

CHAPTER 5

Ibero-America and South-South and Triangular Cooperation with other regions

In 2020-2021, Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation with other regions' developing countries was a reflection of the way in which the global fight against COVID-19 was coordinated

The COVID-19 crisis had opposite effects on development cooperation: on the one hand and in this context, it became one of the most useful instruments to face this global challenge. However, the management of this crisis, especially in terms of mobility and during the 2020-2021 period, has made its implementation more difficult. In this sense, the enormous geographic distance between Ibero-American developing countries and among these and those of other regions makes this paradox especially relevant for the exchanges in which they participate.

This fifth chapter analyzes South-South and Triangular Cooperation Ibero-American countries carried out together with those of other developing regions, focusing on the two most critical years of the pandemic. First, it contextualizes the evolution of this cooperation since 2007 and then characterizes its dynamism in the 2020-2021 period. Second, it identifies its main stakeholders and, from a sectoral perspective and based on the SDGs, reveals how the association between the different regions aimed to combine the response to the COVID-19 crisis with the commitment to continue advancing the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

5.1 Evolution of Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation together with other developing regions

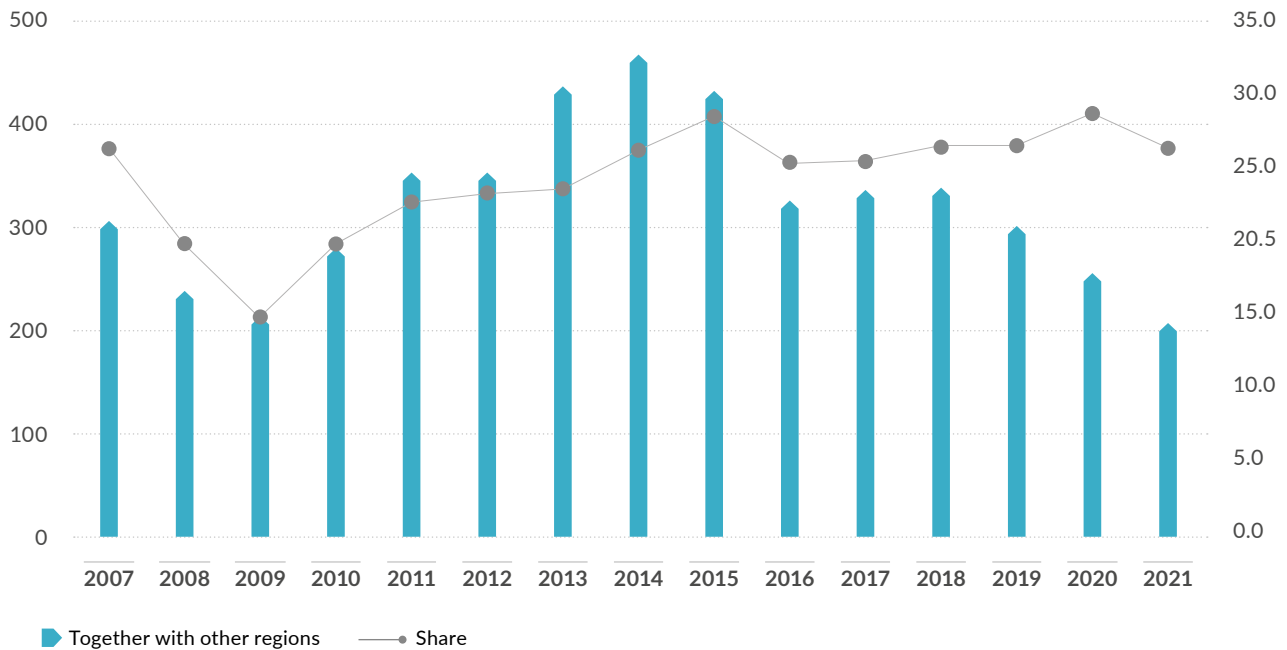
Over the last 15 years, South-South and Triangular Cooperation Ibero-America has promoted with other regions' developing countries has had a similar evolution to that implemented with all partners: it has increased between 2007 and 2014 and decreased thereafter - this reduction being more intense in the years of the pandemic - until 2021. However, the evolution of Ibero-American cooperation with other regions (in both stages) has some features that differentiate it from the trajectory of the region's South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a whole. This is explained by the specific changes that have affected the registration process of this type of cooperation in recent years.

Indeed, between 2007 and 2015, South-South and Triangular Cooperation with other developing regions was concentrated on non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries and mainly on Haiti, especially since 2010, after it suffered a devastating earthquake. Thus, it was not until 2016, in response to a new mandate from Ibero-American countries themselves, that the information regarding cooperation with other developing regions began to be registered. After that year, countries began the process of progressively registering all the initiatives that had been carried out together with other regions during previous years. For this reason, and although it may lead to a

→ GRAPH 5.1

Evolution of Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives together with other regions' developing countries and of their share overall cooperation with all partners 2007-2021

In units and percentage



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

possible under-registration, resulting in lower final figures, this type of cooperation is analyzed throughout the entire period (2007-2021). In addition, considering not all countries participate in this registration process, which is not mandatory, information may be partial and values may be underestimated.

This methodological note is important to understand the evolution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives implemented by Ibero-America together with other regions, which is illustrated in Graph 5.1. Specifically, between 2007 and 2009, it is possible to identify a significant reduction in the number of actions, projects and programs, the figure in 2009 (214) being one third lower than the initial figure (307). After 2010, coinciding with the significant support provided by Ibero-American countries to Haiti - both in times of the most severe emergency and during the reconstruction process - the number of initiatives began to rise, reaching a maximum record of 467 in 2014, which more than doubled the previous one.

Since 2015, however, and despite records begin to consider cooperation with all regions (in addition to the non-Ibero-American Caribbean), initiatives begin to fall once again, in line with the reduction of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives in general: first, with a very high intensity (2015-2016); then (until 2019) stabilizing around 300; and finally having a sharp drop again in 2020 and 2021, coinciding with the most pressing moments of the COVID-19 crisis.

On the other hand, the trajectory of the share of Ibero-American cooperation with other regions is different than the evolution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a whole: in fact, the former shows an upward trend in Graph 5.1, apparently being more resilient. Indeed, Ibero-American countries' support to other developing regions to address the pandemic (especially Cuba, as it will detailed below) precisely explains why the reduction of the number of initiatives is, in relative terms, slightly less severe for this type of cooperation. Consequently, and as the Graph portrays, after overcoming an initial significant decline, since 2010, the share of South-South and Triangular Cooperation with other regions over the total, has an ascending trajectory over time, stabilizing at around 25%, with a historical maximum of 28.8% in 2020.

5.2 Narrowing the analysis: other regions, all modalities and the 2020-2021 period

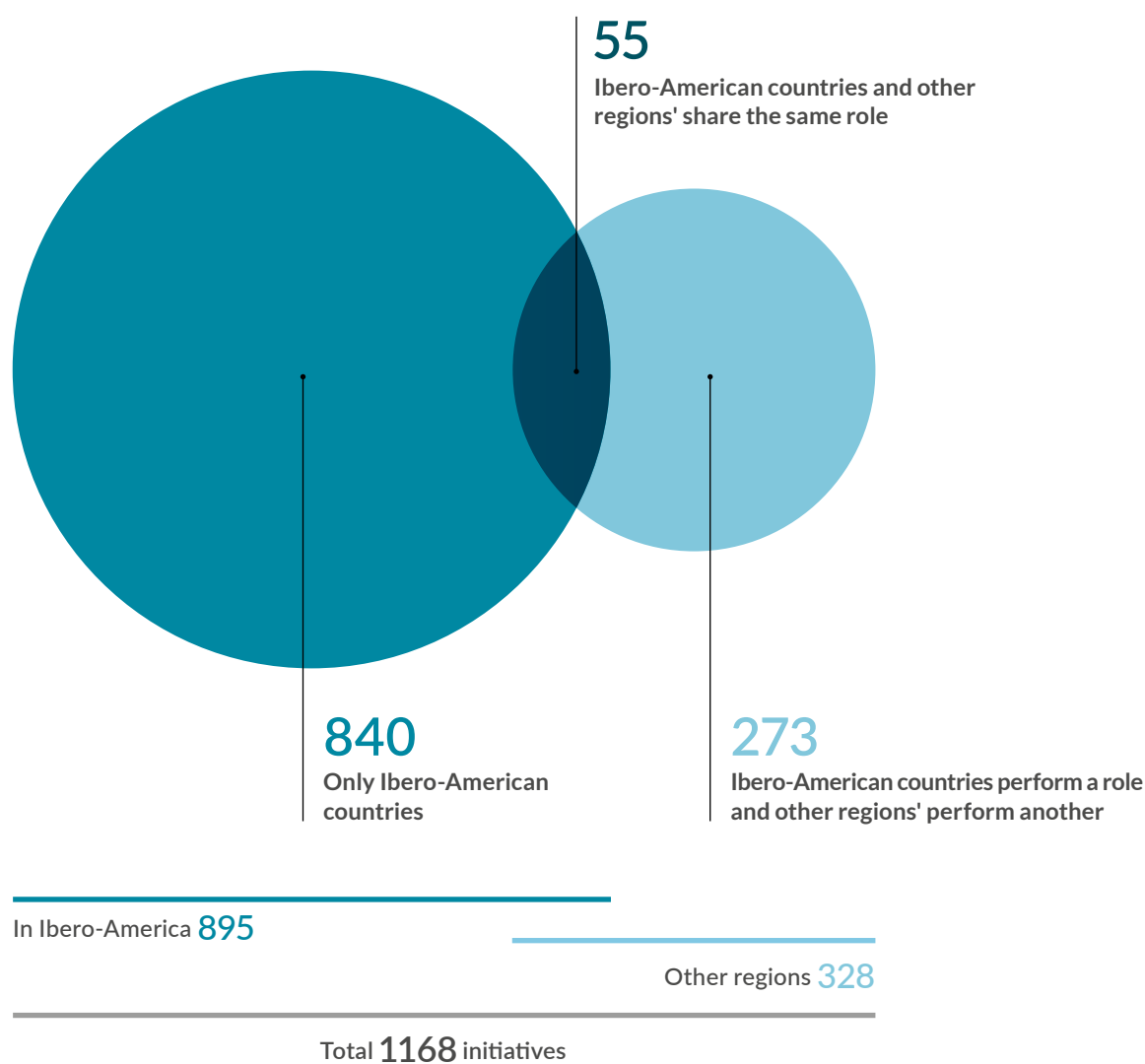
As it has been pointed out throughout this Report and consistent with the biennial nature of this publication, this 2022 edition takes the 2020-2021 period as a reference for the analysis. This also allows to compare data associated with different time frames and to better identify the possible impact the pandemic has had on South-South and Triangular Cooperation finally executed.

On the other hand, as in previous chapters, initiatives can be classified in three different groups according to the different partners that have participated, in any of the modalities recognized in this space, and to the roles they have exercised: 1) exchanges that only involve Ibero-American countries; 2) those in which Ibero-American countries and countries from other regions coincide, executing different roles; and 3) initiatives in which Ibero-American countries and other regions' developing countries coincide and share at least one of the same roles (usually recipient).

→ GRAPH 5.2

Distribution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives according to the participation of Ibero-American countries and other regions' developing countries and the combination of roles. 2020-2021

In units



Graph 5.2 shows the number of initiatives that meet each of these three criteria during the 2020-2021 period and it is used as a reference to narrow the framework of analysis on which this chapter is based. In fact, this chapter focuses on the 328 South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated together with other regions' developing nations in the aforementioned period. In 55 of these, countries from different regions also coincided in the exercise of the same role. If the 840 exchanges in which only Ibero-American countries participated are added to these 328, the total number of exchanges in which the region participated with partners from all over the world in those two years reaches a total of 1,168.

When these figures, associated with 2020 and 2021, are compared with those of the immediately previous period (2018-2019), it is possible to confirm that the impact of the pandemic was more severe within Ibero-America than on South-South and Triangular Cooperation which also involved other regions. This is suggested by Graph 5.3, which shows a drop in all South-South and Triangular Cooperation of more than 28.5% (from 1,634 initiatives 1,168); a reduction which is 10 percentage points more intense when compared to cooperation with other developing regions (a negative 18.4%, from 402 to 328). The difference between the two rates also leads

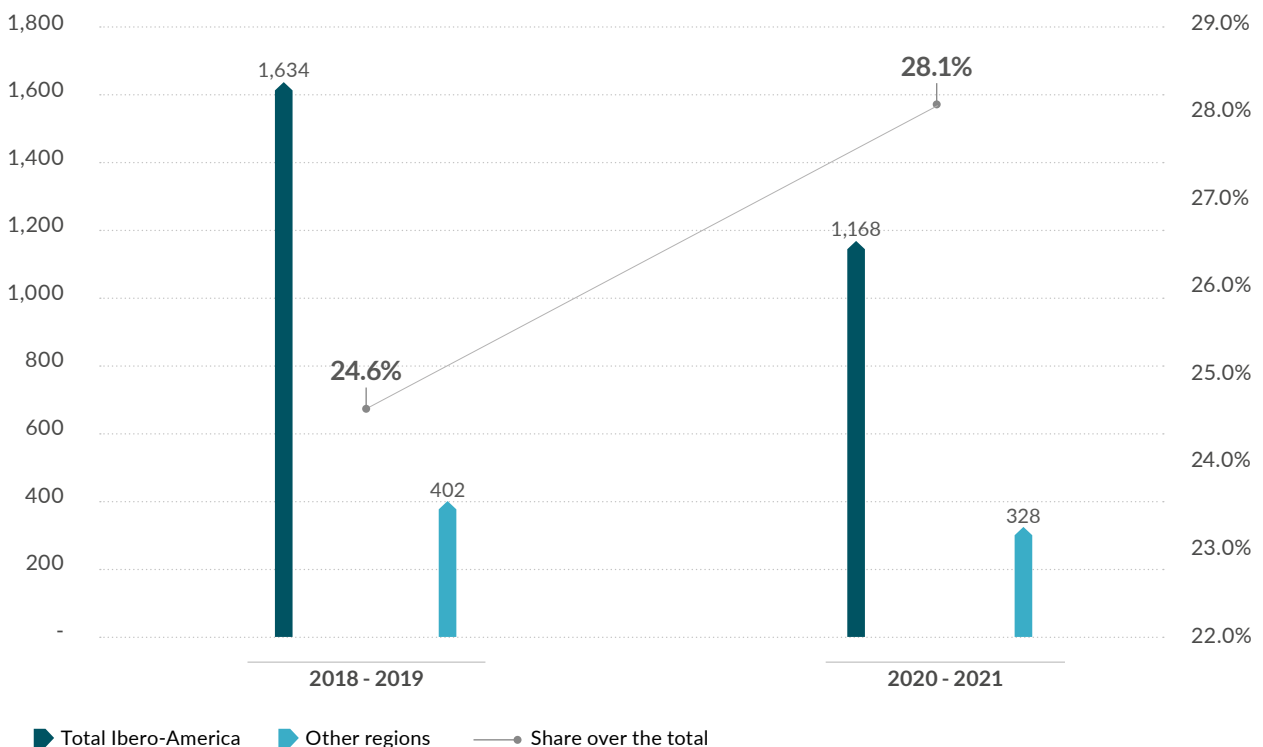
to an increase in the relative share of Ibero-American cooperation with extra-regional developing countries, from 24.6% in the years prior to the COVID-19 crisis to 28.1% in 2020-2021.

Comparing 2020-2021 figures with those of 2018-2019 confirms that the impact of the pandemic was more severe within Ibero-America than for South-South and Triangular Cooperation which involved other regions

→ GRAPH 5.3

Variation of Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives and of their share over the total with all partners, by the region with which they were exchanged. 2018-2019 and 2020-2021

In units and percentage



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



Photo: Children visit and play with otters protected in the framework of the Bilateral SSC project between Brazil and Colombia. This initiative also strengthens the social role of zoos as a key element for environmental preservation. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2022.

5.3 Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation during the 2020-2021 period: countries and regions

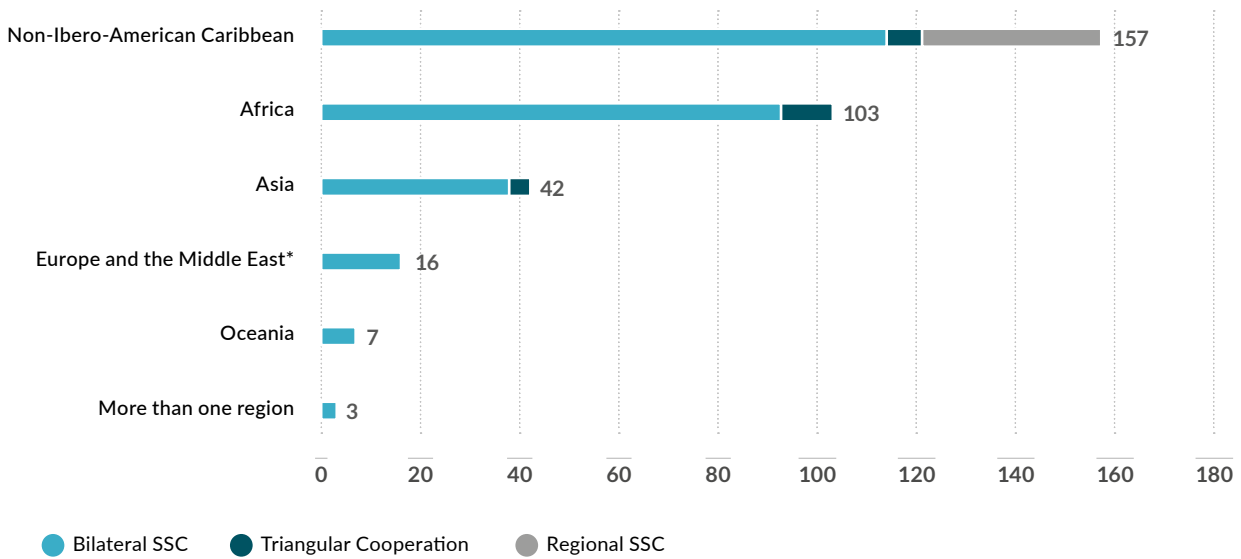
In order to characterize Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation with the rest of the world, it is important to identify its main stakeholders, i.e. mostly, but not only, developing countries and the regions to which they belong. Graph 5.4, precisely prepared to this end, distributes the 328 initiatives carried out by Ibero-America in 2020-2021 together with other developing countries, according to the different regions.

In this sense, as Graph 5.4 shows, Ibero-American countries associated with non-Ibero-American Caribbean nations in almost one half of the initiatives (157, 48% of the total). Indeed, the emphasis Ibero-America has placed on this region remained during the whole period. Despite the risk of this record being over-dimensioned due to the methodological aspects that have been already explained, between 2007 and 2015 and thereafter, the non-Ibero-American Caribbean has accounted, on average, for 12% of the total number of initiatives Ibero-America exchanges with the whole world, and for one half of those carried out with other developing regions. Box 5.1 was prepared to confirm this, as it details the main characteristics of the collaboration between Ibero-American and non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries, at least from 2015 to 2021.

→ GRAPH 5.4

Distribution of Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives with other regions' developing countries, by the region with which they were exchanged and the modality. 2020-2021

In units



Note: (*) Turkey is added to the 8 countries of the Middle East (United Arab Emirates, Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Syria and Yemen).

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

→ BOX 5.1

The non-Ibero-American Caribbean region: a strategic partner for Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation

Given its geographic proximity, the non-Ibero-American Caribbean has historically been the region on which Ibero-American countries have focused their South-South and Triangular Cooperation. This is confirmed by the different editions of the *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America* prepared by SEGIB which, since its first publication in 2007, makes explicit references to cooperation with the Caribbean and also includes, since 2016, information regarding all developing regions.

Between 2015 and 2021, Ibero-American countries participated in 438 South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives together with non-Ibero-American Caribbean nations, exercising different roles. These correspond to 33 programs, 254 projects and 151 actions. Seventy percent of these are Bilateral exchanges, 19% are Regional and 11% are Triangular. In this sense, the

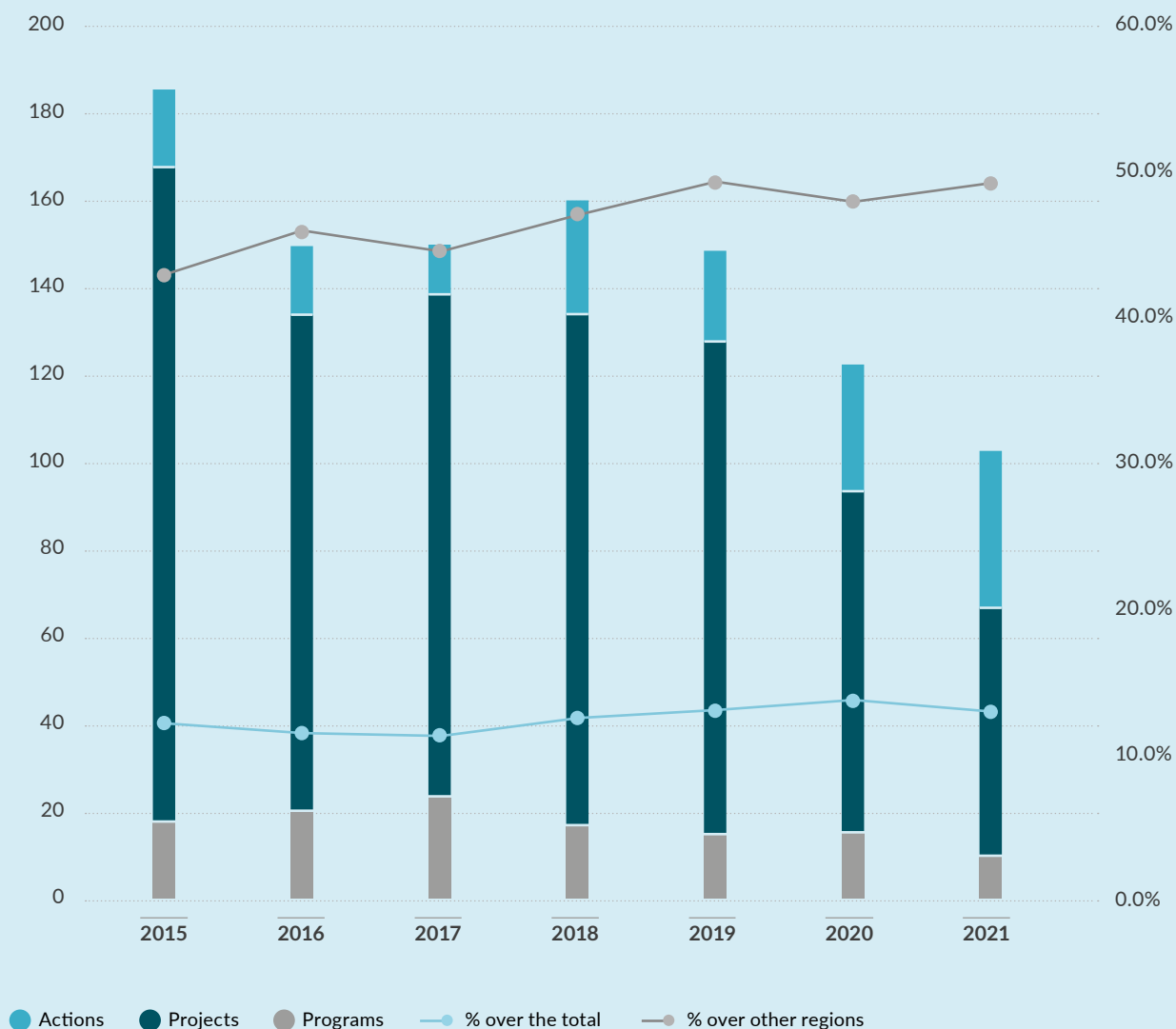
proportion of Regional initiatives with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean is higher than Regional SSC's share in Ibero-American cooperation as a whole (6% for the same period). This seems to be explained by the geographic proximity and by the fact that countries share some regional problems that require shared solutions, which search is often supported by the different multilateral organizations to which they belong (for example: ACS, CARICOM or SICA).

The first of the graphs below shows that, since 2018, the total number of initiatives with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean has fallen. However, this was also the case of all Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation. As a result, the percentage over the total has remained stable (around 10%). Despite the above, the proportion of initiatives with non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries over the total with other regions has slightly increased since

2015 and, in 2021, reached 49.3%. Likewise, the distribution by type of instrument has varied over time and, in 2020-2021, the proportion of actions is higher than that of projects and programs, which seems consistent with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evolution of Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean by type of instrument, percentage overall South-South and Triangular Cooperation with other regions' developing countries and percentage overall Ibero-American cooperation. 2015-2021

In units and percentage



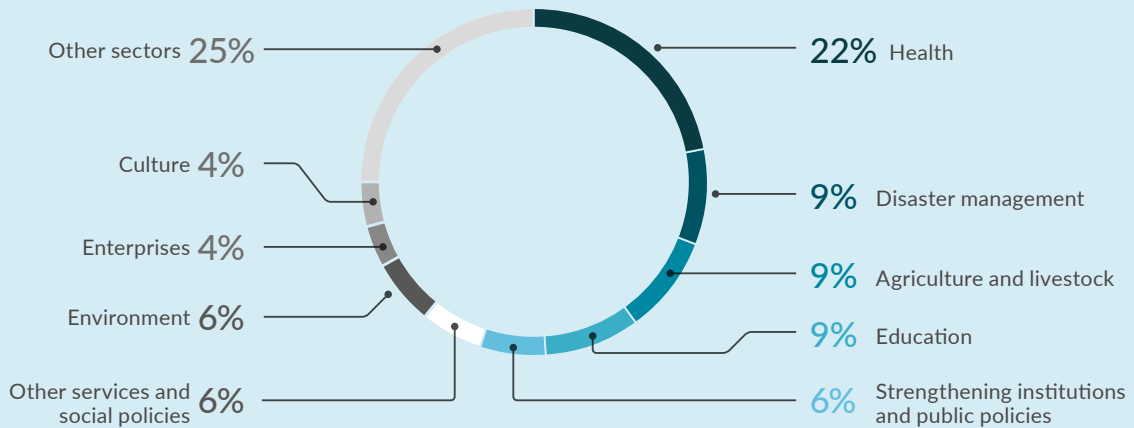
Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation

In sectoral terms (see the second graph), cooperation with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean mainly focused on *Health* (22%), a sector that has a higher importance than in South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a whole during this same period. This is also the case of *Disaster management* and *Education*, which rank second, together with *Agriculture and livestock* (9%), while their incidence is 3.6% and 6.1% in overall cooperation, respectively. This reveals health, integrated natural disaster risk management and the

attention to training needs have been of special interest in the relationship with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean. In contrast, although *Agriculture and livestock* and *Strengthening institutions and public policies* concentrate a large number of initiatives (9% and 6% respectively), they have had a lower share than in Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a whole between 2015 and 2021 (12% and 8%).

Sectoral distribution of Ibero-American South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives with non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries. 2015-2021

In percentage



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

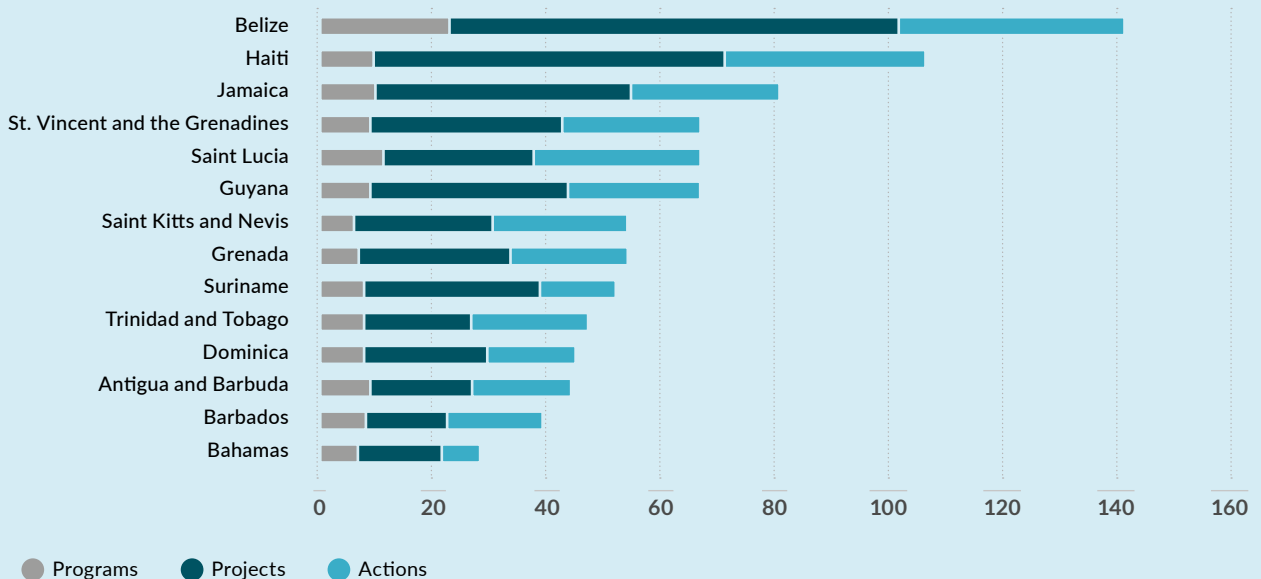
The third graph portrays non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries' participation in the cooperation between the two regions. As shown, Belize has been, by far, the most important non-Ibero-American Caribbean country, participating in 32% of the initiatives executed in the period. In fact, Belize has

been involved in almost 70% of the regional programs that include the non-Ibero-American Caribbean. This can certainly be explained by its membership in SICA, which is very active in terms of Regional SSC and also includes Central-American countries and the Dominican Republic. Belize is followed by Haiti, which

has participated in a quarter of the initiatives. In addition, cooperation has been implemented during the analyzed period with other 14 Caribbean countries and, even the least active (Bahamas), has participated in 28 initiatives, which also reveals the dynamism of this relationship.

Participation of non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries in South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives with Ibero-America, by role. 2015-2021

In units

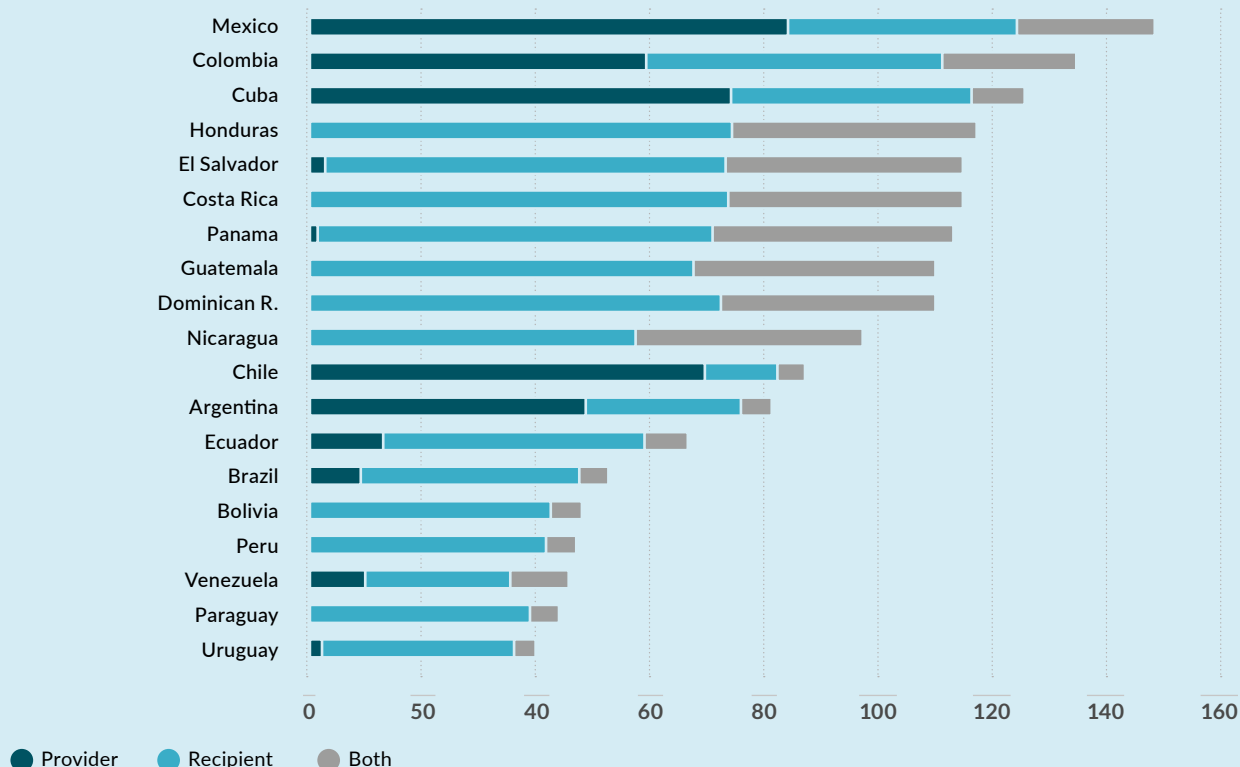


Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation.

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Participation of Ibero-American countries in South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, by type of instrument. 2015-2021

In units



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

Finally, the fourth graph shows the participation of developing countries in Ibero-America. Three of these stand out for their geographic proximity and clear interest in South-South and Triangular Cooperation with

the non-Ibero-American Caribbean: Mexico, Colombia and Cuba; not only as providers but also in other roles. These are followed by all the Central-American countries in addition to the Dominican Republic, which, as

already mentioned, is also a member of SICA together with Belize. Chile and Argentina should also be highlighted as providers.

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

As Graph 5.4 shows, South-South and Triangular Cooperation Ibero-American countries carried out in 2020-2021 with other regions' developing nations also suggests the importance of the relationship with Africa (more than 100 initiatives, corresponding to almost 1 out of 3 of those exchanged with other regions), as well as with Asia (43 initiatives, accounting for 12.8% of the total). Initiatives with the Middle East and Europe (5% of those with other regions) and with Oceania (a smaller 2.1%) were more occasional.

The same graph also portrays some differences regarding the modality chosen for the partnership with these other regions. In this sense, and as Box 5.1 detailed, the relative importance of Regional SSC with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, the only region that also registers initiatives under this modality, is especially noteworthy. Indeed, in the case of the non-Ibero-American Caribbean,

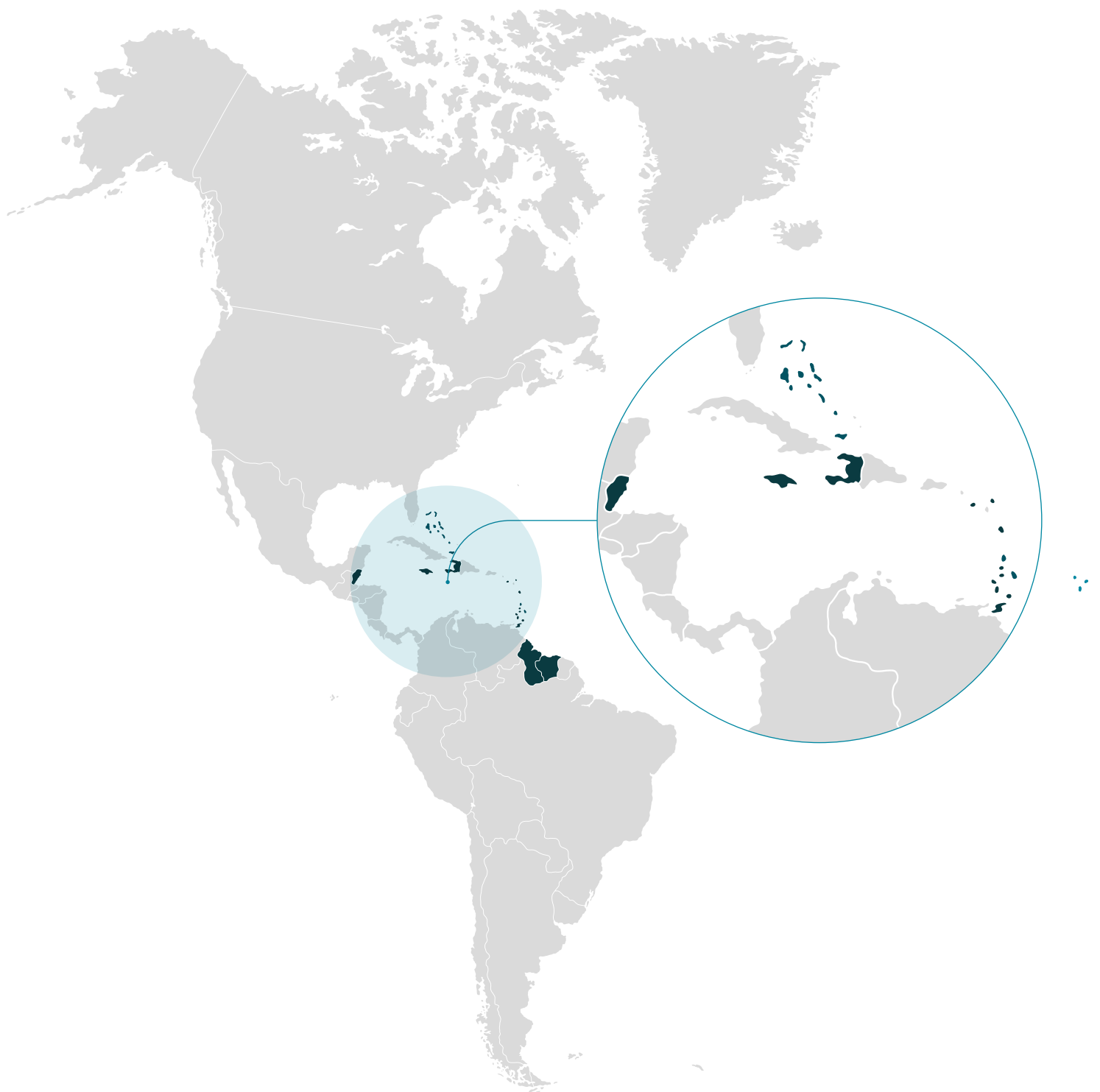
Bilateral SSC accounts for more than 70% of initiatives, but Regional SSC explains 23% of these; a remarkably high share and, in any case, higher than that of total South-South and Triangular Cooperation (10%).

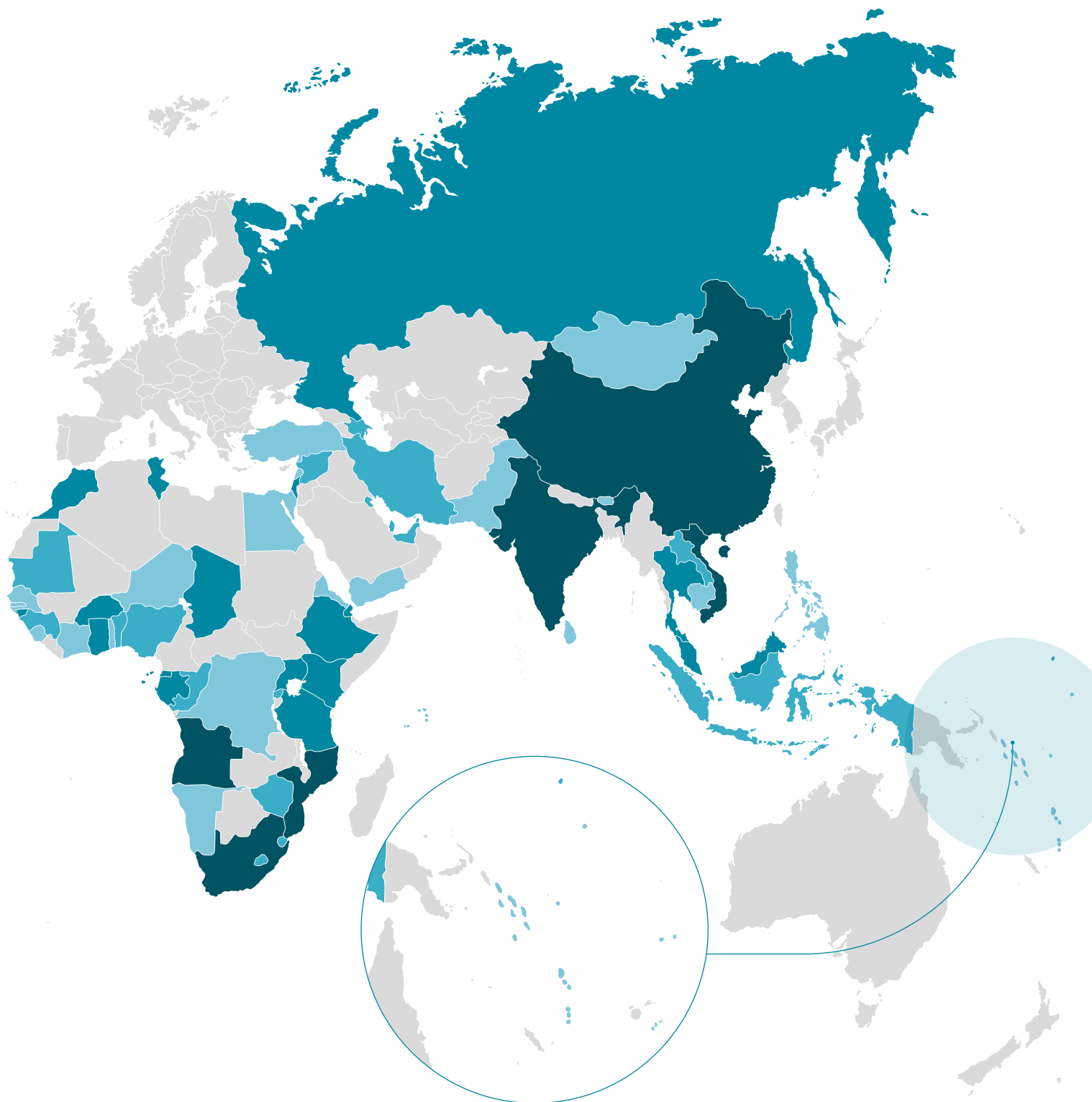
Graph 5.4 also confirms Bilateral SSC is the modality through which most exchanges with other developing regions were carried out, accounting for 8 out of 10 of the initiatives in the 2020-2021 period. Meanwhile, Triangular Cooperation had a more specific and complementary role in the association with the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, Africa and Asia, with a 6.4% share, a lower figure than that of Regional SSC (11%).

→ GRAPH 5.5

Participation of other regions' developing countries in South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives carried out with Ibero-American countries. 2020-2021

In units





Number of initiatives in which each country participated in 2020-2021, regardless of role and modality

- More than 15
- 6 to 15
- 3 to 5
- 2
- 1
- No initiatives registered

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

An analysis of all the aforementioned from a country perspective adds a new dimension to the efforts made. Indeed, Graph 5.5 shows, on a map, the distribution of the 328 South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives Ibero-America executed together with other developing regions during the 2020-2021 period. This collaboration involves (excluding Ibero-American countries) 83 countries throughout the world, a certainly remarkable figure in the context of the current crisis.

In fact, and paradoxically, it is the COVID-19 crisis itself and the response given by Ibero-American countries, especially by Cuba, that explains the above. Indeed, since

the beginning of the pandemic, this small Caribbean nation made its recognized expertise in health and also in disaster and emergency management available upon any request. Thus, and under different formulas of bilateral interventions (sending medical brigades, donating vaccines and treatments, or reorienting the action of healthcare professionals already active in the field), Cuba managed to support more than half of these 83 countries. Box 5.2 specifically details the solidarity of Cuba's SSC.

→ BOX 5.2

Cuba: a benchmark of solidarity in the global fight against COVID-19

In March 2020, only ten days after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic, the first Henry Reeve Cuban medical brigade, which mission was to support the fight against this disease, arrived in Lombardy (Italy), one of the most affected regions at that time. Only a few days later, another contingent of Cuban doctors arrived to assist another European country, in this case, Andorra (Álvarez, 2020) (Guerra, 2020) (*Somos Iberoamérica*, 2020). This exercise of assistance and solidarity, paved the way for an innovative cooperation characterized by an unprecedented South-North pattern (Brown, 2021).

As representatives of WHO noted, by sending these brigades, Cuba responded to two of the many requests this Caribbean nation received. In fact, by the end of 2020, Cuba had mobilized a total of 3,800 healthcare professionals organized in 52 brigades to 39 countries and territories affected by the COVID-19 around the world (Guerra, 2020).

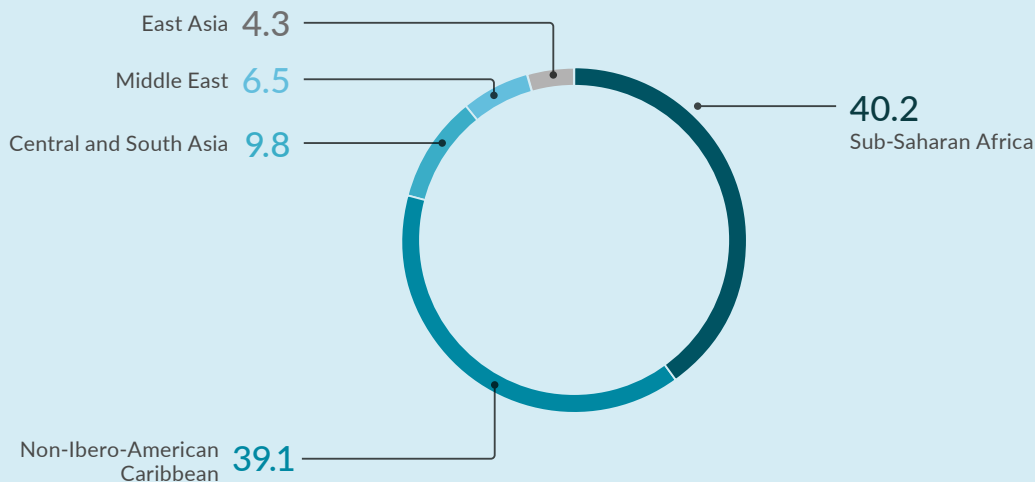
As data suggests, this small Caribbean nation of just 11 million people played a key role in the world's response to an extraordinary challenge. This was not random, as it is part of a trajectory that began in the 1960s - shortly after the

Revolution - when Cuba decided to commit to SSC, especially in the field of public health, by sending medical missions, becoming an international benchmark for development cooperation.

The above is confirmed by the information included in the Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS by its Spanish acronym). According to these records, throughout 2020 and 2021, Cuba carried out 205 South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives in other regions' developing countries

Regions supported by Cuba to address the COVID-19, by SSC initiatives. 2020-2021

In percentage



(excluding Ibero-America). More than half (107) were related to the fight against COVID-19, involving 45 developing countries in these exchanges. Almost 90% were the result of Cuba's support to these other nations.

The first graph distributes the 92 initiatives implemented by Cuba throughout the world during the most severe moments of the COVID-19 crisis, according to the region to which the developing countries that received such support belong. As the graph portrays, almost 80% of these exchanges were carried out in sub-Saharan African and non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries. In this sense, it is important to especially mention the support received by Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique and South Africa, as well as by Angola, Chad, Gabon, Ghana and Zimbabwe, to name a few of the nearly 20 countries that benefited from this aid in this region. In the Caribbean, Cuba's cooperation was destined to Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago, among others.

Another 10% of the initiatives promoted by Cuba to support the fight against COVID-19 aimed to support countries in Central and South Asia, such as Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Timor-Leste. The remaining 10% involved countries in the Middle East and in East Asia (United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar, together with China and Vietnam, respectively).

This cooperation was executed through initiatives that combined several elements: on the one hand, emergency aid and the donation of Cuban treatments and vaccines, especially designed for the fight against COVID-19; on the other hand, the exchange of experiences, for example, regarding the Cuban treatment protocol for patients; and, third, the medical assistance provided by Cuban experts in the field.

Two key aspects explain these support modalities: first, the role played by the Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade, specialized in disaster

management and severe epidemics, as well as by the many Cuban health professionals who were already in the field as part of other missions (the "Comprehensive Health Program" and "Operation Miracle", among others); and, second, the undeniable development and leadership of the biotechnology industry in Cuba, highly aimed to support the health system, which has enabled Cuba to be one of the few countries in the world - and the only country in Latin-America - capable of producing vaccines against COVID-19.

In fact, the Henry Reeve Brigade is made up of a highly trained group of 1,500 Cuban professionals who provide medical care in emergency situations. Promoted in 2005 to support the population affected by Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans (United States) - and although it was rejected (Guerra, 2020) - this brigade has been assisting emergencies around the world for almost two decades. Three important milestones should be highlighted among its most significant actions: the assistance provided to Pakistan after the earthquake that hit that country in 2005; the support to Haiti in 2010 in order to face the impact of the earthquake and the cholera epidemic that devastated this nation; and its undeniable contribution to the fight against Ebola in 2014, which severely affected numerous West African countries (Álvarez, 2020).

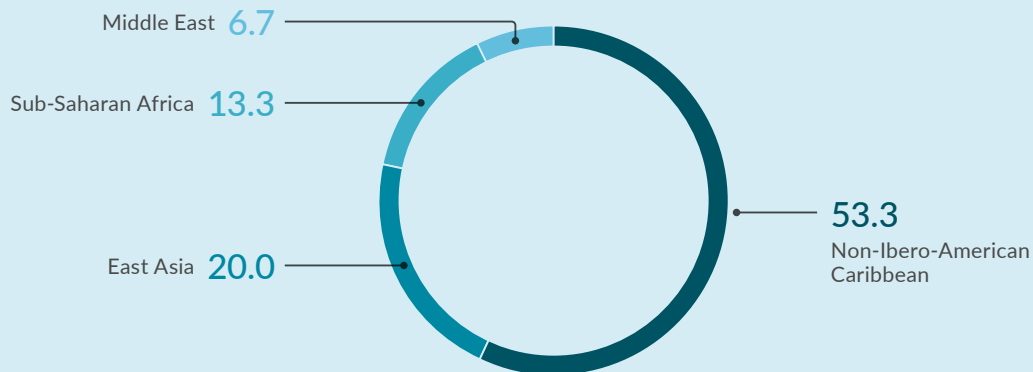
The work of the Henry Reeve Brigade and the contribution of Cuba's medical collaboration abroad has been widely recognized by WHO and various United Nations bodies - including the Secretary-General itself (Álvarez, 2020) - through awards and successive declarations. Its biotechnology industry has also been widely acknowledged, as suggested by the uninterrupted awards that, over more than 25 years, Cuban professionals in this industry have received from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (Yaffe, 2020).

This broad experience certainly explains how a country with limited material resources has achieved, after the outbreak of the pandemic

and in record time, two major biotechnological milestones: the development of specific medical treatments for the fight against COVID-19 (antivirals which use is recommended by WHO and the Johns Hopkins Medical Center and that are based on previous and successful experiences in the effective fight against dengue fever and meningitis); as well as the development of 2 (and other 3 underway) of the only 23 coronavirus vaccines that, worldwide and by the end of 2021, had started phase 3 clinical trials (Yaffe, 2020 and 2021). In fact, Cuba's great success is not only related to having achieved this, but also to having made this progress available for all the countries that requested its assistance (Yaffe, 2021).

Regions from which Cuba received donations to address COVID-19. 2020-2021

In percentage



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

The aforementioned scarcity of material resources - part of it explained by the COVID crisis itself, as well as by the consequences of the US blockade on the island since the 1960s - explains, on the other hand, the fact that Cuba also needed the solidarity of other peoples to fight against this pandemic.

In fact, and according information available in SIDICSS, in the 2020-2021 period, Cuba received 15 donations of medical supplies from more than 10 countries. As the second graph illustrates, its main partners were non-Ibero-American Caribbean

countries (more than half), as well as nations from East Asia (20%), sub-Saharan Africa (13.3%) and, to a less extent, the Middle East (6.7%). The role played by Vietnam and Zambia, as well as by Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, also stood out.

The material received mainly consisted of mechanical ventilators, masks, diagnostic kits, protective goggles, suits, gloves, reagents and other supplies necessary for the management of this disease (Álvarez, 2020). They were all aimed for the

Cuban population and for healthcare professionals who treated patients, both inside the island and/or on missions abroad, which were key in the global fight against COVID-19.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, Álvarez (2020), Brown (2021), Guerra (2020), *Somos Iberoamérica* (2020) and Yaffe (2020 and 2021).

However, the same map suggests some differences in terms of countries' participation. In fact, in Graph 5.5, each country is associated with a color that increases its intensity as the number of exchanges in which it participates in the 2020-2021 period rises, according to the ranges detailed in the corresponding legend. As shown, more than 60 countries had specific interventions (participating in 2-3 initiatives in each case, up to a maximum of 5). In contrast, around 20 countries accounted for most exchanges. Consistent with what was previously described, the importance of the non-Ibero-American Caribbean (between 10 and 51 initiatives), sub-Saharan Africa (Mozambique, South Africa and Angola) and Asia (China, Vietnam and India) deserves a special mention.

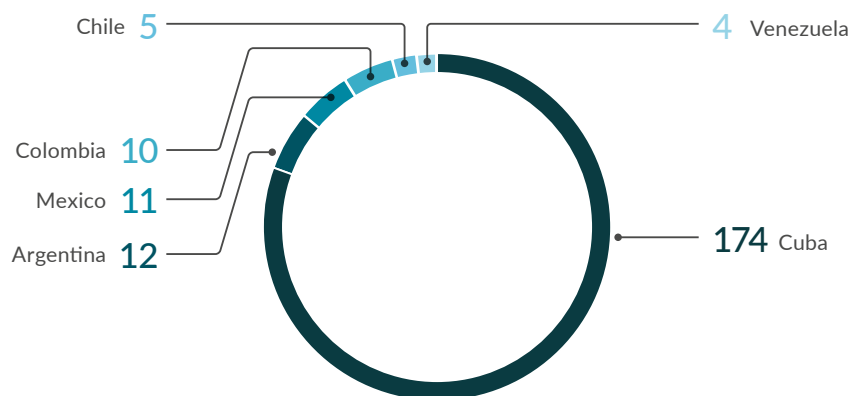
As it was explained, it should be noted that the above data refers to countries' participation but it does not consider modalities and roles. However, if the analysis adds these two variables, it is possible to confirm what the map reveals. At least that is suggested by the combined interpretation of this same map together with Graphs 5.6 and 5.7, which provide information on the main stakeholders that participated in bilateral and triangular exchanges between Ibero-America and other regions in the 2020-2021 period.

→ GRAPH 5.6

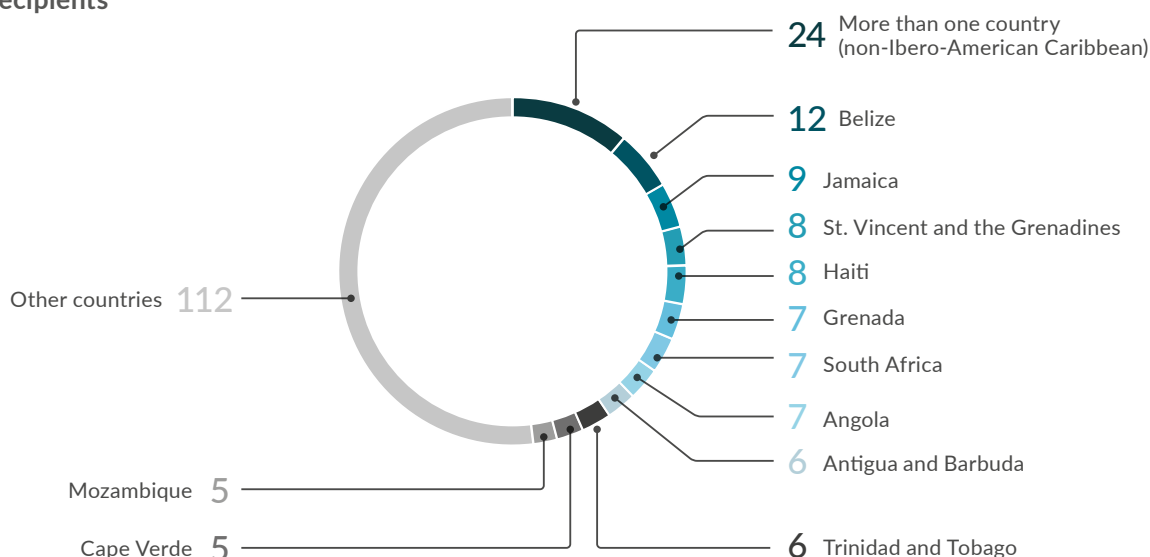
Distribution of Bilateral SSC initiatives exchanged between Ibero-America (as provider) and other regions' developing countries (as recipients), by country. 2020-2021

In units

A. Main providers



B. Main recipients



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

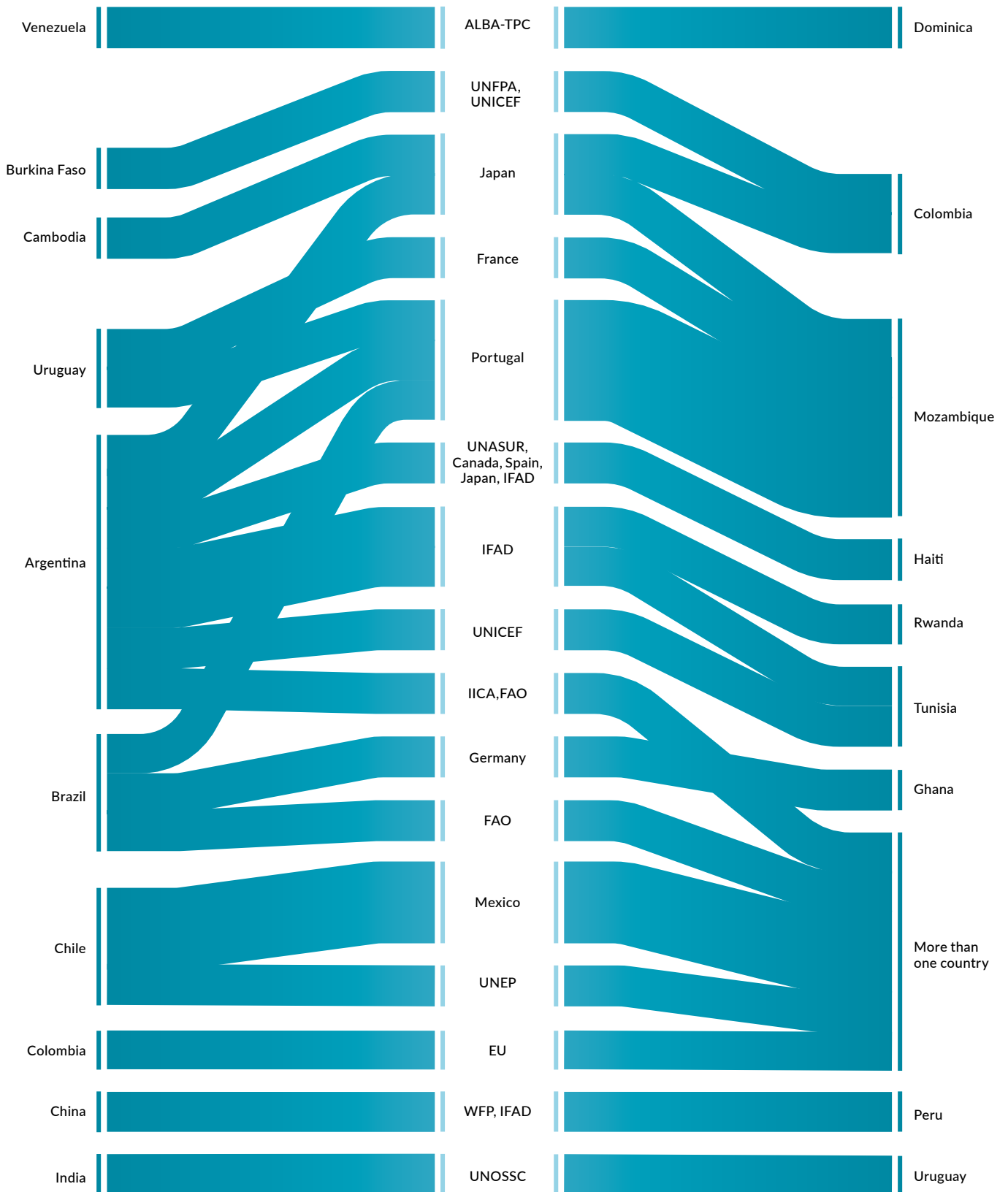
Indeed, Graph 5.6, which is specifically focused on the 216 Bilateral SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America participated as provider (80% of the total), confirms the dynamism of Caribbean nations (especially of Belize and Jamaica, also very active in Regional SSC, as it was already mentioned), as well as of 4 sub-Saharan African countries (Mozambique, South Africa, Angola and Cape Verde). However, the cases in which "more than one country" (usually also from the non-Ibero-American Caribbean) simultaneously coincide in the exercise of the recipient role (in around 10% of the occasions) stands out due to their greater frequency, and the huge dispersion (112 initiatives involving more than 60 countries) is ratified.

— More than half of the 205 initiatives that Cuba carried out together with 45 developing countries worldwide aimed to fight the COVID-19 crisis

→ GRAPH 5.7

Distribution of Triangular Cooperation initiatives exchanged between Ibero-America and other regions, by participants and roles. 2020-2021

In units



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

On the other hand, the flow chart in Graph 5.7 shows the different stakeholders that were involved in the 21 Triangular Cooperation initiatives carried out between Ibero-America and other developing regions during the 2020-2021 period. Specifically, the label “more than one country” stands out in the right flow (associated with recipients), which is common in this modality. Additionally, the importance of African countries such as Mozambique (5 initiatives) and, more occasionally, Tunisia, Ghana and Rwanda, in addition to Dominica and Haiti in the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, is also worthy of mention. Meanwhile, Cambodia, China and India; and Burkina Faso, are the leading providers in Asia and in Africa, respectively.

The various multilateral organizations involved as second providers also deserve a special reference, especially those that are part of the UN System and/or those which have sectoral mandates (IFAD, IICA and FAO, among many others). Spain and Portugal also participated, together with other Ibero-American partners, in TC with Haiti and Mozambique.

Finally, Ibero-American countries' role should also be highlighted. In this regard, the combined analysis of Graphs 5.6 and 5.7 once again confirms the importance of Cuba, which acted as provider in 80% of the Bilateral SSC initiatives in which the region participated in this role. Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Chile and Venezuela also stand out in both bilateral and triangular exchanges. The analysis is completed by Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, which are involved in several Triangular Cooperation initiatives, combining the roles of first provider and recipient.

5.4 Sectoral analysis and the alignment with the SDGs in the context of the COVID-19 crisis

As it has been mentioned throughout this Report and in this chapter in particular, the response to the COVID-19 crisis has been decisive to understand part of South-South and Triangular Cooperation's dynamic over the last two years and, especially, of the cooperation Ibero-America has carried out together with other regions' developing countries. In this sense, a review of the type of capacities that were strengthened during the worst moments of the pandemic only reaffirms this pattern.

Indeed, Graph 5.8, which distributes the 328 initiatives of the 2020-2021 period according to the area of action and the activity sector they addressed, shows that two thirds of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives carried out with other developing regions mainly aimed at strengthening Social capacities. Its relative importance is explained by *Health*, a sector that accounts for 85% of the actions, projects and programs implemented in the Social area and for almost 60% of the total.

Two thirds of South-South and Triangular Cooperation carried out with other regions' developing countries focused on strengthening capacities in the social area

As it was already stated, this cooperation is closely linked to SSC promoted by Cuba to support countries around the world in the fight against COVID-19, but also to that carried out by Chile, Venezuela and Colombia, as suggested, for example, by the international courses for third countries dedicated to the management of acute respiratory failure or the transfer of telemedicine-related capacities. Initiatives to address other health issues that are important for the region also continued (the treatment of diabetes or the common flu, AIDS relief, ophthalmological surgeries for low-income people or permanent training of professionals).



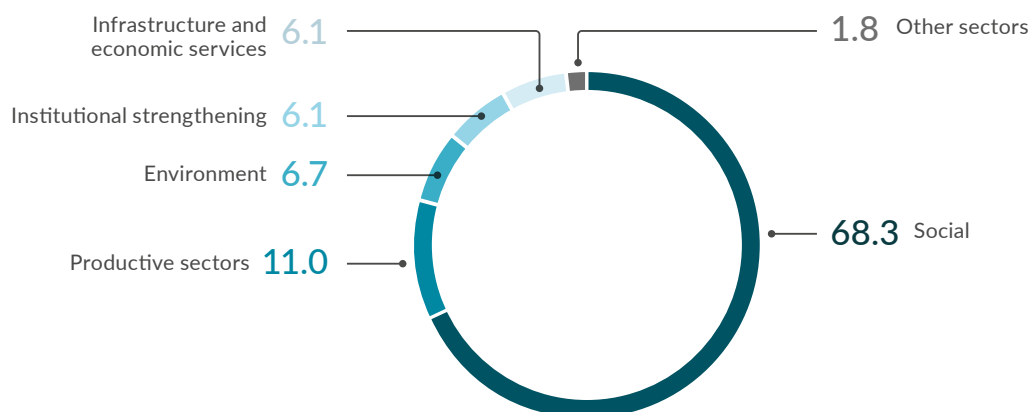
Photo: Improvements in the management of water resources and the transfer of technology for their efficient use can contribute to mitigating the effects of climate change on agriculture. Bilateral SSC project between Mexico and Chile. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.

→ GRAPH 5.8

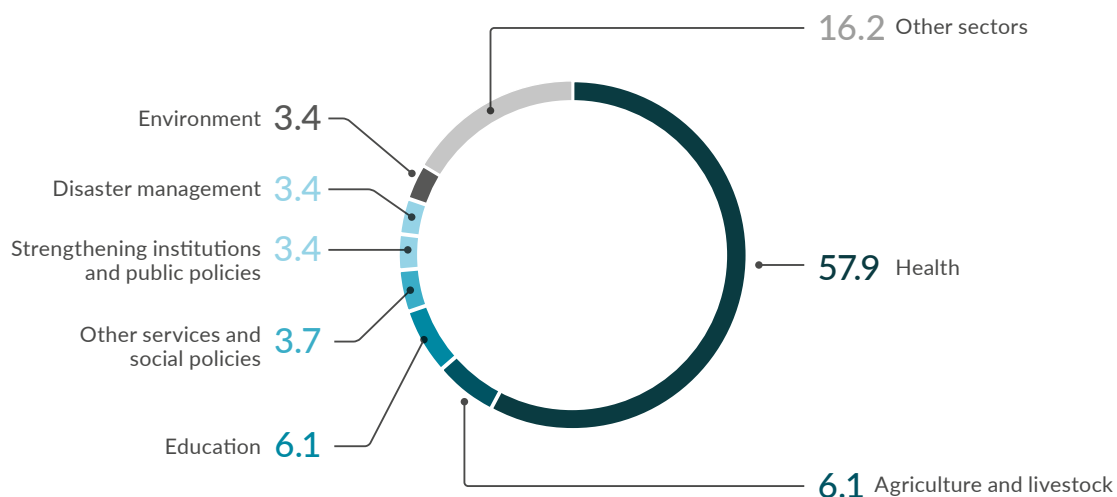
Distribution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives exchanged between Ibero-America and other regions' developing countries, by areas of action and main activity sectors. 2020-2021

In percentage

A. Areas of action



B. Activity sectors



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

The rest of the exchanges in the Social area mainly focused on *Education* (second sector in relative importance together with *Agriculture and livestock*, with 20 initiatives in each case, corresponding to 6.1% of the total) and on *Other services and social policies* (3.7%). An important part of these was implemented to encourage a process of continuous teacher training (often through various scholarship programs), as well as to support literacy and foster inclusive education. Others were dedicated to strengthen public policies for child protection and development (school canteens and universal child allowance models); to improve access to decent housing; as well as to promote sports as an instrument for social inclusion.

On the other hand, and according to the same Graph, the Productive sectors area ranked second in terms of relative importance (36 initiatives, corresponding to 11% of the total), although at a remarkable distance from the Social area. In this case, the most significant sector was *Agriculture and livestock*, which, as it was already mentioned, was the second most important in South-South and Triangular Cooperation with other regions, together with *Education* and *Health*.

The topics specifically addressed in the *Agriculture and livestock* sector were quite diverse although they had some common aspects. In this sense, several interventions were dedicated to livestock farming (technification, yield) and, part of these, in particular, to the production of milk and dairy products. Initiatives also shared the purpose of focusing on traditional products (coffee, wheat and cashew nuts), as well as on small-scale producers; on exchanging experiences to strengthen value chains; or on

working to promote greater sustainability. Case 5.1, which describes a triangular project in cashew nut production involving Brazil and Ghana, supported by Germany, is precisely an example of the above.

The second area in terms of relative importance was Productive sectors (36 initiatives)

→ CASE 5.1

Germany and Brazil join efforts to improve cashew nut production in Ghana



Cashew nuts are becoming increasingly popular around the world. In 2019-2020, they accounted for 17% of tree nut production and ranked third after almonds and walnuts (UNCTAD, 2021). Cashew (also known as cashew nut) is a tropical evergreen tree that originated in North-eastern Brazil and it has a great capacity to adapt to low fertility soils, high temperatures and water stress (EMBRAPA, 2016). It is currently produced in 46 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin-America and the Caribbean (UNCTAD, 2021).

The main product of this tree is the kernel inside the seed, but other by-products are also extracted from other parts (cashew shell, pseudofruit, leaves, etc.). The commercialization of cashew by-products, which are often discarded as agricultural waste, can help diversify revenue sources and generate more value (UNCTAD, 2021).

Africa produced more than half of the global raw cashew nut output in the 2014-2018 period (UNCTAD, 2021). However, its production chain faces several challenges such as limited access to information, technology and financing options (UNOSSC/UNDP, 2022).

Brazil and Ghana are two of the major producers - in 2014-2018 Brazil was the world's tenth largest producer and Ghana the third largest exporter of raw cashew nuts (UNCTAD, 2021) - and they both have similar natural production conditions. This has led to the implementation of a Triangular Cooperation project between these two countries and Germany, dedicated to *Improving cashew planting material and by-product processing technologies in Ghana*.

Its objective was to improve the efficiency and quality of cashew production and processing by developing disease-tolerant, high-yielding varieties adapted to local conditions and by introducing new processing technologies. This way, the initiative aimed to contribute to the reduction of poverty among families, food security, climate change mitigation and the empowerment of rural women.

As a result of the project, about 20 experts and 200 farmers benefited from training sessions, 7 hectares of plant nurseries were established and more than 400,000 cashew seedlings were distributed in Ghana. The adaptation of 5 Brazilian cashew

varieties to local conditions in Ghana - high-yielding and disease-tolerant - and the improvement of fruit processing techniques, were among this project's main outcomes (UNOSSC/UNDP, 2022).

The initiative was implemented between 2017 and 2020 and it was carried out by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA by its Portuguese acronym) and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Ghana (MOFA), as recipient. It was supported by the Brazilian and German international cooperation agencies (ABC and GIZ, respectively).

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, EMBRAPA (2016), UNOSSC/UNDP (2022) and UNCTAD (2021).

As for the rest of the productive activities, cooperation dedicated to *Tourism and Industry*, two sectors that aggregately explain more than 10 initiatives, stood out. In this sense, the former is undoubtedly a source of income for many countries and this support has contributed to the increasing integration of this activity into their national development strategies. For this reason, most of the exchanges that involve Ibero-America and other regions share the purpose of strengthening the tourism offer, taking advantage of a wide range of resources: culture, health and wellness, historical memory and, of course, nature itself, to name a few. In fact, the initiatives promoted tend to address two of the major challenges of the sector: to develop activities while guaranteeing sustainability; and to generate benefits for

the communities involved while ensuring the minimum environmental and socio-cultural impact. Case 5.2, focused on a bilateral exchange between Peru and Thailand, describes an example that combines several of these elements.

→ CASE 5.2

Community-based tourism: the experience of Peru and Thailand

Peru and Thailand are carrying out a Bilateral SSC project on sustainable tourism development with community participation, seeking to strengthen capacities and promote innovation in the management of this sector through the exchange of experiences. This initiative, which has already implemented several phases, focuses on tourism in rural areas and tackles aspects such as the strengthening of the tourism offer, business coordination, the experience of micro-enterprises and gastronomy (CENFOTUR, 2022).

Thus, for example, in mid-2022, delegates from the Tourism Training Center of Peru (CENFOTUR by its Spanish acronym) - through its Peruvian and International Gastronomy

Studies Program - and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru, participated in an activity in Thailand (in Bangkok, Phuket, Chiang Mai and other zones) through which, among other things, they shared the main features of Peruvian gastronomy and learned about the fusion of Thai cuisine with different culinary traditions (CENFOTUR, 2022; Embassy of Peru in Thailand, 2022).

Peru and Thailand have been exchanging their knowledge, best practices and experiences for more than 15 years and this project is part of the 4th Thailand-Peru Development Cooperation Program (2021-2023), coordinated by the Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI by its Spanish acronym) and the Thailand

International Cooperation Agency (TICA). The Program also includes cooperation initiatives in alternative development programs to prevent the production of illicit crops; space and satellite technologies; public health and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic; as well as human resources training (Embassy of Peru in Thailand, 2020).

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation and websites of the Embassy of Peru in Thailand and CENFOTUR.

As for *Industry*, South-South and Triangular Cooperation executed together with other developing regions focused on the transformation of commodities, but also on all aspects related to the strengthening of innovation and industrial property systems. Other initiatives in the Productive sectors area were dedicated, in a more specific way, to support *Construction, Transportation and storage and Fisheries*.

On the other hand, the remaining 20% of the 328 South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives that in the 2020-2021 period involved developing countries in Ibero-America and other regions, addressed (in very similar proportions, with 20 exchanges in each case) purposes associated with the preservation of the Environment, Institutional strengthening and the generation of Infrastructure and economic services. The contribution to Other areas was rather occasional, although 2 initiatives to promote *Gender* equality stood out.

Indeed, up to 22 initiatives have been promoted to provide countries with innovative environmental and *Disaster management* instruments and best practices. This includes, first, topics related to the management of different types of waste (solid, plastic, or Persistent Organic Pollutants - POP -, among others) and to the protection, preservation and recovery of biodiversity,

as well as of marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Other interventions focused on the different phases of disaster management (earthquakes, droughts or floods, to name a few), supporting the exchange of experiences for prevention (safe urban development, resilient construction and information and early warning systems), as well as to reinforce emergency aid and subsequent reconstruction. This was mainly Regional SSC which involved developing countries in the non-Ibero-American Caribbean and in Central and Mesoamerica.

Tourism is certainly a source of income for many countries; this has contributed to the increasing integration of this activity into their national development strategies

Meanwhile, other 20 initiatives exchanged in the 2020-2021 period between Ibero-America and other regions' developing countries resulted from a combination of interventions aimed at *Strengthening institutions and public policies*, promoting *Legal and judicial development and Human Rights*, and supporting *Peace, public and national security and defense*.

The topics that were addressed were diverse, with special emphasis on those that focused on providing States with better management tools, such as the exchange of best practices on electronic transactions, models of proximity and transparency, as well as the systematization and generation of data and information. The latter are key to guide governments in the appropriate decision making process to design, implement and even evaluate any public policy. A remarkable example of this is reviewed in Case 5.3, a Triangular initiative through which Chile and Mexico share their experience with non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries in their respective geospatial information platforms.

In the framework of this same area (Institutional strengthening) it is important to also make reference to experiences in forensic anthropology, the protection of minors through the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, as well as to those dedicated to support national institutions specifically dedicated to the promotion and defense of Human Rights. In this regard, another interesting initiative is described in Case 5.4, through which Colombia and Cambodia, supported by Japan, share their experience in demining in post-conflict stages.

→ CASE 5.3

Geospatial information platforms as an input for decision making



Since 2018, the Mexico-Chile Mixed Fund has been financing the project *Strengthening geospatial information platforms*, which also benefits 14 non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries. The initiative is led by the Ministry of National Assets of Chile and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI by its Spanish acronym) of Mexico and it aims to strengthen geospatial data infrastructures for the use of territorial information in decision making. Specifically, this involves the strengthening of two instruments (GEONODO of Chile and Mx-SIG of Mexico) and transferring the platforms,

through a pilot experience, to some countries in Latin-America and the Caribbean (IDE Chile, 2019).

GEONODO was launched in 2010 - and improved in subsequent versions - by the Executive Secretariat of the National System for the Coordination of Territorial Information of Chile (SNIT by its Spanish acronym) as a means to create, publish, share, analyze and use territorial information, especially aimed at public institutions (IDE Chile, 2022). The SNIT leads Chile's Geospatial Data Infrastructure (SDI by its Spanish acronym), a network of public institutions that collaboratively work to

make up-to-date and reliable geospatial information available to the community (Ministry of National Assets, 2022).

Mx-SIG, in turn, is an open source software platform provided by INEGI to generate online geographic information systems. Its capacity to easily develop visualization tools and its accessibility, scalability and interoperability are among its main advantages.

→ CASE 5.4

Colombia strengthens its capacities for demining based on the experience of Cambodia and Japan



Colombia is the second country in the world after Afghanistan in number of victims of antipersonnel mines and explosive remnants of war (National Center of Historical Memory and *Prologar* Foundation, 2017). This problem has not had much visibility, either because the number of victims is small compared to that of other events associated with armed conflict, or because they are usually isolated cases far from urban centers (National Center of Historical Memory and *Prologar* Foundation, 2017). However, this affects the daily lives of many people, such as children and adolescents, specifically in rural areas.

Physical injuries caused by these explosives "profoundly modify the work and social life of the victims and their families" (National Center of Historical Memory and *Prologar* Foundation, 2017). In addition, their presence triggers "processes of confinement, school drop out, forced displacement and changes

in rural activities" (National Center of Historical Memory and *Prologar* Foundation, 2017).

As of November 2022, Colombia had registered 12,273 victims of antipersonnel mines and unexploded ordnance, 19% of which died as a result of the accident. Sixty percent of the victims were members of the security forces. Fortunately, in the last decade, the annual number of victims has been falling (107 in 2022) (Presidency of the Republic of Colombia, 2022).

Since 2016, Colombia has been strengthening its capacities in integrated mine action based on the experience of the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), through a Triangular Cooperation project supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In this context, 7 courses and 2 seminars were held for people working in this area, such as members of the military forces and officials from the Office

of the High Commissioner for Peace and the Ministry of National Defense of Colombia. Topics such as best practices in demining techniques, quality management, information management and senior management for the coordination of interventions are addressed.

This initiative contributes to strengthening peace in Colombia and to building social fabric in the post-conflict stage. Cambodia's experience is of great importance "not only in terms of technology, but also regarding the impact it can have on poverty reduction and on economic growth in the country" (ApcColombia, n/d). It also contributes to comply with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Source: SEGIB based on Agencies and Directorates-General for Cooperation, National Center of Historical Memory and *Prologar* Foundation (2017) and websites of the Presidency of the Republic of Colombia and ApcColombia.

The last third group of initiatives (another 20) supported the generation of Infrastructure and economic services. Among these, it is important to highlight those that focused on three main lines of action: the development of *Enterprises*; the efficient and sustainable use of *Energy*; and the promotion of *Science and technology* with results applied to the economy.

Specifically, several South-South and Triangular Cooperation interventions aimed to strengthen national productive fabrics, with special emphasis on entrepreneurship and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Other exchanges were implemented to provide these economic agents with greater technical and productive capacities, as well as - and partly in line with the context of COVID-19 pandemic - to exchange experiences that will result in a greater digitalization of the economy, for example, through business and marketing models based on online tools.

In addition, other initiatives exchanged by Ibero-America with other regions' developing countries addressed issues related to energy infrastructure and services. In this framework, it is possible to identify South-South and Triangular Cooperation dedicated to guaranteeing electrical interconnection between sub-regions (in Central-America and the Caribbean) and to develop planning instruments that promote more efficient and environmentally friendly energy use, also including plans to evaluate the risk that climate change generates on the supply and access to this basic good. This analysis would be completed by cooperation aimed at strengthening systems and institutions that support science, technology and innovation.

On the other hand, the profile of the capacities that were strengthened through South-South and Triangular Cooperation promoted by Ibero-American countries together with those of other developing regions during the 2020-2021 period can be analyzed in terms of their alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

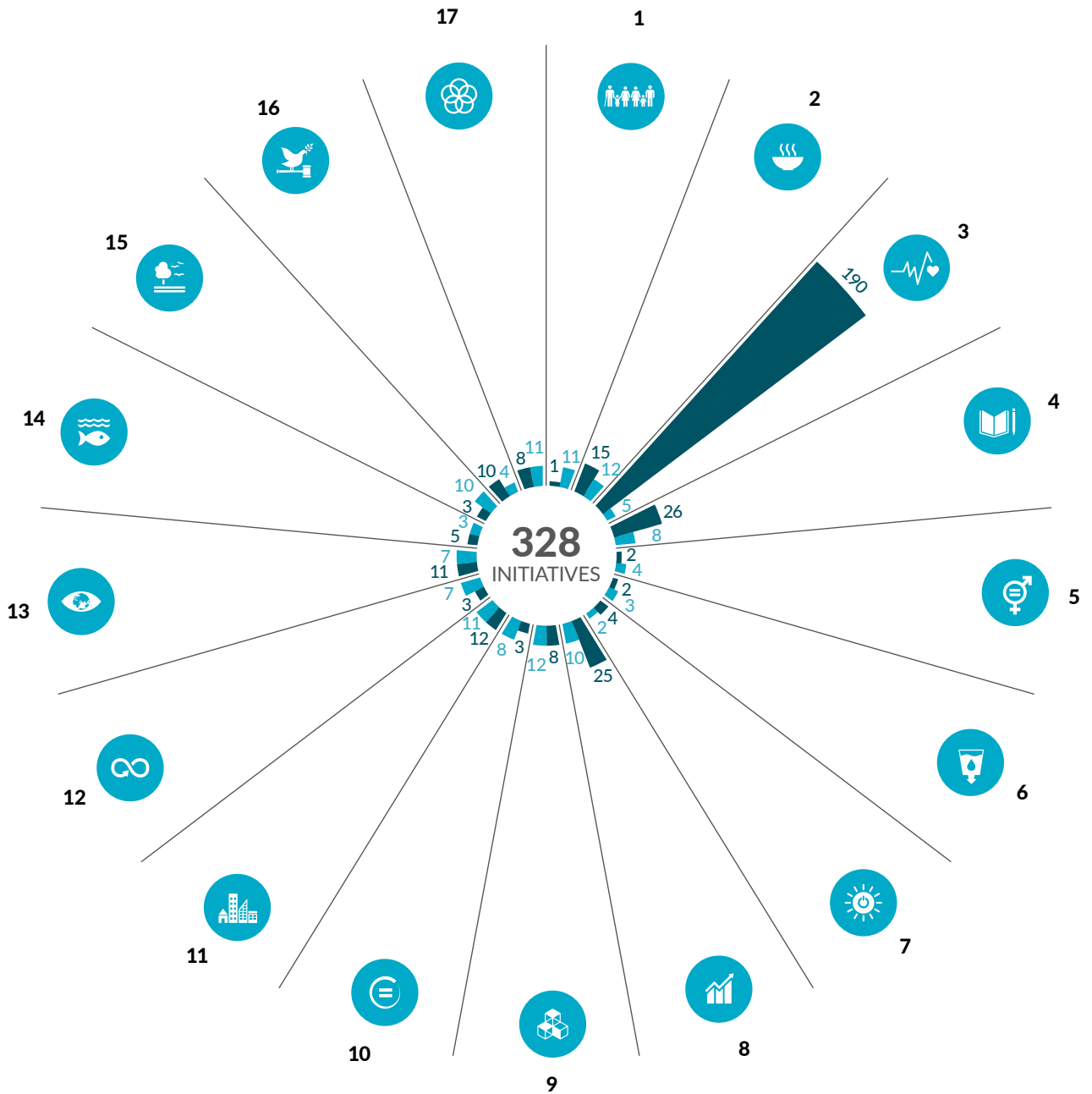
Indeed, Graph 5.9 distributes the 328 initiatives implemented in those years according to the main and second SDG with which they were potentially aligned.

It should be recalled that 100% of the initiatives are associated with a main SDG, but only some (in this case, 46.6%) address up to two second SDGs.

→ GRAPH 5.9

Distribution of South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives exchanged between Ibero-America and other regions' developing countries, by their alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 2020-2021

In units



● Main SDG ● Second SDG

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

Consistent with the above and, as expected, almost 200 initiatives - corresponding to nearly 6 out of 10 - aimed to achieve SDG 3 (Good health and well-being). These were followed, at a remarkable distance, by around 25 that addressed SDG 4 (Quality education) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), respectively.

Meanwhile, around 50 initiatives were aligned with 4 Development Goals of very different dimensions, in line with the 5Ps defined by the United Nations System¹: SDG 2 (Zero hunger), focused on People; SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), associated with Prosperity; SDG 13 (Climate action), which makes emphasis on the Planet; and SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), related to Peace. The remaining exchanges were dispersed in up to 10 different SDGs, SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals) standing out with 8 initiatives each.

As usual, some Sustainable Development Goals gain importance when they are identified as second SDGs. This often occurs with Objectives that have a more cross-cutting nature and/or which affect a specific population group. In this sense and as Graph 5.9 shows, this was the case of SDG 15 (Life on land) and SDG 1 (No poverty).

Finally, some of the Goals tend to be frequently identified as main and as second SDGs. This was very common, for example in the case of SDG 10, which is usually identified as second SDG in initiatives that are mainly associated with SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality education), due to the impacts these interventions have in terms of closing gaps and reducing inequality. Another recurrent association - generally connected to South-South and Triangular Cooperation initiatives that focus on small-scale producers and/or on family farming - is related to SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), as main and second SDGs respectively, and to their alignment with People and Prosperity.



Photo: Experts from different institutions in Colombia and Cambodia share experiences in integrated mine action, supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Photo of the last course held in the Asian country. Image credit: JICA. 2022.

¹ As it was detailed in previous chapters, 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).