

13th MEETING OF THE EU-CELAC WORKING GROUP ON RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES

7-8 MAY 2024, LIMA, PERU



Minutes

Meeting of the EU-CELAC Working Group on Research Infrastructures (RI WG)

7 - 8 May 2024

Lima, Peru



A. Summary

The 13th meeting of the EU-CELAC Working Group on Research Infrastructures (RI WG) was held in Lima, Peru, on 7 – 8 May 2024, hosted by the National Council of Science, Technology and Technological Innovation (CONCYTEC).

On the first day, the results of the Senior Officials Meeting for the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI SOM) in Brussels in November 2023 were presented by the European Commission (EC). This was followed by the key note by Dina Lida Gutiérrez Reynoso, Director General of the Directorate of Genetic Resources and Biotechnology, National Institute for Agrarian Innovation, Peru on the “Current aspects of international cooperation of research infrastructures in the field of Food Security” as one of the priority areas defined by the RI WG. The key note and a brief presentation of METROFOOD-CZ's cooperation with RIs in LAC by the Czech delegate stimulated the delegates to discuss the role of RIs in the area of Food Security in each region, divided into two groups.

The group discussion on food security was followed by more practical aspects of the WG's activities, such as the work plan for 2024, including the identification of possible synergies with the new

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ResInfra Plus project launched in January 2024, which was presented. In addition, an update was given on the upcoming study visits to three host institutions in each region in 2024.

Day 2 was dedicated to the presentation of the Platform #PerúCRIS by Claudia Córdova Yamauchi, Director of the Directorate of Evaluation and Knowledge Management, CONCYTEC, and a discussion on how to integrate the services of RIs in current research information systems.

Dr Daniel Guerra from Peru's Cayetano Heredia University made a further contribution to the effect of RIs with his presentation on "Amplifying RI impact with a global perspective: A Regional Hub model". The project is a partner of Instruct ERIC and is funded by the 4th joint call of the EU-LAC Interest Group.

Highlight of day 2 was the presentation on the first steps towards the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean Forum for Research Infrastructures (LACFRI) by the co-chair and the technical secretariat of the LAC side followed by a strategic discussion on how to further strengthen the cooperation between RIs in LAC and the EU. The two guiding questions were: "What could be future cooperation activities between Latin American and Caribbean Forum for Research Infrastructures (LACFRI) and initiatives, such as the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI)?" and "What are possible next steps for the RI WG to take to strengthen cooperation between RIs/hubs in LAC and the EU?"

The meeting concluded with a visit to various laboratories such as the one for technological research on climate change in the agricultural sector under the guidance of Dr Dina Gutierrez at the National Institute for Agricultural Innovation (INIA) on the research campus in La Molina, Lima.

In total, 15 countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and 7 Member States of the European Union (EU) were represented by their delegates (see list of participants in the annex). Several delegates were new to the WG.

The meeting was co-chaired by Martin Penny, Head of Unit, International Cooperation I (Europe, Americas, thematic coherence), DG Research and Innovation, European Commission, and Fernando Amestoy, former director of the Pando Technology Hub, Uruguay. It was organised by the Global Service Facility team.

B. Outcomes of the WG meeting

- The network of delegates of the RI working group was strengthened, new members were incorporated into the group of experienced delegates.
- The role of RIs in the field of food security was explored.
- Delegates discussed the first strategic steps towards the creation of a Latin American and Caribbean Forum for Research Infrastructures (LACFRI) and how to strengthen cooperation between RIs/hubs in LAC and the EU.

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- In order to support the work of LACFRI from the European side, it is also planned to set up an Advisory Group consisting of members of the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) who can share their experience and knowledge on the design of the instruments, procedures and the structure of the thematic groups.
- The following workplan was agreed upon for 2024:
 - Promotion and implementation of study visits to RIs in CELAC and the EU;
 - Updating the calendar of events for strategic networking with relevant RI stakeholders;
 - Planning of dissemination and networking activities for RI bi-regional cooperation, in collaboration with ResInfra Plus activities and the next 5th Joint STI Call of the EU-LAC Interest Group.
- Next WG meeting will be held online in the second half of 2024.
- Priority topic for 2025 will be energy.

C. Outcomes of the JIRI SOM

The key outcomes of the last Senior Officials Meeting of the EU-CELAC Joint Initiative on Research and Innovation (JIRI SOM) are the proposed establishment of two new WG, one on innovation and one on global challenges. The EC will also liaise with all national delegates and coordinate the process of updating the EU-CELAC Strategic Roadmap for Research and Innovation 2021-2023¹. The updated roadmap will help the EC to formulate new Horizon Europe calls for proposals and will serve as a basis for the next work programme. In addition, the EC is planning an EU-CELAC meeting at the level of science ministers to reach a high-level political agreement, with a date to be set.

D. Keynote on Food Security

During the keynote on “Current aspects of international cooperation of research infrastructures in the field of Food Security”, one of the priority areas defined by the RI WG, Dr. Dina Lida Gutiérrez Reynoso, Director General of the Directorate of Genetic Resources and Biotechnology, National Institute for Agrarian Innovation in Lima, highlighted the importance of open access, indigenous knowledge for research, crop diversity, gender aspects and others. It became clear that food security is a highly relevant topic for bi-regional RI cooperation.

¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-07/eu-celac_strategic-roadmap-2021-2023.pdf

E. Results of the group discussion on the role of RIs in the area of Food Security

The keynote on food security was followed by a group discussion on the role of RI within the topic, the discussion was led by the following guiding questions: What are the main existing research infrastructures in the field of Food Security in CELAC and the EU? What are the specific needs and gaps within this research landscape? How can the bi-regional cooperation be strengthened? In the run-up to the event, the delegates had received a background note on food security for their own preparation. During the event itself, participants were divided into two groups, one comprising of CELAC delegates and one of EU delegates. Each group nominated a spokesperson who presented the results in plenary.

Group 1 (EU-delegates):

Most relevant European research infrastructures relevant for Food Security are:

- METROFOOD-RI, website: <https://www.metrofood.eu/>
- DISH
- Distributed System of Scientific Collections (DISSCO), website: <https://www.dissco.eu/>
- Microbial Resource Research Infrastructure (MIRRI); website: <https://www.mirri.org/>

Needs & gaps: The most important needs & gaps identified by the group are:

- Networking (both at scientific and decision-making level) in order to create known research results, capabilities and R&D capacities. It is also important to ensure coordination among various networks as the process of “getting together” should avoid duplication and waste of resources
- Lower the barrier for participation in various initiatives at EU level (e.g. ERICs – see ERIC Regulation nr. 723/2009. The recognition of the European Court of Justice as the ultimate instance for legal disputes was considered as highly important in this context.
- Synergy of various resources available at EU & LAC level. The Food Security Partnership with 100 million EUR available was cited as an example.
- Scarcity of resources (human, financial, etc.)

Opportunities:

- Knowledge sharing, in particular indigenous knowledge, to be used in full respect of human rights and local population
- Data protection and security. This depends on (but not only) TRL level

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- Integration of RI in partnerships. As a study case the Sustainable Blue Economy Partnership (SBEP) was discussed.
- Cooperation with end-users, either companies or decision makers

The EU delegates remarked that small but strategically invested amounts via **Coordination and Support Action (CSA) type projects** allow fostering cooperation between RIs in EU and LAC.

Also, in order to accelerate integration and facilitate cooperation between research communities, **Trans-Nacional Access (TNA) type projects** appear to be one of the most powerful tools, as European scientists could host and learn from LAC colleagues and vice-versa. They could set/use common standards for R&D performance, exchange good practices and results, common authorship of research articles, etc.

Group 2 (CELAC delegates):

1. What are the main existing research infrastructures in the field of food security in CELAC?

The topic of food security turned out to be very important for all CELAC countries. All countries have at least one public research institute for agriculture, cattle raising and/or fisheries that is dedicated to food security. All CELAC delegates presented their main RI in the field. Below are some examples:

- Barbados: Instituto Caribeño de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Agricultura
- Brazil:
 - Empresa Brasileira de Pesquisa Agropecuaria, Embrapa
 - Universidad Estadual de Campinas, UNICAMP
- Chile:
 - Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario, INDAP
 - Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
 - Universidad de Talca
- Costa Rica:
 - Instituto Nacional de Innovación y Transferencia de Tecnología Agropecuaria, INTA
 - Centro para investigaciones en granos y semillas de la Universidad de Costa Rica
 - Centro de Investigaciones Agronómicas
 - Animal Nutrition Research Center, University of Costa Rica
 - Centro de Investigación y Gestión Agroindustrial
- Cuba:
 - Instituto de Ciencia Animal, ICA
- Dominican Republic:
 - Instituto Dominicano de Investigaciones Agropecuarias y Forestales, IDIAF
- Ecuador:

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- Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Agropecuarias, INIAP
- El Salvador:
 - Centro Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria y Forestal
 - Universidad Católica de El Salvador
- Guatemala:
 - Universidad Galileo
 - Instituto de Ciencia y Tecnología Agrícolas, ICTA
- Honduras:
 - Dirección de Ciencia y Tecnología Agropecuaria de la Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería
 - Universidad Agrícola Panamericana El Zamorano
 - Instituto de Conservación Forestal
 - Centros de Investigación y Capacitación del Instituto Hondureño del Café
 - Fundación Hondureña de Investigación Agrícola
- México:
 - Laboratorio Nacional de Investigación y Servicio Agroalimentario y Forestal, LANISAF
 - Laboratorio Nacional para la Investigación en Inocuidad Alimentaria, LANIIA.
 - Laboratorio Nacional de Biotecnología Agrícola, Médica y Ambiental, LANBAMA
- Nicaragua:
 - Instituto Nicaraguense de Tecnología Agropecuaria, INTA
- Panama:
 - Instituto de Innovación Agropecuaria de Panamá, IDIAP
 - Centro de Investigación y Producción en Ambiente Controlado
- Paraguay:
 - Instituto Paraguayo de Tecnología Agraria, IPTA
 - Universidad Nacional de Asunción
 - Universidad de San Carlos
 - Universidad Nordeste del Paraguay
 - Universidad Autónoma del Sur
- Uruguay:
 - Instituto Nacional de Investigación Agropecuaria, INIA
 - Universidad de la República

Countries that were not represented in this meeting have also very important RI in the field, such as Argentina (INTA) and Colombia (Agrosavia, and CENIs).

2. What are the specific needs and gaps within this research landscape?

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Concytec and the Consortium for Economic and Social Research (CIES) set up a cross-sectoral WG on this topic. The first session of this dialogue cycle was entitled "Food security: global challenges and agenda for Peru". There is a need to combine natural and social sciences with a multidisciplinary approach. General challenges are family agricultural production as well as supply and demand, and food consumption.

Internal challenges:

- Improve production
- Agrochemicals
- Diet associated to other facts: cancer, obesity, malnutrition
- Better governance: lack of continuity between political cycles. Responses to agriculture's problems are long-term and needs are short-term.
- Stakeholders involved with the scientific researchers

External challenges:

- Price of supplies: seeds, fuel
- Price of the basic food basket
- Trade regulations
- Water stress and climate change

There is a necessity to build an early warning system, absorption capacity and recovery mechanisms that transform agri-food systems so that they are more resilient, durable and inclusive, while ensuring healthy and accessible diets.

In the report "The stage of food security and nutrition in the world" FAO 2023, Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the few regions in the world where hunger has decreased in 2022 (mainly in South America as the situation deteriorated in the Caribbean), the prevalence of hunger decreased from 7 % in 2021 to 6.5 % in 2022. However, it is still above pre-pandemic levels.

3. How can the bi-regional cooperation be strengthened?

Getting to know the RIs dealing with this topic, exchange of views, open access to RIs, support for countries through European programmes to improve production and workshops on new regulations such as the new law on entry requirements for foreign CO₂-free products.

F. Update on the study visits to RIs in Europe and CELAC in 2024

The objectives of the study visits, target groups, selection criteria for the participants and selection process were presented by Kathrin Megerle, Global Service Facility (GSF). The GSF will prepare, organise and follow-up the study visits in coordination with the RI WG and the following host institutions:

Study visits in CELAC:

1. Uruguay: Institut Pasteur, Montevideo, <https://pasteur.uy/en>

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2. Brazil: National Institute of Amazonian Research (INPA), Manaus, <https://www.gov.br/inpa/pt-br>
3. Cuba: Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (CIGB), Havana, www.cigb.edu.cu

Study visits in the EU:

1. Germany: Euro-Biolmaging ERIC, European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) Heidelberg, www.eurobioimaging.eu
2. Spain (combined visit to three institutions):
 - EMSO ERIC: Oceanic Platform of the Canary Island (PLOCAN), <https://plocan.eu/en>
 - EMBRC ERIC: Spanish Bank of Algae and Las Palmas University; Gran Canaria, <https://www.embrc.eu/embrc-network/spain>
 - MIRRI-ERIC: University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria – Spanish Bank of Algae – (ULPGC-BEA), Canary Islands, Spain, <https://www.mirri.org/>
3. UK: Instruct-ERIC – European Research Infrastructure in Structural Biology, Oxford, <https://instruct-eric.org/>

G. Content and organisation of the work in 2024

Claudia Romano, Secretariat of the CELAC side of the RI WG, Uruguayan Agency for International Cooperation (AUCI), Uruguay, presented the workplan for 2024 and a calendar with planned activities (including networking activities for RI managers of the ResInfra Plus project) and upcoming events relevant for strategic networking with RI stakeholders and forums in the EU and LAC (e.g. conferences and meetings). The next virtual RI WG meeting shall take place in the second half of 2024.

H. Open Science: the case of the Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) in Peru

Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) are systems with the purpose to collect and disseminate all information related to R&D activities of an institution or a country. This includes data related to researchers, institutions dedicated to R&D, research infrastructures, scientific publications, patents, projects and funding sources. PeruCRIS is a national CRIS led by CONCYTEC, which seeks the articulation and cooperation of the institutions that belong to National System of Science, Technology and Innovation (Sinacti), to operate the National Information Network in Science, Technology and Innovation.

I. Creation of a Latin American and Caribbean Forum for Research Infrastructures (LACFRI): Presentation and discussion

CELAC co-chair Fernando Amestoy and Claudia Romano from the CELAC Technical Secretariat of the RI WG proposed a methodology for the creation and implementation of LACFRI. The objective is to create a regional agenda that serves as a guideline for RI cooperation in LAC, following the model of ESFRI.

1. Selection of 5 thematic hubs, within the priority areas defined by the WG (biodiversity and climate change, health, emerging technologies, food security and energy,) as it is not possible to cover all of them. The idea will be to select one topic per (regional/thematic) hub; no selection was made at the meeting.
2. Implementation: During the discussion the country delegates volunteered to coordinate the thematic hubs and also participate. Peru offered to coordinate food security. Cuba chose health, with participation of the Dominican Republic. Guatemala is interested in participating in emerging technologies. And the hub of biodiversity and climate change gathered most interest: Costa Rica offered to coordinate, Panama opted for co-coordination, with Peru, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic as participants.
3. integration of RIs: The idea is that each thematic hub includes different stakeholders from the countries participating (i.e. WG delegates, RIs, science, innovation and technology organisations). The coordinators of each hub shall invite stakeholders to the meetings (decentralised organisation).
4. Definition of a strategic roadmap: This will be supported by the new ResInfra Plus project "Towards a Sustainable EU-LAC Partnership in Research Infrastructures", in particular through:
 - a. WP 2.3: Workshops will be held in the 5 thematic areas congruent with the thematic hubs and policy workshops that will provide input for the meetings of the thematic hubs. These shall take place after the ResInfra+ workshop and will be organised by the coordinator and co-coordinator of each hub, with the support of participants.
 - b. WP 4.1: Six workshops will be organised on different topics involving RIs: the role of RIs in innovation policies, models of access to RIs, financing of RIs, exchange of research information, management of RIs and development of regional agendas. WG members will be invited to participate in these meetings, as they will also provide valuable inputs.

Finally, a timeline of the different meetings to be held from now on till August 2025 was presented. In the following discussion, the delegates explored possible future collaborations between LACFRI and initiatives, such as the European Strategy Forum for Research Infrastructures (ESFRI). The idea is to:

- Explore how countries outside of Europe could be associated to ESFRI;
- Analyse the ESFRI statute to identify the barriers to access the instrument from LAC countries;

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- Organise a meeting with ESFRI representatives to clarify requirements and identify possible synergies and cooperation opportunities.

With regards to next steps of the RI WG to strengthen cooperation between RIs/hubs in LAC and the EU, the delegates discussed the following:

- Creation of thematic hubs with coordinators and co-coordinators
- Invitation of other stakeholders
- Creation of a roadmap for each hub based on the meetings and workshops, with the aim of a regional roadmap
- Synergies with the EU: share experiences and best practices

J. Creation of an Advisory Group

Delegates discussed the establishment of an Advisory Group for LACFRI composed of four members of ESFRI, an organisation with a very well-established institutional framework and working method, who can share their experience, knowledge and best practices. These insights can then feed into the development of the regional LACFRI strategy.

K. Next steps: specific actions planned for 2024

Claudia Romano from the CELAC Technical Secretariat of the RI WG proposed:

- Organisation of two virtual meetings with the Advisory Group (within the LACFRI framework).
- New round of nominations for EU delegates and greater involvement of those delegates who are already designated but do not participate actively in the RI WG activities.

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L. Photos of the visit to the National Institute of Agricultural Innovation (INIA)



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ANNEX - Participants

No.	Surname	First name	Institution	Country
1	Amestoy	Fernando	Co-Chair EU-CELAC RI WG	Uruguay
2	Benavídez Torres	Pedro	INTA	Nicaragua
3	Cibotti	Andrea	ANID	Chile
4	Córdova	Claudia	CONCYTEC	Peru
5	Cruells Freixas	María Esther	CITMA	Cuba
6	Amaral da Cunha	Dileine	CNPq	Brazil
7	Di Carlo	Cecilia	MUR	Italy
8	Gota Goldmann	Susana	MESR	France
9	Guaylupo	Sabina	FECYT	Spain
10	Kiapés	Daniel	European Commission	
11	Klosakova	Judita	MSMT	Czech Republic
12	Maceda Martinez	Martín	ESCO	El Salvador
13	Megerle	Kathrin	Global Service Facility	
14	Mora Marin	Manuel	MICITT	Costa Rica
15	Pacheco	María de los Angeles	SENESCYT	Ecuador
16	Penny	Martin	Co-Chair EU-CELAC RI WG	European Commission
17	Portillo	José	Universidad Galileo	Guatemala
18	Romano	Claudia	Technical Secretariat EU-CELAC RI WG	Uruguay
19	Romero	Diana	CONACYT	Paraguay
20	Salazar	Mónica	Global Service Facility	
21	Santos Figueroa	Luis Enrique	UPNFM	Honduras
22	Schulz	Susan	BMBF	Germany
23	Soto	Juan	ANID	Chile
24	Vásquez Fábrega	Anabella	SENACYT	Panama
25	Vulturescu	Viorel	MCID	Romania
26	Weselka	Daniel	BMBWF	Austria
27	Casildo	Rocío	CONCYTEC	Peru
28	Gutiérrez	Dina Lida	INIA	Peru
29	Elias Da Silva	Rosa Angelica	INIA	Peru
30	Rodriguez Peña	Carlos	MESCYT	Dominican Republic