SOUTHERN VOICE

Strategic Framework

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Second and Current Version: August 2021

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STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

About this Document

Southern Voice (SV) finalized its first Strategy in 2017. In 2021, this document was updated and approved, following consultation with members and the Steering Committee of Southern Voice to reflect the evolution of the network. This document is accompanied by the document "Southern Voice's Governance, Management, and Secretariat".

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1 Overview

Southern Voice is a network of thinks tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America, which serves as an open platform to stimulate, generate, disseminate and promote high-quality, evidence-based analyses for the global dialogue on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Since its inception in 2012, Southern Voice has evolved into a vibrant network of think tanks dedicated to leveraging quality local data and research to not only enhance the discourse on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but also ameliorate the 2030 Agenda's impact on the Global South and beyond.

Our Vision

Southern Voice envisages a world in which power has been realigned between countries, resulting in fair and equitable engagement on global issues, and advancing a world in which people's rights and needs are met and sustainable development is achieved.

Our Mission

Southern Voice aims to contribute to a power realignment in inter-governmental relations on the 2030 Agenda and related development agendas. It does so by stimulating, generating and promoting high-quality evidence-based analyses on the SDGs, from think tanks of the Global South. It embeds Southern research in global discourse on the 2030 Agenda and promotes spaces for global deliberative evidence-based policy.

2 Strategic outcomes

The network works on the following strategic objectives:

Power realignment
Global South governments will have access to high-quality evidence-based policy analyses from the Global South, contributing to a reduction in the power differential between states in discourse and decisions on the 2030 Agenda.

Evidence-based policy making
Governments, inter-governmental for and other development actors will review and change policies and approaches related to the SDGs on the basis of deliberative reflection on high-quality evidence.

Strengthened multilateralism and the global partnership
Government, inter-governmental bodies and other relevant actors support, engage and fund the multilateral system, the global partnership and South-South Cooperation for achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Established and engaged network
Southern Voice has a firmly established governance structure and Secretariat able to support the full range of planned products and activities; systems that encourage and enable regional and thematic groups to form and function effectively; and both core and project resourcing from a diverse range of donors that supports these while mitigating risk.

3 Areas of work

Southern Voice, in the period 2013-2020, has strengthened its programmes, structures and systems to enable its member think tanks to have greater collective effectiveness and impact. The work of the network, to fulfil its mission and accomplish the strategic outcomes, is organized in the following areas:

Convening
We bring together think tanks as a global network as well as at regional levels and in thematic groups. This enables them to work together at different levels: to learn from each other and build each other's capabilities; and to collectively influence governments, inter-governmental bodies and other actors towards the Strategic Outcomes

Research
The core business of all think tanks is research. As a network, we undertake new collaborative research and combine the results of our existing research agendas to increase their impact. We pursue the production of high-quality relevant research and the implementation of quality assurance mechanisms to our joint work.

Influencing

The purpose of our research together is to contribute to the Strategic Outcomes; we can only achieve this contribution if we consciously use our research and its results to build a power shift; to strengthen the global partnership; and to create spaces for deliberative policy formation.

Learning

Think tanks have high levels of skills, knowledge and competencies; one benefit of working as a network is that members can learn from each other and become individually and collectively stronger. Southern Voice strengthens the skill for research and engagement with global and local policy contexts. Southern Voice will collaborate with other organisations that can provide the necessary training and support. Think Tanks' capacities, however, will primarily be improved informally through their engagement with, and learning from, each other.

4 Operation

All four areas of work can make a contribution at three levels:

- *Global:* The SDG processes, and the inter-governmental bodies that steer them, are a key level of intervention for Southern Voice.
- *Regional:* Regional inter-governmental bodies are an important point of intervention where specific collaborations of think tanks can have a relevant role.
- *National:* All governments have made commitments on the SDGs. Supporting policy deliberations with evidence; working for transparency and accountability in the delivery of the SDGs; and enabling governments to participate in international events armed with strong evidence are key roles for individual member think tank at national level.

SV recognises that there are some areas in which the network will be most effective if activities are coordinated centrally. Equally, there are many areas in which groups of members taking the initiative can contribute to effectiveness and impact; in these cases, the role of the centre is facilitative and enabling.

5 Governance

As a network, Southern Voice is accountable to its members. The **General Assembly** is the ultimate governing body of Southern Voice; ensuring that members have ownership of its direction, strategies, research priorities, constitution and rules. The General Assembly appoints a Steering Committee to oversee the network between Assemblies and holds the Secretariat to account.

The **Steering Committee** is accountable to the General Assembly for governance of Southern Voice between biennial General Assembly meetings. The Steering Committee provides advice and direction to the activities of the network and has oversight of the implementation of the strategy and programmes by the Secretariat. The SC can decide on the number of members depending on the workload, and regional needs. The number of members can be increased.

The Steering Committee is currently comprised of a Chair Person, a representative of the Host organization (ex-officio), the Director (ex-officio), and representatives from each of the following regions: Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Steering Committee members are currently asked to serve in their personal capacity and not as institutional representatives.

The **Secretariat** is the operational hub of the network. It leads, enables and coordinates the members of Southern Voice to work together to achieve the network's mission and deliver its strategy. The Secretariat is accountable to the General Assembly through the Steering Committee.

Southern Voice is not a legally autonomous entity, therefore, one of the member organizations is the **Host Institution** of the Secretariat. It acts as fiduciary host of the Secretariat and supports it in fulfilling its role as hub of the network, including in the hiring of staff and execution of contracts. The Host Institution at present is the Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE) in Peru.

A detailed description for each governance structures, the functioning of the Secretariat, and executive roles are given in "Southern Voice's Governance, Management, and Secretariat," a separate document.

Illustration 1. Southern Voice Governance
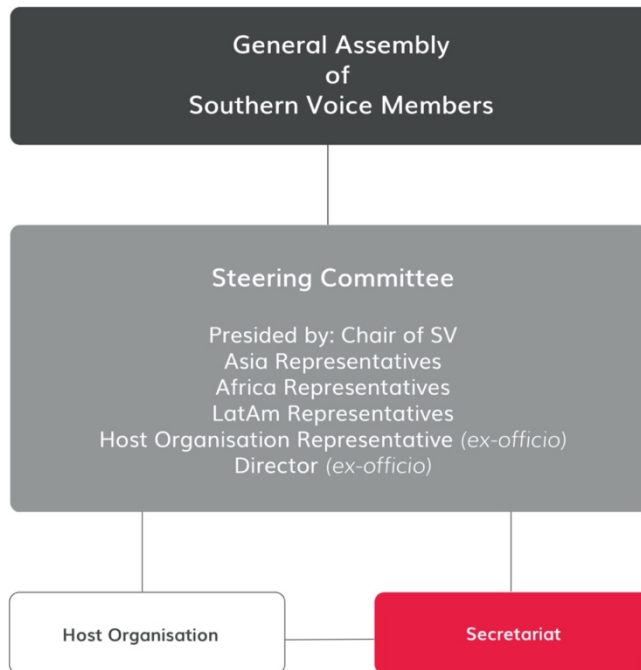
Membership Criteria

Southern Voice welcomes new members. New members are primarily nominated by current members. If other think tanks become interested in being part of the network, the Outreach, Membership, and Partnerships Sub-Committee, with the support of the Secretariat, will assess whether they fulfil the criteria.

Criteria for membership is as follows:

- The organisation is a non-profit research organisation or think tank;

- It works in a sustained way on issues that are related to the SDGs;

- It is based in the Global South.

A relatively simple procedure for admitting new members will be used, with the Steering Committee approving nominations. As of 2020, an Outreach, Membership, and Partnerships Sub-committee of the Steering Committee. The procedure will be:

- Current member nominates proposed new member;

- Secretariat checks that it is a non-profit research organisation based in the Global South, and that at least some of its work is on topics directly relevant to the SDGs;

- Secretariat consults Outreach, Membership, and Partnerships Sub-Committee;

- Secretariat or Sub-Committee recommends to the Steering Committee;

- Steering Committee decides and informs the nominator and nominee;

- Secretariat contacts the new member and sends welcome pack.

Members' mutual expectations, rights and responsibilities

SV will produce documentation of members' mutual expectations, and an outline of the rights and responsibilities of membership. At this stage of SV's development, however, members have not yet had the chance to engage sufficiently with each other to have a clear sense of what they would expect of each other. In the early phases SV will focus on creating the opportunities to engage with each other. A mutual expectations document will be developed for debate and discussion at the 2021 Assembly and finalised thereafter.

6 Executive structure

To carry outs its strategy, Southern Voice has an executive structure that includes: the Chair of the Steering Committee, the Director of the Secretariat, and the Representative of the Host organization. See "Details on Southern Voice's Governance, Management, and Secretariat," a separate document, for more on each of their responsibilities and authorities.

7 Resources for the network

The network's activities and plans will be determined by the availability of financial and human capacity. This implies the need for finances and human resources to be available for the network activities – both for the secretariat and within the membership. The Chair along with the Director will take on the main role of raising funds while the other members of the Steering Committee shall support efforts to ensure financial and human resource availability. As of 2020, the Outreach, Membership, and Partnerships Sub-Committee of the Steering Committee will be specifically engaged on fundraising ideas.

Members can receive appropriate remuneration for their time in carrying out the activities related to the network or on specific research or other projects. In addition, based on funds, Southern Voice will try to meet travel expenses related to fulfilling the activities delineated above.

Annex I: Key indicators for the Strategy monitoring

Southern Voice works towards its mission through its key areas of work: research, convening, influencing and learning. The table below summarises the key indicators that will be monitoring our strategy.

Indicator	Rationale	Data source and collection
Research		
Publications and articles usage	These indicators track how much the research produced by Southern Voice is read and downloaded. This is one channel of influence, and of achieving SV's strategic outcomes.	Statistics from visits to publications (Google analytics)
Citations of SV publications		Statistics of Google Scholar and Google Alerts. Log of mentions and other usages.
Convening		
Participation in SV organized events & proportion of high- level experts and policymakers present.	These indicators will demonstrate that SV is recognised by governments and other influencers as a convenor of relevant debates, and that SV are key experts for global debates.	Log of attendance to events
Invitations received to participate in events and conferences.		Log of invitations and engagements
Influencing		
Participation of SV experts in key global meetings and fora.	These indicators track the demand for SV research and the instances in which SV has provided commentary and advised key actors in global development.	Log of invitations and engagements

	11	
Engagement with development partners and global policy actors to provide evidence and policy advice.		Log of invitations and engagements
Engagement in SV's social media and newsletter, particularly global experts and policymakers.		Social media and newsletter statistics and records.
Visitors of webpage by geographical location.		Webpage statistics (Google analytics.
Learning		
Access of staff from member think tanks to Southern Voice opportunities and resources.	These indicators show how active the network is in different activities and opportunities promoted by the network.	Statistics from internal newsletter and calls for research.
Participation of SV members in SV research, and outreach activities.		Statistics of participation in events, authorship of publications, and articles, etc.