

Argentina

The Argentine government recognises that innovation is a key source of growth and currently concentrates its efforts in several areas.

Hot Issues: Addressing societal challenges (including inclusiveness)

Argentina is focusing on resolving the challenge of social exclusion. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (MINCYT) has made addressing social challenges a priority in its guidelines for the development of the country's innovation system. In 2009, the MINCYT set up the Argentinean Sectoral Fund (FONARSEC), a fund mainly financed by grants from the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, which also supports innovation initiatives that foster social inclusion.

Improving coordination and participatory governance

Many public bodies are involved in Argentina's STI system. The MINCYT, which had a budget of USD 1 386 million PPP (4 994 million Argentine pesos, ARD) in 2013, has a central role in managing innovation investments and R&D institutions. Argentina spent 0.61% of its GDP on R&D in 2014, considerably below the OECD median. The government finances the majority of GERD (0.46% of GDP), and its contribution grew by 15.44% a year over 2008-13, faster than the overall annual growth of GERD (9.5%) over the same period. Agencies such as the National Research Council (CONICET) and the National Agency for the Promotion of Science and Technology (ANPCYT) distribute government grants for research. The Evaluation and Quality Assurance Unit (UEAC) of the ANPCYT, and the National Directorate of Programmes and Projects of the Undersecretary of Institutional Evaluation conduct evaluations with a view to quality assurance. To improve co-ordination, MINCYT's allocation of resources has been progressively aligned over the last five years with policies from other ministries and agencies through the Scientific and Technological Cabinet (GACTEC), an inter-ministerial body in charge of formulating S&T policy. The Federal Council on Science and Technology (COFECYT) acts as an advisory board for maintaining policy coherence among federal, provincial and local governments, and for safeguarding regional interests in the MINCYT's allocation of resources. In March 2013, the MINCYT presented its national STI strategic plan, Argentina Innovadora 2020, which seeks to optimise and articulate the country's public and private STI efforts.

Targeting priority areas/sectors

Sectoral funds constitute the backbone of Argentina's S&T policy. Most of ANPCYT's budget focuses on the strategic knowledge areas and business sectors identified in the Argentina Innovadora 2020 plan. FONSOFT is a trust fund to support ICT, in which Argentina hopes to develop a comparative advantage. The FONARSEC fund supports the development of target technologies (e.g. bio- and nano-technology) and sectors (e.g. energy, health and agro-industry).

Improving overall human resources and skills

Argentina spent 1.12% of its GDP on tertiary education in 2012, a level close to the OECD median. However, the performance of the country's 15-year-olds in science is well below the OECD median and points to shortcomings in the quality of education. The share of doctoral graduates in S&E is also well below the OECD median. To improve the supply of human resources for STI, two programmes, Becas Bicentenario and Becas TICs, provide up to 30 000 scholarships a year for tertiary education for low-income students. CONICET funds domestic doctoral programmes and post-doctoral training and provides grants to support knowledge transfer between universities and the private sector. The government also has programmes targeting Argentina's diaspora. Between the inception of the RAICES programme in 2004 and 2013, more than 1 000 scientists returned to Argentina. These efforts have led to an increased supply of younger researchers, with the share of researchers under age 40 rising from 41% in 2003 to nearly 48% in 2011. Furthermore, to improve the performance of Argentina's researchers, ANPCYT's PITEC and PAE programmes support public-private partnerships in research projects aimed at increasing the contribution of research to Argentina's economy, including

by addressing pressing socio-economic challenges.

Selected Highlights: Universities and public research

While low compared to the OECD median, Argentina's public R&D spending at 0.48% of GDP is higher than that of Chile (0.18%) and Mexico (0.25%). In addition to efforts to improve the skills base described above, the MINCYT has invested in the country's R&D infrastructure needs. In 2013, as part of its Work Plan for Science and Technology, four new buildings with a total 11 122 square metres of R&D infrastructure, including a new headquarters for the national DNA databank and nanotechnology offices and laboratories, were completed. This represents a 17% increase in R&D surface compared to 2007.

Innovation in firms

With BERD of 0.12% of GDP in 2014, well below the OECD median, Argentina lags far behind the OECD in innovation performance, triadic patents and trademark registrations. To improve innovation performance, government programmes target key knowledge areas and sectors to improve both the quality of human capital for research and innovation and the articulation between public research and industry. The MINCYT is currently evaluating the means of measuring private R&D; preliminary results indicate that BERD may have been somewhat underestimated.

ICT and Internet infrastructures

Argentina's Internet infrastructure and use is below OECD levels. In 2012, some 10.9% of Argentinians had a fixed broadband subscription, a higher share than in Brazil (9.2%) but below that of Chile (12.4%). Argentina's e government development index is still low with respect to the OECD median.

Clusters and regional policies

The government aims to reduce the regional gap in STI capacity by increasing the share of GERD performed by the 19 least R&D-intensive provinces from 28% in 2011 to 37% in 2020. The COFECYT disbursed USD 37 million PPP (ARS 113 million) in 2012 in this effort.

Globalisation

The government is seeking to foster international co-operation in S&T. To this end, it has established partnerships and recently increased the number of co-operative projects and programmes with Brazil, Chile, Mexico, the United States and Canada as well as with France, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy.

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