

ISIE Americas 2016 Meeting:
The first-ever Americas regional meeting opened up the IE discussions in Latin America

Between 25th and 27th of May, the first ISIE Americas Meeting was held in Bogota, Colombia, hosted by the School of Management of the Universidad de los Andes (UASM). With the theme, “Industrial Ecology and Green Transformation,” the meeting hosted 79 oral presentations on various topics of industrial ecology including industrial symbiosis and value chains collaborations to sustainable consumption/production and circular economy, life cycle assessment, sustainable business models, social and cultural dimensions of IE, IE education in Latin America, sustainable urban and rural systems, extended producer responsibility, and eco-design. About 190 attendees from 22 countries participated in the meeting and shared experiences and visions for facilitating green transformations in the region.



The conference hosted 190 visitors from 22 countries

Six keynote speakers addressed diverse topics of industrial ecology and sustainable development in Latin America. Frank Boons (University of Manchester School of Management) emphasized the importance of understanding social aspects of industrial systems for sustainability transformations. Jeroen Guinée (Leiden University Institute of Environmental Sciences) introduced the past, present, and future of life cycle assessment, and Pauline Deutz (Hull University Environmental Institute) presented the perspectives from geography in advancing industrial ecology research. Sebastián Rovira (UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean-ECLAC) offered an overview of economic, environmental, and social situations in Latin America, while Arturo Rodríguez (Mexican Federal Deputy Attorney for the Environment, Profepa) presented the policy context in Mexico. Manuel Rodríguez (USAM, the first Minister of the Environment in Colombia) argued for more radical and fundamental changes for sustainability transformation.



Professor Frank Boons, one of the Keynote Speakers, discussed the social dimensions of industrial ecology.

The ISIE Americas was held in conjunction with a half-day student event on May 24th and two industry facility visits on May 27th. The student event, organized by the student community of the ISIE and led by Luis Felipe Vasquez Correa, began with the discussions with the four panelists followed by small group discussions. On May 27th, participants signed up for one of the two facility visits; one to the Colombia's largest brewery and the other to a medium-sized paint manufacturer, both of which have strong sustainability initiatives. These visits allowed participants to have a brief look how industrial ecology has been applied in Colombia.



A group of 24 scholars and practitioners visited Tito Pabón, a paint manufacturer leader in sustainability practices.

The ISIE Americas 2016 regional meeting emerged from a shared interest of both the current and past ISIE presidents, Professors Christopher Kennedy and Marian Chertow. Both envisioned a global expansion of the ISIE, especially to emerging economies, which present complex sustainability challenges from interwoven issues of development, environmental protection and social equality. The preparation for the meeting began at the ISIE meeting held in Surrey, with a group of enthusiastic researchers from Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Trinidad and Tobago, and Costa Rica, who were committed to the creation and organization of this first meeting. Our organizing and technical committee played a crucial role in the planning, organization, and development of this event. The UNECLAC economic development office provided additional support as a key regional player for environmental policy making, and Tito Pabon, Bavaria, and Asocolfores provided financial support for the meeting.



The Board of the ISIE Americas 2016 Meeting

The ISIE Americas 2016 Meeting evidently showed that considerable efforts already exist to advance IE in Latin America. Particularly, it was observed that the topic and scope of industrial ecology is broadening, with more studies focused on social aspects of industrial ecology, and varying regional contexts influencing IE dynamics and applications. Promoting local, regional, and international collaborations and expanding institutional platforms (e.g., IE education) would further realize the growing potential of industrial ecology in the region. At the end of the meeting, the building of an LCA database for Latin America was proposed. The discussions for the second ISIE Americas meeting, potentially in 2018, have already begun.

We had the privilege to host the first-ever ISIE Americas Meeting and we hope this gathering gains momentum over time and across the region to further promote industrial ecology research, applications, and policy making to support green transformation in Latin America.

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