

# South-South Cooperation for Safe Motherhood

## **Good Practice:**

Bhutan-Thailand-UNFPA  
Technical Cooperation under  
Trilateral Partnership





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# Executive Summary

The technical cooperation on Safe Motherhood under South-South Cooperation was initiated by Thailand-Bhutan-UNFPA with the aim at reducing maternal mortality rate in Bhutan. This technical cooperation focuses on institutional capacity development of health personnel from service providers, health workforce trainers to health managers. Thailand based knowledge and experiences were tailored to needs and demands to Bhutan. As the facilitator, UNFPA ensures the systematic steps and process planned with good quality, true partnership, and sustainability. The model of this initiative definitely can be duplicated and applicable to other countries.

## Background

In the Asia Pacific region and beyond, Thailand is held up as a success story in the areas of family planning, maternal health, and population and development. Since the 1970's Thailand has contributed to the development of health personnel from over 20 countries across the globe.

Low and middle-income countries in the region look to Thailand for technical support and guidance in the arena of health in particular. With support from UNFPA, Thailand is well positioned in the region to provide this leadership.

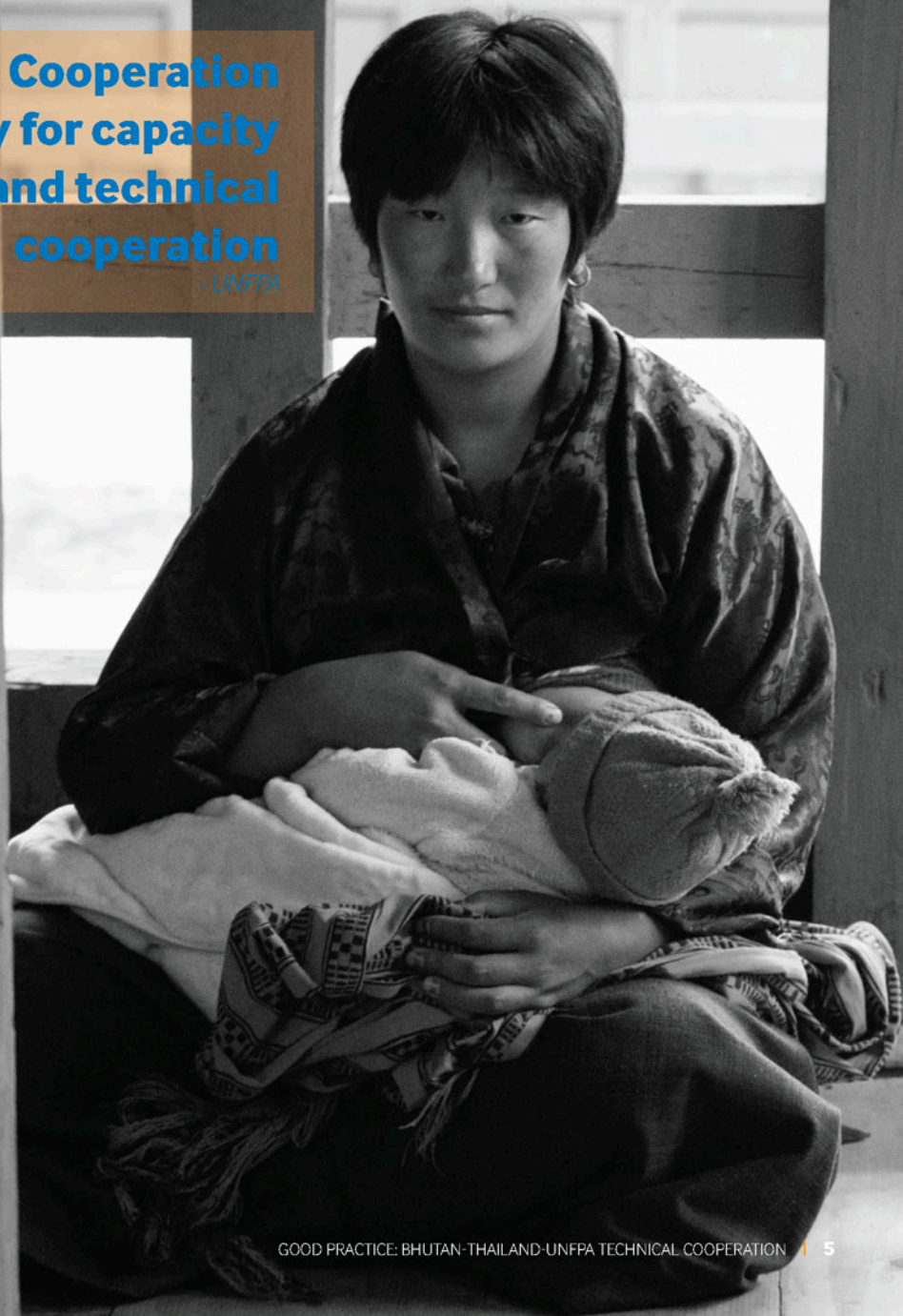
With the deadline to achieve the MDGs and ICPD fast approaching, there is need provide technical support to countries those still lagging behind in achieving their targets is being accelerated.

By 2002, as Thailand became increasingly popular as a regional destination for learning, The Royal Thai Government, recognising this demand, appointed Thailand's International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) as the national coordinator on international development cooperation as well as south-south Cooperation.

South-South Cooperation (SSC) is based on the notion that countries facing common challenges and seeking to achieve common goals can make faster progress through shared learning and experiences.

**South-South Cooperation  
is the key strategy for capacity  
development and technical  
cooperation**

- UNFPA





## How did it start?

Ensuring the support Thailand provides is truly demand driven, in 2008, TICA with the support of UNFPA conducted a country needs assessment in the region to identify needs on Thailand's technical cooperation as well as the preferable methodology of technical supports. Along with the needs assessment, Thailand's South-South cooperation strategy on Reproductive Health and Population Development was reviewed.

What followed was a paradigm shift in the way Thailand provided technical cooperation. From individual capacity development, training and study visits that benefitted only a few and whose impact was hard to assess, Thailand shifted its focus to institutional building, strengthening and global partnership development with their neighbouring countries. Of the top three identified priority areas for Technical Corporation, support required in Maternal Health was priority. Myanmar, Laos, and Bhutan were chosen as pilot countries for this approach.

# Development Process

**T**ICA and UNFPA hired a consultant, ASEAN Institute of Health Development (AIHD), Mahidol University to moderate the processes with Thai experts and institutions, target governments, UNFPA offices in order to come up with draft technical co-operation action plan on Maternal Health. In this connection, the following processes were implemented:

**Involvement of Regional Office:** Through Thailand Programme Desk at regional office, the result on needs for technical cooperation on Maternal Health was brought up to the attention of Regional Technical Advisor. Meetings and discussion on objective of Thai lead South-South Cooperation and new strategy on technical cooperation were discussed. The Technical Advisor on Maternal Health assisted to provide more information and link Thailand SSC with focal points in the target countries.

**Clarification of needs with Country Offices:** Focal points on Maternal Health from three countries together with the Regional Technical Advisor met with AIHD and selected key experts and Institutions on Reproductive Health. Discussion needs and updates to maternal health situations were made.

**Technical Capacity on Maternal Health:** Followed the process two, around twenty experts and representatives from Thai institutions specialise on reproductive and maternal health were invited for discussion on their capacities for technical cooperation. Experiences and good practices on international technical cooperation were re-viewed to ensure alignment of their expertise with needs and the target countries.

**Shopping Around on Thailand Good Practices on Maternal Health:** Ten health officials working on Maternal Health from three countries were invited for a study visit to Thailand for maternal health programmes at national, provincial and sub provincial levels, including: Chiang Mai and Maehongson areas.

After completion of the identification of areas for maternal health technical cooperation and Thailand's capacity review, with some difficulties, Myanmar and Laos could not continue with the pilot technical cooperation under the trilateral partner-ship. Bhutan is the only country ready for technical cooperation.

# South-South Cooperation is considered as an important development instrument and resource mobilisation objective

– International Conference on Population and Development



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