SUMMARY

4th Regional Conference “Perspectives of Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: the Role of TrC in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda – Potentialities and Challenges”

Lima, September 26 and 27, 2017
SUMMARY

The 4th Regional Conference “Perspectives of Triangular Cooperation (TrC) in Latin America and the Caribbean: the Role of TrC in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda – potentialities and challenges” took place on the 26 and 27 of September, 2017 in Lima, Peru. It was hosted by the Peruvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). APCI, jointly with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) through the “Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean” were entrusted with the organisation of the conference.

Regional conferences look to encourage networking and political dialogue regarding TrC on a regional level as well as analysing TrC’s potentialities and limitations in the context of international cooperation. Specifically, this fourth Conference was focused on the contribution of TrC within the 2030 Agenda, analysing concrete experiences of TrC projects and revising methodologies for effective TrC management and their added value.

This fourth regional Conference had as precedent the conferences held in Colombia, Mexico and Chile. The first, “Perspectives of Triangular Cooperation in Latin America: New dynamics and actions in a world of emerging actors” was held in June 2012 in
Bogota, together with the Presidential Agency for Cooperation of Colombia (APC); the second, “Perspectives on Triangular Cooperation in Latin America: The impacts of Triangular Cooperation,” held on September 2013 in Mexico City, Mexico, in coordination with the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID); and the third, “Perspectives for Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: Incorporation of non-governmental actors and management of Triangular Cooperation” was held in April 2015 in Santiago, Chile, in cooperation with the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation (AGCI).

Approximately 100 people participated in this last Conference, representing a total of 23 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Japan, the Kingdom of Morocco, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, the United States and Uruguay. The international organisations present were BID, BRICS, ECLAC, FAO, OECD, PNUD, UNFPA, and the European Union.

The methodological approach was largely participatory. The first part of the Conference was led by a moderator who conducted panels and keynote sections, and highlighted the main contributions of answers and arguments. A second part of the Conference included strategic debates (seven in total). With this methodology a group discussion was generated, guided by questions asked. These strategic debates were established in the context of assigned subjects and were mediated by moderators, resource persons and rapporteurs. The results were presented at the end of each debate.
1. TrC is a cooperation modality that has the potential to contribute to the 2030 Agenda in an effective and multidisciplinary manner, and which has been demonstrated in different political sectors. Sectoral matters of greater interest in the Latin America and Caribbean region, which could be strengthened by implementing triangular cooperation, are tied to “green” public policies and to the strengthening of institutions and vocational training. However, the 2030 Agenda is in the process of being included into national agendas or development plans in the region, and progress varies between countries. By institutionalizing the SDGs in the respective development plans of the countries in the region, TrC could be of concrete benefit, efficiently contributing to the achievement of said SDGs. In this respect lies the importance of the beneficiary country, and for it to act with greater leadership to generate sustainable impact.

TrC is, by general consensus and evidence, an innovative methodology in the effort to find measurements of positive impact regarding global issues, and which has gained relevance in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this context, this cooperation modality can significantly contribute to SDG 17 of the 2030 Agenda, and to any of the other SDGs, depending on the theme of the respective TrC project. It is flexible and offers the possibility of sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices, for both North and South provider countries, and to adapt them to the realities of the beneficiary country. Furthermore, the horizontality offered by TrC broadens reference models and opens the possibility of finding solutions from all sides.

By prioritizing SDGs and themes according to the needs of each country, the fact that climate change and other environmental problems are of special interest to the Latin American and Caribbean region was accentuated. There was a particular emphasis on
the relevance of TrC in dealing with these problems as well as on the opportunity that German experience represents in this scope (renewable energies, green technology, technical knowledge and capacities, etc.).

For this reason, ECLAC’s proposal was received, which stated that TrC must help rethink development policy, investment, technologic change and sustainable development towards the Great Environmental Push (investment package in strategic sectors for advancing towards growth that is low in carbon). Consequently, we must deepen the dialogue and create new coalitions that promote mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the region. Another subject to face in the future is vocational training. As the approach has demonstrated, through analysis of TrC cases, it has the potential to impact several development areas. Not only does it contribute to employability and reducing poverty, but also to areas such as gender equality and violence reduction. Dual vocational training, offered by German experience, has been a key factor for educational success in the presented cases.

Over the course of the Conference, two aspects have been identified as beneficial for the intervention of triangular modality in the achievement of SDGs. The institutionalization of these objectives, by incorporating them in the national development goals and development plans, would be beneficial. Improvement in this aspect in the region is varied at the moment. Additionally, emphasis was put on the importance of ownership and leadership from the beneficiary country in the management of TrC projects in order to later consolidate experiences and establish public policy that assures that good practices will last.
2. The 2030 Agenda places greater emphasis on the debate over good management in International Cooperation, which includes TrC, for the initiatives’ impact to last. On the regional and global level, a dialogue and deeper debate between the different stakeholders is sought out. On one side, the challenge is to apply in practice the elaborated tools (the Guidelines for implementing Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America of the PIFCSS, for example), and on the other, to take advantage of the new initiatives for dialogue on efficient management of TrC (such as the GPI).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – undoubtedly – places major emphasis on the impact of the proposed goals, such as their persistence and consolidation in national agendas, which makes it an Agenda with ambitious goals. The particular approach in SDG partnerships (specially SDG 17) calls to reflect upon how to make management for cooperation projects more efficient – from their initial design to their evaluation – and becomes an even more needed principle. For TrC, which are characterized by the involvement of various sectoral and political stakeholders of three (or more) countries, this is a challenge that has been recognized by different practitioners in TrCs and who keep developing methodologies for an efficient management, particularly in TrCs.

An already established tool to be applied in practice is the publication “Guidelines for implementing Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America”, developed by the PIFCSS of the SEGIB. It has formulated common criteria for TrC and seeks to contribute to a more coordinated and harmonious management between TrC partner countries, to promote effectiveness in its initiatives, and to demonstrate the comparative advantages of this cooperation modality on a regional level. Likewise, its purpose is to promote leadership for triangular initiatives from the beneficiary country and to provide a framework for partners and possible partners who support TrC in the region¹. Its guiding principles point towards defining roles and generating skills that allow for continuous and multiplicative action in order to contribute to the sustainability of the TrC purpose. The ex post application of these Guidelines was studied in the Conference, which helped structure the phases in management of TrC projects, their relevant stakeholders, to discuss about the sustainability of their objectives, and their added value. It would be interesting to analyse the results of the ex post application discussion together with cases with ex ante Guidelines application.

One of the tools currently in development for the efficient management of TrC is the Global Partnership Initiative (GPI). This is a more recent initiative that aims to gather key stakeholders to promote and assure efficient TrC project management, directed by the same countries involved and with particular emphasis in inclusive multi-stakeholder alliances. Common voluntary principles are sought out on a global level for the different stakeholders (of the public and private sector, as well as of the civil society). The initiative is led by Mexico and Canada and counts with additional support from Japan, the Islamic Development Bank, the OECD and the United Nations Office for South-

South Cooperation (UNOSSC). On an operational level, the aim is to analyse existing tools and to develop new ones that will ensure efficient implementation for TrC. In the strategic debate, led by AMEXCID, there was consensus regarding contributions to sustainability by means of a platform for exchanging experiences from Latin America and other regions, this would put in place mechanisms for international technical cooperation and the creation of follow-up and monitoring instruments for the basic principles. Furthermore, the idea of establishing some basic criteria was considered. These criteria could be shared, considering the characteristics of each country, which would contribute to aligning principles.

3. The value-added of TrC is a matter of interest for the practitioners of said TrC. Based on past experiences, added values that stand out are the strengthening in leadership of the region's countries to become drivers of change, the exchange based in and on the complementarity of experiences as well as its multi-stakeholder approach, which in turn allows strengthening of skills and generates impact on different levels in each country. These experiences can contribute to the debate on the measurement of the TrC’s value-added that's still ongoing.

Based on the experiences of the triangular projects analysed throughout the Conference, the added value of TrC is that it allows an exchange of experiences between countries with similar problems and characteristics. Influencing the process of decentralization by working at a local level depends on the continuous strengthening of the States as drivers of their own development. Through the multi-stakeholder approach, skills are enhanced and the sustainability of projects’ impacts and results are benefited. To an extent, the involvement of civil society, the private sector and academia in triangular modality, generates collaboration that lead to achieving SDGs. Overall, the benefit of complementarity between stakeholders was emphasized,
beyond the TrC projects themselves, as was the knowledge management based on experience and building alliances.

Conceptually, exchange regarding identification and measurement of the value-added of TrC was sought out. There was high interest in the discussion that was introduced by the presentation of a methodology currently being developed, a “Toolkit for identifying, monitoring and evaluating the value-added of triangular co-operation” which is driven by OECD together with other relevant stakeholders. This kit will serve to identify the added value of TrC, to facilitate the development of indicators and measurements for the added value as well as its evaluation and monitoring. It was concluded that it’s a worthwhile effort that serves to obtain a measurement of the added value of TrC, emphasizing the important link between results for development and the results of the association between stakeholders of the TrC.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Potentialities

For the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the TrC modality represents an innovative instrument that contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and which has the potential to contribute to SDGs achievement. It facilitates building and strengthening partnerships with diverse stakeholders on both national and international levels, which is why it contributes directly to SDG 17. This modality’s advantage lies in the exchange and its multi-stakeholder approach, which allows for generating impact in the countries involved. Likewise, it promotes leadership in the countries of the region to become drivers for development.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the region were TrC has its strongest presence, based on the quantity of this type of projects implemented there, but also because of the impact of the projects’ accomplishments and their sustainability. As a modality of cooperation, and beyond its contribution to SDG 17, it has the advantage of contributing also to other goals of the 2030 Agenda. During the Conference, there was emphasis – according to demand and interest in the region – on TrC’s potential to drive “green” public policy as well as institutional strengthening and vocational training.

Heterogeneity in the articulation process of the 2030 Agenda in the national development plans of the countries in the region may represent a challenge in completing the contribution of TrC to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. On the other hand, this offers a great opportunity: the triangular modality is based on knowledge sharing, and because of this – through TrC – South provider countries (together with traditional providers), can share their experiences and join beneficiary countries of the region in the process of incorporating SDGs in their respective national agendas.

The high interest from relevant stakeholders in the region in the conceptual debate regarding TrC’s added value should also be noted. TrC is considered to be a cooperation modality that can be strategically applied in order to participate in public development policy on a regional level.
2. Challenges

The 4th Conference reiterates the subjects of the Mexico and Chile Conferences regarding measurement of the impacts of TrC and the challenge of monitoring. The necessity of guaranteeing conditions of horizontality in all phases of the projects is reiterated as well, from identification and definition of problems to execution and evaluation of impacts.

The 2030 Agenda, by general consensus, places greater emphasis on effective management in international cooperation, which includes TrC. The challenge lies in applying the developed tools to guarantee sustainable objectives in triangular cooperations and also in taking advantage of existing ones to contribute to more recent dialogues on tools for a good TrC management, not only on the regional, but also on a global level.

As we briefly mentioned in ‘1. Potentialities’, to finalize the contribution of TrC to the 2030 Agenda and to the SDGs achievement, articulating those objectives in the respective countries and in their own management tools, such as strategic plans and/or in their national priorities for development, would be of great benefit. Currently, this process is varied in the region. Along the same line, it’s important to determine instances of participation and collegiate entities that oversee these SDGs, for example, national committees or development councils. The role of the beneficiary country to generate impact is a key factor in this context.

The multi-stakeholder approach, being on one side a great advantage to TrC, is on the other side also a challenge. During the Santiago Conference (2015), linking non-governmental stakeholders to TrC projects was insisted upon. In this fourth Conference, the link between public stakeholders on a regional and local level was repeated in order to overcome the predominance of projects with public entities at the central level. Also, and because of its proximity to communities, there was an emphasis on the request to include stakeholders of the civil society as a source of experience and knowledge towards solution proposals. This also can have potentials for greater sustainability in the impacts on a local level.

The Regional Conference on the “Perspectives of Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean: the Role of TrC in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda – potentialities and challenges” gave continuity to dialogues brought up in previous regional conferences and was able to place TrC within the context of the 2030 Agenda, including the potentialities and challenges of its contribution. It was able to bring relevant stakeholders together, from political and technical ranks, which allowed for an analysis of their contribution in the practice of SDGs. It was also able to promote exchange in a more strategic manner for future debates with regards to its efficiency and impact in determining a joint perspective for the region towards global challenges.