



Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST)

South Africa Reference Group

Terms of Reference

January 2015

Background

Over the last decade there has been a growing interest and debate over the role of emerging economies and Southern partners in global development, particularly in Africa. Recent international development cooperation conferences such as Busan HLF4 (2011) and Mexico HLM (2014) have highlighted the tensions in the integration of new development players in the global aid effectiveness regimes originally spearheaded by the OECD-DAC donors. At the same time very little understanding and evidence exists on the role and contribution of Southern partners in global development, due in part to limited data, information and M&E capacities among the emerging players. The Delhi Conference of Southern Providers (2013) discussed some of these knowledge gaps and the need for appropriate platforms for exchange of knowledge among emerging development partners.

Against this background the Network of Southern Think-Tanks (NeST) was established on the fringes of the Mexico High Level Meeting (HLM) in March 2014. This network of development cooperation experts and academics from the global South was formed in order to “generate, systematise, consolidate and share knowledge on South-South Cooperation (SSC) approaches in international development”. The executive group of NeST met in Beijing in November 2014 to finalise the governance arrangements, and to draw up the work plan, which included an ambitious agenda of methodology development, empirical research, capacity-development, improvement of data and M&E systems, knowledge sharing and policy support to Southern development agencies.

While some of the plans of NeST remain global in nature, many of the activities are to be further elaborated and implemented by the various national and regional chapters of the network. In order to advance the NeST agenda in Africa, and to further define, refine and enhance the understanding and effectiveness of South Africa’s development partnership



approach, a reference group of South African experts, policy-makers and stakeholders will be formed to constitute the national chapter of NeST South Africa.

Purpose of the network

The purpose of NeST South Africa reference group is to provide a multi-stakeholder platform to support South African and African debate on international development policy, by generating evidence, better understanding and systematising knowledge on South Africa's development cooperation, and how this relates to approaches of other Southern providers and traditional donors operating on the African continent.

This may include:

- Generating broad-based support, enthusiasm and momentum for the NeST work in South Africa and in the African region;
- Developing common understanding among local stakeholders on the nature, principles, approach and success indicators for South Africa's development partnerships;
- Improving data availability, access to information, knowledge and evidence around South Africa's approach to development cooperation on the continent; and
- Hosting periodic meetings, workshops, events among South African experts, policy-makers, partners and stakeholders dealing with development cooperation.

Membership

In line with the global NeST governance principles, NeST South Africa membership is open to experts, academics, researchers, civil society and private sector representatives engaged in research, policy debate and analysis of South Africa's development cooperation. NeST South Africa also welcomes policy-makers, technocrats, legislators and officials from the South African government departments, agencies, parastatals, and financing institutions engaged in development cooperation in Africa and globally, as well as representatives from multi-lateral and regional institutions.