

**Concept Note: 2022 GSSD Expo Side-event (Virtual)
Launch of South-South Ideas Paper on Digital Transformation**

Tuesday, 13 September 2022, 19:30 am (Bangkok Time)

Zoom link: https://undp.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7q90EDXeSP-1CMiaXuedSQ



Introduction of the South-South Global Thinkers initiative

The 2030 Agenda calls for a new and inclusive global partnership, of which South-South and triangular cooperation (SSTC) forms an integral part. SDG 17 focuses on the need to enhance knowledge-sharing through improved coordination among existing mechanisms.

The [BAPA+40 Outcome Document](#) also reiterated that to fully unleash the potential of SSTC, it is imperative to continue support technical, policy and research support for countries. Think tanks and research institutes from the Global South play a vital role in the political and policy arenas at the local, national level, and global levels and assist governments in understanding and in making informed choices about issues of domestic and international concerns. Thus, they can strategically champion the thought leadership on SSC and TrC. The final Report of the 20th High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation (2021) explicitly recognizes the key contribution of the South-South Global Thinkers initiative in this endeavor. Similarly, the United Nations System-Wide Strategy for SSTC for Sustainable Development (2020-2025) indicates that UN entities can build on this global project to jointly conduct evidence-based analysis, research, dialogue and advocacy to inform policymaking on SSTC for supporting the achievement of the SDGs.

The [South-South Global Thinkers initiative](#)- A Global Coalition of Think Tank Networks, was jointly launched by United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and United Nations Development (UNDP), for SSC in partnership with various Southern-led think tank networks and private sector entities. The objective of the initiative is to contribute to growing

body of evidence and knowledge on issues pertinent to SSC. This is a joint effort to draw on the high-quality expertise of think tank networks and research institutes from the South (as well as some from the North) and to develop a platform for SSC research, knowledge sharing and dialogues. The aim is to inform global policy dialogues and agenda setting on SSC and inform policy makers and development practitioners on the value of SSC and TrC and to assist them in making informed decisions on their SSC and TrC investment with the goal in accelerating progress towards the SDGs.

Every year under the initiative the research grants are provided to the think tank through a competitive process on the selected themes. These research papers provide an extensive and cross-disciplinary breadth of knowledge, evidence-based analyses, independent intellectual debate, as well as inspiring policy recommendations for the achievement of the SDGs through leveraging SSTC.

The 2021 Research Grant cycle, among other four research priority areas, included South-South Cooperation in technology and digital transformation. The three papers commissioned on this theme will be launched on the margins of the [2022 GSSD Expo](#) held from 12-14 September 2022.

Background and objective

Developing economies are leveraging digital transformation as opportunity to leapfrog industrial age infrastructure, to draw on the vast knowledge spillovers from the internet, to take advantage of new markets offered by digital platforms and to exploit production possibilities enabled by digital technologies.

Policy making is shifting dramatically as governments strive to keep up with new technologies and manage the increasing volume of data flowing across borders. Institutions — national, regional and international — must evolve quickly to fill governance and regulatory gaps exactly at a time when support for international cooperation needs to be further mobilized. The digital economy, driven largely by data and other intangibles, demands a new approach to international governance across the areas of trade, law, security, economic policy, and privacy, to name a few.

COVID-19 has further triggered the use of digital technologies and a surge in digital skills. It has contributed to bridge the disruption caused by the pandemic. As developing countries continue efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, digital solutions are enabling economic transformation and putting them on a path toward green, resilient, and inclusive growth. Private and public investment in digital solutions is bringing critical services to the poorest, creating jobs, strengthening small and medium businesses, enabling trade and services, and building resilience to shocks. Yet at the end of 2021, nearly 3 billion people remained offline, the vast majority concentrated in developing countries. And the usage gap remains a challenge. Close to half (43%) of the world's population are not using mobile internet, despite living in areas with mobile broadband coverage.

The research papers commissioned under South-South Global Thinkers aims to explore policy recommendations to strengthen SSTC in addressing the digital divide, scaling-up technological transfer and innovations, and enabling digital transformation. The papers discuss different aspects and bring diverse perspective from the South that can help inform the policy discourse.

The paper to be launched in the 2022 Expo Side-event include the following:

1. South-South Cooperation on technology and digital transformation through establishment of Science and Technology Park under the Belt and Road Initiative
2. South-South cooperation, technology and digital transformation: The Case of Arab Countries
3. Digital Trade Integration: Role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The launched papers will also be available on [South-South Global thinkers Platform](#).

Target audience

The publications presented at the side event are expected to inspire SSTC practitioners and policy makers from governments, regional or international institutions, UN entities, academia, think tanks, private sector and entrepreneurs, civil society, and non-governmental organizations etc.

Agenda

	Moderator: Dr. Hany Besada , Senior Research and Programme Advisor, UNOSSC
	Opening Remarks:
8:30	Mr. Zanofer Ismalebbe , (Incoming) Chief, Knowledge Management, UNOSSC, NY
8:35	UNDP Representative (tbc)
8:40	Launch of South-South Ideas Papers: Guided presentation by authors (10 min each)
8:45	Dr. Wen Chen , Department of International Development Cooperation of the Institute of New Structural Economics (INSE) at Peking University, China Present paper on: South-South Cooperation on technology and digital transformation through establishment of Science and Technology Park under the Belt and Road Initiative
8:55	Dr. Vaqar Ahmed , Joint Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Pakistan Present paper on: Digital Trade Integration: Role of South-South and Triangular Cooperation
9:05	Professor Dr. Samia Satti Osman Mohamed Nour , Economic Research Forum (ERF), Egypt Present paper on: South-South cooperation, Technology and Digital Transformation: The case of Arab Countries
9:15	Open Discussion (Q&A)
9:35	Wrap up and closing