

Summary and Key Ideas emerging from the Video Conference¹:
Capacity Development for South-South
Knowledge Exchange (28-29 June 2011)

An initiative of the World Bank Institute

Knowledge exchange on the “how to” of South-South knowledge exchange

Knowledge Exchange/Sharing (KE/KS) is at the heart of the South-South Cooperation (SSC) agenda which is changing the global development landscape. Developing countries are increasingly seeking to understand how other countries in the South have dealt with or have found innovative solutions to common development challenges. While this form of cooperation shows great potential, various studies reveal that there are still a number of gaps. In response to requests from partner countries, the World Bank Institute (WBI) seeks to help them address some of these gaps with an operationally oriented agenda that provides support along the lifecycle of South-South KE/SSKE.

One of the areas in which a number of countries have sought advice is on **how to best develop their own institutional set up and improve their capacity to respond to the growing agenda of SSKE**. As a result, WBI has launched an initiative with the goal of facilitating exchange between countries interested in developing and/or strengthening their SSC institutional arrangements.

Summary of June 28/29 dialogue

This initiative will start with a series of knowledge exchanges through structured dialogues among interested countries through the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) or the Bank’s own video conference facilities.

On June 28/29, 2011, WBI sponsored the first **Video Conference Dialogue on Capacity Development for SSKE** between representatives of China, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Singapore, with participation by WBG, the Task Team on SSC and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA). This intercontinental event connected 25 people in seven separate sites for an intense three-hour exchange (see Agenda, country institutions and venues in Annex).

The videoconference was organized in two main parts. The first part of the event consisted in brief presentations providing an overview of each country’s SSKE, including its institutional development, obstacles it has faced in its organizational progress and the main challenges in capacity development for the medium to long term. Each presentation was followed by a space to clarify issues of interest for other participants.

The second part of the VC consisted in 3 separate blocks dedicated to discussions on cross-cutting issues, the role of coordination and possible needs for external support.

¹ Document prepared by Christian Freres, former consultant to WBI, with input from Han Fraeters and Jessica Poppele, WBI, Nils Schulz and the Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs. The opinions do not necessarily reflect the official position of the World Bank Group.

Key ideas emerging from this dialogue

Based on this initial exchange, WBI has identified a series of ideas that reflect the discussion which took place. These ideas also form a sort of initial mapping of issues upon which future dialogues could focus.

Overall highlights

- **A variety of institutional development** experiences reflects different contexts and influences.
- There is a **broad institutional development agenda** related to SSKE that is not well known.
- In most countries it is necessary to **improve information about KE** in order to increase support.
- For all countries **coordination is an important challenge**, with various ways to deal with it.
- Most of the countries face **financial constraints**; there is no single way to deal with this.
- There are different paths for institutional development; there is **no single way to organize SSKE**.

Understanding of KE concept is limited even among cooperation actors

- Knowledge exchange is seen as **relatively abstract** by many national actors.
- **Links between broader SSC and KE are not always clear**; this problem is particularly evident when differentiating technical assistance and knowledge sharing.
- This implies the need for efforts to improve **understanding about the value of knowledge for development** within each country's cooperation system.
- In any case, other modalities of SSC also contribute to development goals and may complement KE.

Strategy and mainstreaming of KE in national planning

- For the most part **countries have not developed a KE strategy**.
- Some countries have **mainstreamed SSC by including it in their national planning system**, thereby ensuring sustainability and public financing.
- Broader efforts to strengthen SSC institutional capacities may help to capitalize KS efforts.
- **Sustained political commitment** is key to maintaining or scaling up SSKE.

Managing the shift from knowledge transfer to knowledge sharing

- Many countries are **primarily engaged in knowledge transfer (KT)** -a unilateral transmission of experience, know-how, best practice, sometimes based on "packaged training programs", but also responding to partner country demands-
- The **transition from KT to knowledge sharing** –which does not necessarily imply completely foregoing KT activities- is challenging, but some countries have interesting lessons to offer.
- Key **experiences must be identified and systematized** in order to be shared.
- Some countries believe **sharing experiences can also be the basis for joint activities**.

Knowledge sharing is about development results

- Knowledge sharing is not just about sharing knowledge; it must be about **development results**.
- This brings up the challenge of **how to evaluate knowledge-based modalities**.
- More resources need to be invested in **monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** systems.

The coordination challenge

- **SSC activities are often fragmented** and implemented by numerous ministries and institutions.
- Some countries are attempting to advance by creating **national coordination mechanisms**.

- One organization became a **focal point of access for its country's public sector expertise**.
- Coordination mechanisms should be kept **simple, combining formal and informal modes**.

Financing knowledge sharing can be challenging

- For many countries **financial constraints limit the potential to expand and improve KE**.
- Since KE activities are relatively **limited in scale** compared with other SSC flows, they are given less priority in national decisions on allocations for SSC.
- **External support can be key** for financing and as advocates for increased local funding.

The role of the private sector in KE

- The role of the private sector in KE requires more analysis in order to determine **how to attract these actors to participate** in country-led initiatives.
- In one country the **private sector is sharing in costs and contributing its management and operational knowledge** to KE activities
- **Public-Private partnerships (PPP)** may be important for KE, not just as a mechanism to integrate private actors, but also as a subject on which countries can learn from each other.

The role of external actors in supporting SSKE

- **Joining forces with international organizations** has helped some countries be more systematic in engaging partners
- When working with external actors, a country may be **exposed to new sources of knowledge** through those actors' broad international contact base
- International organizations could be more active, looking for **ways to use their on-going programs as a way to advance in SSKE, responding to countries' specific needs** (i.e. linking countries working on similar programs)
- This implies **financing for SSKE from normal operations**; not just SSC-related funds.
- Other **potential roles of International organizations**:
 - o Helping to systematize KE experiences, involving Southern-based academics and universities.
 - o As brokers of financial resources from various sources.
 - o Coordinating and facilitation role between countries.
 - o Helping to develop tools to standardize information about building KE
 - o Creating partnerships between practitioners and policymakers. One idea mentioned was the creation of a "knowledge sharing network"
- In any case **external actors provide different things**: each country must identify what are its specific needs and who is best placed to help meet them.
- **External actors should work more closely together**, establishing mechanisms for some sort of division of labor. In this regard, the G-20 mandate on KE is a key step forward.

What's next?

Given the active participation and high level of interest by the countries involved, it seems clear that there is a need for a permanent space where partner countries can come together to share their knowledge and experience related to how to better organize SSKE. The WBI has set aside resources to contribute to this objective through the organization of several dialogues in FY 2012 (July 2011-June 2012), and to explore, with partners, other ways to take this agenda forward.

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Annex

Agenda of Video Conference
Brief introduction explaining the objectives and guidelines, by WBI
Round of presentations of the participants
<p>I. Short country presentations</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Presentations (in this order) by Mexico, China, Indonesia, Singapore and India (see institutions below)</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Brief clarifying Questions & Answers following each presentation</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">After the presentations and Q&A periods: summary of key points by commentarists²</p>
<p>II. Topical discussions</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic 1. Open exchange between participating countries</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic 2. Coordination and Brokering roles</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic 3. Support needed by international organizations to strengthen capacities for SSKE</p>
Next Steps

The **Country presentations** were made by personnel from:

China	India	Indonesia	Mexico	Singapore
Technical Assistance, Division, Ministry of Finance	Multilateral Institutions Division, Dept. of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance	Directorate for Multilateral Foreign Funding, Ministry of National Planning	Directorate General for Technical and Scientific Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs	International Partnerships Division, Singapore Cooperation Enterprise

The **venues and starting times** of the VC:

June 28		June 29	
<i>Where (City/venue)</i>	<i>Starting at (local time)</i>	<i>Where (City/venue)</i>	<i>Starting at (local time)</i>
Washington, DC: GDLN Studio 2	23:00	Jakarta: Indonesia World Bank Office	10:00 am
Mexico City: Ministry of Foreign Affairs	22:00	New Delhi: India World Bank Office	8:30am
Bogotá: Colombia World Bank Office	22:00	Singapore: Singapore World Bank Office	11:00 am
		Beijing: China World Bank Office	11:00 am

² Technical Secretary, Task Team on SSC, and External Consultant, WBI.