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Puerto Rico Research & Innovation Meet-Ups: share, learn, and improve our local ecosystem [1]

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The Puerto Rico Research & Innovation Meet-Up [3] platform is the first of its kind in Puerto Rico and part of the initiatives launched by the Puerto Rico Science, Technology, and Research Trust. The expectation is to position Puerto Rico as a research and innovation leader in the region, as well as a capable global player by targeting the local ecosystem through a series of meet-ups and the production of a landmark event, the *Forward Research and Innovation Summit* [4]. Our vision goes beyond a typical event production by seeking to establish a point of departure for the ongoing development of the research and innovation ecosystem -both locally and internationally. In addition, capitalizing on the spillover effects of these events over time will help drive a new atmosphere for commerce, innovation, and social impact.

Local meet-ups are done with the intention of making a deep dive into the existing and developing ecosystems that present an opportunity for Puerto Rico's development. Aimed at producing alignment, as well as points of intersection, between the agendas of research, existing resources, and market opportunities, the meetups highlight Puerto Rico's intellectual capital thus positioning the Island to improve technology transfer, development, and commercialization of our intellectual property. Meet-ups regarding technology transfer and commercialization [5], academic collaboration [6], and agro research & technology [7], have been produced in order to serve as a vehicle to present new courses of action in these areas while simultaneously building the support of a broader audience base (check out the reports from previous meet-ups on our website!). Upcoming meetups will delve into issues like bioinformatics and creative industries, among other important areas of opportunity.

Meet-ups foster the creation of social capital by enabling encounters, sharing, and learning arising from the knowledge and experience of key staff from the academia, the private sector, and civil organizations that exercise leadership in the areas of economic development and education. Thus, the ensuing discussion of important topics pertaining innovation, research, and development are meant to promote improvements to existing public policy.

The Trust's value proposition is strengthened by developing, retaining, and attracting world class researchers and scientists to Puerto Rico, engaging with latest global trends, expanding a network of partnership opportunities, and establishing a global research and innovation ecosystem on the Island, all of which encompass the efforts of this platform. All in all, this is a leadership exercise in which the Trust is driver and host, the intention is for shared leadership to take hold and have each ecosystem develop individually while recognizing its participation in a larger landscape of opportunity.

For Puerto Rico, local Meet-ups have the general aspiration of generating positive economic implications, as they are meant to improve the island's strategic global positioning. By moving beyond the traditional focus of the Island's geographical and touristic attractions, we want to generate an appreciation of Puerto Rico as a place ripe with opportunity for relevant areas in research, innovation, and commerce.



Creative economy theories stress that regions that exhibit higher concentrations of technological development and deployment, research activity, and creative workers, are more prone to improved levels of economic development. Puerto Rico has a talented creative class, full of knowledge workers that have been recognized for their ability to spur innovation, thus becoming the most attractive talent of our times. This event platform presents Puerto Rico as a research and innovation driven country, while at the same time highlighting the Island's human capital, creativity, and technological infrastructure, so as to have it considered an attraction for other's to visit, as well as for others to buy, because of its export capacity,

Almost unanimously, feedback from all meet-ups coincided in a general request for an event where these ecosystems could interact individually, and as part of a larger Island-region ecosystem. The Trust's reaction to this petition is the production of Forward: Research and Innovation Summit [4]. We invite you to join us in this encounter, and be part of the new interactions that will form during the event in order to drive Puerto Rico *Forward* [4].

About the authors: Ernesto Cruz (eccopr@gmail.com [8]) and Ricardo Burgos (ricardo@espacioconector.com [9]) are consultants to the Trust, and they are in charge of the design, production, and facilitation of the Puerto Rico Research & Innovation Meet-Up platform.

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