

Montevideo, Buenos Aires, 16 June 2020

On 11 June 2020, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) and the Regional Agricultural Experimentation Consortiums (CREA), launched the Science Technology and Policy Fellowship Program (STeP) (<http://www.iai.int/en/step>) in Argentina through a webinar.

The IAI STeP-CREA-CONICET fellows, Dr. Sofía Nanni, Dr. Sebastián Riera and Dr. Matías Goldenberg, will be addressing priority issues for the agricultural sector in Argentina related to the agroecosystems management to promote the production and provision of ecosystem services in the Pampeana and Chaqueña region, and the competitiveness and productive gaps of the Cuyo region. The fellows are funded by CREA and CONICET.

The STeP Program is an innovative IAI landmark program to bring science closer to the decision-making processes, placing scientists in government agencies and in the private sector in order to facilitate the provision of scientific knowledge to public and private policy makers relevant to global environmental change. Another objective of the program is to establish an Inter-American Network of Fellows in Science and Policy, to integrate diverse knowledge and experience in different sectors and countries in response to the critical challenges of global change and the sustainable development in the Americas.

A group of professionals and key institutions associated with the development of the program in the country took part in the webinar. The objective was to introduce the program IAI_STeP and CREA-CONICET, the Argentinian fellows and their work plans.

Dr. Carolina Vera, head of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MINCYT) of Argentina, Dr. at the University of Buenos Aires and vice-president of the IPCC- group work 1, spoke about the importance of the work of scientists with decision makers in the transdisciplinary research and stated that this program with co-financed scholarships is a milestone for the science-policy interface.

Furthermore, the webinar was also attended by the fellows' supervisors: Dr. Ricardo Grau, head of the Institute of Regional Ecology of the National University of Tucumán; Dr. Martín Oesterheld, head of the Institute of Physiological and Ecological Research applied to Agronomy (UBA); and Dr. Daniel Lema, a researcher at the INTA Institute of Economics, and two mentors, Dr. Esteban Jobbágy and Dr. Martín Oesterheld, who support the co-financed scholarship program, as an important private sector mechanism by supporting projects as a way of stimulate science-policy interaction, as well as foster the concept that the academy is not the only destination of a doctor, but there are other very valuable destinations to society.

Dr. Elena Abraham, director of the CONICET Mendoza Technological Science Centre and former undersecretary of Environment of the province of Mendoza, member of the Science Advisory Committee IAI, expressed that "this program is going to be one of the most emblematic of the IAI because of its immense potential. It is responding to a need in Latin America, that knowledge will be available for the decision-making."

As the representatives of CREA, Dr. Cristian Feldkamp, Dr. Federico Bert and Agricultural Engineer Jorge Saenz Rozas stated, this program aims not only to generate knowledge, but also to forge fruitful links between science and decision-making.

In the words of Dr. Marcos Regis da Silva, Executive Director of the IAI, "STeP is the first step we take together so that a group of experts could have an impact on the development of public policies in a country and a region."

For further information about STeP, please visit www.step.int/es/step, and follow the news about the development of the program in Latin America and the Caribbean. You could also contact Lucía Caldeiro at step@dir.iai.int.