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Revision of the ACP-EU Cotonou Partnership Agreement

EUROPEAN COMMISSION PUBLIC CONSULTATION



BACKGROUND



KEY QUESTIONS FOR WWF INPUT

BACKGROUND

The European Union's formal relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries can be traced back to the Treaty of Rome and the 1964 Yaoundé Convention. The EU-ACP Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) is currently the most comprehensive North-South agreement with respect to its content, legally binding nature, degree of institutionalization and number of participating countries. The Cotonou Agreement is an agreement between the EU and the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states¹; it was signed in 2000 and will expire in 2020.

The official Negotiations between the two parties on the future framework are due to start in 2018. However, discussions are already ongoing on both sides, EU and ACP group, to start defining their respective positions.

As stated in its first article, the CPA's main objective is to reduce and eventually eradicate poverty, while contributing to sustainable development and gradually integrating ACP countries into the world economy. The partnership lies on three pillars "political dialogue, development cooperation and economic and trade relations" which are underpinned by several fundamental principles. These include the equality of the partners, the fulfilment of mutual obligations, the ownership of development strategies by the countries and populations concerned, as well as the participation of all sections of society in the partnership, recognizing the role of non-state actors, local governments and parliaments beyond central governments.

The Cotonou agreement includes firm commitments on mainstreaming environmental issues and natural resource management across all ACP-EU cooperation programmes and at the highest level, and supports specific cooperation on environmental issues, climate change and management of natural resources. The box at the end provides a reference to the relevant articles in the CPA.

EU development cooperation and funding support to ACP countries

There is a specific EU funding instrument, the European Development Fund (EDF), which is dedicated to support actions in ACP countries. It is the largest EU funded instrument for development cooperation with an overall budget of 30+ billion euros for the period 2014-2020. EU Overseas Countries and Territories may also benefit from this instrument. The EDF is financed by direct contributions from EU Member States and sits outside the official EU budget. It supports national, regional and Intra-ACP programmes and it is complementary to other EU funding programmes for development cooperation² and discussions are ongoing on the need to bring such instrument within the official EU budget (so called budgetisation of the EDF) to enhance its effectiveness and allow for more better and faster aid, focusing on the countries most in need.

¹ List of ACP Countries

Angola - Antigua and Barbuda - Belize - Cape Verde - Comoros - Bahamas - Barbados - Benin - Botswana - Burkina Faso - Burundi - Cameroon - Central African Republic - Chad - Congo (Brazzaville) - Congo (Kinshasa) - Cook Islands - Cte d'Ivoire - Cuba - Djibouti - Dominica - Dominican Republic - Eritrea - Ethiopia - Fiji - Gabon - Gambia - Ghana - Grenada - Republic of Guinea - Guinea-Bissau - Equatorial Guinea - Guyana - Haiti - Jamaica - Kenya - Kiribati - Lesotho - Liberia - Madagascar - Malawi - Mali - Marshall Islands - Mauritania - Mauritius - Micronesia - Mozambique - Namibia - Nauru - Niger - Nigeria - Niue - Palau - Papua New Guinea - Rwanda - St. Kitts and Nevis - St. Lucia - St. Vincent and the Grenadines - Solomon Islands - Samoa - Sao Tome and Principe - Senegal - Seychelles - Sierra Leone - Somalia - South Africa - Sudan - Suriname - Swaziland - Tanzania - Timor Leste - Togo - Tonga - Trinidad and Tobago - Tuvalu - Uganda - Vanuatu - Zambia - Zimbabwe

² For an overview of all EU funding instruments of interest to WWF please consult our EU funding Handbook 2014-2020 available to download here : <https://sites.google.com/a/wwf/panda.org/psp-share/team-pages/european-policy-office/eu-funding-guide-2014-2020>

Within the EDF, environmental and climate related priorities have received considerable support, in some cases at the level of EU bilateral cooperation with an ACP country, but most significantly through the Intra-ACP funding envelope which has and continues to support thematic interventions in all or the majority of ACP countries. Through such support the [EU is promoting different objectives](#) such as:

- strengthening the capacities of ACP countries to fulfill their obligations under major multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs);
- promoting better natural resource governance; improving fisheries management; and tackling illegal wildlife killing and trafficking (MIKES)
- strengthening the capacities of ACP states in addressing natural Disasters and improve resilience
- Adapting to the impacts of Climate Change and integrating climate change considerations into their development plans (GCCA-ACP envelope)

Some of these Intra-ACP funded programmes such as the ACP-EU water facility and the ACP-EU Energy Facility, have also been of great interest for WWF offices worldwide and offered funding opportunities to pursue their work, like the recent award of a grant to promote access to renewable energy in remote areas to WWF Uganda.

Political Dialogue and joint institutions between the EU and ACP group

In the framework of the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, joint ACP-EU institutions have been set up, such as joint council of ministers and a Joint parliamentary assembly, and the space for political dialogue and cooperation is recognized, with full participation of stakeholders including civil society as full actors of the partnership.

As part of the policy dialogue, environmental issues and priorities have been addressed in several occasions. Above all, addressing Climate Change has been the subject of joint declarations agreed by the two parties either the Joint Council or the Joint Parliamentary Assembly. The declarations of 2006 and 2009 for instance have stressed the need for the two parties to: cooperate towards the successful conclusion of UNFCCC COP negotiations, enhancing their consultations including through joint initiatives and advocacy; Cooperate in the implementation of their respective commitments; to build the capacities and strengthen the effectiveness of ACP countries' participation in the climate negotiations.

More recently, in July 2014, a joint declaration about the Post2015 framework, highlighting shared principles and vision for a shared and equitable global sustainable development framework

Moreover, ACP and EU states have in several occasions agreed to enhance dialogue and involving relevant stakeholders at country and regional levels to improve the integration of climate change considerations into ACP country and regional development and poverty reduction strategies.

WWF is a global conservation organization. Its mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by: conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

WWF is a global network and aims at building concrete conservation solutions through a combination of field based projects, policy initiatives, capacity building and education work. Specific efforts are dedicated to the involvement of local communities and indigenous peoples in the planning and execution of field programmes, respecting their cultural and economic needs. WWF also strives to build partnerships with other organizations, governments, and business to enhance its effectiveness and promote change at local, national and global level.

WWF's programmes can contribute towards long term poverty reduction and sustainable development by investing in the maintenance of ecosystem services, supporting new livelihood opportunities in natural resource management, and promoting strong environmental governance. In particular for the poor living in rural areas, their daily lives depend on access to natural resources and to the environmental services that nature provides. However, policy makers and businesses often fail to consider the real value of biodiversity and ecosystems in economic and development plans leading to unforeseen social and environmental costs.

THE EC PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF THE ACP-EU PARTNERSHIP: KEY QUESTIONS

A contribution from WWF

Common global interests in a multipolar world

1. To which degree has the partnership been effective in tackling global challenges?

Throughout the years and with a series of revisions firm commitments to address global challenges such as climate change and natural resource management and governance, have been included in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, with specific references to the need for mainstreaming environmental issues across all ACP-EU cooperation programmes and at the highest level. Rightly so, these articles reflect the fundamental link that exist between conserving natural resources and ecosystems and efforts towards poverty reduction and increased human wellbeing

This legal basis has contributed in putting climate change and environmental challenges high on the political agenda of the EU-ACP partnership, and led to the adoption of a number of joint policy initiatives. For instance joint declarations were approved on climate change (2006 and 2009) stressing the need for the two parties to cooperate towards the successful conclusion of UNFCCC negotiations and in the implementation of their respective commitments. More recently (June 2014) a joint declaration on the Post2015 framework was adopted, highlighting key principles

and vision for a fair and equitable global sustainable development framework, such as: being transformative and people centered, addressing the 3 dimensions of sustainability, promoting good governance, human rights, gender equality, integrating climate change issues throughout and focusing on most vulnerable countries.

Despite such efforts it seems that up until now the ACP-EU partnership has not proven to be an effective vehicle for pushing forward agendas on common global challenges. The collaboration has been on ad hoc occasions and concrete follow up on the policy and joint commitments has been lacking³.

At the time of writing, the COP21 conference in Paris entered its last and crucial days of negotiations in December 2015, the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries revealed their joint vision for an ambitious binding deal climate deal⁴. Jointly they have called for the Paris Agreement to be legally binding, inclusive, fair and ambitious and setting out clear long-term goal is in line with science; the future agreement must establish a mechanism for reviewing progress made by countries every five years and include a transparency and accountability system to track progress on the delivery of national commitments.

While this is undoubtedly a sign of a renewed political will to address common pressing challenges, such as climate change, and one that could push other developing and developed countries towards higher ambition, the donor-recipient dynamic has come into play once again since the EU has backed the declaration with a financial contribution of around 475 million euros that will support climate action, resilience-building and environmental priorities in ACP countries. It is crucial that these shared values and principles are kept as a good basis for a renewed partnership between EU and ACP, and should continue to be promoted

On the development cooperation side, several programmes addressing Climate change adaptation and mitigation in ACP countries, natural resource management, DRR, sustainable fisheries management, biodiversity protection, water and energy, and other environmental priorities have been supported by EDF funds, both at the national, regional and particularly Intra-ACP level. Some of these have also benefitted directly Civil Society organizations

However, this support has not been sufficient to reverse the negative trend and ACP countries increasingly face environmental challenges due to unsustainable and inequitable natural resource management which undermine sustainable and inclusive development efforts. Small Island Developing States (SIDS), particularly in the Pacific and Caribbean, and Least Developed Countries (LDCs), remain the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as rising sea level, increased natural disasters, natural resource scarcity, while they remain the countries who have contributed the least to emissions.

2. What would be needed to strengthen results in this respect and on which global challenges could the partnership add most value in the future, in the context of the new SDGs framework and in relevant international fora?

The Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, being universal, brings to the fore a new development narrative that is no longer based on the north-south divide or on the lines of a donor recipient dynamic. It offers the opportunity of embracing a new way of working within and between countries to deliver long term benefits and wellbeing for people and the planet.

³ See ECDPM, The Future of ACP-EU relations: A political economy analysis perspective, Progress report, October 2015

⁴ See http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6273_en.htm

It is important to recognize that any future partnership between the ACP-EU will have to be framed in the context of the new Agenda 2030 and should contribute to its implementation at all levels. The new sustainable development goals address global challenges in an integrated way and provide a great opportunity for further tackling them together, moving away from the donor-recipient dynamic as they are universally applicable.

The EU should continue to support ACP countries efforts in implementing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and their commitments. Support should go to promoting adaptation to climate change, especially for LDCs and SIDS; this includes providing increased, stable and predictable source of climate finance, while addressing loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change, promoting technology development/transfer and capacity building in line with ACP countries priorities and need⁵

As already stressed, any future partnership should be supportive of a development model that is people and planet centered, addresses all dimensions of sustainable development and is respectful of human rights; a path that meets the needs of today, without limiting the opportunities available to future generations. This should recognize the importance of preserving natural resources and ecosystems, including the precious ecosystem services they provide, as underpinning poverty reduction efforts and being fundamental for human well-being.

It is equally important that EU and ACP countries continue to cooperate and promote the appropriate policy framework and governance systems that can lead to inclusive green economies, where resource efficiency, low carbon development pathways become the norm and where renewable energy sources are widespread, contributing to ending energy poverty in line with a 100% access to safe, clean and affordable energy services for all target.

In an interconnected world, the future EU-ACP cooperation should also target drivers of ecosystem loss and degradation such as accelerating urbanisation, changes in consumption patterns, investments and growing resource demands⁶.

What is very urgent and crucial for the EU is to address its own responsibilities and footprint abroad and to reduce the negative impacts that our development model is having on the climate and natural resources in (ACP) developing countries. We need to critically look at our lifestyles and change our consumption and production models; this includes looking at diets, at embedded deforestation within our imports, reducing our carbon footprint and so on. In Europe alone, we consume an average of 2.6 planets⁷.

The EU should also be bold and put forward clear steps and initiatives to address the responsibility of its private sector companies operating abroad and ensure they adopt sustainable, equitable and responsible practices all throughout their supply chain. Private sector has a big responsibility in terms of contributing to challenges such as climate change and environmental degradation. These initiatives should also address fair taxation and illicit financial flows that are directly linked to Natural Resource use. In Africa alone every year around 17 Billion US dollars are plundered due to illegal logging and 1.3billion US dollars due to Illegal, Unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU)⁸.

⁵ See ACP group declaration and issue paper ahead of COP21 <http://www.acp.int/content/acp-council-ministers-declaration-paris-climate-change-conference-cop21> and <http://www.acp.int/content/acp-cop-21-issues-paper>

⁶ As an example of such analysis focusing on future of the African continent see « African Ecological Futures, 2015 » a report by WWF and African Development Bank http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/xwwf_african_futures_report_english-lo-rez.pdf

⁷ WWF, Living Planet Report, 2014

⁸ See Africa Progress Report 2014 « Grain, Fish, Money : Financing Africa's Green and Blue Revolutions" by Africa Progress Panel, K. Annan and others

Policy Coherence for sustainable development is already included in the Cotonou Agreement and should continue to guide future relations as it serves the purpose of addressing the impacts of EU policies on the achievement of sustainable development in other countries.

Finally, the future framework should continue to support and encourage CSOs to play a decisive role in addressing global challenges. Sustainable development is at the core of CSOs business and can provide the expertise, knowledge and innovative solution that can support the transition towards sustainable, low carbon and inclusive development paths for all. Moreover, the recognition of civil society as a full actor in the partnership should be maintained and strengthened at operational level so that CSOs can fully engage in the implementation of the SDGs at all stages from planning stage to monitoring and reporting.

Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, investment and trade

7. How effective has the partnership been in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development?

8. Taking into account the new SDGs framework, should the future partnership do more in this respect, and what?

As already stressed, in the framework of its future relations with the ACP countries, the EU should promote an integrated approach to sustainable development, one that supports and promotes all three dimensions in equal manner: the social, economic and environmental dimension, as is the spirit of the SDGs. The EU should be supportive of development models that put people's rights, needs and aspirations at its center, that are inclusive, equitable and socially viable with benefits for all. Such models should also be environmentally sustainable and tackle climate change, without undermining the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

So far, the CPA has not reflected this vision but rather focused on promoting economic and trade cooperation with the aim of fostering the gradual integration of the ACP States into the world economy and trade system.

The implementation of the Agenda 2030 offers an opportunity to promote this vision of sustainable development and alternative measures of progress should be taken into account. The effectiveness of a partnership should not only be measured against the macro-economic performance that is recorded in the ACP region and the size of domestic markets or exports.

Attention should be given to growing inequalities between and within ACP countries and how to address this. Principles that are the foundation for green economies, such as the valuation of natural capital and the incorporation of environmental externalities across sector planning and policy making, should be promoted within the future partnerships.

The sustainable management of natural resources and maintenance of ecosystem health should be promoted as they are the foundation stones to ensure food security, long term agricultural productivity and livelihoods. Improved governance of natural resources will also contribute to addressing social and economic conflicts that derive from the use of natural resources and reduce instability.

The EU should support participatory approaches to land use and infrastructure planning along with strategic environmental assessments and implementation of environmental and social safeguards. Europeans are familiar with a wide range of ex-ante assessments and regulations in these areas and European governments can

ensure that the highest standards are also applied where European funding or investment is supporting infrastructure development in ACP countries.

On the basis of the EU Resource transparency Initiative, the EU should engage more in promoting transparency, accountability and good governance in the extractive and raw materials sectors in ACP countries, reducing their negative social and environmental impacts. The ambition should be to tackle illicit financial flows depriving ACP economies of great share of potential domestic resources.

The EU should also be at the forefront of supporting sustainable and responsible global value chains, in light of its PCSD commitments and to mitigate the social and environmental impacts that derive from unsustainable practices all along supply chains. In this sense, we welcome the initiative of the upcoming Dutch presidency of the EU to drive efforts on sustainable commodity supply chains⁹.

The EU should be fully integrating climate change in all policies and cooperation programmes and in particular in vulnerable countries and regions.

For implementing the Agenda 2030, all countries will develop sustainable development plans and strategies. The EU should support ACP countries in this process and respect country ownership, priorities and needs. To this end it should support multistakeholder dialogues, with engagement of civil society organisations, which can contribute to the definition of best ways forward in SDGs implementation in accordance with country needs and gaps.

10. How effective has the partnership been in improving domestic revenue mobilization, in promoting fair and efficient tax systems and in combatting illicit financial flows? Would there be added value and more efficiency in stronger ACP-EU cooperation on these matters?

The EU should take further steps in promoting an enabling environment for domestic resource mobilization in ACP countries, supporting the adoption of tools that facilitate tax collection for relevant administrations and promoting capacity building of tax administration. These are fundamental steps on the way to broadening domestic tax bases and making DRM more efficient.

The EU should support the development and management of fair and progressive tax systems and good management of public resources and natural resources in ACP countries including through the support to independent official auditors and the judicial system, the control of the Parliament and the support for the independent monitoring by civil society.

Country-led strategies for sustainable development must integrate development, social and environmental objectives and provide the basis for national budgeting. Environmentally harmful subsidies in sectors such as energy, fisheries, and agriculture should be reallocated towards sustainable practices, while addressing distributive impacts.

These efforts should clearly be complemented by tackling tax dodging and tax evasion. In line with EU's commitment to Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development, the EU should also address its own harmful tax practices that benefit major corporations both in the EU and ACP States by facilitating tax avoidance and evasion. Illicit financial flows also need to be tackled through strengthened national

⁹ See: <http://www.euandqvc.nl/> and declarations signed by 5 EU MS. "Towards Eliminating Deforestation from Agricultural Commodity Chains with European Countries", "The Amsterdam Declaration in Support of a Fully Sustainable Palm Oil Supply Chain by 2020"

institutions, improved tax transparency, country by country reporting, public registries of company ownership, global systems of automatic tax information exchange and legal sanctions for non-compliance.

12. How could the potential of the EU and ACP private sector be better harnessed? What should be the main focus of EU and ACP private sector cooperation in a post-Cotonou framework, and what might be the role of ODA in this?

Support to the local private sector in ACP countries, including small and medium sized enterprises is fundamental for long term sustainable development which has local ownership, potential to encourage inclusive growth, employment and income generation. Currently, the EU Switch Asia programme is an example of the kind of approach the EU can support, in this case encouraging changes to production methods and consumption behavior towards sustainability.

Programmes like this can contribute to changing the mind-set of relevant stakeholders, in particular producers and end users in developing countries, towards the importance of investing in the sustainable use of raw material/natural resources in different sectors such as timber, fisheries and textiles. The new flagship Switch to Green that promotes a similar approach in Africa is modelled on the basis of the Asian experience. Other countries in the ACP group could also benefit of similar type of initiatives that focus on SMEs and encourages strong collaboration among different actors, including CSOs which can play a key role in convening diverse stakeholders, including local communities and user groups, SMEs, chambers of commerce, larger private sector corporations and local authorities to discuss innovative green initiatives with both economic and livelihood benefits.

The future ACP-EU framework should provide the conditions that allow ACP governments to ensure that foreign investments and private sector contribute to sustainable and inclusive economic development in the full respect of human rights and the rule of law.

The private sector has indeed a role to play in the provision of goods and services but this should be within a strong and transparent regulatory framework. There is no "one size fits all" answer for their role in the provision of public goods but it would depend, for example, on the nature of these goods and the type of end-users. It must be also recognized that the private sector is profit-seeking and not philanthropic.

Just as example, access to energy for the 2-3 billion people currently excluded from modern energy services to provide a basic minimum for both consumptive and productive uses is a crucial area to be addressed in a new global sustainable development framework post 2015. It will require the interaction of many players, including government to set policy framework, local authorities, local and international private sector, and financial institutions. Both on grid and off grid solutions will be required, bearing in mind that the cost of extending the grid to sparsely populated or remote areas can be high. Local solutions providing domestic or centralized village level generation are a competitive solution in rural areas, allow for future demand growth and encourage income-generating activities.

The EU's legal obligations to policy coherence for sustainable development imply that the EU should improve steps to assess the impacts on developing countries of its own domestic policies on production and consumption or trade and investment. The role of development cooperation can only be a small part of the EU's contribution to sustainable development globally. In terms of international standards, the EU should take steps to ensure that European companies apply high standards in their

investments: for example, adherence to the OECD guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the International Labour Organisation's Tripartite Declaration of principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy.

Where public funding is involved as in, for example, private-public partnerships with development objectives, these standards should be contractual obligations and mechanisms put in place for third parties to raise issues of non-compliance. CSOs and CSO networks have an important role to monitor the implementation of such standards and therefore support to strengthen such CSO activities is an important complement.

In terms of sectors, business, governments and civil society can work together to manage the risks of unsustainable resource use, to improve understanding of the opportunities of sustainable management of natural resources and the value of investment in natural capital for the long term, to develop and implement better production practices that reduce negative environmental impacts and bring positive social benefits.

The principles and criteria for leveraging private finance and blending should be agreed between the EU and ACP partners. In our view blended finance mechanisms and public-private partnerships should include strict sustainable development criteria, alignment with national development objectives, and local ownership and inclusion. Greater transparency and accountability of private sector finance – including the development of third party certification systems – is also needed to ensure adherence of foreign direct investment to international environmental and social best practices.

Finally, where donors are engaging the European private sector to incentivize development outcomes, in ACP countries and beyond, the following principles could be considered good practice:

- Donors should include conditions on local procurement and ensure that private sector partners are contributing tax revenue in countries where they are working.*
- Demonstrate added value in terms of generating resources, pooling knowledge and stimulating innovation and not be regarded as a substitute for—but rather as an addition to—national public sector investment in key sectors (e.g. health, education, and infrastructure).*
- Strong regulatory frameworks in place to ensure quality of contributions, avoid risk of corruption and ensure adherence to international social and environmental safeguards and standards.*
- Donors should coordinate to pool knowledge and funding and avoid multiplicity of individual overlapping initiatives.*

Ensure a transparent process including in decision making and management of resources. Information on progress and outcomes should be in public domain so it can be independently monitored and eventually available to others for replication.

- Procurement in private-public partnerships should be based on competitive bidding and ensure a level field for national and international companies.*
- Integration into national development plans, local ownership and participation. PPPs should involve and respond to needs of local actors to increase likelihood of long term sustainability.*

- *Adherence to Paris Principles, Accra Agenda for Action and Busan Global Partnership for Development Effectiveness.*

II. The HOW: Towards a more effective partnership

Strengthen the relationship with key actors

29. Has the current model of stakeholder engagement been conducive to attaining the objectives of the partnership in an efficient way? Which actors could play a more significant role in the implementation of the partnership? How could this be addressed?

30. What could be done to promote effective and efficient involvement of both international and domestic private sector, civil society, social partners and local authorities in the partnership?

The current ACP-EU Cotonou agreement recognizes civil society organizations as full actors in the partnership, as defined in Article 6. Mechanisms for ensuring full participation of civil society in the partnership have been developed, but have to date functioned on an ad hoc basis.

In the context of the future ACP-EU partnership, CSOs should be involved at every stage and in every aspect of the relationship, and partner countries should be encouraged to promoting an enabling environment for ensuring CSOs participation. The contribution of civil society to policy making processes at all levels including the local, national, regional and the global level should be promoted. The important role CSOs play in promoting good governance, transparency and accountability mechanisms should be acknowledged and supported, including their direct and active participation in the elaboration and revision of national strategies as well as in the programming of EU development programmes, where CSOs should have a voice in the choice of the most appropriate aid delivery mechanisms.

An important element to remember and to maintain in the future is that the EDF instrument, at the level of bilateral cooperation with each ACP country, foresees the possibility of allocating an additional envelope to support Civil Society actors in the country. This provision is unique added value within the EDF, compared to EU bilateral cooperation with other countries, and for the period 2014-2020 this civil society envelope has been adopted in the majority of the 79 ACP countries.

Civil society organisations play multiple roles in contributing to sustainable development, which is at the core of their business. They are involved at different levels of society to try to trigger solutions for tackling global challenges and promoting more inclusive and sustainable development models. CSOs create innovative thinking that can trigger policy reforms at all levels, local, national and international.

CSOs are proactive in providing practical solutions to local and global challenges and do so by building multi-stakeholder partnerships. They have also significant experience in convening multiple actors to the table to explore solutions and bridge cross-sectoral gaps.

The future EU and ACP partnership should be supportive of these multiple roles of civil society organisations. The EU should take as a basis the important Communication that was adopted in 2012, which states that 'an empowered civil

society is a crucial component of any democratic system and an asset in itself', contributing 'to more effective policies, equitable and sustainable development and inclusive growth' and participatory democracy by 'representing and fostering pluralism' and 'articulating citizens' concerns and growing demand for transparent and accountable governance'.

Better adapted and more flexible development cooperation tools and methods

38. Is there added value in having a dedicated financing instrument in support of the ACP-EU partnership?

If so, what are the reasons and how would it differ from other external financing instruments funded by the general budget of the Union?

40. Does the current set-up of the programming process and implementation of activities lead to real ownership by the beneficiaries? What could be improved? How can the EU and Member States maximize the impact of joint programming?

The future EU development fund dedicated to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries should be designed and implemented in line with key principles, whether it is budgetised or not, and the level of funding should be maintained

Resources should be allocated in line with countries needs and priorities and fully respect country ownership and aid effectiveness principles. A recent analysis by ECDPM on the Programming of the 11th EDF¹⁰ has shown that the EU has followed a top-down approach to programming which has led to a significant erosion of key aid and development effectiveness principles, in particular country ownership. Therefore it is essential that country ownership is reinforced no matter the configuration of the future partnership and instrument

In particular, when it comes to the development and implementation of the new sustainable developments plans under the Agenda 2030, the EU should not be pushing for few key issues or sector that receive support, in line with its own concentration approach that derives from the Agenda for Change. Instead it should be supportive of multistakeholder dialogue to find out how best to support the implementation of SDGs according to country needs and gaps. The 17 SDGs are indivisible so it is not a matter of cherry picking individual goals but agreeing where to prioritise over time and where support is most needed in the time frame of the programme. Again the role of civil society in dialogue, discussion, prioritisation and implementation with governments and donors will be fundamental to ensure a people-centred approach.

The future EDF should be truly complementary to other EU funding instruments and contribute to address global challenges in an integrated way, with an appropriate mix of aid modalities that suits the diversity of development actors and partners.

Environmental and climate priorities should be mainstreamed throughout the future instrument, as well as the whole partnership, and the EU should support countries in integrating these considerations into national development planning and budgeting processes, in line with an integrated approach to sustainable development

¹⁰ <http://ecdpm.org/publications/programming-agenda-change-11-european-development-fund-ACP-EU/>

EU development funding should be focused increasingly on LDCs and SIDs, the majority of which is found is to be found within the ACP States. Apart from high levels of poverty and inequality, these are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change to which they have contributed the least in terms of carbon emissions.

An envelope that allows countries to tackle global climate and environmental challenges such as the current intra-ACP programme will be welcome. However its programming and allocation should be made more transparent, involving civil society participation, be complementary to other national and regional envelopes, and should truly allow countries to cooperate among themselves in addressing these challenges.

Finally, the future partnership needs to look beyond GDP as the proxy for measuring growth, and hence determine the differentiation of aid. This indicator in fact fails to measure existing inequalities and vulnerabilities and does not provide a clear picture of the social and environmental challenges that a country faces.



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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