

# UN System Support for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean



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## Foreword

The Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region continues to lead by example in promoting and institutionalizing South-South and triangular cooperation at the national, regional, and subregional levels.

Building on this momentum, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and the United Nations Development Coordination Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (DCO LAC) launched a pilot regional survey that achieved a 100 per cent response rate from the 24 Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) in the LAC region – including 3 Multi-Country Offices – invited to participate.<sup>1</sup> The main objectives of the survey were to capture the scope of UN System support to South-South and triangular cooperation in the region, identify good practices, and generate insights to enhance the support provided by Resident Coordinators (RCs) and UN Country Teams (UNCTs).

The findings of the survey have informed this regional report, which reaffirms our collective commitment to South-South and triangular cooperation as a transformative modality for sustainable development. The report aims to promote cross-regional knowledge exchange and reinforce the engagement of the UN system.

This joint initiative represents an important step toward systematizing and scaling up South-South and triangular cooperation across the UN Development System. By highlighting the leadership and coordination role of RCs, the survey seeks to strengthen the capacity of RCOs to broker partnerships, foster innovation, and deliver development outcomes that are nationally led and globally connected.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all RCs, UNCT colleagues, and South-South and triangular cooperation partners for their continued leadership and collaboration in advancing this important agenda.



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<sup>1</sup> The full list of respondent Resident Coordinator Offices is provided in Table 1.



# Executive Summary



The Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region has firmly positioned itself as a dynamic centre for South-South and triangular cooperation, drawing strength from a long-standing tradition of horizontal collaboration, regional integration, and forward-thinking policy innovation. Countries across the region actively share their experiences to tackle common development challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and digital transformation. Building on this strong foundation, The LAC region is well-positioned to elevate cooperation to the next level, and the United Nations System has an important role to play through the leadership of Resident Coordinators (RCs) and the coordination of UN Country Teams (UNCTs).

This report, therefore, provides a comprehensive analysis of how the United Nations System supports South-South and triangular cooperation across Latin America and the Caribbean, based on a joint 2025 survey conducted by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and the UN Development Coordination Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (DCO LAC). The survey, conducted

across all Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) in the region, explored five broad categories related to the institutional set-up and implementation of South-South and triangular cooperation in LAC programme countries under the leadership of the RCs, and identified forward-looking opportunities to strengthen these forms of development cooperation in LAC:

- South-South and triangular cooperation institutional set-up in the LAC countries
- UNCT coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation activities
- Partnerships and stakeholder engagement
- Challenges and opportunities in supporting South-South and triangular cooperation at the country level
- Recommendations for a strengthened RC role in the promotion and support of South-South and triangular cooperation at the country level.

Respondent RCOs<sup>2</sup> provided insights into current modalities and priorities for South-South and triangular cooperation in LAC. The survey findings confirmed that these cooperation modalities are highly prioritized and deeply embedded in the LAC region's development agenda, demonstrating both strong national ownership and their relevance as tools for advancing the SDGs. It also revealed the pivotal role of government-designated South-South Cooperation (SSC) focal points with a strong positive correlation between the prioritization of these cooperation modalities, the presence of a clearly defined government focal point, and the volume and diversity of requests received by UNCTs. This underscores the importance of establishing or advocating for a designated government focal institution to enhance the effectiveness and reach of cooperation efforts.

Moreover, survey findings highlighted that in this region, the scope of partnerships and stakeholder engagement in South-South and triangular cooperation is both broad and multi-layered, spanning diverse levels of engagement—from national to subnational and from regional to subregional and cross-regional levels—and actively involves a wide range of non-state actors. In Brazil, for example, the UN has supported both cross-regional initiatives involving nine African countries and intra-regional initiatives with six LAC countries, incorporating these modalities into the Country Programme Documents (CPDs) of participating agencies, funds, and programmes. Another unique example is Colombia's Col-Col Cooperation Mechanism, an in-country knowledge and experience exchange platform between regions at the subnational level. Led by the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia (APC Colombia), this initiative further highlights the breadth and depth of South-South and triangular cooperation in the country. Notably, the findings suggest that UNCTs with a broader scope tend to cultivate more diverse partnerships, emphasizing the value of multi-stakeholder collaboration in line with commitments emerging from the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40).

The UN System plays an enabling and catalytic role in integrating South-South and triangular cooperation within national planning frameworks, responding to government requests, brokering partnerships, and sharing technical resources and innovations via digital platforms. Over 90 per cent of RCOs reported supporting

government requests through technical assistance (advice, training) and facilitation of knowledge and people-to-people exchanges. For example, in Mexico the government engages the UNCT to use South-South and triangular cooperation to enhance national capacities and programmes across thematic areas such as social programmes, governance, public security, and justice. In Belize, the "Upgrade Belize Statistical System project"<sup>3</sup> coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country office and funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) illustrates how UNCTs help host governments leverage South-South and triangular cooperation modalities. While technical and knowledge-based support remain dominant, findings indicate a growing role for partnership facilitation/brokering in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation.

While 88 per cent of respondent UNCTs manage South-South and triangular cooperation activities independently, there are also notable interagency, multi-country joint programmes, such as the Gran Chaco Transboundary Initiative led by the RCs in Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay that emerged to address shared cross-border challenges.

UNCTs deploy a range of tools in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation. Those include a wide use of UNOSSC-DCO Guidelines for integrating South-South and triangular cooperation into UN Development System work as well as agency-specific manuals, expert briefings and trainings, and peer-learning networks and technical exchanges. In addition to the above tools, UNCTs have leveraged a broad spectrum of mechanisms, including joint programming and financial resources to advance South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. By drawing from diverse funding sources including national governments, South-South and multi-partner trust funds, and cooperation agencies, UNCTs demonstrated diversity in resource mobilization and partnership-building.

Nevertheless, challenges in supporting governments in South-South and triangular cooperation persist. UNCTs reported funding gaps, human resource constraints, and limited awareness of this cooperation modality among national partners as factors that negatively affect the provision of this type of support. The development of a standardized monitoring and reporting framework

2. Each RCO submitted a single survey response

3. <https://www.undp.org/belize/press-releases/undp-and-koica-sign-usd34-million-grant-arrangement-expand-and-upgrade-belize-statistical-system-supporting-sustainable>

and its integration into cooperation frameworks (CFs) was also identified as an urgent priority. Building on challenges and opportunities, several recommendations were proposed to strengthen UN System support for South-South and triangular cooperation in the LAC region. Country-specific examples of good practice are presented in greater detail in the country profiles that accompany this report. The key recommendations below, as highlighted by respondents, underscore key areas of continued engagement and strategic investment to deepen South-South and triangular cooperation.

**Strengthen leadership and coordination:** Sustain and reinforce the leadership role and capacity of RCs by equipping them with the tools and resources to champion South-South and triangular cooperation, including cross-border and cross-sectoral initiatives. Enhance interagency coordination through joint South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives, common tools, and guidance, with UNOSSC playing a key role in supporting UNCTs.

**Leverage knowledge and digital innovation:** Reinforce existing mechanisms for knowledge management and experience exchange, map ongoing initiatives, identify synergies, and connect national and global expertise. Expand the use of digital platforms to facilitate real-time peer learning, networking, and dissemination of good practices.

**Mainstream South-South and triangular cooperation in national priorities and CFs:** Institutionalize South-South and triangular cooperation in national policies and CFs by systematically applying the 2023 UN Guidelines, e-learning modules, and national stocktaking tools, with RCs playing a central role in advancing this integration.

**Advance monitoring, evaluation, and accountability:** Support Member States in developing South-South and triangular cooperation tracking and reporting systems aligned with CF, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators. Strengthen national and UN capacities to collect, analyse, and report on South-South and triangular cooperation, ensuring greater visibility, coherence, and accountability.

**Secure financing and partnerships:** Respond to growing Member State calls by mobilizing predictable resources for South-South and triangular cooperation. Advocate for seed funding, explore blended finance and impact investment opportunities, and establish partnerships with the private sector, academia, and civil society. Explore the creation of a dedicated LAC Regional South-South and triangular cooperation fund to provide sustainable financing for regional initiatives.



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Infographic 1. LAC Region



Source: <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/stylized-map-world-1>

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# Acronyms

- AMCHAM** Trinidad and Tobago – American Chamber of Commerce of Trinidad and Tobago
- AMEXCID** – *Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo* (Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation)
- BAPA** – Buenos Aires Plan of Action
- BAPA+40** – Buenos Aires Plan of Action+40
- CAF** – Corporación Andina de Fomento (Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean)
- CDB** – Caribbean Development Bank
- CCA** – Common Country Analysis
- CF** – United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
- CPD** – Country Programme Document
- GEF** – Global Environment Facility
- GIZ** – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
- IDB** – Inter-American Development Bank
- JICA** – Japan International Cooperation Agency
- M&E** – Monitoring and Evaluation
- MEL** – Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan
- MPTF** – Multi-Partner Trust Fund
- RC** – Resident Coordinator
- RCO/OCR** – Resident Coordinator Office / Office of Resident Coordinator
- SDG** – Sustainable Development Goals
- SIDS** – Small Island Developing State
- SSC** – South-South Cooperation
- UNCT** – United Nations Country Team
- UN DCO LAC** – United Nations Development Coordination Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
- UNOSSC** – United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

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# UN System Support for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean

## I. Background

South-South and triangular cooperation have become a cornerstone of international development policy and practice, recognized for their unique value in fostering mutual learning, solidarity, and the exchange of contextually relevant solutions. The global South has increasingly leveraged these modalities to address shared challenges and support the achievement of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs and other internationally agreed goals.

The core principles underpinning these forms of development cooperation, as articulated in foundational documents like the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA, 1978), Nairobi Outcome Document (2009), and BAPA+40 Outcome Document (2019), emphasize country ownership, equality, respect for sovereignty, demand-driven partnerships, and mutual benefit.

These documents, alongside major UN General Assembly resolutions and the outcome reports of the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, call for strengthened institutional frameworks, enhanced data and evidence systems, and greater investments in capacity to maximize the impact of South-South and triangular cooperation. Notably, BAPA+40 advocates systematic integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into national and regional development planning, more robust monitoring and evaluation tools, and increased engagement in the sharing of solutions and resources by stakeholders that include governments, private sector, civil society, and academia.



### a. UN System support to South-South and triangular cooperation

The UN System plays a pivotal enabling role in supporting Member States to leverage the full potential of South-South and triangular cooperation. The United Nations Conference on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) held in Argentina in 1978, produced the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA)<sup>4</sup>, which is considered the blueprint for cooperation among developing countries, and in which Member States realised and rallied for support from the UN Development System to achieve technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) goals. The BAPA+ 40 Outcome Document<sup>5</sup>, stemming from the second High-level United Nations

4. [Buenos-Aires-Plan-of-Action-1978.pdf](#)

5. <https://www.unsouthsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/N1920949.pdf>

Conference on South-South Cooperation, also held in Argentina in 2019 and subsequent resolutions and decisions of the High-level Committee on South-South Conference (a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly)<sup>6</sup> include several calls upon the UN Development System, in line with their mandates and resources to support and promote South-South and triangular cooperation in the implementation of Agenda 2030. The calls included:

- South-South and triangular cooperation integration and mainstreaming, and enhanced support by the UN Development System to address specific thematic needs such as health, education, climate resilience, migration, and digital transformation.
- To improve the effectiveness, coherence and coordination, and operational complementarity of activities in support of South-South and triangular cooperation, in accordance with national development plans.
- South-South and triangular cooperation capacity-building support to developing countries, upon request, to formulate and implement national development policies, strategies and programmes for such cooperation, including the sharing of good practices and experiences from the South.
- Enhance assistance to developing countries in building South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships in strategic areas identified by the developing countries, including platforms for knowledge exchange, particularly supporting the SDGs.
- Improving the monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of South-South and triangular cooperation for better impact assessment and accountability.

UN General Assembly resolutions [A/Res/76/221](#), [A/Res/77/185](#), and [A/Res/78/167](#) confirm the importance of UN Development System support to South-South and triangular cooperation, delivered at the country level and under the leadership of RCs.

6. [High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation – UNOSSC](#)

### b. South-South and triangular cooperation in the Latin America and Caribbean region

Deep-rooted traditions of horizontal cooperation, regional integration, and innovative policy approaches in Latin America and the Caribbean underpin the region's emergence as a vibrant hub for South-South and triangular cooperation. Regional mechanisms and frameworks such as the Ibero-American Programme for Strengthening South-South Cooperation, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) promote peer-to-peer exchanges, horizontal networking, and technical collaboration. LAC countries have consistently drawn on such institutional arrangements in confronting diverse development challenges – from poverty and inequality to climate change, digital transformation, and social inclusion.

Countries often leverage their own development experiences for mutual benefit, fostering solidarity around issues of common concern. The region's experience demonstrates a pragmatic approach, where South-South and triangular cooperation are institutionalized within broader national strategies and supported by robust partnerships and region between government agencies, civil society, regional organisations, and multilateral partners.

In line with their respective mandates, UN entities such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>7</sup> have supported LAC countries to better leverage and engage in South-South and triangular cooperation. Examples include UNDP's introduction of knowledge management and good practices on waste management in Argentina and Colombia; the collaboration between the UNOPS and the Government of Mexico to strengthen development cooperation in Central America and the Caribbean; and FAO's partnership with CELAC on South-South cooperation in Agriculture. In addition, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) serves as the Secretariat for the

7. [South-South and triangular cooperation in Latin America](#)

Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

### c. Regional Latin America and Caribbean Survey on UN System support to South-South and triangular cooperation

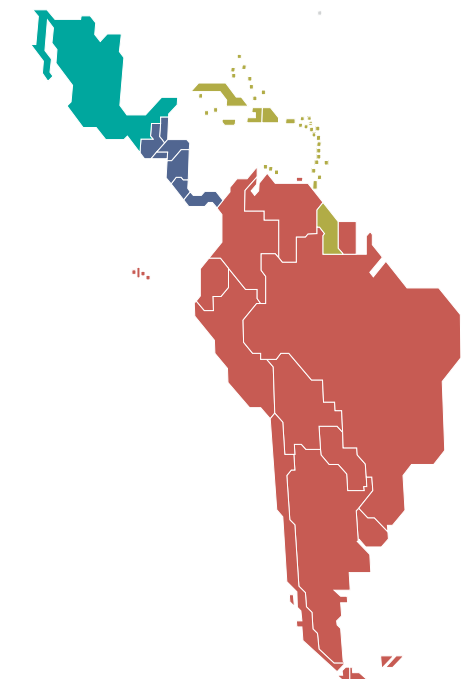
The survey explored how RCs and UNCTs serving Latin American and Caribbean countries support South-South and triangular cooperation across the region. Survey questions probed current practices and institutional arrangements to better understand the scope of South-South and triangular cooperation support, identified good practices, and gathered insights on strengthening the role of RCs to facilitate South-South and triangular in their respective programme countries. This exercise targeted RCOs across the LAC region, collecting information on activities carried out by their respective UNCTs. Each programme country was represented by a single response. Survey questions were designed to capture:

- The prioritization of South-South and triangular cooperation within national and UN planning frameworks.
- The existence and function of government focal points or coordination mechanisms.
- Tools, guidelines, and resources available to facilitate South-South and triangular cooperation engagement.
- Thematic areas where South-South and triangular cooperation are most actively applied (e.g., health, education, climate action).
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships, resource mobilization, and interplay among actors.
- Recommendations for strengthening the role of RCs role in the leadership and coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation as well their specific support needs.

All 24 RCOs responded to the survey, reflecting a 100 per cent response rate. Table 1 below shows the distribution of respondents by RC Area of Responsibility.

**Table 1: Respondent by RC Area of Responsibility**

Subregion	RC area of responsibility
■ Mexico	Mexico
■ Central America (6)	Belize <sup>8</sup> , Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama
■ Caribbean (6)	Multi-country Office (MCO) Barbados (Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines); Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti; MCO Jamaica (The Bahamas, Bermuda, The Cayman Islands, and Turks and Caicos Islands); MCO Trinidad and Tobago (Aruba, Curacao, and Sint Maarten)
■ South America (12)	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname Uruguay, Venezuela



8. The RC based in El Salvador also covers Belize and the RC based in Trinidad and Tobago covers Suriname but each of these four countries has its own RCO and UNCT.

## II. Survey Findings

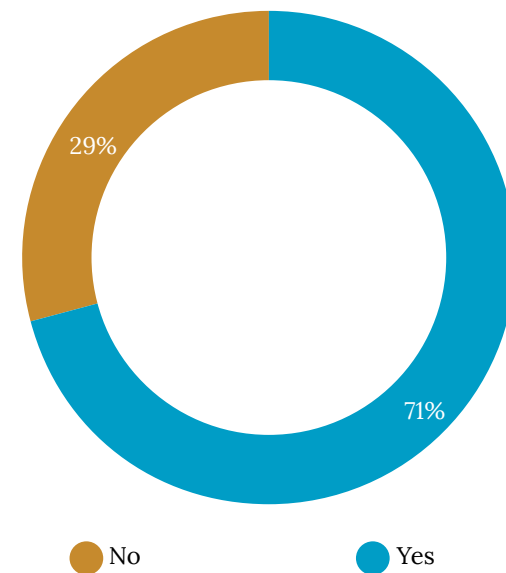
### a. South-South and triangular Cooperation institutional set-up in LAC countries

To better understand the institutional set-up in countries of the region, specific questions included: whether South-South and triangular cooperation are modalities prioritized by governments in RCO programme countries; whether the respective UNCTs received requests from the government to facilitate or support South-South and triangular cooperation in the last 2 years; whether these cooperation modalities are integrated into Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and how they are integrated into CFs, where applicable; and which government institution is the UNCT's focal point or counterpart on South-South and triangular cooperation issues.

In reply, 71 per cent of RCO respondents affirmed that South-South and triangular cooperation are prioritized by governments in their respective programme countries (Figure 1). Fourteen RCOs (58 per cent) reported requests from their host governments for cooperation-related support in the two years prior to the survey. These 14 RCOs included 11 that had confirmed prioritization of South-South and triangular cooperation in their programme countries. This indicates a strong alignment between national priorities and the areas in which the UN is actively engaged. Notably, a quarter of respondent RCOs reporting prioritization of these cooperation modalities at the national level, also reported not receiving any government requests for support in this area. This suggests that there may be a need for greater engagement by RCOs and UNCTs with national partners to stimulate demand and operationalize these cooperation priorities.

Interestingly, the governments of three countries (Chile, Dominican Republic, and Honduras) reported as not prioritizing South-South and triangular cooperation were among those requesting UN support in this area. This highlights a growing recognition of the value of such cooperation and presents an opportunity to engage further with national policymakers to promote its inclusion as a development priority.

**Figure 1:** South-South and triangular cooperation prioritization in LAC Programme countries



On the nature and frequency of requests from governments as well as thematic areas mentioned, Tables 2 and 3 below summarize the frequency and key features, including thematic focus areas, of requests received from sample groups of requesting countries. Over 90 per cent of RCOs reported their support to government requests as focused on technical assistance (advice, training) and facilitation of knowledge and people-to-people exchanges. Additionally, almost 60 per cent of UNCTs reported involvement in partnership facilitation or brokering. Less frequently mentioned forms of assistance include provision of consultants and direct financial support, the latter being the least cited form of support to governments at 38 per cent. These findings suggest that while technical and knowledge-based support are the dominant modalities, there is also a growing role for partnership facilitation in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation. Additionally, 8 percent of respondents reported government requests aimed at strengthening their role as providers of South-South and triangular cooperation. Overall, on frequency of requests, 67 percent indicated that the UNCT received at least one government request related to these cooperation modalities in the last two years.

**Table 2:** Frequency of requests from governments on South-South and triangular cooperation

Frequency of government requests	Count	Key features/requests
Frequent/Structured	60%	Regular/ several requests per year, institutional approaches, multi-year programming, knowledge management, cross-country projects
Ad Hoc/Occasional/Low Frequency	46%	Irregular Isolated sectoral requests, ad-hoc support, limited or non-systematic South-South and triangular cooperation engagement often linked to project planning cycles or sector-specific needs

**Table 3:** Thematic areas mentioned in requests by governments to UNCTs on South-South and triangular cooperation

Thematic area	Countries mentioning this area
Public Policy, Governance, Institutional Strengthening	Colombia, Peru, El Salvador, Mexico and Brazil
Health and Humanitarian Assistance	Haiti, Belize, Uruguay
Agriculture, Food Security, Rural Development	Belize, Mexico, Brazil, Jamaica
Statistics, Data, Information Management	Belize, Guatemala, Mexico
Education, Early Childhood Development	Costa Rica, Brazil
Social Protection, Poverty Alleviation	Guatemala, Mexico
Energy and Environment	Belize, Haiti
Peacebuilding, Justice, and Security	Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico

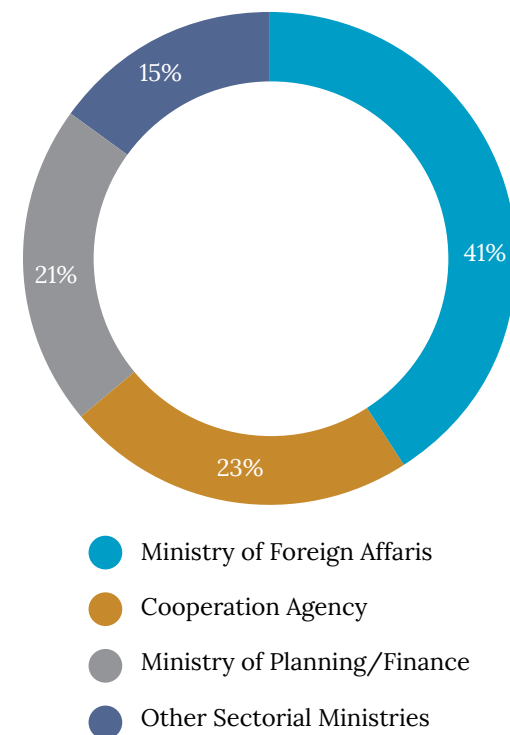
► **Engaging Government Focal Points on South-South and triangular cooperation**

A critical factor in institutionalizing South-South and triangular cooperation is the formal designation of a government office or institution to lead and coordinate the national South-South and triangular cooperation agenda. Survey respondents were asked which government entity is the focal point on issues relating to such cooperation in their respective programme countries.

Figure 2 below shows that out of four named key institutions – national cooperation agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Planning, and where respondents could select more than one option – Ministry of Foreign Affairs emerged as the most frequently designated focal point in programme countries, underscoring its central role in facilitating international cooperation. National cooperation agencies and Ministries of Planning also featured prominently, reflecting their active involvement in shaping and implementing South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives; and more than 90 per cent of responses identified at least one of these 3 government institutions. In Cuba, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Investment serves as the South-South and triangular cooperation focal point, aligning cooperation efforts with broader economic and trade strategies. Other ministries, such as those responsible for health, finance, trade, social development, or agriculture, were also cited, highlighting the multisectoral nature of South-South and triangular cooperation coordination across the region.

It is also worth noting that very few national cooperation agencies in the region are autonomous. Most of them, including those in Argentina, Peru, Mexico, Chile, and Brazil, fall under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs while in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, cooperation agencies are housed within the ministries responsible for national planning and development. The Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-Colombia) is one notable example of an autonomous cooperation agency in this region.

**Figure 2: Government institution as focal point on South-South and triangular cooperation**



The survey also revealed that several UNCTs adopt a multiple-institutional coordination and engagement approach. Common arrangements include:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and National Cooperation Agency (Colombia)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Planning (e.g. Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Venezuela)
- Multiple government entities (e.g. Chile and Guatemala)
- A decentralized and flexible approach (as in Barbados and Brazil) engaging with relevant line or sectoral ministries or national institutions depending on the thematic focus of each project.

The survey results further point to a strong positive correlation between South-South and triangular cooperation prioritization in host governments, the presence of a clearly defined government focal point, and the frequency and scope of requests to the UNCTs.

This highlights the importance for UNCTs to have a defined government focal point on issues of South-South and triangular cooperation and the need for RCs to further advocate for the designation of dedicated government focal points.

► **Integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (CFs)**

Respondents revealed that 71 per cent of programme countries in the region have not yet integrated South-South and triangular cooperation into their CCAs, which highlights a significant gap in the systemic analysis of South-South and triangular cooperation opportunities during the diagnostic phase of UN programming.

In relation to the CFs, as illustrated in Figure 3, most programme countries do not treat South-South and triangular cooperation as distinct projects or outputs. Instead, they are commonly integrated as foundational modalities that underpin the achievement of CF priorities. Another prevalent approach is the integration of South-South and triangular cooperation within the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy of the CF. This aligns with a broader emphasis on leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation for knowledge sharing, capacity building, and resource mobilisation in support of SDG implementation. It is worth noting that while only (29 per cent) of countries have fully mainstreamed these cooperation modalities into their CCAs, 39 per cent have integrated them into their CFs.

These findings underscore the diversity of approaches and the varying degrees of South-South and triangular cooperation uptake across the region, pointing to both opportunities for integration in these critical planning documents and areas where further support and guidance may be needed.

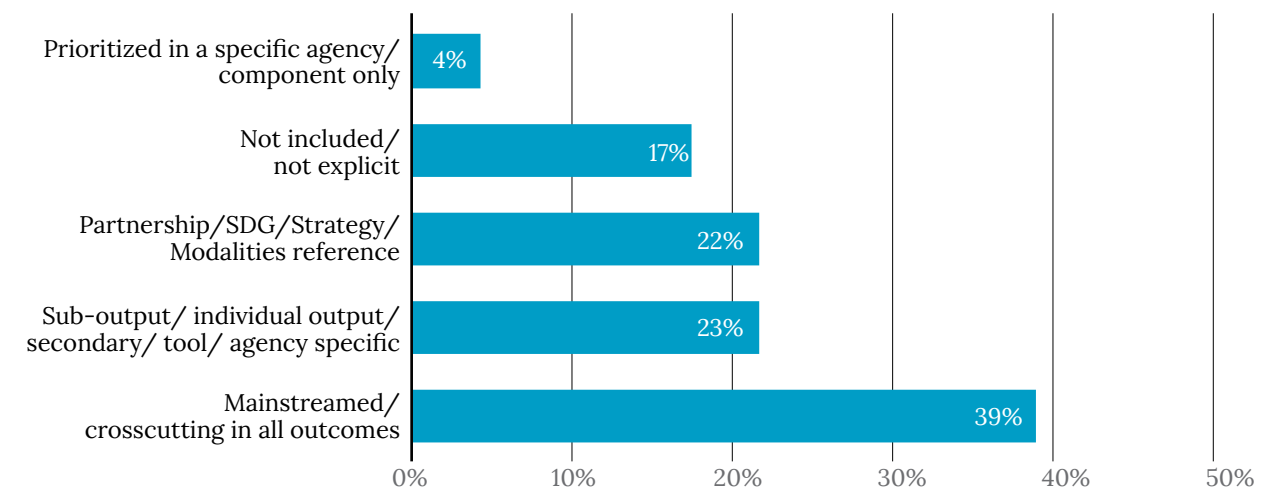
**b. UN Country Team coordination of South-South and triangular cooperation**

With UNCTs at the forefront of UN support to South-South and triangular cooperation at the country-level, this section seeks to better understand how UNCTs in the LAC region coordinate and deliver support to governments regarding this agenda. Survey questions included: how South-South and triangular cooperation are coordinated in the UNCTs; what tools the UNCTs find useful for guiding the work on South-South and triangular cooperation; what resources the UNCTs find useful for knowledge on these cooperation modalities; and what mechanisms and financial resources the UNCTs have explored to foster South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

With four options to select from on how South-South and triangular cooperation are coordinated by UNCTs, 79 per cent of respondent RCOs said that South-South and triangular cooperation activities are managed independently within each agency.

The other five or (21 percent) of respondent RCOs described a hybrid coordination model, where

**Figure 3: South-South and triangular cooperation integration approaches into CFs**



agencies implement individual projects while also engaging in joint initiatives—either informally or under the coordination of RCOs. Examples of multistakeholder collaborative efforts include the Gran Chaco Transboundary Initiative<sup>9</sup>,—cited by respondents from two countries, which impacts SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 13, and demonstrates effective multi-country and multi-stakeholder South-South cooperation on the issue of cross-border cooperation for sustainable forest management in Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia. Under the leadership of the RCs and UNCTs in each country, the initiative has involved different UN agencies, specifically UNEP and UNDP, alongside non-state actors such as civil society organizations, academia, and the Organization of American States (OAS) acting as a supportive regional executing agency.

#### ► Capacity Development tools and mechanisms

UNCTs identified (Table 4) the types of tools that were most useful in guiding their South-South and triangular cooperation work, selecting from the following options given in the survey:

- UN Guidelines for the Integration of South-South and Triangular Cooperation into the Country- and Regional-level Work of the United Nations Development System (released by UNOSSC and DCO in December 2023)
- South-South and triangular cooperation Manuals developed by other UN agencies
- Manuals developed by the host/ programme countries
- Expert briefings and trainings on SS&TrC
- Others- specify and give more details on this.

**Table 4: South-South and triangular cooperation tools that UNCTs find useful for guiding related work**

Tool	Mentions
UN Guidelines for Integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the Country- and Regional-Level Work of the UNDS (UNOSSC & DCO, Dec 2023)	17
South-South and triangular cooperation Manuals developed by other UN agencies	12
Manuals developed by host/ programme countries	10
Expert briefings and trainings on South- South and triangular cooperation	8
Others	4

The UN Guidelines for the Integration of South-South and Triangular Cooperation into the Country- and Regional-Level Work of the UN Development System were jointly released by DCO and UNOSSC at the end of 2023 as part of the operationalization of the UN System-Wide Strategy on South-South Cooperation. The fact that most UNCTs now cite these Guidelines as a useful tool for guiding their South-South and triangular cooperation work—over a year after their release—demonstrates a strong uptake by UNCTs. By actively engaging and relying on DCO leadership in the joint release and promotion of these Guidelines, most UNCTs in the region recognize their importance as key tools in their South-South and triangular cooperation work.

Notably, and with the option to select multiple tools, more than half of the respondent UNCTs reported using multiple tools simultaneously, with 3 respondents (13.6 per cent) selecting all four tools, reflecting a comprehensive approach that combines system-wide guidance, agency expertise, local adaptation, and capacity building. About a third of responses specified a single tool (most often the Guidelines or the agency-specific/briefing tools) while only two respondents reported not using any of these tools at all. The respondent from Colombia added peer-to-peer and knowledge management networks based on demand to the list of tools they utilize and find useful.

9. <https://unsdg.un.org/latest/announcements/beyond-borders-leaving-no-one-behind-gran-chaco-region>

Respondents were asked to select from a list of five knowledge resources (with multiple selections permitted) that UNCTs in the LAC region find useful for information on South-South and triangular cooperation. The survey revealed that a majority (71 per cent) of respondents rely on country and regional reports produced by the UN or Member States. UNOSSC knowledge resources—the South-South Galaxy Platform and the Annual Secretary-General’s report on the state of SSC to the UN General Assembly Second Committee—were the second and third most frequently cited, selected by 54 per cent and 45 per cent of respondents, respectively. The South-South and triangular cooperation Help Desk (UNOSSC/ UNDCO) and the South-South Global Thinkers each

had 7 and 6 mentions respectively. Results also show the leveraging of multiple resource types by more than half of the respondents, suggesting a preference for layered knowledge sources in guiding South-South and triangular cooperation activities. However, six respondent RCOs report not using any of the specified resources—a possible indicator of access gaps, or of reliance on agency-specific or informal mechanisms.

Responses to the survey question on mechanisms and financial resources deployed to foster South South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives are described in Tables 5 and 6 below. Two of the respondent RCOs did not respond to this question.

**Table 5: Mechanism to foster South-South and triangular cooperation Initiatives**

Mechanism	Description/Examples	Countries Involved
Technical Capacities Within Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Workshops, technical assistance, expert consultations, and training programmes (e.g., drone piloting for rice farming in Guyana).</li> </ul>	Colombia, Guyana, El Salvador, Jamaica, and Dominican Republic
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Facilitating cross-border collaborations (e.g., UNCT Colombia-UNCT Chile indigenous women peacemakers exchange).</li> </ul>	Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Belize
Knowledge Sharing Platforms and Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Virtual meetings, roadshows, and regional hubs (e.g., Uruguay’s health-focused Nodo de Inteligencia Sanitaria).</li> <li>■ Belize Development Partners Network (BDPN).</li> </ul>	Costa Rica, Belize and Paraguay
Joint Programmes or Joint Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Multi-agency initiatives like the UNHCR, IOM, ILO, UN Women Joint Migration Project between Mexico City and Santiago.</li> <li>■ <a href="#">Concensus de Montevideo on Population and Development</a>.</li> <li>■ Multi-country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSDCF).</li> </ul>	Mexico, Chile, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Barbados, Chile
Funding Pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Blended financing through SDG Funds, MPTFs, and partnerships (e.g., GEF, China’s SSC Global Fund).</li> </ul>	Mexico, Guyana, El Salvador and Barbados
Advocacy & Policy Dialogues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leveraging global forums (e.g. Cuba G-77 Presidency) to prioritize South-South and triangular cooperation.</li> <li>■ Debt swap used to fund institutional creation and capacity building of the Vice Ministry of International Cooperation (Ecuador).</li> </ul>	Cuba, Panama and Ecuador
Inter-agency Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Approach through OCR (country RCO network) for inter-agency coordination, Multi-Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (MSDCF), regional working groups.</li> </ul>	Barbados, and Panama
National/Local Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Government internal funding, national strategy, government-led partner coordination, bi-national project management/document support.</li> </ul>	Brazil and El Salvador

**Table 6: Financial Resources Explored to Foster South-South and triangular cooperation Initiatives**

Resource Type	Examples	Countries
Bilateral/Regional Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ GIZ support to ECLAC’s Regional South-South LAC Conference</li> <li>■ Migration Fund (to support the joint Mexico City and Santiago project)</li> <li>■ One Country, One Priority Product (OCOP) Initiative funding from Norway, Sweden and Belgium</li> <li>■ Korea International Cooperation Agency support to Belize</li> </ul>	Chile, Mexico, Jamaica and Belize
UN Agency Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ MPTF COVID-19 and the Human Security Trust Fund (Dominican Republic)</li> <li>■ Joint SDG Fund (Mexico, Dominican Republic). Peacebuilding Fund (Argentina)</li> <li>■ RCO Cooperation Funds</li> <li>■ UNRCO Chile- UNRCO Colombia MPTF Peace FundMigration Fund (Chile)</li> </ul>	Dominican Republic, Mexico, Argentina, Honduras, and Chile
Development Banks & IFIs, Funds etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ CAF, IDB, EU Funds</li> <li>■ Global Environment Facility (GEF) Green Climate Fund</li> </ul>	Mexico and Guyana
Triangular Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ JICA, USAID</li> <li>■ EU Resilience Building and Disaster Response Management in the Indian Ocean” (RDRM-IO) programme</li> </ul>	Mexico and Guyana
Government Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Brasil-UN Fund for Sustainable Development of the Brazilian Legal Amazon (MPTF)—explored for SSC funding but not yet utilized</li> <li>■ El Salvador’s self-funded SSC strategy</li> <li>■ Chilean Agency of Cooperation to UN Women and UNDP</li> <li>■ Mexican cooperation through AMEXCID</li> </ul>	Brazil, El Salvador, Chile and Mexico
South-South Cooperation Specific Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ India-UN Development Partnership Fund</li> <li>■ China SSC Global Fund via FAO projects</li> <li>■ India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation (BSA Fund)</li> </ul>	Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, Honduras and Belize

**c. Partnerships and stakeholder engagement**

The scope and diversity of partnerships are central to the effectiveness of South-South and triangular cooperation in the LAC region. With an option to select all that apply, nearly all survey respondents (95.8 per cent) reported active engagement at the national level denoting the centrality of the national governments in these forms of development cooperation. Close to half (48 per cent) of respondent RCOs reported engagement/support to regional initiatives and around 22 per cent reported support to cross-regional South-South and triangular cooperation indicating substantial cross-border engagement. Subregional and subnational/local-level engagement, reported by 35 per cent and 40 per cent of UNCTs respectively, was also notable, reflecting a growing emphasis on localizing the SDGs.

While nine respondent RCOs—representing Honduras, Guyana, Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador, and Paraguay—reported supporting only one level of cooperation engagement (usually “National engagement with Government”), the results also pointed to multiple levels of engagement in other countries. Colombia, for example, engaged across all five defined levels, and the average number of levels per country was between two and three. The Table 7 below presents the various combinations of 3 to 5 engagement levels reported by respondents, illustrating the breadth and diversity of South-South and triangular cooperation engagement across the region.

Survey results indicate that among non-state actors engaged by UNCTs in South-South and triangular cooperation, civil society and academia were the most frequently cited, mentioned by over half of the respondents. The private sector (including their regional and subregional associations) though less frequently engaged is emerging as a key partner, particularly in such areas as technology transfer and sustainable business models. Some respondents also reported no engagement with non-state actors, highlighting opportunities to broaden partnerships in line with BAPA+40 commitments to multi-stakeholder collaboration.

As presented in Table 8 below, RCOs that reported a broader scope of South-South and triangular cooperation supported by their respective UNCTs, tended to engage a more diverse range of stakeholders, suggesting a positive correlation between the breadth of cooperation and the mobilisation of partnerships. While UNCTs in Mexico, Venezuela, and Trinidad and Tobago report strong multi-actor relationships, it is the response from the RCO in Colombia that stands out for the comprehensiveness of its UNCT South-South and triangular cooperation support and engagement across all levels and all stakeholder types.

Survey results also highlight several UN entities, including WFP, UNDP, UN Women, ILO, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UNICEF, Pan

**Table 7: Breadth of South-South and triangular cooperation Engagement**

Breadth of South-South and triangular cooperation engagement	Count
Cross-regional engagement; Regional engagement; Subregional engagement; National engagement with Government	3
Regional engagement; Subregional engagement; National engagement with Government; Subnational/local government engagement	2
Cross-regional engagement; Regional engagement; Subregional engagement; National engagement with Government; Subregional engagement	1

American Health Organization (PAHO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and MPTF, which are frequently mentioned for their facilitation, engagement and support to South-South and triangular cooperation

initiatives in different LAC countries. UNOSSC is also frequently cited in relation to the South-South Cooperation Trust Funds it manages as well as its various tools and resources like the South-South Galaxy Knowledge Platform.

**Table 8: Examples of how UNCTs have engaged with various actors**

Type of Engagement	Actors	UNCT programme countries identified in this engagement
Knowledge Exchange, Peer Learning	Civil society, academia, private sector, regional associations, government, UN agencies	Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Jamaica, Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, and Paraguay
Capacity Building/ Training	Civil society, academia, private sector, government, UN agencies	Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Jamaica and Belize
Resource Mobilization	Government, UN agencies, international partners, foundations, private sector	Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Cuba, Jamaica, Barbados
Joint Programme/Project	Government, UN agencies, civil society, academia, private sector	Dominican Republic, Colombia, Mexico
Technical Assistance	Government, UN agencies, academia, private sector	Mexico, Belize, Jamaica, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Ecuador
Platform/Dialogue	Civil society, regional associations, government, UN agencies, foundations	Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Uruguay
Partnership/ Collaboration/ Implementing Partner	Civil society, private sector, academia, foundations, regional associations, government, UN agencies	Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, El Salvador, Argentina
Bilateral Engagement	Government, UN agencies, other countries	Brazil, Cuba
Study Tour/Exchange Visit	Government, local government, academia	Costa Rica, Belize
Supporting the elaboration of a National Catalogue <sup>10</sup>	Government, UN agencies	Honduras
Regional Initiative	Civil society, academia, regional associations, government, UN agencies	Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay

10. National catalogues in LAC are structured inventories of technical cooperation offers and demands compiled by governments or regional bodies.



**Photo Caption:** The UN agencies work jointly in Costa Rica to bring solutions and well-being to the people of the country. Over the past year, they improved the lives of 1.9 million people and invested more than €30 billion.  
**Copyright:** Naciones Unidas Costa Rica

Respondents have employed a variety of mechanisms to engage partners, including technical exchanges, joint programmes, knowledge platforms, and policy dialogues. Referenced examples include<sup>11</sup>:

- UNICEF Belize and UNICEF Peru exchange on digital technology for remote temperature monitoring for cold chain systems to improve vaccine storage and delivery;
- Uruguay's interagency initiative/ South-South hub of horizontal technical cooperation in health: Health Intelligence Node of Uruguay ("Nodo de Inteligencia Sanitaria"). This initiative includes the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI), RCO and PAHO/WHO.
- Social registry system exchanges between Dominican Republic and Colombia;
- Joint programmes and funding pools such as the Mexican Agency of International Cooperation for Development AMEXID – FAO Mesoamerica Sin Hambre initiative covering 9 Mesoamerican countries: Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica,

Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama;

■ Knowledge platforms such as:

- The Caribbean Civil Society SDGs Knowledge Platform developed by the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) to foster peer learning on the SDGs, which was launched in 2019 with the support of the UNCT in Trinidad and Tobago.
- The Gastro-Lab Surf City initiative, developed by the WFP in collaboration with El Salvador's Ministry of Tourism and supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which offers free technical training in gastronomy to young people aged 18 to 35 and has included exchange opportunities with Peru.
- The UN-facilitated Panama-Guatemala co-creation collaboration on orange economy prototypes.
- South-South and triangular cooperation global prioritization and positioning efforts through Cuba's G-77 Presidency.

11. More details on these initiatives can be found at: <https://www.mitur.gob.sv/los-jovenes-de-gastro-lab-surf-city-for-taleceran-sus-capacidades-y-conocimientos-a-traves-del-inter-cambio-con-peru/>; <https://www.calpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CalP-CVA-DR-final.pdf>; <https://hub.canari.org/sdg/>; <https://www.fao.org/in-action/mesoamerica-sin-hambre/proyectos/mesoamerica/en/>; <https://unsouthsouth.org/2024/02/29/creative-economy-guatemala-and-panama-are-co-creating-sdg-project-prototypes-using-an-agile-methodology/>; <https://www.gub.uy/agencia-uruguay-cooperacion-internacional/comunicacion/publicaciones/es-nisu>

Respondents were further asked to reflect on the resources or partnerships needed to strengthen these engagements. Responses included calls for additional, dedicated and flexible resources to support South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives; capacity building support to UNCT staff on South-South and triangular cooperation tools as well as policy and technical support for national partners on these modalities; broader and more diversified partnerships

through, for example, digital matchmaking to support South-South and triangular cooperation; the mapping of opportunities for such cooperation by theme through the development of more interactive knowledge

hubs; and improved monitoring frameworks and data systems for more effective impact tracking and scaling. Further details are captured in [Table 9](#) below.

**Table 9: Recommended additional resources or partnerships to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation engagement**

Resource/Partnership Type	Examples from Survey Responses	Strategic Value
Dedicated South-South and triangular cooperation Funding	Advocate for blended financing (e.g., Green Climate Fund, India-UN Fund).	Address resource gaps in middle-income countries.
Capacity-Building Programmes	Training for RCO staff on South-South and triangular cooperation tool.	Improve technical skills in partnership brokering and monitoring.
Structured Regional Platforms	Expand platforms like Uruguay NISU health hub or Caribbean SDG Knowledge Platform.	Foster cross-border collaboration (e.g., Amazon Basin, Lithium Triangle).
Private Sector Alliances	Formalize partnerships with chambers of commerce (e.g., AMCHAM Trinidad and Tobago).	Enhance disaster resilience and SDG-aligned CSR initiatives.
IFIs and Development Banks	Partner with CAF, IDB, or CDB for co-funded South-South and triangular cooperation projects.	Scale initiatives in climate action, social protection, and digitalization.
Standardized M&E Frameworks	Adopt UNCTAD Manual for Measuring SSC or UNOSSC e-modules.	Improve data collection and align with SDG indicators (e.g., SDG 17.3.1).

#### d. South-South and triangular cooperation focus areas

The survey findings reveal that South-South and triangular cooperation initiative supported by RCs and UNCTs in the LAC region have had the greatest impact across several key SDGs. As presented in [Table 10](#), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) were the most frequently cited.

Other well represented goals include SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender

Equality), and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) – highlighting the multidimensional nature of South-South and triangular cooperation efforts in the region.

While SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 13 (Climate Action) were less frequently mentioned, their inclusion points to emerging areas of focus that could benefit from further investment and collaboration. Specific examples drawn from the projects aligned with the SDGs listed in [Table 10](#) are detailed in the country profiles accompanying this report.

**Table 10: SDGs impacted by South-South and triangular cooperation UNCT projects or initiatives<sup>12</sup>**

SDG	Frequency	Example Projects & Country Highlights
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	17	Gibara Verde (Cuba/Brazil/China, WFP-IFAD), FAO food security upgrades in Belize/Peru/Jamaica, Mesoamerica Sin Hambre (Mexico/region), Arrowroot Factory (SVG), nutrition programmes (DR, Cuba, Jamaica)
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	14	Cold chain tech (Belize/UNICEF), PAHO/WHO medical response, maternal health/nursing exchanges (Dominican Republic/Chile/UNFPA), hospital waste management (Grenada), Plan Ceibal (Uruguay/UNICEF)
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	13	Multi-country COVID projects, institutional cooperation forums (DR, Barbados), UN annual coordination, bi-/trilateral projects (Gran Chaco: Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay)
SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	13	Peacebuilding (Colombia), justice/accountability exchanges (Belize, Mexico), constitutional reform peer learning (Belize, Barbados), human rights digital platforms (Paraguay/UNDP/OHCHR)
SDG 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth	12	Rural electrification (Belize/IBSA Fund), inclusive growth/youth jobs (Mexico, El Salvador, Jamaica), Kalinago territorial livelihoods (Dominica/ India-UN Development Partnership Fund), tourism sector training (El Salvador)
SDG 1: No Poverty	10	Social protection/registries (Cuba, Colombia, Mexico, DR), anti-poverty initiatives embedded in regional exchanges (various)
SDG 4: Quality Education	8	Hospitality training (Saint Lucia), early childhood/development (Costa Rica-China-Peru), child protection/joint UNICEF activities (Jamaica, Belize), education best practice exchange (Uruguay)
SDG 5: Gender Equality	8	Women's economic empowerment, policy learning (Colombia, Mexico), maternal health, gender-based violence prevention (Dominican Republic, Cuba)
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	5	Social registry, inclusive growth (Colombia, WFP interventions in DR/Latin America), fair access to health and ID (Malawi-Belize), initiatives specifically targeting vulnerable groups
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	4	Examples from Mexico and the Gran Chaco initiative (Bolivia)
SDG 13: Climate Action	6	Disaster risk management (UNDRR/Guyana), resilience programmes (Mexico, Cuba, Bolivia), reforestation/community resilience (Dominica), Paraguay, regional disaster cooperation Forums
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	3	Food security/nutrition (Cuba, Mexico), legislative/technological innovation (Argentina/UNOPS)
SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	3	Rural electrification projects (Belize, IBSA Fund), energy sector knowledge transfers
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	2	Digital access platforms in agriculture (Jamaica-FAO-China), technology use in health/agriculture sector resilience projects, Mexico's South-South Cooperation: Digital Transformation and Innovation in Agriculture
Misc/Other (Cross-SDG or multi-pronged)	many	Many initiatives impact multiple SDGs through cross-cutting themes: e.g., digital transformation and innovation in agriculture (Mexico, China, 12 LAC countries)

12. Note: These counts are based on direct mentions and clear project alignment as described in the dataset.

### e. South-South and triangular cooperation monitoring and reporting

Forty-eight per cent of respondents indicated that they already include South-South and triangular cooperation in their regular reporting. Meanwhile, 28 per cent do not currently report on these modalities and another 24 per cent plan to integrate these modalities into their reporting in the future. Survey results also reveal a linkage among the prioritization of such cooperation by host governments, its inclusion in UNCT regular reporting and, the tools or frameworks used for South-South and triangular cooperation monitoring and evaluation. **Table 11** below shows

this linkage as well as the improvements needed to enhance this process.

The Annual UNCTs/RCOs Report is the most used reporting mechanism. A smaller number of respondents use alternative mechanisms, including monitoring and evaluation reports of UNCT activities; regional UN system reports; national development reports.

These trends point to a growing commitment to mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation in UNCT reporting. The tools and frameworks currently used by UNCTs for monitoring and evaluating these initiatives are detailed in **Table 12** below.

**Table 11: Linkage among South-South and triangular cooperation prioritization, reporting, and M&E**

South-South and triangular cooperation Prioritization	Report on South-South and triangular cooperation	M&E Practices
Yes	Often regular	Agency and/or UNCT-level tools in use; some integration with national or UN frameworks
No	Ad-hoc/limited	Weak or non-existent

**Table 12: South-South and triangular cooperation M&E tools and frameworks used by UNCTs**

Tools/Frameworks Currently Used	Frequency	Notable Country Examples
UNINFO Platform <sup>13</sup>	8	Cuba, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Paraguay, Barbados, Jamaica, Belize
Annual UNCT/RC/UN Annual Results Report	6	Honduras, Belize, Dominican Republic, Barbados, Uruguay and Brazil
Country Implementation Plan (CIP)	1	Belize
CF Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (MEL)	2	Honduras, Peru
Project-level Reports (Agency-specific, ad hoc)	4	Colombia, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Jamaica
Customized M&E strategies (partnership strategies, plans)	2	Mexico
Manuals, Guidelines & UN System-Wide Strategy/ UNCTAD Framework	1	Trinidad & Tobago
None	6	Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala and Haiti

13. UNINFO (also called UN Info) is an online planning, monitoring and reporting platform that digitizes the UN Country Team's results frameworks

### Box 1: Proposed Improvements/Resource Needs for Enhanced M&E

- Enhance data integration across agencies; Add South-South and triangular cooperation reporting tags; Increase training for focal points
- Integrate with standard templates; Periodic direct reporting from agencies to RCO
- UNOSSC support for standardized templates and agency reporting
- Standardize inclusion of South-South and triangular cooperation indicators and outputs in MEL
- Develop unified M&E system; Increase cross-agency learning; Expand reporting to all agencies, develop dedicated South-South and triangular cooperation reporting
- Strengthen M&E mechanisms for South-South and triangular cooperation, clearer indicators, joint systems
- Adopt unified framework; invest in staff capacity; leverage digital modules/Power BI reports
- Need for framework development, staff capacity, and awareness

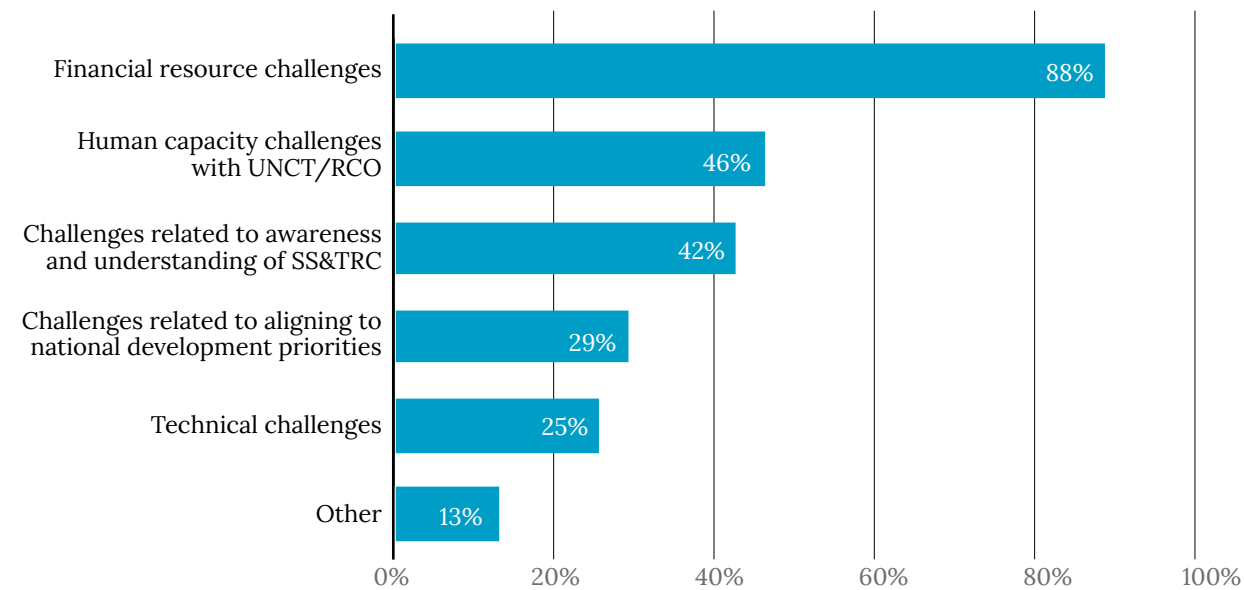
### f. Challenges and opportunities in advancing South-South and triangular cooperation

While there is notable progress and examples of best practices in the region, respondents highlighted key challenges affecting UN's ability to better promote and support South-South and triangular cooperation at the country level as well as opportunities to strengthen engagement in this area.

### ► Challenges

- **Financial resource constraints:** A lack of dedicated or predictable funding, –often limited to project-level budgets– remains the most cited barrier limiting the scale, scope and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.
- **Human capacity and institutional gaps:** Many UNCTs face human capacity and institutional gaps, including insufficient technical expertise, competing priorities and weak coordination mechanisms that hinder systematic engagement and tracking.
- **Limited understanding and national ownership:** Notable disparities among national stakeholders in their understanding of South-South and triangular cooperation reduces demand and engagement. In some cases, South-South and triangular cooperation are not priorities among national policy and programmatic focus areas and are also perceived as relevant only to less developed countries, undermining their strategic value. Such reservations present opportunities for UNOSSC-led capacity-building and further leveraging the UN Guidelines for Integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the Country- and Regional-Level Work of the UN Development System.
- **Policy and strategic alignment challenges:** South-South and triangular cooperation are often not integrated into national development plans or sectoral strategies, making alignment and funding difficult. Political shifts and unclear entry points in CFs exacerbate this issue.
- **Data gaps:** The absence of standardized monitoring and reporting frameworks related to South-South and triangular cooperation makes it difficult to measure impact.

**Figure 4: Challenges to promoting and supporting South-South and triangular Cooperation at country Level**



► **Opportunities**

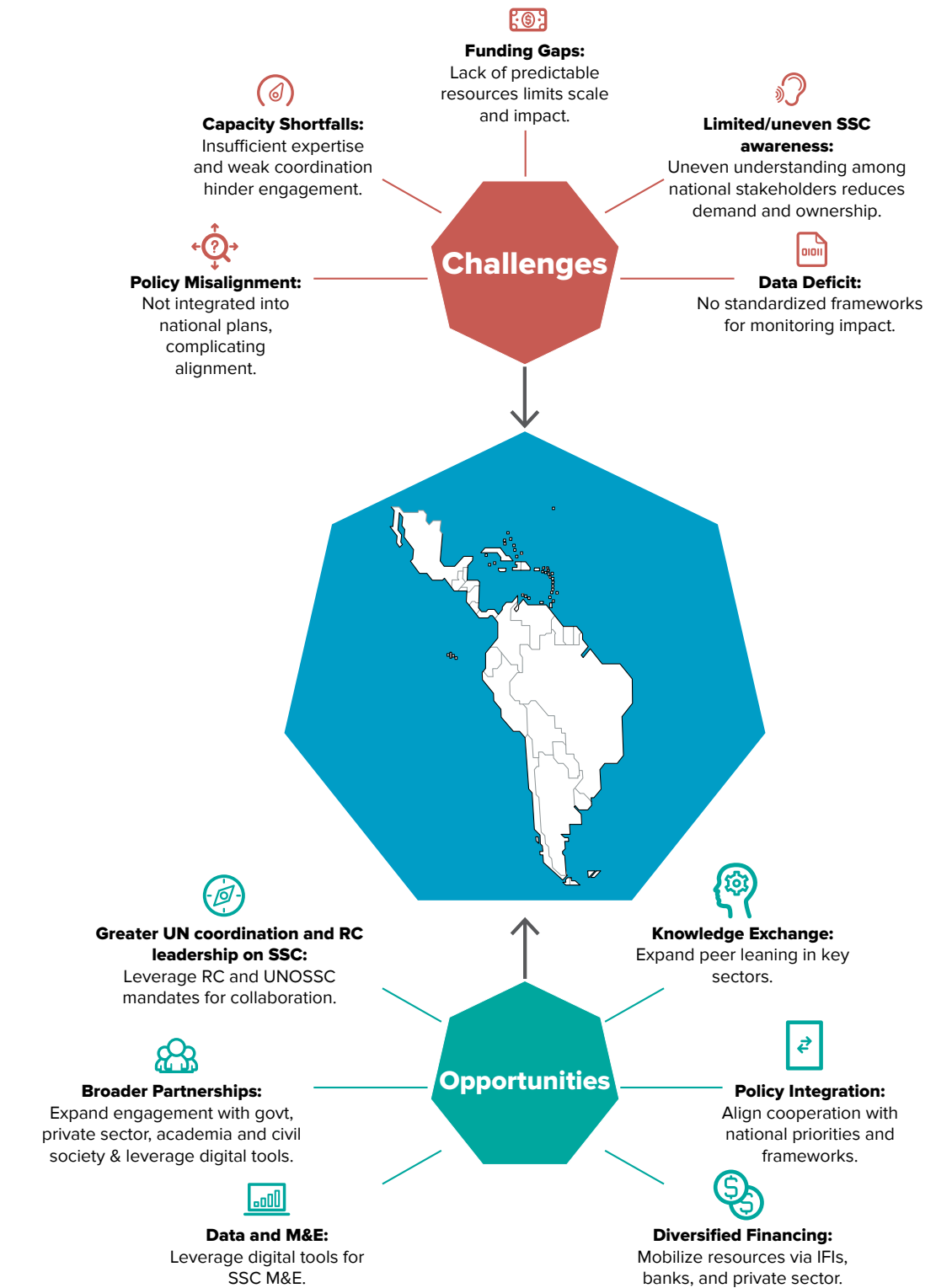
Along with these challenges, strategic opportunities were identified to offer RCs and UNCTs entry points for high impact engagement across the following key areas:

- **UN System coordination and leadership:** UNCTs' calls for coherent support, coupled with RCs' and UNOSSC's mandates, provides opportunities to strengthen interagency collaboration and regional leadership.
- **Knowledge sharing:** The availability of broader expertise in the region creates opportunities for more cross-country exchanges, peer-to-peer learning, and regional capacity-building in the areas such as social protection and social registry systems, nutrition, health systems, disaster preparedness, risk reduction, and resilience, agriculture, rural development, and food security, governance, justice and peacebuilding areas.
- **Partnerships and engagement:** RCs can leverage their convening role with various stakeholders including the private sector, academia, and civil society to bring technology

and innovation into South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

- **Policy and integration:** Increasing calls from governments for South-South and triangular cooperation offer entry points for greater alignment with national policies by further embedding these approaches in country cooperation frameworks.
- **Data collection and monitoring:** Advancing digitalization in the region, coupled with the growing and articulated calls from Member States for systematic monitoring of South-South and triangular cooperation, creates opportunities to integrate this dimension into national and regional data systems and strengthen its visibility in SDG reporting.
- **Financing and capacity:** Diversifying the partnership base is identified as a strategic opportunity to advance these cooperation modalities. This includes expanding engagement with international financial institutions, regional and subregional development banks, and the private sector to mobilize additional resources and strengthen capacities beyond existing channels.

**Infographic 2. Challenges and Opportunities for Advancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation**



### III. Recommendations to advance the South-South and triangular cooperation agenda in the LAC Region

Building on the identified challenges and opportunities, the UN Development System under the leadership of RCs is well positioned to elevate the South-South and triangular cooperation agenda in the LAC region.

#### ■ UN System coordination and leadership:

Enhance interagency coordination through joint initiatives, common tools, and guidance; sustain and reinforce RCs' leadership role by further equipping them with the resources and platforms to champion cross-border and cross-sectoral South-South and triangular cooperation.

#### ■ Knowledge sharing and digital platforms:

- Strengthen regional collaboration and synergies by encouraging cross-country and subregional learning and cooperation on shared challenges. As part of the CCA preparation, map ongoing initiatives to identify complementarities and opportunities for joint action.

- Increase awareness and utility of existing knowledge sharing tools like UNOSSC's South-South Galaxy.

- Establish a robust regional knowledge management system and digital tools to facilitate real-time exchange, matchmaking, and dissemination of best practices by different stakeholders. Such a system could map ongoing initiatives, identify synergies, and systematically connect national and global focal points to available expertise.

#### ■ Facilitate inclusive dialogue and partnerships:

- Foster dialogue and partnerships across government, private sector, academia, and civil society and support regional working groups and thematic platforms.

- Expand public-private partnerships and engage business communities in South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives.

- Establish a dedicated LAC South-South and triangular cooperation fund to mobilize predictable resources for regional priorities.

#### ■ Policy and integration:

- Further institutionalize South-South and triangular cooperation in national and UN frameworks by systematically integrating these modalities into national development strategies and CFs. This will ensure alignment with national priorities and the SDGs, with UNOSSC support.

- Capitalize on the strong uptake of the 2023 UN Guidelines for the Integration of South-South and Triangular Cooperation into the Country- and Regional-Level Work of the UN Development System, systematically applying relevant resources and tools including e-learning modules and national stocktaking tools during CCA preparations.

#### ■ Monitoring and reporting:

- Embed South-South and triangular cooperation indicators in the CFs. Leverage opportunities presented by new CF cycles and major strategic priorities to integrate South-South and triangular cooperation M&E from the outset with clear output and outcome indicators, joint monitoring systems, and links to national results frameworks.

- Provide technical support and capacity-building for national focal points and partners to strengthen SSC and triangular cooperation M&E capabilities. UNCTs can also reference the UNOSSC guidance note on project-level considerations for South-South Cooperation Design, Implementation and Documentation<sup>14</sup>.

- UNCTs can further support host governments to report on South-South and triangular cooperation in Voluntary National Reports (VNR) by leveraging UNOSSC tools such as the Handbook on Integrating South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Voluntary

National Reviews,<sup>15</sup> and utilizing the Manual for the Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation – Technical and procedural aspects<sup>16</sup> under the UNCTAD-led voluntary Conceptual Framework to measure South-South and triangular cooperation with support from UNCTAD, UNOSSC and ECLAC.

#### ■ Address Resources and Capacity Gaps:

Advocate for seed funding, expand access to blended finance and impact investment opportunities, and strengthen tailored capacity-building for national counterparts and UN staff to support sustainable South-South and triangular cooperation implementation.

### IV. Conclusion

This report underscores the strategic importance of South-South and triangular cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean as a dynamic modality for advancing the 2030 Agenda. The survey findings reveal a region deeply committed to South-South and triangular cooperation with the UN Development System actively facilitating diverse partnerships, leveraging technical and financial resources, and engaging a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

The report shows that effective South-South and triangular cooperation in the LAC region relies on strong institutional frameworks and active government ownership. Ministries of Foreign Affairs or dedicated cooperation agencies often serve as the main counterparts or focal points for UN engagement. Responses also highlighted UNCTs' active multi-stakeholder engagement, involving ministries, civil society, academia, local authorities, and the private sector. The breadth and dynamism of South-South and triangular cooperation in LAC are particularly visible in the wide array of mechanisms and financial resources leveraged by UNCTs – from technical exchanges and joint programmes to regional funding pools and triangular partnerships. UNCTs actively facilitate this diversity of partnerships, expanding

the reach and impact of cooperation efforts across national, regional, and even cross-regional scales.

UNCTs in Latin America and the Caribbean also deploy a diverse suite of tools and platforms to advance South-South and triangular cooperation. These include the *UN Guidelines for the Integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the Country- and Regional-Level Work of the UN Development System* – jointly issued by DCO and UNOSSC – alongside agency-specific and national manuals as well as digital solutions like South-South Galaxy. Collectively, these resources facilitate knowledge exchange, capture good practices, and enhance operational coherence in support of country-level implementation.

The survey responses also highlighted key areas that require attention and concerted action. Resource and capacity constraints, in particular, calls urgent attention. Many UNCTs cited the lack of dedicated and predictable funding as a barrier to scaling initiatives. Others highlighted the need to strengthen real-time knowledge sharing, digital platforms, and monitoring systems. There are also gaps in data and reporting with only half of respondents having integrated South-South and triangular cooperation into regular reporting mechanisms. This underscores the urgent need for more systematic tracking, standardized frameworks, and alignment with SDG indicators.

At the same time, these barriers open pathways for innovation, collaboration, and strategic engagement. Several country examples illustrate how partners are working to overcome these barriers and unlock the full potential of South-South and triangular cooperation. Country-led examples including the Belize Development Partners Network (BDPN) championed by that country's RC and initiatives like the "Dominicana Coopera," platform which is designed to foster cooperation with international partners and complement UNCT efforts, demonstrate how countries can systematically mobilise domestic and international resources including seed funding to support catalytic cooperation initiatives. With the support of RCs, engaging international financial institutions, the private sector, and philanthropic actors offer additional avenues for South-South and triangular cooperation funding.

Beyond financial resources, non-financial assets such as technical cooperation, in-kind contributions, and virtual engagements can significantly extend

14. [Considerations-for-South-South-Cooperation-Design-Implementation-and-Documentation.pdf](#)

15. [Handbook on Integrating South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Voluntary National Reviews \(2023\) – UNOSSC](#)  
16. [Manual for the framework to measure South-South cooperation | UN Trade and Development \(UNCTAD\)](#)

and expand the reach of South-South and triangular cooperation. For example, the UNCT in Colombia draws on specialised expertise across its agencies, funds, and programmes to provide technical assistance and training that support South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives. The enhanced use of digital tools for matchmaking, knowledge sharing, and coordination is also recommended to increase visibility, improve efficiency, and strengthen collaboration across countries and sectors.

To ensure sustainability and transformative impact, mainstreaming South-South and triangular cooperation in national planning and CFs is essential to enhance alignment, ownership, and resource allocation. Developing standardized indicators and reporting tools is also recommended to improve tracking, enhance transparency, and support evidence-based decision-making.

Institutional capacity remains a key enabler. UNCTs and national partners require practical guidance and awareness-raising to engage effectively and support host governments to better leverage South-South and triangular cooperation. The *UN Guidelines for the Integration of South-South and triangular cooperation into the Country- and Regional-Level Work of the UN Development System*, along with the e-learning modules and technical support from UNOSSC, can help build this capacity. Tailored support is also needed for specific contexts – such as those of the Barbados UNCT—to identify and respond to South-South and triangular cooperation opportunities, including SIDS-SIDS cooperation.

Finally, the survey's recommendations, rooted in direct experience from across the region, call for sustained and reinforced RC leadership on South-South and triangular cooperation for enhanced knowledge-management and matchmaking systems, fostered inclusive partnerships (especially with non-state actors), strengthened regional collaboration, and increased investment in technical capacity building and exploring of innovative financing tools.

Latin America and the Caribbean are at the forefront of advancing South-South and triangular cooperation, building on its rich history, policy leadership, and dynamic multi-stakeholder engagement. The region's growing interest in and continued commitment to deepening its integration processes and multilateral engagement creates a strong foundation for scaling these cooperation modalities, reinforcing their role as powerful drivers of inclusive and sustainable development at the regional level. In this context, the UN System's role as catalyst, convener, and technical partner remains pivotal. By addressing challenges, harnessing digital innovation, and nurturing the region's collaborative spirit, UNCTs led by their respective RCs are uniquely positioned to help countries realize the full transformative potential of South-South and triangular cooperation. This will ensure that these modalities continue to deliver tangible, inclusive, and lasting results in support of the 2030 Agenda and the region's broader development aspirations.

