

# **2024-2025 Annual Report**

UNESCO Chair on Science, Technology and  
Innovation for Sustainable Development for  
Latin America



**UNU  
MERIT**



# About the Chair

UNU-MERIT’s UNESCO Chair on Science, Technology, and Innovation for Sustainable Development in Latin America is at the forefront of advancing transformative STI policies and research across the region. Established in May 2022, the Chair is dedicated to empowering academics, national and regional policymakers, experts, and industry leaders to drive sustainable development through innovative science and technology strategies.

Under the leadership of Professor Carlo Pietrobelli, the Chair serves as a dynamic hub for research, policy advice, training, and high-impact events. These initiatives are designed not only to address Latin America’s most pressing STI challenges but also to foster a collaborative environment for developing solutions that align with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

The Chair’s strategic priorities include:

- Identifying and addressing key STI challenges in Latin America;
- Promoting and disseminating policy-relevant research to inform decision-making;
- Enhancing STI education in postgraduate programs across Latin American universities and providing targeted training for policymakers, students, and stakeholders in the region;
- Facilitating policy collaboration on design, implementation, and evaluation efforts, including contributions to the UNESCO Latin America Policy Lab.

Through its work, the Chair is committed to building resilient and inclusive STI frameworks that empower Latin America to achieve sustainable and equitable growth.



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<https://unu.edu/merit/unesco-chair>

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# Foreword by the Rector of the United Nations University

I am pleased to introduce the 2024–2025 Annual Report of the UNESCO Chair hosted at UNU-MERIT. This report reflects a year of sustained intellectual leadership, meaningful engagement, and tangible contributions to the priorities of the United Nations system. At a time when multilateral cooperation faces increasing strain, the work of this Chair stands as a compelling example of how rigorous scholarship, policy relevance, and international partnerships can be combined to deliver real public value.

The UNESCO Chair at UNU-MERIT has distinguished itself through its deep and sustained engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. By anchoring its activities in regional realities while maintaining a global analytical perspective, the Chair has created a platform that amplifies voices from the Global South and integrates them into international policy debates. In doing so, the Chair contributes directly to strengthening regional research ecosystems and to fostering South–North and South–South knowledge flows.

**“By anchoring its activities in regional realities while maintaining a global analytical perspective, the Chair has created a platform that amplifies voices from the Global South and integrates them into international policy debates.”**

Equally important is the Chair’s close and productive relationship with UNESCO and many other agencies of the UN system. Through joint initiatives, conferences, and policy-oriented research, the Chair has advanced UNU’s mandate in education, science, and culture, while translating global normative frameworks into empirically grounded analysis. Over the last three years, the Chair has positioned itself as a bridge between global institutions and regional partners, and as a trusted source of knowledge.

The outputs documented in this report underscore the Chair’s strong commitment to policy relevance. Research produced under the Chair does not remain confined to academic debate; it is explicitly oriented towards informing public policy, institutional design, and development strategies. Whether through policy briefs, applied research projects, or engagement with policymakers and practitioners, the Chair has consistently demonstrated how evidence-based analysis can support better decision-making in complex and uncertain environments.

Education and training are central to this endeavour. The Chair has played an active role in advancing high-quality teaching, executive education, and capacity-building activities that connect research with practice. By engaging students, early-career researchers, and policymakers alike, the Chair contributes to building the next generation of scholars and practitioners who are equipped to navigate the challenges of sustainable development and global governance. This integration of research, education, and training reflects a holistic approach to knowledge production and dissemination.

In this respect, the UNESCO Chair at UNU-MERIT is emblematic of the United Nations University Strategy 2025–2029. The Chair delivers across all three of UNU’s core pillars: **knowledge**, through high-quality, policy-relevant research; **partnerships**, through sustained collaboration with UNESCO, regional institutions, and academic networks across Latin America; and **impact**, through education, capacity development, and active engagement in policy processes.

I would like to commend Professor Carlo Pietrobelli and his team at UNU-MERIT for their dedication, intellectual ambition, and collaborative spirit. Their work exemplifies a key role of the United Nations University: advancing independent, rigorous scholarship in the service of multilateral solutions. As global challenges become more complex and interconnected, such models of engaged, evidence-based research will only grow in importance.

I trust that this Annual Report will document achievements and also inspire continued collaboration and innovation in the years ahead.



**Dr. Tshilidzi Marwala**

*Rector of the United Nations University;  
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations*



Impact

# Research and Policy Advice



## Critical Minerals

The Chair’s research and dissemination activities on **critical minerals**, and their role in the green transition and in the industrialisation of emerging countries, continued in 2025. In a UNU-MERIT [blog post](#)<sup>1</sup>, Jorge Valverde explained that in recent years, the concept of critical minerals has gained popularity because the new technologies shaping the ongoing green and digital transitions (together known as the ‘twin transition’) utilise far higher amounts of minerals than more traditional technologies. For example, the construction of a wind farm requires nine times more minerals than that of a natural gas power plant.

In the paper on *Mineral’s Criticality and Countries’ Mining Competitiveness: Two Faces of the Same Coin* by Valverde, Menendez and Pietrobelli, published in *Resources Policy*, we build a theoretical and empirical framework to understand and estimate the relationship between countries’ competitiveness to produce

critical minerals and the level of criticality of these minerals. The main innovation of this study is to present these two variables as part of an endogenous system and simultaneously estimate both dimensions using economic complexity techniques, thereby improving upon the current state of the art, which estimates each dimension separately.

Later in the year, Valverde published the article *China has banned US exports of key minerals for computer chips – leaving Washington with limited options* in [The Conversation UK](#)<sup>2</sup>. This article addressed the export ban imposed by China on Gallium and Germanium, two critical minerals for U.S military equipment and new technologies. Given the market power of China, the U.S becomes very vulnerable and needs to look for new ways to ensure its supply chains’ resilience. Jorge is currently the all-time UNU leader with **341,049 readers reading his articles** in *The Conversation*.

Valverde and Pietrobelli **argued that there are reasons to be positive, even if Trump threatens to disrupt the world’s critical mineral supply**, in another article in [The Conversation UK](#)<sup>3</sup>. Although the energy policies of the new American administration will have ripple effects, these are likely to be temporary, and the market for critical minerals is unlikely to be significantly affected. The global transition to clean energy seems safe, at least in the long run. On these issues, Pietrobelli also gave an interview to *La Repubblica*, Italy’s most widely read newspaper, on 10 March 2025.

Jorge Valverde-Carbonell successfully defended his PhD thesis, “*Essays on Economic Complexity, International Trade, and Minerals Economics*,” in which he argues that economic complexity is a versatile methodological tool for studying multiple economic phenomena. He stressed, however, that the meaning of complexity depends on the specific subject of study.

[The Special Issue](#)<sup>4</sup> on *Capabilities, Sustainability, and Innovation in Mining Value Chains*, edited by Carlo Pietrobelli, Gabriel Casaburi and Michiko Iizuka, was published in *Industrial and Corporate Change* (2024).

Pietrobelli and Guendalina Anzolin from the University of Cambridge published a [piece](#)<sup>5</sup> in the *Journal of International Business Policy* (2025) where they argued that governments have often developed policies for the mining sector in siloes, leading to a lack of systemic focus. To this aim, it was tested with case studies from Australia, South Africa, and Chile.



## Latin America can drive the green transition thanks to its natural resources. International cooperation should promote more balanced and synergistic partnerships, including South-South cooperation.

1 <https://unu.edu/merit/news/what-are-critical-minerals-and-why-are-they-so-important>

2 <https://theconversation.com/china-has-banned-us-exports-of-key-minerals-for-computer-chips-leaving-washington-with-limited-options-246328>

3 <https://theconversation.com/trump-threatens-to-disrupt-the-worlds-critical-minerals-supply-but-there-are-reasons-to-be-positive-249058>

4 <https://academic.oup.com/icc/article/33/4/918/7688234>

5 <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s42214-025-00221-x>



## Twin transitions

The Chair's research and dissemination activities on **green and digital transition**, and their role in Latin American development, have been substantial during 2025. Mercedes led the activities on this topic. Menéndez contributed to the *Science, Technology, and Innovation Week* in the Dominican Republic (DR) in November 2024, in partnership with the UNESCO Chair, LALICS, UNIDO, and the Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo. She spoke on 'Innovation and Industrial Policy Challenges from STI for Latin America'. The workshop took place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Mercedes Menendez successfully defended her PhD in November 2025 on *Technological change and production specialisation in the green and digital transition*. Her dissertation makes an empirical contribution to identifying digital and green components. On the topic, Menendez published a [blog post](#)<sup>6</sup> on "Green Technological Change Opportunities and Challenges in Latin America" in the *ReVista Harvard Review of Latin America*, where she argues that green technological change alone will not resolve the deep-seated structural challenges facing Latin America. Crucially, the green technological change model must enhance knowledge creation and value addition to be successful. Otherwise, it risks merely reproducing the historical pattern of productive specialisation—marked by persistent inequality and low technological content.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Institute of Economics at UDELAR, Menendez published an influential [report](#)<sup>7</sup> for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on Uruguay in the context of the knowledge economy, highlighting the challenges ahead of the green and digital transformations. The report contributes to the informed debate on current global challenges, aiming to understand the green and digital transition, while being attentive to the particularities of Latin America, particularly those of Uruguay.



Carlos Sanlley (INTEC), Víctor Gómez-Valenzuela (INTEC / IPP-CSIC), María de las Mercedes Menendez (UNU-MERIT), Fernando Santiago (UNIDO), Diana Suarez (UNGS), and Carlos Bianchi (UDELAR-LALICS).

<sup>6</sup> <https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/green-technological-change-opportunities-and-challenges-in-lat-in-america/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.undp.org/es/uruguay/publicaciones/uruguay-en-la-economia-del-conocimiento-desafios-ante-la-transicion-verde-y-digital>

## Global Value Chains

**Governance and upgrading in GVCs, Policies and Institutions** was the subject of a keynote lecture during the Institute for International Political Economy (IPE) and the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI) Conference at the Berlin School of Economics on May 19-20, 2025. In the conference the redefinition of trade patterns, and the role played by GVCs, innovation and structural change were discussed, with the engagement of many young PhD scholars. Pietrobelli's work on GVC governance, along with a method for its measurement, was published earlier this year in the *Eurasian Business Review*, co-authored by Brancati and Torres Mazzi.


Pietrobelli gave a special lecture on *Value Chains, Innovation & Policy* in the Course on the Economics of Innovation in Peru, organised by Peru's Ministry of Production and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on May 16, 2025.

The UNESCO Chair also contributed to a policy dialogue in the Philippines. Pietrobelli participated in a Workshop on *Developing a National Roadmap for Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) from the Philippine Bioindustry*

*Development and its Financing* on 13 September 2024. He discussed the possible Global Value Chain policy reforms for a country rich in biodiversity, like the Philippines, highlighting insights on the possible policy packages that the Government could promote

The Chair also contributed **two influential studies to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)** in support of policies aimed at enhancing global value chains (GVCs) in Latin America. The first study, by Jorge Valverde, analysed domestic value addition in exports from Latin American countries, proposing methodologies to increase local value intensity. The second, by Pietrobelli, examined policy options for boosting regional participation and value capture in GVCs. In particular, it examined the role of institutions in shaping and implementing GVC-oriented policies. It proposed a method for identifying the capabilities that such institutions should possess for effective operations. The study's results were presented at a seminar at the IDB in Washington, D.C., on June 3, 2025.




### GVC-oriented policies and institutional capabilities



**Carlo Pietrobelli**  
Carlo Pietrobelli is a professor and advisor on innovation and industrial policy. He holds a UNESCO Chair at the United Nations University UNU-MERIT and is a Professor of Economics at Roma Tre University.

**Tuesday, June 3, 2025**  
11:00 a. m. ET

Hybrid meeting:  
Teams Connection / HQ 07  
NE0719





## Industrial Policy

Government officials from the ministries of Panama, the Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala met in **Panama City** on October 22-23, 2024, to participate in the [Ministerial Regional Policy Dialogue for Central America on Productive Development Policies](https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/unido-publications/2025-11/UNIDO%20IDR26.pdf)<sup>8</sup>. The meeting was hosted by **Eduardo Ortega Barria, Panama's Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation and the IDB**. Pietrobelli delivered a keynote address and offered advisory support in the meeting. He explained how businesses need government – and government needs businesses – in the design and implementation of innovation policy. He argued that industrial innovation policies need three essential ingredients: geography, capabilities, and government-business coordination. First, promoting science and industrial parks, technology centres and business advice through public policies not only strengthens industrial growth, but can also transform territories into regions of innovation and global competitiveness. Industrial and science parks are not just tax-free zones but offer agglomeration advantages that place-based innovation policies may foster. Second, the building of enterprise-level capabilities is hampered by frequent failures and needs to be nurtured and promoted. Third, instead of focusing on what to do, we need to pay more attention to **how policies can be designed and implemented**. This requires regular, efficient interactions between government, business and knowledge institutions.

Professor Pietrobelli contributed to the framing and preparation of the [UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2026](https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/unido-publications/2025-11/UNIDO%20IDR26.pdf)<sup>9</sup>. The 2026 edition explores how industrial development is evolving in response to rapid global changes. It examines how future industries may differ fundamentally from those of the past and provides practical guidance for developing countries on building sustainable, inclusive, and resilient industries. Pietrobelli, Delera and Geri published a UNIDO IID Policy Brief on *Adapting to the reconfiguration* of GVCs for the report.



*Ministerial Regional Policy Dialogue for Central America on Productive Development Policies, Panama*

**Industrial innovation policies need three essential ingredients: geography, capabilities and government-business coordination.**

8 <https://unu.edu/merit/news/why-central-american-economies-need-better-innovation-policies>

9 <https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/unido-publications/2025-11/UNIDO%20IDR26.pdf>

## Quality Infrastructure (QI) for Innovation and Development

In June 2025, the Chair continued its research program on the role of **quality infrastructure (QI) for innovation and development**, which we had begun in 2024. The network of researchers and practitioners, led by the Chair in collaboration with experts such as Richard Doner (Emory University) and Gerald McDermott (Folks Center for International Business, University of South Carolina) convened an international workshop on *International Standards, Industrial Upgrading, and Innovation* at **Brown University**, in Providence, Rhode Island. The local host was Professor Andrew Schrank. This network comprises key international partners, including UNCTAD, UNIDO, ITC, WIPO, OECD, the IDB, and the World Bank, to advance research and policy development on QI for development.

This research program provides an alternative perspective on how emerging countries can leverage international standards to enhance their innovation capabilities and compete in global value chains. It does so by focusing on the increasingly important role of Quality Infrastructure – the system of organisations (public and private), policies, regulatory frameworks, and practices needed to support and enhance the quality, safety and environmental soundness of goods, services and processes ([INETQI](https://www.inetqi.net/)<sup>10</sup>). This configuration can generate and diffuse the applied, experiential knowledge that helps domestic firms to transform their capabilities to meet international process and product standards in an economically sustainable manner. Our approach, in turn, helps reframe core debates in development and new industrial policy, such as the creation of new upgrading capabilities of local firms, and the political economy of the institutions that enable and constrain the export competitiveness of firms and industries in emerging countries. We are preparing a book for a prestigious University Press that will be published in 2026.

10 <https://www.inetqi.net/>

11 <https://virtual.oxfordabstracts.com/event/37937/submission/1321>



*Brown University, Providence (RI), May 2025*

The network on Quality Infrastructure promoted by the Chair organised a roundtable on [Rethinking the Institutions of Development: Quality Infrastructure and Firm Upgrading in the Global South](https://www.inetqi.net/)<sup>11</sup> that took place during the annual conference of the **Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE)** in **Montreal** on July 10. The round table convened experts such as Andrew Schrank (Brown University), Tommaso Ferretti (University of Ottawa), Seth Pipkin (University of California, Irvine), Antonio José Junqueira Botelho (IUPERJ UCAM, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), Rick Doner (Emory) and Carlo Pietrobelli.



*Pipkin, Botero, Pietrobelli, Ferretti at SASE 2025, Montreal.*



## Impact

# Research Outreach and Global Dialogue

The UNESCO Chair actively participated in several international conferences and workshops throughout the year, presenting a range of research outputs. A full list of webinars and papers presented can be found at the end of this report.

The *Latin American and Caribbean Open Science Forum (Foro CILAC<sup>12</sup>)* is “the hub” of science in Latin America and the Caribbean, constituting a regional platform to debate how to strengthen and implement effective STI policies in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the Agenda 2030. The conference was organised by UNESCO in **San Andrés, Colombia**, on 2-4 December 2024, opened by President Gustavo Petro and had a tremendous impact on the STI community in LAC with more than 3,350 participants from 46 countries.



Olman Segura Bonilla at CILAC 2024

The UNESCO Chair held [two panel<sup>13</sup>](#) discussions on highly relevant topics for science in the region. In the first, Pietrobelli debated with Chilean former Minister Eduardo Bitran (Universidad Adolfo Ibáñez) and Jorge Valverde on [Industrial policy and critical minerals in the green transition: The role of STI policies<sup>14</sup>](#). Latin America plays a key role in the energy transition, as it has large endowments of the critical minerals needed for the energy transition. This is regarded as an opportunity to develop and deepen supply chains around these critical minerals. However, increasing the extraction and processing of critical minerals also generates environmental pressures. In this context, new technologies are needed for the energy transition. This is regarded as an opportunity to develop and deepen supply chains around these critical minerals. The panel also debated the options for green industrial policies.



Eduardo Bitran at CILAC 2024

The second panel, titled [“Economic Benefits of the Eastern Pacific Thermal Dome,<sup>15</sup>”](#) was co-organised with the **National University of Costa Rica** by Pietrobelli and Professor Olman Segura Bonilla (International Centre for Economic Policy for Sustainable Development - CINPE-UNA, Universidad Nacional). The Eastern Tropical Pacific Thermal Dome (DTCR-PTO) is a remarkable and highly significant ocean-atmospheric phenomenon that can extend from the waters of Costa Rica to Mexico. Characterised by a notable increase in the surface temperature of the sea, this phenomenon generates an area of high biological productivity and rich biodiversity. The panel discussed the vital role that the Thermal Dome could play in promoting economic activities, such as commercial fishing and marine tourism, as well as in conserving species and local biodiversity. See video [here<sup>16</sup>](#).

During the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of Innovation Economics and Entrepreneurship (RIE) in Montevideo in November 2024, Sergio Palomeque presented a paper in co-authorship with Mercedes Menéndez, Jorge Valverde, and Carlo Pietrobelli entitled “Green technological innovation in Latin America”. This paper examines how local and global knowledge networks shape technological specialisation in Latin America, with a focus on whether green technologies represent a “green window of opportunity” for the region. This paper was also presented at the RSA Annual Conference on May 6–9, 2025, at the Faculty of Economics, University of Porto, Portugal.

**How critical minerals are depends on the technological trajectories of new clean technologies, but also on the competitiveness of mineral producing countries. The dilemma is how to contribute to green transition and use the extractive sector as a lever for economic development.**

<sup>12</sup> <https://forocilac.org/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://unu.edu/merit/conference/latin-american-and-caribbean-open-science-forum>

<sup>14</sup> <https://cilac2024.sched.com/event/1inyB/industrial-policy-and-critical-minerals-in-the-green-transition-the-role-of-cti-policies?iframe=no&w=100%25&sidebar=yes&bg=no>

<sup>15</sup> <https://cilac2024.sched.com/event/1inyf/beneficios-economicos-del-domo-termico-del-pacifico-oriental?iframe=no&w=100%25&sidebar=yes&bg=no>

<sup>16</sup> <https://youtu.be/L57MFdMOyHw>



In September 2024 the Chair hosted a [seminar<sup>17</sup>](#) by Carlos Bianchi on *Varieties of middle-income trap: A Latin American perspective on structural change trajectories and external demand constraints*. The seminar was followed by a workshop in which a group of five of our junior researchers from Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia and Spain presented their research to Prof. Bianchi on topics related to Latin America and its policies.

In September 2025, the Chair participated in the [6th International Conference<sup>18</sup> of the Latin American Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence-Building Systems \(LALICS<sup>19</sup>\)](#), the Latin American chapter of [GLOBELICS<sup>20</sup>](#), in **Rio de Janeiro**, thereby strengthening its mission to connect research and policymaking on science, technology, and innovation in Latin America. Across two [special sessions<sup>21</sup>](#) on “Digitalisation and Artificial Intelligence: Developments and Implications for Latin America and the Caribbean”, the Chair convened eight papers by young scholars from the region, showcasing cutting-edge work on digital transformation, AI adoption, industrial upgrading, and institutional challenges.

To support emerging researchers from the region, **the Chair awarded three travel grants to the authors of the best papers** presented in these sessions. The awards recognised contributions on digital jobs and industrial transformation in Brazil (João Guilherme Marques Augusto Monteiro and Roberto Alexandre Zanchetta Borghi, Unicamp); measurement of Industry 4.0 capacities across Mexican states (Ángeles Ortiz Espinoza, Tecnológico de Monterrey); and the implications of digitalisation and AI for local governments and MSMEs in Colombia (Claudia

Bibiana Ruiz and Leidy Johana Ariza Marín, Universidad Santo Tomás). The discussions highlighted how digitalisation and AI are reshaping development trajectories in the region, opening new avenues for innovation, productive transformation and institutional strengthening. At the same time, the presentations pointed to persistent structural constraints – uneven digital adoption, limited data availability, fragmented policy frameworks, and deep socio-economic inequalities – that shape how these technologies diffuse and who benefits from them.



Marques Augusto Monteiro and Ángeles Ortiz Espinoza with Menendez, Pietrobelli and Seri at LALICS 2025

The lecture delivered by Pietrobelli at the **3rd LALICS Academy** also helped amplify new voices, spur regional debate, and reaffirm the importance of evidence-based innovation policy for a more sustainable and inclusive Latin America.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to become a transformative, general-purpose technology, reshaping global economic, social, and institutional frameworks, and this presents both challenges and opportunities for Latin America. During LALICS, the Chair also convened a **roundtable** – together with Fernando Vargas from the IDB – [on Innovation engine: Artificial Intelligence as a catalyst for innovation<sup>22</sup>](#) to discuss with innovation policy practitioners and academics a research agenda that reflects the realities and constraints of LAC countries and that could help the design and implementation of policies. We invited a group of distinguished experts from academia as well as innovation policy practitioners, which included Gabriel Yoguel (UNGS, Argentina), Fernando Santiago (UNIDO), Selva Olmedo (UNA, Paraguay), Jocelyn Olivari (CORFO, Chile), and Caetano Penna (Centro de Gestão e Estudos Estratégicos - CGEE, Brazil). The panel offered some preliminary answers to questions such as what we need to understand to design innovation policies suited to an era of AI-driven innovation, and which institutional, financial, or data-related bottlenecks should be prioritised for research.

Pietrobelli was also invited by the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** to contribute to the joint [session<sup>23</sup>](#) of the OECD Committee on SMEs and Entrepreneurship (CSMEE) and the Investment Committee (IC) in Paris on November 6, 2025. The policy panel discussed *The Role of FDI and SMEs in Building Resilient GVCs: Navigating Trade and Investment in Uncertain Times*. Pietrobelli was joined by Peter Berkowitz, Director of European Commission DG REGIO, avid Elvira, Global Corporate Public Policy Head at SANOFI, and Giovanni Zazzerini, Secretary General, International Network for SMEs (INSME)

**Digitalization and AI offer significant potential for innovation and structural transformation in Latin America, but realizing these benefits requires reducing persistent gaps in data, capabilities and policy coherence.**

17 <https://unu.edu/merit/news/unu-merits-latest-research-policy-innovation-and-scientific-collaboration-latin-america>

18 <https://lalicsrio2025.ie.ufrj.br/a-conferencia/>

19 <https://lalics.org/>

20 <https://globelicsnetwork.org/>

21 <https://unu.edu/merit/blog-post/unesco-chair-lalics-rio-2025-fostering-global-dialogue-innovation-and-development>

22 <https://unu.edu/merit/blog-post/innovation-age-ai-setting-policy-research-agenda-latin-america>

23 <https://www.oecd-events.org/e/investment-days>



# Training

The Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) and the UN Interagency Task Team on STI for the SDGs (IATT) were established to mobilise STI solutions in support of achieving the SDGs, comprising various UN entities. Within these initiatives, regular training activities are conducted. The Chair contributed to an online training course on [Policies and Tools for Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs<sup>24</sup>](#), in collaboration with UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, and ECLAC in November 2025. The workshop was mainly aimed at public sector practitioners and policymakers working in different areas of STI policy in the region. Other interested audiences, including those from academia, the private sector, and civil society, could also participate. Tommaso Ciarli, Ludovico Alcora, Cecilia Seri and Carlo Pietrobelli from UNU-MERIT were among the instructors, with sessions on the STI policies and the SDGs, the implementation of STI policies, and the impact evaluation of STI programs. The audience was incredibly large, with an average of approximately 1,000 participants attending the five days of online and [YouTube activities](#).

The Chair also supported the [2025 PhD Summer School on The Economics of the Green and Digital Transitions: Innovation Policies for a Global Europe<sup>25</sup>](#), jointly organised by UNU-MERIT, the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence on European Inclusive Open Strategic Autonomy (EU-IOsAC) at LUISS LEAP, and the University of Strasbourg. The program brought together leading scholars to explore how scientific and technological change, inequality, labour markets, and international development cross with Europe's green and digital transitions. Through a mix of theoretical and applied lectures, participants examined Europe's strategic positioning in a rapidly shifting global landscape, gaining tools to analyse emerging challenges and policy responses at the nexus of sustainability, competitiveness, and international cooperation. Pietrobelli presented his ongoing work on QI and innovation.



<sup>24</sup> <https://www.cepal.org/en/node/70132>

<sup>25</sup> <https://unu.edu/merit/event/phd-summer-school-economics-green-and-digital-transitions-innovation-strategies>

# The Year Ahead

The UNESCO Chair will continue to pursue its mandate to promote and disseminate policy-relevant research, offer impactful policy advice, and contribute to enhancing STI education in Latin America during 2025-26. The following key initiatives have already been planned and will be executed:

- Research and policy panel on Twin Transition with Mercedes Menendez at the [III International Conference on Regional Development in South America<sup>26</sup>](#) on 24-26 February 2026 in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Research workshop on Quality Infrastructure and Development Policy at The World Bank, Washington D.C., in partnership with the University of South Carolina and Emory University
- Presentation of the research on “Global Value Chains in the Era of Industry 4.0: Extractive Industries in Latin America” at the final workshop of the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) Research Project, in Tokyo, 19-20 March 2026.
- Research panel on Quality Infrastructure and Innovation Capabilities at [SASE 2026 Annual Conference<sup>27</sup>](#) in Bordeaux, 1-3 July 2026.
- Provision of research and policy guidance on a green industrial policy project, focusing on critical minerals and regional integration, in collaboration with UNCTAD, BNDES Brazil, and ECLAC.
- Presentation of papers at the Conference of Innovation Economics and Entrepreneurship (RIE), in Washington D.C., in November 2026.

These initiatives will enhance the Chair's influence and engagement across Latin America and the Caribbean, contributing to sustainable development through policy innovation and collaborative research.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.regionalstudies.org/events/2026kirdsaconf/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://sase.org/events/2026-bordeaux/>



# Selection of Publications

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# Multimedia

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