

Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas Integrating the Financial and Private Sectors

In April 2009, at the Fifth Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, U.S. President Obama invited leaders from participating nations of the Organization of American States (OAS) to join in an Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas (ECPA). His vision was to bring countries from across the Western Hemisphere together to accelerate clean energy development and deployment, advance energy security, and encourage energy investment. In the first year, more than a dozen clean energy initiatives and projects were announced at the ECPA Ministerial in April 2010 in Washington D.C. and to date, there are over 40 initiatives under the seven pillars (Energy Efficiency, Cleaner and More Efficient Use of Fossil Fuels, Energy Poverty, Energy Infrastructure, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Forests and Land Use, and Adaptation).

Answering Obama's call for a stronger partnership, the Government of Panamá has graciously agreed to host an ECPA Senior-Level Working Group Meeting on **April 7-8, 2011**. The purpose of the Meeting is to further advance a regional dialogue on the most critical energy and climate issues facing the Western Hemisphere as well as to discuss ways to integrate the financial and private sectors into the ECPA framework. The Energy Minister from Panamá, Juan Urriola, will host the Meeting in Panamá City, one of the financial and commercial hubs in the region and gateway from east to west, as well as the critical energy and transportation infrastructure connection between Central and South America.

Up to this point, ECPA has primarily been a government to government mechanism for the development and deployment of clean energy technology and projects. In order to ensure the success of existing and new initiatives and projects, the integration of financial institutions and private companies is essential. The upcoming meeting will assemble representatives from major financiers in the region and some of the invited guests include: World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, HSBC, CAF, CABEI, and CDB. The meeting also aims to attract leading, innovative private sector companies doing business in the region such as Duke Energy, AES, and Exxon Mobil Corporation. They will have the opportunity to provide valuable recommendations to their public sector colleagues on ways to design viable and bankable projects, make their markets more attractive to investors, and even propose beneficial changes to regulations as countries review and amend their energy laws to incorporate renewable energy technologies and address climate change concerns. Major financing institutions can share their products and solutions to government representatives and project sponsors to highlight the vast opportunities that exist under the ECPA umbrella. Private sector representatives will have invaluable exposure to the over 40 initiatives taking place under the ECPA pillars and be able to network with Senior Level Energy Ministry Officials across the Western Hemisphere.

In summary, the ECPA Senior Level Working Group Meeting is an excellent opportunity for the financial and private sectors to join the Partnership of 34 nations and tap into the abundance of government projects as well as gaining insight into government regulations and policies. To learn more about ECPA and/or register for the meeting in Panama, please visit: www.ecpamericas.org.