



Inter-regional expert meeting on the measurement of South-South cooperation

4-6 June 2024

Venue: Doha, Qatar

South-South cooperation, with its rich modalities of exchange and mutual solidarity, has emerged as an important element of international cooperation for development. South-South cooperation has been proven instrumental for the progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in its social, environmental and economic dimensions, and is conducive to inclusive and sustainable economic growth. It also plays a crucial role in fostering employment and regional integration. However, at its halfway point, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda is severely off-track with compounding crises of conflicts, climate change, biodiversity loss, and setbacks in economic and human development. These challenges call for a strengthening of all efforts, including quantifying South-South cooperation flows.

Thanks to the joint efforts of the Global South, for the first time, there is now a global, voluntary Conceptual Framework designed to measure South-South Cooperation developed by the Global South for the Global South. The Framework will support countries reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator, utilizing accounting rules and methodologies developed by the Global South. It provides flexibility for each country to reflect nationally relevant elements of South-South cooperation and serves as a tool for reporting their data to the SDG indicator 17.3.1 on 'additional financial resources mobilized for developing countries from multiple sources', adopted in March 2022. As the co-custodian of the indicator, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will report on data related to South-South cooperation and foreign direct investment, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) other forms of financial support.

The United Nations Statistical Commission, at its 53rd session in March 2023, welcomed the development of the Framework and "requested that further work on this, including on global reporting and capacity-building, be enabled by the co-custodianship of UNCTAD and be led by countries from the global South, building on country-led mechanisms". The Commission invited countries involved in South-South cooperation to work closely with UNCTAD to that effect. In a global survey conducted by UNCTAD, 60 Southern countries, out of the 80 that have responded to date, request immediate support to start collecting these data to fulfil their reporting obligations to the SDG indicator.

In December 2023, the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution (78/167) welcomed "the development of an initial voluntary conceptual framework for the measurement of South-South cooperation, which marks a significant advancement in its measurement based on country-led mechanisms and underscores the vital role of South-South cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda".

To enable the pilot testing of the Framework, a [United Nations Development Account Project on Quantifying South-south Cooperation for the Sustainable Development Goals](#) started in 2023. The project is led by UNCTAD, in collaboration with implementing partners across the statistical departments of Regional Commissions, including the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA),



alongside other strategic partners such as the United Nations Office on South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). The primary objective is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to accurately measure and report South-South cooperation, enabling them to effectively achieve the goals set by the 2030 Agenda.

In July 2023, UNCTAD and UN Regional Commissions convened the first in-person expert meeting in Brazil with 16 member States, following several online awareness-raising events. Member States at the workshop stressed that the agreement on the Framework has historic importance.

UNCTAD and ESCWA, and the UN Regional Commissions, and other regional partners, are organizing two important events in the context of the project in Doha, Qatar, benefiting from the generous hospitality of the Qatari Government. Qatar previously hosted the Second South Summit of the Group of 77 and China in 2005 and the First Arab States' Regional South-South Development Expo in 2014.

The inter-regional expert meeting will discuss strengthening South-South cooperation, as a complement to other development support, and will explore ways to increase the visibility of South-South cooperation globally, leveraging recent global, regional and national developments. This meeting will act as a platform for high-level debates to identify strategies for integrating South-South cooperation and its measurement into future research, development, and policy agendas. It will also examine methods to amplify the voice of the global South in global development discussions, utilizing data from the South, and will assess how the new SDG indicator can assist in managing resources for sustainable development.

The high-level debate will be succeeded by the unveiling of the global United Nations Development Account project, which will include the inaugural training event designed to lay the groundwork for pilot studies across four regions. These studies aim to evaluate the measurement of the rich modalities of South-South cooperation using the Framework developed for this purpose. The technical part of the meeting will offer an opportunity for the global South to engage in discussions and reach consensus on methodological development and tools for data collection, compilation, and reporting. Additionally, it will facilitate a review of the draft Manual to help countries fill the Framework with data.

The target audience will include national, regional and international experts on South-South cooperation and its measurement from development cooperation agencies, statistical offices, and ministries. The event aims to foster dialogue and empower Southern countries to collect and report their own data from country-owned systems. This effort helps to target national policy action and bolster strategic management of development support in the global South. For the technical parts of the meeting, the involvement of experts with technical, statistical, or development cooperation expertise is highly recommended. For the high-level segment, senior officials from countries, regional and international organizations, project partners, and the academic community are invited to discuss and agree on strategies for integration of the Framework to strengthen South-South cooperation.

The [meeting](#) will be hybrid and held in English with simultaneous interpretation available for Arabic, French and Spanish during selected sessions. This ensures participation and understanding for a wider audience.