

## Foreword

Supporting innovation and production development is fundamental to compete in global economies. Innovation is gaining momentum in Latin America, and many countries in the region are involved in designing and implementing better policies to promote it for a more inclusive and sustainable growth. Over the last decade, many countries in Latin America have strengthened their institutional capacities for innovation policies. However, public investment is still very limited and the commitment of the private sector to invest in innovation is still low.

Panama is one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America, but there is a general consensus that incentives are needed to transform that growth into an inclusive and sustainable development path. Since the 2000s, the country has started to design and implement policies to promote innovation and it has set up a mechanism to monitor implementation. Panama, like most countries in the region, seeks to increase the impact of its innovation policy and it has therefore engaged in a peer-review exercise, led by the OECD Development Centre, to assess the effectiveness of its innovation policy and its institutional setting.

This study is part of the OECD Development Centre's work on production development, global value chains (GVCs) and innovation. It reviews the experience of Panama in supporting science, technology and innovation, benefiting from the participation of peers from the Dominican Republic and Uruguay. It analyses the recent economic and innovation trends in the country, the strategy and policy mix of the National Strategic Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation (PENCIYT) 2010-2014, and the experience of Panama in the evaluation of innovation policy. The study concludes by identifying ways to improve the design and implementation of the national innovation policy. Despite the challenges that the country faces in improving its innovation performance and policies, its experience offers interesting lessons to other small developing economies which are experimenting with ways to improve their participation in global knowledge economies.

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The report was drafted by Annalisa Primi, as lead author, and Marta Talevi and Alsino Skowronnek, Junior Policy Analysts at the OECD Development Centre, with the collaboration of Ximena Usher, Head of the Evaluation and Monitoring Unit at the National Agency for Research and Innovation of Uruguay (ANII) and Leonie Zapata Silvestre of the Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Technology of the Dominican Republic who participated as peer reviewers in the project. We thank José Ramón Perea and Federico Recalde-Ovelar for their comments on the draft and Lorenzo Formenti for his support in finalising the publication. The report benefited from the editing of Stephen Jessel. Book production was co-ordinated by Delphine Grandrieux and Vanda Legrandgérard. The lead author acknowledges the comments and the debates on the challenges of implementing innovation policies in Latin America of Carlos Álvarez Voullieme, former Deputy Director and Head of the Thematic Division of the OECD Development Centre at the time of the drafting of the report.

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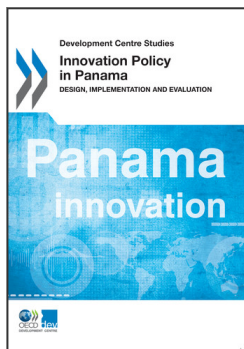
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