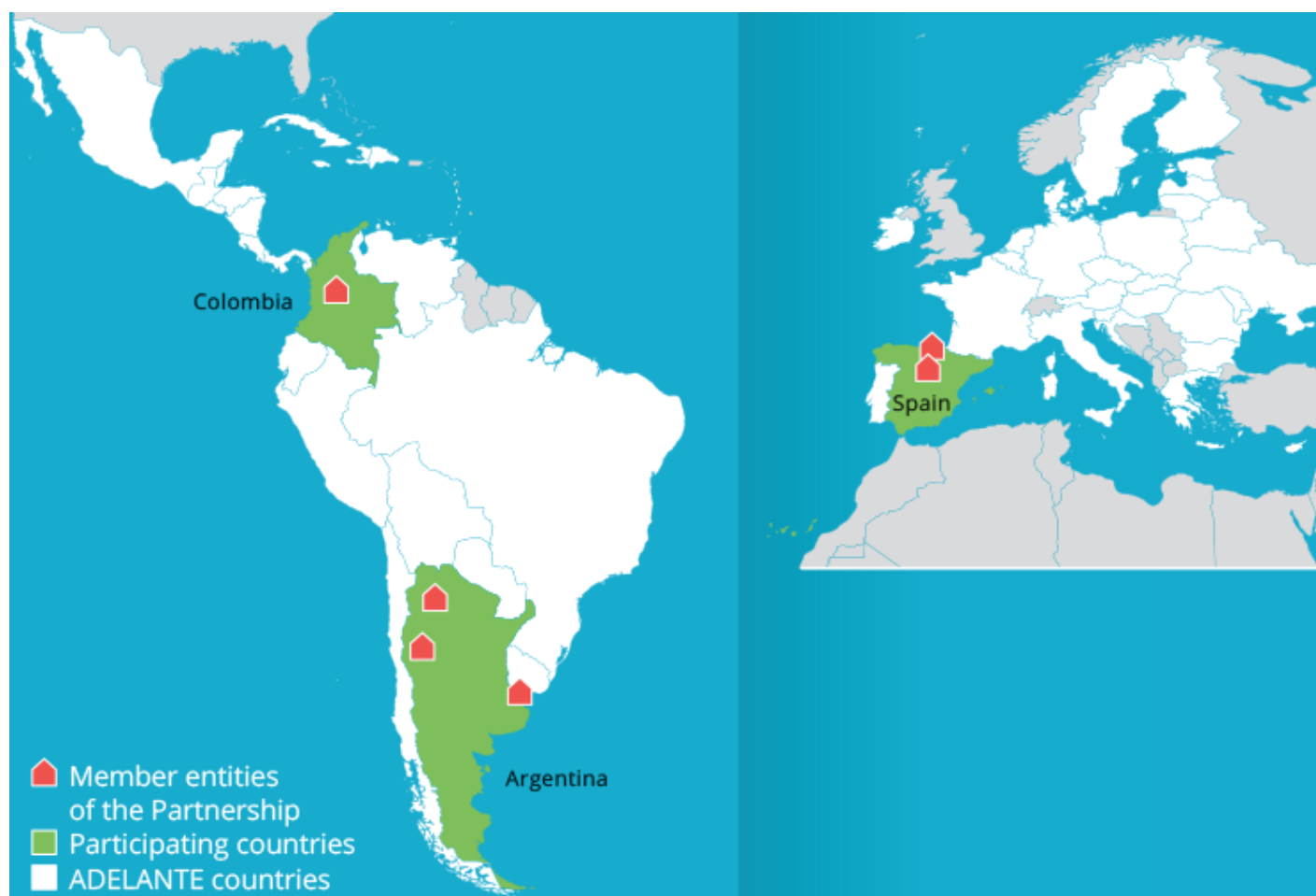


## Public policies to promote Responsible Business Conduct at the local level

### PARTNERSHIP

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### Background

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**SUSTENTIA** (Spain), the *Instituto de Derechos Humanos Pedro Arrupe* of the *Universidad de Deusto* (Pedro Arrupe Human Rights Institute of the University of Deusto), in Spain, and the *Federación Nacional de Departamentos de Colombia* (National Federation of Departments of Colombia) have been working together for some time, within the framework of a project to promote public policies on human rights and business at the departmental level in Colombia. Each of these entities has in-depth knowledge and extensive experience in the field, both in Europe and Latin America.

At the same time, the **Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires**, in Argentina, the **Government of the Province of Salta**, in Argentina, and the **Government of the Province of San Juan**, also in Argentina, have begun to work together on a project as part of the '*Fondo CERALC para la promoción de la Conducta Empresarial Responsable en América Latina y el Caribe*' (CERALC Fund for the Promotion of Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and the Caribbean), financed by the European Union. The objective of the project is to support these governments in promoting a business and human rights approach at the local public level, within the framework of the 'Human Rights Plans' of each of the entities.

Within the context of this project, the **United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights - Regional Office for South America**, the organisation promoting the project, invited SUSTENTIA to discuss the Colombian experience, thus bringing together all of the entities involved in both projects and demonstrating a strong interest in the Colombian model.

To this end, all of the entities involved formed a Partnership, together with the **Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation - Technical Cooperation Office of Colombia**, which has extensive experience in this field and has worked closely with SUSTENTIA on several occasions.

## Entities and roles

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### BENEFICIARY ENTITIES



Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires

Argentina

Gobierno de la Provincia de Salta  
Argentina

Gobierno de la Provincia de San Juan  
Argentina

### FIRST PROVIDER ENTITIES



Federación Nacional de Departamentos de Colombia

Colombia

## SECOND PROVIDER ENTITIES



Sustentia, S.L.

Instituto de Derechos Humanos Pedro Arrupe de la Universidad de Deusto

Spain

Spain

## COLLABORATING ENTITIES

Agencia Española de Cooperación para el Desarrollo - Oficina Técnica de Cooperación de Colombia, Colombia  
Alto Comisionado de las Naciones Unidas para los Derechos Humanos. Oficina Regional para América del Sur

## Development challenges

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Thanks to this Triangular Cooperation Initiative, the Government of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the Government of the Province of Salta and the Government of the Province of San Juan were able to harness all of the knowledge, experience and relational capital in the field of responsible business conduct. In particular, there was a focus on the design and implementation of public policies in the field of human rights and business of SUSTENTIA, the Instituto de Derechos Humanos Pedro Arrupe of the University of Deusto and the National Federation of Departments of Colombia, as a contribution to their goal of promoting the human rights and business approach at the sub-national public level in Argentina and the development of their own human rights plans.

The Partnership, which was created to respond to this need, was designed as a permanent solution. In fact, once the Initiative was finalised, the Alliance of Responsible Territories Latin America-Europe (ATRAE) was founded and officially launched as a network for the coordination of actors to work on public policies on human rights and business at the local level, open to all committed stakeholders from both regions.

Thanks to the Partnership and ATRAE, spaces have been created among actors in the same country that did not exist until now, but with great potential, allowing for joint work throughout the Initiative. Subsequently, all of the insights generated during the Initiative have been made available to other provinces in Argentina.

On the other hand, it was possible to make use of these same insights for other processes led by the Partnership entities in Colombia, Spain and other Latin American and Caribbean countries; some of which are already well under way, such as those in Chile and Peru.

In turn, thanks to SUSTENTIA's participation in various international programmes on the subject, in addition to the global scope of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, the insights gathered through this Initiative have been shared with regional and global platforms and networks.

## INITIATIVE

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*This Triangular Cooperation Initiative strengthened the capacities of the Partnership member entities to **design and implement public policies on human rights and business at the local level**, thus generating a 'guidance document' that could be adapted to this context, as a first step towards a replicable model at the national and regional levels.*

## Triangular approach

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There is strong consensus on the strategic role of the private business sector in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To this end, it is essential to promote and strengthen responsible business conduct, with a focus on business and human rights as one of the main pillars.

Under this approach, both national and sub-national governments have an obligation to protect human rights from the impacts of business activities. In fact, it has become evident that in certain contexts and with certain types of companies, the role of sub-national governments is essential. This exercise is part of the highly anticipated 'localisation of the 2030 Agenda' initiative. However, the lack of experience regarding public policies on human rights and business at the sub-national level is a challenge that requires joint work processes among the local actors themselves, in order to create appropriate models and tools for this purpose.

Thanks to this Initiative, the knowledge of international standards and the experience of Spanish and Colombian entities was used to train officials and civil servants at the sub-national level in Argentina in the design and implementation of these policies, within the framework of their human rights plans, and with the aim of producing replicable and scalable models.

## Sectoral approach - Contribution to the 2030 Agenda

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### PRIMARY SDG



**Goal 8.4** Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead

**Goal 8.7** Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

## SECONDARY SDG



**Goal 12.7** Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities

## ADELANTE SDG



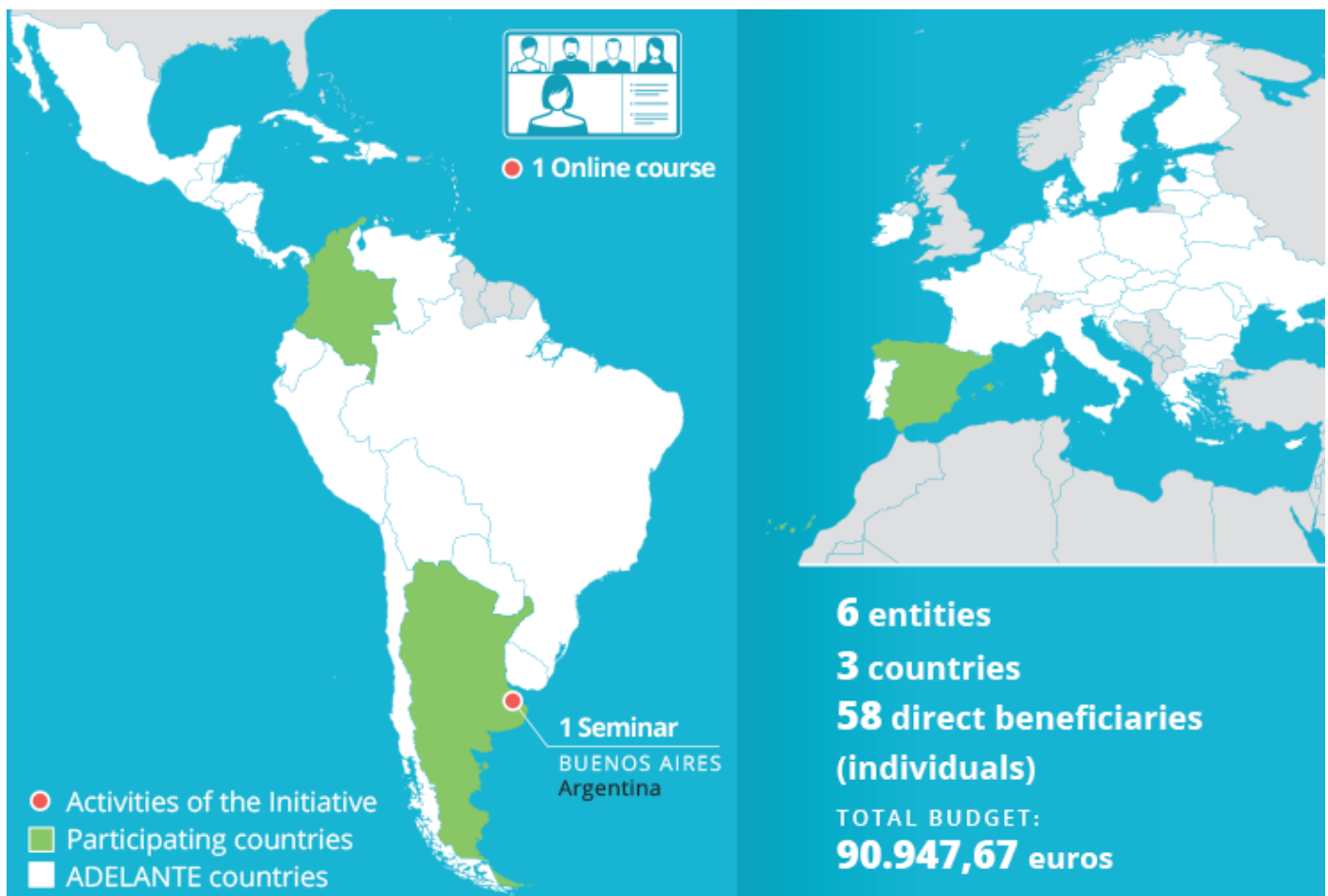
**Goal 10.2** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status



**Goal 17.7** Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed

## Territorial approach

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## Intervention methodology

The intervention methodology of this Initiative focused on the capacity building of civil servants and public employees of the Partnership entities for the design and implementation of public policies on human rights and business, accompanying the training process with a detailed analysis of similar experiences in other sub-national entities.

The first activity was a **consultancy** with a three-fold objective: a) to further examine the experiences of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the Province of Salta and the Province of San Juan in terms of the risks and impacts of business activities on human rights, b) to develop specific materials for the training and joint work planned in the following activities, and c) to prepare a 'guidance document' with key elements to help guide the plans and decision making throughout the process. The consultancy was carried out by professionals who have led and coordinated similar processes in Spain and Colombia.

This was followed by a **course** on human rights and business, responsible business conduct and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The course was especially designed for civil servants and public employees of the sub-national governments, who are beneficiaries of this Initiative. It was carried out as a two-month virtual training course, exploring the risks and impacts of business activities on their surroundings, based on information collected and synthesised during the consultancy. It then linked the risks and impacts to the corresponding obligations of governments at all levels and the responsibilities of the various actors involved, including the measures that can be taken in the field of public policy. Everything addressed in the course was aligned with the leading international standards and regulations, and oriented

towards human rights plans. A line of action was also dedicated to analysing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the field of human rights and business.

In this course, SUSTENTIA lent its experience of more than 15 years in the practical application of international standards in various countries of the European Union and Latin America. In turn, the Instituto de Derechos Humanos Pedro Arrupe of the University of Deusto contributed with its pedagogical and research methodologies, as well as its specialised knowledge on human rights in Latin America, while the National Federation of Departments of Colombia contributed by sharing its recent experience with Colombian sub-national governments and the lessons learnt as a result.

The Initiative concluded with a **seminar** that took place in Argentina. During the seminar, various case studies were shared from both Europe and Latin America, with the experiences of Colombia, Chile, Peru and Argentina particularly worth mentioning. Based on the information gathered during the consultancy, the training provided during the course and the case studies, the representatives from the Partnership entities worked together with the aim of generating a tool to help identify the risks and impacts of business activities, along with the most appropriate measures to address the risks. They also discussed how to manage relationships with key stakeholders for the creation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of these public policies.

Based on this work, a guidance document was developed to serve as the first step towards a model that could benefit other local governments in the countries involved and throughout the region. One of the strengths of this document is the identification of and guidelines for the solution of common obstacles, one of the main concerns in these processes.

This guidance document will benefit from the lessons learnt from the application of the model in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the Province of Salta and the Province of San Juan, and in other areas within the framework of ATRAE. These insights will therefore serve as inputs for other processes that the various Partnership entities are involved in.

The seminar included the launch and public presentation of the Alliance of Responsible Territories Latin America-Europe (ATRAE), as a network that was formed as a result of this Initiative. ATRAE seeks the coordination of specialised actors to work on public policies on human rights and business at the local level, open to all types of entities from both regions.

## Direct beneficiaries (individuals)

*According to Rule 9 of the Guidelines for Applicants: all persons participating in the activities of the Initiative.*

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This Initiative had **58 direct beneficiaries** from two different groups. On the one hand, there were professionals linked to the Partnership entities: 37 civil servants / public employees linked to the Beneficiary entities, among whom the 15 people directly involved in the formulation of the 'Human Rights plans' of the corresponding local governments are worth noting, along with 3 professionals from the academic sector. On the other hand, 18 employees from private business entities benefited from the Initiative's final seminar.



## Budget

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EU contribution: 65,190.91 €

Co-financing - Triangular Cooperation Partnership: 25,756.76 €

Total budget: 90,947.67 €

## IMPACT

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The information gathered in this IMPACT section is the result of the first **'joint ex post analysis exercise'** of the Initiative which, as foreseen in the policy framework of the ADELANTE Window, took place **one year after the end of the implementation period**.

For more information on these exercises, please consult the [ADELANTE Window 2021 Impact Report](#).

## Continuity of the Partnership

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STARTING POINT: Existing North-South relationship that extended its scope to more Beneficiaries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Partnership, as such, has been strengthened and maintained over time.

The dynamic of collaboration and joint work between all the Partnership member entities in the core areas of the Initiative has been maintained.

In addition, a solid platform for collaboration has been created and reinforced by incorporating new entities from Partnership countries as well as other countries in the region.

**Creation of the Alliance of Responsible Territories Latin America-Europe (ATRAE Alliance).**

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## Application of generated knowledge

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The knowledge generated has been applied by all Partnership member entities.

Applying this knowledge has led them to gain greater prominence in their scope of action, creating spaces for collaboration with more actors on a national, regional and international scale.

Thanks to this Initiative, the Partnership member entities have participated as knowledge providers in large-scale strategic processes.

**Support for the preparation of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in Argentina.**

Cooperation Triangular

During its implementation, the Initiative involved final beneficiaries (employees of private business entities in the beneficiary country).

The Beneficiary entities have continued to work closely with these groups, even extending the scope, who have benefited and have applied the knowledge generated during the Initiative, as well as from the knowledge arising from the platform that was created through the Initiative.

## Impact

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Applying this knowledge has enabled the Beneficiary entity to successfully tackle the development challenge that gave rise to the Initiative with the necessary quality and guarantees. At the same time, the other Partnership member entities have increased the impact of their interventions.

### FACTORS THAT HAVE ENABLED THE IMPACT:

The shared commitment from the outset to ensure the continuity and even extend the Partnership beyond the scope of the Initiative.

Internal reflection during the implementation of the Initiative on the best model to ensure the Partnership's continuity.

The relevance of the topic in relation to processes of high priority in the countries involved.

## Future perspectives

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Continue to make progress in the Partnership's work, which is already becoming a reliable platform, with a commitment to increase the number of entities involved, in order to generate new knowledge and to share/offer such knowledge.

Continue to seek national public funding and international funding to strengthen the platform and broaden its objectives, which remain relevant.

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### NEW EX POST EXERCISE:

Yes (2024)