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PROGRESS OF WASH SECTOR PLATFORM IN COCHABAMBA

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PROGRESS OF WASH SECTOR PLATFORM IN COCHABAMBA

I. Introduction

The Bolivian constitution declares that water and sanitation services are a universal human right and the government guarantees the highest priority use of water is for human consumption and supporting life. In recent years, much progress has been made, and according to preliminary data in Cochabamba 73.7% of the population has access to water and 58.5% to sanitation. The situation is more worrisome if we consider that final treatment of residual water and treatment of sludge, and not only sewer connections or the presence of septic tanks at residences, since 80% of water is used without being treated in any way before being returned to the families' properties. But who helps to expand water and sanitation services?

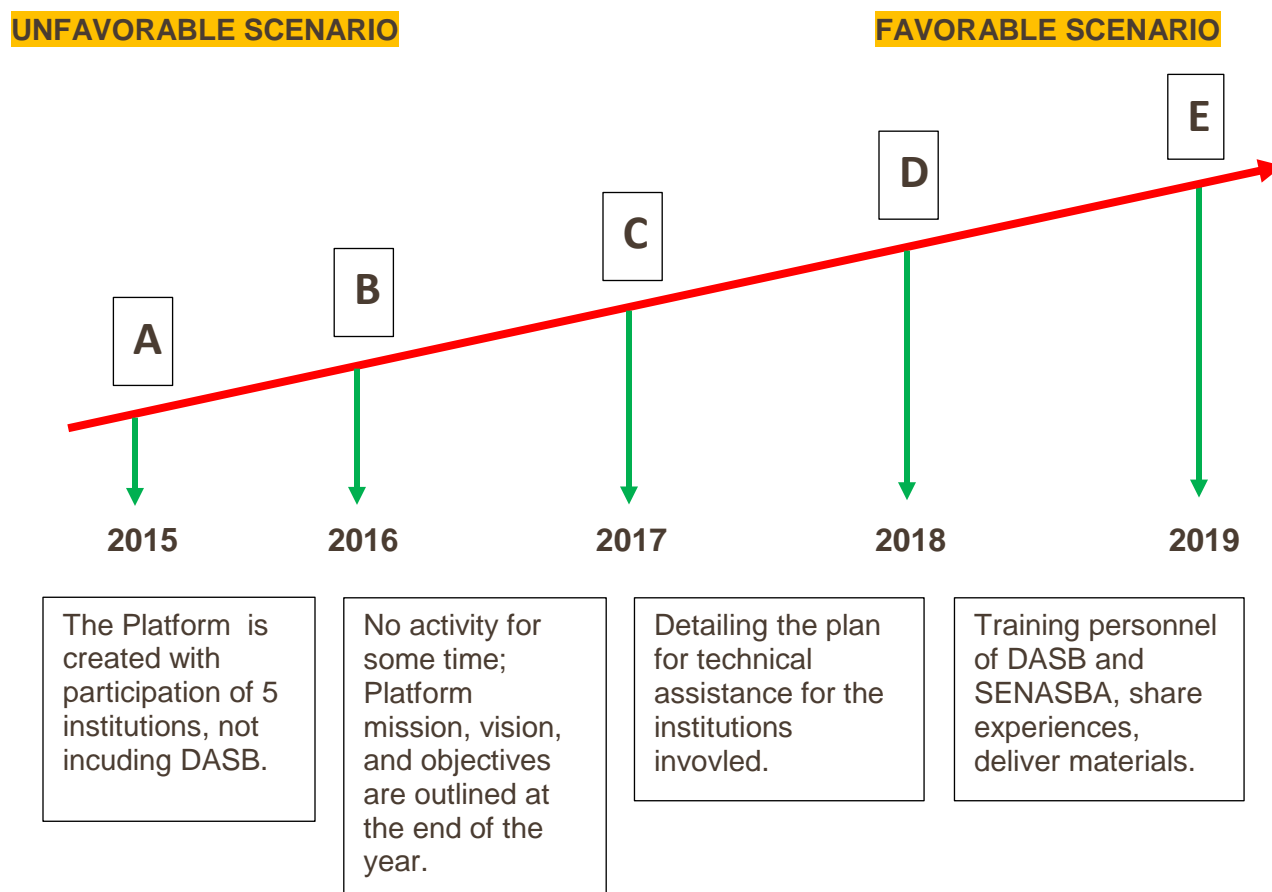
The Law of Popular Participation (Law 1551) of April 1994 took an important step toward delegating power and enforcement at the local level. 20% of revenues are sent to the municipal governments based on population, along with the responsibility for providing, operating, and maintaining potable water service. In 1995, with the Law of Administrative Decentralization (Law 1654), some of the executive power is shared with the departments and with Supreme Decree (DS 25060). In June 1998, Basic Sanitation and Housing Units (UNASBVI) were created in the departments (states) with responsibility to coordinate and promote WASH services and provide technical assistance to the Public Water and Sanitation Services (EPSAS). With the Law of Autonomy and Decentralization (Law 031) of July 2010, steps were taken toward the decentralization of powers to the local governments. **With this law, the local governments have the ability to provide not only technical assistance, but also financial support for investing in water and sanitation projects, with national entities and municipalities.** But who will enforce the laws?

Due to the lack of compliance with the above legislation, the 2015 Holland Service (SNV) created a Water and Basic Sanitation Sector Platform (the Platform) with participation from five institutions including the Cochabamba Government, Agua Tuya (Your Water), Association of Municipalities, Water For People, and the Greater University of San Simon. Water For People was charged with giving WASH technical assistance for Cochabamba.

In 2015 these institutions made efforts to work together to strengthen the directives of Cochabamba. There were presentations, meetings, and discussions to promote Basic Sanitation and Housing Units (UNASBVI), but the intentions were in vain, as the Platform was paralyzed for almost half a year without any actions taken.

II. The Process of Work Completed

The timeline below shows activities that contributed to the Platform.



III. Objective of the Platform

At the end of 2016, the institutions came together and began using WhatsApp to share information, for meeting reminders and agreements, helping all five institutions to meet and participate, and create the vision, mission, and objectives of the Platform. The established objective is:

Create a space for communication and coordination between entities in the WASH sector, to promote a patriotic agenda and carry out the departmental water and sanitation plan, consolidating a network for sharing knowledge.

In February 2017 the government, through the Directorate of Water and Basic Sanitation Management (DGA), called for an initiation of activities with the institutions that work in the sector. In this meeting, it was decided to reactivate the institutions that have truly showed interest in participating and strengthening the water platform in Cochabamba. They agreed on the following:

- Participate in meetings that will be held by DASB of Cochabamba, using that name instead of UNASBVI.

- Monthly meetings rotating between the participating institutions.
- Continue using WhatsApp for announcements, invitations, and news updates on the Platform.
- Begin a timeline with the participating institutions for a plan of action, focusing on the methodology of the 2025 WASH agenda.
- Participating institutions sign the action plan.

IV. Area of intervention

In this process of knowledge management in the WASH sector, and to help accomplish the 2025 agenda, an action plan was created with a timeline for the National Service for Sustainability of Basic Sanitation (SENASBA), DGA, and Water For People in Bolivia, with the goal of sparking interest and sharing lessons learned and experiences of the following municipalities.

INSTITUTION		MUNICIPALITY
DGA	Water For People	Tiraque
		Villa Rivero
		Araní
		San Benito
		Cuchumuela
		Pocona
		Arbieto
	SENASBA	Villa Tunari
		Puerto Villarroel
		Shinahota
		Chimore
		Entre Rios
		Totora
	DGA	Arque
		Tacopaya
		Tapacari
		Morochata
		Independencia

The listed institutions carry out activities in the municipalities, as shown. For example, SENASBA will be in 6 Tropical municipalities, DGA in 5 municipalities in the Andean Zone of Cochabamba, etc. With the purpose of strengthening the Platform that encourages technical, social, and sustainable actions with knowledge management about potable water, sanitation, water resources, and environment.

In this way, Water For People helps to socialize the experiences while creating the municipal roles, basic sanitation plan, monitoring data (Flow), administration, sustainable services checklist, calculating tariffs, and the intervention cycles for water projects with community cooperation. We are currently in the process of exchanging experiences between water committees with less than 30 members.

What do we expect from the Institutions and Municipalities?

- Gradually involve and influence the creation of a municipal role, such as Municipal Water and Sanitation Office (DMSB), or Basic Sanitation Unit (USB), depending on the size of the municipality.
- DGA fulfills its role of providing technical and financial support for concurrent investment projects in water and sanitation, and create opportunities for dialogue, exchange tools between the water committees and DMSB and/or USB.
- Spread water coverage with community participation in the municipalities mentioned.
- Invite the institutions that work in the sector and teach the role they play, and contribute to coverage of water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- The importance of creating a municipal sector role to guarantee the sustainability of services, not only of water, but also sanitation and hygiene.

Why do we want this to be replicated?

Because we are convinced that, if there is a Municipal role, Service Authority, called a DMSB and/or USB, this guarantees technical and social support for basic services that are sustainable. Also, this allows 100% operations and maintenance depending on the size of Water and Sanitation Committees (CAPyS) for water, and 0,10, and 20% of replacement costs, depending on the size of the Water and Sanitation Committee, water quality, source protection, and the sustainable services checklist. This ensures that all resources invested by the municipality in the community will last and have a sense of ownership in “My water system” and “My ideal Water and Sanitation Committee”.

How do we manage information?

The Platform mentions that Water For People carries out sustainable interventions, relies on success and impact indicators, with tools for basic sanitation sustainability, participation in the project lifecycle, local capacity building, such as the Municipal role (DMSB), and social capital in the municipalities, water committee fairs for information exchange regarding organization, leadership, administration, statutes, regulations, operations, maintenance, water quality, data gathering (Flow and SIASAR) and verification of learning through key messaging such as:

- “Hygiene in our hands”
- “Learn to operate and maintain our potable water systems”
- “Learn to save by protecting our water”
- “Calculating tariffs for our water systems”
- “Controlling the quality of water our families are drinking”
- “Taking care of our bathroom”
- “Administering our water system”
- “Our clean and healthy Education Unit”

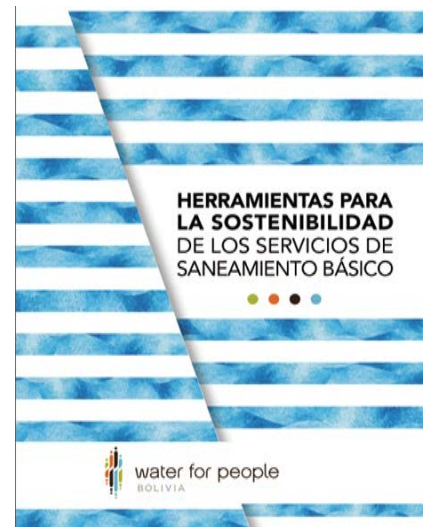
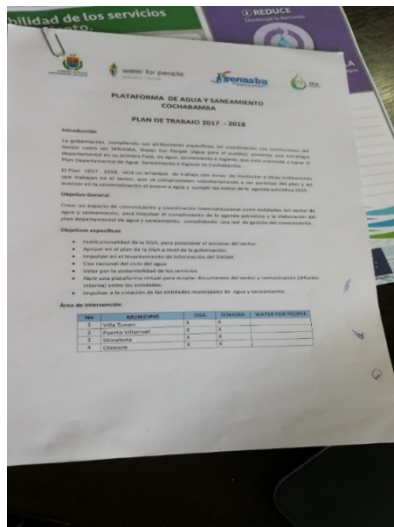
During this trimester, the DMSB of San Benito, Villa Rivero and Arani were leaders in sharing experiences with the Tropical and Andean municipalities, of the 11 municipalities mentioned above, 6 participated in the exchange. One notable aspect is the technical staff of DMSBs took the lead in sharing experiences as facilitators and direct messengers, sharing practical and actual experiences, in which the Water For People team played only a minimal supporting role.

V. Accomplishments

Here are the accomplishments to date according to the water plan carried out with help from the institutions involved.

Work plan and creation of educational tool

The advancement of activities relies on a 2017-18 Work Plan signed by the Director of DGA. This plan includes activities, indicators, and results completed monthly or quarterly, and reflects the focus and methodology of Water For People to be put into practice by the institutions involved.



Also, a “Tools for Sustainability” document will help the 47 municipalities, with hope that the Municipal Sector will adopt, utilize, and practice the tools with the various water committees, and resulting in sustainable actions.

Knowledge Exchange between DMSB, DGA and SENASBA

Knowledge and information has been exchanged between the DMSB of Villa Rivero municipality and personnel of DGA (Directorate of Water and Basic Sanitation Management) and SENASBA (National Service for Sustainability of Basic Sanitation), regarding the functions, technical and social support to the Water and Sanitation Committees (CAPyS), gathering data from Flow, and management of water were shared by the municipal technical experts. Also, the president of Water and Sanitation Committees of Villa Rivero shared lessons learned with the personnel of both institutions, emphasizing the cost of tariffs for services and the legal status of the Water and Sanitation Committees.



Exchange of experiences between Municipal water and sanitation committees

For the exchange of experiences between the Municipalities of Andean, Tropical, and Valley zones, emphasis was given to topics of sustainability, such as tariffs, administration, water quality, and functioning of ecological toilets. Prioritizing Water and Sanitation Committees of smaller size, which have more difficulty ensuring technical, economic, and environmental sustainability of the systems. Also, the process involves municipal authorities such as the City Councils, and there is an exchange of information between authorities, who specifically share messages about the importance of municipal sector involvement.



With respect to toilets, our country is promoting the construction of ecological toilets in the different ecological environments, including the municipalities of the Andean and Tropical zones, who expressed concern about the pits, and discussed the use and functioning of the toilets, along with information from the technical personnel of DGA.

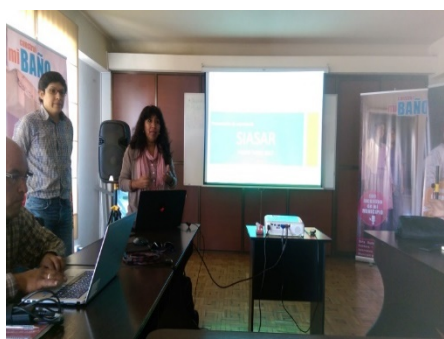


Expansion of sanitation

The government institutions that are working with the Platform participated in a sanitation brainstorming workshop with the purpose of gathering elements and initiatives, and inviting participation from the private sector in these goals, to move forward the 2025 patriotic agenda that our country is promoting.

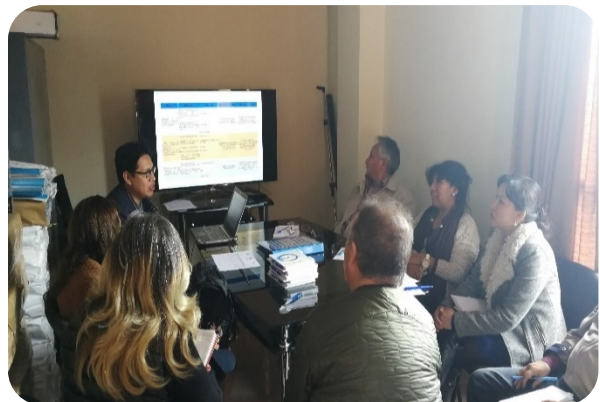


Also, the topic of SIASAR was discussed with the institutions of the Platform, including World Vision and JICA, that are interested in sharing information about the water systems in rural areas and planning investments, strengthening water and sanitation committees, depending on results that are achieved.



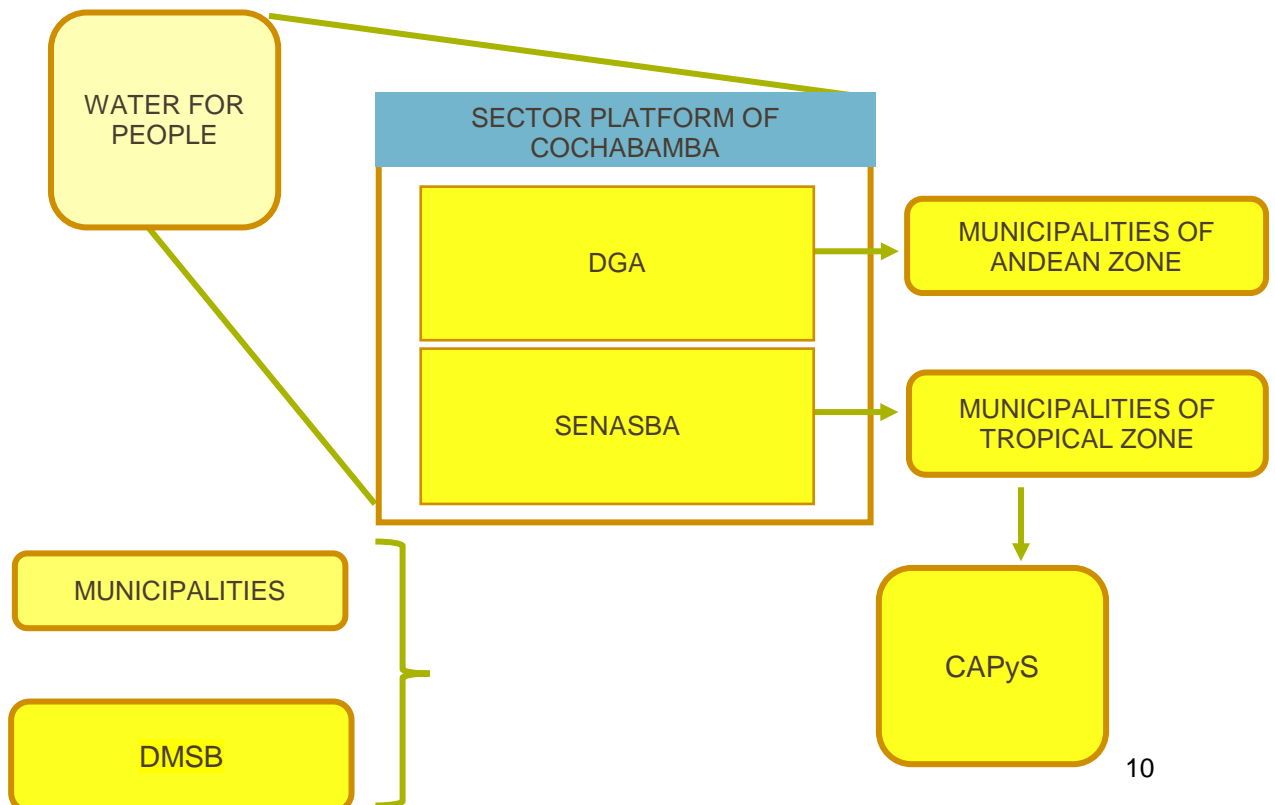
Evaluation of the plan

In order to measure progress of the Plan, the 3 institutions meet each quarter, where the personnel of DGA report to the Director of Water Management, Engineer Salazar, on the progress and adjustments made on the Plan, with about 40% completion for the quarter.



Role of Water For People in DGA

Water For People directs the focus and methodology through the public institutions, who are each carrying out the Platform in the municipalities. The DMSB of Valle Alto are the representatives that can share the experiences that best represent sustainability.



VI. Lessons Learned

Water For People is supporting Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM), but not the full scope of the IWRM, through alliances between DMSBs and Directorate of Production of each municipality, they agreed to reforest the water sources in use. This activity, such as the water quality analysis, is paid by Water and Sanitation Committees and led by the director of Water and Sanitation Committee.

Of 47 municipalities within the department of Cochabamba, it is intervening in 18 of them, with the hope that the institutions that work with them will effectively replicate the institutional focus, with timely follow-up to ensure high quality implementation, and that other institutions working in the sector will become progressively involved to achieve the 2025 patriotic agenda, and reach the goal of water as a universal human right (focus on Everyone Forever).

Perseverance and tolerance were some of the values promoted by Water For People. After many attempts and failures, some thought that the Platform would not work, but the commitment and conviction of certain individuals of the DGA and Water For People, and especially Water For People sharing their experience and facilitating the process, to influence and improve our expertise at the department level was important in strengthening our conviction to move the process forward.

There are mentors in the DGA, focusing on the work of Water For People, who are convinced that water systems without community support are not sustainable, most importantly the strength of the municipalities and water committees. Also, understanding that the government's responsibility according to Law 037, is to permanently assist the other government functions.

It is laudable that the various institutions hold monthly meetings and the Platform is resulting in activities, as an indicator that the government wants to fulfill its role.

Creating a timeline to start with strengthening activities, beginning with personnel of DGA, and later the technical staff of municipalities and water committees was laudable, since it shows milestones are being reached, like the basic sanitation plan already underway in the municipalities of Arque and Tacopaya. The creation of USB (Basic Sanitation Units) in 5 municipalities and establishing authorities such as Councilmembers, allowed the creation of these units, which are verifiable activities being carried out and will influence the decision makers.

VII. Successful Results

In Cochabamba, the Platform is moving forward, and being carried out with the help of two important public institutions, DGA and SENASBA. There is a plan and timeline of actions that can be replicated in other cities outside of the Water For People action areas.

In the municipality of Pocona, a DMSB has been created, and according to the Platform, eight USBs have been identified in the municipalities of Arque, Vacas, Arbieto, Chimore, Shinahota, Puerto Villarroel, Totora, and Villa Tunari. These areas are involved in the work of Water For People, in coordination with the DGA.

Important components include human resources with training and understanding of basic sanitation, and technical experts, and members of the Platform in sanitation education and

sustainability. Municipal authorities (mayors) of Arbieto, Vacas, and Pocona de Cochabamba have become familiar with these concepts.

29 water committees have worked on the topic of sustainability in Altiplano municipalities of Tacopaya, Arque, Morochata, Tapacari, e Independencia; and five water committees in the MI AGUA (My Water) program in the Tropical zone. Also, there are nine basic sanitation plans in Tapacari, Arque, Arbiert, Pocona, Cuchumuela, San Benito, Arani, Villa Ribero, y Tiraque.

The DMSBs of the three municipalities took the lead and facilitated educational efforts, resulting in some changing of attitudes through compromise, positive attitudes, and practice in their own water committees.

The installation of water meters in community water projects is a huge success because it allows each family and water committee director to implement the statutes and regulations that were approved by the full assembly in order to charge for water service. Also, it will allow the operation and maintenance such as the replacement of important water system components, and keeping a record of administration, with low rates of non-payment, and better financial transparency.

The use of toilets and interventions used by the two institutions encourage the construction of ecological toilets, especially the use of drying material and liquid onsite before treatment. According to the reports from the DGA technical staff, the water committees began charging for water services and for use of the ecological toilets.

VIII. Next steps

The next steps are:

- Permanent follow-up with signing the agreement between Water For People and DGA.
- Meetings with each Municipal Authority of the Tropical and Altiplano areas, to consolidate the USBs (Basic Sanitation Units).
- Achieve universal access to water through construction, repair, and improvement of water systems according to the national policies (management of municipal resources, led by DGA).
- Motivate the municipalities in IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management), considering the uses and customs in context of involvement of decision makers in sanitation through various mechanisms.

Water For People is in process of transferring to DGA the Toolkit training for Sustainability of Sanitation Services for capacity building of DMSBs and/or USBs. Continue technical and social assistance for the Tariff Calculations, Statutes and Regulations, Water Quality, IWRM, and the Sustainable Services Checklist in order to replicate our experience to the 47 municipalities of Cochabamba, and guarantee the sustainability of services.