

Scientific Technological Cabinet (GACTEC) - Alejandro Nestor Mentaberry, Executive Coordinator - Argentina



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Tags: [basic research](#), [technology](#), [government](#), [investment](#), [R&D](#)

When was the cabinet was founded and what exactly is its role?

The executive coordinator of GACTEC maps the current level of science and technology in Argentina and outlines the country's ambitions in this area, which is to have an impact on innovation at the international level.

The Scientific Technological Cabinet (GACTEC) was founded in 1996. The cabinet assists in the implementation of policies, priorities and budgetary resource allocations in the areas of science and technology in the public sector, thus contributing to economic growth and welfare of the population, improved education and public health, environmental protection and national defence.

GACTEC is also responsible for approving the national multi-year science and technology plan and its annual reformulation. It also establishes priority areas of research for the advancement of education and public health, environmental protection, national defence and technological development of the productive sector. It also promotes private sector participation in scientific and technological development and proposes policy guidelines for international cooperation.

What is the current level of the science & technology sector in the country?

Back in 2003 Argentina was almost at the point of collapse. The state of science, technology and research was pretty weak. We had no money, and no budget was available. Many people were on the verge of retirement, which had led to an inverted pyramid of human resources. We were living in chaos.

Reinforcing the capacities of the system was our main concern. We started working on the creation and strengthening of human resources across the science and technology sectors, which saw an outstanding increase as a result of our work: from 55,000 people involved, the number grew to more than 102,000 people today. We believe this secures Argentina's scientific future. Today, we have the perfect basis for success.

Another interesting point is the number of research projects. Where before we had less than 2,000 projects, today we have more than 6,000. On top of that, we have been improving the country's science infrastructure: we want to grow Argentina's footprint by 36 percent compared to its size at the creation of the cabinet.

Which initiatives are being currently putting in place by the Ministry of Science & Technology in order to increase innovation in Argentina?

We are promoting the discovery, development and production of products at a national level. In this, the discovery of new biological medicines has a key importance.

Our current plan for the science and technology ministry is to follow the plan 2012-2020, which is focused on generating activities to improve the connection between science and production, which comes under the original mandate of our ministry. We are the bridge between research and industry.

On top of that, we are highly committed on changing the short-term view coming from the industry. There is a need of short term mindset changing. We should always think in long term view. This is a general problem all across Latin-America.

Which is the next step for the Argentinian Science and Technology ministry?

Today is time to improve the quality of our research. Our next step is to improve our evaluation system, in order to be able to produce the best possible quality. We want to have an impact in innovation at international level.

There is a long way to go. It will take time, but we are going to accomplish everything we have in mind. We will be a worldwide innovative player sooner than expected.

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