# **Executive summary**

#### Evaluation object, aims, background and scope

This evaluation has focused on the TUDCN-implemented project *‘Consolidating the contribution of an inclusive Trade Union Development Cooperation Network for more effective impact and development effectiveness’*, which covered the period 2011 – 2012 and has been funded by the European Commission. Where necessary to assess the network’s present performance and achievements, developments from before the 2011-2012 period have also been taken into account.

The main objectives of this evaluation were (1) to demonstrate to which extent the TUDCN has been able to produce *a specific added value* and has the potential to continue doing so in the future, (2) to account for the use of the resources received and (3) to learn lessons from the TUDCN activities, approach and results achieved with a view of improving future performance of the network, in particular in relation to the next project that is expected to start in April 2013.

TUDCN has been established in 2007 following the first ITUC congress in Vienna by a core group of national trade unions (TU) active in development cooperation. It became a formal TU network for coordinating TU development cooperation via support achieved from the EU in 2008-2009. Two other EU supported projects allowed TUDCN to consolidate its achievements and to further expand its scope (both in geographic and program terms), thereby attaching specific attention to the inclusion of Southern Organisations. As such, the TUDCN has today become a unique trade union platform for development cooperation bringing together a broad range of TU-related organisations. Its mandate is (1) to improve trade union development cooperation effectiveness through sharing of information and practices and by stimulating improved impact and results of the solidarity efforts within the trade union movement; and (2) to ensure input of trade union views in the development related policy debates.

#### **Evaluation approach and methodology**

The evaluation approach and methodology have been designed in view of the particular characteristics of the evaluation object (a worldwide network), the aims of the evaluation and the resources available for the evaluation. The evaluation was implemented via three phases: an inception phase consisting mainly of initial contacts and discussions between the evaluation team and the TUDCN secretariat, an implementation phase with a varied range of activities including documentary analysis, interviews with internal and external stakeholders and an electronic survey sent to 245 members, and a synthesis phase consisting of pulling together and triangulating the findings obtained, based on which the evaluation report has been drafted. The evaluation process started in December 2012 and ended in April 2013 with the presentation and discussion of the main findings at the TUDCN General Meeting.

While the evaluation could be roughly implemented as planned, the evaluation team faced a few methodological challenges in view of guaranteeing the validity of the analysis and findings. These challenges relate to the nature of TUCDN itself as a worldwide network and, more importantly, to the poor response rate (8.6%) to the survey, which might imply that the results obtained are not representative for the network in its entirety.

#### **TUDCN’s institutional setup**

TUDCN is the Development Cooperation Network under the ITUC, which represents 175 million workers in 156 countries and territories as members of its 315 national affiliated trade union centres or confederations[[1]](#footnote-1). Its membership is composed of the (1) ITUC affiliates and (2) ITUC regional federations, and further (3) the TU-SSO (Solidarity Support Organisations, mostly national organisations having the mandate to organise and implement TU development cooperation programmes) and (4) the so-called Global Union Federations (GUF) that represent workers from organisations belonging to the same sector. The network has a *General Meeting* (GM), which is the main decision-making body and meets twice a year, a *Facilitation and Steering Group* (FSG) that monitors programme implementation in-between the general meetings and assists the secretariat in implementing the network’s activities, and *Working Groups* (WG) organised around key TUDCN programme issues such as development effectiveness and EU policies. In 2011-2012 the *TUDCN secretariat* was composed of a network coordinator (3/4 FTE), an advocacy officer (1 FTE), one outreach officer responsible for communication (1 FTE) and an administrative assistant (1/2 FTE).

Over the 2011 – 2012 period, most funding was provided via the EU project (budget € 1,331,530), of which 75% (€ 998,648) has been contributed by the EC.

#### Key achievements of TUDCN

**1. TUDCN is a well functioning network that is able to ensure the interest and participation of a broad group of members who strongly belief in its need and added value.**

TUDCN’s achievements in terms of network development can be analysed as follows:

**The goals of the network are widely known and understood by the network members**. There is a broad consensus on the relevance and importance of the two main objectives of TUDCN – representation of TUs in the international development debates and advocacy on one hand, and improving the effectiveness of TU development cooperation on the other hand. These goals also correspond with the members’ expectations towards the network and address what many actors consider as important shortcomings of TU development cooperation in the past, namely: the absence of TUs in the international development debate, the low level of effectiveness of TU development actions and of coordination between these actions.

Moreover, the evaluation revealed that members’ expectations have not significantly changed over time, which indicates that members know what they can/should expect from the network and that the network is adequately responding to these expectations. It appears also that the network raised the members’ interest in being informed on issues that are on the international development agenda, an area many members were relatively unfamiliar with in the past.

The findings depicted above apply at least for those members who are moderately to strongly involved in the network. It is less clear in how far the network and its goals are also well known by the broader group of (potential) members, and in how far this affects their (lack of) commitment with the network. It is likely that members’ expectations and priorities, e.g. with regard to the focus of the advocacy work, will also become more diverse in as far as TUDCN will increasingly realise its ambition of becoming more inclusive and representative as a global TU network. To deal with the complexity of members’ interests and expectations will thus most probably remain an important challenge in the future.

**Members have possibilities to participate in the network’s decision-making and activities and there is a feeling of ownership of the network. There are however still a number of important challenges in this regard.** At present, TUDCN functions as an open platform with a loose membership structure. As such, the network is easily accessible for those interested. It however poses some challenges in terms of membership management and in terms of representation.

Member participation is encouraged in different ways, which makes that most members feel they have sufficient possibilities to contribute information to the network, to participate in the network’s activities and in decision-making. In practice, active participation remains confined to a small group of committed members however. While this should not be considered a major shortcoming as such – many networks rely on a limited group of active members for achieving their goals, moreover real participation requires serious investment (in terms of time and effort) which not everybody can make - care should be taken that TUDCN does not become too much an affaire of ‘insiders’, gradually leaving the broader group of members – with their particular expectations and interests – behind.

An important weakness with regard to member representation and participation, especially in view of TUDCN’s ambition of becoming a unique and “inclusive” platform representing the voice of TU movement in the international development debate, is that some important TU actors still remain underrepresented. Particularly the underrepresentation of the South and the absence of the GUFs are considered as a major problem. Participation of the South has increased over the past two years but still there is a lot to do in terms of strengthening the regional network dynamics, and to develop mechanisms to adequately include Southern members and their points of view in the overall networking process. The reasons for the low interest from the GUFs are not always clear. There are indications that some GUFs feel uncomfortable with TUDCN’s ambition of becoming a unique actor representing the ‘voice’ of the TU movement in international forums. This might not only conflict with the GUFs own advocacy agenda, but also with the GUFs autonomy from by the ITUC (TUDCN is perceived as an ITUC initiative, rather than as a semi-independent network with broader membership). There is a demand for clarifying role and relationships in this regard.

There is a good level of trust among network members and in the work of the secretariat and the working groups. The conferences organised in 2009-2010 have played an important role in trust building; at present the General Meetings have taken over this role. Trust building becomes more challenging where members have competing interests and expectations (which is the case in some regions in the South; it might as well be the case for some of the GUFs). In line with what has been said above, trust building is thus likely to become a major point of attention as the network gradually becomes more inclusive and diverse.

Opinions diverge on whether the present structure of network **– with the secretariat, the FSG, the general meeting and 2 working groups – is optimally fitting the purpose of the network.** The regionalisation of the network in the South as well as the integration of TUDCN in the ITUC (see further), are seen as the major challenges in this regard.

The **TUDCN secretariat** plays a key role in implementing the different activities of the network. Its work is highly appreciated and the present secretariat is considered competent to fulfil its tasks. Some however feel that the secretariat risks to work too autonomously, and to focus too much on the external advocacy work, at the expense of investing in internal network strengthening (including the strengthening of the network dynamics in the regions) and member participation.

The **Facilitation and Steering Group** has not yet fully taken up its role as a governance structure, representing the different categories of membership groups, despite repeated efforts to improve its functioning. It is expected that the recent 2-days meeting of the FSG, in January 2013, will act as a new starting point in re-dynamising the FSG and increasing its importance for the network.

The General meetings, organised twice a year, bring together all members of the network. The GM endorses all important decisions regarding the networks’ objectives and agenda setting. The GMs are seen as an important network moment and therefore considered very important. TUDCN tries to make optimally use of these network gatherings by putting not only ‘internal affairs’ but also content work on the agenda of the meetings. The drawback is that this usually leads to overloaded agendas that leave too little time for liaising, true exchange and networking.

Two working groups are presently active in TUDCN: a WG on development effectiveness and a WG on EU policies. The WGs played a key role in the preparation of several TUDCN key documents produced over the past two years. The principles outputs of the Development Effectiveness WG have been the “TU principles and guidelines on Development Effectiveness“ (2011) and the “TU Development Effectiveness Profile (TUDEP)” (2011). A document on Monitoring and Evaluation at outcome and impact level is in preparation. The EU working group has been responsible for preparing several TUDCN/ITUC positions with regard to EC policies and documents in the field of development cooperation. The most important products of the working groups are known and highly valued by network members. Members seem to be less familiar with the functioning of the WGs as such. A limitation of the WGs is that they rely on a small number of active participants. This is especially the case for WG on development effectiveness, where the low levels of participation can partially be explained by the very technical character of the work. Whereas the present WG fulfil an important role in the network, some members suggest to look for more diversified ways of member participation, e.g. the creation working groups in the South, punctual working groups focussing on specific themes, online discussions and debates, … so as to make better use of the large potential that is actually available within the network.

**Good communication and information sharing mechanisms are in place**. Network communication is coordinated through the TUDCN secretariat. Communication and information sharing takes place through the TUDCN website, the monthly newsletter, “Trade Union focus on Development”, the dissemination of network documents such as position papers and briefing notes, etc. A ‘projects directory’ has been created, where TUDCN members share information on on-going development projects in the South. Especially the TUDCN newsletter and the communications sent as ITUC briefing notes are considered highly useful by members to remain informed on what is going on in the network, on evolutions in the global development agenda and on how TUs are positioning themselves towards these evolutions. A weakness of the present communication system is that the mailing list used to disseminate information is no longer up-to-date. Another weakness is that member response to calls for contributions remains low, which seems to be a consequence of time constraints rather than of limited interest or lack of willingness to contribute. The creation of less time-consuming and thus more accessible alternatives for members to share information and thoughts might provide part of the solution here.

**Institutional embedment within the ITUC is still weak**. The ITUC hosts the TUDCN secretariat. Within the ITUC structure, TUDCN falls under the direct responsibility of one of the two Deputy General Secretaries. In practice, TUDCN has a quasi-independent status within the ITUC. There is a dependency for practical day-to-day operations (communication, internet, office space, ...) and one of the TUDCN policy officers is now also paid as ITUC staff. At the operational level there is a certain degree of coordination and cooperation between TUDCN and some of the ITUC departments.

The weak institutional embedment mainly relates to the fact that the role and added value of TUDCN seem to be poorly understood by the ITUC management and that political support for the network is low. TUDCN is rather seen as a project that exists because of EU-funding, not as an intrinsic part of the work of the ITUC in the longer-term. More than for its achievements (which are little known and understood), TUDCN seems to be valued for the external funding it brings in. This situation can partially be explained by the fact that, indeed, TUDCN was initially developed as a project, with little participation or involvement from the ITUC management. Another factor is that development cooperation is generally not considered a TU priority, which in turn has to do with the fact that there is still a lot of misunderstanding of what development cooperation is about (it is mainly seen as ‘sending funds to projects in the South’, not as working on an agenda for development).

Many actors see the weak political support from the ITUC, as well as the weak institutionalisation of TUDCN within the ITUC as a major weakness, jeopardizing both the legitimacy of the network and its sustainability in the longer term. Moreover it creates a number of missed opportunities. For instance, the large advocacy potential of TUDCN remains largely under-utilised, and there is little structural co-thinking on development and the role of TUs in development cooperation.

Which form a ‘stronger institutional embedment’ in the ITUC should take is less clear. Becoming an ITUC department would possibly conflict with the network character of TUDCN (as a network, TUDCN should be accountable to its members – which do not only include ITUC-affiliates – rather than to the ITUC hierarchy). In any case, there is a broad agreement that stronger ITUC support is needed, which would minimally imply that the importance of development cooperation and the role of TUDCN are recognised and that a political decision is taken to further support the institutional development of TUDCN.

2. TUDCN has clearly contributed to increased capacity for TU development action in the South and the North but the outreach of its influence might still be limited.

### **In terms of internal achievements, the main results of TUDCN’s action can be summarised as follows:**

The network has undoubtedly contributed to strengthened TU views on development cooperation policies and practices. The major piece of work in this regard is related to the development of the *‘Trade Union Principles and Guidelines on Development Effectiveness’*, which were developed in a consultative way. Many members referred to the principles as a tool providing them with something in common that strengthened their identity and confidence. The principles allow the TUs to both positioning themselves within the large CSO community *and* to articulate their specific identity. Lastly, the principles have also served as a basis for strengthening internal capacities related to development cooperation and development issues at large. While these achievements are important, they also should be framed against the context that in many TUs development cooperation was an issue that had remained largely unaddressed till TUDCN became active. It seems also that these ‘strengthened views’ have allowed TUs opening themselves more broadly for development (cooperation) issues, which implies that TUDCN’s strategy to start with work first on a common view as a basis for further capacity building has worked well.

While TU views on development cooperation have been strengthened, the level of inclusion and ownership of development cooperation within TUs remains still rather shallow. Many TUs have ‘development cooperation partisans’ but they often are not representative for their organisation and point to the difficulties to get development cooperation (in terms of activity domain, views, tools) truly integrated in their organisation. The way the ITUC headquarters position itself towards development cooperation (see above), can be illustrative in this case. As such and apart from the SSOs that are structurally linked to the TUs, TUCDN seems to be the only forum/location where development cooperation themes are *structurally* discussed and embedded.

**TUDCN has substantially contributed to increased coordination and coherence of TU development cooperation**. The lack of coordination among TU development initiatives, both in the North and the South, and leading to duplication of efforts, inefficiency and even competition, has constituted one of the major reasons to create TUDCN. The network has in various ways altered this problematic situation and TUs involved in development cooperation state they now better coordinate their action, aim for more coherence (whereby the principles and guidelines are an important support) and, in some cases, engage in operational cooperation to achieve bigger leverage and impact. Some consider the changes brought by the network in this area as its major achievement.  
A key factor in this regard has been in the first instance the creation of the network as such, which filled an important void that had actually existed for too long, and almost automatically implied increased consultation and exchange among TU cadres dealing with development cooperation. A second important factor has been the setup of a project directory that has clearly produced its intended effects, also because members have positively reacted to the network’s appeal to provide information for the directory.  
While TUDCN’s success in this area is undeniable, there remain important challenges, in particular in achieving improved coordination and cooperation in the South. A situation where northern partners coordinate their action in particular southern countries/settings so as to achieve bigger coherence and leverage is indeed still quite far away; in addition, with the exception of South America, TUDCN has not yet been that instrumental in promoting South-South cooperation. This can be partially explained by historical and contextual constraints, but certainly also by the so far limited outreach of the network to the South.

**TUDCN has been instrumental in increasing TU capacity and effectiveness for development action.** To start with, the initial achievements clearly have created a fertile ground and an enabling environment for enhancing capacity and effectiveness. In addition the network has undertaken specific activities to increase development capacity and effectiveness in the more technical sense. Some tools have been developed which for many TUs constitute a welcome operational complement to the rather normative and conceptual way development effectiveness has been outlined in the TU principles and guidelines. Two major initiatives stand out in this regard: the development of a TU Development Effectiveness Profile Tool (TUDEP) and the guidance note for TUs on Monitoring and Evaluation at outcome and impact level. While most members rate the TUDEP positively, opinions related to the Monitoring and Evaluation guidance note (which is still in the process of finalisation) are rather mixed. Furthermore, it is clear that TUDCN cannot address the specific needs of *all* members (SSOs versus TUs) in the same way. Understandably it has opted to mainly address the needs of the bulk of its members (TU structures).  
In line with what has been mentioned with regard to the ‘TU views and principles’, ensuring the actual use of the tools within the organisation has often been a challenge. Some consider this as a ‘missing link’ in TUDCN’s support that should be addressed in the future.

### **3. TUDCN has achieved significant external achievements which can be considered exceptional in view of its short lifetime and limited resources**

### **TUDCN’s main external achievements can be summarized as follows.**

**TUDCN has significantly contributed to common TU positions with regard to development and development cooperation.** In view of the diversity of its membership, at least conceptually it might be a challenge for TUDCN to come up with “common positions” that are shared by all members. However, so far no major problems have been experienced in this regard. This can be explained by a combination of factors related to the nature of the positions developed (often of a rather broad nature, with a high level of agreement already existing among TUs), the adequate functioning of the network (good communication, leadership and quality of the secretariat leading to high levels of trust) and the fact that for many members ‘development cooperation’ is a rather new domain.

While things have gone well so far, some issues need to be considered in view of the future. They deal in first instance with the way the network organises internal consultation, which raises questions at the level of some key external actors and might eventually tarnish TUDCN’s image as a unique and truly representative TU network. In addition, so far there are no mechanisms to derive messages organically from the network members and the regions through a bottom-up approach, as (mainly) the secretariat takes the initiative to engage in particular issues whereby – it should be acknowledged – members are consulted adequately.

**TUDCN has succeeded in increasing visibility and recognition of TUs as development actors in their own right.** Overall, ‘*increased visibility and recognition’* is generally considered as a major achievement of TUDCN. Actually, ensuring increased visibility and recognition was a major consideration behind the network’s inception and its first major initiatives, in particular the organisation of high profile public events that were meant to reiterate the importance of TUs as actors in development cooperation.

Apparently, TUDCN has been most successful in this regard at the international level, via its continuous, adequate and skilful involvement in key CSO platforms related to international debates such as the Development Effectiveness debate after the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action, and the EU structured dialogue initiative. TUDCN has also organised a comparative study on donor support systems for TU that has attracted much attention. In these events and initiatives, TUDCN, mainly via its secretariat, adopted roles and positions both as ‘general’ CSO and ‘specific’ TU representative. Considering the TU presence at the level of these forums has for a long time been rather exceptional and even marginal, TUDCN’s participation has led to TUs being recognised as a distinct actor in its own right, both at the level of the larger CSO community and at the level of international development institutions. However, as mentioned in our previous point, the prominent role of secretariat members in these forums has to some extent raised representation concerns. This strong role of the secretariat is also internally viewed as a weakness to be addressed in the future.

Also at regional level TUDCN’s action has led to increased visibility and recognition, in particular in Latin America. At national level, the changes could not be documented fully. It is clear that through various TUDCN actions, members have gained in confidence and skills and in some countries have engaged in joined initiatives that have added to their visibility and recognition. In other countries, specific factors have implied that the effects have remained limited so far.

TUDCN has enhanced increased TU contributions in development debates and policies. In terms of ‘*participation in development debates and policy formulation’*, the findings are closely linked to those dealing with visibility and recognition. Besides the convincing findings at international level, several success stories of TUs making tangible progress in participating in development debates at the national level were identified, but also examples where particular constraints prevented such effective participation. It is difficult to judge to which extent these contributions at national level can overall be considered as a success or not, the more because TUDCN has no mechanism yet for recording achievements at decentralised levels.

Assessing *actual influence* *on (the outcome of) development debates and policies* is even more challenging from a methodological point of view. This being said, it can be safely assumed that increased participation at all levels must have led at least to ‘some’ effective influence on the outcomes of the development debates and on policies. The results seem to be most tangible, or at least visible, at international level. In the process leading to the Busan declaration, TU representatives played a significant role in solidifying the CSO contribution in terms of contents, strategy and organisation and in ensuring that typical TU concerns related to decent work and social protection were included in the declaration. At EU level, some external observers state that the TUs have had ‘tremendous’ impact, among others because their participation in the corresponding Working Group was of good quality. TU representatives managed to bring in ‘typical’ TU preoccupations such as decent work, labour issues and role of the private sector that influenced the final communication with regard to the EU policy towards CSOs.

A few nuances should be added, which however do not truly affect the achievements of the network in this area. First, many of the debates have come from the outside to TUDCN and, hence, were not initiated by TUDCN itself. Consequently, TUDCN has acted rather reactively and not proactively. Second, some state that the high-quality TUDCN inputs (e.g. via position papers) were insufficiently complemented by a more comprehensive campaigning strategy that would fully use its position as the worldwide network representing the ITUC.

**Improved external networking and cooperation**. This achievement can be mainly considered as both the effect *and* the cause of the other external achievements of the network that have been described above. Overall, the network has been highly instrumental in TUs now occupying an important position in many CSO platforms at the international and national level where they are accepted as an actor that enriches the debates and strengthens the platforms while safeguarding their specific interests. As many CSO platforms struggle(d) with issues related to their legitimacy and representation, the active role of TUs in CSO networks has certainly added to the latters’ legitimacy, notwithstanding the fact that much still needs to be done, in particular in terms of ensuring increased representation and influence from the South.

#### **Conclusions**

Overall it can be concluded that TUDCN has succeeded to develop itself into a network that is fairly stable, inclusive, representative and legitimate. It clearly worked along its mandate to improve trade union development effectiveness and to ensure input of TU views in development policy debates, in particular concerning the inclusion of the decent work agenda and democratic ownership. There are in addition clear signs that TUDCN’s work in these areas has been effective to an important degree.

Moreover and while the achievements so far are already substantial, the network has the possibility to further develop the considerable potential of involvement of TUs in development cooperation and, more generally, in promoting a more equal, democratic and sustainable development.

Whether or not the network will effectively be able to further expand its added value in the medium and longer term and to fully realise its potential, will depend on various factors. The evaluation team has highlighted a few important points in this regard:

* **The sustainability of the network is not yet guaranteed.** So far, ‘sustainability’ has not really been an issue in the network. This is understandable as till now most energy has gone to the setup and initial development of the network, to the elaboration of services and products that benefit the members and, maybe above all, to a series of concerted efforts ‘to put TU development cooperation on the map’. However, TUDCN’s dependence on external grants and its unclear position under the ITUC umbrella are two important challenges which, if not addressed adequately, might jeopardise its longer-term sustainability.
* **High level of dependence on individuals**. The evaluation has come across several situations where the role of individuals has been key to the network’s success. While capable staff and members are to be considered a key asset for all organisations, high levels of dependence on these people make the organisation inevitably vulnerable.
* **Representation and legitimacy will increasingly become an issue to address**. Ensuring representation and legitimacy are core to TUDCN’s long-term sustainability. So far TUDCN has succeeded in dealing fairly well with this issue, notwithstanding the fact that a major part of the representation work, of positions adopted, … is in the hand of a few individuals. ‘Representation and legitimacy’ might however come increasingly under scrutiny by external parties (as they might feel increasingly ‘embarrassed’ by TUDCN’s effectiveness) and by members (that become more competent and, hence, will claim a bigger role).

#### **Lessons learned**

Several lessons can be learned from the TUDCN experience, including:

* The development of an effective network is a complicated process that needs time, resources and, above all, strategic competence and direction. Notwithstanding the successes booked by TUDCN after more than six years of good work, the network remains vulnerable, which is an illustration of the challenge and complexities involved in network development, rather than of the lack of strategic view of the network proponents.
* The TUDCN experience shows that is possible for a network to combine internal (e.g. capacity building of members, network strengthening) and external (e.g. influence on development policies) objectives, in such a way that synergic effects are produced. This however requires an exercise of permanent balancing between both types of objectives.
* The quality and consistency of the contributions of network representatives is *the* key factor for success and recognition of a network, rather than the fact that these individuals represent powerful mass organisations that out of their power might claim a certain level of influence.

#### **Recommendations**

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, the following recommendations have been formulated:

1. TUDCN should **continue and even strategically expand and (in some cases) redirect existing efforts** with – at least – the same quality of involvement and mobilisation of resources, so as to maintain the momentum gained and to safeguard the achievements of the past.

More specifically this implies:

1. To further expand the network in such a way that **southern membership** increases, the voice of the south is more consistently heard and mechanisms are developed to bring southern concerns and priorities more systematically on the agenda of international, regional and national forums.
2. To address more systematically the issue of **representation and legitimacy**: (a) by increasing southern participation; (b) by further optimising internal consultation and representation mechanism and (c) by exploring possibilities to increase GUF participation.
3. To **sustain, via TUDCN, the TUs dynamic** **engagement and leadership role in the CSO forums and platforms**. This implies: (a) to continue to engage in issues that come up via international dynamics, thereby trying to become somewhat more proactive than in the past; (b) to engage more consistently in-country level work (via the members); and (c) to make a critical analysis and identification of the issues and forums TUDCN should concentrate on. It is thereby recommended that TUDCN would broaden its institutional targets (aside from the EU and the post-Busan process) and that the focus would be on advocacy issues that are close to the core of TUDCN as a *TU* network. This might imply a shift in focus from ‘development cooperation management’ as such to issues related to the broader agenda of ‘development’ (provided that good agreements are made with the ITUC and the GUFs in terms of complementarity, coordination and role division).
4. To give more attention to **internal capacity building**, next to the external advocacy work. This should go beyond the (participatory) development of tools, guidelines and approaches to include also support TU representatives in their efforts to mainstream and/or diffuse these tools and approaches in their organisations, partnerships and country-based activities.
5. To develop a comprehensive **sustainability strategy**, which addresses the organisational, institutional as well as financial dimensions of sustainability: (a) at organisational level: to further consolidate the network in technical terms, thereby giving particular attention to the present over-dependence on some individuals; (b) at institutional level: to clarify the network’s position towards and within the ITUC; (c) financially: to develop a strategy that allows TUDCN to gradually become less dependent on external funding.
6. To develop a comprehensive **campaigning approach and strategy** **to make better use of the potential of its TU members** in advocacy.
7. To open the debate on the **specific nature and interests of TUs within the broader CSO family**, so as to be prepared to react adequately if situations would occur where the interests and strategic choices of TUs and those of the broader CSO family would diverge.
8. To **further consolidate and develop the network internally**. This implies: (a) to optimise and diversify internal consultation and participation mechanisms, so as to increase the possibilities for members to effectively participate in the network (e.g. online discussion forums, an opinions page in the newsletter, working groups in the South, etc.); (b) to use General Meetings as a means to more actively engage members in some areas; (c) to ensure that the FSG becomes a true ‘internal’ countervailing power and effectively represents the different member categories; (d) to be a bit more formal in membership management, e.g. by periodically asking members to confirm their interest in being part of the network and by asking small membership fees; (e) to give priority to making the mailing list up-to-date; (f) to continue to use short briefing papers to diffuse important network messages; (g) to give more attention to the capitalisation of experiences within the network; and (h) to reflect on how to further proceed with the work on monitoring and evaluation, thereby taking into account the existing demands for the development of TU-specific, ready-to-use instruments and tools regarding M&E.
9. To **increase the resources of the network,** preferentially including an expansion of the network secretariat.

1. Figures of 2012, as mentioned on the ITUC website. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)