IN THE SPOTLIGHT: COMBATTING COVID-19

With Swedish Support, Innovative Portfolio Guarantee Takes on COVID-19 in Guatemala

The Government of Sweden and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have created an innovative risk transfer mechanism to accelerate development in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). Through a guarantee of up to $100 million, Sweden's support enables the IDB to provide up to $300 million in additional lending to projects in Bolivia, Colombia, and Guatemala. For starters, in the context of COVID-19, the partners deployed the tool to sustain the incomes of vulnerable populations in Guatemala, leveraging $100 million made possible by Sweden's guarantee. With a focus on poverty alleviation, climate change, and gender equality, the mechanism is a result of the IDB Group's long term focus on innovative finance and the historic partnership between Sweden and the IDB.

With $6.15 Million in Funding, Japan and IDB Strengthen COVID-19 Response

More than $6 million in funding from the Japanese Trust Funds, a trust fund managed by the IDB and established with the Government of Japan to promote social and economic growth across the region, is strengthening LAC countries' response to COVID-19. In only three months, the Japan-IDB partnership has approved a series of projects that address the pandemic from multiple angles. To name a few examples, one project will work regionally to advance digital solutions, another will advance malaria efforts in Mesoamerican countries through a COVID-19 lens, and in Ecuador, an additional effort will apply an innovative, technology-based strategy to support the wellbeing of children with disabilities both during the pandemic and beyond.

USAID Supports COVID-19 Solution through the BetterTogether Challenge

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced $575,000 for the first recipients of the BetterTogether Challenge innovation awards. Among the winners is a project to crowdsource and analyze data to improve basic social service delivery, including health care to diagnose and treat COVID-19. Other selected solutions will expand clean water access and harness the media to humanize migrants and share information about basic services. The Challenge is a partnership between USAID and the IDB through its innovation laboratory IDB Lab to identify, fund, and scale solutions supporting Venezuelan migrants and their host communities.

Through $223 Million, France Supports the Dominican Republic’s COVID-19 Response

The Government of France is co-financing an innovative policy-based loan in the Dominican Republic which seeks to help the country strengthen its response to COVID-19. In particular, the effort will improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of public policy and fiscal management to address the health and economic crisis generated by the pandemic.
To Curb COVID-19, Korea Channels Expertise and $53 Million to LAC

Alongside the IDB, the Government of Korea has co-financed a policy-based loan to help Paraguay address COVID-19. Complementing an IDB loan of $160 million with $50 million from the IDB-managed Korea Infrastructure Development Co-Financing Facility, Korea is supporting healthcare spending, temporary cash transfer programs, small businesses, and struggling companies, while encouraging knowledge sharing based on its experience tackling the pandemic. In addition, three projects worth nearly $3 million have been approved by the Korean Trust Funds, donor funds supported by Korea and administered by the IDB, to share Korea’s ICT-based healthcare network, encourage Korean startups to provide technical assistance, and build remote learning platforms in Uruguay.

Everis NTT Data, Microsoft, and IDB Provide Digital Government Solutions

An innovative partnership between Everis NTT Data, Microsoft, and the IDB is providing LAC governments with digital solutions to ensure the continuity of administrative procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Digi/Gob platform, everis NTT Data and Microsoft are providing a turn-key digital solution free-of-charge and sharing technical expertise, while the IDB works with governments on the ground to achieve rapid implementation.

IDB 21st Century Skills Coalition Welcomes Five New Members, Responds to COVID-19

The IDB’s #Skills21 Coalition—a $24.7 million effort to advance inclusive, equitable, and quality education in LAC—keeps growing. Welcoming aboard the French Development Agency, Fundación Gabo, Fundación Santillana, HundrED, and Wikimedia Foundation, the Coalition now includes 32 members. In addition, the initiative is taking action on COVID-19, creating a virtual space for dialogue and a series of blogs where education stakeholders share ideas and knowledge related to the crisis.


The Americas Business Dialogue (ABD)—a private sector-led, IDB-facilitated mechanism for public-private collaboration—has been working with key partners like the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to generate dialogue about COVID-19. In June, the partners hosted a high level exchange on the important role the DFC-IDB Group alliance plays in stimulating sustainable development through the private sector.

Esri Offers Technological Solutions to Combat COVID-19

Esri, the global leader in location intelligence, and the IDB have joined forces to provide free access to geospatial technology to strengthen the COVID-19 response. As a result, LAC governments will access a custom solution to track critical equipment and assets, manage supply chains, and maintain business continuity. In addition, they will be able to leverage Esri’s analytical models to monitor the spread of the virus and identify where intervention is needed.
Spain Pledges €5 Million to Support Migrants and Host Communities

Expanding its ongoing commitment to addressing migration, the Government of Spain pledged an additional €5 million to support Venezuelan migrants and their host communities in the context of COVID-19. The first donor to support the IDB-led Migration Initiative, Spain’s new contribution seeks to mitigate the pandemic’s impact on already vulnerable migrant populations. It was announced at the International Donors Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Refugees and Migrants, organized by Spain and the European Union.

With Santander Universidades and Universia, Helping Higher Ed Adapt to COVID-19

Top leaders from 11 of the region’s esteemed higher education institutions gathered for the II Dialogue with LAC University Presidents, a virtual event to discuss the challenges and opportunities posed by COVID-19. Co-organized for the second time by Santander Universidades, Universia, and the IDB, the event produced an evaluation of the digital transformation of higher education that has been accelerated by the pandemic.

Microsoft and the IDB Tackle Transparency, Integrity, and Anti-Corruption

Building on a history of innovating to boost transparency, Microsoft and the IDB announced a new initiative to harness the power of cloud computing and advanced analytics to reduce corruption, increase transparency, and foster integrity in LAC. Funded by an initial $450,000 from Microsoft, one of the first pilot projects will boost transparency and engagement with civil society in countries’ response to COVID-19. The expanded partnership was announced at a webinar featuring Microsoft President Brad Smith and IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno, where the leaders discussed how technology is shaping life during the pandemic.

Coalition of International Organizations Actively Support COVID-19 Response in LAC

The IDB is actively partnering with a group of international organizations to provide countries additional support during the COVID-19 crisis. For example, the IDB finalized the negotiation of two agreements with the Pan American Health Organization and the United Nations Development Program, making it possible for IDB borrowing member countries to work with these organizations in the context of IDB-financed operations related to the pandemic.

IDB Lab and Grupo Yunén Join Forces to Advance Telemedicine Platform

The IDB Group’s innovation laboratory IDB Lab has joined forces with Grupo Yunén to launch Omnisaúl Colectiva, a telemedicine platform that offers health services focused on COVID-19. Initially, the platform intends to benefit around 50,000 patients in the Dominican Republic, with plans to scale the solution up nationally in subsequent phases.

IDB Ramps Up SDG Bond Issuances to Support the COVID-19 Response

In line with its ongoing commitment to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the IDB has ramped up its issuance of SDG Bonds. In particular, two new bonds have been structured and deployed to support the COVID-19 response with a focus on SDG #3 (Good Health and Well Being). In late May, the IDB priced new Uridashi fixed-rate notes to this end and in June, it deployed an AUD$50 million SDG Bond for the same purpose.
KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

Mastercard Leverages Data to Boost Tourism in the Caribbean

With the goal of boosting the tourism industry in the Caribbean, particularly in light of COVID-19, long standing IDB partner Mastercard is providing one-year access to its Tourism Insights Platform. The platform shares big data analytics with a 360° view of the travel cycle, mining intelligence from anonymous data generated by Mastercard transactions, internet searches, price and booking data, and social media insights. This information can help countries better understand tourists and improve decision-making to attract visitors and revenue.

First Venture Debt Fund Reaches LAC

IDB Invest, the IDB Group’s private sector entity, joined forces with SVB Financial Group and Partners for Growth to launch the $30 million Latam Growth Lending Fund. The first of its kind in LAC, the fund provides venture debt to young and high-growth companies, with a particular focus on the computer software, life science, health care, agritech, edtech, and fintech sectors. The fund will complement the venture debt provided by IDB Lab to early-stage ventures, supporting young companies throughout the life cycle.

In Chile, Leveraging AI to Improve Employment Decisions

The Chilean Ministry of Labor and Social Security, ChileValora, Fundación Telefónica Movistar, and the IDB have teamed up to launch an innovative new website that provides clear, digestible, and relevant information on labor market trends in Chile. Intended to help inform employment decision making in the country, the website’s data is gathered from diverse sources and analyzed using artificial intelligence, with the needs of website users in mind.

Finland Brings Sesame Street to Migrant Children in Colombia

At the International Donor Conference in Solidarity with Venezuelan Migrants and Refugees, the Government of Finland committed €200,000 to enrich the IDB’s work with Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Colombia. These funds will support two interventions with Sesame Workshop, in which WhatsApp and a plug-in device called Jardín Sésamo will broadcast Sésamo, the co-production of Sesame Street for Latin America, over free local Wi-Fi networks in child-friendly migrant protected spaces. To complement these efforts, IDB funding is helping Sesame Workshop make more than 100 hours of its iconic series available in Latin America, while developing new content in response to the pandemic.

Switzerland and the IDB Expand Innovative Financing Partnership

In 2016, Switzerland and IDB Lab worked with Colombia to launch the first-ever Social Impact Bond in a developing country. Thanks to its success, in July Switzerland’s State Secretariat for Economic Affairs committed an additional $400,000 to expand the operation and its efforts to boost employment outcomes in that country. Social Impact Bonds are an innovative public-private partnership in which impact investors provide up-front funding for a social service and the government pays only if outcomes are achieved.
With SDSN and the SDG Academy, Second Edition of MOOC on Partnerships Goes Live

A second edition of the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on “Partnerships as a Vehicle for Advancing Sustainable Development” has gone live, sharing theoretical content and case studies on how to develop, manage, and monitor partnerships for sustainable development. Initially launched in 2019 by the IDB in partnership with the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and its SDG Academy, the course has registered more than 17,000 participants to date.

IDB Invest Supports First Social Bond Issued by a Private Entity in Colombia

IDB Invest has subscribed to a social bond issued by La Hipotecaria Compañía de Financiamiento S.A. for 52 billion pesos, marking the first issuance of a social bond by a private entity in Colombia. The resources from the placement of the bonds will be used to finance housing in the country.

OPPORTUNITIES

Calling All Innovators: Submit Your Proposals to the Spotlight Project

The global education non-profit HundrED joined forces with the IDB to launch the Spotlight Project, an effort to identify and select innovations promoting 21st century skills within and outside of formal education. Innovations can include, but are not limited to, efforts to boost social-emotional skills, project-based learning, and self-guided learning through digital, music, sports, citizenship, and entrepreneurship programs. Apply by October 30!

FEMSA Foundation and the IDB to Reward Innovations in Water and Sanitation

FEMSA Foundation and the IDB announce a new edition of the IDB-FEMSA Awards, which since 2009 have recognized innovative solutions in the water, sanitation, and solid waste management sectors. This year, the Awards will provide $10,000 prizes to winners in each of these categories, while recognizing the most innovative solution that addresses COVID-19.

The PLAY Global Challenge Seeks Videogames that are Transforming Education

The IDB’s newly launched PLAY challenge seeks to identify the most innovative global solutions that are harnessing the use of videogames and gamification to enhance, measure, or certify cognitive, socio-emotional, or executive functioning skills. Submit your proposal by September 11!

Have Ideas for Revitalizing Tourism? Share Them Today

IDB Lab has teamed up with the United Nations World Tourism Organization to identify business models to revitalize the tourism sector in 15 countries. Through an innovation challenge, the partners will identify solutions that develop the tourism labor force and enhance environmental sustainability. Winning projects may receive up to $500,000 in grants and up to $2 million in loans. Apply by July 31!
The GovLab and IDB Apply “Smarter Crowdsourcing” to COVID-19

The Governance Lab (GovLab) at New York University’s Tandon School of Engineering and the IDB jointly launched “Smarter Crowdsourcing in the Age of Coronavirus,” an initiative convening public leaders and experts in public health, technology, data, and innovation for six online advising sessions to source concrete ways to combat the pandemic. Participation will be open through October 2020.

IT Program by Google.org, Glasswing International, and IDB Lab Kicking Off in Panama

IDB Lab has joined forces with Google.org and Glasswing International to launch the IT Certificate Program, which seeks to help young people acquire technical skills that are highly competitive in the labor market. Part of a broader partnership between these organizations, this latest effort invites young people in Panama aged 18-22 to apply by July 29 to participate.

On July 30, Join the Launch of Our Flagship Report

Each year, the IDB’s Development in the Americas flagship report conducts in-depth research on one of the major economic and social challenges facing LAC. On July 30, the IDB will host a virtual event to launch the 2020 edition, titled “From Structures to Services: The Path to Better Infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean”. Register here to attend.

NEWS DIGEST

Out of 47 Entities, IDB Ranks 5th in 2020 Aid Transparency Index

The IDB has ranked fifth among 47 donor agencies in the 2020 Aid Transparency Index, up from seventh place in 2018. This shift is the result of the IDB’s continuous efforts to increase transparency and accountability. The Index is the only independent aid transparency ranking among the world’s major aid donors.

With UK Funding, the University of the West Indies and the IDB to Restore Mangroves

A landmark agreement on mangrove restoration has been signed by Solutions for Developing Countries (SODECO) University of the West Indies and the IDB to enhance Jamaica’s ability to adapt and increase its resilience to climate change. Thanks to a $2.45 million grant from the United Kingdom’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), provided through the UK Blue Carbon Fund created by the UK and the IDB in 2019, the project is designed to restore over 1,000 hectares of degraded mangrove forest and boost ecosystem-based livelihood opportunities.
Migrants’ Urban Integration Project Receives $4 Million Grant from Korea

Thanks to funding from the Government of Korea, a $4 million grant will support the integration of migrants in Colombian cities. Funded by an IDB-managed Korean Trust Fund for technology and innovation, the effort will enhance management and planning related to service delivery, access to housing, and urban development scenarios for future growth. It will complement a grant from the European Union’s Latin American Investment Fund.

Alongside IDB, Blue like an Orange Sustainable Capital Supports LAC Businesses

IDB partner Blue like an Orange Sustainable Capital has closed its first fund, raising more than $200 million to provide credit to companies in the region. Specifically, its Latin America Fund I has mobilized more than 25 private investors to help companies enable growth and social impact in line with the SDGs. The Fund has a co-financing agreement with IDB Invest, with which it is now working to originate, structure, and execute transactions that deploy even more capital to the region.

With the Caribbean Development Bank, Improving the Lives of Caribbean People

The Caribbean Development Bank, the IDB, and IDB Invest have announced efforts to support economic development and the integration of the Caribbean community and common market. In a new agreement, the partners pledged to cooperate through the financing and co-financing of projects, financial and advisory services, and capacity building intended to build resilience, further inclusion and equality, and enhance governance and innovation.

New Agreement with World Bank to Improve Efficiency in Operations

The World Bank and the IDB have signed a Framework Agreement for mutual reliance in public procurement matters related to co-financed projects in LAC. Consistent with international best practices, the agreement allows the partners to more expeditiously implement projects and channel needed resources to the region, in particular by improving the efficiency of projects co-financed by the IDB and World Bank.

Korea Pledges $3 Million to Promote Public-Private Partnerships in LAC

In a newly signed Letter of Intent, the Korean Ministry of Economy and Finance and the IDB jointly outline plans to promote public-private partnerships (PPP) in the region. To this end, Korea has pledged an initial $3 million to the IDB’s Regional Facility for the Preparation of PPPs, which funds specialized transaction advisers, helps public entities design PPP contracts, fosters private participation in sustainable infrastructure projects, and improves infrastructure-based services.

New Zealand Expands Support to Agriculture in LAC

FONTAGRO, an IDB-administered cooperation mechanism between LAC countries and Spain that promotes innovation in family farming, agricultural competitiveness, and food security, has mobilized early $600,000 from the Government of New Zealand for a series of agricultural projects in the region. Building upon a long standing partnership with New Zealand, the projects will specifically work to increase productivity in the bovine industry in LAC’s Chaco region, advance climate-smart agtech in the milk industry, and generate innovations in land management.
In Honduras, $79 Million Project with the Green Climate Fund Invests in Forests

As part of its partnership with the Green Climate Fund, the IDB has approved a $79 million project that will boost the climate resilience of vulnerable coniferous forests in Honduras as a means of improving water security, protecting forests, reducing emissions, and generating benefits for households. Over the course of five years, the project intends to transform forest management to expand the participation of local communities and the private sector, while improving governance and stability.

Harnessing Migration as an Enabler of Development

The International Organization for Migration and the IDB have teamed up to promote orderly, regular, and safe migration as an enabler of sustainable development and inclusive growth. In a new agreement, the partners pledged to promote evidence-based policies and programs, develop institutional capacity, and protect migrants’ human and labor rights.

VISA and the IDB Take Action on Urban Mobility

Following the signature of a new Memorandum of Understanding with VISA earlier this year, VISA and IDB specialists have been working closely on a joint action plan to promote the use of digital, contactless payments in the transportation sector. The plan focuses on creating and sharing content that highlights payment innovations and documents best practices, lessons learned, user experiences, and efficiency gains from the application of these technologies to urban mobility challenges in the region.

In the Health Sector, Brazil’s NIC.br and the IDB Team Up

The Brazilian non-profit Nic.br, responsible for implementing the decisions and projects of the Brazilian Internet Steering Committee, has joined forces with the IDB to improve information collection in the health sector. In a new agreement, the partners outlined joint efforts to ensure quality in the design and implementation of surveys intended to measure access to and the use of communication and information technologies for health-related purposes.

WHERE WE’VE BEEN

First-Ever Korea-Colombia Virtual Forum Talks Health, Economic Reactivation, Entrepreneurship, and More

The Government of Colombia, the Government of Korea, and the IDB have jointly organized the first-ever Korea-Colombia Virtual Forum, which is also the first event of its kind organized between Korea and an IDB member country. With the goal of virtually bringing together policymakers, government officials, and business leaders from across the Pacific, the event generated discussion about post-pandemic economic reactivation, the public health response to COVID-19, and building resilience in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. It was attended by leaders at the highest levels, including Colombia’s President Iván Duque, Korea’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy and Finance Hong Nam-ki, and President Luis Alberto Moreno of the IDB.
France and the IDB Discuss COVID-19, Celebrate $800 Million in Co-Financing

The French Development Agency (AFD) and the IDB Group virtually held their IV Deep Dive Meeting, where they emphasized strengthening the partnership’s momentum and identifying future co-financing operations and activities. Specifically, the partners discussed instruments to support the short, medium, and long-term response to COVID-19, as well as cooperation in line with climate and SDG objectives, key drivers of the AFD-IDB partnership. Finally, the partners reflected on the progress of the agreement signed in 2018 to facilitate up to $1 billion in co-financing by the end of 2020. To date, operations worth $800 million have been approved.

With Germany, Diving Deep to Explore Partnership Opportunities

The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the IDB virtually held their II Deep Dive Meeting, at which they confirmed the importance of partnering to confront the challenges facing the region. Further, the partners highlighted their track record in the area of climate change, outlined their respective COVID-19 responses, and explored future collaboration opportunities, highlighting the importance of a “green recovery” from the COVID-19 pandemic. The gathering with BMZ was complemented by additional meetings with German Development Bank KfW.

Among Global Business Leaders, Putting the Spotlight on LAC

Putting the spotlight on the LAC region, executives from the IDB Group participated in a webinar organized by YPO, a global leadership community of more than 29,000 chief executives in over 130 countries. In the session, IDB Lab CEO Irene Arias, IDB Invest CEO James Scriven, and IDB Vice President for Countries Alexandre da Rosa presented on the LAC region, the IDB Group’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and potential partnership opportunities.

Alongside Banco Santander, IDB Specialists Join Santander X Tomorrow Challenge

As part of the IDB Group’s robust collaboration with Banco Santander, IDB specialists participated as judges in the Santander X Tomorrow Challenge, an effort led by Banco Santander to crowdsource solutions that help small and medium enterprises adapt their business models to a post-COVID-19 world as part of the €30 million fund mobilized to support research on the virus through collaboration with universities and other entities.

With European Partners, Presenting the 2020 Macroeconomic Report

Across Europe, the IDB virtually presented “Policies to Fight the Pandemic: the 2020 Latin American and Caribbean Macroeconomic Report,” which provides a diagnosis of the rapidly changing environment and proposes policy recommendations to bring relief, maintain economic stability, and keep the core of the economy intact. Specifically, webinars were organized with IDB partners, the OECD Development Centre, the London School of Economics, and Casa de America, in which specialists from the IDB and each organization discussed the report in depth. With the latter of these entities, the IDB has also co-organized the digital debate “Rethinking International Trade” to present its flagship report “Trading Promises for Results: What Global Integration Can Do for Latin America and the Caribbean.”
To Tackle COVID-19, Tapping into the Korean Experience

In June, the Korea Center of Diseases Control (KCDC) shared its expertise battling COVID-19 with the Ministry of Health of Argentina. Following a presentation to officials in March, Dr. Seon Ku Lee shared Korea’s approach, citing specific examples regarding its quarantine system. The audience comprised national health specialists, including the vice minister, as well as health officials from each province in Argentina.

With China, Talking Transport in LAC

The State Grid of China participated in the IDB workshop “The Role of Power Utilities in Electric Mobility.” Mr. Ren Yuan, Executive Director of the State Grid Representative Office in the United States, shared his experience on electromobility strategy and activities. In addition, IDB Transport Division Chief Nestor Roa participated in the Latin America session for the “Digital Transportation for a Healthier City” virtual event. Organized by the ride-sharing app DiDi and IDB partner the World Economic Forum, the event discussed the challenges facing the transport sector and how the IDB is addressing them.

Analyzing the Future of Responsible Business with Klaus Schwab

IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno joined Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF), in a dynamic discussion earlier this year on the future of responsible business. Building upon the long standing partnership between WEF and the IDB, the leaders discussed environmental, social, and governance issues and the achievement of the SDGs in a post-pandemic world.

Virtual Dialogue Shares Korean Knowledge with LAC

In a virtual dialogue, the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Korea (MOEF) shared its experience managing the public health and economic aspects of the pandemic, with a focus on its success flattening the curve and the fiscal stimulus packages it deployed to alleviate the adverse effects of COVID-19. During the session, MOEF engaged dialogue with the audience, comprising approximately 200 participants from nearly all LAC countries.

Talking Supply Chains and Social Impact with Danone

In late June, IDB President Luis Alberto Moreno joined Emmanuel Faber, Chairman and CEO of Danone in a virtual chat about business continuity, support for small producers, and corporate social impact in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conversation was particularly relevant given the history of collaboration between Danone and the IDB, which has supported development in the agricultural sector.

Knowledge Sharing to Enhance the COVID-19 Response

In May, the IDB organized the “Health Infrastructure and COVID-19: Strategies and Challenges for its Management and Execution” virtual event. Among other speakers, Dr. Wu Zunyou, Chief Epidemiologist of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Dr. Gong Sen, Executive Vice-President of Center for International Knowledge on Development (CIKD), participated in the session and shared China’s experience in emergency infrastructure implementation, with a focus on shelter hospitals.