

Project Title:	The Estonian partnership for Development
Implementing Organisation:	European Movement Estonia on behalf of Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (in Estonian Arengukoostöö Ümarlaud-AKÜ)
Project Manager:	Sue Tack
Total Budget:	49 163 euros
Requested Budget from Fund :	30 000 euros

Estonia is becoming more active in the international development community, especially through opportunities stemming from its membership to the EU. Progress in development cooperation is steady based on policy formulation and a strong governmental implementation structure- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-ordinates Estonia's development co-operation programme while specific government agencies implement projects in the scope of their competences. Despite these efforts, a mature understanding of development cooperation is needed in Estonia.

In January 1999 "Principles of Development Cooperation" for the years 1999-2000 were adopted by Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament). This served as a conceptual basis for development and humanitarian assistance. In January 2003 this Policy was updated to include explicitly poverty eradication, sustainable development and human rights and the Millennium Development Goals. The policy also took into account the need for domestic awareness raising as an important part of development co-operation and foresaw a greater role for NGOs in its implementation.

By end 2005, the draft of the first strategy for Development Cooperation and humanitarian aid for 2006-2009 was presented. An annual increase in the budget allocated to development cooperation has been taking place. Estonia spends about 0,08% of Gross National Income annually (2004) on development co-operation and intends to steadily increase its contribution, as well as to advance its status and role among other international donors.

The need for a National NGDO Platform was first felt by member organisations (NGOs) where a to facilitate coordinated action in policy work. But, the government also expressed its wish to have a strong development NGO network, with which to cooperate for awareness raising activities. An additional role for NGOs in the National Development Policy was identified in implementing projects in developing countries. This is one consequence of Estonia's membership to the EU in the area of development cooperation. Besides development policy formulation and implementation at the national level, Estonia has to strengthen its position in the development cooperation debate at the EU level as well. The Estonian society has to be informed about the EU Development Policy but much more than that, it also needs to be included in the policy making and implementation processes at the EU level. As a network of NGOs AKÜ is the only and most important organisation which deals with the field of development cooperation policies and related to this the need for congruency of policies.

The Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ) was convened in October 2002 by the Estonian Refugee Council to discuss the draft of the new Principles of the Estonian Development Cooperation, and submit a joint statement of NGOs to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since 2003 it is an informal national platform of NGDOs. The Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation is the

main partner of MFA to raise the general awareness of development cooperation issues in Estonia and to strengthen the partnership between MFA and civil society organisations, both in policy formulation and project implementation. AKÜ serves the interest of its members- development NGOs in Estonia, by informing them about development news, facilitating participation in seminars, training and field studies and cooperating with public sector and similar networks in Europe. The Roundtable participates actively in the Trialog project (Development NGOs in the Enlarged Europe) and in CONCORD working groups (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development).

The Roundtable, though an informal network, is a recognized entity at Estonian and European level.

Project Implementation

This project proposes to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and of the network to facilitate participation in policy formulation and implementation at national and international level. Through building capacity for awareness raising activities and developing the website www.terveilm.net we will increase the involvement of the Estonian society to contribute to the reduction of global poverty.

The project has three main activities:

1. **A General Roundtable with a focus on cooperation and dialogue** (between NGOs and with governmental institutions –on national and EU level). The General Roundtable is organised to bring different development NGO together and find a common ground (common needs, vision, responsibilities, interests, agreements for future joint activities, etc.) in the field of development cooperation. It is organised in order to re-activate, re-motivate our current members and to involve new members (both NGOs and individuals).
2. **Workshops for its working groups:** The working groups are a tool to unite people from different organisations (with sometimes very different backgrounds) to share ideas and develop joint actions on a specific topic. AKÜ has four priority areas for 2006 (Development Policy, Development Education, Fair Trade and EU Neighbourhood Policy) which are also the fields of the four working groups. In order to strengthen these working groups we will organise workshops aimed at increasing their capacity in policy work and in awareness raising.
3. **A workshop for the Terveilm editorial team** will in the first place increase the quality of their work reflected in a better quality and higher frequency of news on development issues on the Terveilm website. Secondly, it will enlarge the editorial team which results in a wider thematic and regional coverage and also in a more regularly updated website. In the third place we will establish a network with the mainstream media in order for greater inclusion of development cooperation issues for public awareness.

To improve the quality of our events we involve six foreign experts from Europe. Four who are active in our priority fields and will be a trainer in the workshops. Also for the General Roundtable in the beginning of the project we will invite two foreign experts. Slovakia for example is one of the NMS who has a lot of good practices to share in building good relations and collaboration between NGOs and ministries. The second foreign expert is invited to speak about international networks, campaigns and awareness raising activities. Estonian experts and representatives from Estonian government will be invited to speak about Estonian Development Cooperation. By then the first strategy paper on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid for 2006-2009 will be adopted by Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament). Also an overview of EU Development Policy will be given, including the role of national NGOs in the formulation and implementation of the policy.

Estonia has almost no immigrants from the South and the international development activities of NGOs are focused on Eastern countries. To encourage more awareness raising activities on the Global South (Africa, Latin-America and Asia) one of the workshops for the working groups will be focused on the South. In the case of the working group on the Neighbourhood Policy someone from the Eastern countries will be invited. In these workshops participants will get in depth information about a specific development issue from a specific country or region. Together the interdependency between North and South will be highlighted. As there are no Estonian NGOs with partners in the South we will cooperate for these workshops with our Finnish and Swedish partners. To lower the costs we will invite experts from the South who are in Finland or Sweden for a short or long term.

Project Sustainability

The General Roundtable will lead to new members (both NGOs and individuals) who will of course also stay involved after this current project. The General Roundtable is organised with the aim to (re-)build a sustainable partnership in the field of development cooperation between NGOs as well as between NGOs and governmental organisations.

Also the workshops for the working groups are aimed to involve more Estonians, to find common interests, aims and future plans. Besides, the workshops these working groups will meet regularly and also stay in contact through newsgroups. The workshops are organised to strengthen the capacity of the working groups in their awareness raising activities and policy work. Action plans for these working groups will be made including the development of materials (articles, training-methods, information brochures, information from EU, book reviews) in Estonian. As such the outcome of the workshops is sustainable and can be used by a wider public. The probability that these working groups organise similar events in their specific fields after the workshops of this project is high. The workshops in this project have to be seen as a kick off for actions and ongoing cooperation.

The workshop for the Terveilm editorial team is also a kick-off meeting of activities that will definitely continue after the contract period as well. This is especially the case for the new people who will get involved in AKÜ to write for the website. For our existing team members it will contribute to their personal skills but also to their motivation. The workshop is the entry point to a more coordinated and professional approach of the editorial work. The AKÜ coordinator will coordinate the team after the workshop; organising meetings and looking for new or additional team members if this is necessary. In the budget proposal of this project we include funding for translation and writing of articles which ensures us that we reach our objectives and have a sustainable outcome. Also the purchase of books and journals is included. These will be available for the organisations and individuals and will be advertised on our website. The development of Terveilm is one of our main priorities. This project will contribute to the start of this process and the workshop organised will lead to an action plan which includes fundraising for the future development.

Cooperation of MFA is very likely assured in this field as they supported us previously and have increased their budget available for awareness raising activities.