

**Webinar report**  
***Triangular Cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean:***  
***A forward-looking modality for a globalised world***  
**14 May 2020**

Summary

*Flexibility and innovativeness characterise triangular cooperation arrangements but are also crucial to international cooperation during the coronavirus pandemic. Against the backdrop of the pandemic, the face-to-face event on triangular cooperation that originally had been planned to take place in March 2020 as part of Latin America and Caribbean Week was switched to an online seminar. Just a few weeks later, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH brought together almost 140 participants for a webinar to debate future modes of cooperation, digital transformation and best practice in triangular cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean – and reached a much larger international audience than the event originally planned in Berlin would have done. 180 individuals from 28 countries registered for the webinar.*

*In a fast-paced dialogue with experts in theory and practice, the webinar demonstrated that (1) triangular cooperation is a responsive tool that can be deployed in crisis situations; (2) development banks are playing an increasingly important part in implementing triangular cooperation; (3) digitalisation is an integral component of managing triangular cooperation and can also be part of the project objective; and (4) there is further scope for using the potential offered by triangular cooperation, with the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean serving as an example of best practice for other regions.*

Full report

The coronavirus pandemic has created a climate of uncertainty around the globe, with all countries involved in searching for new solutions. Sharing best practice beyond the traditional mechanisms of North-South cooperation demonstrates solidarity at a time when the nations of the world are together facing known and new global challenges. This is an opportunity to learn from each other and to demonstrate the importance not just of research and academia but also of international cooperation to efforts to identify trends at an early stage and to respond to and tackle them. Digital formats for sharing and exchanging information are particularly timely at present.

In an online moderated panel discussion, triangular cooperation experts from the worlds of politics, academia, think tanks, development banks and practice came together to demonstrate the scope and challenges of triangular cooperation as a modern, horizontal international cooperation instrument that is particularly responsive to crises and especially adapted to solving cross-border and global problems. The objective of the webinar was to raise awareness among German and international experts of the development policy debate surrounding triangular cooperation as an innovative and forward-looking form of cooperation. A further aim was to create valuable input to BMZ's approach to triangular cooperation and to the process of reshaping the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.



As an internationally recognised cooperation partner and one of the most active bilateral DAC donors in triangular cooperation, Germany has had great success in implementing this approach in Latin America and the Caribbean. The webinar offered a chance to share its experience in a changing world with the audience in a fast-paced dialogue, using case studies of measures in and with countries from the region. The webinar took as its starting point the following key questions:

- Where and how can triangular cooperation best be used as a development policy instrument? What experience is there of using it in public health contexts, such as the current coronavirus pandemic?
- How do triangular cooperation and digitalisation fit together? How important are innovative horizontal forms of cooperation in the age of digital transformation? And what experience is there of technology transfer as part of triangular cooperation?

The webinar also focused on the ‘success story’ of Latin America and triangular cooperation, with findings and recommendations from the recent evaluation of the German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval).

The webinar was aimed at German and international development policy experts. More than 180 individuals from 28 countries registered, with around 140 experts joining in the live session, representing regional and international organisations, academia, research institutions and government bodies. The audience posed questions on issues including the sustainability of triangular cooperation measures, the understanding of roles, the learning experiences of all cooperation partners involved, and the scope for transferring the knowledge and experience gained in triangular cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean to other regions around the world.

In his introduction, **Franz Marré**, Head of BMZ Division 304 (South America, Brazil), emphasised the role Germany plays as an active promoter of triangular cooperation, citing examples of the Regional Fund’s experience in Latin America and the Caribbean. Marré stressed BMZ’s interest in promoting forms of horizontal cooperation to advance the 2030 Agenda and in response to demand, in order to work together to find solutions to global problems, especially in crisis situations such as the current pandemic. Video testimonials from a range of partners from Latin America and the Caribbean were shown, supporting the positive view of the added value that triangular cooperation can create.

In her keynote address, **Nadine Piefer-Söyler**, Policy Analyst from the Foresight, Outreach and Policy Reform Unit in the Development Co-operation Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), underlined international recognition of triangular cooperation as an effective instrument for international cooperation and stressed the added value and potential that it brings, including – and particularly – in times of crisis. Triangular cooperation is flexible and can be deployed in many different sectors affected by the impact of the pandemic. Developing horizontal and transparent partnerships in which a range of cooperation partners learn and benefit from each other promotes a spirit of global solidarity, especially when the focus is on global goods, such as health.

Questions were asked about the areas in which triangular cooperation can be used effectively within development cooperation and how. A particular example is the experience of *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)* in a triangular cooperation with Brazil and Uruguay



in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention. **Katrin Enting-Pauw**, Project Manager, Urban and Social Development Latin America and Caribbean at KfW, explained that this issue does not respect national borders and that cross-border networking by academic institutes has created important and lasting impacts in terms of partnerships. Both partner countries benefit equally, with KfW financing capacity development measures in one country and infrastructure development in the other. This case study demonstrates that development banks can also apply triangular cooperation as a development cooperation instrument and make effective use of it. The lessons learned also show, however, that on the German side, internal organisational structures are often insufficiently flexible to make horizontal forms of cooperation effective.

**Paulo Esteves**, Director of the BRICS Policy Center in Rio de Janeiro, emphasised the importance of non-state actors such as the private sector and civil society organisations. The private sector has an interesting role to play, particularly in measures focusing on infrastructure development. Furthermore, triangular cooperation projects are neither costly nor time-intensive for the private sector, thus creating potential for the scaling-up of initiatives. Civil society organisations, for their part, are important in encouraging ownership. Esteves raised a further interesting area for discussion, highlighting the role of multilateral organisations as additional partners in triangular cooperation arrangements. This model, known as triangular cooperation+1, means that partners can benefit from the expertise of multilateral organisations, while these institutions themselves also benefit.

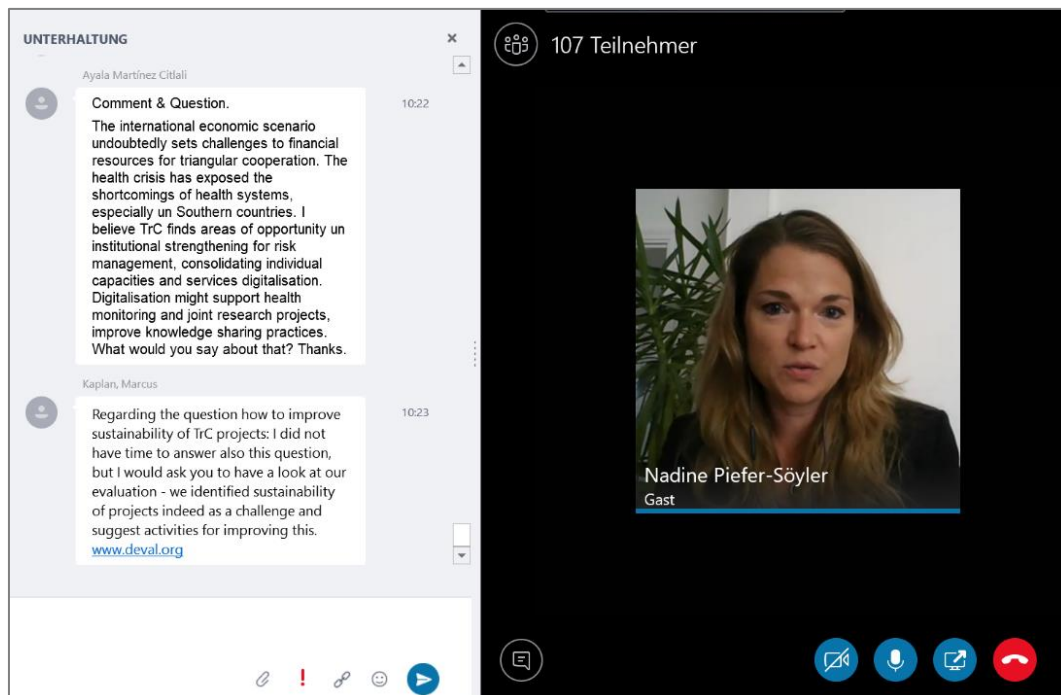
Triangular cooperation arrangements take a multistakeholder approach in which a range of partners cooperate from different locations. Triangular cooperation and digital communications formats and management tools are therefore essential. **Harald Spahn**, an expert in disaster risk management and capacity development, reported on his experience as Senior Consultant on the triangular cooperation between the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Germany, which focus on an early warning system for hydrometeorological risks. During the implementation phase of the project in particular, virtual exchange formats in the area of project management are key, he reported. However, he also stressed the importance of face-to-face meetings, particularly during the preparation phase when trust is being built between the partners but also throughout the process of working together. He added that new technologies often had limitations in this respect. Alongside the use of online media at management and working level, digital transformation may also be part of the project objective, and triangular cooperation is an appropriate form of cooperation for this. One example is the development of a digital communications platform and accompanying user applications as part of an effective early warning system in the Dominican Republic that involved the expertise of both the Mexican and the German partners.

Finally, the findings of the evaluation of triangular cooperation within German DC conducted recently by German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval) confirm that such a cooperation modality can be a meaningful tool in international cooperation to tackle global challenges. It is important to ensure from the outset that all cooperation partners within the arrangements have the same understanding of roles, principles, processes and objectives. All partners should also be clear about both the opportunities and the limitations of triangular cooperation, something that is not always the case. Both **Dr Marcus Kaplan**, Senior Evaluator at DEval, and other speakers emphasised that learning with and from each other, building trust and striving for cooperation between equals are characteristics of triangular cooperation. They added that the experience of German partners has not yet been



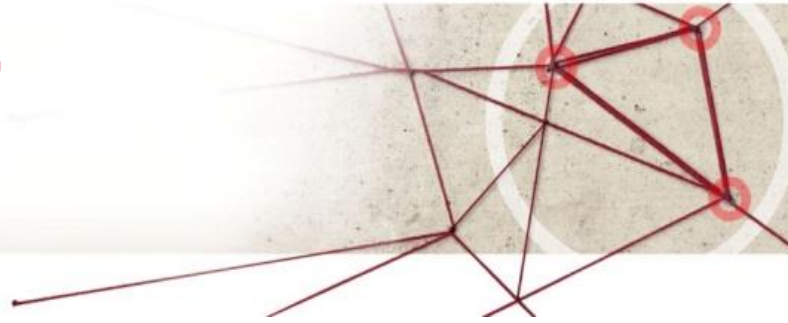
evaluated systematically. Germany, too, can learn from the other partners, but this learning is not yet embedded within German DC. The potential of triangular cooperation is, therefore, not being fully exploited, in particular with regard to development results in recipient countries. Dr Kaplan emphasised the positive experiences of the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the in-service training programme for implementing organisations on the management of triangular cooperation projects, most of which is run online. In general terms, triangular cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean has firmly established itself as a German DC instrument with clear processes, structures and criteria and is rated very highly by countries in the region. The programme can serve as an example of best practice in promoting triangular cooperation in other regions.

In her closing remarks, **Rita Walraf**, Deputy Head of BMZ Division 100 (Policy issues of bilateral development cooperation; emerging economies), summarised the contributions and stressed the importance of reflecting the points made during the webinar in future activities, initiatives and products. Accordingly, the experiences and recommendations can also be fed into the design of the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation with Asia, which BMZ wishes to commission this year. The event provides important input into the process of updating BMZ's strategy paper on triangular cooperation. Valuable insights and impressions can also be fed into the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean's forthcoming fifth regional conference in Buenos Aires, which is being planned with Argentina's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship for October 2020. These insights will be compiled into webinar documentation and made available to participants following the event.



Nadine Piefer-Söyler, OECD (screenshot by GIZ)





## Annex: Speakers

### **Introduction:**

- **Franz Marré**, Head of Division 304, South America, Brazil, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

### **Keynote address:**

- **Nadine Piefer-Söyler**, Policy Analyst, Foresight, Outreach and Policy Reform Unit, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD

### **Speakers:**

- **Dr Marcus Kaplan**, Senior Evaluator, German Institute for Development Evaluation (DEval)
- **Prof. Paulo Esteves, PhD**, Director of the BRICS Policy Center, Rio de Janeiro
- **Katrin Enting-Pauw**, Project Manager, Urban and Social Development Latin America and Caribbean, KfW Development Bank, Counterpart of the triangular cooperation between Uruguay, Brazil and Germany focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention
- **Harald Spahn**, Expert in technology transfer, disaster risk reduction and capacity development; Senior Consultant for the triangular cooperation between the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Germany focusing on an early warning system for the prevention of natural disasters

### **Closing remarks:**

- **Rita Walraf**, Deputy Head of Division 100, Policy issues of bilateral development cooperation; emerging economies, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

### **Chair:**

- **Dr Ulrich Müller**, Senior Advisor, Competence Center of Innovation, Learning, Knowledge, Method, Digital Transformation and Innovation, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

### **Testimonials:**

- **Marianella Feoli**, Directora de Fundecooperación, Costa Rica
- **Otto Cordero**, Encargado del Departamento de Manejo Integrado de Ecosistemas Costeros, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales, República Dominicana
- **Janet Sucasaca**, Docente de la Escuela Registral del Registro Nacional de Identificación y Estado Civil, Perú
- **Fernando Galarza**, Director de Cooperación Internacional, Gobierno Departamental de Tarija, Bolivia

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