

Unofficial translation

**Latvian Development Cooperation Policy Strategy
2011-2015**

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Abbreviations

UN	United Nations Organisation
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
LAPAS	Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation
GNI	Gross National Income
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

Introduction

The Treaty of Lisbon¹ has considerably changed the architecture of Europe's external relations and development cooperation. With the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the role of the European Union (EU) on the global scene is increasing, which both affects and sculpts the global agenda. Development cooperation holds a central position in the external policy of the EU; consequently, development cooperation is also one of priority areas in Latvia's foreign policy, being closely related to the national security policy and external economic policy.

The EU, alongside with its Member States, is the world's biggest donor, providing more than a half of the aid volumes that are allocated to developing countries. Since adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) has doubled. The EU together with its Member States, Latvia including, honours its international development financing commitments and strives to reach the MDGs by 2015. At the same time Latvia is aware that poverty exists also within the boundaries of the EU.

The close interconnection of the global processes is clearly revealed by the challenges of today – the financial and food crisis, climate change, pandemics and other threats to national and individual security, often affecting most severely the population in the world's poorest countries. Development cooperation is an effective tool for reducing these threats, when in the globalization processes the principles of equality, solidarity and responsibility are followed and community sustainability is set as the main goal.

For the EU and Latvia to use efficiently in the international arena the added value and the new opportunities that open with the EEAS starting its work, it is essential to underline the importance of mutual interaction and complementary aspects of three elements – development, defense and diplomacy.

When shaping and implementing development cooperation policy Latvia follows the principle that targeted and effective efforts to promote decent life for all have to be in the centre of the development cooperation policy of the EU and its Member States, viewing all the development processes and areas in their integrity and through the prism of human rights. Within the context of reaching the MDGs it is essential for Latvia not to focus on quantitative aid indicators but on the aid effectiveness, policy coordination and sustainability of the results.

Taking into account that Latvia's presidency of the EU coincides with the year of assessing the UN MDG (2015) it is important for Latvia to participate actively and responsibly in international discussions and in planning and implementation of the EU development cooperation policy.

The political framework and guidelines for the implementation of Latvia's development cooperation policy for the period that also includes Latvia's presidency of the EU in the first six months of 2015, will be based on the Development Cooperation Strategy 2011-2015 (hereinafter – the Strategy).

¹ Treaty of Lisbon, amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007

During the elaboration of the Strategy particular attention was paid to the involvement of the society representatives. Consultations were held with the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Parliament (Saeima), non-governmental organizations, the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) among them, social partners, including the Employers' Confederation of Latvia and the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the private sector, the academic sector and other representatives of civil society.

In the period 19 March-19 April, 2010, the draft Strategy was submitted for public consultation. The submitted proposals were taken into account when drawing up the Strategy.

1. Compliance with other development planning documents

The Strategy has been drawn up pursuant to the **United Nations Millennium Declaration** signed by the UN member countries in 2000, by which they resolved to reach the MDGs by 2015, as well as the **Outcome Document adopted at the UN High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG Summit) (High Level Summit on the MDGs)** of 2010. At the international level, the UN Millennium Declaration can be regarded as a normative basis for the development cooperation policy of Latvia.

The Strategy has been aligned with the **Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007**, establishing that the EU policy concerning development cooperation is guided by the EU's principles and goals for external action and the development cooperation policies of the EU and of its Member States are mutually complementary and strengthening one another.

Likewise, the planning document is based on *The European Consensus on Development*, jointly adopted on 20 December 2005 by the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament and the European Commission, which is the first joint document of the Community and the Member States defining the actions by the Commission and 27 Member States in the field of development policy.

The Strategy is to be implemented in accordance with the development strategy goal – "The international dimension of Latvia's growth" – and the appropriate measures, namely, to build and actively pursue the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as facilitate the involvement of Latvia, a new donor, in development cooperation, set out in the medium term development planning document, **The National Development Plan of Latvia for 2007-2013**², ranking highest in the hierarchy of planning documents as laid down in the Law on Development Planning.

The Strategy has been devised in line with the **Government Action Plan** for the implementation of "The Declaration of the Intended Activities of the Cabinet of Ministers headed by Valdis Dombrovskis".³

Development cooperation policy as one of priority areas in Latvia's foreign policy is also reflected within the overall framework of foreign policy in the Foreign Minister's annual report to the Saeima on the achievements and future plans for the country's foreign policy.

² Approved by the Cabinet of Ministers on 4 July, 2006 (Minutes No 35, para. 20)

³ Approved by the Cabinet of Ministers Decree No 67 of 23 February 2011.

In accordance with the amendments made to the Saeima's Rules of Procedure in autumn 2010, the Saeima holds an annual open debate on foreign policy matters.

The Strategy complies with **Guidelines for an All-embracing Involvement of Latvia in the Renewal of Afghanistan 2007-2013**.⁴

2. Situation outline and problems identified

2.1. Development cooperation implemented by Latvia from 2004 to 2010

When Latvia became an EU Member State in 2004, it launched the implementation of a planned development cooperation policy. In 2008, Latvia's status in the International Development Association of the World Bank was changed and Latvia officially joined the group of donor countries.

During the period from 2004 to 2010, Latvia has carried out its development cooperation policy in the following priority partner countries: Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus, as well as in Afghanistan. Priority areas for cooperation during the time were: fostering market economy, promoting sustainable social development (good governance, civil society, and local governments), education and environment.

From 2005 to 2008, the funds⁵ under the Foreign Ministry budget line "Development cooperation projects and international assistance" were spent in accordance with the procedures currently in place, namely, by means of open grant competitions organised by the Foreign Ministry and also by decentralising funds, that is, by supporting development cooperation projects identified by Latvian embassies in partner countries and, from 2007 onwards, by approving and financing/co-financing development cooperation (civil) projects in Afghanistan.

In 2007 and 2008, grant project competitions had become specialised, with the aim of supporting specific groups of beneficiaries or a specific activity:

- a grant project competition for the public and non-governmental sector, local authorities, businesses (as from 2005);
- a grant project competition for non-governmental organisations (2008);
- a grant project competition for communication activities in order to raise awareness among the general public in Latvia on development cooperation and development education (in 2007 and 2008).

Each year, on the basis of policy planning documents currently in force⁶ and the government budget allocations for bilateral development cooperation and in association with the Advisory Council for Development Cooperation Policy Matters *The Annual Plan for Development Cooperation Policy* was drawn up and approved by the Government. The drafting took into consideration the current and long-term needs identified by partner countries and areas in need of reform; partner country institutions were consulted and expert opinion was provided by Latvian embassies in partner countries.

⁴ Approved by the Cabinet of Ministers Decree No712 of 15 November 2007.

⁵ LVL 100 000 in 2005, LVL 150 000 in 2006, LVL 450 000 in 2007, LVL 580 000 in 2008.

⁶ Development Cooperation Policy Programme of the Republic of Latvia 2006-2010, Development Cooperation Policy Strategy of the Republic of Latvia, approved in 2003, and the Law on International Assistance, adopted in 2008.

From 2009 to 2010 due to the financial crisis and respective budgetary cuts the intensity of development cooperation activities slowed down in comparison with the previous year. However, Latvia continued to implement development cooperation projects in its priority countries.

In recent years, a special focus was placed on information and raising awareness among the general public of development cooperation goals and the possibilities for Latvia to facilitate and contribute to the achievement of the goals.

2.2. International financial commitments

Latvia's development funding targets stem from commitments set within the framework of the UN and the EU. In line with the UN commitments, the EU and its Member States have committed to achieve the official development assistance funding target of 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI)⁷ by 2015. Under the EU commitments, Latvia was expected to reach the 0.17% ODA/GNI target by 2010 and strive towards the 0.33 % GNI target by 2015⁸.

"The Conception for Increasing State Budget Financing for Implementation of the Development Cooperation Policy of the Republic of Latvia 2006-2010" was effective until the year 2010. In accordance with this document, Latvia had pledged to contribute 0.1% of its GNI to development assistance funding by 2010. At present, Latvia fails to meet its international commitments. In 2010 Latvia's ODA amounted to 0.06% of its GNI.

The ODA volumes of Latvia are made up of funding disbursed through multilateral and bilateral channels:

- In the multilateral format, the ODA volumes of Latvia consist of the following international contributions:
 - Latvia's contributions to the EU budget;
 - Payments to the 10th European Development Fund (EDF);
 - Payments to UN agencies and other international institutions that can be regarded as ODA⁹;
 - Payments to international initiatives and trust funds.
- The ODA of Latvia comprises the following bilateral funding channels:
 - Funds under the Foreign Ministry budget line "Development cooperation projects and international aid";
 - Development assistance funding allocated by other government institutions;
 - *Ad hoc* aid and humanitarian assistance;
 - Private initiatives and promoting trade with developing countries;
 - Non-traditional forms of cooperation in development assistance.

Multilateral development cooperation constitutes on the average 80-90% of Latvia's ODA volumes.

⁷ According to the Road Map towards the Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration (2001) and Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development (2002).

⁸ According to the Council conclusions of External Relations Council 24 May, 2005 Member States undertake to achieve the 0.7% ODA/ GNI target by 2015 whilst those which have achieved that target commit themselves to remain above that target; Member States which joined the EU after 2002 will strive to increase by 2015 their ODA/GNI to 0.33%.

⁹ In accordance with the OECD/DAC classification.

2.3. Legal framework for the development cooperation policy of Latvia to date

The initial legal framework of Latvia's development cooperation policy was established in 2003 by the Cabinet of Ministers Decree "On the Basic Principles of Development Cooperation Policy of the Republic of Latvia"¹⁰. The document set out the goals and principles of Latvia's foreign policy in the field of development cooperation, and the Foreign Ministry was appointed as the institution in charge of implementing those basic principles. In line with the decree, an Advisory Council for Development Cooperation Policy Matters was also established in 2003¹¹ and its by-laws were approved¹², which stipulated that the members of the Advisory Council shall provide recommendations and proposals to the Foreign Ministry on planning and implementation of development cooperation policy.

In 2006, the Development Cooperation Programme of the Republic of Latvia 2006-2010 was approved for a five-year period¹³, setting as the main goal the promotion of the international role of Latvia as a new donor by enabling a more active foreign policy both at bilateral and multilateral level. Taking into account that the Programme ceased to be in force in 2011, a new medium term policy planning document needs to be adopted.

The new *Development Cooperation Strategy 2011-2015* incorporates the two documents – the Development Cooperation Strategy adopted in 2003 and the medium term (a five year period) Programme¹⁴.

The procedure of the planning and implementation of Latvia's development assistance is prescribed in the Law on International Assistance¹⁵ and the binding decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers.

2.4. Problems identified

1) Taking into account Latvia's international financial commitments, as well as the importance of bilateral development cooperation for implementing Latvia's foreign policy, a considerable increase of the resources earmarked for bilateral development cooperation is needed in the subsequent two years. It is essential to allocate in the bilateral development cooperation budget financial resources for co-financing those Latvian NGOs that have gained funding for project implementation from international donors.

2) The Latvian development cooperation policy planning documents are not in force (the Programme) and are contextually outdated (the Strategy). Consequently, a new Latvian medium term development cooperation policy planning document needs to be approved.

¹⁰ Cabinet of Ministers Decree No.107 of 19 February 2003 "On the Basic Principles of Development Co-operation Policy of the Republic of Latvia".

¹¹ Cabinet of Ministers Decree No.257 of 3 June "On the Advisory Council for Development Co-operation Policy Matters".

¹² Cabinet of Ministers Decree No.271 of 20 May 2003 "By-laws of the Advisory Council for Development Cooperation Policy Matters".

¹³ Cabinet of Ministers Decree No. 76 of February 2006 "On the Development Cooperation Programme of the Republic of Latvia for 2006-2010".

¹⁴ In accordance with the accompanying Cabinet of Ministers decrees (13.11.09.) to the Law on Development Planning Documents the policy planning documents include the Strategy, the Plan and the Concept. The Strategy is a medium term planning document.

¹⁵ The Law on International Assistance of 28 May 2008.

3. Goals and key principles of Latvia's development cooperation policy

Due to considerable cuts in Latvia's bilateral development cooperation budget since 2009 it was not possible to fully reach the policy goals, set in the Development Cooperation Programme, adopted in 2006. Thus, reaching the 2006 goals by adapting them to the current situation is retained for the period up to 2015.

Goals

- 1) Strengthening the role of Latvia as a bilateral donor, thus pursuing foreign interests of Latvia**
- 2) Awareness raising and promotion of public support to development cooperation goals and policy**
- 3) Latvia's increasing role in reaching international development goals and meeting international commitments**

Key principles

Implementation of Latvia's development cooperation policy in compliance with the key principles, adopted globally and by the EU

- 1) Latvia is among those 189 countries that in 2000 signed the United Nations Millennium Declaration, by which they resolved to reach the MDGs by 2015, setting as the general goal poverty reduction by half up to 2015. The UN Millennium Declaration (2000) sets the following 8 goals:
 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
 2. Achieve universal primary education and ensure the possibility of acquiring general secondary or vocational secondary education;
 3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
 4. Reduce child mortality;
 5. Improve maternal health;
 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, as well as other avoidable causes of mortality;
 7. Ensure environmental sustainability;
 8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Latvia focuses on the aspects of **human rights and human security** while implementing the MDGs.

- 2) Latvia develops and implements its cooperation policy pursuant to the international commitments on aid effectiveness (Paris Declaration (2005); EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy (2007); Accra Agenda for Action (2008)).
- 3) Latvia's development cooperation policy is drawn up and implemented in compliance with the international consensuses on Financing for Development (Monterrey (2002) and Doha (2008) outcome documents).
- 4) Latvia integrates in its development cooperation the commitments included in the conclusions of the EU Foreign Affairs Council, namely, the principles of development cooperation, Policy Coherence for Development, aid effectiveness, division of labour, aid for trade and support for strengthening democracy.

- 5) Latvia follows the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (hereinafter OECD) guidelines on development cooperation.
- 6) The development cooperation policy, implemented by Latvia, is characterized by inclusive approach to the development processes in the partner countries, regarding the individual needs and national development planning strategies.
- 7) In the development and implementation of the development cooperation policy Latvia follows the principle that partner countries themselves bare the main responsibility for their development processes.
- 8) Latvia follows the principle about integrating into the development cooperation policy and foreign policy in general all the most important horizontal issues of cooperation policy (democracy, human rights, good governance, gender equality, environmental sustainability, the rights of children and indigenous population, combating of HIV/AIDS and other contagious diseases).

4. Directions in implementing Latvia's development cooperation policy

To reach the goals, set in the Strategy, Latvia implements the development cooperation policy in the following directions:

4.1. Bilateral development cooperation policy

Latvia's development cooperation policy is implemented in cooperation with the partner countries and based on the national development plans of the partner countries and following the principle that the partner countries themselves bear the primary responsibility for their development.

Implementation of bilateral cooperation opens up possibilities for the Latvian NGOs, social partners, the private sector, as well as public and local government experts to be involved in the project implementation. Thus, the experience and capacity of the Latvian experts increase, enabling them to apply more successfully for project financing from other international donors.

Bilateral cooperation development is also an essential tool for promoting the international presence of the state.

Using of the development cooperation tools facilitates creation of new contacts and cooperation opportunities for the private sector in the markets of the developing countries and those of transition economy.

It is essential to take into account that in recent years the NGOs, the private sector, local governments and other representatives of the community have critically increased their interest in the possibilities of implementing the development cooperation projects.

Priority countries

The Development Cooperation Strategy, adopted in 2003, established the priority development cooperation regions to be the CIS and the Balkan states.

Latvia's Development Cooperation Strategy up to the year 2015 advances as the priority regions the Eastern Partnership states within the EU Neighbourhood Policy, the countries

of Central Asia, as well as the countries in which Latvia's military missions or the state dispatched civil experts are located.

Complying with the international principles of aid effectiveness Latvia will continue focusing on providing aid to a limited number of countries, preferring those with which a successful cooperation and /or good project partnership has already been developed and where there is a clear demand for Latvian expertise.

Cooperation areas

When providing assistance to the developing countries, Latvia takes into consideration the topical global challenges and the main areas identified in *The European Consensus on Development* for the EU and its Member States, concentrating the aid activities in areas where they have comparative advantages:

- Democracy, human rights, good governance, the rule of law, support to economic and institutional reforms, promoting involvement of the non-governmental sector and other representatives of the community and strengthening of local governments;
- Human development, including a wide access to education and training, gender equality, health care, including sexual and reproductive health, promotion of social dialogue;
- Social cohesion and employment;
- Trade and regional integration;
- Environmental sustainability, climate change, sustainable management of natural resources and biological diversity;
- Migration;
- Infrastructure, communications and transport;
- Wide access to energy resources, sustainable development of energy resources, ensuring drinking water;
- Sustainable development of agriculture and food security, regional development, territorial planning;
- State fragility and security, including prevention of conflicts, overcoming crisis and strengthening of administrative capacity.

Latvia focuses on providing its assistance as a donor state in the areas where Latvia's comparative advantages and the expertise in aiding the development programmes of the partner countries can be most effective, thus resulting in the greatest possible contribution. Latvia will offer its transition experience, so as to bilaterally and through the EU initiatives assist in implementing political and economic reforms in the regions, where it is required.

In accordance with the aid effectiveness principles concerning maximally efficient and targeted use of the financial resources allocated for development cooperation, Latvia can implement delegated cooperation with the European Commission or other donors. Delegated cooperation opens for Latvia possibilities of implementing, with a maximum effectiveness, development cooperation in remote regions of the world and in areas non-traditional for Latvia in development cooperation.

4.2. Trilateral development cooperation policy

Programmes or projects of trilateral development cooperation in the partner countries are implemented in cooperation with other bilateral donors or international organization, Latvia contributing with its expertise and/ or partial financing. Latvia is also ready to participate in joint programming with other donors.

Latvia will use to the utmost the advantages and opportunities within the framework of trilateral cooperation:

- Flexible and creative approach to development cooperation;
- Expansion of the implemented development cooperation both geographically and in terms of thematic scope;
- Wide possibilities to use limited financing resources with maximum efficiency.

4.3. Multilateral development cooperation policy

Considering the fact that Latvia as a small donor cannot participate in bilateral assistance in all regions of the world, Latvia contributes to the promotion of global development by participating in financing the programmes or projects of international organizations, as well as making payments to international organizations earmarked for development cooperation programmes or projects.

Making compulsory payments stems from Latvia's participation in the respective international organization.

The following principles lie at the basis of selecting priorities for voluntary payments:

- Conformity of the international organization with the development cooperation policy goals of Latvia;
- Functions of the international organization and efficiency in giving assistance, allocation and use of resources, the achieved outcome.

In 2011 Latvia started making regular payments to the 10th European Development Fund (EDF). When Latvia acceded to the EU, it joined the Partnership Agreement between the EU and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) (the Cotonou Agreement). Consequently, Latvia must also comply with the financial obligations, embraced in the Cotonou Agreement, namely, making payments to the EDF, the Cotonou Agreement financial instrument. As of today the 10th EDF is in force, the total contribution of Latvia will make about EUR 15 877 400 (LVL 11.16 million). In 2011 Latvia's payment to the EDF is about LVL 1.5 million, and in 2012 it will constitute about LVL 1.8 million. Making payments to the EDF will considerably increase Latvia's financial contribution to assisting the developing countries, alongside with increasing the role of Latvia in the EU policy making related to the countries of the ACP region.

4.4. Humanitarian assistance

Latvia provides humanitarian assistance pursuing Good Humanitarian Donorship principles, defined in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid (2007.g.)¹⁶.

Latvia complies with the fundamental principle of humanitarian aid: to provide financial support in proportion to the needs and on the basis of appropriate needs assessment for the needs of men and women.

Latvia is advancing towards an operative approach in providing humanitarian assistance.

4.5. Strengthening the capacity of development cooperation providers of Latvia

In compliance with the readiness in the first six months of 2015 to undertake the responsibilities of the EU Presidency as well as considering that development cooperation is in the centre of the EU foreign policy Latvia focuses on strengthening the institutional capacity and skills of the personnel.

Taking into account Latvia's commitment by 2015 to gradually increase ODA financing, Latvia pays attention to the capacity strengthening for efficient, transparent and timely management of the available financial resources.

Latvia gives attention to strengthening the capacity of the non-governmental organizations and other project implementers, highlighting as the main aspects the availability of information about development cooperation, opportunities of project development and access to financing.

Latvia underlines the role of the presence of diplomatic representations and national experts in the partner countries for successful promotion, implementation and strengthening of the development cooperation policy.

4.6. Awareness raising, global education and education for sustainable development

Latvia underlines the role of global education and education for sustainable development in promotion of society openness and awareness about overall justice, solidarity and culture of inclusion.

When developing and implementing the development cooperation policy, Latvia focuses on the information and education of the society on the matters of sustainable development in its wider meaning, including human rights, global (environmental) sustainability, peace, conflict prevention, cultural interaction and gender equality.

¹⁶ The joint policy statement by the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Parliament "The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid" (2007) stipulating the EU actions in the field of humanitarian aid in accordance with the principles, jointly defined in 2003 by the donor states, the UN agencies, NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Latvia especially emphasizes the role of Latvian and international development cooperation platforms, non-governmental organizations, social partners and local governments in promoting global education and education for sustainable development, including such issues as human security, mother and child healthcare, sexual and reproductive health.

Latvia advances towards integrating education for sustainable development and aspects of development in the education of all age groups.

4.7. Assessment of the effectiveness of the development cooperation policy under implementation and the reporting system

Latvia underlines transparency, exchange of information and informing of the public as the basic aspects regarding the assessment of the effectiveness of the development cooperation policy. As regards the evaluation of results Latvia focuses mainly on the impact of the implemented policy on all-embracing and inclusive human development in the developing countries.

Latvia presents reports to the development cooperation partner countries in a form of a political dialogue by jointly assessing the implemented projects.

Latvia regularly submits reports to international institutions – the European Commission, OECD DAC a.o. – on development cooperation being implemented and volumes of financing allocated to it.

Reports to the public in Latvia:

- Report to the Cabinet of Ministers on the implementation of the development cooperation policy planning documents;
- Regular placing of information on the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the development cooperation projects implemented by Latvia;
- Regular participation of the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in informative seminars and discussions, organized by NGOs and other representatives of the society

5. Impact assessment on the state and local government budgets

In line with the international and EU development financing commitments Latvia had committed to strive to reach 0.17% ODA/GNI level by 2010 and 0.33% ODA/GNI level by 2015.

In 2010 Latvia's ODA amounted to 8.3 million LVL representing 0.06 % ODA/GNI.

In order to fulfil the international development financing commitments and reach the targets of the Strategy by implementing a consistent development cooperation policy it is of utmost importance to ensure a gradual increase of development financing annually.

6. Reporting and evaluation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs submits to the Cabinet of Ministers an informative interim assessment report on the Strategy implementation by December 1, 2013, and the final impact assessment by July 1, 2016.

7. Policy planning documents to be recognized null and void

Adoption of the "Development Cooperation Policy Strategy 2011-2015" shall make null and void Decree No 107 of the Cabinet of Ministers "On the Basic Principles of Development Cooperation Policy of the Republic of Latvia" of 19 February, 2003.

