



International  
Labour  
Organization

Employment-intensive  
Investment Programme



International Training Centre



# ► Peer Learning Guide South-South Technical Cooperation (SSTC) for the Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP)

EIIP SSTC

Inter-regional forum  
for Asia and the Arab States

8-10 April 2025, Bangladesh



► **Peer Learning Guide  
South-South Technical  
Cooperation (SSTC) for the  
Employment Intensive Investment  
Programme (EIIP)**



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## ► Foreword

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The EIIP has evolved over 50 years, linking together a series of labour-intensive infrastructure programmes, to establish a comprehensive package of integrated interventions. The programme recognises that construction activities can boost local economic and social development and contribute to reducing urban and rural poverty. An emphasis on labour-based construction leads to the creation of decent jobs, improved assets and cash income. The EIIP recognises that the construction industry has huge potential to absorb employment with the sector employing about 7.7% of the global workforce.

The ILO places special emphasis on South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) as a means achieving its mandate and mission, implementing the Decent Work Agenda and achieving its objectives, and has aligned the SSTC and Decent Work Agenda frameworks by using SSTC as a strategy to promote fair, inclusive and sustainable labour practices worldwide. Within the SSTC framework the ILO can facilitate the dissemination and exchange of good practices and can coordinate and build partnerships with government and institutions. The SSTC principles and EIIP approaches dovetail neatly in that EIIP strategies include using local skills and expertise through participative projects that connect communities, employers and government to build sustainable infrastructure, which bolsters local economies and long-term employment.

An SSTC approach applied in tandem with EIIP activities can be instrumental in supporting employment generation and the local economic development of countries in the global south. This learning guide aims to introduce SSTC as a tool for socio-economic development and to achieve the Agenda 2030. It explains the main concepts of SSTC, its fundamental principles, processes to be followed to implement projects under the framework of such cooperation and the actors involved. A “do’s and don’ts” section clarifies the basic characteristics of SSTC and how the principles are applied in practice.

The guide also explains the fundamentals of the EIIP approach and how this converges with SSTC, providing case studies of selected Employment Infrastructure Investment SSTC projects and activities in the Arab States and Asian regions. The guide is aimed at a wide audience, including those who are not yet familiar with SSTC and those who want to learn more about the connection between SSTC and the EIIP. The ideas in this Learning Guide is to focus on how EIIP SSTC projects have been carried out in the past and how they illustrate the process of engaging ILO’s constituents and partners in the realization of the ILOs four strategic objectives.

This document has been prepared as guidance for participants in an EIIP South-South Technical Cooperation Forum, scheduled to take place in April 2025 in Bangladesh. The forum aims to foster peer-to-peer learning among stakeholders from countries in the global South who are employing employment-intensive approaches to address pressing issues such as climate change, natural disasters, conflicts, and economic downturns. The forum will target government officials, ILO staff, development practitioners, research and education institutions, and donor organizations that support employment-intensive work.

## ► Acknowledgments

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<sup>1</sup> This Peer Learning Guide was prepared by Jonathan James Price for the ILO-Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP), March 2025.

This paper has been developed firstly on the basis of a desk review of existing documents and web pages on South-South and Triangular Cooperation<sup>2</sup>, EIIP web pages<sup>3</sup> and the knowledge of the consultant. Existing documents that were reviewed and from which information was expressly extracted, include the “How-to-Guide on SSTC design for Decent Work” (revised edition<sup>4</sup>) and “South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Labour Migration a Peer-Learning Guide”.

The author is sincerely grateful to all who played a role in this endeavour.

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<sup>2</sup> ILO website on South-South and triangular cooperation: <https://www.ilo.org/south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-sstc>

<sup>3</sup> EIIP website: <https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/employment-intensive-investment#eiip>

<sup>4</sup> <https://southsouthpoint.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final-SSTC-H2G-.docx-.pdf>

## ► Contents

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|                                                                                    | <b>Page</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| ► <b>Foreword</b>                                                                  | <b>3</b>    |
| ► <b>Contents</b>                                                                  | <b>5</b>    |
| <b>1. SSTC: An introduction</b>                                                    | <b>7</b>    |
| 1.1. Definitions, modalities and principles                                        | 7           |
| 1.1.1. Modalities                                                                  | 7           |
| 1.1.2. Principles                                                                  | 7           |
| 1.2. Sub-modalities                                                                | 8           |
| 1.2.1. City to City Cooperation (C2C)                                              | 8           |
| 1.2.2. Cooperation between Small Island Developing States (SIDS-to-SIDS)           | 8           |
| 1.2.3. Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation (F2F)                                        | 9           |
| 1.2.4. Regional, Sub-regional, Interregional Cooperation                           | 9           |
| 1.2.5. Forms and Mechanisms                                                        | 10          |
| 1.3. Actors involved                                                               | 11          |
| 1.4. BAPA+40                                                                       | 12          |
| 1.5. South-South Technical Cooperation step by step                                | 12          |
| 1.6. SSTC design for results                                                       | 13          |
| 1.7. Dos and Don'ts of South-South Technical Cooperation                           | 14          |
| <b>2. SSTC, the ILO and EIIP</b>                                                   | <b>15</b>   |
| 2.1. SSTC and the Sustainable Development Goals                                    | 15          |
| 2.2. South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the ILO                             | 16          |
| 2.3. South-South and Triangular Cooperation and EIIP                               | 17          |
| 2.3.1. EIIP fundamentals                                                           | 17          |
| 2.3.2. EIIP and SSTC                                                               | 18          |
| 2.3.3. SSTC endeavours of the EIIP                                                 | 18          |
| 2.3.4. Importance of SSTC and EIIP convergence according to projects               | 19          |
| 2.4. Case Studies: SSTC and EIIP                                                   | 19          |
| ► <b>Additional resources</b>                                                      | <b>23</b>   |
| ► <b>Annex 1: BAPA + 40 Recommendations for the ILO (as part of the UN System)</b> | <b>24</b>   |

# 1. SSTC: An introduction

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## 1.1. Definitions, modalities and principles

Changes in global power dynamics have empowered new actors from the Global South to shape the development agenda, provide innovative responses to local, national and global and are become strategic partners for other developing countries. South-South Cooperation (SSC) refers to a collaboration between developing countries to strengthen ties and address common development challenges and areas of opportunity. The approach is guided by a series of principles, promoting inclusive development to equitably distribute resources, opportunities, and benefits. Fostering mutual support and learning strengthens capacities for sustainable and decent work for all.

### 1.1.1. Modalities

BAPA+40 (2019)<sup>5</sup> identifies two main modalities of south-south development cooperation. These are South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) which refers to implementation with a partner from the Global North or a multilateral organisation and South-South Cooperation (SSC), where two or more developing countries collaborate. South-South Cooperation complements North-South Cooperation. In this document SSTC refers to South-South Technical Cooperation, which focusses on mutual support between nations in the Global South.

SSTC initiatives can be carried out in the form of study visits, learning exchanges, knowledge-sharing platforms, fielding of experts, institutional collaboration, policy dialogue, international workshops etc. (see figure 1), aiming to share resources, expertise, technology, knowledge, skills, technical know-how, resources and experience to develop skills and capacities. The SSTC approach can be used by governments, regional organisations, civil society, academics, social partners and the private sector, for their individual and/or mutual benefit, with cooperation implemented at regional, sub-regional or inter-regional levels.

The principles of SSTC aid the countries concerned in attaining a higher level of commitment and self-assurance, with the approach promoting self-sufficiency, enhancing solidarity, fostering partnerships and building networks to exchange policies, innovative practices and technical expertise and labour and social issues. Automatic alignment with the priorities and needs of development partners ensures greater sustainability and motivates countries to develop, adapt and replicate their own solutions in their own context.

For the ILO SSTC is an important tool to promote decent work, reduce inequalities, and achieve sustainable development. The emphasis on partnerships between countries with shared experiences and similar, cultural, political or socio-economic contexts means that SSTC can facilitate the adoption of successful programmes and solutions, with proximity making it easier and more cost-effective to adapt these to local needs and priorities, advancing the ILO mission to promote social justice and improve working conditions globally.

### 1.1.2. Principles

The SSTC agenda is guided by a comprehensive set of principles, including respect for national sovereignty and ownership, equality, solidarity, non-conditionality, and mutual benefit. These principles are reflected in the outcome document of the second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation - BAPA+40 (2019)<sup>6</sup>. The table below (extracted from the updated ILO “How-to-Guide on SSTC design for Decent Work”<sup>7</sup>) is a summary of these principles and how they importance in the context of the ILO.

<sup>5</sup> The Conference, which marked the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, which took place from 20-22 March 2019, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

<sup>6</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sqrZWIn6ZU0a-4o-AtEcyKEOJ4gPqZHS/view?pli=1>

<sup>7</sup> <https://southsouthpoint.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final-SSTC-H2G-.docx-.pdf>

| Principles                                                                                   | ILO context and application                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>National ownership and leadership, demand-driven, independence and non-conditionality</b> | These principles refer to the need for demand-driven development cooperation, of a voluntary nature, respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs and country and/or regional ownership. In the context of ILO projects, it is important to keep the Global South partners in the driver's seat during the entire project cycle.          |
| <b>Equality and complementarity</b>                                                          | Equality and horizontality are essential in ILO SSTC initiatives where countries should work as equal partners, learning from each other. According to the ILO (GB 2018), SSTC should not be seen as official development assistance, but as a partnership among equals, complementing North-South cooperation and avoiding wasteful fragmentation and competition. |
| <b>Multi-stakeholder approach</b>                                                            | SSTC embraces a multi-stakeholder approach. The ILO has a comparative advantage in this regard, due to its tripartite nature, and social partners (employers and workers organisations) can play a key role in promoting SSTC. <sup>8</sup>                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Mutual accountability and transparency</b>                                                | BAPA+40 <sup>9</sup> , AAAA <sup>10</sup> and GPEDC <sup>11</sup> recognised the need to enhance the effectiveness of SSTC by continuing to increase mutual accountability and transparency, in accordance with national development plans and priorities. The ILO has embraced this concept, and it is increasingly relevant in framework of SSTC reporting.       |
| <b>Mutual benefit</b>                                                                        | SSTC is based on the principle that all parties to this form of cooperation learn from each other. Often SSTC projects replicate traditional and vertical models of cooperation, whereas there should be indicators that all parties take full benefit of the project results.                                                                                      |
| <b>Participative nature</b>                                                                  | Participation and consultation are essential to strengthen collaboration among ILO's tripartite Constituents. The EIIP aligns projects with local needs and involves local communities in design, implementation and monitoring of activities, fostering social cohesion and sustainability.                                                                        |
| <b>Solidarity</b>                                                                            | The principle of Solidarity, in the GB 2018 paper, <sup>12</sup> focuses on future South-South steps. It is a key principle, and it relates to key areas of work, such as Social and Solidarity Economy (economic development that prioritizes people and the planet over profit and growth) and Local Economic Development (LED).                                  |

## 1.2. Sub-modalities

SSTC includes the following sub-modalities: City-to-City Cooperation (C2C); Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation (F2F); Cooperation between Small Islands and Developing States (SIDS-to-SIDS) and Regional and Inter-Regional Cooperation.

### 1.2.1. City to City Cooperation (C2C)

C2C is recognised by the international community (and is defined in GB 2018) as a sub-modality of SSC that enables countries and cities from the Global South to benefit from experiences developed in similar contexts, and which are therefore better adapted to their situations. Cities and local authorities are essential actors in SSTC, since they are routinely in direct contact with the needs of the population and are logically the ones who implement public policies that directly impact people.

### 1.2.2. Cooperation between Small Island Developing States (SIDS-to-SIDS)

Small island developing States (SIDS) have been recognised as a distinct group of developing countries that are vulnerable to specific social, economic and environmental shocks – particularly in the light of climate change - and are often dependent on global partners for trade, tourism, and financing. As stated in ILO GB 2018, SSTC support

<sup>8</sup> Paragraph (e) of GB 2012 paper on SSTC (<https://www.ilo.org/resource/conference-paper/gb/313/south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-way-forward>)

<sup>9</sup> <https://unsouthsouth.org/bapa40/>

<sup>10</sup> Addis Ababa Action Agenda, 2015 [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2051AAAA\\_Outcome.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2051AAAA_Outcome.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation <https://www.effectivecooperation.org>

<sup>12</sup> ILO South-South and triangular cooperation and decent work: Recent developments and future steps [https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_617990.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_617990.pdf)

for cooperation between the LDCs (Least Developed Countries) and SIDS is a unique and stand-alone form of development cooperation.

### 1.2.3. Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation (F2F)

The F2F sub-modality refers to cooperation between two or more countries in fragile or post-conflict situations, with cooperation consisting of (i) sharing good practices and experiences to promote peaceful societies; (ii) fragile states placing common issues and objectives on international agendas and forums; (iii) mutual support through exchange programmes and resource mobilisation. The ILO has developed an F2F cooperation strategy and in March 2014, signed an MoU with the G7+<sup>13</sup>. The MoU supports the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States with emphasis on efforts to facilitate peer learning among G7+ states, peacebuilding, employment and livelihoods<sup>14</sup>.

#### ► Example: Earthquake damage assessment

In February 2023 EIIP in Lebanon used their experience and skills to support a new EIIP project in Syria, providing technical support in earthquake damage assessment and debris removal for the ILO in Aleppo.

This included training for the Order of Engineers in Syria in structural damage assessment techniques and equipment, whilst providing cross-border expertise from staff who knew the context and could speak the same language.

*Photo: EIIP activities in Aleppo (debris removal and cleaning) - C Nassar, May 2023*



### 1.2.4. Regional, Sub-regional, Interregional Cooperation

This is the most common type of cooperation between countries of the Global South and occurs within the framework of regional (e.g. the Arab League, Organization of Islamic Cooperation - OIC or Association of Southeast Asian Nations - ASEAN, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation - SAARC), sub-regional (e.g. Greater Mekong Subregion - GMS) and interregional groups or platforms (e.g. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation – APEC or the Economic Cooperation Organization - ECO). It is typically based on exchanges of good practices, joint projects (e.g. on issues concerning more than one country, in border areas, etc.), collection and harmonisation of labour statistics and others.

<sup>13</sup> The voluntary intergovernmental organisation that brings together countries facing active or recent conflicts and fragility

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/ilo-signs-agreement-g7-group-fragile-states>

**► Example: Arab States Regional workshop**

From 27-29 February 2024 EIIP held a regional workshop in Jordan, bringing together participants from Jordan, Iraq, Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Yemen and Lebanon.

Participants shared success stories, lessons learnt and discussed a road map for future EIIP strategies and how employment-intensive interventions have impacted on development in the region.

Site visits were made to the Jordanian EIIP project (*see photo*) with government counterparts to gain insights into the implementation of EIIP projects, whilst showcasing the tangible impacts.

Photo: [Screen grab from EIIP](#)



### 1.2.5. Forms and Mechanisms

The following diagram shows the key forms and mechanisms that are acknowledged in the BAPA +40 outcome document as essential for fostering effective SSTC, with a focus on reinforcing solidarity among developing countries, leveraging shared experiences, and fostering mutual support to achieve sustainable development goals. The diagram shows four main forms of cooperation with the mechanisms circling these. No links are shown between these two levels deliberately because many of the mechanisms overlap with or apply to more than one of the different forms:



*Figure 1 Forms and Mechanisms of South-South Technical Cooperation*

This is not an exhaustive list of forms and mechanisms. The UN is continually promoting other and more innovative forms of SSTC such as the use of digital technology and AI, promoting climate smart solutions, supporting Private-Public-Partnerships, diverse financing models, cross-sectoral collaboration, south-south innovation hubs and gender responsive and inclusive initiatives.

### 1.3. Actors involved

South-South and Triangular Cooperation takes a multi-stakeholder approach and under the tripartite structure of the ILO, governments and workers' and employers' organizations are formally part of the implementation process. Because of this, the ILO has a comparative advantage, and in this context, it is of paramount importance that social partners be involved in developing and promoting SSTC from the earliest stages in the process. While SSTC can also benefit from the strengths of international and regional organisations, a partnership between equals and the commitment of social partners is fundamental to the integration of the Decent Work Agenda and to the sustainability of SSTC actions and results.

► **According to BAPA+40 and GB documents, some of the key actors that can be involved, include the following:**

- Governments from the Global South and Emerging Partners
- Bilateral agencies
- Academic and national institutions and other networks
- Social partners (not explicit in BAPA)
- Sub-national entities and parliamentarians
- Funds Philanthropic organizations
- Scientific and technological communities
- Faith-based organizations
- International and regional banks
- Foundations and think-tanks
- Local and regional authorities
- Civil society and NGOs
- Private sector
- Volunteer groups

## 1.4. BAPA+40

In March 2019, the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (known as the BAPA+40 Conference) was held in Buenos Aires, with the theme "The role of South-South Cooperation and the Implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development: Challenges and Opportunities". The first Conference on SSC, when the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) was adopted, took place in 1978. BAPA+40 provided a new international framework for SSTC, with recommendations for its practice and clarifications regarding its concepts and terminologies.

BAPA+40 succeeded in bringing together several international frameworks on South-South and Triangular Cooperation such as G77+China, Nairobi 2009, Nairobi 2016. The BAPA+40 Outcome Document<sup>15</sup>, includes all the resolutions adopted by the Conference. Since BAPA+40 the UN has intensified SSTC efforts to align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the UNOSCC (United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation) South-South Galaxy<sup>16</sup> for knowledge exchange, UNDP Global Hubs focussed on climate resilience and poverty reduction, the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme<sup>17</sup> and many other efforts to strengthen partnerships across the Global South, fostering solutions to shared development challenges.

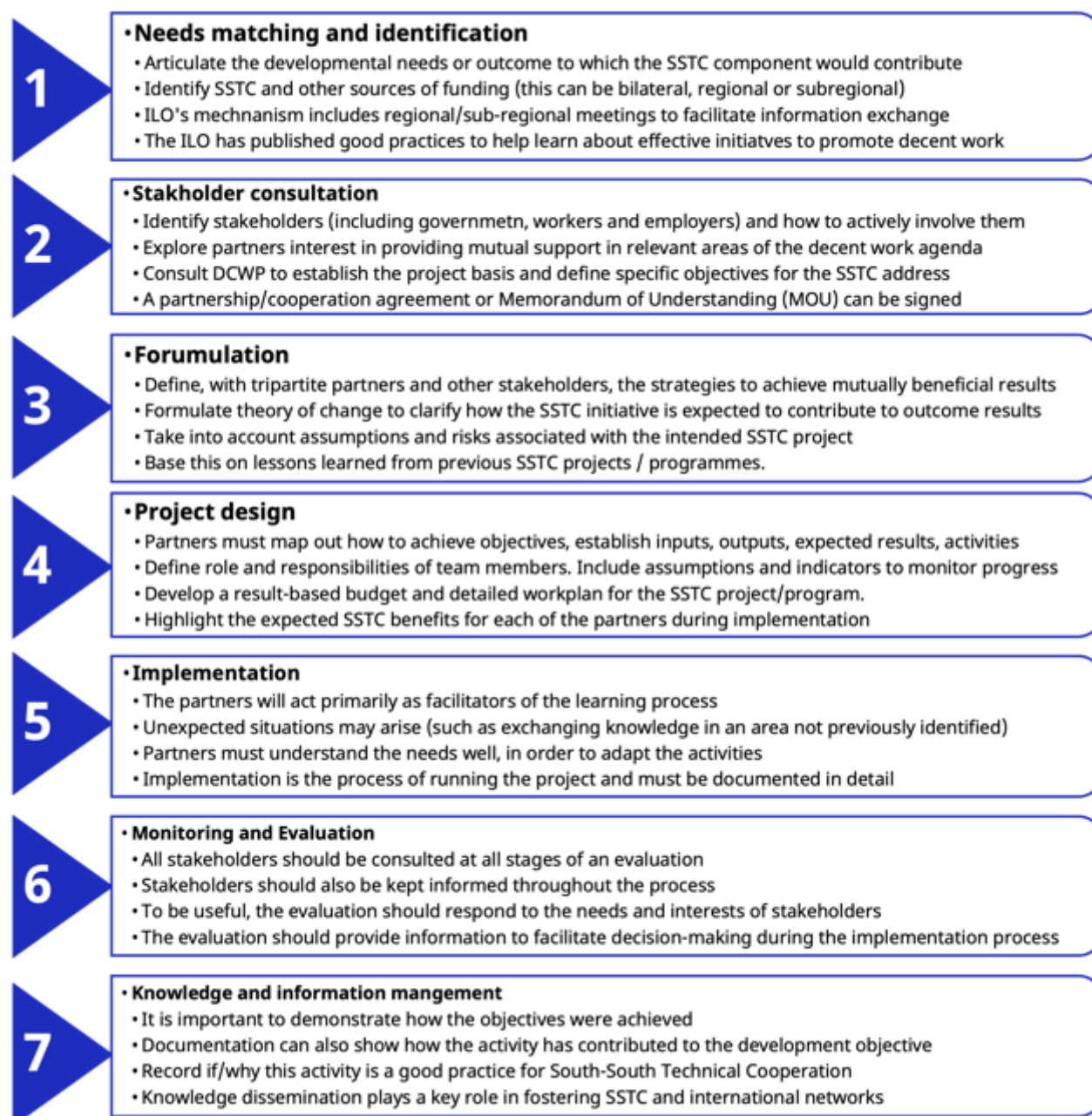
## 1.5. South-South Technical Cooperation step by step

The following diagram explains the steps taken in formulating and SSTC project. Generally, SSTC projects follow similar steps to any other development cooperation project, but with peer learning and participatory approaches systematically included throughout the process:

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/N1911172.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://unsouthsouth.org/library/south-south-galaxy/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/1a987fc0-2cc5-4a18-94bc-58aac9a88e83>



*Figure 2 Steps taken in formulating and SSTC projects*

## 1.6. SSTC design for results

SSTC projects should use result-oriented methodologies and tools such as:

- **A Logical Framework (Log Frame)** which can help clarify the underlying causality intended in the SSTC project and can link the SSTC design phase and the implementation phase by connecting the project results chain with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, through indicators.
- **A Theory of Change (TOC)** which is essential for clarifying and communicating how change is expected to happen and where monitoring must occur to ensure that it happens as expected within an SSTC project. A TOC can also help clarify the causal links between outputs and outcomes, and between outcomes and impact.

## 1.7. Dos and Don'ts of South-South Technical Cooperation

| Do's                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Don'ts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Needs matching and identification</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collect adequate information</b> to help thoroughly understand the issues of each partner, and the resources they bring</li> <li>• <b>If needs match, examine partner compatibility</b> from all perspectives (culture, language, religion, gender, and race)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Don't overlook culturally sensitive contexts</b> and assign value judgements to differences and similarities</li> <li>• <b>Don't overlook longer term needs</b> - but focus on sustainable solutions not short-term fixes</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Stakeholder consultation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Involve and include all tripartite partners</b> from the beginning of the design process</li> <li>• <b>Align consultations</b> with development partners' priorities and needs (demand-driven)</li> <li>• <b>Advance the SSTC and its agenda</b> by focussing on the needs of the countries of the Global South</li> <li>• <b>Ensure a gender balance</b> in stakeholder consultations as a key to the SSTC project efforts of achieving gender equality</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Don't call development partners "donors"</b>. For SSTC stakeholders are development partners, neither "donors" nor "recipients"</li> <li>• <b>Don't exclude key stakeholders</b> or overlook groups that may have valuable insights, avoid dominating the conversation</li> <li>• <b>Avoid making the process a token exercise or rushing of the process</b>, listen and respond to issues</li> </ul>                            |
| <b>Project design</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use participatory processes</b> to ensure all partners have a voice, while following ILO rules</li> <li>• <b>Equally include partners from the north and south</b> if it is a Triangular Cooperation</li> <li>• <b>Ensure the design process is flexible and adaptive</b> to the local contexts and changes that might occur</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Don't design projects without consultations</b> with the constituents and other stakeholders of the SSTC</li> <li>• <b>Avoid one-size-fits-all solutions</b> and don't assume a solution that is effective in one context will automatically work in another</li> <li>• <b>Don't forget risk assessments</b>, as risks like political instability and cultural barriers can jeopardise the likelihood of SSTC success</li> </ul> |
| <b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Allow for revisions</b> in the design process and adjustments based on the results of evaluations</li> <li>• <b>Ensure quality and results evaluation indicators</b> reflect SSTC principles as defined in internationally agreed frameworks</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Don't Rely Solely on Quantitative Data:</b> Qualitative insights are equally important for understanding social impact and sustainability.</li> <li>• <b>Avoid bureaucratic M&amp;E</b>, keep the process practical and not too complex to ensure timely data collection and reporting</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Knowledge and information management</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Structure Knowledge management</b> based on peer-to-peer learning</li> <li>• <b>Include a structured Knowledge management system</b> that allows the revision and replication of SSTC results in the future</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Don't Hoard Knowledge</b>, avoid siloing information, ensure it's accessible to all stakeholders and promote two-way exchanges</li> <li>• <b>Don't Ignore Context</b> – adapt shared knowledge to local conditions and cultural norms</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## 2. SSTC, the ILO and EIIP

### 2.1. SSTC and the Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the UN action plan that was adopted in 2015 to guide global and national development policies, aiming at ending poverty in all forms. It encompasses three sustainability dimensions (economic, social and environmental), and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and 169 targets, which build on the progress made with the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). The ILO estimates that 600 million new jobs need to be created by 2030<sup>18</sup>, to keep pace with the growth of the working age population, representing 40 million jobs per year.

The significance of decent work in achieving sustainable development is underscored by Goal 8, which aims to foster “sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.” The ILO reports labour statistics on 14 decent work indicators, grouped under 5 of the 17 SDGs and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda (employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue) are integral elements. The Nairobi Outcome Document (the result of the 2009 High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation) reaffirms SSTC as an expression of solidarity among countries of the South that contributes to well-being, self-reliance and the achievement of international agreed development goals.

The UN System-Wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development (2021), similarly states that SSTC plays an important and catalytic role in the global cooperation architecture for sustainable development. SSTC constitutes a complementary path to traditional North-South cooperation, supports national efforts to achieve the SDGs as well as regional and subregional development agendas and has comparative advantages during programme design, implementation, as well as in improved coordination, coherence and contextualization. The two main SDGs that relate to SSTC are:



The aim of this SDG is to “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development”. It emphasizes the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships, to mobilize resources, share knowledge, and transfer technologies. SSTC is a key mechanism to enhance international cooperation, build capacity, leverage peer networks, mobilise and optimise financial resources and promote inclusive and sustainable development through mutual support among developing countries.



Goal 8 is the key SDG that relates to employment creation and decent work and concerns the promotion of “sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”, reinforced by targets for social protection, eliminating forced and child labour, productivity growth, youth employment, SMEs and skills development etc. SSTC enables knowledge exchange on best practices on entrepreneurship, SMEs support, and workforce training, whilst promoting inclusive economic policies, improved labour standards, and social protection systems.

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/decent-work-and-2030-agenda-sustainable-development/goal-8-decent-work-and-economic-growth>

## 2.2. South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the ILO



*Figure 3 Key SSTC areas in the ILO*

The ILO places special emphasis on SSTC as a means achieving its mandate and mission, implementing, the Decent Work Agenda and achieving the objectives of promoting and realising fundamental principles and rights at work; creating greater opportunities for decent work and income; enhancing social protection for all, strengthening tripartism and social dialogue. The ILO also has a particular advantage in promoting SSTC and its multi-stakeholder approach, because the ILOs tripartite constituents have such extensive experience and knowledge, in capacity development, knowledge sharing, best practices and interregional cooperation.

The ILO has aligned the SSTC and Decent Work Agenda frameworks, by leveraging SSTC as a strategy to promote fair, inclusive and sustainable labour practices worldwide. This has included promoting the decentralization of the decent work agenda by encouraging Fragile-to-Fragile and City-to-City cooperation<sup>19</sup>, sharing good practices through peer-to-peer learning and supporting initiatives based on southern solutions to promote decent work<sup>20</sup>, the new South-South Cooperation Programme 2023-2027 “Social Justice for the Global South”<sup>21</sup>. Overall, the ILO has launched 14 projects for SSTC in 2024-2025<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://southsouth-galaxy.org/featured-partner/ilo/#:~:text=The%20adoption%20of%20ILO%27s%20future,actors%20through%20multi%2Dstakeholder%20partnerships.>

<sup>20</sup>

[https://www.oitcenterfor.org/sites/default/files/file\\_publicacion/wcms\\_211770.pdf#:~:text=from%20initiatives%20based%20on%20southern%20solutions%20that,provides%20an%20important%20mechanism%20to%20leverage%20resources](https://www.oitcenterfor.org/sites/default/files/file_publicacion/wcms_211770.pdf#:~:text=from%20initiatives%20based%20on%20southern%20solutions%20that,provides%20an%20important%20mechanism%20to%20leverage%20resources)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/brazil-and-ilo-sign-new-south-south-partnership-programme-promote-social#:~:text=The%20Government%20of%20Brazil%2C%20through,decent%20employment%20and%20social%20protection.>

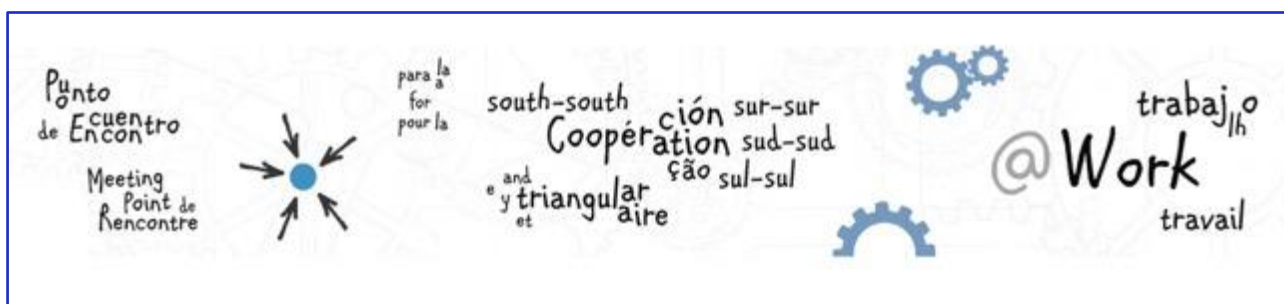
<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-sstc>

► **The role of the ILO in SSTC includes:**

- **Facilitating the systematization and dissemination of good practices** and activities to enhance policy dialogue and research – supporting in visibility of results, publicising good practices
- **Facilitating exchange and acting as a knowledge broker** for strategic initiatives in the world of work – providing technical support and promoting networks and organising knowledge-sharing platforms
- **Coordination between partners** (including tripartite constituents) – identifying and bringing parties together, acting as an advocate for dialogue to help them reach consensus on SSTC activities
- **Building partnerships with governments and institutions** from the south and preparing individual strategies to implement SSTC activities – supporting development and capacity building

► **South-South Meeting Point:**

- **The ILO South-South Meeting Point is an online platform** to share theoretical and practical information on SSTC and discuss different topics in the world of work with stakeholders from the Global South
- **It is a multilingual, interactive space** allowing people from different countries to connect and collaborate, the goal being to increase connectivity and interactivity among people interested in SSTC network building
- **The meeting point was developed in 2016** with the support of the ILO Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV) and ILO Turin
- **The meeting point was an implementation component** of the ILO SSTC strategy 2012-17, and was defined as a management tool to provide access to knowledge and resources related to SSTC and decent work



## 2.3. South-South and Triangular Cooperation and EIIP

### 2.3.1. EIIP fundamentals

The EIIP has evolved over 50 years and the comprehensive package of interventions developed is seen as a fundamental approach to generating decent jobs and income, whilst creating and maintaining public assets and basic services. The programme promotes employment-intensive approaches and local resource-based technologies in the execution of public investments, focusing on local infrastructure. With the construction industry employing about 7.7% of the global workforce, employment intensive approaches are a key entry point to paid labour and an opportunity to improve living standards whilst having a direct impact on the quality of people's lives.

The EIIP, is an ILO programme promoting and supporting employment-intensive investment activities and addresses all the core labour standards, set out in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (a safe and healthy working environment, the elimination of compulsory labour and child labour, the elimination of discrimination in employment and freedom of association). Key aspects of the strategy include:

1. Using employment-intensive and local-resource based (LRB) approaches
2. Community Participation and Local Empowerment
3. Income Generation and Poverty Reduction, through the creation of decent jobs
4. Capacity Building, training for workers and partners improving employability
5. Sustainability and Social Protection, including environmental sustainability
6. Gender and Social Inclusion, implementing works using an inclusive approach

The 2024 International Labour Conference emphasized advancing just transitions to sustainable economies, enhancing social protection systems, and addressing climate change. This focus resonates with EIIP's work on generating green jobs, developing climate-resilient infrastructure, and promoting inclusive employment opportunities in vulnerable communities.

## 2.3.2. EIIP and SSTC

The principles of SSTC dovetail neatly with the concepts and approaches that EIIP espouses.

| Principles of SSTC                                                                           | Concepts and approaches of EIIP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>National ownership and leadership, demand-driven, independence and non-conditionality</b> | Key strategies of EIIP include LRB approaches (making use of local skills, traditional practices and expertise), community participation and local empowerment, all of which enhance national ownership and avoid creating interdependence                                                                      |
| <b>Equality and complementarity</b>                                                          | EIIP projects aim at the active and meaningful participation of marginalised groups including women, youth, PWD, focussing on the poorest. Projects align with national development priorities and integrate with different programmes to ensure sustainability and local relevance.                            |
| <b>Multi-stakeholder approach</b>                                                            | EIIP projects collaborate with tripartite partners (workers, employers and governments), UN agencies and international organisations, in design, monitoring and implementation. This collaboration helps ensure that diverse perspectives are considered, and strengthens ownership, sustainability and impact. |
| <b>Mutual accountability and transparency</b>                                                | EIIP activities establish clear roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders. Establishing participatory systems for decision-making, communication, monitoring and evaluation ensures that progress and challenges are shared openly, with open financial reporting building a culture of accountability.   |
| <b>Mutual benefit</b>                                                                        | EIIP projects disperse the project benefits and results as widely as possible by focussing on constructing sustainable public assets, providing long-term employment opportunities, developing local capacities and skills, and enhancing social and labour standards.                                          |
| <b>Participative nature</b>                                                                  | EIIP projects are inherently participative, engaging a wide range of stakeholders in project identification, design, beneficiary selection, implementation and monitoring. This ensures that projects address relevant local needs and priorities, leading to more sustainable and impactful results.           |
| <b>Solidarity</b>                                                                            | EIIP projects prioritise job creation, social inclusion and community-driven infrastructure improvements that benefit people and the environment. Sustainable methods that optimise the use of labour and local resources support local economic development, while minimising environmental harm.              |

## 2.3.3. SSTC endeavours of the EIIP

### 2.3.3.1. Regional workshops and seminars

For more than 30 years, the EIIP has organized a regional seminar for labour-based practitioners in Africa. These seminars convene practitioners, policy-makers, planners, implementers, and academics from various parts of the world to share experiences and perspectives on diverse themes related to employment-intensive investments and labour-based technologies. The 20th Regional Seminar will be held in 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Similarly, EIIP has conducted several regional workshops to bring together regional participants to share success stories, lessons learned and discuss a road map and future strategies for EIIP. The most recent of these types of events include:

- **Regional workshop in Jordan from 27 to 29 February 2024:** Bringing together participants from Jordan, Iraq, Syria, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Yemen, and Lebanon and serving as a platform for participants to share success stories, lessons learned and discuss future strategies for EIIP.<sup>23</sup>
- **The 19th Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners:** hosted by the Ministry of Public Service and Labour, government of Rwanda in Kigali from the 15th to the 19th of May 2023 under the theme: "Promoting skills and productive (decent) jobs for our common better future".<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/employment-intensive-investment-programme-workshop-highlights-success>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/meetings-and-events/19th-regional-seminar-labour-based-practitioners>

- **The 18th Regional Seminar for Labour-based Practitioners:** held in Tunisia from September 9 – 13, 2019, and hosted by the Government of Tunisia, under the theme of "towards sustainable and inclusive local development: local resource-based approaches and decent job creation".<sup>25</sup>

### 2.3.3.2. Summary of EIIP SSTC experience

The ILO, over the past 2-3 years has initiated more than 32 SSTC activities, in 5 regions and 80 countries. The ILO ITC has supported many events and seminars, bringing together experience from many countries, on decent work, skills development, refugee and displaced person employment, green works, peace and resilience, public works and employment programmes. More specifically the EIIP has conducted regional seminars on labour-based approaches for more than 30 years, with the 20<sup>th</sup> workshop to be conducted in May 2025. More issue-focussed regional seminars have also been conducted in the Arab States in 2024 (planning and strategizing), in Bangladesh in 1997 (rural accessibility planning) and in Thailand in 2003 (pro-poor delivery of infrastructure services).

In the Arab States and Asia Pacific region, the recent SSTC experience of specific in-country EIIP projects and programmes is more limited. However, over the last decade, EIIP project staff and associated stakeholders have shared skills and experience with neighbouring and regional countries, through knowledge exchanges and training on structural earthquake damage assessment and debris removal, green jobs and environmental works (and associated project formulation and new concepts), training of trainers on cultural heritage and conservation (with skills certification), maintenance of rural roads, small scale contractor training, and indigenous-driven solutions to address water crises.

### 2.3.4. Importance of SSTC and EIIP convergence

In Lebanon project staff see SSTC in EIIP projects as an important means of exchange and learning from similar projects and contexts in the region, which can be used to refresh and generate new concepts for the project's future strategy. EIIP staff in Lebanon believe that there is potential to make further exchanges with other projects in the region and beyond. In Iraq SSTC is seen as facilitating technical co-operation, knowledge sharing, skills transfer with huge potential for expansion, considering that Iraq is seeking to implement a National Public Works Programme, which the BEIT project is supporting. Future SSTC activities may include technical cooperation, sharing of knowledge and experience, education, capacity development and technology transfer, and fielding of experts.

Because SSTC facilitates the exchange of technical expertise, best practices and innovative solutions among countries facing similar development challenges, using SSTC mechanisms can have a positive impact on EIIP projects. By leveraging SSTC, EIIP projects can enhance capacity building, improve project implementation efficiency and promote locally appropriate, sustainable labour-intensive infrastructure solutions. In regions like the Arab States and Asia Pacific, where employment challenges and infrastructure deficits are prevalent, the convergence of SSTC and EIIP can drive significant socio-economic impacts and strengthen South-South solidarity, promoting regional development and contributing to achieving the SDGs and Decent Work Agenda.

## 2.4. Examples of EIIP SSTC experience in the regions

### ► EIIP Lebanon supports ILO Syria in earthquake damage assessment

In February 2023 EIIP Lebanon used their experience and skills to support a new EIIP project in Syria. Assistance provided included:

- Technical support for damage assessment and debris removal, including support in procurement and logistics and equipment
- In-country training for the Order of Engineers in Syria in structural earthquake<sup>26</sup> damage assessment techniques

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/summary-18th-regional-seminar-labour-based-practitioners>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/earthquake-adds-further-financial-burden-already-struggling-households-and>

This support and training was funded by the ILO in Syria and involved ILO ROAS, ILO EIIP Lebanon and Syria and the Syrian Order of Engineers Aleppo Branch. This model provided cross-border expertise and support from staff who knew the context and could speak the same language, drawing on established staffing and resources to set up new offices and interventions.

#### ► EIIP activities in Aleppo (debris removal and cleaning)

Phase 1, initiated in May 2023, included:

- Clearing of 29 sites in urban neighbourhoods
- Removal of 5,400 m<sup>3</sup> of debris
- Creation of 114 job opportunities.

Phase 2, which started in September 2023, included:

- Creation of 239 job opportunities
- Removal of remaining debris and rubble
- Reopening of roads and sewage system maintenance
- Repair of damaged roads and sidewalks

*Photo: Aleppo, Syria ©ILO, 2023*



#### ► Jordanian Government visit to ongoing EIIP project in Lebanon

In October 2023 members of the Jordanian Government and EIIP staff from Jordan, visited the ongoing EIIP project in Lebanon. Activities included:

- Site visits to Green Plan farms, and a meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture/Green Plan and with EIIP project team.

The Green Plan project<sup>27</sup> is implemented by EIIP in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and is funded by KfW. The project generates green jobs through environmentally friendly works focusing on environmental preservation, land reclamation and improved agricultural and economic productivity. Construction activities include terracing, dry stone retaining walls, irrigation networks and concrete water tanks/reservoirs.

This exchange of knowledge between Jordanian government officials as well as EIIP staff in Jordan and in Lebanon, was funded by ILO Jordan with contributions in kind from ILO EIIP Lebanon, and is an important means of exchange and learning from similar projects and contexts in the region, which can be used to refresh and generate new concepts for the project's future strategy. EIIP staff in Lebanon believe that there is potential to make further exchanges with other projects in the region and beyond.

#### ► Jordanian Engineers train trainers from Iraq, Jordan and Yemen

In November 2022 for 5 days, under the skills certification interventions component of the "Support to Livelihoods through Cultural Heritage Development" project, and in preparation to implement the programme, the ILO arranged with the Jordanian Engineers Association for them to train local trainers from Iraq, Jordan and Yemen. This Training of Trainers (TOT) was:

- Based on a Technical Curriculum developed by an ILO International Consultant and included general EIIP subjects as well as customized sections on Cultural Heritage activities.

After the TOT, a skills' certification programme was conducted in-person in each country through the trained trainers, which focused on skills relevant to historical sites conservation works.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/ilo-eiips-green-plan-project-driving-sustainable-agriculture-and-economic#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20its%20focus,walls%20using%20locally%20available%20stones.>

► **Participants from the Jordanian Government visit the Green Plan farms in Lebanon with EIIP staff**

The Green Plan project supports vulnerable farmers across Lebanon. Achievements include:

- Direct assistance to 740 farmers
- Employment opportunities for 2,459 workers
- Generation of 1,627 jobs in total
- Repair of damaged roads and sidewalks

The project uses a Local Resource-Based approach, employing local expertise, knowledge and skills, thus minimising reliance on external resources.

*Photo: Green Plan Farms visit ©ILO Lebanon, 2023*



► **Nepal Department of Local Infrastructure Development study tour of ILO EIIP Timor-Leste**

From 8-15 November 2015 a twelve member technical delegation, headed by the Director General of the Department of Local Infrastructure Development (DoLIDAR), under the Ministry of Federal Administration and Local Development (MoFALD), Nepal, visited two major ILO EIIP projects and its government counterpart in Timor-Leste. The objective was:

- To hold technical discussions on the construction and maintenance of rural roads, small scale contractor training and employment-intensive approaches.

The study tour included meetings and briefings by the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communication (MPWTC) of Timor-Leste and ILO project staff as well as visits to ERA (Enhancing Rural Access project) and R4D (Road for Development) rural road project sites. The study tour was arranged under the “Strengthening the National Rural Transport Program” (SNRTP) for Nepal EIIP project, which ran from 2014 to 2019.

► **Indigenous leader in Mindanao shares his experience at World Water Week**

From 23-27 August 2021 UN-Water organised World Water Week<sup>28</sup>, on the theme of Building Resilience Faster. The ILO “Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao” project participated<sup>29</sup> by arranging for Mr Alagan, an indigenous leader, and President of the Rifao Spring Development Organization to share his experience:

- This was part of the session on Leading the world: Indigenous-led partnerships and governance, discussing the effectiveness of indigenous-driven solutions to address water crises.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.unwater.org/news/world-water-week-stockholm-2021>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource/indigenous-peoples-partners-safe-water-decent-work-and-peace>

► **EIIP water supply project for peace in Mindanao**

Project outcomes included:

- Improved access to safe and reliable water supply in target communities
- Capacity building for maintenance of water supply system.
- Organisation of a skilled pool of workers to address demands for local construction works
- About 1,800 workers benefitted from jobs created through water infrastructure projects

*Photo: Screen grab from [video presented at World Water Week](#) ©ILO, 2021*



The session and discussions aimed at fostering partnership between indigenous peoples from Australia, Myanmar, New Zealand and Argentina. The presentation underscored how the EIIP project respected indigenous cultures and traditions.

## ► Additional resources

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- [23 December 2024](#): South-South Cooperation in ILO's Regular Budget (RBTC): the 2024 year in Review (overview of activities)
- [14 June 2022](#): Stakeholder Consultation and Engagement Requirements (This document specifies the requirements for stakeholder consultation and engagement for projects seeking certification under GS4GG)
- [28 February 2022](#): South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) good practices (This compilation pulls together key good practices in the ILO promoting the Decent Work Agenda through SSTC)
- [20 October 2020](#): The ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25, adopted at the 107th Session (2018) of the International Labour Conference
- [30 April 2019](#): Outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation
- [15 February 2018](#): ILO South-South and triangular cooperation and decent work: Recent developments and future steps, 332nd Session, Geneva, 8–22 March 2018 GB.332/POL/4
- [9 November 2015](#): ILO Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation and Decent Work: an ILO perspective (ILO's involvement with fragile-to-fragile cooperation)
- [21 September 2014](#): ILO How-to guide on South-South and triangular cooperation and decent work (aims at helping practitioners better understand South-South and triangular cooperation)
- [2014](#): "How-to-Guide on SSTC design for Decent Work" (revised) (aims at helping ILO officials in the field and at HQ to design SSTC projects and/or to include SSTC elements in other development cooperation projects.
- [5 October 2012](#): South-South and triangular cooperation: The way forward – Revised indicators for the Strategy adopted in March 2012 (GB 316th Session, Geneva, 1–16 November 2012 GB.316/POL/5)
- [15-30 March 2012](#): ILO South-South and triangular cooperation, Governing Body, 313th Session, Geneva, February 2012, GB.313/POL/7: South-South and triangular cooperation: The way forward

## ► Annex 1: BAPA + 40 Recommendations for the ILO (as part of the UN System)

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- Strengthen South-South platforms and the exchange of experience among sub-regional and regional groupings: The ILO does this through the RBTC-SSTC facility (support to regions)
- Engage think tanks, communities of practice, networks and expert groups to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Support initiatives for information and data collection, coordination, dissemination and evaluation of South-South cooperation, upon the request of developing countries
- Continue incorporating South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into policies, programmes, strategic frameworks and other planning instruments, including appropriate indicators and methodologies
- Provide support for the exchange of good practices on innovative policies and approaches between developing countries
- Continue its support to the strengthening of relevant public research institutions, academic institutions, think tanks, knowledge networks and relevant regional or thematic centres of excellence, as institutional spaces for knowledge development and sharing on South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives
- Assist developing countries, upon request, in building the human and institutional capacity needed to formulate and implement national development policies, strategies and programmes for South-South and triangular cooperation
- Enhance its assistance to developing countries in seeking for potential cooperation partners in strategic areas identified by developing countries and to act as enabler of the building of these partnerships
- Enhance its support to South-South and triangular cooperation inter alia in the areas of promoting capacity-building, regional integration, interregional linkages, infrastructure interconnectivity and the development of national productive capacities and in several areas of sustainable development
- Improve the effectiveness, the coherence and coordination and complementarity of their operational activities in support of South-South and triangular cooperation
- Continue its support to regional and sub regional organizations for the continued promotion of transparent, sustainable and accountable development practices, and to enable more partnerships
- To further incorporate South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in technology facilitation mechanisms
- To conduct relevant studies and convene dialogues to explore policy options for developing countries to individually and collectively manage challenges and enhance the benefits from the evolution of technologies
- Encourage Member States (and social partners) to share relevant knowledge, experience and best practices on public-private partnerships
- Commend developing countries that have partnered with United Nations entities and established financing facilities and trust funds to advance South-South cooperation for addressing development challenges
- Upon request, to facilitate developing countries to access South-South cooperation funds

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54394/YPFA1460>