

Building Bridges: GTZ's Experience with Trilateral Cooperation

For those of you who do not know GTZ, we are a public enterprise of the German Government that implements development cooperation projects mostly for the German government, but also for donor clients like World Bank, ADB, EU, and DFID, in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. In 2008 will have a turnover of a little over €1.1 billion per annum and operate through 92 offices that serve 120 countries with about 12,000 employees working in 2,700 projects. About ¼ of our turnover is in Asia.

Because of our wide geographic presence, access to development cooperation officials and the diversity of our projects, we have the infrastructure in place to engage in a great deal of trilateral cooperation. Much of this is already happening, below the radar, in many of our existing projects.

On a global level we officially have 14 operational trilateral projects, where the main partners are:

- China, with Chile, Vietnam and India mainly in the area of economic policy dialogue
- Brazil with 10 countries in Latin America and Africa mainly in the area of AIDS
- Mexico with Guatemala, Ecuador and Dom. Republic on issues related to the environment
- South Africa with Ethiopia, D.R. Congo, Lesotho, India on governance and technology
- Chile with several Latin American countries where we have a special fund for trilateral
- Indonesia with Timor Leste on national parks development

At this stage of trilateral cooperation most of our projects revolve around: joint missions, the combined use and exchanges of experts, on the job training and education, fellowships and study visits, these are mainly instruments for idea generation and innovation.

In Thailand we have a few more projects in the pipeline:

- Thailand with Laos and Cambodia in private sector development
- Thailand with Laos in the area of regional value chain promotion (handmade paper)
- Thailand with Vietnam in the area of materials testing for environmental protection

In Asia, the planned areas of cooperation will include vocational education, agricultural and rural development, micro-finance, SME promotion and health.

How it works?

- We usually have additional budgets for this type of activity from our parent ministry BMZ
- We use our in-country staff and networks to identify and conceptualize the projects
- These people, and our offices, coordinate with their respective official cooperation offices
- Joint planning exercises take place, projects are designed and eventually funded

Where do we see the critical success factors?

- Finding common denominators with all partners and still remaining strategic and relevant.
- Identifying partners' comparative advantages, (who does what best?).
- The "nitty gritty" of valuing costs and sharing them (what is 1 work month worth?)
- Agreeing on common project management principles: project design, impact assessment.
- Involving the private sector, they have an increasing role in all development activities
- Applying Paris Declaration principles.

Where are our (GTZ's) comparative advantages in this field?

- A network of personnel and contacts, built up over 35 years, that is still in place in Asia
- A lot of project management tools that are effective and up to date (PCM, CW, RBM etc.)
- Development policy experience