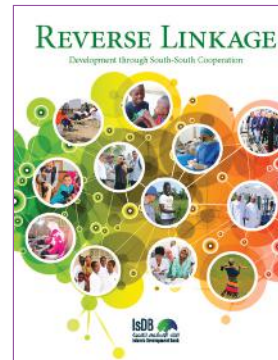


Reverse Linkage: Development through South-South Cooperation

Compiled by Sean Nicklin and Ben Cornwell at Human Development Forum, Tudor Rose; and Islamic Development Bank Reverse Linkage Team.
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The Islamic Development Bank highlights its contributions towards South-South Cooperation through its flagship publication titled, *Reverse Linkage: Development through South-South Cooperation*. Contrary to the literal meaning of “reverse” associated with moving in a backward direction, the work reflects use of “reverse” as the forward and backward linkages of knowledge with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) as the facilitator that will assist countries on their development trajectory. A glance over the content highlights the various aspects of South-South and Triangular Cooperation, presenting a blend of analysis that bring out technicalities of IsDB’s reverse linkage mechanism and its partnerships with the United Nation’s Office of South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It also lays out the best practices that reflect in-action the working of the reverse linkages, in countries ranging from Latin America to Asia. For a novice reader, the publication is complemented with a chapter explaining Triangular Cooperation, its defining characteristics and its role in sustainable development of OIC Countries.

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¹ <http://digital.tudor-rose.co.uk/reverse-linkage/files/assets/common/downloads/publication.pdf>

Triangular Cooperation is a Southern-driven mode of partnerships among two or more developing countries supported by developed countries, international organizations or multilateral agencies. This forms the linchpin of IsDB's Reverse Linkage mechanism between countries seeking expertise in innovation and technology. The process connects them with countries having the capacity to meet the demand for expertise with IsDB as the catalyst. A survey by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) draws upon four key characteristics wherein triangular cooperation is increasing the efficiency of countries in achieving their development goals without additional planning, and hence the procedures of any cooperation project are followed with minimal changes. The survey asserts that triangular cooperation adds value through horizontal partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and co-creating development solutions.

Opening with the vision of the Bank as a *"Bank of Developers"*, the President, H.E. Dr. Bandar M. H. Hajjar articulates IsDB's role not only as a financial institution but as a catalyst for 'connecting and engaging stakeholders and partners to transform the development journey of member countries'. In achievement of such a vision and its 5 Year Programme (P5P), the reverse linkage mechanism draws upon learnings of the Bank, development know-how, identification of existing expertise, technology and resources to create an enhanced modality in South-South Cooperation. Identified as a new approach by IsDB, Reverse Linkage is a blend of capacity development and technical cooperation enabled through the transfer of capacity to empower

countries towards their autonomous development. Highlighting not just a gap in sharing of knowledge for development but also mapping knowledge hubs, the IsDB argues that a key challenge for development providers is in the limitations of availability of information on online platforms. Taking a solution focused approach, the IsDB Reverse Linkage Team launched an integrated Programme for mapping of Resource Centres (RCs) complimented by a methodology to develop a resource base. This methodology is a combination of assessing a country's comparative advantage, collecting specific data through questionnaires, and data assessment through a scoring scheme to create RC profiles highlighting sectoral interventions, expertise and achievements. This mapping was however done with the ownership of the countries to bring out indigenous and local country knowledge systems to the fore. Complimenting this is a new framework of action called "3 2-C Initiative for Effective Technical Cooperation" structured on three pillars of convergence and complementarity; coordination and collaboration; and capitalisation on knowledge and communication.

The Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 rest at the heart of the knowledge management and exchange, drawing upon Goal 17 for partnerships. Triangular partnership is becoming popular in a wide range of sectors and in working with a multiplicity of actors due to increased role of development banks, local level governments, non-governmental stakeholders and private sector. In support of this demand, the UNOSSC and IsDB created a space for "capacities and needs matching" through events that promote

triangular partnerships wherein countries like Algeria in need of expertise for their automobile manufacturing industry are linked to a private company in Pakistan that assisted in training and feasibility study for Algeria's public corporation, or Pakistan's demand for training its scientists found its way to knowledge hubs nested in Saudi Arabia.

Drawing upon the experiences of a range of other development actors such as the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Indonesia's Directorate for Foreign Policy and International Development Cooperation (BAPPENAS), Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA), and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), IsDB traces their impact in technical assistance and knowledge sharing. It draws upon best-practices, highlighting initiatives that paralleled engagements with IsDB and contributions made towards the development of receiving countries.

Case studies on Triangular Cooperation have also been enumerated upon, that have resulted in bilingualism in Chad; enabled Morocco to improve monitoring of quality of its raw water; and increased livestock productivity in Kyrgyzstan; based on the knowledge and expertise focused engagement.

A timely publication launched on the eve of BAPA+40, *Reverse Linkage* associates itself with the flow of knowledge, capacity, technical expertise and innovative approaches amongst development partners. The in-depth articulation of the mechanism and the best practices reflect knowledge sharing and transfers that complement the demands of developing countries. A critical look uncovers a limitation in the publication as it leaves its reader with an incomplete picture of "Reverse Linkage" of a forward and backward linkage that encapsulates the learnings for the Bank and other countries. Knowledge moves from provider to the source of demand reflecting a transfer, but for an effective "exchange" a resultant transfer will lead to improved knowledge and capacities in reverse for both the provider and facilitator as well, to actualize a complete South-South Partnership. While IsDB asserts its role as an enabler, the publication does not showcase a deeper understanding of the knowledge acquired by the Bank that added to the efficiency of its linkage mechanism. A reflection upon this will highlight the "new" ways of sharing and co-creating knowledge that emerge from a "to-and-fro" learning from supply side to demand side and its reverse. Nonetheless, in 130 pages IsDB lays open to its reader an elegant mapping of linkages highlighting developing countries as centres of excellence and SSC as the development approach for OIC countries.