

From Principles to Practice

Examining China's development assistance data in the GPEDC monitoring round (2015-2016)



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Introduction

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (hereafter Global Partnership), created at the 2011 High-Level Meeting in Busan, is a multi-stakeholder global platform **to advance the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors**. It does this by regularly monitoring progress on the implementation of agreed development effectiveness principles and related commitments at the country level; and by facilitating dialogue and encouraging the sharing of experiences among relevant stakeholders. Three monitoring rounds and two high-level meetings (HLM) have been conducted subsequently.



Facilitated jointly by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Partnership is neither a UN forum nor as a type of expansion of the Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) structure. It integrates both traditional donors and emerging development partners such as South-South Co-operation (SSC) providers, aiming at being more inclusive in terms of its membership (Li, 2017).

Currently, the Global Partnership has the biggest reach among all global-level processes, including all relevant actors such as members of parliament, civil-society organizations, the private sector, think tanks and academics, in addition to government representatives. However, development providers such as Brazil, India and China, while being increasingly notable for their rising volume of SSC, have not substantively engaged with the Global Partnership. This issue has been discussed in side-events of two HLMs, where think tank representatives from those countries helped to foster a better understanding of their respective reasons for not joining.¹

As part of UNDP's work in China, the UNDP China Country Office supports the Chinese Government in gaining exposure to internationally recognized practices and approaches with a view to increasing development effectiveness.

Whereas China did not report development cooperation data in the monitoring exercises, through examining the data that voluntarily reported by partner countries, UNDP China gained valuable insights with regard to SSC data flow and China's development data management.

During the first monitoring exercise (2013-2014), 11 partner countries reported on Chinese development cooperation data, amounting to over 770 million USD in total. In this case, UNDP China undertook a research paper titled *Demand-Driven Data: How Partner Countries are Gathering Chinese Development Cooperation Information*, which provided analyses of the determining factors and mechanisms behind the reporting process, and how to improve the data gathering process.

¹ https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/German_Development_Institute_Klingebiel_Li_06.12.2016.pdf

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Developing countries are encouraged to participate in consultations, within the regional commissions, relevant intergovernmental fora on SSC on non-binding voluntary methodologies, building upon existing experiences, taking into account the specificities and different modalities of SSC and respecting the diversity within SSC and within national approaches.

22

2013-2014
USD
770 Mn
in Chinese
development
co-operation
funding

2015-2016
USD
814 Mn
in Chinese
development
co-operation
funding

In the 2015-2016 monitoring round

In both monitoring rounds

Mauritania

In the 2013-2014 monitoring round

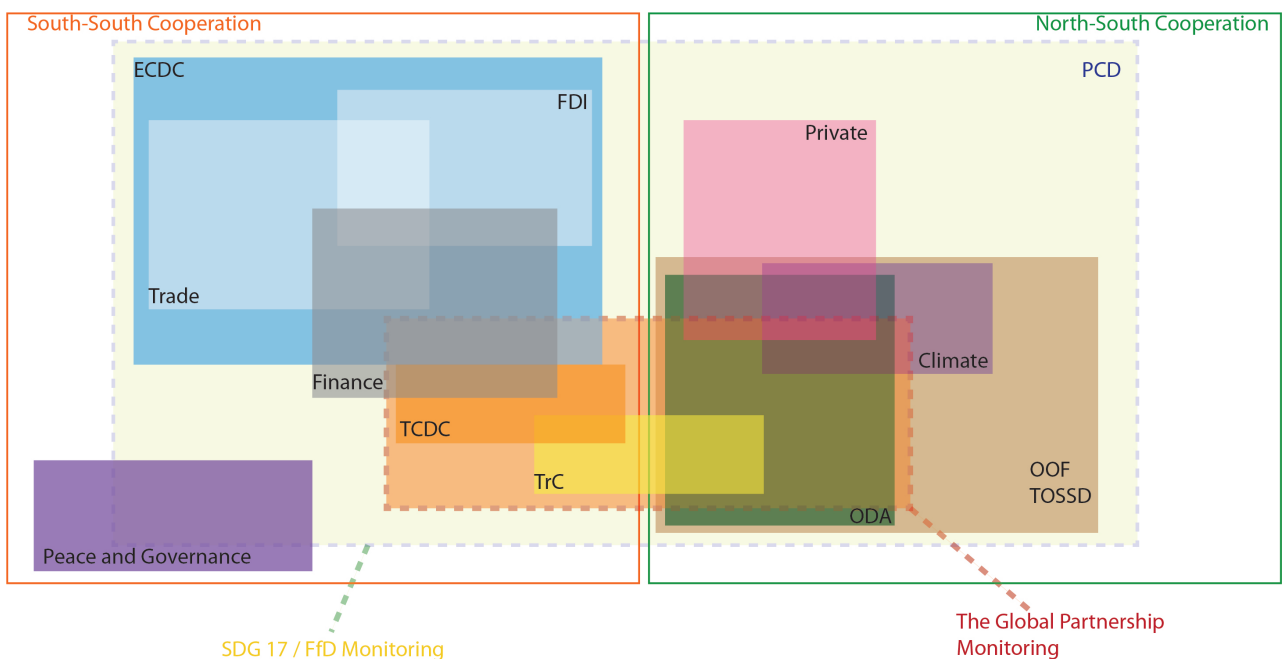
SSC Providers and the Global Partnership

South-South Co-operation (SSC) occurs through a mix of public and private channels, where the lines between aid, trade and investment are often blurred (Besharati and Rawhani 2016). There is a notable lack of well-defined parameters in areas such as accounting and measurement in SSC. There is no standard reporting or measurement mechanism to provide information on SSC efficacy and effectiveness currently (Bracho & Grimm 2016).

Different efforts have been sought among the SSC partners. For instance, national and regional initiatives like the Survey of Brazilian Cooperation for Development (COBRADI) and Iberoamerican Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) were launched. Notably, based on the principles emerging out of historical conferences of the global South (Bandung, 1955; Buenos Aires, 1978; Nairobi, 2009; Bogota, 2010; Delhi, 2013), 20 operational indicators, organized in 5 dimensions were initiated by the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST) to measure the quality of SSC partnerships and processes, which is seen as one of the first concrete tools from the global South.

Abbreviations

ECDC: Economic cooperation between developing countries
 FDI: Foreign direct investment
 FfD: Financing for Development
 ODA: Official Development Assistance
 OOF: Other official flows
 PCD: Policy coherence for development
 TCDC: Technical cooperation among developing countries
 TOSSD: Total Official Support for Sustainable Development
 TrC: Trilateral cooperation



Partnership, Finance and Organizations
 Elaborated based on figure 2.1 in Besharati. N & MacFeely. S (2019)

South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but is complementary to North-South co-operation

- United Nations General Assembly -

2015-2016 Monitoring Framework

The Global Partnership monitoring framework consists of a set of **10 indicators**.

1	Development co-operation is focused on results that meet developing countries' priorities
2	Civil society operates within an environment that maximises its engagement in and contribution to development
3	Engagement and contribution of the private sector to development
4	Transparency: information on development co-operation is publicly available
5	Development co-operation is more predictable (annual and medium-term)
a+b	
6	Aid is on budgets which are subject to parliamentary scrutiny
7	Mutual accountability strengthened through inclusive reviews
8	Gender equality and women's empowerment
9a	Quality of developing country PFM systems
9b	Use of developing country PFM and procurement systems
10	Aid is untied

It aims at measuring progress in making development co-operation more effective in specific areas related to the **four principles**:

- ownership of development priorities by developing countries
- focus on results
- inclusive development partnerships
- transparency and mutual accountability among partners.

At the same time, OECD-DAC donors have engaged with SSC providers and attempting to bring major Southern powers into an aid effectiveness agenda.

At the Busan meeting, both DAC donors and SSC providers such as China, South Africa and Mexico were involved in the drafting process of the outcome document that founded the Global Partnership (Bracho, 2017). As expected, the Global Partnership would become an inclusive platform, seeking to account for diverse forms of development co-operation.

Yet, given the clear differences in rhetoric, principles and practices between DAC donors and SSC providers,

aligning diverging interests was difficult. Subsequently, the cumbersome process of negotiating had fallen short. On the surface, the Global Partnership had incorporated the SSC narrative, but the specific agenda of major SSC providers were not enshrined in the documents nor in the monitoring exercises (Bracho, 2017).

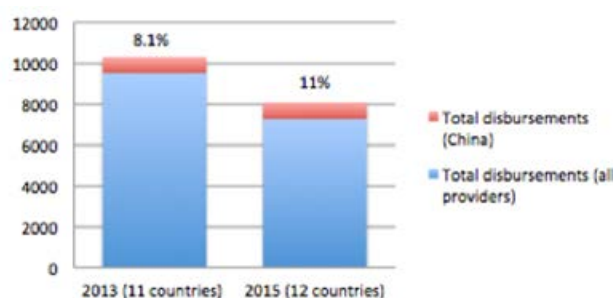
Having noted this fact, since 2016, the Global Partnership has practiced further refinement of its terminology and methodology, so that it increasingly looks at covering development cooperation beyond ODA. A new monitoring approach on South-South Technical Cooperation (SSTC), for instance, will be piloted during the 2018 monitoring round.

In 2016, as part of the Global Partnership monitoring process, Mexico examined the applicability of the monitoring framework to its context as a dual provider and recipient of development co-operation, with a particular focus on the provision of SSC. Building on this analysis, a framework to assess whether SSC is provided in line with the effectiveness principles is currently being developed.

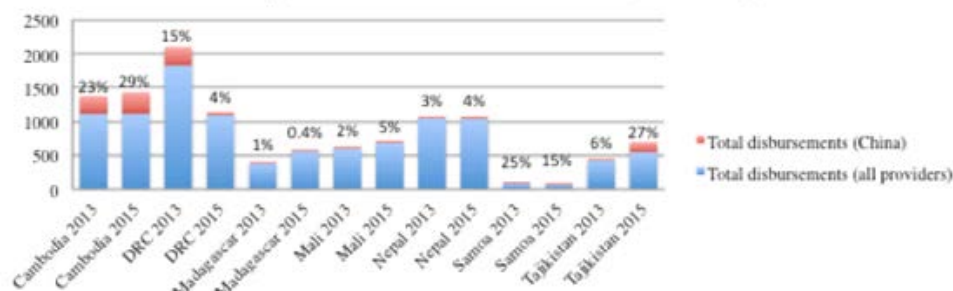
China

China has not committed to reporting to the Global Partnership monitoring framework. Yet, the analysis of Chinese development cooperation data voluntarily reported by partner countries points to good practices as well as bottlenecks countries face when collecting and reporting development cooperation data. The analyses also point to the shortcomings of the Global Partnership reporting framework, particularly in accounting for SSC flows, and need for improvements in the monitoring exercise.

Share of Chinese flows in total flows received in two monitoring rounds (USD million)



Share of Chinese flows in total flows for the seven countries that reported data in both rounds



Three points need to be considered when interpreting Chinese development assistance data in the second GPEDC monitoring round.

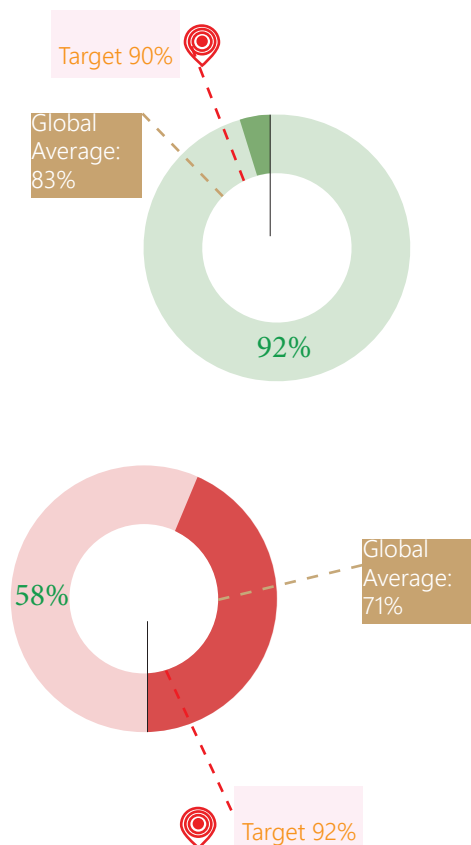
- (1) The proportion of countries reporting Chinese development flows and the volume of the flows appear to be relatively low. In 2015-2016, 12 (15%) out of the 81 countries that participated in the Global Partnership monitoring round voluntarily reported incoming Chinese flows. According to Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), China's net foreign aid is estimated to be US\$5.2 billion in 2013 and US\$5.9 billion in 2015. Regardless of the accuracy, it is fair to argue that the data collected in the monitoring round outlined only limited landscape of total Chinese development cooperation provided.
- (2) Only 7 countries voluntarily reported Chinese flows in both 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 monitoring rounds.
- (3) None of the countries that voluntarily reported Chinese flows in any of the two monitoring rounds provided data for all the 10 indicators. A few countries also reported incomplete data.

China's development assistance, as general SSC, is featured with "mixing and combining foreign aid, direct investment, service contracts, labor cooperation, foreign trade and export."

(Piao, 2006)

Indicator 5

Annual & Medium-term predictability



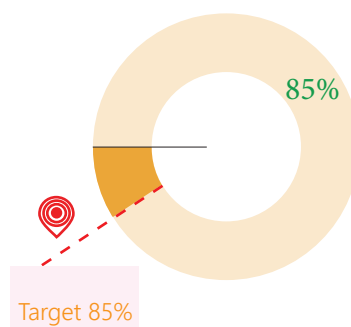
In the 2015-2016 monitoring round, 92% of Chinese foreign assistance scheduled was disbursed. As such, there is a high annual predictability of Chinese flows voluntarily reported, which mainly contributed by Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Tajikistan. Annual predictability of the Chinese flows voluntarily reported to GPEDC in the 2015-2016 monitoring round is above global average (83%) and GPEDC target (90%), but slightly below the average in East Asia.

Chinese flows are less predictable in the medium-term (58%) compared to global average flows (71%). Medium-term predictability of Chinese flows also remains below the global targets set by GPEDC stakeholders: 92% in 2016; 85% in 2017; and 79% in 2018 (GPEDC 2016a). According to the 2016 GPEDC progress report, 82% of estimated total development cooperation funding is currently covered by forward-spending plans for one year ahead. The availability of forward information decreases to 69% for two years ahead, and to 63% for three years ahead.

Indicator 6

Development cooperation on budget

In the 2015-2016 monitoring round, 85% of Chinese foreign assistance voluntarily reported to GPEDC was on budget. In 2015-2016, China met the GPEDC target of 85% of cooperation on budget contributed mainly by Madagascar and Mali.



Mutual accountability

Indicator 7

85%

(Among Cambodia, DRC, Madagascar, Mali, Nepal, Samoa and Tajikistan)



(Among Burundi, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire and Mauritania)



Among the seven partner countries that reported Chinese flows in both monitoring rounds, 85% are undertaking mutual reviews to track progress on commitments and targets relating to the effectiveness of development cooperation.

Among the five countries that started reporting Chinese development cooperation in 2015-2016, only Burundi is undertaking mutual reviews.

In the DRC, the policy on aid and partnerships announces the country's development cooperation priorities. The government and its partners jointly define, monitor and evaluate the development objectives and targets at the national level.

In the Philippines, mutual accountability is articulated mostly through bilateral arrangements such as joint country partnership strategies closely aligned with the national development plan, as well as more specific agreements related to budget support.

Indicator 9

Use of country public financial management (PFM) and procurement systems

64%

Among the seven partner countries that reported Chinese foreign assistance in both monitoring rounds (Cambodia, DRC, Madagascar, Mali, Nepal, Samoa and Tajikistan), it was observed an increase of 64% in the use of country systems.

22%

Among the five countries that started reporting Chinese foreign assistance in 2015-2016 (Burundi, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire and Mauritania), this increase amounts to 22%, pushed mainly by Cote d'Ivoire.

Quality of public financial management systems in countries that reported Chinese development assistance

Quality of country PFM systems

Country	2015 (COUA score *)	2013 (CPIA score *)	2010 (for reference)
Burundi***	3.5	3.5	3
Cambodia	3.5	3.5	3.5
Cook Islands***	-	-	-
Costa Rica***	-	-	-
Cote d'Ivoire***	3	3	-
Democratic Republic of Congo	3	3	2.5
Madagascar	2	2	2.5
Mali	3.5	3.5	3.5
Mauritania***	-	-	3
Moldova**	4	4	4
Nepal	3	3	2.5
Philippines**	-	-	-
Samoa	4	4	3.5
Senegal**	3.5	3.5	3.5
Tajikistan	3.5	3.5	3.5
Togo**	2.5	2.5	3

(*) World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). Criteria 13: quality of budget and financial management systems. Ratings 2012. CPIA figures are only available for World Bank IDA countries.

(**) Reported Chinese flows only in 2013

(***) Reported Chinese flows only in 2015

Source: GPEDC monitoring exercise 2015-2016 and 2013-2014

Challenges

Financial and technical capacity to develop data management, monitoring and evaluation systems remain limited in most countries.

This is exacerbated by the evidence gaps and the low quality of data on SSC, which is largely incomplete and unreliable owing to relatively nascent M&E and information systems in the SSC partner countries. In addition, existing mechanisms for reporting SSC tend to focus on the inputs, activities and immediate outputs of the often ad hoc and short-term projects.

Development agencies in the SSC partner countries are also relatively new and lack seasoned M&E experience. Quality country public financial management and information systems should be further strengthened, thus improving the links amongst national budget and policy priorities, fiscal reporting and management, as learned from the DFA experience.

CAPACITY

Information on China's development cooperation flows is often not channeled through national systems.

Traditional donors and SSC partners, including China, provide on their grants, loans, and other activities that do not integrate into partners' national budgets and processes. This practice challenge partner countries' efforts to access data, especially when this data is used to support national development processes.

CHANNEL

ACCOUNTABILITY

Mutual accountability can be enhanced through creating document guidelines well suited to specific forms of cooperation; jointly definition, monitoring and evaluation of the development objectives and targets by partners; publication of the results of the mutual assessments; and the involvement of local governments and non-government stakeholders in the review process.

DATA

Challenges for enhancing the monitoring of Chinese foreign assistance and overall development cooperation include the lack of valuation methodologies that allow estimates of the economic value of technical cooperation and other modalities. This means establishing the direct and indirect technical staff costs; defining the manners in which these values, in particular those relating to technical staff (formulas, estimates), shall be calculated; identifying the information required (nature and sources) to make the respective costs; setting up the channels to capture information (platforms, forms, interviews, spreadsheets, etc.); and processing and controlling the quality of information. The construction of such valuation methodologies implies in advancing several previous stages as for instance defining the type and modality of cooperation. It also requires specialized resources, guidance and patience to develop valuation processes focused on continued learning and adjustment.

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Efforts to enhance accounting and monitoring of development cooperation, including SSC flows, depend on three main elements:

First, partnership countries' motivation and readiness to collect, report and use development cooperation data (e.g. existence of strong national systems and capacities for collecting, reporting and using development cooperation data); second, the suitability of existing accounting and monitoring frameworks like the Global Partnership to SSC; and, third, the capacity to account for and to monitoring cooperation - in addition to development cooperation forecasting and expenditure.

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Opportunities

for enhancing the monitoring of Chinese development cooperation

1. Disclose donor-level data in the GPEDC Monitoring Reports.
2. Design valuation methodologies that allow estimates of the economic value of technical cooperation and other modalities of development cooperation.
3. Attract specialized resources to develop valuation processes focused on continued learning and adjustment.
4. Provide closer guidance and encouragement to countries reporting.
5. Develop quality country public financial management and information systems.
6. Create document guidelines and definitions well suited to specific forms of cooperation.
7. Create processes for joint definition, monitoring and evaluation of the development objectives and targets by partners.
8. Publication of the results of the mutual assessments and involvement of local governments and non-executive stakeholders in the review process.

Opportunities

for strengthening the Global Partnership monitoring frameworks

1. Find a minimum common ground among the SSC frameworks proposed by think-tanks, governments and non-governmental organizations.
2. Building on this minimum common ground, identify complementarity with existing global monitoring frameworks, in particular for the monitoring of SDG17.
3. Map SSC contribution to the achievement of the SDGs by documenting country experiences against a common framework and building the knowledge base on SSC.
4. Drawing from the evidence collected, produce a global paper on the way forward for a global monitoring of development cooperation that reflects the voices of the South. This can be presented on occasions such as the next High-level United Nations Conference on South South Cooperation.

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



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