

TRIALOG IN THE ENLARGED EU



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For **Christine Bedoya**
TRIALOG Project Manager (2003-2013)

In November 2013 our dear colleague Christine Bedoya lost her fight against cancer and passed away at the very young age of 49. She was strongly devoted to building up civil society engaged in development cooperation in the enlarged EU and supported their integration in European development structures. Her achievement is an example for civil society and will be carried on in joint efforts for a better world.

IMPRESSUM



TRIALOG is a project to strengthen civil society organisations (CSOs) in the enlarged EU for active engagement in global development.

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HORIZONT₃₀₀₀

AUSTRIAN ORGANISATION
FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

HORIZONT3000, the lead agency of TRIALOG is an Austrian NGO working in the area of development cooperation, specialised in the monitoring and implementation of projects as well as in the provision of experts in developing countries.

www.horizont3000.at



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FOREWORD

TRIALOG is a project that has been running for so long and has such a loyal group of collaborators that it would be easy to imagine that it will be around forever. In fact, it is a body of work, experiences and relationships that has built up and evolved over the years, from a specific starting point in a context of rapid EU enlargement and change that now looks very different. After almost 15 years of the TRIALOG project, partners and team members are reflecting on what should come next. It is in this new context that we have undertaken this systematisation process. Trying to see the underlying processes that have accompanied the project's evolution; reliving the pivotal moments for some key project partners; evaluating the relationships and successful collaborations that have resulted from TRIALOG's efforts – all these elements give a sense of what has been achieved and the way in which TRIALOG has contributed to newer EU members' integration into European development policy and practice.

We hope this publication allows our partners to reconnect with their experiences of TRIALOG but even more importantly, we hope that the lessons we learned during the project's life can be useful to others.

Rebecca Steel-Jasińska
TRIALOG Project Manager

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ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
CEE	Central and Eastern European
CONCORD	European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCI	Financing Instrument for Development Cooperation
DEAR	Development Education and Awareness Raising
DEEEP	Developing Europeans' Engagement for the Eradication of Global Poverty Project
DEVCO	DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid
DG	Directorate General
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighbourhood Partnership
EPAN	Enlargement, Pre-accession and Neighbourhood
EU	European Union
EU10	The 10 countries which joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia)
EU12	The EU10 countries + Bulgaria and Romania which joined the EU in 2007
EU13	The EU12 countries + Croatia which joined the EU in 2013
EU15	The 15 countries which were members of the EU already before 2004 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom)
GNI	Gross National Income
GLEN	Global Education Network
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGDO	Non-governmental Development Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NMS	New (EU) Member States, term used for countries that joined the EU after 2004
NSA-LA	Non-State Actors and Local Authorities
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PCM	Project Cycle Management
RPP	Regional Partnership Programme
PCD	Policy Coherence for Development
WG	Working Group

INTRODUCTION

WHAT WILL THIS BOOKLET TELL ME?

This is a journey through the TRIALOG experience, starting in the late 1990s when a group of European CSO practitioners started exploring ways of supporting the integration of civil society from newer EU member states into the EU's development cooperation structures. TRIALOG started in 2000 as an EC co-funded project, based in Austria with a liaison office in Brussels.

This booklet follows TRIALOG from its birth to the fifth project phase, starting in 2012. It provides insights into the context in which the project was embedded. Project activities are described and analysed according to the three main areas of TRIALOG's work: "European Integration of Development CSOs from the Enlarged EU", "Platform Building Support" and "Capacity Building for Development CSOs". A special focus looks at the contribution of TRIALOG to "Networking", "Learning and Empowerment" and "Advocacy" in EU13. At the end of this journey you will find the lessons learnt. Finally, case studies of selected development CSO platform in EU13 countries illustrate more practically how TRIALOG contributed to their establishment and the CSO sector in the region.

WHO CAN USE THIS BOOKLET?

This booklet aims to share TRIALOG experiences, especially tools that were used and lessons learnt, with other actors working in or with civil society organisations. TRIALOG's focus is on development cooperation and global learning but its experiences could easily be translated to other areas such as, for example environment or peace building.

Organisations in countries with EU accession prospects in particular might find this document useful for inspiring examples of how to tackle the topic of development cooperation. If they are considering the establishment of a national CSO platform the "Step by Step Guide to Development CSO Platform Building" is a helpful tool, further illustrated by the case studies of platforms in selected countries.

There are also relevant conclusions for CSO platforms and their members in EU13 among the lessons learnt, especially when it comes to working in large project consortia with many diverse partners.

METHODOLOGY

To capture, review and analyse the valuable experience gathered during the TRIALOG project, a method called "systematisation" was chosen. Systematisation is a participative exercise from Latin America which creates awareness through critical reflection. It allows participants to understand more fully the individual and collective processes that are part of the experience. The exercise included several workshops with key stakeholders to gather memories and later analyse the experiences gained in TRIALOG over the years. The outcomes of the process are summarised in this booklet, a more detailed document is available online on the TRIALOG website.

THE CONTEXT

I. DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND THE EU ENLARGEMENT PROCESS 2000-2013

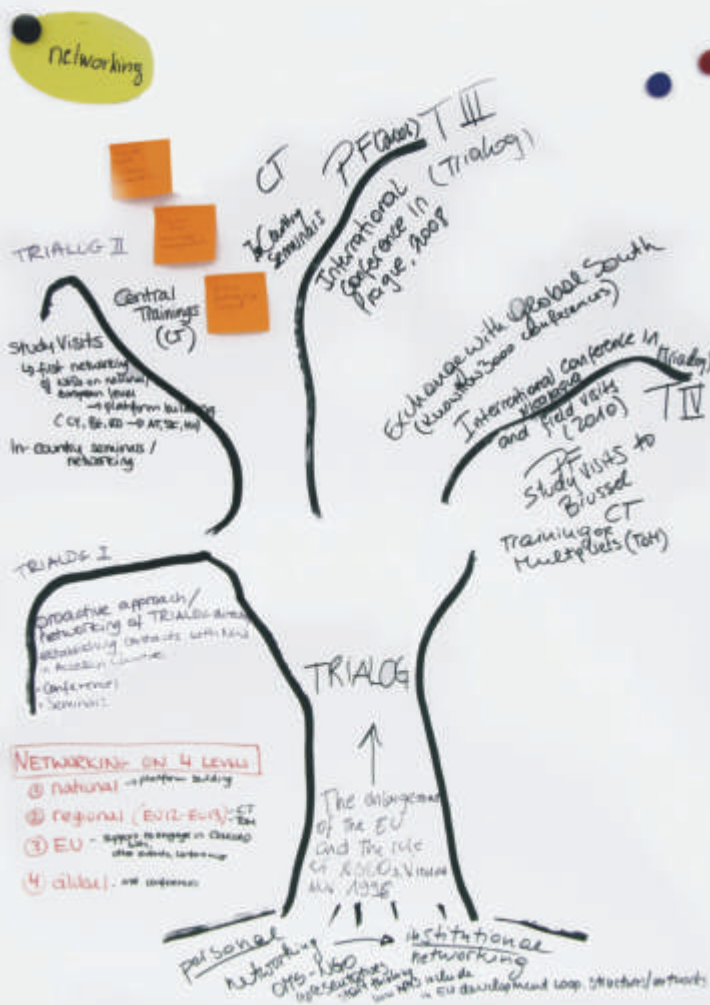
The enlargement of the European Union (EU) in 2004 represented one of the milestones in the process of European reunification, closing accession negotiations with Cyprus, Malta and eight CEE candidate countries that had been opened in March 1998. To join the EU, candidates had to comply with the economic and political conditions known as the "Copenhagen criteria", comply with the *acquis communautaire* (EU rules and obligations) and gain the consent of the EU institutions and the approval of their citizens. Regarding the *acquis communautaire* concerning development cooperation, by acceding the EU, the states had to accept the overall objectives of EU aid and the international commitments involving the EU. No clear criteria were established regarding what the accession countries needed to achieve concerning development cooperation prior to joining the EU¹.

Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU next, in January 2007, followed by the youngest EU member State Croatia, which joined the Union in 2013 and brought the number of EU states to 28.

THE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION OF THE EU

EU development cooperation is part of EU external action and ODA is executed by the EC. In 2000, the EC initiated the reform of its external aid to increase its effectiveness and coherence. This resulted in the so-called "European Consensus on Development" which defined the common goals and principles which the EU and its member states should implement in their development policies in order to guarantee complementarity. The Consensus sets up the EU's shared vision of development which is based on eight MDGs and their overall goal of poverty eradication².

In 2007, the financing instrument for development cooperation (DCI)³ and the instrument for democracy and human rights (EIDHR)⁴ were introduced as new tools which should help to make the EU external aid more simple and efficient. One of the five thematic programmes under DCI is the "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" (NSA-LA) programme. Among its objectives, NSA-LA covers the Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) activities. EU13 development CSOs are mainly active in the field of DEAR and the fifth TRIALOG project was also funded under this programme.



Currently, the EU is the world's largest donor, providing around 56% of global development assistance⁵. Nevertheless, if the EU wants to reach its 0.7% ODA/GNI MDG target by 2015, the member states would need to almost double their current ODA in nominal terms⁶. These MDG commitments were based on individual targets of 0.7% ODA/GNI for the EU15 and 0.33% GNI for the 13 member states. At the same time, the EU still has to work on how resources are used and how non-development policies harmonise with development cooperation. The EU addresses policy coherence for development (PCD) in the Lisbon Treaty⁷.

It is important to remember that when speaking about development cooperation, what is generally referred to as the "Global South" includes also countries that are in the European Neighbourhood Programme (ENP), which has existed since 2004 and covers sixteen countries, which in geographic terms are not part of the southern hemisphere⁸.

II. TRIALOG PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

LEAD ORGANISATION AND PARTNERS

The TRIALOG project has always been led by the Austrian organisation HORIZONT3000. As one of the main development CSOs in Austria, HORIZONT3000 is specialised in the monitoring and implementation of projects, including those co-financed by the EU, as well as in sending experts to partner countries.

The CSO representatives who first discussed the project idea of what became TRIALOG, considered HORIZONT3000 as the most suitable actor because of its experience and capacity in implementing large cross-European programmes and transferring knowledge to new contexts. Austria was seen as the ideal location because of its strategic political role in CEE and the focus of Austrian Development Cooperation on South-East Europe⁹ and the Danube region¹⁰, as well as its geographical location close to the upcoming EU member states. In the following years HORIZONT3000 built up vast expertise in strengthening CSOs in EU13 for development cooperation and continued to lead TRIALOG together with a consortium of European CSOs.

Some organisations remained involved for only one or two phases but a few others were partners for the entire project history, such as Light for the World and Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe e.V. (AGEH). A special role has been the one of CONCORD, the European NGO confederation for relief and development (formerly NGO Liaison Committee). CONCORD is a "natural" and important stakeholder as a central aim for TRIALOG was that all national platforms become members of the confederation.

TRIALOG has observer status in all CONCORD working groups and coordinates many activities for EU13 CSOs with CONCORD. This cooperation is facilitated by TRIALOG staff members based in Brussels.

For more details on the lead agency and partner organisations involved in TRIALOG over the years, please see the Annex.

III. TRIALOG PROJECT STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

TRIALOG started with three staff members: a project manager and information officer in Vienna and a policy officer in Brussels. The position in Brussels was embedded in the CONCORD secretariat to link the project more closely with the European development policy work of the confederation. In the second project phase the position of a capacity building officer was created in order to cover an increasing volume of training and events within TRIALOG. A part time position for a project assistant was added in the third phase in order to tackle the administrative and logistical tasks. The team of five staff members continued in TRIALOG IV and V. Additionally, in the fifth phase each EU13 platform employs a liaison officer which is (partly) financed by TRIALOG.

The total budget of TRIALOG slightly increased over the years from EUR 1.1 million in the first phase to almost EUR 1.5 million in the fifth phase. Whereas the first three phases were directly funded by the EC, since 2009 follow-up applications have had to compete in the open call for proposals. The project is coordinated by the project manager and a member of the HORIZONT3000 management team. Regular meetings with a group of project partners – the so-called advisory group – support the project management and add to the strategic orientation.

TRIALOG advisory group and team members, 2013





THE TRIALOG EXPERIENCE: AN ANALYSED HISTORY

The work of TRIALOG can be divided in three main areas: “European Integration of Development CSOs from the Enlarged EU”, “Platform Building Support” and “Capacity Building for Development CSOs”. A special focus highlights their contribution to “Networking”, “Learning and Empowerment” and “Advocacy”.



Field visits to projects of HORIZONT3000 in
Región Autónoma del Atlántico Norte (RAAN), Nicaragua, 2010

NETWORKING

Networking within TRIALOG can be identified on the following four levels:

- National: via CSO platform building support and national seminars in the enlarged EU
- Regional: via regional activities such as the Central Training or Training of Multipliers for EU13
- EU: via support to engage in CONCORD working groups and other European events
- Global: via organisation of international conferences, field visits and other exchange activities.

Civil Society in EU Accession Countries (AC) did not have a strong background in development issues and NGO structures at the time TRIALOG started. This was a determining factor for the way in which networking was used by TRIALOG in the beginning; to bring together like-minded people on national level, to support regional links and finally to establish a wider European network. Especially in the early phases TRIALOG staff members engaged in networking “for” and “with” the newcomers from EU13 whereas through the years this role has changed to becoming a “facilitator” of networking.

LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT

Learning and empowerment is one of the key aspects of TRIALOG's activities for CSOs on their way to becoming fully functioning platforms serving their members and acting as contact points for their political decision makers as well as being integrated into the European confederation CONCORD. The project is still seen today as a capacity building project, and the impact of the activities over the years is clearly visible.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is an element that runs through many of TRIALOG's activities. TRIALOG has played different roles – from raising awareness about the particular needs of organisations in countries without a well-established system for development cooperation and development education, to providing training on how to better advocate for issues connected to development.

In the same way that TRIALOG staff went from networking on behalf of partners to facilitating that networking, advocacy work was in the first instance on behalf of EU13 actors and later in partnership with them, as well as supporting their advocacy.

All three elements – networking, learning and empowerment and advocacy have been interlinked through many TRIALOG activities.

I. HOW THE PROJECT CAME ABOUT - MEMORIES OF A TRIALOG FOUNDING FATHER

by **Joachim Lindau**

former Programme Director of Bread for the World

The development cooperation of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries was organised as state bilateral and/or multilateral “Proletarian Internationalism and Anti-imperialist Solidarity”. There was no room for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Only a few groupings, mostly under church “protection”, supported people in third world countries through various channels which at the same time guaranteed a flow of information. Only very few projects were continued by the newly independent governments or international organisations in the 1990s. Predominant and pressing social needs within the newly independent states and the lack of local CSOs who could have served as partners, prompted some larger private western, church-based and secular organisations to register “branches” in CEE countries (ADRA, Caritas, CIDA, Soros Foundation and Terre des Hommes to name a few). Governments of the “old EU member states” contributed very little to supporting CSOs. For these reasons most CSOs were small, fledgling and did not play any visible role in their countries even towards the end of the 1990s.

The “Aquis Communautaire” was not discussed in the “Liaison Committee of Development NGOs in the European Union” (LICO) in any detail until 1998 when accession negotiations started with six countries that had been under communist rule till 1989/1990. The LICO “Strategic Plan 1997-2000” provided the required encouragement to go ahead for the initiators of TRIALOG as enlargement appeared as one of nine priorities, which underlined the fact that enlargement was still not the top priority. A need was identified to

- Prepare for the enlargement of the European Union to include the countries of Central and Eastern Europe;
- Identify and contact NGDOs and relevant civil society organisations in Central and Eastern Europe;
- Bring together CEE and EU NGDOs for dialogue and exchange of information.



From left: Joachim Lindau, Robert Zeiner

The Austrian NGDO platform started to follow up on the second point in 1997, capitalising on much older contacts to neighbouring countries. This followed earlier, successful Austrian lobby efforts within the LICO to put some more emphasis on enlargement.

Parallel to that, an informal agreement was reached among LICO delegates from Austria, Germany, Finland, Portugal and the LICO-staff to use their lobby opportunities during the EU presidency programmes to remind governments that enlargement should not take place at the expense of development assistance. A first conference organised by the Austrian NGDO platform took place in Vienna from 18th to 20th November 1998 involving around 150 representatives of NGDOs from Eastern, Central and Western Europe, and the developing world - an event that marked the birth of a new dialogue on intercontinental cooperation. The "Vienna Appeal" outcome document encompassed most elements which reappeared in the application for the TRIALOG-programme in 2000.

To avoid "cooling of the subject" the German NGDO platform VENRO picked up the essentials of the Vienna conference when publishing their Memorandum for the German EU Presidency. The Berlin conference "Globalisation of Solidarity – from Dialogue to Trialogue" June 21 - 22, 1999 built as well on the results of the Vienna Conference, particularly in the closing statement called "The Berlin Declaration". In her contribution: "The Enlargement of the EU – Chance and Impulse for a new East-West-South Cooperation?" Marina Beyer introduced the term "trialogue" into the development discourse. The term "trialogue" was used in the title of the report on the Berlin conference and later on adopted by the Austrian platform as "brand name" for the TRIALOG – programme.

The conference hosted by the Finnish NGDO platform in December 1999 in Tampere and the conference hosted by the Portuguese NGDO platform in Sintra attempted to reinforce the findings of the first two conferences.

Even before the conferences it became clear to everybody involved, that extra and longer term efforts were required, given the complicated - often discouraging - situation in accession countries, which were confirmed during the conferences of and in numerous direct contacts. The plan of an extra – tailor made - programme in support of development CSOs in accession countries started taking shape. As early as January 1999 the outlines of what would be TRIALOG had been drawn.

Study visit to Brussels, 2013



II. SETTING THE GROUND FOR DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN THE ENLARGED EU

The first TRIALOG project, which started in 2000, aimed to raise awareness in the EU accession and candidate countries (CC)¹¹ of development education and development cooperation, and to encourage links between those countries and the Global South. Furthermore, extensive mobilising and networking on the ground in candidate countries was needed to facilitate their engagement in the field of global development. From the beginning, the establishment of national CSO platforms was seen as an important step in order to deal with development policy on national and European level and give civil society organisations from these countries a stronger voice. Additionally, dialogue between the new development actors and EU institutions was promoted through existing CSO networks. Many of the initial contact people in the AC and CC later became project partners with their organisations starting with TRIALOG II onwards and remained in close cooperation with the TRIALOG staff. This group of people provided added value through their advice, critical and visionary observations, and input on the work of the secretariat to TRIALOG.

III. EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF DEVELOPMENT CSOs FROM THE ENLARGED EU

TRIALOG supported CSOs from EU13 in establishing strong ties with development CSO networks across Europe and with EU institutions in order to strengthen their integration into European development policy processes.

Joining CONCORD

From the start of the project, TRIALOG supported the participation of EU13 representatives in the working groups¹² and meetings of the umbrella organisation of European NGDOs, CONCORD. Being a member of CONCORD gives NGOs a direct link to Brussels and the possibility to influence EU level development policy making. By 2013 all EU13 development CSO platforms were CONCORD members.

The involvement of future CONCORD members was crucial in paving their way to membership, introducing new policy areas and consolidating their understanding of CONCORD's work and European-level policy processes. Through participating in the AidWatch group, for example, representatives learned how to monitor aid flows and how to produce a country report, which led to the empowerment of platforms to monitor their governments' contribution to development. In some working groups, EU13 representatives started to bring in a focus on topics such as democratisation and countries in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.

A main factor that hindered this participation was platforms not having a Brussels representative and having to find someone who was willing to travel, as well as the gap in understanding generated by the complex development language used in policy discussions. The core interests of CONCORD working groups also hindered wider engagement because it was sometimes hard for new members to relate to and engage with the topics. From this, however, arose the need to create a new space – the Enlargement, and then EPAN working group. This was a way for EU13 participants to engage with a topic on which they could share their expertise.

EPAN Working Group Support and Meetings 2003-2012

TRIALOG convened the CONCORD working group on Enlargement, Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood (EPAN) between 2003 and 2012. The work was key to introducing EU13 to CONCORD's work by focusing on a region that they were usually more involved in compared to 'traditional' partner countries of EU15 in the ACP countries. Having one TRIALOG staff member in Brussels greatly facilitated this work, including the coordination with the CONCORD secretariat, but a number of factors hindered the work over the years. Participation was always an issue due to limited resources, membership was very fluid and there was a lack of leadership among EU13. The group also struggled with a lack of recognition within CONCORD as the focus region was not in the centre of attention for many EU15 and network-based NGOs and the links with other working groups were also missing. TRIALOG convened the group because it was felt that it was the ideal entry point for EU13 platforms to get

involved in CONCORD. TRIALOG stopped performing this convenor's role in 2012 at the end of phase four, when it was considered that the time had come for members of the group to take over main responsibility for the groups' work and to rely less on the TRIALOG policy officer creating position papers and policy documents. EU13 members of EPAN succeeded in bringing attention to and providing CSO input into certain EU policy areas such as the European Transition Compendium and the establishment of the European Endowment for Democracy. It published regular position papers on neighbourhood and accession-related issues and included high-level speakers in working group meetings, which also provided a first contact point for many in the EU13 with Brussels-based policy makers.

Building up Relations with European Development Actors

During TRIALOG I, bilateral seminars and study visits were organised to bring together CSO representatives from AC with EU15 development CSO platforms. In the beginning, the objective was to show how other platforms work and how EU structures function. In 2005, NGO and MFA representatives from Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania came together for study visits to NGO platforms and MFAs in Austria, Hungary and Slovakia. This also contributed to strengthening the contacts between representatives of NGOs and MFAs which turned out to be useful for further cooperation and advocacy work.

During all project phases, TRIALOG facilitated the participation of representatives from EU13 in European development events to foster networking and increase their knowledge on different development policy topics.

Study visit to Brussels, 2014



Study Visit to Brussels

After an initial study visit to Brussels in 2003, this activity became an annual event from 2009 onwards. During the study visits, EU13 NDGO representatives gained first-hand experience of the EU policy making environment and met with relevant stakeholders in the EU institutions and European development networks. The success of the initial visit was enhanced by the enthusiasm of the participants, who were trying to get used to their new status and keen to learn, but also by the openness of the EU to the new members. Later study visits benefitted from the continued enthusiasm of participants and the fact that they seized the opportunity to build links in Brussels and with other stakeholders.

A challenge of later study visits was the lack of follow-up and feedback of information from the participants to the platforms after their return. Some platforms started to sign contracts with their representatives including a follow up plan to ensure the information was shared with other member organisations through, for example, a national training on the respective topics.

With regards to advocacy, this activity proved extremely helpful in illustrating to the EU13 the need for engagement with European-level policy making processes through CONCORD working groups and for making personal contacts with the people platforms needed to advocate towards. This way, the study visits also supported CONCORD in building up its future members.

Building up Relations with Global Development Actors

TRIALOG organised two international conferences to enable an open dialogue between CSOs from the “West”, the “East” and the “South”. The first conference, in cooperation with the Czech development CSO platform FoRS, the Ekumenická Akademie Praha and CONCORD, took place in May 2008 in Prague. Under the theme “Are we on the right track? Paradigm review by CSOs as development actors” participants from more than 50 different countries reflected together upon the principles which underlie the development work of civil society. The results of the conference¹³ fed into the strategic plan of CONCORD and into the strategy for TRIALOG’s future work.

This conference was the basis for a second conference in November 2010 in Nicaragua which focused on practical steps and the resources civil society needs in order to reach development aims. “Global Crossroads: The Role and Perspectives of CSOs in Development Co-operation” was organised with HORIZONT3000 and its partner - the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Caribbean Coast in Nicaragua (URACCAN). The outcome document¹⁴ includes the commitment of CSOs to the principle of indigenous cultures: the concept of collective well-being (“El Buen Vivir”) and the Istanbul

principles¹⁵ for CSO development effectiveness. Following the conference, TRIALOG invited representatives from EU12 to field visits of HORIZONT3000 and URACCAN projects in the Atlantic Coast region.

The conferences in Prague and Nicaragua were occasions where TRIALOG touched its core: East meets West meets South. These were great occasions for learning and sharing ideas about development. The experience and engagement of the HORIZONT3000 field office in Nicaragua was a crucial benefit, as they co-organised the event and guided the visits to project partners. A hindering factor was the fact that, despite the huge CONCORD support for the Prague conference, there was a lack of engagement in Nicaragua. This meant that the outcome of the conference could have had stronger links with EU15 CSOs. On the content of discussions it was observed that the diverse backgrounds of participants enriched the conversations, but made it challenging to formulate joint positions which adequately reflected the different perspectives.

The global exchange continued in Europe where TRIALOG supported the participation of EU13 and Western Balkan CSO representatives in HORIZONT-3000’s international conferences in 2011, 2012 and 2014. The idea behind the conferences was bringing together HORIZONT3000 project partners from across the world to share their knowledge and expertise and to facilitate dialogue. This increased the feeling of connectedness between HORIZONT3000 and TRIALOG both on the level of project partners, on the institutional level and on the level of outside perception of the project and its lead agency.

With the support of TRIALOG, the ASA Internship Programme established or strengthened national focal points for volunteer sending in in Central and Eastern Europe. The ASA partner NGOs currently work together under the Global Education Network of Young Europeans (GLEN)¹⁶ and organise internships in development projects in the Global South.

HORIZONT3000 international conference, 2014





Based on an idea from TRIALOG and the Enlargement working group of CONCORD, the Regional Partnership Programme (RPP) was initiated in 2005. It facilitated the implementation development cooperation projects in the Global South and development education projects in Europe with an experienced Austrian NGO and one newcomer from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia.

As well as providing a basis for networking, the RPP also helped to establish a political dialogue between CSOs and MFAs in the participating countries. The contacts made through the RPP between 2005 and 2008 often resulted in long lasting partnerships.

Lobbying and Advocacy at European Level

Especially during the first phase of TRIALOG, the policy officer in Brussels carried out lobbying activities towards the EU Institutions. Further emphasis was put on drawing the attention of politicians and civil servants from AC to the issue of development policy. The third focus was put on increasing the profile of the enlargement process in CONCORD.

TRIALOG did direct advocacy work and cooperated with other actors such as CONCORD and DEEEP to secure fair conditions for Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) projects of EU13 NGOs. For example, within the DEAR call of the EU in 2006, 10 million were ring-fenced for actions taking place in the EU12.

Field visits to the University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN), Bluefields, Nicaragua, 2010



The EC also agreed to different criteria for proposals of EU10/AC NGOs – the minimum size of grants was decreased and the EC contribution to the budget increased. In 2013, EC plans to change the guidelines of the DEAR call, favouring significantly larger grants (which means more co-funding from other sources) and bigger project consortia, resulted in EU13 platforms lobbying through TRIALOG and CONCORD for fairer conditions again. Subsequently, a special Lot for EU13 CSOs was created to ensure that smaller CSOs could also apply.

This success can be attributed to consistent lobbying from TRIALOG stakeholders – using one voice; as well as support from EU15 stakeholders who increasingly saw EU13 CSOs as interesting potential partners. Challenges related to TRIALOG, rather than EU13 platforms directly, driving the action – this was due to well-known reasons: low capacities and lack of practical experience regarding funding.

Although EU funding criteria were altered to take the particular challenges faced by EU13 CSOs in account, a recent TRIALOG study from 2014 clearly highlights the gap between EU13 and EU15. Only 0.75% of the almost 4000 EU development grants analysed and 17.4% of the DEAR grants went to EU13 CSOs during the decade 2004-2014.

The TRIALOG Policy Officer facilitated the elaboration of different position and recommendation papers concerning proposals of the EC on the funding instruments of ENPI and IPA. In 2012 a special tool for advocacy in the field of development education and development cooperation was elaborated. The Advocacy Guide “12 Years of TRIALOG – Advocacy Successes from EU-12” includes best practice examples from EU12 platforms and organisations.

Information for Integration: TRIALOG's Communication Tools

Since the beginning of TRIALOG in 2003, the communication tools have included a website, an online NGO database, an electronic newsletter and a yearly printed brochure called the Bulletin. TRIALOG has social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Additionally, TRIALOG published Country Papers on development cooperation and CSOs in EU13 and AC.

TRIALOG's information tools were very valuable for many platforms and interested individuals, especially in the early phases. They are increasingly being used for sharing knowledge between platforms and organisations.

Networking for Joint Projects: The Partnership Fair and Online Partner Search

TRIALOG organised the first Partnership Fair in 2006. The aim of this event was to create a space where CSOs from older and newer EU Member States could identify possible cooperation and prepare joint projects.

Central Training, 2012



The results of the DEAR Call for Proposals 2007 of the EC show that all approved projects with a newer Member State CSO as an applicant started at the Partnership Fair 2006. This Europe-wide event became one of the most successful TRIALOG activities and was organised again in 2010, 2011 and 2013. However, co-funding for EC grants was often difficult to secure and project plans sometimes did not materialise.

Nevertheless, the fairs were always highly appreciated by the participants in terms of building up new contacts, exchange and networking for future projects. Additionally, TRIALOG has continuously been a focal point for facilitating new contacts and has set up tools to distribute partner search requests online.

IV. PLATFORM BUILDING SUPPORT

Facilitating the establishment of national development CSO platforms has always been one of TRIALOG's core interests. Strong, legitimate, and financially sustainable CSO platforms are key actors that can give development CSOs a strong and united voice and be a civil society partner for state actors. TRIALOG support for the newly established development CSO platforms ranged from awareness raising and training support on numerous development cooperation topics, to creating networking opportunities with other platforms to providing methodological support for organisational development and financial support. The situation of EU13 platforms was and continues to be very diverse. Some platforms were well established quickly and recognised as competent partners by their governments. In other countries the process took longer. In these countries more support and organisational development was needed.

The platforms of four countries were established by 2003 before entering the EU –the Czech Republic (2002), Hungary (2003), Malta (2001) and Slovakia (2003). Soon platforms were established in most other EU10 countries as well - Latvia (2004), Poland (2004), Slovenia (2005) and Estonia (2006).

- The platform building in Cyprus started in 2005 and was finalised in 2008. In Lithuania, a special situation emerged.
- After the founding of the Platform (Pagalba) in 2008, a separate platform (LITDEA) with a focus on DEAR was
- established in 2010.

In 2012 the two platforms agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding ahead of a joint EU presidency project in 2013 – this paved the way for one national platform (Lithuanian Umbrella – LU) and full CONCORD membership.

Providing Methodology: How to set up a Platform

The platform building activities, organised by TRIALOG in the very early stages, helped to raise awareness about development cooperation among NGOs in EU10 and AC. The process empowered national NGO actors to form a group of like-minded people and raise the topic of development cooperation in their countries towards both society and politicians and state institutions. Later in the process, TRIALOG organised several seminars to give NGOs in the EU13 the tools necessary to set up a platform. The seminars concentrated on various topics, such as the necessary structures, communication tools, policy work, financing and capacity building.

It has been demonstrated that a careful needs assessment together with the beneficiaries is crucial to avoid a top-down creation of needs. The impulse to set up a platform has to come from its members. Otherwise the risk is that member organisations will not engage with and work through the platform. In Cyprus for example, TRIALOG introduced development cooperation / development education and the local CSOs developed a very strong interest in these topics, although they were not high on their agenda beforehand. This led to the formation of the island-wide platform CYINDEP, which then joined

CONCORD. The process was strongly led by TRIALOG and can be seen as example of very successful European integration efforts. On the other hand, the local situation in Cyprus, described by challenges like the internal political division of the island over the prominent migration issues or the recent financial crisis, is hindering the work of the development platform and its members. CYINDEP implemented a very strong and effective EU Presidency Project in 2012 but when the funding ran out it had to reduce staff and work only on the basis of financial resources provided by TRIALOG and CONCORD, as membership fees are very low. Additionally, the engagement of members decreased. In response, a workshop on organisational development facilitated by TRIALOG was held in order to start the process towards a new platform strategy.

Networking with other CSO Platforms

A special event TRIALOG organised throughout the years was the Central Training. This event was directed specifically towards platform representatives from the enlarged EU countries. The purpose of the Central Training was to deepen cooperation, enable sharing of experiences, and create opportunities for joint action between EU13 platforms. The Central Training was highly valued by the platforms as it responded perfectly to their needs to share and discuss among a group of people in similar situations and to receive special inputs on relevant topics from the side of TRIALOG. It created a feeling of belonging to a network. Whereas in the beginning the training component was very strong, later the sharing and exchange aspect as well as development of joint strategies on certain topics became more relevant. In TRIALOG V the event was renamed in "Strategy Meeting".

Cypriot Civil Society Strengthening Programme

mc The Management Centre **INTRAC** NGO



Platform Support

In TRIALOG II, small grants were made available to support platforms financially, although for a limited amount of money, at a particular moment in the project. The platforms were also supported by the TRIALOG staff through advice and consultation on various issues from organisational development to advocacy work and through commenting on EU project proposals.

In TRIALOG IV, all platforms were offered a small budget to organise different activities according to their current needs and all but one made use of this tool. Activities ranging from organisational development for the platform, to training for their members, to advocacy events took place and TRIALOG received very positive feedback about this opportunity. It was, however, an unforeseen administrative effort for the TRIALOG secretariat to launch the call, collect the applications, evaluate and monitor the narrative and financial reports, and assist the platforms with practical issues related to the activities. In TRIALOG V, all platforms receive a contribution to the monthly salary of a Liaison Officer. Most of the Liaison Officer tasks are directly related to the TRIALOG project.

V. CAPACITY BUILDING FOR DEVELOPMENT CSOs

TRIALOG recognises capacity building as one of the main mechanisms of support for countries of the enlarged EU in order to strengthen and empower national platforms and their members.

Training Activities

Training is a core element of TRIALOG's learning and empowerment activities. In the first phase of TRIALOG, "Introductory course on development policy" seminars were organised on EU development policy, development cooperation and project management for participants from EU and AC. As these events gathered participants from different AC in Vienna, they were also a space for networking. Additionally, TRIALOG facilitated the participation of NGO representatives from AC to seminars and study visits to European development CSO platforms and build up contacts with European NGOs.

Future strategy event, 2011



Whereas in this early phase the focus was on "demonstrating" to the AC how European NGOs work, the approach naturally changed throughout the years towards an exchange.

Since TRIALOG II, the "In-Country Training" has been organised on topics like co-financing opportunities with the EC, EuropeAid grant management, project cycle management (PCM) and fundraising methods. These seminars offered an additional space for networking on the national level between development NGOs in EU13 and sometimes included also members of the Ministries or Development Agencies which contributed to the cooperation among NGOs and relations with the authorities in charge of national development policies.

In TRIALOG IV the training became more decentralised as some platforms increased capacities for organising the events. Sometimes it was hard to find participants for training events and offers were not accepted. Platforms explained it as a certain training fatigue. Reasons for this include a huge variety of offers for training from various sources as well as limited human resources to make use of all the opportunities.

Creating a Pool of Multipliers

The Training of Multipliers (ToM) was introduced in 2010. It aimed to contribute to the creation of a pool of multipliers in the area of development cooperation among members of CSOs in EU13. The objective was very ambitious and, despite the fact that the concept and outline was drafted in close cooperation with the platforms, the training did not match the expectations of many participants. The diverse levels of participants' knowledge were challenging and led to a low level of satisfaction in the first training cycle.

TRIALOG re-designed the course and organised fewer but longer training modules, including fewer topics but in more detail. The interest of participants in 2011 and especially 2012 to follow-up on the training topics and continue networking among their group gave the training a valuable networking aspect. Many of the people that were trained then are still engaged on a long-term basis with the platforms.



From Beneficiaries to Partners

In its fifth phase, TRIALOG moved from a project for EU13 platforms and organisations to a project of EU13 platforms, where they are not only consulted but are fundamentally involved in the project. This step underlined the success of TRIALOG's support throughout the years 2000 – 2012 in the creation of empowered CSO platforms in EU13. On the other hand, platforms expressed the need to continue TRIALOG in order to strengthen their capacities and to create a space for networking opportunities, additional to CONCORD and other networks.

Decentralisation of Capacity Building

In TRIALOG II the principles of decentralisation and responsiveness were already integrated. The platforms were offered a variety of training topics to choose from and TRIALOG provided and financed the training. A further step was taken in the fifth TRIALOG phase. Each EU13 platform elaborates their own national capacity building plans and coordinates the implementation of its activities. TRIALOG allocates a yearly budget to the platforms and constantly monitors the process.

VI. RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS AND EMPOWERMENT OF EU13 CSO PLATFORMS

TRIALOG always maintained close relationships with EU13 platforms and adapted its activities according to the needs expressed throughout the different project phases. Furthermore, representatives of all platforms were invited to share their ideas for the subsequent TRIALOG projects. Through this participatory process, TRIALOG changed over the years according to the development of the platforms.



LESSONS LEARNT FROM TRIALOG

INCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT



Avoid top-down approaches

When designing project structures and activities, it is crucial to avoid top-down approaches. The engagement of project beneficiaries in the design and planning of activities leads to greater ownership and satisfaction with the actions.

TRIALOG integrated its main beneficiaries, the CSO platforms, into the design of its four follow up projects and individual activities. In the fifth project phase, the platforms became partners with much more influence in relation to project implementation. Nevertheless, even in TRIALOG V the perception of a centrally-run project and ways of working with the project secretariat are changing slowly and are a learning process for both sides.

The limited participation and a lack of leadership among EU13 CSO actors in European development cooperation processes is also rooted in the way they got involved in development – as a top-down process rather than bottom-up organically grown engagement. EU13 were obliged to provide development aid through the Acquis Communautaire when they became members of the EU, and this kind of imposed obligation results in certain challenges. Development expertise had to be built up on both the government side and within civil society.

Avoiding top-down approaches is also important when it comes to the establishment of national CSO platforms. Attention should be paid to whether local CSOs feel the real need to organise themselves through such a body and if many CSO voices are being heard. Otherwise, there is the risk that the platform will be neither a member-driven nor a representative body of members' interests.



Include flexible spaces among project activities

In order to address a diverse array of needs it is helpful to build in some open spaces in the project activities that can respond to individual partner needs.



- In TRIALOG IV small amounts of funding were made available to EU13 platforms to use in activities ranging from training, advocacy and organisational development, responding to their most urgent needs.





From representation to empowerment

Ideally, a project empowers its target group and supports it in articulating positions towards certain audiences. Within this process, the role of the project staff can change from “speaking on behalf” of the target group towards advising them in the background and supporting them with the relevant tools and information.

Whereas in the early phases TRIALOG represented CSOs from EU13 in different European fora, mainly within CONCORD and towards the EC, over the years they became more and more involved and independent and TRIALOG’s role shifted. After two project phases, TRIALOG’s support started to focus more on enabling platforms and their members to increase expertise in development policy topics and advocacy methods.



Lack of resources for CSOs in EU13 is a hindering factor

Financial and human resource sustainability is crucial for the functioning and development of CSOs.

Limited participation and engagement of EU13 representatives in TRIALOG activities was challenging throughout all project phases. This was mostly due to a lack of resources in the EU13 where development CSOs often lacked (and still do) financial resources and hence operate with very few staff members, often on a volunteer basis. The lack of sustainability and financial stability translated into a lack of capacity, which led to insecurity about ability and possibilities for engagement, which in turn led to a lack of leadership.

LEARNING BY DOING



Take the risk! Give opportunities for project implementation in an unknown environment

Let people partner up with experienced counterparts to plan and implement activities.

Extremely positive feedback was given to the Regional Partnership Programme which was set up and run with the support of TRIALOG. Through the implementation of projects in the Global South together with an experienced Austrian partner, organisations from newer EU member states were given the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of development cooperation projects. This helped build the expertise and capacities of CSOs in the enlarged EU to carry out their own projects in developing countries.



Include peer learning among your project partners

Giving partners the opportunity to share their knowledge with colleagues in the project enhances their own capacities and brings in new perspectives.

Peer learning appeared in several forms: at the time of establishing platform structures, TRIALOG organised visits from EU13 to EU15 countries for knowledge sharing. Later, study visits between EU13 platforms took place to share the experiences in platform building and preparing for EU presidencies.

CONTINUITY AND FLEXIBILITY NEEDED



Sustainable change takes time and is context bound

The change, especially in political or socio-cultural contexts, that can be supported through a project is more sustainable the longer a project is actively supported by all stakeholders. Furthermore, the successes or failures of a project are related to the context and external processes.

The continuity of TRIALOG was perceived as positive by the national CSO platforms because, through multiannual support, the capacities and structures within EU13 civil society were strengthened.

Nevertheless, in all EU13 countries funding for the platform is not secured and is mostly project based, which means that there are hardly any resources for core activities. This affects the policy engagement, advocacy possibilities and support to platform members.



Build up a strong relationship with your partners

Mutual trust and a partnership based on respect, openness and willingness to compromise between the different actors contribute to the success of a project. These partnerships grow stronger over the years.

As a result of its continuous support, TRIALOG is established as a reliable partner for platforms and CSOs in the enlarged EU. This turns the project’s lead agency and people involved into valuable resources for CSO integration in EU development cooperation and development policy, as well as CSO platform building.

Adjust to the capacity of the target group

Adapting to the changing needs of beneficiaries is crucial for the success of a project. It is natural that the needs and situations of partners differ and some may not continue to need the same support while others may join and start benefiting from the project. The process of assessing the situation and being inclusive to allow everyone's voice to be heard is challenging but necessary.

For TRIALOG, each new phase marked a turning point where situations were assessed and new directions defined. The way TRIALOG supported CSO platforms from the enlarged EU evolved naturally from providing services to supporting them in providing their own services.

Dare to let go

When the group of project partners develops into a strong network it requires trust, daring, and innovation to change the mind-sets of all those involved from a traditional project approach to a more open and loose network approach.

At the end of phase IV, TRIALOG reached a point where its traditional approach of service delivery was questioned by some national platforms. This can be described as TRIALOG changing from being in the centre of a network to being one part of it

Be inclusive: Recognise potential partners outside usual groups

TRIALOG aimed to continuously share ideas about how to interact with stakeholders outside the usual groups involved in the project. This has been done through organising joint activities with actors such as the GLEN Network, Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) and representatives of HORIZONT3000 field offices in the Global South. Exchange with these stakeholders triggered new thinking and brought fresh views to the work of TRIALOG.

CREATING SPACE FOR CSOs

Open up spaces for networking

Provide people with the space to meet and interact as networks are extraordinary ways of organising knowledge, co-operation and exchange.

Many partners see the added value of TRIALOG as its ability to bring people together. It was repeatedly underlined that the spaces for Europe-wide and global networking were extremely helpful for CSOs in Central and Eastern Europe. Through its different activities,

exchange, information sharing and peer-learning was possible. This encouraged CSOs and platforms to organise themselves regionally and fostered their integration in the development CSO sector at European level.

Global experiences create motivation and positive impact for work at home

Bringing together people from different backgrounds and cultures who work towards the same aim is extremely fruitful in terms of learning and enriching individual perspectives.

Participants in the Global Exchange activities underlined the relevance and positive impact the events had on their work back home. The encounters were perceived as stimulus for discussions on development policy topics, as the voices of a variety of stakeholders from across the world were heard.

Support and advocacy for project funding

Provide capacity building for project funding combined with lobbying efforts to create an enabling environment for CSOs, including legal aspects, political dialogue between CSOs and decision makers, as well as funding possibilities.

TRIALOG's training events on EC funding and proposal writing, as well as the Partnership Fairs, information sharing on EC calls and the online Partner Search were starting points for many CSOs to elaborate larger projects and apply for EC funding. The TRIALOG team additionally supported the efforts of CSOs by successfully lobbying the EC for less strict funding criteria for the EU13 applicants.

NGO PLATFORM BUILDING KNOW-HOW IS REPLICABLE TO NEW CONTEXTS

It has been shown that the way TRIALOG supported and accompanied platform building processes produced knowledge that can be flexibly applied in other countries going through similar processes. Especially the experiences in Romania and Cyprus, as well as more recently in Croatia, show that despite very different national contexts the guiding support of TRIALOG encouraged and strengthened the platform building process.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO DEVELOPMENT CSO PLATFORM BUILDING

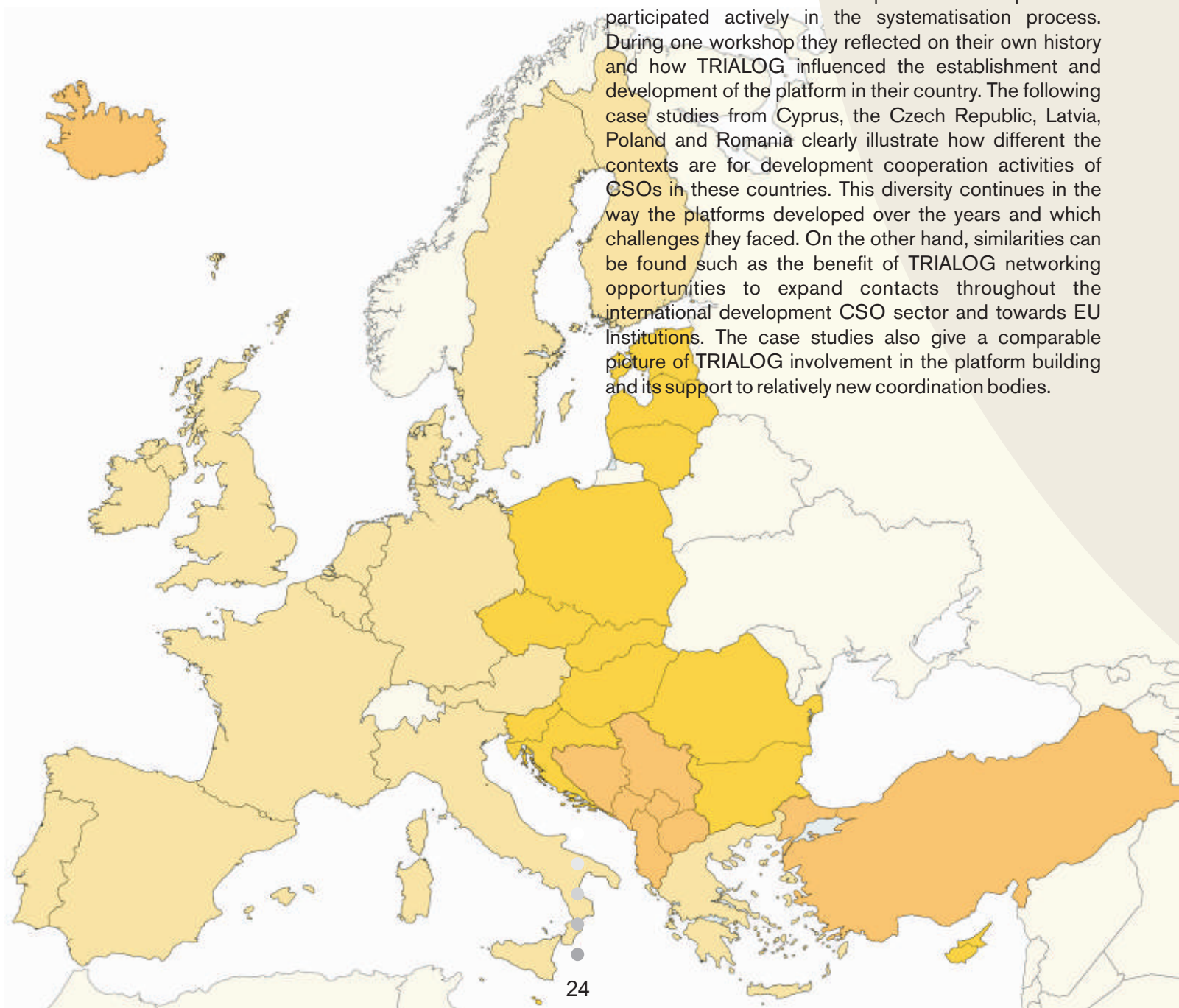
The following steps are based on TRIALOG's experience in supporting and accompanying Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in different newer EU member states during their process of development CSO platform building. They can be used as guidelines for organisations that aim to initiate a platform, network or a similar structure in their country, as well as by a body from outside supporting such a process. The different steps propose a certain structural approach, but naturally some activities might happen in parallel.

	WHAT?	HOW?	WHY?	REMEMBER
1	Map potential partners	Map CSOs that are already working or potentially interested in working on issues related to global justice, human rights, peace building, sustainable development etc. This can be done through research (online and via existing contacts to organisations) and consultation meetings with state and CSO representatives. The mapping can be designed as a country paper. See: http://www.trialog.or.at/country-papers-3	To identify potential organisations that would be interested in forming a network and eventually a platform.	Be inclusive and involve all relevant CSO actors taking into account geographical differences and differences in organisation size in order to allow everyone to contribute.
2	Build relations with potential partners	Contact CSO representatives and arrange meetings to identify potential interest and needs to engage in setting up a platform.	To build up personal contacts and provide information on development cooperation and the role of civil society in it to interested actors.	Do not underestimate the investment of time needed to build up a trust relationship.
3	Create a core group to lead the process	Identify highly motivated individuals who support the idea to set up a platform and are committed to working on the process.	It is crucial to have a team of at least 2-3 people who will be dedicated to continuously work on the process.	It is easier to coordinate the core work in a small and committed team.
4	Raise awareness among (potential) partners	Organise thematic seminars to familiarise a wider group of CSO representatives with the relevant topics (development cooperation, development education, development CSOs' role in the EU etc.).	To raise awareness of the relevant topics, to build alliances and to identify potential platform members.	Raise interest in your topics but avoid a top-down approach. Encourage peer learning, knowledgeable members of the group can take on active roles during seminars.
5	Assess capacity building needs of partners	Through questionnaires or interviews identify the main capacity building needs of the (potential) partners in terms of the core topics of the platform and working methods.	To facilitate the process of platform building and enable organisations to take an active role.	The capacity building needs and the level of knowledge are different between CSOs and from one country to another. Adapt to existing needs.
6	Build capacity among partners	Provide capacity building activities such as seminars on development cooperation/ development education and EU funding opportunities; job shadowing with other development CSO platforms; and study visits (to EU institutions).	To ensure that the expertise needed by CSOs to improve their work and participation at the national, regional and EU level is available at the right time and with the required quality.	A good mix of activities is needed for diverse groups of CSO representatives. Design activities that respond to the working environment and (scarce) resources of the organisations.
7	Plan the legislative procedures	Organise seminars and follow-up meetings on platform building and organisational development for CSOs. Decide on the formal status and set up a timeframe for the legal establishment. Combine the meetings on legislative procedure with concrete development topics, so people will gain knowledge on content and have a clearer idea about why it is important to create the platform.	To bring together a group of CSOs leading the platform building process to facilitate their work on concrete issues such as strategy, statutes and membership engagement.	The process is likely to take time and some organisations might break away leaving space for others to join.
8	Take enough time to ensure an appropriate consultation process	Take as much time as is needed but at the same time do not allow the process to destroy the idea. Develop a common understanding of what the platform should achieve.	If things move too quickly and there is little consultation with stakeholders, the process can create frustration and lack of ownership. Members might develop different expectations towards the platform.	Find a balance between giving the process enough time and not losing the momentum and ambition of reaching the final objective. Define the role of the platform.
9	Develop relations with state stakeholders and beyond	Make contacts and facilitate meetings with the state officials responsible for development cooperation (often in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs). Facilitate meetings with relevant stakeholders, such as representatives from academia, journalists, other civil society actors, politicians, and ministries related to the topic, European institutions' representatives in your country, foreign embassies etc.	To learn about their engagement in the topic, plans for the future and experience with and approach to working with CSOs. To identify potential cooperation opportunities with a wide range of actors.	Invest in good working relations since this cooperation is important in the long-run. A communication strategy can be a helpful tool.
10	Raise awareness in the society	Organise national roundtable events engaging state, EU and civil society stakeholders.	To raise awareness among CSO representatives and politicians on relevant topics. To build links with different stakeholders working on similar topics.	Events are a good starting point for networking but require consistent follow up.
11	Share experiences with peers in other countries	Organise peer-to-peer learning meetings with CSO platforms from different countries.	To learn from others' experiences and exchange on crucial issues.	Contacts made during the time at the establishment of the platform can also be useful at later stages.
12	Take national level work to the European level	Foster involvement in relevant (development and development education) debates and working processes on international/European level. Identify relevant international partners and networks to join (such as CONCORD Europe).	To gain expertise and legitimacy, as well as to build links with international CSOs and other stakeholders and bring the country's perspective into the European/global discourse.	Engaging at international level can bring legitimacy in the eyes of domestic stakeholders and additional support for establishing the platform. Do not hesitate to ask for advice.

ANNEX 1

CASE STUDIES ON THE HISTORY OF EU13 DEVELOPMENT CSO PLATFORMS

Five of the EU13 development CSO platforms participated actively in the systematisation process. During one workshop they reflected on their own history and how TRIALOG influenced the establishment and development of the platform in their country. The following case studies from Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland and Romania clearly illustrate how different the contexts are for development cooperation activities of CSOs in these countries. This diversity continues in the way the platforms developed over the years and which challenges they faced. On the other hand, similarities can be found such as the benefit of TRIALOG networking opportunities to expand contacts throughout the international development CSO sector and towards EU Institutions. The case studies also give a comparable picture of TRIALOG involvement in the platform building and its support to relatively new coordination bodies.



CASE STUDY

CYINDEP IN CYPRUS



In Cyprus, the platform-building process was initiated by TRIALOG in 2005, and resulted in what today is CYINDEP, an island-wide platform with twenty three members. Besides inappropriate national development legislation, one of the main challenges for CYINDEP remains funding. The CYINDEP office is located in the Green Zone in the border area, in order to allow both communities to actively engage.

History of the Cypriot Development CSO platform CYINDEP and TRIALOG

The first time NGOs in Cyprus got in touch with development cooperation (DC), was in 2005 when NGO representatives participated in the TRIALOG study visit to Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. During this phase, NGOs were encouraged by TRIALOG and by other platforms to explore ways of becoming active on development issues in Cyprus. This was followed by initial platform building meetings.

In 2006, during the first TRIALOG Partnership Fair, several NGOs from Cyprus formulated their first joint project proposal on development education and awareness raising. Although the proposal was rejected, this event was a milestone and a valuable networking experience.

This was followed by a public conference organised by TRIALOG in Cyprus, TRIALOG meetings with the Cypriot MFA, and reporting in the media on development issues and Cypriot responsibilities in the field of international development as an EU member.

In 2007 several events and initiatives helped start a blooming phase. The proposal that was rejected in 2006 was re-submitted and one organisation started implementing a development education project in Cyprus. These first projects did not only help the relation between the NGOs but also with the MFA. Additionally, TRIALOG facilitated the participation of Cypriot NGOs in CONCORD events and working groups. Despite this being a blooming phase, the problems generated by the island division were still reflected in the cooperation between NGOs from the two communities.

2008 was marked by endless negotiations between organisations in the two communities, aimed at overcoming these challenges and identifying ways of setting up a joint platform. In 2008 the platform was finally established. Two separate organisations were registered in the two communities and, with support from TRIALOG, the two platforms joined under one umbrella organisation – CYINDEP, in 2009. The umbrella became a CONCORD member in 2010.

TRIALOG supported the consolidation of the platform with capacity building on EC proposal writing, and, together with CONCORD members supported CYINDEP in becoming active in expressing their views towards Cypriot policy makers, for example through yearly AidWatch reports.

In 2012, the platform received an EC grant for a project on food security and post-2015 connected to the EU presidency of Cyprus, which enabled the platform to engage paid staff and operate from a joint office. Additionally, this generated media attention, government discussion, and public visibility. The platform situation improved but financial instability continued due to a lack of complementary funding. Consequently, after the project completion, only one staff member continued to work in the CYINDEP secretariat, with support from the TRIALOG V project.



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CASE STUDY

ForS IN CZECH REPUBLIC

Czech NGOs started to implement development cooperation projects in the early 1990s. A platform of Czech NGOs and other non-profit organisations engaged in development cooperation, global development education and humanitarian aid – the Czech Forum for Development Co-operation (ForS) – was created in 2002 by 15 organisations.





History of the Czech development CSO platform FoRS and TRIALOG

In 2000, the first serious consultation on the future of Czech development cooperation began between representatives of government and civil society - workers and students, the academic sector, NGOs, and independent experts. Equally importantly, in 2002 the role of non-governmental partners appeared in the concept of foreign development aid for 2002 - 2007.

In September of the same year, 15 NGOs working in the areas of development cooperation, development education and humanitarian assistance agreed to establish FoRS – the Czech Forum for Development Co-operation.

TRIALOG was not directly involved in the platform's establishment, but supported it at a later stage through capacity building, opening the doors to cooperation between “old” and “new” EU countries and their NGDO platforms, and facilitating dialogue (including internal dialogue with major country stakeholders and policy dialogue). Additionally, TRIALOG provided funding for travel to meetings or events.

Following the establishment of the platform, FoRS established partnerships with line ministries and national stakeholders, becoming a dialogue partner for the Czech MFA on the ODA programming and preparation of NGO grant schemes for Development Education, capacity building and support for trilateral projects.

In 2003, FoRS became a founding member of CONCORD which enabled the platform to actively participate in development cooperation processes at European level even before the Czech Republic joined the EU. TRIALOG paved FoRS' way to CONCORD including a seat in the CONCORD board through Jan Plesinger.

Between 2004 and 2006, FoRS was involved in a number of events and witnessed a number of successes that contributed to its becoming a fully-fledged platform. One of these successes was being funded by the government for the first time, and another was being engaged in influencing first national development policies and the creation of country strategy papers for Czech ODA priority countries.

From 2007 to 2008, FoRS went through the first consolidated strategy planning, concluded by a formulation of vision, mission and main objectives. The experience gained, during the Czech EU Presidency (January - June 2009) also contributed to better coordination and more staff.

Throughout the years, FoRS cooperated with TRIALOG at a more partner level, voicing criticism about the limitation of its involvement in TRIALOG decision making. FoRS preferred to organise events itself to make them tailor-made for its needs. The TRIALOG Partnership Fair and networking events for platforms (Central Training) seemed the most relevant for FoRS, although it was felt that some specific needs of FoRS were not sufficiently reflected in these events over time.



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CASE STUDY

LAPAS IN LATVIA

After gaining independence, Latvia focused firstly on its own transformation and development. It started providing development assistance via its UN membership fees and humanitarian aid, on a case-by-case basis, only in 1999. According to the World Bank International Development Association's resolution, Latvia only became a fully-fledged donor state in February 2008.

In general, the policy dialogue between the MFA and NDGOs works well. However, Latvian development NGOs face difficulties with sustainable funding, especially for covering administrative costs and project co-funding, which leads to challenges with human resources as well.

TRIALOG in-country training in Latvia, 2010





History of the Latvian development CSO platform LAPAS and TRIALOG

LAPAS was established in 2004, a process facilitated by the Soros Foundation Latvia. Although TRIALOG was not present during the platform building process in Latvia, TRIALOG's support was appreciated early on in capacity building.

After its establishment, LAPAS representatives started participating in TRIALOG events such as the Central Training, an event seen as very relevant by LAPAS, as it provided a space for all EU13 platforms to exchange information on common problems and jointly identify solutions.

At the 2012 TRIALOG Conference "Advancing Beyond 2015" platform representatives from LAPAS presented the concept of operationalising human security by strengthening securitability (a form of resilience) as a post-MDG paradigm issue.

TRIALOG's expert sending seminar in 2008 was also received with enthusiasm by LAPAS, since it facilitated an understanding between NGOs and government officials, but unfortunately Latvian Development Cooperation was minimised during the crisis from 2008-2012, so Latvia did not develop an expert sending system.

In the same year, TRIALOG offered LAPAS members a seminar on EU NSA-LA project proposal writing, in light of the forthcoming DEAR grant competition. A local authority participating in the seminar was awarded a DEAR grant, which facilitated improved cooperation between the Local Government Association and LAPAS. Two NGOs receiving DEAR grants participated in TRIALOG training on EC contract management in Poland in 2010.

Participation in TRIALOG supported or organised events such as the conference and field visits in Nicaragua in 2010 and the rural development conference of HORIZONT3000 which took place in Vienna in 2011 also facilitated the dialogue with the Global South. The discussions during the latter inspired the participants from Latvia to establish a new working group of LAPAS in early 2013 on food security and post-MDGs.

As far as TRIALOG support is concerned, LAPAS would also highlight the importance of the exchange between platforms, particularly the one with the Slovenian platform on the role of NGOs during EU presidencies, the opportunities provided by the DEAR funding line, the information on the Baltic countries from the country reports, and the crystallisation of food security as a thematic priority for LAPAS.

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CASE STUDY

GRUPA ZAGRANICA IN POLAND

Poland formulated its preliminary development cooperation priorities as a donor in 1997 and started providing development aid in 1998. Regular Polish development initiatives started in 2004, a trend directly linked to EU accession. The MFA's Department for International Cooperation was established in 2005 and the current Polish ODA system has been under gradual construction since 2004.

"Grupa Zagranica", the Polish platform of NGOs involved in international development cooperation, democracy support, humanitarian aid and global education was officially registered only in 2004, though it had been in existence since 2001 as an informal group.





Central Training in Krakow, 2010

History of the Polish development CSO platform Grupa Zagranica and TRIALOG

TRIALOG encouraged the informal NGO group formed in 2001 to become a platform and join CONCORD, helping to overcome fears connected to the burden of membership fees, for example.

In 2006 members of Grupa Zagranica attended the first TRIALOG Partnership Fair to elaborate development education projects. Following this, TRIALOG organised several training events on EC funding, EuropeAid project proposal writing, grant management and implementation in Poland.

The platform kept growing and new members entered, the first church related organisations joined and, the first Polish AidWatch report was launched in 2007. The methodology of the report was jointly elaborated by one of the working groups of the platform. The AidWatch report contributed to ensuring that the MFA started recognising the platform as a vital and important actor. Since then Grupa Zagranica has published shadow reports in response to official MFA reports.

TRIALOG continued to provide platform members with opportunities to gain practical knowledge about development projects on the ground during the conference and field visits in Nicaragua 2010.

The Polish EU Presidency from July to December 2011 was, without a doubt, the biggest project organised by the platform so far. The most important outcome of the Polish presidency for the development CSOs was the establishment of the Development Cooperation Act on 16 September 2011.

CSOs participated actively in putting their views and suggestions into the new legislation and its adoption was a major milestone. The presidency also opened up the opportunity for some of the representatives of the Polish development CSO platform to participate in the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, South Korea.

By 2013, the Polish platform was already well established, with a stable membership base and regular dialogue with ministries, parliamentarians, and media. The platform consisted mainly of NGOs working in the East on democratisation and in the South.

Since its establishment, TRIALOG has always been in the background, supporting the platform's activities.

CASE STUDY

FOND IN ROMANIA

Since the end of 1989 there has been a rather slow but important evolution of the civil society in Romania.

Thousands of new NGOs mushroomed throughout the country at the beginning of the 1990s. The financial support from abroad, mostly from the US and later from the EU was crucial to the CSOs' survival and growth.

Despite difficulties in mobilising civic participation and local resources, civil society in Romania enjoys a considerable degree of public trust even after the economic and fiscal crises, unlike many Romanian public institutions.



Adela Rusu of FOND during a systematisation workshop, explaining the timeline of the platform



History of the Romanian CSO platform FOND and TRIALOG

With TRIALOG support, NGOs in Romania started working on national platform building in 2005. The platform FOND was established in 2006 in consultation with TRIALOG and with the Romanian MFA. USAID supported the creation of FOND through the World Learning grant.

In November 2005, TRIALOG organised a study visit for participants from Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania to meet with development NGOs and ministries in Austria, Slovakia and Hungary. During meetings, the focus was on development cooperation strategies, the implementation of ODA policies, and financing models. This was an important step towards the creation of the Romanian platform.

During April and May 2006, TRIALOG provided Training on Development Cooperation: Role of and opportunities for Romanian NGOs in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Iasi and Timisoara. In June, TRIALOG organised a Platform Building Seminar looking at how to develop the platform, followed by a visit to Poland in June 2006, another series of TRIALOG seminars in Romania, and the participation of Romanian NGO representatives in the first TRIALOG Partnership Fair. Although Romania was not yet eligible for EC funding, the event was very useful for gaining knowledge and ideas.

The official registration of the Romanian NGDO platform FOND took place in March 2007. The first working groups were established, namely one for development education and one on the Eastern Neighbourhood (Moldova/Georgia). During the initial stages, TRIALOG continued to offer the platform financial and capacity building support, such as training events on EC project proposal writing and participation in the Study Visit on Expert Sending.

In June 2010 the Romanian Development Camp (an annual event initiated by the Romanian MFA in 2008) was organised for the first time in partnership with FOND and attracted great media interest and visibility for the platform and the topic of development cooperation. Among the guests were high level EC representatives like the Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs.

Other key events followed, such as participation in the TRIALOG Future Factory, FOND gaining membership of CONCORD, and FOND becoming partner in two EC projects. It all culminated in 2013 with FOND signing an agreement with the MFA. The Collaboration Protocol represents a major step in the cooperation between the Romanian NGDO platform FOND and the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in terms of development cooperation and reflects the efforts and progress made during the last years.

ANNEX 2

PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

I. TRIALOG Lead Agency

HORIZONT3000: www.horizont3000.at

HORIZONT3000 is an Austrian development NGO with seven catholic member organisations (DKA, Austrian Catholic Men Movement - KMBÖ, Austrian Catholic Women Movement – kfb, Bruder und Schwester in Not – Diocese Innsbruck, Bruder und Schwester in Not - Katholische Aktion Kärnten, Caritas Austria, Welthaus of the Diocese Graz-Seckau, as well as Referat Mission und Entwicklung of the Archdiocese of Vienna). HORIZONT3000 is mainly funded by the Austrian Government (Austrian Development Cooperation), the European Union, contributions of its member organisations and Liechtensteinischer Entwicklungsdienst LED, as well as the Medicor Foundation.

II. EU13 Development CSO Platforms

Bulgaria: Bulgarian Platform for International Development (BPID): www.bpid.eu

Croatia: CROSOL – Croatian Platform for International Citizens Solidarity

Cyprus: Cyprus Islandwide Development NGO Platform (CYINDEP): www.cyindep.eu

Czech Republic: Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (FoRS): www.fors.cz

Estonia: Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ): www.terveilm.net

Hungary: Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND): www.hand.org.hu

Latvia: Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS): www.lapas.lv

Lithuania: Lithuanian National Platform of Development NGOs: www.pagalba.org

Lithuania: Lithuanian Development Education and Awareness Raising Network (LITDEA): www.litdea.eu

Malta: National Platform of Maltese NGDOs (SKOP): www.skopmalta.org

Poland: The Group of Polish NGOs working abroad (Grupa Zagranica): www.zagranica.org.pl

Romania: The Romanian NGDO Platform (FOND): www.fondromania.org

Slovakia: Slovak Non-governmental Development Platform (MVRO): www.mvro.sk

Slovenia: Slovenian Global Action (SLOGA): www.sloga-platform.org

III. Consortium Partners

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Entwicklungshilfe e.V. – AGEH (Germany): www.ageh.de
Partner in TRIALOG I-II-III-IV-V

AEC (France)
Partner in TRIALOG II

Bread for the World (Germany): www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de
Partner in TRIALOG I-II-III

Centre for Peace Studies (Croatia): www.cms.hr
Partner in TRIALOG V

Christian Children Communities Movement – eRko (Slovakia): www.en.erko.sk
Partner in TRIALOG III-IV

Civil Society Development Foundation (Romania): www.fdsc.ro
Partner in TRIALOG III-IV

CONCORD a.i.s.b.l. (Belgium): www.concordeurope.org
Partner in TRIALOG I-II-III-IV-V

Cordaid (Netherlands): www.cordaid.org
Partner in TRIALOG I-II

Development and Education Centre European Perspective (Greece)
Partner in TRIALOG IV

Ekumenicka akademie Praha (Czech Republic): www.ekumakad.cz
Partner in TRIALOG III-IV

Koperazzjoni Internazzjonali – Kopin (Malta): www.kopin.org
Partner in TRIALOG IV

Light for the World/ Licht für die Welt – Christoffel Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Austria): www.lichtfuerdiewelt.at
Partner in TRIALOG I-II-III-IV-V

Lithuanian Kolping Society (Lithuania): www.kolping.lt
Partner in TRIALOG IV

Polska Akcja Humanitarna / Polish Humanitarian Action – PAH (Poland): www.pah.org
Partner in TRIALOG III-IV-V

Terre des hommes Foundation “Lausanne” (Hungary): www.tdh.ch
Partner in TRIALOG IV



IV. Other partners and stakeholders

Austrian Development Agency: www.entwicklung.at
DEEEP Project: www.deeep.org
EuropeAid: www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid
Global Education Network GLEN: www.glen-europe.org

ANNEX 3 RESOURCES

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11. EU Accession Countries in 2000: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic and Slovenia. In Romania and Bulgaria the accession negotiations started in June 2004.

12. More information and a complete list of working groups can be found on the CONCORD website at:
<http://www.concordeurope.org/about-us?id=94>

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<http://db.trialog.or.at/images/doku/prague-conference-report.pdf>

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http://www.trialog.or.at/images/doku/trialog_outcome_document_nicaragua_conference.pdf

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