

## Knowledge Nodes on Sustainable Sanitation

SEI aims to promote and develop pro-poor sustainable sanitation in the developing world through capacity development and knowledge management. SEI is working in partnership with highly reputable organisations world-wide, who are acting as hosts for knowledge nodes on sustainable sanitation through this programme. The nodes serve as capacity development, information and networking platforms/hubs for governments, civil society and the private sector relating to different sustainability issues of sanitation.

Two knowledge nodes on sustainable sanitation have been established in Latin America.

### The Decentralized Sustainable Sanitation Node in Bolivia

SNV is hosting the knowledge node in Bolivia, using the national sanitation collaboration platform for local, regional, and national government entities, DINESBVI, NGOs, educational institutions, and the private sector as main vehicles for outreach in the sector. DINESBVI stands for *Directorio Nacional de Espacios Sectoriales en Saneamiento Básico y*

### Sustainable Sanitation

Sustainable sanitation systems protect and promote human health, minimise environmental degradation and depletion of the resource base, are technically and institutionally appropriate, socially acceptable and economically viable in the long term.

### Ecological Sanitation (ecosan)

Ecological sanitation systems safely recycle excreta and other organic waste to crop production, in such a way that the use of non-renewable resources is minimised.

*Vivienda* - National Directory of Sector Spaces in Basic Sanitation and Housing

The overall goal for the decentralized sustainable sanitation node, or DSSN, in Bolivia is to increase the access of the rural and urban poor to adequate sanitation services by contributing to the generation of knowledge and capacity related to the design, promotion, implementation and institutionalization of decentralized (or household-centered) sustainable sanitation systems in Bolivia. The process to achieve the goal include: formalization of the node in national institutions, training sector professionals and members of allied organizations in sustainable sanitation, generating demand for sustainable sanitation in different strata of society through demonstration projects in diverse

contexts, and finally documentation and analysis of DSS in cooperation with universities and research institutions.

### Some successes of DSSN

In cooperation with the Vice-Ministry for the Environment and Water and the Vice-Ministry of Water and Basic Sanitation, the DSSN developed three new guidelines:

- Guidelines for Integration of Gender in Projects for Basic Sanitation in Bolivia.
- Technical Guidelines for Ecological Sanitation.
- Technical Guidelines for the Design and Implementation of Water and Sanitation Projects with Alternative Technologies.

Through national surveying, the DSSN mapped professionals, organizations, businesses, and institutions working in water and sanitation. The DSSN identified and trained around 160 people in DSS and each participant received a prestigious certificate bearing the seal of the co-sponsoring Ministry of Environment and Water.

As a result of extensive networking, and training of partners in the sector of water and sanitation, DSSN systematically identified six opportunities for demonstration projects DSS. Each project is designed to expose the various groups within Bolivian society to DSS. Some of the beneficiaries are university students of agriculture and education, visitors to



DSSN is building ecosan toilet modules in 400 households in the Bolivian Amazon

Lake Titicaca and the Salar de Uyuni, naval troops, fishermen and residents of the Amazon region. Each project includes a plan for education, training and support, ensuring positive results to generate demand for DSS.

SNV, through the conclusion of the knowledge hub, has signed a Letter of Intent with the University of San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca in Sucre, Bolivia. The Letter of Intent is with the department of social cooperation and the extension, which means that the knowledge hub will not only be able to contribute to the Nursing, Education, Civil Engineering and Sociology Programs, but also through their outreach programs to schools in the region.

### The Central American Knowledge Node

In Central America, SEI launched the knowledge node within the Regional Network of Water and Sanitation in Central America or RRASCA. Since 1992, RRASCA coordinates and supports communication, knowledge sharing, and systematization of experiences between four country networks of water and sanitation including Guatemala (RASGUA), El Salvador (RASES), Honduras (RAS-HON), and Nicaragua (RASNIC). RRASCA supports the work of the Central American Integration System (SICA)

and their efforts to improve access to potable water and sanitation.

### Some successes of the Central American Knowledge Node

Each of the four countries formed a Working Group for Sustainable Sanitation (GTSS) from existing members interested in advancing sustainable sanitation. The objectives of the GTSS are to develop and strengthen sustainable sanitation capacity of actors in the water and sanitation sector, modify national policy and regulations to include sustainable sanitation in formal education curricula, and finally validate the use of sustainable sanitation in local contexts.

Education of members of the water sector began with the GTSS training other members of the country networks in sustainable sanitation concepts. Professionals from RAS-HON and RASES participated in a sustainable sanitation course hosted by SARAR in Mexico. In Honduras, 52 professionals and decision-makers were trained in workshops and demonstration projects.

The networks promote sustainable sanitation locally. For example in Honduras the Fifth Forum on Water and Sanitation; in Guatemala a Workshop on Ecological Sanitation; in El Salvador meetings with the Ministry of Environment and the Investment Fund for Local Develop-

ment; and in Nicaragua, the Second National Integrated Sanitation Forum.

Each country completed studies of the national conditions of sanitation, as well as the supply and demand of sustainable sanitation knowledge. In Guatemala and El Salvador, the GTSS conducted a review of sanitation education and curriculum, and an investigation into existing laws and policies for sanitation. These studies are the baseline for current GTSS planning of capacity development, suggesting changes in educational curricula to include sustainable sanitation, and inclusion of sustainable sanitation in each national sanitation agenda. RAS-HON is working so that the concept of sustainable sanitation is included in the new National Plan of fir Water and Sanitation, based on IWRM.

In order to demonstrate and validate the use of specific technologies, such as urine diversion systems, the networks conducted various activities. RASGUA is planning demonstration initiatives in the towns of Santa Cruz del Quiché and La Libertad. RAS-HON is negotiating a Regional Plan for Sanitation in the Bay Islands that includes sustainable sanitation. RAS-HON published an analysis of urine diversion experiences completed in Honduras by various organizations.

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