Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America

Triangular Cooperation, which is different but cannot be dissociated from South-South Cooperation, has a section of its own in this *Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America*, ever since its first edition in 2007. This section has been increasingly gaining importance, as Triangular Cooperation has been internationally consolidating as an innovative instrument in the search for collaborative solutions to development problems. This renewed bid for Triangular Cooperation has coincided with, on the one hand, its acknowledgement in 2015, as a means to effectively implement the 2030 Agenda and, on the other hand, in 2019, with the special treatment it was given in the framework of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Argentina to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, as outlined in Box III.1.

In this sense, and following a similar methodology to that applied when analyzing South-south Cooperation, this chapter on Triangular Cooperation presents the following contents:

a) First, the chapter identifies (and characterizes) Triangular Cooperation actions, projects and initiatives in which the countries of the region participated in at least some moment of 2017. In addition, it reconstructs the trajectory followed by the set of these initiatives between 2006 (first year for which Triangular Cooperation data is available) and 2017, identifying some of the main trends.

b) Second, the analysis focuses on the protagonists: which countries and other stakeholders (generally, intergovernmental organizations) were participating in that set of initiatives, as well as in what role. In addition, this analysis is completed by the identification of the most frequent associations, between which partners these are developed, and under which circumstances, in order to detect the existence of any institutionalized mechanism (memorandum or mixed fund, among others) that could be facilitating the promotion of these Triangular associations among specific countries. In this sense, and as in previous editions, this chapter will also refer to Triangular Cooperation’s more operative aspects. However, unlike previous years, a specific section will not be dedicated to these matters; they will be addressed from a cross-cutting perspective, presenting the most remarkable cases which merit a special analysis.1

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1 This will be possible given the vast accumulated knowledge that the Ibero-American space currently has on this modality: information and data associated with more than 1,100 Triangular Cooperation initiatives which the region executed in this last decade (refer to Box II.1 in the previous chapter). (ver Cuadro II.1 del capítulo anterior).
Finally, the chapter adopts a sectoral perspective that enables a better understanding of the profile of capacities that were strengthened in the region, during 2017, through Triangular Cooperation, as well as the way in which different partners contributed to that purpose. In addition, a complementary analysis, developed with the same methodology as the one applied in the second chapter, identifies how this capacity strengthening could be contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**BOX III.1**

**BAPA+40 AND THE RENEWED SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO TRIANGULAR COOPERATION AS A MEANS FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

Between March 20th and 22nd, 2019, the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation was held in Argentina (BAPA+40). This conference commemorated the 40th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries which, in 1978, resulted in one of South-South Cooperation's founding milestones: the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). Through the celebration of this Second Conference and in line with the acknowledgement this cooperation had already received in 2015 in the framework of the 2030 Agenda, the international community reaffirmed the importance of South-South and Triangular Cooperation as means to effectively implement Sustainable Development.

In this sense, and generally speaking, this Second Conference recognized the value of these modalities at political, technical and financial levels. It emphasized on its multidimensionality, congruent with the nature of the new Development Goals. It focused on its potential contribution to advance in poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions and it also recognized, among many, its contribution to regional, sub-regional and inter-regional integration as well as to the addition of innovative efforts through which collective measures are adopted to strengthen sustainable development, contributing to establish a fairer and more equitable international economic order.

The outcome document clearly outlines these general acknowledgements and, although the document almost always refers simultaneously to both cooperation modalities, there are specific entries (specifically, 12 and 28) which recognize Triangular Cooperation’s particularities and urge member countries to recur more intensely to its implementation. Among these references to Triangular Cooperation, it must be highlighted that:

a) The outcome document identifies a Triangular Cooperation that complements South-South Cooperation and that could even be a combination of South-South and North-South Cooperation, since it generates associations that enable partners of a very different nature to join efforts in the achievement of shared development objectives.

b) In addition, and always with reference to the same document, the international community identifies that associations which Triangular Cooperation enables, add value to South-South Cooperation as they facilitate a better access to different resources, experiences and capacities which, in turn, contribute to reach higher development levels and to support the achievement of the SDGs.
Throughout 2017, Ibero-American countries participated in 127 Triangular Cooperation projects and 37 actions, which represent an increase compared to the previous year.
In this sense, a more detailed analysis of the evolution of Triangular Cooperation initiatives in which Ibero-American countries have participated in the 2006-2017 period, enables the identification of various trends:

a) On the one hand, three growth stages can be identified for the set of initiatives:

- A first stage, between 2006 and 2008, in which an average annual growth rate higher than 27% pushes the total of initiatives up, basically from 60 in 2006 to 100 in 2008.

- A second and more extended stage, between 2009 and 2014, in which the total number of initiatives duplicates, due to the accumulated growth, up to over 200.

- A third stage, from 2015 to 2017, in which the trend is reversed and negative growth rates begin to emerge, of -6.8% on annual average. This slightly pushes the final number of initiatives down, from more than 200 in 2014 to 164 in 2017, as was already mentioned.

b) On the other hand, a change is identified in terms of the implementation of Triangular Cooperation, in favor of projects and to the detriment of actions. Thus, between 2006 and 2014, projects represented around 53% of total initiatives, on annual average. Meanwhile, as of 2015, this relative importance continued increasing up to a remarkable 77.4% in 2017, when more than 3 out of 4 initiatives were executed through projects.
GRAPH III.2
DISTRIBUTION OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION ACTIONS AND PROJECTS, BY DURATION. 2017

In days

5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0

Projects
Actions

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation

GRAPH III.3
DISTRIBUTION OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION ACTIONS AND PROJECTS, BY STARTING YEAR

In percentage

Before 2017
During 2017

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
Given the aforementioned, the recent trend in the reduction of the volume of total initiatives, together with projects relative growth, results in Triangular Cooperation’s increasing strength, which is possible due to the fact that projects have a larger duration than actions, as can be concluded after a comparative analysis of both instruments. Consequently:

a) Graph III.2, distributes Triangular Cooperation projects and actions that were under execution throughout 2017 in terms of the elapsed time (in days) between the beginning and the end of the initiative’s execution.

As is illustrated, figures were remarkably higher in terms of projects, in all the analyzed parameters.

• One half of 2017 projects had a duration of between 1 and 2 years. Although some projects also presented lower (a minimum of 29 days) and higher (up to five years and, exceptionally, even 12) durations, this half had an average execution period of 835 days (2 years and 3 months).

• Meanwhile, actions presented much lower ranges of values. In terms of quartiles, 25% of the actions required between 1 and 3.5 days for their complete execution; another 25%, required from 3.5 up to 9 days; and the remaining 50%, increased the execution time to slightly more than one month (32 days). Exceptional outliers, corresponding to durations which are higher than 1,000 days, substantially increase the mean up to 58 days. Nonetheless, this figure barely represents 7% of the required time for a project’s execution (835 days).

b) The former data coincides with information portrayed in Graph III.3, which distributes the total of projects and actions that were under execution during some moment of 2017, by the starting year (2017 or before). As is noticeable, as they have a larger duration, the majority of the projects (56.7%) started before 2017, while 43.3% of the 127 Triangular projects that were registered that year, started in 2017 itself. These figures contrast values registered by actions since basically all of these (94.6%) started their execution in 2017, those that started before that year being exceptional (only 5.4%).

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1 In order to estimate the duration of an initiative, it is necessary to count with initiatives’ starting and ending dates, simultaneously. As this information is not available for all initiatives, Graph III.2 was plotted with information of 55.9% of the 127 projects and 94.6% of the 37 actions.

2 Given that information regarding the starting year is mandatory in when registering initiatives, Graph III.3 is actually plotted considering the total of Triangular Cooperation initiatives that were under execution in 2017.
III.2
COUNTRIES AND PARTNERS PARTICIPATION IN TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN IBERO-AMERICA

This section details, first, which countries participated in Triangular Cooperation that was executed in the region throughout 2017 and, second, which types of associations were developed between partners for this purpose. The peculiarities that the nature of this type of cooperation confers to this analysis, together with the way in which it has been defined in the Ibero-American space, suggests the need to previously recall several aspects:

a) On the one hand, Triangular Cooperation is not defined by the number of stakeholders which take part in it: it is defined by its execution in terms of three roles: first provider, second provider and recipient. For this reason, the analysis will identify, for each action and project, which countries and/or intergovernmental organizations (individually or together with other partners) participated in Triangular Cooperation under each of those roles, and how often.

b) On the other hand, the fact that triangular associations take place between some partners or among others, and that it is developed under some terms or others, is often defined by the existence of previous agreements between the parties, implemented precisely to promote Triangular Cooperation. For example, Memorandums of Understanding or Mixed Funds that determine the way in which Triangular Cooperation will be developed. For this reason, to know about the existence of these agreements and to further examine the way in which they operate will tend to mainstream the analysis of the associations and of their effective development through Triangular Cooperation projects and actions.

III.2.1
COUNTRIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND ROLES IN TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

Graph III.4 shows the countries and intergovernmental organizations that were more active in the 127 Triangular Cooperation projects which were under execution in the region throughout 2017. For that purpose, the graph distributes the different partners in terms of two variables: the relative share in total exchanges and the role executed in each case (first provider, second provider and recipient).

### GRAPH III.4
TRIANGULAR COOPERATION PROJECTS MAIN STAKEHOLDERS, BY ROLE. 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First provider</td>
<td>Others 15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argentina 7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>El Salvador 10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Costa Rica 15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chile 15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brazil 17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mexico 19.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second provider</td>
<td>Others 23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United States 4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japan 5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FAO 6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luxembourg 15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Germany 18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain 26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient</td>
<td>Others 43.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guatemala 6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dom. Rep. 6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bolivia 11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>El Salvador 15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than one partner 17.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The category referred as “more than one partner” is used when more than one stakeholder exercised the same role. The category “others” refers to the rest of the partners which participated in Triangular Cooperation but are not explicitly mentioned.

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
Its interpretation suggests that:

a) In terms of first providers, throughout 2017, up to 12 Ibero-American countries transferred their capacities under this role in, at least, one occasion. In fact, and as depicted in Graph III.4, Mexico was the country that was active in a higher number of cases: in 25 of these initiatives, corresponding to basically 20% of the total. In terms of relative importance, Brazil, Chile and Costa Rica followed, each of them participating in around 20 projects. Overall, these four countries aggregately accounted for two thirds of Triangular Cooperation projects promoted in 2017. Other two relevant stakeholders were El Salvador and Argentina (13 and 9 projects, respectively) with an aggregated participation of 17.3%. Meanwhile, the remaining 15% of the projects was explained by the more specific participation of Ecuador, Uruguay, Cuba, Colombia and Peru, which acted as first providers in between 1 to 3 triangular projects. In addition, the seven projects in which “more than one (Ibero-American) partner” associated to act as first providers, must be considered within this 15%, and associations between Mexico and Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, El Salvador or Panama, should be highlighted, according to the case.

b) On the other hand, more than 30 stakeholders participated in 2017 Triangular Cooperation projects as second providers; this is, 18 countries (4 of them Ibero-American —Brazil, Chile, El Salvador and Spain—) and up to 13 intergovernmental organizations. Specifically, as is depicted in Graph II.4, Spain had a decisive role in more than a fourth part of the total. Another third was explained by the joint contribution of other two countries, Germany and Luxembourg, which participated in 24 and 19 projects, respectively. Three out of 4 of the 127 Triangular Cooperation projects of 2017 are explained when around 20 projects are added to the aforementioned figures. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as well as one of the countries which has the greatest experience in Triangular Cooperation (Japan), and one of the countries which has recently increased its participation in this modality (United States), took part in these projects, in very similar proportions.

c) Still from the second providers perspective, the relative importance of two international organizations is worthy of mention: the Organization of American States (OAS), which participated in 6 Triangular Cooperation projects, corresponding to almost 5% of the total; and the European Union (EU), which for the first time participates in projects developed under this modality (specifically in 4 of them), as a result of efforts promoted only two years before when it launched its Adelante Program, conceived precisely to facilitate Triangular Cooperation between Latin-America and Europe. Further details are outlined in Box III.2.

Meanwhile, specific interventions were registered from, on the one hand, Brazil, Chile and El Salvador; on the other hand, Australia, France, Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland; and finally, from the Central-American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE by its Spanish acronym), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Agencies dedicated to Education, Culture and matters relative to Population (UNESCO and UNFPA, respectively). Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that, once again, and as occurred with the first providers, projects are considered in which more than one partner simultaneously perform the same role. The majority of these would respond to an association between a country and an organization which join to act as second providers. Examples of these associations would be, to name a few: Italy with Latin-America Development Bank (CAF by its Spanish acronym), Chile with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), and Germany with the Pacific Alliance (AP by its Spanish acronym).
In terms of the exercise of the recipient role and, as has been occurring, the most common situation was that several countries simultaneously participated in that role: specifically, in 22 cases, which explain 17.3% of the 127 Triangular Cooperation projects which were under execution throughout 2017. Association formulas were very diverse. In order to illustrate, for example: associations between two partners (El Salvador and Guatemala; Chile and Panama; Colombia and Peru, among others); between border countries (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay); or between countries of the same sub-region (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, together with the Dominican Republic, in the Central-America and Caribbean region; Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru, in the Southern part of the continent). Cases in which only one country participated, followed. Among these, El Salvador’s and Bolivia’s cases are worthy of note, which, as recipients, were responsible for more than 25% of 2017 Triangular Cooperation exchanges (20 and 14 projects, respectively). The Dominican Republic’s and Guatemala’s participation was also relevant. Both countries were recipients in 8 Triangular Cooperation projects each, which aggregately correspond to 12.6% of the total. Paraguay’s figures closely followed (6 projects), as well as the participation of Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras and Peru (5 in each case). Interventions developed by Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama and Uruguay (3 projects each), Argentina (2), Chile and Mexico (1 each), were more specific.

As of 2017, information reported by countries on Triangular Cooperation developed together with the European Union changed its profile. Actions were substituted by projects as a result of what seems to be the EU’s new strategy and its increasing bid for this modality. In fact, and as is shown in the table designed for this purpose, data for 2017 already makes reference to 4 Triangular Cooperation projects, two of which were also developed within a framework which establishes a turning point: the Regional Facility for Cooperation and International Association promoted by the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO) of the European Commission in 2015, which was renamed as ADELANTE Program.
This change takes place in a context in which Triangular Cooperation is gaining importance in the development debate, since it is understood to be a cooperation modality that better seizes its stakeholders’ comparative advantages in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The possibilities offered by Triangular Cooperation to build bridges between North-South and South-South Cooperation, as well as for all its stakeholders to share responsibilities, is another of its attractive features (GPI, 2019).

Considering that the possibility to promote this type of initiatives is easier when it is accompanied by an institutional framework, the UE decided to materialize its bid through the promotion of Adelante Program. With a 10,063,365 Euros budget, Adelante Program identifies and promotes horizontal relations between Latin-American and the Caribbean countries and among these and Europe; it enhances knowledge exchange to take advantage of all of its partners’ capacities in order to contribute to development-oriented solutions for the region; and it finances projects under the principle of shared costs (GPI, 2019).

With reference to 2017, two projects must be highlighted:

a) The first project supported by the EU promotes technical cooperation between Chile’s Agriculture and Livestock Service and the Ministry of Agriculture of Cuba. This is a phytosanitary project which aims at increasing the availability of innocuous food of animal origin as a means to ensure food security for the population. In the framework of this project, which has budget of more than a million Euros, several training and technical education actions have been developed. Among these, professional internships in Lo Aguirre Quarantine Laboratory and Station and the Central Office of the Agriculture and Livestock Service of Chile, are worthy of note.¹

b) Costa Rica’s Judicial Power took part in the second project, leading the capacity transfer process, while Rodrigo Lara Bonilla Judicial School of Colombia and the Judicial Power of the State of Mexico, were predominantly recipients. The aim of this initiative is to apply alternative solutions to incarceration, in order to promote a more humane and equitable justice and to increase opportunities for the most vulnerable populations.² According to the project’s memory, the EU jointly financed this project, which budget was of 1,029,182.6 Euros, but also participated through the promotion of dialogue spaces and by facilitating the exchange of experiences and good practices (Villalobos and Castrillo, 2019).

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation

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¹ https://www.adelante-i.eu/

In the same way, Graph III.5 shows the participation of the different stakeholders which took part in 2017 Triangular Cooperation, once again, in terms of the different roles, but this time considering the 37 actions which were under execution in at least some moment that year. Results reproduce some features which usually characterize projects. However, figures show some particularities of their own in other aspects. Specifically:

a) Although the number of Ibero-American countries which acted as first providers was very similar to that identified in projects (12 in terms of actions, compared to 13 identified in projects), the distribution of this participation was more concentrated in just a few countries. Hence, Chile was the country which acted as first provider in most cases: 14, which basically explain 38% of all 2017 actions. A similar proportion is explained by the aggregated contribution of 4 countries: Argentina and Mexico, which participated in 4 actions respectively (slightly more than 20% both); as well as Costa Rica and Peru, which participated in 3 actions each (an aggregated 16.2%). The last fifth is explained by the addition of specific actions developed by Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Honduras, El Salvador, Panama and Uruguay.

b) On the other hand, 10 different stakeholders participated as second providers in the execution of the 37 Triangular Cooperation actions that were registered in 2017: 8 countries (Chile, Spain, Mexico and Portugal from Ibero-America, together with Germany, the United States, Japan and Luxembourg) and 2 intergovernmental organizations (IDB and OAS). In this case, partners’ concentration was also high: thus, Japan explained 16 actions, corresponding to more than 43% of the total. The United States, Luxembourg, Germany and Spain followed, at a remarkable distance. All these were second providers in between 5 and 3 actions which, aggregately, represent another 40% of the total of actions executed in 2017. Finally, 16.2% responds to specific actions executed by IDB (2), OAS, Chile, Mexico and Portugal (1 each).

c) Finally, in 2017, all 19 Ibero-American countries participated as recipients of Triangular Cooperation actions, at least in one occasion. Once again, as occurred with projects, countries participated together with other partners of the region in basically one half of the finally executed actions (48.6%). Barely 6 countries individually participated as recipients in the other half. These figures fluctuate between 5 and 6 actions developed by El Salvador and Guatemala, 3 executed by Peru, 2 by Honduras and Argentina, and 1 specific action executed by Uruguay.
III.2.2

MAIN STAKEHOLDERS AND DEVELOPED ASSOCIATIONS

In order to illustrate the different types of associations that were developed among Triangular Cooperation stakeholders in 2017, the analysis focuses on the cases of those Ibero-American countries which stood out as first providers (Mexico, 25 projects), second providers (Spain, 33) and recipients (El Salvador, 20). A flow diagram was designed for each of these countries in order to depict its partners and the intensity with which exchanges were developed, under each of the roles. First providers are distributed in the left flow; second providers are situated in the middle flow; and recipients are set in the right flow.

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
In this sense, Diagram III.1 shows the associations through which Mexico could execute the 25 Triangular Cooperation projects in which it participated as first provider in 2017. Consequently:

a) In terms of second providers, Mexico’s associations with Germany and Spain stood out. It participated, respectively, in 8 projects with these countries which, aggregately, explain 64% of the 25 mentioned Triangular Cooperation projects. Associations with other second providers were more specific. Among these, Japan and the United States deserve a special mention (2 projects in each case), as well as Australia, Chile, once again Chile together with PAHO (“more than one partner”), Luxembourg and Singapore (1 project with each of them).

b) Existing institutional agreements with Germany and Spain strongly influence Mexico’s intense relation with these countries and contribute to promote Triangular Cooperation. In the case of Spain (and as will be further detailed in Box III.3), Mexico-Spain Technical Cooperation Mixed Fund, created in 2014, contemplates three modalities, one of which materializes through the development of Triangular Cooperation projects with third countries. The same logic underlies the agreements which facilitate Mexico’s associations with Germany for the execution of Triangular Cooperation initiatives. In this case, two institutional frameworks of a different nature must be considered. On the one hand, one which is specifically bilateral, the Program for the Institutional Strengthening of AMEXCID, supported by German agency GIZ. On the other hand, the Regional Fund for Triangular Cooperation in Latin-America and the Caribbean, also promoted by GIZ, in this case together with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

c) Finally, Triangular Cooperation projects in which Mexico participated as first provider contributed to strengthen capacities of around 15 recipients. In fact, this cooperation showed a low concentration. In most common cases (6 projects, corresponding to 24% of the total), several predominantly Meso or Central-American countries, simultaneously acted as recipients. In addition, the Mexico-Spain association tended to concentrate in triangular projects with Central-American and Caribbean countries; while cooperation promoted by Mexico and Germany presented a different profile in which partnerships favored Guatemala (4 projects), “more than one partner” (2 projects, one with Guatemala and Costa Rica and the other one with the former and Honduras), as well as countries in the Southern part of the continent such as Argentina, Bolivia and Peru which were recipients in 1 Triangular project in each case.

In terms of Triangular Cooperation initiatives, Mexico stood out as first provider (25 projects), Spain as second provider (33) and El Salvador as recipient (20)

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4 Actually, Mexico also participated as first provider in other 4 Triangular Cooperation projects. As was anticipated, in these projects, Mexico shared this role with Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama. For this same reason, these projects were not considered in Diagram III.1 which only includes those projects in which Mexico individually participated as first provider.
5 https://aecid.org.mx/fondo-mixto-de-cooperacion-tecnica-y-cientifica-mexico-espana/
Diagram III.2 illustrates, in line with the aforementioned methodology, the way in which Spain associated with other partners in order to develop the 33 Triangular Cooperation projects in which it participated in 2017, as second provider. Through its analysis, it can be argued that:

a) In 2017, basically one half (48.4%) of the 33 Triangular Cooperation projects in which Spain participated as second provider had, in addition, the participation of two first providers: Costa Rica and Mexico, with which it shared a total of 16 projects, in the same proportion. Another 30.4% was explained by the association with Chile and El Salvador (5 triangular initiatives in each case); and the remaining 20% was explained by specific exchanges with Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Peru (1 or 2 projects, depending on the case).

b) Through these associations, Spain contributed, in turn, to the strengthening of around 15 recipients. Twelve projects (corresponding to 36.4% of the total) destined, in identical proportions, to the strengthening of El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, should be highlighted, as well as 4 projects executed together with Bolivia (12.1%), and 3 in which it simultaneously associated with "more than one partner" as recipients (another 9.1%). The remaining 42.4% of the projects was distributed between basically 10 countries, each of these receiving 2 (Costa Rica itself, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Uruguay) or 1 Triangular Cooperation projects (Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Paraguay).
c) The fact that Spain is currently the leading stakeholder in terms of Triangular Cooperation as second provider, as well as the kind of partnerships through which these associations materialize, cannot be dissociated from the commitment that this country has made in recent years to promote this modality. In this sense, and as is portrayed in Box III.3, between 2010 and 2017, Spain has signed instruments to promote Triangular Cooperation with up to 10 different countries, 8 of which coincide with the first providers with which it partnered in the 33 projects that were registered in 2017. These agreements have accompanied the progressive increase of the number of triangular initiatives in which Spain participates, and have determined the chain of associations between first providers, second providers and recipients.7

7 In order to illustrate, the 8 projects in which Spain (second provider) and Costa Rica (first provider) participated, were destined to: El Salvador (2), Honduras (1), the Dominican Republic (2); as well as Colombia, Paraguay and Uruguay (1 in each case). This distribution coincides with the fact that these initiatives were developed in the framework of the Spain-Costa Rica-Latin America and the Caribbean Triangular Cooperation Program, initially launched to promote Triangular Cooperation with third Central-American countries and which, a couple of years ago, has broaden its scope of action to all the countries of the region. In addition, the majority of these projects (6 out of 8), addressed environmental issues; coinciding with the fact that this Cooperation Program is focused on areas such as climate change, childhood and adolescence, and population and development. (http://www.aecid.es/ES/Paginas/D%C3%B3nde%20Cooperamos/Am%C3%A9rica%20Latina%20y%20Caribe/Centroamerica-Mexico-Caribe/Costa-Rica.aspx).

**BOX III.3**

**SPAIN: A DECADE COMMITTING TO TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN IBERO-AMERICA**

In slightly more than a decade, Spain has consolidated as one of the main stakeholders in Triangular Cooperation in Ibero-America.

The graph which illustrates the evolution of the actions and projects (initiatives) in which this country has annually participated under this modality, shows an exponential increase: from barely 2 initiatives in 2007 up to 36 in 2017.

**EVOLUTION OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION INITIATIVES IN WHICH SPAIN PARTICIPATES. 2007-2017**

In units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation

CONTINUES ON P. 115
However, and paradoxically, the fact that this increase has followed an irregular trajectory does not hinder the identification of clear trends, which result from Spain’s bid and firm and continued commitment to this modality. In fact:

a) On the one hand, identified irregularities are compatible with the distinction of two stages, with different intensities in terms of participation: the first stage, from 2007 to 2010, when Spain’s dynamism is relatively lower (it participates in between 8 or 9 initiatives on annual average); and a second stage, as of 2011, when initiatives in which this country participates on an annual average, basically triple themselves, with final figures over 25 initiatives.

b) On the other hand, the different evolution in terms of actions and projects and, consequently, the evolution of their different relative importance in the total of initiatives, shows that Triangular Cooperation is not only augmenting, but also that this growth is explained by a dynamic which increasingly favors projects to the detriment of actions, which suggests greater strength. This way, while in 2011 and 2012 the number of actions (between 21 and 18) multiplied projects (7) in 2 and up to 3 times, this proportion is inverse as of 2013. In 2017, basically all of the registered initiatives (34 out of 36) are projects, and actions are more incidental.

This dynamic of Triangular Cooperation growth and its strengthening is not divorced from the effort Spain has been making to develop associations with other countries of the region and, through this, to promote a series of instruments which have undoubtedly favored the fast and agile boost of an increasing number of initiatives. These instruments are diverse (Memorandums of Understanding, New Generation Agreements, Mixed Funds or Technical Cooperation Programs, among others) and they share, among other objectives, the aim to promote technical Triangular Cooperation with other countries. The designed figure illustrates the chronology of the signature of these agreements, between 2009 and 2017, in which up to 10 Ibero-American countries are included: Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil, El Salvador, Uruguay, Mexico, Ecuador, Panama and Argentina, in terms of the same chronological order.

**CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNED INSTRUMENTS BETWEEN SPAIN AND OTHER PARTNERS OF THE REGION WHICH PROMOTE TRIANGULAR COOPERATION**

![Chronology of Signed Instruments](image-url)

Source: SEGIB based on www.aecid.es

In fact, and in aggregated terms, between 2007 and 2017, Spain participated as second provider in a total of up to 140 Triangular Cooperation projects and actions. The last graph disaggregates these 80 projects and 60 actions in terms of the country which, associated with Spain, was acting as first provider. As is illustrated, there is a high correlation between countries with which Spain has signed instruments and the joint participation in Triangular Cooperation initiatives. In this sense, initiatives are registered with the 10 Ibero-American countries with which the aforementioned associations have been developed. The number of exchanges fluctuate between 42 projects, executed together with Costa Rica, and 1 project specifically promoted with Ecuador. Other, also specific partners, such as Colombia (4 triangular initiatives), Bolivia (3), Guatemala (3), Cuba (1) and Paraguay (in this case, an action in which the role of first provider is shared with Brazil and Ecuador), should be mentioned.
In this scenario, the association between Spain and Chile is worthy of a special mention. These two countries have promoted around 20 initiatives under this modality, throughout this decade. This association dates back to 2009, coinciding with the signature of the first Memorandum promoted by Spain with its Ibero-American partners. This agreement was the bedrock of the development of an innovative mechanism to finance their joint activities, through which 8 of the registered projects have been executed: the Chile-Spain Triangular Cooperation Mixed Fund which, throughout 2019, commemorated its first decade.

This fund was conceived to achieve a double objective: to develop joint projects to benefit third countries in Latin-America and the Caribbean, under the Triangular Cooperation modality, in a way in which the association between Spain and Chile offers comparative advantages compared to bilateral cooperation; as well as to institutionally support the Chilean Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AGCID by its Spanish acronym).

The Fund has been implemented in two stages: the first stage, between 2011 and 2014, with a budget of up to 1,300,000 dollars, 70% financed by Spain and 30% by Chile; and the second stage, between 2015 and 2020, in which both countries have a 50% contribution of 150,000 dollars a year. After a decade, the evaluation developed by both countries has been satisfactory, and the instrument has been praised by both Chile and Spain, given its capacity to promote horizontal and peer relations and a Triangular Cooperation from which numerous lessons have been obtained. This instrument has also strengthened associations between its partners (including the recipient partner, which has participated with a significant degree of appropriation), and has become an example of how Triangular Cooperation experiences result not only in benefits for the recipient country, but also for providers, which equally nourish from the exchange of technical knowledge and experiences (AECID and AGCID, 2019).
Finally, Diagram III.3 enables a similar analysis for El Salvador, the Ibero-American country which, in 2017, acted as recipient of Triangular Cooperation projects in a higher number of occasions (20). Its interpretation sheds light on the relations which El Salvador has developed with other partners in order to implement these projects. Specifically:

a) 80% of the Triangular Cooperation projects in which El Salvador participated as recipient in 2017, is explained due to its relation with two second providers: Luxembourg, with which it shared 10 projects (half of the total) and Spain, partner in other 6 projects, corresponding to 30% of the total. This enormous concentration contrasts with the distribution of the remaining 4 projects which are actually specific initiatives exchanged with Germany, the United States, Netherlands and OAS.

b) This relation dynamic cannot be dissociated from the boost that El Salvador, together with Spain and Luxembourg, has given to an instrument which has been key for the whole process: the so-called Salvadorean Fund for South-South and Triangular Cooperation (FOSAL by its Spanish acronym), financed, precisely, with the contributions of these two countries. In this sense, associations developed among these partners and the implementation of this Fund, explain part of El Salvador’s increasing importance in the region’s Triangular Cooperation in an innovative manner, promoting a “dual” role for the Central-American country: as recipient (16 triangular initiatives in association with Luxembourg and Spain in 2017) and as first provider (13 Triangular Cooperation projects in 2017, 9 with Luxembourg as second provider and 4 with Spain executing the same role).
c) However, it is important to point out that not all triangular initiatives developed by Spain and El Salvador are financed by FOSAL. Some of them are financed through another instrument; generally, by Spanish Mixed Funds with countries that act as first providers, such as Mexico and Chile. In this sense, in 2017, and as Diagram III.3 illustrates, 10 Ibero-American countries participated as first providers in these 20 Triangular Cooperation projects. In terms of relative importance, these countries were Costa Rica (4 projects); Cuba and Mexico (3 in each case); Argentina, Chile and Ecuador (2 each); and Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay, all of them participating in 1 specific exchange.

a) One half of Triangular Cooperation projects in which Ibero-America participated in 2017, contributed to strengthen two types of capacities: those related to the Social area (33 projects, corresponding to 26% of the total); and to Environment (32 projects which explain 25.5% of what was executed in 2017). The other half is mainly explained by efforts destined to the Economic area (another fourth part of the total of projects, in a proportion of 3 to 1 between Infrastructure and economic services and Productive Sectors); to Institutional Strengthening (20.5%); and to Other areas of action, which includes Culture and Gender, sectors in which only 4 projects were executed (3.1%).

b) As Diagram III.4 shows, the relative importance of the different areas of action is determined, in turn, by the importance of several sectors. Mainly 5 sectors explain 6 out of 10 of the 127 Triangular Cooperation projects executed in 2017: Environment (1 out of 5 projects); Agriculture and livestock (12.6% of the total); Other services and social policies and Health (around 9-11% in each case, evenly corresponding, in aggregated terms, to another 20%); and those initiatives which aimed at Strengthening institutions and public policies (8.7%).

c) In terms of sectors, it is undoubtedly important to highlight the region’s high commitment to strengthen its capacities in Environment. In this sense, Box III.4 studies the way in which the main activity sectors have been changing their relative importance in the total of Triangular Cooperation projects between 2007 and 2010, arriving to a clear conclusion: Ibero-America is determined to join efforts to promote triangular associations and to strengthen its capacities to face the region’s and the planet’s current environmental challenges. This, in addition, represents one of the 2030 Agenda main commitments: sustainable development. In 2017, projects which addressed the following issues stood out: the promotion of adaptation to climate change; information management and applied knowledge for biodiversity preservation; the mitigation of greenhouse gases emissions; the development of methodologies and guidelines for environmental assessment; and the improvement of solid urban waste integral management, to name a few.

III.3
SECTORAL ANALYSIS
OF TRIANGULAR
COOPERATION IN 2017

Analysis of Triangular Cooperation from a sectoral perspective sheds light on how the region has strengthened its capacities through those initiatives that were executed in 2017. This exercise is developed, first, by identifying the sectors which the 127 projects and the 37 actions that were under execution in 2017, tackled through this modality; and, second, by relating that sectorial distribution with what was done by each of the stakeholders that more actively participated in 2017 Triangular Cooperation, under the different recognized roles.

III.3.1
TRIANGULAR COOPERATION
PROJECTS AND ACTIONS PROFILE

Diagram III.4 distributes the 127 Triangular Cooperation projects in which the countries of the region participated throughout 2017 (left flow), in terms of the area of action with which they were associated (middle flow) and its corresponding activity sector (right flow). Through its analysis, it can be argued that:
SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION PROJECTS. 2017

In units

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
IBERO-AMERICA’S PROGRESSIVE BID FOR A TRIANGULAR COOPERATION THAT RESPONDS TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES: THE 2007-2017 PERIOD

During the 2007-2017 period, Ibero-American countries have been modifying the sectoral priority of their Triangular Cooperation projects. These changes are depicted in the first graph, which shows the evolution of the 5 most important activity sectors in 2017 (Environment, Agriculture and livestock, Other services and social policies and Strengthening institutions and public policies), throughout the analyzed period.

In fact, analysis of the graph suggests the distinction of three stages:

1. During the first stage (2007-2008), these 5 sectors explained, on average, 40% of Triangular Cooperation projects. Efforts were mainly concentrated on the Strengthening institutions and public policies sector, which explained, on average, more than a fourth part of the projects. The importance of this sector is reinforced when adding data in terms of the relative participation of sectors such as Legal and judicial development and Human Rights, Management of public finances, and Peace, public and national security and defense, which finally account for around 60% of the total of Triangular Cooperation projects. Meanwhile, Agriculture and livestock contributed, on average, with 8.1% of all triangular initiatives; and Environment, Other services and social policies and Health, barely represented a specific contribution, corresponding, in each case, to 1.2%-2.2% of the total.

2. In barely a few years, during the 2009-2011 period, the aforementioned scenario changed: on the one hand, since the average relative importance of these 5 sectors increased in more than 20 percentage points, situating slightly above 60%; and, on the other hand, given the strong (and opposite) changes of those same sectors’ trends. In fact, the global increase is precisely explained by the upward pressure of four of these five sectors: this way, Agriculture and livestock duplicates its average importance in the total, up to a remarkable 16.6%; Other services and social policies and Health, increase their relative importance from an aggregated 3.4% to values higher than 25%; and Environment shows a constant growth, multiplying its relative importance until 1 out of 10 of the final projects can be explained. These trends contrast those registered by projects dedicated to Strengthening institutions and public policies, which average share is reduced from 26.9% in 2007-2008 to 8.5% in this second stage.

EVOlUTION OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION PROJECTS DISTRIBUTION, BY SECTORS. 2007-2017

In percentage

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation

CONTINUES ON P. 121
CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGE IN THE TOTAL OF PROJECTS, BY ACTIVITY SECTOR. 2007-2017

In percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services and social policies</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and livestock</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaster management</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply and sanitation</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace, public and national security and defense</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enterprises</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and reproductive health</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political participation and civil society</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening institutions and public policies</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and judicial development and Human Rights</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of public finances</td>
<td>-5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation

The second graph analyzes information from another perspective, which confirms the same trends. This graph has been plotted to identify the contribution of each sector to the registered change in the 2007-2017 period—85 additional projects when comparing 2017 (127) and 2007 (42) figures—.

Its interpretation leaves no doubt: basically 3 out of 10 of these new projects (28.2%) are explained by how Ibero-American countries have prioritized the fact that Triangular Cooperation contributes to address the region’s current environmental challenges. In addition, 4 out of 10 new projects are explained due to the aggregated contribution of three sectors which still have a high relative importance: Other services and social policies, Agriculture and livestock, and Health. Another priority which increases its importance is that related to Disaster management (a total contribution of 7.1%). Meanwhile, in line with the former, sectors such as Strengthening institutions and public policies, Legal and judicial development and Human Rights, as well as Management of public finances, either make a very small contribution (1.2% of the change) or even suppose a negative contribution (-3.5% and -5.9%).

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
d) The second most relevant sector in 2017 was Agriculture and livestock, with 16 Triangular Cooperation projects. In this case, Ibero-American countries focused their action on some crops which are typical in the region (coffee, sugar cane, cotton, cocoa, avocado...), as well as on small scale or family farmers. There were several initiatives developed in this framework which focused on food security, but also on the promotion of formulas that facilitate a higher financial inclusion of rural producers. In addition, there were also other experiences related to phytosanitary matters (germplasm banks administration) and to sustainability (the use of sugar cane agricultural residue).

e) Within Agriculture and livestock projects, 11% of those that were focused on Other services and social policies, stood out. These initiatives were dedicated to support policies and institutions which focus their action on some population groups such as childhood, adolescence and older adults. Projects which link youth, employment and social integration must be highlighted, as well as those that address the population progressive aging process, and develop practices for better attention and care, as Box III.5 details.

f) In addition, basically 1 out of 10 Triangular Cooperation projects in which Ibero-American countries participated throughout 2017 addressed the Health sector. A large part of these initiatives was destined to strengthen the system itself, through the exchange of experiences to improve patients’ attention and security, as well as to reorganize the network of hospital and emergency care services, to name a few. Projects also focused on specific population groups; once again, on childhood (development of pediatric care in child cardiology), and also on specific diseases (fight against HIV/AIDS) and medications (access and rational and safe use).

g) Other remarkable activities (around 9% of the 127 Triangular projects which were under execution in 2017) refer to capacities which strengthen government management through the Strengthening institutions and public policies sector. Cooperation in terms of the decentralization of competencies, as well as all matters relative to territorial planning, should be highlighted. Another important set of projects was oriented to the strengthening of cooperation itself, including very diverse initiatives which involve the implementation of information systems, the promotion of sectoral governmental institutions (under-secretaries), the support to Triangular Cooperation Programs and the implementation of the development cooperation effectiveness agenda.

h) The remaining 40% of the projects was distributed in up to 15 different activity sectors, only those destined to Disaster management; Legal and judicial development and Human Rights; and Water supply and sanitation, standing out. These four sectors’ relative contribution fluctuated between 4% and 5% of the total. The remaining sectoral capacities were tackled through specific interventions of 1 to 4 projects, in which the Gender sector, is worthy of note.

Finally, the 37 Triangular Cooperation actions which Ibero-American countries had under execution throughout 2017 deserve a specific mention. Actually, basically 3 out of 4 of these actions focused on Institutional strengthening (37.8%) and Environment (35.1%), suggesting a higher concentration of actions in terms of a few areas. In addition, and compared with projects, another significant difference can be identified in the kind of activities that were developed in sectors such as Management of public finances (6 actions) and Disaster management (a total of 10). In order to illustrate, through Triangular Cooperation actions, countries strengthened the administration of properties in extinction of domain; laws which regulate public bidding, contracting and procurement systems; practices in ministries of finance; as well as capacities which improve warning, prevention and action against tsunamis, earthquakes and forest fires, among other natural disasters.
IBERO-AMERICAN TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN TERMS OF THE ATTENTION TO ADULT POPULATION

According to the United Nations (2019), the world population is aging. This process manifests through the progressively growing share of people aged 60 years and over with respect to the total population. The evolution of some figures and projections seems to confirm this fact. In this sense, it is estimated that, in 2019, 1 out of 11 people (around 9% of the world population) will be over 65 years; a proportion which is expected to rise to 1 out of 6 (up to 16%) by 2050. This progression is even further accentuated in developing regions. In this sense, the same study projects that, between 2019 and 2050, the proportion of people over 60 and over, will double in Northern Africa and Western Asia, in Central and Southern Asia, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

ECLAC (2018) confirms these same trends. This way, the analysis of the graph plotted for this purpose suggests that, in Latin America, the proportion of people over 60 in the total population will continue to rise at an exponential rate, going from 8.2% in 2000 to 12.9% in 2020: values which, by 2050, could rise up to basically 25%. The impact that all the above will have on the demographic structure itself will provoke unprecedented consequences. In fact, ECLAC itself estimates that by 2037 “the increasing proportion of older persons will surpass the proportion of those under 15 years of age, stage after which the aging process will become the predominant demographic phenomenon” (ECLAC, 2018, page 31).

In this context, and in the framework of the commitments of the 2030 Agenda, aging becomes an unavoidable topic in the public agenda. On the one hand, by transforming planning instruments, since decision making on development must be carried out considering the different demographic scenarios. On the other hand, through the implementation of more integral public policies and by adapting economic and social structures in order to improve the quality of older adults’ life and advance, in turn, towards the universalization of the protection of their rights.

CONTINUES ON P. 124
In this scenario, and with reference to 2017, the boost to the initiative “Support for the design of strategies for aging care and care of the adult population in Argentina”, must be highlighted. In this Triangular Cooperation project Argentina is the first provider, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) is the second provider and Chile, Uruguay and Mexico are the recipients.

As the graph illustrates, all the Ibero-American countries involved in this initiative are suffering from the progressive aging of their populations. In fact, for Chile and Mexico, as well as for the whole region, the proportion of people over 60 and over in the total population projected for 2050, almost triples the figure registered in 2000; while, for Argentina and Uruguay, this proportion is almost one half of that registered by the other countries (1.6-1.7).

The initiative originates in an Argentinean experience. This way, in this scenario in which adaptation to population’s aging is necessary, Argentina focused on improving medical and social care services provided by the National Institute of Social Services for Retirees and Pensioners (INSSJP by its Spanish acronym) to the elderly, and within these, especially to those who also suffer from chronic diseases and register high comorbidity rates, which embodies a higher level of fragility and vulnerability. The development of a research study enabled the identification of this fragile population and it also set the foundations to test a new concept of care: Casa Médica, conceived to integrate health services benefits of various levels with other benefits which are typically associated with social services.

After its implementation, IDB agreed to finance a 350,000 dollar initiative that enables Argentina to share its experience with other countries that are facing similar aging processes, such as Chile, Mexico and Uruguay, as was mentioned. This project supports and promotes integral health, providing general and specialized medical care to preserve or recover health through prevention, healing and rehabilitation. In addition, it organizes team work so the different involved professionals can take care of individuals from a bio-psychosocial perspective which integrates innovative concepts regarding organization and information technology with evidence-based medicine to optimize the person’s well-being. The positive assessment of this experience is based on the evidence that it decreases hospital costs, hospitalizations and emergency consultations. In addition, it increases people’s access to health services, patients’ quality of life and satisfaction, as well as the effectiveness of preventive services.

Consequently, Graph III.6 distributes the 25 projects in which Mexico participated in 2017 as first provider, according to the activity sector which they addressed. Its analysis suggests the following:

a) Two thirds of these Triangular Cooperation projects addressed the strengthening of three different areas of action: Institutional strengthening (20.8%), Productive sectors and Social (20% in each case). The remaining 32% of Mexico’s triangular initiatives was evenly distributed between the support to Environment and to Infrastructure and economic services.

b) Actually, and as is interpreted from Graph III.6, the 25 projects in which Mexico participated were very disperse, as they were distributed in up to 15 different activity sectors, which suggests shares that fluctuated between 1 and a maximum of 4 projects. Specifically, 4 initiatives (16.0%), which contributed to strengthen, in each case, capacities related to Environment and Agriculture and livestock, should be highlighted; as well as 3 initiatives that were destined to Legal and judicial development and Human Rights (12.0%) and 2 projects in which matters relative to Energy and Other services and social policies were respectively addressed.

c) In order to illustrate, Mexico took advantage of 2017 Triangular Cooperation projects to exchange its experience in terms of waste management, the integral development of coasts and seas and the use of big data to assess and face ecosystems degradation. It also shared its experience in avocado pre and post-harvest management, in fostering applied research to improve cocoa’s productive chain, and in phytosanitary issues, including germplasm banks and seed improvement. Other initiatives worthy of mention are those aimed at strengthening national electoral bodies and at promoting good practices which favor greater energy efficiency, to name a few.
Meanwhile, Graph III.7 illustrates Spain’s case, which in 2017 acted as second provider in 33 Triangular Cooperation projects. Its analysis sheds light on the following:

a) There was a higher level of concentration in Spain’s case; thus, basically 85% of the projects were explained by three areas of action: Institutional strengthening (30.0% of these initiatives), Environment (another 30.0%), and Social (24.2%). Initiatives executed in other areas were more specific.

b) Environment was the most outstanding sector, since more than one fourth of the Triangular projects which Spain supported in 2017 aimed at capacity strengthening in this matter. There were 9 initiatives dedicated, for example, to promoting recycling, integral solid waste management and environmental management, in many of these cases addressing institutional aspects (development of public policy programs or support for sectoral organizations) and/or focusing on the specific case of municipalities.

c) In terms of relative importance, Triangular Cooperation projects destined to Other services and social policies (5), Legal and judicial development and Human Rights (4), and to Strengthening institutions and public policies, followed. For example, projects through which Spain supported youth (employment and social insertion, youth participation and policies for prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug use to favor this same integration), must be highlighted; as well as those destined to support the implementation of policies to promote racial equity; the development of territorial management instruments; and initiatives to share, with third partners, the experience of Spanish Triangular Cooperation agreements with other countries of the region.

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
Finally, Graph III.8 portrays El Salvador’s case, the country which in 2017 participated as Triangular Cooperation recipient in a higher number of occasions (20). With reference to the type of capacities that were strengthened under this cooperation modality, it can be argued that:

a) On the one hand, 60% of the projects in which El Salvador participated addressed, in identical proportions, capacity strengthening in Environment and Social areas. In addition, the remaining 40% of the projects was destined to support, almost totally and in similar proportions, capacity development in terms of Institutional Strengthening (20.0% of the total exchanged) and Productive Sectors (15.0%).

b) On the other hand, these 20 initiatives associated with up to 11 activity sectors. The highest concentration of projects affected Environment (5), Health (3) and Other services and social policies (3). This cooperation was destined to strengthen environmental assessment processes; to promote the access and rational use of medications; and to ensure the integral development of marine resources. Initiatives were also dedicated to organ transplants regulation and to reorganize hospital assistance services; as well as to address, through different means, all matters related to youth and social insertion.
III.4

TRIANGULAR COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As in the previous chapter, and according to the methodology that is being developed within the Ibero-American space, identifying the activity sectors with which projects executed under the three South-South Cooperation modalities are associated, enables the identification of those Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with which these same projects could be potentially aligned. In this sense, Graph III.9 was plotted to portray which SDGs are supposedly being addressed by the 127 Triangular Cooperation projects in which Ibero-American countries participated in 2017. More specifically:

a) One third of the 127 Triangular Cooperation projects that were under execution during 2017 could be aligned with SDG 13 Climate action (24 projects corresponding to basically 20% of the total registered that year) and SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions (around 20 projects which explain 15.7%). Another third part of the projects is explained by the potential alignment with up to four different SDGs: SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth, SDG 3 Good health and well-being, and SDG 2 Zero hunger (with participations in each case of 11% and 8%); as well SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production, a goal with which 7 projects could be aligned (5.5%). When results associated to SDG 15 Life on land, SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation, and SDG 10 Reduced inequalities, are added, 8 out 10 Triangular Cooperation projects which were executed by the region in 2017, are explained. The remaining 20% is explained by projects that specifically tackle any of the eight remaining SDGs, with the only exception of SDG 4 Quality education, which was not associated with any project in 2017.

b) More specifically, the 25 Triangular Cooperation projects which could potentially contribute to the region’s progress in the achievement of SDG 13 Climate action, shared the purpose of strengthening Ibero-American countries institutional and human capacities in their process of prevention, adaptation and mitigation of climate change effects. These projects were mainly classified in the Environment and Disaster management sectors, aimed at the strengthening of environmental sustainability promotion; the development of risk evaluation and monitoring systems to face disaster threats (including, as is detailed in Box III.6, the use of big data instruments); the exchange of experiences regarding environmental services payment; monitoring the evolution of tropical glaciers in light of global warming; advancing in the implementation of Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers; as well as to learn how to mainstream climate change in the design of budgets, investments and public policies in general, to name a few.
DISTRIBUTION OF TRIANGULAR COOPERATION PROJECTS, BY POTENTIAL ALIGNMENT TO THE SDGS. 2017

In units

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
Meanwhile, the 20 Triangular Cooperation projects potentially aligned with SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions, tend to be connected with initiatives that were classified in the Institutional strengthening area. In this case, among other purposes, countries aimed at improving public institutions efficacy and increasing their transparency, promoting non-discriminatory laws, advancing towards the universal access to justice, ensuring the right to political participation and fighting against all types of violence, especially that suffered by women and children. In order to illustrate, cooperation promoted to implement public accountability instruments; to strengthen electoral systems; to promote policies which ensure racial equity and the rights of LGBT population; to exchange experiences which facilitate the reestablishment of childhood rights in post-conflict zones, must be highlighted; as well as all initiatives that were focused on driving young people away from all forms of violence.

In addition, in 2017, 14 Triangular Cooperation projects were destined to the achievement of SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth. In this case, initiatives were related to the economy and its working conditions. Projects which, in the Agriculture and livestock sector, focused on harvest processes to improve production, but that were also dedicated to incorporate more environmentally sustainable procedures, are worthy of mention. In addition, other projects which, classified in the Trade sector, contributed to facilitate insertion in foreign markets, as well as those which, related to Enterprises, support the creation of favorable conditions for small-scale entrepreneurs and for small and medium-sized enterprises, should also be highlighted.

Finally, more than 10 Triangular Cooperation projects were identified to be aligned with SDG 3 Good health and well-being, and SDG 2 Zero hunger. Thus, and in terms of SDG 3, those initiatives that intended to improve health care systems, especially hospital management and services focused on some specific groups (pediatric cardiology and older adults’ quality of life); and to fight against HIV/AIDS, must be highlighted. Initiatives related to Population and reproductive health, with projects regarding obstetric and neonatal emergencies, and the exchange of experiences on systems to analyze maternal and infant mortality to reduce current rates, are also worthy of mention. On the other hand, and related to SDG 2 Zero hunger, it is important to highlight projects which, included in the Agriculture and livestock sector, were dedicated to strengthen food and nutrition security; as well as those which are included in the Health sector and also addressed ensuring access to food, through initiatives that promote food self-production and the improvement of family farming crops.
Although there is no precise or agreed definition on the concept of "big data", there is agreement on the fact that it should not be compared to the notion of "massive data". The concept goes beyond, and entails conflicting approaches which confront, on the one hand, the potential that big data has as an instrument to analyze, understand and address many of the most important social and environmental problems the world is currently facing; and on the other hand, the enormous challenges its effective use generates, which include from how to develop the scientific infrastructure it requires, to much more sensitive aspects such as the need to regulate its possible ethical conflicts (DNP, 2017).

Nonetheless, however, it currently seems difficult to improve decision making processes and, consequently, public policy management as a whole, without recurring to big data. This is suggested, for example, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development itself which, taking into account lessons learnt through its predecessor, the Millennium Agenda, focuses on the importance of the availability of "quality, accessible, timely and reliable" data to help "with the measurement of progress in order to improve follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved during its implementation (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2017).

The Report that systematized these arguments, "Transforming our world", also referred to the need for capacity building for these purposes, as well as to develop information analysis methodologies that adapt to current realities and enable the adoption of multidimensional approaches (economic, social and environmental), coherent with the concept of Sustainable Development, which the international community has set as a goal. Delving into this purpose, in January 2017, the United Nations Organization celebrated in Cape Town (South Africa), the First World Data Forum. This space served, in turn, to present a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, that was adopted the year before during the celebration of the 48th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (United Nations Statistical Commission).

This way, and from the environmental perspective, existing precedents enable progress in this sense. One of these precedents is the Millennium Ecosystems Assessment, promoted by the United Nations Secretary General himself in the year 2000. This is a "scientific appraisal", based on the massive analysis of data, of the trends and the evolution of the world’s ecosystems and the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being. It also enables improved decision-making and the promotion of the necessary actions to restore, conserve or enhance the sustainable use of ecosystems. The assessment’s findings involved the work of 1,360 experts worldwide and they were systematized in five technical volumes and six synthesis reports.1

Considering these precedents, current trends on information management and the commitments in terms of the 2030 Agenda, in 2017, Mexico, as first provider, Australia as second provider and Colombia as recipient, decided to promote the Triangular Cooperation project "The use of Big Data for the assessment of ecosystems integrity and ecologic degradation". The aim of the project is to count with information to monitor ecosystems change in these three countries, and in some of the services these ecosystems provide, in order to understand their possible impacts as soon as possible and to guide and expedite the adoption of public policies to promote Sustainable Development. For this purpose, the project works on the creation of a digital environment with a big data perspective, which facilitates massive environmental data storage and transmission. After its processing, sub-products of enormous utility are generated, such as control panels and reporting systems with a sustainability approach. Finally, operational systems are developed to monitor the environment with standardized indicators, specially designed to identify and evaluate those changes that occur quickly and abruptly, thus improving reaction times to face their possible effects.

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1 https://www.millenniumassessment.org/es/About.html