



BELLA II

Building the Europe Link to
Latin America and the Caribbean

In August 2021, Europe was directly connected to Latin America for the first time in history, thanks to the Project Building the Europe Link to Latin America - BELLA, which deployed the ELLALink submarine cable that connects Sines-Portugal with Fortaleza-Brazil. Eight months later, the South American ground infrastructure was completed to promote intra-regional data transfer and its exchange with Europe.

BELLA was developed by a consortium made up of the Regional Research and Education Networks of Europe (GÉANT) and Latin America (RedCLARA) and the NRENs (National Research and Education Networks) of Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain.

It was financed by the European Commission and the NRENs of Latin America, with a total amount that exceeded €50 million. The successful completion of BELLA, and the deployment by RedCLARA of the robust land infrastructure that connects, with high capacity, Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Panama, and Ecuador. The conclusion of this project left the way open for the development of a second phase, in order to extend the benefits of BELLA to all Latin America and the Caribbean.



BELLA II: A new challenge

BELLA II is a regional initiative that aims to reduce the digital divide and support the development of the necessary infrastructure to consolidate and expand a digital ecosystem of science, technology, education, and innovation. It seeks to strengthen and expand the digital ecosystem of Latin America and the Caribbean, enabling relations and exchanges between companies, research centers, educational institutions and national research and education networks, which are aligned with the strategic objectives in education, science, technology and innovation from LAC and Europe.

BELLA II is the opportunity to extend and increase the Digital Alliance between Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe in a significant and complementary way. To do this, it will extend BELLA's infrastructure to as many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean as possible, starting with Peru, the countries of Central America, the Caribbean, Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Uruguay.

This second phase will also have the support of the European Commission, through a total investment of €13 million, which will be complemented by contributions from the countries of the region and allied organizations interested in participating in the implementation of this digital platform and its associated ecosystem.

BELLA II is part of the EU-LAC Digital Alliance, a regional initiative of Team Europe (TEI) that brings together the European Commission (EC), some of its Member States as well as their agencies and development banks, with their counterparts in Latin America and the Caribbean to work together towards digital transformation.

The importance of this project is that it transcends connectivity, expanding collaboration to promote the use of digital transformation technologies: Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Blockchain, Internet of Things, 5G, Machine Learning and Augmented Reality, which will contribute to the solution of the urgent challenges of the region in all sectors of society.

To make this challenge a reality, the Open Strategic Dialogues will be launched, a participatory methodology for building social consensus, which will facilitate dialogue between national governments, political actors, economic leaders, regional development agencies, multilateral financial organizations, digital companies, and ICT. It will be a space for the exchange of ideas, expectations, knowledge that will serve as a springboard for the construction of a process of collective reflection and ideation of solutions, thanks to the exchange of resources and capacities of the interested parties.



BELLA II receives funding from the European Union through the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), under agreement number 438-964 with DG-INTPA, signed in December 2022. The implementation period of BELLA II is 48 months.