

Terms of reference for policy-supporting research

Concept note on the Triangular Cooperation

Which approach to adopt in the Belgian development cooperation in Morocco and beyond?

Summary - Thanks to its geographic position, **Morocco** is positioning itself as a pivotal country between Europe and Africa. It has developed a particular relationship with Europe through the European Neighbourhood policy and has a new ambition with the African continent.

Triangular cooperation is high on the agenda of most international actors, especially in Morocco. Belgium being one of the few actors who have already implemented programs on this topic, *Belgium should capitalize on its experience and develop an appropriate approach for triangular cooperation programs in Morocco and beyond.*

This research is an **opportunity to set up a Belgian approach for triangular cooperation.**

The research will identify the approach to be adopted by the Belgian development cooperation in triangular cooperation in Morocco and beyond (position to be adopted by BE, comparative advantage of BE, choice of sectors with an impact in the sub-Saharan Africa, potential geographical targeting, etc.).

I. CONTEXT

a) Morocco's African ambitions

In recent years, Morocco has taken several actions to increase its position of pivot country between Europe and Africa, especially through an increased presence in African countries. In addition, it has taken two important steps to reinforce African connections in 2017: **its reintegration in the AU** and the principle agreement of ECOWAS to its accession. In terms of foreign diplomacy, these are 2 major successes for Morocco. They are part of the various components of the Moroccan diplomacy with African countries which combines religious and anti-radicalism influence, security agreements, military cooperation, and an important economic diplomacy (investments).

Economy – Commercial exchanges with African countries have rapidly increased from 1 billion USD in 2004 to 4.4 billion USD in 2014 essentially through increased exports. West Africa represents half of those exports. Indicators of regional integration in the sector of commercial exchanges, production, infrastructures, human mobility or finance are reaching high levels. Morocco has become **the second African investor on the continent** through holdings or multinationals such as Saham (healthcare /insurance), Maroc Telecom, Royal Air Maroc, hydro projects, buildings, renewable energies, new technologies/digitalization, infrastructures, public construction as well as banks. Among other banks Attijariwafa Bank is present in 14 African countries, Banque Centrale Populaire is present in 8 countries of UEMOA as well as the partnership with Commercial Bank of Ethiopia.

Morocco plays such a role in the African political and economic arena not only for the sake of its own political and economic interests but also as an international investment hub for those countries.

Bilateral agreement between Morocco and African countries are estimated at around 500 formal cooperation agreements, including 14 commercial ones.

Capacity development - In addition to the economic side, Morocco also plays an important role in terms of **human capital development** (education/training). Morocco is indeed a reference for many on the continent, especially in some sectors such as agriculture, environment, climate, renewable energy. As an illustration, its significant contribution to the training of African students who later became ministers or leaders of private companies in their country of origin.

Morocco is thus a key player for the mobility of students. Through its Agency of International Cooperation, the country has welcomed/welcomes around **13,000 foreign students from 110 countries**, 85% coming from sub-Saharan Africa (around 500 new students per year), many of them receiving grants/bourses. Morocco has also developed support to vocational training in other African countries such as Ivory Coast or Gabon.

Human Mobility – In addition to the mobility linked with the education sector, Morocco is a key country in terms of migration. Given the increased difficulties to enter Europe, Morocco has become less a temporary/transit country for migrants than a **country of (temporary?) destination**. In terms of migration and asylum, a National Strategy has been developed and the country tries to be a model on this thematic.

Furthermore, Morocco does have a high mobilization capacity of the Moroccan diaspora based in Europa or Northern America (e.g. within academic sector and research networks in Belgium). Indeed, Moroccan communities abroad constitutes what is called the '13th Region of Morocco' and have a dedicated Minister Delegate, showing the close links that remain between the diaspora and the country of origin.

b) Triangular cooperation: concept and interventions in Morocco

Definition of concept - Although, there is no internationally agreed definition of the **triangular cooperation**, the OECD one is comprehensive and defines the concept as “development co-operation where i) one or more providers of development co-operation or international organizations join forces with ii) one or more providers and recipients of development co-operation (notably providers of South-South Cooperation) to promote a sharing of knowledge and experience or implement development co-operation projects in iii) other developing countries.¹

It is interwoven with the concept of **South-South cooperation** which is defined by the UN Office for South-South cooperation as a ‘broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, intraregional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts.’²

¹ 2012 Report – Triangular Co-operation : What can we learn from a survey of actors involved? , OECD Development Co-operation Directorate, 2013.

² http://unoss1.undp.org/sscexpo/content/ssc/about/what_is_ssc.htm

Knowledge and experience sharing are the main targets of triangular cooperation project. The exchanges allow indeed to share specific expertise or technology, in order to support other actors/ countries that are facing similar challenges.

Belgian projects on triangular cooperation

- Bilateral projects: Belgium has financed two bilateral projects of triangular cooperation in Morocco in recent years. Those are considered successful as they allowed exchanges of expertise between sub-Saharan countries and Morocco with the support of Belgium. The first one (2007-2011 – 120.000Eur) focused on agriculture and water/sanitation sectors in Belgium partner countries while the second one (2014-2019 – 400.000Eur) opened to Moroccan priorities and partners. It focused on short term trainings in a very wide range of sectors (entrepreneurship, migration, human rights, journalism, public finances, etc.). Trainings were conducted by external providers and beneficiaries were coming from African countries, including partner countries of the Belgian development cooperation
- Academic projects: ‘MOUNAF Project’ enhance mobility through an innovative approach of high education (training and research). It focuses on exchanges between students as well as scientists in four African regions on various topics such as environment, resources management, agriculture, health, engineering. Main actors involved are universities from DRC, Ethiopia, Morocco, Mozambique, South Africa and Belgium with Hasselt University which provides technical assistance in the project.
- Echo Communication (Belgian NGO): Support the participation of African public servants to territorial coaching trainings in partnership with Moroccan local administration.

Triangular cooperation in Morocco

Although governments and international organizations are the main actors of triangular cooperation, non-state actors of the private sector, civil society organizations or universities are also key players in the implementation of projects around triangular cooperation. This diversity implies a wide range of approaches that are very different from one to the other.

The strategic actor from Morocco is the Moroccan Agency of International Cooperation (**AMCI**³). In addition, Morocco is hosting some international institutions such as the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa⁴), which is an important actor on the continent in the creation of links between countries.

A few development partners are implementing triangular cooperation in partnership with AMCI: JICA and the Islamic Development Bank. The **EU** has budgeted 4M Eur in 2020 for the thematic of triangular cooperation and the project ‘Link up Africa’ is in the early phase of development. France and Spain are also interested by the concept of triangular cooperation.

³ www.amci.ma

⁴ <https://www.uclga.org>

II. DEFINING THE PROBLEM AND IDENTIFYING THE FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

Triangular cooperation is high on the political agenda of most actors, especially in Morocco due to its geographical and political position. Belgium being one of the few actors who have already implemented programs on this topic, Belgium should capitalize on its experience and develop an appropriate approach/fit for purpose.

In general, the projects of triangular cooperation that have been implemented by Belgian actors targeting a very broad range of sectors and answering to requests from partner countries. However, they were not really designed within a conceptual long term vision. And, indeed, in terms of triangular cooperation, the actions should go beyond just delivering trainings and supporting the logistics of training.

Triangular cooperation should constitute a real opportunity to establish relationships between experts from different countries and create long term partnerships in specific areas.

Based on the various experiences, the **objective of the research is to formulate a Belgian approach for triangular cooperation in Morocco and beyond.**

A new concept note, specifically designed for the cooperation between Belgium and Morocco, would be very useful to define how Belgium should position itself in this field in order to increase the impact of its actions through triangular cooperation.

What are the comparative advantages of Belgium? What has Belgium to offer in terms of exchange of expertise? What are the key sectors where Belgium can position itself as one of the leading actors? What sectors should be supported to have an impact in the South? What geographical targeting should be made?

OECD has conducted several very interesting research/theoretical works and have identified generic success factors of triangular cooperation that can serve as references. This research would support of own study in the context of the Belgian development cooperation in Morocco⁵.

III. EXPECTED RESULTS OF POLICY SUPPORT FOR BELGIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The mission of the academic expert would ideally starts in quarter 2 or 3 for a duration of 50 working days spread over a period of three to six months. A maximal budget of 50.000 euros will be allocated for all expenses involved.

The expert will contribute to both theoretical and formative study, through the formulation of recommendations and the organization of one or more workshops.

The researcher will do some desk review in Belgium, connect with OECD triangular cooperation section in Paris, meet actors based in Morocco involved in the triangular cooperation and contact, if necessary, stakeholders in African countries involved.

As a result, the research will:

⁵ [http://www.oecd.org/fr/cad/relations-mondiales-cad/la-cooperation-triangulaire.htm](http://www.oecd.org/fr/cad/rerelations-mondiales-cad/la-cooperation-triangulaire.htm)

- Contribute to a better knowledge of the triangular cooperation and its fields of interventions (synergies and complementarities improvement);
- Contribute to the definition of Belgium's priorities in terms of triangular cooperation;
- Contribute to the development of win-win relationships between experts and institutions as well as create new dynamic/opportunities for **regional integration/cooperation**.

The research will, among others, present a mapping of initiatives of triangular /South-South cooperation in Morocco and identify existing strategies of the different partners (national institutions, Development partners, private sector). An analysis of the institutional capacities of the key Moroccan actor, namely AMCI would also be interesting in order to identify the institutional support needed and the best approach to adopt.

At the end of the research, a **workshop** will be organized with OECD and other actors of the triangular cooperation.

In a broader perspective, the research will position Belgium as a key actor on the thematic of Triangular cooperation and strengthen the links between Belgium, Morocco and OECD, who is the leading organization on this topic.

IV. Follow-up and monitoring of the expected products described in the ToR

The follow-up of this PSR will be done by an Ad Hoc Working Group with Belgian actors involved in the triangular cooperation (Ambabel Rabat, DGD, Paris Multi, Enabel Maroc, NGA). This group would be chaired by Ambabel Rabat. The group will also ensure the continuation of the process after the duration of this PSR.

The results of the research will support the further elaboration of a future bilateral program as well as the Common Strategic Framework on Non-Governmental Actors. In addition, it will support Enabel and other Belgian actors to position themselves on the thematic of Triangular cooperation to maximize their impact (with Belgian or external fundings). This research will also be useful in view of the workshop that Enabel will organize to close the last bilateral project on Triangular cooperation.

In Morocco, this initiative will also contribute to the improvement of the coordination on the thematic of triangular cooperation.