Incidence of International Cooperation on Sustainable Agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico (2015–2020)

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Abstract

The research titled "Incidence of International Cooperation on Sustainable Agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico (2015–2020)" aims to provide readers with an understanding of the interrelation between international cooperation, agroindustry, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The central question analyzed was: How has international cooperation influenced sustainable agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico during the 2015–2020 period? The starting point was to determine whether the presence of international cooperation significantly contributed to sustainable agroindustry growth in the Department of Atlántico between 2015 and 2020.To answer this question, the study investigated the presence and amount of international cooperation as well as its direction. It also analyzed the specific "incidences" of international cooperation on sustainable agroindustry and identified actions within the local, national, and international institutional frameworks that support development. To facilitate understanding, a guide was presented on how to implement an international cooperation project or program for sustainable agroindustry in the studied department. It is important to note that this research was made possible through the support of Universidad Autónoma del Caribe, Universidad del Norte, the Government of Atlántico, and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation. Their academic contributions and funding enabled efforts to focus on answering the research question.

Keywords: International development cooperation, Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030, sustainable agribusiness, policy.

Incidencia de la cooperación internacional en la agroindustria sostenible en el departamento del Atlántico (2015–2020)

Resumen

La investigación titulada Incidencia de la cooperación internacional sobre la agroindustria sostenible en el Departamento del Atlántico (2015 – 2020) quiere ofrecer al lector la posibilidad de entender la interrelación entre cooperación internacional, agroindustria y Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS). El interrogante que se trató de analizar fue ¿cómo ha incidido la cooperación internacional sobre la agroindustria sostenible en el Departamento del Atlántico periodo 2015 - 2020. El punto de partida que se pensó abordar fue si la presencia de la cooperación internacional

abordó en el aumento significativo en la agroindustria sostenible en el Departamento del Atlántico entre el 2015 y el 2020. Para lograr responder se investigó la presencia y cuantía de la cooperación internacional y su direccionamiento. También, fue importante analizar cuáles "incidencias" tenía la cooperación internacional sobre la agroindustria sostenible e identificar acciones del entorno institucional local, nacional e internacional para el desarrollo. Para agilizar la comprensión del lector se presentó una guía sobre cómo se realiza un proyecto o programa de cooperación internacional en la agroindustria sostenible en el Departamento de estudio. Es preciso anotar que esta investigación es viable gracias al respaldo de la Universidad Autónoma del Caribe, la Universidad del Norte, a la Gobernación del Atlántico y al Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación a través de su contribución académica y a la financiación que permite enfocar los diferentes esfuerzos para encontrar la respuesta a la pregunta.

Palabras claves: Cooperación Internacional para el desarrollo, Objetivos de desarrollo sostenible, agenda 2030, Agroindustria sostenible, políticas públicas.

Incidência da cooperação internacional na agroindústria sustentável no departamento do Atlântico (2015–2020)

Resumo

A pesquisa intitulada Incidência da cooperação internacional em agronegócios sustentáveis no Departamento de Atlántico (2015 – 2020) tem como objetivo oferecer ao leitor a possibilidade de compreender a inter-relação entre cooperação internacional, agronegócio e os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável (ODS). A questão analisada foi: como a cooperação internacional afetou o agronegócio sustentável no Departamento do Atlântico entre 2015 e 2020? O ponto de partida que se pretendia abordar era se a presença de cooperação internacional abordava o aumento significativo do agronegócio sustentável no Departamento de Atlántico entre 2015 e 2020. Para responder, a presença e o grau de cooperação internacional e sua direção foram investigados. Também era importante analisar quais "impactos" a cooperação internacional teve no agronegócio sustentável e identificar ações no ambiente institucional local, nacional e internacional para o desenvolvimento. Para acelerar a compreensão do leitor, foi apresentado um guia sobre como um projeto ou programa de cooperação internacional em agronegócio sustentável é realizado no Departamento de Estudos. Deve-se notar que essa pesquisa é viável graças ao apoio da Universidade Autônoma do Caribe, da Universidade do Norte, do Gabinete do Governador do Atlântico e do Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Inovação, por meio de sua contribuição acadêmica e do financiamento que permite concentrar os diferentes esforços para encontrar a resposta à questão.

Palavras-chave: Cooperação internacional para o desenvolvimento, Objetivos de desenvolvimento sustentável, Agenda 2030, Agronegócio sustentável, políticas públicas.

Introduction

The Department of Atlántico is a hub for regional industries with significant growth potential and rural areas located less than three hours from the capital. However, the contribution of the agriculture, livestock, hunting, and forestry sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remained at 0.7% between 2015 and 2019 and dropped to 0.6% in 2020, ranking last among the seven departments and one archipelago of the Caribbean Region. Nationally, it ranks 25th out of Colombia's 32 departments. In 1990, 40,000 hectares (ha) were dedicated to crops. By 2015, this figure had decreased to 15,198 ha, and in 2019 it rose slightly to 17,308 ha. The department has limited public infrastructure aimed at strengthening primary and agro-industrial production. This limitation

hinders the maintenance of cold chains that facilitate handling, reduce losses, and preserve product quality. Additionally, the department lacks a center for research, technological development, and innovation that could address the needs and connect stakeholders in the agro-industrial sector. Consequently, the current agro-industrial infrastructure is primarily the result of private initiatives due to the absence of a regional specialization policy with agro-industrial implementation. This represents a significant weakness for the department, reflected in stagnation, low performance, underutilization, and outdated practices. These factors contribute to understanding how the commercial deficit of 2020 was reached—a period during which imports exceeded exports, resulting in a 34% deficit in agricultural and agro-industrial goods and services (DANE, 2021; UPRA, 2020; ENA, 2019; MINCIT, 2021; Gobernación del Atlántico, 2020; FAO & ADR, 2019).

At the same time, in 2015 food insecurity affected 58% of households in Atlántico—4 percentage points above the national average—indicating that more than half of households experienced food insecurity. Agricultural activities form the economic base for most rural farmers who operate on an artisanal scale, revealing a lack of entrepreneurial development. Seasonal climatic variations further exacerbate instability in agricultural production. Agricultural Production Units (UPAs) are present in rural areas but only 10% possess machinery and just 15% have structures for production activities. This results in instability and insufficient food supply, limiting access to a basic food basket and creating deficiencies in consuming essential nutrients for a balanced diet. Unhealthy lifestyles and foodborne diseases highlight an increasing trend of malnutrition across South America—further hindering development (Gobernación del Atlántico, 2016; Gobernación del Atlántico, 2020; FAO & ADR, 2019; ENSIN, 2015; UPRA, 2020; PNUD, 2021).

Aligned with sustainable agroindustry goals, the Comprehensive Plan for Agricultural and Rural Development with a Territorial Focus for Atlántico emphasizes that sustainable agro-industrial production should adapt to climate change; include agricultural machinery and equipment; provide technical and/or economic assistance to producers; and establish small-scale agricultural economies focused on development and innovation. From this perspective, Official Development Assistance (ODA) agencies play a role in empowering key stakeholders while promoting monitoring efforts and collaborative work to ensure project sustainability. This requires capacity-building to achieve long-term objectives alongside governmental commitment to prevent clientelism and social fabric erosion. The absence of concrete inclusion mechanisms, implementation plans, public policies, and accountability frameworks can lead to marginalization—highlighting the importance of local adaptation for fulfilling Agenda 2030 goals (FAO & ADR, 2019; Moon & Lee, 2020; Futemma et al., 2020; Siegel & Bastos Lima, 2020; Colciencias, 2018; Beltrán, 2017).

Agro-industrial development is one of the leading causes of water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change as well as biodiversity loss worldwide—posing challenges to balance environmental quality with increased food production demands (Melendez, 1999; García L., 2011; FAO, 2002; FAO & ADR.,1996). While humanitarian aid and development cooperation have been significant contributors to progress globally—their outcomes depend on each country's specific realities. For instance, Colombia—classified as an Upper-Middle-Income Country (UMIC)—continues to face economic disparities and stabilization challenges requiring international cooperation support. Bilateral Cooperation management alongside ODA ensures Colombia's participation in international platforms such as the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), and other integration mechanisms (Cancillería de Colombia.,2022).

According to the aforementioned considerations, this research has analyzed the impact of international cooperation on sustainable agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico during the period 2015–2020. Institutional data has been considered, and interviews have been conducted with officials from the territorial entity, international support from the government of Atlántico, the international relations office of the Mayor of Barranquilla, the APC liaison with the department, academia, operators, and agricultural producers. The aim was to identify actions from the local, national, and international institutional context for cooperation benefiting the Department of Atlántico.

Theoretical Framework

From the perspective of International Relations theories, this research takes neoliberal institutionalism as its central axis. Additionally, it is imperative to establish close connections with positivist theoretical foundations, the neo-neo debate, cosmopolitanism, and the contributions of post-positivist revisions and contemporary theoretical developments such as constructivism. Keohane (1989) asserts that states have been and continue to be the most important agents in world affairs but simultaneously assigns a role to interest groups, transnational corporations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and individuals. Cooperation and discord models can only be understood within the context of institutions that help define the meaning and importance of state action. Therefore, it is essential that agents share some mutual interests, meaning they must derive potential benefits from their positive-sum cooperation.From this perspective, Keohane and Nye (1977) emphasize the anarchy of the international system and the predominant role of the nation-state while recognizing limited information in rational decision-making processes and the possibilities of establishing distributive gain relationships in a context of interdependence.

Both transnationalism and interdependence are fundamental concepts in this school of thought, leading to the study of international cooperation. Thus, from the 1980s to today, the two major schools of International Relations—Neoliberalism and Neorealism—have sought to address globalization using the prefix "Neo" (Jiménez C., 2003). Furthermore, Salomón (2001) highlights that neorealism perceives international cooperation as difficult to achieve, maintain, and dependent on state power relations. In contrast, neoliberal theory emphasizes the prevalence of interest in benefits, where international cooperation is both fostered and employed as an instrument for gaining relative positional advantage among power centers.

Among post-positivist contributions in constructivism, the conception of international cooperation for development converges in theoretical dialogues that enrich understanding of international reality. According to Bilbao and Lallande (2017), this theory acknowledges moral considerations underpinning policies and programs based on poverty, inequality, and injustice in historical relationships. From a proposed theoretical bridge approach informed by Wallerstein (2005) regarding developmentalism and globalization, there is a critique of modernization theories and conceptions about reifying the nation-state as a unit of analysis, as well as constraints imposed by transnational structures on countries' development. These evolutionary paths may vary from one country to another (Sorinel, 2010). The world-systems approach proposed by Wallerstein shapes international system analysis within efforts to open academic dialogues on global development. In this way, globalization challenges support cosmopolitanism as a paradigm for developing an international political ethic where international cooperation plays a predominant role. In this sense, David Held's principles for building cosmopolitan international democracy emerge within a transnational civil society context that defends humans as central to moral questions and guarantees their self-determination through active participation in democratic structures spanning local to global levels (Aristizábal, 2011).

In summary, it is crucial to highlight that neoliberal institutionalism, constructivism, and cosmopolitanism provide an approach for understanding international reality and specifically serve as a theoretical foundation for analyzing international cooperation for development. Among their main tenets are theoretical bridges fostering academic dialogue on interdependence's influence within the international system and ethical solidarity responsibility benefiting humanity globally. This convergence creates spaces for analyzing ethical issues in international politics, the genesis of a global civil society resulting from state sovereignty erosion, globalization's advancement alongside transnational challenges requiring global solutions. Although epistemological and methodological differences exist between previously addressed International Relations paradigms, it is necessary to emphasize their agreement on aspects related to international cooperation. Consequently, they strengthen academic debate to understand various relevant international phenomena.

From this perspective, International Development Cooperation (IDC) is the essential axis of this research project. It is considered a subsystem of International Relations composed of public and private actors' policies and actions promoting sustainable human development through global interaction as a necessary path toward peace and international security (Agudelo, 2011). In Colombia, IDC is channeled through the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC). According to APC (2019), it recognizes different modalities such as Official Development Assistance (ODA), which refers to flows directed at states listed as recipient countries by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) or multilateral development institutions acting as intermediaries in this process. ODA's primary objective is promoting economic development and welfare in developing countries; it is concessional in nature with at least 25% grant element (Tassara, 2016). Additionally, Col-Col cooperation promotes local development through the exchange of knowledge between two or more national or local actors funded by AECID and USAID. Similarly, South-South cooperation focuses on generating positive agendas and high-value exchanges with developing countries. Furthermore, triangular cooperation combines traditional vertical cooperation (North-South) with South-South cooperation (SSC) to benefit a third developing country. Finally, in-kind donations include goods or services provided by public and private entities from Colombia and abroad.

This concept needs to be complemented with sustainable agroindustry, understood as a chain of agricultural and manufacturing activities associated with crop production for the processing industry, including all actors involved in production, services, and others (ANDI, 2017). It increases participation in regional, national, and international markets; strengthens productive chains by subregions; enhances the competencies, skills, and abilities of agricultural producers in technical production processes, resource management, and commercialization; and leads to agricultural restructuring. It promotes innovation, research, science, technology, and the implementation of good practices that improve the quality of life for rural producers while enabling adaptation to climate change conditions and efficient use of water resources (FAO and ADR, 2019). It facilitates the formation of partnerships under the concept of productive chaining, making it possible to achieve common objectives and goals in an articulated and efficient manner (ADR, 2021). Additionally, it generates employment for the rural population not only in agriculture but also in off-farm activities such as handling, packaging, processing, transportation, and commercialization of food and agricultural products (FAO, 2013); Sustainable development coexists with this framework by seeking to meet the needs of the current generation while promoting economic growth, social equity, constructive ecosystem modification, and maintaining the natural resource base without degrading the environment or compromising future generations' right to use it for their own needs (DNP, 2014).

In this context, it is appropriate to consider an action plan for people, the planet, prosperity, and peace. This plan consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), known as Agenda 2030: Transforming Our World. Initiated in 2015 and set to conclude in 2030, it integrates three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. This plan is being implemented by 193 UN member states. Within this framework, SDG No. 2 (Zero Hunger) considers food security as a key component in evaluation and compliance. It is a requirement for proper management of food production systems to contribute to the sustainability of the agri-food industry while addressing hunger and malnutrition worldwide. Food security exists when individuals have timely and permanent physical, economic, and social access to sufficient food in quantity and quality for adequate consumption and biological utilization. This ensures a general state of well-being that aids in achieving development (INCAP, 1999).

Therefore, Bernstein (2016), in his analysis of food regimes and the establishment of links in the international relations of food production and consumption, distinguishes three periods of capitalist accumulation within food regimes: "The Colonial Project" (1870–1914), "The Development Project" (1945–1973), and the current "Globalization Project" since 1980. This regime has generalized an agrarian crisis of massive proportions, now reflected in a growing movement to stabilize rural areas, protect the planet, and promote food sovereignty against new threats to agricultural cultures and biodiversity. The author asserts that agriculture and industry are conceptualized in an oversized manner, leaving little room for diversity and differentiation in agrarian transitions. These temporal regimes of interests and relationships develop through internal tensions that eventually lead to crises, including social movements and environmental change. Furthermore, the focus on peasant mobilization recognizes that the human and ecological footprint created by the globalization of the corporate food regime is the central contradiction of the 21st century. Bernstein (2016) revisits complementary alternatives proposed by Friedmann and McMichael regarding the global institutionalization of accumulation regulation. These include a global reserve bank with genuine controls over a real-world currency, as well as the promotion and reorientation of regional, local, and municipal decentralization policies to reconnect and redirect local production and consumption.

Methodology

The research is conducted under a qualitative methodological approach with a descriptive scope to characterize events or phenomena, as outlined in Research Methodology (Hernández, 2014). The chosen research technique is the case study, focusing on the "Department of Atlántico" as the central case. The sustainable agroindustry is considered the unit of observation, while International Development Cooperation serves as the unit of analysis. This approach accounts for its relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the lack of prior studies on this topic. To collect information, a matrix was used with data from institutional databases related to international development cooperation (IDC) projects between 2015 and 2020. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted to evaluate how these resources were applied in the Department and its sustainable agroindustry. This methodology aligns with the approaches of Taylor, S., and Bogdan, R. (1987).

The study aims to diagnose and establish strategies regarding the presence and direction of international development cooperation, alongside monitoring compliance with SDGs in the sustainable agroindustry of Atlántico. The working hypothesis posits that international cooperation significantly impacts sustainable agroindustry in the case study. For qualitative analysis, content analysis and discourse analysis of involved parties were employed, along with systematic organization of results.

The inclusion criteria for actors involved in the process were based on their role within the main chain of international cooperation for sustainable agroindustry in Atlántico.

Confidentiality of shared information was ensured, with strict custody of materials that could reveal participant identities or sensitive data.

Results

Presence and Amount of International Cooperation and Its Direction in the Department of Atlántico

It is demonstrable that International Development Cooperation (IDC) has been present in Atlántico through local negotiations and the mediation of the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC). The agency recorded approximately 251 IDC projects in the Department of Atlántico during the 2015–2020 period, amounting to USD $58,232,764 (APC, 2021). Within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda, these projects primarily focused on SDGs No. 2, 8, 10, and 13, aiming to promote zero hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, foster sustainable agriculture, ensure decent work and economic growth, reduce inequalities, and take action against climate change (APC, 2021; UN, 2015). In alignment with SDG No. 2, international cooperation is seen as an opportunity to increase investments in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technological development, and plant and livestock gene banks. These efforts aim to enhance agro-industrial production capacity in developing countries, particularly in least-developed nations (ECLAC, 2018; APC, 2021).

Background of International Cooperation on Sustainable Agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico

Based on the concept of sustainable agroindustry, IDC projects contributing to the sustainable agro-industrial chain in the Department during 2015–2020 were identified. The importance of certain axes from the National Development Plan (PND) was established along with classifications under Official Development Assistance (ODA) as recognized by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Additionally, supported SDGs were identified. Projects were valued at an estimated USD $23,829,426—representing 40.9% of international cooperation for Atlántico.

*Table 1. Analysis of international cooperation aimed at sustainable agroindustry in theDepartment of Atlántico (2015–2020). **Source: Own elaboration based on APC (2021).***

Year	Type of Assistance	Contribution Value (USD)	Main Countries	Key Actors	Municipalities Benefited	Axes of the National Development Plan (PND)	Development Assistance Committee (DAC)	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
2015	Financial and technical assistance.	$ 3.515.628	Canada; United States; Netherlands; France	Global Affairs Canada: 54.7% | Environmental Facility: 27.3% | Netherlands: 11.4% | Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): 5.3% | French Development Agency: 0.6%	Barranquilla; Galapa; Malambo; Puerto Colombia; Soledad; Unspecified areas	Cross-cutting Strategies: 02. Social Mobility | 03. Rural Transformation | 06. Green Growth	Multisectoral aid | General environmental protection | Water and sanitation | Agriculture	SDG 1 No Poverty | SDG 4 Quality Education | SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation | SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth | SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities | SDG 13 Climate Action | SDG 15 Life on Land
2016	Financial and technical assistance.	$ 3.575.591	Germany; Venezuela; Belgium; Colombia	Germany: 90.7% | Development Bank of Latin America (CAF): 3.8% | European Union: 2.3% | Toledo International Center for Peace: 0.2%	Barranquilla; Unspecified areas	Cross-cutting Strategies: 01. Competitiveness and strategic infrastructure | 04. Security, justice, and democracy for peacebuilding | 06. Green Growth | Focus: IV. Sustainability	General environmental protection | Agriculture | Trade policy and regulation | Other multisectoral areas	SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure | SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities | SDG 13 Climate Action | SDG 14 Life Below Water | SDG 16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
2017	Financial assistance	$ 665.495	Belgium; Norway	European Union: 72.3% | Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 21% | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad): 14.6%	Barranquilla; Campo de la Cruz; Repelón; Unspecified areas	Cross-cutting Strategies: 01. Competitiveness and strategic infrastructure | 03. Rural transformation | Structural focus: III. Equity	Enterprises and other sectors | Agriculture	SDG 5 Gender Equality | SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth | SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

2018	Financial and technical assistance.	$ 3.082.212	United Kingdom; United Arab Emirates; Colombia; United States	United Kingdom: 23.9% | Development Bank of Latin America (CAF): 21.14% | Abu Dhabi Fund for Development: 20.9% | International Labour Organization (ILO): 17.3% | Presidential Advisory Office for Early Childhood (Colombia): 11.4%	Barranquilla; Unspecified areas	Cross-cutting Strategies: 01. Competitiveness and strategic infrastructure | 02. Social mobility | Regional focus: Caribbean	Government and civil society | Education | Emergency aid | Other multisectoral areas	SDG 4 Quality Education | SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy | SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth
2019	Financial and technical assistance.	$ 4.546.279	United States; International Private Sector; Switzerland; Japan	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM): 35.1% | United States Agency for International Development (USAID): 27.4% | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation: 16.6% | IDB Lab: 3.3% | Japan: 1.59%	Barranquilla; Manatí; Soledad	Structural Axes: I. Legality | II. Entrepreneurship | III. Equity | Cross-cutting Strategies: IX. Mineral-energy resources for sustainable growth and expanded opportunities	Emergency aid | Industry | Energy generation, distribution, and efficiency | Enterprises and other services | Other social services and infrastructure	SDG 2 Zero Hunger | SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy | SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth | SDG 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure | SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities
2020	Financial and technical assistance.	$ 8.444.221	United States; United Kingdom; Colombia; Germany; Sweden	USAID: 58.2% | Inter-American Development Bank (IDB): 6.2% | Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance: 12.1% | United Kingdom Embassy: 7.6% | Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF): 3.6% | German Federal Foreign Office: 2.9% | World Bank: 1.1% | Global Environmental Facility (United States): 1.1% | Sweden: 0.8% | World Food Programme (United States): 0.3%	Barranquilla; Juan de Acosta; Malambo; Polonuevo; Ponedera; Repelón; Santa Lucía; Santo Tomás; Soledad; Suan; Unspecified areas	Structural Axes: III. Equity | IV. Sustainability | XV. Equity for women | Cross-cutting Strategies: VII. Quality and efficiency of public services | VI. Transportation and logistics for competitiveness and regional integration	Agriculture | Emergency aid | Food aid for development | Assistance to refugees in donor countries	SDG 2 Zero Hunger | SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation | SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities | SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities | SDG 13 Climate Action
Total		$ 23.829.426						

The main donors to sustainable agroindustry include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Germany, Global Affairs Canada, Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration (BPRM), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Global Environmental Facility, Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, United Kingdom, Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (APC, 2021).The Metropolitan subregion concentrates a significant industrial zone where some agricultural and livestock products are processed. These are transported to Barranquilla for pulp processing aimed at beverage production or export. Additionally, rice and corn are processed through mills located in Barranquilla. The city also hosts two food-processing plants and facilities for fish processing—specifically tuna. Consequently, Barranquilla's metropolitan area was the primary recipient of international cooperation between 2015 and 2020 (Atlántico Government Office, 2020; APC, 2021).

International Actions within the Local, National, and International Institutional Context for Development Cooperation in the Department

Non-reimbursable international cooperation aligns with the priorities outlined in the National Development Plan (PND) 2018–2022, the Implementation Framework Plan for the Peace Agreement (PMI) 2017–2031, and the National Strategy for International Cooperation (ENCI) 2019–2022. These national and local legal frameworks are supported by the strategic vision proposed by the 2030 Agenda "Transforming Our World," which is grounded in international legal frameworks aimed at harmonizing the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of global human development. In Colombia, international cooperation is institutionalized through three key entities: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE), the National Planning Department (DNP), and the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation of Colombia (APC). Among the negotiated cooperation strategies led by Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs are agreements with Germany (Final Act of Development Cooperation Negotiations 2020–2022), South Korea (Country Partnership Strategy 2021–2025), the United States (Development Goals Grant Agreement with USAID 2021–2025), Spain (Country Partnership Framework 2020–2024), Sweden (Swedish Strategy for Development Cooperation in Colombia 2021–2025), the European Union (New Cooperation Strategy 2021–2027), and Switzerland (Swiss Cooperation Program 2021–2024 in Colombia). Regarding environmental matters, initiatives include collaboration with the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), chapters on agriculture, agroindustry, and environmental issues in Free Trade Agreements, and regional mechanisms. Additionally, agreements such as the Paris Agreement (2015) to strengthen global responses to climate change threats and the European Green Deal (2019) play a significant role.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MADR) presented strategic guidelines and public policy on Campesino, Family, and Community Agriculture (ACFC) in 2018. Furthermore, through collaboration between the Rural Development Agency (ADR) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Comprehensive Agricultural and Rural Development Plan with a Territorial Approach for Atlántico was developed in 2019 under the FIRST program, supported by the European Union.

At a departmental level, initiatives are guided by Atlántico's Development Plan "For the People" (2020–2023) and, for this study's relevant period, include Atlántico's "Leader" Development Plan (2016–2019). These efforts are complemented by Atlántico's Global Leader Public Policy through its Office of Internationalization and Cooperation (OIC) (Atlántico Assembly, 2018). This office leads programs to strengthen institutional capacities for managing internationalization partnerships and cooperation that benefit Atlántico's municipalities (Atlántico Government, 2020). In Barranquilla, Atlántico's capital city, the "Soy Barranquilla" Development Plan (2020–2023) prioritizes connecting Barranquilla with global networks while focusing on migration, employability, and environmental issues through its International Relations Office (Barranquilla Mayor's Office, 2022). Additionally, Barranquilla hosts a United Nations System office that includes agencies such as UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), IOM (International Organization for Migration), UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), and UN Women.

Designing a Guide for International Cooperation in Sustainable Agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico

International development cooperation is conceived to support high-quality and sustainable programs and projects, ensuring greater feasibility in negotiations with both official and non-official funding sources. Accordingly, project management involves the process of planning, executing, and controlling a project from its inception to its conclusion, with the aim of achieving a final objective within a set timeframe, cost, and quality level by mobilizing physical, financial, and human resources (APC, 2012).

In this context, a guide was developed for international cooperation in sustainable agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico using the Logical Framework methodology. This guide aims to facilitate basic knowledge for project formulation.

Table 2. Guide for the management of programs and projects of international cooperation in sustainable agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico. Source: Own elaboration based on APC (2012, 2021), ECLAC (2015), FAO (2018).

Guide for the management of programs and projects of international cooperation in sustainable agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico					
Criteria for Selection	**Program or Project Life Cycle**	**Technical Sheet/Initial Profile**		**Logical Framework Methodology Structure**	**South-South Cooperation (SSC) Exchange Process**
		Part 1	**Part 2**		
Specific Technical Criteria: International technical transfer, capacity development, national counterpart, management rationality, technical, administrative, and financial capacity, partner collaboration, and beneficiary participation. Quality Criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, feasibility, and sustainability.	1.Programming 2. Identification 3.Assessment 4. Design and formulation (The logical structure of means-ends suggested by the logical framework is analyzed) 5.Negotiation 6.Execution, monitoring, and follow-up. 7. Evaluation. Constraints: Scope, time, and cost.	**Presentation and Summary:** Project name, proposing and executing entity, responsible party information, project duration in months, relation to the SDGs, territorial development plans, ENCI, and public policies, concise project description, external contribution, national contribution and total cost, geographic distribution.	**Project Information:** 1. Context: What? Where? When? Who? and Why? 2. Background and justification 3. Stakeholder analysis matrix 4. Problem statement 5. Planning matrix – Logical framework 6. Institutional framework (relevant information about the entities participating in the project) 7. Coordination mechanisms (agreements, conventions, or contracts) 8. Budget 9. Monitoring and evaluation	Stakeholder, problem, objective, and alternatives analysis; project analytical structure; Logical Framework Matrix and intermediate evaluation. Logical Framework Matrix: 1. Summary of objectives and activities 2. Indicators 3. Means of verification 4. Assumptions 5. End 6. Purpose 7. Components/Results 8. Activities	1 and 2. Opening, information exchange, and proposal preparation. 3. Proposal submission and formalization. 4. Proposal evaluation. 5. Meetings for approved initiatives. 6. Agreement formulation. 7. Project execution. 8. Monitoring. 9. Closure and results evaluation. 10. Experience analysis.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aligned with sustainable agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico (2015–2020):			**Sustainability in production systems towards a focus on supporting and accelerating the transition to sustainable food systems (FAO, 2018):**		
SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 5: Quality Education, SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 13: Climate Action, SDG 14: Life Below Water, and SDG 15: Life on Land.			1. Increase productivity, employment, and added value in food systems; 2. Protect and enhance natural resources; 3. Improve livelihoods and promote economic growth; 4. Strengthen the resilience of people, communities, and ecosystems; 5. Adapt governance to new challenges. In this way, balance the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainability, forming the basis for developing policies, strategies, and regulations.		

To obtain more information, you can consult the following resources: manual de formulación de proyectos de cooperación internacional (APC, 2012), herramientas para la formulación de proyectos de cooperación internacional (APC, 2021), Caja de herramientas para el fortalecimiento de la cooperación Sur – Sur (APC, 2021), Metodología del marco lógico para la planificación, el seguimiento y la evaluación de proyectos y programas (CEPAL, 2015), diseño de proyectos de inversión con el enfoque de marco lógico (IICA, 2009), guía para la formulación de proyectos de inversión del sector agropecuario bajo el enfoque de planificación estratégica y gestión por resultados (FAO, 2017).

Discussion and conclusions

According to the Atlántico International Cooperation Report by APC, it is stated that international development cooperation (IDC) has made contributions to the Department of Atlántico during the years 2015–2020. Such cooperation has been allocated to financial and technical assistance amounting to USD $58,232,764 (APC, 2021). Projects directed at the agro-industrial chain are estimated at USD $23,829,426. The amounts may vary depending on the project. The interests of international cooperation have primarily focused on the five municipalities in the metropolitan area; therefore, the presence of donors in the remaining eighteen municipalities is very limited. Sometimes the issue is not even the amount of resources but rather how they are utilized—specifically, the effectiveness achieved in the territory.

To this end, donors have aligned themselves with the criteria of the National Development Plan (PND), the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are aimed at people, environmental care, and, to a lesser extent, agricultural production that naturally generates economic resources for producers. In this regard, SDG No. 2 (Zero Hunger) is the goal that receives the most cooperation. It is often directed toward emergency aid, food assistance for development, and refugee support. However, this does not mean that there cannot be potential restrictions on IDC resource mobilization by donors.

On another note, upon verifying the state of sustainable agroindustry in the Department of Atlántico—and despite having maritime, air, and land routes, good road infrastructure, and some irrigation districts—there are no crops with the necessary projections and volumes to produce sufficient products for achieving a sustainable departmental agroindustry. This causes current private-sector agriculture to rely on raw materials from other areas of the country due to a lack of production and agricultural vocation in the territory. This is compounded by an aging agricultural sector.

It is important to clarify that if Barranquilla's metropolitan area is disaggregated from data, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for agriculture, livestock, hunting, and forestry in the department would show a more consistent percentage. Among notable cooperation models is Israel, which does not appear on APC's list of registered donors during the study period but provides support for agricultural production through technical and financial assistance. Consider the case of Campo a Toda Marcha in Southern Atlántico—a project aimed at agricultural producers. Through an associative model with identified products, irrigation districts, ICR credits, technical assistance, and guaranteed commercialization, it would be possible to increase planted hectares as well as enhance final products while improving rural development and its sustainable profitability.

Based on this analysis, the working hypothesis is not fulfilled because international cooperation has not significantly impacted sustainable agroindustry growth due to insufficient production to sustain these projects. Furthermore, during this period, there was no balance in sustainability criteria —economic, social, and environmental—and the total amounts received are not an indicator of efficiency in project development. Instead, these projects require monitoring and sustainability.

A challenge lies in adapting to different methodologies while ensuring results are achieved. Additionally, it is crucial to identify donor projections so that programs or projects include a differentiating factor.

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