

The Science, Technology and Innovation Policy system in Latin America: current trends, rationales, and challenges.

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Abstract

During the last decade, the Latin American institutional landscape as well as the policies for science, technology and innovation (STI) have changed quite substantially. The emergence of new institutions, policies and rationales has reshaped both the anatomy and physiology of science, technology and innovation. The attempt to develop and strengthen the STI systems in the region has become an explicit policy goal across countries. In spite of very heterogeneous trajectories, levels of capabilities, maturity, and overall systemicness between large and small countries, and between emerging economies and more vulnerable ones, there are converging actions towards the development and strengthening of science, technology, and innovation systems.

This article first analyzes the evolution of the STI policy system, the changes in policy rationales and instruments, and their orientation, and goals in four countries: Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Uruguay. Secondly it critically reviews these trends with regards to two crucial and complementary challenges and goals of STI policies in the LAC region in particular, and developing countries in general: economic growth, and social inclusion. Through analyzing the current dynamics of Brazil, Colombia, Panama and Uruguay it further explores the questions of “[W]hy does inequality increase and how could innovation contribute to close the gap of inequality and lead to social inclusion? What happens with the conceptual, theoretical, and/or policy models that are in place? What models would better serve this purpose and where should we look for new alternatives?” {Bortagaray and Ordoñez, 2012 #1505}

Finally, it proposes a set of criteria and guidelines for advancing towards the evaluation of the different landscapes and functioning dynamics of the STI policy system in these countries. Some of the triggering questions have to do with: what are the driving principles of the current rationales for STI policy, what are the instruments in place and oriented towards what goals, what are the institutions and roles, how systemic are the existing approaches, and what mechanisms are in place to correct for systemic failures, are there evaluation practices and guidelines embedded in the policy system, and how are they being instrumented?

Reference

Bortagaray, I. and Ordóñez-Matamoros, G. (2012), Introduction to the Special Issue of the Review of Policy Research: Innovation, Innovation Policy, and Social Inclusion in

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