

Workshops for Institutional Capacity Building in Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union: Focus on Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic

- Concept Note -

Organisation: EU-LAC Foundation, LAC NCP Network / Uruguayan Agency of International Cooperation

Partner: National Secretary of Science, Technology and Innovation, Panamá (SENACYT)

With the collaboration of: Central American University Council (CSUCA)

Date: 21, 22 and 23 November 2022

Format: hybrid

Location: Hotel El Panamá, Salón Topacio

Digital participation: prior registration on the zoom platform: <https://t1p.de/bsivu>

Background and justification

The last five years of international cooperation between the member countries of the European Union (EU) and the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in the field of Science and Technology have been developed within the framework of the **Senior Officials Meetings on the Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI-SOM)**. The "**Strategic Roadmap 2021-2023**", agreed at the last JIRI-SOM on 30 October 2020, outlines the strategic priorities that European, Latin American and Caribbean scientific actors intend to address, particularly with regard to the four pillars of **researcher mobility, cooperation in research infrastructures, global challenges (health, environmental aspects of sustainable development/green transition, digital transformation), and innovation**. Within the priority areas of the European Commission, the **Horizon Europe Programme** has been developed as a unique tool to deploy new opportunities and channels to increase and promote scientific cooperation between the countries of both regions.

The **EU-LAC Foundation**, whose mandate is based on the CELAC-EU Action Plans approved by the Heads of State and Government as well as other Joint Communiqués emanating from bi-regional Foreign Ministers' Meetings, aims to strengthen the bi-regional strategic partnership. In the field of science and research, the EU-LAC Foundation has supported efforts to promote the establishment of the **EU-CELAC Joint Research Area** and has served as a privileged space for dialogue, connection and promotion of synergies between academic, university, institutional and governmental actors from both regions, seeking a better articulation of the actions promoted by the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI).

The Latin American and Caribbean Network of National Contact Points has been working since 2015 directly with all the governing bodies and authorities in Science and Technology both in Europe and in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Since 2020, the Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI) has been in charge of the coordination and management of the LAC NCP Network, and its main objective is to strengthen the STI capacities of the countries of

¹ See document here:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/strategy_on_research_and_innovation/documents/eu-celac_strategic-roadmap-2021-2023.pdf (last review 19 July 2022)



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Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting the development of cooperation between both regions, through the participation in the framework programmes. The LAC NCP Network

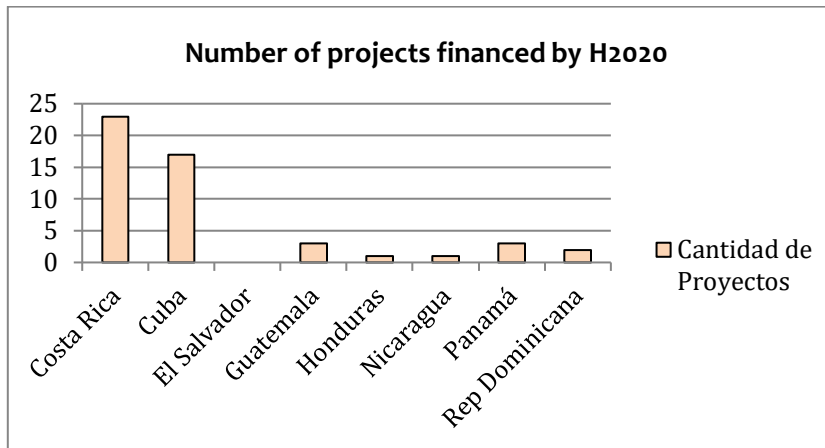
supports the National Contact Points (NCPs) in Latin America and the Caribbean to connect with scientists and STI actors in other LAC and European countries, creating and strengthening bi-regional ties.

During 2020 and 2021, the LAC NCP Network extended, virtually, the scope of its trainings, considerably increasing the extent to which the Horizon Europe programme was promoted in the LAC region. In those two years, more than 60 trainings with approximately 12.500 participants from 30 LAC countries were implemented. Most of the beneficiaries were researchers, academics, officials from the internationalisation offices of universities, decision-makers, representatives of companies, SMEs, NGOs, hospitals and foundations.

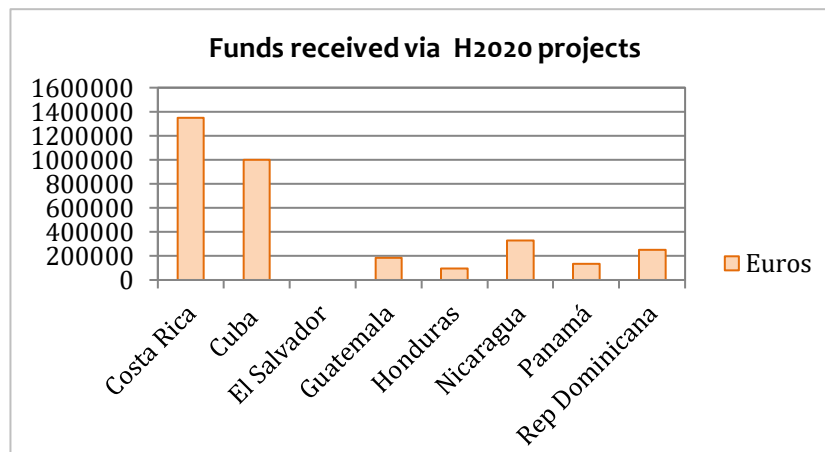
Based on this previous experience, and on the basis of our links and our continuous communication with senior officials in the region and with all government actors working in the area of science and technology, we can affirm that there is still a long way to go to strengthen the capacities of both the persons working as National Contact Points (NCP) so that they can develop their advisory task, and of research groups and scientists throughout the region, in order to better understand the processes of applying for funding from the various calls of the Horizon Europe Programme. Another issue of importance is the need to seek a better articulation of the actions promoted by the JIRI with multilateral mechanisms that promote international cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation in order to generate synergies, strengthen scientific links and contribute to the CELAC-EU Knowledge Area. It is for this reason that the present proposal has been drawn up for the development of a series of workshops and training and institutional capacity-building activities, mainly in Panama, but also in the Central American region.

Although the participation of LAC countries in Horizon 2020 calls (2014-2020) increased by 37% compared to the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) for Research (2007-2013), there is still much work to be done and it is considered a priority to increase the participation of LAC countries in Horizon Europe. Panama participated in three projects in FP7 for which it received 134,100 euros. Similarly, other countries in the Spanish speaking Central American Region (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua) as well as in Cuba and the Dominican Republic managed to apply to calls that were part of Horizon 2020, but the scope for scientists to engage in a greater number of scientific projects with European actors under the new Horizon Europe scheme is equally substantial.

Some Data on Projects financed by the Horizon 2020 Programme



Data and compilation: Red LAC NCP, Source: H2020 Projects, Funding and Tenders, European Commission.



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General objective

The overall objective of the “Workshops for Institutional Capacity Building in Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union: Focus on Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic” is to achieve a better understanding and exploitation of the opportunities that currently exist to develop bi-regional scientific cooperation initiatives and projects - between European and Latin American and Caribbean institutions - and thus strengthen the strategic partnership between the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

Specific objectives

- To strengthen the capacities of the institutional actors of the Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) agencies of Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
- To encourage the participation of research teams from Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic in collaborative projects of the Horizon Europe Programme.



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- To facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and competences applied to the creation of networks and connections with institutions of reference in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean that make up the innovation ecosystem.
- To promote exchange between participants in the actions generated under the umbrella of the JIRI Strategic Roadmap 2021-2023, seeking to create synergies and contribute to its four priorities: innovation, cooperation in research infrastructures, mobility and global challenges.

Invited participants

The target groups of the workshops are:

- Public officials, decision-makers and representatives of governmental STI authorities from Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
- National Contact Points (NCPs) in Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.
- Researchers, university managers, representatives of university associations from Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

Format / modality of trainings

Three workshops will be held over three consecutive days, each lasting 6 to 8 hours, in a hybrid format. A maximum of 35 people per day are expected to attend in person in Panama, particularly the NCPs for the Horizon Europe Programme from the Central American and Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries and public officials as well as representatives of Panamanian universities. The specific modality for face-to-face attendance at the trainings will be in accordance with national and local health conditions and regulations.

Most of the participants are expected to participate virtually in the conference.

The workshops will be held in **Spanish**.

A **training certificate** will be issued to attendees who meet the requirements of attendance and active participation in the trainings.

Specific focus of the workshops

The **first workshop** will be aimed at public officials, decision-makers and representatives of governmental STI authorities from Panama, the Spanish speaking Central American region, Cuba and Dominican Republic. The aim is to socialise the JIRI and take stock of the progress achieved in the topics agreed in the JIRI Roadmap 2021-2023. Similarly, it is expected to provide technical tools to the responsible officials to promote dialogue, the development of synergies, and strengthen scientific cooperation in the CELAC-EU Knowledge Area. Among others, representatives of DG RTD - European Commission and PPT CELAC Argentina will be invited to this dialogue, but also NCPs so that they can update themselves on this subject matter and establish contacts for their work.

The **second workshop** is designed for the NCPs of the Horizon Europe Programme from the Spanish speaking Central American region, Cuba and Dominican Republic, with whom there exist pre-established links within the LAC NCP Network. This workshop will seek to strengthen their capacities so that they in turn can assist, guide, advise and accompany researchers, university and entrepreneurs who apply for calls and manage projects financed within the framework of the Horizon Europe programme. They will work on a strategic planning in order to determine goals, indicators and results which facilitate and guide their work.

The **third workshop** will be aimed at researchers, university managers and representatives of university associations from the Spanish speaking Central American region, Cuba and Dominican Republic in order to deepen their knowledge of the functioning and characteristics of the Horizon Europe programme, acquire skills and tools to increase their chances of successful implementation and to present projects of excellence, particularly in areas relevant to the bi-regional partnership between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. The NCPs from the region are also invited to this workshop so that they can establish contacts for their work.

At specific sessions of the conference, representatives of Germany, *Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt German Aerospace Center (DLR)*, an institution with which the LAC NCP Network has been working since 2018. DLR has been part of the consortium that undertook the Service Facility for the Horizon 2020 Programme and has supported the Technical Secretariat of the Research Infrastructures Working Group. Representatives of the European Commission, ENRICH in LAC, EURAXESS, Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT) and NCP from other countries will also be invited to attend virtually and help contribute knowhow to these trainings.

The three days will be evaluated by the participants, who will be sent a survey.

Expected results

- A significant number of public officials from agencies and Ministries of Science, Technology and Innovation / Higher Education, National Contact Points (NCPs), researchers, university managers, representatives of university associations from Central America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean sensitised and trained on funding programmes for bi-regional scientific cooperation between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Impulses generated to increase applications of research teams from Spanish-speaking Central American and Caribbean countries in collaborative projects of the Horizon Europe Programme;
- Exchange promoted between public officials from Spanish-speaking Central American and Caribbean countries on the JIRI Roadmap 2021-2023;
- Facilitation of the establishment of connections, collaboration and consortia between institutions and actors of reference in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean that make up the innovation ecosystem.



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