



# EVALUATION REPORT

## Executive summary

December  
2014

Evaluation of the ECLAC-AECID Technical Cooperation  
Programme 2010-2012





UNITED NATIONS

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cooperación  
española

This report was prepared by Jordi del Bas and Eva Otero, the external consultants who evaluated the programme, under the supervision of Nurit Bodemann-Ostow, Programme Evaluation Officer of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit of the Programme Planning and Operations Division of ECLAC, and Irene Barquero, Programme Officer in the same Unit, who also provided technical coordination support and logistical and methodological assistance. Support and input was also received from Ana López Castelló, Coordinator, CEPAL-AECID programme; and Jonathan Narváez, Associate Programme Officer, and María Victoria Labra, Evaluation Assistant, both of the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit.

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The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizations mentioned.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Summary of analysis

Programme performance was very satisfactory. This was an extremely relevant intervention that closely met the needs of the region's countries, and was very efficient and effective, in particular in terms of the three types of change arising from its Theory of Change: personal, organizational and public-policy change. Programme design was consistent with the Theory of Change, but the results framework did not accurately reflect the nature and scope of the intervention. Sustainability varied according to the facet and component. More enduring change was observed with regard to staff training and the positioning of themes on regional agendas. The programme's gender mainstreaming was weak (with the exception of component 1 on gender equality). Progress was made on inter-divisional work, although the joint execution of substantive tasks remains a challenge.

Institutional exploitation of the programme results has been poor, above all by Spanish cooperation institutions and by the technical cooperation offices in particular.

## Evaluation context, objectives and methodology

1. This report presents the final evaluation of the ECLAC-AECID 2010-2012 programme "Building knowledge and skills for the design and implementation of public policies in Latin America and the Caribbean" implemented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and financed by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).
2. This evaluation was requested, managed and supervised by the Programme Planning and Evaluation Unit (UPEP) of the Programme Planning and Operations Division (DPPO) of ECLAC and was carried out by two external evaluators.
3. In addition to its role as an accountability mechanism, this evaluation was intended to provide feedback on the planning, implementation and monitoring of future joint activities carried out by ECLAC and AECID, and also to provide more general feedback on other ECLAC initiatives. It is an ex post evaluation, which was launched six months after the end of the programme and in the midst of programming the ECLAC-AECID 2014-2016 programme. The evaluation was performed from June to December 2014.
4. The evaluation's specific **objectives** cover five aspects of the programme: (i) to analyse programme design; (ii) to evaluate the efficiency of activity execution; (iii) to take stock of the results obtained; (iv) to evaluate their sustainability; and (v) to identify best practices and lessons learned.
5. The programme had a budget of US\$ 3,888,550 and was executed from 2011 to 2013. It had five components: (i) gender equality (component 1); (ii) fiscal policy for economic growth and social cohesion (component 2); (iii) strategies for environmental sustainability (component 3); (iv) integration, trade and investment (component 4); and (v) training of public officials (component 5).
6. The programme did not have its own Theory of Change, but rather adhered to the overall ECLAC Theory of Change, which was adapted for each of the five components. The evaluation team sketched out and approved an approximation of this Theory of Change, which suggests that, in order to achieve equality, ECLAC works with people who have a certain degree of influence, mainly in the region's governments, that is, public officials and State representatives. The acquisition of new skills and knowledge and the adoption of new **attitudes** and **values** by these people have the potential to contribute in a relevant way to the development of **organizational innovation** within government entities and ultimately to the development of more just **public policies**.

7. The evaluation **methodology** was based on a mixed and multimethod approach, and both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used, although there was an emphasis on qualitative methods. Data collection tools included documentary analysis, in-depth semi-structured interviews, discussion groups and online surveys, and data collection tools were also used to perform cybermetric analysis, a method for processing, segmenting and presenting data on the reach, use, visibility and influence of documents and virtual platforms available on the Internet.

8. A total of 186 people were interviewed in 24 countries, 57% of whom were officials and staff associated with government institutions. Interviews were conducted both in person and remotely. Face-to-face interviews were carried out in Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay, which were the countries selected for field visits. Six surveys were also conducted online: five were aimed at people participating in events organized for each component, and one was aimed at publication users. Thus, 318 surveys of event participants and 161 surveys of publication users were conducted. The cybermetric analysis included a study of the 30 publications with the greatest expected impact, the observatories supported by the programme, and the programme website.

9. Analysis methods comprised triangulation techniques based on various sources and methods of verification, and also included validation methods, such as internal team meetings and a workshop to discuss the preliminary findings.

10. The **evaluation criteria** used to assess the results by thematic area were: relevance and quality of programme design, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and internal change. Analysis of cross-cutting aspects included gender mainstreaming, the degree of joint work carried out by ECLAC divisions, and the extent of institutional exploitation of the programme results.

11. The conclusions are presented below in greater detail, together with a summary of the recommendations and the lessons learned.

## Conclusions

### Relevance and appraisal of programme design

**12. The programme was highly relevant in all respects: it was well adapted to the needs and priorities of the region's countries; it was closely aligned to the ECLAC mandate; and it was consistent with Spanish cooperation priorities during the period under evaluation. The programme's high level of adaptation and flexibility with regard to the specific emerging needs of its counterparts further boosted its relevance.**

13. Owing to the fact that it was consistent with the ECLAC programmes of work for the periods 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, which reflected the priorities established at the ECLAC session, the programme was closely aligned with the interests of national governments.

14. Programme themes not only included priorities highlighted by the region's governments; the gender equality and fiscal policy components were also able to influence the subjects that were placed on regional agendas. The **gender equality component**, for example, contributed to the development of initiatives such as the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, which addressed key themes in the region. Several of these are reflected in the programme: institutional machineries for the advancement of women; violence against women; economic autonomy; political representation; and discrimination against indigenous and Afro-descendent women. In the case of the **fiscal policy component**, the agenda themes were primarily decided upon at the regional seminar on fiscal policy, an annual event organized by the Executive Secretary of ECLAC. The seminar, which both reflects and sets the regional agenda, examined the themes addressed in the research and studies conducted as part of the programme: fiscal policy and inclusive development, inequality and fiscal policy, and the redistributive effects of tax reform.

15. The strategies pursued as part of the **training component** implemented by the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) were very closely aligned with the needs and expectations of the officials at whom they were aimed. Indeed, the number of applications to participate in the 13 courses delivered as part of this component far exceeded the number of places available (11 times more applications were received than places available).

16. Moreover, several components responded very well to countries' ad hoc needs, further underscoring the usefulness of the programme and the relevance of its activities. For example, in the case of the **gender equality component**, the 2012 report on bonuses and the 2011 report on institutionalization were requested directly by the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The **fiscal policy component** responded to specific demands from the governments of the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Guatemala, submitted as technical assistance requests. In addition, most of the new training workshops run as part of the **trade component** responded to ad hoc requests from the region's countries.

17. The themes and the objectives associated with all components also responded to Spanish cooperation priorities during the period in question, as set out in the Master Plans. This was less true of the **training component** for officials, since public institutional building was not explicitly mentioned as a strategic line. Even so, the promotion of institutional development and improvements in capacity building were a priority of the Spanish Cooperation Master Plan 2009-2012.

18. The relevance of programme themes was an essential aspect of the perception of quality reported by the key public regarding products and activities. The fact that the programme dovetailed closely with regional agendas also boosted the ability of ECLAC to convene and the perception that it was a legitimate organization.

**19. Programme design was coherent and there was a good level of consistency among the five components. However, this was thanks to adherence by all components to the ECLAC Theory of Change, rather than the fact that components were explicitly and directly interlinked. The main design weakness was that the results framework did not reflect the nature of the programme, making it impossible to measure its achievements realistically.**

20. When the programme was designed, no internal links were created between the five components, that is, component products and results were not interrelated. However, this was not detrimental to coherence, since component relationships and rationale were based on the ECLAC Theory of Change, and dovetailed with the subprogrammes of work of the ECLAC divisions and the thematic areas of the previous ECLAC-AECID programme. In fact, the five components were designed to follow on from previous work, in a linear progression. The only exception was the **fiscal policy component**, which did not tie in with the results of the previous ECLAC-AECID programme in terms of the measurement of social spending.

21. These linkages ensured programmatic continuity and an effective integration with ECLAC work in general, which ultimately had a very positive impact in terms of relevance and the adaptation of all components to the priorities and needs of the region's countries. This is explained by the fact that ECLAC programmes of work are adopted at the ECLAC session, a biennial forum in which ECLAC and all its member countries analyse and prioritize the most important themes for regional development.

22. The results framework, however, was based on a logical framework that was ultimately ill suited to the task of monitoring and evaluating the programme. Its weaknesses were threefold: (i) the change sought by all components was oversimplified (particularly in the case of the first four components), reducing it to a single, linear path; (ii) there was a disconnect between the time frame of the programme (three years) and the degree of change envisaged by the goals (medium-term change); and (iii) the indicators were not suitable for measuring, specifically and realistically, the range of change to which the programme contributed. Thus, the results framework as formulated was unable to capture and monitor the complex amalgamation of tangible and subtle achievements associated with the Theory of Change in each component.

## Programme effectiveness and achievement of results

**23. Progress towards the goals set out in the logical framework varied by component. Some goals were far exceeded, some were met as expected, some were not achieved, and insufficient information is available for others. Where goals were not achieved, this was not due to weaknesses in the performance of the components, but rather to external factors and to the fact that the indicators envisaged a degree of change that could not reasonably be expected given the Theory of Change and the programme's time frame.**

24. Some goals were far exceeded, such as the relative number of countries that received technical assistance and training in the implementation of the **gender** indicators. Other goals were met as expected, such as an increase in the number of institutions benefiting from services to boost their skills in the area of **trade**. Others were not achieved, such as the number of countries that adopted policies or measures based on ECLAC recommendations in the **environmental sustainability component**.

25. In some cases, insufficient information was available regarding the goals. For example, regarding the percentage of readers who stated they had benefited from the analysis and policy recommendations set out by the **environmental sustainability component**. In some cases, fulfilment of a goal hinged on the way the indicators had been formulated, which was open to interpretation. This applied in particular to the **fiscal policy component** and the **environmental sustainability component**.

26. In any case, failure to achieve some of the goals did not occur because of weaknesses in the performance of a component, but rather because of external factors and the fact that the indicators envisaged a degree of change that could not reasonably be expected given the programme's time frame. Initial forecasts regarding Paraguay and Uruguay were not fulfilled because negotiations with the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) ground to a halt in both countries; this is an example of an external factor that affected the **trade component**. An example of the second type of problem is the use of an end-of-process indicator for the **environmental sustainability component**, while the programme was providing support during an intermediate phase.

27. Owing to these flaws in the design of the results framework, any assessment of achievements based solely on what is laid down in the programme's logical framework would be at best partial and incomplete. A more extensive analysis of programme effectiveness is presented below, which measures achievements against the Theory of Change.

**28. The programme made an appreciable contribution to technical-capacity building and openness to new ideas, attitudes and approaches among the relevant public (essentially, public officials and State representatives).** Broken down by component, relative contributions to technical-capacity building were more visible and tangible in the areas of **gender equality**, **environmental sustainability** and **trade**. The acquisition of new skills and the adoption of new attitudes proved particularly notable in the **training component** for public officials.

29. For the **gender component**, 73% of survey respondents said that programme activities contributed to the acquisition of new skills. This percentage was even higher for formal training activities, that is, the online courses (83%). A great deal of positive feedback was also received during interviews.

30. For the **environmental sustainability component**, 71% of survey respondents said that the events organized contributed considerably to the acquisition of new technical skills. During the in-depth interviews, several people who had participated in the online course of the International Forum of Experts (Group 11+) said that they were applying the concepts and the tools for analysis in their daily work.

31. For all components, but particularly the **trade component**, workshop and seminar participants repeatedly mentioned the usefulness of the understanding they had gained through these activities of the regional reality and of the comparisons they were thus able to draw between their own country and others.

32. With regard to the promotion of new ideas and attitudes, the work carried as part of the **gender equality component** made a relevant contribution to ideological change among people not working for gender-specific organizations and, in particular, within national statistical offices.

33. With regard to **fiscal policy**, the in-depth interviews revealed that publications had made individuals more open to new approaches and ways of seeing reality, above all with regard to issues such as the relationship between fiscal policy and equity, and the use of tax policy as a redistributive tool.

34. The interviews relating to the **environmental sustainability component** revealed that the acquisition of new approaches and ideas was associated above all with the incorporation of the concept of a comprehensive approach into transport, infrastructure, logistics and mobility policies and with what had been learned with regard to the incorporation of systemic approaches and of the tools for evaluating the environmental impact of the economic, technological and regulatory measures presented at the International Forum of Experts (Group 11+).

35. Lastly, the survey results for the **training component** for public officials were particularly striking: 84% of participants who responded to the survey said that it had changed their attitudes and had opened their minds significantly to new ideas, while 85% said that they had gained new skills.

36. Formal training activities, publications and technical assistance workshops were the most effective strategies for building individual technical capacities. The four programme strategies (assistance, training, forums and evidence) contributed in an aggregate way to changing opinions among the target public, who took on new approaches and ways of seeing reality. This change relates to issues such as the importance of incorporating a gender perspective, consideration of the relationship between fiscal policy and equity, and the need to develop a comprehensive and sustainable approach to transport policy formulation.

37. A fundamental aspect of this change was the contribution of ECLAC analysis in increasing the technical nature of debates, which would otherwise be dominated by politics, and in making the discussions and opinions expressed more technical by providing technical and scientific arguments that lent credibility to the different positions. As another key factor in the promotion of ideological change, the programme provided multiple opportunities for the relevant public from different countries to share their experiences and offer examples of possible scenarios. These served as an inspiration and were an element of comparison among peers.

38. The acquisition and strengthening of technical capacities and the contributions to ideological change were both extremely important as prerequisites for organizational and public-policy innovation.

**39. The programme brought about change in terms of strengthening public bodies and improving their management in all components.**

40. These changes were particularly significant in the **training component** for public officials, and the **gender equality component**, whose work also contributed to a strategic repositioning of machineries for the advancement of women within national governments. With regard to such machineries in El Salvador, Peru and Uruguay, and especially in the Dominican Republic, programme activities were closely linked to institution-building processes.

41. In Brazil, Ecuador and Peru, the programme helped change the culture within national statistical offices. Qualitative change has taken place consisting of a transition from the concept of gender statistics as data disaggregated by sex towards a concept that includes the need to perform specific analysis to highlight gender gaps and explain their causes.

42. For the **training component** for public officials, a very high percentage of people consulted (88% of those surveyed) said that they had applied the knowledge and skills gained from the courses in their work. This has, for example, translated into changes in their approach to planning, and the implementation of a form of management that makes it possible to improve plan execution and expand services and partnerships with other actors.



43. The trade, fiscal policy and environmental sustainability components also contributed to organizational change, although their contributions were uneven. With regard to the **trade component** for example, the Export Development Unit of the Office of the Under-Secretary of Domestic Trade and Exports of the Plurinational State of Bolivia is already implementing some of the indicators introduced by the programme (such as the Herfindahl-Hirschman index), and the Unit has the funds to set up a trade intelligence unit, which will enable it to make systematic use of the analysis tools facilitated by ECLAC. Several Colombian organizations are implementing the tools and recommendations presented at the technical workshops, such as the Balassa index, the Grubel-Lloyd index, and revealed comparative advantage analysis. In Ecuador, technical assistance contributed to the formation of a unit to study the impact of trade policy within the Directorate of Economic Study of the Ministry of Foreign Trade.

44. As part of the **fiscal policy component**, tools and approaches transmitted by the programme were also incorporated. In the Ministry of Public Finance of Guatemala, for example, fiscal and microeconomic programming tools are being used to prepare the medium-term budget. In the Ministry of Finance of Honduras, the use of indicators when dealing with borrowing requests from local governments has been institutionalized, thanks to the Ministry's participation in the 2011 Regional Seminar on Fiscal Policy.

45. The work carried out as part of the International Forum of Experts (Group 11+) of the **environmental sustainability component** contributed to change within some of the participating organizations. In Antioquia, Colombia, the proposal put together during the course was used as input for the guidelines on land-use planning in the department. Some elements of the course in which the Technical Division of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development of Chile participated (such as analysis by strategic focus) were incorporated into that country's National Strategy for Sustainable Construction.

46. All of the programme's intervention strategies had both an individual and an aggregate impact on this kind of organizational change. Nevertheless, technical workshops, whether in the form of institutional assistance or small forums for training or peer exchange, made the greatest contribution to the use of knowledge by participating organizations.

47. Although levels of knowledge appropriation and use were good for all components, one recurrent limitation was the lack of follow-up mechanisms for many activities, which reduced the potential impact on organizations.

48. The **fiscal policy component** was unable to capitalize on the huge amount of organizational change generated by the previous programme, because there was no subcomponent on social spending.

**49. Public-policy change occurred across all components, and comprised areas such as the positioning of themes on national and regional agendas, substantive input into policy, and influencing decision-making forums and processes.**

50. Programme contributions were significant in all components with regard to coining or promoting concepts that today pervade political discussions and agendas in Latin America and the Caribbean. In some cases, these terms travel conceptual pathways, for example, from domestic work to the care economy, or from redistribution through spending to redistribution (also) through taxation. So decisive is the role that ECLAC plays in developing these pathways and positioning these concepts that some interest groups considered it to be an achievement if ECLAC echoed certain notions and hence drew attention to them and legitimized them in the region.

51. Thematic positioning was achieved through several programme strategies, including some publications, and in particular through the preparation and strengthening of high-level forums for political dialogue. This was particularly evident for the first three components, thanks to meetings such as the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, the regional seminar on fiscal policy and the revival of the Meso-American Meeting of Transport Ministers. Key factors that explain the successful contribution of these meetings to thematic positioning are the fact that the forums in question are very high level, participants come from different (both public and private) social sectors, and media coverage is sometimes very extensive. This

strategy was complemented by continuous monitoring, and by a combination of technical input from ECLAC and political will from the counterparts.

52. ECLAC analysis (and ECLAC statistics in particular) has helped promote dialogue because the organization has lent credibility to technical debate, thereby diverting disagreements away from more political or ideological platforms. The Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean has played a role here; it argued in favour of machineries for the advancement of women and heightened the visibility of reliable gender-based data, and went beyond the target audiences to address the media and civil society, which has had the potential to foster a climate favourable to certain gender-equality issues.

53. The advocacy work carried out by all programme components has contributed appreciably to the formulation, constitution, better implementation, follow-up and evaluation of national and regional policies. Case studies provide considerable evidence of the programme's contribution to these processes, which includes the adoption of concrete public policies (as reflected in the logical framework indicators) as well as the whole range of changes that precede, follow and accompany the adoption and implementation of such measures.

54. For example, in the **gender equality component**, the programme contributed tangibly to the development of the document *Hacia un modelo solidario de cuidados. Propuesta para la construcción del Sistema Nacional de Cuidados* [Spanish only] of the National Council on Social Policy, published in September 2012 in Uruguay, and to the final revision of the indicators relating to Peru's National Gender Equality Plan 2012-2017.

55. The **fiscal policy component** is recognized to have contributed to follow-up of the tax reform and post-reform period in Uruguay, and to the definition of the technical and conceptual basis of the political dialogue regarding the fiscal compact in the Dominican Republic. This component is also indirectly a part of the conceptual pathway that has visibly been present in the discussions and proposals regarding the current tax reform in Chile.

56. The **environmental sustainability component** has made a direct and palpable contribution to laying the foundations for the development of a regional policy for Meso-American logistics and mobility, while in Ecuador the **trade component** provided key inputs that were used to make decisions on national trade policy at the highest level. This applies to the Evaluation of the possible impacts of Ecuador's full membership of MERCOSUR (April 2013), a study that was used as a direct input for decision-making and was highly appreciated by the government.

57. For the **training component** for public officials, course content was exploited to implement and design strategic and operative plans at the national, regional and local level. The many examples mentioned in this report include: the Annual Operative Plan of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala; the Strategic Plan to Modernize the WSS Sector (PEMAPS) of Honduras; the evaluation of the Development Plan of Valle del Cauca Department in Colombia; and the Regional Agrarian Plan of Tacna, in Peru.

## Efficiency

**58. Although a more in-depth analysis of the value for money offered by the programme was not possible, owing to the limitations of the financial recording system, it may be concluded that the programme was extremely efficient. Tangible results were obtained with the budgeted sums thanks to very high quality activities and products. However, their reach was smaller than may have been expected, owing to poor management of dissemination strategies targeting the intended public and interest groups. No significant obstacles were encountered in programme execution, which was flexible and adjustments were made that promoted a good use of resources.**

59. The good results achieved by the programme, the relatively low investment by year and component, and the high levels of budgetary execution (close to 100% for all components) are clear indications that the programme was very efficient. The three key factors underpinning this success were: (i) flexibility; (ii) the performance of the Coordination Unit; and (iii) the high quality of products and activities.

60. Programme execution was smooth for most components, and budgetary amounts were adjusted and redistributed where necessary for maximum benefit. In fact, once the budgets had been approved, funds were executed flexibly, on the basis of an implicit Theory of Change rather than strict planning, and in consequence programme results were positive.

61. The performance of the Coordination Unit, in particular the programme coordinator, was unanimously deemed to be very satisfactory, and was a key factor in the positive efficiency results achieved, even though the Unit was under-staffed in light of the wide range of functions assigned to it. In addition, there was no clear protocol setting out how activities were to be coordinated between the Unit and AECID.

62. Programme users felt that the quality of products and activities was excellent, which reflected well on the legitimacy of ECLAC and hence on the efficiency of these products and activities. With regard to their reach, meaning product use, coverage and visibility, results were uneven across the components. The work of the **training component** for public officials had an excellent reach, thanks to an appropriate participant selection process. Some relevant products were identified but under-utilized, such as the Fiscal Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean (OFILAC), while the publications by the **gender equality component** do not appear to have reached the right people despite a wider scope than those produced by other components.

63. A more conclusive assessment of efficiency cannot be performed since budgetary planning and the financial reports available (in which the guidelines established by ECLAC administrative systems had to be followed) were not comparable. This makes it impossible to compare the amounts invested in each activity, and thus the scope of the investment cannot be precisely determined.

## Sustainability

**64. All programme results are part of ongoing change processes that have yet to be consolidated, meaning that they still require support. The prospects for this support to continue, however, vary from component to component. With regard to the sustainability of the changes achieved, this is highest in the area of personal change and most tenuous in the cases of organizational and public-policy change. Whether products continue to be used depends above all on their integration in ECLAC intervention strategies, which is significant for many of the components.**

65. In general, research products and assistance funded by the programme (in all components except for training) were integrated into advocacy processes that continued once the programme had ended, ensuring that they would continue to be used after implementation. The analysis presented in several of the studies and research produced as part of the **trade component** was included in a book used by the Division of International Trade and Integration as the basis of its conceptual pathway, while some of the indicators produced by the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean have been incorporated into the daily work of the authorities that participated in the meetings of the Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, although at different levels, the observatories require special attention if they are to become mechanisms for sustaining the programme results. The Fiscal Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean suffers from under-utilization and a lack of visibility, while the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean needs greater resources to formulate more indicators and further the development of those already available.

66. The results obtained in the areas of personal training and thematic positioning are more enduring than those relating to the transfer of skills to organizations. In the responses received during the interviews and in the questionnaires, there is a perception that organizations do not yet have the technical and financial capacity to sustain these results by themselves. Likewise, it appears that changes relating to policy constitution and implementation are not yet sufficiently institutionalized so as to become permanent. The only exception is the work carried out by the Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division in the **environmental sustainability component**, which, although part of an ongoing process, has achieved a high degree of institutionalization owing to its connection to the Meso-America Project and the Cartagena Declaration (2010).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Twelfth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Tuxtla Mechanism for Dialogue and Coordination, Cartagena, Colombia, October 2010.

67. In general, products and results both form part of long-term change processes that will continue to require the support of international organizations and donors. Nevertheless, there is something of a disconnect between the way that the ECLAC-AECID programming is carried out (what is prioritized) and analysis of the maturity and consolidation of the results generated by these change processes. In other words, funding is not linked to the Theory of Change, but rather to ad hoc priorities.

68. Ongoing support appears to be assured in the case of the **gender equality component** and the **training component** for public officials, thanks to a long-standing and ongoing relationship between Spanish cooperation institutions and ECLAC based on the profound institutionalization of these subjects on both sides and direct communication between the Division for Gender Affairs, the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and Spanish cooperation institutions at the highest level. Institutional commitment is also present, although to a lesser extent, in the **fiscal policy component**, which plans indicate will remain active in the next programme (2014-2016). However, relations in the areas of **environmental sustainability** and **trade** are more sporadic, and mechanisms for discussing how support can be continued are less structured and hence less predictable, which could affect the sustainability of these processes.

### Cross-cutting aspects

**69. Aside from some very specific examples and with the exception of the gender equality component, the integration of gender issues into the other components was not reflected in programme design and implementation.**

70. When the programme was formulated, no specific gender indicators, activities or monitoring systems were designed outside the **gender equality component**. Nor were any gender analyses or assessments carried out to establish specificities and the consequences of integrating (or not) the gender perspective in the work of each programme component. With the exception of the component administered by the Division for Gender Affairs, the gender perspective was only incorporated into the activities of other components in specific cases, such as the joint missions carried out by the Division for Gender Affairs and the Division of International Trade and Integration in April 2014; the publication of a study entitled "The gender perspective in transport in Latin America and the Caribbean" (Fal Bulletin No. 301, prepared by the Natural Resources and Infrastructure Division); and a collaboration between ILPES and the Division for Gender Affairs on a technological platform for delivering the Division's online courses.

71. The lack of a more conscious and comprehensive gender mainstreaming process was largely due to three factors: (i) the absence of an overarching gender strategy during the programme design phase; (ii) the fact that it was particularly difficult to incorporate the gender perspective into several components (especially the **fiscal policy** and **trade components**) because no argument or solid methodological tools existed for doing so; and (iii) a still weak culture of inter-divisional work at ECLAC.

72. The absence of a gender perspective in each component meant that the differing concerns and experiences of men and women were not taken into consideration in the preparation, implementation, oversight and evaluation of the agendas and policies in which the programme had an impact, thus aiding the persistence of inequality.

**73. Both external (with other actors and projects) and internal (between ECLAC divisions) complementarities and synergies were prioritized and promoted in the programme. In fact, this programme represents progress on inter-divisional work, although the joint management of activities by a coordinated executing team remains a challenge. Exploitation by Spanish cooperation institutions of the programme's good results has been poor, in particular by the technical cooperation offices. For its part, ECLAC has failed to capitalize on the opportunity to consider these offices as partners in the implementation process, or in product dissemination and use.**

74. Good levels of coordination and association with external actors was achieved via formal and informal partnerships, and helped maximize the use of resources (efficiency) and the magnitude of the results (effectiveness)

by ensuring activities and products had a greater reach than would be expected from the resources available and planned for initially. The myriad examples of synergy-building with other projects include the following: organization of joint activities between the **fiscal policy component** and the European Union's EUROsociAL programme; close links between the products of the **environmental sustainability component** and the REDD+ Projects and low-carbon urban development pathways financed by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ); and use of the **trade component's** manuals in the United Nations Development Account project "Strengthening the Capacities of Governments and Food Exporters to Adapt to the Requirements of Climate Change".

75. The external actors with whom synergies and complementarities were established were international organizations, donors, the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, government bodies, civil society organizations (in the **gender equality component** only), and to a lesser extent, academia, private sector organizations and the media. The programme benefited from the inclusive approach followed by all ECLAC divisions, although the work of the Division for Gender Affairs in the **gender equality component** was particularly strong in this regard. The Division frequently became the link between very diverse actors, promoting trust and political ties by establishing formal and informal networks, which have played an extremely important role in the progress made towards the changes sought.

76. Programme activities were also coordinated and work was undertaken jointly with specialized technical bodies in Spain, such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IEF), the Spanish Railways Foundation (FFE), and the autonomous body of the government agency Puertos del Estado of the Ministry of Economic Development of Spain. However, such links were forged only by ECLAC, not by AECID, which could have capitalized on the wide range of possible synergies offered by these institutions.

77. With regard to the coordination of work between divisions, some progress was made in respect of the level of interaction and the scope of the joint work carried out by the divisions in the form of a cooperation programme run as part of the **environmental sustainability component**. The framework was designed, planned and agreed upon together, but execution, follow-up and assessment of the products and results were not carried out in coordination. This was for two reasons: administrative and financial procedures which, while permitting activities to be jointly financed and budgets to be executed in coordination, did not allow for the use of joint accounts, meaning that different divisions could not simultaneously manage and execute a budget; and the lack of a culture of divisions undertaking joint work. The lessons learned from the programme with regard to inter-divisional work have not gone unnoticed at ECLAC and steps for improvement, although partial, are being taken in new projects.

78. Lastly, exploitation by Spanish cooperation institutions of the opportunities offered by the programme for enhancing visibility and strategic positioning was very limited. The Spanish Cooperation Training Centres and AECID headquarters did take advantage of this to some extent, but only in the area of gender equality.

79. Exploitation by the technical cooperation offices was not only poor; it also generated costs. Costs ensued from a lack of coordination with the programme, that is, there were efficiency costs, and in relation to the institutional image (the perception of Spanish cooperation institutions as a fragmented and uncoordinated donor). There were also costs relating to a loss of opportunities, since discussions with actors with whom they were already working could have been intensified, and access could have been obtained to national and regional institutions with whom they had never worked, thanks to their association with the ECLAC name.

## Recommendations

80. The recommendations arising from the evaluation's findings and conclusions are divided into three sections: "Recommendations for ECLAC", "Recommendations for the next ECLAC-AECID programme" and "Recommendations for AECID". In each section, recommendations are presented in order of priority according to their relevance and the consensus they generated among those consulted during the evaluation.

## Recommendations for ECLAC

81. **(i) Gender mainstreaming** should be made a priority and concrete and substantive steps should be taken to contribute effectively to the achievement of gender equality and its institutionalization in public policy in Latin America and the Caribbean. During programme formulation, specific gender assessments must be performed for each of the themes, and this must translate into specific budgetary commitments for the divisions in question.
82. **(ii)** The feasibility of and options for carrying out a **pilot initiative** involving comprehensive **joint management** by ECLAC divisions should be examined, with the aim of making further progress towards a comprehensive approach and the multisectoral composition of ECLAC activities.
83. **(iii)** In the development of future programmes, the flaws in the results framework should be corrected and **key elements of the Theory of Change should be incorporated** so that the framework reflects the magnitude of the changes to which it is contributing, and to ensure that it constitutes a useful monitoring and evaluation tool.
84. **(iv)** In order to address a lack of follow-up mechanisms and improve product reach, **interest groups should be analysed and consciously managed**. Databases should also be created on these groups and specific communication strategies formulated that target them.
85. **(v)** The Programme Planning and Operations Division should initiate conversations with relevant actors at ECLAC and within the United Nations system on designing a financial monitoring mechanism that is able to link costs and effects, in order to improve accountability and move towards results-based management.  
**(vi)** In the medium-term, in order to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of ECLAC work, progress should be made towards institutionalization of the current **technical cooperation model with a view to building closer links with countries** where ECLAC works (for example, by establishing partnership-style frameworks, or inserting technical assistance into medium-term agreements, or the work carried out as part of inter-agency committees). Implementation of these measures would enhance the impact of ECLAC work and would reduce inconsistencies in the adoption of countries' recommendations.
86. **(vii)** Talks should be opened with donors with a view to assessing the possibility of **thematic evaluations**, which would bring benefits in terms of efficiency and convergence with the principles of the Paris Declaration.

## Recommendations for the next ECLAC-AECID programme

87. **(viii)** In order to improve coordination and address the failure of the technical cooperation offices to exploit the programme results and of ECLAC to exploit the opportunities offered by the technical cooperation offices, **the number of staff working in the Coordination Unit should be increased, as should the information and communication flows** between the programme and agents in Spanish cooperation institutions, especially the technical cooperation offices.
88. **(ix)** With a view to more sustainable results, **the two key platforms of the programme**, the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Fiscal Observatory of Latin America and the Caribbean, **should be revived and strengthened**. This would make it possible to maintain and increase, if possible, the funds assigned to the Gender Equality Observatory to finance the development of more comparative, and hence more relevant, regional indicators. It would also overcome the transition phase currently being experienced by the Fiscal Observatory and revive the platform.

## Recommendations for AECID

89. **(x)** To capitalize on the opportunities offered by the **specialized technical bodies of Spain**, these should be incorporated, via consultation, into the design process for multilateral programmes.

## Lessons learned

These relate to aspects of the programme that the evaluation has shown to be particularly noteworthy and which constitute valuable lessons that can be extrapolated to other ECLAC programmes.

### Lessons learned: programme design and execution

90. **(i) Ongoing donor support over time** within the framework of collaboration that is integrated into the work plans in the receiving organization (ECLAC, in this case) can lead to high levels of relevance, effectiveness and sustainability, and hence, a good programme performance.
91. **(ii) The flexible execution of funds** in alignment with the (implicit) Theory of Change results in a highly efficient use of resources.
92. **(iii) ECLAC technical assistance** has a **distinctive formula** which is extremely effective in promoting change. Its key ingredients are as follows: (i) technical assistance services are provided by teams from ECLAC headquarters, while other organizations tend to subcontract the work to consultants, and this is considered to be an important value added, since the assistance is felt to bear the ECLAC seal; (ii) ECLAC staff have very advanced technical skills, and direct personal and professional dealings enhance accessibility, which builds trust and rapport; (iii) the ECLAC ideological position, evident in the technical assistance provided and always associated with robust and rigorous technical research, generates credibility; and (iv) the provision of technical assistance is not subject to any financial conditions, which is seen as a sign of a genuine desire to work on a multilateral basis.
93. **(iv) The association strategy of the Division for Gender Affairs**, which is based on informal partnerships with other actors including representatives from a wide range of sectors, constitutes a modus operandi that could serve to inspire other ECLAC divisions. These networks build trust and forge institutional and political ties, which has the potential to enhance the magnitude and quality of results and to drive the convergence of a multiplicity of resources towards the fulfilment of the goals in which ECLAC is participating.
94. **(v) Providing technical assistance within the framework of national inter-institutional mechanisms** shields it against changes of government, making sustainability more likely.
95. **(vi) Advocacy processes** are more likely to lead to organizational change when both **intermediate technical staff and their superiors** participate in them.
96. **(vii) Incorporating the technical cooperation offices in the region into the programme as active players** may mean greater reach and consolidation of results.

### Lessons learned: cross-cutting aspects

97. **(viii)** If one of the goals at ECLAC is for the concept of gender equality to pervade public policies in the region, **divisions with access to government departments at the heart of power**, that is, those responsible for designing key policies that are subsequently budgeted for, implemented and evaluated (such as ministries of finance and trade), **must work closely with the Division for Gender Affairs** and machineries for the advancement of women.
98. **(ix)** When programmes are linked to processes for supporting and influencing public policy, as at ECLAC, the logical framework is insufficient as a planning, monitoring and evaluation tool. **In order to capture and measure the complexity of social and political change processes**, and to fulfil its role as an accountability tool, **the logical framework must be supported by other methodological tools**, such as the Theory of Change approach.