

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN ACTION

Stories of Success



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Foreword



In March 2018, three countries on two continents – Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Congo – took an unprecedented step to protect the world’s largest tropical peatland. The area in question, the Cuvette Centrale, is a vast store of carbon that lies in the heart of the Congo Basin.

Policymakers in the DRC and the Republic of Congo had a clear vested interest in the health of this portion of the planet’s “lungs”. To achieve the aim of peatland protection, they secured support from Indonesia, another country of the global south, which is responding to a similar challenge and possesses significant experience of managing tropical peatlands. With UNEP’s support together with that of the Global Peatlands Initiative, the three countries signed the Brazzaville Declaration on Peatlands. The result was a commitment to promote better management and conservation of this globally-important carbon store and biodiversity treasure.

This represents South-South cooperation at its best.

The world needs more collaborations like this. In the 2012 Rio+20 Conference outcome document, “The Future We Want”, Member States reiterated their support for South-South cooperation in the implementation of development programmes that are attuned to the particular circumstances of developing countries. The Sustainable Development Goals themselves stress the importance of South-South cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Goal 17 – which aims to “Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”, places particular emphasis on the critical role of South-South cooperation, as well as Triangular Cooperation – among developing countries and developed country partners – in achieving this ambitious development agenda.

South-South cooperation thus represents an efficient and cost-effective way to step up efforts to meet the SDGs, fulfil climate-related commitments, and safeguard biodiversity. UNEP has a long history of promoting South-South cooperation, and the stories presented in this booklet are a mere sampling of what can be achieved through the deliberate design and implementation of projects that encourage the exchange of knowledge among developing countries.

More than this, UNEP and the UN system as a whole have a duty to scale-up South-South cooperation efforts. There are a number of ways to achieve this: by intensifying multilateral support for South-South initiatives to address common development challenges; by fostering inclusive partnerships for South-South cooperation; and by optimizing the use of South-South approaches in achieving the internationally agreed development goals.

The examples which we are pleased to share with you in this booklet, demonstrate just how much progress can be achieved if we incorporated South-South cooperation into all of UNEP’s programme of work.

For this reason, we will continue to support countries in the developing world to learn from each other’s experiences. The benefits, often achievable at modest cost, are more than worth the effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Lewis'.

Gary Lewis

Director, Policy and Programme Division, UNEP



Introduction

Since 1978, when the delegations from 138 states adopted a Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (the Buenos Aires Plan of Action), South-South cooperation and “triangular cooperation” – collaboration among developing countries and a developed-world partner – have been recognized as important means of development cooperation and technology transfer.

In March 2019, during the Second United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to South-South cooperation (SSC) and called for greater South-South cooperation to achieve sustainable development. The Bali Strategic Plan (BSP) on Technology Support and Capacity-Building of 2005 (UNEP/GC.23/6/Add.1) recognized South-South cooperation as a means of supporting capacity-building efforts in developing countries and countries with economies in transition through systematic partnerships and the exchange of expertise, experiences, best practices and knowledge among experts and institutions of the South.

Collaboration among countries in the developing world promotes country or regional ownership of new policies and facilitates the uptake of new technologies and methodologies. Indeed, the Sustainable Development Goals stress the importance of South-South cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Goal 17, “Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development,” places particular emphasis on the critical role of South-South and triangular cooperation in achieving this ambitious development agenda.

UNEP has for many years used South-South and triangular cooperation in the delivery of the organization's programme of work, and it continues to do so today. This pamphlet showcases UNEP's engagement in this approach through a variety of projects and initiatives conducted over the past few years. Key lessons learned in the implementation of these projects can help us to better structure and implement South-South and triangular cooperation. These include the following:

- Knowledge sharing and flow of information should be continuous.
- Building strong relationships among partners is necessary to ensure political buy-in. Influencing decisions does not depend solely on producing convincing science and useful information; it is also about building relationships.
- Adaptability, flexibility, and country-level ownership are key to ensuring the sustainability of interventions beyond the life of the project.
- Long-term commitment is key to ensuring that interventions have continuity.
- Objectives must be aligned with national strategies and goals.
- Interventions at the sub-national level can be very successful.
- South-South cooperation helps create synergies and scale-up environmental monitoring capacities.
- South-South cooperation needs to be supported and to happen at many levels to have the highest impact and results – from scientists to political leaders, all partners benefit from sharing experiences and drawing on international expertise to make the best informed and most ambitious commitments with confidence.

The projects and initiatives highlighted in this document demonstrate how South-South and triangular cooperation can facilitate and catalyse environmental management, policy development, and implementation. These examples make the case for increased focus on South-South cooperation to achieve impact and increase efficiency. They demonstrate that the tailored and purposeful application of this approach can enhance countries' abilities to attain the SDGs as well as the efficiency of UN agencies and other development partners in supporting them towards this goal.

“I see five issues that will be central to implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. South-South cooperation can offer solutions to all of them.”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS – REMARKS TO THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (BAPA+40, 2019).



ACP MEAs Project Steering Committee
in Brussels, Belgium (2017).

Photo: UNEP

Supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements through the strengthening of environmental governance

The challenge

Biodiversity loss – which is driven primarily by climate change and unsustainable resource use – has a direct and harmful impact on human health and livelihoods. The management of society’s hundreds of highly useful but also potentially noxious chemicals presents another important challenge. To address these and other challenges, countries have forged a host of multilateral environmental agreements, which include global commitments such as the Convention on Biological Diversity; the Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions; and, more recently, universal goals and targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, transforming these agreements into tangible change remains a challenge, as many developing countries face obstacles to their implementation, including constraints in human, financial, and technical resources.

The strategy

Through the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) programme, which works with countries in those regions, UNEP supports two key areas of environmental governance: preventing biodiversity loss and enabling the sound management of chemicals and waste. In the past decade, the ACP programme has supported the institutionalization of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) by enhancing the capacities of regional institutions, national bodies, and most importantly, by empowering change makers. The programme acts at different levels: global, regional and national, with the main objective of supporting partner countries in the specific areas required and to drive change within each one’s national context.

The impact

The programme introduced regional 'hubs' within the following regional inter-governmental organizations: the African Union Commission (AUC); the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM); and the Secretariat for the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). These hubs have provided MEA support to their member states by enhancing officials' negotiating skills and developing institutional and policy frameworks for the implementation of MEAs.



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) training in the Cook Islands (May 2017).
Photo: UNEP

African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, the project actively promotes and is supported by South-South cooperation.

Cooperation across regions

The project allowed knowledge to be shared across regions of the Global South. UNEP regional coordinators travelled to each other's regions to participate in activities. At a workshop held in March 2016, representatives from 17 developing countries from three regions shared their experiences of revising their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). The stakeholders' experiences and relevant country case studies were captured in UNEP (2016).

Two of the three regions (the Caribbean and the Pacific) consist primarily of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Sharing of knowledge and experiences among countries in these two regions has proved to be a successful model for facilitating South-South cooperation.

Cooperation within regions

Africa

In December 2018, a workshop was held to promote the harmonization of Prior Informed Consent (PIC) on international trade in hazardous chemicals and Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) pesticides. The two-day meeting was attended by eight participants who work in the field of POPs and pesticides regulation and management; the participants represented seven Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Ethiopia, Djibouti,

Lessons learned

One of the key lessons learned is that there should be a steady flow of information and knowledge to catalyse environmental change through South-South cooperation. Ad hoc implementation of South-South knowledge sharing is not sufficient to create a culture of knowledge and experience sharing. Dedicated and sustained mechanisms must be established to facilitate such exchanges across the three regional hubs.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

The ACP MEAs Programme implements activities in 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, most of which are categorized as least developed countries. While this project is made possible by cooperation between the European Commission and the secretariat of the

Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda). The workshop sensitized participants on the need to harmonize PIC and POPs chemicals as well as the need to develop a road map towards achieving coordinated use of the Global Harmonized System (GHS) codes on trade in hazardous waste chemicals. It also recommended that a concrete and adequate labelling system for the PIC and POP pesticides be defined through a regional approach that integrates transboundary movement, storage and use of notification procedures for traders across the IGAD Member States.

Caribbean

The ACP MEA Programme's Caribbean Hub has been leading the efforts in developing the first-ever regional Biodiversity Strategy for the Caribbean, a global biodiversity hotspot. Through a wide consultative process spanning over two-years, which included member states, civil society stakeholders, and others, the intra-regional effort established a biodiversity strategy that is customized to the region and that is considered a significant milestone. The strategy is expected to be endorsed in 2019.

Pacific

In 2017, SPREP established a partnership and collaboration with the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Bureau of Environment and Coastal Quality in delivering capacity-building training on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) compliance and permitting in Pohnpei and Kosrae States of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). The training targeted government sectors, business communities, Environmental Protection Agency board members, environment officers, and municipal council members. The training was in response to a request by the Office of Environment and Emergency Management (OEEM) of FSM. A review of the existing EIA guidelines for FSM was initiated as a direct result of the training. In 2018, the Pacific Hub organized a regional review meeting of the ACP MEA

2 Project Pacific component. The event brought together representatives from Pacific ACP countries to share their experiences, ideas, best practices and lessons learned on environmental impact assessments, State of Environment (SOE) reporting, NEMS, MEA implementation, as well as on engagement at MEA Conference of the Parties (COP) meetings.

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

South-South cooperation plays a clear role in achieving the project's objectives. For example, inter-regional South-South cooperation between the Pacific and the Caribbean Hubs, particularly during phase 1 of the ACP MEA Project, helped to foster a good working relationship between the two hubs; it was also instrumental in building a good understanding of issues that are common between the two regions. Bringing country representatives together in a regional forum creates an excellent platform for learning, sharing and networking. According to the Pacific Hub, for South-South cooperation to be effective and meaningful, **all parties need to be engaged right at the outset** and take an active role in designing and delivering South-South interventions. This approach helps to build ownership of the process as well as the outcomes that are achieved. Such ownership is key to ensuring that the mechanisms established are **sustained beyond the life of the project**. SPREP recommends that, going forward, South-South cooperation should aim to facilitate exchanges among key decision-makers, including parliamentarians and other actors.

“We producers live daily with pesticide related risks. Some producers, after treating and during the treatment of their farms with pesticides, without washing their hands clean, eat and smoke. We, some years later, notice their health deteriorating. Thanks to the various awareness campaigns in the course of the [ACP MEAs] programme, people are more careful and try to better manage pesticide storage and treatment procedures.”

YAYA DIALLO

COTTON PRODUCER, VELINGARA, SENEGAL

Project Title: Capacity-building related to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries – ACP MEAs Programme

Subprogramme: Environmental Governance

Funding source: European Commission (DG DEVCO)

Project period: Overall ten years; first phase began in 2009, second phase in 2014. Currently in the third phase, which commenced in January 2019 and runs through 2022.

Countries involved: 79 countries from Africa, Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP region)

Project team: Mamadou Kane (Project manager), Anjana Varma

Key partners:

European Commission (EC); African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States Secretariat (ACP Secretariat); African Union Commission (AUC); Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat; Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





Farmers displaying their crop diversity at the Busia Food Fair, Kenya.
Photo: Biodiversity International/T. Borelli

Biodiversity for food and nutrition

The challenge

Human diets and global food systems are in need of urgent transformation. The way food is produced today is increasing food insecurity, degrading the environment, reducing economic opportunities for small-scale farmers, and undercutting biodiversity and traditional food cultures. Agricultural biodiversity is under threat worldwide, as just 12 crops account for the majority of current production and consumption. Poor in quality and characterized by a lack of diversity, current diets are causing an increase in obesity and non-communicable diseases, while exacerbating undernutrition. Roughly **820 million people are hungry; 151 million children are stunted and 51 million are wasted; 2 billion people are unable to access to a full range of nutrients.** Food production is also a major driver of global environmental change, responsible for 30 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and 70 per cent of freshwater use, among other burdens. These negative impacts are distributed unevenly across the globe; the most severe effects are often felt in low-income countries, where biodiversity levels are high.

The nutritional diversity required for a healthy life depends on this diversity of plant species. Yet there remain many political, social, economic and technical barriers to mainstreaming food biodiversity to improve food systems and health. Policy discussions and deliberations that impact food often remain fragmented and incoherent.

The strategy

A number of initiatives, particularly the Convention on Biological Diversity, acknowledge the link between biodiversity, agriculture and nutrition.

By working in collaboration with four countries that are rich in agricultural biodiversity, but that face many of the global nutrition and environmental challenges, the Biodiversity for Food and Nutrition (BFN) Project has increased the supply of and demand for locally adapted, nutrient-rich crops and influenced national policies that support the sustainable production and consumption of these foods. This GEF-supported project is jointly

implemented by UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, with Bioversity International serving as the executing agency in collaboration with the governments of Brazil, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

The impact

The BFN project collected evidence on 195 species and contributed to national food composition tables as well as to the FAO/INFOODS database. The result was to increase recognition of underutilized, wild and cultivated biodiversity for improved nutrition. In addition to revising the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, BFN also played a key role in several policy achievements, including a federal policy ordinance in Brazil that formally recognizes the nutritional value of native biodiversity species and the first ever Biodiversity Conservation Policy in Kenya (in Busia County, March 2018). Other activities include cooking workshops, nutritionist trainings, education and green job trainings, recipe books, a farm-to-school direct procurement model in Kenya, gastronomy events such as the Wild Herb Festival in Turkey, the development of Sri Lankan women-led traditional food businesses, and an online course based on project experiences on how to better mainstream biodiversity for food and nutrition into policies and programmes.

Lessons learned

A 'mainstreaming' project is different from a conventional project. Interaction with governments is necessary to ensure that there is political buy-in. Influencing decisions does not depend solely on producing convincing science and useful information; it is also about influence and relationships. The project has demonstrated the importance of both identifying strategic partnerships and nurturing those partnerships.

Ensuring that project objectives are aligned with national strategies and goals is important to ensuring a project's success. Because government's goals and priorities change over time, it is important to ensure that the project is adaptable and flexible. Flexibility also favours the identification and uptake of opportunities, which can be beneficial for replication and out-scaling.

While there is no way to formally assess the level of enthusiasm that a project generates, this project clearly succeeded on that front. The reason for this might be linked to the project theme, the connection with food and health, the people working



Collection of wild leafy vegetables.

Photo: Andreas Melikyan and Armen Danielyan

in the project, or a combination of many factors. The level of enthusiasm that the project generated will hopefully help to sustain the project's impact.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

Examples of South-South cooperation were evident throughout the project. All countries benefited from key exchange visits to partner countries fostering the sharing of ideas and lessons learned. As well as participating in the International Steering Committee meetings, countries were encouraged to participate and present findings either in national or regional conferences, in BFN conferences organized in the four countries, as well as at important international conferences and fora such as the Annual Planetary Health Alliance Meeting and COP 14 of the Convention of Biological Diversity. Farmer-to-farmer exchange visits and study tours were organized in Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey with training provided on sustainable agricultural practices, nutrition and cooking demonstrations. Turkey shared their experience in collecting plant samples; the country's sampling procedure has been used in Kenya and Sri Lanka. Turkey carried out nutritional analysis of two plant samples for Kenya at its Central Research Institute of Food and Feed Control, as well as antioxidant analysis of those samples at the West Mediterranean Agricultural Research Institute.

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

South-South cooperation has improved collaboration and stakeholder participation and partnership. Strong partnerships were established at the project design stage and during implementation as opportunities arose. The project created an important platform for sharing of experiences across the four countries along the three project components: evidence, policies and awareness. Collaboration across countries resulted in a greater number of species analyzed, the endorsement of important policy tools, and the organization of national awareness events and scientific conferences focusing on biodiversity for food and nutrition. These partnerships have been of significant benefit to the project in the implementation of activities and in achieving project objectives, to an extent that the significant country ownership is likely to help sustain the activities beyond the project's end.

““South-South cooperation is a global exercise of all countries of the South to benefit everyone. [...] Every country, every partner has something to share or teach, whatever their circumstances.”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS – REMARKS TO THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (BAPA+40, 2019).

Project Title: Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use for Improved Human Nutrition and Well-Being

Subprogramme: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems

Funding sources: Global Environment Facility (GEF), CGIAR Research Programme on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH) and the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

Project period: 2012-2019

Countries involved: Brazil, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Turkey

Project team:

UNEP Task manager: Marieta Sakalian

FAO Lead technical Officer: Florence Tartanac

Global Project Management Unit: Danny Hunter, Teresa Borelli (Bioversity International)

National Project Coordinators: Daniela Moura de Oliveira Beltrame, Camila Neves Soares Oliveira and Lidio Coradin (Brazil); Victor W. Wasike (Kenya), Gamini Samarasinghe (Sri Lanka); Hasan Gezginç and Birgul Güner (Turkey)

Project flyer: www.b4fn.org/fileadmin/templates/b4fn.org/upload/documents/Flyers/BFN_FINAL_FLYER_11_18-compressed.pdf

Project website: www.b4fn.org

Key Partners:

National executing agency: Ministry of the Environment (MMA) of Brazil; Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO); Ministry of Mahaweli Development and the Environment of Sri Lanka; General Directorate of Agricultural Research and Policies and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Turkey.

The full list of partners including universities, research organizations, private sector, international organizations and government agencies is available on the project website.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





Strengthening Environmental Governance through South-South Cooperation

The challenge

Even the most thoughtfully constructed environmental law will have little effect if it is not properly enforced. Many of the same enforcement challenges arise in different national contexts, and the environment suffers as a result.

The strategy

The main objective of the project was to strengthen the enforcement of environmental laws at the national level by developing and promoting the uptake of a set of best practices on enforcement. This was mainly achieved by providing a forum for countries across regions to share knowledge and experience on enforcement as well as to learn from each other's experience on what works best. The set of best practices that was generated as a result of these deliberations enabled pilot countries to develop their own national institutional guidance material. The best practices on enforcement that were developed have been widely disseminated online, thus influencing institutional development in enforcement beyond the targeted countries.

The impact

The major success of the project was to enhance countries' institutional capacities to enforce environmental law. This was achieved through information exchange and the development of a set of best practices, which countries have since adopted to strengthen institutions that were struggling with weak enforcement.



Tsitongambaraka forest, one of Madagascar's few remaining stands of humid lowland forest.

Photo: UNEP

Lessons learned

Some countries did not fully benefit from the project because of language constraints. To address this challenge, the best practices publication was translated into relevant languages that allowed for it to be better understood and shared.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

The mechanism used in this project was exchange of information among the participating countries on what works best in terms of enforcement of national environmental laws. The documentation of good practices from the exchange of information and experiences enabled the uptake of lessons to individual countries. The project therefore facilitated peer-to-peer learning in strengthening enforcement of laws among participating countries.

How South-South cooperation helped the project achieve its objectives

South-South cooperation was central to the project and the basis on which it was developed. It was the means through which the whole project was implemented and results achieved.

Project Title: Strengthening Institutional Capacity of African and Asian Countries for the Enforcement of Environmental Legislation through South-South Cooperation

Subprogramme: Environmental Governance

Funding sources: China Trust Fund (1st and 3rd Tranche)

Project period: 2014-2017

Countries involved: African and Central Asian countries, ASEAN Countries and China

Project manager: Ms. Sylvia Bankobeza, Law Division

Key partners:

Government Ministries of Environment; Environmental Protection Agencies and other enforcement agencies; China ASEAN Environmental Cooperation Centre (CAEC); regional organizations; enforcement networks and Universities.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





Consultation meeting with local women in Nepal.

Strengthening climate resilience through healthy ecosystems

The challenge

The negative effects of climate change are being experienced by local communities within a wide range of economic sectors in developing countries across Africa and Asia-Pacific. Multiple factors make these countries particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. These factors include poverty, dependence on rain-fed agriculture, as well as limited capacity of regional and national institutions to plan and implement adequate adaptation technologies and practices. There is an urgent need for immediate actions to address and prepare for climate change before its impacts become unmanageable.

The strategy

The project's overall goal is to build climate resilience in developing countries by increasing their capacity to plan and implement Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA). In addition to interregional activities for capacity-building and knowledge management, the project is leading concrete, on-the-ground EbA interventions in three pilot countries – Mauritania, Nepal and Seychelles – representing three different vulnerable ecosystems (dryland, mountain and coastal ecosystems, respectively).

The impact

Trainings, tools, knowledge products and policy briefs were developed to support effective planning and implementation of EbA technologies. Other project outputs include web platforms (EbA case studies, webinars, e-discussions), the EbA planning tool 'AlIVE: Adaptation, Livelihoods and Ecosystems', an EbA handbook, guidelines on EbA research, and inter-regional training workshops.

Concrete, on-the-ground EbA interventions were implemented in Seychelles, Nepal and Mauritania. This work aimed to both increase climate resilience and strengthen the livelihoods of vulnerable people in the targeted areas. These interventions have received tremendous government support and community buy-in.

Long-term research programmes were institutionalized in Seychelles, Nepal and Mauritania. This work aims to measure the short- and long-term effects (ecological, hydrological and socio-economic) of EbA interventions. See more from www.ebasouth.org

Lessons learned

EbA should be science-based, calibrated according to local conditions and implemented in a careful manner.

Opportunities for sustainability are extremely variable according to each EbA site.

Adaptive management is a key component to ensuring the sustainability of interventions, and an adaptive management plan should be built into the design. This should document the facts, record the lessons and monitor social and economic factors, as well as the environmental ones.

There is evidence that weed clearing and fencing promote the natural regeneration of indigenous forest species.

"Sustainable Livelihoods Knowledge Sharing", was held in Beijing, China in April 2018. Advanced training workshops on ecosystem monitoring and management for developing countries were organized in 2015 and 2016.

An international exchange visit to Mauritania in July 2018 was organized, bringing together project members from Seychelles and Nepal. This visit was an opportunity for project members to share experience and lessons learned from the implementation of EbA interventions in a South-South cooperation perspective. Another field visit to Chengdu was co-organized by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) Institute of Mountain Hazards and Environment in June 2015 after the earthquake in Nepal. This visit allowed participants to learn from China's experience in managing post-earthquake operations, addressing both ecosystem restoration and livelihood improvement.

The project developed a web-based knowledge platform that contains a database of good practices and case studies. The platform allows for the Global South's wealth of ecosystem management experiences to be shared among developing countries.

The project strengthened institutional cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The cooperation included the sharing of experiences in conducting long-term research and monitoring in pilot countries.

The project generated significant South-South co-financing. The Chinese Government provided a co-finance of \$3.28 million to Nepal for its earthquake-impacted areas, including the provision of more than over 32,000 sets of household

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

The project enabled a significant exchange of expertise on long-term EbA research programmes, adaptation intervention measures and protocols, EbA financing, and other related topics.

The project also included South-South cooperation workshops for knowledge sharing. For example, the "South-South Exchange Workshop: Ecosystems for Climate Change Adaptation and

solar-power generation systems. The Chinese Government provided a co-finance of \$4.48 million to Seychelles' public schools on the three main islands. The Chinese Academy of Sciences provided an in-kind contribution by sharing its ecosystem-based adaptation technology, capacity and technologies.

Some of the project's South-South cooperation elements are featured in the other publications:

- The UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC 2018) featured the project on South-South cooperation between Nepal and China.
- The project was also mentioned in a publication by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC 2017).

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

South-South cooperation is a key feature of the project, especially sharing China's experience and research know-how in ecological restoration and climate change adaptation. The project's first two components are facilitating knowledge sharing and capacity-building in vulnerable developing countries. The third component in the three pilot countries also entailed South-South exchanges as well as technical and financial support.



“South-South cooperation will be vital to ensure mutual support and exchange of best practices, to enhance adaptation and increase the resilience of developing countries and communities facing the devastating impacts of climate change.”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS – REMARKS TO THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (BAPA+40, 2019).

Project Title: Enhancing Capacity, Knowledge and Technology Support to Build Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Developing Countries (Ecosystem-based Adaptation through South-South cooperation: EbA South)

Subprogramme: Climate Change

Funding sources: \$4.9 million from the Global Environment Fund's Special Climate Change Fund and over \$7 million in co-financing from China

Project period: 2013-2019

Countries involved: Seychelles, Nepal and Mauritania; China provides expertise and co-financing

Project team:

Tatirose Vijitpan, Diwen Tan,

Project Co-Managers

tatirose.vijitpan@unep-iemp.org ; diwen.tan@unep-iemp.org

United Nations Environment Programme – International Ecosystem Management Partnership

C/o Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research

11 A Datun Road, Chaoyang District, Beijing 100101, China

Key partners:

The project, funded in part by the Global Environment Facility, is implemented by UNEP and executed by the National Development and Reform Commission of China (NDRC), through the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSNRR, CAS). International Ecosystem Management Partnership of UNEP coordinates the project management processes. Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change in Seychelles, Ministry of Forests and Environment in Nepal, and Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development in Mauritania are executing national components.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





National workshop to enhance awareness and understanding about corporate sustainability reporting. Buenos Aires, Argentina (2018).

Enhancing Capacity for Corporate Sustainability Reporting

The challenge

In many markets, both in developed and developing countries, there is a growing call for increased transparency and accountability of the private sector. Potential health and environmental risks posed by companies, and the goods and services they produce, are increasing regulatory pressure on companies to generate, assess, and make public information on their sustainability performance and impacts. Sustainability reporting represents a potential mechanism to generate data and measure progress and the contribution of companies towards global sustainable development objectives. Sustainability reporting can help companies and organizations measure their performance in all dimensions of sustainable development. It can also help them set goals and support the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and inclusive green economy.

The Latin American region has seen an increase in the number of companies publishing sustainability reports and national governments are beginning to address this domain. However, national policies in this regard remain at an early stage or have not yet been entirely developed. For this reason, countries in the region are experiencing similar challenges on this subject including the inconsistency of measurement and presentation of sustainability issues. This is largely due to the lack of guidelines and methodological resources for companies to reference. There is also a critical lack of follow-up and review of the information provided in sustainability reports. Thus, sustainability reporting has not yet reached its full potential as a tool to support decision-making.

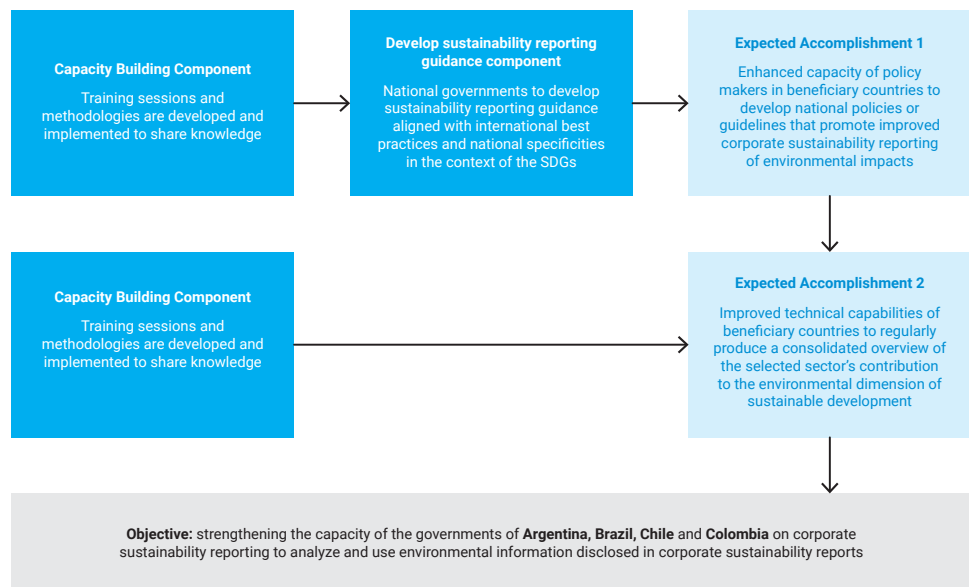
Given these circumstances, the Latin American member countries of the Group of Friends of Paragraph 47 (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia) have started different initiatives to promote corporate sustainability reporting. In line with this, the project entitled 'Enhancing Capacities to Manage Information from Corporate Sustainability Reporting in Latin American Countries' aims to strengthen the capacity of these four

governments in corporate sustainability reporting and to analyze and use environmental information disclosed in corporate sustainability reports. The project is helping to close the information gap between companies' environmental performance and the private sector's environmental impacts at the national level.

The project also aims to enhance the comparability of current reporting approaches and methodologies and to allow for corporate activities to better align with the SDGs. The expected outcomes include, on the one hand, facilitating the integration of sustainable practices by companies (SDG 12.6) in alignment with the SDGs and, on the other, facilitating the follow-up and review of the SDGs by governments through higher quality and standardized information from corporate reports.

The strategy

The following figure illustrates the key activities carried out under this project in order to address the problem analysis.



The impact

Since the project's inception, several activities have been successfully completed including the establishment of the Project's Steering Committee (PSC) whose role is to oversee the project governance and coordination.

The first capacity-building workshop took place in Santiago, Chile in November 2017 at the premises of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Its objective was to build the awareness of policymakers on the usefulness and potential of sustainability reporting to inform policy decisions; to develop their capacities to address sustainability reporting from a policy perspective; and to contribute to the development of the training of trainers' toolkit on corporate sustainability reporting.

In 2018, the beneficiary countries - Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia - organized national workshops in Buenos Aires, Brasilia, Santiago and Bogota. The objective of these national workshops was to enhance awareness and understanding about corporate sustainability reporting, its potential, its environmental benefits, and the existing



National workshop to enhance awareness and understanding about corporate sustainability reporting. Brasilia, Brazil (2018).

methodologies and opportunities. These workshops also served as an initial opportunity to discuss the development processes of the national sustainability reporting guidelines that countries will develop for the following sectors: viticulture (Argentina), soy (Brazil), fruits and vegetables (Chile) and meat and fish (Colombia). These events benefitted from the participation of governmental representatives, UNEP colleagues from the region, representatives from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and professionals and experts in charge of and/or associated with the agenda of sustainable development in general and on sustainability reporting in particular.

As part of the activities being undertaken within the context of the regional project, a toolkit on corporate sustainability reporting has been produced. Its purpose is to contribute to building policymakers' awareness of corporate sustainability reporting to inform policy decisions, and to develop their capacities to address sustainability reporting from a policy perspective. It provides step-by-step guidance for the formulation of national regulatory instruments and for the collection and management of data and indicators on business impacts (particularly environmental and social impacts) that can enhance the number and quality of corporate sustainability reporting practices. It also has an operational orientation and provides detailed information, self-assessment tools and hands-on tools that help countries implement sustainability reporting strategies.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

Workshops, development and dissemination of toolkits and other resources.

How South-South cooperation helps to achieve the project objectives

The Project's Steering Committee, which is composed of representatives from government institutions of the beneficiary countries, functions as the supervising body throughout the project's implementation, fostering dialogue among all implementing and project partners.

The Project Steering Committee manages the supervision of the different activities of the project through validating relevant decisions for the correct functioning of the project, exchanging and discussing information between all implementing and national partners of the project, as well as ensuring delivery of and approving major project outputs.

UNEP through its Economy Division and with the strong support of its Latin American and the Caribbean office, its sub-regional office for the Southern Cone in Montevideo, Uruguay and through its national offices and representations in Brasilia, Brazil and Bogota Colombia is supporting the coordination and implementation of the project in close collaboration with the Project's Steering Committee. This provides a platform for inter-regional exchange and experience sharing that is a core component of the project.

Project Title: Enhancing capacities to manage information from corporate sustainability reporting in Latin American countries.

Subprogramme: Resource efficiency.

Funding sources: UN Development Account funded project (10th tranche projects)

Project period: 2017-2019

Countries involved: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia

Project team:

Elisa Tonda, Head, Consumption and Production Unit / UNEP Economy Division

Abraham Pedroza, Consultant, Consumption and Production Unit / UNEP Economy Division

Key partners:

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); The Group of Friends of Paragraph 47; GRI; UNCTAD.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





South-South Cooperation for GEO6

The challenge

Most Latin American and Caribbean countries still face challenges in dealing with national and international demands on environmental information management. The project “South-South Cooperation (SSC) in Latin America and the Caribbean and capacity-building for GEO6 process” seeks to accelerate the harmonization, adoption and implementation of environmental indicators to provide a common language and monitoring framework and to support the effective integration of environmental considerations into national and regional development plans and policies.

The project has increased the capacity of countries in the region to monitor the status and trends of the environment within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. This cooperation was possible through the focal points of the Working Group on Environmental Indicators (WTEI) of the Initiative of Latin America and the Caribbean for Sustainable Development (ILAC) of the Forum of Ministers of Environment.

In 2019, the project will contribute to the production of environmental change scenarios (land use and land cover change maps) under different drivers of change (climate change, demography, variable macroeconomics).

The strategy

The project falls under the Environment under Review subprogramme, which seeks to increase the use of high-quality, open environmental data, analysis and participatory processes that strengthen the science-policy interface to generate evidence-based environmental assessments, identify emerging issues and foster policy action in the region.

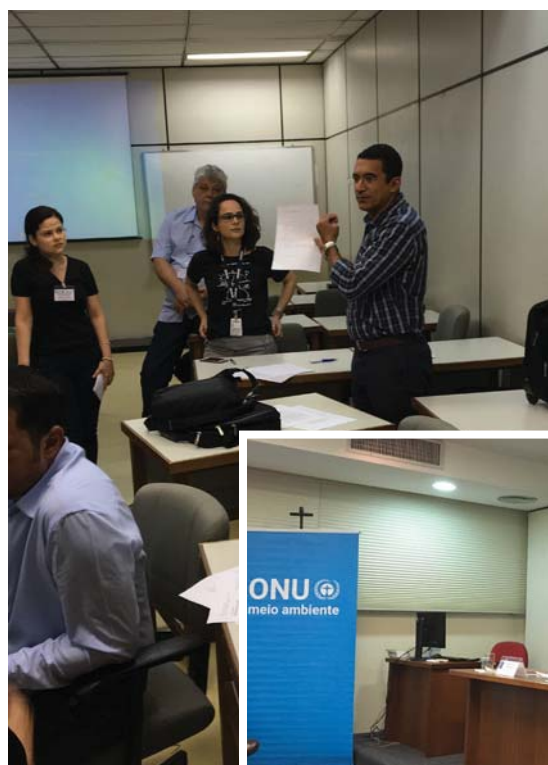
Project objectives

1. Fast track the harmonization, uptake, and implementation of environmental indicators.
2. Use the selected SDG/MEA/ILAC indicators to produce regional environmental reports (as part of the GEO initiative).
3. Strengthen the region's national and regional environmental information systems and networks.
4. Promote the more effective and integrated use of environmental data and information in policymaking and decision-making in the region.

The impact

The results of the project have made ILAC and the WGEI visible throughout the region, reaching the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean which is the highest deliberative level in environmental issues.

The project has also effectively coordinated collaboration across countries to prioritize a list of indicators for each sub-region (Latin American and Caribbean Countries); this information can now be used to integrate environmental assessments. Additionally, some countries have strengthened their national environmental information systems and reinforced a regional collaboration on specific SDG indicators on topics such as green economy, sustainable production and consumption patterns, disasters and risk reduction, biodiversity, marine environments, and waste management. Currently, there are 23 indicators for Latin America and 13 for the Caribbean.



Regional Workshop "Development and Strengthening of Environmental Statistics and Indicators in Latin American countries: The joint path of the SDGs and ILAC". Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (11-15 December 2017).





Regional Environmental Information Network (REIN) Conference. Quito, Ecuador (14-16 November, 2018).

Lessons learned

Opening the technical process to participants from other specialized agencies of the government fostered inter-institutional collaboration and improved the results.

It is important to bring data producers and consumers together so that they can exchange priorities, share needs, and create a demand for reliable information in the region.

In the case of environmental information, working in smaller groups with focused themes increased efficiency, especially when there were technical aspects to address.

It was important to always take into consideration different priorities between Latin America and the Caribbean as this generated a different set of indicators for each subregion.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

Capacity-building has occurred through face-to-face and webinar meetings with experts from both within and outside the region. Sub-regional workshops were held on specific topics, and monthly meetings took place with the Steering Committee to ensure that the project kept moving in the right direction. During this collaborative work, it was possible to create synergies that enriched the learning process to produce indicators and to strengthen environmental information across the region. It also resulted in the development of the ILAC community in Environment Live, where all the project documents are available including metadata and events information.

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

South-South cooperation played a key role in getting international and regional experts to contribute to the development of methodological sheets and specific information needed for the integration of each indicator. South-South cooperation also provided tools to increase the number of networks that are now working on environmental information and statistics. Furthermore, this cooperation made it possible to measure the importance of building capacities to fill the gaps in data processes, from production through to the dissemination.

“Southern solidarity is a pathway to share options based on mutual respect and empathy.”

JORGE CHEDIEK,

ENVOY OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (UNOSSC) – “SOUTH-SOUTH IN ACTION: SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION ON PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT” (2019).

Project Title: South-South cooperation and capacity-building for the GEO6 process in Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC)

Subprogramme: Environment under Review – ROLAC

Funding source: Government of Brazil, through the Ministry of Environment

Project period: 2016 – 2019

Countries involved: 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean

Project team: Francesco Gaetani, Pia Wiche

Key partners:

The Working Group on Environmental Indicators (WGEI); Ministries of Environment; National Statistic Offices.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





Memorial at the Minamata Disease Municipal Museum, Minamata, Japan.
Photo: UNEP

Support to the Minamata Convention on Mercury

The challenge

The environmental burden of mercury emissions has increased over time. Natural processes convert mercury into toxic methylmercury, which accumulates in the food chain, leading to high concentrations in fish and shellfish that many people consume.

The strategy

The project consisted of Secretariat support to international negotiations to ensure a successful first Conference of Parties (COP), informed by appropriate technical information and lessons learned from a range of country experiences towards sound management of mercury.

The negotiations on the Minamata Convention on Mercury concluded in 2013, with the Convention being adopted and opened for signature in October 2013. The Convention is a global agreement to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The Convention includes measures for technical exchange and international support to implementation and measures to control the supply and trade of mercury and to phase-out certain products and processes that use mercury. The Convention also includes control measures for air, land and water emissions and releases, waste management requirements, actions to address contaminated sites, as well as steps to reduce, and where feasible, eliminate mercury use in artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM).

UNEP has been requested to provide the secretariat for the Convention until it officially enters into force. This task involves the provision of secretariat services to the

intergovernmental negotiating committee and its subsidiary bodies, as well as supporting governments in their efforts to implement and ratify the Convention. The project involves conducting secretariat activities, including making the arrangements for the further sessions of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and relevant intersessional meetings; arranging the meeting of, and support for the intersessional work relating to, the group of technical experts established by the Conference of Plenipotentiaries; and the provision of technical assistance and awareness-raising activities to facilitate early implementation and ratification of the Convention.

The projected outcome of the project was that countries would increasingly ratify the Minamata Convention and adopt policies and measures for the sound management of mercury.

The impact

A terminal report of the project rated its performance as 'Highly Satisfactory'. Specifically, the project excelled in two areas: project efficiency and cost-effectiveness; and strategic relevance, including clear alignment with UNEP's policies on capacity building and South-South cooperation.

Specific project achievements:

1. Three global meetings were effectively prepared and serviced.
2. Four technical guidance documents were delivered. Each of the documents was produced with Secretariat support and adopted by the first Conference of Parties. The documents informed ratification and implementation and prioritized areas of Global Environment Facility support.
 - Technical guidance on Emissions – best available techniques and best practices.
 - Technical Guidance in determining goals and setting emission limit values.
 - Technical Guidance on criteria on emission sources.
 - Technical Guidance on methodology for preparing inventories of emissions.Each of these technical guidance documents was adopted by the COP, which acknowledged the high quality of the work of the technical expert committee.
3. An array of awareness-raising workshops and pilot projects supported individual countries. Awareness-raising workshops were inclusive and well-appreciated by participants. A series of project-supported country pilot projects led to diverse activities in nine countries across Africa and Asia and served as preliminary work for the more comprehensive assessment and planning supported by the Global Environment Facility.

With respect to Minamata Convention ratification, 92 countries had ratified by spring 2018, compared to the target of 50 countries. As of March 2018, 20 countries had adopted sound policies and measures, which was the project target.

Pilot country interventions

The pilot projects included guidance on the assessment of the current legislative structure, the preparation of new or revised legislation or regulations to ensure compliance with the provisions of the mercury instrument and/or the national development of plans and strategies towards ratification and implementation.

Awareness-raising activities were intended to address problems including a lack of awareness and understanding of the provisions of the Minamata Convention on Mercury; a lack of awareness of the current mercury challenges within each country; and a lack of understanding of the resources available to address mercury issues.



Artisanal and small-scale gold Mining in Kakamega County, Kenya
Photo: UNEP

Lessons learned

Future phases of Secretariat support to Convention implementation should emphasize knowledge management by the continued and widespread sharing of lessons learned from country practice in the different dimensions of the Convention. Future support should also aim to set up expert network systems of technical assistance on implementation and to expand the pool of expertise to include industry and technical players.

Pilot country interventions called for a mapping of relevant stakeholders to achieve project objectives. This practice should be replicated for other projects aiming to support MEA implementation.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

The delivery of the project aligned with UNEP's policies on capacity-building and South-South cooperation. The project included a needs assessment and encouraged exchanges of resources, technology and knowledge between developing countries. The project approach to regional meetings was inclusive and facilitated discussions among different country-level stakeholders to discuss possible activities with the Global Environment Facility. UNEP provided assistance to countries in obtaining relevant technical and financial support. Meetings were attended by country-level negotiators, as well as technical specialists in mercury and umbrella NGOs.

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

South-South cooperation exchanges enabled relevant existing technology, available knowledge and proven solutions to be transferred and replicated in other countries, especially through workshops and meetings. Sustainability of project outcomes is likely based on a consideration of the socio-political, institutional and financial circumstances. With regards to financial sustainability, South-South sharing of best practice and lessons learned between policymakers and relevant stakeholders does not necessarily rely on external financing, and so can be considered a viable way to try to sustain the successful outcomes of ratification of the Minamata Convention and the adoption of policies and measures for the sound management of mercury.

“Innovative forms of knowledge exchange, technology transfer, emergency response and recovery of livelihoods led by the South are transforming lives.”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, SPEAKING AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE 10TH SOUTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENT EXPO AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK (NOVEMBER 2018).

Project Title: Secretariat Support to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Subprogramme: Chemicals and Waste

Funding sources:

The project benefitted from funding from over a dozen donors, totaling \$12,832,720 (Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, France, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America).

There was an additional \$300,000 contribution from the China Trust Fund.

The UN Environment Fund financed approximately half of the staff post costs.

Project period: August 2014 – December 2017

Countries involved: Global

Project manager: Sheila Logan

Key partners:

Several NGOs, particularly the Zero Mercury Working Group and International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), provided technical capacity support.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





International Tropical Peatland Center – Center visit

The Global Peatlands Initiative

The challenge

Peatlands are vital, super-powered ecosystems, providing essential services such as storing and capturing carbon, protecting and housing rare biodiversity, controlling water supply and quality, cooling our atmosphere, preventing floods and droughts and producing biomass and food for people.

Peatlands are found in more than 180 countries around the world but we are only just starting to understand their role, both in climate change and in our urgent efforts to curb it. While peatlands cover only 3 per cent of global land area, they store nearly 30 per cent of the world’s soil carbon and contain twice as much carbon as the world’s forests.

Despite their importance and the extent of the threats they face, peatlands are one of the least-understood and least-monitored ecosystems. Disproportionate to the land surface they cover, greenhouse gas emissions from drained or degraded peatlands (due to agriculture, forestry and other types of land use) account for 5 per cent of the global carbon budget, in the range of 2 billion tonnes of CO₂ per year, and when they are burning, this can double to 10 per cent.

In 2016, due to the emissions and dangers of unprecedented peatland fires, Indonesia declared a state of emergency and called out to the international community to support it in tackling peatlands fires. Following this, Indonesia made a bold commitment to halt any new conversion and draining of peatlands to agricultural lands and set out a nationwide campaign to urgently rewet and restore its peatlands. The challenges that Indonesia faced in 2016 and the collaboration that was fostered inspired the establishment of the Global Peatlands Initiative. The Initiative, led by UNEP, seeks to capture and establish new approaches for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of peatlands – linking science to practice and policymaking. Four peat-rich tropical countries – Indonesia, Peru, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo – are

the pilot countries of the Global Peatlands Initiative. Due to the enormous amounts of carbon they hold and the catastrophic consequences their drainage and degradation has generated in the past, a commitment by over 28 partners and tropical peatland countries to work together to halt the further destruction of peatlands is gaining international attention. Partners are sharing their knowledge and experience to promote healthy peatlands through their restoration and conservation as one of the fastest ways to tackle the climate crisis.

The strategy

UNEP, together with 12 other core partners established the Global Peatlands Initiative (GPI), with the aim to support countries to address the current and potential challenges they face with peatland degradation and loss. The Initiative was launched at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP) in Marrakech, Morocco in 2016 under UNEP's leadership to save peatlands as the world's largest terrestrial organic carbon stock and to prevent this stock from being emitted into the atmosphere. Since then, the Initiative has grown to 28 international organizations and four major tropical peatland countries of Indonesia, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Peru.

Partners are working together within their respective areas of expertise to assess, measure and take actions to preserve peat carbon and biodiversity. Drawing on the expertise of the Initiative's partners and peatland practitioners, and through a structured South-South cooperation approach, the project helps countries contribute to major Multilateral Environmental Agreements (namely the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Convention on Migratory Species, and the Ramsar Convention). Specifically, the work of the Initiative aims to help the pilot countries achieve their Nationally Determined Contributions while advancing progress toward the SDGs. By collecting, advocating for and supporting conservation practice and restoration efforts in the pilot countries, the project also contributes to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, especially Target 5 (reduced habitat loss/degradation), Target 14 (ecosystems that provide essential and valuable services are restored and safeguarded), and Target 15 (contribution of ecosystems to carbon stocks).

The impact

The Second Meeting of the Global Peatlands Initiative partners took place in Jakarta, Indonesia, in May 2017 and was co-hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and Peatland Restoration Agency of Indonesia and Badan Restorasi Gambut. Bringing together representatives from the Governments of the Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Peru and Indonesia, together with over 80 specialists, the Global Peatlands Initiative partners shared their experience and knowledge and charted a collaborative pathway forward to support one another. Partners refined the principles and priorities of work for the partnership, agreed on a work plan and set a first milestone to publish a peatlands Rapid Response Assessment and to launch it during the Climate Change COP23 in November 2017.

The Global Peatlands Initiative meeting culminated in a special Global Landscapes Forum thematic session "Peatlands Matter" in May 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and co-coordinated by UNEP and the World Bank, the exchange forum brought together local and global actors to share commitment and experiences with the aim to accelerate positive action in the management of peatlands around the world. "Peatlands Matter" explored what it means



to employ multi-directional and multi-stakeholder dialogues in practice, spearheading a community-first and people-centered approach to peatlands management, with a strong focus on South-South cooperation, innovation and learning (CIFOR 2017).

In November 2017 the Global Peatlands Initiative, under UNEP’s leadership, released its rapid response assessment (UNEP and GRID-Arendal 2017), at a side event held at the UNFCCC COP23 in Bonn, Germany.

In March 2018 in an unprecedented move, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo and Indonesia jointly signed the Brazzaville Declaration on Peatlands, to protect the Cuvette Centrale region in the Congo Basin – the world’s largest tropical peatlands – from unregulated land use, and prevent its drainage and degradation. The declaration came as a result of the proceedings of the 3-day Third Global Peatlands Initiative meeting of the Partners held in Brazzaville and co-hosted by the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The proceedings saw the participation of the Prime Minister and 32 Ministers from the Republic of Congo and two DRC Ministers as a strong cross-sectoral awareness-raising exchange. The Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia shared their experience, as captured in the report “Managing Peatlands to Cope with Climate Change: Indonesia’s Experience” (Indonesia, Ministry of Environment and Forestry 2018), which shared the measures taken by Indonesia to restore degraded peatlands, conserve the remaining healthy peatland and provide alternative livelihoods for communities living within and near peatlands.

The outcome of the meeting – the Brazzaville Declaration - formalized the commitment of three governments to continue to work together and exchange knowledge with the support of the Initiative partners to promote better management and conservation of the Cuvette Centrale peatland – a globally important carbon store.

As a further step to advance the Global Peatlands Initiative aims and support the implementation of the Brazzaville Declaration, a high-level South-South exchange

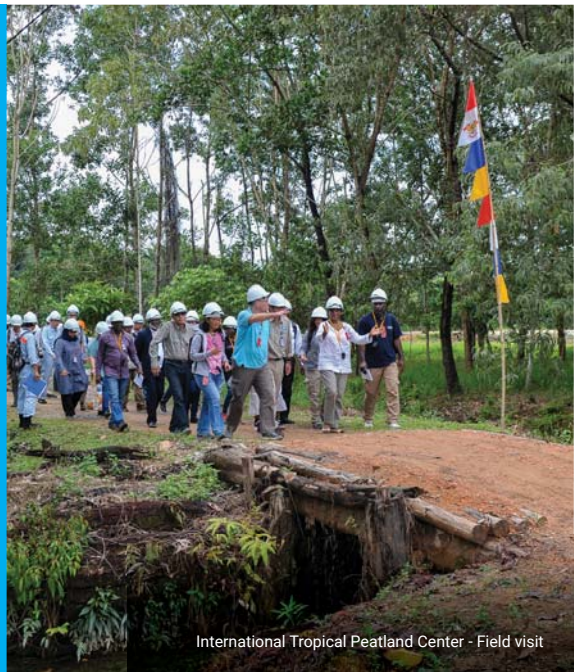
between the Ministers of Indonesia, Republic of Congo and the DRC was organized. With support from UNEP and CIFOR, and other Global Peatlands Initiative partners the Ministers and their representatives took part in a working week to deepen their sharing of peatlands knowledge and governance. With a strong commitment to further peatlands conservation and sustainable management, partners and Indonesia, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo came together to declare their support to establish the International Tropical Peatlands Center (ITPC). The ITPC was supported by the GPI partners and conceptualized as a mechanism to advance links between tropical peatlands research, to promote inter-disciplinary collaboration and bring tropical peatlands science to practice. The Republic of Congo and Indonesia took their partnership one step further and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on peatlands knowledge and experience sharing to solidify further collaboration connected to the ITPC and GPI.

The Global Peatlands Initiative continues to raise the profile of South-South cooperation on peatlands during a series of global policy-setting and influencing events. Collaboration between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) was fostered during Ramsar COP13 and in a workshop held in Vilm, Germany. Peatlands featured during World Wetlands Day, World Environment Day, in the Frontiers Publication (UNEP 2019), and as a stand-out topic at more than eleven side events and discussion forums during the UNFCCC COP 24 in Katowice, Poland.

As a significant global milestone for the Initiative, in March 2019 during the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly the first ever global resolution for the “Conservation and Sustainable Management of Peatlands” (UNEP/EA.4/RES.16) was adopted with support of all countries. The resolution acknowledges the contributions of the Global Peatlands Initiative and further requests UNEP “to coordinate efforts to create a comprehensive and accurate global peatlands inventory”.

Lessons learned

For South-South cooperation to have the biggest impact, it needs to be supported and it needs to happen in many contexts (among scientists, political leaders, civil society leaders, etc.). All partners can benefit from sharing experiences and drawing on international expertise to make the best informed and most ambitious commitments with confidence that they can rely on one another.



International Tropical Peatland Center - Field visit

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

The Global Peatlands Initiative has used the following mechanisms of South-South cooperation:

1. Establishment of a global partnership for policy impact. The Global Peatlands Initiative brings together four countries of the South (Peru, Indonesia, Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo) and partners to affect global and national policy-making.
2. Convening of high-level and multi-stakeholder inclusive meetings of the partners and designs and facilitates structured working exchanges. Such meetings were held in Jakarta, Indonesia in May 2017 and in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo in March 2018. A wide range of stakeholders participated in the meetings, including high-level officials, technical experts, and others. Each of the meetings had a political stream and a technical stream, which were intertwined to

enable exchange among scientists, practitioners, the public and government leaders. There was also an additional day dedicated exclusively to technical exchanges sharing best practice approaches in the four work areas of the Initiative.

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

South-South cooperation and “triangular cooperation” are the primary delivery mechanisms of the Global Peatlands Initiative. This approach has helped with the identification, collection and sharing of good practices, and has enabled exchanges and improvement of methods, as well as the adoption of approaches across a range of interventions to support sustainable peatlands management. Exchanges between countries of the South has enabled bold decisions to be made, commitments to action to be accelerated and a coalition of like-minded actors to structure their collaboration.

Project Title: Global Peatlands Initiative: Assessing, Measuring and Preserving Peat Carbon

Subprogramme: Ecosystems Management

Funding sources: German Federal Government International Climate Initiative (IKI);

Project period: Global Peatlands Initiative was founded end 2016; Project started February 2018 – Jan 2021

Countries involved: Indonesia, Peru, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo

Project manager: Dianna Kopanksy (dianna.kopansky@un.org)

Key partners and their roles:

FAO (Implementing partner, contributions to data harmonization and availability); all 28 partners can be found on the Initiative’s website <http://www.globalpeatlands.org/>.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





The structure of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) under construction. The line goes from Mombasa to Nairobi through the Nairobi National Park, Kenya.

Photo: Diego Juffe Bignoli

The Development Corridors Partnership

The challenge

A development corridor is an often-linear geographical area that governments choose to target for public and private investment. Development corridors can spur economic growth by diversifying and improving livelihoods and by making trade, communications and services more efficient. They can also spread development opportunities to remote, poor or marginalized communities and regions, thus enabling countries to better achieve their priority Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. These significant benefits can be maximized if corridors are planned and implemented through an integrated approach that uses sound policies, plans and practices.

As well as achieving economic goals, development corridors must protect the integrity of ecosystems and biodiversity, and respect the rights and livelihoods of communities from the earliest stages of planning through to the implementation of the development activities.

Negative impacts of poorly planned and implemented corridors include the loss of biodiversity, ecosystem integrity, livelihoods and social cohesion. Poor design or implementation may also leave communities with greater vulnerability to, for example, the impacts of climate change. Such challenges can threaten the attainment of the broader social and economic goals of development corridors.

The strategy

The Development Corridors Partnership is a research and capacity-building collaboration that brings together British, African and Chinese institutions. The Partnership aims to improve the rigor, relevance and quality of interdisciplinary research on development corridors; it is also working to build capacity to plan and implement development corridors in Africa that are more sustainable, resilient and inclusive.

The Partnership will build capacity among researchers, practitioners, government and private sector actors to deliver sustainable development corridors in East Africa. This will include increasing availability of the best tools and analyses, as well as the skills needed to use them.

Progress to date

- A thorough internal capacity needs assessment has been conducted and a training programme that meets those needs has been identified and designed.
- A broad network of stakeholders in Kenya, Tanzania and China has been identified, with numerous stakeholders expressing an interest in engaging with the Partnership.
- Advice has been provided to key actors in development corridors in both Kenya and Tanzania, including coordinating centers, private sector actors, government officials and civil society representatives.
- African and Chinese partners have already been collaborating beyond the scope of the project, with joint funding proposals already submitted. Staff exchanges between Chinese, African and British partners have also occurred.
- New partnerships have been established with NGOs, private and financing sector to develop tailored training or work together to address key issues and improve tools and methods to improve positive outcomes of development corridors.

Lessons learned

A lack of cultural understanding and guidance is often one of the key reasons why development corridor processes involving foreign actors have some undesired impacts. Enhancing cultural understanding can help avoid some of these impacts.

In other cases, the main reason for undesired impacts is a lack of sustainability standards to govern lending to implement development projects. International best practice standards exist but are not applied or implemented equally by all lenders, resulting in projects with high environmental and social risks being financed.

In order to influence corridor planning discussions, all relevant actors need to engage early in the process before too much money has been spent or decisions made.

Capacities to conduct comprehensive and balanced environmental assessments remain insufficient. Assessments often miss important environmental and social risks that could result in high societal costs.

Lack of coordination between government agencies with competing objectives and priorities can also lead to worse outcomes for people and nature. Cross-sectoral groups and collaborative land-use planning processes can address some of these challenges.



Farmed landscape in Tanzania
Photo: Diego Juffe Bignoli

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

The Development Corridors Partnership brings Chinese researchers to Kenya and Tanzania to collaborate on research projects, provide trainings and further their understanding of the cultural context in East Africa. Conversely, African partners are invited to China to learn from their experiences and better understand the Chinese context. Collaboration on research projects, papers, trainings and field visits provides plenty of opportunities to expand networks, discover future collaborative

opportunities, and find new ways to engage with development corridor stakeholders in China and in Africa.

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

The project involves host country institutions (Kenya, Tanzania) as well as investment source country institutions (China, Great Britain) to ensure that deep local knowledge is combined with an ability to address critical investment decision-making processes.

Project Title: The Development Corridors Partnership

Funding sources: UK Research and Innovation's Global Challenges Research Fund

Project period: 2017-2021

Countries involved: Kenya, Tanzania, China, UK

Project manager/team:

Principal investigator: Neil Burgess, Chief Scientist UNEP-WCMC.

Project manager: Lisen Runsten, UNEP-WCMC

Key partners:

UNEP-WCMC is leading a consortium of five universities (Cambridge, London School of Economics, Nairobi, Sokoine University of Agriculture and York); two East African NGOs (WWF Tanzania, African Conservation Centre); three Chinese think tanks (the National Centre for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation and the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences).

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





African Leadership Group in Biodiversity and Development

The challenge

Countries need to integrate development priorities into their revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and then to use the revised plans to influence key national or sectoral processes of policy development.

The strategy

The African Learning and Leadership Group on Biodiversity Mainstreaming offered a platform for Finance, Planning, Development, Environment and sectoral officials in Africa to convene and work together in an explicitly reciprocal manner.

The impact

Actively improved in-country links between officials in development, planning, finance and biodiversity, authorities in eight African countries who are now coordinating and helping to make a business case for biodiversity.

- Participating countries supported to produce National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans that address national development priorities and issues.
- Enhanced integration of biodiversity priorities in several national, sub-national and sector development plans.
- Integrated biodiversity in national Sustainable Development Goals planning processes.
- Peer-review of mainstreaming plans and activities between countries.
- Rapid evolution into mature, knowledgeable and influential community of practice that includes biodiversity, development and finance; sectors such as energy and agriculture; and officials, academics and civil society.
- Practical ways to ensure the integration of biodiversity and development promoted and showcased at the meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Multiple requests to scale up approach have been received.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

- Peer-to-peer learning for the promotion of mainstreaming, including peer review of mainstreaming plans and activities between countries;
- Co-development of mainstreaming tools including testing and review;
- Co-production and co-promotion of declarations at major international meetings.

How South-South cooperation helped the project achieve its objectives

- The project brought together eight African countries – Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe – to establish a regional network (community of practice) of national biodiversity champions. South-South cooperation was a key mechanism for the implementation of the project.



A herd of elephant at Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe
Photo: Unsplash

Lessons learned

Leadership for biodiversity mainstreaming is vital. The approach of the African Leadership Group is an example of linking leaders in environment, finance and development both within and across countries. Creating such a network can help to ensure that mainstreaming happens in-country, as these leaders coordinate the budgets and strategic plans in which

biodiversity issues need to be integrated. Institutionalization and 'ownership' of biodiversity mainstreaming – an issue requiring continuous engagement – is critical.

Just as the environment should be mainstreamed into development policies, so should development and poverty reduction be mainstreamed into environment policies, programmes and financing.

“South-South cooperation must also involve young people, civil society, the private sector, academia and others, building innovative partnerships and extending the reach of initiatives. It must harness the potential of new technologies and digitalisation that create opportunities and promote inclusivity.”

ANTÓNIO GUTERRES

SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS – REMARKS TO THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (BAPA+40, 2019).

Project Title: African Leadership Group in Biodiversity and Development Mainstreaming

Subprogramme: Healthy and Productive Ecosystems

Funding sources: UK Darwin Initiative, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Department for International Development (DFID), Global Environment Facility (GEF) and European Union (EU)

Project period: 2012 -2017

Countries involved: Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, Seychelles, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Project team: John Tayleur and Abisha Mapendembe

Key partners:

UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) facilitated the initiative.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project





An entrepreneur from Kenya, James Mwaura (Director, Champion Shoes, Ltd.) displaying some of the improved products made by his enterprise after training on green manufacturing.

Photo: SWITCH Africa Green

Switch Africa Green

The challenge

In most African countries, a large share of national economic output comes from sectors such as tourism, agriculture, mining, forestry and fishing that rely heavily on natural resources. In many of these countries, this resource base is threatened by degradation, depletion and inefficient practices. Today's businesses must operate more efficiently and sustainably in order to ensure a stable future for coming generations.

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) form the backbone of development in Africa. Today, these small and growing businesses create around 80 per cent of the region's employment, establishing a new middle class and fueling demand for new goods and services. Through the Switch Africa Green programme, countries identified four priority sectors for support in green business development: agriculture, integrated waste management, manufacturing and tourism. The beneficiary MSMEs are supported to green their processes; this results in cleaner and safer environments and generates economic as well as social benefits.

The strategy

The overall objective of SWITCH Africa Green is to support countries in Africa to achieve sustainable development by engaging in the transition towards an inclusive green economy that can generate growth, create jobs and reduce poverty. This goal is achieved through support to private sector-led inclusive green growth. More specifically, the project aims to develop green entrepreneurship and the use of green economy and sustainable consumption and production practices by having in place (i) better equipped businesses and (ii) conditions in the form of clear policies, sound regulatory frameworks, incentive structures and tax and market-based instruments in targeted sectors.

The programme has three components:

- The policy development component aims to create an enabling environment for green business development that allows private sector-led inclusive green growth.
- The green business development component is aimed at supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through grants to intermediary organizations to enable them to start and develop green businesses or apply or take up sustainable consumption and production practices and patterns. The grant projects focus on growing “green” sectors and capturing market opportunities for resource-efficient green goods and services.
- The Networking Facility aims to distil and share knowledge, lessons learned and best practices on green business and sustainable consumption and production to create broader awareness and to increase understanding of green business development in the region.

The impact

Phase 1 of the Switch Africa Green programme identified gaps in policies, regulations and standards that are required to support green business development in the four priority sectors in the participating countries. Support on specific policies has commenced and further support will be provided through the second phase of the programme. In addition, support in capacity development of MSMEs in Sustainable Consumption and Production practices through 34 grantees was carried out in Phase 1 of the programme. Over 3,000 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have been supported in the uptake of innovative green business and sustainable consumption and production practices across the four priority sectors and five cross-cutting themes (energy efficiency, labelling and standards, water efficiency, eco-innovation and sustainable trade). A total of \$11.5 million was disbursed to grantees during Phase 1 of the project.

The MSMEs were provided with toolkits, training and mentorship to adopt more sustainable and resource efficient production processes, such as energy efficiency, water efficiency, product innovation, record keeping, better product pricing, standards and certification, etc.

The implementation of innovative green business practices and sustainable consumption and production practices by the entrepreneurs has increased productivity, improved time efficiency, cut costs, increased incomes, improved working conditions, improved health, created decent jobs, and led to a cleaner environment, among other benefits. Overall, SWITCH Africa Green is creating a multiplier effect to improve livelihoods, especially of women and youth.

“Today, solutions created in the South are delivering lasting results around the world.”

ACHIM STEINER

**ADMINISTRATOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME –
OPENING REMARKS AT THE SECOND HIGH-LEVEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (BAPA+40, 2019).**



A farmer from Green Acre Living shows a compost structure for sustainable agriculture installed during a training. Johannesburg, South Africa.

Photo: SWITCH Africa Green

Lessons learned

Support for MSMEs in sustainable consumption and production practices and green businesses reduced the use of energy, water and materials; minimized waste in production processes; improved health and safety conditions in work places; improved corporate image; increased competitiveness; and strengthened compliance with national laws and regulations. These MSMEs require partners to continuously work with them to improve their practices and make them sustainable.

Green products are not fully appreciated by consumers (both public and private consumers). Support in sustainable public procurement policies and greater awareness of sustainable products is needed.

Governments in the region need regular support to appreciate, develop and implement policies that support green entrepreneurship and sustainable consumption and production.

MSMEs lack knowledge of and access to successful models of sustainable consumption and production, and/or they lack important skills related to greening business processes or adopting sustainable consumption and production practices.

There is lack of green financing mechanisms for small enterprises including support for MSMEs to develop sustainable business models and bankable proposals for implementation of identified green options in the enterprises.

There is lack of public information programmes on sustainable consumption and production and a lack of networking platforms for public and private stakeholders to share their experiences.

Mechanisms of South-South cooperation

- **Training:** Implementation of a sustainable consumption and production e-learning course for policymakers and other decision-makers in Africa by UNEP, 10YFP and UNITAR as replication of the programme initially started by SWITCH Asia.
- **Policy dialogues:** Exchange of good practices on green and Sustainable Consumption and Production policies across countries at national and regional levels.
- **Networking facility:** The design of the SWITCH programmes includes a networking facility. Through the networking facility, national and regional forums have been held to share knowledge, exchange best practices and lessons learned on SCP policies, practices and actions as a means to transition to inclusive green economy in countries.
- **Networking across regions:** Regional exchanges were hosted with sister programmes – Switch Asia and Switch Mediterranean. There was also regular exchange of information and best practices across these regions.

How South-South cooperation helps the project achieve its objectives

The forums provide a networking opportunity for green entrepreneurs, industry leaders, government officials, development partners and non-state actors. The participants in the forum are able to share opportunities and challenges, experiences and lessons learned, as well as build synergy and complementarity. They provide a platform for partnerships and collaborations between different initiatives in green economy and sustainable consumption and production practices. The exchanges

within countries, between countries and across regions have proved to be very useful. Grantees have shared knowledge and techniques that have improved their project implementation. The beneficiary enterprises have shared market opportunities, improved production processes and exchanged technologies between countries. This has resulted in the replication of successful interventions in some of the projects.

More details on the Switch Africa Green programme are available at the programme website: www.switchafricagreen.org

Project Title: Switch Africa Green

Subprogramme: Resource Efficiency

Funding source: European Union

Project period: 2014-2019; 2018-2021

Countries involved: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia,¹ Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Uganda

Project team:

Project Manager - Patrick Mwesigye,

Team: Rhoda Wachira, Kamala Earnest, Carolyne Kilel, Sylvia Munuhe

Key partners:

UNDP²; UNOPS³; EU Delegations⁴ in the 7 countries; National Technical Coordination Committees (NTCC); Grantees.

1 Ethiopia joined the programme in phase 2: 2018 – 2021.

2 UN National coordinators based in UNDP offices in phase I of the programme.

3 Management of grants in phase I of the programme.

4 Management of grants in phase II of the programme.

Sustainable Development Goals that are supported through the work of the project



Conclusion

As these case studies show, developing countries are successfully using South-South cooperation to respond to their sustainable development challenges. Governments, the private sector, donors and civil society are joining forces, establishing new and ambitious partnerships for green development in the Global South.

Examples of joint research, capacity-building, technology transfer as well as the sharing of knowledge, experience, best practice and lessons learned underscore the numerous opportunities and immense potential of South-South cooperation to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. As innovative solutions to environmental and sustainable development challenges are increasingly available in the Global South, South-South cooperation continues to be a crucial means of progress towards a green and sustainable future.

The United Nations Environment Programme will continue to foster South-South cooperation and strengthen regional and international collaboration among developing countries.

“South-South cooperation should not be seen as official development assistance. It is a partnership among equals based on solidarity.”

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