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Concept Note: FfD4 Side Event

Proposed Title:

Emerging donors in action: tracking, boosting, and shaping development

Proposed Co-Hosts: The Lowy Institute

To be confirmed potential Co-Hosts: Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), Shanghai University, Korea International Cooperation Agency, and emerging donor government aid agencies, including Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), Ministry of External Affairs of India, Indonesia AID

Proposed Time Slot:
Wednesday, 2 July 2025, 10:30 am -12:00 pm *(TBC based on final availability and speaker schedules, and flexible)*

Background

Independent of fluctuations and instability in global ODA flows, South-South Cooperation and contributions from emerging donors are rapidly gaining importance as a complement to traditional development assistance. The draft FfD4 outcome document urges new development partners to "scale up their contributions and support" and to "enhance triangular cooperation" between established and emerging donors and recipient countries.

However, unlocking the full potential of emerging donors remains a challenge. Fragmented systems, inconsistent definitions, and poor data interoperability continue to hamper transparency and coordination, leaving Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with limited visibility and weak planning capacity.

Strong data and digital infrastructure are essential to fix these gaps. Yet today, global financial flows remain scattered, undermining development effectiveness when it is needed most.

Against this backdrop, the Lowy Institute, with support from the Australian Government, has been working to close the data gap by tracking development finance from emerging donors in Asia (https://seamap.lowyinstitute.org/) and the Pacific (https://pacificaidmap.lowyinstitute.org/), a region where emerging donors play a leading role and where intra-regional development financing (from the region, to the region) is rapidly expanding.

In support of the efforts of UNCTAD and the Working Group of Measurement of Development Support, and in parallel with UNCTAD's pilot program on Quantifying South-South Cooperation for the SDGs, we aim to identify data collection and reporting approaches to inform UNCTAD's process, drawing from the experience and expertise of our region. Through better data and capacity building, we aim to strengthen policymaking, build capabilities, and enable more strategic engagement across

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all development actors, balancing the need for greater transparency with the imperative to foster an inclusive, agile and flexible development cooperation system with low barriers to entry for new and emerging donors.

This side event will explore:

- The evolving role of emerging development partners, globally and specifically within the Asia-Pacific;
- The critical need for data transparency, predictability, and standards alignment;
- How traditional partners can support emerging donors in building stronger reporting systems, enhancing the effectiveness and credibility of South-South cooperation.

At a time when the future of development finance is increasingly uncertain, this session will shed light on the growing contributions of emerging donors, and demonstrate why greater transparency, coordination, and data-driven cooperation are essential to maximise impact and ensure no partner is left behind.

Objectives

- **Highlight the growing role of emerging development partners**
  Showcase how South-South Cooperation and intra-regional financing are evolving and why emerging donors are increasingly key to achieving global development goals, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Identify barriers that fragment global development finance and disadvantage vulnerable recipients**
  Explore the technical, institutional, and political obstacles to tracking and aligning finance from emerging donors, and show how these inefficiencies disproportionately affect LDCs and fragile economies.
- **Support efforts by UNCTAD to progress the SSC Framework in pursuit of SDG 17.3**
  Advance practical proposals to strengthen planning, coordination, and financing strategies in developing countries by scaling up support for robust aid management systems and leveraging forward-looking data.
  Promote collaboration between traditional and emerging donors to close capacity gaps without undermining South-South Cooperation principles.
- **Deliver actionable recommendations to strengthen transparency, coordination, and triangular cooperation**
  Identify specific steps to improve data systems, harmonise reporting practices, and foster triangular cooperation, ensuring development finance is more efficient, predictable, and impactful for all.

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Format and agenda (90 Minutes)

Time	Segment
0–10 min	**Opening remarks** - Welcome and scene-setting by Australia and the Lowy Institute
10–50 min	**High-level panel -** Perspectives from co-organizers and key partners
50–70 min	**Interactive roundtable -** Input from broader stakeholders and participants
70–85 min	**Political call to action -** Launch of joint declaration to support integration of the Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation, prioritising support for national aid management systems of LDCs
85–90 min	**Closing -** Wrap-up and submission of session outcomes

Strategic Fit with FfD4 and Sevilla Platform for Action

1. Scaling up ODA and alternative flows

- The FFD4 draft explicitly calls for **reversing ODA declines** and **scaling up new sources of development finance.**

3. Capacity building and country systems

- The FFD4 draft stresses the need **to strengthen national development finance systems and promote country ownership.**

4. Triangular and South-South Cooperation

- The FFD4 draft specifically calls for **enhancing triangular cooperation** between traditional and emerging donors.

5. Inclusion of vulnerable countries

- The FFD4 draft prioritises ensuring that LDCs and vulnerable countries are not left behind.

Key messages

- **Emerging donors are reshaping development finance in the Indo-Pacific.**
- **Better data means better decisions, for both donors and recipients.**
- **Stronger national aid systems are key to country-led development.**
- **Triangular cooperation unlocks the full potential of South-South partnerships.**

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