



**DP/FPA/2021/CRP.2**

16 December 2020

## **UNFPA MANAGEMENT RESPONSE**

to

### **Formative evaluation of the UNFPA approach to South-South and triangular cooperation**

(DP/FPA/2021/CRP.1)

#### **Agenda item 7. UNFPA – Evaluation**

*First regular session 2021  
1 to 5 February 2021, New York*

## UNFPA management response to the formative evaluation of the UNFPA approach to South-South and triangular cooperation

Evaluation report issue date	<a href="#">Evaluation report tag</a>	<a href="#">Additional attributes</a>	UNFPA business units responsible for implementation	Heads of responsible business units	Responsible unit managing/ coordinating focal point	Date of submission
19/11/2020	Programme Level Evaluation	Formative	PSD, TD, DHR, DMS, DCS, ITSO, HO, APRO, ASRO, ESARO, EECARO, LACRO, WCARO		PSD/ICCO Yanming Lin lin@unfpa.org	

### EVALUATION RECOMMENDATION(S) AND PROPOSED ACTION POINT(S)

Recommendation No. 1	<i>Clarify the conceptualization of SSTC and further integrate SSTC into the strategic frameworks and thematic areas of UNFPA</i>	Priority: High
	<p>Recommendation 1. UNFPA should clarify the conceptualization of SSTC and further integrate SSTC into the strategic frameworks and thematic areas of UNFPA.</p> <p>1. While the current corporate strategy for SSTC helps to broadly understand and guide SSTC interventions, UNFPA should further clarify its conceptualization to ensure that SSTC is effectively and more systematically utilized as a key strategy to further support the ICPD and the 2030 Agenda. This includes providing a clear definition of SSTC at UNFPA, the role of UNFPA in SSTC interventions, and the potential application of SSTC across all modes of engagement, its core mandate areas, and within the framework of its business model.</p> <p>2. This would require the development of a theory of change to provide a more articulated connection between SSTC and broader development issues and processes, such as the United Nations engagement with middle-income countries, United Nations system reform and the contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>3. Further, SSTC should be further integrated into the strategic frameworks, and supported with budgetary resources, to ensure that SSTC is reflected as an integral way of working to contribute to the UNFPA mandate. Complementing this, UNFPA should further clarify the potential opportunities of SSTC in all of its thematic areas of its intervention, especially deepening the focus in the areas of youth and adolescents, as well as in humanitarian contexts, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>4. To achieve this, UNFPA should:</p> <p>(a) Review the existing SSTC strategy and guidance documents and provide clarifications where needed;</p> <p>(b) Develop an overarching theory of change for SSTC that can be adapted to different regions and contexts, and that connects SSTC with broader international agendas;</p>	

(c) Integrate SSTC as a key strategy into the next strategic plan (for 2022-2025), including the specification of SSTC indicators in its results framework and dedicated financial resources in the integrated budget;

(d) Mainstream SSTC into other strategic frameworks, including global and regional action plans and budgets, and the middle-income countries strategy;

(e) Include clear and specific guidance on leveraging SSTC in all thematic guidelines and strategies.

**Management response to recommendation acceptance status** Accepted.

We agree that SSTC, under the current UNFPA strategic plan (SP), has contributed significantly towards the achievement of the results of the SP as a new mode of engagement in programming. It is therefore of paramount importance that SSTC be further integrated and operationalized into the UNFPA SP 2022-2025 with development of theory of change and dedicated financial resources set aside through the Integrated Budget and in the global component of the Global and Regional Interventions (GRI). It is also agreed that SSTC be included in the updated middle-income country strategy and the thematic and sector-wide strategies and guidance that UNFPA will issue.

*If recommendation is partially accepted or rejected, provide reasons:*

*If recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, list, below, action(s) that will logically lead to its implementation, ideally within a year of the date recommendation was issued*

Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Lead implementing and reporting staff	Additional units involved in implementation (if any)
1a. Update and re-issue SSTC strategy and programming guidance	Update and re-issue the existing SSTC strategy and programme guidance documents and provide clarifications where needed to ensure full reflection of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and the UN SSTC system-wide strategy and action plan issued by the UN Secretary General's Executive Committee as a key strategy to support the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and the ICPD.	06/30/2022	PSD	Yanming Lin	OED
1b. Integrate SSTC in new SP 2022 - 2025	Integrate SSTC into SP 2022 -2025 by developing an SSTC position paper, theory of change, business case for SSTC, and results indicators	06/30/2021	PSD	Charles Katende	PSD/ICCO
1c. Include SSTC in integrated budget for next SP	Continue to provide dedicated financial resources for SSTC in the Integrated Budget for the SP 2022 - 2025	06/30/2021	PSD	Jacqueline Mahon	DMS
1d. Mainstream SSTC into regional strategic frameworks	Include SSTC in the regional component of the GRI and Action Plans for 2022 - 2025	06/30/2021	All ROs	Regional Directors	
1e. Mainstream SSTC into other global strategic frameworks	Include SSTC in Global Action Plan of the GRI, the UNFPA Middle-Income Country Strategy	06/30/2021	PSD	Charles Katende	PSD/ICCO
1f. Update and re-issue thematic guidance for strengthened SSTC	Update and re-issue thematic guidance to strengthen utilization of SSTC in sector-wide programming, including youth, census, humanitarian, gender equality, etc.	12/31/2021	TD	Benoit Kalasa	HO, PSD

<b>Recommendation No. 2</b>	<p><i>Enhance SSTC implementation at the regional and country levels</i></p> <p>Recommendation 2. UNFPA should enhance SSTC implementation at regional and country levels.</p> <p>1. While the facilitation of SSTC has greatly improved since the establishment of the ICCO, there are still opportunities to enhance implementation at regional and country levels.</p> <p>2. At the regional level, UNFPA should clarify the role of the regional office, as it is uniquely positioned to facilitate SSTC interventions both within and between regions. At the country level, UNFPA should integrate, as appropriate, SSTC as a core component of country programme planning and implementation, supported by a dedicated budget.</p> <p>3. Further, in collaboration with regional offices and headquarters, country offices should – in partnership with other stakeholders – continue to provide support to, and further seek to establish centres of excellence on SSTC, leveraging these institutions as knowledge hubs to foster exchange and facilitate SSTC in more effective and self-sustaining ways.</p> <p>4. Finally, UNFPA should invest in continuing building strategic partnerships with other development actors at regional and country levels, including regional bodies and non-traditional partners (ministries responsible for SSTC at country level, subnational entities, non-governmental organizations, academia, and the private sector).</p> <p>5. To achieve this, UNFPA should:</p> <p>(a) Clarify the roles and responsibilities of headquarters, regional offices and country offices in the coordination and facilitation of SSTC initiatives;</p> <p>(b) Integrate SSTC into the terms of reference of regional offices and job descriptions of targeted regional office staff;</p> <p>(c) Allocate a dedicated budget for SSTC in country and regional programme documents;</p> <p>(d) Map opportunities for supporting the establishment of SSTC centres of excellence at regional level, and provide – as feasible – technical and financial support to national agencies that have the interest and capacity to host SSTC centres of excellence;</p> <p>(e) Identify, establish or strengthen partnerships with government agencies and other partners at country level, and, where applicable, regional bodies/organizations responsible for SSTC.</p>	<b>Priority: High</b>
<b>Management response to recommendation acceptance status</b>	<p>Operational Requirements (a), (c), (d) and (e) are accepted. Operational Requirement (b) is partially accepted.</p> <p>UNFPA will implement the recommendation in accordance with the agreed principles at BAPA+40 for SSTC We will clarify the roles and responsibilities of HQ, ROs and COs in SSTC programming. Studies have shown that centres of excellence are instrumental in enabling countries in the South to benefit from the knowledge and experiences of one another. UNFPA hence needs to look into the possibility of working with national centres of excellence by providing</p>	

	technical guidance and facilitating networking within the region and across regions. We will expand the types of partnership to include national agencies that are coordinating SSTC within the governments.				
<i>If recommendation is partially accepted or rejected, provide reasons:</i>	Operational Requirement (b) is partially accepted, as SSTC will be integrated in the work plans of all relevant organizational units as a corporate issue, instead of an issue that only affects certain offices such as the ROs. Operational Requirement (c) is accepted but as it is already a current practice, it is not included in the action points.				
<i>If recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, list, below, action(s) that will logically lead to its implementation, ideally within a year of the date recommendation was issued</i>					
<b>Action point title</b>	<b>Action point text</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Lead implementing unit</b>	<b>Lead implementing and reporting staff</b>	<b>Additional units involved in implementation (if any)</b>
2a. Clarify roles and responsibilities of units involved in SSTC programming	Update guidance note to clarify roles and responsibilities of HQ, ROs and COs in conducting SSTC programming	6/30/2021	PSD	Yanming Lin	ROs and selected COs for consultation
2b. Map centres of excellence	Identify centres of excellence/reference in SSTC and leverage them as SSTC hubs	6/30/2021	All ROs	Regional Director(s)	PSD
2c. Support centres of excellence	Provide technical guidance and facilitate networking for the centres of excellence within and across regions, in accordance with the agreed principles at BAPA+40 for SSTC.	6/30/2022	PSD	PSD Director	All ROs
2d. Provide regional leadership on SSTC	Provide regional leadership on SSTC by facilitating partnerships within the region and across regions, as well as expanding the types of partnership to include national agencies that are coordinating SSTC within the government in accordance with the principles agreed at BAPA+40.	12/31/2022	All ROs	Regional Director(s)	PSD

<b>Recommendation No. 3</b>	<i>Strengthen capacity of staff to effectively facilitate SSTC interventions</i>	<b>Priority: High</b>
	<p>Recommendation 3. UNFPA should strengthen the capacity of staff to effectively facilitate SSTC interventions.</p> <p>1. Building on the success of existing SSTC capacity building and guidance tools, UNFPA should develop additional in-depth training as well as practical, context-aware guidance and learning events for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SSTC. Capacity building for SSTC should respond directly to ICCO, regional office and country office needs, and also take into consideration the current capacity of staff across all business units to undertake key activities that improve SSTC results (measurement and monitoring of SSTC, implementation of SSTC across different modes of engagement, advocacy and outreach).</p> <p>2. This calls for the development of targeted and more in-depth training, and in particular the regular scheduling of SSTC capacity-building workshops or events (virtual or in-person) to ensure that up-to-date knowledge and opportunities are shared.</p> <p>3. To complement these efforts, UNFPA should clarify existing guidance on SSTC implementation, specifying a more practical application of SSTC principles as well as concrete operational actions to mainstream SSTC into the work of regional offices and country offices.</p> <p>4. To achieve this, UNFPA should:</p> <p>(a) Develop various training and learning events to accommodate staff at all levels, and employ different types and modalities of capacity building;</p> <p>(b) Integrate SSTC awareness-raising and capacity-development activities into annual meetings or events across regions, such as regional planning or leadership meetings;</p> <p>(c) Gather feedback and track progress on SSTC-related learning needs from regional offices and country offices, and address them by conducting annual reviews;</p> <p>(d) Increase capacity of the ICCO in targeted areas critical for UNFPA to become a global leader in SSTC, including advocacy and communications, and analysis of SSTC programming activities.</p>	
<b>Management response to recommendation acceptance status</b>	<p>Accepted.</p> <p>With coordinated efforts from various levels of the organization, UNFPA has been positioned as a global leader of SSTC in population and development and reproductive health as noted in the evaluation. However, the capacity of ICCO is faced with challenges particularly in communications and data collection, analysis and application, as confirmed by the evaluation. We therefore acknowledge the need and will address it by increasing the capacity of ICCO in these areas. We will ensure that SSTC will be part of the regional leadership meetings and events. To deliver on the recommendations detailed earlier, the capacity for SSTC of ROs and COs will likewise be strengthened and lead to an increased capacity of these offices to scale up SSTC in country programmes.</p>	
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<i>If recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, list, below, action(s) that will logically lead to its implementation, ideally within a year of the date recommendation was issued</i>		

Action point title	Action point text	Due date	Lead implementing unit	Lead implementing and reporting staff	Additional units involved in implementation (if any)
3a. Identify learning needs on SSTC and develop programs to address them	DHR identifies suitable SSTC Learning Champions and trains and supports them in analysing learning needs on SSTC of regional and country office staff, develop programs to address them, manage their implementation, and monitor and report impact.	12/31/2022	DHR	Markus Voelker	ROs, PSD, ICCO
3b. Integrate SSTC into Regional Planning/Leadership events/meetings	Integrate SSTC into each annual Regional Planning/Leadership events/meeting	12/31/2022	All ROs	Regional Directors	PSD
3c. Increase capacity of ICCO	The issue of capacity of ICCO in communications and data collection, analysis and application will be addressed through training interventions and by exploring other possible solutions.	12/31/2021	PSD/PSDD	Jacqueline Mahon	DHR

<b>Recommendation No. 4</b>	<i>Improve monitoring and evaluation of SSTC interventions, and strengthen efforts in the communication and knowledge management of SSTC results</i>	<b>Priority: Medium</b>
	<p>Recommendation 4. UNFPA should improve monitoring and evaluation of SSTC interventions, and strengthen efforts in the communication and knowledge management of SSTC results.</p> <p>1. To enhance organizational learning and accountability, UNFPA should review existing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate SSTC interventions in order to be able to regularly and accurately capture results and address current evidence gaps. This should be integrated into the design of the forthcoming enterprise resource planning system.</p> <p>2. Further, UNFPA should enhance its efforts to communicate SSTC results to better demonstrate its programmatic impacts and showcase UNFPA experience in SSTC to audiences both within and external to the organization.</p> <p>3. Finally, UNFPA should strengthen its approach to the knowledge management of SSTC results in order to improve availability and access to evidence-based learning on UNFPA-supported SSTC interventions and to better facilitate the use of SSTC results.</p> <p>4. To achieve this, UNFPA should:</p> <p>(a) Establish an improved monitoring and evaluation mechanism for SSTC interventions, that can be integrated into the forthcoming enterprise resource planning system;</p> <p>(b) Provide practical guidance for country offices, regional offices and thematic divisions on how to evaluate SSTC initiatives either as individual initiatives or as a cluster of initiatives;</p> <p>(c) Synthesize and showcase validated good practice and lessons learned of UNFPA experience in SSTC based on assessments and evaluations managed by regional offices and country offices;</p> <p>(d) Develop and utilize knowledge management platforms and tools both internal and external to the organization.</p>	
<b>Management response to recommendation acceptance status</b>	<p>Accepted.</p> <p>Building on the current reporting processes which deliver some basic information on SSTC initiatives facilitated by the organization, it would be critical to ensure more detailed tracking and reporting on these SSTC initiatives. We acknowledge past successes in documenting SSTC good practices and agree to do more and share them more widely. This will contribute to more clearly capturing the results through SSTC as well as inspire more SSTC partnerships.</p>	
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<i>If recommendation is accepted or partially accepted, list, below, action(s) that will logically lead to its implementation, ideally within a year of the date recommendation was issued</i>		

<b>Action point title</b>	<b>Action point text</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Lead implementing unit</b>	<b>Lead implementing and reporting staff</b>	<b>Additional units involved in implementation (if any)</b>
4a. Improve monitoring and reporting for SSTC	Include SSTC as part the monitoring and reporting system in new Enterprise Resource Planning System, beyond current tagging feature	12/31/2021	PSD/PSIPB	Charles Katende	ITSO, PSD/ICCO
4b. Improve evaluation guidance for COs on SSTC	Update and disseminate guidance for country offices on how to evaluate SSTC initiatives	12/31/2022	PSD	Jacqueline Mahon	ROs
4c. Document SSTC good practices	Document and disseminate SSTC good practices	06/30/2021	PSD/ICCO	Yanming Lin	DCS
4d. Utilize knowledge management platforms to capture and share SSTC practices	Include SSTC-dedicated webpage on UNFPA public website; and Upload SSTC good practices to UN system-wide platform on SSTC (South-South Galaxy)	12/31/2021	DCS	Selinde Dulckeit	PSD, ROs