

CHAPTER 2

Ibero-America and Bilateral South-South Cooperation

Ibero-American countries developed strategies to dynamize and adapt Bilateral SSC to pandemic times.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 has undoubtedly determined the way South-South Cooperation (SSC) was implemented during 2020 and 2021. This chapter analyzes bilateral relations considering not only how the crisis affected the possible exchanges between Ibero-American countries, but also how these exchanges adapted to address this multidimensional crisis that severely affected the region, while ratifying countries' firm commitment to contribute to "leaving no one behind" through SSC and its alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

2.1 The COVID-19 crisis and Ibero-American Bilateral SSC in 2020 and 2021: a first approach

Ever since the beginning of the pandemic, forecasts of the possible impacts the crisis could have on the execution of the different SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries were participating, could only predict a strong impasse in all exchanges. Indeed, COVID-19 and the restrictive measures its management required - including strict confinements and restrictions on mobility - led to the cancellation of previously scheduled activities and/or to a partial or total suspension of many of them. This issue is particularly critical for this type of cooperation which strength usually lies on on-site visits and exchanges between countries' officials and technical experts.

Early data for 2020 and 2021 suggests these forecasts were only partially reliable. Indeed, as will be described below, the drop in the number of initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated was significant, but it only intensified - although in an extraordinary way - a downward trend that had already been occurring for some years. However, this same data suggests that, in spite of the adverse circumstances, countries demonstrated a great capacity to adapt and respond to the new context. This ability revealed in the redesign of existing initiatives and even in the promotion of new ones (mainly specific SSC actions) - online and mainly focused on the response to the challenges imposed by COVID - situation that contributed to prevent a greater drop in the total number of initiatives.

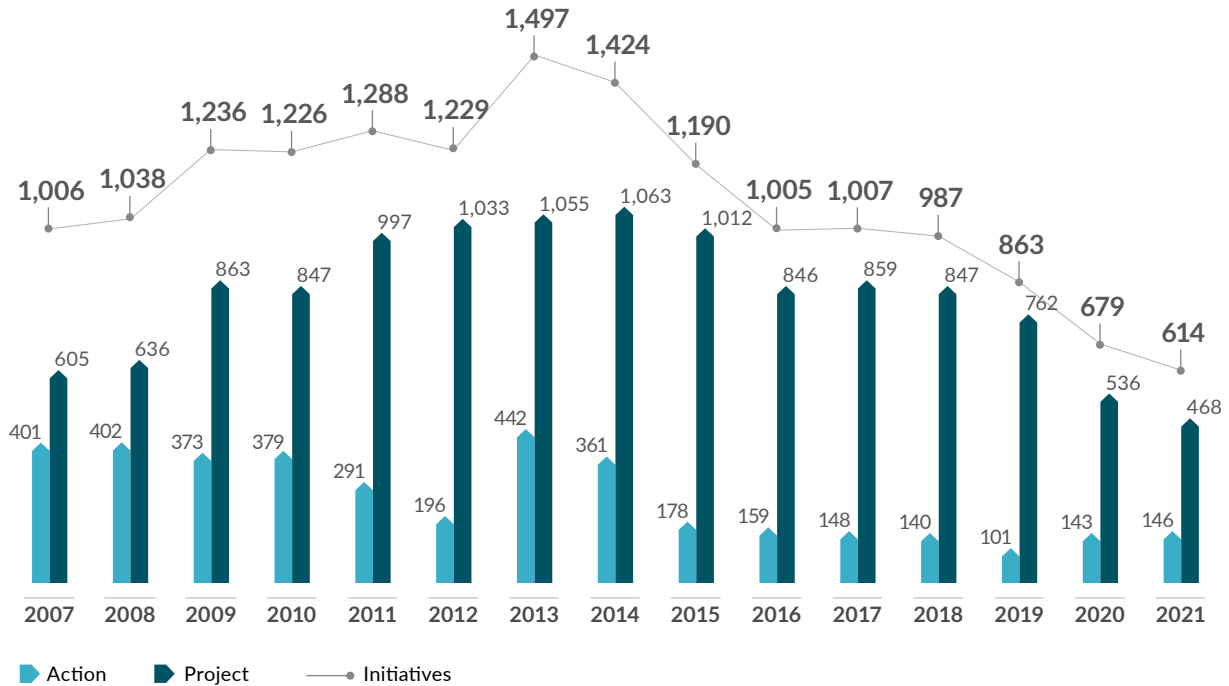
Graph 2.1 confirms the first dynamic suggested above. Specifically, this graph displays SSC actions, projects and initiatives - bilaterally exchanged by Ibero-American countries with partners around the world - that were under execution in at least some moment of the 2007-2021 period. In this regard, it is possible to identify two contrasting trends: the first one, which shows an intense growth in the total number of initiatives (from 1,006 in 2007 to a maximum of nearly 1,500 initiatives in 2013, when the annual average increase reached 7.3%); and a second stage, of a sharp - although irregular - fall, leading to a minimum of 614 initiatives registered in 2021, with negative annual average variation rates of 10.3%.

Indeed, as mentioned, the drop in the total number of initiatives between 2013 and 2021 has gone through different stages. Up to 2016 and in just 3 years, total Bilateral SSC actions and projects in which Ibero-American countries participated suffered a significant reduction of -12.3% per year, bringing the final figure to 1,005 initiatives, almost identical to that of 2007. During the following two years and, to a certain extent, this situation tended to stabilize, with annual reductions

→ GRAPH 2.1

Evolution of Bilateral SSC actions, projects and initiatives exchanged by Ibero-American countries with partners from the rest of the world. 2007-2021

In units



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

of -0.9%. This kept the total number of initiatives in 2018 just below 1,000 (987). Since then, figures show a sequence of very sharp drops, with averages of more than two digits per year (-14.5%), including a historic decrease of -21.3% in 2020, which coincided with the most severe restrictions of the COVID-19 crisis.

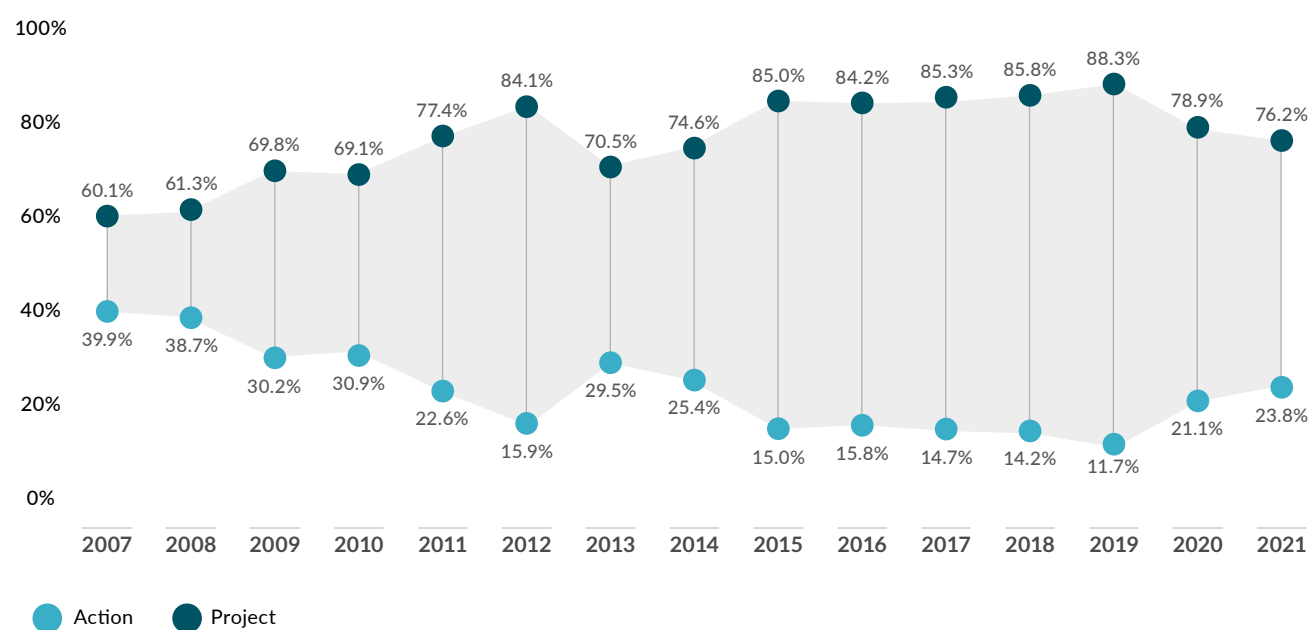
Graph 2.2, in turn, confirms the second predicted trend and reveals the dynamizing role SSC actions played in the adverse conditions caused by the pandemic. In fact, this graph shows the evolution of projects' and actions' share in the total number of Ibero-American Bilateral SSC initiatives implemented in the same period. As depicted, before the pandemic, the evolution of these two instruments had been clearly divergent, with a clear focus on projects - of greater relative dimension - to the detriment of more specific actions.

Thus, while in 2007 the project/action ratio stood at 60%-40%, by 2019, this same ratio had increased to a maximum close to 90%-10%. The outbreak of the pandemic and imposed restrictions revalued actions' role, as they enable the implementation of exchanges of a more specific and probably remote nature. This brought proportions closer together once again, although the ratio remains at a remarkable 76%-24%.

→ GRAPH 2.2

Evolution of projects' and actions' share in the total number of Ibero-American Bilateral SSC initiatives with all partners. 2007-2021

In percentage



● Action ● Project

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

2.2 Narrowing the analysis: the 2020-2021 period and Bilateral SSC in Ibero-America

The first approach to Bilateral SSC in which Ibero-America participated during the two years of the pandemic considered all SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries bilaterally participated, regardless of the developing region with which these initiatives were carried out. This analysis also took actions and projects that had annually been implemented in the 2007-2021 period as the main reference. This enabled to individually focus on the two most difficult years of the pandemic, 2020 and 2021.

However, the exceptional nature of the context calls for an aggregate analysis of both years, in order to review SSC initiatives that were under execution at some point during this time frame. This way, a comparative analysis can be made between the 2020-2021 period and the two immediately previous years (2018-2019). This may reveal changes or trends related to the necessary adaptation to the COVID-19, which differ from the pre-pandemic stage.

On the other hand, for methodological reasons and to ensure consistency with this Report's structure, this chapter does not focus on *Ibero-American* Bilateral SSC. It analyzes SSC that takes place *in Ibero-America*, i.e., exchanges between countries in the region. *Ibero-American* SSC together with other developing regions will be later addressed in another chapter.

The outbreak of the pandemic boosts the role of actions once again, as they enable exchanges of a more specific nature that can probably be implemented online

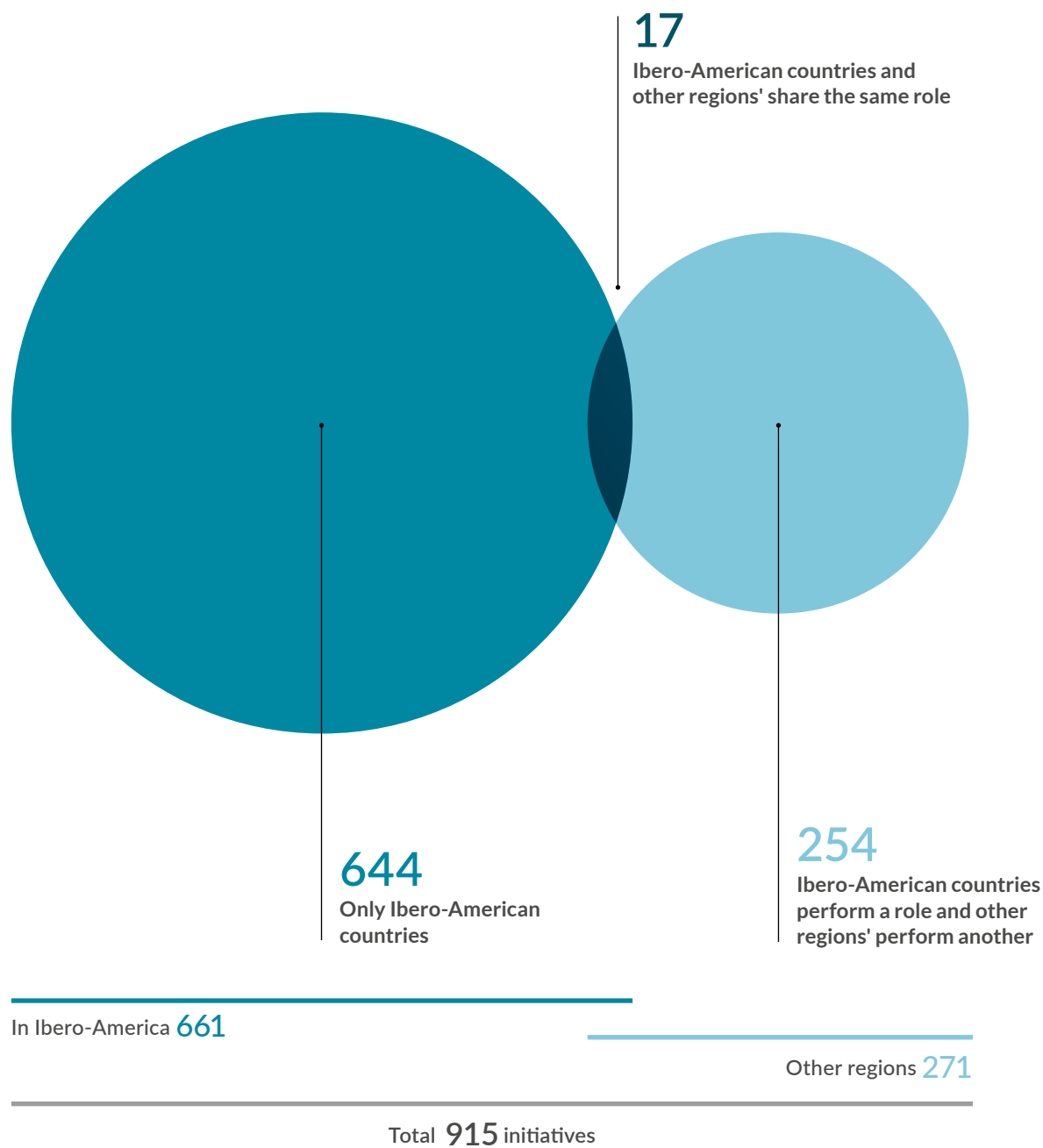
Graph 2.3 details the figures associated with these two different approaches (*Ibero-American* SSC with other regions and SSC in *Ibero-America*). It considers the total number of Bilateral SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated during the 2020-2021 period (915) and distributes them according to the region with which exchanges were carried out. Thus, a distinction is made between the initiatives exchanged *in Ibero-America* (661, only between member countries) and those which Ibero-American countries exchanged - under the different roles - with partners in other developing regions (271).

This graph also illustrates the number of actions and projects (only 17) in which countries from different regions coincide in the exercise of at least one of the roles (usually recipient).

→ GRAPH 2.3

Distribution of Ibero-American Bilateral SSC initiatives, by the region with which they were exchanged. 2020-2021

In units



Note: A distinction is made between: 1) initiatives exchanged in Ibero-America, among the countries of the region where one or several Ibero-American countries act as provider, recipient or "both"; 2) initiatives exchanged between Ibero-American countries and other developing regions, exercising different roles in each case; and 3) initiatives in which countries of at least two different regions coincide in the exercise of one of the two roles (usually recipient).

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

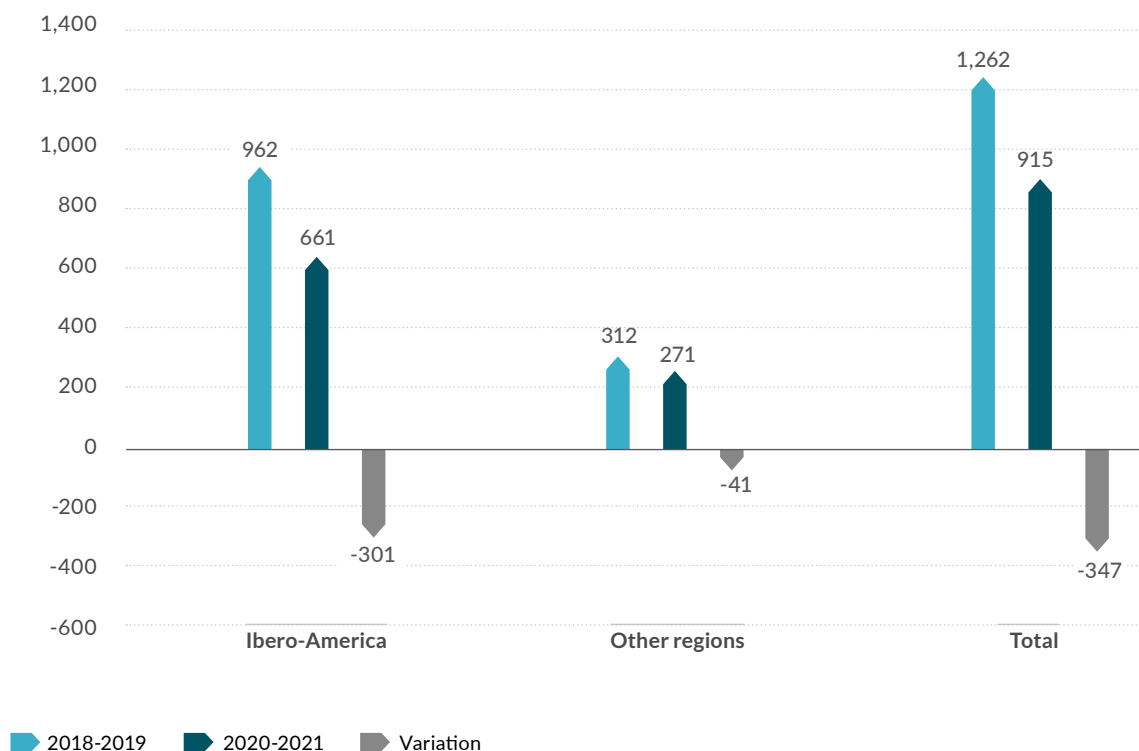
915 Bilateral SSC initiatives were implemented in 2020-2021, 27.5% less than in the previous two-year period

Graph 2.4, in turn, shows how figures for the 2020-2021 period are substantially lower than those of the two previous years (2018-2019), this reduction being especially significant for SSC exchanges in Ibero-America. Indeed, initiatives that were under execution in 2018-2019 (1,262) decreased 27.5%, pushing the final figure down to 915 in 2020-2021. This decline was significantly influenced by the situation of Bilateral SSC exchanges within the Ibero-American region, which dropped at an even faster rate (31.3%), bringing the 962 initiatives of the previous period to the aforementioned 661. Meanwhile, Bilateral SSC with other regions was less affected, dropping from 312 initiatives to 271 in the last two years, representing a reduction of -13.1%, significantly lower than the overall fall. As will be explained in another chapter, the relatively better performance of Bilateral SSC between the countries of Ibero-America and those of other developing regions is mainly explained by the active role played by Cuba in the emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis, an action of global scope that exceeded the region itself

→ GRAPH 2.4

Variation in Ibero-American Bilateral SSC initiatives, by the region with which they were exchanged. 2020-2021 and 2018-2019

In units



Note: A distinction is made between: 1) initiatives exchanged in Ibero-America, among the countries of the region where one or several Ibero-American countries act as provider or as recipient; and 2) initiatives exchanged between countries of Ibero-America and other developing regions, exercising different roles in each case.

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

2.3 Countries' participation in Bilateral SSC in Ibero-America during 2020-2021

This section analyzes Ibero-American countries' participation in SSC initiatives bilaterally exchanged during the particular context of the 2020-2021 period. To this end, the following aspects are examined in depth: the intensity with which countries participated in these exchanges, the roles under which they did, and their most common partnerships. All the above is limited, as already mentioned, to the 2020-2021 period and to exchanges in *Ibero-America*, while Ibero-American SSC with partners of other developing regions will be analyzed in another chapter.

2.3.1. Ibero-American countries' participation and roles in 2020-2021 Bilateral SSC

The adverse conditions that affected international cooperation throughout the 2020-2021 period also had an impact on Ibero-American countries' possibilities to participate in bilateral exchanges within the region. Graph 2.5 shows Ibero-American countries (specifically the 19 Latin-American countries that, given their nature, participate in Bilateral SSC) and the number of SSC actions, projects and initiatives in which they bilaterally participated in the 2020-2021 period, and arranges them according to the lowest and the highest number of exchanges. A first approach suggests a significant gap between the countries that were able to respond with greater dynamism and those which possibilities to exchange with other partners in the region were more limited.

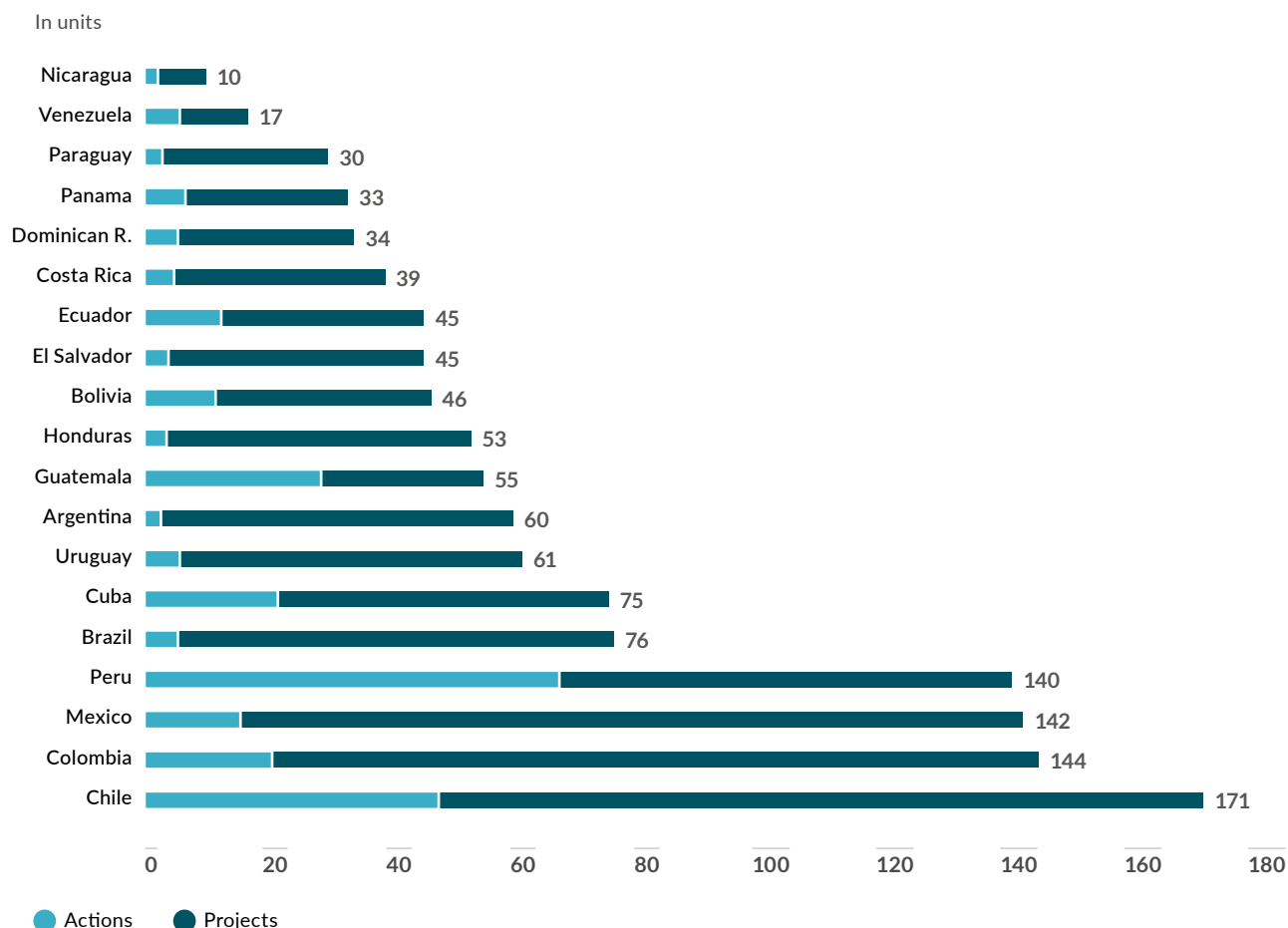
Indeed, the 171 initiatives in which Chile (the most active country) participated in the 2020-2021 period and the figures registered by Peru, Mexico and Colombia (between 140 and 144), practically double those of their immediate followers, Cuba and Brazil, two countries with a still significant volume of initiatives (75 and

76, respectively). Meanwhile, most countries' shares (up to 11) fluctuated between 30 and 60 initiatives. This was the case of Argentina and Uruguay (60 and 61); Ecuador and Bolivia in the Andean sub-region (45 and 46); Panama, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic in Central-America and the Caribbean (between 33 and 55 actions and projects, depending on the case) and Paraguay (30). Finally, Nicaragua and Venezuela implemented the lowest number of initiatives (10 and 17, respectively), figures that confirm the aforementioned gap.¹

Chile, Peru, Mexico and Colombia were the most dynamic countries in 2020-2021, with almost twice as many initiatives as their immediate followers

¹ However, it should be added that part of the referred gap is overestimated by the way in which the number of initiatives in which each country participated is considered. Indeed, and based on this criteria, the analysis takes into account initiatives in which countries participated as providers, as recipients or as "both", and initiatives are only considered if the country individually performs one of these roles. However, the analysis does not include those initiatives in which the country participates and shares a role (usually recipient) with other countries, this role becoming blurry in the generic label "more than one country". This aspect is very relevant during this period, as some countries acted as the (only) provider of actions that had "more than one country" as recipient. This means that provider countries' records (see Graph 2.6 below) may be overrated as their figures include initiatives that are not taken into account in the case of recipient countries. In fact, in 2020-2021, 50 initiatives were executed with "more than one country" simultaneous acting as recipient. These were not considered for recipient countries, but were taken into account for providers such as Chile (40), Brazil (4), Guatemala (4) and Mexico (2).

→ GRAPH 2.5

Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America, by type of instrument and country. 2020-2021

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

As Graph 2.5 shows, it is possible to identify some significant differences in the way countries used both instruments (actions and projects) during this period. On average, during these two years and overall, countries executed 207 actions and 646 projects, corresponding to a ratio of 24%-76% over the total number of initiatives. This graph also suggests that, for some countries, the implementation of actions was above average. Thus, at least 1 out of 4 of the initiatives in which Ecuador, Bolivia, Cuba and Chile participated, were actions. The ratio increased to 1 in 3 in the case of Venezuela and to 1 in 2 in the cases of Guatemala and Peru, for which actions were a clearly dynamizing resource.

Other remarkable differences can be noticed in the role countries mainly played in all the Bilateral SSC initiatives in which they participated during this period. Graph 2.6 arranges them in ascending order, according to the number of initiatives they exchanged, and it shows how they exercised the three roles recognized for Bilateral SSC: recipient, provider or “both”.² In this sense, the graph

— Actions were an incentive to dynamize some countries’ Bilateral SSC; such is the case of Guatemala and Peru

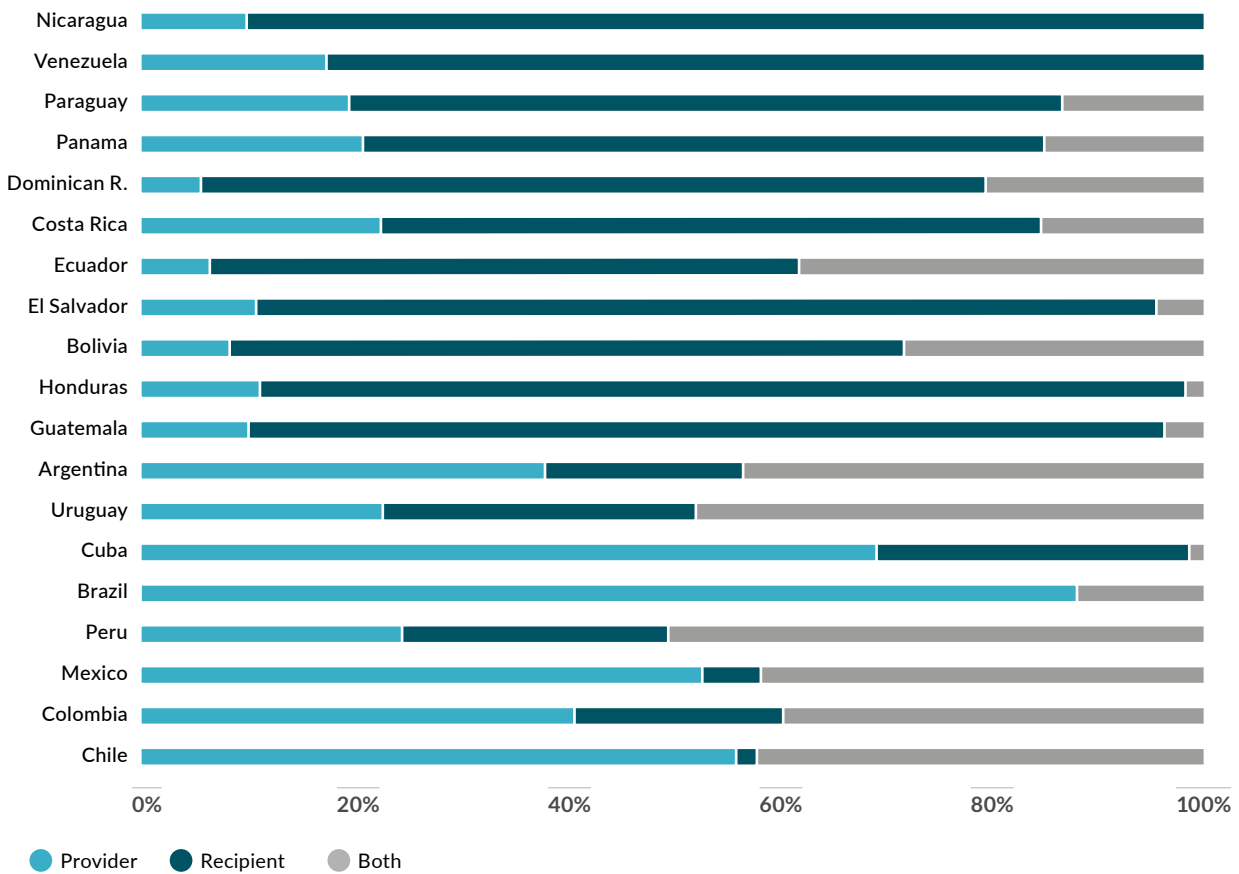
suggests three different behaviors that tend to confirm this type of cooperation’s usual pattern: the fewer the number of initiatives, the greater the recipient role; and the greater the number of initiatives, the greater the exercise of a combination of the provider and the role “both”.

² It should be noted that the role of “both” is used to refer to those situations in which the country, simultaneously and in the same initiative, performs both the roles of provider and recipient (for more details, see methodological note).

→ GRAPH 2.6

Countries' participation in Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America, by role. 2020-2021

In percentage



Note: Countries are arranged in ascending order, according to the total number of Bilateral SSC initiatives they exchanged with other Ibero-American partners during the 2020-2021 period.

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

Specifically:

- a) The first identified pattern is related to the countries with relatively less dynamism in SSC in the 2020-2021 period: from Nicaragua to Guatemala, a total of 11 countries acted as recipients in at least one half of the bilateral initiatives exchanged, with percentages ranging from 90% in Nicaragua's case to 55% in Ecuador's.
- b) On the other hand, another group of countries acted as providers in at least one half of the exchanges carried out. In this case, some of the countries with the greatest relative dynamism were Mexico (53% of the initiatives), Chile (56%), Cuba and Brazil (almost 70% and 90%, respectively).
- c) A third group of countries stood out for mainly participating under the role "both", having also registered a relatively higher number of exchanges. Colombia (40%), Argentina (43%), Uruguay (47%) and Peru (50%) should be mentioned as part of this pattern (from lowest to highest).
- d) Finally, and beyond these patterns, it is worth to mention some countries for which the role "both" was not only relevant - between 30% and 40% of their exchanges - but was highly complementary to the roles of provider (Mexico and Chile) and recipient (Ecuador and Bolivia). The most remarkable case was Peru, which played what is known as a "purely dual" role in its bilateral exchanges: provider in 25% of its 140 initiatives, recipient in another 25%, and "both" in the remaining 50%.

2.3.2. Exchanges and relations between Ibero-American countries

It is essential to analyze exchanges between the different partners in order to understand and characterize countries' participation in Bilateral SSC in Ibero-America during the 2020-2021 period. Graph 2.7 provides information on the way in which countries associated.

Indeed, Graph 2.7, which resembles a matrix, distributes the 661 initiatives that were bilaterally exchanged in 2020-2021 according to the pair of partners that implemented them. Thus, the 19 Latin-American countries which participate in this modality (arranged in ascending order considering the total number of initiatives in which each of them participated in 2020-2021) appear twice: recipients in the upper horizontal line and providers in the vertical line to the left.

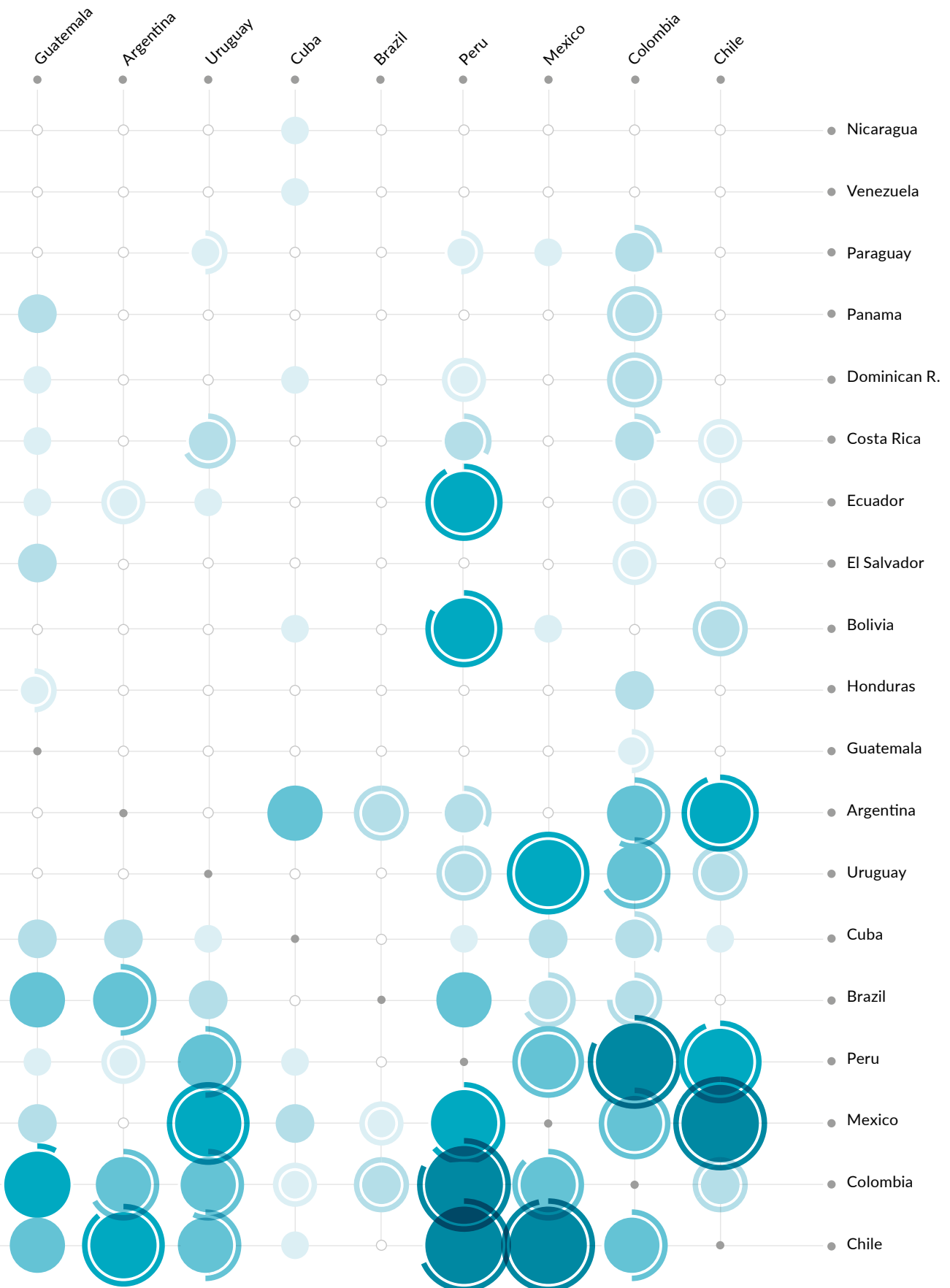
Each of the resulting intersections shows a possible pair of partners with their corresponding distribution of roles. Countries' arrangement in the matrix reveals how the roles of provider and recipient were distributed.

In addition, the bubbles provide several pieces of information: 1) the bubble itself indicates whether or not projects were exchanged between these two countries; 2) the bubble's size and color (as referred in the legend) show how many initiatives were executed in the framework of this partnership; and 3) the size of the outer circle that (sometimes) surrounds the bubble indicates the proportion (over the total) of those initiatives in which the two countries performed the role "both".

In this sense, Graph 2.7 provides an overview of SSC exchanges in the 2020-2021 period, focusing on three aspects: first, on the dynamics on which SSC was based (partnerships that actually took place); second, on the identification of its stakeholders (which countries participated and the distribution of their roles); and third, on the intensity of these exchanges (number of initiatives exchanged), thus differentiating the more specific associations from those that suggest consolidated partnerships.



Photo: Traditional cooks from Santiago de Anaya in Hidalgo, Mexico, recreate their gastronomic legacy, inherited from their mothers and grandmothers, and prepare dishes with natural ingredients, without preservatives and with high nutritional value. Ibero-American Program *Ibercocinas*. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.



Note: Considering the total number of Bilateral SSC projects executed in the 2020-2021 period, countries are arranged as the total number of projects in which they participated increases.

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

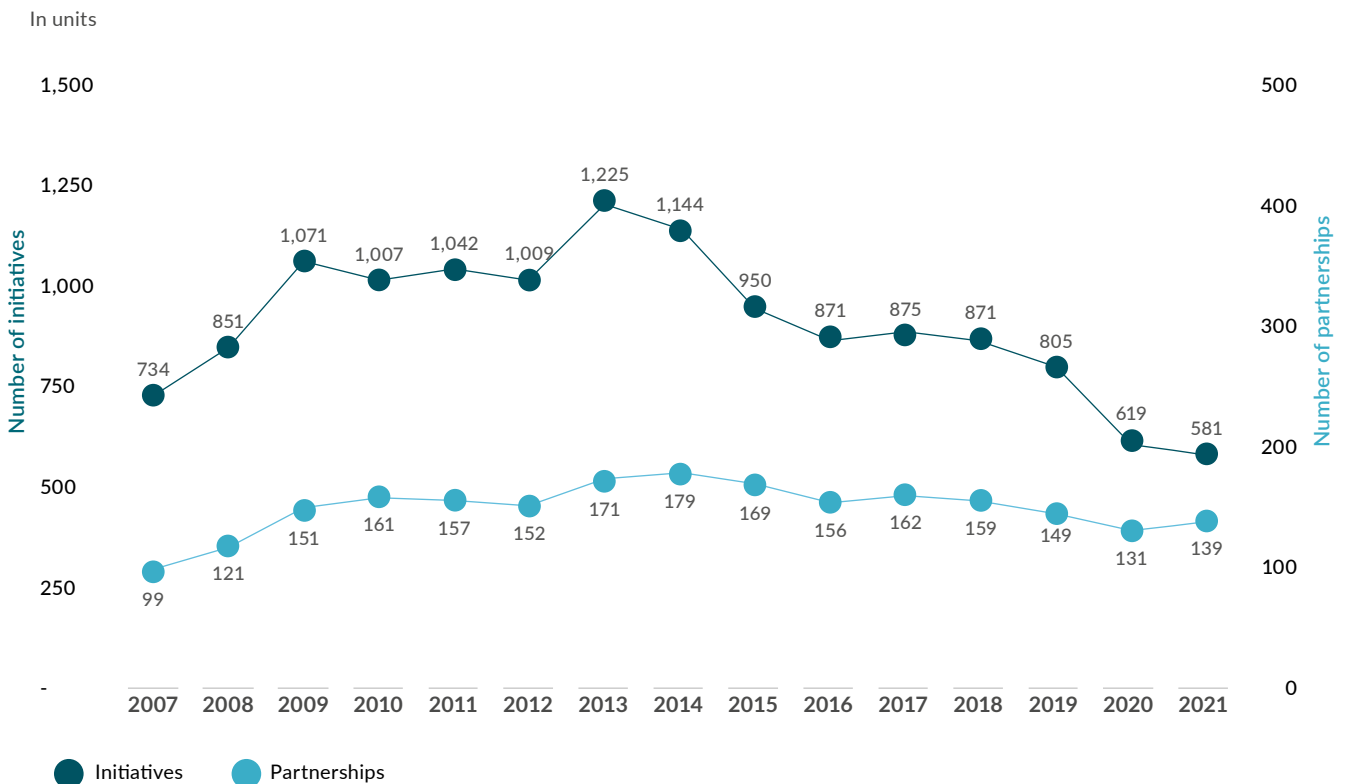
Thus, a first approach to Graph 2.7 suggests that, despite the adverse circumstances countries had to face during 2020 and 2021, exchanges were still remarkably dynamic. Indeed, it can be stated that 155 different partnerships have been registered in the 2020-2021 period considering the total number of partnerships among Ibero-American countries as an indicative figure based on a differentiated distribution of roles. This figure represents 45.3% of the total possible combinations (342).³ The interpretation of this data is twofold: on the one hand, it confirms the aforementioned dynamism and, on the other, it suggests there is still a considerable wide margin to increase these associations, since more than half of the partnerships that could take place have not occurred, at least in this period.

In the same sense, data suggests that, in recent years, exchanges between countries have tended to increase and diversify. Graph 2.8 compares the evolution of two variables for the 2007-2021 period: on the one hand, the number of initiatives exchanged in Ibero-America each year (top line); and, on the other, the number of partnerships based on the different combinations of countries and roles (bottom line). As can be noted, the two lines tend to come closer together over the years, progressively closing the initially existing gap and resulting in a convergence between the two values. The above can

be interpreted as follows: although in recent years the number of initiatives has tended to decrease, the number of partnerships on which these exchanges are based is, in relative terms, increasing. This means countries are increasingly taking advantage of the potential to associate with other partners through the region's Bilateral SSC.

→ GRAPH 2.8

Evolution of the number of initiatives annually exchanged in Ibero-America and the number of partnerships through which they were implemented. 2007-2021



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

³ The total of 342 is calculated by multiplying 19 by 19 (Bilateral SSC is limited to the 19 Latin-American and Caribbean countries), and then subtracting the 19 combinations in which the country would associate with itself.

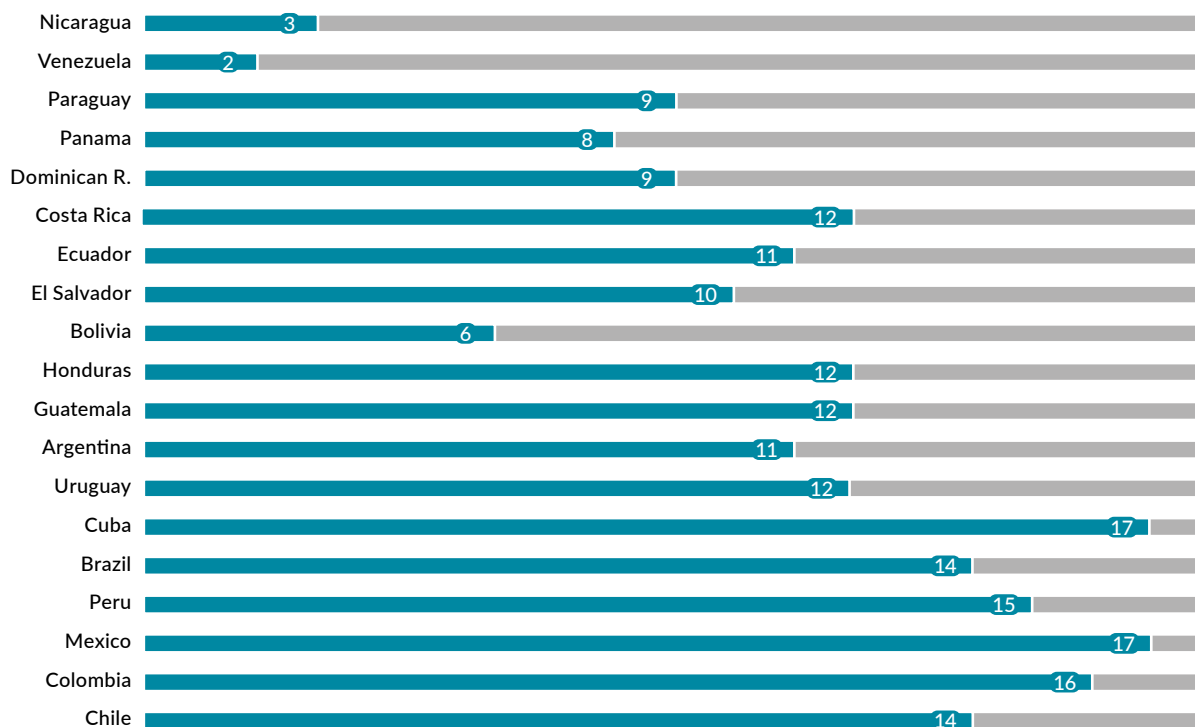
A second approach to Graph 2.7 also enables a deeper understanding of the nature of these exchanges, specifically through another relevant piece of information: the number of partners with which each country associated. Graph 2.9 was prepared in order to provide information in this regard. The figure sorts the countries in ascending order according to the number of initiatives

they implemented during the 2020-2021 period, showing the number of partners with which each of them exchanged their SSC. As portrayed, the maximum possible number of partnerships is 18, which offers additional information: specifically, it shows the margin each country still has to establish new exchanges with other partners.

→ GRAPH 2.9

Number of partners with which Ibero-American countries associated in their Bilateral SSC exchanges in Ibero-America. 2020-2021

In units



Note: the countries are listed in increasing order according to the number of initiatives in which they participated in 2020-2021.

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

Its interpretation also suggests four relationship patterns which, although different, are based on the same predictable trend: the more initiatives, the more partners. Indeed, Nicaragua and Venezuela (between 10 and 20 initiatives) exchanged with 2-3 partners. Meanwhile, Paraguay, Panama and the Dominican Republic (between 30-35 exchanges) associated with up to 8-9 other countries, almost one half of the potential partners. Additionally, a large group of 8 countries, from Costa Rica to Uruguay, implemented between 40 and 60 actions and projects, showing an even higher level of diversification and associating with 10-12 partners. Bolivia was the only exception to the above, as its 46 initiatives are based on a more concentrated relation with only 6 other partners. The last pattern involves the 6 most dynamic countries (between 75 and 171 initiatives), which tend to associate with 14-17 different partners, Cuba and Mexico standing out.

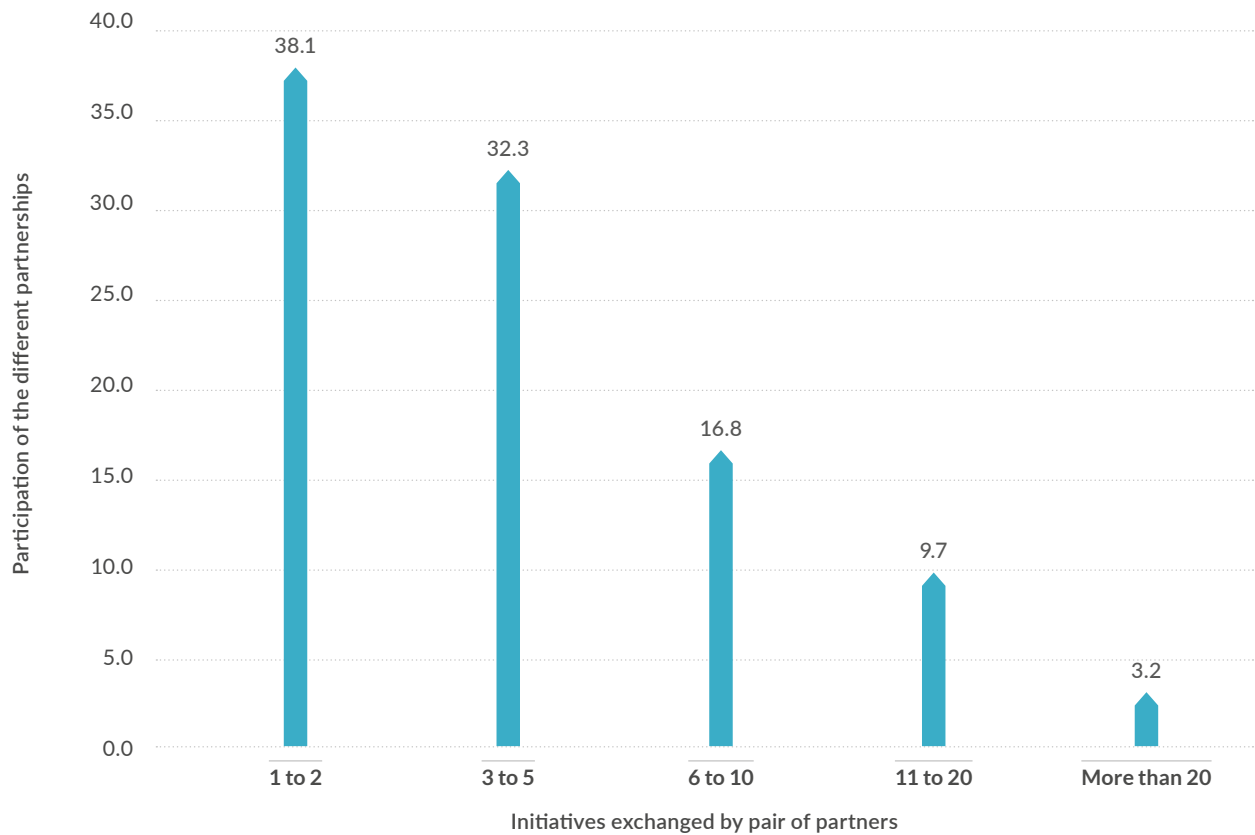
A third interpretation of Graph 2.7 also sheds light on another important feature of Ibero-American countries' association pattern: the number of initiatives each pair of partners exchanges. In fact, this figure can significantly vary and it reveals very different bilateral relations. In this sense, Graph 2.10 distributes the different partnerships in the 2020-2021 period (155)⁴ according to the number of initiatives implemented through each of these associations. Maximum and minimum figures illustrate and contrast the different situations: the exchange of 1 or 2 initiatives (in about 40% of the occasions) - or up to 5 (almost another 33%) - is the most common scenario, while the exchange of more than 20 initiatives is rather unusual, a record that occurs in 3.2% of the cases.

⁴ It should be noted that, according to the matrix, the different pairs of partners are determined not only by the countries (for example, country A and country B) but also by the roles. For example, this implies the distribution of roles A (provider) and B (recipient) is considered as one partnership, and that corresponding to A (recipient) and B (provider) is considered a different one.

→ GRAPH 2.10

Distribution of partnerships in Ibero-America, according to the number of Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged. 2020-2021

In percentage



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

This suggests the coexistence of different patterns: some based on more specific and circumstantial exchanges and others that result from consolidated partnerships (for example that of Chile and Mexico, with a maximum of 29 initiatives) which strength lies in specific instruments (the Chile-Mexico Mixed Cooperation Fund) that support a long-standing cooperation based on a mainly dual role (28 of the 29 initiatives have a "bidirectional" nature, in which the two partners simultaneously act as providers and recipients).

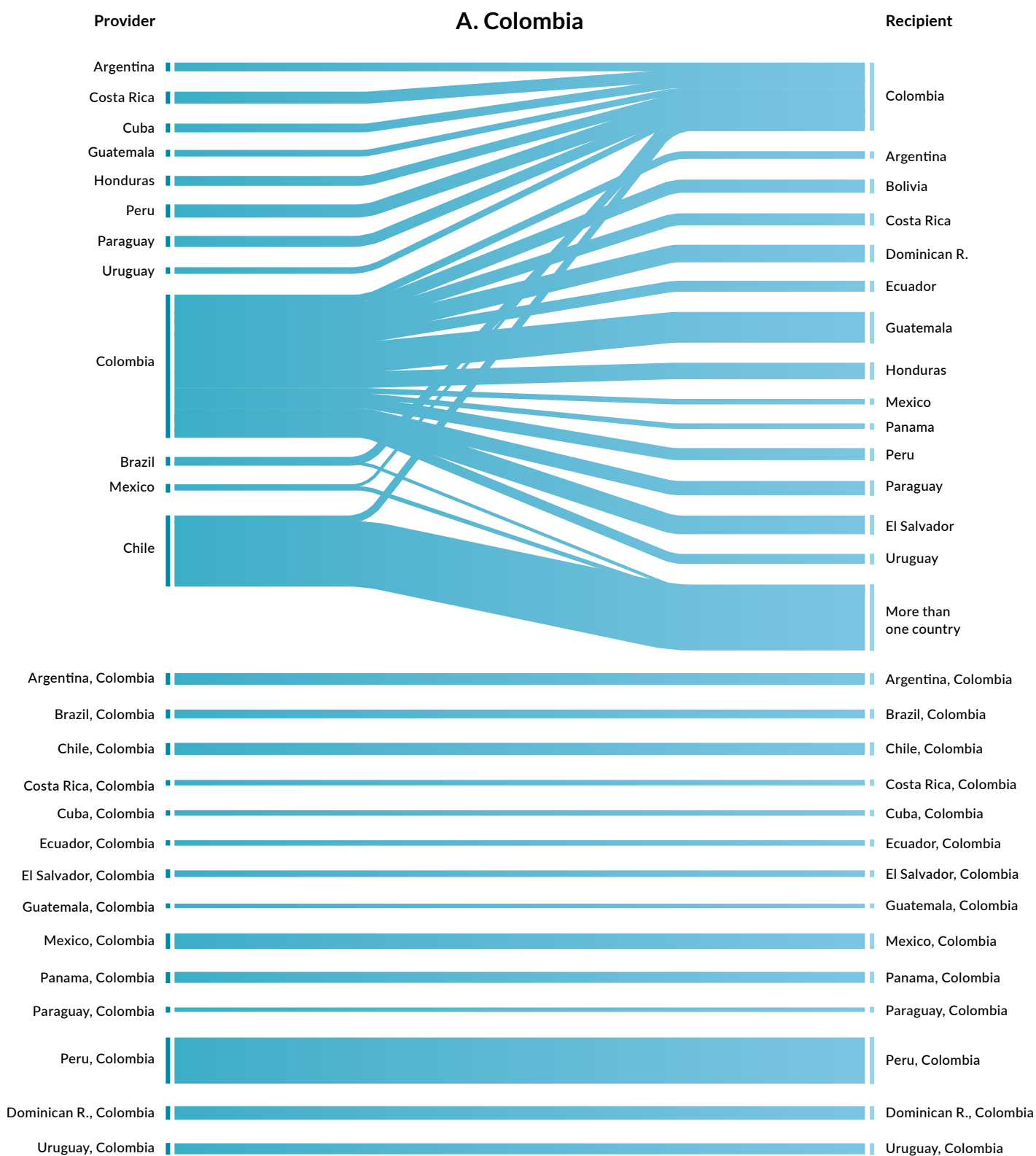
The combination of all of the above (partnerships, relations based on the different roles and the number of initiatives exchanged) ultimately defines the different relationship patterns. A number of countries were selected in order to illustrate the way in which these patterns materialize, through the following flow diagrams (Graph 2.11 A, B and C). These diagrams distribute the initiatives in which a country participates and differentiates them according to partners and roles (provider, left side; recipient, right side). In the case of bidirectional initiatives (when both partners act as both provider and recipient) the two names appear on both sides of the figure.

— 70% of bilateral partnerships implemented up to 5 initiatives in the 2020-2021 period

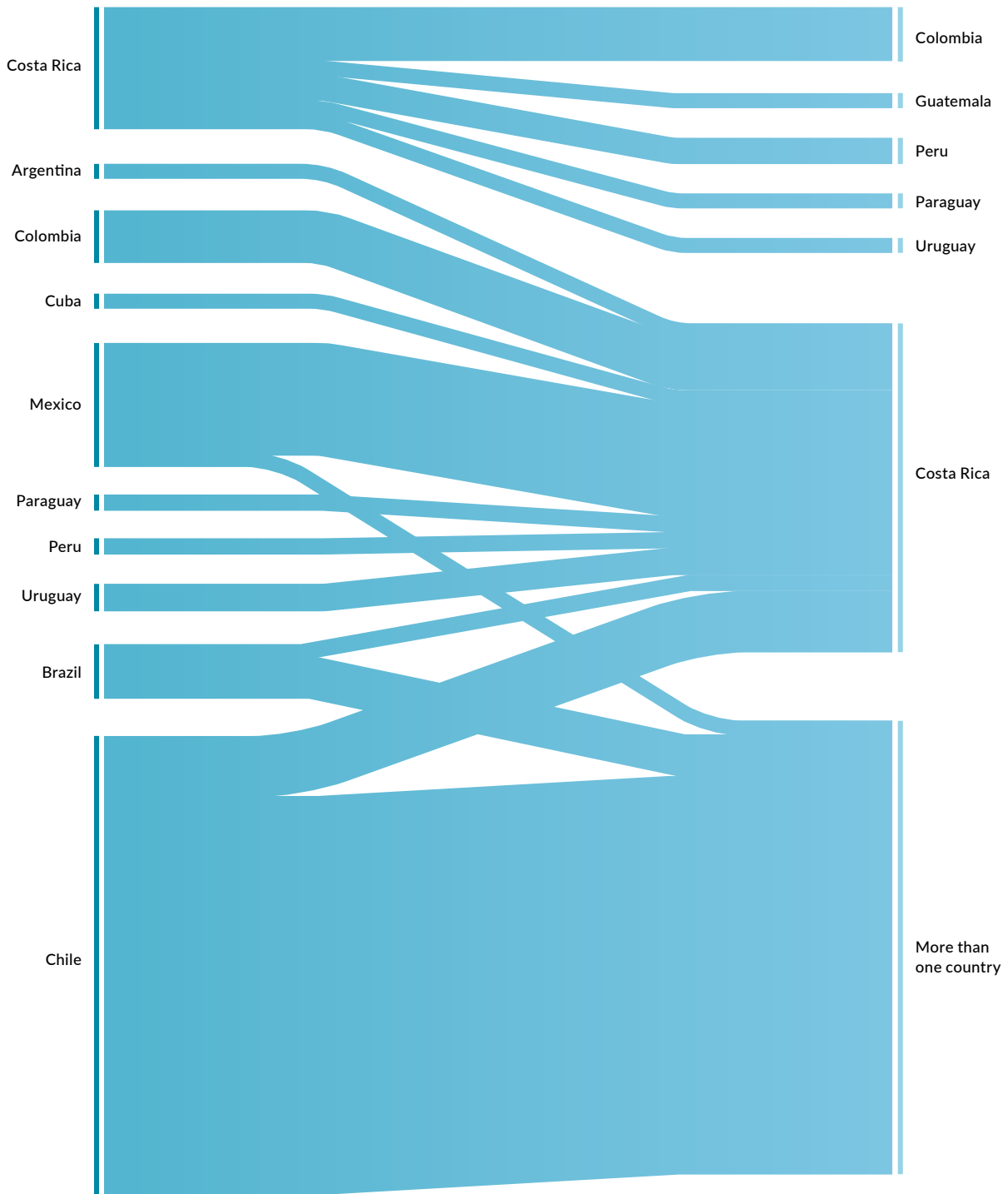
→ GRAPH 2.11

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America according to selected countries, by partner and role. 2020-2021

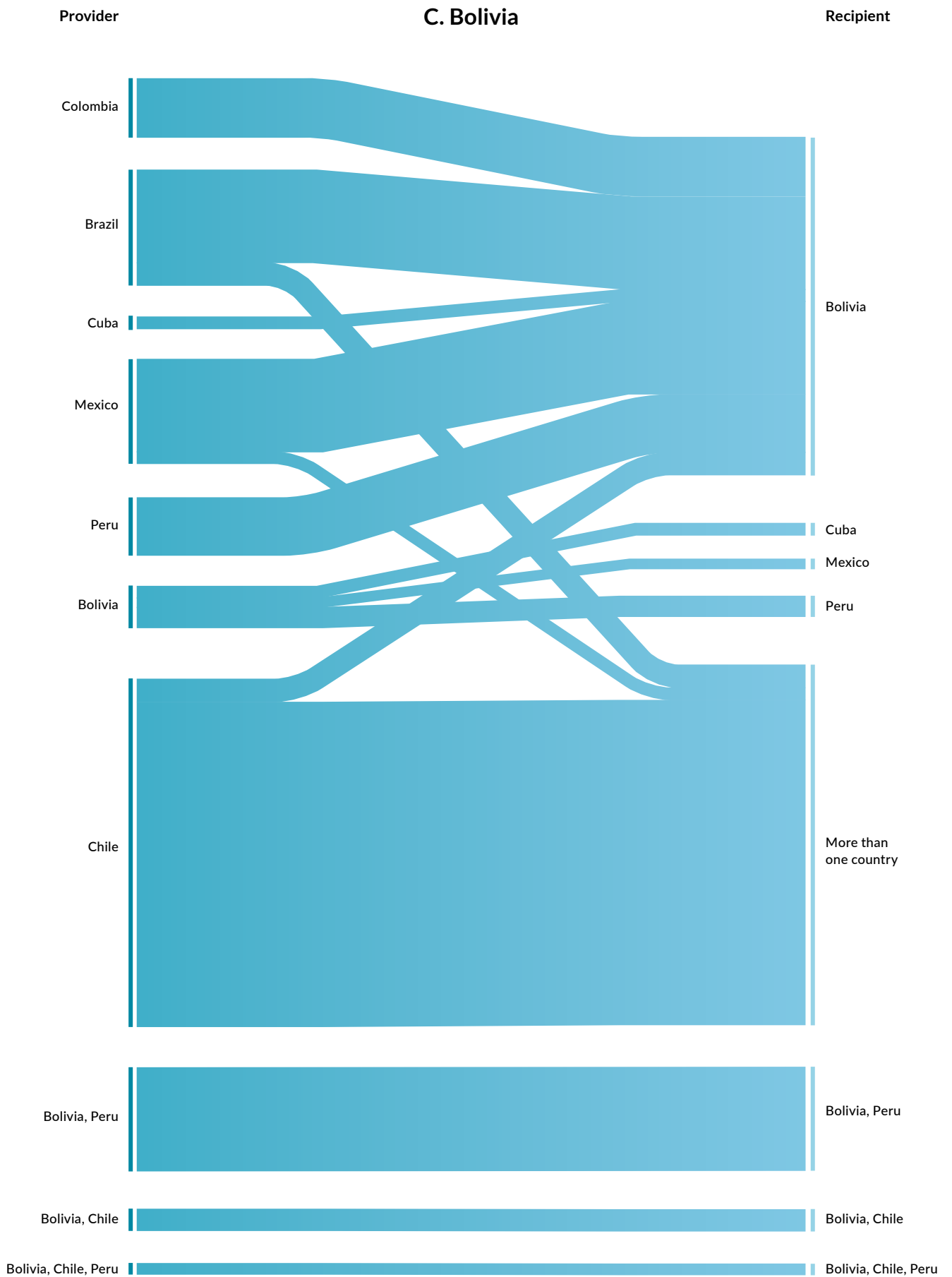
In units



Provider **B. Costa Rica** Recipient



Costa Rica, Panama	Costa Rica, Panama
Costa Rica, Peru	Costa Rica, Peru
Costa Rica, Uruguay	Costa Rica, Uruguay
Costa Rica, Chile	Costa Rica, Chile
Costa Rica, Colombia	Costa Rica, Colombia



Note: In order to identify bidirectional initiatives (those in which both partners perform the role “both”), the names of the two participating countries were included both in the left flow (when acting as provider) as well as in the right flow (when acting as recipient). The diagram also includes the category “more than one country” for those initiatives in which countries share a role (usually recipient) with other partners.

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

Colombia's analysis (Graph 2.11.A) suggests a remarkably diversified pattern of exchanges: a dynamic country (144 initiatives) with a high level of partnerships (16) and in which profile (mainly provider – in 40% of the exchanges), the "bidirectionality" of the role "both" is also significant (another 40% of exchanges). This combination results in a diagram of many relatively narrow flows with many two-way exchanges in which the country acts both as provider and as recipient.

— Colombia was very active in 2021, associating with a large number of partners and combining a mainly provider profile with a large number of bidirectional initiatives

Costa Rica (Graph 2.11.B) and Bolivia (Graph 2.11.C) were chosen as two other illustrative cases. These countries have both implemented a similar number of initiatives (39 and 45, respectively), but particularly differ in the number of partners (12 and 6, maximum and minimum values in that range of exchanges), as well as in the roles in which they participate: a more dual profile, combining the exercise of the three roles (recipient, provider and "both"), in the case of Costa Rica; and a more clearly recipient profile, in the case of Bolivia. As a result of these similarities and differences, both flow diagrams suggest different relationship patterns: Costa Rica's profile is more diversified (Graph 2.11.B) while Bolivia's is more concentrated (Graph 2.11.C).

2.4 Sectoral analysis of Bilateral South-South Cooperation during 2020-2021

The outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis in early 2020 has defined the course of the world, which had to face the most unprecedented challenge in recent history. This crisis, which began as a health emergency and gradually became a multidimensional one (mainly economic and social, but not exclusively), has exposed global vulnerabilities to face other crises (such as the climate crisis) under conditions of enormous inequality. Challenges are increasing while the pandemic has taught another lesson: the need for strong States willing to join efforts to find shared solutions to global challenges.

The response to the pandemic and the potential contributions made by Ibero-America through its SSC are, consequently, the essential topic of this section, which aims to understand how Ibero-American countries strengthened their respective capacities through the SSC they bilaterally promoted in the 2020-2021 period. First, the analysis takes a glance at the region as a whole, and then examines whether countries acted mainly as providers, by transferring their capacities, or as recipients, learning and closing gaps.

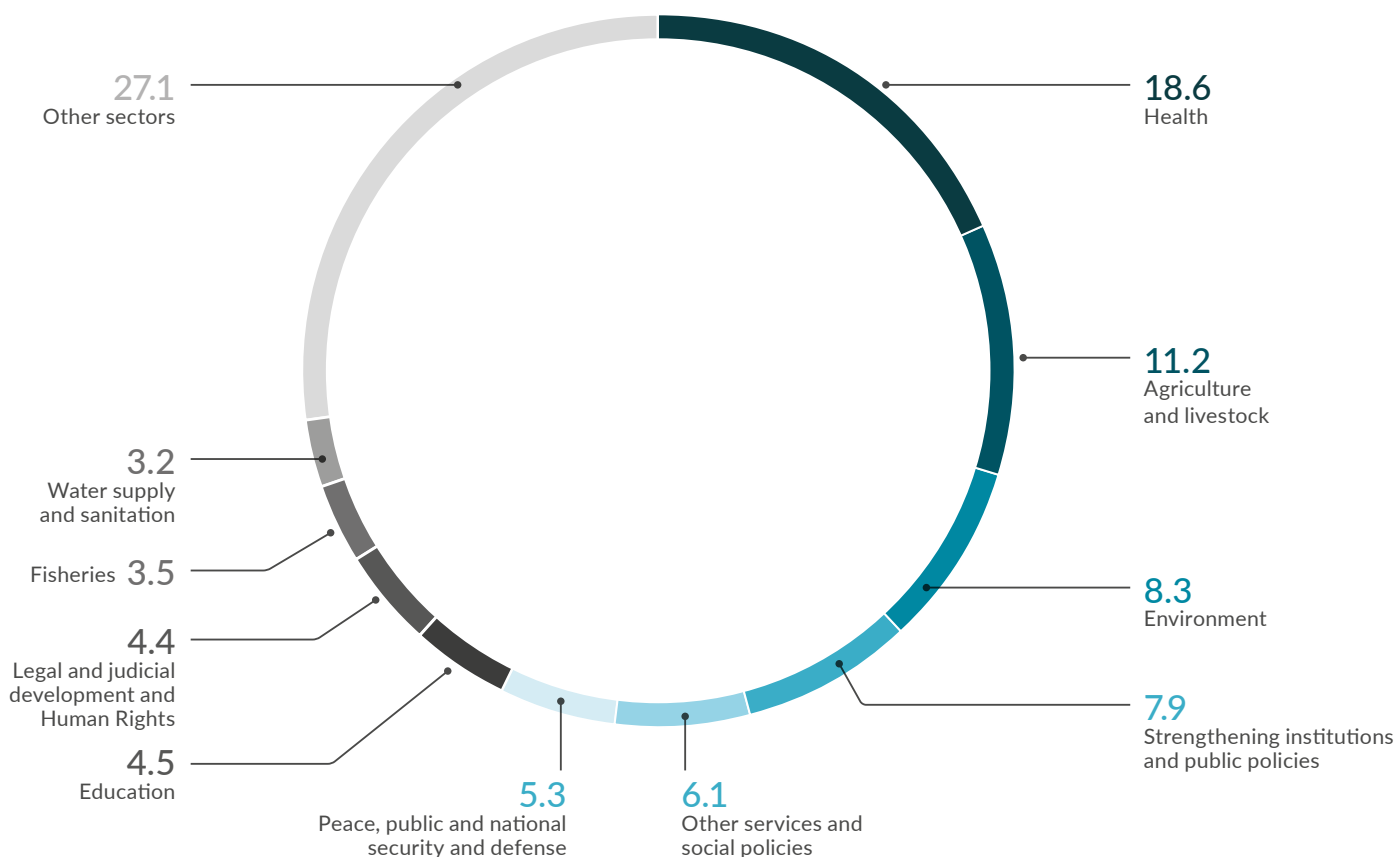
— Almost 1 out of 3 of the exchanges addressed priorities in the Social area, the *Health* sector standing out as the most dynamic

The sectoral analysis takes the 30 activity sectors recognized in the Ibero-American space as a reference, as well as their classification in 6 areas of action (see methodological note at the end of this Report), and the approach enables to combine a regional analysis with some specific experiences (Cases). In addition, this section tries to go one step further and explain how Ibero-America addresses the multiple crises and challenges the world currently is facing.

→ GRAPH 2.12

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America, by the main activity sectors. 2020-2021

In percentage



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

2.4.1. Strengthened capacities

The 661 SSC initiatives Ibero-American countries bilaterally exchanged during the 2020-2021 period enabled the strengthening of multiple types of capacities. Graphs 2.12 and 2.13 were plotted in order to identify them, showing the distribution of these initiatives according to the activity sector they addressed. In the former, activity sectors' share is estimated over the total of 661 initiatives; the latter estimates their relative importance within each area of action (areas are arranged from highest to lowest).

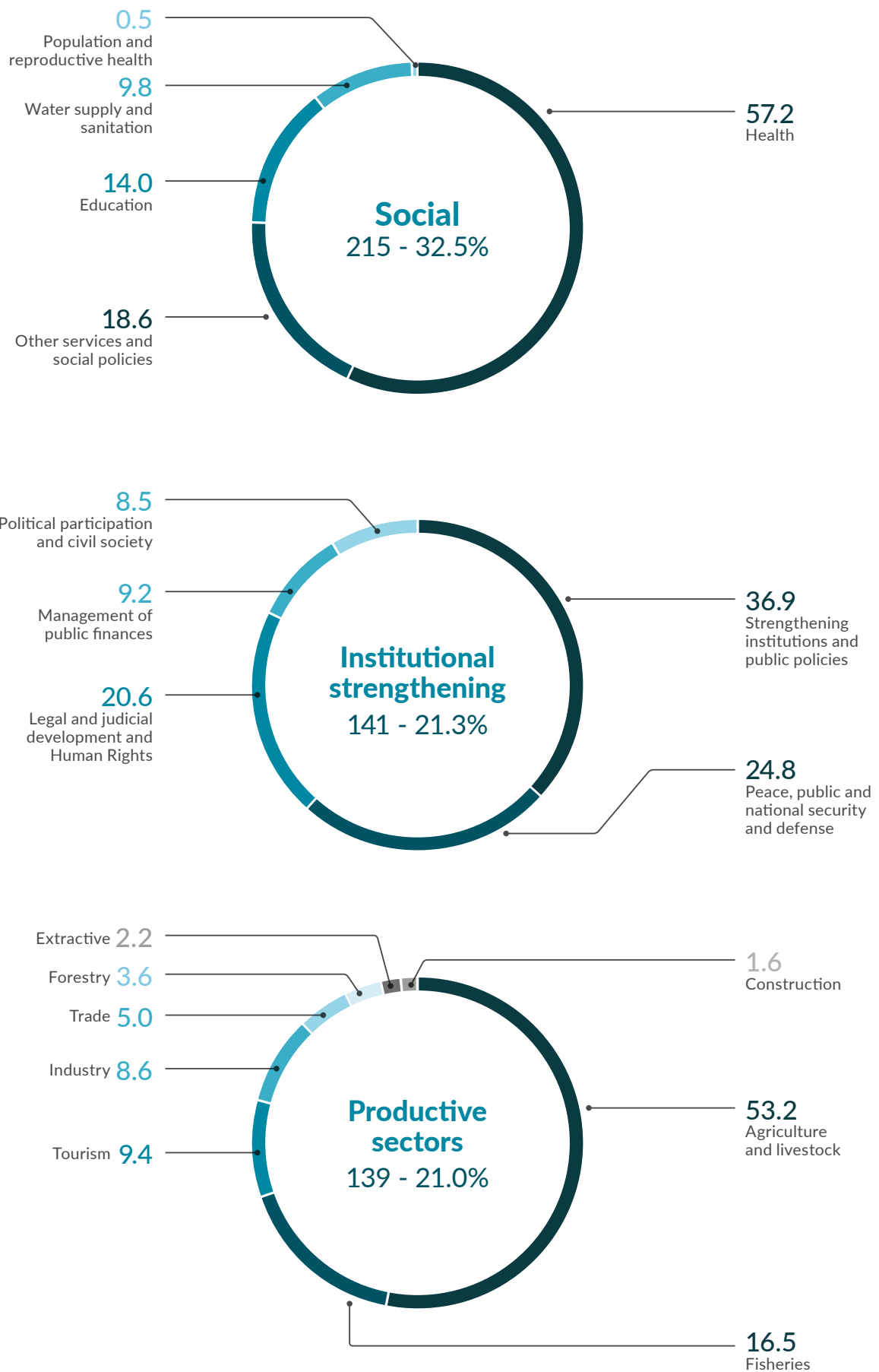
As shown, almost 1 out of 3 exchanges (215) aimed at addressing priorities in the Social area. In terms of relative importance, actions and projects which focused, on the one hand, on Institutional strengthening and, on the other, on Productive sectors (140 initiatives in both cases) followed, corresponding to 21% of the total, in each case. Meanwhile, 75 initiatives (a remarkable

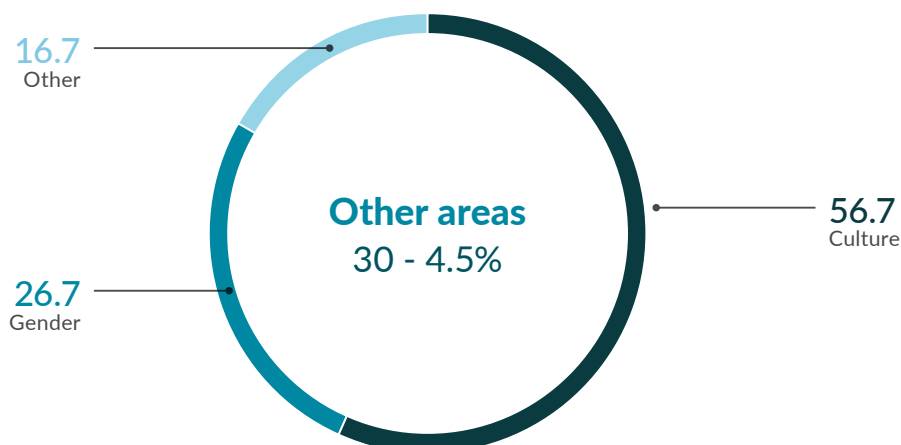
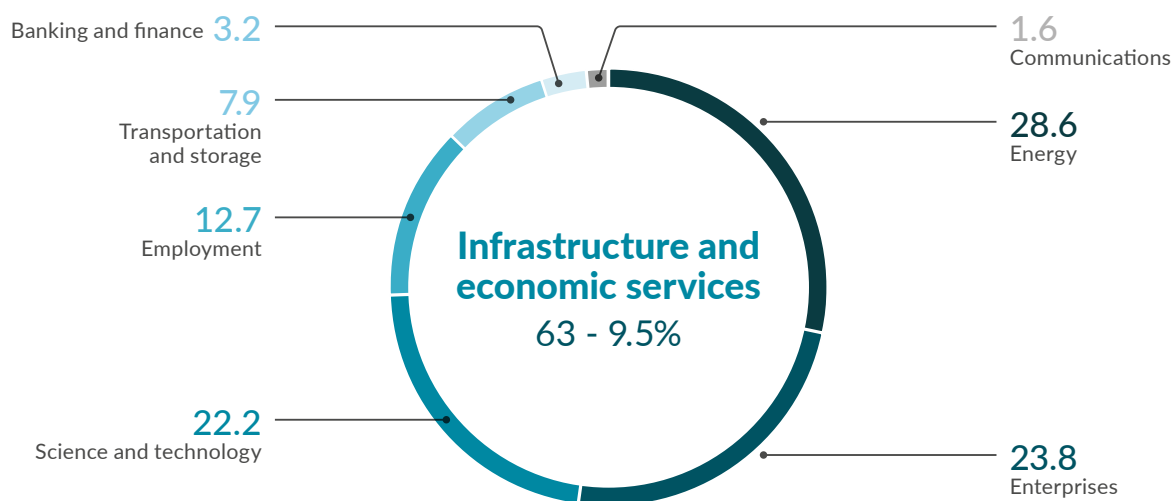
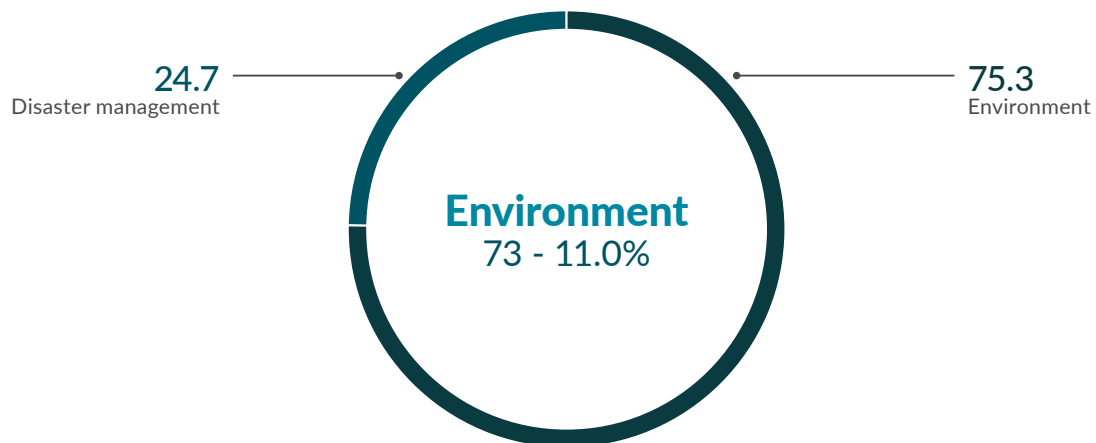
11%) were dedicated to improve the Environment, slightly more than the 63 initiatives (almost 10%) Ibero-American countries promoted to strengthen Infrastructure and economic services. Other areas accounted for the last 30 exchanges (4.5% of the total).

→ GRAPH 2.13

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America, by area of action and activity sector. 2020-2021

In percentage





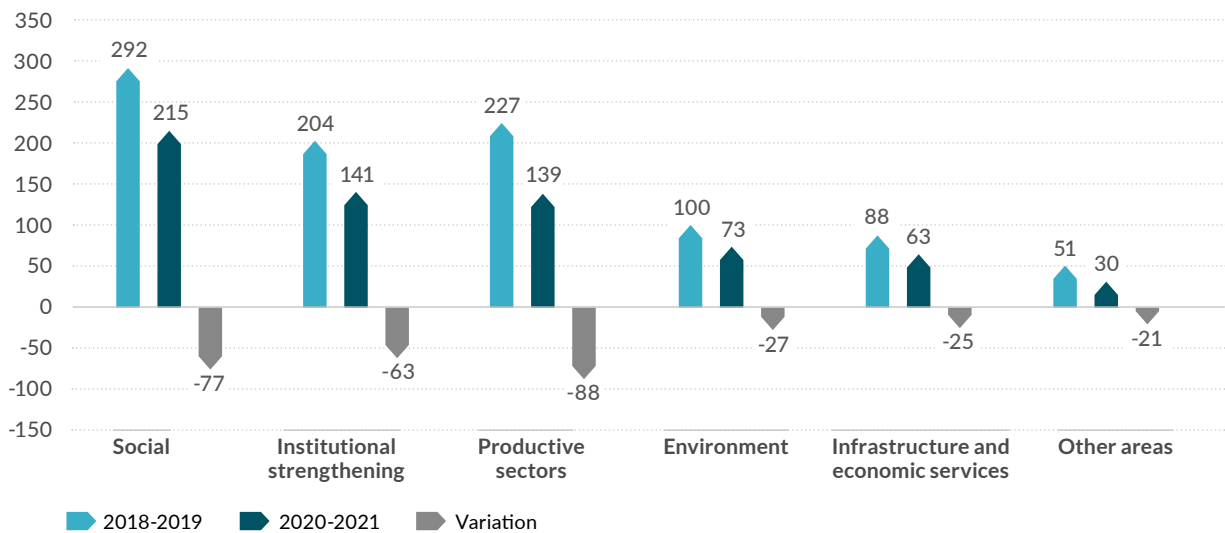
As expected, the response to the pandemic had an impact on the distribution by areas of action, increasing the relative importance of the Social area, in which the *Health* sector is classified. The interpretation of Graph 2.14 precisely suggests this and compares, in the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 periods, how the distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives changes according to the areas of action, both from an absolute (Graph 2.14.A) and a relative dimension (2.14.B). Indeed, between 2018-2019 and 2020-2021, SSC initiatives bilaterally exchanged in

Ibero-America suffered a significant fall from 962 to 661, registered during the pandemic crisis. This drop (of more than 300 initiatives) pushed the figures in all areas of action down (see Graph 2.14.A), but its impact in relative terms was uneven, mainly due to a twofold effect (Graph 2.14.B): an increase of 2.2 percentage points in the Social area; and a loss of relative importance (2.6 points) of SSC aimed at Productive Sectors.

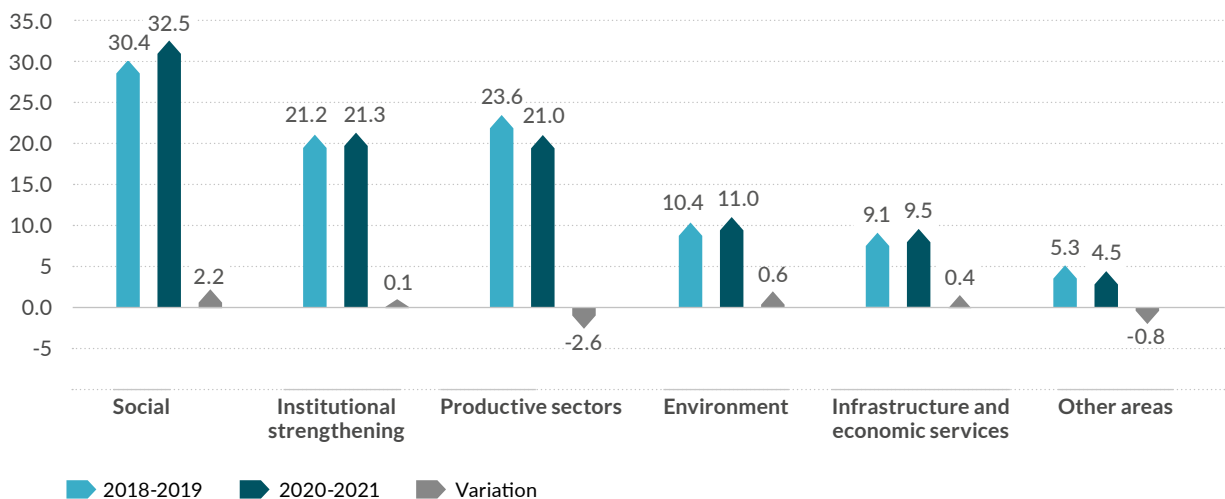
→ GRAPH 2.14

Variation in Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America, by area of action. 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

A. Initiatives (in units)



B. Shares (in percentage and percentage points)



When the analysis focuses on the sectoral level (Graphs 2.12 and 2.13), the priority given to the *Health* sector during the worst moments of the COVID-19 crisis and the way in which this had an impact on all SSC bilaterally exchanged during the pandemic years, is confirmed. Specifically, during 2020-2021, healthcare will account for nearly 60% of the initiatives promoted for social purposes and for almost 1 out of 5 (18.6%) of the 661 initiatives registered in the period, this being the activity that concentrated the greatest efforts.

An analysis of the topics that were actually addressed in the *Health* sector confirms the high priority given by Ibero-American countries to the fight against COVID-19.

In fact, as shown in Box 2.1, almost 1 out of 3 of the 123 SSC initiatives bilaterally exchanged in Ibero-America in 2020-2021 and classified in the *Health* sector, were promoted to address the COVID-19 crisis. This Box details the way in which the countries of the region responded to the pandemic: it describes how, given the adverse circumstances, SSC became - mainly through the promotion of specific actions - an important resource to face the health emergency, trying to stop the spread of the pandemic and mitigate its worst effects based on a multidimensional perspective that also considers the economic and social crises.

→ BOX 2.1

Bilateral SSC as an instrument to respond to the COVID-19 crisis

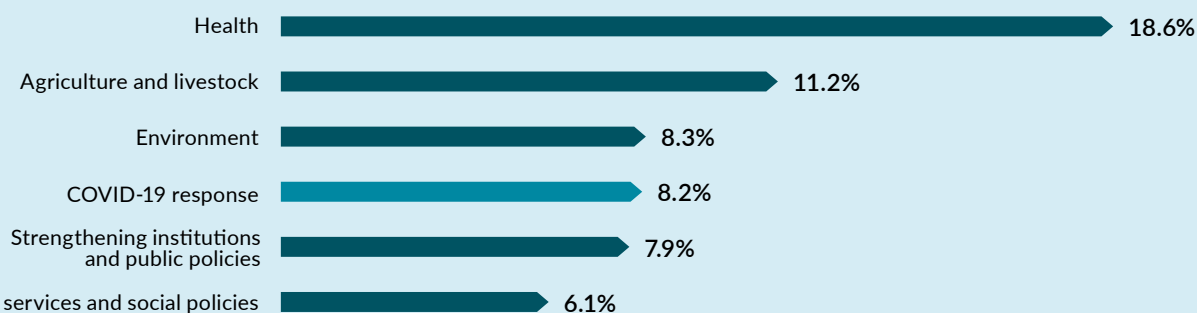
The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, has triggered a global crisis that is not only health-related, but multidimensional. Apart from the negative consequences it has had on the lives of many people worldwide, it has taught us a lesson: global challenges need global responses. In this sense, Bilateral South-South Cooperation has been one of the available instruments countries counted with to jointly and horizontally face the crisis.

In the 2020-2021 period, 54 bilateral initiatives were implemented in Ibero-America as a direct response to COVID-19: 38 actions and 16 projects, representing 8.2% of all Bilateral SSC in the region during the period. Given the multidimensional nature of this crisis, initiatives were classified in different sectors, *Health* (in 2 out of 3 cases) being the most important.¹ The final figure is remarkably significant: as the first graph shows, if the initiatives promoted in response to COVID-19 were considered as a sector, during the

2020-2021 period, the fight against the pandemic would have represented the fourth most important priority, only after SSC in *Health* (18.6%), *Agriculture and livestock* (11.2%) and *Environment* (8.3%). In these exchanges, the prevalence of actions over projects - as was generally the case in this period - is precisely associated with the adaptation of this instrument to provide a rapid response to the emergency.

Bilateral SSC initiatives, by the main sectors and its contribution to the response to COVID-19. 2020-2021

In percentage



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

¹ Of the 54 initiatives identified in response to COVID-19, 40 were classified in the *Health* sector; while the remaining 14 were distributed between *Strengthening institutions and public policies* (4), *Enterprises* (3), *Political participation and civil society* (3), *Management of public finances* (2) and *Trade* (1).

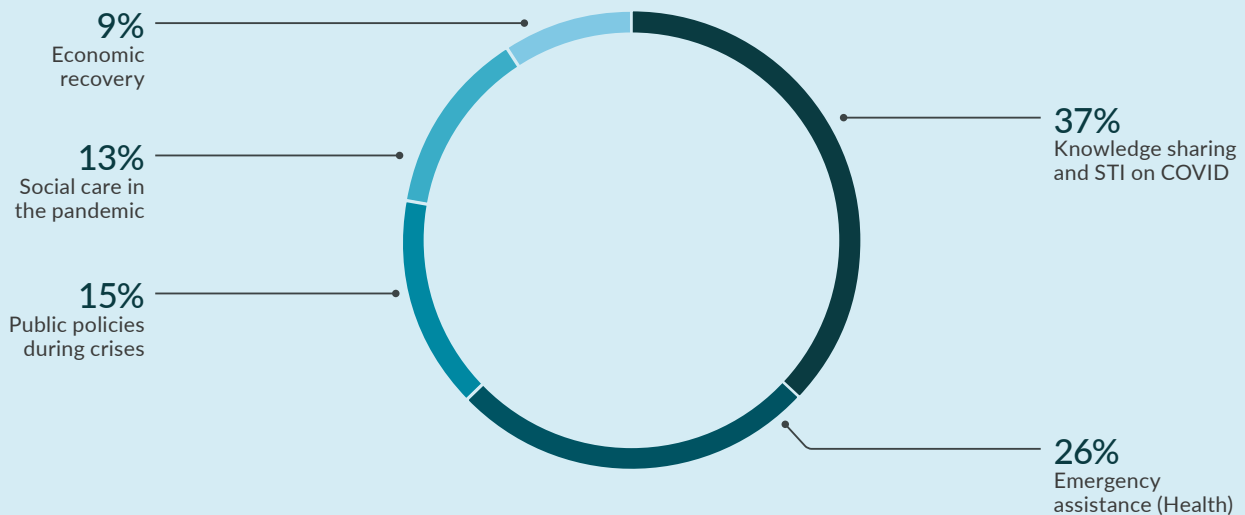
The second graph distributes these 54 initiatives according to the topics they actually addressed in the framework of COVID-19. Thus, most of the initiatives promoted (20, i.e. 37%) involved exchanges of knowledge, science, technology and innovation (STI) on the virus. Exchanges that focused on therapies and treatments to deal with the disease, epidemiological strategies (such as those related to prevention and control), and research on vaccines are especially worthy of mention. These were closely followed (14 initiatives) by emergency aid, which included donations of medicines, supplies and equipment to face the pandemic. Equally important

were the initiatives that focused on public policies in the context of crisis (another 15%), which made it possible to address, for example, best practices for elections, the generation of data and information to improve follow-up and monitoring, in addition to those related to the management of public budgets adapted to the crisis. Likewise, 7 actions and projects (13%) were dedicated to "Social care in the pandemic", among which those dealing with mental health, ergonomics for the new working conditions imposed by the so-called "new normality", care for the elderly and social protection, including others, should be highlighted.

Finally, initiatives of a different profile (the last 9%) were identified towards the end of 2020, as a result of, on the one hand, the gradual elimination of the restrictions on mobility and, on the other, the need to address problems derived from COVID-19 but of a different nature, such as economic and employment recovery, as well as the revitalization of trade and business, especially focused on small and medium-sized enterprises.

Thematic categorization of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America that addressed the fight against COVID-19. 2020-2021

In percentage



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

On the other hand, it should be added that countries' participation in these exchanges responded to different dynamics, with a clear differentiation based on the roles they were able to perform. Thus, Chile (21 actions and 2 projects in the provider role) and Cuba (12 actions) were the two most important providers, accounting for

almost two thirds of the total number of initiatives registered in response to COVID-19. Chile's initiatives were mainly based on international courses aimed at multiple countries (usually online due to mobility restrictions); Cuba, in turn, implemented direct actions to fight against COVID-19.

Another large group of initiatives was promoted under a bidirectional dynamic, in which countries acted as providers and as recipients at the same time. This was possible, partially, because both partners shared a bilateral cooperation instrument that was "reshaped" to provide a more agile response to the challenges

the pandemic imposed. Specifically, Mexico and Chile, through their Mixed Fund, executed 7 projects - mainly joint studies and research. Mexico and Uruguay, also through their joint fund, implemented 3 projects that facilitated the donation of supplies and equipment, as well as the exchange of experiences in terms of epidemiological strategies. Argentina and Chile, in this specific case and without an instrument, promoted 3

projects to provide a collaborative response to the pandemic and promote economic recovery.

Thirdly, as for initiatives received (22 out of 54), in most cases several countries simultaneously shared the recipient role and this occurred in 60% of the non-bidirectional initiatives. This was a dynamic on which, for example, online courses and training were based.

All the above reveals bilateral initiatives to respond to the pandemic were diverse, as were countries' needs in this period. Bilateral SSC proved to be a useful instrument to deal with the crisis.

Methodological note: The Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS by its Spanish acronym) was used to carry out this exercise. On this basis, a search was performed using keywords related to COVID-19. Initiatives that had not begun in 2020 or 2021 were removed as well as those that were not related to the pandemic. The resulting initiatives were then classified into thematic categories related to the multidimensional attention to the COVID-19 crisis.

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

In addition to addressing the emergency and the exceptional situation imposed by COVID-19, Ibero-American cooperation also focused on other health issues that have traditionally been important for the region. Indeed, a review of the specific purposes of the initiatives bilaterally promoted by Ibero-American countries in the *Health* sector reveals that the region has chosen to continue strengthening capacities in areas in which it has already accumulated important experience. Specifically, previously consolidated projects continued, such as those related to nutrition and food safety (Maternal Milk Banks); prevention, surveillance and treatment of endemic diseases (dengue, zika and chikungunya); and strengthening institutions and sectoral public policies (quality management, health surveillance systems, hospitals, blood and blood products). Efforts were also made in terms of research, especially to develop medical treatments for oncological diseases, tuberculosis and diabetes, through initiatives that, although different, suggest an increasingly specialized and comprehensive approach to these illnesses. Training for healthcare professionals, to which the region has always been committed and that the pandemic has revalued through online mechanisms, is also worthy of mention.

In spite of the health emergency, Ibero-American countries continued addressing other issues in the Social area which are relevant to the region. Hence, 4 out of

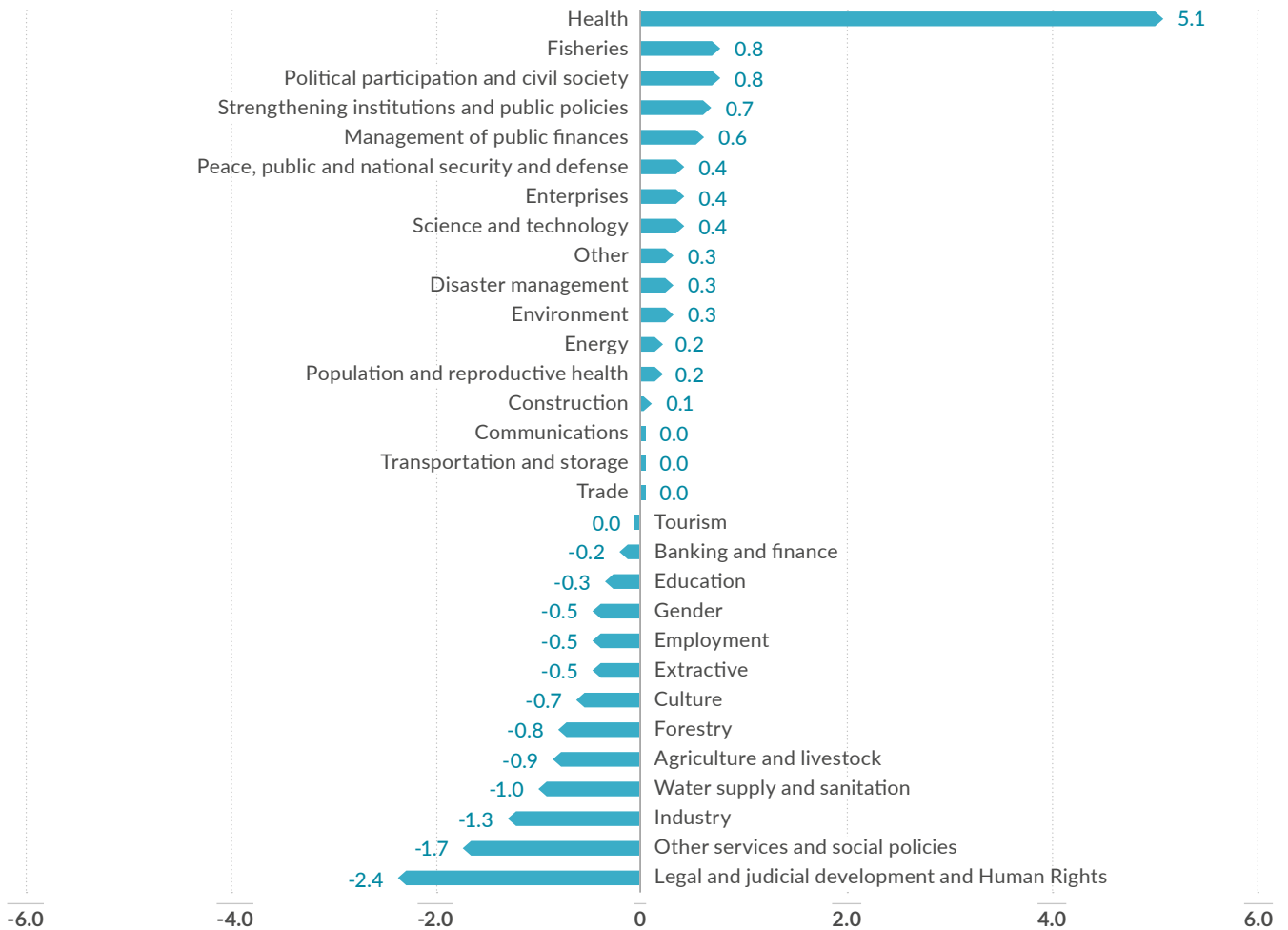
10 of the initiatives promoted in this area aimed at *Other services and social policies* (18.6%), *Education* (14.0%) and *Water supply and sanitation* (almost another 10%). However, despite being part of the area in which the region concentrated most of its cooperation, these sectors also suffered a loss of relative importance as a result of the pandemic.

— In spite of the emergency imposed by COVID-19, Ibero-American countries continued addressing other health issues in the Social area that have traditionally been relevant to the region

→ GRAPH 2.15

Variation of activity sectors' share in the total number of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America. 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

In percentage points



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

Graph 2.15, which compares the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 periods, shows the variation of activity sectors' share in the total number of Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged in Ibero-America. Thus, the *Health* sector increased its share in 5.1 percentage points, far ahead the other sectors, which at most, registered growths that never exceed 0.8 points. In contrast, some of the sectors which shares lost importance were those that are also classified in the Social area: *Other services and social policies* (1.7 percentage points less), *Water supply and sanitation* (-1 point) and *Education* (-0.3), which drops aggregately explain 3 of the 5 points the *Health* sector increased.

Although SSC in these sectors was less intense, Ibero-America continued promoting issues in which -COVID aside- the region has accumulated significant experience. In this sense, a significant number of the SSC initiatives that were under execution in the 2020-2021 period aimed at strengthening social policies (overcoming poverty, social inclusion and housing) and focused on reinforcing the attention to vulnerable groups as well as on ensuring the exercise of their rights (people with

disabilities, indigenous populations and those who, differentiated in age groups, may face more critical situations, such as children, youth and older adults). In this sense, it should be noted that, in certain cases, these issues were also tackled in the framework of the specific impact of the pandemic. For example, Case 2.1 describes an initiative between Colombia and Peru - developed online due to the restrictions imposed by the crisis - that addresses the promotion of sports as an instrument to improve older adults' well-being; a population group that was hit particularly hard by the pandemic.

→ CASE 2.1

Older adults' well-being during the pandemic

In March 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations already recognized that, in the face of this exceptional situation, older adults not only “face a disproportionate risk of death but they are further threatened by COVID-19 due to their care support needs or by living in high-risk environments such as institutions” (OHCHR, 2020).

Indeed, the pandemic had a very serious and visible impact on the elderly - high mortality rates and the effect on mental health standing out - but it also had other less known consequences, such as a certain deterioration of physical health, as a result of the disease itself and confinements. In this context, and being aware of the aforementioned challenges, countries prioritized the need to mitigate these impacts through the promotion of older adults' physical activity, adapted to the pandemic, in

order to improve their well-being. This problem was specifically addressed by the Sports Institute of Peru (IPD by its Spanish acronym) and the Ministry of Sports of Colombia, which joined efforts to share best practices for the promotion of healthy habits and lifestyles in times of COVID-19 with emphasis on the elderly (*Plataforma digital única del Estado Peruano*, 2020).

According to the countries, this Bilateral SSC action contributed to improve the skills of professionals who had graduated from the different programs carried out by the Peruvian National Directorate of Training and Sport Technique, officials from the Integral Centers for Older Adults and IPD staff. This action consisted of a series of conferences on “Older adults: physical activity in times of COVID-19”, which were available on institutional online platforms. Knowledge and experiences were exchanged on specific topics such as: older adults,

aging and old age; the benefits of recreation; National Recreation Strategy for and with older adults; *Programa Nuevo Comienzo* “Another reason to live”; home games and interactive evaluation games.

Through the implementation of this action, Colombia and Peru enabled Ibero-American cooperation and their own sports agendas to promote older adults' health and well-being. In addition, this is an example of how SSC could adapt to a new context and could continue its implementation despite a global pandemic that hindered face-to-face exchanges in Ibero-American countries.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2020) and *Plataforma digital única del Estado Peruano* (2020).

Likewise, and concluding the review of the Social area, during the 2020-2021 period, SSC exchanges were also aimed at strengthening institutions and laws related to water management and at advancing water sanitation and purification, in addition to promoting its collection, preferably from rainfall and aquifers. It should be noted that some of these initiatives focused on actions in rural environments in order to close possible gaps in terms of ensuring the access to this right. Other significant social experiences were promoted to support literacy; strengthen higher education tools; develop professional training that - especially focused on young people - contributes to greater employment; and promote a greater use of audiovisuals and innovation, a commitment that had already been made but which has recently been revalued by COVID-19.

The second most relevant area of action in the 2020-2021 period was Institutional strengthening (141 initiatives, corresponding to 21.3% of those registered in 2020-2021). The importance of this area is explained by the nature of the region's SSC, which is defined as intergovernmental. In this framework, once again taking

Graphs 2.12 and 2.13 as a reference, it is possible to state that more than a third of the exchanges were destined to *Strengthening institutions and public policies* (52 SSC actions and projects), a figure that places this as the fourth most important activity sector in the period (almost 8% of the 661 final exchanges).

Meanwhile, important efforts were also made to promote SSC to support *Peace, public and national security and defense*, as well as others related to *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights* (almost 25% and 20% of initiatives in this areas, respectively). The rest of the 25 initiatives aimed at Institutional strengthening, distributed between *Management of public finances* and *Political participation and civil society*, were supported in more specific occasions.

It should be added that it is also possible to identify a redistribution of the priorities with respect to the previous two-year period. In this sense, Graph 2.15, which compares the variation of activity sectors' share between the two periods in the total number of Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged in Ibero-America, shows how *Legal*

and judicial development and Human Rights suffered the greatest drop in terms of relative shares (-2.4 percentage points), contrasting with the slight growth registered by the other sectors in this area (between 0.4 and 0.8 points each).

In this case, experiences were promoted to provide civil servants with better management and evaluation tools; and to enable the exchange of best practices and develop regulatory frameworks that, as a whole, can improve the quality of government services at different levels, especially at the local level. Part of this support materialized through numerous trainings, many of them online, due to the conditions imposed by the new context. Initiatives related to document and archive management, as well as the applied use of information technologies to facilitate their systematization and management, in addition to those that focused on strengthening the institutions responsible for international cooperation, should also be mentioned.

— Almost all sectors in the productive area decreased their importance in terms of Bilateral SSC exchanged in 2020-2021, compared to 2018-2019

In this same institutional framework, Ibero-American countries also made considerable efforts to promote SSC initiatives to strengthen peace, collective memory, restorative justice and the social reintegration of conflict victims. Other experiences aimed to guarantee access to justice, through projects specifically destined to groups which right to defense may be undermined. In this regard, to protect and promote human rights, activities were implemented to prevent torture and ill-treatment, as well as to eradicate the worst forms of child labor. In many of cases, particularly vulnerable groups were taken into special consideration (children, youth, women and indigenous peoples, to name a few). Numerous training sessions were also held for the police and the military, and experiences in forensic techniques and policies to combat drugs and corruption, stood out among these. Finally, it is important to mention some initiatives that - even *ad hoc* - were adapted to introduce a COVID approach to their main purpose; for example, SSC promoted to share experiences in holding secure elections in the context of the pandemic.

Special reference should be made to the third area of action which is object of this analysis: Productive sectors. Indeed, the combined interpretation of Graphs 2.13 and 2.14 suggests two things: overall, SSC that focused on

this purpose remained remarkably active (almost 140 initiatives, corresponding to another 21.0% of those registered in the entire period) but this area lost the greatest share in relative terms (2.6 percentage points when comparing 2020-2021 with the two immediately previous years).

Part of the above is explained by the impact caused by the second most important sector of Bilateral SSC in the 2020-2021 period: *Agriculture and livestock*. Specifically, over the past two years, Ibero-American countries bilaterally promoted 74 initiatives to strengthen activities in this sector, a figure that accounts for more than half of those that were implemented within the Productive Sector area (Graph 2.13) and 11.2% of the 661 registered overall in the region (Graph 2.12). Although these numbers are remarkable, they are significantly lower than those of the 2018-2019 period, when *Agriculture and livestock* sector explained 116 Bilateral SSC initiatives (42 above those registered in 2020-2021). This represents, as shown in Graph 2.15, a fall of almost 1 percentage point over the total.

It should be added that the comparative analysis of the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 periods (Graph 2.15) confirms almost all activities classified in the Productive Sectors area suffered drops in their share considering the total number of SSC initiatives bilaterally exchanged by Ibero-American countries. *Industry* (which relative importance fell by 1.3 percentage points), *Forestry* and *Extractive* (-0.8 and -0.5 points, in each case) stand out as examples of the above. These falls, in turn, explain the lower relative importance these activities had in all the initiatives that are classified in this area (Graph 2.13), all of them with shares below 10%. The only exception is *Fisheries*, the second most important sector after *Agriculture and livestock*, but still at a considerable distance from the latter (23 initiatives, corresponding to 16.5% of those carried out in the Productive Sectors area). In fact, *Fisheries* is one of the few sectors which share increased (0.8 points) when comparing the two periods.

A wide range of topics were addressed within the *Agriculture and livestock* sector, mainly related to agriculture. Relatively less important were those aimed at strengthening livestock and other activities that are connected with the food industry and rural areas, such as poultry farming and apiculture. Specifically, most SSC initiatives Ibero-American countries bilaterally exchanged in 2020-2021 addressed all stages of the agricultural production cycle in a comprehensive manner. For example, techniques were exchanged to make the best use of soils and irrigation, as well as to promote the selection, production and genetic improvement of seeds. Efforts were also dedicated to epidemiological surveillance, pest control and the development of biopesticides in order to protect harvests. As for initiatives related to safe consumption and marketing, countries shared biotechnological tools for animal health and complemented other activities that contribute to guaranteeing food safety.

An important characteristic of SSC initiatives promoted in Ibero-America in the *Agriculture and livestock* sector (and sometimes in other subsectors) was the increasingly common inclusion of other purposes that - although not as a priority - cut across their main objectives. In this sense, some of these features are frequently repeated: the concentration on local and on some of the region's typical products (corn, beans, cacao, quinoa, soybeans, potatoes, coconuts, avocado and nopal, to name a few); the importance given to family-sized agriculture, seeking, on the one hand, to ensure its development (access to financial instruments such as credit or insurance) and, on the other, its promotion as a source of income generation; the adoption of an environmental approach that mainly focuses on the sustainability of production and on resilience to climate change, through measures to adapt to and mitigate its worst effects. An example of the above is described in Case 2.2, a project between Argentina and Brazil which aim is to predict how some diseases

that proliferate as a consequence of global warming may impact future harvests of two products (sugarcane and peanut). The different scenarios that were analyzed and the information collected can be used to guide decision making to help protect crops.

→ CASE 2.2

How does climate change affect crop diseases?



Every year, up to 40% of food crops is lost to plant pests and diseases (FAO, 2022). Global warming facilitates the introduction of these unwanted organisms. A single, unusually warm winter may be sufficient to assist the establishment of invasive pests (FAO and IPPC, 2021). This not only poses a threat to climate-dependent agricultural production, but also to the environment in general, as pests can cause a major loss in biodiversity (FAO, 2022). The incidence, severity and geographical distribution of plant diseases are altered by climate change (EMBRAPA, 2022), and this may deepen even further in coming years.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) “despite the wealth of studies on climate-change biology, there are still prominent gaps in research into the impact of climate change on pests” (FAO and IPPC, 2021). This challenge

is being addressed by the Bilateral SSC project between Argentina and Brazil “The impact of climate change on crop diseases”, which started in 2018. The initiative is carried out by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA by its Portuguese acronym) and the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA by its Spanish acronym) of Argentina, and is supported by the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC by its Portuguese acronym) and the Argentine South-South and Triangular Cooperation Fund (FO.AR by its Spanish acronym).

The aim of this project is to assess the impacts of climate change on diseases of two crops of agro-Industry importance for Argentina and Brazil: sugarcane and peanut. In particular, it seeks to characterize climatic conditions that favor the development of diseases in these crops in the main producing regions of both countries (orange and brown rust, leaf scorch,

black spots) and to anticipate future scenarios in which these conditions may occur (EMBRAPA, 2022). All this is essential to be able to adopt adaptation measures (e.g., through the development of resistant varieties), avoiding severe crop losses in the coming decades (SIDICSS, 2022).

This project is based on another initiative (2011 and 2014) which produced information on epidemiological scenarios of pests and diseases in common Industry crops in both countries. This second initiative, still underway, seeks to deepen these findings and also prioritize the scientific and technological dissemination of its results (SIDICSS, 2022).

In addition, SSC bilaterally exchanged in Ibero-America during the 2020-2021 period to strengthen the *Fisheries* sector had a similar behavior to that associated with *Agriculture and livestock*. In this sense, initiatives aimed to cover the entire production cycle: optimize the aquaculture feeding system; support fish and shellfish farming; promote epidemiological surveillance; ensure safety (studies that detect nano and microplastics particles in shellfish); strengthen the value chain and improve the quality and sale of final products. Likewise, many initiatives focused on artisanal and local aspects,

promoting *Fisheries* as an economic resource, or were related to environmental issues. The experience Case 2.3 reviews, in which Chile supports Uruguay to identify adaptation and mitigation measures to address the damage caused by climate change to a local small-scale product, such as pink shrimp, is an example of the above.

→ CASE 2.3

Adapting artisanal fishery to climate change



According to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC, 2022), climate change is having a profound impact on our oceans and on marine life. One of the greatest impacts is on fisheries, a productive sector on which many families depend in terms of labor and food security. Marine ecosystems in Latin-America show a reduction in the abundance, density and coverage of coral and of fish stocks and marine fauna, changes in plankton and loss of wetland ecosystems (CAF, 2022).

One of the most important shrimp species for Uruguayan artisanal fishery (the pink shrimp) can be found in the South of the Latin-American continent and its annual recruitment is strongly dependent on climatic and oceanographic variability. Due to its importance and taking advantage of Chile's accumulated experience, both countries carried out the Bilateral SSC

project *Capacity strengthening to assess the vulnerability of pink shrimp fisheries to climate change in Uruguay's coastal areas* between the Regional University Center (CURE by its Spanish acronym) in Uruguay, and Chile's Interdisciplinary Center for Aquaculture Research (INCAR by its Spanish acronym).

Its main aim was to promote the strengthening of institutional capacities for inclusive and sustainable development, through a pilot experience that involved artisanal pink shrimp fishery on the Uruguayan Atlantic coast. The approach was based on: food security, social development, environmental protection and natural resources; improved governance and the development of local communities; and the mitigation of the effects of climate change on marine resources and communities that depend on them (SIDICSS, 2022).

Both the scientific and research approach that characterized this initiative stand out. In September 2020, experts from both institutions participated in an online workshop in order to exchange on different instruments and mechanisms to improve scientific communication and its appropriation by society. Following this activity, a new training session was held in October to analyze possible applications of the model to assess the vulnerability of pink shrimp to climate change (INCAR, 2020).

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, CAF (2022), INCAR (2020) and MSC (2022).

Still within the Productive Sectors area, it is interesting to examine some of the topics on which initiatives on *Tourism* and *Industry* focused. In particular, a clear priority was set to promote tourism models based on historical, cultural and natural heritage, with a strong emphasis on the exchange of experiences at the local government level. Meanwhile, the industries that concentrated a greater number of SSC initiatives were those related to the processing of products derived from agriculture and livestock, such as honey (bee and sugar cane), rum, dairy products and textiles, among others.

The fourth area in terms of relative importance was Environment (73 Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in the 2020-2021 period, corresponding to 11.0% of 661). Its relevance increases if the analysis considers that - unlike other areas - it is only composed of two sectors: *Disaster management* (1 out of 4 initiatives) and *Environment*, which, in addition to accounting for the other 75% of the actions and projects carried out in this area, is the third most important activity sector in the period

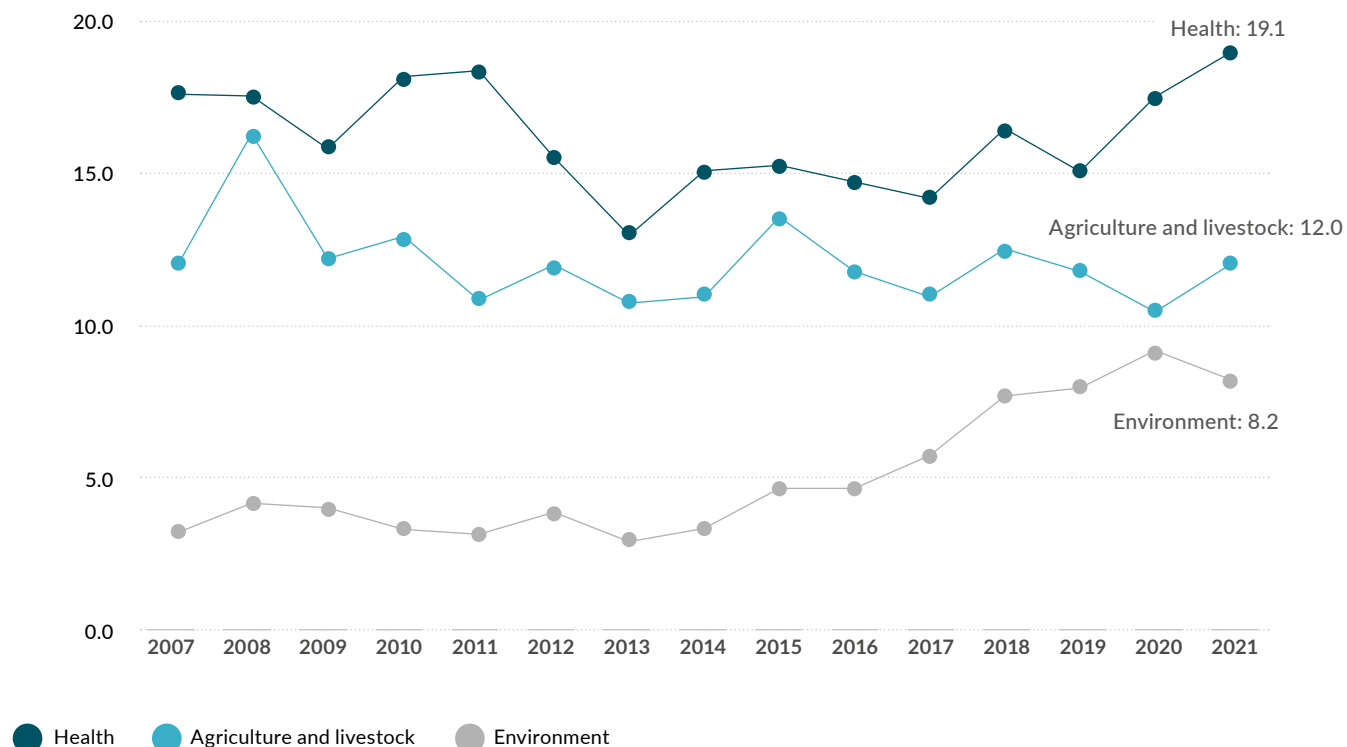
(55 exchanges, corresponding to 8.3% of the total - Graph 2.12). Graph 2.16, which shows the evolution - between 2007 and 2021 and in terms of relative annual shares - of

the three most important sectors in the last two-year period (*Health, Agriculture and livestock and Environment*), confirms this trend has been consolidating for years.

→ GRAPH 2.16

Evolution of the three main activity sectors of the 2020-2021 period, according to Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged each year in Ibero-America. 2007-2021

In percentage



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

The variety of topics addressed by the more than 50 initiatives that in 2020-2021 were classified in the *Environment* sector ensured that the actions promoted by Ibero-American countries were completely comprehensive. There were numerous initiatives dedicated to the management and conservation of endangered species and ecosystems (marine, mountain and polar); the recovery of degraded soils in environments of special value; the integrated management of resources (especially hydrographic) and waste (solid, organic and inorganic, chemical products, hazardous waste, among others); and the development of capacities, techniques and skills in environmental assessment systems.

However, two of the most definitely recurring subjects - with a high degree of interrelation - aimed to contribute to the protection of biodiversity and to the region's fight against climate change. In fact, and as experiences described in Cases 2.2 and 2.3 revealed, the cross-cutting nature of the Ibero-American countries' response to the challenges posed by global warming had an impact on numerous actions of all kinds and significantly exceeded

those strictly classified in the *Environment* sector. This is certainly a result of the enormous importance countries attach to tackling a problem that can only be controlled with collective and coordinated actions that bring together more and different stakeholders. Ibero-America is committed to this global effort and its SSC is one of the most significant demonstrations. Box 2.2 was prepared to provide evidence for this statement, based on an analysis of the 170 initiatives that, between 2015 and 2021 and classified in 14 activity sectors, enabled Ibero-American countries to exchange their experience in mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

This context of constant threat, generated by the climate crisis and its worst effects, defines the growing importance of SSC initiatives promoted by Ibero-American countries in the 2020-2021 period to address *Disaster Management*. Within this sector, priority was given to address two types of phenomena: those related to global warming (mainly droughts and fires) and those inherent to the region's geological characteristics (volcanic and seismic). In either case, countries focused

on strengthening national institutions and on improving instruments (early warning systems), as well as procedures that, above all, and in the face of different adverse phenomena, increase the resilience of the most vulnerable populations.

→ BOX 2.2

Ibero-America and Bilateral South-South Cooperation in the face of the global climate crisis

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) firmly states that “warming of the climate system is unequivocal” (IPCC, 2014).¹ Since the 1950s, unprecedented changes are happening: “the atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished and sea level has risen” (IPCC, 2014). Extreme cold temperatures have also decreased, extreme warm temperatures have increased and more intense precipitation has been experienced in several regions (IPCC, 2014).

Scientists have demonstrated that this warming is, with high probability, a result of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as a consequence of human activities, which have increased since the pre-Industrial era mainly due to economic and population growth (IPCC, 2014). As a result, current concentrations of these gases in the atmosphere are the highest in the last 800,000 years.

The risks that climate change brings to people and ecosystems are unevenly distributed and are usually higher for vulnerable people and communities (IPCC, 2014). Poor people have contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions and yet they are shouldering the bulk of the most negative impacts of climate change.

Controlling climate change requires a simultaneous strategy of mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation involves reducing GHG emissions into the atmosphere to slow warming. This can be achieved in two ways (EEA, 2022): by reducing the sources of these gases (avoiding, for example, burning fossil

fuels) or increasing the “sinks” that store them (such as oceans, forests and soil).

Without further mitigation efforts [...] by the end of the 21st century, warming will result in a high to very high risk of severe, widespread and irreversible global impacts (high confidence) (IPCC, 2014).

These efforts pose challenges at all levels, including the availability of appropriate technology.

On the other hand, adaptation “refers to changes in processes, practices and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change” (UNFCCC, 2022), such as the green economy. It is necessary both to adapt to the changes that are already occurring and to prepare for future impacts. Adaptation measures include, for example, the construction of defences against rising sea levels, integrated disaster management for extreme weather events, etc.

Besides the clear importance of adaptation, the IPCC (2014) already warned that its effectiveness is limited “especially with greater magnitudes and rates of climate change”. In turn, it is imperative that proposed adaptation measures do not increase GHG emissions (such as the use of fossil fuel-based cooling devices in the face of rising temperatures).

For all these reasons, and since this is a global problem with global consequences, countries at the international level have made

progress in different agreements to tackle it. Thus, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in 2015 includes a goal dedicated to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”. However, the Paris Agreement (UN, 2015), adopted the same year under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-Industrial levels (UN, 2022). The agreement also aims to reinforce countries' capacity to deal with the effects of climate change.

Bilateral SSC in Ibero-America has not been a stranger to these international commitments. In fact, 170 initiatives were identified in the 2015-2021 period (141 projects and 29 actions) which objective is to tackle problems related to climate change, accounting for 7% of all bilateral initiatives in that period. Sixty-one percent correspond to adaptation measures and the remaining percentage is associated with mitigation or both, simultaneously.

Adaptation includes water resource management and integrated disaster management, followed by the adaptation of agriculture to climate change, a key sector for the region's economy. This involves, for example, the study of the effects of this phenomenon on agriculture and livestock, the development of varieties resistant to heat stress and drought, and water use efficiency, among others.

¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was created in 1988 to provide comprehensive assessments of the state of scientific, technical and socioeconomic knowledge on climate change, its causes, potential impacts and response strategies <https://www.ipcc.ch/>

On the other hand, the great majority of mitigation initiatives are related to energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energies, followed by the sustainable management of forests, important "sinks" of greenhouse gases. Other initiatives for carbon footprint measurement and the development of GHG inventories were also identified, and experiences for the promotion of sustainable transport should be highlighted as well.

Since this is a cross-cutting issue, initiatives are aligned with 14 different activity sectors (of the 30 defined in the Ibero-American space). SDG 13 (Climate action) naturally stands out as the main SDG, but SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), which includes integrated water resources management, are also worthy of mention. If a second SDG is also considered in the analysis, SDG 15 (Life on land) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) should also be highlighted.

Mexico, Brazil and Chile were the main providers of Bilateral SSC initiatives in the 2015-2021 period. These three countries account for 45% of the initiatives related to climate change. Argentina and Colombia follow, with 8% and 7%, respectively. Particularly, in Brazil's case, mitigation or adaptation is included in at least 13% of the bilateral initiatives in which it acts as provider in the period.

A greater diversity can be identified among recipients. Honduras, El Salvador, Ecuador, Bolivia and Uruguay stand out in this case; however, they only account for one third of the initiatives related to climate change. In Uruguay's case, these represent 13% of the bilateral initiatives in which it participates as a recipient in the analyzed period.

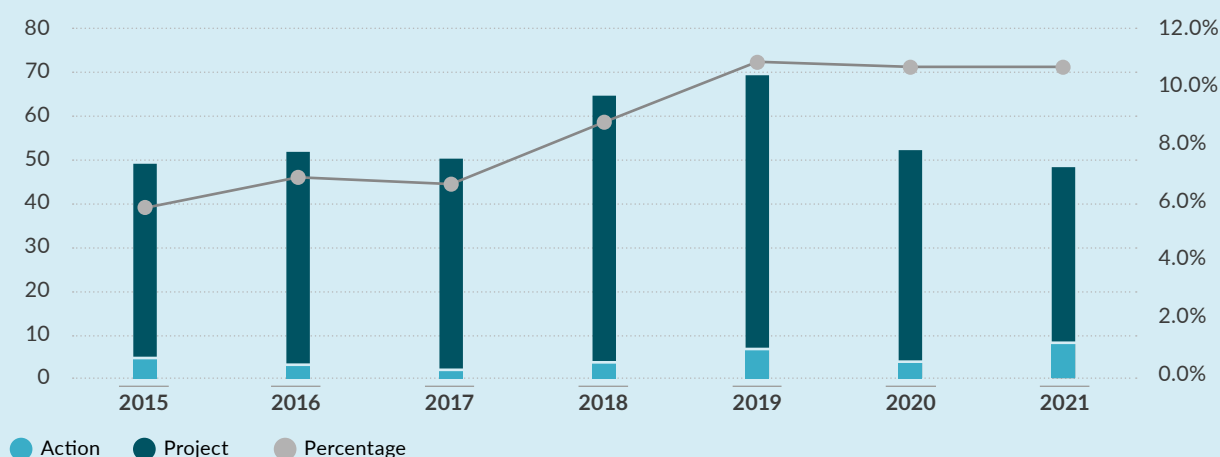
Finally, 28% of the identified initiatives are bidirectional, i.e., both partners act as both provider and recipient. Among these, the partnership between Mexico and

Chile is particularly noteworthy, through 13 joint mitigation and adaptation projects.

As for the evolution of these figures over time, and as shown in the graph prepared for this purpose, Bilateral SSC initiatives related to climate change increased from 2015 to 2019 but this trend was interrupted in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the percentage of climate change in the total number of bilateral initiatives continued to be over 10% in the last two years.

Evolution of Bilateral SSC initiatives for climate change mitigation and adaptation, by type of instrument and percentage over the total number of bilateral initiatives in Ibero-America. 2015-2021

In units and percentage



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

Methodological note: The Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS) was used to carry out this exercise. On this basis, a first broad filter was applied in order to search for cooperation initiatives that could be related to this topic (approximately 500) and then a manual review was performed to double check this aspect, based on initiatives' title and objectives. The first broad filter included initiatives in the *Disaster Management* and *Energy* sectors, aligned with SDG 13 (main or second) and those which title and/or objective included one of the key words related to the issue (both in Spanish and Portuguese, the two official languages of the Ibero-American Space). This classification implied initiatives aim to mitigate or adapt to climate change, although not necessarily explicitly. For example, mitigation included aspects related to renewable energies and energy efficiency, and adaptation included integrated disaster management (unless specifically related to earthquakes, volcanoes or tsunamis) and water resource management (as specified in IPCC, 2014, p. 28). Due to limited descriptive information, figures may probably be underestimated.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, EEA (2022); IPCC (2014); UN (2015 and 2022) and UNFCC (2022).

Finally, the last group of SSC initiatives bilaterally exchanged in Ibero-America during the 2020-2021 period focused on two different types of purposes: on the one hand, 63 initiatives, corresponding to almost 10% of the total, addressed the need to strengthen operational aspects of national economies and were classified in the Infrastructure and Economic Services area; on the other hand, 30 actions and projects, accounting for the remaining 4.5%, were dedicated to the attention of important and cross-cutting sectors, such as *Culture* and *Gender*, which explain 75% of SSC initiatives associated with Other areas.

Specifically, through Bilateral SSC, Ibero-American countries made efforts to strengthen their economies, especially in the *Energy*, *Enterprises* and *Science and Technology* sectors (18, 15 and 14 initiatives respectively, which together account for almost 75% of all those classified in Infrastructure and economic services). Experiences were exchanged to promote greater energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies; strengthen institutions and regulations related to energy system; promote entrepreneurship, MSMEs and female inclusion in business; provide extraordinary support to these same companies to address the COVID-19 crisis and contribute to the development of digital business models in line with the new context; develop metrology as well as promote and share scientific and technological progress and explore their potential economic applications (experiences in information and satellite technologies, nanotechnology and advanced microscopy, among others).

More than 15 SSC initiatives were bilaterally exchanged by Ibero-American countries to strengthen various topics associated with the *Culture* sector. Among these, efforts made for the conservation, protection, restoration and enhancement of cultural heritage; the development of statistical and legislative instruments for its better management; the promotion of creative and cultural industries; as well as experiences that turn culture into an instrument to promote peace, coexistence and social inclusion, such as art programs, choirs and orchestras for young people, stand out. The analysis of this heterogeneous area is completed with almost 10 initiatives that were designed to empower women; thus, they tackled violence against women and promoted legislative progress to protect their rights and advance a more effective equality, not only for women but also for the LGTBI+ collective.

2.4.2. Countries' profile

An aggregated analysis of the region's cooperation illustrates the way in which Ibero-American countries participated in capacity building. Two graphs were prepared (2.17 and 2.19) in order to shed light on this. Both graphs show the areas of action on which countries' cooperation tended to focus; the former focuses on the main recipients while the latter depicts the main providers.

Indeed, Graph 2.17 lists the 12 countries in which exchanges the recipient role prevailed. It sorts them in descending order, Guatemala being at the top (47 initiatives as recipient) and Nicaragua at the bottom (9). The graph shows the total number of Bilateral SSC initiatives in which these countries participated as recipients, distributed according to the area of action with which they were aligned. As revealed, in a period dominated by the pandemic, the main result is fully consistent with what was stated above: the region set a clear priority to address every aspect related to the Social area.

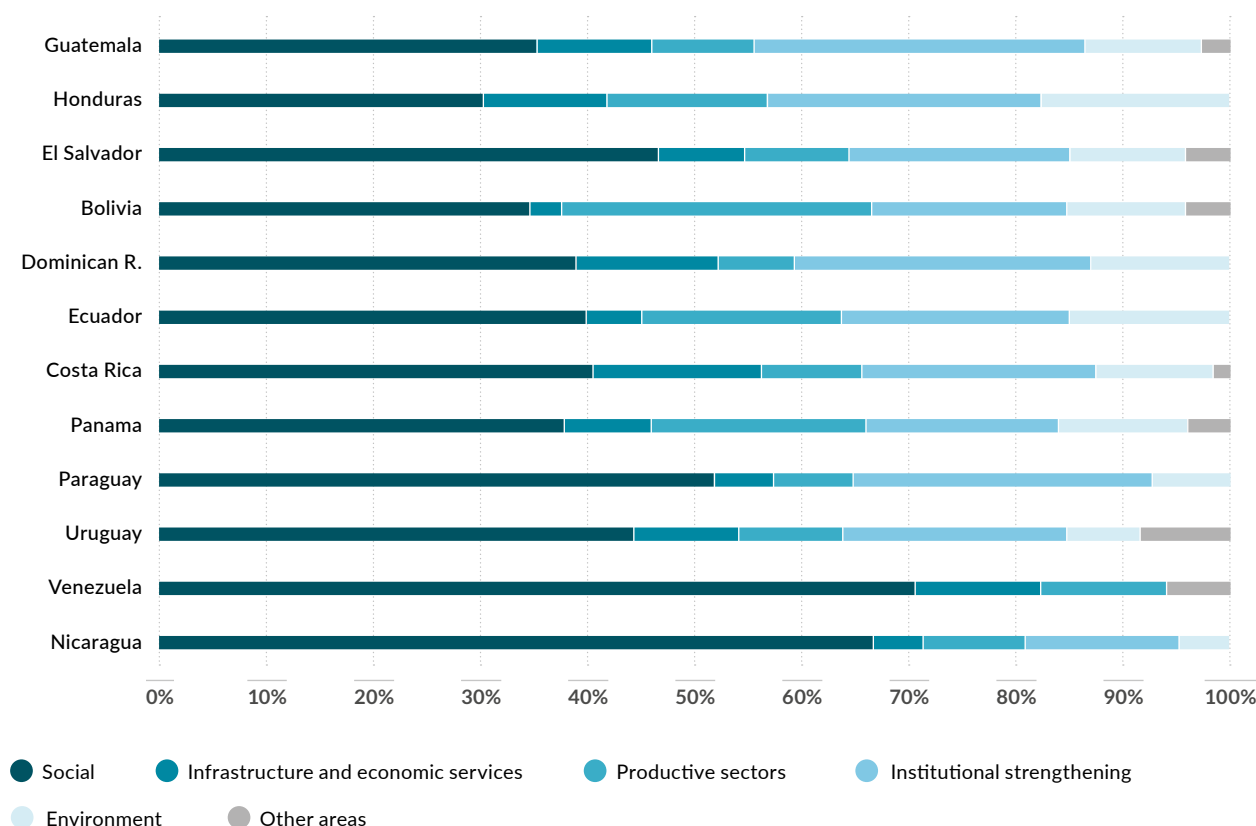
— Countries that mainly acted as recipients in Bilateral SSC concentrated the highest number of initiatives in the Social area

In fact, it concentrated the largest percentage of the initiatives in which these 12 countries participated as recipients. However, this range of values substantially varied from one country to another: thus, in the case of Honduras, Bolivia, Guatemala, Panama and the Dominican Republic, the Social area accounted for between 30% and 40% of the initiatives exchanged under this role; as for Ecuador, Costa Rica, Uruguay, El Salvador and Paraguay, this percentage rose to levels that could even slightly exceed 50%; while the cases of Nicaragua and Venezuela (with a lower volume of exchanges) were the most extreme, as the relative importance of this area of action in SSC these countries received reached maximum values of 66% and 71%, respectively.

→ GRAPH 2.17

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in which countries that mainly act as recipients participated, by area of action. 2020-2021

In percentage



Note: The graph includes countries which ratio of received/provided initiatives is equal to one or higher; countries are arranged in descending order (the last country that appears in the list received the lowest number of initiatives).

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

Graph 2.17 also shows that, most of these countries prioritized the Institutional strengthening area when they received SSC from other regional partners. In this sense, this area was particularly relevant for 4 countries (Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Guatemala), as it accounted for between a quarter and almost a third of the SSC initiatives in which they participated as recipients during the 2020-2021 period. Panama and Bolivia (in addition to Venezuela, which did not receive any initiative for this purpose) were exceptions to this profile. These two countries clearly prioritized the Productive sectors area, in which 20.0% and almost 30% of the initiatives received by each of them were executed.

Environment issues were also a priority for the countries that mainly acted as recipients. This is suggested by the fact that at least 8 of these countries strengthened their capacities in this area, accounting for at least 10% of the initiatives received in the years 2020-2021. The cases of Ecuador and Honduras are particularly noteworthy, which shares of SSC dedicated to Environment issues exceed 15%. Finally, cooperation to strengthen Infrastructure and economic services had a more circumstantial importance,

with exceptional records for the Dominican Republic and Costa Rica, for which this area represented 15% of their SSC as recipient countries.

Graph 2.18 was precisely plotted to better illustrate these countries' behavior as it distributes the initiatives in which the three most active recipients participated, by areas of action and activity sectors: Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador (47, 46 and 38 bilateral SSC actions and projects as recipients during 2020-2021).

Thus, as Graph 2.18 shows and given the context of the pandemic, these three Central-American countries received Bilateral SSC that prioritized the strengthening of the *Health* sector. However, the relative importance of this sector in the total number of initiatives received by each country differed considerably, ranging from 16.5% in Honduras' case to 20.3% in Guatemala's and a maximum of 27.4% in El Salvador's. It is also possible to identify significant differences in terms other strengthened capacities. As for Guatemala's cooperation, the *Health* sector was followed by initiatives that contributed to strengthen *Peace, public and national security and*

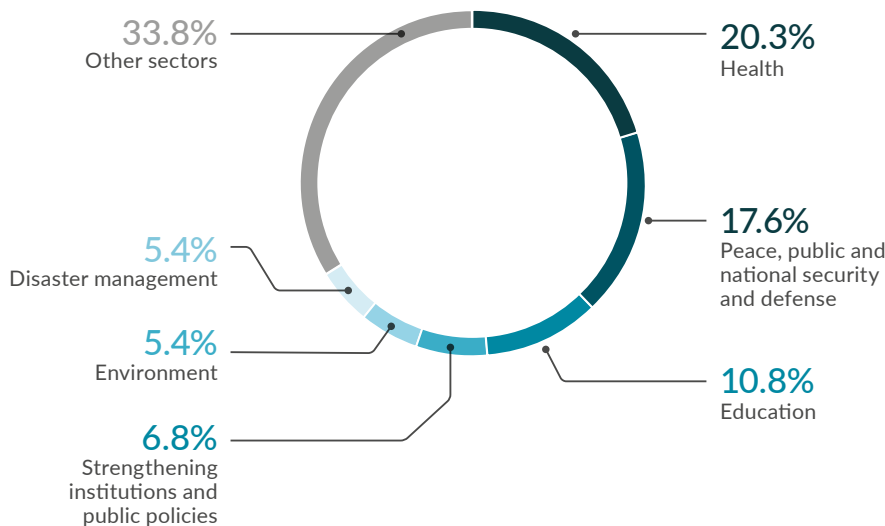
defense (17.5%) and, to a less extent, by those dedicated to Education (the only other sector with a share above 10%). On the other hand, Honduras' second priority as SSC recipient was associated with Agriculture and livestock (13.9%), also addressing the Environment and Disaster management sectors (shares of 9%). Meanwhile, El Salvador had a very diversified profile as recipient and strengthened a wide variety of capacities, among which Education and Strengthening institutions and public policies stood out, each with shares of 8.2%.

→ GRAPH 2.18

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in which the main recipients participated, by activity sector and area of action. 2020-2021

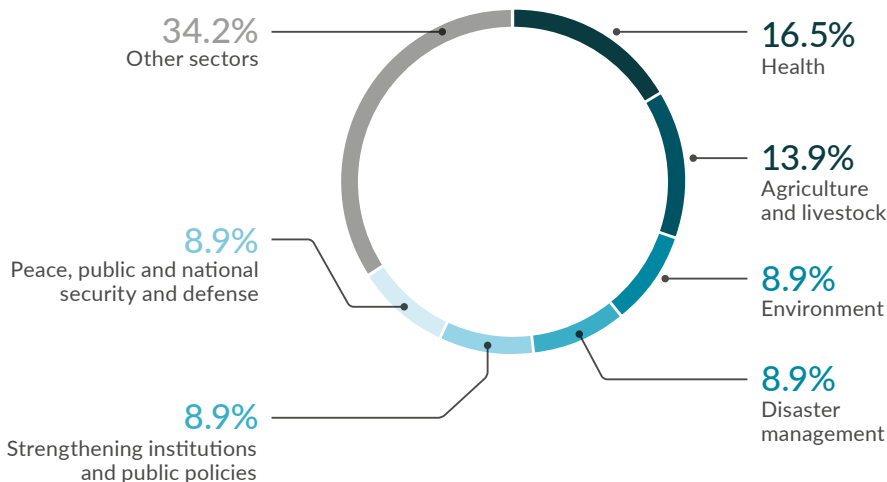
In percentage

A. Guatemala



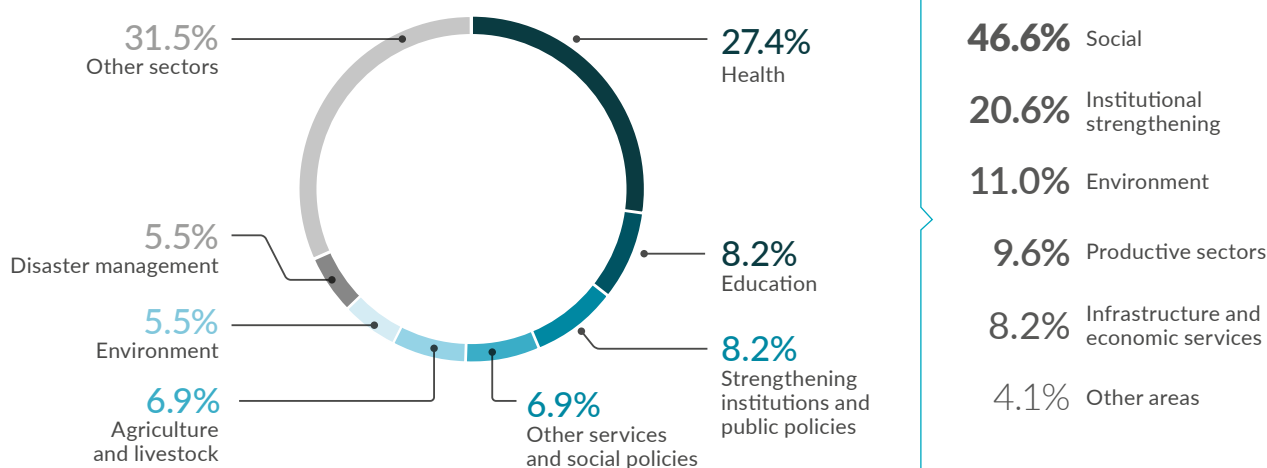
- 35.1%** Social
- 31.1%** Institutional strengthening
- 10.8%** Environment
- 10.8%** Infrastructure and economic services
- 9.5%** Productive sectors
- 2.7%** Other areas

B. Honduras



- 30.4%** Social
- 25.3%** Institutional strengthening
- 17.7%** Environment
- 15.2%** Infrastructure and economic services
- 11.4%** Productive sectors
- 0.0%** Other areas

C. El Salvador



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

In addition, Graph 2.19 distributes the Bilateral SSC initiatives in which the 7 countries that mainly acted as providers participated, by areas of action. Once again, countries were arranged in descending order from Chile (at the top of the list, registering a maximum of 96 initiatives in this role) to Argentina (at the bottom, with a minimum of 23). This graph suggests the main providers had remarkably different cooperation profiles.

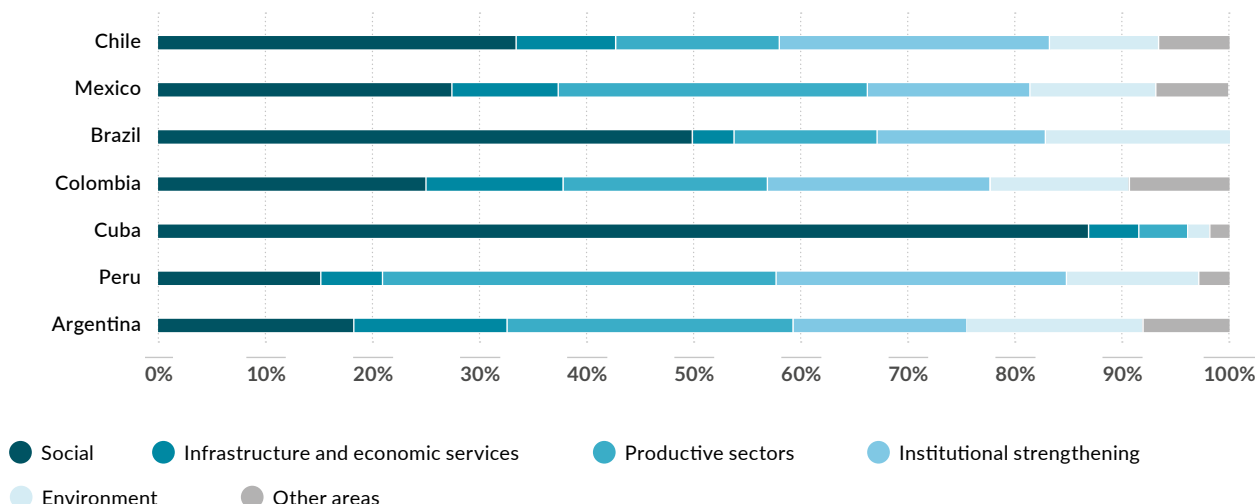
Indeed, it is important to highlight those countries that mainly transferred capacities to strengthen the Social area. However, and although they share this feature, the cases of Cuba and Brazil differ considerably from those of Colombia and Chile. On the one hand, the Social area would account for 9 out of 10 of the SSC initiatives exchanged by Cuba, as provider, with other

Ibero-American partners, being the remaining areas almost circumstantial. Meanwhile, in Brazil's case, the Social area accounted for half of the SSC it bilaterally provided, the other 50% of its initiatives being distributed fairly evenly among three other areas, the most prominent being Environment (17.1% of 67). In contrast, the importance the Social area has in SSC provided by Colombia and Chile fluctuates in remarkably lower ranges, equivalent to a quarter and a third of the initiatives provided by each of these countries. In fact, addressing Social issues would be highly complementary to efforts made in the Institutional strengthening area, which accounts for more than 20% and 25% of the actions and projects offered by Colombia and Chile, respectively.

→ GRAPH 2.19

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in which countries that mainly act as providers participated, by area of action. 2020-2021

In percentage



Note: The graph includes countries which ratio of provided/received initiatives is equal to one or higher; countries are arranged in descending order (the last country that appears in the list provided the lowest number of initiatives).

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

Argentina, Peru and Mexico, in turn, should be grouped together, as their Bilateral SSC as providers is mainly focused on transferring their knowledge and experience in the Productive sectors area. In fact, this would account for 26.5% of the initiatives in which Argentina participated as provider, 29.1% of those exchanged by Mexico and 36.5% of those in Peru's case. Meanwhile, capacity building in the Social area, although complementary, would materialize in very different ways.

Mexico shows the strongest commitment to Social issues, this area ranking second in terms of relative importance (27.6%, a figure just 1.5 percentage points below that of the Productive sectors area). The Social area is also in second place in Argentina's case (18.3%), but at a remarkable distance from productive issues and with figures that are very close to the rest of the areas. Finally, Peru's profile is different, since Institutional strengthening accounts for almost 27% of the SSC initiatives bilaterally provided to other partners in the region. This figure, together with that registered in terms of the productive area, would explain almost 2 out of 3 initiatives.

Finally, Graph 2.20 details the capacities that were transferred by the three countries that most frequently acted as providers. To this end, the graph distributes SSC initiatives Chile, Mexico and Brazil bilaterally provided to their Ibero-American partners in the 2020-2021 period, according to the area of action and the activity sector in which they were classified. Its interpretation suggests diverse profiles.

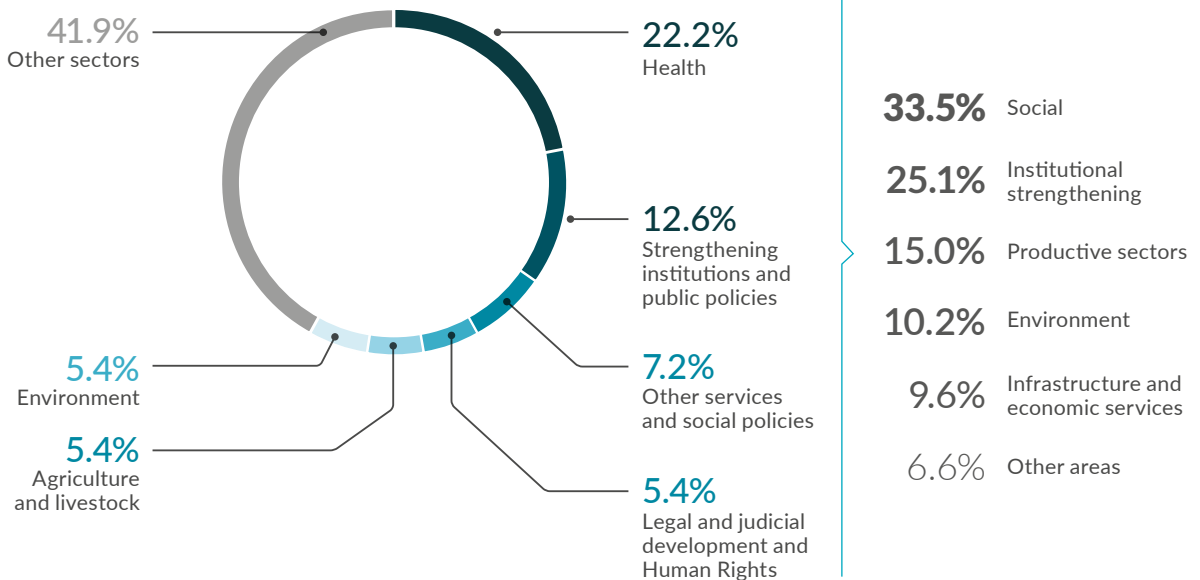
Bilateral SSC provided by Argentina, Peru and Mexico together with other Ibero-American partners focused on the Productive sectors area

→ **GRAPH 2.20**

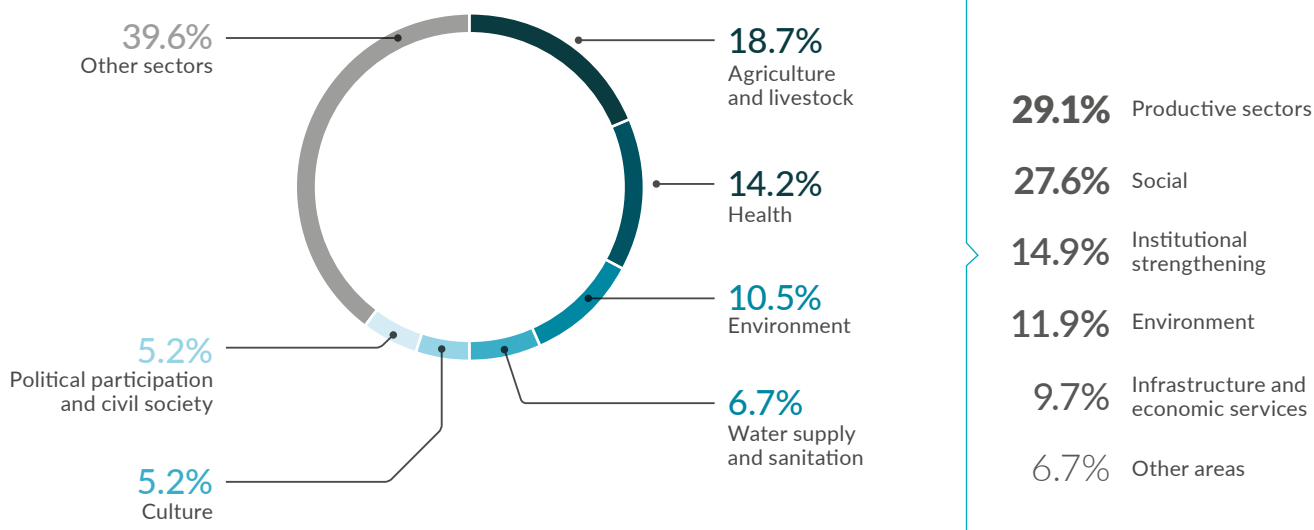
Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in which the main providers participated, by activity sector and area of action. 2020-2021

In percentage

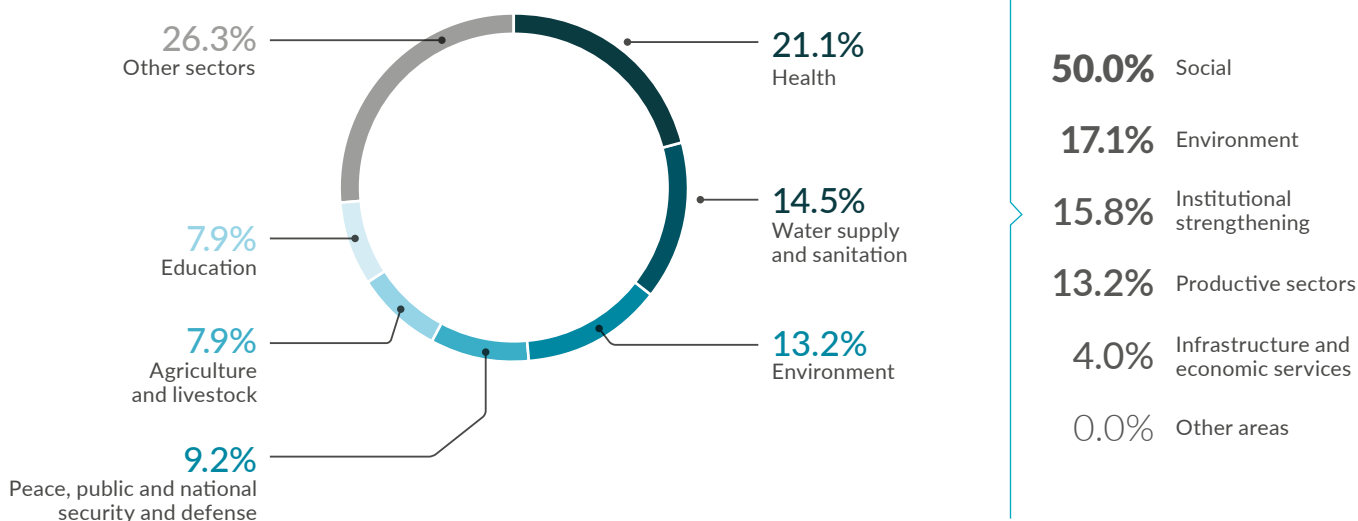
A. Chile



B. Mexico



C. Brazil



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

For both Chile and Brazil, *Health* is the sector that concentrates the largest number of initiatives (in both cases, above 20%). However, two differences should be noted. First, capacities specifically transferred in *Health* are quite different: Chile's cooperation was strongly defined by the response to the COVID-19 crisis, and it focused on the promotion of online courses and training; meanwhile, Brazil's cooperation continued supporting its most representative programs, especially Maternal Milk Banks. The second difference is related to the type of capacities they strengthened. Indeed, Chile's initiatives addressed very different topics. As a result, *Strengthening institutions and public policies* is the only other sector

which share is higher than 10% and, together with *Health*, both account for only one third of the initiatives Chile bilaterally provided to the rest of the Ibero-American partners. Brazil, in turn, strongly promoted SSC initiatives which aimed at strengthening the *Water supply and sanitation* and *Environment* sectors, both with a relative importance above 10%. Thus, these three sectors account for almost one half of the actions and projects this country provided to the region in 2020-2021.

2.5 Bilateral South-South Cooperation in 2020-2021 and the Sustainable Development Goals

One third of the time that was set for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda had passed when the COVID-19 pandemic began. However, although during these years the international community had made progress towards this goal, this crisis' serious impacts triggered the threat of a major setback, in addition to casting a shadow - 10 years still ahead - on the real possibilities of achieving Sustainable Development according to the targets that were defined. ECLAC warned about these risks, specifically for Latin-America and the Caribbean, and pointed out that the pandemic broke out in an already complicated context, after "seven years of slow growth" combined with "increasing poverty, extreme poverty and inequality rates" that had a particularly critical impact on the most vulnerable and threatened to leave the most underprivileged population behind. In addition to the above, "structural problems of the economic and (...) social model" of the region strongly re-emerged, not only aggravating the crisis, but also jeopardizing the effectiveness of the many measures Latin-American countries adopted to respond to it (ECLAC, 2020a).

— Bilateral SSC in 2020-2021 was mainly aligned with SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)

However, in the face of this difficult and challenging scenario, ECLAC also stressed the opportunity countries had to commit to "accelerate" the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, advancing a development model that, in addition to overcoming this crisis, would ensure the resilient, inclusive and sustainable recovery that must be the foundation of a post-pandemic world. ECLAC also recalled this commitment should be part of countries' international agenda and that it should be guided by five milestones, one of which is particularly relevant for this Report: supporting SSC, which recognition in 2015 as a means for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda was reaffirmed

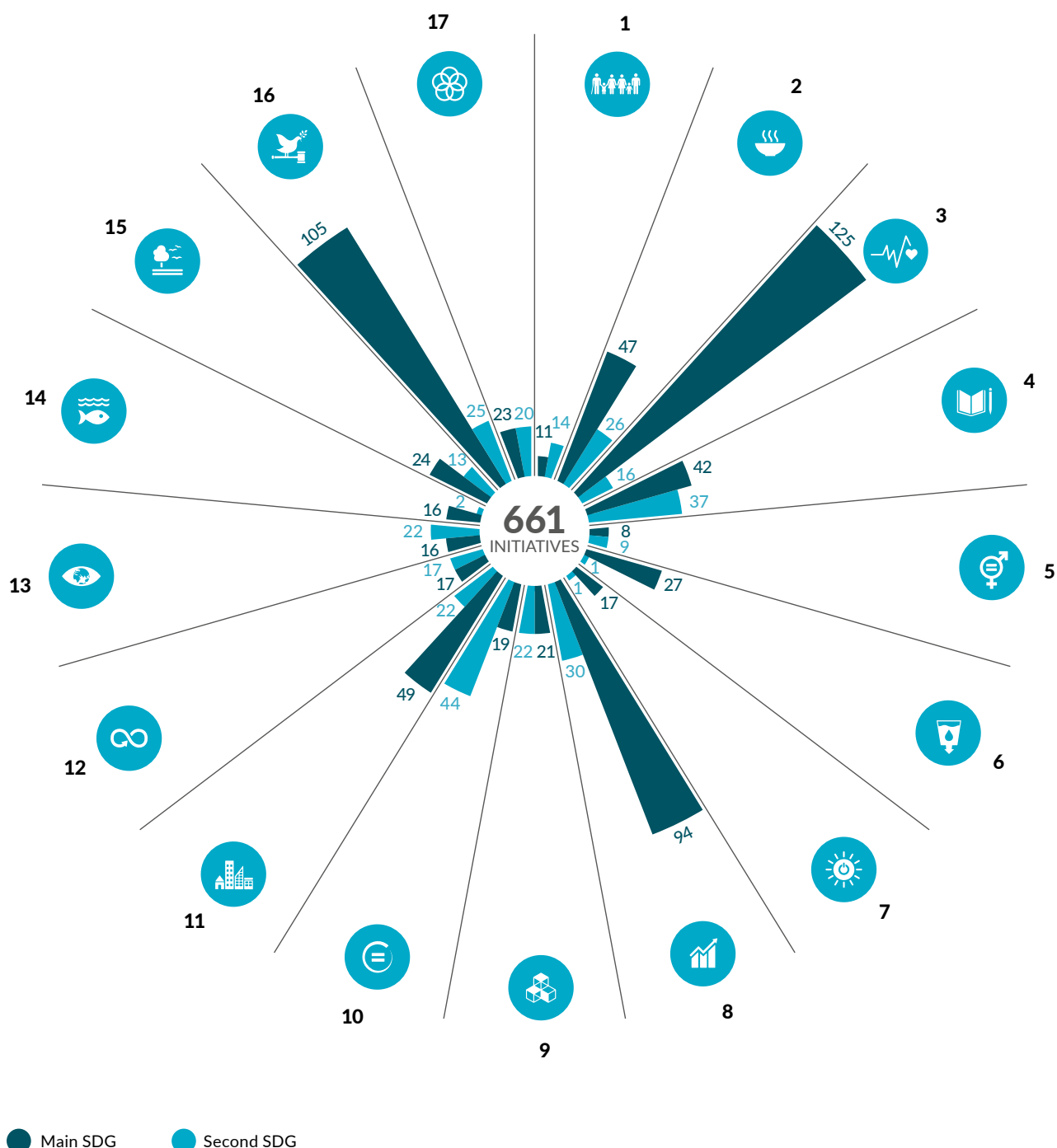
in 2019, prior to this crisis, during the UN Conference that commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) (ECLAC, 2020b).

In line with this, the need to continue promoting SSC to contribute to advance the achievement of Sustainable Development becomes imperative. In this regard, SSC bilaterally exchanged by Ibero-American countries confirms the region's commitment to the 2030 Agenda during the hardest years of the pandemic (2020-2021). Thus, in this period, Ibero-American SSC reveals an alignment with the SDGs that responds to a dual purpose: to continue addressing structural problems - consolidating long-standing programs - while implementing SSC initiatives to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

→ GRAPH 2.21

Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America, by their potential alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 2020-2021

In units



SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

Graph 2.21, which distributes the 661 SSC initiatives Ibero-American countries bilaterally exchanged during the 2020-2021 period according to the main SDG with which they were potentially aligned, sheds light on these two combined purposes. However, given the multidimensional and comprehensive approach of the Agenda, the same

graph also illustrates the “second” SDG to which initiatives could also be contributing. Indeed, Ibero-American countries stated 75% of the initiatives implemented in those years also addressed one (or even two) of these second SDGs.

In this context, it was certainly predictable that the 2020-2021 period would confirm the usual trend: the concentration of the largest number of initiatives on SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), 125, corresponding to almost 1 in 5 of those promoted these years. In terms of relative importance, 105 actions and projects potentially aligned with SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) followed, as well as 94 exchanges that addressed SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth). As the graph shows, Ibero-American countries concentrated their greatest efforts on these three Sustainable Development Goals, which account for one half of the 661 SSC initiatives implemented in 2020-2021.

Case 2.4. precisely illustrates how these priorities have been combined. This initiative, launched in 2019, prior to the pandemic crisis, addressed one of the most significant challenges society is currently facing: labor market inclusion of young people, who are affected by high unemployment rates. Through this initiative, Mexico

shares its experience (which in the 2019-2020 period benefited more than 1.5 million young people) with El Salvador. The initiative addresses a structural challenge, prioritized in the 2030 Agenda through SDG 8 (Decent Work and economic growth). Its importance is even more significant during the COVID-19 crisis, which has hit employment hard, especially that of the most vulnerable groups, such as youth.

→ CASE 2.4

Training and labor market inclusion of young people: a major challenge in the COVID-19 context



Youth unemployment is one of the most pressing problems worldwide and it has increased as a consequence of the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of job opportunities for young people not only affects the economy as a whole, but also increases inequality and is detrimental to citizens' human development. In Mexico, for example, the population between 18 and 29 years that has the possibility to study or work but is not currently doing so is above 2 million (Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare of Mexico, 2022).

In the face of this huge challenge, the program Youth Building the Future (*Jóvenes construyendo el futuro*) focuses on training for work and effective inclusion in the labor market. In 2019, the Program benefitted 1,120,543 young adults and, by 2020, it supported 444,585 new applicants, adding up to 1,565,128 at the end of that year (Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare of Mexico, 2021).

Due to its success, this initiative was replicated in other countries of the region, such as El Salvador, which faces similar challenges. Indeed, Mexico shared the Program with this Central-American partner through the Mexican Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AMEXCID by its Spanish acronym) and it had an impact on young people in communities of prioritized municipalities with high rates of migration flows, poverty, reduced employment opportunities and risk of violence. Efforts were made to strengthen their participation in community development, on-the-job training and in the reconstruction of the social fabric, through the promotion of endogenous leaderships and the generation of instruments for a better quality of life and to strengthen their connection with their territorial environment and their inclusion in productive activities (Agency for International Cooperation of El Salvador, ESCO by its Spanish acronym, 2019).

This initiative, which started in 2019 and is still under execution, was supported and coordinated by several national institutions in both countries such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Government and Territorial Development, Labor and Social Welfare, International Cooperation Agencies and the Integrated Public Health System, among others.

The program was recently launched in San Salvador, in February 2022, in close coordination with the Mayor's Office, providing scholarships to 200 at-risk young adults from six different districts. The investment was of 280,000 USD and will last 8 months, after which participants will receive a certification for their skills, which will enable them to enhance their labor competencies and productive processes (*La Huella Newspaper*, 2022).

As Graph 2.21 shows, the purposes addressed by the rest of the Bilateral SSC exchanges that were implemented in Ibero-America in 2020-2021 are much more diversified. The ranges of values in which they fluctuate are consequently much lower, never exceeding the figure of 50 initiatives, at a considerable distance from values associated with SDGs 3, 16 and 8.

As for the rest of the SDGs, it is worth to highlight the efforts made by Ibero-American countries to address SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), each of them being the main purpose of between 40 and 50 initiatives that aggregately account for 20% of the total. Ibero-American countries also focused on topics aligned with SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals), SDG 15 (Life on land) and SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), figures ranging, in each case, between 20 and 30 initiatives. All the above suggests the multidimensional scope of the

region's SSC, which will be even more evident when the analysis considers the types of second SDGs that were simultaneously addressed. Case 2.5 is an example of the aforementioned, as it reviews a bilateral exchange between Ecuador and Peru that focuses on water conservation (SDG 6 as the main SDG), with the additional aim to contribute to the recovery of mountain ecosystems (SDG 15 as a second SDG).

— SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) were identified as the main purpose of between 40 and 50 initiatives

→ CASE 2.5

Protecting water: key to recover mountain ecosystems

Mountain ecosystems are of global importance. They are the source of the world's major rivers and, as rates of precipitation are higher in mountains, storing both ice and snow, they are also origins of groundwater. Thus, mountain ecosystems provide freshwater to more than half of the world's population, for domestic consumption, irrigation, industry and energy generation, among other activities (UNESCO, 2014). This is the case of the Metropolitan District of Quito, Ecuador, which is supplied with water from the moorlands that surround the city. The Environmental Fund for Water Protection (FONAG by its Spanish acronym) preserves and recovers these areas to ensure water supply, "with a technical, social equity and sustainability approach" (FONAG, 2022).

Based on this experience, FONAG provides technical assistance to the National Institute for Research on Glaciers and Mountain Ecosystems of Peru (INAIGEM by its Spanish acronym), through a SSC project on

water services research, through which the two institutions share their experiences in the impact conservation and recovery of mountain ecosystems has on these services (FONAG, 2021). INAIGEM, in turn, is a Peruvian government institution that works to increase scientific and technological research on glaciers and mountain ecosystems, promoting their sustainable management in favor of the populations that depend on or benefit from them (Ministry of Environment of Peru, MINAM by its Spanish acronym, 2020).

The project began in 2020 and has executed several activities, initially online due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end of 2021, FONAG's technical team visited INAIGEM's headquarters in Huaraz, and was able to visit some of the Institute's research sites, such as pine tree slopes and grasslands in Cátac, a bofedal (type of high Andean wetland) on the Pastouri glacier route (over 3,600 meters above sea level)



and pine tree plantations in Tayacoto (over 4,500 meters above sea level). Acid drainage produced by glacier retreat was also witnessed in these sites. Ecuadorian technical experts found differences between high mountain ecosystems of both countries - for example, in the conditions that determine their formation - but similarities between plant species (FONAG, 2021).

The project continues to monitor INAIGEM's research aimed at assessing impacts on the provision of water services (SIDICSS, 2022) and plans to continue inter-institutional joint work in the future (FONAG, 2021).

Meanwhile, around 100 SSC initiatives (another 15% of 661), focused on topics aligned with up to seven different SDGs: specifically, SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 14 (Life below water). Although their relative importance as main SDGs is lower, these SDGs should not be considered less relevant, since another analysis clearly contradicts this: in most of these cases (SDG1, SDG5, SDG10 and SDG13) these Goals significantly increase their importance if considered “second” SDGs. Indeed, one of the great strengths of the 2030 Agenda is its multidimensional approach and its comprehensive treatment of such a complex process as development. The way in which SSC initiatives are adapted to be able to simultaneously address different goals ratifies Ibero-American countries’ commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to progress towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive development “leaving no one behind”.

Once again, as Graph 2.21 shows, one of the most illustrative cases of this effort is the fight against inequality: SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) appears as the main SDG in 19 initiatives, but is considered the second SDG in 44 exchanges (more than twice as many), which means this purpose is explicitly present in at least 1 out of every 10 initiatives. In fact, the possibility to be aligned with more than one goal enables to also focus, for example, on economy and employment (SDG 8 and SDG 9); sustainability (SDG 11, SDG 13 and SDG 15) or on supporting populations in especially vulnerable conditions (SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 5 and, as mentioned, SDG 10).

→ CASE 2.6

Haku Wiñay/Noa Jayatai “Let’s grow” (*Vamos a crecer*): agricultural entrepreneurship and social inclusion



One of the main conclusions of UNDP’s Regional Human Development Report 2021 is that the Latin-America and Caribbean region is caught in a trap of high inequality and low growth as a result of the complex interaction of three main factors: the concentration of power, violence and inefficient social protection systems (UNDP, 2021, p.3). As inequality, the different gaps that affect the region’s development have been deepened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of this complex scenario, SSC has much to contribute with effective mechanisms for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as with frameworks for the exchange of knowledge which, ultimately improves people’s quality of life.

The bilateral project between Peru and Panama, *Exchange of experiences for the implementation of a social intervention project based on the Haku Wiñay/Noa Jayatai FONCODES-MIDIS*, is an

example of this cooperation, which is focused on reducing horizontal and vertical inequalities (income gaps, and cultural and geographic gaps, respectively). Through this initiative, Panama strengthened its capacities in the *Other services and social policies* sector, based on the Peruvian public policy Haku Wiñay/Noa Jayatai “Let’s grow” (*Vamos a crecer*).

This initiative consisted of a series of exchanges to transfer knowledge, skills and competencies between officials of the Ministries of Social Development of the two countries and among their communities and other stakeholders. The project had a component of productive inclusion for families, among others. The Peruvian policy Haku Wiñay/Noa Jayatai “Let’s grow” (*Vamos a crecer*), the model on which this knowledge transfer was based, has been implemented for almost 10 years in the framework of the National Strategy for Social Development and Inclusion “Include to Grow” (*Incluir*

para Crecer), promoted to generate sustainable economic inclusion through the development of productive capacities and rural entrepreneurship in beneficiary families, in order to overcome their lack of access to local markets (Social Development Cooperation Fund, FONCODES by its Spanish acronym, 2021).

In the framework of the implementation of this bilateral project, both countries addressed their adaptation to a new socio-economic context within the global health emergency posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also important to highlight the strong territorial, community-based and participatory spirit of the project, which takes advantage of Yachachiqs’ traditional knowledge (in Quechua language: peasant leaders who know and teach) and uses the farmer-to-farmer training model, mainly based on horizontal and mutually beneficial formulas, in line with SSC.

An example of the importance of this combination of purposes is described in Case 2.6, based on an experience between Peru and Panama. This project, aimed at indigenous populations, promotes agricultural entrepreneurship as a means to generate income to contribute to overcoming poverty and inequalities (income, cultural and geographic). In any case, and although it is still not enough, this experience accounts for SSC promoted in Ibero-America for and/or with these populations. Box 2.3 examines this, as it analyzes all the actions and projects that, between 2015 and 2021, have had indigenous peoples among their main objectives.

This sheds light on the efforts that have been made - and on those actions that still remain undone - through SSC, to "accelerate" the achievement of the Agenda and effectively "leave no one behind".

→ BOX 2.3

Ibero-America, the 2030 Agenda and South-South Cooperation for and/or with indigenous peoples

In 2007, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognized "Indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests" (UN, 2007). Latin-America is the continent that has the largest indigenous population and heterogeneity on the planet (58.2 million in 2018, around 10% of the total), with more than 800 peoples (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020).

Although the countries of the region have been making progress to recognize and protect their rights, "indigenous peoples are still one of the most socially, politically and economically excluded and neglected sectors of the population in Latin-America" (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020, p. 15). Among other things, indigenous populations have a higher incidence of income poverty than non-indigenous people, even more than twice in some countries (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020). At the same time, "major barriers persist in the access of indigenous peoples to secondary education" (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020, p. 233). In addition to this, it is possible to identify challenges in terms of access to housing, basic services, etc.

On the other hand, indigenous peoples play a key role in climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation -particularly agro-diversity - through their knowledge, practices and uses of nature. In fact, the aforementioned United Nations Declaration recognizes that "respect for indigenous knowledge, cultures and traditional practices contributes to sustainable and equitable development and proper management of the environment" (UN, 2007).

As a consequence of the above, protecting their territories is no longer only essential for them, but for all humanity. "However, this collective continues to be among the groups that lag the furthest behind in terms of its rights in all countries of the region" (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020, p. 16). The irruption of the mining industry in the Amazon area and the expansion of the agricultural frontier into their territories are some of the threats to which they are exposed.

At the same time, climate change has deepened inequity towards indigenous peoples since, even though they contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions and protect forests, they are among the groups that are most vulnerable to its effects. In addition, their situation has been aggravated by the health and socioeconomic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The above suggests the diversity and richness of Latin-America's indigenous peoples can provide answers to some of the major challenges of our times, such as the climate crisis. However, this "requires comprehensive policies to tackle the structural causes of the exclusion of indigenous peoples in terms of development and well-being, which design and implementation must necessarily involve indigenous peoples themselves as essential stakeholders" (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020, p. 234), in line with the principle of leaving no one behind of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

How has SSC responded to these challenges? In the document *South-South and Triangular Cooperation and Indigenous Peoples*, Zúñiga states that "South-South and Triangular Cooperation for or with indigenous peoples has been essentially absent from the definitions of public policies on cooperation in most of the countries of the Ibero-American community" (Zúñiga, 2022, p. 30). Although not specifically aimed at indigenous people, several South-South and Triangular Cooperation instruments can support this type of initiatives. However, in Zúñiga's perspective (2022), the subject is not being addressed on the basis of a specific strategic guideline.

Forty-eight Bilateral SSC initiatives were implemented in Ibero-America between 2015 and 2021 (see methodological note) for and/or with indigenous peoples (39 projects and 9 actions), accounting for 2% of the total. This percentage is only slightly higher than that identified by Zúñiga (2022) for all South-South and Triangular Cooperation between 2006 and 2019 (1.2%). Of these, two thirds correspond to what the author calls "initiatives for indigenous peoples",

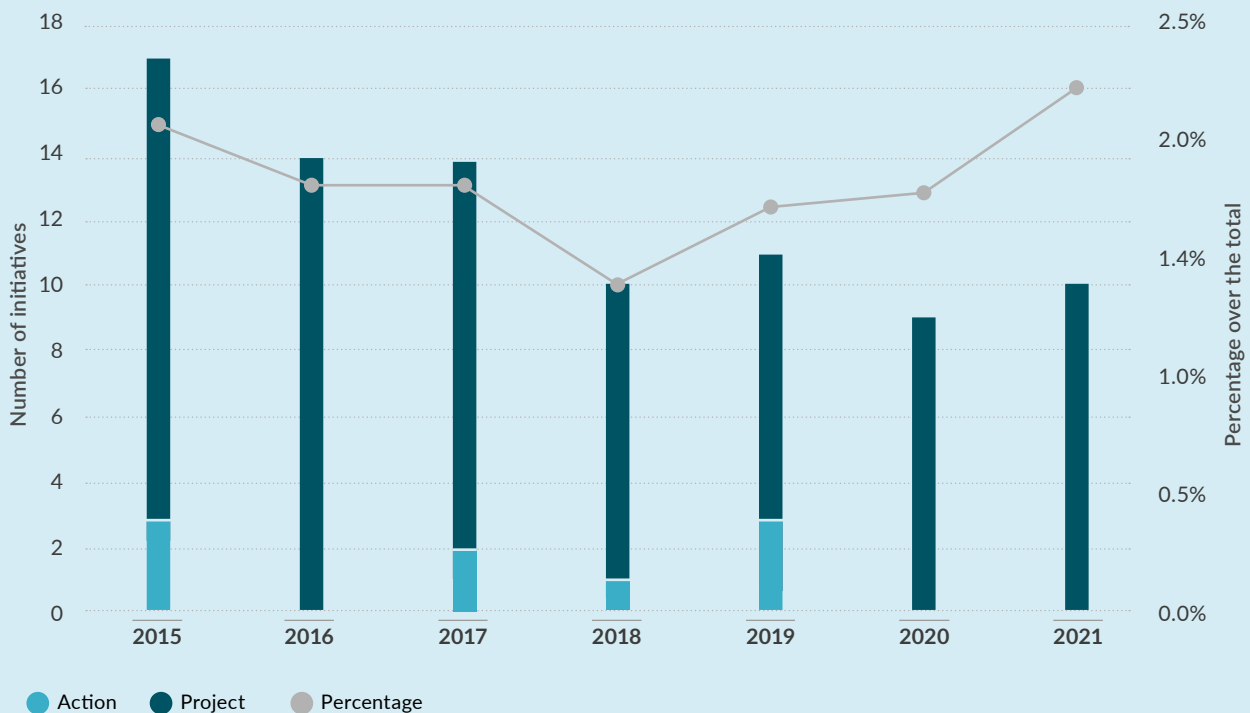
i.e., those that have indigenous peoples as the only beneficiaries. The rest are initiatives "with indigenous peoples", which explicitly include them among their target population, but together with other groups.

As the first graph shows, Bilateral SSC initiatives for and/or with indigenous peoples in Ibero-America have fallen in the analyzed period: from 17 in 2015 to 10 in 2021, although this drop is smaller if only projects are

considered. Its proportion over the total annual Bilateral SSC initiatives reached its minimum in 2018 (1.4%), but steadily increased thereafter, including in the pandemic years, with a maximum of 2.2% in 2021.

Evolution of Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America for and/or with indigenous peoples, by type and percentage over the total. 2015-2021

In units and percentage



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

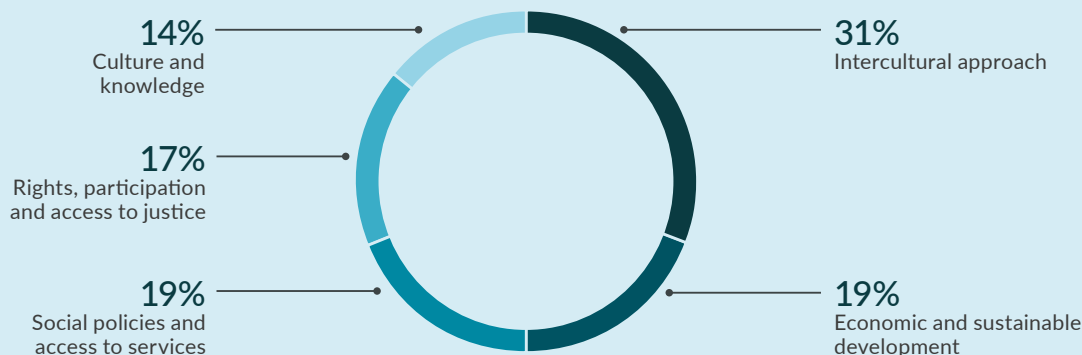
As for the topics that were addressed (see the second graph), 31% of the initiatives can be grouped considering an intercultural approach to public policies (mainly health and intercultural education), but also based on their cross-cutting impact on public management and planning. Economic and sustainable development issues followed - in sectors such as agriculture, handicrafts and ecotourism - as well as Social policies and access to services, each with almost one-fifth of the total.

The latter includes a wide variety of initiatives, from work with specific population groups (children and adolescents; women), to conditional cash transfers, access to healthcare, electricity, among others. In terms of Rights, participation and access to justice, some initiatives focus on electoral participation, but also on participation in the design and execution of public policies, the right to autonomy and governance, and the right to defense. Finally, and classified in Culture and knowledge,

it is possible to identify projects and actions related to safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of indigenous peoples, indigenous languages and ancestral knowledge.

Main topics addressed by Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America for and/or with indigenous peoples. 2015-2021

In percentage



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

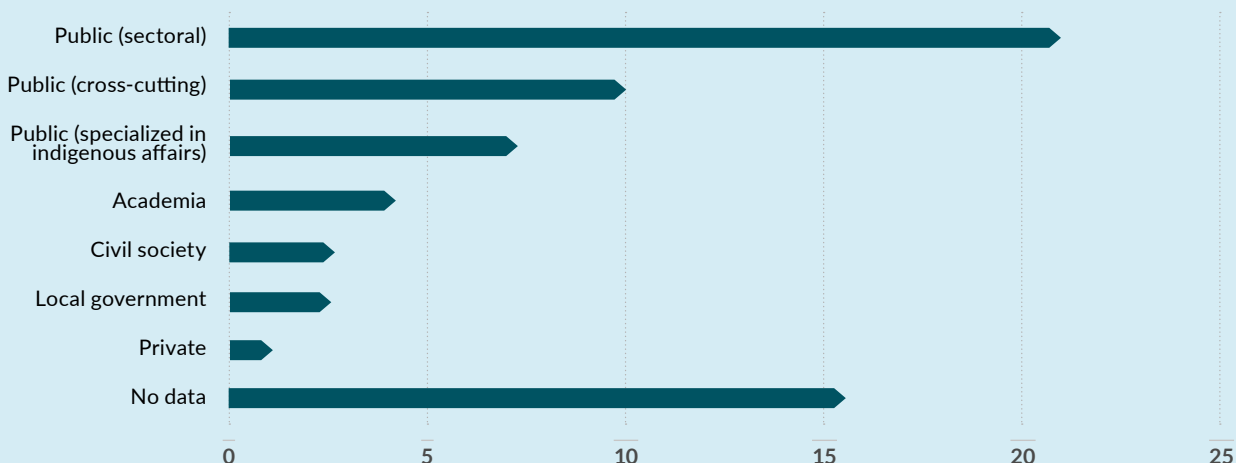
The third graph focuses on the type of stakeholders that participated in the initiatives. In this sense, as the graph shows, indigenous organizations only participate in 1 initiative out

of 48, while most of them are implemented by public institutions, whether sectoral, cross-cutting or specialized in indigenous affairs. Academia, civil society, local

governments and the private sector also participate in this cooperation although to a much less extent.

Type of stakeholders that participated in Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America for and/or with indigenous peoples. 2015-2021

In units



Note: This is a multiple variable, since different types of institutions may be collaborating in the same initiative. Sometimes information is only available for one of the partners, so data is incomplete.

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

In turn (see fourth graph), 14 countries in the region have engaged in Bilateral SSC initiatives for and/or with indigenous peoples between 2015 and 2021. Colombia stands out with a completely bidirectional profile, since it equally participates as provider and as recipient. These 20

initiatives represent 3.7% of the total Bilateral SSC this country promoted with Ibero-America. This feature is especially worthy of mention since, according to data from ECLAC and FILAC (2020), Colombia's indigenous population corresponds to 4.4% of the total, i.e., it is not among the countries

with the largest concentration of this population although, in absolute terms, it stands above two million.

Peru and Mexico follow, the former with a dual profile that tends to receive technical assistance, and the latter with a predominantly

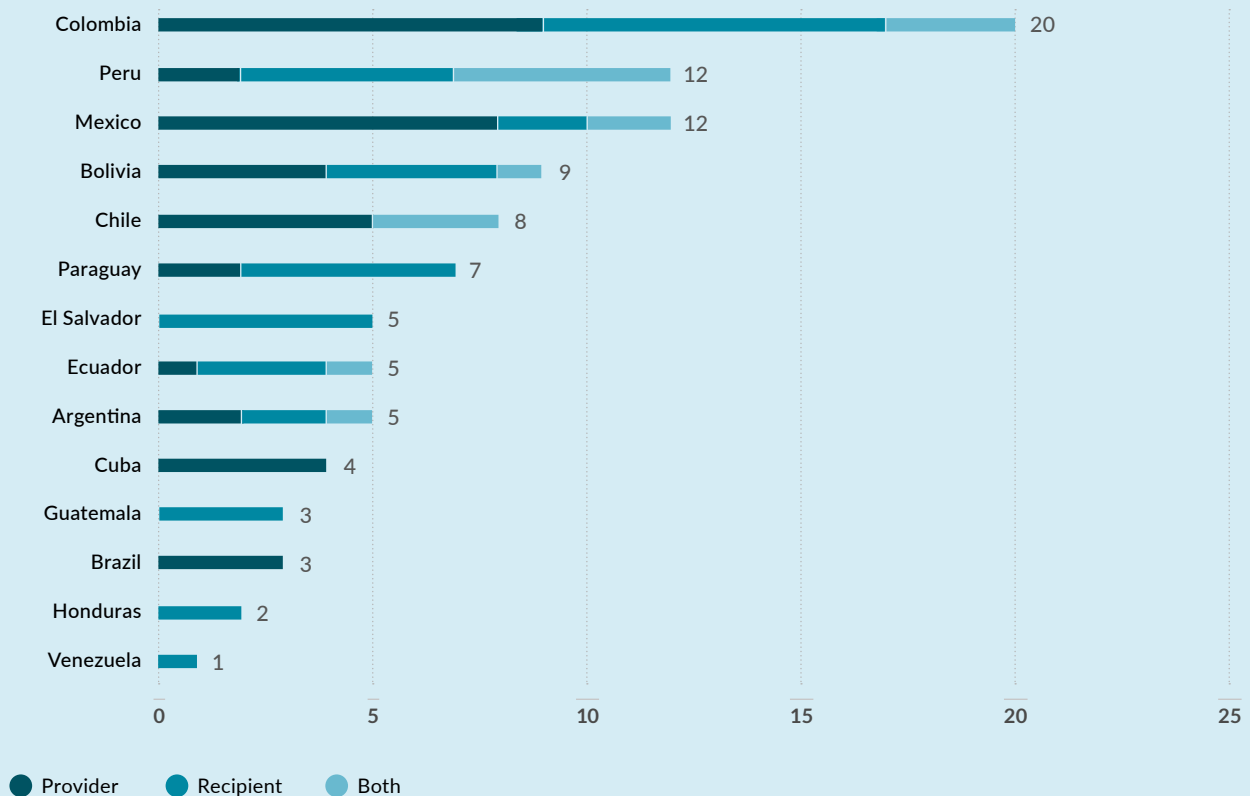
provider profile. These two countries participate in almost one quarter of the initiatives. Mexico has the largest indigenous population in the region, with more than 27 million people, while in Peru this group represents 26% of the total (ECLAC and FILAC, 2020).

Bolivia, Chile and Paraguay have also been active in this type of cooperation. Chile has mainly participated as provider or in bidirectional initiatives, while the other two have had a more varied profile. In Bolivia's and Paraguay's cases, these exchanges represent

3.8% and 3.9% of the Bilateral SSC initiatives in which they participate during the period in Ibero-America, a proportion that almost doubles the regional average.

Countries' participation in Bilateral SSC initiatives in Ibero-America for and/or with indigenous peoples, by role. 2015-2021

In units



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

Although the region has certain experience in Bilateral SSC for and/or with indigenous peoples, there is still much to be done in this sense. According to Zúñiga (2022), this type of SSC can become an essential instrument to bridge the gap between

the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and their systematic violation in practice, and also to respond to one of the great challenges of our times, such as the environmental and climate crisis.

Methodological note: The Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS) was used to carry out this exercise. On this basis, a search was performed using keywords related to indigenous peoples in initiatives' title and/or objective (both in Spanish and Portuguese, the two official languages of the Ibero-American Space). A manual review was then made to double check this aspect and proceed to classify them. Due to limited descriptive information, figures may probably be underestimated. Although the classification was based on Zúñiga (2022), it suffered some variations.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, ECLAC and FILAC (2020), UN (2007) and Zúñiga (2022).

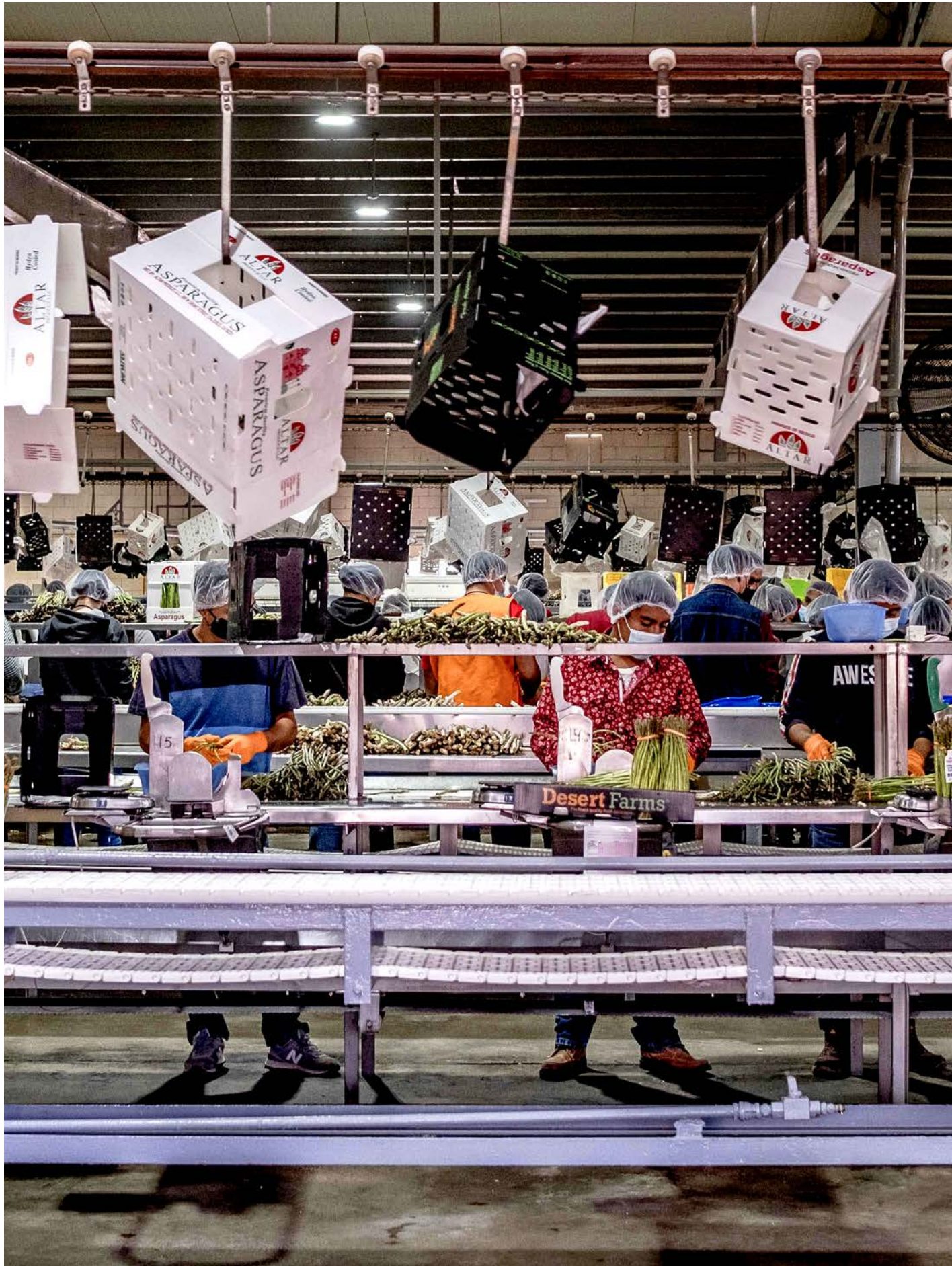


Photo: Scientists, students and agricultural producers work together to promote agriculture and food security through good practices for the care and efficient use of water. Bilateral SSC project between Mexico and Chile. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.