



**Intermediate Assessment Review of the Country Partnership
Framework
(2014-2018) between Spain and Ecuador**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In 2009, the Spanish Cooperation (SC) implemented the Country Partnership Frameworks (CPF), a strategic planning instrument developed jointly with the partnering countries, to put the SC mission into practice.

The 2014 – 2018 Spain – Ecuador CPF is a reflection of the changes in the national landscape in regard to political, economical and social affairs. Through this instrument, the SC undertook a new role as facilitator of processes and discussion spaces, in addition to promoting work alongside State entities and organizations of the Ecuadorian and Spanish civil societies.

The 2014 – 2018 CPF addresses four Development Outcomes (DO): i) DO1 Productive Development, ii) DO2 Research, Development and Innovation, iii) DO3 Training of Civil Servants, and iv) DO4 Post-Earthquake Reconstruction. The first three outcomes are framed within the National Plan for Good-Living [*Plan Nacional para el Buen Vivir* or *PNBV*]. DO4 was added later throughout the process, after the Joint Commission approved the inclusion of a new component, in alignment with the post-earthquake Plan for Reconstruction and Productive Reactivation.

The intermediate review of the 2014 – 2018 CPF aimed at analyzing the strategic framework (macro-level) and its action points (meso-level) during the period between 2015 and 2016, and from January to October 2017. It also included analyzing three field interventions (micro-level) to assess the implementation of crosscutting approaches.

The CPF review responded to four goals, which are described in detail as follows:

- 1) Analyze the CPF's level of coherence, its alignment with Ecuadorian public policies, and its efficiency as strategic planning instrument.
- 2) Review the level of coherence of the SC's instruments and interventions in Ecuador in relation to the CPF.
- 3) Evaluate the level of enforcement of the CPF's crosscutting approaches for gender, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability in the supported interventions, pertaining the SC's differential value in Ecuador.
- 4) Provide input to improve efficacy, efficiency, alignment, and coherence of the interventions supported by the SC in Ecuador, and extend potential recommendations for future reflection on the next CPF.

The review analyzed the key aspects in the CPF's design and implementation, which made it possible to evaluate the main breakthroughs and pending challenges.

The methodological sequence encompassed the following phases: 1) Literature review; 2) Construction of the assessment matrix and identification of key stakeholders; 3) Data collection through interviews, workshops, online queries,

and one field visit; 4) Outcome analysis and feedback; 5) Drafting of interim and final reports.

The literature review included documentation on the CPF's design, implementation, follow-up and monitoring, as well as content related to the Ecuadorian public policy and the guiding documents for the country's international cooperation.

In order to lead the review process, the consulting team prepared an assessment tool with 22 guiding questions, which are also the assessment hypothesis. The questions were broken down in accordance with the goals and dimensions to be analyzed, which define its scope in regard to the design, structure, processes, outcomes, and indicators of the CPF. In addition, the key stakeholders to be consulted were identified according to their typology.

For data collection, besides the document review, the following tools -including interviews, workshops, online queries, and a field visit- were used. These tools allowed to identify the stakeholder's perceptions about the assessment and triangulate the information collected. A field trip to three projects supported by the SC was carried out to the Province of Chimborazo. During the visit, mainstreaming of gender, interculturality and environmental sustainability into the productive development component of projects was observed (DO1.).

To complement the insights concerning the CPF's internal architecture analysis, throughout the interviews and workshops, the consulted stakeholders carried out a numerical assessment of the questions in regard to goal 1 of the assessment. Numeric values were not used in goals 2, 3 and 4, given the nature of the data to be collected.

The geographical scope of the analysis was constrained to the CPF's action zones: Zone 1: Provinces of Imbabura, Sucumbíos, Carchi, and Esmeraldas; Zone 3: Provinces of Pastaza, Tungurahua, Chimborazo, and Cotopaxi; Zone 4: Provinces of Manabí; and the IKIAM University of the Amazon, in the Province of Napo.

A total of 66 stakeholders from Ecuadorian public institutions, Ecuadorian NGOs, Spanish public institutions, Spanish NGOs, other Spanish Cooperation stakeholders, and international cooperation organizations were part of the consultation process.

Among the main results of the evaluation stands out the alignment of the CPF with the Ecuadorian development priorities or public policies. The importance of having a framework of outcomes is highlighted in order to define, monitor and assess the DO, which contribute to the CPF's efficacy as a planning instrument. The CPF has allowed focus of sectorial and geographic efforts to meet the DO, which results in greater efficiency and lower transaction costs.

Among the main conclusions of the revision of the MAP, the following stand out:

Alignment to national priorities (*PNBV*) by specifically adopting two policies (Policies 4.6 and 10.4) and one guideline (Guideline 1.5.f) in DO1, DO2 and DO3, as their own Development Outcome. DO4 is aligned to the post-earthquake Plan for Reconstruction and Productive Reactivation. At a macro level it addresses the priorities established by the National Policy for International Cooperation and by the National Agenda for International Cooperation (DO1, DO2 and DO3), by the National Strategy to Change the Productive Matrix (DO1 and DO2), and by the National Plan for Science, Technology, Innovation and Ancient Knowledge (DO2).

The SC's comparative advantages in Ecuador -to foster economic opportunities for the least privileged and to strengthen the structure and management systems in the public sector- were prioritized in the CPF's design and implementation.

The CPF has facilitated the annual implementation of *Programa País* and has also enhanced the efficiency of interventions led by the AECID. As concerns ownership and alignment, in defining the CPF's Development Outcomes, the SC in Ecuador has privileged the development priorities defined in the *PNBV*, in response to a request filed by the Ecuadorian Government.

With respect to ownership, the CPF integrated the ownership of development priorities as one of its core principles, acknowledging that alliances may only be successful if they grow to adapt to the country's specific needs and situations and if it is the country who leads them, according to the proposal made by the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Efficiency.

In regard to harmonization, the CPF has allowed other donors to understand the SC's comparative advantages in Ecuador, facilitating a space for work allocation among donors.

As concerns management aimed at Development Outcomes, the outcome framework of the CPF and *Programa País* altogether, in spite of being extremely complex and detailed, enables follow-up and assessment of a common strategy oriented towards the Development Outcomes.

In terms of concentration, the CPF has allowed to focus sectorial and geographic efforts to attain the established Development Outcomes, improving efficacy as translated into lower transaction costs.

The CPF has proven that it is a flexible instrument in terms of design and implementation. In times in which the State recovered the role it had to play in development planning, the CPF granted the NGOs with a space to work in the rural development landscape (DO1) hand in hand with the Ecuadorian State's needs.

Cooperation relations between Spain and Ecuador gave flexibility to the CPF in the face of the situation created by the April, 2016 earthquake, by including DO4 to the reconstruction and economic reactivation of the shaken provinces.

Finally, in May 2017, monitoring and assessment indicators were adjusted for three of the CPF's Development Outcomes. Even so, the expectation is that, despite such reduction, the indicators report will continue to hinder the project's implementation among the stakeholders involved in the CPF.

The CPF's outcomes' framework provides the possibility to measure the attainment of Development Outcomes. However, the assessment gave rise to a major concern with regard to the complexity entailed in the indicators report and the lack of alignment between the project's and CPF's indicators. It is key to have a series of a few strategic indicators to safeguard the coherence in the CPF's role as a strategic planning document.

The CPF must offer improved strategic guidance supported by follow-up indicators to measure the scope of the Development Outcomes expected by SC. The repetitive message, conveyed throughout the entire assessment determines that it is key to avoid working with such complex indicators, which are hard to measure and hinder adequate tracking of the SC's contribution to Ecuador's development.

The implementation of crosscutting axes (gender, interculturality and environmental sustainability approach), although it is a commitment uttered by the CPF, depends on installed capacity and the political will of the Parties involved thereto.

Promotion of rights among women and gender equality were not addressed in a sectorial way in the CPF, in spite of the fact that these topics are part of the National Agenda for International Cooperation and despite the SC's relevant path in that sphere. In the current CPF, gender remains as a crosscutting axis that faces implementation and development constraints.

The outcomes of the Regional Programs Indigenous and Afro-descendant are out of the CPF and are not reported in the incidence process that may stem from enforcing a Human and Intercultural Rights approach in the country.

Concerning the environmental sustainability approach, the conclusion is that it requires further attention, given its relationship with DO1-beneficiary populations; it also needs to integrate broader environmental and climate change considerations in the design and implementation of interventions.

Finally, a major aspect for checks and balances is required when dealing with the above-mentioned conclusions. As the CPF is the SC's main accountability and strategic planning instrument, it should include every contribution made by the Spanish society to Ecuador, encompassing every program, instrument and action of the SC.