THE 9TH AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS EXCHANGE ON INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (ACE)

A seven-day high-level tour for senior global leadership through the cities of Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Israel, and Berlin & Dresden, Germany Sunday, June 24 to Friday, June 29, 2018
DEAR 9th ACE APPLICANT,

It is with great enthusiasm that we invite you to apply to the 9th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE) – Special Edition – to take place Sunday, June 24 to Friday, June 29, 2018 in Germany and Israel.

This will be the first time that the ACE program will take place outside of the American hemisphere under the motto “Building Bridges.” Selected participants will dive into the innovation ecosystems of Germany and Israel and get to know the innovation policy strategies and instruments of both countries which demonstrates strong links between academia, industry and government.

The ACE is the premier hemispheric program under the framework of the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) for countries to establish long-term global partnerships around value-added innovation entrepreneurship opportunities and ecosystems, to accelerate collaboration, economic links and business opportunities among countries of the Americas and beyond.

Are you ready to join us in this enriching encounter with state-of-the-art technologies, top level authorities, experts and researchers, and many others key political and economic decision makers of the Americas and beyond? Apply today! Applications will be open until April 20, 2018.

We look forward to receiving your application!

The ACE 9 Organizers
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#ACXchange

Deadline to apply: April 20th, 2018
The Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) is a regional initiative of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC). Ministers and High-Level Authorities of the countries of the Americas approved ACE as one of the main activities of the 2017-2019 RIAC’s Work Plan.

The objective of the Exchange is to showcase successful examples of entrepreneurship, innovation, strategic investments and public-private partnerships from a specific region/country that contribute to the economic development at the local, national, and regional levels. The event brings 50 decision makers from across the Americas and beyond for a five to six-day tour of innovative hubs, 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 of the Americas.

The ACE was originally created in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of State, and the Organization of American States (OAS) as RIAC Technical Secretariat.

PRIOR HOST REGIONS/COUNTRIES INCLUDE:

ACE I:
Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, USA,
April 2014
ACE II:
Mexico City, Aguascalientes, and Guadalajara, Mexico,
August 2014

ACE III:
Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, USA,
April 2015

ACE IV:
Province of Cordoba, Argentina,
October 2015

ACE V:
Arizona and California, USA,
April 2016

ACE VI:
Province of Ontario, Canada,
September 2016

ACE VII:
Central Texas, USA,
April 2017
2. THE 9TH AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS EXCHANGE

The 9th Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship invites key leaders and decision makers from the public, private, and academic sectors to apply for this program.

For the 9th ACE, the Governments of Israel and Germany are delighted to open the highest levels of the economic assets that are making these countries great places to invest, do business, research, develop and test new technologies. The six-day tour will take place from Sunday, June 24 to Friday, June 29, 2018. The initial part of the program will take place Sunday to Tuesday in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv (Israel), and Tuesday evening to Friday will be regionally focused on Berlin and include a day trip to Dresden (Saxony).

CONVENING INSTITUTIONS

The 9th ACE is convened by the Organization of American States (OAS) as the Inter-American Competitiveness Network (RIAC) Technical Secretariat; the Government of Germany, through its Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy; and the Government of Israel, through its Foreign Ministry and Innovation Agency (Israel Innovation Authority).

The organizers thank the collaboration received from the Government of the United States, through the US Department of Commerce and the US Department of State as the ACE Co-founders and
ACE Committee Members, and the Government of Argentina, through its Ministry of Production, as Chair Pro Tempore of RIAC (September 2017-2019).

**TARGET CLUSTERS**

Geographically, Germany and Israel are small countries and yet they rank among the most innovative ones and are on the cutting edge of the technology frontier. Particularly worth looking at is how the countries and their companies explore and use their relative advantages for mutual benefits. For example, they have combined their relative strengths to institutionalize start-up exchange programs which serve to boost both of their economies.

ACE 9 will examine the special features of the Israeli and German economies and innovative systems at large – with a view to expanding cooperation and reach out to the American hemisphere.

In Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the participants will experience the power of Israeli startups in multiple sectors; will be exposed to the cutting-edge technologies in areas of cyber, smart cities, smart mobility, alternative energy, VR, Bio meds and more. They will also have a rare opportunity to meet with experts on plants sciences, plant protection, environmental science and herd management.

In Berlin and Dresden, key features of the German innovation system will be showcased, i.e. its Mittelstand companies (SME), the mission-driven interplay between research institutions and business, as institutionalized for example in the Fraunhofer and Helmholtz societies. Since the German innovation policy is decidedly technology-neutral (open for all kind of different technologies) sites visited on the tour will be very diverse. The tour will exemplify how policy tools cater to the specific challenges that companies encounter during the various stages of the innovation process, i.e. “from the idea into the market”. Among the firms showcased on the tour will be globally known brands from the automotive industry, several hidden champions, as well as start-ups from a whole range of businesses, such as mobility, energy, health, digitization and environmental protection.
OBJECTIVES

By the end of the 9th ACE, participants will see how Germany and Israel are:

- Assisting their companies in closing the gap between ideas and market success.
- Building bridges between their economies and using them in mutually beneficial ways.
- Establishing global commercial relationships and FDI partnerships among hosts and participants.
- Sharing and promoting best practices in economic development to strengthen local innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems.
- Connecting universities, industry, and government to solve complex challenges no one sector or player could address on their own.

3. THE 9th ACE PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Participants will get to know the economic, Innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv (Israel), Berlin and Dresden (Germany) during a six-day high-level tour for global senior leadership.

ACE 9 will start (Sunday, June 24th) in Israel at the Israeli Innovation Authority, with an overview of its mandate, divisions and its rational supporting innovation across the Israeli industry. Then the participants will have the unique opportunity to meet cutting edge startups and to learn about their technologies and the entrepreneurial environment in Israel.

Later in the day, the participants will get a glimpse to the innovative ways in which Israel deals with water security and arid areas. Countless innovations from the Volcanic Agriculture Research Organization in Israel have earned worldwide reputation dealing with these phenomena.

The day will end with a Gala Dinner, in the participation of top government and industry leaders.
Day 2 (Monday, June 25th), will start at Google Headquarters in Tel-Aviv, where participants will learn about the development center, will see firsthand the search, analytics and a range of special projects. From there we will start heading north to Hadera, a tranquil Mediterranean town, where we can find a flagship of the desalination industry, an innovative plant that provides clean potable water for over 1 million people in Israel. Upon returning to Tel-Aviv we will stop at SCR COW Intelligence Solution, a provider of advanced cow monitoring systems designed to collect and analyze critical data point for every individual cow. We will end the evening with a culinary and cultural experience of TLV.

The last day of the Israeli part of the tour (Tuesday, June 26th) will take place at the capital city, Jerusalem, with an overview of technology transfer organizations of the Israeli Academic institutions and how they facilitate transfer of technology to industry. Thereafter, the participants will have an opportunity of learning from the global leaders in the department of vision technology for Advanced Driven Assistance Systems, Mobileye.

Just before taking off to Berlin, we will have one last taste of Israel by exploring the Old City of Jerusalem, the epicenter of history; an experience beyond words that cannot be missed.

In the evening of the third day (Tuesday, 26 June), the group will be transferred to Berlin, Germany, where it will be welcomed in the Brandenburg Gate Museum.

The first morning in Berlin, Germany on day 4 (Wednesday, 27) will be opened in the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy with an overview of Germany’s innovation policy instruments and strategies, including testimonials from businesses. Next stop will be the EUREF-Campus, a location developed on a private sector basis, where companies in the fields of energy, sustainability, and mobility collaborate on topics like smart mobility, renewable energy and pollution control. Participants will meet numerous Startups and SMEs from these fields and visit a special exhibition by Mercedes Benz featuring clever approaches to the demographic development – an issue of high relevance to Germany’s competitiveness.
The afternoon will take place at Factory Berlin – a next generation business club - and will be dedicated to the thriving Berlin Start-Up scene and its innovation partnerships with larger firms.

A visit to the “Reichstag” (parliament building) and its glass dome, the latter designed by Sir Norman Foster in the 90s, will lead into a “cluster-evening”: a conference that will reflect Germany’s federal structure by featuring several successful innovation networks comprising industries and research institutions from different regions. This evening will provide first-hand information about cooperation possibilities throughout several geographic and economic areas, combined with excellent networking possibilities.

**Day 5 (Thursday, 28)** will take participants to the city of Dresden in Saxony, which showcases an area that has successfully mastered the fundamental transition from a formerly socialist to market economy. The day starts with a business breakfast at the **Institut für Holztechnologie (IHD)**, the institute for wood related Technology, participants will learn about that comparatively smooth economic transition and get to know key players who were involved in the process: SMEs, R&D institutes, global companies such as Infineon and global foundries, networking organizations, spin-offs, and the Silicon saxony business club. Here **Volkswagen** will invite participants to its transparent factory and share insights into the production of electric vehicles and latest developments of autonomous driving.

The afternoon will be dedicated to the **Fraunhofer society**, Europe’s largest application-oriented research organization. At its Dresden Campus, nine institutes will present R&D projects in the field of material and beam technologies, ceramic technologies, photonic microsystems and more. The evening will end with a boat trip along the romantic Elbe river, providing opportunities to network and enjoy views of the city and its surroundings.

On the final day of ACE 9 (**Friday, June 29**), participants will spend the morning at **Adlershof** – a locality with a long tradition in science which reinvented itself after the fall of the Berlin wall. Today the “**Science City**” is one of the most successful high-technology sites in Germany. It is home to 1,041 companies and scientific institutions on an area of 4.2 km² - embedded in an integrated urban planning concept. 16,778 people work and 6,700 study there. Concentrations
focus on photonics and optics, renewable energies, Microsystems and materials, IT and Media, Biotechnology and Environment. Participants will tour BESSY II, a third generation synchrotron radiation source, and the German Aerospace Center (DLR) where they will see examples of market oriented technology projects based on the co-operation between the German "Mittelstand" (SME) and scientific/research institutions as well as for quality infrastructure. After some a tourist break, the afternoon will focus on Germany’s vocational system at ABB’s education center. Participants will learn about the factors that put a successful qualification system under stress – and about approaches to relieve it.

Any (positive) personal stress that participants may hitherto have accumulated from the intense program can be disposed of in the closing event: a relaxed yet inspiring atmosphere and ample scope to deepen conversations and acquaintances with high level keynote speakers will finally conclude ACE 9.

4. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS & REQUIREMENTS

WHO IS INVITED TO APPLY?

This high-level program invites key decision makers who drive inclusive economic development in their countries, institutions, and communities, including: Ministers/Vice Ministers (of Economy, Industry, Trade, SME, Science and Technology); Ambassadors, Mayors, Members of Congress/Legislature/Parliament; Private Sector and Local Government Leaders from cities/regions; Chancellors/Presidents/Vice Presidents of Universities; Presidents of Competitiveness Councils, Senior Leaders of Regional Economic Development, Small Business Development Center Leaders; Senior Public/Private/Academia Sector Individuals; and Top Entrepreneurs and societal influencers, among others.

ACE strives to obtain strong representation from the public, private, and academic sectors as well as to encourage gender balance amongst its participants.
WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS?

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

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

c. Be fluent in English. All activities of the 9th ACE will be carried out only in English.

d. Have a valid visa (if necessary) to enter Israel and Germany.

e. Be able to provide visa, passport, photo, and other necessary information to complete travel procedures.

f. Be able to participate for entire the six-day program. Partial participation will not be considered.

5. LOGISTICS & ESTIMATED BUDGET

REGISTRATION

There is no registration/event fee for this program, but it is only open to selected applicants. If chosen, candidates will have 7 business days to confirm their participation by sending an email to abonilla@oas.org; nikolai.ziegler@bmwi.bund.de; and political@washington.mfa.gov.il. Proof of air fare to Israel and from Germany will need to be submitted by no later than three weeks after receiving the acceptance letter. Those who do not confirm and/or submit the requested documentation in a timely manner could lose their spot on the program.
HOTELS

Hotels in Germany and Israel will be around USD 200 per night. Participants will be responsible for arranging and paying for their own hotel reservations.

TRANSPORTATION

The program organizers will provide local transportation free of charge throughout the week, including air fare from Tel-Aviv to Berlin and bus transportation from site to site in Germany and Israel. The selected participants will need to book and pay for their airfare arriving into Tel-Aviv (Israel), and a return ticket from Berlin (Germany).

6. VISA

Visa to enter the Federal Republic of Germany:

For some countries, a visa will be required. Applicants are invited to check here:

https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/einreiseundaufenthalt/visabestimmungen-node/staatenlistevisumpflicht-node

Procedures to obtain a visa are detailed here:

https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/einreiseundaufenthalt/visabestimmungen-node#content_1

Please note that it will take authorities up to 10 working days to decide on a short term stay. Applicants are hence encouraged to factor in due time and start the process early.

Visa to enter the country of Israel:

Visa information can be found at the following link:

http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ConsularServices/Pages/Visas.aspx
7. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Competitive and limited partial economic assistance might be available for few qualifying selected candidates from the Americas who request support. Particular consideration will be given to those from small economies in senior positions. Top female entrepreneurs will also be considered.

Kindly take note that the Selection Committee value positively applicant’s capacity to cover the cost of their participation.

8. SELECTION PROCESS & CRITERIA

The SELECTION PROCESS will take place as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPEN CALL FOR APPLICATIONS</td>
<td>March 20, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEADLINE TO APPLY</td>
<td>April 20, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCEPTANCE LETTERS WILL BE SENT TO THE FIRST POOL OF ACCEPTED CANDIDATES*</td>
<td>Week of April 23rd – 27, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCEPTANCE LETTERS WILL BE SENT TO THE SECOND POOL OF ACCEPTED CANDIDATES</td>
<td>May 7 – 11, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>*PRELIMINARY LIST OF ACCEPTANCE CANDIDATES WILL BE PUBLISHED</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCEPTANCE LETTERS WILL BE SENT TO THE THIRD POOL OF ACCEPTED CANDIDATES (If space available)</td>
<td>May 21 – 25, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>DECLINATION LETTERS WILL BE SENT TO REMAINING CANDIDATES</td>
<td>May 7 – June 8, 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PUBLISHED</td>
<td>June 4, 2018</td>
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A maximum of 50 participants will be selected by the 9th ACE Selection Committee based on the following **CRITERIA:**

1. Key decision-makers and influencers
2. Ability to create long term economic connections
3. Ability to allocate or influence the use or engagement of economic assets/resources
4. Gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity
5. Geographic and sectoral balance
6. Former ACE hosts and participants
7. Special categories: SBDC Directors, top entrepreneurs, and startups
8. Capacity to cover the cost of their participation
9. Early application

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.

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**9. WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA INFORMATION**

**WEBSITE:** [www.riacevents.org/ACE/germany-israel](http://www.riacevents.org/ACE/germany-israel)

**TWITTER:** [www.twitter.com/riacnetorg](http://www.twitter.com/riacnetorg)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/RIACnet/](http://www.facebook.com/RIACnet/)

**FLICKR:** [www.flickr.com/photos/89835551@N02/sets/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/89835551@N02/sets/)

**YOUTUBE:** [www.youtube.com/user/riacnetorg/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/riacnetorg/videos)

**ACE HASHTAG:** #ACXchange
10. CONTACT INFORMATION

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