



## OAS Member States Reach Collaboration Agreements in Puerto Rico

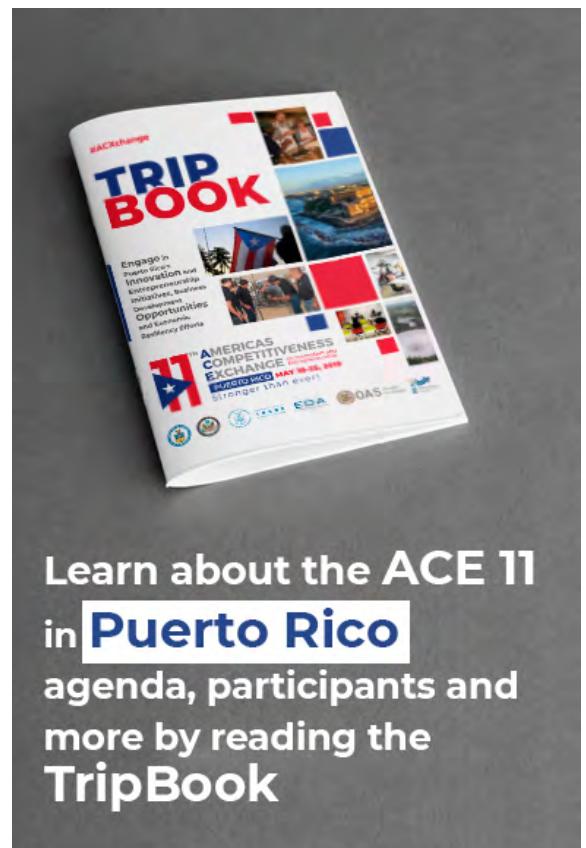


50 leaders from the Americas and beyond visited more than 20 sites to create multisectoral learning and exchange opportunities during the 11th Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) that took place in Puerto Rico, United States, on May 18-25, 2019.

Puerto Rico opened its doors to leaders from the private sector, academia, and government to share the Island's successes in entrepreneurial development, biotech and pharma, academic research, aerospace and aeronautics. The hosts discussed the challenges following Hurricane Maria and highlighted best practices developed since, making it clear that the Island's most significant competitive advantage is the resiliency of its people. As proven throughout ACE 11, this resilience is the energy that powers Puerto Rico to thrive and become a critical strategic partner for the Americas and regions across the globe.

In addition to offering valuable knowledge and unique opportunities for collaboration, Puerto Rico made clear how they have become a strategic soft-landing destination for businesses interested in entering the United States. Since Puerto Rico has the same ground-rules for doing business as the rest of the United States, companies from around the world find the Island as an attractive platform to start and expand their operations.

The ACE program seeks to cultivate and accelerate collaboration opportunities among countries to foster trade and economic development by leveraging top-notch innovation and entrepreneurship initiatives. In this edition, Puerto Rico was the catalyst of a significant number of concrete collaborations and initiated many other potential partnerships. For instance, leaders from Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Suriname, and Colombia are looking to engage with experts from Engine 4 to undertake Internet of Things and Smart Cities initiatives in their local communities. Additionally, a leader from Brazil approached representatives from the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce to establish an aerospace cabling company in Puerto Rico. Leaders from Colombia, Chile, Suriname, and the United States expressed interest in starting collaboration with Parallel 18's business incubation programs.



In terms of institutional cooperation arrangements, a leader from Colombia is looking to implement cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce of San Juan, while a leader from the Dominican Republic is seeking to establish a sister institution to Puerto Rico's Science, Technology, and Research Trust.

Jamaica's Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries is aiming to create the first national business incubator / accelerator in the country based on the models and good practices showcased in Puerto Rico.



Caribbean Delegations were particularly keen on exchange opportunities with Colmena 66, an SME development center and leveraging the expertise and training capabilities on food science of the University of Puerto Rico Meat Lab. A leader from Trinidad and Tobago is following up on a Memorandum of Understanding with the



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University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez regarding food testing and academic exchanges. Likewise, the leader from Ecuador reached out to the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez to explore a tech transfer agreement. Furthermore, the representative from Madison, Wisconsin, United States, is reaching out to promote educational exchange programs with the University of Puerto Rico regarding specialized meat and dairy research and development.

The ACE in Puerto Rico showed the program's critical role in strengthening regional and global ties by building on ideas and models that work. The ACE program continues to expand its influential network of economic development, innovation, and business leaders in the Americas and beyond.

The 11th ACE was convened by the Organization of American States (OAS) as the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) Technical Secretariat; the Government of the United States, through the Department of Commerce and the Department of State; and the Government of Argentina, through the Ministry of Production and Labor, as Chair Pro Tempore of RIAC (2017-2019).

“Guatemala is developing initiatives on innovation and entrepreneurship. The experience exchanged with our neighbouring countries will help us strengthen them.”

**Jose Ramón Lam,**  
Vice Minister of Investment and Competitiveness,  
Ministry of Economy,  
Guatemala

“The ACE is extremely relevant for all the countries in Latin America to create more developed ecosystems and better integrate entrepreneurial initiatives.”

**Javier Cueto,**  
General Manager  
Imagine Lab

**The next ACE will be hosted in Chile on November 4-8, 2019.**

Stay tuned for the Open Call for Applications at [www.riacevents.org/ace](http://www.riacevents.org/ace) or by following #ACXchange on Twitter and Facebook

For more information, please contact Adriana Bonilla, the ACE program coordinator of the Organization of Americas States at [abonilla@oas.org](mailto:abonilla@oas.org)



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