



Puerto Rico
Science, Technology
& Research Trust

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On track for 2022 with a new strategic plan and over 20 programs in continuous innovation

The Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust begins 2022 with a new strategic plan while celebrating important achievements in the areas of public health, research and development, and entrepreneurship.

March 10th, 2022. San Juan, Puerto Rico - The Science, Technology and Research Trust was established in 2004 under Public Law 214 as an autonomous entity, created to stimulate innovation, the commercialization of technology and the creation of high-tech jobs in the specific industrial sectors of Puerto Rico, such as: life sciences, alternative energy, environmental and agricultural sciences, computer sciences and information technologies, medical devices, aerospace, and aeronautics, among others.

As 2022 begins, the Trust concludes one of its fastest growing years with over 20 programs grouped into its strategic areas of research and development, public health, and entrepreneurship. A new strategic plan has been defined to direct the scope, impact, and contributions of this private non-profit organization. The benchmarks outlined for this new plan include increasing the capacity for innovation, transforming the public health paradigm, expanding, and streamlining the capacities we have on the Island to carry out clinical research, accelerating technology transfer, retaining talent on the Island in entrepreneurship and research, promote job retraining, promote the adoption of STEM programs in the educational system.

In 2014, the organization started to work under the direction of Eng. Lucy Crespo, its current chief executive officer. Since then, the mission of the Trust is to invest, facilitate, and develop capacities that continually advance the economy of Puerto Rico and the well-being of its citizens, through companies based on innovation, science and technology and its industrial base. All this with the vision that Puerto Rico becomes a globally recognized innovation center that develops and retains scientists, companies, and entrepreneurs of world excellence, to promote Puerto Rican competitiveness and creativity. The past 7 years have been key to programmatic activity that has grown in the three key pillars of research and development, entrepreneurship, and public health. The Trust has rounded off a solid strategy in its operation by achieving a robust diversification of funds, recruiting a human resource of excellence.

"As an optimistic person, I am always looking for those opportunities within the challenges we face. Reviewing our annual report, you can appreciate the commitment and passion that the leadership, associates, and trustees of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust have with the programs and stakeholders we support. It is impressive how the Trust is incorporating innovation and technology into all our programs to fulfill our mission," said Lucy Crespo, CEO.

As expected, there have been multiple challenges that the Trust and its programs have faced in these years of innovation and evolution. The pandemic situation that is the latest push for adaptation has accelerated the adoption of technology at a rate never seen before. The employees and collaborators of the Trust have adapted to the new remote virtual work and life environment and have transformed the delivery and deployment of existing programs to a mainly virtual format.

"Making this digital transformation possible has required a lot of commitment from our entire work team. The use of platforms and applications have facilitated collaboration and operation in our programs following the best practices of cybersecurity policies and processes," stated the Principal IT Officer of the Trust, César Piovanetti.

It would be practically impossible to enumerate all the achievements of the various programs of the Trust in almost two decades of work and dedication. However, the 2020-2021 impact metrics in pillars such as Entrepreneurship, Investment and Development, and Public Health are a good example of the scope and impact of this entity.

In the entrepreneurship pillar, Colmena66, the referral network of the Trust's entrepreneurship ecosystem that is part of Sourcelink in the United States, increased its

number of resource partners to 259, generated 15,521 search engines in the referral network, and has managed to connect a total of 8,091 entrepreneurs to provide support and guidance.

In the case of parallel18, the global accelerator that provides grants, mentoring and business connections and investment to entrepreneurs from Puerto Rico to the world, they have managed to accelerate 290 companies with more than 700 jobs created since their inception. This past year, they had 359 participating startups. The program reached the figure of \$12,140,000M awarded in grants. They raised \$189M in total revenue, of which \$61M was local. 85% of companies continue to operate. A private investment fundraising of \$126M was achieved with \$20M of local capital. 40% of foreign companies maintain operations in Puerto Rico. These programs have strengthened the business ecosystem by expanding the organizations that support entrepreneurs at all stages. In addition, this pillar continues to expand with new programs such as Phase 1 and Xpand.

“The interesting thing about crises is that they are the perfect platform for innovation. There is no doubt that these years have presented situations that require seeking new solutions. The fascinating thing about the research, projects and undertakings that are born from crises is that, although they first address local issues, the problems they seek to solve are global. At the Trust, we are committed to innovation to find solutions, develop them, and enhance them so that they are not only possible, but sustainable,” said Sebastián Vidal, Chief Innovation Officer of the Trust.

As for the Investment and Development pillar, the numbers speak for themselves. The Research Grants Program awarded \$13,549,478M in grants to 113 researchers. In addition to achieving an impressive ROI of \$33,121,672M. More than 300 students were impacted, and more than 96 posts were peer-reviewed. Regarding patents, there were 60 patent applications from researchers and 39 patents were obtained by researchers. 8 companies were founded by fellow researchers and 18 SBIR/STTR proposals were awarded to fellow researchers. 294 abstracts were received in this historic period. Thanks to our grants, researchers have been able to secure funding that allows them to continue their projects and advance scientific activity on the Island.

In 2021, the number of patents obtained and requested has been a record and is the result of the Technology Transfer Office, which has continued to increase commercialization efforts in Puerto Rico. In 2022 the headquarters of: the Central University of the Caribbean and the San Juan Bautista School of Medicine will be added. The Office of Technology Transfer completed an "EnTRUST" pilot program to develop and deliver educational content, programs, and resources to increase the participation of researchers and

inventors in Hispanic Serving Institutions. Last year, more than 26 disclosures were evaluated, six new patents were filed, and three were granted. The commercialization of more than 27 technologies from its portfolio was achieved and four license agreements were closed.

Doira Díaz, Esq., who serves as administrator and main legal advisor of the Trust, established on her part that: “2021 was a year of challenges for everyone in any area that is discussed. It has been gratifying to be a part of the Trust's efforts to use its existing resources and talents, as well as adapt and expand these, to make those challenges more manageable. Our portfolio of programs, as well as our ability to adapt and respond to challenges, put us in a position not only to be a significant support entity, but also to represent a great social responsibility that we accept with seriousness and enthusiasm.”

This is why in a year as crucial as this one, the Trust has played a leading role in the public health pillar, remaining at the core of the current events that have impacted the island. In its second year of operation, the Puerto Rico Public Health Trust (PRPHT), under the direction of Dr. José Rodríguez Orengo, continues to strengthen its role as a trusted advisor in the health sector in Puerto Rico. Working with the Puerto Rico Department of Health, the Puerto Rico Scientific Coalition, and private entities, the program continues to advise on how Puerto Rico should address the COVID-19 pandemic and advance the mission of promoting and improving public health initiatives based on evidence and provide ways to improve the economy in Puerto Rico. In addition, 45 localities in Puerto Rico (in the most isolated areas) were impacted with the Telemedicine and Telehealth program, providing specialized medical services remotely.

For its part, the Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit (PRVCU) program expanded its mosquito surveillance efforts to historical dengue foci in Puerto Rico to reduce the risk of outbreaks. These were expanded to more municipalities, and a new super trap pooling method was implemented, resulting in increased testing capacity producing higher volume at lower cost. Now their coverage includes the US Virgin Islands, and they offer laboratory services to the Marshall Islands. In one of the most innovative projects, they released more than 60M mosquitoes with Wolbachia in Ponce, reducing *Aedes aegypti* by about 50% in Ponce. They also started a new project to reduce mosquitoes in Caguas, and with the support of the International Rotary Club they launched the new Culebra-Free of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito initiative.

One of the great challenges is communicating the efforts of so many programs that impact a diversity of populations and audiences. “Beyond making visible the multiple awards and recognitions that our programs achieve with their work of excellence, for the Trust it

is essential that the communities and individuals who can benefit from our work know our initiatives and have equitable access to them. The goal is for our impact to be exponential and for each year to have more and better news to communicate”, shared Lupe Vázquez, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer of the Trust.

The institution proudly celebrates its trajectory doing what it does best: investing, facilitating, and building capacity to continuously advance the economy of Puerto Rico and the well-being of its citizens. They are faced with the challenge of working on the transformation that requires integrating technology into all phases of the operation and developing unique and new models. With the vision of cultivating and strengthening the relationship between technology and human beings, as a long-term relationship with a vision of the future.

The bar is very high and the plan is to continue promoting companies driven by innovation, science and technology in the areas of Entrepreneurship, Public Health and Research and Development and that these in turn celebrate many more anniversaries.

The data from the impact report of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust can be accessed at this link: <https://prsciencetrust.org/metricas-de-impacto-2020-2021/>

About the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust: The Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust, as described in Public Law 214, is a non-profit organization created in 2004 to promote the participation and creation of jobs on the Island in the global economy of knowledge by promoting investment and financing of research and development of science and technology. By investing in technology research and commercialization, the Trust serves as a catalyst for job creation and retention of the Island’s highly skilled and often bilingual residents. It is also responsible for Puerto Rico’s public policy for science, technology, research, and development. For more information: www.prsciencetrust.org .