

## CHAPTER 4

# Ibero-America and Regional South-South Cooperation

Regional SSC in Ibero-America in the 2020-2021 period aimed to respond to COVID-19 and to the 2030 Agenda.

In recent years, Regional South-South Cooperation (SSC) has gained importance as an instrument to find innovative solutions to Ibero-American countries' common problems. Part of this boom can be explained by the possibility it has to bring together an increasing number of stakeholders of a different nature while broadening the scale and the scope of other cooperation modalities. This chapter analyzes Regional SSC in Ibero-America in the 2020-2021 period, in a context determined by two major challenges: the need to respond to the COVID-19 crisis while advancing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

## 4.1 Evolution of Regional SSC in Ibero-America: a first approach

Graph 4.1 was prepared to show the evolution of Regional SSC in which Ibero-America has participated over the last 15 years based on two different variables: the number of initiatives Ibero-American countries annually had under execution during the 2007-2021 period; and the share of these same exchanges in the total number of initiatives registered in the three modalities recognized in this space.

Its interpretation suggests two stages of clear contrast: a first phase of intense growth in terms of the number of initiatives, between 2007 and 2013; and a second one in which there is a progressive reduction, definitely accelerated during the most severe years of the pandemic. Indeed, during the first period, the volume of initiatives

doubled, from a minimum of 68 to a maximum of 139. From that moment on, the aggregated number of programs and projects decreased; at first, gradually, at an average annual rate of -2.5% and, as a result, in 2018-2019, the total number of initiatives still remained at 120. Then, it is possible to identify a sharp decline, coinciding with the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, with an average annual drop of -15.5% that pushes the final number down to 85 in 2021.

Meanwhile, the evolution of Regional SSC's share suggests the performance of this modality, in almost the entire period, was relatively better than that of SSC and TC in which Ibero-American countries participated. This would explain the fact that, up to 2020, the importance Regional SSC exchanges had over the total number of initiatives executed in the framework of the three modalities recognized in this space registered an upward trend: from 6.9% in 2008 and 2009 to almost 15% in 2020. Thus, in 2021 alone, Regional SSC's performance is relatively poorer than that of all SSC, its share losing more than 1 percentage point as a result.

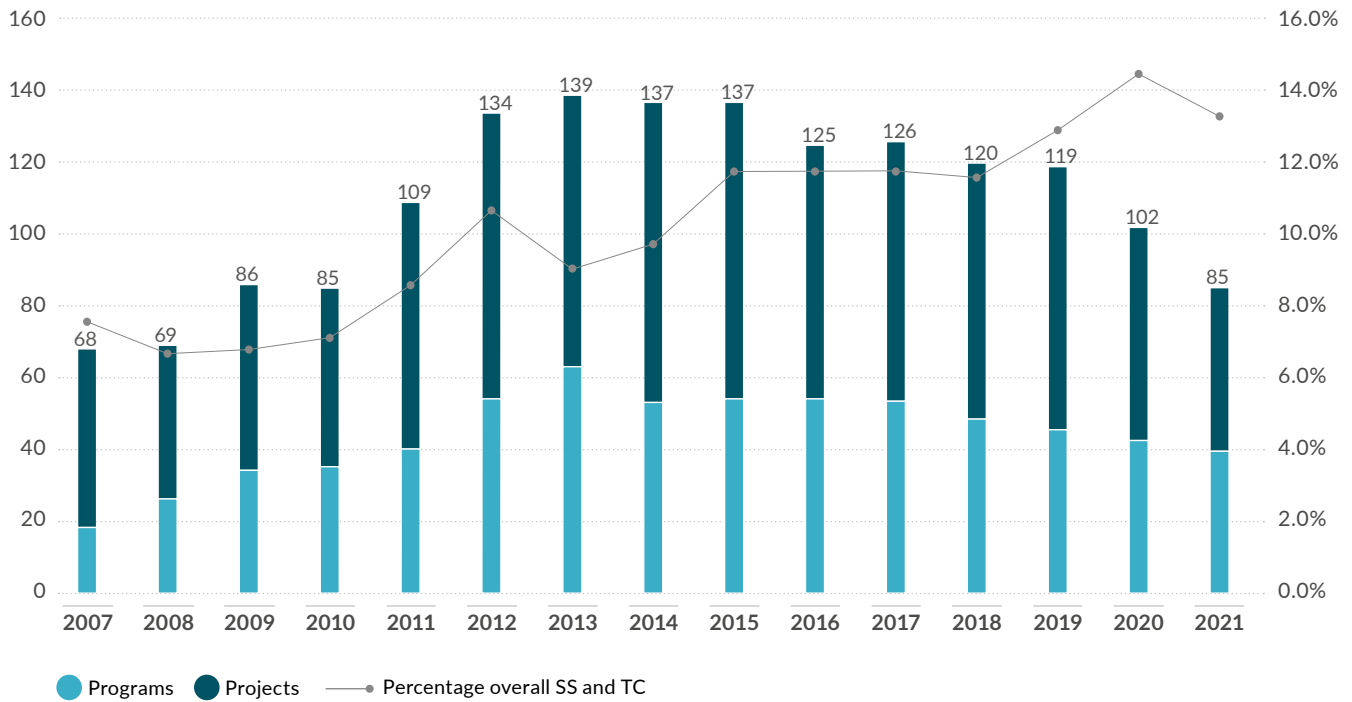
In addition, this general behavior underlies different dynamics regarding the two instruments through which Regional SSC initiatives are executed: projects and programs. First, it is essential to understand that they are both very different, especially in terms of their scale. In this sense, and considering their estimated time frame in the 2020-2021 period, projects had an average duration of 2.5 years while programs could have been active for an average of 8 years.

The above suggests these two instruments have very different scopes, and choosing one or the other when implementing SSC in its Regional modality definitely has different implications in terms of time, objectives and even the volume of allocated resources. This also implies that, depending on the type of instrument, Regional SSC initiatives will have more or less capacities to adapt and/or be resilient to a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, and as it was explained in Chapter II, Bilateral SSC actions had a greater capacity to dynamize this modality than projects, due to their nature. In this same sense and regarding Regional SSC, programs were more resilient to COVID-19's context.

## → GRAPH 4.1

**Evolution of Ibero-American Regional SSC initiatives with all partners, by programs and projects, and their share overall Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation. 2007-2021**

In units and percentage



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

In light of the above, the reduction associated with the most severe years of the COVID-19 crisis was more pronounced for projects. Indeed, in 2019, 73 Regional SSC projects and 46 programs were registered. Very significant although different average annual decreases occurred during the next two years (-21.5% and -6.7%, respectively), which pushed the final figures to 45 projects and 40 programs.

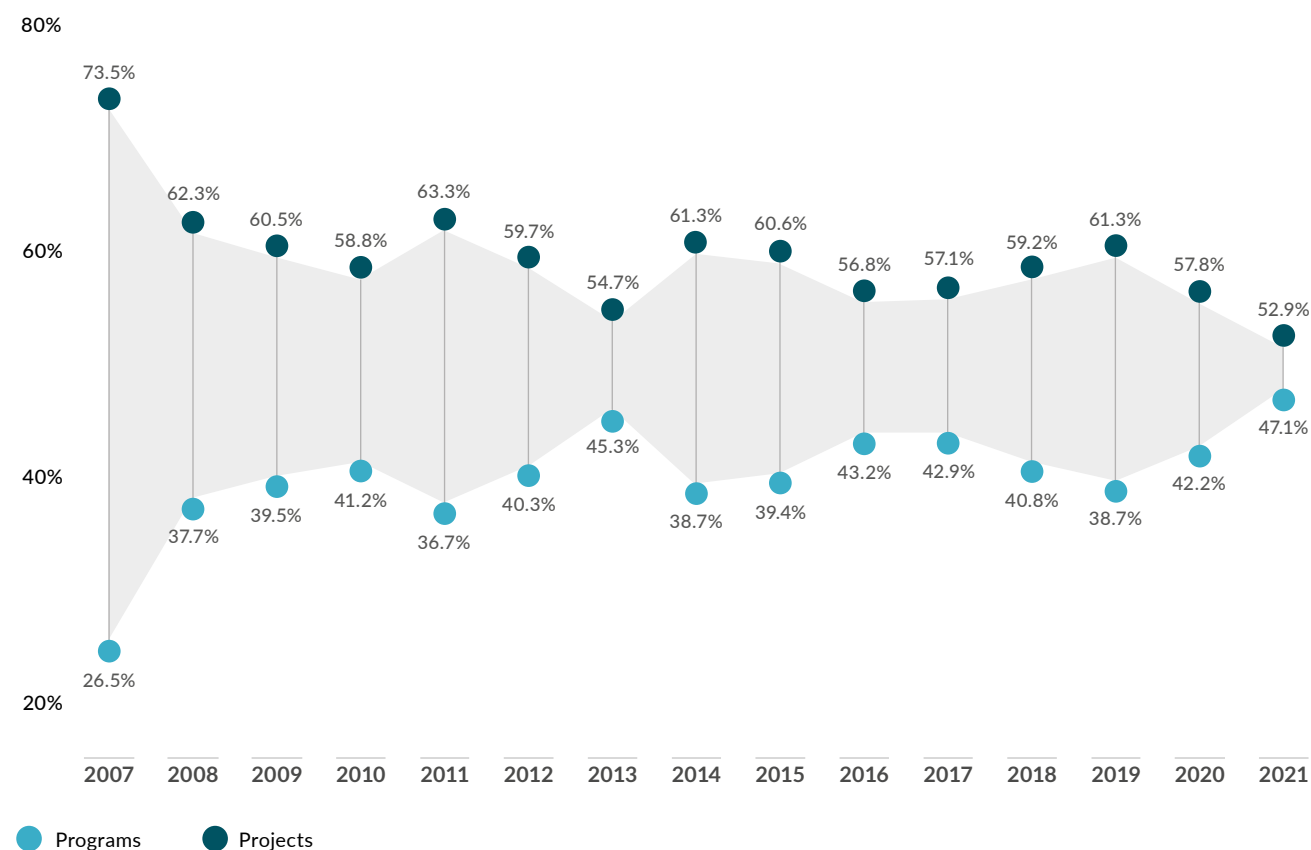
This changes the distribution of Regional SSC initiatives considering the two instruments and, more specifically, it translates into a relative increase in the importance of programs to the detriment of projects. Graph 4.2 shows this variation and the evolution of projects' and programs' share in the total number of Regional SSC initiatives annually implemented by Ibero-America in the 2007-2021 period. Throughout this period, the distribution in terms of projects and programs has been changing and tending to converge and it is possible to identify three moments with different ratios: the first of 75%-25% in 2007; the second, which, with variations, remains stable at 60%-40% until 2019; and the third, of almost 50%-50% in 2021.

It is easier to understand that the decline during the most severe years of the COVID-19 crisis has been more pronounced for projects than for programs

## → GRAPH 4.2

**Evolution of projects' and programs' share in Ibero-American Regional SSC initiatives with all partners. 2007-2021**

In percentage



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

## 4.2 Narrowing the analysis: the 2020-2021 period and Regional SSC in Ibero-America

The biennial nature of this *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America*, as well as the need to understand how the COVID-19 crisis has influenced the evolution of SSC in the region, has led to choosing the 2020-2021 period as the time frame for this analysis. For this reason, this chapter's review of Regional SSC also focuses on these two years.

Graph 4.3 shows the 116 Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated that were active in 2020-2021. In this sense, in order to further delimit the analysis on which this chapter focuses, the same graph distributes these 116 initiatives considering the way in which the different partners (Ibero-American countries and/or other developing regions) were involved.

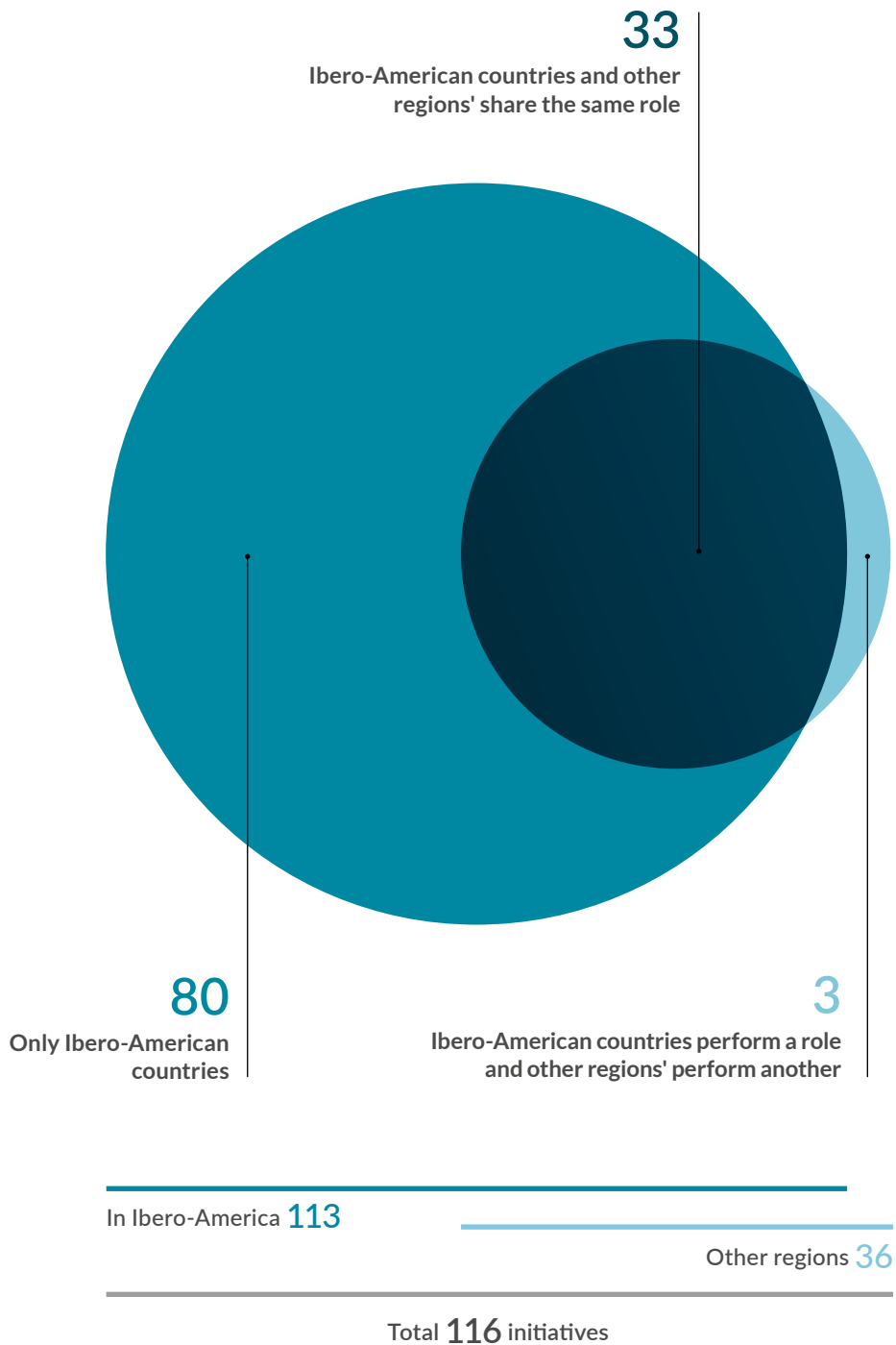
Specifically, it is possible to identify three groups of initiatives: the first, with 80 programs and projects, in which only Ibero-American countries exchange among themselves; the second, with only 3 initiatives, where there is a clear distribution of roles (provider and recipient) between Ibero-American countries and those of other developing regions; and the third, with 33 programs and projects, in which Ibero-American countries and those of other regions coincide in the same role. This is very common, for example, in experiences that involve Mesoamerica, where the recipient role is exercised both by Central-American countries and by an extra-regional one such as Belize, considered part of the non-Ibero-American Caribbean.

In short, this chapter analyzes the 113 Regional SSC initiatives that involved exchanges *in Ibero-America* and that were under execution during the 2020-2021 period. As Graph 4.4 shows, this figure reflects the reduction and the dynamics already described, as it is 20% lower than that registered in 2018-2019, when it was over 140.

→ **GRAPH 4.3**

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

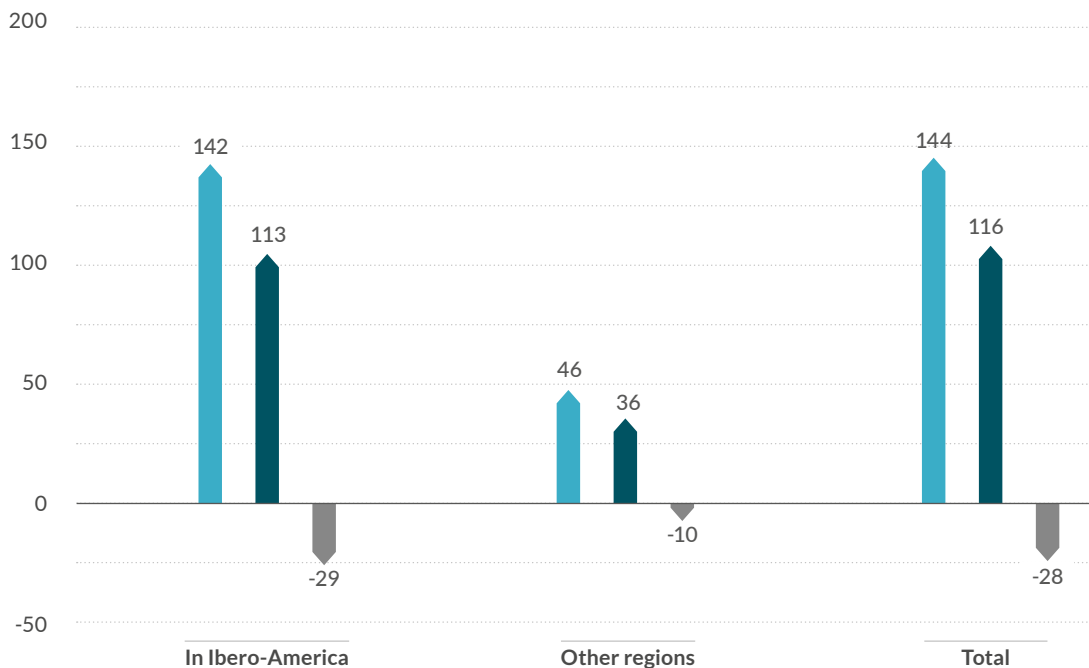
In units



→ GRAPH 4.4

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

In units



■ 2018-2019 ■ 2020-2021 ▾ Variation

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



Photo: Manatees are marine mammals in danger of extinction due to the extensive hunting they have been suffering for centuries and as a result of the loss of the mangroves they inhabit. Regional SSC project *Strengthening the Biological Corridor in the Caribbean* with the participation of the Dominican Republic and Cuba. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2022.

## 4.3 Participation of the different stakeholders during the 2020-2021 period

The characterization of Regional SSC that took place in Ibero-America during the 2020-2021 period begins with an analysis of the participating stakeholders: Ibero-American countries, on the one hand; and, on the other, regional and international organizations that joined them in this cooperation. In this sense and, as a first approach, the aim is to identify the different stakeholders that were involved and understand the level of their relative participation in the 113 initiatives that were carried out.

However, this section also sheds light on other relevant aspects in terms of the way in which this participation took place. The first refers to relationships between countries and, in a way, to the role played by the region as a whole (as another stakeholder), which emerges due to the different options countries have to establish partnerships, but also due to the opportunities they have to associate in the framework of the organizations to which they belong. The second aspect is related to one of the implications that the participation of these organizations has: the possibility of being able to provide an institutional and concrete operational framework, and even to define a thematic priority for Regional SSC initiatives promoted by the different integration systems.

### 4.3.1. Ibero-American countries and multilateral organizations

As it was already mentioned, the main purpose of this section is to identify the intensity of the participation of Ibero-American countries in Regional SSC that took place in Ibero-America in the 2020-2021 period, as well as the most active multilateral organizations in the region.

In Graph 4.5, which is based on the map of the region, the 22 Ibero-American countries are associated with colors of increasing intensity to indicate, according to the legend, the range of values where the number of initiatives in which it participated is situated.

In this sense, two countries stand out in particular: Argentina and Uruguay, both in the Southern Cone and with participations above 60 Regional SSC initiatives (66 and 62, respectively). In terms of relative importance, they were followed by 4 countries (with more than 50

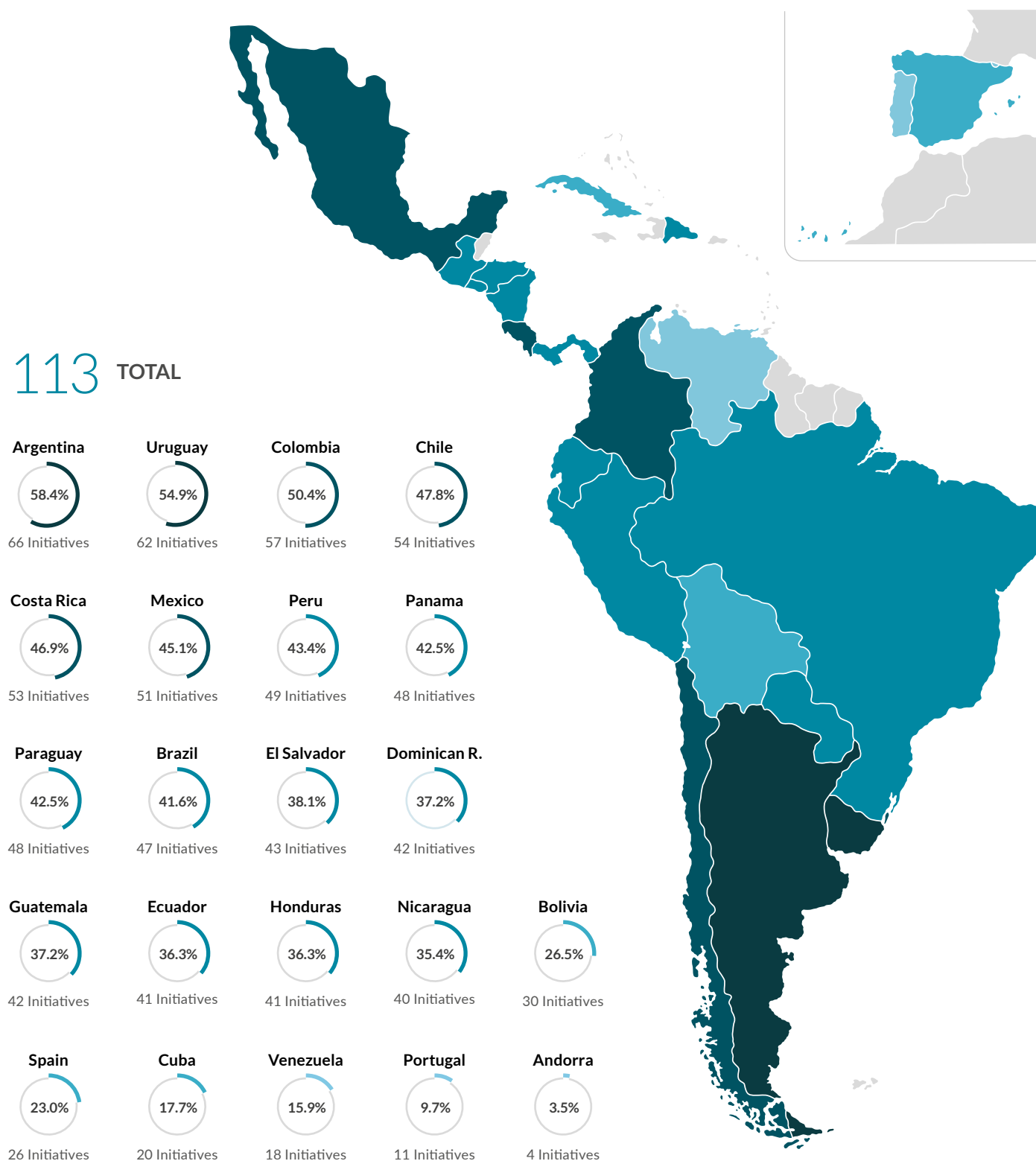
initiatives in each case) that are geographically distributed throughout the continent: in the South and North, Chile and Mexico, respectively; Costa Rica in Central-America; and Colombia in the Andean sub-region. Meanwhile, most countries (up to 10) participated in 40 to 50 initiatives, for example: El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama in Central-America; the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean; and Ecuador and Peru, together with Paraguay and Brazil, in South-America. Bolivia and Cuba, in the Andean and Caribbean sub-regions, had relatively lower records, with 30 and 20 initiatives in each case. Spain, in the Iberian Peninsula, had mid-range values (26 programs and projects). The other two peninsular countries, Portugal and Andorra, together with South America's Venezuela, close the analysis with records below 20 initiatives.

— Argentina and Uruguay, both in the Southern Cone, had outstanding participations in Regional SSC, with more than 60 initiatives (66 and 62, respectively)

→ GRAPH 4.5

**Ibero-American countries' participation in Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America. 2020-2021**

In units and percentage over the total



Number of Regional SSC initiatives in which each country participated in 2020-2021

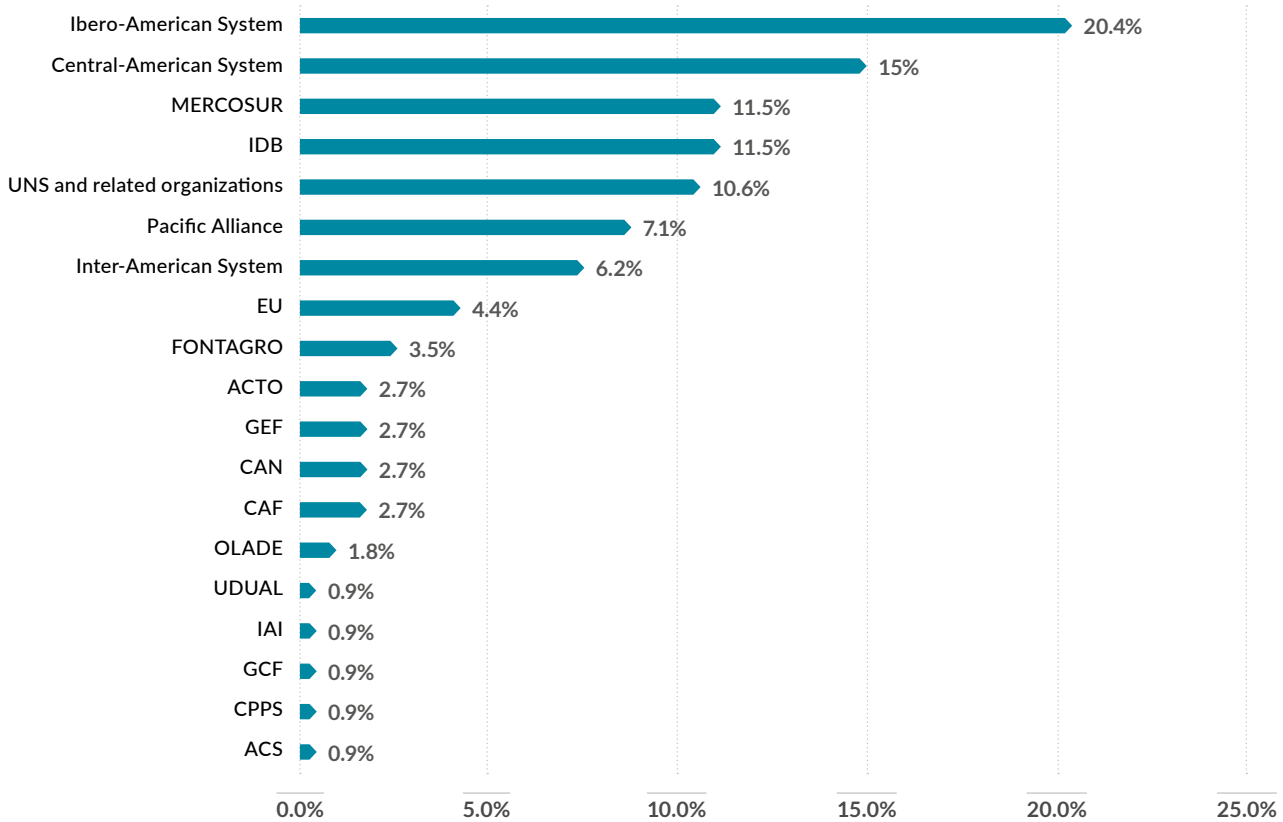
- 60 or more
- Between 50 and 59
- Between 40 and 49
- Between 20 and 39
- Less than 20
- No initiatives registered

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

## → GRAPH 4.6

**Multilateral organizations' participation in Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America. 2020-2021**

In percentage



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

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

A second analysis considers the multilateral organizations (another key stakeholder in this modality) that joined Ibero-American countries in the implementation of each and every one of the 113 Regional SSC initiatives of the 2020-2021 period. Graph 4.6 shows these organizations and arranges them according to their relative level of participation in the exchanges that were carried out.<sup>1</sup>

As illustrated, one or more organizations of the Ibero-American System participated in at least 1 out of every 5 of the more than 110 Regional SSC programs and projects executed in 2020-2021: for example, the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB by its Spanish acronym), the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI by its Spanish acronym) and the Ibero-American Organization for Social Security (OISS by its Spanish acronym).

The presence of the organizations of the Central-American System, active in 15% of the cooperation initiatives in the 2020-2021 period, was also important. The Central-American Integration System (SICA by its Spanish acronym) is a key stakeholder in this sub-region but also for Mesoamerica as a whole, through the Tuxtla Dialogue and Agreement Mechanism, on which joint work between Mexico and SICA is based.

The participation of organizations that are part of the Central-American System, active in 15% of the 2020-2021 initiatives, was also important

<sup>1</sup> It should be added that several multilateral organizations may simultaneously participate in the same initiative. This determines the way in which their participation is considered in the analysis (see methodological note in Graph 4.6).



The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR by its Spanish acronym) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) also deserve a special mention, both participating in 11% of the Regional SSC initiatives that were implemented in Ibero-America during the last two years. They were closely followed (with another 10%) by the agencies of the United Nations System and related organizations. In this sense, reference should be made to the role played by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Economic Commission for Latin-America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), among many others.

Finally, it is important to highlight the support provided by the Pacific Alliance (PA) (participating in 7.1% of the Regional SSC initiatives carried out in Ibero-America in 2020-2021), as well as by the Inter-American System (mainly through the Organization of American States, OAS); and the European Union (EU), both with shares of 6.2% and 4.4% respectively.

### 4.3.2 Partnerships and sub-regions

The analysis of the participation of multilateral organizations in this modality is in turn decisive to understand some of the dynamics which characterized Regional SSC that took place in Ibero-America in 2020-2021. This, as it was mentioned above, enables the identification of the most common types of partnerships and associations between countries, based on a “sub-regional” approach.

Graph 4.7 precisely portrays this information through a heatmap which distributes the 22 Ibero-American countries in the vertical columns and horizontal rows of the resulting matrix, according to their association pattern. The color of each cell is more intense as the number of initiatives in which each pair of partners coincides is higher.

Graph 4.7 suggests the coexistence of different relationship dynamics, not only in terms of countries, but also regarding the sub-regions to which they belong. In this sense, for example and according to the matrix, the relatively low levels of association registered by Andorra,

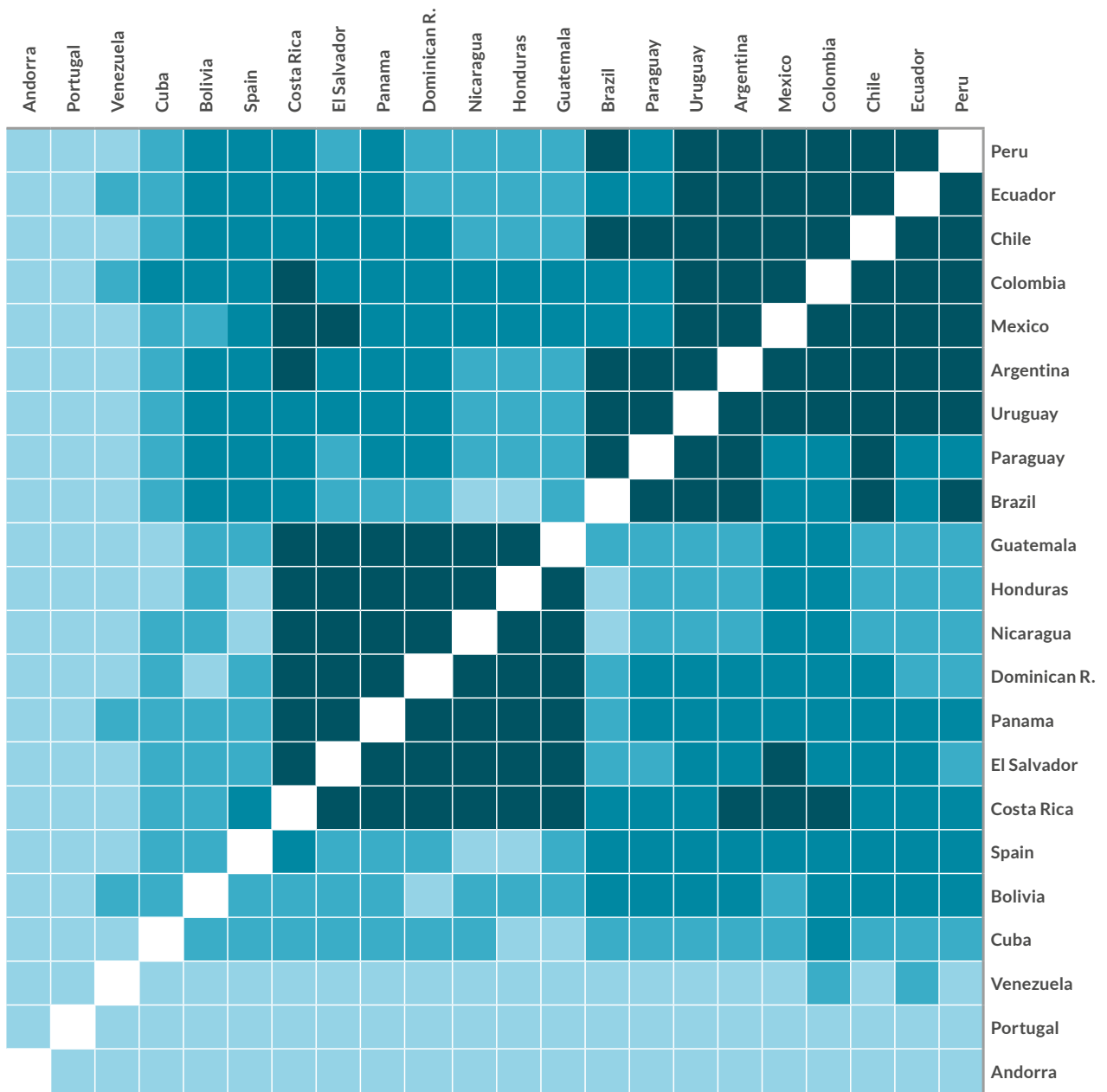


Photo: Demonstration of butterfly irrigation to develop a water management program for efficient water use. Bilateral SSC project *Increased water efficiency and care through a joint experience between the communities of Sonora, Mexico, and Linares, Chile*. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.

→ GRAPH 4.7

**Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in which the countries of the region coincide, according to pairs of partners. 2020-2021**

In units



Number of Regional SSC initiatives in which each pair of partners coincided in 2020-2021

- From 1 to 11
- Between 12 and 17
- Between 18 and 26
- Between 27 and 59

Methodological note: the colors and values assigned to the respective ranges are the result of the distribution of the initiatives by quartiles. Value ranges go from the lowest number of initiatives in which each pair of partners can coincide (0), to the highest number registered in 2020-2021 (59).

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

Portugal and Venezuela and, to a less extent, by Cuba, contrast with the high number of partnerships established between the countries of Central-America and the Caribbean (from Costa Rica to Guatemala, including the Dominican Republic) and among those of South-America (from Brazil to Chile in the Southern Cone, plus Colombia, Ecuador and Peru in the Andean sub-region).

Likewise, the high intensity of the association at the "intra-regional" level tends to fall when the focus shifts to exchanges between different sub-regions. Thus, the relationship between several Central-American countries (Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala) is more intense with their sub-regional neighbors than with South-American countries. In line with this, for example, Bolivia, has a more active relation with South-American partners than with Central-American ones.

Part of the patterns described above result, in turn, from a combination of at least three aspects: first, the different options countries have to establish partnerships as they simultaneously belong to several intergovernmental integration systems; second, the dynamism each country has in the framework of those same spaces; and third, how involved these organizations were in Regional SSC cooperation that was implemented in the 2020-2021 period.

Mexico, for example, has a very active relationship with most of the countries of South-America, as well as with Costa Rica and El Salvador, and a high - but relatively lower - degree of association with its Central American neighbors. This pattern is influenced by the fact that Mexico's participation in three spaces that were particularly dynamic in 2020-2021 is very significant. Specifically, being a member of the Ibero-American System, having a special cooperation agreement with SICA and Central-American countries, and joining the Pacific Alliance (PA), which other partners are South-American countries, determined an important part of Mexico's profile.

In addition, the partnership options and the way in which each country was involved in Regional SSC in the last two-year period may be very different. This explains, for example, Portugal's and Andorra's aforementioned lower level of relative associations; their alternatives being very

limited to the Ibero-American space. However, differences also exist within Latin-America. In order to illustrate this aspect, Graph 4.8 shows the participation of each country in the 113 initiatives and their potential "growth margin", distinguishing between two sub-regions: Mexico, Central America and the Ibero-American Caribbean; and South America.

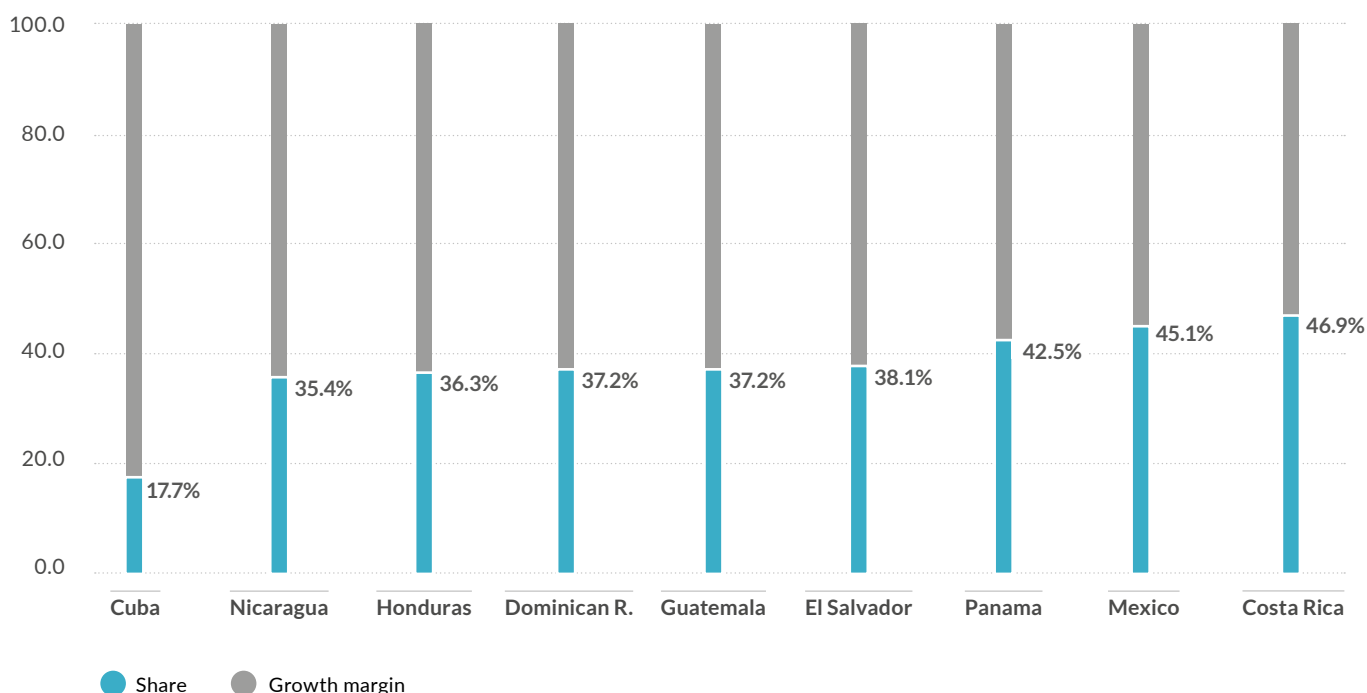
As can be seen, the level of participation of the countries that are part of each of these sub-regions differs and fluctuates in different ranges of values: lower for those located in the North of continent; higher for those located in the South. Indeed, most Central-American and Caribbean countries participated in between 30% and 40% of the 2020-2021 initiatives; Panama's, Mexico's and Costa Rica's records standing out, with relative shares above 40%. In contrast, most South-American countries (7 out of 10) moved precisely in this range (40% to 50%) and even in the next higher range (50% to 60%).

→ GRAPH 4.8

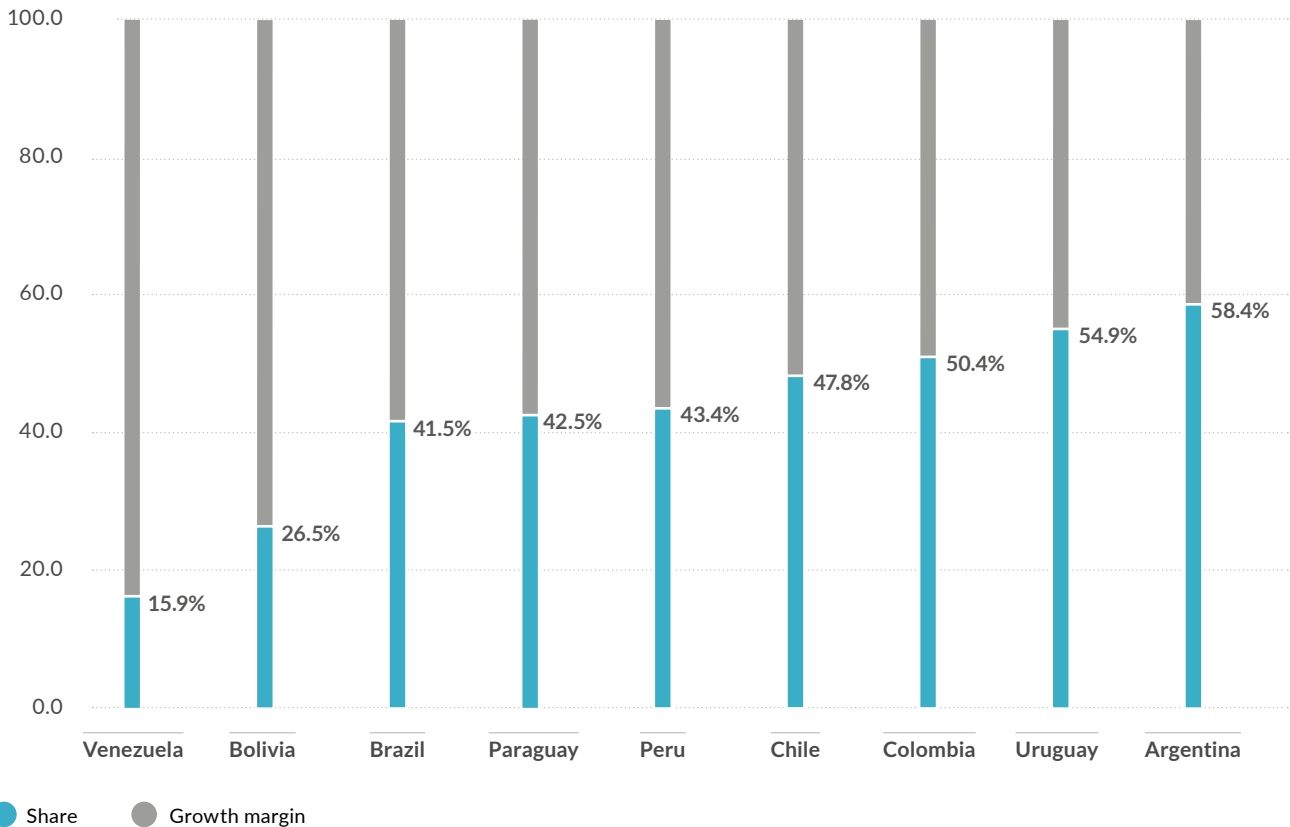
**Ibero-American countries' participation in Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America and "growth margin" of that participation, by region. 2020-2021**

In percentage

**A. Mexico, Central-America and Ibero-American Caribbean**



## B. South-America



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

### 4.3.3 Operational frameworks and thematic priorities

The participation of multilateral organizations in Regional SSC also provides information on other relevant aspects related to how this modality works in practice. Multilateral organizations' cooperation is usually based on institutional frameworks and on different criteria that guide and regulate its implementation in terms of participants, roles, financial mechanisms and the types of partnerships, among others. The presence of these organizations can also be important to identify the thematic priorities addressed by the initiatives carried out in the different integration systems.

Graph 4.9 was prepared to make a first analysis of these operational frameworks. This graph defines and characterizes the cooperation mechanisms through which the initiatives promoted in the 4 most active multilateral spaces in the 2020-2021 period (the Ibero-American System, the Central-American System, IDB and MERCOSUR) are usually executed. The first two include all cooperation carried out in the framework of these platforms (Programs, Initiatives and Ascribed Projects -

PIPAs by its Spanish acronym - and the Mechanism for the Management, Coordination and Information on Regional Cooperation). Cooperation implemented within the other two, is based on the Regional Public Goods Initiative - RPG - and MERCOSUR's Structural Convergence Fund - FOCEM by its Spanish acronym).

The chart outlines the differences between these mechanisms, all of them conceived to promote collective action among their participants while defining clear procedures regarding the way in which this SSC is carried out, for example: the type of cooperation (technical and/or financial); resource allocation and distribution; the types of partnerships; and the possibility for other stakeholders - apart from governments - to participate, to name a few. In the Ibero-American and Central-American Systems, all these aspects are detailed in different documents explicitly prepared for this purpose, such as the Operating Manual for Ibero-American Cooperation and the technical guidelines for the Regional Cooperation Mechanism.

Graph 4.9 suggests these mechanisms are also a guideline to set the thematic priorities addressed by each of these integration systems. In this sense, and although they all aim to strengthen their member countries and bring them together as part of one same region, the specific mechanisms and purposes to reach this end differ in each case.

For example, SSC in the framework of the Ibero-American System focuses on development and on the region's identity, which leads it to promote joint actions for its cohesion, placing emphasis on culture, science, education

and social issues. Other spaces prioritize regional integration, but seek to strengthen it through different strategies: MERCOSUR, by reducing asymmetries among its members, especially through the improvement of economic infrastructure; IDB, through the generation of products (regulatory frameworks, sectoral action plans, methodologies) that facilitate regional coordination and result in common benefits for all its members; and the Central-American System, by emphasizing the need to solve common problems that make the region especially vulnerable, such as the prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and the worst effects of climate change.

#### → GRAPH 4.9

### Institutional frameworks and cooperation mechanisms on which the implementation of Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America is based: some selected examples. 2020-2021

Multilateral Organization	Cooperation Mechanism	Definition and main features
Ibero-American System	Ibero-American Programs, Initiatives and Ascribed Projects (PIPAs by its Spanish acronym)	<p>According to the Operating Manual for Ibero-American Cooperation, PIPAs are intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms through which governments express their will to cooperate in a given sector, agreeing on its design and assuming its execution. Their ultimate purpose is to strengthen the Ibero-American identity through collaborative efforts to develop and consolidate capacities in the cultural, scientific, educational, social and economic fields.</p> <p>The difference between Programs and Initiatives is mainly based on their scope: Programs' time frames and objectives are long or medium-term and Initiatives' are more limited.</p> <p>Decisions are made on an horizontal basis; all participating countries contribute with financial, human, technical and material resources - according to their capacities - and mutually benefit from the activities that are carried out. PIPAs' nature may be technical and/or financial: the former aim to develop human and institutional capacities through a wide range of activities; the latter provide financial resources to achieve development objectives and mainly materialize through competitive funds.</p>
Central-American System	Mechanism for the Management, Coordination and Information on Regional Cooperation	<p>SICA's Mechanism for the Management, Coordination and Information on Regional Cooperation and its complementary technical guidelines serve as regional regulations to strengthen the processes of management, execution, follow-up and evaluation of regional cooperation.</p> <p>This instrument defines concepts, principles and criteria for the selection of projects; procedures; stakeholders and roles; and transparency and accountability mechanisms. It seeks to align all cooperation with the five priorities of regional integration (social and economic integration, democratic security, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and the effects of climate change, and institutional strengthening).</p> <p>Three main procedures have been established for the management of this cooperation: first, a direct one, for general projects of SICA's General Secretariat; a second one for regional projects of SICA's Secretariats and institutions; and a third one for regional projects that result from Dialogue and Cooperation Fora, Bilateral Meetings or other mechanisms established by SICA.</p>

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	Regional Public Goods Initiative (RPG)	<p>It is based on the premise that countries of Latin-America and the Caribbean (LAC) share numerous development challenges and opportunities that can be more effectively and efficiently addressed through regional collective action and cooperation.</p> <p>The Initiative defines Regional Public Goods (RPGs) as goods, services or resources that are collectively produced and consumed by the public sector and, if appropriate, the private, non-profit sector in a minimum of three borrowing member countries of the IDB. It focuses on RPGs that have the potential to generate significant shared benefits and positive spillover effects.</p> <p>The RPGs Initiative seeks to finance specific regional coordination products (for example, regulatory frameworks, sectoral action plans and methodologies, among others) that can then be implemented at the national level by the participating countries and other interested countries.</p> <p>Each year, IDB calls for proposals to finance projects that promote RPGs by means of collective action. In the case of the 2022 call, eligible topics were to be framed within priority areas of IDB Group's "Vision 2025" for the achievement of IDB's Institutional Strategy and the region's post-pandemic recovery.</p>
MERCOSUR	MERCOSUR's Structural Convergence Fund (FOCEM by its Spanish acronym)	<p>This is the first solidarity-based financing mechanism for MERCOSUR member countries, aimed at reducing asymmetries between them. It is based on their contributions to finance projects to improve infrastructure, business competitiveness and social development, as well as to strengthen MERCOSUR's own institutional structure.</p> <p>The Fund works through a system of contributions and inverse distribution of resources, which means countries with greater relative economic development make greater contributions and, at the same time, countries with less relative economic development receive more resources. These are distributed as non-refundable grants. The presentation, analysis, approval and follow-up of projects considered to be of interest to the Parties is carried out on the basis of FOCEM's Regulations. Cooperation in sanitation, drinking water, rehabilitation and construction of roads, maintenance of electrical networks, improvement and expansion of school buildings, rehabilitation of railroads, among others, stands out in the framework of this mechanism.</p>

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, SEGIB (2016), SIDICSS (2022), and IDB, MERCOSUR and SICA websites.

These differences are clearly illustrated in Graphs 4.10 and 4.11, which distribute Regional SSC programs and projects that were implemented in the framework of each of these systems, in the 2020-2021 period, according to the area of action and activity sector they addressed. In this regard, Graph 4.10 precisely shows that more than 50% of the initiatives executed in each of these spaces focused on very different areas: Other areas, in the case of the Ibero-American System (56.5% of PIPAs); Environment was the most significant for Central-American cooperation (58.8% of the initiatives); and Productive Sectors, through 53.8% of the programs and projects supported by the IDB. MERCOSUR, however, deserves a special mention, since

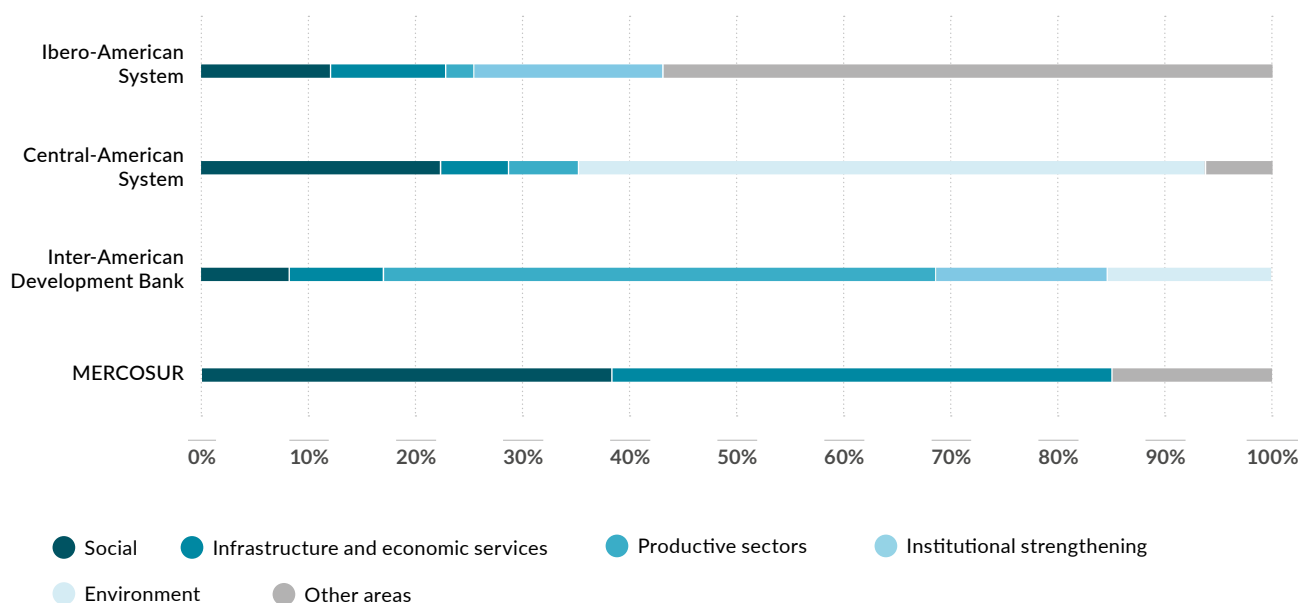
46.2% of its initiatives were dedicated to strengthening Infrastructure and economic services but, when exchanges associated with the Social area are added, the figure rises to a remarkable 85%.

As for the classification of the initiatives according to activity sectors (Graph 4.11), the differences in the purposes addressed by the 4 systems are also evident. In this sense, the Ibero-American System and IDB concentrate their greatest efforts in the *Culture* (56.5%) and *Agriculture and livestock* (53.8%) sectors, respectively. On the other hand, initiatives promoted by the Central-American System are distributed between

→ GRAPH 4.10

**Thematic priorities in Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in the framework of the main intergovernmental systems, by area of action. 2020-2021**

In percentage



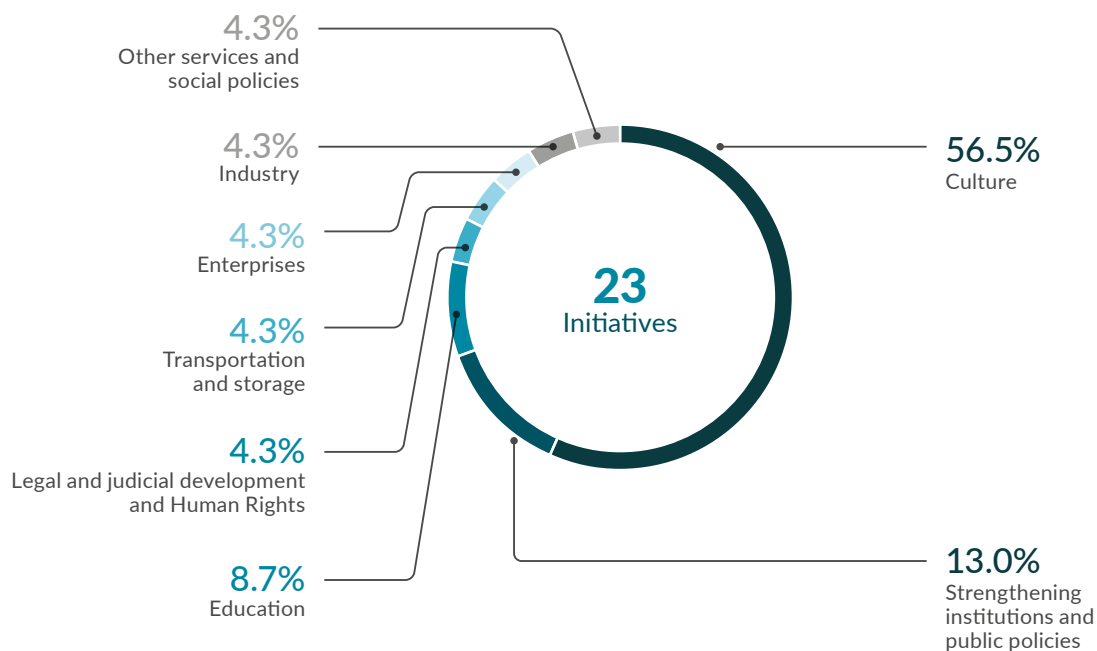
Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

→ GRAPH 4.11

**Distribution of Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America in the framework of the main intergovernmental systems, by activity sector. 2020-2021**

In percentage

**A. Ibero-American System**



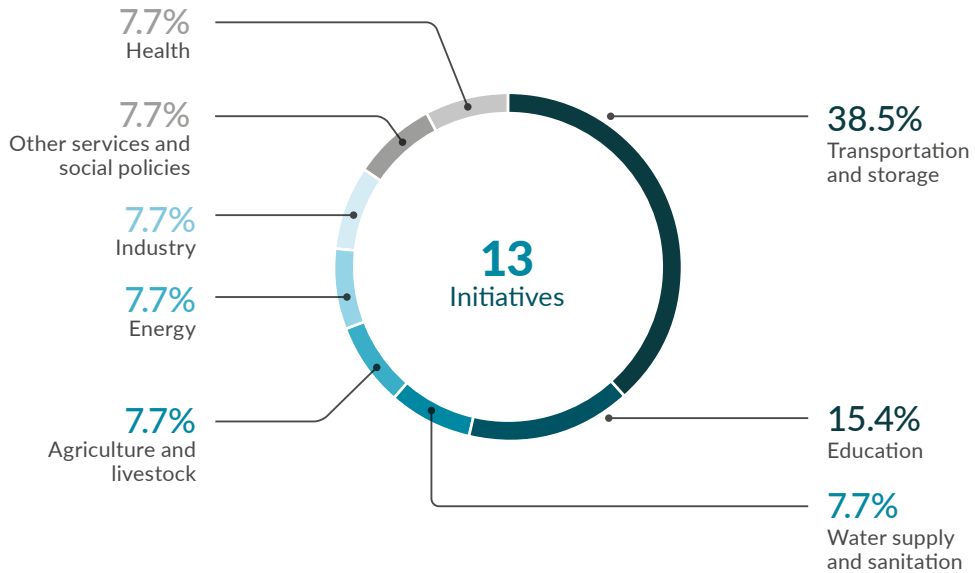
**B. Central-American System**



**C. Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)**



**D. MERCOSUR**



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



Disaster management (35.3%) and Environment (23.5%), while MERCOSUR prioritizes *Transportation and storage* (38.5%); *Education* (15.4%) also standing out among other economic and social sectors.

## 4.4 Sectoral analysis: common problems, shared solutions

One of Regional SSC’s main strengths is the possibility to bring together a growing number of stakeholders which join efforts to carry out a collective action to advance the achievement of a shared purpose. The combination of purposes this modality addresses reveals in the type of capacities the region decides to strengthen through SSC.

In order to illustrate the capacities that Regional SSC strengthened in Ibero-America in the 2020-2021 period, Graph 4.12 shows the distribution of the 113 initiatives according to the area of action (12.A) and the activity sector (12.B) with which they were associated.

The Social area concentrates most initiatives (1 out of every 5). This figure contrasts with cooperation related to Institutional strengthening, which is almost one half (10.6%). In addition, a rather homogeneous distribution of Regional SSC programs and projects around the rest of the areas of action recognized in the Ibero-American space (Environment, Productive sectors, Infrastructure and economic services and Other areas) was the most frequent pattern: thus, their share in the total number of initiatives during the period remained very close, ranging from 16% to 18%.

When the above is contrasted with the details by sector, however, the information reveals the performance of each area is based on very different sectoral dynamics: very concentrated in a few sectors, in some cases; and very diversified, in others.

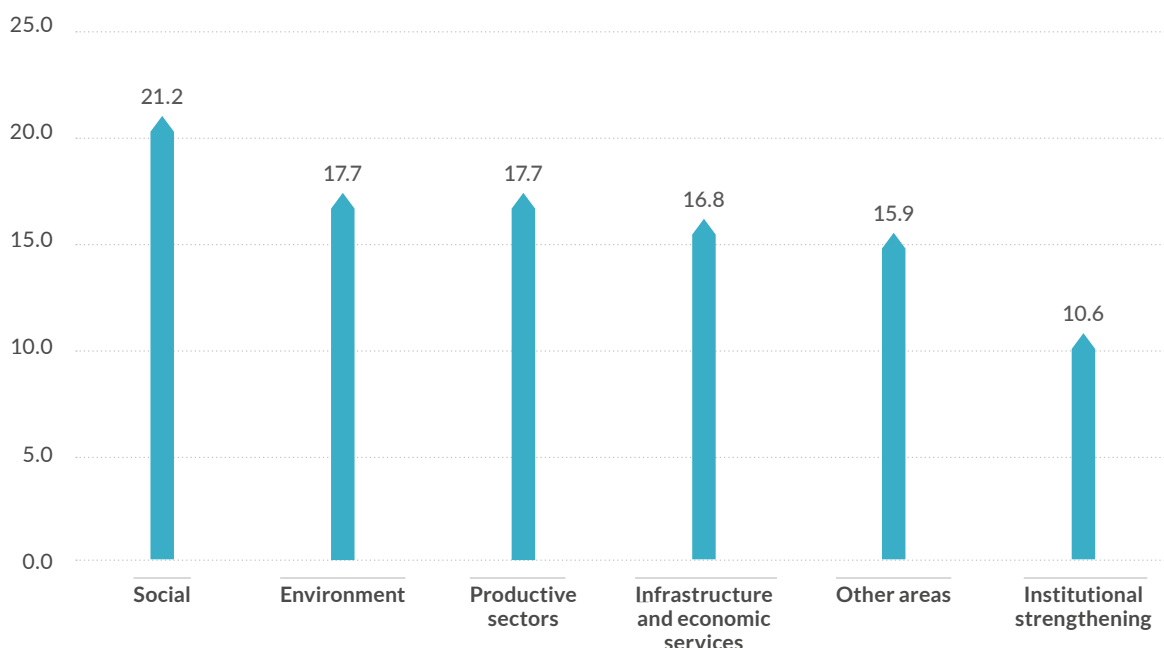
An illustrative example of the above is the most important area (Social) since, as Graph 4.12.B confirms, the sectors that are associated with it are not among the most significant of the 2020-2021 period. In fact, the main sector within the Social area is *Education*, which, with 8% of the initiatives, ranks fourth in terms of relative importance. This is complemented by *Other services and social policies*, *Health* and *Water supply and sanitation*, with shares that slightly exceed or barely reach 5%. In any case, considering the topics, the most remarkable initiatives

→ GRAPH 4.12

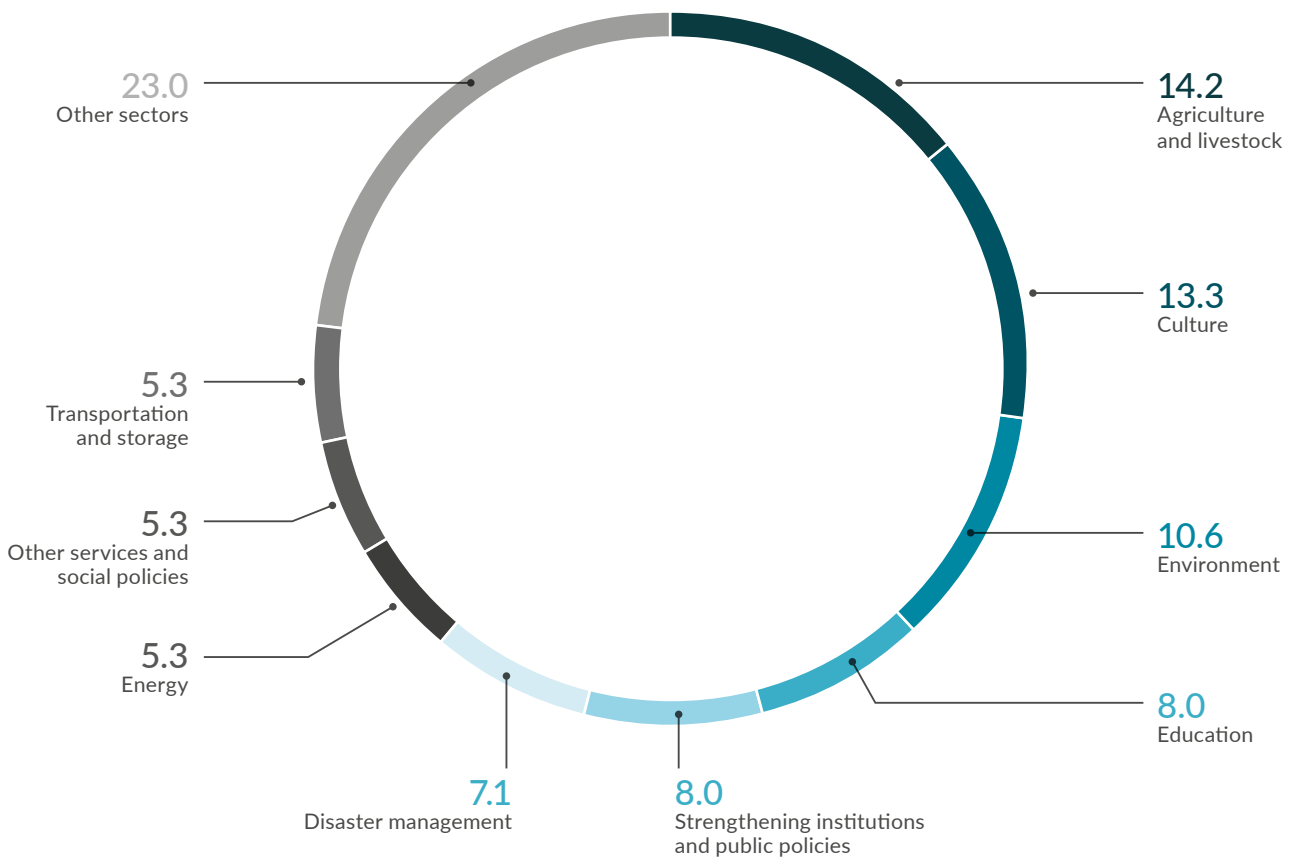
**Distribution of Regional SSC initiatives in Ibero-America, by activity sector and area of action. 2020-2021**

In percentage

**A. Area of action**



## B. Activity sector



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

shared the objective (from different perspectives and through different strategies) of promoting the mobility of students and teachers, as well as the integration and improvement of the living conditions of certain population groups, such as young adults, the elderly and migrants.

In contrast, the relative importance of Productive sectors and Environment - both with a 17.7% share in the total number of initiatives of the 2020-2021 period - is explained by very few sectors. Specifically, in the case of the former, its importance is explained by *Agriculture and livestock* (the most important sector in the period, with a share of 14.2% of the total) and, in the latter, by the aggregate contribution of the second most important sector (*Environment*, which accounts for 1 out of every 10 initiatives), together with *Disaster management* (a remarkable 7.1%).

The *Agriculture and livestock* sector includes cooperation that combines agricultural and livestock issues and focuses on crops that are relevant to the region (potatoes, rice, coffee) as well as on animal species which are key for food security (meat and dairy products). Likewise, this kind of initiatives combine elements that aim to contribute to increase and diversify production, especially in family environments, which are highly dependent on the income

these activities can generate. To this end, this cooperation combines different types of interventions, including: the adoption of technological innovations; improvements in irrigation systems and efficient water use; treatment of fodder and livestock feed; pest management; genetic improvements; and the incorporation of information systems to assess the risks, losses and damages that may be caused by natural disasters and the increase in temperatures resulting from climate change, among others. An illustrative example of the way in which it combines several of these elements is the project developed in Central-America for the management of coffee rust, described in Case 4.1.

## → CASE 4.1

**Regional strengthening of agricultural health in Central-America**

## Central-American System

Rust is a fungus that affects coffee plants causing premature leaf drop, weakening infected trees and ultimately causing their death. The impact of this disease is very high in Latin-America since coffee is one of the region's main exports and, in addition, many families directly depend on some of the processes associated with its production and sale (InfoAgro, 2014).

The first rust outbreak in Central-America dates back to end of the 1970s; however, between 2012 and 2013, climatic factors, reduced phytosanitary measures and a fall in international coffee prices triggered the most serious epidemic to date in the region (Piñeiro, V., Morley, S. and Elverdin, P., 2015, p.2). In 2013, in the framework of the Coffee Rust Summit in Guatemala, the countries of the region committed to jointly address the problems of coffee production in the region and approved the Regional Action Plan with Immediate Measures, which included the creation of the Central-American Program for Integrated Coffee Rust Management (PROCAGICA by its Spanish acronym).

This program aims to promote the

adoption of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, as well as natural disaster risk reduction to support regional and national efforts to control coffee rust. On this basis, it seeks to build resilience among coffee-dependent families by introducing sustainable agricultural practices, diversifying crop patterns and strengthening their livelihoods (IICA, 2021, p. 2).

This Regional SSC initiative, implemented by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA by its Spanish acronym), involves the Central-American Integration System member countries (SICA by its Spanish acronym) and is supported by the European Union (EU). Additionally, and according to IICA (2021), the Program has benefited 7,059 small-scale coffee producers (of which 35% are women and 10% are young people under the age of 30) and the Program's beneficiary organizations are now able to offer members more services, generating additional income (p.4). All this has had positive impacts related to environmental sustainability, improved competitiveness, the

strengthening of partnerships among producers and the reactivation of the local economy.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, Piñeiro, V., Morley, S. and Elverdin, P. (2015), IICA (2021), and InfoAgro (2014).

On the other hand, it could be stated that Regional SSC to address the care and protection of *Environment* is motivated by the search for shared solutions to collective problems in the region. Thus, an important part of the initiatives brings together countries which priorities are the following, among others: the Mesoamerican Caribbean Reef Ecoregion; the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor; endangered species of the Amazon; marine resources of the Caribbean Ecosystem; environmental problems of the Andes; and Central-American and Caribbean biodiversity (see the experience of SICA and its member countries, in Case 4.2). Other initiatives deal with more general topics and seek to provide the countries of

the region with instruments to achieve their international commitments, such as those related to climate financing and plastic waste management and Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), to name a few.

**Regional SSC on *Environment* is motivated by the search for shared solutions to collective regional problems**

## → CASE 4.2

## SICA member countries join efforts to preserve biodiversity

### Central-American System

The Central-American region is geographically rich in terms of biodiversity. Eight percent of the world's biological biodiversity is distributed in 206 ecosystems, 33 ecoregions and 20 life zones in Central-America, and around 12% of the coasts of Latin-America and the Caribbean, including 567,000 ha of mangroves and 1,600 km of coral reefs, are located in this region (Central-American Integration System, SICA by its Spanish acronym, 2022a).

Biodiversity provides important goods and services that are essential to local and national economies and ecosystems also play an important role in water regulation, erosion control and reservoir sedimentation, filtering of pollutants and scenic beauty (SICA, 2022b). There is also a close relationship between climate change and biodiversity loss as "biodiversity is essential to maintain the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere at a level that somehow mitigates further

impacts of climate change. Anything that can avoid the deforestation of ecosystems (...) is important" (Soto M., 2019).

Being aware of this priority, SICA member countries and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) joined efforts to promote the Regional SSC project *Capacity building for an integral management and conservation of biodiversity in the region*. This initiative - currently under execution - is expected to finish in 2024 and is led by the Executive Secretariat of the Central-American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD by its Spanish acronym). Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, the Dominican Republic and El Salvador are the beneficiary countries.

The first year of the project's execution was dedicated to define the activities of its Action Plan, an effort that resulted in a regional technical

workshop held in San Salvador in September 2019, sponsored by CCAD together with the environmental authorities of countries and partners involved.

Subsequently, last September, during the presentation of the results to CCAD Council of Ministers, countries highlighted the implementation of pilot projects in cross-border areas such as the Maya Forest (between Belize and Guatemala), the Gulf of Fonseca (between El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua), La Amistad (between Costa Rica and Panama) and Montecristi in the Dominican Republic. Other achievements, such as the Regional Environmental Observatory, set in the framework of other CCAD projects, as well as the training of Central-American officials through JICA's Knowledge Co-creation Program were also worthy of mention (El Día, 2022).

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, El Día (2022), Central-American Integration System (2022a), (2022b) and Soto M. (2019).

Meanwhile, 7.1% of the Regional SSC initiatives that in the 2020-2021 period addressed issues related to *Disaster management* focused on providing countries with tools to improve their capacities for prevention, response, adaptation, mitigation and resilience in the face of different types of phenomena. The aim of this cooperation is to share sectoral policies, impact strategies, intersectoral and/or multidisciplinary approaches, public-private partnership formulas or information systems, among others. As it was mentioned in another section, most of these initiatives involve countries in sub-regions which are especially affected by these disasters, such as the Caribbean, Central-America and Mesoamerica.

On the other hand, Regional SSC destined to generate better conditions in terms of Infrastructures and economic services is mainly explained by the contribution of two activity sectors: *Energy* and *Transportation and storage*, each with relative shares of 5.3%. These initiatives aim

to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and electricity interconnection, as well as to rehabilitate roads and railways to ensure the necessary connectivity between countries that are part of the same economic space. As stated, these programs and projects focused on the Central and South-American regions, with the special involvement of SICA and MERCOSUR, in each case.

The importance of Other areas deserves a special mention, as it is mainly explained by the commitment of the Ibero-American System to programs and projects to strengthen *Culture*, the second most important sector of the 2020-2021 period (13.3% of the initiatives, as Graph 4.12.B shows). PIPAs tackle a wide range of issues in this sense, including the strengthening of performing and audiovisual arts, music, the protection and digitization of historical and diplomatic archives, museums and libraries, among others. However, the comprehensive approach to culture, considered an instrument to achieve Sustainable Development, is actually more important than the addressed topics. In this regard and in the Ibero-American

space, culture contributes to build a collective identity, but also plays a decisive role in peoples' well-being and in greater social cohesion and inclusion.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the importance of the *Strengthening institutions and public policies* sector in the sixth area of action (Institutional strengthening) should also be stressed, as it accounts for 8.0% of the total number of initiatives in the period, a figure that places it, together with *Education*, as the fourth most important sector in relative terms. As its name suggests, cooperation associated with this sector focused on providing instruments (registration and communication systems, training, statistics and use of data, among others) that enable governments at different levels - national and subnational - to strengthen their capacities in the design, implementation and management of their public policies. Among these initiatives, special

mention should be made to those that, in the framework of the Meso and Ibero-American systems, aim to strengthen SSC.

Given the context of 2020 and 2021, a final interesting aspect to analyze in this section is how the response to the COVID-19 crisis may have impacted the type of capacities countries strengthened through Regional SSC. Graph 4.13 sheds light on the above and compares this period with the two previous years (2018-2019) showing

— Culture is the second most important sector in the 2020-2021 period (13.3% of the initiatives)



Photo: Family producers in La Colmena, Paraguay, which has a large fruit and bee production, work on the care and reproduction of bees, as well as on honey collection, through Bilateral SSC. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.

<sup>2</sup> For more details, see the Ibero-American Strategy for Culture and Sustainable Development, approved at the 27th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in April 2021 in Andorra.

the different sectors' variation in terms of their share over the total number of Regional SSC initiatives that were carried out in Ibero-America in each of these time frames.

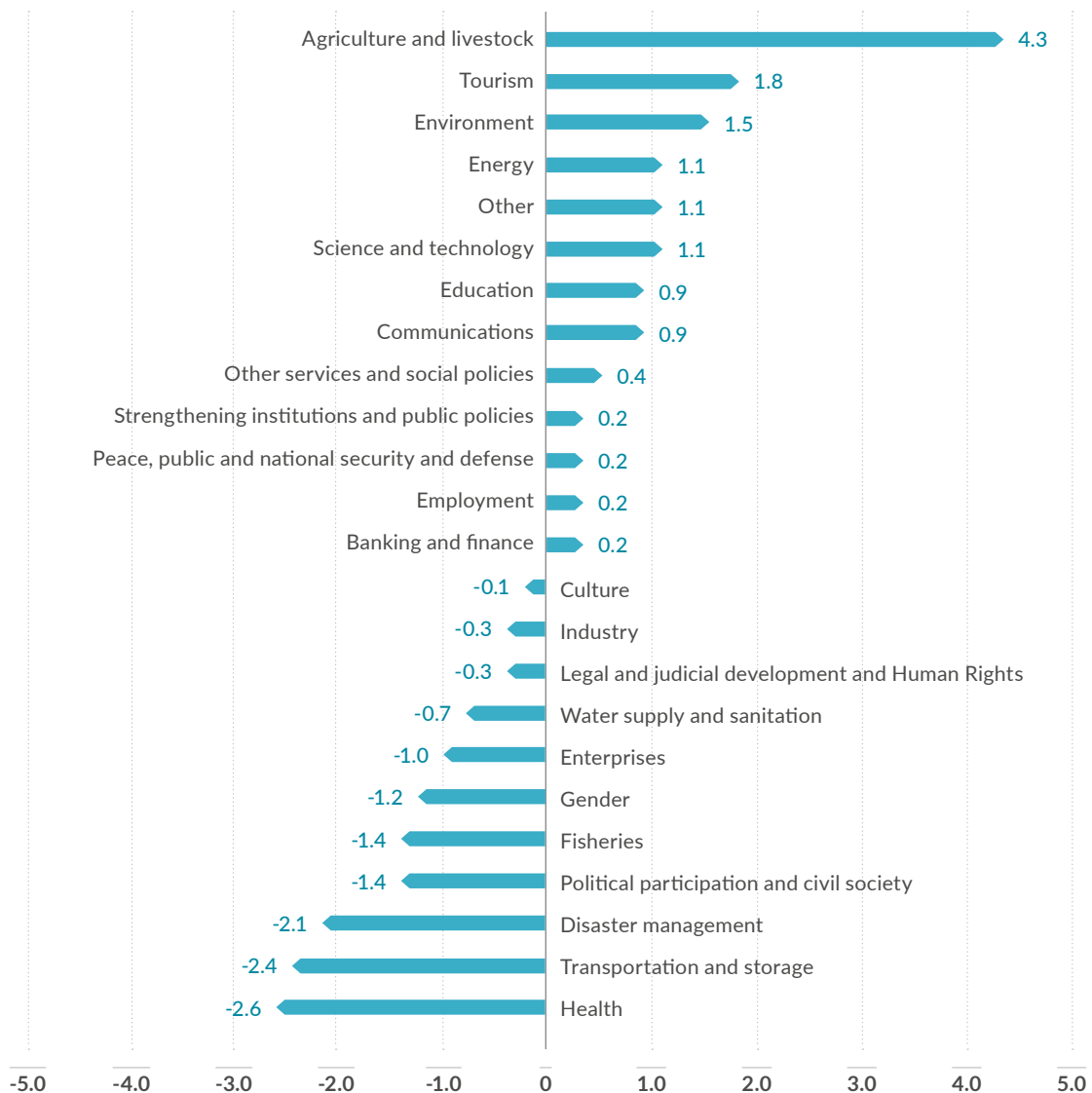
In this sense, it is possible to identify two particularly striking aspects: the strong increase of *Agriculture and livestock* (4.3 percentage points, which explains its position as the most important sector in 2020-2021); and the significant drops of *Disaster management* (-2.1 points), *Transportation and storage* (-2.4) and *Health* (-2.6). Indeed, given this dynamic, *Health* had a relatively low participation in Regional SSC as a whole in the analyzed period (4.4%), a figure far below that registered, for

example, in the framework of Bilateral SSC (18.6%). In addition, as a result of the different relative importance both modalities also have overall the region's SSC, the contrast in absolute figures is even greater: 123 initiatives were bilaterally exchanged in Ibero-America in the *Health* sector, compared to only 5 at the regional level.

#### → GRAPH 4.13

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

In percentage points



The above does not mean Regional SSC has not addressed the COVID-19 crisis. The dimension of the initiatives carried out in this modality and its special characteristics imply the response cannot be easily analyzed based on aggregate data though. In this sense, it is possible to state that, in most cases, initiatives that were already under execution carried out activities in response to the pandemic, adapting them to their usual mechanisms. However, this was not reflected, for example, either in the title of the program and/or project or in the sector in which they are classified. Decisions made by the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS by its Spanish acronym) are an example of this. As detailed in Case 4.3, ever since the outbreak of the pandemic, PIFCSS adapted its

Structured Mechanism for the Exchange of Experiences of South-South Cooperation (MECSS by its Spanish acronym) to support specific interventions in response to COVID-19.

### Partners facing COVID-19 accounted for South-South and Triangular Cooperation's capacity and flexibility to adapt to unexpected scenarios

#### → CASE 4.3

### Partners facing COVID-19: a regional response to a global challenge

#### Ibero-American System

In August 2020, the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS by its Spanish acronym) invited its 21 member countries to participate in the *Partners facing COVID-19* call for proposals, which aim was to support initiatives in response to the challenges of the emergency context caused by the pandemic. This call was launched in the framework of one of the most significant instruments developed by the region to achieve the strategic objective of strengthening institutional capacities of the institutions in charge of South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America: the Structured Mechanism for the Exchange of Experiences of South-South Cooperation (MECSS by its Spanish acronym) (SEGIB, 2022). This way, PIFCSS, together with the countries, adapted the traditional MECSS to provide a concrete response to the pandemic.

*Partners facing COVID-19* considered initiatives proposed by institutions responsible for international cooperation, sectoral institutions and/or subnational/local governments, to address the impacts of the pandemic

in the health, social policy, education, employment, and science and technology areas, among others.

Interested parties were invited to submit one proposal per country (not exceeding USD 10,000) or in collaboration with others (with an additional 50% budget). In addition to submitting projects and/or specific actions, countries were also allowed to hire experts to provide technical assistance and/or to support the design or implementation of diagnoses, studies, strategies, applied research and/or projects in different areas. This mechanism also included the possibility of purchasing specific goods or services to support the strengthening of development processes or project execution in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (for example, specific supplies, software licenses, publications, among others). Finally, *Partners facing COVID-19* included short-term academic training for government officials (2020-2021 Annual Report, PIFCSS, P.14).

Since 2020 to date, PIFCSS has launched 4 specific calls of this special mechanism and 38 proposals

in different thematic areas have been financed in this framework. In addition to stressing the importance of conceiving and materializing shared solutions - specifically based on regional efforts and capacities - in the face of crises which have an impact on development, *Partners facing COVID-19* accounted for South-South and Triangular Cooperation's flexibility and its capacity to adapt to unexpected scenarios, while proving to be an effective mechanism for capacity building, as proposed in SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals.

Another alternative has been the effective promotion of new initiatives that, although their specific objectives make reference to the response to COVID-19, do not include these key words in their titles. This Regional SSC focused on other dimensions of the crisis, so none of them are classified in the *Health* sector. The 3 initiatives which are shown in Graph 4.14, promoted in the framework of the Pacific Alliance to address some of the economic and social impacts of the crisis, are an example of the above.

The profile of strengthened capacities in the framework of Regional SSC coincides with the way in which initiatives aimed to contribute to the SDGs

→ GRAPH 4.14

**Regional SSC initiatives promoted in Ibero-America by the countries of the Pacific Alliance and which objective makes specific reference to the COVID-19 crisis.**

Initiative	Objective and main features
Strengthening the digital skills of teachers and school administrators in basic education	<p><b>Program – Education – SDG 4 (Quality education)</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Strengthen teachers' and authorities' digital skills, capacities and competencies in order to develop innovative options for comprehensive development and remote learning, in the context of the current emergency of COVID-19 and possible new confinements.</p>
Promoting a plan for the reactivation of tourism in the Pacific Alliance member countries	<p><b>Program – Tourism – SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Implement a campaign through a strategic media plan to promote the Pacific Alliance member countries with the aim to reactivate the regional tourism industry, in order to mitigate the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the sector.</p>
Social Observatory of the Pacific Alliance	<p><b>Project - Other services and social policies - SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities)</b></p> <p><b>Objective:</b> Design and implement the Social Observatory (SO) of the Pacific Alliance (PA) as a cutting-edge virtual instrument to compile, systematize, manage and publish updated information on the social sector that will contribute to design and strengthen public policies to improve the well-being of our peoples. As a result, the entire community will be able to benefit from those practices that have been applied in terms of Social Development to address the health crisis caused by COVID-19 which, in turn, are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (ARDSI by its Spanish acronym).</p> <p>The structure of the SO has been designed considering the following dimensions, with their respective indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Social development (poverty, social and labor inclusion, health, education and housing).</li> <li>2. Social management (standards, institutional design, strengthening and participation).</li> <li>3. Social investment (social spending).</li> <li>4. Systematization of experiences (international cooperation).</li> <li>5. Social innovation (in social policies).</li> <li>6. Programs, public policies and national strategies of the PA member states to face the COVID-19.</li> </ol>



## 4.5 Regional SSC in 2020-2021 and the Sustainable Development Goals

The profile of the capacities that were strengthened by Regional SSC initiatives implemented in Ibero-America during the 2020-2021 period has a correlation with the way in which they, in turn, aimed to contribute to the

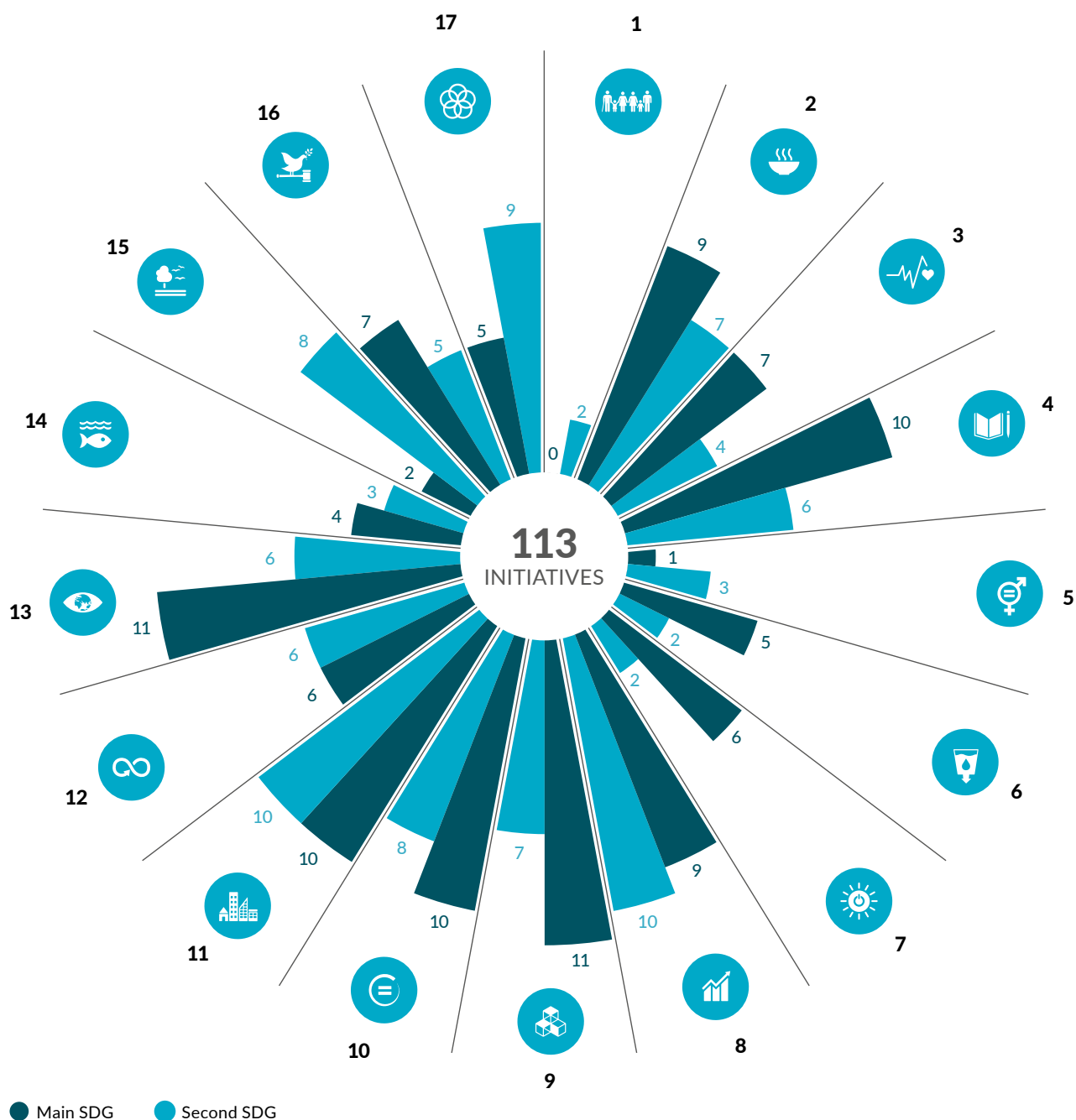
achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to analyze this alignment, Graph 4.15 shows the number of initiatives associated with each of the Goals, differentiating between the main and the second SDG. Indeed, 100% of the initiatives respond to a main SDG; and, according to the countries, half of them are also aligned with at least a second SDG (44% with one; and 6% with two).

Specifically, as the graph portrays, 7 Goals were particularly significant as main SDGs, since approximately 10 initiatives (which aggregately accounted for more than 60% of the total), were aligned with each of these.

→ GRAPH 4.15

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

In units



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

According to the United Nations' categorization<sup>3</sup> - and although the 17 SDGs have a strong multidimensional approach - during the 2020-2021 period, SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) and SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) stood out, which shared purpose was to advance Prosperity. On the other hand, SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 4 (Quality education), as well as SDG 13 (Climate action) were the most significant in terms of People and Planet, respectively.

In turn, 30% of the Regional SSC initiatives implemented in Ibero-America during the 2020-2021 period were also diversified around 6 other Sustainable Development Goals. Initiatives that focused on SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and

SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), as well as those dedicated to the other 5Ps defined by the UN, Peace (SDG 16) and Partnerships (SDG 17), should also be highlighted. Given the pandemic context of the last two years, the 7 initiatives associated with SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) also deserve a special mention. Case 4.4, regarding the initiative approved at the Ibero-American Summit in Andorra in 2021, which seeks to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of Chagas disease, was prepared in order to illustrate the importance of this SDG and its different approaches.

#### → CASE 4.4

### Ibero-American Initiative on congenital Chagas disease

#### Ibero-American System

About 6 to 7 million people worldwide, mostly in Latin-America, are estimated to be infected with *Trypanosoma cruzi*, the parasite that causes Chagas disease (WHO, 2021). In the Americas, Chagas disease shows an annual average incidence of 30,000 new cases and registers 12,000 deaths per year. It is also estimated that around 70 million people in this continent live in areas of exposure and are at risk of contracting this disease (PAHO, 2021). Historically, the main route of transmission has been vector-borne; however, other routes include mother-to-child (congenital) transmission, oral (food-borne) transmission, and that derived from blood and organ donation (WHO, 2021).

It is estimated that between 8,000 and 15,000 newborns become infected during gestation, making the congenital route currently one of the main ways of transmission in many countries. Early detection and treatment in pregnant women and women of child-bearing

age is essential to reduce it. This requires proactive actions since the disease is often asymptomatic both in women and newborns (Sosa-Estani *et al*, 2021).

The Ibero-American Initiative *No baby with Chagas, the road to new generations free of Chagas* was approved at the Andorra Summit in 2021, as part of the regional response to this shared problem, and held its first Intergovernmental Council in November of the same year. Its purpose is to contribute to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission of the disease from a multidimensional approach, considering control and prevention strategies of other routes of transmission.

The strengthening of health systems for prevention, timely diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of Chagas disease, with emphasis on women of child-bearing age, pregnant women and newborns are among its specific

objectives. These will be implemented through different instruments such as technical assistance among participating countries, training, exchange of experiences and resources, among others. The initiative currently counts with four member countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Spain) and other four guest members (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Paraguay). Its Presidency is held by Brazil and the Technical Unit is hosted by Argentina's Mundo Sano Foundation which, together with PAHO and ISGlobal, have provided technical support throughout the design process.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, PAHO (2021), WHO (2021) and Sosa-Estani *et al* (2021)

<sup>3</sup> According to the United Nations, the 17 SDGs can be categorized into the 5Ps to better assess them: Planet (SDG 6, 12, 13, 14 and 15), People (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), Prosperity (SDG 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11), Peace (SDG 16) and Partnerships (SDG 17).

The analysis is completed by 10% of the Regional SSC programs and projects that during 2020-2021 were aligned, specifically, with SDG 14 (Life below water) and, to a less extent, with SDG 15 (Life on land) and SDG 5 (Gender equality). All the above sheds light on the areas where progress is being made while it also provides information on those where the region must continue improving and, consequently, reveals where part of

the new efforts should be focused. Case 4.5, which summarizes another of the initiatives approved at the Ibero-American Summit in Andorra in 2021, is an example of this as it is dedicated to one of the most pressing issues where progress still needs to be made: the eradication of all forms of violence against women.

#### → CASE 4.5

### Eradicating violence against women: a global and Ibero-American commitment

#### Ibero-American System

Violence against women is one of the most widespread and persistent human rights violations worldwide (UN, 2022) and it represents a global public health problem (WHO, 2021). It is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality, and it manifests itself in multiple forms. It includes, among others, physical, sexual and psychological violence within the family or community, as well as violence perpetrated or tolerated by the State. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed women to violent behavior due to measures such as confinement and the interruption of essential support services.

After several decades of mobilizations carried out by women's organizations, the eradication of gender-based violence is now on national and international agendas. At the global level, two of the major milestones were

the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993 and the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. These commitments were reinforced the following years with the signing of various agreements, among which, the inclusion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through specific goals (5.2 and 5.3) stands out, setting a strong mandate for progress.

In order to regionally address this problem, Ibero-American Heads of State and Government approved the *Ibero-American Initiative to Prevent and Eliminate Violence against Women* at the 27<sup>th</sup> Summit in Andorra, which was supported by 10 countries. The Initiative, which is taking its first steps, will be the region's first permanent cooperation platform in this matter and will seek to consolidate a common reference framework (SEGIB, 2021).

It has three main lines of action: (1) promoting the development and strengthening of comprehensive public policies and laws; (2) improving comprehensive care, protection and reparation of women victims/survivors of violence; and (3) strengthening the scope of programs and plans to prevent of violence against women in Ibero-America.

These goals will be achieved from a human rights and intersectionality approach, aiming to respond to women's needs and to their diversity, particularly focusing on those who suffer multiple forms of discrimination, such as indigenous and Afro-descendant women, migrant women, adolescent women, older women, women in rural areas or women with disabilities, among others.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, WHO (2021), UN (2022) and SEGIB (2021)

Finally, it is also important to review those Goals that were classified as second SDGs. As Graph 4.15 illustrates, most of these have a "cross-cutting nature", which explains their association with very diverse sectors and, consequently, their importance as second SDGs rather than as main SDGs. Specifically, this would be the case of SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 15 (Life on land) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals).

On the other hand, some situations favor a repeated link between main and second SDGs. These connections are generated by initiatives that, while addressing *Disaster management*, contribute to achieve SDG 13 (Climate action) and are aligned with SDG 11 (Sustainable cities

and communities) as second SDG which, in target 11.b, makes explicit reference to climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience and, in short, to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Other examples are the programs and projects that, by promoting *Education* and SDG 4, also support the reduction of inequalities (SDG 10); or those initiatives that, in the *Agriculture and livestock* sector, seek to support the achievement, first, of SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and, second, of SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth).