

**THE RISE OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN THE INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF THEIR INTERACTION WITHIN THE DG DEVCO, FROM EUROPEAN
UNION, AND THE ABC, FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN
BRAZIL***

**A ASCENSÃO DE ATORES NÃO ESTATAIS NO SISTEMA
INTERNACIONAL DE COOPERAÇÃO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO: UMA
ANÁLISE COMPARATIVA DA SUA INTERAÇÃO NA DG DEVCO, DA UNIÃO
EUROPÉIA E ABC, DO MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS NO
BRASIL**

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ABSTRACT: One of the major changes world politics has witnessed during the past three decades is related to the rise of non-state actors influence in different international domains, such as the international development cooperation system. These actors, which were primarily neglected by some International Relations theories, like Realism, now play a key role in the global governance, influencing a variety of agendas. Some international organizations promote a fruitful relationship with non-state actors, such as the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) from European Union (EU). Other institutions, like the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC – Agência Brasileira de Cooperação) from Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil (MRE – Ministério das Relações Exteriores), still require improvements in this aspect. In this context, the proposed article aims to analyze and compare the different sorts of interactions of non-state actors within the international development cooperation system, mainly through DG DEVCO/EU and ABC/Brazil. Were non-state actors able to change the architecture of

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international development cooperation agenda within these two referred institutions? What kinds of changes have they promoted so far? These are some of the questions the proposed article aims to answer.

Keywords: International Cooperation. Non-State Actors. European Union. Brazil.

RESUMO: Um dos maiores desafios que a política mundial tem presenciado, durante as últimas três décadas, está relacionado à ascensão da influência de atores não-estatais em diferentes domínios do sistema internacional, como no sistema da cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento. Esses atores têm agora um papel fulcral na governança global, influenciando uma variedade de agendas. Alguns organismos internacionais promovem significativa relação com atores não-estatais, como a Direção Geral para a Cooperação Internacional e o Desenvolvimento (DG DEVCO), da União Europeia (UE). Outras instituições precisam de aprimoramentos, como a Agência Brasileira de Cooperação (ABC) do Ministério das Relações Exteriores do Brasil. Nesse contexto, o presente artigo se propõe analisar e comparar diferentes interações com atores não-estatais no sistema de cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento, notadamente por meio da DG DEVCO (UE) e ABC (Brasil). São os atores não-estatais capazes de mudar a arquitetura da cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento no âmbito das duas instituições referidas? Que tipo de mudanças foram capazes de promover até o momento? Essas são algumas das questões que o presente artigo pretende responder.

Palavras-Chave: Cooperação Internacional. Atores Não-Estatais. União Europeia. Brasil.

1 Introductory Remarks

The international development cooperation (IDC) system has been evolving significantly, incorporating aspects that transcend its initial objective of promoting economic development in developing countries. These aspects range from management qualification to the involvement of non-state actors in the definition of cooperation strategies, among others.

In this context, this article aims at presenting a descriptive and comparative analyses regarding the involvement of non-state actors within two different institutions that currently promote IDC: The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), from the European



Union (EU); and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), from the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE).

These analyses were based, mainly, on secondary and primary sources composed of official documents produced by the two institutions.

Despite the differences between the two institutions mentioned above, from their origins to their purpose – once the former represents a development cooperation directorate within the structure of an economic and political regional organization and the latter a cooperation agency of a country that is a major contributor to the so-called South-South Cooperation – a comparison between them is valid, as the initial objective of this article is to examine the involvement of non-state actors (NSAs), in particular Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), on the elaboration and implementation of the IDC agenda, which is focused on developing countries. The involvement of NSAs does not depend necessarily on the organizational structures of DG DEVCO and ABC, but equally on the political will and necessity of these two organizations to incorporate different actors, beyond the state, in the discussion of different topics, including international development cooperation, following a trend that has been increasing since the 1990s.

However, given the improvements in the relations between DG DEVCO and NSAs, since its foundation, and especially in the last two decades, this article will pay special attention to the operation of the European directorate.

As for ABC, despite it acclaims the participation of non-state actors in elaboration and, in particular, in the execution of its cooperation agenda, and despite the numerous civil society organizations operating in different parts of the country, there is still space for improvement, as will be seen, including the design of regulations and mechanisms that foster a greater interaction between the various actors.

2 International Development Cooperation and South-South Cooperation



According to Keohane (1984, p. 51), international cooperation occurs when different actors adjust their behavior to the preferences of other actors through political articulation. Keohane also highlights the role of international conflict as an instigator of international cooperation, acknowledging that lack of harmony and the anarchic of international system were relevant promoters of the movement for international cooperation between states, especially after World War II, replacing conflict with different types of international cooperation.

In that same historical context, the financial aid provided by the United States to European nations through the Marshall Plan is perceived as an embryo of international development cooperation, having as one of its primary goals the reconstruction of the Europe.

With the task of managing the resources of the Marshall Plan, it was created, in 1948, the Organization for European Economic Co-Operation (OEEC), focused exclusively on Europe and later replaced by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 1961. The OECD expanded its focus to other continents beyond Europe and developed strategies to improve the coordination and execution of IDC, instituting, for example, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) with the objective - that remains at its core to this day - to “define and monitor global standards in key development areas”¹

In fact, the OECD became a leading international organization in the field of international development cooperation, discussing and defining strategies and directives adopted by the various actors of the IDC system, including EU’s DG DEVCO.

Broadly speaking, the objectives of IDC are associated with the promotion of economic and social development of developing countries (designated by DAC/OECD as receptors) through different strategies that can involve the transfer of financial resources or technical knowledge, among other alternatives.

¹ This definition is available at OEDC web site, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dac>. Accessed in: 20 Aug. 2016.



Some of the challenges to implement the IDC strategies are related to the methods of promoting different aspects of development in the receptor countries, as well as the definition and execution of management mechanisms, including the necessity to involve different actors in its conception and implementation. As we will see in the next topic, non-state actors were converted into a fundamental part of the evolution of IDC.

It is relevant to highlight that, initially, IDC was characterized by the verticality of the relations between donors and recipients of aid, aspect that was criticized, for example, by countries like Brazil, among others developing countries (DC), that proposed, as an alternative, the establishment of a more horizontal cooperation, equally focusing on the DC, later termed South-South Cooperation (SSC). It is noticeable, however, the expansion of SSC, initiated in the 1950s/1960s, occurred as a consequence of DC improvement in various fields such as technical, political and economic, gradually favoring international cooperation among them (Corrêa, 2010).

In that context, the technical character of SSC was renamed: Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), propelled by the creation in 1974 of a special unit within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the objective of subsidizing technical cooperation among developing countries.² In general, the basis of this type of cooperation, established in the Buenos Aires Action Plan, in 1978, are focused on the sharing of expertise, technology, resources, among other aspects, in the form of horizontal relationships, without conditionalities, opposing IDC characteristics that had been heavily criticized.

It is relevant to add that SSC does not possess a reference institution, such as the OECD, to centralize and coordinate the actions of its different actors. The strategies, agendas and even statistic data concerning SSC can only be obtained on a case-by-case basis, with the participating actors.

² Although SSC has been utilized as a synonym of TCDC, the latter is treated in this article as a technical dimension of SSC. Thus SSC accounts for a broader scope of activities including different types of cooperation between DCs, namely economic, technical, academic, technological, cultural and humanitarian cooperation (Corrêa, 2010).



Having into consideration the scenario previously described, the DG DEVCO is committed to the IDC/OCDE principals and agendas, as will be explored later in this article; and, as for the ABC, cooperation efforts are guided by the principles of SSC, characterized, at least in the official documents, by the horizontality of its actions, among other aspects.

Although IDC and SSC can have different motivations and forms of execution, both intent to contribute to the development of DCs, and, for that reason, both are understood as part of the IDC system, justifying the comparative analysis presented in this article.

3 Non-States Actors and the 1990s

The 1990s, a decade heavily influenced by the end of the Cold War and the intensification of the globalization process, witnessed the emergence of a series of social and environmental agendas promoted by the United Nations with the active participation of NSAs. Due to the promotion of these agendas, the 1990s became known as the “decade of the international conferences”, a period that also witnessed a substantial increase of the relevance of NSAs to the study of international relations (Lindgren, 2001), in opposition to one of the main principles of the Realist theory, which focuses mainly on the role of the States in the international system.

As for the IDC system, the conferences held in the 1990s culminated in the definition of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which recently gave place to the Sustainable Development Goals (ODS) - encompassing different state and non-state actors, domestically and internationally. The implementation and fulfillment of the 8 objectives initially defined – besides have influenced the IDC agenda – have involved, and continue to involve, a significant effort of the international community, including international organizations, as well as civil society organizations.

On the other hand, if the 1990s became known as the decade of the international conferences, the beginning of the new millennium can also be



referred to as the "decade of the declarations." In this sense, a number of OECD-led statements have been developed and agreed on with the objective of improving the effectiveness of IDC, and its legitimacy by improving the involvement of NSAs.

The Rome Declaration of 2003, for example, considered, as a central concern, the need for harmonization of policies, procedures and practices with the aim of improving the effectiveness of IDC and the implementation of the MDGs. It also referred, albeit in an incipient form, to the need for civil society engagement in IDC agenda, including the perspective of the recipient country (OECD, 2003).

It is interesting to emphasize this perspective, since the involvement of CSOs in the IDC will evolve, as will be seen, not only in relation to their relationship with the governments of countries receiving such cooperation - or as relevant partners to carry out the various activities of cooperation - but in the need to involve such actors from the perspective of those who offer cooperation, that is, to involve CSOs in the definition of strategies jointly with States and organizations that provide cooperation. In this way, CSOs improve their participation in the two IDC axes: from the perspective of the provider country/organization and from the perspective of the country/organization that receives the cooperation.

Also related to the declarations promulgated in the 1990s, by the OCDE, the Declaration of Paris, which succeeded the Rome Declaration - and which became one of the most emblematic of the IDC - highlighted, among other aspects, the need to strengthen civil society participation as well as that of the private sector in their coordination, a perspective that has become irreversible in this agenda (OECD, 2006).

Two other initiatives are also underway: the Accra Agenda for Action, which also reinforced the need for civil society participation in the development of the IDC, and the Busan Partnership for the Effectiveness of Cooperation for Development, from 2011, which, among other aspects, proposed: (i) a global forum for follow-up on the commitments assumed so far, the Global Partnership



for effective development cooperation; (ii) monitoring mechanisms; and (iii) strengthening the partnership between civil society and the private sector.

In this context, and in line with OECD principles, the EU has sought to strengthen its relationship with CSOs, following strategies agreed on in the above-mentioned declarations, and aligning the principles of such strategies with their own strategies for Cooperation, such as the Agenda for Change³, for example. From the standpoint of the discourse taken by the EU and the official documents themselves, CSOs also play a key role in promoting and strengthening democracy, human rights, social development, poverty reduction and so on.

In addition, there is growing concern about the legitimacy of EU actions, through the involvement of CSOs, not only in the countries where the bloc operates but also in the definition of the cooperation strategies themselves (as well as in coordination with the member states). The pursuit of the involvement of European CSOs, for example, strengthens the bloc's legitimacy, while seeking to provide feedback to its citizens on its actions in the field. In times of crisis, especially after the financial and economical crisis of 2008, which had not only financial but also political implications for the bloc, the seek for the legitimacy of its actions, involving European civil society, became crucial. In fact, according to Hryniewiecka (2011), one of the EU's weakest points refers to the civil society's participation in European Governance, understanding this aspect as a key to overcoming the European democratic deficit.

On the other hand, criticisms can be raised against the above-mentioned declarations, specifically about the relevance of its principles for the implementation of SSC, as it has different principles of the IDC developed within the framework of the OECD. In this line of thought, Corrêa (2010) questions to what extent should CSS assumes the "quality standards" or "good practices"

³ The Agenda for Change was adopted in 2011 and is the basis for the EU Development Policy. The strategies adopted have as primary objective: to improve the impact and effectiveness of EU development policy. The orientations are applied for the 2014 – 2020 period. More information can be consulted on the EU website, available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy/agenda-change_en. Accessed in: 25 Sep. 2016.



defined, for example, in the Paris Declaration and to what extent the agreed principles would be of "real universal application" (Corrêa, 2010, p. 93).

However, even if the author refers specifically to the aspect of evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the IDC - without reference to the involvement of CSOs in the practice of SSC - it is emphasized that, regardless of the criticisms that may be made of the aforementioned statements and its applicability in the various developments of the IDC, the objective of this topic was to draw attention to the participation of CSOs and their increasing involvement in the IDC system.

In this respect, it must be emphasized that, although in a less structured or systematized form than in DG DEVCO, for example, the concern with the involvement of such organizations in the cooperation provided by Brazil can also be observed in official documents and reports of ABC / MRE, as will be seen.

As a conclusion, it is worth noting that more relevant, for this article, than discussing the differences between IDC and SSC, is the emergence of the NSAs participation on the debates and declarations which guided the IDC system, during the last decades, encompassing frequently recommendations about the necessity of the involvement of CSOs in the referred system.

4 Non-State Actors, Civil Society, and Global Governance

The definitions of Non-State Actors, Civil Society, and Organized Civil Society will be made from the perspective of the institutions quoted in the present article. It also will be made a reference to the global governance process, especially its aspect that focuses on the NSAs.

According to DG/DEVCO web site, NSAs is a large definition which include non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, cooperatives, trade unions, professional associations, universities, media and independent foundations, which have in common their independence from the State and the voluntary basis upon which they act and promote common



interests⁴. According to this definition, profit non-state actors, such as multinational corporations, are out of the scope, once all the EU IDC instruments are focused on non-profit organizations, which will also be the perspective adopted by this article.

Regarding the civil society concept, from the point of view of the EU, the term “includes all forms of action carried out by individuals or groups which neither emanate from the State nor are determined by it. The term Organized Civil Society applies to the organizational structures whose members serve the public interest through a democratic process, acting as intermediaries between citizens and the public authorities” (EU, 2015b).⁵

From the Brazilian point of view, according to the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), a federal public foundation linked to the Ministry of Planning, civil society organizations are institutions born out of the free organization and social participation of the population which develop actions of public interest without aiming for profit. CSOs deal with a wide range of issues and interests, with varying forms of action, funding and mobilization. These organizations are also characterized by being private, institutionalized, voluntary, non-profit and able to manage their own activities. Also according to IPEA, the term CSOs is frequently used as non-governmental organizations, comprising the list of non-state actors.⁶

The current article does not aim to discuss in great depth the myriad of possible conceptualizations for civil society, or civil society organizations, but let it be known that the term CSOs, as referred in the abovementioned definitions, will be adopted and used to refer the non-profit organizations that, as said before, neither emanate from the State nor are determined by it.

⁴ Definitions available at: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/civil-society_en. Accessed in: 10 Dec. 2016.

⁵ According to the EU, civil society organizations may be: Non-governmental organizations, which defend causes such as that of the environment, consumer rights, training and education, etc.; grassroots organizations, which represent a portion of society (youth organizations, family associations, etc.); and religion communities, among others (EU, 2015b).

⁶ This definition is available at IPEA web site, available at, <https://mapaosc.ipea.gov.br/static.html?page=faq#faq1>. Accessed in: 10 Oct. 2016.



Finally, some reference should be made to the process of global governance, especially to its main aspects, which are of particular interest to the current article. Matias (2005) discusses the idea of global governance, introducing a new paradigm characterized by the transition from a sovereign-state-centered model to a new model in which various transnational and supranational actors (including CSOs) interact and influence agendas. This aspect is emphasized by the authors Avant, Finnemore, and Sell (2010) who especially highlighted the role of global governance agents, referring to them as global governors.

Indeed, in their analysis of global governance, these authors point out the existence of a gap in the International Relations literature concerning the various actors/agents (including international organizations, corporations, professional associations, and advocacy groups, among others) who, in conjunction with States, seek to govern and influence decisions within their areas of interest. Still, according to Avant, Finnemore, and Sell (2010), State-centered analyses do not help explain the existing variety of non-state actors or their influence on global governance agendas.

This aspect of the global governance process, i.e. the focus on its agents (beyond the entity of the State), is of central interest for the present article, since it brings into evidence the relevance of the role played by NSAs in the context of the international cooperation system.

5 The DG DEVCO/EU and Non-State Actors

Primarily, it is useful to underline that the EU international cooperation and development policy is under the responsibility of the European Commission (EC), known as the executive body in the bloc. The EC has many DGs (Directorate General), covering different EU issues, but the one with special interest for this article is the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), which is specifically in charge of designing the EU international cooperation and development policy. This policy is carried out



mainly through regional or bilateral cooperation (among EU and third region or country) or through thematic lines (which support is given directly to civil society organizations), covering different issues, such as promoting human rights and democracy, eradicating poverty, improving education, among others.⁷

Related to the NSAs, the EU initiatives towards these actors can be pointed out specially in two directions: (i) aiming at fostering their involvement in the strategies and services and delivered by the EU; and (ii) supporting the involvement of CSOs in the context of their own countries, seeing them as important actors to strengthening the democratic governance processes. In the first aspect, the EU has developed policies/actions to improve the dialogue with CSOs (as will be demonstrated ahead, through the conception of the road maps, for instance), and related to the second aspect, the support is given either through bilateral cooperation initiatives (government to government projects) or through different thematic lines (directly to CSOs), such as 'European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) or "Support to Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities" (CSOs/LAs).

In fact, one of the first policies developed by the EU to promote the involvement of NSAs in the services delivered by the EU is stated in the "White Paper on European Governance", launched in 2001, which, besides underlining the necessity for more interaction with the CSOs, also proposes that the bloc's internal governance should be reformed, as to make their own actions more coherent (concerning the interactions among their various institutions) and legitimized (with respect to improving the dialogue with CSOs).

Following this strategy, the EC published specific instructions for the dialogue with interested parties, in 2002, in the document entitled "Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue - General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission" (EU, 2002). The overall objective was to establish a set of general principles and minimum standards to be followed by the many EC departments, related to

⁷ All the areas covered are available at: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/funding/funding-instruments-programming/funding-instruments_en. Accessed in: 20 Oct. 2016.



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the consultation of interested parties, with a special focus on the role of the CSOs.

The last EU Treaty, of Lisbon, ratified in 2007, also acknowledged and reaffirmed the relevance of the CSOs, establishing that the bloc must maintain a dialogue that is “open, transparent and constant” with such organizations (EU, 2007).

One decade after the 2002 strategy, in 2012, a more strictly communication, related to the involvement between the CSOs and the EU was published, named “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations”⁸, which specify three priorities towards CSOs: (i) to enhance efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries; (ii) to promote a meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policies of partner countries, and in the EU programming cycle and international processes; (iii) to increase local CSOs' capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively (EU, 2012).

The new communication also recommended, as a key mechanism to comply with the above-referred priorities, the conception of a “country roadmap for engagement with CSOs”, related to each country the EU has IDC initiatives with. According to this specific instruction, the EU and its Member States should:

Develop country roadmaps for engagement with CSOs, to improve the impact, predictability, and visibility of EU actions, ensuring consistency and synergy throughout the various sectors covered by EU external relations. These roadmaps are also meant to trigger coordination and sharing of best practices with the Member States and other international actors, including for simplification and harmonization of funding requirements (EU, 2012, p. 9).

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, available at: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/5/50/Com_492_en.pdf. Accessed in: 27 Nov. 2016.

The “first generation” of Roadmaps covers the period from 2014 to 2017, and the second generation will cover the period from 2018 to 2020 ⁹. The purpose of this document is to ensure more consistency of the EU cooperation actions towards civil society and also to better coordinate efforts between the EU and its member states. Worth also noting that each country the EU has cooperation with, should have its own roadmap, as already mentioned, and this strategic document should be validated by each member state operating in the country.

As seen, the priorities of the last EU strategy reinforce the relevance of CSOs, from the UE point of view, and the necessity to establish a close dialogue with them. It does not mean that all the CSOs demands will be taken into consideration or that the EU IDC strategies will be guided in full alignment with the CSOs demands, or even that the CSOs feel represented within the EU policies; but they exemplify the EU actions towards the CSOs, understanding these actors as relevant ones in order to legitimize the EU discourse and actions across the world, reinforcing its Soft Power.¹⁰

Besides the intention to reinforce the dialogue between EU and CSOs, in a broad context, including them in the discussions of the EU priorities for IDC, these priorities largely focus on the role played by CSOs in the domestic policies, once, from the perspective of the EU (at least on the discourse level), these actors are seen as important ones to promote development and democracy within their countries.

Consequently, in order to comply with such strategies, the EU has developed different mechanisms, which should be implemented and adapted according to different countries. In the next section, some of these mechanisms will be exemplified, using as an example the thematic programs, in Brazil.

5.1 The DG DEVCO and the support to the CSOs in Brazil

⁹ The roadmaps for different countries can be found in: <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/public-governance-civilsociety/minisite/roadmaps>. Accessed in: 05 Nov. 2016.

¹⁰ According to Joseph Nye (2004), Soft Power refers to the capacity for persuasion and attraction of one State in relation to others, when a certain objective is pursued.



Thematic lines or thematic programs, as mentioned before, cover a variety of issues with the primary objective of supporting Civil Society Organizations ¹¹. In case of Brazil, there are two thematic programs which should be highlighted as an example: the program “Support to Civil Society Organizations and Local Authorities” for the period 2014 – 2020 (which replaced the former “Non-State Actors and Local Authorities”), and the EIDHR, specifically the Country-Based Support Scheme (CBSS) for Brazil, established in 2007 (EU, 2015a) ¹².

These two thematic programs are managed directly by the EU Delegation in Brazil, which has the responsibility to launch the respective Call for Proposals, prepare the contracts, follow up the projects, analyze the reports, give the instructions for payments, and so far. In a nutshell, the Delegation in Brazil is responsible for all the programming cycle related to these programs.¹³

Actually, both programs foresee, as their main focus, a direct support to civil society organizations, understanding these actors as the most relevant ones to implement the rule of law, democracy and human rights in their countries, and also significant actors to support and promote a sustainable development.

On the other hand, to legitimize the EU actions in the country – as seen before – the EC demands that CSOs (as well as other donors and stakeholders) should be consulted prior to the launching of the calls for proposals, in order to

¹¹ The support to international, inter-governmental organizations is equally possible; however, the support to CSOs remains more prevalent.

¹² The thematic programs are financial instruments with a value of grants defined for a given period, which are awarded to projects submitted by CSOs, evaluated and approved in the context of calls for proposals launched by Brussels or by the countries themselves.

¹³ Worth noting that, despite these programs had been developed under the EU – Brazil Framework Agreement of 1992, they are not jointly executed with Brazilian Government and don't require government permission to be implemented, even though the EU does seek to support the respective governmental public policies. In this context, the EIDHR/CBSS, for instance, has its general priorities defined by the DG DEVCO, but their specific goals are defined according to the needs of each country (what explains the program name: Country Based Support Scheme).



discuss and validate the correspondent (pre defined) objectives and strategies for the country (EU, 2006).

Nonetheless, despite the strategic documents “good intention” to establish a close dialogue with CSOs, it does not mean that all these actors demands will be attended or that the programs will manage to support the whole of CSOs, as already mentioned. In the case of Brazil, for instance, because of its continental size and the plurality of its CSOs, it is practically impossible to carry out a discussion with ample representation prior to issuing each call for proposals.

Nevertheless, the EU Delegation in Brazil frequently chooses to invite organizations with which they’ve had previous engagements, as well as associations of organizations such as ABONG (the Brazilian Association of NGOs), in order to establish a broader dialogue.

In this case, the usual method for carrying out these discussions has been to hold meetings and seminars in Brasília, lasting a half or full day, or even two or three days meetings outside Brasília, aiming at to adjust the calls for proposals objectives to the Brazilian circumstances, and also to attend, as much as possible, the demands made by the CSOs, thus achieving some degree of legitimization for the EU actions in the country.

Worth noting that the Delegation has to comply with the objectives pre-defined for each program, which means that demands of the CSOs will be heard and taking into account, whenever possible, but the Delegation has also to carry on with its own objectives.

6 The ABC/MRE and Non-State Actors

In the case of Brazil, although the structure of the implementation of international cooperation is different from that of the EU, as we will see, this difference does not invalidate the aspect addressed in the article, related to the involvement of CSOs in such an agenda.



Have said that, the technical cooperation undertaken by the Brazilian Government is carried out mainly through two different axes: the cooperation provided, also named as horizontal cooperation or south-south cooperation (SSC); and the cooperation received (bilateral or multilateral). Both axes are under the responsibility of ABC, created in 1987, which has the legal mandate to negotiate, coordinate, implement and monitor technical cooperation programs and projects. The present article will focus on the first axis, SSC, and the foresee involvement with CSOs.¹⁴

It is relevant to bear in mind that SSC does not follow directives from a leading international organization, such as OEDC/DAC, but operates based on common principles carried out by the states of the Southern Hemisphere, namely: respect for the sovereignty of the developing countries; non-interference in internal affairs in countries receiving cooperation; horizontality (referring to each other as partners, not as donor and recipient); and mutual gains among the donors. Other aspects that characterize SSC discourse are the principles of solidarity and the absence of conditionalities.

Operators of cooperation between developing countries are emphatic when they indicate solidarity as their motivator, detached from interests other than development promotion, positioning themselves against the conditionalities and directions that permeate the official development assistance of developed countries (Corrêa, 2010, p. 91).

These characteristics are highlighted here once the execution of Brazil's cooperation initiatives are based on the principles mentioned above, at least at the official documents and speeches level.

Even though SSC is also seen as an outcome of the IDC, the aspect of horizontality as a central feature in the cooperation relations between the developing countries seems to be a relevant counterpoint to the cooperation provided by the developed countries. In this case, the discussions or strategies

¹⁴ The research is based upon public documents of ABC, and the same for DG DEVCO. Which means that whether exist initiatives that were not published/registered by these institutions, they were not be able to be mentioned by the present article.



that define management aspects, execution models for Brazil's cooperation or the definition of the mechanisms that involve direct consultation of the interest parties, including SCOs, appear to become secondary in the referred agenda. Concerns thus seem to fall more on the affirmation of the principles of cooperation provided, with the focus on solidarity and horizontality, for example, than on the improvement of its execution mechanisms *per se*.

In this context, it is useful to refer to management difficulties of SSC, stemming from the incipient regulatory framework of cooperation provided by Brazil, which makes it impossible for the country, for example, to work in basic areas of international cooperation, such as contracting services, acquisition of goods, remittances of financial resources abroad, causing ABC to operate through international agencies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (Renzio et al, 2013).

The incipient regulatory framework is associated with the idea that Brazil should convert international cooperation for development into a public policy in order to improve its laws and execution mechanisms. In this sense, according to Ayllon (2012), the challenge for the country is to institute a sustainable and lasting international cooperation public policy that is placed above the governments or the political leaders of the time.

The scenario above exemplifies the difficulty in operationalizing the cooperation provided by Brazil, however, it does not mean that the concern about the involvement of CSOs is absent from their execution or from their guiding documents. For example, in the three reports already published on the Brazilian Cooperation for International Development (Cobradi) – which aim to map the cooperation implemented by the federal government – there is a growing mention of CSOs and the need to involve them not only in the execution of cooperation actions, but also in the definition of strategies (in the latter aspect, however, references are scarcer).

References to SCOs or Civil Society in the 3 COBRADI reports:

2005 – 2009	6 references
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2010	13 references
2011 – 2013	25 references

Source: IPEA, publications available at:

http://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/index.php?option=com_alphacontent&Itemid=357 (accessed 17 set 2016).

The above table reflects the growing concern over the involvement of CSOs in Brazil's cooperation initiatives; nevertheless, the absence of systematized guidelines related to this involvement is noted.

As an example of the lack of instructions about the involvement of CSOs in the SSC, during the whole project cycle ¹⁵ (not only as a government partner during the implementation programs and projects), the first management manual launched, in 2013, towards the South-South Technical Cooperation (Manual de Gestão da Cooperação Técnica Sul-Sul), only mentions CSOs three times, along its 196 pages, with no practical reference about how to involve these organizations in the formulation of the SSC.

Worth noting that, despite the expressive number of civil society organizations and their activeness in different social agenda in Brazil¹⁶, their participation regarding the definition of priorities for CSS is still incipient (Ayllon & Leite, 2010). There is no clear mechanism, at least not a public one, foreseeing a systematized participation concerning the formulation of the cooperation provided.

What can be pointed out, related to the cooperation provided, is the intention to establish an open the dialogue with civil society, but no practical mechanisms were defined so far. In fact, the most common involvement of these organizations in SSC, in Brazil, is through partnerships established between CSOs and government to execute actions/projects already conceived.

¹⁵ The Project Cycle comprises the six phases: (i) Identification; (ii) Formulation; (iii) Appraisal and Approval; (iv) Implementation and Monitoring; (v) Evaluation; (vi); Closure.

¹⁶ According to the IPEA, the CSOs represent 441 thousand organizations in Brazil, according to the map of civil society organizations available at: <https://mapaosc.ipea.gov.br/static.html?page=faq#faq1>. Accessed in: 10 Dec. 2016.



7 Considerations on DG DEVCO and ABC: characteristics, differences, and points for potential improvements

Although the two institutions in question appear to present more differences than similarities, comparative analyses are valid with regard to the enhancement of the dialogue with NSAs, notably with CSOs, in the implementation and formulation of international development cooperation policies.

As observed throughout this article, two perspectives related to the involvement of CSOs in IDC can be perceived: (i) in the formulation of cooperation actions/strategies phase; (ii) in the execution of these same actions/strategies.

From the point of view of DG DEVCO, there is an institutionalized concern with the involvement of such actors in both perspectives, especially during the last two decades, and with specific orientations on how to coordinate such involvement.

In the case of the DG DEVCO/Delegation in Brazil, for example, it is possible to observe an improvement of the dialogue with the CSOs in the country, both through direct support to them (in the case of thematic lines), but also in the involvement of CSOs in the discussions of the priorities to be adopted for the country (in relation to the same thematic lines). On the other hand, attention was drawn to the difficulty of covering the full range of CSOs demands, when discussions between such actors and the EU were opened, given, among other reasons, to the plurality of these organizations in the country, and the pre-defined objectives to be carried out by the EU Delegation to Brazil, for example.

Regarding the ABC, it is observed that given the incipient regulatory framework of international cooperation implemented by Brazil, and since IDC is characterized as a government policy, not a State policy, there is a lack of specific laws to guide Brazil's cooperation efforts. The same occurs with regard to the involvement of CSOs. Despite the increasing number of mentions to the



importance of CSOs in the COBRADI reports, there are no mechanisms that establish how a dialogue between the government and CSOs should take place. In this sense, the most common are to refer the perspective of CSOs involvement in the implementation of programs and projects already defined by the country, and not in the formulation of SSC strategies.

Thus, in comparing the two institutions with regard to the involvement of CSOs in the IDC agenda, there is a greater institutionalization of such dialogue from the perspective of DG DEVCO, with mechanisms defined for its implementation, such as the need to consult CSOs prior to the launch of the thematic calls for proposals, or the requirement to build a road map on CSOs in countries with which the EU operate cooperation initiatives, for example; and from the ABC point of view, there is a growing concern about the improvement of such a dialogue, but without pre-defined mechanisms for its implementation.

Even so, the challenges faced seem to be diverse for both institutions. For DG DEVCO, for example, it is difficult to cover all the demands of CSOs in the established dialogues. Moreover, when raising expectations that these organizations will be heard, they actually expect to have their demands attended, which is frequently not possible.

In the case of ABC, there is a need to improve concrete mechanisms for increasing dialogue with CSOs, especially in formulating cooperation strategies. In fact, although ABC recognizes the importance of NSAs in the formulation of their agenda, concerns seem to be more focused on the design of SSC ideals, in order to affirm the horizontality and solidarity of SSC, for example, than on the need to establish clear mechanisms for NSAs involvement.

8 Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to conduct a descriptive and comparative analysis of the involvement of non-state actors (NSAs) in two different institutions promoting international cooperation for development: the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and



Development (DG DEVCO), From European Union (EU); And the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC), from Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil (MRE).

The proposal is justified given the growing importance of NSAs, notably civil society organizations (CSOs), in various international relations agendas, including international development cooperation, since the 1990s, a decade also marked by the process of global governance, within which a new paradigm is discussed, characterized by the transition from a sovereign-centered model to a new model in which different transnational and supranational actors interact and influence agendas.

In this context, for example, the growing participation of NSAs in the various conferences organized by the United Nations during the 1990s marked the involvement of these actors in different agendas of international relations, mainly social and environmental. In the same decade, attention was drawn to the OECD Declarations on Aid Effectiveness, which also testified to the need to strengthen and encourage the participation of civil society organizations in the formulation and implementation of the IDC.

Specifically regarding to the questions posed: "Were non-state actors able to change the architecture of international development cooperation agenda within these two institutions?" and "What kinds of changes have they promoted so far?", it was not possible to respond to them with in quantitative terms, about what modifications have been possible until this point, for example. However, it has been observed that NSAs have increasingly been involved in the international development cooperation regime, albeit to varying degrees.

In DG DEVCO, for instance, there is a certain degree of institutionalization regarding the involvement of NSAs in different IDC perspectives, both in its conception and in its implementation, despite the difficulties and challenges pointed out.

From the ABC point of view, there is a lack of pre-defined mechanisms to promote the involvement of such actors in the formulation of cooperation, for example. Nevertheless, attention was drawn to the growing reference in institutional documents to the relevance of that involvement.



Thus, from a qualitative or conceptual point of view, it can be observed an increasing need to involve NSAs in the IDC agenda. Alone the fact that these actors can be involved in discussions on cooperation strategies, as demonstrated in the case of DG DEVCO, or even on the necessity - and sometimes obligation - of involving these actors in discussions, evidences some change.

The most difficult, however - indeed a common challenge for a number of issues pertaining to the IDC (such as the evaluation and quantification of its results, for example) - would be to quantify such change. Nonetheless, the growing involvement of non-state actors in IDC reflects qualitative changes in its architecture, by broadening a dialogue - initially restricted to States and intergovernmental international organizations - to non-state actors, legitimizing and strengthening States' own actions on this agenda.

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