

## SECTION 2. PRACTICE

### 2.1 Overview

This section discusses how to integrate South-South and triangular cooperation into the common country programming process and throughout UN operational activities for development as set out in “UNSDCF: Internal guidance” of 2019<sup>20</sup> and its companion “Consolidated annexes”<sup>21</sup> updated in May 2022, as well as the “Cooperation Framework companion package” of May 2020.<sup>22</sup> It sets out the key considerations and practical steps for UNCTs to integrate South-South and triangular cooperation priorities of national government partners at each stage of the CCA and UNSDCF processes as well as throughout the implementation of all UN operational activities for development at the country level.

While this section focuses foremost on the common country programming process, clarifying how these guidelines complement the other UNSDCF companion pieces, it also embraces the full breadth of UN operational activities at the country level and considers the possibility of identifying and designing South-South and triangular cooperation activities at any point during the UNSDCF programming and implementation cycles.

While the UN development system advocates for the benefits of South-South and triangular cooperation, those modalities *are demand-driven and are to be pursued at the request of, and in consultation with, national authorities*. In the UNSDCF Results Group discussions, South-South and triangular cooperation are a means of implementation and enablers. Thus, the Results Groups could identify opportunities for joint South-South and triangular cooperation in support of the UNSDCF outcomes. These opportunities can be discussed with government and other stakeholders involved in South-South and triangular cooperation, throughout the year.

The UNSDCF is an important entry point for UN development system engagement in and support to the coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation at the country level. There is also room within national planning processes for UN entities to coordinate their South-South and triangular cooperation operational activities consistent with their mandates and national priorities.

Prioritizing key areas early will ensure greater development impact by allowing time for the creation of synergies through which UN entities, within their mandates, can build coalitions around a priority area, each entity with its specific experience, unique role and expertise.

This section identifies entry points in analysis, planning, policy and programming as well as practical options for the UN development system at the country level, when requested, to

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<sup>20</sup> UN, Sustainable Development Group, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, Internal guidance, 3 June 2019. Available at [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019\\_1.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/UN-Cooperation-Framework-Internal-Guidance-Final-June-2019_1.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> UN, Sustainable Development Group, Consolidated annexes to the Cooperation Framework guidance, updated in May 2022. Available at <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/consolidated-annexes-cooperation-framework-guidance>.

<sup>22</sup> UN, Sustainable Development Group, “Cooperation Framework companion package”, May 2020. Available at <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAAsia/Docs/Misc/UNSC2/21%20Cooperation%20Framework%20Companion%20Package%20%282020%29.pdf>.

integrate South-South and triangular cooperation into UN operational activities for development, especially the CCA and UNSDCF programming processes. It will focus on the CCA, stakeholder engagement and programming while also offering practical options for using South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as modalities to optimize development solutions at any time during UNSDCF implementation.

**2.2 Road map for the UNSDCF design process**

The road map constitutes the advance planning stage and an opportunity to integrate South-South and triangular cooperation into the key milestones, timelines, support needs and roles in the UNSDCF design process in line with the 2019 UNSDCF internal guidance, its 2022 consolidated annexes and its 2020 companion package. There are three main entry points for integrating South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation into the road map:

- (a) positioning South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in the review of **country analytic work**, including identifying if the country has in place a South-South and triangular cooperation framework;<sup>23</sup>
- (b) identifying South-South and triangular cooperation stakeholders in the **mapping exercise**; and
- (c) identifying **UNCT comparative advantages and gaps** in integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into the national development planning process and the CCA and UNSDCF elaboration processes.

Checklist 1. Positioning South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation in the road map for the UNSDCF process		
UNSDCF features in the road map	UNSDCF elaboration actions	South-South and triangular cooperation actions to include in the road map
Stakeholder engagement	The road map is developed by UN entities present both in-country and elsewhere to ensure maximum UN development system participation. It also offers the opportunity to begin mapping stakeholders nationally and regionally.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flag the need to:</b> Map and identify South-South and triangular cooperation stakeholders – building, if available, on a country’s existing South-South and triangular cooperation framework – including civil society organizations, women’s and youth organizations, donors, academia and the private sector, especially organizations and representatives of groups most left behind, as well as all relevant

<sup>23</sup> Some countries may have already developed a South-South and triangular framework, which should be considered as a basis for early discussions with the Government on integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into the CCA and UNSDCF processes.

		expertise in South-South and triangular cooperation within and outside the UN development system.
CCA	The CCA underpins the UNSDCF and is updated periodically at a frequency determined by the UNCT in light of the country context but at least once a year.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flag the need to:</b> Include South-South and triangular cooperation perspectives in identifying the resources and analytical tools to map challenges, opportunities, national capacity gaps, national and regional stakeholders, and UN development-system comparative advantages, strengths and capacity gaps. Refer to <a href="#">Checklist 2, 3 and 4</a>
UNSDCF and results framework formulation	The UNSDCF is formulated based on the stakeholder engagement, guiding principles, the CCA, and UNCT comparative advantages and gaps.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flag the need to:</b> Position South-South and triangular cooperation modalities in the UNSDCF results areas and framework when identified as suitable options during the previous analysis and mapping steps. South-South and triangular cooperation could also be an enabler to achieve specific UNSDCF outcomes or outputs or could be included as partnerships for delivering on the UNSDCF results. Refer to <a href="#">Checklist 6 and 7</a> .
UN-entity country programmes	UN-entity country programmes are derived from the outcomes in the UNSDCF.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flag the need to:</b> Determine, based on the comparative advantages of the UN entity/entities, where and how to contextualize South-South and triangular cooperation results from the UNSDCF in UN-entity work plans, as appropriate.
Joint workplans	Joint workplans are derived from the UNSDCF outcomes and outputs and reported on annually.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flag the need to:</b> Based on the comparative advantages of the UN entities, include South-South and triangular cooperation-related outcomes and outputs from the UNSDCF in joint workplans of UN entities, as appropriate, and monitor

		and report on them through the annual review.
<b>Resource mobilization and partnerships</b>	The UNSDCF expands from funding per se (resource mobilization for UN programmes) to SDG financing (leveraging all available financial flows and instruments to support national priorities for achieving the SDGs).	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flag the need to:</b> Elaborate on opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships and ensure inclusion of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation financing mechanisms including Southern-led international financial institutions to leverage financial flows and instruments to support national priorities for achieving the SDGs. Refer to <a href="#">Checklist 5</a>
<b>Joint National-UN Steering Committee</b>	The UNSDCF is governed by the Joint National-UN Steering Committee, which may include other stakeholders as determined based on the national context.	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Flag the need to:</b> Consider to include and engage South-South and triangular cooperation national actors, such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs or national development cooperation agencies, in the Joint National-UN Steering Committee.  Consider including and engaging South-South and triangular cooperation actors in the UNSDCF multi-stakeholder advisory boards/committees.
<b>Monitoring, reporting and evaluation</b>	The preparation of the M&E framework includes the formation of results groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning from other countries on development solutions they have implemented to address similar challenges, could be included as part of the terms of reference of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Group of the UNCT

## 2.3 Common country analysis (CCA): Country analysis, capacity analysis and partnerships mapping

South-South and triangular cooperation may be discussed at the earliest stages of UN development system-Government engagement during national development planning, when the expectations of the UN development system at the country level are being articulated. From a UNSDCF perspective, this takes place when developing the road map and throughout the CCA process. This is the time to identify national priorities, i.e., opportunities where South-South cooperation or triangular cooperation could help accelerate development results.

Later, once the UNSDCF has been approved and adopted, these same analytical tools remain suitable and should be used at any time that South-South cooperation or triangular cooperation emerges as a suitable modality for tackling a development challenge during UNSDCF implementation – for example, when developing joint programmes.

As noted in the UNSDCF internal guidance, early discussions should consider development trends beyond national boundaries such as regional, subregional and cross-border strategies and partnerships both external and internal to the UN development system and good practices from other countries and regions in national priority areas. These supranational considerations also actively facilitate and foster South-South and triangular cooperation.

The UNOSSC-assisted national stocktaking exercise on trends and opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation (discussed in section 2.3.2) is a suitable tool for this exercise and for each step of the process. This section looks at this unfolding process step by step and provides catalytic actions and entry points in the main areas of consideration of the CCA:

- (a) **The common country analysis** focuses on national development challenges and needs and how they may be addressed through South-South and triangular cooperation, based on analysis of existing South-South and triangular cooperation operational activities, potential new South-South and triangular cooperation opportunities, and the comparative advantages of the UNCT and agencies.
- (b) **Partnership and stakeholder mapping and engagement** prioritize inclusive dialogue with a wide range of actors to identify South-South and triangular cooperation development solutions to address the country's development challenges and capacity needs. This includes mapping South-South and triangular cooperation stakeholders for the UNSDCF at the country and regional levels as well as regional players.

### 2.3.1 Common country analysis

The CCA constitutes a unique moment in the UNSDCF process when the UNCT undertake an independent, collective, integrated, forward-looking, evidence-based joint assessment and analysis of the country situation. It is a key entry point and the ideal tool for exploring, in consultation with national partners, whether a development challenge can be met through South-South and/or triangular cooperation.

As highlighted in “UNSDCF: Internal guidance” (3 June 2019), the CCA is no longer a one-off event but rather a real-time, core analytical function that is **periodically updated**; as such, the CCA remains a valid tool for integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into UN operational activities for development *at any time during the UNSDCF life cycle* – even when UNSDCF implementation is under way.

Furthermore, CCA **exploration of cross-border and regional elements** offers a window through which to introduce South-South and triangular cooperation knowledge, resources and good practices from elsewhere in the region and globally into the UNSDCF process and UN operational activities more broadly.

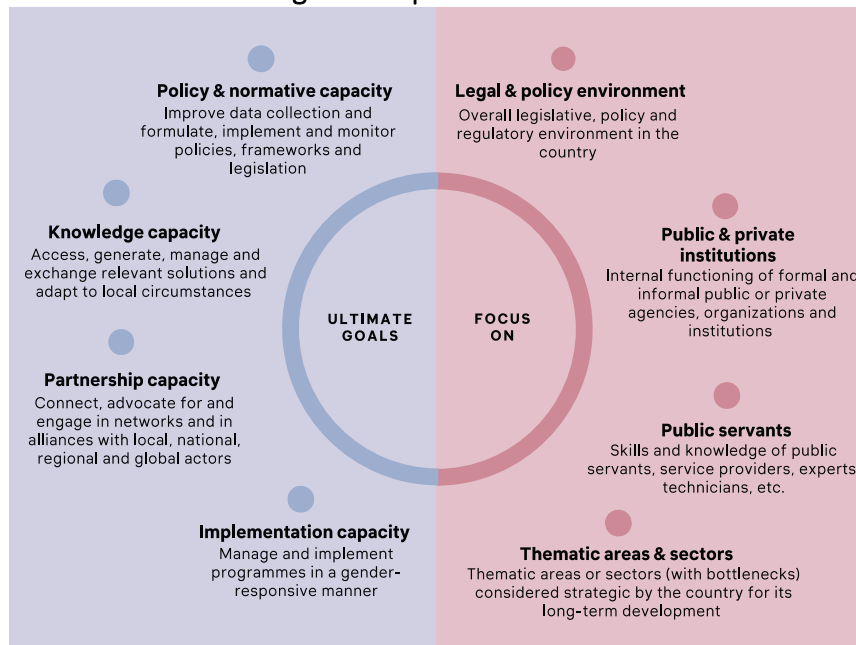
The CCA also offers a unique opportunity to **map key South-South and triangular cooperation stakeholders** relevant to UNSDCF implementation and UN operational activities.

In the CCA step, the aim is to analyze and identify gaps and opportunities in the development process which UN interventions and that of other development actors will address. At a later stage, the prioritization exercise, during the UNSDCF development stage, South-South and triangular cooperation can be intergrated. This step is key for integrating South-South cooperation and/or triangular cooperation into the UNSDCF because the decision to choose South-South cooperation and/or triangular cooperation as suitable to address a given development challenge or accelerate results is informed by analyses regarding each of these topics. Refer to [Checklist 3 and 4](#).

### 2.3.2 South-South and triangular cooperation capacity analysis

UN system support to developing national capacity for the achievement of national priorities and the SDGs is central to the Nairobi and BAPA+40 outcome documents and the stated main purpose of South-South and triangular cooperation. UN system support in this effort is demand-driven and anchored in country ownership, leadership, commitment and priorities. The ultimate goal of the UN capacity analysis, seen through the lens of South-South and triangular cooperation, is to identify gaps and enhance and sustain national capacity to achieve national priorities and the SDGs. Figure 2 shows the ultimate goals and the focus of UN South-South and triangular cooperation capacity analysis.

Figure 2. Assessment of national capacities with a view to engaging in South-South and triangular cooperation



Central to its goal to build national capacity, the capacity analysis helps to determine if a development challenge can be met through South-South cooperation and/or triangular cooperation by identifying:

- (a) **the overall development bottlenecks and capacity gaps;**
- (b) **national, subnational and institutional capacities and coordination mechanisms, including the adoption of new technologies and data systems; and**
- (c) **emerging challenges, critical gaps and potential partnerships.**

The South-South and triangular cooperation capacity analysis complements these CCA tools and resources and is informed by the data and evidence that emerge from the national development planning and UNSDCF processes. Refer to [Checklist 4](#) for Guiding questions.

### **Box 2. National stocktaking exercise on trends and opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation**

The national stocktaking exercise equips national partners and UN entities to leverage South-South and triangular cooperation for greater impact, especially in building back better from COVID-19 and fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. Requests are initiated through the Government and resident coordinators and have successfully enabled countries to identify practical policy, programme and partnership opportunities to promote South-South cooperation and raise awareness of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as effective development tools.

#### **The national stocktaking exercise aims to:**

- **Take stock** of the cooperation stage in the country, including at the regional level, while documenting successful policies and practical solutions across various areas and sectors that can be easily adopted and replicated in other similar country contexts.
- **Identify** the main challenges and opportunities in establishing/strengthening/consolidating South-South and triangular cooperation; and
- **Develop** a set of practical recommendations for national stakeholders and UN country teams.



### *2.3.3 South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships*

Engaging partners and stakeholders is a key element of UN development system support to South-South and triangular cooperation at the country level. The CCA offers a unique opportunity to map key partners and stakeholders relevant to the implementing of the UNSDCF and national sustainable development goals. These may include national and regional institutions, technical cooperation agencies, centres of excellence and academic institutions, youth groups and volunteer organizations, the private sector, development banks and export-import banks. The guiding questions in [Checklist 5](#) help to identify the South-South and triangular cooperation actors in the country.

## **2.4 Programming: United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and strategic planning**

### *2.4.1 Determining solutions relating to South-South and triangular cooperation for the UNSDCF results framework*

The CCA may provide the data and information to identify the development challenges for which South-South cooperation or triangular cooperation can be deemed the more suitable option or an accelerator of development results.

Specifically, based on national priorities and interests expressed by Government, the UNCT compares the results of the national **capacity-gap analysis with the comparative advantages of UN entities** to determine the specific South-South and triangular cooperation solutions that could be shared with the country and included in the UNSDCF results framework. Those results include data and information fed into the UNSDCF from three sources: the CCA; national and subregional development planning, budgeting and financing; and root causes of exclusion.

The next step is to **adopt and integrate** South-South and triangular cooperation priorities identified by the Government and its partners into **(a) the theory of change for the UNSDCF could reflect South-South and triangular cooperation as enablers, (b) the UNSDCF results framework** using as a basis the country-level results areas, outcomes, outputs and proposed deliverables identified in the UN system-wide strategy on South-South, and triangular cooperation, and **(c) into UNSDCF programming and operational tools and implementation instruments**, such as UNSDCF results groups, joint workplans, joint annual reviews and monitoring frameworks, etc. Refer to [Checklist 6](#)

In turn, individual **UN entities at the country level could include a focus on** South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as *means of implementation* that enable the UN development system to offer to a developing country suitable and complementary support

to accelerate development results. Individual UN entities could also **contextualize and integrate** the proposed South-South and triangular cooperation outcome areas and key deliverables into their respective country programmes and workplans, which will use and build on the country-level outcomes, outputs and proposed activities identified in the UN system-wide strategy and the 2016 framework of operational guidelines on UN support to South-South and triangular cooperation (SSC/19/3). Refer to [Checklist 7](#).

#### ***2.4.2 Catalytic actions and criteria***

Aligning with the South-South and triangular cooperation principles outlined in section 1.2, the UNCT may consider the specific South-South and triangular cooperation solutions in light of the catalytic actions and criteria in [Checklist 8](#).

## 2.5 United Nations country team (UNCT) configuration

The UNCT configuration exercise, a central component of the UNSDCF internal guidance, is designed to ensure that the UNCT is fit for purpose. The configuration exercise, as noted in the UNSDCF internal guidance, enables an examination of the capacities available and needed (programmatic and operational) and potential synergies to deliver on the UNSDCF. The configuration exercise, therefore, can also serve to examine UNCT capacities in South-South and triangular cooperation and determine where gaps need to be filled based on the common country analysis of South-South and triangular cooperation needs.

The internal assessment and mapping of capacities consider individual entities' mandates, comparative advantages and added value relative to UNSDCF priority areas, with a focus on identifying gaps, synergies and overlaps. In parallel with the CCA phase of the UNSDCF, the internal exercise offers an ideal moment to ensure that the UNCT has the capacities necessary to support the implementation of a South-South cooperation and/or triangular cooperation modality. Steps in this process and the suggested actions to assess the collective UNCT South-South and triangular cooperation capacities are available in [Checklist 9](#). Guiding questions to assess the UNCT configuration for capacities needed for South-South and triangular cooperation are available in [Checklist 10](#).