In March, SPARC organized a two day event called the Governance Share Fair at the 3J’s Hotel in Abuja, Nigeria. This was to (1) promote cross learning between SPARC and non SPARC states (2) enable wider replication and adoption in non lead states. Government officials were invited from different states to enable free exchange of ideas.

At least 10 key government officials from 6 northern states – Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna (Old SPARC states) and Yobe, Zamfara, Katsina (New SPARC states) – were in attendance with 3 people from Niger states acting as observers. It was an interesting interactive period where states representatives shared on Public Financial Management, Public Sector Management and Policy & Strategy. Officials learnt freely from their counterparts in other states and took home useful ideas with the promise of adapting it to their various states. A publication is currently being produced that captures all important information with an accompanying CD that has all the presentations and pictures from the event.

A session during the event was tagged Governance Share Fair Market Place where State Government and SPARC stalls were setup in the main hall and relevant materials and information packs of successful reforms in the States were displayed. These included publications, leaflets, and presentations. An official manned each stall and answers were given to questions asked by curious participants.

To enhance participation, the market place was also in form of a competition with two categories – the new northern SPARC states (Yobe, Katsina and Zamfara) and the sunshine state (Kano, Jigawa and Kaduna) – and grading was done based on content and display. The declared winner in old SPARC states category was Kaduna; the officials were so excited, they came out dancing and chanting the premier league theme song (Stand up for the champions). The winner in the new states category was Yobe. Both winners were awarded gifts in form of box of chocolates.

A second event is set to take place in the South-East region of Nigeria (Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi and Imo) with Enugu acting as the host in May, 2012. This is been organized under the umbrella of the Nigeria Governors’ Forum and is meant to attract Governors from each state and top level officials. This promises to be a highly interactive event which will also have the added advantage of relationship building. The hope is that this model will become sustainable whereby States involved will take turns in hosting this event.