

Towards a new partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries after 2020

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

This is the form to post your contribution on the Joint Consultation Paper issued by the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Contributor

* You are/represent

- a public authority / international organisation
- an association
- a think tank
- a civil society organisation
- a company
- a citizen

* Your name and/or name of your organisation

Embassies of the Eastern Caribbean States

* Country of residence or location of headquarters

Belgium

* E-mail

ecs.embassies@oece.org

Identification number in the Transparency Register (if applicable)

* Your contribution

can be directly published with your personal/organisation information. You consent to publication of all information in your contribution in whole or in part including your

- name/the name of your organisation, and you declare that nothing within your response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication.

can be directly published provided that you/your organisation remain(s) anonymous. You consent to publication of any information in your contribution in whole or in part - which

- may include quotes or opinions you express - provided that this is done anonymously. You declare that nothing within your response is unlawful or would infringe the rights of any third party in a manner that would prevent publication.

cannot be directly published but may be included within statistical data. You understand that your contribution will not be directly published, but that your anonymised responses

- may be included in published statistical data, for example, to show general trends in the response to this consultation. Note that your answers may be subject to a request for public access to documents under Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

Common global interests in a multi-polar world

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

The partnership is a unique one that neither the ACP countries nor the EU has had with other multilateral partners.

The partnership, however, was not designed to deal with global challenges but rather evolved in the context of development cooperation and on issues specific to the ACP Group, as evidenced in the objectives of the Cotonou Agreement. It is only in recent times that ACP and EU have been consistently active on global issues such as climate change and sustainable development.

The CARIFORUM Group wishes to express some degree of concern with respect to the current modus operandi used to participate in global events or initiatives. The release of joint position papers may not be sufficiently effective in tackling these global issues. Moreover, the funds contributed to global initiatives have been often based on the EU's agenda and not necessarily on a commonly shared agenda or through a joint approach and decision making. There is therefore need for improvement in the approach to supporting or tackling global challenges.

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?

Strengthening the results in tackling global challenges can only happen to the extent to which the EU and ACP have a commonality of interest. Consideration might be given to the setting up of a mechanism that allows for filtering of issues that are of global interest to both regions and that allows for discussion specifically on these issues.

Though the European Parliament could be one such mechanism for dealing with specific EU-ACP issues, the Parliament is not generally seen as a major interlocutor or showing very much interest in the ACP-EU partnership except for Africa. This should be addressed. For the ACP it is may be important to consider the future role of the EU Parliament especially as its role will be enhanced once the budgetisation of the EDF is effective post 2020. This may also mark greater and more regular involvement of the EP in EU-ACP dialogue and relations. However, primary responsibility for determining issues of common interest remains with national governments.

The EU has provided a list of areas of common interest with respect to global challenges, but these need to be prioritised. The SDGs are universally important and CARIFORUM is committed to attaining these. The partnership, though, should be flexible enough to take on other new challenges that may arise. Specific global challenges of interest to the Caribbean include financial services, climate change, vulnerability and resilience building and security issues. However, going forward, the region insists that the EU in general should obtain a better understanding of which of its own policies that can and do affect the development of ACP countries negatively (eg. EU blacklisting with respect to tax jurisdictions) and seek to facilitate open and genuine dialogue with its Caribbean partners on these issues with a view to remedying these, as relevant.

Human rights, democracy and rule of law, as well as good governance

3. Have the mechanisms provided for in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) (i.e. political dialogue, financial support, appropriate measures, suspension of the agreement) achieved meaningful improvements on human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance, including the fight against corruption? Should the future partnership do more in this regard, and in what way?

Political dialogue between the EU and ACP has been tedious in the past and as such the relevant articles in the CPA have remained lettre morte. Going forward, it is clear that more should be done in this regard, through a more balanced, equitable process. A genuine partnership approach is required to pursue dialogue on sensitive issues such as those related to good governance and human rights.

4. Has the involvement of local authorities and non-state actors (i.e. civil society organisations, the media), national parliaments, courts and national human rights institutions in the partnership been adequate and useful to promote human rights, democracy and rule of law as well as good governance? Could they contribute more and in what way?

Relations with local authorities and non-state actors have progressed somewhat over the years of the partnership but to be able to deepen the involvement of these actors, it must be done in keeping with the cultural and political practices and norms of sovereign countries, even as debate about these are expected in special situations.

In the specific case of the Caribbean which has small populations, the Governments are generally aware of realities on the ground. Currently, national political structures do not allow for branch out mechanisms such as autonomous regions or municipalities. In their case, local participation is assured in many political processes.

Peace and security, fight against terrorism and organised crime

5. Are the provisions on peace and security in the CPA appropriate and useful and has the balance between regional and ACP involvement been effective?

The Caribbean's approach to peace and security is focused on preventative measures, addressing the root causes of crime and insecurity and the strengthening of existing institutions. Issues of major concern to the region have been the illegal trade of drugs and of small arms and ammunition as well as human trafficking, that affect Caribbean society. The CPA has not focused on this issue except in those countries where security is identified as a national priority in the NIPs. Regional structures however have taken up the mantle.

6. Should the future partnership provide for more effective joint action on conflict prevention, including early warning and mediation, peace-building and state-building activities, as well as on tackling transnational security challenges? Should this be done in the EU-ACP context?

There is need for greater technical assistance, information and intelligence sharing on security issues. It is not clear, however, whether the EU-ACP configuration is the most effective forum to deal with this specific governance issue.

Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, investment and trade

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

The partnership has been generally effective in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development. There is, however, need for greater policy coherence.

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

The future partnership should adapt to the new global development framework and embrace the SDGs, but not before taking stock of the challenges that the partnership faced in achieving the MDGs. Moreover, the Commission's own administrative machinery needs to adapt to the requirements of SDGs in order to have a more effective impact. Additionally, there may be other challenges that the partnership might face in the future, that cannot be predicted. The partnership therefore needs to be flexible in adapting to its geopolitical environment.

9. How effective has the partnership been in supporting macroeconomic and financial stability? In which areas would there be added value in ACP-EU cooperation on macroeconomic and financial stability?

The Commission assisted ACP countries with a series of measures in the past, to deal with specific exogenous economic shocks such as the STABEX, SYSMIN, Flex and V- Flex. These were effective as countercyclical support measures, but in some cases displayed some ambiguities and bureaucratic challenges in terms of implementation. The use of the budget support instrument had been beneficial in many countries as it respected the sovereignty of the government in budgetary matters and could have been seen as direct government support. Concern resides however in the fact that the Commission relies too heavily on criteria developed by international partners to whom the development - and even fiscal - specificity, of SIDS, for example, is sometimes lost. CARIFORUM therefore expects greater advocacy from the EU in these international fora on their behalf.

10. How effective has the partnership been in improving domestic revenue mobilisation, 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 partnership has not been effective across the board in improving the mobilizing of domestic resources because this has not been part of the aim of the partnership or competence of the cooperation. However, CARIFORUM welcomes these initiatives as long as they are country-led and complimentary.

11. Has the partnership been able to contribute substantially to mobilising the private sector and attracting foreign direct investment?

The partnership has not effectively mobilized the private sector and has contributed even less to attracting FDI. If properly implemented, the Joint ACP-EU Cooperation Framework for private sector development support in ACP countries provides an opportunity to assist in the strengthening of the private sector in ACP countries.

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?

The potential of the EU and ACP partnership on private sector issues could be better harnessed if there is full implementation and real delivery on the commitments made under the CARIFORUM-EU EPA including the development component. There are a number of areas that could benefit such as youth entrepreneurship, research and development, operationalizing market access for service providers and transfer of technology. The role of ODA should be in part that of leverage to assist with the development of the private sector and the creation of an enabling environment in ACP countries, with the objective of contributing to sustainable development.

13. In this setting, what opportunities do you see for the new, digital economy?

The digital economy is valid for the exchange of information and modernization of the private sector, for example as with e-commerce. CARIFORUM embraces this move, provided that there is enough and relevant support to diversify our economies in that direction.

14. To what extent has the partnership been able to contribute to increase agricultural development and trade?

The results of the partnership in the area of agriculture development and trade have been mixed and reveal the need for policy coherence for development. The work of joint institutions such as the CTA, and others such as COLEACP have added value though, specifically as it relates to climbing the value chain.

15. What has been the contribution of the partnership trade preferences to the integration of ACP countries in the world economy and to its development goals?

The CPA enshrines the parties' commitment to the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy, however the erosion of trade preferences as well as successive changes in EU's internal policies have had contrary effects. Trade preferences have been positive up to a point, but the integration of ACP countries into the global economy has not provided the growth that they needed because they remained price takers and producers of raw materials, with little diversification and systematically occupying the lower echelons of the value chain.

16. Is there still a need for specific provisions on trade cooperation in the post-Cotonou framework, also taking into account the ACP countries which have not signed an EPA? If so, what could/should they cover?

CARIFORUM agrees that there is need to keep specific trade cooperation provisions in the post-Cotonou framework, specifically provisions that are cross-cutting and deal with technical assistance and overarching trade cooperation issues.

Human and social development

17. Has the partnership delivered on its human development objective in an effective and efficient way, in particular on poverty eradication, and also concerning gender equality and empowerment of women? How could it be improved?

Resources have generally contributed to and assisted with the human development objective, however it is difficult to measure the specific impact and results in relation to other inputs.

18. Taking into account the new SDGs framework, what are the main challenges related to human development that the future partnership should focus on?

The new SDG framework is complex. However, some areas of prime interest to CARIFORUM include non-communicable diseases, education, energy security, water and environment.

Migration and mobility

19. Has the partnership been a useful vehicle for discussing migration issues and has it positively contributed? Has Article 13 CPA been fully applied?

EU-ACP dialogue on migration has only recently started in its current more structured form. There are positive and negative impacts of migration and these require further discussion. The dialogue should take account of the specificities of each region.

20. Should a future partnership do more in this regard, and on which particular aspects should it focus (legal migration and mobility, addressing root causes of migration, return and readmission, tackling human trafficking and smuggling, international protection)?

CPA Article 13 probably should be refined to fit the purposes of any new Agreement. An area of keen interest for CARIFORUM relates to the diaspora and its role in national development.

A stronger political relationship

21. How effective has the political dialogue been and at which level is it the most effective: national, regional and through the joint EU-ACP institutions? Should the scope of political dialogue be widened or narrowed?

Political dialogue works best at the national level, than at the regional level. ACP-EU political dialogue has been a tightly choreographed encounter that in many instances has proven to be sterile and void of real debate. Often this “dialogue” is only one-way, which compromises its effectiveness. Only at the JPA level are issues debated or at least brought to the fore, and even then little concrete results/action have been obtained. The scope of political dialogue should be jointly agreed and probably narrowed.

22. Would a stronger involvement of EU Member States, associating their bilateral policies and instruments to the political dialogue at national level, enhance the dialogue's effectiveness and efficiency?

Stronger involvement of EU Member States may not necessarily enhance the dialogue's effectiveness and efficiency in the Caribbean because many EU MS do not have bilateral instruments or policies specific to the Caribbean.

23. Has the fact that the agreement is legally binding been instrumental to its implementation as compared to other regional partnerships based on political declarations?

The legally binding nature of the Agreement is indeed instrumental to its implementation.

Coherence of geographical scope

24. Could a future framework be usefully opened up to other countries than the current members of the ACP Group of States? Which countries would that be?

A future framework may not be usefully opened up to other countries. This also would depend on the EU's own intentions and the ACP vision for its future, which are still under consideration.

25. What kind of framework should govern EU and ACP relations? How could an ACP-EU successor framework relate to the more recent EU regional partnerships with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States? Could a future ACP-EU framework include distinct partnerships with regional partners?

The Caribbean supports one Agreement that spans all three regions and is not in favour of regionalized Agreements.

26. Is there scope for building in more structured relationships with Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa?

Currently there is little scope for building in structured relationships with other regions especially if the Agreement is to be binding. This also implies a totally new framework.

Cooperation tailored more towards groups of countries with similar development level

27. Is the current system of allocation of development resources, based on need and capacities as well as performance, sufficient for channelling funds towards those countries where the highest impact can be obtained? Should allocation of resources continue to prioritise countries most in need, including fragile states?

The current system of allocation of development resources is not sufficient and can be counterproductive. While CARIFORUM supports the focus on countries “most in need”, the EU’s policy of differentiation and graduation often ignores the specificities and vulnerabilities of Caribbean countries and other SIDS. Haiti is a special case within the group and should be recognized with relevant attention given to its needs.

28. What kind of cooperation could help to cover the specific needs of more developed ACP countries with a view to attaining more equitable and sustainable growth?

A new cooperation framework should be based on different types of criteria and indices that are specific to Small Island Developing States that take into account their vulnerability and peculiarities. That cooperation should provide an enabling context for development despite their specific challenges, and should span different fora. Cooperation should also focus on private sector development with special focus on MSMEs, higher education, research and development and transfer of technology.

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?

The current model of stakeholder engagement is lacking active cross-fertilisation of ideas among stakeholders. There needs to be a mechanism that pulls the issues and ideas together for more positive results across actors and institutions.

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 promotion of effective and efficient involvement of other actors must always be done with national governments, as the structures for stakeholder engagement vary across countries.

31. Should the partnership be open to new actors as referred above?

Opening the partnership to new actors may make the partnership even more complex in terms of management and could in fact dilute its effectiveness. A new partnership would be created altogether and as such instruments of cooperation would need to change.

32. In this regard, should the possibility of opening up the partnership to 'associated members' or 'observers' be considered?

BRICS may be considered as observers to the partnership but this is more properly handled by the ACP in its own configuration, outside the EU partnership.

33. How could a new framework promote triangular and South-South cooperation, including the increased involvement of ACP States as development actors in support of other ACP countries?

South-South cooperation (as distinct from triangular) is more of an internal ACP matter, which CARIFORUM supports in principle. CARIFORUM is also open to exploring how the triangular cooperation approach can be one element in the new ACP-EU agreement.

Streamline the institutional set-up and functioning of the partnership

34. Has the joint institutional set-up (with the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors, and the Joint Parliamentary Assembly) been effective in debating and promoting common views and interests and in providing political guidance and momentum to the EU-ACP partnership and the implementation of the CPA?

The joint institutional set-up has been effective to some extent as this provides guidance and some momentum to the partnership, to the extent that the pre-choreographed meetings allow. However, in terms of the real influence of these institutions, for example the JPA, the impact has been moderate to very limited. There has been little debate and minimal results in terms of political guidance and momentum. Also the often sparse EU MS participation in the Joint meetings is common and is probably evidence of the interest accorded to these encounters.

35. What is the added value of the joint ACP-EU institutions as compared to more recent regional and regional economic community frameworks for dialogue and cooperation?

The joint institutions are of supreme relevance, all things being equal. Each layer of relations, national and regional are interlinked and of individual relevance. In practice, the overarching institutions should provide mandates and guidance for the regional processes which in turn feed back into the supranational processes. In terms of efficiency, there is great potential for improving these frameworks.

36. What institutional arrangements would most effectively help address common challenges and promote joint interests?

The current structures are relevant. There is need to increase their effectiveness.

37. Should a higher degree of self-financing of this functioning (ACP-EU Joint institutions and ACP secretariat) by the ACP States be required?

With respect to self-financing, this is one of the options currently being considered by the ACP Group, but its constraints are clear.

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? Is this instrument flexible enough, especially to address crisis situations? Can this instrument be deployed differently?

CARIFORUM is of the view that a dedicated financing instrument in support of the ACP-EU partnership is essential as it is predictable and facilitates monitoring and evaluation. It is flexible in general, however, its disbursement methodology must be reviewed and made lighter. It should also be more responsive to crises.

39. What is the added value of the EDF's co-management system involving national authorities in the programming and management of aid programmes, as compared to other EU cooperation instruments in non-ACP countries?

The Caribbean endorses the principle of co-management as enshrined in the CPA, and underscores that genuine efforts at co-management must continue to be made. Meaningful actualization of the principle of co-management is critical to the success of the partnership.

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 maximise the impact of joint programming?

The impact of the joint programmes can be maximized by making the cooperation truly joint, fostering real ownership of ACP countries of the process as well as its implementation.

41. Does the variety of existing tools adequately support the EU and ACP common principles and interests and are there gaps that should be addressed? How do you assess the effectiveness and efficiency of various implementation modalities?

There are definitely common principles shared by the EU and ACP Group, as laid down in Article 2 of the CPA, further strengthened by the common values and interests underscored in the Joint Caribbean-EU Partnership Strategy (JCEUS). However, common ownership of the tools and their implementation do not exist. For example, the processes for procurement and reporting are onerous and complex and may decrease the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation modalities. The decision-making process is quite often one-dimensional and should be reviewed.

42. Should a higher degree of self-financing from the ACP States be required for activities to ensure ownership? Would this apply to all countries? On which principles should this be based?

Though it may help to have a higher degree of self-financing from ACP States, as necessary, it is clear that such financing does not automatically translate to ownership. As such, increasing self-financing may not necessarily foster greater ownership. Ownership begins rather at the inception of the project and conveys the desirability of the project.

43. How can the expertise of the EU and its Member States be better mobilised, particularly in the middle-income countries?

No response.

Contact

✉ europaaid-01@ec.europa.eu
