The World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), and the six global audit networks (GPPC) partnered together to start the CReCER (Spanish acronym of Accounting and Accountability for Regional Economic Growth) initiative in 2007.

Objectives and Summary

The main objective of CReCER is to create greater awareness of the importance of sound financial reporting and auditing for the development of a well-functioning market economy and of an efficient public sector, which in turn are the cornerstone for equitable and sustainable economic development, and to promote the adoption of international standards for corporate financial reporting and auditing.

CReCER is relevant to the work and interests of policymakers, senior civil servants, financial sector regulators, standard-setters, academics, accountants and auditors, private sector stakeholders, and regional and international organizations, including the donor community. The Spanish Fund for Latin America and the Caribbean (SFLAC) has funded the creation of the CReCER Community of Practice (CoP) that brings these achievements together (see www.creceramericas.ning.com).

What began as the annual organization of the regional CReCER Conference has, through the leadership and guidance of its stakeholders, developed and expanded into a multi-dimensional initiative encompassing (a) the production of studies and reports such as the “Accounting for Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean” publication; (b) knowledge sharing in the form of conferences and communities of practice (the CReCER CoP); (c) technical assistance and support for accountancy reform through the World Bank, the FIRST Initiative, the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), and the SFLAC; and (d) collaborative relationships and networks throughout the region.

By David Martínez
CReCER Activities

To date, the following activities are attributed to CReCER: (i) the organization and delivery of four regional conferences; (ii) the development of the aforementioned Community of Practice; (iii) the publication of Spanish language translations of the training modules created by the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) for Small and Medium-sized Entities (SMEs); (iv) the collaboration of regional professional associations and enterprises; (v) technical assistance projects in El Salvador, Honduras, Peru, Chile, and Haiti. The SFLAC has funded items ii and iii.

CReCER Conferences

Since 2007, four global conferences (Mexico, El Salvador, Brazil and Panama) have been held providing a channel for dialogue and for countries to share experiences and best practices. They have helped to generate and sustain interest in the development of the accountancy profession, promotion of international standards for corporate financial reporting, and improvement of public financial management in Latin America and the Caribbean Region (LAC).

The web sites www.creceramericas.ning.com and www.crecerliderazgo.org have more information on these events.


The third conference took place in São Paulo, September 23-25, 2009. Speaking to over 1,000 participants from 32 countries, Pamela Cox, the World Bank’s Vice President for LAC, noted that the region’s countries were able to avert a domestic financial crisis, in large part, thanks to improvements in the tightening of financial regulation and a more responsible banking supervision, which helped them be much better prepared to face the challenging times. She also underscored that the issues related to transparency and accountability discussed at CReCER will play an important role during the global economic recovery, and that sound financial management in both the private and public sectors will be central in putting LAC economies on a positive growth trajectory.

For the fourth CReCER conference, which took place in Panama on October 5, 2010, the organizers opted for a new approach. Participation in the CReCER Leadership and Commitment Regional Event was by invitation only, targeted at LAC’s top financial management decision-makers.

Instead of the large plenary or break-out sessions which characterized previous years’ CReCER conferences, this format utilized more intimate, smaller group, roundtable discussions to allow for an exchange of ideas and greater participant interaction. The positive feedback received by all counterparts made this fourth edition a great success.

The success of the CReCER conferences demonstrates that the issues discussed are very relevant for the
region. It also shows that regional policymakers and practitioners in the fields of public financial management and corporate financial reporting, truly value this type of initiatives where they can exchange their experience and identify opportunities for cooperation. Building on the success of the CReCER conferences, additional activities have been added to the agenda.

**Community of Practice**

The World Bank and the CReCER Partners created the Community of Practice (CoP), funded by the SFLAC, as an informal group of individuals who share a common interest in promoting improved financial reporting practices in the public and corporate sectors in LAC. Its purpose is to encourage an informed dialogue and disseminate good practices among CoP members through a number of activities, such as the Regional Dialogue Series (explained below), the CReCER Knowledge Portal with publications about the topics relevant to CReCER, and the gathering of materials derived from technical assistance activities like the First Regional Spanish-language Train-the-Trainers Workshop on IFRS for SMEs organized in Panama on October 11-14, 2010. The CoP provides an online platform for continued collaboration and dissemination of good practices and success stories.

**CReCER Regional Dialogue Series**

The CReCER Regional Dialogue Series comprises videoconference-based seminars, utilizing the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN) platform. **Seventeen countries** from LAC will be connected throughout the series (up to six at a time) with leading international experts from within the region, as well as from the United States and Europe, to discuss pertinent accounting and auditing issues. These seminars will also be webstreamed on the CReCER Community of Practice web site. By webcasting presentations from leaders in the profession, including researchers and practitioners with knowledge and skills on key topics of accountancy that are particularly relevant to the region, knowledge sharing is furthered at a very low cost to participants. This helps to encourage regional collaboration as well as education, and even some aspects of assistance.

Two sessions have already taken place. On June 21, Paul Pacter, Member of IASB, and Mike Wells, Director of the IFRS Foundation Education Initiative, broadly explained the Standard of IFRS for SMEs and eligibility criteria, with examples, to **90 participants** distributed in the GDLN Centers across the region.

On August 31, Henri Fortin, Sr Financial Management Specialist of the World Bank, and Jorge Gil, Director of the Standard-Setter Body in Argentina, respectively presented the recently published book “Accounting for Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean”, and the experience of IFRS adoption in Argentina.

On December 7, the CReCER team will have the third Regional Dialogue Series on accounting education and certification. More information is available at [www.creceramericas.ning.com/groups](http://www.creceramericas.ning.com/groups).

**Technical Assistance**

From October 11 to 14, the World Bank co-organized with the IFRS Foundation, the First Spanish-language Train-the-Trainers Workshop on IFRS for SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean Region (more details at [http://www.ifrs.org/IFRS+for+SMEs/SME+Workshops.htm](http://www.ifrs.org/IFRS+for+SMEs/SME+Workshops.htm) and [www.creceramericas.ning.com](http://www.creceramericas.ning.com)).

The local accounting body in Panama City (*Colegio de Contadores Públicos Autorizados de Panamá*) hosted the event. The speakers/instructors were Haydeé de Chau, Partner at KPMG Panama, and Michael Wells, Director of the IFRS Foundation Education Initiative. Haydeé spoke in Spanish, and Michael in English, with simultaneous interpretation throughout.

The Workshop and the translation of most of the IFRS for SMEs training modules used were funded, in part,
by the SFLAC which has, as one of its main goals, to assist client countries to develop a stronger private sector through provision of technical assistance and advisory services.

The objective of this Workshop was to develop the capacity of local Financial Reporting Trainers to train others in the application of the IFRS for SMEs. The Workshop was planned as an interactive learning course wherein participants shared experiences, guided and prompted by the speakers who acted as facilitators.

One hundred and fourteen participants from 16 countries in LAC, representing ministries of finance, professional accounting bodies, academics, and private accounting and auditing firms, attended the event.

Over the three-day Workshop, Michael Wells and Haydeé de Chau covered the 35 sections of the Standard, each followed by active Q&A sessions. The Workshop was moderated by David Martínez Muñoz, Operations Officer at the World Bank.

In particular, the event provided an opportunity for participants to improve their understanding of which entities were eligible to apply the IFRS for SMEs in their own jurisdictions.

The PowerPoint templates for the presentations used in the three-day Train-the-Trainers Workshop on IFRS for SMEs are now freely available in English at the IFRS Foundation web site (http://www.ifrs.org/IFRS+for+SMEs/SME+Workshops.htm).

The presentations in Spanish are available at the CReCER CoP web site (http://creceramericas.ning.com/group/replicatallerniifpymePanamOctubre2010).

About the Author

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