**About South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)**

South-South cooperation is a broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental, and technical domains. It is a tool used by the states, international organizations, academics, civil society, and the private sector to share knowledge, skills, resources, and successful initiatives in different areas.

South-South cooperation “is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation”. Involving two or more developing countries, it can take place on a bilateral, regional, intraregional or interregional basis.

Recent developments in South-South cooperation have taken the form of an increased volume of South-South trade, flows of foreign direct investment, movements towards regional integration, technology transfers, sharing of solutions and experts, and other forms of exchanges.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is a 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.

The SSTC involves three actors: two or more developing countries from the South and one actor from the North. The latter (can also be an international organization, for example, the UPU) provides the financial resources so that the countries of the South can exchange technical assistance on a specific topic. The division of “North” and “South” is used to refer to the social, economic, and political differences between developed countries (North) and developing countries (South), and does not depend on a geographic location.

**Guiding Principles of South-South Cooperation**

In his 2017 Report on the State of South-South Cooperation to the UN General Assembly, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres mandated the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) to coordinate, in consultation with the UN agencies, the preparation of the UN system-wide South-South cooperation strategy to “achieve more coherent and coordinated support by the UN system”. “Collaboration among countries of the Global South offers a unique pathway that accelerates us towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals,”said the UN Secretary-General on 12 September 2019, International Day for South-South Cooperation.

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 on 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, independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs, and mutual benefit.

**Objectives of the SSTC**

The basic objectives of the SSTC, according to the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries endorsed by the General Assembly in 1978 (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 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 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 a 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; and
* enable developing countries to achieve a greater degree of participation in international economic activities and to expand international cooperation for development.

**UPU’s commitment to the SSTC**

Abidjan Postal Strategy (2022–2025) lays down the development cooperation between UPU member states based on the SSTC mechanism. To support the achievement of Postal Vision 2030, the UPU is expected to “…seek to offer postal sector stakeholders quality advice, training and technical cooperation options to support them in navigating the challenges and opportunities of a fast-changing sector.”

The 27th Universal Postal Congress in Abidjan has emphasized this methodology to raise resources for beneficiary developing UPU member states. The focus is to support their relative initiatives and align them with their national priorities by applying a “bottom-up” development approach.

Taking into consideration the lessons drawn from the Istanbul cycle and the decisions of the Abidjan Congress, the UPU Development Cooperation Policy for 2022–2025 is structured around eight main development areas, one of which is “Area 5 – Strengthen South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a support system alongside UPU actions in the field.”

The SSTC constitutes one of the intervention methods under the new policy and should serve to reinforce UPU activities and support national and regional development efforts. This cooperation method will help to strengthen institutional and technical capabilities and improve the sharing of knowledge and experience between developing countries. The UPU will take a proactive and pioneering role in promoting this approach, to reduce the implementation costs of development cooperation projects through innovative forms of cooperation with the countries of the South.

**SSTC methodology**

The overall aim of the UPU is to reduce the postal development gap between its member countries around the world. Therefore, the UPU seeks to increase the involvement of Northern countries to find solutions for the Southern countries within a framework of the SSTC, and link development project outcomes to national and regional priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals, to obtain support from the international community and wider civil society.

Within this framework, the UPU has developed its methodology for the SSTC and its primary objectives are:

* To support national and regional development efforts;
* To strengthen institutional and technical capacities;
* To improve the exchange of experience and know-how among developing countries;
* To respond to the specific challenges of developing countries;
* To increase the impact of international cooperation and UPU’s effectiveness in the region.

The use of appropriate technology and solutions works well, especially if there is a big constraint on resources. Southern countries used to complain about such solutions being thrust on them because they only led to further issues. That is why *“Nothing for me without me”*has become the voice of the South in the development cooperation field. It means, the solutions found should be tailored to consider the peculiarities and national priorities of each country. They need to be country-specific, yet align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Consequently, instead of developing and imposing projects and solutions on the UPU member countries in the South, it is important to communicate with them directly and inquire about their real needs. For example, they could need specific postal infrastructure or mail delivery vehicles. Another form of practical assistance could be consulting on postal policies, and training workshops in different postal areas, such as IT, operations, e-commerce, etc.

An important element of the SSTC is training similar countriesto ensure technical development. Only successful methods in a similar environment should be applied so that there is no need “to reinvent the wheel”.

Therefore, the SSTC becomes a learning process for countries of the South, but also for the North and the UPU as the parties identify and share the best practical experience in particular industries. They learn from each other by analyzing their needs and finding the most effective compromise solutions to bridge postal development gaps.

**Resource mobilization for the SSTC**

The SSTC is an important tool for raising new resources for postal development projects – in-cash and in-kind. There are many ways to reduce project implementation costs by innovatively cooperating with the countries in the South and the North.

Considering that no resources should be wasted, the UPU seeks to carry out projects in traditional and innovative ways by using the funds already available. For example, the resources of the developing countries have increased and many of them are willing to share their postal equipment with the designated operators in the South. Countries in the North find the solutions and initiatives of the South worth supporting and they are willing to provide their resources and implement joint development projects under the SSTC. However, the UPU should approach them as donors only once such projects are clearly formulated and ready to be launched.

To bridge postal development gaps, the UPU needs to encourage its member countries to share their best practices between themselves, and to ensure more efficient cooperation between its own teams who have already gained valuable knowledge and experience in SSTC projects.