

Approach Paper

# Technical Cooperations at the IDB

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# **Technical Cooperations at the IDB**

**Office of Evaluation and Oversight**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| CAN    | Country Department Andean Group  |
| CCB    | Country Department Caribbean   |
| CDC    | Country Development Challenges   |
| CID    | Country Department Central America, Haiti, Mexico, Panamá and Dominican Republic |
| CPD    | Country Program Document   |
| CPE    | Country Program Evaluation   |
| CRTC   | Contingent Recovery Technical Cooperation  |
| CS     | Country Strategy   |
| CSC    | Country Department Southern Cone   |
| GCM    | Grants and Co-financing Management Unit  |
| GPS    | Global Partnership Office  |
| ICPR   | Independent Country Program Review   |
| IDB    | Inter-American Development Bank  |
| NRTC   | Non-Reimbursable Technical Cooperation   |
| OC     | Ordinary Capital   |
| OC-SDP | Ordinary Capital Special Development Program                                     |
| ORP    | Office of Outreach and Partnerships  |
| OVE    | Office of Evaluation and Oversight   |
| PCY    | Office of the Presidency   |
| QRR    | Quality and Risk Review  |
| RPPD   | Regional Programming Prioritization Document                                     |
| RTC    | Reimbursable Technical Cooperation   |
| SG     | Sovereign-Guaranteed   |
| SP     | Special Programs   |
| TC     | Technical Cooperation  |
| TCDM   | Technical Cooperation Decision Mechanism   |
| VPC    | Vice Presidency of Countries   |
| VPS    | Vice Presidency of Sectors   |
| XCPE   | Extended Country Program Evaluation  |

## I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 **This document defines the approach the Office of Evaluation and Oversight (OVE) will adopt to evaluate technical cooperations (TC) in the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).** It includes the objective, scope, questions, and methodology that OVE will use for the evaluation. This evaluation was included in OVE's 2025–2026 work program (document [RE-600-3](#)), as approved by the IDB and IDB Invest Boards.
- 1.2 **Since its establishment, the IDB has supported its member countries by providing technical assistance through non-reimbursable instruments, such as TC.**<sup>1</sup> The Agreement establishing the IDB includes among the Bank's functions the provision of technical assistance for "(i) the preparation, financing, and execution of development plans and projects, including the consideration of priorities and the formulation of loan proposals; and (ii) the development and advanced training, through seminars and other forms of instruction, of personnel specializing in the formulation and implementation of development plans and projects."<sup>2</sup>
- 1.3 **OVE has conducted two previous evaluations focused on TC in 2010 and 2014.**<sup>3</sup> The 2010 evaluation (document [RE-364](#)) examined the Bank's management of non-reimbursable TCs and found that TC funding grew significantly since 2005, supported by new donor contributions and the creation of dedicated units and policies to strengthen management. However, it noted limited accountability for developmental results, fragmented programming, and weak alignment with the Bank's broader goals. The 2014 evaluation (document [RE-476-5](#)) found that the shift to using Ordinary Capital (OC) for Special Programs (SPs) expanded TC access, improved processing times through increased Bank execution, and helped advance some new areas of work. At the same time, the evaluation identified opportunities to strengthen strategic direction and evaluability, noting the absence of an overarching strategy, program-level monitoring, and systematic mechanisms to assess results. In addition, earmarked funds reduced flexibility, encouraged suboptimal allocation, and faced challenges in attracting substantial donor contributions. The evaluation recommended improved resource management, clearer strategic alignment, implementation of a results framework, and restricting OC funding to seed money for new initiatives and regional or project-support activities. Even though these recommendations were not endorsed

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<sup>1</sup> TCs form part of the wider scope of technical assistance actions available to the Bank, such as Fee-Based Advisory and Knowledge Services and Economic and Sector Work, among others

<sup>2</sup> Agreement Establishing the Inter-American Development Bank. Article VI. Section 1.

<sup>3</sup> In 2018, OVE also evaluated the IDB's support for knowledge production and training mainly through technical assistance (document [RE-517-2](#)), noting challenges in assessing strategic alignment due to decentralized processes and inconsistent quality controls across units and funding sources.

by the Board,<sup>4</sup> Management used the findings of the evaluation to inform improvements included in the development of the Action Plan for the Special Programs financed by Ordinary Capital (document [GN-2819](#)).<sup>5</sup>

- 1.4 **The objective of this evaluation is to assess the relevance and strategic deployment of TC operations, as well as the adequacy of the operational framework that governs them.** It aims to determine the extent to which TCs respond to institutional priorities, regional challenges, and the country's demands; and whether the current operational and institutional frameworks support their effective and coherent deployment. The objective of the evaluation is directly aligned with the objectives of IDBStrategy+, which calls for strengthening the strategic use of TCs to maximize development impact. The evaluation is expected to generate evidence on how TCs are used and provide recommendations on how their strategic value can be strengthened in alignment with the institution's objectives. Two main questions guide this evaluation: 1) How relevant are technical cooperation operations in addressing IDB's priorities, regional and country-specific challenges, as well as the country's demand? and 2) How adequate is the Bank's operational framework for technical cooperation?
- 1.5 **This evaluation focuses on non-reimbursable TC operations<sup>6</sup> approved by the IDB,<sup>7</sup> using a two-level approach.** A portfolio-level analysis will cover all 4,477 TCs approved between 2015 and 2024 to identify trends in the use of the instrument across countries, sectors, and regions. To complement this, an operation-level analysis will examine a purposive sample drawn from the 2,383 TCs approved between 2020 and 2024, allowing for deeper insights into TC design, implementation, and governance. This recent period was chosen to ensure better data availability and greater relevance. To examine the institutional and operational frameworks that govern the design of TC operations, the evaluation team will focus on the processes, tools, and responsibilities that guide how they are identified, designed, approved, and financed within the IDB. The evaluation encompasses TCs funded both with the Bank's Ordinary Capital (OC) and third-party donor resources.

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<sup>4</sup> The Board found that, even though the evaluation highlighted important issues, the recommendations as formulated were not implementable and were seen as limiting the Bank's flexibility to respond to the needs of its borrowing member countries.

<sup>5</sup> The Action Plan proposed a set of initiatives, including Special Programs streamlining, rationalization, and flexibility in annual programming; carrying out a comprehensive analysis of why the Bank was increasingly executing TCs; developing a monitoring and reporting system for TCs, and improving the management of knowledge products financed with TCs.

<sup>6</sup> The evaluation focuses exclusively on non-reimbursable TCs (NRTC). It excludes reimbursable TCs (RTCs) and contingent recovery TCs (CRTCs), given their low number of approvals during the evaluation period (5 RTCs and 18 CRTCs). Additionally, it covers only technical assistance financed through TCs, excluding other types of knowledge products or services such as sector work, fee-for-service activities, or assistance funded from the Bank's administrative budget

<sup>7</sup> The evaluation excludes technical assistance (advisory services) provided by IDB Invest, as they operate under a separate institutional framework and because OVE provided specific recommendations to strengthen the governance of IDB Invest's advisory services in the IDB Invest Evaluation (2023) These included the establishment of selection and prioritization criteria, funding and client concessionality mechanisms, and a monitoring and evaluation system. IDB Invest Management is currently implementing these recommendations as part of the deployment of its new business model (IDB Invest 2.0).

- 1.6 **A new assessment of TC is important and timely given its central role in the IDB Group’s non-lending support and its contribution to the value the Bank offers the region.** Given the strategic role of TCs, evaluating how they are deployed offers a valuable opportunity to deepen understanding of their diversity, and intent, as well as their alignment with institutional priorities, regional challenges, and the country’s demands. It also provides an occasion to examine whether the current framework for identifying, preparing, financing, and implementing TCs supports their strategic use—insights that are important for maximizing their contribution to development impact. The evaluation is also timely as OVE’s previous evaluations were conducted several years ago and because it will provide relevant input to the Board and the administration for the upcoming update to the current TC policy.
- 1.7 **The remainder of this Approach Paper is organized as follows.** The following section presents a background on TC in the IDB. Section III describes the evolution of the IDB’s TC portfolio from 2015 to 2024. Section IV presents the evaluation’s scope, questions, and methodology. Section V includes the evaluation team and timeline. Annex I presents the portfolio’s summary, and Annex II contains the evaluation matrix (evaluation questions, scope, and methods).

## II. BACKGROUND ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION IN THE IDB

- 2.1 **The TC Program is governed by the 2008 TC Policy, its accompanying framework document, and the TC Operational Guidelines.** The current TC Policy, approved in 2008 (document [GN-2470-2](#)), defines the objective of the Bank’s technical cooperation—“to facilitate the transfer of technical know-how and qualified experience with the purpose of complementing and strengthening national and regional technical capacities, thereby contributing to the primary purpose of the Bank”.<sup>8</sup> This policy applies to TC operations led by IDB operational units, financed by the Bank with its own resources or resources under its administration, under the modalities of Non-Reimbursable TC (NRTC), Contingent Recovery TC (CRTC), or Reimbursable TC (RTC). The policy aimed to provide a long-term vision for managing technical cooperation and was complemented by the TC framework (document [GN-2469-2](#)), which offered medium-term guidance for developing and implementing the TC Program. The framework document included a Bank model of grant resource management for TC and established a centralized grant resource management function within the Bank’s Grants and Co-Financing Management Unit (GCM) at the Global Partnership Office (GPS).<sup>9</sup> GCM oversees a centralized “single window” to match TC proposals with funding from the Ordinary Capital Special Development Program (OC-SDP) and third-party sources. In 2011, Operational Guidelines (document [GN-2629-1](#)) were issued to guide the programming, preparation, approval, execution, and monitoring of TCs. These guidelines also introduced the current TC taxonomy, classifying them into three categories: Operational Support, Client Support, and Research and Dissemination TCs (Box 2.1).

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<sup>8</sup> Proposal for a new Bank policy on technical cooperation. Revised version. Document [GN-2470-2](#), paragraph 2.2

<sup>9</sup> The Grants and Co-financing Management Unit (GCM) at the Global Partnership Office (GPS), formerly known as the Office of Outreach and Partnerships (ORP), works with other IDB departments to ensure grants and co-financing resources are used effectively and strategically.

### Box 2.1. TC taxonomy description

- **Operational support:** TCs that support the preparation, execution, or evaluation of a loan, guarantee, or grant. They must be linked to a financial product—either in the pipeline, under execution, or, in the case of ex-post evaluations, fully committed or disbursed.
- **Client support:** TCs initiated at the request of the borrowing country.<sup>a</sup> They include demand-driven, stand-alone products that provide either (i) rapid responses to client needs (e.g., intraregional cooperation), or (ii) medium- to long-term support for policy development, sector knowledge, outreach, capacity building, training, and community development.
- **Research and dissemination:** include all knowledge products and dissemination activities initiated by the Bank. They consist of stand-alone efforts to deepen the Bank's or clients' knowledge or capacity on specific topics, or to share existing knowledge through outreach and dissemination.

*Source:* Operational Guidelines for Technical Cooperation Products. Revised version. Document [GN-2629-1](#). Note: (a) In very specific occasions, TCs can be requested by private sector clients, as stipulated by the TC policy.

**2.2 While the overarching policy for TC operations at the IDB has remained unchanged since 2008, the institutional arrangements have evolved over time.** Key elements of this evolution include adjustments to the overall architecture, resource allocation mechanisms, programming exercises, coordination mechanisms, and the monitoring and reporting system.

- Overall architecture of the OC Program: TCs funded with OC have been progressively organized into different thematic areas and windows (see paragraph 2.3). This evolution aimed to reduce fragmentation over time, enhance alignment with institutional priorities, and preserve the flexibility to support emerging needs.
- Resource allocation mechanisms: changes in the overall architecture were accompanied by adjustments to resource allocation processes. These adjustments sought to increase flexibility and address challenges related to unutilized carryover resources, by allowing the transfer of resources between OC programs to some extent.
- Programming processes: while TC operations can be identified on a rolling basis, over time, efforts have been made to include both country-specific and regional TCs into the programming exercises. This was intended to strengthen the alignment of TCs with the priorities set in the institutional strategy, country strategies, and sector framework documents.
- Internal coordination mechanisms: decision-making bodies have been established and adjusted over time to enhance coordination between the Vice Presidency of Countries (VPC), the Vice Presidency of Sectors (VPS), and the Global Partnership Office (GPS), and more recently with the Office of the Presidency (PCY) (see paragraph 2.4). These changes sought to ensure that the TC portfolio responds to country demand and institutional priorities and aimed to improve the agility of TC preparation processes.
- Monitoring and reporting system: In 2011, Management introduced tools to strengthen results orientation—an annual reporting system, a Reports Portal, and a visualization platform—improving accountability and visibility of TCs. In 2014, the Board requested inclusion of a TC monitoring and reporting system in the OC Special Programs action plan. Management proposed a new Technical Cooperation Monitoring and Reporting System, which was approved

in 2015 and updated in 2019. This system established that each TC must include a results matrix with output indicators.<sup>10</sup> Outcome indicators are optional—though they may be required by donors in some cases.

- 2.3 TC operations are financed through a combination of the Bank’s Ordinary Capital (OC) resources and contributions from third-party donors.** Since its inception, the IDB has financed TCs with its own resources unlike other Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), which tend to rely more heavily on external funding. Prior to 2005, TCs were funded primarily through the net income of the Fund for Special Operations (FSO). In 2005, the IDB’s Board of Directors approved the use of OC net income to fund TCs in support of specific needs at the country and regional level. The Bank created special programs as the financing vehicle, which evolved into strategic development programs in 2016 (document [GN-2819-1](#)) and finally consolidated into a single and integrated Strategic Development Program (OC-SDP) (document [GN-2819-14](#)) in 2021.<sup>11</sup> The OC-SDP is organized into three windows that include core commitments, priority areas, and emerging needs.<sup>12</sup> These windows are currently being revised by Management.<sup>13</sup> OC resources are allocated annually to these windows and are sent for approval by the Programming Committee of the Board. On the other hand, third-party donor financing includes single-donor and multi-donor trust funds, as well as financial intermediary funds. Donor trust funds have different guidelines that define their respective scope<sup>14</sup> and outline the associated procedures, including specific eligibility criteria. Additionally, project-specific grants and special arrangements are available for preidentified specific operations and are managed on a case-by-case basis<sup>15</sup>.
- 2.4 TC operations may be identified through the annual programming exercise or on a rolling basis, and they generally follow a streamlined funding process, with some exceptions depending on the source of financing.**

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<sup>10</sup> In cases where two or more TCs are linked, a joint monitoring and reporting is carried out through a single results matrix

<sup>11</sup> Initially established with 11 OC-SPs in 2008, the architecture expanded to 17 OC-SP by 2012, before being regrouped into four thematic clusters in 2013, for a total of 19 OC-SP. In 2021, these programs were consolidated into a single OC-SDP subdivided into three windows.

<sup>12</sup> The Core Commitments Window includes flagship areas related to the lending program and specific client and knowledge needs (e.g., regional public goods, country systems strengthening, regional policy dialogue, emergency assistance). The Priority Areas Window includes six thematic areas: climate change and environmental sustainability; sustainable and resilient infrastructure; effective, efficient, and transparent institutions; global and regional integration; inclusive social development (including gender and diversity); and inclusive economic growth. The Window for Emerging Needs allows the introduction of new areas that cannot be adequately addressed through the other windows.

<sup>13</sup> A new architecture for the OC-SDP (document [GN-2819-18](#)) was discussed at the Policy and Evaluation Committee on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and is currently being revised by Management, incorporating the feedback provided by Board members.

<sup>14</sup> Some funds have a broad scope, while others are very specific. For example, the Korea Poverty Reduction Fund focuses on poverty reduction and social development activities, while the Japan Quality Infrastructure Initiative finances operations for sustainable infrastructure for competitiveness and inclusive growth.

<sup>15</sup> Project specific grants are non-reimbursable contributions from donors, administered by the Bank to finance or co-finance specific grant operations, such as technical cooperation projects. Special arrangements refer to other options of funding operations with partner resources, following specific guidelines and procedures. These include the European Commission to finance or co-finance projects of mutual interest in areas such as citizen security, public and fiscal administration, energy, environment, among others; and Fontagro, which supports co-financing for agricultural technology projects.

Country-specific TCs are typically included in the annual country programming exercise led by VPC and reflected in the Country Programming Document (CPD) with some exceptions. Emergency TCs are, by nature, not programmed; they are deployed in response to a country's request in the event of an emergency. Donor-funded, country-specific TCs are not always programmed and are prepared in accordance with donor requirements. Regional operations funded with OC resources follow their own programming process, coordinated by GCM, and are recorded in the Regional Programming Prioritization Document (RPPD). This process aims to ensure that regional client support and operational support TCs are aligned with country dialogue and programming, that sectoral regional work includes active participation from relevant specialists and divisions, and that there is space for regional research and dissemination TCs. Parallely, regional operations funded with donor resources do not follow a programming process and are prepared on a rolling basis. The preparation and funding cycle is the same for both country-specific and regional TCs, although there are exceptions depending on the type of TC.<sup>16</sup> Once TC proposals are submitted through the Single Window, a preliminary funding match is conducted by GCM, followed by an eligibility review by Fund Coordinators and country and sector liaisons, to ensure alignment with country and sector priorities. For regional TCs included in the RPPD or for country-specific TCs, eligibility is granted automatically. In other cases, the TC Decision Mechanism (TCDM),<sup>17</sup> responsible for day-to-day decisions concerning the allocation of resources to individual TCs, reviews the operation to determine eligibility. Once eligibility is confirmed, project teams prepare the TC documentation. The Quality and Risk Review (QRR) committee then reviews these documents and authorizes GCM to certify that funding is available.

### III. PORTFOLIO TRENDS IN TECHNICAL COOPERATION AT THE IDB (2015-2024)

- 3.1 **Between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2024, IDB approved 4,477 non-reimbursable<sup>18</sup> TCs, representing 78% of all sovereign-guaranteed (SG) operation approvals by number.** Over this ten-year period, TC operations accounted for 1.8% of total SG-approved amounts, totaling US\$2.1 billion. Of these, 2,975 TCs (66% of the total) and US\$1.2 billion (56.6% of the total approved amount) supported country-specific initiatives. (see Figure I.1 in Annex I). The remaining 1,502 operations and US\$896.6 million in approvals were directed toward regional efforts.<sup>19</sup> During the period, annual TC approval amounts averaged US\$206.7 million, with individual operations receiving an average of approximately US\$461,000. On average, country-specific TCs were approved for US\$393,338, while regional TCs averaged US\$596,919.
- 3.2 **There has been an upward trend in TC funding over the last ten years.** Annual total approved funding for TCs gradually increased from US\$184 million in 2015 to US\$228.3 million in 2019. This upward trend was interrupted in 2020, with a 12.9% decline compared to 2019, followed by a further 9.6% drop in 2021. From 2022 to

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<sup>16</sup> For example, TCs funded through project-specific grants do not go through Single Window as their resources are secured on a case-by-case basis. TCs for the targeted response to C&D countries, CT/INTRA, and Emergency TCs do not go through the funding or preparation processes.

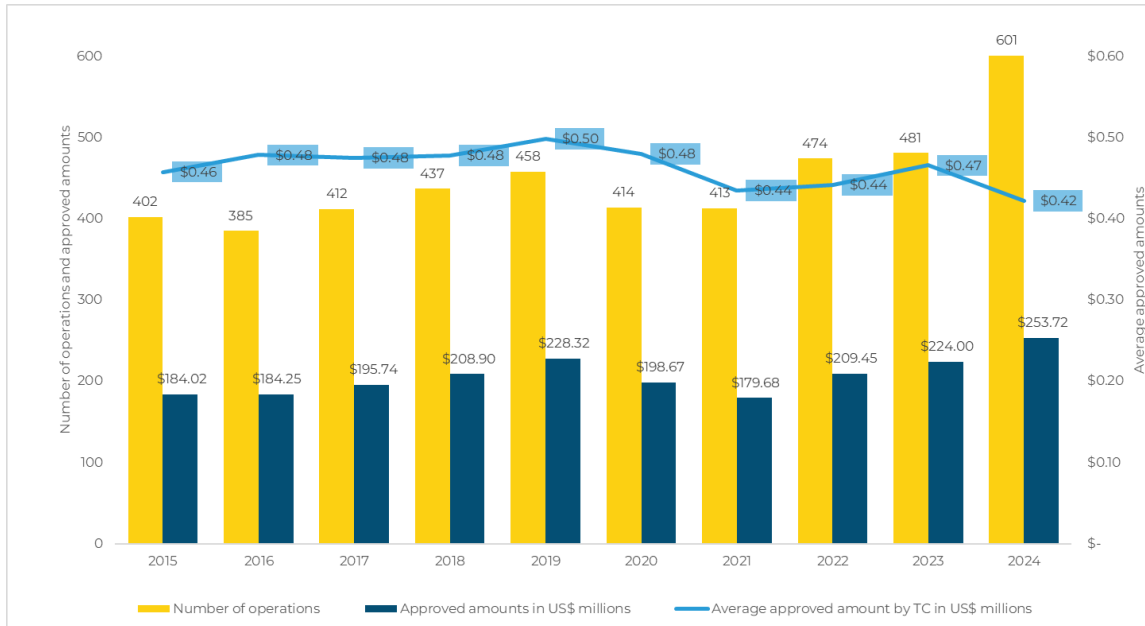
<sup>17</sup> Members of the TCDM are PCY, VPC, VPS, and GPS/GCM.

<sup>18</sup> Excludes reimbursable and contingent recovery TCs.

<sup>19</sup> According to the TC guidelines, regional TCs are those benefiting two or more countries.

2024, approved funding recovered, peaking at US\$253.7 million in 2024 across 601 projects, driven by a significant increase in OC SDP allocations that year (see Figure 3.1).<sup>20</sup>

**Figure 3.1: Evolution of TC approvals 2015-2024**



Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases

**3.3 TC operations were funded almost equally by the IDB and donor resources and were predominantly executed by the IDB.** Between 2015 and 2024, 52.5% of total TC approved amounts were financed with OC resources, while donor contributions made up the remaining 47.5% (see Figure I.2 in Annex I). Among donor-funded TCs, 42.5% of the approved amounts came from single donor arrangements. Project-specific grants and multi-donor funds each represented about 21% of donor contributions, while 15.5% was provided through the Financial Intermediary Fund (see Figures I.3 and I.4 in Annex I). Execution of TC operations, however, was mostly carried out by the Bank, which served as the executing agency for 87.6% of all TCs<sup>21</sup>.

**3.4 Client Support was the most prominent use of TC resources, though patterns differed notably between country-specific and regional TCs.** Client Support accounted for 58.2% of total approved amounts, followed by Research and Dissemination (24.5%) and Operational Support (17.4%). Among country-specific TCs, Client Support dominated with 69.7% of approved funding, while Operational Support represented 28%, and Research and Dissemination only amounted to

<sup>20</sup> In November 2023, the IDB Board approved an increase in resources for the OC SDP, allocating US\$149 million for fiscal year 2024, a 46% increase over the 2023 fiscal year budget (see documents [GN-3185](#), [GN-31851](#) and [GN-2819-17](#)).

<sup>21</sup> TCs can be executed by the Bank or by a recipient agency, which may be a government agency at the national, state, or local level, a private enterprise borrowing from the Bank, or a civil society organization.

- 2.3% (see Figure I.5 in Annex I). In contrast, regional TCs were primarily allocated to Research and Dissemination (53.5%), followed by Client Support (43%) and Operational Support (3.4%) (see Figure I.6 in Annex I).
- 3.5 **Five sectors accounted for just over half of total TC approvals during the evaluation period.** The sectors with the highest approved amounts were in descending order: Environment and Natural Disasters (12.9%), Reform and Modernization of the State (12.5%), Water and Sanitation (10.9%), Social Investment (9.4%) and Energy (8.1%) (see Figure I.7 in Annex I). While the exact rankings and percentages vary slightly, these five sectors consistently represented more than 50% of the total approved amounts for both country-specific and regional TCs.
- 3.6 **Seven countries accounted for half of the country-specific TC funding, with Colombia and Brazil receiving the largest allocations.** Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, and Paraguay consistently received close to half of all approved funding for country-specific TCs. Colombia and Brazil led with 12.8% and 11.3% of the total, respectively, each receiving over 50% more than the next highest recipient, Peru (7.1%) (see Figure I.8 in Annex I). These three countries also registered the highest approved amounts for individual TCs, each with at least one TC operation with an approved budget of over US\$15 million. Overall, countries in the C and D income groups received 56.8% of approved TC funding, while those in the A and B groups received 43.2%.<sup>22</sup> By subregion, the Regional Country Department for Central America, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, and the Dominican Republic (CID) received the largest share (33.3%), followed by the Andean Group (CAN) with 30.4%, the Southern Cone (CSC) with 25.8%, and the Caribbean (CCB) with 10.5% (see Figure I.9 in Annex I). Close to a third (30.5%) of regional TCs serviced all 26 borrowing countries, another third (34.6%) had four or fewer beneficiaries, and the rest had between five and 26 participating countries. In terms of participation in regional TCs, the five most frequent recipients were Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Chile, and Ecuador.

#### IV. EVALUATION QUESTIONS, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

##### A. Evaluation scope and questions

- 4.1 **The evaluation will assess the relevance and strategic deployment of TC operations, as well as the adequacy of the operational framework<sup>23</sup> that governs them.** First, the evaluation will assess the extent to which TCs respond to institutional priorities, regional and country-specific challenges, as well as client demand, thereby evaluating their relevance within the Bank's overall development agenda and in relation to client priorities. Second, the evaluation will review the operational and institutional frameworks governing TCs to understand how well the current arrangements support the strategic deployment of TCs — that is, whether

<sup>22</sup> The IDB groups member countries based on their relative level of development within the region. Group A comprises the more advanced countries; Group B, middle-income developing countries, and Group C and D encompasses the least-developed countries in the region.

<sup>23</sup> The set of institutional processes, tools, and responsibilities that guide how Technical Cooperation (TC) operations are identified, designed, approved, implemented, and financed within the IDB. This framework includes decision-making structures, eligibility criteria, resource allocation mechanisms, key implementation considerations (such as execution modalities), monitoring and reporting systems, and internal workflows that shape how TCs are deployed across countries, sectors, and priorities.

they facilitate alignment with institutional and client priorities, enable timely and flexible support, and foster coordination across actors and instruments. This approach will also identify institutional or procedural constraints that limit the strategic potential of TCs. To address these objectives, the evaluation will use a two-level analytical approach: a portfolio-level analysis of TC operations approved between 2015 and 2024 and an operation-level (project-level) review of a purposive sample of TCs approved between 2020-2024.

#### 4.2 **Two main questions guide this evaluation**

- I. How relevant are TC operations in addressing IDB’s institutional priorities, regional challenges, and the country’s demands?
  - a. To what extent are TC operations aligned with the instrument's objective?
  - b. To what extent are TC operations aligned with IDB institutional priorities (i.e., IDB's institutional strategies, sector framework documents, country strategies, and regional initiatives)?
  - c. To what extent do TC operations respond to regional and country-specific challenges as well as country demand?
- II. How adequate is the Bank’s operational framework for TC?
  - a. To what extent does the operational framework for TCs enable (or constrain) the identification, funding, approval, and implementation<sup>24</sup> of relevant TCs?
  - b. How adequate is the operational framework—including its organizational structure, incentives, monitoring and reporting systems—for identifying relevant TCs and facilitating learning?

#### **B. Evaluation methodology**

4.3 **The scope of this evaluation includes non-reimbursable TC operations approved by the IDB, with two distinct levels of analysis: a portfolio-level and an operation-level analysis.** To ensure adequate coverage and depth of analysis, a broad-based assessment at the level of all 4,477 NRTC approved between 2015 and 2024 (portfolio analysis) will be complemented with an in-depth assessment of a purposive sample drawn from the 2,383 TCs approved between 2020 and 2024 (operation-level analysis). This more recent period was selected to ensure better data availability and enhance the relevance of the findings. The portfolio-level analysis will focus on identifying trends and intended uses of the instrument across regions, sectors, and countries. The operation-level work will rely on desk reviews and interviews with IDB staff and country counterparts, including executing agencies, to explore the use of the TC instrument in greater depth. To examine the current institutional and operational frameworks that govern the design and implementation of TC operations, the evaluation team will review internal guidelines and process documents and conduct interviews with key stakeholders (see Table 4.1 and Annex II).

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<sup>24</sup> Only key aspects of implementation will be assessed, such as TCs' execution modalities (IDB executed vs client executed), identification of implementation constraints, and monitoring and reporting systems.

- 4.4 **For the operation-level analysis, the evaluation will use a nested case design to purposively sample country-specific and regional TC operations.** For the country-specific TCs, four countries will be selected based on variation in key variables such as geographic region, income level, size of the TC portfolio, and the type of TCs employed, allowing for a diverse cross-section of institutional and country contexts. Within each country a purposive sample of country-specific TC will be selected, reflecting variation in TC type, approved amounts, funding source, and sector focus. The initial sample will include approximately 40 TC operations across the four countries<sup>25</sup>. This strategy seeks to ensure efficiency for fieldwork while maintaining diversity and comparability across cases. For the regional TCs, the evaluation will use a maximum variation purposive sampling of approximately 40 TCs selected on the basis of key variables such as geographic reach, number of beneficiary countries, sectors, and type of activity. The final number of operations reviewed in both cases will be determined iteratively, based on the principles of convergence and saturation of findings, ensuring that the sample is sufficiently rich to draw meaningful insights into the relevance, use, and strategic value of TCs.
- 4.5 **OVE will employ a mixed-methods approach to assess the relevance and adequacy of the operational framework of the Bank's TC operations.** The relevance analysis will examine the extent to which TCs align with: (i) the objectives of the instrument, (ii) IDB institutional priorities, (iii) regional initiatives and (iv) regional and country-specific challenges and demands. To this end, the evaluation team will carry out (i) a portfolio-level analysis of TC operations, and (iii) a qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence. To assess the adequacy of the operational framework, the evaluation will include: (i) a reconstruction of the process theory for the deployment of TCs, and (ii) a process theory-driven assessment informed by qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence. Table 4.1. shows a summary of the methodological approach by question and level of analysis, and Annex II includes a detailed evaluation design matrix.

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<sup>25</sup> This approach seeks to enhance the likelihood that the sample is representative of the broader reference population. Case (operation) selection will initially ensure meaningful variation across the population; however, representativeness can only be determined ex post, depending on the convergence of findings. If convergence is low, additional cases may be incorporated to capture greater variation.

**Table 4.1. Summary of Evaluation Approach**

| Evaluation question   | Level of analysis  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | Portfolio-level (2015-2024)  | Purposive sample of TC cases (2020-2024)   |
| <b>1. How relevant are technical cooperation operations in addressing IDB’s institutional priorities, regional challenges, and the country’s demands?</b>                                   |  |  |
| 1.1 To what extent are TC operations aligned with the instrument’s objective?   | Portfolio analysis to identify uses of TCs   | Qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence (In-depth desk review of TC documents; semi-structured interviews with IDB staff, country counterparts, and executing agencies) |
| 1.2 To what extent are TC operations aligned with IDB institutional priorities?   | Portfolio analysis   |  |
| 1.3 To what extent do TC operations respond to regional and country-specific challenges as well as country demand?  |  |  |
| <b>2. How adequate is the Bank’s operational framework for technical cooperation?</b>   |  |  |
| 2.1 To what extent does the operational framework for TCs enable (or constrain) the identification, funding, approval, and implementation of relevant TCs?                                  | Reconstruction of TC process theory to map how TC operations are identified, approved, funded, and implemented   | Process theory-driven assessment, informed by:<br><br>Qualitative analysis of interview-based evidence (semi-structured interviews with IDB staff, country counterparts, and executing agencies) |
| 2.2 How adequate is the operational framework—including its organizational structure, incentives, monitoring and reporting systems— for identifying relevant TCs and facilitating learning? | Process theory-driven assessment, informed by:<br>- Qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence (desk review of TC policy documents; semi-structured interviews with IDB staff (involved in the process) and donor counterparts |  |

Source: OVE.

**4.6 The relevance of TCs will be assessed based on the following methodological building blocks:**

- a. **Portfolio-level analysis of TC operations:** The evaluation will use available information from IDB databases to assess the relevance of the TC program at the aggregate level, including trend analysis over the period and, where data permits, hypothesis testing and statistical analysis. The evaluation will also identify the main uses of TCs within each of the three TC types (operational support, client support, and research and dissemination), seeking to detect patterns and clusters that reveal how the instrument is being applied and what kinds of activities it supports.
- b. **A qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence:** The evaluation will conduct an in-depth assessment of a purposive sample of TCs approved between 2020 and 2024. This will include a desk review of TC documents and semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and country counterparts to substantiate the analysis across all evaluation questions related to the relevance of TCs. Interviews will be carried out with IDB staff involved in the programming, preparation, design, and execution of TCs,

providing insights into the rationale behind them and their alignment with the country and institutional priorities. Similarly, interviews with country counterparts will collect information on the extent to which TCs reflect their demands.

4.7 **The adequacy of the operational framework will be assessed based on the following methodological building blocks:**

- a. **A reconstruction of the process theory of deployment of TCs:** To assess the adequacy of the operational framework, the evaluation will reconstruct a process theory that maps how TC operations are identified, approved, funded, and implemented within the IDB. The theory will map key aspects such as: organizational units involved in the identification, funding, and implementation of TCs; execution modalities and incentives; implementation processes and monitoring and reporting systems. This exercise will incorporate both formal processes (as outlined in internal guidelines and policies) and informal practices (as observed in day-to-day decision-making). The process mapping will be informed by internal documentation, procedural guidelines, and interviews with IDB staff and country counterparts. This process theory will serve as the analytical foundation for identifying constraints or enabling factors in the deployment of TCs.
- b. **A process theory-driven assessment informed by qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence.** Using the reconstructed process theory as a reference, the evaluation will conduct a structured assessment of the operational framework's adequacy with respect to whether it leads to: (i) identifying relevant TCs, (ii) leveraging synergies between TCs and other instruments, and (iii) identifying lessons learned from individual TCs to scale up for impact. This assessment will draw on a qualitative analysis of interviews and desk review evidence. Interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders involved in the programming, identification, eligibility, approval, and implementation process of TCs. These include Bank staff responsible for TC programming exercises, design, approval, and funding decisions, such as staff from the Grants and Co-financing Management Unit, VPC, VPS, and major donors of selected trust funds, where appropriate. Country counterparts, including executing agencies, will also be interviewed to assess how effectively they were engaged in the design and implementation.

4.8 **Limitations:** Given limited time and resources, the evaluation will not assess the relevance of the current OC SDP architecture (e.g., its strategic orientation, priority areas) or the specific agreements with third-party resources or their requirements or priorities. The evaluation will focus on assessing relevance at a project level and answering questions on governance and the management structures that allow for the allocation of resources. Given the lack of a clear understanding of the universe of TCs (a knowledge constraint that this evaluation will address) and the limited information available on the results (while output reporting is available, data on the strategic use of these products and overall TC outcomes is limited), the evaluation will not assess the results achieved by individual TC operations. Finally, the case-level analysis focuses on operations approved between 2020 and 2024, which is a period that may reflect contextual influences related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## V. TEAM AND TIMELINE

- 5.1 **Evaluation team:** The team comprises Lina Pedraza (task team leader), Claudia Figueroa, Vladimir Nessler, Brianda Romero, Erin Straight, Cristina Montero, and Melisa Wong, under the supervision of Jose Ignacio Sembler (acting Corporate Cluster Leader), Jozef Vaessen (Principal Advisor), and Marialisa Motta (Director of OVE).
- 5.2 **Timeline:** OVE will conduct its evaluation activities during 2025 and will deliver its final report to the Board of Directors during the first trimester of 2026 (see Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1. Indicative timeline of activities**

| Activities  | Date           |
|---|----------------|
| Approach Paper to Board of Executive Directors                          | September 2025 |
| Draft for Management Review   | January 2026   |
| Submission to SEC for delivery to the Board of Executive Directors      | March 2026     |
| Presentation before the Programming Committee of the Board of Directors | April 2026     |

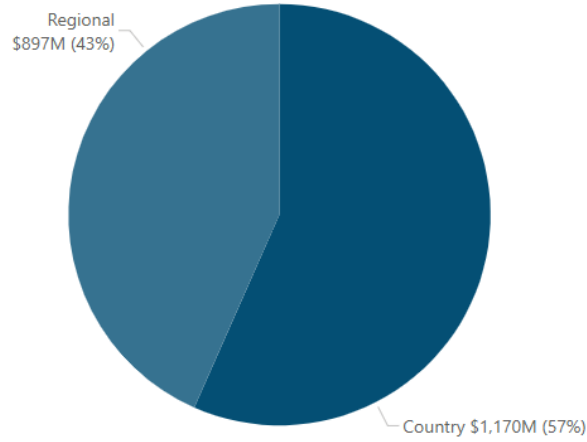
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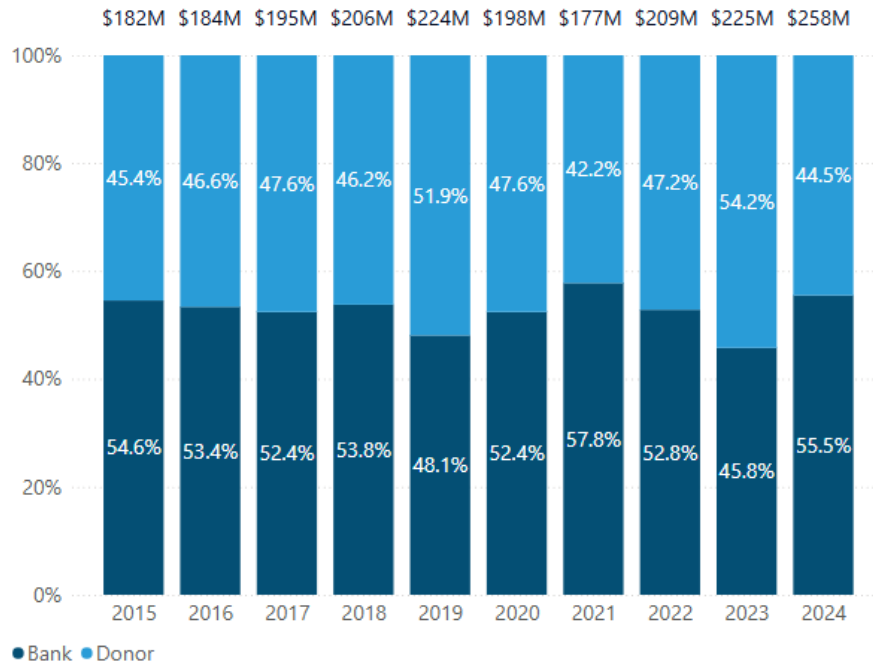
## ANNEX I – TECHNICAL COOPERATION PORTFOLIO SUMMARY

Figure I.1: Approved amounts by type of technical cooperation (2015-2024)



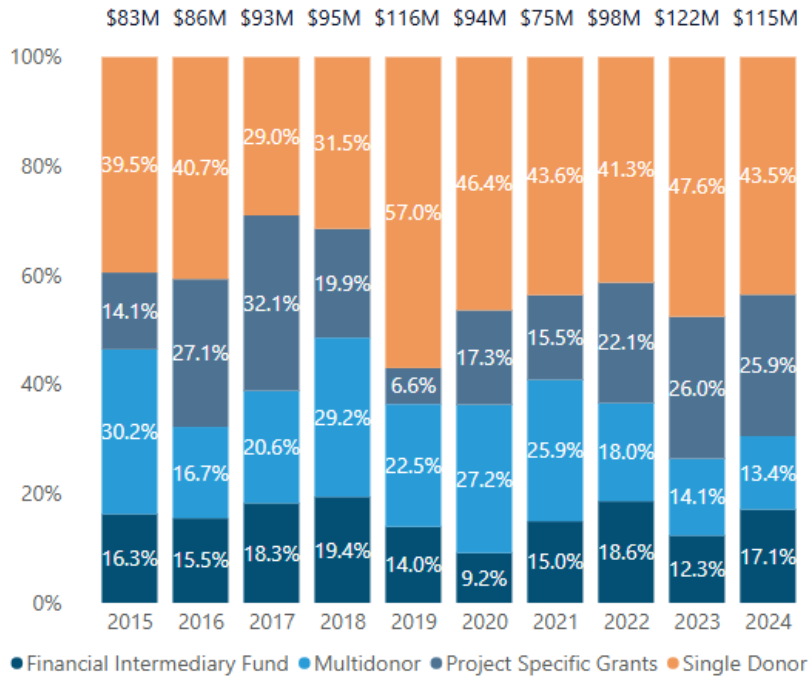
Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases  
Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

Figure I.2: Technical cooperation approved amounts by source of funding (2015-2024)



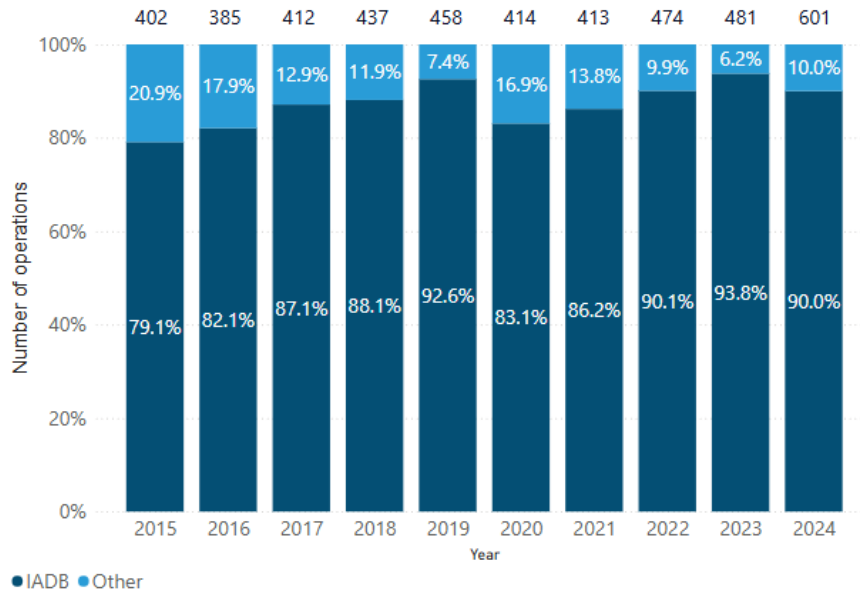
Source: OVE, based on GCM's Historical Operations Detail dashboard  
Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

**Figure I.3: Donor-funded technical cooperation approved amounts by source of funding (2015-2024)**



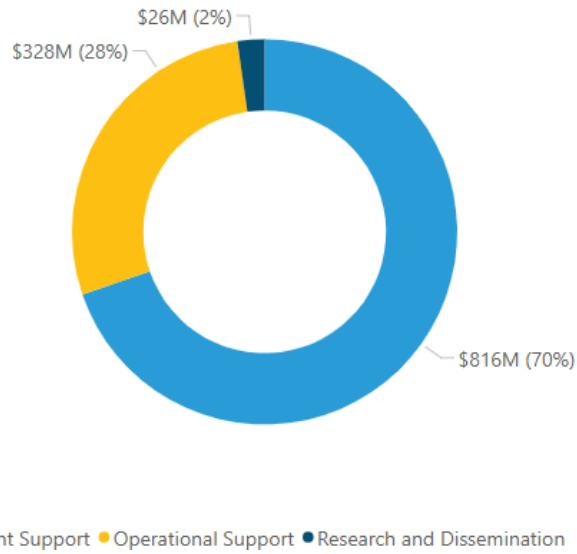
Source: OVE, based on GCM's Historical Operations Detail dashboard  
Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

**Figure I.4: Technical cooperation projects by executing agency (2015-2024)**



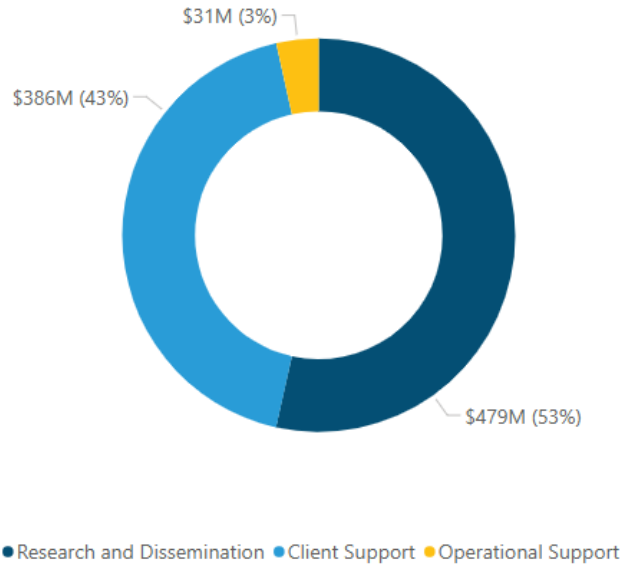
Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases

**Figure I.5: Country-specific technical cooperation approved amounts by taxonomy (2015-2024)**



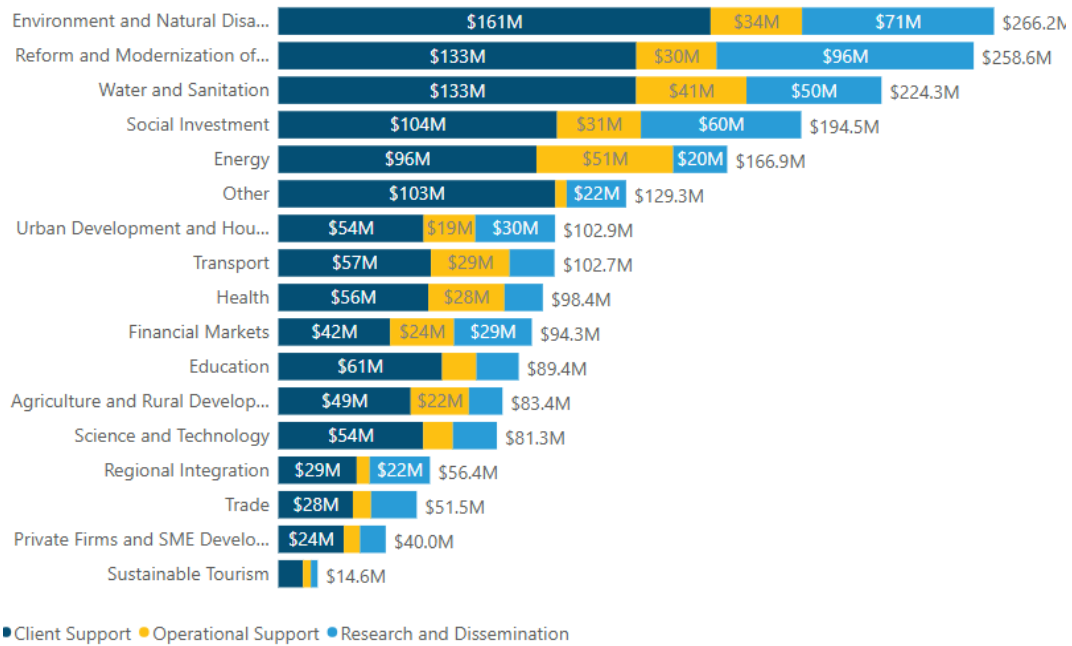
Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases  
Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

**Figure I.6: Regional technical cooperation approved amounts by taxonomy (2015-2024)**



Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases  
Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

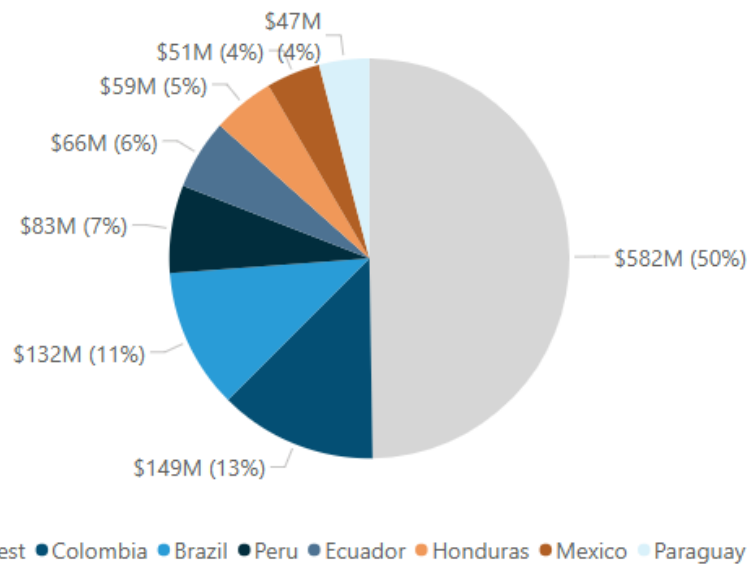
**Figure I.7: Technical cooperation approved amounts by sector and taxonomy (2015-2024)**



Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases

Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

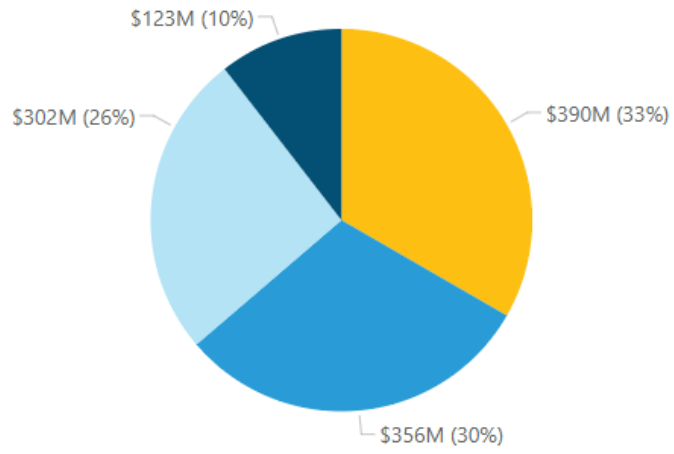
**Figure I.8: Country-specific technical cooperation approved amounts by recipient country (2015-2024)**



Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases

Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

**Figure I.9: Regional technical cooperation approved amounts by Country Department (2015-2024)**



Source: OVE, based on data from IDB databases  
Note: Approved amounts are shown in US\$ millions

## ANNEX II – EVALUATION DESIGN MATRIX

**Overarching questions:** (i) How relevant are technical cooperation operations in addressing IDB’s priorities, regional challenges, and the country’s needs? and (ii) How adequate is the Bank’s operational framework for technical cooperation?

**Table II.1: Evaluation design matrix**

| Evaluation question  | How judgment will be formed to answer evaluation questions   | Sources  | Scope and methodology  |   | Limitations   |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
|  |  |  | Portfolio-level analysis (2015-2024)   | Purposive sample of TC cases (2020-2024)  |   |
| <b>How relevant are technical cooperation operations in addressing IDB’s institutional priorities, regional challenges, and the country’s demands?</b> |  |  |  |   |   |
| To what extent are TC operations aligned with the instrument’s objective?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of TC use vis-à-vis the objective of the instrument as stated in the TC policy</li> </ul>  | TC policy, TC documents, TC databases, semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and Government counterparts.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portfolio analysis to identify uses of TCs using IDB databases and machine learning models</li> <li>Quantitative analysis of the correlation between TC approvals and pipeline development</li> <li>Quantitative analysis of the relationship between operational support TC approvals, and loan performance</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence (in-depth desk review of TC documents, semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and country counterparts)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The period selected for in-depth analysis, 2020 to 2024, may reflect contextual influences related to the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>Getting information from interviewees may present difficulties.</li> </ul> |
| To what extent are TC operations aligned with IDB institutional priorities?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of TC operations’ alignment with:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country Strategies to ensure consistency with the parameters that define the</li> </ol> </li> </ul> | TC documents, Programming documents, Institutional Strategies, Sector Framework Documents, Country Strategies, other IDB documentation, OVE evaluations (country | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Portfolio analysis</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence (in-depth desk review of TC documents, semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and country counterparts)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The period selected for in-depth analysis, 2020 to 2024 may reflect contextual influences related to the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>Getting information from interviewees may present difficulties.</li> </ul>  |

| Evaluation question   | How judgment will be formed to answer evaluation questions  | Sources   | Scope and methodology  |  | Limitations  |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|
|   |   |   | Portfolio-level analysis (2015-2024)                                   | Purposive sample of TC cases (2020-2024)   |  |
|   | <p>Bank's dialogue with the country</p> <p>b. Cross-cutting issues outlined in the Institutional Strategy</p> <p>c. Lines of action identified in relevant Sector Framework Documents</p> <p>d. The Banks' knowledge agenda in a comprehensive manner</p> <p>e. Regional initiatives (e.g., ONE Caribbean, Amazonia Siempre and América en el Centro)</p> | <p>program reviews and evaluations, Review of Knowledge Generation and Dissemination in the IDB), and semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and government counterparts.</p>  |  |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OVE country evaluations (CPE/ICPR/XCPE) are not always available in recent years.</li> <li>• The alignment of operations to each donor funding source is outside of the scope of the evaluation</li> </ul>  |
| <p>To what extent do TC operations respond to regional challenges and country needs, as well as country demand?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of TC operations' alignment with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Country needs assessments (e.g. Country Development Challenges (CDC))</li> <li>b. Regional challenges documents (e.g. Institutional Strategy, Sector Framework Documents (SFD)).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                   | <p>TC documents, Country Development Challenges Documents, Country Strategies, Institutional Strategies, Sector Diagnoses, Programming documents, OVE evaluations (country program reviews and evaluations, Review of Knowledge Generation and Dissemination in the IDB), semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio analysis</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-based evidence (in-depth desk review of TC documents, semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and country counterparts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Country diagnostics will not be conducted. The analysis will be based on available assessments</li> <li>• Getting information from interviewees may present difficulties.</li> <li>• OVE country evaluations (CPE/ICPR/XCPE) are not always available in recent years.</li> </ul> |

| Evaluation question   | How judgment will be formed to answer evaluation questions   | Sources  | Scope and methodology  |  | Limitations   |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|
|   |  |  | Portfolio-level analysis (2015-2024)   | Purposive sample of TC cases (2020-2024)   |   |
|   | <p>c. Country demands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the integration of country dialogue and TC operations into country and regional programming exercises</li> <li>• Assessment of the use of TC products by government counterparts</li> <li>• Assessment of the relationship between TC approvals and pipeline development</li> </ul> | government counterparts.   |  |  |   |
| <b>How adequate is the Bank's operational framework for Technical Cooperation?</b>  |  |  |  |  |   |
| To what extent does the operational framework for TCs enable (or constrain) the identification, funding, approval and implementation of relevant TCs? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of the criteria and processes used to identify relevant operations</li> <li>• Assessment of whether the resource allocation mechanisms and decision-making bodies allow for timely funding of TC operations.</li> <li>• Assessment of the factors informing the decision-making process for</li> </ul>           | Corporate documents guiding the TC origination, funding, preparation, and approval processes (TC policy, OC-SPD program documents, guidelines, regulations, and others as relevant), TC databases, semi-structured interviews with IDB staff (involved in the process) and donor counterparts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconstruction of TC process theory to map how TC operations are identified, approved, funded, and implemented</li> <li>• Process theory-driven assessment, informed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Qualitative analysis of desk review and interview-</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process theory-driven assessment, informed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Qualitative analysis of interview-based evidence (semi-structured interviews with IDB staff, country counterparts, and executing agencies)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting information from interviewees may present difficulties.</li> <li>• The operational framework related to OC-SDP operations has evolved over time and is currently under revision. The analysis of procedures and practices may only reflect these changes to the extent that information is available.</li> </ul> |

| Evaluation question   | How judgment will be formed to answer evaluation questions   | Sources  | Scope and methodology   |  | Limitations   |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
|   |  |  | Portfolio-level analysis (2015-2024)  | Purposive sample of TC cases (2020-2024) |   |
|   | <p>approving TC operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of TC execution modalities, implementation challenges, and monitoring and reporting systems</li> </ul>  |  | <p>based evidence (desk review of TC policy documents; semi-structured interviews with IDB staff involved in the process and donor counterparts</p> |  |   |
| <p>How adequate is the operational framework—including its organizational structure, incentives, monitoring, and reporting systems—for identifying relevant TCs, and facilitating learning?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment of the quality of the monitoring and reporting system and how well it is used at the operational and strategic levels for decision making</li> <li>Assessment of the existence, functioning, and use of mechanisms to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify relevant TCs.</li> <li>Capture, systematize, and share lessons learned from the design and implementation of TC operations.</li> <li>Facilitating learning to scale up for impact</li> </ol> </li> <li>Identification of incentives in place in relation to learning from TCs.</li> </ul> | <p>Corporate documents guiding the TC origination, funding, preparation, approval, and implementation processes (TC policy, OC-SPD program documents, guidelines, regulations, and others as relevant), TC databases, semi-structured interviews with IDB staff and government counterparts.</p> |   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting information from interviewees may present difficulties.</li> <li>The operational framework related to OC-SDP operations has evolved over time and is currently under revision. The analysis of procedures and practices may only reflect these changes to the extent that information is available.</li> <li>The assessment of whether the operational framework facilitates learning and enables the replication of successful TCs will be based on the existence of mechanisms, structures, and incentives in place, rather than on actual evidence of TC results</li> </ul> |

## Office of Evaluation and Oversight - OVE

Established in 1999 as an independent evaluation office, OVE evaluates the performance and development effectiveness of the activities of the Inter-American Development Bank Group (IDB Group). These evaluations seek to strengthen the IDB Group through learning, accountability and transparency.

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