



## FY26 Call for Proposals

The Florida International University Gordon Institute for Public Policy and U.S. Southern Command invite you to submit a proposal for our annual Analytic Outreach Program. This program supports the advancement of knowledge on topics of security and governance in Latin America and the Caribbean.

For the 2026 cycle, proposals will be funded based on availability of funds and contingent upon originality and new ways of looking at important issues. While we are looking for innovative ideas in specific issue areas, these are wide-ranging topics that are ripe for re-thinking and re-imagining. This is especially true in the Latin American and Caribbean context, where political change and social dynamics provide specific challenges in research. The topics include:

- 1. External State Actors:** Latin American countries exhibit varying degrees of receptivity to external state actors' efforts to build influence, shaped by domestic political orientation, economic needs, historical ties, and geopolitical calculations. While traditionally aligned with the United States and Europe, many states have increasingly diversified their external partnerships, most notably with China, seeking alternatives for financing, trade, and diplomatic leverage. This pragmatic pluralism is particularly evident in countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Peru, which maintain active relations with both Washington and Beijing.
  - a. **Special Questions:** What factors influence military cooperation choices among regional states? And how do multilateral forums and international organizations shape regional relationships?
- 2. Regional Cooperation and Partnership:** Security partnerships in Latin America are shaped by a confluence of political will, institutional capacity, threat perception, and external engagement. Successful partnerships hinge on shared strategic interests, interoperability, and sustained investment in defense diplomacy. Regional training exercises, such as the U.S.-led *UNITAS* or Brazil's multilateral *Amazônia 2023*, enhance military effectiveness by promoting coordination, standardizing procedures, and fostering mutual understanding. These exercises also expose militaries to new technologies and doctrines, especially as China and Russia increasingly offer alternative military training programs and equipment packages, often tied to broader strategic relationships.
  - a. **Special Questions:** What factors influence successful security partnerships? And how do regional training exercises impact military effectiveness?
  - b. **Special Questions:** What drives information sharing among regional partners? And how do bilateral relationships affect regional stability?
- 3. Economic and Infrastructure Development:** Latin America's regional development is shaped by an evolving interplay of infrastructure, natural resources, technological advancement, energy policy, and informal economic activity. Infrastructure development, often funded or implemented in partnership with external actors like China, has a profound impact on regional trade patterns. China's growing role in Latin America's renewable energy, e.g., solar projects in Chile and hydroelectric investments in Ecuador, illustrates the intersection of geopolitical strategy and green energy transition.
  - a. **Special Questions:** How do infrastructure development projects impact regional trade patterns? What role do natural resources play in regional development?
  - b. **Special Questions:** How do emerging technologies affect regional economic development? What factors influence energy sector development in the region? How do informal economies affect regional development?



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- 4. Maritime and Port Security:** Port security effectiveness in Latin America is shaped by a combination of institutional capacity, investment in technology, interagency coordination, and international cooperation. Countries with major trade hubs, such as Brazil, Mexico, Panama, and Colombia, have made strides in enhancing port security through modernization programs, often supported by the U.S. or by partnerships with private and foreign firms. However, uneven enforcement, corruption, and resource constraints continue to undermine efforts in many areas, leaving ports vulnerable to narcotrafficking, smuggling, and illicit transshipment.

  - a. Special Questions:** What factors influence port security effectiveness? How do maritime capabilities affect regional commerce?
  - b. Special Questions:** What challenges exist in securing maritime trade routes? How do coastal nations manage maritime domain awareness?
- 5. Cyber Security and Technology:** Latin American countries are increasingly recognizing cybersecurity as a national and regional priority, but responses remain uneven due to disparities in resources, technical capacity, and institutional maturity. Countries like Brazil, Mexico, and Chile have developed national cybersecurity strategies and established cyber defense units within their armed forces, while others rely heavily on international support for cyber threat mitigation and training. The Organization of American States (OAS) plays a central role in promoting regional cybersecurity norms and capacity-building through its Cybersecurity Program, yet implementation gaps persist.

  - a. Special Questions:** How are regional countries addressing cybersecurity challenges? What factors influence technology adoption in security institutions?
  - b. Special Questions:** How does digital infrastructure development affect regional connectivity? What role does telecommunications infrastructure play in regional development?
- 6. Governance and Institutional Effectiveness:** Security cooperation in Latin America is highly sensitive to changes in political leadership. Transitions in government often bring shifts in foreign policy orientation, defense priorities, and attitudes toward external partners, particularly the United States and China. Progressive or nationalist administrations may reduce U.S. military engagement while seeking deeper security ties with non-Western actors, as seen in Bolivia and Venezuela. Conversely, conservative governments often prioritize traditional partnerships and emphasize regional security collaboration through bilateral pacts.

  - a. Special Questions:** How do changes in political leadership affect security cooperation? What factors influence institutional reform in security sectors?
  - b. Special Questions:** How effective are anti-corruption measures in regional institutions? What impacts the development of professional security forces?



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- 7. Public Health and Security:** Regional health infrastructure is shaped by public investment, international aid, and partnerships with non-state actors. Chronic underfunding, unequal access to care, and shortages of trained personnel weaken health system resilience. At the same time, Chinese companies have become active in hospital construction, telemedicine, and health technology transfers, particularly in countries with closer political ties to Beijing. While these investments help fill infrastructure gaps, they also introduce long-term dependencies on foreign suppliers and influence over national health priorities.

  - a. Special Questions:** How do health crises affect regional stability? What enables effective health security cooperation? How do countries coordinate medical response? What impacts regional health infrastructure?
- 8. Transportation and Logistics:** The management of critical infrastructure is increasingly viewed through a national security lens. Cybersecurity threats to transportation systems, vulnerability to natural disasters, and sabotage by criminal groups have prompted countries to strengthen public-private coordination and resilience planning. Yet, disparities in institutional capacity mean that some states still rely heavily on international donors and foreign firms for critical infrastructure maintenance and protection.

  - a. Special Questions:** How do transportation networks affect security cooperation? What impacts regional logistics capabilities?
  - b. Special Questions:** How do countries manage critical infrastructure? What factors influence transportation security?
- 9. Crisis Response and Resilience:** Latin America is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world, facing frequent earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and droughts. Regional institutions show varied levels of preparedness for natural disasters, with capabilities often shaped by national investment, historical experience, and levels of international support. Countries like Chile and Mexico have developed strong early warning systems and disaster-response frameworks due to repeated exposure, while others—particularly in Central America and the Caribbean—struggle with limited resources and institutional fragility

  - a. Special Questions:** How prepared are regional institutions for natural disasters? What factors influence emergency response capabilities? How do countries coordinate during regional crises?
  - b. Special Questions:** What affects institutional capacity for crisis management? What factors influence regional responses to humanitarian crises? What impacts the effectiveness of disaster response mechanisms?

This is not an all-encompassing list, and we will be accepting other proposals unrelated to these topics. We want to hear fresh ideas and avenues to explore as well as potential policy prescriptions that lawmakers and decision-makers need to be thinking about.

The submission deadline is **Friday, August 29<sup>th</sup> 2025 at 11:59pm EST.**



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The levels of payment are as follows:

- Individual Author
  - One research paper (15-25 pages) + 1 hour presentation for SOUTHCOM + 30-minute podcast interview: **\$3,000 for author(s).**
- Individual Author and Dataset for Security Research Hub Dashboard.
  - One research paper (15-25 pages) + dataset or spreadsheet + 1 hour presentation for SOUTHCOM + 30-minute podcast interview: **\$5,000 for author.**
- Institutional Partnership
  - A multi-month partnership with FIU on a specific topic, resulting in at least 3 papers (length to be determined), multiple presentations for SOUTHCOM, a 30-minute podcast interview, and other requirements: **\$10,000-\$20,000.**

If selected, FIU will work with you to identify a timeline that works best for both organizations, set up a preliminary discussion meeting with USSOUTHCOM, identify a date for product presentation, and process payment to the author(s)/organization.

To submit a proposal for FY26, please fill out the following survey: [FY26 Call for Proposals](#)

For examples of past products, please visit [FIU Jack D. Gordon Institute for Public Policy Publications](#)