

GUIDANCE:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON REPORTING TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION IN THE CRS



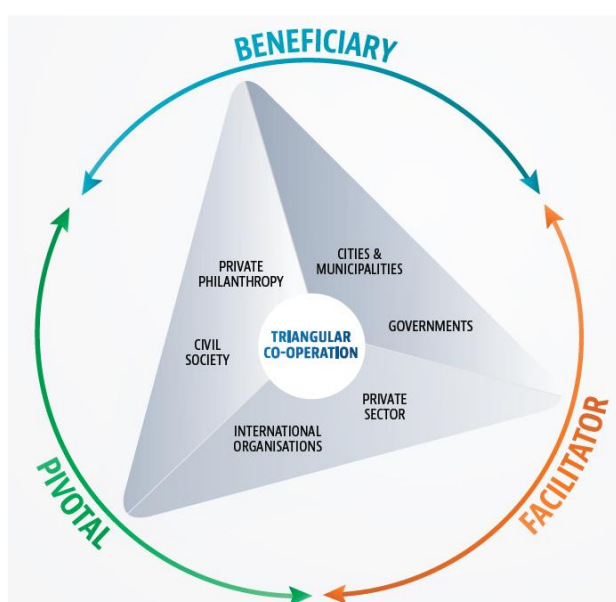
This guidance note has been produced to assist DAC members in their reporting of triangular co-operation activities within the OECD's Creditor Reporting System (CRS). In November 2015, a proposal was approved by the WP-STAT to monitor triangular co-operation activities (TrC) in the CRS through the bi_multi code "8". The proposal came into effect for the reporting in 2016 of 2015 activities and rules were clarified in 2019. An OECD's knowledge-sharing exercise on triangular co-operation held in 2021-22 revealed that many DAC members continue to find reporting of triangular co-operation a challenge. This guidance note addresses some of the frequently asked questions that DAC members asked when reflecting on their reporting practices of triangular co-operation in the CRS.

Q1. What is triangular co-operation?

The Reporting Directives describe triangular co-operation as a form of bilateral co-operation with "Activities where there are at least three partners and where three main roles (see Figure 1) can be identified as follows:

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

Figure 1. Three roles in triangular co-operation



Source: OECD (2022:12), Triangular Co-operation with Africa, [https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD\(2022\)33/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/DCD(2022)33/en/pdf)

Q2. What is NOT triangular co-operation?

The boundaries between multi-stakeholder partnerships, regional and triangular co-operation are often difficult to identify. The main difference is the role of the pivotal partner (see Q4), which acts as a second provider in a triangular co-operation. Generally, the following would not be considered as triangular co-operation:

- A **regional co-operation project** where several countries benefit from the same approach provided by a DAC member or channelled through a regional organisation (see Box 1). The Swiss example involves several

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countries that often act as pivotal partners in triangular co-operation projects, e.g. China, Indonesia, Thailand, or Viet Nam. In this case, they are all beneficiaries of the same project approach and not one (or more) of them take(s) up the role of pivotal partner.

Box 1. Regional co-operation facilitated by Switzerland to close rice yield gaps in Asia

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supports the International Rice Research Institute and national research and extension partners in six countries in Asia (China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam) to optimise the sustainability of irrigated systems with the objective of enhancing regional food security while minimising the environmental footprint of rice production. Through this contribution, Switzerland has initiated the development of sustainable rice production indicators, which are now adopted by more than 100 private and public organisations. More than 800,000 farmers are targeted directly in the six countries of this regional co-operation and the International Rice Research Institute supported the regional co-operation through research and training.

Source: Website of the Swiss Development Co-operation (SDC), <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/projekte/projekte.filterResults.html/content/dezaprojects/SDC/en/2012/7F08412/phase3?oldPagePath=/content/deza/en/home/projekte/projekte.html>

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives, such as the Alliance for Integrity (Box 2) or the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Alliance for Financial Inclusion that benefit multiple countries through the same facilitator.

Box 2. The Alliance for Integrity

The Alliance for Integrity is a business-driven, multi-stakeholder initiative with partners in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, seeking to promote transparency and integrity in the economic system. It is facilitated by Germany (hosting the Secretariat); in addition, it is governed by a global steering committee with representatives from different stakeholders and local advisory groups. To achieve its goals, the Alliance for Integrity fosters collective action of all relevant actors from the private sector, the public sector and civil society. It contributes to improving framework conditions by fostering dialogue between the public and private sectors, making it a global contact point for businesses countering corruption collectively.

Source: Website of the Alliance for Integrity, <https://www.allianceforintegrity.org/en/>

- EU Delegated Co-operation (see the example in Figure 2) is explicitly excluded in the CRS reporting directives on triangular co-operation. Institutions that are authorised to implement delegated co-operation, such as the Agence Française de Développement (Afd), the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), or the Spanish International Co-operation Agency (AECID), often form consortia to implement the EU grants and leverage additional own funds to benefit countries or regions, such as the Maghreb and Near East in the example below. Apart from the CRS reporting directives instructions, in this regional constellation, a pivotal partner is missing to characterise it as triangular co-operation.



Figure 2. EU Delegated Co-operation with France and Germany to support energy efficiency in buildings in Maghreb and the Near East



Source: Website of Agence Française de Développement (Afd), <https://www.afd.fr/en/europe>.

If a triangular co-operation component is included in a regional co-operation, multi-stakeholder partnership, multi-stakeholder initiative or an EU delegated co-operation, this component should be reported in the CRS (see Q7 for more information on reporting components of triangular co-operation).

Q3. Which countries can be reported as beneficiary partners of triangular co-operation within the CRS?

The **beneficiary partner** in triangular co-operation is the main country target of the project. To be reported in bi_multi code 8, the beneficiary partner must be an ODA-eligible country. The beneficiary is reported as for any other ODA activities under the CRS Recipient Code. The description of triangular co-operation implies that the roles can change in the course of the activity and the same country can act as beneficiary and pivotal partner in a TrC project (see Box 3).

Box 3. Understanding the different roles in triangular co-operation – example of a project with Costa Rica, Germany and Morocco

The beneficiary partner usually solicits support to tackle a specific development challenge, while the pivotal partner provides expertise and other resources, and the facilitator helps connect all partners, supporting the collaboration financially and technically. In the programme “Improving the Management and Sustainable Use of Forests, Protected Areas and Watersheds (2013-2016)”, Morocco and Costa Rica, with support from Germany, implemented a number of pilot projects that aimed to improve watershed management, to prevent forest fires and to protect biodiversity. Morocco implemented two pilot projects in national parks and adopted Costa Rica’s system of payment for environmental services to design a financing system and a collaboration association to tackle forest issues. In these pilots Morocco is the beneficiary and Costa Rica the pivotal partner. At the same time, Costa Rica implemented two pilot projects to improve watershed management, based on the Moroccan experience. For these pilot projects Morocco was recorded as the pivotal partner and Costa Rica as the beneficiary. Germany provided knowledge of bilateral co-operation in the management process across all the pilots and offered organisational and methodological impulses and across all the projects remained the facilitating partner. This project should be reported by

Germany as triangular co-operation and “third country government” as the channel code, indicating the name of the Moroccan or Costa Rican institution (depending on the project) acting as pivotal partner.

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019, p. 16^[11]), 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>

Q4. Which entities can be a pivotal partner in triangular co-operation and how do I report the pivotal partner in the CRS?

The role of the **pivotal partner** is what differentiates triangular co-operation from other modalities, such as regional co-operation. The pivotal partner has developed and tested expertise in an area in its own context. This experience is valuable for beneficiary partners to learn and adapt the expertise to their specific context with the support of the pivotal and facilitating partners.

The concept of triangular co-operation used to limit pivotal partners to government providers of South-South co-operation. However, the OECD DAC has widened its understanding of triangular co-operation in recent years and the Reporting Directives now include ‘countries (at national and sub-national levels), international organisations, civil society, private philanthropy, private sector and academia. The pivotal partner is often an actor or institution from another developing country or from the same region as the beneficiary.’

While the pivotal partner is nearly always an entity from a developing country, the widening of the definition means that in some exceptional circumstances DAC members can play the role of pivotal partner. For example, support from the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic to Georgia with the facilitation of Austria. The Czech Republic and Slovak Republic are both DAC members but, in this case, played the role of pivotal partners in sharing their transition experience with Georgia.

The methodology to track TrC in the CRS also enables reporters to identify the pivotal partner of triangular co-operation using the CRS fields “Channel of delivery name” and “Channel of delivery code”. With the new wider understanding of triangular co-operation, you can tick any of the following Channel delivery names – ‘Third country government’, ‘developing country NGO’, ‘private sector in third country’, ‘University, college or other teaching institution, research institute or think-tank’, ‘network’ and ‘multilateral organisation’. The TrC with the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic illustrates an exception, where ticking ‘donor country government’ is fine. If the DAC member does not act as pivotal partner – which should be the majority of cases – it should not identify its own institutions as channel of delivery but name the pivotal partner as channel.

Unlike the beneficiary, the **pivotal partner does not need to be ODA-eligible** to be reported in bi_multi code 8. This means, for instance, that triangular co-operation projects where Chile or Uruguay are acting as pivotal partners can be reported in CRS. Funds should only be channelled through them and any funding that benefits Chile, Uruguay or any other non-ODA recipient country cannot be counted as ODA.

Q5. Can a regional project ever be counted as triangular co-operation?

Yes. A regional project can be classified as triangular co-operation if a DAC member or international organisation is working with a pivotal partner to share information and learning across multiple other countries. The pivotal partner could be any developing country government, CSO, academic or private sector actor that has relevant expertise and experience to share in the region. It could also be a government, CSO, research institute or private sector actor from the region that is not necessarily categorised as a developing country. Take for example, Finland’s Southern Africa



Box 4. Example of a regional-focused triangular co-operation programme: the Southern Africa Innovation Support Programme

The [Southern Africa Innovation Support Programme \(SAIS 2\)](#) is a regional initiative that supports the growth of new businesses through strengthening innovation ecosystems and promoting cross-border collaboration between innovation role-players in Southern Africa. SAIS 2 is supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland, in partnership with the Ministries responsible for Science, Technology and Innovation of Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat. SAIS 2 is managed through a Programme Management Office based in Namibia. The Finnish MFA and the Programme Management Office together take up the role of facilitators and the five partner countries are beneficiaries. Nevertheless, depending on the activity, partner countries also act as pivotal partners, sharing knowledge and expertise and engaging in capacity development and networking. Thus, SAIS 2 has components of triangular co-operation, where some partners, like South Africa, often play a double role of a pivotal partner. During the design of the second phase of SAIS, South Africa actively contributed and was considered as pivotal partner in the implementation of SAIS 2, while also benefiting from other elements of the programme.

The SAIS programme is a good example of fluid boundaries between regional and triangular co-operation. The initial project design is benefitting all partner countries in a regional co-operation approach. SAIS 2 dedicates a special role to the Government of South Africa as pivotal partner and allows all other partners to take up this role in sharing knowledge and expertise with the others.

This programme should be reported in the CRS as triangular co-operation with the channel of delivery “third country government”, specifying South Africa as the pivotal partner.

Source: GPEDC (forthcoming)

Innovation Support Programme (Box 4) that includes a triangular component or the programme Mesoamerica without Hunger (Box 5).

Box 5. Mesoamerica without Hunger – a programme with bilateral, regional and triangular components

The programme Mesoamerica without Hunger aims to promote regional actions in food and nutritional security as well as family farming to contribute to eradicating hunger in Mesoamerica. The participating countries are: Mexico, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. It is facilitated by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which provides regional advice on the definition, characterisation and registration of family farming as well as the promotion of sustainable seed systems. FAO is not the only knowledge producer, since Mesoamerican knowledge networks have been established (parliamentary advisers, journalists and experts in rainwater collection) and systematically built into the project. The complementary expertise of other Mexican and Central American actors has been used to build bridges and co-create solutions to problems related to food security.

The programme is implemented at three levels:

- **Regional:** Compilation, systematisation, dissemination and exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices, as well as technical assistance and capacity building.
- **National:** Implementation of differentiated actions within the framework of 10 lines of action aimed at strengthening family farming and food security through the technical support of FAO.



- **Triangular:** Transfer of experiences and good practices by Mexican institutions, acting as pivotal partners, to address the effects of drought through the improvement of water resource management in countries of the Central American Dry Corridor.

FAO would report the triangular component of the programme indicating “third country government” as the channel code, and the name of the Mexican institution acting as pivotal partner in the channel of delivery name.

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019, p. 16^[11]), 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>

Q6. Is there a limited number of partners that can be engaged in triangular co-operation?

No, there is no limit to the number of partners that can be engaged in triangular co-operation. However, what distinguishes triangular co-operation from multi-stakeholder partnerships is the fact that the partners collectively perform all three of the roles critical to triangular co-operation – facilitator, pivotal or beneficiary. There can be multiple partners playing one of the roles, as exemplified by the triangular co-operation “Alliance to fight avoidable blindness” in Box 6.

Box 6. Multiple beneficiary, pivotal and facilitating partners in a triangular co-operation in a triangular co-operation project

The “Alliance to Fight Avoidable Blindness” is a triangular co-operation example that was scaled up from a pilot phase with few partners to a large global alliance with multiple beneficiaries, pivotal and facilitating partners. Based on the successful first phase, the second phase is:

- **Facilitated** by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD), along with the African Institute of Tropical Ophthalmology, Al Bassar International Foundation (based in Saudi Arabia), and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA).
- **Counting with expertise from pivotal partners, such as:** Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA), Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development (EAPD), Palestine International Cooperation Agency (PICA), Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH- Turkey), Nadi Al Bassar Tunisia, Prevention of Blindness Union (PBU) and further partner institutions from Brazil, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, and Libya.
- **Including beneficiaries across Africa, namely:** Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Mali, Mozambique, Comoros, Niger, Somalia and Togo.

The programme benefits from the expertise of several research and medical institutes, CSOs, government institutions and multilateral development banks, making it a multi-stakeholder triangular partnership. What distinguishes this alliance from others of similar scale and scope, is the role of the pivotal partners. For instance, under the contribution of AIDA, Azerbaijani ophthalmologists from the National Eye Center, shared their knowledge and experience with their colleagues in Western African countries. More than 300 000 people had eye examinations and more than 56 000 patients regained their vision after cataract surgery carried out free of charge. In addition, 177 local doctors benefited from professional training as part of the initiative. This is just one example of a pivotal partner sharing its expertise; others include doctors sent through Egypt, PICA or Tunisia – just to name some examples.

Some international organisations, only consider a project to be triangular, when they are joined by another facilitator in the same role – either a DAC member or another international organisation, as is also the case in this example. In its new [United](#)



[Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular co-operation for sustainable development](#) (2021), the UN sheds light on the role of international organisations in triangular co-operation.

The IsDB (or any other facilitator) would report this project in the DAC CRS indicating “third country government” as the channel code, and the name of the institutions acting as pivotal partners in the channel of delivery name.

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019, p. 16^[1]), 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>

Q7. How can I report a triangular co-operation project that is part of a wider bilateral programme?

Often bilateral programmes have a component within it that is triangular co-operation. There are multiple ways to report the triangular co-operation component within the CRS. If you know the exact amount spent on the triangular component, you can count the triangular co-operation component as a separate activity within the CRS, separating it from the wider bilateral programme. If you do not know the exact amount of the project that is triangular co-operation, you could estimate the share of funding that was spent on the triangular co-operation component and then report it as separate activity.

Another way of managing larger bilateral programmes that contain a component of triangular co-operation is to use a co-efficient. The European Union for example, marks all projects that have 50% or more component of triangular co-operation as triangular-co-operation in the CRS. If you choose to use a co-efficient approach, please make sure you note the methodology that you use in the project description and do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat to share your experience or to clarify questions in this regard.

Q8. What if I am unsure whether to report my project or programmes as triangular co-operation?

If you feel uncomfortable using the bi_multi code 8 because you are unsure of whether the activity qualifies for triangular co-operation, you can add a keyword “triangular co-operation” in the keyword field. This way the OECD Secretariat can assess whether the project should or should not be classified as triangular co-operation.

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