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Author(s): NEISSAN BESHARATI, CARMEL RAWHANI and ORNELA GARELLI RIOS

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COMPILED BY NEISSAN BESHARATI, CARMEL RAWHANI & ORNELA GARELLI RIOS



SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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ABSTRACT

In September 2015 the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST) published its first working document based on the initial technical workshops held in South Africa in 2015 to develop a common conceptual and analytical framework for South–South cooperation (SSC). Following consultations with broader stakeholders throughout 2016, as well as tests of the framework through various field-based SSC case studies, Southern experts and researchers came together again a year later in Mexico City to revisit the monitoring and evaluation framework for SSC. This paper summarises the outcome of the NeST technical workshop held in Mexico in September 2016, where different country and regional experiences were drawn upon to fine-tune, simplify and update the NeST analytical framework. The framework now presents a new set of 20 indicators, organised in five dimensions, which researchers, evaluators and policymakers can use to assess the quality and effectiveness of SSC and its contribution to sustainable development.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

This document is a compilation of the work of numerous academics and experts from the Network of Southern Think Tanks. A list of contributing authors is available in Annexure 2.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEBRI	Centro Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
G2G	government-to-government
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
HLM	high-level meeting
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
NeST	Network of Southern Think Tanks
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSC	South–South cooperation
TOSSD	Total Official Support for Sustainable Development
UNDP	UN Development Programme

INTRODUCTION

In March 2015 a group of 25 prominent academics and development cooperation experts from the global South gathered in Midrand, South Africa to discuss a common analytical framework for South–South cooperation (SSC). This was the first technical workshop of the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST)¹ and marked the beginning of a 20-month process of international technical working group discussions, stakeholder consultations and political gatherings of Southern partners in Johannesburg (September and November 2015), Geneva (December 2015), Xiamen (January 2016), Delhi (March 2016), Addis Ababa (June 2016), Mexico City (September 2016) and Beijing (November 2016). The NeST technical discussions benefited from the contributions of representatives from Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The NeST discussions brought together a range of governmental, civil society, academic and multilateral stakeholders, to discuss key challenges, systematise knowledge, develop measurement systems and generate consensus around key themes within the SSC discourse and its contribution to the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

In September 2015 NeST published its first working document on how to measure the quantity, quality and impact of SSC, based on the discussions held in Midrand and Johannesburg in 2015. The document provided a basic conceptual framework for analysing SSC. While it reflected the broad-based consensus, it also captured divergence and tensions in some of the areas. Following the Midrand and Geneva meetings, a number of NeST technical working groups were set up to further unpack the following areas:

- the definition, quantification and accounting of SSC flows;
- the development of indicators to measure the quality and effectiveness of SSC;
- South–South trade, investment and public–private partnerships;
- the concessionality of South–South development finance and lending instruments; and
- common reporting systems/templates for SSC.

While discussions around defining, accounting and reporting SSC flows are still inconclusive and present a vast diversity of views and approaches, the area where most progress has been made has been around measuring the quality and effectiveness of South–South partnerships, relationships and processes. The NeST technical working group that met in September 2015 proposed, as part of the analytical framework, a set of indicators organised in six dimensions to assess SSC and its effectiveness.

In the subsequent months the NeST framework was translated into Mandarin and Spanish, to allow for broader dissemination among a wider range of Southern stakeholders. A number of consultations were held at national, regional and international level with political, civil society and other development stakeholders in Geneva, Xiamen, Manila, Delhi, Addis Ababa, Nairobi and New York, to seek further inputs and feedback on

1 SAIIA (South African Institute of International Affairs), NeST (Network of Southern Think Tanks), <http://www.saiia.org.za/nest>, accessed 18 February 2017.

the proposed approaches and methods for the assessment of SSC. The framework was also discussed at various side events at global development forums such as the third International Conference on Financing for Development (July 2015), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Summit (September 2015), the UN Development Cooperation Forum and the 14th UN Conference on Trade and Development (July 2016), the BRICS Forum (September 2016) and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation's (GPEDC) second High Level Meeting (HLM2, November 2016).

To test the framework and the set of indicators developed by NeST, a number of empirical field-based case studies were conducted by various Southern think tanks and researchers during the course of 2015 and 2016. These assessed the effectiveness of the development cooperation of South Africa, Brazil, India, Turkey and Mexico.



PARTICIPANTS AT THE NEST MEXICO CITY WORKSHOP, INSTITUTO MORA, SEPTEMBER 2016

In September 2016, a year after the initial table of indicators had been developed, Southern experts and researchers gathered once again in Mexico City to update the SSC evaluation framework with the inputs received from the various multi-stakeholder consultations, as well as with the evidence and experience emerging from the SSC case studies that piloted the initial set of NeST indicators.

In an effort to advance this ongoing work, this paper shares the outcomes of the NeST technical workshop held in Mexico City in September 2016. It presents the updated table of qualitative indicators agreed by the ‘developers’ and ‘testers’ of the NeST framework. While the Mexico meeting discussed certain definitional/conceptual aspects of SSC, as well as the impact of SSC and its links to the SDGs, the GPEDC and Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD), the main area of convergence remains the qualitative indicators used to measure the effectiveness of South–South partnerships for development.

ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF SOUTH–SOUTH COOPERATION

In September 2015 a groundbreaking consensus was reached when NeST was able to produce an organic document with a preliminary set of dimensions and indicators, accompanied by a monitoring framework that would guide the analysis of the effectiveness of SSC. This was an important step in developing a common methodological framework that would assist in generating more knowledge and empirical evidence on SSC, which could be systematised and compared across different country experiences.

All stakeholders involved in the process were in agreement that a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for SSC could not be based on the principles, standards or approaches developed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) donors, whose paradigms differ from those of Southern partners. A potential assessment framework for SSC thus needed to be rooted in the principles and experiences of cooperation and exchanges within the developing world.

In the Midrand and Johannesburg meetings, the NeST experts set themselves the task to extract, from the outcome documents of the key political conferences of the global South, the principles that developing country governments had agreed would guide SSC. These have been captured in Table 1.

TABLE 1 SSC PRINCIPLES EMERGING FROM VARIOUS SSC CONFERENCES	
BANDUNG (1955)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for human rights • Respect for sovereignty • Equality • Non-interference • Mutual interest and collaboration • International Justice
BUENOS AIRES (1978)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reliance • Exchange and sharing • Capacity development • Knowledge transfer • Respect for national sovereignty • Economic independence • Equality • Non-interference

<p>NAIROBI (2009)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilateralism • Environmental sustainability • Mutual benefit, win-win, horizontality • Capacity development • Mutual learning, knowledge exchange, technology transfer • Transparency and mutual accountability • Respect for national sovereignty • National ownership and independence • Equality • Non-conditionality • Non-interference • Inclusivity and participation • Results, impact & quality
<p>BOGOTA (2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity development • Human rights and equity • Environmental sustainability • Solidarity and collaboration • Mutual benefit, win-win • Knowledge transfer, exchange, learning • Specificity of SSC and complementarity to NSC • Inclusivity and participation • Flexibility, adaptation, context-specific • Partnership, equity, trust, confidence, respect • Ownership and demand-driven • Transparency and accountability
<p>DELHI (2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand-driven • Non-conditionality • National ownership and independence • Respect for national sovereignty • Self-reliance and self-help • Mutual benefit • Common but differentiated responsibilities • Voluntary partnerships • Solidarity • Complementarity to NSC • Diversity and heterogeneity • Capacity development

The NeST technical working group tried to operationalise some of these Southern principles into performance indicators. Each indicator would be accompanied by guiding questions and suggestions for data collection methods and potential sources of information. The framework would rely on data collected and triangulated from interviews with a diversity of stakeholders from both ‘provider’ and ‘recipient’ countries, through documentary analysis. It would also use experiential observations from field-based research. The table of indicators – and the accompanying monitoring framework – was expected to be a flexible and adaptable tool that different countries and research teams could use as a reference for their own specific needs and national context.

The framework was designed for the evaluation of SSC initiatives at both the project and the country (aggregate of all SSC projects) level. It was more effectively used in the assessment of bilateral cooperation between two partner countries, typically a larger Southern provider and a smaller Southern recipient, but in some cases it was also used to assess regional and international SSC initiatives.

A year after the first draft of the NeST framework had been published, a number of SSC case studies were conducted in different geographic, operational and sectorial contexts. All attempted to utilise the NeST indicators to assess the effectiveness of the SSC initiative being assessed. Some of the pilot studies conducted in 2016 utilising the NeST framework included:

- Besharati N & C Rawhani, ‘South Africa and the DRC: Evaluating a South–South Partnership for Peace, Governance and Development’, SAIIA Occasional Paper, 235, 2016;
- Sucuoglu G & J Stearns, ‘Turkey in Somalia: Shifting Paradigms of Aid’, SAIIA Research Report, 24, November 2016;
- Pérez, JA *et al.*, *Sistema Mesoamericano de Salud Pública del Proyecto de Integración y Desarrollo de Mesoamérica. Primera Fase de Operación 2010–2015* (available only in Spanish), Oxfam Mexico, 2016;
- Besharati N, Garelli O & A Huitrón, *La cooperación México-El Salvador, entre su institucionalidad y sus desafíos operativos* (available only in Spanish), Oxfam Mexico, 2016; and
- Vazquez KC & A Lucey, ‘Advancing South–South Cooperation in Education and Skills Development: Lessons from the Field’, CEBRI (Centro Brasileiro de Relações Internacionais), ISS (Institute for Security Studies) & UNDP (UN Development Programme) Research Report, 2016.

The researchers involved in the case studies above, and the initial group of NeST experts involved in the Johannesburg technical working group, re-grouped in Mexico City to revisit the indicator framework by integrating the experiences gathered from the field-based case studies, as well as the inputs received from the various national, regional and international consultations held in 2015 and 2016.

A general point repeatedly made by various participants was the need to simplify and streamline the initial framework into a clearer and more concise table of indicators that

was more easily accessible to the different national stakeholders – academia, civil society, provider and recipient governments, and regional organisations.

A more specific recommendation made in the Turkey in Somalia case study is to include the broader dynamics at play for a more complete analysis of SSC. The case study highlighted that, ‘[j]ust as with traditional donors, domestic politics and geopolitical interests play a role in shaping aid policies and their outcomes. Emerging donors are different not just because of their cultural practices and their past but also because of their particular interests.’² Some examples include: the tradition of providing assistance to communities with which they share historical and cultural links; the need to expand their visibility and power as regional and sometimes global actors; the quest to open markets for their growing economies; or, their support for ways of working beyond the traditional rules and dynamics of donor and recipient countries. The inclusion of additional political dynamics was therefore recommended in helping to further define SSC relations.

The Mexico City discussions in September 2016 thus resulted in a new set of 20 indicators, organised in five dimensions (from the initial six), which would guide M&E processes around the quality of South–South partnerships for development (see Table 2).

TABLE 2 INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE QUALITY OF SSC

DIMENSIONS	INCLUSIVE NATIONAL OWNERSHIP	HORIZONTALITY	SELF-RELIANCE & SUSTAINABILITY	ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY	DEVELOPMENT EFFICIENCY
INDICATORS	Multi-stakeholder partnerships	Mutual benefit	Capacity building	Data management & reporting	Flexibility & adaptation
	People-centred inclusivity	Shared decisions & resources	Knowledge & technology transfer	M&E systems	Time & cost-efficiency
	Demand-driven	Trust & solidarity	Use country systems & human resources	Transparency & access to information	Internal & external coordination
	Non-conditionality	Global political coalitions	Domestic revenue generation	Mutual accountability & joint reviews	Policy coherence for development

2 Sucuoglu G & J Stearns, Turkey in Somalia: Shifting Paradigms of Aid, SAIIA Research Report, 24, November 2016, p. 42.

The following sections will provide a brief overview of each of the five dimensions that make up the NeST framework, suggesting measures that can be used for each of the indicators within each dimension.

NEST INDICATORS FOR EFFECTIVE SOUTH–SOUTH COOPERATION

INCLUSIVE NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

National ownership has always been a cardinal principle of SSC, but at the Mexico workshop NeST members agreed that this concept needed to be combined with that of inclusivity and participation. Thus the concept evolved to inclusive national ownership. SSC has always been dominated by government-to-government (G2G) relations, but at the Nairobi High-Level Meeting on SSC (2009) the importance of inclusive participation in SSC was stressed (ie, beyond G2G to include civil society and people-to-people), hence this element was included in the NeST framework. This understanding was also in line with global trends and shifts, particularly the people-centred, inclusive vision of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, which specifically emphasises the importance of SSC.³ At the core of the notion of inclusive national ownership is the expectation that SSC needs to be demand-driven, involving projects that are based on requests from the recipient country and in which the recipient is not only a stakeholder but also in the driving seat of the development initiatives. Furthermore, it integrates the notion that no one should be left behind in development and peacebuilding processes, and that the entire population should benefit from peace and development dividends, beyond geographical, urban–rural and other divides. An organic harmony exists between demand-driven partnerships and multi-stakeholder participation, involving the elevation of traditionally marginalised actors to active participants of SSC. Empowerment is an essential guiding principle in this context, closely linked to non-conditionality, respect for sovereignty and non-interference – other important pillars of SSC.

3 See UN, ‘Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’, UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>, accessed 20 February 2017.

DIMENSION INCLUSIVE NATIONAL OWNERSHIP	
INDICATOR	SUGGESTED MEASURES
Multi-stakeholder participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of policy frameworks, legal mechanisms, institutional arrangements, and platforms for inclusive and accountable dialogue and joint action in SSC between different state and non-state actors (in both SSC partner countries) • Number and type of actors/organisations taking part in consultations and activities of SSC (taking gender equality into consideration) • Evidence that non-state actors provide inputs and influence programming, policy formulation, design, implementation, and M&E processes of SSC • Frequency and quality of participation (if the consultations are actually occurring and the engagements are meaningful and fruitful)
People-centred inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSC activities support transformational investment to improve the socio-economic conditions of the poorest and most disenfranchised populations, aiming to achieve geographical inclusivity, beyond capital cities and urban areas • SSC partners follow the labour, land, safety, environmental and social standards of both partner countries (whichever is higher) • Partner countries have strong national regulatory frameworks to safeguard labour rights, safety standards, land issues, and social and environmental protection • Amount of resources allocated towards poverty alleviation and social inclusion, taking into consideration gender equality. Percentage of activities and budget focusing on marginalised and vulnerable groups • Inclusion of women, youth, indigenous, marginalised and vulnerable population groups in the planning and implementation of the SSC initiative, demonstrated in the outcomes/results of the project
Demand-driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of SSC initiatives/projects where there is evidence of a request by the recipient partner • Formulation of projects/programmes based on beneficiary country request • Level and nature of participation of recipient country in project/programme development • SSC initiative is linked to recipient country's development strategy. Number of SSC project initiatives that are aligned to national priorities of the recipient country • Extent of use of recipient country results framework by SCC provider
Non-conditionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation of projects/programmes is based on the mutually agreed bilateral cooperation framework • Number of initiatives that include any form of policy conditionality (tacit or implicit)

HORIZONTALITY

Horizontality refers to shared responsibility, management and implementation in all phases of the programme cycle. The basis of horizontality is a strong spirit of solidarity, trust and open communication channels. Mutual benefits for both partners at all levels (ie, beyond the state apparatus) should be planned and achieved as part of the SSC initiative. Although partners strive for horizontality, fairness and mutuality this may not translate into perfect equality in the relationship, owing to the existing differences and power asymmetries between Southern countries themselves. If one attempts to borrow the definition of 'solidarity' and contextualise it within the ambit of SSC, it could be described as the 'unity' and 'brotherhood' of countries based on a common interest, objectives and principles. Solidarity in SSC is both a means and an end, achieved primarily at bilateral level. It may also manifest at the multilateral level with common positions on global governance issues. Ultimately, realising horizontality is key to the realisation of all of the other SSC dimensions. Therefore, establishing trust and reciprocity at the outset of any SSC engagement is essential.

HORIZONTALITY	
INDICATOR	SUGGESTED MEASURES
Mutual benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSC agreement document has stated benefits for each partner country. Benefits for both partners are transparently identified and articulated • Stated benefits in SSC agreements between countries have been achieved/attained (levels: political; socio-economic; strategic) • Evidence of mutual learning experiences as shared by SSC partners
Shared decisions & resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of technical discussions, scoping missions or joint evaluations • Existence of mechanisms for regular joint decision-making • Ratio of local human resources in management/technical/unskilled activities by the different partners • The ratio of the executed/budgeted costs borne by each partner
Solidarity & trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of common interests, objectives, principles and approaches between SSC partners, whether in domestic or foreign policy • Length and quality of the relationship between SSC partners • Frequency and quality of communication and interactions between partners • Shifting from short-term aid delivery and assistance to a long-term vision of development cooperation and partnership
Global political coalitions*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of joint positions taken at multilateral policy forums • Number of formal international coalitions created and active (ie, BRICS, Africa–South America Summit, Union of South American Nations, etc.) • Joint actions, especially within the UN, regional and other bodies where both SSC partners are members

* This indicator is not always applicable in all SSC initiatives, which typically occur at a national level on a bilateral basis.

SELF-RELIANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

This dimension refers to the principle that SSC should promote reduced external dependency through a steady increase in local capacity. There must be an empowerment strategy that encourages the recipient country to take control of the project in the longer term. As such, capacity building forms an integral part of SSC and is evidenced both by the efforts to build capacity and by the noticeable changes produced from such efforts. Part of this consists of knowledge and technology transfers in terms of tools and systems that are adopted by partner countries as a result of the SSC activities, as well as the strengthening of national capacities (both people and institutions).

Untying aid and using local systems and resources are central to the capacity development of the recipient country; however, this is also a controversial element of SSC. Tied aid can support 'mutual benefit' objectives (discussed above) but can also have a negative impact on the sustainability and self-reliance of the recipient partner. At the same time, utilising local systems can be challenging for partner countries where these are weak or non-existent.

From the Mexico discussions (2016) and consultations with African partners⁴ it became clear that this dimension should highlight the importance of building recipient countries' capacity to raise domestically diverse sources of financing to support long-term national development processes.

4 AU, NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) & Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness, 'African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness', 2011, <http://africa-platform.org/sites/default/files/resources/african-consensus-english.pdf>, accessed 20 February 2017.

SELF-RELIANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY	
INDICATOR	SUGGESTED MEASURES
Capacity building (people, institutions, systems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of capacity-building initiatives within a given SSC agreement • Number of people trained/or part of knowledge exchanges within SSC capacity-building initiatives • Capacity-building initiatives aim to build leadership capacities and core skills that cater for the needs of society in the longer run, beyond capacities needed for shorter-term project implementation • Evidence of application of knowledge acquired through SSC • Changes in behaviour, and institutional and policy practices, as a result of knowledge gained through SSC
Use country systems & human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which SSC is not tied to any predetermined modalities, conditions, materials, institutions or human resources from a provider country • Percentage of tied aid compared to total aid • Use of local financial management and procurement systems (local or national) • Percentage of local human resources and local material resources that are being used in the SSC initiative
Knowledge & technology transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of tools, systems and technology adopted from exchanges • Improved partners' capacity to absorb and adapt technology and skills to meet their specific developmental needs • Technological capacities in developing countries created or strengthened
Domestic revenue generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of partner countries growing out of dependency and taking over the developmental initiatives through a diversification of the means of national resource mobilisation • Evidence of the provider country facilitating the above

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

SSC partners should make information about their development cooperation activities publicly available (via both countries' appropriate government websites) so that interested stakeholders (governments, civil society, private sector, academia, parliaments of Southern countries) can act on the basis of available information. This dimension assumes that SSC partners possess a sound information management system and a strong M&E system for the regular review of SSC activities, which will support accountability (based on goals and standards agreed upon by the partner countries at the outset of their engagement). Partners should also publicise necessary information on SSC in such a manner that it is not only available but also useful and easily accessible by all stakeholders. Here accountability is also informed by multi-stakeholderism, such that mutual accountability expands to become multiple accountability.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY	
INDICATOR	SUGGESTED MEASURES
Data management & reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both SSC partners possess the institutional frameworks, capacity and political will to collect, analyse, simplify and publish data on a regular basis • Detail, frequency and extent of published SSC information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Memorandums of Understanding, contractual agreements, planning documents; » sectoral and geographic focus of SSC initiatives; » type, modality and instruments of development cooperation; » implementation status and timeframes; » results and performance of SSC activities/evaluation reports; » disaggregated financial spending (budgeted and disbursed); » procurement information: tenders, contractors; and » other detailed project information
Monitoring & evaluation for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of effective and quality M&E system at national/ institutional/project level • M&E is performed at all stages of the SSC project cycle (baseline, monitoring implementation, ex-post impact evaluations) • Evidence of capacity for M&E activities (ie, expertise, budget, time) • Evidence that partners are using the results of M&E processes to inform policies and programmes, and promote improvement and learning – knowledge is generated from M&E
Transparency & access to (published) information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of hubs/sources/platforms/mechanisms for public access to SSC information • SSC information is published on a timely and regular basis* • Information that is published is comprehensive, as well as backward and forward looking • Evidence of scrutiny of SSC information by parliament, civil society organisations, academia and media
Mutual accountability & joint reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of review mechanisms that ensure reciprocal accountability • Partner countries undertake regular reviews at both the technical and political level to assess progress and challenges in implementing agreed commitments • Evidence that results from joint reviews are followed up, converted into action and integrated into future SSC activities

* Based on the International Aid Transparency Initiative's (IATI) scoring system. See IATI, 'Global Partnership Transparency Indicator Proposal', <http://dashboard.iatistandard.org/transparency-indicator.html>, accessed 17 February 2017.

DEVELOPMENT EFFICIENCY

Here 'efficiency' also refers to 'effectiveness' (a term deliberately not used, as it evokes OECD-DAC processes). Nonetheless, the end goal remains maximising the development impact of SSC endeavours, particularly for the poorest countries and people. Southern countries often undertake SSC through a variety of different ministries and agencies, but these multiple players are generally not well coordinated or coherent in their activities with the partner country (ie, Brazil or South Africa). Effective SSC requires coordination and complementarity among the provider's internal delivery agencies as well as with external development partners operating in the recipient country, but the modality of coordination should be set and led by the partner country itself. SSC should encourage flexibility and adaptation of activities to the local context, as these are key to achieving sustainable development results. Time and cost efficiency in the delivery of development projects are the assumed strengths of SSC. Lastly, the policy coherence for development of SSC partners, although not strictly linked to development cooperation, remains important, to ensure that the foreign and domestic policies of the SSC partners do not negatively affect other developing countries.

DEVELOPMENT EFFICIENCY	
INDICATOR	SUGGESTED MEASURES
Flexibility & adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of local, context-specific elements in SSC projects • Evidence of flexibility, adaptation and changes as the project unfolds • Evidence of successful scale-up/take-up by the national and local partners of the project activities
Coordination (internal & external)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of a structured country coordination mechanism in the recipient country with respect to the development partner's coordination • Participation of the SSC provider in the recipient country's development cooperation coordination mechanisms • National agencies of provider and recipient countries are coordinated and coherent with regard to their development cooperation with other partner countries • Existence of a centralised agency to coordinate development cooperation activities
Time & cost efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio between budgeted and actual costs • Ratio between planned and actual implementing time • Average duration of SSC projects/initiatives (start–completion dates); degree of bureaucratic delays • Time and cost of SSC activities compared to those of NSC activities in similar projects and contexts
Policy coherence for development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of policy incoherence – negative externalities • SSC partners' aid, trade, investment, peace and migration policies are consistent with other Southern countries' development efforts • SSC contributes to global public goods and the achievement of the SDGs, under the principle of common but differential responsibilities

Although the NeST indicator framework is driven by more qualitative approaches, which possess both strengths and weaknesses,⁵ there have been suggestions to complement the qualitative assessments of the SSC endeavours with more systematic quantitative assessments. The initial framework document of 2015 shied away from proposing ratings and ranking, so as to avoid the political sensitivities that Southern countries have towards similar OECD-DAC processes. However, all the SSC case studies mentioned above recommended the use of a balanced scoring system to rate not only each indicator but also the overall dimension characterising the quality of the SSC. Researchers and evaluators conducting different SSC case studies could systematically collect and analyse responses from different stakeholders on the performance of the SSC initiative and then provide an average score to characterise performance on each indicator or dimension. This could later assist in efforts to improve the South–South partnership and projects, as well as support research efforts and cross-country analysis. Although researchers/evaluators are free to use their own rating system, the numerical or colour coding scale in Table 3 could be used as an example and reference.

TABLE 2 EXAMPLE OF SCALE FOR RATING EACH INDICATOR AND DIMENSION IN THE NEST FRAMEWORK

No efforts were made in this area	SSC effort failed completely in achieving expected results and/or had negative effects	Despite efforts to meet expectations, SSC initiative performed poorly	SSC met the basic standards and performed averagely in this area	SSC initiative performed well and surpassed expectations	SSC performed superbly and produced exceptional results
0	1	2	3	4	5

The NeST technical workshop in Mexico City acknowledged that, while the framework has been refined since the earlier 2015 version and now presents a more streamlined set of indicators, additional work needs to be done to prepare a separate technical guide. The guide would flesh out the methodological details such as guiding questions, levels of analysis, data collection methods and sources of information for each of the indicators. A special task team of NeST M&E experts led by Prof. Milindo Chakrabarti (Research and Information System for Developing Countries) has volunteered to put together the technical guide to using the NeST framework. This will draw also on the lessons learned from the initial field-based case studies on SSC conducted in 2016.

5 De Mello e Souza A, 'Evaluation methodologies and accounting SSC', Presentation at the Conference on South–South Cooperation, New Delhi, 10–11 March 2016.

CONCLUSION

Evaluating the results and impact of SSC may be premature,⁶ as many SSC countries still do not have basic accounting and monitoring of SSC inputs, owing to the lack of a common conceptual definition on what to count as SSC. Yet progress has been made more recently in NeST by agreeing on a common system to assess the quality and effectiveness of SSC. Building on the discussions held in Johannesburg in September 2015, a year later Southern researchers had refined and updated the NeST analytical framework by proposing a new set of 20 qualitative indicators, organised around the dimensions of:

- inclusive national ownership;
- horizontality and mutuality;
- self-reliance and sustainability;
- transparency and accountability; and
- development efficiency.

The NeST M&E framework is the result of a 20-month process of technical discussions among dozens of SSC experts (see Annexure 2) and consultations with broader stakeholders, which built on past political commitments made by governments in the historical conferences of Bandung (1955), Buenos Aires (1978), Nairobi (2009), Bogota (2010) and Delhi (2013).

The NeST indicator framework was further sharpened and strengthened thanks to the inputs and experiences gathered from the pilot studies conducted in 2016 on the SSC of South Africa, Brazil, India, Turkey and Mexico. As it stands, the new framework is streamlined and has been condensed not only to make it more user friendly but also to better demonstrate the linkages between previously separated dimensions that were mistakenly viewed as mutually exclusive.

The extensive work done by NeST over the past two years was showcased to the international development community during the HLM2 of the GPEDC held in Nairobi at the end of November 2016. In Nairobi, NeST had the opportunity to put on the table an alternative monitoring framework, developed by Southern experts for the assessment of SSC, technically sound and politically more appropriate, to undertake in depth-analysis of SSC and its contribution to global development.⁷

The NeST framework is primarily an academic tool, but it is offered to the development community to be used as deemed appropriate in the policy arena. While it is not the only system to conduct M&E of SSC, the framework puts forward one of the first concrete tools to evaluate the quality of South–South processes, practices and relations by think tanks and development practitioners from the global South. Partners and development

6 NeST, 'Developing a Conceptual Framework for SSC', September 2015, p. 23.

7 See SAIIA, 'NeST Africa Engagements in HLM2 of the GPEDC', 29 November 2016, <http://www.saiia.org.za/events/nest-africa-engagements-in-hlm2-of-gpedc>, accessed 20 February 2017.

The NeST framework
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stakeholders can adapt the NeST framework to their specific context and purposes. Different actors (including Southern governments that provide assistance, recipients and institutions such as multilateral development banks) may use the framework to measure the degree of accountability, or they can integrate certain elements into national, regional and global accountability mechanisms. NeST members remain available to provide technical support for these endeavours.

Discussions around TOSSD and improving statistics of development finance flows are becoming ever more prominent. NeST will continue its technical work to unpack conceptual gaps around SSC and facilitate the building of a common definition on SSC that can assist Southern partners to consistently report on their contributions to development.

As the new SDG campaign unfolds, it is critical to show the added value that SSC brings to international development. The NeST framework can assist in the effort to produce more empirical evidence and systematised knowledge on how SSC contributes to sustainable development. The work of NeST becomes more significant as the global South gradually prepares itself for the 40-year follow-up of the landmark SSC document of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

ANNEXURE 1

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ANNEXURE 2

LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

The NeST analytical framework has benefitted from the contributions and inputs of the following experts and organisations:

- 1 Amanda Lucey, Institute for Security Studies, South Africa
- 2 André de Mello e Souza, Institute for Applied Economic Research, Brazil
- 3 Anne McLennan, Wits School of Governance, South Africa
- 4 Bianca Suyama, Articulação SUL, Brazil
- 5 Carolina Maldonado Pacheco, Oxfam Mexico, Mexico
- 6 Eleanor Maeresera, African Forum and Network on Debt and Development, Zimbabwe
- 7 Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa
- 8 Fanwell Kenala Bokosi, African Forum and Network on Debt and Development, Malawi
- 9 Fritz Nganje, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
- 10 Gerardo Bracho Carpizo, Centre for Global Cooperation Research, Germany
- 11 Gizem Sucuoglu, Center on International Cooperation – New York University, US
- 12 Huang Meibo, Xiamen University, China
- 13 Jorge A. Pérez Pineda, Instituto Mora, Mexico
- 14 Juan Pablo Prado Lallande, Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico
- 15 Karin Carvalho Adams, BRICS Policy Center, Brazil
- 16 Karin Costa Vazquez, OP Jindal Global University, India, and Brazilian Centre of International Relations, Brazil
- 17 Kevin May, Oxfam Hong Kong, China
- 18 Li Xiaoyun, China Agricultural University, China
- 19 Liliana Parra Santamaría, Fluyt Knowledge Brokers, Colombia
- 20 Marianne Buenaventura Goldman, Oxfam, South Africa
- 21 Mehmet Arda, Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, Turkey
- 22 Meilissa Pomeroy, Articulação SUL, Brazil

- 23 Michele Ruiters, Development Bank of Southern Africa, South Africa
- 24 Milindo Chakrabarti, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India
- 25 Neissan Alessandro Besharati, Wits School of Governance, South Africa
- 26 Neuma Grobbelaar, South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa
- 27 Nomagugu Masaku, Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results, Zimbabwe
- 28 Paulo Esteves, BRICS Policy Center, Brazil
- 29 Pranay Sinha, Birmingham University, UK
- 30 Qi Gubo, China Agricultural University, China
- 31 Renu Modi, Centre for African Studies, University of Mumbai, India
- 32 Richard Ssewakiryanga, Civil Society Partnership for Development Effectiveness, Uganda
- 33 Sachin Chaturvedi, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, India
- 34 Sal Muthayan, National School of Government, South Africa
- 35 Tjiurimo Hengari, South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa
- 36 Towfiqul Islam Khan, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh
- 37 Vitalice Meja, Reality of Aid Network, Kenya
- 38 Wang Yihuan, China Agricultural University, China
- 39 WPS Sidhu, Brookings India/Centre for International Cooperation (NYU), India
- 40 Xiaojing Mao, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, China
- 41 Yao Shuai, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, China
- 42 Zhang Chuanhong, China Agricultural University, China



Jan Smuts House, East Campus, University of the Witwatersrand
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)11 339-2021 • Fax +27 (0)11 339-2154
www.saiia.org.za • info@saiia.org.za