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Universidad de La Sabana

2ND CONFERENCE ON EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS 2026

DEVELOPING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY **FOR INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH MANAGEMENT:**

Perspectives from Latin America

A CHALLENGING FUNDING LANDSCAPE FOR GLOBAL SOUTH RESEARCH (CLACSO, 2025)

1. Imbalance in research capacities across countries:

Low investment in human resources, weak infrastructures, less cross-sector connections, fragile institutions.

→ Unequal access to international funds, benefiting consolidated research elites (Matthew Effect).

2. Lower capacity reduces influence in research agendas and ToRs.

→ Less context-sensitive solutions for and from the Global South.

3. Decision-making imbalance in internationally funded projects.

→ Data ownership and visibility remain in Northern institutions.

SPECIFIC CHALLENGES **IN LATIN AMERICA:**

- Research management infrastructures are still emerging.
- Government investment focuses on doctoral training.
- Increased PhD output and scientific production.
- HEIs play a central role.
- Limited institutional RM capacity and international experience.

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Strategic partnership between **International Cooperation** and **Research Development Units:** Pre-award and post-award support across the project lifecycle.

Capacity Building:
I2LATAM Project – European Commission funded initiative coordinated by Universidad de La Sabana.

i2latam

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP RESULTS (2019–2025):

- **44** international projects.
- **USD 3.2 M** secured.
- **5** International organizations and funders from 11 countries.
- **160+** partners.

NEXT STEPS: AN ACTION RESEARCH DISSERTATION PROJECT

Perception of Institutional Support

- Bureaucracy and rules turn into negative faculty experiences.
- Bypassing processes and unreasonable demands lead to PS's frustration.

Faculty-Staff Partnerships

- Partnerships are critical.
- Strong PI-PS relationships develop ownership, coordination and co-responsibility.

Root Causes of Strained Relationship

- Unclear processes.
- Unclear roles.

Action Research Project within **doctoral dissertation framework.**

Cycle 1: Diagnostic findings.

Cycle 2: Structured collaborative experiences between faculty and professional staff.

Purpose	*Input*	*Activities*	*Outputs*	*Outcomes*
To test whether structured collaborative experiences between faculty and PS improve perceptions of institutional support and enhance relationship quality.	Participation from 10-12 faculty-staff pairs. Formal process. Real cases of funding applications.	4 structured collaborative sessions + Collaborative work between sessions.	Participant journals. Pre- and post-survey data. Observations. Interview transcripts. Stakeholder log.	Improved perception of institutional support (RQ_1). Enhanced relationships between faculty and staff (RQ_2). Improved grant submissions and success rates. Improved participation in the funding landscape.

Short term → **Long term**

Cyclic Adaptations

Action Step — **Results Evaluation**

Key Recommendations for International Partners:

- Invest in long-term internal and external partnerships.
- Enable Global South institutions to coordinate projects.
- Be aware of institutional capacity constraints.
- Mentor RMAs and ICOs as part of your projects.
- Include RM capacity building in grant proposals.

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