

South-South and triangular cooperation in Latin America

SUMMARY

Over the past few decades, South-South and triangular cooperation (TrC) among developing countries has been acquiring increasing importance as a necessary complement to traditional North-South development cooperation. The United Nations (UN) High Level Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries held in Argentina in 1978 set the basic framework for this form of cooperation with its Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA). The model was recently modified by the UN 2030 Agenda for Development and its 17 sustainable development goals, together with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for financing development cooperation.

The Latin American region has been a pioneer of South-South cooperation (SSC), both bilateral and regional, as well as of TrC and SSC with other developing regions. Its various regional and sub-regional integration mechanisms, including the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the Ibero-American Conference, have established their own cooperation bodies. Moreover, since 2006, this cooperation has been described in detail in an annual report on South-South cooperation in Ibero-America.

The 2019 UN High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Buenos Aires from 20 to 22 March 2019, 40 years after the Buenos Aires Action Plan (BAPA +40), presented a unique opportunity to tailor SSC and TrC more closely to the 2030 Agenda and its sustainable development goals. The EU took part in the conference and contributed to the outcome document. The EU promotes this type of cooperation as part of its European Consensus for Development, and has launched a regional facility to this effect.



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A cooperation model on the rise

Over the past four decades, horizontal cooperation among developing countries of the South has been growing in relevance, and gradually complementing the traditional model of North-South cooperation based on official development aid (ODA) from developed, high-income countries to developing countries. But, what exactly is to be understood by South-South and triangular cooperation?

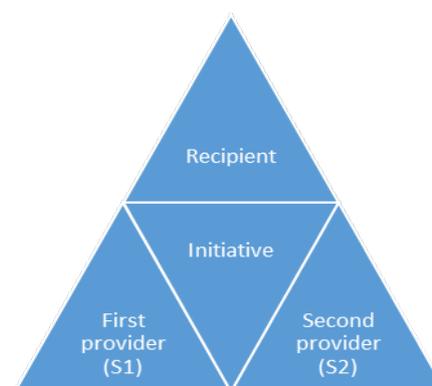
According to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation ([UNOSSC](#)), **South-South cooperation (SSC)** is 'a broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains'. It is 'managed by developing countries themselves, with [active participation](#) from governments, public and private sector actors, academia and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)' among others. It involves '**two or more developing countries**', and can take place 'on a bilateral, regional, intraregional or interregional basis'. It serves developing countries to 'share knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to meet their development goals through concerted efforts'. The World Health Organisation ([WHO](#)) puts the emphasis on 'the exchange of expertise between actors' in developing countries 'to help each other with knowledge, technical assistance and/or investments'; and insists on the role of developing countries as agents of action and 'leaders of the development process'. SSC moves away from the traditional cooperation model of one-way assistance from donor to recipient to one based on solidarity among peoples and countries of the South, on a more equal footing, guided by the principles of 'respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit'.

Triangular cooperation (TC), meanwhile, is a form of SSC where development partners, developed countries and/or international organisations 'provide financial or technical support to facilitate development activities' between two or more developing countries. The [United Nations](#) describes it as involving 'Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries, supported by a developed country(ies) or multilateral organisation(s), to implement development cooperation programmes and projects'. It promotes 'horizontal associations, based on reciprocity' aimed at overcoming the traditional relationship between donor and recipient by recognising the capacity of developing countries to contribute by sharing knowledge and experience not only between countries of the South, but also with developed countries of the North in both directions (North-South and South-North).

In this triangle there is usually a first provider (S1), that is, one or more countries acting as the main party responsible for capacity building and bringing the technical assistance required (usually an emerging country); a recipient partner, which receives the technical assistance but can also contribute to the project (a developing country); and a second provider (S2), which acts as a facilitator, giving some type of support (technical, financial or other) to the capacity building process. This latter role is usually played by a '[traditional donor](#)' (development partner, developed country or international organisation. TrC offers a good alternative to North-South cooperation.

The [OECD](#) stresses, nevertheless, the complementarity of SSC and North-South cooperation, and the fact that they are not meant to be mutually exclusive. Despite their different backgrounds and features, they both share the objective of promoting sustainable growth and reducing poverty in developing countries, as well as common principles such as ownership, inclusiveness, transparency, mutual accountability, quality and results, and have been gradually converging over time.

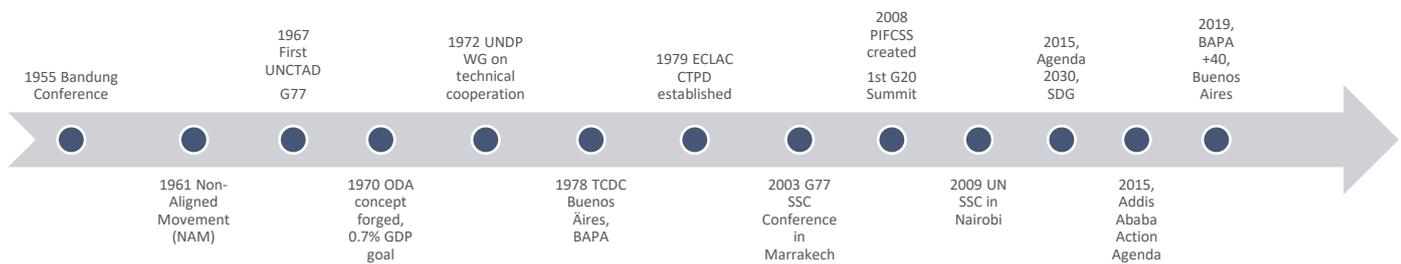
Figure 1 – Triangular cooperation



Source: [Cooperacionsur.org](#).

A history of South-South cooperation

Figure 2 – SSC milestones



Data source: SEGIB, [Una década de Cooperación Sur-Sur en Iberoamérica](#), 2018.

The [Bandung Afro-Asian Conference](#) in 1955 – in which Latin America did not participate – is often recognised as the first milestone in South-South cooperation (SSC);¹ some elements of the 'discourse' of the South, such as non-interference, respect for sovereignty, or promotion of reciprocal cooperation, were already underlined here. Six years later the Non-Aligned Movement ([NAM](#)) was founded in Belgrade; on that occasion, reference was made to the need for cooperation among developing countries on the reduction of global economic inequalities. In 1964, the first UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) saw the founding of the [G77](#) – the first group of developing countries in the framework of the United Nations; the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ([ECLAC](#)) played a key role. Its executive secretary [Raul Prebisch](#) was also first [secretary-general](#) of UNCTAD. In 1970, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee ([DAC](#)) forged the concept of 'official development aid' (ODA) and the commitment of its member states to assign 0.7 % of their GDP to it. In 1972 SSC was first institutionalised with the establishment of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Working Group on [technical cooperation](#), and in 1974 the UN General Assembly adopted its first [resolution](#) on technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). But the biggest milestone was the celebration in 1978 of the First UN High Level Conference on TCDC in Buenos Aires, and the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action ([BAPA](#)). Other SSC conferences were held in [Marrakech](#) and 2009 in [Nairobi](#). In the Latin American context, the establishment of the ECLAC TCDC in 1979 and of the Ibero-American programme for the reinforcement of SSC ([PIFCSS](#)) in 2008 were also important milestones, as was the participation of Argentina and Brazil in the first G20 summit that same year. In 2015, the adoption of the UN [2030 Agenda](#) and its sustainable development goals ([SDG](#)), along with the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) for financing sustainable development, offered a new framework for South-South cooperation.

The Buenos Aires Plan of Action

Over 40 years ago, delegations from 138 countries meeting in Buenos Aires at a UN High-Level Conference adopted by consensus the [Plan of Action](#) to Promote and Accomplish Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, also known as the Buenos Aires Plan of Action ([BAPA](#)). This plan set a comprehensive framework for promoting cooperation among countries of the South, with a series of guiding principles, objectives and recommendations (at national, regional and sub-regional, and global levels). It broke with the paradigm of developed countries as 'donors' and developing countries as 'recipients'; paved the way for major changes in approaches to development assistance, recognising it as a multidimensional process; and showed developing countries the possibility of cooperating according to their capacities, under the principles of equal rights, solidarity, respect for national sovereignty, economic independence and non-interference in internal affairs. It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 1978.

SSC and the 2030 Agenda

The adoption in 2015 by all UN members of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development marked a commitment to a new development model: sustainable development understood as interconnected environmental, social and economic dimensions, through the achievement of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDG). The Agenda explicitly recognised the important role of South-South cooperation in achieving its goals and targets. That same year the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) on Financing for Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change were adopted, also lending new impetus to SSC.

Latin America's pioneering role

The Latin American region has been involved in SSC since its beginnings. There are various specialised [international cooperation bodies](#) in the Latin America and Caribbean region focused on regional and sub-regional integration mechanisms. These include: the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) international cooperation [working group](#); the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) [Group of High-level Authorities](#) on South-South cooperation; the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) [International Cooperation Group](#); the [Cooperation Technical Group](#) of the Pacific Alliance; the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project (PM); ECLAC's [Committee on South-South Cooperation](#); and the [meetings of heads of cooperation](#) of the Ibero-American Conference. With support from the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), CELAC is currently developing a regional cooperation policy to outline development project priorities for SSC and TrC. One example of interregional SSC is the [trust fund](#) jointly established by ECLAC and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to support projects promoting cooperation among stakeholders in Asia and Latin America.

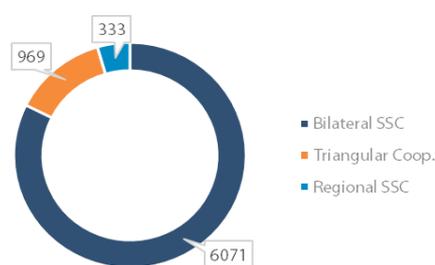
The 2008 Ibero-American summit established the Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation ([PIFCSS](#)) in order to develop and strengthen institutional capacities, as well as to identify and disseminate innovative cases and experiences on SSC. The main statistical source available for SSC and TrC in Latin America is the Integrated Ibero-American Data System on South-South and Triangular Cooperation [SIDICSS](#), which serves to elaborate the annual reports published by the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB). Besides Latin American countries², the reports also cover Andorra, Portugal and Spain (both EU members).

Regional participation in SSC

Latin America has been involved in South-South cooperation since its beginnings. Between 2006 and 2015 there were around 7 375 **programmes, projects and actions**³ in the region. Over 6 000 of these (eight out of ten) involved bilateral SSC, nearly 1 000 took the form of triangular cooperation, and over 300 involved regional SSC.

As regards total SSC **initiatives**, Brazil took the lead, with 851 initiatives, followed by Mexico (827), Argentina (777), Cuba (686), Colombia (598) and Chile (554). The main providers were again Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Cuba; and the main recipients El Salvador, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala and Paraguay. All countries also exercised both provider and recipient roles to some extent – Peru did so in 176 initiatives, followed by Mexico, Colombia and Argentina.

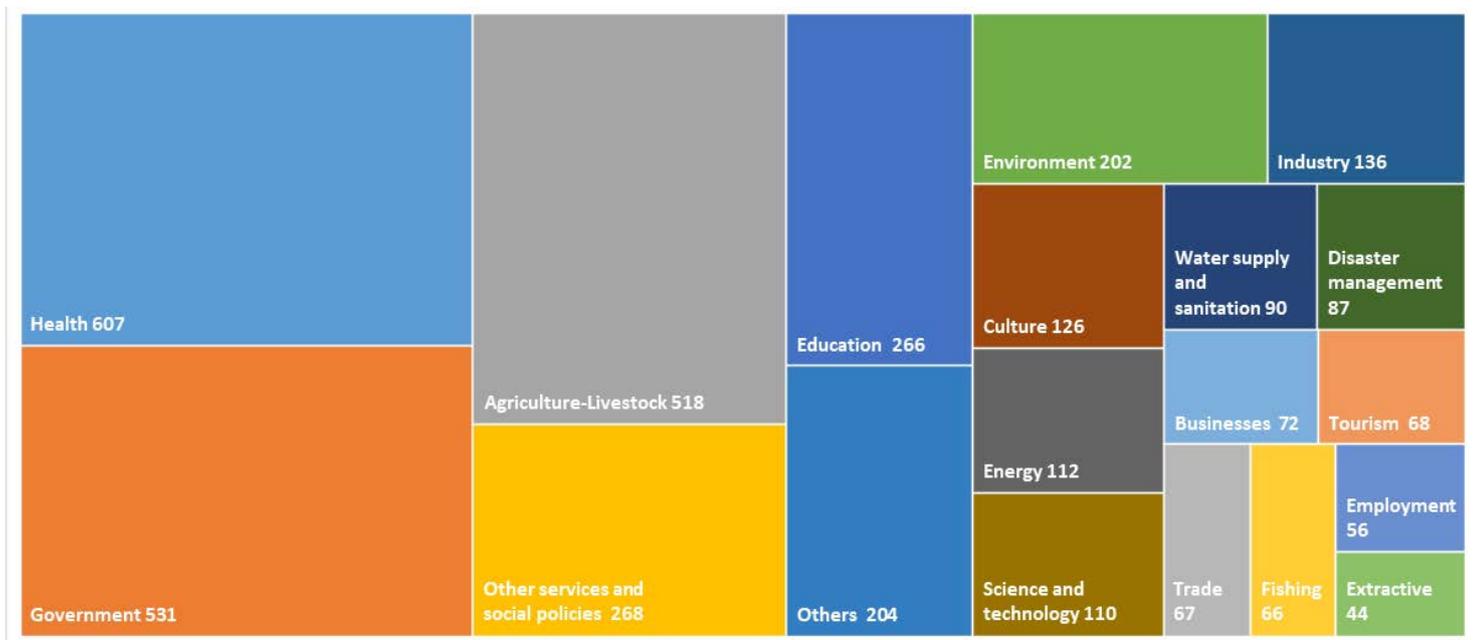
Figure 3 – Number of SSC actions by type (2006 to 2015)



Data source: SEGIB.

Figures 4 and 5 – Number of SSC initiatives: by country and role; and by sector (2006-2015, Latin America + Spain and Portugal)

Country	Recipient role	Both roles	Provider role	Total
Argentina	85	160	532	777
Bolivia	318	122	3	443
Brazil	44	124	683	851
Chile	46	142	366	554
Colombia	167	169	262	598
Costa Rica	250	121	49	420
Cuba	185	47	454	686
Ecuador	229	133	68	430
El Salvador	342	99	10	451
Guatemala	223	101	1	325
Honduras	180	96	1	277
Mexico	88	170	569	827
Nicaragua	176	86	2	264
Panama	125	99	4	228
Paraguay	214	89	8	311
Peru	179	176	37	392
Dominican Republic	167	84	2	253
Uruguay	114	112	70	296
Venezuela	135	57	128	320
Portugal	0	26	0	26
Spain	0	60	70	130



Source: SEGIB.

The main **sectors** of South-South cooperation over the 10 years studied were health, with 607 initiatives, followed by government (531), agriculture and livestock (518), education (266) and other services and social policies (268).

SSC and sustainable development goals

Of the 1 105 bilateral SSC **projects** implemented in the Ibero-American region between 2013 and 2015,⁴ over a third (348) were able to contribute to SDGs 2 (zero hunger) and 3 (good health and well-being); an additional 12 % (130 projects) to SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions); nearly 170 projects to SDGs 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure); another 75 to SDG 4 (quality education); and around 200 projects shared their contribution among SDGs 6 (clean water and sanitation), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 17 (partnerships for the goals, which includes the recognition of SSC as means of implementing the 2030 Agenda). An additional 10 % of projects contributed to SDGs more directly related to the environment (13 – climate action, 14 – life below water, and 15 – life on the land) and SDGs 7 (affordable and clean energy) and 12 (responsible consumption and production). Finally, a small number of projects related to SDGs 1 (no poverty) and 5 (gender equality). According to the data available, around 60 % of projects contributed to at least two SDGs simultaneously.

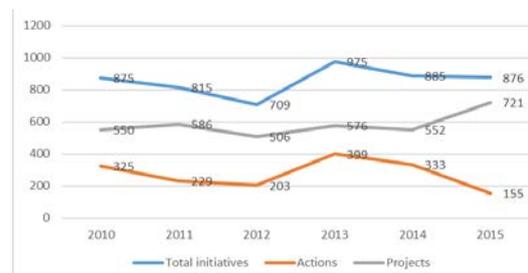
Bilateral South-South cooperation

In 2015, Latin American countries participated in a total of 721 **projects** and 155 **actions** involving **bilateral SSC**; [2016](#) saw 680 **projects** and 165 **actions**. Between 2014 and 2015, the number of projects being implemented in the 19 countries of the region increased by 30 % (from 552), whereas actions decreased by 53 % (from 333). The general trend seems to be towards more projects and fewer actions, though this gap narrowed slightly again in 2016. Three out of ten projects began in 2015, and another 29 % in 2014; while 80 % of actions started in 2015.

As regards **projects**, the most important **providers** in 2015 were Argentina (25 %, 180 projects), Mexico (17 %, 125 projects), and Brazil (15 %, 110), followed by Chile (11 %, 80) and Cuba 8 %, 59). The main project **recipients** were El Salvador (13.6 %, 98), Bolivia (9.4 %, 68) and Argentina (8 %, 57). All 19 countries were project recipients in 2015, while Honduras and Nicaragua were only recipients. The Central American and Andean sub-regions were the main recipient areas, accounting for 34 % and 24 % of projects respectively; while the Southern Cone, Mexico and the Ibero-American Caribbean were mainly providers (43 %, 26 % and 15 %). In [2016](#), Mexico was the top **project provider** (22.8 %, 155), followed by Argentina (110), Chile (97) and Brazil (76), Colombia (66) and Cuba (68). Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela did not participate as providers. El Salvador was again the main **recipient** (15.6 %, 106), followed by Mexico (58) and Colombia (56). Nicaragua, Panama, Brazil and Venezuela together received only 7 % of the total.

Regarding **actions**, Argentina and Peru were the main providers (one in three actions), followed by Chile, Colombia and Mexico. Only Panama did not play this role in any action. And the main action recipients were Guatemala (17 %), Peru (13 %), Panama and Honduras (these four countries accounted for 50 % of all actions). Only Venezuela was no recipient of any action. All regions show a predominantly provider profile with the exception of Central America, which was mainly a recipient. The **main sectors** of bilateral SSC were health (18 %), agriculture and farming (16 %), and government in the case of projects; over 54 % of actions were aimed at institution building, and around 25% to apply advances in science and technology, employment policies, and productive activities.

Figure 6 – Evaluation of bilateral SSC in Ibero-America 2010-2015



Data source: SEGIB.

Regional South-South cooperation

According to the SEGIB definition, [regional South-South cooperation](#) is a form of SSC aimed at strengthening the development and/or integration of a region; it is understood that the countries of this region (with a minimum of three developing countries) share this aim and agree on it; relations among participants are regulated by an institutional mechanism formally recognised by all the parties; and it is carried out through programmes and projects (never actions).

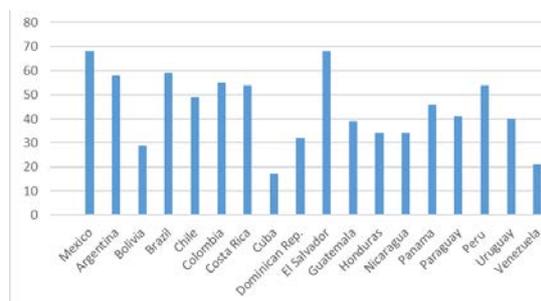
In 2015, Ibero-American countries participated in 44 programmes and 57 projects of regional SSC (101 initiatives). Countries belonging to the Latin American region participated in over a third of these initiatives (35.6 %). 26.7 % of initiatives were supported from the Ibero-American area; 16 % from Meso-America; and 10 % involved South American countries. For all sub-regions the number of projects being implemented was higher than that of programmes, except in the Ibero-American area. This compares to 98 initiatives in 2014 (39 programmes and 59 projects). Only 6.9 % of these initiatives started in 2015, with 32.7 % in 2014 and 24.8 % in 2012 to 2013. Most countries developed their initiatives mainly in the Ibero-American area, with the exception of Honduras, where the Central American Integration System (SICA) was the most important regional area.

As regards countries, in 2015 Mexico had the highest participation, with 68 regional SSC initiatives, followed by Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Peru and Costa Rica (50 to 60 programmes and projects each); and Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Panama with 40 to 50 initiatives each. Cuba only registered 17 initiatives. Multilateral bodies also participated in almost 90 % of the initiatives being implemented in 2015 (89 of the total number of initiatives), led by Ibero-American bodies (the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), the Conference of Justice Ministers of Ibero-American Countries ([COMJIB](#)) and the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture ([OEI](#)), with a total of 26 initiatives all together); the International Atomic Energy Organisation with 13 projects, and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and MERCOSUR, with 10 initiatives each. Over half of the regional SSC initiatives implemented in 2015 were aimed at the social and economic sectors (26.7 % each); 16 % targeted the institutional strengthening of governments in the region; and 15 % focused on other areas, in particular culture (14 %). Science and technology represented 12 % and health 10 % of initiatives.

Triangular cooperation

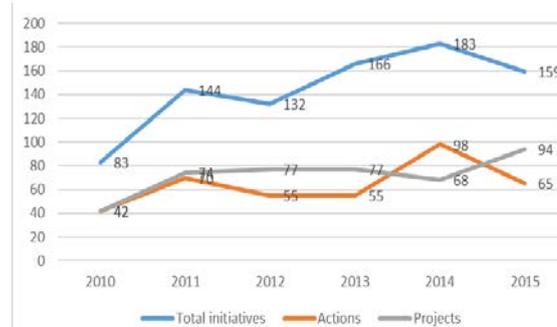
In 2015, Ibero-American countries implemented a total of 159 **TrC** initiatives, 94 of which were projects and 65 actions.⁵ Although it does not reach the level of bilateral SSC – which in the same year had nearly 10 times more projects than TrC and over twice the number of actions (155 compared with 65) – it has been acquiring increasing relevance in the region. Thus, the number of initiatives being implemented in 2015 was nearly eight times higher than in 2006 (only 21 initiatives) and almost double the number in 2010.

Figure 7 – Country participation in regional SSC initiatives (2015)



Source: SEGIB.

Figure 8 – Evolution of Ibero-American triangular cooperation 2010-2015



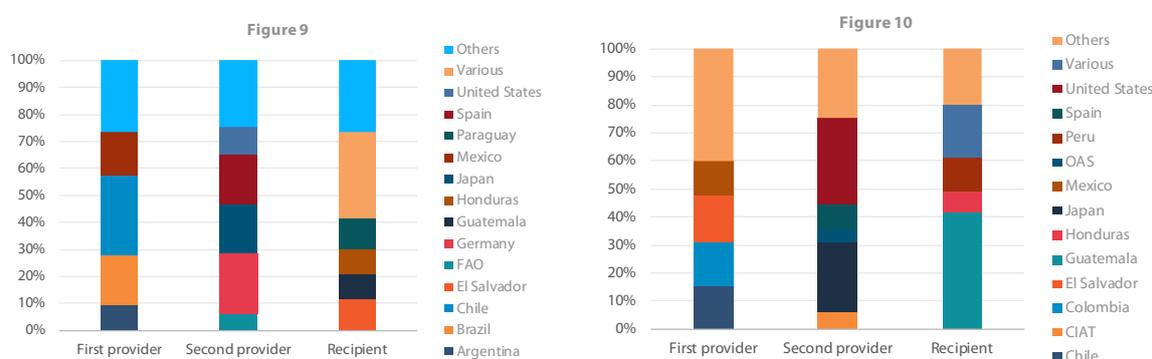
Data source: SEGIB.

As regards participation in each of the three roles in **TrC projects in 2015**, only 12 of the region's 19 countries acted as **first providers** transferring their capacities, while just four countries dominated nearly three out of four of the 94 projects offered: Chile, with nearly 30 %; Brazil, 18 %; Mexico, 16 %; and Argentina, under 10 %. Uruguay, Peru and Costa Rica participated as providers in five projects each, Colombia in four and El Salvador in two. Panama, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic also participated as first providers. In the case of TrC actions, El Salvador was first provider in a sixth of them; followed by Chile and Colombia, with 10 initiatives each. These three countries were first providers in nearly half of all actions.

A total of 22 actors participated as **second providers in TrC projects**. Half of them were countries, and the other half international bodies – linked either to the UN system (Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), UN Women, World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, International Labour Organisation (ILO)), development banks (World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), Development Bank of Latin America (CAF)) or to regional multilateral bodies, such as the OAS. Among the countries, Germany supported 21 projects (a fifth of the total); and Spain and Japan 17 projects each; thus over 58 % of triangular cooperation projects were supported by these three countries alone. The United States was the fourth most important second provider, meaning that these four countries supported 7 out of 10 projects in 2015. Regarding actions, there were fewer second providers, but with a similar distribution between countries and international bodies. The United States was first, with 20 actions, followed by Japan with 16, representing between them over 50 % of the total. Spain, the Inter-American Center of Tax Administrations (CIAT) and the OAS followed, these five actors acting as second providers in three out of four actions. Less important actors were Germany, Switzerland, Brazil, Uruguay, South Korea, the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the EU and the OEI, as well as the FAO, the IABD and the World Bank.

In 32 % of the **projects** a number of countries (nearly 10 per project on average) participated as joint **recipients**, which allowed all Ibero-American countries to participate as recipients in some projects. Only 14 countries were individual recipients, with Paraguay and El Salvador taking the lead (23 % of the remaining initiatives); followed by Guatemala (nearly 10 %) and Honduras (over 8 %). These four countries were recipients in over 40 % of the initiatives, plus those in which they participated together with other countries. Guatemala was the single recipient of over 41 % of TrC **actions**, followed by Peru and Honduras. The average number of countries participating in activities with multiple recipients was higher than in the case of projects (14).

Figures 9 and 10 – Participation of main actors in each triangular cooperation role in 2015 (Figure 9 shows projects – Figure 10 shows actions)



Data source: SEGIB.

In 2016 the number of TrC projects rose slightly (100) and that of actions fell to 37, with 11 Latin American countries acting as first providers in at least one project. Brazil and Chile led with 19 projects each, followed by Mexico, Costa Rica and El Salvador (10 to 15). As regards second

providers, Germany led again (25 projects), followed by Spain (20), Luxembourg (11) the US (10) and international and regional organisations. All 19 Latin American countries acted as recipients, with El Salvador standing out again with 16 projects, followed by Paraguay (11), Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Guatemala (10 to 15).

SSC with other developing regions

The first geographical area included by Latin America in its SSC was the Caribbean region, which became more relevant after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. As of 2015 this commitment was extended to other developing regions, such as Africa and Asia. Between 2006 and 2015, Ibero-American countries participated in over 1 100 SSC actions, projects and programmes, with 109 countries. Most of this activity was carried out with Caribbean countries, such as Haiti (300 SSC initiatives), Belize (182), Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname (around 90 initiatives each); the Caribbean country with the fewest exchanges was the Bahamas (nearly 60 initiatives). As regards SSC with sub-Saharan Africa, Mozambique takes the lead, with 37 initiatives; followed by Angola (25), Cape Verde (20), Saint Tome and Principe (17), Ghana and Kenya (10 each); Algeria is the main partner in the Maghreb region. As regards Asia, Timor-Leste participated in 23 SSC initiatives, followed by Cambodia, China, South Korea and Thailand (10 to 15 initiatives each). In the rest of the world, Lebanon was the country that registered most SSC exchanges with Latin America (6). In 2015, Ibero-American countries participated in 21 TrC initiatives with partners from other developing regions, in particular the Caribbean and, to a lesser extent, Africa and Asia. In 2016, the total of SSC initiatives with other regions was 314, again with the non Ibero-American Caribbean and Africa as the main partners.

Figure 11 – SSC initiatives between Ibero-America and other developing regions 2016

Developing regions	Bilateral SSC	Triang. Coop.	Regional SSC	Total
Africa	88	1	2	91
Asia	59	0	1	61
Caribbean (non-Ib-A)	90	12	28	130
Oceania	10	0	0	10
Middle East	17	0	0	17
Various regions	1	3	2	6
Total	265	16	33	314

Data source: SEGIB Annual Report on SSC, 2018.

Some case studies

The Mesoamerica Hunger Free programme

This South-South and triangular cooperation [programme](#) is the result of a 2015 cooperation agreement signed between the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Mexican government, through its Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), whereby Mexico committed to fund its activities with US\$15 million over a five-year period. It aims to achieve SDGs 1 (end poverty), 2 (zero hunger) and 6 (clean water and sanitation) in nine Mesoamerican countries (Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) by supporting the strengthening of 'policies and institutional frameworks to improve food and nutritional security and family farming practices in the region'. It envisages actions at the national and local levels, as well as among two or more Mesoamerican countries; and facilitates exchanges between Mexican institutions and those of Mesoamerican countries. Among its main achievements – thanks to its high level of local ownership and the involvement of national authorities and communities – are the provision of technical advice to define and register family farmers in the region; the promotion of sustainable seed systems for family farming in Nicaragua; the development of model laws on small-scale fisheries and on family farming, adopted by the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino); the setting up of knowledge networks to strengthen capacities of relevant groups in the region; the setting up of rainwater harvesting systems for human consumption in Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Panama; or the support of fruit and vegetable production in protected environments in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. Its success has resulted in plans for a second phase of the programme.

Transforming Paraguay's civil service

This triangular cooperation initiative started with a plan laid out in 2008 by the Paraguay civil service (SFP) to transform their model with regard to the recruitment, management and development of public sector employees. Paraguay (the recipient) contacted Chile (the first provider) because of its experience in strengthening democratic institutions, and Chile invited the Spanish government (second provider) to cooperate by providing experts to complement the actions of the Chilean participants. The project was financed by Spain (70 %), Chilean development cooperation agency (AGCID, 20 %) and the SFP (10 %). Instead of adopting the Chilean or Spanish civil service models, Paraguay opted to build its own. A participatory process was launched and between 2009 and 2013 the partners established a competitive system for access to civil employment, designed programmes for training teaching staff to handle public management tools, drew up a non-discriminatory and egalitarian plan designed to foster social inclusion in the civil service, and implemented a system of supervision and evaluation. Between 2008 and 2011 the method was applied to fill 35 000 job openings in the public service. And in 2013, Paraguay set up its own national institute of public administration (INAPP) to train civil servants so as to ensure that Paraguayan citizens enjoyed a high-quality civil service. The project was completed that same year.

SSC projects to strengthen transplants and organ donation

Argentina and Uruguay are regional leaders in [transplants and organ donation](#), and have shared their experience in the field with other countries in the region. Argentina has carried out initiatives with Costa Rica, Peru and Ecuador to help increase the number of donations, improve access to quality services, train staff, set up laboratories, etc. As a result, the number of donors rose in those countries (by 116 % in Ecuador between 2015 and 2016). [Uruguay](#) has also been involved in projects with Chile, Venezuela, Bolivia, Colombia and Brazil, sharing its experience in creating a national roster of donors, helping to create a tissue bank, training staff, or developing a renal health project. They have also cooperated with each other, among other things to establish criteria for reciprocity in assistance, such as securing access to transplants in emergency situations, keeping track of donors, drawing up waiting lists or coordinating programmes. The success of this SSC bilateral cooperation has been praised abroad. It has contributed towards achieving SDG 3 (good health and well-being) in the region.

A role for the EU

EU [Regulation No 233/2014](#) establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the 2014-2020 period states in its general principles that the Union shall support triangular cooperation and promote South-South cooperation. The EU recently adopted a new [European consensus on development](#) – which replaces the previous one of 2005 – as a 'shared vision and framework for action for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States, which aligns its development policy with the UN 2030 Agenda and its sustainable development goals (SDGs)'. It recognises that the different SDGs are interlinked, and includes among its cross-cutting elements 'innovative engagement with more advanced developing countries' to implement the 2030 Agenda through 'a broader range of cooperation tools' that include trade, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing. The consensus states the EU's intention to work with these countries '**to promote South-South and triangular cooperation** consistent with development effectiveness principles'. To this effect, in 2015 the Union launched the Regional [Facility for International Cooperation](#) and Partnership, with a budget of [€13 million](#) in its first call for proposals.

The EU also sees the Latin American region as a natural choice for launching a new approach to international cooperation called '[development in transition](#)', based on multilateral partnerships, comprehensive, nationally-owned strategies, flexibility and innovation, and recognition of the unique contribution of all countries involved. It includes designing new partnerships between and within regions, also by means of South-South and triangular cooperation, and finding new ways to engage with countries with a higher level of development and income, as are many in Latin America.

To build this approach into its cooperation strategy, it has also developed and launched the Regional [Facility for Development in Transition](#) for Latin America and the Caribbean together with the OECD and ECLAC. The EU's initial allocation was €9.5 million, complemented by resources from [ECLAC and the OECD's Development Centre](#) bringing the total to €16 million. Individual EU Member States, such as Spain, Portugal and Germany are important contributors to South-South cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, acting in particular as facilitators.

The [EU](#) contributed to the BAPA +40 draft outcome document. It suggested, among other things, that the document should recall the principles of Agenda 2030, referring to their applicability to SSC; that a reference also be made to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in the preamble; that there was a need to enhance the development effectiveness of SSC and to monitor, measure and report on progress following the UN Statistical Commission's Global Indicator Framework for the sustainable development goals and targets; that the importance of triangular cooperation should be boosted; and that SSC should be mainstreamed into the UN development system, SDG processes and the UN High Level Political Forum ([HLPF](#)) on Sustainable Development. The [EU](#) was represented in Buenos Aires by Mr Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, together with representatives of EU Member States.

The European Parliament and SSC

In its resolution of 13 September 2017 on EU political relations with Latin America, the European Parliament mentions that European cooperation with the region is strong 'as a result of financial and triangular cooperation'. On 1 June 2017, Parliament adopted a resolution on the [new European Consensus on Development](#), welcoming the Commission's proposal to revise the consensus in order to 'reflect the new global development context following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda' and the SDGs; and endorsed the [joint statement](#) on the adoption of the new European consensus by the Parliament, the Council and the representatives of Member States' governments. On 22 November 2016, Parliament adopted another resolution on [increasing the effectiveness of development cooperation](#), stating, among other things, that it believed that the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation ([GPEDC](#), a multi-stakeholder platform of [161 countries and 56 organisations](#), created to advance the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors to deliver long lasting results and contribute to the SDGs) 'ought to play a leading role in ensuring progress' on the 17 sustainable development goals, including South-South and triangular cooperation.

Latin America and BAPA +40

To mark the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, and in order to strengthen South-South cooperation, the UN General Assembly decided, by resolution [71/244](#) of 2 February 2017, to convene the second high-level United Nations conference on South-South Cooperation ([BAPA +40](#)). On 30 August 2017 a further [resolution](#) set out the ways and means. It was decided that the conference would be held in [Buenos Aires](#), Argentina, from [20 to 22 March 2019](#), at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government, and that it would result 'in a concise, focused, forward-looking and action-oriented inter-governmentally agreed outcome'. Its central theme was the role of South-South cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. All states of the UN system, intergovernmental organisations with observer status with the UN General Assembly, specialised agencies and other entities of the UN system were invited to participate. NGOs and public and private sector development partners of the UN were also invited.

The ECLAC Committee on SSC [convened](#) a regional interactive dialogue of the Latin American and Caribbean countries on the priorities of the region, with a view to BAPA +40, held at the UN's New York Headquarters on [29 and 30 November 2018](#). During the 26th Ibero-American Summit, the Heads of State and Government of the Ibero-American countries issued a [special communiqué](#) on the celebration of BAPA +40, recognising the important contribution of South-South and triangular cooperation to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs, as well

as the Ibero-American community's commitment to strengthening this type of cooperation and to assuming a pro-active role in the negotiating process of this High Level Conference.

Outlook

[Some experts](#) considered BAPA +40 the ideal place to decide on a clear definition of SSC; to review the issue of 'international responsibility'; to systematise existing impact assessment practices among SSC partners and agree on common criteria to assess it; moving beyond existing models of triangular cooperation to emphasise horizontal partnership and knowledge-sharing. It was also viewed as an opportunity to help reach a consensus on SSC and establish a global set of norms for development cooperation. The [Latin American](#) experience could serve as a model for this. Government authorities from the region and UN officials have indicated that international development cooperation must [change its approach](#) so that it can respond to the specific needs of Latin America and the Caribbean by taking the new economic, social and environmental challenges on board.

MAIN REFERENCES

SEGIB, *Una década de Cooperación Sur-Sur en Iberoamérica*, SEGIB y Turner, 2018.

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UNDP, [Scaling-up South-South Cooperation for Sustainable Development](#); UNDP, 2016.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ *Una década de Cooperación Sur-Sur en Iberoamérica*, SEGIB y Turner, 2018.
- ² Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.
- ³ According to the [European Commission](#), a **project** is 'a series of activities aimed at bringing about clearly specified objectives within a defined time period and with a defined budget which is specific to the project'. It should have 'clearly identified stakeholders, including the primary target group and the final beneficiaries', 'clearly defined coordination, management and financing arrangements, and a monitoring system to oversee and follow implementation and to support project management'. They are usually carried out in the wider framework of development cooperation **programmes**. **Actions**, meanwhile, are activities that do not correspond to, and are not part of, a cooperation project or programme ([AMEXCID](#)). They represent a concrete and limited expression of international cooperation, and are implemented on a one-off basis, through specific variants (consultancy, missions, joint research, seminars, etc.) ([SEGIB](#)).
- ⁴ *Una década de Cooperación Sur-Sur en Iberoamérica*, SEGIB y Turner, 2018, pp. 81-82.

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