



RESULT OF THE "CO-LABORATORY FOR STRENGTHENING TRIANGULAR COOPERATION IN IBERO-AMERICA" HELD IN TELA, HONDURAS | JUNE 24-26, 2024

## Recent Mechanisms in Ibero-America to Boost Triangular Cooperation (TC) Projects

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Since 2020, several Ibero-American countries have reevaluated their strategies for Triangular Cooperation (TC), building new partnerships to support financial mechanisms for projects under this model. Examples include TC funds involving Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, Uruguay, and the European Union (EU); partnerships between Portugal and the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) to facilitate TC between Ibero-America and African countries; and the renewal of Spain's TC program.

During the Co-laboratory for Strengthening TC in Ibero-America, held in Tela, Honduras, representatives from the member countries of the Ibero-American Program for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation (PIFCSS) shared their experiences. They discussed creating and operating financial mechanisms for TC projects. The event focused on exchanging knowledge, best practices, and experiences among participants. Through discussions, participants explored the steps needed to design and launch these mechanisms, as well as the challenges and lessons learned.

Key questions discussed included:

- What motivated the creation or redesign of the mechanism?
- What steps did the organization take in preparation for launching the mechanism?
- What agreements were necessary with the partner(s) (organization(s) or country/countries)?
- What obstacles did they overcome?
- What would they have liked to know before launching the mechanism? What questions came up while the call was open?

Based on the exchange during the Co-laboratory, a comparative table highlights seven recent Triangular Cooperation mechanisms in Ibero-America. Each mechanism offers different approaches and solutions to key challenges, such as resource transfer, managing partnerships with funders, and selecting proposals. These mechanisms include both open calls and closed bilateral processes, each with its own advantages and challenges.

Some of the most important takeaways from this session were:

### Short duration of calls:

Some calls are open for noticeably short periods. This makes it difficult to find partners and project opportunities. It also complicates the development of solid proposals and the confirmation of institutional commitments.

### Use of official channels:

The use of official channels (cooperation agencies and governing institutions) to submit project proposals is seen by governmental actors as a strength. Some reasons supporting this view include that agencies can assist in proposal design, enhance institutional commitment, and ensure the information is captured in national systems and, by extension, in SIDICSS. On the other hand, requiring the use of official channels can raise concerns about how accessible cooperation opportunities are for other actors. This is particularly true for non-governmental organizations or those less connected to the cooperation coordinating bodies.



### Transferring resources to implementers:

Transferring resources to other actors as implementers has its pros and cons. On the one hand, it allows for the use of international organizations' or bilateral agencies' office networks. On the other hand, it can lead to high administrative costs or reliance on external actors for project execution.

### Regional institutional capacities:

Countries in the region possess valuable knowledge and experience in managing cooperation resources, which they can share to help strengthen institutional capacities for Triangular Cooperation (TC). For example, Chile has developed processes to manage both domestic and foreign resources through its own agency, without the need for a third-party implementer. Similarly, Colombia successfully transferred its own resources to GIZ, which acts as the implementing agency for a tripartite mechanism with the EU and Germany.

### Institutional response times:

Institutional response times and formalities, such as obtaining commitment letters from certain institutions, can be slow. This can delay the official start of implementation, shorten the project's duration, affect the achievement of expected outcomes, and increase administrative costs if the implementation extends beyond the planned timeframe.

### Technical support and tools:

The availability of support tools and technical assistance for designing initiatives is highly appreciated.

### Accountability:

Different actors account for counterpart contributions in various ways, particularly when it comes to non-monetary contributions.

### Managing expectations:

Effectively managing expectations from mechanism administrators can help reduce stakeholder fatigue. Additionally, there is growing interest among countries in the region to capitalize on the pool of proposals generated through project calls.

These insights were reflected in two key activities conducted as part of MÁS QUE TRES. The first was a joint reflection between PIFCSS member countries and Germany on best practices, lessons learned, and potential challenges for the Regional Fund for TC with partners from Latin America and the Caribbean, focused on planning for 2025-2029. The second was a feedback survey on the experiences of countries in the region with Spain's new TC program.

The discussion on designing and implementing TC financing mechanisms also contributed to the development of an inventory of key questions or decisions to consider when an entity seeks to launch or revise its financing mechanisms for TC projects.



# Key Features of Recent Support Mechanisms for TC Projects in Ibero-America

	 Spain	 Portugal-ALC-Africa TC Fund	 Chile-EU Joint TC Fund	 Brazil-EU-Germany TC Instrument (trilateral)	 Colombia-EU-Germany Tripartite TC Mechanism	 EU-Costa Rica-ALC TC Fund
Duration		2 years	4 years	3 years	3 years	3 years, 6 months
Facilitating Instrument	New Triangular Cooperation Program for Latin America and the Caribbean	Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of the Fund	Grant Agreement between the Chilean International Cooperation Agency for Development (AGCID) and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA), like the one signed for the Bilateral Development in Transition Fund.	Memorandum of Understanding	Grant Agreement between Colombia and GIZ. The EU signs a mirror agreement. There is no tripartite agreement.	Memorandum of Understanding between Costa Rica and the EU
Resource Management Entity	The Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), with a dedicated management unit	SEGIB	Chile, through AGCID, manages the funds.	Each partner manages its own resources: Brazil through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP); the EU and Germany through GIZ.	The EU and Colombia channel resources to GIZ for administration.	AECID channels resources through the University of Costa Rica Foundation.
Financial Instrument	No fund transfer: contracts and payments are managed by the management unit.	Memorandum of Cooperation with SEGIB.	AGCID requests authorization from the Ministry of Finance to receive international funds and opens accounts associated with the Fund. For national contributions, a similar request is required if AGCID's own funds are insufficient.	Collaboration with UNDP allows Brazil to execute resources efficiently.	Contribution agreement to transfer resources from Colombia's International Cooperation and Assistance Fund (FOCAI) to GIZ (grant-like agreement).	Grant to the Costa Rican government, managed by AECID and a foundation.
Total Financial Contributions	Not predetermined, expected to be made through annual	1 million euros from Portugal.	500,000 euros per partner (1 million total).	1,000,000 euros per partner (3 million total).	750,000 euros per partner (2.25 million total).	1.2 million euros from the EU (1.5 million total).
Decision-Making Body		Technical Evaluation Committee.	Executive Technical Committee.	Joint Coordination Committee.	Steering Committee (each partner has one official representative with voting rights).	Steering Committee and Tripartite Technical Committee.



<b>Themes</b>	Aligned with prioritized areas in Country Partnership Frameworks, Advanced Cooperation Agreements, or Joint Commissions between partner countries. Focus on multi-actor and multi-level proposals.	Education, health, gender equality, culture, climate change, food security, social cohesion, digital transformation, and development education. Two categories: knowledge generation/dissemination and capacity building.	Renewable energy (green hydrogen certification), digitalization, satellite data highway.	All thematic areas (no restrictions), aligned with national and global development agendas (Agenda 2030).	All thematic areas (no restrictions), aligned with global development agendas (Agenda 2030). Priority given to initiatives aligned with the priority agendas of each partner.	Ecological transition, green recovery, and decarbonization; digitalization and innovation; other areas contributing to Sustainable Development Goals (migration, gender equality, culture, development, health, justice, etc.).
<b>Eligible Participants</b>	Proposers: public institutions that submit proposals through Cooperation Agencies or Directorates. Other public institutions, civil society, academia, and/or the private sector can participate.	Public and private entities from Portugal and Latin America, including partners from Portuguese-Speaking African Countries and the broader Ibero-American community.	Open to a variety of cooperation actors, including universities and civil society.	Public institutions.	Emphasis on projects that foster multi-actor partnerships with national and local public entities, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, civil society, and academia.	Academia, civil society, public and private sectors.
<b>Project Selection Mechanism</b>	<u>Call</u> for proposals. Each Cooperation Agency or Directorate can submit up to three proposals to the Spanish Cooperation Offices (OCE).  35 proposals received, 24 selected.	<u>Call</u> for proposals (open for 2 months).  340 proposals received, 6 selected	Identification of opportunities based on defined themes.  2 projects approved, execution starting soon.	<u>Call</u> for proposals (open for 2 months).  25 proposals received, 4 selected (30% had technical weaknesses), 3 under execution.	<u>Call</u> for proposals (open for 1.5 months).  There were two calls for proposals: In 2022, 12 proposals were submitted, and 3 were selected. In 2023, 106 proposals were received, 72 of them with letters of political support, and 3 were selected.	<u>Call</u> for proposals (open for 1 month).  66 proposals received, 44 moved to the second stage.
<b>Maximum Funding Per Project</b>	Estimated at 100,000 euros per project, with a maximum of 150,000 euros if justified.	50,000-200,000 euros per project, covering up to 85% of the total.	No maximum amount per project. The Fund's budget is distributed between the projects and includes operational/banking costs.	750,000 euros per project, with substantial non-monetary contributions expected from the applicant.	750,000 euros per project, with substantial contributions expected from the applicant.	Maximum of 75,000 euros. The counterpart must represent at least 25% of the total.
<b>Project Submission Guidelines</b>	<u>Call</u> for proposals with guidelines, methodological guide with annexed formats, video support, OCE support, <a href="#">INTERCOONECTA tools</a> , <a href="#">Triangular Cooperation Program - aecid.es</a> .	Call for proposals; no specific format; 600 inquiries received by email.	AGCID submission formats, along with pre-established formats agreed with the EU.	Call summary, format from the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC).	Project submission format for the GIZ Regional Fund, adapted to the requirements of the Tripartite Mechanism.	Fund's own project submission format.



Institutional Endorsement	Proposals must be channeled through Cooperation Agencies or Directorates	Letters of support from each participating entity affirming their agreement with the proposal.	Since it doesn't operate via calls, institutional endorsement is not a prerequisite but is developed as projects are identified and designed.	The final proposal must be backed by the political cooperation bodies of the respective partners.	Project proposals must be endorsed by the political cooperation bodies of the respective partners, with commitment letters from technical institutions.	Endorsements come from the institutions participating in the Technical and Steering Committees, which are the governing bodies of cooperation.
Key Achievements	Reflection on prior TC experience to design the new advanced horizontal cooperation program. Promotion of innovation methodology based on the INTERCOONECTA Program. Useful tools for submitting proposals.	Confirmed interest and opportunities for promoting interregional cooperation between ALC and Africa. A proposal bank for interregional cooperation projects.	Full resource management by AGCID. The only country in the region with this capacity.	Opportunity for Brazil to collaborate more closely with Caribbean Community countries. Peer-to-peer exchange and learning. Focus on current and non-traditional technical cooperation topics.	Agreement for the transfer of annual installments to GIZ (250,000 at the start of each year). First time an ALC country has transferred resources to GIZ for project operation. Colombia's contributions matched those from the EU and GIZ.	Communication and visibility manual. Broad participation across all sectors and multiple EU countries in the partnerships.
Key Challenges	Call duration. Securing confirmation and commitment from partners. Assessing the co-creation approach for program design with the network of Spanish Cooperation actors (OCE, Spanish Cooperation Training Centers, etc.).	High costs in managing the call: expectations exceeded available funding. Proposer burnout and fragmented efforts. Balancing flexibility of the mechanism with clear formats and guidelines. Coordination across different institutional areas.	Project identification and formulation. Accountability to the EU, particularly regarding institutional contributions (e.g., fixed costs are not accepted; in-kind contributions where applicable).	Time spent on formalities to initiate the project. If projects are not recognized by cooperation agencies, they are not considered official cooperation.	No established methodology for harmonizing in-kind contributions reporting by project actors. Clear communication on requirements (commitment letters). Managing expectations for the call, many applications, small technical team.	Identify capacities, for example, using a catalog, to build partnerships with EU countries.
	The role of cooperation agencies as filters or central hubs for proposals is a topic of debate.			There is often a lack of clarity around execution timelines. Although the calls for proposals are for two-year projects, it typically takes a full year just to get started, leaving only one year for execution. This discrepancy leads to confusion and inefficiencies. Additionally, fund partners often interpret the start date and execution period differently, which can create significant issues. For instance, if the project extends beyond the expected timeframe, GIZ must continue paying administrative fees, further complicating project management.		

