

INNOVATIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION MODEL

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The following paper discusses the case of South Africa in South-South Cooperation and attempts to identify and illustrate some of the innovations in South Africa's South-South Cooperation Model, particularly the model of the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA). It also clarifies about tripartite partnerships and notes the success and active participation of South Africa in the IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) coalition. It broadly outlines the background, vision and principles that have shaped South Africa's role as a Development Partner in the continent of Africa along with mapping its patterns of development assistance and its underlying institutional framework. This paper also attempts to provide an understanding of issues in the South African Development Assistance Framework and the need for an umbrella agency like SADPA, which has the potential to be the most innovative model of South-South Cooperation if implemented in its entirety.

INTRODUCTION

South Africa is the economic powerhouse of the entire African continent. It has the largest strategic, economic and military might. South Africa is Africa's biggest economy, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately US\$467 billion (2007). Though South Africa is classified as a medium-income country according to the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI), it holds a unique position not just in the South African Development Community but also across the African continent and internationally where it often represents Africa, particularly in G20, BRICS and IBSA.

According to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

(UNOSSC), South-South Cooperation (SSC) is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains. It can take place on a bilateral, regional, sub-regional or interregional basis where developing countries share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts. In this paper, the term developing countries refer to all southern countries including under-developed countries. The South-South cooperation agenda and South-South cooperation initiatives must be determined by the countries of the South, guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit and must work towards the attainment of internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals.

The objective of the following paper is to analyze the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA) as an innovative model of Development Assistance in South-South Cooperation along with outlining South Africa's role as a development partner in South-South Cooperation. South Africa for many years, after Apartheid has been striving to constantly change its image in Africa. This paper broadly outlines the vision and principles underlying South African Development Assistance that have shaped its Development Assistance for many decades. It maps its role as a partner, the countries it partners with, the extent, the kind and the process of providing development assistance along with the underlying institutional framework. This paper also attempts to provide an understanding of the issues that surround the South African Development Assistance Framework, such as the need for a distinctive umbrella agency like SADPA and how it affects South-Africa's role in the continent. It presents the innovative model of SADPA¹.

VISION

South Africa's assistance to other African countries is often depicted as 'brotherly help'. Its vision and foundational principles for development assistance are deeply embedded in the African Renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which form an integral part of South Africa's foreign policy. South Africa describes its approach as one that is based on partnership and solidarity and

¹ Refer to Appendix for Background and History.

brotherhood.

AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

South Africa in its development assistance shares with the rest of the continent the vision for African Renaissance. African Renaissance is the concept that African people and nations shall overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, and economic renewal. This concept was popularized by former South African President Thabo Mbeki. This African Renaissance vision drives all of South Africa's Development Assistance.

NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT (NEPAD)

South Africa's Development Assistance is embedded within the broad framework of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) which is a vision and a strategic framework for Africa's renewal. NEPAD is the central priority of the Department of Foreign Affairs. NEPAD is the socioeconomic development program of the African Union. It aims to eradicate poverty, create sustainable growth, integrate Africa into the global economy and accelerate women's empowerment.

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (DA)

South Africa's aid is formally known as Development Assistance, which is embedded within the broad framework of the NEPAD and the vision of the African Renaissance. It is spread across different government departments and is highly decentralized; hence, it cannot be described as a single national assistance program. The departments use their general budgets to fund the Development Assistance. For example, the Department of Defense has a special Peacekeeping Fund allocated by the National Treasury. The two predominant forms of agreements that South Africa made were either a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to establish development partnerships or the negotiation of bilateral treaties. All formal requests for assistance made by other countries must be approved by the Presidency and the National Treasury.

South Africa's development assistance has always been directed almost entirely towards Africa, even in the apartheid years. The launch of NEPAD has entrenched South Africa's commitments towards the continent. Some of the key areas in which it provides development

assistance is peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction and Research for Development. This model leans towards partnership as there are overall signs of thrust toward African renewal rather than to boost trade.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) defines development partnerships as “cooperation between developing countries in the field of aid, trade, security, and politics to promote economic and social well-being”. The aim of South African Development Assistance is to “Manage the evolution of its development assistance in a way that mitigates some of the negative perceptions and concerns about its motives on the continent, while advancing peace, stability, and development, and increasing its political leverage and furthering its commercial interests”.

South Africa prefers to identify itself as a development partner rather than a donor or an emerging donor which could be the consequence of two factors. Firstly, because of its sensitivity to the continent’s perception that it may be replicating the role of a dominant economy in colonial relations and secondly, because it is a recipient of aid and development assistance from the OECD-DAC countries, of which it has been critical.

Being the most developed country in the continent of Africa, South Africa is perceived as a hegemon by other African countries. There is scepticism among a significant number of African countries and they accept the assistance with some uneasiness. Although South Africa wants to play a greater role in continent, it does not want to overreach politically or financially because it is aware that many African countries still do not trust it as a development partner.

TRIPARTITE PARTNERSHIPS

One of the innovations in South Africa’s South-South Cooperation is that of its engagement in Tripartite Partnerships. Tripartite Partnerships or Triangular Cooperation (TriCo) could be of various kinds and there is a necessity to delineate them from misconceptions. An arrangement where a northern donor is providing assistance either directly or through an international organization simultaneously to two developing or under-developed nations, cannot be termed TriCo. Such arrangements would still be considered vertical cooperation or North-South Cooperation. The UNDP’s view that Triangular Cooperation is a type

of South-South Cooperation between two or more countries involving a developed nation, denoted as North-South-South, is limited. It could also be conceptualized as a type of South-South Cooperation with not just a Northern country but also an international organization (IO), Arab nation, emerging economy (developing country) or an under-developed country. It could take forms such as IO-South-South, South-IO-South and South-South-South.

South Africa has positioned itself as a development partner engaging in tripartite partnerships. Because such a triangular partnership is a mechanism for financial and technical support for South Africa, these partnerships predominantly involve collaborating with a traditional donor to deliver DA to a partnering African country. In traditional terms, the TriCo that South Africa is predominantly involved in, is that of a Donor – South Africa – African nation. The southern country also partners trilaterally with other southern countries, like Brazil and multilateral institutions like the UN from time-to-time to deliver assistance. Since South Africa is itself battling a myriad of problems, such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, and crime etc., internally, such an arrangement enables it to play an increasing role in the continent without incurring high costs or engendering resentment from its neighbors.

In order to formalize this, the National Treasury has drafted a trilateral policy in early 2007 and appointed a dedicated trilateral assistance division to establish principles, criteria, and guidelines. This kind of an arrangement is also very convenient for the donor partners as they acknowledge South Africa's comparative advantages in Africa, in terms of location, culture, history, identity, acceptability, and the shared African Renaissance vision. A greater understanding of African contexts and needs by virtue of being an African country also makes South Africa a great entry point into Africa for the traditional donor countries. The Department of Foreign Affairs has pioneered the use of trilateral assistance. By 2007, trilateral partnerships were struck with Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, and Belgium.

According to Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, "The country seems to be increasingly involved in trilateral assistance. Partly because South Africa has insufficient resources to meet all the requests it receives. But also, because 'old donors' want to use South Africa as a vehicle for providing assistance in countries where their presence would be politically unwelcome. However, South Africa has to balance its involvement in trilateral assistance with the desire to remain, in the eyes of other African countries, politically independent."

PATTERNS

South Africa's Development Assistance, most of which is directed towards Africa, also has seen a few exceptions like Haiti, Turkey, Cuba, Palestinian Authority etc., which are conflict-ridden. Within Africa, a greater proportion of assistance is provided to regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the African Union (AU). Priority assistance is provided for conflict-ridden countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi, and Sudan.

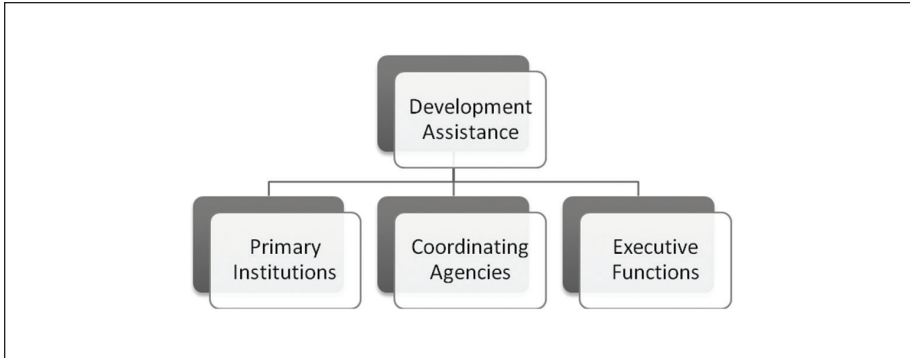
Among these, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) accounts for the bulk of DA (about 70%). It is difficult to account for overall volume of the DA since it based on both regional integration and development cooperation. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) is a Common Monetary Area (CMA) where the customs pool is divided according to a formula based on the trade within the SACU with an element that accounts for economic well-being. The SACU has constituted a development fund to which the members of SACU contribute approximately R2 billion. The line between support for regional integration and development cooperation is not drawn sharply and hence it becomes very difficult to distinguish the amount of DA.

In 2011-12, South Africa's DA accounted for over 1% of GNI (300 million Euros), which is about the size of a medium level international donor, being on par with a number of new European Union member states and developing nations. According to the contributions required in ODA, it figures almost at the top as other traditional donors contribute much less than 1% of their GNI. The DA is not formally tied but most of the projects rely on South African inputs such as skilled labour and technology.

INSTITUTIONAL SETUP

South Africa has no form of centralized agency that coordinates all its DA operations and is very fragmented. The National Treasury receives ODA and disburses funds for providing assistance. DA is provided through the ARF in the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), which was previously known as the Department of Foreign Affairs. The South African Presidency and DIRCO play a decisive role in formulating the strategy and foreign policy of the nation which drives their DA. Almost all the line ministries are involved and are responsible for the implementation of DA projects pertaining to

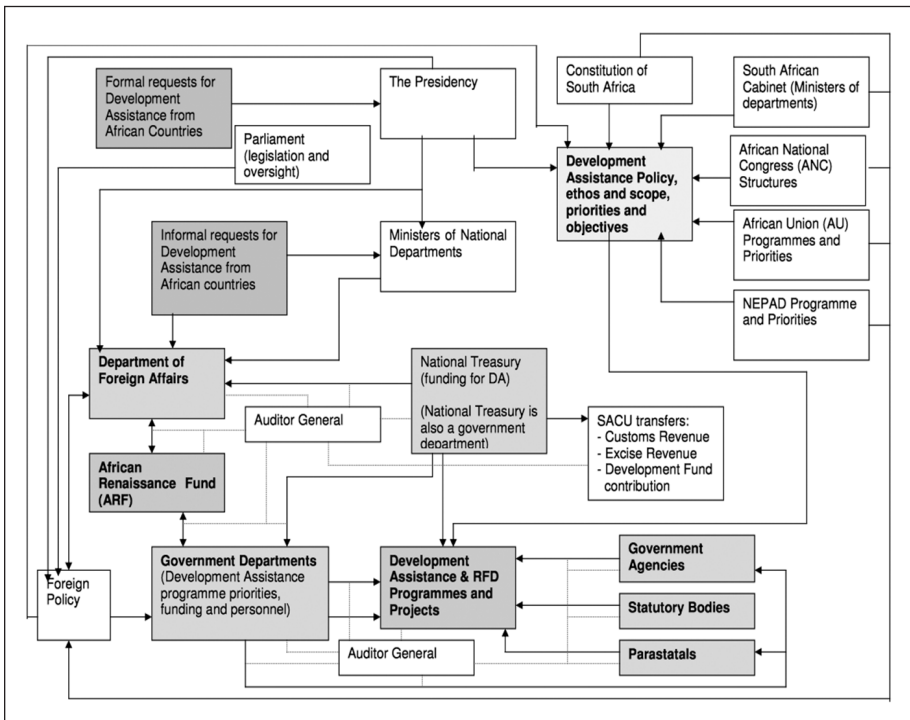
their department. The country is in the process of conceptualizing the creation of a new agency, that is to be established as a replacement of



Source: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2008.

The following presents an overview of the institutional structure of South African DA.

Figure 1 : Institutional Structure of South African Development Assistance



Source: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2008.

ARF, which would consolidate and monitor all the DA operations. There was a debate on whether it would be called South African International Development Agency (SAIDA) or the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA), and the latter was agreed upon to reiterate the country's emphasis on creating partnerships. SADPA was scheduled to come into effect over half a decade ago. It was thought that SADPA will be located within DIRCO.

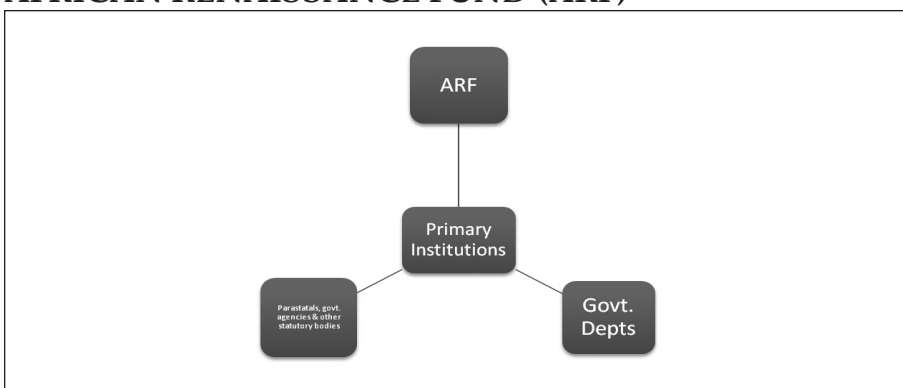
The institutional setup of South Africa's DA can be mainly categorized into primary institutions, coordinating agencies and executive functions.

PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS

The primary institutions are the most visible component of the country's DA. A bulk of its funding is provided in grants. They also make concessional loans. The primary institutions can be categorized into the ARF, the government departments and the Parastatals, govt. agencies and other statutory bodies.

Source: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2008.

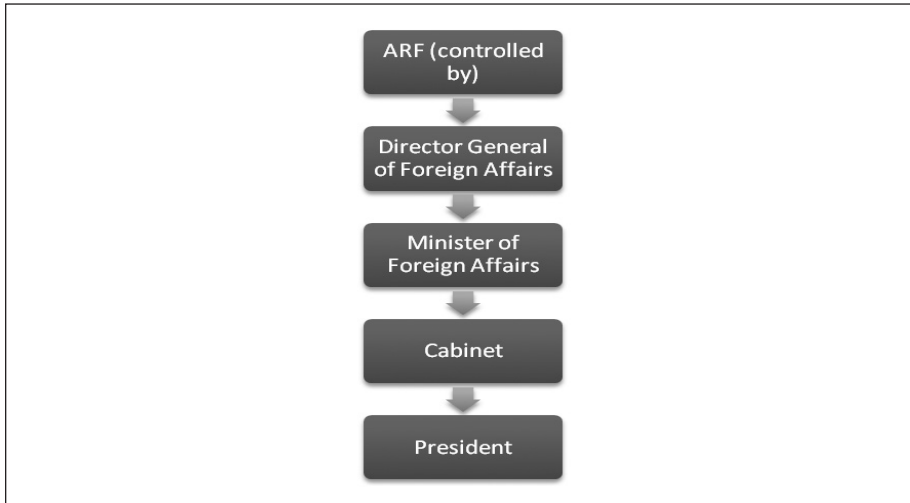
AFRICAN RENAISSANCE FUND (ARF)



This has contributed about 45 million Euros in the year 2011-12. Its original purpose was to channel external funding received from traditional donor countries to African countries in the absence of adequate funds. The need for this was felt in the case of the Mozambique floods. It falls under the NEPAD Directorate and is subject to audits. ARF supports projects in 4 areas of AR agenda, which are poverty alleviation, economic development, security, and stability. It has a priority for support for capacity- building projects and also provides seed funding to these initiatives.

Source: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2008.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS



Numerous government departments and line ministries are involved in DA, some of which are Defense, Education, Minerals and Energy, and Trade and Industry among many others.

PARASTATALS AND OTHER STATUTORY BODIES

A large number of parastatals and other statutory bodies are also involved such as, the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), the National Research Fund (NRF), and the SA Management Development Institute (SAMDI).

RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT (RFD)

The Research for Development program constitutes only a small component of South Africa's DA. Most of RFD undertaken involves South African personnel. NEPAD's influence has resulted in locating a large percentage of RFD within Africa, a bulk of which is concentrated within the SADC. There are only a limited number of bilateral and trilateral RFD projects, compared to large number of traditional projects. This is attributed to the limited number of African governments and departments that request for and can carry out RFD partnerships.

A major proportion of projects are implemented either by using the donor funds and South Africa's expertise or co-funded by donors and South Africa, and using South African expertise. Partnering is restricted to this level due to absence of a counterpart national science and technology research body or a national structure for RFD in African countries.

In South Africa's RFD, the European Union (EU) figures prominently in international partnerships. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) acts as an African Regional Focal Point for the World Association of Industrial and Technological Research Organisations (WAITRO), which promotes interaction among African researchers. The CSIR participation was funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Malaysian government. The CSIR performs regular contract work in Africa for several foreign donor institutions and development agencies. The process generally begins when an African country approaches a donor for assistance and then the donor contracts the CSIR to implement the project.

The National Research Fund (NRF) has established numerous trilateral partnerships some of which involve, the UK working to tackle foot and mouth disease in livestock, France partnering with South Africa and Ethiopia on a laser project among many others. The donor partners keep a low profile and allow South Africa to take the lead in project implementation. Such an arrangement suits South Africa, as it is not keen on being seen as an extension of donor nations and foreign agencies.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

South Africa has no comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system that can track its assistance barring the exception of a few examples of tracking that are in place. The funds from the external development partners that are earmarked for South African development are tracked by the Development Co-operation Information System (DCIS) and the database is maintained by the International Development Co-operation Chief Directorate (IDC CD), located in the National Treasury. The only verifiable sources of data on trilateral partnerships is obtained from the foreign donor partners

ISSUES

Due to the absence of a tracking mechanism in South Africa, the exact

total figures and specific types of projects, loan interests and repayments are missing. There are numerous blanks in the system including the absence of a systematic database in place to track or record DA, separate financial reporting lines for development projects, an overall government strategy to direct DA, generic operating guidelines, to facilitate overall provision of DA policies, to direct trilateral cooperation and a clear picture within departments as to where the resources are distributed — all are lacking.

One of the major criticisms that South African Development Assistance has had is that of the ARF facing bureaucratic and structural delays, poor coordination and lack of strategic direction which has resulted in reactive, uncoordinated and ad-hoc projects rather than responsive projects that help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. International organisations have a competitive advantage over South Africa in that the beneficiary country has a say, whereas for South Africa the ability to act as a 'partner' is entirely shaped by its relationship with its voters and not the particular needs of the beneficiary country.

IBSA

South Africa claims to be a voice for the continent in many multilateral forums such as the G20, BRICS and IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa). The formation of IBSA was quintessentially a brainchild of South Africa and hence, it has been very active in IBSA. The IBSA agreements cover collaborative initiatives and co-funding in a range of areas. Their areas of assistance are trilateral RFD and general DA in each other's countries through an IBSA Fund to help the most disadvantaged of the developing countries. Each country contributes US\$1 million to the Fund each year. The National Research Fund (NRF) implements projects and decides on projects in conjunction with the Indian and the Brazilian institutions. Projects involving more developed partners such as Brazil, India and China often involve some technical support and technology transfer from South Africa, which for its size possesses highly advanced technology. It is this technological sophistication, and not just its economic position in Africa, that enables South Africa to 'punch above its weight' in SSC.

SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP AGENCY (SADPA)

According to Sidiropoulos, “South Africa’s development assistance lacks a coherent policy framework due to the little coordination between Ministries. Also, there are no generic operational guidelines outside the ARF facilitating overall provision of aid. Instead, development assistance tends to be given on an ad hoc basis. Due to the lack of a codified institutional memory on the subject it is difficult to determine the implications and impact of assistance provided by South Africa.” The country’s DA has been described over the years by many as reactive, uncoordinated, fragmented and following an ad hoc approach. But Sidiropoulos also referred to the new structures and more inclusive approaches which were being established.

South Africa seeks to rectify these drawbacks and fill gaps through SADPA. The SADPA model is by far the best innovation in South Africa and maybe even in SSC. It has been taking careful strides, consulting stakeholders and examining best practices for its conceptualisation even though the process has been extremely time-consuming and delayed the materialisation of SADPA till now. SADPA’s overall aim is “To develop partnerships that drive innovation around development cooperation in Africa and developing countries to create self-sufficient societies.” SADPA intends to employ an approach that is people-centred, partnership-driven, effective and strategic in order to develop strategies and programmes that serve as a catalyst for development. It has defined the term “catalytic initiatives” as helping to unlock the potential of a country or region, multiply impact of projects, and employing projects that should be replicable and up scalable in collaboration with development partners as stated by a SADPA official. The draft SADPA policy framework seeks to work in close partnership with countries of the South and North to implement joint programs, develop best practices, and to engage in a policy discourse on modalities for development cooperation. As stated in the AMEXCID’s Report on Experiences of Middle Income Countries in International Development Cooperation, nine programmes have been proposed in SADPA’s current strategic framework:

- Humanitarian Assistance
- Peacekeeping
- Elections Support
- IBSA Poverty Alleviation Fund

- Bilateral Partnerships
- Trilateral Partnerships
- Regional Partnerships
- Decentralised Partnerships
- Multilateral Partnerships

South Africa has been involved extensively in ensuring peace, security, stability, post-conflict reconstruction, humanitarian assistance and regional integration in the continent which it has retained in SADPA's strategic framework. It can also be seen from the above that SADPA intends to maintain a flexible approach to accommodate various forms of partnerships which would provide them with a plethora of cooperation opportunities. It plans to formulate a policy framework for Triangular Cooperation that could serve as a template for engagement as a partnership, after consultation with the various stakeholders involved such as northern donors, international/multilateral organizations and beneficiaries. It intends to ensure that quality is maintained in all its activities through rigorous monitoring and evaluation with a focus on accountability, good governance and transparency which would be ensured by reporting to the parliament and the public.

South Africa's intention of practicing SSC through SADPA is quite close to the conceptual framework for SSC developed by the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST) which includes attributes such as national ownership, horizontality & solidarity, capacity development, sustainability and learning, transparency, accountability, inclusive and efficient partnerships, and citizens' protection and empowerment.

South Africa has for long seen the involvement of South African private, non-governmental, regional and civil society organizations in African countries both before and after it began providing DA to those countries. However, its involvement has been highly uncoordinated and in some cases even exploitative, resulting in the view in the continent of South Africa being a hegemonic 'big brother'. South Africa intends to change this through SADPA's vision of establishing partnerships between multiple parties i.e., to move away from 'traditional cooperation' towards 'multi-party partnerships' fostering equal relationships. Such partnerships would involve cooperation which includes regional organizations, private sector, foundations, think tanks, academia and other civil society organizations, on the different ends of the triangle in a triangular cooperation. This would help rein in these organizations, providing them with appropriate operational guidelines and would help organize the country's development assistance.

LESSONS LEARNED

The training of partner-country diplomats in capacity building projects may present a unique comparative advantage for South Africa over other potential partners. South Africa has evolved as a cost-effective and trusted service provider over time. The DIRCO's partnership model involves creating space for critical engagement which is vital for testing assumptions and managing risk. A reflexive approach and an organizational culture that is open to criticism with aim at actively identifying and reporting on mistakes as a part of continued lesson-learning is something that all countries involved in international development cooperation need to adopt. The involvement of academia, government, civil society and the private sector into a multi-stakeholder approach of the South African DA is something that others countries need to emulate.

CONCLUSION

There is a lot that can be learned from South Africa's innovations, both existing and planned, in tripartite partnerships, international groupings like IBSA and the conceptualisation of SADPA in particular. The SADPA model is based on the principles of South-South cooperation and follows an approach close to the NeST's conceptual framework. It involves sharing of contributions, ownership, responsibilities and risks through its unique partnership model. The adoption of a flexible framework with different modes of partnerships to involve various forms of arrangements and allowing a space for change, learning, customization and configuration to contexts on a case-by-case basis through the employment of a multi-stakeholder approach is indeed an innovation that gives the best-of-all-worlds. Although, the realization and implementation of the SADPA model would be very challenging, it has the potential to be the best and the most innovative model in SSC if implemented in its entirety.

APPENDIX

Background

South Africa's image in the continent was marred with colonialism and apartheid. Racial segregation or Apartheid was a political and social system in South Africa that was in place in the 20th century until 1994 under the rule of a white minority. Racial discrimination was

institutionalized during the time of Apartheid. It was also during this time that South Africa became a superpower and the South African white elite benefitted economically by exploiting the coloured. Ever since the end of Apartheid, South Africa has been trying to change its image in the continent as a colonial and an economic super-power. It has made several attempts since 1994 to reinforce the narrative that South Africa is a 'rainbow nation' – for all those who live in it. This is one of the main reasons why South Africa's Development Assistance almost entirely concentrates on the African continent.

It is in this context that South Africa in its development assistance shares the motivation and vision for the African Renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

HISTORY

South Africa's Development Assistance (DA) prior to 2000 and after 2000 saw significant changes. Prior to the 2000, DA originated as efforts to support African countries against the apartheid in order to win friends and buy votes at the UN. Institutionally, assistance was granted through the Development Assistance Program, in the Chief Directorate in the Department of Foreign Affairs. It consisted of direct project-related DA with little or no Research for Development and only responded to direct requests for assistance.

South Africa's DA, after achieving democracy in the 2000s was replaced by the African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund Act, or the African Renaissance Fund (ARF) as it is commonly known. The Preamble of the ARF states that it has been established to enhance cooperation with other African nations through the promotion of democracy, good governance, prevention and resolution of conflict, socioeconomic development and integration, humanitarian assistance, and human resource development. The ARF is the most visible component in South Africa's DA.

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