



Photo: Environmental volunteers develop initiatives for reforestation and for the creation of firebreaks in Los Andes Forest Park (San Miguelito, Panama). This prevents fires from spreading and residents from being exposed to soot. Through this project, Panama and El Salvador share their experience to increase environmental protection and awareness. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2024.

# Commemorating fifteen editions of the Report: challenges and opportunities in the framework of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development

## I South-South Cooperation's main contributions and achievements since 2007

Fifteen years ago, in 2007, Ibero-America initiated a benchmark practice in terms of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC): the systematization of initiatives based on the principles of solidarity, consensus, equity and horizontality. Since then, the different editions of the Report on SSTC have accounted for countries' political will to generate collaborative partnerships aimed at exchanging experiences and best practices that contribute not only to strengthening public policies but also to support government institutions to effectively provide goods and services that promote the improvement of the quality of life of the region's population. Thus, Ibero-American SSTC has become a reference for international cooperation, having a flexible and effective strategy for knowledge sharing and resource management among countries with common characteristics and challenges.

Ibero-American SSTC plays a relevant role in the context of global development strategies, strategically aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate agendas, and, more recently, with post-pandemic recovery efforts. This cooperation model, characterized by its adaptability, enables the region to face emerging challenges such as human mobility crises and the effects of climate change —among others—, in an inclusive and participatory manner. As a result of its contribution to SDG 17, Ibero-American SSTC stands out as an effective mechanism to strengthen multisectoral partnerships, supporting sustainable development in the countries of the region.

This fifteenth edition reveals how Ibero-America has managed to consolidate its agreements and collaborative instruments to respond to common needs, in the face of the impact of political crises and of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of its capacity to address specific problems in an efficient and adaptable manner, technical cooperation has been the most dynamic in these fifteen years, accounting for national and regional priorities in areas such as education, health, and disaster management, to name a few.

Over the years, SSTC in Ibero-America has consolidated a working mechanism that enables countries to share resources and knowledge, promoting sustainable, high-impact programs. Each report has shed light on projects' quantity and quality, making the consolidation of SSTC as an essential modality for the region's development, visible. This document has also provided evidence on the innovations that Ibero-American countries have generated in this area.

We are less than six years away from 2030, and the region faces the challenge of accelerating its progress towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In a complex international context, with structural challenges such as climate change, inequality and human mobility, SSTC is a key instrument to accomplish comprehensive sustainable development. Ibero-American countries have demonstrated a joint commitment to build a cooperation system aimed at implementing effective public policies in the framework of collaborative efforts that strengthen the region's human and economic development.

This edition of the Report highlights the process of systematization, measurement and visibility of SSTC in Ibero-America, a region that has managed to reach a consensus on criteria and terms, and has agreed on an integrated vision of progress in the framework of this cooperation modality. As a result of the financial support of Spanish Cooperation, of Ibero-American countries' commitment, and of the work carried out by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) for its preparation, this Report documents the achievements that have been made and the lessons learned, making the regional contribution to the SDGs visible.

Ibero-American cooperation is not just the aggregation of national initiatives; it is an example of common value-added practices that accounts for the way in which structured collaboration can have a multiplying impact on countries' development. This edition, commemorating fifteen years of work, highlights the region's efforts to address local needs while creating a cooperation model that can be replicated in other contexts.

In the current scenario of debates on financing for development, this Report becomes a strategic instrument, providing essential data and analyses that contribute to the region's visibility, positioning it as a reference for its inclusive and dynamic cooperation. SSTC in Ibero-America is a vehicle to generate new partnerships and associations, reaffirming the region's commitment to sustainable development and to strengthen its technical and political capacities.

The Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America has become a fundamental reference in this field. Its fifteen-year history reveals the region's shared commitment to build a solid,

effective and transparent system based on the principles of equity and collaboration. This edition places emphasis on the progress made so far and it underscores the future potential of SSTC as an essential modality to address global challenges.



## Regional challenges after fifteen years of collaborative work

SSTC must clearly and measurably demonstrate its contribution to sustainable development in all its dimensions, bringing key stakeholders such as local governments, civil society, the academia and the private sector together, in order to maximize the joint impact of its initiatives.

It is necessary to delve into the debate on SSTC's quantitative and qualitative measurement and evaluation. It is therefore crucial to strengthen data collection systems so that its follow-up can shed light on its impact on public policies and its contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. This favors transparency and accountability, increases the possibilities of having access to new financial resources, and improves cooperation's management in the region.

Although some challenges still persist, the current debates on measurement acknowledge the progress made and reveal the global recognition that the Ibero-American region has gained in this area. This would not have been possible without the Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Each country contributes to SSTC from a unique combination of knowledge, experiences, solutions and technologies according to its institutional capacities to effectively transfer these resources. In this sense, the development of solid national cooperation systems, with an adequate coordination and leadership of International Cooperation Agencies, Directorates-General or other respective offices, becomes an essential pillar for countries' successful performance.

It is also key to generate, systematize and transfer knowledge through efficient and sustainable cooperation and evaluation mechanisms in order to maximize SSTC's sustainability and its impact at the regional and global levels, as well as to strengthen national cooperation systems' capacities to identify, systematize and share best practices in a timely manner, when requested by their counterparts.

The global debate on SSTC must incorporate these specific regional contexts and consider the different perspectives of all Ibero-American countries. It is crucial to continue systematizing their cooperation, giving them visibility and providing them with tools for its better management. This will strengthen Ibero-America's positioning in an inclusive and global debate, reaffirming this modality as a driver of sustainable development that can contribute to reduce poverty and inequalities in and between countries, and as a benchmark for the future and for other regions.



## Opportunities for South-South Cooperation in the framework of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development

Next year, Spain will host the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, following Monterrey (2002), Doha (2008) and Addis Ababa (2015). This event represents a strategic opportunity to mobilize policies and resources that boost sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Since the last conference, the world has undergone profound changes in terms of digitalization, macroeconomics and finance, in addition to facing systemic risks derived from climate change, pandemics and conflicts, which have limited access to financing for development. This context makes this a key venue to define a financial framework that addresses these challenges and facilitates access to resources in a fair and sustainable manner.

In the framework of the Pact for the Future, countries reached a basic agreement to strengthen financing for development, prioritizing the creation of a multi-stakeholder, multilevel cooperation system that will enable low- and middle-income countries to access financing on fair terms. This Pact promotes resource mobilization through innovative and collaborative mechanisms, focusing on resilience and sustainability to address critical matters such as climate change adaptation and post-pandemic economic recovery.

This access to financing on favorable terms is essential for Ibero-America, especially for middle-income countries that face obstacles in this area. In this sense, this Fourth Conference is a crucial platform for Ibero-American countries to agree on the need for a new international architecture for financing for development that addresses aspects such as the reform of the international financial system in order to make it more inclusive, responsive to

global priorities and equitable to tackle the challenges that define contemporary global landscapes and countries' needs—considering their diverse economic and social contexts—, from a multidimensional perspective, through innovative and efficient mechanisms for the mobilization of public and private, monetary and non-monetary resources. SSTC, as a capacity building modality, can be very significant to create the conditions that favor investors' confidence in the region.

Likewise, SSTC, already positioned in the development agenda debates, must also be at the core of the debates on financing. The conference should promote political dynamization and resource mobilization to achieve the SDGs at the global, regional, national and local levels, ensuring that these funds are available to the most vulnerable populations. It should also encourage countries to explore alternative mechanisms and financial instruments and to comply with their commitments in the framework of international development agendas.

Although technical cooperation and SSTC often involve modest budgetary amounts, their high value in terms of technical knowledge transfer and their capacity to strengthen institutions are priceless. SSTC has its own value, providing countries with the opportunity to mobilize financial flows with a high return in technical and institutional capacities. This approach also generates confidence, facilitating the participation of new stakeholders and making the region more attractive to international financial flows while boosting synergies and innovation, which are key in the current context.

This effort must be translated into the reduction of asymmetries, capacity strengthening, the promotion of sustainable development and the design of public policies that consolidate Ibero-America's position in the international political and economic system. This will reaffirm countries' multilateral and collaborative calling and will promote a cooperation system that prioritizes inclusive and resilient development, aligned with the commitments of the Pact for the Future.