

Call for Papers 2025

Seventh edition

“Positive Transformation for the Central American Region: Integrating Knowledge and Research for Development”

Bases of the Call

The General Secretariat of the Central American Integration System (SG-SICA), the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) through the Center for Economic Integration Studies (CEIE), and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) through the Independent Evaluation Office (ODEI), are calling for papers for the seventh edition of the Call for Papers entitled “Positive Transformation for the Central American Region: Integrating Knowledge and Research for Development.” This edition is based on the conviction that knowledge, empirical evidence, and academic reflection are key instruments for advancing toward a positive transformation of the region, in which strategic thinking contributes to strengthening institutional capacities, regional cohesion, and, consequently, the well-being of Central American citizens.

Through this initiative, the coordinating institutions of the call seek to create a space for specialized research on Central American integration, with the aim of putting into perspective the opportunities that the Central American Integration System represents for positive transformation in the region. In this edition, the objective is to develop proactive articles that contribute new knowledge and strategic information to strengthen the work of the five pillars of integration: Democratic Security, Climate Change and Comprehensive Risk Management, Social Integration, Economic Integration, and Institutional Strengthening. The papers submitted are expected to explore relevant and contextualized solutions, from a regional perspective, that promote a transformative agenda based on the analysis of structural and emerging challenges.

I. Conceptual framework

For more than 70 years, Central American integration has been an essential component in building a more united, prosperous, and supportive region. Since the entry into force of the Tegucigalpa Protocol in 1991, the Central American Integration System (SICA) has consolidated an institutional framework that coordinates the efforts of the eight Member States—Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic—to achieve a region of peace, freedom, democracy, and development. SICA has contributed to political consensus building, technical and financial cooperation, and the formulation of regional responses to common challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, migration, health crises, and more recently, technological and geopolitical transformations that directly affect the region's economy and social cohesion.

In recent years, Central American countries have witnessed a series of interrelated phenomena that require innovative approaches to regional integration. On the one hand, intraregional trade remains a key tool for economic development and the revitalization of the regional market, especially if it is strengthened by the active participation of the private sector as a strategic actor in the value chain and in the consolidation of the common market. On the other hand, advances in artificial intelligence, although still in their infancy in some countries, offer opportunities to transform key sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, and public management, provided they are addressed in an inclusive, ethical, and sustainable manner.

Similarly, challenges related to food and nutrition security—exacerbated by rising prices, trade barriers, and the impact of climate change—require an in-depth analysis of tariff policies and their interaction with production systems, regional trade, and the food needs of the population. These issues not only reflect global trends, but also raise critical questions about the role of Central American integration in the formulation of collective solutions. In addition, studies that incorporate approaches to the evaluation of public policies, programs, and regional initiatives as fundamental tools for generating learning, measuring impacts, and improving decision-making in the field of integration are also encouraged.

In this context, this edition of the Call for Papers invites researchers, specialists, teachers, and representatives from the academic sector to submit research proposals that contribute to enriching the debate and offering substantive contributions to the Central American integration process. Proposals that rigorously and proactively address issues such as intraregional trade and the role of the private sector, technological advances—including artificial intelligence—tariffs and their impact on food security, public policy evaluation approaches, challenges in regional cooperation, digital transformation, and democratic security, as well as other emerging issues with relevant implications for the region, will be particularly valued.

The selected proposals will form part of an academic forum that will contribute to the development of regional public policies, in line with the strategic pillars of SICA and with an inclusive, resilient vision focused on people's well-being.

II. Thematic areas:

The development of academic research articles will focus on the five priority pillars of the Central American integration process, preferably on the following topics:

a. Institutional strengthening

- i. Trade and regional cooperation opportunities under the European Union-Central America Association Agreement.
- ii. Challenges and opportunities for South-South and Triangular Cooperation with Non-Traditional Partners/Emerging Countries of the Global South in favor of the SICA Region.
- iii. Opportunities and challenges of digital transformation and the adoption of Artificial Intelligence for the sustainable development of the region.
- iv. Evaluation as a tool for public policy and results- and evidence-based decision-making.

b. Democratic Security

- i. Analysis of non-regional migration flows in Central America from a protection and human rights perspective.
- ii. The fight against drug trafficking from a perspective of shared and differentiated responsibility among States.
- iii. Lessons learned and recommendations for the Framework Agreement on Democratic Security in Central America.

c. Economic Integration

- i. Intraregional trade and the role of the private sector in integration.
- ii. Opportunities in food production in the face of global crises.
- iii. Role of technology in economic development.

d. Social integration

- i. Context of gender equality in Central America: gaps in economic opportunities, access to health, education, social protection, and political participation that hinder development.
- ii. Poverty reduction and food and nutrition security in the SICA region.
- iii. Territorial development, housing, and human settlements in the Central American region.

e. Climate Change and Comprehensive Risk Management

- i. Sustainable value chain (with an emphasis on plastic): Innovative approaches to waste management and the circular economy.
- ii. Private sector participation in the conservation, protection, and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- iii. Innovation for climate and environmental resilience in the SICA region.

III. Minimum structure of the research article

The research article may be submitted in Spanish or English and must have a minimum structure that includes:

a. Cover page

The cover page of the research article must contain the following elements:

- i. title of the work,
- ii. name or pseudonym of the author or co-authors,
- iii. date of preparation of the research article, and
- iv. keywords [minimum five and maximum eight].

b. Abstract

This must be in Spanish and English. It should not exceed 150 words or 900 characters, including spaces, and should address the main points covered in the article. Bibliographic citations, graphs, figures, and tables should not be included.

c. Body of the document

- i. Introduction
- ii. Conceptual theoretical framework
- iii. Methodology
- iv. Results
- v. Discussion
- vi. Conclusion

d. Bibliographic references

- i. Citations and bibliographic references must follow the standards of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition.
- ii. All bibliographic references must correspond to the citations made within the text.

IV. Editorial aspects

a. Length

The text of the article must be a minimum of two thousand five hundred (2,500) words and a maximum of five thousand (5,000) words, excluding:

- i. the cover page
- ii. titles, subtitles, footnotes, tables, figures, graphs, and sources of information
- iii. bibliographic references, and
- iv. annexes

Articles must be written in Word, using Times New Roman font, size 12, with single spacing and left-aligned text.

Italics should be reserved for highlighting concepts or key ideas that the author wishes to emphasize, as well as for mentioning book and magazine titles, scientific names, and words not found in Spanish. Bold or underlining should not be used for this purpose under any circumstances.

Acronyms should be written without periods or spaces and should always be preceded by the article corresponding to the main noun. In addition, acronyms should be specified the first time they are mentioned in the text, in parentheses, for example, Central American Integration System (SICA).

b. Titles

- i. Titles should be aligned to the left margin of the text, without numbering, and comply with the following criteria:

Article title [bold, 14 point, Times New Roman]

Content titles [bold, 12 point, Times New Roman]

Level 1 subtitles [bold, 10 point, Times New Roman]

Level 2 subtitles [bold, italics, 10 point, Times New Roman]

Level 3 subtitles [italics, 10 point, Times New Roman]

- ii. The titles corresponding to the Bibliography and Annexes shall be written in bold, 12 point, Times New Roman.

c. Graphic elements

Graphs, figures, and tables must meet the following requirements:

- i. Graphic elements must be prepared in Excel format and incorporated into the body of the article.
- ii. In addition to the article, a single file in Excel or another program containing all the original graphic elements must be submitted. Graphs, figures, or tables that are copied and pasted from other texts will not be accepted, even if they are properly cited.
- iii. Images included in the article must be high definition.
- iv. Titles, notes, and sources for graphic elements must be included as part of the text of the document, not within the body of the graphic, figure, or table.
- v. Titles must be placed at the top of each graphic, figure, or table, indicating the time period and unit of measurement, when necessary [in bold, 12 point, Times New Roman].
- vi. Explanations of abbreviations should be included at the bottom left of each graph, figure, or table, when necessary.
- vii. Each graphic element should be numbered according to the order in which they appear in the article, identifying the type of graphic element to which they belong (graph, figure, or table). The numbering of graphic elements is restarted when another type of graphic element is added. For example: (Table 1, Table 2, Graph 1, Table 3, Figure 1, Table 4, etc.)
- viii. The title of each graph, figure, or table should appear on a line below the number of that graphic element. Titles should be aligned with the left margin of the text.

V. Conditions for participation

a. Participants

- i. Professionals, academics, public officials, and researchers involved and interested in the dynamics of the Central American integration process are invited to participate.
- ii. Authors of any nationality may participate.
- iii. Winners of the 6th edition, as well as officials of the General Secretariat of SICA, SIECA, and CABEL, consultants of the regional institutions of SICA, and relatives up to the fourth degree of consanguinity and second degree of affinity of the members of the Editorial Committee of the initiative, as well as the heads and representatives designated by the strategic partners of this initiative, are excluded from this call for entries.
- iv. Individuals who received honorable mentions in previous editions may participate in this call for entries.

b. Participation

- i. Participation may be individual or co-authored, with no limit on the number of researchers. In both cases, only one research paper may be submitted per author or co-author. In the case of co-authorship, all those involved must approve the submission of the article.
- ii. Participants must guarantee the authorship, originality, and unpublished nature of the work submitted, assuming the corresponding responsibilities if the intellectual property rights of third parties are violated. Unpublished work is understood to be any work that has not been published or disclosed, in whole or in part, nor is it in the process of acceptance and/or publication in any other medium, contest, or academic-scientific journal.
- iii. Participation is free of charge. No registration fees or payments of any kind are required. Likewise, the General Secretariat of SICA, SIECA, and CABEL do not assume or reimburse the costs of preparing and presenting research articles.

c. Restrictions

- i. Opinion articles will not be accepted.
- ii. Graduation papers, monographs, dissertations, and/or university theses will not be accepted. However, these works may form the

basis for a new research article specifically intended for this call for papers.

- iii. Articles that have been submitted in previous editions of this call for papers will not be accepted, unless they have been substantially modified from the version previously submitted. In such cases, authors must expressly indicate the changes made at the time of submission.

VI. Requirements for the admissibility of research

- a. Only research that complies with the structure established in section III will be accepted for evaluation.
- b. Articles will be disqualified if they:
 - i. exceed the established word limit
 - ii. do not present a regional focus or scalability
 - iii. contain partial or total plagiarism.

VII. Evaluation

- a. All articles will be reviewed by the Editorial Committee, made up of representatives from each of the institutions coordinating the Call for Papers, to determine that they are unpublished, original, and based on rigorous research processes. The Editorial Committee will also review the articles to ensure that they do not fall within the restrictions mentioned in these guidelines.
- b. Articles that meet the requirements for research admissibility will move on to the evaluation phase, which involves two stages:
 - i. The first stage focuses on compliance with the established criteria for form, structure, and word limit.
 - ii. The second focuses on the relevance of the topic, as well as reviewing the robustness and soundness of the scientific evidence presented in the research. This evaluation will be carried out by double-blind peer review and the Editorial Committee.
- c. The criteria for evaluating the research submitted are as follows:
 - i. clarity and precision in writing
 - ii. originality in contributing to the state of the art of knowledge
 - iii. validity and scientific basis
 - iv. applicability and inclusion of a regional approach, and
 - v. compliance with editorial regulations.

- d. The following parameters are defined for the research awards:
 - i. First place: having achieved a minimum of 90 points.
 - ii. Second place: having achieved a minimum of 85 points.
 - iii. Third place: having achieved a minimum of 80 points.
- e. Authors will receive information about the results of the evaluation by the Editorial Committee.

VIII. Committees

- a. The Editorial Committee will be made up of representatives from the institutions coordinating the Call for Papers: the General Secretariat of SICA, SIECA, and CABEL. The Editorial Committee will have sole authority to receive, review, award prizes, and/or disqualify participating articles.
- b. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to suggest editorial changes to bring the content into line with editorial policy.
- c. The Coordinating Committee shall be composed of a representative from each of the institutions coordinating the Call for Papers: the General Secretariat of SICA, SIECA, and CABEL as the governing bodies of the initiative.

IX. Strategic Partners

The Call for Papers includes a category of strategic partners that includes the participation of academic and research institutions or other development partners who, with the aim of enriching the initiative, contribute technical and/or financial assistance to the call.

Strategic partners may participate as observers in the meetings of the Editorial Committee, with a voice in each session to contribute technical elements that strengthen the review and evaluation process.

The following strategic partners will participate in this edition:

- a. Central American Institute of Public Administration (ICAP), with technical assistance.
- b. ETEA Foundation, Development Institute of Loyola University Andalusia, with technical assistance.
- c. Institute of International Studies of the University of Chile, with technical and financial assistance.

X. Recognition

- a. The winning articles will be presented at an awards ceremony organized jointly by the General Secretariat of SICA, SIECA, and CABEL, to be held in the second semester of 2025.
- b. The three best research papers will be awarded a cash prize, in the following order:
 - i. First Place: USD 3,000 plus academic benefits and/or publication.
 - ii. Second Place: USD 2,000 plus academic benefits and/or publication.
 - iii. Third Place: USD 1,000 plus academic benefits and/or publication.
- c. In the case of co-authorship, the financial remuneration will be divided and awarded to each co-author in equal parts.
- d. As part of the award, the winning articles may be included in academic publications disseminated by the institutions participating in this initiative, provided that they comply with the recommendations made by the Editorial Committee.
- e. In addition to the first three places, the Editorial Committee has the power to recognize outstanding research papers that obtain at least 75 points with an honorable mention, which will receive a certificate accrediting them as such.

XI. Obligations of the Winners

- a. Make an internal presentation to the Editorial Committee prior to the award event, in order to guarantee the professionalism and quality of the presentation.
- b. Participate in the regional seminars organized by the coordinating institutions and/or strategic partners, within the year following the awarding of the research.
- c. Grant the General Secretariat of SICA, SIECA, and CABEL the rights to publish the text in any format, printed or digital, with full acknowledgement of the authorship of the researchers.

XII. Unforeseen situations

Situations not foreseen in these terms and conditions shall be resolved by the Coordinating Committee, which is responsible for their interpretation.

XIII. Schedule of Activities

Activity	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Launching of the call (July 14, 2025)						
Doubts and queries to the e-mail addressess (July-August 2025)						
Closing date for applications (November 1, 2025)						
Review of Papers (November 1-15, 2025)						
Communication of results to winners and honorable mentions (November 15-30, 2025)						
Awards Event (December 2 - December 13, 2025)						

Questions and queries to the following e-mail addresses:

disseminationodei@bcie.org with cc to fcolocho@sica.int, sorellana@bcie.org and info_ceie@sieca.int