The Water and Sanitation Program

The Water and Sanitation Program is an international partnership for improving water and sanitation sector policies, practices, and capacities to serve poor people.

Reaching the water, sanitation and hygiene goals in Latin America
Based in Washington DC, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) is an international partnership administered by the World Bank whose mission is to help the poor gain sustained access to improved water and sanitation services. WSP’s vision is a world where all people have sustainable, safe and affordable access to water and sanitation services, make effective use of these services, and adopt appropriate hygiene practices.

Therefore, WSP is committed to the international collective efforts oriented to poverty reduction and achieving the targets of the MDGs related to water and sanitation.

**Target 10, Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability**

By 2015, halve the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

WSP provides **technical assistance, policy advice, capacity building**, and support in **knowledge management** and **pilot project** implementation in over 25 countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In Latin America, WSP has a regional office in Lima, Peru, and a sub-regional hub in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Photo: Wanda Obando, UNICEF-Nicaragua
Why working in Latin America?

- **190 million** people live in poverty, while **69 million** subsist under the poverty line.
- Latin America has one of the **highest inequality rates** in the world: The healthiest (5%) benefit from 25% of the national income, while the poorest receive less than 7.5%.
- **Public investment in infrastructure** does not even reach 3% of GDP in comparison to the 7% of investment in Asia.
- Latin America is experiencing **rapid urbanization**: In 2015 it is estimated that 2/3 of the poor in Latin America will live in urban areas requiring proper water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities.
- 17 of the 50 countries with the **highest natural disaster risks are located in Latin America**, a fact that puts additional strains on local planning capacities for sustainable water and sanitation service delivery and solutions.
- Latin America has made **significant progress in sector development**, especially in topics related to financing, technologies, governance, hygiene, and decentralization, from which experience other Regions lagging behind can benefit. The documentation and replication of good practices and innovative approaches applied in LAC can contribute to sector development and the achievement of the MDGs global wide.

WSP’s Comparative Advantages*

**WSP is...**

- An honest broker specialized in guiding change and policy reform in the sector.
- Advisor for scaling up good practices and successful pilot experiences.
- Unique in its global reach and local presence.
- Innovative in thinking and testing new approaches.
- Close to partner governments and its sustained country presence and capacity on the ground enables it to move faster than most multi-lateral development banks.
- Learning organization collecting, distilling, and disseminating knowledge at global, regional, and local levels.

* Adapted from the External Evaluation of the Water and Sanitation Program, 1999-2003
The Regional Strategy

WSP-LAC activities are oriented towards the following business lines:

Focusing efforts on sanitation and hygiene
- Reinforce sanitation advocacy efforts in order for it to become a priority in the national development plans at country level.
- Introduce the concept of sanitation marketing and businesses together with appropriate sanitation processes, and transfer lessons learned from Peru to Central America.
- Based on public-private partnerships, implement the Handwashing Initiative across the country in Peru in order to reduce diarrhea in children under five years of age, and promote the initiative’s expansion in Bolivia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.
- Assist the Bolivian government in developing an adequate sanitation policy, through an adjusted strategy, a consolidated institutional and legal framework, a realistic financing strategy and a sustainable monitoring and evaluation system.

Strengthening Decentralization and Governance
- Support decentralization of services in Peru by building capacities of local municipalities, empowering citizens to demand accountability, enabling access to information for decision making, and developing local plans to consolidate regional governance.
- Support the rehabilitation and reconstruction of water and sanitation services in 8 provinces hit by the earthquake in Peru from which lessons will be extracted and transferred to other countries facing similar risks.

Supporting Sector Strategies and Policies
- Support donor harmonization in the sector through national WSS networks and coordination groups in all focus countries, especially in Peru through the Water Group, an advisory body to the sector authority comprised of the main funding international cooperation agencies.
- Assist Central American governments in following up Sanitation Road Maps and the strategy implementation of the WSS Central American Forum (FOCARD-APS).
- Support the development of policies in Ecuador to implement new alternative technologies to increase service coverage.

Promoting Communication for Development and Knowledge Management
- Mainstream Communication for Development into sector programs and projects in order to facilitate consensus building and citizen participation.
- Disseminate and support scaling up of new management models based on the experience of the Small Town Pilot Project in Peru which proposed a public-private-social partnership to professionalize services by introducing an independent specialized operator.

Visit www.agualatina.net, the “link of links” of water and sanitation in Latin America. For more information on WSP visit www.wsp.org or contact wsplac@worldbank.org