

**Regional Focal Point  
for Latin America  
and the Caribbean**



**International  
Science Council**

**Update report on activities of the  
Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean  
of the International Science Council  
(ISC RFP-LAC)**

Carolina Santacruz-Pérez Ph.D.

Science Officer for the

Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean

of the International Science Council

## Summary

The following report aims to succinctly inform the history, governance and activities developed by the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Science Council, since its creation in 2022.

## Background

With the formation of the ISC in July 2018, the three former regional offices of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in (1) Africa, (2) Asia and the Pacific and (3) Latin America and the Caribbean automatically became regional offices of the ISC, and the self-organized European group of ICSU Members expanded its membership to include all European Members of the ISC.

Following a unilateral decision of the government of El Salvador, the regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean closed in December 2019. Similarly, the hosting arrangements provided by the South African Department of Science and Innovation and the Academy of Sciences of South Africa for the regional office in Africa, and by the Academy of Sciences Malaysia for the regional office in the Asia-Pacific region were concluded in 2021.

During its first three years of operation (2019 – 2021), the ISC Governing Board worked towards the development of concrete plans aimed at operationalizing the ISC's ambitious new vision and mission, including related actions for securing a strengthened regional presence, building on the valuable experiences and support networks of the former regional offices.

The Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean region was the first new regional presence of the International Science Council (ISC) after its formation in 2018, with an approved annual budget of \$75,000 euros for a period of 3 years.

## Historical

### 2021

- Signature of the agreement between the ISC and the Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences, on November 23, 2021.
- Selective process to appoint a Science Officer for the ISC RFP-LAC, December 2023.

### 2022

- Official launch of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Science Council, January 2022.
- Start of activities of the Science Officer, January 2022.

## 2023

- Passing of Dr Enrique Forero Gonzalez, Chair of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the ISC, September 2023.

## 2024

- Appointment of new governance of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the ISC, January 2024
- Global Knowledge Dialogue for Latin America and the Caribbean, April 2024.

### **Regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean objective**

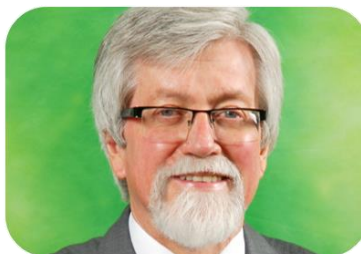
The Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the ISC (ISC RFP-LAC) is based at the Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences, convenes the scientific community in Latin America and the Caribbean and acts as a hub for ISC Members and activities in the region.

Regional focal points are crucial to ensuring that the work of the ISC is representative of scientists from across the world, and of the concerns of different regions. Through supporting and promoting the integration of regional communities and capacities within the ISC network, this new regional focal point works to ensure that ISC activities can benefit the Latin America and Caribbean region.

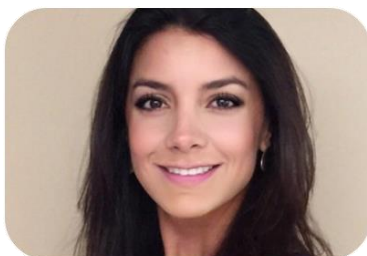
The regional focal point works with ISC Members in Latin America and the Caribbean to ensure that scientists and scientific institutions working in the region are actively engaged in the ISC's global activities and in the ISC's affiliated bodies and other networks.

### **Governance and staff of the ISC RFP-LAC**

The ISC RFP-LAC began its activities in 2022 under the leadership of Dr Enrique Forero Gonzalez, as President of the Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences, and as Chair of the LAC Regional Focal Point. The activities carried out had the support of the designated Science Officer, Dr Carolina Santacruz-Pérez (Figure 1).



**Enrique Forero**  
Chair ISC RFP-LAC



**Carolina Santacruz-Pérez**  
Science Officer ISC RFP-  
LAC



Staff of the Colombian  
Academy of Exact, Physical  
and Exact Sciences



**Liaison Committee** of the  
ISC RFP-LAC

**Figure 1.** Governance and staff of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Science Council from January 2022 to August 2023.

In 2022, the ISC RFP-LAC together with the main headquarters in Paris launched the [Call for nominations: Members for the Liaison Committee of the ISC Regional Focal Point for the Latin American and Caribbean](#), and 11 members were appointed (Figure 2a) representing 10 countries in the LAC region (Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala and Bahamas) (Figure 2b), and with scientific experience in various areas of exact sciences and social sciences. The Liaison Committee was chaired by Dr Enrique Forero until August 2023.



Enrique Forero

Chair, Latin American and  
Caribbean Region



María del Carmen  
Samayoa



Graciela Díaz de  
Delgado



Luisa Fernanda  
Echeverría-King



Dora-Luz Flores



Germán Gutiérrez



R. Daniel Peluffo



Silvina Ponce Dawson



Ana Rada



Elisa Reis



Luis Sobrevia



Adelle Thomas

**Figure 2a.** Members of the Liaison Committee of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Science Council, from July 2022. [Liaison Committee appointed for the ISC Regional Focal Point for the Latin American and Caribbean Region - International Science Council](#)



**Figure 2b.** Countries represented by the members of the Liaison Committee of the ISC RFP-LAC: Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina, Guatemala and Bahamas.

After the passing of Dr Enrique Forero, the ISC RFP-LAC went through a transition period during which a new governance was defined. The regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the ISC will be directed as of January 2024 by Dr Helena Groot, current president of the Colombian Academy of Exact, Physical and Natural Sciences. After a nomination process, Dr Luis Sobrevia and MSc Ana Rada, members of the ISC RFP-LAC Liaison Committee, take up the position of co-chairs: [The Latin American and Caribbean Liaison Committee appoints two new co-chairs - International Science Council](#) (Figure 3). Science Officer Dr Carolina Santacruz-Pérez supported the ISC RFP-LAC as interim director during the last semester of 2023 and continues to support the activities of the LAC Regional Focal Point from the Colombian Academy in Bogota, in close collaboration with the main headquarters in Paris.

### Co-chairs



Ana Rada

Bolivia



Luis Sobrevia

Chile



Helena Groot

Colombia

### Director

### Committee members



María del Carmen  
Samayoa

Guatemala



Graciela Díaz de  
Delgado

Venezuela



Luisa Fernanda  
Echeverría-King

Colombia



Dora-Luz Flores

Mexico



Germán Gutiérrez

Colombia



R. Daniel Peluffo

Uruguay



Silvina Ponce  
Dawson

Argentina



Elisa Reis

Brazil



Adelle Thomas

Bahamas

**Figure 3.** New governance of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Science Council, from January 2024.

### Mission and Vision

The mission and vision of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean were established during the [first in-person meeting of the ISC RFP-LAC Liaison Committee](#) held in the Dominican Republic from March 29 through April 2, 2023.

### VISION

Act as a reference for science in Latin America and the Caribbean, leading regional initiatives on issues related to sustainable development and contributing to decision-making at a regional and global level based on relevant scientific evidence.

## MISSION

The mission of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Council of Science is to be a consultative body and regional voice for science, promoting research and facilitating collaboration between the scientific community in the region and the world. Our goal is to support capacity building and promote inclusion and diversity in science and technology in the region. We work closely with civil society, governments, international organizations and the private sector to identify regional needs and opportunities on key issues for our countries. We are committed to the principles of freedom, responsibility and ethics in science; equity and inclusion; interdisciplinarity; regional and global integration.

## **Regional Scientific Priorities**

The RFP-LAC has been working during 2022 on the formulation of a regional Action Plan aligned with the global Action Plan of the ISC, and with the opportunities found in the context of Latin America and the Caribbean to support the entire scientific community of this region. Together with the Liaison Committee, we have identified the Member Academies and a long list of partners including regional offices, International Scientific Unions with members from the LAC region, affiliated bodies of the ISC, and scientific organizations from various areas who have the greatest expertise in each of the areas of our 5 scientific priorities. These regional priorities are the equivalent to the global priorities described in the ISC Action Plan for the period 2022-2024 and were discussed at the first face-to-face meeting of the RFP-LAC Liaison Committee held in the Dominican Republic from March 29 to April 2, 2023.

### 1. LAC SCIENCES IN THE PURSUE OF REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Points for discussion:

- Robust platforms: increase the integration of early warning systems in the LAC region and anticipate the occurrence of disasters. Those systems need to be in public domain and serve as a tool to help the implementation of public policies where governments work in collaboration with the scientific community.
- Databases: they serve to integrate the scientific groups that are working with Sustainability in the LAC region. In the future, platforms and databases may serve to map scientist who can offer scientific advice to governments and to private sector.
  - water governance.
  - reforestation.
  - loss of biodiversity.
  - waste management.

### 2. INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE



Countries of the LAC region have very unequal digital capabilities. But we have countries that are well connected to the private sector that can help smaller countries to build capacity.

Points for discussion:

- Become part of the platforms developed by the ISC, unified scientific repositories, cloud for global open science, developing collaborations with digital spin-offs to develop regional platforms.
- Database with expert scientists in material sciences, AI-enabled neurosciences in health, agriculture solutions, water sanitation, mobility and energy solutions; connection between academia, productive sector, governments and society.

### 3. SCIENCE FOR POLICY, AND SCIENCE ADVICE

Points for discussion:

- Establish a new relationship with regional governments after the pandemic, achieve better communication channels and offer support from the regional presence of the ISC in the region.
- Use science diplomacy channels as a tool to increase integration between countries in the region and give visibility to the scientific capacities of each country in their areas of greatest power.
- Achieve synergy between the various International Scientific Committees and Scientific Advisory Councils that operate in the Region, and build specialized Scientific Offices of Legislative Advice in each of the subregions into which the region is divided, in order to encourage greater participation and representation of those countries that are not yet part of the Committee of Global Scientific Advisors (CSA).

### 4. COLLABORATION BETWEEN ACADEMIA, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Points for discussion:

- Mapping the current situation of this intersectoral relationship within the countries of the region.
- Identify success stories and capitalize on the results obtained to develop a concept of good practices.
- Developing best communication channels to connect cross-sector projects, using identity factors within the subregions, covering needs and showing statistics of the positive impact that the collaborative examples have in times of crisis.

### 5. SCIENCE EDUCATION AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE LAC REGION

Points for discussion:

- New global models of resource mobilization;
- New forms of collaboration between international funding agencies and science systems in low- and middle-income countries.



- Generate transformative knowledge required to achieve the SDGs.
- Use innovative foresight methods to gather and articulate different visions about sustainable and equitable futures, types of knowledge and in turn science, technology and innovation systems required.
- New forms of organization, priority setting. Resource mobilization and collaboration can help science systems contribute to transformative pathways of development.
- Diverse stakeholders, including those who make little demands on science technology and innovation systems.

### **Activities of the Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean**

The regional structure of the ISC in the LAC region has been serving to increase the ISC's global reach and its relevance at the regional level. We want to serve as a forum to discuss regional needs and defend scientific priorities that are adequately represented in the ISC's global agenda. We support our regional members so that their voices are actively engaged in the ISC's work, and that regions benefit from the activities and results of that work. We pursue and promote the effective integration of regional communities and capacities that comprise the ISC family.

With the members of the Liaison Committee, we have been working on missions related to the strategic goals of the ISC, and we work to generate opportunities associated with direct institutional engagement in the ISC's continued development, including exposure to its wider networks of influence in the global science and political landscape.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND COLLABORATIONS

- The LAC regional office collaborated with the **Center for Science Futures** on the report: [Preparing National Research Ecosystems for AI: Strategies and progress in 2024 - International Science Council](#), which highlights global strategies for accelerating AI in science and research and features a series of country case studies, including those from Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay, which were connected through the LAC regional office. In the same way, we collaborate with the interaction with ILDA ([Iniciativa Latinoamericana por los Datos Abiertos](#)) for the logistical preparation of the workshop held during the Global Knowledge Dialogue in Santiago, Chile, on April 9, 2024.
- We promote the formation of **young academies in the LAC region** and offer support to young scientific associations by connecting them with the [Focal Point for EMCR at the ISC](#), promoting participation in the recently launched [ISC Early and Mid-Career Researchers \(EMCR\) Forum](#), and participation in opportunities disclosed in the dedicated [Newsletter](#). The ISC RFP-LAC supported the organization of the [ISC Early and Mid-Career Researchers \(EMCR\) Forum: Latin America and the Caribbean](#) held during the Global Knowledge Dialogue LAC in Santiago de Chile, on April 9, 2024. The results of this forum are being used to formulate initiatives in collaboration with participating organizations, which will be communicated in the coming weeks.
- We have been invited to present the ISC Regional Focal Point for Latin America and the Caribbean at regional scientific events offered by scientific associations in Colombia or other countries in the region. This has allowed the identification of new potential members,



collaborating organizations, and the growth of our own **regional database of experts**, who today can be consulted to participate in opportunities such as the [Global Call on Science Missions for Sustainability](#).

- The ISC RFP-LAC collaborates with the **ISC global science policy unit** by locating scientific experts from all areas within the LAC region, who have the potential to contribute to the ad hoc requests coming from the different UN agencies with whom The ISC has been producing policy briefs, events, meetings, reports, statements. This collaboration has allowed greater regional representation in the **roster of ISC experts** and opportunities for nominations, training, and participation where the regional voice of science gains space.
- We contributed to the report: [Looking beyond research co-production: Exploring the challenges of evidence use](#) published by the Institute of Development Studies on 12 October 2023.
- The ISC RFP-LAC has supported activities developed by CAS ([Caribbean Academy of Sciences 23rd Biennial Conference](#)), who will soon have a leading role in the **SIDS4 conference**, whose results will be inputs for the Summit of the Future.
- We supported one of the workshops in the **series of workshops organized by UNEP** in collaboration with the ISC for foresight, as part of the global foresight exercise: [Regional Foresight Workshop - Latin America and the Caribbean](#).
- We are participating in the round table that will be developed on the futures of development with the United Nations Development Program - UNDP, which will serve as input for the **UNDP Global Signals Report 2024** in consultation with ISC.
- We have recommended women scientists SDGs and sustainability to the **2027 Global Sustainable Development Report**, through the ISC science policy unit.

#### ADDRESSING GAPS IN MEMBERSHIP

- The Young Academy of Colombia recently became Member of the ISC.
- The Academy of Science of Ecuador is in the process to become Member of the ISC.
- The Young Academy in Mexico has recently been launched and is in the configuration process.
- The Young Academy of Argentina has requested the necessary documentation to become a member of the ISC.
- The Academies of Sciences of Peru and Cuba have expressed their interest in founding their young academies.
- Panama is seeking to found its National Academy of Sciences and its young academy.
- [Asociación Latinoamericana de Población - ALAP \(alapop.org\)](#) is completing the documentation to become a member of the ISC.
- The Academy of Sciences of Uruguay has expressed its interest in becoming a member of the ISC. Also, Nicaragua and Paraguay.
- The Latin American Academy of Sciences – ACAL, has expressed its interest in becoming a member of the ISC.
- Medicine and engineering academies in the region are being addressed, including within Caribbean (Anne's campaign).

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

A long list of scientific events attended where the ISC's regional presence was presented is described in detail in the 2023 Annual Report. The scientific events attended during the second half of 2023 and those in which it is expected to participate during 2024 are:

- [Regional Foresight Workshop - Latin America and the Caribbean \(unep.org\)](https://www.unep.org)
- [Caribbean Academy of Sciences 23rd Biennial Conference and General Meeting - International Science Council](#)
- [First Connections to Sustain Science in Latin America Symposium | National Academies](#)
- [GEO Mountains - Outcomes of GEO Mountains' Regional Workshop in the Andes](#)
- [Fourth meeting of the Conference on Science, Innovation and ICTs of ECLAC | Bogotá, 4 and 5 April 2024 \(cepal.org\)](#)
- [Programme: Global Knowledge Dialogue for Latin America and the Caribbean - International Science Council](#)
- [UN 2024 SIDS Conference | Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#)
- [Summit of the Future website - EN | United Nations](#)
- [Colombia will host the next United Nations Biodiversity Conference | Convention on Biological Diversity \(cbd.int\)](#)
- [¿Qué es CILAC? - CILAC \(forocilac.org\)](#)
- [United Nations World Data Forum](#)

## WORKING GROUPS

- Steering Committee of the Latin America and the Caribbean Chapter of INGSA (International Network for Government Science Advice).
- Regional Scientific and Advisory Group within the Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR).
- Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) Colombian chapter.

## OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The ISC RFP-LAC has concentrated its efforts to establish its presence in the region and foster collaboration with scientific organizations that work in the natural and the social sciences. We carry out permanent outreach of ISC updates and activities, we use our social networks to promote the activities of our member organizations at the regional level, we disseminate news, scholarships, training and we have launched our regional newsletter. Our internal database for communication activities includes:

- list of category 2 members;
- list of international scientific unions;
- list of regional scientific associations;
- list of young academies or thematic networks;
- list of IANAS members;
- list of scientists in the Caribbean;
- list of internationalization departments in universities;
- list of funding agencies.

### Perspectives of action for the ISC RFP-LAC

- STRATEGIC REGIONAL COOPERATION: after the GKD LAC, the various participating stakeholders have shown interest in developing collaborative projects with the ISC RFP-LAC and for that, we will define an agenda of regular virtual meetings where it is intended to shape the LAC Regional Action Plan with the active and committed participation of these organizations that represent the quadruple helix.
- EMCR PROJECTS: we have started conversations with NewVoices, GYA and TYAN for the development of a capacity building program in leadership and science advice for EMCR, led by Gabriela Ivan, Membership Development Officer of the ISC.
- SCIENCE POLICY PROJECTS: we intend to launch a regional scientific advisory pilot project in collaboration with [ParlAmericas](#), the science policy unit of the ISC and the RFP-LAC.
- CAPACITY BUILDING: we will participate in the scientific advisory training program organized by INGSA for the second half of 2024.
- STRATEGIC WORKING GROUPS: we have started conversations with ECLAC to participate in the working groups that will work during the next two years under the presidency of the Conference on Science, Innovation and ICTs of ECLAC, which has been granted to the Ministry of Science and Technology of Colombia.