



Water conflicts need urgent solutions: Academia, NGOs and local communities join forces and expertise to inform decision making on water provision in critical areas of Latin America

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A multinational project to identify key aspects of the decision-making structure for water management that affect water provision in Latin America will be conducted by a diverse group of researchers, NGO practitioners and local communities to inform policy makers in Brazil, Chile, Argentina and Colombia. The main researchers are Alexander Rincon, PhD. of National University of Colombia (Colombia), Maíra Padgurschi, PhD. of State University of Campinas (Brazil), Jorge Vergara, PhD. of the Foundation Desierto de Atacama (Chile), Tatiana Souza, Msc. of the NGO Conservation International and Erica Carrizo, Msc. of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation (Argentina). In the next two years, the group will produce local assessments through an approach that integrates social and natural sciences and knowledge from distinct social actors. The major result of the project will be an informative document for policy makers to support decision making with scientifically credible, legitimate and relevant information. The group is formed by economists, agronomists, biologists, anthropologists and local leaders who have experience conducting projects of this scope in the four countries of study.

Access to water is an important human right and essential to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the global sustainability agenda to be achieved by 2030. According to the last United Nations World Water Development Report (2015), the priority for Latin America is to build the formal institutional capacity to manage water resources and bring sustainable integration of water use into socio-economic development. Therefore, the identification of the links between the water provision and the aspects that influence its management is an essential need for policy makers of Latin America countries. The purpose of the

project is to gather all the knowledge available, from scientific to empirical, from formal institutions to local communities, and integrate it into a holistic framework.

To conduct this integrated approach, the research group will use the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) concepts and framework. The IPBES is an intergovernmental body which assesses the state of biodiversity and of the ecosystem services it provides to society, in response to requests from decision makers. The project will be innovative by applying for the first time the conceptual framework of IPBES at the local level, including different countries, different ecosystems, an interdisciplinary team and, most importantly, a common idea “water governance in Latin America”.

“We expect our project to be the starting point of a longer research project in the region focused in water provision. In this framework we envision the creation of a strong network of committed researchers, NGO’s and community representatives with the skills to successfully recognize, analyze and help solve pressing global environmental challenges through an approach that integrates different viewpoints in our home countries and internationally” said Alexander Rincón, principal researcher of the project.

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