ACE 10 Final Report

October 21 - 27, 2018, Northern California

10th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Birthplace of Innovation

#ACXchange
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Introduction

The Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE) is one of the main initiatives of the Organization of American States (OAS) to promote better innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in the Americas and other regions as a means to foster inclusive, sustainable development. Created and supported by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. State Department, and the OAS, the ACE program is part of the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) in which the OAS serves as Technical Secretariat.
The ACE 10 showcased Northern California’s unique entrepreneurial and innovation assets. During the week-long program, the ACE 10 focused on the intersection of these assets across four themes: improving health, feeding the world, maximizing resources, and fostering resiliency.

The program began Sunday, October 21, 2018, in San Francisco and traveled to the Silicon Valley. After visiting Monterey Bay Area, the delegation crossed into California’s Great Central Valley, with stops in Fresno and other locations of interest. The program concluded on October 27, 2018, in Davis and Sacramento. Participants experienced the dynamism, creativity, and beautiful cultural and natural resources of the Golden State, which is the 5th largest economy in the world. The program featured experiences of both urban and rural areas and included activities across several sites ranging from higher education, incubators, accelerators, maker spaces, research centers, sustainable manufacturing facilities, to field demonstrations.

Forty-eight leaders from more than 20 countries participated in the program, including senior-level government officials, business, policy, and economic decision-makers from academia and the public and private sectors. During the tour, they shared best practices, connected talent and networks, and generated multiple opportunities to explore and expand the links between the economies of the Americas and beyond.

“After this program, we are going to work more collaboratively together with organizations like OAS and others in the region to increase collaboration among the nations.”

Brian Lenihan
Executive Director, SelectUSA
U.S. Department of Commerce
The ACE 10 was convened by the OAS as the RIAC Technical Secretariat; the Government of the United States, through the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of State; and the Government of Argentina’s Ministry of Production, as Chair Pro Tempore of RIAC (September 2017-2019).

“No one country or no one company can single-handedly solve some of the technological challenges on the horizon, nor solely reap the economic benefits associated with solving those challenges ... In America, we have a culture of entrepreneurship that we are willing to share with the rest of the world”.

Ian Steff,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing,
International Trade Administration,
U.S. Department of Commerce

**Agenda Overview**

Leaders from the Americas and beyond had unique opportunities to share knowledge and strengthen their contact network, and to explore mutually beneficial collaborations in the following sites visited during ACE 10:

The Vault ~ The Commonwealth Club ~ QB3 UCSF ~Cisco Systems ~NASA Ames Center ~ Seymour Marine Discovery Center ~ National Steinbeck Center ~ Taylor Fresh Foods ~ Hahn Estate ~ Hartnell College ~ Monterey Bay Aquarium ~ Los Banos ~ California State University, Fresno ~ WET Center ~ Bitwise Industries ~ Product Incubator (PI) Shop ~ Museum Arte Americas ~ Almond Orchard ~ Golden 1 Center ~ Urban Hive ~ Farm to Fork networking activities ~ Leland Stanford Mansion State Historic Park ~ UC Davis ~ Bayer Crop Science ~California Museum ~ among others
Day 1 – San Francisco

The program kicked off on Sunday, October 21st in San Francisco. After registration, the participants headed to The Vault, which is a full-stack innovation ecosystem and a global network of start-up accelerators and collaborative workspaces. The official welcome, program overview, and introduction were presented by Dr. Barrett Haga, Senior Administrator for Economic Engagement at the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Cesar Parga, Chief of the Competitiveness, Innovation and Technology Section at the OAS. Dr. Glenda Humiston, Vice President of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) at the University of California (UC) then introduced the ACE 10 program week ahead and the day continued with a tour and lightning talks at The Vault. The day ended with an opening ceremony and networking reception where John Andersen, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Western Hemisphere at the U.S. Department of Commerce, Dr. Humiston, Dr. Maryse Robert, Director of Economic Development at the OAS, and Dr. Gemi José González López, Consul General at the Consulate of Mexico in San Francisco, offered welcoming remarks.

Day 2 – San Francisco/Silicon Valley

The second day of the program, Monday, October 22nd, started in Mission Bay at QB3, a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in the life sciences located within the University of California, San Francisco. The delegation participated in an interactive overview of advances in biotechnology. The group was also introduced to UC Berkeley Skydeck, an accelerator for promising startups affiliated with University of California, and Nextbiotics, a Biotech startup. The group then departed for Silicon Valley to visit Cisco System, a worldwide leader in information technology, networking, and cybersecurity solutions. The group received a “technology welcome overview” and a presentation led by Cisco System’s Chief of Staff for Customer Experience, Joel Barbier. The visit continued with lunch and a panel discussion featuring leading accelerators, incubators, funders, and youth development programs. The panel discussion showcased how the world-class innovation ecosystem of Silicon Valley works in practice. It focused on the elements that make Silicon Valley successful, and how diversity and international partnerships can further enhance competitiveness.
The third stop of the day was NASA Ames Research Center with a welcome speech by the Deputy Director, Carol Carroll and a panel about Public-Private Partnerships, Young Innovators, and a Global Entrepreneurship Ecosystem. After the panel, the participants took a tour of Future Flight Central, a sophisticated simulator helping NASA identify and solve difficult airport and air traffic control, and the NASA Advanced Supercomputing Facility, showcasing world-class supercomputing resources and services customized to apply space science on Earth.

The ACE 10 program then departed to Santa Cruz. At Seymour Marine Discovery Center, Vice Mayor of Santa Cruz, the Honorable Martine Watkins, and Dr. George Blumenthal, Chancellor at the University of California, Santa Cruz gave welcoming remarks. The group attended a presentation of Community-University Partnerships in Technology and Innovation and participated in a strolling reception and networking activity with community leaders and entrepreneurs before heading to Monterey.

**Day 3 – Monterey Bay Area**

The third day, Tuesday, October 23rd, started at the National Steinbeck Center with a welcome presentation by the Mayor of the City of Salinas, the Honorable Joe Gunter, followed by a panel on Salinas Valley Agriculture. The group discussed how to create an ecosystem to support new technologies and start-ups, including mentorships, co-working space, and investment programs, in smart farm technologies for Agriculture Technology (AgTech) companies globally. The tour continued to Taylor Fresh Foods and later to Hahn Estate for a presentation and tour of the facilities highlighting the use of technology in agriculture and wine industries. The next stop was Hartnell College which included an Industry and Technology Showcase with rotating demonstrations of agricultural technologies and workforce development partnerships with industry aimed at preparing students for in-demand jobs.

The day concluded with a visit to Monterey Bay Aquarium where participants enjoyed dinner by the Open Sea Exposition, followed by welcoming remarks from the Mayor of the City of Monterey, the Honorable Clyde Roberson, and the Honorable Congressman Jimmy Panetta. Later, the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Agenda, the Seafood Watch Program, Think Beyond Plastics initiative, and Sustainable Tourism practices were presented and discussed with the group.
Day 4 – San Joaquin Valley

On Wednesday, October 24th, Mayor Mike Villalta and Cannon Michael, President of Bowles Farming Company, welcomed the group in the City of Los Banos. During the visit, the delegation interacted with Los Banos leadership, future farmers of America, and key local businesses.

The second stop of the day was at the Water, Energy, and Technology (WET) Center at California State University, Fresno, where local leaders showcased the assets of the university and shared testimonials from international businesses and entrepreneurs. After lunch, the president of California State University, Joseph I. Castro provided closing remarks before the group headed to a tour through the University Farm Laboratory.

The day continued with a visit to Bitwise Industries, where the group was welcomed by the Honorable Lee Brand, Mayor of Fresno. After a tour of the academic facilities, the group departed to PI shop, Fresno’s newest innovative incubator and a “micro-factory” for entrepreneurs to design, test, build or manufacture products. There, participants had an opportunity to give their “Golden Pitches” outlining what they were looking to achieve through the ACE program.

The last activity of the day was a Reception and Networking Dinner showcasing locally grown products in Fresno, one of the world’s most productive agricultural regions at the Museum Arte Americas.

Day 5 – Sacramento

Before departing to Sacramento, participants visited an Almond Orchard to learn about strategies the region is developing to combat insect destruction of almond crops through Smart Mating Disruption Insect Control and Precision Orchard Management Systems.

In Sacramento, participants enjoyed lunch at the Golden 1 Center, home of the NBA Sacramento Kings. Several high-level officials from the community provided remarks to the group, including Congresswoman Doris Okada Matsui and the Mayor of the City of Sacramento, Darrell Steinberg. The visit concluded with a tour through the stadium, highlighting its innovative resources and its connection to the economic vitality of the community in Sacramento.
Later, participants arrived at Urban Hive, a local co-working space. Molly Weber, founder of Urban Hive, Louis Stewart, Chief Innovation Officer at the City of Sacramento, and Evan Schmidt, Director of Strategy and Evaluation at Valley Vision welcomed the group with an overview of the Sacramento Region’s innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. Participants learned how Sacramento is developing a thriving ecosystem for start-ups and growing businesses across all industries, supported by new public investments in facilities, services, and equipment. Before the tour through the facility, the group listened to a discussion roundtable featuring female leadership and critical assets of the region’s innovation ecosystem including maker spaces, manufacturing incubators, universities, and academic institutes, public-private partnerships and investments, business and industry partnerships, and support services. To end the night, the delegation was broken down into groups and directed to local restaurants, where participants and local hosts networked in America’s Farm to Fork Capital.

**Day 6 – Sacramento**

The last day of the tour, Friday, October 26th started at the Leland Stanford Mansion State Historic Park with welcome remarks from Congressman Ami Bera, Robert Nelsen, President of the California State University, Sacramento, and Brian Lenihan, Executive Director of Select USA, the federal government’s investment promotion arm. It continued with a policy roundtable, where State legislative and agency officials discussed California’s leadership role in international trade and investment, economic development, resiliency and infrastructure, and innovative public policy on the green economy.

Next the group departed to the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) where Dr. Ralph Hexter, Associate Vice Chancellor and Provost at UC Davis, Dr. Joanna Regulska, Vice Provost and Associate Chancellor of Global Affairs, and the Honorable Brett Lee, Mayor of the City of Davis welcomed the group, followed by a presentation of UC Davis Global Health Initiative.

During lunch, the delegation attended a discussion panel about “Women and Policy in STEM” with Jennifer Curtis, Dean of the College of Engineering at UC Davis, and Maryse Robert, Director of Economic Development at the Organization of American States, as speakers. They talked best good practices to cultivate a global ecosystem for women in STEM. This activity was followed by interactive discussions on UC Davis innovations, partnerships, and opportunities for collaboration to foster economic development. The following programs and institutions were presented: UCD Venture Catalyst, UCD Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Verde Innovation Network for Entrepreneurship, and Innovation Institute for Food and Health. The last activities at UC Davis consisted of Sensory Testing, a demonstration on the Science of Taste, and a tour around the Robert Mondavi Institute for Food and Wine Science.
The next stop was Bayer Crop Science in West Sacramento, where the participants visited the campus and research labs. The tour included the new CoLaborator incubator for life science start-ups, which is equipped with a wet lab, office infrastructure, and access to research expertise as part of global innovation ecosystem partners.

The program concluded with a reception and dinner at the California Museum in Sacramento. There, organizers handed over ACE Participant Awards in recognition of the outstanding work of the group to strengthen collaboration among countries and promote innovation and entrepreneurship. The ACE Committee also presented the Fernando Sierra Award to Virginia Avila, Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Government of Tucuman, Argentina, for nurturing the innovative, entrepreneurial, and collaborative spirit across the Americas and beyond.
THE DELEGATION

Link to Bios

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SURVEY AT-A-GLANCE

36 countries represented in a highly competitive selection process

The Open Call for Applications was launched on July 11th, 2018, over 200 applications were received from 36 countries along with 3 international organizations.

48 participants from 23 countries

The ACE 10 had a geographic diversity with 48 leaders on innovation and entrepreneurship representing 23 countries from the Americas and beyond (20 from OAS Member States and 3 from outside the region) as well as 3 International Organizations.
The ACE Program is committed to empowering women in leadership positions and in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields, to foster inclusive economic development.

20 women leaders participated in the program from 12 countries

ACE 10 also created dialogue opportunities to promote social inclusion and gender balance in STEM fields. Some of the activities included the Discussion Panel about Silicon Valley Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Cisco Systems; the Public-Private Partnerships, Young Innovators, and a Global Entrepreneurship Ecosystem at NASA Ames Center; the Discussion Roundtable on Sacramento’s Region Innovation Ecosystem at Urban Hive; and the Presentation on Women and Policy in STEM at UC Davis.

The 10th Edition of the ACE continues to engage participants from the public, private and academic sector, ensuring a multi-stakeholder approach to the promotion of good practices and policies on innovation and entrepreneurship.

Participants by sector

Note: Other includes NGOs, public-private partnerships, research organizations, etc.
Post-Survey

To evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the program, participants were asked to complete pre- and post-surveys that included questions related to their experience in the program, best practices shared, lessons learned, among others. 42 out of 48 participants (around 88%) responded the post-survey as of 12/11/2018.

According to the ACE 10 Survey, participants consider the program to be instrumental in exchanging lessons learned to accelerate innovation-driven entrepreneurship and expand their network to advance businesses and trade.

How well did the ACE program meet your objectives?

- Greatly exceeds expectations (52%)
- Exceeded expectations (33%)
- Meets expectations (12%)
- Needs improvement (3%)
- Did not meet my expectations (0%)

How likely are you to recommend the ACE program?

- Extremely likely (83%)
- Very likely (15%)
- Somewhat likely (2%)
- Not likely (0%)
- Not at all likely (0%)
Fulfilled Objectives

97% of the participants said the program met or exceeded their expectations

98% of the participants would recommend the program

Participants reported that they were interested in participating in ACE Alumni engagement initiatives and keep in contact with the ACE Community to strengthen their network. Participants preferred this communication be through email newsletters, the ACE website, and RIAC social media. Regarding the information they would like to receive, participants are interested in learning about upcoming events, collaboration opportunities, best practices, lessons learned, joint projects, and research.

40+ projects and hundreds of best practices featured in 7 cities

Multiplier Effect

340+ new best practices were demonstrated during the program that could be implemented by the participants.

Good Prospective Outcomes

125+ potential outcomes were reported

Advancing Social Inclusion

93% of participants implemented or are planning to implement strategies to promote gender and youth inclusion
Post-Survey

“The environment you created for participants’ integration to find collaboration opportunities is fantastic. Thank you.”

Celio Vaz, President, Orbital Engenharia S.A., Brazil

“It is an awesome experience. We are grateful for the great job done by every sponsor, including the California Team.”

Velia Govaere, Coordinator of the Observatory of Foreign Trade, UNED, Costa Rica

“You are doing an amazing job with this program! ACE is life-changing, not just for the persons involved but for entire countries and regions. ACE is changing the World!”

Dennell Florius, Entrepreneur, EcoCarib Inc., Saint Lucia.

“I want to thank the organizers and organizations that supported ACE 10. I greatly appreciate the opportunity for my region to be represented and hope to continue participating.”

Nicole Griensewic Mickelson, Executive Director, Region Nine Development Commission, United States.

“I think the ACE program is a fantastic mechanism for global entrepreneurial development and engagement.”

Anderson Cumberbatch, Chief Business Development Adviser, Ministry of Small Business, Entrepreneurship, and Commerce, Barbados
“Thanks to the whole team from the US and the OAS for the outstanding program and quality of the conversations and guests. Very impressive.”

Anderson Cumberbatch,
Chief Business Development Adviser,
Ministry of Small Business,
Entrepreneurship, and Commerce,
Barbados

“Thanks for the organization of this programs and for allowing us to participate. I think it’s important to do something in the short term based on this program; I will be very open to including more people from my country.”

Nancy Perez,
Director of Knowledge Management and Technological Innovation,
Universidad del Desarrollo,
Chile

“This program is an excellent and beneficial project. I look forward to future participation.”

Oral Shaw, Principal Director,
Ministry of Industry, Commerce,
Agriculture, and Fisheries,
Jamaica

“This was a superb event and organization. It is important to keep momentum and devise specific collaboration.”

Marco Kamiya, Coordinator,
Urban of the Economy and Finance Branch,
UN-HABITAT.

“ACE 10 proved to be an excellent opportunity to learn best practices on entrepreneurship and innovation to support local economic development. It was immensely useful to learn some of the methodologies used by cities in northern California to attract and generate investment. I was also great to network with colleagues from the Americas to learn and share experiences.”

Kwesi Roberts,
Business Development Officer,
OECS
Visual and Communications Aids

**TripBook**

The TripBook is a document for participants to review before, during, and after the ACE 10. It contains information about the program, including host communities, key sites, and opportunities for collaboration; the agenda; bios and social media of all participants; principal speakers; and the organizers of the program.

The TripBook is an important instrument for decision-makers to learn how the tour was organized, get a glimpse of all the companies and institutions included in the exchange and identify the main sectors of interest to make further connections and possible collaborations.
WhatsApp Group

Participants are included in a WhatsApp group to improve networking, stay connected to the program and RIAC activities, establish further collaboration opportunities, share information on initiatives and best practices, and being up-to-date on what each participant is doing to enhance innovation and entrepreneurship in their countries.

Golden Pitches

A new activity was introduced in the ACE 10 for participants to have an additional opportunity to network and explore the potential collaborations and partnerships. The participants were encouraged to individually share at least one “Golden Pitch,” by recording a video and posting it in Social Media, sending it to the 10 ACE WhatsApp group or sharing it with the delegation during the tour. This pitch was designed as a communication tool for participants to introduce themselves to the group and share their goals and offers to the program, aiming to promote connections and potential collaborations.

Media Outlets and Social Media

Press Releases

Media: California Chamber of Commerce
Title: CalChamber Hosts U.S. Department of Commerce Official
Date: 10/26/2018

Media: Caribbean Business
Title: Puerto Rico to host 11th Americas Competitiveness Exchange
Date: 10/24/2018
https://caribbeanbusiness.com/puerto-rico-to-host-11th-americas-competitiveness-exchange/
Media: abc30 Action News
Title: International and national leaders visit the Valley during Americas Competitiveness Exchange program
Date: 10/24/2018

Media: Fresno State
Title: Delegation from Americas Competitiveness Exchange visits campus
Date: 10/22/2018

Media: Valley Vision
Title: California to host tenth Americas Competitiveness Exchange
Date: 10/12/2018
https://valleyvision.org/california-host-tenth-americas-competitiveness-exchange/

Media: U.S. Economic Development Administration
Title: U.S. Commerce Department announces Tenth Americas Competitiveness Exchange
Date: 10/12/2018

Media: Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
Title: Applications are open for 10th Americas Competitiveness Exchanges on Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Date: 08/08/2018
https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/applications-are-open-for-10th-americas-competitiveness-exchanges-on-innovation-and-entrepreneurship/

Media: Ord Forward
Title: ACE10 Tour
Date: 08/08/2018
https://ordforward.org/ace10-tour/
Media: Saint Lucia News Online
Title: Applications are open for 10th Americas Competitiveness Exchanges on Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Date: 08/08/2018
https://www.stlucianewsonline.com/applications-are-open-for-10th-americas-competitiveness-exchanges-on-innovation-and-entrepreneurship/

Media: Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA)
Title: 10th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship
Date: 07/25/2018

Media: California Association for Local Economic Development
Title: EDA Calls For Applications to Attend the Americas Competitiveness Exchange
Date: 07/17/2018
https://caled.org/eda-calls-for-applications-to-attend-the-americas-competitiveness-exchange/

Media: Valley Vision
Title: Bringing partnerships across the Americas to Sacramento
Date: 04/18/2018
https://valleyvision.org/bringing-partnerships-across-americas-sacramento/

Media: Fresno State: Office of Community & Economic Development
Title: Central Valley AgPLUS Gearing Up for Americas Competitiveness Exchange
Date: 05/2018
http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/oced/oced-newsletter/may-2018/ace.html

Media: GOV.UK
Title: US-UK Trade and Investment Working Group - statement
Date: 04/03/2018
Media: Sacramento Business Journal
Title: International delegation will be looking for trade, research partners
Date: 03/13/2018

Media: Valley Vision
Title: University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources and Valley Vision to host exchange in Northern California promoting economic partnerships across the Americas
Date: 03/13/2018

Media: ANR NEWS RELEASES - UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Title: UC ANR to host exchange in Northern California promoting business partnerships across the Americas
Date: 03/13/2018
http://www.ucanr.org/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=26598

Media: UCCE Sonoma County
Title: UC ANR to host exchange in Northern California promoting business partnerships across the Americas
Date: 03/13/2018
http://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/index.cfm/?blogpost=26598&blogasset=9611

Media: Valley Vision
Title: Project: ACE 10 – Americas Competitiveness Exchange
https://valleyvision.org/projects/ace-10-americas-competitiveness-exchange/

Media: UNAPEC
Title: Call for Applications 10th Americas Competitiveness Exchanges on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE) Deadline to apply: August 10th
https://internacional.unapec.edu.do/?p=5971
PowerPoint Presentations

The VINE Institute
UC Agriculture and Natural Resources

Increasing Jobs at Home by Expanding U.S. Exports
U.S. Commercial Service, U.S. Department of Commerce – International Trade Administration

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies
U.S. Economic Development Administration

THE VAULT WELCOMES ACE 2018

Welcome ACE 2018
Paul Kallmes, The Vault

Overview of the Northern California megaregion
Egon Terplan, SPUR

Central Valley AgPlus Food and Beverage Manufacturing Consortium
Trish Kelly, Valley Vision

Digital Vortex: How Today’s Business Leaders Can Beat Disruptive Competitors at Their Own Game
Joel Barbier, Cisco CX Operations

Integrating Human, Animal and Environmental Dimensions into Pandemic Preparedness
Christine K. Johnson, University of California, Davis
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