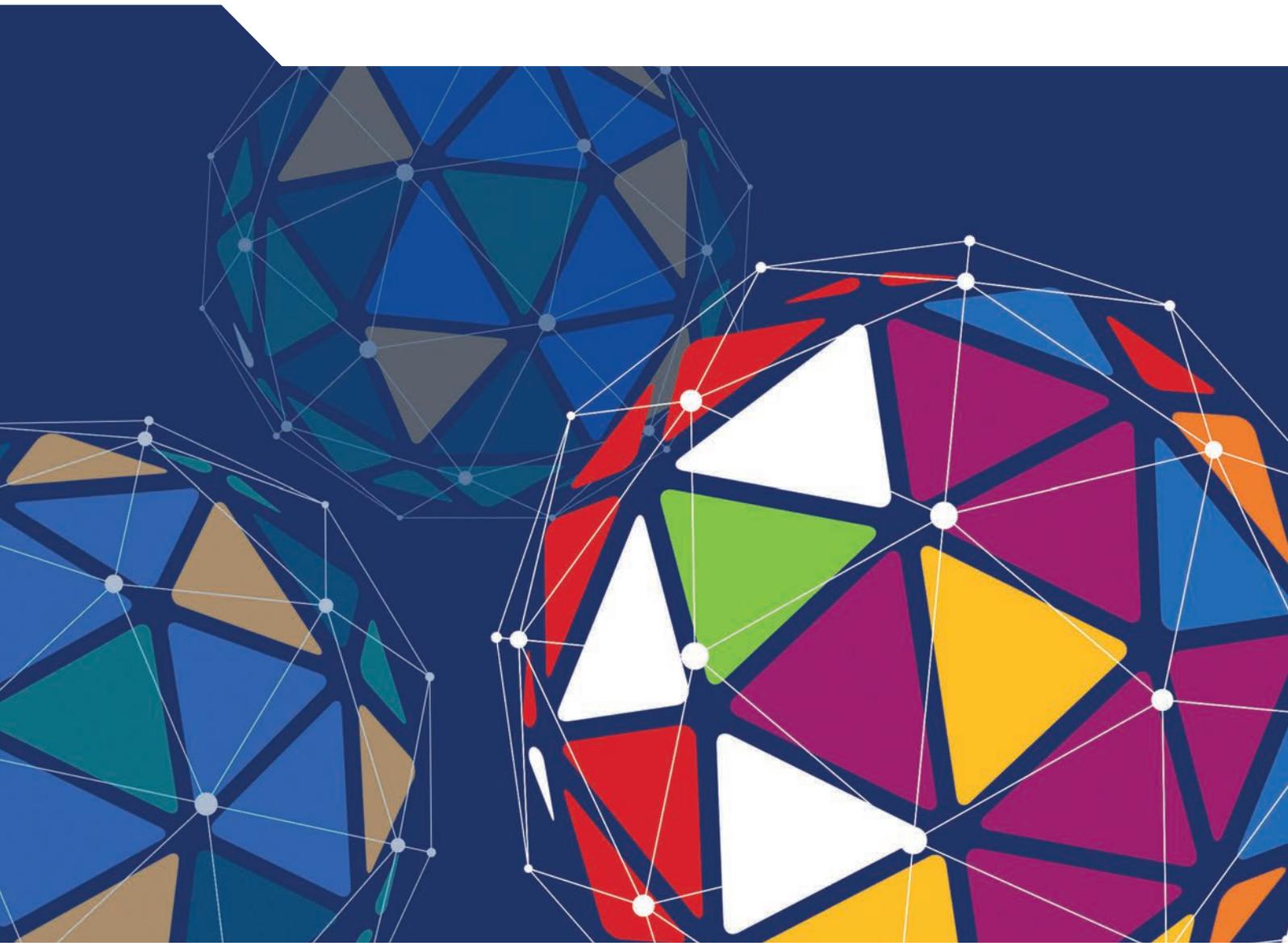




Global Perspectives on Triangular Co-operation



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Foreword

This report is a joint publication by the OECD and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) that examines global trends in triangular co-operation. Triangular co-operation has been recognised as an important modality for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Triangular Co-operation delivers high-impact results through inclusive partnerships that enable all partners to share their expertise, knowledge and resources to deliver on a common objective.

The OECD Development Co-operation Directorate has been providing its members and the broader international community with analysis, data and evidence, dialogue, policy support, and advocacy on the effective use of triangular co-operation for over a decade.

Since its establishment, the IsDB has championed South-South and triangular co-operation among its member countries as one of its key founding principles. Its seminal Reverse Linkage mechanism enables more than 33 of its member countries to share their knowledge and expertise to support sustainable development efforts.

This report is organised in four chapters and an annex. Chapter 1 explores the role of triangular co-operation in supporting sustainable development now and in the future. Chapter 2 identifies key global trends in the use of triangular co-operation using the latest available data. Chapter 3 examines the ecosystems that can support and strengthen the use of triangular co-operation. Chapter 4 discusses how triangular co-operation can contribute to addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, with a specific focus on small island developing states. Annex A profiles 16 countries and how they are engaging in triangular co-operation to share expertise and resources in support of sustainable development across a variety of sectors.

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Editorial

Triangular co-operation is an investment in inclusive partnerships that can bridge divides and leverage the collective know how and resources of all partners to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Triangular co-operation does not aim to replace South-South co-operation or any other forms of bilateral or multilateral co-operation. It successfully provides a link between South-South co-operation and North-South co-operation, enabling developed and developing countries, international organisations, and other stakeholders to come together and work in partnerships that draw on the wealth of knowledge, expertise, and resources of all partners to deliver sustainable results.

The heart of triangular co-operation is its ability to build trust between partners that can potentially extend beyond the technical co-operation activities to underpin broader political dialogue and drive further progress on sustainable development.

The OECD is dedicated to delivering better policies for better lives. Working in partnership with governments, policy makers and citizens, it delivers evidence-based international standards and policy solutions for a range of challenges. Its Development Co-operation Directorate sets standards and provides critical data and analysis on the effective use of development co-operation to accelerate progress towards the SDGs) in developing countries.

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has been supporting the socio-economic development of its 57 member countries for the last 5 decades and providing innovative solutions to their development challenges. Guided by the principles of South-South and triangular co-operation, its Reverse Linkage mechanism supports IsDB's member countries to exchange their expertise and resources with others, building up capacities and co-creating solutions to promote its members' autonomous development.

This report is proof of a strong partnership, between the IsDB and the OECD. We are members of the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Co-operation, and we acknowledge and welcome the increasing interest in triangular co-operation globally, the explicit demand for triangular partnerships from partner countries, and the potential to scale up the use of this modality to achieve effective and sustainable results. Recognising that there is no single flagship report or source to consult for the most recent analysis, trends, data and thematic discussions on triangular co-operation, the OECD and IsDB set out to fill this gap and, with the support of other partners, to provide such a knowledge product for the benefit of the broader development community. Their hope is that this report triggers debates on the current state and future of triangular co-operation and demonstrates the need to scale up and invest in triangular partnerships globally for a more sustainable world.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| ABC | Brazilian Cooperation Agency |
| CDB | Cotton Development Board (Bangladesh) |
| CRS | Creditor Reporting System |
| CRI | Cotton Research Institute (Türkiye) |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| ECIS | Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States |
| GPI | Global Partnership Initiative |
| IsDB | Islamic Development Bank |
| IFAD | International Fund for Agricultural Development |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| LAC | Latin America and the Caribbean |
| MENA | Middle East and North Africa |
| ODA | Official development assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| SEGIB | Ibero-American General Secretariat |
| SIDS | Small island developing states |
| TOSSD | Total official support for sustainable development |
| TrC | Triangular co-operation |
| UNOSSC | United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation |
| USD | United States dollar |

Executive summary

The world is marked by multiple crises and challenges that transcend borders and require not only local but global solutions. Only by working together and bridging divides and differences can countries address these challenges and drive a sustainable development future for all. Triangular co-operation is explicitly designed to build inclusive, trusting and impactful partnerships that bring different stakeholders together to leverage their expertise, knowledge and resources for a sustainable future.

Triangular co-operation's ability to deliver technical diplomacy will be a critical asset for the future of international co-operation

This report opens by using foresight tools to examine the potential of triangular co-operation in four very different future world scenarios. This is an important exercise that can help countries assess the strategic value of triangular co-operation in their future co-operation portfolios as a complement to South-South co-operation and official development assistance.

Across all the scenarios – a new sustainable development world, a fragmented world, a conflicted world and an unsustainable growth world – triangular co-operation has an important role to play. Its ability to deliver what this report terms technical diplomacy, building trust between partners that can transcend technical engagement and help underpin wider political dialogue, is a real asset. Another added value is its ability to foster genuine partnerships that break down old hierarchies between the South and North and donor and recipient and leverage the expertise, experiences and resources of all partners.

A growing and diverse set of partners report engagement in triangular co-operation, but there is room to scale up its use

Triangular co-operation may be vital for the future, but it is already playing an important role. In the absence of a single, comprehensive global database on triangular co-operation, this report draws on three different datasets and finds a growing and diverse set of partners are reporting engagement in triangular co-operation. Geographically, the largest share of triangular co-operation is with partners in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, and there has been a rise in its use with partners in sub-Saharan Africa and the Asia-Pacific region since 2018. The volume of funding reported as disbursed through triangular co-operation has also increased over time but remains relatively low compared to other development finance flows. At the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Co-operation, governments called upon multilateral, regional and bilateral development co-operation providers to consider increasing financial resources and technical cooperation to promote South-South and triangular cooperation.

The lack of a comprehensive and consistent dataset on global triangular co-operation flows makes it difficult to monitor the evolution of the modality and to build an evidence base on its effective use. This report calls on all co-operation partners in triangular co-operation – governments, multinational organisations, the private sector and civil society – to improve their own reporting and monitoring processes

of triangular co-operation at the national level and to encourage better monitoring of the modality at the regional and global level.

Strengthening national ecosystems of triangular co-operation

The United Nations (UN) Conference on South-South Co-operation in 2019 called for the strengthening of national policies and mechanisms for South-South and triangular co-operation in light of the growing importance and increasing complexity, scale and sophistication of these modalities. The Islamic Development Bank has developed a framework that identifies seven pillars of an effective national institutional arrangement that can support the use of South-South and triangular co-operation (Islamic Development Bank and South Centre, 2019[30]). While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to delivering triangular co-operation, these pillars highlight some institutional elements that can assist in its delivery.

The IsDB's seven pillars are 1) high-level political will, 2) including South-South and triangular co-operation in national strategies, 3) building solid information bases that enhance knowledge on the modality, 4) connecting stakeholders engaged in South-South and triangular co-operation to raise awareness and amplify its use, 5) establishing a national body, department or unit with responsibility for South-South and triangular co-operation, 6) establishing national financing mechanisms, and 7) ensuring performance management systems are in place to assess what is working and why, and to use this learning to enhance the efficiency and impact of the modality in the future.

Green triangular co-operation can support cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches

Key global conventions recognise triangular co-operation as an important co-operation modality to address climate change and biodiversity. Partners frequently engage in triangular co-operation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. While the volumes committed are relatively small at present, they are increasing and make up a significant share of total triangular co-operation. The potential benefits of green triangular co-operation are especially significant for small island developing states, which are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and depend on strong global alliances to advocate for their needs and interests in this regard.

The modality's ability to deliver technical diplomacy is a strength and can help forge greater understanding and consensus across countries to advance and implement international climate and biodiversity agreements. Individual triangular co-operation projects and programmes frequently cover multiple sectors, and this is also an asset, as addressing climate change and biodiversity loss require cross-sectoral approaches. Finally, the success of policy measures related to climate and biodiversity greatly depends on the engagement of people and communities living in affected areas. Triangular co-operation's multi-stakeholder approach can help enable local engagement in the project.

This report demonstrates triangular co-operation's relevance for delivering progress on sustainable development now and in the future given its innovative approach to diplomacy and building alliances and its ability to draw on the full range of expertise, experience and resources of all partners. The report calls on all actors to consider scaling up their use of the modality, improve reporting and monitoring of its impact, and strengthen national ecosystems to support its effective delivery.

1 The future of triangular co-operation

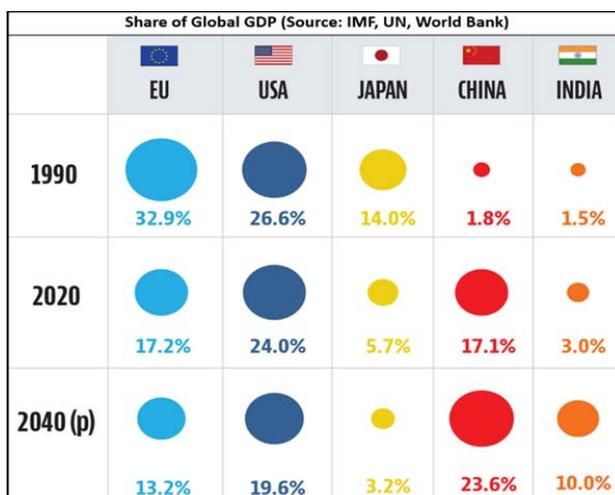
This chapter outlines opportunities and challenges for triangular co-operation, using foresight tools to explore four very different scenarios for global geopolitical relations, sustainable development and development co-operation. It then discusses the value added of triangular co-operation as a means of technical diplomacy, and how it can best contribute to a post-2030 development co-operation agenda.

Making the most of shifting power balances

Today's times are turbulent with multiple, interlinked and complex crises and challenges that transcend borders and require global solutions. Climate change poses an existential risk and threatens the development progress of recent decades, particularly for the poorest countries (OECD, 2023^[1]). The COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing wars and conflicts, including in Ukraine, have not only had devastating short-term consequences but have also accentuated longer-term economic and geopolitical shifts.

The tectonic plates of great power politics have shifted considerably over the last three decades. After a period of unipolarity following the fall of the Soviet Union, the (re-)emergence of China, India and other countries as important geopolitical players has made the global order more multipolar. In economic terms, China has emerged as the largest trading partner for many countries and is predicted to become the largest economy in the world, overtaking the United States before 2040 (Figure 1.1) (Goldman Sachs, 2022^[2]). This process, together with global urbanisation and digitalisation, creates political and economic redistribution and new conditions for geopolitical governance.

Figure 1.1. Share of global gross domestic product from 1990-2040



Source: Authors' visualisation based on data from international Monetary Fund (2023^[3]), *World Economic Outlook Databases* (webpage), <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/SPROLLS/world-economic-outlook-databases#sort=%40imfdate%20descending>.

These events have already impacted development co-operation. The year 2023 is the midway point for implementing the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Conflicts, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have made it even more difficult for countries to reach the SDGs, stalling, and in some places reversing progress made. Increasingly frequent extreme weather events from climate change have exposed millions of people to food insecurity and reduced water security across Africa, Asia, and Central and South America (IPCC, 2023^[4]). It is estimated that between 32 million to 132 million people could be pushed into poverty by 2030 as a result of climate change (Jafino et al., 2020^[5]).

A food and fuel crisis driven by conflict is also hindering progress on the SDGs, and has raised inflation globally, slowed economic activity and increased many countries' national debt (OECD, 2023^[1]). Official development assistance (ODA) is also shifting in response to conflicts with more ODA being spent on in-donor refugee costs in Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries (OECD, 2023^[6]).

Emerging economies in Asia and Latin America are demanding that regional and middle-income country perspectives be included in global policy making on sustainable development. In addition, many countries

across the globe are taking on dual roles – as beneficiaries of ODA and also providing expertise and co-operation to other countries. More countries are creating or transforming agencies for development co-operation to engage in new frameworks of exchange where everyone learns and everyone contributes. South-South and triangular co-operation are growing in prominence, enabling countries to have a wider choice of development co-operation partners and a greater wealth of expertise available to help them shape their country's development. Triangular partnerships mean countries no longer have to choose between working either with DAC providers of development co-operation or working with Southern co-operation partners. They can combine the best of both worlds through triangular partnerships.

Triangular co-operation, or trilateral, tripartite or triangular development co-operation, is internationally recognised as a key modality for delivering the SDGs (UN, 2019^[7]). More than 150 countries in the UN General Assembly confirmed this in 2019 with the approval of the outcome document of the Second UN High-level Conference on South-South Co-operation, recognising that:

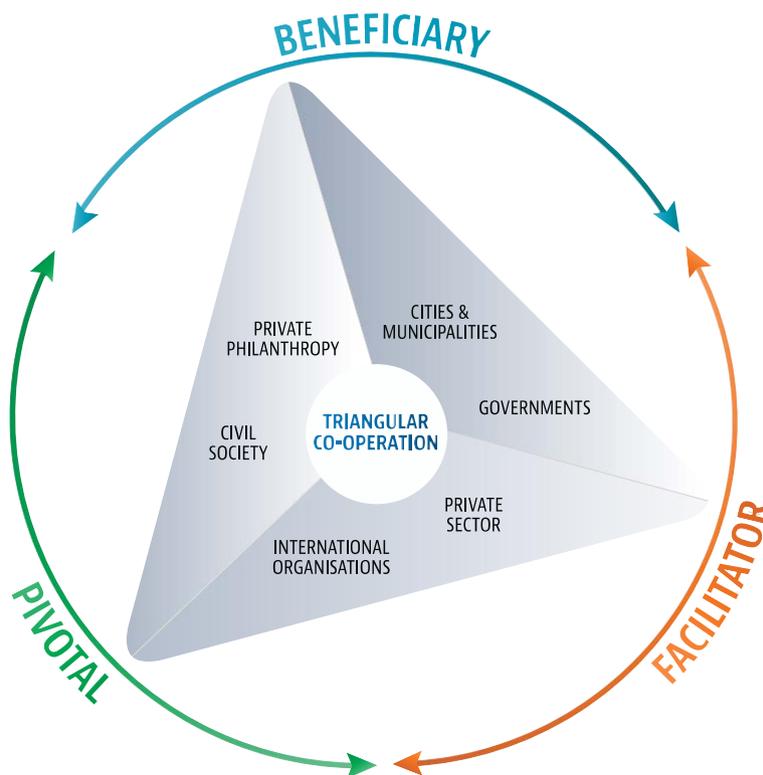
“... triangular cooperation is a modality that builds partnerships and trust, between all partners, and that combines diverse resources and capacities, under the ownership of the requesting developing country, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals; and that it provides added value by leveraging and mobilizing additional technical and financial resources, sharing a wider range of experiences, promoting new areas of cooperation, and combining affordable and context-based development solutions under flexible arrangements and agreed shared modalities” (UN, 2019^[7]).

Triangular co-operation is based on the principle that no country is too poor to share experiences and that no country is too rich to learn. While there is no globally shared and agreed definition of triangular or trilateral co-operation,¹ all the various formulations are underpinned by a general framework that brings together at least three partners to address a development challenge. According to the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019^[8]), triangular co-operation is a collaborative model of co-operation that involves three dynamic roles (Figure 1.2):

- a beneficiary partner, which requests support to tackle a specific development challenge
- a pivotal partner, which has relevant domestic experience in addressing the issue in a context similar to that of the beneficiary country and that shares its financial resources, knowledge and expertise
- a facilitating partner, which may help connect the other partners and supports the partnership financially and/or with technical expertise.

Partners include countries (at national and subnational levels), international organisations, civil society, private philanthropy, the private sector, and academia. The roles often change throughout the lifespan of a triangular co-operation project, enabling genuinely horizontal partnerships.

Figure 1.2. Understanding triangular co-operation



Source: OECD (2022^[9]), *Triangular Co-operation with Africa*, https://triangular-cooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/OECD_Triangular-co-operation-with-Africa.pdf.

Future opportunities and challenges for triangular co-operation

Scenario planning is a foresight tool that develops multiple narratives of how the future could look in order to explore and learn from them in terms of implications for the present (OECD, 2019^[10]). This section uses this tool to explore potential opportunities and challenges for triangular co-operation in four very different future scenarios, each assuming different trajectories for geopolitical relations in the world, sustainable development and development co-operation.

These scenarios were derived by combining two different, existing sets of scenarios: the four scenarios developed by the OECD for the future of development co-operation in 2030² (OECD, 2022^[11]) and the four scenarios for the future of Africa in the world³ developed by the Institute for Security Studies Africa (Cilliers, 2023^[12]). The scenarios discussed in this chapter are not meant to capture the full range of plausible futures nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive.

The future of triangular co-operation is explored across the following four scenarios:

- Scenario 1 – A new sustainable development world
- Scenario 2 – A fragmented world
- Scenario 3 – A conflicted world
- Scenario 4 – An unsustainable growth world.

The scenarios and their implications for triangular co-operation were discussed with experts in foresight and triangular co-operation in workshops organised by the OECD and Islamic Development Bank in February 2023. Each possible future for triangular co-operation is summarised below. Drawing on the four

scenarios, this and subsequent chapters make the case for scaling up the use of triangular co-operation as a modality that can deliver technical diplomacy that builds up vital trust between stakeholders and establishes horizontal partnerships that are key to delivering a post-2030 international sustainable development agenda, no matter what the future holds.

Scenario 1 – A new sustainable development world

Possible future: Countries agree and begin to implement far-reaching global commitments towards sustainable production and consumption, reducing the effects of climate change and loss of biodiversity. Developing countries' needs are considered during the transition and support is provided to cover any negative social and economic costs that occur as a result of the transition.

Countries are taking different paths and approaches to address modern challenges, informed by the experiences of their partners in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world (Archaya, 2017^[13]). A rules-based multilateral system with a more equitable governance structure thrives. Digitalisation and new technological innovations are used to drive sustainable development and are governed by globally agreed rules, minimising their harm.

Development co-operation shifts to a greater focus on protecting global public goods. A wide array of actors from both the South and North are engaged in providing co-operation and financing extends beyond ODA to incorporate a broader set of development resources.

The deployment of triangular co-operation increases quickly as partnerships become the norm for delivering sustainable development, and countries increasingly recognise the need to work together to achieve common goals and leverage resources, expertise and experiences in horizontal partnerships. The three roles of beneficiary, pivotal and facilitating partners are fluid and shift among the countries involved, breaking down the traditional donor-recipient model and North-South divides and enabling all partners to contribute and to learn.

Scenario 2 – A fragmented world

Possible future: Individual countries and regions adopt their own measures towards sustainable production and consumption, but progress is slow due to the lack of global co-ordination. Climate risks continue to increase, with developing countries the most impacted.

The present-day trend towards a more fragmented global order is accelerated, and competition between nations and regions rises. Countries in the Global South increasingly question so-called Western norms and values. The rules-based multilateral system weakens and leadership of powerful nations or blocs dominates. Digitalisation and new technologies are not subject to effective global rules but governed at the national and regional level, and while these advances present opportunities to support sustainable development and reduce fragmentation, they also pose threats.

Multiple countries and blocs offer a diverse array of international development resources and strategies, undoubtedly giving beneficiaries greater choice than ever before. But in the absence of strong global co-ordination, development co-operation is increasingly fragmented and in places incoherent. Duplication of efforts is rife, and gaps in provision remain.

The deployment of triangular co-operation increases, with regional blocs engaging in it to share expertise among members. Countries and regional organisations keen to make the world more collaborative and sustainable, use the modality deliberately as a form of diplomacy that bridges divides between countries and geopolitical blocs, building trust that can be used beyond development co-operation to foster wider political agreements on sustainable development.

Scenario 3 – A conflicted world

Possible future: Amid intense conflict and instability around the world, progress on achieving sustainable development grinds to a halt. Climate change and biodiversity loss accelerate, while environmental degradation causes resource shortages that fuel further conflicts, harming economic development and spurring migration in a vicious cycle of instability.

The rules-based multilateral system falters, as the world becomes divided and borders between countries become more and more protected. The environmental crisis disproportionately affects developing countries, which are often at the centre of strategic competition for resources and access to markets. Countries wishing to stay neutral are under constant pressure to take sides. Digitalisation and new technologies are not governed by any global rules and are often used nefariously to assert control over populations and advance warfare.

Development co-operation is highly instrumentalised for national security goals and its scope is substantially reduced, with a strong focus on providing immediate humanitarian support to allies.

The deployment of triangular co-operations stalls. Triangular co-operation is used predominately as a means for countries to win influence with key strategic partners in a divided and conflicted world. However, even in this scenario, some countries and stakeholders – civil society, research institutions and the private sector – continue to use triangular co-operation as a form of diplomacy in an attempt to build bridges between divided nations in order to reduce conflicts and drive the world to a more sustainable path.

Scenario 4 – An unsustainable growth world

Possible future: Most countries fail to switch to sustainable growth paths and continue to pursue models of unsustainable growth, due in part to inertia and in part to powerful vested interests that have much to lose from any change in the status quo. While global income grows, costly environmental deterioration substantially reduces the positive social and economic effects of this growth. A few developing countries prosper by capitalising on growth and managing to adapt, but at a high environmental and social cost. But most struggle. Given their fragile developmental state, the impact of environmental deterioration stifles growth and development.

Countries engage in a slimmed-down, rules-based multilateral system that focuses predominately on supporting infrastructure investments, value chain inclusion, resource provision and the expansion of a business-friendly regulatory environment, with limited attention paid to sustainability. Governance is encouraged at the national and multilateral level to be lean, to provide services in fast, cheap and simple ways. Digitalisation and new technologies are governed by global rules that focus on encouraging their use to drive productivity and growth. Less attention is paid to ensuring that rules protect societies from the potential harm of these technologies.

Development co-operation flourishes but is mainly focused on supporting an enabling environment for unsustainable growth and compensating for the uneven social and environmental consequences of this relentless pursuit of growth. Public-private partnerships between development co-operation providers and tech-based, data-driven start-ups mushroom.

Triangular co-operation in this scenario is increasingly deployed. It is often used to engage the private sector with the aim of drawing on its resources and expertise in horizontal diplomacy to enable growth and offset the short-term negative impacts of this growth in the absence of sustainability. For the minority of countries engaging in sustainable development, triangular co-operation is also used to try to build bridges with other countries and drive more sustainable pathways.

Looking ahead: Triangular co-operation's added value delivering technical diplomacy and building horizontal partnerships

The four scenarios are not predictions about the future but rather are presented to illustrate a range of possible futures. Across all the possible futures – a new sustainable development world, a fragmented world, a conflicted world and an unsustainable growth world – triangular co-operation has an important role to play. Whatever the future holds, it is clear that adopting innovative approaches to diplomacy, expanding partnerships beyond existing alliances (Müller and de la Lastra, 2022^[14]), and drawing on partners' full range of expertise, experience and resources to safeguard global public goods will be needed to achieve a sustainable world in the future.

Triangular co-operation is a modality well suited for meeting these needs. Its value added is in its ability to deliver technical diplomacy, building vital trust between strategic partners through technical engagement, and its ability to foster horizontal partnerships, which break down old hierarchies and leverage each partner's expertise, experiences and resources.

Building trust through technical diplomacy

Countries engage in international diplomacy – continuous peaceful communication with other countries – in order to achieve their foreign policy goals, build understanding and forge closer ties with other countries (Forsberg and Marley, 2020^[15]). There are numerous forms of international diplomacy, ranging from bilateral and multilateral to cultural and economic (Table 1.1).

Technical diplomacy is defined in this report as activities that pave the way for and underpin political dialogue and diplomacy through joint actions and horizontal partnerships at the technical level.

Triangular co-operation is a modality that is well suited to deliver technical diplomacy. Partners invest in two goals at the same time when engaging in triangular co-operation: first, to build strategic partnerships, often between the facilitator and pivotal partners, for national, regional and global goals and second, to achieve effective development results in the beneficiary partner (OECD, 2018^[16]).

Table 1.1. Overview of selected types of diplomacy

| Type of diplomacy | Actors and target group | Purpose | Channel of negotiation |
|---|--|--|--|
| Bilateral diplomacy (Track 1 diplomacy) | Two or more governments | To negotiate and discuss a particular issue of the bilateral relations of two countries | Official |
| Multilateral diplomacy | Multiple governments come together, e.g. in multilateral or regional organisations | To negotiate and discuss a particular issue of the broader international community | Official |
| Cultural diplomacy | Governments working with governmental and non-governmental cultural organisations | To promote a country's culture, values and traditions to foster better relations and understanding | Official and unofficial channels (e.g., artists, music groups, film, etc.) |
| Public diplomacy | Governments targeting the general public in other countries | To communicate with the public in a foreign country and promote a favourable image abroad | Official but with unofficial communication channels such as media and social media |
| New diplomacy | Governments, media and internet, private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) | To address human rights, humanitarian assistance, labour rights, environmental issues and fair trade | Official with unofficial communication channels such as media, internet and social media (links to bilateral, multilateral and public diplomacy) |
| Economic diplomacy | Governments, private sector, lobby groups | To promote a country's economic interests | Official and unofficial channels involving private sector |

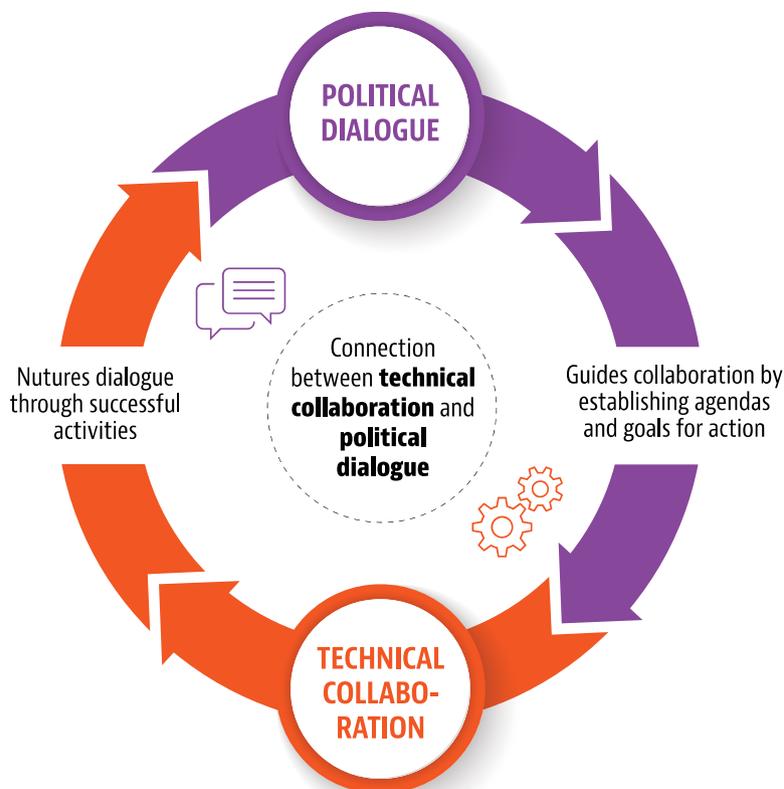
| Type of diplomacy | Actors and target group | Purpose | Channel of negotiation |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | representatives, lobby groups, etc. in (preparing) the negotiations |
| Environmental diplomacy | Governments with support from non-governmental actors | To negotiate and agree on global environmental issues | Official and unofficial with inputs from research institutes, NGOs and others |
| Track II diplomacy | Non-governmental negotiations between individuals or groups from different countries | To address sensitive or complex issues below the level of official diplomacy | Unofficial with links to official channels |
| Technical diplomacy | Technical experts from government, the private sector and non-governmental actors | To build trust and address sensitive issues at a technical level, invest in project partnerships, and have negotiations at the level of informal diplomacy | Official and unofficial with the potential to scale up to the political and diplomatic level |

Note: This table provides a brief overview of types of diplomacy and is not exhaustive; there are many additional concepts of diplomacy, and these can overlap.

Source: Cooper, Heine and Thakur (2013^[17]), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.001.0001>; Susskind and Ali (2014^[18]), *Environmental Diplomacy: Negotiating More Effective Global Agreements*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199397976.002.0003>.

The effectiveness of technical diplomacy hinges on the link between technical collaboration and diplomatic political dialogue (Cowan and Arsenault, 2008^[19]). This is a two-way connection: Political dialogue guides technical collaboration by establishing agendas and goals for action and setting a broader framework for action while technical collaboration nurtures political dialogue by providing meaningful examples of successful activities (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3. Technical diplomacy: Connection between technical collaboration and political dialogue



Technical diplomacy offers a platform for technical experts to engage with other stakeholders such as line ministries, local and regional authorities, NGOs, and the private sector. These exchanges facilitate learning and knowledge sharing. They also help build important trust – an asset that can transcend the technical engagement to infuse broader political dialogue in other arenas, making it easier for countries to discuss differing norms and values (Emrich and Schulze, 2017^[20]) and reach agreements. The United States and India’s triangular co-operation which is enabling India to share its innovations with beneficiaries in Asia and Africa is also clearly intended to strengthen the two nations’ diplomatic and political ties (Box 1.1).

Technical diplomacy is closely linked with the types of diplomacy that emphasise greater citizen involvement in international relations, such as new diplomacy or track II diplomacy, as illustrated in the overview of different types of diplomacy in Table 1.1.

Naturally, delivering technical diplomacy via triangular co-operation requires a high level of investment at the beginning of a project. Triangular co-operation typically involves a robust initial negotiation phase where the partners discuss key concepts, establish a common language and clarify their contributions. Clear partner commitments can enhance ownership and strengthen collaboration.

Box 1.1. India-United States technical diplomacy via triangular co-operation

Recognising their countries’ long history of engagement, President Biden of the United States and Prime Minister Modi of India explicitly celebrated their triangular co-operation in 2021 as part of broader diplomatic efforts to work together as a force for good to enhance security, trade and investment and to tackle global challenges such as climate change and global health (The White House, 2021^[21]). A joint Statement of Guiding Principles on Triangular Co-operation for Global Development steers the two countries’ technical diplomacy via triangular co-operation which was recently extended in 2021. Their triangular co-operation brings together United States government officials, research and private sector actors, and Indian government officials, researchers and private sector actors to help share India’s expertise in areas including agriculture, energy, and family planning, child, and maternal health care with partners in Southeast Asia and Africa.

Source: The White House (2021^[21]), “U.S.-India Joint Leaders’ Statement: A Partnership for Global Good”, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/u-s-india-joint-leaders-statement-a-partnership-for-global-good/>.

Fostering horizontal partnerships

Triangular co-operation can also help to build horizontal partnerships. Its three-way partnerships can help balance power relations and foster horizontal exchanges, thereby transcending donor-recipient dynamics and enabling all partners to share their expertise, experience and resources. The four foresight scenarios above show that existing binary divisions between countries – for instance, between the Global North and Global South and between donors and recipients – may increasingly become less rigid as the world evolves.

Triangular co-operation recognises that all partners have something to bring to the table according to their experiences and knowledge and that all partners also have something to learn. Triangular co-operation enables the governments of a wide range of countries to enter into a new partnership in the role of either beneficiary, pivotal or facilitating partner irrespective of income or other classifications. The roles are defined according to the knowledge and resources that each partner brings to the table and how these contributions relate to the objectives of the project. Building on the foresight exercise, the four scenarios and on the notion of technical diplomacy, triangular co-operation is positioning itself as a modality that interlinks and maximises knowledge and technical expertise to answer concrete challenges.

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Notes

¹ This publication uses the terms triangular and trilateral interchangeably.

² The OECD describes four scenarios for the future of development co-operation in 2030: 1) a new development co-operation global architecture takes root, 2) development co-operation power dynamics shift, 3) locally led development co-operation culminates and 4) development co-operation digitalises.

³ The Institute for Security Studies in South Africa describes four scenarios: a sustainable, new development world; a divided and regionalised world; a world at war or conflicted world; and a private sector, growth world.

2 Global data trends on triangular co-operation

This chapter reviews existing global datasets on triangular co-operation and provides an overview of global trends: who engages, how much funding is provided, and which regions and sectors benefit. It calls on all partners engaging in triangular co-operation to strengthen their own reporting and monitoring, and to support improved reporting at the regional and global levels.

A growing and diverse set of governments, international organisations and non-state actors are reporting engagement in triangular co-operation. While the volume of funding reported as disbursed through triangular co-operation is increasing, it remains low compared to overall official development assistance (ODA) flows. Triangular co-operation is deployed across all regions, with the largest share in terms of the volume disbursed undertaken in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the volume deployed in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia-Pacific has grown substantially since 2018. Triangular co-operation is deployed across multiple sectors and is a popular instrument for sharing experiences and knowledge on how to support government and civil society, protect the environment, and tackle health issues. Looking ahead, all stakeholders engaged in triangular co-operation need to enhance their own reporting of triangular co-operation at the national level and encourage better monitoring at the regional and global level.

The most comprehensive dataset on triangular co-operation projects is run by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) but it covers just the Ibero-American region. At present, there is no single, consistent and comprehensive dataset on triangular co-operation at the global level. In light of this gap, this report focuses on three global datasets that capture different aspects of triangular co-operation: the OECD's Creditor Reporting System ([CRS](#)), the new statistical measurement of [total official support for sustainable development \(TOSSD\)](#), and the [OECD's online project repository for triangular co-operation](#). As these databases vary greatly in their methodological approaches, scope and the types of information gathered, caution needs to be taken when comparing information across the databases (Table 2.1).

The OECD's CRS is an official database that captures data from the 32 members¹ of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on their ODA and other development finance flows. Reporting is mandatory for DAC members, and other official providers can also report to the OECD on a voluntary basis.² The OECD Secretariat checks and officially verifies the data, to ensure rigor, consistency, and comparability. The CRS has been collecting global data on triangular co-operation only since 2016, when the DAC Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT) introduced a new reporting code for triangular co-operation. Currently, some OECD members do not report or under-report their triangular co-operation to the CRS.

Table 2.1. Overview of databases on triangular co-operation

| Database | OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) | OECD Triangular co-operation project repository | Total official support for sustainable development (TOSSD) |
|----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Scope | OECD DAC members, international organisations and other interested reporting official providers of development co-operation | All countries, international organisations, civil society organisations (CSOs), think tanks, etc. | International organisations, DAC members ¹ and other official providers |
| Time frame | 2016-21 | 2000-22 | 2019-21 |
| Method of reporting | Official | Unofficial, self-reporting and voluntary | Official but voluntary |
| Financing flow | ODA only | All flows | International public finance |

Note: 1. The Development Assistance Committee members are not fully covered. A first round of data collection to pilot TOSSD with refinements is planned.

The OECD's online project repository is a voluntary, self-reporting database that is open to all governments, international organisations, CSOs and research organisations. It thus covers the widest range of actors of the three databases and is the oldest dataset, dating from 2000. The project repository links to the [South-South Galaxy](#) platform of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation by identifying and including the triangular co-operation projects from its database. The evidence and data collected in the OECD online project repository, however, are not officially verified or updated on an annual basis. Rather, most respondents report data on an ad hoc basis but can also input historical data, thus

contributing to a constantly evolving dataset. The project repository does not track the exact volume of finance disbursed but provides information on project budgets. Only Norway has consistently reported all of its triangular co-operation since 2002, representing good practice. Its engagement in Africa, as reported to the OECD repository, is outlined in Box 2.1.

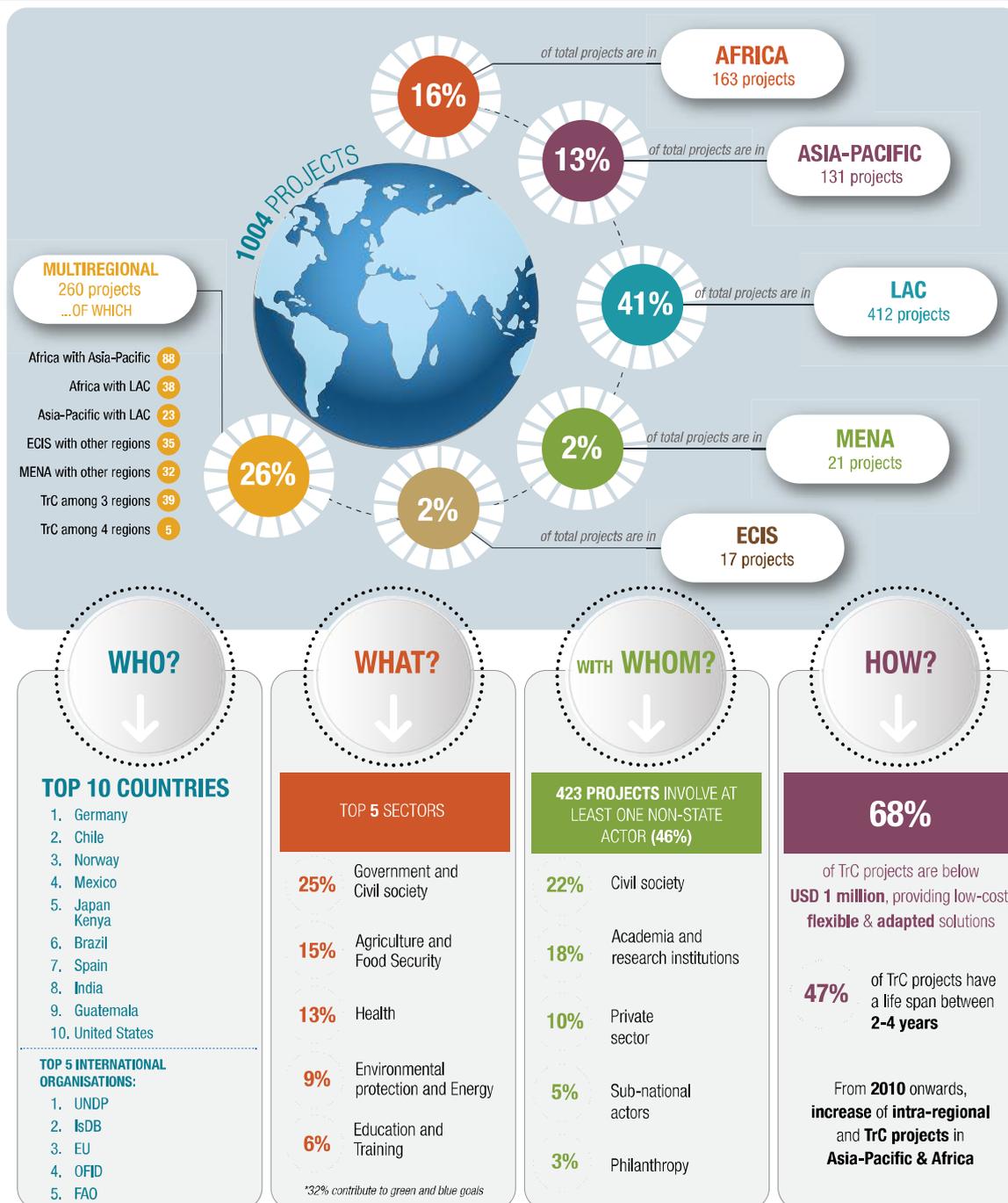
TOSSD is the newest of the three databases referenced in this report. An international standard for measuring resources to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, as agreed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It is open to all official development co-operation providers and international organisations. TOSSD captures a wide set of flows covering ODA, ODA-like flows and other official flows that support global public goods around sustainable development. At the moment, it is a voluntary database, and the data are verified by the OECD Secretariat. Data are available from 2019-21 and from 106 reporting institutions.

Unpacking global trends in triangular co-operation

Who is engaging in triangular co-operation?

While the data vary substantially across the three datasets due to their methodological differences, it is clear that a wide and growing range of governments and international organisations report engagement in triangular co-operation. According to data shared to the OECD project repository, which captures more stakeholders engaged in triangular co-operation projects than the other global datasets, 199 countries and territories and 85 international and regional organisations engaged in triangular co-operation over 2000-22. Since its beginning in 2000 the number of triangular co-operation projects shared to the repository increased from about 400 to over 1 000 in 2022. The project repository also shows that triangular co-operation projects were deployed across all regions, many sectors and with partners other than governments. Infographic 2.1 provides a global overview of who is engaged in triangular co-operation.

Infographic 2.1. Triangular co-operation worldwide, 2000-22



Knowledge sharing and learning jointly are at the heart of trilateral initiatives. Triangular co-operation builds ownership and trust by creating horizontal partnerships that tackle today's most pressing economic, social and environmental challenges.



Note: According to data shared on the OECD project repository.

LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; ECIS = Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; IsDB = Islamic Development Bank; EU = European Union; OFID = OPEC Fund for International Development; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization.

Source: Authors' visualisation based on (OECD, 2023^[1]) *Triangular co-operation repository of projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

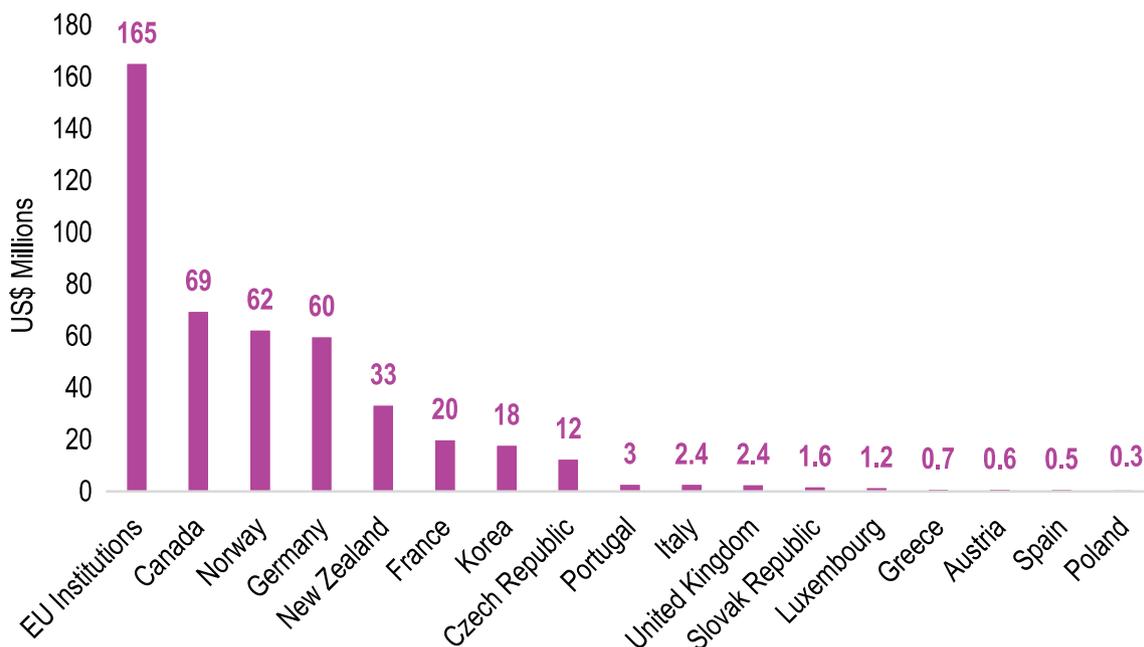
All three datasets show that a wide diversity of partners including subnational entities, CSOs, think tanks and the private sector are engaged in sharing knowledge through triangular co-operation. As shown in Figure 2.1 and according to the OECD project repository, which contains the most extensive information on different stakeholders' engagement, 46% of the triangular projects recorded between 2000-22 involved at least one non-state actor. CSOs are involved in the largest number of projects, followed by research and academic institutions, and the private sector (OECD, 2023^[11]). This diversity suggests that triangular co-operation is not only a good tool for sharing knowledge among emerging and strategic countries but also for forging deeper links such as with countries' CSOs, research institutes and private sector.

How much funding is disbursed for triangular co-operation?

At the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Co-operation, governments called upon multilateral, regional and bilateral development co-operation providers to consider increasing financial resources and technical co-operation to promote South-South and triangular co-operation. Only the OECD CRS and TOSSD datasets capture funding flows. Both databases show that the volume of funding disbursed through triangular co-operation has grown significantly over time as reporting on triangular co-operation has improved. The volume, however, remains low compared to overall development finance flows and even accounting for underreporting there is clearly room to scale up funding through this modality in the future.

DAC members have substantially increased the volume of the ODA they disburse through triangular co-operation since reporting was introduced in the CRS in 2016. In 2016, only 2 DAC members reported, collectively disbursing USD 26 million through triangular co-operation (constant 2021 prices). In 2021, 13 DAC members reported disbursing USD 114 million. Over the six-year period from 2016-21, according to CRS data, 17 of the then-30 DAC members reported disbursing a total of USD 451 million of their ODA through triangular co-operation.

Figure 2.1. Total disbursements of official development assistance for triangular co-operation by DAC members, 2016-21 (CRS)



Note: Disbursements are shown in US dollars, millions, constant 2021 prices.

Source: OECD (2023^[2]), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

Figure 2.2 shows only DAC members' contributions to triangular co-operation. But pivotal partners in most cases and the beneficiaries at times also contribute financial and in-kind resources, enlarging the financing for triangular co-operation beyond what is captured in the CRS. For example, a German government study found that its Regional Fund for Triangular Co-operation with Partners in Latin America and the Caribbean contributes on average 40% of the financing for Triangular Co-operation (TrC) projects and pivotal and beneficiary partners contribute the remaining 60% of the project funding (BMZ, 2022^[3]). Such contributions not only provide additional resources they also help create crucial buy-in and ownership to the projects across all partners.

The TOSSD database shows that 17 governments and 8 international organisations reported engaging in triangular co-operation from 2019-21. Financing flows to triangular co-operation have increased from USD 175 million in 2019 to USD 378 million in 2021. In total, USD 678 million in development finance was disbursed for triangular co-operation between 2019-21 (Table 2.2). While the TOSSD database covers a shorter time period than the CRS, it shows a larger volume of funding disbursed through triangular co-operation. This is because TOSSD is open to more development partners and captures a wider set of flows beyond ODA, including in-kind contributions. The total volume of triangular co-operation activities, however, is likely much higher than indicated in the TOSSD triangular co-operation data. Disbursements for South-South co-operation in TOSSD amounted to USD 2.3 billion between 2019-21. As not all countries and institutions track triangular co-operation activities on a systematic basis, part of the reported South-South co-operation may include triangular co-operation.

The OECD project repository does not collect funding flows by year but includes the budget range of triangular co-operation projects. The data show that triangular co-operation projects tend to involve small volumes of financing, with most projects (69%) during the period 2000-22 between USD 100 000 and USD 1 million and only 30% above USD 1 million (see Table 2.3). The African continent has the largest share of projects over USD 1 million with 44% of all projects recorded over this amount.

Table 2.2. TOSSD disbursements for triangular co-operation, 2019-21

| Reporting country or institution | Disbursements 2019-21 (USD million, constant 2021 prices) |
|---|---|
| Interpol | 146.128 |
| EU institutions | 92.333 |
| Global Green Growth Institute | 88.442 |
| Norway | 78.564 |
| Canada | 73.646 |
| Indonesia* | 55.459 |
| Central American Bank for Economic Integration | 53.048 |
| Switzerland | 27.873 |
| Brazil | 21.178 |
| France | 21.015 |
| Korea | 6.437 |
| International Fund for Agricultural Development* | 6.209 |
| Islamic Development Bank** | 2.1 |
| Chile | 1.466 |
| Inter-American Development Bank Group | 1.38 |
| Austria | 0.723 |
| Denmark* | 0.67 |
| Poland | 0.46 |
| Costa Rica | 0.39 |
| Spain | 0.37 |
| Portugal | 0.2 |
| Greece | 0.13 |
| Italy | 0.09 |
| Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries | 0.05 |
| Sweden | 0.05 |
| Mexico | 0.003 |
| Peru | In-kind |
| Grand total | 678 |

Note: *For countries and institutions with an asterisk, commitments were used as proxies as data on disbursements were not available.

** Data still under verification.

Source: (TOSSD, 2021^[4]), *Data visualisation tool* (database) <https://tossd.online/>.

Table 2.3 Budget range of triangular co-operation projects shared with the OECD repository

| Budget range | Number of projects | Percentage of projects |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Less than USD 100 000 | 172 | 22% |
| Between USD 100 000 and 500 000 | 191 | 25% |
| Between USD 500 000 and 1 million | 169 | 22% |
| Between USD 1 million and 5 million | 169 | 22% |
| Between USD 5 million and 10 million | 10 | 1% |
| More than USD 10 million | 55 | 7% |
| Total | 767 | |

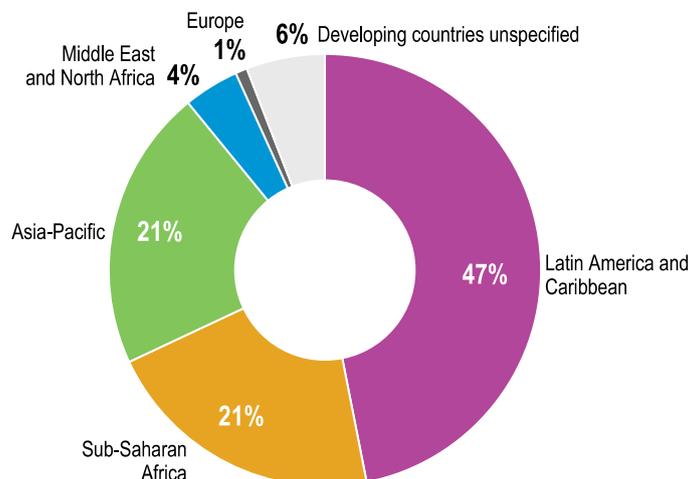
Note: Of the 1 004 projects reported to the OECD online project repository, only 767 contain information on the project budget.

Source: OECD (2023^[11]), *Triangular co-operation repository of projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

Where are partners engaging in triangular co-operation?

Partners engage in triangular co-operation across all regions. According to the CRS data, the largest share of ODA disbursements by DAC members for triangular co-operation between 2016-21 (47%) went to engagement with partners from the LAC region; 21% with partners in sub-Saharan Africa, a further 21% with partners in the Asia-Pacific region, 6% to unspecified developing countries, 4% with partners in MENA and only 1% with partners in Europe (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2. Percentage of DAC disbursements for triangular co-operation by region 2016-2021 (CRS)

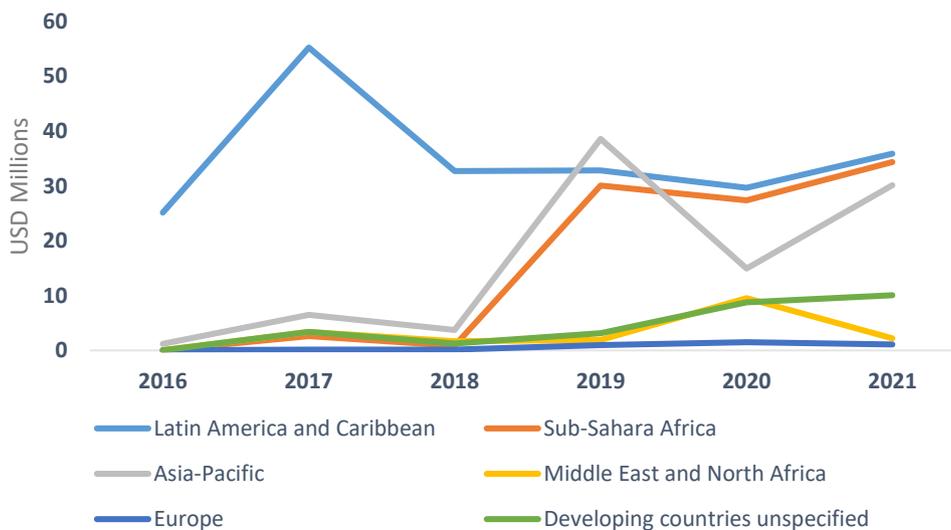


Source: OECD (2023^[2]), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

Reporting to both the TOSSD database and the OECD project repository shows that LAC is the top region for triangular co-operation engagement. In the TOSSD dataset, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for the second-highest share of disbursements for TrC over 2019-21; multi-regional engagements – engagements that cover more than one region – accounted for the second-highest share of projects reported to the OECD project repository.³

Confidence in the use of and demand for triangular co-operation outside the LAC region has been increasing alongside growing awareness of its effectiveness and efficiency as a tool to achieve development goals, build trust and foster horizontal partnerships. The CRS data show a significant increase in the volume of disbursements for triangular co-operation focused on sub-Saharan Africa, highlighted by Norway's engagement in triangular co-operation with the region (Box 2.1), and on Asia-Pacific between 2018-19. Funding levels to these two regions briefly caught up with (and in the case of Asia-Pacific, exceeded) those to the LAC region (Figure 2.3). The CRS data also show a modest rise in disbursements to the MENA region in 2020. Similar trends are evident in the project repository, which is based on project data rather than financial flows.

Figure 2.3. Trends in DAC triangular co-operation disbursements by region, 2016-21 (CRS)



Note: Figures are disbursements, USD, million, constant 2021 prices.

Source: OECD (2023^[2]), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

Box 2.1. Norway's triangular co-operation with Africa is on the rise

According to data shared in the OECD's project repository, Norway is one of the most active partners in triangular co-operation projects in Africa. The Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (Norec), a platform for exchange and networking for development co-operation, supports most of these triangular partnerships. Of the 111 triangular co-operation projects between 2002-20 that Norec shared to the repository, 60% (67 projects) involved at least one African partner with a steady increase in Norway's engagement at the project level with Africa overtime.

Source: OECD (2023^[1]), *Triangular co-operation repository of projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

In which sectors are partners engaging in triangular co-operation?

Triangular co-operation is a flexible modality and is being used to address a range of development challenges as the Islamic Development Bank's (IsDB) Reverse Linkage mechanism demonstrates (Box 2.2). CRS data show that over the six-year period of 2016-21, the top five sectors in terms of the volume of triangular co-operation disbursements by DAC members went to government and civil society (21%) general environment protection (20%), followed by multi-sector (14%), education (9%) and health (7%) (Figure 2.4).

Box 2.2. Strengthening co-operation among IsDB member countries through Reverse Linkage

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) has been promoting triangular co-operation among its member countries in order to channel development solutions among them while using different programs such as its home-grown mechanism called Reverse Linkage.

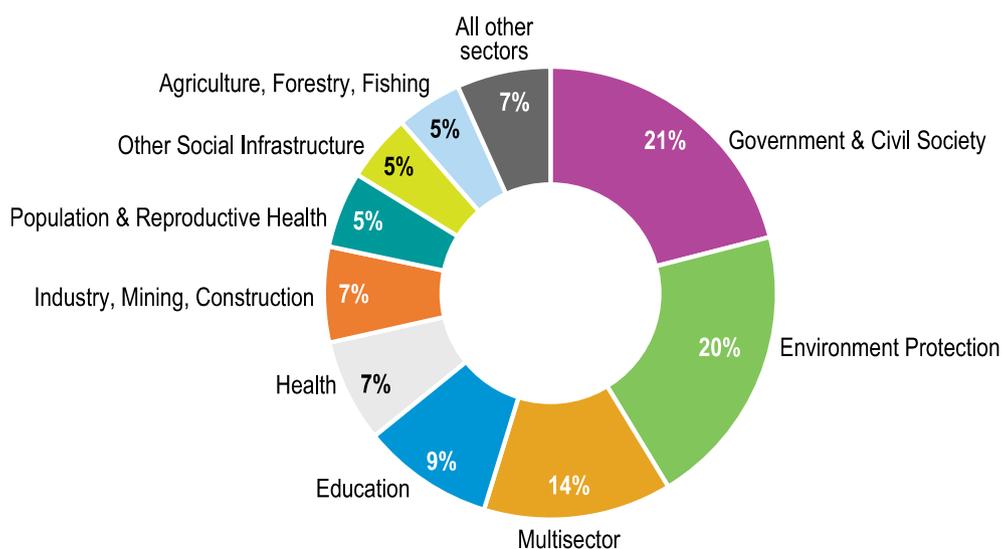
The IsDB started using Reverse Linkage in 2013 as a scaled-up technical co-operation mechanism. The Reverse Linkage goes beyond traditional capacity development and aims to resolve a member country's development needs by transferring and tailoring a proven solution from another member country while building local capacity in order to ensure the solution is sustainable. Reverse Linkage can be funded by grants, non-grants or both. In terms of typology, Reverse Linkage projects can take the form of standalone interventions or they can be mainstreamed as a component of ordinary operations of the Bank. These projects covered a wide spectrum of sectors and thematic areas such as health, education, renewable energy and agriculture.

Over the years, the Bank successfully managed to mobilize technical and financial resources through Reverse Linkage. Thus far, the sources of funding for Reverse Linkage projects include 56% from IsDB's non-grant resources, 4% from IsDB's grant resources, and 40% covered by the member countries and partners, including both cash and in-kind contributions.

By the end of 2022, the Bank helped more than 33 member countries to collaborate with each other in problem-solving projects while using the Reverse Linkage mechanism.

The data from the three databases indicate that most partners engage in triangular co-operation to share learning, experiences and knowledge between countries on how best to support the government and civil society sector, including through projects ranging from public financial management and strengthening the rule of law to supporting the media.

Figure 2.4 Sector shares of DAC disbursements for triangular co-operation, 2016-21 (CRS)



Source: OECD (2023^[2]), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

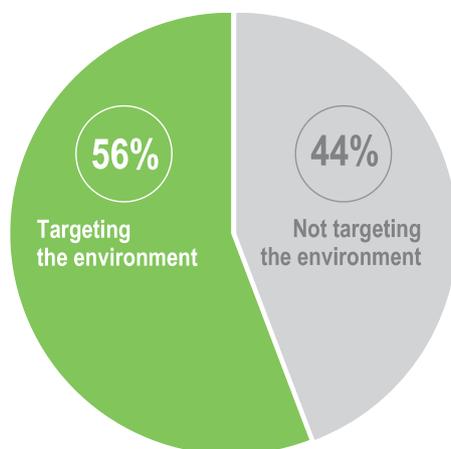
The TOSSD dataset, which covers a more diverse set of actors but has not collected data for as long as the CRS has, shows an even larger share of disbursements through triangular co-operation supported

government and civil society (47%) from 2019-21. As in the CRS, the second-largest share went to environmental protection (15%) followed by health (10%).

The OECD's project repository, which has the oldest data series and widest set of providers of the three datasets, also shows a similar breakdown. While not all its sector categories match those employed by the TOSSD and CRS, the repository shows that the largest number of triangular co-operation projects between 2000-22 also focused on the government and civil society sector (24%), followed by agriculture and food security (15%), health (13%), and environmental protection (9%).

According to the CRS, 56% of triangular co-operation disbursements in 2020-21 that had been screened to assess whether they are targeting the environment or not using the OECD's environmental marker⁴, were found to have targeted the environment (Figure 2.5). This is higher than the DAC member average of 34.3% of bilateral ODA targeted towards the environment over the same period (OECD, 2022^[5]).

Figure 2.5 Share of DAC members screened using triangular co-operation targeting the environment, 2020-21 (CRS)



Source: OECD (2023^[2]), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

The CRS data also show that 76% of screened disbursements in 2020-21 targeted gender using the OECD's gender marker. This percentage is also far greater than the DAC member average of 45% of bilateral ODA targeted towards gender in 2019-20.

Looking ahead: Improving global data on triangular co-operation

This snapshot of existing datasets and assessment of trends in triangular co-operation highlights the need for improved reporting and monitoring of this modality at the global level to enhance the evidence base. The extremely comprehensive regional dataset on triangular co-operation projects, established and managed by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), is a good example of how concerted efforts can lead to a far more systematic approach to capturing data across partners (Box 2.3). An equivalent level of ambition is required at the global level.

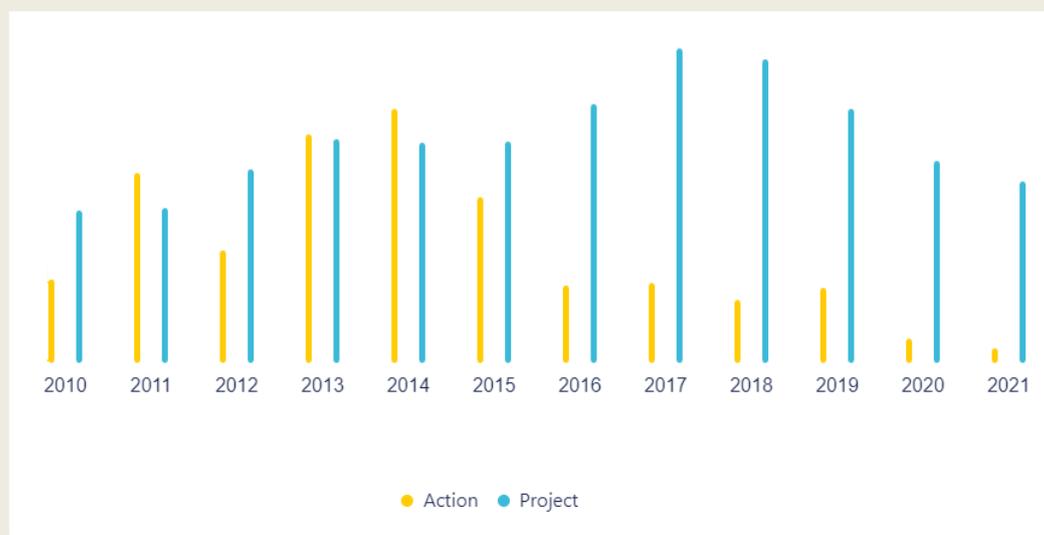
Box 2.3. Data from more than a decade of triangular co-operation in Ibero-America show its growing importance

SEGIB has published an annual report on South-South and triangular co-operation in Ibero-America since 2007. Data are collected each year through a conceptual and methodological framework agreed among the SEGIB member states to register South-South and triangular co-operation.

In 2015, the Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Co-operation created the first regional online data platform where countries share data on their South-South and triangular co-operation. The platform is based on four pillars: 1) political legitimacy by involving representatives from all SEGIB members and the Secretariat's co-ordination; 2) statistical reliability through an annual review and feedback on registered data; 3) a technological platform that is constantly updated; and 4) continuous methodological improvement by consensus, which allows adaptation to changes in the context of co-operation (GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation, 2019^[6]).

SEGIB data, which identify approximately 1 000 triangular initiatives in the region over 2010-21, confirm the growing importance and strengthening of triangular co-operation (Figure 2.6). The number of triangular co-operation projects peaked in 2017 and declined from then onwards, it is noteworthy that the number of projects increased strongly over time and the number of small activities (indicated as Actions in Figure 2.6) decreased (SEGIB, 2021^[7]). This is a sign of triangular co-operation moving towards a next step of maturity in the region.

Figure 2.6. Triangular co-operation actions and projects in Ibero-America, 2010-21



Source: Ibero-American General Secretariat (2021^[7]), Ibero-American cooperation figures (database), <https://informesursur.org/en/ibero-american-cooperation-figures/>; GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019^[6]), Triangular Co-operation in the Era of the 2030 Agenda: Sharing Evidence and Stories from the Field, <https://triangular-cooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final-GPI-report-BAPA40.pdf>. Ibero-American General Secretariat (2018^[8]), A Decade of South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America, <https://informesursur.org/en/report/a-decade-of-south-south-cooperation-in-ibero-america/>.

To improve global data on triangular co-operation, there first needs to be greater awareness among all those engaging in triangular co-operation of what constitutes triangular co-operation and how to define it. More guidance as to what constitutes triangular co-operation is required if reporting is to improve.

Second, reporting systems at the organisational level need to be improved to more easily track and report triangular co-operation. Governments, international organisations and non-state actors need to adapt their own internal systems to enable more systematic monitoring and tracking of triangular co-operation. Including a tick box within an organisation's project management reporting systems to identify triangular co-operation is an easy first step. Germany, for instance, introduced a new marker for triangular co-operation in its system. New project proposals now must explicitly state (by a tick in a box) if the proposed project contains a triangular partnership. The marker is flexible and applies to stand-alone triangular co-operation projects and programmes as well as those that are embedded within larger, more standard bilateral programmes.

Third, development co-operation providers need to demand that the regional and global databases they report to effectively monitor and track triangular co-operation. Making more data available on triangular co-operation at the global level will enhance the knowledge base and improve the future deployment of triangular co-operation.

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- TOSSD (2021), *Data visualisation tool (database)*, <https://tossd.online/>. [4]

Notes

¹ The DAC is an international forum of many of the largest providers of development assistance. Its 31 members are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, European Union (EU), Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

² The CRS also captures data on international organisations, but there is no code for reporting triangular co-operation for international organisations.

³ TOSSD data show the largest share of disbursements through triangular co-operation over 2019-21 went to the LAC region (30%), 21% to sub-Saharan Africa and 17% to the Asia-Pacific (17%). The OECD project repository, which has project-level data rather than disbursement data, shows that from 2000-22, 41% of TrC projects were allocation to the LAC region. In contrast to the CRS, the second-largest share of projects in the repository focused on multi-regional engagement (26%) followed by sub-Saharan Africa (16%).

⁴ The environmental marker allows providers to mark multiple sectors beyond the environmental protection sector as environmentally-focused.

3 **Strengthening national ecosystems to support triangular co-operation**

This chapter explores the national ecosystems that can help support the use of triangular co-operation at country level. It presents a framework developed by the Islamic Development Bank that rests on seven key institutional pillars that can bolster the use of South-South and triangular co-operation. The chapter also highlights examples of how countries are establishing these pillars in their various national contexts. Looking ahead, it calls on partners to invest in building up their national ecosystems to scale up triangular co-operation.

Strengthening national ecosystems

The BAPA+40 Outcome Document, adopted at the Second High-level United Nations (UN) Conference on South-South Cooperation in 2019, acknowledges the growing importance and increasing complexity, scale and sophistication of South-South and triangular co-operation. The document calls for strengthening national policies and mechanisms around these modalities to improve policy co-ordination, knowledge sharing and evaluation, and learning.

In recognition of the need to strengthen national mechanisms, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and South Centre (2019^[1]) have developed a framework around seven key institutional pillars constituting national ecosystems that can bolster the use of South-South and triangular co-operation at the national level (Figure 3.1). The framework was designed primarily for providers of South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation, but is also relevant for providers of official development assistance (ODA).

Figure 3.1. The Islamic Development Bank’s seven pillars of national ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation



Source: Islamic Development Bank and South Centre (2019^[1]), Developing National Ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Achieve Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, <https://www.isdb.org/reverse-linkage/developing-national-ecosystems-for-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-to-achieve-agenda-2030-for-sustainable-development>.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach to delivering triangular co-operation, these pillars point to some institutional elements that can assist in its delivery. Given that ecosystems are complex and interconnected systems, the pillars should also be viewed as interlinked and mutually reinforcing individually. The seven pillars in the IsDB and South Centre framework briefly entail the following:

1. **Political will** at the highest governmental levels is vital to ensure that South-South and triangular co-operation are included in the national development strategy and mainstreamed into the national consciousness and relevant legislative and regulatory instruments.

2. **National strategies** that include South-South and triangular co-operation can help governments identify their priority areas as well as potential gaps and developmental needs that they could address, both as providers and beneficiaries, through South-South and triangular co-operation.
3. **Information bases** can assist countries to build up vital knowledge on the modality, helping to ensure South-South and triangular co-operation are used in a strategic manner. For example, mapping information on the expertise that countries have to offer to other countries (as pivotal partners) and the expertise that countries require for national progress (as beneficiary partners) can make it easier to engage in strategic triangular partnerships, particularly if this information is made easily accessible.
4. **Connected actors** are important to the functioning of such ecosystems. Bringing together the different stakeholders across government, civil society, academia and the private sector that engage in or are interested in engaging in triangular co-operation can help raise awareness, enhance co-ordination and strengthen a country's ability to engage in the modality.
5. **A national body (department or unit)** for South-South and triangular co-operation can facilitate increased co-ordination of national stakeholders and facilitate co-operation among countries through institutional arrangements that guide national South-South and triangular co-operation efforts and mobilise external and internal resources.
6. **Financing mechanisms** can bring in more resources and domestic contributions, including in-kind contributions, for South-South and triangular co-operation activities. Contributions can also be raised at the regional and international levels.
7. **Performance management** processes can help leverage the experience gained and lessons learned and increase the efficiency and benefit of South-South and triangular co-operation for all stakeholders.

Pillar 1: Political will

Developing countries recognise that South-South and triangular co-operation have contributed to advancing economic and social development for their own citizens and have supported progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, for a country to fully engage in South-South and triangular co-operation, political will from the highest national authorities is also indispensable and key to turning policy commitments into action.

At the national level, governments have worked to promote political will in South-South and triangular co-operation through political declarations and statements that have then been translated into policies, and legal frameworks, and in turn can translate into actions and specific South-South and triangular co-operation initiatives. The government of Morocco is a good illustration of how political will can play a key role in a country's engagement. The 2011 Moroccan constitution explicitly calls for reinforcing South-South with a strong focus on co-operating with African countries (Kingdom of Morocco, 2011^[2]). King Mohammed VI is also supportive of the concept, and South-South co-operation is one of the main pillars of Morocco's foreign policy.

Mexico is another good example of high-level political will. Its 2011 Law on International Co-operation for Development Engagement, which provides the legal basis and a comprehensive framework for Mexico's development co-operation system, explicitly endorses engagement in triangular co-operation (OECD, 2019^[3]).

Pillar 2: National strategies

By ensuring that national strategies recognise triangular co-operation (TrC) as a key modality for supporting sustainable development and creating specific policies and guidelines for using TrC, countries

can better identify where it might best be deployed and also raise key stakeholders' awareness of the modality. National strategies can inform stakeholders where TrC might be best used and identify partners they may want to engage with (all three types of partners), the issues they may want to support (as facilitator partners), the expertise they have to share (as pivotal partners), and where external expertise is needed to tackle national development challenges (as beneficiary partners).

Indonesia is a good example. The president's nine goals national development agenda, *Nawa Cita*, recognises South-South and triangular co-operation as important modalities for achieving national objectives. The country's 2020-24 National Medium-Term Development Plan also references it as a modality to enhance development co-operation (Government of Indonesia, 2020^[4]).

Botswana also has an explicit South-South and triangular co-operation strategy that identifies the country's political governance, macroeconomic management, beef production, animal health, tourism and mining as areas where its experiences could be shared with others. The Botswana's Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation, its primary co-ordinating agency, manages the strategy (OECD, 2022^[5]). Likewise, Brazil has issued a specific guideline for the design, co-ordination and management of triangular co-operation initiatives (Brazilian Cooperation Agency, 2019^[6]).

As part of its foreign policy of regional integration and development, Argentina also has a specific strategy for South-South and triangular co-operation that recognises the principle of horizontality and non-interference. The guidelines for its General Directorate for International Cooperation also include South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation (Argentine Fund For Horizontal Cooperation, 2010^[7]).

The Palestinian Authority has developed a framework of international co-operation for development. The Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA) co-ordinates and organises the Palestinian development process, which includes the implementation of co-operation programmes in line with South-South co-operation principles and the 2030 Agenda (Giner, 2018^[8]). According to the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, "all PICA working areas aim to contribute to the global development agenda; each field is committed to accomplish one or more SDGs" (Giner, 2018^[8]).

While some countries include triangular co-operation in their national strategies or develop specific guidelines, many still do not. A 2018 study by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific found that some countries in the region have developed international co-operation strategies covering South-South and triangular co-operation, but few have incorporated stand-alone policies or regulations exclusively dedicated to South-South and triangular co-operation (UNESCAP, 2018^[9]).

Similarly, some DAC providers of ODA mention triangular co-operation in their international development co-operation strategies as does, for instance, the European Union in its *New European Consensus for Development* (European Union, 2017^[10]). Very few, however, have dedicated policies or strategies on triangular co-operation to guide their efforts. Germany is an exception: It published a strategy in 2013 that was updated in 2022 after a comprehensive evaluation of Germany's triangular co-operation portfolio (BMZ, 2022^[11]). (Annex A provides more detail)

Pillar 3: Information bases

A solid information base can help countries build up vital knowledge on South-South and triangular co-operation and ensure the modality is deployed in strategic manner. A solid knowledge management system should bring together information on the country's national capabilities and expertise that it could share with others as a pivotal partner and on critical issues within the country that could benefit from external expertise from others (as beneficiary). Such a system could also bring together all existing policies and guidelines on triangular co-operation; information on any programmes and funds that deploy triangular co-operation; and key data on the resources disbursed, partners engaged, issues addressed, and results delivered by the modality (Pillar 7: Performance management). (Chapter 2 discusses the need for improved monitoring and reporting of triangular co-operation activities.) This information can help build knowledge on how best

to strategically deploy the modality and be used to raise awareness of South-South and triangular co-operation among a wider set of stakeholders.

Information provided by developing countries regarding the existence of a policy or regulatory framework guiding South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation activities is often limited, as noted in a UN working paper (UNESCAP, 2018^[9]). A recent OECD study of triangular co-operation in Africa also found that despite positive trends in the use of TrC on the continent, stakeholders had limited knowledge on the size, use and impact of triangular co-operation (OECD, 2022^[5]). The reasons for this limited knowledge base, according to the study, include unclear understanding of triangular co-operation projects, limited reporting on country cases and a lack of policy literature on triangular co-operation. The report suggested greater awareness raising to improve knowledge on the modality at the regional level.

Malaysia is a good example of a country that has built a solid information base on the expertise it has to offer to other countries as a pivotal partner in triangular co-operation. Malaysia's multitude of relevant resource centres have a wealth of expertise and knowledge to share with other countries around Malaysia's key economic sectors. With the support of the IsDB, Malaysia has mapped these resources, which include competent institutions with proven and transferable knowledge and expertise and experience in international collaborations and partnerships. This mapping makes it easy for triangular co-operation partners – either potential facilitators or beneficiaries – to engage with Malaysia as it gives them knowledge of what the country has to offer in expertise to share (Box A.6. in Annex A).

IsDB, through its mapping of Resource Centers program, supported seven of its member countries namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Türkiye to identify institutions that have accumulated expertise and transferable developmental solutions. So far, the IsDB mapped more than 250 providers of expertise from public, private and non-governmental sectors in the seven countries.

Pillar 4: Connected actors

There is a multiplicity of actors who come together to undertake South-South and triangular co-operation initiatives starting from their conceptualisation and design and then their implementation and follow-up. These actors may include governments, government policy makers, national implementing and co-ordination agencies, local communities, the private sector, and academia. As noted in Chapter 2, a large share of triangular co-operation projects involve non-state actors. Enabling these actors to come together can help to co-ordinate and harmonise their engagement in triangular co-operation and greatly augment the ability of countries to engage in this modality as both providers and beneficiaries.

The United States and India, for example, jointly support the Self-Employed Women's Association, an eminent women's organisation in India to share its expertise and knowledge to contribute to women's economic empowerment in Afghanistan. Similarly, Portugal has supported Brazil's research institutes to work with the government of Mozambique and research institutes in Mozambique to identify potential impacts of climate change on coffee production and to seek innovative solutions to sustainable agricultural production (Box A.1. in Annex A).

Another example is Cuba. For its health aid programmes, Cuba utilises a host of connected actors. It usually enters into a bilateral agreement with partners that includes agreeing on the number of Cuban doctors to be deployed and the number of medical scholarships to be offered. The Cuban doctors generally work on two-year contracts. The host country usually provides accommodation, food, the workplace and a monthly allowance, and the Cuban government maintains the doctors' regular salaries. Following this model, countries across Latin America, Africa and Asia have greatly benefited from Cuban collaboration over the decades.

Keeping stakeholders regularly informed of triangular co-operation opportunities through communication and dialogue is key. Building a network of potential partners to engage in triangular co-operation, particularly in pivotal and beneficiary partner countries, can also help to map out the expertise within a

country that could be shared. This pillar of connected actors is closely linked to ensuring information bases are in place (Pillar 3: Information bases).

Pillar 5: A national body, agency, department or unit

The existence of an institutional set-up is a very important pillar for the proper functioning of national ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation. Establishing a national body, department or unit for these activities or in the case of official development co-operation providers, assigning responsibility for triangular co-operation to a department or unit can help facilitate triangular co-operation. Such a body, department or unit can provide policy guidance and co-ordination for all stakeholders engaged in both domestic and external triangular co-operation. It can also collect and disseminate important data (Pillar 4: Connected actors) relating to triangular co-operation and promote awareness about triangular initiatives.

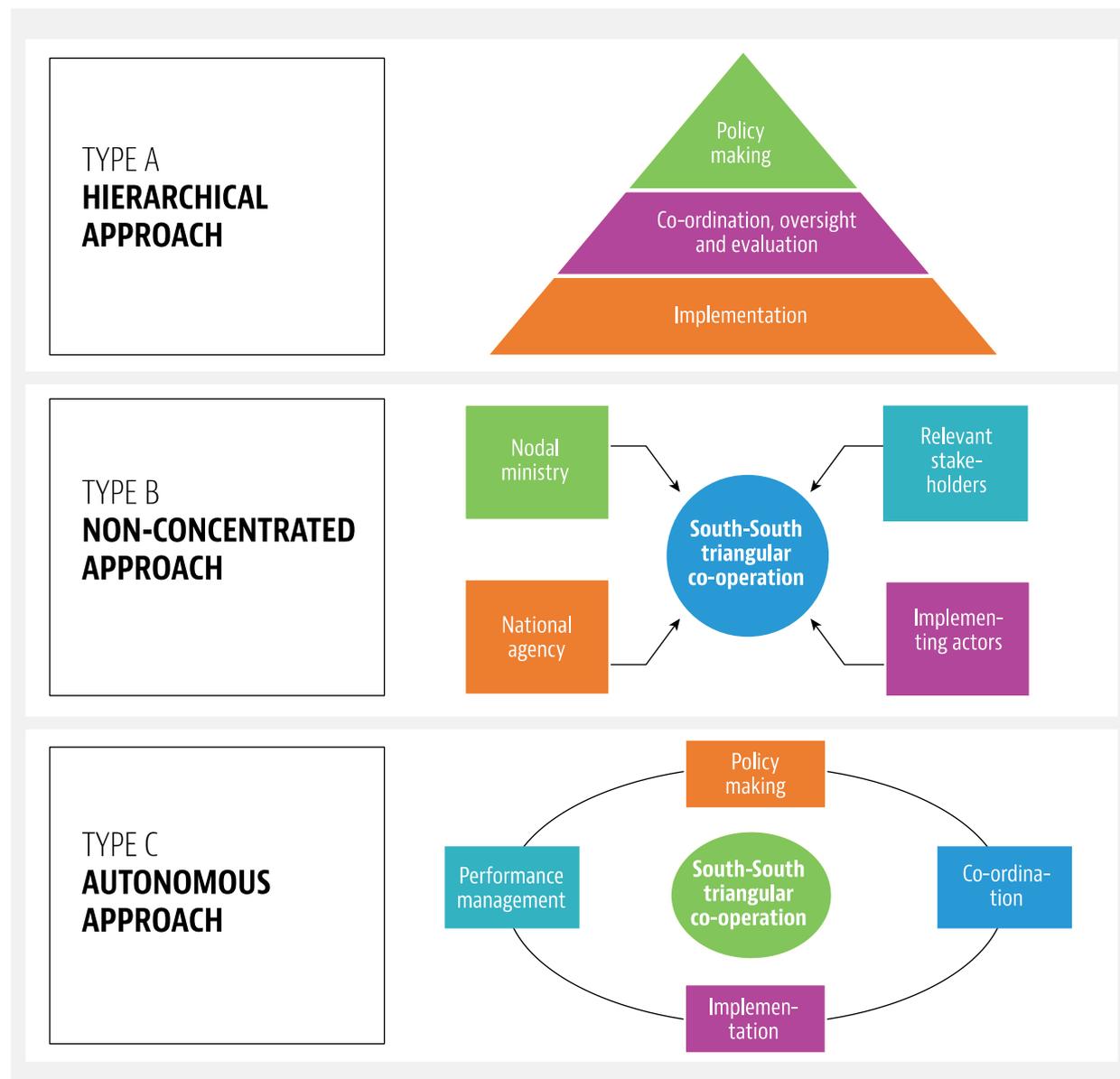
A good example of such a national body is the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT), which was created in 1972 as the government institution responsible for implementing the national policy of technical co-operation to respond to the needs of developing countries. One of the agency's four key missions is the promotion of South-South technical co-operation and trilateral co-operation. ATCT has consistently worked since its inception to build win-win partnerships with different countries (especially Arab and African countries) and with regional and international organisations to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation activities.

In Brazil, two of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency's seven divisions are responsible for triangular co-operation, one with bilateral partners and the other with multilateral organisations (Annex A). The Indonesia government has established a National Coordination Team for South-South and Triangular co-operation¹ (Annex A). India's Development Partnership Administration (DPA) is situated within the Ministry of External Affairs and co-ordinates India's bilateral, regional and triangular development co-operation. Comprised of three sections, each with a specific focus area, the DPA is tasked with streamlining the delivery of India's South-South and triangular co-operation projects from conception to launch, execution and completion, which leads to efficient implementation of projects in close co-operation with and the facilitation of its partner countries.

The configuration of national bodies for South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation varies across countries (Figure 3.2). This is also true across providers of ODA, which have differing organisational set-ups. Some countries opt for a hierarchical approach to institution building by designating a particular ministry to be the directorate for South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation while other states have developed a less-centralised approach that incorporates all connected actors in the decision-making processes under the guidance of a department or agency that may or may not be dependent on a nodal ministry. Still others have chosen to establish autonomous agencies for the development of South-South and triangular co-operation activities.

These examples illustrate the range of specialised institutions, bodies and agencies dealing with South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation. They support developing countries' efforts to streamline their co-operation activities, and their role in aligning co-operation with countries' national development priorities and the development needs of partner countries. Regardless of how they are designed, however, developing countries would benefit from having comprehensive institutional frameworks for South-South co-operation and triangular co-operation initiatives aligned with their national strategies, including for regional and subregional co-operation.

Figure 3.2. Islamic Development Bank configurations for South-South and triangular co-operation national bodies



Source: Islamic Development Bank and South Centre (2019^[1]), Developing National Ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Achieve Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, <https://www.isdb.org/reverse-linkage/developing-national-ecosystems-for-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-to-achieve-agenda-2030-for-sustainable-development>.

Pillar 6: Financing mechanisms

Triangular co-operation draws on an array of different types of resources, often from all partners engaged in the programme or project. Establishing financing mechanisms that are transparent and flexible and can co-ordinate different types of resources from multiple actors is vital to enabling triangular co-operation to function well and be well resourced.

Indonesia's South-South and triangular co-operation activities, for example, are funded through several different mechanisms including state budget funding; specific triangular partnership funds and international development partners; cost sharing with the beneficiary countries; partnership with the private sector; and

trust funds such as the World Bank Group's South-South Facility. Governments can also provide financial incentives rather than explicit financing mechanisms to encourage national stakeholders to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation, these can include providing tax incentives for engagement.

Evidence on financing mechanisms for triangular co-operation is scarce, but recent research by the OECD and the IsDB has identified four common funding mechanisms used in triangular co-operation initiatives. These are:

- **Parallel funding.** A facilitator/s, pivotal partner/s and in some cases beneficiaries provide resources to the same programme or project. Partners work along an agreed set of project objectives and deliver on components of the project or programme. No financing is transferred between any of the partners.
- **Co-funding.** A single facilitator transfers funds directly to a pivotal partner/s for a given project or programme and/or beneficiary. Pivotal partners (and in some cases beneficiaries) then contribute their own share of resources to the project via parallel funding (financing or in-kind contributions).
- **Joint funding.** A facilitator/s and pivotal partner/s (and beneficiaries in some cases) all contribute financial resources to a joint fund that is governed by one or all of the partners. The joint fund then distributes funds according to the project requirements.
- **Pooled funding.** Multiple facilitators pool resources via either one of the facilitators or via another additional partner that then distributes the funds to a pivotal/s and/or beneficiary partner/s. Pivotal partners and beneficiaries can contribute their own share of resources to the project via parallel funding (financial or in-kind contributions).

This list of mechanisms is not exhaustive, and some partners in TrC arrangements deploy more than one funding mechanism for a given programme and fund. Chile provides a good example of joint funding. The Chile-Mexico Fund supports triangular co-operation projects and is also open to bilateral co-operation projects. The fund has a fixed cost sharing model, with Chile and Mexico providing USD 1 million each annually into the fund. Funding is allocated to projects via an annual call for proposals that takes place at the same time in Chile and Mexico. Bilateral and triangular co-operation projects are selected, and the projects receive the joint funding. A joint commission including representatives of the Chilean and Mexican co-operation agencies is responsible for the fund's governance (AGCID, 2022^[12]). The fund is part of a wider strategic partnership agreement that Chile and Mexico signed in 2006 (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Chile's joint funding mechanisms for triangular co-operation with Mexico and Spain

| | Chile-Mexico Fund | Chile-Spain Joint Triangular Cooperation Fund |
|--|--|--|
| Funding mechanisms | TrC joint funding | TrC joint funding |
| Level | Fund | Fund |
| Cost sharing model | Fixed: 50-50 | Fixed: 50-50 |
| Financing flow | Cash | Grants, cash |
| Earmarking | Fully earmarked for TrC | Fully earmarked for TrC |
| Restriction on partners | Restricted: One of the pivotal partners must be from the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, but fund is open to all beneficiaries | Restricted: One of the pivotal partners must be from the LAC region, but fund is open to all beneficiaries |
| Restriction on projects and programmes | None | None |

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2022^[13]), Implementing BAPA +40 Through Triangular Co-operation - Case Story: Chile, <https://triangular-cooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/GPI-Spotlight-Chile.pdf>; Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (2022^[12]), Fondo Chile-México [Chile-Mexico Fund], <https://www.agci.cl/index.php/fondo-chile-mexico-menu/>.

Another financing mechanism example is provided by Germany. Its Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation with Partners in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Fund) and its Regional Fund for

Triangular Cooperation with Asia employ co-funding and parallel funding. The LAC Fund has a fixed cost sharing model whereby the German contribution to a project's funding is limited to no more than 50%. Experience over the past ten years has shown that on average, Germany provided 40% of the funding and the pivotal and beneficiary countries provided 60% of TrC projects and programmes (BMZ, 2022^[11]). The fund for Asia does not have a fixed cost sharing model, but administrators indicate that preference is given to projects that anticipate nearly equal contributions. Portugal recently established a facility for triangular co-operation projects between Latin America and Africa that has dedicated funding mechanism.

Pillar 7: Performance management

To assess whether triangular co-operation is delivering results and meeting its objectives, triangular projects and programmes must be regularly monitored and evaluated. In 2018, the UN Secretary-General said that “many United Nations entities encounter difficulties in monitoring and evaluating their support for South-South initiatives, but some have designed methodologies to assess performance and measure the impact of their various interventions” (UN, 2018, p. 13^[14]). These methodologies are “based on their common vision and complementary approaches for delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals” (UN, 2018, p. 13^[14]). Developing countries face similar challenges in their efforts to identify the overall contribution of South-South and triangular co-operation to meeting their development objectives.

Many countries have developed considerable project-based expertise on performance management and continue to develop their national practices in line with their identified priorities. But given developing countries' different national circumstances and development priorities, there is a need to explore new and innovative means for performance management at the national level.

A number of countries have engaged in various strategies for South-South and triangular co-operation by categorising financial or in-kind contributions such as inputs, outputs and outcomes of certain projects (Di Ciommo, 2017^[15]). The Brazilian Cooperation Agency's (2017^[16]) Manual of South-South Technical Cooperation Management is a good example of guidance and processes for assessing the performance of triangular co-operation. The manual offers detailed guidance on how to appraise and monitor Brazil's projects and programmes and recommends that all partners be directly involved in the planning of operations and monitoring and evaluation of results. Such co-ordination allows challenges and difficulties to be identified at every stage of a project. Brazil also established the Project Steering Committee as one of the main mechanisms for managing and co-ordinating its South-South and triangular partnerships. The committee generally includes a focal point from each partner country and discusses performance and actions to take for project co-ordination, technical implementation, and financial and administrative execution (Brazilian Cooperation Agency, 2017^[16]).

India also monitors and reviews projects and programmes, including triangular co-operation. For example, its Future India Triangular Training programme, supported by the United States Agency for International Development, was reviewed to assess the impact of the programme (Nandi and Kallur, 2018^[17]). The Ministry of External Affairs manages the reviews, and partners are also engaged in the reviews. For instance, Bangladesh recently sent a multi-ministerial delegation to India to review South-South co-operation projects in Bangladesh, where exchanges happen regularly.

As illustrated by India and Brazil, engaging all partners in the monitoring and evaluation is a key element in the performance management pillar of a strong national ecosystem for triangular co-operation. The OECD Toolkit for Identifying, Monitoring and Evaluating the Value Added of Triangular Co-operation also provides useful guidance on the process and potential indicators for evaluating triangular co-operation (OECD, 2018^[18]). The toolkit includes guidance on how to capture results that contribute towards a programme's development objectives as well as the results that contribute towards the programme's partnership objectives as the desire to build partnerships is an explicit part of engaging in triangular co-operation.

Looking ahead: Strengthening national ecosystems

The seven pillars discussed in this chapter underpin an ecosystem that can help to strengthen the delivery of triangular co-operation at the national level. Some pillars may be more relevant for some countries than others depending on the national context, and the way the pillars are implemented will also vary according to context.

To operationalize the framework of national ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation, the IsDB formulated the “Capacity Development Program for Enhancing National Ecosystems for South South and Triangular Co-operation (SSTrC) in IsDB Member Countries”, which was approved in December 2019 (UNOSSC, 2020^[19]). This was followed by developing the “Assessment Framework for National Ecosystems for SSTrC”, which was released in September 2020 (IsDB, 2020^[20]). A number of IsDB member countries are benefitting from the Bank’s supporting to develop their ecosystems such as Cameroun, Guinea, Pakistan or Tunisia.

Looking ahead, it is vital that countries invest in strengthening their national ecosystems to support triangular co-operation. Investing in the seven pillars can provide high-level political support for the modality and help ensure that South-South and triangular co-operation are deployed strategically in support of national and international development priorities. Such investment can also help ensure that triangular co-operation draws on the full wealth of expertise within a country, leverages all partners resources and has a high impact.

Establishing a South-South and triangular co-operation ecosystem entails two clusters of interventions: carrying out activities that establish the system itself (such as enhancing the capacity of a South-South and triangular co-operation agency, building information bases, training South-South and triangular co-operation actors) and undertaking specific South-South and triangular co-operation transactions between the country concerned and other countries.

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Notes

¹ The team is comprised of the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the State Secretariat.

4 **How triangular co-operation contributes to biodiversity and climate change goals**

This chapter examines how partners are deploying triangular co-operation to address environmental challenges, particularly with regard to climate change and biodiversity loss. Drawing on the latest data, it identifies trends in the use of the modality, and explores how it fosters trust that can support broader political dialogues on environmental challenges, delivers cross-sectoral action, and enables multi-stakeholder and local engagement. The chapter reviews some of the many innovative, green triangular initiatives, with a specific focus on how they support small island developing states. Looking ahead, it highlights the need for further guidance on green triangular co-operation; improved monitoring and evaluation of impacts on climate and biodiversity; and greater efforts to raise awareness about the added value of green triangular co-operation.

Climate change and biodiversity loss are ranked as among the most pertinent threats to humanity and form a twin crisis (Pörtner et al., 2021^[1]). The public and private resources needed to address climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation are estimated to be between USD 103 billion to USD 824 billion annually – a stark reminder of the scale of the effort required (Díaz et al., 2019^[2]; Achampong, 2023^[3]; OECD, 2023^[4]; IPCC, 2023^[5]).

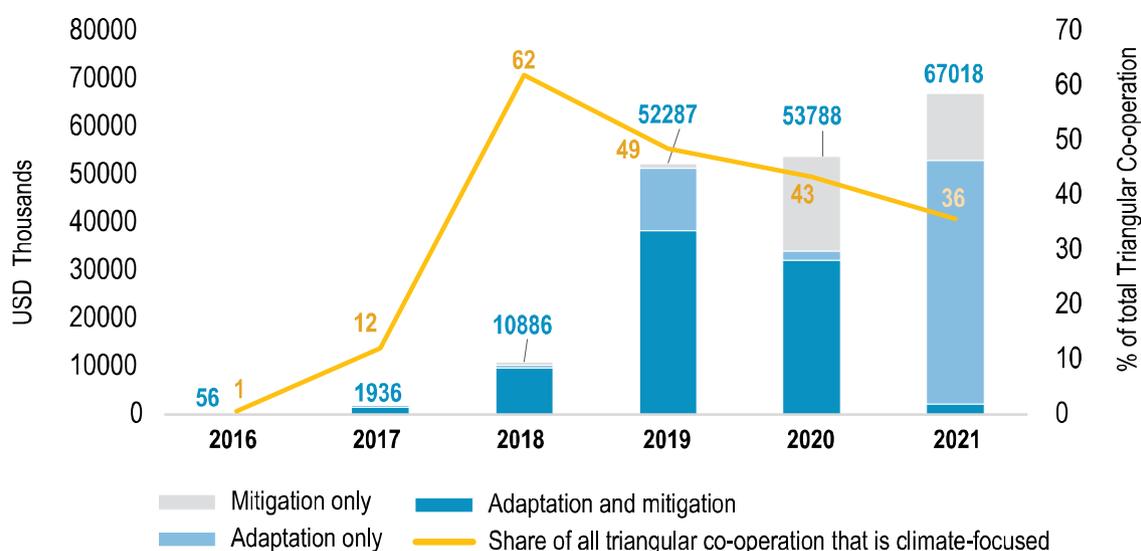
Key global conventions recognise triangular co-operation (TrC) as an important co-operation modality for addressing climate change and biodiversity. Available data show that partners frequently engage in triangular co-operation to address green and climate-related issues. While still relatively small, the volume of development finance committed to green projects and programmes is increasing and makes up a significant share of total triangular co-operation. Green triangular co-operation offers great potential especially for small island developing states (SIDS), which are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and depend on strong global alliances to advocate for their needs and interests. The modality's ability to deliver technical diplomacy (Chapter 1), support multi-sectoral approaches and engage numerous stakeholders including local communities is also highly valued in the context of environmental challenges. But there is a need to enhance understanding of TrC; improve reporting, monitoring and evaluation of TrC engagements; and raise awareness of the added value of the modality to scale up its use in addressing environmental, climate and biodiversity challenges.

Facts and figures on green triangular co-operation

How much is being committed to green triangular co-operation?

According to the Creditor Reporting System (CRS), OECD DAC members committed USD185.9 million to climate-related triangular co-operation between 2016-21. This is official development assistance (ODA) that is focused on climate adaptation and/or mitigation. While the volumes are relatively small, climate-related triangular co-operation commitments have increased from USD 56 000 in 2016, when the CRS reporting code for triangular co-operation was introduced, to USD 67 million in 2021. It also makes up a relatively large share of all triangular co-operation: 40% on average of all DAC members reported triangular co-operation between 2016-21 was climate-related¹ (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Volume and share of climate-related triangular co-operation by DAC members, 2016-21



Note: Commitments USD, thousands, constant 2021 prices.

Source: OECD (2023^[6]), Creditor Reporting System (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

Thirteen DAC members reported engaging in climate-focused triangular co-operation in the six years between 2016-21. In volume terms, the largest provider of climate-focused triangular co-operation was the European Union (EU), which committed USD 89 million: 89% of the EU's triangular co-operation commitments were climate-focused.² The next-largest providers in terms of volume over this period were Canada (USD 34 million) and Norway (USD 31 million). Three DAC members committed all or nearly all of their triangular co-operation to climate-focused activities: Italy committed 100%, of its triangular co-operation commitments to climate-focused activities, Korea 99% and Austria 98%.

CRS data also show that DAC members committed 45% of their climate-related triangular co-operation between 2016-21 to activities that supported both climate adaptation and mitigation; 36% to adaptation-only activities; and 19% to mitigation-only activities.³ Most climate-focused triangular co-operation projects (59%) had tackling climate change as their principal objective; 41% had this as a significant objective.⁴

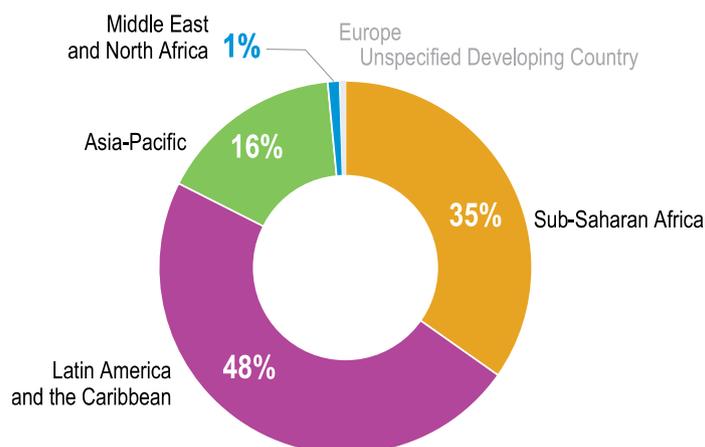
According to CRS data, USD 13.8 million or 3% of DAC members' triangular co-operation between 2016-21 was biodiversity-related.⁵ Most of this TrC (64%) was also focused on climate adaptation and/or mitigation activities. Eight DAC donors reported biodiversity-focused triangular co-operation between 2016-21.⁶

The OECD project repository, open to a wider set of countries than the CRS, also suggests that partners often engage in triangular co-operation to address environmental issues. Of the more than 1 000 triangular co-operation projects reported to this voluntary database between 2000-22, 30% focused on environmental issues, a category that includes more than climate adaptation and mitigation. The repository shows 72 countries and 60 international organisations engaged in environment-focused triangular co-operation projects over this period. It is not possible to disaggregate the data to determine how many were climate-related versus biodiversity-related projects.

Where are partners engaging in green triangular co-operation?

The largest share of climate-related triangular co-operation between 2016-21 engaged partners in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region (48%), according to the CRS data, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (35%) and Asia-Pacific (16%) (Figure 4.2). Climate-focused triangular co-operation activities made up 64% of all triangular co-operation commitments to LAC, with the largest volume focused on activities that target both adaptation and mitigation. The Asia-Pacific region had the highest volume of commitments targeting mitigation-only activities while sub-Saharan Africa had the largest volume of commitments targeting adaptation-only activities.

Figure 4.2. Share of DAC members' climate-related triangular co-operation by region, 2016-21 (CRS)



Note: Commitments, USD, million, constant 2021 prices.

Source: OECD (2023^[6]), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

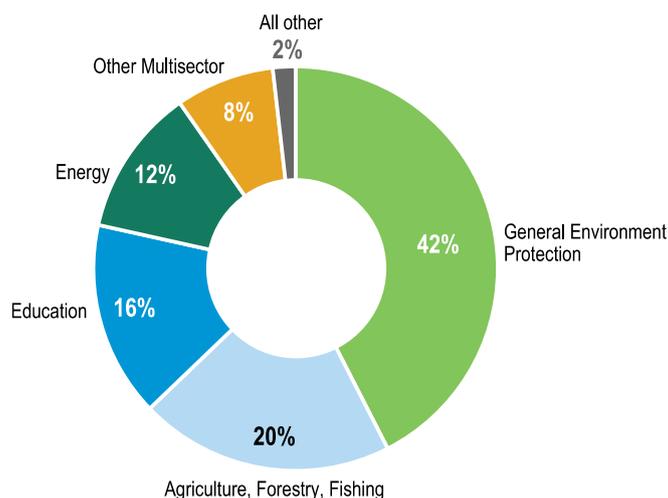
On the other hand, the largest share of biodiversity-focused triangular co-operation went to the Asia-Pacific region (42%) followed by LAC (22%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (21%).

Data from the project repository show that the largest share of environment-related triangular co-operation projects engaged partners in LAC (42%) followed by multi-regional (29%) and sub-Saharan Africa (16%).

In which sectors are partners engaging in green triangular co-operation?

According to the CRS, general environment protection is the main focus for climate-related triangular co-operation, accounting for 42% of DAC donor commitments. This sector includes multi-sector and cross-cutting environmental programmes and activities such as environmental policy and administration and environmental education, training and research. The agriculture, forestry and fishing sector received 20% of commitments, followed by education (16%) and energy (12%) (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3. Volume of climate-focused triangular co-operation by key sectors, 2016-21 (CRS)

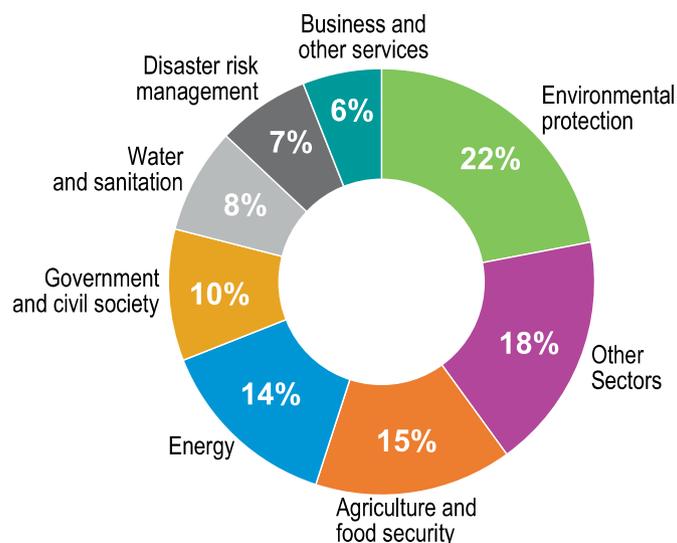


Note: Commitments, USD, million, constant 2021 prices.

Source: OECD (2023^[6]), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

The focus of environment-related triangular co-operation projects registered in the OECD project repository is similar, though the sector categories differ slightly from those used in the CRS. The largest share of environment-related projects in the repository focused on environmental protection (22%), followed by agriculture and food security (15%) and government and civil society (14%) (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4. Environment-focused triangular co-operation projects in the OECD repository, by sector



Source: OECD (2023^[77]), Triangular co-operation repository of projects (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

Triangular co-operation's added value to addressing climate change and biodiversity

Triangular co-operation in climate and biodiversity conventions

The 2015 Paris Agreement emphasises the importance of international co-operation to jointly combat climate change but does not mention triangular co-operation explicitly. However, in 2018, the Technology Executive Committee of the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) acknowledged the key role that South-South and triangular co-operation can play in combating climate change (UN, 2018^[81]). Earlier, in its 2011-20 strategic plan, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2012^[9]) had recognised triangular co-operation as an important instrument.

Ahead of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) in 2021, some international partnerships pursued in the context of the UNFCCC – for instance, the 2021 Green Partnership on energy, climate and the environment between the EU and Morocco – also mentioned triangular co-operation as a lever to encourage stronger commitment to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and collectively advance the global climate agenda (European Commission, 2021^[10]). And more recently, Target 20 of the Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in December 2022, formally calls for South-South, North-South and triangular co-operation (UNEP, 2022^[11]).

Delivering a strong cross-sectoral focus: Overview of climate-related and biodiversity-related triangular co-operation projects

Many green triangular projects take a strong cross-sectoral approach, addressing climate change, biodiversity and often other Sustainable Development Goals simultaneously. The cross-sectoral approach is in line with current strategic approaches within the biodiversity and climate community to foster action across sectors and avoid sector silos. It is also an added value of green triangular co-operation. Partners are engaging in green triangular co-operation projects to tackle a wide array of environmental issues (OECD, 2023^[7]). Examples of projects with a primary focus on climate mitigation include:

- technological innovations in the area of energy efficiency (India, Malawi, United Kingdom)
- micro and mini hydropower plants for rural electrification (Indonesia, Tanzania, United Nations Industrial Development Organization)
- renewable energy technology transfer (China, Denmark, Ethiopia, Ghana, Sri Lanka, Zambia, UN Development Programme)
- decarbonisation of the economy through sustainable urban mobility, transport electrification, waste management and energy efficiency (Costa Rica, Germany, Spain).

Examples of triangular projects with a primary focus on climate adaptation include:

- climate risk planning and strategies covering multiple sectors (Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United States, Zimbabwe)
- disaster risk management and early warning systems (Brazil, Germany, Mozambique)
- strengthening geospatial information infrastructure in the Association of Caribbean States (Chile, China, Mexico and the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management)
- community-based disaster management in Asia covering multiple sectors (Bangladesh, China, Nepal, United Kingdom)
- assisting small-scale farmers to adapt to climate change through sustainable agriculture techniques and appropriate technology (Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Norway, Sri Lanka, Thailand)
- increased cotton production on less-productive agricultural land (Bangladesh, Türkiye, Islamic Development Bank). Box 4.1 discusses this last project.

Box 4.1. The Islamic Development Bank, Bangladesh and Türkiye: Triangular co-operation to support sustainable cotton

Bangladesh and Türkiye are both cotton-producing countries and face adaptation challenges as a result of climate change. A triangular co-operation project set up by the IsDB enabled Türkiye to share with Bangladesh its experience in developing new cotton varieties that generate high yields even in challenging conditions. Between 1999 and 2022, the IsDB co-ordinated and funded a peer-to-peer consultation process between Bangladesh's Cotton Development Board (CDB) and Türkiye's Cotton Research Institute (CRI), two institutions with mandates to improve cotton varieties in their respective countries.

The project has provided long-term training on cotton research for 10 Bangladeshi researchers in Turkish universities and organised short-term training in Türkiye on cotton production practices for 65 CDB staff members. The training, which took place in the CRI and the Izmir Institute of Technology, provided the Bangladeshi experts with ten of the CRI's previously developed and patented cotton varieties. As part of the project, adaptation trials were conducted at five CDB research centres in different Bangladesh agroecological zones. New desired varieties were also produced by crossing ten of CRI's varieties with four local Bangladesh varieties. The exchange has enhanced the research and information technology environment within the CDB, including procuring raised bed planter machines and desktop computers.

Source: Islamic Development Bank (2021^[12]), *Reverse Linkage (Bangladesh & Turkey) Cotton Varieties Development*, <https://www.isdb.org/reverse-linkage/projects/reverse-linkage-bangladesh-turkey-cotton-varieties-development>.

Biodiversity, with a specifically strong cross-sectoral approach, is often part of green triangular projects. Examples of such projects include:

- alternative practices to the use of fire in the Amazon (Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Italy, Development Bank of Latin America)
- enhanced management and conservation of forests in the Andes while improving adaptation and mitigation strategies (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Switzerland, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)
- evergreen revolution to address global food security (Africa, India, United States)
- ecosystem-based adaptation (China, Mauritania, Nepal, Seychelles, Green Environmental Fund)
- natural resource management and clean technology solutions (India, Malawi, United Kingdom)
- improved environmental, social and labour standards for the textile industry (China, Ethiopia, Germany, UN Industrial Development Organization)
- competitiveness of small and medium enterprise suppliers in value chains, including environmental sustainability practices (ANTAD.biz platform, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico)
- sustainable coffee production in Gorongosa National Park in Mozambique (Brazil, Mozambique, Portugal)
- effective agricultural policies aligned with climate change policies that enhance food security and adaptation and mitigation co-benefits (Malawi, Viet Nam, the EU, Food and Agriculture Organization)
- strengthened capacities for the application of the principles of Access and Benefit Sharing (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Germany)
- handling marine litter from the fishing industry (Sri Lanka, India, Norway)
- recovery and protection of reefs (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Germany, Honduras). (Box 4.2)

Box 4.2. Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Honduras and Germany: Recovery and protection of reefs through triangular co-operation

Coral reefs host up to 25% of the total marine biodiversity and they are natural carbon reservoirs. However, in the Dominican Republic, oil exploitation, overfishing and excessive marine tourism (Fernández, 2021^[13]) are negatively impacting its coral reefs. Protecting the reefs requires national or regional policies and programmes and the provision of significant financial resources as well as the involvement of different stakeholders.

Between 2017 and 2021, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Germany joined efforts and developed a triangular initiative to measure the economic contribution of coral reefs in the Dominican Republic in order to take action to preserve them. An economic evaluation of the ecosystem services of coral reefs in Bayahíbe, Punta Cana and Samaná concluded that these reefs generate more than USD 1.1 million per year for the Dominican Republic economy (Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development of the Dominican Republic (MEPYD), 2021^[14]). The National System of Conservation Areas of Costa Rica has been sharing its experience in policy development for the protection and sustainable management of natural resources and its Payment for Environmental Services scheme, which has been implemented since 1996 (Diario Libre, 2019^[15]). The triangular co-operation project included the participation of Biodiversity Partnership Mesoamerica, a multi-sector association that seeks the private sector's support for the integration of biodiversity in the economic activity (Biodiversity Partnership Mesoamerica (BPM), 2022^[16]).

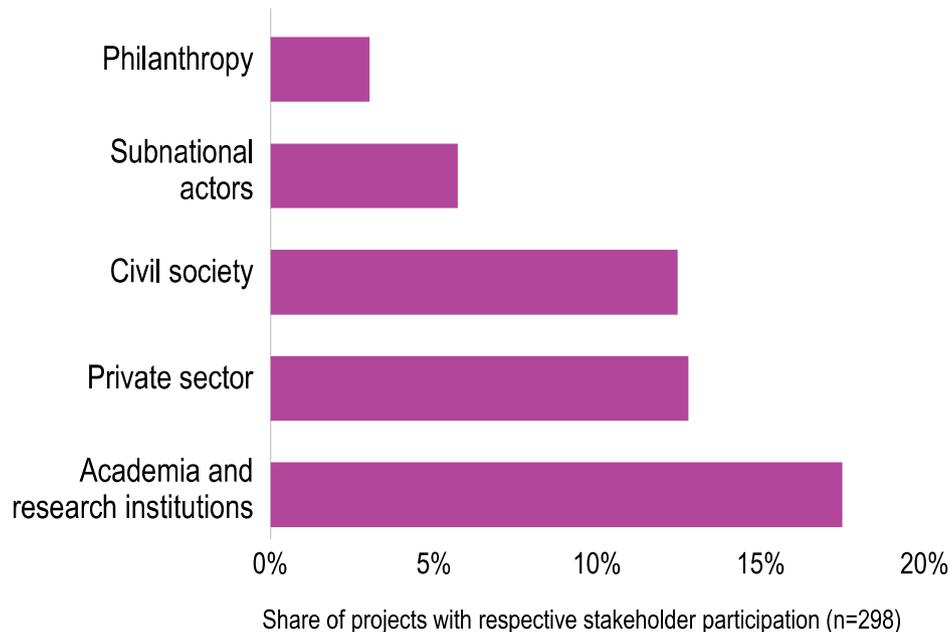
In 2020, the three partners launched a new triangular project to apply innovative tools for the conservation and restoration of coral reefs in Honduras.

Source: Adapted from Ibero-American General Secretariat (2023, p. 111^[17]), *Report on South-South and Triangular Co-operation in Ibero-America 2022*, <https://informesursur.org/en/report/report-on-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-in-ibero-america-2022/>.

Multi-stakeholder approach

Another added value of triangular co-operation is that it enables multiple stakeholders to collaborate effectively, building trust and sharing vital knowledge, experiences and resources. As is the case for triangular co-operation in general, a large portion (40%) of the green triangular co-operation projects involve one or more non-state actors, according to data from the OECD repository (OECD, 2023^[17]). These partners may be subnational actors, civil society, philanthropic organisations, or actors from academia, research institutions and the private sector (Figure 4.5). The participation of sector expert organisations and local actor organisations can ensure effective implementation as they may share similar contexts and challenges and/or may have worked together before.

Figure 4.5. Breakdown of non-state stakeholders involved in green and environment-focused triangular co-operation projects (OECD project repository data)



Source: OECD (2023^[7]), *Triangular co-operation repository of projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

The private sector, whose expertise and resources give it a pivotal role in achieving environmental goals, has been engaged in 38 of the 298 (13%) green triangular co-operation projects (i.e., those with primary or secondary green objectives) documented in the OECD repository between 2000-22.

Achieving global climate and biodiversity goals depends heavily on local actors. Indigenous traditional knowledge systems, for example, contribute to enhanced understanding of how to preserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems (UN, 2007^[18]; Thaman et al., 2013^[19]; Reyes-García et al., 2022^[20]). Moreover, representative or community-based organisations are accountable to their communities (Ali, 2023^[21]).

The collaborative working spirit of triangular co-operation closely aligns with the concept of locally led development (or localisation) in the green sector and beyond. Increasingly, many development and environmental organisations are supporting important global initiatives to shift ownership and benefits towards local stakeholders (Vij, 2023^[22]; USAID, 2022^[23]; FAO, 2016^[24]). There are no available statistics on how many triangular co-operation projects foster or build on locally led development schemes. The project examples highlighted in this chapter, however, indicate that local stakeholders are frequently considered and included stakeholders in green triangular co-operation projects. For example, in Principe, the autonomous and ultra-peripheral region of the Sao Tome and Principe, a carbon sustainability roadmap with over 39 mitigation measures was created that involved 70 local actors (Box 4.3).

Strengthening political trust

One of the most important added values of triangular co-operation is its ability to build trust. This modality can help to solidify political ties between partners, which in turn can assist in strengthening the delivery of international agreements on biodiversity as well as climate goals and further align development and green agendas. A recurring question in the framework of the Conferences of Parties for biodiversity and climate

is how different actors, with potentially incompatible agendas and procedures, can best make decisions together and align to common goals.

In triangular co-operation, a wide variety of (new) partnerships between countries from all regions work together for concrete impacts, as illustrated by the many examples in this chapter of existing green partnerships and exchanges. Triangular engagement is a form of technical diplomacy (Chapter 1), with the technical collaboration often strengthening political ties between partners beyond the development projects. As highlighted in Chapter 3, several countries have established governmental bodies and national strategies for South-South and triangular co-operation and see triangular engagement as an important part of their foreign policy. Thus, green triangular co-operation projects and activities generate ground-level green impacts and also potentially contribute to political alignment between parties to the climate (UNFCCC) and biodiversity conventions.

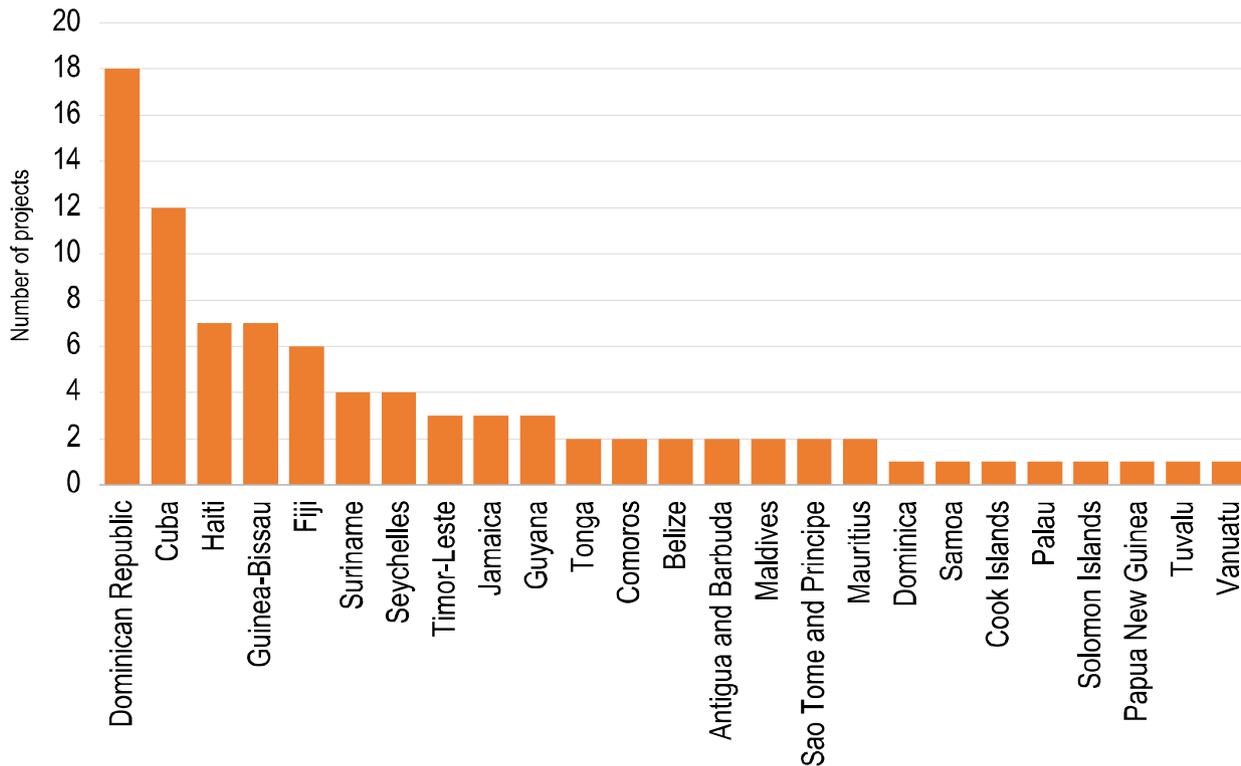
Green triangular co-operation in small island developing states (SIDS)

How much green triangular co-operation is happening with SIDS and in which sectors?

Green triangular co-operation with SIDS⁷ is gaining importance within triangular co-operation partner networks. The data in the OECD CRS show that 49% of screened triangular co-operation with SIDS was environment-focused between 2016-2021, 16% was climate-related and 13% biodiversity-focused.⁸

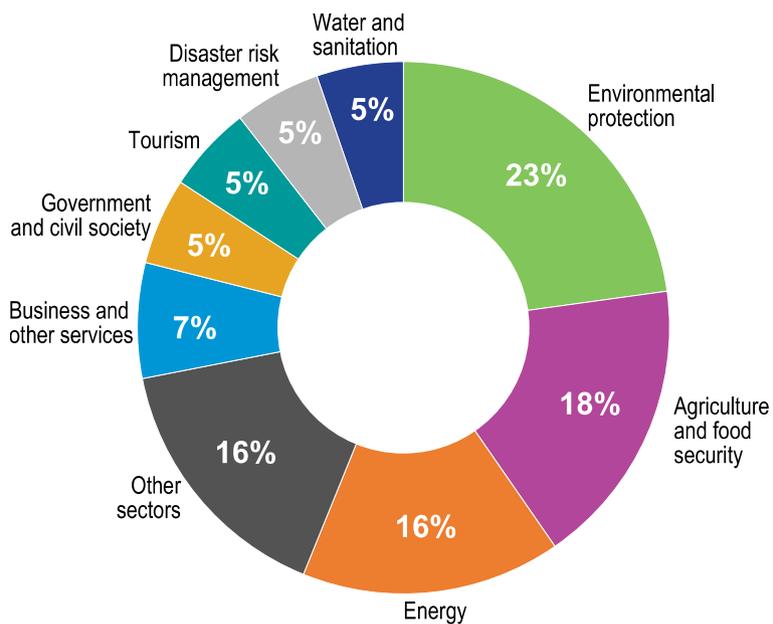
The OECD repository data on triangular co-operation shows that almost 20% of all environment-related triangular co-operation projects registered since 2010 have engaged with SIDS as partners (58 out of 298 registered green projects). The Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, Guinea-Bissau and Fiji were among the SIDS most frequently involved in green triangular co-operation projects (Figure 4.6). The environment-related triangular co-operation projects with SIDS covered diverse sectors (Figure 4.7), with environmental protection, agriculture and food security as well as energy accounting for over 50%.

Figure 4.6. Small island developing states triangular co-operation projects focused on environment (OECD project repository)



Source: OECD (2023^[7]), *Triangular co-operation repository of projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

Figure 4.7. Environment-focused triangular co-operation projects engaging small island developing states, share by sector (OECD project repository)



Source: OECD (2023^[7]), *Triangular co-operation repository of projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

Triangular co-operation with SIDS: Helping to build political alliances and transfer vital knowledge

Green triangular co-operation can respond to the need of SIDS for strong global alliances to advocate for their needs and legitimate interests in the context of climate change. Among all developing country groupings, SIDS suffer the most from the impacts of climate change but are responsible for only 0.2% of the global carbon emissions (UN, 2023^[25]). They are more likely to experience the most intense tropical cyclones, storm surges, droughts, changing precipitation patterns, sea level rise, coral bleaching and invasive species, all of which are already detectable across both natural and human systems. Ecosystems degradation will amplify the vulnerability of island peoples to climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects an 18 to 40 centimetre sea level rise by 2050 and an extinction risk of up to 100% for endemic species within insular biodiversity hotspots by 2100 (IPCC, 2022^[26]). SIDS are typically highly dependent on a single nature-dependent economic structure to thrive such as agriculture, tourism or fishing, making environmental degradation a potentially grave risk to economies and well-being. As such, SIDS are among those countries that are most directly exposed to the risk of a collapse in the ecosystem services provided by biodiversity (Nori et al., 2022^[27]; Lee et al., 2022^[28]; OECD, 2023^[29]).

Due to their vulnerabilities, SIDS often take a lead on the world stage to raise awareness about the climate crisis. For three decades, leaders of SIDS have been at the forefront of advocacy for a new measurement that truly recognises countries' ecological and economic vulnerability (UN, 2023^[25]). As triangular co-operation fosters new political alliances at the project level, this modality can potentially also benefit the climate agenda of SIDS at the global level. An example is outlined in Box 4.3.

With their small populations and often extremely peripheral locations, SIDS also face specific challenges of connection and connectivity. Triangular co-operation provides an opportunity for SIDS to overcome isolation and be part of collaborative activities beyond mere advocacy for SIDS needs. The triangular setting provides a broader range of contacts than bilateral partnerships, in many cases connecting regional and global networks and contacts (Box 4.3 and Box 4.4).

Finally, triangular co-operation is a vital modality for transferring knowledge and technology to SIDS to help with climate mitigation and adaptation and biodiversity loss. Thanks to a triangular co-operation project, for instance, Indonesia was able to transfer its technology on solar-powered boats to Fiji, transforming the islands' fishing practices.⁹

Box 4.3. New alliances through triangular co-operation: Roadmap for Carbon Sustainability in Principe Island

Principe is an autonomous and ultra-peripheral region of Sao Tome and Principe, a small island developing state located 165 kilometres northeast of Sao Tome Island, the seat of the national government. About 90% of Principe's territory is forest and thus an important carbon sink. Many economic activities, among them tourism, are sustained by the islands' biodiverse rainforest and the high number of endemic species. However, due to Principe's double insularity, available climate data for the region tend to be presented by extrapolation or by default. Through the Roadmap for Carbon Sustainability project, Principe developed its own database based on real data from the autonomous region and subsequently entered into a new triangular initiative with Portugal, the government of Sao Tome and the local non-governmental organisation (NGO) Efrican Foundation.

The initiative started collecting the climate data in 2020 as a partnership between the Regional Directorate for the Environment and Nature Conservation of the Autonomous Region of Principe; the Portuguese Environmental Fund of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Action; and the Efrican Foundation. Together with 70 local representatives of public entities, NGOs, and primary, secondary and tertiary economic sectors and in consultation with the university and national government of Sao Tome, the project team developed a socioeconomic scenario in which the island would remain a carbon sink by 2050. The resulting carbon sustainability roadmap includes 39 mitigation measures involving the main stakeholders of each sector.

The developed roadmap was selected for presentation at COP26 in Glasgow. At this high-level event, the environmental ministers of Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe as well as the president of the Autonomous Region of Principe decided to join forces and develop the roadmap for the Sao Tome Island as well, with Efrican facilitating the process. The expanded final roadmap will become the whole country's long-term low-emission development strategy under the Paris Agreement.

This new triangular co-operation presents a unique opportunity for the two islands and Portugal to work together, both on a project as well as strategic level, for their sustainable future in light of climate change.

Source: Government of Portugal (2023^[30]), *Roadmap for Carbon Sustainability of Principe Island*, <https://roteiroco2principe.com/en/>.

Regional SIDS organisations engaging in triangular co-operation

Regional co-operation of SIDS in the Caribbean is mainly fostered by Caricom and in the Pacific by the Pacific Island Forum, both established in the beginning of the 1970s to strengthen collective voices and political and economic co-operation. No comparative structure with SIDS members exists in Africa.

Caricom has been involved in several triangular co-operation projects and activities over the last decade. Most recently, in December 2022, the group affirmed the importance of strengthening South-South, bilateral, regional and triangular co-operation and programmes for development in the Bridgetown Declaration of the 8th Caricom-Cuba Summit in Barbados (Caricom, 2022^[31]). For monitoring and reporting on triangular co-operation in the region, the Ibero-American General Secretariat plays a very important role (SEGIB, 2023^[32]).

The Pacific Island Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (Pacific Islands Forum, 2022^[33]) includes climate change and disasters as well as ocean and environment as two out of seven thematic areas. Strategic pathways include partnerships and co-operation in general. The Pacific Islands Development Forum, a multipartite platform for Pacific leaders and representatives, has a strategic plan

2019 to 2030 in which South-South co-operation as well as green and blue projects are important pillars (Pacific Islands Development Forum, 2019^[34]). In the region, triangular co-operation is mainly conceptualised as a tool to support South-South co-operation in which Pacific Islands member countries often engage with bigger countries such as China and India as providers of South-South co-operation through South-South Trust Funds managed by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation¹⁰ (Borg, 2019^[35]). Several triangular activities address biodiversity and climate challenges, among them the project presented in Box 4.4).

To further exploit the potential for green and blue triangular co-operation for SIDS, especially in Africa and the Pacific regions, there is a need for more systematic reporting on triangular co-operation with SIDS and monitoring and evaluation of its impacts in order to raise awareness of the modality. Strong and sustainable regional co-ordination as well as efforts to further conceptualise, formalise and operationalise the triangular co-operation modality could be highly beneficial for all SIDS (Anderson and Swanepoel, 2022^[36]).

Box 4.4. Samoa, Kiribati and Australia: Diversifying seaweed industries in Pacific Island countries

Blue projects – for instance, supporting sustainable fishing to help food security and livelihoods and protect marine and ocean resources – are increasingly relevant for SIDS. Indeed, many SIDS have begun identifying themselves as large ocean states rather than small island developing states.

Aquatic blue foods such as seaweed play an important role for food, nutrition and livelihoods for people in the Pacific and have an important role in climate mitigation and adaptation. Between 2018-19, the Kiribati Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development; Samoa Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research and the University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia worked together to build the capacity of women and youth in Kiribati to use seaweed as a sustainable and nutritious source of food. i-Kiribati women were introduced to various activities across the seaweed supply chain. Samoan seaweed farmers and fisheries officers with expertise in sea grape harvesting and processing provided training workshops in Kiribati.

The triangular activity exemplifies the value of community-based and locally led approaches that build on local and traditional context-based knowledge systems and achieve direct outcomes for the target groups. Learning benefits were two-directional. The project benefited i-Kiribati women who acquired new skill and knowledge, with some later establishing their own small businesses to produce jams and ice creams. The local Samoan partners experienced personal empowerment and gained new perspectives and skills. Trust and strong relationships were critical for project success and provided a solid foundation to build upon in subsequent projects. These kinds of relationship outcomes were not part of the formal indicators and thus challenging to communicate toward the evaluators of the project.

Source: Heaton (2023^[37]), “Seaweed: A healthy boost to Pacific Island economies?”, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/10/seaweed-a-healthy-boost-to-pacific-island-economies/>.

Looking ahead: Green triangular co-operation

Climate change and biodiversity loss rank among the most significant threats to humanity and require broad whole-of-government, multi-stakeholder, and cross-sectoral strategies and genuine collaboration.

A wide range of governments, international organisations and other stakeholders are already deploying triangular co-operation to tackle environmental, climate and biodiversity challenges. The modality fosters co-ownership and co-leadership that can enable local action. It often supports cross-sectoral approaches and can help build greater political trust among diverse partners, which is key to collaborative global action

to achieve climate and biodiversity goals. To fully capitalise on the strengths of triangular co-operation and scale up its use for addressing environmental, climate and biodiversity challenges, there is a need for the following:

- Guidance is needed on what constitutes (green) triangular co-operation as well as improved reporting processes by all stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels (Chapter 2).
- There should be greater use of monitoring and evaluation of triangular co-operation's impacts on climate and biodiversity to encourage greater use of the modality by the green community. Such monitoring and reporting could specifically focus on capturing measurable achievements in the areas of cross-sectoral action, multi-actor engagement, private and financial sector action, specific needs of SIDS, and ownership and leadership of local actors for biodiversity and climate governance.
- Greater efforts are required to raise awareness among a wider range of stakeholders about the added value of green triangular co-operation, especially for building political trust to further align green agendas across sectors, countries and regions. At the national level, stakeholders include environment and international development ministries as well as agriculture, trade, economy, energy and finance ministries. At the global level, awareness should be enhanced within high-level green platforms and initiatives such as the implementation of the roadmap of the Global Biodiversity Framework; the upcoming UNFCCC meetings (COP28 and following); and the Group of Twenty meetings to be held in Brazil in 2024 and South Africa in 2025.

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Notes

¹ Since 1998, the DAC has monitored development finance flows targeting the objectives of the Rio Conventions on biodiversity, climate adaptation, climate mitigation, biodiversity and desertification. For purposes of this report, climate-related commitments refer to the Rio Markers for climate adaptation and climate mitigation. The formula applied avoids double counting by discounting all commitments marked as contributing to both climate adaptation and mitigation. More information on the Rio Markers can be found https://www.oecd.org/dac/environment-development/Revised%20climate%20marker%20handbook_FINAL.pdf.

² The EU Euroclima+ programme includes triangular co-operation activities as one mode of delivery in its workstreams on national Paris Agreement commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean in multiple sectors.

³ In comparison, DAC members as a whole allocated on average 22% of their total bilateral allocable ODA to activities that supported both climate adaptation and mitigation, 42% to adaptation-only and 33% to mitigation-only activities.

⁴ In the CRS, an activity can be marked as contributing to one of the Rio Markers in a principal or significant way. In the former, the objective (climate change mitigation or adaptation) is explicitly stated as fundamental in the design of or the motivation for the activity. In the latter, the objective (climate change mitigation or adaptation) is explicitly stated but is not the fundamental driver or motivation for undertaking the activity, which has other prime objectives but has been formulated or adjusted to help meet the relevant

climate concerns. See https://www.oecd.org/dac/environment-development/Revised%20climate%20marker%20handbook_FINAL.pdf.

⁵ To avoid double counting, biodiversity commitments are not added with climate-related commitments.

⁶ The eight are Austria, EU institutions, France, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Poland and Portugal.

⁷ This report considers 35 SIDS that are or were recently included in the DAC list of ODA recipients. Of these 31 contexts were still on the list in 2022 (Belize, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia, Montserrat, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu). The remaining four graduated from the DAC list of in 2018, 2020 and 2022 but are nonetheless considered in this analysis (Seychelles, Cook Islands, Antigua and Barbuda, and Palau).

⁸ As noted, the percentages should not be added together as this may lead to double counting.

⁹ Information based on stakeholder interview with the Pacific Islands Development Forum, June 2023

¹⁰ Information was confirmed through interviews with the Pacific Islands Development Forum.

Annex A. Triangular Co-operation Partner Profiles

Brazil

Triangular, or trilateral, co-operation has a long history in Brazil and is a key element of its development co-operation. Two of the seven divisions of the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) are responsible for triangular co-operation, one working with bilateral partners and the other with multilateral organisations. The ABC has developed and updated a series of frameworks and manuals including the Manual of South-South Technical Cooperation Management (Brazilian Cooperation Agency, 2017^[1]) and the General Guideline for the Design, Coordination and Management of Trilateral Cooperation Initiatives (Brazilian Cooperation Agency, 2019^[2]).

Brazil allocated USD 8.5 million for triangular co-operation in 2021 according to OECD data for total official support for sustainable development (TOSSD). The main sectors of its trilateral projects are government and civil society and agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors (Box A.1).

Brazil works with many DAC members in triangular partnerships. Among these are Canada, the EU, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States. Brazil also engages with a broad range of regional and international organisations in triangular co-operation, including the United Nations (UN) system, the Rome-based institutions, the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, and others.

Box A.1. Mozambique, Brazil and Portugal: Supporting sustainable agriculture

Mozambique is a large-scale coffee producer, but deforestation and climate change may potentially impact its coffee production and the livelihood of coffee producers. Drawing on Brazil's globally renowned expertise in tropical agriculture and Portugal's strong development expertise in the African nation, partners (governments and research institutes) from Brazil, Portugal and Mozambique have joined forces through triangular co-operation to share research on the impacts and provide innovative solutions that support sustainable agriculture. All three countries contributed resources to the project and combined their expertise and capacities in research and training. The project has been such a success that work is now underway to determine if it can be adapted to other Portuguese-speaking African countries such as Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe.

Source: OECD (2022^[3]), *Triangular Co-operation with Africa*, https://triangular-cooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/OECD_Triangular-co-operation-with-Africa.pdf.

Chile

Chile, with over 30 years of experience, is an international leader in triangular co-operation. It has a strong triangular co-operation system backed by political will and guided by its 2015-18 International Development Cooperation Strategy (AGCID, 2015^[4]). The country's strategic objectives for 2021-24 include intensifying South-South and triangular co-operation initiatives at the regional level.

According to TOSSD data, Chile disbursed USD 495 000 on triangular co-operation in 2021. Its regional priority is Latin America; its main partner countries are Germany, Mexico, Paraguay and Spain; and the main sectors where it engages in triangular co-operation are the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector and government and civil society sector. In 2021, the Chilean Agency for International Development Cooperation (AGCID) had a budget of USD 9.9 million, and it allocated about USD 4.3 million, or 62.1%, to the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Program (62.1%).

Chile aims to deepen strategic partnerships for development through three types of different partnerships: North-South partnerships via the Triangular Fund Chile-Spain, the Bilateral Fund for Development in Transition and the Kizuna programme with Japan (Table A.1); South-South partnerships via the Pacific Alliance and Chile-Mexico Fund; and South-global partnerships via the Chile Fund and Chilean Fund for Ibero-American South-South Cooperation.

Table A.1. Case study: Kizuna programme and multi-stakeholder engagement

| Project title | Kizuna Training Programme for Disaster Risk Reduction |
|-------------------|--|
| Partners involved | Chile: AGCID, National Forestry Corporation, Research Centre for Disaster Risk Management, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Ministry of Public Works, University of Chile, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, and Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaiso Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) |
| Objective | To strengthen technical capacity in disaster risk reduction in the LAC region through three pillars: specialised professional training, capacity building of implementing agencies, and creating a network for exchange of specialised information on disaster risk reduction among LAC countries |
| Activities | The training programme offered in Chile has trained approximately 5 000 professionals from 30 LAC countries in its first phase. Highlights of this project include: All partners contributed resources and shared costs. Knowledge was shared among all partners – for instance, Colombia and Peru shared experiences in areas of volcanology and landslides and Japan and Chile shared experiences with earthquakes and tsunamis. |
| Project period | March 2015 to March 2020 (a second phase is currently being negotiated) |

Source: Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (2023^[5]), AGCIDChile (webpage), <https://www.agci.cl/>.

People's Republic of China

People's Republic of China (hereafter China) engages in triangular co-operation and its strategic approach to engaging in the modality is elaborated under its white paper [China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era](#) (China International Development Cooperation Agency, 2021^[6]). The China International Development Cooperation Agency co-ordinates triangular co-operation, and projects tend to focus on areas where China can contribute with its domestic experiences, enhance policy dialogues and knowledge exchange, and advance co-operation with international organisations. The white paper indicates a strong focus on agriculture and public health. China views triangular co-operation as a way to increase its development resources and expand the scope of its development co-operation, learn from the best practices of traditional providers, improve its co-operation system, and build a favourable global image of China (Chao, 2021^[7]; Zhang, 2020^[8]; Zhang, 2017^[9]).

According to the OECD's triangular co-operation project repository, China engaged in 62 triangular partnerships between 2000 and 2022 (OECD, 2023^[10]). China established a facility in 2018 with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) focused on delivering South-South and triangular co-operation (Box A.2) and a programme with the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Box A.2. China-International Fund for Agricultural Development South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility

The facility was established in 2018 with a contribution of USD 10 million from China. It is focused on mobilising knowledge, resources and expertise from the Global South to tackle rural poverty and enable sustainable rural transformation.

The facility takes a demand-driven approach and involves a wide range of stakeholders including government agencies, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector. It supports projects targeted to smallholder farmers, farmers' organisations and small agribusinesses and covers a broad range of topics, among them include climate change, gender, nutrition and youth.

As of the start of 2023, the facility has supported projects in more than 30 countries, generating nearly 200 solutions and benefiting over 4 500 smallholder farmers with 40 000 indirect beneficiaries.

Source: International Fund for Agricultural Development (2023^[11]), China-IFAD South-South and Triangular Cooperation Facility (webpage), <https://www.ifad.org/en/sstcf>.

India

India is a pioneer of triangular co-operation, with its first projects dating back to India's independence in 1947. India's approach to triangular co-operation is evolving, and a specific Indian model of triangular co-operation is emerging that aims to enable India and its partners to leverage domestic development innovations and the strengths of India's diverse landscape of civil society organisations via triangular initiatives (Chaturvedi and Piefer-Söyler, 2021^[12]).

Many of India's triangular co-operation partnerships focus on sharing Indian expertise and innovations with African and neighbouring South(east) Asian partners (Table A.2). For example, a key objective of the United States and India's triangular co-operation programmes is to increasingly share innovations proven to work in India with other countries in Asia and Africa (USAID, 2017^[13]). The programme has enabled the sharing of Indian innovations in the agriculture sector with Kenya and the sharing of Indian HIV/AIDS treatment solutions in Sri Lanka.

Table A.2. India's triangular co-operation with DAC members and partners (1957-2023)

| Year | Facilitator | Beneficiary | Focus |
|------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| 1957 | United States | Nepal | Established road network |
| 1959 | Canada | Nepal | Wheat supply |
| 1958 | United States | Nepal | Established radio network |
| 1964 | Switzerland | India/China (Tibet) | Tibetan refugees |
| 1999 | Japan | Africa | TICAD Tokyo International Conference on African Development |
| 2006, 2011, 2017 | Germany (Helmholtz Association) | African, Asian countries, global reach | Research on infectious diseases |

| Year | Facilitator | Beneficiary | Focus |
|-----------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 2009 | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation | Bangladesh | Low-emission building materials |
| 2010 | United States | Africa | Evergreen revolution to address global food security |
| 2014 | Switzerland | India | LC3 Low-carbon production cement |
| 2015 | United Kingdom | Africa and Asia | Various |
| 2015/16 | France | Developing countries | International Solar Alliance |
| 2016 | Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation | Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Tanzania | Asia-Africa Rural Private Sector Development |
| 2016 | United States | Afghanistan | Common goals of development including women's economic empowerment |
| 2017 | Japan | Africa | Asia-Africa Growth Corridor |
| 2019 | United Arab Emirates | Ethiopia | Set up an information and communications technology centre |
| 2020-2023 | Germany | Global | Fund for Triangular Cooperation with Asia (2020), Joint Declaration of Intent signed at ministerial level, exchanges on triangular co-operation at the level of heads of states |

Source: Based on Chaturvedi and Piefer-Söyler (2021^[12]), *Triangular co-operation with India: Working with civil society organisations*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/285b1a9a-en>, updated in March 2023.

European Union institutions

The European Union (EU) institutions are leading facilitating partners for triangular co-operation and have provided triangular co-operation since the late 1990s. The current EU development co-operation policy document, the [New European Consensus for Development](#), highlights triangular co-operation as an innovative instrument to implement the 2030 Agenda.

The EU institutions disbursed USD 35.6 million for triangular co-operation in 2021, with LAC as their regional priority and a strong focus on supporting general environment protection. The EU institutions engage in triangular co-operation via various programmes such as Euroclima, the Europe Latin America Programme of Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime or PAcCTO, EUROsocial, and Expertise on Social Protection, Labour and Employment or SOCIEUX. The EU Commission's flagship triangular co-operation programme is ADELANTE, which focuses on supporting triangular co-operation between the EU and LAC. Between 2016 and 2020, the European Commission co-financed 8 triangular projects via ADELANTE involving 93 organisations from 22 LAC countries. Building on the lessons learned from the implementation of the first phase, the EU launched ADELANTE 2 in 2021. As of 2022, the programme had undertaken more than 94 activities under the 15 funded initiatives in the 2021 Window, with 2 171 direct beneficiaries. Box A.3 describes an ADELANTE public health project.

The ADELANTE programme stands out for engaging multiple stakeholders. Data from the 2021 Window show that 13% of the triangular programme projects included public institutions at the national level and 25% engaged with subnational public institutions. Non-state actors were involved in 51% of the total initiatives.

Box A.3. Paraguay, Bolivia and the EU: Addressing Chagas disease

The ADELANTE programme has enabled Paraguay's Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare to learn from other governments in the region and from research institutes in Europe about how to effectively organise the diagnosis and treatment of Chagas disease in the community. Chagas disease is classified by the World Health Organization as a neglected tropical disease and is frequently linked to poverty and a lack of access to health systems. The programme, which had assistance from Spain and featured strong dialogue with the Bolivian government, has involved 192 direct beneficiaries covering health professionals, academics and researchers. The total budget for the programme was EUR 99 127 EUROS, with the EU covering EUR 71 418 of the budget.

Source: ADELANTE 2 (2023^[14]), *Comprehensive care for Chagas disease* (webpage), <https://www.adelante2.eu/en/initiatives/ict71-21/14>.

Germany

Germany is a long-standing and leading partner in triangular co-operation, with engagement dating back to the mid-1980s. Its approach to triangular co-operation has been guided by a clear strategy that was updated in 2022 (BMZ, 2022^[15]) following an extensive evaluation of its triangular co-operation (DEval, 2020^[16]).

In 2021, Germany disbursed USD 7.9 million for triangular co-operation, according to OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS) data. Its regional priority is Asia with a focus on government and civil society. The OECD triangular co-operation project repository data show that Germany engaged in more triangular projects – 152 between 2000-22 – than any other country reporting to the database. Germany's triangular projects are demand-driven and consistent with partners' development priorities. All development projects align with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Germany has two specific funds for triangular co-operation: the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation with Partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, in operation for more than a decade, and the more recent Fund for Triangular Cooperation with Asia, established in 2021. Beyond these funds, Germany also engages in this modality to complement its existing bilateral programmes with pivotal partners, among them the Brazil-Germany trilateral co-operation programme and Mexico-Germany triangular cooperation project (Table A.3). The Sino-German Center for Sustainable Development, established in 2017, also promotes triangular co-operation projects between Germany and China to deliver global public goods. At the beginning of 2022, Germany and India signed a Joint Declaration of Intent to implement triangular co-operation in third countries with a focus on tackling the climate crisis, scaling up renewable energies and agroecology approaches.

Table A.3. Germany's regional funds for triangular co-operation in Latin America and the Caribbean (2010-25) and with Asia (2020-23)

| | Regional fund in LAC | Regional fund with Asia |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Funding mechanisms | Parallel and co-funding | Phase 1: Pilots –parallel funding Phase 2: Scale up of well performing pilots –co-funding |
| Level | Fund | Fund |
| Cost sharing model | Fixed: Ceiling for German funding contribution at no more than 50% | Not fixed, but a preference for close to parity in contributions to triangular co-operation pilots from Germany and from pivotal partners |

| | Regional fund in LAC | Regional fund with Asia |
|--|--|--|
| Financing flow | Grants, cash and in-kind contributions | Grants, cash and in-kind contributions |
| Earmarking | Fully earmarked for triangular co-operation | Fully earmarked for triangular co-operation |
| Restriction on partners | Restricted: One of the pivotal partners must be from the LAC region, Open to all beneficiaries | Restricted to pivotal partners in Asia and restricted to beneficiary countries that are eligible for official development assistance (with preference for countries that are already partner of German development co-operation) |
| Restrictions to projects and programmes | None | None |

Source: Ongoing collaboration and meetings with representatives from the German regional funds for triangular co-operation in LAC and with Asia; OECD (2019^[17]), *Enabling effective triangular co-operation*, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5fc4501e-en>; GIZ (2022^[18]), *Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation with Partners in Latin America and the Caribbean*, <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/106526.html>.

Indonesia

Indonesia, as both a provider and beneficiary of co-operation, has made triangular co-operation one of its political priorities, underpinned by its 2019-24 National Medium-Term Development Plan. Indonesia's South-South and triangular co-operation system is an example of inter-institutional co-ordination among four institutions on the National Co-ordination Team (NCT): the ministries of foreign affairs, national development planning and finance and the State Secretariat. Relevant sectoral line ministries are responsible for implementing triangular co-operation initiatives. Since 2019, the NCT is supported by the Indonesian Agency for International Development, which is hosted within the Ministry of Finance.

The TOSSD dataset shows that in 2019 (the most recently reported data), Indonesia allocated USD 58.1 million for triangular co-operation, with projects focusing mainly on population policies and health. Its main partners are in Asia and include Cambodia, Japan, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam (Box A.4).

Box A.4. Mapping Indonesia's knowledge and expertise

To share Indonesian knowledge and expertise more effectively with other countries, the government of Indonesia and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) have developed a database that maps out Indonesia's resource centres. The database, launched in June 2018, lists 22 public and private sector resource centres covering 12 key economic sectors in which Indonesia has a wealth of experience. Some of these resource centres have either already partnered with the IsDB Reverse Linkage programme (e.g., Singosari National Artificial Insemination Center in Malang) or are in the process of partnering with this IsDB programme (e.g., Biofarma), enabling Indonesia to share its knowledge and expertise with others partners.

Source: Adapted from Islamic Development Bank (2021^[19]), Preliminary Assessment of National Ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Co-operation, https://www.isdb.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2022-02/MemberCountries_Web_HR_0.pdf.

Japan

Japan has a long history of engaging in triangular co-operation, which it views as complementary to its bilateral co-operation and as an effective way to disseminate across developing countries what works.

The OECD's project repository shows that Japan has engaged in 99 triangular co-operation projects over 2000-21, the fifth-largest number of projects engaged of any country in the database.

Japan provides triangular co-operation via multiple programmes across an array of issues, including supporting disease control in West Africa (Box A.5). The Partnership Programme, one of its most established triangular co-operation programmes, is based on a series of individual memoranda of understanding between Japan and 12 pivotal partner country governments (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Tunisia). These pivotal partners support a set of beneficiary countries where Japan is already providing bilateral co-operation. The Partnership Programme has two main sub-programmes – the Third Country Training Programme and the Third Country Expert Dispatch – that are designed around enabling pivotal partners to share training and expertise with key beneficiary countries. As of September 2022, JICA supported 77 countries through the Third Country Training Programme that benefited 80 000 participants.

Box A.5. Japan, Ghana and West Africa: Building resilience to respond to crises

In response to the spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa, JICA launched the Partnership for Building Resilience against Public Health Emergencies through Advanced Research and Education (PREPARE) programme in 2017, which provides training in Egypt, Ghana and Kenya for technical experts of national core laboratories. These countries later became pivotal partners in sharing their expertise with other African countries through the facilitation of Japan. As part of the PREPARE programme, for instance, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana became a regional centre of excellence in medical and infectious diseases. Subsequently, it was able to conduct over 370 000 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests for COVID-19 between March and mid-July 2020, representing around 80% of all the PCR tests in the country. It also became a key institute for testing, contact tracing and diagnostic confirmation of COVID-19 in Ghana and beyond.

Source: OECD (2022^[3]), Triangular Co-operation in Africa, https://triangular-cooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/OECD_Triangular-co-operation-with-Africa.pdf; UN (2020^[20]), Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development – Volume 3, <https://unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Good-Practices-in-SSTC-for-Sustainable-Development-Vol.-3-2020-Digital-FINAL.pdf>; GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2021^[21]), "Leveraging triangular partnerships to respond to COVID-19 and build back better from the pandemic", <https://bricspolicycenter.org/en/publications/leveraging-triangular-partnerships-to-respond-to-covid-19-and-build-back-better-from-the-pandemic/>.

Malaysia

Since independence in 1957, Malaysia has focused on advancing greater co-operation and solidarity among newly independent countries of Asia and Africa, actively promoting self-reliance of the developing countries and cultivating partnership among them through South-South and triangular co-operation. The Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP) is key to this policy, prioritising developing countries of strategic interest and focusing on Malaysia's areas of expertise, providing demand-driven courses and programmes. MTCP focuses on the thematic areas of professional services; management and public administration; economics and trade; science, technology, and information and communication technology management; industrial and technical training; finance; diplomacy; health services; humanitarian activities; academic and educational areas; and social development. The programme draws on Malaysian public and

private sector institutions, which have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and expertise across these sectors that can be shared with partners (Box A.6).

Box A.6. Strengthening Malaysia's information base

Malaysia has a multitude of relevant resource centres that have a wealth of expertise and knowledge to share around Malaysia's key economic sectors. With the support of the IsDB, Malaysia has developed a mapping of its resource centres, comprising competent institutions with proven and transferable knowledge and expertise as well as experience in international collaborations and partnerships. This database, finalised in June 2020, contains 64 public and private sector resource centres covering 19 economic sectors where Malaysia has a proven experience of delivering results. The resource centres include SME Corporation Malaysia, a specialist in small and medium enterprise development; the Institute for Medical Research, which specialises in healthcare and pharmaceuticals; and the Serba Dinamik Holdings Berhad, a specialist in oil and gas-related services.

Source: Islamic Development Bank and South Centre (2019^[22]), *Developing National Ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Achieve Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*, <https://www.isdb.org/reverse-linkage/developing-national-ecosystems-for-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-to-achieve-agenda-2030-for-sustainable-development>.

Morocco

South-South and triangular co-operation has high-level political support in Morocco, with the Moroccan constitution in its preamble recognising its reinforcement as a primary national objective.

Morocco has been engaged in technical co-operation since 1986, when it created the Moroccan Agency of International Cooperation (AMCI). As the national body responsible for co-ordinating and promoting South-South and triangular co-operation interventions, AMCI works in close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Co-operation and Moroccan Expatriates. It has close partnerships with various Moroccan governmental, financial, educational and private institutions that it engages with to carry out South-South and triangular co-operation activities (Box A.7) and an extensive network of partners at international, regional and bilateral levels. AMCI also is a partner in implementing technical assistance projects, offering in particular expertise in project demands, mobilising financial resources, and facilitating visa and related foreign affairs issues.

Box A.7. Morocco, the Islamic Development Bank and Djibouti: Strengthening maternal and neonatal health

Tackling maternal and neonatal health is a core priority for the Djibouti government with a national action plan dedicated to reducing maternal and neonatal mortality rates. The IsDB Reverse Linkage mechanism connected the national Reproductive Health Centre of the Ibn Sina hospital in Morocco, which has more than 25 years of experience in obstetrics and neonatal management, with the Djibouti Ministry of Health's Mother and Child Health Centre. The exchange aims to improve the quality of healthcare surveillance for high-risk pregnancy and childbirth through training and capacity building and help design specific solutions for the capacity gaps in maternal health in Djibouti. To ensure joint ownership, the governments of both Djibouti and Morocco contributed to the project's financing together with the IsDB.

Source: Islamic Development Bank (2020^[23]), *Reverse Linkage (Djibouti & Morocco) Maternal & Child Health*, <https://www.isdb.org/reverse-linkage/publications/reverse-linkage-djibouti-morocco-maternal-child-health>.

Nigeria

Nigeria responded to the UN's 1978 Buenos Aires declaration on promoting co-operation among developing countries South co-operation by establishing the Directorate of Technical Aid Corps (DTAC) as an alternative to direct financial aid given to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The government of Nigeria has demonstrated its political will to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation by providing the DTAC with various resources, participating in major regional and international South-South and triangular co-operation events, and taking part recently in the IsDB 3 2-C initiative for enhancing synergy among the technical co-operation agencies of IsDB member countries.

The DTAC maintains and draws from the large roster of Nigerian professionals to provide volunteers to beneficiary countries and manages Nigeria's funding for South-South and triangular co-operation (Box A.8). Areas of knowledge where Nigeria has a comparative advantage include the health sector, education, agriculture and agronomy, civil and electrical engineering, and handicrafts. Triangular initiatives include collaboration between the DTAC and the IsDB to support efficient treatment of obstetrics fistula in Gambia, Sierra Leone and Somalia.

Box A.8. Financing mechanism for Nigeria's South-South and triangular co-operation

Nigeria's South-South and triangular co-operation projects are funded mainly through the DTAC annual budget. In 2004, the country established the Nigerian Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF), a USD 25 million fund co-managed by the Directorate for Technical Cooperation in Africa and the African Development Bank, as a grant facility for development projects and programmes to support the socioeconomic and technological development of African countries and to promote regional co-operation and economic integration in Africa. During its ten years of operation, the NTCF has financed approximately 70 projects.

Source: Adapted from Islamic Development Bank (2021^[19]), Preliminary Assessment of National Ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Co-operation, https://www.isdb.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2022-02/MemberCountries_Web_HR_0.pdf,

Norway

Norway actively engages in triangular co-operation. It disbursed USD 32.5 million for triangular co-operation in 2021, according to the CRS data. Its regional priority is Africa, with a focus on education.

The main institution within Norway that facilitates triangular co-operation is the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Co-operation (Norec), which runs volunteer programmes based on mutual exchange between institutions. About 70% of Norec's project portfolio are triangular co-operation projects. Since its establishment in 2000, more than 9 600 people have participated in exchanges in 65 countries and approximately one-third of these exchanges have been focused on enabling South-South learning (Tjønneland, 2019^[24]). Norway reported it has engaged in 133 projects between 2000-2022, according to the OECD project repository database, and is the most active country engaged in triangular co-operation in Africa (Box A.9).

Box A.9. Norway, Nicaragua and Guatemala: The FUNDATE AND CEHEHCA Exchange Project

Norway's personnel exchange programme has supported staff exchanges between the Guatemala NGO La Fundación Asistencia Técnica para el Desarrollo (FUNDATED) and Centro de Derechos Humanos y Autonomicos (CEDEHCA) in Nicaragua to share knowledge on how to improve psychosocial treatment. The exchanges facilitated by Norway have targeted two different groups – in Guatemala, children with disabilities and in Nicaragua, female victims of violence. The transfer of knowledge has helped build up the capacity of FUNATED and led to a new programme being established in CEDEHCA to engage youth and young people and identify and support people with learning difficulties and victims of violence at an early stage.

Source: UN (2018^[25]), *Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development – Volume 2*, <https://unsouthsouth.org/2018/09/12/good-practices-in-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-for-sustainable-development-vol-2-2018/>.

Portugal

Portugal is actively engaged in using and promoting triangular co-operation at the global level. Portugal organises key international events on triangular co-operation and has helped to focus political attention on the issue and foster learning and sharing across countries.

The [Portuguese Cooperation Strategy 2030](#) continues a focus on co-operation with Portuguese-speaking countries, with human development, governance, employment, and climate and environment as key thematic priorities and with gender equality as a cross-cutting priority (Government of Portugal, 2022^[26]).

Portugal disbursed USD 100 000 for triangular co-operation in 2021, according to CRS data. Its regional priority is Africa, with a focus on agriculture, forestry and fishing (Box A.10).

Portugal engages in triangular co-operation as a means of enabling horizontal partnerships for sharing knowledge and experience. Portugal uses its membership within the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries and the Ibero-American Conference to foster triangular co-operation using a whole-of-government approach.

Box A.10. Portugal, Chile, Mozambique and Angola: Enabling sustainable aquaculture

Camões, Portugal's development agency, and the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development provided training on sustainable aquaculture in molluscs and macroalgae to officials of the ministries of fisheries in Mozambique and Angola. The training was held at the Universidad Católica del Norte in Coquimbo, Chile. The international course focused on promoting sustainable aquaculture in Africa as a real alternative for food production and an opportunity to create jobs and limit the exploitation of fishery resources.

The goal of the course was to train professional and technical personnel in the cultivation of molluscs and macroalgae at all stages in order to improve the planning, execution and implementation of new government or community projects in that area.

Source: OECD (2022^[27]), "Portugal promotes triangular co-operation through advocacy and partnerships", <https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning/practices/portugal-promotes-triangular-co-operation-through-advocacy-and-partnerships-0a03c06b/>.

Senegal

Senegal established in 1995 the Technical Cooperation Directorate under the authority of the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, as the national focal point for technical co-operation for development. Over approximately four decades, the government of Senegal has demonstrated its political will for South-South and triangular co-operation by maintaining the directorate and providing it with various resources, participating in major regional and international South-South and triangular co-operation events, and taking part recently in the Islamic Development Bank's 3-2-C initiative for enhancing synergy among the technical co-operation agencies of IsDB member countries.

Senegal has a long tradition of South-South co-operation thanks to its previous status as the capital of French West Africa and its geographical position that enabled it to develop many good practices in terms of technical co-operation. Working with the IsDB, Senegal's Institute Pasteur Dakar has been sharing vital knowledge on pandemic preparedness with other African countries (Box A.11).

Box A.11. Senegal's support to other African countries during COVID-19

Senegal's Institute Pasteur Dakar, a prominent centre of excellence in Africa, partnered with the IsDB to provide knowledge and expertise through Reverse Linkage. The institute shared its knowledge and expertise with ten laboratories in Africa with aim of building their institutional, organisational and human capacities in order to enhance their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other communicable diseases.

The participatory approach and the relevance of this project have been recognised regionally and globally such as the Paris Peace Forum's Call for Solutions, which highlighted this project during the global forum.

Source: UNOSSC (2019^[28]), Regional Reverse Linkage Project for Capacity Building in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, <https://my.southsouth-galaxy.org/en/solutions/detail/regional-reverse-linkage-project-for-capacity-building-in-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic>.

South Africa

South Africa was one of the first pivotal partners to engage in triangular co-operation in sub-Saharan Africa (Box A.12). It focuses on triangular partnerships across the African continent and with Cuba and the Palestinian Authority. South Africa engages in projects in sectors related to governance issues, post-conflict reconstruction, regional integration, and peace and security.

The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund under the Department for International Relations and Cooperation together with the National Treasury are the main co-ordinating bodies for triangular co-operation. Line ministries implement triangular co-operation projects.

Box A.12. Regional exchanges: The Southern African Innovation Support Programme

The Southern African Innovation Support Programme 2 (SAIS 2) is a multi-stakeholder partnership and regional initiative with strong triangular components supported by the government of Finland in partnership with the ministries responsible for science, technology and innovation in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) secretariat. SAIS 2 aims to incubate and scale innovations in southern Africa in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector and beyond by providing funding and technical assistance. South Africa was invited to join SAIS 2 as a knowledge partner, which allows the country to take on a dual role as a beneficiary and pivotal partner. The programme has also allowed Finland to access new ideas in the ICT sector and learn from countries in the southern African region. Once the programme ends, it will be integrated into SADC, ensuring a continuation of the exchange and knowledge networks.

Source: Adapted from OECD (2022^[31]), *Triangular Co-operation in Africa*, https://triangular-cooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/OECD_Triangular-co-operation-with-Africa.pdf.

Türkiye

Türkiye officially began its development co-operation efforts in June 1985 when a comprehensive capacity development package was developed for Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal and Somalia. With the break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1980s and the establishment of new republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia regions, Türkiye ramped up its development co-operation by establishing the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in 1992. TIKA was given the responsibility of implementing Türkiye's development co-operation policy and co-ordinating with national actors on formulating and implementing technical co-operation activities in other countries.

TIKA has steadily increased its operations in all regions across the globe since 1992. It has a vast network of 62 offices in 60 countries that enables Türkiye to understand the needs of partner countries through direct co-ordination and feedback from the field (Box A.13).

Box A.13. Türkiye, the Islamic Development Bank and Pakistan: Improving resilience to earthquakes

Pakistan is vulnerable to disasters, and nearly two-thirds of the country is prone to earthquakes. Türkiye has an extensive and highly developed seismology research and detection institute – the Earth and Marine Sciences Institute (EMSI). The IsDB Reverse Linkage mechanism has helped EMSI share its learning and knowledge with Pakistan's Meteorological Department, the equivalent agency that is responsible for detecting and locating earthquakes but has limited capacity and infrastructure. The exchange, which took place through the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, helped EMSI share in particular its work on developing classification and seismic hazard maps for cities, building the Pakistan department's capacity in this area.

Source: Islamic Development Bank (2020^[29]), *Reverse Linkage (Pakistan & Turkey) Earthquake Seismological Research*, <https://www.isdb.org/reverse-linkage/publications/reverse-linkage-pakistan-turkey-earthquake-seismological-research>.

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Global Perspectives on Triangular Co-operation

The world is marked by multiple crises and challenges that transcend borders and require not only local but global solutions. Only by working together and bridging divides and differences can countries address these challenges and drive a sustainable development future for all. This report by the OECD and the Islamic Development Bank demonstrates triangular co-operation's relevance for delivering progress on sustainable development. In particular, it stresses its innovative approach to diplomacy, and its ability to bring together different stakeholders from across the global south and north in trusting partnerships that leverage the expertise, knowledge and resources of all partners. The report also examines the current global trends in the use of triangular co-operation, explores how to strengthen national ecosystems to support its effective delivery, and highlights how triangular co-operation can contribute to addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, with a specific focus on small island developing states.



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