

# NATIONAL STOCKTAKING EXERCISE ON TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOUTH-SOUTH, EAST-EAST AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN THE ARAB STATES, EUROPE AND THE CIS

*A BEDROCK FOR GREATER INSTITUTIONALIZATION,  
LEADERSHIP AND OWNERSHIP*

CONCEPT NOTE

JUNE 2021

## BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught the international community that development cooperation in all its forms remains critical to an effective response to shocks, resilience, recovery, and, ultimately, sustainable development, especially during the last Decade of Action to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this context, South-South, East-East and triangular cooperation (SS/EE/TrC) is acknowledged as an effective driver for change, as it offers a unique framework for the identification, exchange, and matching of cost-effective solutions for national and regional challenges. Yet, despite the significant rise in the scope and magnitude of South-South cooperation (SSC), experiences indicate that more harmonized and coordinated efforts in this form of cooperation would better assist and enable Member States to achieve greater development outcomes.

Thus, the logical first step is to identify countries' overall policy priorities and strategic preferences *vis-à-vis* the potential benefits that SS/EE/TrC can bring about, as well as the country's level of readiness to pursue such priorities and preferences. The [BAPA+40 outcome document](#) encourages developing countries to strengthen national policies in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC), while enhancing the capacity of national and subnational coordination mechanisms. Furthermore, the BAPA+40 outcome document has urged the UN Development System (UNDS) to enhance its assistance to developing countries in seeking potential cooperation partners in strategic areas, whilst assisting those countries in building the human and institutional capacity needed to formulate and implement national development policies, strategies and programmes for SSTC (para. 27 c, d). The [2020 UN System-wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development](#), which is increasingly being acknowledged as one of the instruments to further advance the fundamental tenets of UNDS reform, also commits the UN system to supporting Member States in establishing and strengthening national institutional arrangements for SSTC (para. 22).

Deliberations during the recent [20th Session of the UN High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation](#) in June 2021 also underlined the imperative for relevant policies, institutional arrangements, and capacities. Among others, it was also noted that having the support of the UN system, as a whole, will allow developing countries to broaden access to experiences and engage new partners in mobilizing the necessary resources to achieve sustainable equitable recovery.

Given some of these developments, the national stocktaking exercise supported by [UNOSSC Division for Arab States, Europe and the CIS](#) in the past is now being revitalized to equip interested national partners and UNDS entities and further leverage SSTC for greater impact, especially in building back better from COVID-19 and achieving the 2030 Agenda. Since its establishment in 2014, the Division had supported Member States and the UNDS entities to carry out demand-driven stocktaking exercises, aimed at unleashing the potential for SSTC in attaining national (and, as applicable, regional) development priorities. Between 2014-2018 and through stakeholder consultations, national stocktaking exercises were carried out in **Azerbaijan, Djibouti, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Tunisia**. Requests were initiated either by the governments or the UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs). The resulting reports identified practical policy, programmatic and partnership opportunities for the promotion of SS/EE/TrC, as well as improving awareness on SSTC as an effective tool for development.

## OBJECTIVES

The national stocktaking exercise will:

1. **Take stock** of the cooperation stage in the country, including regional level, while documenting successful policies and practical solutions across various areas and sectors that can be easily adopted and replicated in other similar contexts;
2. **Identify** main challenges and opportunities in establishing/strengthening/consolidating SS/EE/TrC; and
3. **Develop** a set of practical recommendations for national stakeholders and UN Country Teams.

## PROCESS

This can be initiated in three scenarios, depending on country contexts:

1. At the initial stage of integrating SS/EE/TrC into development processes;
2. During the establishment or strengthening of national SSC architecture; and
3. At the stage of consolidating significant results achieved through SS/EE/TrC policies and institutional frameworks and mechanisms.

As in the previous phase, this exercise can be carried out under the overall guidance and support of UNRCs in the interested countries, including in the context of [UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks \(UNSDCFs\)](#), COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plans (SERPs), joint programmes, etc. Alternatively, this can also be pursued by any UN entity as part of its country programme priorities.

Key activities include:

1. **Conducting** a survey aimed at identifying existing national development cooperation and relevant SS/EE/TrC frameworks and institutional arrangements, policy priorities (including regional), relevant initiatives of UN entities and other partners, successful practices, and challenges, etc. This step could be optional for countries that are at an advanced stage of SS/EE/TrC, but it is highly recommended to document the latest information to guide the other steps, as applicable;
2. **Convening** consultative meeting(s) with all key stakeholders to discuss national and regional priorities, the enabling environment, institutional arrangements, lessons learned, latest trends and opportunities that can be advanced through SS/EE/TrC strategic partnerships; and
3. **Producing** a report with practical recommendations covering short, medium, and long-term projections.

## CONTACT

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