



## CHAPTER IV

### Ibero-America and intra- and interregional South-South Cooperation

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

**southsouth**

## CHAPTER IV

# Ibero-America and intra- and interregional South-South Cooperation

This new chapter is promoted to understand Ibero-American SSC from a renewed perspective, focusing on the region as a key stakeholder for development. A double approach is adopted for this purpose: the first continues the analysis developed so far and still refers to *intra-regional* SSC, however, with an emphasis on the initiatives Ibero-America implements as a whole, through the Regional modality; the second perspective analyzes *interregional* interventions, in order to focus on the exchange of experiences between Ibero-America and other developing regions, and to contribute to the necessary collective response to global and cross-border problems and challenges.

## IV.1 Introduction

The commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA), one of the founding milestones of South-South Cooperation, in March 2019, allowed the international community to renew its commitment to this cooperation modality. In this sense, in article 16 of this commemorative Conference's outcome document, countries acknowledged the progress SSC has made in the past few decades, from a perspective that places the region as the focal point". Indeed, countries noted how South-South Cooperation has "expanded its scope" and has "facilitated regional, sub-regional and interregional integration", providing "innovative approaches for collective actions" which contribute to "sustainable development" (UN, 2019, p.3).

In fact, this same document, in article 7, also recognized that this cooperation modality "can take place in bilateral, regional or interregional contexts", which, in any of these formulas, enable "countries to meet their development goals through concerted efforts, taking into account the principles of South-South cooperation" (UN, 2019, p.2).

In this context, and given the region's leading role as a stakeholder for development in terms of South-South Cooperation, it is interesting to review Ibero-American cooperation in 2019 from a new perspective. Indeed, the region as a whole is considered to be a piece of territory, as it is comprised of a group of countries (or some parts of these) that share similar circumstances

or characteristics (ethnic, historical, linguistic, climatic, cultural or topographical, to name a few) with which they all feel identified.<sup>1</sup>

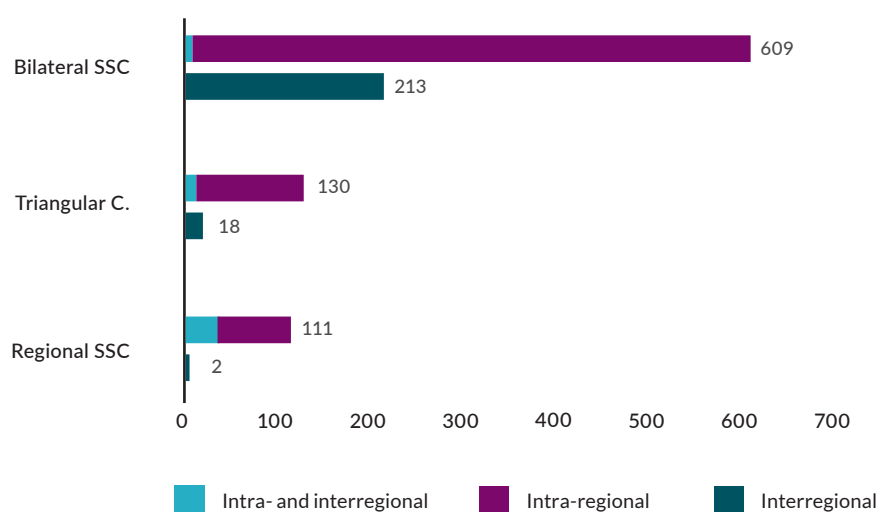
Graph IV.1 was prepared in order to better understand how this approach is applied in this chapter. This graph distributes the almost 1,100 SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America participated throughout 2019 based on a double criteria: first, the modality under which they were executed (Bilateral, Triangular, Regional); and, second, their scope, intra-regional (within Ibero-America) or interregional (together with other regions' developing countries).<sup>2</sup>

According to that distribution, the first part of this chapter focuses on intra-regional SSC; that is, on initiatives which take place within Ibero-America. This approach is favored by the fact that these are considered to be Regional SSC initiatives, a modality defined in the Ibero-American space that tends to be accompanied and institutionally supported by a regional organization. It should also be recalled that other intra-regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America participated in 2019, executed through Bilateral and Triangular modalities, were already analyzed in the two previous chapters.

**GRAPH IV.1**

### Intra- and interregional Ibero-American SSC, by modality. 2019

In units



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

The second part of this chapter focuses on interregional SSC, mainly implemented through Bilateral and Triangular modalities. Its analysis sheds light on how Ibero-America

and other regions' developing countries were able to share their experience and contribute to advance sustainable development.

<sup>1</sup> This concept is based on the definition of the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE by its Spanish acronym): <https://dle.rae.es/regi%C3%B3n>

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, and given that part of the cooperation is simultaneously intra- and interregional, a third scope can be identified which combines the other two.

## IV.2

### A closer look at Intra-regional SSC in Ibero-America

South-South Cooperation within Ibero-America in 2019 has been promoted through the execution of 111 initiatives, implemented under the Regional modality. This section focuses on these initiatives and addresses three aspects: it analyzes the way in which Regional SSC has been consolidating throughout these years; it identifies and characterizes its different stakeholders (country, organization, region); and it interprets how these stakeholders' joint efforts have contributed to capacity strengthening and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

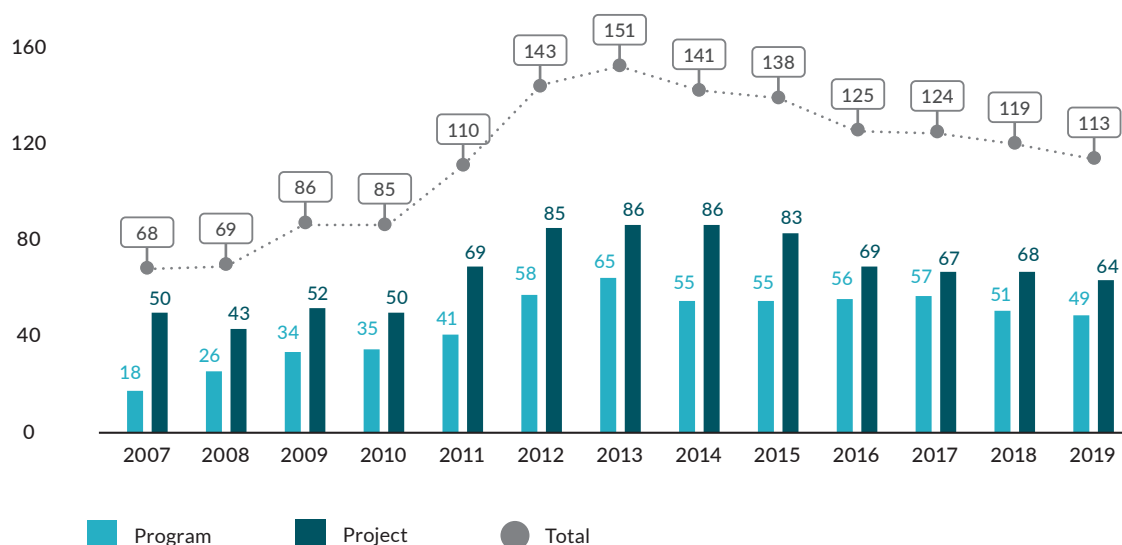
#### IV.2.1 The role of this modality: Regional SSC

Graph IV.2 portrays the evolution of Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America has participated between 2007 and 2019, still not differentiating the context in which they were executed: intra-regional (111 in 2019) and interregional (only 2). Thus, and as the graph shows, two stages with different behavioral dynamics can be identified in this period: the first, between 2007 and 2013 is characterized by a remarkably high average growth rate of 15%, uplifting the total number of initiatives from 68, initially, to a historical maximum of 151; the second stage, until 2019, is marked by a slow but progressive decline, with an average annual growth rate of -4.7%, which pushes the final number of initiatives down to 113.

GRAPH IV.2

#### Evolution of Ibero-American Regional SSC projects, programs and initiatives with all partners. 2007-2019

In units



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

In addition, during the first stage, an increasing process to promote programs rather than projects is identified. Thus, while in 2007 the programs/projects ratio was basically 25:75%, in 2013 the proportions were close to 43:57%. In the second

stage, the proportion was stable and the fall of the total number of initiatives did not change the distribution in terms of the instruments which, in 2019, was still slightly favorable to projects.

The fact that the number of Regional SSC initiatives has remained above one hundred and that programs have shown an increasing importance, suggests Ibero-America's commitment to this modality. This perception is reaffirmed when considering that the

**/// South-South Cooperation within Ibero-America in 2019 has been promoted through the execution of 111 initiatives, implemented under the Regional modality ///**

execution of these initiatives is of a longer-term and that they tend to be extended over time. In fact, more than 40% of the projects and 90% of the programs that were under execution in 2019 began sometime prior to 2018, some of these even beginning in 2014 and 2001, respectively. The Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS by its Spanish acronym) is precisely an example of the above as it was launched in 2008 while its activities began in 2010. Box IV.1 reviews its 10 years' experience based on its commemorative slogan "share capacities, build knowledge", which reflects the important contribution that this Program has made to its member countries.

#### BOX IV.1

### "Share capacities, build knowledge": commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS)

The first edition of the *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America* in 2007 revealed, among other aspects, the need to build a common conceptual and methodological framework for South-South Cooperation in the region, in addition to work to strengthen countries' capacities to systematize information (SEGIB, 2018).

In this context, in 2008, during the 18<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit in San Salvador, Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation promoted the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS by its Spanish acronym), with the aim to:

- (a) strengthen national institutions which coordinate international cooperation; (b) promote the adoption of agreed regional positions in different debate fora; (c) contribute to the development of

information, monitoring and evaluation systems; (d) identify, systematize and replicate good practices, lessons learnt and successful experiences (SEGIB, 2008).

The Program began its activities in 2010, when its first technical unit was established in Colombia. Initially supported by 14 countries, PIFCSS has gained support in the region and is currently comprised of 21 Ibero-American countries. In addition, its headquarters have rotated, moving to Uruguay, El Salvador and Argentina, which hosts the technical unit since 2018 and holds the Presidency of its Intergovernmental Council.

Ten years after it was launched, PIFCSS celebrates its tenth anniversary with a slogan that accurately defines its essence: "Share capacities, build knowledge". In this sense, it can certainly be stated that the original objectives that were set have

been accomplished. During this time, PIFCSS has contributed to strengthen Ibero-American SSC, based on the work carried out both at the political and at the technical level.<sup>1</sup> In addition, it has managed to link these two levels in a virtuous way, since "the decisions made by the Heads of Cooperation are translated into effective actions implemented at the technical level" and "technical problems identified by cooperation experts can be politically addressed until the will to generate the necessary solutions attained" (PIFCSS, 2020).

The Program has succeeded in building shared visions on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, developing common work agendas and positioning the region at the international level (chapter 1 of the consecutive Reports of SSC in Ibero-America, which is prepared by the Ibero-American Heads of Cooperation themselves, is an example of the political consensus reached on some matters).

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to PIFCSS website: <https://cooperacionsursur.org/>



Furthermore, it has strengthened countries' cooperation institutions' capacities and provided them with instrument to improve its implementation. For example, the Structured Mechanism for the Exchange of Experiences<sup>2</sup> (MECSS by its Spanish acronym), which facilitated mutual capacity strengthening between countries' cooperation Agencies and Directorates-General, is worthy of mention. In addition, more than 1,000 experts were trained in these 10 years (PIFCSS, 2020) and four editions of the "Diploma on International Cooperation with an emphasis on SSC" were implemented. The design of methodologies and instruments to improve SS and TC management should also be highlighted, among which, the document "Management guidelines for implementing triangular cooperation in Ibero-America" and the Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS by its Spanish acronym), stand out. The development of both these products implied many hours of collective work. Moreover, in terms of knowledge management, PIFCSS has supported the

preparation and publication of the different editions of the Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America and has published 17 working documents on the matter.

Apart from these results, the Program's greatest contributions may have been to have strengthened the bonds between the countries of the region in terms of friendship and trust, and, especially, to have created working networks among cooperation officials and to have strengthened the network of Ibero-American Heads of Cooperation (PIFCSS, 2020).

The current context is very different from that when PIFCSS was created; however, its main objective, which is to strengthen SSC in Ibero-America, still stands strongly. Unlike in 2010, "currently all Ibero-American countries have institutionalized the management of this cooperation modality and most of them have progressed towards a dual role in terms of their cooperation, positioning themselves simultaneously as recipients and as providers" (PIFCSS, 2020). In addition, and although it was analyzed in the Report from the

beginning, triangular cooperation, a modality closely associated with SSC, has strongly gained ground in recent years. Furthermore, the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015 recognized SSC as one of the essential means to achieve the global goals. These two aspects now determine PIFCSS' current mission: strengthen SS and TC in Ibero-America, promoting its values and principles, in line with the achievement of the SDGs.

To conclude, it is important to highlight that the Program constitutes an exercise of SSC in itself, as it is based on the horizontal exchange of experiences and capacities among countries with different development challenges and different trajectories in terms of cooperation. In a world where some stakeholders question the value of multilateralism, PIFCSS has proven to be a privileged space "to exchange visions and coordinate collective responses beyond national efforts" (PIFCSS, 2020), improving cooperation's contribution to achieve sustainable and equitable development for all.

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to Box IV.2 of the Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2019 "PIFCSS and the development of innovative instruments for SSC institutional strengthening: the case of the Structured Mechanism for the Exchange of Experiences" (SEGIB, 2020, pp. 148-149).

Source: SEGIB based on SEGIB (2008), SEGIB (2018), SEGIB (2020), PIFCSS (2020) and PIFCSS website: <https://cooperacionsursur.org/>

Finally, and as it was previously mentioned, the 113 Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated in 2019 can be, in turn, disaggregated according to the way in which both Ibero-America and other developing regions participate. Indeed, and as Graph IV.3

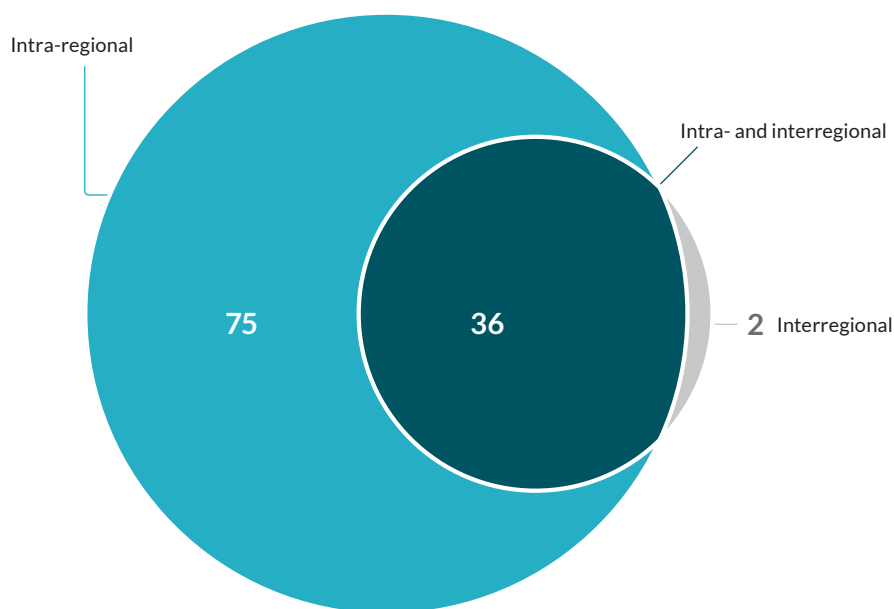
shows, three different groups can be identified: initiatives with an intra-regional scope in which only Ibero-American countries participate (75); interregional initiatives, in which Ibero-America and other regions participate, under different roles (2); and initiatives that are both intra- and interregional (36).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The difference is explained by the way in which regions participate in Regional SSC under the possible roles (provider, recipient, both). Indeed, in interregional initiatives, the roles are clearly differentiated (each region performs one role). However, if initiatives are simultaneously inter- and intra-regional, all the different regions participate and also tend to coincide in the exercise of at least one of the possible roles.

GRAPH IV.3

### Distribution of Regional SSC initiatives (intra- and interregional) exchanged in Ibero-America and together with other regions' developing countries. 2019

In units



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

#### IV.2.2. Countries, organizations and regions

One of Regional SSC's added values is the possibility to include a higher number of countries in the search for innovative solutions to a common problem. This feature is enhanced by the fact that these efforts can be supported by a multilateral organization which, in many occasions, has a specific sectoral expertise. Its participation strengthens this cooperation modality as it provides it with institutional frameworks and operational mechanisms while it transfers its knowledge and experience in a specific matter. In this sense, the Plan of Action of the Summit of the Community of Latin-American and Caribbean States (CELAC by its Spanish acronym), held in La Havana in 2014, already called for a SSC that "through the articulation of existing cooperation organizations at the regional and sub-regional level" contributed to "reduce regional asymmetries and national development gaps and to promote sustainable development" (FAO, 2014, p.1).

Graphs IV.4, IV.5 and IV.6 were prepared to better understand South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America in 2019 from a regional perspective, focusing on the role of the region itself as a whole. The two first graphs respectively show the intensity with which Ibero-American countries and multilateral organizations participated in the 111 Regional SSC initiatives registered in 2019. The third graph complements the other two by portraying the most common partnerships in order to identify the sub-regions that were most active.



GRAPH IV.4

Ibero-American countries' participation in Regional SSC initiatives. 2019

In units



Legend. Intensity brands, according to the number of Regional SSC initiatives in which each country participated in 2019

60 or more   Between 50 and 59   Between 40 and 49   Between 20 and 39   Less than 20   No projects registered

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

In Graph IV.4, each country is associated with a color according to its participation in 2019's Regional SSC initiatives. As the map shows, seven countries were especially active in this year's Regional SSC: on the one hand, Costa Rica, Panama and Mexico, in the center of the continent; and, on the other hand, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, in the South. All these countries participated in at least one half of the 111 programs and projects that were under execution throughout 2019. Indeed, values fluctuated between 56 (Uruguay) and a maximum of 65 (Costa Rica).

Meanwhile, other seven countries were also remarkably active, as they participated in around fifty Regional SSC programs and projects, in each case. Central-American and Caribbean countries (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic) and South-American countries (Peru, Chile and Paraguay) stand out once again. Nicaragua and Ecuador closely followed, participating in almost 45 initiatives. The remaining six countries (Bolivia, Cuba, Venezuela, together with the three countries of the Iberian peninsula, Spain, Portugal and Andorra) had a less active relative participation which, nevertheless, fluctuated between 4 (Andorra) and more than 30 (Bolivia) programs and projects. In any case, as can be seen, all Ibero-American countries, without exception, participated in this cooperation modality.

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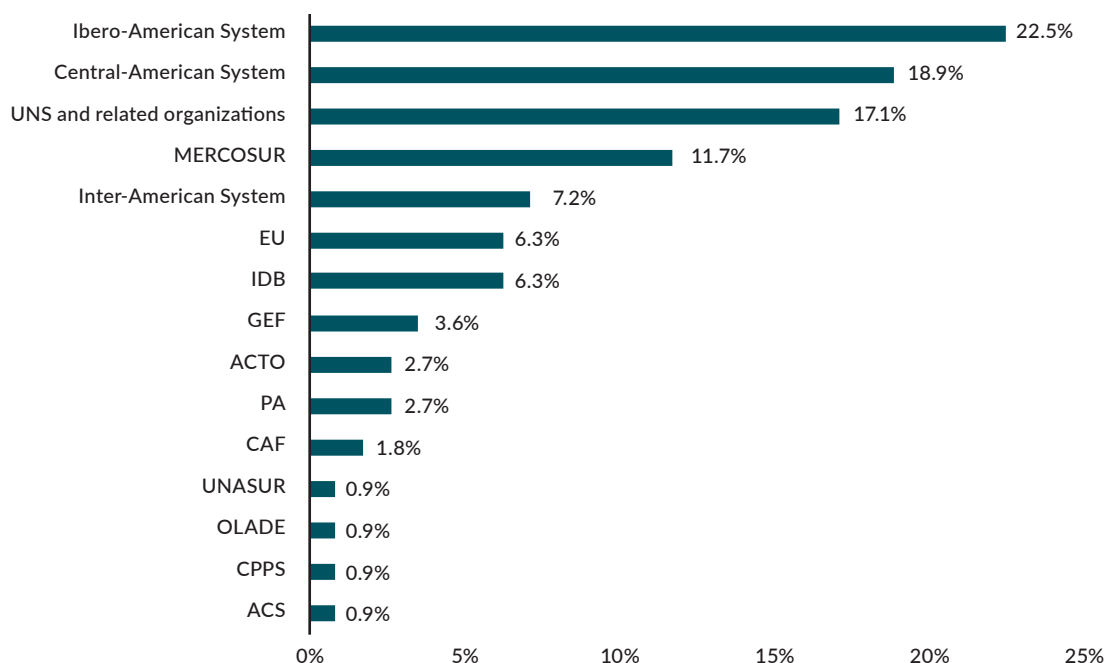
Graph IV.5, in turn, individually shows the participation of the more than 40 multilateral organizations which supported Regional SSC in 2019 (MERCOSUR, EU, IDB, for example). These can also be grouped according to the System to which they belong (Ibero-American, Central-American, Inter-American and the United Nations System). As has been already pointed out, this information is extremely relevant to SSC, not only in terms of the institutional framework under which these initiatives are implemented, but also to understand how "the diverse forms of regional (...) and sub-regional integration" enhance cooperation by "pooling efforts to address development issues" (FAO, 2014, p.2).

Hence, and as Graph IV.5 portrays, organizations that are part of the Ibero-American System participated in 25 Regional SSC initiatives, corresponding to 22.5% of the total. In all these cases, SEGIB itself was the participating institution, also supported (in two occasions) by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI by its Spanish acronym) and the Ibero-American Organization for Social Security (OISS by its Spanish acronym), which particular areas of expertise are education and social security, respectively. Organizations within the Central-American System closely followed, participating in basically 1 out of 5 initiatives throughout 2019. In general, this cooperation is explained by the strong involvement of SICA, institution with the second highest participation in 2019's Regional SSC (20 initiatives) and the most active (in up to 82 programs and projects) if the analyzed period is extended (2006-2019).

GRAPH IV.5

**Multilateral organizations' participation in Regional SSC initiatives. 2019**

In percentage



Methodological note: The analysis considers the number of initiatives in which each organization participates (both individually and when grouped with those of the system in which they take part) and their importance in the total. In this sense, and given that several organizations can simultaneously participate in the same initiative, some initiatives are counted more than once. This means that the percentages associated with each organization and/or group cannot be aggregated and in no case can the total add up to 100%.

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

In addition, the role of the organizations of the United Nations System<sup>4</sup> (or those considered related to it), which participated in 17.1% of the initiatives, is also worthy of mention. Actually, these accounted for around 20 programs and projects distributed in up to seven organizations, among which ECLAC (5), FAO (4), ILO (3) and the United Nations Program for Environment (UNEP) (3) stand out, as well as more specific interventions of UNESCO (2), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (1) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (1).

Meanwhile, it is possible to state that MERCOSUR appears as a very powerful regional stakeholder, as suggested by the fact that, in 2019, it supported its member countries 13 Regional SSC initiatives. The institutions of the Inter-American System participated, to a less extent, through the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA by its Spanish acronym) (3 initiatives), OAS (3) and PAHO (2).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For example, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is considered to be a related organization. In order to understand the UN System's structure, specialized agencies and related organizations, please refer to [https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/un\\_system\\_chart.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/un_system_chart.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> According to PAHO website "the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) wears two institutional hats: it is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American System and also serves as Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO)" (<https://www.paho.org/en/who-we-are>). In this sense, and for the purpose of this analysis, PAHO is included within the Inter-American System, regardless of its role as the regional office of WHO.

## BOX IV.2

## IDB, global public goods and the development of information systems

Having solid, reliable and integrated information systems is an essential condition to strengthen public policies. The cooperation policy is not exempt from this premise. Good data is not only crucial for decision-making, but also for accountability in terms of public management.

Ibero-American countries have different capacities to systematize information regarding the international cooperation in which they participate. While some of their systems are long-standing and others are more recent, a few countries do not yet have these kind of instruments. In turn, countries which systems were designed years ago currently have new challenges in terms of integrating, in a single platform, the cooperation they receive and provide, or the different cooperation modalities in which they participate (traditional, South-South, Triangular, among others). Other systems might still need to develop new features to register all the initiatives implemented by sectoral and local institutions, not only those managed by the institutions responsible for cooperation in the countries.

Having quality information is essential to prepare this Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America. Therefore, for more than a decade, SEGIB, with the support of the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS by its Spanish acronym), has been working to strengthen countries' registration capacities. PIFCSS has become a space for fruitful technical exchange of best practices in this matter, reasonably focused on South-South cooperation. However, lessons learnt in the framework of this Program can also be applied to the other

cooperation modalities in which Ibero-American countries are involved.

In this regard, as a result of the region's remarkable progress in recent years, the first online data platform on South-South Cooperation was designed and launched in 2015: our Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS by its Spanish acronym), which countries regularly update to provide the data on which this report is based.

In this context of capacity strengthening, Chile, Costa Rica and Panama presented the project "Information System for International Cooperation" (SICI by its Spanish acronym) to the call for proposals in the framework of The Regional Public Goods (RPG) Initiative of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The project's aim is to provide countries with updated quality information, on a timely basis, on the international cooperation in which they participate. This requires unifying criteria and lowest common denominators to register the information.

Thus, the aim of the project is to improve dialogue and coordination among stakeholders for decision making.<sup>1</sup> In turn, this software will contribute to knowledge building and transparency in terms of international cooperation resources' management. The initiative is expected to broaden its scope to other countries of the region in the future.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Panama, the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy of Costa Rica and the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID by its Spanish acronym) participate in this initiative,

the latter being the resources' manager and the implementing institution.

Prior to the design of the System, best practices in terms of national information systems for international cooperation were identified in the framework of the project. This analysis included the information systems of the three participating countries and of other six countries within and outside the region (Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Uruguay, Spain and France), in addition to SIDICSS. The exercise involved reviewing aspects such as regulatory frameworks to update information, data models, technological strategies, among others. The results of this analysis were shared with national and regional stakeholders in mid-2020. In addition, a series of recommendations were made, on which the design of the Information System for International Cooperation should be based (Guadatel and Track, Workshop "Analysis of national registries", June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020).

The project was signed in May 2017 and is still under execution. IDB contributes with 500,000 dollars in the framework of the *Regional Public Goods Initiative*. Participating countries' contributions add up to a total budget of 786,000 dollars (IDB, 2017, p.3).

The RPG Initiative is destined to support the generation of regional public goods that have a potentially high development impact and which will result in significant shared benefits and positive spillover effects on many countries (IDB, 2017). The initiative is based on the premise that Latin-American and Caribbean countries share development challenges and opportunities that can frequently be addressed more effectively and efficiently through regional collective action and regional cooperation (IDB, n.d.).

<sup>1</sup> For more information on this project, please refer to AGCID website:

[https://www.agci.cl/images/Insumos\\_IMG/cooperacion/proyectos/desnac/BID/BID%20%20SICI.docx](https://www.agci.cl/images/Insumos_IMG/cooperacion/proyectos/desnac/BID/BID%20%20SICI.docx)

In addition, the IDB (which was originally founded within the Inter-American space but does not take part in it) and the EU, worked with the countries in 6.3% of Regional SSC initiatives in 2019, respectively. Other 8 organizations had specific interventions, their presence fluctuating between 1 (the Association of Caribbean States —ACS—, the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific —CPPS by its Spanish acronym—, the Latin-American Energy Organization —OLADE by its Spanish acronym— and the Union of South-American Nations —UNASUR by its Spanish acronym) and 4 initiatives (the Global Environment Facility— GEF). In this regard, Box IV.2 was prepared to illustrate the work supported by these organizations as it refers to a project in which the IDB joined Chile, Costa Rica and Panama in the generation of a global public good: their information system for development cooperation.

Finally, the analysis of countries and multilateral organizations that participated in this cooperation modality and the intensity with which they did so, sheds light on the most frequent partnerships and on the sub-regions that most actively participated, as a whole, in 2019's Regional SSC. Graph IV.6 precisely portrays this information through a heatmap which distributes the 22 Ibero-American countries in the vertical columns and horizontal rows of the resulting matrix. Countries are sorted (both in columns as in rows) according to their association pattern with the other possible partners. In addition, and as the legend reads, the color associated with each cell increases its intensity as the number of initiatives in which each pair of partners coincides also increases.

Thus, and as Graph IV.6 shows, two groups of countries tend to predominantly associate to promote Regional SSC initiatives: on the one hand, Central-American countries and the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Colombia (these two have a slightly lower degree of coincidence than that of the rest of the group); and, on the other hand, countries in the South of the continent (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay, Ecuador and Peru), with the only exception of Bolivia. Among these, indeed, the most frequent partnership takes place between countries which, in turn, are part of the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay).

In addition, it is possible to identify remarkably intense matches between these two groups of countries, especially between Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador and the countries of the Southern Cone, on the one hand; and, on the other hand, between Colombia and Mexico together with Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina. Meanwhile, the three countries of the Iberian peninsula, Bolivia, Cuba and Venezuela have a lower degree of association, consistent with the fact that these countries also have a relatively lower participation in the total number of 2019's Regional SSC initiatives.

The conclusions that can be drawn from Graph IV.6 are consistent with the aforementioned. In this sense, it is easy to identify some Ibero-American sub-regions' intense activity, especially of those in the Central and Southern part of the continent, with a strong presence, in turn, of the multilateral organizations of which these countries are members (SICA and MERCOSUR). Visually, however, the role of larger sub-regions (Ibero-American and Inter-American), which activities tend to have a more homogeneous impact on all their member countries, is more diffuse.

As was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, non-Ibero-American countries also joined Ibero-American countries in these 36 Regional SSC initiatives, adding efforts to find innovative solutions to common problems. In this regard, cooperation projects that have been addressing the search for the sustainable management of Amazonian water resources serve as an example of the above. In these projects, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (in the Ibero-American region) have worked together with Guyana and Suriname with the support of a specialized sub-regional institution such as the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO). Box IV.3 summarizes these interesting experiences.

## BOX IV.3

## South-South Cooperation for the sustainable management of water resources in the Amazon Basin

The Amazon River Basin is the largest hydrographic network in the planet, corresponding to 44% of the land area of the South-American continent. In terms of volume, the basin discharges 70% of Latin-America's freshwater and it contributes with at least 20% of the world's discharge (National Water Agency of Brazil, ANA by its Portuguese acronym, 2017). This is the only hydrological system that crosses the national borders of eight countries (ACTO, 2018a).

Two Regional SSC initiatives on water resources' management stand out in the framework of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO) —intergovernmental organization founded in 1978— due to their contribution to sustainable development: the Amazon Project and the so-called GEF Amazon Project.

The *Amazon Project: Regional Action on Water Resources*, now in its second phase (ACTO, 2018), aims to strengthen the sustainable management of water resources and to promote integration and technical cooperation among Amazonian countries in this matter. Its main objective is to strengthen ACTO member countries' information systems and to create a regional monitoring network.

Progress was made during the first phase (2012-2017) in terms of the integration and availability of hydrometeorological and water quality data (ANA, 2017). The second phase, still under execution, is expected to continue the work in these areas, as well as in the dissemination of knowledge on the Amazon and in the improvement of technical capacities of countries' water resources management institutions, among others.

The project is an initiative of the National Water Agency of Brazil and the Brazilian Cooperation Agency and is implemented by ACTO together with the national water agencies of its member countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela).

On the other hand, in the framework of the same organization and involving the same countries, the project *Integrated and Sustainable Management of Transboundary Water Resources in the Amazon River Basin Considering Climate Variability and Climate Change* (also known as the GEF Amazon Project), was executed between 2012 and 2018. As the Amazon Project, this initiative aimed to protect and sustainably manage the Amazon Basin's water resources —including groundwater— in the face of climate change, through the "*strengthening (of) the institutional framework for the planning and execution of agreed strategic actions*" (ACTO, 2016).

In this sense, the project delivered three essential outcomes which should be highlighted: a shared vision of the Amazonian Basin (this required an analysis of the institutional and legal frameworks of each of the countries and extensive qualitative and quantitative research, together with the basin's main stakeholders), a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and a Strategic Action Program (SAP) (ACTO, 2016). The participatory process to implement pilot projects, studies, training and workshops with more than 1,170 participants and the generation of scientific data on various aspects on the matter are worthy of mention as cross-cutting features of this initiative (ACTO, 2016). Specifically, the TDA, based

on a wide consultation process (ACTO, 2018a), provided the factual basis and the analysis of the main transboundary problems, their impacts and causes, to define the SAP (ACTO, 2018b). The latter, technically approved by ACTO's members in January 2016, was a very important milestone, as it is an agreed document and a guiding instrument for countries' activities and for regional cooperation (ACTO, 2018b). It included 19 strategic actions, among which the implementation of a regional water quality monitoring system for the rivers of the Amazon basin, the development of a groundwater use and protection program for public supply in the Amazon region, the creation of systems to forecast and warn about extreme hydroclimatic events (droughts and floods) and the development of an Integrated Regional Platform with Information on Water Resources in the Basin, stand out.

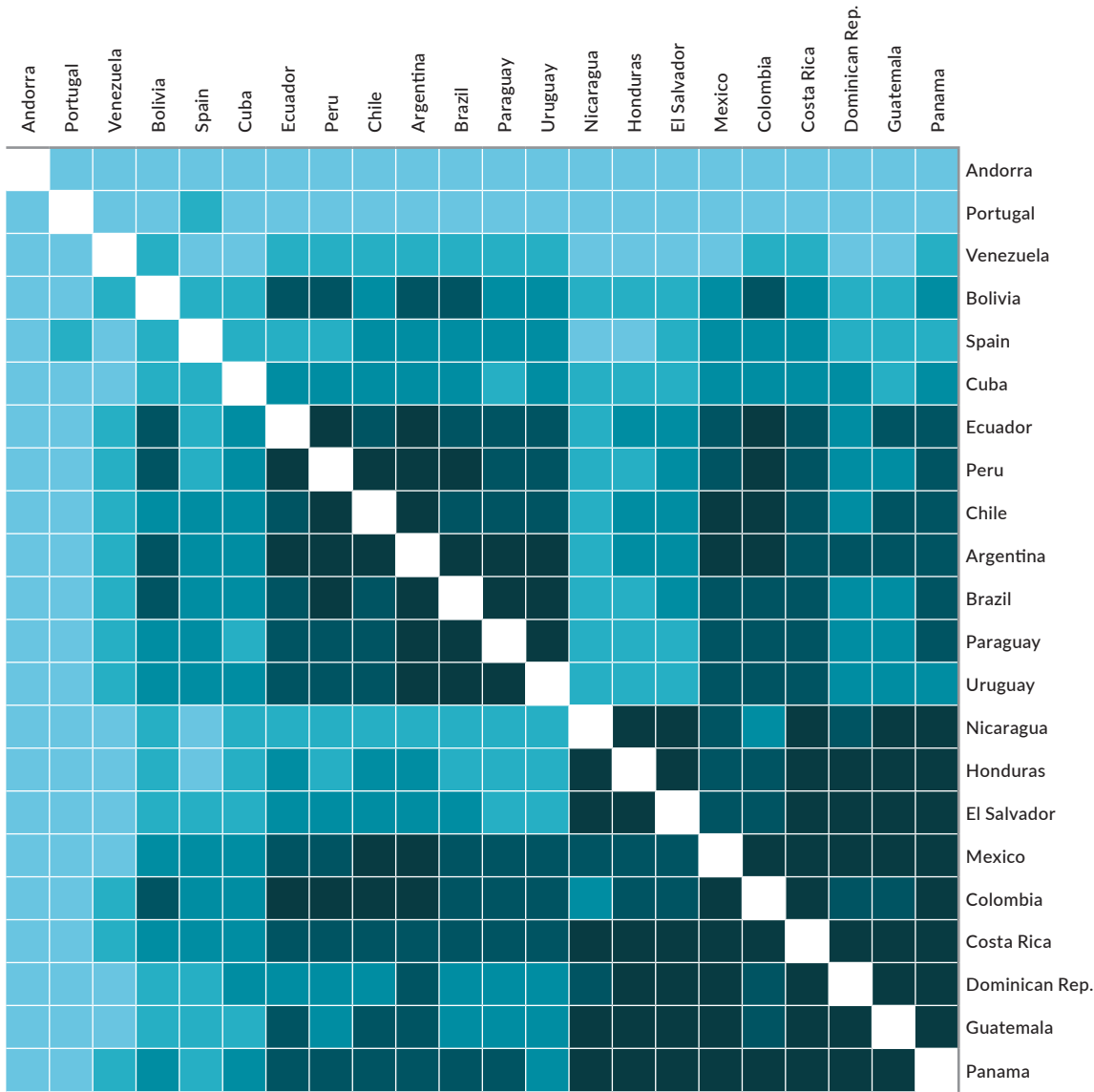
Finally, the project created an Atlas of Hydro-climate Vulnerability, it strengthened the capacity of local governments to adapt and respond to extreme events, and it developed an Integrated Information System (SII by its Spanish acronym) for transboundary water resources in the Amazon Basin (ACTO, 2016). As an innovative feature, the project promoted the coordinated use of surface and groundwater in urban centers of the cities of Leticia (Colombia) and Tabatinga (Brazil), which share the same aquifer.

The project was financed by GEF, together with countries' and other donors' contributions, and it was implemented by the United Nations Environment Program and executed by ACTO.

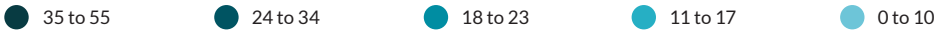
GRAPH IV.6

Intensity of the association between Ibero-American countries, by the number of Regional SSC initiatives in which each pair of partners coincides. 2019

In units



Legend: Intensity bands, according to the number of Regional SSC initiatives in which each pair of countries coincided in 2019.



Methodological note: the colors and values assigned to the respective intensity bands are the result of the distribution of the initiatives by quintiles. Value ranges go from the lowest number of initiatives in which each pair of partners can coincide (0), to the highest number registered in 2019 (55).

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



### IV.2.3. Common problems, shared solutions

Joint efforts made through Regional SSC enabled Ibero-American countries to advance towards shared solutions to overcome common problems while achieving a more sustainable development. In order to better understand this progress, this section identifies both strengthened capacities as well as the Sustainable Development Goals to which Regional SSC was able to contribute.

Thus, Graph IV.7 distributes the 111 Regional SSC initiatives that were under execution in Ibero-America in 2019 by activity sector and area of action. As the graph shows, three out of four were focused on strengthening different matters associated with the following areas: Environment (more than 20% of the total number of initiatives in 2019); Social and Infrastructure and Economic Services (around 19% in each case); and Other Areas (heterogeneous, and with a remarkable share of

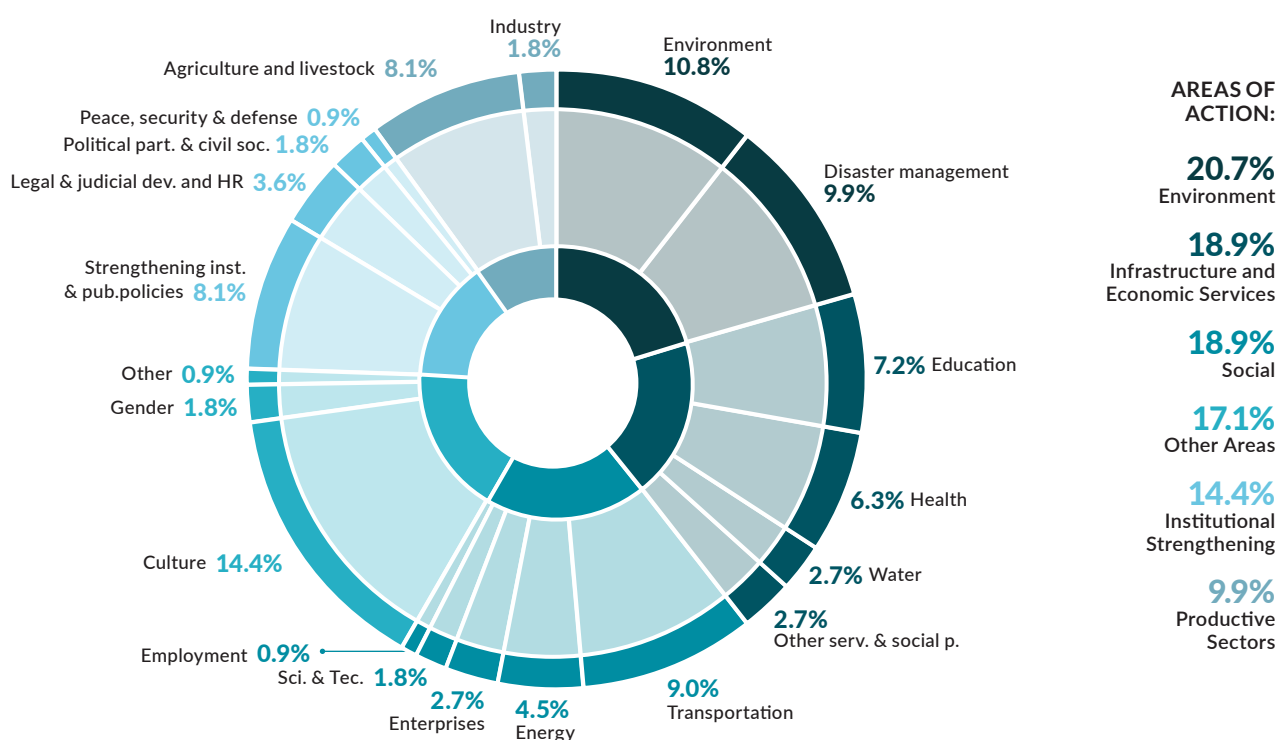
17.1%). The remaining 25% was explained by initiatives destined to Institutional Strengthening (14.4%) and to the Productive Sectors area (basically 10%).

This distribution is, in turn, determined by the relative importance of the different activity sectors within each area of action. In this sense, and as Graph IV.7 portrays, the fact that one out of five initiatives addressed environment matters is explained, in basically identical proportions, by programs and projects which aim was to strengthen *Environment* and *Disaster management*. Hence, initiatives in these two sectors combine to fight against climate change; to strengthen risk management in the face of this phenomenon and to increase resilience to overcome its most devastating effects such as droughts, fires and floods. Other exchanges tackled the comprehensive management of different types of waste, including Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), and all matters related to the conservation of biodiversity and, in this context, of fauna and flora threatened by trade.

GRAPH IV.7

#### Distribution of Regional SSC initiatives, by activity sector and area of action. 2019

In percentage



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



/// ***Accumulated experience in the health sector is extremely diverse and can certainly contribute to the regional response to address the COVID-19 challenge*** ///

Countries that participate in these exchanges tend to share topographic, geographic and even climatic characteristics; as a result, actions are usually focused on specific sub-regions, such as Central-America, Meso-America, the Caribbean, the Amazon or the South-East Pacific, to name a few.

In addition, both the Social and the Infrastructure and Economic Services areas are extremely diversified in sectoral terms. Indeed, and within the Social area, programs and projects dedicated to *Education* (7.2%) and *Health* (6.3%), stood out, as well as to *Water supply and sanitation* and to *Other services and social policies*, with lower shares (2.7% in each case). This cooperation is mainly destined to promote academic mobility among students, teacher training and the universalization of inclusive education. Moreover, accumulated experience in the health sector is extremely diverse and can certainly contribute to the regional response to address the COVID-19 challenge: exchanges in this sector include initiatives to strengthen public health systems, to develop new applications of biotechnology, to regulate medicines production and market and to promote an emergency plan to face another epidemic, such as AIDS. Finally, cooperation to manage water resources and water quality, especially in the Amazon Basin, as well as urban sanitation, should also be highlighted.

Meanwhile, almost one half of the total cooperation that supported the generation of better Infrastructure and Economic Services is explained by the significant relative importance of the *Transportation and storage* sector (9.0% of 2019's Regional SSC initiatives). In this respect, the Ibero-American Road Safety Program, recently approved, as well as five initiatives promoted in the framework of MERCOSUR's Structural Convergence Fund (FOCEM by its Spanish acronym) for the rehabilitation of road and railroad sections that connect its member countries, stand out. Initiatives aimed at promoting renewable *Energy* and its rational and efficient use would complete this area's analysis.

However, the sector with the highest relative importance in 2019 is part of the heterogeneous Other areas: *Culture*, which accounts for 14.4% of the total number of exchanges (111). This percentage is explained by 13 cooperation initiatives promoted in the Ibero-American space to strengthen, among others, performing and audiovisual arts, music, the protection and digitization of historical and diplomatic archives, or libraries, to name a few. In addition, and although the work in the *Gender* sector is still irregular, the strategy promoted within the framework of MERCOSUR to favor the access of Afro-descendant and indigenous women to sustainable development is worthy of mention, due to the different aspects of vulnerability it aims to address.

Finally, experiences in sectors such as *Strengthening institutions and public policies*, *Agriculture and livestock* (8.1% of the initiatives, in each case), and *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights* (a smaller 3.6%), explained a large part of the remaining 25% of 2019's initiatives in the Institutional Strengthening and Productive Sectors areas. Efforts made to strengthen statistical and information management systems (some applied to development cooperation), to improve local and urban planning and management, to promote food security, and to genetically improve traditional crops, such as potatoes, wheat, coffee and soybean, should also be highlighted. In addition, experiences that, from a rights-based approach, aimed to progress towards greater social inclusion also stood out. The new Ibero-American Program on the Rights of People with Disabilities would be a good example of the above, which trajectory is detailed in Box IV.4.

However, the scenario in 2019 is significantly different from that identified just a decade ago, which suggests a change in the region's priorities as a whole. Indeed, Graphs IV.8 and IV.9 portray the variation of the relative importance of the different areas of action and activity sectors in the total number of Regional SSC initiatives executed in Ibero-America in 2010 and 2019. When comparing these two years, it is possible to identify a progressive shift from cooperation aimed at the Social (although still very relevant) and at the Productive Sectors areas (which respective relative shares fell 14 and 4.2 percentage points), in favor of initiatives to address Environment, Infrastructure and economic services and, to a less extent, Other Areas and Institutional Strengthening.

## BOX IV.4

**Ibero-America comes together for the rights of people with disabilities**

According to the latest available data (ECLAC, 2013), 12% of the Latin-American population has at least one disability. Prevalence is higher among women and other economically and socially vulnerable groups (children, older adults, rural population, indigenous and Afro-descendant people, and people with lower incomes).

Likewise, although progress has been made in recent years in terms of the protection of people with disabilities at the regulatory level, most of them continue to be excluded from political, economic and social life, as suggested by the fact that literacy rates, schooling, access to the labor market, wages and health indicators are considerably lower than those of the rest of the population, while those related to poverty are higher (SEGIB, 2018).

In line with the above, it is possible to state that Ibero-America has not been indifferent to this problem within the region nor to its scale, as has been reflected in the successive declarations of its Summits of Heads of State and Government for almost two decades. Recognizing the need to include the disability perspective in a cross-cutting manner in order to ensure social inclusion and protection (Panama, 2013), and the mandate SEGIB and OISS were set to prepare an initiative or program on the rights of people with disabilities, based on accumulated experience (Action Program, section

A.3, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 2016),<sup>1</sup> should be highlighted among the main milestones of this process, and as the origin of the program to which this Box refers (SEGIB, 2016).

In late 2017 and early 2018, efforts were focused on the design of the mandated program together with the national disability authorities of the promoting countries, supported by leading experts in public policy, academia and international organizations, as well as by the Spanish National Organization of the Blind (ONCE by its Spanish acronym), which contributed with its specialized technical advice.

The Ibero-American Program on the Rights of People with Disabilities was finally approved in the 16<sup>th</sup> Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government held in La Antigua (Guatemala) in November 2018, starting its activities in 2019. Currently, Andorra, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay are its member countries, while Paraguay joined as observer in February 2021. These countries work together to contribute to the economic and social inclusion of people with disabilities, promoting policies that ensure the full enjoyment and exercise of their rights, according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the 2030 Agenda.

Through technical assistance among its member countries, training, exchange of experiences and resources, and the identification of best practices, among other instruments, the Program focuses on six strategic objectives:

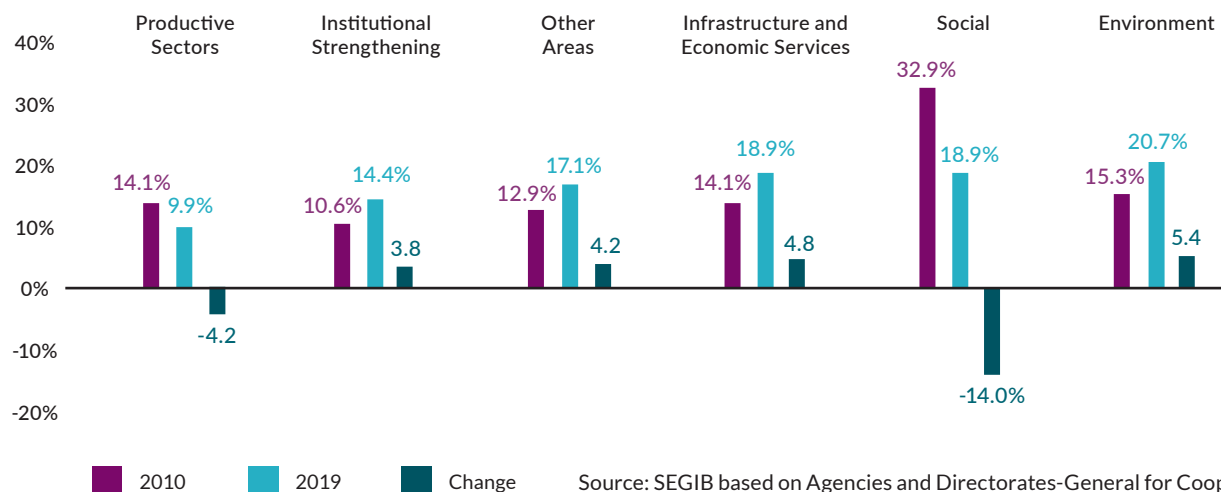
1. [Data and statistics] Consolidate a system to collect and manage data on people with disabilities. This is not only aligned with the CRPD, but is essential for the design of public policies on disability, as well as to monitor progress on the SDGs.
2. [Equality and non-discrimination] Guarantee access to justice and the right to equal recognition before the law for all people with disabilities.
3. [Education] Guarantee access, permanence and success in an inclusive general education system, at all levels, which is respectful of the cultural identity of the deaf community.
4. [Employment and social protection] Guarantee the full enjoyment of labor and trade union rights of people with disabilities in the public and private sectors.
5. [Empowerment] Strengthen organizations of people with disabilities.
6. [Health] Guarantee the right to health for people with disabilities and improve permanent and priority access to promotion, prevention and specialized care services.

<sup>1</sup> Since 2012, OISS has led the Program on Employment of People with Disabilities in Ibero-America, supported by 16 countries of the region. For more information, please refer to: <https://oiss.org/discapacidad/programa-para-el-empleo-de-personas-con-discapacidad/>

GRAPH IV.8

## Change in areas of action's share in the total number of Regional SSC initiatives. 2010-2019

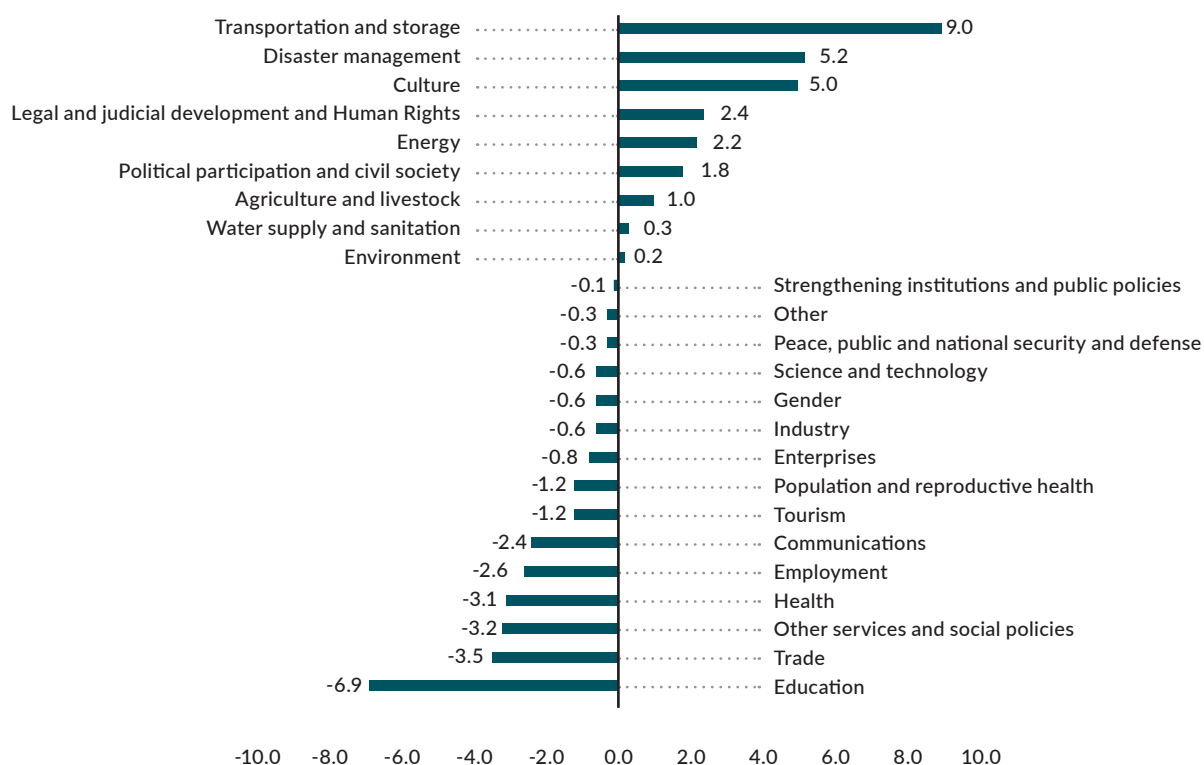
Share, in percentage; change, in percentage points



GRAPH IV.9

## Change in activity sectors' share in the total number of Regional SSC initiatives. 2010-2019

In percentage points



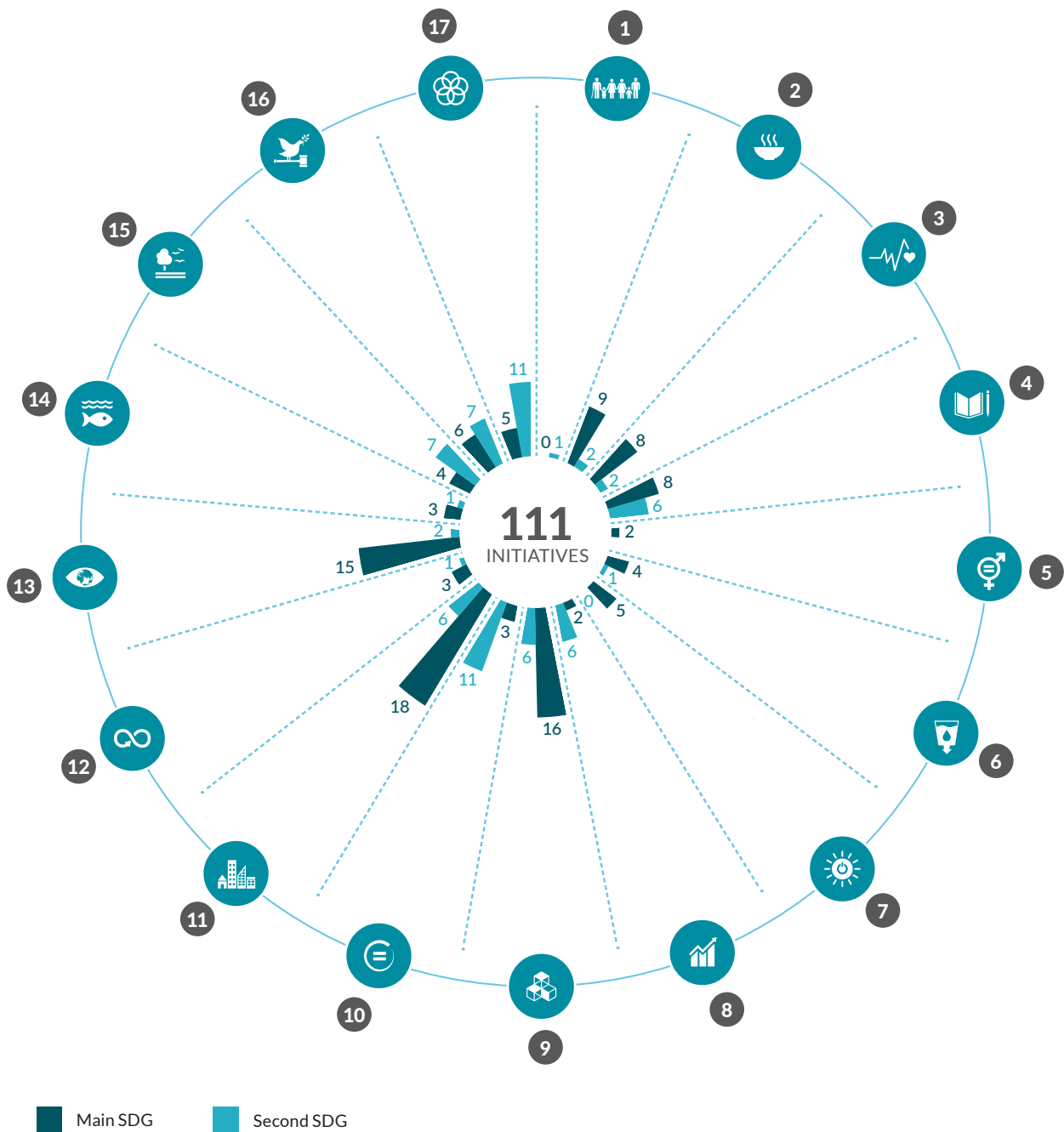
Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

This is reflected in the promotion of cooperation to strengthen *Disaster management* (which increases 5.2 percentage points); to solve *Transportation and storage* structural problems (increases up to 9 points); and to promote *Culture* as an instrument

for cohesion (another 5 points). At the same time, initiatives dedicated to *Education* lose relative importance (almost 7 percentage points). However, as in the case of the Social sector as a whole, *Education* continues to be one of the region's priorities.

**GRAPH IV.10**  
**Distribution of Regional SSC initiatives, 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

## BOX IV.5

## Culture and its cross-cutting role in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

As stated in the Mexico Declaration on Cultural Policies of 1982, which is considered a conceptual milestone in this matter, culture is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon:

In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs; it gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgement and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through

culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he transcends his limitations. (Mundiacult, 1982, p. 1).

Accordingly, culture is recognized as an instrument for individual and social transformation and, therefore, as a cross-cutting mechanism to address development problems. Indeed, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020) aims at:

Incorporating culture into all development policies, be they related to education, science, communication, health, environment or cultural tourism and, on the other hand, (at) supporting the development of the cultural sector through

creative industries. By contributing in this way to poverty alleviation, culture offers important benefits in terms of social cohesion.

This broad vision of culture and development is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Although there is no specific SDG dedicated to culture, the 2030 Agenda does include a cross-cutting recognition of its role as an element to enhance social, economic and environmental policies and, thus, as a vehicle towards a sustainable development that leaves no one behind. In this sense, the declaration's introduction already mentions the respect for cultural diversity, and references to culture in the framework of several SDGs can also be identified.

The most remarkable mention appears in SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), which refers to cultural heritage (target 11.4). The association between



The analysis of strengthened capacities throughout 2019 must be complemented with another approach which sheds light on how Regional SSC could have contributed to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Graph IV.10, plotted for this purpose, distributes the 111 Regional SSC initiatives that were under execution in Ibero-America in 2019 according to the main and second SDG with which they are potentially aligned. All the initiatives are associated with one main SDG, while a second SDG was identified in 63% of the cases.

As the graph shows, almost 45% of the 111 Regional SSC initiatives that were executed in Ibero-America during 2019, mainly tackle the achievement of SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities (on which 16.2% of programs and projects focused), SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure, and SDG 13 Climate action (around 14% in each case). Meanwhile, 22.5% could have contributed to advance the achievement of SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 3 Good health and well-being, and SDG 4 Quality education. The remaining third would be aligned with up to 10 different Sustainable Development

culture and cities, conceived as physical and symbolic spaces, is pointed out, both of them being essential for the preservation of tangible and intangible assets threatened by climate change, social conflicts and/or economic inequalities. UNESCO had already made significant progress in 2013 with respect to this pair of concepts, at the Congress *Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies*:

[...] reaffirm the potential of culture as a driver for sustainable development, through the specific contributions that it can make – as knowledge capital and a sector of activity – to inclusive social, cultural and economic development, harmony, environmental sustainability, peace and security. (UNESCO, 2013, p.6)

This was also the case at the 2016 Habitat III Conference, where the United Nations adopted

the New Urban Agenda as the roadmap to guide sustainable urban development and transform the world's cities in the next 20 years (UNESCO, 2020).

In addition, SDG 4 (Quality education), specifically proposes, in target 4.7, that by 2030, all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, through the promotion of a culture of peace and the appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to development, among others.

On the other hand, Hosagrahar (2017, p. 12) mentions that "cultural tourism accounts for 40% of the world's tourism income", which positively impacts on labor and economy. From this approach, culture can be related to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), specifically to targets 8.9 and 12.b, which link the promotion of tourism with

culture's strengthening. Likewise, the potential contribution to these SDGs can also be identified in the impact culture has on the promotion of creative industries.

Ibero-America is no stranger to this debate and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB by its Spanish acronym) is currently working on the Strategy for Culture and Sustainable Development, through which culture is being mainstreamed into the targets of the 2030 Agenda, from an Ibero-American perspective. Additionally, and as a result of the partnership with the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin-America and the Caribbean (FILAC by its Spanish acronym), work is underway to create an Ibero-American Institute of Indigenous Languages to preserve and protect the heritage of indigenous languages spoken in Latin-America, especially those that may become extinct.

Source: SEGIB based on Hosagrahar (2017), MONDIACULT (1982), UN (2015), UNESCO (2013) (2020) and Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

Goals, SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions, being the most significant. In addition, it is possible to state that SDG 1 No poverty, was not associated with 2019's programs or projects as a main SDG.

These Goals' relative importance has a clear positive correlation with the sectors that were also mainly strengthened. In this sense, Regional SSC initiatives dedicated to *Environment*, *Disaster management* and *Culture* stood out. It should be noted that cooperation related to *Culture* is usually associated with SDG 11 (the most prominent) as it includes a specific target

on cultural heritage. However, and as a result of its potential as an instrument for development, the approach to this issue in the 2030 Agenda is very cross-cutting. This cross-cutting nature (further detailed in Box IV.5) explains why cooperation in the *Culture* sector may be contributing to the achievement of other second SDGs, such as SDG 10 Reduced inequalities, SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth, and SDG 4 Quality education, all of which stand out in Graph IV.10.

Nevertheless, cooperation related to Culture only explains one part of the importance SDG 10 has as a second SDG (11 initiatives). Another significant part is determined by Regional SSC which mainly contributed to advance SDG 3 Good health and well-being, and SDG 4 Quality education, both key to guaranteeing access to basic rights, as well as to building a fairer society.

Finally, SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals, also has a strong predominance when focusing on initiatives' alignment with a second SDG. Likewise, this SDG has significant cross-cutting features and it stands out in initiatives which are mainly aligned with different SDGs, among which SDG 5 Gender equality, and SDG 13 Climate action, are worthy of mention. In these cases, the link with SDG 17 is established, for example, through the design of information and statistical systems applied to their respective specialized matters. As a result, the generation and better management of knowledge is promoted, and multiple SSC stakeholders are encouraged to coordinate their responses to development problems more effectively.

/// One half of 2019's cooperation is explained by the participation of non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries ///

## IV.3

### Ibero-American Interregional South-South Cooperation

As Graph IV.1 showed, throughout 2019, South-South Cooperation between Ibero-America and other developing regions was executed through almost 290 initiatives, predominantly implemented under the Bilateral modality. This section analyzes this SSC in order to identify the roles of developing countries throughout the world, as well as the sub-regions in which they are situated. In addition, it sheds light on an essential aspect: the potential contribution these exchanges have made to solve global and cross-border problems, while promoting more sustainable development.

#### IV.3.1. A first approach

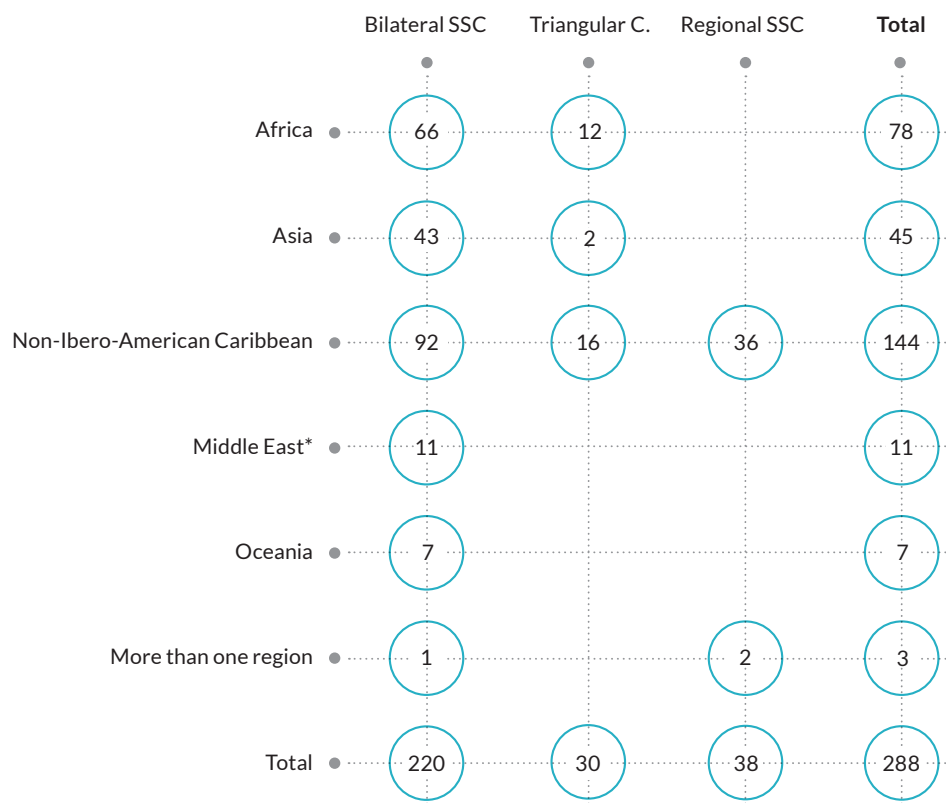
Graph IV.11 distributes the 288 SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America participated together with other regions' developing countries, based on a double criteria: geographical location and modalities. As the graph portrays, one half of 2019's cooperation is explained by the participation of non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries. African and Asian countries followed, at a certain distance (27.1% and 15.6% of the initiatives, respectively). Meanwhile, more specific exchanges were executed with the Middle East and Oceania, which respective relative shares fluctuated between 2.5% and 4%.



GRAPH IV.11

**Ibero-American initiatives with other regions' developing countries, by modality. 2019**

In units



Note: (\*) Seven countries are included in this region (Iran, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Syria, Qatar and Yemen), in addition to other three which are categorized as European such as Turkey, Moldova and Romania.

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

This distribution is similar to that accumulated between 2006 and 2019. In this period, the number of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives in which Ibero-America participated together with other regions' developing countries was higher than 1,450. Six out of 10 (880) were explained by the significant relative importance of the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, while initiatives in which it participated together with Africa and Asia accounted for 20.9% and 12.6% respectively. The remaining initiatives, together with the possibility of several regions coinciding in the same exchange, accounted for the last 6.4%.

In turn, Graph IV.11 itself confirms the preeminence of the Bilateral SSC modality, under which 3 out of 4 of the 288 initiatives registered in 2019 were executed. Regional and Triangular initiatives accounted, however, for 13.2% and 10.4%

respectively. In line with the above, bilateral exchanges also stood out in terms of Ibero-American cooperation with any of the other considered regions. Meanwhile, Triangular cooperation was mainly implemented together with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean (16 actions and projects), Africa (12) and, more specifically, with Asia (2).

The 38 Regional SSC initiatives registered in 2019 deserve a special mention: as anticipated, only 2 of these initiatives were classified as interregional, while most of them (36) meet both inter- and intra-regional criteria. In any of these cases, this is basically a Regional SSC in which Ibero-America and the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, and only occasionally, Africa, participate.



### IV.3.2. Countries, organizations and regions

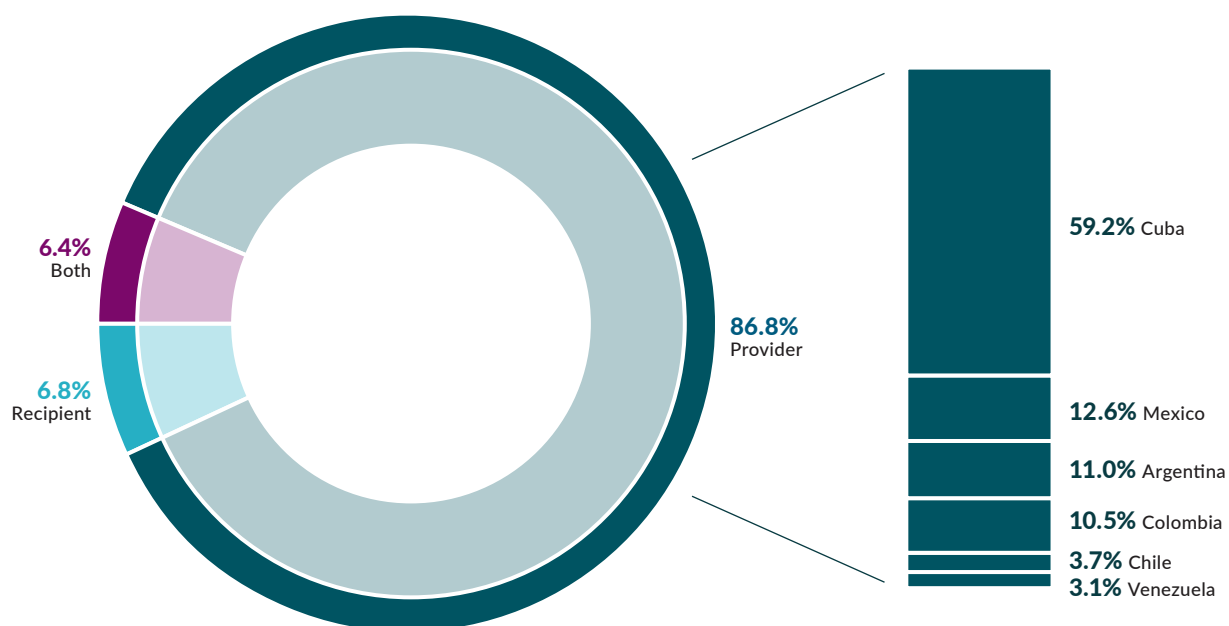
The following analysis disaggregates cooperation by modalities in order to better understand which countries, both in Ibero-America and in other developing regions, most actively participated in inter-Regional SSC in 2019, as well as the organizations that joined them. In this way, it is possible to examine some other aspects in depth, among which the role from which stakeholders tended to participate and/or the type of partnerships that were most frequently established, stand out.

Thus, Graph IV.12 provides two types of information in terms of Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged in 2019 between Ibero-America and other regions' developing countries: the first refers to the role under which Ibero-American countries participated in the 220 initiatives that were under execution that year; and, the second, focuses on the most predominant role (provider) and identifies Ibero-American countries which performed it, arranged according to their different relative importance.

**GRAPH IV.12**

#### Bilateral SSC initiatives with other regions' developing countries, by role and by Ibero-American countries' participation. 2019

In percentage



Note: The role *Both* includes initiatives in which at least one Ibero-American country performs this role, but also those in which both roles coincide, i.e. initiatives with at least two Ibero-American countries, one of them acting as provider and the other as recipient.

In fact, Graph IV.12 shows how Ibero-American countries acted as providers in 86.8% of the Bilateral SSC initiatives registered in 2019. Consequently, their participation under the other roles was more

specific: the recipient role barely explains 6.8% of the exchanges, while the coincidence of both roles was only identified in 6.4% of the total.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> As explained in Graph IV.12's methodological note, this 6.4% considers two different cases: the first refers to initiatives in which at least one Ibero-American country performs the role *Both*; the second refers to cases in which "both roles" coincide, as at least two Ibero-American countries participate, one of them acting as provider and the other as recipient.

## BOX IV.6

**Argentina and Africa: approaching through South-South Cooperation**

In 2016 the Argentinean government launched the Argentine Plan for Cooperation with Africa 2016-2019, which aim was to “contribute to strengthen bilateral and regional ties with African countries through cooperation actions in strategic areas such as agribusiness, science, technology and tourism” (Lechini, 2018, p.153). Three stages were planned for this purpose: the first stage, until 2017, included the implementation of 18 projects which are already under execution; 12 new programs would be developed in the framework of the second stage, in 2017 and 2018, with countries with which no agreement had been signed; and, finally, during the third stage, between 2018 and 2019, 12 additional projects would be promoted with countries with which cooperation had previously taken place (Sputnik News, 2016).

As a result of this Plan, Argentina has been able to more actively approach various countries of the African continent and share its experiences in the framework of SSC, strengthening capacities in different areas, with a special

emphasis on: agriculture and livestock, fisheries development and science and technology. Thus, and according to the Plan's first assessment, “the importance of actions carried out between 2016 and 2019, in the framework of 29 cooperation projects, which include bilateral, triangular and regional initiatives, mobilizing 150 highly qualified Argentine and African professionals, are worthy of mention” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, 2019).

In this regard, three of the key institutions that have supported this Plan have been: at the technical level, the National Agricultural Technology Institute (INTA by its Spanish acronym) and the National Institute of Industrial Technology (INTI by its Spanish acronym); and, at the financial level, the Argentine Fund for International Cooperation (FO.AR by its Spanish acronym).

As for INTA and INTI, it is important to highlight their contribution to the development of the agro-industrial sector in Argentina, to the improvement of SMEs through innovation and

technology transfer, and the subsequent experience they have been able to share with other countries. In this regard, one of the first public-private cooperation partnerships was promoted in the framework of the Argentine Plan for Cooperation with Africa 2016-2019. This initiative involved INTI, the Argentine Chamber of Agricultural Machinery Manufacturers (CAFMA by its Spanish acronym), the Research and Technological Development Center (CIDETER by its Spanish acronym) and the group of South African companies GRAIN SA, which carried out “more than 10 missions to South Africa in order to promote sustainable grain production based on the Argentine ‘direct sowing’ technique” (MRECIC, 2020, p. 77).

As for FO.AR, it is possible to state that this fund is one of the most renowned SSC and Triangular financing instruments in the region. Ever since its origin in the 1990s, it has enabled the Argentinean government to generate partnerships with various countries within and outside Ibero-America through the exchange of national and foreign experts →

In addition, and as the graph portrays, only six Ibero-American countries participated in this cooperation as providers. Cuba is the most remarkable case, which explains 6 out of 10 of Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged in 2019 with other regions’

developing countries. Mexico, Argentina and Colombia followed, at a certain distance, each of them with relative shares equal to or slightly above 10%. Chile and Venezuela explained, in each case, less than 3% of the total number of initiatives.

and by hosting seminars and workshops. Regarding the African continent, according to FO.AR's records up to 2018, exchanges with African countries accounted for 18% of all its cooperation (MRECIC, 2018, slide 5).

As a result of all this international effort, in 2016, delegates from the Argentinean government participated in exploratory missions to identify new cooperation opportunities with Kenya and Mozambique. The aim was to "concentrate Argentinean cooperation actions, focusing it on specific topics in order to improve its effectiveness in those areas in which our country has capacities, comparative advantages and recognized trajectory" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina, 2020). Additionally, this mission contributed to strengthen bilateral cooperation's institutional framework with the approval of a Technical Cooperation Agreement and of Memoranda of Understanding with Mozambique and the Republic of Congo, among others.

In short, the promotion of cooperation between the South-American country and countries of the African continent has had important results. Indeed, and as provider, between 2018 and 2019, Argentina kept 21 initiatives under execution with African developing countries (14 initiatives corresponded to Bilateral SSC and 7 to the Triangular modality). More than one half (62%) corresponds to the Productive Sectors area. Within this, *Agriculture and livestock* stood out (52%), as well as *Industry*, to a less extent. The most noteworthy initiatives in these sectors include projects related to the improvement of livestock and dairy production, as well as the implementation of sustainable agriculture models shared with Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa and Tunisia. In addition, four initiatives in the Infrastructure and Economic Services area are also worthy of mention, all executed under Triangular Cooperation, with the participation of Portugal or Japan as second providers. In these cases, exchanges were promoted to strengthen capacities in science,

technology and innovation systems and technologies for production management in small and medium-sized enterprises.

On the other hand, initiatives which tackled Institutional Strengthening were also significant, specifically in terms of public policies (international cooperation projects management), of *Political participation and civil society* (training for elections) and of *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights* (forensic sciences). Finally, the Social area was also addressed by the contribution of two projects: the first focused on water resources management with Mozambique, through which professionals were trained in water management in arid zones and in the use of wastewater for irrigation; through the second one, Argentina transferred Tunisia the universal child allowance model, which aim is to address and protect the needs of this vulnerable population group.

Source: SEGIB based on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina (MRECIC by its Spanish acronym) (2018) (2019) (2020), Lechini, G. (2018), Sputnik News (2016) and Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

However, it is necessary to be cautious when contrasting 2019's figures with the accumulated data for the 2006-2019 period. In this sense, between 2006 and 2019, Ibero-American countries participated, together with other developing regions, in a total of 1,122 Bilateral SSC initiatives. Once again, in almost 85% of the cases, Ibero-American countries acted as providers. However, up to 17 different countries participated in this period's cooperation: six of them (the same as in 2019) accounted for 77.2% of the exchanges; ten countries had more specific

participations, aggregately explaining only 3.7% of the total number of initiatives; and, the most outstanding difference was that of Brazil, which accounted for a remarkable 19.1% of the final figure, contrasting with its lack of participation in 2019's SSC.

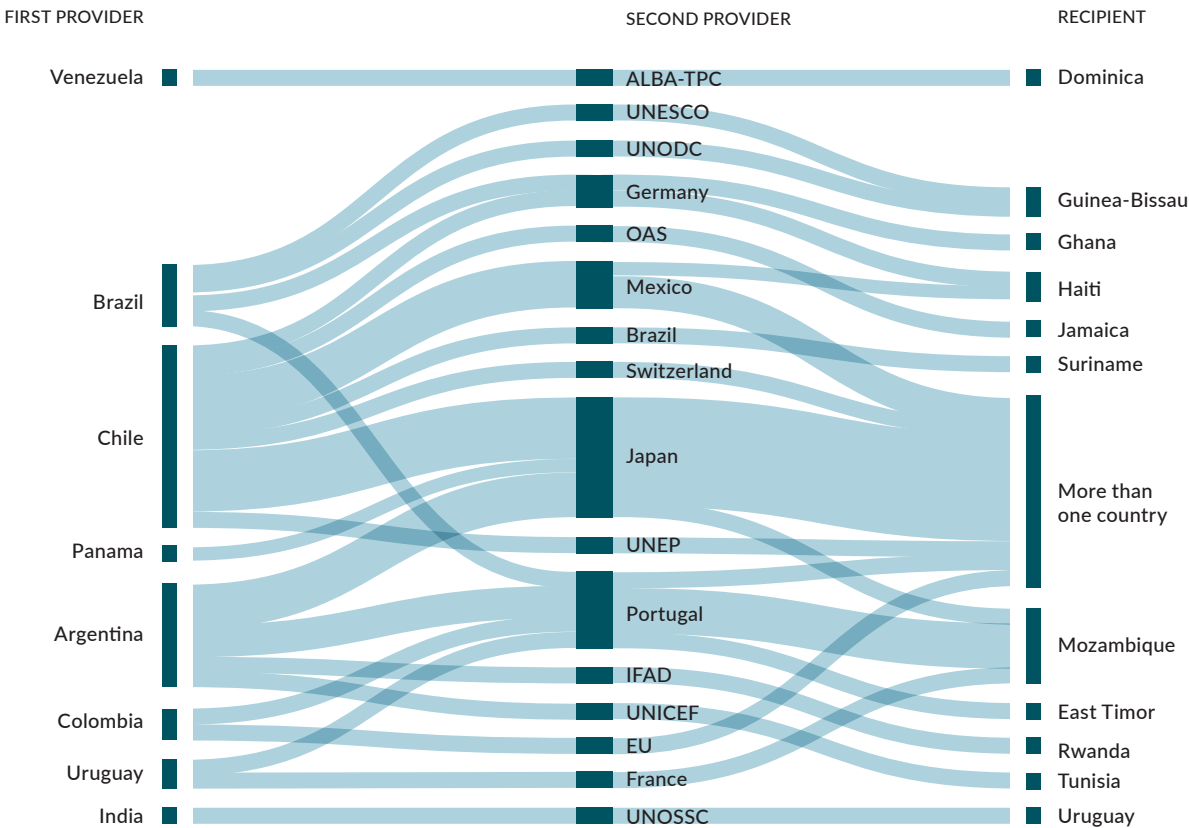
The above can only be explained by a methodological difference, related to the way in which data registration is carried out. In this sense, it is possible to identify two stages and a turning point in 2015: specifically, prior to that date, Ibero-American

countries only registered their experience with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean;<sup>7</sup> and, only after that date, they began to report their exchanges with all developing regions. However, not all countries registered this kind of information with the same regularity: for example, while Argentina, Mexico and Colombia chose to annually update information regarding this cooperation, Brazil and Cuba decided to do so only in certain years, decision that may be biasing the results.

Finally, in terms of bilateral exchanges and according to 2019’s data, Ibero-America has mainly acted as provider, especially with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, Africa and Asia. Box IV.6 illustrates an example of the above and details the special partnership that Argentina has established over the years with Africa. As for overall cooperation, Asia would be the only exception, region with which Ibero-America has established a more dual association. This region acted as provider in 14 of the 15 Bilateral SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated as recipients.

**GRAPH IV.13**  
**TC initiatives between Ibero-America and other regions, by stakeholder and role. 2019**

In percentage



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

<sup>7</sup> This is mainly explained by the focus Ibero-America placed on the Caribbean after the devastating effects of the earthquake that took place in Haiti in 2010. As a result, the relative importance of this region represents 60% of the total number of the exchanges registered between 2006 and 2019. This figure is higher than the 50% that was registered in 2019.

## BOX IV.7

## Portugal and the development of an institutional framework to promote Ibero-American TC with developing regions

According to *Instituto Camões* (2020), Portuguese cooperation has as its main objective “the eradication of poverty and (to advance the achievement of) sustainable development (...) it should be seen as an investment and not as an expense, and as a means of development rather than providing assistance”. Accordingly, Portugal’s cooperation is focused on the following areas: education for development; gender; food security and nutrition; rural

development; human rights and good governance; migration and refugees; security and development; justice; environment and energy; and health.

For this purpose, Portugal has signed cooperation instruments with different partners in diverse topics, diversifying stakeholders and partnerships.<sup>1</sup> Among these, agreements with other Ibero-American countries to promote Triangular Cooperation as a way

to leverage additional resources, share different stakeholders’ experiences and added value to favor development, should be highlighted. The following figure summarizes the institutional framework Portugal has developed for this purpose, based on the chronological signing of Memoranda of Understanding on TC with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Chile, El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay (Instituto Camões, 2020).

### Cooperation instruments on TC signed by Portugal and different Ibero-American countries



Source: SEGIB based on Instituto Camões (2020)

<sup>1</sup> Some examples are: on the one hand, the signing of the Agreement between Portugal and SEGIB, in November 2019, to establish a financing mechanism for the International Development Cooperation Fund, which will be available for both institutions; and, on the other hand, the signing, already in 2020, of a Memorandum of Understanding with the OECD to strengthen cooperation in areas that contribute to improve governance.



On the other hand, Graph IV.13 refers to Triangular Cooperation. In this sense, 30 initiatives are distributed in a flow diagram, according to the countries and organizations which acted as first providers (left flow), second providers (middle flow) and recipients (right flow). As the graph portrays, Chile (40% of the initiatives), Argentina and Brazil stood out as first providers, transferring their capacities. These three

countries aggregately explain 75% of the total number of actions and projects. Colombia and Uruguay, together with Panama, Venezuela and India (in Asia) had more specific participations.

This Triangular Cooperation was mainly destined to non-Ibero-American and African developing countries. Specifically, and as has been the case

Numerous TC initiatives have been promoted in this framework, some of them with Asia, but most of them with Africa and, almost always, with countries which are, in turn, part of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP by its Portuguese acronym). In fact, Portugal prioritizes Portuguese-speaking states such as Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe and East Timor. In addition, and as part of the efforts made to promote the institutional framework described above, the financial resources that make this cooperation possible have a "special fund supported by voluntary contributions from public and private entities to promote specific actions (...)" (*Instituto Camões*, 2020).

The strengthening of this cooperation, as well as the interest to connect Ibero-America with other regions and broaden collaboration ties for the benefit of developing countries, has led to a growing number of experiences being registered in

SIDICSS: thus, in the 2018-2019 period, Portugal, together with other Ibero-American countries, acted as provider in 5 triangular initiatives with Asia and Africa.

Specifically, the following Triangular Cooperation actions and projects are worthy of mention:

- a) First, and to contribute to capacity building in the *Agriculture and livestock* sector, it is possible to identify: on the one hand, the TC project with Brazil as first provider and Mozambique as recipient<sup>2</sup> in sustainable coffee production; and, on the other hand, an action to strengthen the cocoa production chain, with Colombia as first provider and Ghana and São Tomé and Príncipe as recipients.
- b) Other two projects also aimed at supporting Mozambique's development. The first one, in the *Health* sector, was dedicated to the care of oncology patients, with Uruguay as the first provider. This initiative contributed to

the detection and treatment of hematology-oncology diseases, through the training of Mozambican professionals and technicians in Flow Cytometry. The second initiative, in the *Science and technology* sector, in which Argentina was the first provider, enabled all countries to join efforts in terms of biotechnology, biosafety, water treatment and reuse, as well as to develop statistics and indicators.

- c) Finally, the initiative promoted by Portugal together with Argentina to strengthen the training process of East Timorese journalists should also be highlighted. Through this, different technical areas of journalism were addressed (chronicle, report, interview, social networks or radio), with the possibility to broaden the exchange of experiences to topics such as graphic design for newspapers and online publications, or the development of databases of a journalistic nature.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on this initiative, please refer to "Box V.3. Portugal and Brazil join efforts to support coffee's sustainable production in Mozambique" of the *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America 2019*.

Source: SEGIB based on Instituto Camões (2020) and Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

in the past in terms of this modality, the most common situation (in 43% of the cases), is that "more than one" recipient (mainly Caribbean countries) participate in the same initiative. In addition, individually, one third of the cooperation was explained by Mozambique (which acted as recipient in up to 5 initiatives), as well as by four other African developing countries (Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Rwanda and Tunisia). As for other recipient

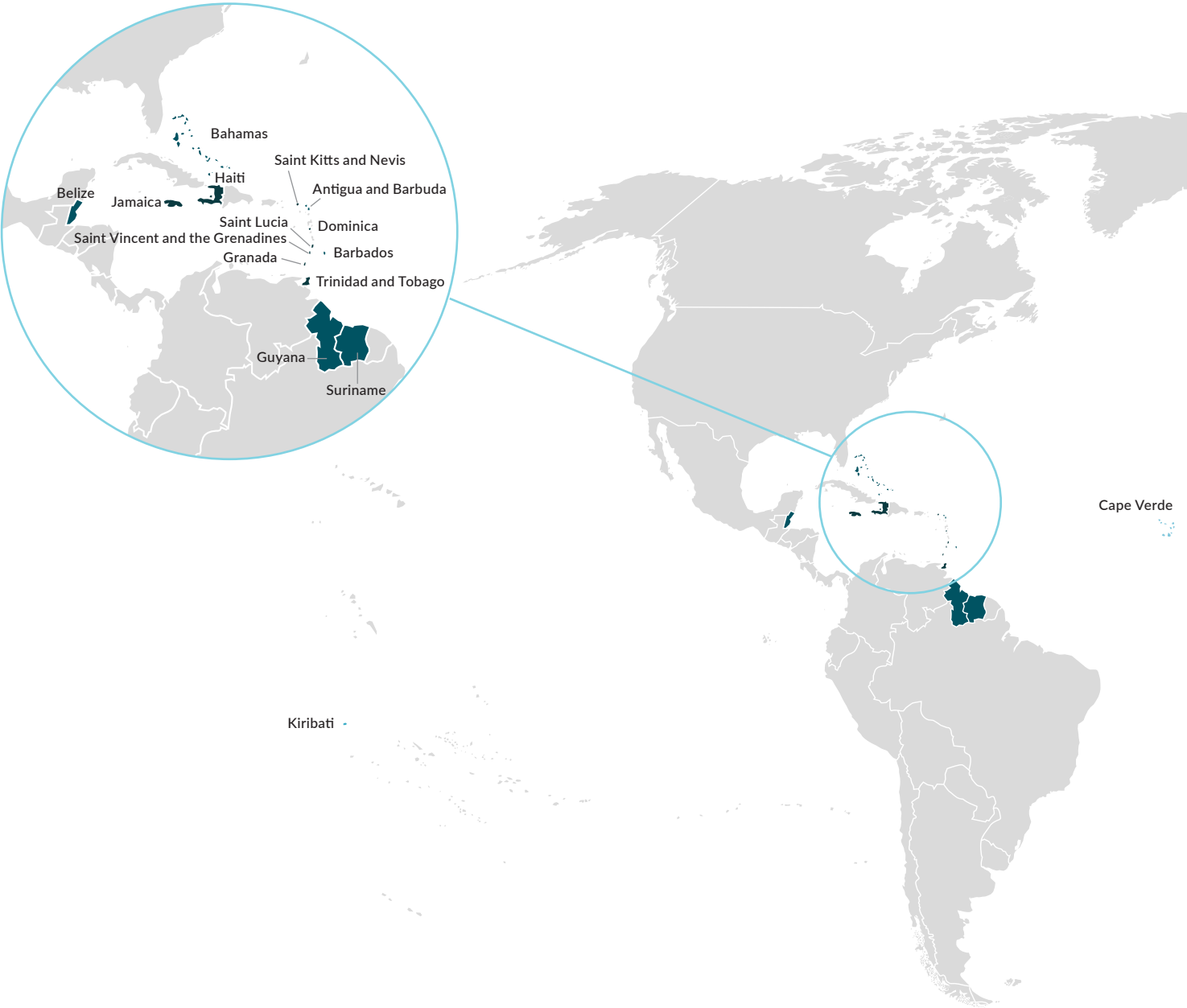
countries, Dominica, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname, in the Caribbean, complete the analysis, together with East Timor, in Asia, and Uruguay, in Ibero-America.

Up to 16 different stakeholders, including countries and multilateral organizations in basically identical proportions, were involved in partnerships between first providers and recipients. In this sense, more than one half of the initiatives are explained by

GRAPH IV.14

Participation of other regions' developing countries in Ibero-American inter-regional SSC. 2019

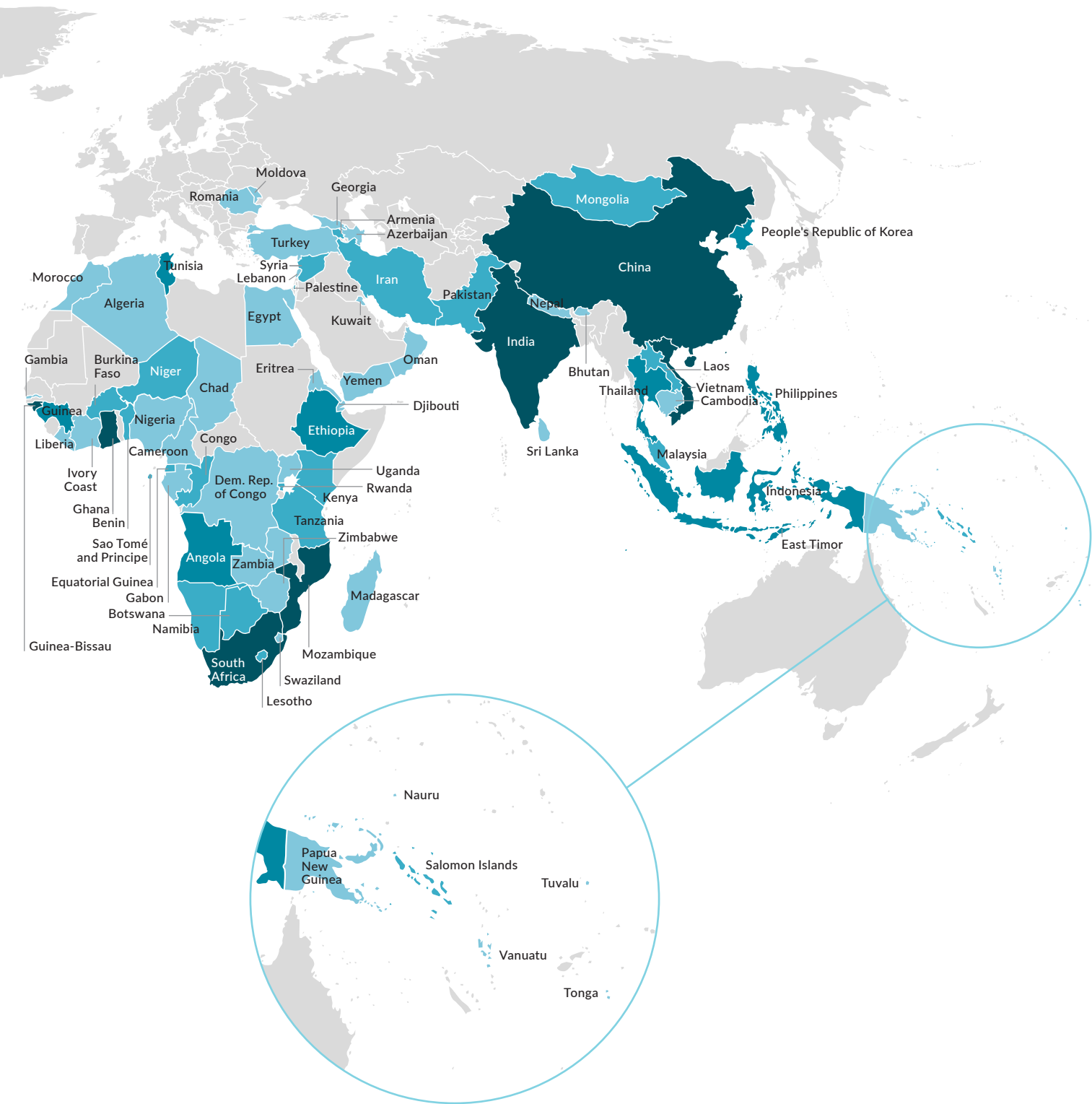
In units



Legend: countries according to the number of initiatives in which they participated in 2019, regardless of the modality and the role.

- 16 or more
- 5-15
- 3-4
- 2
- 1
- No projects registered

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





Japan (26.5% of 2019's TC with other regions), and by Portugal and Mexico (which account for another 26.7%). In fact, Portugal has been building an institutional framework based on agreements with other partners, which has enabled it to gain ground in terms of Triangular Cooperation with other regions, especially with the Portuguese-speaking community, as Box IV. 7 details. Other countries such as Germany, France and Switzerland, in Europe, and Brazil, also participated in these exchanges.

As for the multilateral organizations which supported Ibero-American Triangular Cooperation with other developing regions throughout 2019, it is possible to identify two groups: on the one hand, institutions that are part of the United Nations System, some of these are specialized agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime –UNODC– the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation –UNOSSC– and IFAD); and, on the other hand, organizations which are part of regional integration platforms and political coordination mechanisms such as EU, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America - Peoples' Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP by its Spanish acronym) and OAS.

Finally, the distribution shown in Graph IV.14 is explained by the above data, together with the information that was already detailed with reference to 2019's Regional SSC that, as was mentioned, focused on the exchange of experiences between Ibero-American and non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries. Indeed, the resulting map portrays all developing countries around the world according to their participation in the 288 SSC initiatives promoted in 2019 together with Ibero-America, regardless of the modality and role. Their different relative importance is determined by the color with which each of them is associated, which increases its intensity as the number of initiatives in which they participate also increases, as referred in the legend.

### */// All regions are represented, the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, Africa and Asia standing out ///*

As the map shows, in 2019, 89 non-Ibero-American developing countries participated in this SSC. Consistent with what has been previously pointed out, all regions are represented, the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, Africa and Asia standing out. Indeed, up to eleven Caribbean nations appear in the highest possible value range, the number of initiatives in which they participated ranging from 16 in Grenada's case to 33 in Haiti's and 56 in Belize's. The latter was remarkably active in the three modalities, especially in Regional SSC (27 initiatives), its high participation being explained by its membership in SICA and its location in the Meso-American sub-region.

Finally, other ten countries, which participated in between 5 and 15 SSC initiatives, should also be highlighted. Within this group, it is possible to identify non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries, once again. However, other African and Asian countries also had a strong participation, mainly as providers. Specifically, on the one hand, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and South Africa, together with Mozambique (as already mentioned) stood out; and, on the other hand, China, Vietnam and India are also worthy of mention.

### IV.3.3. Common problems, shared solutions

During 2019, Ibero-America and other developing regions were committed to exchange SSC experiences and to add efforts to face global and cross-border development problems. In this context, Graph IV.15 was plotted to better understand the priorities that were addressed by this cooperation. The graph distributes the 288 SSC initiatives executed in 2019 according to the area of action and the activity sector in which each of them was classified.

Thus, and as the graph shows, more than one half of 2019's inter-Regional SSC (52.8%) was destined to strengthen the Social area. Meanwhile, one out of five initiatives aimed at supporting the development of Productive Sectors (19.4%). The remaining SSC exchanges were diversified in sectors such as Environment (10.1%), Institutional

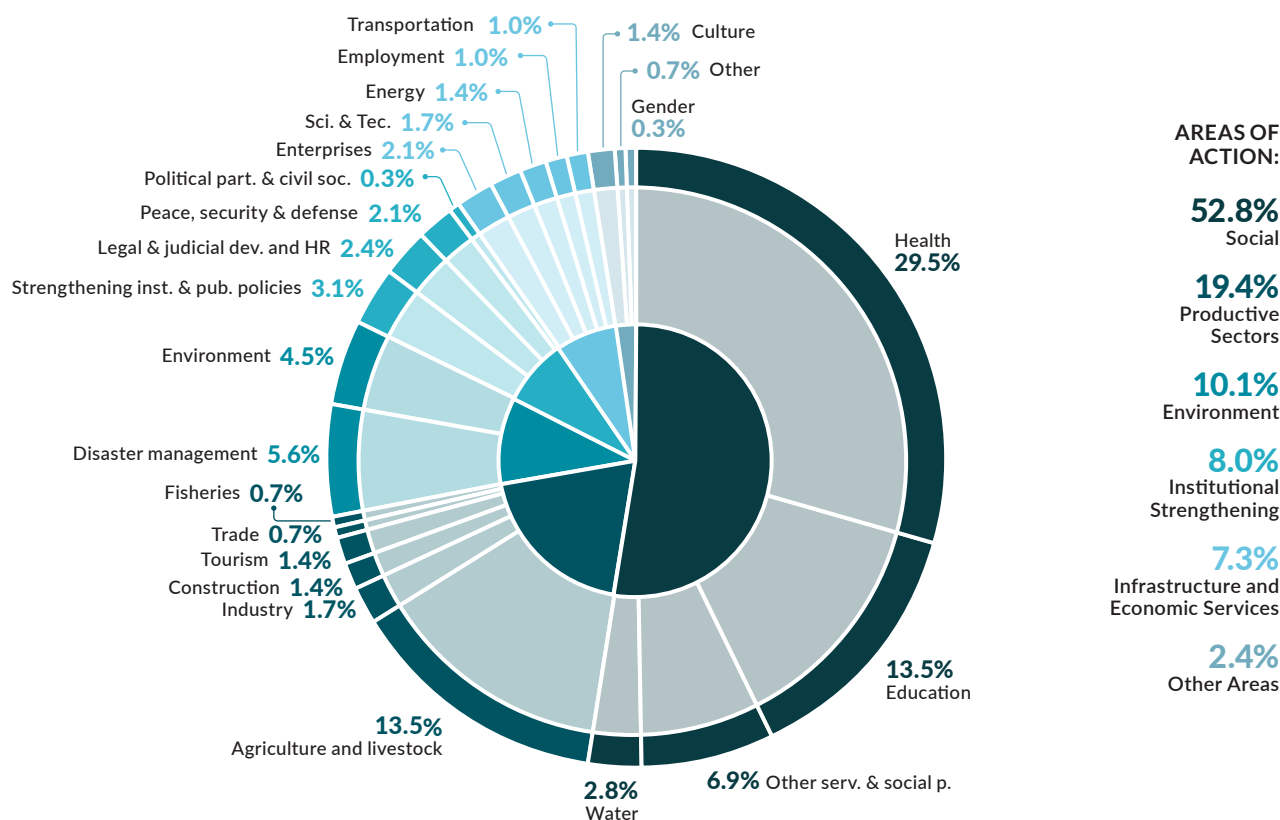
Strengthening (8.0%), and Infrastructure and Economic Services (7.3%). Specific interventions were registered in Other Areas (2.4%).

A disaggregated analysis shows that three of the four most important sectors in 2019 precisely addressed social problems. In this sense, *Health* stood out (3 out of 10 initiatives) and, at a certain distance, *Education* (13.5%) and *Other services and social policies* (6.9%) followed. In addition, an important part of this distribution is determined by Cuba's specialized profile which, in 2019, provided the highest number of Bilateral SSC initiatives to other regions. In any case, and as Box IV.8 details, Cuba's solidarity, together with efforts made by Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela, contributed to strengthen many developing countries' public health systems, improving their possibilities to respond to the COVID-19 global crisis.

GRAPH IV.15

#### Ibero-American initiatives with other regions' developing countries, by activity sector and area of action (all modalities). 2019

In percentage



## BOX IV.8

## SSC and the strengthening of health services: key for the global fight against COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has put all countries' health systems to the test. The overload of health services, even in those nations that have a higher level of development, has once again highlighted the importance and need to implement more robust public health policies, to provide and invest more technological and financial resources and, naturally, to have human resources which are capable of facing these challenges under very adverse circumstances. The challenge is even greater for developing countries, which respective systems already have to overcome structural deficits.

In this context, it is important to highlight South-South Cooperation's dynamism in the *Health* sector between Ibero-America and other regions' developing countries, through capacity strengthening which proved to be certainly valuable to face the health emergency challenge. Indeed, in 2019, *Health* was the sector on which the highest number of exchanges were concentrated (almost 30% of the total). These 85 initiatives, implemented under different modalities, have facilitated

Ibero-America's support and knowledge transfer to various developing countries, especially to the non-Ibero-American Caribbean and Africa.

More specifically:

a) Ten of these initiatives have a really diverse profile, not only in terms of the modality but also regarding the stakeholders which took part in them. However, the following countries deserve a special mention: in Ibero-America, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Uruguay, Venezuela, together with all Central-American countries; and, Haiti, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Saint Lucia, in addition to Mozambique, in the Caribbean and in Africa. All these experiences share a common feature: they all contribute to strengthen health systems and, consequently, they provide countries with extremely useful lessons for the health response to COVID-19. Exchanges explicitly promoted to strengthen public health systems; to improve registries, the access to and use of quality

medicines; to focus on health surveillance and laboratory networks; as well as those that establish an Emergency Plan to alleviate another epidemic, such as AIDS-HIV, are especially relevant in this context.

- b) However, the most important part of these initiatives (75) are explained by the commitment Cuba has had, for decades, to share its renown experience in *Health* matters with other developing countries. With further detail, this includes:
- The *Comprehensive Health Care Program*, which started in 1998 as a response to the social and humanitarian disaster caused by another emergency: the strike of Hurricanes George and Mitch in Central-America. Since that year, more than 164 countries around the world have benefitted from this program. It was originally designed based on a comprehensive perspective of health, understood as a right and a good that must be provided and guaranteed by the State to its citizens. It involves sending medical



*Agriculture and livestock* was another relevant sector, the third in terms of relative importance, on which 39 SSC initiatives focused, accounting for 13.5% of those registered in 2019. The exchange of experiences in this sense aimed to strengthen the production and market chains of products such as cocoa and rice, as well as those of livestock origin;

to move towards sustainable agriculture, including the development of bio-inoculant technologies; to improve animal and plant health management and achieve greater food safety; and to contribute to fight climate change and its worst effects (especially those caused by droughts) by strengthening technical skills and, especially, biosafety.

brigades to recipient countries to train human resources and, in turn, provide services in rural areas or areas affected by different vulnerabilities. According to Jiménez (2009):

The Program is organized to respond to necessities determined by the recipient country, providing not only medical attention to its population, but also improving services' organization and preparing the medical and paramedical workforce which will continue the work initiated by the Cuban medical brigades, ensuring assistance's sustainability. (p.7)

- Undergraduate scholarships, which have been key to support the training of thousands of students from different parts of the world in various health areas, particularly at the *Latin-American School of Medicine* (ELAM by its Spanish

acronym), university promoted by Cuba which campus was established in the country in the late 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Thus, and according to 2019 Health Statistical Yearbook, Cuba trained 7,726 foreign students in the 2019-2020 academic year in different health careers, 7,147 of them through the Medicine Program and 579 in specialized bachelor's degrees in different fields from nutrition to hygiene and epidemiology (p.188).

- *Operación Milagro*, which Cuba is promoting since 2005, to provide health care to vulnerable populations with eye diseases that could not be treated through national health systems. It also supports the training of health professionals in ophthalmology, once again, to ensure that knowledge is appropriated and replicated. By the end of 2019, more than 3,144,000 patients from more than 30 nations had benefited from this Program (Díaz, 2020).

Finally, and in a context as exceptional as the one provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to mention that, during 2020, Cuba's renown experience (not only in terms of Health but also regarding emergency response) explains why this country did not hesitate to send its health professionals to different countries in Latin-America and the Caribbean (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Grenada, Suriname, Jamaica, Haiti, Belize, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia and Saint Kitts and Nevis), but also to others such as Andorra and Italy (*Somos Iberoamérica*, 2020). Cuba's solidarity transcends traditional cooperation modalities and demonstrates the importance of joining efforts, for the benefit of all, to overcome the challenge the world is currently facing.

It should be highlighted that ELAM not only trains students in health-related careers, but also in areas related to sports, pedagogy and culture.

Source: SEGIB based on Díaz (2020), Jiménez (2009), Ministry of Public Health of Cuba (2020), *Somos Iberoamérica* (2020) and Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

<sup>1</sup> It should be highlighted that ELAM not only trains students in health-related careers, but also in areas related to sports, pedagogy and culture.

Thirty initiatives which, in similar proportions, were dedicated to *Disaster management* and *Environment*, deserve a special mention. Most of them are focused, once again, on the fight against climate change and on risk management in the face of its most harmful effects, as well as on all matters related to preserving biodiversity. In addition, most of the problems

addressed within this area are of a cross-border nature. Consequently, many of these initiatives were executed under Regional SSC and involved developing countries in Latin-America and the Caribbean.

Finally, joint efforts to find shared solutions to common problems contribute, in turn, to advance Sustainable Development, in line with the commitments made in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic has put its achievement at risk, it is even more crucial to better understand the progress that had been made prior to this health, economic and social crisis the world is facing. Graph IV.16 was prepared for this purpose. The graph distributes the 288 inter-Regional SSC initiatives that were executed in 2019 according to their potential alignment with a main (in 100% of the cases) and, when corresponding, with a second SDG (in around 80% of the exchanges).

As the Graph shows, the alignment with the SDGs is consistent with the profile of strengthened capacities, especially in the Social and Productive Sectors areas and, to a less extent, in the Environment area. In fact, 86 initiatives, corresponding to more than one third of the total, could potentially contribute to advance the achievement of SDG 3 Good health and well-being. Contributions to SDG 4 Quality education and SDG 2 Zero hunger followed, at a certain distance, accounting for almost another 30% of the initiatives. The remaining exchanges were remarkably diversified; however, the aggregate contribution of 23.3% to four SDGs, stands out: SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth, SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure, SDG 13 Climate action and SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions.

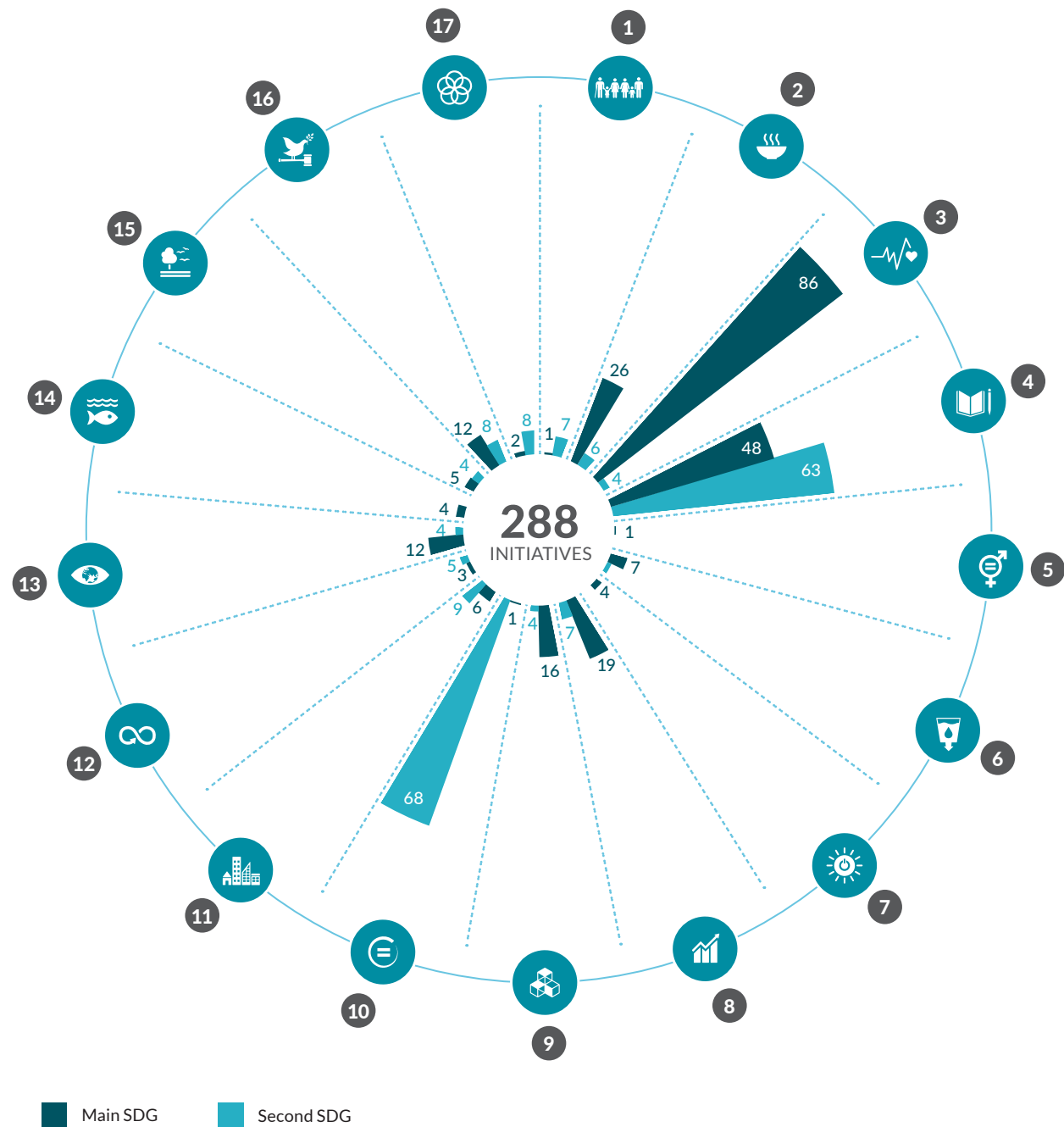
On the other hand, the Development Goals that were most frequently identified as second SDGs, are related to initiatives which mainly promoted more egalitarian societies, and provided the population with greater technical and professional skills, especially in the health area, through cooperation and training. Thus, it is possible to understand why more than half of 2019's initiatives were associated with these second SDGs: SDG 10 Reduced inequalities and SDG 4 Quality education.

/// More than one third of the total of the initiatives, could potentially contribute to advance the achievement of SDG 3 Good health and wellbeing ///

GRAPH IV.16

Ibero-American initiatives with other regions' developing countries, by main and second SDG (all modalities). 2019

In units



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