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Information Document 6

Program Update: Science Technology and Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program

1. This information document has been prepared by the IAI Directorate.
2. The Conference of the Parties, at its 27th meeting, adopted Decision XXVII/18 which states:
XXVII/18. The IAI Directorate is instructed to implement the IAI Science and Technology Policy (STeP) Fellowships Program, subject to the availability of external financial resources.
3. The IAI Strategic Plan calls for, by the end of 2022, create Fellowship and Mentorship programs to train early-career scientists in the science-policy interface. Outstanding early-career individuals from multiple backgrounds and disciplines will contribute to a pool of experts suited for contributing to future IAI research and to promote and disseminate the IAI's work in their home countries and organizations. Fellows are paired with senior experts from both academic and policy sectors to train mentees in the science-policy interface:

Theme 1, Goal 3: Parties have worked collaboratively towards the Vision of the IAI to accomplish more together than any one country can achieve alone.

iii. The IAI supports capacity-building efforts in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, collaboration, and innovation.

About the IAI Science Technology and Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program

4. STeP aims to build human and institutional capacities in IAI member states to provide expert scientific advice for public policy development on global change. IAI STeP fellows are early to mid-career scientists interested in how science can help address national and regional challenges and support sustainable development. IAI facilitates their training, mentorship, and their connection to an Inter-American network of science-policy

fellows to exchange information, experiences, best practices, cross-border collaborations, and international career opportunities.

5. The program-specific objectives are: a) to encourage practical experience for early career scientists in policy and decision-making; b) to build expertise in the provision of scientific advice in different IAI countries; c) to promote TD approaches to problem-solving as a more effective strategy to address complex global change problems; d) to facilitate the use and incorporation of scientific knowledge in government work; e) to develop a platform for professional development and networking for Fellows and IAI Alumni to enhance lessons learned and to share science-policy experiences and best practices; and f) to promote the work of the IAI in host organizations and countries.

Intersessional Activities and Achievements

6. The growing number of regional STeP fellows continued capacity building in communication, science diplomacy, and leadership with 14 virtual and in-person training sessions from 2022-2023. The training and community of practice of early career researchers and policy makers provides valuable insight into context-relevant knowledge, tools, and practical skills to tackle transboundary issues of global change (GC).
7. The main achievement of the 2022-2023 intersessional period, as measured by the retention and demand for Fellows by member and non-member states, includes the expansion of the cohort to a total of 64 Fellows from 13 countries, 22 males and 42 females over 40 different advanced degrees/disciplines, 30 public (executive and legislative branches) and private host institutions.
8. In February 2023, the STeP Program graduated the first cohort of Alumni (17 Fellows from Generation 1). Work is ongoing to develop an alumni engagement program as part of the IAI Science Diplomacy Center.
9. The 2023-2024 program with the current group of 45 active fellows began with Orientation in April, including 2 new countries (Chile's Ministry of Science Technology Innovation and Knowledge and Uruguay's National Agency for Research and Innovation - ANII). Moreover, work is ongoing to support IAI member states and program partners as they expand with more fellows for Generation 3.
10. STeP Science Diplomacy Training 2022-2023
After evaluating the first year of the STeP Professional Development program, the updated framework for the training pillar in Science Diplomacy combined virtual and in-person experiences. The program equipped STeP fellows, their supervisors, and host institutions with the context-relevant knowledge, practical tools, and networks to better understand and navigate the science-policy-diplomacy interfaces to tackle transboundary and regional issues of global change in the Americas and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and other international agreements.

Virtual Sessions:

- Introduction to Science Diplomacy (April 2022)
- Nation, regional and thematic approaches to science diplomacy in the Americas (May 2022)

- Group Project Preparation: Stakeholder Mapping and SWOT Analysis (July 2022)
- Career Pathways in Science Diplomacy (January 2023)

In-Person Training:

The IAI supported 30 fellows from 14 nationalities in the Americas to attend the STeP Leadership in Science Diplomacy Workshop in Uruguay (November 2022) to learn and interact with each other alongside global experts from the new Advisory Board of IAI Science Diplomacy Center (SDC). In-person sessions included:

- Transdisciplinary Leadership: key principles of the TD Approach
- Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) and decolonization at the nexus of science and policy
- Science Diplomacy Simulation Game: -Accident in a Marine Ecosystem off the Central American Coast!
- Behavioural science in science diplomacy for consensus building.
- Group Work and Project Presentations
- Leadership Redefined: Using the ground rules created by Fellows in the previous sessions Fellows brought their rich cultural and professional diversity to the table and worked together to challenge the current definition and examples of leadership. This experience then resulted in a draft leadership statement that embodies their vision of science diplomacy in the Americas, which was presented to members of the Global Research Council, that met in Montevideo in November 2022. Fellows will share the final statement at the IAI Conference of Parties 31 and at the SRI Congress.

General comments from Fellows about the in-person workshop:

“Early career professionals, especially women, often underestimate their potential, knowledge and training. I have done this many times. This Workshop reinforced that there is immense value in the knowledge and experience that I bring to the table as a professional and as a leader!! It was indeed an experience that I will never forget and has definitely opened my eyes and mind to the possibilities for the future!”

“I’ve learned more than I could expect from any workshop. Some positive aspects to mention: the process of collective learning and building ideas; the deepness of the discussions and the exercises; the willingness of everyone to open and share their minds. Nonetheless, I highlight that the “redefining leadership” reflections were quite useful to me ... I am somehow more confident about my possibilities.”

“I really appreciated learning in more depth about transdisciplinarity and what it means to work in collaboration across sectors and disciplines. It’s an area in which I would like to work more and learn more.; I enjoyed having my eyes opened to all the different career paths and trajectories that I might take in order to have an impact on the world; Most of all, I enjoyed meeting the other fellows and building relationships with them. I hope to take forward the attitude promoted in the JEDI session on “if you want to go deep, go slow”.”

11. On February 27, 2023, STeP fellows presented a selection of their hands-on projects related to GEC from the unique angle of science diplomacy. The **STeP Science**

Diplomacy Project Forum was the culmination of the training program Generation 1 & 2 STeP fellows from eight host countries in the region who worked through 2022 in multidisciplinary teams on the following topics:

- Circular economy approaches to wastewater treatment
- Hydrogen for the Americas
- Stakeholder Engagement for Sharing Data at the Global Health-Climate Change Nexus
- "30 X 30" conservation ambition in the Americas and the Science-Diplomacy opportunity for collective implementation
- Environmental Justice across the Lithium supply chain: A role for science diplomacy?"
- Microplastic pollution and behaviourally aligned global action
- Assessment of Green Infrastructure in Cities for Climate Change Resilience across Latin America and the Caribbean
- Towards a Climate Solidarity? Strategies for Knowledge-Sharing on Climate Justice

STeP fellows from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Barbados, Canada, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru and USA discussed from the perspective of science diplomacy unique assessments, strategies and actions related to global change challenges. The Science Diplomacy Forum was open to the public for the first time with 109 registered participants.

12. STeP Communication Training (and publications)

To support the development of outputs identified by each science diplomacy group, the IAI partnered with the Journal of Science Policy & Governance (JSPG) for a special issue: **Development Policy and Global Change Science to Achieve the Vision of Sustainable Americas**. ([press release](#)). JSPG is an international, open-access peer-reviewed publication managed by and for students, policy fellows, and young scholars in science, technology, and innovation policy. A series of training sessions for prospective authors were held for the public and STeP Fellows.

Communication Training Sessions:

- Science Policy Writing Workshop on Transdisciplinarity and Communication (October 2022)
- Transdisciplinarity in the Development of Science Policy and Diplomacy Outputs (November 2022)
- Science Policy and Diplomacy Communication and the Global South. (December 2022)

JSPG special issue includes the Belmont Forum and Sustainable Research and Innovation Congress as engagement partners.

The JSPG Special issue release date is June 15, 2023. Of the 8 science diplomacy group projects, 4 (in bold) will be published in the journal.

- *Comparing Pesticide Regulations: What can Belgium (EU) and Washington State (US) Learn from One Another?*
- ***Overlooked No More: Empowering Youth Voices in Global Climate-Change Negotiations***

- *A new vision of sustainable communities: Transforming communities and academia via the EPIC Model*
- ***Practicing transdisciplinarity in diverse contexts: recommendations to TD capacity building to face Global Environmental Change***
- ***"Closing the Intention-Action Gap: Behaviourally-aligned Strategies for Effective Plastic Pollution Reduction"***
- ***Environmental Justice Across the Lithium Supply Chain: A Role for Science Diplomacy?***
- *How to overcome the transboundary plastics pollution? Insights from policies challenges and governance opportunities*

13. Other Conference Presentations / Papers

(May 2023) **Nobel Prize Summit: Empowering Science Diplomacy Emerging Leadership Across the Americas:** This solution session brings together science diplomacy experts and IAI STeP fellows from across the Americas to share their recent experiences mobilizing knowledge in diverse scientific fields, socioeconomic sectors, and tiers of government towards the common goal of increasing the provision of science advice and science diplomacy for sustainability in the Americas. This session will share the context in which this new model operates as an inclusive, transdisciplinary, transboundary, multisectorial learning experience for early career researchers to cultivate practical power skills and create an international science-policy community of practice.

(March 2023) **American Association for the Advancement of Science Annual Meeting:** *Workshop Title: Science Diplomacy Fellowships for Stronger Public Policies.* This workshop explored the fundamental role of science diplomacy fellowship programs and their impact on public policies across the Americas.

(February 2023) **Canadian Science Policy Conference**, *Session title: Tools for Science Policy Education: How can the next generation advance the field of science-policy?*

(November 2022) **IBRO-PEDECIBA Postgraduate Hybrid Course: Science Diplomacy Applied to Neuroscience for the Global South**, *Session Title: Science diplomacy to face the challenges of global change in Latin America and the Caribbean. Case studies, good practices, challenges and Inter- American Spaces for Research, opportunities to strengthen this interface.*

(November 2022) **Global Research Council Regional Meeting:** STeP Fellow Presentation of the Leadership Statement

(September 2022) **Science Summit of the 77 United Nations General Assembly (SSUNGA 77)** *Session Title: Perspectives from Emerging Leaders in the Global South: Building science advisory & diplomacy capacity to address the SDGs*

(September 2022) **Mitacs Canada Science Policy Fellowship Orientation:** Presentation on the IAI and the STeP Fellowship Program

(August 2022) **São Paulo Innovation and Science Diplomacy School (InnSciD SP),** *Session Title: Science Diplomacy to and from the Global South*

(June 2022) **Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress**, Session Title: *Perspectives of Emerging Leaders: Dialogue with an Inter-American coalition of early career fellows working in the science-policy interface*

(April 2022) **Encuentro Educativo Global** Centro Internacional para el Desarrollo Sostenible (CIDES), Centro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible para América Latina y el Caribe (CODS) de la Universidad de Los Andes – Bart College. *Session title: Entender el impacto de clima y salud en el centro y sur de las Américas y Capacitar la próxima generación de consejeros/diplomáticos científicos*

STeP Science Diplomacy Group/Team 1 has also published an opinion piece circulated in media throughout US and Latin America on the new platform LatinoAmerica21. [Circular Economy Approaches to Wastewater Treatment](#), Leslie Brooks, Nathalia Tejedor, Odiney-Alvarez-Campos, Osawai John, Sebastian Riera

Another article was published as a result of the STeP Leadership Statement in relation to the proceedings of UNFCCC CoP27 [The climate crisis: a crisis of leadership and imagination](#), Maria Inés Carabajal, Fany Ramos Quispe, Kim Portmess

14. Fundraising efforts

Efforts are ongoing to work with the **Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (GBMF)** as a potential financial supporter of STeP. A webinar was organized in collaboration with GBMF staff and Conservation Director on *The Science-Policy Interface for Amazon Conservation* (June 2022). In December 2023 the **Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) Panama** coordinated a meeting with the Science Program Director, who has supported for 10 years the expansion of Science Technology and Policy (STP) Fellowship programs across the United States. STeP is now part of the State S&T Policy Fellowship monthly meetings through this contact. After a follow-up meeting in Washington, DC (March), GBMF requested a written description of the program and various funding request scenarios. The IAI submitted A concept note to GBMF in collaboration with STRI in Panama in April 2023.

Recommendation

15. The Conference of the Parties is invited to take note of this information document.