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Project in Hemispheric Cooperation in the Development of Science and Technology Policy

Reference Document

The Office of Science and Technology (OST) of the Organization of American States (OAS) is implementing a Project in *Hemispheric Cooperation in the Development of Science and Technology Policy*, approved by the Member States of the OAS in the Special Meeting of the Inter-American Committee on Science and Technology (COMCYT) held in Lima, Peru from May 5-9, 2003. The Project's main objective is to generate science and technology policies and strategies for the Americas in the priority areas defined by the COMCYT.

COMCYT is a Committee within the Inter-American Council for Integral Development (CIDI) of the OAS, and its delegates are the High Officials of the National Councils of Science and Technology (ONCYT's) from all OAS Member States or their representatives. The Office of Science and Technology functions as the COMCYT's Technical Secretariat.

The policies and recommendations that result from this Project will provide a substantive agenda for a Hemispheric Meeting of Ministers and High Officials in Science and Technology in November 2004. This Agenda will facilitate both the review and update of mandates formulated at the last Ministerial meeting in 1996, and the formulation of new mandates to strengthen science and technology development in the Americas in the 21st century.

The Project has five components, the first four of which respond to the following COMCYT-defined priority areas: *Science, Technology and Innovation to Increase Competitiveness in the Productive Sector*; *Science and Technology for Social Development*; *Scientific and Technological Development in the Americas*; and the *Popularization of Science*.

The Project will bring together, through specialized workshops, distinguished science and technology experts and policy makers, for an exchange of views on technical questions and the formulation of science and technology policies for the Americas. The main objective of each Workshop is to propose policies in each of the priority areas.

Two Workshops have already been held, one on "*Science, Technology and Innovation for the Increase of Competitiveness in the Productive Sector*" in Buenos Aires, Argentina from November 17-19, 2003, and the second on "*Scientific and Technological Development in the Americas*" from December 10-12, 2003 in Quito, Ecuador.

The first Workshop, "*Science, Technology and Innovation for the Increase of Competitiveness in the Productive Sector*" analyzed the role of innovation as the key element for increasing the competitiveness of the productive sector. It discussed conceptual aspects of innovation and presented various innovation experiences from different sectors and different countries of the Hemisphere. The recommendations included, among others, recognition of

science and technology's important role in increasing competitiveness, the need to rethink the innovation model, and quality as a vital component for increasing competitiveness.

The Workshop on *"Scientific and Technological Development in the Americas "* brought together specialists in four areas: Information Technologies and Advanced Networks, Materials and Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, and Clean Technologies and Renewable Energy. Recommendations for policies in each of these topics were developed, and the importance of hemispheric cooperation in their execution was stressed. The final Workshop report will cross-reference the recommendations to regional and national strategies, human resources development, professional and research infrastructure and research connections with the private sector.

The fifth component of the Project *"Hemispheric Cooperation in the Development of Science and Technology Policy, "* the Workshop on the *"Consolidation of Hemispheric Policies in Science and Technology"* will be held in Panama City, Panama, March 8-9, 2004. In this Workshop, the official COMCYT delegates will analyze the proposals and recommendations defined for the four priority areas and elaborate a final document of recommended policies for review by COMCYT and participants in the above-mentioned Hemispheric Meeting.

To facilitate the exchange of information between specialists and COMCYT delegates, the Office of Science and Technology has created a Virtual Meeting Place accessible to all the participants of the various Workshops. The documents of the Workshops already held can be accessed at this Virtual Meeting Place.

Two more COMCYT priority area Workshops, one on the *"Popularization of Science,"* and the other on *"Science and Technology for Social Development"* will be held in 2004. The first of these will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from February 2-5, 2004 and the second in Kingston, Jamaica from March 2-4, 2004.

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