



Opportunities and challenges of Triangular Cooperation between the European Union and Latin America and The Caribbean with other regions of the global south

Executive Summary



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Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB)

Andrés Allamand Zavala, Ibero-American Secretary General

Lorena Larios Rodríguez, Secretary for Ibero-American Cooperation

Coordination:

Martín Rivero Illa y Cristina Santalla González
Area of Social Cohesion and South- South
Cooperation, SEGIB

Author:

Valeria Giacchino

In collaboration with Fernando Nivia Ruiz

SEGIB South-South Cooperation team:

Cristina Xalma Mellado

Natalia Vargas Talero

Santiago Alonso Álvarez

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ACRONYMS

AECID (by its Spanish acronym)	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
BAPA+40	Buenos Aires Plan of Action
BMZ (by its German acronym)	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
EU	European Union
FFD4	Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
GGGI	Global Green Growth Institute
GiZ (by its German acronym)	German International Cooperation Society
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MICs	Middle Income Countries
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PICA	Palestinian International Cooperation Agency
PIFCSS (by its Spanish acronym)	Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEGIB (by its Spanish acronym)	Ibero-American General Secretariat
SIDICSS (by its Spanish acronym)	Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation
SSC	South-South Cooperation
TC	Triangular Cooperation
TCS	Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat
TOSSD	Total Official Support for Sustainable Development
UNFSCC	United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation



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Introduction

In recent years, Triangular Cooperation (TC) has established itself as a highly valued form of cooperation by both developed countries and those of the Global South, as it serves as an effective mechanism for fostering partnerships and bridging the gap between South-South Cooperation (SSC) and traditional Cooperation.

Since the approval of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, TC has gained renewed importance, being recognised, along with SSC, as a means of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, in 2019, the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, which commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA+40), made an unprecedented recognition of the specific value of TC for its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In this context, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has positioned itself as the most dynamic region globally in TC, both in terms of the number of initiatives carried out and the methodological instruments developed in this area. This is expressed and reaffirmed by major sources of information in the field, such as the *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America from the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB)*, or the report “*Global Perspectives on Triangular Cooperation*” from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), to name a few examples.

Although, since SEGIB has been keeping records, TC has gone through periods of growth and others of clear contraction, it has nonetheless become consolidated as a consistent mode of collaboration between northern and southern countries. In fact, according to data from SEGIB itself, the performance of TC is relatively better than that of the overall South-South Cooperation (SSC) in which the region has participated, when the three recognised modalities in this space (bilateral, triangular, and

regional) are aggregated, as explained in the following pages (SEGIB, 2024).

In recent years, TC has also become established as a form of cooperation valued by the European Union (EU) and its member states, which are key partners of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in these working frameworks. Data from the SEGIB shows that while until 2015, TC between the EU, its member states, and LAC countries accounted for between 25% and 30% of total TC exchanges, by 2021, the proportion nearly doubled, reaching 64.8% of total TC exchanges (SEGIB, 2022a).

However, when looking at the participation of other regions of the Global South in the TC initiatives executed by Ibero-American countries, it has been lower in comparison to other modes of cooperation. According to the same source, while other regions of the Global South participate in around 40% of regional SSC exchanges and 25% of bilateral SSC exchanges, their participation in TC initiatives from LAC is only about 16% (SEGIB, 2023).

The data highlights that Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has a unique opportunity to showcase its extensive experience in managing Triangular Cooperation (TC), along with the tools, expertise, and best practices that have established its leadership in this field. By partnering with the European Union (EU), LAC can extend its knowledge to other developing regions. To achieve this, it is crucial to understand and identify both the challenges and opportunities that will enable the development of a strategic roadmap and strengthen partnerships with other regions of the Global South.

With just over five years remaining until the deadline for achieving the 2030 Agenda, and in a global scenario marked by the deepening of the climate crisis, economic inequalities, armed conflicts, and the still-devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, among other phenomena, TC is seen by the international community as a key tool for

addressing the multidimensionality and dynamism of development challenges.

This is the context in which this “*Study on Opportunities and Challenges of Triangular Cooperation between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean with Other Regions of the Global South*” commissioned by SEGIB, is set.

Community leaders and species protection



The Armila Community in Guna Yala (Panama) is the fourth most important leatherback nesting area in the world, a sanctuary for this endangered sea turtle species. Volunteers from the indigenous Guna community, together with the Ministry of Environment, conserve and protect the nesting of this species on their beach and share their knowledge with El Salvador. Image Bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2024.

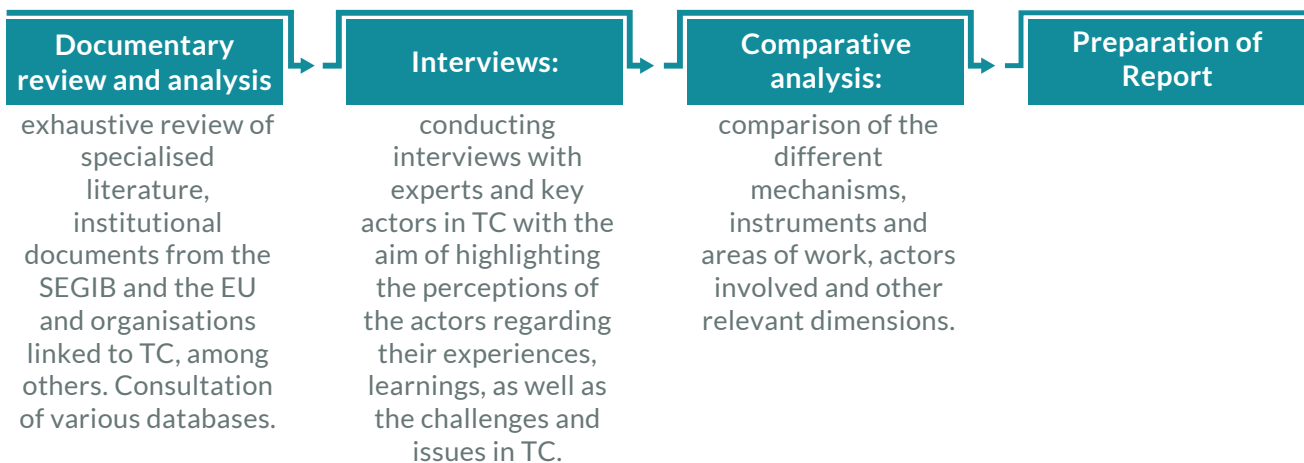


Methodology

Chapter 1 describes the working methodology used to carry out this study, which has two main objectives. Firstly, it aims to advance the creation of a comprehensive diagnostic of TC carried out between 2015 and 2023 in three specific contexts: intraregional TC within LAC, TC between LAC and other regions of the Global South, and TC in other regions of the Global South. The diagnosis seeks to examine the evolution of TC in these scenarios, the topics and sectors of work, the instruments used, the actors involved, and the roles they played, among other aspects. In all three cases, particular attention has been given to initiatives promoted in partnership with the EU.

The second objective is to identify the opportunities and comparative advantages that the current context offers for generating new and broader TC alliances between the bi-regional LAC-EU partnership and other regions of the Global South. In this way, the situational analysis is expected to provide a forward-looking framework, outlining a roadmap for Ibero-American countries, in collaboration with the EU, to expand their scope of action in TC.

To achieve this, a methodological process was defined, which included the following stages:



Conceptualisation of Triangular Cooperation

Although several decades have passed since the first actions of TC, there is still no common definition at a global level. While there are references to Triangular, Trilateral, or Tripartite Cooperation in official and academic literature (SEGIB, 2023), this study will use the term “Triangular Cooperation” to encompass the attributes of this cooperation modality, understood in the context of the Ibero-American space, where it is defined as:

“A modality of SSC in which a group of actors participate, all of whom can contribute in different ways (technical, financial, or other). The roles are divided into three categories: the so-called first provider and recipient (one or more developing countries, in each case), and the second provider (developing country, developed country, regional or multilateral organisation, or any association between them). The distinguishing feature is determined by the role” (PIFCSS, 2015).

Databases consulted

For data collection, the statistical frameworks of international development cooperation from three multilateral spaces that influence the reporting and availability of information on Triangular Cooperation (TC) were consulted. These are the Ibero-American Integrated Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SIDICSS) of the SEGIB, the Triangular Cooperation Projects Repository of the OECD, and the Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD), whose secretariat is also contained within the OECD (SEGIB, 2022b).

Conservation of species and ecosystems



The objectives of this project, in which the Zoological Foundation of Cali (Colombia) and the Zoological Garden Foundation of Brasilia (Brazil) participate, are animal welfare, environmental education and participatory conservation. It also aims to strengthen the social role of zoos as a key element in raising awareness of existing biodiversity and ecosystems and, in this way, contribute to environmental preservation. Image Bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2022.



The path towards the consolidation of Triangular Cooperation

The second chapter provides a brief overview of the process that led to the consolidation of TC as a modality of cooperation aligned with the development agenda and the contributions made by the Ibero-American space.

In fact, in recent years, TC has gained increasing centrality in the international development cooperation system. Over a relatively short period up to the present day, triangular partnerships have gradually increased in number, actors, participating regions, and sectors of work addressed. This progressive rise in TC practice has also been reflected in the growing interest from governments, international organisations, and academia to deepen the understanding of the motivations, impact, strategic value, and processes involved in promoting this modality of cooperation (Malacalza, 2022).

During the first decade of the 21st century, within the framework of the process initiated with the Millennium Agenda and, in particular, after the approval of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005, significant transformations took place in the cooperation system and the distribution of Official Development Assistance (ODA), driven by the reconfiguration of the cooperation strategies of donors and developing countries. On the one hand, northern countries, which remained interested in cooperating with the south, had to find new channels to facilitate cooperation with so-called middle income countries (MICs) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) beyond the restrictions imposed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD (Alonso, 2013). At the same time, many of these Latin American MICs, experiencing a decline in ODA, took on leading roles in the growing South-South Cooperation (SSC) across the region. As a result, many northern countries found in TC a new framework for continuing their work with the South (Rollón, 2021).

Since then, TC has gained increasing centrality in global processes. However, it was with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 that TC truly solidified its role in the international agenda, reaching its peak in 2019 with the United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, PABA+40, held to mark the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (PABA). The prominence of TC throughout the conference and in the final document, in comparison to South-South Cooperation (SSC), highlighted the unprecedented recognition of TC's specific value for its contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

A review of the key events between 2015 and 2023 shows the growing centrality of TC on the agenda. In fact, particularly within global-reaching bodies like the United Nations, as well as those promoted by developed countries or the OECD itself, there has been a noticeable increase in the prominence of TC in international discussions.

This momentum, driven by the narrative within the international development cooperation system and efforts to strengthen TC institutionalisation, has been mirrored in the practice of TC and in the growing number of actors participating in TC year after year.

2.1 Contributions from Ibero-America

Ibero-America has been committed to the promotion of TC from a very early stage. Through regional efforts in both the political and technical dimensions, and via various mechanisms, this region has been working for over a decade to strengthen this form of cooperation. At the political level, through the SEGIB and the Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS), the countries in the region have initiated collective reflection exercises to identify challenges and opportunities for promoting TC, and have made significant efforts in its conceptualisation,

among other aspects. At the technical level of these platforms, numerous processes have been launched to develop tools and methodologies for TC management, train professionals in TC management, create information systems that register triangular initiatives, and many other actions.

Special mention should be made of the TC registration exercises carried out by SEGIB for the past 15 years through the *Report on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America*. This report not only constitutes a unique and pioneering exercise at the global level, which has made it possible to understand the SSC and TC initiatives being carried out by Ibero-American countries both among themselves and with other regions of the world, but it also represents a valuable tool that has made significant contributions to the positioning and consolidation of TC. Additionally, Ibero-America produced the first “*Guidelines for implementing triangular cooperation in Ibero-America*”, aimed at establishing operational guidelines and contributing to the development of better management capacities for more effective TC, thus becoming an innovative and pioneering tool in the field (PIFCSS, 2024).

Indeed, the combination of all these efforts has positioned LAC as the most dynamic region globally in TC, both in terms of the number of initiatives carried out and the methodological instruments developed. This is affirmed by various sources of information, such as SEGIB's own report and the OECD and IsDB's “*Global Perspectives on Triangular Cooperation*”, which also concludes that LAC was the region that received the largest share of ODA disbursements from DAC members for TC initiatives between 2016 and 2021 (47%), according to data from the OECD's Creditor Reporting System (CRS) (OECD & IsDB, 2023).

In contrast, when examining the participation of other developing regions in the TC initiatives carried out by Ibero-American countries, a significantly smaller proportion is observed. This evidence prompts further investigation into the factors that may influence the construction of this scenario (the concentration of intraregional TC) and the opportunities for transforming it in favour of expanding TC partnerships between LAC and other regions of the Global South.

Ibercocinas (by its name in Spanish)



The otomí gastronomy of the Mezquital Valley has its origins in a deep and intimate tradition with the ecosystem which includes collecting flora, fauna and insects. Traditional cooks from Santiago de Anaya recreate this legacy, inherited from mothers and grandmothers, and prepare dishes with natural ingredients, without preservatives and with high nutritional value. Ibercocinas promotes the design of policies, programs, strategies and initiatives aimed at safeguarding, protecting and promoting Ibero-American cuisine as a tool for sustainable development. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.



Triangular Cooperation between LAC and the EU

Chapter 3 outlines the background to this study and the key elements that characterise the LAC-EU partnership in the context of TC. It also describes the main instruments and mechanisms of TC developed by the most dynamic EU members for cooperation with LAC.

Just as TC has become a highly valued modality of cooperation for LAC countries, it has also been the same for the EU and its member states, which are key partners of LAC in these working frameworks. Indeed, TC has become a conducive mechanism for promoting partnerships and bridging the gap between South-South Cooperation (SSC) and traditional cooperation from EU countries and their institutions. Certainly, the convergence of countries with different levels of development and diverse trajectories, within a framework where dialogue and complementarities play a central role, allows all actors to participate based on their potential and benefit according to their needs. This consolidates TC as a modality of cooperation that aligns with the ideals, principles, and ambitions of the 2030 Agenda. In particular, TC demonstrates strong alignment with the revitalisation of the global partnership for sustainable development aspired to by SDG 17.

Certainly, in recent years, TC has become an effective tool for partnership and cooperation for the EU with the so-called middle income countries, for which, due to their classification level, traditional ODA has very little relevance (Ramos Rollón & López, 2020). As will be seen in the following chapters, although TC with the participation of the EU and its member states is gradually expanding to several developing regions, the largest number of initiatives is registered in LAC. In 2021, EU institutions disbursed USD 35.6 million for TC with LAC as a regional priority, with a strong focus on supporting environmental protection (OECD & IsDB, 2023).

The member states with the most experience in the field of TC in LAC are Germany and Spain, followed by Portugal. Over recent decades, these three countries have participated in TC partnerships with LAC countries under various bilateral cooperation instruments, which included cooperation with and in third countries. However, in recent years, they have also developed specific instruments as a framework for TC with LAC, as did the EU itself, as summarised in the following table.

TABLE 1:

TC Instruments of the EU and its Member States with Latin America and the Caribbean

Partner	Specific TC instrument	Funding and/or implementing bodies	Duration	Other instruments to promote TC
Germany	<i>Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation with partners in Latin America and the Caribbean.</i> <i>Financial Allocation: no information.</i>	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).	Since 2011.	Bilateral and Triangular Funds with LAC countries promoting cooperation activities with and in third countries.

Partner	Specific TC instrument	Funding and/or implementing bodies	Duration	Other instruments to promote TC
Spain	<i>Triangular Cooperation Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean.</i> <i>Financial Allocation: no information.</i>	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).	Since 2024.	Bilateral and Triangular Funds with LAC countries promoting cooperation activities with and in third countries.
Portugal	<i>Triangular Cooperation Fund between Portugal, Latin America and Portuguese-speaking African Countries.</i> <i>Financial Allocation: €1,000,000.</i>	Camões – Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua. Ibero-American General Secretariat.	Since 2024.	
European Union	<i>ADELANTE 2</i> <i>Financial Allocation: Operational Component: €5,000,000 (Windows 2021-2024) + 4,188,800 technical assistance.</i> <i>Institutional Support Component: €5,000,000 (2021-2026).</i>	Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) of the European Commission.	Since 2021. The first edition of ADELANTE took place between 2015-2020.	

Source: Compiled by the author, 2024.

Iberorquestas juveniles (by its name in Spanish)



Children and adolescents of the Maya Chuj community (one of the 22 recognized Mayan nations) share language, beliefs and culture, but are divided by the border that separates Mexico (Chiapas) and northern Guatemala. The percussion ensemble project and choir, with more than 60 participants, is an experience that manages to strengthen common bonds beyond the limits of each country and incorporates the rich Mayan cultural tradition to the musical didactics with self-employment workshops and putting in value the cultural heritage and natural. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.



Instruments of the EU and its Member States for Triangular Cooperation in other regions

Chapter 4 characterises the EU instruments for promoting TC with other regions of the Global South.

For several decades, the EU institutions have been leaders in promoting TC. Although, as mentioned earlier, the funds directed towards this modality of cooperation are not comparable to the total of their ODA, the fact is that in the various registration systems, the EU appears among the leading TC partners in terms of resources invested. According to the CRS, during the period 2016-2021, EU Institutions ranked first among the DAC members, with USD 165 million in disbursements. Meanwhile, according to the TOSSD, between 2019-2021, the EU positioned itself as the second most important actor globally, with USD 92.333 million invested in TC (OECD & IsDB, 2023).

Although, as previously mentioned, the regional priority is LAC, there are also some TC partnerships between the EU and its member states in other regions such as Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Non-Ibero-American Caribbean. The following chapters will examine, in detail, these initiatives launched in various developing regions. However, upon investigating the existence of specific instruments for promoting TC with other regions by the EU or its member countries, their development still seems limited and incipient. In particular, the available information indicates the work of only two countries (Germany and France) and a project by the EU, as seen in the following table.

TABLE 2:

TC Instruments of Germany, France, and the EU in other regions of the Global South

Partner	Specific TC instrument	Funding and/or implementing bodies	Duration	Other instruments to promote TC
Germany	<i>Fund for Triangular Cooperation with Asia</i>	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).	Since 2020.	Sino-German Centre for Sustainable Development (Since 2017).
France	<i>Indo-Pacific Triangular Cooperation Fund.</i>		In construction.	Bilateral and Triangular Funds with LAC countries promoting cooperation activities with and in third countries.

Partner	Specific TC instrument	Funding and/or implementing bodies	Duration	Other instruments to promote TC
European Union	Smart Change Project (Jakarta-Berlin, Bangkok).	Department of Economics, Energy and Enterprises of the Berlin Senate (SenWEB), Provincial Government of Jakarta, City of Bangkok. European Union.	2016.	

Source: Compiled by the author, 2024.

Cocoa field



The Triangular Cooperation project ‘Cocoa bioagrobiodiversity for environmental conservation and climate resilience’, is one of the initiatives approved within the framework of the Portugal-Latin America and Africa Triangular Cooperation Fund, constituted by the Instituto Camões I.P., and SEGIB.



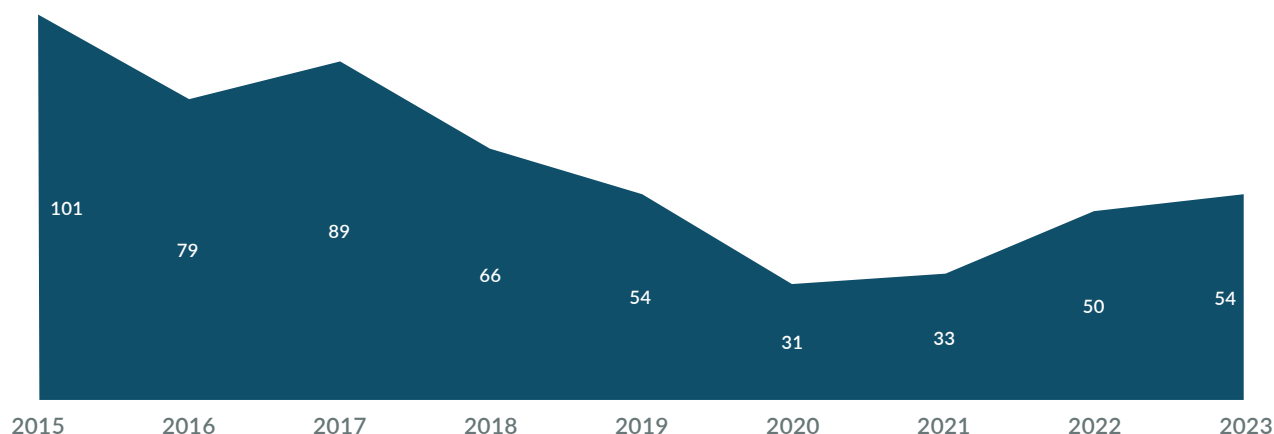
Latin America and the Caribbean and Intraregional Triangular Cooperation

The fifth chapter provides a comprehensive diagnosis of the TC implemented between 2015 and 2023 by LAC countries at the intraregional level. As mentioned in previous chapters, LAC is, according to all the databases consulted, the most dynamic region in terms of TC. With regard to the period analysed in this study, data from SIDICSS indicates that between 2015 and 2023, LAC countries implemented 557 intraregional TC initiatives, i.e., initiatives that involved only countries from the Latin American and Caribbean region as recipients, most often in partnership with Northern providers.

Analysis of the data shows that 2015 recorded 101 TC initiatives, and from there, a decreasing trend is observed, with some temporary increases, until the 2020-2021 period, which represents the lowest point with 31 and 33 initiatives, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by a subsequent rebound to 54 in 2023.

GRAPHIC 1:

Evolution of Intraregional TC in Latin American and Caribbean countries 2015-2023



Source: Compiled by the author based on data from SIDICSS, 2024.

An analysis of the information from the three consulted databases enables us to conclude that all LAC countries have participated in intraregional TC, both as first providers and recipients. Meanwhile, a very small percentage has participated as second providers (Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Mexico). Countries such as Cuba and Peru, which stand out as major providers with the most SSC initiatives in the latest SEGIB reports, have yet to fully consolidate their role as providers in TC schemes.

On the other hand, while nearly one-third of the intraregional actions involve more than one country in the recipient role, Guatemala stands out in this role, followed by Peru, throughout the analysed period.

At the bilateral level, Japan, Germany, and Spain stand out as providers of intraregional TC in LAC. Meanwhile, the combined initiatives of EU institutions and their member states, both with and without the participation of other partners, account









for 50% of the total initiatives during the period. In fact, 41% of the actions are carried out within the framework of TC strategies from the EU or its member states. Also, in these sources of information, GGGI and Canada appear as partners of LAC countries in their intraregional TC.

The largest number of intraregional initiatives has been directed towards strengthening the institutional and public policy sector, according to SEGIB's sectorial classification, followed by the environmental sector and productive sectors (agriculture and fishing).

The previous analysis is summarised in the following table.

TABLE 3:

General overview of TC in Latin America and the Caribbean by data source

	Main First Providers LAC	Main Second Providers	Main Recipients	Main sectors of work	Main SDGs to which TC potentially contributes
Database SIDICSS 2015-2023	Chile Argentina Mexico	Japan Germany Spain	Guatemala Peru El Salvador	Institutional Strengthening Environment Social	   
OECD ¹ Database 2015-2022	N/A	Germany Spain EU	Bolivia Dominican Republic Guatemala	Government and Civil Society Environment Health	N/A
TOSSD Database 2019-2022	N/A	Brazil GGGI Canada	Brazil Chile Mexico Paraguay Ecuador Colombia	Government and Civil Society Multisector Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	   

Source: Compiled by the author based on data from SIDICSS, OECD, TOSSD, 2024.

São Tomé City



Technical authorities and citizens of São Tomé and Príncipe participate in two of the initiatives approved under the Portugal-Latin America and Africa Triangular Cooperation Fund. Together with partners from Argentina and Colombia, they are strengthening institutional capacities in cocoa bio-agrodiversity and digital transformation.

¹ The identification of actors and roles was carried out manually by the author.



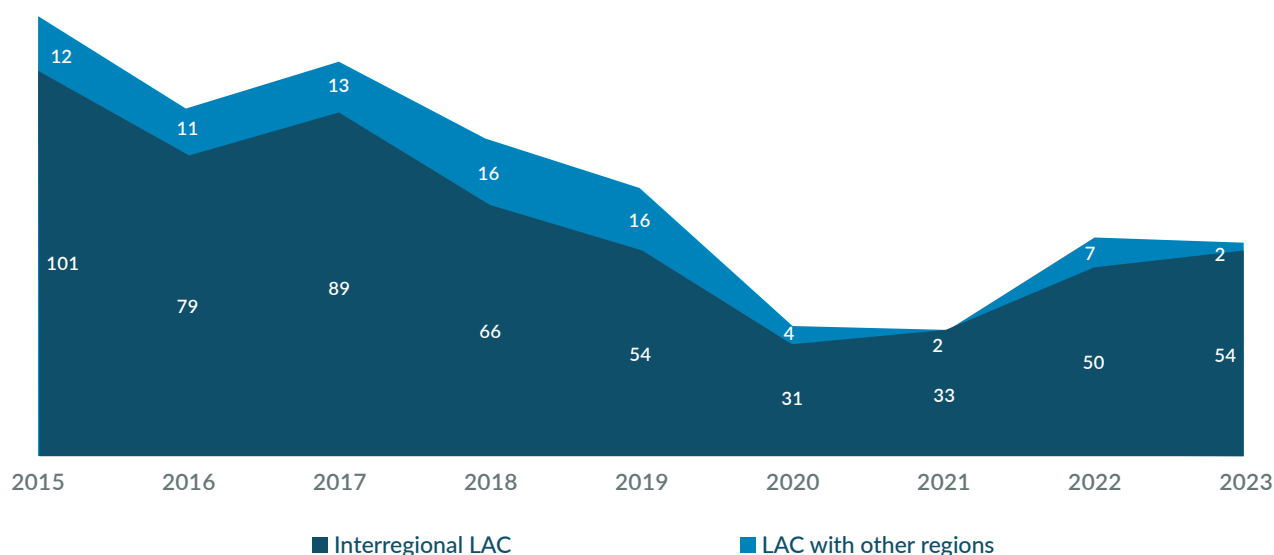
Latin America and the Caribbean and Triangular Cooperation with other regions

Chapter 6 explores the TC between LAC and other regions of the Global South, i.e. the interregional TC in which LAC participates. The dynamism gained by LAC in recent decades in terms of SSC and intraregional TC, along with the rich body of experiences that LAC countries continue to strengthen themselves with year after year, has also demonstrated the potential it holds to address regional and global challenges. However, although TC has proven to be an effective instrument for interregional dialogue, the level of implementation of TC initiatives by LAC countries in other regions remains low.

According to records from SIDICSS, between 2015 and 2023, LAC countries promoted 83 TC initiatives with developing countries from other regions, comprising 41 actions and 42 projects. As shown in Graph 18, there was a gradual increase in initiatives from 2016 to 2019, followed by a sharp decline during the pandemic years. However, signs of recovery began to emerge in 2022².

GRAPHIC 2:

Evolution of LAC's intraregional and interregional TC. 2015-2023. In units



Source: Compiled by the author based on data from SIDICSS, 2024.

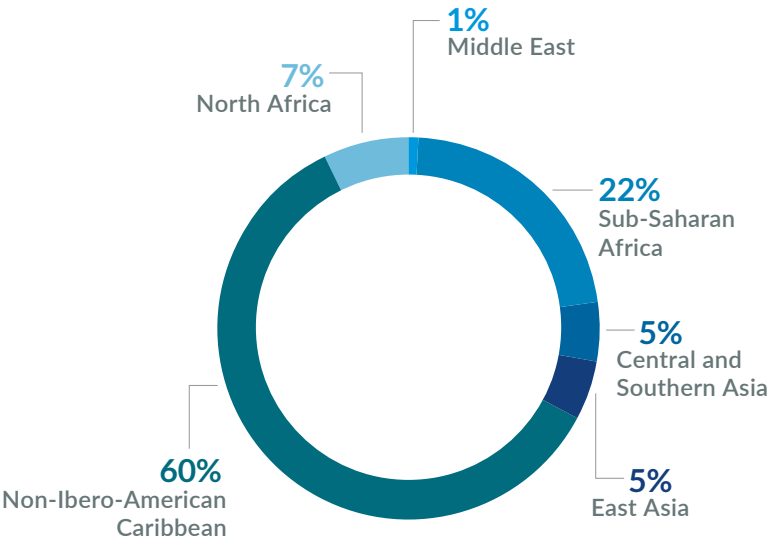
² It is important to note that the process of recording this cooperation has had certain particularities that differ from the registration of intraregional TC in LAC, and therefore the data presented here may not accurately reflect reality (SEGIB 2022).

In terms of regional distribution, there is a noticeable concentration of initiatives carried out with non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries, accounting for 60% of the total. Following this, 22% of TC from LAC

in other regions takes place in Sub-Saharan Africa. The remaining 18% is distributed across North Africa (7%), Central and South Asia (5%), and the Middle East (1%).

GRAPHIC 3:

Regional distribution of TC from LAC in other regions. 2015-2023. SIDICSS data. As a percentage



Source: Compiled by the author based on data from SIDICSS, 2024.

At the bilateral level, according to the SIDICSS of the SEGIB, Japan, Portugal, Germany, and Spain stand out as the main partners facilitating TC from LAC with other regions of the world. In other databases, Norway and the EU Institutions also appear as important partners for LAC beyond its borders.

particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Regarding the main sectors in which the extra-regional TC from LAC is framed, there is also a significant concentration in strengthening institutions and public policies, as well as in productive sectors, similar to the intra-regional TC within LAC.

The main recipients of TC from LAC are non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries and African countries,

The data from the three consulted information sources is summarised in the following table.

TABLE 4:

General overview of TC from LAC countries with other regions of the world by data source

	LAC First Providers	Main Second Providers	Main recipient partners ³	Main sectors
SIDICSS Report 2015-2023	Argentina Chile Mexico	Japan Portugal Germany	Various non-Ibero-American Caribbean Various Sub-Saharan Africa Haiti Mozambique	Productive sectors Environment Social/Institutional Strengthening

³ On many occasions, the source of information does not specify the name of the country, but only refers to the region (Africa or Asia) to which one or more of the recipient countries of the TC belong.



	LAC First Providers	Main Second Providers	Main recipient partners ³	Main sectors
OECD Report 2015-2023 ⁴	Brazil Colombia Mexico	Norway Portugal Various	Mozambique Various Africa Interregional	Government and Civil Society Agriculture and Food Security
TOSSD Report 2019-2022	N/A	Brazil Chile	Mozambique Angola Various Africa	Health Governments and Civil Society Education

Source: Compiled by the author based on data from SIDICSS, OECD, TOSSD, 2024.

“Sembrando vida” project between Mexico and El Salvador



Salvadoran and migrant farmers working in the “Dry Corridor” area received support and accompaniment to improve their crops under a sustainable approach and long-term regional development. Thanks to the “Sembrando Vida” project, they combine traditional crops with a system that intersperses fruit trees with vegetables and timber. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.

⁴Identification of roles carried out manually by the author.



Triangular Cooperation in other regions of the global south

The seventh section analyses the TC promoted in other regions of the Global South during the same period, with a focus on Africa, Asia, the non-Ibero-American Caribbean, the Middle East, Europe, and Oceania.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, TC has increasingly expanded its geographical reach, and today it is present in all regions of the world. Although the largest proportion is implemented in LAC, in terms of disbursed volume, TC involving the subregions of Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia-Pacific has grown substantially since 2018 (OECD & IsDB, 2023).

Many countries that are part of the Global South have traditionally been recipients of North-South cooperation and are progressively becoming more dynamic participants in SSC and TC. These countries not only play the role of recipients but also as providers. Despite facing significant and persistent challenges in their development processes, these countries engage in bilateral and triangular partnerships, sharing their capabilities in support of other partner countries. A good example is Palestine, which in 2016 established the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency (PICA), and although it continues to function as a recipient country, it is also a provider in TC initiatives in African countries. (UNDP, et al., 2019).

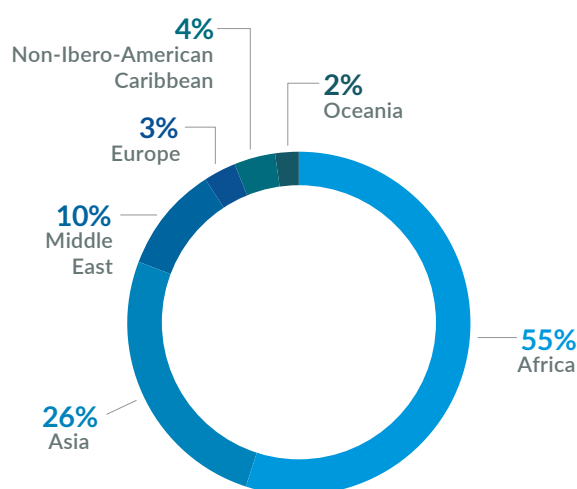
Although in practice, these transformations are becoming more frequent, the recording and measurement of TC initiatives in other developing regions has not yet been sufficiently developed to provide a comprehensive view that would allow for an understanding of the effective participation of these countries in triangular partnerships. Given that the SIDICSS only collects information involving Ibero-American countries, this section will rely on the OECD and TOSSD project repositories, although it is worth noting that these systems do not provide key information, such as the role of the primary provider, for TC.

In both databases, Africa accounts for just over 50% of the TC initiatives carried out, while 25% take place in Asia. The remaining 18% is distributed across the Non-Ibero-American Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania. In the latter two regions, there are discrepancies between the two databases. While in TOSSD, 6% of initiatives took place in Oceania and 3% in the Middle East, the proportions are reversed in the OECD database. In the OECD base, 10% of initiatives took place in the Middle East and 2% in Oceania.

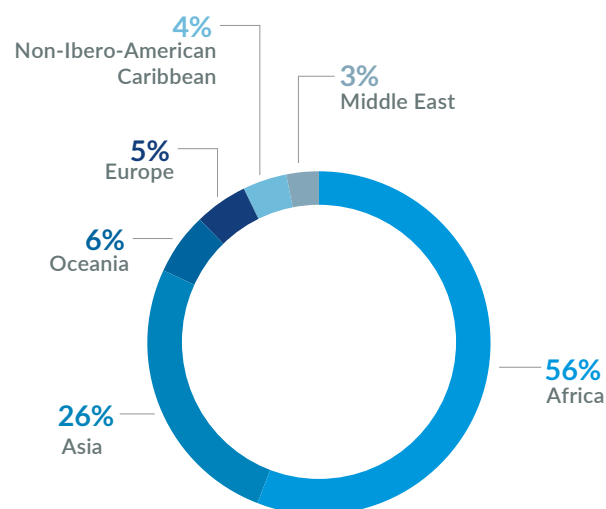


GRAPHICS 4 AND 5:

Distribution of TC initiatives in other regions. 2015-2022. OECD data. As a percentage



Distribution of TC initiatives in other regions. 2019-2023. TOSSD data. As a percentage



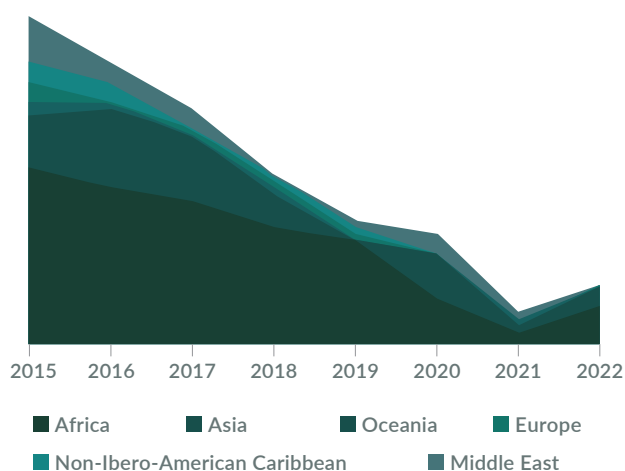
Source: Compiled by the author based on OECD and TOSSD, 2024

When analysing the evolution of TC in recent years in other regions of the Global South, the data obtained from both databases appear to be complementary. Thus, the OECD data shows a progressive decline in initiatives in almost all regions from 50 in 2015, with a brief uptick in 2019, followed by a sharp decline in 2020 and 2021 due to the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. From there, a nascent recovery can be observed towards 2022.

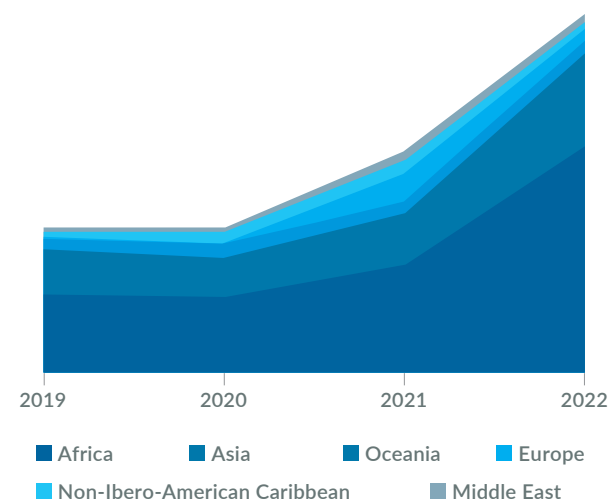
Meanwhile, the TOSSD data does not show the expected decline during the pandemic years. According to the analysed information, the total number of initiatives across all regions in 2019 and 2020 was around 300 annually, with a rise to 467 in 2021, reaching a peak of 752 in 2022. This surge is explained by a 100% increase in initiatives in Africa and an 80% increase in Asia (TOSSD, 2024).

GRAPHICS 6 AND 7:

Trend of TC initiatives in other regions. 2015-2022. OECD data



Trend of TC initiatives in other regions. 2015-2022. OECD data



Source: Compiled by the author based on OECD and TOSSD data. 2024

For a detailed analysis of the behaviour of TC in other regions of the Global South, the chapter presents a diagnosis for each region, taking into account the

participating actors and their roles, as well as the sectors of work and contributions to the SDGs.



The European Union and the global south in numbers

Chapter 8 provides a characterisation of the TC supported by the EU in various regions. Based on the comprehensive diagnosis conducted in the three scenarios presented in the previous chapters, certain specific features of the TC promoted by various actors in partnership with the EU in different developing regions have been identified.

There is no doubt that the region that records the highest number of partnerships with the EU and its member countries is LAC. As shown in Graph 54, data from SIDICSS shows 277 TC actions between LAC countries and the EU. According to this information system, when combining the initiatives implemented by the EU and other actors (40)⁵, as well as EU Institutions (16) in the role of secondary provider, and those driven by member countries (221)⁶, the total number of initiatives was 277 for the period 2015-2023. It is worth noting that Germany and Spain stand out as the most dynamic countries with 167 initiatives between them. Additionally, SIDICSS records two more initiatives involving LAC countries and the EU, alongside non-Ibero-American Caribbean countries (SEGIB, 2023).

For its part, the OECD data presented in the same graph records 129 initiatives involving the EU and its member countries during the period 2019-2022. Here to it is evident that the largest number of actions are carried out with LAC countries, accounting for 105 initiatives. In Africa and Asia, there are 13 and 6 respectively. Meanwhile, the Middle East and the Non-Ibero-American Caribbean each account for 2 actions per region, and finally, 1 initiative is recorded in Europe (OECD, 2024).

The TOSSD data, in turn, accounts for 143 actions by the EU and member countries in collaboration with various developing regions. In this case, the most significant number is recorded in Europe, with 45 activities concentrated in Ukraine during 2021. Following this, 34 initiatives are recorded with various LAC countries and 34 with countries in Asia. Meanwhile, Africa accounts for another 24 actions, and the Middle East for 6 (TOSSD, 2024).

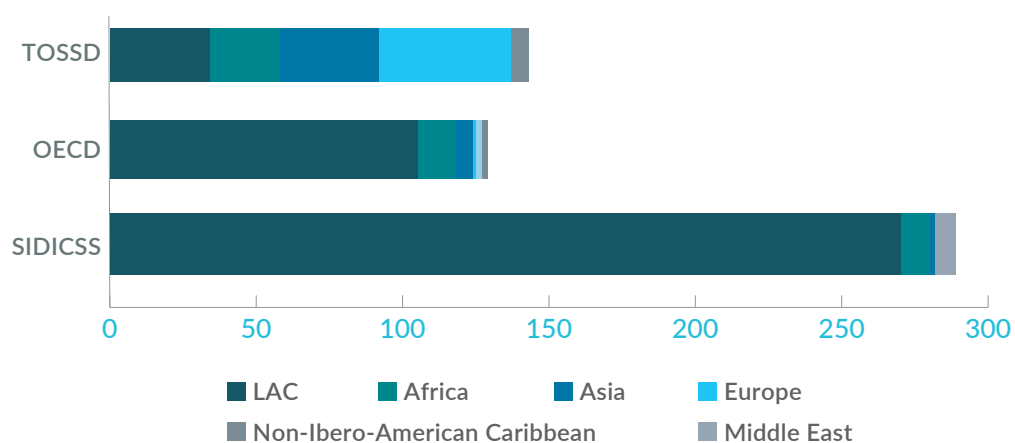
⁵ Spain is the most active country, participating in 28 of the 40 initiatives led by the EU in collaboration with other actors.

⁶ These are Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium, France, and Sweden.



GRAPHIC 8:

Regional distribution of EU TC initiatives by information source



Source: Compiled by the author based on SIDICSS, OECD, TOSSD, 2024 data

Colombia-Costa Rica Marine Protected Areas



Colombia and Costa Rica have protected areas in the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR by its Spanish acronym). These countries are working together to protect and conserve the biodiversity and marine and coastal resources of these areas. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS, 2022.



Other partners in the global south

Chapter 9 identifies the main TC partners active in other regions of the Global South. The analysis of the data highlights the prominent role and dynamism gained in recent years by four global actors who

focus their activities in regions beyond LAC. These are Canada, Norway, the GGGI, and the IsDB. The following table summarises the most relevant data that characterises their work in terms of TC.

TABLE 5:

Main TC partners in other regions of the Global South

Partner	Funding and/or implementing bodies	Regional scope	TC disbursements
Canada	<i>Global Affairs Canada.</i>	The largest proportion of initiatives are concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Asia and the Middle East. Limited actions are recorded in LAC.	USD 69 billion between 2016-2021 (CRS data).
Norway	<i>Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).</i>	Primarily deploys its actions in Africa, with a special focus on Sub-Saharan countries. A distant second is Asia, with actions in countries such as Bangladesh and Nepal.	USD 62 billion between 2016-2021 (CRS data). USD 78.564 billion between 2019-2021 (TOSSD data).
Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)		Primarily active in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia in similar proportions. Also records initiatives in Oceania, the Middle East, LAC, Non-Ibero-American Caribbean, and Europe.	USD 88.442 billion between 2019-2021 (TOSSD data).
Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)		Focuses its TC in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Some actions are also recorded in the Non-Ibero-American Caribbean.	USD 2.1 billion between 2019-2021 (TOSSD data).

Source: Compiled by the author, 2024

The creation of other TC instruments is also highlighted, such as the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS), established in 2011 by the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea; the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Mechanism between China and the IFAD, created

in 2018; and the Triangular Cooperation Window within the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation (UNFSCC), created in 2022 by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).



Distinctive elements of Triangular Cooperation at a global level

Section 10 systematises the main results arising from the three scenarios analysed: LAC's intra-regional TC, LAC's TC in partnership with other regions, and TC in other developing regions.

The following table summarises the key points.

TABLE 6:

Global Overview. Key characteristics of TC by region

	LAC in LAC	LAC with other regions	Africa	Asia	Non-Ibero-American Caribbean	Middle East	Oceania	Europe
<i>Distinctive Features</i>	An increasing number of countries are participating in TC in LAC. Growth in specific instruments to promote TC focused on LAC.	Concentrated among a few partners with greater experience in TC. Mainly directed towards the Non-Ibero-American Caribbean, followed by Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.	Concentration of TC in Sub-Saharan African countries.	Diversification of TC across the continent, with participation from Central and Southern countries, as well as East and Southeast Asia.	The vast majority of TC initiatives involve several countries in the region as recipients.	TC is still incipient. Broad thematic focus of the initiatives.	TC is still incipient. Narrow thematic focus of the initiatives.	Concentrated in Ukraine within the context of the armed conflict.
<i>Main partners</i>	Japan Germany Spain EU (Institutions + Countries). Others: Canada, GGGI.	Japan Portugal Germany Spain Others: Norway, EU.	Norway Canada IsDB GGGI	Norway GGGI Canada UNDP IsDB	Canada GGGI	IsDB Canada Germany UNDP GGGI Switzerland Interpol	GGGI Indonesia	European Union
<i>Main sectors where TC is carried out</i>	Strengthening institutions and public policies. Environment. Productive sectors.	Strengthening institutions and public policies. Productive sectors.	Education. Government and Civil Society.	Government and Civil Society.	Environment. Government and Civil Society.	Government and Civil Society. Health. Education and training. Social infrastructure. Environmental protection.	Environment. Energy.	Education.

Source: Compiled by the author, 2024



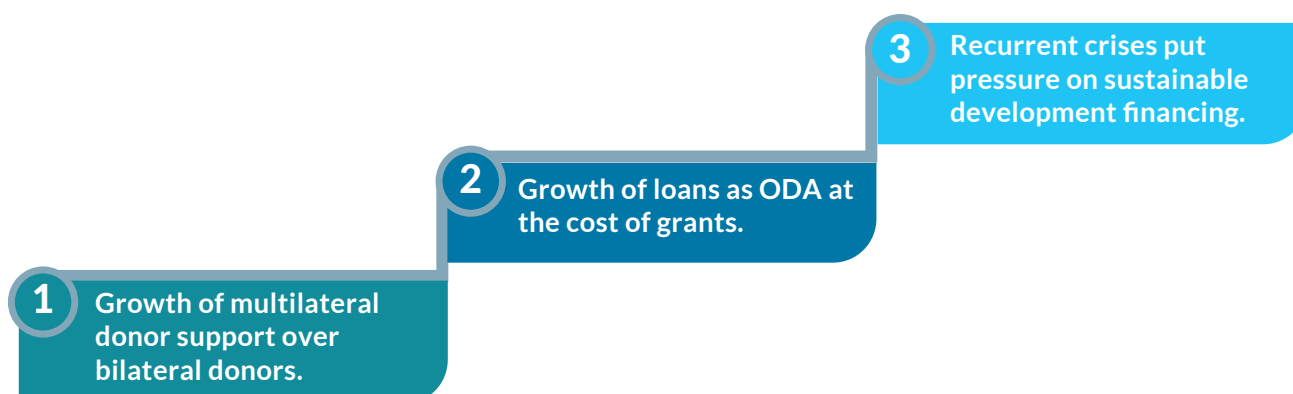
Critical nodes and emerging challenges: a look ahead

Chapter 11 presents the critical issues and future challenges identified during the study, which included interviews with key stakeholders in TC. It specifically examines the global context and official development assistance, the prospects for TC, emerging challenges for TC in LAC, and opportunities for the Latin America and the Caribbean-European Union partnership in other regions.

Regarding the first point, and based on the report prepared by the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group titled “Aid under Pressure”, which analyses changes in ODA resulting from current global transformations, three main trends are identified.

CHART 1:

Trends in Official Development Assistance in the context of the current crisis



Source: Compiled by the author, 2024, from the Report of the UN Global Crisis Response Group

In relation to the prospects for TC, the presence of TC in various international forums is taken into account, as is the creation of platforms to promote it; its recognition in the “Pact for the Future”, the expectation for its inclusion in the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) to be held in June 2025, as well as the outcomes of the “8th International Triangular Cooperation Meeting: Linking global processes to create local impact”, co-organised by Portugal and the OECD, which took place in October 2024 in Lisbon, Portugal, among other factors.

Finally, based on a thorough analysis of the three specific scenarios addressed within the framework of this study, as well as the inputs gathered from interviews with key stakeholders in TC in LAC, and

the elements presented throughout the document, this chapter identifies the factors that may be influencing the concentration of TC in LAC, as well as the factors that could explain the lesser projection of LAC’s TC with other regions and the opportunities the context offers to enhance the LAC-EU partnership.

The identified factors are classified into three different dimensions, with implications for the future of TC. At the *Political* level, these are associated with strategic definitions in foreign policy and cooperation carried out by countries and actors linked to TC.

At the *Institutional* level, this refers to aspects related to the availability of financial resources, the



frameworks and margins of action of the institutions promoting TC, the provision of human resources and institutional capacities, working networks, and other elements.

And, finally, the factors associated with the *Methodological* level are linked to work processes and the available tools and methodologies.

With regard to the opportunities for the Latin America and the Caribbean-European Union partnership in other regions, four key and complementary elements appear to be crucial when considering how to project LAC's TC, in partnership with the EU, towards other regions, as discussed in this section.

CHART 2:

Key elements to consider for projecting Triangular Cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean-EU alongside other regions



Source: Compiled by the author, 2024

Ibermemoria sonora y audiovisual (by its name in Spanish)



Students and academics from the University of Morelos are working on the sound and audiovisual recording of 100 species of birds, with the aim of disseminating the natural heritage of the San Andrés de la Cal and Coatetelco area in Morelos, Mexico. Project led by the Ornithology Laboratory of the Biological Research Centre (CIB) of the Autonomous University of the State of Morelos (UAEM), in collaboration with A-birds (a-birds.org), supported by the Ibermemoria sonora y audiovisual programme. Image Bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.



Final considerations

Finally, chapter 12 presents some final considerations. Throughout the chapters of this study, an effort has been made to outline the key elements that characterise TC today, from the most conceptual and political level to its implementation and materialisation in concrete initiatives. This exercise was carried out with the main objective of identifying opportunities and challenges for TC between LAC and the EU with other regions of the Global South.

The current global context in which TC operates is marked by geopolitical transformations and fragmentations, the deepening of the climate crisis, economic inequalities, armed conflicts, and the still devastating aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The consequent effects of these phenomena directly impact development financing in terms of regional and sectoral prioritisation, volume, and scope.

Despite the persistent demand from developing countries, expressed in multiple international forums, for increased financing for international cooperation, particularly for TC, the evidence does not seem to reflect significant progress in this regard.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, ODA is transformed in response to global events and reconfigures its composition. In this regard, it will be important to closely monitor the development of the armed conflict in Ukraine and the political reconfigurations in several northern countries. Both phenomena could directly impact the greater or lesser availability of resources for ODA and its regional prioritisation.

The EU, for its part, appears to have decided to focus its international development action on the Global Gateway investment instrument (European Commission, 2024). Regarding TC, the ADELANTE Window will conclude in 2025, and the funds that constitute the institutional support component of ADELANTE 2 will progressively cease their activities until 2027. There are no indications, at present, of

the establishment of a new alternative mechanism aimed at promoting TC in LAC, while in other regions of the Global South, only one initiative focused on TC between Jakarta, Berlin, and Bangkok has been identified. The instruments identified for TC with other regions of EU member states, such as Germany and France, are directed towards the Asian continent.

Thus, financing for TC activities in LAC seems to be limited to the support of the region's traditional partners, who have already reiterated their commitment to launching new instruments to promote TC, as in the case of Spain and Portugal, or sustaining their funds, as Germany has done.

As for non-EU partners, countries such as Japan and South Korea are working on creating new mechanisms to promote TC with LAC, according to information provided by some countries in the interviews conducted. However, these instruments would also be aimed at intraregional TC initiatives.

In other words, to date, the only active instrument designed for TC between LAC countries and other regions, in this case Africa, is the Portugal-SEGIB Fund. Although the recent programme launched by AECID and the Regional Fund of GIZ also allow proposals for TC with other regions, the terms of reference for these mechanisms may eventually limit funding for activities in other regions. Nevertheless, it would be beneficial to seize the opportunities provided by these three instruments and encourage LAC countries to submit initiatives alongside other regions.

Indeed, in the face of growing demand from LAC countries, both for intraregional and interregional TC at least in discourse, the availability of funding is insufficient.⁷ Both for MICs and for developing countries in transition in LAC, access to funding to promote TC remains limited. Therefore, partnering with other actors who have the financial capacity, such as transnational thematic networks, transnational social/civil society organisations,



development banks, philanthropic organisations, among others (SEGIB, 2023), could help overcome these limitations.

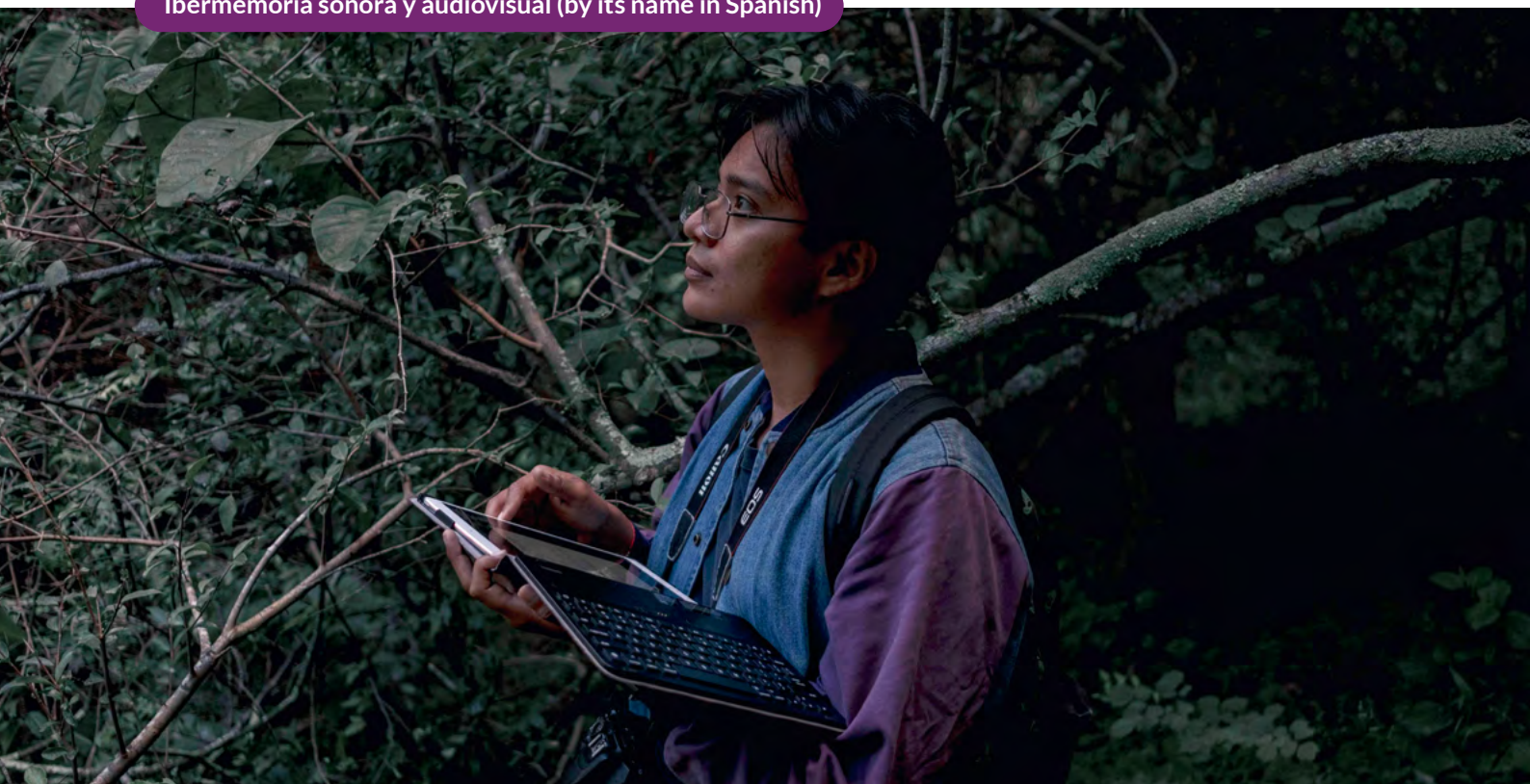
One element to consider, which emerges from the analysis of the data and the discussions held during this study, is the apparent reduction in the scale of TC projects driven by LAC countries in recent years. This phenomenon could indicate that the various funds and mechanisms for TC created in recent years have, to some extent, replaced the lack of resources in many LAC countries for SSC. It is crucial to recognise this trend and remain vigilant so that TC does not become a substitute for SSC funds and loses its added value and strategic role.

In terms of expectations, both historical LAC TC providers and more recent ones have expressed interest in expanding their actions to other regions, particularly towards African countries. The previous chapter identified the factors that may be limiting this coordination, beyond the ever-essential funding.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the phenomenon of *intraregionality* in TC is not unique to LAC; it affects all regions of the Global South, as highlighted by the analysis of data from various sources and the interviews with different stakeholders. The same factors identified for LAC are applicable to all the regions of the Global South analysed: geographical distance and high costs, language differences, limited embassy networks, lack of awareness of other regions' realities, etc.

Therefore, working at the political, institutional, and methodological levels and making progress in overcoming the identified limitations that characterise the current scenario, as has been suggested, could constitute the first step towards the reconfiguration of Latin American TC and its opportunities for projection in the near future.

Ibermemoria sonora y audiovisual (by its name in Spanish)



Students and academics of the University of Morelos work on the sound and audiovisual recording of 100 bird species in order to disseminate the natural heritage of the area of San Andrés de la Cal and Coatetelco, Morelos, Mexico. Image bank on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America. SEGIB-PIFCSS. 2021.

⁷ Within the framework of the Portugal-SEGIB funding call, 354 projects were submitted, involving more than 1,200 organisations. The total amount requested during this call was €54 million, while the available budget was €1 million, which allowed for the financing of seven projects (Summary of the discussions from the 8th International Triangular Cooperation Meeting). linking global processes to create local impact. October 2024 Lisbon, Portugal).



Opportunities and challenges of Triangular Cooperation between the European Union and Latin America and The Caribbean with other regions of the global south

Executive Summary



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