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22 June 2020

NOTIFICATION

Subject: Official Launching of the Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program

Dear Sir, Madam,

I am writing in regard to Decision XXVII/18, adopted at the 27th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Brasilia, 2019, which instructs the IAI Directorate to implement the Science, Technology, Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program.

In support of this Decision, I am pleased to inform you that the IAI Directorate officially launched the pilot of the STeP Fellowship Program on 11 June 2020. The first pilot will be developed in the private sector, in collaboration with the Consorcios Regionales de Experimentación Agrícola (CREA). The first STeP Fellows are three post-doctoral scientists working at the science-policy interface in the agricultural sector. The fellows are funded jointly by CREA and the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) in Argentina. The launch of the program had a positive response from the local press in Argentina, with nearly 10 newspapers publishing the joint IAI-CREA communication about the Fellows program. Clarin, one of the most influential newspapers in Argentina highlighted the story in its rural section, "Agroindustry: launched a fellows program to investigate key themes for agro." Please find additional details on the 11 June virtual launch in the attachment to this notification.

The STeP Fellowship Program is an innovative landmark program of the IAI to enhance human and institutional capacities in IAI member countries and to support the provision of expert scientific advice to policy makers for the development of policy relevant to global change and sustainable development.

The IAI STeP program is modeled after the successful AAAS Science, Technology, Policy Fellowships (STPF) Program, which has been replicated in several other industrialized countries to foster the uptake of scientific knowledge into policymaking processes. AAAS, an Associate to the IAI, has effectively placed several fellows at agencies in all branches of the US Federal government in Washington, DC and is working with the IAI Directorate to adopt the model for Latin America and the Caribbean. Although STeP will be implemented at the national level, it is a regional program connecting fellows, their host institutions, and countries to engage in joint training and program collaboration across the Americas.

STeP Fellows are placed at host government or private organizations to engage first-hand with policy and decision-makers and facilitate the uptake of scientific knowledge into policy processes. STeP Fellows will gain leadership and communication skills, as well as science diplomacy instruction, through tailored professional development training and mentorship.

Moreover, STeP Fellows will participate in the IAI Inter-American network of STeP peers and alumni and share best practices and lessons learned. This multinational network creates the means to integrate diverse knowledge and expertise across different sectors and countries in response to critical global change challenges in the Americas.

We very much look forward to working with our STeP-CREA-CONICET Fellows in Argentina over the next two years. Several Parties have expressed interest in participating in the STeP Fellowship Program. The Directorate is in advanced negotiations with two other IAI Parties to implement additional pilots in their countries to address important science-policy themes, such as agriculture, public health, cities, resilience and natural disasters, tourism, governance and indigenous communities, etc. We will be pleased to keep all Parties informed on the further development of STeP.

Finally, STeP is a new initiative of the IAI Capacity Building Program in collaboration with our Science Policy work led by Ms. Marcella Ohira, Deputy Director, and Ms. Susanna Ehlers, Science-Policy Program Officer. Please contact Ms. Ohira (marcella@dir.iai.int) or Ms. Ehlers (sehlers@dir.iai.int) should you require additional information or have any questions on participation. You can also access information on the STeP through the IAI website at: <http://www.iai.int/en/step>.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Marcos Regis da Silva
Executive Director