

# Third Expert-Level Roundtable on Fostering South-South and Triangular Cooperation for Intellectual Property and Development



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**WIPO**

# South-South And Triangular Cooperation for Innovation: An Overview

- Innovation is a process of knowledge creation: inventors invest time and money to do research and create knowledge that enables the development of new technologies.
- Once innovation is in public domain it is impossible to exclude others from using it, unless protective mechanisms such as patents, design rights, or copyright are put into place.
- With the assumption that “investors motivation to innovate is profit-oriented”, IP protection ensures that inventors recoup their initial R&D investments.



# South-South And Triangular Cooperation for Innovation: An Overview

- Innovation at micro level is more complex for three main reasons:
  - a) **formal IP is not the only mechanism**, firms also rely on informal IP protection (secrecy, lead time, design complexity, confidentiality agreements, lock-in).
  - b) ***the motivation to engage in R&D*** and to **innovate is diverse and not necessarily** and may have multiple motives (examples: climate technologies originated from public research institutions and universities; altruistic goals and other non-commercial intervention)
  - c) formal IP protection is ***not always motivated by the need to protect the exclusivity*** over an innovation but to attract finance for commercialization and scaling-up.

# South-South And Triangular Cooperation for Innovation: An Overview

- South-South and triangular cooperation are seen as catalysts and enablers for transformation within and among developing countries.
- South-South and Triangular cooperation is driven by a spirit of solidarity toward mutual gains, inclusion and development.
- Within this framework, four strategic mechanisms are envisioned to pool resources, license high-impact technologies, and localize manufacturing
  1. Environmental Impact Fund
  2. Health Impact Fund regional hubs
  3. Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)
  4. Digital Public Infrastructure

# Environmental Impact Fund

- **Vision:** Establish an Environmental Impact Fund to acquire, adapt, and deploy innovations, technologies, and IP that drive sustainable industrial transformation across the Global South.
- Why it matters!!
- **Bridging Innovation Gaps** – Global climate-tech startups raised only **USD 56 billion in 2023, a 29% decline**, deepening access gaps for emerging markets.
- **Expanding Climate Finance** – Adaptation finance in developing economies must rise to **USD 212 billion annually by 2030**, but current flows remain far short.
- **Mobilizing Global Support** – Developed nations contributed USD 116 billion in 2022, surpassing the USD 100 billion goal, yet equitable distribution is limited.
- **Strengthening South–South Cooperation** – Cross-country data systems remain fragmented, limiting the full potential of regional innovation ecosystems.

# How It Works

- **Pooled Financing** – Contributions from emerging economies, MDBs, and philanthropic capital.
- **IP Access Mechanism** – Licensing or buyouts of high-impact technologies (green hydrogen, circular economy, AI for climate).
- **Regional Innovation Hubs** – Centers in Nairobi, São Paulo, and New Delhi for local adaptation and diffusion.

## Call to Action:

“Let’s transform IP from a barrier into a bridge—democratizing environmental innovation so no country is left behind.”

# Health Impact Fund: Catalyzing Equitable Innovation for the Global South

- Vision: Establish a Health Impact Fund to acquire, adapt, and deploy innovations, technologies, and IP that drive equitable and sustainable health progress across the Global South.
- **Bridging the Access-Innovation Gap** – Over 2 billion people lack access to essential medicines, and neglected diseases receive less than 2% of global R&D funding (WHO, 2024).
- **Addressing Patent Inequality** – **80% of pharmaceutical patents originate in the Global North, while 90% of disease burden lies in developing nations** (WIPO, 2023).
- **Empowering South-South Collaboration** – Pooled IP resources can enable joint vaccine R&D, local manufacturing, and faster regulatory harmonization.
- **Reducing Dependence** – Localized innovation ecosystems strengthen resilience against pandemics, supply shocks, and drug shortages.

# How It Works

- **Pooled Financing** – Contributions from BRICS+, MDBs, and global health foundations (e.g., Gavi).
- **Open IP Access Mechanism** – Licensing or co-ownership of breakthrough technologies such as mRNA platforms, diagnostics AI, and medical devices.
- **Regional Hubs** – Innovation and manufacturing clusters in Nairobi, São Paulo, and Hyderabad for adaptation and distribution.

## Call to Action:

“Let us democratize access to life-saving innovations — where health IP serves humanity, not hierarchy.”

# Triangular Cooperation as a Catalyst for 'Reverse Knowledge Flow': Role of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

- Emphasize South–South–North triangularity, where innovations originating in the Global South are adapted by Northern systems reversing the traditional direction of technological diffusion.

## Examples;

- **India UPI (Unified Payments Interface):** Near-universal, bank-to-bank instant payments.
- **Kenya — M-Pesa:** Mobile money rail embedded in daily commerce; ~45.3M mobile-money subscriptions in 2024/25.
- **Bangladesh — bKash / MFS ecosystem:** ~237M registered mobile-financial-service accounts (Dec 2024).
- **Philippines — GCash:** Claimed ~81M active users (Jan 2025); backed by major corporates and on a fast-growing fintech track.

# Triangular Cooperation as a Catalyst for 'Reverse Knowledge Flow': Role of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

## Digital Health Innovations

- India — ABDM (**Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**): National health stack (ABHA IDs, registries, consented data-sharing) building a unified digital-health ecosystem.
- India — **eSanjeevani Telemedicine**: The national telemedicine service has delivered ~276+ million consultations (peer-reviewed 2024 analysis).
- India — **CoWIN Platform**: Arranged the COVID-19 vaccine rollout with ~2.206+ billion doses logged on the live dashboard.
- Kenya — **M-TIBA Health Wallet** (by PharmAccess & partners): **A mobile health wallet** used for savings/co-pays and programmatic purchasing; connects ~4.7M people to ~4,800 providers across Kenya/Nigeria.

# IP as an Enabler of Contextual Innovation-TKDL

- Recognizing frugal, grassroots, and social innovation.
- Tailoring IP frameworks to local problem-solving.

## Examples:

- **India – Neem Tree (2005):** TKDL evidence led the European Patent Office to revoke a fungicide patent, setting a global precedent against biopiracy.
- Morocco – Argan Oil: **GI status empowered Berber women's** cooperatives to protect and globally market authentic, high-value argan oil.
- Peru – **Maca Root: Documentation of traditional knowledge prevented foreign monopolization** of a native medicinal crop.
- Thailand – Jasmine Rice (Hom Mali): **GI protection preserved authenticity**, boosted exports, and ensured regional farmer livelihoods.

# Triangular Cooperation as Knowledge Equity

Concept: **South-South partnerships, supported by Northern or multilateral enablers (WIPO, UNCTAD, MDBs)**, aim to co-create, co-own, and equitably share knowledge, technology, and intellectual property.

## Global Data Highlights:

- 333 International Investment Agreements restrict host countries from mandating technology transfer clauses, showing the need for knowledge equity frameworks.
- Over 100 treaties signed by 2024 include digital cooperation chapters encouraging joint R&D, technology sharing, and digital infrastructure investments among developing economies.
- Middle-income economies account for 80% of data centre investments across developing regions (2020–2024), signalling South-led digital infrastructure growth

## Global Case Examples:

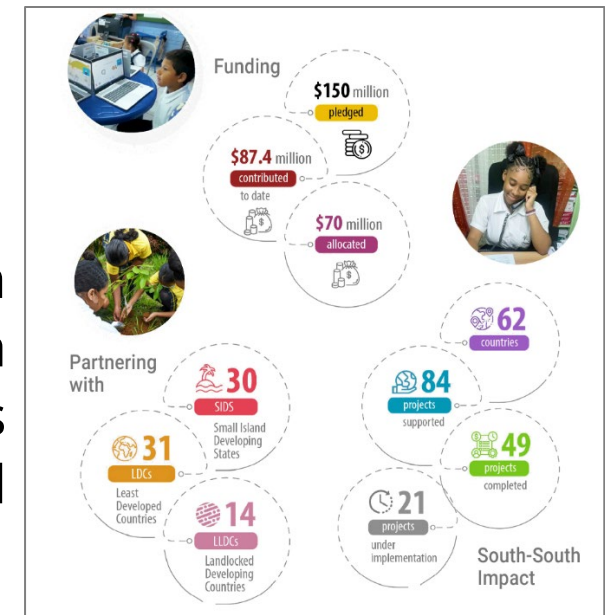
- Australia–UAE CEPA (2024): Collaboration on AI, data-centre architecture, and healthtech R&D with open IP-sharing mechanisms.
- WIPO Re:Search & WHO mRNA Hubs: Enable IP co-ownership between African/Asian institutes and OECD pharma companies for NTD research.
- India–South Africa Vaccine Collaboration: Shared IP and manufacturing rights for COVID-19 vaccines,

## Strategic Takeaways:

- Knowledge equity should anchor innovation diplomacy ensuring co-creation replaces dependency.
- Triangular frameworks (South–South + North/MDB) pool finance, expertise, and governance capacity for inclusive innovation.

# India-UN Development Partnership Fund

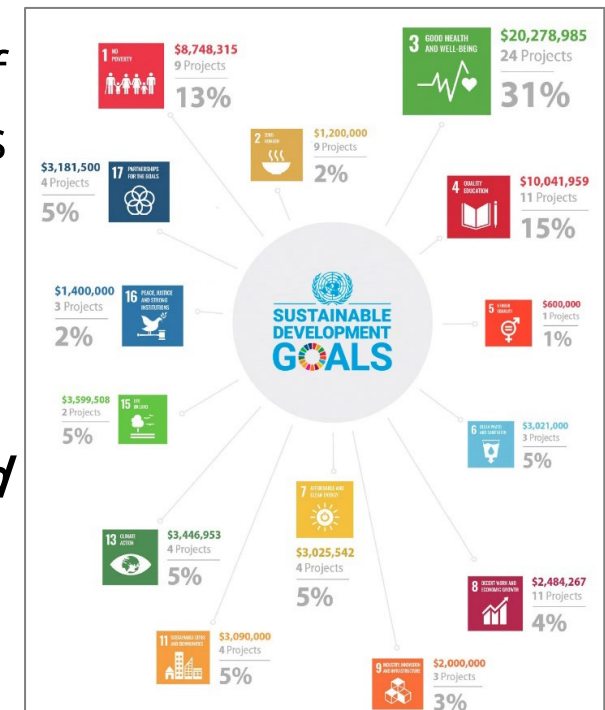
- Established in 2017, Government of India has committed \$150 million over 10 years to the India-UN Fund, including \$50 million under a separate Commonwealth Window, \$14 million dedicated to countries of the Caribbean Community, and \$12 million for Pacific Island developing States.



- India-UN Development Partnership Fund is led by the Government of India and implemented in collaboration with the United Nations system.

## Examples:

- *Establishment of a climate early warning system in Pacific island nations.*
- *Solar Water Purification Systems in Chuuk State, Micronesia*



# India-USA-Japan Cooperation in Indo-Pacific

- India, U.S. and Japan cooperation for development assistance in third countries.
- The three countries agreed to work together to maintain maritime security through greater collaboration.
- Participant in the Blue Dot Network (BDN), that aims to **promote high-quality, transparent, and sustainable global infrastructure development**, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Recognizing the extensive disaster response capabilities and interests, climate resilient and sustainable infrastructure, and capacity building in ASEAN and island nations.
- The Blue Dot Network's **technology and framework are owned and governed by the OECD**, which hosts the Secretariat, and a steering committee of member governments and implemented by an **Independent Verifier appointed by the OECD**



# India-ASEAN Cooperation Projects



- India has been cooperating with ASEAN by way of implementation of various projects in the fields of Agriculture, Science & Technology, Space, Environment & Climate Change, Human Resource Development, Capacity Building, New and Renewable Energy, Tourism, People-to-People contacts and Connectivity etc.
- Both India and ASEAN countries are developing their own capabilities in Digital connectivity 5G technology , with companies like **Reliance Jio** and **Airtel** leading in India, and **Qualcomm** supporting development in ASEAN.
- Cooperation involves financial and technological support from India for ASEAN projects, including fibre networks, and a joint effort to improve digital connectivity and security through initiatives like the **Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR)**

# From Transfer to Co-Creation

- Old Model: Capacity building and replication.
- New Model: Co-creation and co-development of IP-led solutions.
- Build innovation ecosystems across developing nations.
- Example: India–Africa Innovation Bridge; IBSA Nanotech Initiative.
- Key Message: From technology immersion to technology origination.

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Thank you for your attention!

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