



SSTC in the ILO

And international frameworks for development cooperation



► South-South Cooperation in the ILO

South-South Cooperation refers to development cooperation between developing countries in the Global South. When South-South Cooperation is implemented with the support of a Northern partner, it is referred to as Triangular Cooperation. South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is a tool used by governments, international organizations, academics, social partners, civil society and the private sector to collaborate and share knowledge, skills, know-how, and good practices in decent work and lifelong learning approaches as well as successful initiatives in specific areas such as agricultural development, human rights, urbanization, health, climate change, social protection and employment generation.

Several [ILO-SSTC projects](#) and development cooperation projects with an SSTC dimension are implemented in cooperation with other UN agencies. For example, [the Mano River Union \(MRU\) project in collaboration with UNFPA and OXFAM](#), in West Africa is working to develop simplified guidance for women entrepreneurs to support their empowerment and resilience.

The ILO engages in SSTC by working with governments and workers and employers organizations to identify, document and disseminate good practices; facilitate exchanges and peer-to-peer learning approaches; promote knowledge sharing between social partners and other actors through multi-stakeholder partnerships; broker agreements and memoranda of understanding; and share good practices. In March 2012, the Governing Body (GB) of the ILO endorsed the paper "[South-South and triangular cooperation: The way forward](#)", making the ILO the first UN agency with a dedicated strategy on SSTC. In March 2018, "[South-South and triangular cooperation: future steps](#)" document was adopted and recommendations fed the ILC development cooperation discussion (ILC 2018). During the latter, a Roadmap requested ILO to step up its South-South Cooperation.

Support to regional initiatives

- Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training ([CINTERFOR](#)) in the Americas
- The ILO International Training Centre in Turin ([ITC-ILO](#))
- The [Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour](#) regional initiative
- Implementing the [ILO's agreement with ASEAN](#)
- The [Africa Facility for promoting South-South and triangular cooperation](#)

SSTC in the ILO

And international frameworks for development cooperation

Current SSTC priorities

- ▶ Reinforce ILO's constituents capacity to address emerging needs and trends in international cooperation and cross-regional peer learning swiftly, integrating COVID 19 in the [ILO's Regular Budget SSTC allocations for 2020-2021](#)
- ▶ Strengthen the awareness and capacity of ILO constituents and partners to implement SSTC programmes under the framework of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy;
- ▶ Leverage SSTC's comparative advantage to support regional ILO and UN initiatives by facilitating peer learning and exchanges of knowledge, information and practices to achieve the SDGs and through the UN Inter Agency Mechanism on South-South Cooperation;
- ▶ Follow-up on the next steps outlined in the 2018 ILO Governing Body on SSTC, the South-South elements of the Development Cooperation Roadmap (ILC, 2018) and in the GPEDC (Nairobi 2016) to continue to promote the Decent Work Agenda in UN consultations post BAPA+40;
- ▶ Contribute to the advancement of the ILO's strategic framework and flagship programmes through regional, sub regional and interregional programming, networking, joint learning and mutual capacity development, mutual accountability and transparency, peer learning and solidarity;
- ▶ Support the Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation initiative (F2F cooperation) in the framework of the humanitarian-development nexus. Given the ILO's experience in successfully promoting and expanding SSTC, the Organization would be well positioned to offer valuable insights on consultation and policy processes to countries in fragile situations;
- ▶ Continue engaging in key areas where SSTC has the most impact, such as local economic development, fundamental principles and rights at work, social dialogue, climate change and just transitions and social protection for all, while also supporting the social and solidarity economy as well as southern-driven partnerships and initiatives in the world of work.

▶ South-South Meeting Point

For more information on South-South Cooperation in the ILO, access the South-South Meeting Point: southsouthpoint.net

SSTC in the ILO

And international frameworks for development cooperation

► ILO/SSTC and Nairobi outcome document principles (2016)

[The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation \(GPEDC\)](#) in Nairobi in 2016 agreed on principles for urgent action to implement the SDGs contained in an outcome document. The Nairobi 2016 Principles have implications for the ILO: Within the realm of **principle 1**, which reaffirms “ownership of development priorities by partners countries receiving support”, the ILO has encouraged the tripartite constituents to pursue national sovereignty and nationally owned decisions linked to fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social dialogue and social protection, while integrating them in decent work country programmes. ILO’s South-South cooperation also promotes **principle 3** “inclusive partnerships” which recognize the importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships, south-south exchanges, peer learning in the promotion of development co-operation and achieving SDGs. Under **principle 2**, focus on results, ILO’s development cooperation are built on a theory of change that focuses on attaining results and providing relevant high-quality service mix. Furthermore, ILO encourages effectiveness by focusing on achievable results and efficiency through the best use of available resources in line with **principle 4, transparency and accountability**, as well as all commitments taken at previous effectiveness cooperation fora (Paris 2005, Accra 2008, Busan 2011, Mexico 2014).

In April 2020, the [United Nations quadrennial comprehensive policy review \(QCPR\)](#)¹ report by the Secretary General recognized the ILO and UNICEF joint action in preparing new guidance to harmonize principles and operational standards for due diligence on United Nations Development System (UNDS) partnerships. Additionally, the SG report on QCPR recognizes SSTC as an essential element in enabling horizontal exchanges of know-how, technologies and resources to respond to country challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The ILO will continue incorporating South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into policies, programmes, strategic frameworks and other planning instruments in adherence to QCPR processes.

► ILO/SSTC, Nairobi principles (2016) and other international frameworks for development cooperation

The importance of SSTC is emphasized in the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#), the Paris Agreement, and the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#). Additional guidance was also provided by the declarations and summits of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation ([GPEDC](#)). The latter brings together multiple development actors, such as national and local governments, civil society, private sector, bilateral and multilateral organizations, trade unions and parliaments to advance the effectiveness of their development efforts. GPEDC also supports country-level implementation, data generation, peer-learning promotion and policy dialogue. These are complementary to processes under the Development Cooperation Forum of the UN Economic and Social Council and a wide range of UN resolutions on the topic.

¹The Quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of the operational system of the United Nations is a process and a United Nations General Assembly resolution by which the 193 members of the United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) review the coherence effectiveness and funding of the 27 UN development programmes, funds, and specialised agencies of the UN operational system for development.

SSTC in the ILO

And international frameworks for development cooperation

The ILO cooperates with the UN system on SSTC, including the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and has established SSTC partnerships with several entities, governmental organization, regional groupings and UN system as a whole². In implementing SSTC projects, ILO adheres to principles in BAPA + 40 and GPEDC as clearly highlighted in the ILO's [How-to-Guide on SSTC](#). The guide supports the inclusion of this modality among other strategies applied by ILO officials to contribute to the ILO's strategic objectives and policy outcomes in a manner that benefits from the unique tripartite structure of the organisation. It is inspired by new SSTC initiatives at the ILO as well as other international frameworks on SSTC, most notably [BAPA+40](#). In pursuit of the ILO strategic framework, the Organization used the potential offered by SSTC to advance the Decent Work Agenda, generating the capacity to identify and implement SSTC by drawing on its tripartite constituency experience, this can be seen in the implementation of [SSTC P&B 2018/2019 outcome report](#). Regarding knowledge management, the ILO maintains an [SSTC portal](#), and helped launch a [South-South virtual meeting point](#) which provides access to a wealth of knowledge and resources related to SSTC and decent work. The ILO engages through SSTC, an increasing number of governments, social partners, UN agencies and non-state actors. In the last biennium ILO secured solid accomplishments under the P&B 2018/2019 in the five regions.

Regional highlights in SSTC 2018-19: some key examples

▶ Americas:

The EPIC Americas peer learning on equal pay supported the creation of a network of governments, workers and employers committed to working together on this important issue, improve data collection and policy making at the national level through peer-to-peer learning and document and disseminate good practices in line with the GPEDC principle of inclusive partnership promoting inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships necessary for the realisation of effective development co-operation and for reaching the SDGs.

▶ Africa:

The peer learning initiatives in employment promotion, skills and enterprise development in Zambia improved the capacity of Zambian workers in the areas of employment promotion, skills and enterprise development, through training and peer learning from experts from Kenya and South Africa promoted the principle of country ownership of development priorities. The project provided an enabling environment for innovation including the application of traditional knowledge to support development objectives in the country; The capacity of local governments was strengthened to enable them to fully assume their roles in service delivery, enhancing participation and accountability at the local level. By working with local communities, the SSTC project supported the need to have communities on the driver's seat to support the achievement of SDG 2030 thus ensuring transparency and accountability.

²Group of 77 and China, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), parliamentarians from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the g7+ group of fragile states, the South Centre, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the UN Research Institute for Social Development, the United Nations Environment Programme, the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy

SSTC in the ILO

And international frameworks for development cooperation

Regional highlights in SSTC 2018-19: some key examples

▶ Europe and Central Asia:

The peer-to-peer learning workshops on employment policies in the Western Balkans supported practitioners from the public employment agencies of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia to exchange information, experience, challenges and emerging practice in the design of partnership approaches and service delivery models targeting population groups most detached from the labour market through peer-review practices; municipality-to-municipality, this strengthened the capacity of local governments to enable them to fully assume their roles in service delivery, enhancing participation and accountability at the local level in line with the Nairobi principle.

▶ Asia:

Through local capacity development and study visits, the activity contributed to Pakistani Employees Social Security Institutions to learn from Malaysia and Thailand's experience on effective implementation of employment injury compensation systems. Issues on OSH were addressed in accordance to the International Labour Organisation labour standards, United Nations Principles on Business and Human Rights, while supporting the GPEDC transparency and accountability principle. The Future of Work in Asia initiative strengthened the capacity of ILO constituents in China and other ASEAN countries through the exchange of good practices and lessons on employment creation in the care economy, by ASEAN countries working together, efforts of national governments and other development partners were developed to support inclusive partnership principle. Additionally, partner countries committed to monitor and ensure that support of development partners falls within the ambit of the national policy and development strategy priorities in line with the principle of Ownership of development priorities by developing countries.

▶ Arab states:

The Nairobi 2016 principle of Inclusive partnership was promoted by the cross country exchange amongst Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraq on promoting decent work in refugee crisis response settings. The four countries working together to support Syrian refugee crisis supported the inclusive multi-stakeholder partnership in achieving SDGs; The project also supported international dialogue on peacebuilding and state building focusing on fragile and conflict affected states; Knowledge sharing on refugee issues was also strengthened through voluntary and mutual agreed terms to support response and recovery among Syrian refugees hosted in the four countries.

SSTC in the ILO

And international frameworks for development cooperation

▶ ILO/SSTC and Nairobi 2016 Principles and BAPA +40: Recommendations and implication

- ▶ In the SDG context, SSTC offers a strategic approach for people of the South and the North to work together, providing opportunities for triangular cooperation, peer learning, and knowledge exchange.
- ▶ Ensure country ownership and inclusive partnership in designing projects to address the current challenges, such as developing a capacity to address emerging needs and trends in international cooperation and cross-regional peer learning swiftly, integrating COVID 19 in the RBTC-SSTC allocation for 2020-2021.
- ▶ Incorporate South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into all ILO policies, programmes, strategic frameworks and other planning instruments in line with QCPR. Strengthen the capacity and raise awareness among ILO constituents and partners, to integrate the SDGs into national development plans to support results frameworks.
- ▶ Promote the Decent Work Agenda in UN system-wide consultations post Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40, Argentina, 2019 through inclusive partners with national governments, local governments, private sector and civil society.
- ▶ Support the advancement of the ILO's strategic framework and flagship programmes through regional, sub regional and interregional programming, networking, joint learning and mutual capacity development and of regional facilities for SSTC in line with Result Based Management and Theory of change to promote transparency and accountability.
- ▶ Develop Fragile-to-Fragile cooperation development strategy to offer valuable insights on consultation and policy processes to ILO member state in fragile situations.
- ▶ Widen SSTC scope, in areas such as local economic development, city-to-city cooperation, and support for the social and solidarity economy, and with the private sector, to support southern-driven partnerships and initiatives in the world of work.
- ▶ Align decent work agenda with the [ILO Centenary Declaration](#) within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, in alignment with the [ILC 2018 Resolution on ILO effective development cooperation in support of the SDGs](#) and its subsequent [plan of action](#).
- ▶ As recommended in the QCPR, diversify the ILO's resources and robust partnerships at the global, national and local levels to scale better the achievement of SDGs by 2030.
- ▶ Continue commitment to the [principles of effective development cooperation](#) and collaborates with the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation ([GPEDC](#)) in their promotion, including in areas such as [Private Sector Engagement](#).
- ▶ Work closely with the tripartite partners and other stakeholders through south-south Triangular cooperation to respond to the COVID-19 crisis to achieve tangible results through inclusive partnership.
- ▶ In pursuit of adherence to BAPA +40 and GPEDC principles, it would be important to integrate, into ongoing, and pipeline projects, a tighter mutual accountability, country ownership, transparency and results framework: this can be included in a) the evaluation of the Brazilian funded South-South project of Cooperation with Africa and Americas; b) ongoing China funded project on skills; c) upcoming CHINA-ASEAN initiative on Social Security; c) preparation of the Russia G20 second Phase; d) integration in the reporting framework of the SIALC (Latin America Information System on Labour, funded by Panama); and future work with emerging partners from Arab countries.