

## EU-LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN WORKING GROUP ON RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES (WG RI)

### **3rd Policy workshop**

*“Governance of Research Infrastructures: EU/LAC Collaboration”*

San José, 27 November 2019

-Minutes-

- The workshop counted with 9 participants from 8 EU countries and 14 participants from 13 LAC countries (refer to participants list).

#### **Objectives of the workshop**

- Explore and create common understanding on how governance models can support internationalization of RIs: exchange views and lessons learnt on different types of legal frameworks, governing structures, organizational models, competences on management, and scenarios for international collaboration; standardize concepts.

#### **General remarks and conclusions**

- Participants stressed that in LAC it is still unclear what can (or should) be considered a RI. In many cases, national institutions (public and private universities and research universities) host research infrastructures. Legal issues are dependent on status of hosting institution. The single-sited RIs that do operate independently can be connected with research institutions (or vice versa) through a distributed approach.
- Participants mentioned that most of the countries, both EU and LAC, don't have legal frameworks developed for RIs on national level. But tools, like national roadmaps and science policies, exist that allow for enhancing internationalization and networking.
- Participants stressed that in EU, ERIC complements national and inter-governmental regulatory schemes, and provides a common legal framework recognised in all EU Member States.
- Participants agreed that an important task for a RI is to provide services and organise a community (support networking between researchers and other stakeholders) in a specific fields to be able to respond to global challenges;
- Participants from LAC mentioned that private funds for RIs are not widely available in LAC, most of them depend on public funds.
- Participants stressed that for LAC the mapping of RIs and their equipment is a

necessary first step in starting a regional roadmap exercise;

- Apart from the bigger autonomous RIs a lot of research centres exist on national level that can be connected (nationally and internationally) creating a “network of RIs”. Participants agreed that political choices and priority settings should be made at national level to define where a country wants to add value and start collaborating internationally. Involve the scientists in this discussion.

### *Key note presentation and discussion*

The presentation of Dr. Prof. M. Lavitrano focused on the different governance models and three key parameters involved (legal framework/ organisational structures/ management) for setting up the organisational structure of a RI. Amongst others, the presentation stressed that multi-national RI's still need to distribute responsibilities to national nodes and therefore have to seek alignment with different national roadmaps and funding mechanisms. As multi-national RI's involve the spending of national public money, the General Assembly of national representatives can have different objectives than the RI management itself. Therefore the governance should facilitate clear communication to stakeholders on the functioning and operations and performance of RIs. A proper discussion on voting rights and individual contributions are a good way to balance the different national interests and address the added value multi-national RI can have for the different national communities.

### *General remarks and conclusions*

During the discussion on international RIs that followed the presentation, participants stressed that:

- Both global problems and scientific interest and excellence are key elements to take into account when internationalising a RI as they can be a boost for the societal development of countries and for research communities.
- Managing a international RI requires special (intercultural) management skills and competences and not only scientific knowledge of the domain. Moreover, continuous training of managers and RI staff is important, taking specificity of the RI into account;
- The smooth development of a governance structure requires the involvement of all (potential international) stakeholders from the start and lessons learned from previous set-ups of RIs. These two should be taken into account. Strive for a flexible legal structure without too much details but with minimal and optimal configuration and internal rules that can be modified;
- A strategy for performance monitoring should be integral to the governance of a RI and should be aligned with the requirements of funders. Although difficult to measure, the added value to economic and social development is important as most RIs spend public money;
- Governance is putting politics into practice: look out for taking older governance models (like used for CERN for example) as a reference as they are outdated in several aspects. ERIC, although not perfect, is a good option for distributed RIs,

also in terms of sustainability, but needs further development and adaptation to specific contexts;

### ***Session 1: “Typology of legal frameworks and governing structures to structure the bi-regional dimension of RI collaboration”***

In six sub-groups, participants discussed the different types of national legal frameworks and governance structures in EU and LAC and identified main features of a governance structure to catch the opportunities of biregional collaboration.

#### **General remarks and conclusions**

- Interventions are considered necessary on three levels:
  - (-1-) national level: enhance coordination between individual institutions that already exist (share Uruguay’s example of cooperation agreement between facilities on national level).
  - (-2-) regional level: continue/finish mapping exercise [for LAC].
  - (-3-) bi-regional level: [for LAC] develop a regional legal framework for LAC based on a “fit for purpose” model (opportunities with Mexico being President Pro Tempore of CELAC for 2020). ERIC experience might be used as mayor reference. / [for EU] ERIC offers “special partnerships” which allows for possible affiliations from LAC with 21 existing ERIC’s.
- Prioritise flexible and quick actions and identify research priorities within thematic areas (include the researchers!) followed by discussion on suitable legal framework.
- The consortium agreement was frequently mentioned as a suitable governance model to be used in EU/LAC bi-regional RI collaboration as it allows for simplicity and flexibility organisational structures.

### ***Session 2: Experiences with different RI governing models and management competencies in EU (LifeWatch/ ERIC) and LAC (CeNAT)***

The presentation by Dr. Juan Miguel Gonzalez (Director Common Facilities LifeWatch ERIC, Spain) explained that LifeWatch, established as a ERIC legal entity, uses the MoU and Rules of Procedures instead of statutes as these are “legally non binding” and open and acceptable to all parties. Different bodies like the Forum Assembly, Executive Board, Working Groups, Advisory Board support the operability.

The presentation of Dr. Eduardo Sibaja Arias (Director General CeNAT) explained that, although PAN-regional legal frameworks do not exist, interoperability at national level can be developed and sustained by creating a “network” of distributed RIs facilities -CeNAT laboratories-, are structured as a an inter-university body based on a “traditional” governance structure, that support efforts conducted by public university centers, private and governmental projects.

### *Session 3: Discussion tables on thematic areas*

In 5 sub-groups around prioritised thematic areas (Energy, Health, Food security, Biodiversity and Climate change, Emerging technologies) participants discussed the main variations between the RI ecosystems in EU and LAC in this thematic area and the main competences of a RI manager to push bi-regional cooperation in this thematic area.

#### General remarks and conclusions

- The discussions raised the picture of fairly developed cooperation frameworks and mechanisms in Europe in the five thematic fields, as opposed to LAC. LAC representatives mentioned that cooperation with the more automatized RI ecosystems in EU is sometimes difficult which could be mitigated and facilitated by a regional entity on the LAC side, operating as an intermediate between EU and LAC.
- The different models of governance that can be used for a single-sited RI show similarities/commonalities in terms of the structures that are used and roles that need to be carried out (eg. financing mechanisms, involvement of stakeholders, scientific advice etc.)
- Across-border cooperation involve more (political) stakeholders in the different countries which adds an extra layer of complexity. Two options:
  - “formal” route by creating a legal structure (like ERIC): this takes time and effort but allows for stability and sustainability
  - “informal” route through a MoU approach: quicker but depends on individuals and their commitment so has disadvantages in terms of durability and sustainability.
- The right competences of staff involved in RIs are absolutely vital.

#### Outcomes of the discussion tables

	<b>RI ecosystems</b>	<b>Key competences RI manager</b>
<b>Energy</b> (Italy, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Chile, Uruguay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In EU interesting RIs exist like the European Carbon Dioxide Capture and Storage Laboratory Infrastructure (ECCSEL) or MYRRHA on the site of the Belgian Nuclear Research Centre.</li> <li>• Many incentives for Renewable energy research exist in both LAC and EU (eg. tax benefits, structural funds etc.).</li> <li>• Mainly Cross-sectoral research with opportunities for open access.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-active networker</li> <li>• Negotiation skills</li> <li>• (Inter-cultural) communication skills</li> </ul>
<b>Health</b> (Uruguay, Honduras, Guatemala,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the EU: several national and regional mechanisms exist for information exchange and calls for cooperation (eg. Institut Pasteur –</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent communication skills</li> <li>• Good knowledge of health</li> </ul>



Austria)	<p>EUPHEM).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Uruguay and Honduras: no specific public funding support for this area</li> <li>In both EU and LAC, models for health research design exist with and without government regulations, allowing for more autonomy for the research centre in the latter.</li> </ul>	<p>research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preferably with training in management of RIs</li> </ul>
<b>Food security</b> (Romania, Cuba, Spain, Paraguay)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In both EU and LAC: mainly national public funding institutions with different ministries coordinating related RIs. The field has many public and private stakeholders.</li> <li>METROFOOD-RI is an interesting example of an ESFRI RI.</li> <li>Many laboratories inside research centres (quality control and food innovation).</li> <li>Definition and understanding of food security differs depending on national contexts but interests are global and allows for many complementarities between LAC and EU.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong science diplomacy skills</li> <li>Good knowledge on research in the field</li> <li>Openness (allowing for interdisciplinarity and cross-fertilisation)</li> <li>Innovation and strategic skills</li> </ul>
<b>Biodiversity and Climate change</b> (Peru, Mexico, Germany, Czech Republic & Spain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In LAC: Both Peru and Mexico have included the topic as part of their National S&amp;T System.</li> <li>Both GBIF Perú and GBIF Mexico excellent collaborate with GBIF .org particularly through colleagues from EU.</li> <li>Peru is particularly strong in Marine-Coastal Biodiversity: Fisheries banks preservation-oriented.</li> <li>IWRM and Prediction of Climate Change Future scenarios very relevant topic to both Peru and Mexico.</li> <li>In EU: Funding programmes based on priorities, national programmes implemented by Max Planck and individual universities.</li> <li>European (Regional) Development Funds in synergy with different EU Framework Programmes (FP7, H2020, etc.) implement policies to support (e-)RIs related to Biodiversity &amp; Climate Change</li> <li>Various competitive EU calls for applications from National Ministries and many research institutions working on the topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managerial competences</li> </ul>
<b>Emerging Technologies</b> (Bulgaria, Colombia, Italy, Spain, Panama)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding mechanisms: national roadmaps for RIs / competitive fundings / institutional fundings / national research programmes / structural funds.</li> <li>Structural funds and roadmap funding are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intercultural communication skills</li> <li>Business-innovation skills</li> <li>People management skills</li> </ul>



	<p>available in a considerable part of EU countries but hardly in LAC countries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multi-disciplinarity of the topic allows for flexibility / open access and open data.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good industry network</li><li>• Knowledge about different ecosystems</li></ul>
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