



RURAL SYNERGIES



PROJECT SUMMARY

*Building bridges between social and
productive inclusion policies*



With the technical and financial support of:

“Improving coordination between social protection and rural productive development programmes in developing countries: Lessons from Latin America and Africa”

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his project, also known as **Rural Synergies** seeks to influence the government institutions related to rural productive development and social protection policies in order to take advantage of the potential synergies between the two. To that end, the project has gathered evidence of the benefits of the coordinated interventions that could inform institutional and operational design. The intention is to allow policymakers and development cooperation agencies to use the results as the basis for improving interventions targeting rural poverty and, in doing so, help small-scale farmers to be part of the rural transformation. In these conditions given by the pandemic, being able to accelerate the poverty reduction process of the rural households is even more relevant.



This initiative has been possible through funding granted by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the execution of the project **“Improving coordination between social protection and rural productive development programmes in developing countries: Lessons from Latin America and Africa.”** It is being coordinated by Universidad de Los Andes (UNIANDES) through its Centre for Economic Development Studies (CEDE). The project was executed in three countries in Latin America (Colombia, Mexico and Peru) and four countries in Africa (Mali, Lesotho, Ethiopia and Zambia) between 2017 and 2020.



Rural Synergies advances the research and advocacy agenda that IFAD and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) have maintained over the past few years, analysing the possible synergic effects of interventions that involve social protection programmes and productive development projects in rural households. IFAD has done so through the grant “Conditioned

monetary transfers and rural development in Latin America” (www.sinergiasrurales.info/) coordinated by Universidad de Los Andes in Colombia, and FAO has done so through the project “From protection to production: The role of social monetary transfers in promoting economic development” (PtoP) (www.fao.org/economic/ptop). This has been developed in a context in which many countries are designing interventions directed at making use of said synergic effects through different institutional coordination schemes and incentives. In some cases, they have had positive results, but in most they come up against a set of restrictions and difficulties derived from a well-established form of working in sectorial compartments.



Both organizations have gathered evidence on said synergies and complementary areas in Latin America and Africa, posing new questions related to the types of synergies and how to take advantage of them, the proper sequencing of programme implementation and the institutional reforms necessary to move forward thus improve programme results. These questions give way to a new research and advocacy agenda designed to generate rigorous evidence in order to understand the different institutional ways in which these interventions generate results at the domestic and regional levels with the purpose of contributing to the reduction of rural poverty in developing countries.



The project returned to these questions in order to contribute evidence and recommendations for improving interventions directed at overcoming rural poverty. It focuses on the evidence of impact assessments and tries to understand how institutional arrangements can accelerate or delay opportunities for coordination.



Coordinating social protection and rural productive development

The premise that sustains the added value of the coordination of social protection and rural productive development is that together these initiatives bring together the capacity to help poor and at-risk households move beyond the poverty trap and break its intergenerational transmission.

This type of coordination strategy is particularly important in rural areas, which are home to the greatest number of poor individuals and households and have limited opportunities for income generation through access to paid work.

While the monetary transfers provide liquidity and security to rural families, allowing them to make small investments in agriculture, increase social participation and better manage risks, agricultural development interventions promote increased productivity of small family units by addressing limited access to resources and assets such as land, water, financial services, technical advising services and markets.

PROJECT GOALS

THE GOAL OF THE PROJECT IS TO PROVIDE EVIDENCE TO POLICYMAKERS ON THE BENEFITS OF COORDINATED PRODUCTIVE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS IN ORDER TO GENERATE A BROAD BASE OF DOCUMENTED CASES THAT ALLOW FOR REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON. SUCH EXCHANGES ARE BASED ON THE EFFECTS GENERATED IN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS AND THE INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT FACILITATE OR STAND AS OBSTACLES TO THE COORDINATION OF THE INTERVENTIONS. THE GOAL IS TO INFLUENCE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS RELATED TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES IN ORDER TO MAKE USE OF THE SYNERGIES IDENTIFIED BETWEEN BOTH TYPES OF INITIATIVES.

The specific objectives are:

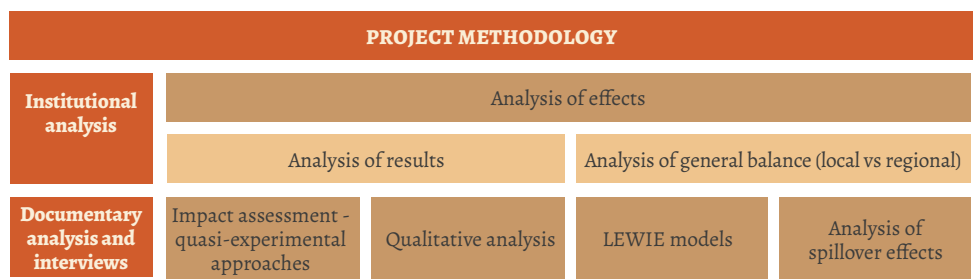
- 1.** To explore and document evidence on the benefits of the coordination of social protection and rural productive development interventions in order to provide substantive evidence to the individuals responsible for formulating policies and to donors regarding improved design, sequencing and institutional design for supporting the alleviation of rural poverty.
- 2.** To identify the main characteristics of cases of coordination between social protection and rural productive development, highlighting the institutional architecture that supports them.
- 3.** To describe the mechanisms (at the individual, household and/or territorial level) through which social protection and rural productive development interventions could be improved when they are coordinated.
- 4.** To report to national and international policymakers on the results and potential of effective coordination between these sorts of initiatives.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Evaluation and analysis

- Impact or results assessment:** Gathers information on the real changes in programme beneficiaries in order to show whether and to what degree the interventions have achieved effective changes in the beneficiaries' behaviour and characteristics. Each case study defined the best method for analysis based on the information available. In many cases, the impact evaluation is accompanied by a qualitative assessment.
- Institutional analysis:** Brings together information on programme design and contextual problems that could impact their performance in order to examine the institutional methods through which social protection and rural productive development programmes and/or components coordinate. All of the cases under study followed the same methodological foundation, which was adapted to the specificities of each case and to the national contexts.

Figure 1. Methodological summary of the project

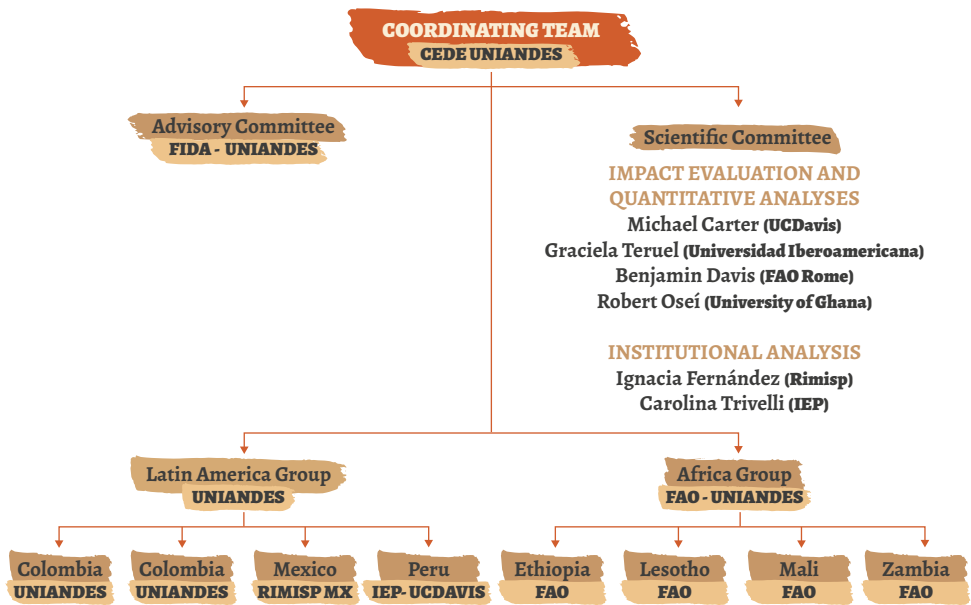


Partners

The project was financed by IFAD and executed by the Universidad de Los Andes (Colombia) Centro de Estudios sobre Desarrollo Económico (CEDE). It also benefited from the technical support of FAO-Rome for the development of the case studies in Africa, and from Rimisp - Latin American Centre for Rural Development for institutional analysis.

The project had the support of a Scientific Committee comprised of high-level experts from world renowned institutions. The committee was responsible for monitoring and providing comments on the design, execution and management of results in order to ensure the best possible analytical strategy. There was also an Advisory Committee, which was the main strategic guidance tool for the project, the research programmes and the communications strategies as well as for policies for project discussions and strategic decision-making (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Summary of partners involved



CASES ANALYSED

COLOMBIA

Familias en su Tierra y Estrategia UNIDOS

The social protection programme Estrategia UNIDOS is a national, intersectorial initiative that began in 2015. Its purpose is to “ensure that the poorest and most at-risk households can overcome the conditions that keep them impoverished and increase their capacities for development and the exercise of their rights” (Prosperidad Social, 2017). It constitutes a bridge of coordination for bringing State social provisions to households and communities experiencing extreme poverty.

The rural productive development programme is Familias en su Tierra (FEST), which focuses on the socio-economic strengthening of households that have been victims of the armed conflict. UNIDOS promotes conditions of co-responsibility among entities, households and communities.

While the Estrategia UNIDOS is focused on all households experiencing poverty and extreme poverty and seeks to promote social inclusion by bringing social provisions to beneficiary families in order to meet the needs identified, FEST seeks to support return and relocation processes for households subjected to forced displacement. It offers social inclusion and especially productivity tools through community work, training and support for productive projects accompanied by a monetary benefit.

This coordination of the two programmes is possible because of the coordinating role of the Estrategia UNIDOS. It allows UNIDOS households to be targeted by and beneficiaries of FEST.

In order to gather data for this assessment, structured surveys were applied to beneficiary households or at least to those that were eligible to participate in UNIDOS and FEST. The population universe was divided into four groups: a) households that are only members of FEST, b) households that are not linked to either of the programmes analysed, c) households that receive both interventions, and d) households that are only linked to UNIDOS. A total of 2,377 surveys were conducted in two regions of Colombia: Urabá Antioqueño and Montes de María. The different effects are estimated through the comparison of the different groups established with a pairing analysis known as Propensity Score Matching (PSM). In practical terms, the pairing method compares the households with more common controls (shared support) in terms of the likelihood of participation in the programme.

The qualitative analysis consisted of 21 interviews conducted in the municipalities of the area around Urabá Antioqueño and 28 interviews in municipalities in the area of Montes de María in seven types of households. The interview guide included various models that explored general aspects related to each of the programmes, the effects on the variables selected for the quantitative analysis that the households can attribute to the interventions, and a section that allowed researchers to infer synergies or complementarities among them. The interviews lasted between one hour and a little over two hours depending on the household type.

COLOMBIA

Programa Proyectos Productivos

The Programa Proyectos Productivos (PPP) is part of the Special Administrative Unit for Land Management and Restitution (Spanish acronym URT), which seeks to contribute to the restitution of the rights of populations that have been victims of displacement or forced abandonment of land and who have had their rights restored through judicial orders. The programme is part of the Victims and Land Restitution Law (Law No. 1448 of 2011), which provides a context of services and assistance to victims of armed conflict. Its specific goal is to contribute to the socio-economic sustainability of the families who are beneficiaries of the Victims Law through the provision of economic stimuli to families who have received restitution. The stimuli are to be used for the design, execution or strengthening of family productive projects and for technical support for these projects.

In order to estimate the causal effect of the programme, a treatment intensity strategy was conducted. This is a quasi-experimental approach that seeks to measure the effects of PPP based on the differences in duration of exposure to the programme. The design was based on the following two scenarios: (i) the impact of the programme based on exposure time, which is understood as the time that has passed since the intervention began and (ii) the heterogeneous effects of PPP explained by the time that the household received a particular intervention methodology or by type of household (whether or not their participation in the programme has ended). The study was based on two groups of households –active and graduated- and a total of 880 surveys were conducted.

The qualitative analysis was developed on the basis of semi-structured interviews with families that had received

restitution and were part of the two study groups. The surveys were conducted in eight departamentos where land restitution was implemented. A total of 46 surveys were conducted.

MEXICO

Proyecto de Inclusión Productiva Rural (PROINPRO)

The Proyecto de Inclusión Productiva Rural (PROINPRO) is part of the PROSPERA - Programa de Inclusión Social productive inclusion strategy (2014-2019). PROSPERA was the country's main social development programme and was overseen by the Ministry of Social Development (Spanish acronym SEDESOL). It is the third stage of evolution of conditional transfer programmes in Mexico, which expanded its scope of action to include labour, productive and financial inclusion. PROINPRO was one of the four pilot projects of this expansion strategy. It consisted of a connection scheme that sought to provide comprehensive support services, from the formulation of group projects to the provision of adequate technical assistance after the group had received funding. In order to obtain project funding, PROINPRO had to coordinate with a set of productive development programmes prioritised in the Social Development and Agriculture ministries.

Given that this initiative ended in 2016, in this case the work was limited to an institutional analysis designed to elucidate the institutional architecture and analyse levels of coordination among social protection components and rural productive development components. In addition, researchers identified the main processes and sub-processes in the coordination of the programmes and obstacles to and facilitators of institutional mechanisms. The study used a mixed approach, including an analysis of primary and secondary information.



PERU

Programa Nacional de Apoyo Directo a los más Pobres - Juntos and Haku Wiñay

Juntos is the main conditioned cash transfer programme implemented in Peru. It is overseen by the Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion (Spanish acronym MIDIS). For its part, Haku Wiñay is a rural productive development programme that seeks to develop productive capacities and enterprises in order to increase and diversify sustainable autonomous income for households experiencing poverty and extreme poverty. It is managed by Social Development Cooperation Fund (Spanish acronym FONCODES), which is part of MIDIS.

The impact evaluation was focused on Haku Wiñay. The discontinuous regression method was used to determine whether the programme can have impacts on Juntos programme recipients. Additional treatment of soft skills (also called coaching) was conducted on a sub-group of Haku Wiñay users in which it was evaluated using an experimental design to estimate the direct effects of coaching and the possible spillovers of those who received coaching to those who did not, and using a partial population saturation design. In short, the case study included three groups of households: i) Households that received HW + Juntos, ii) Households that received HW + Juntos + Soft Skills programme, and iii) households that received Juntos. Two data sets were gathered to calculate the effects: the 2017-2018 baseline (999 surveys) and the 2020 intermediate line (782 surveys).

In regard to the qualitative assessment, interviews were conducted with programme users in nine populated centres and yachachiqs¹ were interviewed in a populated centre. Haku Wiñay households that form part of these surveys are the users from the 2017 cohort.

ETHIOPIA

Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services with Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT)

Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is a non-conditional transfer programme managed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) that innovates in the phases prior to the programme itself in the incorporation of health and nutrition components. IN-SCT is a pilot programme that was designed as an integral part of PSNP-4 that is managed by the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA). It is a multisectorial programme that considers social protection and access to other social services such as nutrition-sensitive farming.

The impacts of PSNP and IN-SCT were estimated using a differences-in-differences approach with an inverse probability weighting. Given that the baseline was conducted in 2016, several years after PSNP began in 2005, the monitoring comparison includes both the effect of PSNP and that of IN-SCT for new participants and only the effects of IN-SCT for existing PSNP participants. Using the differences-in-differences approach captures a blend of the effect of PSNP plus IN-SCT and that of IN-SCT on its own. The comparison group was selected using non-experimental means given that it was not feasible to randomise the treatment. As such, the differences-in-differences approach was combined with inverse probability weighting (IPW). Two samples were used for this study: a mother-child study (1,920 households) and one for households with children under-5 (1,200 households).



¹ The yachachiq are small farmers or technicians with a small-farmer background who are recognised as having produced and gathered knowledge related to the daily activities involved in rural work, and who are valued by the community. Within the framework of the programme, they provide training and technical assistance using the small-farmer to small-farmer training methodology.

LESOTHO

Child Grants Programme (CGP) and Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Income, Nutrition and Access to Government Services (SPRINGS)

CGP is the second most important social assistance programme in the country, and SPRINGS is a comprehensive community development programme that emerged from the review and lessons of two prior interventions managed by FAO and Catholic Relief Services (CRS). The first is implemented by the Ministry of Social Development and the second by CRS.

A non-experimental design analysis was conducted that allowed the impact of CGP to be evaluated on its own and together with SPRINGS using Propensity Score Matching (PSM). Three groups were used: i) households that received CGP and SPRINGS; ii) households that received CGP but not SPRINGS; and iii) households that did not receive benefits from either programme. In order to identify the comparison group, a propensity score matching analysis was conducted. The Local Economy-Wide Impact Evaluation (LEWIE) was also conducted, allowing researchers to identify the direct and indirect impacts of CGP and SPRINGS on local economies. A total of 2,014 surveys were conducted.

A qualitative impact assessment that triangulated the information from focus discussion groups, interviews with key informants and in-depth case studies of some households was developed alongside this effort. The institutional analysis mainly consisted of a literature review and interviews with key informants in three main areas: i) policies and programmes, ii) favourable environment, and iii) programme performance.

MALI

Nioro Cash+ Project

The Nioro Cash+ Project is a unique programme that incorporates social protection and rural productive development components. This was originally a pilot programme designed and implemented simultaneously in Mali and Mauritania by the FAO between 2015 and 2017. Its purpose was to promote food security through interventions designed to strengthen resilience and access to and availability of livestock during periods of food scarcity. The programme divided beneficiaries' participation into two modes. Those who chose Cash only would receive a transfer in two payments and those who chose the Cash+ option would receive a monetary transfer, goats and assistance and training for their care.

The quantitative analysis evaluated the efficacy and impacts of Nioro Cash+ using a non-experimental inverse probability weighted regression adjustment (IPWRA). The study had three groups: Cash Only, Cash+ and the control group. The analysis was conducted through 1,151 surveys.

Field surveys were conducted in two municipalities, one urban and one rural, for the qualitative assessment. Two towns in each municipality were identified, one with Cash+ beneficiaries and one with Cash Only beneficiaries.

ZAMBIA

Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) and Conservation Agriculture Scale-Up (CASU)

Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) is a social protection programme implemented by the Zambian government with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP). The initiative brings together two goals: to provide school meals and productive goals through the acquisition of public food. The programme uses the WFP **Purchase for Progress (P4P)** platform to acquire the food from small-scale producers to provide school meals. CASU was an agricultural investment implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) with the support of the FAO. It was designed to promote food security through increased agricultural production and income.

Three types of analysis were conducted: a quantitative assessment to measure the impacts of the two programmes individually and together; a qualitative assessment that provided useful information on the broader context of the households during the time in which they participated in the programmes, reporting on the processes that led to the final results captured by the quantitative assessment; and a micro simulation study that addressed issues related

to hypothetical scenarios at the national scale of the two programmes, integrating the quantitative survey data and surveys that were representative at the national level.

The impact assessment was based on a post-test only non-equivalent control group design with a single wave of data after the intervention. The assessment included four groups: only HGSF, only CASU, HGSF + CASU and a control group. In addition, a micro simulation exercise was conducted to explore the distributive impacts of the combination of the HGSF programme and the CASU project. The quantitative assessment included 3,636 surveys and 72 community interviews.

The qualitative component was designed as an assessment meant to contextualise the results of the quantitative assessment of the impact. The study was conducted in two places: an exclusive HGSF site in the Luwingo district and a CASU and HGSF site in the Katete district. These overlap with the quantitative analysis.

Institutional analysis

A single methodology was developed for each of the case studies, which was adapted to the national conditions of each case. The methodology consisted of an exhaustive review of the national legal framework that accompanies the programmes, operating documents and other available secondary information. This was complemented by in-depth interviews with political officials and technical directors of the programmes at the national and sub-national levels.

MAIN RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The coordination between social protection and rural productive development programmes can help poor and at-risk households to overcome the poverty trap and break its intergenerational transmission. This coordination enables to increase household's resilience upon external shocks, an argument especially relevant in the current context we face as a result of the pandemic caused by the COVID-19.
- The impact evaluations show that the results associated with productive variables vary across countries, assessments and programmes of study. However, one can conclude that positive effects on some variables associated with productive activity were found, particularly productive assets, time focused on working on secondary activities, the number of agriculture and livestock products, the average herd size, and crop production.
- The results point to important positive effects of the interaction between productive projects and social protection projects in terms of food security and nutrition.
- The institutional analysis shows that although political support plays a key role in promoting this type of coordination, this is not sufficient if institutional resistances and inertia are not considered and if there is no coherent design with viable technical conditions and incentives.
- One constant that was observed is the resistance of labour ministries to working together. While ministries of agriculture are stronger in Africa and hold an important policy space, in Latin America the ministries of development or social protection have a greater technical and budgetary capacity. However, this does not change the resistance displayed by both of these sectors.
- A set of technical mechanisms can contribute to generating incentives and promoting coordination, including budget, focalisation and the definition of the programme target population.
- Vertical coordination receives less attention but is important to consider. Many design difficulties are resolved in the implementation stage. At this level, it is important to note the capacity and commitment of management teams, promoters or local programme monitors who do not have a clear mandate but often solve problems.



LATIN AMERICA

Multidimensional programmes that encourage productive inclusion of at-risk populations integrated into a single ministry

- Given the weight of institutional inertia rooted in Latin American organisational culture, we recommend promoting the design of multidimensional programmes that integrate the social and productive dimensions into a unique design and are managed by a single team.
- Given the extensive coverage of conditioned transfer programmes in the region, the programmes' social aspect should not focus on transfers. Rather, it should focus on giving the beneficiary population the initial skills required to make better use of the productive options and connect them to social programmes and services in each country.
- In addition, we recommend situating these programmes in Latin American agriculture ministries rather than social development ministries. This will avoid inter-institutional jealousy and budgetary differences, such as the ones described in the various case studies, which go against the visibility and potential priority assigned to the programme. In order for that to be viable, the priority assigned to rural development by agriculture ministries must be increased. Unfortunately, this tends to be less important than support for large-scale agriculture for export. Although experiences like Haku Wiñay in Peru show that it is possible to provide productive support through social ministries, redundancy and loss of expertise reinforce the importance of strengthening agriculture ministries' capacity to expand their sphere of action to include the most at-risk sectors. Agencies like IFAD can make an important contribution in this regard.

AFRICA

Technical assistance and international cooperation to support the design and implementation of programmes and generate institutional capacities

- In Africa, with low and middle income countries, it is very important to continue to focus on a financial and technical support strategy through cooperation agencies and international NGOs to support the strengthening of ministries and public services. That strengthening includes the design of formal coordination mechanisms that generate adequate coordination incentives.
- The analysis revealed the need to group together resources in order to implement programmes jointly in a context in which budgetary aspects could be a key tool for coordinating interventions. This is particularly important when the stakeholders involved have different perspectives and there are costs associated with coordination.
- A strategy like the one proposed requires strong investment in strengthening of human resources at all levels of implementation. These should be trained on the importance of multisectorial interventions.
- Finally, for both cases, we recommend that special attention be paid beginning at the design stage to the role that the local level is expected to play in the implementation of programmes. This must start from an adequate and exhaustive knowledge of the capacities, stakeholders and sources of resistance that may be at play at the local level in order to strengthen the strengths and mitigate possible risks derived from inadequate consideration of the key role that all of the experiences analysed show the local level to play.

ADVOCACY AND DISSEMINATION

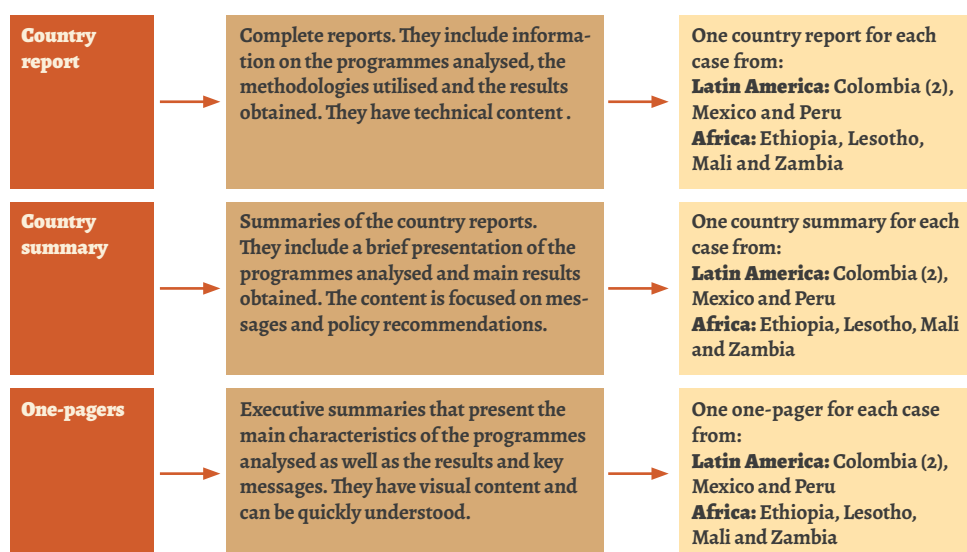
The impact evaluations and institutional analysis provide a series of lessons and recommendations that can be quite useful for public and cooperation agencies that are working to design and implement this type of strategy.

Disseminating these results and discussing these lessons and the recommendations derived from them is a key purpose of the project.

The main results dissemination strategy consists of a series of technical dialogues in the form of webinars with high-level officials and technicians from the agencies responsible for the design and implementation of the programmes analysed. The communications and dissemination strategy includes diverse media channels for socializing these materials, from the use of social media, one-pagers and videos to building a website that will contain all of the information from the cases.

In order to support this strategy, a series of dissemination materials was developed for each case study (Figure 3) along with a comparison of the cases and regions, which this document is part of. The project thus includes a set of documents for each national case. First, there is a country report (complete reports on each case analysed that outline the methodology utilised and results obtained from said analyses). The country summaries are derived from these. They present a summary of the country report focused more on the messages and policy recommendations that offers an introduction to each case of programmes analysed and the main results obtained from the analysis. Finally, there are also one-pagers that summarise the main characteristics of each case analysed along with the main results and policy recommendations through images that are easy to understand.

Figure 3. Products for each case analysed



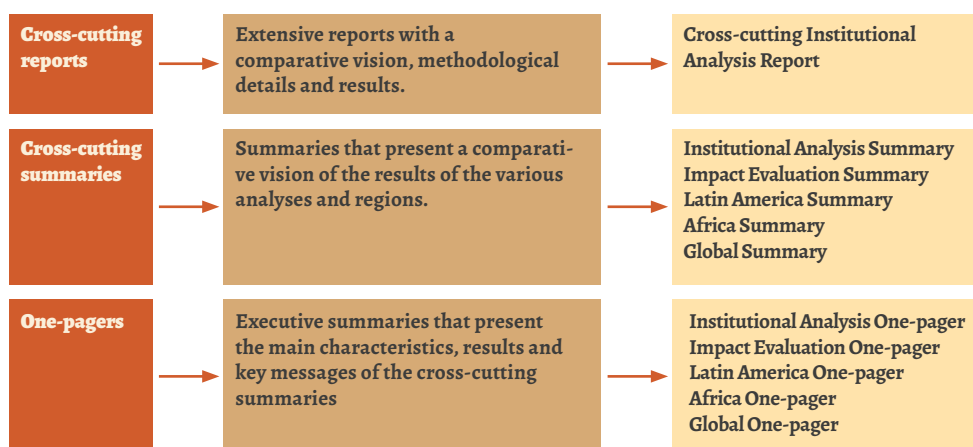
In addition, another series of documents has been generated to create a cross-cutting vision of the results using comparative analyses. These offer a shared vision of all of the impact assessments conducted as well as the institutional analyses conducted in Latin America and Africa. Furthermore, they offer cross-cutting regional visions that include all of the analyses and results developed.

The following cross-cutting studies are available:

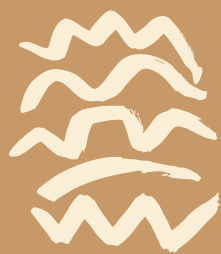
- Cases from Latin America
- Cases from Africa
- Aggregate impact assessments
- Aggregate institutional analysis
- Global analysis

This set of documents follows a structure similar to that of the national cases (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Cross-cutting analysis products



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With the technical and financial support of:



Facultad
de Economía



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations