



BILATERAL COOPERATION THROUGH THE INTER-AMERICAN NETWORK FOR LABOR ADMINISTRATION (RIAL)

RESULTS OF THE 18th CALL FOR PROPOSALS

April 8, 2025

INTRODUCTION

Bilateral cooperation, which has also taken the form of south-south and triangular cooperation, has been one of the most powerful tools of the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) in supporting the institutional strengthening of Ministries of Labor. This tool functions through open Calls where Ministries of Labor present previously negotiated proposals to the Technical Secretariat (Dept. of Human Development, Education and Employment/SEDI/OAS) consisting of specialized technical assistance. Until the 12th call (2019), the activities were carried out face-to-face by means of on-site visits or expert visits according to the place where they were held. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic required rethinking the channels of cooperation and opened a new exchange channel: virtual cooperation, which has demonstrated that effective and impactful collaboration between Ministries can also be achieved virtually. Since 2023, the possibility of carrying out in-person cooperations was opened on an exceptional basis and only for those cases in which the need for it could be justified.

To date, there have been 138 bilateral cooperation activities of the RIAL carried out with excellent results; 23 of them took place virtually and 1 in a hybrid format.

The 18th RIAL Call for Bilateral Cooperation was open between January 15 and March 10, 2025, and 59 proposals were received, involving 23 Ministries of Labor. Out of these, 52 proposals involving 19 Ministries met all the requirements and entered the selection process.

This document presents the selected proposals, details the selection criteria and the highlights of this Call, reviews the proposals received and the topics they cover, and presents next steps.

SELECTED PROPOSALS

In the 18th Call, the following 5 cooperation proposals were selected.

Table No. 1 - Selected Proposals

<i>Requesting Ministry</i>	<i>Providing Ministry</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Antigua and Barbuda	Canada	Violence and Harassment at Work
Guatemala	Mexico	Virtual learning platform for adolescents
Paraguay	Panama	Child labor
Peru	Chile	Certification of Labor Competencies
Trinidad and Tobago	Jamaica	Labor Market Information System



The proposals were evaluated and selected using the following criteria:

- Pertinence and timeliness of the cooperation – the justification/rationale for the activity shows why cooperation is required at the time. The needs and challenges of the beneficiary institution, as well as the expected results are explicit.
- Clarity and relevance of objectives
- Expected final product is clear, pertinent, and achievable through a virtual activity**
- Explicit commitment of the involved parties
- Degree of relevance of the topic for the IACML
- Priority was given to proposals arising from activities of the RIAL and the IACML.

In the first round of evaluation, each of the proposals was graded based on these criteria and from a strictly technical standpoint. This grading put special emphasis on the potential impact of the cooperation; that is, on proposals where a concrete result could be anticipated that would result in improved capacities and improvements in the operations of Ministries of Labor. Subsequently, the most solid proposals were taken into consideration; it was verified that there was a broad representation of countries, and special consideration was given to relatively less-developed countries.

** It should be noted that in this Call the possibility of carrying out a bilateral cooperation in-situ was once again opened, exceptionally and only for those cases in which the need for an in-person activity was justified, i.e. it was demonstrated that the objectives could not be achieved virtually. To this end, the Request Form included the following instruction in the objectives section: "if you consider the objectives can only be achieved through an in-person cooperation, please justify." Regardless of the answer to this question, the Secretariat evaluated the objectives and the final product of all the proposals received considering the possibility of fulfilling them in virtual cooperations. All the selected cooperations in the 18th Call can achieve the expected product through virtual cooperations, following the methodology already established by the RIAL/OAS.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS CALL

- More Ministries than the average of previous calls participated, with **23 countries involved** (19 of them presented proposals that met all the requirements) vs. 18 countries on average. This increase highlights the value and relevance that the RIAL/OAS bilateral cooperation has at the regional level.
- The participation of countries from all subregions of the Hemisphere is noteworthy, particularly the increased involvement of the Caribbean. This call saw participation from more Caribbean countries than in the past 15 years. Additionally, interest from Central America has remained consistently strong, with six countries participating in each of the last four calls. Similarly, participation from the Southern Cone has remained high in recent years, as has North America's, with at least 2 of its 3 countries involved in each call.



- The number of proposals submitted has remained consistently high, with over 50 proposals received in the past three years and a historical average of 47. Notably, a growing number of these proposals now meet all formal requirements. However, in this call, there is a clear difference in the overall quality and robustness of the submissions. Many proposals show significant gaps, particularly in the justification section—where a clear explanation of the circumstances that make cooperation necessary and relevant is expected, along with a projection of anticipated impact. Similarly, there are shortcomings in the clarity and relevance of both the objectives and the proposed outcomes. This serves as an important reminder for future Calls. The Secretariat remains available to support the Ministries by addressing concerns and offering guidance and information. Suggestions to improve the next Call are also welcome, with the aim of enhancing the overall quality of proposals.
- The proposals submitted covered a wide range of issues addressed by labor administrations, as shown in Table No. 3. In this call, half of the requests (26) fell under the “Labor” category, while 14 proposals focused on “Employment” issues. In previous calls, there was a more even distribution between these two areas, as well as much fewer proposals related to “Labor Relations.” This time, there was a noticeable increase in interest around topics such as conflict resolution, collective bargaining, freedom of association, and social dialogue. Additionally, a significant number of proposals addressed labor inspection (11) and occupational health and safety (9). Notably, in recent years, proposals related to occupational health and safety have increasingly included the prevention of psychosocial risks in labor.
- Over 80% of the provider institutions referenced in the submitted proposals were identified through the RIAL Portfolio of Programs, which is publicly available online at www.rialnet.org.
- On January 24, 2025, the Technical Secretariat held a bilingual webinar to address questions related to the 18th Call, support countries in preparing their proposals, and assist them in identifying the most suitable partners for their cooperation requests through a matchmaking process. This session saw the active participation of over 120 government officials from 21 countries—a noteworthy level of engagement.
- Some of the Ministries of Labor that submitted proposals in this Call had previously received virtual technical assistance, reflecting their recognition of this modality as both relevant and valuable.
- Finally, among the selected proposals, it is noteworthy that the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Public Safety and Labour of Antigua and Barbuda will receive bilateral cooperation for the first time. Similarly, it is relevant to mention that after six years of its last participation, Paraguay will receive, for first time, a virtual bilateral cooperation from the Ministry of Labor and Workforce Development of Panama. Congratulations to these Ministries, as well as to all others selected in this Call.



PORTFOLIO OF PROGRAMS

The RIAL Portfolio of Programs was the primary tool used by most Ministries to identify their cooperation partners. As previously noted, 80% of the providing institutions were selected through this platform, underscoring the value of the database and the importance of keeping it up to date. The Portfolio currently features nearly 200 programs from the vast majority of Ministries across the region, covering all areas of labor administration. All Ministries are encouraged to upload new programs and update existing ones. For any inquiries, please contact trabajo@oas.org.

PROPOSALS RECEIVED

Table No.2 shows that 52 proposals were received involving 19 Ministries of Labor: 7 as requesting institutions, 5 as providing institutions, and 7 simultaneously as requesting and providing institutions.

Table No. 2 - Proposals (complete) received by country

Propuestas recibidas por país <i>Proposals received by country</i>			
	Min.Trabajo <i>Labor Min.</i>	Solicitante <i>Requestor</i>	Proveedor <i>Provider</i>
1	Antigua and Barbuda	1	
2	Argentina	4	10
3	Barbados	1	
4	Bolivia	2	
5	Brasil		2
6	Canada		2
7	Chile		9
8	Colombia	5	7
9	Costa Rica	1	2
10	Dominican Republic	8	
11	Ecuador	5	5
12	El Salvador		1
13	Guatemala	11	
14	Jamaica		2
15	Mexico	2	5
16	Panama	3	3
17	Paraguay	4	
18	Peru	4	4
19	Trinidad and Tobago	1	
	TOTAL	52	52



Out of the 59 proposals received, 52 met the established requirements—namely, the submission of 1) the request form, 2) a letter from the requesting institution, and 3) a letter from the providing institution—and were therefore entered into the selection process. The topics of the received and selected proposals are detailed in Table 3.

Table No. 3 - Proposals received and selected by topic

Topic / Subtopic	Proposals received	Proposals selected
Trabajo / Labor	26	2
Condiciones de trabajo / <i>Working conditions</i>	1	
Cumplimiento y difusión de la legislación laboral / <i>Enforcement and awareness of labor legislation</i>	1	
Informalidad laboral y el trabajo no registrado / <i>Informality and non-registered work</i>	1	
Inspección del Trabajo / <i>Labor Inspection</i>	11	
Salud y Seguridad Ocupacional / <i>Occupational Safety and Health</i>	9	1
Trabajo infantil / <i>Child Labor</i>	3	1
Empleo / Employment	14	3
Formación profesional y certificación de competencias / <i>Professional Training and Skills Certification</i>	6	1
Inclusión Laboral de Grupos en Situación de Vulnerabilidad / <i>Labor Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations</i>	2	1
Sistemas de información y observatorios de mercado laboral / <i>Labor market information systems and observatories</i>	2	1
Servicios de Empleo / <i>Employment Services</i>	4	
Relaciones Laborales / Labor Relations	12	
Solución de conflictos individuales y colectivos / <i>Individual and collective conflict resolution</i>	4	
Negociación colectiva y libertad sindical / <i>Collective bargaining and freedom of association</i>	4	
Diálogo Social/ <i>Social Dialogue</i>	3	
Organizaciones sociales / <i>Social organizations</i>	1	
TOTAL	52	5



NEXT STEPS AND EXECUTION OF THE VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

The activities for this 18th Call are scheduled to take place virtually between May and December 2025. Any activities that cannot be completed within this timeframe will be cancelled.

The Technical Secretariat (DHDEE/SEDI/OAS) will send formal communications to the selected Ministries and their counterparts to begin planning each activity. This will involve jointly defining session dates, content, and steps for preparing the final product.

The agenda and contents of each cooperation activity must respond to the objectives and final product proposed by the requesting institution and the strengths of the providing institution. As such, they should be developed by the technical staff of both institutions, in coordination with the RIAL focal point of each Ministry and the Technical Secretariat.

All activities will be conducted via the "Teams" platform of the OAS Department of Human Development, Education, and Employment. The Technical Secretariat will provide the necessary technical and logistical support throughout.

Ministries are encouraged to explore the possibility of carrying out cooperation activities that were not selected. The RIAL/OAS Secretariat will explore the possibility of carrying out other activities, such as virtual meetings and hemispheric dialogues, to address the cooperation needs raised in this Call for Proposals that were not selected.

All information about this Call for proposals is available on the RIAL website: [http://rialnet.org/?q=en/Bilateral Cooperation](http://rialnet.org/?q=en/Bilateral_Cooperation), which is frequently updated.

Benefits of having a virtual bilateral cooperation

- Opportunity for sharing all relevant information (documents, presentations, legal framework, among others) prior to the cooperation and between sessions.
- Longer duration of the cooperation (between 3 to 6 months) allows for greater support and technical assistance from the providing institution, compared to face-to-face missions (maximum 5 days).
- More relevance and depth of the cooperation. Given that the sessions are successive and there is a minimum of 1 month between each of them, institutions can respond to specific queries between sessions, deepen topics and adjust content, if necessary. The providing institution can better understand and analyze the counterpart's progress.
- Development of a concrete final product and technically more solid, given the continuous and specialized feedback process from the providing institution throughout the exchange.
- Possibility to involve more officers.
- Possibility to have more sessions (3 sessions).

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions:

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