

**External evaluation  
on  
TRIALOG III**

**Executive Summary**

**Strengthening Development Cooperation  
in the enlarged European Union  
ONG/ 2006/ 122 – 088**

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## **Preface**

The author was asked to evaluate the third project phase of TRIALOG (from 2006 to September 2009) in January, February and March 2009. The evaluation of TRIALOG III was an interesting process as TRIALOG is an interesting project. On the one side TRIALOG cooperates with different actors in twelve New Member States of the European Union and further more, with key actors in some Old Member States and some Candidate Countries. On the other side TRIALOG itself is an important actor in the field of non governmental development cooperation and awareness raising on European Level. Hence, it was a challenge for this evaluation to consider all relevant activities of TRIALOG on these different levels.

Therefore, the author of this evaluation would like to thank all staff members of TRIALOG for their support and all interview partners for their ideas and their contributions in regard to this evaluation. Without their patience, their openness and their willingness to provide information this evaluation would not have been possible.

## **Executive Summary**

The overall evaluation results of TRIALOG III are very positive. TRIALOG III has more than achieved most of its aims and quantifiable outcomes outlined in the EU proposal. Coordinators and board members of national platforms in New Member States (NMS) and Accession Countries (AC) and even from some Old Member States (OMS) judge TRIALOG III as an important and successful project.

In all of the main activity areas of TRIALOG (1.Capacity Building, 2.Support of National Platforms, 3.Networking, 4.Policy 5.Advocacy, 6.Information) TRIALOG achieved excellent results and significant impacts.

On national levels many NMS platforms were officially registered during the project phase III after being informal bodies before, and there are officially registered platforms in all NMS now. In this context many platforms became stronger and more capable for acting, and most platforms are relevant counterparts and dialogue partners for national ministries or governmental agencies in their countries. A further aspect in this regard is that there are far more EC-funded projects in NMS than before, and that many NGDOs from NMS got EC co-financed contracts for development education projects or are at least partners in an EC project.

On European level there is a stronger exchange and communication between different NMS/AC and between NMS/AC and OMS. NMS and AC are more aware of each other and are more open in regard to collaboration. More platforms are active members of CONCORD and taking responsible roles within working groups than before. All national platforms are active in at least one of the CONCORD working groups. Furthermore, NMS NGDOs and NMS platforms are much more connected to partners in OMS. In general the perspectives and priorities of NMS/AC in regard to development cooperation and especially the perception of neighbourhood partnership are more accepted among OMS and on European level.

Nevertheless there are still unsolved problems, challenges and difficulties which TRIALOG is facing at the end of phase III. For the purposes of this executive summary the evaluator would like to highlight four of these aspects and indicate some recommendations. Elaborated recommendations are made by the evaluator in each chapter of the full report.

### **1. Financial Crisis und unclear financial perspectives**

The global financial crisis and the unclear financial perspectives create insecurity and irritation among NMS/AC actors and TRIALOG AG/staff. In this regard TRIALOG should pay even more attention on these financial aspects in training, in capacity building activities, in advocacy activities and in the support of platforms in NMS and AC.

By the EU TRIALOG IV should be treated as a targeted project as in the current project phase in order to avoid competition with beneficiaries and target groups in NMS and AC in regard to limited EU-funds.

### **2. The future role of strong NMS in TRIALOG**

The spectrum of NMS/AC platforms and NGOs in regard to experience, knowledge, capacities, activities, financial resources and infrastructure is very wide. Some are considered as weak and some are considered as strong, some even as stronger than platforms and NGOs in certain OMS. This variety can cause problems and jealousy, and it could lead to an exit strategy for these strong platforms and NGOs. But it can also be used by TRIALOG for new approaches and partnerships especially in regard to new ways of cooperation between strong and weak NMS/AC. Platforms and NGOs which dispose more capacities and experiences than others could play an important and an active role in the further enlargement of the TRIALOG target group (Western Balkan countries, Turkey).

### **3. Participation of NMS and AC Actors in TRIALOG**

The fourth aspect in some ways is directly linked to the third. There is a strong will of some NMS platforms, mainly from countries which are considered as strong, to have more influence in TRIALOG decision making processes and to participate more in regard to training activities. This strong will should be analysed, and TRIALOG should examine ways how the perspectives and perceptions of NMS platforms could be integrated in a structured and explicit modality in TRIALOG IV. At the same time, the strong platforms should not become the main beneficiaries of TRIALOG capacity building activities. The focus on weaker and younger platforms should be maintained.

### **4. The relationship between TRIALOG and CONCORD**

The relationship between TRIALOG and CONCORD is still unclear and difficult as it was already during the phase of TRIALOG II. There is a clear need to clarify this relationship, the roles and the ways of cooperation as soon as possible.