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**THE CHINA-MOZAMBIQUE PROJECT OF AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY  
TRANSFER UNDER WAADL: HOW DOES IT FIT INTO THE SOUTH-SOUTH  
COOPERATION DEBATE?**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the extent to which the China-Mozambique Project of Agricultural Technology Transfer under Wanbao Africa Agriculture Development, Ltd (WAADL) fits into the South-South Cooperation mode of development cooperation. The result we found is that the project partly aligns with national priorities for several reasons. Amongst the setbacks of this projects there is the control by the ruling elite, which prevents small farmers from having a meaningful participation in decision-making for their own development. Another problem encountered was the dominance of Chinese officials in the management of the project and the lack of information concerning non-conditionality. The study contributes to a broader understanding of the principle of national ownership as well as a common methodology to assess the quality of South-South projects. Finally, this is just one principle of SSC, therefore, it does not provide a general view of how does this project fit into SSC. Coupled to it, it cannot be interpreted as describing in the whole spectrum of how the Wanbao project fits into SSC, given its reliance on secondary data, in majority.

**Keywords:** Inclusive National Ownership, Nest Africa, South-South Cooperation, WAADL

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## Introduction

The China-Mozambique Project of Agricultural Technology Transfer under Wanbao Africa Agriculture Development, Ltd (WAADL) was officially launched in 2012. This project is a partnership between the Chinese company WAADL and the Mozambican government for the transfer of agricultural technology to increase agricultural productivity. The project came to replace the Hubei Lianfeng. Mozambique Company, Lda (HLMO Co) in 2011, another Chinese company that was established in Mozambique in 2007 to address the deficit of food supply in the district of Xai-Xai and help Mozambique through technology transfer, but failed to do so due to financial and material difficulties (Chichava, 2015:111).

As such, the Wanbao Xai-Xai project emerges to respond to this problem faced by Mozambican people, in particular, people from Xai-Xai, on the one hand. On the other hand, it reflects the increasing efforts taken by southern partners to strengthen their relationship under the framework of South-South Cooperation/solidarity. The growing engagement of southern partners in strengthening South-South solidarity is illustrated by the continued meetings China-Africa under FOCAC. It was, for instance, in one of these meetings, in 2007, that China and Mozambique initiated conversations and agreed to establish a center of training and technology transfer in Xai-Xai. This center was called rice Hubei Gaza friendship farm and was managed by the HLMO as aforementioned. Coupled with the domestic deficit of food and need to assure food security in Mozambique, the establishment of the Wanbao Xai-Xai project reflects the widespread efforts undertaken in the whole African continent to develop agriculture and ensure African people do not struggle to get food.

These national, regional and international dynamics led to the establishment of the China-Mozambique Project of Agricultural Technology Transfer under WAADL was officially launched in 2012. To work in the production of rice and supporting local farmers WAADL was conceded a land of 20,000ha for a period of 50 years by the government of Mozambique. Starting from 2012, WAADL aimed at investing US\$289m in Xai-Xai to grow rice over a period of 3-5 years. Besides the production of rice, WAADL also had the plan to grow maize and other crops on a small scale (Wanbao Grain & Oil undated).

Since its inception till 2015, few the available research on this project (Chichava, 2014 ;) indicate that 65 farmers were trained in Chinese rice technical production by 2013. Besides training local farmers, the Wanbao Xai-Xai project constructed agricultural infrastructure, and provided agricultural inputs to other Chinese farms that it subcontracted its land. 3. While these insights are positives, Chichava (2014:3) asserts that this project is “accused of failing to transfer agricultural technology and knowledge to the local farmers, instead of selling its services at unaffordable prices, and of not respecting local labor laws by paying salaries below minimum wage” (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, several authors (Anesi and Fama, 2013; Madureira, 2013; Chichava, 2014:3) consensually inform that Wanbao project has displaced many people, leaving them without the sources to produce food their living. These and other insights coming from the ground are reported in the literature related to this project. But, such literature says little, if not, about the meaning of these grounded experiences as interpreted by the framework of South-South Cooperation. They do not respond the question of how does WAADAL project fit into the south-south cooperation debate based, mostly, but not exclusively on its grounded experiences.

This is critical because it gives the impression that the Wanbao Project is detached from the framework of SSC. Therefore, one fail to understand the dynamic of SSC. Therefore, it is important to examine this project under the framework especially now that NeST Africa,<sup>1</sup> (2015) created a framework of analysis of SSC project. Prior to NeST Africa there was no common methodology for assessing the quality or evaluating SSC (NeST Africa, 2015). So, the NeST Africa methodology is the first framework intended to be applied to analyze the quality of countries from the Global South. Thus, this study operationalizes this framework to addresses the lack of assessment of this project under the rubric of SSC.

To attain this aim we first we first choose the principle of Inclusive National Ownership (INO), amongst others used as analytical frames of SSC development projects in the NeST Africa (2015) framework. We choose the INO principle because it was declared to be the core principle of SSC in the Conference of Southern Providers (RIS, 2013). Moreover, after analyzing the INO principle of any activity of SSC, we can better assess other principles like horizontality, suggesting that there is a hierarchy between the principles s of SSC, whereby INO constitute the stepping stone to initiate the investigation of the quality of SSC endeavor.

This study will address the following question: What do the insights from the ground related to the Wanbao-Xai Xai Project mean to the broader debate of SSC)? To answer this question, we apply the NeST Africa (2015) methodology, whereby we review relevant documents to answer the guiding questions informing the existence or not of the principle of Inclusive National Ownership (INO) under this methodology (NeST Africa, 2015:30).

This study is limited for it just focuses on the principle of Inclusive National Ownership (INO), first. Second, we were unable to find important sources information - Co-operation agreements, Application forms/ proposal formal letters, Joint commissions, Stakeholders and partners - indicated by the NeST Africa to examine the principle of INO. Also, our data collection methods does not go beyond the reviewing of scholarly articles, most of them from the scholar Sergio Chichava, to include Surveys and Interviews pointed out by NeST as the basic data collection methods to assess INO in SSC development projects. So, our analysis is somehow limited to lack of data. Thus, there is a need for much more research is needed on this project applying the whole methodology of NeST Africa, making use of each of the sources of information it indicates and data collection methods to ensure the validity and reliability of our findings.

Nonetheless, drawing on the sources we could review, we found that most of the experiences, such as the exclusion of civil society organizations, meaningless voice of small farmers and others,

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<sup>1</sup> For example, in September 2015, the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST Africa), published the first working document for measuring the quantity, quality and impact of SSC in development. This document built on the political commitments made by Southern governments in historical conferences in Bandung (1955), Buenos Aires (1978), Nairobi (2009), Bogota (2010) and Delhi (2013) (NeST Africa, 2015). To produce this document, NeST experts, involving 15 countries from the Global South, have condensed the principles driving South-South cooperation (SSC) into a new set of operational indicators to evaluate the quality of South-South partnerships and processes. More importantly, Nest Africa (2015:30) departs from the state-centered approach of SSC to embrace a multi-stakeholder approach and supports an inclusive partnership while engaging in SSC activities. Doing so, it aims to overcome the weaknesses of SSC practices and narratives (*Ibid*). Nonetheless, this document is recent and we have not found any research or practical example in which this framework was applied. Therefore, we need to explore it further.

related with the Wanbao project does not fit with SSC. This information is essential because it sheds light on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of SSC narratives, norms and practices, on the one hand. On the other hand, it will inform about what can or needs to be done to ensure food security in Gaza province through the Wanbao Project. Furthermore, by applying this framework we express our support to its ample view of multi-stakeholders, inclusive partners and innovations of SSC.

The analysis of this topic takes four phases. First, we introduce the work that includes the problematization, the objectives and the structure of the work. Second, we provide the analytical framework that guides this work. Third, we analyze the insights from the ground related to the Wanbao Xai-Xai project, applying the NeST Africa Framework of SSC. Fourth and finally, we conclude our work restating the main findings of the study.

## **Analytical Framework - Norms and Goals of South-South Cooperation Approach to Development**

### *South-South Cooperation Approach to Development: Origins, principles and dynamic*

South-South Cooperation (SSC) has its roots in the 9050s. Its landmark event was the realization Bandung Conference in 1955 in Indonesia (CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, 2014:5; Mulakala, 2015). This conference “laid the foundation for the solidarity that underpins South-South Cooperation (SSC) today” (Mulakala, 2015). In the Bandung conference, the basic principles of SSC – “mutual benefit, respect for sovereignty, non-interference, non-aggression” - were affirmed and remain the same till present day, whereas some modalities and objectives have been altered (*Ibid.*)

These principles demarcate the identity of SSC and make it an alternative or different approach to development cooperation as opposed to western aid donorship. These principles differ with Western model of cooperation that underscore conditionalities. Behind the principles of SSC there is the belief shared amongst countries from the global south that the western model of cooperation did little to revitalize the development of countries from global south. By contrast, the western model of cooperation has perpetuated inequality and aid dependence through conditionality and inadequate knowledge and technology transferred to the global south. Therefore, these countries from the south come together with new approaches, institutions, experiences and join efforts to challenge the current status quo and bring about sustainable development to their countries and people (CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, 2014:1; UNDP, 2013; Mulakala, 2015).

The growing importance of SSC is illustrated by Mulakala (2015)

“...SSC has become a centerpiece of development cooperation. As traditional aid stagnates, volumes of SSC have risen dramatically. Chinese and Indian development assistance reached \$7.1 billion and \$1.3 billion in 2013, largely a reflection of the growth of these economies. SSC has also diversified. While grants and technical cooperation remain key components, they have been surpassed by concessional loans and line of credits, largely for infrastructure projects. Today, concessional loans comprise more than 50 percent of China’s SSC, while India’s LOCs totaled \$10.2 billion in 2014”.

As Mulakala (2015) demonstrates, both the stagnation of the Western aid development and the Southern solidarity, drive has driven SSC development approach to the extent that it occupies an important position in the international system. Today, one of the key mechanisms used by southern partners in this process of searching for development and eradication of global inequality is technology transfer ( Mulakala, 2015).

While technology transfer (TT) has been defined in many different ways by various stakeholders (Acs and Audretsch, 2012), throughout this paper this term "...comprises the process of learning to understand, utilize and replicate the technology, including the capacity to choose it and adapt it to local conditions and integrate it with indigenous technologies" (IPCC, 2000). In addition to this definition, this paper understands technology transfer as "South-South knowledge exchange between countries facing comparable challenges" (United Nations SSC/17/1).

These definitions convey the idea that TT is both development and political tool in SSC. They mean that this modality of SCC goes beyond the exchange of knowledge, by putting together countries from the Global South working towards addressing comparable challenges. One of the common challenges of countries from the Global South is the lack of sustainable human development (UNDP, 2013). So, as the UNDP (2016) shows, to achieve sustainable human development (SHD), the agenda of the United Nations (UN) 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,' and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda have underscored the importance of technology transfer as a potential source to help southern countries to accomplish the goal of sustainable human development through collaboration of various multi-stakeholders and partners.

The countries of Global South engage in replicating technology, since they believe that these technologies can easily adapt in domestic contexts, given the similarities of their economy and development challenges as opposed to northern technologies. So, TT amongst SSC partners represent an alternative mechanism to the technology offered by northern countries. It represents a mode of engaging in a development led by SSC partners for SSC (UNDP, 2013). Moreover, Southern partners, in this case, Singaporeans, according to (Mulakala, 2015) "share the belief with many in the South-South Cooperation community that the sharing of skills and knowledge transfer is equally, if not more important, than funding in breaking the cycle of low development". Knowledge sharing, not only contributes for mutual development, but also as a tool of soft power and "a means of diplomatic soft power policy" internationally (*Ibid*). However, some contenders of South-South Cooperation regard the narratives through technology transfer as a means to enable the expansion of agribusiness interests of private companies of emerging countries into small countries of the Global South. This is seen as replication of northern modality of aid and a threat to SSC.

In this paper, we do not to engage in this debate; rather we frame the Wanbao project under the rubric of south-south cooperation between two acclaimed Southern countries - China and Mozambique proclaimed SCC (Anesi and Fama, 2013). Furthermore, both China and Mozambique view this project as a mechanism to which they help each other. On both sides, the ultimate goal of the Wanbao project is to assure food security (Brautigam, 2013:146).

How is this process of ensuring food security articulated for both sides? In the case of Mozambique Jinyan and Wenping (2014:18;19), speaking about the WAADL, argue that “An agriculture technical training center has been set up to provide training on Chinese rice production technologies to local farmers and promote advanced cultivation techniques transfer of technical know-how Jinyan and Wenping, 2014:18;19). Also, Chichava (2015), "The Chinese technology transfer consists of free training for the farmers within an area of 1ha over one agricultural rice campaign (Chichava, 2015).

In the case of China, as illustrated by Brautigam (2013:149), ‘Growing rice and corn is not the company’s ultimate goal in Africa, ‘Chai Shungong told *China Daily* in 2014. “We are a private company, and we believe our strength is in grain processing’. This author (*Ibid.*) goes reporting Chai Shungong, who asserts that “Once the local farmers learn the new techniques, we will shift back to our competency of processing grains.” [...] ‘in the long run the farm will also become one of China’s sustainable grain and oil production bases overseas, serving to consolidate the food security of our country [China]”.

Thus, the Wanbao project serves mutual and multiple interests. It supports the mutual pursuance of food security between Mozambique and China. It reinforces the development and political goal underlining SSC. However, in addition to the development and political tool of southern partners, the Wanbao project is a business tool of private agribusiness companies of China. This project is driven by business interests, while working to reinforce the south-south solidarity (Brautigam, 2013:14).

The presence of business interests in SSC development engagements raises various concerns. Some authors (GU et al, 2016) advance that private agribusiness interests are the true driving forces of the initiative of agricultural development advanced by emerging countries, instead of south-south solidarity. As consequence, they claim that there is no difference between western model of cooperation development and SSC. This debate is beyond the scope of this study.

The second concern has to do with the impact of commercial agriculture exports on local food security. According to Brautigam (2013), some critics argue that export agriculture undermines food security. However, she (Brautigam, 2013), rightly refutes this argument affirming that “[there is] plenty of evidence to the contrary.” Therefore, Brautigam (2013), claims, “African food security will be strengthened when African farmers move up the value chain, increasing the use of more productive technology for cultivation, harvesting, and postharvest—whether for export or local consumption” (*Ibid.*). So, the Wanbao Project constitutes an engine to boost the agriculture of Mozambique and ensure food security to its populations was well those of China. Official sources report that this project is guided by the principles of SSC, of which the principle of Inclusive National Ownership is one of them. Next section devotes special attention to this principle.

### **Principle of National Ownership**

What constitute the principle of National Ownership in the Context of SSC according to NeST Africa (2015)? Under the framework of NeST Africa (2015:58)? ” National ownership refers to the continued leadership by partner countries on priorities, policy

direction and implementation of the SSC initiative, supported by participatory processes at the national/local level. Partners identify and analyze their main development issues and formulate the requisite strategies to address them together”.

The principle of national ownership as advocated by Nest Africa (2015:58) is based on three key indicators: Meaningful citizen participation; Long-term approach: Engagement of all stakeholders throughout the whole project cycle and Mutuality. An illustration of these four indicators of this principle are shown in the Table 1 below.

**Table 1 - Indicators of the Principle of Inclusive National Ownership**

Nr.	Indicators	Sub-dimensions of INO indicators
1	Meaningful citizen participation	Demand-driven
2	Long-term approach: Engagement of all stakeholders throughout the whole project cycle	Alignment to national priorities Non-conditionality
3	Mutuality	

*Source:* NeST Africa (2015).

As the table above shows, there are three sub-dimensions that follow from these indicators. These are: demand-driven, alignment to national priorities and non-conditionality. Each of these sub-dimensions of the principle of national ownership has its own specific guiding questions, through which one should answer to ascertain whether SSC project meet each of these requirements. The sub-dimensions of the principle of national ownership and their respective guiding question are as follow:

### **Demand-driven**

Demand-driven is observed, according to NeST Africa (*Ibid.* 25), through answering of the question of “who exactly is the specific partner requesting the support package? (*Ibid:*25)”. In specific, the guiding questions to assess the observance of this indicator in the SSC Development projects are as follow: a) Was the SSC initiative/project requested by the recipient partner? b) How and through which channel (at what level was the request made)? Why? c) How does SSC ensure the participation of beneficiary countries in terms of the identification and implementation of initiatives? d) Are partner priorities and structures for the co-ordination of SSC activities clearly identified? (*Ibid:*30)”. Besides these questions, NeST Africa (*Ibid.* 31), asserts that ‘Demand-driven’ ” could also be related to the country needs that are identified in a multilateral forum and are aligned to national priorities. States of urgency (including natural disasters) can also be considered as being demand driven and aligned to national priorities.“

## **Alignment to national priorities**

To ascertain whether a SCC Development projects is aligned to national **priorities** one needs to answer these guiding questions: How are the local needs identified, assessed and met? Is the co-operation focused on results that meet the recipient country's stated needs and priorities? was the project aligned with the national strategy/ policy/paper/plan? and or a list of actions agreed between the recipient and international community? (NeST Africa, 2015:25).

## **Non-Conditionality**

The assessment of non-conditionality, according to Nest Africa (*Ibid.*: 31), can be done by answering six questions: 1) Are there policy (political, economic) conditionalities as part of the co-operation or operationalisation process? 2)What are the policy conditionalities? (nature/type); 3) are they disclosed? 4) Are there de facto/ tacit conditionalities?; 5) What is the source of the conditionality? And 6) Does it affect the partner countries' policies?

Traditionally South-South Cooperation partners have proclaimed the inexistence of conditionality amongst them (). But, NeST Africa (*Ibid.*) refutes this narrative. This organization affirms that between South-South Cooperation partners there are conditionalities that occur in form of, for example, imposition of the terms of local procurement requirements. In the words of this organization, "It is relevant to see whether there are conditionalities imposed upon the provider, such as local procurement requirements. It is good when purchasing is done locally but it could be interesting to see if there are cases where this appears as a conditionality". This assertion shows that NeST Africa (*Ibid.*) shows that either the recipient country or the provider can be subjected to conditionality. This organization make a plea for non-conditionality in both sides so as to ensure inclusive national ownership is attained.

## **The China-Mozambique Project of Agricultural Technology Transfer under WAADL: Insights from the ground vis-à-vis South-South Cooperation**

### *Insights from the ground vis-à-vis South-South Cooperation*

#### *Demand-Driven approach*

The project fulfils partially the requirement of demand-driven, since, as shown by Brautigam (2015:142) "Mozambique had asked Hubei province to help the country meet its food needs". This means that the recipient country, in this case Mozambique, requested the support package or the SSC project. Thus, the first requirement of demand-driven indicator of INO is partially met.

To meet this indicator, one also needs to answer the question: How does SSC ensure the participation of beneficiary countries in terms of the identification and implementation of initiatives? One mechanism of SSC through which Mozambique, in its quality of beneficiary country, participated in the identification of SSC initiatives was the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2006. In this forum, both China and African countries, including Mozambique, set up the development of African agriculture and the assurance of food security in African countries as the leading goal of their efforts (Jinyan and Wenping, 2014:8).



The immediate result of this meeting for Mozambique, was the agreement for the establishment of a Chinese ‘friendship’ rice farm set up in 2007 by the Mozambican and the Chinese governments through the Provinces of Gaza and Hubei respectively (Chichava, 2014). So, both through unilateral and multilateral mechanisms Mozambique, the beneficiary country, participated in the identification of SSC initiative, in this case, the Wanbao Project. On the one hand, the Wanbao Project represent the self-ambition of Mozambique to increase its agricultural productivity and become self-sufficient rice producer. On the other hand, it manifests the long-term goal of China to produce rice and export to its country, thus guaranteeing food security to its population (Gabas, 2013 ).

Concerning implementation, the government of Mozambique set up the Associação dos Agricultores e Regantes do Bloco de Ponela para o Desenvolvimento Agro-Pecuário e Mecanização Agrícola de Xai-Xai (ARPONE) to work alongside the Chinese counterpart. This organizations is charged of defending the rights of local farmers. Nonetheless, the project fails to ensure meaningful participation of small farmers, since the association has been captured by people linked to the governing elite in Mozambique. These, they show little commitment to the needs and concerns of small local farmers. In many situations, small local farmers are displaced and found no one to fight for their claims. There are also reported cases of violence committed by Chinese workers on small farmers, but which remained unsolved due to the indifference of ARPONE. Also, Chinese authorities have often prejudiced by firing them deliberately and violating local labor laws (Chichava, 2014).

So, the participation of these people in the implementation phase is not meaningful. It is constrained by the lack of an intuition or mechanism capable of representing them meaningfully. This is aggravated because this arrangement excludes local civil society organisations (CSOs), such the Fórum das Organizações Não Governamentais de Gaza (FONGA), to participate in the decision-making process of the center (Chichava, 2015:111). Furthermore, even in the management sector of WAADL, the majority of people occupying important position in the managerial sector of the WAADL Center are from China. Thus, the participation of small farmers or Mozambicans in general, in the implementation phase of this project is less meaningful due to the deficiencies of ARPONE and the consequent domination of local farmers by Chinese. On the side of Mozambique, only those people linked to the governing elite benefit from the project. Thus, there are uneven benefits at domestic context. So, SSC as looked on the basis of this project, fails to ensure meaningful participation of all the stakeholders affected or associated with this project, since not all the stakeholders drive the project on equal or approximate basis.

These findings, supports the claim of UNDP (2013) that the unequal power in Southern countries constitutes a big challenge to SSC development endeavors given the threat of capture of the projects by the most powerful groups in these countries. This in turn, threatens the attainment of comprehensive social inclusion, human development and the sustainability of these projects and SCC.

Moreover, indicates that Chinese constitute the majority in the managerial sector of the project as well as normal workers. Consequently, there is a threat that this project becomes unsustainable if Mozambicans are left out with managerial tasks, given that they may struggle or fail to manage such projects without the presence of Chinese. They may become dependent of Chinese personnel

to manage such kind of centers as it happens with Mozambicans with the departure of Portuguese after 500 years of domination and monopoly of knowledge

Regarding implementation, the project fall short because of the usurpation of ARPONE, the organization entitled to work on behalf of the local farmers (Chichva, 2015). This, the lack of inclusion of SCO and the less inclusion of nationals contributes for the meaningless participation of small farmers. Consequently, the requirement of demand-driven in this project is not fully attained since it leaves the main concerned and large group, small farmers, and benefits few people associated with the ruling elite in Mozambique.

Despite these insights, to ascertain the extent to which the demand-driven requirement is fully attained in this there remain some questions to be answered. These are: b) How and through which channel (at what level was the request made)? Why? c) and d) Are partner priorities and structures for the co-ordination of SSC activities clearly identified? At what level the request for this help was made. It does not respond the question of “Are partner priorities and structures for the co-ordination of SSC activities clearly identified?” put forth by NeST Africa to assert whether the project is Demand-driven.

Moreover, those sources claiming that the Chinese constitute the majority in the managerial sector of the project do not specify who, how many and why this happen. Therefore, one needs to be cautious while making conclusions about this project. For the time being, we consider this finding and advocate a need for further research ().

In short, because of the lack of information that answer all these questions indicatives of demand-driven, it is not possible to fully determine whether the requirement of demand-driven underpinned in the principle of inclusive national ownership has been met in this project. Additionally, this methodology needs to clarify which one of these conditions or questions or both these elements are sufficient or necessary requirement for the determination of demand-driven in SSC development projects.

But, in general, the realities in the ground related to this project indicate that Mozambique is the specific partner requesting the support package in its quality as the recipient partner through multilateral forum, FOCAC. The reasons for this request is the need to ensure local food security. These two conditions mean that the Wanbao project meets partially the indicator of demand – driven. Thus, basing on the information we gathered in this paper, the insights in the ground coming from the activities of the Wanbao project do not align with SSC cooperation as regards as the indicator of demand-driven.

#### *Alignment to national priorities*

The Wanbao Project meets the requirement of alignment to national priorities largely in three ways. First, it is focused on results that meet the recipient country’s stated needs and priorities. Second, the project aligns with the national strategy/ policy/paper/plan. Third, it aligned with a list of actions agreed between the recipient and international community. The single requirement or question about which we do not know whether this project meets is the following: How are the local needs identified, assessed and met? To get this study we need to review National &

provincial/state development plans Co-operation agreement; International/multilateral documents; Communiqués as proposed by NeST Africa (*Ibid.*30).

Concerning the alignment between the projects' priorities and national goals, the Strategic Plan for Agrarian Development (PEDSA)<sup>2</sup> (Justiça Ambiental, 2012) and the Proposal of the Economic and Social Plan for 2015 (PES<sup>3</sup> 2015) sustains the consistence between the Wanbao project with the goals and national priorities of Mozambique. These documents are guiding instruments of programing, management of the economy, development and social activity of Mozambique.

In PEDSA (Justiça Ambiental, 2012), for example, the government of Mozambique expresses its hope and reliance on Wanbao project to contribute to food security in the region and help reduce the country's imports. So, this show the support of the government of Mozambique to this project. The affirmation and support of the goals of this project in the national policy documents of Mozambique reflects the alignment of the goals of Wanbao Project with the economic and developmental goals and priorities of Mozambique.

Furthermore, this alignment is exemplified by the assertion of the Government of Mozambique, through its former President Armando Guebuza, that this project will address the country's rice deficit and cease it from being a net importer of rice (Allafrica, 2013). Finally, just like the national policy documents of Mozambique and the discourses of Mozambique, existing scholarly research also indicate that the goals of Wanbao Project align with the projects' and national priorities. For instance, Chichava (2015), as said above, asserts that this project intends to address the deficit of food in Mozambique (*Ibid.*).

The formal statement of the government official of Mozambique and the inclusion of the Wanbao Project in national officials documents associated to the national economic development, means that the this project meets the requirement of alignment to national priorities, hence it is guided by the principle of inclusive national ownership under SSC.

### *Non-conditionality*

The available information () on the WAADL project is silent concerning the existence of conditionalities in this project, both de facto/ tacit conditionalities. Several activities or facts in the context of implementation of this project, which are represented in the literature on this topic as a result of agreement. As said before, for example, most of the senior officials in the Wanbao project are from China. Furthermore, those farmers who successfully learn how to use the Chinese technology (Chichava, 2015) are required to produce rice and it sell to the Chinese company at the price of 10 metical (Mozambican currency), generally US\$0.30 per kilo. These and other requirements to local farmers are portrayed as generous gesture by Chinese in favour of local farmers who lack market to sell their products. Whether local farmers do not have market to sell

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<sup>2</sup> PEDSA is a plan established by the National Planning System with a medium / long term vision. This plan is based in the national guidelines for agriculture and in the Integrated Program for the Development of Agriculture in Africa (IPDA). IPADA constitute the priorities of the common guiding framework of African countries to improve the performance of the agricultural sector.

<sup>3</sup> PES 2015 is the instrument of programing and management of economic and social activity that guided the governmental action in 2015 .

their rice, or whether the price deducted by Chinese officials is consensual and beneficial for local farmers too, only an ethnographic study can help answer this question.

But, such sources (*Ibid*) do not specify the contextual factors that underpin the actors while setting up the modalities of payment and other contractual elements. A non-examination of the conditions - e.g. power relationship or asymmetries between the parties - involved in the setting up of contracts, can lead to a non-observation of conditionalities underlying partnership agreements between the parties.

Drawing on the existing data on the Wanbao Project we are not able to determine whether there is conditionality of not, both explicit or implicit. To identify such conditionalities, we need to conduct further research, focusing specially on power asymmetries between the parties and the implication of this power on their relationship.

Overall, current information about the Wanbao Project is limited to provide us fully answer of the meaning of the grounded realities involved in this project to the debate of SSC. But, for the time being, drawing on this little information, they inform us that the project fits into the debate of SSC.

## **Conclusion**

The present paper sought to answer the question: What do the insights from the ground mean to the broader debate of South-South Cooperation? Here we concentrated on the principle of national ownership, given its importance amongst others and other time constrain that forced us to limit ourselves in just one principle of NeST Africa (2015) framework.

We chose the framework of NeST Africa (2015) because it is comprehensive. This methodology embraces the Nairobi Outcome (2009) and other drivers of SSC approach to development and distil their principles to form only one applied to all southern partners. Also, we chose it because it broadens the concept of National Ownership to include various stakeholders of both countries. It does so in reaction to the critics against SSC initiatives as exclusive to the governments. Finally, we chose this approach because it is the first one engages in the assessment of the quality of SSC and give clear direction on the questions to address, sources of information and methods to collect data.

Through this framework we have been able to understand how do the insights from the ground (experiences arising from the work of Wanbao project) fit into the broader debate of SSC. For that, we focused on the indicators of National Ownership as conceived by NeST Africa.

The result we found is that the project present partly aligns with the principle of national ownership in a lesser extent for the following reasons: In the national context, the Government and ARPONE, the organization created to represent the voices of the farmers participated. Therefore, there was a decentralization of power from national government, thus allowing a multi-stakeholder participation. Nonetheless, the participation was less inclusive due to the exclusion of CSO. Also, this participation was less meaningful because the voices of the weakest part, the farmers was unheard, due to the capture of the project by the ruling elite. Hence, affecting negatively the indicator of demand-driven.

Another constrain verified in this project that affects this indicator was the little presence of Mozambicans in both management of the project and as normal workers in the center.

Consequently, we concluded that they are not taking the lead of their own development as this indicator preconizes.

However. Finally, we found that the data available about the project leaves us with less possibility to determine whether there was conditionality or not. But, we suggested the review of project contract, agreements and interview with various stakeholders to address this gap. But, we are unsure if both the governments of china and Mozambique will deliver these information's, given the secrecy that define the agreements in which China is involved with southern partners.

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