

# Introduction

## The organisations behind trade union support

For many years, trade unions in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands have been engaged in international trade union solidarity. An important element of this work involves supporting programmes and projects aimed at strengthening the trade union movement in developing countries and countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Co-operation may be organised on a multilateral or bilateral basis. Multilateral projects are co-ordinated through the ICFTU, the ITSs and to some extent the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Bilateral co-operation is carried out directly between the trade union organisations in the Nordic/Dutch countries and those in developing countries.

In all the Nordic/Dutch countries, these types of project co-operation are financed by the trade union movement's own funds, as well as by public funds. A large part of public funds come from tax revenues. It is important that these can be used for the benefit of the international trade union movement in defence of workers' rights. In some cases, funds from the European Union (EU) are also available.

In Denmark, the LO and the FTF have established the Danish Trade Union Council for International Development Co-operation (hereafter referred to as the LO/FTF).

In Finland, the SAK and its affiliates have established the Trade Union Solidarity Centre (hereafter referred to as SASK).

In the Netherlands, FNV has a department for international co-operation within its confederation (hereafter referred to as FNV).

In Norway, co-operation activities take place within the framework of the international department of LO (hereafter referred to as the LO-N).

In Sweden, the LO and the TCO have established the Secretariat for International Trade Union Development Co-operation (hereafter referred to as the LO-TCO).

All national centres involved are affiliated to the ICFTU and, at European level, to the ETUC.



## Co-operating partners

*Field organisation:* the organisation with which the project is carried out in a developing country or a country in transition.

<sup>1</sup> LO/FTF have no project co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe.

*International organisation:* the organisation responsible for the monitoring, administration and, in some cases, implementation of multilateral projects.

*Requesting organisation:* the organisation responsible for the implementation and administration of the project. For a bilateral project, the requesting organisation can be a Nordic/Dutch trade union organisation. Alternatively, the field organisation and the requesting organisation can be one and the same. For a multilateral project, the international organisation is the requesting organisation.<sup>2</sup>

*Funding organisation:* in the Nordic/Dutch countries this can be the LO/FTF, SASK, FNV, LO-N or LO-TCO. They are accountable to the federations, unions and government in their respective countries.

## Division of responsibilities between co-operating partners

### *Procedures for project funding*

Proposals for multilateral projects are usually forwarded to the funding organisation via the ICFTU or its regional organisations or via the relevant ITS. Based on the criteria given in the current guidelines, these organisations will study the proposals and decide whether to recommend them to the funding organisations.

Projects proposed for bilateral funding are dealt with directly between the requesting and the funding organisations.

A project can in some cases be co-financed by two or more funding organisations.

The funding organisations will in both cases decide whether to give final approval.

### *The roles of the field and/or requesting organisations*

The ownership of the project lies primarily with the field organisation.

The division of responsibilities between the co-operating parties in a project is set out in a contract. The organisations signing this contract are responsible for the implementation and management of the project. By signing the contract, the requesting organisation is committed to implementing the project according to the approved plan and budget and to providing the necessary reports and audited financial statements to the funding organisation according to the directives contained in these guidelines.

### *The role of the funding organisations*

The funding organisations are committed to providing the funds according to the approved budget, monitoring the project and contributing technical assis-

<sup>2</sup> For LO-TCO the requesting organisation must be a Swedish organisation.

tance as agreed. The funding organisations have a responsibility to follow the progress of implementation and assess and evaluate the programmes. This is achieved through working visits, interim assessments and monitoring, in co-operation with the partners involved.

With regard to the trade unions and government agencies for international development co-operation in their home countries, the funding organisations are responsible for complying with national development co-operation policies and ensuring that the funds are used in accordance with mutually approved plans.

## Aims and objectives

One overall aim of international development co-operation is to alleviate poverty and inequality. Trade unions strive to achieve this by improving the working and living conditions of workers and by developing democratic and independent organisations which represent their members at work and in civil society.

International trade union co-operation seeks to achieve this aim by supporting the development of strong, democratic and politically and financially independent trade unions and organisations that defend the interests of working men and women.

The strength of the trade union movement lies in collective action. The funding organisation designs its policies and acts jointly with its partners. Such co-operation is not a neutral process. Choosing partners, countries and projects involves making political assessments and choices. This distinguishes the funding organisations' projects from humanitarian assistance and emergency aid.

Democratic organisations are a prerequisite for the evolution of democratic social systems. The trade union movement can play a decisive role in this area. Funding organisations set great store by developing democratic unions and thereby promoting democratic societies.

Many of our co-operating partners are well-established organisations with long traditions. It is therefore vital that our goal in development co-operation is consistent with the goals and priorities of our partners.

An important objective is to improve the social and working conditions of women and men on the basis of equality. All projects need to give consideration to gender issues and especially to the creation of equality of opportunity for men and women.

To support trade unions in their fight for trade union and human rights is also an important objective, for which the conventions and programmes of action of the UN and the ILO form the main basis.



The Nordic/Dutch trade union movement aims to strengthen the international trade union movement. Therefore, co-ordination with the ICFTU and the ITSs constitutes an essential part of project co-operation.

## Criteria and conditions

### Basic principles and areas of co-operation

Co-operation is aimed, in the first place, at trade union organisations. Where such organisations do not yet exist, project co-operation should be part of a process to promote the formation of such trade unions in order to become democratic and independent.

Support may also be given to organisations linked to, providing services to or working closely with trade unions on issues such as organising workers in the informal sector, fighting for the improvement of women's living and working conditions; or else it can be given to organisations that promote and defend trade union and human rights.

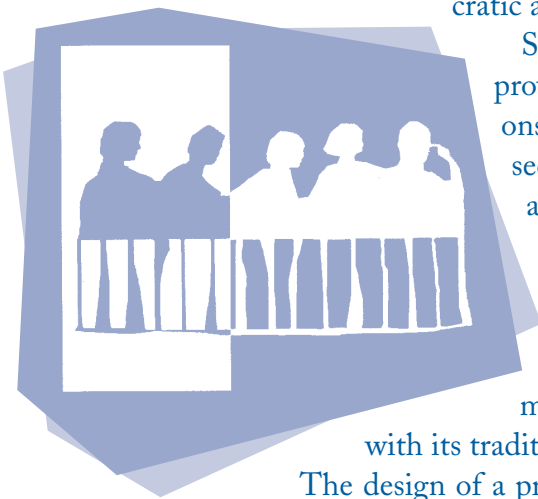
All projects should be developed in co-operation with the field organisation and should reflect its members' interests and needs, while being in consonance with its traditions, structures and situation.

The design of a project should contribute directly or indirectly to the development and strengthening of an independent, representative, self-reliant and democratic trade union movement. Project activities may include organisational development, membership recruitment, information, administration and research work.

All programmes should integrate elements of labour rights. This applies especially to the need to understand the contents and significance of the ILO core conventions as stated in the Declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work, which was adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 1998, and its follow-up. Co-operation partners should be encouraged to use these Conventions in those countries that have ratified them and promote their signature and ratification in those that have not.

The overall priority of gender equality applies to all activities. This means that all proposals submitted for support need to indicate the ways in which gender issues are to be addressed.

Trade union education of elected representatives and members will continue to be a central element in the funding organisations' strategy for co-operation with unions in developing countries. This education should promote recruitment



and organising of new members, strengthen the organisation and include the awareness raising of the union movement's role in society.

Projects in such areas as the informal sector, racism, youth, the work environment, social clauses and child labour may be supported. In special cases, projects with a humanitarian orientation or which provide legal aid and counselling may be undertaken.

Projects covering one or more regions may be supported, as well as projects for the creation of networks between countries and regions.

## Strategic project planning

There are different ways for trade unions to develop and strengthen their organisation. A thorough analysis of the organisation is a first step to identifying the main challenges and obstacles involved. Some of the obstacles might be dealt with in the form of a project or programme for which external funding is sought. The funding organisations are prepared to co-operate in the process of organisational development, amongst other things, by giving financial support for projects and programmes.

Careful planning and preparation are the foundations of effective project co-operation. An important prerequisite is that the parties involved trust and understand each other. This requires that they have good communication from the very beginning.

The funding organisations are using a project planning approach to facilitate communication in order to:

- structure ideas on a project or an activity;
- clarify and define objectives and the activities required for their achievement;
- explain the links between objectives, outputs and means;
- create a common understanding of the project as a platform for continued work;
- monitor, report on and evaluate the project.

This planning approach is presented in the “Handbook on participatory and strategic project planning” (see Annex 1), which can be used as a guide in writing a project proposal. In planning and formulating their project proposals the requesting organisations are asked to use this approach or a similar logical system so that progress towards the objectives and the results of a project can be assessed, both in terms of its content and the financial aspects.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The handbook is not applicable when planning projects in co-operation with LO-Norway.

## Contracts

Once the form of co-operation has been agreed upon, the partners will draw up a contract in which rights and responsibilities are set out.

### Co-operation for self-reliance



All parties have a common interest in ensuring that co-operation leads to the strengthening of the field organisation and avoids the risk of economic dependency so that, over time, activities can continue without the need for external support.

This implies that the scope of the projects must be proportional, as far as possible, to the human resources and financial circumstances of the field organisation.

The project must be oriented towards assisting the field organisation to become self-reliant as external support is phased out. There should be a contribution from the field organisation from the very beginning of the project.

The aims of the project must be set within a realistic time schedule and include a time frame for a gradual phasing out of support.

### Monitoring, assessment and evaluation

Monitoring is a tool for project management, for both project managers and the organisations involved in the project. It aims to provide project managers and supervisors with the necessary information to identify and analyse factors affecting the realisation of the expected output of the project. Based on this information, adjustments can be made in the implementation of the project. If necessary, external expertise can be invited.

Monitoring of projects includes regular assessments of and follow-up to the results achieved. Men and women from the target groups should be involved in analysing the results in order to ensure that their needs are fully taken into account. Internal assessments may be complemented by external evaluations.

An evaluation is a deeper and broader analysis of the implementation of projects and programmes, with the aim of drawing lessons for future activities and providing a basis for policy development. An evaluation is normally carried out when the project is finished and sets out to assess to what extent the situation addressed by the project has changed, and in what ways the activities have contributed to these changes.

External evaluations should be carried out by independent experts with relevant professional experience and gender awareness. In most cases, a team will be nominated by the funding organisation together with the requesting organisation.

In all cases, “terms of reference” should be developed as the basis for the evaluation. The terms of reference should specify at least the aims and objectives of the evaluation, the methodology, the staffing, a timetable and a budget. They can be drawn up either jointly by the co-operating partners or by one of them, in consultation with the other.

## Application

### The content of a project application

The funding organisations have agreed on a joint application form, which may be obtained on request. The structure of this form is closely linked to the “Handbook on participatory and strategic project planning”, as well as to individual funding organisation’s administrative procedures for a given project.

Projects presented along these lines will simplify communication between the partners and facilitate project administration.<sup>4</sup>

### Expenses to include in a budget

Only those expenses related to the project can be supported by the project budget. The budget must establish a clear link with the activities listed in the planning of the project. The funding organisations primarily fund activities, while the material infrastructure and fixed charges relating to the normal running of the partner organisations are financed by the partner. Only administrative expenses directly incurred in project implementation can be included in the budget.

In principle, the budget must be presented in the currency of the country in which the expenditure occurs and must include funds allocated for the project by the field organisation, income from other sources and funding applied for from the funding organisation.

If a project has income from sources other than the funding organisation to which the application is being presented, this must be reflected in the overall budget.

The proposed budget for the project must be proportional to the financial status and resources of the field organisation concerned. The field organisation must account for its income and expenses.

When a project covers more than one country or when expenses for assistance from the international organisation to the field organisation are included

<sup>4</sup> Neither the application form nor the handbook are used when applying to LO-Norway.

in the application, the overall expenses should be given in the currency used by the international organisation (for example, USD, CHF, BEF and EUROS).

Any substantial changes in the project activities and, hence, in the budget must be agreed on in advance by the funding organisation and the requesting organisation in advance.

## Submission of applications

Applications must be sent to each funding organisation before the following dates:

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LO/FTF	1 March
SASK	1 August
FNV	no fixed date
LO-N	1 August
LO-TCO	1 August

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A first indication of approval will be given within three months.

# Reports

## Different project reports requested

All reports pertaining to a project must be structured in accordance with agreed plans and budgets. A reporting form is available on request.<sup>5</sup>

The following types of reports are required by the Nordic/Dutch funding organisations:

1. *Progress report*: a brief summary of activities and expenditure related to the approved budget and an indication of project funds needed for the following months.

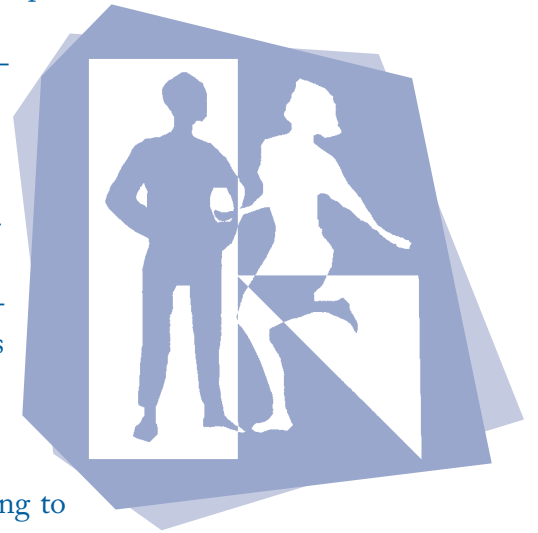
2. *Annual report*: a full report on activities and finances. The financial report should include a statement of income and expenditure, as well as a statement of assets and liabilities. If the project costs are partly covered by the field organisation (or any other external organisation), this should be clearly indicated. All annual financial reports must be audited by chartered accountants according to the agreements made between the co-operating partners. Auditing costs can be included in the budget.

Reports must refer to the measures and indicators set out in the project for that particular year. They must be as factual as possible to show whether or not progress has been made in relation to the project objectives.

<sup>5</sup> This form is not applicable when reporting to LO-Norway.

3. Final report: When the project is completed, a final report should be submitted. This shall:

- relate to the project document;
- show to what extent objectives have been met and target groups reached;
- indicate unforeseen positive or negative effects and results;
- compare the actual implementation with the work plan and timetable;
- analyse difficulties and progress made during the implementation of activities;
- describe the impact of the project on target groups, with special reference to women and men;
- describe the experiences of participating organisations;
- indicate lessons learned, for example, whether there might have been other and possibly better ways to achieve the same objectives;
- indicate if there are problems remaining to be solved and how the process is expected to continue;
- describe how the results of the evaluation are going to be used for activities and projects in the future.



The final report shall also, as stated in the contract, include a financial report covering the whole project period, i.e., income and expenditure. If stated in the contract, the financial report shall be audited by a chartered accountant.

## Balances

At the end of each financial year, the balances should be reported. For ongoing projects, the balances will be deducted from the transfer of the allowance for the new budget year. For completed projects, the remaining funds should be transferred back to the funding organisation.

## Submission of reports

Reports must be submitted to the funding organisations on the following dates:

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	<b>Annual reports</b>	<b>Progress reports</b>	<b>Auditor's report</b>
LO/FTF	1 February	Every three months	1 April
SASK	1 March	–	–
FNV	No fixed date	Half-yearly (according to contract)	–
LO-N	1 March	–	–
LO-TCO	1 March	–	–

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## Annexes

(Not applicable when applying or reporting to LO-Norway.)

Annex 1. Handbook on participatory and strategic project planning

Annex 2. Application forms

Annex 3. Reporting forms



Graphic design: Fröjdlund Grafisk Form  
Illustrations: Ingela Penje  
Printed in Sweden by Strands Tryckeri AB, 2000