



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

RESULTS OF THE 19th CALL FOR PROPOSALS

April 7, 2026

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 yearly 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. In this context, 2026 marks the sixth consecutive year of implementing cooperation in a virtual format, a practice that was consolidated following the COVID-19 pandemic and has proven effective in sustaining technical collaboration processes and generating tangible outputs among Ministries. Furthermore, since 2023, in-person cooperation has been considered on an exceptional basis, when its relevance and added value are duly justified.

To date, 143 bilateral cooperation activities have been carried out within the RIAL framework, yielding concrete results for the institutional strengthening of the Ministries of Labor. Of these, 28 were conducted virtually and 1 in a hybrid format.

The 19th RIAL Call for Bilateral Cooperation was open from January 15 to March 13, 2026, and 29 proposals were received, involving 16 Ministries of Labor. Of these, 24 proposals, involving 14 Ministries, met all 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 19th Call, the following 5 cooperation proposals were selected.

Table No. 1 - Selected Proposals

<i>Requesting Ministry</i>	<i>Providing Ministry</i>	<i>Theme</i>
Barbados	Trinidad and Tobago	Compliance with Legislation / Occupational Safety and Health
El Salvador	Ecuador	Occupational Safety and Health
Guatemala	Chile	Information Systems / Labor Observatories
Mexico	Chile	Labor Inspection
Dominican Republic	Mexico	Employment Services / Employment Portal

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. As acknowledged by the Ministries themselves, all cooperation initiatives selected under the 19th Call can achieve the expected product through virtual cooperations, following the methodology already established by the RIAL/OAS, which has yielded satisfactory results in recent years.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS CALL

- A total of 16 Ministries of Labor participated of which 14 submitted proposals that met all established requirements.
- The number of proposals submitted in this edition (24) falls below the levels observed in previous years, when more than 50 proposals were received (over the past three years) and a historical average of 47 was recorded. Additionally, a notable difference in the overall quality and robustness of the proposals has been observed. 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, above all, in the definition of the proposed final product. 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 edition, there is a concentration in the “Labor” thematic area (13), representing more than half of the total proposals received, while topics related to “Employment” account for 7 proposals. “Labor Relations,” in turn, accounts for a smaller number of initiatives (4), although with a substantive focus on mechanisms such as the resolution of individual and collective disputes and trade union registration. Compared to previous Calls, there is a lower degree of thematic dispersion and a greater focus on operational areas. In addition, proposals addressing key subtopics such as labor inspection and occupational safety and health stand out (4 in each case), reflecting Ministries’ interest in strengthening enforcement capacities and preventing occupational risks. In this latter area, the recent trend of incorporating psychosocial risk management in the workplace continues.
- In 96% of the proposals submitted, the provider institutions were identified through the **RIAL Portfolio of Programs**, which is publicly available online at www.rialnet.org.
- On February 5, 2026, the Technical Secretariat held a **bilingual webinar** to address questions related to the 19th Call, support countries in preparing their proposals. On this occasion, the participation of more than 70 officials from 20 countries is highlighted.
- 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, it is noteworthy that, after six years since their last participation as requesting institutions, both the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and the Third Sector of **Barbados** and the Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare of **Mexico** will receive, for the first time, bilateral cooperation in a virtual format from the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development of **Trinidad and Tobago** and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of **Chile**, respectively. Congratulations to these Ministries, as well as to all those selected.



PORTFOLIO OF PROGRAMS

The RIAL Portfolio of Programs was the primary tool used by most Ministries to identify their cooperation partners. As previously noted, 96% of the proposals indicate that provider institutions were identified 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 24 complete proposals were received, involving 14 Ministries of Labor: 4 as requesting institutions, 7 as providing institutions, and 3 simultaneously as requesting and providing institutions.

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

Proposals received 19th Call			
	Labor Min.	Requestor	Provider
1	Barbados	1	
2	Brazil		2
3	Chile		6
4	Colombia	2	
5	Costa Rica		2
6	Dominican Republic	7	
7	Ecuador		5
8	El Salvador	1	1
9	Guatemala	4	
10	Mexico	2	4
11	Panama		2
12	Paraguay		1
13	Peru	7	
14	Trinidad and Tobago		1
	TOTAL	24	24



The 24 listed proposals correspond to those that 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 both the proposals received and selected are detailed in Table 3.

Table No. 3 - Proposals received and selected by topic

Topic / Subtopic	Proposals received	Proposals selected
Labor	13	3
Enforcement and awareness of labor legislation	1	
Informality and non-registered work	1	
Labor Inspection	4	1
Occupational Safety and Health	4	2
Child Labor	3	
Employment	7	2
Labor market information systems and observatories	3	1
Employment Services	3	1
Unemployment benefit schemes	1	
Labor Relations	4	
Individual and collective conflict resolution	3	
Labor union registration	1	
TOTAL	24	5

NEXT STEPS AND EXECUTION OF THE VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

The activities for this 19th Call are scheduled to take place virtually between May and December 2026. 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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