DEAR APPLICANT,

“We would like to welcome ACE 13 to Colorado, where innovation runs deep, and our passion for collaboration runs deeper.”

The Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) is going to Colorado, where nature meets high tech to spark innovation! With over 300 days of sunshine each year and entrepreneurial activity around every corner, Colorado is sure to be an outstanding host of the ACE program.

The program will take place from May 17 – 22, 2020, in the City and County of Denver, Jefferson County, and El Paso County, Colorado.

We encourage you to apply and be part of this unique regional program designed for the 50 top performers in economic development, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the Americas and beyond. In ACE 13, you will be able to learn first-hand about Colorado’s innovation-driven, dynamic, and diverse business-friendly economy and unparalleled work-life balance, world-class research and development facilities, as well as global access to collaboration and investment opportunities.

ACE 13 will visit and connect with innovation hubs, research centers, academic institutions, private sector partners, state and local governments, and nonprofit entities from around the heart of Colorado; known as the Front Range. Participants will also interact with people who are engineering the cities of the future, accelerating business development, promoting the bio-economy, building the next generation of spacecraft, reinventing the manufacturing process, leading wildfire mitigation efforts, supporting critical defense and intelligence operations, and solving some of the world’s most challenging healthcare issues.

The ACE is the Premier Economic Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurial Network of the Americas. It serves as a regional platform to boost international and regional partnerships, increase trade and investment, strengthen innovation and competitiveness, and foster inclusive economic development in the Americas and other regions. It is a flagship program of the Organization of American States that successfully connects decision-makers from the Americas and beyond and serves as a catalyst for economic development initiatives.

The ACE is convened by the Organization of American States (OAS) as the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) Technical Secretariat; the Government of the United States, through the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) in coordination with the International Trade Administration (ITA); and the U.S. Department of State.

Apply today to the #ACXchange!

Applications will be open until March 25, 2020.

The ACE Organizers
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1. THE AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS EXCHANGE (ACE) #ACXchange

The Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) brings together up to 50 senior-level government, business, policy, and economic decision-makers from across the Americas and beyond to experience first-hand the diverse range of projects, strategic investments, public-private partnerships, and best practices from a particular region’s economic, innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

These top global leaders are selected to participate in the week-long program to visit and engage with innovation hubs, advanced technology centers, leading firms, educational and research institutions; explore local, regional, urban, and rural economic development models; share experiences and knowledge; build networks to enhance competitiveness in the Americas; promote sustainable and inclusive economic development; and increase trade and investment opportunities.

During the ACE, participants will travel on a custom charter bus through over 30 innovation hubs, research centers, top companies, and leading academic institutions. Each ACE visit offers a unique opportunity to explore local and regional economic development models, share experiences and knowledge, and build networks among the local and visiting stakeholders.

The immersive program includes hands-on demonstrations of next-generation technology, presentations and interactive discussions, behind the scenes tours, and VIP networking events to create multidirectional collaboration channels designed for participants to explore mutually beneficial partnerships, investment opportunities, and the exchange of best practices on innovation and entrepreneurship between the hosts and fellow ACE leaders.

The ACE has been held twelve times throughout different regions since 2014, including seven in the United States, one in Canada, three in Latin America (Mexico, Argentina, and Chile), and one Special Edition hosted jointly by Germany and Israel.
The ACE is Leading Change!

More than 10,000 authorities, officials, and experts have engaged in the ACE since its inception in 2014, including the globally selected, high-level delegates who have participated and benefited from it.

The program has resulted in more than 2,000 collaboration opportunities, strategic alliances, and new projects. Global impact programs that have emerged as a result of the ACE program include the following:

✔ The creation of new advanced textile jobs in North Carolina, United States, by drawing attention to the Conover Global Textile Research Center creating new investment opportunities;
✔ The development of a strategic plan for the Logistics Sector of the State of Hidalgo, Mexico, through a collaboration with the Georgia Institute of Technology;
✔ The creation of new jobs in Wisconsin, United States, through the establishment of new trade networks with Argentina and Mexico;
✔ The consolidation of a $10M research and development program to support innovation ventures between Brazil and Israel;
✔ The installation of The Ithaka Center of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Catholic University of Uruguay (UCU);
✔ A compatible cluster map of the United States, Canada, and Mexico, to better inform policymakers;
✔ The implementation of a “Seed Capital for Biotechnological Entrepreneurs” project by the National Agency for Research and Innovation of Uruguay, based on U.S. models and Economic Development Administration programs;
✔ The Launch of Haiti’s first Incubator Center for Technological Innovation (ALPHA Haiti) modeled after U.S. and Mexico incubators and supported by ACE leaders;
✔ The establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding between Argentina and Germany for joint funding of research and development projects for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs);
✔ The establishment of 12 entrepreneurship clubs in Haiti’s high schools inspired by the Flagler County School District model from Florida, United States.
2. THE 13th ACE in Colorado

The 13th Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) will take place from May 17-22, 2020, in the City and County of Denver, Jefferson County, and El Paso County, Colorado.

TARGET CLUSTERS

Sites on tour will feature the following targeted themes and sectors:
- Economic Planning and Stability
- The “Experience” Economy
- Business Creation and Development
- Bio-economy
- Smart Cities
- Disaster Recovery and Mitigation
- Security Innovation including Cyber Security

OBJECTIVES

The ACE general objectives are the following:

- Promoting long-term multilateral commercial, trade, and investment partnerships;
- Identifying and sharing best practices in economic development, including public-private partnerships, building local assets that grow businesses, cluster development, promoting entrepreneurship, and coordinating regional economic development strategies;
- Stimulating capital investment and job creation in the region;
- Fostering an environment for innovative companies to startup and expand;
- Bringing together universities, industries, and governments to solve complex, multi-sectoral challenges that business could not address on their own;
- Facilitating commerce and trade;
- Promoting economic resiliency; and
- Enhancing opportunities for underrepresented populations
Some of the specific objectives of ACE 13 in Colorado are to:
● Showcase examples of practical innovation and entrepreneurship-related initiatives in Colorado;
● Familiarize participants with the business-friendly environment in Colorado to stimulate more significant multilateral trade and investment opportunities;
● Enhance access to capital and debt financing for small companies and stimulate private investment;
● Actively promote collaborative relationships with and among participants to forge new partnerships and create new projects or joint-initiatives;
● Promote academic exchange, peer-to-peer learning, joint research, and public-private partnerships with Colorado’s numerous educational institutions and national research labs.

THE 13th ACE PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Denver

Denver is the capital of Colorado and is the most populous municipality of the State of Colorado. Known as the “Mile High City” due to its elevation being one mile above sea level, Denver has been recognized as a “Beta-World City” by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network. Denver is the fastest growing city of the 50 largest U.S. cities (2018, Wallethub), the second-best place to live (2019, U.S. News & World Report) and is the fourth-best place for business and careers (2018, Forbes).

Denver is the core of a future-focused metro region marked by partnerships in innovation across industry, academia, and the public sector. Collaboration and inclusion are at the center of Denver’s continued success. New technologies borne out of innovation-driven public-private partnerships create opportunities for all residents to be part of the increasingly skill-driven economy and help support businesses of all sizes.

Among the top sites ACE 13 will visit in Denver are Coors Field, the Panasonic Pena Station NEXT (Smart City), Denver International Airport, University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, and the National Western Center.

ACE 13 will open with a welcoming reception at the home of Major League Baseball’s Colorado Rockies, Coors Field. ACE delegates will get a behind-the-scenes tour of the stadium and get to enjoy the stellar views while networking with global and community leadership. Sports are an essential anchor of the Experience Economy of Denver and
Colorado, with a significant impact on jobs, regional economies, and life quality for communities and families.

Panasonic Pena Station NEXT is a new vision of a transit-oriented community. Currently located at the first train stop from Denver International Airport, Pena Station NEXT is a new kind of community and a global showcase for integrating innovation into the fabric of cities -setting a new standard for smart, sustainable, connected living. Participants will tour the area and meet with senior leaders of Panasonic to learn about how they can contribute to integrating innovation into the fabric of this community and other cities around the world.

Denver International Airport (DEN) is the 19th-busiest airport in the world and the fifth-busiest in the U.S. With close to 65 million passengers traveling through the airport in 2018, DEN is one of the busiest airline hubs in the world’s largest aviation market. DEN is the primary economic engine for the state of Colorado, generating more than $26 billion for the region annually. Delegates will meet with leaders from the executive team, learn about how the airport participates in local economic development efforts and understand the opportunity to leverage the vast amount of land to build out commercial districts. This visit will showcase investment opportunities, professional development by sharing best practices, and demonstrate how an airport can contribute to the vitality of an economy. DEN is looking to expand connections and business opportunities with the Western Hemisphere and beyond.

University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus is the largest academic health center in the Rocky Mountain region, and a world-class medical destination at the forefront of transformative education, science, medicine, and healthcare. Located on a former army campus, delegates will get a comprehensive tour of the facility, meet and converse with leading experts from different medical disciplines, and learn about existing partnerships with countries in the Western Hemisphere as well as uncover opportunities for future collaborations in research, technology transfer and other areas of the health science sector.
The National Western Center is a reimagined master-planned campus that will be a vibrant, dynamic and accessible educational and entertainment environment that celebrates Colorado’s western heritage and solves global issues through research and collaboration. It is a shared vision between founding partners from the City and County of Denver, Colorado State University, the Western Stock Show Association, the Museum of Nature and Science, and History Colorado. These organizations, combined with input from local community members, made this project to life and will learn about opportunities for their respective communities to tap into this resource on food, water, and sustainability issues.

El Paso County

Formed in 1859 and designated as one of Colorado’s original 17 counties in 1861, El Paso County is now the most populous county in the state of Colorado and home to eight cities and towns; five major military installations including the United States Air Force Academy, Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Base, Peterson Air Force Base, Schriever Air Force Base, and Fort Carson Army Base; the Garden of the Gods Park; and America’s Mountain, Pikes Peak. The natural physical beauty of the area, encompassing uninterrupted views of Pikes Peak and the Front Range, inspired Katharine Lee Bates to write the poem “America the Beautiful” after her visit here.

El Paso County features multiple outdoor recreation opportunities, promotion of physical well-being and active lifestyles, and a strong military presence. El Paso County is a prime example of how to build a community around nature, tourism, job creation, and innovation. With 300 days of sunshine each year, more than 55 natural and man-made attractions, and 156 state, county, and city parks, it is no wonder that more than 5.2 million tourists visit this region each year. Add in a lower than the national average unemployment rate and higher than the national average job market increase, and you find a region where residents can find the best of both worlds between substantial employment opportunities and recreation; creating a healthy and thriving work-life balance.
Serving as the county seat Colorado Springs is the second-most populous municipality in the state of Colorado. Highlighted as the #1 most desirable place to live, #1 fastest growing city for millennials and #4 business-friendly city in the United States by sources such as U.S. News & World Report, Brookings’s Institution and Thumbtack, Colorado Springs is experiencing rapid growth in the information technology, cybersecurity, aerospace and defense, sports and outdoor recreation, healthcare, and finance and business services industries.

Known as “Olympic City USA,” Colorado Springs is at the heart of the United States’ Olympic movement and the epicenter of an extensive sports industry. In 1978, the United States Olympic Committee, now the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee, moved its headquarters from New York City to Colorado Springs. Along with the Committee, the largest of three official United States Olympic and Paralympic Training Centers and 24 national governing bodies of sport reside within the City of Colorado Springs.

Continuing in the Olympic spirit, in 2018, Colorado Springs debuted the United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum, scheduled for a grand opening in the spring of 2020, all of which will be opened up on ACE for VIP access.

While in El Paso County, participants will hear from and interact with cross-sector leaders who are working on innovation and entrepreneurship collaborations within the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. The program of events will highlight the synergetic relationship between industry and military bases, lessons learned and innovative practices implemented after the destruction of the Waldo Canyon and Black Forest fires, and the public-private partnership that led to the creation of the National Cybersecurity Center. From the burgeoning sports medicine economy, economic impacts of the Olympic City USA branding efforts, and the merging of hospitality with outdoor recreation to create a one-of-a-kind experience economy, El Paso County offers multiple opportunities for international partnership through import/export capabilities, research collaborations, and the ability to provide economic incentives and networking resources for companies seeking to locate within this region.
Key stops during ACE 13 are the United States Air Force Academy, National Cybersecurity Center, Cottonwood Center for the Arts, University of Colorado – Colorado Springs, United States Olympic and Paralympic Training Center, United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum, Qualtek/Milestones for Growth, and the Broadmoor.

Jefferson County

Jefferson County offers a diversified geographical setting, from urban to rural lifestyles to thriving mountain communities. Serving as an epicenter for aerospace, aviation, beverage production, bioscience, energy, and outdoor recreation Jefferson County is the gateway to the famous Colorado Rockies. The county is a premier business location and provides access to the labor market that boasts the third-highest concentration of high-tech workers in the United States. The county’s prominent role as a high-tech leader is greatly enhanced by the presence of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) and the Colorado School of Mines.

During ACE 13 participants will experience premiere education operations, advanced practices, and cutting edge technology at sites that include NREL, Colorado School of Mines, Lockheed Martin, Pilatus Aircraft, and Terumo BCT.

NREL: The nation’s premier federal laboratory dedicated to research, development, commercialization, and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. From breakthroughs in fundamental science to new clean technologies and integrated energy systems that power our lives, NREL leaders will share solutions to today’s energy challenges and opportunities for collaboration and partnerships.
Colorado School of Mines: Colorado School of Mines is a public university focused on science and engineering, dedicated to educating and inspiring students, advancing knowledge, and innovating to address the great challenges society faces today—particularly those related to earth, energy and the environment. Founded in 1874 with specialties in mining and metallurgy, Mines’ scope and mission have expanded to meet the needs of industry and society, producing distinctive graduates and revolutionary innovations, and becoming a world leader in advancing sustainable use of the Earth’s resources. Participants will explore opportunities for collaboration, joint research, and sharing of best practices as you engage with thought leaders who are conducting education and research in engineering and science to solve the world’s challenges related to the earth, energy, and the environment.

Lockheed Martin Corporation: An American global aerospace, security, and advanced technologies company with worldwide interests. Join the innovators from the team to learn about technologies that are being deployed worldwide, as well as probing the topic of innovation around workforce development. Explore opportunities for partnership and best practices in the realm of talent development as Lockheed experts share information on their more than 70 work-based learning programs, which include apprenticeships designed to skill workers for long-standing careers in aerospace and defense.
Pilatus Aircraft Ltd.: Founded in 1939, Pilatus Aircraft Ltd is the only Swiss company to develop, produce and sell aircraft to customers around the world. With over 2,000 employees at its headquarters, Pilatus is one of the largest employers in Central Switzerland. Pilatus provides training for about 130 apprentices in 13 different professions – job training for young people has always been a very high priority at Pilatus. ACE participants will enjoy breakfast and a tour of their wonderful facility in Jeffco. Colorado believes in the global economy and works to provide its businesses with the resources they need to connect and be successful in markets around the globe. Engage in conversations at Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. around opportunities for point-to-point partnerships within foreign trade zones, establish relationships that will encourage greater trade through resources provided by the Denver World Trade Center, Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, and The U.S. Export Assistance Center.

Terumo BCT: A global leader in blood component, therapeutic apheresis and cell therapy technologies, is the only company with the unique combination of apheresis collections, manual and automated whole blood processing and pathogen reduction technologies. They believe in the potential of blood and cells to do even more for patients than they do today. This belief inspires their innovation and strengthens their collaboration with customers. Colorado is home to a vibrant and growing cluster of research institutions, renowned scientists, and more than 1,700 bioscience-related companies that are developing breakthroughs in life-saving drugs and devices.

3. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS & REQUIREMENTS

WHO IS INVITED TO APPLY?
This high-level program invites critical decision-makers who drive inclusive economic development in their countries, institutions, and communities including Ministers/Vice Ministers or equivalent; members of Congress, Legislature, or Parliament; Presidents and Vice Presidents of Chambers of Commerce Chief Executive Officers; private sector
and industry leaders; Mayors or senior leaders from cities or provinces; Chancellors, Presidents, and Vice Presidents of colleges and universities; Presidents of Competitiveness and Innovation Councils; top entrepreneurs; and Senior leaders of regional economic development partnership groups, innovation agencies, or other crucial public or private sector individuals to apply.

The ACE program strives to obtain diverse representation from the public, private, and academic sectors and aims for geographical, sectoral, and gender balance amongst its participants, when possible.

WHAT ARE THE PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS?

- Have a professional and academic background that facilitates inter- and intra-country based development such as foreign direct investment, trade, exports, supply chain linkages, shared technology, etc.

- Be able to allocate resources, propose and adopt critical policies, and possess the necessary connections to make identified priorities and actions possible within their country and in collaboration with other countries.

- English fluency. All activities of the 13th ACE will be carried out only in English.

- Have a valid visa (if necessary) to enter the United States and be able to provide visa, passport, photo, and other necessary information to complete travel procedures.

- Ability to participate in the entire six-day program. Partial participation will not be allowed.

- The ability to cover the cost of airfare and hotel accommodation will be an essential point of consideration for the ACE Selection Committee.

Once your application is received, the ACE Committee reserves the right to reach out to the applicant to clarify information for the application processes.

Former participants are welcome to join the ACE in Colorado. They would need to demonstrate concrete results of their participation and have responded to the mid-year consultation.
4. LOGISTICS & ESTIMATED BUDGET

REGISTRATION
The Organizing Committee offers the ACE program to the participating countries with no registration or participation fee.

If chosen, candidates will have a maximum of two weeks to confirm their participation by signing the official Commitment to Attend form. Proof of airfare tickets and reservations at the ACE selected hotels will need to be submitted no later than three weeks after receiving the acceptance letter. Those who do not confirm and provide the requested documentation promptly could lose their spot in the program.

ESTIMATED BUDGET
The Program Organizers will provide the following to selected participants at no cost:

- Local transportation throughout the program from site to site and city to city by bus;
- VIP access to sites and experts;
- Most meals; and
- Preferential rates at the ACE selected hotel.

Selected participants will be responsible for:

- Booking and paying for their airfare;
- Booking and covering the cost of their hotel accommodations for the duration of the program;
- Arranging their transportation airport-hotel-airport; and
- Covering the remaining cost of meals outside of the program and other miscellaneous items.

5. VISA

Information about Visa requirements can be found at the following link: https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/visit.html

Please note that the ACE organizers are unable to facilitate visa issuance.
6. SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

The selection process will take place as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Call for Applications</th>
<th>February 3, 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline to Apply</td>
<td>March 25, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Letters Will Be Sent to the First Pool of Accepted Candidates</td>
<td>Feb. 3 – March 25, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Letters Will Be Sent to the Second Pool of Accepted Candidates</td>
<td>March 25 – April 3, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance Letters Will Be Sent to the Third Pool of Accepted Candidates (If space available)</td>
<td>April 6 – April 17, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Participants Will Be Published</td>
<td>May 4, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Important notice:**
Official letters will only be sent to accepted participants.

The RIAC/ACE Coordinating Committee shall consider the following criteria for selecting the maximum of 50 participants, in no particular order:

- Diplomatic Rank/Diplomatic protocol
- Public, private, and academic sector senior leadership
- Prior ACE hosts and participants who have shown ACE-related results, including in Americas Competitiveness Forum (ACF) and the Group of Experts on Subnational Competitiveness (GTECS)
- Diversity: geographical, sectoral, and gender balance
- Capacity to cover the cost of their participation
- Ability to create long-term economic connections
- Top entrepreneurs and innovators
- Economic development system representatives

Kindly note that if a candidate is accepted into the program and he/she is unable to attend, the selected candidate cannot independently select an alternative candidate. The nomination is **NOT** transferable.
7. WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA INFORMATION

WEBSITE:  http://riacevents.org/ACE/colorado2020

www.twitter.com/riacnetorg
www.facebook.com/RIACnet
www.flickr.com/photos/89835551@N02/sets
www.youtube.com/user/riacnetorg/videos

#ACXchange

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

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