



## EDITORIAL

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It is a true honor to be part of an international network for scientific and technological collaboration like WAITRO, which brings together prestigious organizations that generate global impact. In this space, applied sciences serve as a bridge, connecting not only institutions but also their people. Collaboration between Latin America, the Caribbean, and the rest of the world allows us to exchange valuable knowledge and experiences, creating a fertile environment for innovation and promoting progress toward sustainable development. This collaborative approach translates into creativity, excellence, and joint solutions to the most pressing challenges of our region and the world.

The potential that emerges from the synergy between the capacities and experiences of WAITRO members is immense, and many opportunities still lie ahead. As a testament to this spirit of cooperation, the next WAITRO Board Meeting will be held in October at the facilities of Fraunhofer Chile, an institution that has facilitated the implementation of over 130 projects in the region for more than a decade. This meeting strengthens our commitment to regional integration and innovation. We invite the entire community to actively participate in this year's activities to continue strengthening our network and boosting the global impact of Latin America and the Caribbean.

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### WAITRO SETS DIRECTION AND WELCOMES NEW LEADERSHIP



The WAITRO Executive Board met in Istanbul on April 7–8 to review progress, approve new initiatives, and set the course for 2025–2026. Key topics included **membership, financial sustainability, capacity building, and raising WAITRO's global visibility**. Highlights from the benchmarking program reaffirmed leadership training and partnership development as top priorities.

**Dr. Benjin Luo** was officially introduced as the new Director of the WAITRO Secretariat. Alongside the current team, he will guide the network's strategic growth and impact. The next WAITRO Summit was also confirmed for 2026, hosted by Istanbul Technical University under the proposed theme: **"Leading the Path of Implementation."**

The meeting concluded with a technical visit to the UN Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries (UNTB), opening new doors for cross-sector collaboration in science, technology, and innovation.

## WAITRO STRENGTHENS ITS GLOBAL OPERATIONS THROUGH WAITRO OPERATIONS E.V.

Since 1970, WAITRO has been registered as a non-profit organization in Canada. However, over time, this legal structure has limited its ability to lead funded projects and implement operational programs that benefit its members.

Given this reality—and considering that officially relocating WAITRO’s legal base outside of Canada would require dissolving the association and creating a new one, which is not a viable option—a strategic solution has been proposed: to maintain WAITRO’s legal structure in Canada unchanged while establishing a new legal entity in Germany to provide operational support to the global network.

This new legal entity will be a non-profit association registered in Germany under the provisional name WAITRO Operations e.V. (where e.V. stands for eingetragener Verein, the German equivalent of a registered association). Its purpose is to support WAITRO’s mission by facilitating the development of collaborative programs among members

to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Unlike the main organization, this new entity will be able to collect membership fees and hire staff, thereby enhancing the network’s operational and financial capacity.

It is important to emphasize that WAITRO Operations e.V. will not replace WAITRO, nor will it alter its Constitution or governance model. On the contrary, it will add new capabilities without diminishing the legacy of the original organization. Its creation will reduce dependence on the host country of the Secretariat and provide a solid foundation for the long-term sustainability of the WAITRO ecosystem.

With this step, the global network reaffirms its commitment to innovation, international cooperation, and institutional strengthening of its members worldwide.

# NEWS IN THE NETWORK

Good standing RTO’S LAC 2025



Our next WAITRO Executive Board and RFP Meeting will take place on October 27–29, 2025, in Santiago, Chile.

**Stay tuned for more information!**

## Collaboration between WAITRO members Cenat (Costa Rica) and CIB (Colombia) results in successful triangular cooperation project: Costa Rica – Colombia – Sweden

The project, titled “Technology transfer to coffee and avocado producers in Costa Rica and Colombia on high-quality, low-cost biofactories and bio-inputs,” focused on the artisanal production of agricultural bio-inputs. Bio-inputs are natural-origin products used to improve soil health as well as plant nutrition and protection. They offer a more sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative to agrochemicals. However, producing high-quality bio-inputs requires the implementation of scientific and technological knowledge and tools to ensure proper practices.

Through a participatory approach involving more than 100 coffee and avocado producers in Colombia and Costa Rica, the project identified and promoted best practices in sustainable agriculture for on-farm (in situ) bio-input production. In the first phase, training workshops and knowledge exchange sessions were held in both countries, allowing the collection of information on how farmers produce and use bio-inputs. In the second phase, samples of bio-inputs produced on different farms in Colombia and Costa Rica were collected and analyzed using tools from molecular biology, genomics, and bioinformatics.



The findings highlighted the need to standardize techniques and protocols used by farmers in order to increase the presence of beneficial microorganisms. The knowledge gained was then transferred back to the participating producers to support continuous improvements in sustainable agriculture.

This initiative aligns with the European Union’s priorities on ecological transition and was funded by the Triangular Cooperation Fund European Union–Costa Rica–Latin America and the Caribbean, through the ADELANTE 2 Program. It was coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, with the participation of MIDEPLAN and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID). The project was implemented by the National Center for Biotechnological Innovations (CENIBiot–CENAT–CONARE), Costa Rica’s Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), the Corporation for Biological Research (CIB) in Colombia, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).

## DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE WITH THE WAITRO NETWORK?

Send us your events, news, courses, certifications, or updates on joint projects with other members.

Be part of our upcoming newsletters – we’d love to hear from you!



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