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DISCUSSION PAPER

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Norwegian Aid and Triangular South-South Cooperation

Mapping, analysis and implications for Norwegian knowledge transfer

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Cooperation**

*Mapping, analysis and implications for
Norwegian knowledge transfer*

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Introduction

The Knowledge Bank was formally established in March 2018 as a department within Norad. The Knowledge Bank aims to coordinate and strengthen technical cooperation and sharing of knowledge in areas where Norway has particular competencies or sought after expertise. The objective is to strengthen the competency and capacity of public administration in Norway's partner countries. To achieve this the Knowledge Bank cooperates with a range of Norwegian public institutions: Nine ministries, 16 directorates and government agencies, and 11 higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the Knowledge Bank also strives to increase support to south-south cooperation. It does this by promoting technical cooperation between countries in the South. The explicit goal is to increase the transfer of knowledge and competence between Norwegian partner countries through support to triangular cooperation.¹

The Knowledge Bank has commissioned this report as an input to how south-south/triangular cooperation can be further strengthened in the programmes implemented. The purpose is to provide the Knowledge Bank with a necessary understanding of best practices derived from experiences and research on south-south cooperation, and to propose how the Knowledge Bank can meet the goal of increased triangular cooperation.

The specific objectives are to:

- 1) Map existing research, international norms and standards as well as existing practices on south-south cooperation among donor organizations.
- 2) Determine, based on existing literature, the most common challenges of south-south cooperation, and measures to overcome these.
- 3) Map existing practices in results reporting on south-south cooperation, including how benefits of south-south cooperation projects are likely to sustain after projects are completed.
- 4) In brief, discuss how anti-corruption and good governance can be implemented in south-south cooperation programmes in the Knowledge Bank.
- 5) Assess which of the best practices are suited for implementation in current Norwegian development aid through the sectors represented in the Knowledge Bank, based on the "value added" of south-south cooperation to development initiatives.

The Terms of Reference are attached as Annex 1.

The first part of this report maps and analyses the evolving approaches to and scope of south-south and triangular cooperation. This includes reviewing trends in support from the UN, development banks

¹ This is outlined in the recent 2018 Government White Paper on Partner Countries (Norway 2018a) and in the development aid budgets for 2018 and 2019 (Norway 2018b).

and key donors as well as the role of major South countries engaging in such cooperation. It also outlines Norwegian policies and trends in supporting south-south cooperation.

The second part summaries and reviews key challenges and lessons learnt from south-south/triangular cooperation. This includes discussing issues related to results, monitoring and evaluation as well as anti-corruption and governance.

The final part identifies main implications of the mapping and analysis for the future work of the Knowledge Bank and efforts to scale up support for south-south and triangular cooperation.

This report is mainly based on a review of the available literature, including studies and evaluations from main aid agencies. In addition, important information was also collected through a series of meetings with the Knowledge Bank. This included all three sections (Knowledge programmes; Research, innovation and higher education; and Oil for development) and also the associated section dealing with environment and food security as well as five of the Bank's programmes (Oil for Development, Tax for Development, Clean Energy, Higher education and Research, and Gender for Development). In addition, interviews by phone was held with the former FK Norway, now the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (Norec).

A draft report was submitted in early November. This final report addresses comments received from the Knowledge Bank, including written comments submitted by Norec through Norad.

The consultant has attempted to address all the questions in the Terms of Reference. Needless to say, any flaws and omissions are entirely his. The consultant is also responsible for the views and recommendations expressed in this report.

1: What is “south-south” and “triangular” cooperation?

“South-south” and “triangular” cooperation are terms frequently used by development aid agencies. The terms cover a range of different issues and approaches. It may include support for increased economic and political cooperation between countries in the south. This is manifest in support to regional cooperation and integration, especially support to various intergovernmental regional and sub-regional institutions in Africa. Furthermore, there is also much donor support to joint programmes and projects involving two or more neighbouring countries in areas such as development of cross border infrastructure.

A third dimension is support to individual countries participating in regional cooperation. This may be linked to efforts to help the country concerned to maximize benefits from participating in the regional/cross border cooperation, or enable the country to share benefits with other participating countries.

Fourthly, south-south cooperation may also be transferring competence and expertise from one developing country to another or sharing experiences and knowledge between two or more developing countries. This may involve public institutions as well as civil society and the private sector.

Fifthly, within the south-south cooperation there has also emerged a new emphasis on triangular cooperation. This is a type of south-south cooperation that involves at least one international organisation or bilateral OECD DAC donor agency and one or more developing countries providing development support to one or several other developing countries. The purposes may be several: from promoting mutual sharing of experiences between developing countries to the use of the resources (competence and skills) of one “pivotal” developing country providing development support in one or several other developing countries (“beneficiary” countries).

The traditional northern and multilateral donors will in this trilateral case act as “facilitators” that contribute funding but also in many cases additional competence, expertise and knowledge to the cooperating south-south partners. The south providers in this type of cooperation are typically middle-income countries that has established their own institutions and funds for providing development support to other developing countries. The main such countries are emerging south powers such as China, India, South Africa or Brazil, but also Mexico, Indonesia and others.

“South-south” and “trilateral” are terms have a long history, but we have seen a renewed emphasis in recent years. This is partly linked to the recent development of the aid effectiveness debate and the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Furthermore, the move of economic and political power from the North and West to the South and East and the role of the emerging south powers provide the context for changing development partnerships (Third World Quarterly 2016, Tjønneland 2013).

The origins and evolution of an approach

South-south cooperation originated with political cooperation between newly independent countries. The first manifestation was the 1955 Bandung conference between Asian and African countries and the decision to work together as the Afro-Asian Group. This paved the way for increased bilateral cooperation between several of these countries. China, in particular, launched an aid programme in several African countries. This was mainly small projects with agriculture and health although a major infrastructure project (the Tazara railway between Zambia and Tanzania) also originated in this early period.

A main political manifestation emerging from the Bandung conference was found at the UN. The idea of economic cooperation among developing countries resulted in the establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964. At the first UNCTAD, Latin American countries joined with the Afro-Asian Group to create the Group of 77.

The UN and the Buenos Aires Plan of Action

These origins helped shape the UN approach to south-south cooperation.² In 1972, the UN General Assembly created a working group on technical cooperation among developing countries that recommended the creation of a special unit for such cooperation. In 1972, the General Assembly endorsed “the establishment of a special unit within the UNDP to promote technical cooperation among developing countries.” It was renamed the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, and from 2013 it became the *UN Office for South-South Cooperation* as a separate entity but still hosted by the UNDP. Its mandate was to coordinate, promote and facilitate south-south and triangular cooperation on a global and UN system-wide basis. Triangular means that support and/or funding from the UN or a UN agency are provided for a project involving cooperation between two or more developing countries.

The work plan and approach of this UN office was first laid out in the *Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA)* for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries endorsed by the General Assembly in 1978. The south-south emphasis received a further boost with the adoption of the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, the aid effectiveness agenda and the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. These all helped reinforce the emphasis on south-south cooperation. In 2019, a Second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40 Conference) will take place.

The current focus of the UN special office is to

- mainstream south-south cooperation by leveraging its global reach as well as its policy and institutional capacities to assist UN agencies and developing countries in strengthening their south-south cooperation capacities. It works to support countries’ efforts to manage, design and implement south-south cooperation policies and initiatives through the identification, sharing and transfer of successful Southern-generated development solutions. It also advocates for support to south-south initiatives;
- engage a wide range of partners, including member states, UN entities, multilateral bodies and private-sector and civil society organizations in order to provide the most efficient, effective and comprehensive support for south-south cooperation;

² This story is well captured in the website of the UN South-South office - <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/>

- innovate by continually seeking, showcasing and transferring forward-thinking Southern development solutions to development partners to meet the critical development challenges of today;
- enable countries of the south – emerging, middle income and least developed – to work together to use their wealth of resources, tangible and intangible, in support of national, regional and global development efforts;
- serve as the secretariat to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, which provides policy directives and guidance and reviews worldwide progress in South-South cooperation. In this context, it monitors trends in South-South cooperation among UN agencies as well as globally, preparing reports for various intergovernmental bodies, including the report of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation; and
- manage the UN Fund for South-South Cooperation, the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation, the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, and the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

The initial focus of the UN approach as outlined in the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action, largely focused on technical cooperation, capacity building, and knowledge exchange. This is still an important component, but current projects cover a very wide area of projects. They cover virtually every sector affecting development. Activities supported include facilitation of cooperation between two or more countries, regional cooperation and integration, technology transfers, knowledge sharing, capacity building and more.

The UN Office for South-South Cooperation has begun the publication of an annual report on “best practices” in south-south cooperation (UN Office for South-South Cooperation 2018). Projects listed there are classified according to the relevance in relation to the 17 sustainable development goals. While the list is dominated by projects from UN agencies, it also include others where reports are submitted to the UN office, including south-south projects funded by Norway (FK Norway or Norec). The website of the UN office also contains links and references to south-south policies and projects funded by the UN and its agencies.

The World Bank and development finance institutions

The World Bank has a wide portfolio of projects funded with south-south components. Typically, these are projects related to development of infrastructure involving two or more countries, or projects focusing on supporting regional cooperation and integration. However, there are also projects that specifically seek to promote knowledge sharing between developing countries. In the case of Brazil, a very large participant in the Bank’s south-south knowledge sharing activities, the Bank reported that from 2009 to the present it has supported over 220 south-south knowledge sharing activities with Brazil in all development areas, with over 110 countries worldwide (Carneiro 2017).

An illustrative and relevant initiative here is the Bank’s trust fund *The South-South Experience Exchange Facility*. This Facility finances global and primarily south-south knowledge exchange projects that seeks to draw upon the expertise of developing countries, and provides a platform for sharing lessons. The trust fund awards grants to the Bank’s country teams that work with the World Bank to integrate the exchanges into their broader development goals and lending programmes. The South-South Facility then seeks to help teams document their results and lessons so that other practitioners may benefit

from them as well. The trust fund started in 2008 and have funded a range of largely stand-alone projects/activities, but from 2017, it has attempted to integrate them with the Bank's lending and technical assistance programmes. Five of the trust fund's donors are South countries: China, Colombia, India, Indonesia and Mexico. They have contributed 50% of the trust funds with China being the single largest funder in the last five years (World Bank 2018).

The other regional development bank have similar approaches with perhaps the Inter-American Development Bank having the strongest emphasis on this. The EU is a major funder of south-south cooperation, mainly through its strong emphasis on supporting regional cooperation in Africa through funding for pan-African and sub-regional organisations.

The OECD DAC and bilateral donors

OECD's Development Assistance Committee has also paid increasing attention to south-south cooperation, but with a strong focus on the triangular cooperation with funding and/or technical assistance from a North-partner. Their work has included surveys in 2012 and 2015 that seeks to identify projects implemented, special studies of triangular cooperation in specific regions, and development of relevant monitoring and evaluations tools (OECD 2017 and 2018, Casado-Asensio and Piefer 2018)

The main bilateral donor agencies have numerous programmes and projects focusing on south-south and trilateral cooperation. This is most evident in interventions that seek to promote regional cooperation and integration. There is also another key trend evident from major aid agencies: efforts to work strategically with emerging and regional south powers in implementing interventions in other developing countries. This is most evident with countries like China, India, Brazil and South Africa, but also with countries such as Indonesia, Chile and Mexico. This is justified both by the belief that these countries possess certain strengths, relevant experiences and have policies and instruments available to support development efforts in other countries. This trend is also motivated by a keen interest in "influencing" the aid policies of these emerging powers. Some major bilateral donors – such as the UK and Germany - have developed specific strategies for this (Rosengren 2013, ICAI 2016, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development 2013, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013, Honda and Sakai 2014, Farias 2015 and Lengfelder 2016).

These trilateral polices are not well captured in the surveys from the OECD and others mentioned above. However, some of these surveys (especially those from the World Bank and the OECD) also shows the dominance of these south powers in many south-south cooperation projects. They are often the main "supplier" of knowledge to other developing countries. However, these surveys also show that other developing countries can be providers of knowledge, including to the rising south powers.

Emerging South powers and development aid

Several of the emerging south powers have become important providers of development assistance. China stands out, but it also includes a number of others such as India, Brazil and South Africa and a few other middle-income countries (Tjønneland 2013, 2015). These countries have established their own aid agencies or dedicated aid institutions, but they also make strong use of knowledge and management resources from other government departments. The main channel of aid provided is through bilateral arrangements, but they are increasingly channelling funds and resources also through other agencies and have entered the world of trilateral cooperation. This is mainly through international organisations, especially UN agencies and development finance institutions. Importantly, it also includes a number of new Southern finance institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Bank, the BRICS New Development Bank and South Africa's Development Bank of Southern Africa. They have

also – on a more modest scale - contributed to trust funds with the UN and the World Bank for special South initiatives. Examples include the support for the World Bank’s South-South facility discussed above, the joint India, Brazil and South fund for development managed by the UN South-South Office and the India-UN Development Partnership Fund.

Some of the emerging powers have traditionally been reluctant to engage in triangular cooperation with bilateral northern donor agencies. This may now be changing. There is an expanding triangular cooperation between “traditional” and “new” donors. They may view triangular cooperation as an option to address rapidly growing demand from other developing countries for knowledge sharing and expertise and it may be a way of advancing their own evolving development cooperation architectures. In this regard, they might consider triangular cooperation as a way to acquire more international recognition as development partners. Ultimately, however, motivations to engage in triangular cooperation relate to broader foreign policy considerations that vary across countries (Paulo 2018, Zhang 2017, Kondoh 2015, Haider 2018).

Several of the emerging powers also stand about because of the sheer volume of their support to knowledge sharing and capacity building in Africa. In the 2019-2021 Action Plan from the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation China promises to continue this. The Action Plan includes offering 50 000 scholarships for students and 50 000 training opportunities (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation 2018, King 2013). It also includes special emphasis on several sectors such as training in the energy sector. South Africa is also a major provider of educational opportunities for African studies. Currently, more than 50 000 foreign African students are enrolled at South African universities. Most of them are from the Southern Africa region benefiting from opportunities available under a SADC protocol where South Africa allows students from SADC to study in South Africa on similar terms as domestic South African students (but there are no direct funding from South Africa for this).

Norway, Triangular and South-South Cooperation

There is no proper overview of Norwegian development aid to south-south cooperation or more specifically to triangular south-south cooperation. The recent OECD survey referred to above, found Norway to be one of the main donor-supporters of south-south cooperation, but this seems to be based on incomplete responses to the survey questionnaires and the dominance of the projects supported by Norec (see more on Norec below). Over the years, there has been significant Norwegian support to south-south cooperation through both bilateral country programmes and through support to regional cooperation. An early (2003) mapping of the support for good governance in the Southern Africa/SADC region estimated that 10% of the Norwegian support had a regional or south-south component (Norad 2003). A more recent (2013) but incomplete survey of Norwegian support to the African Union and sub-regional organisations also found a varied and large number of projects supported (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2013).

In most of these south-south projects, the triangular component from Norway is mainly financial. There are however also several examples of such projects with components involving knowledge transfer. One illustrative example is within energy and the support to the Southern African Power Pool. This has involved training and knowledge sharing between officials from participating countries, but also in some cases from Norway (sharing experiences from the Nordic power pool model) (Norad 2017).

Norway has also attempted to engage strategically in trilateral cooperation with emerging south powers although much less today compared to the situation a few years ago. This was most evident in relation to South Africa. Norad had a Memorandum of Understanding with South Africa’s new development aid agency, the Foreign Ministry helped initiate and fund a project where the South

African police provided training and capacity building to the police in South Sudan, and more. In the case of China, Norway developed ambitious plans to engage with them in Africa, but this came to an abrupt halt with the deterioration of political relations between the two countries in the aftermath of the award of the Nobel peace prize to Liu Xiaobo in 2010. There has been more use of South African resources mainly because it is believed that they have skills and resources not found in other African countries. In both the energy and security sectors, South African institutions have for more than 25 years been commissioned by Norwegian aid to provide services (the Energy Policy Development Resource Centre at the University of Cape Town has provided training to energy officials from Africa and the Training for Peace in Africa programme relies heavily on South African NGO resources) (Tjønneland & Pillay 2008).

Norec – or FK Norway (Fredskorpset) – is a main Norwegian institution with much focus on south-south cooperation. Many donor agencies have volunteer programmes that provide funding for youth and young professionals to work with institutions in developing countries, but Norec is one of few volunteer programmes that is based on mutual exchange between institutions. Furthermore, there is a large exchange between institutions in the south in addition to a Norwegian-South exchange (Espe 2016, Tjønneland 2016).

Since its establishment in 2000, more than 9600 people have participated in exchanges between 1500 partner organizations in 65 countries, mostly on one-year assignments. Roughly, one third of this volume of activity has been exchange of youth and young professionals between partner networks in developing countries. In some cases this involves a Norwegian partner institution, but in most cases the triangular cooperation revolves around Norec funding and facilitation by the Norec Secretariat of cooperation between south-south partners. Over the years, Norec has established a solid reputation in facilitating personnel exchange between organisations and institutions in the south and of how exchanges can be used to maximise benefits for participating individuals and organisations.

Norec is also the primary channel between Norway and the UN South-South office. The Norwegian examples and best practices mentioned in reports from the UN office are largely examples from Norec's South-South exchanges. Similarly, Norec has also participated in the OECD DAC discussions and most of the Norwegian entries in the OECD survey of triangular south-south projects are Norec projects.

Norwegian NGOs also contribute to south-south and triangular cooperation. This is mainly through a growing emphasis on networking between civil society organisations to facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building, but also through support for regional networks and joint activities and campaigns (Tjønneland 2018).

Norad's Knowledge Bank has carried out an internal mapping exercise of its various programmes to identify the extent and scope of south-south projects (Norad 2018a). While there has been no specific focus on these issues the review finds several examples of triangular and south-south cooperation. They include south-south cooperation without any specific Norwegian contribution beyond funding (such as several projects within food security, energy and research); programmes with south-south components that also had some Norwegian knowledge input (clean energy), and programmes with significant south-south components and Norwegian participation (higher education). The NORHED programme in higher education probably has more comprehensive triangular cooperation than the other programmes (Technopolis Group 2018, Norad 2018b).

2: What works? Knowledge, gaps and challenges

The mapping above showed that south-south cooperation has a long history, it differs widely in scope and purpose and it has gained renewed attention in recent years. Furthermore, the move in economic and political power from the North and West to South and East together with the emergence of middle-income countries have led to much focus on trilateral cooperation.

Real results or development tourism?³

A major challenge is assessing how results from triangular and south-south cooperation relates to the purpose. Is the purpose to improve development outcomes in a specific south country (one or more “beneficiary” countries)? Is it to increase the capacity of a south country (the “providing”/pivotal country) to assist other developing countries? Is it to spread Northern (OECD DAC) norms to emerging south powers? Or is the purpose to promote cooperation between developing countries?

Moreover, what is the “value added” of triangular cooperation? Does funding and technical assistance from a Northern country or international organisation increase efficiency and/or effectiveness compared to direct support to individual developing countries?

What do we know about results from such cooperation in relation to knowledge transfer and capacity building? Does the accelerated growth in knowledge exchange activities lead to any real results, or is it just an opportunity to spend a few days abroad? There are as indicated above, numerous reports on south-south co-operation and activities undertaken but there are few reports on results beyond this. Some studies do give data on outcomes but there are no studies summarizing or synthesizing what they tell us.

Findings from many of these projects tend to show that there are “added value” also linked to development outcomes. The experiences and lessons from personnel exchanges supported by FK Norway/Norec are probably illustrative. Findings from projects facilitating personnel exchange between institutions in Norway and developing countries compared to exchanges between institutions in developing countries indicate that the south-south exchanges have stronger results. One main reason for this seems to be the relevance for participating personnel and institutions.⁴ These findings are however, linked to typical long-term institutional cooperation with several exchange rounds. In most cases, the cooperation is of much shorter duration; they are often small and scattered making assessment of results far more difficult.

A number of the recent trilateral cooperation initiatives have attempted to move beyond listing of activities and outputs and have addressed more systematically outcome issues. Some of the DFID-funded trilateral projects stands out in this respect. DFID’s 2012-2017 agriculture partnership between the UK, China, Uganda and Malawi is an illustrative example. The project aimed to transfer appropriate

³ The title is derived from Igor Carneiro (2017).

⁴ These are indicative findings from a study by Norec based on survey data from participating individuals and institutions. The study is expected to be completed in late 2018.

Chinese agricultural technologies (in cassava and tilapia) from production to processing and value adding in order to improve agricultural productivity and food security. It intended to achieve this through collaborative research, pilot programmes and knowledge-sharing activities. It aimed to bring together Chinese technology experience with DFID's understanding of effective aid delivery related to technology transfer (Buckley 2017, Zhou 2018). Reviews of the programme finds it largely successful. The transactions cost are however high, but it provides important lessons for scaling up trilateral cooperation in this area. Also: this and other reviews identify an additional challenge: the risk of the pivotal/providing becomes an additional foreign donor with the sustainability suffering from low ownership by the beneficiary country.

DFID has also provided more direct support to aid agencies of the emerging powers with a view to help make them effective in delivering aid. Early reviews, such as the review of support to Brazil, indicate that this is challenging when not linked to specific programmes in third countries (DFID 2016).

Overall, any assessment of triangular/south-south cooperation in transferring knowledge support for capacity building will deal with issues and lessons similar to those from the history of technical assistance and capacity building (Timmis 2018). Recent synthesis studies find that there is a dearth of rigorous evaluations of capacity building interventions. This is due to a lack of monitoring and evaluation in the field, conceptual confusion in the literature and a tendency to view capacity building as an "end in itself" rather than a "means to an end". There is often an overemphasis on delivering aid and to identify best practices together with an insufficient focus on the most difficult challenge: achieving results on the ground. Nevertheless, there is a large literature documenting good practice for effective capacity building. In the literature, there is strong consensus on five best practices; ensuring country ownership; recognizing and responding to complexity; improving delivery of technical assistance; involving different levels of government, as well as non-state actors; and focusing on results.

Monitoring and evaluation: The challenge of capturing and sustaining results

Lack of clear purpose is one major challenge in assessing the contribution and added value of triangular/south-south cooperation. Another is proper instruments and systems for measuring, capturing, documenting and learning from projects. A number of guidelines and manuals are now beginning to appear (Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation 2015, UNDP 2016, Network of Southern Think Tanks 2016, and OECD 2018).

The most recent and relevant for this discussion is the emerging toolkit from the OECD Development Assistance Committee. They have identified six dimensions where triangular south-south cooperation may add value and contribute to increasing the effectiveness of international development initiatives. These are: 1) building ownership and trust, 2) promoting complementarity and increasing co-ordination in development co-operation, 3) sharing knowledge and learning jointly, 4) co-creating solutions and flexibility, 5) enhancing the volume, scope and sustainability, and 6) achieving global and regional development goals through strengthened partnerships for sustainable development. For each dimensions indicators have been developed.

Based on this an approach to triangular cooperation should focus on identifying the added value and clarify the role of the three parties. One is the facilitator or donor country in the north that helps to connect countries and organisations to form a triangular partnership and gives financial and/or technical support to the collaboration. The second is the main South partner (the pivotal country or institution) with proven experience and that is willing to share its resources, knowledge and expertise through triangular co-operation. This key south partner is often, but not necessarily, a major middle-

income country with dedicated institutions and resources available for supporting other developing countries. The beneficiary partner is the target of the development results to be achieved through the triangular co-operation project and in line with its own development priorities and needs. The partners in the cooperation are mainly public institutions, but it may also be private actors and civil society.

Each partner can have more than one role and partners can take on various aspects of all roles throughout the lifetime of the triangular collaboration or can play different roles in related activities or partnerships.

Based on the evaluation framework we can identify at least three key dimensions or challenges that must be addressed (Paulo 2018). One is the potential high transaction costs of triangular cooperation. Triangular cooperation is in many ways a third cooperation mechanism. It is a mechanism that comes in addition to established bilateral and multilateral systems for managing delivery of aid. Triangular cooperation requires coordination among three or more countries, possibly including several partner organisations within each country. The modality is therefore more demanding with regards to setting up and aligning the required institutional, legal and financial processes and structures as well as the availability of capacity and staff. Moreover, participating countries need to ensure the compatibility of technical and operational aspects, for instance the organisation of work at field level and evaluation techniques. As a result, effective implementation requires clarity about objectives and a clear division of roles.

Furthermore, ownership in the beneficiary country is crucial. One of the expected benefits of triangular cooperation is to transform existing patterns of development cooperation into more horizontal partnerships by bringing pivotal countries into the equation. However, triangular cooperation runs the risk of falling short of creating genuinely horizontal partnerships. The relationship between traditional donor and pivotal country often dominates the partnership. Lack of ownership and insufficient use of country systems risk undermining effectiveness.

Finally, triangular cooperation has always struggled with the reputation of consisting mainly of relatively small and scattered projects in the form of training, dispatching experts, exchange visits, capacity building and human resource development. High numbers of small projects contribute to the fragmentation of development cooperation.

[Anti-corruption and governance: what role for triangular cooperation?](#)

At one level, south-south cooperation between states has not focused much on governance issues. Such cooperation has traditionally avoided “political” issues and have approached these issues from a “non-interference” perspective. Furthermore, the growing commercial expansion of several emerging south powers have also tended to contribute to increased corruption in several countries. In addition, increased influence of emerging powers have reduced the influence of northern donor agencies. In developing countries with authoritarian governments, it may have weakened any focus on issues related to governance and corruption. In other countries with stronger focus on this, the effect may have been the opposite.

However, developments have also been very mixed and many entry points for triangular south-south cooperation may also be available. This is perhaps best illustrated with China’s role and evolving approaches to these issues. In the past (before 2014) China’s approach was largely to subscribe to international conventions and norms in relation to domestic corruption issues, including provision to fight money laundering og terrorist financing. More recently, provisions have also been adopted in

Chinese policies in relation to corruption abroad, especially linked to bribery of foreign officials. However, there is a stark contrast between the staggering punishments for domestic bribery and the almost complete lack of credible enforcement of provisions against foreign bribery. This position may now be changing. China's renewed efforts to deal with corruption at home have also made it necessary to be able to chase Chinese individuals and assets abroad. More importantly for our discussion is that China now actively seeks to use multilateral forums to strengthen its own role in promoting a global anti-corruption agenda. The Chinese emphasis in this in arenas such as G20, Belt and Road and the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation is to strengthen anti-corruption norms that are compatible with national interests and to frame anti-corruption as intergovernmental "win-win cooperation". This may – as suggested by a recent study (Lang 2018) – also be seen as an emerging and more fundamental Chinese authoritarian alternative to the "good governance" agenda.

However, China's rapidly emerging new role in anti-corruption also illustrates that there are entry points for engagement by traditional donor agencies. This is illustrated with the Chinese commitments under the Forum for China-Africa cooperation. In the most recent 3-year action plan adopted in Beijing in September 2018, China commits itself to train 100 African anti-corruption officials to help strengthen the implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation 2018). These and other issues are also potential entry points for triangular support to south-south cooperation.

Some of the other middle-income countries and emerging powers such as South Africa or India are more receptive also to work with the traditional donors on the governance agenda. However, all of them struggle with the balance between their support to their own business sector operating under often limited anti-corruption supervision and a foreign policy objective recognizing the importance of a good governance agenda.

Triangular cooperation are challenging and demanding in the area of anti-corruption and governance. In many instances, the entry point and added value of triangular cooperation may be best – in the case of Africa - by working through relevant bodies and agencies of the African Union, sub-regional organisations or special programmes such as organisations bringing together revenue services, auditors or customs officials (e. g., the African Tax Administration Forum).

Anti-corruption and governance are also areas where there is great potential to rely on south-south regional networks of civil society organisations and research institutions. They can be supported in relation to advocacy, training/capacity building and/or monitoring of policies and implementation.

3: What are the implications for the Knowledge Bank?

In responding to this final question, we will focus on knowledge sharing/transfer in the bilateral support targeting public institutions in developing countries. Triangular cooperation through the UN, development banks and other international organisations are not included. We have also excluded triangular cooperation where the Norwegian support is purely financial.

In general, development aid funding for both triangular south-south cooperation and south-south cooperation is expanding. Many of the activities supported are scattered and fragmented and with limited capturing and assessment of results. However, this review also found that there potentially could be a distinct added value to triangular south-south cooperation in knowledge sharing and capacity building. This is linked to shared experiences and greater relevance of activities, but also to wider political and economic relations between developing countries. South-south and triangular cooperation has gained impetus from the rise of middle-income and emerging south powers with resources and commitment to support other developing countries.

However, the experiences and findings from recent and ongoing triangular south-south projects also identified challenges. One is the insufficient focus on the purpose of the trilateral cooperation in many projects. What are the objectives beyond promoting south-south cooperation? What are the added value of providing knowledge through triangular cooperation compared to traditional delivery of aid from North to South?

A second key issue is the need to ensure ownership and commitment from the main beneficiary countries. This is an additional challenge in trilateral south-south cooperation with the Northern donor and the main South participant running the risk of ending up as a joint donor group in relation to weaker South countries.

A final observation: the transaction costs of successful trilateral cooperation projects are often high. Triangular cooperation is in many ways a third cooperation system that comes in addition to established bilateral and multilateral systems for managing delivery of aid. Triangular cooperation requires coordination among three or more countries, possibly including several partner organisations within each country.

There is a large and varied experience in supporting triangular south-south cooperation in Norwegian development aid. Much of the Norwegian support in this area are components of bigger Norwegian-funded programmes and projects. However, the history of triangular south-south cooperation is also a history of many relatively small and scattered projects in the form of training, dispatching experts, exchange visits and so on. High number of small projects contribute to the fragmentation of development cooperation.

Among current and recent Norwegian support to triangular cooperation two types stand out and provide important lessons. One is the personnel exchange funded through Norec. Norec's support to south-south cooperation is mainly financial but there is also substantial knowledge transfer from the Norec secretariat to the participating institutions and individuals on how to maximise benefits from personnel exchange. The current exchanges are however mainly confined to youth and young professionals.

The other broad area that offers important lessons is Norwegian support to regional cooperation and countries via regional institutions and regional programmes. Much of this has been limited to financial support, but it has included Norwegian knowledge transfer in specific projects. Such regional mechanism can play an important role in facilitating and advancing policy change through development of common norms and standards, training and capacity building. These are important avenues for support also in relation to political sensitive areas such as governance issue.

Based on these considerations we propose a number of guidelines for the further development and operationalisation of a Norad Knowledge Bank approach to triangular south-south cooperation. It is expected that the bulk of the Knowledge Bank's programmes will still be traditional bilateral aid, but that in some cases triangular cooperation may add value to the support.

1: Identify purpose, objectives and the added value of triangular cooperation

The Knowledge Bank should have a clearly defined purpose and objectives for triangular cooperation. Furthermore, there should be an identified potential added value of the triangular cooperation compared to a pure bilateral cooperation. The trilateral cooperation must address the transfer of knowledge (competence, experiences) between participating developing countries/regional institutions as well as the transfer of Norwegian knowledge (through the Knowledge Bank's programmes and/or skills in management of development aid).

2: Be prepared for higher transaction costs

Transaction costs are often high in trilateral cooperation in development projects. This also includes staffing involved in planning and facilitation. There are solid experiences in bilateral aid from relying on Norwegian knowledge institutions in "twinning" arrangements with partner institutions in developing countries. Ownership by the partner, flexibility on the Norwegian side and long-term cooperation can lead to strong results. Bringing a third party into this (a strong developing country with relevant skills, and/or a regional institution) will often add a strong management burden to the relationship. Major resources will have to be dedicated to improve the capacity of the "delivering" or pivotal south country or regional institution to deliver knowledge and expertise to the other developing country or countries benefitting from the trilateral cooperation. This requires strong competence in aid management. The additional workload will have to be carried by Norad staff (and their consultants) and less by other Norwegian public institutions.

3: Adapt to changing context: emerging powers and expertise in delivering aid

The emergence of middle-income developing countries with dedicated resources and commitment to support other developing countries is changing the context in many of Norway's partner countries. This will also affect the Knowledge Bank's programmes and the role of trilateral cooperation. The massive support provided to education, training and capacity building by especially China in Africa, but

also by South Africa and others, poses new challenges. It may imply need to support other developing countries and/or regional institutions and strengthen their capacities to engage with these south powers. However, it may also suggest that triangular cooperation with these new powers can help strengthen their delivery of aid in a way that improves the benefit for other developing countries.

4: Integrate knowledge transfer in development programmes

Trilateral cooperation projects related to knowledge exchange will benefit from integration with other development programmes. Stand-alone training courses and workshops often have limited value. These development programmes may not necessarily have to be funded and supported by Norway, but the Knowledge Bank should ensure that there are linkages between the knowledge transfer/exchange and these programmes.

In some cases, triangular “light” activities may be supported. These “light” projects will typically be training courses and workshops with participants from different developing countries and where these are not components of bigger development programmes. The focus is often on the activities (e.g., training, sharing of experiences) and outputs (delivery of courses) and less on wider development outcomes. This may be justified where a main purpose of the triangular cooperation is to learn about possibilities and options for further cooperation.

5: Select pilot countries for triangular cooperation

The Knowledge Bank’s programmes are currently active in more than 30 countries. The Knowledge Bank has a main presence (defined as three or more programmes) in six of Norway’s 16 partner countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Tanzania and Uganda).⁵ Some of these countries should be selected for exploring the feasibility of launching a more systematic trilateral cooperation initiative. This may involve one or more of the current programmes.

One illustrative case could be capacity building in the clean energy sector in say Tanzania or Ethiopia, which could involve both the energy and the higher education programmes. A pivotal country in the trilateral cooperation could be China (which has singled out training of energy officials as a priority in the recent 3-year action plan from FOCAC and even invited “third countries” to participate). Another or additional pivotal candidate could be South Africa, which has provided training services to the Norwegian energy programme since the early 1990s. This is also a sector where Norway (in addition to funding) can provide expertise both in energy and in delivery of aid.

Identification and selection of pivotal partners will depend upon context and demand. It should not be restricted to Norway’s main partner countries. Other middle-income and emerging south powers may be selected and invited. It may also include regional institutions and programmes.

Furthermore, participating institutions may not necessarily be restricted to the public sector. It may, in different roles, include civil society, the private sector or research facilities.

⁵ The government’s proposed criteria for selecting partner countries and the choice of the current 16 is currently with Parliament (Norway 2018a). Parliament is scheduled to make a final decision in December this year.

6: Monitor, evaluate and learn

Adequate monitoring mechanisms should be in place for trilateral projects. This will be important not just for the Knowledge Bank and the beneficiary country, but also for the pivotal country/institution in the cooperation. In major projects in partner countries and where feasible, attempts should be made to institute an independent process evaluation ("følgeforskning") with regular feedback to the Knowledge Bank and/or participating developing countries and institutions.

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Mapping and analysis of existing research on South-South and Triangular cooperation in international development

Introduction and rationale

In accordance with the white paper “Common Responsibility for Common Future” (Meld. St. 24, 2016-2017), the Norwegian government tasked Norad with establishing The Knowledge Bank. The mission of The Knowledge Bank is to strengthen the competency and capacity of the public administration in Norway’s partner countries. This will be done through coordination of technical cooperation and facilitating the sharing of knowledge in areas where Norway has particular competencies. Please see www.norad.no/kunnskapsbanken for more information.

The Knowledge Bank shall promote technical cooperation between countries in the South (Prop 1 S. 2018). The explicit goal is to increase the transfer of knowledge and competence between partner countries (North-South-South cooperation) through support to trilateral cooperation. This will mainly be done through the implementation of South-South Cooperation into existing development programmes. As a foundation to this, The Knowledge Bank will commission a mapping and analysis of existing research and lessons learnt from South-South Cooperation.

Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this overview is to provide The Knowledge Bank with a necessary understanding of best practices derived from past experiences and research on South-South Cooperation, and to propose how the Knowledge Bank can meet the goal of increased triangular cooperation.

The objectives are to:

- 6) Map existing research, international norms and standards as well as existing practices on South-South Cooperation among donor organizations.
- 7) Determine, based on existing literature, the most common challenges of South-South Cooperation, and measures to overcome these.
- 8) Map existing practices in results reporting on South-South Cooperation, including how benefits of South-South Cooperation projects are likely to sustain after projects are completed.
- 9) In brief, discuss how anti-corruption and good governance can be implemented in South-South Cooperation programmes in The Knowledge Bank.
- 10) Assess which of the best practices are suited for implementation in current Norwegian development aid through the sectors represented in The Knowledge Bank, based on the “value added” of South South Cooperation to development initiatives.

Scope and tasks

The assignment will cover research on South-South Cooperation.

Objective 1:

Map existing research, international norms and standards as well as existing practices on South-South Cooperation among donor organizations. This objective includes providing an overview of the trends within existing research on South-South cooperation, at the minimum those listed in Annex 1. The report should provide an historical outline on how South-South Cooperation as a concept has evolved over time and the current ‘consensus’, if it exists, within the international development community on the preferred approach to South-South Cooperation. International norms and standards may include UN resolutions and similar

agreements, and donor organisations could be the UN, the World Bank, and major Non-Governmental Organisations.

Objective 2:

Determine based on existing literature, the most common challenges of South-South cooperation, and measures to overcome these. The consultant will provide an overview of the most commonly encountered pitfalls of implementing South-South Cooperation from a donor perspective in existing development portfolios through analysis of case studies and experiences highlighted in literature. The consultant will include a section on measures to overcome the described challenges.

Objective 3:

Map existing practices in results reporting on South-South Cooperation and assess the extent to which benefits of South-South Cooperation projects are likely to sustain after projects are completed. The consultant will determine, based on existing body of research, the most commonly employed methods for results reporting on South-South Cooperation from a donor perspective. The consultant can also include thoughts on which are most applicable to the activities of The Knowledge Bank. The consultant is asked to assess whether historically, benefits to local populations and organisations have been observed after South-South Cooperation projects have been completed. What measures have been/can be taken to ensure that prolonged benefits manifest even after development programs have transpired?

Objective 4:

Discuss how anti-corruption and good governance can be implemented in South-South Cooperation programmes in The Knowledge Bank. In accordance with Meld. St. 24 (2017/2018), The Knowledge Bank shall facilitate the transfer of knowledge on good governance and anticorruption practices within the sectors covered by The Knowledge Bank. The consultant shall gather data on the implementation of good governance and anticorruption in existing South-South projects. Based on this, and statistics on corruption in the partner countries, the consultant will make a recommendation on which sectors and countries are in greatest need of aid projects that encompass good governance and anticorruption.

Objective 5:

Assess which of the best practices are suited for implementation in current Norwegian development aid through the sectors represented in The Knowledge Bank, based on the "value added" of South South Cooperation to development initiatives. The consultant will first assess based on available literature what the "value added" of implementing South-South Cooperation in development projects is, and based on this, recommend the most feasible areas for The Knowledge Bank to implement South-South Cooperation, per sector and country, in light of the sectors represented in The Knowledge Bank and the its partner countries.

If time permits, Objective 6:

Compile data on past and ongoing South-South projects in Norway's partner countries distributed among sectors represented in The Knowledge Bank. The consultant shall draw on accumulated data where available, through OECD, UN and others. The consultant shall not conduct primary research but base the analysis on already available data to map projects (by number of projects and amount of monetary funding) conducted in the last 5 years that included a South-South component and present a graphical illustration of the following data:

- Total volume of South-South projects in the time period and
- Distribution of projects per country
- Distribution of projects per sector
- Distribution of projects per organisation

Suggested data sources

This overview shall be conducted a desk study where the selected consultant will use open sources. Data sources will among others include:

- Norad and the Knowledge Bank
- OECD DAC statistics
- United Nations Office on South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC)
- World Bank Group
- Regional development banks
- USAID, DFID; other main donors
- Technical networks/knowledge hubs websites and reports (e.g. ALNAP, Development Initiatives)
- National statistics, where available.

All data shall be captured and presented in text as well as tables, graphs or figures.

Deliverables and tentative timeline

The timeline will be agreed upon before signing contract, but the deliverables and tentative timeframes is:

- Signing of contract at as soon as possible
- A draft report of maximum 15 pages, disregarding annexes, shall be delivered 2-3 weeks after signing of contract.
- A final report including figures and graphs shall be delivered 2-3 weeks after the delivery of the draft report.
- Datasets/database in Excel compatible format.

Suggested bibliography

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