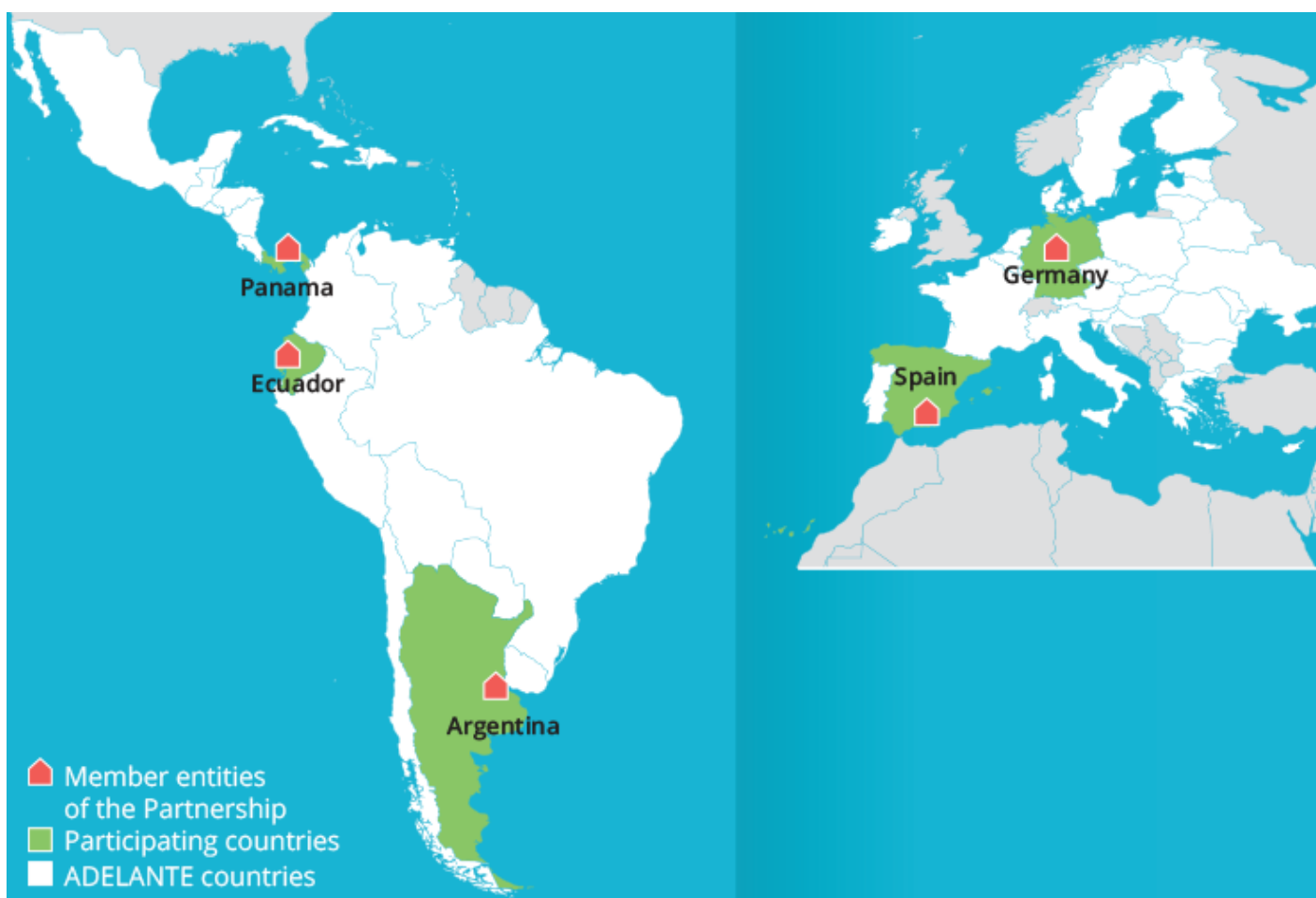


Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation for River Basin Environmental Sustainability

PARTNERSHIP



Background

The **Association of European Border Regions** (AEBR) and the **Comisión Administradora del Río Uruguay** (Administrative Commission of the River Uruguay - CARU, in Argentina and Uruguay) have a long history of collaboration, which has been supported by the European Union; first through the EUROsociAL+ programme, and subsequently in the framework of the Initiative '[Strengthening cross-border governance of water basins](#)', coordinated by AEBR and co-financed by the ADELANTE Window.

At the same time, AEBR and the regional government of Andalusia (Spain) have been working together for decades to promote cross-border governance between Spain and Portugal, primarily with the regions of Alentejo and Algarve (Portugal). In addition, AEBR and the **Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo** (Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation - AACID, Spain) are working together on several projects to transfer knowledge on this subject to Latin America.

AEBR and the **Fundación Indígena FSC** (FSC Indigenous Foundation, Panama) have previously worked together in the search for indigenous solutions based on the forest-nature-climate nexus. FSC lent its expertise on indigenous governance of natural areas to the Initiative 'Strengthening cross-border governance of water basins'.

In addition, **Naturaleza y Cultura Internacional Ecuador** (Nature and Culture International Ecuador) and AEBR have been working together on cross-border governance with an environmental approach in water basins on the Ecuador-Peru border since 2018, in which *Plan Binacional de Desarrollo de la Región Fronteriza Perú-Ecuador* (Binational Development Plan for the Peru-Ecuador Border Region), a collaborating entity in this Partnership, is taking the lead in these joint efforts.

Thanks to the coordination of AEBR and previous collaborative experiences in cross-border water basin governance, these entities have formed a Triangular Cooperation Partnership that aims to address the needs of environmental protection of biological corridors and generate joint solutions in the Catamayo - Chira and Zarumilla (Ecuador-Peru) and Sixaola (Panama-Costa Rica) water basins.

In addition to *Plan Binacional de Desarrollo de la Región Fronteriza Perú-Ecuador* (Binational Plan for the Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region), the *Comisión Técnica Mixta de Salto Grande* (Joint Technical Commission of Salto Grande, Uruguay) and the *Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja* (Private Technical University of Loja, Ecuador) are also collaborating entities in the Partnership.

Entities and roles

BENEFICIARY ENTITIES



[Naturaleza y Cultura Internacional](#)

Ecuador



[FSC Indigenous Foundation](#)

Panama

FIRST PROVIDER ENTITIES



Comisión Administradora del Río Uruguay

Uruguay

SECOND PROVIDER ENTITIES



Asociación de Regiones Fronterizas Europeas -
ARFE

Germany



Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el
Desarrollo

Spain

COLLABORATING ENTITIES

Comisión Técnica Mixta de Salto Grande, Uruguay
Plan Binacional de Desarrollo de la Región Fronteriza Perú-Ecuador, Ecuador
Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, Ecuador

Development challenges

Droughts, floods and other unusual events caused by climate change, together with the environmental issues resulting from human activity, such as land degradation caused by intensive farming and poor

management of waste and runoff, are threatening the rich biodiversity of ecosystems and livelihoods of local communities and indigenous populations in the Catamayo-Chira and Zarumilla river basins in Ecuador and Peru, as well as the Sixaloa river basin in Costa Rica and Panama. In order to address the environmental protection needs of the biological corridors of these basins, the Partnership entities propose to draw on the lessons learnt from the work carried out on the cross-border governance of the Uruguay river basins, as well as European cross-border basin governance models, to obtain a governance model with solutions based on the protection of nature, in accordance with the world view of indigenous peoples. The participation of civil society, local communities and indigenous groups will also be key, incorporating scalable and replicable tools.

INITIATIVE

This Triangular Cooperation Initiative aims to harness the knowledge of the Provider entities to transfer and adapt their model of cross-border governance of water basins, tapping into the practices and expertise of indigenous groups and local communities to promote the conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems located in international watersheds.

Triangular approach

In addition to its expertise in cross-border cooperation among the different levels of government, academia and civil society for the protection of natural resources, the Administrative Commission of the River Uruguay (CARU) lends its expertise on the Uruguay water basin to foster cooperation strategies between binational and local structures for the management and development of water basins, as well as the establishment of cross-border structures for the economic and environmental development of the region.

This experience in Latin America is further enhanced by the contribution of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which, together with the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, integrates knowledge from the European context on the sustainable use of natural resources through shared management processes, the mapping of cross-border areas of environmental value and the creation of networks for environmental studies and protection, as well as cross-border analysis and monitoring of environmental variables, and joint risk management. In turn, the Andalusian Agency for International Development Cooperation (AACID) will lend its expertise and knowledge acquired through cross-border projects in Europe and Latin America on the sustainability of natural areas, multilevel and cross-border governance, integrated management of aquifers and green corridors. In addition, the Guadiana cross-border observatory will be studied as a success story.

Based on the European and Latin American experience, new knowledge will be generated in order to classify natural spaces and create a cross-border governance model for their protection, including tools for data collection and monitoring, as well as for the coordination of public sector actors at different government levels and on different sides of the border, civil society organisations, indigenous communities, women leaders and other groups; all while ensuring inclusive governance and environmental protection.

Furthermore, the FSC Indigenous Foundation offers its knowledge, building on a perspective of development advocated for by indigenous peoples, in which water and nature are not considered objects to be exploited, and where the balance and protection of nature is essential; operating in sustainable harmony with life cycles and the environment. In addition, NCI Ecuador lends its knowledge of different types of local actors working on the conservation of cross-border nature reserves. These two entities, while assuming the role of Beneficiaries within the Partnership, will provide key expertise for the alignment and relevance of the cross-border governance model, and will be in charge of ensuring the future implementation of this model.

Sectoral approach - Contribution to the 2030 Agenda

PRIMARY SDG



Goal 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

Goal 15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

SECONDARY SDG



Goal 6.5 By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

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 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

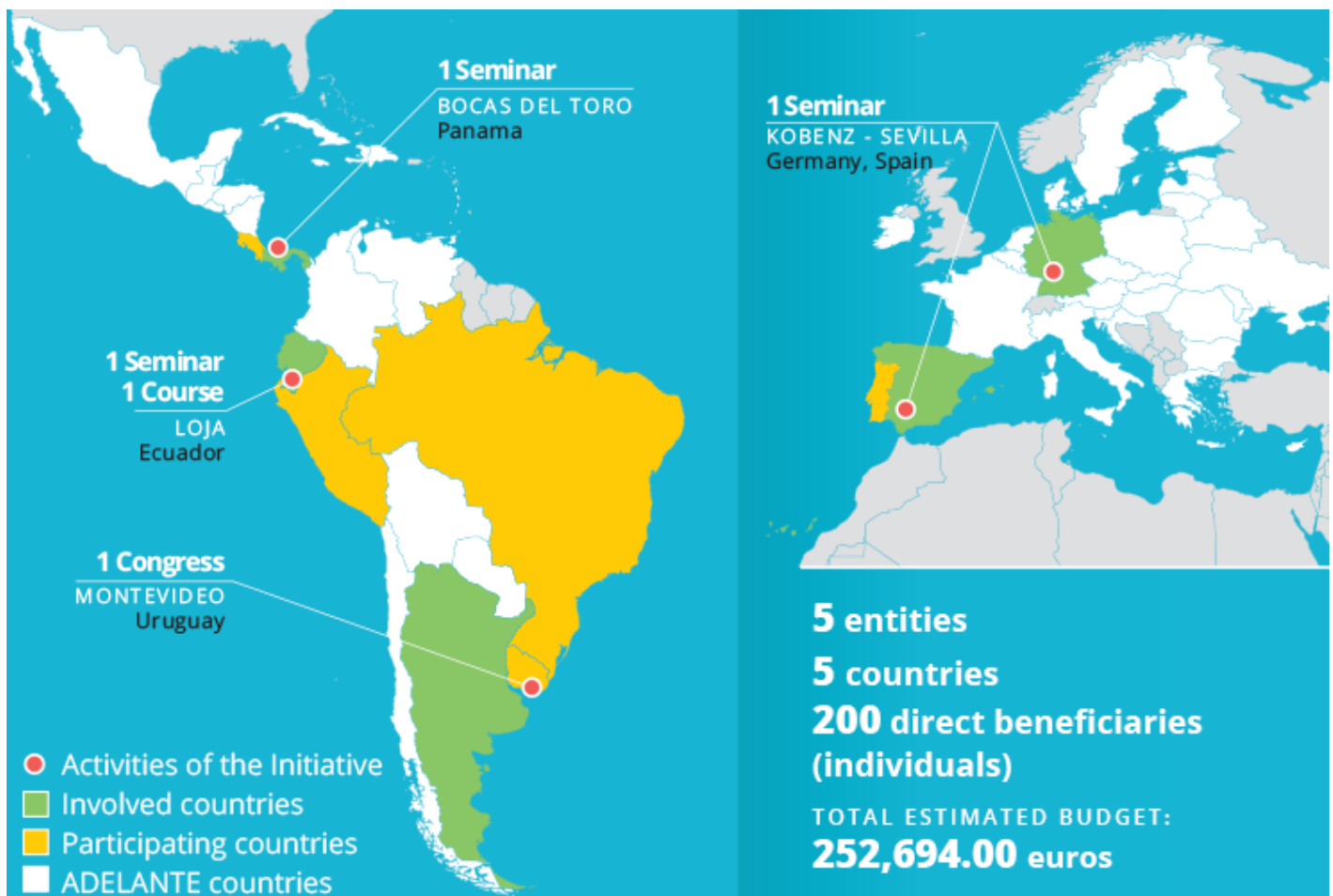
Goal 10.B Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes



Goal 17.9 Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

Goal 17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

Territorial approach



Intervention methodology

The work plan of this Initiative is based on **six activities** that will provide the opportunity to jointly explore the environmental, institutional and social dimensions of the development challenge among the Partnership member entities and various local actors in Europe and Latin America. The process of developing the model will be carried out at various strategic stages, and will foster the exchange of

knowledge and collaboration between the Partnership member entities, with the support of the collaborating entities.

The Initiative kicks off with **a seminar in Europe**, which will take the Partnership to Germany, together with AEER and the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, in order to learn about experiences in ecosystem protection. As part of the same activity, they will also travel to Spain, where they will visit the Lower Guadiana, together with AACID, in order to learn about wetland management and governance strategies.

The second activity will be **a seminar in Loja** (Ecuador), which will primarily address the challenges for the environmental sustainability of river basins, focusing the discussion on the governance of the Zarumilla and Catamayo - Chira river basins (Ecuador - Peru).

In the third activity, expert **consultants** will present proposals for the creation of binational monitoring and cross-border cooperation schemes with a gender-based approach, based on the case studies of the Catamayo - Chira (Ecuador - Peru) and Sixaola (Panama - Costa Rica) river basins, and building on the knowledge generated through the Initiative 'Strengthening cross-border governance of water basins'.

The fourth activity will be **a seminar in Panama**, providing an opportunity to learn about experiences in environmental protection in the Sixaola basin, its cross-border governance needs, and indigenous participation in these processes.

The fifth activity will be **a course** on binational monitoring and management schemes for natural areas. The course will be aimed at rural stewards, specialists and those responsible for municipal conservation areas, community reserves and protected areas, as well as representatives of water councils, and will be certified by the Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja, a collaborating entity.

The initiative will close with **a congress on the border of Argentina and Uruguay**, where local cross-border experiences will be shared, and the lessons learnt, good practices and results of the Initiative will be disseminated.

Direct beneficiaries (individuals)

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

This Initiative aims to reach **more than 200 direct beneficiaries** from the Partnership member entities, as well as representatives of local governments and national government entities in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Peru that have a direct impact on the administration and conservation of watershed ecosystems. Direct beneficiaries will also include representatives of water administration councils and community entities in charge of managing micro-watersheds that supply water for human consumption in rural areas, as well as representatives of indigenous communities.

Budget

EU contribution: 185,827.00 €

Co-financing - Triangular Cooperation Partnership: 66,867.00 €
Total budget: 252,694.00 €