**Final evaluation of the performance of the**

**United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation**

**under its strategic framework, 2014-2017,**

**in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

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The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) requested a final evaluation of its performance during the implementation of its strategic framework, 2014-2017, prior to the preparation of the strategic framework for 2018-2021. The final evaluation was conducted at the end of 2017, drawing on the midterm review undertaken by the same evaluator in early 2016. Part I of the present report describes the strategic framework, 2014-2017, and the structure of UNOSSC. Part II considers the accomplishments of the Office with respect to the outputs included under the three major outcomes outlined in that strategic framework. Some activities that were not anticipated in the framework are also mentioned. Part III looks at the allocation of core and non-core resources with regard to the three major outcomes in the strategic framework. Part IV presents conclusions and recommendations. Annex I contains suggested elements for the UNOSSC strategic framework for 2018-2021, while annex II consists of a list of persons interviewed for the final evaluation.

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**Introduction**

1. In 2012, the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, in accordance with its decision 17/1, renamed the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation the “United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation” (UNOSSC) to reflect the commitment of Member States to strengthen and enhance system-wide coordination of South-South cooperation as a key priority in United Nations operational activities for development.[[1]](#footnote-1) UNOSSC then designed its strategic framework, 2014-2017,[[2]](#footnote-2) to reflect the expectations and responsibilities of the renamed Office.
2. The strategic framework was approved by the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in January 2014. The strategic framework provides a structure within which UNOSSC focuses on areas where it should be able to contribute most effectively, in line with its mandate, by providing support to: (a) global and United Nations policy development and advocacy, particularly in servicing the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation as well as national focal points for South-South cooperation; (b) inter-agency coordination and facilitation through United Nations system focal points and country teams; (c) catalysing the development of innovative mechanisms for South-South and triangular cooperation; (d) fostering inclusive partnerships and mobilizing resources from both public and private entities to support multi-agency collaboration in implementing the recommendations in the Nairobi outcome document; and (e) supporting knowledge-sharing, networking and the exchange of best practices, including through Southern centres of excellence.
3. A midterm review and a final evaluation of the performance of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation under the strategic framework, 2014-2017, were to be carried out in accordance with a provision in the framework.[[3]](#footnote-3) The midterm review was also requested by the Secretary-General at the intersessional meeting of the High-level Committee on 8 September 2015.[[4]](#footnote-4) For the midterm review, which was carried out in February-March 2016, the reviewer examined what the Office had achieved over the period 2014-2015 by comparing actual outputs with the outputs outlined in the annex to the strategic framework. The annex, in table format, listed the goals, outcomes and outputs as well as output indicators for the framework period.[[5]](#footnote-5) Since most of the outputs did not have a time frame, the reviewer found that it was difficult to determine whether expectations had been met but general trends could be discerned. The final evaluation examined the performance of the Office during the full four-year period of the strategic framework, building on the 2016 midterm review.
4. In May 2016, the Secretary-General submitted to the nineteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation his report on a comprehensive proposal on concrete ways to enhance the role and impact of UNOSSC as well as the key measures taken to improve the coordination and coherence of United Nations support to South-South cooperation.[[6]](#footnote-6) Among other things, he suggested that the Office focus on six priorities[[7]](#footnote-7) that reflected the conclusions of the reviewer in the midterm review of the Office. Those priorities are referred to in the present report to show how they relate to the strategic framework. The Secretary-General’s report also provided guidance on how the Office could be improved based on the six priorities.[[8]](#footnote-8) In that same document, the Secretary-General reaffirmed his intention to designate the Director of the Office as his Envoy on South-South Cooperation for the duration of the Director’s tenure in that Office (para. 37).
5. The proposed measures to enhance the role of the Office within the United Nations system and the designation of the new Director as the Secretary-General’s Envoy raised the profile of the Office. Most of the stakeholders interviewed thought that those changes had enhanced the impact of the Office because it was the focal point for South-South and triangular cooperation throughout the United Nations system.
6. The changes also followed the adoption by Member States of the Sustainable Development Goals in late 2015, after which the orientation of the strategic framework was modified. Despite the changes, UNOSSC continued to be hosted by UNDP, which provided most of its core resources.
7. Part I of the present report describes the strategic framework of UNOSSC, 2014-2017, and the evolving structure of the Office. Part II discusses the performance of the Office with respect to the outputs included under the three major outcomes outlined in the strategic framework. Some activities that had not been anticipated in the framework are also mentioned. Part III focuses on the allocation of core and non-core resources with regard to the three major outcomes, and part IV presents conclusions and recommendations. Annex I contains draft elements of a new strategic framework for the period 2018-2021, while annex II provides a list of persons interviewed for the final evaluation.

**Part I. United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation strategic framework,**

**2014‑2017, and structure of the Office**

1. In its efforts to adjust to its new role and reposition itself to be more responsive, more effective and more efficient in servicing Member States’ needs and the demands from United Nations system organizations, UNOSSC proposed a functional realignment of the Office in a briefing to Member States on 28 June 2013[[9]](#footnote-9) as its fourth cooperation framework (2009-2013)[[10]](#footnote-10) was coming to an end. The realignment was to include the following units: Office of the Director; Innovation and Strategic Initiatives; Policy and United Nations Affairs; Partnerships and Triangular Cooperation; Funds and Programmes Management; Knowledge and Technology Exchange; and regional coordinators. The reviewer took note that the proposed functional realignment was never officially approved by UNDP and was not fully implemented. Moreover, the reviewer found that the structure of the Office based on those units was confusing, with the job titles and unit names inconsistent. It was also pointed out to the reviewer that several of the units in UNOSSC had been designated as divisions even though they had fewer than four staff members each; that was not in line with guidelines for divisions in other United Nations entities. Nonetheless, the midterm review was conducted on the basis of the units created under the proposed realignment since those were the ones in place.
2. The reviewer noted that, during the first two years under the strategic framework, there had been an emphasis on the three-in-one multilateral South-South support architecture that had also been central to the work of the Office under the third and fourth cooperation frameworks. That architecture included the services of the Global South-South Development (GSSD) Academy, Global and Regional South-South Development Expos, and the South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange (SS-GATE). The reviewer found that, while the renamed Office had assumed United Nations system-wide responsibilities with respect to mainstreaming and increasing the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation, much of the actual work of UNOSSC in 2014-2015 had remained focused on building the three-in-one architecture. During the last two years of the strategic framework, however, the three-in-one architecture was modified to reflect the priorities of the Secretary-General and the General Assembly, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among other structural changes, in August 2017, the Secretary-General transferred the Southern Climate Partnership Incubator from his office to UNOSSC because of its strong South-South component.
3. The reviewer was informed that in 2016, a Management Consulting Team (MCT) recommended by the UNDP Office for Internal Audit and Investigations had designed a transformation plan for the Office.[[11]](#footnote-11) The MCT had suggested two options for such a transformation plan to strengthen organizational focus and integrity. The Office selected elements of one of the options and has started to put a structure into place. That structure consists of the Director and two Deputy Directors, one responsible for oversight of programme and operations and the other for policy and strategic partnerships. The Deputy Director for Programme and Operations has oversight responsibility in the following areas: the four regional offices; the Programme Support Unit; and the Knowledge and Advisory Services Unit and programme teams, including the Climate and Sustainability Programme and the South-South Cooperation in Peacebuilding Programme. The Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships is responsible for overseeing policy, intergovernmental support and United Nations coordination, advocacy, strategic communications and outreach, and for directing the implementation of activities relating to strategic partnerships and alliance-building with Member States, United Nations agencies, especially UNDP, intergovernmental institutions and all other partners.

1. Although recruitment has begun to fill vacant posts, much of the implementation will depend on the resources available. While the proposed structure has not yet been fully put in place, the units that have been created have been included in the final evaluation of the performance of UNOSSC.
2. UNOSSC has been tasked with a number of new mandates by the General Assembly since late 2016. In its resolution 71/244 of 21 December 2016, the General Assembly decided “to convene, within extrabudgetary resources and making use of the existing coordination mechanisms of the United Nations system, a high-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, to be held no later than the first half of 2019” (para. 30). In that same resolution, the General Assembly welcomed the generous offer by the Government of Argentina to host the conference (para. 31) and requested UNOSSC to effectively provide the secretariat to the conference (para. 29). General Assembly resolution 71/318 of 28 August 2017 provides more detail on the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-south Cooperation, which is to be held from 20 to 22 March 2019. In that resolution, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General “to provide all necessary assistance to the preparatory process and the High-level Conference, including the preparation of a comprehensive report, consistent with the overarching theme of the Conference, no later than August 2018” (para. 2), and “to prepare a background note by the end of January 2018, including proposals for the overarching theme of the High-level Conference…and sub-themes for the interactive panel discussions” (para. 3). The General Assembly further requested UNOSSC “to continue to provide the necessary substantive and technical support to the preparatory process for the High-level Conference” (para. 4). Moreover, the President of the General Assembly was requested “to initiate…informal intergovernmental negotiations with all Member States…with a view to producing a draft outcome document by February 2019” (para. 6). The General Assembly also decided that the twentieth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation would be held in June 2019 rather than in 2018 (para. 13).

1. In addition, the Secretary-General, in his report on the state of South-South cooperation of 7 August 2017,[[12]](#footnote-12) stated that he had requested UNOSSC to “consider commissioning an independent annual comprehensive South-South cooperation report” (para. 95), “conduct a mapping of major development cooperation activities led by developing countries and key South-South cooperation providers” (ibid.), and “develop, in close connection with the United Nations agencies, an action plan for South-South cooperation in support of [his] climate change engagement strategy (2017-2021)” (para. 96).
2. In that same report, the Secretary-General further requested UNOSSC, in its role as the coordinator of United Nations system activities for South-South and triangular cooperation, “…to coordinate, in consultation with the United Nations agencies, the preparation of a United Nations system-wide South-South cooperation strategy” (para. 94). Finally, in December 2017, at the very end of the UNOSSC strategic framework, the Secretary-General issued his report on repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.[[13]](#footnote-13) In that report, South-South cooperation is given prominence as a means of implementation by the United Nations development system in delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. All of these new mandates will give a higher profile to the Office but will also require higher levels of staff responsibility, especially for the following: the Strategic Communications and Outreach Unit (hereinafter referred to as the “Communications and Outreach Unit”); the Policy, Intergovernmental Support and UN Coordination Unit (hereinafter referred to as the “Policy and UN coordination Unit”); and the Knowledge and Advisory Services Unit. Activities related to these mandates will have to be included in the upcoming strategic framework for 2018-2021. The reviewer has provided a rough outline for the new strategic framework, including the new mandates, in annex I.
4. Despite the general satisfaction with much of the work of UNOSSC in completing the tasks included under the strategic framework, 2014-2017, several of the persons interviewed expressed their concern that the Office had operated in an environment without sufficient corporate accountability and oversight, especially with respect to some of the major programmes such as the Global South-South Development (GSSD) Expos. In that regard, an Expo Advisory Committee was established for GSSD Expo 2017, which would address that issue. A question also was raised as to whether UNOSSC was accountable to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation or UNDP. It is important to point out that the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) audit report of 24 February 2016 in which UNOSSC had received an “unsatisfactory” rating[[14]](#footnote-14) was followed up by OAI Report No. 1754 dated 22 February 2017[[15]](#footnote-15) in which OAI concluded that UNOSSC had already implemented 15 out of its 16 recommendations. Later in 2017, OAI reported that its final recommendation had also been implemented by the Office.
5. Some respondents stated that it would be desirable to have guiding principles for conducting South-South cooperation activities and standardized statistical measures for reporting on budget and project expenditures as well as funds management. The reviewer found that it was somewhat difficult to compare projects under different cooperation funds and to differentiate South-South from triangular cooperation projects in some cases.

**Part II. Outputs under the strategic framework outcomes**

1. The reviewer looked at the performance of UNOSSC in terms of the outputs listed under the three main outcomes found in the annex of the strategic framework. Through interviews and perusal of documents and the new UNOSSC website (www.unsouthsouth.org), the reviewer examined which deliverables had been completed under each of the outputs during the four-year period.
2. **Outcome 1. Strengthened multilateral South-South policy-making processes advance Southern perspectives, development agenda and approaches in major intergovernmental and inter-agency processes and enhance the coherence and coordination of United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation.**
3. Three outputs are listed under outcome 1*.*

**1. *Output 1.1 The High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation has relevant information***

***to make informed decisions on South-South and triangular cooperation policies and***

***strategies****.*

1. Under output 1.1, the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation is to have relevant information to make informed decisions on South-South and triangular cooperation policies and strategies. This is similar to priority (a) in the Secretary-General’s comprehensive proposal (See SSC/19/2, para. 22: “Providing effective secretariat support to intergovernmental bodies, including analytical reporting on trends and opportunities”). The Division for Policy and United Nations Affairs (referred to as the “Policy and UN Coordination Unit” in this final evaluation) was responsible for servicing the High-level Committee and providing it with relevant reports to guide its deliberations. The reports that were prepared specifically for the Committee fell mainly under output 1.1. Indicators of deliverables under output 1.1 included evidence-based analytical reports (reports of the Secretary-General and reports of the Administrator to the High-level Committee), issue-based policy dialogues and experts’ reports.
2. The reviewer found that during the four years of the strategic framework, the Policy and UN Coordination Unit had successfully carried out much of the work that had been requested under output 1.1, in particular servicing of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, which normally meets every other year. That included not only providing the evidence-based analytical reports but also convening issue-based dialogues among South-South cooperation practitioners. Those thematic dialogues required inputs of experts, for which additional resources were needed. In general, the reviewer found that the dialogues had been organized in conjunction with the High-level Committee but could have been held at other times during the two-year period, depending on resources available. Such periodic dialogues would have to be built into the work plan of the unit.
3. The High-level Committee held its eighteenth session in May and June 2014, an intersessional meeting in September 2015 (the latter not anticipated in the strategic framework) and its nineteenth session in May 2016. For the eighteenth session, the Policy and UN Coordination Unit prepared three main reports: the report of the Administrator on the review of progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the new directions strategy for South-South cooperation and the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation;[[16]](#footnote-16) the report of the Secretary-General on measures to further strengthen the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation;[[17]](#footnote-17) and the note by the Secretary-General on the framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation.[[18]](#footnote-18) The Policy and UN Coordination Unit had revised those guidelines to align them with the Sustainable Development Goals.[[19]](#footnote-19) It also prepared reports of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation that were submitted to the General Assembly in 2014,[[20]](#footnote-20) 2015,[[21]](#footnote-21) 2016[[22]](#footnote-22) and 2017.[[23]](#footnote-23) In addition, it produced the report of the eighteenth session [2014] of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation for the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)[[24]](#footnote-24) and two reports relating to the intersessional meeting of the High-level Committee held in September 2015.[[25]](#footnote-25)
4. The nineteenth session of the High-level Committee was held from 16 to 19 May 2016. The Policy and UN Coordination Unit, with some inputs from other units in the Office, produced three documents for the session: Report on the review of progress made in implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, the new directions strategy for South-South cooperation and the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation ([SSC/19/1](http://undocs.org/SSC/19/1)); Report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive proposal on concrete ways to enhance the role and impact of the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation as well as the key measures taken to improve the coordination and coherence of United Nations support to South-South cooperation ([SSC/19/2](http://undocs.org/SSC/19/2)); and Note by the Secretary-General on the framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation ([SSC/19/3](http://undocs.org/SSC/19/3)). The Administrator of UNDP produced the Note on the adoption of the agenda and organization of work ([SSC/19/L.3](http://undocs.org/SSC/19/L.3)). The report of the nineteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (A/71/39) was prepared by the secretariat and issued on 1 July 2016. For the nineteenth session of the Committee, the Policy and UN Coordination Unit organized a thematic discussion on “The contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. As inputs to the discussion, nine experts made presentations on conceptual aspects and case studies related to the contributions of South-South and triangular cooperation to the 2030 Agenda. The delegates discussed, among other things, the good practices presented, ways to build partnerships to use South-South cooperation as a means of implementation, and the role that UNOSSC could play in assisting with the development of those partnerships. More frequent dialogues among experts and practitioners could provide direction to both practitioners and UNOSSC.
5. Document SSC/19/2 outlined six new priorities for UNOSSC (para. 22) in light of the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by Member States as well as concrete ways in which the role and impact of the Office could be enhanced (para. 24). That document provided important direction for the Office and reflected many of the recommendations of the midterm review.
6. The reviewer concluded that all of the documents requested for those sessions of the High-level Committee had been successfully delivered, including those that originally had not been included in the strategic framework. It should be noted here that activities called for by the intergovernmental bodies must be delivered regardless of whether or not they are included in the strategic framework.
7. It can be said that the Office was considered responsive to the needs of the High-level Committee and its Bureau and to developing countries. The Executive Secretary of the Group of 77 (G-77) had been supported by UNOSSC under the strategic framework. Member States appreciated the work of the Office in the preparation of policy documents and thematic dialogues to guide the Committee discussions as well as wider discussions at ECOSOC and the General Assembly.
8. The reviewer examined the policy documents that had been drafted and submitted to relevant oversight bodies during the four-year period under evaluation. They included: the seven reports serving as inputs to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation for its eighteenth session, the intersessional meeting and the nineteenth session; four reports to the General Assembly detailing the state of South-South cooperation; and the reports of the eighteenth and nineteenth sessions and the intersessional meeting of the Committee. Overall, those documents are of high quality and provide valuable information by surveying developments in South-South cooperation, thus building a strong research base for policymakers in the field, which strongly correlates with their stated purpose. However, the reviewer noted that UNOSSC was required to report similar information to different legislative bodies during the same period (i.e., multiple reports to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and the annual reports on the state of South-South cooperation to the General Assembly that are produced in the same year). Thus, the reviewer questioned whether it would be possible to consolidate the information into fewer documents to better highlight trends and take a longer-term view to understand the implications of the information under review.
9. That reporting issue also arose with regard to the new mandates that were given to UNOSSC in 2017. For example, the General Assembly, in its resolution 71/318 of 28 August 2017, requested that the Secretary-General provide all necessary assistance to the preparatory process and the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in 2019, including the preparation of a comprehensive report, consistent with the overarching theme of the Conference, no later than August 2018 (para. 2). In addition, the Secretary-General, in his 2017 report on the state of South-South cooperation, requested UNOSSC to consider commissioning an independent annualcomprehensive report on South-South cooperation.[[26]](#footnote-26) The reviewer suggested that it would be more cost-effective to produce the comprehensive report for the Conference in 2018 and the first in the series of independent annual comprehensive reports on South-South cooperation in 2019 rather than producing two comprehensive reports in 2018. However, the Office pointed out that the two reports might serve different purposes and that the latter would be more analytical, providing a broad overview of issues for discussion. If the research were to be undertaken by partners outside the Office and the Office were to serve mainly as the coordinator of partner inputs, perhaps the two reports could be produced in the same year, although Office staff already seemed to be overextended. Whether produced in 2018 or 2019, the independent annual comprehensive reports on South-South cooperation will be flagship knowledge products of the Office and will require at least one staff member dedicated to their production. The annual comprehensive report should address the challenges of developing countries to meet the Sustainable Development Goals and could be the basis of regional or global dialogues.
10. In the report of the Secretary-General on further mainstreaming and coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system submitted to the 2015 intersessional meeting of the High-level Committee, the Secretary-General called on UNDP to continue to provide the institutional home for UNOSSC[[27]](#footnote-27) and requested Member States and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes (if they had not already done so) to designate institutional focal points for South-South and triangular cooperation.[[28]](#footnote-28) Delegations at the nineteenth session of the Committee also encouraged countries that had not done so to appoint such institutional focal points.[[29]](#footnote-29) It should be noted here that a number of South-South focal points at both the national and inter-agency levels had been functioning informally quite effectively for several years. The recommendations on national and United Nations country-team focal points were being followed up by UNOSSC in early 2016 through letters to national governments and United Nations resident coordinators. The reviewer thought that implementation of the focal point network would provide strong institutional support to the work of the Office, especially at the regional level.
11. The reports on the eighteenth session, the 2015 intersessional meeting and the nineteenth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation indicated the value that Member States placed on the work of UNOSSC in creating a space where Member States, United Nations system organizations, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could forge inclusive partnerships for effective development. In the report of the intersessional meeting, Member States “urged the Office and the United Nations development system to step up their efforts to strengthen the Office and South-South cooperation overall”.[[30]](#footnote-30) Thus, although deliberations on many of the issues were not concluded, the reviewer considered that the Policy and UN Coordination Unit had successfully carried out its tasks under output 1.1 of the strategic framework.
12. The reviewer observed that, although the Policy and UN Coordination Unit had produced all of the reports requested by intergovernmental bodies, especially for the High-level Committee, it had not been able to produce many of the publications (evidence-based analytical reports) that had previously been within its purview. Such publications included *Southern Innovator* magazine and the monthly e-newsletter “Development Challenges, South-South Solutions*”.* In the case of *Southern Innovator*, one issue (No. 5 on waste and recycling) was published during the four-year period of the framework but did not have wide online distribution, and issue No. 6 was awaiting funds for publication. The e-newsletter was last issued in July 2014 even though the reviewer found it a good way to communicate with focal points at the national and inter-agency levels. In fact, the shortage of funds for those knowledge products was the main reason that they had ceased being produced during the evaluation period. At the same time, a new series, South-South in Action, was being issued under the Knowledge and Advisory Services Unit. Each issue of South-South in Actionis submitted independently by one country or organization and is edited, printed and distributed by UNOSSC. The series does not replace the analytical reports that had previously been produced by the Office but it does contribute to advocacy for the work of partners and the visibility of the Office.
13. The new UNOSSC website [www.unsouthsouth.org](http://www.unsouthsouth.org) was launched in mid-2017. Content in French and Spanish was added during the second half of 2017, and Chinese content will be included in the first quarter of 2018. The website, which is a Web portal, is a significant improvement over the earlier website but its Member States Portal was not yet operational at the time of the final evaluation. The reviewer had observed in the midterm review that a timely electronic communication product, such as the newsletter previously issued by the Policy and UN Coordination Unit, had provided evidence on new trends, opportunities and challenges for South-South and triangular cooperation and that funds should be made available for some form of real-time outreach such as a newsletter or a more interactive website. A UNOSSC electronic bulletin was also launched along with the new Web portal partially to meet that need. At the time of the final evaluation, the electronic bulletin was being issued once a month by the Communications and Outreach Unit. It had a circulation of about 2,000 and included updates, photos and summaries of the Expos, meetings and other news. There is still some way to go to have timely interactive communications with national focal points for South-South cooperation but the Office is moving in that direction. Some of the national respondents indicated that they would like to have an annual calendar of UNOSSC and partner events to guide their inputs and participation. Such a calendar would also be useful for the different units in the Office but would require the participation of all staff.

**2. *Output 1.2 Mechanisms established for more inclusive and systematically organized High-***

***level Committee for policy guidance and coordination of South-South and triangular***

***cooperation in the United Nations system.***

1. Under output 1.2, the Policy and UN Coordination Unit was responsible for enhancing the coherence and coordination of United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation, which is similar to priority (b) in the Secretary-General’s comprehensive proposal (SSC/19/2, para. 22): “Coordinating coherent United Nations system support to South-South and triangular cooperation, and monitoring and reporting on the mainstreaming of that cooperation”. The Unit supported the meetings of the United Nations inter-agency focal points for South-South cooperation, particularly those held simultaneously with the High-level Committee or with the GSSD Expos. A large number of United Nations offices, agencies, funds and programmes had already designated focal points for South-South cooperation to participate at those meetings, and some of them were designated to participate in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team (discussed later in this report). The Task Team has completed its work but the Office should continue to work with United Nations system focal points by providing advisory services to those agencies as they develop South-South cooperation policy instruments and in coordinating the preparation of a system-wide strategy on South-South cooperation.
2. The number of United Nations agencies that contributed to the reports for the High-level Committee and the General Assembly (indicator 1.1.2) increased considerably during the period covered by the final evaluation. During the first two years of the framework, only seven United Nations bodies, including regional economic commissions, responded to the online survey to gather agency inputs to those reports. In 2016, that number rose to 11 and by 2017, 23 United Nations entities had responded to have their South-South cooperation activities included in the reports. The large increase in responses by the end of the evaluation period was an achievement of the Policy and UN Coordination Unit under the 2014-2017 framework.
3. The upturn in interest among United Nations agencies may be partly in response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the identification of South-South cooperation as an important means of implementation. Many large United Nations agencies now have their own units on South-South cooperation that have been active in implementing joint projects. While some respondents felt that the plethora of those South-South cooperation units was confusing, especially at the country level, proper coordination of South-South cooperation units across the United Nations development system could be advanced through the proposed system-wide strategy and might lead to greater visibility and resources for South-South cooperation. UNOSSC should be in a position to provide a coordinating mechanism for South-South and triangular cooperation at the global and regional levels.

**3. *Output 1.3 South-South approaches are integrated into policies and operational***

***activities of the United Nations development system.***

1. The Policy and UN Coordination Unit contributed to output 1.3 by assisting the Administrator to establish the UNDG South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team under the UNDG Sustainable Development Working Group, which was co-chaired by UNOSSC and the International Labour Organization. The Task Team, which held three meetings in 2015, aimed to integrate South-South cooperation approaches into United Nations operational activities in order to meet the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals. The Policy and UN Coordination Unit led the preparation of the work plan of the Task Team and the implementation of various activities that improved coordination of United Nations entities in mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into operational activities at the country level. That was another function not included in the strategic framework but the reviewer found that it was extremely important in transitioning from the focus on the Millennium Development Goals to the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, thus expanding the relevance of South-South and triangular cooperation much beyond the Office. The Task Team completed its work and was discontinued in March 2017. UNOSSC was requested by the Secretary-General to coordinate, in consultation with the United Nations agencies, the preparation of a United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South cooperation.[[31]](#footnote-31) Several respondents were of the opinion that that process might be an extension of the work of the Task Team but that it would be broader since it would involve the whole United Nations system. Convening focal points from all the United Nations system agencies and guiding the process of developing a system-wide strategy would enable UNOSSC to provide advisory services and share its South-South cooperation expertise and tools with the entire United Nations system.
2. As part of the effort to mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation into the operational activities of the United Nations development system, the Policy and UN Coordination Unit guided roll-out countries in Eastern and Southern Africa on integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), “Delivering as one” programmes and the UNDG strategy for work in middle-income countries in Africa. Those initiatives were useful in implementing the strategic framework and operationalizing South-South cooperation in practice. The Governments of Honduras and Panama, along with the United Nations country teams in the respective countries and UNOSSC, entered into innovative new partnership agreements that brought together all three parties to promote and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through expanded South-South and triangular cooperation. UNOSSC, possibly through its regional offices, should build on such innovative experiences and provide advisory services on national-level integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into UNDAFs and other national policies.
3. The initiatives under the strategic framework were also expected to be in line with the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, since UNOSSC was still hosted by UNDP and had to adhere to UNDP policies even though its mandate required that its work cover the entire United Nations system. In chapter 4 of its Strategic Plan, UNDP proposed to make South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation core ways of working in its programme and operations at the global, regional and country levels.[[32]](#footnote-32) It also would continue to host the Office and strengthen support for system-wide coordination and action.[[33]](#footnote-33) The UNDP Strategic Plan provides valuable support to the principles of South-South and triangular cooperation. Under its new Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, “UNDP will continue to work closely with the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and Member States to implement the UNDP strategy on South-South and triangular cooperation as an essential instrument to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda."[[34]](#footnote-34) UNDP (and several other United Nations agencies) also has its own unit on South-South cooperation.
4. In the UNDP integrated resources plan and integrated budget estimates, 2018-2021, UNDP has proposed maintaining its support to UNOSSC “at the same level as actual allocations for 2014-2017, based on projected regular resources contributions for the integrated budget, 2018-2021”.[[35]](#footnote-35) For 2018-2021, UNDP has committed a total of $26.2 million: $14 million under the programmatic component of the integrated budget (development effectiveness line) and $12.2 million under the institutional component.[[36]](#footnote-36)
5. While UNDP pledged to support UNOSSC at the same level as in previous years, the reviewer noted that the Policy and UN Coordination Unit and the Communications and Outreach Unit had been operating without sufficient staff under core resources and seemed to be smaller than all other units at the end of the strategic framework period. All of the personnel in those two units had temporary or fixed-term contracts under the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). It should be noted that UNOPS contracts were to be discontinued in 2016 and shifted to UNDP. Several respondents wanted to see a more transparent allocation of funds among the various units of UNOSSC. It is hoped that under the next strategic framework, a more balanced allocation of resources among the various units of UNOSSC would improve the productivity of the Office.
6. The four UNOSSC regional offices are included under output 1.3. These offices could become more prominent in coming years, since priority (c) in the Secretary-General’s comprehensive proposal (19/2, para. 24) refers specifically to the importance of deepening regional partnerships. In the UNOSSC structure, there are provisions for four regional offices, which currently report directly to the Deputy Director for Programme and Operations and provide support to country teams, focal points and national partners. While the regional offices had varying degrees of activity during the four-year evaluation period, it is expected that they will become more active in the lead-up to the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in 2019.
7. The Regional Office for Arab States, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), currently located in Istanbul, was very productive during the evaluation period. It was responsible for the Regional South-South Development Expo in Qatar in 2014 and produced a number of publications over the four-year period. In 2017, its publications included*: The Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (The Turkic Council): How a Regional Organization Uses South-South Cooperation to Promote Regional and Global Development*, South-South in Action series;[[37]](#footnote-37) [*South-South and Triangular Cooperation: Towards Sustainable Human Development in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States*](http://www.arab-ecis.unsouthsouth.org/2017/06/15/south-south-and-triangular-cooperation-towards-sustainable-human-development-in-europe-and-the-commonwealth-of-independent-states/) *–* *The Power of Knowledge-sharing*, a regional report;[[38]](#footnote-38) and *South-South and Triangular Cooperation: Towards Sustainable Human Development in the Arab States*.[[39]](#footnote-39) The Regional Office also published *Mapping South-South Cooperation Mechanisms and Solutions in the Arab States* in 2014 in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank and UNDP, with a similar mapping exercise carried out for Europe and the CIS in 2016; both publications are available from the mapping portal South-South World ([www.southsouthworld.org](http://www.southsouthworld.org)). In 2016, the Regional Office also issued a series on trends and opportunities in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation in specific countries: Tajikistan[[40]](#footnote-40) and Kyrgyzstan[[41]](#footnote-41) in 2015; and Azerbaijan,[[42]](#footnote-42) the Republic of Moldova[[43]](#footnote-43) and Somalia in 2016.[[44]](#footnote-44)
8. The functions of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific were carried out partly by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific in New York from 2014 to 2016 in cooperation with UNOSSC headquarters; the Coordinator of the Regional Office was based at headquarters until he returned to Bangkok in July 2017. While in New York, he continued to be responsible for the South-South focal points and a number of activities in the region. For example, he provided support to the High-level Meeting on “Financing for Development in the South and Technology Transfer” held in Dhaka, Bangladesh (May 2015), and the High-level Multi-stakeholder Strategy Forum held in Macao, China (August 2015), and convened the Eighth South-South Citizenry-based Development Academy on Building Urban Resilience: Risk Transfer and Insurance, at the All-India Disaster Mitigation Institute in Ahmedabad, Gujarat (January 2016). As part of the South-South Global Thinkers: The Global Coalition of Think Tank Networks for South-South Cooperation (South-South Global Thinkers initiative), a workshop titled “[South-South Investment for Sustainable Development Goals: Policy and Legal Environment in Asia](http://www.yingkeinternational.com/uncategorized/summit-of-south-south-investment-for-sustainable-development-goals-policy-and-legal-environment-in-asia)” was held at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Bangkok on 1 September 2017. The research agenda identified policy and legal issues that were enabling or hindering Southern countries in engaging in South-South cooperation within the Asian region. Over 130 participants from 18 countries attended the workshop.
9. The Regional Office continued to be responsible for managing the Republic of Korea Facility for Poverty Reduction through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Education, Science and Technology (Korean Facility), which supported a number of sustainable development projects, mainly in Asian countries. The Korean Facility is implemented as a separate entity under the legal framework of the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation (UNFSSC). It has its own governance structure but uses the Fund as an operational tool. Under the Facility, the Regional Office convened capacity-building workshops in Cambodia (June 2017) and Indonesia (September 2017). It also co-convened with UNDP a workshop on investment in Bangkok on 23 August 2017. The Facility is discussed in more detail later in the report.
10. The Regional Coordinator is now assisted by a programme assistant and two staff seconded by the Government of Thailand as part of its contribution to the South-South cooperation agenda. This is in line with General Assembly resolution 71/244 (para. 10) on additional support that United Nations system organizations and all States could provide to South-South and triangular cooperation, including “voluntary secondment of staff”. They are the first staff seconded by a government to a UNOSSC regional office. To date, the secondment has worked well. Thailand has been a good partner in piloting this programme. The reviewer observed that the secondment programme was an excellent way to involve partners in the work of the Office and provided much-needed staff assistance for both UNOSSC headquarters and the regional offices.
11. The Regional Office for Africa, now located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, provided support to the African Union in developing its partnership strategies in 2015 and 2016.[[45]](#footnote-45) The Coordinator of the Regional Office assisted with a youth employment initiative that led to the development of young entrepreneurs in Togo; their products were showcased at the GSSD Expo 2016.[[46]](#footnote-46) The Coordinator also produced and delivered analytical papers on democratization in Africa in 2016 and 2017[[47]](#footnote-47) and provided briefings on the informal economy to the deputy chair of the African Union Commission and the committee on the second high-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation to be held in 2019. Moreover, the Regional Office staff reviewed documents produced by the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa, such as those relating to the informal economy, methods of mapping South-South cooperation in Africa, and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP)-European Union Strategic Dialogue. Close collaboration among the UNDP Regional Service Centre, the Economic Commission for Africa and the UNOSSC Regional Office (all located in Addis Ababa) was considered important for upcoming regional consultations in preparation for the hhigh-level United igh-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation in 2019. The Regional Office was also involved in conceptualizing three capacity-building workshops in Africa on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development in 2017, while the Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific assisted in the implementation of those workshops. The reviewer observed that the Regional Office for Africa had a limited budget during the evaluation period and that its activities were not reflected on the UNOSSC website.
12. The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has yet to be created, and the post for its director was temporarily used by the Regional Office for Europe in Geneva for the period 2014-2016. The Regional Office for Europe had been the secretariat of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP), which was discontinued in mid-2017. WACAP had had a number of issue-oriented dialogues in 2014 and 2015 but its secretariat function was not in the strategic framework and that function was transferred to the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) in 2017. The Regional Office for Europe was then integrated into the Regional Office for Arab States, Europe and the CIS.
13. The reviewer felt that the regional offices could play a much greater role in outreach for South-South cooperation among Member States, United Nations organizations, the private sector and NGOs, especially with the consultations and preparations for the high-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation to be undertaken in 2018. The regional offices were then quite weak and needed support and resources from UNOSSC and partners within the regions. The reviewer considered that the work of the regional offices would become increasingly important in the run-up to the 2019 conference and that the regional teams needed to be more strategic, coherent and more aligned with the UNOSSC strategic framework, 2018-2021. It would be advantageous for them to work closely with the regional economic commissions, UNDP regional offices and other regional organizations. It would be useful for each regional office to prepare a two- or four-year work plan in consultation with UNOSSC headquarters that would fit into the budget available. After approval by UNOSSC headquarters, they would have a clear budget to work within and could also mobilize resources from regional partners. The reviewer noted that it was important to have active regional offices in Africa and Latin America, each with adequate staff and an adequate budget, during the period of the next strategic framework.

1. **Outcome 2. Institutional capacities of Member States, United Nations system organizations and other partners to effectively initiate, manage, coordinate and implement South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation are enhanced.**
2. The reviewer looked at UNOSSC performance with respect to the three outputs under outcome 2. This outcome is similar to priority (d) in the comprehensive proposal of the Secretary-General (SSC/19/2, para. 24), which stresses that the Office should become a robust knowledge hub on South-South and triangular cooperation.

**1. *Output 2.1 Development partners including Southern governments, policymakers,***

***practitioners and United Nations development system have access to high-quality, peer-***

***reviewed knowledge on South-South and triangular practices.***

1. During the first half of the period covered by the strategic framework, the GSSD Academy was responsible for UNOSSC knowledge management regarding South-South and triangular cooperation. The Academy came under the Division for Funds and Programme Management. Over the years, it produced 20 volumes of the series Sharing Innovative Experiences (SIE), which showcased 330 Southern development solutions up through 2014. Publications such as those volumes of SIE reflected a well-established niche that UNOSSC had created in terms of knowledge management, particularly in the documenting of Southern development solutions. Specific volumes of the SIE series had generated interest among participants who had attended related workshops, and that had led to follow-up projects and visibility. The effort to connect those publications to current international topics and conferences assisted the Office in appealing to a broader audience and expanding knowledge of South-South cooperation. While the Academy has been phased out, those knowledge management functions are now undertaken by the Knowledge and Advisory Services Unit, which comes within the purview of the Deputy Director for Programme and Operations. In 2016, 61 development solutions were documented in the volume *Good Practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development,*[[48]](#footnote-48) a joint publication with ILO and UNDP. That publication was well received by stakeholders. The Office is in the process of collecting new case studies and updating the compendium for release in 2018. It is anticipated that all United Nations agencies will contribute.
2. The functions of the Academy as a knowledge hub have also been supplanted by the South-South Global Thinkers initiative (discussed later in this report), and the SIE series has been superseded by a new series, South-South in Action (SSiA), with volumes produced independently by Member States and partner organizations but developed jointly with UNOSSC.
3. Through the SSiA series, which has become a flagship knowledge product of the Office, UNOSSC has begun to build a repository of best practices and case studies relating to South-South and triangular cooperation. Since the establishment of the series in 2017, six SSiA reports – two with Member States, four with intergovernmental organizations – have been completed and launched; another 16 are in the pipeline. In addition, discussions have been held with more than 40 potential partners who are interested in the series. SSiA is thus an important means through which UNOSSC can solidify partnerships and engage in advocacy. Topics covered in the first six volumes range from the Thailand sufficiency economy model, citizen-friendly public service innovations in Bangladesh, and examples of regional cooperation from the Turkic Council and the Union for the Mediterranean to bamboo and rattan as building materials and “fragile-to-fragile cooperation”. Each volume was created and written by a national government agency or an international association or organization and edited and published by UNOSSC. All of the volumes, which can be downloaded at [South-South in Action](https://www.unsouthsouth.org/library/publications/south-south-in-action-series/),[[49]](#footnote-49) showcase examples of South-South cooperation on the ground that can be replicated or adapted. The intention is to offer hands-on experiences and insights into what has and has not worked rather than providing analytical reports that could offer direction to policymakers. Since the reports are partner-led, focusing on partner-selected areas of interest, there is no set framework for who will partner and produce a report, the topics to be covered or the timeline. There are, however, guidelines for the content of each publication on the SSiA website. With respect to the analytical reports previously produced by the Office, such as *Southern Innovator,* they have not been produced in recent years owing to lack of funding. They may be revived, however, through the independent annual comprehensive report on South-South cooperation and the South-South Global Thinkers initiative. UNOSSC is making an effort to put in place a mechanism to ensure that production of such analytical reports starts up again.
4. The GSSD Academy also provided secretariat services to the China South-South Development Centre (SSDC), a partnership between the China International Centre for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE) and UNOSSC. SSDC is funded by the contribution of the Government of China to UNFSSC (discussed later in the report), and the SSDC secretariat, located in Beijing, provided technical support and financing for projects in a number of developing countries. The Centre, which was founded in 2009, promotes and facilitates South-South cooperation between China and other partners and provides small grants to developing countries to implement joint projects. It also hosted capacity-building forums on specific topics, such as renewable energy technologies and dairy technologies. It published the *China Development Report on South-South Cooperation* in 2015, which featured research on the South-South cooperation of China in trade, investment and foreign aid and an analysis of the challenges and solutions. The Centre organized two feasibility study tours in 2016: one to three South Pacific island countries and the other to three East African countries. The purpose was to explore the possibility of establishing small demonstration projects on solar energy, small hydro power, freshwater fisheries and bamboo industries as well as on the ecological protection of freshwater lakes. CICETE and the SSDC were also very active in promoting the GSSD Expos and SS-GATE.

1. In September 2015, CICETE, along with several United Nations agencies and WACAP, held a conference to launch the Maritime-Continental Silk Road Cities Alliance, an initiative that holds promise for cities along the Silk Road, including those in developing countries. The Silk Road Cities Alliance has been listed as a priority project by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of China. UNOSSC presented the Alliance at a side event at the GSSD Expo in Antalya, Turkey, in 2017. The SSDC is fully funded by partners, with UNOSSC serving as Fund Manager, providing quality assurance, and coordinating the various stakeholders. It should be noted that mobilizing resources for and launching innovative self-sustained South-South and triangular partnership initiatives constitute indicator 3.1.3 of output 3.1.
2. Four GSSD virtual sub-academies operated during the evaluation period but they were no longer managed by UNOSSC at the end of that period. They were: the Taxation for Development Institute; the South-South Citizenry-based Development Sub-Academy; the Creative Economy for Development Institute; and the South-South Hydrocarbon Capacity Development Institute. While those sub-academies had produced useful knowledge products in the past, outputs during the evaluation period were very limited. Most of the work of the Academy during that period was carried out by partners, has often been attributed to them and is accessible only on their websites. Some of the main partners included UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Ibero-American Secretariat (SEGIB).
3. The South-South Global Thinkers: The Global Coalition of Think Tank Networks for South-South Cooperation (South-South Global Thinkers initiative) (<https://www.ssc-globalthinkers.org>/) is a joint initiative by UNDP and UNOSSC to provide knowledge on South-South and triangular cooperation, especially that relating to the Sustainable Development Goals. **The First Steering Committee Meeting of the South-South Global Thinkers initiative** was held in conjunction with the GSSD Expo in Antalya in 2017. It brought together six networks comprising more than 200 think tanks. Since its establishment, the initiative has organized a forum on the policy and legal environment for South-South investment in Asia, resulting in the production of a scoping paper on this topic, and it is planning similar forums to be held in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean in 2018. In addition, the initiative will commission research from think-tank members in 12 priority areas in 2018. It is providing intellectual input that may have been provided by the Academy in earlier years, and it could act as a platform to produce analytical reports of interest to policymakers. The reviewer thought that incorporating the work of the Academy into the initiative was a positive development. UNDP and UNOSSC have supported the South-South Global Thinkers initiative; resources have come from governments, the private sector and civil society.
4. A **Global Thinkers Dialogue was convened on 31 January 2018 in New York** under the umbrella of the South-South Global Thinkers initiative.It is expected that the network will provide the evidence base for how South-South and triangular cooperation can accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, it will enable the networks to expand their spheres of influence. This initiative comes within the purview of the Deputy Director for Programme and Operations.
5. The Deputy Director for Programme and Operations is also responsible for programme teams, including those for Peacebuilding and the Climate and Sustainability Programme. Many countries of the South are supporting peacebuilding efforts of other developing countries. However, there is no framework to facilitate efforts of Southern partners in scaling up South-South cooperation for peacebuilding. United Nations departments and agencies have asked for a more coherent approach to jointly support South-South cooperation in peacebuilding. UNOSSC is working with partners to develop a framework to document knowledge and case studies, to set up a funding mechanism and to advocate for this agenda. A joint peacebuilding programme between UNOSSC and the Government of Colombia (Presidential Academy for International Cooperation, or APC) resulted in the publication of Experience-based Peacebuilding: Practices and Perspectives from Different Regions (2016).[[50]](#footnote-50) The book presents 15 experiences from Colombia and four international examples. Building on that work, UNOSSC launched a report titled Fragile-to-fragile Cooperation: Volunteerism, Cooperation and Solidarity at the GSSD Expo in November 2017.[[51]](#footnote-51) That report, which is part of the South-South in Action series, is the work of the Group of Seven Plus, a group of 20 countries in post-conflict or fragile situations. The Government of Colombia has contributed over $360,000 to this peacebuilding work through UNFSSC. An upcoming issue of South-South in Action will further showcase the work of Colombia in peacekeeping through South-South cooperation.
6. In July 2017, the Climate and Sustainability Programme was transferred from the Secretary-General’s Office. It falls within the purview of the Deputy Director for Programme and Operations. During the evaluation period, UNOSSC prepared the South-South Cooperation Action Plan, which is an integral part of the implementation of the Secretary-General’s United Nations system-wide Climate Change Engagement Strategy. The Action Plan aims to leverage the opportunities provided by South-South cooperation on climate towards the implementation of countries’ nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and UNOSSC in April 2016 launched the Southern Climate Partnership Incubator, with initial funding of $6 million from China. This initiative, with a staff of three, advises country-team networks on climate-related cooperation projects. In November 2017, UNOSSC and the South Centre issued a joint report titled “Climate Partnerships for a Sustainable Future,[[52]](#footnote-52) which had been commissioned by the United Nations Southern Climate Partnership Incubator. In early January 2018, UNOSSC and the Beijing Qiaonyu Foundation launched the QIAO United Action Plan on Climate Change and Conservation, pledging an initial investment of approximately $13.5 million between 2018 and 2023. This is a priority of the entire United Nations system and the 2030 Agenda, so it should give new vitality to the work of the Office.
7. For the period 2014-2017, one of the main activities under output 2.1 was the Web of Information for Development (WIDE) platform that powers rosters of experts. Through WIDE, the Office has been able to offer roster management services to boost and support the use of Southern experts and expertise by development partners, both national and multilateral. Through the online platform, partners from across the United Nations system and even some national development agencies have been able to create and manage their own individual rosters of experts on various subjects. In May 2016, UNDP and UNOSSC signed an agreement to establish WIDE as the official platform for talent management. Under this platform, UNOSSC staff encourage the use of Southern expertise. The rosters are built and managed by partners who commit to providing an equal opportunity to experts from the South. The rosters are used primarily by United Nations offices and have limited accessibility outside the United Nations system. For the evaluation period, there were 36 rosters of experts in over 25 areas of expertise. Of the 7,715 experts on the rosters, 62 per cent were from developing countries and 37 per cent were female. Some rosters had very few experts, the number depending in part on the area(s) of specialization. Some had moderate to low activity levels while others within the United Nations system were quite active (the Security Council, the Mediation Centre, UNDP Afghanistan and the Addis Ababa Regional Centre).
8. UNDP was the most active WIDE user; in particular, the various teams of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS) had a total of 10 active rosters, which provided either direct search-user access to UNDP country offices or referral service, such as for the Innovation roster, the Social and Environmental Standards roster and the HIV, Health and Development roster.
9. At the United Nations Secretariat, the three most active WIDE users were the Security Council Affairs Division, the Mediation Support Unit and the Field Personnel Division. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was also one of the most active users with its roster of Value Chain Experts. UNOSSC had also established a cost recovery strategy, and as of the time of the evaluation, it had recovered $62,000 from WIDE partners for its assistance.
10. In general, UNOSSC supports and facilitates the rosters but receives limited feedback on the number of Southern experts whom it has succeeded in promoting and engaging in South-South cooperation activities through WIDE. UNOSSC has been able to assist United Nations agencies and national organizations to develop their own rosters of South-South experts. During the period covered by the evaluation, many of the expert rosters were increasingly being managed by the partners who hosted them; thus many were delinked from the Office. WIDE provides a good example of how to support and build capacity among partner agencies.
11. Another important activity under output 2.1 is participation in capacity-building platforms where policymakers, government officials, United Nations development system officers and development practitioners can meet to exchange experiences and learn about successful approaches to South-South and triangular cooperation. For example, three peer-learning training courses on capacity development in the management of South-South and triangular cooperation were hosted by Brazil from 2013 to 2015. The courses were co-sponsored by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). After the training courses, 14 case studies were compiled in a report by UNOSSC and JICA and published in 2017.[[53]](#footnote-53) Three capacity-building workshops were held in Africa on South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development in 2017: in Benin for West Africa (February); Kenya for East Africa (May); and Mozambique for southern African countries (August). The Mozambique workshop was held in conjunction with the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) regional meeting. Many of the participants at such workshops are national focal points for South-South cooperation. While the UNOSSC regional offices assisted with the workshops, the main support came from UNOSSC headquarters and the host government.
12. Most recently, a workshop on the theme “Innovations in service delivery: The scope for South-South and triangular cooperation” was convened in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 9 to11 December 2017. The workshop built on the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Network on Public Service Innovation that had been launched at the GSSD Expo in November 2017. That Network aims to assist countries to achieve citizens’ demands for efficient public service delivery consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Other capacity-building workshops were held in conjunction with the GSSD Expos, and some were sponsored by the China SSDC and the Korean Facility.
13. Such workshops were considered to be very useful by the participants, especially the national focal points, many of whom were not familiar with the South-South cooperation concepts and modalities. They learned how to manage South-South cooperation and how to participate in South-South cooperation efforts with peers whom they met at the workshops. The 2016 publication titled *Good practices in South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Sustainable Development,* mentioned earlier, documented 61 development solutions that were exchanged at such workshops. As the concept of South-South cooperation becomes more widespread as a means to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, national partners will need adequate capacity to ensure accountability and proper measuring and monitoring of their South-South cooperation projects. Such workshops will need to reach a wider range of practitioners in the future.
14. Another unit that contributed to output 2.1 was the former Deputy Director’s office, which until 2016 was responsible for the Innovative and Strategic Initiatives Unit. That Unit managed two main projects: the South-South Energy Initiative (SSEI) and the Network for Economic Empowerment of Women of the South (NEEWS). The Office drafted a business model for SSEI and completed a draft statute outlining conditions under which SSEI should be organized. In September 2014, the President of Ghana chaired a meeting in New York of 36 Heads of State and Government from the South to establish SSEI and offered to host the Initiative in Ghana.[[54]](#footnote-54) SSEI is thus now being led by the President of Ghana. With regard to NEEWS, the network was introduced to the Arab States region at the regional Expo held in Qatar in February 2014 and was established in Latin America and the Caribbean in November 2014 at a forum held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Since the two main initiatives of the former Deputy Director’s office had been assumed by other entities, the functions of the Innovative and Strategic Initiatives Unit were marginalized and the Unit was phased out.

**2. *Output 2.2 Southern partners and United Nations system organizations have access to***

***mechanisms/platforms to showcase solutions and forge partnerships to scale up their***

***successful development solutions.***

1. The Office of the Director provided overall coordination of the GSSD Expos and guidance to regional SSD Expos, which were the main venues for showcasing sustainable development solutions. However, all the units in UNOSSC, including the regional offices, contributed their expertise and raised resources for the Expos. Under the reorganization of the Office in 2017, the new Deputy Director for Programme and Operations was tasked with overseeing the Expos although almost all Office staff had contributed to each one. The Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships was tasked with oversight of political processes undertaken during the Expos, including the United Nations inter-agency meetings and the Directors General Forums. The seventh GSSD Expo was held in Washington, D.C. (hosted by the Organization of American States) in November 2014, and parallel meetings of the Directors General for Development Cooperation and the inter-agency focal points for South-South cooperation were held in conjunction with the Expo. The GSSD Expos were held annually from 2008 to 2014 and featured sponsorship and active participation by more than 25 United Nations organizations, over 100 Member States and many private-sector and civil society organizations. A Regional South-South Development Expo was held in Qatar in February 2014 and drew a global audience. However, it had been difficult to negotiate the details of financing and host facilities for those events, and no global Expo was held in 2015.
2. The Office of the Director was also responsible for two meetings that were intended to provide inputs to the post-2015 development agenda. A high-level meeting on the theme of “South-South and triangular cooperation in the post-2015 development agenda: Financing for development in the South and technology transfer” was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in May 2015, and the High-level Multi-stakeholder Strategy Forum was held in Macao, China, in August 2015. The reviewer noted that, while both meetings generated a number of good ideas, particularly with regard to financing South-South cooperation, financial commitments were not made and the future of the Expos was not assured. The reviewer also noted that the funds used for those two meetings had been questioned by the auditor and that better financial oversight was needed for all such activities.
3. The global Expos continued in 2016 and 2017. A new development during the evaluation period was that Expos were organized in partnership with Member States. In 2016, the Expo was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 October to 3 November, on the theme “Exchanging innovations toward achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. In Dubai, UNDP launched its new solutions platform SSMart for Sustainable Development Goals. That platform drew on some of the lessons from SS-GATE, which is currently managed by a national institute in Shanghai, China. SS-GATE is discussed later in this report.
4. The GSSD Expo 2017 was held in Antalya, Turkey, from 27 to 30 November on the theme “South-South cooperation in the era of economic, social and environmental transformation: Road to the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action”. From interviews with participants, the reviewer concluded that the Expo went very well. It included: three Leadership Round Tables; a Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation (the DG Forum 2017); a meeting of inter-agency United Nations focal points; thematic solutions forums; and regional capacity development workshops. Many of the discussions related to efforts to institutionalize South-South and triangular cooperation and the preparations for the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in 2019. The UNOSSC website listed 73 development solutions posted since 2016. In 2017, an innovation at the Expo was the “Wall of Ideas”, where institutional and individual partners could indicate their interest in nine specific initiatives. Governments or private-sector entities were also able to express their interest through thematic sessions at the Expo. The Expo provides space for partners to engage with one another through the solutions presented; however, the Office is not responsible for follow-up to such partnership meetings. One agency respondent observed that national laws have sometimes been a barrier to engaging with foreign entities.

1. Quite a few respondents noted that the Expos were a very important global platform for listening to voices of practitioners of South-South and triangular cooperation. While some previous evaluations had noted limited follow-up to such events, there is some evidence to the contrary. An example of positive follow-up to a development solution presented at the 2016 GSSD Expo is the Access to Information initiative of the Government of Bangladesh that aims to improve their public services and allow citizens to have faster access to information and services. With UNOSSC facilitation, the South-South and Triangular Network on Public Service Innovations was created jointly with partners as a platform through which governments can learn from one another, exchange best practices and improve their service delivery. The Network initiative, which was presented at the 2017 Expo, will draw on innovations from the SSiA volume *Citizen-friendly Public Service Innovation in Bangladesh*. Moreover, a GSSD Expo Advisory Committee was created in 2017 to assist the Office to showcase successful development solutions and initiatives created by institutions of countries of the global South. That may address some observations about lack of accountability for Expo expenditures during the first two years of the strategic framework.

**3. *Output 2.3 Southern partners have access to a sustainable and cost-effective South-South***

***and triangular cooperation technology transactional platform***

1. The UNOSSC Development Solutions and Technology Exchange Unit had been responsible for facilitating the identification, showcasing and scaling up of South-South and triangular cooperation development solutions for interested parties. Those activities were carried out through the SS-GATE programme, a global platform comprising an online and on-the-ground operational network. In 2014, SS-GATE was actively promoted at three major United Nations high-level conferences, which had not been anticipated in the strategic framework: (a) the Ministerial Conference on New Partnerships for Productive Capacity‑building in the Least Developed Countries, Cotonou, Benin (July); (b) the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, Apia, Samoa (September); and (c) the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, Vienna, Austria (November). At the meetings at Cotonou and Apia, the Development Solutions and Technology Exchange Unit partnered with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to launch two separate technology transfer facilities: one for small island developing States and one for landlocked developing countries.
2. As of 2017, the SS-GATE network comprised 50 country centres in 40 countries. UNOSSC, through SS-GATE, had facilitated the matchmaking of solution seekers and providers and exchanges of development solutions, and had provided space for in-person matching at regional and global Expos and at other high-level meetings. The platform actively participated in and supported the Expos in Washington, D.C., and Qatar, but by 2017, much of its work had been transferred to the SS-GATE centre in Shanghai. At the Expos in 2016 and 2017, UNDP presented its SSMart platform, which drew on the matching work of SS-GATE.
3. The reviewer was informed that, while the achievements of the SS-GATE platform under the strategic framework had decreased, the targets in the framework were met. The achievements were lower than expected owing to management transitions at both the SS-GATE Global Secretariat, based in Shanghai, China, and at UNOSSC as well as to budget reductions throughout the evaluation period. Owing to the decision to phase out support to the SS-GATE programme and transition it into support for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (or to SSMart), some of the targets in the framework (e.g., increasing the number of country centres to 70) were not met.
4. In the period 2016-2017, 73 new GSSD Expo solutions were added to the website <http://www.esupp.unsouthsouth.org/gssd-expo-solutions/>. The reviewer observed that many of the solutions showcased at past Expos and on the website had been offered by a limited number of countries (such as China and Brazil) and United Nations agencies. In addition, the SS-GATE Global Secretariat had a separate SS-GATE website. While the number of exchanges transacted during the period 2014-2017 was small, it should be noted that technology transfer is a long, complicated process involving multiple actors. Moreover, transactions and scaling up of solutions were dependent on the availability of funding.
5. The Development Solutions and Technology Exchange Unit supported the SS-GATE Global Secretariat in Shanghai as a core part of the three-in-one multilateral support architecture. It provided overall policy and strategic guidance and assistance with partnership-building as well as models of technology transfer through case studies to the SS-GATE Global Secretariat but did not handle day-to-day operations. The Unit had represented UNOSSC on the secretariat of the United Nations Inter-agency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation, part of the technology facilitation mechanism (TFM) included in target 17.6 of Sustainable Development Goal 17.[[55]](#footnote-55) It would be very useful to have the lessons and experiences gained from the SS-GATE programme used to inform and develop the online platform that is a core component of the TFM.
6. The reviewer confirmed that most of the activities under outcome 2 of the strategic framework had been developed under the three-in-one multilateral South-South support architecture, which had been phased out by the end of the strategic framework period. While that architecture had served to publicize and showcase South-South cooperation solutions from 2009 to 2016, the reviewer had noted in the midterm review that it might be time to revamp its structure and explore new opportunities to engage Member States and diverse partners in South-South cooperation dialogues and exchanges. Also, as mentioned earlier, the UNDP SSMart has expanded some of the ideas of SS-GATE and made it somewhat easier to use.
7. **Outcome 3. Innovative South-South, triangular and public-private partnerships and funding modalities marshal financial and in-kind resources that support the scaling up of the development impact of Southern solutions in meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.**

**1. *Output 3.1 Innovative South-South, triangular and public-private partnership modalities***

***established and strengthened to secure in-kind and financial resources for supporting the***

***scaling up of the development impact of South-South and triangular cooperation.***

1. Under outcome 3, there is only one output (3.1), which covers two distinct areas of work that are handled by different units in the Office. The first area of work, innovative funding modalities, is part of the funds management function undertaken by the Programme Support Unit under the Deputy Director for Programme and Operations. That function is similar to priority (f) in the Secretary-General’s comprehensive proposal (document SSC/19/2, para. 24), which relates to mobilizing resources and managing funds. At the same time, the Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships also contributes to overseeing the management of financial resources assigned to UNOSSC, including core, UNFSSC, PGTF and the IBSA Fund. It is not clear how the funds management functions are divided between the two Deputy Directors but it seems that the former is responsible for day-to-day management of projects under the funds and the latter is responsible for oversight over all financial resources, core and non-core. The second area of work, South-South, triangular and public-private partnerships, is to be managed by the Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships. Under the first three years of the strategic framework, those two functions were handled by the Division for Funds and Programme Management and the Division for Partnerships and Triangular Cooperation, respectively. Again, the Deputy Director for Programme and Operations was also involved in building partnerships through funds management and other operational areas.
2. The reviewer assessed the performance of UNOSSC against output 3.1 in terms of those two different functions.

***Funds management***

1. The Division for Funds and Programme Management and its successor, the Programme Support Unit, functioned as the fund manager for three funds: UNFSSC; the IBSA Fund; and PGTF. An additional fund, the India-UN Development Partnership Fund (India Fund), was established in 2017, with initial funding of $5 million. For accounting purposes, it is included under UNFSSC. Table 1 shows contributions to the three funds by donors during the period from January 2014 through September 2017.
2. UNFSSC, an important United Nations trust fund for promoting and supporting South-South and triangular cooperation, has been included in the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities since 2005. In the period 2009-2017, it received over $29.5 million in contributions from 33 Member States and 14 partners. Those contributors represented a broad and diverse range of partners. Up until the end of 2016, the largest share of resources (64 per cent) was provided by China (including individual municipalities) to support the SSDC in Beijing and other projects and by the Republic of Korea (32 per cent) towards the Korean Facility. The third-largest donor (5 per cent) was the G-77, which pooled small contributions from many developing countries to support the work of the UNOSSC Policy and UN Coordination Unit. Contributions by Member States accounted for 93 per cent of the resources, while the remaining 7 per cent were contributed by United Nations agencies, funds, banks, foundations and NGOs.

**Table 1. Contributions to non-core resources, January 2014-September 2017**

**(in thousands of dollars)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fund/  Cost-sharing | Non-core resources mobilized, 2014-2016 | % of total non-core resources mobilized, 2014-2016 | Non-core resources mobilized,  2017  (preliminary) | % of total  non-core  resources mobilized, 2017 (preliminary) | Total non-core resource mobilized, 2014-2017 | % of total non-core resources mobilized, 2014-2017 | Outcome |
| UNFSSC | 9,028 | 52.1 | 8,520 | 78.6 | 17,548 | 62.3 | 2 and 3 |
| IBSA | 5,905 | 34.1 | 2,107 | 19.4 | 8,012 | 28.5 | 3 |
| PGTF | 2,221 | 12.8 | 125 | 1.2 | 2,346 | 8.3 | 3 |
| Cost-sharing | 182 | 1.0 | 82 | 0.8 | 264 | 0.9 | 2 |
| **Total** | **17,336** | **100.0** | **10,834** | **100.0** | **28,170** | **100.0** |  |

1. In 2016, a total of $4.47 million was contributed by eight Member States (the contributions of China included several different municipalities and other donors) and three other entities. That was a large increase over the previous year. The majority of resources (91 per cent) came from two countries: China (76 per cent) and the Republic of Korea (15 per cent). That overall trend changed in 2017 when India contributed $5 million to UNFSSC under its India-UN Development Partnership Fund and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) contributed $1.04 million. Those new large donors almost doubled annual contributions to the Fund from 2016 to 2017. Thus, the total contributions in 2017 amounted to $8.52 million,[[56]](#footnote-56) of which 59 per cent came from India, 16 per cent from China and 12 per cent from IFAD. Cumulative totals were altered by that large infusion from India. Thus, the three main contributors over the course of UNFSSC since 2009 are now China, 37 per cent; the Republic of Korea, 21 per cent; and India, 17 per cent.
2. Contributions by all the small and large donors to UNFSSC are made in various forms: they can be open or earmarked for specific South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives agreed upon between a contributing country and the Office. In addition to the two main facilities (the SSDC and the Korean Facility), UNFSSC is used to support a wide range of projects, including capacity-building for the G-77, as well as GSSD Expos, WIDE rosters, SS-GATE exchanges and community-based disaster risk management centres. UNOSSC has extended its base of donors and providers of development cooperation beyond China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the IBSA countries. Many of the key participants in South-South cooperation are now both providers and receivers. For example, in addition to the largest donors, the following countries contributed over $20,000 each to UNFSSC: Argentina, Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Suriname, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and others.
3. Total UNFSSC non-core resources disbursed over the period 2014-2017 totalled $10.5 million, as seen in table 2.

**Table 2. Disbursements of non-core resources, January 2014-September 2017**

**(in thousands of dollars)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fund | Non-core resources disbursed, 2014-2016 | % of total non-core resources disbursed, 2014-2016 | Non-core resources disbursed,  2017  (preliminary) | % of total non-core  resources disbursed, 2017  (preliminary) | Total  non-core resources disbursed, 2014-2017 | % of total non-core resources disbursed, 2014-2017 |
| UNFSSC | 7,554 | 43.8 | 2,977 | 42.2 | 10,531 | 43.3 |
| IBSA | 8,317 | 48.2 | 3,634 | 51.6 | 11,951 | 49.2 |
| PGTF | 1,381 | 8.0 | 435 | 6.2 | 1,816 | 7.5 |
| **Total** | **17,252** | **100.0** | **7,046** | **100.0** | **24,298** | **100.0** |

1. The reviewer noted that the Korean Facility has been managed separately from UNFSSC under the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. As part of its resource mobilization efforts in phase 1, the Office established an institutional agreement with the Republic of Korea for $5 million in triangular cooperation over the period 2010-2014. For phase 2 (2016-2020), the Republic of Korea has agreed to provide an additional $4 million, although only $676,000 was allocated in 2016 and $680,700 in 2017. The country has indicated that the full amount will be paid by the end of 2019.[[57]](#footnote-57) The Facility is implemented with other United Nations agencies and institutions in developing countries. While in phase 1 the emphasis was on knowledge products relating to science, technology and innovation,[[58]](#footnote-58) phase 2 is focused more on community and leadership development. Target countries in the earlier period included countries in Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America, while in phase 2, the target countries include Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia.[[59]](#footnote-59) Training programmes are part of every project. One involved water professionals from Southeast Asia and Africa exchanging experiences and expertise on water-quality monitoring and management. Another focused on training of trainers to assist women to gain access to information and communications technology in Latin America. The Regional Office approves the work plans, participates in monitoring missions, reviews quarterly and annual progress reports, and authorizes disbursements. In addition, it facilitates the work of the institutions in the Republic of Korea and supports the recipient countries and their institutions to develop and achieve a common vision.
2. The India-UN Development Partnership Fund is a dedicated facility within UNFSSC established in 2017. It is supported and led by the Government of India, managed by UNOSSC and implemented in collaboration with the United Nations system. The Fund supports Southern-owned and -led, demand-driven, and transformational sustainable development projects across the developing world, with a focus on least developed countries and small island developing States. United Nations agencies will implement the Fund projects in close collaboration with partnering governments. Speaking at the November 2017 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, India announced its decision to significantly scale up its contribution to the Fund through a multi-year contribution of $100 million. Such a partnership, led and financed by one developing country to help other countries of the South, gives new vitality to the realization of the vast potential of South-South cooperation.
3. In addition to the non-core funding from UNFSSC, UNOSSC manages two special funds: the IBSA Fund and PGTF. The projects under the IBSA Fund, established in 2004, are facilitated by the Office but decided by the IBSA Board of Directors, which is comprised of Ambassadors of the IBSA countries to the United Nations. The Office facilitates the work of the IBSA Fund through a multi-stakeholder approach that includes the Board of Directors and country teams. The Board of Directors meets once every three months, with the chairmanship rotating annually among the three provider countries. Up until 2017, the donors had contributed a total of $35 million to the Fund, which had implemented 27 projects in 21 partner countries for a total of $22 million in expenditures.
4. During the evaluation period, the IBSA Fund mobilized $8.01 million but disbursed $11.95 million worth of project funds. The lower mobilization can be explained by the delay in contributions from Brazil because of the lack of a legal agreement. That agreement has been signed and Brazil is expected to catch up on its contributions in 2018. In general, the IBSA Fund should disburse funds in line with the amount that it mobilizes. UNOSSC provides updates on projects, financials and status on the ground to the Board of Directors meetings, and the Board expresses its satisfaction with the support that the Office provides. As a result, statements of support to both IBSA and UNOSSC have been made at key United Nations forums, such as the UNDP Executive Board and the General Assembly.[[60]](#footnote-60)
5. UNOSSC provides support to implement and report on replicable and scalable IBSA Fund projects that can be disseminated to interested countries of the South as examples of best practices in fighting poverty and hunger. As the Fund secretariat, UNOSSC supports needs-matching exercises to identify institutions and experts from the South that can provide programme support for knowledge-sharing and capacity-building. UNOSSC has also promoted the visibility of the results of the IBSA Fund: over 14 exhibitions have been held in conjunction with global events relevant to the South, such as the annual GSSD Expos and other global and regional conferences. IBSA annual reports, portfolio overviews and other relevant publications such as photo books, brochures and fliers were produced for those events.[[61]](#footnote-61) That is a good example of how outreach and communications have been successful: all of that information was communicated through the website (<http://www.ibsa-trilateral.org/>).
6. There is a wide variety of medium-sized and small projects under the IBSA Fund, all of which are demand-driven. Each of the three countries contributes about $1 million per year, although the contributions of Brazil were delayed in 2016 and 2017, and the Fund spends up to around $1.6 million per project over several years. The Fund disburses a total of about $3 million per year on the various projects. It provides support costs to the Programme Support Unit for funds management. A strategic review of the IBSA Fund was requested by the IBSA focal points at a meeting on 19 September 2017. The resulting draft policy note “suggests approaches to strengthen the IBSA Fund and a road-map for the next phase of a re-energized and scaled-up alliance.” [[62]](#footnote-62)
7. Thematic areas of the IBSA Fund projects include poverty, hunger, health, livelihoods, safe drinking water and other areas to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. The projects have a South-South focus and a gender-sensitive approach. Most projects involve national or regional training programmes. The IBSA projects are considered the essence of South-South cooperation: they provide a partnership model that supports cooperation among developing countries through institutions and expertise from the South. IBSA is considered an incubator for South-South cooperation policy and practice, including the principles that should guide South-South cooperation projects, the application of such principles and modalities for implementation.
8. In general, the IBSA Fund projects were implemented by UNDP, with support from UNOSSC and local partners. Most of the countries that receive project funding are least developed countries or small island developing States. Ongoing projects in 2017 included two in the State of Palestine, and one each in Guyana, Haiti, Saint Lucia, Sudan, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. Completed projects have been funded in countries such as Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Sierra Leone, the State of Palestine and Viet Nam. They range from promoting food security to health, education, capacity-building, rural electrification, water and sanitation, and many more. New projects in Cambodia, the Comoros and Fiji were approved in 2017, focusing on post-disaster reconstruction and development for countries in need of support.[[63]](#footnote-63)

1. Management of the IBSA Fundbuilds on the previous experience of UNOSSC in its support to PGTF, which was established in 1983 on behalf of the G-77. PGTF, with a core capital of $8 million, provides financial support to cooperative projects carried out by three or more developing-country members of the G-77. The administration of PGTF resources is highly conservative, using only interest earned as the funds for supporting projects (plus voluntary contributions), while the core capital is to be kept intact. Accounting and administration of the monies are carried out by UNOSSC according to UNDP-established rules and procedures. A Committee of Experts, comprising six elected experts from G-77 countries, meets annually to examine the project proposals. Following the recommendation of the Committee, the projects are approved by the Annual Ministerial Meeting of the G-77. Disbursement of funds and administrative follow-up are carried out by UNDP.
2. From 1986 to 2016, PGTF provided a total of $13.7 million to 291 projects in 143 developing countries.[[64]](#footnote-64) Some results of the projects can be accessed at the G-77 website [www.g77.org](http://www.g77.org) although they do not go beyond 2015. Total contributions to PGTF during the evaluation period were $2.35 million, while disbursements amounted to $1.82 million over the same period. PGTF contributes about $35,000 per project to initiatives with matching, or greater, contributions from the requesting institutions. The collaborative projects are implemented mostly by national institutions and are focused on joint research, workshops, publications, development of common standards and educational activities. PGTF activities cover topics such as food and agriculture, health and trade. A South-South in Action publication focusing on achievements and lessons learned through the Fund will be released in early 2018.
3. The IBSA Fund and PGTF are used to support targeted development projects in countries of the South. Those projects reflect the core principles of South-South cooperation and are much appreciated by the partners. UNOSSC fulfilled its mandate to manage those funds and support the projects associated with them. Those activities were considered central to the work of the Office. It should be noted that UNOSSC may supervise the implementing institutions through its regional offices, as has been the case in the Asia and the Pacific region. That regional office has staff seconded from the Government of Thailand to assist with managing the Korean Facility.

***South-South and triangular partnerships***

1. South-South and triangular partnership initiatives had been managed under the Division for Partnerships and Triangular Cooperation but are currently within the purview of the Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships. In support of managing those initiatives, Brazil hosted peer-learning training courses on capacity development in the management of South-South and triangular cooperation. The three courses (from 2013 to 2015) were co-sponsored by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). After the training courses, several concrete results were reported by the participants, and 14 case studies were compiled in a report by UNOSSC and JICA published in 2017.[[65]](#footnote-65)
2. JICA has been one of the biggest supporters of the work of the Office and a key triangular cooperation partner over the years. JICA and UNOSSC jointly launched the High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation during the first GSSD Expo in 2008. Since then, the Directors General Forum has been held nine times as an integral part of the GSSD Expo. During the reporting period, a Forum was held in Washington, D.C., in November 2014, co-organized by JICA and UNOSSC and hosted by the Organization of American States. A Regional High-level Forum of Directors General for Development Cooperation, also co-organized by JICA and UNOSSC, was held in Qatar during the Regional SSD Expo in February 2015 and attended by 130 participants. During the Regional SSD Expo, the Office also arranged bilateral meetings for the participants to strengthen partnerships. Also in 2015, the Directors General were invited to the High-level Multi-stakeholder Strategy Forum held in Macao, China.
3. The eighth Directors General Forum was held in conjunction with GSSD Expo 2016 in Dubai in November 2016. It was co-organized by UNOSSC and JICA and hosted by the Zayed International Foundation for the Environment. The theme of the 2016 Forum was “Strengthening policy and management for the implementation of South-South and triangular cooperation towards the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The Forum brought together 150 people from 34 countries, 30 intergovernmental and United Nations entities, and nine private- and public-sector organizations. Fifteen case studies were presented and included in the report of the meeting.[[66]](#footnote-66)
4. The ninth Directors General Forum, co-organized again by UNOSSC and JICA and hosted by the Government of Turkey, was held in conjunction with the GSSD Expo in Antalya in November 2017. The theme of that Forum was “Voices of practitioners of South-South and triangular cooperation and the road towards the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40)”. The 2017 Forum brought together 137 people from 47 countries, 10 intergovernmental and international organizations, and eight other entities. It is considered important for these development practitioners to meet face to face and discuss their experiences with South-South and triangular cooperation, and JICA has been a crucial partner in making that possible. The Directors General will soon be able to communicate with one another via the Member States Portal provided on the [www.unsouthsouth.org](http://www.unsouthsouth.org/) Web portal.
5. The new type of partnership initiated by the Governments of Honduras and Panama provided a means by which the United Nations agencies could “deliver as one”. The innovative partnership agreements brought together the United Nations country teams, the national government and UNOSSC to promote and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through expanded South-South and triangular cooperation. As suggested earlier, UNOSSC, possibly through its regional offices, should build on such innovative experiences and provide advisory services on national-level integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into UNDAFs and other national policies.
6. The Communications and Outreach Unit, which falls within the purview of the Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships, upgraded the website to a Web portal in mid-2017. As [www.unsouthsouth.org](http://www.unsouthsouth.org), it is now independent from UNDP and includes the United Nations System Portal as well as the Member States Portal. The United Nations System Portal linked to the website is currently being utilized by 10 United Nations agencies to share a wealth of information on South-South activities within their respective focus areas. The online space for Directors General and South-South cooperation focal points is currently under construction, having been redesigned to make it more interactive and user-friendly. The Web portal was launched as part of a communications strategy that involves conventional communication techniques, social media and multimedia to engage its constituents.
7. The Member States Portal is to be implemented for the first group of about 12 interested countries in the first quarter of 2018. In the meantime, a new United Nations South-South Facebook Group enables partners to interact in real time. Coinciding with the launch of the new Web portal, an electronic newsletter has been circulated on a monthly basis highlighting the work of UNOSSC and United Nations agency and external partners in South-South cooperation. The launch of the new Web portal and the use of emerging tools, including social media channels and multimedia, have engaged UNOSSC staff and United Nations agency and external partners in outreach efforts, contributing to all three outcomes of the framework.
8. The reviewer noted that priority (e) in the Secretary-General’s comprehensive proposal (document SSC/19/2, para. 22) was missing from the UNOSSC strategic framework, 2014-2017. Priority (e) stresses that “outreach, advocacy and strategic communication on issues of critical importance to South-South solidarity, global integration and international collective action” should be expanded. Advocacy during the period covered by the evaluation was, however, limited to events such as the global Expos and the annual United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation on 12 September. Although there is a proposed unit for Strategic Communications and Outreach under the realignment recommendations, there is no specific mention of advocacy. That may be an area where the Office needs to place more resources. Since outreach, advocacy and communications are essential to build partnerships, perhaps the Office could modify the proposal and create a Communications, Outreach and Advocacy Unit.
9. In that regard, several of the persons interviewed observed that advocacy and outreach by UNOSSC during the first part of the evaluation period had been inadequate but that it had improved during the last year of that period (2017). In order to improve its services, the proposed unit would need to be strengthened from its current level of two staff members. That should be taken into account as resources become available for staff recruitment.

**Part III. Resource allocation**

1. In the strategic framework, core and non-core resources are allocated among the three outcomes as percentages of the total, as follows: outcome 1, 35 per cent; outcome 2, 40 per cent; and outcome 3, 25 per cent. Non-core resources are allocated as follows: outcome 1, 10 per cent; outcome 2, 20 per cent; and outcome 3, 70 per cent. The projected budget for the four-year period of the strategic framework was $14 million in core resources (see table 3) and $20 million in non-core resources. While the projection for core resources was accurate, the non-core resources mobilized over the period amounted to over $28 million (see table 1). The allocation of expenditures is outlined in table 3.

**Table 3. Allocation of core resources and actual expenditures by UNOSSC, 2014-2017,**

**by strategic framework outcome (in dollars)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Out-come | Core resources  allocated in 2014-2017 strategic framework | % of total core resources allocated, 2014-2017, by outcome | Total actual expendi-tures,  2014-2015,  by outcome | % of total actual expendi-  tures,  2014-  2015, by outcome | Total actual expendi-tures,  2016-2017,  by outcome | % of total actual expendi-tures, 2016-2017, by outcome | Total actual expendi-tures,  2014-  2017,  by outcome | % of total actual expendi-tures,  2014-2017,  by outcome |
| 1 | 4,900,000 | 35 | 1,991,277 | 29.2 | 2,708,070 | 38.7 | 4,699,347 | 34.0 |
| 2 | 5,600,000 | 40 | 3,132,289 | 45.9 | 2,511,328 | 35.9 | 5,643,617 | 40.8 |
| 3 | 3,500,000 | 25 | 1,697,803 | 24.9 | 1,781,130 | 25.4 | 3,478,933 | 25.2 |
| **Total** | **14,000,000** | **100** | **6,821,369** | **100.0** | **7,000,528** | **100.0** | **13,821,897** | **100.0** |

1. In addition to the core and non-core resources, UNDP supports the Office through an institutional budget allocation of staff positions rather than of funds. For example, in 2016, institutional budget resources accounted for the posts of Director, Deputy Director, Regional Coordinators and Chiefs of the main divisions. The value of those UNDP-funded posts was $2.2 million in 2016. Other core and non-core resources put the total staff costs in 2016 at about $5 million. Under the UNDP integrated resources plan and integrated budget estimates,[[67]](#footnote-67) UNDP has committed a total of $26.2 million to UNOSSC for 2018-2021: $14 million under the programmatic budget (development effectiveness line) and $12.2 million under the institutional budget line.
2. Leaving aside the institutional budget contribution for the four-year period under evaluation, the reviewer first looked at core resources of $14 million and compared allocations to actual expenditures among the three outcomes. Table 3 shows the proposed budget allocations compared to the actual expenditures under each outcome. While expenditures have been aggregated for the period, it should be noted that resources allocated for 2014 were higher than those for 2015 ($3,800,000 and $3,200,000, respectively). Resources allocated for 2016 and 2017 were $3.5 million each year.
3. The reviewer noted that table 3 indicates that the Policy and UN Coordination Unit (now under the Policy and Strategic Partnerships Division), which was to deliver most of the outputs under outcome 1, was to be allocated 35 per cent of core resources. Outcome 1 included support to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and the G-77. The Policy and Strategic Partnerships Division depends almost entirely on core resources to deliver its outputs, so it is important that it receive sufficient resources to deliver the work of the Office projected for the next two years, including the United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South cooperation, preparations for the High-level United Nations Conference in 2019 and support to the High-level Committee in 2019. It should also be noted that the percentage of resources allocated to the Policy and UN Coordination Unit rose to 39 per cent of core resources in 2016-2017 compared to only 29 per cent in 2014-2015. Thus, resource distribution was more in line with projections at the end of the period of the final evaluation: outcome 1 accounted for 34 per cent of total core resources expended over the four-year period, which is quite close to the original allocation. However, it is not clear why that 2016-2017 increase occurred since that Unit still seemed to be lacking resources for staff and publications.
4. At the same time, expenditures under outcome 3 were almost on target for core resources throughout the period. The Programme Support Unit and the Communications and Outreach Unit, which were responsible for most of the deliverables under outcome 3, expended 25 per cent of the total core resources compared to the allocation of 25 per cent to that outcome: there was only a small difference in the dollar amounts for the four-year period. The activities and programmes under outcome 3 were much more heavily dependent on non-core resources than were activities under outcome 1, so the reviewer concluded that those two units appeared to have been adequately funded.
5. With regard to outcome 2, a larger proportion of core funding than was envisaged in the strategic framework went to outcome 2 in the first two years. That outcome covered the Expos, SS-GATE and the GSSD Academy, and that group of activities was supposed to receive 40 per cent of the core budget but it accounted for about 46 per cent of actual expenditures in 2014-2015. The reviewer found that some of the activities under that outcome in 2014-2015, such as SS-GATE and technology matchmaking, had been carried out by partners and that support for such activities could be reduced or phased out. That, in fact, was done during the last two years of the strategic framework. Thus, for those two years, outcome 2 accounted for about 36 per cent of total expenditures, bringing it more in line with the allocation. It seemed appropriate to allocate a sufficient proportion of core budget resources at New York headquarters to activities such as policy and strategic guidance, partnership-building and identification of case studies for promotion and advocacy. Such an alignment of resources might require a redistribution of core posts, however.
6. Furthermore, the reviewer took note of the large allocations that had been dedicated to the GSSD Expos and SS-GATE over the first two years of the evaluation. Expenditures on the global and regional Expos accounted for 20.7 per cent of total core expenditures during 2014 and 2015 ($1.41 million) and SS-GATE accounted for 18.2 per cent of total core expenditures ($1.24 million). The large expenditures under outcome 2 could be explained by the additional meetings that had not been anticipated under the strategic framework, including those launching technology transfer facilities in Benin (July 2014) and Samoa (September 2014), and the Multi-stakeholder Strategy Forum in Macao, China, in August 2015. The reviewer noted that it might be better to finance such add-on activities from non-core resources. In 2016-2017, the spending under outcome 2 was more in line with projections and very little was spent on the Expos from core resources. The Expos in 2016 and 2017 were almost entirely financed by non-core or in-kind resources, and the percentage of core resources spent on outcome 2 fell from 45.9 per cent in the first two years of the framework to 35.9 per cent in the last two years. At the same time, the percentage spent on outcome 1 rose from 29.2 per cent in the first two years to 38.7 per cent in the last two years. Thus, in the last two years of the strategic framework, budget allocations and expenditures were in line with allocations in the strategic framework.
7. Regarding non-core resources, which are mobilized from partners and contributed for a purpose (94 per cent earmarked), the preliminary figures for contributions through September 2017 (see table 1) show that UNFSSC had accounted for 52 per cent of the total from 2014-2016 and that that number rose dramatically to 62 per cent in 2017. The total of non-core resources contributed up until September 2017 was over $28 million, compared to the projection for the four-year period of $20 million. Such numbers were considered beyond expectations and an indicator that donors considered the funds a sound investment:

* The UNFSSC and IBSA trust funds are the most important sources of contributions to non-core funding, amounting to $25.6 million out of total non-core resources mobilized of $28.2 million through September 2017 (91 per cent). Most of those contributions went to outcome 3 (aside from a small contribution from the G-77 that went to outcome 1).
* Cost-sharing from developed countries and United Nations agencies had become a very small percentage of total non-core resources (less than 1 per cent), mainly as contributions to the Expos under outcome 2.
* PGTF funds represented a capital endowment or were mobilized through voluntary contributions and accounted for about 8 per cent of total contributions.

1. Looking at disbursements of non-core resources (table 2), the following picture emerges. Despite the fact that UNFSSC contributions over the four-year period were quite a bit higher than those for the IBSA Fund, actual disbursements from the IBSA Fund were higher than those from UNFSSC. For example, disbursements from the IBSA Fund from 2014 to 2017 amounted to $12 million or 49 per cent of total non-core expenditures, while disbursements from UNFSSC were $10.5 million or 43 per cent of the total. While some of that difference was related to accounting differences and lags in payments, the good record of the IBSA Fund in implementation should be recognized.

1. The reviewer concluded that, even though the data were preliminary, over 90 per cent of non-core resources were devoted to outcome 3, including funds management and partnerships. For the period through 2016, 54 per cent of the non-core contributions were made by China and the Republic of Korea for their programmes. In addition, a significant portion (over 34 per cent) was mobilized through the IBSA Fund. For 2017, the large infusion of $5 million from India increased its overall contribution to South-South cooperation considerably, and the contribution from UNFSSC grew to over 62 per cent of all non-core resources (see table 1). Overall, Brazil, China, India, the Republic of Korea and South Africa appeared to be leading the efforts to make South-South cooperation operational. Those countries should be commended for their leadership in South-South cooperation.
2. A very small proportion of non-core funds (about 0.9 per cent) went to outcome 1, and about 3.8 per cent went to outcome 2 as a contribution to institutional capacity-building. By far the largest proportion went to outcome 3. It should be remembered that most (94 per cent) of the non-core funds that UNOSSC receives are earmarked, such as the China and Republic of Korea contributions. Thus, the Office may not be making the decisions about which projects the earmarked fund are used for but it should provide oversight regarding the proper use of funds.

**Part IV. Conclusions and recommendations**

1. **Conclusions**
2. The reviewer concluded that there were areas where UNOSSC had contributed significantly to promoting the principles of South-South and triangular cooperation under the strategic framework. In other areas, some of the functions that had been included in the strategic framework were phased out during the final two years, following the midterm review and an unfavourable audit. It was considered a positive result that some functions that had been undertaken by the Office were transferred to other entities that could handle them better.
3. In addition, it is important to point out that the unfavourable audit (UNDP OAI report 1580 dated 24 February 2016) was followed up by audit report 1754 dated 22 February 2017.[[68]](#footnote-68) The latter report indicated that UNOSSC had already implemented 15 out of its 16 recommendations. Later in 2017, OAI reported that its final recommendation had also been implemented by the Office.
4. At the time of the midterm review, the reviewer found that the structure of the Office was confusing, with inconsistent job titles and unit names. The evolving current structure is based on an August 2016 Transformation Plan for the Office suggested by a Management Consulting Team recommended by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations. UNOSSC is now implementing elements of one of the options for realignment as a new structure. Although recruitment to fill vacant posts has begun, much of the implementation will depend on resources available.
5. The new structure seems to make organizational sense but it is unbalanced in terms of potential posts assigned to each unit. The Policy and UN Coordination Unit has been allocated fewer posts than the other units. That would seem short-sighted in light of the upcoming responsibilities regarding coordination of the preparation of a system-wide strategy on South-South cooperation, preparation of comprehensive reports, and its role as secretariat of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation and the twentieth session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation in 2019.
6. Under the realignment recommendations, there is a proposed unit for Strategic Communications and Outreach but no specific mention of advocacy. That may be an area where the Office needs to place more resources. Since outreach, advocacy and communications are essential to build partnerships, perhaps the Office could consider modifying the proposal to create a Communications, Outreach and Advocacy Unit. In order to improve its services, that Unit would need to be strengthened from its current level of two staff members. That possibility should be taken into account as resources become available for staff recruitment.
7. The main areas of success observed by the reviewer were the following:
8. In general, the reviewer found that the Policy and UN Coordination Unit had successfully carried out much of the work under outcome 1 in the strategic framework, in particular servicing intergovernmental bodies, including the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and the General Assembly. All of the documents requested by the Committee had been delivered even though several of them had not been anticipated in the strategic framework. Members of the Bureau of the Committee who were interviewed indicated that the background reports were useful to them and provided a framework for policy discussions.

1. The recommendations on national and United Nations country-team South-South cooperation focal points were followed up by UNOSSC in early 2016 and 2017, and the reviewer concluded that implementation of the focal point network would provide strong institutional support to the work of the Office, especially at the regional level. There had been meetings of the national focal points and inter-agency meetings of the United Nations agency focal points in conjunction with the GSSD Expos, enabling colleagues to meet periodically in addition to meeting in New York.
2. The proposed measures to enhance the role of UNOSSC within the United Nations system and the designation of the new Director as the Secretary-General’s Envoy on South-South Cooperation raised the profile of the Office. Most of the stakeholders interviewed felt that they had enhanced the impact of the Office because it was the focal point for South-South and triangular cooperation throughout the United Nations system.

1. The number of United Nations agencies that contributed to the reports for the High-level Committee and the General Assembly increased considerably during the evaluation period. During the first two years of the strategic framework, only seven United Nations agencies, including regional economic commissions, responded to the online survey to gather agency inputs for those reports. In 2016, that number rose to 11, and by 2017, 23 United Nations bodies had responded to have their South-South cooperation activities included in the reports. The large increase in responses by the end of the evaluation period is an achievement of the Office under the framework.
2. The mandate given to the Office to convene a United Nations group to draft a system-wide strategy for South-South cooperation in 2018 was another indication of the confidence of the Secretary-General and other partners in the ability of the Office to take a leadership role in South-South and triangular cooperation. Such a group could continue the work completed by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) South-South and Triangular Cooperation Task Team in 2017, but it would reach the larger United Nations system beyond UNDG. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development expands the relevance of South-South and triangular cooperation much beyond the Office.
3. The initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand to provide seconded staff to the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific was working very well. The reviewer observed that the secondment programme was an excellent way to involve partners in the work of the Office and provided much-needed staff assistance for both UNOSSC headquarters and the regional offices.
4. The transfer of the Climate and Sustainability Programme to UNOSSC was another plus for the Office since that was expected to be a growth area in coming years. In 2017, UNOSSC prepared the South-South Cooperation Action Plan, which is an integral part of the implementation of the Secretary-General’s United Nations system-wide Climate Change Engagement Strategy. In early January 2018, the QIAO United Action Plan on Climate Change and Conservation was launched with an initial investment of approximately $13.5 million pledged for the period from 2018 to 2023. Climate change action is a priority of the entire United Nations system and the 2030 Agenda, so it should give new vitality to the work of the Office.
5. In terms of mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation into the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the reviewer found that the Policy and UN Coordination Unit had supported United Nations agencies at both the global and country levels to develop South-South cooperation policy instruments and integrate South-South cooperation principles into their UNDAFs.

1. The Governments of Honduras and Panama, along with the United Nations country teams in the respective countries and UNOSSC, entered into innovative new partnership agreements that brought together all three parties to promote and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through expanded South-South and triangular cooperation. UNOSSC, possibly through its regional offices, should build on such innovative experiences and provide advisory services on national-level integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into UNDAFs and other national policies.
2. The reviewer noted the importance of the funds managed by the Programme Support Unit, which were used to support targeted development projects in countries of the South. Those projects are much appreciated by the partners and reflect the core principles of South-South cooperation. Those activities were considered central to the work of UNOSSC. Brazil, China, India, the Republic of Korea and South Africa appeared to be leading the efforts to make South-South cooperation operational. At the same time, a much larger number of G-77 countries were contributing to the funds, most of which are both providers and receivers of cooperation. That is the way in which South-South cooperation should work. The total of non-core resources contributed from 2014 up until September 2017, shown in table 1, was over $28 million compared to the projection for the four-year period of $20 million. Such numbers were considered beyond expectations and an indicator that donors considered the funds a sound investment.
3. Regarding disbursements of non-core resources, actual disbursements from the IBSA Fund ($12 million over the four-year period) were higher than those of UNFSSC ($10.5 million). While some of the difference is related to accounting differences and lags in payments, the good record of the IBSA Fund in implementation should be recognized.
4. The reviewer observed that the Communications and Outreach Unit, which is within the purview of the Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships, had organized exchanges and dialogues on successful approaches to managing South-South cooperation in collaboration with JICA. The Directors General Forums held in conjunction with the Expos were considered valuable to development professionals and should continue.
5. The upturn in interest regarding South-South cooperation among United Nations agencies may be partly in response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the identification of South-South cooperation as an important means of implementation. Many large United Nations agencies now have their own units on South-South cooperation that have been actively implementing joint projects. Proper coordination of South-South cooperation units in the United Nations development system through the proposed system-wide strategy and under UNOSSC could lead to much greater visibility for the concept and expanded resources.
6. The South-South Global Thinkers initiative, a joint initiative between UNDP and UNOSSC, has been well established. The initiative is currently comprised of six think-tank networks accounting for more than 200 individual member institutions. This coalition is providing intellectual input that may have been provided by the Academy in earlier years. The reviewer thought that incorporating the work of the Academy into the initiative was a positive development.
7. The Office has begun to build a repository of best practices and case studies for South-South and triangular cooperation. The South-South in Action series has become a flagship knowledge product of UNOSSC. The series is an important way through which UNOSSC can solidify partnerships and engage in advocacy.
8. The launch of the new Web portal and the use of emerging tools including social media channels and multimedia have engaged UNOSSC staff and United Nations agency and external partners in outreach efforts, contributing to all three outcomes of the framework.
9. Some of the activities under the strategic framework that either did not meet expectations or changed over the four-year period included the following:
10. The Policy and UN Coordination Unit had not been able to produce many of the analytical publications that had previously been within its purview because of a shortage of funds over the first two years under evaluation. Some of those publications had been superseded by the South-South in Action series under the Knowledge and Advisory Services Unit, which issued six volumes in 2017. While these reports provide valuable case studies of South-South cooperation, there is no overall vision of what will be produced in the series, and they are not analytical reports that would provide direction to policymakers.
11. The reviewer noted that certain units in the Office had been operating without sufficient staff under core resources, with most of their personnel holding temporary or fixed-term contracts under UNOPS. Core staff should be regularized and included under core and institutional budget resources. An assessment of personnel against budgets should be undertaken.
12. The reviewer thought that the regional offices could play a much greater role in outreach for South-South cooperation among Member States, United Nations organizations, the private sector and NGOs. Those offices are currently very weak, however, and need enhanced support from UNOSSC and partners within the regions. Clear allocation of resources to those entities, under which they could submit two- or four-year work plans to UNOSSC headquarters, would be very helpful to them.
13. Most of the work of the GSSD Academy was taken over by partners during the evaluation period. Thus, some of the expectations for the Academy were not met. Some WIDE rosters that had moderate to low activity levels were discontinued or given back to their host organizations and thus delinked from UNOSSC. That was understandable. Other rosters within the United Nations system were quite active and were supported by UNOSSC and the detailed Web presence of WIDE.
14. Since the two main initiatives of the former Deputy Director’s office had been assumed by other entities, the reviewer thought that the functions of that office had been marginalized and supported the decision to phase it out.
15. The reviewer noted that the future of the GSSD Expos was not assured since negotiations on hosting details had sometimes been difficult. The global Expos in 2016 in Dubai and 2017 in Antalya, Turkey, were deemed successes, and quite a few respondents noted that the Expos are a very important global platform for listening to voices of practitioners of South-South and triangular cooperation. Moreover, a GSSD Expo Advisory Committee was created in 2017 to assist the Office in presenting development solutions and initiatives created by countries of the global South. That may address some observations about lack of accountability for Expo expenditures during the first two years of the strategic framework.
16. The reviewer noted that there were two high-level meetings held in 2015 in addition to the intersessional meeting of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation: one in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in May and one in Macao, China, in August. While both meetings generated a number of good ideas, particularly with regard to financing South-South cooperation, financial commitments were not made. The reviewer also noted that the donor funds used for those two meetings had been questioned by the auditor and that better financial oversight was needed for all such activities.
17. For SS-GATE, the allocation of core resources had been high during the first two years of the framework (18.2 per cent of total expenditures in 2014-2015) although the number of exchanges transacted in the past had been relatively small. The reviewer supported a redirection of the SS-GATE efforts away from the SS-GATE Global Secretariat to the technology facilitation mechanism (TFM). The experience gained through SS-GATE could be useful to the TFM as well as to the new SSMart platform of UNDP.
18. The reviewer observed that most of the activities that had been developed under the three-in-one multilateral South-South support architecture had served to publicize and showcase South-South cooperation solutions. The reviewer further observed, however, that it had been appropriate to phase out that architecture in order to explore new opportunities to engage Member States, United Nations agencies and diverse partners and to align the services of UNOSSC with their expressed needs.
19. Several persons interviewed expressed their concern that the Office had operated in an environment without sufficient accountability and oversight. While it is acknowledged that South-South cooperation is hard to define, respondents indicated that it would be desirable to have guiding principles for undertaking South-South cooperation and standardized statistical measures for reporting on budget and project expenditures and funds management.
20. **Recommendations based on the final evaluation**
21. On the basis of the findings from the final evaluation of the performance of UNOSSC under the strategic framework, 2014-2017, the reviewer made a number of recommendations.
22. Proper coordination of South-South cooperation units across the United Nations development system should be advanced through the preparation of a United Nations system-wide South-South cooperation strategy, as requested by the Secretary-General. UNOSSC is in a good position to convene the United Nations system partners and guide the process of developing the system-wide strategy; it could provide advisory services and share its South-South cooperation expertise and tools with the entire United Nations system. UNOSSC, possibly through its regional offices, should find ways to advise national-level South-South cooperation focal points on integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into UNDAFs and other national policies.
23. Similar information produced for various legislative bodies should be consolidated into fewer documents to better highlight trends and take a longer-term view. In that regard, it would be cost-effective to produce the comprehensive report for the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/318, para. 2) by August 2018 and the first in the series of independent annual comprehensive reports on South-South cooperation (referred to in General Assembly resolution 72/297, para. 95) in 2019 rather than producing two comprehensive reports in 2018. However, UNOSSC pointed out that the two reports might serve different purposes since the latter would be more analytical and would provide an overview for broad discussion. If the research were to be undertaken by partners outside the Office and the Office were to serve mainly to coordinate partner inputs, perhaps the two reports could be produced in the same year, although Office staff seemed to be overextended. Whether produced in 2018 or 2019, the annual independent comprehensive report on South-South cooperation will be a flagship knowledge product of the Office and will require at least one staff member dedicated to its production. The comprehensive report should be analytical and address the challenges of developing countries to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. It could be the basis of regional or global dialogues.
24. The reviewer observed that the secondment programme was an excellent way to involve partners in the work of the Office and provided much-needed staff assistance for both UNOSSC headquarters and the regional offices. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand has provided two seconded staff to the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. Thailand has been a good partner in piloting that programme and is working to address issues relating to privileges and immunities. Thus, the Office should consider requesting specific countries in a position to do so to emulate the Thai example and provide one or more seconded staff to UNOSSC.
25. National focal points for South-South cooperation and Directors General for Development Cooperation need more timely information and a means to communicate with one another more easily. A monthly UNOSSC electronic bulletin has been launched along with the new Web portal and a United Nations South-South Facebook page. The Member States Portal on the UNOSSC website is being redesigned to make it more interactive and user-friendly. Such efforts are a good start in the direction of better communications. UNOSSC should work directly with individual national focal points to build a successful Member States Portal.
26. National respondents indicated that they would appreciate having an up-to-date annual calendar of UNOSSC and partner events to guide their inputs and participation. Staff, including regional coordinators, should regularly share their activities and achievements with the Communications and Outreach Unit to ensure coherence and stronger partnership-building moving forward. That would provide inputs to an up-to-date calendar of events for the website.
27. The reviewer considered that the work of the regional offices would become increasingly important. Thus the regional teams should be more strategic, more coherent and more aligned with the UNOSSC strategic framework. They should work closely with the regional economic commissions, UNDP regional offices and other regional organizations, especially in the run-up to the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in 2019. UNOSSC headquarters should work closely with each regional office to prepare two- or four-year work plans that would fit into the budget available. That would call for clear allocation of resources to these entities. The plans would then be submitted to UNOSSC headquarters. There should be active regional offices in Africa and Latin America, with adequate staff and budget, during the next strategic framework.
28. Guiding principles should be drafted for conducting South-South and triangular cooperation programmes and projects. Standardized statistical measures for reporting on budget and project expenditures and funds management would assure potential donors and partners of better accountability and oversight for such programmes.
29. The reviewer noted that some units in the Office had been operating without sufficient staff under core resources and seemed to be smaller than other units at the end of the strategic framework period. Many core personnel in those units were on temporary or fixed-term contracts. Under the next strategic framework, UNOSSC core staff should be recruited on regular budget posts and there should be a more balanced allocation of resources among the various units of UNOSSC, which could improve the productivity of the Office. In that regard, an assessment of human resources and respective budgets available should be carried out.
30. The new type of partnership initiated by the Governments of Honduras and Panama provided a means by which the United Nations agencies could “deliver as one” on mainstreaming South-South cooperation into UNDAFs and other planning documents. The innovative partnership agreements brought together the United Nations country teams, the national government and UNOSSC to promote and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through expanded South-South and triangular cooperation. UNOSSC, possibly through its regional offices, should build on such innovative experiences and provide advisory services on national-level integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into UNDAFs and other national policies.
31. Advocacy may be an area where the Office needs to place more resources. Since outreach, advocacy and communications are essential to build partnerships, perhaps the Office could include advocacy specifically in the work of one of its units, such as the Communications and Outreach Unit. In order to improve its services, that Unit would need to be strengthened from its current level of two staff members. That should be taken into account as resources become available for staff recruitment.
32. **Future directions: Strategic framework, 2018-2021**
33. In the past two years, UNOSSC has been given several new responsibilities mandated by the Secretary-General, the General Assembly and the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation. Many of these have been mentioned in the context of the final evaluation.
34. In the key document SSC/19/2[[69]](#footnote-69) on concrete ways to enhance the role and impact of the Office, priorities were laid out in paragraph 22, as follows:

“In order to prioritize its efforts to be more responsive to the requests of Member States and the United Nations system and restructure the Office accordingly, the review suggested that the Office consider focusing on providing more effective support to the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation; analysing and articulating evolving and emerging trends, dynamics and opportunities in South-South cooperation; and supporting South-South cooperation focal points at the national, regional and global levels. More specifically, it recommended focus on the following:

(a) Providing effective secretariat support to intergovernmental bodies, including analytical reporting on trends and opportunities;

(b) Coordinating coherent United Nations system support to South-South and triangular cooperation, and monitoring and reporting on the mainstreaming of that cooperation;

(c) Forging strategic South-South and triangular partnerships;

(d) Mapping Southern development solutions, and becoming a robust knowledge hub on South-South and triangular cooperation;

(e) Undertaking outreach, advocacy and strategic communication on issues of critical importance to the South that call for South-South solutions;

(f) Mobilizing resources and managing the three existing funds and others to be established for South-South cooperation within the purview of the Office.”

1. These priority areas have been referred to throughout this final evaluation. The reviewer also used that structure (and a more detailed one in SSC/19/2, para. 24) to provide some possible elements for the strategic plan, 2018-2021, currently being formulated by the Office (see annex I).

**Annex I. Suggested elements for the new UNOSSC strategic framework, 2018-2021**

**DRAFT, 12 February 2018**

**(Structure based on document SSC/19/2, p. 8, para. 24 – UNOSSC functions)**

The Office should have stronger capacity focused primarily on taking innovative actions with regard to six priorities, which are considered here as outcomes.

**Priority area 1**. Strengthened policy-making processes advance Southern perspectives in major intergovernmental and inter-agency bodies and processes. UNOSSC and the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation have greater impact across the United Nations system and in Member States.

1. Intergovernmental bodies, including the High-level Committee, have relevant and timely information, including on policy options, provided by an effective UNOSSC secretariat

1. Analytical reports contributing to efforts by developing countries to bolster South-South and triangular flows of trade, investment, finance, technology and expertise.
2. Substantive and technical support provided to the preparatory process for the 2019 High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation by a strengthened UNOSSC secretariat

1. Regional and global consultations convened and facilitated by UNOSSC

headquarters and regional offices

1. Substantive secretariat support provided to intergovernmental and inter-agency discussions on selected themes resulting in negotiated outcome document
2. Timely secretariat support is provided to the twentieth session of the High-level Committee (June 2019)
3. Provision of high-quality substantive reports to guide discussions
4. Substantive support to negotiations on new directions

**Priority area 2.** Coherent United Nations system support to South-South and triangular cooperation is coordinated, and the mainstreaming of that support into the policies and programmes of the United Nations system is monitored and reported

1. A more formalized and effective inter-agency mechanism is established to coordinate United Nations development system South-South and triangular cooperation programmes
2. Development of a United Nations system-wide strategy on South-South and triangular

cooperation facilitated by UNOSSC (General Assembly resolution 72/297, para. 94, of 7 August 2017)

1. Collaborative frameworks formulated for the mainstreaming of South-South and

triangular cooperation into the operational activities of the United Nations system

1. Support is provided to countries in integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into common country assessments, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and national development plans
2. Accountability is enhanced through more effective monitoring and clear reporting by UNOSSC

**Priority area 3.** Strategic South-South and triangular partnerships are developed and deepened at the regional and interregional levels to advance social and economic integration of the South and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

1. Regional offices of UNOSSC are strengthened by collaboration with regional organizations
2. Regional offices build on partnerships with various actors vested in South-South and triangular cooperation
3. Four regional offices revitalized and upgraded with adequate budget, terms of reference and staffing (including pending appointments and secondments from national partners)
4. Regional offices backstop regional processes for capacity-building, knowledge exchange, mobilization of resources and the preparatory process for the 2019 High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation
5. Regional think-tank networks requested to provide resource persons for regional

processes

1. Regional priorities (i.e., Africa 2063) used by UNOSSC as a framework for formulating South-South and triangular cooperation policies and promoting South-South and triangular cooperation to support those priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals
2. New multi-country South-South cooperation strategies and initiatives are facilitated by UNOSSC, including the creation of official partnership agreements and provider-specific trust funds
3. Programmes and initiatives are developed to address the demands of developing countries regarding the Sustainable Development Goals in areas such as urbanization, population changes, climate change, peacebuilding and new technology advances

**Priority area 4**. Southern development solutions are recorded, mapped and exchanged, building a robust knowledge hub on South-South and triangular cooperation

1. Inputs and results from Global South-South Development Expo exchanges and

meetings of national Directors General for Development Cooperation are recorded and

monitored

1. Online platforms and global and regional expositions are improved and more user-

friendly to stimulate South-South technology transfers and exchanges of practical

knowledge

1. Capacity-building workshops for practitioners to exchange knowledge and state-

of‑the-art technology

B. Global frameworks used for technology transfer and knowledge exchanges

III. An annual independent comprehensive report on South-South and triangular

cooperation is prepared that includes emerging trends, and major initiatives by

developing countries and United Nations agencies are mapped

**Priority area 5*.*** Outreach, advocacy and strategic communication on issues of critical importance to South-South solidarity, global integration and international action are greatly expanded to meet global demand

I. Timely and relevant dissemination of innovative South-South solutions is carried out through the UNOSSC Web portal and other media

II. Advocacy is undertaken through printed publications and electronic media

**Priority area 6.** Innovative funding modalities are mobilized, managed and expanded

I. Management is undertaken of the day-to-day operations of the United Nations Fund

for South-South Cooperation, the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund and the India, Brazil and

South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, and other funds as they are

established, upgraded and improved

II. Additional resources are attracted through the establishment of official and

documented partnership agreements and new types of partnership agreements

**Annex II. List of persons interviewed for the final evaluation**

**A. UNOSSC staff and consultants**

1. Mr. Jorge Chediek, Envoy of the Secretary-General on South-South Cooperation and Director
2. Ms. Xiaojun Grace Wang, Deputy Director for Programme and Operations
3. Mr. Tarik Iziraren, Deputy Director for Policy and Strategic Partnerships; Coordinator of the final evaluation of UNOSSC performance under the strategic framework, 2014-2017
4. Ms. Inyang Ebong-Harstrup, former Deputy Director (by phone)
5. Mr. Edem Bakhshish, Regional Coordinator for the Arab States, Eastern Europe and the CIS, Istanbul (by email)
6. Mr. Francois Ekoko, Regional Coordinator for Africa, Addis Ababa (by phone and email)
7. Mr. Joshua Gimba, Policy Specialist, Policy and Strategic Partnerships Division
8. Mr. Shahid Hussain, Special Adviser to UNOSSC
9. Ms. Gabriele Kodura, Roster Manager, Division for Knowledge and Programme Management
10. Ms. Teresa Liu, Knowledge Management Specialist, Development Solutions and Technology Exchange Unit
11. Ms. Nawra Mehrin, Policy Analyst, Policy and Strategic Partnerships Division
12. Mr. Mehdi Mirafzal, Senior Business Adviser, Knowledge and Advisory Services Unit
13. Mr. Denis Nkala, Regional Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok
14. **Mr. Mithre Sandrasagra,** Strategic Communications Adviser, Strategic Communications and Outreach Unit
15. Mr. Michael Stewart, Project Consultant, Knowledge and Advisory Services Unit
16. Ms. Ines Tofalo, Chief, a.i., Programme Support Unit
17. **Ms. Sirithon Wairatpanij**, Advocacy Adviser, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
18. Mr. Xiaohua Zhang, Manager, Climate and Sustainability Programme

**B. UNDP**

1. Ms. Shams Banihani, Policy Analyst on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)
2. Mr. Zanofer Ismalebbe, Intergovernmental Engagement Specialist, Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy (BERA)
3. Ms. Simona Marinescu, Director, Development Impact Group, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support (BPPS)
4. Mr. Adam Rogers, Senior Adviser, Development Impact Group, UNDP

**C**. **Other United Nations entities**

1. Ms. Martha Santos, Programme Manager, South-South/Horizontal Cooperation, Learning and Knowledge Exchange Unit, Division of Data, Research and Policy, United Nations Children’s Fund
2. Ms. Yan Jia, South-South and Triangular Cooperation Focal Point, a.i., Policy and Programme Division (OSZ), World Food Programme, Rome, Italy (by phone)

**D. National partners**

1. High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation Bureau

a. President: H.E. Mr. Adonia Ayebare, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,

Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations

b. Vice-President: Mr. Nicolas Randin, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to

the United Nations (by phone)

c. Vice-President: Mr. Jaime Gnecco Daza, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the

United Nations (by phone)

1. Other national delegates

a. Japan: Mr. Tatsunori Higuchi, First Secretary, Economic Section, Permanent Mission

of Japan to the United Nations

b. United States of America: Mr. Charles Chang, Senior Economic and Development

Policy Officer, Department of State, Washington, D.C.; member of UNDP Executive

Board (by phone)

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