



 **BOLIVIA**

IWRM IN BOLIVIA

PROJECT FEATURES

Year: 2020 –2024

Benefiting zone:
Santa Cruz Department, Bolivia

Implementing agency:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit
(GIZ)

Partners:
European Union, German
Federal Ministry for Economic
Cooperation and Development
(BMZ), Autonomous Departmental
Government of Santa Cruz,
Municipalities of San Ignacio de
Velasco, Urubichá, Concepción and
San Miguel de Velasco

Total cost of the project:
€ 5 900 000

EU contribution:
€ 4 900 000

Type of EU support:
Delegated cooperation

The challenge: Realising the universal right to safe drinking water and sanitation

Bolivia is one of the countries with the most pressing water and sanitation needs in Latin America and one of the most vulnerable to climate change, suffering cyclical water crises with recurrent droughts and floods. The disappearance of glaciers in the Andes due to global warming is drying up one of Bolivia's main water sources, affecting cities like La Paz and El Alto. At the same time, non-compliant land use activities, unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation, wildfires, inadequate planning of human settlements, infrastructure and economic activities, exacerbate impacts from climate change. These realities compound physical vulnerability of river basins and increase pressure on water security.

The struggle for access to water, a symbol of life, dignity and social justice for Bolivians, has generated large social mobilizations that have transformed local water policies. In 2009, the citizens of Bolivia approved a new constitution that established universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a fundamental human right and a public service. Since then, water and sanitation have been prioritised on the national political agenda, which is why national strategies and actions are being developed in this sector with the participation of the government, international donors, the private sector, producers, academia, civil society, and indigenous communities.

Bolivia faces a great challenge to make this universal right effective. 28% of Bolivians in rural areas do not yet have access to improved drinking water sources, and 50% of the population lacks sanitation services, according to WHO/UNICEF data. These deficiencies, aggravated by climate change, hinder the development capacity of poor communities and lead to stagnation in productivity and family income.

Photo: © GIZ

KEY INDICATORS



70 000
beneficiaries



2 river basins &
1 sub-basin



20 000 hectares
of land managed
sustainably



Photo: © GIZ

The solution: Integrated management of water and natural resources

The European Union has been cooperating with Bolivia to implement the human right to water and sanitation through complementary approaches and programmes aimed at providing services in urban, peri-urban and rural areas and strengthening environmental sustainability through Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

EU actions have taken into account water supply chain interlinkages, implementing a wide range of programmes that include not only water and sanitation services provision, but also the conservation of strategic ecological areas and integrated watershed management for water consumption and irrigation.

This approach has led to the inclusion of climate change adaptation measures in water resources management policies, plans and investments, based on sound analyses of the hydrological cycle and its vulnerability to climate change.

IWRM actions in Bolivia have been made possible through a variety of cooperation mechanisms such as EU budget support and blending operations, delegated cooperation, and by working together with Member States and civil society organizations. The EU has contributed around 140 million euros in the period 2014-2020 to support substantial reforms for the integral development and sustainable use of water and other natural resources to guarantee the well-being of the Bolivian population.

A good practice: Water security and climate-resilient communities

An encouraging example of these EU cooperation actions is the 'Resilient Landscapes for Resilient Societies' project. This project promotes water security through a comprehensive landscape approach, including water resources management, sustainable agricultural practices, restoration of areas of high conservation value and protection of habitats and their biodiversity in the San Martín and Paraguá basins and in the Zapocó sub-basin of the department of Santa Cruz.

This project will achieve the sustainable management of 20 000 hectares of land and benefit 70 000 people.

The Resilient Landscapes programme has a portfolio of five pilot projects with an Ecosystem-Based Adaptation approach. These pilot projects are the result of a participatory process and arise from the needs of local actors and Autonomous Municipal Governments.

"The difficulties in the productive sector are diverse: droughts, frosts and fires have hit the region hard in recent years. However, pilot projects in the communities guide small producers towards a new agronomic model and improved management of their croplands, so that they become sustainable and help families have a better quality of life and food," says Cristian Oyola, President of MINGA, the united coffee workers' association.

The project also promotes capacity building, with a focus on water security and on integrated and sustainable management of landscapes; as well as supporting territorial planning processes. Sectorial and territorial plans integrate concrete measures for mitigation and adaptation to climate change that contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the Nationally Determined Contributions for water, forests and agriculture at the river basin level.

Public Group on Water and Sanitation

https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/public-water_and_sanitation/wiki/success-stories-1

E-mail: INTPA-F2-WATER-SECTOR@ec.europa.eu