



IAI Science Technology & Policy (STeP) Fellowship Pilot Program 2020-2024

“step into your communities and shape science for society”

Program Charter



STeP Program General Objective: Support the provision of expert scientific advice to policy makers for the development of evidence-based policy relevant to global change and sustainable development and enhance human and institutional capacities in IAI member countries.

Motivation for the Science Technology and Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program

Trustworthy scientific information and advice have never been so critical to decision-makers and to society given the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. How can governments, industry, and society respond effectively to current and future challenges unless solutions are based on science? Scientific research capacity in Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) is increasing; however, science uptake to inform policy remains a challenge. Incorporating scientific information into policy is especially challenging in the region, where resources are unequally distributed, severely limited in some countries, and politics may be unpredictable (Rabadan-Diehl, Linking Evidence to Policy, Science & Diplomacy, 2017). Most countries in the Americas lack a strategy to train and enable scientists to contribute to policy and decision-making nor are policy and decision-makers accustomed to working with scientists. Looking forward to post-pandemic recovery, we are presented with a unique opportunity to build more sustainable and resilient science-policy systems throughout LAC.

In light of the above, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) recently launched the Science, Technology and Policy (STeP) Fellowship Program with the first cohorts in Argentina and Mexico in 2020. STeP is an innovative and strategic program for Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) placing scientists in public or private host institutions to inform and advise decision-making on global environmental change and sustainable development issues of national priority. The STeP program will provide strategic professional development training and networking opportunities for policy makers and scientists to value and incorporate science as part of the decision-making process and to become leaders and active agents of systemic change in their countries.

Specific Objectives:

1. Facilitate institutionalized mechanisms for the effective use and incorporation of scientific knowledge into government and the private sector to address complex global problems by promoting a transdisciplinary collaboration between scientists, stakeholders, and decision makers.
2. 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 Leadership, Communication, and Science Diplomacy.
3. Create an Inter-American networking platform for Fellows, host institutions and countries, international partners and associates, and IAI alumni to exchange lessons learned and to share experiences and best practices in science-policy interface.
4. Promote IAI work in host institutions and IAI member countries and strengthen international partnerships through the science-policy work of the Fellows.

Program Strategy:

Intervention Model: The IAI will identify host countries/institutions interested in fostering science uptake into policy, negotiate joint agreements, and develop an implementation plan to respond to national priorities to collaboratively implement STeP Fellowship Program and achieve program objectives.

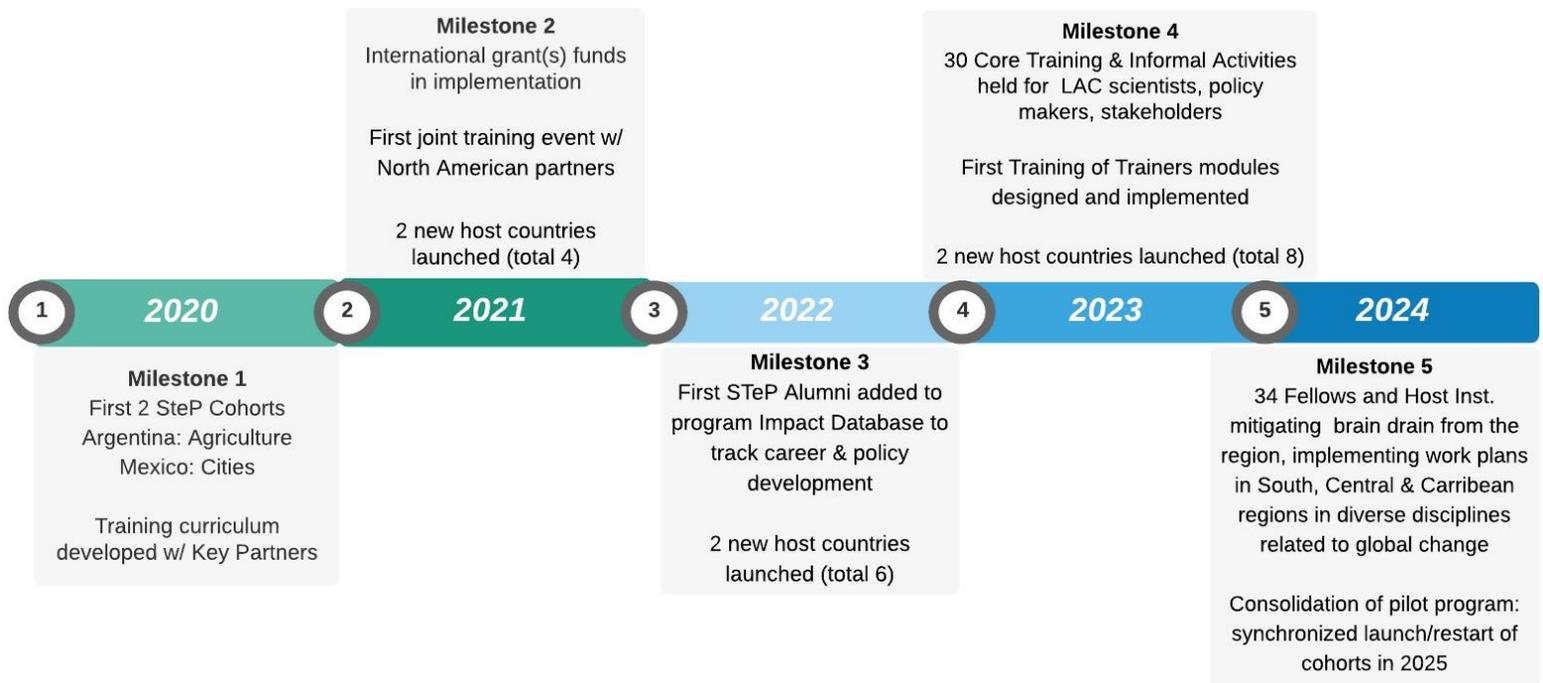
Scope:

IAI Core Responsibilities	Host Institution Core Responsibilities:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and provide STeP Fellows a two-year professional development program of virtual and in-person core training activities tailored for scientists and policy makers working in Latin America and the Caribbean in the pillar areas of Leadership, Communication and Science Diplomacy. ● Invite fellows to participate in at least two international events during their Fellowship. These events may be workshops, meetings, scientific, institutional, political and science and political conferences of the IAI or partner institutions. Finance the Fellows' international travel in accordance with IAI travel policies. ● Establish an inter-American network of Fellows, host institutions and countries and IAI alumni and promote opportunities for international collaboration of fellows from other cohorts for the development of professional collaboration networks, exchange of knowledge, experiences, etc. ● Produce and disseminate outreach material about program products and results. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify priority areas and sectors based on issues of global change, sustainable development, and natural resources, and provide institutional conditions necessary for Fellows to develop their work program and impact plan, including defining a supervisor at the host institution who will support/supervise the fellow's work during the two years of the Fellowship. ● Define and provide stipends for Fellows for a period of two years in the STeP program. Serve as the primary contact in communication and negotiation with the IAI on any topic regarding the implementation of the program and the financing of fellowship stipends. ● Support Fellows' supervisors to participate in the STeP professional development training and networking activities and events and finance supervisors' travel to at least two international meetings. ● Disseminate outreach material about program products and results.
Joint Responsibilities: IAI & Host Institution	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Design, where needed, the call for Fellows (considering the priority areas and requirements requested by host country/institution) and its dissemination. ● Jointly select Fellows (considering the priority areas, requirements requested by host country/institution and those of the IAI, and Fellow's profile). ● Approve the Fellows' work plan or any modifications regarding the themes, objectives and activities. ● Form a group of mentors who will support the development of the Fellows' program by considering mentors who have experience 	

in science and decision-making processes.

- Monitor the work of the Fellows during their participation in the program.
- Organize at least two meetings per year to plan, evaluate and manage themes of this collaboration and interaction with Fellows, Supervisors and Mentors.
- Discuss possible adjustments in the development of the program during its execution, especially in each new cycle of call, selection and development of new Fellows every 2 years.
- Develop a manual of best practices, experiences and lessons learned based on the experience of the Fellows and Hosts, to help the IAI and Host Institution improve and develop future programs.
- Disseminate this collaboration and the results and products of the program, through social networks, institutional websites, press releases, as well as possible publications presenting a summary of the results of the fellowship program.
- Jointly seek funds to support additional program activities.

STeP Pilot Program Timeline & Milestones:



Summarized Budget Commitment & Investment:

Existing Investment:

- IAI Core Budget: Staff time for STeP Pilot Program development & implementation
- IAI International Grant Funds: US National Science Foundation: Training module development
- Host Organizations: Fellow stipends, institutional support

Additional Resources Needed:

1. Program Management Staff
2. Training materials for Fellows and Host agencies
3. Networking, program monitoring & evaluation, workshops, meetings
4. Travel
5. Communication and outreach
6. Equipment and IT software

List of High-Level Risks:

- Given the current circumstances presented by the global pandemic and the regional nature of the program, activities will be virtual and eventually a combination of virtual/ in-person when international travel is open.
- Pilot Phase involves the staggered start of cohorts across a broad geographical region presents the challenge of efficiently planning and hosting training activities.
- Sustainability of the program, especially host country funding of fellowships.
- IAI funding to support the development of new professional training modules and training and networking activities, is subject to the availability of external resources.

Program Team**Governance Structure:**

STeP Fellowship Pilot Program is overseen by:

- IAI Directorate
- IAI STeP Informal Advisory Committee
- Host Financing and Coordinating Institution

Management Structure:

IAI has a strong consortium of strategic alliances throughout the world with key partners that have existing networks and expertise.

A number of strategic partnership agreements are already in place or underway, including:

- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS): STeP Training Pillars are based on the objectives developed by the AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowships program. As an IAI Associate, we thank AAAS for their continued support and sharing their objectives.
- Mitacs, Canada
- Future Earth - Earth Leadership Program/Formerly known as Leopold Leadership
- International Network for Government Science Advice (INGSA)^[1]_{SEP}

2020 Host Financing and Coordinating Institutions

- Asociación Argentina de Consorcios Regionales de Experimentación Agrícola, Argentina
- Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET), Argentina
- Secretaria de Educación, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación (SECTEI) del Gobierno de la Ciudad de Mexico (CDMX), Mexico City, Mexico