



Country Fact Sheet Cuba

Table of contents

Foreword	3
List of abbreviations	4
Statistics	6
Country map	8
1. Country profile	9
1.1 <i>Geographical presentation</i>	9
1.2 <i>Socio-economic analysis</i>	9
1.3 <i>Political structure</i>	11
1.4 <i>Economic performance - synthesis</i>	12
1.5 <i>Development challenges</i>	15
2. Education	16
2.1 <i>Structure</i>	16
2.2 <i>Data and policy focus in terms of higher education</i>	16
3. Development aid analysis	21
3.1 <i>Development strategy with focus on poverty reduction</i>	21
3.1.1 <i>Poverty reduction analysis and Millenium Development Goals</i>	21
3.1.2 <i>Development strategy of the Republic of Cuba</i>	22
3.2 <i>actors</i>	234
3.3 <i>Donor aid</i>	23
3.3.1 <i>Overview</i>	23
3.3.2 <i>EU – Cuba – Indicative Cooperation Programme 2011-2013</i>	24
3.3.3 <i>United Nations –UNDP Programme</i>	26
3.3.4 <i>AECID in Cuba</i>	28
4. University development cooperation	31
4.1 <i>VLIR-UOS activity in/with the country</i>	31
4.2 <i>Focus of other university development cooperation donors</i>	31
List of resources and interesting links	34
Annexes	35
4.1 <i>Overview activities/projects of Flemish university/institutes of higher education in the country (VLIR-UOS and other) – working document</i>	35
4.2 <i>Overview VLIR-UOS projects per thematic activity and as compared to interventions of other donors (2 worksheets) – working document</i>	35

Foreword

The Country Sheet Cuba is a compilation of information from related documents with factual country information, economic, social and development priorities, as also information on higher education and university cooperation in Cuba. The information included is extracted from policy documents, websites and strategy papers from EU, UNDP, AECID and other organisations.

This compiled document was realised by Peter De Lannoy, VLIR-UOS South Coordinator, and is by no means to be considered as a policy document. Its only purpose is to propose a working document with background and context for Country Strategy Identification of VLIR-UOS cooperation in and with Cuba.

As this concerns a working document, frequent updates will occur. The date of compilation of the current version is mentioned in the footer of the document.

List of Abbreviations

ACP	Africa, Caribbean, Pacific
ACS	Association of Caribbean States
AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo
ALBA	Alianza Bolivariana para las Americas
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CARIFORUM	Caribbean Forum
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CITMA	Ministerio de Ciencia Tecnología y Medio Ambiente
CSP(s)	Country Strategy Paper(s)
CIUF	Conseil Interuniversitaire des Universités de la Belgique francophone
CUD	Commission Universitaire pour le Développement de la CIUF
CUC	Cuban Convertible Peso
CUP	Cuban Peso
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness Programme
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EDF	European Development Fund
EPA(s)	Economic Partnership Agreement(s)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSP	Generalised System of Preferences
HDI	Human Development Index
HPI-1	Human Poverty Index
HRC	Human Rights Council
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MEP	Ministry of Economy and Planning
MINCEX	Ministry for Foreign Trade, Investment and Cooperation
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NIP	National Indicative Programme

NSA(s)	Non-State Actor(s)
OAS	Organisation of American States
ONE	Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas – National Statistics Office
PCC	Partido Comunista de Cuba - Cuban Communist Party
TCP	Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UPR	Universal Peer Review
US(A)	United States of America
USD	US Dollar
VLIR	Flemish Interuniversity Council
VLIR-UOS	Flemish Interuniversity Council –University Development Cooperation
WFP World	Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Statistics

	INDICATOR	VALUE	YEAR	RANKED POSITION VLIR-UOS PARTNER COUNTRIES
BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT (VLIR-UOS country selection methodology)				
1	BoD-score (based on basket of 2, 3 and 4)	0,426	2010	10
2	Human Development Index	0,76	2010	1
3	Public Spending on Education (as % percentage of GDP)	13,6	2008	1
VLIR-UOS INVESTMENTS				
4	# VLIR-UOS-investments Totaal	1.048.494	2010	5
5	# Institutional University Cooperation	1	2011	3
6	# Own Initiatives	9	2011	1
7	# South initiatives	0	2011	3
8	# Scholars (ICP/ITP/KOI/ICP-PhD)	2	2010	11
9	# Travel Grants + VLADOC	1	2010	16
EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT AID				
10	# Universities	50	2011	9
11	School enrollment, tertiary (% gross)(high% because of # studying adults)	117,79104	2009	1
12	Net ODA received per capita (current US\$)	10,4	2009	18
13	DGD expenditure: bilateral cooperation	0	2009	14
14	DGD expenditure: Indirect cooperation	2.960.646	2009	11
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT				
15	Life expectancy at birth	78,89	2009	1
16	Under-five mortality (per 1,000 live births)	6	2008	19
17	Combined gross enrolment ratio in education (both sexes) (%)	100,8	2010	1

18	Adult literacy rate (both sexes) (% aged 15 and above)	99,8	2010	1
19	Gender Inequality Index (updated)	0,484	2008	12
20	Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	5	2007	15
DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS				
21	Population	11.204.180	2009	16
22	Labor participation rate, total (% of total population ages 15+)	62,3	2009	13
23	GDP per capita (2008 PPP US\$)	no data		no data
24	Improved water source (% of population with access)	94	2008	2
25	Internet users (per100 people)	12,9	2008	5
26	Income Gini coefficient	no data	no data	no data
POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL INDICATORS				
27	Voice and Accountability Percentile Rank (0-100)	21,4	2009	20
28	Political Stability Percentile Rank (0-100)	45,8	2009	6
29	Government Effectiveness Percentile Rank (0-100)	37,6	2009	13
30	Regalutory Quality Percentile Rank (0-100)	4,8	2009	19
31	Rule of Law Percentile Rank (0-100)	31,1	2009	12
32	Control of Corruption Percentile Rank (0-100)	64,8	2009	1

Country Map



1. Country Profile

1.1 Geographical Presentation¹

The Republic of Cuba is a free socialist, sovereign, and collective State. Cuba is an archipelago located in the western- most part of the Caribbean Sea, comprising the island of Cuba, the Isla de la Juventud (the Island of Youth), and some 1,600 smaller islands and keys, for a total land area of 110,860 km². Cuba is the largest island of the grouping of the Caribbean, situated west of Hispaniola island (Haiti and the Dominican Republic), and 145 km south of Key West, Florida (US).

Cuba is made up of 14 provinces, divided into 169 municipalities, a Special Municipality, the Isla de la Juventud. 75,8% of just over 11 million Cubans live in urban areas. In recent years, population growth has slowed significantly. Cuba is characterized by uniformity in the geographical distribution of its population and the variables that comprise it. The central provinces and the capital have older populations.

Cuba is situated in the hurricane belt and frequently suffers severe impacts from hurricanes or tropical storms. The island was severely hit by three hurricanes in 2008, with overall damage estimated at some USD 10 billion. Climate change may be increasing the frequency and strength of the hurricanes that affect Cuba.

1.2 Socio-economic Analysis²

Cuba's population stood at 11.24 million at the end of 2009. The population has largely stabilised, with average annual growth of less than 0.5 percent per year over the past decade, a level which is well below the Latin American average of 1.6 percent. According to official figures, in 2008-09 the population increased slightly, with annual net emigration since 2000 averaging around 30,000 (around 0.3 percent of the population), of whom 20,000 legally migrate every year to the US under a bilateral migration agreement. Both birth and death rates are low compared with the regional average. The demographic profile is one of a rapidly ageing population due to low death rates and emigration, and therefore a rising old age dependency ratio. According to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the percentage of the population over 65 years rose from 8.4 percent in 1990 to 9.6 percent in 2000, and will rise to 15.8 percent in 2020. The Cuban authorities are concerned with the ageing of the population as well as with the exodus from rural to urban areas. The government is in the process of analysing scenarios of population shifts for the next 15 years.

Cuba's population replacement rate has not been guaranteed since 1978. In 1975, the number of children born per woman was only 1.5. Approximately 79% of deaths occur among the population aged 60 and older. In Cuba, infant mortality and mortality among child under 5 have markedly decreased. The increase in life expectancy at birth is a faithful reflection of the country's significant reduction in mortality. At the beginning of the 20th century, life expectancy was 40 years. In 2005, life expectancy was more than 77 years.

Since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution, particular emphasis has been placed on support policies in the social sector, including education, health and social security, as an essential element of the 'social contract' between the Communist government and the Cuban people.

Despite the serious economic and financial problems that Cuba faced in particular during the "special period" from 1991, efforts have been made to minimise the social costs of the necessary fiscal austerity measures.

¹ Information from EU Country Strategy Paper and Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile Cuba.

² Idem

Effective social sector support has always been and will remain key for the legitimacy of Cuba's Communist government.

The Human Development Index (HDI) for Cuba is high, at 0.86315, which means that the country ranks 51st out of 182 countries for which data are available. While Cuba ranks second in adult literacy, it comes only 95th in the GDP per capita (PPP USD) poverty measure (see previous points on GDP calculation). However, its Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) ranking is 17th among the 135 developing countries for which the index has been calculated.

The emphasis placed by the government on the universal provision of basic health care has made Cuba's health statistics comparable to those of industrialised nations. In 2009, life expectancy at birth was 77.97 years (the highest in Latin America and Caribbean region after Chile and Costa Rica) and the infant-mortality rate was 4.7 per 1,000 live births (the lowest in the region). A preventive health care system, based on family doctors serving small patient groups, was developed in the 1980s. Cuba has the highest ratio of doctors to population in the world (633 per 100,000 in 2007). Since around 20,000 physicians out of a total of 71,000 work abroad, the number available on the island is significantly less, but still high by international standards.

With respect to HIV/AIDS, after the first case of HIV was diagnosed in the country in 1985, the Cuban government implemented a national programme for the monitoring and management of the epidemic that included control strategies, education, prevention and treatment. This approach has kept the rate of prevalence on the island to 0.1 percent, the lowest in the Americas. The Cuban mortality rate from AIDS-related diseases is also low, at 1.0 per 100,000 inhabitants. Sexual transmission is the main source of infection (99 percent). Despite these achievements, the number of new infections has increased steadily since 1996, especially among homosexuals. The majority of those living with HIV/AIDS are men (80 percent).

Under Cuban law, women and men have equal rights and responsibilities regarding marriage, divorce, raising children, house-keeping and pursuing a career. The law also lays down the principle of equal pay for equal work. Cuba ranks 49th out of 177 countries in the Gender Development Indicator. It is a signatory of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and it reports regularly to the Commission of Experts of this Convention. In its last report, produced in 2005, Cuba defined three main challenges for gender equality: a) change of mentality about the traditional roles of men and women, b) focus on gender issues in policies, programmes and projects and c) participation of women in high-level posts. Gender and racial equality remain among the declared objectives of the Cuban state, although it is acknowledged at the highest level that there is room for improvement, e.g. representation of women in senior positions.³

The state is Cuba's main employer, but the share of state employment has fallen since 1990, when it accounted for 95 percent of total employment. By 2000 it had slipped to 77 percent, but since then it has crept back up to over 80 percent. The main non-state jobs are in the agricultural sector, where traditional private small farmers were joined by members of newly created farm co-operatives, known as "Unidades Básicas de Producción Cooperativa" (UBPCs – Basic Units of Co-operative Production), which replaced many of the large state landholdings. New categories of self-employment and family businesses that have been legalised since 1993 have had to operate under tight regulation and high taxes.

There are huge disparities in wages between different employment sectors, and especially between those working in tourism with access to CUC or other hard-currency, and the rest of the population, which relies on

³ http://www.one.cu/publicaciones/cepde/anuario_2008/7_anuario_DEFUNCIONES.pdf; Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile 2008, page 20; Extracts from "La estrategia cubana de respuesta al VIH/Sida" – Oxfam International, July 2008; World Health Organisation, 2008; Ministry of Public Health, 2007; http://www.undp.org.cu/documentos/genero/genero_HDR_20072008_SP.pdf

salaries in CUP. A senior specialised physician earns a salary equivalent to €40 per month in CUP, while a parking keeper can earn five times more with tips in CUC. The average monthly salary of a state employee is around the equivalent of USD 1533.

1.3 Political Structure⁴

The Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) has been the only legal political party since 1965. The Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular (the National Assembly of People's Power) is the paramount state institution, "representing and expressing the sovereign will of the Cuban people". Elections to the Assembly take place every five years; the most recent ones were held in 2008. Under the current legislature, the Assembly includes 611 members of which 43 percent are women.

In principle it is not compulsory for candidates to belong in the PCC, although in practice almost all deputies are members of the Party or of an affiliate organisation. Candidates for the National Assembly are chosen by Candidacy Commissions chaired by local trade union officials and composed of elected representatives of "mass organisations" representing workers, young people, women, students and farmers. There is only one candidate per seat in the national and local assemblies.

The Assembly members – "Diputados" – elect the 31-member Council of State. The President of the Council of State is the Head of State and Government. The Council of State holds the legislative power when the Assembly is in recess. The Council of Ministers exercises executive and administrative functions through its 9-member executive committee.

The Constitution provides for independent courts; however it explicitly subordinates them to the National Assembly and to the Council of State, with the People's Supreme Court being the highest judicial body.

Fidel Castro was Head of State and Government from 1959 (marking the date of the revolution that overthrew the regime of General Batista) to February 2008. Raul Castro was elected President of the Council of State by the National Assembly on 24 February 2008. Following his appointment as President of the Council of State, Raul Castro announced a series of reform measures ranging from largely symbolic reforms, such as allowing Cubans to own mobile phones, stay in international hotels or buy DVDs, to farther-reaching reforms such as the lease of agricultural land, the decentralisation of some decision-making in this sector and the liberalisation of private taxi transport. No significant new reform measures are expected to be decided before the next Congress of the Communist Party. The Party Congress had not met for 12 years and was frequently postponed. A consultation campaign, unusual for Cuba, began in December 2010. It finally took place in April 2011.⁵ The Congress decided on an important number of economic reforms amongst other the liberalisation of limited form of free enterprise and the reduction of the number of civil servants. A Communist Party convention, addressing political issues will likely follow in 2011.

In January 2011 Castro made another cabinet shuffle showing an increased role for career military leaders and a continuation of placing long-time allies in top posts. Dissident movements are active despite strong repression. The European Union has underscored its dissatisfaction with the human rights situation, and the U.S has consistently opposed easing of its embargo until Cuba implements political and economic reforms. The U.S. sanctions law also precludes any major shift in US policy while either Fidel or Raúl Castro is in power. However, in March 2009, Washington lifted Bush-era restrictions on travel and remittances, and relaxed limits on the sale of food and medicine. Washington announced another round of easing restrictions on remittances and travel in late 2010/early 2011. Any more substantive U.S. opening is likely to come very

⁴ Extracts from EU Country Strategy Paper and Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile Cuba.

⁵ The 6th PCC congress and 1st since 1997 and without Fidel Castro as leader started on 15 April 2011 and mainly dealt with a reform package presented by Raul Castro.

slowly. In 2006 Cuba signed a “Peoples' Trade Agreement” with Venezuela and Bolivia, and the resultant access to Venezuelan oil on favourable terms is now a critical part of Cuba's economy. Other countries have also forged closer ties with Cuba in recent years, including Russia, Brazil, China and other Asian countries like Vietnam. Cuba is very wary of heavy dependence on any one relationship.

The civil and political rights situation in Cuba is still a matter of concern, in particular with regard to the situation of political prisoners and restrictions on freedom of expression, such as access to media, and internet use.

In February 2008, Cuba signed the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In February 2009, Cuba ratified the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

1.4 Economic Performance - synthesis⁶

Cuba has a dual monetary system. Two currencies are in circulation: the Cuban convertible peso (CUC) is equivalent to 1.08 USD and to 24 Cuban pesos (CUP) or *moneda nacional* (but the official exchange rate of 1:1 is also used for some public transactions). The economy has a rather competitive external component (nickel, tourism, biotechnology, services) for which the CUC is used, and a protected and not very efficient domestic component managed in CUP, as well as a parallel economy⁷.

In 2008, Cuba spent 50 percent of its current budget on *agricultural* and *energy* imports. This has resulted in a current account deficit exceeding 2.5 billion USD (4-5 percent of GDP), which has drained the cash reserves of the Cuban state. Cuba has the world's third largest reserves of nickel and cobalt, it exports high quality cigars and rum, and has a service industries, high-tech biotechnology and a high level of performance in ICT and health. Offshore oil drilling operations in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), initially planned for 2009, have been postponed. The Cuban government estimates that there could be 20 billion barrels of *oil* reserves in its offshore fields. Cuba currently imports 50 percent of its oil from Venezuela on highly preferential terms.

Tourism is another important source of income for Cuba, with over 2 million visitors every year, including 900,000 Canadian and 200,000 British tourists, bringing gross revenues of 2 billion USD. If the US Congress decided to lift its ban on US citizens travelling to Cuba, this could represent a potential flow of 2 to 3 billion USD annually.

It is estimated that *remittances* from Cuban migrants were about 800 million USD in 1998 and 1 billion USD at the end of 2007. Most of the remittance flows originate from the US, although between 2005 and 2009 estimated remittances from the US fell from 81 to 53 percent as a consequence of the expansion of migration to other countries such as Spain, where the share increased from 12% to 23%. It is reported that many Cubans have stopped sending money back to their home country as a consequence of the global economic crisis.

Due to restrictions in the US and Cuba, remittances are often sent through non-official channels, which makes the true figure difficult to calculate.

⁶ Extract from EU Strategy Paper 2011-13.

⁷ Text extracted from the « DGTPE - Direction Générale du Trésor et de la Politique Economique - Cuba, October 2009 Report”

The authorities maintain fairly restrictive rules on foreign direct investment (FDI), which has to fulfil several criteria: technology transfer, provision of capital and export markets. The principal investors in the island are Italy (telecoms), Canada (oil, nickel) and Spain (hotels).

Even if Cuba's human development index (HDI) is high, the living conditions of Cuban people are not easy. Overall, the current economic situation of Cuba is serious. Adding to the structural weaknesses of the economic system, coupled with the long-standing impact of the US embargo, the Cuban economy was seriously affected by the combined effect of the 2008 hurricanes (500,000 houses destroyed or damaged, temporary evacuation of some three million Cubans, and overall damage and losses estimated at almost ten billion dollars, i.e. over 20 per cent of Cuban GDP), rising food prices (Cuba imports 80 per cent of its food). Services dominate the Cuban economy, despite the marginal character of the private sector, and their share has increased in recent years. According to estimates based on the latest available data from national sources, services accounted for 69.8 per cent of GDP in 2007, compared with 57.2 per cent in 1990.

The whole economy is controlled by the state, which acts not only as a provider of both commercial and non-commercial services, but also as a controller of trade in services. In 1990, the agriculture sector accounted for 10.8 per cent of GDP; today, it is estimated at less than 4 per cent, even though it employs 18.57 per cent of the population. The decline of the sugar industry, a lack of finance for agricultural imports and the weak incentives for farmers have resulted in a fall in the share of agriculture in the Cuban economy. Until 2002, sugar accounted for around one half of the land area under cultivation, but a radical restructuring programme initiated during that year has halved this area. Today, there are 700,000 hectares devoted to sugar cane in the country, of which close to 50 per cent are harvested each year. Eventually, this is expected to facilitate an expansion of other export crops (mainly citrus and tropical fruits), as well as food crops and forestry.

Industry accounted for an estimated 25 per cent of GDP in 2007, down from 32 per cent in 1990. After a sharp decline in industrial production in the early 1990s, new investments have brought a recovery in some industries. These include: nickel mining, steel production, light industries supplying the tourism sector and - since the launch of a new housing programme in the second half of 2005 - the construction materials industry.

The Cuban armed forces control significant parts of the economy. As part of the concept of "perfeccionamiento empresarial" (perfecting management), their entities manage the most lucrative sectors of the economy in the country. Boosted by its economic success, the military-industrial Cuban system has grown in importance. Its elites are a significant factor of growth.

The need to make the Cuban economy more efficient and self-sufficient is recognised by the Cuban authorities and reiterated at the highest levels. Despite the contribution of Venezuelan subsidies related to purchases of services (especially medical) from Cuba. Cuba has been virtually *insolvent* since January 2009. Castro stated in his July 2009 speech "no individual, and no country, can indefinitely go on spending more than they earn". Apart from Venezuelan aid credits to buy oil, loans from China, Brazil and Russia and guarantees capped by Euler-Hermes, Cuba has no access to long-term finance due to its unilateral moratorium on debt since 1986 and the US embargo.

Measures taken by the government to deal with the economic situation are adversely affecting external trade and investment. Banks are not allowed to pay cash directly and transfers in foreign currency are held back by the Central Bank (cf Resolution 1/2009 which imposes restrictions and increased surveillance measures on account movements in order to "avoid undue use of bank services"). Hence, money is withheld in the banks, and the Central Bank uses it for its own payments, thus putting foreign firms in the hands of the Central Bank. Up until now, the Central Bank has implicitly required foreign enterprises to be patient, an expectation which was made more explicit by the authorities in late 2009. Reportedly, in December 2009, the

Central Bank also levied a one-off “tax” of 19 percent on all CUC denominated accounts of Cuban public entities.

Cuba is not a member of any of the main International financial institutions (IFIs). The Cuban government withdrew from the World Bank in 1960. Since the budget deficit reached its peak at 6.7 percent of GDP in 2008, economic observers estimate that the Cuban authorities have managed to narrow the budget shortfall in 2009, and this trend is set to continue in 2010.

According to statements by President R. Castro and the Minister for Economy and Planning, Marino Murillo, the main focus in 2010 will be on increasing domestic productivity, careful investment planning, and on sectors producing for export, with an attempt to balance the budget by a tightening of budgetary allocations and even cuts in some of the social benefits for the population. This will involve significant changes, including decentralised decision making and an expansion of the role of markets in some areas, particularly in agriculture and food distribution and retail. A medium-term economic plan was announced on the same occasion, with the 2011-2015 economic plan due to be drafted in the course of 2010.

Although there are plans to formulate a strategy to move towards a single currency, which is expected to remove a major barrier to economic growth, the slowing down of the economy in 2009 delayed efforts to bring the two national currencies (CUC and CUP) into closer alignment.

While petty corruption is pervasive and socially acceptable due to low salaries, corruption involving large amounts is uncommon in Cuba and is frowned upon by the population. Cuba ranks 63rd (out of 180) in the Corruption Perception Index of the Transparency International report of 2008. In the past, the Cuban government has implemented several large-scale initiatives to reduce theft of state property (i.e. gasoline, meat), but the corrective effects cannot be sustained due to the gap between prices and salaries. A supplement to salaries is being implemented to compensate certain benefits in kind that have been discontinued, such as meals for office workers.

In view of its geographical and economic characteristics – small economy, overall poorly developed industrial base, low productivity of the agricultural sector – Cuba depends mostly on imports for its current operation. In 2008, asset imports rose by 43.8 percent and exports by 2.1 percent. The result is a negative trade balance of 10.7 billion CUC (11.5 billion USD), which increased by 4 billion compared to 2007, i.e. a progression equivalent to almost 70 percent of the deficit.

Three key trade partners have emerged since the beginning of the decade: a) Venezuela, under the Caracas and Petro Caribe agreements, b) China, with priority being given by the authorities to purchases of consumer and industrial goods of Chinese origin, and c) the United States, which became Cuba’s 5th largest partner in 2007 in spite of the embargo (one way – Cuba can not export to the US). Imports from the US, which had been prohibited by US law since 1961, resumed in 2002, but trade with the US is restricted to imports of food and agricultural and pharmaceutical products. Canada and Spain also carry considerable weight - the former because of its proximity and important presence in the Cuban economy, particularly in the nickel sector, and the latter as a longstanding partner and main investor in the tourism industry.⁸

1.5 Development Challenges⁹

The gradual political, state and economic reforms and how this will position Cuba in the global geopolitical and economic context are a major challenge. Cuba wishes to address challenges with the less possible effects for its social and cultural system.

⁸ Info extracted from the “2008 Report on Cuba by the Economic Advisors based in Havana, working paper”; Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Report Cuba, November 2009, p. 5.

⁹ EU Strategy Paper analysis, p. 25-26.

Food security has been declared an issue of national security. The effects of the 2008 hurricanes, the rapid and sustained increase in international food prices, the lack of foreign currency both for imports and for food production inputs, and energy constraints have contributed to ensure that increasing national food production, especially by using endogenous resources and appropriate (low-input) technologies, is a national overarching priority. In this context, a series of measures are gradually being put in place to increase food production by small-holders, as well as improving its efficiency and quality.

As such a reform of the agricultural sector is crucial in order to ensure the sustainability of the process initiated: with a number of reforms which were implemented. Main challenges are modernisation, diversification and increase of production. A further difficulty is the economic sustainability of food production in a double currency system. Whereas 60% of inputs are obtained in Cuban Convertible Pesos (CUC), by state decree, 90% of sales are in (non-convertible) Cuban Pesos (CUP), thus providing little economic incentive to farmers and cooperatives. At present, cooperatives have only limited access to credit in CUP and no access to credit in CUC.

Given the above, the sustainable expansion of food production in the Cuban smallholder agricultural sector will primarily depend on the capacity of the Government to facilitate access to inputs (for production and processing) and credit.

Environment and climate change. Economic growth and the promotion of a sustainable and equitable social development, while safeguarding the environment and rationalizing the use of natural resources, are at the very heart of Cuba's national policies. However, although Cuba has the knowledge, the human capacity and a clear understanding of its needs and priorities, it lacks the financial resources to expand its efforts and to undertake further environment-related studies and investments in key sectors.

2. Education

2.1 Structure

Cuba has the highest literacy levels and the highest average levels of education attainment in Latin America. Education at all levels is free. The government continues to regard universal education and a high uptake of tertiary education, particularly in science and technology, as economically and socially important.

Since 2002, following the difficult years of the “*special period*”, the government has focused on education as a national priority. Educational spending increased to around 14 percent of GDP in 2007, up from 6.3 percent in 1998. The school infrastructure has been renovated and modernised, and new schools and higher-education institutions have been added. Thousands of new teachers have been trained in order to reduce primary school class sizes to not more than 20 pupils, and an extensive new network of adult education centres (in a programme known as “making education universal”) has been established, offering education up to university level in addition to training programmes. By the 2006/07 academic year there were 24.5 education professionals per 1,000 inhabitants, up from 18 in 1999/2000¹⁰. However, rationalisation of public spending is now being pursued in the education sector too.

2.2 Data and Policy focus in terms of higher education¹¹

In terms of data, the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Higher Education offers information in its Statistics Bulletin.

The Cuban system of Higher Education is today composed of 68 higher education institutions including 3,150 university sites. In Cuba, education at all levels, including undergraduate and graduate studies are public and entirely free.

The Ministry of Higher Education was founded in 1976 in line with the growing importance granted by the State to higher education. Four basic principles underlie the training of professionals in Cuba, namely:

1. a broad profile curricula, with two leading ideas:
 - the combination of instruction and education,
 - a close link between studies and work;
2. continuing education in all fields of knowledge;
3. research as an integral part of the university mission;
4. university extension as the integrating process of university work.

Ninety-four different five year undergraduate programs are offered, covering all fields of knowledge. Curricula are based on the criterion of broad-profile undergraduate training, through a greater integration of the academic research and pre-professional work components. This proved that it is necessary to train professionals who, with a sound mastery of the fundamental knowledge and the most general professional skills in a given field, are better able to achieve an upgrade and increase of their knowledge and qualifications through postgraduate studies and also to develop new skills required to meet the variety of changing demands and conditions from the world of work and the development of society.

¹⁰ Human Development Report; Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Profile 2008, p.19

¹¹ Extract from website Cuban ministry for higher education:
http://www.mes.edu.cu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=36

To this end, a needs analysis was conducted for each program, which resulted in the set of assignments that characterizes each profession. These assignments became the starting point for curricula design, which show the set of professional goals that should be met for each degree course that is the pedagogical expression of the social mission of each university. Among the various features of this design, the concept of an integrating discipline, as an important element to achieve systematization and integration of curricula contents, has had the greatest impact. Identified with the professional activity the integrative discipline offers the best framework to establish the link with professional practice and to harmoniously structure pre-professional work and research throughout the program.

The permanent improvement of higher education is expressed by the appropriateness of the continuous renewal of Cuban universities given the ever growing need of updating and enhancing knowledge; this is of particular significance, not only for undergraduate courses, but also for the responses that must be given by the various modalities of the postgraduate level.

At present postgraduate academic education is geared towards achieving specialties and master's degrees and doctorates. Another important line of postgraduate studies is that of continuing education for further professionalization, updating, recycling and complementation.

Since the year 2000 crucial transformations have been taking place in the Cuban system of higher education, which are aimed towards broadening the opportunities and possibilities of access to universities of the least favoured social sectors. These transformations have been the result of a more comprehensive approach for achieving more social justice and equity. These transformations include the location of the university. Thus we have been engaged in opening university campuses in all municipalities and increasing its access.

But it is not only to widen access to university studies to achieve greater equity among all citizens. This is to reduce the dropout rate, which involves to create all necessary conditions to ensure that the vast majority of entering students to complete their training successfully. Obviously, this presents huge challenges both academic and social.

To meet these challenges, the new Cuban university has gone beyond its traditional walls and now carries out all its processes in a close relationship with all of society, particularly with local communities and territories. New pedagogical innovations to enhance the quality of learning are being implemented and validated; new programs are offered to meet the demands made, on the one hand, by the dynamics of science and technology and, on the other, by the specific needs of the country, of a productive sector or of a given region.

Evaluation and accreditation systems in higher education

All university entities have focused their attention on systematic quality assurance and quality improvement not only in the academic processes of undergraduate and graduate education and in scientific research but also in university management.

A university system of accreditation programs (SUPRA) was established in 1999 aimed at contributing to the improvement of Higher Education by certifying, at a national and international level, programs and institutions which meet the established quality standards. To implement this system a National Accreditation Board was created. This Board aims to contribute to improving the quality of Cuban higher education through the development and implementation of the University System Accreditation Program. Its objectives are to promote, organize, implement and control the policy of accreditation for higher education in the country through the bodies as directed. In addition, the Board grants the different categories of accreditation to evaluated programs and institutions.

SUPRA includes the Evaluation and Accreditation System for undergraduate programs (SEA-CU), the Evaluation and Accreditation System for Master's Degree programs (SEA-M), the Evaluation and Accreditation System for Doctoral programs (SEA-DR) and the System for the Evaluation of Institutions (SEI).

SUPRA operates within a legal framework which ensures its proper development. The system of accreditation programs is based on the following principles:

1. quality standards for Cuban Higher Education meet international standards, embracing academic excellence and social relevance;
2. the system does not exist "per se". It is the essential way of management to assure systematic quality improvement of programs and/or institutions;
3. self-evaluation is the core of the system. It is conducted by those who directly implement a program (for program accreditation) or by the faculty and administrative leaders forming the staff of a given school, department, laboratory, university municipal site, etc. (for accreditation of institutions);
4. certification is based on external evaluations conducted by peers and experts in open discussions with the agents of the program or institution being evaluated.

Although evaluation of programs and institutions of higher learning have been taking place in Cuba since 1976 and all institutions have received an evaluation on cycles that range from 3 to 5 years, the accreditation of programs as such was started nine years ago.

SUPRA systems include Evaluation Rules, Quality Standards and Evaluation Guides. These are the basic documents for developing a general self-evaluation culture within the university population: academic staff, students and other stakeholders. Standards for each accreditation category to be granted, procedures, documents and information to be delivered to peers during the external evaluation, technical aspects for each stage of the process, and criteria for decisions regarding the achievement of standards, are described in these documents.

The accreditation categories granted to each program are:

1. Undergraduate programs:

- Authorized program
- Certified program
- Excellence program

2. Master's Degree programs:

- Authorized program
- Ratified program
- Certified program
- Excellence program

3. Doctoral program:

- Authorized program
- Certified program
- Excellence program

Undergraduate programs reach the category of Authorized programs through the defense of the project presented by the corresponding National Undergraduate Commission before a board composed of renewed experts from academic and / or productive sector. The Minister of Higher Education grants this category.

The category of Master's Program Authorized is reached through a positive opinion of the Advisory Committee on Graduate Education (COPEP) of the Ministry of Higher Education, endorsed by Resolution of the Minister of Higher Education.

The National Commission for Scientific Degrees of the Republic of Cuba grants the category of Authorized program to each Doctoral program that meets the requirements of the Cuban regulations and quality standards.

Other accreditation categories are granted by the National Accreditation Board of Cuba after submitting them to an appropriate self-evaluation, external review and recognition by the Board.

According to the Evaluation and Accreditation System for undergraduate programs, categories of Certified and Excellence programs can only be granted if the program fulfils the following:

- five cohorts of graduates;
- satisfactory results in partial or general evaluations of the program in the last two years;
- official request of an external evaluation to the National Accreditation Board signed by the university rector;
- satisfactory results during the peer review;
- favourable opinion of the Technical Evaluation Committee;
- agreement of the National Accreditation Board.

These categories will last five years. Only after two or more years, can the program be submitted to another external evaluation process in order to improve the accreditation category or ratify the one previously obtained.

In the case of the Master's Degree programs, the category of Authorized program, granted by the Cuban Adviser Commission for Graduate Studies (COPEP), will last five years. During this time, the program has to complete two editions and to have started a third one, in order to be able to ask the National Accreditation Board for an external evaluation. As the result of the process, the program will obtain a higher category (Ratified, Certified or Excellence Program) or will remain as an Authorized Program.

Categories of Ratified, Certified or Excellence Program will be granted if the program fulfils the following:

- two editions with the corresponding self-evaluation processes completed;
- a third edition in course;
- official request of an external evaluation to the National Accreditation Board signed by the university rector;
- satisfactory results during the peer review;
- favourable opinion of the Technical Evaluation Committee;
- agreement of the National Accreditation Board.

The category of Ratified Program will last four years. The category of Certified Program will last three editions covering 6 years and the category of Excellence Program will last four editions during eight years.

The Certified or Excellence category for Doctoral programs will be granted if the program completed a self-evaluation process, an official request for an external evaluation is sent to the National Accreditation Board, satisfactory results are obtained during the external evaluation, the Technical Evaluation Committee expresses a favourable opinion and the National Accreditation Board agrees with the proposed category.

Doctoral programs have to complete at least a self-evaluation process in a period of five years after their approval by the National Commission of Scientific Degrees. At that time, an official request for an external evaluation has to be made. If at the end of the accreditation process no category other than that of Authorized Program was granted by the National Accreditation Board, the program has a period of time no greater than three years to ask for a new external evaluation. If the results are not favourable, the Authorized category can be denied by the National Commission of Scientific Degrees.

Universidades del MES

[Universidad de Pinar del Rio](#)

[Universidad de la Habana](#)

[Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría](#)

[Universidad Agraria de la Habana](#)

[Universidad Isla de la Juventud](#)

[Universidad de Matanzas Camilo Cienfuegos](#)

[Universidad de Cienfuegos](#)

[Universidad Central de las Villas](#)

[Universidad de Sancti Spiritus](#)

[Universidad de Ciego de Ávila](#)

[Universidad de Camaguey](#)

[Universidad de las Tunas](#)

[Instituto Superior Minero Metalúrgico de Moa](#)

[Universidad de Holguin Oscar Lucero Moya](#)

[Universidad de Granma](#)

[Universidad de Oriente](#)

[Universidad de Guantánamo](#)

[Instituto de Ciencia Animal](#)

[Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Agrícolas](#)

[Estación Experimental de Pastos y Forraje Indio Hatuey](#)

[Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria](#)

3. Development Aid Analysis

3.1 Development strategy with focus on poverty reduction¹²

3.1.1 Poverty Reduction Analysis and Millennium Development Goals¹³

The “*special period*” forced Cuba to reduce or put a halt to foreign credit, the purchase of fuel supplies and equipment for its industry and commercial exchanges. Although it did not fall into a situation of extreme poverty, Cuba was nevertheless confronted with a crisis that involved both economic and social aspects, and whose impact is still being felt by the population.

Cuba is committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The national authorities have published two reports on MDG progress in the country (2004 and 2005) and the National Statistics Office (ONE) has just released a paper with updated statistics (see annex II with table on MDGs).

According to the MDG Monitor three goals have already been achieved, namely: delivering universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowerment of women; and reducing child mortality. The attainment of three other goals is considered likely, as progress is on track. These are: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, improving maternal health, and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. Two goals – namely environmental sustainability and a global partnership for development – require further efforts.

The MDG Monitor assessment is that these goals can still be achieved if some changes are made. Although these are still challenges for the Government, it is however committed to safeguarding the environment and rationalizing the use of natural resources. Economic development and food security remain at the top of the State’s list of priorities.

The main challenge to achieving the MDGs lies in the disparities at the regional and provincial levels. The eastern provinces show the least progress and are being prioritized by national development programmes and international development assistance.

New programmes with higher strategic objectives have been introduced since 2000, including the increasing use of information technology to raise the standards of education of the population as a whole, achieve full employment, and provide personalized welfare services.

12 Human Development Report – Country Fact Sheet Cuba 2009 and EU-Cuba Country Strategy Paper 2011-2013;

13 Human Development Report 2009 – Country Fact Sheet - Cuba; Cuba en cifras: Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio 1990-2008. Edición 2009; http://www.mdgmonitor.org/country_progress.cfm?c=CUB&cd=192#

3.1.2 Development strategy of the Republic of Cuba

National medium-term development priorities are being worked out by the Ministry of Economy and Planning in the context of drawing up the 2011-2015 Plan. The Plan for this period is expected to become available during 2010 and is likely to consolidate the process that is already underway of seeking greater economic efficiency, modernisation and self-sufficiency of the Cuban economy, including through decentralisation of agriculture and smaller-scale production.

Meanwhile, short-term objectives can be extrapolated from existing government documents and official announcements, as well as from the budget submitted to the National Assembly by the Minister of Economy in December 2009. These include:

- strengthening of the national economy;
- increasing, strengthening and diversifying agricultural production;
- building houses, roads, railways and restoring electrical and communications networks;
- correcting distortions of the wage system;
- studying the current governmental structure with the aim of gradually reducing its size and increasing its efficiency;
- the Health and Education systems.
- in order to improve the national economy, Government is paying special attention to:
 - development of agricultural production;
 - development of tourism;
 - increasing productivity;
 - saving resources.

As already mentioned, food security is regarded as the overarching national priority for the country, coupled with the protection of natural resources and adaptation to climate change, both of which are key sectors with a major impact on the social and economic development of Cuba.

These are two areas where there is a particular dynamism in terms of new initiatives and which address key challenges of major importance to the Cuban population, including access to food and the capacity to withstand extreme climate events.

Taking into consideration these two national priorities and the focus of the European Commission's present and future cooperation with the country on food security and environment/ adaptation to climate change, a more in-depth analysis of the governmental policies in these two specific areas is presented in the EU strategy document.¹⁴

3.2 Actors

Not so many international NGOs are active in Cuba. However, a number of them are active in collaboration with UNDP in the context of the UN focus areas.

¹⁴ EU Country Strategy Paper, p. 20 and following

As for Belgian NGO cooperation, this is limited to a few organisations. FOS, linked to the Flemish Socialist Party (Spa) and trade union ABVV has been traditionally a strong player. Also Oxfam-sol and Handicap international have a number of focussed interventions. Just recently FOS went to Cuba on an identification mission for further development of a strategy for 6-years of development cooperation with Cuba. These projects will focus on social protection and insurance and local and workers organisation development.

Overview of Belgian NGO activity in Cuba¹⁵

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
11.11.11	233.268	160.000	80.000					
Caritas							26.787	
DMOS				5.000		5.000		
Fos	95.172	200.894		815.627	389.105	415.768	430.710	651.464
G3W							28.936	14.240
Handicap Int.	182.011	259.137	192.888	165.011	232.810	437.744	591.826	1.316.579
Oxfam-Sol	869.473	831.750	803.454	594.334	192.929	356.739	395.239	715.674
Steunfonds Derde Wereld	131.940	172.884	181.822	165.895	126.025	129.700	750	
Wereld- solidariteit							5.000	
TOTAAL	1.511.864	1.624.665	1.258.164	1.745.867	940.869	1.344.951	1.479.248	2.697.957

¹⁵ NGO Open boek. (ngo-openboek.be)

3.3 Donor Aid

3.3.1 Overview

See overview of donor intervention per thematic area in [annex 2](#).

Main multilateral and multistate organisations are the UN and EU. In terms of State to State development cooperation Spain is the most important players. However, most cooperation is through indirect cooperation actors as NGOs and universities.

3.3.2 EU – Cuba – Indicative Cooperation Programme 2011-2013

The overall objective of this programme is to contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of Cuba. This objective is to be pursued through support to be provided in the sectors of:

- Food security (€10 million)
- Environment and Adaptation to Climate Change (€7 million)
- Expertise exchanges, training and studies (€3 million)

These funds can be complemented by projects and programmes financed under the DCI and EDF regional programme

Priority 1: Food security

Responding to national food insecurity through appropriate measures is a clear and declared priority of the Cuban authorities.

At the core of this national priority lay processes of both transfer of the key role in food production from state-owned companies to cooperatives and individual producers, and decentralisation of the decision-making process for the production and distribution of foodstuffs from the central to the municipal level.

1. Main priorities and goals

The main priority of this component is to contribute to the continued and sustainable economic and social development of Cuba, in particular supporting production and diversification of Cuban agriculture in a sustainable way.

2. Specific objectives and target beneficiaries

The specific objective of this programme is to contribute to the improvement of Cuban food security, through increased economic sustainability of local production focusing on small scale agriculture. Direct beneficiaries will include cooperatives and smallholders as well as municipalities. Indirect beneficiaries will include Cuban population in general terms, benefiting from the increased and diversified access to foodstuffs.

3. Expected results

The indicative expected results of this sector are:

- diversification and increase of smallholder (including urban and sub-urban) farmers'

products' supply;

- modernisation of the agricultural sector through strengthened food processing commercialisation, marketing and distribution;
- supporting the sustainability of food production by reducing the dependency on fossil fuels through the promotion of bio-fuels and small-scale renewable energy generation capability;
- consolidation and strengthening of the decentralised approach to food supply and the chain of getting goods to the markets;
- improved farmers' capacity and access to innovation, new technologies and exchange of relevant experiences in the sector.

4. Programmes to be implemented in pursuit of these objectives and type of assistance to be provided

Programmes in the sector could include i.a. training and capacity building, supply of inputs and equipment, technical assistance, scientific cooperation, small scale production and processing infrastructure.

5. Integration of cross-cutting themes

Gender will be taken into account as a cross-cutting issue during both the identification and the implementation phases of all the priorities of the National Indicative Programme. With this aim, the European Union Delegation will liaise with the relevant women associations and stakeholders in the country. Special attention will be paid to assess the links between poverty and gender and propose actions accordingly. At project identification level, specific measures will be taken to ensure adequate attention to gender issues, with possible inclusion of a related budget and expected results where relevant. Such strategy would be monitored and assessed as the rest of the actions included in the projects. As regards food security and agricultural production, empowerment of women and girls is a necessary pre-condition for programmes' sustainability. The Food Security sector is already identifying (under the DCI Food Security Thematic Programme and Food Facility programmes in Cuba) and will continue to identify women-headed households and female producers among priority target groups.

Programmes will ensure that women will be fully represented in decentralised decision making and that investments are prioritised taking into consideration their capacity to remove specific constraints faced by women in the households. More generally, attention will be given to issues of access and participation of people and organisations concerned by actions as well as non-discrimination towards vulnerable groups.

Similarly, environmental sustainability of all development activities is also a key element for achieving lasting poverty reduction and sustainable development. Thus, environment and sustainable management of natural resources will be integrated into all projects' activities. In this particular sector, actions will be designed so as to support sustainable development, promoting where possible low-inputs, organic productive methods.

6. Financial envelope:

The total indicative budget planned is €10 million.

7. Activities under other EU budgetary instruments in the country

The Commission will or is already supporting food security projects under the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) 2009 (€16.5 million) and the Food Facility (€11.7 million). These on-going or planned activities are fully coherent with the objectives and interventions planned in the NIP (see CSP – Chapter 3). It is intended that support under FSTP will continue during the period of 2011-2013. Complementarity between the NIP and thematic programmes will be ensured through appropriate coordination between geographic and thematic Annual Action Plans. Given the scale of needs, complementarity can easily be ensured by expanding programmes into other provinces/municipalities and/or by combining different implementing partners.

3.3.3 United Nations – UNDP Programme

Cuba is one of the 51 founding States of the United Nations. Over the past four decades it has played a significant role in all United Nations forums. Cuba is an active partner of the United Nations operational system for development and welcomed the first international office of that agency when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) opened its office in Havana in 1950.

Eleven of the 15 United Nations agencies have offices in Cuba. In all, the United Nations agencies have carried out more than 1,300 projects over the past 30 years, for a total of US\$350 million. The collaboration of UN agencies, funds, and programs (UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNESCO, PAHO/WHO, FAO, WFP), as well as NGOs (i.e., Doctors without Borders of the Netherlands and Spain, Physicians of the World of France, MediSwiss, a group of Italian volunteers, Hivos of the Netherlands, and Unitarian University, among others) have worked on the development of the National Action against HIV/AIDS Framework through the project “Strengthening of the National Multisectoral Response for the Treatment and Prevention of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in the Republic of Cuba.” This project was financed by the Global Fund, which approved this 5-year project for Cuba in the amount of US\$26.15 million (January 2003).

Due to the economic situation of the 1990s, in 1992 a system was organized within the National Health System to receive donations from a variety of different sources. Its results have proven significant in terms of increasing the mobilization of internal and external resources for the health sector, disbursed primarily through projects and their rational use for specific objectives, via planned and controlled processes.

Cuba has promoted the Technical Cooperation among Countries as a tool for horizontal cooperation, understanding, and solidarity. Within the policy framework implemented by PAHO/WHO, Cuba has launched 67 projects within a period of 12 years, working together with countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

WHO strategic agenda

Drawing on Cuban health research, development proposals and challenges, the types and content of development assistance and associations, PAHO/WHO technical cooperation and its special features in the country, and WHO policies at the global and regional levels, a set of joint cooperation priorities were identified that have defined Cuba’s health strategies. These strategies will be supported by PAHO/WHO and their main efforts and resources will concentrate on the following

Cooperation Modalities:

- support for the development and dissemination of scientific research and technological innovations;
- identification, systematization, and documentation of best practices and experiences for decision-making;
- support for information and knowledge management;
- evaluation of public health policies, programs, and interventions;
- support for the formation and participation of partnerships and national and international networks;
- decentralized cooperation for local capacity building;
- mobilization of resources to strengthen strategic actions for national health development.

National Policies:

briefly, will emphasize on:

- improving health system response capacity, quality, and efficiency through development of the primary health care approach and polyclinic system;
- providing universal education, training, and upgrading of human resources via new teaching scenarios and cutting-edge programs;
- controlling the risks and harm from infectious and non-communicable diseases, addictions, and violence;
- harnessing scientific and technological innovation for health;
- promoting international solidarity.

The technical areas of the Ministry of Public Health have worked to make these policies health system priorities and to incorporate them into work strategies. Other sectors working on public health problems have designed and based their strategic work partnerships with the health system on these policies and priorities. The agencies of the United Nations system have defined and selected their priorities on the basis of country cooperation, especially with the National Health System and the priorities it has established.

Cooperation Priorities

for the next 3-year period (2008-2010) are as follows:

- contribute to the development of policies to promote health and the quality of life;
- help strengthen the National Health System by improving primary health care, with special emphasis on the development of Municipal Health Bureau (Dirección Municipal de Salud) and the Polyclinic;
- support national efforts to improve the quality of health services, emphasizing accreditation, technological adaptation, regulation, and strengthening of the regulatory authority;
- Support the national priority of improving the integrated public health surveillance system, with special emphasis on early warning and forecasting capability, in accordance with the provisions of the International Health Regulations;
- contribute to the strengthening of the health sector and intersectoral action to respond to the aging of the population;

- support the strengthening of the new model of human resources education in primary care and the Polyclinic system, with emphasis on the use of new technologies in education, information, and communication;
- support the development of Primary Environmental Care, within the framework of the updating of sector analyses of water, sanitation, and solid waste, with emphasis on the identification and management of environmental health hazards;
- promote scientific exchanges and the dissemination and use, as appropriate, of the results of the institutions of the Scientific Pole and WHO Centers of Excellence and Collaborating Centers;
- support the enhancement of programs that contribute to the fulfillment of national nutrition and food security strategies;
- support the enhancement of national procedures for evaluating the National Maternal and Child Program, with emphasis on actions to reduce maternal mortality;
- contribute to the development of national procedures for evaluating programs on the most prevalent non-communicable diseases and support the national social communication strategy;
- support compliance with and national procedures for evaluating the Program of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control and enhancing capacity to meet the challenges of emerging and re-emerging diseases;
- support National Health System initiatives for preventing and mitigating the health impact of disasters on the population;
- support international health cooperation by promoting successful Cuban experiences in other countries and facilitate the country's access and participation to innovative projects in the development of international health policy and international and regional agreements in health.

3.3.4 AECID in Cuba

AECID in Cuba strongly focuses on **rural development in Eastern Cuba**. The “Programa de Desarrollo Rural el Oriente Cubano (Programa Oriente Rural)” aims at contributing with local development processes in the rural sector and support the Cuban's governments actions in this respect. The idea is to stimulate processes of change and local development in 5 provinces of eastern Cuba (Guantánamo, Santiago, Granma, Holguín y Las Tunas).

The four main intervention areas are:

- support of local policies in the context of rural development in small communities and cities;
- strengthening of cooperatives in the agricultural sector (livestock and crop agriculture) and of initiatives regarding the diversification of production as a way to stimulate local market provisions and import substitution;
- promote initiatives in the rural sector in terms of stimulating value chain development;
- in all its actions gender equality is being placed on the agenda, as well in the context of local development plans as in the context of economic development processes.

Beneficiaries: men and women from small rural communities in 5 provinces in eastern Cuba, approximately 3.967.371 persons of which 1.445.536 are women.

The Project is also looking at the possibilities for universities and research centres, student organisations to contribute with the implementation of the project which is running from 2011 to 2014.

Another sector of interest of Spanish cooperation with Cuba deals with Environment, climate change and habitat.

3 main strategic focus areas can be distinguished:

1. Water resources and management with special interest on water provision and basic sanitation.

The interventions are to be seen in the context of the [Fondo de Agua y Saneamiento Básico](#) of the Spanish cooperation.

2. Promotion of renewable and efficient energy, based on renewable energy sources and adapted technologies.

Region: eastern southern coastline of Cuba (PRODESCO), in particular 5 municipalities in the province of Guantánamo (Maisí, Niceto Pérez, Imías, San Antonio del Sur and Guantánamo), 3 in the province of Santiago de Cuba (San Luís, Santiago de Cuba and Guamá) and 2 in the province of Granma (Pilón and Niquero).

Actors: municipal and provincial authorities but also the institution CUBASOLAR high-level and specialised in the matter. Priority: looking at sustainable energy use and adequate use of renewable energy sources.

3. Risk management and disaster prevention.

Most projects on this matter are situated in the context of the [Fondo España-PNUD](#) "Hacia un Desarrollo Integrado e Inclusivo en América Latina y el Caribe".

Social development

The social development programme of AECID supports the strengthening of Cuban basic social services which are universal and free for the population.

In the area of education the general objective is to strengthen the National Educational System through a collaboration with Ministerio de Educación (MES) in the following areas:

- la evaluación y actualización curricular, promoviendo el desarrollo de competencias transversales como la educación en valores, en sexualidad y géneros, el desarrollo sostenible y la utilización de las TIC;
- los procesos y resultados de enseñanza-aprendizaje mediante el apoyo a:
- la formación inicial y permanente del personal docente, incluidos los y las de la vía no institucional, y de la administración educativa.
- el trabajo investigativo
- la dotación de recursos educativos básicos, que incorporen las actualizaciones e innovaciones apoyadas.

- la rehabilitación y mejora de las condiciones de vida que brinda la escuela;
 - los procesos de participación en la educación;
 - la integración educativa y social de niños, niñas y jóvenes con necesidades educativas especiales o en situación de desventaja social;

In the health sector, general support is given to the health policies of the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP). The following action lines were defined:

- El fortalecimiento de las capacidades del Sistema Nacional de Salud en el área de la gestión de la salud pública
- El apoyo a acciones dirigidas a la disminución y control de los factores de riesgo más importantes que afectan la salud de la población a través de otros Programas que cuentan con el apoyo de la Cooperación Española

Gender and development

Gender is a transversal issue for all AECID activities in Cuba and the goal is to achieve full equality between men and women . The goal is to achieve full human and citizens rights for women through emancipation and empowering activities.

Cultural Heritage Programme (in Spanish)

La cooperación en la preservación del patrimonio persigue los objetivos de desarrollo humano y social prioritarios de creación de riqueza y mejora de las condiciones de vida, a través de la puesta en valor y gestión sostenible del patrimonio cultural, estableciendo las condiciones para que esas mejoras beneficien especialmente a la población de menores recursos. Además, favorece el desarrollo de las capacidades culturales y la preservación de las identidades y la diversidad cultural.

Con estos fines, el Programa Patrimonio para el Desarrollo (P>D) se integra como programa multisectorial cuyo eje central de actuación se centra en la puesta en valor y gestión sostenible del patrimonio cultural para el desarrollo socioeconómico, que, en general, se concreta en planes de desarrollo socioeconómico y mejora social mediante la puesta en valor y gestión sostenible de bienes de interés patrimonial.

En efecto, el patrimonio cultural es también un recurso potencialmente generador de actividad e ingresos. En algunos casos constituye de hecho la fuente principal, cuando no prácticamente única, de desarrollo económico, ofreciendo una perspectiva más allá de la simple supervivencia a la comunidad, siempre que dicho recurso sea gestionado sosteniblemente y con criterio social y participativo.

En el caso de Cuba, las actuaciones que cuentan con el apoyo de P>D se ejecutan a través de las distintas Oficinas del Historiador y Conservador en la isla (La Habana, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, Camagüey y Santiago de Cuba), con las que se promueve su articulación horizontal e intercambio de experiencias a través de la Red de Oficinas de Centros de Históricos de Cuba.

5. University Development Cooperation

4.1 VLIR-UOS Activity in/with the Country

See **annex 1** for an overview of past and present VLIR-UOS investments and active programmes (REI, BTP & Zuid) and scholarships. Also other scientific cooperation of Flemish universities has been integrated in the same overview.

See **annex 2** for an overview of thematic areas in which VLIR-UOS university development cooperation actors are active. The donor overview annex ...also shows how these relate with other donor action.

4.2 Focus of other university development cooperation donors

Other donors active in the field of university (development) cooperation with Cuba are amongst other Spain (through AECID), Italy, Canada, Venezuela, Brazil and China.

The largest cooperation programme next to Belgian university cooperation is AECI's **Programa de Cooperación Interuniversitaria (PCI)**

El PCI tiene como objetivo fomentar vínculos estables de docencia e investigación en áreas temáticas priorizadas entre las Universidades de España y América Latina. De esta manera, se contribuye a crear un sistema de investigación en temas relevantes para el desarrollo, a la vez que se va creando una comunidad de equipos de investigación y de especialistas en la materia. Asimismo, se apoyan las respectivas publicaciones que recogen los resultados y experiencias de las investigaciones conjuntas, en materia de cooperación y desarrollo.

Las ayudas objeto de esta convocatoria serán destinadas a financiar las actividades que se articulen entre equipos conjuntos de profesores universitarios e investigadores (titulados superiores), que deberán pertenecer a las Universidades u Organismos participantes, durante el período de realización de las mismas. Con estas ayudas, de un año renovable de duración y de cuantía variable, se busca potenciar la movilidad para incrementar la participación interuniversitaria en programas conjuntos, con vínculos estables, y en temas prioritarios. En los tres últimos años este Programa ha alcanzado en el caso de Cuba un monto de 4 467 746.08 euros de ellos 1 121 855.00 destinados al fortalecimiento institucional de las Universidades cubanas.

Estas ayudas se presentan en cuatro modalidades, que son:

- Proyectos conjuntos de investigación;
- Proyectos conjuntos de formación;
- Acciones preparatorias;
- Acciones Integradas para el fortalecimiento científico e institucional.

En las convocatorias [2007](#), [2008](#), [2009](#) y [2010](#) del PCI se aprobaron 175 proyectos de docencia e investigación conjuntas, desglosados por modalidades de la siguiente manera: 66 modalidad A, 20 modalidad B, 21 modalidad C y 29 modalidad D

Para más información, puede contactar con Nelson Coda, Responsable de Cooperación Interuniversitaria, correo electrónico: nelson.coda@aecid.co.cu

Programa Iberoamericano de formación Técnica Especializada (PIFTE)

El objetivo del Programa es la formación y capacitación técnica de los recursos humanos de las instituciones públicas iberoamericanas con el fin de promover el aumento de capacidades sociales e institucionales en los países de la región. El Programa tiene como beneficiarios al personal al servicio de las administraciones públicas iberoamericanas con competencias en el desarrollo y promoción de cada uno de los sectores de intervención prioritaria que marca el III Plan Director 2009-2012 de la Cooperación Española. El Programa constituye, por tanto, uno de los instrumentos esenciales de la AECID para promover el fortalecimiento institucional necesario para llevar a cabo políticas de desarrollo en todos y cada uno de los ámbitos de intervención del sector público de la región.

El Programa Iberoamericano de Formación Técnica Especializada (PIFTE) se organiza en colaboración con instituciones públicas españolas, fundamentalmente otras administraciones públicas, que aportan el componente técnico de cada curso y que financian parte del desarrollo de los mismos. Este Programa se imparte en los Centros de Formación de la AECID en Iberoamérica (Centro de Formación de la Antigua - Guatemala, Centro de Formación de Cartagena de Indias - Colombia y Centro de Formación de Santa Cruz de la Sierra – Bolivia y Centro de Formación de Montevideo-Uruguay) y en España.

Para la parte del Programa correspondiente a formación en España, se ofrecen una serie de ayudas destinadas a facilitar la participación especialistas de América Latina en los diferentes cursos organizados conjuntamente con diferentes Ministerios e Instituciones del Estado. Estas ayudas se recogen en dos convocatorias, una general en la que se incluyen los cursos que se realizan con los Ministerios de Fomento, Interior, Defensa, Educación, Sanidad y Política Social, Exteriores y Cooperación, Medio Ambiente y Medio Rural, y Marino, así como el Consejo General del Poder Judicial; y otra específica para los cursos que se organizan con el Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda, y el Instituto de Estudios Fiscales.

Las bases de las diferentes convocatorias se publican en la página de la AECID, así como en las respectivas de cada uno de los Centros de Formación señalados anteriormente.

Participación cubana PIFTE 2007 - 2008 - 2009

Centro de Formación	2007			2008			2009			TOTAL
	H	M	Total	H	M	Total	H	M	Total	
Cartagena de Indias, Colombia	21	15	36	35	35	70	18	17	35	141
La Antigua, Guatemala	12	8	20	23	19	42	15	23	38	100
Montevideo, Uruguay							4	2	6	6
Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia	18	11	29	8	7	15	9	14	23	67
PIFTE en España	3	2	5	14	9	23	11	2	13	41
TOTAL	54	36	90	80	70	150	57	58	115	355

Para más información, puede contactar con Bárbara Gutsens, Responsable de Formación Técnica, correo electrónico: barbara.gutsens@aecid.co.cu

List of Resources and interesting Links

Ministries in charge of Higher Education Institutions

Ministry of Higher Education (MES): <http://www.mes.edu.cu>

Ministry of Education (MINED): <http://www.cubaeduca.rimed.cu>

Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP): <http://www.sld.cu>

National Institute of Sports and Physical Culture: <http://www.inder.cu>

Universidades del MES

[Universidad de Pinar del Rio](#)

[Universidad de la Habana](#)

[Instituto Superior Politécnico José Antonio Echeverría](#)

[Universidad Agraria de la Habana](#)

[Universidad Isla de la Juventud](#)

[Universidad de Matanzas Camilo Cienfuegos](#)

[Universidad de Cienfuegos](#)

[Universidad Central de las Villas](#)

[Universidad de Sancti Spiritus](#)

[Universidad de Ciego de Ávila](#)

[Universidad de Camaguey](#)

[Universidad de las Tunas](#)

[Instituto Superior Minero Metalúrgico de Moa](#)

[Universidad de Holguín Oscar Lucero Moya](#)

[Universidad de Granma](#)

[Universidad de Oriente](#)

[Universidad de Guantánamo](#)

[Instituto de Ciencia Animal](#)

[Instituto Nacional de Ciencias Agrícolas](#)

[Estación Experimental de Pastos y Forraje Indio Hatuey](#)

[Centro Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria](#)

ANNEXES

1. Overview activities/projects of Flemish university/institutes of higher education in the country (VLIR-UOS and other) – working document
2. Overview VLIR-UOS projects per thematic activity and as compared to interventions of other donors (2 worksheets) – working document

Other relevant annexes will be added when available.