

Press Release
25 May 2010

The National Science and Technology Council of Mexico and the OECD have agreed to launch the innovation pillar of the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Initiative, which aims to help regional cooperation efforts by building a more inclusive peer-dialogue process around key public policy issues, and by raising the profile of LAC countries' policy experiences.

The LAC Initiative has been developed jointly by the OECD and the Governments of Mexico and Spain, with the support of Chile, as part of the Organisation's outreach strategy, and covers joint work around four pillars of activity (innovation, fiscal policy, access to public services, and investment). Other countries with close ties to the LAC region are currently considering joining the process.

The Government of Mexico has decided to promote a series of events to strengthen the links between LAC countries' science, technology and innovation programs, in order to encourage new collaborative platforms between national networks of researchers, deepen regional peer-evaluation capacity, and promote greater knowledge exchanges.

Work around the innovation pillar will include, among other things, a High-Level Conference, to be held in Mexico latter this year, where the *LAC Innovation Network* would be launched in close coordination with the international organizations active on this issue in the region.

The network would serve as a platform to promote an open discussion about on-going national and regional efforts in science, technology and innovation. Through this enhanced contact mechanism, LAC countries will be able to exchange ideas about the result of recent innovation policy reviews, identify common challenges and effective policy responses, and benefit from the analytical framework developed as part of the soon-to-be-launched OECD Innovation Strategy.

Discussions are expected to provide a deeper understanding about the role of innovation in socio-economic development, including on measures to strengthen human capital and the role of regional innovation systems in a changing global environment. Likewise, it will complement efforts on the part of national agencies and regional programmes, like the Ibero american Network for Science and Technology (RICYT), to develop indicators to better measure innovation efforts.

Mexico has taken the lead in launching the innovation pillar of the LAC Initiative to spearhead the design of future innovation policies, including the construction of better indicators aimed at measuring innovation-friendly business environments and non-technological innovation.

The promotion of innovation figures were prominently among the priorities identified by the Government of Mexico in the Special Program of Science, Technology and Innovation 2008-2012 (PECiTI). It is worth noting that Mexico follows OECD guidelines and best practices for science, technology and innovation development, including in the design of new indicators and the collection of base line data. These activities complement the joint efforts between CONACYT and RICYT.

As a result of the implementation of the PECiTI, CONACYT has strengthened institutional coordination among national research centers, better aligned and developed incentive programs to support innovation, and promoted synergies between government, private sector and the academic and research communities.

The Mexican National Innovation System has also benefited from the OECD Innovation Policy Review (2009), with many of the conclusions and recommendations being incorporated directly as part of the PECiTI.

The Head of the National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT), Dr. Juan Carlos Romero Hicks, launched the innovation pillar of the LAC initiative with Deputy Secretary General Richard Boucher at a ceremony in Paris on Tuesday 25 May.