

TUR/PRT Non-paper on Trilateral Cooperation: Leveraging Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development

I. Introduction

Under the current G20 Presidency, **Brazil proposes Trilateral Cooperation (TrC) as a priority within the Development Working Group (DWG)**. The dedicated Issue Note describes TrC as a cooperation modality that “usually involves at least three cooperation partners: a beneficiary, that seeks support to address a development challenge; a pivotal partner, that provides resources and/or expertise; and a facilitating partner, that connects both parties through financial and/or technical support”. As it is commonly stated TrC “offers an opportunity to move beyond traditional provider-recipient dynamics by creating partnerships and by repositioning the roles of cooperation partners. It can be an avenue of mutual learning of knowledge sharing between developed and developing countries¹” including the least developed countries (LDCs), while promoting more equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation between all partners.

Beyond the G20, TrC is gaining traction as an innovative and adaptable approach. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN), and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), all recognize the value of TrC in combining the strengths of different development actors to address complex global challenges effectively. This collaborative approach is particularly well-suited to tackle issues that transcends the capabilities of any single country or organization with a holistic perspective. Arguably, its success and effectiveness are closely linked to several factors: a) its transformative potential; b) adopted approaches and their impact; c) enabling policy environment; and d) standardization in definitions. This means that **TrC is a dynamic and evolving modality of international development that promotes collaborative and equitable partnerships**.

The aim of this non-paper is to build on the Issue Note proposed by the current G20 Presidency, highlighting the following: a) the need to invest in TrC as a modality that can contribute to implementing SDG17; b) position TrC as an instrument to fight against inequalities including reducing global poverty; c) supporting awareness among stakeholders, including the private sector.

II. Advantages of Trilateral Cooperation: enhancing value for knowledge-sharing

As stated in the **BAPA+40**, TrC does not replace but “**complements and adds value to South-South cooperation** by enabling requesting developing countries to source and access more, and a broader range of resources, expertise and capacities, that they identify as needed to achieve their national development goals and internationally agreed sustainable development goals”. Thus, it “enables developing countries to achieve sustainable development through partnership and, *inter alia*, to promote unity and cooperation, which contribute to establishing a fair and equitable international economic²”. Especially LDCs should be encouraged to use this kind of cooperation to overcome their challenges towards a greener, more inclusive, and more sustainable future.

¹ G20 Development Working Group [Issue Note](#), page 7.

² Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, paragraph 15 ([UN resolution A/CONF.235/3*](#)).

Indeed, TrC presents several advantages:

- a) A **lever of diverse resources and expertise** – TrC is known for building trust and partnerships by combining diverse resources and capacities from multiple countries and organisations (as it brings innovative solutions and promotes the exchange of best practices, improving the quality and outcome of development projects);
- b) **Facilitating mutual learning and skills development** – allowing countries to share and adapt proven knowledge across diverse environments – “based on the principle that no country is too poor to share experiences and that no country is too rich to learn³”;
- c) The fact that investing in TrC is investing in **technical diplomacy** (that can pave the way for political dialogue through joint actions and horizontal partnerships).

These connections lay the groundwork for mutual understanding, future collaborations, extending beyond immediate project benefits to mobilize collective action on global challenges and enhance economic value through knowledge sharing.

III. Impact on sustainable development

Evidence gathered by the UNOSSC and other IO (e.g. SEGIB and OECD), shows that **TrC significantly boosts human, economic, and social development – including environmental sustainability** – and it is, therefore, in line with a wide range of SDGs.

As an example of human development, TrC can enhance capacity and knowledge sharing, particularly in healthcare and education, by merging different expertise with local insights. This leads to improved healthcare systems and educational programs, which build long-term capacities and enhances public health and education outcomes.

Economically, TrC promotes sustainable growth by facilitating financial resource mobilization, technology transfer, infrastructure development, boosting agricultural productivity and fostering innovation.

Socially, it advances inclusion and reduces inequalities by empowering women and girls, supporting groups in vulnerable situations and special needs and strengthening governance, which enhances civil society and government transparency.

Additionally, TrC projects can play an important role in tackling migration issues that are beyond the means of a single country, requiring international burden sharing.

Furthermore, TrC projects can also focus on environmental sustainability, supporting climate action and sustainable urban development, disaster risk reduction, incorporating environmentally friendly technologies and promoting zero waste approach to ensure localized effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Based on the DWG Issue Note, **G20 countries could commit to:** a) raising the number of TrC partnerships; b) sharing information on financial instruments to support TrC partnerships (in

³ OECD/IsDB (2023), Global Perspectives on Triangular Co-operation, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/29e2cbc0-en>.

preparing for the FFD4); c) fostering the creation of a practitioners networking platform on South-South and TrC within the multiregional technical meetings.

IV. Awareness and communication

TrC needs global awareness and better communication. This is vital for increasing recognition among potential partners and building trust among existing ones. Effective measures can include: a) a more clear information on the different platforms about TrC partnerships and possible opportunities for project development; b) extended interoperability among existing platforms; c) establishing concrete connections among different platforms.

Key features of existing and future partnerships could include a searchable project database, mechanisms for expressing partnership interest and integrated project management tools. Implementing these strategies would not only boost TrC's visibility but also enhance its operational efficiency, making it easier for new participants to engage and collaborate effectively in TrC initiatives.

V. Conclusion

TrC stands as a dynamic and effective approach for international development. **The G20 members welcome increasing TrC partnerships and investing in awareness and communication, including a more efficient coordination and meaningful impact.** This brings value to the G20 Presidency deliverable on TrC, as it has the potential to build on the “establishment of a structured trilateral cooperation initiative, aiming to strengthen capabilities and disseminate good practices among G20 member countries and interested developing nations”.

As this modality continues to evolve, there is ample opportunity for the G20 to enhance their engagement and capitalize on the innovative potential of TrC. In this sense, one of the three multiregional technical meetings foreseen in the G20 DWG deliverable can be hosted back-to-back with the Lisbon's International Meeting on Triangular Cooperation in October, where G20 members can actively engage in improving TrC frameworks.

Attachment

Potential impact-driven actions of TrC on the SDGs

