CONCEPT NOTE: KNOWLEDGE SHARING EXERCISE ON TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION

Knowledge sharing exercise on triangular co-operation

Triangular co-operation (TrC) is on the rise as a horizontal, partnership-oriented modality, where the complementary strengths and experiences of different partners are used to co-create solutions to pressing development challenges. In the lead-up to the Second UN High-Level Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA+40), DAC members joined forces in advocating for a stronger recognition of triangular co-operation – with success: the importance of triangular co-operation was acknowledged 73 times in the BAPA+40 Outcome Document, including in a paragraph dedicated to trilateral partnerships.

Now, one year after BAPA+40 and during times of the global COVID-19 crisis, horizontal partnerships are needed more than ever to share knowledge and data and to foster innovation in an increasingly interconnected world. Against this backdrop, there is a need to move from political advocacy to implementation of the BAPA+40 Outcome Document.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many partners in triangular co-operation are interested in engaging more in this modality, but face some operational challenges along the way. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Embracing the option of working in triangular co-operation in all programming processes and procedures and linking it to thematic discussions (e.g. climate change, health, agriculture, etc.);
- Identifying incentives throughout development co-operation systems to use the instrument of triangular co-operation more systematically, including by linking country/regional offices with headquarters and by linking to debates on development innovation;
- Allocating specific budgets/budget lines to triangular co-operation;
- Tracking triangular co-operation projects in statistics;
- Engaging in discussions on transaction costs vs. investments in partnerships;
- Capturing better the results and value added of triangular co-operation;
- Capturing the learning experiences of DAC partners in triangular co-operation and feed them back into the respective development co-operation systems;
- Including triangular co-operation in the COVID-19 response;
- Finding ways to ensure that knowledge is co-produced and traditional North-South knowledge flows are altered.

SOLUTION/PROPOSAL

As many DAC members and other partners in triangular co-operation face similar operational challenges in triangular co-operation, the OECD/DCD proposes to pick up some of these in a structured knowledge sharing exercise with a view of learning how others have addressed the issue or which ideas they have to do so in the future. The Global Partnership Initiative (GPI) on Effective Triangular Co-operation already provides a platform with vast knowledge and experience, that this knowledge sharing exercise can draw from, while at the same time providing new inputs and ideas to the work of the GPI. The Voluntary Guidelines for Effective Triangular Co-operation and work carried out by the OECD and other partners could serve as basis for discussion.

Making good use of a broad range of experiences and ensuring an open exchange among partners, the following process is suggested along five pillars as illustrated in Figure 1 below:

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1 The DAC agreed on a new definition for capturing triangular co-operation through “bi-/multi code 8” at the WP-Stat meeting on 1-2 July 2019
2 Results of the first overarching portfolio evaluation of Germany’s triangular co-operation can be found here.
1. A knowledge sharing exercise among DAC members (pillars 1-3),
2. Including and consulting interested partners in triangular co-operation to share effective experiences, good practices, challenges and lessons learned when implementing triangular co-operation projects; testing options of incorporating triangular cooperation in development programming processes (pillars 4 and 5);
3. Regular feedback loops with the members of the GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation.

Figure 1: Overview of knowledge sharing exercise on triangular co-operation - Pillars

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar 1: Embracing TrC in all development programming</th>
<th>Pillar 2: Tracking, results and impact of TrC</th>
<th>Pillar 3: Learning and knowledge production in TrC</th>
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<td>Incorporating the option of working in TrC, incl. in the COVID-19 response and in thematic discussions (e.g. climate change, health, agriculture, etc.)</td>
<td>Establishing a working definition of TrC in comparison to regional and global programmes</td>
<td>Capturing better what DAC members learn in triangular co-operation to move towards true joint and mutual learning and horizontality</td>
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<td>Creating incentives in development co-operation systems to use TrC more, incl. in development innovation</td>
<td>Based on the agreed working definition, exchange experiences and ideas on tracking TrC in statistics</td>
<td>Discussing how ways of doing TrC are changing during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. digitalisation) and which lessons are learned from these times</td>
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<td>Budgeting &amp; financing mechanisms (incl. capturing in-kind contributions)</td>
<td>Working towards impact and results - monitoring and evaluating TrC experiences and grounding TrC in effectiveness</td>
<td>Exchanging views on knowledge production in TrC - moving from knowledge production in the Global North to co-creation among partners</td>
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<td>Working with government partners, CSOs, private sector, philanthropy, academia, research institutes, and other partners</td>
<td>Transaction costs vs. investments in partnerships and harmonising contributions of different partners</td>
<td>Communicating better about TrC &amp; linking discussions on multi-stakeholder partnerships, global networks and funds with triangular co-operation</td>
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Pillar 4: Reflection group with partners in TrC and the GPI

Engage interested other official providers of development co-operation as well as non-governmental partners in triangular co-operation with a view of: i) setting the frame, ii) receiving strategic input and iii) sharing the outcomes of the discussions in pillars 1-3 to receive feedback on how triangular co-operation could be implemented more effectively. The work in this pillar could be kicked-off at the beginning of the process and be continued at the next international meeting on triangular co-operation in Lisbon (TBC).

Pillar 5: Testing options of incorporating TrC in programming processes

Exchange among different actors in triangular co-operation with a view of nurturing the discussions in pillars 1-4 and to learn from their experiences, test new ideas and receive feedback on how triangular co-operation could be implemented in practice. The work in this pillar is developed interactively with pillars 1-3 and includes regular feedback loops with the GPI members.

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3 Potential partners may include: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Islamic Development Bank, Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Co-operation (PIFCSS), private sector, CSOs, philanthropy and others including developing countries that partner in triangular cooperation projects.
OUTPUTS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The dynamic and interactive exchange during the knowledge sharing exercise would lead to:

- Moving from political discussions on triangular co-operation to more effective implementation and tackling challenges of DAC members on the operational level.
- Providing operational tools throughout the development programming cycle of triangular co-operation projects, enhancing the OECD’s Toolkit series with additional tools, which could support all DAC members in embracing triangular co-operation as a means of achieving the 2030 Agenda. Depending on the discussions and findings of this knowledge sharing exercise, three (or more) new tools could potentially be designed along the three pillars of this exercise: 1) Embracing triangular co-operation in all development programming; 2) Tracking, results and impact of triangular co-operation; and 3) Learning and knowledge production in triangular co-operation.
- Learning from interested partners about challenges and ideas, based on international good practices.
- Engaging in a trusting exchange with partners, fostering consensus in the global triangular co-operation community on preparing the ground for innovative collaboration and further horizontal implementation of findings and tools.
- Engaging in regular exchange with the members and the core group of the GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation and the work of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) to ensure synergies and complementarities.

The OECD/DCD Secretariat will capture the results of this knowledge sharing exercise in several tools to facilitate the implementation of triangular co-operation. In doing so, it will enlarge the DCD’s Toolkit series on triangular co-operation and provide more operational tools to implement the BAPA +40 Outcome Document and make good use of the full potential of triangular co-operation.

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4 In 2018, the OECD launched the “Toolkit for identifying, monitoring and evaluating the value added of triangular co-operation”, which has been successfully piloted with the EU-LAC Programme for Triangular Co-operation (ADELANTE), the German development co-operation and other partners.

5 The final topics and contents of the tools will be the result of the knowledge sharing process.