

Water Benefit Certificates Colombia

A result based finance mechanism to conserve an ecosystem providing water

Water Benefit Certificates (WBC)

The WBC mechanism uses a market-based approach centered around the idea of financing water related projects based on the environmental and social benefits they generate. (Water Benefit Standard. The Gold Standard. 2012)

Objectives



Maintain water balance
in the watershed



Promote the participation
of stakeholders



Guarantee access to water
(quality and quantity)



Reduce poverty and
improve quality of life

WBC defines best practice
governance for projects that:



Purify

Supply

Conserve



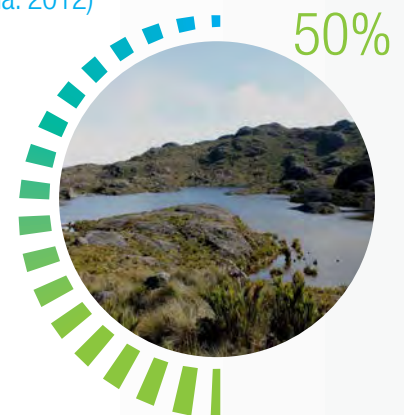
Quantified and verified outcomes



High Andean Wetlands (Páramo Andino)

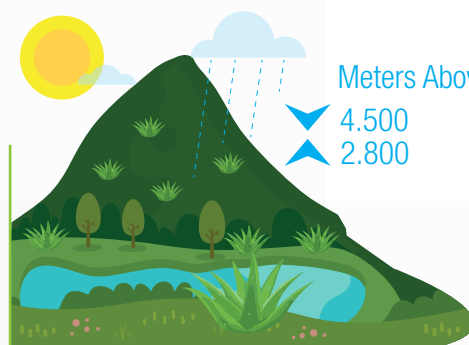
The high Andean wetlands are well known for capturing rain drops through the leaves of different plant species. The water is captured by the leaves and then conducted through the roots into the soil. These water reservoirs slowly feed lakes and rivers downstream.

50% of these high Andean wetlands worldwide are in Colombia. (Alexander von Humboldt Research Institute. Colombia. 2012)

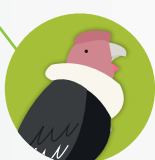


Ecosystem Services

- ✓ Water regulation
- ✓ Carbon sequestration
- ✓ Landscape and cultural services
- ✓ Biodiversity



Páramos are characterized by extensive grasslands and the dominance of plants commonly known as Frailejones (Espelletia).



The High Andean Wetlands in Colombia are home to a rich biodiversity.

- 70 species of mammals.
- 4,700 species of vegetation.
- 154 species of birds.
- 130 species of butterflies.
- 87 species of frogs and toads.

High Andean Wetland in Colombia

More than 20 million of Colombians depend directly on the high Andean wetlands for their water supply. Unsustainable land use, untreated wastewater, mining and other threats affect the ecological health of these fragile ecosystems and increase the water risk in Colombia.



Colombia's páramos cover less than 2% of the country's total area, but produce 90% of total fresh water.

Conservation actions help to:



Reduce deforestation and land degradation



Value and appreciate ecosystem services.



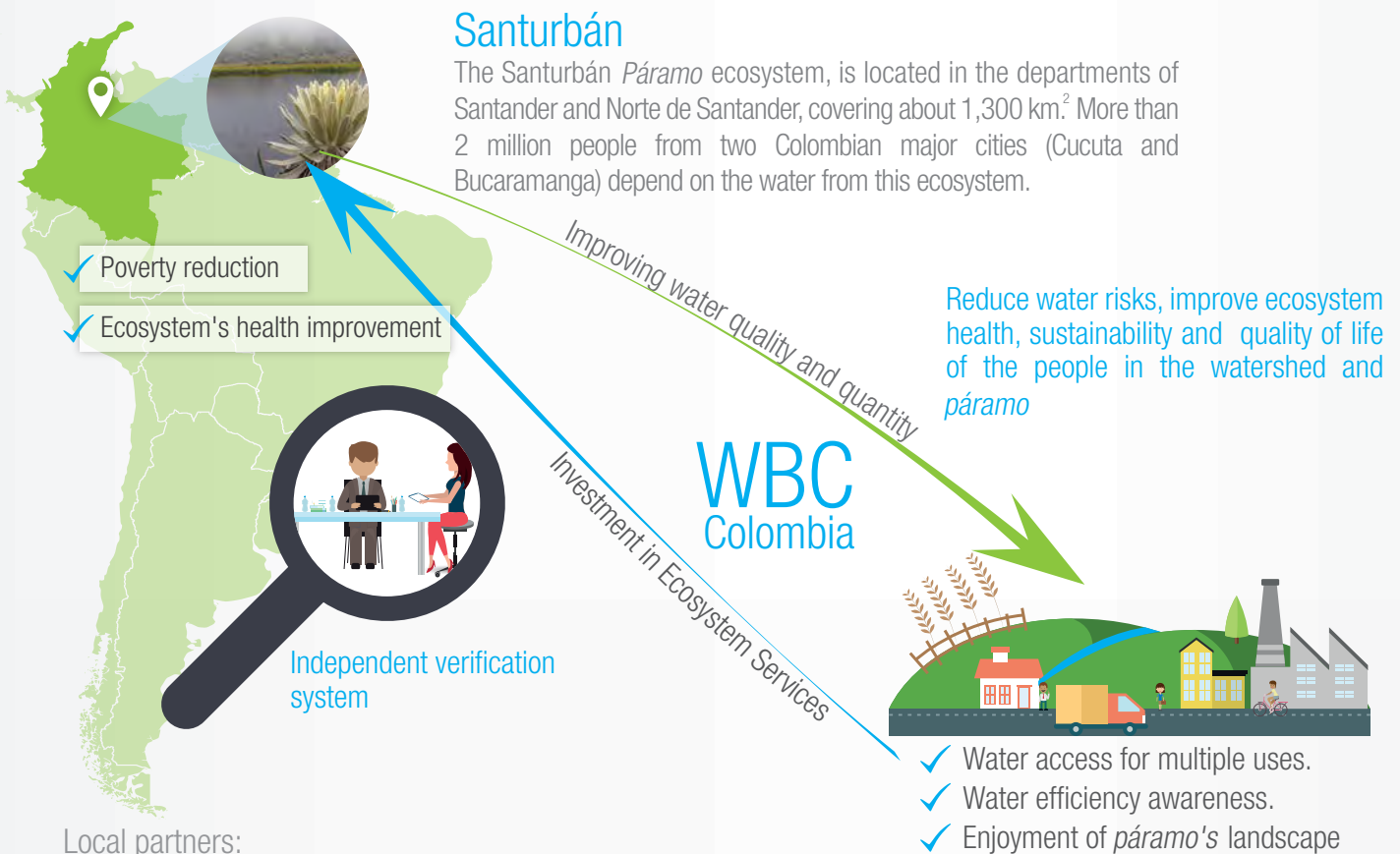
Reduce poverty and increase sustainable agricultural productivity.



Improve the control for high-impact activities (mining, grazing livestock)

¿How would the certificates work in Colombia?

The Water Benefit Certificates scheme in Colombia will be used as a mechanism to engage upstream and downstream stakeholders in the conservation of an ecosystem that provides water: the páramo. The quantification of the water supplied (and regulated) by this ecosystem, in a certain period of time, is valued and linked to other core benefits such as: improvement of the quality of life, carbon sequestration and biodiversity.



Local partners:

