



## EXTENDED ABSTRACT (SMALLWAT11)

### WATER & SANITATION COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES

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#### Abstract

Water supply in rural areas of Chile is on hands of around 1500 small operators community organizations, registered as “Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios” or “Water Committees”. 600 of these small operators provide water supply and sewage services to 150.000 families in urban and rural areas in the central part of Chile. Looking for improving the management and technical capabilities of these small operators, a Federation of them has emerged. It is called Federación Nacional de Cooperativas de Servicios Sanitarios, FESAN, a non profit organization, [www.fesan.coop](http://www.fesan.coop), ruled by the cooperative principles. FESAN has a strategic alliance with CINARA, [www.cinara.edu.co](http://www.cinara.edu.co) from Colombia, with the goal of rebuild the wastewater treatment systems of Cooperative Maule, project that originated the idea of create Community Learning Centers to continue with these experiences, with the support of GWOPA of UNHABITAT and IADB.

#### Introduction

In 2008, a study of small operators in Chile allowed these to know each other, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, come into contact with other experiences, and give shape to the idea of establishing more formal ties through a federation, so they could help each other, taking successful models of management and replicate them at a national and Latin American level. As a result of this idea was created FESAN, and the earthquake of February 2010 showed the desirability of the idea, because FESAN contact Cinara to rebuild the water treatment systems of Cooperative Maule obtaining the support and commitment of GWOPA of UN-HABITAT to start this task through a WOP.

Here we present the progress and results achieved through the WOP between FESAN (Chile) and CINARA (Colombia) for the reconstruction of cooperative sanitary systems of Cooperativa Maule, affected by the earthquake that shocked the country in February 2010, and later on the capacity building initiative through a programme proposal to be funded by the Government of Chile and IADB (FOMIN) for establishing 7 "Cooperative Learning Centers" in Chile to reproduce the WOPs concept at national level.

Currently, the main objective of FESAN is the reconstruction of Maule infrastructure, and to improve the management and technological capabilities of 600 rural water and sanitation services in the central zone of Chile, through the creation of 7 Cooperative Learning Centres. The first Community Learning Centre will be located in the town of Maule, where Cooperativa Maule, a partner of FESAN, will take an active role in this project. The Centre is developing a pioneering experience on using environmental friendly technologies for the treatment of wastewater. It will share its experience on design, construction, operation and maintenance of environmental friendly technologies to FESAN members, using the WOP tool. But, it can also contribute to strengthening the competitiveness and creating an environment that promotes community development and efficient cooperation between partners, according to 7 and 8 goals of the MDGs.

The functions of the Centers are:

- **Sharing** information and knowledge on technical, social, environmental and management with FESAN partners and other community operators in Chile.
- **Creating** conditions to develop processes to update their knowledge.
- **Maintain** networking with the community centers arising in Chile and Latin America.

## Methods

The beneficiaries of this project for the first Center, are primarily members of the Cooperative of water and sewage services Maule, as a member of FESAN. Located in the Seventh Region, Province of Talca (Chile), agricultural and vineyards region, is located 300 km south of the city of Santiago, the capital. In a second stage, FESAN partners, through the replication of this model in 2 more centres, strengthen their management, technical skills, leadership abilities and training facilitators of community processes learning, and on the last stage, 4 centres for community organizations providing services of water and sanitation in the central part of Chile, with an estimated of 600 small operators and 150,000 families.

Chile predominant uses conventional activated sludge technology for treating wastewater, mainly in urban areas with high population, that are expensive and with high costs of energy for operation, and difficult to operate and maintain. Rural communities should explore green technologies that are low cost operation and easy maintenance, thus becoming Maule in a community pioneer in the use of eco-technologies for the treatment of wastewater. It now becomes a duty to share that knowledge with rural communities in the country with the FESAN Community Learning Centre Eco-technologies for management and treatment of wastewater.

The following are major activities to implement the project.

1. Technical mission to advance the Participatory Evaluation
2. Preparation Mission Report
3. Sharing information and prioritization of areas of intervention
4. Strengthening in the priority areas
5. Design materials
6. Development of monitoring plan of the wastewater treatment system
7. Preparation of final report
8. Disclosure of the project.
9. Dissemination through the web pages FESAN, CINARA and DOH and regional media.

## Results and discussion

The activities and outcomes are described in table 1

Activity / Components	Outcome
<p><b>Component-Activity 1: General</b></p> <p>Establish Maule Cooperative as a Community Learning Center for management and treatment of wastewater with eco-technologies, with FESAN as a local leader of this process and service provider, strengthening local community management.</p>	<p>Creating a Community Learning Centre which aims to strengthen community management and environmental technologies for small operators of water and sanitation in central Chile.</p> <p>Building Vision, Mission and operational structure of the Community Learning Center. Final Report of the process.</p>
<p><b>Component-Activity 2: Specific</b></p> <p>Performing with the CINARA Institute a participatory assessment of community management that operates in Maule and knowledge that exists in the management community about local treatment of wastewater.</p>	<p>Participatory Assessment Report of the Community Management of water and sanitation systems in Maule.</p>
<p><b>Component- Activity 3: Specific</b></p> <p>Overtaking a training process to the community of Maule on the operation and maintenance of environmental technologies, and establish a monitoring system for the process in conjunction with CINARA and Catholic University of Maule and training of personnel linked to the Cooperative Maule as a facilitator of community learning processes in conjunction with the University.</p>	<p>Memory of the Facilitators Training Workshops.</p>

Table 1

Currently, CINARA and FESAN in conjunction with the support of the IDB and UN-HABITAT, developed in 2010 a project entitled *"Sanitation: Non-Conventional Technologies for Wastewater Treatment, Assessment Systems Maule Cooperative"*, closely linked to this project proposal.

Also, FESAN and CINARA through an international Seminar held in Santiago de Chile in December 2010, are taking the lessons learned to implement this project.

To ensure the safe monitoring of the project, main activities will be implemented as follows:

- Follow-up by customers of "Maule Community", for which it intends to undertake a participatory assessment of the management of the cooperative and inquiry with the local community about existing knowledge with regard to local treatment technology of waste water.
- Monitoring Cooperative Maule; in the implementation of the project personnel will be trained in the Maule Cooperative as facilitators of learning processes and develop participatory community materials.
- Monitoring from the authority represented by the Ministry of Public Works in Chile and International Monitoring, which will be represented by CINARA Institute.

## **Conclusions**

After examining the results and experience of the operation of the first center, it will be possible to replicate this centre, both, at the national level, because of similar characteristics of rural water & sanitation services, and international levels, tailored to the needs of each country, together with community organizations and local universities, with the invaluable support of GWOPA of UNHABITAT.

## **References**

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