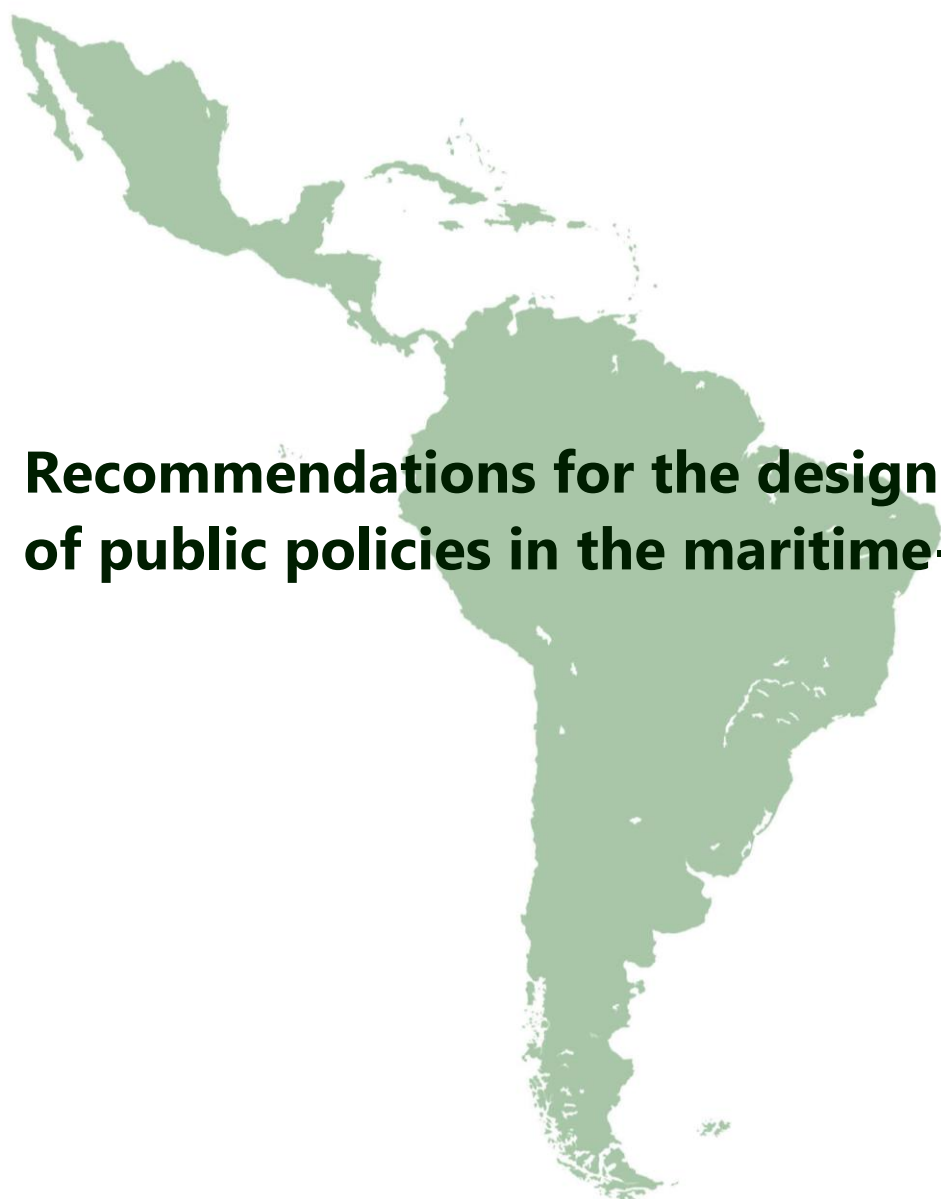




SISTEMA ECONÓMICO
LATINOAMERICANO
Y DEL CARIBE



Recommendations for the design of public policies in the maritime-port sector

Economic Recovery

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Printed in the Permanent Secretariat of SELA, Caracas, Venezuela.

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I. RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

From 16 to 18 October, the [VIII Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Port Logistics Communities](#) was held virtually, organised by the Permanent Secretariat of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic System, in collaboration with CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean and the Municipality of Veracruz-Mexico. This activity is included in the Work Programme of SELA for 2022-2026, Project A. Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports, Programme II Trade Facilitation of the Economic Recovery Area.

A total of 191 participants attended the three-day event, representing the following Member States of SELA: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Representatives from Antigua and Barbuda, Costa Rica, Spain and the United States also participated in the event.

Also participating were representatives of port logistics communities (LPCs); customs officials; ministries or secretariats in charge of trade, transport, industry, production and maritime matters; port and maritime authorities; port terminals; shipping companies; as well as port agents; entrepreneurs; trade union representatives; academics; consultants and specialised media. Representatives of the following regional organisations also attended: CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean; the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The opening session of the event included a speech by Carolina Rueda, Director of Regional Integration of CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by the Ambassador Clarems Endara, Permanent Secretary of SELA.

The VIII Meeting consisted of six sessions, which addressed topics such as: international supply chains and maritime transport in a world of disruptions; the Mexican port system; industry 4.0 in ports; maritime and port security; concessions and public-private partnerships in ports. The new value proposition of the Network of Digital and Collaborative Ports and its action plan for 2030 was also presented.

The following panellists took part in the event: Rodolfo Sabonge, Silvia Marucci, Agustina Calatayud, Miryam Saade; Elisabet Torres, Domingo Gómez, José Luis Valencia; Carlos Martner, Mariela Gutarra, Ricardo Maeshiro, Manuel Martínez de Ubago, Ismael Torres; José Miguel Rovira, Lisbeth Laurie, Pilar Larraín, Alfredo Quintanilla; Jorge Layton, Carlos José González, Ricardo Sánchez, Bryan Andrade; and Octavio Doerr.

The recordings of each day, which contain the details of each presentation, are available on the minisite of the [VIII Latin American and Caribbean Meeting of Port Logistics Communities](#); on SELA's Web site (www.sela.org), as well as on the YouTube channel of the Permanent Secretariat of SELA @SELAVideos.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC POLICIES IN THE MARITIME-PORT SECTOR

Through the presentations made by the panellists and in response to the questions posed by the moderators, points of view and reflections were exchanged on the status and prospects of the maritime-port sector and its communities: their contribution to facilitating trade, overcoming current challenges and boosting regional welfare and progress. Following is a summary of some of the public policy recommendations derived from the meeting and contained in the bibliographical references pointed out by the speakers.

Development or updating of regulations. It is recommended to incorporate aspects related to decarbonisation and climate resilience in the National Transport Plan or an equivalent document, highlighting objectives and actions to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, within a set timeframe, for the different transport modes and sub-sectors; as well as measures and targets for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, in order to meet the objectives of the *Paris Agreement*. These measures should consider not only the use of new energy sources in the sector, but also focus on the use of more sustainable means and the intermodality of more efficient and environmentally friendly modes. To that end, coordination among the competent authorities in the areas of transport, environment, trade, industry and energy will be essential (Calatayud, Rivas, Camacho, Beltrán, Ansaldo and Café, 2023).

It is also recommended that sectoral plans (including at national level) be modified and adapted to include digital transformation and automation strategies to guide and support the port or terminal towards the integration and use of innovative technologies (Gutarra, 2024).

Ratification of MARPOL. A recommendation is made to ratify the *International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)*, whose protocol aims to prevent and minimise pollution from ships, both accidental and from normal operations; conserve the marine ecosystem; protect marine life from the harmful effects of pollution; and unify standards worldwide to ensure that all ships meet the same standards of environmental protection (Gómez, 2024).

Delimitation of water basins. It was recommended to ensure water resources for human consumption and for canal operations, in the face of recorded drought seasons, by means of plans to guarantee the availability and sustainable use of water. In the case of the Panama Canal, the Multipurpose Reservoir of the Indio River is being implemented for the protection and conservation of the hydrographic basin, based on the delimitations made for this purpose (Marucci, 2024).

Modernisation and expansion of infrastructure. A recommendation was made to identify the conditions and specific cases in the project portfolio where the private sector can participate or lead the construction and/or operation of new terminals and ports. To that end, fiscal incentives can be offered to companies that invest in the modernisation of port infrastructure. It should be noted that this modernisation or expansion should be in line with the new needs of the shipping sector and the demands of cargo movements (González, 2024).

Investment in technological infrastructure. It was recommended to make significant investments in state-of-the-art technological infrastructure (5G networks, IoT, AI) and to ensure robust, sustainable and secure connectivity for all stakeholders linked to port activity and the information and data obtained. The aim is to facilitate the elimination and reduction of procedures, costs and documentation.

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Development of bi-ocean corridors. Creating adequate infrastructure to facilitate the transit of goods and people was another recommendation, including roads, bridges and ports. The development of bi-ocean corridors could reduce the isolation of certain regions, favour the implementation of multimodal logistics solutions, integrating road, rail, ports and waterway transport. Among others, some of the advantages of these corridors are the following: they reduce logistics costs and travel times; facilitate the export of products from the countries involved; and promote investment in national logistics and transport systems, thanks to multimodality. The success of the corridors depends on cross-border crossings being agile, efficient, modern, secure and digitised. This will require the coordination of the relevant bodies in the different countries and the homogenisation of regulations and logistics integration (Saade, 2024 and Valencia, 2024).

National maritime security strategies. A recommendation was made to create national risk matrices in order to identify threats that may occur in ports and implement assessments of their security plans more effectively (Laurie, 2024).

National policy against organised crime. Another recommendation was to create and implement rules and regulations that contribute to reducing the criminal activity of criminal organisations, through planned and coordinated action by state institutions responsible for the prevention, control and prosecution of these crimes (e.g. Chile's National Policy against Organised Crime 2022-2027) (Larraín, 2024).

Short sea shipping routes and cabotage. It was recommended that short sea shipping (SSS) and cabotage be promoted as alternatives for the movement of cargo from one part of the country to another and, particularly, as a way to facilitate foreign trade of products between countries (e.g. the South-Southeast region of Mexico and the United States), through economic incentives, simplification of procedures and improvements in infrastructure. This will require the creation of a unified legal framework through international agreements and codes and the establishment of strategic alliances between operators in the intermodal transport chain (Gómez, 2024).

Connected port communities. It was recommended to establish new management and leadership models such as Port Community Systems (PCS). A PCS is a digital platform that enables intelligent and secure exchange of information between public and private stakeholders to improve the competitive position of sea and airport communities. Thus, port and logistics processes are optimised, managed and automated through a single data feed connecting transport and logistics chains (Saade, 2024 and Gutarra, 2024).

Established roles. The public and private sectors play complementary roles in the port environment. The public sector sets the regulatory framework, provides the basic infrastructure and promotes growth, while the private sector is in charge of operations and innovation, as well as managing the risks associated with the activity (design, construction, operational, commercial, among others). In this regard, fostering partnerships between local and national governments and private investors, through public-private partnerships (PPPs), concessions and other forms of collaboration, allows improving efficiency, increasing competitiveness, increasing investment and optimising customer service in the maritime-port sector, within the framework of an economic consideration with mutual benefits, in a given timeframe (González, 2024 and Andrade, 2024).

Collaboration among stakeholders. It was recommended to strengthen both the institutional capacity of governments and to implement open, high-level governance, characterised by high coordination and low decentralisation (donor-recipient coordination model). Governance promotes the pooling of efforts and resources among various stakeholders to foster economic growth. This is possible through incentives, legal frameworks adjusted to the maritime-port reality, clear roles, shared decisions and spaces for dialogue and coordination (ECLAC, 2024).

Investment in innovation. A recommendation was made to establish a legal and regulatory framework to enable the creation of an innovation ecosystem that fosters collaboration between the public, private and academic sectors and to implement incubation and acceleration programmes for startups to foster the development of new technological solutions focused on the needs of the port (Maeshiro, 2024).

Data accessibility. It was recommended to incorporate in tenders and service contracts the possibility of sharing the data produced by the systems with the entities and companies linked to the project, in order to improve operations, automate tasks, make predictions and simulations adjusted to reality, as well as to improve decision-making, reduce costs, offer better services to clients and optimise coordination among the different actors in the chain (Torres, 2024).

Promotion and education on the digitalisation of transport. The digital transformation in the field of transport, as in any process of technological adoption, requires the updating of technical knowledge to meet the growing demand for new professional profiles in this sector. To that end, continuous education campaigns will allow the population to fully understand both the benefits and the challenges associated with the technologies and policies that are being implemented or will be implemented in the future (Calatayud, Katz and Riobó, 2022). In other words, investment must be made in training and educating staff to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to work in a digital environment and to foster a culture of innovation and continuous learning (Gutarra, 2024 and Martínez de Ubago, 2024).

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