

South-South Cooperation Data Forum ¹

Concept Note

Bangkok, 26 to 27 November

Objectives for the meeting

The meeting seeks to advance a shared vision for South-South cooperation data as a tool for solidarity, evidence-based policy making and greater visibility of the contributions and reported outputs of South-South. It will bring together countries and institutions of the Global South to review the achievements of the pilot phase of the UN Development Account project measuring South-South cooperation, exchange experiences and shape the next generation of work.

The meeting will provide a platform for policymakers, statisticians and development cooperation practitioners to discuss why South-South cooperation data matters, what has been achieved, and where future efforts should be directed. Discussions will focus on how data can be used to strengthen national policies, improve coordination, and increase the visibility of South-South cooperation in global development processes.

Building on the achievements and lessons learned, the meeting will also discuss how to move from a project-based to a sustainable, country-led architecture for South-South cooperation data. The launch of the *Steering Committee on South-South Cooperation Data* and discussions on the *South-South Data Fund*, will contribute to establishing mechanisms to guide methodological development, strengthen national capacities and expand data collection across regions.

As countries prepare for discussions on sustainable development beyond 2030, strengthening evidence on South-South cooperation is increasingly important to ensure that its contributions are reflected in global development debates and future international cooperation frameworks. Held back-to-back with the Asia-Pacific Directors-General Forum for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the meeting will connect technical work on data and measurement with high-level policy discussions on the future of South-South cooperation.

¹ Interregional meeting, hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Nālandā University of India, and co-organized with United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Progress through interregional collaboration

Built on solidarity, mutual benefit and national ownership, South-South cooperation plays and increasingly important role in sustainable development. Yet its scale, contributions and reported outputs often remain overlooked due to limited and fragmented data.

To address this gap, countries of the Global South developed the United Nations Conceptual Framework for the Measurement of South-South Cooperation. The Framework enables countries to collect and report their own data in a harmonized manner, including through voluntary reporting under Sustainable Development Goal indicator 17.3.1.

Member States have repeatedly called for advancing this work. In 2025, the United Nations General Assembly reiterated its calls for strengthened support to developing countries in applying the Framework and requested regular reporting on progress in implementing its Manual.²

Since 2023, a United Nations [project](#) led by UNCTAD, in collaboration with the regional commissions and partners, has supported countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Arab region in collecting and reporting South-South cooperation data. In 2026, nine countries reported data for the first time using a common methodology. The project has also produced practical tools, including the [Manual for the framework to measure South-South cooperation](#), e-learning course, online reporting platform and a growing Community of Practice.

These achievements demonstrate how better data can improve the visibility of South-South cooperation, help countries communicate its contributions and reported outputs more effectively, and strengthen policymaking.

A new phase of country-led engagement

The meeting marks the transition from pilot implementation to sustained, country-led measurement of South-South cooperation, with a focus on expanding data collection across regions and strengthening the tools, capacities and partnerships needed for regular reporting.

A key milestone will be the inauguration of the *Steering Committee on South-South Cooperation Data*, providing a platform for countries of the Global South to guide methodological development, share experiences and shape future priorities in line with General Assembly mandates. Discussions during the meeting will also advance the establishment of a *South-South Data Fund*, a country-responsive mechanism to mobilize resources for strengthening national statistical and institutional capacities and expanding data systems according to country-defined needs and priorities.

Building on the momentum of the Brasília and Doha interregional meetings, these new mechanisms could help move South-South cooperation data from a project-based initiative to a sustainable, country-led global architecture.

² (A/RES/80/156)

Indicative programme

26 November, Morning — High-level Segment

Why South-South Cooperation Data matter and how to shape their future

This high-level segment will bring together senior policymakers, heads of statistical institutions and development cooperation leaders, to discuss the growing importance of South-South cooperation data for sustainable development, evidence-based policymaking and the post-2030 agenda. Discussions will explore how stronger data can enhance the visibility and recognition of South-South cooperation and support more effective development cooperation.

The segment will also mark a key milestone in the transition from pilot implementation to a sustainable, country-led architecture through the inauguration of the *Steering Committee on South-South Cooperation Data* and discussions on a *South-South Data Fund*. Participants will discuss priorities for methodological development, capacity-building, partnerships and the expansion of country participation.

26 November, Afternoon — Segment A

Insights and Partnerships for Advancing South-South Cooperation Data

This segment, co-organized by the Nālandā University (India), will bring together researchers, country representatives, development partners and donors to discuss what emerging South-South cooperation data reveal about development cooperation and how these data can inform policymaking, partnerships and resource mobilization. Discussions will highlight lessons learned, opportunities for collaboration and priorities for expanding country-led measurement efforts.

27 November, Morning — Segment B

Achievements and lessons learned from the interregional pilot project

This segment will take stock of progress achieved through the United Nations Development Account project on measuring South-South cooperation. Participants will review country experiences in applying the United Nations Framework for the Measurement of South-South Cooperation, including first reporting outputs, lessons learned and progress in establishing national reporting systems. The session will also showcase practical tools developed through the project and identify priorities for scaling up implementation across regions.

27 November, Afternoon — Segment C

From implementation to global architecture

This segment will focus on country experiences, technical advances and lessons learned in measuring South-South cooperation. Participants will discuss methodologies, tools, reporting systems and capacity-building approaches, as well as opportunities for expanding country participation and strengthening peer learning through the Community of Practice.

The segment will conclude with a forward-looking discussion on the future of South-South cooperation data, including governance, partnerships, financing and coordination mechanisms needed to support a sustainable, country-led global architecture.

Expected outcomes

The meeting is expected to:

- ❖ Review achievements and lessons learned from the implementation of the United Nations Framework for the Measurement of South-South Cooperation;
- ❖ Identify priorities for expanding country participation and strengthening national measurement and reporting systems;
- ❖ Inaugurate the Steering Committee on South-South Cooperation Data and advance the establishment of the South-South Data Fund;
- ❖ Strengthen collaboration among countries, development partners, academics and international organizations in support of South-South cooperation data.

Please register for the webinar at: <https://indico.un.org/event/1025706/>

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