



# DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION TIPS TOOLS INSIGHTS PRACTICES

## In practice

# A TRAINING APPROACH TO TRIANGULAR CO-OPERATION

### Key messages

Japan is a strong supporter of South-South and triangular co-operation. With its pivotal partners Japan concludes triangular partnership frameworks to share lessons from their co-operation through third country training programmes. This simple and structured approach makes it easy to explore new partnerships. Beyond individual learning, such training can also support wider change if it matches partner country needs and is integrated into wider reform efforts.

### Keywords

Partner countries | Partnerships

### Key partner

Japan

### Challenge

Solutions that were developed in the Global South are often suitable and valuable for other developing countries. There is thus huge potential to capitalise on these experiences and create horizontal partnerships through South-South and triangular co-operation. A key challenge is often how to move from isolated positive exchanges and sharing of lessons to partnerships that lead to lasting and tangible results. In triangular co-operation, development co-operation partners also fear higher transaction costs from bringing in an additional partner.

### Approach

Japan, one of the largest triangular co-operation partners globally, uses a third country training approach, such as in Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Asia-Africa Knowledge Co-Creation Program. Key features of Japan's approach are:

- **Partnership programmes with 12 "pivotal" countries:** these comprehensive frameworks established between Japan and the pivotal country support their co-operation with third countries, enabling them to dispatch and receive personnel and provide training and other support.

- **A thematic focus** through sub-programmes, e.g. on health or agriculture, aligning the programmes with JICA's regional strategies.
- **Making use of pivotal countries' comparative advantages in the region**, e.g. their cultural proximity or capacity to develop solutions that are adapted to the context of beneficiary countries.
- **Offering standardised (open to multiple countries) and tailored training** for one or more years. Participants are selected by partner countries and JICA.
- **Follow-up through "mini projects" to ensure sustainability of training courses**, such as by sending experts and trainers to participating countries to organise seminars for knowledge dissemination.
- **Sharing costs and resources** dedicated to the triangular partnership between JICA and the pivotal country determined on a case-by-case basis through dialogue.

## Results

Monitoring shows that triangular co-operation has **successfully disseminated knowledge of what works and driven wider change**. For example, Tanzania scaled up experiences from Sri Lanka in hospital management, building on previous co-operation between Japan and Sri Lanka. A partnership with Chile on disaster risk reduction has encouraged knowledge exchange and the creation of a network of specialists at national and regional levels.

Japan's triangular co-operation has **contributed to building trust and strong partnerships between countries, regions and globally**, through co-creating solutions which are well adapted to the context of developing countries.

Japan uses its long-standing experience to promote triangular co-operation within the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and other global fora. **This contributed to the recognition of triangular co-operation** throughout the Outcome Document of the 2019 Second High-level UN Conference on South-South Co-operation (BAPA +40) as a complementary modality to South-South and North-South co-operation.

## Lessons learnt

**Knowledge needs to be shared beyond just strengthening the skills of individual participants.**

Isolated training activities make this less likely. Following up the training with "mini projects" and other bilateral co-operation activities with the beneficiary country is useful.

**The approach works particularly well when expertise and needs are well matched.** Training courses should be tailored and beneficiary partners should have greater ownership.

**Clear selection criteria for participants** are important to ensure the independence and quality of the selection process.

**Training programmes are cost effective and facilitate piloting new approaches** or engaging with a new pivotal or beneficiary country (including in fragile contexts) in a simple and structured manner.

## Further information

JICA, South-South and Triangular Co-operation, [https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our\\_work/thematic\\_issues/south/index.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/south/index.html)[https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our\\_work/thematic\\_issues/south/index.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/thematic_issues/south/index.html).

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### **OECD resources**

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### **To learn more about Japan's development co-operation see:**

OECD (2021), "Japan", in *Development Co-operation Profiles*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b8cf3944-en>.

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