

Concept Note

Southern Voice on Global Development (SVGD)

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The Southern Voice on Global Development Initiative

Introduction

The future of the global development agenda will be debated at a time when the multilateral system is experiencing one of its most significant crises. Erosion of trust in international institutions, shifts toward unilateral decision-making, over-politicization of global governance structures, and geopolitical tensions have all weakened collective action. Countries that traditionally provided funding for development are scaling back their contributions. Furthermore, ongoing conflicts, climate emergencies, and financial instability are straining the capacity of international cooperation mechanisms to deliver meaningful progress towards a more sustainable future for people and planet.

These challenges highlight an urgent need for global development debates to be rooted in evidence that reflects the realities of those most affected by these shifts. The Southern Voice on Global Development (SVGD), the network's flagship initiative previously known as the Southern Voice on the State of the SDGs (SVSS), contributes to this goal by amplifying research from the Global South and positioning these perspectives in global debates.

The SVGD 2027 edition aims to contribute to **shaping the post-2030 global development agenda by providing context-specific evidence from the Global South to inform a more just, effective, and future-ready development framework**. It will showcase concrete examples of local solutions—successful interventions or policies from across the Global South—that have demonstrably advanced development outcomes. As Southern Voice's flagship initiative, SVGD 2027 seeks to co-produce strategic Southern knowledge, foster collaborative research, and enrich global debates with fresh perspectives and actionable insights that place Global South leadership at the centre of global transformation. The SVGD 2027 has the following components:

- **Cross-regional comparative case studies**, which bring locally-based evidence on successful policies or interventions from across the Global South,

investigating what elements enabled their success, as well as how obstacles were overcome. These studies will allow Southern researchers to draw overarching lessons that can contribute to shaping the post-2030 development agenda to become more aligned with local realities and make its implementation more effective.

- The **SV Dialogues Platform** is a co-creating space that will bring together Global South researchers and key global policy actors to discuss Global South perspectives on the post-2030 agenda and the future of global development. Along with the case studies' findings, the inputs generated by these dialogues will inform the Global Report and contribute to positioning Global South perspectives to influence decision-making and global debates.
- The **Global Report** aims to provide concrete insights and forward-looking recommendations from a Global South perspective to inform the post-2030 debates and the future of global development.

The SVGD will therefore help bridge the evidence-to-action gap, amplify Global South research, and foster stronger collaboration among Southern researchers and institutions to shape a more inclusive global development agenda.

Southern Voice on Global Development 2027

As in previous editions of this flagship initiative, the Southern Voice on Global Development 2027 aims to amplify Global South research and knowledge, promoting a bottom-up approach that brings local realities into global development debates and decision-making. In particular, this edition seeks to inform and influence the formulation of the global development agenda beyond 2030 by drawing on grounded and context-specific experiences from the Global South. Upon consulting with our members and several global stakeholders¹, it became clear that, while

¹ SVGD's design and focus have been shaped by collective perspectives gathered through an iterative consultation process, including roundtable conversations and a survey. Engaging key stakeholders, SV Steering Committee members, and former SVSS researchers, we reviewed lessons from previous editions to refine strategies for lasting impact and reaffirm the flagship initiative's role in amplifying Global South priorities in international development debates. The consultations underscored the need for sustained Global South leadership in research and expanded opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration and feedback in order to ensure the SVGD remains a platform for meaningful engagement and influence.

having collective global goals is crucial, achieving them in highly diverse contexts has proven challenging. The limited and in some cases reversed progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), further exacerbated by a deepening multilateral crisis and ongoing geopolitical turmoil, is a testament to this diagnosis. Additionally, we have found that development research originating from the Global South receives relatively low recognition and has a limited role in setting knowledge agendas², indicating a gap between local evidence and global debates.

The SVGD 2027 challenges this scenario by bringing examples of concrete solutions –interventions and policies that show clear and measurable progress in addressing a development challenge, contributing to a tangible advancement in outcomes, systems, or capacities– from the Global South. The initiative will focus on what **factors enabled their success, as well as how obstacles were overcome**, whether at the design, implementation, monitoring, or evaluation stages. Based on these experiences, the initiative’s researchers will draw overarching lessons that can contribute to making the post-2030 development agenda more aligned with local realities and implementation more effective.

The initiative will be guided by the main question: What lessons from the Global South can shape a more just, effective, and future-ready global development agenda beyond 2030?

To enable a deeper, more nuanced analysis, the initiative will also aim to answer the following secondary questions:

- How should the post-2030 development agenda be shaped from a Global South perspective?
- What key characteristics should it have to reflect Southern priorities, realities, and leadership?
- How can we ensure that the post-2030 agenda is inclusive, context-aware, and truly transformative?

² Ordóñez Llanos et al., (2024) Envisioning an equitable future for research across the North-South Divide. Available [here](#).

The initiative's three main components are described in the next section.

Components of the initiative

Component I: Cross-Regional Comparative Case Studies

To ground conclusions in local experiences, the SVGD 2027 will draw lessons from a series of **cross-regional comparative case studies**. Each comparative case study will be conducted by a working group composed of three member think tanks, one from each region (Africa, Asia, and Latin America & the Caribbean - LAC). Each think tank in the working group will work on an example of policy or intervention from their own region, totalling three examples per cross-regional comparative case study. With the understanding that Global South researchers should be able to set their own research agendas, the working groups will be responsible for defining the specific theme of the comparative case studies. Nonetheless, the working group members must coordinate to ensure the examples they are studying have enough commonalities and the research methods are sufficiently aligned to ensure a cohesive comparative case study that brings these examples together at the end of the research process. Each working group will designate a working group lead to ensure this coordination takes place and to be the focal point that will bridge communication between the member think tanks and the SV Secretariat.

Each cross-regional comparative case study must include an in-depth analysis of the key factors that contributed to the success of the specific policies or interventions selected. Based on input gathered from SV members, there is an indication that some of these key factors are localisation, partnerships, financing, and integration of goals. The SVGD 2027 may, therefore, explore these or even other factors identified by the researchers in the comparative case studies, which can significantly bolster effectiveness in implementation. The overarching lessons that can feed into the post-2030 agenda development process must be clear, for although the comparative case studies should be contextually grounded, their applicability should go beyond the specific local or national setting.

The findings from the comparative case studies, in combination with the insights generated through the Dialogues Platform (detailed further below), will be analysed and compiled into a Global Report aimed at informing discussions around the post-2030 future of development.

The cross-regional approach aims to foster South-South collaboration and knowledge exchange between researchers, enriching the initiative as a whole and strengthening Global South research networks. It will also encourage collaboration between researchers with different technical, methodological, and cultural backgrounds, breaking knowledge silos and bringing a more holistic approach. The comparative analyses within each comparative case study will enrich the discussion, allowing the Global Report to more deeply integrate Southern perspectives on the future of development.

Research questions

Each comparative case study should adequately respond to the following questions:

- What development challenge were the selected policies and interventions seeking to address?
- What was their relevance in the national, regional, and global context?
- What is the evidence that shows the significant advance on the development issue in question?
- What are the key factors that contributed to the success of these policies and interventions in advancing development issues (e.g. localisation, means of implementation, integration, capacity, intersectionality, etc.)?
- If there were significant challenges to their implementation, how were they overcome to ensure success?
- What were the key lessons that stakeholders in other countries could take from this case?

Publication

The comparative case studies will be published independently, increasing the visibility of the research and the transparency of the Global Report (detailed further below).

Component II: Southern Voice Dialogues

The initiative will create a platform to host the exchanges mentioned previously among researchers and policymakers. The platform convenings will take place in parallel to the development of the cross-regional comparative studies component, but they will be organised by the Southern Voice Secretariat.

This platform aims to drive evidence-based decision-making and tangible policy impact by mobilising knowledge and engaging key stakeholders through collective intelligence and collaborative approaches. The convenings under this component will: first, define Global South priorities and narratives for the post-2030 agenda and the future of global development; second, connect and position these priorities with global, regional, and multilateral actors; and, third, strategically influence international spaces to shape future global development goals, ensuring that Southern perspectives and locally grounded insights inform global policies.

The goal is for the platform to become a key dialogue space for understanding Global South perspectives on the post-2030 agenda and for meaningful exchanges among stakeholders with a wide range of perspectives. Ultimately, we expect these Dialogues to enrich the research findings and inform the post-2030 debates in a purposeful and inclusive way. The Dialogues will be divided into three tracks with different but complementary objectives.

Track 1 - South-South learning and collaboration

This track focuses on driving exchange, peer learning, and collective strategic action in the Global South, a core aspect of Southern Voice's work. Three groups will be engaged in successive stages, gradually expanding dialogue to validate and enrich findings, and co-create the narrative and the overarching framework emerging from

the SVGD research components. First, researchers directly involved in the SVGD main research component (comparative case study authors) will contribute insights; next, the 71 institutions of the Southern Voice network will be invited to participate to broaden and deepen the discussion; and finally, as appropriate, other Global South stakeholders will be engaged to contribute to shape a framing that resonates widely and fosters a co-created vision for the post-2030 agenda.

The timing, themes, and invited participants of each convening will be shaped by the evolving needs and interests of the researchers—ensuring that every gathering adds real value, responds to the process, and maximises collective learning at each stage of the initiative. To maximise this track’s contribution to the research component, these conversations are expected to begin at project onset, with alignment meetings between initiative researchers and report authors to define and refine the research framing and narrative (more details on team structure below). Some potential agendas include discussions around research design, methodology, strengthening the actionability of the studies, and connecting local findings with global debates.

Track 2 - Global Policy Dialogues

Track 2 focuses on fostering strategic collaboration with organisations and key stakeholders shaping the post-2030 agenda. It aims to connect and create dialogue among a diverse set of regional and global actors from both the Global South and Global North, with the objectives of positioning Southern perspectives, bridging North–South divides on priority issues, and identifying areas of common ground and tension to strengthen global collective action’s alignment with Southern priorities and uncover high-impact partnerships. This includes inviting relevant partners to co-create with the Southern Voice network common elements of narrative or joint strategies based on respective agendas, and identifying champions who can amplify and advance Global South perspectives and priorities.

The platform will therefore foster engagement between the researchers and key stakeholders, such as policymakers, practitioners, multilateral actors, and external experts, among others. These exchanges will contribute to refine and better position Global South narratives and findings, increasing their influence in global governance

spaces and, therefore, bolstering impact. These conversations are expected to kick-start at the beginning of the research process, but will have more frequent convenings once the comparative case studies begin to yield their initial findings, likely in the second semester of 2026.

Track 3 - Engaging in global and regional forums

This track focuses on building strategic relationships with key decision-makers involved in the post-2030 process and other relevant debates and spaces (at the global, regional, and national levels, as appropriate), to support the timely uptake of evidence, and engaging with key relevant milestones in the UN and multilateral organisations calendar. Activities within this track seek to actively position pertinent evidence and expertise from the Global South throughout the post-2030 process. It will also inform the Global Report, by contributing insights into the developments in the post-2030 debate that will help shape, where appropriate, how evidence, and elements of narrative and language, can be presented for optimal impact.

Track 3 activities will include, on one hand, direct outreach to key stakeholders at key UN forums and agencies (e.g. 2027 SDG Summit, office of the UN Secretary General, UN-DESA). On the other, this track will support champions within the Southern Voice network to participate in key milestones in the global political calendar (e.g. High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), selection of the new UN Secretary General, SDG Summit, initial review of the implementation of the Pact for the Future, G20 process, Munich Security Conference, and Hamburg Sustainability Conference). Additionally, an in-person side event at the HLPF is planned to officially launch the Global Report. Finally, Southern Voice will produce a final policy paper gathering key conclusions and recommendations based on the input generated through these conversations. The document will be made available to the general public through SV's website.

Component III: The SVGD Global Report

The Global Report will integrate insights from both the case studies and Dialogues to distill critical lessons from the Global South and offer a deeper analysis to inform

the post-2030 agenda. The combination of in-depth, local-level analyses and rich multi-stakeholder exchanges will allow for a robust and multidimensional output. The Global Report will capture not only evidence of what has worked at the national level through the comparative case studies, but also practitioner insights, regional nuances, and emerging ideas harnessed through the Dialogues Platform. This combination will enable report authors to further refine analyses at the global level and identify patterns that bridge different regions and thematic areas, helping shape a cohesive narrative and body of lessons.

The Global Report will be drafted chiefly by the senior lead, with contributions from the working group leads (see below), and any other working group researchers who would like to contribute to the co-writing process.

Communication and dissemination

Southern Voice will disseminate the insights generated through the different components of this initiative among the research and policy communities, as well as to wider audiences, at every step. The SVGD will thus amplify the reach of Global South research and perspectives. Our member think tanks, particularly those engaged in the initiative, will be key partners in this dissemination effort.

Team structure

Working groups

Cross-regional working groups of researchers based in SV member think tanks across the Global South will be the cornerstone of this initiative. Each working group will be composed of researchers based in three different think tanks, one per region. The working groups will carry out the comparative case studies, each analysing three examples of policies or interventions, also one per region. The researchers engaged in the initiative will also be key participants in the Dialogues platform. Each working group will be responsible for the internal coordination necessary to develop its comparative case study.

Working group leads

Each working group will designate one of the member think tanks to be responsible for coordination within the working group. The working group lead will ensure the smooth development of the research process, as well as the harmony and cohesiveness between the three examples of the comparative case study. Additionally, this working group lead will be the focal point who will bridge the communication between the working group and the Southern Voice Secretariat. The working group leads will also directly contribute to the development of the Global Report.

Senior lead

The senior lead will be designated to carry out several roles within the initiative. Firstly, they will support the researchers in the working groups by offering feedback and technical insights, particularly in the research design and definition of the framework for the comparative analysis, implementation, and draft review stages. They will also, together with the researchers and SV Secretariat, contribute to choosing the themes and participants of the different Dialogues convenings. Finally, the senior lead will have a key role in the construction of a consistent narrative for the Global Report, ensuring coordination among the researchers to collectively build this narrative. With significant contributions from the working group leads, the senior lead will also be responsible for drafting the Global Report.

Implementation plan

Part 1 - Research: comparative case studies and Global Report (February - December 2026)

The researchers leading the selected comparative case studies will use Track 1 Dialogues convenings (detailed below) to establish the final framework for the initiative and refine their respective research design and methodology. They will then begin implementation, including empirical and analytical phases. Initial findings and reflections will be brought forth in Track 2 Dialogues convenings. An analysis taking

stock of all the comparative case studies' findings, identifying overarching factors and trends, will reveal key lessons for the development of a post-2030 agenda. In combination with the input from the Dialogues conversations, this analysis will inform the drafting of the Global Report. After thorough internal and peer reviews, this stage concludes with the presentation of the final drafts of the comparative case studies and the global report.

- Comparative case studies development: 10 months.
- Global Report development: 5 months, with overlap on the last two months of the development of the comparative case studies.

Part 2 - Platform Dialogues (February 2026 - September 2027)

Track 1 Dialogues will begin soon after the kick-off meeting, to enable researchers to develop a framework and start building a cohesive narrative for their studies and Global Report. The exchanges described previously in this concept note will continue as the research progresses, focusing on strengthening the research, fostering peer learning, and aligning the joint narrative.

As initial findings and reflections emerge, the Track 2 Dialogue convenings will help the researchers and senior leads to a) connect the national-level analyses with global debates, and b) position their findings and perspectives in the global discussions around the post-2030 agenda. Track 3 activities will also begin at this stage and continue into the dedicated outreach stage of the project.

Part 3 - Publication and dedicated outreach (December 2026 - September 2027)

The drafts will proceed to editing, review, and layout to prepare for publication. A launch event is planned to take place around the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2027. Activities linked to Track 3 of the Dialogues will be crucial during this stage of implementation. We will leverage the momentum created by the Dialogues platform to increase policy impact and reach during the launch event and post-research outreach activities. The dedicated outreach will, among other actions,

target key global platforms in 2027, such as HLPF, the SDG Summit, and the 82nd Session of the UN General Assembly.

Proposed timeline for key milestones

Initiative phase	Estimated dates
Submission of applications by	16 January, 2026
Selection process results	February, 2026
Kick-off (virtual)	February, 2026
Submission of complete drafts of country comparative case studies	Q4 2026
Publication ready	Q2 2027
Launch event	July 2027