IDB Group

OpportunA

Economic Opportunity Accelerator

Latin America and the Caribbean
2026 Prospectus

Inter-American Development Bank
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Women in Latin America and the Caribbean face structural barriers that limit their access to quality jobs and economic opportunities. Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and other groups face similar underrepresentation. The female labor force participation rate in the region stands at 58%, compared with 70% in high-income countries—a gap that, if closed, could yield gains of up to 30% of gross domestic product (GDP) in some countries of the region (Cuberes et al., 2022, IDB). Entrepreneurial potential adds to this: closing gender gaps in entrepreneurship could raise per capita income by up to 15% in countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with potentially larger gains in developing economies (Cuberes and Teigner, 2016, 2017, IDB Working Paper). With the working-age population projected to peak around 2030, the cost of failing to harness this potential will only rise.

These gaps represent a tangible loss of competitiveness and productivity. The low participation of these groups deprives the economy of a broad pool of talent—of diverse backgrounds and experiences that enrich productivity and innovation capacity (Araujo et al., 2024, IDB). Moreover, when they do participate, structural barriers contribute to their concentration in lower-productivity sectors and occupations.

Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have a significant opportunity to strengthen their competitiveness and accelerate long-term growth through greater labor and economic inclusion. Realizing this potential requires coordinated action among governments, the private sector, and civil society to align the incentives, policies, and investments that promote equal opportunity and enable broader participation by all talent groups.

OpportunA responds to this challenge. It is an acceleration initiative that promotes and drives public policy reforms and good practices by firms to expand economic opportunities for women and other underrepresented groups. It is a flexible, results-oriented tool, with interventions that can be tailored to each national context.

OpportunA draws on more than a decade of experience implementing the Gender Parity Accelerator (known by its Spanish acronym, IPG), an effort led by the IDB Group in ten countries across the region, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the French Development Agency (AFD). The IPGs have been an important instrument for advancing equal opportunity and women's economic inclusion. OpportunA makes the model more flexible and broadens its scope to respond more effectively to the diverse contexts and institutional priorities of countries, the private sector, and strategic partners.

What is OpportunA?

AN ACCELERATION MODEL BUILT ON FOUR PILLARS

OpportunA operates through these four mutually reinforcing pillars:

1. Public-private dialogue: bringing together high-level strategic actors—government agencies, companies, chambers, and trade associations—around shared agendas to expand economic opportunities for women and other underrepresented groups.

2. Inter-institutional coordination: coordination among public agencies, the private sector, and cooperation bodies to maximize the impact of each intervention.

3. Network building: connecting with regional and international experiences for peer learning and knowledge transfer.

4. Mobilization of resources and technical capacities: from the IDB Group, allies, and strategic actors and partners, such as the WEF.

A FLEXIBLE TOOL THAT ADAPTS TO EACH COUNTRY

OpportunA is designed around the needs and policy context in each country. The common elements across all interventions are:

- **Focused, time-bound scope:** interventions lasting 6 to 18 months.
- **Agile processes with clear political backing.**
- **Strategic focus:** generating evidence, convening dialogues, strengthening institutional capacities, and accelerating specific reforms.
- **Proven tools:** technical instruments developed by the IDB Group in collaboration with strategic partners.
- **Mobilized actors:** focusing on those with the greatest capacity to drive change at scale.

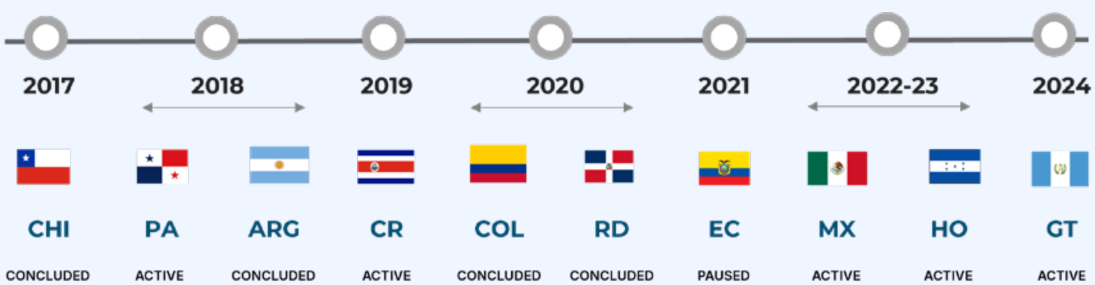
BOX 1

Lessons learned: 10 years of Gender Parity Accelerators

Public-private synergy has been an important factor in the IPG model: it brought together economic, finance and planning agencies, and women's ministries with private-sector companies around a common agenda. That momentum is sustained when the actors involved organize around shared goals. Without such goals, changes within governments or institutions can stall progress—even for projects delivering meaningful results.

OpportunA incorporates this lesson: its flexible design keeps the economic-inclusion and equal-opportunity agenda active through targeted interventions, even amid political transitions or weak institutional alignment.

The IPG journey in Latin America



Source: OpportunA regional team.

How does it work?

OpportunA acts as a catalytic mechanism to respond quickly to specific demands from governments and the private sector, seize windows of opportunity, and support strategic policy moments—even amid transitions or shifts in institutional priorities—to keep the economic-inclusion agenda active.

Depending on the context and objectives of each intervention, it convenes and connects actors from different spheres: ministries of economy, finance, planning, and labor; mechanisms for the advancement of women; private-sector companies, trade associations, and business groups; academia, civil society, and cooperation agencies. Through this strategic engagement ecosystem, it catalyzes dialogue, generates evidence, and facilitates the building of consensus and action commitments geared toward concrete results.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT ECOSYSTEM

OpportunA Economic Opportunity Accelerator

VALUE PROPOSITION
OpportunA accelerates economic inclusion and equal opportunity through strategic interaction among ecosystem actors in Latin America and the Caribbean.

OUR PURPOSE
To generate more connected, collaborative, sustainable, and influential ecosystems that drive economic inclusion and equal opportunity in the region.

1 ECOSYSTEM ACTORS

We identify and bring together key actors in the regional ecosystem.

- Public sector
- Companies and the private sector
- Academia
- Multilateral organizations
- Civil society
- Other strategic partners

2 CONNECTION AND ENGAGEMENT

We build bridges and trusted relationships to align objectives and encourage active participation.

- Relationship-building strategies
- Continuous listening and stakeholder segmentation
- Audience-appropriate communication channels
- Regional community
- Cross-sector engagement

3 EXCHANGE AND COORDINATION

We facilitate the exchange of information, experiences, and resources to strengthen regional collaboration.

- Exchange of best practices
- Spaces for dialogue and learning
- Visibility of initiatives
- Cooperation among accelerators
- Strategic networking

4 ACCELERATION OF INITIATIVES

We turn collaboration into concrete, high-impact actions.

- Partnerships and joint projects
- Access to resources and knowledge
- Technical support and practical tools
- Connections to markets and opportunities

5 ECOSYSTEM IMPACT AND REGIONAL SCALING

We promote sustainable, visible, and connected ecosystems.

- Greater equality of opportunity
- Economic participation and growth
- More connected and sustainable ecosystems
- Greater regional visibility and influence

FINAL OBJECTIVE To strengthen regional coordination and accelerate economic inclusion and equal opportunity initiatives in order to maximize economic and social impact in the region.

PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE MODEL

- Ecosystem and multi-stakeholder approach
- Transparency, trust, and collaboration
- Adaptable to different contexts and levels of institutional maturity
- Regional harmonization with local flexibility
- Focus on equal opportunity and economic inclusion

Each initiative begins with a context analysis and assessing five main criteria. This makes it possible to determine the appropriate depth, scope, and type of intervention for each country:

Criterion	Description
Explicit demand	An active request from governments, the private sector, or other actors.
Institutional maturity	The technical capacities of the counterparts involved.
Clear objectives	Generating evidence, connecting actors, advancing reforms, or preparing future IDB Group interventions.
Actor ecosystem	The presence of actors committed to expanding economic opportunities.
Available resources	Sufficient technical and financial resources to support the process.

Results

OpportunA works on two complementary levels:

- **Intermediate results:** It consolidates reform processes, advances public policies, and promotes good business practices. It helps improve existing programs and the implementation of regulatory frameworks.
- **Long-term impact:** It expands employment and business opportunities for women, persons with disabilities, and other diverse groups in higher-productivity sectors where they currently face structural barriers.

Each initiative has its own results framework, aligned with its nature, scope, and timeframe, so that expectations are calibrated to the type of intervention. Expected results include:

- Public policy reforms formulated and/or adopted
- Good practices adopted by the public and private sectors
- Strategic dialogues launched
- Key actors connected and mobilized
- Knowledge and tools developed
- Strengthened institutional capacities
- Expanded access to economic opportunities
- IDB Group and strategic-partner operations generated

EXAMPLES OF ACCELERATED RESULTS

Mexico | Implementing care policies

The IPG facilitated public-private dialogue to implement regulations on childcare services in industrial parks. This work contributed to an IDB Invest operation and strengthened the private sector's coordination with key government actors, such as the Ministry of Economy. **Learn more:** 1 2 3

Ecuador | Operationalizing regulatory frameworks

Working with UN Women, the IPG contributed to the approval of regulations linked to the Right to Care Law and the Law to Boost the Economy of Women Entrepreneurs, accelerating the implementation of both. **Learn more:** 1 2 3

Guatemala | Scaling up good business practices

The IPG is driving the development of a certification for women-led businesses to ease their access to public procurement. It is also working with Asazgua—a trade association representing eight sugar mills—to strengthen labor standards and adopt good practices for preventing and addressing violence in the workplace. **Learn more:** 1

Costa Rica | Preventing and addressing street harassment

The IPG supported the strengthening of the Espacios Seguros (Safe Spaces) program, an initiative aimed at preventing and addressing street harassment. This support helped expand and improve the program by introducing new intervention approaches and updating operating protocols, reinforcing the response to incidents of street harassment. **Learn more:** 1 2

Panama | Generating evidence on women's leadership

In collaboration with the Asociación de Directoras de Panamá (Panama Association of Women Board Directors) and Sumarse, the IPG conducted a baseline study of 111 medium-sized and large companies on women's participation in board and executive roles. The findings provided key evidence to guide actions aimed at strengthening women's representation in leadership positions. **Learn more:** 1

Honduras | Tools for violence-free workplaces

The IPG developed the Empresas sin Acoso (Harassment-Free Companies) tool to help prevent and address violence and harassment in the workplace. The instrument has three components: an assessment to identify areas for improvement; templates for developing institutional policies and protocols; and awareness-raising resources to promote a workplace culture free of violence and harassment. **Learn more:** 1

BOX 2

OpportunA as a mechanism for generating operations

Beyond contributing to specific results, **OpportunA** can play an enabling role in future IDB Group operations. Through public-private dialogue, evidence generation, and the engagement of key actors, the initiative can serve as a mechanism for laying the groundwork and pre-investment, facilitating the identification, design, and development of financing and technical-assistance operations.

In this respect, **OpportunA** contributes to:

- Identifying public policy gaps and opportunities.
- Building consensus among key actors to advance reform agendas.
- Strengthening institutions to design and implement policies and programs.
- Aligning interventions with national plans and sectoral strategies.

Concrete cases under the IPG model:

→ **Argentina:** Dialogue and institutional coordination that supported preparation of the Program to Support Gender Equality Policies, a US$200 million policy-based loan—the first of its kind in the world.

→ **Panama:** Laying the groundwork for the Program to Support Gender Equality Policies II, a US$150 million policy-based loan implemented in two phases (2018 and 2021).

→ **Ecuador:** Incorporation of the gender-equality agenda as a strategic component of the Social Expenditure Protection and Employment Recovery Support Program, a US$200 million loan.

Between 2016 and 2026, the IPG mobilized more than US$5 million in non-reimbursable technical-cooperation resources, helping create the technical and institutional conditions for developing larger-scale reforms and operations.

Knowledge management

OpportunA systematizes, standardizes, and disseminates tools, technical notes, and good practices. The coordinated work of national and regional teams and of internal and external partners helps ensure that the knowledge generated is available and replicable.

Available tools and materials

Regional

- → Gender Parity Accelerators in Latin America 2016-2022: A Public-Private Collaboration to Accelerate Equality (IDB Group, 2023).
- → Guide to Promote Gender Equality in Latin American and Caribbean Companies (IDB Group, 2024). In collaboration with the WEF and the AFD.
- → Self-assessment platform with AI-assisted action plans (IDB Group, 2026). In collaboration with ConnectAmericas.

National (with potential for replication and adaptation)

- → **Honduras:** Harassment-Free Companies toolkit for preventing workplace violence (IDB Group, 2025).
- → **México:** Toolkit for MSME hotels to prevent risk factors for trafficking and exploitation (IDB Group, 2025).
- → **Colombia:** Equirutas. A toolkit of free resources to help SMEs adopt inclusive labor practices (Grupo Éxito, IDB Group, 2023).

OpportunA also fosters knowledge exchange through webinars and other dialogue spaces, developed in collaboration with the WEF and other strategic partners, to encourage strategic reflection and share evidence and global and regional trends on economic inclusion.

Working structure and financing

OpportunA is managed by the IDB Group through a multilevel structure that combines strategic leadership, regional coordination, and country-level teams. This structure ensures methodological consistency, supports channeling of resources, and allows adaptation to different national contexts.

STRATEGIC LEVEL

Made up of IDB Group management units (the IDB's Gender and Diversity Division and IDB Invest's Gender and Social Inclusion Advisory Services), in coordination with allies and strategic partners. This level sets the overall direction, positions the initiative, and ensures alignment with regional and global agendas. It also mobilizes resources to support projects.

REGIONAL COORDINATION LEVEL

IDB Group specialists and consultants. Their main functions include:

- Ensuring the technical quality, methodological consistency, and results orientation of interventions;
- Providing support to national initiatives;
- Developing, systematizing, and disseminating knowledge products and tools;
- Promoting the exchange of experiences and good practices among countries;
- Identifying opportunities for cross-sector coordination and synergies with IDB Invest;
- Managing Regional Technical Cooperation resources and other funds.

COUNTRY LEVEL

IDB Group specialists and locally based technical consultants. They are responsible for coordinating with government counterparts and the IDB's country offices, providing technical assistance, and ensuring operational coordination.

Financing and technical support come from the IDB Group, strategic partners, in-country allies, and contributions from key actors themselves.

REGIONAL COORDINATION TEAM

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