

Minutes
**2017 RTIM Pre-Consultation on Enhancing South-South and Triangular
Cooperation: “Institutional Arrangement and Monitoring”**

Ministry of Planning and Investment
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The Government, together with development partners and other stakeholders, has realized the important contribution of south-south and triangular cooperation to the achievement of 8th NSEDP, including the LDC graduation and SDG achievement. As highlighted in the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, countries engaged in South-South Cooperation both provide and receive resources, expertise and technology. This complements traditional forms of development cooperation, rather than replacing them.

Knowledge sharing and mutual learning will be strengthened by:

- a) Deepening the understanding of the nature and modalities of South-South cooperation that are guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit, and the ways and means to enhance and accelerate its development impact;
- b) Developing and scaling up of triangular cooperation initiatives, both at strategic, policy and project level;
- c) Encouraging the development of networks for knowledge exchange, peer learning and coordination among South-South cooperation actors as a means of facilitating access to important knowledge pools;
- d) Enhancing the collective knowledge concerning the possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer on voluntary and mutually agreed terms, and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies that can be utilized to the advantage of Lao PDR; and
- e) Better integrating south-south cooperation partners into coordination structures such as the Round Table Process and its Sector Working Groups.

Key points for further enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation

1. **South-South and Triangular Cooperation provides an important contribution** to the existing development cooperation for the achievement of the national development goals including the Sustainable Development Goals and LDC graduation. Different countries have different approaches to achieve national development goals and targets. However, all partners work towards the same objectives: sustainable development and the improvement of people’s life. There is therefore the need to increase efforts to learn from each other, based on different approaches but with a shared vision on not leaving anyone behind. Similar levels of development and experiences enable developing countries to share good practices and development solutions that are easily adaptable to local economic and social conditions.

2. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. A **comprehensive national approach to South-South and Triangular Cooperation**, including a clear process and content, is crucial. This should be guided and supported by a comprehensive national roadmap, a strong institutional setup and clear arrangements. It is also important to ensure all partners understand the core concepts and modalities, particularly on how to implement, monitor, and assess development impacts. At provincial level, full participation and engagement of local authorities is important to ensure South-South and Triangular Cooperation benefits the local level as well.
3. **National ownership** is key for enhancing the effectiveness of South-South and Triangular Cooperation programmes and initiatives. Lao PDR will need to ensure alignment to national systems and development priorities. South-South and Triangular Cooperation has to be demand-driven.
4. **Horizontality and solidarity.** South-South and Triangular Cooperation requires that countries collaborate with each other as equal partners. This means that, irrespective of their different levels of development, collaboration is established voluntarily without any party linking its participation to the setting of conditions. South-South Cooperation is based on consensus between all partners involved, within a common negotiation framework, and through mixed commissions or their equivalent. It is important the benefits are distributed equitably among partners.
5. **Capacity development, learning and sustainability.** Engaging in South-South and Triangular Cooperation required enhanced capacities to help establish supply and demand, improve modalities of cooperation, and better seize opportunities for knowledge and technology transfer. Where possible, local systems, expertise and resources should be used, to ensure sustainability.
6. **Transparency, accountability and information management.** South-South and Triangular Cooperation works best when all partners involved have the right information and data. This will prevent overlaps, facilitate greater complementary and reduce transaction costs. Information-sharing thus needs to be improved to ensure better quality and results.
7. **Inclusive partnerships.** It has been demonstrated that South-South and Triangular Cooperation leads to good development results when the cooperation is based on long-term relations, and the willingness to scale up and diversity partnerships. Multi-stakeholder participation is desirable, including not only traditional OECD donors but also regional and emerging partners. These should be engaged in the Round Table Process and Sector Working Groups, complementing the strong bilateral relations. In addition, greater efforts are needed to further involve local authorities in the implementation, monitoring and reporting of development outcomes of South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
8. **South-South Cooperation in the Global Arena.** To further enhance South-South and Triangular Cooperation, it is important that country-level action is strategically linked to regional and global initiatives, including in particular the engagement in regional and international platforms for experience-sharing. Coalition building, learning exchanges, secondments, and international peer learning and networking will be increasingly important.

Potential next steps include the following:

1. Prepare a **draft a roadmap**, including milestones on next steps to enhance South-South and Triangular Cooperation
2. Strengthen existing **institutional arrangements**, looking for instance into terms of reference of, and division of labour between, key institutions.
3. Enhance **institutional coordination**, for instance by establishing a coordinated task force and mechanism to share information, identify new opportunities and challenges, and follow up on opportunities, ensuring South-South and Triangular Cooperation is demand-based.
4. Identify immediate needs related to **the development of national capacities** on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
5. Identify **opportunity to engage in global platforms** aiming to tap knowledge and experience of other countries and international organizations such as exchange programmes, secondment, peer learning etc.
6. Find **complementarities and promote convergence** between North-South and South-South partners
7. Provide a **clear monitoring and evaluation framework** to measure progress.