

Thematic Evaluation Series

**Evaluation of FAO's contributions to
Sustainable Development Goal 2 - "End
hunger, achieve food security and improved
nutrition and promote sustainable
agriculture"**

South–South and triangular cooperation

Abstract

This document presents the results of a brief study of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) work on South–South and triangular cooperation. It was conducted as part of the strategic evaluation of FAO’s contributions to Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), with a view to understanding the relevance of South–South and triangular cooperation as a mechanism for mobilizing resources and partnerships to support Members in achieving SDG 2, as well as to identify key challenges and opportunities for FAO to expand this mechanism in the context of the 2030 Agenda. South–South and triangular Cooperation is a relevant and effective means of implementing the SDGs, as highlighted by the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. This study confirmed that South–South and triangular cooperation is an excellent mechanism for mobilizing partnerships, pooling resources for sustainable development and conveying innovative solutions. Within FAO, South–South and triangular cooperation has achieved significant milestones, especially in terms of structural change. However, its potential has not been fully explored. Challenges such as the high turnover of top management, inadequate visibility by senior management and insufficient resources may have hampered the consolidation of a South–South and triangular cooperation strategic vision and plan for the Organization. There is momentum and plenty of opportunity for FAO to tackle certain systemic challenges and strengthen its South–South and triangular cooperation work to accelerate progress on achieving SDG 2.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

BAPA+40	High-level United Nations Conference on South–South Cooperation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNS	Food and nutrition security
GCP	Government Cooperative Programme
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
OED	Office of Evaluation
PST	South–South and Triangular Cooperation Division
RBA	Rome-based Agency
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UNOSSC	United Nations Office of South–South Cooperation
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

1. This document presents the results of a brief study of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) work on South–South and triangular cooperation conducted by the FAO Office of Evaluation (OED) in collaboration with the FAO South–South and triangular cooperation division (PST), as part of the strategic evaluation of FAO's contributions to Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
2. South–South and triangular cooperation was selected as a "signature product", along with 13 other practices and approaches. These methodologies, mechanisms and approaches have the potential to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 2. They were identified in the first phase of the SDG 2 evaluation and proposed in the evaluation report presented to the FAO Programme Committee at its 128th session (FAO, 2020a, p.44). The case studies of signature products will feed into the evaluation report of the second phase of the SDG 2 evaluation, which will be presented to the FAO Programme Committee at its 129th session.
3. The main objective was to inform the SDG 2 evaluation on the relevance of South–South and triangular cooperation as a mechanism for mobilizing resources and partnerships to support Members in achieving SDG 2, as well as the challenges and opportunities involved in expanding South–South and triangular cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Although it is an evaluative exercise, this study was not intended to be an evaluation of all of the South–South and triangular cooperation promoted by FAO. The scope for this signature product is directly linked to the wider SDG 2 evaluation and limited to the relevance and pertinence of South–South and triangular cooperation to SDG 2. This study provides an overview of FAO's South–South and triangular cooperation work, not an exhaustive analysis. OED plans to conduct a comprehensive South–South and triangular cooperation evaluation in 2021.
4. For rapid evidence assessment, this study mainly relied on secondary data (please see the bibliography). The review was complemented by semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with key informants in and outside FAO (Appendix 1). The examples showcased in this report are illustrative, but not exhaustive and selected based on the availability of evaluative data and/or volume of information.

2. Background

2.1 Definition and principles of south–south and triangular cooperation

5. The evaluation team found different definitions, especially for triangular cooperation. The United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation (UNOSSC), for example, defines South–South cooperation and triangular cooperation as 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.” Triangular cooperation 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” (UNOSSC, n.d.).
6. This case study adopts FAO’s definitions of South–South and triangular cooperation (FAO, 2016a):
 - i. South–South cooperation is the mutual sharing and exchange of key development solutions – knowledge, experiences and good practices, policies, technology and resources – by countries in the Global South.
 - ii. Triangular Cooperation involves two or more countries of the Global South collaborating with a third party, typically a multilateral institution, traditional resource partner or emerging economy, to facilitate South–South cooperation through the provision of technical or financial resources.
7. Aires Plan of Action for promoting and implementing technical cooperation among developing countries (BAPA) (United Nations General Assembly, 1978):
 - i. Normative: a) respect for national sovereignty; b) national ownership and independence; c) equality; d) non-conditionality; e) non-interference in domestic affairs; and f) mutual benefit.
 - ii. Operational: a) mutual accountability and transparency; b) development effectiveness; c) coordination of evidence- and results-based initiatives; and d) a multi-stakeholder approach.

2.2 South-South and triangular cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda

8. South–South and triangular cooperation feature in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 17, as a key “means of implementation” or mechanism to achieve the SDGs (United Nations General Assembly, 2015):
 - i. Target 17.3. Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources, including through SSC.
 - ii. Target 17.6. Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, in particular at the United Nations level.
 - iii. Target 17.9. Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the SDGs, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

9. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development also explicitly mentions South–South cooperation as an important element of international cooperation for development to complement traditional North–South cooperation (United Nations, 2015, p. 28).
10. The outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South–South Cooperation (BAPA+40), endorsed by the General Assembly in April 2019, also recognized the potential of South–South and triangular cooperation in achieving the SDGs and called for further investment in this means of technical cooperation to promote food and nutrition security, as well as sustainable agriculture. Specifically, it reminded the United Nations System entities that they are enablers of partnerships and should assist developing countries in seeking potential cooperation partners (United Nations General Assembly, 2019, p.7).

3. FAO's South-South and triangular cooperation

3.1 Overview of the evolution of South–South and triangular cooperation at FAO

11. FAO started to explore South–South cooperation in 1979, with the establishment of a focal point to promote technical cooperation among developing countries. FAO's involvement became more prominent from 1996, with the endorsement of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) by the World Food Summit.¹ The SPFS made significant use of South–South cooperation, especially in China, by establishing the FAO–China South–South Cooperation Programme in 2009, supported by a trust fund of USD 80 million (for more, see FAO, 2019b).
12. In 2011, the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System (JIU) conducted a system-wide review of existing United Nations arrangements in support of South–South and triangular cooperation and found that the United Nations System had made little progress in promoting South–South and triangular cooperation since 1978, particularly triangular cooperation. In summary, it recommended that the institutional arrangements be improved in terms of overall system-wide policy frameworks, governance, coordination, structures, mechanisms and dedicated resources, and that more effort be put into enhancing its contribution to South–South cooperation (United Nations JIU, 2011).
13. To address this recommendation, FAO established a specific South–South Cooperation Unit under the former Technical Cooperation Department (TC) in 2012 and followed this up with a corporate strategy in 2013. This strategy established key drivers and pillars and defined FAO's role as a broker of South–South cooperation. During this period, as well as establishing a specific team to facilitate South–South cooperation initiatives in headquarters under the former Partnerships, Advocacy, and Capacity Development Division (DPS), FAO decentralized South–South cooperation officers to promote the implementation of the mechanism in the five regions. Decentralization was completed in 2014. In the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (RAP) and the Regional Office for the Near East and North African (RNE), the function has been shifted to Policy Officers, who perform others functions in addition to South–South and triangular cooperation. They all report to their regional offices, not to PST.
14. In 2019, to demonstrate FAO's focus on South–South cooperation and to emphasize the importance of triangular cooperation, the South–South Cooperation Unit became the Office of South–South and Triangular Cooperation (OSS), reporting directly to the Assistant Director-General, Programme Support and Technical Cooperation Department (FAO, 2018a). Although FAO had facilitated triangular cooperation initiatives in previous years with major partners such as Japan and South Korea, this was the first time it was formally acknowledged.
15. In the same year, FAO's South–South and triangular cooperation passed two other significant corporate milestones:
 - i. the completion of a strategic review of South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives promoted by FAO between 1996 and 2017 (FAO, 2019a); and

¹ The SPFS was launched in 1994, but only endorsed in 1996.

- ii. the inclusion of South–South and triangular cooperation-related questions in country annual reports.²
16. It also conducted a comprehensive ten-year review of the FAO–China South–South Cooperation Programme to document the main results, challenges and lessons learned between 2009 and 2019 (FAO, 2019b).
17. Although the changes that occurred between 2012 and 2019 somewhat increased the visibility of the mechanism within the Organization and among Members and partners, considerable challenges continued to hamper its consolidation as a strategic mechanism for mobilizing partnerships and resources for development. For example, the institutional structure saw high leadership turnover and periodic changes of direction during this time. Between 2015 and 2020, FAO's South–South and triangular cooperation unit has had one chief and four directors. In addition, because of its multifaceted nature, it has undergone several changes in direction, such as a shift in focus from being a means of implementation to a tool for resource mobilization, then a tool for strengthening collaboration. Further challenges are listed in Section 6.
18. In July 2020, OSS became a full division under the Partnerships and Outreach stream: the South–South and Triangular Cooperation Division (PST) (FAO, 2020c). This is expected to enhance the use of the mechanism, foster collaboration both within and outside FAO and integrate South–South and triangular cooperation into high-level strategic discussions. Hereinafter, FAO South–South and triangular cooperation “institutional structure” is used to refer to all South–South and triangular cooperation teams, divisions and departments that have existed over the years, from the South–South Cooperation Unit to PST.
19. FAO's South–South and triangular cooperation strategy is currently being revised to address the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the BAPA+40.

3.2 FAO's role and responsibilities

20. As a neutral broker, FAO is expected to perform the following tasks through its South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure (FAO, n.d.a):
 - i. provide a framework for cooperation between countries, institutions, cooperatives, farmers and international organizations;
 - ii. facilitate dialogue between governments, institutions, civil society and the private sector to coordinate South–South and triangular cooperation programmes/projects and ensure mutual commitment;
 - iii. offer its extensive country-level presence, technical capacity and outreach to, among other things, identify similar constraints and solutions between regions and similar socioeconomic contexts; and
 - iv. mobilize resources for and raise the visibility of South–South and triangular cooperation.
21. FAO establishes partnerships to mobilize development solutions, such as financial and in-kind resources, for South–South and triangular cooperation-related activities and helps to match partners that have development solutions with partners that are interested in implementing them. Between 2012 and 2020, it has established or renewed a number of South–South and triangular

² In collaboration with the former Office of Support to Decentralized Offices (OSD). South–South and triangular cooperation activities are now reported and documented in country reports, as well as in the regional and global synthesis reports.

cooperation trust funds (such as the FAO–China Trust Fund and FAO–Morocco Trust Fund) and signed 17 memorandums of understanding with partners interested in offering technical and/or in-kind solutions.

22. Furthermore, FAO facilitates the design and implementation of South–South and triangular cooperation projects and project components worldwide. It also implements South–South and triangular cooperation projects or project components directly, mainly through its technical divisions and decentralized offices, including some in collaboration with FAO Strategic Programme teams and technical divisions, such as the *“Plateforme d’échange de connaissances: renforcer la cohérence entre l’agriculture et la protection sociale pour promouvoir la résilience en Afrique francophone”* (FAO, 2018b). In 2019, for example, 111 FAO country offices reported on South–South and triangular cooperation-related activities (FAO, 2020a).
23. Over the years, many projects or project components involving South–South and triangular cooperation have been successfully implemented without involving the corresponding institutional structure, for example, the Forest and Farm Facility partnership and the Dimitra community listeners’ clubs (FAO, 2014a, 2018c, p.38). It is also common to have practices and activities mistakenly reported as South–South and triangular cooperation, such as short-term exchanges of experience not aligned with the normative and operational principles of the mechanism.

3.3 Examples of successful partnerships

24. South–South and triangular cooperation as a means of implementing the 2030 Agenda presumes partnerships and multistakeholder engagement. Although FAO’s work in this regard has mainly involved collaborating with governmental actors, there are some successful examples of partnerships with non-state actors that could be replicated to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 2. The following examples were selected based on their results in mobilizing resources (financial and in-kind) and partnerships. As explained in Section 1, this choice addresses South–South and triangular cooperation as a “means of implementation” in line with SDG 17 (partnership for the goals) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. However, some examples of SDG 2-related results achieved through South–South and triangular cooperation are listed in Section 4.

3.3.1 State actors

25. FAO receives many requests from developing countries interested in receiving development solutions through South–South and triangular cooperation. Over the years, FAO has facilitated such initiatives in more than 80 host countries, some of which have also acted as providers, for example, Brazil and Morocco.³
26. Identifying providers has proven more challenging, possibly due to insufficient knowledge of the mechanism, problems in identifying their strengths in terms of development solutions and specific political priorities. For further information, please see Section 6. Nonetheless, FAO has engaged in some successful long-term partnerships with national governments through large South–South

³ Also Argentina, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Colombia, the Cook Islands, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Haiti, Liberia, Namibia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Nigeria, Niue, Paraguay, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Suriname, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda and Vanuatu.

and triangular cooperation trust funds and programmes. Although different in modality, objective and scope, the following examples are remarkably similar:

- i. **FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme:** In 2006, Turkey committed USD 10 million for the implementation of 28 projects over a five-year period. In 2014, Turkey and FAO began a second phase of this partnership with an additional USD 20 million. The main goals are to increase food security, combat rural poverty and improve natural-resources management in the Caucasus and Central Asia through projects operated on a national, multi-country and subregional level (FAO, 2019c).
- ii. **FAO-Brazil Partnership:** The Brazil-FAO International Cooperation Programme was launched in 2008. Over the years, Brazil has invested more than USD 60 million to share its experiences, knowledge and technical capacities with developing countries. The main objectives of this partnership are to promote food security and rural development in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa through projects aimed at strengthening national school feeding programmes, promoting nutritious and healthy diets, strengthening family farming and promoting inclusive social protection systems (FAO & ABC, 2018).
- iii. **FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme:** In 2006, FAO and China established a strategic alliance. In 2009, FAO and China signed a general agreement to establish a trust fund of USD 30 million for the creation of the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme. In 2014, FAO designated five reference centres for South-South cooperation coordination, research and training, with a view to transferring technology and knowledge from China to other developing countries. In 2015, China contributed an additional USD 50 million.⁴ In 2016, FAO and China signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership, with one of the priorities being South-South cooperation. In September 2020, the Chinese President announced a new contribution of USD 50 million to FAO to support the third phase of the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme. The main goals of this partnership are to promote sustainable agricultural development, increase food security and improve rural livelihoods in developing countries through projects focused on aquaculture, crop production, irrigation, livestock breeding, pest control and poultry farming. In 2009–2019, FAO and China have fielded more than 290 experts and technicians, 243 of whom have carried out longer-term two-year assignments. The interventions have mainly been in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2019b, 2019d). Based on its rich experience of implementing the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme, FAO has engaged in the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund.
- iv. **FAO-Morocco Trust Fund:** In 2014, FAO and Morocco established a trust fund of USD 1 million to support African countries. Its main objectives are to: i) increase agricultural productivity in a sustainable manner; ii) achieve food security; iii) improve livelihoods; iv) build resilience to threats and crises; and v) improve natural-resource management. Moroccan cooperators have been deployed to Burkina Faso, the Niger and Djibouti. Under this framework, tripartite agreements were signed with Guinea and Mali (FAO, 2020a).
- v. **Mesoamerica Hunger Free AMEXID-FAO programme:** In 2015, Mexico provided USD 15 million for development solutions in Latin American and Caribbean countries from 2015 to 2020. The programme works closely with public authorities and institutions to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. It has been structured around nine lines of action: i) supporting legislative and political processes on food and nutrition security

⁴ In 2016, the three Rome-based Agencies strengthened their partnership with China to enhance South-South Cooperation.

(FNS); ii) supporting the strengthening of FNS follow-up and analysis for evidence-based decision-making; iii) promoting more inclusive coordination between sectors and stakeholders; iv) discussion of governance processes that enable the strengthening of family farming; v) supporting regulatory and political processes on family farming; vi) validating and facilitating innovative practices aimed at enabling sustainable agriculture production; vii) supporting the creation of favourable environments for rural organizations and institutions, as well as empowering poor rural populations; viii) supporting the development and application of knowledge and technologies for better access of family farmers to markets; and ix) awareness-raising among the public and decision makers in relation to the fight against hunger.

27. Still active, it is worth noting that three of these trust funds/programmes were established before the advent of the SDGs. On the one hand, this indicates that FAO was aware of the relevance of South–South and triangular cooperation for SDG 2-related areas before the launch of the 2030 Agenda. On the other, it could suggest that the Organization faces challenges in expanding its modality of partnership.
28. FAO has also established successful partnerships with providers of South–South and triangular cooperation on specific projects, irrespective of their more limited length and/or scope. For example:
 - i. South Africa Through different projects, South Africa invested more than USD 16 million in African countries between 2006 and 2013, mainly in emergency-related projects (such as OSRO/RAF/510/SAF – “Strengthening livelihoods through food and nutrition security in vulnerable Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries”, and OSRO/RAF/203/SAF – “Support to the regional coordination for the 2012 Sahel crisis”).
 - ii. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of): Approved in May 2014, project GCP/RAF/489/VEN – “Partnership for sustainable rice systems development in sub-Saharan Africa”, funded by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, has been successfully implemented in ten African countries (FAO, 2020b).⁵ The main objectives of this USD 5 million project are to develop sustainable and productive rice systems in the region to increase food security and to enhance sustainable development of the rice food chain among smallholder farmers.
29. In addition to partnering with its traditional governmental counterparts, such as ministries of agriculture, FAO has successfully engaged other relevant state actors in South–South and triangular cooperation activities. FAO’s work with the parliamentarian fronts against hunger is the most prominent example. Both the FAO–Brazil Partnership and the Mesoamerica Hunger Free AMEXID-FAO Programme promoted exchanges of experience among parliamentarians in Latin America and the Caribbean. There are similar examples involving African parliamentarians. For further details, please see the signature product review of FAO’s legal work on food and nutrition security.
30. Notwithstanding its achievements in mobilizing South–South cooperation providers, FAO has been less successful in attracting triangular partners. There are some positive examples, such as

⁵ Benin, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda.

Czechia, Germany, Israel, Japan, Spain, the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands, but they have not been as widespread as South–South cooperation.⁶

31. However, this constraint is not exclusive to FAO; other United Nations agencies, including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP), have reported similar difficulties. One potential reason is a lack of a mutual understanding, both internally and externally, as to what triangular cooperation entails for partners. In this respect, the BAPA+40 outcome document notes a need to promote better understanding of triangular cooperation across the United Nations System and among Members and development partners, and to provide more evidence on its scale, scope and impact (United Nations General Assembly, 2019, p.8).

3.4 United Nations System entities and non-state actors

32. In addition to collaborating with national and local governments, FAO has established partnerships with multilateral organizations and non-state actors to promote South–South and triangular cooperation, including other United Nations System entities, civil society organizations and academia.
33. FAO is a member of the South–South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team of the United Nations Sustainable Development Groups, co-chaired by UNOSSC and the International Labour Organization (ILO). FAO has also been actively collaborating with the other Rome-based agencies (RBAs), namely, IFAD and WFP.
34. The first official RBA collaboration on South–South and triangular cooperation happened in 2016 in the context of the Global South–South Development Expo, an annual event organized by UNOSSC, where the three agencies presented a joint panel showcasing successful, evidence-based initiatives. Since then, a joint panel has been organized every year.
35. Since 2017, the RBAs have been marking the United Nations Day for South–South Cooperation with a joint event. In 2019, the theme was “leaving no one behind in achieving SDG 2: opportunities for the RBAs to broker South–South Cooperation after BAPA+40”. In 2020, the theme was “the role of South–South and Triangular cooperation in the transformation of food systems, in view of COVID-19”.
36. In 2017, the RBAs presented a joint roadmap towards BAPA+40 at the Global South–South Development Expo. The document, entitled “Strengthening collaboration among Rome-based Agencies on South–South and Triangular cooperation”, introduced an action plan for joint collaboration on and through South–South and triangular cooperation (FAO, IFAD & WFP, 2018). Its implementation, however, has been quite limited, with only a few examples of joint initiatives to date, such as “Purchase from Africans for Africa (PAA)” and “Strengthening the resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable smallholder farmers to climate-related shocks in Sri Lanka”.
 - i. Purchase from Africans for Africa: PAA was a partnership between the Government of Brazil, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, FAO

⁶ For example: GCP/RLA/182/SPA – “Reforzamiento de las políticas de producción de semilla de granos básicos en apoyo a la agricultura campesina para la seguridad alimentaria en países miembros del CAC” and GCP/INT/053/JPN – “Intra-African training and dissemination of technical know-how for sustainable agriculture and rural development with Africa–ASEAN country cooperation within the framework of South–South cooperation”. There are also some examples of triangular cooperation involving the European Union, such as GCP/GLO/028/EC – “Sustainable development of fisheries and aquaculture value chains in ACP countries”.

and WFP. Based on the Brazilian experience with local purchase schemes for school feeding and food assistance, PAA supported home-grown school feeding in Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, the Niger and Senegal (WFP and FAO, 2018).

- ii. Strengthening the resilience and livelihoods of vulnerable smallholder farmers to climate-related shocks in Sri Lanka: This pilot project is part of a long-term strategic collaboration between China and Sri Lanka, enabled by FAO and WFP. It aims to improve agricultural services, enhance access to markets and equip smallholder farmers with innovative tools and technology for post-harvest management in order to ensure that “no one is left behind in hunger” (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2019a, p.13).

37. To date, there has been just one example of an initiative involving all three agencies, namely, “Local Production of Fortified Cassava Flour in Bouenza Department in Congo”.

- i. Local production of fortified cassava flour in Bouenza Department in Congo: This project is a partnership between FAO, IFAD, WFP, the Agricultural Company of Congo and the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences. It was approved in 2020 through the China–IFAD South–South and Triangular Cooperation Facility to establish a framework and evidence-based business plan for the production of fortified cassava flour and sales of the products in the national and regional markets. Ideally, this project will enable small-scale farming cooperatives to access industrial value chains (IFAD, 2020).

38. Although the three agencies and UNOSSC have reported fruitful collaboration on South–South and triangular cooperation, especially at a global level, they have also acknowledged that there is room for improvement, especially in terms of moving from purely institutional activities to concrete actions, such as the mobilization of new partnerships and the joint implementation of South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives. The RBAs are currently developing guidelines on how to monitor and evaluate South–South and triangular cooperation interventions. The publication date has yet to be confirmed.

39. The same is true for non-state actors. Partnerships with academia, civil society organizations and the private sector on both the provision and receipt of development solutions are still very limited.⁷ The most successful partnership with a non-state actor probably happened three-and-a-half decades ago, in 1985, when four million Indonesian farmers came together to raise money to help African farmers affected by severe droughts in the Sahel. FAO set up the “Indonesian Farmers Fund” through which two vocational training centres were created in the Gambia and the United Republic of Tanzania. This initiative supported more than 80 development projects across Africa (Thomas, 2015).

⁷ The main responsibility for mobilizing partnerships with non-state actors lies with the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division (PSU) and the Resource Mobilization and Private Sector Partnership Division (PSR). To benefit from the partnerships established, PST should work together with both divisions. Nonetheless, this method of partnership is still very limited within FAO, as identified by two strategic evaluations recently conducted by OED: the Evaluation of the FAO Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations and Evaluation of the FAO Strategy for Partnerships with the Private Sector (FAO, 2020d; 2020e).

4. Effectiveness of South–South and triangular cooperation and relevance to the SDGs, especially SDG 2

40. Both the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda underscore South–South and triangular cooperation as an important “means of implementation” to achieve the SDGs, and stress the importance of pursuing partnerships beyond overseas development assistance to finance development. This case study corroborates the evidence that South–South and triangular cooperation is a relevant and effective delivery mechanism for accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 2 and a valuable complement of North–South cooperation. Among other things, they:

- i. Unlock a catalytic effect: Some of the initiatives reviewed demonstrated that SSTC can have a catalytic effect in terms of attracting additional resources, partnerships and efforts in development processes. For example:
 - Domestic public resources: mobilizing domestic public resources is at the core of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda given its potential to enhance national ownership. Through SSTC, FAO has contributed to the mobilization of domestic resources; e.g. UTF/ANG/048/ANG and City-to-City Cooperation.
 - Strengthening and Innovation in the Agricultural Veterinary Research Institutes of Angola. Angola has directly contributed to the cost of implementing SSC in its territory through UTF/ANG/048/ANG, which is an agreement between FAO, the Government of the Republic of Angola and Brazil. Technical experts from the Brazilian Agricultural Research Cooperation (EMBRAPA) were transferred to Angola to develop the capacities of the Angola’s Agronomic (ARI) and Veterinary Research (VRI) institutes.
 - Upcoming FAO-China SSC Project in Uganda (Phase 3): In 2019, Uganda agreed to commit approx. 9.6 million as a Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF) to support the implementation of Phase 3 of the project in Uganda under the FAO-China SSC Programme.
 - FAO-China SSC Project in Madagascar (on-going): the national project in Madagascar was launched in October 2019 focusing on hybrid rice breeding/production and animal husbandry, with a project duration of 2 years. The government of Madagascar pays great attention and focus to this project, in August 2020, a UTF of USD 185,000 was donated by the government to support the continuous implementation of the project.
 - City-to-City Cooperation. This initiative was launched by FAO in 2017 to support local development. In the pilot, Dakar shared with Douala and Praia its experience of developing urban horticulture with a view to giving households the knowledge to produce more nutritious and diverse food in urban spaces. As a result, the local government of Praia set up a micro gardening exhibition center and replicated the practice across the city with its own resources.
 - Private sector investment attracting private investment for sustainable development is one of the priorities within the context of the 2030 Agenda. SSTC has potential to catalyze resources from the private sector.
 - Technical Assistance to Uganda’s Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan. This project was a tripartite agreement between FAO, China and Uganda aimed at

supporting the implementation of Uganda’s Agricultural Sector Strategic Plan (2015–2020). Within the scope of this project, seven agricultural technology demonstration hubs were established to showcase Chinese technologies in horticulture, livestock, cereals, aquaculture, renewable energy, agro-machinery value addition, and sustainable business models. The project also established trade and investment linkages. Because of this initiative, producers were able to increase their production and productivity in horticulture, cereals, aquaculture, livestock and crosscutting technologies. After its completion, it ended up attracting private investments: five private enterprises from China’s Sichuan Province have invested in agricultural industrial parks across the county, as well as in three centers; i.e. an Agricultural Production Technology Incubation Centre, an Agricultural Products Processing and Trade Centre, and an Agricultural Industry Cooperation Centre.

- Civil society contributions although more limited in examples, the “Indonesian Farmers Fund” mentioned in section 3.4 proves that mobilizing resources from civil society organizations, including cooperatives, is possible. Another prominent example is the project “Diversify Rural Women’s Income and Enhance Trade Capacity in Central Asia”, in which Kyrgyz women entrepreneurs delivered training on rural crafts to rural women from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in order to improve their skills and promote sales in the local, regional and global markets.
- ii. Bring new partners to fund sustainable development. SSTC transforms beneficiaries of development assistance in providers of development assistance, bringing additional financial and in-kind resources to promote sustainable development; e.g. Brazil, China, Morocco, Venezuela, South Africa, and Indonesian farmers.
- iii. Help to identify innovative development solutions. Through SSTC, it is possible to identify innovative solutions developed by - and tested in - developing countries with potential to accelerate progress towards SDG 2 in similar contexts. Through the Mesoamerica Hunger Free Programme, for example, FAO facilitated the exchange of technical solutions for lobster fishing between Mexican specialists and Nicaraguan fishermen. Lobster fishing by assisted diving on Nicaragua’s Caribbean coast had posed major risks and health challenges to divers for more than twenty-five years. The Mexican solution contributed to saving lives, and the Nicaraguan government decided to replicate it across the country.
- iv. Offers flexibility and greater sense of ownership. South–South and triangular cooperation is a flexible mechanism, so development solutions are adapted to hosts’ needs, both in terms of technical area and method, for example, policy advice, technical exchanges, etc. Although the negotiation process can be slow, there are indications that South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives are likely to create a greater sense of ownership among partners,⁸ so the slow pace could be regarded as a positive investment. Possible reasons are: i) building on the principle of mutual benefit, SSTC offers a horizontal relationship; ii) partners have similar commitments and responsibilities; iii) host countries identify the areas of support as well as the modalities through which the support will be provided; and iv) SSTC development solutions are often medium- and long-term. Furthermore, many SSTC initiatives facilitated by FAO tend to involve institutional capacity

⁸ In addition to being one of the South–South and triangular cooperation guiding principles of the core Office for Special Relief Operations, the evaluation reports reviewed indicated that Office for Special Relief Operation South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives are likely to generate a greater sense of ownership; e.g. investment of domestic resources and/or continuity of activities.

development and/or policy-related activities, which tend to be more sustainable than purely technical interventions. In FAO's projects/programmes, the facilitation of SSTC is also flexible as it could happen within different types of instruments, i.e. GCP, TCP, UTF, FMM, OSRO, and MoU.

- v. Convey innovative solutions to address increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. Another advantage of SSTC is its capacity to identify and mobilize development solutions to help partners prepare and respond to emergencies. Some examples are:
- South Africa and Brazil both countries have already provided development solutions to address crisis and emergencies; e.g., above-mentioned OSRO/RAF/203/SAF – “Support to the regional coordination for the 2012 Sahel Crisis” and GCP/RLA/160/BRA, which has supported many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to recover from natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes through its 16 baby projects.
 - FAO-China SSC Programme support to the control of the Desert Locust crisis The project OSRO/GLO/016/CPR is supporting Desert Locust (DL) control activities in Ethiopia, Iran, Kenya, Pakistan, and Uganda by providing the most needed inputs for immediate response and organizing capacity building (including local activities) to strengthen their resilience, also sharing Chinese experiences on DL surveillance and control technologies.
 - Emergency Prevention System for Animal Health (EMPRES) the exchange of development solutions between countries to increase resilience of livelihoods through SSTC has been fundamental in the context of EMPRES. This experience was highlighted in another signature product; i.e. control of transboundary diseases and pests.
- vi. China-IFAD SSTC Facility IFAD is promoting SSTC to generate and exchange innovative solutions, approaches and methodologies to support the post-COVID-19 recovery period “that can be subsequently scaled up and benefit a wider population of poor rural people”. Modest investments can contribute to remarkable results. SSTC is often reported as a cost-effective mechanism. In practice, it is difficult to translate into numbers the benefits of intangible interventions such as knowledge exchange and policy dialogue. However, the examples reviewed by this case study demonstrated that modest financial resources can contribute to large-scale results.
- Strengthening School Feeding Programmes in the context of the Latin America and the Caribbean without Hunger 2025 Initiative with less than USD 9 000 000, this project contributed to increasing political commitment on food and nutrition security in 13 countries; this includes the approval of school feeding laws that will benefit thousands of children and family farmers in Latin America.
 - Other possible “cost-effective” examples supported by evaluative evidence are GCP/RLA/193/BRA, GCP/RLA/199/BRA, GCP/RLA/160/SPA, GCP/RAF/489/VEN and GCP/SLM/001/MEX.
- vii. Can be an effective delivery mechanism to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 2. Over the years, FAO has, among others, i) facilitated policy dialogue to promote the development of FSN policies and legislation; ii) fostered multi-stakeholder platforms to improve FSN governance; iii) exchanged technical expertise and innovative solutions at regional and country levels to enhance institutional capacities on FNS and sustainable agriculture. These interventions facilitated through SSTC have generated SDG 2-related results in line with the key principles of the 2030 Agenda.

Some examples with evaluative evidence are: Mesoamerica Hunger Free AMEXID-FAO programme (SDG targets 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4), the Partnership for Sustainable Rice Systems Development in sub-Saharan Africa (SDG targets 2.3 and 2.4), school feeding programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean (SDG targets 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 12.7) and strengthening the implementation of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) initiative through capacity development (SDG target 2.5). Positive outcomes generated by interventions facilitated through South–South and triangular cooperation are documented in other signature product reviews produced as part of the SDG 2 evaluation (support for value chains, aquaculture promotion and blue growth, rural women's empowerment, legal and parliamentary work on food and nutrition security, food for the cities and urban agriculture, and control of transboundary diseases and pests).

5. FAO's strengths in facilitating South–South and triangular cooperation and its positioning in an SDG 2 context

41. The United Nations System is a global and neutral broker of South–South and triangular cooperation and, as such, it i) ensures wider and better-targeted matching processes between providers and hosts of development solutions; ii) offers technical quality assurance of development solutions; iii) enhances visibility of the development solutions promoted by providers; and iv) identifies innovative development solutions worldwide that could be replicated in similar or different contexts.
42. This study has identified FAO's comparative strengths within the United Nations System in this regard:
 - i. More consolidated structure to facilitate SSTC in support of SDG 2. Compared with other United Nations entities with similar mandates, FAO's South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure is more robust in terms of resources, particularly staffing. Despite the limitations of this institutional structure within the Organization (see Section 6), it has evolved significantly over the years. The new status of PST as a full division has the potential to increase the visibility and uptake of the mechanism within and outside FAO.
 - ii. Technical expertise and global convener on SDG 2-related areas. FAO's vast technical expertise in areas related to FNS and sustainable agriculture makes the Organization a credible and reliable facilitator of development solutions focused on SDG 2. This is reinforced by FAO's role as a global convener on these issues.
 - iii. Country presence. FAO's country presence is one of its greatest comparative advantages in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Through its country offices, FAO should, among other things, be able to identify relevant and innovative development solutions to be exchanged, map areas of need and mobilize partners interested in South–South and triangular cooperation.
 - iv. Medium- to long-term exchange of development solutions. Most of the exchanges facilitated by FAO are medium- to long-term and focused on policy support, such as institutional capacity development and policy dialogue. This approach tends to create a greater sense of ownership among partners.

6. Overall challenges and potential opportunities to expand SSTC in the context of the 2030 Agenda

6.1 Overall challenges

43. FAO continues to face many challenges to expand South–South and triangular cooperation as a means of accelerating progress to achieve SDG 2. This case study identified the following barriers:
44. High turnover of top management and personnel. Over the past five years, there has been a lot of leadership and personnel turnover within FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure. There are indications that these repeated changes have affected the work of South–South and triangular cooperation, as each change in management has brought changes to the way of working.
45. In particular, at the Organizational level, these changes have: i) delayed the consolidation of a South–South and triangular cooperation strategic vision and plan for the Organization; ii) hindered the creation of institutional memory; iii) hampered the development of a common understanding of FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation; iv) hindered potential collaborations within the Organization and, consequently, the mainstreaming of the mechanism into more projects and programmes; and v) led to missed opportunities in establishing partnerships for both South–South cooperation and triangular cooperation. However, this challenge is not exclusive to FAO, as other United Nations agencies, such as IFAD and WFP, have reported similar issues.
46. A lack of common understanding of South–South and triangular cooperation definitions and principles, both within and outside FAO. There are various, and sometimes inconsistent, definitions of South–South and triangular cooperation within and outside the United Nations System, leading to confusion over what it means for partners. This makes it difficult to raise awareness of the benefits of South–South and triangular cooperation and constitutes a challenge to expanding cooperation initiatives.
47. Within FAO, despite a corporate strategy with clear definitions of South–South and triangular cooperation, this lack of a common understanding translates into different initiatives being labelled as South–South and triangular cooperation, or projects with the South–South and triangular cooperation component not being labelled as such.⁹ Outside FAO, it prevents the mobilization of partners. For example, some middle-income countries have not yet seen the benefit of providing development solutions.
48. The issue is not exclusive to FAO, however. The BAPA+40 outcome document states that better understanding of triangular cooperation across the United Nations System, Members and development partners is needed (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2018).
49. Inadequate visibility of South–South and triangular cooperation within FAO’s Strategic Framework and across strategic initiatives. Senior management has made only sluggish efforts to promote South–South and triangular cooperation as a complementary mechanism to technical

⁹ For example, exchanges or partnerships between developing countries are frequently labelled South–South and triangular cooperation, even though only the following have been regarded as such historically: (1) there is political agreement – both sides contribute and will cover costs; (2) there is sharing of knowledge and technologies; (3) there are clearly identified needs by host governments; (4) technology remains in national or local institutions, where it can be adapted.

cooperation. This could be because South–South and triangular cooperation is often perceived as political. In addition to the minimal visibility of the mechanism in the FAO’s Strategic Framework, flagship initiatives where South–South and triangular cooperation could add value, such as the Hand-in-Hand Initiative, rarely invoke FAO’s expertise in this domain.

50. The lack of a systematic approach to South–South and triangular cooperation as a “means of implementation” leads to poor turnover of partners, especially providers. Consequently, FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation ends up being more opportunistic than strategic, relying on partners that approach FAO rather than the other way around. However, this is not exclusive to FAO; other United Nations agencies, such as IFAD and WFP, have reported similar challenges.
51. Ambiguity in the role of FAO’s SSTC Institutional Structure. The evolution of FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure from a single focal point to a full division is a major achievement, but it has also created some uncertainty about its role. In short, there is no consensus on whether it should be an implementer of South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives, so its role has not been widely communicated within the Organization. According to FAO’s current South–South and triangular cooperation strategy, the structure should serve to broker the mechanism, for example, by mainstreaming South–South and triangular cooperation into the Strategic Framework, increasing resources for such cooperation and harmonizing approaches across FAO. However, FAO personnel and partners frequently consider FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure to be an implementer of South–South and triangular cooperation initiatives.
52. Acting both as a broker and as an implementer of development solutions can create conflicts of interest, similarly to what happened with the Strategic Programme teams (see FAO, 2016b; 2017a; 2018d; 2019f). Technical divisions and decentralized offices may perceive FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure to be an internal competitor for resources and may decide not to involve it in South–South and triangular cooperation-related projects and programmes. What’s more, it could pose some reputational risks, as FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure does not have the requisite technical capacity on issues related to FNS and sustainable agriculture, nor is it expected to.
53. There are indications that this lack of clarity is contributing to the proliferation of South–South and triangular cooperation practices that are either not tagged or incorrectly tagged as such. This situation prevents proper planning of activities and monitoring of results and may affect FAO’s compliance with RBA standards and international principles on South–South and triangular cooperation.
54. Although there is a quick guide to help technical divisions mobilize South–South and triangular cooperation, PST considers it obsolete (FAO, 2015a). In addition to reviewing the guide, there is an expectation that adding the South–South and triangular cooperation marker in the Field Programme Management Information System and including PST in the project task force will ensure that South–South and triangular cooperation normative and operational principles are correctly mainstreamed into FAO’s projects and programmes.
55. Insufficient resources to strengthen the mechanism. Within FAO, there is little funding available from the regular programme to strengthen South–South and triangular cooperation,¹⁰ so FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure is under-sourced in terms of

¹⁰ FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure has managed to access some budget through service-level agreements established with the Strategic Programme teams, however, it is still unclear what will happen with when the Strategic Programmes become extinct.

human and financial capacity. The problem is slightly worse at regional level (currently, each regional office has a South–South and triangular cooperation officer, who is expected to coordinate all South–South and triangular cooperation activities for the entire region. In the case of the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (REU) and Regional Office for Near East and North Africa (RNE), these officers are also assigned to other duties. Furthermore, the memorandums of understanding do not have funding attached to them.). This limits considerably the amount of work that can be done within the regions and do not give the South–South and triangular cooperation institutional structure much opportunity to create and nurture relationships with providers.

56. Among other things, as a broker of South–South and triangular cooperation, FAO's dedicated institutional structure should be expected to mobilize partners and providers of South–South and triangular cooperation, including overseas development assistance, international financial institutions and the private sector.¹¹ It is, therefore, not reasonable to expect it to be able to mobilize voluntary contributions. Seed money is necessary to strengthen the mechanism and enhance its visibility.
57. Poor monitoring and evaluation system. This is a recurring challenge across United Nations entities, as monitoring and evaluating a mechanism through which partners exchange their own development solutions is not as straightforward as evaluating technical interventions that are developed and implemented by FAO. In addition to the methodological challenges, monitoring and evaluating South–South and triangular cooperation involves many ethical and political issues. Nevertheless, the lack of a solid monitoring and evaluation system for South–South and triangular cooperation hinders the provision of accountability to providers, which in turn slows the mobilization of additional partners and resources.
58. Lack of a comprehensive platform to facilitate matching. Perhaps the most controversial challenge is the absence of a comprehensive portfolio of development solutions available from providing countries, as well as a list of needs from host countries. While there is general agreement on the importance of having such a tool to match willing providers with appropriate hosts, there is still significant disagreement on the format. The FAO Members Gateway platform was supposed to meet this need, although there are indications that the idea was too ambitious for the resources available.
59. Biased communication of development solutions and good practices. FAO's South–South and triangular cooperation has produced good material to communicate best practices over the years. However, the practices of providers that have offered greater amounts of financial resources tend to be more visible than others. As this visibility is the main benefit for providers of development solutions through South–South and triangular cooperation, there are indications that this biased communication discourages current providers from continuing and deters future partners. Furthermore, these communication materials tend to focus more on the benefits to hosts than on the benefits to providers of development solutions.
60. Language barriers. Language can also be a challenge when implementing South–South and triangular cooperation; for example, where incoming experts do not speak the local language. This requires extra efforts to hire translators to facilitate discussions, but it is often not possible to

¹¹ There are indications as to the challenges of engaging triangular partners, the private sector, international financial institutions and other resource partners in South–South and triangular cooperation activities. This is mainly down to the lack of resources to initiate and maintain a dialogue, as well as the challenges mentioned above: inadequate visibility of FAO's South–South and triangular cooperation work and an uneven understanding of South–South and triangular cooperation definitions and benefits.

have one present at all times, which can delay or hinder the implementation process, especially in very rural areas. However, this challenge is not exclusive to FAO; it can also be found in bilateral collaborations.

6.2 Potential opportunities

61. This case study focused on opportunities, because its scope and methodology are insufficient to provide evidence-based recommendations. It has identified the following opportunities of which FAO could avail to scale up its South–South and triangular cooperation work:

Conducive environment

62. The most obvious opportunity is the mainstreaming of South–South and triangular cooperation into the global development agenda. Both SDG 17 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda offer a unique opportunity to promote South–South and triangular cooperation as a complement to North–South cooperation to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 2.
63. While overseas development assistance funds to agriculture and nutrition remained static from 2014 to 2018, according to Donor Tracker (Donor Tracker, 2021), in 2018, FAO estimated that achieving SDG 2 by 2030 would require additional investments of USD 265 billion a year (FAO, 2018e), though the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 are likely to have increased this figure. South–South and triangular cooperation can help to narrow the gap.

Revision of FAO’s Strategic Framework and organizational restructuring

64. The recent organizational structure approved by the FAO Council at its 164th session as well as the ongoing process to review the FAO’s Strategic Framework offer an opportunity to, among others:
- i. Emphasize SSTC in the Strategic Framework as a key means to implement the 2030 Agenda, in particular to accelerate progress towards the achievement of SDG 2, and mainstream it across Regional Initiatives and Country Programming Frameworks.
 - ii. Position PST as a strategic division to support the implementation of SDG17 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. To this end, PST will need to clarify the ambiguity about its role and find a niche to operate; e.g. mobilization of innovative development solutions through partnerships. Ideally, it should position itself as a broker of SSTC to i) avoid internal competition for resources; ii) enhance its visibility, and iii) strengthen internal collaboration with technical teams. This would also require coordination of efforts with other divisions under the Partnerships and Outreach Stream, and with the Office of Innovation (OIN), Office of SIDS, LDCs and LLDC’s (OSL) and Office of SDGs (OSG).
 - iii. The extinction of the SP teams offer an opportunity to strengthen collaboration with technical divisions to, among others, i) develop a systematic approach for the identification of efficient, innovative, viable and scalable development solutions, ii) promote the implementation of the existing partnership agreements, including those established by PSU and PSR as appropriate; and iii) encourage the inclusion of SSTC in upcoming projects and programmes; and iv) develop a quality assurance system for clearing projects involving SSTC.

Ongoing and future strategic programmes and initiatives

65. FAO is currently designing and piloting some strategic programmes both at global and regional level that could benefit from SSTC. The most significant one is the Hand-in-and Initiative given its

foundation on principles of partnerships, mutualism, flexibility and exchange of technical solutions and innovation with a view of “accelerating progress toward achievement of national sustainable development priorities for food and agriculture”. In summary, this is a strategic way of attracting Southern providers and triangular partners; therefore, the HIHI task force and country teams could benefit from PST’s expertise and experience in this type of matchmaking. PST’s expertise could also add value to upcoming interventions on post-COVID-19 recovery.

Ongoing revision of FAO’s SSTC Strategy

66. The current revision of the SSTC strategy offers the momentum to address some of the challenges already identified by PST, and confirmed by this case study. This strategy could, for example: i) publicise the definitions of SSTC in line with the BAPA +40; ii) enhance awareness on what SSTC entails for partners; iii) clarify the objectives of FAO’s SSTC and the role of PST; and iv) set minimum standards for FAO divisions and offices, including decentralized offices, interested in promoting SSTC. This strategy should be widely disseminated within and outside FAO; e.g. by delivering workshops to all offices and divisions to discuss their own roles in promoting and implementing SSTC.
67. The implementation of this strategy could, for example:
 - i. Include more collaboration with country offices to i) identify relevant development solutions, ii) map countries’ needs,¹² and iii) mobilize potential partners; a focal point could be identified to this end, preferably a senior officer given the high turnover of national consultants.
 - ii. Promote regular exchanges between countries and regional offices to increase knowledge, generate lessons learnt and offer tips on how to better engage with stakeholders.¹³ This could further be improved if a FAO knowledge exchange platform is developed to host the wealth of information that is available on FAO’s SSTC; this could lead to a more informed-based documentation and dissemination of good practices, expertise, technologies and solutions. The revamp of the SSTC Gateway could address this issue.
 - iii. Rely on active communication to further engage with middle-income countries, triangular partners, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector. This could include, for example, diversifying the format and style of the material used to communicate best practices with a view of attracting providers; e.g. shorter publications demonstrating what SSTC entails and the benefits for providers and resource partners (as recommended by BAPA+40).

Existing system-wide initiatives

68. PST could take advantage of current UN system-wide initiatives to strengthen its own corporate functions and enhance joint collaboration. For example:
 - i. Monitoring and evaluation guidelines being developed with IFAD and WFP: Although the objective of these joint monitoring and evaluation guidelines is to offer a framework for monitoring and measuring results from FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation activities in the field, the process is an opportunity for PST to reflect on its own corporate system to monitor, evaluate and report on FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation

¹² Country Annual Reports present an existing opportunity to map countries’ main needs.

¹³ In 2019, PST and OSD facilitated a think-lab online exchange between FAO Representatives on South–South and triangular cooperation.

work. This could be done in collaboration with IFAD and WFP, with the support of the FAO Office of Strategy, Planning and Resources Management (OSP) and OED. Improved reporting and monitoring systems on South–South and triangular cooperation programmes will ensure that the effectiveness of FAO’s current and future work in this regard is recorded and showcased across the Organization.

- ii. Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South–South Cooperation and China–IFAD South–South and Triangular Cooperation Facility: FAO, IFAD and WFP could avail of both trust funds to strengthen RBA collaboration and support the implementation of the joint roadmap towards BAPA+40.

7. Concluding remarks

69. South–South and triangular cooperation is a relevant and effective means of accelerating progress towards achieving SDG 2, as highlighted by the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It is an excellent mechanism for pooling resources and efforts when it comes to innovation and development solutions. As neutral brokers of South–South and triangular cooperation, the United Nations entities are expected to strengthen this mechanism to narrow the investment and partnership gaps to realizing the SDGs.
70. While FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation has achieved significant milestones, especially in terms of structural change, its potential has not been fully explored. Despite some systematic challenges and missed opportunities over the years, there is momentum and plenty of opportunity to strengthen FAO’s South–South and triangular cooperation work and for PST to position itself as a strategic division within FAO.

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Note: Document review

FAO internal documents

The Evaluation Team reviewed 94 CPFs signed between January 2016 and December 2019. It also reviewed 100 project-related documents for this case study, including progress and terminal reports, which are not listed here. This review also benefited from country case studies conducted within the scope of the SDG2 evaluation on Angola, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Morocco and Turkey. These case studies will be published on the OED website.

Appendix 1. People interviewed

Last name	First Name	Organization/Division	Position
Akinnifesi	Festus	FAO	Senior Coordinator
Alderighi	Cristina	FAO	Programme Officer
Ali	Athifa	FAO	Programme Officer
Anaadumba	Peter	FAO-RAP	South-South Cooperation Officer
Aziz	Arya	FAO-REU	Policy Officer
Banihani	Shams	UNOSSC	Knowledge and Research Specialist on South-South Cooperation
Bertusi	Elena	IFAD	South-South and Triangular Cooperation Specialist
Curca	Irina	FAO	Programme Officer
Gargiulo	Julana	FAO	South-South and Triangular Cooperation Specialist
Gutta	Debel	FAO	South-South and Triangular Cooperation Specialist
Jaff	Kayan	FAO-RNE	Senior Policy Officer
Kenngott	Carola	WFP	Global Coordinator for South-South and Triangular Cooperation
Leon	Victor	FAO	Strategy and Planning Officer
Lopez	Dina	FAO-RLC	South-South Cooperation Officer
Park	Yeonkyeong	FAO-RAP	South-South Cooperation Officer
Sisto	Ilaria	FAO	Gender and Development Officer
Takara	Bruna	FAO	South-South Cooperation Specialist
Taylor	Katrin	FAO	Programme Officer
Wang	Jinbao	FAO	Senior Programme Officer
Ye	Anping	FAO	Director

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