



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Building Bridges for Science-Policy-Society in LAC

Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):	Regional: LAC
Duration (in months):	36
Name and Unit of project Officer	Ernesto Fernández Polcuch MTD/SC/PCB
Partner(s) institutions:	SciDev.net, IADB, UN-ECLAC, OEI, UNESCO Chair on Women in Science in LAC, WAYS LAC, Red POP, ACST, CARICOM, RICYT, UNESCO Chair on S&T Indicators, World Technopolis Association (WTA), International Centre for Science and Technology Strategy (CISTRAT).
Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs	US\$ 2 Million

Rationale and background

In the on-going process for the establishment of Sustainable Development Goals at the global level, UNESCO has been arguing in favour of incorporating a goal of 1% of GDP devoted to R&D to reflect national S&T capacities for sustainable development.

During the last decade, LAC countries have increased their attention to science and their investment in R&D and innovation. However, they are still far from achieving the 1% goal proposed for the SDGs.

During the last two biennia, UNESCO Montevideo, Regional Office for Science in LAC, has conducted a consultation to LAC Member States which resulted in a Regional Plan of Action for STI Policy. Implementing this action plan is the aim of this project, in particular through capacity-building and evidence production that will enable Member States to increase and enhance sustainable development-relevant investment in STI.

The activities in this proposal are aimed at increasing overall social awareness of the importance of STI, as well as enhancing quality of STI policies in terms of social participation, evidence base, and policy-making capabilities at the National level.

Why UNESCO?

The project is a new phase of a process carried out during the last two biennia by UNESCO Montevideo, Regional Office for Science in LAC. A regional consultation to Member States resulted in a Regional Plan of Action for STI Policy presented in 2013. This project aims at implementing this action plan, making use of the specific capacities of UNESCO in the region, and the partnerships established with various groups of stakeholders, such as Women and Youth, or networks of researchers or science popularization such as RedPOP, established by UNESCO in 1990.

The project interacts well with the activities carried out under UNESCO's programme at UNESCO Montevideo, with the Regular Programme budget acting as seed money for many of the activities as proposed. This project therefore would significantly enhance and provide broader impact to resources already allocated to the region.

Overall Goal/Objective

The overall goal of the project is to provide Member States with tools for increased and sound investment in STI in LAC countries, based on bigger overall social awareness of the importance of STI, and enhanced quality of STI policies in terms of social participation, evidence base, and policy-making capabilities at the national level.

Main expected results

- Policy makers in all areas of government further support STI, based on improved science advice mechanisms and increased awareness of success stories of STI on development in the region.
- Culture of science promoted through strengthening of science popularization activities such as science centres, science journalism, science performances and other initiatives.
- Increased participation of youth and women in STI policy decision making.
- Expanded resources for evidence-based STI policy making available in the region.
- Capacities for STI policy-making and implementation enhanced, with particular emphasis on Caribbean SIDS and countries with less developed STI systems, including the development of science parks and technology business incubators.
- South-South cooperation mechanisms in place for policy-dialogue and governance with Africa and other developing regions.

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

1. Production of a series of publications on “STI success stories in LAC”, in order to raise overall policy awareness of the importance of STI for development in the particular context of the region, in various formats including short films and mobile apps
2. Awareness raising workshops and capacity building activities on appropriate approaches for science advice mechanisms in Member States, with the participation of Management of Social Transformation Programme (MOST)
3. Studies on measuring impact of science centres, and on ways to improve public understanding of science through thematic performances.
4. Capacity building and networking of science journalists
5. Consolidation of WAYS LAC (the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Young Scientists), preparation of a “Manual on the Participation of Youth in STI Policy Making”, and preparation of a compendium of good practices on fostering STI careers for young scientists.
6. Preparation of a document on “Policy Recommendations for Gender Equality in STI in LAC”, based on regional and extra-regional experiences. Study on women’s participation in STI policy making in LAC and proposals for its improvement / enhancement. In co-operation with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), development and testing of appropriate Gender Indicators in S&T.
7. Redesign and expansion of SPIN (the LAC Science Policy INformation platform spin.unesco.org.uy) to act as regional ecosystem for evidence-based policy support.
8. Baseline studies and publication of STI policy and governance in LAC countries. Capacity building workshops in countries requesting such support.
9. Workshop on “The Caribbean approach to STI Policy”, with participation of representatives of all significant stakeholders in the region, to propose an endogenous approach to STI policy development, followed by a series of capacity building activities. Capacity building for the establishment of STI statistics systems in the Caribbean and support to pilot data collection in countries.
10. Capacity building activities and technical assistance in the development of science parks and technology business incubators.
11. “South-South Science (S³) Conference”, with Science Ministers from LAC, Africa and Asian developing countries, to discuss STI policy, governance, and cooperation in a South-South cooperation framework.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

Beneficiaries are Governments, scientists, and civil society in Member States in LAC. Other key stakeholder groups who are also benefiting are Youth and Women. WAYS, the World Association of Young Scientists, has participated in the design of the project and will participate in the delivery of the related components; same with the UNESCO Chair on Women in Science in LAC.

The project is a result of the LAC Regional Action Plan for STI Policies development process, with the participation of STI Ministries from all over the region. Therefore, ownership is being built in into the proposal from the beginning.

Implementation strategy

The project is based on the outcomes of the LAC Regional Action Plan for STI Policies development process, with the participation of STI responsible Ministries from all over the region. It therefore matches the regional priorities and has been widely consulted. Other stakeholders have also participated strategically in its inception.

The Project will be coordinated out of UNESCO Montevideo Office, with the participation of all the UNESCO Cluster Offices in LAC, as well as the national offices where activities will take place. A coordination committee will be established to ensure proper delivery of results. A project coordinator will manage the implementation of the project. Strategic partners have already been identified for most of the components of the project (SciDev.net, IADB, OEI, UNESCO Chair on Women in Science in LAC, WAYS LAC, Red POP, ACST, CARICOM).

Regional activities will be executed by UNESCO Montevideo, while sub-regional activities will be executed directly by the corresponding UNESCO Cluster Office. In some cases, National activities will be carried out by UNESCO National Offices. In all cases, technical backstopping will be additionally provided by UNESCO Montevideo and UNESCO/SC/PCB at Headquarters.

The publications on “STI success stories in LAC” will be prepared in partnership with SciDev.net, and will comprise a regional (thematic) series, as well as a certain number of sub-regional (Central America, Caribbean), and national publications, based on the methodology used in the publication on “Africa’s Minds”, duly adapted to the local STI and development contexts.

Different science advice mechanisms available in the world will be studied and discussed, based on the particularities of Government structures in the region. The model implemented by MOST will also be examined to analyze its implications for STI policy. A workshop will be held to discuss options for LAC. A publication will be prepared to guide governments on how to implement science advice structures in LAC.

In cooperation with RedPOP, the LAC Network on Science Popularization, a group of researchers and practitioners will develop studies on measuring impact of science centres, and on ways to improve public understanding of science through thematic performances. This activity will be linked to research projects going on in Europe such as “The H-Factor”.

In cooperation with WAYS LAC (the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Young Scientists), a “Manual on the Participation of Youth in STI Policy Making”, and a compendium of good practices on fostering STI careers for young scientists, will be commissioned.

In cooperation with the UNESCO Chair on Women in Science in LAC, a document on “Policy Recommendations for Gender Equality in STI in LAC”, based on regional and extra-regional experiences, will be prepared, as well as a study on women participation in STI policy making in LAC and proposals for its improvement / enhancement. The development of appropriate Gender Indicators in S&T will be carried out in co-operation with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), and a set of these new indicators will be applied in data collection in five LAC countries.

SPIN (the LAC Science Policy Information platform spin.unesco.org.uy) will be redesigned and expanded to act as regional ecosystem for evidence-based policy support.

In cooperation with STI policy researchers region-wide, a number of baseline studies of STI policy and governance in LAC countries will be commissioned and published in various formats. Capacity building workshops will be provided to countries requesting support in

improving STI policy making capacity and governance reform, including in the field of S&T statistics and indicators, in cooperation with UIS and the Ibero-American Network on S&T Indicators (RICYT).

In cooperation with CARISCIENCE and the Caribbean Science Foundation, a workshop on “The Caribbean approach to STI Policy”, with participation of representatives of all significant stakeholders in the region, will be carried out, in order to propose an endogenous approach to STI policy development, followed by a series of capacity building activities, including in the establishment of STI statistics systems in Caribbean countries. Support to pilot data collection will be provided to four selected countries.

A “South-South Science (S³) Conference” will be organized, with Science Ministers from LAC, Africa and Asian developing countries, to discuss STI policy, governance, and cooperation in a South-South cooperation framework, in cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) as well as organizations in the other regions.

Gender equality will be addressed through various means, in particular through participation of women and women’s groups in all activities at the highest level. Gender parity in participants will be sought at workshops. Science policy workshops will include specific guidelines on how to incorporate gender equality in science policy design and governance. Gender indicators will be measured all through the project. SPIN will incorporate a dedicated chapter on gender STI policies and instruments. The specific component of gender aims at improving women’s participation in STI policy making and proposing good policy practices, which will then be incorporated in the capacity building activities.

An overall communication strategy will be put in place, aimed at communicating the results of the project to all stakeholders, governments, the scientific community, public at large, while building strong communities of science journalists which will support the sustainability of the communication effort.

Sustainability and exit strategy

The project aims at consolidating capacities for STI policy making in the region. Therefore, Governments in Member States and other stakeholders will be empowered to sustain their work after the project’s end.

In terms of replication and scaling-up, a number of policy proposals, manuals and compendia of good practices will be prepared, which will be used for replication in other countries or regions of the world.