



Research for Innovation and Equity

**Dynamics of South-South
Cooperation:
An Analysis of Health Biotechnology
Cooperation Between Low-and-Middle
Income Countries**
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Outline

Main question:

What shapes the dynamics and impacts of South-South Cooperation?

1. Historical background on South-South cooperation
2. Key principles of South-South cooperation
3. Why South-South cooperation in health biotechnology?
4. Main impacts of the health biotechnology cooperation
5. Conceptual understanding of South-South cooperation in science intensive fields

Historical context

- With independence from colonial powers there were political and economic incentives to find alternatives to relations with Northern countries
- Terms of trade with former colonial powers had been unfavourable
- The Asian Relations conference in 1947 and the Bandung conference between Asian and African countries in 1955 marked the beginning of formal South-South relations between developing countries

Further developments included

- The Non-Aligned Movement (1961) and the Group of 77 (1964)
- Formations of regional associations such as the Arab League, ASEAN, CARICOM, Mercosur, AU, IBSA etc.
- United Nation's involvement through, for example, UNDP's Special Unit for South-South collaboration.

*Institutional infrastructure for
South-South cooperation*



Key drivers of South-South cooperation

- Promote economic and scientific development
- Political force - to stick together to counteract political influence of Northern countries
 - Influence international agenda, e.g. at the World Trade Organizations rounds
 - IBSA's role to strengthen voice of developing countries
- Increasingly demands for South-South cooperation to jointly address challenges and promote sustainable development
 - Southern countries have many environmental, health and climate-induced problems that Northern countries do not share
 - Strong need to develop low cost solutions



Different principles

- Whereas North-South cooperation is proclaimed to be pursued for altruistic reasons, South-South cooperation is aimed at mutual benefits.
 - “Instead of a ‘one-way charitable aid relationship, South-South is defined as a ‘two-way cooperation relationship.’” (Alden et al 2012).
 - Is aimed at accruing financial and political gains for all partners.
- Promotes horizontality driven by solidarity



Different principles cont'd

- Strengthen national and collective self reliance
- Non-interference in domestic affairs of cooperating countries
- Should be demand driven
- Increasing reference to private sector and sustainable development

Developing countries are not a homogenous group

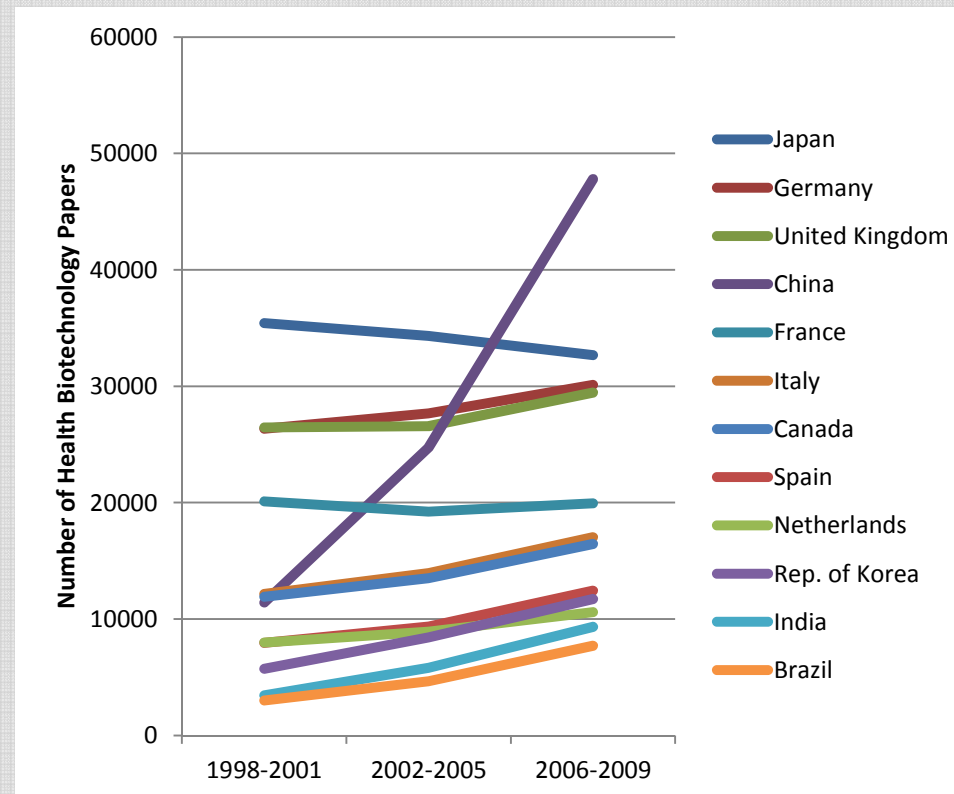
- Concerns about growing South-South divide
- At the same time differences provide scope for increased learning and cooperation between Southern countries

Why South-South cooperation in health biotechnology?

- Southern countries have expressed interest in increasing South-South cooperation in science and technology at many fora and signed a number of cooperation agreements.
- Health research/innovation and biotechnology are commonly emphasised in South-South cooperation agreements
- Health biotechnology is a field that several Southern countries, including the emerging economies, have built up expertise in.

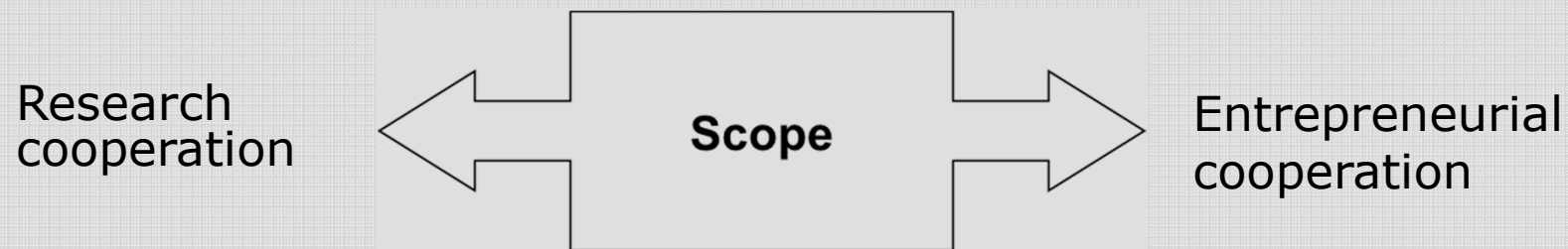


Some low-and-middle income countries have increased their knowledge production in health biotechnology



Study on South-South collaboration in health biotechnology

- ① Mapped the levels, geographic distributions and key characteristics of South-South health biotechnology collaboration
- ② Identified the opportunities, drivers, challenges, and impacts of the collaborations and examined the factors and conditions that shape the collaborations



Examined bilateral cooperation involving 13 countries
Carried out 348 interviews

Key impacts of the cooperation

1. Increased capacity to meet local health needs

- “A collaboration between South-South... could be much more successful and realistic to solve the problem of food and hunger and health and environment” (Thai policy maker)
- Mutual benefit for Southern countries to expand capacity in dealing with health problems.

2. Publications in international peer reviewed journals

- Mutual benefits to Southern countries as can jointly strengthen their research capacity

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Key impacts of the cooperation cont'd

3. Affordable health products in developing countries' markets

- Mutual benefits access to market and lower priced health products

3. Ability to leverage on specific resources such as traditional medicine

- Both technological and commercialisation based learning



What shapes the impacts of South-South cooperation?

Integration of the cooperation into the innovation systems of the participating countries

Helped by:

- Two-way cooperation relationship.
- Focus on scientific, financial and political gains for all partners.
- An integrated approach of knowledge sharing and benefits.



Key messages on what limits the impacts of South-South cooperation

Systemic misalignments

In order to have more impacts there is a need for better alignments between the countries involved in international cooperation

For example:

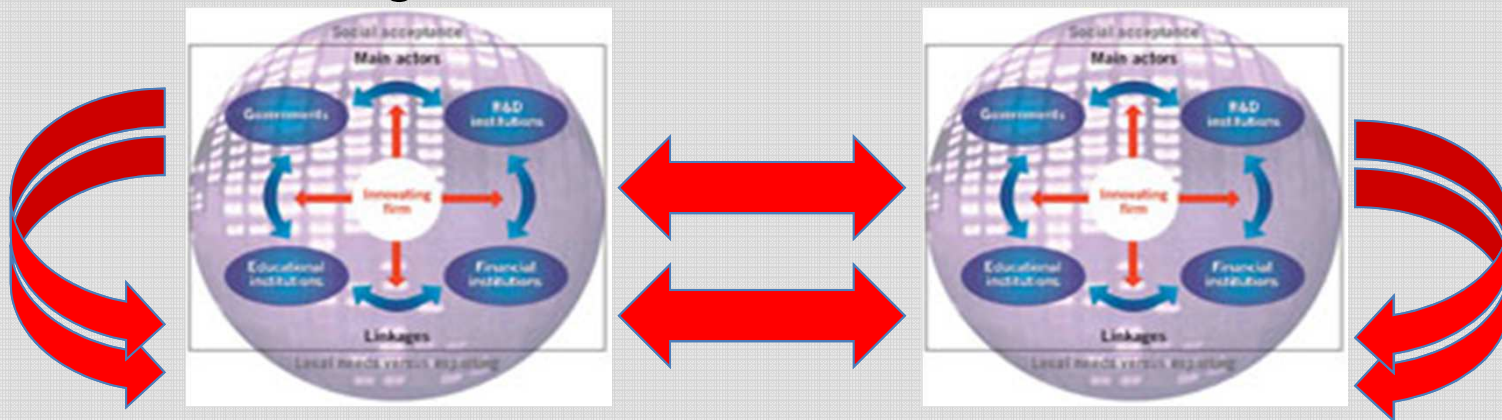
Capacity building efforts won't contribute to research, innovation and health promotion efforts because of lack of local infrastructure and planning coordination.

Immature and differences between regulatory systems hamper the cooperation



Conceptualisation of South-South cooperation

We need to look at South-South cooperation as interaction of innovation systems and focus on strategies for their alignments



Very simplified scheme of interacting innovation systems

Thank you for your attention!

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Steinunn Thórarinsdóttir - Thought