

Towards an Ibero-American Ecosystem of Decentralised South-South and Triangular Cooperation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Pablo José Martínez Osés

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Acronyms

LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ODA	Official Development Assistance	PIFSSC	(by its Spanish Acronym) Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
PCSD	Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development	SEGIB	(by its Spanish Acronym) Ibero-American General Secretariat
DC	Decentralised Cooperation	BAPA+40	Second United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation
DSSC	Decentralised South-South Cooperation	CAIS	Central American Integration System
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation	SIDISSC	(by its Spanish Acronym) Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation
DSSTC	Decentralised South-South and Triangular Cooperation	UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments
TC	Triangular Cooperation	EU	European Union
GPI	Global Partnership Initiative		
HDI	Human Development Index		
NUA	New Urban Agenda		
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals		
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals		
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development		

Introduction

This executive summary describes in a structured manner the main findings of the study commissioned by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) within the framework of the *Innovative Triangular Cooperation for a new Development Agenda* project, which develops a research and action strategy for the purpose of promoting and driving the generation and joint management of knowledge. This project constitutes a mechanism that is articulated from the strategic political and technical dialogue maintained permanently between the SEGIB and the European Union (EU), and provides the opportunity to formalise a space for joint work and collaboration between both organisations aimed at the consolidation of Triangular Cooperation (TC) as a priority in the EU-Latin America relationship, based on its capacity to offer innovation, more flexible structures and personalised responses to local realities. The shared purpose is the substantive contribution to the building of a new Triangular Cooperation model between the Ibero-American region and the EU.

The study, promoted by both organisations, aims to adopt an analytical approach to cooperation carried out at the subnational and local levels of the Ibero-American region from the perspective of

South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). In this regard, it is necessary to note the diversity and disparity of the territorial administrative organisations of the Ibero-American states—which evidence very different levels of power decentralisation—as well as of the names and functions of subnational and local entities. We will find, however, certain shared elements in the deployment of cooperation undertaken by cities in recent times, which allows us to draw a picture of this type of cooperation in the region.

This is an issue, that of Decentralised Cooperation (DC), which has not received much attention in academic and institutional literature compared to other matters related to cooperation relations between Latin America and the European Union. It is true that we have numerous studies on DC and a growing documentary repository of catalogues of experiences gathered with various institutional and theoretical criteria about what is meant by good practices in this area or cooperative work modality. However, there have been few entities that have carried out sustained analytical efforts regarding this type of territorially-based cooperation linked to or led by subnational and/or local entities, although all of them have served as fuel and a fundamental guide

for the conducting of the study referred to in this executive summary. If we stick to the phenomenon of Decentralised South-South and Triangular Cooperation (DSSTC), the studies available from this specific perspective are very few and far between.

The above has a simple explanation. Both SSTC and DC are, at the same time, considered to be specific or particular modalities of the international development cooperation system. As such, they have usually been presented as partial phenomena and often subrogated or subordinated to the main elements that have traditionally made up the said cooperation system. Although they have distinct foundational milestones, traits and sources, both phenomena have also been analysed as visions and perceptions of cooperation that differ from the traditional ones insofar as they promote and are inscribed in their own values, based on which they aim to constitute a particular and different form of cooperation. Horizontality, mutual support, equality between the participants and the exchange of learning and knowledge have been building a value system that has been seen as a response to the vertical nature that has characterised traditional cooperation relations. In this respect, there are those who have underscored that decentralised cooperation constitutes a modality that is an alternative to the traditional mode of cooperation.

Often, although not always reliably, an attempt has been made to transfer this system of values to cooperation practices although, in order to achieve this, these practices had to violate standards, regulations and inertia that were well installed and precisely defined in the rules that govern the international development cooperation system. To the extent that, today, a large part of the activity in the areas of DSSTC is not always well looked upon or recognised in the systematisations of development cooperation. This situation is not exclusive to these areas of cooperation since other actors, different modalities and some instrumental innovations have meant that, especially in the last decade and a half, the world of international development cooperation has become much more complex, extending beyond the boundaries and the main definitions on which the system was based, which is now being pressured by multiple flanks.

The swamping of the international cooperation system is just one more symptom of the deep crisis in which it finds itself; a crisis caused mainly by the enormous changes evidenced in an increasingly interdependent reality, characterised by the

emergence of global problems that clearly show the interrelation between the social, environmental, economic, political and cultural dimensions of development processes. This scenario of multiple crises, interdependencies and transnational problems urgently demands renewed, tailored governance mechanisms, which seek to manage regional and global public assets while offering multidimensional responses to the territorial anchorages and expressions of the effects of the dynamics of globalisation.

Furthermore, what is being directly refuted by reality is not only the national methodological view of the problems and the fragility of the multilateralism built up to now; it is the very conceptualisation of development that is being brought into question in a context marked by growing political and social polarisation, generated by the poor performance of an economy understood mainly in monetary terms of growth and the evidence of having exceeded and overexploited the boundaries and resources of the natural ecosystem. Both matters are presented today as indisputable, so that current attempts to shape alternatives involve incorporating a multidimensional vision of progress that reconciles social and environmental dynamics with a people- and planet-based economic dynamism.

The study, which can be viewed in its full version in Spanish on the www.cooperaciontriangular.org website, includes in its first part a brief description of some of the main elements of both critical situations: that of a more complex reality and that of an international cooperation system that is clearly insufficient to build adequate responses. This description—which is not exhaustive owing to the length and scope considerations of the study—aims to underline the main tensions the system is subjected to, and to what extent and on the basis of which elements DSSTC constitutes, at the same time, a series of adaptive responses to the problems and a transformation potential for their governance.

To this end, in its second section, the study draws an overall picture of two processes that are not always clearly related above and beyond response values that can be summarised in a demand for greater horizontality in cooperation relations. SSC first and SSTC later, as well as DC, have been characterised more for serving as an evolution of a conceptualisation of relationships than for having managed to generate distinguishable, clearly distinct practices as alternatives to the traditional ones. In any case, both SSC and DC have emerged



and evolved as elements or modalities of the traditional system, constituting, at the same time, subsystems with their own values which, therefore, are construed as demands for the transformation of traditional relationships and, in that respect, as a response to that.

The study, however, also traces, in its third section, the results of an exploration of the attempts to systematise and define the practices, which, in both cases, have been considered as their own. The lack of availability of a complete, widely-recognised systematisation of DC is but one indication of the difficulties involved in determining a satisfactory and sufficiently comprehensive definition that establishes a clear outline for it. As regards SSC—above and beyond the valuable, generally-recognised systematisation and information effort undertaken by the SEGIB, following a decade of reports on the subject in the Ibero-American region—, it still lacks specific evaluation methodologies and elements leading to recognition of its consolidation in the system. Triangular Cooperation (TC), still incipient and insignificant in quantitative terms, is a reaction by some donors—in search of adaptation

to a reality with more actors and more complex power distributions—to the traditional cooperation system with enormous potential to develop and strengthen the spaces of horizontality intended in SSC practices. In short, and for different reasons, we are facing an area, that of DSSTC, which evidences notable tensions and the inescapable nature of a transitioning process open to multiple possibilities.

The study concludes with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the area analysed based on several previously justified criteria. In the same way, it suggests some recommendations for the generation of a roadmap that allows contribution in order to reduce one of the most widely-accepted gaps and weaknesses, the lack of shared criteria to systematise available information, which, as evidenced in the exploration, is much broader, dynamic and diverse than accessible for its processing. Finally, findings and conclusions are summarised in the form of policy recommendations for strengthening the field of DSSTC.

We present below the main starting points and findings of all of the above.

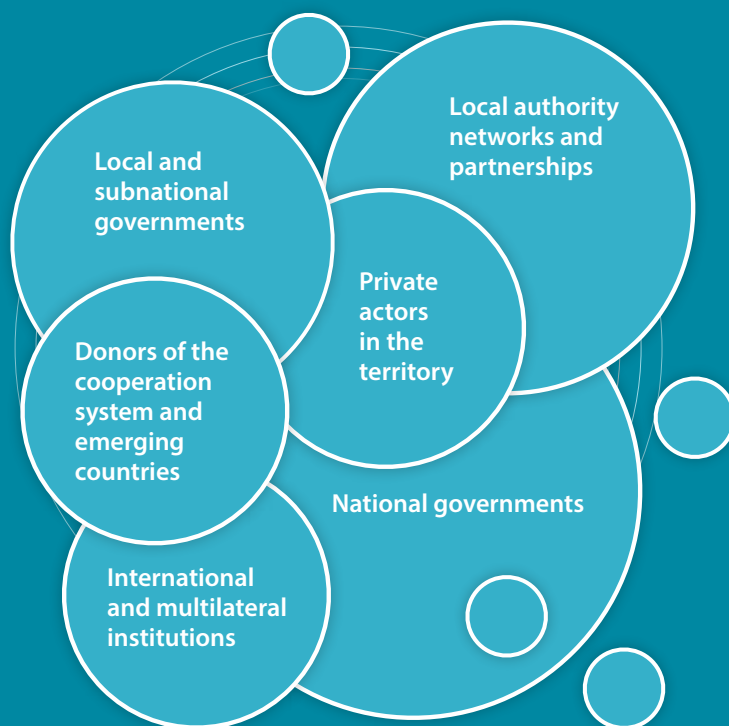
Executive Summary

A. The challenges the study intends to address:

- I. The incorporation of Decentralised Cooperation (DC) into the field of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) cannot be approached as a mere aggregation of two types, modalities or subsystems provided for in the broader system of international cooperation.
- II. We must explore the current moment in which the aim is to build bridges between both phenomena in order to have a context in which to place them, but also to respond to an age marked by profound changes and transitions that are impacting the international cooperation system.
- III. For the same reason, we should ask and explore to what extent the evolution of SSC and DC is related to the problems that make up the changes in the development paradigm and particularly in the interrelationships between its main actors.
- IV. The link between DC and SSC can thus rest on converging, shared value systems that put both phenomena in a common place, marked by their shared diverse interrelationships, by their nature and by their vocation for response and, ultimately, by the shaping of an ecosystem of varied, multicentric interdependencies.
- V. The purpose of the study is to contribute to an understanding of this articulation in the Ibero-American region, which we call the *Decentralised Ecosystem of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (DSSTC)*, underscoring its relevance and adaptation to the challenges of current international

development agendas and suggesting some elements that may contribute to its consolidation and strengthening.

GRAPHIC 1: DSSTC ECOSYSTEM FOR THE IBERO-AMERICAN REGION



Source: compiled by author.

We took the ecosystem idea from a proposal prepared for the organisation of SSTC at the national level by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB 2020) and we adapted it to the Ibero-American regional context. It is a collection of interconnected pillars with reinforced feedback loops between them, which coexist and complement each other without a specific hierarchical order in order to maximise the contribution of SSTC to regional development. These components include political will; a regional strategy for SSTC information bases; aligned actors; the SSTC Agency, and financing and performance management mechanisms.

B. Cooperation in times of the Anthropocene

- VI. DSSTC will develop and consolidate its possibilities within a context of profound changes in reality and in the political agendas of the international system. These changes are marked by the obvious correlation between development levels and ecological footprint and by the crossing of four critical physical frontiers at the planetary level, such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, land use and the phosphorus and nitrogen cycles.
- VII. Considering sustainability as something substantive and not as a mere qualifier of the notions of growth, mobility or consumption, indicates the need for an in-depth transformation of these processes, as the title and purpose of the 2030 Agenda clearly emphasise.
- VIII. The sustainability challenge reminds us of the need to build a new development paradigm that calls into question the misappropriation of the economy's objective by average national income-based gauges, such as Gross National Product (GNP). Putting the planet and people at the core of our economies means removing GNP from that core.
- IX. From the point of view of transition governance, multidimensional development processes present, on the one hand, dynamics, pressures and limits that must be observed and managed globally and, on the other hand, a variety of impacts and intensities in the territorial and local expression of these development problems. Governance must become *glocal*, that is, it must gather and articulate a dual global and local perspective in all its strategies and mechanisms.

- X. In short, environmental sustainability and *glocal* governance are presumed to be essential components of political development agendas in these times. Their equivalent in terms of governance architecture and mechanisms is their polycentric, multilevel nature, which corresponds more appropriately to the nature of the abovementioned problems rather than those mechanisms considered from centralised and hierarchical logics.
- XI. As a matter of fact, both SSTC and DC share a history that can be summarised as a continuous attempt to change the pillars of an international cooperation system based on a national perspective and on a set of standards that classify and rank. Both cooperation practices attempt to present themselves as the core elements of a system that should, therefore, undergo a radical transformation and accept their polycentric, multilevel nature.

C. Crises and transitions in the international cooperation system

- XII. In the history of the international cooperation system there have been constant overhauls of the approach to development, as a result of which human development, sustainable development, gender-based development and human rights have gained importance. However, the attempt to take them all on board has been from an eminently technical perspective through the incorporation of new methodologies for formulating projects and programmes and of new instruments and discourses, but without managing to bring about a profound transformation in practices. As a result, the pillars of the system have remained in the basics.
- XIII. To this very day, the international cooperation system continues to lean on the notion of aid and is, therefore, based on the idea of the unidirectional transfer of resources, assets and knowledge. The inflexibility of ODA and of the censorship established by national income measures do not allow the full incorporation of cooperation actions based on the dual facilitator / beneficiary role and on relationships of exchange and mutual learning.
- XIV. At the current time, development problems are being increasingly evidenced by a growing understanding of their transnational and interdependent nature: climate change,

inequality and the concentration of wealth and power, mass migrations, economic financialisation, an absence of effective mechanisms against tax avoidance and tax evasion, the exhaustion and swamping of natural cycles and ecosystems, global pandemics and growing demands for authoritarianism and bigoted viewpoints constitute a challenging scenario for a global and multilateral governance system that is losing relevance and is seeing its cooperation-based foundations being called into question.

- XV. In short, within a global context marked by profound changes and problems that are pressing for the entire planet, with highly stressed governance systems at all levels and territorial powers, the agendas and actions of countries in terms of development cooperation call for an in-depth overhaul in order to renew concepts, standards and practices within the international cooperation system.
- D. Convergences between two different stories: SSC and DC**
- XVI. DC has generally been regarded as a type of cooperation that is subrogated or subordinate to international cooperation understood as a national phenomenon. The lack of systematisation hinders the creation and consolidation of a comprehensive, widely-accepted conceptualisation.
- XVII. SSC and DC represent, via different paths, the same set of values that calls for a mechanism of more horizontal relationships than the one created in the international cooperation system where they emerge and to which they belong. In both cases, they are subsystems, which, at the same time, supplement and question the pillars of this system.
- XVIII. Triangular cooperation (TC) is an adaptive reaction by some countries in response to a more complex system of relationships. However, it is still an incipient response that has a lot of scope in which to gain the importance its potential suggests.
- XIX. In short, Decentralised South-South and Triangular Cooperation (DSSTC) today comprises a set of practices of considerable importance that has enormous potential to transform the relationships of the international cooperation

system, while being subject to various tensions and pressures. In this respect, we must look at the set of practices understood as DSSTC as a transitioning process and it is, therefore, open to various possibilities that will have to be updated and specified.

- XX. DC, also within the scope of the Ibero-American region, is lacking in sufficient analytical studies that offer a consistent conceptual framework and a vision of its evolution over time. This is due to the fact that it has generally been observed and treated as a category, modality or particularity, always within the international cooperation system and, therefore, circumscribed to its norms, computations and processes guided by a national perspective.
- XXI. However, we can see in DC and SSC studies some shared values that emerge from their practices and discourses, such as horizontal relationships, mutual assistance, the exchange of experiences and learning, and the lower relative weight of the unidirectional transfer that characterises the international system conceived as mere assistance management.
- XXII. The systematisation of DC and SSC practices has found it difficult to incorporate any that do not fit into the conceptualisation and own regulations of the international system which, on the other hand, has been overwhelmed in the last decade and a half by the emergence of new practices, modalities, instruments and actors.
- XXIII. Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, which calls for a new development paradigm and, therefore, an in-depth renovation of international cooperation, local actors and territorial approaches take on crucial importance, becoming success factors in the orchestration of this new global agenda and in the scope of the SDGs. It is in this context of changes and transitions between the old and the new that this study places the analysis of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) and its dimension centred on local government-deployed cooperation (DSSTC).
- E. DSSTC: the contours of a space recognisable by its values and practices**
- XXIV. The study rejects addressing DSSTC on the basis of a normative definition that meets the objective of distinguishing and discriminating

on account of its specificities. As an alternative, we suggest considering DSSTC as a plural, diverse space which, however, is characterised by sharing a series of practices and principles with which it seeks not only to achieve greater efficiency in its cooperation actions, but also to impact the pillars of the international cooperation system. The main shared experience in the evolution of SSC and DC is their insistence on understanding and developing interrelationships between the partners from a logic that is special and unlike that sanctioned by the international system.

- XXV. Although they have different histories, SSC and DC share elements that include a relevant political focus on cooperation, without in any way dismissing the importance of the technical level: in their trajectory, both have in common that i) they are responses to the international cooperation system in some of its core foundations, ii) they evidence enormous potential for development and iii) they call for new distributions of power; hence, they place greater emphasis on the form than on the content of the relationships. In this regard, there are already studies that explore the evolution of SSTC from a cooperation modality towards a political space-enabling partnership.
- XXVI. The main political challenge today is to create solutions in order to understand and respond to the interdependence between local factors rooted in the territory and transnational dynamics with enormous capacity to open up or constrain political, economic and cultural margins of action for all governments. The equivalent of this political challenge in the international cooperation system could well be the emergence of TC, insofar as it is not defined only by the number of participants in the cooperation actions, but, fundamentally, by the recognition that these actions require interrelationships between their protagonists in a different format. Inasmuch as these new interrelationships include global-local governance goals, TC's potential may be deployed with greater influence and will seek greater effectiveness in the solutions it proposes.
- XXVII. In the construction of SSTC, the option chosen is one more consistent with reality's current complexity, which requires

accepting that different partners may have different visions and principles that guide their cooperation actions and, therefore, incorporate these issues into political dialogue instead of trying to regard them as closed and accepted. In this context, both the incorporation of political dialogue on human rights or any other issue, as well as the commitment to horizontality and non-conditionality in cooperation relations, are a challenge of enormous interest and even greater complexity.

- XXVIII. As a common incentive, the agents of the North and the South find in SSTC a space in which to negotiate principles and practices in the context of a continuously evolving international cooperation system, in need of redefinition and innovation with respect to its traditional pillars. The conditions required to develop this potential also seem clear: i) to synchronise political dialogue efforts, ii) to have in place a polycentric, intricate system that converses not only on the coordination of practices but also on values and principles and, finally, iii) to move forward in systematising, monitoring and evaluating the work of this network with sufficient transparency and accountability.

F. DSSTC: towards an Ibero-American ecosystem of dynamic, multilevel cooperation

- XXIX. The Ibero-American DSSTC ecosystem would be formed of spaces that share a critical vision of traditional cooperation practices and standards as long as they strive to uphold a system of values based on the mutual recognition of the partners and on the horizontality of the relationships.
- XXX. The converging value systems that serve as the basis for shaping the DSSTC ecosystem stress the political nature of cooperation relations and their translation into the strengthening of public policies; their approach centred on responding to territories' specific challenges and regional contexts; and their focus on the exchange of experiences and innovations aimed at generating applied knowledge to be shared.
- XXXI. A major challenge for the shaping of the DSSTC ecosystem is the integration of locally-based cooperation, which has

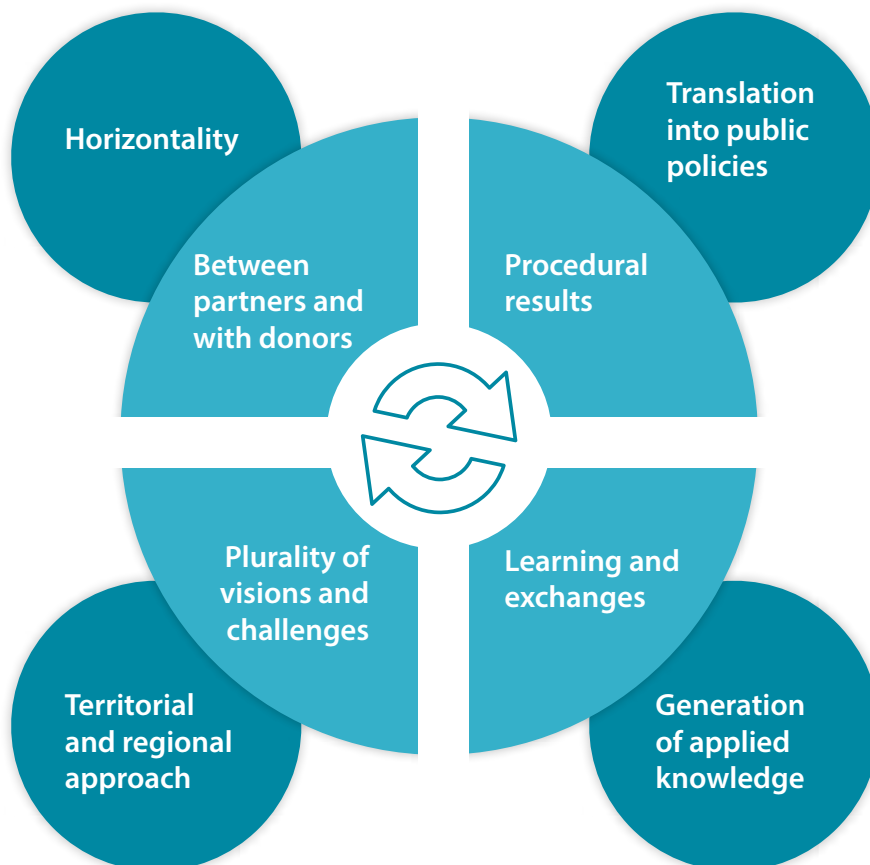
emerged from the prominence of cities and local government networks. In this respect, and as follows from the results of a survey conducted by the PIFSSC among members of the Ibero-American community, subnational and local governments, above and beyond being regarded as Agenda implementers, must be recognised as politically responsible and catalysts for change.

XXXII. For its part, the prevalence of a territorial and regional approach is in itself an opening up to the plurality of diagnoses, priorities and visions of the solutions that are to be implemented and to which cooperation relations are intended to contribute. A territorial approach does not consist only in putting the spotlight on a geographical or

administrative spatial reality, since a territory is not only the space but also its inhabitants, so that this principle constitutes, in practice, an enormous accumulated experience of coordination and political dialogue with multiple actors.

XXXIII. Achieving the multilevel articulation of a DSSTC ecosystem based on the value of horizontal relations is a daunting challenge, particularly for traditional donors who decide to get involved in triangular cooperation schemes. Horizontality is not explicitly declared, but it is perceived and assured in the process of the cooperation relations themselves, insofar as the beneficiary party feels that its role as a key player is intact with regard to its aspirations, visions and opinions.

FIGURE 2: CONVERGING POTENTIAL BENEFITS THAT MAKE UP A SYSTEM OF SHARED VALUES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR DEFINING KEY ELEMENTS FOR THE IBERO-AMERICAN DSSTC ECOSYSTEM



Source: compiled by author.

Proposed lines of work

- I. The notable advances achieved by the systematisation effort made by the SIDISSC and the SEGIB in terms of SSTC do not hide the gap between the dynamism and the existing diversity of visions and actions at the heart of DSSTC and their poor incorporation into comprehensive, recognised information systems.

The analysis conducted enables us to recognise the need to bridge a systematic information gap with respect to DSSTC that is presented as a crucial element for building and consolidating the governance of an Ibero-American DSSTC ecosystem. Its enormous dynamism and diversity are not sufficiently known and recognised precisely due to a lack of systematic information. Based on research, we offer some brief recommendations whose aim is to provide perspective and to determine possible directions for strengthening this work:

- The SEGIB's social cohesion and SSTC division boasts political relations, accumulated experience, achieved results and perseverance in the political dialogue that suffice for it to be regarded as the ideal space for reinforcing DSSTC information systems.
- The incorporation of criteria and categories for gathering information on DC actions in the region requires exploring possible changes to the data collection records used by the SIDISSC, at least to enable the participation of subnational governments in the initiatives to be specified.
- It is crucial to contribute to bringing to a successful conclusion the information process on local capabilities set in motion, by exploring their expansion and categorisation in accordance with

a variable geometry that incorporates different roles and, very importantly, experience in actions and relationships with international networks.

- The diverse, polycentric nature of the ecosystem presents the formidable challenge of achieving a balance between autonomy and coordination. The information obtained and collected for the systematisation will be broader and richer insofar as the dialogues and mechanisms that are implemented for its collection move from subsidiary, dependent visions between administration levels towards multilevel articulations of shared competences and the generation of co-government development policy experiences.
 - We propose introducing, within the framework of SEGIB and EU relations, the development of a specific common strategy aimed at generating and strengthening the information systems for the Ibero-American DSSTC ecosystem, coupled with sufficient human and financial resources for its priority deployment.
- II. The specific DSSTC evaluation methodology has yet to be developed, despite incipient exercises and methodological proposals that address either TC or DC separately.

We can confirm that there is no specific methodology we can use to approach and systematise SSTC, which leads to the absence of a specific definition for it and hinders its recognition. The findings of this research show that a proposed systematic approach must unavoidably include a dual dimension, one that is political-strategic and programmatic-thematic. Likewise, we should consider mechanisms

for monitoring political dialogue processes and evaluating public policy implementation procedures, even if this means moving away from the logic of results and their allocation to projects.

We can also confirm that the approach of a common evaluation framework for decentralised cooperation, still to be implemented, needs to comprehend the phenomenon within the changing global context, in an understanding of the political nature of these actions, in their territorial approach and in the institutional dimension that decentralised governments provide for their international action. In every respect, we must design “variable geometry” evaluative approaches, as suggested in a recent proposal drawn up in light of the new role that the 2030 Agenda and the current challenges afford to local action (Malé 2020).

III. In terms of Ecosystem governance, we suggest as a line of work the generation of a multi-actor, multi-level space under the leadership of the SEGIB SSC programme and supported by its European partners most involved in triangular cooperation schemes. It is a question of beginning to test forms of governance that respond to the polycentric, multilevel nature rather than to ratify centralised, hierarchical schemes: polycentric with respect to the international cooperation system and multilevel with respect to the traditional prominence of state schemes and positions.

The requirement expressed by the 2030 Agenda to articulate multilevel governance mechanisms, which recognise the need to deploy a *glocal* perspective that addresses, in a coherent, consistent manner, both transnational dynamics and specific territorial expressions and demands, suggests creating shared spaces that respond to more horizontal and, therefore, more plural logics. It means committing to the generation of a new culture of global responsibilities, undoubtedly much more in alignment with current times and the challenges expressed in international agendas, both in their territorial emphasis and in those relating to the governance of regional and global public assets.

In this regard, the SEGIB itself, hand in hand with its SSC division and with the support and participation of national cooperation managers, can test the creation of a specific multi-actor body for the governance of the ecosystem, gradually involving some networks with which

they already have consolidated collaboration frameworks, such as the Ibero-American Centre for Strategic Urban Development (CIDEU), the Ibero-American Municipal Union (UIM) and the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI), among others, as well as representatives of thematic and representative networks that are part of this ecosystem, such as 100 resilient cities, Mercocities, ICLEI and C40, to mention just active examples with a different membership and thematic direction. Ultimately, it is a question of generating a governance mechanism that incorporates different visions and approaches to address multidimensional, multilevel development processes in the territories, in which the strategies and political relations of multiple actors prevail and which progressively permeates all relations and cooperation actions along the same lines.

The following are proposed as possible ways of promoting engagement with the governance of the ecosystem:

- Calls for specific exchanges.
- Participation in the proposed methodology to create a catalogue of capabilities currently under construction by the PIFSSC.
- An annual edition of specific awards for the most outstanding practices and experiences in different thematic areas relating to the goals and priorities foreseen in the 2030 Agenda.

An open award convened by the SEGIB, with a diverse, multidisciplinary jury, designed to recognise the most noteworthy experiences involving the main transformation-based actions, such as sustainability, gender and democratic governance, as well as the different categories ensuing from the framework of principles that we have foreseen as the founding principles of the DSSTC ecosystem: horizontal relations, knowledge generation, a territorial approach and translation into public policies.

A recognition of the community and a monetary award, perhaps modest for the ecosystem as a whole, but relevant to the usual shortage of resources in most subnational governments, may encourage the active participation of many actors. For example, a series of awards could be set up based on an analysis and perspective with regard to DSSTC information systems.

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