



A LA MANO

8 de noviembre de 2024

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SENADO DE PUERTO RICO
OFICINA DEL SECRETARIO
12 NOV 2024 AM 10:42

Hon. Pedro Pierluisi Urrutia
Gobernador de Puerto Rico

Hon. José L. Dalmau Santiago
Presidente
Senado de Puerto Rico

Hon. Rafael Hernández Montañez
Presidente
Cámara de Representantes de Puerto Rico

Sr. Yamil Rivera Vélez
Secretario
Senado de Puerto Rico

Lcdo. Javier Gómez Cruz
Secretario
Cámara de Representantes de Puerto Rico

Re: Entrega de Informe Anual Año Fiscal 2023-2024
Fideicomiso para Ciencia, Tecnología e Investigación de Puerto Rico

Estimados Honorables Gobernador Pierluisi, Senador Dalmau, Representante Hernández, señor Rivera y licenciado Gómez:

Reciban un cordial saludo de parte del Fideicomiso para Ciencia, Tecnología e Investigación de Puerto Rico ("FCTI").

En conformidad con nuestra encomienda legislativa de presentar un Informe Anual correspondiente al año fiscal 2023-24 al Gobernador y a la Secretaría de ambos cuerpos legislativos, le remitimos el Informe Anual en referencia para su consideración y trámite pertinente. Como parte de este Informe Anual, también hemos incluido nuestro Plan Estratégico.

De necesitar cualquier información adicional relacionada con este documento, puede comunicarse al 787-523-1593.

Atentamente,

Luz A. Crespo Valentín
Luz A. Crespo Valentín
Principal Oficial Ejecutiva



Puerto Rico
Science, Technology
& Research Trust

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Puerto Rico is a
globally recognized
innovation hub.



Puerto Rico
Science, Technology
& Research Trust

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Annual Report of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust

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The Puerto Rico Science, Technology & Research Trust, established in 2004 under Act 214-2004, as amended, as an autonomous entity, stimulates innovation, technology commercialization and the creation of high-technology jobs in Puerto Rico's targeted industry sectors such as: Life Sciences, Alternative Energy, Environmental & Agricultural Sciences, Computer Science & Information Technologies, Medical Devices, and Aerospace & Aeronautics, among others.



CONTENTS

Executive Summary CEO	7
Trustees	50
Executive Team	52
Infrastructure and Operational Areas	59
Science City	62
Administration	64
Human Resources Connections	65
Information Technology	66
Design, Marketing & Communications	68

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT 79

Research Grants Program	80
Technology Transfer Office™	88
Center for Tropical Biodiversity	94
Caribbean Center for Rising Seas	100
Research Institute	110

PUBLIC HEALTH 153

Puerto Rico Public Health Trust	154
Puerto Rico Consortium for Clinical Investigation	166
Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit	180

Anexes	223
PRSTRT’S Strategic Plan 2022-2025	225
Consolidated Financial Statements	271
Impact Report Colmena66	299
Impact Report Parallel 18	353

ENTREPRENEURSHIP 125

Colmena66 & SBIR STTR	126
Parallel 18	134
Fase 1	144

EDUCATION 205

STEM Education & Workforce Development Program	206
Meet-Ups Program	212

Forward Center

WE ARE
THE
TRUST



Dear Stakeholders,

As the CEO of the Puerto Rico Science Technology and Research Trust, I am thrilled to present our progress and achievements over the past year. Our steadfast dedication to advancing the Puerto Rico's innovation agenda, nurturing a dynamic innovation culture, and inspiring a new generation of researchers, entrepreneurs, and public health professionals has led to significant outcomes. This commitment is not just a goal, but a driving force that motivates us to push the boundaries of innovation and create a lasting impact.



This year, we made excellent progress in advancing our vision for Puerto Rico to be recognized as a global innovation hub.

On October 23, 2023, President Biden announced the designation of the inaugural 31 Tech Hubs and recipients of 29 Tech Hubs Strategy Development Grants. This included the PRBio Tech Hub, led by the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust, which aims to advance the region as a global leader in biotechnology through fast-tracking the discovery, development, manufacturing, and supply of next-generation biotechnology and medical device products to detect, treat, and cure diseases and ailments was selected as one of the designees. In November 2023, the U.S. Department of Commerce announced “Build to Scale” grants awarded to 60 organizations across the country — located in 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. BioLeap, a life sciences innovation incubator program led by the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust to increase economic development through innovation and entrepreneurship in the life sciences sector in key focus areas such as biotechnology, AI-driven medical technologies, genomics, and more, was one of the selected programs.

Also, in November 2023, the Trust was appointed as host of the inaugural Life Sciences Exchange between New York and Puerto Rico to boost the life sciences industry in both jurisdictions. This designation was formalized during the establishment of the New York State and Puerto Rico Economic Opportunity Advisory Council, with the participation of NY Governor Kathy Hochul and P.R. Governor Pedro Pierluisi.

More over, in August 2024, we announced that the Trust is the financial advisor to the Puerto Rico Banco de Desarrollo Economico (BDE) for the Venture Capital Access Program, providing for the first time in Puerto Rico a \$30M allocation from the U.S. Department of Treasury for investment in emerging and expanding companies.

This executive brief highlights our organization's achievements and milestones from the past fiscal year, showcasing our steadfast commitment to driving Puerto Rico's innovation agenda. As we look to the future, we are more determined than ever to push the boundaries of research, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, and strengthen the communities we serve.

We are enthusiastic about the opportunities ahead and their impact on Puerto Rico's future.

The Trust is creating a better future

Our Communications & Marketing Department has demonstrated exceptional performance and innovation in the past year, achieving remarkable milestones that have significantly elevated our brand presence and engagement. These results include a 39.1% growth in social media followers, with LinkedIn experiencing the highest growth at 41.9%. The department organized over 36 successful events, produced 169 videos, and garnered \$3.99 million in non-paid publicity through 746 media appearances. Integrating CRM tools, like HubSpot and Mailchimp, enabled them to manage a database of over 110,000 contacts, enhancing customer retention and engagement.

\$3.9M
Non-Paid Publicity

+30
Public Events
Supported

179
Videos Produced

+4k
Social Media Posts

789
Email Campaigns

10
Podcast Episodes
Produced





The unwavering support and guidance of our Board of Trustees have been instrumental in steering our initiatives and achieving our goals. Their strategic vision and dedication have provided us with the foundation to excel in our endeavors.

Our program directors and executive team's leadership have driven our initiatives forward. Their expertise, vision, dedication, and commitment to excellence have ensured the successful implementation of our programs and the achievement of our goals. Additionally, our associates 'and partners' energy, enthusiasm, and commitment have been the driving force behind our success. Their collaborative efforts and shared passion for innovation have enabled us to create a thriving ecosystem that fosters growth and development.

Together, we have made significant strides in advancing the Puerto Rico innovation agenda and culture and inspiring a new generation of researchers, entrepreneurs, and public health professionals.

Research & Development

Entrepreneurship

We create new technology, products, services, systems, and solutions. It is a process supported greatly by science that can generate new discoveries and knowledge to ultimately improve our lives. Our R&D programs have impacted diverse sectors like research, biodiversity, transfer of technology, health, cultural heritage, agriculture, among others. Each program pushes to expand its field providing funding mechanisms, resources, mentorship, or other means to drive innovation.

148 **+\$16M**

Grantees since
program inception

Cumulative grants

+\$60M

Return on funding

33

inventions disclosures
evaluated by TTO

Entrepreneurship is essential for economic development. It fuels innovation and creates new jobs, industries, and markets. It also has the potential to improve lives, communities, and countries. Our entrepreneurship programs provide a blueprint for how to support businesses in all their stages, stimulate their growth and build economic development.

+5k

entrepreneurs in 2023
marking a 36.9% increase
compared to 2022

1.8k

Fase1 members,
with 578 new
registrations on
online academy

498

graduated startups
from Parallel18

\$760K

Parallel18 grants funding distributed
among Generation11, for 19
startups from 19 countries



Public Health

Education

Public health attempts to promote and protect the wellbeing of people and their environment. This work is achieved by promoting healthy lifestyles, researching disease and prevention, environmental hazards and addressing epidemics of infectious diseases. Our public health programs operate based on evidence to make systematic improvements in the health of the population, increase access to health resources, and reduce inequalities in local communities.

+\$11M **133**

new funds obtained by the
Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit
and the P.R. Public Health Trust,
a great achievement
for public health pillar

outreach and education
activities executed by the
P.R. Vector Control Unit

+30 **307**

active studies for clinical trials
for the Puerto Rico Consortium
for Clinical Investigation that
secured three clinical trials and
seven active partnerships
more this fiscal year

members in 3 health
networks that P.R. Public
Health Trust establish, and
also deployed 43 community
health workers across
29 municipalities

Innovation is a global force that demands continued adaptation and multisectoral engagement. These programs converge in different sectors and ecosystems to build capacity and propel innovation.

New Forward Center launch

75.5% **100%**

retention rate of participants in
all STEM Workforce programs

target goal for
Puerto Rico Ready

378 **795**

new students of
Stem Boxed Experiences

meetups attendees with
51 subject matter experts
in 6 meetups



Research Grants

The Trust's Research Grants Program has attained significant achievements and milestones over the past fiscal year. These showcase our commitment to advancing research, fostering innovation, and supporting the scientific community. Since the program's inception, we have had 148 grantees, with 12 new grantees added in this fiscal year. The cumulative grants awarded amount to \$16,308,572, resulting in a remarkable return on funding of \$60,021,220. Our Forward Research & Innovation Summit saw an impressive attendance of 394 individuals, and we currently have 533 active Beacon users.

From July 2023 to June 2024, our active grantees reported remarkable achievements: 47 undergraduate and 41 graduate students were impacted, contributing to 537 students since the program's inception. One MS thesis and one PhD dissertation were completed, with two MS theses and one PhD dissertation in progress. Active grantees secured \$1,954,867 in external funding and published 16 peer-reviewed articles across various journals.

The **Advanced Research Grant (ARG)** is a solicited proposal mechanism that provides funding to advance locally developed science and technology projects. Awards are up to \$150K. This fiscal year, we received 44 letters of intent, invited 37 to submit full proposals, and received 36. The peer review of these proposals has been completed.

Our funded projects span various institutions, including the University of Puerto Rico (Río Piedras, Mayagüez, Medical Sciences, Cayey, and Ponce campuses), Ana G. Méndez University, Universidad Central del Caribe, and Ponce Health Sciences University. We also funded projects from for-profit and non-profit organizations.

148

Grantees since
program inception

12

New Grantees
in this Fiscal Year

+\$60M

Return on Funding





\$16,308,572

in Grants Awarded

Our funded projects cover strategic sectors, such as Biotechnology and Life Sciences, Agriculture, Information and Communications Technology, Clean Technologies/Renewable Energy, Environmental Sciences, Medical Devices, Aerospace, and Clinical Trials. In collaboration with Rhodium Scientific, we announced the Advanced Research Grant: Space Edition in July 2023. This innovative funding mechanism enables Puerto Rican science and technology on the International Space Station (ISS) through a competitive, proposal-based selection process. Two projects from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus, were funded and are on track to be launched to the ISS. On February 23, 2024, we presented the new cohort of grantees during our Advanced Research Grant Recognition Event. We recognized 12 new grantees, including the recipients of the ARG Space Edition, with a total award of \$1.6M.

We announced a new call for the CRG during our Recognition Event. The Catalyzer Research Grant (CRG) enhances the competitiveness of local researchers by providing critical bridge funding. In April 2024, we received 40 letters of intent, invited 32 applicants to submit full proposals, and received 28 proposals, now under evaluation by our peer review group.

On November 30, 2023, the Forward Research & Innovation Summit: Science & Space Edition was held at the Caribe Hilton Hotel. The summit brought together experts, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to facilitate knowledge sharing, networking, and the development of cutting-edge ideas and projects. It featured discussions with leading speakers, including Puerto Rican Astronaut Joseph Acaba, NASA's Chief of the Astronaut Office.



Joseph Acaba
NASA's Chief of the
Astronaut Office

Technology Transfer Office

In 2024, the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) made significant strides in bridging the gap between scientific research and commercial applications. Under the theme of Connecting Science to Business, the TTO's mission is to identify, evaluate, protect, market, and transfer the most promising research discoveries from Puerto Rico's universities, institutions, and research institutes to the private sector, yielding remarkable results.

In its fourth year, the EnTRUST Program, in partnership with Columbia University, continued to accelerate life science discoveries by providing training and funding to researchers. This initiative has been instrumental in de-risking early-stage technologies and fostering entrepreneurial thinking among researchers. In its sixth year, the XLerator Network received new funding to support biomedical researchers with learning opportunities, early-stage de-risking funding, and mentorship networks.

TTO evaluated

33 invention
disclosures showcasing innovation

The TTO has made significant progress. They evaluated 33 invention disclosures, showcasing innovation. It TTO maintained an active portfolio of 120 technologies, highlighting diverse research activities. It filed 26 new patent applications, ensuring robust intellectual property protection. The portfolio includes 108 patents under management, demonstrating a commitment to commercialization. Additionally, the TTO secured 13 active licenses, facilitating technology transfer to the market. These accomplishments reflect the TTO's dedication to promoting innovation, protecting intellectual property, and driving commercialization.

This program aligns with other Trust initiatives to support life science innovation. The biopharmaceutical ecosystem saw the TTO lead three efforts to impact Puerto Rico's biopharmaceutical ecosystem with substantial financial support from the NSF Engines and EDA Tech Hubs programs.

33
New Invention
Disclosures

120
Active
Technologies

26
New Patent
Applications

108
Patents Under
Management

13
Active Licenses

The TTO connects science to business by delivering technology transfer services to five university partners representing 17 campuses, including four medical schools. These partners include the University of Puerto Rico campuses, Ana G. Méndez University campuses, Ponce Health Sciences University/Ponce Research Institute, San Juan Bautista School of Medicine, and Universidad Central del Caribe.

Our portfolio mirrors the R&D activities of its scientists and researchers, with \$108 million in R&D expenditures reported in FY2022. The diversity among TTO inventors is exceptional, with 42% of inventors being female, significantly higher than the U.S. average of 13% for women inventor-patentees. This year, 64% of inventors who submitted an invention disclosure did so for the first time, indicating a growing engagement with new inventors.



Center for Tropical Biodiversity

The Center for Tropical Biodiversity (CTB) has achieved significant milestones and results over the past year. One key accomplishment is the submission of grants totaling \$10,350,000 for CTB-driven projects. Additionally, identifying 14 new compounds in the Cuban Tree Frog alone and repositing 118 compounds in the NatPORT Online Repository are noteworthy achievements.

The CTB received a funding recommendation from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) with a proposed budget of \$2,991,860 over five years. This proposal aims to create and integrate a dual analysis pipeline for identifying natural products in crude extracts and protein targets for natural extracts. Another significant proposal awarded for funding is the NSF EPSCOR E-Rise Program, led by Dr. Riccardo Papa, with a proposed budget of \$7,000,000 over five years. This proposal focuses on developing tropical insects as growth, development, and genetic variability models.



14

new compounds
identified in the Cuban
Tree Frog alone

1

invention disclosures
on behalf of the
PR Science Trust

118

compounds deposited in the
NatPORT Online Repository

The CTB has also made progress in identifying compound families within the *Arracacia xanthorrhiza*, known as “apio” in Puerto Rico. This work has led to identifying genes in the apio leaves that encode the production of polyphenols, a family of compounds with documented health benefits.

Looking forward, CTB will continue supporting companies like Dynamiko Pharmaceuticals LLC and SeaMust LLC in enhancing their value propositions. The CTB also aims to further engage with natural products researchers in the Caribbean and Latin America.

These accomplishments and initiatives highlight the CTB’s commitment to advancing scientific research, conservation, and commercialization of biodiversity-derived products.

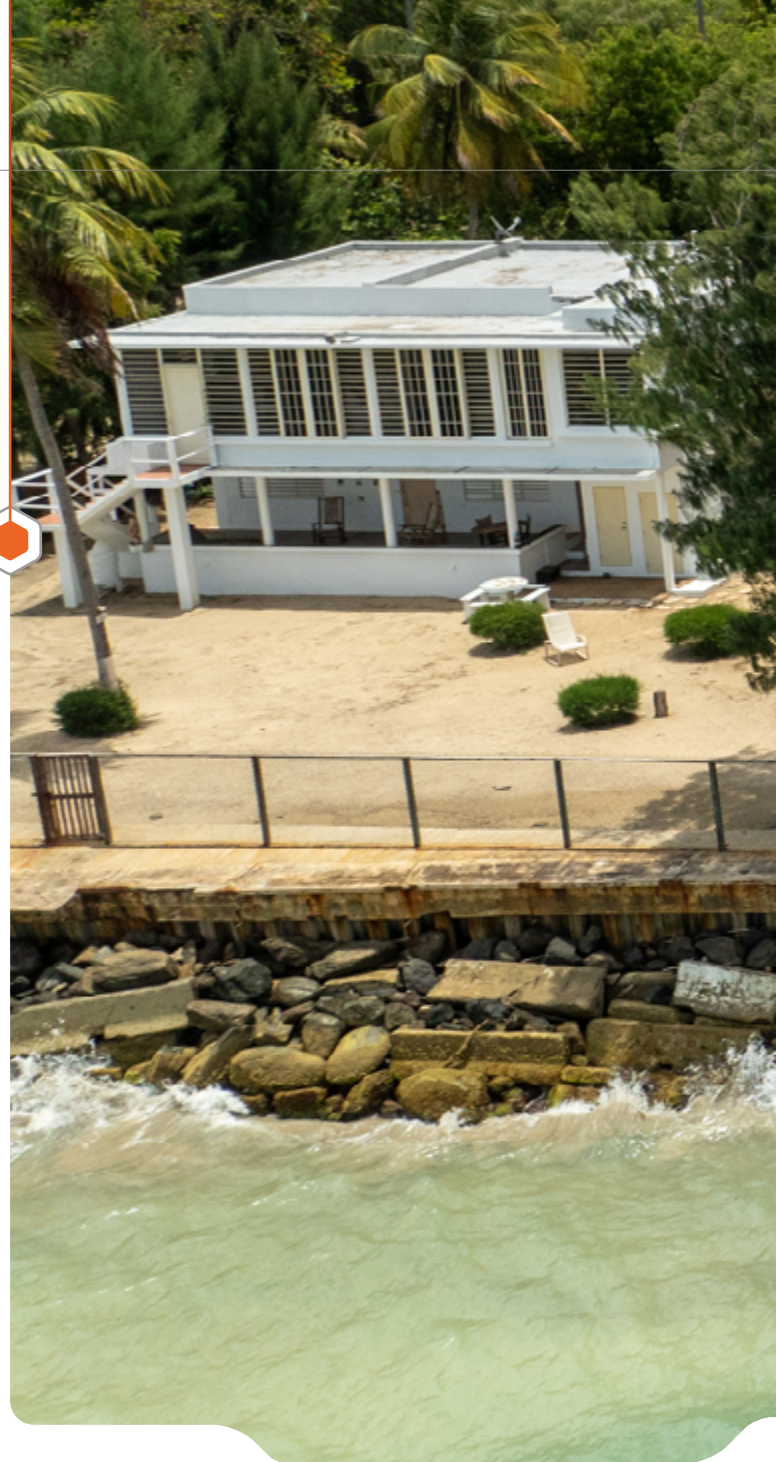
Submission of grants totaling
+10,000
for CTB-driven projects



Caribbean Center for Rising Seas

The Caribbean Center for Rising Seas has achieved significant accomplishments and results in the past year. They funded a research project covering 10% of their expenditures, addressed 1281 participants at 28 events, delivered 26 presentations, and reached 619 professionals. They formed three external collaborations and commissioned a risk and vulnerability report and digital platform. Their documentary trailer received over 4,800 views, and they submitted public comments for four public hearings. Additionally, they engaged five additional coastal communities.

The Center's highlights include advancing environmental justice in Puerto Rico through a project with NASA, and the Global Resilience Institute, using earth observation data to strengthen ecological justice in coastal areas. They presented preliminary findings at the American Geophysical Union 2023 Conference, sharing progress and exploring future applications of Earth observation data. They also prepared policy position papers, participated in public hearings, and advocated for considering Sea Level Rise in long-term planning.



33 local and visiting specialist
conducted deep dive discussions

The Center co-hosted an expedition to Puerto Rico by the International Committee of Floodplain Managers, facilitating discussions on current flood risk management practices. They commissioned a study on the economic impacts of flooding and sea level rise, creating a digital platform to depict buildings in coastal flood-prone areas of Puerto Rico.



28 EVENTS
1,281

619
Professionals reached
(architects, engineers, attorneys, etc.)



They also engaged in continuing education for professionals, delivering presentations and participating in podcasts and radio shows. The Center's efforts in advancing climate literacy included providing general presentations, participating in meetups, and designing educational materials. They formed new collaborations, including joining the Scientific Advisory Board of the Caribbean All-Hazards Program to Build Resilience and Climate Equity. They also supported the First Milo Climate Action Academy for Puerto Rico, using satellite data and remote sensing technology to address climate change challenges.

In summary, the Caribbean Center for Rising Seas has made significant strides in research, education, policy advocacy, and community engagement, contributing to environmental justice and resilience in Puerto Rico.

Research Institute

During the 2023-2024 period, the Research Institute has played a pivotal role in shedding light on Puerto Rico's epidemiological trends through state-of-the-art genomic analysis. Aligned with the Puerto Rico Science, Technology, and Research Trust's vision of establishing Puerto Rico as a global innovation hub, the Research Institute, through the pioneering efforts of the Puerto Rico COVID-19 Variant Surveillance Initiative (PRCVSI), has sequenced over 15,600 COVID-19 samples. Furthermore, the Institute now houses one of the largest COVID-19 sample repositories in Puerto Rico, containing more than 32,600 specimens, a resource of immense scientific value. These efforts have identified over 13 recombinant COVID-19 variants, including four that had never been reported.

The PRCVSI's achievements are a testament to the expertise and dedication of its carefully selected team of scientists and the advanced next-generation sequencing infrastructure—the most sophisticated in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. The PRCVSI remains a vital force in the fight against COVID-19, continuing its mission to protect public health in Puerto Rico through genomic insights and precise epidemiological data.

Now situated within the newly renovated Research Institute Core Laboratories of the Research Institute on the first floor of the Innovation Building, the PRCVSI continues to evolve. The Research Institute remains committed to supporting innovative basic and applied research into the fundamental biological mechanisms of diseases that disproportionately affect our population, ensuring that Puerto Rico stays at the forefront of scientific discovery and public health protection.

The Research Institute continues to evolve significantly, reflecting our commitment to advancing scientific discovery and public health. This semester, we are set to complete the execution of the genomic surveillance initiative we have diligently supported since 2001, a milestone that will result in sequencing thousands of samples. Furthermore, for the first time, we will establish and measure the neutralizing antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2 across the Puerto Rican population, analyzing more than 1,000 samples representative of the entire island. This groundbreaking effort will provide critical insights into the population's immunity and resilience against the virus.



\$15.6 M

ARPA PRDOH

\$2.8 M

NIH U01CA26054

By integrating these elements, the Research Institute becomes more than just a research facility; it catalyzes the Island's economic growth. The innovations and breakthroughs that emerge from this ecosystem will drive the development of new industries, attract investment, and create high-quality jobs, transforming Puerto Rico into a global leader in the life sciences. The institute's impact will ripple through the local economy, elevating the Island's position on the world-wide stage as a beacon of scientific progress and economic resilience.

The cornerstone of this initiative is the Puerto Rico Integrated Biomanufacturing STEM Program (PR-IBSP). This project was submitted as part of the EDA PRBio Tech Hub Track 2 funding application. This program, developed in collaboration with the North Carolina State University Biomanufacturing Training and Educational Center (NC BTEC) and Accenture, aims to create industry-ready students by establishing the first minor in biomanufacturing at UPRH. Additionally, the program will offer hands-on training in chemistry and microbiology and make the first associate degree in biomanufacturing technology, specifically designed to produce highly skilled biomanufacturing technicians.

We have developed the Puerto Rico Biomanufacturing Apprentices Program (PRBAP) to democratize access to well-paid careers in the biomanufacturing sector. This program mainly targets individuals who may not wish to follow the traditional college route but are eager to enter the workforce with practical, job-ready skills. PRBAP offers rigorous training and hands-on experience for aspiring biomanufacturing process operators, who play a critical role in the manufacturing lifecycle of biotechnology products. Participants in this program will learn essential skills such as managing, monitoring, and regulating complex equipment and performing critical tasks like cleaning, sterilization, and blending active ingredients for pharmaceuticals and biotech products.

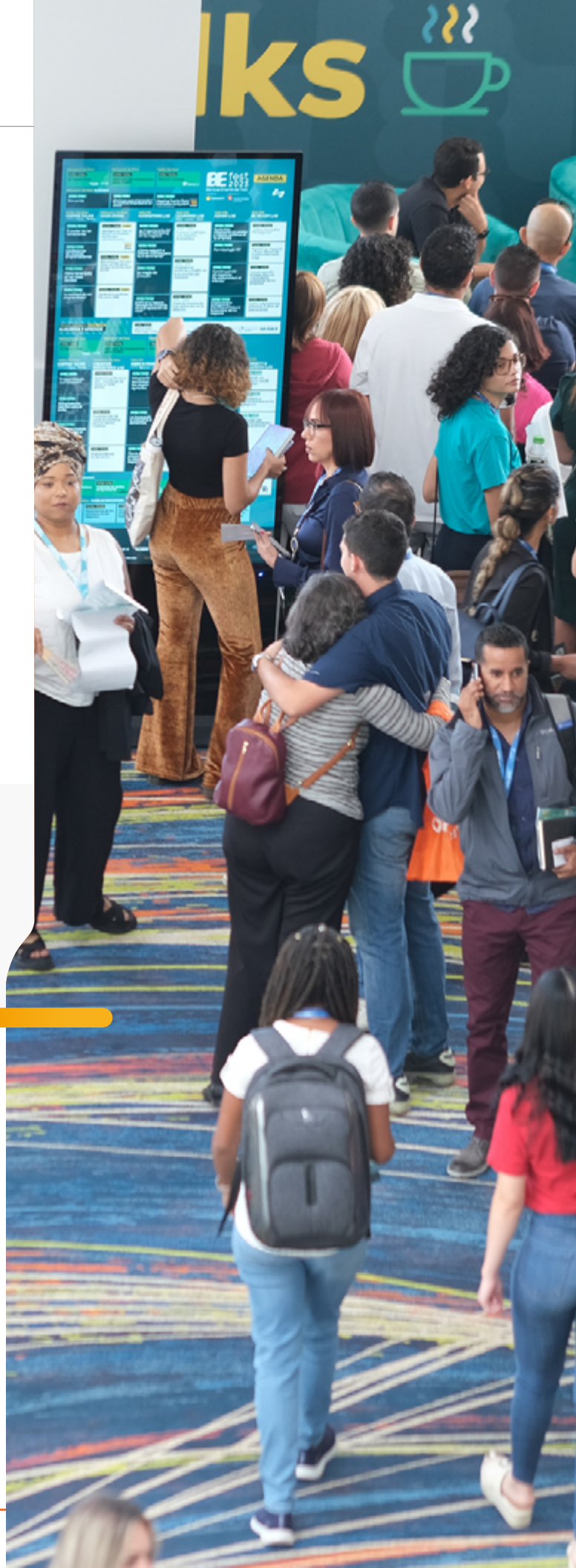


Colmena66

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Colmena66 achieved significant milestones and impactful results. The organization assisted 5,009 entrepreneurs in 2023, **marking a 36.9% increase compared to 2022 and 20,000 entrepreneurs since 2016**. They facilitated 3,019 referrals to the right resources at the right time and had 10,031 interactions with entrepreneurs in 2023. Colmena66's network includes over 200 business resources. The organization ranked first among 80+ SourceLink affiliates in the US for the number of entrepreneurs seeking assistance and counseling hours provided. Additionally, 36.6% of surveyed entrepreneurs decided to start a business after contacting Colmena66, and the services received a 9/10 rating.

The organization assisted
5,009
entrepreneurs in 2023

Key program highlights include the *Levanta tu Negocio PR* platform, which supports SMEs in crisis preparedness and response. This initiative, recognized by the PR & USVI SBA District Office, helped 129 entrepreneurs assess their crisis preparedness. The *Tu Camino Empresarial Tour*, relaunched in Mayagüez, connected over 190 participants with business support resources, achieving a satisfaction rate of 4.9/5. The *Boricua Empeñe Fest*, Puerto Rico's largest entrepreneurship event, saw a 56% increase in participation, with 1,871 attendees in 2023.





The *Acércate al Grant* program, funded by a \$200k SBA Growth Accelerator Fund 2023 Award, supported 16 projects and reached 516 entrepreneurs and researchers. The PULSO program, part of the SBA's Community Navigator Pilot Program, secured \$1 million in funding and disbursed over \$160,000 in grants, impacting 62 municipalities.

Colmena66 also launched the first Interactive Status Report of Puerto Rico's Entrepreneurial Community, using Power BI to present impact metrics and data from annual surveys. The organization was selected as one of thirteen members of the first Leadership Council establishing the Ecosystem Building Leadership Network. Additionally, Denisse Rodríguez, Executive Director of Colmena66, was nominated to the Consumer Advisory Board of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

Looking ahead, Colmena66 will continue to build Puerto Rico's entrepreneurial ecosystem, host the Boricua Emprende Fest 2024, and maintain partnerships to support local entrepreneurs. They aim to increase SBIR/STTR awards through the *Acércate al Grant Program* and update the interactive dashboard with new data.

Fase 1

Has made significant strides in fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the past year. The Fase1 community has grown to over 1,800 members, with 578 new registrations in the online academy, Fase1 Lab. The program has maintained a high retention rate, with 96% of participants completing the modules. The second cohort of Fase1 Intensive concluded with a successful Demo Day, where 46 participants presented their startups. The program's impact is evident in its support for rural and underrepresented communities, with 55% of participants from outside the metropolitan area and 68% women.

Fase1 has also launched two new educational modules, "Transforming my Idea into a Minimum Viable Product" and "PRecovery for Your Business," to help entrepreneurs develop their ideas and prepare for contingencies. The program's outreach efforts have been extensive, with 42 events organized or participated in impacting 17 municipalities. The Fase1 Coffee Talks during the 2023 BE Fest was a hit, covering various entrepreneurial topics and ranking as the second favorite track of the day.

Fase 1 has grown to over
1,800 members
with **578** new registration



820+

Participants (events)

9

Entrepreneurial
modules

42

Outreach events



Fase1's commitment to building a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem is evident in its efforts to forge stronger connections with the community, educational institutions, and new collaborators. The program aims to expand its footprint by adding 50 new participants to the business incubator, Fase1 Intensive, and continuing to provide high-quality educational materials through the Fase1 Lab. The program's collaboration with the Puerto Rico Department of Housing is set to continue, providing critical support and resources to enhance the program offerings.

The strong network of mentors and partners supporting the participants further highlights the program's success. Over 30 local and international experts provided tailored guidance and strategic advice through one-on-one sessions. The third generation of Fase1 Intensive received 116 applications, with 50 new ideas selected for the program. The participants represent 18 municipalities, 58% from women-led projects and 54% from low- and moderate-income categories.

Overall, Fase1's accomplishments in the past year demonstrate its dedication to nurturing and empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs, fostering innovation, and creating opportunities for underrepresented communities. The program's success is a testament to the hard work and commitment of its participants, mentors, and partners.



Parallel18

Parallel18 has continued to make significant progress in fostering innovation and supporting startups through its various programs.

The international acceleration program P18 has welcomed companies from across the globe for eight consecutive years, creating a diverse ecosystem that supports the local business landscape and provides opportunities for global expansion. P18 Gen. 11 achieved remarkable milestones in just five months, with 73 closed deals and over 64,000 new users. The cohort experienced a 2.6x increase in revenue and positively impacted the community, with 829 individuals benefiting from its Giveback program.

Additionally, \$760,000 in grants were distributed among 19 startups from 9 countries, and \$380,000 was deployed as investment capital. The participants generated \$1.3M in revenue and reported an \$83M enterprise valuation.



498

Graduated companies in
all programs in seven years

123

Partnerships formed

60

Graduated companies in all
programs this fiscal year

24

Investments deployed
in companies



\$760,000

in grants were distributed among
19 startups from 9 countries

Xpand, a post-acceleration program supporting innovative companies in advanced growth stages in Puerto Rico, has also seen significant achievements. In 2023, Gen.3 of Xpand participated in 25 hours of specialized mentorship and 18 sessions or workshops. The program allocated \$100,000 in seed capital investment in up to three companies. Xpand Gen.3 and Gen.4 reported over \$16M in cumulative revenue.

BioLeap, launched in January 2024, is the first Life Sciences incubation program to assist Life Sciences projects. The program provided participants with access to educational and relevant resources, technical assistance, and coworking space. By the end of August 2024, the first generation of BioLeap reported over \$1M in cumulative capital raised and an \$8M cumulative valuation. These accomplishments underscore the effectiveness and commitment of the Trust's programs in fostering business growth, innovation, and societal betterment.

The local pre-acceleration program, Pre18 Gen.6, consisted of 23 startups in various industries, including Artificial Intelligence, Consumer Goods, Food Technology, and more. After 12 weeks, the startups reported market adaptation and sales increases, received over 38 mentorship sessions, and engaged in more than 18 GiveBack sessions, which impacted over 785 individuals. A total of \$562,500 in grant funding was distributed, and the cohort reported \$2,929,730 in total revenue since inception.

Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit

The Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit (PRVCU) has made excellent progress in the 2023-2024. With \$2,853,478.00 in new funding, the PRVCU deployed 1,372 surveillance traps and tested 46,270 pools for arbovirus, identifying 237 pools positive for dengue. The unit has also processed over 60 WALS applications and intervened in over 30 dengue clusters. Their outreach and education efforts have been extensive, with 133 activities conducted and over 12,300 educational and prevention materials distributed. Additionally, the PRVCU has grown its membership to 430 Puerto Rico Vector Management Association (PRVMA) members, reflecting the community's commitment to combating vector-borne diseases and promoting public health. The PRVCU continues to perform activities for awards from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Deployed +46,000 pools
for arbovirus identifying
237 pools positive for dengue.**

To enhance Global Health Security, the PRVCU has been working on strengthening public health surveillance systems and preparedness globally. This includes establishing and evaluating the use of Wolbachia in the *Aedes aegypti* population throughout the urban areas of El Salvador. The PRVCU has developed a dengue hotspot response protocol, Advanced Molecular Detection (AMD) applications, and professional networks. With the Lead and Healthy Homes Technical Studies (LHHTS) Grant Program, PRVCU has been evaluating the effectiveness of screens in doors and windows to prevent virus-borne diseases by *Aedes aegypti* in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

The PRVCU has developed the Tropical Island Training and Evaluation Center (TITEC) for vector-borne disease to provide training, evaluation, and partnerships in preventing and controlling vector-borne diseases in the US territories and freely associated states. The PRVCU hosted three students from the Southeastern Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases and eight from Interamerican University, Metro Campus. The interns participated in various areas of the PRVCU and supported the implementation of projects.

A public health emergency was declared due to a dengue epidemic in Puerto Rico on March 25, 2024. The declaration was extended until December 31, 2024, to promote prevention and control measures. As of June 2024, there were 1,596 accumulated cases of dengue, with the highest numbers reported in San Juan, Carolina, Rincón, Bayamón, and Canóvanas.

The PRVCU collaborated with the Puerto Rico Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture to implement modern technologies and effective pesticides to control the *Aedes aegypti*. Laboratory capacities were established in San Juan and Ponce to support surveillance activities and test alternate control technologies. The PRVCU mosquito surveillance system collects, identifies, and tests female *Aedes aegypti* for arbovirus weekly. The system has expanded to include samples from various projects and municipalities. Up to June 2024, 1,372 AGO traps were processed weekly.



+\$2M

New funds

+12K

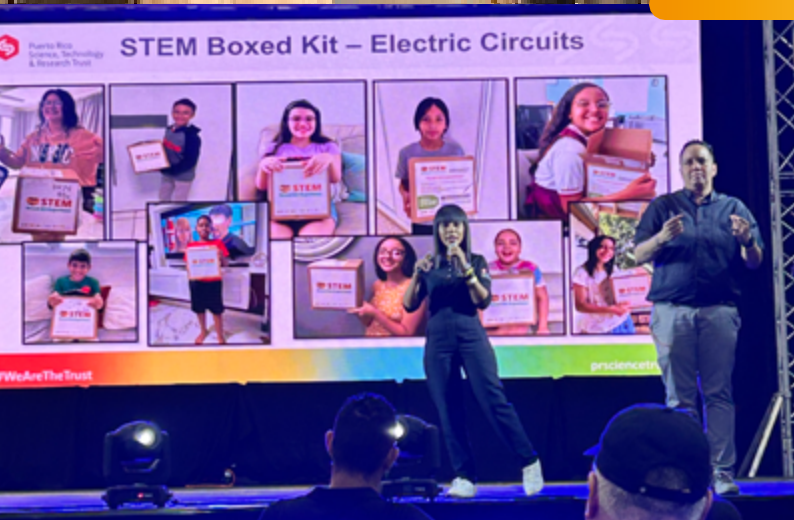
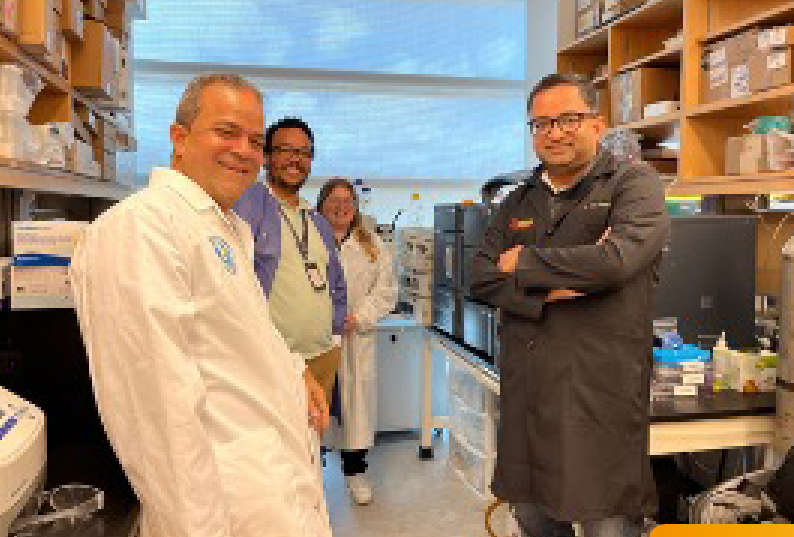
Educational and prevention
materials distributed

133

Outreach and
education activities

60

WALS application





Puerto Rico Public Health Trust

The Puerto Rico Public Health Trust (PRPHT) has made significant strides in public health initiatives over the past year. The organization has established three health networks with 307 members, deployed 43 community health workers across 29 municipalities, and facilitated 1,243 health and social referrals. Additionally, PRPHT has formed 416 collaborations, conducted 710 outreach and educational activities, and developed 212 resources. The distribution of 100,113 health prevention and preparedness materials and the delivery of 36 oral and poster presentations further highlight their impact.

3 health networks with 307 members, deployed 43 community health workers across 29 municipalities, and facilitated 1,243 health and social referrals

The Community Health Workers (CHWs) initiative established the PRPHT as a vital partner to increase access to services and develop solutions based on our communities' needs. This initiative has been particularly impactful, with 43 CHWs providing essential services and advocating for recognizing CHWs as integral to the health system. Environmental health initiatives have focused on protecting vulnerable residents from climate change, with specialized training for rural health professionals and developing resources on extreme heat and emergency preparedness.





The Social Epidemiology and Evaluation Division has raised awareness about the social determinants of health (SDoH) and health equity, reaching hundreds of participants through webinars and educational sessions. The division has also established an interest group in SDoH with 214 members committed to advocacy and education.

The Communications and Marketing Division has disseminated PRPHT's accomplishments and opportunities through various campaigns and media efforts. Notable events include the Health and Research Congress, which attracted over 580 attendees, and the celebration of PRPHT's fifth anniversary with a social media campaign. The division's efforts have resulted in significant growth on social media platforms, with notable increases in followers and engagement.

Overall, PRPHT's initiatives have substantially impacted public health in Puerto Rico, demonstrating its commitment to improving health outcomes and promoting health equity for all residents.

3

Health networks
established with
307 members

43

Community
health workers
in 29 municipalities

416

Collaborations
established

710

Outreach and
educational
activities held

Puerto Rico Consortium for Clinical Investigation

The fiscal year 2023-2024 was a landmark period for the Puerto Rico Consortium for Clinical Investigation (PRCCI), marked by the inauguration of a state-of-the-art Clinical Research Center in August 2023. This new facility has significantly enhanced research capabilities, securing three clinical trials and seven active partnerships.

The Clinical Research Operations team achieved notable progress with over 30 active studies and more than 25 presentations to sponsors and research sites. Business development efforts generated over 50 leads, converting 28 into qualified opportunities, and executed contracts for three Phase III trials. Additionally, PRCCI's dedication to education and community outreach was evident in the certification of 20 new Clinical Research Coordinators and engagement with over 471 community members. Marketing and communications efforts successfully shifted focus from a consortium to a clinical research center, generating new study leads and achieving significant growth in digital presence.

Overall, PRCCI remains committed to advancing clinical research in Puerto Rico, providing innovative treatment options, and enhancing clinical research capabilities.

+30 active studies
and more than 25 presentations
to sponsors and research sites





33

Active studies

7

Participation in
Patient Advocacy
Activities



20

New Clinical Research
Coordinator

+400

Community Members



STEM Education & Workforce Development Program

The STEM Education & Workforce Development Program for the year 2023-2024 has achieved significant milestones and delivered impactful results. The program has successfully contracted services and philanthropic sponsorships toward education in Puerto Rico worth over \$200,000. Additionally, a direct investment of \$80,000 was made towards free STEM activities for local students, benefiting 378 new students who completed the STEM Boxed Kit Experience. The program also achieved a 100% target goal for PR Ready and maintained a 75.5% retention rate across all programs.

The STEM Boxed Kit Experience, funded by the Medtronic Foundation and local organizations, provided hands-on learning in programming fundamentals to 500 students, focusing on coding and computer science. The HackLab Academy, launched in February, engaged 18 teens in developing computational thinking and problem-solving skills through real-world applications of computer programming. The ConCiencia Podcast, introduced in 2023, produced 12 episodes dedicated to science communication and educational entertainment, reaching hundreds of listeners inside and outside Puerto Rico.



The Despegue Científico event, part of the White House Space Initiative, provided 44 participants with high-quality informal education on aerospace, space careers, and rocket science. The 21st Century Techforce Partner program, with an allocation of \$1.2 million, led procurement efforts for nine Lighthouse Schools, aiming to engage more than 20,000 new professionals in technology over the next ten years. In collaboration with the National Energy Education Development Project, the EV Challenge saw 73 female students from local public schools participate in capacity-building workshops and electric vehicle competitions.



75.5%

Retention Rate
in all Programs

100%

Target Goal
for PR Ready

\$170k

Contracted Services

378

New Students
that Completed our STEM
Boxed Kit Experience



The Puerto Rico Ready program completed its third and final cycle of certifications in Drone Pilot, GIS, and IT Support Specialist, providing workforce training to 272 low-to-moderate-income participants. The program will be sunset in December 2024, and plans are to roll out a Talent Showcase Platform for program graduates and other potential employees.

The STEM education program added long-term founders to its roster of sponsors and opened a 3D printing studio in Ponce. It also launched a five-year strategy to provide 100 teachers with a STEM+AI Professional Development Certificate.

The program will also unveil a learning management platform featuring self-paced and instructor-led courses in various fields, broadening access to high-quality learning for thousands of Puerto Ricans. Additionally, the program will lead collaborations in an initiative from the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce. It will provide high school students early access to IT and Emergent Technology fundamentals.

Overall, the STEM & Workforce Program has made significant strides in promoting STEM education, workforce development, and community engagement, positioning itself for continued success in the coming years.

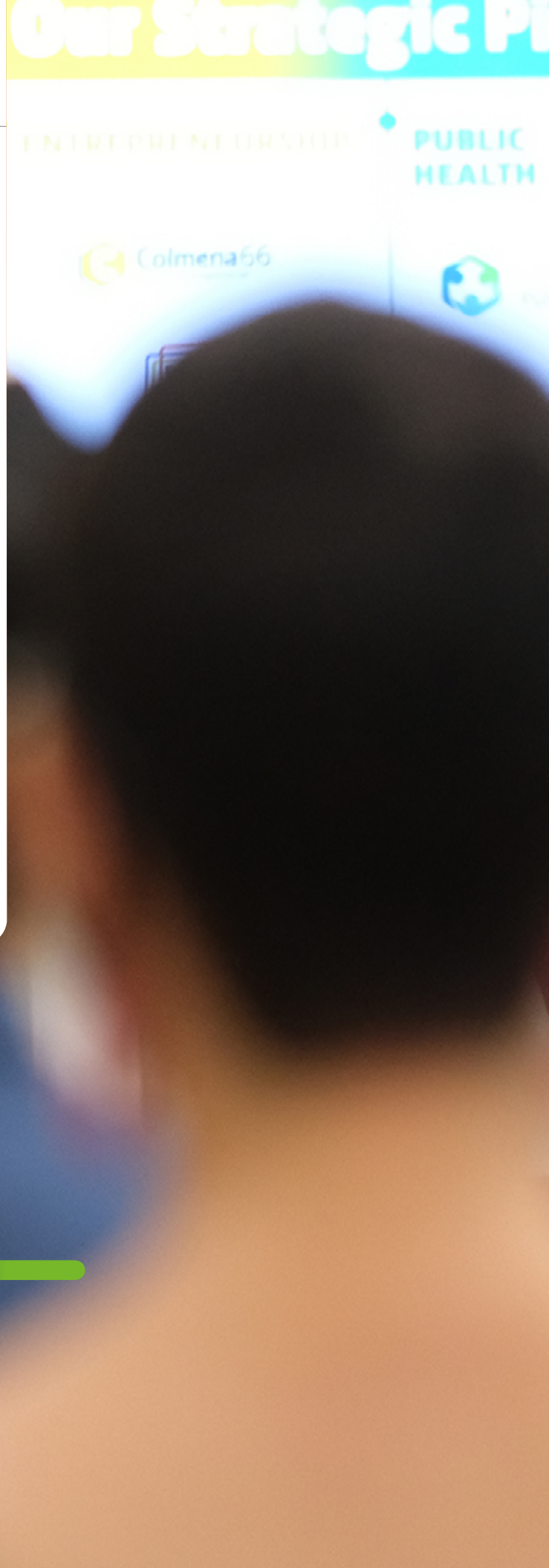


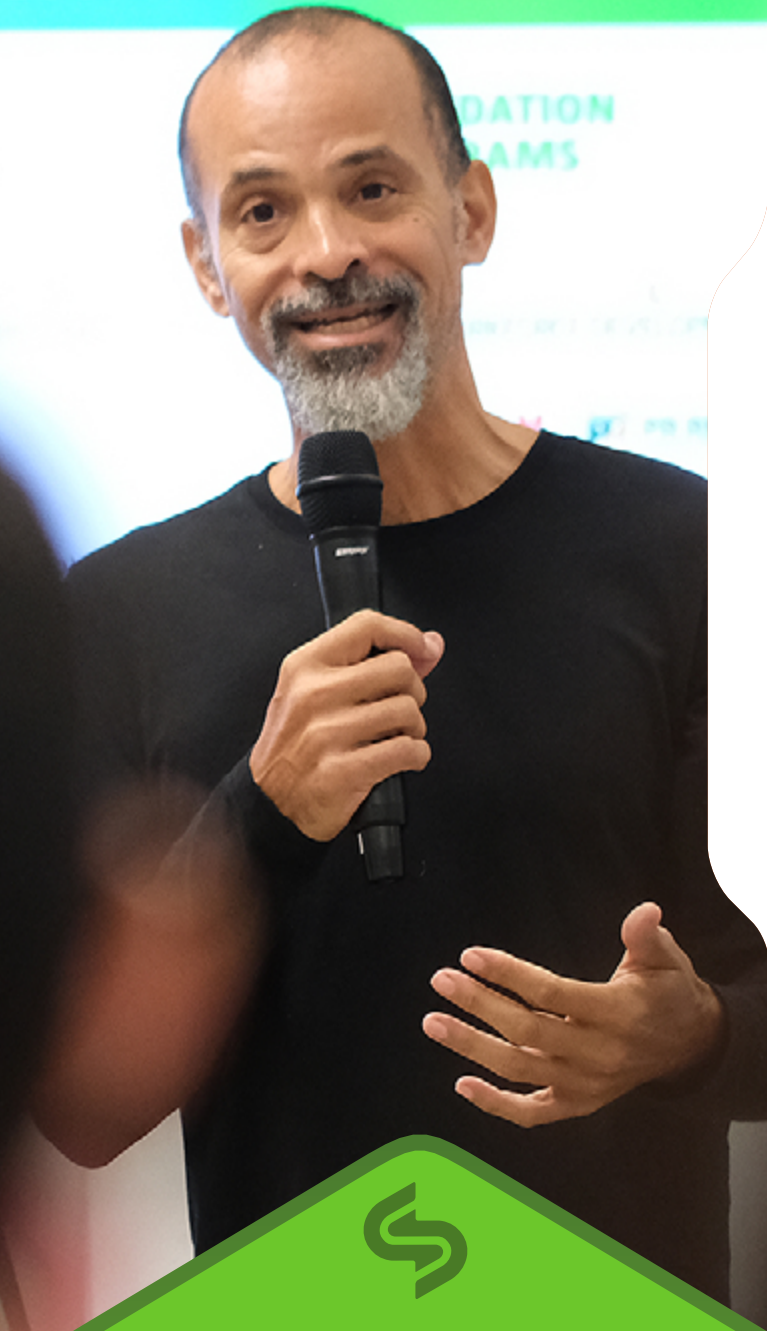
Puerto Rico Research and Innovation Meetups

The Puerto Rico Research and Innovation Meetups Program had a successful year in 2023-2024, expanding its role as a dynamic platform for addressing critical issues ranging from waste management to AI and the creative economy.

The program engaged a diverse audience of experts, curating events that fostered solution-oriented dialogue and innovation. Notable meetups included the PRCCI event on clinical trials, which aimed to strengthen Puerto Rico's clinical investigation ecosystem through awareness campaigns and networking. The AI & Creatives meetup explored the transformative potential of AI in creative industries while emphasizing ethical adoption and education.

To foster productive **dialogues that lead to innovative solutions,** ultimately enhancing the well-being of citizens and driving sustainable economic development





The Science Communications Meetup stressed the importance of continuous education, cultural humility, and intersectoral collaboration in effective science communication. The first Empresas B en Formación Cohort celebrated businesses working towards B Corporation certification, focusing on measuring social and environmental impact. The Agricultural Sustainability Meetup addressed the importance of education and collaboration in sustainable agricultural practices amid climate change challenges. Lastly, the working session on composting systems developed solutions for organic waste management to enhance sustainability in Puerto Rico. Through these initiatives, the program contributed significantly to Puerto Rico's scientific research, business innovation, and sustainable development growth.



6

Meetups Events
(2023-24)

795

Total Meetups
Attendees

51

Subject Matter
Experts

23

Entrepreneurial
Ecosystem Referrals



Oso Blanco's Historical Remnants

Forward Center

Environmental Research Laboratory

The Department of Public Safety will build a 200,000 square-foot Safety Room and Emergency Operation Center for Puerto Rico on parcels B-1 and B-2, rented from the PRSTRT. The Science City Boulevard will be a half-mile road with a right of way of 29.3 meters, located in Science City. This boulevard will have four lanes to accommodate vehicular traffic from two directions. It will include landscaping, a bike lane on the west side, and wide pedestrian-facing sidewalks with street furniture.

A new facility of up to 20,000 square feet will be designed and constructed for PRVCU, serving development activities, the establishment of a mosquito factory, and a storage area for equipment and vehicles. A new grant was submitted to secure funds for constructing a new 80,000-square-foot Forward II Building to provide space for the Research Institute Core Lab and PRCCI operation expansion. This building will include laboratory space for developers and Bio-Tech entrepreneurs, workforce development space, a theater, and classrooms.

The Forward Center project has made significant progress, with the building officially inaugurated on April 3, 2024. The outfitting of the first floor, completed at \$1,710,000, now provides three laboratory-type spaces for lease.

Paralell-18 personnel have moved from the Santurce office into the 3rd floor, while the Comprehensive Cancer Center has leased the entire second level. Additionally, landscaping and sidewalk work for the building has been completed, and a new temporary car park is planned to accommodate up to 60 cars.]

The Innovation Center has added new energy-efficient LED lighting to all office and conference areas. The Research Institute Core Laboratories has recently expanded its facilities with a new laboratory space on the 1st Floor of the Innovation Center. The project, which has a contract amount of \$900,000.00, is currently 90% complete. This new space will enhance the institute's capabilities and support ongoing research and innovation efforts.

*Thank you for your continued
support and partnership*

Eng. Lucy A Crespo

Sincerely,

CEO, Puerto Rico Science Technology and Research Trust

Science City

Innovation
Center

Photo by: Tatiana Ortiz



I want to take a moment to highlight some of the remarkable achievements of the P.R. Science Technology & Research Trust's functional areas. These accomplishments showcase our unwavering commitment to operational excellence, innovation, and long-term growth.

Human Resources Department

Made significant strides in creating a dynamic and inclusive work environment. Women constitute 63% of the workforce, particularly in STEM roles, with 50% in management positions. Over 35 new employees were onboarded through a comprehensive Induction Program, and professional development initiatives, such as the Leadership Academy and Project Management certifications, supported employee growth. Additionally, 25 employees were certified in Mental Health First Aid, and launching a Summer Internship Program provided 14 participants with valuable work experience.

Administration

The department focused on wellness programs, health and safety training, and efficient procurement processes. Over 1,800 purchase orders were processed, totaling \$10 million. A significant increase in vehicle fleet management was achieved, from 19 to 28 units. In-house counsel supported over 1,800 consultations and facilitated strategic negotiations with federal and local governments.



Finance Department

Enjoys automated financial processes, including invoicing and expense report processing, and achieved a clean audit opinion for the seventh consecutive year. The department also introduced artificial intelligence to streamline accounting processes and developed a travel expense reimbursement application, enhancing financial oversight.

IT & Cybersecurity

Focused on fortifying the organization's cloud infrastructure and automating administrative processes. The team implemented advanced cybersecurity measures and initiated training programs in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and project management, positioning the organization for future technological advancements.



Puerto Rico
Science, Technology
& Research Trust

Research & Development



Andreica Maldonado
Program Director



David L. Gulley, PhD, RTTP, CLP
Program Director



Abel Baerga, PhD
Program Director



Fernando Pabón AIA, CAAPPR
Program Director



Marcos López Casillas
Program Director

Entrepreneurship



parallel¹⁸

Héctor Jirau, PhD
Program Director



Denisse Rodríguez
Program Director



Barbara Rivera
Program Director

Public Health



Amarilys Silva, PharmD
Program Director



Grayson Brown, PhD
Program Director



Marianyoly Ortiz-Ortiz, PhD
Program Director

Education



Jorge Valentine, EdD
Program Director



Frances Zenón Melendez, EdD
Program Director



Ricardo Burgos,
Program Manager

Designations, merits, acknowledgments and accolades

This year, we made excellent progress in advancing our vision for Puerto Rico to be recognized as a global innovation hub, as demonstrated by the following designations, merits, acknowledgments and accolades.



31 Tech Hubs

The Tech Hubs Program was enacted as part of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 (as the Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs program) which authorized \$10 billion for the program over five years. On October 23, 2023, President Biden announced the designation of the inaugural 31 Tech Hubs, as well as recipients of 29 Tech Hubs Strategy Development Grants. Puerto Rico, led by the PR Science Trust, organized and engaged a consortium that received a Strategy Development Grant and importantly, the recognition that Puerto Rico was 1 of the 31 Tech Hubs in the United States.

The Tech Hubs Program aims to strengthen U.S. economic and national security with investments in regions across the country with assets and resources with the potential to become globally competitive in the technologies and industries of the future — and for those industries, companies, and the good jobs they create, to start, grow, and remain in the United States.

As a Designated Tech Hub, Puerto Rico has a long-term commitment and partnership with the U.S. Economic Development Administration to support the biopharma/bioscience ecosystem, engaging the private and non-profit sectors, including academic institutions, government, and workforce training organizations.

October 2023



Grant Award

The U.S. Department of Commerce announced “**Build to Scale**” grants awarded to 60 organizations across the country — located in 36 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. **BioLeap**, a life sciences innovation incubator program led by the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust to increase economic development through innovation and entrepreneurship in the life sciences sector in key focus areas such as biotechnology, AI-driven medical technologies, genomics, and more, was one of the selected programs.

November 2023



Life Science Exchange

The Trust was appointed host of the inaugural **Life Sciences Exchange between New York and Puerto Rico** to boost the life sciences industry in both jurisdictions. This designation was formalized during the establishment of the New York State and Puerto Rico Economic Opportunity Advisory Council, with the participation of New York Governor Kathy Hochul and Puerto Rico Governor Pedro Pierluisi.

November 2023



XLerator Network

The Trust is the state lead for PR in the XLerator Network (started FY2022): NIH/NIGMS IDeA Regional Entrepreneurship Development (I-RED)

May 2023



SBA Growth Accelerator

Colmena66 won for the Trust the **SBA Growth Accelerator Fund Competition**

September 2023

BANCO DE DESARROLLO ECONOMICO PARA PUERTO RICO



Financial Advisor

The Trust became the **financial advisor** to the Puerto Rico **Banco de Desarrollo Economico (BDE)** for the **Venture Capital Access Program**, providing for the first time in Puerto Rico a \$30M allocation from the U.S. Department of the Treasury for investment in emerging and expanding companies.

August 2023

Staff Recognition

Ecosystem Building Leadership Project

Leadership Network

Dennisse Rodríguez and Colmena66 was chosen to be part of the Ecosystem Building Leadership Council that is developing the first **Ecosystem Building Leadership Network**.

December 2023



NSF Engine Development Award

The Trust through its Technology Transfer Office (TTO), was awarded the **NSF Engine Development Award** (started FY2023).

May 2023



Ambassadors

Ambassadors of the **National Community Health Worker Association** – Wilma Rivera and Israel Román, PRPHT Community Health Workers.

May 2023



AUTM

Association of University Technology Managers TM Volunteer of the Year- Dr. Carlos Baéz, TTO Associate Director

May 2023





**Creating a
better future**

TRUSTEES

Our Council of Trustees is composed of distinguished professionals who support and oversee our work and provide guidance to ensure that the Trust is focused on within its mission and vision



Alfredo Casta

Alfredo Casta is the Founder and former Chairman of Cascades Technologies, Inc (CTi), which was recognized as one of Inc. 5000 magazine's fastest growing companies for eight years. Mr. Casta combined his technical expertise, management skills and an unrelenting mission focus to accomplish results in the service of the American public. Under the tenants of Think – Build – Measure, CTi delivers IT Governance services, Technical Solutions, Data Management, Agile Development, and IT Organization Analysis including Cyber Security expertise to key cabinet agencies such as NIH, CDC, Labor, GSA, US Army, DHS, Justice, and Financial Regulatory Agencies.



Esther M. Alegría, PhD

Alegría has nearly 30 years of biopharmaceutical industry experience. She serves as a Senior Executive Biopharmaceutical Advisor at Catalyst Excel & Advance (EA) lending her expertise to establish and start-up pharmaceutical & biopharmaceutical companies. Prior to this, she held multiple executive roles leading to the success of biopharmaceutical large-scale drug substances, medical devices assembly, finished goods and small molecule manufacturing operations. In 2009, she was named Woman Extraordinaire of the Year by Business NC Magazine for her impact in economic success and forward-thinking strategies. Esther holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Hawaii and an Executive Business Management certification from Harvard Business School. She has also served as mentor, advocate and educator throughout her career.



Daniel Colón Ramos, PhD

Dr. Colón Ramos is the president of the Scientific Coalition of Puerto Rico. He also serves as the Dorys McConnell Duberg Professor of Neuroscience and Cell Biology at Yale University and is the co-founder of Ciencia Puerto Rico, a non-profit organization that promotes local scientific research and education. His lab at Yale studies the development and function of the nervous system, and their work has been recognized by several awards, including the Sloan Fellowship for "outstanding promise", an award given to recognize the best researchers of the United States and Canada.



Edith A. Pérez, MD

Dr. Pérez is an internationally recognized translational researcher and cancer specialist, Chief Medical Officer of Bolt Therapeutics, Inc., Professor of Medicine at Mayo Clinic, and Director of the Mayo Clinic Breast Cancer Translational Genomics Program. Dr. Perez is known for her strategic vision in designing innovative clinical trials, her passion for patient care, and her strong team leadership. Her experience includes leadership in academic and biopharmaceutical environments, as well as focused philanthropic endeavors.



Ubaldo Córdova, PhD

Córdova is a professor in UPRM of chemical engineering, a researcher and the institution's former vice president for Academic Affairs and Research. He holds a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Puerto Rico (UPRM) and a MS and PhD from California Institute of Technology. His research experience includes the authoring of peer-reviewed articles in Physics Review Letters, Soft Matter, Journal of Fluid Mechanics, Advanced Functional Materials, and Nature Chemistry. In 2011, he was awarded the prestigious NSF CAREER award, and in 2013 as Distinguished Professor in Chemical Engineering.



Gualberto Medina

Mr. Medina spans career as an attorney, CPA, real estate broker, and New Jersey's Secretary of Commerce. He also served as the co-founder, president, or general counsel for many technology and biotechnology startups. Because of his successful career in government and business sectors, Mr. Medina was named one of Hispanic Business Magazine's 100 Most Influential Hispanics. He has ample experience serving as a Trustee for the Trust.



Manuel Cidre

Cidre is the founder of Los Cidrines, a market leader in the sale, distribution and manufacturing of bakery products in Puerto Rico. He is a graduate of the Pontifical Catholic University of PR, with a bachelor's degree in management, majoring in finance and marketing. He has held several leadership roles, such as president of the PR Products Association, president of the PR Manufacturing Association, founder and president of the Alliance for Puerto Rico's Development, among other community and philanthropic organizations. Cidre ran for Governor during the Puerto Rican general election in 2016 as an independent candidate. His commitment to Puerto Rico and work has been recognized by multiple communities and professional organizations. His motive in life is returning to God all the blessings he has received by devoting much of his time to organizations seeking to make Puerto Rico a better country.



Frances Santiago-Schwarz, PhD

Santiago-Schwarz is Professor of Molecular Medicine at the Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell and Professor, Elmezzi Graduate School, Northwell Health. She has contributed to the advancement of human immunology, and as an educator and biomedical scientist, Dr. Santiago-Schwarz has been actively engaged in a variety of mentoring, diversity, and global humanitarian initiatives. Current activity in response to the COVID-19 pandemic includes acquiring insight into the immunopathology of COVID-19, unraveling novel therapeutic opportunities and development of COVID-19 medical-educational alliances with the community.



Félix Negrón

With over 30 years of international experience, Félix Negrón, in his tenure as VP of Operations at Medtronic, was responsible for over 6000 employees, serving as Group VP of Operations for the global Diabetes business, VP of Puerto Rico Operations, Corporate Leader for Lean, Six Sigma, Design for Manufacturability and Global Manufacturing Strategy.

Félix was also the Operations Quality VP in Medtronic with responsibility of 27 sites globally. Prior to Medtronic, he was Senior VP of Global Operations in Pall Corporation and Executive Director in J&J. Now, as Founder of NY Consulting, is advising entities such as like Stryker Corp, Sartorius BioTech, J&J and the Department of Economic Development in Puerto Rico.



Michael A. Caligiuri, MD.

President of the City of Hope National Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. He previously served as CEO of The Ohio State University (OSU) James Cancer Hospital and Director of OSU's Comprehensive Cancer Center, where he oversaw the construction of the 3rd largest cancer hospital in the U.S. and recruited over 300 physicians and scientists. His research on immunotherapy for tumors has led to over 400 peer-reviewed publications and pivotal discoveries in the development of CAR NK cells for cancer therapy. Dr. Caligiuri has conducted clinical studies involving NK cells for over 1,000 cancer patients, mentored over 100 students, and received numerous prestigious awards. He has held leadership roles in various professional organizations and co-founded several initiatives, including Pelotonia and CytolImmune Therapeutics.

EXECUTIVE TEAM



Eng. Luz A. Crespo
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Ms Crespo has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust since 2015, leading the organization to outstanding achievements and building the innovation capacity of the country. She was previously appointed as General Manager of Hewlett-Packard Puerto Rico, where she served for 31 years. During her tenure, she successfully lead the HP Computing & Printing and Personal Systems business units. She was also the first woman to become president of the Puerto Rico Manufacturers Association.

Lucy is a key figure in the tech and science industry of Puerto Rico due to her ample experience and contributions to these sectors. She holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Puerto Rico (Mayagüez Campus), is a graduate from the Kellogg's Graduate School of Management of Northwestern University for Executive Development and a member of the Alpha Pi Mu, the Industrial Engineering Honor Society. She has also served in several advisory roles and received multiple recognitions for her leadership.



Puerto Rico
Science, Technology
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Gilberto Márquez
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

In February 2012, Gilberto Márquez joined the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust as Advisor and promoted to Chief Financial Officer in 2018. Mr. Márquez has over 14 years of experience involved in initiatives related to technology commercialization. Prior to joining the Trust, Mr. Márquez was Director of the Center for Innovation and Technology, a specialty service center of the Puerto Rico Small Business and Technology Development Center hosted by the Inter American University of Puerto Rico. Mr. Márquez has participated as proposal reviewer panelist for the National Science Foundation's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II program. He is an accountant and holds a master's degree in biotechnology management (MBM) from IE Business School in Madrid, Spain.



Doira Díaz, Esq.
**General Counsel and
Administrator**

Since 2018, Ms Díaz advises the Chief Executive Officer, the Board of Trustees and the Trust's program directors and managers on applicable regulations, processes and procedures related to the administration, human resources, and general services of the Trust. She is also the Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the Puerto Rico Green Energy Trust, a position she holds *ad honorem*. Prior to joining the Trust, Doira held various positions at top law firms, covering matters in the areas of real estate, environment, land use and telecommunications with emphasis in real estate development, permitting matters and related disputes at the administrative and judicial levels. She also served as Deputy Advisor to the Governor of Puerto Rico for Energy, Environment, and Infrastructure. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a Juris Doctor degree from Fordham University and is also a notary public and a certified mediator. She is admitted to practice in the court of Puerto Rico, New York and New Jersey.



Inés Álvarez De La Campa
Human Resources Director

Ms Álvarez de la Campa has a track record of analyzing companies and organization needs and executing plans to improve their competitiveness and overall employees' satisfaction. She has dedicated her career to the management of human resources, talent acquisition and administration in companies like Bristol Mayers Squibb and Johnson & Johnson.

Álvarez holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting and a master's degree in Business Administration. She is also certified as a Personnel Administrator and Yellow Belt Certified (BMS OpEx).



Luis Nieves, PE
Chief Facilities
Management Officer

Luis Nieves is the Chief Facilities Management Officer. He worked for Hewlett Packard Enterprise until 2018 where he engaged in rolls which included Project Engineer, Business Development and Supply Chain Management defining logistics solutions for HPE for subcontractors located in eastern Europe and Mexico. He also had a role as Strategic Sourcing Manager at Pall Life Science (now Cytiva) until 2021.

Luis holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in industrial engineering from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus, and completed a minor in accounting from the same institution in 1991.



Lupe Vázquez
Chief Communications
& Marketing Officer

Ms Vázquez has served as the organization's Chief Communications Officer since 2015. Prior to that, she served as editor and reporter for more than 30 years at the local newspaper El Nuevo Día. As a journalist, she led the direction of writers, designers and freelancers for the creation of reports on diverse topics such as news, lifestyle, business, education, among many others. Her experience also includes the redesign to improve the reach of print and digital platforms, the conceptualization of new editorial products, brand management, integration of sales strategies and the execution of initiatives to improve revenue and readership models. Lupe holds a bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts and a Master's degree in Translation both from the University of Puerto Rico (Río Piedras Campus). In 2012 she was recognized with the WAN-IFRA award for her leadership in the digital transition of Logon, a newspaper designed for teenagers at El Nuevo Día.



César Piovanetti
Chief Information Officer (CIO)

Piovanetti has over 15 years of experience in the geographic information sciences (GIS) field, as GIS and technology consultant in various locations in the United States and Puerto Rico. Throughout his career, he has held various roles in the technology sector integrating cloud software solutions for the public, private and NGO sector. Experienced in designing and deployment of platforms and solutions as a service in the Microsoft Azure Cloud, Office 365 integrations at the enterprise level as well as logistic operations using geolocation technologies. During the last couple of years, as part of the Trust's technology team, Mr. Piovanetti has led implementations for federal, local and NGO funded geospatial projects.

Education and Capacity Building for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Mission

Our Education and Capacity Building initiatives aim to provide participants with instruction, mentorship, and other development opportunities in strategic sectors of science, technology, and entrepreneurship. We strive to give Puerto Ricans the tools they need to be more competitive in science and technology fields or to pursue entrepreneurial initiatives.

The Trust supports and funds various events, conferences, educational activities and summits. Also, through our sponsorship policy, we have powered events and activities related to R&D, entrepreneurship, public health, and innovation.

The Trust invested **\$133,7690.00** in science, technology, research & entrepreneurship training initiatives, including the following **21 organizations**:

- University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras
- Obsidis Consortia
- Universidad Central del Caribe
- Ernesto Gonzalez Torres
- Jesennia Bonilla Tirado
- The Institute for Cognitive Neuroscience
- National Women's Collaborative
- University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez Camp
- University of Puerto Rico Foundation
- Palacios Consulting LLC
- Voces Coalicion de Inmunizacion
- Evolving Space Corporation
- Asociacion de agricultores de Puerto Rico
- Centro de Periodismo Investigativo, Inc.
- INDUNIV -Industry University Research Center
- Universidad de Puerto Rico Bayamón
- Colegio de Arquitectos y Arquitectos de Paisajistas de P.R.
- CAPALBIOART La Parguera Corp.
- Christian Nazarene Academy , INC.
- Ecoexploratorio
- Engine4

On the contrary, the following organizations are allies of our organization with sponsorships and support for various events and programs within our strategic pillars. Partnerships are part of our growth and strengthen the relationships of the ecosystems we facilitate. The Trust has received **\$410,084.16** from these **41 organizations** have sponsored some of our events:

The Trust establishes alliances with a diverse range of organizations, educational, private, and non-profit, and the result is a bigger map of stakeholders to reinforce the Trust's mission & vision. These are the **more than 38 organizations** with which the PRSTRT and its programs has officialized alliances during this fiscal year.

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