

FINAL REPORT



7TH
**AMERICAS
COMPETITIVENESS
EXCHANGE**
on Innovation & Entrepreneurship
CENTRAL TEXAS | APRIL 2-7, 2017



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1. The Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE) & its Seventh Edition in Central Texas, United States

The Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE) is one of the main activities of the Organization of American States (OAS) in the promotion of better innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in the Americas. The ACE program is included as part of the core initiatives of the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) - www.riacnet.org - , in which the OAS serves as Technical Secretariat.

The ACE is a high-level program that brings 50+ economic and political decision makers from across the Americas and beyond to get to know first-hand the clues and best practices from a particular region's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems.

The objectives of ACE are to increase knowledge on Innovation and Entrepreneurship by sharing of good practices to strengthen local innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems; establish collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders from universities, industries and governments; advance commerce and accelerate business opportunities; and to showcase the importance and benefits of:

- a. Public-private partnerships to advance a coordinated regional economic development strategy that leverages local assets;
- b. A coordinated regional business plan to stimulate capital investment and job creation;
- c. Research to understand problems and develop tools to achieve environmentally sound economic development;
- d. Providing appropriate infrastructure for innovative businesses to start up and expand;
- e. Uniting Universities, Industry, and Government to solve complex challenges no one sector or player could address on their own.

The Seventh Edition of the ACE Program took place Sunday, April 2 to Friday, April 7, 2017 through the cities of San Antonio, New Braunfels, Fredericksburg, San Marcos, College Station, and Austin in Central Texas, United States with the purpose of strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in the OAS Member States.

The 51 leaders selected to participate in the week-long program tour innovative hubs, advanced technology centers, leading firms and educational and research institutions, to explore local and regional economic development models, share experiences and knowledge, and build networks among the local and visiting stakeholders to enhance innovation and competitiveness in the Americas. Public-private partnership projects and strategic investments were highlighted in various sub-regions, in urban and rural environments. Specific clusters that were covered during the program included: advanced

manufacturing, information and communication technology, water, agriculture, energy, medical devices

The 7th ACE was convened by the Organization of American States and the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC); the Government of the United States, through its U.S. Department of Commerce - the International Trade Administration (ITA) and the Economic Development Administration (EDA) - and the U.S. Department of State-Permanent Mission of the United States to the OAS; and the Government of Mexico, as Chair Pro Tempore of RIAC 2016-2017.



2. The Participants

| COUNTRY | PARTICIPANTS |
|--|--|
| Argentina  | GUILLERMO ACOSTA Undersecretary of Federal and Sectorial Articulation, Ministry of Production, Government of Argentina |
| | MARIANO ORTEGA General Manager, Regional Centers of the National Institute of Industrial Technologies |
| | ROMINA ELIANA GAYÁ Director, Knowledge Economy Observatory, Ministry of Production, Government of Argentina |
| | JUAN NASCIBENE Senior Advisor, Undersecretary of Foreign Trade, Government of Argentina |
| Barbados  | SONJA TROTMAN Chief Executive Officer, Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, Government of Barbados |

| COUNTRY | PARTICIPANTS |
|---|---|
| <p>Belize</p>  | <p>LEJIA MELANIE GIDEON General Manager, Belize Trade and Investment Development Service (BELTRAIDE), Government of Belize</p> <hr/> <p>JOY ELIZABETH GODFREY Owner/Managing Director, CilGlobalIP</p> |
| <p>Bolivia</p>  | <p>LUIS GUILLERMO POU MUNT SERRANO Chairman, National Chamber of Exporters / General Manager, Business Group Pou Munt</p> |
| <p>Brazil</p>  | <p>MARCONDES MOREIRA DE ARAUJO Science & Technology Liason for three Brazilian States, Federal Agency of Brazil's Mid-West (SUDECO)</p> |
| <p>Canada</p>  | <p>KELLY GILLIS Associate Deputy Minister, Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED), Government of Canada</p> |
| <p>Chile</p>  | <p>SOFIA DEL SANTE Community & Networks Director, Start-Up Chile</p> |
| <p>Colombia</p>  | <p>MARCO LLINAS Vice President, Chamber of Commerce of Bogota</p> <hr/> <p>ISABELA ECHEVERRY Director of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Chamber of Commerce of Cali</p> <hr/> <p>MARCELA RUEDA Deputy Director, Connect Bogota Region</p> <hr/> <p>FERNANDO SIERRA Co-Founder & General Partner, INVICTUS CAPITAL</p> |
| <p>Costa Rica</p>  | <p>LUIS ALONSO JIMENEZ Director-Manager, University Agency for Entrepreneurship Management, University of Costa Rica</p> |

| COUNTRY | PARTICIPANTS |
|---|--|
| Dominica  | ROSELYN VICTORIA PAUL Minister of Commerce, Enterprise and Small Business Development, Government of Dominica |
| Dominican Republic  | TOMÁS DOMINGO GUZMÁN Director, Innovation and Productive Development, Vice Ministry of National Competitiveness Management, Ministry of Economy, Planning, and Development WELINGTON OMAR SANCHEZ Director, SBDC, SME Center UCATEBA University |
| Ecuador  | SANTIAGO LEÓN Minister of Industries and Productivity, Government of Ecuador |
| Guatemala  | JUAN CARLOS PAIZ Member of the Board, Private Competitiveness Council CLAUDIA LISETH VASQUEZ National Representative, SBDC Guatemala, Vice Ministry for the Development of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, Ministry of Economy |
| Haiti  | FABIOLA ANTOINE Public Policy Advisor, Int. Cooperation and Implementation of Tech Incubator, Ministry of Economy and Finance |
| Honduras  | RICARDO IRIAS Co-Founder and CEO, Sube ANA MARGARITA MAIER Dean of Business and Social Sciences, Tech University of Honduras (UNITEC) |
| Jamaica  | ALTHEA JANICE WEST-MYERS Manager, Jamaica Business Development Corporation |

| COUNTRY | PARTICIPANTS |
|--|--|
| <p>Mexico</p>  | <p>ENRIQUE PERRET Director General for North America, ProMexico</p> <p>LILIANA ARACELI REYES Director of Venture Capital, National Entrepreneurship Institute, Secretariat of Economy, Government of Mexico</p> <p>ADRIANA E. EGUIA ALANIZ Executive Director, Director of Economic and Industrial Development, Tijuana AC</p> <p>EUGENIO JOSÉ REYES GUZMÁN World Trade Center, Monterrey</p> <p>LILIA MARCELA ARECHAVALA Chief Operation Officer, The George E. Brown U.S.-Mexico Foundation for Science (FUMEC)</p> <p>IAN PAUL OTERO CEO & Finance Director of the Confederation of Industrial Chambers (CONCAMIN), Red Beab S.C.</p> |
| <p>Nicaragua</p>  | <p>RENE GONZÁLEZ-MEJÍA Executive Director, Development Institute of Nicaragua (INDE)</p> |
| <p>Panama</p>  | <p>HILARIO ESPINOSA Special Project Assistant, Secretariat of Competitiveness and Logistics Panama, Ministry of the Presidency, Government of Panamá</p> |
| <p>Paraguay</p>  | <p>KAREN L. CORONEL President, GROW SRL</p> <p>MARIA PAOLA FERRARIO Vice President, Global Entrepreneurship Network</p> |
| <p>St. Lucia</p>  | <p>JACQUELINE CAROLINE EMMANUEL FLOOD CEO, Trade Export Promotion Agency, Government of Saint Lucia</p> |

| COUNTRY | PARTICIPANTS |
|--|---|
| The Bahamas  | KAREN ELEANOR ST. CYR Senior Lead Policy Advisor and Coordinator of Regional and International Projects, Ministry of Education, Government of The Bahamas |
| Trinidad and Tobago  | CARLA SALTRA MC KNIGHT Incubator Manager, National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited |
| United States  | MANUEL A.J. LABOY Secretary, Department of Economic Development and Commerce, Puerto Rico |
| | MICHAEL PAUL GAY Senior Vice President, Madison Region Economic Partnerships, Madison, Wisconsin |
| | PATRICIA (TRISH) KELLY Managing Director, Valley Vision, Sacramento |
| | CRISTINA LONG PAREDES Deputy Director, Tallahassee – Leon County Office of Economic Vitality |
| Uruguay  | MARIA MAGDALENA GIURIA Project Manager, National Research and Innovation Agency of Uruguay (ANII), Government of Uruguay |
| Germany  | OLE JOHANN JANSSEN Director, Innovation and Technology Policy, Ministry of Economic Affairs & Energy, Government of Germany |
| | NIKOLAI ZIEGLER Policy Officer, Ministry of Economic Affairs & Energy, Government of Germany, Government of Germany |
| Israel  | ISRAEL SHAMAY Executive Director, Americas Operations, Israel Innovation Authority |

3. Results

ACE 7 by the numbers

- **More than 200 applications received**
The Open Call for Applications was shared with around a million of contacts in the Hemisphere and more than 200 applications were received from 35 countries of the Americas and beyond
- **51 participants were selected from 27 countries**
The ACE 7 had an outstanding geographic diversity with 51 leaders on innovation and entrepreneurship representing 27 countries from the Americas and beyond (25 from OAS Member States and 2 from outside the region)
- **40+ projects and good practices were shared**
More than 40 projects and good practices of advanced research and technology centers, companies, incubators and accelerators, public-private partnerships and strategic investment were shared to participants through more than 26 sites
- **25 women leaders participated in the program**
The ACE 7 program achieved the best gender balance in comparison to previous editions. During the ACE in Texas, almost half of the group were women leaders (25 out of 51 participants).

The ACE program is truly committed to power gender equality as a relevant component of countries inclusive economic development strategies. Therefore, the percentage of women participation in ACEs have been increasing with time:

ACE 1: 32% of the group were women

ACE 2: 35% of the group were women

ACE 3: 43% of the group were women

ACE 4: 35% of the group were women

ACE 5: 40% of the group were women

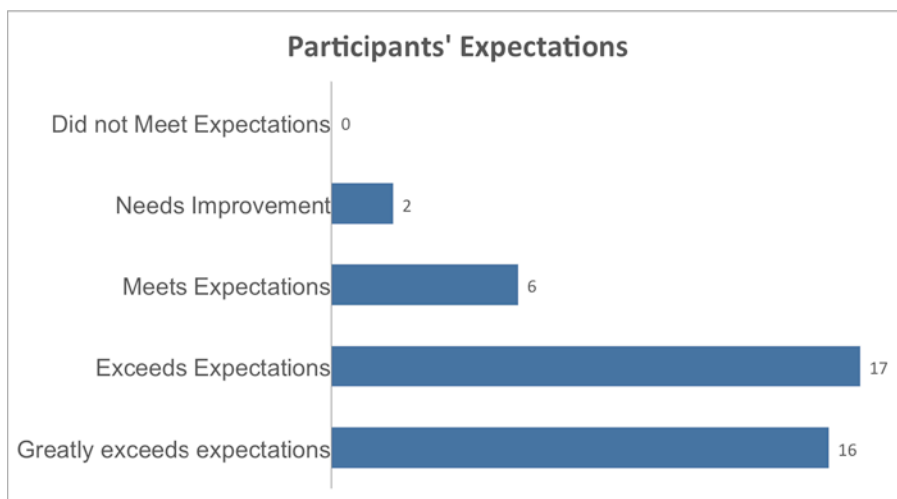
ACE 6: 46% of the group were women

ACE 7: 49% of the group were women

- **4 entrepreneurs were selected for the first time in ACE**
For the first time in the program, some spaces were officially reserved for top entrepreneurs. Four entrepreneurs from Latin America were selected and were granted a scholarship to participate. They had the opportunity to learn, exchange and interact with high-level authorities, private sector and academia representatives.

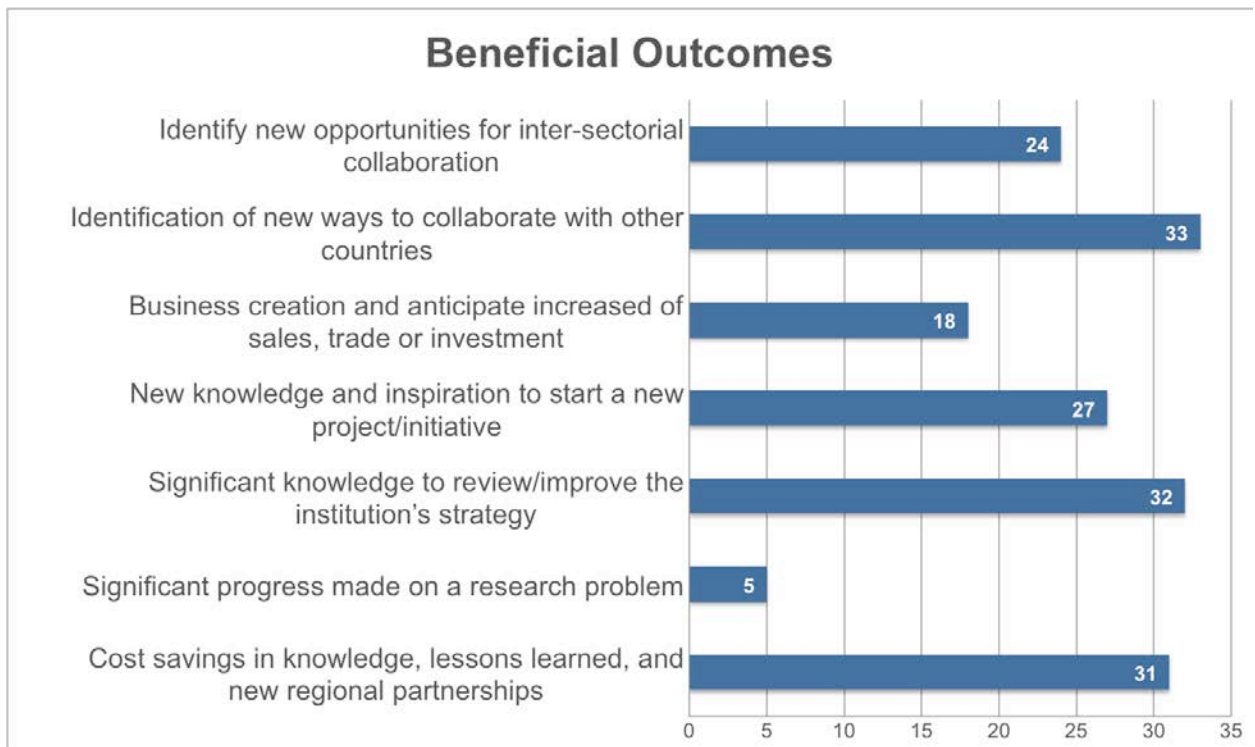
Results gathered by the ACE final survey:

- **More than 1,000 new contacts were initiated**
These contacts were registered in the final survey and reflect the new direct interactions among participants, and among participants and community leaders.
- **Participants increased their contact network by +150%**
Prior to the program, each participant had an average of 3 contacts with economic leaders in Central Texas. After the program, each participant had an average of 15 strategic contacts with economic leaders in Central Texas.
- **100 collaboration opportunities were registered**
After analyzing the survey results, around 100 collaboration opportunities emerged as a result of the program among delegates, experts, and high-level authorities and officials from the participating communities.
- **100% of the participants said they would participate again**
As a result of the survey, all participants expressed they would participate again in future editions of the program or recommend a colleague to apply.
- **95% of the participants expressed that the program met, exceeded and greatly exceeded their expectations**
In addition to that, during the survey, more than 40% of the participants expressed that the program was great and greatly exceeded their expectations of what they were looking to obtain from the ACE 7.



Other survey results:

- Beneficial outcomes:
Surveyed participants expressed that the most beneficial part of the program was to identify new ways to collaborate with other countries, obtaining significant knowledge to review/improve their institutions' strategy, cost savings in knowledge, lessons learned, and new regional partnerships.



- Anticipated results:
 - 82% of the participants anticipate that the program will have a positive impact on the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems of their institution.
 - 44% of the participants consider that the program will improve their skills to foster the creation of jobs and new projects.
 - At least 35% participants believe that their participation in the ACE 7 has already benefited their institution capacity to support innovation and entrepreneurship.

4. Testimonies

ACE 7 Participants feedback is consolidated as follows:

Final Survey

- “Excellent practice in ecosystems of innovation, groups directed to entrepreneurship with private support” - Tomás Domingo Guzmán Hernández (Dominican Republic)
- “Keep the ACE working, it is a great help for countries like Ecuador. The interchange is awesome” - Santiago Leon Abad (Ecuador)
- “I enjoyed absolutely everything, the exposure to all of the innovation, the interaction and sharing with participants and the huge networking opportunities” - Karen Eleanor St. Cyr (The Bahamas)
- “A special thank you to sponsors, organizers and participants for a successful and inspiring ACE” - Jacqueline Emmanuel- Flood (St. Lucia)
- “The organizers were the best! Thank you for your support during the week” - Sofia Del Sante (Chile)
- “*Muchas gracias por todo este esfuerzo, definitivamente, para AUGE y la UCR es la mejor y más efectiva forma que tenemos para impulsar nuestra internacionalización (...)*” - Luis Alonso Jimenez Silva (Costa Rica)
- “The panels and presentations were great, I enjoyed them all greatly. It was an amazing experience for me” - Paola Ferrario (Paraguay)
- “The bus time provided opportunities to bond and have discussions with delegates about conditions in their countries, what they wanted to obtain from ACE, and potential opportunities for partnerships, collaboration and information sharing” - Patricia (Trish) Kelly (United States)
- “Great program in general. Networking amongst participants (very well selected) and a very professional program. Just a wholehearted thank you” - Eugenio José Reyes (Mexico)
- “Organizers did an impeccable job. Thank you very much to all! It was a wonderful experience!” - Marcela Rueda (Colombia)
- “Another great ACE event. Thank you” - Michael P. Gay (Madison, Wisconsin, US)

WhatsApp Group “The ACE 7 Group”

- “It was a real pleasure getting to know u! Let’s keep in touch and keep the ball rolling to strengthen the relationships that were made. Hope to see u soon either at Baja or at another ACE!” – Adriana Eguia (Mexico)
- “My sincere thanks to the organizing team. And to the participants it has been my privilege to get to know you and your stories. I go back to Argentina with 50 new inspiring friends! Keep in touch!! All the best and as soda stereo would say: gracias totals” – Juan Nascimbene (Argentina)
- “I would like to say thank you to all of you. This first ACE was a very inspiring, wonderful experience for me. I learned so much! Very happy to met all of you, to know you. I’m going back to Haiti with a lot of ideas, new perspective. Success to all of you! Keep in touch” – Fabiola Antoine (Haiti)
- “Thank you for an exceptional week. It has been an honor and privilege knowing you and sharing such great ideas. Thank you central Texas for your openness and enthusiasm in sharing your best practices in innovation and entrepreneurship. Finally, thank you EDA, Dept. of State, Dept. of Commerce and OAS for your leadership and commitment. See you in Florida!” Manuel Laboy (Puerto Rico-United States)

5. Press Releases

- Media: Metro
Title: Gobierno acude al Intercambio de Competitividad de las Américas
Date: Abril 9, 2017
<https://www.metro.pr/pr/noticias/2017/04/09/gobierno-acude-intercambio-competitividad-americas.html>
- Media: Texas Economic Development Council
Title: International Decision Makers Explore Economic Opportunity In San Antonio
Date: April 5, 2017
<https://www.texasedc.org/members-news/international-decision-makers-explore-economic-opportunity-san-antonio>
- Media: New Braunfels EDC
Title: A Warm Welcome: Foreign Dignitaries Greeted By New Braunfels’ Best
Date: April 4, 2017
<https://innewbraunfels.com/business/2017/04/06/warm-welcome-foreign-dignitaries-greeted-new-braunfels-best/>

- Media: City of Austin
Title: Seventh Americas Competitiveness Exchange Aims To Spotlight Austin
Date: April 4, 2017
<http://www.austintexas.gov/news/seventh-americas-competitiveness-exchange-aims-spotlight-austin>
- Media: The Philip's College
Title: 2017 Americas Competitiveness Exchange
Date: April 4, 2017
<http://www.alamo.edu/spc/americascompetitivenessexchange/>
- Media: International Federation of Engineering Education Societies
Title: 7th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Date: April 2, 2017
<http://www.ifees.net/event/7th-americas-competitiveness-exchange-on-innovation-entrepreneurship/>
- Media: Chamber in New Braunfels
Title: New Braunfels Host City For Americas Competitiveness Exchange Tour
Date: April 2, 2017
<https://innewbraunfels.com/chamber/2017/04/05/new-braunfels-host-city-americas-competitiveness-exchange-tour/>
- Media: My SA
Title: San Antonio hosts economic development leaders from the Americas
Date: April 3, 2017
<http://www.mysanantonio.com/business/local/article/San-Antonio-hosts-economic-development-leaders-11047499.php>
- Media: Spectrum News
Title: Innovative Exchange Promotes Global Economy in San Antonio
Date: April 3, 2017
<http://www.twcnews.com/tx/san-antonio/news/2017/04/3/innovative-exchange-promotes-global-economy-in-san-antonio.html>
- Media: INDE
Title: INDE asistirá a intercambio para la Competitividad de las Américas en Innovación y Emprendimiento
Date: Marzo 31, 2017
<https://www.inde.org.ni/2017/03/31/inde-asistira-a-intercambio-para-la-competitividad-de-las-americas-en-innovacion-y-emprendimiento/>

- Media: US EDA
 Title: U.S. Commerce Department Announces Seventh Americas Competitiveness Exchange
 Date: March 27, 2017
<https://www.eda.gov/news/press-releases/2017/03/27/ace.htm>
- Media: Texas State University
 Title: 7th Americas Competitive Exchange brings spotlight to Texas State
 Date: March 1, 2017
http://www.txstate.edu/news/news_releases/news_archive/2017/March-2017/ACE033117.html
- Media: Asociación de Industriales Latinoamericanos
 Title: Intercambio para la Competitividad de las Américas en Innovación y Emprendimiento – Texas – Abril 2017
 Date: Febrero, 2016
<http://aila.la/evento/intercambio-para-la-competitividad-de-las-americas-en-innovacion-y-emprendimiento-texas-abril-2017/>
- Media: US Department of Commerce
 Title: San Antonio's Economic Competitiveness Enhanced by Job Training, Education Efforts
 Date: December 5, 2016
<https://2014-2017.commerce.gov/news/blog/2016/12/san-antonios-economic-competitiveness-enhanced-job-training-education-efforts.html>
- Media: Nodoka
 Title: 7° Intercambio de Competitividad de las Américas
<https://www.nodoka.co/es/convocatorias/7-intercambio-de-competitividad-de-las-americas>
- Media: U.S. EDA
 Title: Press Release - U.S. Government Selects Central Texas to Host Exclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Event
 Date: September 9, 2016
<https://www.eda.gov/archives/2016/news/press-releases/2016/09/09/ace.htm>
- Media: Rivard Report
 Title: Central Texas Selected to Host Major International Exchange
 Date: September 9, 2016
<https://therivardreport.com/central-texas-selected-to-host-major-international-exchange/>

- Media: Grow With US
Title: U.S. Government Selects Central Texas to Host Exclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Event
Date: September 9, 2016
<http://grow.cstx.gov/?p=1229>

6. Power point presentations

The presentations that the hosts prepared are included in the ACE 7 webpage. The link thereof is the following¹:

<http://www.riacevents.org/ace/texas/presentations.html>

7. Photos and Videos

In order to better document the ACE 7, pictures and videos we taken and uploaded to the Internet. The videos are in the YouTube RIAC Channel and the photos were posted in the RIAC Flickr account.

Videos

YouTube: riacnet.org

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJIK6ckyqeOTDgc8svIGjTQ>

- The ACE 7 – Texas
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxtxsHCAj6Q>
- The ACE 7 – Participants:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHpefIRG6N8&index=2&list=PLCFmKggkdz0ETNhVyTmQVhNeln-NaJgac>
- The ACE 7 – Welcome:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pTXS55XnQc&index=3&list=PLCFmKggkdz0ETNhVyTmQVhNeln-NaJgac>
- The ACE 7 – Day 1:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaY0ZmxsoBw&index=4&list=PLCFmKggkdz0ETNhVyTmQVhNeln-NaJgac>

¹ We are in the process of uploading more presentations

- The ACE 7 – Day 2:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ-WCZkNqfw&list=PLCFmKggkdz0ETNhVyTmQVhNelN-NaJqac&index=5>
- The ACE 7 – Day 3:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7F2fqgOyg8g&list=PLCFmKggkdz0ETNhVyTmQVhNelN-NaJqac&index=6>
- The ACE 7 – Day 4:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKK7r9UPbcQ&index=7&list=PLCFmKggkdz0ETNhVyTmQVhNelN-NaJqac>
- The ACE 7 – Day 5:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-sRqjGUfNw&index=8&list=PLCFmKggkdz0ETNhVyTmQVhNelN-NaJqac>

Photos

Flickr: RIACNET

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/89835551@N02/sets/72157680172730321>

8. Points of Contact

Participants and Host can follow future ACE versions in the following websites and social media accounts:

- RIAC web page: www.riacnet.org
- Twitter account: [RedDeCompetitividad](#) at [@riacnetorg](#)
- Facebook account: [RIAC- Inter-American Competitiveness Network](#) at [@RIACnet](#)

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For additional information, please contact the ACE Program Coordinator, Mrs. Adriana Bonilla at abonilla@oas.org