

5. Annex

5.1 Terms of Reference

Global South-South Development Center Evaluation Guidelines

Background

Overview

The Global South-South Development Center (SSDC), with its Secretariat in Beijing, was established in 2009 through the partnership between the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE) and UNOSSC. The overall mission of SSDC is to promote successful South-South cooperation experiences and practices and build development capacity in the global South. SSDC supports the formulation, coordination, technical support and small-scale catalytic financing of cooperation activities.

SSDC has facilitated cooperation between a network of renowned centers of excellence based in China and institutions from other developing countries. Since 2009, it has sponsored numerous study tours, workshops, training courses and small grants projects. These activities enabled cooperation in a variety of fields: solar energy, information technology application, car maintenance technology and many others.

The SSDC was originally a five-year project running from November 2008 to December 2013. In 2013 the SSDC Project Board decided to extend the project for a further five years to December 2018.

A comprehensive evaluation of the SSDC project 2009 to 2013 was completed in 2014. This evaluation classified the the activities undertaken by SSDC into 5 main areas:

6. Capacity and partnership building efforts.
7. Provision of small grants
8. Research and studies
9. Communications
10. Establishment and management of SSDC platform

The evaluation made 5 recommendations:

6. The SSDC platform should be enhanced. UNOSSC and CICETE should make greater efforts to get legal status for SSDC in China.
7. Encourage greater cooperation between SSDC partners – called “Excellence Centers” in the evaluation.
8. Expand the SSDC database. At the time of the evaluation, the SSDC had established a domestic expert database. The evaluation recommended setting up technology and project databases, to facilitate knowledge sharing and cooperation.
9. Establish a China South-South Cooperation Academy, under the umbrella of UNOSSC’s Global South-South Cooperation Academy. The functions of the China South-South Cooperation Academy would be to:
 - a. Provide human resources and technological supports for domestic South-South cooperation practices in different fields.
 - b. Participate in the initiatives carried out by the Global South-South Cooperation Academy in the international context.

- c. Undertake policy study and research on domestic and international South-South cooperation.
 - d. Undertake training courses on South-South cooperation.
10. Establish a China South-South Cooperation Fund to provide reliable financial support for the sustainable development of the SSDC.

Key Partners

- United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).
- China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE), under the Ministry of Commerce, China.
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

Management Arrangements

The SSDC Project Document outlined three execution arrangements:

- **National Execution (NEX)** – now called National Implementation Modality (NIM) – with CICETE serving as the Implementing Partner representing the Government of China.
- **SSDC Grants** to various implementing partners, in particular UN entities, national government institutions, or NGOs in recipient countries.
- **Agency Execution Modality**, in particular engaging UNOPS acting on behalf of the SSDC.

Implementing Modality	Primary Uses
NEX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the SSDC and its operations. • Umbrella activities to promote South-South cooperation, or initiatives to promote South-South cooperation modalities on a global basis.
SSDC Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the diverse range of activities that the SSDC will undertake and support, it was foreseen that many activities would be implemented in the form of grants. • Grants facilitate the use of different implementing partners, including UN entities, national government institutions, or NGOs.
Agency Execution (UNOPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation activities. • Coordination of Project Steering Committee activities. • Human resources and procurement activities including consultant contracts, lease of office space, and procurement of equipment.

Notes:

- Many SSDC grantees have also received support from the UNOSSC-managed Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund. A list of these projects is included as an annex to these guidelines.
- There is a separate Project Document, titled *China South-South Development Centre – Management Effectiveness*, which formalizes the Agency Execution arrangement between UNOSSC and UNOPS. The Agency Execution arrangement ceased in 2017. Since this time,

UNOSSC has been responsible for activities envisioned under the Management Effectiveness project.

Overview of United Nations and South-South Evaluations

Rationale

Evaluation is a regular step of UNOSSC/UNDP's project management cycle. This evaluation will be carried out according to UNDP's Evaluation Policy. This policy sets out the purpose and basic principles of evaluation.

The evaluation will follow the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) definition of evaluation as "an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance". As per UNDP policy:

*"Evaluations should focus on expected and achieved accomplishments, critically examining the presumed causal chains, processes, and attainment of results, as well as the contextual factors that may enhance or impede the achievement of results. **Evaluations focus on determining the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNDP work in order to make adjustments and improve conditions to development**".*

The UNDP policy outlines three rationales for undertaking evaluations.

1. **Evaluations support better decision-making and promote learning among stakeholders:** Evaluations are important tools for helping UNDP to learn from past experience and better understand what types of development support work well, and not so well, and in what contexts. The scope, design and implementation of an evaluation should generate relevant, cost-effective and timely information.
2. **Evaluations help stakeholders to hold UNDP accountable for contributing to development results at different levels:** Evaluations help hold UNDP accountable to stakeholders including the Executive Board, funders of programmes, and governments and citizens of countries where UNDP works. In addition, UNOSSC is also accountable to the General Assembly High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation.
3. **Improved national evaluation capacity enhances progress towards the sustainable development goals:** Support to national evaluation capacity is a UNDP programmatic priority.

UNDP Evaluation Principles

The evaluation should be guided by UNDP's **people-centered approach to development**, which enhances capabilities, choices and rights for all men and women. The evaluation will abide by universally shared values of **equity, justice, gender equality and respect for diversity**. The ECOSOC requires UNDP to **systematically integrate human rights and gender equality** into evaluating the operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

UNDP/UNEG Evaluation Norms

The evaluation must abide by the 10 norms defined by the UNEG:

1. **Uphold and promote the principles and values to which the United Nations is committed:** In particular, evaluators should respect, promote and contribute to the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. **Utility:** There should be a clear intention to use the resulting analysis, conclusions and recommendations to inform decisions and actions.
3. **Credibility:** Credibility is grounded on independence, impartiality, and a rigorous methodology. Key elements include transparent evaluation processes, inclusive approaches involving relevant stakeholders and robust quality assurance mechanisms.
4. **Independence:** Independence of evaluation is necessary for credibility, influences the ways in which an evaluation is used, and allows evaluators to be impartial and free from undue pressure throughout the evaluation process.
5. **Impartiality:** The key elements of impartiality are objectivity, professional integrity and absence of bias. Evaluators need to be impartial, implying that evaluation team members must not have been directly responsible for the policy setting, design or management of the evaluation subject.
6. **Ethics:** Evaluations must be conducted with the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the “do no harm” principle.
7. **Transparency:** Evaluation products should be publicly available.
8. **Human rights and gender equality:** It is the responsibility of evaluators and evaluation managers to ensure that human rights and gender equality are respected, addressed and promoted.
9. **National evaluation capacities:** National evaluation capacities should be supported upon the request of Member States.
10. **Professionalism:** Evaluations should be conducted with professionalism and integrity. Key aspects include access to knowledge; education and training; adherence to ethics, norms and standards; utilization of evaluation competencies; and recognition of knowledge, skills and experience.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The SSDC was developed as a South-South cooperation project. Therefore, in addition to the above-mentioned principles and norms, the SSDC evaluation must take into account the unique history and principles of South-South and triangular cooperation.

As per UNOSSC, South-South cooperation is a “broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, intraregional or interregional basis. Developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts. Recent developments in South-South cooperation have taken the form of increased volume of South-South trade, South-South flows of foreign direct investment, movements towards regional integration, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, and other forms of exchanges.

Triangular cooperation is collaboration in which traditional donor countries and multilateral organizations facilitate South-South initiatives through the provision of funding, training, management and technological systems as well as other forms of support.

South-South cooperation is a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development. **The South-South Cooperation agenda and South-South cooperation initiatives must be determined by the countries of the South, guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit.”**

The basic objectives of South-South cooperation, as outlined in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (resolution 33/134) are to:

- **Foster the self-reliance of developing countries** by enhancing their creative capacity to find solutions to their development problems in keeping with their own aspirations, values and specific needs.
- Promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among developing countries through the **exchange of experiences; the pooling, sharing and use of their technical and other resources; and the development of their complementary capacities.**
- **Strengthen the capacity of developing countries** to identify and analyze together their main development issues and formulate the requisite strategies to address them.
- **Increase the quantity and enhance the quality of international development cooperation** through the pooling of capacities to improve the effectiveness of the resources devoted to such cooperation.
- **Create and strengthen existing technological capacities** in the developing countries in order to improve the effectiveness with which such capacities are used and to improve the capacity of developing countries to absorb and adapt technology and skills to meet their specific developmental needs.
- **Increase and improve communications among developing countries**, leading to greater awareness of common problems and wider access to available knowledge and experience as well as the creation of new knowledge in tackling development problems.
- **Recognize and respond to the problems and requirements of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States** and the countries most seriously affected by, for example, natural disasters and other crises.
- Enable developing countries to achieve a **greater degree of participation in international economic activities and to expand international cooperation for development.**

Guidelines for SSDC Evaluation

Objectives

The objectives of this evaluation are to:

7. Assess the extent to which the planned outputs of the project were implemented and results achieved.
8. Assess the extent to which the project was implemented in line with the principles and objectives of South-South and triangular cooperation, including any unique “value adds” of using the South-South modality.
9. Assess the effectiveness and suitability of the chosen management mechanisms to achieve desired outputs and results.
10. Assess the extent to which recommendations made in the 2014 evaluation were implemented.
11. Identify innovate aspects of the project, challenges faced, and lessons learned.
12. Provide strategic advice to UNOSSC, CICETE, and the SSDC team to enable planning for the next phase of the SSDC.

Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Suggested Key Questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the SSDC suited to the priorities and policies of project beneficiaries and partners? To what extent are the objectives of the SSDC still relevant in the context of an evolving global development landscape – including the 2030 Agenda, and the Belt and Road Initiative? Were the activities and outputs consistent with the overall SSDC goal?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were the stated objectives of the SSDC achieved? What were major factors influencing the successful achievement (or otherwise) of the stated objectives?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were SSDC activities cost efficient, keeping in mind the objectives and principles of South-South cooperation? Were SSDC activities and objectives achieved on time? Were the chosen SSDC management modalities (NEX, small grants, UNOPS) efficient? What other modalities could have been chosen, and would these have resulted in greater efficiencies?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has happened as a result of the SSDC? What real differences have been made to SSDC partners and beneficiaries? Were there any negative and/or unintended impacts resulting from the SSDC? How did political contexts, particularly in China, effect the impact or potential impact of the SSDC?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has sustainability been built into the SSDC? How? What are major factors that impact the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?
Alignment with South-South principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was the SSDC designed and implemented in line with principles of South-South cooperation? How did alignment with the principles of South-South cooperation impact – positively or negatively – the achievement of SSDC goals and objectives?

Use of Results

Evaluation results will be used to:

1. Inform the design the next stage of the SSDC.
2. Facilitate organizational learning.
3. Report results.
4. Inform project supporters and beneficiaries.

Evaluation Management

Management Team

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