

Call for Climate, Environment and Health Responders in the Americas
Mobilizing transdisciplinary knowledge and training for policy action
June 3, 2022

Introduction

The region of the Americas needs to strengthen the capacity of public sector actors to address and adapt to environmental determinants of health (EDHs), prioritizing populations living in conditions of vulnerability. An integrated and evidence-informed approach within the health sector and in partnership with other key sectors such as climate, environment, and disaster risk management, is essential to addressing and adapting to the challenges of EDHs in the Region. Implementation of solutions must be context-specific, based on the needs and realities of countries, and should encourage coordination, leadership, and communication.

A transdisciplinary (TD) approach expects stakeholders, including decision- and policy-makers, implementers, communities affected by policies, and practitioners, to work together with researchers in collaborative and iterative co-development processes at the interface of science and policy. TD research projects are problem-driven and solution-oriented, integrating knowledge, tools, and ways of thinking from multiple disciplines and actors from the public and private sectors. Stakeholders are included from the initial project framing stage and throughout the project life cycle in an equitable and ethical co-creation process.

Science-policy projects at the nexus of Climate, Environment and Health (CEH) can have broad societal framework and measurable societal benefits; their focus can range from vulnerability and resilience to reduce the risks of natural and anthropogenic hazards, to pollution, food/water security and quality, chronic and emergent diseases related to global change, and adaptation and mitigation actions in different socio-economic and environmental sectors to improve wellbeing (<https://www.iai.int/pdf/en/Strategicplan-en.pdf>).

Main objective

This training initiative aims to enhance the capacity of professionals and institutions across the Americas to address challenges at the intersection of climate, environment and health through a transdisciplinary approach. Participants will develop skills in communication and engagement with diverse stakeholders, with a focus on the science-policy interface and the genuine participation of communities. The over arching goal is to contribute to the development and implementation of more effective public policies that address the most critical national, regional and global public health priorities.

Overall objectives

- Provide training to diverse stakeholders to better understand the TD approach, the potential of TD research to produce information that is useful for policy- and decision-making, and implementation, and to develop evidence-based policies;
- Encourage researchers and stakeholders in the Americas to work together at the CEH nexus, thus responding to the societal and policy challenges identified by the IAI Conference of the Parties and the global frameworks provided by multi-lateral environmental agreements and

organizations, including Nationally Determined Contributions, Health National Adaptation Plans, and Sustainable Development Goals;

- Foster research collaboration at the regional level by linking individuals from research and policy institutions across disciplines and countries, thus strengthening a regional Americas CEH community of practice;
- Strengthen the capabilities, particularly of early to mid-career professionals and individuals from historically underrepresented groups, to adopt a TD approach;
- Support policy organizations (i.e. Ministries of Environment, Ministries of Health, Meteorological Services, etc.) of IAI member countries to strengthen professional and institutional capacities on the TD approach at the science-policy interface
- Contribute to global change solutions that increase human health and well-being, increase societal resilience, reduce vulnerability and inequities, and increase the social-ecological sustainability of the Americas;
- Enhance communication skills of research and policy processes in climate, environment, and health to reach broader audiences, deepening the capability for generating solution-oriented outputs;
- Develop mechanisms for co-funding regional research, capacity building, and science-policy initiatives;
- Support the development of competitive project proposals based in a TD approach in the nexus of Climate, Environment, and Health.

Phases

There are three phases in this process (further details are below):

Phase 1:

- Virtual 7-week training and mentorship in transdisciplinary science, politics and ethics, knowledge co-production and project drafting.
- Virtual training workshop to identify CEH project proposal topics.

Phase 2:

- In-person regional grant development workshop.
- Virtual mentorship to strengthen CEH project proposal development for TD teams.

Phase 3:

- Seed grants with co-funding.

Target audience

Decision- and policy-makers, implementers and practitioners, working at the nexus of climate, environment, and health who are interested in gaining skills in the TD approach and development of science-policy projects, such as: government officials at the national and sub-national levels; members and leaders of communities, and civil society; knowledge users, and researchers from key sectors (medicine, epidemiology, public health, environment, climate, weather/meteorological services)

IMPORTANT NOTE: *It is expected that participants already have foundational knowledge about the CEH nexus, such as the content presented in the Climate & Health Responders Course Lectures (in Spanish and English) and course materials (in Spanish or English) are available here for free:*

<https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/global-consortium-climate-and-health-education/climate-and-health-responder-course-latin-america>).

Phase 1: Virtual 7-week mentorship and training for TD teams

Dates: 20 Sept 2022 – 03 Nov 2022, every Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00 -12:30pm UYT

Skills and Knowledge:

- Participants will learn foundational concepts in TD knowledge and the science-policy interface.
- Regional case studies will provide examples of best practices and lessons learned.
- Participants will gain skills in science communications to mobilize research for action and facilitate science-policy dialogue and collaboration.

Format:

- Each week will have two 90-minute sessions hosted on Zoom: (1) Tuesday sessions will focus on the TD approach and skills with regional case studies on CEH; (2) Thursday sessions will focus on science communication skills, led by trainers from Latinoamerica21.
- Speakers may present in Spanish and English with interpretation available between the two languages.
- Sessions will be recorded and posted online with course content.
- Selected reading material will be shared before each session.
- Participants will be encouraged to network and build TD teams using the Climate & Health Science to Practice Network, a virtual networking platform.
- Teams will have the support of TD mentors, who will meet periodically with them to provide guidance as they develop their pre-proposals.
- Participants will be expected to develop a TD CEH pre-proposal during Phase 1, which will be presented upon completion of Phase 1 to continue to Phase 2. At least 50% of team members should participate in 70% of virtual sessions for the team to be considered for Phase 2.
- Research ideas should be clearly linked to public health sector policies or programs, i.e., the co-creation of climate services for the health sector, strategies to close the science-policy gap (implementation research), improvement of clinical and public health practice/programs related to climate impacts, climate & pollution vulnerability maps/assessments related to chronic or emerging diseases, tools that use climate information for health surveillance and observatories, feasibility studies related to climate-environment-health adaptation strategies, health co-benefits of adaptation and mitigation strategies, early warning systems, and climate risk reduction and national adaptation plans from a public health perspective.

Syllabus

Week 1

1. History, Definitions, Theory & Current Discussions in TD with Lily House Peters and Gabriela Alonso
 - a. Multi, Inter, Trans-disciplinary distinctions

b. Convergence Science

2. Master class: Challenges of and solutions for science communication - with Juan Manuel Sarasua, biologist, journalist, and science communicator from Colombia

Week 2

3. Knowledge co-production and integration across diverse actors with Lily House Peters and Gabriela Alonso
 - a. Boundary Objects
4. Workshop: How to explain science to a broad audience - with Ana Pai, a journalist from Radio Ambulante specializing in science journalism

Week 3

5. Check-in #1: updates on proposal progress and possible challenges.

Week 4

6. The Politics and Ethics of doing TD Research for GEC with Lily House Peters and Gabriela Alonso
 - a. Actor equity & de-centralization of academia
 - b. Social Learning and TD Teamwork
7. Workshop: Telling stories through data - TBC with Marcelo Rinesi, specialized in AI and data visualization

Week 5

8. Translating Knowledge to Policy and Action with Lily House Peters and Gabriela Alonso
9. Writing workshop: Quick guide to writing for a broad audience - with Angelo Attanasio, journalist, and editor, former video producer, and writer for BBC World New

Week 6

10. Check-in #2: updates on proposal progress and possible challenges.

Week 7

11. TD Grant Writing, Research Management, Assessment & Evaluation with Lily House Peters and Gabriela Alonso
 - a. Applying What you Know
 - b. TD Evaluation Criteria
12. Workshop: How is a public policy designed and how can I become a better advocate? - with Pamela Poo, a political scientist

Phase 2: In-person regional grant development workshop

Dates of the in-person workshop: 1 week in Dec 2022

Location: TBD

Format

Prior to the in-person workshop

- Selected teams will continue to work to improve their proposals with support from mentors.
- Teams will continue to engage virtually using the Climate & Health Science to Practice Network

During the in-person workshop

- In-person sessions with a hybrid modality
- Daily lectures from TD and CEH experts
- Mentorship/advisory sessions to get feedback on proposal development
- Time for teamwork to develop proposals
- Field visits (TBD)

Phase 3: Seed grants with Co-funding

Dates: Early 2023

Following completion of Phase 2, teams will be eligible for two streams of seed grant funding:

- Funding to support teams to continue to develop a grant submission for a larger funding mechanism (6-month period) such as the Belmont Forum or other.
- Funding to conduct a pilot TD CEH study with emphasis on co-creation processes and science-policy engagement, over 12 to 18 months.

Teams that are awarded seed grants will continue to engage with TD mentors over the course of the grant. Teams will also be expected to share with other groups the training that they have received, to amplify its reach and impact.

Co-funding requirement for seed grant proposals

There is an expectation that the teams will secure co-funding for seed grant proposals so that the resources necessary to carry out projects will not be fully dependent on the IAI grant. Co-funding is a key factor for projects being considered for these grants. The IAI anticipates greater co-funding in upper and upper-middle-income countries with greater science and technology development. Co-funding encourages additional resources—funding, knowledge, and expertise—to the program. It increases the ownership of the project by participants and contributes to the establishment of strong partnerships. Co-funding also helps the IAI to focus its funding on supporting the incremental cost of projects, with an emphasis in backing IAI member countries that are in more need of support to develop their science and technology capacity.

Co-funding is defined as resources that are additional to the IAI grant and that are provided by the grantee's institutions, governments (science funding agencies, other government bodies at the national, subnational, and local levels), other multilateral agencies, development cooperation agencies, the private sector, private foundations, civil society organizations, and various type of beneficiaries, for supporting the implementation of the proposal and the achievement of its objectives.

Co-funding could take the form of financial or in-kind contributions. Eligible in-kind contributions include nonmonetary resources such as researchers' salaries or those from employees of organizations involved in the project; scholarships for students, valued at the regular rate of pay for the time devoted to the project; access to paid databases (incremental costs of access); analytical, professional, technical and other services (printing, editing, publishing, transportation, etc.) at customary rate for time; provision of or access to equipment and vehicles, and their supplies; space and facilities to be used for office work, fieldwork, meetings and community-based activities, valued at the fair rental rate; other supplies.

Co-funding must into account the specifics of the proposal: partners engaged and their roles, work plan and types of activities, and timing. The IAI will recognize only those in-kind contributions that are fully documented and considered essential to carry out the work.

Application process

- Interested TD teams and individuals should apply by completing the Expression of Interest (EOI). The link and instructions are available in the webpage of the IAI (<https://www.iai.int/en/post/detail/CEH-responders-in-the-Americas>) and the GCCHE (<https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/global-consortium-climate-and-health-education/climate-environment-and-health-responders-america>).
- EOIs will be accepted in English or Spanish.
- The deadline to apply is August 1, 2022.

Timeline

Expression of Interest deadline: 1 August 2022

Participants are notified if they are selected: 21 August 2022

Phase 1, Virtual Mentorship and Training duration: 20 Sept – 03 Nov 2022

Pre-proposal deadline: 10 Nov 2022

Phase 2, In-person workshop: 05 Dec – 09 Dec 2022

Phase 3, Seed grants awarded: Jan 2022

Phase 1

- Two types of Expression of Interest are allowed:
 - TD team: These include a minimum of 1 stakeholder (government officials at the national and sub-national levels; members and leaders of communities; knowledge users; practitioners), 1 social sciences specialist and 1 natural sciences specialist. Each team should designate a team lead, who will submit the EOI on behalf of the team. Early and mid-career scholars are encouraged to apply as team leads.
 - Individual applications: early to mid career government officials at the national and sub-national levels interested in networking/being matched with TD teams during the virtual training.
- Individuals who are members of groups that have been historically underrepresented in the sciences are encouraged to apply and take key responsibilities in the project, including as team lead. Underrepresented groups include, but are not limited to, women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority/racialized groups, and members of LGBTQ+ communities.
- Teams must include an equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) plan in their proposal to explain how they will mainstream considerations of EDI in the composition of the research team and in the research activities.

Phase 2

Pre-proposals submitted at the end of Phase 1 will be evaluated by a committee and the best proposals will be selected to continue to Phase 2. Individuals from selected teams will be invited to participate in a week-long in-person regional training workshop.

Phase 3

Following completion of Phase 2, TD teams will present a final proposal for seed grant funding. The team lead should have the ability to receive and manage international research funds, including sub-awards to institutions in other countries.

Contact e-mail: iai_science@dir.iai.int

Organizers

IAI

The Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) sits at the intersection of science and policy. As a regional intergovernmental organization, with 19 member countries of the Americas (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela), the IAI aims to provide nations with the tools and institutional capacities to better face the challenges posed by global change. Global environmental change (GEC) is defined by the IAI as the interactions of biological, chemical, physical, and social processes that regulate changes in the functioning of the Earth system, including the particular ways in which these changes are influenced by and impact on human activities. This collaborative, multinational effort is guided by the understanding that global change is urgent, complex, dynamic, and with considerable uncertainties.

IAI supports science that improves the Americas' ability to cope with and thrive under global change, making a positive impact on the sustainability of the region. Innovative science and training approaches are needed to increase institutional and research capacities across the Americas. These efforts are grounded in the IAI's foundational principles, identified in the Strategic Plan: transdisciplinary (TD) science, participatory and inclusive design, innovative and solution-based science, multi-scalar analysis and integration, open data/science, scientific outreach and knowledge mobilization, alignment with environmental governance frameworks, where appropriate, and strengthening capacities across the science-policy interface. Details are provided in the IAI's science agenda (<https://www.iai.int/en/research/agenda>) and strategic plan (<https://www.iai.int/pdf/en/Strategicplan-en.pdf>).

GCCHE

The Global Consortium on Climate and Health Education (GCCHE) aims to promote and develop climate and health education across the globe in healthcare, academia and beyond. Its membership represents a global coalition of organizations; its secretariat is based at Columbia University. The Consortium harnesses the expertise of more than 240 member institutions and partners to create best practices, educational trainings, and resources to be used by any interested party. The GCCHE's vision is that all health professionals throughout the world – doctors, nurses, public health practitioners, mental health practitioners, and allied health specialists– will work together to prevent, reduce, and respond to the health impacts of climate change. The mission of GCCHE is to unite health professional training institutions, health societies, and regional health organizations to create a global climate-ready health sector, prepared to mobilize and lead health promotion and response in the era of climate change, while restoring the health of the planet. More information here: <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/research/global-consortium-climate-and-health-education>

PAHO

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is the specialized international health agency for the Americas. It works with countries throughout the region to improve and protect people's health. PAHO engages in technical cooperation with its member countries to fight communicable and noncommunicable diseases and their causes, to strengthen health systems, and to respond to emergencies and disasters. PAHO is committed to ensuring that all people have access to the health care they need, when they need it, with quality and without fear of falling into poverty. To advance these goals, PAHO promotes technical cooperation between countries and works in partnership with ministries of health and other government agencies, civil society organizations, other international agencies, universities, social security agencies, community groups, and other partners. Under the leadership of its 51 member countries and territories, PAHO sets regional health priorities and mobilizes action to address health problems that respect no borders and that, in many cases, jeopardize the sustainability of health systems. PAHO wears two institutional hats: it is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American System and also serves as Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO), the specialized health agency of the United Nations. More information here: <https://www.paho.org/en>

Partners

MRI

The Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) serves as a coordination network for research collaboration, bringing the global mountain research community together. It strives to promote basic and applied research to understand how drivers and processes of global change present challenges and opportunities in mountain social-ecological systems. Through its Coordination Office, the MRI maintains numerous collaborations and networks of researchers, implementing actions that enhance the profile and value of global change research in mountains, whilst also integrating and synthesizing the results of this research and thereby informing stakeholders about the implications of these results for policy and practice. More information here: <https://www.mountainresearchinitiative.org/>

Latinoamerica21

Latinoamerica21 (L21) is a media outlet and content platform that brings together a vast community of experts and academics, who produce analysis and opinion about political, economic and social issues in Latin America. Through the free dissemination of expert and diverse opinions, L21 seeks to help improve Latin Americans' capacity to make critical judgments on main issues of regional relevance. Further information here: <https://latinoamerica21.com/en/>

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