



Energy and Climate
Partnership of the Americas

A Decade-Plus of Cooperation



2020



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) appreciates the ongoing financial support provided to the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA) by the government of the United States, through its Permanent Mission to the OAS. This funding has made it possible for the ECPA Technical Coordination Unit to operate and has facilitated many initiatives throughout the region.

A Sustainable Partnership

Through the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA), countries in the Western Hemisphere exchange ideas and forge solutions to help them achieve a more sustainable energy future.

A Committed Partnership

While their specific policies and strategies may vary, all the countries participating in ECPA—members of the Organization of American States (OAS)—share key goals: More renewable energy. Cleaner fossil fuels. Maximum energy efficiency. Improved energy integration. Climate-smart infrastructure. Greater resilience.

Such objectives are in sync with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a blueprint for peace and prosperity. In fact, several of the Sustainable Development Goals focus on energy and the environment.



Building on this foundation of shared commitments, ECPA provides a regional platform for cooperation. It brings together governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector to implement initiatives and explore solutions to the challenges every country faces as it strives to “ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all,” in the words of Sustainable Development Goal 7.

The challenges are many and the stakes high. Former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet put it this way, at the Third Ministerial Meeting of ECPA, held in Chile in 2017:



Michelle Bachelet
Former Chilean President

“The energy transition is one of our most urgent tasks. There is no time to lose if we are to reduce the most polluting emissions and prevent climate change from getting worse.”

A Flexible Partnership

Since its beginnings, more than a decade ago, ECPA has been a simple, flexible mechanism, designed to encourage cooperation and address evolving needs and priorities. Almost all the OAS member countries participate, through their energy ministries or other agencies designated as **national focal points**.

Ministerial Meetings: The region's ministers of energy or the environment meet periodically to establish the direction for ECPA to follow. They adopt a detailed Action Plan, laying out the initiatives that each government plans to take on its own, or in collaboration with other countries or international agencies, to meet critical energy goals.

The first ministerial meetings took place in Washington, D.C.; Mérida, Mexico; and Viña del Mar, Chile. Jamaica is scheduled to host the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of ECPA in February 2020.



THE AMERICAS



UNITED STATES



MEXICO



JAMAICA



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



COSTA RICA



PANAMA



CHILE



ARGENTINA

Steering Committee

ECPA's ongoing operations are guided by a Steering Committee, currently made up of nine countries: Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States. With the assistance of the ECPA Technical Coordination Unit, the Steering Committee promotes dialogue, fosters the exchange of best practices, and facilitates regional coordination on energy-related issues.

ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES



Technical Coordination Unit

Part of the General Secretariat of the OAS, the Technical Coordination Unit supports every aspect of ECPA. Among other activities, it coordinates official meetings, public discussion forums, and workshops; facilitates participation by outside organizations; and handles public outreach through its website, a monthly newsletter, and social media. In the lead-up to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of ECPA, it organized a series of Ministerial Dialogues on several key issues: electric mobility, gender and energy, urban resilience, and natural gas.

An Effective Partnership

Through webinars, workshops, and other events, ECPA aims to build expertise and capacity in the region on subjects related to sustainable energy. In 2019, for example, a technical workshop in Mexico City brought together experts on the front lines of monitoring air quality in nine countries in Central and South America, to share knowledge about how to make their systems more robust and accurate. This effort, which received support from the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), was part of a broader, continuing initiative on using metrology—the science of measurement—to meet high energy and environmental standards in the Americas. ECPA and NIST have also been working with the eight countries in the Central American Integration System (SICA) to develop a common set of efficiency and performance standards for lighting.

ECPA has provided technical assistance and funding to support projects in different countries. Examples include a program to introduce sustainable packaging production in Trinidad and Tobago and the installation of solar photovoltaic systems at the National Energy Commission in the Dominican Republic and in Shirley Heights National Park in Antigua and Barbuda.

Over the past decade, dozens of diverse initiatives have been deployed under the auspices of ECPA, with support from the OAS General Secretariat, member countries, international organizations, universities, and other entities. In some cases, the focus has been on a subregion—such as efforts to promote sustainable communities in Central America and the Caribbean or to provide technical assistance in geothermal energy for countries in the Andean region. Other projects have been more locally oriented—such as one that looked at how to improve energy efficiency in municipal buildings in three cities in Brazil, Chile, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Information about all ECPA initiatives is available on the website (ecpamericas.org).



ECPA Mission

To promote regional energy cooperation through different strategies and actions for achieving energy development that is cleaner, safer, and more efficient, modern, and fair.

ECPA Vision

Shared leadership in the implementation of energy initiatives and the exchange of experiences among the countries of the Americas in support of the Sustainable Development Goals.





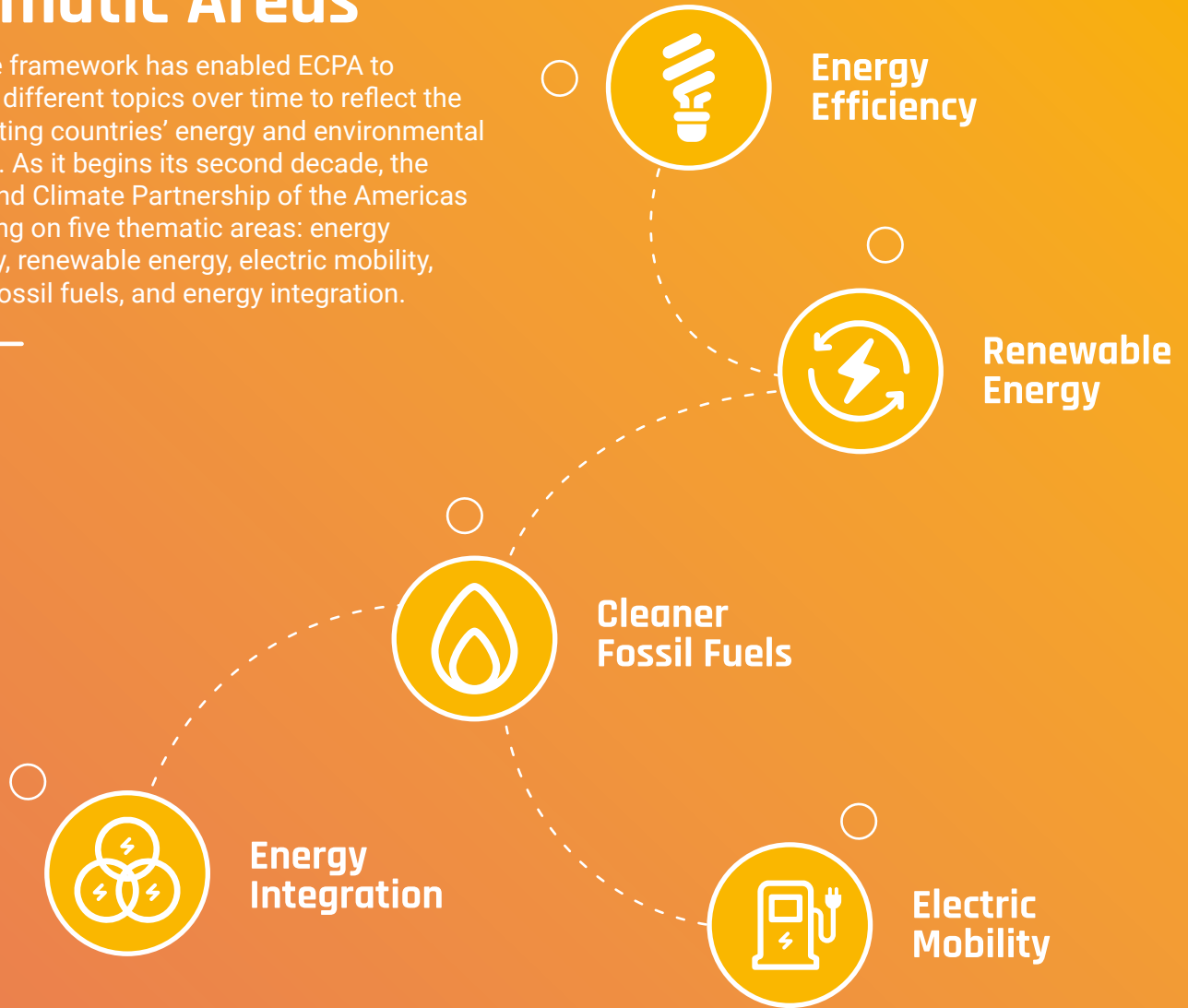
Luis Almagro

OAS Secretary General

“The boom in renewable energy gives us a unique opportunity to spearhead the global energy transition and ensure universal access to energy for everyone in the Americas.”

Thematic Areas

A flexible framework has enabled ECPA to highlight different topics over time to reflect the participating countries' energy and environmental priorities. As it begins its second decade, the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas is focusing on five thematic areas: energy efficiency, renewable energy, electric mobility, cleaner fossil fuels, and energy integration.



Energy Efficiency

What energy could be cleaner and more cost-effective than energy that is never used in the first place? Energy efficiency is often considered a resource in its own right—a “hidden fuel” that has the potential to cut costs, increase energy access, reduce air pollution, and improve energy security, among other benefits. And, as the International Energy Agency has noted, energy efficiency “is the one energy resource all countries possess in abundance.” Mexico is one country in the region with extensive experience in this area; in fact, its program to improve energy efficiency in public buildings dates back to the 1990s.



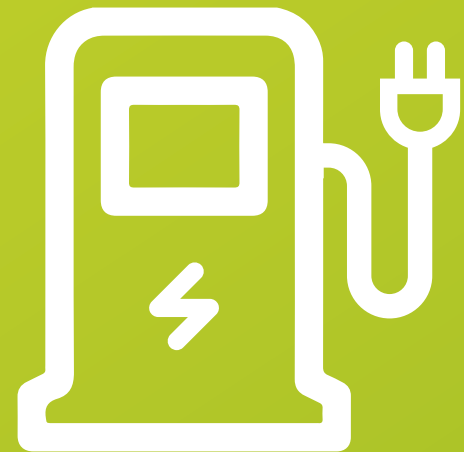


Renewable Energy

Several Latin American countries have high percentages of renewables in their electricity mix, due in part to their vast hydroelectric resources. Meanwhile, investments in solar and wind energy are on the rise throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, as the region seeks to capitalize on its natural assets. Wind energy accounted for 8% of the electricity Brazil generated in 2018, up from 0.4% in 2010; Argentina's wind and solar capacity has also skyrocketed. Geothermal plants are already producing renewable, reliable energy in several countries, notably Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, with exploration or development underway from Peru and Ecuador to Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Electric Mobility

Electric vehicles—whether scooters, cars, buses, or trains—are an attractive option across the region. Small countries such as Barbados and Uruguay have taken advantage of their limited geographical area to put a national infrastructure in place for charging electric vehicles. Among big cities, Santiago, Chile, has led the way on electric buses; in Colombia, Bogotá, Medellín, and Cali are all expanding their fleets. Costa Rica, for its part, is seeking to capitalize on its virtually 100% renewable power grid by having more of its public transportation run on electricity. Many countries have adopted tax incentives to promote electric mobility.



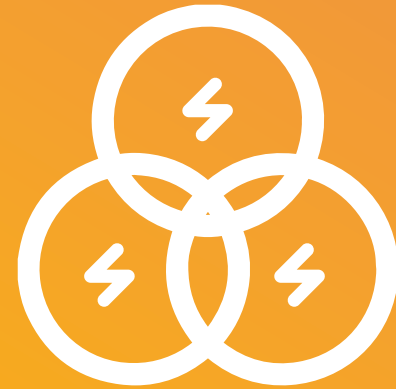
Cleaner Fossil Fuels

Natural gas is often considered a transition fuel—a bridge to renewable energy—because of its ability to provide reliable baseload power that is cleaner to burn than fuel oil or coal. Extracted from the ground in gas form and typically moved to market by pipeline, this resource can also be cooled and turned into liquefied natural gas (LNG), transported by ship, and then converted back to gas for use as a fuel. In recent years, Jamaica, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Panama are just some of the countries that have increased the use of natural gas for electric power generation. A surge in U.S. shale gas production is driving new LNG distribution networks in the Caribbean Basin.



Energy Integration

Being able to buy, sell, and deliver energy across borders—whether through natural gas shipments or electric transmission lines—can make energy systems more cost-effective, secure, and resilient. Integrating power grids, in both infrastructure and regulatory frameworks, allows electricity to move between countries efficiently to meet fluctuating supply and demand. A more interconnected region could expand the reach of renewable energy sources and complement the power supply in countries with different climates, seasonal conditions, or time zones, according to a 2017 study by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).



2009

APRIL

Fifth Summit of the Americas *Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago*

The U.S. government proposes the creation of an Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas

JUNE

Americas Energy and Climate Symposium *Lima, Peru*

The region's governments establish five initial areas of cooperation—energy efficiency, renewable energy, fossil fuels, energy infrastructure, and energy poverty—and designate the OAS as the ECPA Technical Coordination Unit

2010

APRIL

First ECPA Ministerial Meeting *Washington, D.C., United States*

Delegations from more than 30 countries discuss steps forward to promote sustainable energy

2011

APRIL

Regional Dialogue on Critical Energy Issues & ECPA Meeting *Panama City, Panama*

In a series of panel discussions and breakout sessions, more than 150 participants talk about their countries' most pressing energy-related challenges

MILESTONES OF A DECADE+



2012

APRIL

Sixth Summit of the Americas
Cartagena, Colombia
Colombia and the United States launch Connect 2022, an initiative to expand access to electricity throughout the Americas

2013

JUNE

Connect 2022 Ministerial
Washington, D.C.
Representatives of the member countries of the Central American Electrical Interconnection System (SIEPAC) sign the Action Plan for Consolidation of the Regional Electricity Market

2014

MAY

First Preparatory Meeting for ECPA Ministerial, held on the fringes of the International Renewable Energy Forum
Quintana Roo, Mexico
The region's governments review progress on ECPA and begin to lay the groundwork for the next ministerial meeting

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

Preparatory Meetings for ECPA Ministerial

Miami, Florida; Montevideo, Uruguay; Guatemala City, Guatemala

The preparatory meetings obtain input from different regions, with the participation of civil society and the private sector



2015

MAY

Second ECPA Ministerial Meeting

Merida, Yucatan, Mexico

Under the theme “Promoting Energy Investment and Sustainability through Reform,” the governments define priority areas and establish the ECPA Steering Committee to facilitate implementation

AUGUST

Launch of ECPA Steering Committee

Santiago, Chile

The original members of the Steering Committee—Chile, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States—begin work on an Action Plan

2016

OCTOBER

Preparatory Meeting for ECPA Ministerial

Miami, Florida, United States

Nearly a year ahead of the Third Ministerial, ECPA representatives begin to offer ideas to help shape the agenda

2017

MAY

Preparatory Meeting for ECPA Ministerial

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Energy efficiency and renewable energy emerge as top priorities as representatives of 28 countries identify their main challenges

SEPTEMBER

Third ECPA Ministerial Meeting

Santiago, Chile

Energy efficiency and renewable energy emerge as top priorities as representatives of 28 countries identify their main challenges



2018

NOVEMBER

Preparatory Meeting for ECPA Ministerial

Miami, Florida, United States

As they look ahead to the Fourth Ministerial in Jamaica, participants propose topics they would like to see on the table and discuss the critical role of the private sector

2019

APRIL

Preparatory Meeting for ECPA Ministerial

San José, Costa Rica

Representatives begin to flesh out details of an agenda focused on “Energy Resilience and Investment Opportunities”

MAY - OCTOBER - NOVEMBER - DECEMBER

Ministerial Dialogue Series

Washington, D.C.

A dialogue series held at the OAS explores issues designed to enrich the discussions in Jamaica—Electric Mobility in the Americas; Gender and Energy; Building Urban Resilience; and Investing in Natural Gas

NOVEMBER

Launch of the Fourth ECPA Ministerial

Kingston, Jamaica

At a kickoff event in the nation’s capital, Energy Minister Fayval Williams stresses the role of energy in meeting the Sustainable Development Goals

2020

FEBRUARY

Fourth ECPA Ministerial

Montego Bay, Jamaica

Building on the progress made in the three previous ECPA ministerial meetings, energy ministers from around the Americas seek to expand access to clean, affordable energy and advance the region’s prosperity



National Focal Points

Designated institutions known as national focal points represent their countries' interests within ECPA. The national focal points help shape policy and enable governments to maintain fluid lines of communication with each other and with the ECPA Technical Coordination Unit.



ECPA Partners

ECPA is essentially a partnership of countries, but it also relies on a broader network of strategic partners to advance shared energy goals. These partners—which include universities, think tanks, multilateral agencies, development banks, and nongovernmental organizations—bring new resources and fresh ideas to the table and enable ECPA initiatives to have a broader reach.

To cite just a few examples, in 2019 ECPA and the IDB joined forces to hold a conference in Chile on “Electric Mobility in the Americas.” ECPA also helped sponsor the Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum, a Caribbean Community (CARICOM) event held in the Bahamas in 2017 and Belize in 2018. ECPA has also collaborated on projects with organizations such as the Clean Energy Solutions Center and the German development agency GIZ. It worked with the Caribbean Examinations Council to develop a multidisciplinary “green engineering syllabus” to help students develop problem-solving skills.

Because business plays such a pivotal role in harnessing the region’s energy potential, communication between the public and private sectors is critical. ECPA cooperates closely with the energy working group of the Americas Business Dialogue, a high-level, private sector-led initiative facilitated by the IDB to promote greater opportunities for economic growth and development.

Since ECPA began in 2009, the United States has provided funding for its activities and initiatives.

Fourth Ministerial Meeting

Energy ministers and other high-level officials from North, Central, and South America and the Caribbean will meet in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on February 27-28, 2020, for the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas. The theme of the meeting will be “Energy Resilience and Investment Opportunities.”

During a visit to the OAS in late 2018, Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness called the country’s decision to host the ministerial meeting “a demonstration of our commitment to developing renewable sources of energy and addressing the high cost of energy.”

“I believe that if Jamaica is to achieve its full potential, we must diversify our energy sources with a view to achieving complete energy security,” he said. The ministerial meeting, Holness said, will support that objective in Jamaica and the Americas as a whole.





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