



# Triangular co-operation with Africa





# Abstract

Triangular co-operation is on the rise in Africa, responding to shifts in global development. African countries participate widely in triangular partnerships with the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and the Americas – they have rich policy experiences and innovations to share and may benefit from triangular co-operation. This paper shows that triangular co-operation has high potential to address three megatrends that the African Union's Agenda 2063 has identified as critical to African development: 1) digitalisation and information and communication technologies, 2) environment and climate change, and 3) demographic changes. Furthermore, it identifies success factors for engaging in triangular co-operation, including aligning new initiatives to global and national strategies, supporting African ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation, and accounting for cultural differences. Finally the paper shows that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, despite triggering setbacks in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has created a number of opportunities for new triangular partnerships where all countries can engage in mutual learning – building forward sustainably, making good use of circular innovations and co-operation and ultimately joining forces to provide global public goods.

# Foreword

Interest in triangular co-operation – when countries, international organisations, civil society, private sector, private philanthropy and others work together in groups of three or more, to co-create flexible, cost-effective and innovative solutions for reaching the SDGs – is growing, both in terms of scope and scale. In response to this demand, the OECD Development Co-operation Directorate's work on triangular co-operation aims to support its contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through 1) analysis; 2) data and evidence; 3) dialogue; 4) advocacy; and 5) tools and policy advice.

To jointly assess successes and challenges around triangular co-operation, the OECD collects data and evidence, maintaining the only global [online project repository of triangular co-operation projects](#). Any partner in triangular co-operation is invited to contribute to this repository to grow the evidence base for new analyses. Based on this work, the OECD supports countries and stakeholders in reinforcing their systems to enable effective triangular co-operation, and facilitates dialogue and joint learning in international meetings. In addition, the OECD is a core group member of the Global Partnership Initiative (GPI) on Effective Triangular Co-operation.

This paper complements previous analysis on triangular co-operation globally in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), in India, and with civil society organisations. Using a mixed methodological approach, the paper draws on evidence from the following sources: the OECD's online project repository; the OECD's Creditor Reporting (CRS) system; a survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); a seminar on triangular co-operation in Southern Africa, which the DCD co-organised with the South African Department of Science and Innovation in Pretoria (2-3 December 2019); participation in a Wilton Park meeting on triangular co-operation in Maputo, Mozambique (21-22 November 2019); a side event co-organised with the OECD and the Egyptian Ministry for International Cooperation during the "Egypt International Cooperation Forum" (8 September 2021); and 35 interviews with representatives from African governments, triangular co-operation project staff, DAC members, think tanks, researchers and international organisations.

The paper comprises an overview and four main chapters. The overview introduces the broader context for this work, including by highlighting key shifts for African development since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Chapter 1 sheds light on global trends in triangular co-operation, and provides key data on triangular co-operation with Africa. Chapter 2 looks at how triangular co-operation is embedded into the broader context of African partnerships, and examines its potential to help address development challenges related to megatrends in Africa. Chapter 3 highlights success factors for triangular co-operation with Africa, including the importance of building ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation on the continent. Finally, the paper provides a range of concrete suggestions on how these partnerships might be further strengthened in the future.

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# Executive summary

Triangular co-operation is on the rise in Africa. At the time of finalising this paper (February 2022), one third of the 921 triangular co-operation projects in the *OECD online triangular co-operation project repository* involve countries on the African continent, in comparison to 21% in 2016 (OECD, 2017<sup>[1]</sup>). African countries participate widely in triangular partnerships with the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and the Americas – both as beneficiaries and pivotal partners sharing their experiences and innovations. These partnerships are unique because they enable intra-Africa exchanges, as more countries are building ecosystems to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation. In this regard, the Regional Economic Commissions and the African Union (AU), including its development agency (AUDA-NEPAD), as well as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), play an important role in fostering Africa's strategic partnerships, using the AU's Agenda 2063 as a framework for holding development partners to account on country ownership and inclusive partnerships.

This paper analyses how and where triangular co-operation can add value in supporting Africa's efforts to address development challenges related to megatrends on the continent. To this aim, the paper addresses the following research questions:

- What are the current trends in triangular co-operation, both globally and specifically in Africa?
- Are there synergies between triangular co-operation initiatives and African trends? How can triangular co-operation be used more and better to support African countries? What is the value added of triangular co-operation for Africa?
- Looking ahead, what are strategic considerations for triangular co-operation with Africa?

**Globally, the outcomes of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA+40) in 2019 provided an important political impetus to triangular co-operation, showing its rise and importance.** At BAPA+40, UN members emphasised that triangular co-operation is a modality of co-operation that builds partnerships and trust between all partners and combines diverse resources and capacities under the ownership of the requesting developing country to achieve the SDGs (UN, 2019<sup>[2]</sup>).

**Bilateral co-operation often sets the basis for new triangular initiatives. OECD data show that African countries and their partners co-operate in similar topics bilaterally and through triangular partnerships.** Comparing the data on African triangular co-operation projects with that of other regions, the following findings emerge:

- African champions of triangular co-operation are also among the top 10 beneficiaries of official development assistance (ODA) in Africa.
- African partners engage in more multi-regional triangular partnerships than partners in other regions.
- Over half of the triangular co-operation projects in Africa are in the areas of government and civil society (22%), agriculture and food security (20%), and health (13%). These sectors match what would be expected from bilateral North-South co-operation.

- Triangular co-operation with Africa attracts larger budgets and longer durations in comparison to other world regions and the global average.

**Triangular co-operation has high potential to address development challenges related to three megatrends** that the African Union's Agenda 2063 has identified as critical to African development: 1) digitalisation, information and communication technology; 2) climate change; 3) demographic changes (youth employment, urbanisation and international mobility). Respondents to an e-survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2020 said they regard digitalisation as the most promising area for triangular co-operation (91%), ahead of tackling climate change (77%), rapid urban growth (68%), environmental impacts (64%) and demographic changes (45%). Working on health issues related to infectious diseases, particularly the coronavirus (COVID-19), was mentioned as another promising area (UNDP, 2022<sup>[3]</sup>).

### ***Going forward: ideas for more triangular co-operation with Africa***

**Spot, share, and scale up innovations:** In Africa, triangular co-operation goes hand in hand with “circular innovation”, meaning that an innovation in a pivotal country is scaled up through the support of a facilitator – often a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) or an international organisation – and then shared with other African countries in the region. Triangular co-operation can also support the diffusion of digital innovations developed by diasporic communities, such as tracking systems to monitor and contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Embedding triangular co-operation into Africa's partnerships to support development effectiveness:** African countries can scale up their role in triangular co-operation. Evidence from African countries suggests that closely aligning triangular co-operation projects to the beneficiary partners' national development priorities and strategies helps increase participation, ownership, and the sustainability of development outcomes. Establishing linkages between triangular co-operation projects and large-scale development programmes on the continent is crucial in fostering co-ordination among partners. Partners should also ensure that triangular co-operation complements their bilateral development programmes.

**Support the continent's efforts to strengthen its ecosystems and capacities for South-South and triangular co-operation:** This includes supporting efforts of African countries to formulate and/or enhance their institutional and legal frameworks, policies and guidelines for negotiating, financing and managing triangular co-operation. As more countries in Africa are building ecosystems, e.g. strategies, agencies or dedicated units, to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation (e.g. Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, Egypt, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda), African countries could act more as pivotal partners, sharing their valuable experiences and innovations.

**Engage in trustful partnerships based on open communication and the recognition of socio-cultural differences as the cornerstone of successful triangular co-operation initiatives:** Often misunderstandings among partners in triangular co-operation and delays in project implementation are due to differing understandings of the objectives and lack of a common cultural language. For instance, a development partner may expect partners to openly disagree on project objectives, whereas for the partner this is culturally insensitive, as the communication style is more indirect and not one of open confrontation. Therefore, partners should consider establishing a communication strategy and a common understanding of the project objectives at the beginning of a project life cycle in order to build a respectful and horizontal partnership structure and to mitigate potential conflicts in triangular co-operation projects.

**Systematically mobilise the added value of triangular co-operation in development co-operation:** Triangular co-operation needs to be mainstreamed into thematic discussions, e.g. in the area of climate change, global public health, education, agriculture, etc. For instance, the Development Bank of Southern Africa has introduced triangular co-operation as part of the discussions on financing for sustainable

development, bringing the modality of co-operation closer to thematic discussions on combining different sources of concessional and non-concessional finance with technical assistance.

**Conduct more research, reporting, learning and knowledge management on triangular co-operation to make good use of the full potential of triangular co-operation to support African countries:** Development partners should step up their reporting of triangular co-operation, enhance knowledge of the modality by labelling their partnerships as triangular co-operation and monitoring of country case studies. Lessons learnt on the opportunities and challenges of implementing triangular co-operation could be shared with relevant stakeholders at local and international levels, which can also help increase triangular co-operation's effectiveness and replicability.

# 1 Global and African trends in triangular co-operation

International co-operation is at a turning point. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has turned the world upside down and acts as a disruptor and an accelerator of megatrends in development co-operation. The development co-operation community is at a strategic moment to harness innovative thinking, as United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres highlights:

*The pandemic is a clear test of international co-operation – a test we have essentially failed. [...] This was the result of a lack of global preparedness, co-operation, unity and solidarity. [...] We urgently need innovative thinking on global governance and multilateralism, so that they are fit for the 21st century.*

– UN Secretary-General António Guterres in a video message to the UN Security Council on 24 September 2020 (UN, 2020<sup>[4]</sup>)

The outcomes of the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA+40) in 2019 provided an important political impetus to triangular co-operation. At BAPA+40, UN members acknowledged that triangular co-operation builds partnerships and trust between all partners, combining diverse resources and capacities, under the ownership of the requesting country, to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereafter the “2030 Agenda”) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, BAPA+40 provided a unique opportunity to review the lessons learned since the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) was agreed in 1978 – where triangular co-operation did not feature yet – while identifying new mechanisms and areas for triangular co-operation to add value and have a renewed and important impact.

## Understanding triangular co-operation

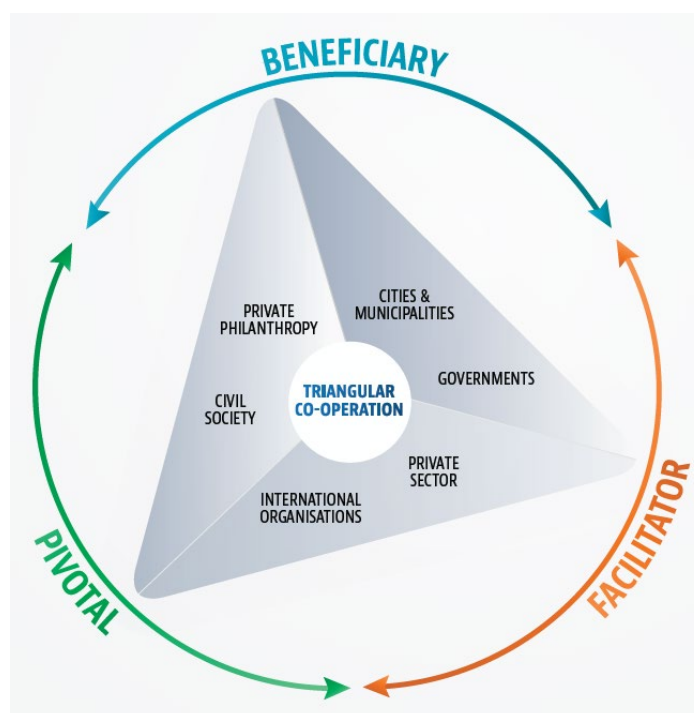
In line with the universal spirit of the 2030 Agenda, no country is too poor to share lessons, and no country is too rich to learn. As a means of implementing the 17 SDGs, triangular co-operation embodies this spirit. Three types of partners play a role in triangular co-operation:

1. **a beneficiary partner**, which requests support to tackle a specific development challenge
2. **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
3. **a facilitating partner**, which may help connect the other partners and supports the partnership financially and/or with technical expertise.

These roles might evolve and involve the three partners working together in the formulation of the project in a partnership that brings added value to traditional bilateral co-operation, and following to the extent possible, the development strategies defined by the beneficiary partner. Partners include countries (at national and sub-national levels), international organisations, civil society, private philanthropy, the private

sector and academia (Figure 1.1). All partners share knowledge and expertise, often encouraging innovation and co-creation through mutual learning, which can eventually lead to mutual benefits (GPI on Effective Triangular Cooperation, 2019<sup>[5]</sup>).

**Figure 1.1. Understanding triangular co-operation**



Source: Authors' own visualisation.

In African regional and civil society organisations, triangular co-operation is often associated with or replaced by the concept of “circular innovation”. This refers to a specific kind of triangular co-operation where an innovation that has been adopted in a pivotal country is scaled up through the support of a facilitator – often a Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member or an international organisation – and then shared with other African country in the region to expand the potential of the innovation to achieve catalytic impact in support of the 2030 Agenda.<sup>1</sup> As such, the African experience in use of triangular co-operation to extend innovation provides a strong evidence base to extend the use of innovation in other regions.

### The value-added of triangular co-operation

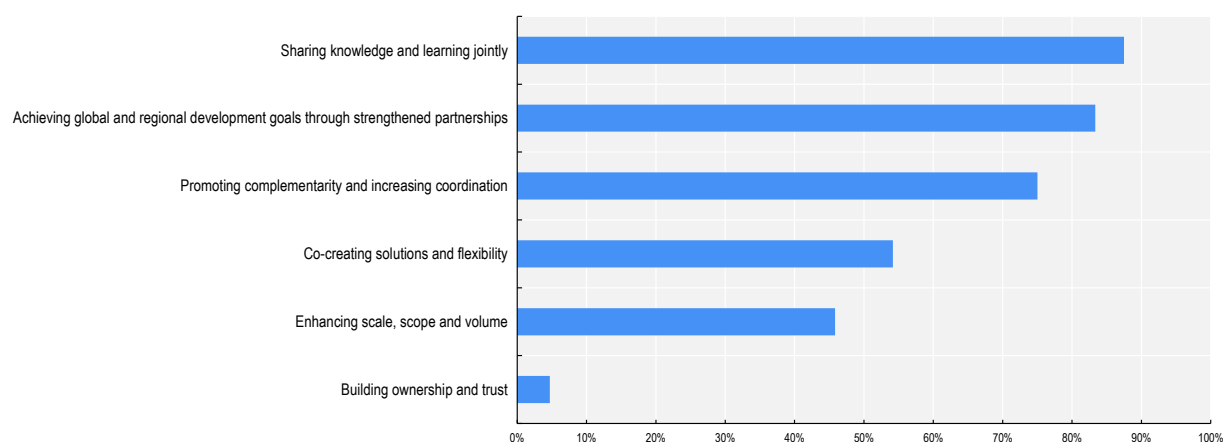
Triangular co-operation complements South-South and North-South co-operation, bringing value to both modes of co-operation. It does so by providing a broader base and platform for learning and sharing experiences than bilateral co-operation by diversifying resources, technical expertise and a wide range of experiences, which have been gathered over time. It also offers ample possibilities for African countries to take up different roles. For instance, depending on the area of co-operation, Kenya engages as a pivotal partner (e.g. in digitalisation, digital finance, financial inclusion) or as a beneficiary (e.g. food security).<sup>2</sup>

African countries have extensive experience and innovations to share, with a preference for identifying African home-grown solutions first before turning to traditional development partnerships. For example, previously, if an African airline was facing problems, it looked to Air France, British Airways or Lufthansa;

now, Ethiopian Airlines is an example for the rest of the continent for aviation mobility and excellence.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, cultural influences from emerging economies are expanding. Examples include the increase of Chinese language and cultural institutes, movies, music, scholarships to study in China, cultural institutes from Arab countries, complementing the already existing offers from Europe and North America.<sup>4</sup> These developments also create new pathways and opportunities for triangular co-operation models, where new African solutions with cross-border or transformative potential can be facilitated by a third partner.

This demand was clearly reflected in the results of an survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in August and October 2020, where 23 representatives from 14 African countries provided views on the value of triangular co-operation.<sup>5</sup> When asked about the areas identified in the OECD's Toolkit for identifying, monitoring and evaluating the value-added of triangular co-operation (OECD, 2018<sup>[6]</sup>), sharing knowledge and learning jointly (86%) was considered the key value-added, followed by achieving global and regional development goals through strengthened partnerships and promoting complementarity and increasing co-ordination (both 81%). Co-creating solutions and flexibility (52%) came next, followed by enhancing scale, scope and volume (48%) and building ownership and trust (48%) (Figure 1.2). Interestingly, building ownership and trust comes late among the survey respondents, whereas it was the first thing that most interview partners (see Annex A) mentioned, and that research on the beneficiary perspective in triangular co-operation (Kamwengo, 2020<sup>[7]</sup>) was found to be a key value-add for triangular co-operation.

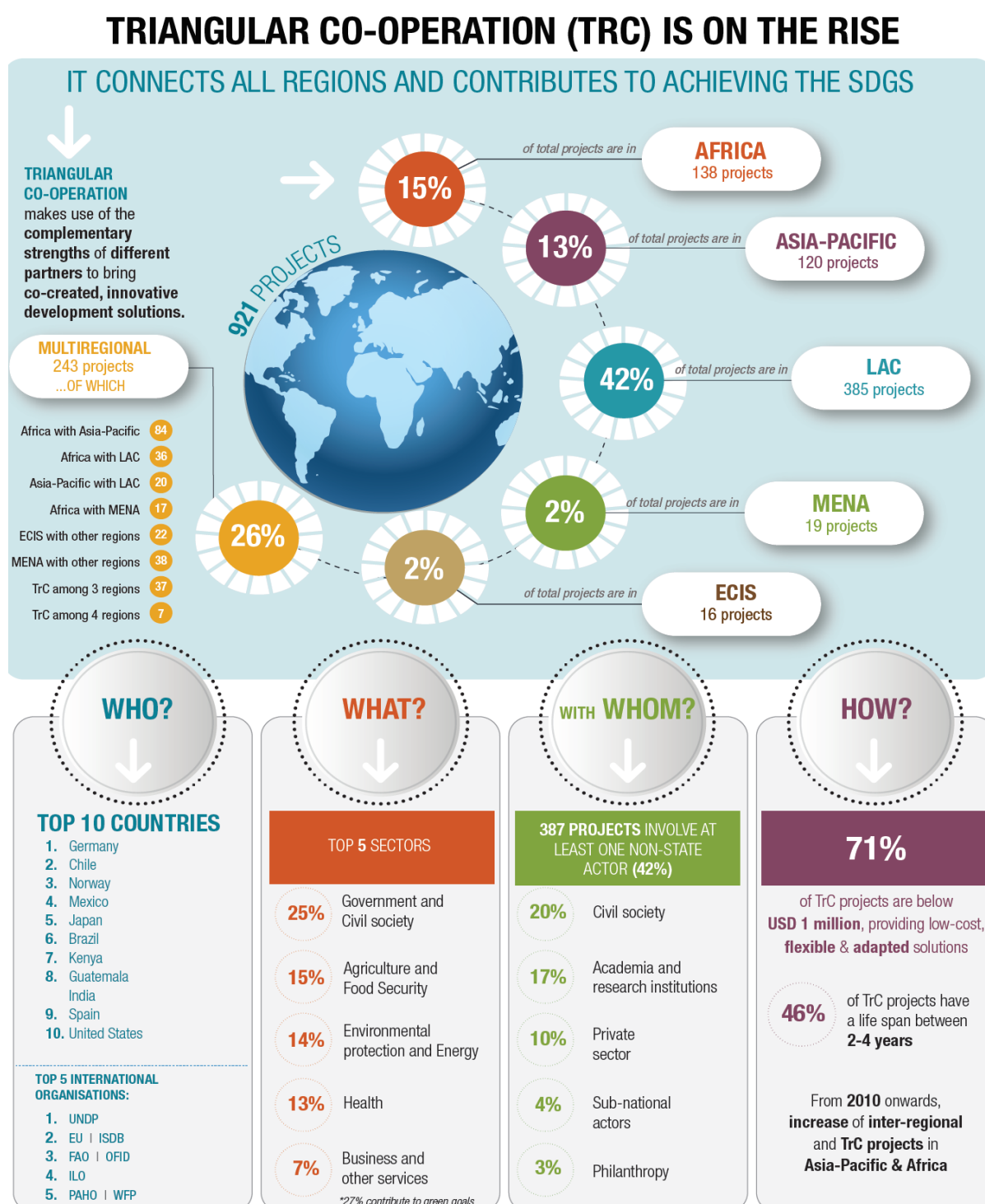
**Figure 1.2. Perception of the value-added of triangular co-operation among African survey respondents**



Source: E-survey conducted by UNDP (2022<sup>[3]</sup>), [Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery through Ushikamano wa Pan-Africa | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://www.un.org/development/dpd/publications/accelerating-covid-19-recovery-through-ushikamano-wa-pan-africa)

As of July 2021, the OECD online triangular co-operation project repository houses information on 921 triangular co-operation projects worldwide (Figure 1.3). Of these, 42% were in the LAC region, 15% in Africa<sup>6</sup>, 13% in the Asia-Pacific region, 2% in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA)<sup>7</sup> and another 2% in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS). The remaining 26% are triangular partnerships that span different regions, of which 35% are between partners from Africa and Asia-Pacific, 15% between African and LAC partners and 8% between LAC and Asia-Pacific. In comparison, in 2016 the repository housed 396 projects with 56% implemented in Latin America and the Caribbean, 14% in Africa, 13% in the Asia-Pacific region, and 18% of the triangular co-operation projects reported involved more than one region (OECD, 2017<sup>[1]</sup>). When adding the multi-regional projects that involve African partners, 21% of projects were in Africa in 2016.

Figure 1.3. Triangular co-operation worldwide



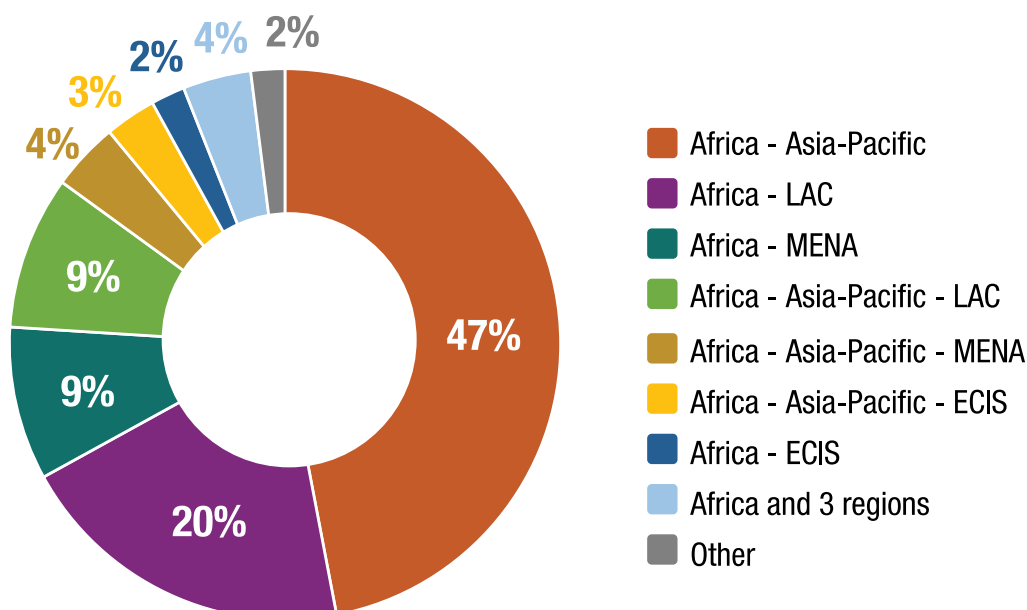
Note: UNDP = United Nations Development Programme; EU = European Union; ISDB = Islamic Development Bank; FAO = Food and Agriculture Organization; OFID = OPEC Fund for International Development; ILO = International Labour Organization; PAHO = Pan American Health Organization; WFP = World Food Programme.

Source: Authors' own visualisation.

The top five sectors for triangular co-operation globally are government and civil society (25%), i.e. projects addressing governance issues ranging from fiscal reforms to housing policies and working with civil society partners, followed by agriculture and food security (15%), environmental protection and energy (14%), health (13%), and business and other services (7%). Over one-quarter of triangular co-operation projects contribute to green goals, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity, desertification and local environmental issues (e.g. water and air pollution, waste disposal).

Africa hosts most multi-regional triangular partnerships. Adding these multi-regional partnerships to the intra-African initiatives, 36% (330 projects) of the triangular co-operation projects in the OECD's online repository involved one or more African countries (see Figure 1.4).

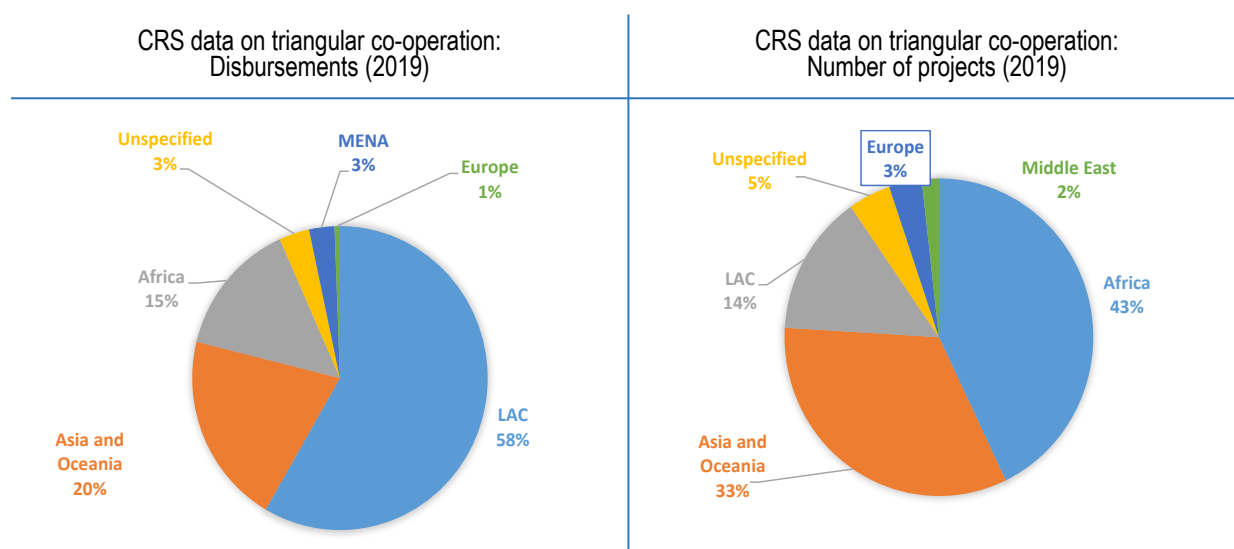
**Figure 1.4. Africa's multi-regional partnerships**



Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

The OECD's Creditor Reporting System, the statistics for Official Development Assistance (ODA), also includes a code on triangular co-operation, which DAC members have increasingly been using since its introduction in 2016. For the data collection in 2019, 13 out of 30 DAC members reported their triangular co-operation initiatives in the DAC statistics. Interestingly, the regional overview differs when looking at disbursements of ODA versus number of projects in 2019 (Figure 1.5). The left pie chart shows that most ODA for triangular co-operation is being disbursed to LAC (58%) with only 15% of disbursements going to Africa. When looking at the number of projects, 43% are implemented in Africa and only 14% in LAC. This is partly due to Norway's reporting of triangular co-operation projects in the area of personnel exchange, which are mainly implemented in Africa and Asia with relatively low budgets (see Box 1.1).

Figure 1.5. Regional overview of triangular co-operation from DAC CRS data



Source: OECD (2021<sup>[9]</sup>), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

## Where and how is triangular co-operation happening in Africa?

When comparing data on African triangular co-operation projects with that of other regions, some interesting findings emerge with regard to the nature of the partnerships, co-operation sectors, budgets, duration, and finally when comparing it to bilateral ODA to Africa from members of the OECD DAC. Despite a lack of comparable statistical data on triangular co-operation, the OECD's online triangular co-operation project repository is a useful resource that can indicate potential trends and help identify key gaps in the knowledge base where future work is required.

### ***African champions of triangular co-operation are also among the top ten beneficiaries of ODA in Africa***

According to the statistics collected through the OECD's Creditor Reporting System, in 2019, the African continent received the highest net ODA at USD 57.7 billion, ahead of Asia at USD 47.7 billion. Comparing Tables 1.1 and 1.2 reveals that five countries appear in both top ten lists – that of the DAC beneficiaries of ODA and that of the top ten African countries involved in triangular co-operation in the OECD's online project repository<sup>8</sup>: Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda.

Table 1.1. Top ten ODA beneficiaries in Africa (2019)

Rank	Country	Amount (USD million)	Percentage of ODA to Africa
1	Ethiopia	4 677	8%
2	Nigeria	3 277	6%
3	Kenya	3 173	6%
4	Democratic Republic of the Congo	2 810	5%
5	Tanzania	2 126	4%
6	Uganda	2 030	4%
7	Mozambique	1 841	3%
8	Mali	1 816	3%
9	Somalia	1 720	3%
10	Egypt	1 709	3%

Other African beneficiaries of ODA	32 494	56%
Total	56 673	100%

Source: OECD (2021<sup>[9]</sup>), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), ODA to Africa – Summary, <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

**Table 1.2. Top ten African countries in triangular co-operation**

Rank	Country	Number of triangular partnerships
1	Kenya	93
2	Tanzania	64
3	Uganda	63
4	Ethiopia	62
5	Mozambique	57
6	Malawi	46
7	South Africa	45
8	Zambia	37
9	Ghana	36
10	Senegal	35

Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

Both top-ten lists feature countries that are currently, or for a longer time, have been categorised as fragile contexts, e.g. Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda. The OECD defines fragility as the combination of exposure to risk in five areas – economic, environmental, political, social and security – and the insufficient capacity of the state or system to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks (OECD, 2020<sup>[10]</sup>). Research by Cooperation Canada and interviews with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) representatives reveal that triangular co-operation is regarded as especially useful in fragile contexts due to the role of the pivotal partner, which is often from the same region and may have easier physical and cultural access (Abdelnaiem and Kindornay, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>). For instance, in a triangular co-operation with Cambodia, Uganda and Kenya, JICA provides support to build up the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation. Meanwhile, Cambodia shares its experiences in the water sector as a post-conflict country, and Ugandan and Kenyan water treatment facilities can be used by all partners to train colleagues from South Sudan. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this support to the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation was crucial in maintaining a clean and safe water supply in the capital city of Juba.<sup>9</sup>

The comparison of Tables 1.1 and 1.2 suggests that bilateral co-operation is often the basis for triangular partnerships (OECD, 2019<sup>[12]</sup>). Comparing Africa's partners for bilateral and triangular co-operation shows some differences, but also commonalities, as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan are among the top ten partners in both forms of co-operation (see Tables 1.3 and 1.4).

**Table 1.3. Top ten providers of ODA to Africa (2019)**

Rank	Country	Amount (USD million)
1	International Development Agency	10 537
2	United States	9 572
3	European Union Institutions	6 831
4	Germany	4 549
5	United Kingdom	3 814
6	France	2 950

7	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	2 591
8	African Development Bank	1 650
9	Japan	1 572
10	United Arab Emirates	1 157

Source: OECD (2021<sup>[9]</sup>), *Creditor Reporting System* (database), ODA to Africa – Summary, <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>.

**Table 1.4. Top ten most active triangular co-operation partners in Africa (since 1996)**

Rank	Country	Partnerships
1	Norway	67
2	India	44
3	Brazil	39
4	United Kingdom	30
5	Japan	29
6	Germany	25
6	United States	25
7	China (People's Republic of)	23
8	Islamic Development Bank	21
9	Canada	18
9	Indonesia	18
9	United Nations Development Programme	18
10	OPEC Fund for International Development	16

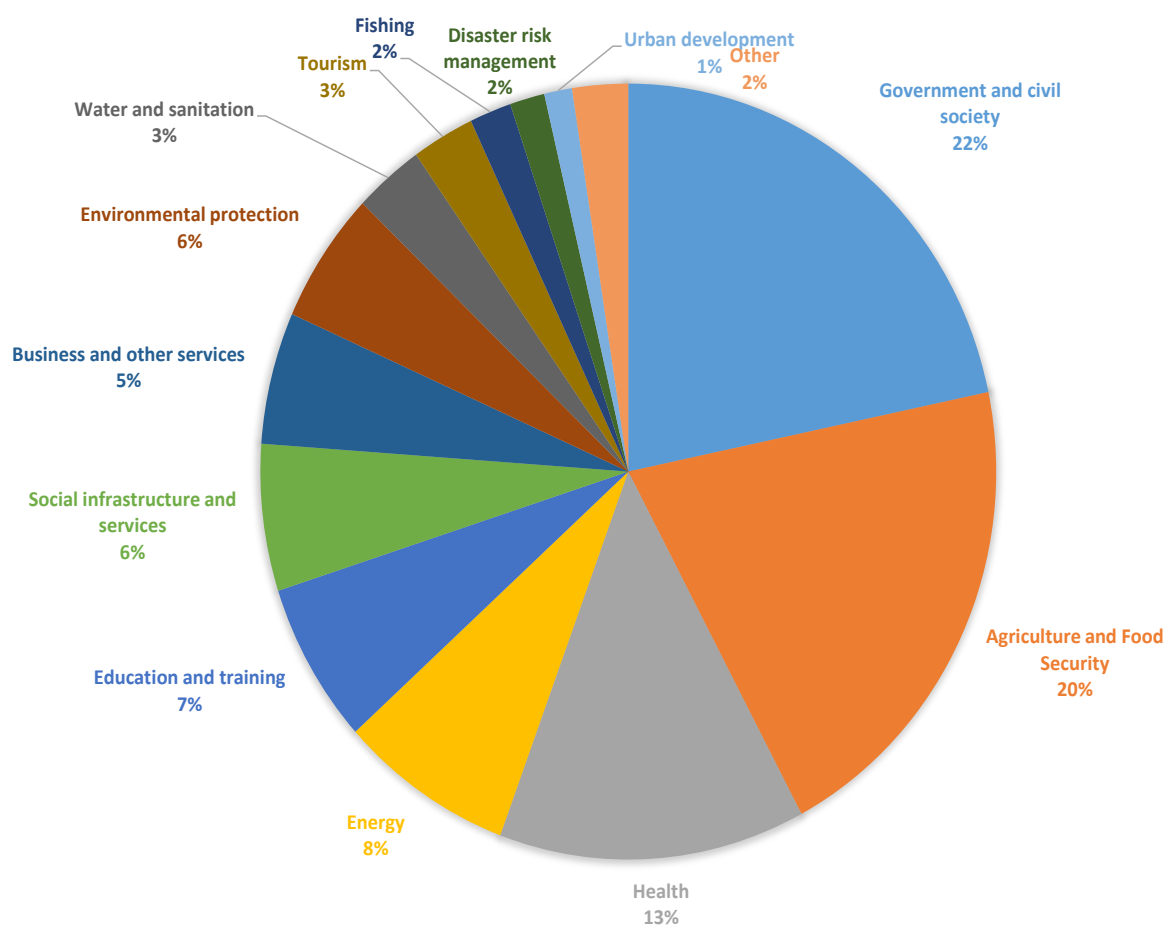
Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

Based on evidence collected through the OECD's online repository of triangular co-operation projects, Norway is the most active partner that engages in the highest amount of triangular co-operation projects with African countries (Box 1.1), followed by India, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and the United States. The importance of multilateral organisations as partners in triangular co-operation with Africa is shown by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development's (OFID) prominence in the top-ten list.

### ***African countries and their partners co-operate on similar topics bilaterally and through triangular partnerships***

Over half of the triangular co-operation projects in Africa are taking place in the areas of government and civil society (22%), agriculture and food security (20%) and health (13%). These match what would be expected from bilateral North-South co-operation. What follows is fewer projects in the sectors of energy (8%), education and training (7%), environmental protection (6%), social infrastructure and services (6%), and business and other services (5%). Despite the megatrend of rapidly growing cities in Africa, only 1% of the triangular co-operation projects are happening in urban development (see Figure 1.6).

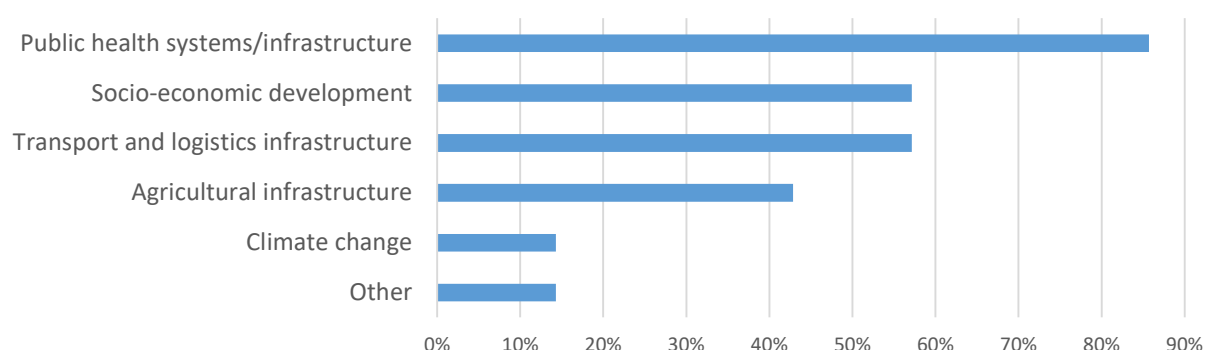
Figure 1.6. Sectors of triangular co-operation in Africa



Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

In response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, African respondents to a 2020 UNDP e-survey stated that public health systems/infrastructure (86%) is the main area where South-South and triangular co-operation initiatives contributed to the COVID-19 response in Africa, followed by socio-economic development and transport and logistics infrastructure (both 57%), agricultural infrastructure (43%), climate change (14%) and public financial management reforms/public works (14%) (see Figure 1.7).

**Figure 1.7. Main sectors of existing South-South and triangular co-operation initiatives contributing to the COVID-19 response in Africa**



Source: E-survey conducted by UNDP (2022<sup>[3]</sup>), [Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery through Ushikamano wa Pan-Africa | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#).

***Triangular co-operation with Africa attracts larger budgets and longer durations than in other parts of the world***

Looking at the reported budgets and duration for triangular co-operation projects in Africa and comparing them with the figures reported globally for triangular co-operation, Africa engages in longer and larger projects and programmes (see Tables 1.5 and 1.6).<sup>10</sup> Over one-third (34%) of triangular co-operation in Africa has a volume of USD 1-5 million, and 19% are USD 5 million or more. In comparison, 48% of global triangular co-operation projects have a budget below USD 500 000, 21% are USD 1-5 million and only 10% over USD 5 million.

### Table 1.5. Budget ranges of triangular co-operation projects in Africa

Budget range	No. of projects in Africa	Percentage (Africa)	No. of projects globally	Percentage (globally)
Less than USD 100 000	20	9%	144	21%
Between USD 100 000 and 500 000	45	20%	183	27%
Between USD 500 000 and 1 000 000	40	18%	140	21%
Between USD 1 000 000 and 5 000 000	75	34%	146	21%
Between USD 5 000 000 and 10 000 000	10	5%	15	2%
More than USD 10 000 000	32	14%	51	8%
Total	222	100%	679	100%

Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

These figures are the budgets reported by one (or more of the partners) and often do not capture all contributions to the project. For instance, South Africa always works in co-financing arrangements with its partners, as do many DAC members. Often, only one partner's contributions will be shared in the OECD's online project repository, while the total budget of the project or programme may be higher. Furthermore, triangular co-operation is a modality where all partners contribute in-kind contributions, which are usually not monetised. Financing from the facilitating partner tends to cover the project manager's salary, foreign travel, and equipment purchases. However, beneficiary and pivotal partners each cover the costs of project focal persons and the cost of capacity-building workshops held locally. Sharing costs and responsibilities in triangular co-operation, encourages country ownership and horizontality in partnerships.

While triangular co-operation projects with African partners share similar trends in terms of duration, as most global projects receive large amounts, lasting between two and three years, Table 1.6 shows that some African partners engage in exceptionally long triangular partnerships. One such example is a triangular partnership of the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) and Japan to enhance KEFRI's capacity, which started in 1996. Initially a bilateral co-operation, over the past 25 years, this triangular project evolved into a regional hub, diffusing knowledge to other countries in the region. By 2019, about 500 participants from 20 eastern, central and southern African countries have benefited from training (OECD, 2019<sup>[12]</sup>) at KEFRI.

**Table 1.6. Durations of triangular co-operation projects in Africa**

Duration	No. of projects in Africa	Percentage (Africa)	No. of projects globally	Percentage (globally)
Less than 12 months	31	11%	113	14%
Between 13 and 24 months	37	14%	112	14%
Between 25 and 36 months	52	19%	241	30%
Between 37 and 48 months	44	16%	135	17%
Between 49 and 60 months	42	16%	87	11%
Between 61 and 72 months	19	7%	41	5%
Between 73 and 84 months	10	4%	18	2%
Between 85 and 96 months	6	2%	10	1%
Over 96 months	29	11%	41	5%
Total	270	100%	798	100%

Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

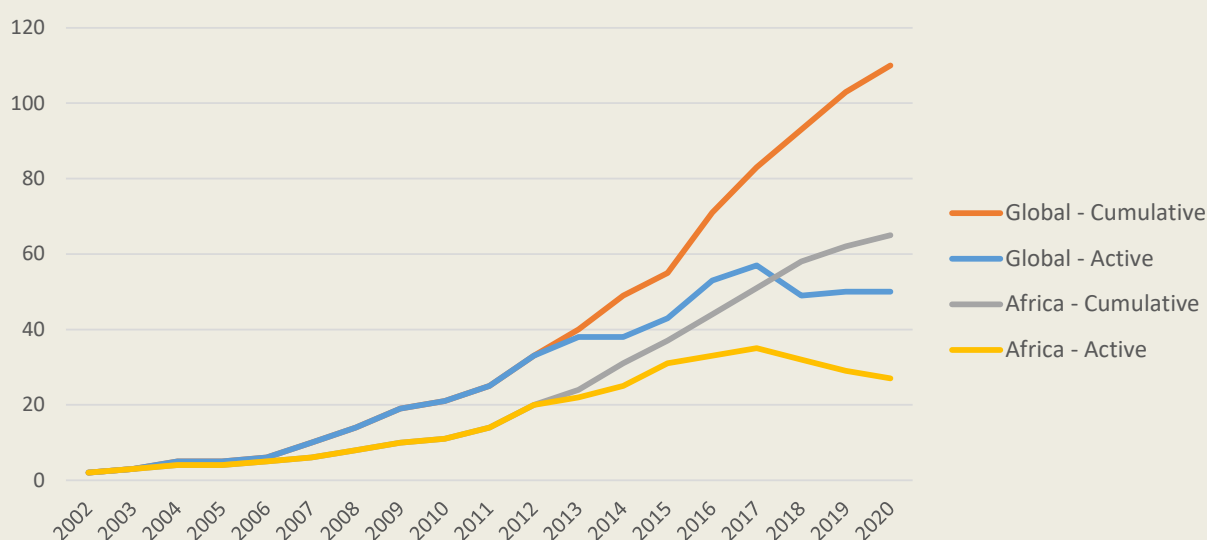
To illustrate the data presented in this section, Box 1.1 provides a snapshot of how Norway's triangular co-operation projects evolved. Norway has provided very detailed and complete data on its triangular partnerships since 2002 for the OECD's online repository, and a stark increase of projects since 2015 until today can be observed (see Figure 1.8).

### **Box 1.1. The evolution of Norway's engagement in triangular co-operation with Africa**

According to data shared in the OECD's online project repository Norway is the most active partner in triangular co-operation projects in Africa. Most of these triangular partnerships are supported by the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Co-operation (NOREC), which is one of three agencies responsible for Norwegian development co-operation alongside the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) and the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (NORFUND). NOREC is a platform for exchange and networking for development co-operation.

Of the 111 triangular co-operation projects from 2002 to 2020 that NOREC shared in the OECD's online project repository, 60% (67 projects) involved at least one African partner. Between 2002 and 2015, the number of new projects per year ranged from 2 to 9, while this has increased to between 8 and 16 from 2016 onwards – with roughly 50 active projects per year since 2016 (see Figure 1.8).

**Figure 1.8. Evolution of NOREC's triangular co-operation in Africa and globally**



Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>.

NOREC is engaged in 19 African countries, mainly in eastern and southern Africa. Overall, NOREC engages primarily in the sectors of government and civil society, followed by health, and education and training.

## Notes

1. Interview with a representative of Allsight Africa on 27 April 2021.
2. Interview with a representative from Kenya on 29 April 2021.
3. Interview with a representative of the Institute for Global Dialogue, South Africa on 26 October 2020.
4. Interview with a representative of the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa on 26 October 2020.
5. Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zambia. The original survey was also shared with UNDP China and Chinese partners, receiving three responses from China. As the focus of this paper is on African perspectives in triangular co-operation, these survey responses were not considered for the analysis.
6. Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger,

Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

7. Countries in North Africa are classified as Africa if in a project with other African countries. If project involves countries from Middle-East, North African countries are classified as MENA.

8. The comparison of data from the DAC CRS and the OECD's online triangular co-operation project repository is indicative. Due to the lack of robust and comparable data on triangular co-operation, the online repository provides an overview of partners, sectors, budgets and durations of triangular co-operation projects that were reported on a voluntary basis to the OECD or where information is publicly available. The OECD DAC CRS follows a robust and comparable statistical method of data collection every year.

9. Interview with the South Sudan Urban Water Corporation on 12 July 2019; OECD (2019<sup>[12]</sup>) and information on JICA's website (2020<sup>[71]</sup>).

10. For Tables 1.5 and 1.6, it is important to bear in mind that budgets and duration were neither indicated for all 330 triangular partnerships in Africa, nor for triangular co-operation globally.

## 2 Opportunities for triangular co-operation with Africa: fostering partnerships to address development (mega-) trends

The publication of *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* by the African Union (AU) in 2013 outlined the development aspirations that African countries want to achieve over a 50-year period. These aspirations are centred on economic diversification, digitalisation, human resource development, good governance and inclusive regional and global co-operation. The plans in the document align with the national development priorities of African countries and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This makes Agenda 2063 a constructive framework for development partners to understand African needs, challenges, and aspirations as defined by the owners and drivers of the development process.

Triangular co-operation has high potential to address three megatrends that have been identified as critical to African development in the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 (IDS and ASul, 2019<sup>[13]</sup>), (DSI-OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>). These are:

- information and communication technology
- environment and climate change
- demographic changes (youth employment, urbanisation and international mobility).

These megatrends align with the development plans of African countries, their co-operation priorities with development partners, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There is scope for increased partnerships to address megatrends, as Table 2.1 summarising the responses of 14 African countries to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) e-survey shows. Digitalisation was regarded as the most promising area for triangular co-operation (91%), followed by tackling climate change (77%), rapid urban growth (68%), environmental impacts (64%) and demographic changes (45%). Working on health issues related to infectious diseases was mentioned as another potential area for triangular co-operation.

**Table 2.1. Triangular co-operation as a suitable modality to address emerging and important megatrends in Africa**

Is triangular co-operation a suitable modality to address emerging and important megatrends in Africa?		
Yes	20	95%
No	1	5%
<b>If yes, which areas</b>		
Digitalisation	18	90%
Climate change	15	75%
Rapid urban growth	14	70%
Environmental impacts	12	60%
Demographic changes	10	50%
Other	1	5%

Source: E-survey conducted by UNDP (2022<sup>[3]</sup>), [Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery through Ushikamano wa Pan-Africa | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

## Embedding triangular co-operation into African partnerships

Africa has an extensive network of strategic partnerships that can be leveraged for triangular co-operation, while using Agenda 2063 as a framework for supporting African ownership. Bearing in mind the great diversity in Africa and specificities of different countries and/or (sub-) regions, triangular co-operation is a promising modality for addressing and incorporating the changing landscape of development partnerships in Africa. Yet, more efforts are need to enhance involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs), private sector and diasporic communities. The African Union and its institutions, as well as the Regional Economic Commissions, represent an important asset for structured triangular co-operation initiatives on the continent. In addition, some African countries are very active in South-South co-operation within the continent, and their contribution can be leveraged for more active triangular partnerships in Africa.

Most development partners, historic or new partners, and non-state actors have individual plans to support Africa's development. Triangular co-operation provides fertile ground for strengthening the effectiveness of all development partnerships with African countries. Strengthened co-operation will enable development partners to contribute to Agenda 2063, support collective action to tackle global challenges (such as climate change, migration and tax transparency alongside other governance issues), and ensure their plans correspond with Africa's rising economic and geopolitical importance.

African countries have a long history of economic and development partnerships with diverse state and non-state actors from around the world (see Table 2.2). Traditionally, Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members have been the leading providers of official development assistance (ODA) and other forms of support to African countries. This role continues while African countries are diversifying their partnerships. Partners from the global South (such as the People's Republic of China [hereafter "China"], India, Brazil, the Russian Federation, Türkiye and the Gulf countries) provide diverse forms of development co-operation, with a focus on infrastructure financing and technical co-operation. There is an emphasis on mutual benefits in South-South relations, and hence development co-operation is often used to generate commercial opportunities between the beneficiary country and the development co-operation provider.

Non-state actors from across the North-South divide, such as CSOs, philanthropic organisations as well as public-private partnerships, provide additional forms of economic and development co-operation. These partnerships complement each other and can be mobilised through triangular co-operation to address the persistent development challenges faced on the continent.

Table 2.2. Development partnerships in Africa

Type	Traditional development partners	Historical and new Southern partners	Regional blocs and mechanisms	Non-state actors	African diaspora	Foreign communities
Explanation	OECD DAC members and multilateral institutions	Countries and multilateral institutions from the global South	Intra-African mechanisms	Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), philanthropic organisations, public-private partnerships	Investments and knowledge transfers from Africans abroad	Business linkages between diaspora and countries of origin
Examples	Finland France Germany Japan Norway Portugal Sweden United Kingdom United States European Union African Development Bank United Nations World Bank	Brazil China Cuba India Kuwait Malaysia Russia Saudi Arabia Türkiye United Arab Emirates Islamic Development Bank New Development Bank OPEC Fund for International Development	African Union (including AUDA-NEPAD and APRM) Arab Maghreb Union Common Market for East and Southern Africa East African Community Economic Community of West African States Southern African Development Community	The Global Fund Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation NDC (Nationally Determined Contributions) Partnership	Mo Ibrahim Foundation Akoin Foundation African Foundation for Development	Indian Chinese Greek Lebanese

Source: Authors' own compilation.

South-South co-operation (SSC) is a form of transnational solidarity between countries from the global South that fosters political, economic, and development co-operation. It is borne out of shared experiences and common goals such as poverty reduction, sustainable growth and attaining self-reliance. Early manifestations of South-South co-operation include the 1955 Asia-Africa conference in Bandung, the promotion of Pan-Africanism through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) from 1963, and support for the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). Longstanding bilateral partners to Africa include Cuba's provision of medical personnel and training in the health sector, China's infrastructure financing, and Russia and India's technical assistance in the education sector. The 'rise of the global South' (Grovo, 2011<sup>[15]</sup>) since the 1990s has further diversified the composition of Africa's development partners. Leading more recent development partners include Brazil, Malaysia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and the United Arab Emirates. South Africa, Rwanda, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria and Senegal are at the forefront of promoting South-South co-operation within Africa.

Regional bodies such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) act as key forums for promoting and co-ordinating intra-Africa co-operation and development financing. Development financing has also emerged from regional and national development banks such as the Islamic Development Bank, and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID). The creation of the New Development Bank (NDB) and the US\$100 billion Contingency Reserve Arrangement by the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group of countries in 2014, has mobilised additional resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects for emerging economies and developing countries in Africa. The China International

Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) and mechanisms such as the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund and the Centre for International Knowledge on Development have also been established to enhance the effectiveness of its partnerships.

These partnerships provide a basis on which triangular co-operation initiatives are also being established. Linguistic and cultural ties open opportunities for triangular co-operation. For instance, Brazil and Portugal act as pivotal and facilitating partners in triangular co-operation initiatives in Mozambique (Box 2.1).

### Box 2.1. Mozambique's triangular partnerships: Making good use of linguistic ties

Mozambique is among the most active African countries in triangular co-operation. Yet, most activities are *ad hoc* or based on previous bilateral co-operation. A co-ordinated strategy to engage in triangular partnerships would support further engagement in this modality. Mozambique is receiving many offers for support from DAC members and providers beyond the DAC membership for bilateral programmes and projects with higher volumes than would be the case for triangular co-operation. For instance, China is one of Mozambique's main partners at present, with influence in the capital city of Maputo and beyond.

At the same time, Portugal is increasing its engagement in triangular co-operation projects with Mozambique. Partners are mostly from Latin America, mainly Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. Co-operation is formalised through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), by scaling up bilateral co-operation or including a trilateral component in larger bilateral programmes (e.g. in the health sector). Triangular co-operation also provides an entry point to countries new to working with Mozambique, as is the case with Argentina providing capacity development and training on biotechnology and water treatment.

An example of making good use of the linguistic proximity between Mozambique, Brazil and Portugal is the triangular co-operation on "Sustainable Coffee Production in Gorongosa National Park". Although a consolidated and large-scale coffee producer, Mozambique faces issues with deforestation and climate change with potential impacts on coffee production and the livelihood of coffee producers. The need to ensure sustainable agriculture in this value chain goes hand in hand with the long-term approach to ensure decent work and food security for local communities. Partners from Mozambique, Brazil and Portugal, including universities from both countries, all contribute resources to the project and combine their respective expertise and capacities in research and training. The governments of Mozambique and Brazil are actively engaged in the capacity-building scheme, and Portuguese institutions serve as facilitators in the triangular partnership, which aims to ensure longer-term public-policy commitment to the broader agenda of food security.

The sustainability of the project can be reinforced through all three partners' work within the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP). The project partners are assessing that this good experience could be shared and adapted to other Portuguese-speaking African countries, such as Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tome and Principe, owing to the lack of a language barrier, with due adjustment in terms of political engagement and value-chain focus.

Triangular co-operation is mentioned at times during the development partner co-ordination platforms in Maputo, where it could be discussed more strategically, as well as with Mozambique's South-South co-operation partners.

Source: Interviews in Maputo with representatives from the Ministry of Economic and Finance of Mozambique and the Embassy of Portugal to Mozambique on 20 November 2019; OECD (2022<sup>[16]</sup>), OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Portugal 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1787/550fb40e-en>; South-South Galaxy (n.d.<sup>[17]</sup>), *Brazil's Sustainable Coffee Production in Mozambique in an Integrated Agroforestry System in the Context of Deforestation, Climate Change and Food Security: Enhancing the Sustainability of the Coffee Production System*, <https://my.southsouth-galaxy.org/en/solutions/detail/brazils-sustainable-coffee-production-in-mozambique-in-an-integrated-agroforestry-system-in-the-context-of-deforestation-climate-change-and-food-security>.

There are vast opportunities to scale up the benefits of triangular co-operation through non-state development partners, as evidenced in the example provided in Box 2.1 highlighting how the Federal University of Espirito Santo (Brazil) and the University of Lisbon (Portugal) play key roles. Over one-fourth of the triangular co-operation projects that involve CSOs can be found in sub-Saharan Africa (27%), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (23%), Asia-Pacific (21.3%), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region (6.6%), and Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS, 4.1%) (Chaturvedi and Piefer-Söyler, 2021<sup>[18]</sup>). Of the 330 triangular co-operation projects with Africa, 66% (219 projects) involve partners beyond governments, which is above the global average. CSOs are involved in 82 projects, followed by academia (70 projects), the private sector (51 projects) and philanthropy (16 projects).

Private sector entrepreneurs, business associations and philanthropic organisations have great potential to become even more important partners in triangular co-operation with Africa than they are today. A significant number of triangular projects have facilitated knowledge exchanges and policy reforms that have increased private sector involvement in areas such as agriculture and renewable energies. For instance, Development Alternatives, an Indian social enterprise dedicated to sustainable development, works with Malawi, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Egypt on sharing innovations from the private sector in India in construction technologies with African countries. These innovations include new technologies in the renewable energy sector, water systems, clean cooking stoves, agricultural technologies or new types of cement. The potential and possibilities for exchange are large, but support – from government, international agencies and financial – is needed to lubricate these partnerships. A recent example is the Green Climate Fund's contribution of USD 50 million to a new project with Malawi.<sup>1</sup>

All 14 triangular co-operation projects with Africa that Canada shared in the OECD's online repository involve partners beyond the government. Canada sees explicit value and encourages its CSOs to engage as partners in triangular co-operation (Abdelnaiem and Kindornay, 2020<sup>[11]</sup>).

CSOs from countries with similar development challenges, such as the Indian Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), have valuable experiences to share with their partners in Africa and vice versa. An example is SEWA's bilateral co-operation with the International Domestic Workers Federation in Tanzania, exchanging study visits to both countries and, in a bottom-up approach, sharing lessons for women to organise themselves. The outcomes of this collaboration received attention at the highest political level in Tanzania, providing visibility to women working in the informal sector and eventually leading to new policies. There is scope to scale up these successful experiences throughout Tanzania and potentially in neighbouring countries, in a triangular partnership and through the support of a facilitator.<sup>2</sup>

Academic and research institutions are also key partners in triangular co-operation. Initiatives such as the United Kingdom's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) enable researchers and scientists from Africa to engage in capacity building and knowledge sharing with their peers from Europe, LAC and Asia. The GCRF's partnership with the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) also enables the production of innovative solutions to diverse development problems on the continent, including climate change, urban density and conflict. The Fund forms part of the United Kingdom's ODA and its distinctive approach to helping developing countries achieve the SDGs (UK BEIS, 2017<sup>[19]</sup>).

Beyond their celebrated role as sources of remittances, African diasporic communities are promoting technology transfer, good governance, skills development and entrepreneurship across the continent. This includes the work of start-ups, such as Susu, and organisations, such as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Akoin Foundation, and the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) (Susu, n.d.<sup>[20]</sup>; Mo Ibrahim Foundation, n.d.<sup>[21]</sup>; Akoin Foundation, n.d.<sup>[22]</sup>; AFFORD, n.d.<sup>[23]</sup>). Ethiopia, Rwanda, Liberia and Zimbabwe offer interesting lessons on how diaspora communities can reverse the challenges associated with brain drain and emerge as potential partners in triangular co-operation. The Ethiopia Diaspora Trust Fund is a non-profit organisation working in co-ordination with the Ethiopian government to finance people-focused social and economic development projects in health, education, water and sanitation, agricultural development, technology, small-scale entrepreneurship and social development sectors (EDTF, n.d.<sup>[24]</sup>). The Government of Rwanda has also created multiple incentives to secure the diasporic community's confidence to invest in the country. This includes the Diaspora Banking Services and a Diaspora Mortgage Facility offered by the Commercial Bank of Rwanda. Similarly, Liberia has established the Liberian Diaspora Fund, which functions as seed funding for small- and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, Zimbabwe's Diaspora Scholarship Fund mobilises funding from the diaspora to send talented Zimbabweans to universities around the world. These initiatives are outcomes of an African Union legacy project on diaspora investment through innovative finance adopted by member states in 2012 and incorporated in Agenda 2063 (African Union, n.d.<sup>[25]</sup>).

Diasporic communities also tend to be involved in advocacy and development policy making. The “early” adoption of dual nationality has enabled Rwanda to tap into skills that would otherwise not be available in the government and industrial sectors.<sup>3</sup> Several members of the Rwandan diaspora with dual nationality have returned to the country to serve as cabinet ministers, senior advisors and bureaucrats, which is a strategy that has contributed to Rwanda's development record over the past 20 years. Foreign diasporic communities are also enhancing the economic development of African countries, which has encouraged partner countries to support their diasporic communities living on the continent. For example, the Government of India's economic co-operation in Zambia has concentrated on supporting joint ventures between the Indian diaspora (both recent migrants and Africans of Indian heritage) and businesses from India operating in the pharmaceuticals, health, information and communication technology (ICT), transport and energy sectors (High Commission of the Republic of Zambia, n.d.<sup>[26]</sup>). Triangular co-operation projects, such as the Supporting Indian Trade and Investment for Africa (SITA) (Table 2.3, a triangular partnership facilitated by the UK and the International Trade Center (ITC), make explicit use of these linkages (GPI on Effective Triangular Cooperation, 2019<sup>[5]</sup>).

**Table 2.3. Supporting Indian Trade and Investment in Africa (SITA)**

Project title:	Supporting Indian Trade and Investment in Africa (SITA)	
Countries/ IOs	Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, India, United Kingdom, International Trade Centre (ITC)	
Objective:	Increased value of business transactions between India and selected East African countries by promoting investment, trade and technology partnerships	
Description of activities related to the case story topic:	<p>Despite an enormous untapped potential for trade expansion between India and Africa, data reveal that a limited number of products are currently being traded. India's trade with Africa is concentrated in certain sectors and countries, and it is dominated by exports of primary commodities. While the potential for export diversification exists, it may not be realised without targeted intervention. With the growing importance of South-South co-operation, India's expertise can be leveraged to build trade capacities in African partner countries through the sharing of knowledge, technology and lessons learnt. The project responds to the challenges that selected East African countries face in increasing and diversifying exports. It also addresses the trade priorities of the beneficiary countries so that they may achieve sustainable development. The objective will be achieved by enabling access to India's market and facilitating investment and transfer of Indian knowledge, expertise and technology to East Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting public-private dialogue and partnerships;</li> <li>- Improving capacities of East African companies and TSIs; and</li> <li>- Creating business linkages.</li> </ul>	
Project period:	2015-2020	

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019<sup>[5]</sup>), *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>

The following sections will provide a brief overview of each of the aforementioned (mega-) trends in Africa, together with examples of successful triangular co-operation in this area and ideas for future triangular partnerships. Some of the triangular initiatives portrayed in this chapter are not (yet) labelled as such but have the characteristics mentioned in Chapter 1 of three different roles contributing to the projects: the host country/ies or beneficiary, the pivotal partner and the facilitator.

## Digitalisation and information and communication technologies (ICTs)

African countries are aiming for an educated and skilled population underpinned by technology and innovation that can foster innovation and contribute to sustainable development (AUC/OECD, 2021<sup>[27]</sup>). Triangular co-operation can be mobilised to scale up the impact of digital innovations and facilitate Africa's socio-economic transformation during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic (Ramalingam and Kumpf, 2021<sup>[28]</sup>). For example, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) facilitates a triangular co-operation project with Mauritania and Tunisia that aims to improve financial inclusion in Mauritania through the development and adaptation of mobile-based financial services (Table 2.4). The project has enabled the Mauritanian Postal service to learn from the Tunisian Post's experience of establishing and operating a fast and secure mobile payment system (South-South Galaxy, n.d.<sup>[29]</sup>).

**Table 2.4. Sharing and adapting an innovative solution to enhance financial inclusion**

<b>Project title</b>	Developing a Platform for Mobile-Based Financial Services
<b>International organisations/countries</b>	Islamic Development Bank, Tunisia, Mauritania
<b>Other partners</b>	Tunisian Post (public sector), Digitus (Tunisian private sector), Mauritanian Post (public sector)
<b>Objective</b>	Enhancing financial inclusion in Mauritania
<b>Description of activities related to the case study topic</b>	Setting up a mobile-based financial services platform based on cloud architecture. Developing and deploying standard services, namely cash transfer and scholarship distribution. Developing MauriPost Digital Strategy to set the principles and orientations that it will adopt while providing mobile payments. Analysing the requirements of digitising the financial services of eight public and private entities. Developing and rolling out Mauritania-specific services such as paying the bills of public services and paying the monthly pensions for retirees. Implementing a communications campaign to inform Mauritanian citizens about the launch of the new services. Training MauriPost on operating the new platform, covering both frontline and backend functions.
<b>Budget</b>	USD 830 000
<b>Project period</b>	2020-21

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019<sup>[5]</sup>), *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>; UNOSSC (2020<sup>[30]</sup>), *Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development - Volume 3*, <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Good-Practices-in-SSTC-for-Sustainable-Development-Vol.-3-2020-Digital-FINAL.pdf>.

Digital innovations are renowned for supporting more equitable access to healthcare, information, trade, and education in African countries (Box 2.2). African innovations in the digital financial services (DFS) sector have generated the most attention for their contribution to spurring entrepreneurship, trade and increased savings on the continent. The most prominent platform *M-Pesa*, has inspired the development of mobile-phone based money transfer services across the world. *M-Pesa* and *Zipline* are both examples of innovations that (partly) originated in Africa and were scaled up through the support of a facilitator (UK, Safaricom, Vodafone, Zipline), by using the experience of a pivotal partner (Kenya, Rwanda). While not labelled as triangular co-operation, these partnerships align with the understanding put forward in Chapter

1. Through this co-operation, Kenya's experience has now been shared with other countries in rolling out *M-Pesa*. The Rwandan government supported Zipline's vision and was closely involved in developing and testing it. This experience is now used to share the drone technology with other African countries, the United States and Japan – making it a truly circular innovation.

### Box 2.2. Examples of digital innovations

#### **M-Pesa: From Kenya to the world**

M-Pesa has revolutionised the provision of financial services in Africa. Recognising the crucial role of the private sector, particularly the financial sector, the then UK Department for International Development (DFID) set up its first Financial Deepening Challenge Fund in 2000 with a volume of GBP 15 million. It offered organisations in 15 countries (12 in sub-Saharan Africa, plus India, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom) a chance to win grants of between GBP 50 000 and GBP 1 million. Safaricom and Vodafone in Kenya were among those winners and launched the first mobile-banking platform M-Pesa in 2005, providing mobile banking services for those who previously did not have any access to financial services. Based on the experiences in Kenya, M-Pesa has been introduced in Afghanistan, the Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mozambique, South Africa and Tanzania.

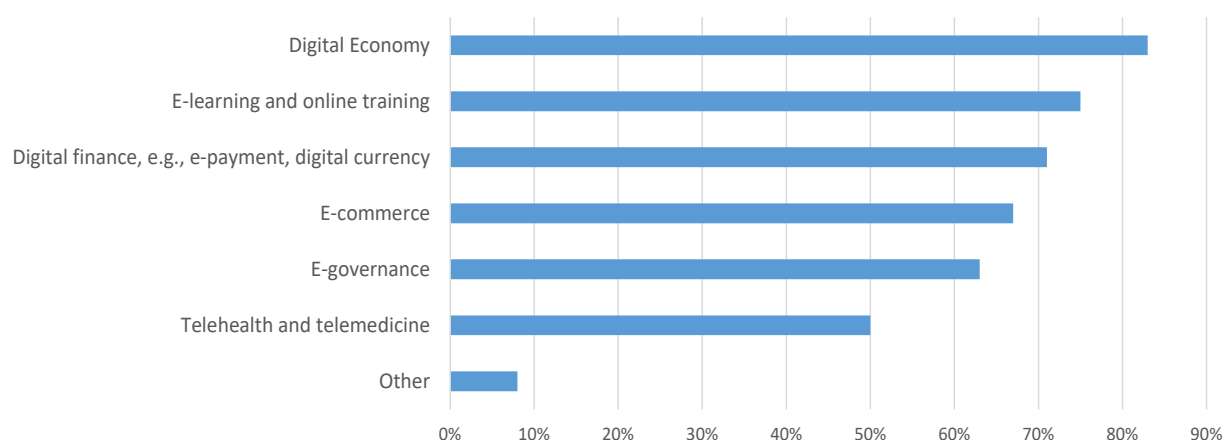
#### **Zipline: Innovating the delivery of vital medical supplies through drone delivery**

Zipline, a California based start-up, co-created its innovation of delivering much-needed medical supplies to remote areas in Africa via drones, together with a Tanzanian computer programmer and health researcher and the Government of Rwanda. Zipline started delivering blood products, vaccines and other medical supplies by unmanned drones to remote areas in Rwanda, which are not served well by the country's road infrastructure, in 2016. Using its experience working in Rwanda, Zipline then opened a new distribution centre in Ghana in 2018. The success in both African countries led to the United States authorising Zipline to operate in the United States in 2019. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Zipline signed an agreement with Pfizer to deliver vaccines in Ghana and Nigeria and is planning expansion into the Japanese market.

Source: Pompa (2013<sup>[31]</sup>), *Understanding Challenge Funds*; Ali and Phillips (2017<sup>[32]</sup>), "8 things we learned from running a challenge fund", <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/8-things-we-learned-running-challenge-fund>; Batchelor (2012<sup>[33]</sup>), "Changing the Financial Landscape of Africa: An Unusual Story of Evidence-informed Innovation, Intentional Policy Influence and Private Sector Engagement", *IDS Bulletin*, <http://doi.org/10.1111/J.1759-5436.2012.00367.X>; León (2021<sup>[34]</sup>), "Role of medical drones in global Covid vaccine campaign is growing", *CNBC Disruptor 50*, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/02/04/role-of-medical-drones-in-global-covid-vaccine-campaign-is-growing.html>; *Business Insider*, <https://www.businessinsider.fr/us/covid-vaccine-ghana-drones-covax-who-coronavirus-zipline-rural-communities-2021-3>; Zipline (n.d.<sup>[35]</sup>), "Zipline - Vital, On-Demand Delivery for the World", <https://flyzipline.com/>.

The above-mentioned examples of digital economy, e-learning, digital finance, and telemedicine align with the priorities that the respondents to the UNDP survey mentioned for important fields for South-South and triangular partnerships to strengthen the digital transformation in Africa (Figure 2.1).

**Figure 2.1. Important fields to strengthen the digital transformation in Africa**



Source: E-survey conducted by UNDP (2022<sup>[3]</sup>), *Accelerating COVID-19 Recovery through Ushikamano wa Pan-Africa*.

Overall, international organisations, businesses and African governments can work together to create digital policy frameworks that will support the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Specifically, reforms that can improve cross border e-commerce and trade on the continent through enhanced digital infrastructures, transportation, access to information and customs processes (UNOSSC, 2021<sup>[36]</sup>). These policies will create a conducive environment for business growth, innovation and revenue collection. Many countries are already taking the lead in spotting policy needs and use the diverse partnerships available to increase access to their digital innovations within and beyond the African continent. Rwanda, with its vision of transitioning from subsistence agriculture to a knowledge- and service-based society (Box 2.2), is such an example.

### Box 2.3. Rwanda's vision to become a digital hub in East Africa

Rwanda is committed to transitioning from subsistence agriculture to a knowledge and service-based society and becoming an ICT hub in East Africa. The Cabinet approved the Smart Rwanda Master Plan (SRMP) in 2015 – a strategic plan focussing on the digital transformation to build a knowledge-based economy. In its Development Co-operation Policy, Rwanda expects its development partners to support building the capacity of institutions to identify and implement innovative technologies that maximise development results and strengthen the environment for innovation. The National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) for 2017-24 and Rwanda's Vision 2050 put special emphasis on digital literacy, an area that Rwanda co-operates, e.g. with Germany. The Rwandan-German Digitalisation Fund and the Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development programme with its Digital Centre serve as enablers and provide a convening space for the Rwandan ICT community, bringing together innovators, start-ups and the private sector. Based on this strong institutional framework and existing development partnerships, best practices could be shared with other African countries, as the importance of digitalisation is rising and the number of digital centres in Africa is increasing.

An example of sharing experiences to meet the demands of knowledge-based industries in the education sector is the five-year "Skills for Employability" triangular co-operation project between Cameroon, Rwanda, Senegal, Canada and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) – Next Einstein Initiative (see Table 2.5).

**Table 2.5. Triangular co-operation to meet the demands of knowledge-based industries**

<b>Project title</b>	Skills for Employability
<b>Countries</b>	Cameroon, Rwanda, Senegal, Canada
<b>Other partners</b>	African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) – Next Einstein Initiative
<b>Objective</b>	To meet the demands of knowledge-based industries
<b>Description of activities related to the case study topic</b>	This project aims to meet the demands of knowledge-based industries by providing highly skilled training and support for the transition to work for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) scholars and students. The project also aims to increase access and opportunities for African women.
<b>Budget</b>	Between USD 500 000 and USD 1 000 000
<b>Project period</b>	2016-21

Source: OECD (n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation Repository of Projects* (database), <https://www.oecd.org/dac/dac-global-relations/triangular-co-operation-repository.htm>, Republic of Rwanda (2019<sup>[37]</sup>), *Rwanda Development Cooperation Policy*; Republic of Rwanda (2017<sup>[38]</sup>), *National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1) for 2017-2024*; MINICT (n.d.<sup>[39]</sup>), *Rwanda Ministry of ICT and Innovation*, <https://www.minict.gov.rw/>; and MINICT (n.d.<sup>[40]</sup>), *Digital Ambassadors Programme*, <https://www.minict.gov.rw/projects/digital-ambassadors-programme/>.

Different and innovative funding mechanisms for digitalisation and ICTs are already deployed in African trilateral approaches. Examples include the Southern African Innovation Support Programme (SAIS), 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. Aiming to scale innovations in southern Africa – in the ICT sector and beyond – SAIS is open for applications from all partner countries to incubate and scale up innovations in different sectors. In these innovation hubs from the five countries, large-scale funding is combined with technical assistance teams. Currently, in its second phase, the programme has also allowed Finland to access new ideas in the ICT sector and learn from countries in the southern African region. SADC has been a partner since the beginning, and it is planned to integrate the programme into SADC after the end of this second phase – enhancing sustainability and ensuring a continuation of the exchange and knowledge networks.<sup>4</sup>

## Environment and climate change

There is a global consensus that urgent action is needed to tackle climate change – not least after the launch of the 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on climate change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability. The SDGs and Agenda 2063 aspire to support African communities and economies to engage in environmentally sustainable and climate-smart practices that can protect the continent's rich biodiversity, forests, land and waters. Climatic changes have been linked to rising temperatures and extreme weather events across the globe. In 2020, heavy rains caused flooding, landslides and food insecurity in numerous countries, from the Sahel region to the Horn of Africa. Conversely, it is projected that drier than normal conditions – combined with the threat of desert locust invasions in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya – will continue to cause an increase in food prices or conflicts over resources due to unstable food/livestock production and incomes in countries with agricultural systems that rely on rainfall (FSIN and Global Network Against Food Crises, 2021<sup>[41]</sup>). Furthermore, public health restrictions implemented by African governments to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have further compounded food insecurity and uncertainty through border closures, high transport costs and an increase in input prices. Several African countries are also experiencing rapid population growth but struggle to produce sufficient food stocks to meet increasing demand (OECD and FAO, 2020<sup>[42]</sup>).

Although African countries only account for a small percentage of the total GHG global emissions, it is estimated that sub-Saharan Africa will contribute almost 44% of the global increase in direct emissions from agriculture and account for 17% of global direct emissions by 2029 (OECD and FAO, 2020<sup>[42]</sup>). African countries are also the most vulnerable and least prepared to deal with the impacts of climate change. Therefore, triangular co-operation can play a role in facilitating knowledge transfers and mutual learning on sustainable, climate-resilient and adaptive agricultural systems (Box 2.4). This includes opportunities for Africa's six small island developing states (SIDS) to engage in peer exchange with SIDS in other regions on their specific needs and challenges.<sup>5</sup>

#### Box 2.4. Africa-Brazil-United Kingdom triangular co-operation: Agricultural Innovation Marketplace (MKTPlace)

Some pivotal countries are in a prime position to share experiences with African countries: Brazil, for example, shares parallels in ecosystem, climate and agricultural practices. Those elements have presented opportunities for the joint generation and sharing of knowledge on sustainable farming practices and technologies in the agricultural sector. The Agricultural Innovation Marketplace (MKTPlace) is considered a successful model of Brazil's triangular co-operation with African countries. The MKTPlace was established in May 2010, in a partnership with the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa), the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), the then UK Department for International Development (DFID), the World Bank and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).<sup>6</sup> The MKTPlace fostered policy dialogue and knowledge sharing among researchers and institutions in Brazil, countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. It was a mechanism to channel demands from developing countries for technical co-operation and research for development (R4D) projects, which supported smallholder farmers aiming to promote rural and agricultural development (Table 2.6).

Table 2.6. Africa-Brazil-United Kingdom triangular co-operation: Agricultural Innovation Marketplace (MKTPlace)

<b>Programme title</b>	Africa-Brazil Agricultural Innovation Marketplace (MKTPlace)
<b>Countries/IOs</b>	Brazil, United Kingdom, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda World Bank, FARA, FAO, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), CIAT
<b>Philanthropy</b>	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
<b>Non-state actors</b>	3 projects (of 64) had a non-governmental organisation (NGO) as a partner institution, 15 academia and 1 private sector
<b>Objective</b>	To foster policy dialogue and knowledge sharing among researchers and institutions in Brazil and African countries supporting smallholder farmers and promoting rural development
<b>Description of activities</b>	The MKTPlace created a platform to channel demands and fund technical co-operation and R4D. The platform was based on three pillars: 1) policy dialogue; 2) knowledge sharing and management; and 3) collaborative R4D projects: matchmaking for innovation. The platform organised four international fora gathering partners for capacity development and funded 64 R4D projects in 13 African countries.
<b>Project budget</b>	USD 5 million
<b>Project period</b>	2010-18

Source: Reifschneider et al. (2016<sup>[43]</sup>), *Agricultural Innovation Marketplace: South-South Cooperation Beyond Theory*, <https://issuu.com/innovationmarketplace/docs/mktplace>.

During pilot trials, projects went through monitoring and evaluation processes to identify successful cases that could be scaled up through the "M-Boss Programme: Building on the Successes of the Africa-Brazil Marketplace". The M-Boss Programme, launched in November 2013, mainly with the

support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and UK-DFID, aimed to support scaling up successful projects of the MKTPlace. The programme invited the co-leaders of MKTPlace projects to present a larger proposal for a three-year project, with a budget between USD 300 000 and USD 700 000, focused on applying the results of their R4D projects. In total, the M-Boss partners mobilised USD 8.3 million and implemented 15 of the 64 projects with African countries.

Source: BRICS Policy Center and OUT3 (2019<sup>[44]</sup>), *Impact and Scalability study of Marketplace, Report to UK-FCDO, unpublished*; Reifschneider et al. (2016<sup>[43]</sup>), *Agricultural Innovation Marketplace: South-South Cooperation Beyond Theory*, <https://issuu.com/innovationmarketplace/docs/mktplace>.

India, another key partner for triangular co-operation with African countries, has useful experiences to share based on its agricultural innovations. The United States and India look back on five years of triangular co-operation (2015-20) to share Indian agricultural innovations through the “Feed the Future India Triangular Training Programme” with projects in nine Asian and 11 African countries<sup>7</sup> with a total US budget of USD 4.4 million.<sup>8</sup> This training programme aims to impart knowledge and skills to agricultural professionals about the technologies and approaches that helped India deal with its food security challenges. The triangular partnership is having a measurable impact with 887 agricultural professionals having completed training on various agricultural topics. These trainees upon their return to their home countries trained their colleagues and farmers; applied new technologies; and already created local impacts benefiting farmers. These impacts are being documented and quantified. These trainings created a critical mass of trained professionals in each of the target countries that could be leveraged for agricultural development. According to high-level Kenyan government officials, this triangular co-operation contributes to the Government’s “Big Four” initiative and Kenya requested continuing support in selected areas. Malawian senior government officials particularly appreciate the support from moving from a food-deficient to a food-surplus country (USAID, 2019<sup>[45]</sup>).

## Demographics changes

Africa is home to the world’s youngest, fastest-growing and urbanising population. It is estimated that 60% of the population on the continent will be below 25 years of age by 2030 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2021<sup>[46]</sup>). These demographics present significant opportunities and challenges for sustainable development that have to be managed, particularly with regard to how they impact youth employment, and rural-urban transitions.

### Youth employment

Agenda 2063 emphasises that African countries aim to have educated and empowered youth and children with access to early childhood development services, healthcare, recreational activities and employment opportunities that can enable them to realise their full potential. However, millions of young Africans were unemployed in 2019, including almost one-quarter of those living in the largest economies on the continent. This has made SDG 8 – Promote inclusive economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all – a priority for African governments.

As entrepreneurs, most African youths have difficulties in accessing financial capital, land and commercial markets. As discussed earlier, triangular co-operation in the area of digitalisation and ICT is creating vast opportunities for entrepreneurship through e-commerce and easy access to information on trade and investment regulations. Emerging triangular partnerships are also facilitating the development of policy plans to support youth entrepreneurship and the creation of decent jobs. For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is facilitating a triangular co-operation together with the Government of Spain and with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as pivotal partner to provide

technical and financial support to the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development. Through this triangular partnership, the Ministry can produce, monitor and evaluate the Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (NIYEAP) (Decent Jobs for Youth, n.d.<sup>[47]</sup>).

Most economic activity, waged employment and higher education institutions in African countries tend to be concentrated in urban areas. Consequently, rural youth often migrate to urban areas to search for better opportunities, but the loss of the working-age population in rural areas has, in turn, contributed to food insecurity in African countries, such as Zambia, that rely on rural smallholder agriculture (IFAD, n.d.<sup>[48]</sup>). The urban formal sector does not generate sufficient waged employment opportunities; as a result, the informal sector is the primary source of employment for most young Africans. Informal sector workers face challenges such as hazardous working conditions and low wages to punitive action from local governments. Triangular co-operation between trade unions in Belgium, Niger and Burkina Faso has shown that transnational solidarity and dialogue can help protect vulnerable informal sector workers (Table 2.7).

**Table 2.7. Improving informal sector working conditions in the Niger and Burkina Faso**

<b>Project title</b>	Network for Information Sharing among Trade Unions on Informal and Vulnerable Workers
<b>Countries/IOs</b>	Intersyndicale des Travailleurs du Niger (ITN); Unité d'Action Syndicale (UAS), Burkina Faso; Organisation for the Harmonisation of Corporate Law in Africa (HADA) Solidarity Support Centre; Movement for International Solidarity (MIS) of the General Confederation of Liberal Trade Unions (CGSLB) of Belgium
<b>Objective</b>	Strengthened trade union partners are able to improve social dialogue, contributing to more favourable working conditions for vulnerable workers in the informal and formal economy with a focus on women and youth
<b>Description of activities related to the case study topic</b>	Study visits for experience-sharing workshops to harmonise and improve the respective labour legislation and strengthen the union of action among trade unions at the national and regional levels, especially as far as workers in the informal economy are concerned. The Burkinabè and Niger unions have been working together since 2013 to compare their respective labour laws in order to identify elements favourable to workers and to advocate for uniform labour legislation at the West African Economic and Monetary Union level, especially as far as workers in the informal economy are concerned. These efforts are major and strategic, not only because they aim to strengthen workers' rights but also because they are carried out in inter-unions platforms. Such co-ordination also strengthened their capacity to work together at the national and regional levels vis-à-vis the regional integration institutions.
<b>Project period</b>	2012-16

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2019<sup>[5]</sup>), *Triangular Co-operation in the Era of the 2030 Agenda: Sharing Evidence and Stories from the Field*, p. 48, <https://triangular-cooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Final-GPI-report-BAPA40.pdf>.

### **Rural-urban transitions and urbanisation**

Despite most African states having policies designed to manage rural-urban migration, urbanisation has rapidly increased across the continent. The high urban population density has led to the sprawl of squatter settlements in large cities, pressured local government services and created planning and governance challenges. Triangular co-operation has great potential to support African states to manage these rural-urban transitions and urbanisation at the national and sub-national levels. Triangular co-operation can support the dissemination of best practices on water, sanitation and waste management in cities, social safety net programmes to support poor urban dwellers and affordable urban housing.

The Zimbabwe, Germany and South Africa (ZIGESA) Dialogue is an example of a peer-learning project between city councils and local government associations. This two-year collaboration was started in 2014 by the cities of Harare, Munich and eThekweni, facilitated by the German development co-operation, and funded under the South African-German Trilateral Co-operation Programme (GIZ, n.d.<sup>[49]</sup>). At the city level, officials from the twin cities of Harare and Munich collaborated with their counterparts at eThekweni Municipality to explore how local governments can use geographic information systems (GIS) to improve service delivery and boost revenue collection. The dialogue between the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the German Association of Cities (DST) and the Urban Councils Association of

Zimbabwe (UCAZ) explored opportunities for improving advocacy and lobbying services for their members and knowledge management in local government. The project resulted in establishing a network that has continued to facilitate exchanges between the cities after the project life cycle.

Furthermore, the FAO promotes city-to-city collaboration to exchange knowledge and practices on sustainable urban food systems. In this context, a triangular co-operation project promotes exchanging good practices on urban food waste reduction and management between Kigali, Nairobi and Milan. Due to COVID-19, the project that initially involved in-person and on-site training and exchange was adapted into a virtual training. Kigali and Nairobi will put in place systems that will improve food waste and loss, drawing on Milan's experience (GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation, 2021<sup>[50]</sup>).

## Public health

The COVID-19 pandemic has strained public health systems and produced economic shocks and uncertainties that put most African countries at risk of not meeting the SDGs. The rapid rate at which the coronavirus spread across the globe in 2020, has cast light on the importance of knowledge sharing and mutual learning. During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, several African countries led successful public health responses to contain the spread of the virus, using knowledge gained from the Ebola epidemic and other infectious disease outbreaks. South-South co-operation and regional blocs have played an important role in facilitating knowledge exchanges. The African Union's Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), which was established in 2017 to address Ebola, created an Africa Taskforce for Novel Coronavirus in 2020 to co-ordinate COVID-19 surveillance, emergency preparedness and joint funding to address the virus in member countries (UNOSSC, 2020<sup>[30]</sup>). Triangular co-operation also contributed to national COVID-19 responses and testing in African countries. Examples include Japan's strategic approach building on past triangular partnerships in the public health sector in African countries to support COVID-19 preparedness (Box 2.5).

### Box 2.5. Building resilience to respond to crises: Experiences from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

In response to the spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) launched the Partnership for Building Resilience against Public Health Emergencies through Advanced Research and Education (PREPARE) programme in 2017. The programme aimed at preparing and strengthening the capacity of African disease control experts to manage pandemics in their countries. Through triangular co-operation, Japan scaled up the programme's impact by providing training in Egypt, Ghana and Kenya for technical experts of national core laboratories of almost half of these countries. These countries, especially Ghana, later became pivotal partners in sharing their expertise with other African countries through the facilitation of Japan.

As part of the PREPARE programme, 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 the country and beyond. The Noguchi Institute's strong reputation encouraged private financial institutions in Ghana to provide donations to support its COVID-19 work, turning it into a case study of how public-private partnerships can scale up the impact of triangular co-operation. To facilitate mutual learning on countermeasures against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, Ghana shared its experiences with 15 experts from nine countries in West Africa through a third-country online training programme with Japan in early 2021.

Japan has also supported scientific institutes in Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Zambia. It has focussed on strengthening the capacity of national core laboratories in these African countries, strengthening the capacity of African disease control experts through regional training programmes and postdoctoral training in Japan, and networking with regional disease control initiatives such as the Africa CDC and the WHO Regional Office for Africa.

Source: GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (2021<sup>[50]</sup>), “Leveraging triangular partnerships to respond to COVID-19 and build back better from the pandemic”, *BPC Papers*; UNOSSC (2020<sup>[30]</sup>), *Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development - Volume 3*, <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Good-Practices-in-SSTC-for-Sustainable-Development-Vol.-3-2020-Digital-FINAL.pdf>.

Governments and international organisations can also engage diasporic communities in triangular co-operation related to public health management. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, African diasporas have used their skills to create innovative solutions to manage the crisis in their countries of origin. For example, members of the Tunisian American Young Professionals (TAYP) have developed digital platforms to track the progression of the COVID-19 virus in Tunisia along with treatment efforts; collect and consolidate data on hospital needs, calls for donations and fundraising; to outline quarantine centres, government policy and best practices (IOM, 2020<sup>[51]</sup>; Trabelsi, 2020<sup>[52]</sup>). During the 2014 Ebola epidemic, the Organisation of Sierra Leonean Health Professionals Abroad (TOSHPA) worked with Public Health England (PHE) to produce a fact sheet to educate the West African diaspora about Ebola and how they could prevent the importation of cases. Significantly, lessons learnt by international partners on the management of the Ebola epidemic in Sierra Leone have also informed COVID-19 public health strategies in diverse countries ranging from Nigeria to the United States (Afolabi et al., 2021<sup>[53]</sup>).

The global shortage of COVID-19 vaccines has shaken bilateral relations between nations and raised concerns about vaccine equity between rich and poor countries. It has been predicted that most people in low-income countries will only access COVID-19 vaccines in 2023, most in Africa (Padma, 2021<sup>[54]</sup>). Countries in the global South are increasingly producing home-grown vaccines, including Cuba’s Soberana and Abdala vaccines (Burki, 2021<sup>[55]</sup>). Financial and resource constraints have generally hampered the South-South and triangular exchanges of vaccines and/or successful pandemic management strategies. However, Egypt and the People’s Republic of China’s (hereafter “China”) co-operation on the production of the Sinovac is expected to support the manufacture of vaccines for use domestically and in other African countries (Daily News Egypt, 2021<sup>[56]</sup>). The World Bank and the governments of Germany, France and the United States have provided EUR 600 million in joint financing so that Aspen Pharmacare can expand its local production capacity of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine in South Africa (IFC, 2021<sup>[57]</sup>). To further improve vaccine access on the African continent, the World Health Organization (WHO) is working with the South African government to establish a COVID mRNA (Messenger RNA) vaccine technology transfer hub that can facilitate increased vaccine production. The biopharmaceutical company, Biovac, will act as the vaccine developer, the Afrigen biotechnology firm will be the manufacturer, and a network of universities and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention will provide the scientific know-how for the hub (WHO, 2021<sup>[58]</sup>).

Similar initiatives are taking place in other parts of the global South, as can be seen from an example from Latin America. Mexico called for universal access to COVID-19 medication and equipment for treatment, as well as vaccines at the UN General Assembly early on; it supports the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) mechanism; and engages in a triangular partnership with Argentina, Oxford University and AstraZeneca to produce and distribute the vaccine in Latin America and the Caribbean. Argentina is producing the active biologic, shipped to Mexico for bottling and distribution to Latin America and the Caribbean. In both cases, local pharmaceutical laboratories are working with the governments to accomplish this triangular co-operation project. Also, the Mexican government agreed with China’s CanSino Biologics laboratory to bottle its vaccine in-country by another private pharmaceutical laboratory, which started output in March 2021 (GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation, 2021, p. 18<sup>[59]</sup>).

These initiatives demonstrate the potential for triangular co-operation to facilitate knowledge and technology transfers on vaccine production, the sharing of policy strategies to mitigate vaccine hesitancy, and mutual learning on evidence-based public health management strategies that can prevent future pandemics. They also provide a basis for which new forms of triangular co-operation in Africa's health and pharmaceuticals sector can be established.

## Notes

1. Input by a representative of Development Alternatives at the event “Triangular Co-Operation with India – Emerging Policy Choices for Enhanced Collaboration with Civil Society Organisations”, co-organised by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS India) and the Development Co-operation Directorate of the OECD on 25 January 2021.
2. Input by a representative of the International Domestic Worker Federation in Tanzania at the event “Triangular Co-Operation with India – Emerging Policy Choices for Enhanced Collaboration with Civil Society Organisations”, co-organised by the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS India) and the Development Co-operation Directorate of the OECD on 25 January 2021.
3. The ruling Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) Party reserves 30% of the seats of its annual congress for diaspora.
4. Interview with the Southern African Innovation Support Programme on 30 October 2020.
5. Interview with a representative of the Comoros on 26 November 2020.
6. Other partners also joined the initiative. They include the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply, and University of California (UC) Davis.
7. Botswana, Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania.
8. It is a follow-on programme to the “U.S.-India Triangular Cooperation for Global Development: Training in Agriculture and Enterprise Development (TRIAED)”, a partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/India, the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare to train 230 agricultural professionals from Kenya, Liberia and Malawi.

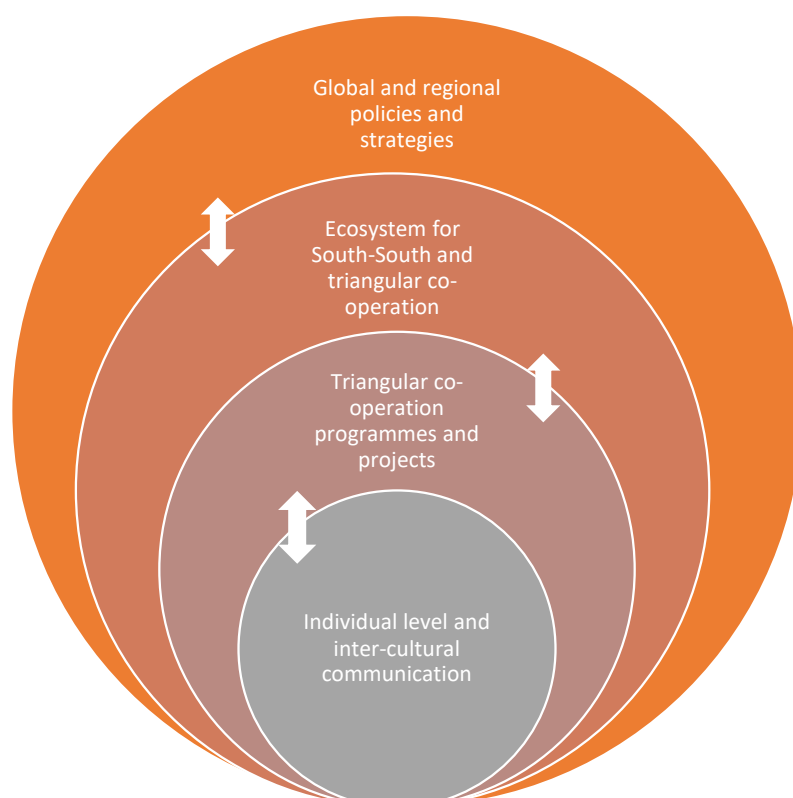
# 3

## Success factors for triangular co-operation with Africa

Triangular co-operation is a means to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing challenges and opportunities around megatrends in Africa. Based on the research, meetings and interviews conducted for this policy paper, success factors for triangular co-operation with Africa can be identified in four main clusters (Figure 3.1):

- **From global to regional and national policies** – aligning triangular co-operation closely to African countries' strategies enhances effectiveness.
- **Supporting ecosystems** and building institutional capacities contributes to fostering active African engagement in triangular co-operation.
- **Establishing linkages with large-scale development partnerships** on the continent and identifying complementary expertise of pivotal and facilitating partners helps align triangular co-operation with African priorities.
- **Accounting for cultural differences and developing a common understanding of key development concepts** creates trust between partners.

**Figure 3.1. Different levels of success factors of triangular co-operation with Africa**



Source: Authors' own visualisation.

### **From global to regional and national policies – aligning triangular co-operation closely to African countries' strategies enhances effectiveness**

Jointly owned international and regional agendas, such as the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Paris Agenda, provide the framework to embrace triangular co-operation in thematic discussions, e.g. in the area of climate change, global public health, education, agriculture. For instance, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), as a member of the International Development Finance Club (IDFC), has been increasingly discussing triangular co-operation as a way to combine different sources of concessional and non-concessional finance with technical assistance – mainstreaming triangular co-operation into the discussions on financing for sustainable development. For DBSA, trilateral partnerships include the Global Climate Fund, the Global Environment Facility as well as development partners, such as Japan or the European Commission for work in Southern Africa countries (DSI-OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>), giving them a focus on green issues.

Aligning triangular co-operation projects and programmes to the national and local priorities is a necessary condition for its success and helps increase participation, ownership, and the sustainability of development outcomes, as evidence from Zambia shows. In line with the Development Effectiveness Principles and the Voluntary Guidelines on Effective Triangular Co-operation,<sup>1</sup> there is a need to align with national and regional development agendas, including Agenda 2063, and the overall development ecosystem of the partner countries. For instance, the People's Republic of China (hereafter "China") and Zambia's renewable energy technology transfer project, which was facilitated by Denmark and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), received local support because it aligned with local plans to address rural electrification through solar energy technologies (Kamwengo, 2020<sup>[7]</sup>). The project's outputs, such as

a centre of excellence in solar energy, complement other development co-operation programmes in the energy sector activities (see Box 3.1). Institutional and regulatory reforms supported by the project have also supported increased private sector involvement in closing the rural energy gap in Zambia.

### **Box 3.1. Triangular co-operation complementing bilateral co-operation on renewable energy technologies in Zambia**

The energy sector in Zambia benefits from bilateral co-operation initiatives with various governments and private sector actors from the global North and South. The China-Zambia renewable energy technology transfer (RETT) project complemented these initiatives from 2014 to 2019. Foreign exchange trips and capacity-building workshops conducted as part of the project improved local scientists', technicians' and entrepreneurs' knowledge of renewable energy technologies (solar, wind, biomass and small hydropower), enhanced their capacity to conduct feasibility studies, and their ability to build energy infrastructures. In addition, a centre of excellence in solar energy, which is one of the key project outputs, has been training local technicians on the installation and maintenance of solar technologies. Some of the first graduates of the centre have supported a bilateral co-operation between UNDP and the Zambian government aimed at electrifying rural health centres through solar energy technologies. The project also supported the review and reform of energy sector regulations to increase private sector involvement in rural electrification.

Another objective of the RETT projective was to improve China's (the pivotal partner) capacity to manage and deliver development co-operation. As facilitating partners, Denmark and UNDP shared their best practice on project management and how to engage in cross-cultural collaboration with African countries. The RETT project management unit from China's Ministry of Science and Technology institutionalised the lessons learnt from the project in Zambia and a similar initiative in Ghana. It has established a Technology Transfer South-South Cooperation Center (TTSSC), which is enabling China, in partnership with UNDP and Sri Lanka, to adapt the RETT model in a 2019-22 triangular co-operation project in Ethiopia.

Source: Kamwengo (2020<sup>[7]</sup>), Beneficiary Country Ownership and the Politics of Partnership in Trilateral Development Cooperation: A Case Study of Zambia, <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/13696/>; UNDP China (n.d.<sup>[59]</sup>), China-Zambia South-South Cooperation on Renewable Energy Technology Transfer, <https://www.cn.undp.org/content/china/en/home/projects/china-zambia-south-south-cooperation-on-renewable-energy-technol.html>; UNDP China (n.d.<sup>[60]</sup>), MOFCOM-UNDP: Trilateral Cooperation on Renewable Energy in Ethiopia, <https://www.cn.undp.org/content/china/en/home/projects/mofcom-undp--trilateral-cooperation-on-renewable-energy-in-ethio0.html>.

African countries are interested in development co-operation that supports opportunities for increased trade and investments. This reflects the importance of mutually beneficial relations in South-South co-operation. Triangular co-operation supports this principle by creating opportunities for policy makers, researchers and entrepreneurs in partner countries to exchange ideas and initiate business, research and commercial partnerships. An example of such a project is the Sustainable Textile Investment and Operation in Ethiopia with the support of China and Germany (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1. Triangular co-operation between Ethiopia, China and Germany to strengthen the Ethiopian textile sector**

<b>Programme title</b>	Sustainable Textile Investment and Operation in Ethiopia
<b>Countries/IOs</b>	Ethiopia, China, Germany, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
<b>Other partners</b>	Ethiopian Textile Industry Development Institute (ETIDI), China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC)
<b>Objective</b>	Improving the environmental, social and labour standards of Ethiopia's textile sector through capacity development and awareness-raising for Chinese investors/factory managers and their local business partners with a potential scaling-up and replication elsewhere in Africa and Asia
<b>Description of activities related to the case study topic</b>	<p>Ethiopia's textile and garment industry is witnessing rapid growth, as a number of domestic and multinational firms are being engaged in the production of textile and apparel for domestic and global markets. In the path to industrialise Ethiopia, the sector is given a prominent position by the Ethiopian government in boosting export, creating job opportunities, and as a model to other sectors. The sector has become a top priority as part of Ethiopia's goal to become a middle-income country by 2025. The key objective is to make the sector globally competitive and bring the necessary structural transformation to the nation's economy.</p> <p>China has become the largest exporter of textiles and garments in the world. Supported by national policy encouraging overseas investment and upgrading the textile sector, Chinese enterprises have started moving manufacturing operations to other countries, together with other factors, such as labour shortage and sharply increased wages much higher than those in other Asian and African countries. Ethiopia, among others, is becoming an attractive destination in this regard. According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), China was the largest investor in Ethiopia in 2019, accounting for 60% of newly approved foreign direct investment projects.</p> <p>Ethiopia and Germany are already implementing a sustainable textiles programme together. China and Germany already co-operate successfully on furthering sustainable development in Asia. All partners benefit from pooling their resources and knowledge to: 1) engage in a baseline assessment of Chinese investments in the Ethiopian textile sector; 2) identify areas for capacity development and awareness-raising; 3) share knowledge and aim to replicate successful outcomes with other projects.</p>
<b>Programme period</b>	2020-21

Source: Interviews with GIZ China (27 November 2020) and GIZ Ethiopia (22 March 2021); and Sino-German Center for Sustainable Development (2020<sup>[61]</sup>), *Sustainable Textile Investment and Operation Ethiopia - Triangular Cooperation Ethiopia-China-Germany*, [https://sg-csd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Factsheet\\_Sustainable-Textile-Investment-and-Operation-in-Ethiopia-2.pdf](https://sg-csd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Factsheet_Sustainable-Textile-Investment-and-Operation-in-Ethiopia-2.pdf).

At the level of global, regional and national policies, partners in African triangular co-operation initiatives could:

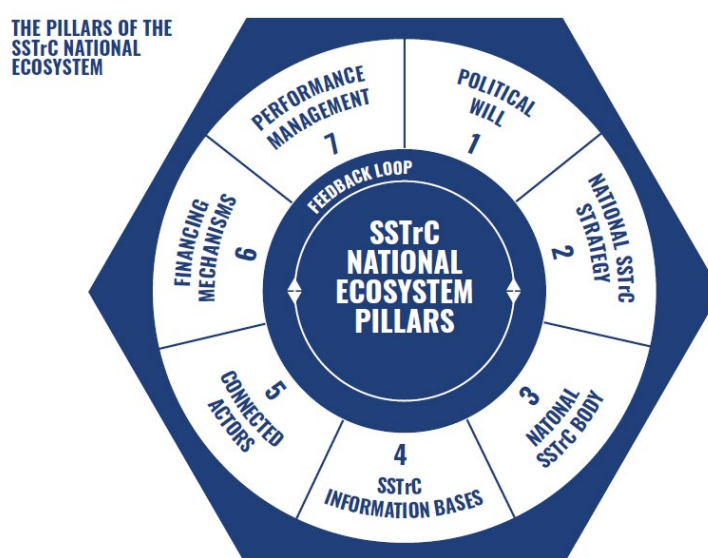
- support the continent's and individual countries' efforts to make greater use of triangular co-operation as beneficiary and pivotal partners.
- closely align new triangular initiatives to national development priorities and strategies.
- embrace the value-added of triangular co-operation when discussing key development challenges to link global discussions on triangular co-operation with topics for development co-operation, such as climate change, agriculture, global health, education, etc.

## Supporting ecosystems and building institutional capacities contributes to fostering active African engagement in triangular co-operation

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the South Centre (2019) have identified seven pillars of national ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation (SSTrC), namely: 1) political will; 2) a national strategy for SSTrC; 3) a national body that acts as the focal point for SSTrC interventions; 4) information bases that enable countries to map their national capabilities and development solutions that can be shared with others while also identifying issues that can be addressed through SSTrC; 5) connected actors that

co-ordinate their SSTRc efforts and activities in order to harmonise their interventions and amplify the effect of their work; 6) national financing mechanisms that provide the necessary resources for countries to engage in SSTRc regionally and globally; and 7) performance management systems (Figure 3.2). Furthermore, the OECD supports countries in reforming their development co-operation systems and joining forces with the IsDB and other partners in strengthening ecosystems.

**Figure 3.2. The pillars of the South-South and triangular co-operation ecosystem**



Source: IsDB and South Centre (2019<sup>[62]</sup>), *Developing National Ecosystems for South-South and Triangular Cooperation to Achieve Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*, p. ii.

Across the continent, African countries are increasing their strategies, national bodies and South-South and triangular co-operation activities – building an identity as dual countries of providing and benefitting from co-operation. Table 3.2 provides examples of existing institutional structures in Africa to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation. In terms of Pillars 4 and 7 of the IsDB's and South Centre's framework, a great challenge to scaling up knowledge of and the use of triangular co-operation in African countries is loss of institutional memory due to staff turnover in critical institutions (Kamwengo, 2020<sup>[7]</sup>; DSI-OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>). Furthermore, most countries do not have triangular co-operation focal points – having national champions for triangular co-operation projects is crucial to ensuring continuity even in the absence of a dedicated focal point. Subsequently, there is a need for partner countries to prioritise the monitoring, evaluation and reporting on triangular co-operation to retain institutional memory.

**Table 3.2. Examples of South-South and triangular co-operation structures and activities of African countries**

	Strategy	Responsible unit	Activities	Geographic focus
Botswana	South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy	Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation (MIAC) as primary co-ordinating agency	Share expertise on political governance, macro-economic management, beef production, animal health, tourism and mining.	
Comoros	Strategic Plan of ACCI	Agence Comorienne de la Coopération Internationale (ACCI)	Project development and implementation; humanitarian co-operation; education and training; recently signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with South-South co-operation (SSC)	

	Strategy	Responsible unit	Activities	Geographic focus
			agencies of Morocco, Tunisia, Brazil, Palestinian International Cooperation Agency.	
Egypt	Reference to SSC included in the Constitution	Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development (EAPD) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry for International Cooperation	Modalities: capacity building, dispatching experts, humanitarian assistance. Sectors: food security and agriculture, health, judicial co-operation, renewable energy, tourism, information and communication technology (ICT), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the banking sector.	Focus on African countries
Kenya	SSC has been mainstreamed into Kenya's Third Medium-Term Plan (2018-22) and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (2019/20-2021/22)	State Department for Planning in the National Treasury and Planning; South-South Technical Standing Committee to co-ordinate inputs from different line ministries and government agencies; Roadmap for the development of a policy and later a formal institutional and legal framework to support the management of South-South and triangular co-operation	Exchange of knowledge and skills; promotion of science, technology and innovation; promotion of trade and investment; and solidarity on many issues affecting the Global South.	
Madagascar	Under development as component of its development co-operation policy	Permanent Technical Secretariat of Aid Coordination	Health, humanitarian assistance, infrastructure support, the productive sector and trade, textile industry, agriculture. National aid database has been established and will also include a section on SSC.	
Morocco	Reference to SSC in the Constitution and strategies supported at the highest political level	Agence Marocaine de Coopération Internationale (AMCI)	Higher education and technical trainings in different domains (e.g. agriculture, infrastructure); humanitarian assistance. AMCI budget is estimated at USD 338 million per year.	Partnerships with 111 countries, including 46 African countries
Nigeria		Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa (DTCA) and Directorate of Technical Aid Corps (DTAC) - part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Sharing knowledge and expertise, dispatching experts; Nigeria Technical Cooperation Fund (NTCF) jointly managed by DTCA and the African Development Bank (AfDB). Focus on governance, education, science and technology, regional integration, business and finance.	Between 2004 and 2017, NTCF disbursed about USD 20.9 million to projects within Africa. Partnerships also exist with Caribbean and Pacific States.
Rwanda	Yes	Rwanda Cooperation Initiative (RCI)	Capacity building, project development and management, dispatching experts, research co-ordination, focus on public finance management, community health management, social protection, land management, energy and environment, ease of doing business, judicial reforms, and gender equality.	Focus on African countries by promoting "Home-grown Initiatives", which are context-based solutions to local development challenges.
South Africa	African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF); Strategic Plan 2020-25	African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and many other government departments	Peace, security, post-conflict reconstruction, regional integration, governance and humanitarian assistance. Active engagement in the Group of Twenty (G20) and through BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) membership.	African continent; the OECD estimates that development co-operation reached USD 106 million in 2019.
Tunisia		Agence Tunisienne de Coopération Technique	Dispatching experts, assisting in designing, implementing and evaluating projects.	Focus on Arab and African countries
Uganda	Under development	Development Cooperation and Regional Cooperation Unit (within the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development)	Health, governance, infrastructure, business development, migration and refugees, education and skills, mining.	Mostly African countries with a focus on Great Lakes Region

Other countries with SSTrC structures: Benin, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Namibia and Togo.

Source: Authors, based on OECD (2021, unpublished internal mapping); UNDP and AUDA-NEPAD (2019<sup>[63]</sup>), *First African South-South Cooperation Report*, <https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/library/reports/first-african-south-south-cooperation-report.html>; OECD (2021<sup>[64]</sup>), *Development Co-operation Profiles*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/2dcf1367-en>; UNDP (2022<sup>[3]</sup>), *African South-South and Triangular Cooperation Responses to COVID-19 and Beyond*.

Yet, given these positive trends and the potential to support sustainable development, knowledge about how triangular co-operation is happening in Africa tends to be low. This is due to a lack of clarity on the understanding of triangular co-operation projects (see Chapter 1), limited reporting on country cases and a lack of policy literature on triangular co-operation. Labelling and taking stock of triangular co-operation as a separate modality is important to advance working in this modality and learn from experiences. Madagascar is an interesting example in this regard, as interview partners mentioned that 26% of overall development co-operation is with partners beyond the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) membership and 10% is triangular co-operation, where Japan is the main facilitating partner and pivotal partners from Asia provide valuable experiences, e.g. in the agricultural sector.<sup>2</sup> More knowledge on the scale and scope of triangular co-operation is needed to inform African countries' engagement and strategies.

This calls for formulating institutional and legal frameworks, policies, strategies and guidelines for triangular co-operation to capture the modality's full benefits for African countries as well as an African exchange about triangular co-operation, and which platforms, opportunities and partners exist. Looking into building sustainable ecosystems for triangular co-operation<sup>3</sup> would support countries with capturing and sharing innovative experiences across the continent and with other regions. Countries with such frameworks in place could potentially share their experiences with others in the region through triangular partnerships. Furthermore, the IsDB and OECD are engaging in joint capacity assessments of ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation with a view to supporting with strengthening institutional structures.

Throughout the research, meetings, events and interviews for this paper, it was highlighted that the role of a regional body to provide a platform, collect knowledge, lessons learnt and experiences, and facilitate triangular co-operation is crucial. There is a need to better build on existing mechanisms, such as the role of the African Union's development agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the African Union (AU), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Regional Economic Commissions, cities alliances, the United Nations network, regional and multilateral development banks, and others. The joint work of UNDP, AUDA-NEPAD, IsDB, and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) for the first African South-South Co-operation Report (UNDP and AUDA-NEPAD, 2019<sup>[63]</sup>) brought valuable information and experiences on which future work can build.

Furthermore, the APRM, as an AU voluntary acceded mechanism, has been working closely with different partners as a beneficiary and a facilitating partner to meet the growing demands of African countries for tackling development issues and governance deficits. As governance is a cornerstone for successful implementation of national development plans and continental agendas i.e., Agenda 2063, APRM has supported UN efforts to promote South-South and triangular co-operation especially under its expanded mandate. In 2021, the APRM initiated the "High Level Forum on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTrC)" as a continental and sustainable platform for exchange on South-South and triangular co-operation in Africa. The first forum took place in Cairo and was co-organised with the support of GIZ, USAID and the European Union, alongside other partners i.e., UNDP, UNOSSC and others. The Forum can be considered as the first attempt at creating an institutional co-ordination platform for African countries to discuss cross-cutting issues pertinent to governance-development and development co-operation. Further, it offers a space for African countries to exchange views and partnership opportunities pertinent to economic resilience, food and water security, digitalisation, and e-learning.

At the level of ecosystems for triangular co-operation, partners in African triangular co-operation initiatives could:

- engage in raising more awareness for the benefits of triangular co-operation, dedicating strategies to make the best use of the modality and adapting institutional structures to engage effectively in triangular partnerships
- learn from experiences in other regions, e.g. Ibero-America, where focal points for South-South and triangular co-operation meet and exchange experiences regularly – creating a network of peers that fosters co-operation and innovation in triangular co-operation
- engage in joint activities to strengthen ecosystems for South-South and triangular co-operation, such as the capacity assessments conducted by the Islamic Development Bank and partners, including the OECD.

### Establishing linkages with large-scale development partnerships on the continent and identifying complementary expertise of pivotal and facilitating partners helps align triangular co-operation with African priorities

Bilateral co-operation (South-South or North-South) is often the starting point for triangular co-operation with Africa (Chapter 1). Trust and complementary interest of all partners in a triangular co-operation project are fundamental to each new initiative. The majority of triangular partnerships are a part of larger co-operation programmes or scaled up from bilateral co-operation; yet, few of these are labelled as triangular co-operation. At the same time, it is important to link triangular co-operation projects and large-scale development partnerships on the continent, such as development programmes with the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) Group and the European Union (EU), for better impact and results.

Several studies and events have been conducted to make good use of the comparative advantages and complementary strengths of pivotal and facilitating partners in triangular co-operation to best meet African demands (IDS and ASul, 2019<sup>[13]</sup>). They often take existing bilateral co-operation structures, including embassies, in African countries as a starting point to map countries where both partners could add value and build on existing programme and project experiences and infrastructure. Furthermore, they identify renowned expertise of the partners to match it with African countries' needs and priorities for development co-operation (Box 3.2).

#### Box 3.2. Identifying future topics and partnerships for Brazil-United Kingdom-Africa triangular co-operation

The Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) look back on a long and trusting partnership in bilateral and trilateral co-operation. Going forward, they are engaging in jointly and strategically assessing “best bets” (thematic areas) for triangular co-operation with African countries. These “best bets” are based on the criteria of: Brazilian strength and/or innovation; opportunity to enhance policy and impact on poverty and structural change; links with ongoing in-country UK co-operation programmes; links with current or potential funding through FCDO-HQ or FCDO Brasília; and the United Kingdom plays an enabling role (funds other complementary initiatives). The results of this exercise and a Wilton Park Meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, in November 2019 were five “best bets”:

- 1) high-quality data for managing demographic change

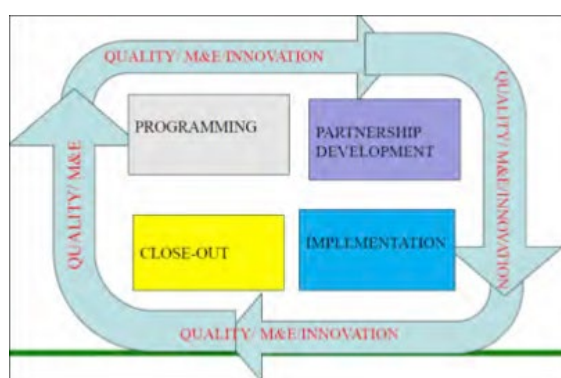
- 2) effective city management for inclusive urbanisation
- 3) climate-resilient agriculture for social protection
- 4) natural resource-based innovation for structural transformation
- 5) health system strengthening for universal health coverage.

Key recommendations from the Wilton Park meeting include: 1) building more evidence around the multiplicity of existing triangular arrangements and their added value and building on their diversity to devise new context/sector appropriate innovative partnerships in Africa, alongside the priorities set by Agenda 2063; 2) steering the new partnership to areas where there is synergy among the three partners, availability of technical expertise along the continuum and potential for multidirectional mutual learning; 3) making use of the broader national ecosystems (public and private, national and subnational) to foster the sustainability of initiatives; 4) learning from successful national and regional experiences in Africa; and 5) embedding future Brazil-United Kingdom triangular co-operation on wider regional initiatives in Africa, making use of existing multi-stakeholder networks.

Source: IDS and ASul (2019<sup>[13]</sup>), *Scoping a Strategic UK-Brazil Global Development Partnership: Mapping of Trilateral Cooperation Potential*, <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/DFID-ABC-Mapping-Study.pdf>.

Any collaboration across borders takes time and needs to pay attention to different bureaucratic regulations – the more partners join, the more complicated planning may get. For instance, it took the South African government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) some months to identify working procedures for their triangular co-operation, due to different financial years and thus budgeting and financial planning in triangular co-operation (DSI-OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>). This time is worth the investment, as it is needed to build trust (OECD, 2019<sup>[12]</sup>). Trust is the key word for successful trilateral partnerships. Planning additional time to foster and build an equal partnership from the initial project design, negotiations and implementation are important for triangular co-operation projects to deliver effective results. When in the process of being established, the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) developed a project cycle that includes a dedicated phase to partnership development for all its co-operation activities. This good example may be helpful to allow all partners to get to know and understand each other.

**Figure 3.3. SADPA project cycle with a dedicated phase to partnership development**



Note: M&E stands for monitoring and evaluation.

Source: Casoo (2012<sup>[65]</sup>), *The South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA)*.

Furthermore, valuing all contributions to the projects (including in-kind) is important to ensure horizontal partnerships and move away from a donor-recipient mentality. Experiences of South African partners and

DAC members confirmed the importance of measuring both development and partnership results of triangular cooperation (DSI-OECD, 2020<sup>[14]</sup>).

At the programme and project levels, partners in African triangular co-operation initiatives could:

- systematically include the option of triangular components of development programmes or as a complement to bilateral and regional co-operation – in line with national development priorities and strategies
- systematically identify comparative advantages and complementary strengths of pivotal and facilitating partners in triangular co-operation that best respond to African needs
- plan partnership development into the triangular project cycle to account for additional time to foster and build an equal partnership, which is important for triangular co-operation projects to deliver good results.

### Accounting for cultural differences and developing a common understanding of key development concepts creates trust between partners

Trustful partnerships based on open communication and the recognition of socio-cultural differences are the cornerstones of successful triangular co-operation initiatives. When establishing triangular partnerships, all partners need to bear in mind that despite some similarities in political and economic histories or conditions, the context of any partner country will differ from the experiences of the pivotal partner. This is significant given that the existence of different socio-cultural norms for communication and collaboration among partner countries has been found to be one of the greatest challenges in triangular co-operation projects. For example, some stakeholders in Zambia have used non-confrontational approaches, such as silencing project negotiations or non-implementation of recommendations in triangular co-operation as ways to express their disagreement with proposals made by their Chinese and Danish partners (Kamwengo, 2020<sup>[7]</sup>). Furthermore, some Zambian stakeholders relegated their exercise of country ownership in triangular co-operation to participation in activities that will secure their desired development outcomes, e.g. technical skills, technologies or infrastructure, due to institutionalised approaches for dealing with hierarchical bilateral partnerships. This indicates that disengagement is not always a sign of a lack of human and institutional capacities but can also signify that the beneficiary partner has a different interpretation and understanding of what country ownership means.

Similarly, the experiences of Brazilian partners working with Portuguese-speaking African countries have shown that speaking the same language may ease verbal communication, while it does not guarantee an understanding of the partner country cultural context or that adapting development solutions will be easier during project implementation.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Portugal actively engages in the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) to support dialogue, sharing experiences, and developing joint policy positions of countries at different stages of development. In particular, in CPLP, Portuguese ministries engage substantively in numerous policy areas. Partners in Africa and Latin America appreciate that Portugal is mindful of encouraging active participation and leadership by other members, bearing in mind cultural differences and perceptions (OECD, forthcoming<sup>[66]</sup>).

A scoping study conducted for the Sino-German Center for Sustainable Development by representatives from Africa, China and Germany on the potential for trilateral co-operation (Müller et al., 2020<sup>[67]</sup>) clearly pointed to different ways keywords in international development co-operation are used and understood (Box 3.3).

### Box 3.3. Finding a common understanding of key development terms

The scoping study on the potential for trilateral co-operation between African countries, China and Germany, found that China operationalises mutual respect through non-interference or limited demands on transparency and accountability in development projects, while Germany emphasises shared responsibility, mutual learning, transparency and accountability in their understanding of respectful partnerships and country ownership in triangular co-operation. In a dedicated sub-chapter, the issue of differing understanding is presented for terms like “sustainability”, “ownership” or “effectiveness”. The conclusion was that “in the discussion towards a common language, it will not be sufficient to define single keywords but to find also a basic agreement on how to relate with each other. [...] Taking too easily for granted that a common language exists, also puts in danger the quality of project planning. In the worst case, all stakeholders involved interpret and understand something different and therefore finally pursue different goals and the project will fall apart. [...] Practitioners rather need to create a common language in each new project. Once overcoming an initial feeling of nuisance in this kind of exercise, there is a high potential for mutual enrichment, enlightenment and improvement of project quality” (Müller et al., 2020, p. 37<sup>[67]</sup>). Based on these findings, the Sino-German Centre for Sustainable Development plans to work together with various renowned Chinese and international academic institutes and think tanks on a development co-operation glossary. The objective of such exercises is not to reach universal definitions of key terms but to inspire further discussion and debate to achieve mutual learning and common understanding. The initiative “De-coding China” dictionary addresses this issue and aims to facilitate understanding beyond literal translations by putting key terms into a cultural context with respective interpretations.

Source: Muller et al. (2020<sup>[67]</sup>), *Potentials for trilateral cooperation between African countries, China and Germany*; Oud and Drinhausen (n.d.<sup>[68]</sup>), *The Decoding China Dictionary*, <https://decodingchina.eu/>.

These findings emphasise the need for more research on the different interpretations and practices of country ownership and mutual respect in triangular partnerships. It is also important to understand how the historic context of a beneficiary partner’s bilateral relationship with its Northern and Southern partners affects its approach to ownership and partnership in triangular co-operation.

At the individual and intercultural levels, partners in African triangular co-operation initiatives could:

- engage in increased dialogue to be mindful of differences in understanding key development terms and (cultural) contexts.

## Notes

1. For more details on the voluntary guidelines, see GPI on Effective Triangular Co-operation (n.d.<sup>[69]</sup>).
2. Interview with representatives from Madagascar on 3 December 2020.
3. Interview with a representative of the Southern African Innovation Support Programme on 30 October 2020.
4. Discussions at the Wilton Park Meeting on 21-22 November 2019 in Maputo, Mozambique.

## 4 What is next for triangular co-operation with Africa?

African countries participate widely in triangular partnerships with the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, and the Americas. They benefit from triangular co-operation and have rich policy experiences and innovations that they can share with other countries as pivotal partners. These partnerships are unique because they enable intra-Africa exchanges, as more countries are building ecosystems to engage in South-South and triangular co-operation. Emerging triangular co-operation partnerships highlight and respond to global development shifts with regard to financing and the importance of knowledge sharing. However, this paper has shown that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created a number of opportunities for new triangular partnerships where all countries can engage in mutual learning – building forward sustainably, making good use of circular innovations and co-operation and ultimately joining forces to provide global public goods.

First, partner countries and international organisations can engage regional organisations, civil society organisations, research institutes, diasporic communities and the private sector in triangular co-operation.

The African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Commissions on the continent can play an important role in co-ordinating Africa's strategic partnerships, using Agenda 2063 as a framework for holding development partners to account on country ownership. Respectful and inclusive partnerships based on open communication and the recognition of socio-cultural differences must be the cornerstone of all triangular co-operation initiatives. These partners will need to address power inequalities in an honest way – moving towards mutually beneficial relationships. Partner countries and international organisations need to engage in increased dialogue to improve their understanding of how key development concepts (including triangular co-operation, country ownership, mutual respect, and partnership) are operationalised by partner countries and the different strategies partner countries use to address development megatrends.

Second, development partners can engage in spotting, sharing, and scaling up innovations, both from within and outside of the African continent, to address development megatrends.

Triangular co-operation supports the circular movement of innovative policy solutions, programmes and technologies from partners in the global South to the global North and vice versa. It has the potential to enhance dialogue and joint learning on megatrends, such as digitalisation, climate change, demographic changes, and pandemic preparedness to protect global public health, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Triangular co-operation can also contribute to addressing other development megatrends in Africa that align with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes the development of the blue/ocean economy, African capital markets, and the construction of decent housing, transport and energy infrastructure. These are areas that partner countries and international organisations can target more specifically, in line with their own development programmes, when seeking new triangular co-operation partnerships.

Third, development partners can support the continent's efforts to strengthen its ecosystems and capacities for South-South and triangular co-operation.

Bearing in mind the diversity of needs and challenges on the continent, this paper identifies the following strategies to improve capacities for triangular co-operation in Africa and leverage new partnerships. Partner countries and organisations can support African countries to:

- establish a national body and focal point to co-ordinate triangular co-operation and its complementarity with bilateral development programmes
- formulate and/or enhance institutional and legal frameworks, policies and guidelines for negotiating, financing and managing triangular co-operation
- invest in building institutional memory on triangular co-operation through increased monitoring, reporting and information sharing on triangular co-operation projects
- establish linkages between triangular co-operation projects and bilateral programmes or multilateral partnerships
- establish a platform in the African regional institutional architecture to facilitate, co-ordinate and support engagement in South-South and triangular co-operation.

Fourth, development partners can enhance knowledge of triangular co-operation by more consistently identifying their partnerships as triangular co-operation in monitoring and reporting exercises and within country case studies.

Ultimately, scaling up effective triangular co-operation efforts for the future is likely to require the adoption of all these steps. Together, the African Union's development agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the OECD and the Global Partnership Initiative on Effective Triangular Co-operation already provide a range of powerful resources and tools for knowledge building and dissemination of lessons learned. Yet many opportunities to increase collaboration and co-operation at local, regional and international levels remain. Making the most of these opportunities will enable all stakeholders develop better strategies that strengthen the effectiveness, replicability and scalability of triangular co-operation while also supporting the sustainability of development outcomes achieved.

### Assessing triangular co-operation projects

Going forward, there is a need for more research and data collection on country cases of triangular co-operation. Greater understanding of the key successes, challenges and failures will help to improve the development effectiveness and replicability of triangular co-operation initiatives. Questions that should be asked when assessing triangular co-operation include:

- How are triangular co-operation projects initiated?
- What is the value added of working in triangular co-operation (OECD, 2018<sup>[6]</sup>)? Are all partners working towards this value added in the new triangular initiative?
- What are the financing arrangements?
- How are roles and responsibilities divided?
- Is there a common understanding of project objectives, country ownership and sustainability among stakeholders?

- Cultural differences can hinder dialogue, mutual learning and uptake of the policy lessons in partnerships. Hence, what strategies do project management units use to ensure understanding of different cultural contexts and approaches to triangular partnerships?

## Annex A: List of interviews conducted to inform this study

	Interviewee	Interview date	Type of interview
1	GIZ Mozambique	19 November 2019	In-person meeting in Maputo, Mozambique
2	Embassy of Portugal in Mozambique	20 November 2019	In-person meeting in Maputo, Mozambique
3	Ministry of Finance and Economy, Maputo, Mozambique	20 November 2019	In-person meeting in Maputo, Mozambique
4	Participation and exchange of ideas during the Wilton Park Meeting “Enhancing effective development co-operation between the UK, Brazil and African partners” in Maputo, Mozambique	21-22 November 2019	In-person event in Maputo, Mozambique
5	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)	21 November 2019	In-person meeting in Maputo, Mozambique (at the margins of the Wilton Park Meeting)
6	Office of the Mayor of Johannesburg	21 November 2019	In-person meeting in Maputo, Mozambique (at the margins of the Wilton Park Meeting)
7	Ethiopian Environment and Forest Research Institute, Addis Ababa	21 November 2019	In-person meeting in Maputo, Mozambique (at the margins of the Wilton Park Meeting)
8	Seminar on “Triangular Co-operation in Southern Africa” co-organised with the South African Department of Science and Innovation in Pretoria	2-3 December 2019	In-person event
9	Department of Science and Innovation, Pretoria, South Africa	2 December 2019	In-person meeting in Pretoria, South Africa
10	Canadian High Commission to South Africa	2 December 2019	In-person meeting in Pretoria, South Africa
11	Delegation of the European Union to South Africa	2 December 2019	In-person meeting in Pretoria, South Africa
12	USAID (United States Agency for International Development) South Africa	2 December 2019	In-person meeting in Pretoria, South Africa
13	Development Bank of Southern Africa	3 December 2019	In-person meeting in Pretoria, South Africa
14	African Union development agency AUDA/NEPAD	3 December 2019	In-person meeting in Pretoria, South Africa
15	NOREC - Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation	20 May 2020	Skype for Business meeting
16	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	20 May 2020	Skype for Business meeting
17	UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) Africa Finance Sector Hub	1 July 2020	Zoom meeting
18	University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa	26 October 2020	Zoom meeting
19	Institute of Global Dialogue, Pretoria, South Africa	26 October 2020	Zoom meeting
20	Southern African Innovation Support Programme, Windhoek, Namibia	30 October 2020	MS Teams meeting
21	Consultant working for UNDP Africa Finance Sector Hub	13 November 2020	MS Teams meeting
22	Agence Comorienne de Coopération Internationale (ANCI), Comoros	26 November 2020	MS Teams meeting
23	GIZ China	27 November 2020	MS Teams meeting
24	Secrétariat Technique Permanent pour la Coordination de l'Aide (STP-CA) Palais du Premier Ministre, Madagascar	3 December 2020	Zoom meeting
25	GIZ Ethiopia	22 March 2021	MS Teams meeting
26	Researcher, University of Bath, United Kingdom	23 April 2021	MS Teams meeting
27	Allsight Africa, Kigali, Rwanda	27 April 2021	MS Teams meeting
28	State Department for Planning, Kenya	29 April 2021	MS Teams meeting

Further interviews with representatives in Africa were conducted within the scope of the OECD policy paper “Enabling effective triangular co-operation” (OECD, 2019<sup>[12]</sup>):

	Interviewee	Interview date	Type of interview
1	JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) South Sudan	8 July 2019	Questionnaire sheet
2	JICA Kenya	10 July 2019	Phone interview
3	South Sudan Urban Water Corporation	12 July 2019	Phone interview
4	JICA Tanzania	12 July 2019	Phone interview
5	JICA Burkina Faso	23 July 2019	Phone interview

	Interviewee	Interview date	Type of interview
6	JICA Egypt	1 August 2019	Phone interview
7	Egyptian Agency of Partnership for Development (EAPD)	7 August 2019	Phone interview
8	Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI)	7 August 2019	Phone interview
9	Rice Research and Training Center (RRTC), Egypt	8 August 2019	Phone interview

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