# Building water institutions in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Pascal Blunier, Co-director of Environmental Management Project, CSD Engineers

HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

CSDENGINEERS
INGENIOUS BY NATURE

# Context

# Context

**Department of Cochabamba**

- 55.631 km2
- 1.9 million inhabitants (almost 60% in metropolitan area)
- Ecological floors from 500 to 5000 m
- Average precipitation 300 and 4000 mm/y (500mm/y in the metropolitan area
- Agricultural vocation “the barn of Bolivia”
- Region of internal immigration

# Multiple uses of water in Cochabamba

**Drinking water**

- 54% of piped drinking water coverage
- 70% of sanitation coverage

**Irrigation**

- 1.333 irrigation systems
- 20% of families from the department
- Only 14% of systems are technified

**Energy**

- Important complex in Corani, 220 millions m3

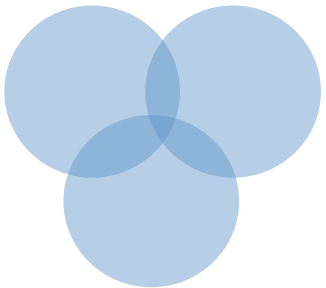
# Some of the water challenges in Cochabamba

**Drinking water and sanitation**

- Coverage
- Inequity
- Inefficiency: losses up to 55%
- Continuity of services - vulnerability to climate changes

**Irrigation**

- Unsatisfied demand
- Inefficiency
- Conflicts for water rights and obligations
- Vulnerability to climate change



**Cross cutting**

- Watershed degradation and contamination
- Climatic vulnerability: drought and inundations
- Competing uses, grabbing, territorialization
- Vulnerability to climate change

# Building water governance:
## From a cooperation project to departmental institutions

# 1991-2000: from a technical…

**Context**

Recurrent floods in Cochabamba valleys

**Drinking water:**

- need for strong investment
- SEMAPA inefficient / corrupt

➢ Privatization of water utility (SEMAPA-> Agua del Tunari)

**Intervention**

PROMIC: technical answer in several "laboratory" watersheds of the Cordillera del Tunari

- Project from the prefecture of Cochabamba, funded by SDC
- Hydraulic infrastructures, irrigation, etc.

➢ Evolution from watershed management to IWRM

Integrate people in the management of water

# 2000-2005 … toward a political priority

## Context


**Drinking water:**

- Reverse gear on privatization
- Challenge to reform SEMAPA
- Misicuni multipurpose project

## Intervention

PROMIC takes part in the commission for integrated water management in Cochabamba, with Swiss funding

- "Think Tank" on IWRM
- Integration of social movements: irrigation syndicates and water committees
- Proposition force for a new law on water
- Departmental commission becomes national

# 2005-2012: from project to institutions

**Context**

2005 Evo Morales and the MAS win national election – 1st departmental elections

2006 Creation of National minister for environment and water

2007 Pilot project of PNC (Plan Nacional de Cuencas)

2009 New national Constitution (CPE) -> strengthen role of public sector in water

2012 PNC 2

**Intervention**

- New phase (and last?) of PROMIC

-> question of future of the project, creation of a foundation?

- 2005 -2008 Deteriorated relation with departmental authorities, but good relations with national level – change in the management of the project
- PROMIC as a technical referent with opportunity to "sell services"
- Learnings from PROMIC are integrated in PNC

➢ Idea to "nationalize" PROMIC inside of the departmental system

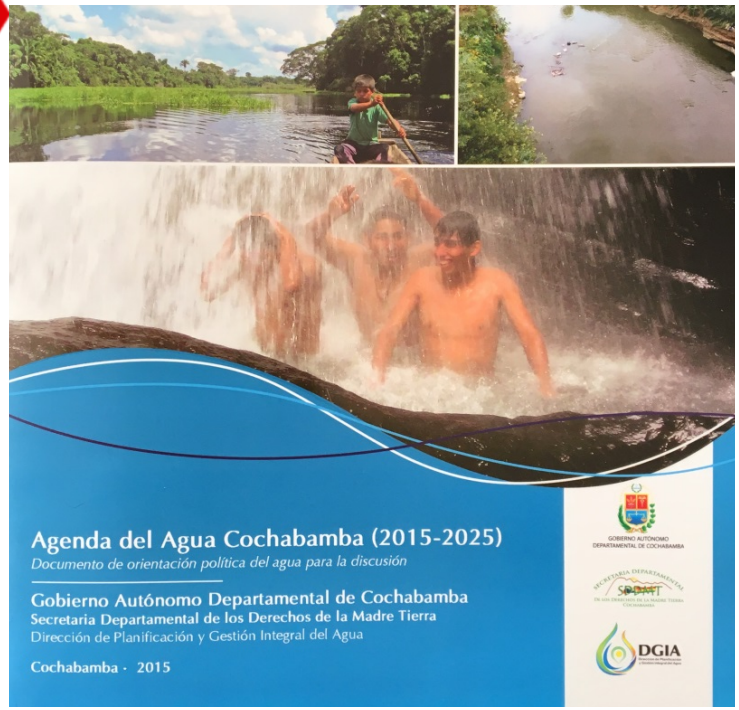
# Since 2012: new water institutions

- **Creation of 2 institution, 1 technical and 1 political, articulated but not directly dependent**

- Technical service
- Focus on watershed management
- Experience from PROMIC


- Strategy and Planning
- Normative and public policy
- Regulation

# Key milestones of Water institutions in Cochabamba




**Water Agenda (Agenda del Agua Cochabamba 2015-2025)**

- A framework for political debate

*Short term challenges:*

- Validate ADA
- Sanitation plan of river Rocha
- Management of project Misicuni
- Water master plan of Valle Alto

*ADA marks a willingness to build agreement prior or instead of "rigid" planning, it pretends to become the Agenda of all involved stakeholders, not only the official water institutions*

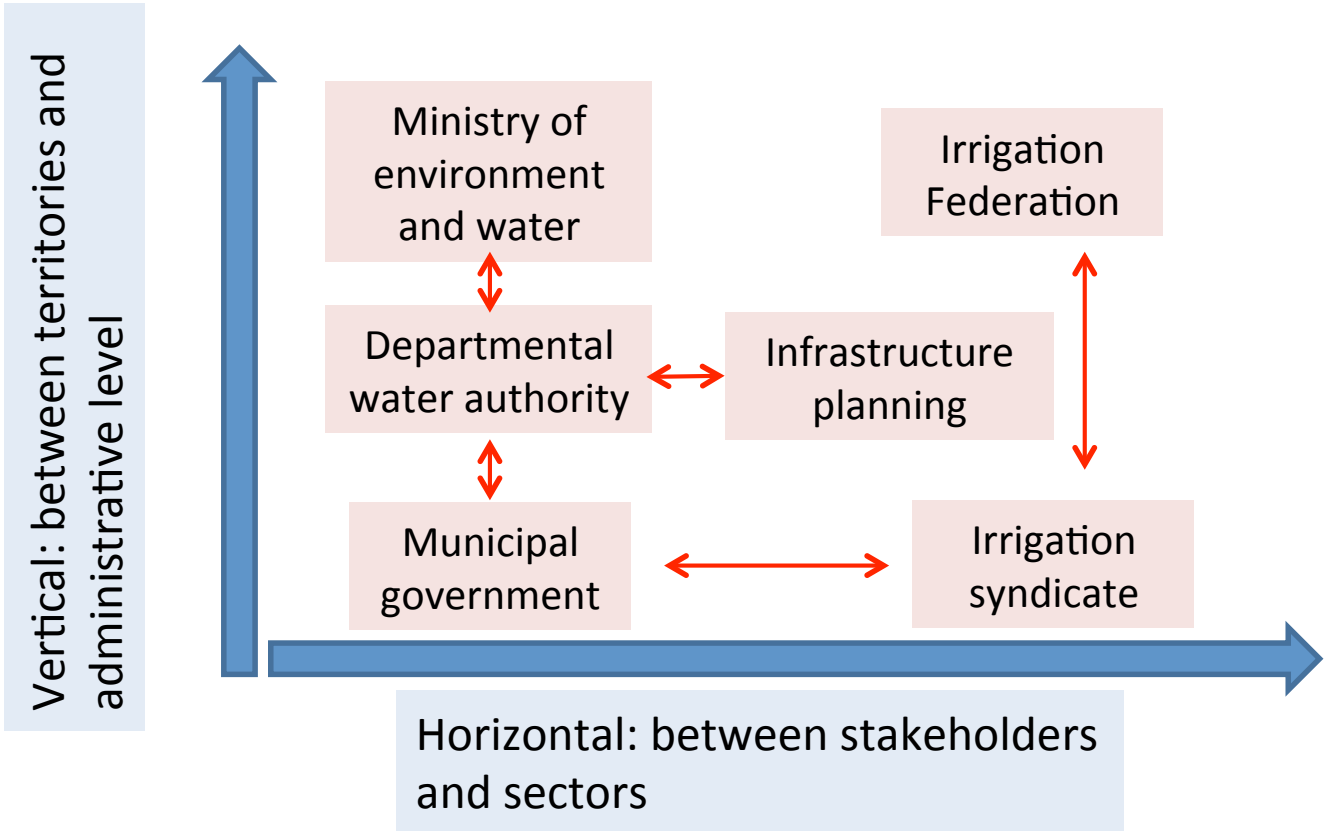
# Cochabamba’s water institutions through the lenses of water governance

# Water governance framework

**Water governance:** capacity of the water sector to be effectively oriented and governed taking into account, inclusion (decision making, shared responsibility and inclusion of the most vulnerable), sustainability and respect of human rights and democracy principles.

| Government capacity | Articulation | Participation |
|---|---|---|
| • Norms & policy<br>• Technical capacities of the government<br>• Strength of institutions<br>• Conflict sensitiveness | • Horizontal articulation in the water sector and between sectors<br>• Vertical articulation | • Social capacity (effectiveness and inclusion)<br>• Social participation and concertation<br>• Social control and shared responsibility |

# Articulation in the governance framework




*Articulation includes:*

- *Inter-institutional agreement*
- *Financial concurrence*
- *Competencies delegation*

# Government capacity: achievement

| | |
|---|---|
| Norms & policy | • Water Agenda<br>• Master plans (Valle Alto y metropolitan area)<br>• Constitution and Water as Human Right |
| Capacity | • Recognized inheritance from PROMIC (25 years)<br>• Field experience |
| Institutional strength | • 2 institutions with clear functions: “water authority” and “technical service” |
| Conflict sensitiveness | • Conflicts at the center of the Water Agenda<br>• Institutions built upon history of conflicts |

# Government capacity: challenges

| | |
|---|---|
| Norms & policy | • National framework is weak (water authority)<br>• Sectorial decentralization |
| Capacity | • Scaling-up experience from 1 province to all department<br>• Urban experience |
| Institutional strength | • Low coverage of budget, dependence of international cooperation<br>• Personal is in majority for determinate time, high rotation |
| Conflict sensitiveness | • Water Agenda recognized conflicts, but is a “minimum agreement”<br>• Low willingness to pay |

# Articulation: achievement

## Horizontal

- Cooperation (technical assistance fund)
- Articulation SDC / DPGIA (without dependency)
- Net experts former-PROMIC, university

## Vertical

- Participation and incidence in PNC
- Financial concurrence with National level
- Coordination with municipalities

# Articulation: challenges

## Horizontal

- Weak articulation with water and sanitation and with energy sector
- Bureaucracy in departmental government and circulation of information

## Vertical

- Distribution of competencies and decentralization
- Financial concurrence with municipalities

# Participation: achievement

| | |
|---|---|
| Social capacity | • Structured organization of users (irrigation syndicates in particular, but also water committees)<br>• Experience of organization from “Guerra del Agua” |
| Concertation | • Water Agenda instead of rigid planning<br>• Concertation space, “cumbre del agua” to generate long term agreements |
| Social control and shared responsibility | • Participation is a key component of the water policy (at national and departmental level)<br>• Norm for social control in Bolivia |

# Participation: challenges

| | |
|---|---|
| Social capacity | • Sectorial representation (lobby)<br>• Social inclusion is low<br>• Culture: “property of water but gratuity of services” |
| Concertation | • Appropriation of the Water Agenda<br>• Water Agenda as a “minimum agreement” |
| Social control and shared responsibility | • Social actors demand and do not propose<br>• Shared responsibility is not explicit in Water Agenda<br>• Formal canals and practice for participation and decision making are underdeveloped |

# Lection learnt and challenges

# Water governance in Cochabamba

**Factors of success**

- Based upon field experience: technical and political
- Recognize the conflictive nature of water management and use
- Articulated with different stakeholders and different levels
- Clear recognition of the political nature of water

**Challenges**

- IWRM in the concept, but cross-cutting management is still not a full reality: better inclusion of the water and sanitation and energy sector and of urban-rural relationships
- Social participation is building-up on an history of conflicts, need for more inclusion and more proposition

**Conclusion**

- Cochabamba is still facing important challenges in the water sector
- Environmental, social and institutional constraints make it an interesting laboratory to develop IWRM / water governance
- The new water governance are still young and in a process of competence clarification and institutional strengthening
- Is there more hope to solve Cochabamba's water challenges through the Water Agenda or through a "century project" like Misicuni?

# Role of Swiss Cooperation

**In terms of bilateral Cooperation, the transition from a project to public recognized institution is a success story.**

This success story has participated in opening doors for:

- Scaling-up of field experience (GESTOR / GIA), other departments and public incidence (PNC)
- Scaling-out in other sectors (in particular RRD and urban sanitation)

**Factors of success**

- Long term commitment
- Orientation and expertise (transmitted to the national sector)
- Flexibility
- Confidence
- Strong public alignment

**Challenges**

- Strong public alignment sometimes reduce field of incidence (ex. Social and gender inclusivity)
- Phase-out and reorientation of funding

# *Muchas gracias…*

*p.blunier@csd.ch*

HELVETAS
Swiss Intercooperation

CSDENGINEERS
INGENIOUS BY NATURE