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Executive summary

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

southsouth



Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB)

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Note:

With reference to the inclusion of the term Triangular in the title of the Report, Brazil "*understands 'Trilateral Cooperation' is the most appropriate expression to refer to the type of cooperation that is executed between 3 international stakeholders*".

Front cover photo: Triangular Cooperation project "*Strengthening processes to achieve a good coexistence in San Francisco neighborhood (Asunción, Paraguay)*", implemented together with Chile and Spain.

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Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a global crisis of devastating effects, but it has also taught multiple lessons. One of these refers to our vulnerability and interdependence, even more evident in the face of a multidimensional crisis which impacts health, economic and social matters. This experience makes us recognize, once again, that the answers to overcome this crisis must also be multidimensional and collective, since only joint action will lead us to the desired outcome.

In this sense, multilateralism and truly horizontal cooperation must be the backbone of global collaborative efforts. This spirit is the essence of one of the instruments we count with to achieve this goal: South-South and Triangular Cooperation. Therefore, exercises such as the **Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020**, which we are hereby presenting, enable us to learn from accumulated experience and understand to what extent our countries have already been cooperating, both in form and in substance, with the aim to generate and strengthen shared capacities which are now critical to face the pandemic.

As a result of this edition's coincidence with the outbreak of the pandemic and due to the way in which the information is processed to prepare the Report, the data analyzed in this edition refers to 2018 and 2019. This 2020 Report does not yet include cooperation initiatives developed in response to COVID-19. However, it does analyze and especially highlight, for example, the significant number of projects (close to 300) which, in those two years, were dedicated to add efforts in health-related matters, sector on which most South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives are annually concentrated. These projects focused on topics that have proven key to fight the pandemic, such as the strengthening of national health systems or the control of communicable diseases and even of other epidemics.

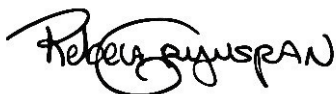
This **Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020** systematizes and analyzes the almost 1,600 initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated

during 2018 and 2019. This cooperation is implemented among the countries of the region but also between Ibero-America and other regions' developing countries. This figure also includes 300 Triangular Cooperation actions and projects, developed together with multiple organizations and different countries around the world.

Since this is also a collective exercise, we would like to congratulate Ibero-American countries' enormous efforts: on the one hand, to keep up the dynamism that has characterized this cooperation for more than a decade and, on the other hand, to be able to register and report the information this 13th edition required. Likewise, to do so under such adverse conditions is even more praiseworthy. It is an honor for SEGIB to accompany the region in this effort, to systematize and analyze this information and to be able to prepare and present this 2020 Report.

Year after year we strive to honor constant innovation as one of our Report's main assets, of which we are very proud. As part of this commitment, the title of this year's Report has indeed a relevant new feature. This is the first edition in which Ibero-American countries have officially decided to explicitly mention Triangular Cooperation in the title of the Report, although the document has included analyses in terms of this modality for more than a decade. In addition, SEGIB has developed a new online platform to access the world's largest regional South-South and Triangular Cooperation database, with more than 9,000 records. This information is available to all its member states and to the entire international community.

Finally, during this last year characterized by confinements, we have participated in different international fora in order to contribute to reflect on the global scope and nature of the pandemic, and on the fact that we were all equally exposed to the same level of adversity. In this framework, we have once again confirmed that South-South and Triangular Cooperation our region has been able to collectively develop throughout these years is one of our greatest strengths and a vehicle to bring us together in the search for a solution to a problem that has also done so.



Rebeca Grynspan

IBERO-AMERICAN SECRETARY GENERAL



María Andrea Albán

SECRETARY FOR IBERO-AMERICAN COOPERATION

Executive summary

The *Report of South-South and Triangular Cooperation 2020* is probably presented in one of the moments of greatest global uncertainty in recent times, in a context marked by the severe crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Much has been already written about the way this crisis, in its threefold health, economic and social dimensions, has changed daily life worldwide, and on how it has transformed public policy priorities in general and development strategies in particular. In this sense, the crisis has affected us all, but it has had a greater impact on the most vulnerable, putting efforts made since 2015 to advance the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at risk.

In spite of the above, the COVID-19 pandemic has also taught a great lesson, revealing the need to add efforts and strengthen international cooperation as one of the available instruments to improve global capacities to respond to this crisis. In this context, the *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020* and what it represents, have a renewed value, as they enable us to better understand the progress made so far, to learn from accumulated experience and contribute to this response.

Accordingly, the need to identify these potential lessons certainly determines the way in which the information included in this *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020* has been analyzed. In this sense, and more than ever, this edition focuses on those capacities that were strengthened through cooperation, and on the identification of those experiences that, in very diverse matters, contribute to improve the region's management of the COVID-19 pandemic. All this analysis is carried out based on a comprehensive perspective, which includes not only the emergency response, but also the adoption of public policy measures to address the crisis in all its dimensions (health, economic and social), and to contribute to diagnosis, prevention and warning in the face of potential new crises.

This approach cuts across all the contents of this 2020 Report and mainly those related to chapters II, III and IV, dedicated to the systematization and analysis of South-South and Triangular Cooperation implemented in Ibero-America in recent years, especially in 2019. In this search for lessons learnt, reviewing experiences in *Health*-related matters (those with the greatest relative importance in overall Ibero-American SS and Triangular Cooperation) will be particularly relevant. However, exchanges in other areas related to the emergency itself and its management, such as the care and protection of older adults (especially vulnerable in this crisis), the application of communication technologies to healthcare and education, and even phytosanitary and zoonosanitary research, a field in which the region has accumulated enormous experience and that is key to prevent the transmission of diseases from animals to human beings, to name a few, are also worthy of mention.

The pandemic also determines the content of **CHAPTER I** of this *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020*, prepared since 2009 by Ibero-American countries' Heads of Cooperation. This chapter has historically outlined the region's political vision on different current issues related to SSC and the development agenda. In line with the above, in 2020 and almost inevitably, Chapter I analyzes the impact the COVID-19 crisis has had on the development of the countries of the region; it assesses the extent to which progress made in recent years related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda may suffer setbacks; and it stresses the potential role multilateralism and cooperation can have in a solid and long-term recovery.

However, COVID-19 has not only determined the different contents of this 2020 Report. Its impact has also been evident during its preparation, as it put the effective registration of SS and Triangular Cooperation data at risk. In fact, the outbreak of the pandemic, together with worldwide confinements, interfered with the process countries annually carry out to update information in our online data platform, the Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS by its Spanish acronym). Nevertheless, Ibero-American

Heads of Cooperation and their technical teams in the different Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, once again reaffirmed their strong commitment to this project and, even in such adverse circumstances, successfully completed this task.

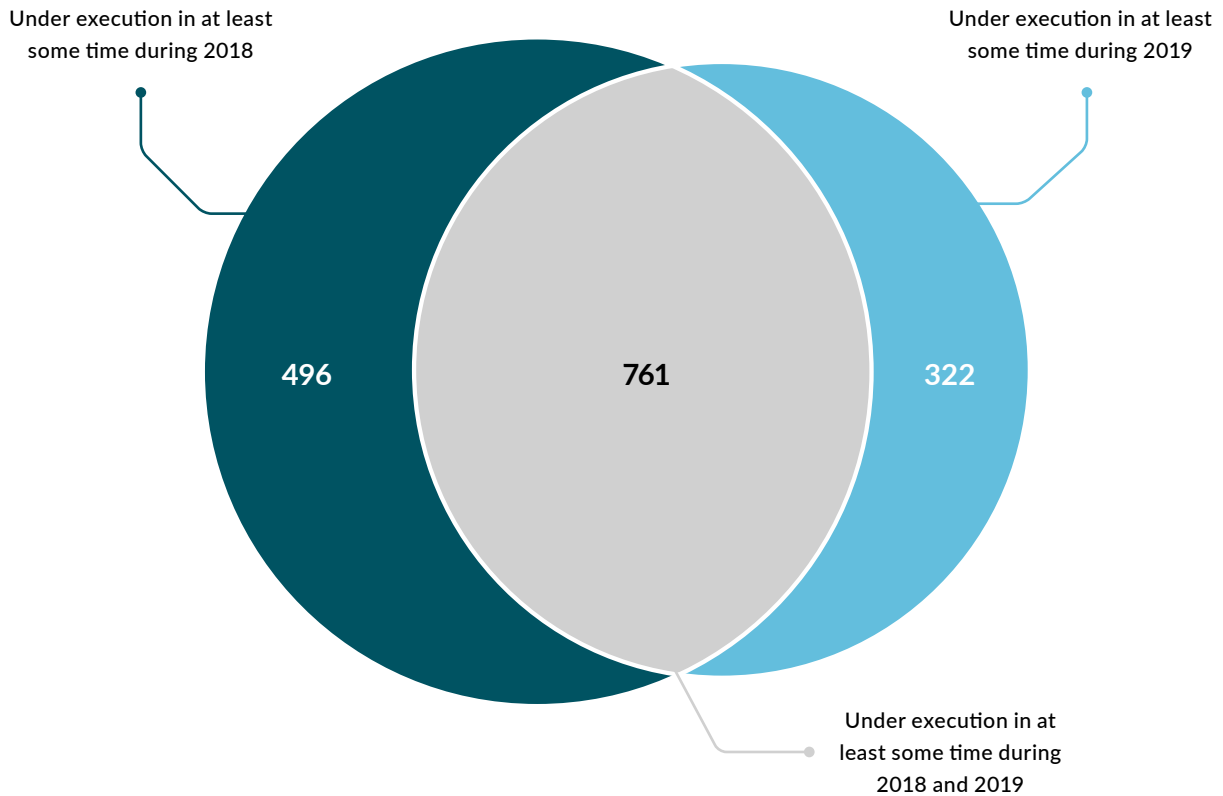
These efforts went even further. Countries also achieved a pre-pandemic goal and narrowed the gap between the year in which the Report is published and the year to which data refers, to just one year. Indeed, and due to the complexity of these processes, previous editions of this Report referred to cooperation implemented two years before. For example, the 2019 Report focused on data related to 2017. In order to narrow this gap to a single year, the preparation of the 2020 Report

had already set the aim to broaden the collection and registration of SS and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America executed both in 2018 and in 2019. Despite 2020's adverse circumstances, and at the risk of possible under-reporting, countries completed this task and registered the almost 1,580 initiatives that were under execution in 2018 and/or 2019 in SIDICSS. This data is illustrated in Graph A.

GRAPH A

SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America participated (all modalities), by the year in which they were executed. 2018 and/or 2019

In units



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

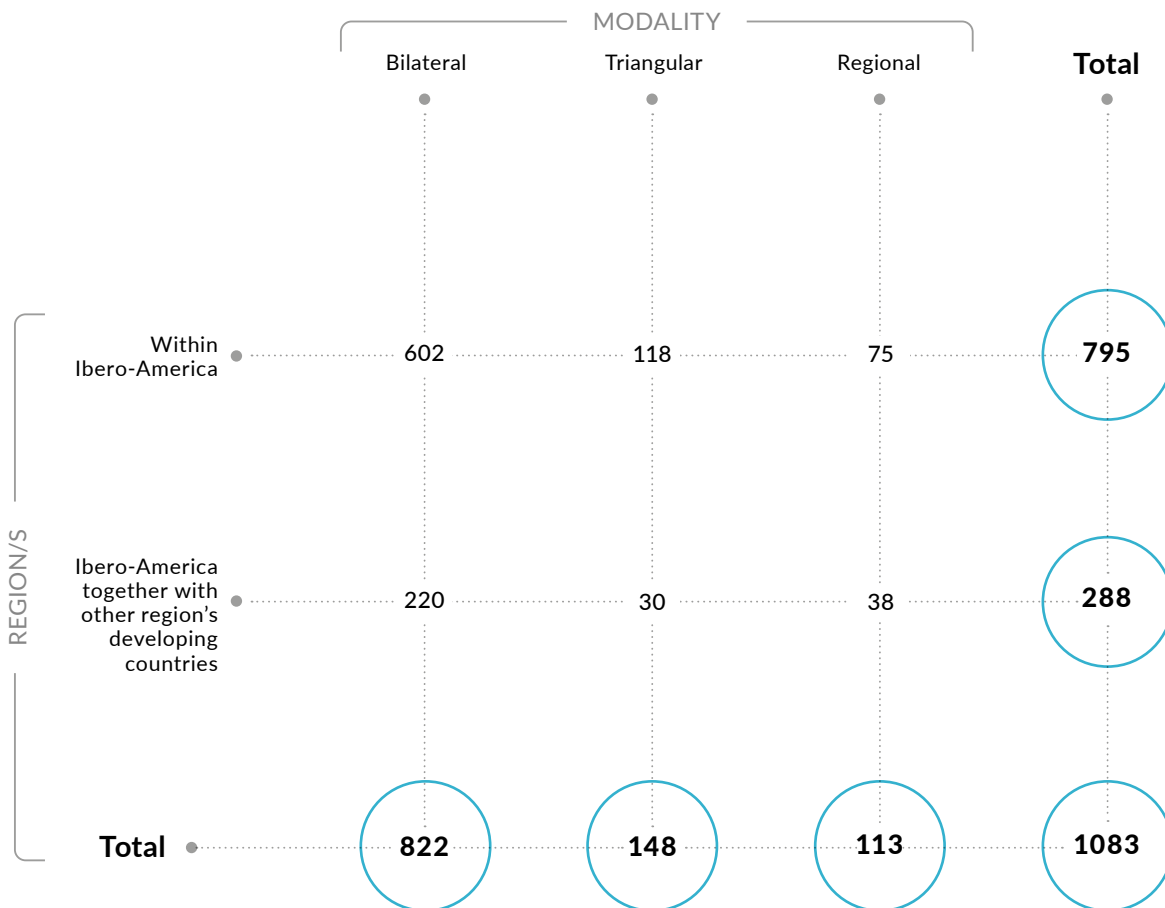
Thus, **CHAPTERS II, III and IV** and **COUNTRY FACTSHEETS**, are based on the systematization and analysis of the information registered, focusing on the 1,083 South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives in which Ibero-America participated in 2019. Graph B distributes this total according to

the modality (Bilateral, Triangular, Regional) and the region with which Ibero-America associated, differentiating between intra-regional (among Ibero-American countries) and interregional SSC (together with other regions' developing countries).

GRAPH B

SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America participated, by region with which they were exchanged and by modality. 2019

In units



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

The different combinations by modalities and by regions with which initiatives are exchanged, in turn, define each chapter's main contents. In addition, it should be pointed out that accumulated data related to the 2006-2019 period, which includes up to 9,119 SSC initiatives, provides added value as it enables to carry out a trend analysis that would not be possible without these historical series.

Specifically, **CHAPTER II** is dedicated to the more than 600 Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged in Ibero-America in 2019. Although each of the 19 Latin-American and Caribbean countries participated in this modality, their behavior was uneven, Chile and Mexico standing out with a maximum of 185 and 160 initiatives respectively. It is also possible to identify a greater dynamism in terms of the way in which countries related, which resulted in a process to broaden and diversify the partners with which each of them exchanged. This trend is accompanied by an increase in the number of initiatives in which countries simultaneously act as providers and as recipients, very common, for example, in Uruguay's case.

Other trends referred to the type of capacities that were strengthened through Bilateral SSC exchanged in Ibero-America throughout 2019, are also worthy of mention. The area on which most efforts continue to be concentrated is related to Social matters (more than one third of the total number of initiatives) and, within this, the most important sector is *Health* (almost one hundred projects). As it was previously mentioned, this data is particularly relevant in the context of the health crisis caused by COVID-19. Likewise, cooperation aimed at preserving the *Environment* continued to gain ground, consolidating as the third sector with the highest relative importance in overall bilateral initiatives in 2019, closely following the second sector, *Agriculture and livestock*.

CHAPTER III is dedicated to the systematization and analysis of the 130 Triangular Cooperation initiatives promoted in Ibero-America during 2019. As highlighted in this chapter's introduction, its increasing importance, especially based on the renewed recognition the international community has given to TC as an instrument for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the framework of BAPA+40, has led to its inclusion in the title of this *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020*.

In line with the above, 2019's data suggests Ibero-America's commitment to an increasingly stronger Triangular Cooperation. This greater strength does not result in a higher number of initiatives (which show a relatively stable overall figure), but in a change in terms of their implementation, with a progressive shift from specific and isolated actions to projects of a larger scope. In this sense, and as first providers, Chile, Mexico and Brazil stood out; Spain and Germany were the most active stakeholders as second providers; and, El Salvador, Bolivia and Paraguay should be highlighted as the main recipients. However, and as has been the case in the past, the most common situation still was that several countries simultaneously exercised this role.

As for the capacities that were strengthened through Triangular Cooperation, it is possible to identify a change in trend, between 2010 and 2019, in terms of the region's sectoral priorities, which focused on contributing to the preservation of the *Environment* (16.5% of the initiatives). TC dedicated to Institutional strengthening also gained ground, especially in matters related to *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights*. However, these changes did not impact the *Agriculture and livestock* sector, which continued to be the one with the second highest relative importance in 2019. From another perspective, the above is consistent with the fact that one half of this cooperation focused on contributing to advance SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), SDG 2 (Zero hunger), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 13 (Climate action).

CHAPTER IV adopts an innovative approach and merges the fourth and the fifth chapter of the previous editions of this Report (*Ibero-America and Regional SSC* and *Ibero-America and SSC with other regions*, respectively). The aim of this change is to focus on the region as a key stakeholder for development, stressing its role as a whole, and to highlight how the region's cooperation can strengthen and enhance the collective response to global and cross-border problems and challenges.

For this purpose, Chapter IV addresses data from a double perspective: the first continues the analysis developed so far and still refers to intra-regional SSC, however, with an emphasis on initiatives Ibero-America implements as a whole, through the Regional SSC modality; the second perspective analyzes interregional interventions, focusing on the exchange of experiences between Ibero-America and other developing regions.

Thus, in 2019, Ibero-America participated in more than 110 Regional SSC initiatives, most of them of a long-term nature. More than 40 organizations joined Ibero-American countries in the implementation of this cooperation and institutionally supported it, those of the Ibero-American and Central-American Systems standing out. The significance of these types of organizations, as well as the importance of shared features which bring countries of these regions together, is consistent with the fact that SSC predominantly focused on strengthening *Culture* (14.4% of the initiatives), as well as *Environment* and *Disaster Management* (20%). This also explains why SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 13 (Climate action) are two of the Goals to which this Regional SSC mainly contributes.

On the other hand, also in 2019, Ibero-America executed 288 initiatives with other regions' developing countries, mostly under the Bilateral SSC modality. One half of this cooperation is explained by the participation of the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, followed by Africa (27.1% of the initiatives) and Asia (15.6%), the participation of the Middle East and Oceania being more specific. This cooperation mainly focused on addressing Social problems and, above all, on the *Health* sector (3 out of 10 initiatives). In this sense, efforts made to strengthen many developing countries' public health systems can be an essential contribution to increase their capacity to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

The *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020* ends with the **COUNTRY FACTSHEETS**, which summarize information regarding the cooperation of each of the 22 members of this space. Its review sheds light not only on the total number of initiatives in which each country participated in 2019, but also on how these were distributed by modalities and roles, the capacities that were strengthened, the SDGs with which they were potentially aligned and the main partners with which countries associated.

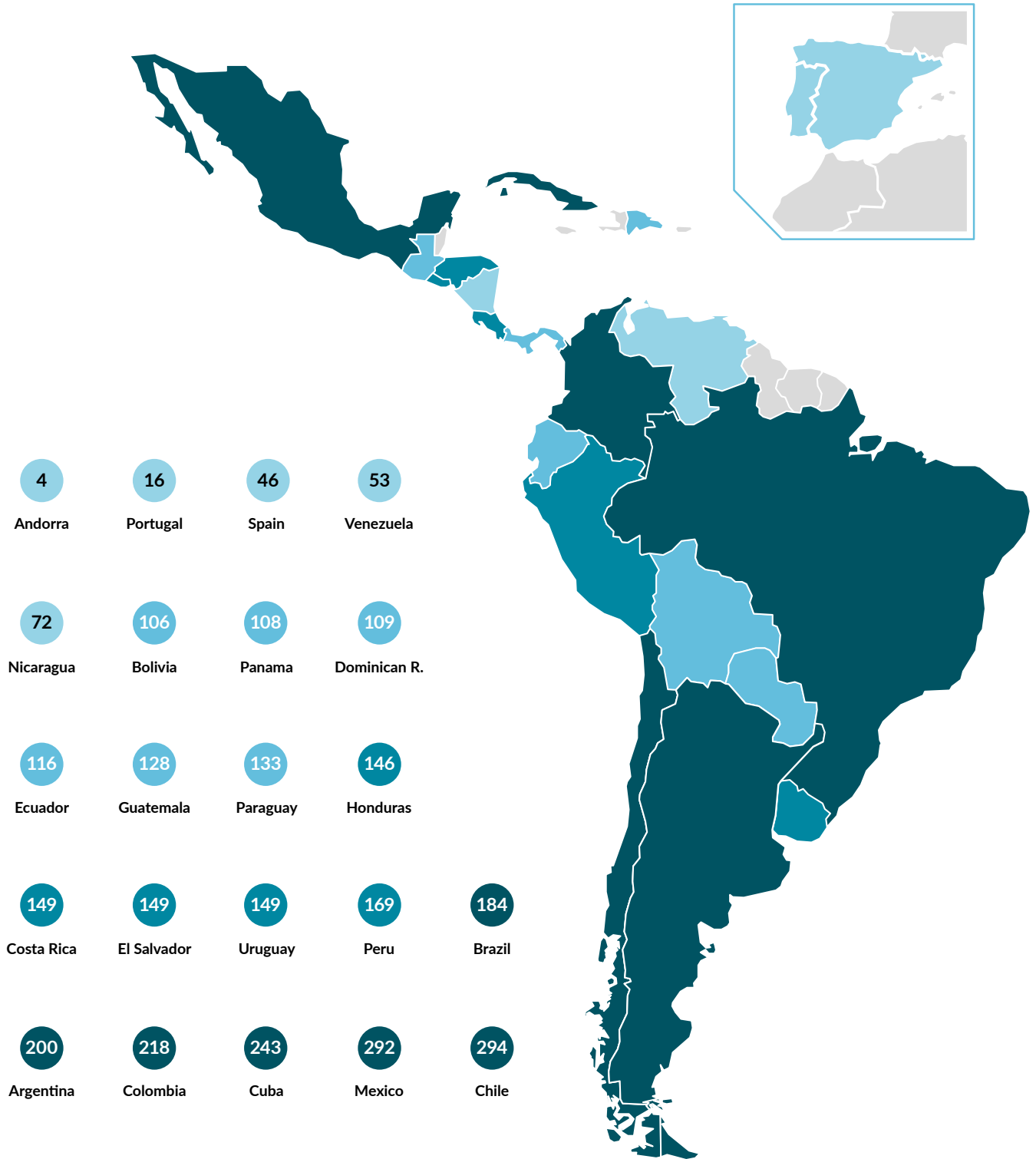
/// *In 2019, Ibero-America participated in 1,083 SS and Triangular Cooperation initiatives, 288 of which were carried out with other regions' developing countries* ///

Graph C is based on these Country Factsheets and it distributes the 1,083 SSC initiatives that were under execution in 2019 according to the intensity of Ibero-American countries' participation. As the graph shows, different dynamics coexisted. On the one hand, countries such as Mexico and Chile participated in more than 290 initiatives. Argentina, Colombia and Cuba closely followed (with more than 200), together with Brazil (184). On the other hand, and consistent with their nature - which limits their participation to the Triangular and Regional modalities - Spain, Portugal and Andorra should be highlighted, all of them participating in less than 50 initiatives. Meanwhile, most Central-American (Panama, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and El Salvador) and Andean (Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru) countries, together with the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Uruguay participated, to a more or less extent, in between 80 and 180 initiatives. Venezuela and Nicaragua completed the analysis, each of them being active in between 50 and 75 exchanges.

GRAPH C

Ibero-American participation in the total number of SSC initiatives executed in 2019, by country.

In units



Legend: number of initiatives in which each country participated in 2019

- Up to 80
- Between 81 and 140
- Between 141 and 180
- Between 181 and 300

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

The *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America 2020* systematizes and analyzes cooperation initiatives in which the region participated in 2019. One of the main innovative features of this edition is the inclusion of the term Triangular in the name of the Report. This change acknowledges Ibero-America's accumulated experience in this modality and is aligned with its global recognition as a means for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

It is important to highlight that this thirteenth edition was prepared in the framework of the COVID-19 crisis, which has made the need to cooperate and add efforts to face global challenges even more evident, if possible. Indeed, this crisis and the possible contributions South-South and Triangular Cooperation can make to the health, economic and social response the world needs, cut across this edition. Hence, the 2020 Report focuses, as has been the case in the past but with an even greater emphasis, on the sectoral analysis, and on the importance of capacity strengthening and the exchange of experiences in the search for shared solutions to development problems.

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