
IAI STeP Professional Development & Networking Plan: Pilot Phase (2020-2024)

Updated June 2021

BUILDING POWER SKILLS FOR SCIENCE POLICY ADVISORS IN LAC

INTRODUCTION

Modeled after the highly successful American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science & Technology Policy Fellowship, an Associate of the IAI, STeP is the first Science, Technology, Policy Fellows program implemented at the national level in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition to the Fellow work plans defined by each host institution, IAI provides a STeP Professional Development program as a complimentary training experience to early career researchers across the three training pillars of **science diplomacy, communication, and leadership**. Through a unique cultural lens and a safe learning environment, the STeP Fellowship Program aims to create an Inter-American Network for shared capacity building and science-policy experiences among the Fellows, host institutions, and IAI member country stakeholders.

Policy institutions and decision-makers are not accustomed to working with scientists or seeking their advice. There is a need to create a common language, build trusting relationships, and create effective mechanisms to bridge science and policy communities. At the same time, most academic programs do not prepare scientists to navigate and work in the world of policymaking nor are they provided with the power skills that are increasingly necessary to apply and advance science in policy and in society. Through a broad network of relationships, the IAI brings expert material to STeP Fellows and Host Institutions with the challenge of making **content relevant and contextual to a large and diverse region like Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)**. In the Pilot Phase the IAI is designing training modules to enrich Fellow work plans and to integrate Fellow supervisors to support/build long-term institutional mechanisms for science policy interface.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

DEVELOP AND PROVIDE A TWO-YEAR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF CORE TRAINING ACTIVITIES TAILORED FOR SCIENTISTS AND POLICY MAKERS WORKING IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE PILLAR AREAS OF COMMUNICATION, SCIENCE DIPLOMACY, AND LEADERSHIP.

For these reasons, and to increase the impact and benefit of STeP, IAI and Training Partners will identify opportunities in each of the STeP pillars, Communication, Science Diplomacy and Leadership, to develop and implement a Training of Trainers (ToT) model. Fellows and host institution supervisors will work with technical experts/master trainers to build a pool of expert trainers in LAC.

The IAI will integrate professional development best practices to ensure effective knowledge transfer. This means core training activities are built on principles of peer-collaboration, local/regional case studies, mentoring, and technical assistance. Strategic focus areas within each training pillar are based on real needs of LAC scientists and policymakers and aim at generating visible results. Monitoring and evaluation of pilot program impact should continuously measure professional development outcomes or key performance indicators to bridge the gap between project activities and high-level development objectives. As an engagement strategy, stakeholder consultation is embedded in the professional development work plan as the IAI program team will work with key partners and trainers to establish evaluation questions and performance indicators. Results will be analyzed, interpreted, and shared with key stakeholders to inform strategies moving beyond the pilot phase. Networking events (see Networking Plan below) will be designed to provide follow-up support to strengthen the uptake and skill level of Fellows and supervisors resulting in communities of practice around shared regional challenges in global change and sustainable development.

STeP fellows (and Host institution supervisors) will build skills using a transdisciplinary (TD) approach to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to inform policy makers and co-create strategic visions for problem-solving in global change and sustainable development. TD is a novel approach to research and training that is problem driven and solutions oriented, integrating knowledge, tools, and ways of thinking from multiple disciplines and societal actors (including decision makers) to provide useful and actionable information for end users (policy makers, local communities, indigenous peoples, stakeholders, etc.). However, there is a marked lack of consensus, if not understanding, on what constitutes TD research, particularly in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The IAI aims to contribute to this body of knowledge and practice through TD training and collaborative development of training materials tailored for the region.

«Science does not have all the answers. But without science the answer that is made is less likely to be a good answer.»

Sir Peter Gluckman, INESA Chair, Foro CILAC 2021

Training Pillar Aims & Objectives:

PILLAR	AIM	CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY
SCIENCE DIPLOMACY	Learn the fundamentals of science policy, advisement, and diplomacy as well as how the three are inherently interconnected and applied in LAC.	Science Advisement & Policy in LAC Introduction
		Science Diplomacy Training Program: (Five Modules + Train the Trainer)
		Series: Application of Science Diplomacy in LAC
COMMUNICATION	Learn the fundamental skills of professional, digital, and science communication and actively practice techniques for credible, clear, and consistent communication that is easily understood by targeted audiences of non-specialists.	Workshop: Effective Communication Tools to become agents of change (four sessions) Workshop: How to Write an Effective Policy Brief
LEADERSHIP	Build skills using a transdisciplinary approach to work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to inform policy makers and co-create strategic visions for problem-solving in global change and sustainable development.	Leadership for Sustainable Development/Global Change Introduction
		Discussion Series/Panel: Scientific Leadership in LAC

«The experiences shared by the speakers are similar to what I am currently experiencing and the tips on "ego systems", "working with scenarios rather than data" and "analysis paralysis" will help me to improve my current activities.»

STeP Fellow, Mónica Jimenez, PhD. Toxicology, Mexico City, 2020

SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The IAI STeP Science Diplomacy Training Program seeks to equip fellows with the knowledge and skills to understand and navigate the intersection of science, technology and innovation with foreign policy, international affairs, geopolitics and global governance for sustainable development and addressing regional challenges related to global change.

INTER-AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH

STeP - Science, Technology,
Policy Fellowship

Professional Development Plan

MODULE 3:
Science-Policy and
Diplomacy Ecosystems

Instructor: Dra. Marga Gual Soler



CORE TRAINING ACTIVITIES

MODULE 1: Introduction to Science Diplomacy and its importance for LAC.

MODULE 2: National, regional and thematic approaches to science diplomacy in LAC.

MODULE 3: Science diplomacy ecosystems. In-depth exploration of strategies, tools, mechanisms, stakeholders and actors for the effective use and incorporation of scientific knowledge into policy in LAC. Factors for success and barriers.

MODULE 4: Role Play Game: Science diplomacy skills to foster transdisciplinary collaboration between scientists, stakeholders, and decision makers

MODULE 5: Introducing the Science Diplomacy Train-the-Trainers methodology

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Science Diplomacy Group Project: After the first two modules of the training program, fellows are provided a hands-on learning opportunity to build regional networks, identify cooperation priorities at the national and regional level, deepen their knowledge about their topics of interests that align with both their background and expertise and their fellowship host institutions, and elevate the issues to national and regional policy agendas.

Fellows work in groups to:

- Identify the challenges and areas of opportunity to improve the science-diplomacy interface from the perspective of the fellows' countries and domains of work.
- Equip fellows (and their host organizations) with context-relevant knowledge, tools, practical skills and networks to tackle transboundary and regional issues of global change in the Americas.
- Practice their communication, teamwork and leadership skills and develop a product to help advance a science diplomacy issue of shared concern in the Americas, aligned with the overarching agenda of the IAI.

COMMUNICATION



CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY	SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EVALUATION QUESTIONS/KPI
SESSION 1: Concepts and strategies for effective communication	1) communicate science in a more accessible and effective way to various non-expert audiences, including decision makers; 2) apply effective communication strategies in the design and dissemination of your science diplomacy projects; 3) use social media as a communication tool for expertise and thought leadership; and 4) exercise leadership in the area of science and technology public policy to become agents of change.	A survey will be provided to assess the change in participants' perceptions and confidence in their science communication skills before and after the workshop. This survey will also monitor the knowledge and preferences of use of the social networks of the participants (individually and in their respective countries). Preparation of a 60 second video pitch of science diplomacy project: define the audience, objectives, central message, and outline strategies of cultural relevance and effective communication. Each Fellow will practice skills they will be able to use in explaining their own projects/research throughout their careers to non-expert audiences in addition to having a product to build their own brand.
SESSION 2: Creating a pitch		
SESSION 3: Office Hours		
SESSION 4: Using social media for scientific communication and thought leadership		
Science Communication Workshop: How to Write an Effective Policy Brief	1. Learn the basic components of a policy brief and techniques for effective writing, including regional specific examples. 2. Tips for distribution and engagement.	Supervisors poll/interview to determine topic of interest Fellows will draft a brief and distribution strategy to implement as part of their impact/work plan.

LEADERSHIP

CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY	SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES	EVALUATION QUESTIONS/KPI
Leadership for Sustainable Development/ Global Change Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the significance of the Transdisciplinary Approach including best practices and methods based on lessons learned from previous global change research and policy applications. 2. Learn how to strategize, empower, engage, manage teams, delegate work, motivate and inspire, and encourage collaboration for global change. 3. Learn the foundations of leadership for global change: Innovation and design thinking, Barriers and opportunities for social change. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capacity scorecard to measure abilities before and after training.
Discussion Series/ Panel: Scientific Leadership in LAC	Learn from a panel of scientists/ policymakers in leadership positions in Latin America & Caribbean their candid experiences in both science and policy worlds.	Draft and post a blog and/or Twitter thread on each session topic

INTER-AMERICAN NETWORK PLAN

The IAI is keen to create an inter-American network of Fellows, host institutions and countries and IAI alumni. The power of the fellows' network cannot be overstated. From moral support to career pathways, having a network of peers to share experiences and lessons learned and to find mentors, enhances the longevity and impact of STeP. Most importantly, the network enhances the Fellows' and host institution's experience and endures long after their fellowship ends.

The STeP Fellowship Program will develop the tools and the human talent needed to effectively promote best practices and inform policies for sustainability and global change based on scientific evidence. Joint training activities planned with strategic partners from North America looking to strengthen their connection with Latin America & Caribbean will forge the personal and institutional network and capacity necessary to help address future transboundary, regional and global challenges.

Networking Specific Objective: Create an Inter-American networking platform for Fellows, host institutions and countries, international partners, and IAI alumni to exchange lessons learned and share experiences and best practices in science to policy and policy to science.

AIMS

- Foster opportunities for multinational collaboration among host organizations and countries to collaborate on transboundary and regional challenges and priorities with the support of the work of the Fellows.
- Broaden STeP Fellow career options with experience in diverse sectors beyond academia.
- Build opportunities to practice career/professional networking skills through formal training and informal activities for STeP Fellows cohorts to interact with each other and peer networks of key partner organizations (e.g. Inter-American Science Policy Network (peer network), AAAS, Mitacs and eventual STeP Alumni).
- Increase awareness of the value of science advice in the policy/decision making community through shared educational experiences that promote engagement, build trust, credibility, and relationships.

GOALS

- A. Host and/ or attend at least 1 joint training event with international partners (Mitacs, Future Earth, AAAS)
- B. Host at least formal activity every 3 months between fellowship cohorts or among all cohorts, with the participation of supervisors.
- C. Co-host with Fellows at least 1 informal activity / 3 months between fellowship cohorts (e.g. Journal club, happy hour, Ask a Former Fellow) with the goal that this sort of activity would eventually be fellow-led.
- D. Open participation, when applicable, for a portion of the core training activities in Science Diplomacy, Communication, and Leadership to include supervisors, mentors, and an expanded audience.
- E. Build joint exercises and activities related to each training pillar that promote collaboration between fellows and supervisors.

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History of the IAI

In 1992, 12 nations of the Americas came together in Montevideo, Uruguay to establish the IAI. The 12 governments, in the Declaration of Montevideo, called for the Institute to develop the best possible international coordination of scientific and economic research of global change in the Americas. Since then, 7 additional nations have acceded to the treaty, and the IAI has now 19 parties in the Americas.

Become a fellow!

Host a fellow!

Fund a fellow!

