Chapter IV

Ibero-America and Regional South-South Cooperation

This chapter focuses on the third South-South Cooperation modality which is recognized in the Ibero-American space: Regional South-South Cooperation. This modality has a wider dimension; it adds several countries’ efforts in the search for collaborative solutions for development problems, and it is executed through cooperation programs and projects. Its largest scale also manifests through its broader scope of action, both geographically and chronologically speaking. In fact, and as will be developed throughout the chapter, the combination of the historical analysis and what actually occurred in 2017 suggests Regional South-South Cooperation is remarkably stable, and its action extends for several years.

According to the aforementioned, the chapter dedicated to this modality is structured as follows:

a) First, it systematizes and characterizes Regional South-South Cooperation initiatives (programs and projects) in which Ibero-American countries participated during 2017. This analysis is completed by studying the evolution of these initiatives in the 2007-2017 period, first and last year for which data is available.

b) Second, what occurred in 2017 is analyzed in terms of Ibero-American countries’ participation. For this purpose, an intensity map is designed to illustrate each of the countries’ participation in the set of initiatives that were under execution in 2017. As an innovative feature, an analysis will be developed to understand the way in which Ibero-American countries related when executing this South-South Cooperation modality.

c) Third, still in terms of participation, the analysis focuses on another stakeholder which is relevant in this modality: multilateral organizations. In this sense, the identification of these organizations is important to understand, in turn, some aspects related to programs’ and projects’ operational mechanisms, since these organizations are precisely the ones that provide cooperation with an institutional framework and with organization rules and regulations.
d) Fourth, Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-America participated in 2017 are distributed according to the activity sectors and areas of action to which they contribute. As occurred with the other modalities, this analysis is developed to understand which purposes were addressed by SSC and, given its regional scope, to identify the type of development problems that countries tried to collaboratively solve.

e) Finally, given the methodology that has been developed in the Ibero-American framework, the sectoral analysis enables the identification of the way in which Regional South-South Cooperation programs and projects could potentially be aligned with Sustainable Development Goals and, ultimately, understand how Ibero-America can advance in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda through this modality.

**IV.1**

REGIONAL SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS IN 2017

During 2017, Ibero-American countries participated in 102 Regional South-South Cooperation initiatives that were implemented, in similar proportions, through the execution of 50 projects and 52 programs. Graph IV.1, which illustrates the evolution of these initiatives between the first year in which they were registered (2007) and the last, shows that values in 2017 are only slightly lower than in 2016 (108 initiatives). This difference is basically explained by the reduction of the number of projects from 57 to 50.

**GRAPH IV.1**

EVOLUTION OF REGIONAL SSC INITIATIVES, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS. 2007-2017

In units

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
In fact, according to this graph and from a wider chronological perspective, values of 2017 Regional SSC initiatives (102) are 45% higher than those registered in 2007 (70 initiatives). However, this growth has not been constant, but it results of two different stages with opposite dynamics: the first one (2007-2013), of an intense growth, and the second one (2014-2017), of a progressive downfall, where projects’ and programs’ behavior is also different. More specifically:

a) Between 2007 and 2014, the number of Regional SSC initiatives in which countries participated doubled: from 70 in 2007, to 140 in 2014. Two thirds of new initiatives were explained by the increase of programs executed under this modality, while 1 out of 3 initiatives was explained by projects’ growth.

b) On the other hand, between 2015 and 2017, Regional SSC initiatives registered an annual average downfall of -7.5% which put downward pressure on the final figure, from the maximum registered in 2014 to the already mentioned 102 initiatives in 2017. In this second stage, as was anticipated, and unlike what occurred in the first one, projects’ behavior had a larger impact than that of programs. In fact, by the end of this stage, although programs had registered an average annual decrease of -5.5%, they still registered a relatively high figure (52), more than 2.5 times higher than in 2007 (20). Meanwhile, the annual downfall registered by projects between 2015 and 2017 was more intense (of -8.7%) and pushed the figure of these initiatives down. This way, the number of projects was exactly the same as that registered at the beginning of the considered decade (50).

The fact that Regional SSC programs have a more stable behavior over time is strictly related to two aspects which clearly differentiate them from projects: on the one hand, because the execution times of these initiatives are higher and, on the other hand and in line with the former, because their starting dates go further back in time. This is ratified by the combined analysis of Graph IV.2, which portrays the execution times that initiatives tended to register, and of Graph IV.3, which distributes programs and projects according to their starting year. In this sense, it is important to highlight that:

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**GRAPH IV.2**

**DISTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL SSC PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS, BY DURATION, 2017**

*Years elapsed between the beginning and the end of the execution*

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
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a) As Graph IV.2 illustrates, one half of the Regional SSC programs that were under execution in 2017 had a duration of between 1 and 7.25 years, time that could have extended, in 25% of the cases, up to 14 years. On the other hand, the duration of one half of the projects fluctuated in a range of relatively lower values, between 1 and 4.5 years, while 25% could have also extended up to 9 years.

b) In addition, and as Graph IV.3 shows, 75% of the Regional SSC programs in which Ibero-American countries participated during 2017 began before 2013; one fifth began between 2014 and 2016; and barely 6% of the 52 registered regional programs began in 2017 itself. In contrast, only 1 out of 4 Regional SSC projects began before 2013. The majority of the projects (6 out of 10) began between 2014 and 2016, and basically 15% of the total, began during 2017 itself.

In order to plot this graph, it is necessary to count with initiatives’ starting and ending years, simultaneously. The former is available for all initiatives, but the latter is available only for those that have actually finished. Thus, as ending dates are not always available, the graph was plotted with a sample of 80% of Regional SSC projects and one fourth of the total programs.

During 2017, Ibero-American countries participated in 102 Regional SSC initiatives that were implemented, through the execution of 50 projects and 52 programs.
COUNTRIES PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN 2017

Map IV.1 distributes the 22 Ibero-American countries in terms of the number of initiatives through which they participated in Regional SSC executed throughout 2017. As in Chapter II of this report, possible values are arranged in bands and each band is associated with colors of different intensities. This way, Map IV.1 becomes an instrument to quickly visualize how active the participation of each Ibero-American country was in terms of 2017 Regional SSC.

In this sense:

a) In 2017, Costa Rica, Mexico and Colombia were the most dynamic countries in terms of Regional SSC, as they were participating, in each case, in a total of 63 programs and projects. In terms of relative importance, two Central-American countries (Panama and Guatemala) and two from the Southern cone (Argentina and Brazil) followed, which participated in a lower number of initiatives, but still over 50.

b) The most common case, however, was that shared by nine countries which participated in between 40 to 49 initiatives. These countries were El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, in the Central-American and Caribbean region; and, once again in the South of the continent, Ecuador, Peru and Chile, together with Paraguay and Uruguay.

c) Other six countries registered lower and more disperse participations. In fact, and still within America, two Andean countries, Bolivia and Venezuela, respectively participated in 33 and 23 Regional SSC programs and projects; while Cuba was active in slightly more than 20 initiatives. In the Iberian Peninsula, Spain participated in 25 initiatives, Portugal in 12 and Andorra in 2.
Chapter IV

IBERO-AMERICAN COUNTRIES PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL SSC INITIATIVES. 2017

Total: 102

Legend: Intensity bands, according to the number of Regional SSC initiatives in which each country participated in 2017

- More than 60
- Between 50 and 59
- Between 40 and 49
- Between 30 and 39
- Between 20 and 29
- Between 10 and 19
- Between 0 and 9
- No projects registered

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
In addition, as an innovative feature in this edition of the Report of SSC in Ibero-America, the analysis of the way in which countries participated in Regional South-South Cooperation can be complemented by adding another perspective that analyzes the most frequent associations (of two or more countries). In other words, the analysis of who associated with whom in order to add efforts to face common problems.

The results of this analysis are depicted in Graph IV.4 through a "heatmap", plotted in a matrix of 22 rows and 22 columns. Each of these is associated, in the same order, with one of the 22 Ibero-American countries. Cells where rows and columns intersect indicate the corresponding partnership (pair of countries). These cells are colored in order to indicate the number of initiatives in which the two countries coincided and the color intensity increases as the final number of initiatives is higher. In addition, countries are arranged in such a way that certain groups can be easily distinguished in the graph.

Given the aforementioned, interpretation of Graph IV.4 enables the identification of, at least, four different “groups” of partners. More specifically, it can be highlighted that:

a) The first group of countries which associations were more frequent under the Regional SSC modality is situated in the lower right quadrant of the graph. This group is comprised of the Central-American countries, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador, together with the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Colombia. In fact, each of the possible partnerships tends to coincide with a minimum of 31 initiatives (those cases of Colombia and Honduras, or Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic) and a maximum of up to 52 initiatives (Colombia and Mexico). As can be interpreted, this relation is much determined by geographical and proximity aspects, and even by these countries’ sense of belonging, since they are all also part of the Meso-American region.

b) A second group could be identified in a more central quadrant, which would overlap with the previous quadrant in its lower right end. In this case, the majority of South-American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia), should be added to Mexico, Colombia and Costa Rica, which were already mentioned. Each possible partnership will tend to coincide with between 20 and 50 Regional SSC initiatives. Within this group, a third group of countries would stand out. Their partnerships’ intensities are situated in bands that are associated with higher values. This group would be comprised of four countries of the Southern cone which, in turn, take part in MERCOSUR: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

c) Finally, Graph IV.4 also illustrates the group of countries that, apart from being the least active in 2017 Regional SSC, are also those which less coincide with other partners. This is the case of Cuba, Venezuela, Spain, Portugal and Andorra which, physically grouped, would be situated in the upper left corner. In this case, any possible partnership between them corresponds to 10-13 initiatives at most. However, in terms of these countries’ relations with others in the region, Spain’s most intense partnership with Argentina (24 initiatives) should be highlighted, as well as its associations with Mexico (22) and with Cuba, Paraguay, Uruguay, Costa Rica and Chile (21, in each case). All these results coincide with the fact that the three countries of the Iberian Peninsula find it difficult to participate in Regional SSC outside the Ibero-American space, although Spain has developed collaborative agreements with MERCOSUR and SICA.
Finally, it is worth highlighting that non Ibero-American countries could have also participated in some of the 102 Regional SSC initiatives that were under execution in 2017. In order to illustrate, this would be the case of Canada, the United States, Finland, France, Japan and Switzerland, as well as Caribbean countries such as Belize. Their presence responds to different reasons, many times related to financial support, specific capacity transfer or even to shared memberships in other multilateral organizations. For example, associations between Latin-American countries and the United States and Canada are usually developed in the framework of initiatives in which OAS also participates; while the presence of Belize would tend to be related to initiatives developed in the framework of the Meso-American Program which, from Mexico to Colombia, is comprised of the Central-American countries and the Dominican Republic.
IV.3
MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL SSC IN 2017

One of the features that defines Regional SSC in the Ibero-American space is the fact that this modality counts with an institutional mechanism which, officially recognized by all parties, regulates the relations between all the different stakeholders (PIFCSS and SEGIB; 2013). In this sense, and sometimes, this institutional framework is especially designed to regulate the terms under which this cooperation will be executed. However, this is exceptional. In most common cases, as the analysis of previous years suggests, these regulatory frameworks are determined by the participation of another stakeholder which is key in this modality: multilateral organizations.

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
The importance of these stakeholders in Regional SSC execution is illustrated in Graph IV.5, which distributes the 102 initiatives that were under execution in 2017 in terms of the organizations that, for each and every case, took part in this cooperation.

Analysis of Graph IV.5 suggests the following:

a) Basically 3 out of 10 of the Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated throughout 2017 included the participation of some Ibero-American multilateral stakeholder. In fact, in 80% of these cases, this stakeholder was the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) itself. In 20% of the remaining initiatives, other Ibero-American organizations, sometimes together with SEGIB, facilitated this regulatory framework. Such is the case of COMJIB, OEI, OIJ and OISS, respectively dedicated to cooperation in terms of justice, education, youth and social security. Anyhow, these 24 Regional SSC programs and 6 projects were all approved in the framework of the consecutive Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government.

b) Almost another fifth part of the initiatives (19) is explained by the active participation of Central-American organizations and, specifically, of the Central-American Integration System (SICA by its Spanish acronym), which participated in 85% of these exchanges, and of one of its specialized institutions, the Regional Center for the Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (CENPROMYPE by its Spanish acronym), organization that explains the other 15% of those same Regional SSC programs and projects.

c) Meanwhile, MERCOSUR was the third multilateral organization that participated in a larger number of Regional SSC initiatives in 2017: 11, all implemented through projects. In terms of relative importance, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) followed, which respectively participated in 8 and 3 initiatives. IDB’s case is especially interesting due to the way in which, through South-South Cooperation, promotes initiatives that enable the region’s progress in the achievement of global public goods and, ultimately, towards development. One of these experiences refers to the initiative Retina Latina, detailed in Box IV.1.

d) Finally, and as portrayed in Graph IV.5, the remaining third of Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated in 2017 counted with the participation of up to 20 different organizations. The role played by the Pacific Alliance (PA) and the Organization of American States (OAS), should be highlighted, both participating in 4 initiatives; as well as by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the Union of South-American Nations (UNASUR by its Spanish acronym), which respectively participated in 2 initiatives. In addition, other organizations’ participation was more specific, even through associations with homologous institutions. In this case, the participation of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN by its Spanish acronym), and of development banks such as the Central-American Bank for Economic Integration (BCIE by its Spanish acronym) is worthy of mention, as well as the contribution of some United Nations Agencies (FAO, OPS, PNUD y PNUMA), to name a few.
For many years, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has been carrying out the Regional Public Goods Initiative based on the premise that Latin-American and Caribbean countries share development challenges and opportunities and that, in many occasions, these can be addressed more effectively and efficiently through collective action and regional cooperation.1 Particularly, through this Initiative, the IDB aims to actively support South-South Cooperation for development.

In this framework, the IDB understands regional public goods as “goods, services or resources that are produced and consumed collectively” (by the public sector or the private, non-profit sector) and which benefits are shared. This is, goods or services that can be used without prejudice to existing users (nonrivalry) and that they are available to all potential users at no cost (non-excludability of benefits).2 Consequently, an open Call for Proposals is implemented each year. These proposals should be presented by a minimum of three countries, to be financed by IDB through non-reimbursable resources.

One of the 9 projects selected in 2012 was the “Regional Platform to Coordinate and Promote the Export of Audio-visual Services”, which aimed at “the creation of a regional market for audio-visual products in Latin America and promote the countries’ cultural integration”.3 The project, which is currently under execution, is carried out by cinematography institutions of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay. The coordination, technical secretariat and execution are led by Colombia through the Department of Cinematography of the Ministry of Culture and Proimágenes Colombia, respectively.

As its protagonists state, “the proposal originates from the need to generate specific regional actions to respond to three conditions: the inexistence of a consolidated regional market, the concentration of successful national productions that are not exhibited in neighbor markets, and insufficient regional coordination mechanisms for cinema distribution”.4 This way, in March 2016, the Retina Latina project was launched. This is the first free digital platform of cinema on-demand and of film information for Latin-American audience.5 In addition, towards the end of 2017, the platform was selected as one of the seven beneficiaries of the International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, with the project “Appropriation, strengthening and promotion of Latin-American cinema through the regional digital platform Retina Latina”.6 In this framework, training workshops have been developed such as the Distribution laboratory for Latin-America and the Caribbean7 to strengthen new filmmakers’ capacities.

The platform also bids for the development of short films and the documentary genre, for which it has the collaboration of the Ibero-American Conference of Cinematographic Authorities (CACI by its Spanish acronym) through its DOCTV Latinoamérica program, comprised of 17 Latin-American countries.8 It has also associated with festivals, film schools, film events and agents of the Latin-American and international sector to promote and disseminate the region’s cinema. Until mid-2019 Retina Latina had had more than a million and a half visits and had published more than 300 cinematographic productions from different countries.9

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation and IDB, Retina Latina and the Ministry of Culture of Colombia websites

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1 https://www.iadb.org/bpr
2 https://www.iadb.org/es/project/RG-T2218
3 https://www.ainlab.com/acerca-de-retina-latina/
5 https://www.iadb.org/es/noticias/comunicados-de-prensa/2016-03-04/retina-latina-bid%2C11413.html
6 https://www.retinalatina.org/la-plataforma-de-cine-latinoamericano-retina-latina-gano-el-fondo-internacional-para-la-diversidad-cultural-fidc-de-la-unesco/
7 https://www.retinalatina.org/conecta-que-es/
8 https://www.iadb.org/es/project/RG-T2218
9 https://www.mincultura.gov.co/prensa/noticias/Paginas/Retina-Latina-realiza-laboratorio-de-distribuci%C3%B3n-cinematogr%C3%A9fica-en-el-BAM.aspx

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IV.4
SECTORAL ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN 2017

The fact that Regional South-South Cooperation is a modality in which so many stakeholders of such a different nature participate, sheds light on its higher complexity. These stakeholders tend to recur to this modality and to join efforts to enhance this cooperation, precisely in the search for collaborative synergies and solutions to face development problems, which are usually common to all parties, with greater strength.

In this sense, the type of problems that Regional SSC addresses, as well as the sectoral profile it underlies, is strongly related to the nature of the multilateral organizations that join the countries in the search for solutions. The majority of these institutions are precisely specialized in addressing the problems that initiatives try to solve. Exceptionally, though, some of them are of a more political nature.

**GRAPH IV.6**
DISTRIBUTION OF REGIONAL SSC INITIATIVES, BY ACTIVITY SECTOR AND AREA OF ACTION. 2017

In percentage

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation
In line with this, Graph IV.6 distributes the 102 Regional SSC initiatives in which the region participated during 2017 in terms of areas of action and activity sectors. The combination of the information portrayed in the graph, together with available data regarding initiatives’ more specific contents and the different stakeholders which take part in them, tend to confirm the aforementioned. Specifically:

a) On the other hand, as Graph IV.6 illustrates, Regional SSC in 2017 showed a significantly disperse profile in terms of the different areas of action. Thus, 25% of the 52 Regional SSC programs and the 50 projects that were under execution in 2017 were destined to problems of a Social nature. This proportion is slightly higher than the proportion of initiatives that were, in identical proportions, dedicated to the generation of Infrastructure and economic services and to Other areas of action, which is more heterogeneous (20.6% in each case). The remaining set of initiatives was destined to Environment (14.7%), Institutional strengthening (11.8%) and, once again from the Economic perspective, to support several Productive sectors (7.8%).

b) On the other hand, in the Social area, initiatives were also disperse in terms of sectors. Thus, the 25 Regional SSC initiatives which in 2017 addressed this type of problems were also associated with up to four different activity sectors. In fact, more than 15% of the total of programs and projects in which Ibero-America participated in 2017 tackled problems related to Education and Health; 5.9% addressed Other services and social policies; while the remaining 2.9% was dedicated to Water supply and sanitation.

In order to illustrate, initiatives that promoted alphabetization and continuous learning should be highlighted; as well as those that fostered progress in education systems which, in line with the 2030 Agenda, ensure effective social inclusion. It is also worth noting all matters related to student and teacher training, where the promotion of exchange networks and academic mobility programs deserves a special mention. In addition, some regional programs and projects were dedicated to strengthen health systems, including all efforts to improve information management in this sector through, for example, the boost of a network for the development of electronic health records. Still within the Health sector, regional efforts were destined to control and face an important group of diseases, such as those associated with dengue, chikungunya, malaria and zika. Moreover, some of 2017 initiatives focused on social care for some population groups such as young people and older adults. Anyhow, some Ibero-American specialized organizations (OEI and OISS), as well as the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), and also SICA, participated in this cooperation due to the fact that some of the aforementioned initiatives were focused on the Central-American and Meso-American sub-regions.

c) Meanwhile, the 21 Regional SSC programs and projects which in 2017 contributed to strengthen Infrastructure and economic services, were dispersed in up to 6 different activity sectors. Their relative importance fluctuated between the maximum of those initiatives destined to promote Enterprises (corresponding to 5.95); those dedicated to Transportation and storage (4.9%); Employment and Energy (3.9% respectively); and those specific initiatives in the Banking and finance and Science and technology sectors.

This distribution is highly influenced by the role of SICA and its specialized institution, the Regional Center for the Promotion of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (CENPROMYPE by its Spanish acronym). Once again, the focus is centered on the Central-American and Meso-American sub-regions, through initiatives promoted to support its countries’ business networks. Part of these initiatives strengthen public policies destined to national entrepreneurial ecosystems and the provision of services, especially for smaller companies. The region’s efforts to advance in socially protected and decent work, should be highlighted, including the development of labor market indicators which facilitate decision making and improve employment policies’ design. In this case, the geographical focus is wider, with the relevant participation of MERCOSUR, ECLAC and ILO.

d) In contrast, the significant relative importance of Other areas is explained by one of its sectors’ outstanding results: Culture. In 2017, the majority of Regional SSC initiatives was associated with this sector: 19, corresponding to 18.6% of the total. In fact, only other 2 initiatives, classified in this area of action, are not related to this sector but address Gender issues. Fifteen out of these 19 initiatives are Ibero-American programs that tackle one of the three areas which, together with Social Cohesion and Knowledge, guide SEGIB’s work. Within these, very diverse initiatives can be identified which contribute, among others, to the promotion of public libraries, crafts, music and audiovisual arts, as well as to the development of archives. The other 4 are Regional SSC projects in which
other multilateral organizations participate: the aforementioned Retina Latina, promoted by IDB; the initiative to strengthen cultural itineraries in Jesuit missions in which MERCOSUR participates; the promotion of regional art fairs together with UNASUR; and the design of cultural satellite accounts in Andean countries, which has been supported by OAS for many years.

With reference to the Environment area, its relevance is determined by the important relative shares of sectors such as Environment (the second most important in 2017 with 8.8% of all Regional SSC initiatives) and Disaster management (a remarkable 5.9%). As is outlined throughout this Report, added efforts in the search for collaborative solutions for the region's environmental challenges, as well as to mitigate and manage their worst effects, are a constant, regardless of the analyzed cooperation modality.

In this sense, Regional SSC initiatives destined to strengthen Meso-American countries' capacities to reduce vulnerabilities resulted from droughts' effects and to favor forest restoration, consolidate; as well as initiatives dedicated to extend Biological Corridors and to promote strategic programs and actions for the sustainable management of large marine ecosystems. Research services and networks that improve regional capacities to cope with climate change are also promoted, as well as cooperation for capacity development in terms of risk management and hydrometeorology, science dedicated to study water and energy transfer between the surface and the atmosphere, which is extremely useful in order to face events such as hurricanes, floods and sudden temperature changes.

It is important to mention some of the organizations which, in this case, joined the region's efforts in Environment and Disaster management: the International Maritime Organization (IMO); the Fund that, in association with the United Nations, development banks and countries, is dedicated to finance environmental projects (GEF); as well as organizations related to the most affected regions, such as SICA, the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Pacific Alliance (PA).

Finally, more than 10% of Regional SSC initiatives in 2017 were destined to Institutional Strengthening. In this case, the sector which accounts for a larger number of programs and projects (6 out of 12) is Strengthening institutions and public policies. The majority of the initiatives correspond to Ibero-American programs related to urban strategic development and to the training of authorities and officials responsible for local management. In addition, one of the most outstanding initiatives in this space is the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFSS), launched in 2008, coinciding with the 18th Ibero-American Summit held in San Salvador (El Salvador), in order to support national institutions responsible for International Cooperation in its 21 member countries. Box IV.2 was elaborated to highlight one of the instruments through which it implements its action: the so-called Structured Mechanism for the Exchange of Experiences (MCESS by its Spanish acronym), an innovative instrument that contributes, through the exercise of SSC, to strengthen and improve countries' capacities to manage their national cooperation policies.
PIFCSS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INNOVATIVE INSTRUMENTS FOR SSC INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING: THE CASE OF THE STRUCTURED MECHANISM FOR THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES

In 2008, in the framework of the 18th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, celebrated in San Salvador (El Salvador), the countries of the region approved the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS). As was outlined in the constituting document, this initiative originated with the clear purpose to "strengthen and dynamize South-South Cooperation" (…) "contributing to the quality and impact of its actions, as well as to the promotion of the exchange of experiences that can be adapted to contexts and priorities in line with each of the countries' public policies". This same document also detailed other more specific objectives, dedicated to, on the one hand "develop and strengthen institutional capacities of the organizations that manage international cooperation in the Ibero-American countries" and, on the other hand, "identify and publish (innovative) South-South Cooperation experiences".¹

In line with the aforementioned, in its more than ten years of existence, PIFCSS has developed different kinds of instruments to implement its action; however, training activities and the exchange of experiences in terms of South-South and Triangular Cooperation have been a constant. The Structured Mechanism for the Exchange of Experiences (MECSS by its Spanish acronym) was promoted as a result of this context and it is one of the instruments that has been best received and is greatly valued by the Program's 21 members.

Through MECSS, PIFCSS promotes the strengthening of South-South and Triangular Cooperation management. For this purpose, it finances initiatives for the exchange of knowledge/experiences between member countries, according to their institutional capacities and strengths and in terms of their cooperation policies. In this sense, although in the framework of a Regional SSC program, MECSS enables the execution of exchanges under Bilateral SS and Triangular Cooperation mechanisms. Thus, countries/institutions participate in MECSS under the roles that are associated with the execution of these modalities, through projects or specific actions, which many times materialize in internships, workshops, technical and/or diagnoses meetings and on-site visits, among others.²

The table plotted for this purpose outlines the 14 initiatives that were financed and executed in the framework of MECSS throughout 2017. As the table illustrates, around 15 of the Program’s 21 member countries participated in some of the initiatives that were executed in 2017. In all cases, projects and actions were executed under the bilateral modality with two or more countries. They addressed very diverse topics, some of which deserve a special mention: the specific strengthening of national institutions responsible for International Cooperation; the development of different methodologies for its better management; the evaluation and even quantification of SSC; the design of technical capacities documents; to name a few.

¹ http://cooperacionesursur.org/es/conozcanos/acerca-del-pifcss.html
² http://cooperacionesursur.org/es/recursos/mecss.html

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Participating countries</th>
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<td>Colombia and Bolivia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exchange of experiences between Andorra’s and Uruguay’s national institutions responsible for International Cooperation to explore possible collaborative lines of action under the bilateral and triangular cooperation modalities in order to strengthen both countries’ relations</td>
<td>Uruguay and Andorra</td>
</tr>
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IV.5
REGIONAL SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As in previous chapters, the methodology that Ibero-American countries have been developing throughout these years to identify the possible alignment of South-South Cooperation with the Sustainable Development Goals, enables an approach to the way in which Regional SSC can potentially contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

In line with this, Graph IV.7 distributes the 102 Regional SSC initiatives in which the Ibero-American countries participated in 2017, in terms of their potential alignment with the SDGs. Once again, through a radial column chart, SDGs are arranged clockwise and each SDG is associated with a total number of programs and projects with which they could potentially be aligned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Participating countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>3 Exchange of experiences for South-South and Triangular Cooperation capacity strengthening between the Government of Costa Rica and the Government of Peru</td>
<td>Peru and Costa Rica</td>
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Source: SEGIB based on information from PIFCSS

Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation and the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) official website
Through its interpretation, it can be argued that:

a) More than 30% of the Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated in 2017 was destined to advance in the achievement of targets associated with two SDGs: SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities (18 programs and projects that explain 17.6% of the total) and SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure (14 initiatives that account for another 13.7%). Two out of 3 of that year’s initiatives are explained when the relative shares of initiatives that could be potentially aligned with other 4 SDGs are added (SDG 13 Climate action, SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions, SDG 3 Good health and well-being and SDG 4 Quality education).
According to the same graph, the remaining third of Regional SSC could be potentially aligned with up to 9 different SDGs. Their respective relative importance would fluctuate between a maximum of 6.9%, corresponding to SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth and SDG 10 Reduced inequalities, and a minimum of 2 initiatives that could be tackling SDG 2 Zero Hunger and SDG 5 Gender equality. Only 2 Goals would not be associated with 2017 Regional SSC: SDG 1 No poverty and SDG 12 Responsible consumption and production.

b) The remarkable relative importance of SDG 11 on Sustainable cities and communities (18 initiatives) is closely linked with the importance of the Culture sector. In this sense, one of the targets associated with SDG 11 makes explicit reference to the need to "protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage". The only exception is an initiative which, through the promotion of urban development, is classified in the Strengthening institutions and public policies sector, and could potentially contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable urbanization.

c) On the other hand, the potential alignment with SDG 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure, could be associated with those initiatives (up to 14) preferably related to sectors such as Transportation and storage, Industry and Enterprises and, more specifically, to Trade and Science and technology. In this sense, Regional SSC programs and projects which in 2017 were dedicated to improve both land and sea transportation and communication infrastructure, should be highlighted; as well as cooperation that, through entrepreneurship and the provision of frameworks for businesses and industrial networks, was dedicated to advance towards the development of innovation and its use in the economy.

d) Meanwhile, basically 10 initiatives seem to have been aligned with SDG 13 Climate action and SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions. Nine Regional SSC projects, related to Environment and Disaster management, could be associated with SDG 13. In this sense, initiatives that contribute to strengthen capacities for the mitigation and adaptation to climate change should be highlighted, as well as those which focused on increasing resilience and on reducing its worst effects. On the other hand, in terms of SDG 16, initiatives were much related to the Institutional strengthening area. Among these, those which focused on public institutions’ effectiveness, transparency and accountability would stand out, as well as those that pursued the universalization of rights, access to justice, non-discrimination or improved security.

e) Ibero-American countries dedicated 8 Regional SSC initiatives to SDG 3 Good health and well-being. In line with what was already highlighted in the sectoral analysis, this cooperation added efforts to put an end to those epidemics and communicable diseases that have a special impact on the region. In this sense, Box IV.3 details the experience of the fight against zika, especially virulent between 2016 and 2018. Other 8 initiatives would be potentially aligned with SDG 4 Quality education. Those dedicated to advance towards inclusive systems that guarantee access to education, at all levels, are worthy of mention, as well as those that promote its quality through continuous learning and exchange.

f) Regional SSC that could potentially be aligned with SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth and SDG 10 Reduced inequalities, is associated with still more than 5 initiatives. Specifically, SDG 8 would be addressed by initiatives classified in sectors such as Employment, Enterprises and even in Agriculture and livestock, as long as they promoted entrepreneurship, decent work and the protection of labor rights. On the other hand, initiatives that could be aligned with SDG 10, so necessary to "leave no one behind", would be explained by cooperation that, classified in the Other services and social policies sector, would be particularly favoring children, young people and older adults’ social inclusion and integration.

g) Finally, and in line with the aforementioned, the potential alignment of the remaining Regional SSC initiatives in which Ibero-American countries participated is of a more specific nature. Nonetheless, it is important to mention the region’s efforts related to SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals, through the strengthening of its statistical and measurement capacities, as well the strengthening of international, South-South and Triangular cooperation itself. Some initiatives also tackled SDG 5 Gender equality, through programs that generate information and indicators in this area and, therefore, contribute to design, monitor and evaluate policies that eliminate all discrimination against women.

BOX IV.3

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION AND SDG 3: REGIONAL EFFORTS TO FIGHT AGAINST ZIKA

Target 3.3 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development proposes “By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases”. In line with this, this box details a Regional SSC initiative that collectively addresses the disease caused by the Zika virus.

Although the Zika virus infection in the region had its peak in the first half of 2016 and substantially decreased during 2017 and 2018, it still represents a public health problem that most intensely affects poorest and most vulnerable groups. In this sense, the pledge to “leave no one behind” of the 2030 Agenda (UNDP and IFRC, 2017) is being challenged. As is portrayed in the map that was designed for this purpose, in 2018, there was evidence of autochthonous transmission of the Zika virus in all the countries of the region, with the only exception of Chile and Uruguay.

In this context, in 2016, the Regional SSC project “Support for the Regional Strategy to combat Zika” was designed, in the framework of the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of the Zika Virus in Central-America and the Dominican Republic, according to the mandate of the Central-American Integration System’s (SICA by its Spanish acronym) Heads of State and Government and of the Council of Central-American and the Dominican Republic Ministers of Health. This project was based on the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and resolutions and on International Health Regulations (IHR).

It was executed between 2016 and 2018, and its aim was to “develop an instrument for the operationalization of regional and national actions to address a common emerging health problem in the countries of the region, transmitted by an endemic vector in Central-America and the Dominican Republic, such as Aedes aegypti.” It was carried out by the Executive Secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Central-America and the Dominican Republic (SECOMISCA by its Spanish acronym), which involves seven Latin-American countries –and Belize–, with the additional support of the Government of Turkey.

According to SICA’s public information, the results of this project were:

- The development of a study of insecticide resistance in three countries of the region: Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica.
- Strengthening capacities of the region’s ministries of health on vector chemical control and quality when performing laboratory tests to confirm diagnoses of arboviral diseases, through the purchase of specialized equipment.
- The beginning of a training process in the countries of the SICA region, through courses on entomology, molecular pathology and studies on insecticide resistance, among others.
- The beginning of the process to develop an Entomology Working Group of Central-American countries and the Dominican Republic.
- Donation of specialized equipment and machinery to the ministries of health of Central-American countries and the Dominican Republic.


Source: SEGIB based on Cooperation Agencies and General Directions for Cooperation, UNDP and IFRC (2017) and SICA and PAHO websites

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INCIDENCE RATE OF ACCUMULATED ZIKA CASES PER 100,000 INHABITANTS IN THE LATIN-AMERICAN COUNTRIES OF IBERO-AMERICA. SUSPECTED AND CONFIRMED AUTOCHTHONOUS CASES. 2018

Legend: bands of intensity, according to incidence rate of accumulated Zika cases

- More than 20
- Between 10.1 and 20
- Between 4.1 and 10
- Between 2.1 and 4
- Between 0.1 and 2
- 0