



CHAPTER II

Ibero-America and Bilateral South-South Cooperation

REPORT ON SOUTH-SOUTH
AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION
IN IBERO-AMERICA 2020

southsouth

CHAPTER II

Ibero-America and Bilateral South-South Cooperation

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of Bilateral South-South Cooperation, modality through which Ibero-American countries have executed more than 80% of the 9,120 exchanges that have been registered since 2007. The chapter focuses on 2019 and it studies how Bilateral Cooperation has evolved throughout these years, the most relevant changes and trends, countries' roles and strengthened capacities to contribute, in turn, to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In addition to all the above, an aspect cross-cuts the entire analysis: how the exercise of Bilateral South-South Cooperation can contribute to the region's necessary response to the COVID-19 crisis.

II.1 Bilateral South-South Cooperation initiatives in 2019

In slightly more than one decade, between 2007 and 2019, Ibero-American countries participated in almost 7,400 Bilateral SSC initiatives. Graph II.1 displays data regarding that period and distributes those initiatives according to the year in which they were under execution, also differentiating whether they were implemented through actions or through projects.

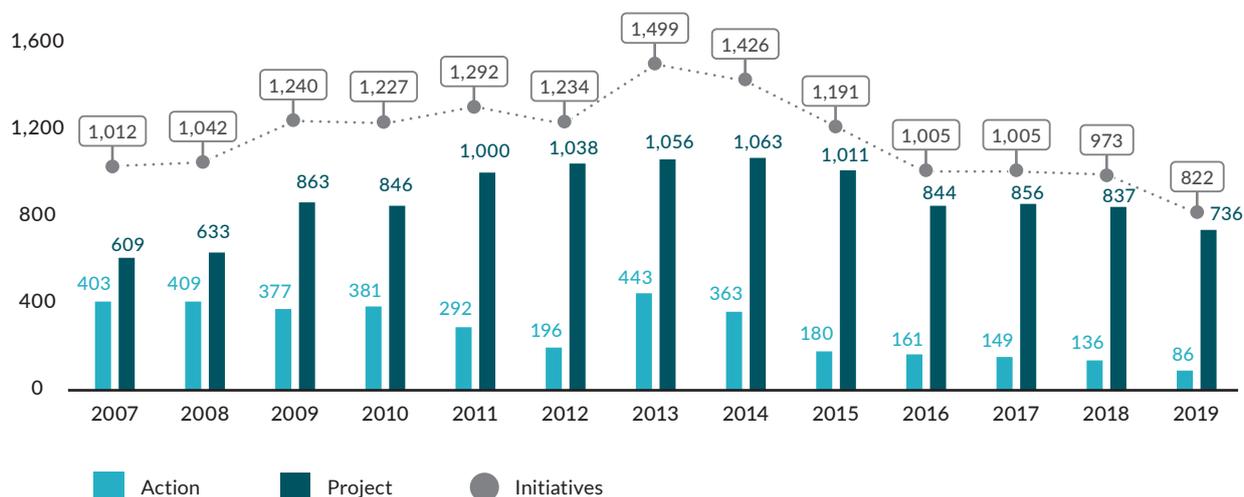
The analysis of the total number of initiatives and their behavior, at a first approach, suggests three very different stages: an intense growth between 2007 and 2013; an intense fall, from 2014 to 2016; and a certain stabilization, this stage ending, however, with another descent, between 2017 and 2019. Indeed, the 1,000 initiatives registered in 2007 grew at an

average annual rate of 7.2%, which pushed the final figure to a historical maximum in 2013, close to 1,500 initiatives. From that moment until 2016, as a result of a very sharp drop, the total number of initiatives was close to one thousand once again. Finally, the period of stability that started in 2017 seems to end in 2019, when a new fall takes the total number of initiatives to the lowest value of the entire period (822). However, there is still no evidence to conclude this latest reduction responds to a change in trend. Data should be interpreted with caution, since the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have hindered countries' ability to gather 2019's information, which may have led to possible under-reporting.

GRAPH II.1

Evolution of Ibero-American Bilateral South-South Cooperation actions, projects and initiatives with all partners. 2007-2019

In units

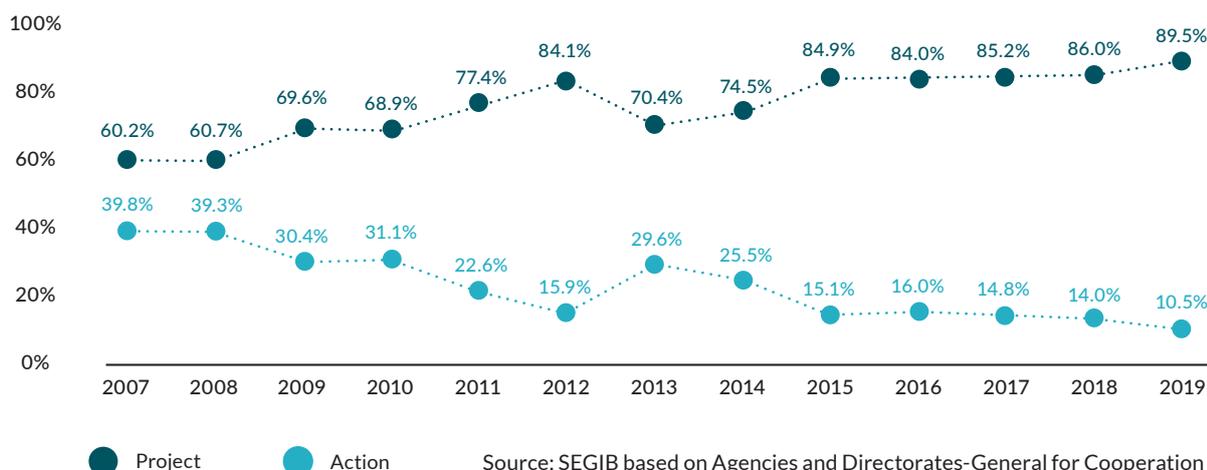


Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

GRAPH II.2

Evolution of projects' and actions' share in the total number of Ibero-American Bilateral SSC initiatives with all partners. 2007-2019

In percentage



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

Graph II.1 itself also suggests a different (and even opposite) behavior in terms of actions and projects. Graph II.2 was prepared to verify and to better understand how different the evolution of

each type of initiative was. Through its analysis, it is possible to compare, for each year of the 2007-2019 period, actions' and projects' relative share in the total number of initiatives.

As shown, both modalities clearly follow opposite trajectories, suggesting a progressive shift of actions in favor of projects. Indeed, in 2007, actions (more specific, of a smaller dimension and, consequently, easier to execute when countries begin to promote cooperation) explained basically 4 out of 10 initiatives. However, in 2019, more than a decade after, they accounted for 1 out of 10. In this sense, actions are still being executed as they prove to be very necessary for many countries' incipient participation in Bilateral SSC; nevertheless, countries are increasingly showing a greater capacity to concentrate their efforts on the implementation of projects, an instrument through which the region implements 90% of the exchanges in which it participates.

Finally, a methodological remark must be pointed out. The 822 Bilateral SSC initiatives that were under execution throughout 2019 can, in turn, be divided into two groups according to the geographical area

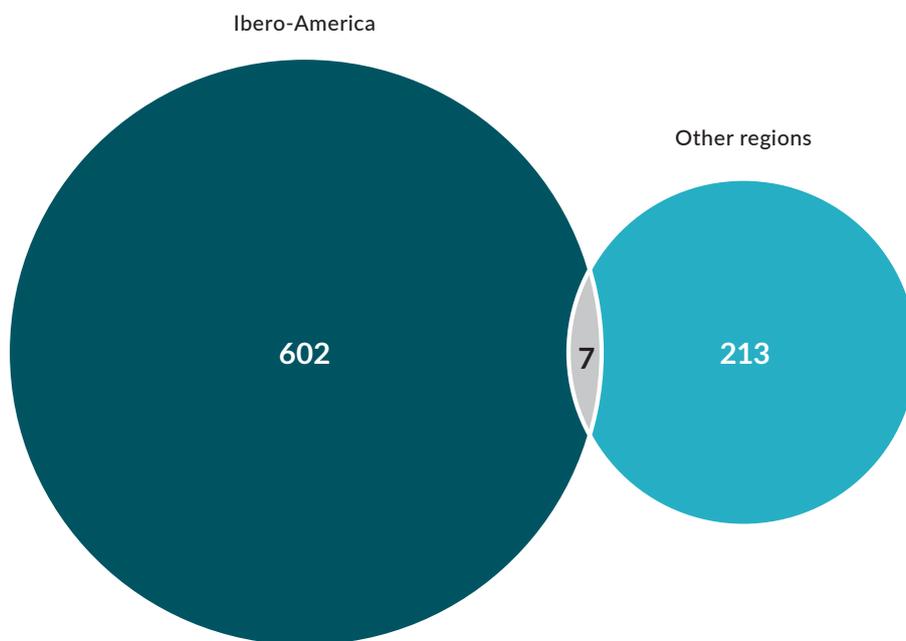
with which they were exchanged: in fact, Graph II.3 shows how basically 75% of the exchanges take place among Ibero-American countries, while the remaining 25% is promoted together with other regions' developing countries. In this sense, this chapter is dedicated to the more than 600 initiatives that were exchanged within the Ibero-American region; while the remaining more than 200 are analyzed in the fourth chapter of this Report.

/// In slightly more than one decade, between 2007 and 2019, Ibero-American countries participated in almost 7,400 Bilateral SSC initiatives ///

GRAPH II.3

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives by the region with which they were exchanged. 2019

In units



Note: When initiatives are exchanged "within Ibero-America", both the provider and the recipient roles are exercised by one or more than one Ibero-American country. When initiatives are exchanged with "Other regions", the roles are exercised by Ibero-American countries, on the one hand, and by other regions' developing countries, on the other hand. In the 7 initiatives where the two circles overlap, at least one of the roles (generally, that of the recipient) is simultaneously exercised by countries of different regions.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

II.2

Countries' participation in Bilateral SSC in Ibero-America

In 2019, Ibero-American countries bilaterally exchanged a total of 609 South-South Cooperation initiatives between each other: 544 were implemented through projects and 65, through actions. This section analyzes the way in which countries participated in this cooperation, from two broad perspectives: the first one focuses on the intensity with which countries participated in the total number of exchanges, as well as the roles they exercised; meanwhile, the second analysis sheds light on the type of partnerships countries developed to execute this modality.

II.2.1 Countries and roles

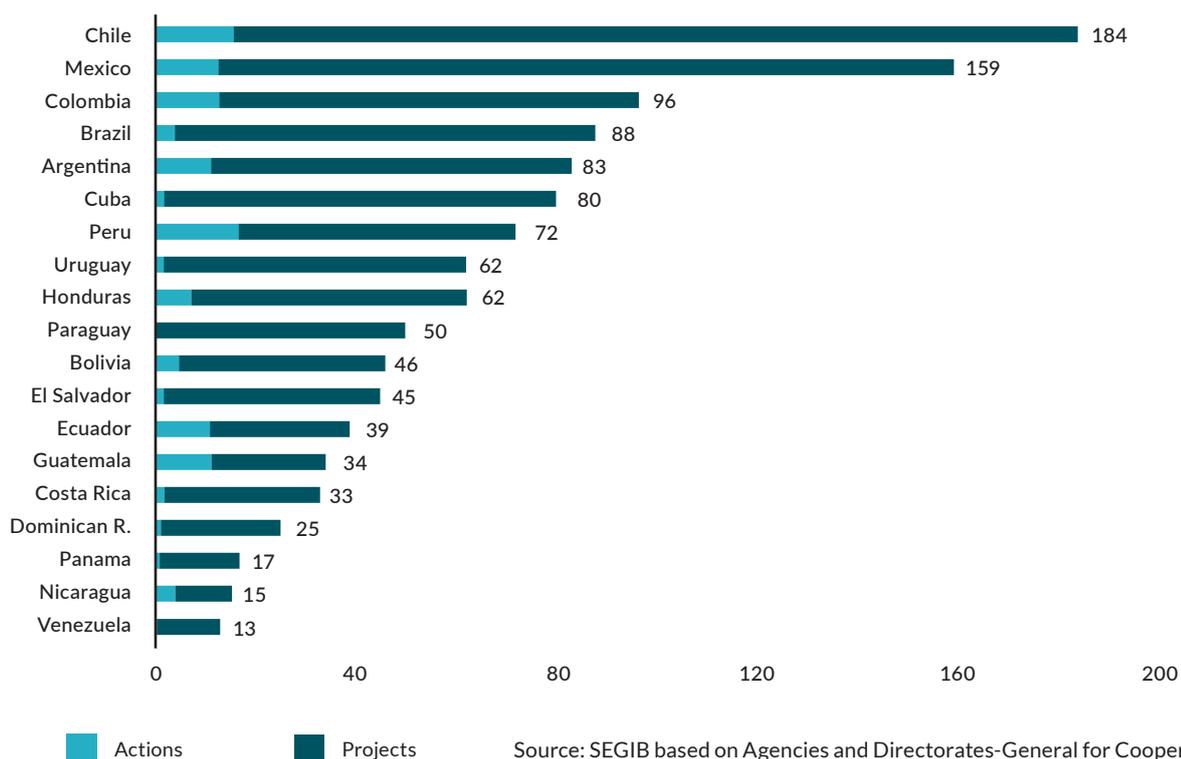
Graph II.4 portrays the 19 Latin-American countries, according to the total number of Bilateral South-South Cooperation actions and projects in which they participated throughout 2019. Through its analysis, it is possible to group countries in terms of their different participation patterns. In fact, Chile and Mexico stood out first, in the South and the North of the continent, these two countries participating in basically 185 and 160 initiatives, respectively. Cuba, Colombia, Brazil and Argentina followed, at a certain distance, all of them participating in a high number of initiatives, between 80 and 100.

On the other hand, Peru, Uruguay, Honduras and Paraguay were also significantly active, participating in between 50 and 72 initiatives, depending on the case. The remaining countries (all of them situated in the Andean, Central-American and Caribbean sub-regions) are part of two groups which accounted for around 25 initiatives: thus, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic participated in an equal or higher number of exchanges, while Panama, Nicaragua and Venezuela were less active.

GRAPH II.4

Countries' participation in Bilateral SSC in Ibero-America, by actions and projects. 2019

In units



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

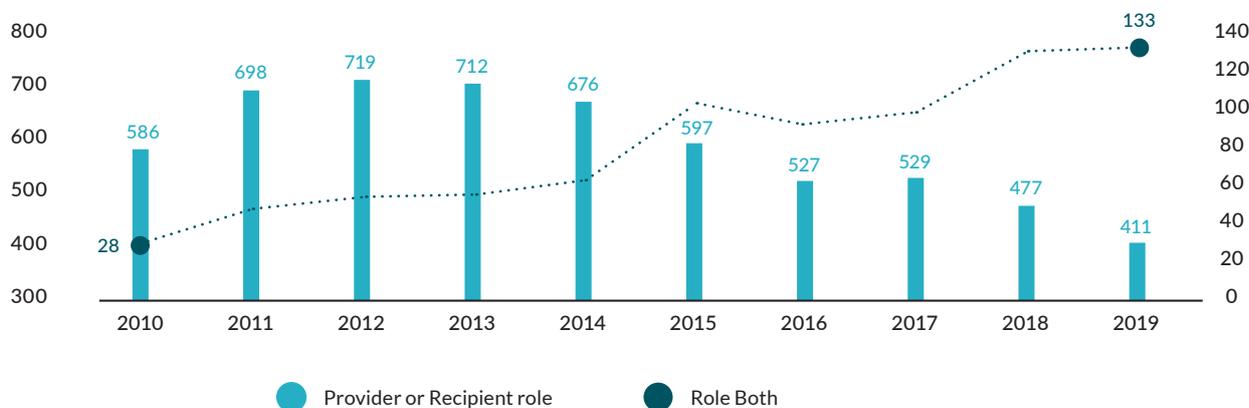
Graph II.4 also confirms another aspect that has already been mentioned: the increasing implementation of projects to the detriment of actions, which are losing relative importance both in terms of overall exchanges and of each country's bilateral cooperation. In this sense, in the overall Bilateral SSC promoted in Ibero-America in 2019, the projects-actions ratio is 8 to 1. Countries like Chile and Mexico have a slightly higher ratio (10:1), Uruguay's and Cuba's cases being more extreme (30:1 and 40:1, respectively). However, actions are still a very important instrument for countries such as Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ecuador and Peru, which ratio is 2-3:1.

Another interesting perspective to complement the analysis is that related to countries' roles. In general, Bilateral SSC initiatives are developed between two partners. Historically, the most common situation is that one of these partners acts as provider while the other executes the recipient role. In recent years, however, the tradition has changed and initiatives in which the two partners execute both the provider and the recipient roles have strongly increased. In these cases, and in order to simplify the analysis, countries are considered to play the role "both". This feature's increasing importance is reflected in Graph II.5, which compares the evolution of Bilateral SSC projects in which countries have participated performing a single role (main vertical axis, to the left) or performing the role "both" (secondary axis, to the right), in the 2010-2019 period.

GRAPH II.5

Bilateral SSC projects, by the role under which countries participate. 2010-2019

In units



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

As the graph shows, between 2010 and 2012, the number of projects in which countries performed only one role increased more than 20%: from 586 to almost 720. From that moment on, however, it is possible to identify a turning point when the number of projects begins to significantly drop, at an average annual rate of -7.5%, pushing the final figure down to 411 in 2019. This progressive decline mainly responds to a shift in favor of projects in which countries perform the role "both": thus, during the decade between 2010 and 2019, this

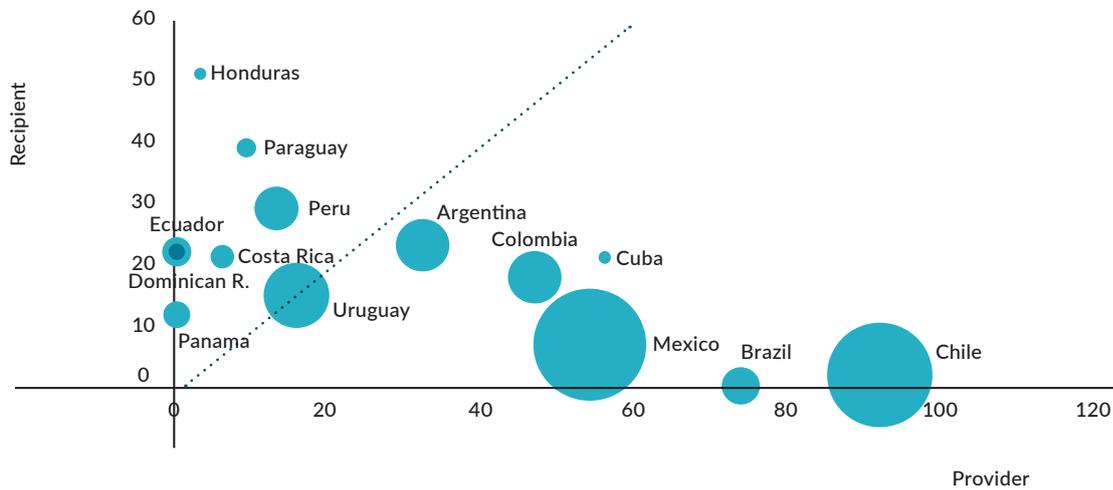
type of participation annually increases an average of 21%, this growth rate basically multiplying these projects' final figure by five (from 28 to 133).

SAs has been pointed out, this pattern is strongly gaining ground; moreover, it seems to be related (although not exclusively) to countries that have traditionally acted as "providers". At least that is what Graph II.6 suggests, which combines, for each of the Latin-American countries that have participated in the 544 Bilateral SSC projects in

GRAPH II.6

Bilateral SSC projects in Ibero-America, by country and role (recipient, provider, both). 2019

In units, projects as recipients (vertical axis); projects as providers (horizontal axis); projects with the role “both” (size of the bubble)



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

2019, three types of information: the number of projects in which they participated as “recipients” (vertical axis), as “providers” (horizontal axis) and the projects in which they participated under the role “both” (data associated with the size of the bubble).

As the graph shows, the bubbles of a larger size tend to be situated below the diagonal line, coinciding with the part of the graph in which those countries that participate in Bilateral SSC with a predominantly “provider” profile are placed. Two of the most illustrative cases are Mexico and Chile, which exercised the role “both” in up to 85 and 74 projects, respectively. Countries as Colombia, Argentina and Brazil, each of them participating under the role “both” in 18, 17 and 10 projects, are also worthy of mention.

Meanwhile, countries as Peru, Ecuador and Costa Rica, which have a predominantly “recipient” profile but also performed the role “both” on a fairly significant number of occasions, are situated in the upper side of the diagonal, with 13, 6 and 4 projects, respectively. Uruguay, however, deserves a special mention as it has a very balanced profile, almost “dual”, as suggested by its position on the diagonal line. In this sense, in 2019, Uruguay participated in 16 Bilateral SSC projects as “recipient” and in 15 projects under the “provider” role, simultaneously combining both roles in around 30, figure that was only higher in Chile’s and Mexico’s cases.

II.2.2. Exchange relations

Another way to characterize how Ibero-American countries participated in Bilateral SSC that was under execution in 2019, is to analyze the profile of the exchanges that were implemented, which essentially means to understand countries’ interactions, the intensity or frequency with which they associated with each other and the combination of roles under which they exchanged.

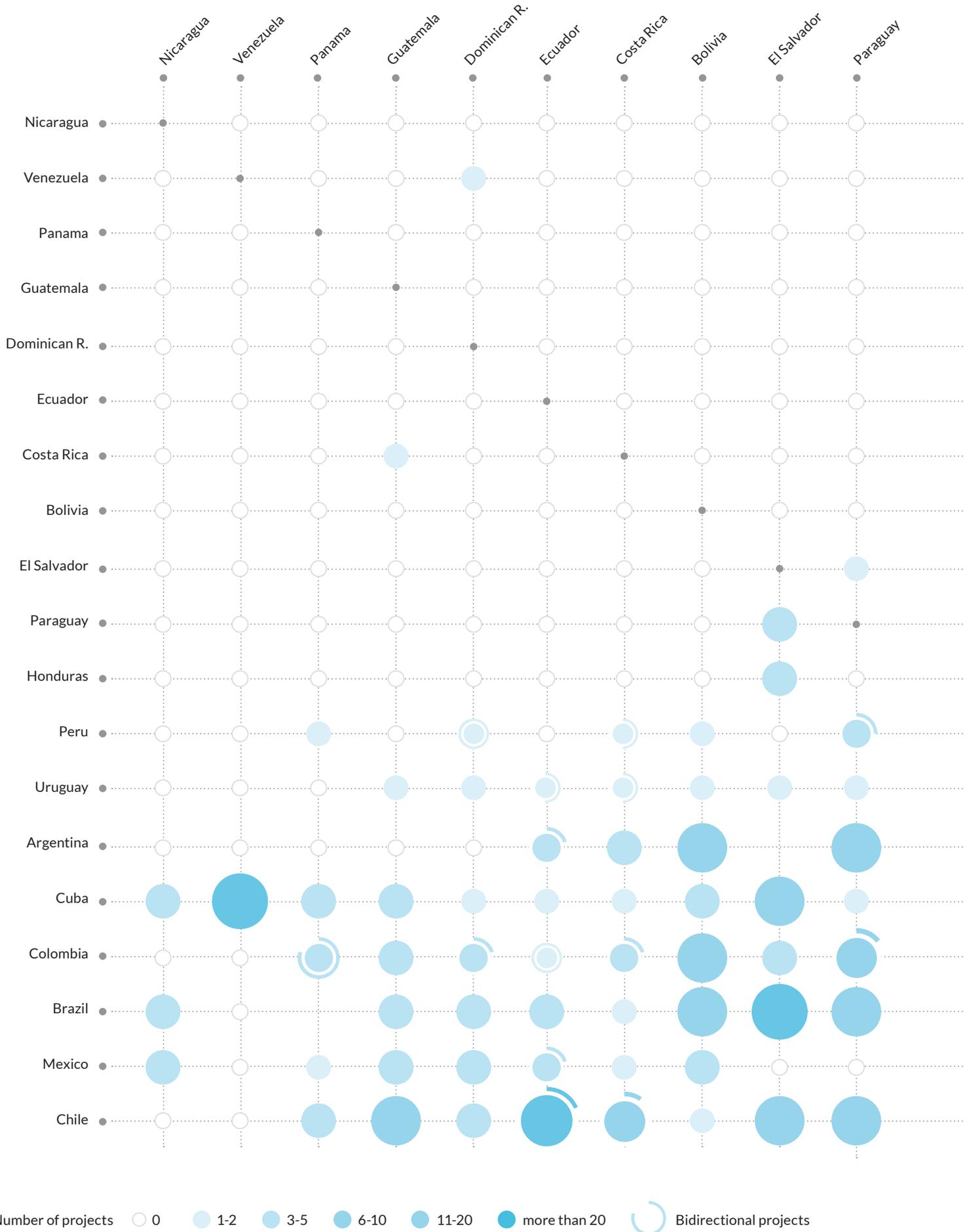
Graph II.7, which resembles a matrix, was prepared for this purpose, arranging the 19 Ibero-American countries that participate in Bilateral SSC according to their role (recipients in the upper horizontal line; providers in the vertical line to the left). Countries are sorted as the total number of projects in which they participated increases (data always refers to cooperation executed throughout 2019, within Ibero-America). According to this criterion, Nicaragua is the first country in the list (11 projects) and Chile is the last one (168 projects).

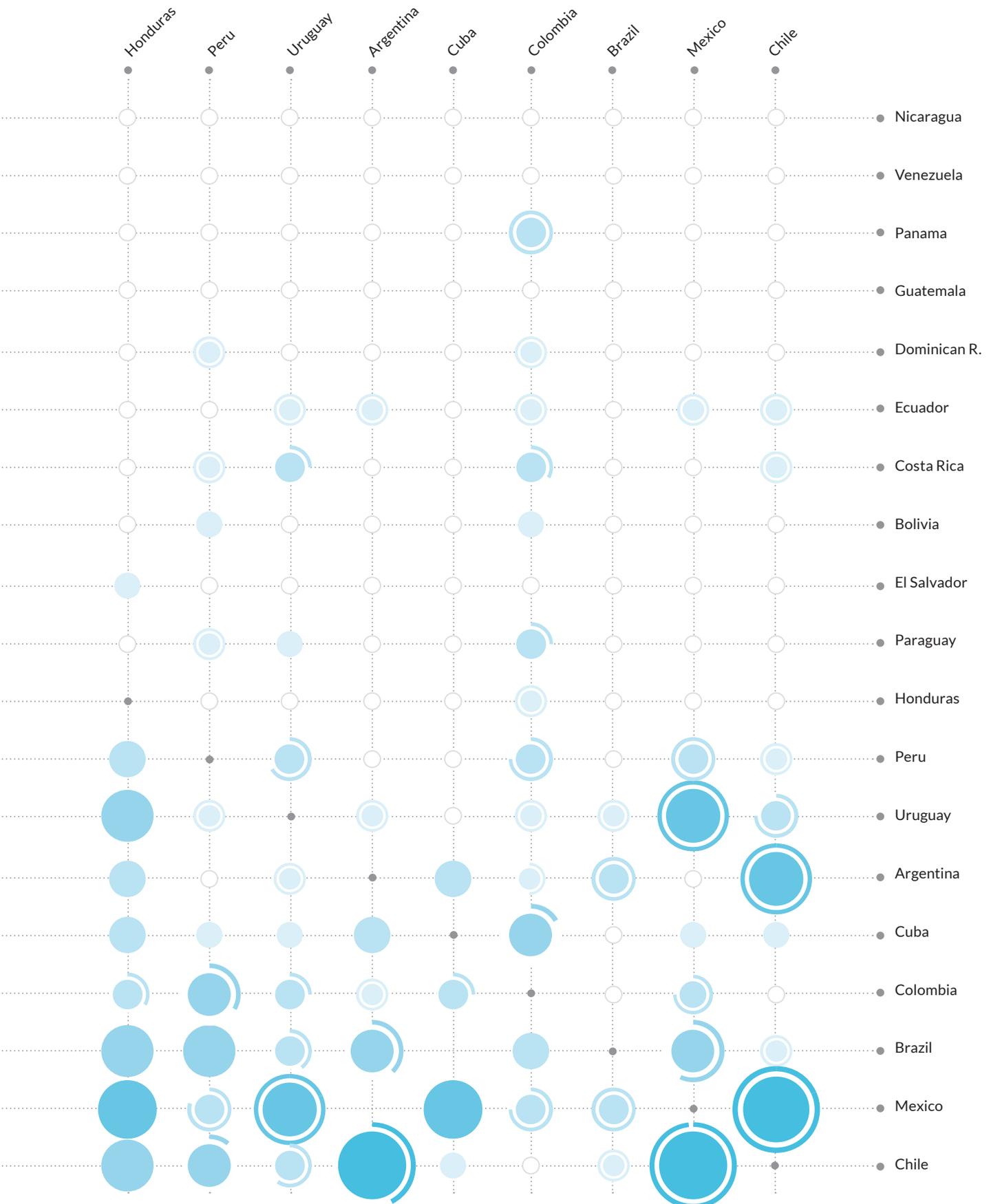
A bubble is plotted in each of the intersection points where two countries coincide. The bubbles’ size and color (as referred in the legend) indicate whether or not projects were exchanged and, if so, how intense the exchange was. Additionally, it is possible to identify the role in which each partner participated by linking each bubble with the vertical or horizontal line in which each of the

GRAPH II.7

Intensity of the exchanges by countries' partners, by number of projects. 2019

In units





Note: Countries are sorted as the total number of projects in which they participated increases, considering the total number of Bilateral SSC projects executed in 2019 in Ibero-America. Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

two partners is situated. Finally, the frequency with which the two countries simultaneously exercised "both" roles is revealed by the size of the outer circle that surrounds the corresponding bubbles.

The first conclusion that can be drawn is that of an extremely dynamic scenario in which countries display great capacities to take advantage of the multiple possibilities to develop partnerships. Thus, considering that 19 Ibero-American countries participate in Bilateral SSC and that all of them can act as providers and recipients, each exchange of initiatives can be explained by 342 possible combinations of partners and roles.¹ In 2019, 133 combinations of countries and roles were developed, which means that almost 40% of the partnerships that could potentially take place, were finally implemented. This figure contrasts, for example, with that of 2010, when only 1 out of 10 partnerships were executed.

The possibility to develop more, new and different partnerships responds to a process through which countries are also broadening and diversifying the number of partners with which they interact. In Graph II.7, this aspect is determined by the area

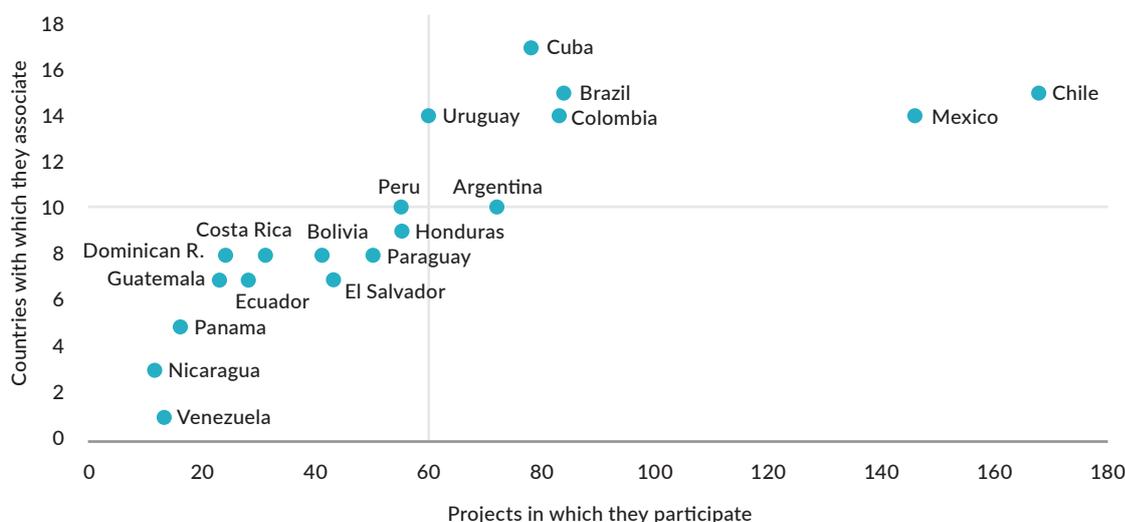
in which the bubbles tend to be concentrated: the two southern and eastern quadrants. These quadrants precisely portray data associated with countries that participate in a larger number of projects, and which, consequently, also have the possibility to diversify their cooperation with a higher number of different stakeholders.

Graph II.8 reaffirms this concept, as well as it enables the identification of a general pattern. In this sense, each country is placed in the graph according to the total number of Bilateral SSC projects in which it participated in 2019 (horizontal axis) and the total number of other Ibero-American countries with which it associated to promote exchanges (vertical axis), 18 being the maximum. As a result of the positive correlation between the two variables, the dots take an upward trend according to which: countries that participate in less than 20 projects tend to associate with a maximum of 5 different partners; those which participate in between 20 and 60 projects, with other 7 and 10 partners; while the most dynamic countries, with a higher number of exchanges, and even with some exceptions, interact with about 15 partners.

GRAPH II.8

Countries' participation in Bilateral SSC in Ibero-America, by the total number of projects in which each country participated and the number of partners with which it associated. 2019

In units



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

¹ The total of 342 is calculated by multiplying 19 by 19, and then subtracting the 19 combinations in which the country would associate with itself.

/// The first conclusion that can be drawn is that of an extremely dynamic scenario in which countries display great capacities to take advantage of the multiple possibilities to develop partnerships ///

In this scenario, the distribution of the 544 Bilateral SSC projects countries exchanged in Ibero-America throughout 2019 by pair of partners is very uneven. Hence, as Graph II.7 portrays, the exchange values are very irregular and oscillate within a remarkably wide range (minimums of 1 and 2 projects and maximums above 50). In fact, most frequently (in almost two thirds of the exchanges), the total number of executed projects is no higher than 5. In the second most frequent case (almost 30% of the occasions) exchanges are implemented through the execution of up to 15 projects. Higher numbers of exchanges of between 15 and 56 projects are less common (in less than 5% of the cases, tending to be visually concentrated in the southeast quadrant of the graph).

In this sense, the possibility to associate with more or less countries and to distribute the total number of projects in which each country participates in a more or less concentrated or diversified manner, determines each country's exchange pattern. However, it is possible to identify an extra element that has a special influence on this: the importance "bidirectional" projects have in the total number of exchanges (projects in which countries simultaneously act as provider and recipient). Two cases illustrate the difference: Cuba, which associated with 17 of the 18 possible partners) and Mexico (the second country with the highest number of exchanges in 2019). Their respective behaviors are detailed in Graphs II.9.A and II.9.B which distribute (through a flow diagram) the total number of projects in which each of these countries participated, situating recipients to the left and providers to the right.

Thus, Cuba, which participated in 78 Bilateral SSC projects in 2019, shows a predominantly provider role, through which it implemented more than 90% of its exchanges. Under this role alone, Cuba associated with 17 other countries in the region (all countries excluding Brazil), which suggests a diversified distribution of its cooperation. This perception is confirmed by the fact that its two main partners, Mexico and Venezuela, barely account for around 15% of its projects, in each case.

Mexico, in turn, the second most dynamic country in 2019's Bilateral SSC (146 projects), developed its cooperation together with other 14 partners, two of which (Chile and Uruguay) especially stand out due to two reasons: on the one hand, Mexico shares 56 and 18 projects with these two countries which, altogether, account for one half of its cooperation; on the other hand, in almost all these projects, the two participating countries simultaneously perform the role "both".² In fact, exchanges with Chile and Uruguay were promoted in the framework of one instrument: the Mixed Cooperation Funds which, since 2008 and 2009, Mexico has signed with these two countries (SEGIB, 2020). As a result, Mexico shows a more dual or balanced profile between the two roles. This feature is reinforced, mainly but not exclusively, by the development of other "bidirectional" exchanges, those with Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru standing out.

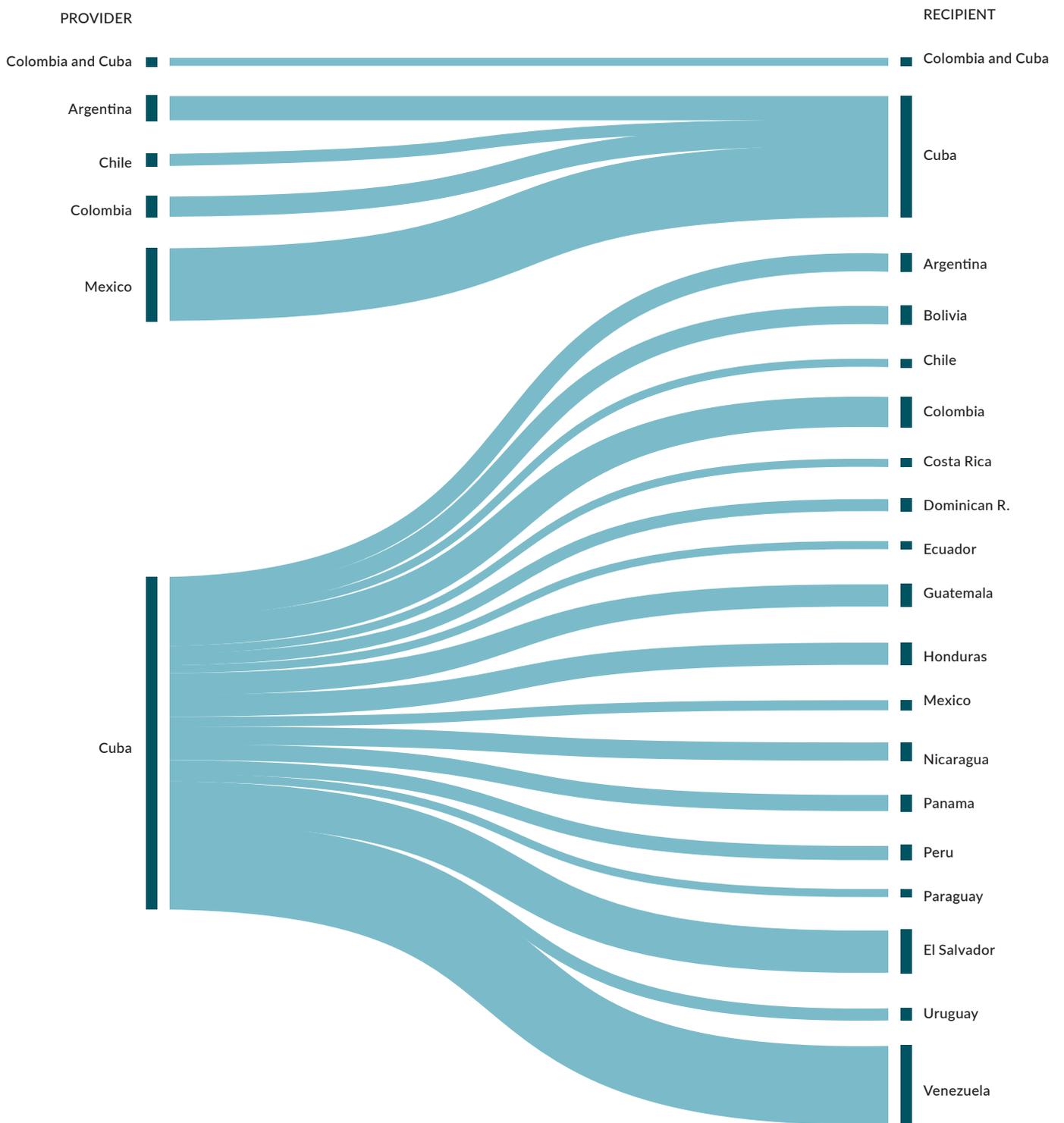
² In order to identify the exercise of this role in the flow diagram, the names of the two participating countries were included both in the left flow (when acting as provider) as well as in the right flow (when acting as recipient).

GRAPH II.9

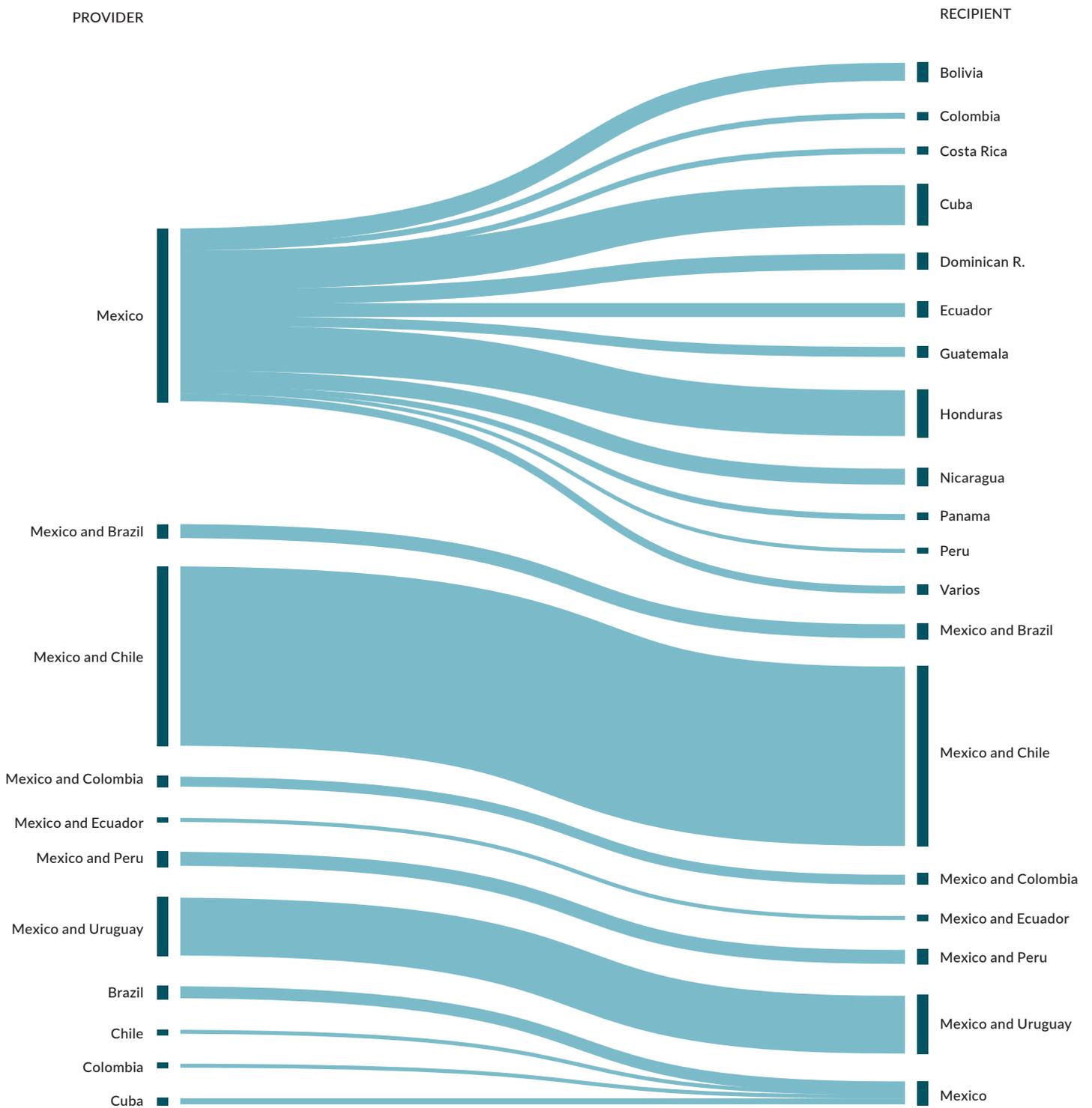
Distribution of Cuba’s and Mexico’s Bilateral SSC projects with Ibero-American partners, by role. 2019

In units

II.9.A. Cuba



II.9.B. Mexico



Note: When projects are “bidirectional” and both countries simultaneously perform the role “both”, the names of the two participating countries are included both in the left flow (when acting as provider) as well as in the right flow (when acting as recipient).
 Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

II.3

Sectoral analysis of Bilateral South-South Cooperation in 2019

This section focuses on the capacities that were strengthened through Bilateral SSC, from a double perspective: the first has a regional scope and the second approaches to countries' behavior. This analysis sheds light on the strengths countries shared when acting as providers; the necessities that were tackled or the gaps they tried to close

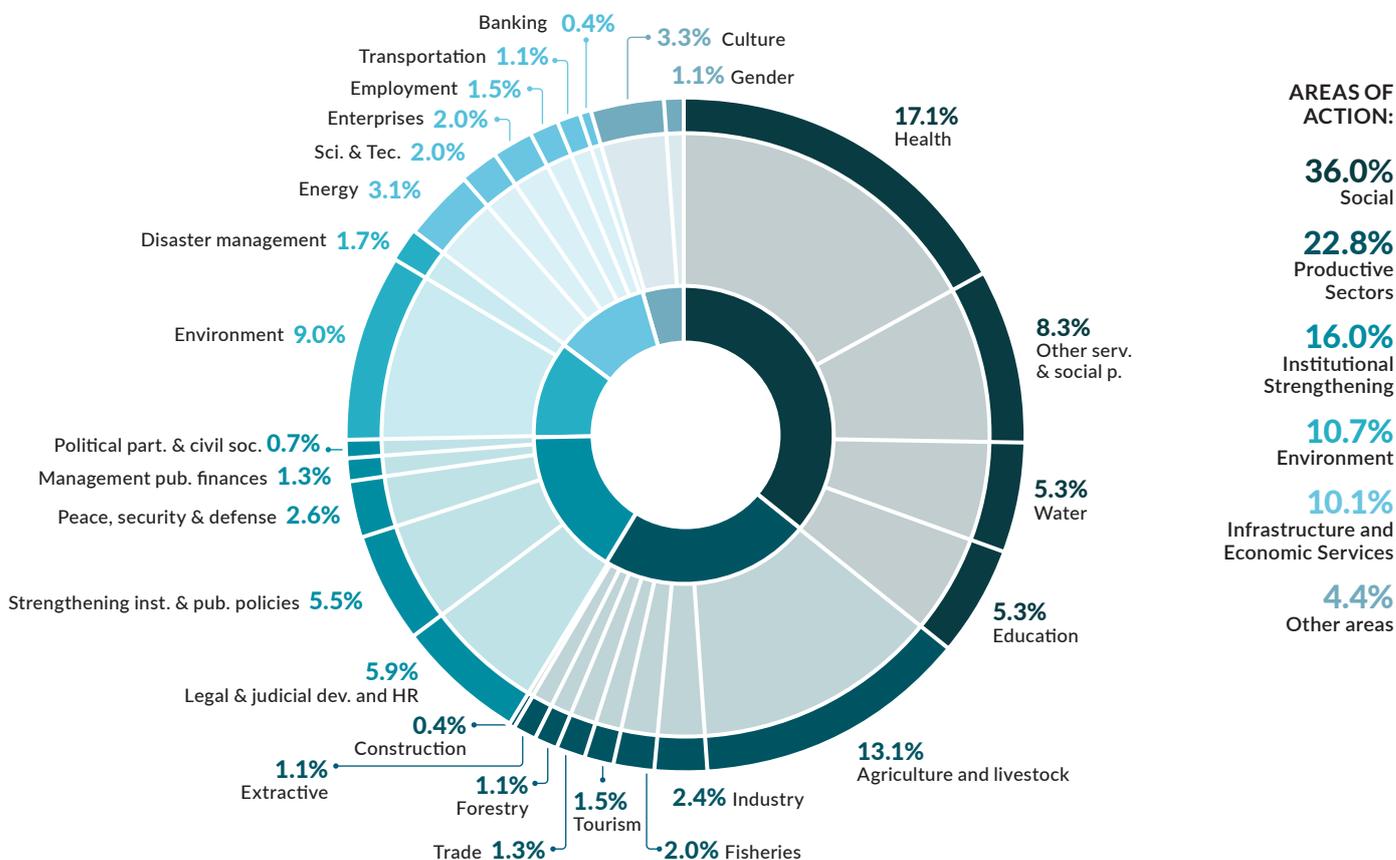
when participating as recipients. In short, it studies how the region strengthened as a whole. In order to organize this exercise, 2019's Bilateral SSC is analyzed from a sectoral perspective and in terms of areas of action, according to the classification that has been defined and agreed within the Ibero-American space and that is detailed in the Methodological Note.

In addition, and in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding the capacities that were strengthened through Bilateral SSC is also essential to learn from previous experiences and assess how cooperation can contribute to the health, economic and social response that Ibero-America needs to promote in the face of this enormous challenge.

GRAPH II.10

Bilateral SSC projects, by activity sector and area of action. 2019

In percentage



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

II.3.1. Strengthened capacities

Graph II.10 distributes the 544 Bilateral SSC projects that were under execution in Ibero-America throughout 2019, according to the activity sector and area of action they mainly addressed. Sectors are situated in the outer concentric ring and the areas of action in which they are grouped are displayed in the inner ring.

At a first approach by areas of action, Graph II.10 portrays how, as has been the case in the past, most projects (more than one third) were dedicated to strengthen capacities in the Social area. Seventy-five percent (75%) of 2019's projects are explained when adding 22.8% and 16.0% of the exchanges that respectively tackled Productive Sectors and Institutional Strengthening. The remaining 25% is explained by projects which focused on Environment (10.7%), Infrastructure and Economic Services (10.1%) and, occasionally, on Other areas (4.4%).

This distribution is, in turn, determined by the relative importance of the different sectors. In this sense, throughout 2019, and as has been the case in previous years, the activity that concentrated the largest number of projects (more than 90, corresponding to 17.1% of the total) was, once again, *Health*. This data is more than relevant when considering the severe health crisis that, since the beginning of 2020, has been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, it is currently essential to focus on the details of the topics these projects specifically address. This will

/// Most projects (more than one third) were dedicated to strengthen capacities in the Social area ///

BOX II.1

Ibero-American South-South Cooperation in the face of the COVID-19 health crisis

On January 30th, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declares that the outbreak of pneumonia initially detected in Wuhan (China), from which cases are beginning to appear in other countries around the world, constitutes what is known as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). A month and a half later, on March 11th, 2020, and due to the alarming levels of the disease's spread and severity, WHO itself determines that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic (WHO, 2020).

Another month later, on April 14th, 2020, WHO published an update of its "COVID-19 Strategy". This

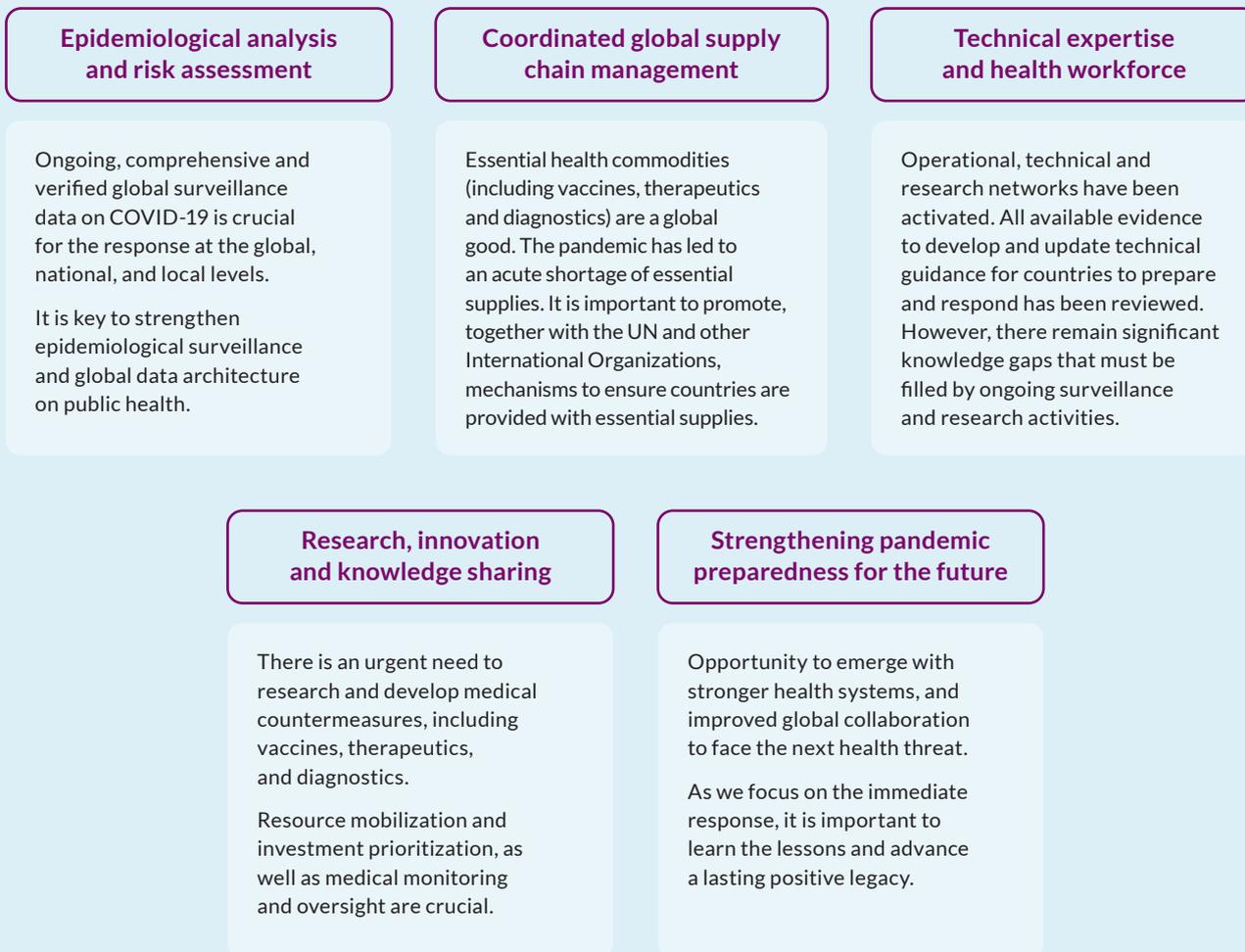
guideline document is based on the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan that was presented to the international community on February 3rd, 2020, as well as on lessons learnt and on other technical recommendations that were outlined as the pandemic progressed. The main lines of the proposed response strategy, which was updated in April 2020, are detailed in the first figure, both in terms of their global and national dimensions.

As the figure illustrates, according to WHO and with respect to international action, it is key to strengthen epidemiological surveillance, based on crucial data generation for decision making

and to design measures, technical guidelines and strategies to respond to COVID-19. International coordination and collaboration to advance on research and to develop therapeutics and vaccines that can cure and immunize the world's population are also essential, as well as coordination to ensure a stable and safe delivery of medicines and of any essential health care supply, including therapeutics and vaccines among these. In addition, the protection and provision of resources for health care professionals, as well as the strengthening of health systems are essential to better respond to current challenges and to face any future challenge.

WHO's global and national strategy to respond to COVID-19: main lines of action

GLOBAL STRATEGY



Source: SEGIB based on WHO (2020)

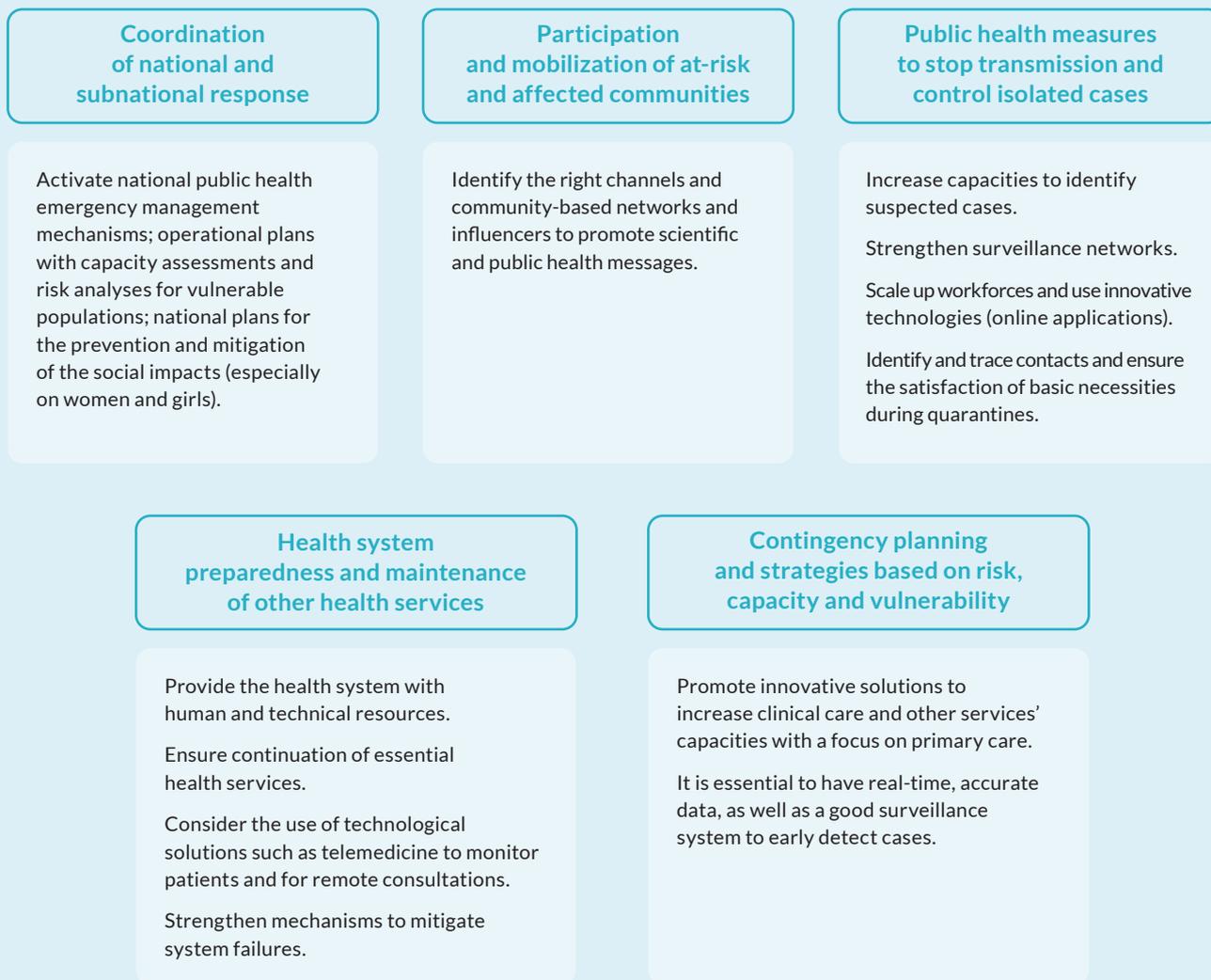


shed light on our region's capacities in the matter in order to learn from previous experiences to contribute to Ibero-America's immediate, but also medium- and long-term, response to this unprecedented challenge. Box II.1 was prepared for this purpose as it reviews the past experience based on a more comprehensive

concept of health (which complements the analysis by including issues that are not only classified under this sector)³, especially focusing on 2018 and 2019. It also analyzes the way in which SSC can contribute to respond to this serious crisis, in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations.

³ As Box II.1 shows, a more comprehensive concept of health is applied, as that used by the World Health Organization and the Pan-American Health Organization (WHO and PAHO, respectively). When using this definition, the analysis can be complemented by adding other issues related to this matter that are very relevant to fight against COVID-19 and that were initially classified under other sectors, such as initiatives related to older adults (generally classified under *Other services and social policies*) or to food safety (under *Agriculture and livestock*).

NATIONAL STRATEGY



Source: SEGIB based on WHO (2020)



In addition to the *Health* sector, and still within the Social area, it is necessary to highlight 45 projects dedicated to strengthen *Other services and social policies*, which explain up to 8.3% of the total number of exchanges that took place in Ibero-America in 2019. In this sense, it is possible to mention cooperation that promoted sport as an instrument for a greater social inclusion, especially that of young people; initiatives dedicated to promote social housing and comprehensive neighborhood rehabilitation; as well as initiatives that focus on vulnerable groups, including early childhood, older adults, people with disabilities (specific projects on

national sign language programs for people with hearing loss or deafness) and indigenous communities.

Ten percent (10%) of the projects, which, in equal proportions, were dedicated to promoting *Education* and *Water supply and sanitation*, complete the analysis of the Social area. On the one hand, it is possible to identify projects which address literacy, training of professionals, the promotion of digitalization and curricular adaptation to guarantee quality education for children under four years of age, as well as for those who need inpatient treatment. On the other hand, some projects were dedicated to improve water

In order to complement the above, it is suggested that the national response involves and coordinates all government levels, that it includes emergency management mechanisms and combines contingency plans with other medium- and long-term plans. With the purpose to stop transmission and control cases, WHO recommends having real-time, accurate data, as well as a good surveillance system for early detection. All parties' commitment is key: on the one hand, the population must have access to information and must receive clear messages that contribute to the proper exercise of personal responsibility; and, on the other hand, health systems must be strengthened so as to comply both with the pandemic response and the normal exercise of its routine practice. To this end, it is necessary to provide the health system with more resources and enhance its capacities, especially in terms of primary health care services, by using innovative solutions which, based on technology, contribute to broaden its response capacities (tracing apps, remote consultations, telemedicine, among others).

In this scenario, it is interesting to identify how South-South Cooperation can contribute to the immediate, but also medium- and long-term, response to this severe crisis. The region has a remarkable accumulated experience in this matter: indeed, between 2006 and 2019, the total number of Bilateral SSC actions and projects which addressed the *Health* sector reaches 835. Likewise, year after year, *Health* is the sector on which most bilateral exchanges tend to focus: thus, only in 2018 and 2019, around one hundred projects, corresponding to 18% and 17% of the total executed each year, addressed the strengthening of health matters.

However, the experience becomes even richer if a more comprehensive concept of health, as that used by WHO and PAHO, is applied. In this sense, the range of projects is widened as it is possible to include initiatives that, although classified under other sectors, also address problems related to this area: for example, comprehensive health care projects associated with *Other services and social policies*, which are multi-sectoral, but have health-related characteristics, or those that address broader

aspects of public health, such as those related to food safety, categorized under the *Agriculture and livestock* or *Industry* sectors.

The impact of SSC is more significant when the analysis is developed from this new perspective. In this sense, about a third (29,6%) of the 766 Bilateral SSC projects that were under execution at some moment in 2018 and 2019 contributed, to a certain extent, to strengthen regional capacities in the Health sector. The second figure distributes these 227 projects according to WHO's and PAHO's classification by program areas in order to differentiate the specific objectives they address: reduction and even eradication of communicable diseases (1 out of 10 projects); prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases (15%); promotion of health determinants and health conditions throughout the entire life course (basically 4 out of 10); strengthening health systems (one fourth); and all interventions related to risk reduction, preparedness, response, and recovery from epidemics, disasters, conflicts or environmental emergencies (12.3%).



resources' management, aquifers' recharge and tariff and price management, especially for ecosystem services, in order to progress not only towards a better preservation of resources, but also towards models that universalize the access to them. It is important to highlight that, most of these experiences will also be very valuable to identify lessons to apply

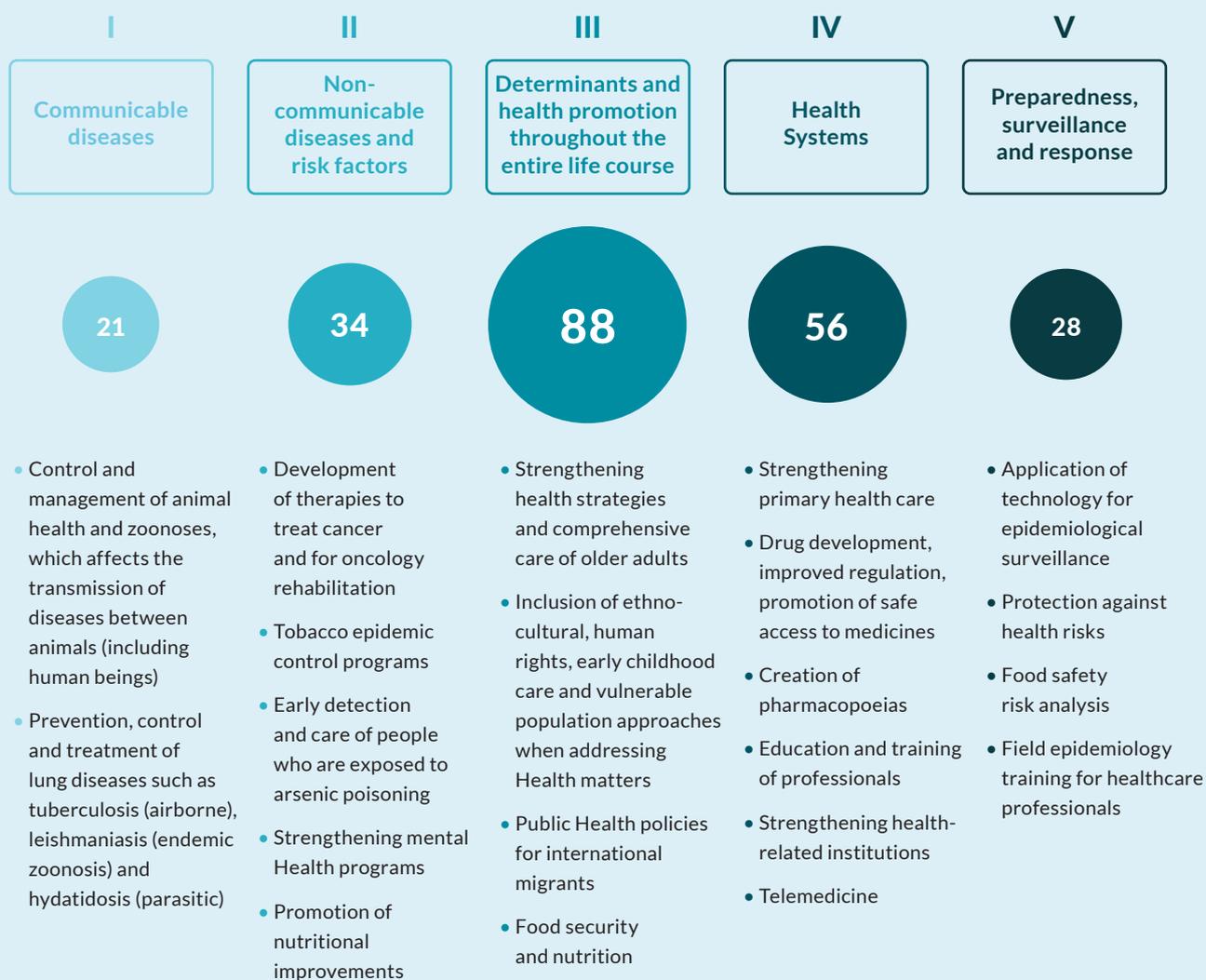
in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only to respond to the health crisis (Box II.1) but also to overcome the economic and social crisis, addressed in greater detail in Box II.2, at the end of this section.

In line with the above, it is possible to identify 70 projects which aim was to strengthen the *Agriculture*

Bilateral SSC projects (2018-2019) classified according to their contribution to a more comprehensive concept of health and from which to learn to address the health crisis

In units

227 SSC projects that strengthen Health from a broad perspective



SSC projects from which to obtain lessons to apply to the health strategy to fight against COVID-19

Note: Project classification according to WHO's and PAHO's program areas.
 Source: SEGIB based on PAHO-SEGIB (2017), WHO (2019) and Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation



and livestock sector. With a relative importance of 13%, this sector is the second most important in 2019 and the first within the Productive sectors area, diversified around 7 other sectors, all of them with specific shares in no case higher than 2.4%. As has been the case in the past, numerous exchanges were promoted to strengthen the value chain of

some of the region's typical products, such as cocoa, coffee, potato and quinoa; as well as to support livestock and dairy chains; and those conceived to adapt agricultural practices to face climate change and for harvest protection. However, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and, as referred in Box II.1, it is possible to identify a set of Bilateral SSC

In addition, after a detailed analysis of the projects that are included in each of these new categories, it is also possible to identify experiences aligned with the strategy proposed by WHO and to learn how to strengthen essential capacities to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, both in terms of the immediate response as well as of its long-term aspects.

Specifically, it is possible to refer to projects related to the control and management of animal health and zoonoses and their transmission to human beings, aspect which is certainly important in terms of the origin of the current pandemic, but which can also especially contribute to prevent future crises. In addition, the region has experience in addressing other communicable diseases, including tuberculosis, which, as COVID-19, is an airborne disease and part of its serious impact is concentrated on the lungs and the respiratory system.

Other experiences to learn from are those related to the development of therapies and immunological treatments, in this case, against cancer. In this respect, it is also possible to refer to the strengthening of early detection and care techniques applied to specific diseases, which could also be useful for COVID cases. Furthermore, given the psychological impact that social distancing and confinement measures are having on part of the population, experiences related to the strengthening of mental health programs are key.

The region's experience to strengthen health strategies and older adults' comprehensive care can also be important, as this is one of the population groups which are most certainly affected by COVID-19. Health and social protection measures for the most vulnerable populations is precisely one of the aspects recommended in WHO's strategy. Latin-America also has accumulated experience in this sense, as suggested by projects which are dedicated to the inclusion of ethno-cultural, Human Rights, early childhood care and international migrant approaches, among others, when addressing Health public policies.

In addition, it is essential to take advantage of all cooperation that in recent years has been dedicated to the institutional strengthening of the health sector, to the training of its professionals and to the reinforcement of a critical service to this pandemic, such as primary health care. The progress already made in terms of telemedicine is also relevant, as it contributes to increase the system's response capacities in situations of unusual pressure. Cooperation to contribute to the development of new drugs, as well as to advance towards improved regulation to promote and guarantee safe access to them, should also be considered.

Finally, it is also possible to identify regional experiences in terms of preparedness, surveillance and response to health risks, including emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this sense, projects that have promoted technology for epidemiological surveillance, those dedicated to health risks management and others which have contributed to train health professionals in field epidemiology, should be highlighted.

Source: SEGIB based on WHO (2020), WHO (2019), PAHO-SEGIB (2017), WHO website (www.who.int) and Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

experiences associated with agriculture and livestock which are particularly relevant: initiatives dedicated to food safety, epidemiological surveillance and the management of phytosanitary and zoonosanitary matters, key in a crisis which origin is considered to be precisely related to the transmission of diseases of animal origin to human beings.

In terms of Institutional Strengthening, projects dedicated to *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights*, to *Strengthening institutions and public policies* (around 30 initiatives in each case), and, to a less extent, to *Peace, public and national security and defense* (14 exchanges), stood out. In this case, cooperation was predominantly destined

/// Basically around 50 projects addressed matters related to Environment, the third sector with the highest relative importance in Ibero-America in 2019 ///

to improve judicial and prison systems, especially focusing on guarantees and on the promotion of young adults' and adolescents' social reintegration; as well as to address issues related to Human Rights, among which, initiatives associated with Memory, Truth and Justice, and the eradication of the worst forms of child labor, are worthy of mention. It is also possible to identify projects to support countries' territorial planning, providing them with planning instruments based, in many occasions, on the use of geospatial data; the professionalization of public officials through the application of performance evaluation techniques, for example; and projects to promote the use of information technologies for government document management.

Meanwhile, basically around 50 projects addressed matters related to *Environment*, the third sector with the highest relative importance in Ibero-America in 2019. In this sense, very diverse experiences coexisted and should be highlighted. For example, those dedicated to the conservation of different types of ecosystems, especially, marine and coastal ecosystems, as well as those of certain regions (High-Andes and the Amazon). Initiatives that addressed the conservation of specific animal species such as red-and-green macaws, which survival is threatened by the progressive deforestation of their natural habitats, are also worthy of mention. Indeed, the fight against deforestation and climate change was another of these projects' aims, in line with the region's commitments in the framework of the Paris Agreement. Accordingly, cooperation was destined to adopt techniques for environmental assessment and greenhouse gas measurement, as well as to develop forest monitoring systems, some of these based on the use of satellite data. Solid waste management, especially of microplastics, was also prioritized. Within this same area of action, around ten projects were dedicated to *Disaster management*, through the development of warning and risk prevention systems, especially for earthquakes, floods, fires and droughts, with a special focus on urban areas.

BOX II.2

Ibero-American South-South Cooperation in the face of the COVID-19 economic and social crisis

The health crisis caused by COVID-19 has driven the world economy into a new recession. The necessary emergency response to protect citizens' health and lives with social distancing measures, activity lockdowns and mobility restrictions, among others, has led to a paralysis of the world economy which, according to

the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) last forecasts (IMF, 2021), has resulted in a fall of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of -3.5% in 2020.

The IMF itself, as well as other multilateral organizations such as the OECD, the World Bank and ECLAC, agree that the contraction

of the economic activity has been even more severe in the so-called emerging and/or developing economies, among which, the Latin-American region as a whole is included. Indeed, if forecasts are confirmed, in 2020 according to ECLAC, Latin-America's GDP would have suffered a fall of -8%.



The crisis' severity is increased by the impact that hypothetically exogenous factors have on an open economy such Latin-America's. The way in which trade and financial flows with the rest of the world are affected —especially with China and the United States— as well as the abrupt collapse and the subsequent slow reactivation of tourism, stand out among these factors. In addition, the economic crisis multiplies the underlying social crisis of a region that, prior to COVID-19, was already facing enormous challenges.

According to the OECD (2020), several features make Latin-America particularly vulnerable to the pandemic. Among these, it is possible to identify the following: structural informality in the labor market (with rates fluctuating, depending on the country, between 30% and 80%); the lack of universal social security networks (with assistance programs becoming more widespread, but still barely covering 62% of formal workers and their families); persisting income inequality, which also currently impacts on the ability to comply with social distancing and/or confinement measures, and even

to access health services; and the existence of important indigenous and migrant communities (the former, particularly affected by other communicable diseases' high prevalence rates such as hepatitis B, tuberculosis, malaria and dengue; the latter, especially vulnerable and sometimes living in precarious households and poor health conditions, not having access to essential services or social protection).

WHO already pointed out the special vulnerability of regions such as Latin-America on March 31st, 2020. Through a statement, its Director General warned that the COVID-19 pandemic would hit developing economies hardest and recommended governments to implement a set of social policies to protect their most vulnerable populations (WHO, 2020). Accordingly, and with the aim to “*leave no one behind*”, the countries of the region promoted a set of economic and social measures.

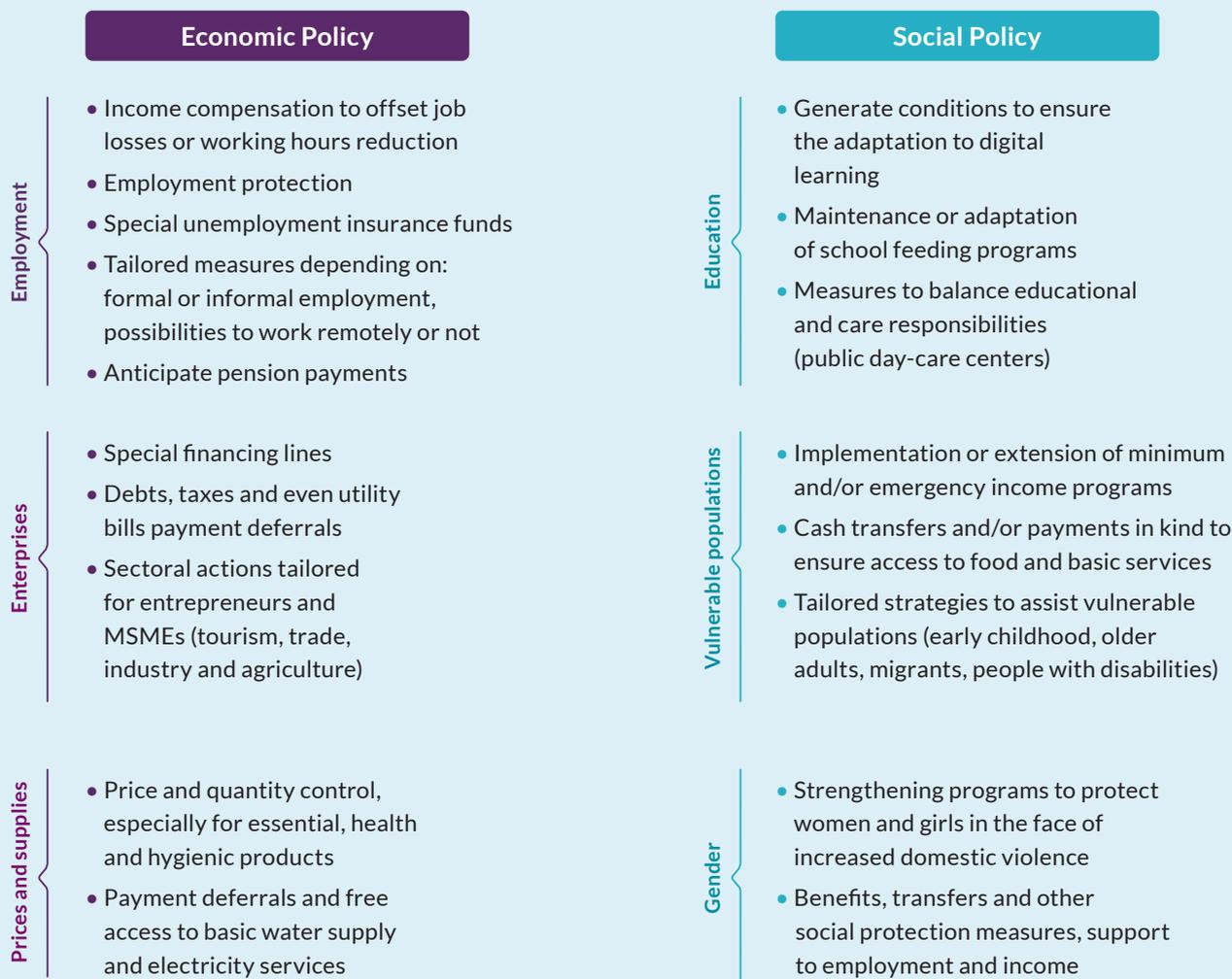
As the figure shows, and according to ECLAC and OECD (2020), these are, on the one hand, economic policy measures that, through fiscal and monetary resources, aim to preserve employment and/or incomes, as well as business activity, especially of small entrepreneurs and MSMEs, and to regulate prices and supplies to decouple income from the access to basic products and services. On the other hand, social policy measures focus on protection, with emphasis on income and/or in-kind transfers to the most vulnerable groups, especially to women and girls (victims of a context that has led to greater domestic violence), and on guaranteed access to an education that was forced to digitalize and reinvent itself in order to reach everyone.



A total of 55 projects were associated with the Infrastructure and Economic Services area. These were distributed, in turn, around 6 activity sectors. *Energy* stood out, in the framework of which experiences were promoted to transit towards a more efficient and sustainable use of clean sources, for example, by investing in hydraulic and geothermal energy. Initiatives classified under the *Science and technology*, *Enterprises* and *Employment* sectors are also worthy of mention. In fact, experiences in the framework of these activities become especially

relevant in a context in which the necessary response to the health crisis caused by COVID-19 has led to a worldwide paralysis of the economic activity plunging countries into a deep economic and social crisis. Box II.2 was precisely prepared to address these other dimensions of the COVID-19 crisis, to shed light on the response countries of the region have been promoting and, once again, to try to learn from previous experiences in order to assess how Bilateral SSC can contribute to respond to this challenge.

Latin-American countries' economic and social measures to fight COVID-19



Source: SEGIB based on ECLAC (2020) and OECD (2020)



The remaining 24 projects that were under execution in Ibero-America throughout 2019 were distributed in two activity sectors: *Culture* and *Gender*, with a 3:1 ratio. Specifically, Ibero-American countries worked to strengthen policies for the conservation of cultural heritage through the restoration of murals and document digitalization, among others. Other experiences focused on the promotion of creative industries, the recovery of indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures' value and the use of a performing art (theater) as an instrument to promote

social inclusion, especially that of young people. Meanwhile, several projects aimed to provide care for victims of violence against women, to promote greater gender equality and their economic empowerment.

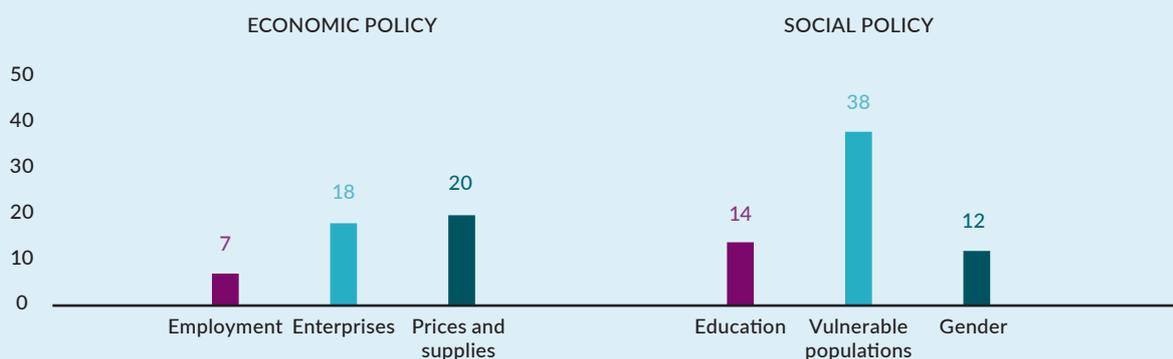
Taking these measures as a reference, a recategorization of the 766 Bilateral SSC projects Ibero-American countries had

under execution in 2018 and 2019, suggests that about 15% of that total (109 initiatives) was based on experiences that

can contribute to promote and strengthen the economic and social policies the region needs to respond to and address COVID-19.

SSC projects (2018-2019) that can contribute to the economic and social response to the pandemic

In units



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

Thus, and as the second graph shows, 4 out of 10 of these more than one hundred identified projects refer to experiences in economic policies that can provide lessons related to three of the main groups of considered measures: those which protect

employment and income (7); those which stimulate the continuity of productive activity, especially of small enterprises (18); and those which set price and quantity controls that guarantee the access to essential supplies and services (20).

In order to illustrate the above, it is possible to identify projects countries exchanged to better understand and strengthen employment programs, especially those dedicated to young people, in a context that demands specific interventions which consider



Finally, and to complete this section (related to capacity strengthening from a regional perspective), it should be noted that this scenario is dynamic and that, in recent years, significant changes in trends have been registered. Indeed, Graphs II.11 and II.12 respectively portray the variation of the different areas of action's and activity sectors' share in the total number of projects in 2010 and 2019.

A combined analysis of both graphs shows a significant change of priorities in the last decade: the Social area falls from 48% to 36% and loses more than 12 percentage points, while cooperation in which experiences related to Institutional Strengthening and Environment, two areas which relative importance increased, in each case, more than 5.5 percentage points, leading to a combined growth of nearly 12 points, increasingly prevails. If this dynamic is analyzed in terms of the activity

vulnerabilities such as age or labor informality. Other experiences have been addressing, over the years, the promotion of micro-entrepreneurial fabrics and encouraging entrepreneurship among particularly vulnerable groups, which may be crucial in the current context of the pandemic. Likewise, it is important to learn from the accumulated experience in the management of tariff systems to ensure the provision of and the access to water and electricity, as well as the expertise related to the regulation of the provision of these essential services.

In addition, basically 60% of the identified Bilateral SSC projects address social policy measures which are key to countries' management of the pandemic. In this sense, and in a context in which guaranteeing the right to education is determined by, among other aspects, the digitalization of the education system for distance learning,

it is essential to consider 14 projects which have promoted the progressive use of technologies, the development of the so-called digital classrooms, technical assistance to promote educational television, as well as the adoption of flexible education strategies that allow curriculum and format adaptation to circumstances that affect traditional education methods, as is currently happening during the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, and to complement the above, it is necessary to mention SSC experiences that are also associated with education but that have a different objective: cooperation related to school gardens and canteens, which must be reinvented and replaced by alternatives that, compatible with distance learning, guarantee families' access to food.

Finally, the required social policy measures to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis are also related to the more than ten experiences in gender programs, mainly conceived to fight violence against women and to promote their economic inclusion. However, the most important group of measures could refer to the almost 40 projects which, to a certain extent, promote the effective protection of the most vulnerable groups. In this respect, it is possible to consider cooperation associated with poverty reduction programs; comprehensive care policies for early childhood, older adults, people with disabilities, indigenous communities or international migrants; projects that strengthened and contributed to the expansion of social security systems; as well as experiences in the digital management of cash transfer programs or housing vouchers, to name a few.

Source: SEGIB based on ECLAC (2020) (2021), IMF (2021), OECD (2020), ECLAC website and Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

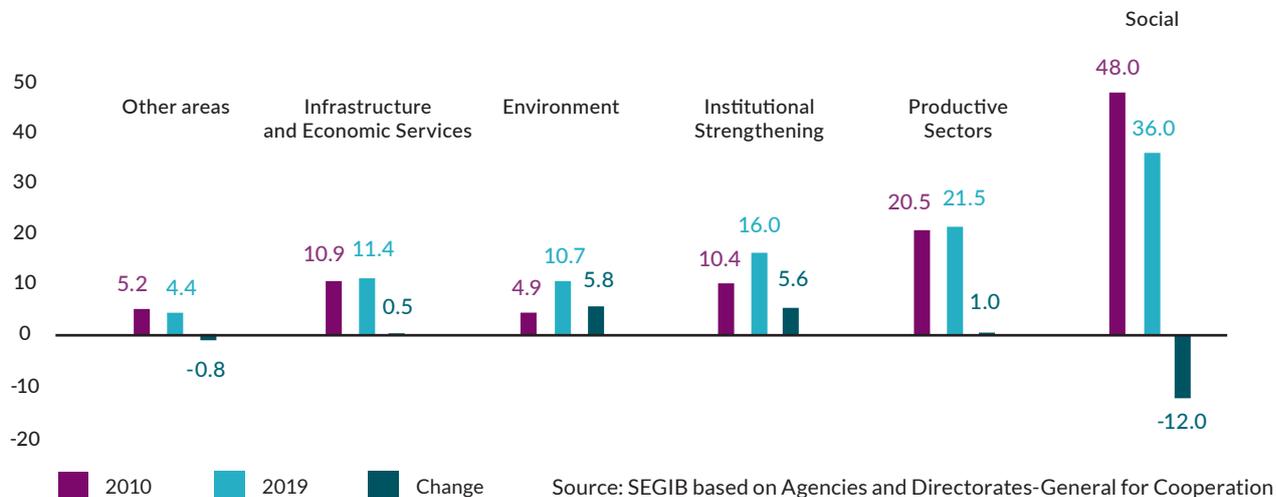
sectors, it is possible to identify, on the one hand, a shift from projects associated with *Education* and *Health* (that fall 7.5 and 6.7 percentage points, respectively), to the *Water supply and sanitation* sector (which increases 3.1 points, slightly offsetting the overall fall of the Social area). On the other hand, the shift to *Environment* and *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights*, two sectors which, in the last decade, gain more than 5 and 3 percentage points respectively, should also be noted.

/// *Several projects aimed to provide care for victims of violence against women, to promote greater gender equality and their economic empowerment* ///

GRAPH II.11

Change in areas of action’s share in the total number of Bilateral SSC projects. 2010-2019

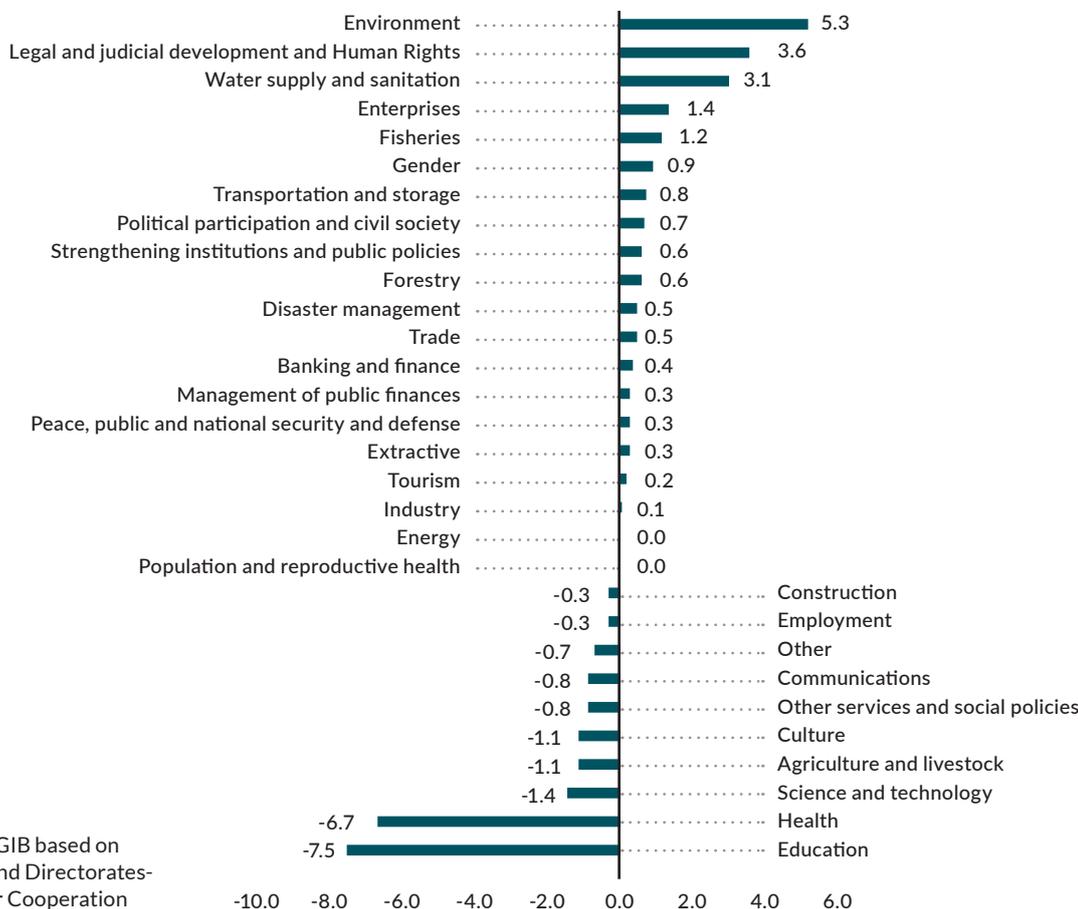
In percentage points



GRAPH II.12

Change in activity sectors’ share in the total number of Bilateral SSC projects. 2010-2019

In percentage points



II.3.2. Countries' profile

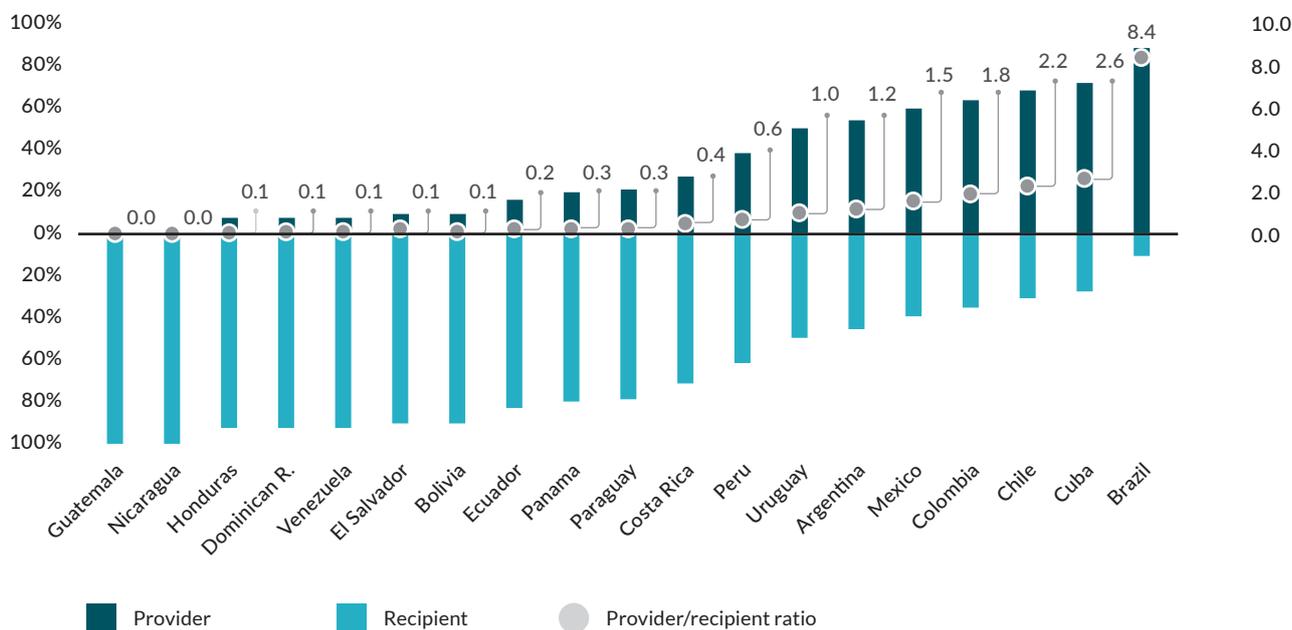
The regional approach to the capacities that were strengthened as a result of Bilateral SSC that was exchanged in 2019 must be completed with the analysis of the contribution of each of the main stakeholders. In this sense, the overall outcome is certainly the result of countries' participation as providers, by transferring their main strengths to other partners, and as recipients, to close their knowledge gaps.

Graph II.13 was prepared for this purpose. As the graph shows, countries are arranged according to their profile (SSC provider and/or recipient) and are grouped in order to identify behavior patterns. To this end, the graph combines two types of information for each country. First, the vertical left axis shows the relative contribution of each role in terms of the total number of projects (100%), while the importance of provided initiatives is situated over the horizontal axis, and that of received initiatives, is situated below.⁴ Second, the right vertical axis portrays each country's provider/recipient ratio, where 1 corresponds to an even distribution of the two roles.

GRAPH II.13

Country profiles, by their participation as providers and recipients. 2019

Relative contribution of each role, in percentage; ratio, in units



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

⁴ In methodological terms, it should be noted that, as the aim in this case is to clearly differentiate the two roles, projects in which countries participated under the role "both" are divided and counted twice, once for the "provider" role and once for the "recipient" role.

According to this graph, Central-American and Andean countries, from Guatemala to Peru, together with the Dominican Republic and Paraguay, participated in 2019's Bilateral SSC projects under a predominantly recipient role; Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Cuba and Brazil mainly acted as providers; while Uruguay shows an absolutely balanced distribution of the two roles. However, different profiles coexisted within each of these groups. For example, when comparing Guatemala and Peru (the former is 100% recipient and the latter has a recipient/provider ratio of 2:1), or Argentina and Brazil (with a provider/recipient ratio of 1.2, highly balanced and close to 1, and of 8.4, respectively).

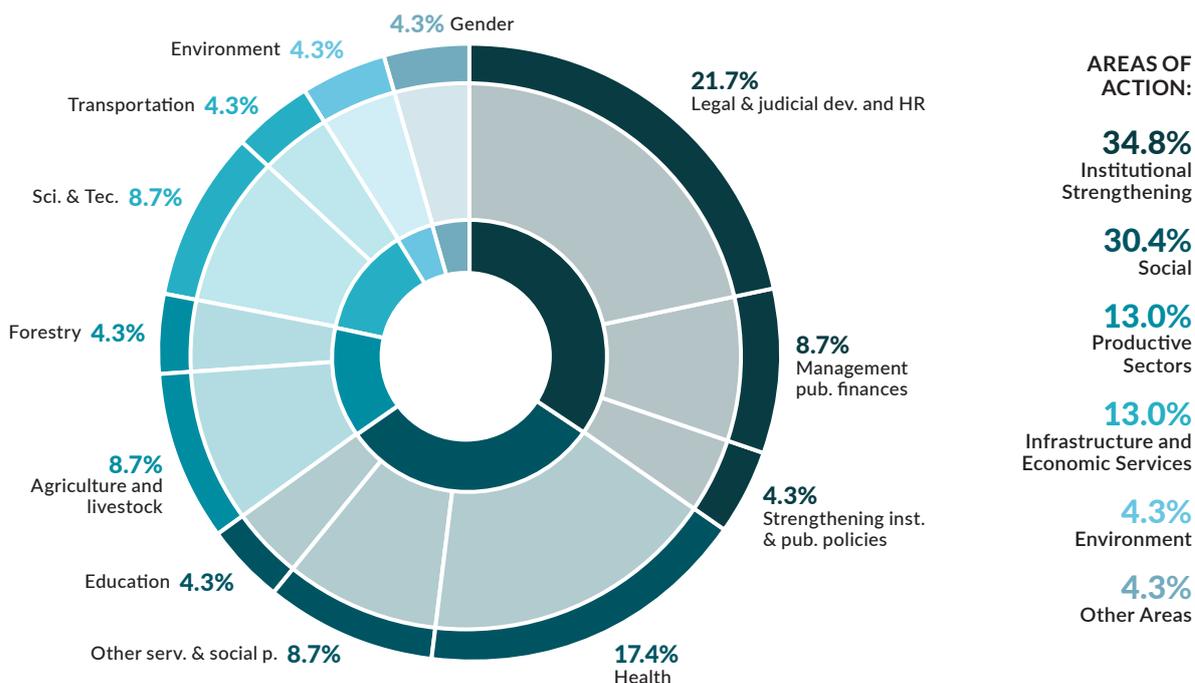
In this sense, Graph II.14 was prepared to illustrate the type of capacities countries aim to strengthen when they participate in Bilateral SSC exchanges under a predominantly recipient role. In this case, the graph portrays the case of Guatemala. The distribution of the 23 projects in which this country participated in 2019 by area of action and activity sector sheds light

on how two thirds of its cooperation was focused on the Institutional Strengthening (34.8%) and Social (30.4%) areas. This was influenced by this country's priority to support matters related to *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights and Health sectors*. In fact, Guatemala took advantage of Bilateral SSC to, on the one hand, support the judicial system's modernization and to find formulas that contribute both to prevent violence against young people as well as to protect them in case they came into conflict with the criminal justice system. On the other hand, it aimed to strengthen health services, especially contributing to professional training and promoting the access of low-income population to ophthalmology surgeries and to child nutrition (Maternal Milk Banks). Additionally, Guatemala would have also received cooperation (around 25%) destined to strengthen aspects of its productive and economic activities, especially in terms of agriculture and livestock.

GRAPH II.14

Distribution of projects in which Guatemala participated as recipient, by activity sector and area of action. 2019

In percentage



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

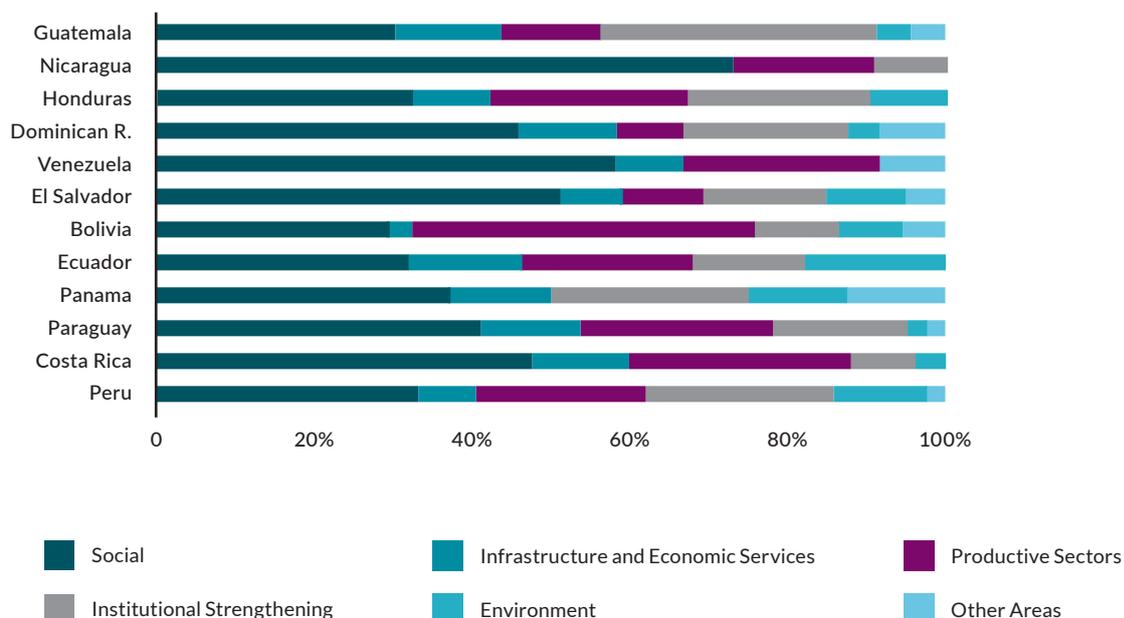
Graph II.15, in turn, distributes the projects in which other Ibero-American countries participated as recipients, according to the area of action which they addressed. As the graph shows, most projects executed by Central-American countries and the Dominican Republic, were aimed at capacity strengthening in the Social area. Its relative

importance, however, remarkably fluctuated from 32.7% in Honduras' case, to 72.7% in Nicaragua's. Institutional strengthening (El Salvador, Panama and the Dominican Republic) and Productive Sectors (most importantly for Costa Rica, Honduras and Nicaragua), alternated as the second most relevant areas.

GRAPH II.15

Distribution of projects in which countries with a predominantly recipient profile participated, by area of action. 2019

In percentage



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

Meanwhile, the Andean countries and Paraguay (except Bolivia) focused their cooperation on the Social area, once again its relative importance being much diverse and fluctuating between 32.1% in Ecuador's case and 58.3% in Venezuela's. For all these countries, the Productive Sectors area was the second most relevant, with the exception of Peru; in this case cooperation in the Institutional Strengthening area, stood out. Bolivia was the country with the most diverse profile. In this case, the Productive Sectors area prevailed, diversified in *Agriculture and livestock, Industry and Tourism*, followed by Social matters.

As for countries that predominantly acted as providers, Graph II.16 shows the example of Brazil, which executed almost 9 out of 10 projects in 2019 under this role. According the graph, almost one half was destined to share capacities in the Social area and, especially, in sectors such as *Health* (more than one fifth), *Water supply and sanitation*, and, to a less extent, *Other services and social policies*. The other half was mainly explained by a combination of capacities related to the Environment, Productive Sectors and Institutional Strengthening areas.

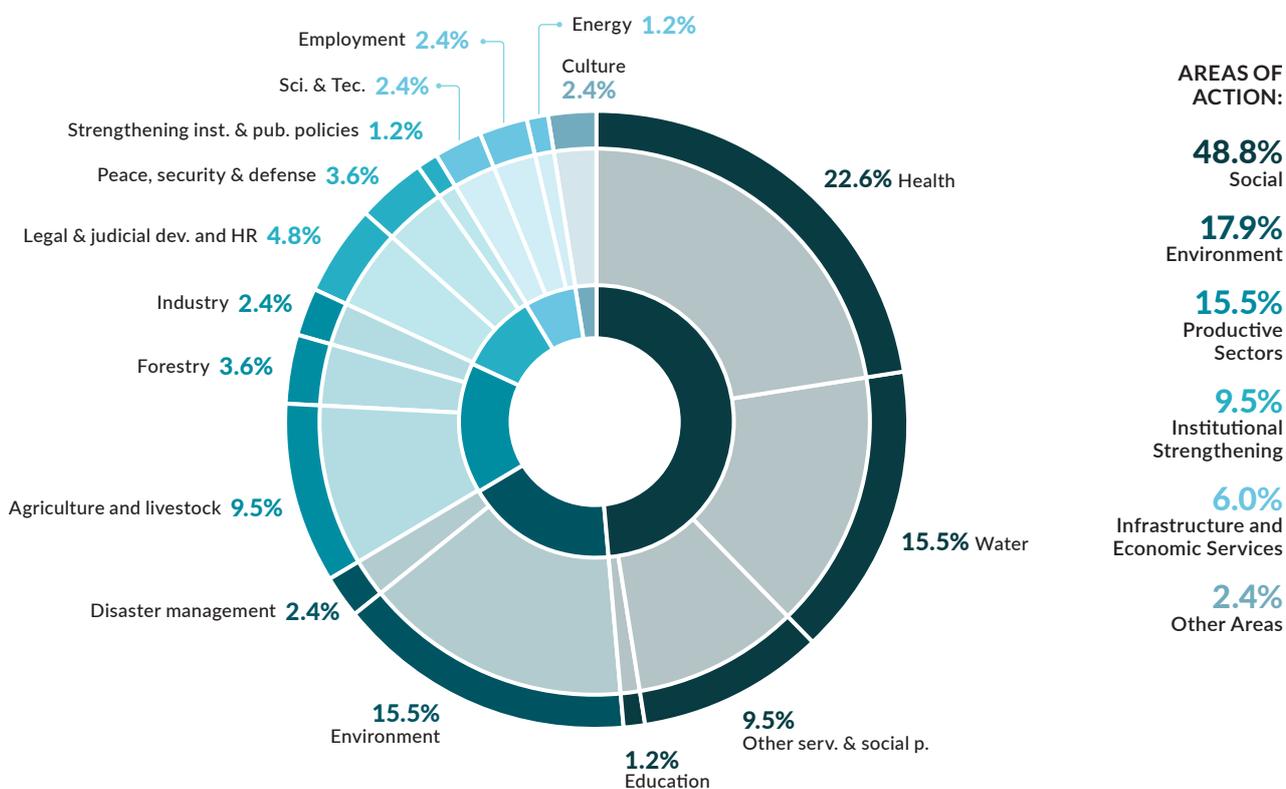
In the framework of these areas, it is possible to include Brazil’s experience in the following matters: child nutrition through the expansion of the network of Human Milk Banks; institutional strengthening of health-related institutions, such as those dedicated to epidemiological surveillance

and drug regulation; comprehensive management of water resources and the sustainable use of rainwater cisterns; and early childhood protection, especially by promoting school canteens as an instrument to exercise both the right to education and to food.

GRAPH II.16

Distribution of projects in which Brazil participated as provider, by activity sector and area of action. 2019

In percentage



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

Graph II.17 was prepared to illustrate the case of other Ibero-American countries that also predominantly acted as providers. This graph distributes each country’s provided projects, according to the area of action. As the graph shows, Colombia and Cuba were the other two countries with the highest

relative importance in terms of cooperation dedicated to the Social area. In spite of this, however, both countries have very different profiles: highly diversified in Colombia’s case (especially related to productive and institutional capacities); and, very concentrated (more than 85% of the projects) in the

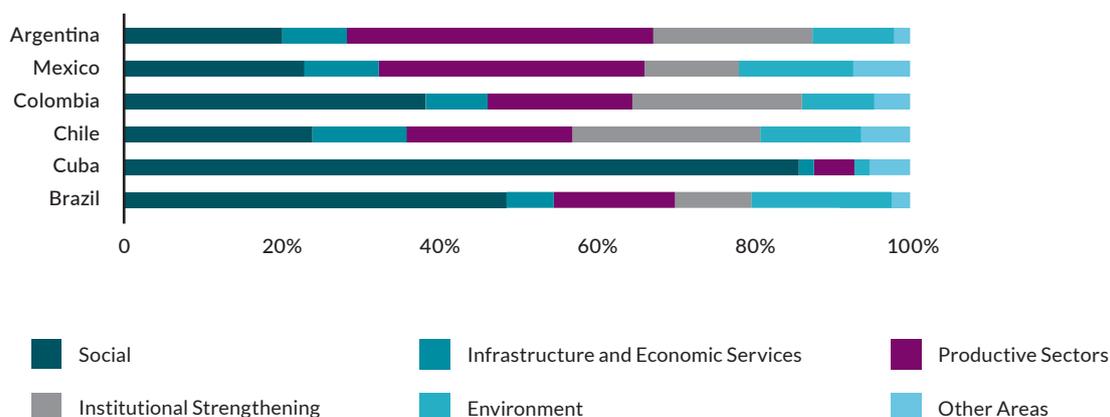
case of Cuba, which shared its renown experience in sectors such as *Education* and *Health*. Meanwhile, the most important part of Argentina’s and Mexico’s Bilateral SSC as providers was particularly destined to support the development of Productive Sectors. Finally, Chile certainly had the most diversified

profile: 75% of the projects in which it participated as provider focused on sharing its experience in the Social, Institutional Strengthening and Productive Sectors areas, all in very similar proportions.

GRAPH II.17

Distribution of projects in which countries with a predominantly provider profile participated, by area of action. 2019

In percentage



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

In order to complete this section, the analysis details the case of Uruguay, the country that, in 2019, had a basically equal proportion of provided and received Bilateral SSC projects. In this case, the aim is not only to shed light on which type of capacities were associated with each of the roles, but rather to understand how cooperation under both roles complemented. Indeed, this complementarity occurs even within the same type of capacity, when the difference in terms of each role is determined by a specific specialization profile. This is common in the so-called "bidirectional" projects, where the two countries simultaneously exercise the role "both", example that explains one half of Uruguay's exchanges.

In this regard, Graph II.8 distributes the total number of Bilateral SSC projects in which Uruguay

participated in 2019 together with other Ibero-American countries, according to the area of action and the activity sector they addressed. Unlike in previous graphs, however, in this case it is also necessary to distinguish the role under which Uruguay participated in each exchange. In order to add this information, the graph is divided in two. Projects in which Uruguay acted as recipient are situated to the left, and those in which it participated as provider are displayed to the right.

In this sense, the distribution of capacities in terms of each of the roles is very similar, although not identical. In fact, and as for both roles, most projects (more than one half) were destined to strengthen capacities in the Social and Infrastructure and Economic Services areas. In addition, although from the sectoral perspective the distribution was also very similar, it is possible to

identify certain differences: indeed, the importance of the Social area was even higher when Uruguay acted as recipient, uplifted by a higher number of projects in the *Health* and *Education* sectors. Meanwhile, cooperation to support the generation of better

economic operating conditions had an even greater relative importance when the country performed the provider role, through which Uruguay shared, with other partners, its experience in the *Energy* sector.

GRAPH II.18

Distribution of projects in which Uruguay participated as provider and as recipient, by activity sector and area of action. 2019

In percentage

RECIPIENT

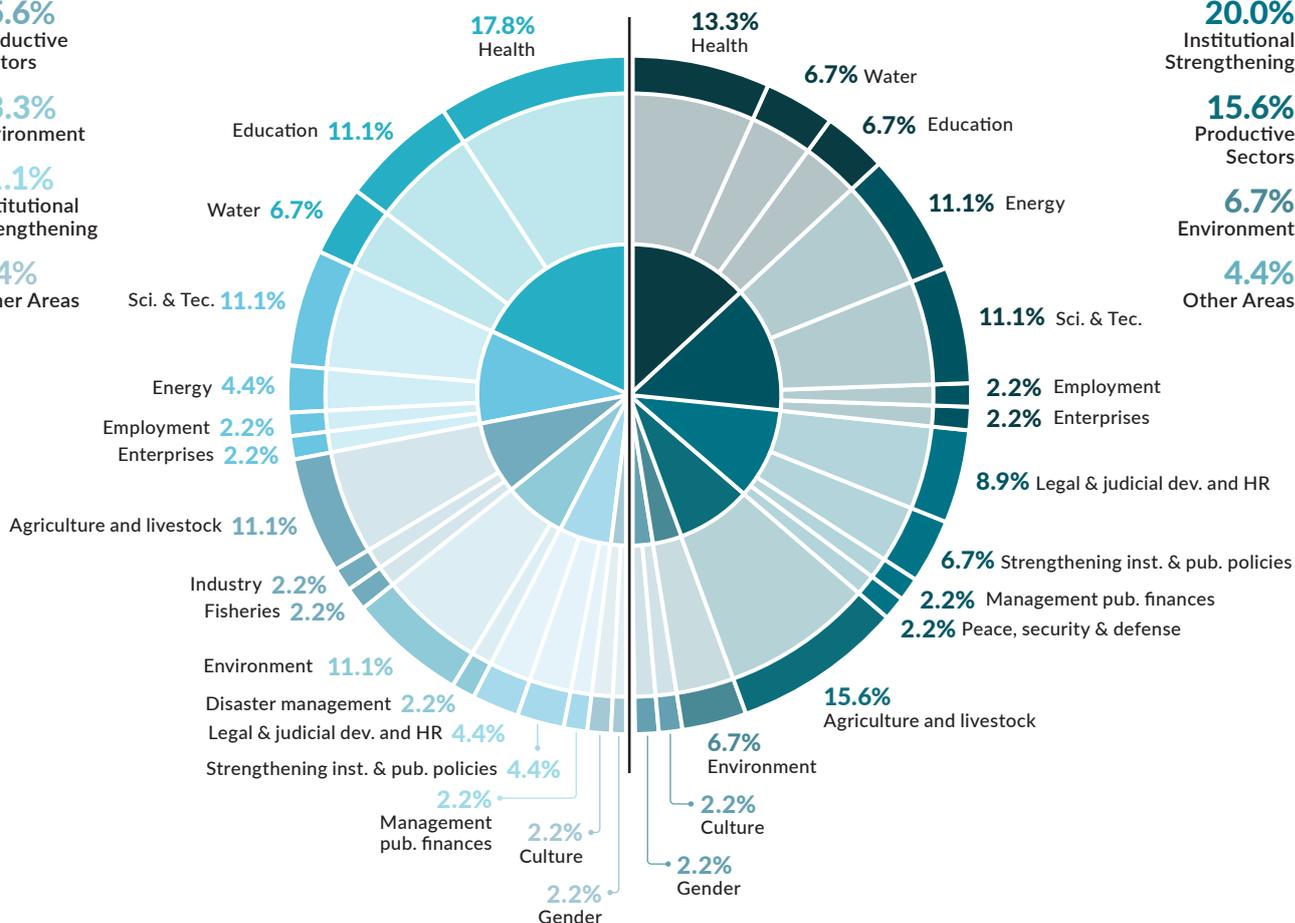
AREAS OF ACTION:

- 35.6%** Social
- 20.0%** Infrastructure and Economic Services
- 15.6%** Productive Sectors
- 13.3%** Environment
- 11.1%** Institutional Strengthening
- 4.4%** Other Areas

PROVIDER

AREAS OF ACTION:

- 26.7%** Social
- 26.7%** Infrastructure and Economic Services
- 20.0%** Institutional Strengthening
- 15.6%** Productive Sectors
- 6.7%** Environment
- 4.4%** Other Areas



Methodological note: in this case, "bidirectional" projects in which Uruguay participated under the role "both", are divided and counted twice, once for the "provider" role and once for the "recipient" role. Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

As for the remaining exchanges, it is also possible to identify one main difference: as recipient, Uruguay had the possibility to strengthen its knowledge in the Environment area; as provider, it could share its experience in terms of Institutional strengthening. From the sectoral perspective, Uruguay was provided with expertise and knowledge associated with the protection of ecosystems and natural areas, whereas, as provider, its projects contributed to strengthen the *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights* sector. Meanwhile, the *Agriculture and livestock* sector was the most important in terms of exchanges in the Productive sectors area, both from the provider as from the recipient perspective. Completing the analysis in terms of both roles, it is possible to identify specific and "bidirectional" projects in *Culture* and in *Gender* equality, both sectors associated with Other areas of action.

The single analysis of the specific topics on which Uruguay's exchanges have focused in terms of the *Health* sector already illustrates the complementarities between projects, but also between the roles performed by this country in Bilateral SSC, as well as the high degree of their specialization. In this sense, projects in which Uruguay has participated under both roles have focused on the joint development of technologies applied to very diverse aspects, including therapies to fight breast cancer or on the development of biofilms to fight some types of multi-resistant organisms. Meanwhile, in those exchanges in which it predominantly acts as recipient, for example, Uruguay chooses to strengthen its capacities to fight diseases such as Leishmaniasis, transmitted from animals to human beings, or to improve its renown experience in terms of transplants, working with its partners to develop a tissue bank and a donor registry.

/// *It is possible to identify specific and "bidirectional" projects in Culture and in Gender equality* ///

II.4. Bilateral South-South Cooperation and Sustainable Development Goals

In March 2019, Ibero-American countries subscribed the outcome document of the Second United Nations High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation, also known as BAPA+40, which, in article 8, recognized "the importance and different history and particularities" of this cooperation modality and reaffirmed its understanding of South-South Cooperation

... as a manifestation of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South that contributes to their national well-being, their national and collective self-reliance and the attainment of internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, according to national priorities and plans (UN, 2019, p.2).

Countries' commitment is still firm. However, barely a year after, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has put the achievement of Sustainable Development at risk. In fact, the United Nations itself (2020) recognizes this crisis is taking the world further away from the 2030 Agenda objectives, although it is also committed to a solidarity that has proven to be essential to "leave no one behind".

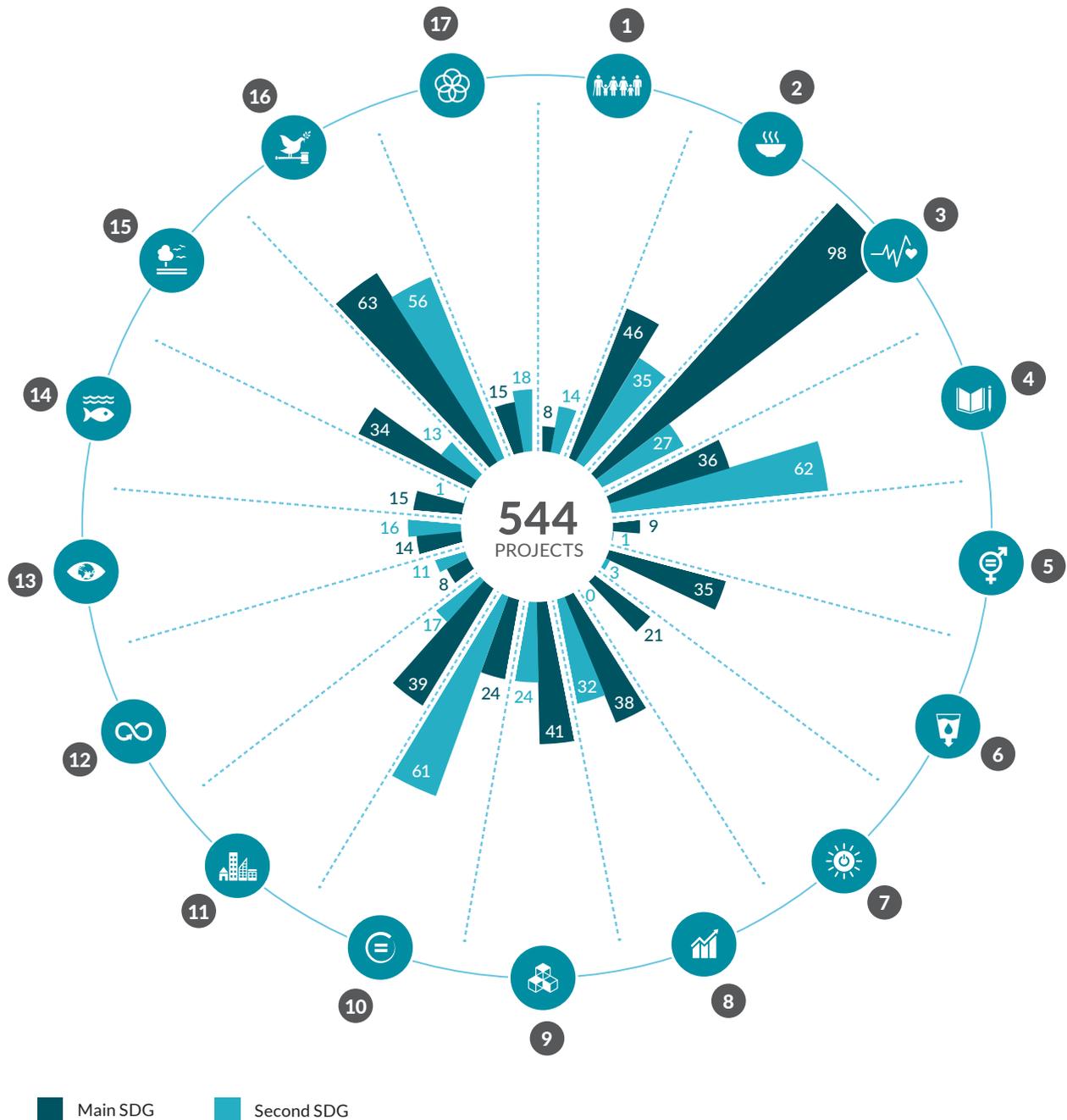
In this scenario, the analysis of Bilateral SSC promoted by Ibero-American countries throughout 2019 and its reassessment in terms of the progress made to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), and of the aspects that are still pending, is crucial to direct future efforts towards a SSC that contributes to overcome the crisis in an inclusive manner.

Graph II.19 was prepared for this purpose. It distributes the 544 Bilateral SSC projects that were under execution in Ibero-America in 2019, according to a double criteria: the first refers to the main SDG with which they could potentially be aligned (100% of the projects are associated with one main SDG), while the other criterion refers to the "second" SDG to which they could also be contributing (a second SDG was identified in 70% of the cases though).

GRAPH II.19

Distribution of Bilateral SSC projects in Ibero-America, by the main and the second SDG with which they are potentially aligned. 2019

In units



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

The analysis of this graph shows how, in line with the sectoral distribution itself and, as has been the case in previous years, most (basically one hundred) Bilateral SSC projects executed in Ibero-America during 2019 were aimed at advancing the

achievement of SDG 3 (Good health and well-being). In addition, 30% of the total (544) is explained when adding the 63 projects that were aligned with SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

In terms of relative importance, more than half a dozen SDGs followed, at a certain distance, with between 30 and 50 projects in each case. These SDGs, and their diversified purposes, confirm the region's SSC was committed to advance towards Sustainable Development in a comprehensive manner, addressing each of its multiple dimensions. Thus, from the social perspective, efforts to advance the achievement of SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 4 (Quality education) and SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), stood out; the commitment to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), of a more economic nature, is also worthy of mention; and, under the environmental dimension, it is possible to identify cooperation destined to achieve SDG 15 (Life on land) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities). The remaining SDGs (up to 8 different ones) are associated with a lower number of projects, which reveals that additional efforts are still necessary to prioritize some strategic goals in the regional agenda, such as SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 1 (No poverty) and SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production).

In many occasions, projects simultaneously contribute to more than one Goal. This is often determined by the cross-cutting nature of the aspects they try to tackle. As a result, some SDGs, which are frequently not identified as main SDGs, strongly stand out when analyzing projects' alignment with a second SDG. A common example is that of SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), essential in the Latin-American context and mainly associated with 24 projects, increasing to 61 when focusing on projects' alignment with a second SDG. SDG 4 (Quality education) and SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) are other examples of the above, consistent with this cooperation modality which recurrently focuses on training, technical and professional capacity building, and on the strengthening of public institutions.

To conclude, and in line with the aforementioned, it is interesting to identify which SDGs tended to most frequently relate to each other and why: that is, what type of projects tend to link them. Graph II.20 was prepared for this purpose, as a version of a network graph, where the 17 SDGs are sorted clockwise and in ascending order, in an outer circle, and SDG 1 is placed as if twelve o'clock. When the same project connects two SDGs (regardless of their hierarchy, main or second), a string links them, as in a net. The string's thickness is proportional to the number of projects through which each pair of Goals is related.

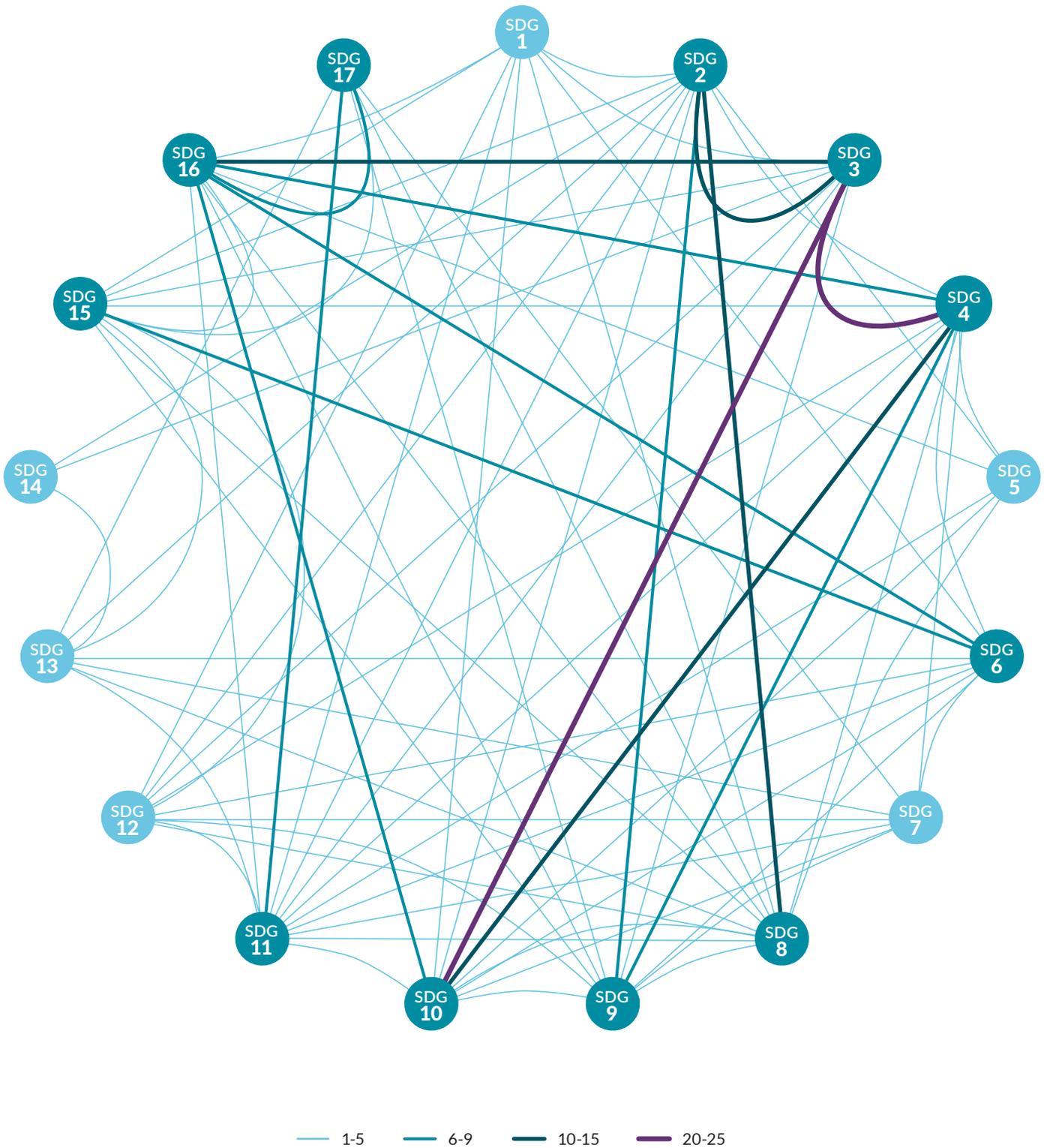
As the graph portrays, one of the most frequent associations is that related to projects which simultaneously aim to achieve SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 3 (Good health and well-being). This coincidence is common, for example, in cooperation dedicated to promote food security or to the improvement of animal and plant health management, generally developed within the agriculture and livestock activity which, in turn, impacts on other aspects such as nutrition and food safety. Another noteworthy example would be the frequent association between SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality education). In this case, the connection is mainly explained by the numerous projects which are dedicated to training and education, general or specific, in health matters. However, some other examples correspond to specific exchanges, such as that detailed in Box II.3, to adapt innovative pedagogical methodologies to guarantee the right to education and health for children in inpatient treatment.

Other relevant associations would be mainly related to the Goals which, in turn, are strongly identified as second SDGs. In this sense, it is worth mentioning the frequency with which SDG 4 (Quality education) or SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) are related to SDG 10, which is consistent with the fact that these projects, although having a positive impact on the main SDG with which they are aligned, also address inequality reduction. The same conclusion can be drawn, in a context of intergovernmental cooperation, from the frequent association of SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) with SDG 3 and even with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals), with which projects that strengthen cooperation itself tend to be aligned. Finally, and given their economic dimension, SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) are strongly associated with projects that also address SDG 2 (Zero hunger), as they strengthen productive chains or the promotion of family agriculture.

GRAPH II.20

Distribution of Bilateral SSC projects in Ibero-America, by the association between SDGs. 2019

In units



Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

BOX II.3

Quality education for minors in inpatient treatment: SDGs 3 and 4

Health and education are basic human rights and key indicators for human sustainable development, recognized by international instruments such as the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” (art. 28 and 29) and the “Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities”, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20th, 1989 and December 20th, 1993, respectively. Both rights are also closely related, since lack of health care not only limits economic opportunities and increases poverty, but also threatens the right of children and young people to access an education that will enable them to acquire knowledge and, consequently, enjoy fulfilling social lives. Education is also essential to overcome poverty as it facilitates socio-economic mobility.

Given its importance, the rights to education and health have been crucial aspects in global development agendas and especially in the 2030 Agenda, which is based on a comprehensive definition of development. Indeed, the approach to education in the context of hospitalization, on which this Box II.3 focuses, is especially associated with SDGs 3 and 4, and it constitutes a paradigmatic example of the above.

In fact, a common situation which undermines or interrupts the educational process is that of many children and young people who are hospitalized or convalescent, or who have to undergo frequent medical treatment. Hospital pedagogy, a field of social pedagogy, is essential to promote the continuity of these children’s educational process.

The project “Implementation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in the educational process of inpatient minors”, implemented between 2018 and 2019 among two children’s hospitals in Costa Rica and Chile, precisely refers to this aspect’s strengthening.

The project allowed Costa Rica and Chile to share experiences through a technical exchange between two reference hospitals in the matter: Dr. Carlos Sáenz Herrera National Children’s Hospital in San José, Costa Rica, and Dr. Exequiel González Cortés Hospital in Chile.

In 1996, Costa Rica passed “Law 7600 on Equal Opportunities for people with disabilities”, which regulation states, in articles 21 and 51, the obligation to guarantee students the right to education in the event of hospitalization or convalescence. However, the country’s first interventions started almost four decades ago, in 1955, in the Department of Pediatrics of the *San Juan de Dios* Hospital. Shortly thereafter, in 1964, Dr. Carlos Sáenz Herrera National Children’s Hospital was founded, which, being aware of the problem, promoted Hospital Pedagogy from the very beginning.

Chilean Dr. Exequiel González Cortés Hospital, in turn, founded in 1991 as a result of the initiative of parents of children with cancer, is one of the two hospitals in Chile that has hospital schools recognized by the Ministry of Education. Its inauguration coincided with the launch of the UDL didactic approach at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), a US non-profit educational organization. Being aware of its potential, the hospital promoted its practice.

The application of UDL in classrooms is based on a theoretical framework that includes the latest developments in neuroscience applied to learning, educational research, and digital media and technologies. This framework guides the design of accessible and challenging learning environments and it aims to change the design of the learning environment rather than changing students. When environments are intentionally designed to reduce difficulties, all students can participate in rigorous and meaningful learning, making it especially suitable for the needs of children and young people who are suffering from a disease.

Based on both experiences, the project’s main aim was to strengthen pedagogic practices in Costa Rica’s Dr. Carlos Sáenz Herrera National Children’s Hospital so that, based on the Chilean experience, it could adopt the UDL approach and apply it to first and second cycles’ curriculums. The exchange allowed the Costa Rican hospital to take another step forward in terms of its ongoing efforts to ensure the right to equal opportunities and the access to quality education for children who are suffering from a disease. This time, it also counted with the support and collaboration of the Departments of Special Education and the Department of First and Second Cycles of the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education.