

Mobilizing the Wealth of the Andes to Overcome Poverty and Social Exclusion

CONDESAN's Road Map

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1. THE WEALTH OF THE ANDES

The Andes are home to extraordinary ecological and cultural diversity and a long history of enigma and tradition that make them special. About 40 million people, many of them descended from cultures that developed in this environment over the centuries, live in this region and its seven countries.

Geographically, the Andes consist of a wide variety of landscapes: the mountain plateaus, the inter-Andean gorges and valleys, the cloud forests, the snow-capped peaks, the moors and glaciers. This geographic variety contributes to the ecological wealth of landscapes, species, and genes.

The cultural, historical, and organizational wealth of the Andes is the result of the way in which local cultures evolved since before colonization by the Incas and then the Spaniards. The languages, races, music, cuisine, architecture, traditions, and customs of the Andean peoples are represented, recognized, and valued not only in the other Andean societies but also beyond their borders.

The rural economy is based on the ingenuity and creativity of thousands of small towns and farming communities engaged in very diverse forms of agriculture, in the broad sense of the term, small-scale business and services, and manufacturing. Due to the geographical conditions and historical and cultural influences, agriculture is still very closely related to nature and natural resources. The ancestral ways also express an often subtle diversity between types of relationships between men and women and between generations.

In recent years, business relationships between rural communities and cities within the Andes themselves, in neighbouring areas, and in other countries have expanded. The Andes are in the process of opening up and interacting more with the rest of the world. New and growing commercial, cultural, and political exchanges are providing new markets, new knowledge, and new capacities to Andean peoples. This has been partly the result of migrants from the Andes who have settled in the cities and in other countries.

The Andes are an essential water source for the hydrology system of the South American continent. The rural economy depends greatly on farm irrigation, which is often based on centuries-old systems and knowledge but is also a major source of conflict in the Andes. In addition, water is a resource that links the country to the city.

However, the reality in the Andes is that its people are increasingly poor and very little is being done to fight poverty within the Andean territory. The social and political conflicts that are currently affecting most Andean countries, and which in some cases can intensify and continue indefinitely, constitute an adverse context for development processes intended to include the rural poor and, at the same time, redouble the responsibility of organizations

such as CONDESAN to contribute to building new options for development and social cohesion.

Public policies and development strategies for rural areas are still oriented primarily toward energizing the small-farm agriculture that produces non-differentiated goods. In this context, the aforementioned multidimensional diversity is seen as an obstacle to the region's development and to the well-being of its population. Development is still understood by many to mean reducing the gap between existing circumstances and a homogeneous hypothetical urban-industrial model.

This shows that, in order to take advantage of new opportunities, old and new challenges must be faced. The diversity of the Andes being a source of development and well-being opportunities for the rural poor is a possibility and not a guaranteed fact. A new possibility, which still needs to be investigated in more depth and systematically explored, is that the diversity of the Andes is not a barrier, but rather a reserve of diverse assets that can be mobilized to promote development processes that benefit the rural poor.

But if such diversity has always existed, how can it now become a source of wealth instead of an obstacle to development? Basically, there are five reasons: First, urban consumers, both in the Andean countries and elsewhere, are increasingly demanding new goods and services with identities based on the type, history, culture, ways of life, and production conditions of the Andean peoples. Second, the economy of Andean rural regions—including employment and income of Andean farmers and indigenous peoples—has diversified, which creates better conditions for meeting demands for new farm- and non-farm-based goods and services. Third, chains and institutions that put rural communities in contact with the large consumer markets for new products and services are gradually developing. Fourth, rural communities, including the indigenous peoples of the Andes, have developed a better capacity for organization and social mobilization and for influencing the public policies that affect them. Fifth, ideas on the ultimate direction of development are changing, and today there is growing recognition in Andean societies of the significance and value of diversity and pluralism in national life.

But this equation relating diversity with development processes that include the Andean poor is just a possibility and a hypothesis. The challenge that the Consortium for Sustainable Development in the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) intends to face over the next five years is showing that this diversity is a great asset and can be the basis for development strategies that generate well-being and include the poor.

Specifically, and in view of the experience gained by the partners of CONDESAN, our contribution will focus on the issues linked to integral management of water resources and innovation in agrarian systems, with the poor included.

2. CONDESAN'S ROAD MAP

The Consortium for Sustainable Development in the Andean Ecoregion (CONDESAN) is a diverse and dynamic group of partners from the public and private sectors who have been working together since 1993, with a shared focus and a synergy of efforts, capacities and resources, to make and assist with concerted efforts in research, training, development, and policy initiatives that promote sustainable socioeconomic progress with the goal of contributing to the equality and well-being of the Andean ecoregion's population.

CONDESAN's contribution is based on the diverse work of its partners throughout the Andes. This includes activities related to production systems, value chains, watersheds, and ecosystems within the Andes. From an institutional viewpoint, the partners' activities cover all municipal, provincial, and national levels, from rural small-farm and indigenous communities and producer organizations to international concerns. The issues addressed by partners are equally diverse, such as preserving and valuing biodiversity; generating production and post-harvest technologies; giving small-scale farmers access to export markets; strengthening local governments; designing public policies for agricultural, rural, and environmental development; promoting ecotourism; managing water resources; or facilitating multi-player and social learning coordination processes. Partners research, advise, educate, and train, seeking to affect the public policy design and management. This practice by its partners and the reputation associated with it make it possible for CONDESAN to do its work and fulfil its mission. CONDESAN is truly a consortium in which diverse disciplines, priorities, and perspectives are represented. CONDESAN's effort has always focused on ways to stimulate and take advantage of its partners' ideas and experiences in order to generate new development options in the Andes, with priority given to social equality, economic growth, and environmental preservation.

CONDESAN has contributed, and intends to continue contributing, to strengthening its partners' work and insertion into different areas and issues that are relevant to the Andes. But the manner in which CONDESAN plans and provides this support must change as each partner's capabilities and independence change. CONDESAN can now concentrate on *synthesis, integration, and value-adding activities on an ecoregional scale*, based on the results, knowledge, networks, and capabilities built and accumulated by its partners. CONDESAN is powered by its partners' work so that it can conduct its synthesis, integration, and value-adding activities, allowing it to enrich every partner's work in return.

The Road Map that will guide this stage allows us to identify and take advantage of our strengths, define goals and priorities, evaluate ourselves and be evaluated by others, and outline the cooperative relationship between CONDESAN and its partners.

3. OBJECTIVE

Over the next five years, CONDESAN's objective is to contribute to improving the quality and efficiency of its partners' work toward developing the Andes and benefiting its poor.

To achieve this objective, CONDESAN will stimulate and support learning and practice relationships among its partners, who will work throughout the Andes to generate, synthesize, and integrate knowledge, to strengthen multi-player networks and platforms, to foster communication and information, to strengthen the capabilities of local players, and to promote a dialogue with citizens and affect policies.

4. GENERAL ISSUES

CONDESAN's work plans are centred around two issues:

- a. Integral management of water resources with respect to watersheds, ecosystems, and political units.
- b. Innovations in the agrarian systems¹ that take advantage of the wealth contained in the diversity of the Andes.

¹ Agrarian systems are ways to use rural space, in which activities based on agriculture (in a broad sense) play a major role. They are the result of determining factors such as the history and culture of a region, the natural

4.1. Integral management of water resources

The Andean region is undergoing a wide range of social as well as physical and environmental changes, from the explosive growth of some cities to the constant expansion of industrial activity and changes in climate patterns. Andean water resources are being exploited to meet growing internal and external demands. As water supplies become more uncertain and the debate over how this resource should be managed becomes polarized, local users and the institutions involved are trying to find a way out of the situation.

Water in the Andes is a resource that links regions and communities, while at the same time it is a source of conflict. Water interrelates different types and scales of ecological systems. It links families, communities, and fields with cities, regions, and countries. Preservation of ecosystems and natural areas for water regulation, political management of multinational watersheds, and social movements that cross social, ecological, or political borders when claiming their rights to control water resources are trends visible to all of the Andes' population. The degradation of vegetation and land that results in droughts and floods, inefficient and unequal distribution of water in the field, and policies that do not consider present and future realities, opportunities, and challenges are less visible but are still sources of poverty, inequality, and environmental deterioration.

Integral management of water resources is based on detailed knowledge of water systems and on the informed and equal participation of the resource's various beneficiaries and decision-makers. It safeguards the rights of the different sectors, particularly the poorest people. It recognizes the interrelationships, general trends, and specific issues at different levels. It includes social learning processes that allow players to find and implement new solutions and lead to new power balances, with more room for the poor and marginal populations. It considers gender relationships with respect to water use. It resolves water use and access conflicts through legitimate, transparent, and democratic standards and processes. It promotes mechanisms that let diverse players, public and private, work together for efficient and plural control of water resources. Ultimately, it creates opportunities for the poor populations in the rural Andean areas and makes important contributions to the development and general well-being of all Andean societies.

Integral management of water resources requires that diverse issues and ideas be addressed, such as:

- preservation and management of Andean biodiversity related to water regulation at the quantities and qualities required by society
- interdependence of management at different levels (ecosystems, watersheds, political units)
- social organization and collective action to manage water resources
- gender relationships in water resource management
- mechanisms for resolving conflicts regarding water resources access and use
- standards and regulations that structure the control of water resources
- access and use rights of various social sectors
- protection and respect of the standards, ways, and customs of the indigenous populations and small farming communities and their inveterate rights.

The challenge

environment, internal and external institutions, types of organizations and social relationships involving other players in other areas, and political and economic contexts.

The real challenge is for society to organize all of these complex elements in such a way that integrated water resource management will become a source of opportunities, inclusion, and well-being for the rural Andean communities, and especially for the poorest sectors.

Expected results

To face this challenge, over the next five years CONDESAN proposes support for learning and practice communities in order to obtain the following results:

- a. Diagnosis on a regional level of the current water resource situation and the related social and political conditions at different levels, including the gender and generation dimensions.
- b. Rigorous analysis of external factors, public assets associated with water resources, and options (policies, institutions, organizational arrangements, investments) with the goal of converting them into real benefits for the poor Andean populations.
- c. Analysis of water resource management trends in the Andes and their determining factors and implications. Based on that, a comparative analysis of various integral management strategies, their costs and benefits, and distribution of the latter to the different rural social strata, between cities and fields, men and women, agriculture and other activities, and present and future generations.
- d. Proposals for institutional innovations, forms of organization, and mechanisms for dialogue, negotiation, incidence, and reconciliation that are needed to improve water resource control.
- e. A regional, multi-player platform for dialogue, exchange, and learning about integral water management and how to use it to create well-being and inclusion opportunities.

Desired effects

Based on these results, CONDESAN hopes to make a substantive contribution to achieving the following desired effects:

- a. CONDESAN's partners will use and share information, analyses, methodologies, and strategies so that integral water resource management can generate well-being and inclusion opportunities for the poor.
- b. Rural communities will have the background and tools needed to successfully design and negotiate integral water resource management proposals.
- c. Players in the Andean region will strengthen their relationships and improve their decision-making, negotiation, and proposal processes with respect to integral water resource management.

4.2. Innovation in agrarian systems that takes advantage of the wealth contained in Andean diversity

The principal Andean economic activity is agricultural, in the broad sense of the term. The 5.7 million Andean small-farmer and indigenous producers with farms or parcels of land smaller than ten hectares are the central players in Andean agriculture.

Andean agrarian systems have undergone significant transformations and are being affected by new dynamics (globalization, climate change, migration, urbanization, etc.) that are altering the context and defining new objectives for agricultural activity, affecting societies as well as the producers themselves.

Small-farmer and indigenous producers, together with merchants, food processing companies, financiers, and other economic agents, have initiated multiple innovations and experiments to acknowledge and adapt to these changes and to fit creatively into this new and changing context.

Many of these innovations are in response to new demands for goods and services derived from the exploitation and management of Andean diversity. Exotic high-value products, environmental and agrotourism services, value chain integration, new types of institutional partnerships and arrangements, clean products, and new technologies are some examples of these innovations.

Nonetheless, many of these innovative responses are still limited to small spaces and markets. To take advantage of these opportunities, significant challenges must be faced and care must be taken not to underestimate the associated difficulties. These arise partly from the same Andean environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity, which makes it difficult to replicate innovations that have been successful in one specific context within the region. Shortages of markets and institutions are also factors that limit the expansion of new options and their impact on poverty.

Development of responses based on the new context and also on the various players' ability to develop innovations within the distinctive conditions of Andean diversity requires that various issues and ideas be addressed, such as:

- the relationship between the environment and agricultural production
- attainment of the competitiveness standards needed to participate in dynamic markets
- new technological innovation systems and new technical and financial services needed by rural players
- options for diversifying production and including more (agro)biodiversity in agrarian systems
- ways to organize producers and value chains
- changes in gender relationships related to changes in agrarian systems
- institutions (contracts, quality standards, certifications)
- domestic and international public policies regarding trade, intellectual property rights, regulation and control of genetic resources, agricultural subsidies, and exports to developed countries.

The challenge

The challenge to find ways for these isolated processes, generally localized in small markets, to be expanded to a scale that will make a significant difference in opportunities for well-being and inclusion of the poor.

Desired results

To face this challenge, over the next five years CONDESAN proposes support for learning and practice communities in order to obtain the following results:

- a. Comparative analysis of the innovation processes in Andean agrarian systems, as well as their determining factors, costs and benefits, and of their distribution to producers at different levels, between players in the same chain, between producers and consumers, between different Andean regions, and between agriculture and other activities.
- b. Proposals for institutional innovations, forms of organization, and mechanisms for dialogue, negotiation, and cooperation needed to develop and expand innovation processes in agrarian systems.
- c. Mechanisms for dialogue with and between professional training institutions in the Andes, to coordinate research results with training goals and issues at the pre- and post-graduate levels.
- d. An exchange and learning system for young rural entrepreneurs, with explicit mechanisms to guarantee participation by women.

Desired effects

Through the use of these results by various agents, CONDESAN hopes to contribute to the following effects:

- a. CONDESAN's partners will use and share information, analyses, methodologies, and strategies to support the development and expansion of innovative agrarian systems that will take advantage of Andean diversity.
- b. Equal participation and decision-making opportunities for young rural entrepreneurs in CONDESAN initiatives will be expanded.
- c. The quality of policies, projects, and programs supporting the development and expansion of innovative agrarian systems will be improved.
- d. Regional players will strengthen their relationships and improve their decision-making, negotiation, and proposal processes with respect to the development and expansion of innovative agrarian systems.

5. OPERATIONAL FOCUS AND METHODS

CONDESAN promotes social learning processes as a strategy for achieving the objectives and results discussed in this Road Map. To advance this strategy, CONDESAN's activities will be governed by the following principles:

- CONDESAN's contributions to public and private policies are based on evidence derived from **rigorous analysis of actual conditions** through applied research, action research, systematization, and synthesis processes.
- The area in which CONDESAN works requires **comparative ecoregional analysis**, which offers an integral vision at the ecoregional level without losing the ability to generate operational responses differentiated according to Andean diversity.
- Given the complexity of the issues on CONDESAN's agenda, an **interdisciplinary perspective** is required, creatively integrating knowledge and actions with physical and biological, economic, social, and institutional variables.
- CONDESAN **develops and strengthens multi-player platforms** as a mechanism for actively involving various relevant players from Andean societies, based on their own perspectives, interests, and priorities.
- CONDESAN is committed to applying mechanisms that guarantee **equal participation by both genders** in its activities, and to including gender analysis in all issues where it is relevant.

- CONDESAN will conduct its activities based on **transparent and competitive rules and procedures** that permit the participation of its partners and other relevant players according to capacity and excellence criteria.
- CONDESAN will give special emphasis to training **young researchers** and ensuring their participation in its activities, in order to stimulate a process of constant change in the Andean region.

Based on these principles, CONDESAN's secondary activities are divided into five types:

- Generation of knowledge** based on the synthesis, comparative analysis, systemization, and comparison of experiences on an ecoregional level.
- Communication and information** for socializing knowledge and making experiences widely accessible.
- Strengthening of regional networks, multi-player platforms, and practical communities** to support exchange and learning.
- Strengthening of local decision-making capabilities** (governments, social organizations, and businesses) to design and implement programs and projects and to intervene in public policies related to CONDESAN's areas of focus.
- Promotion of citizen dialogue and political involvement**

The instruments that CONDESAN is developing to implement these activities are:

- Ecoregional synthesis projects** related to each of the prioritized issues, with components for synthesizing and integrating knowledge, strengthening multi-player networks and platforms, promoting communication and information, strengthening local players' capabilities, and promoting citizen dialogue and political involvement.
- Source of exchanges, workshops, and learning communities**, aiding in collaboration between CONDESAN partners and forming the basis for activities related to strengthening networks and platforms and promoting dialogue and political involvement.
- Electronic and conventional **publications** targeting diverse populations to socialize activity results.
- InfoAndina** (Andean information), for taking advantage of information and communication technologies in order to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among partners and the Consortium's cohesion; and externally, for socializing knowledge and promoting more strategic and proactive involvement than in the past.
- Forum for Sustainable Development in the Andean Ecoregion**, which will provide a space for periodic encounters and exchanges among multiple players in the area of Andean development. This forum will permit information generation and exchange as well as dialogue and political involvement.
- Support and sponsorship of projects designed and managed by CONDESAN partners**, related to those issues and areas where there are gaps that make knowledge synthesis and integration difficult on an ecoregional level.

The following essential management principles will apply to all of these instruments: (a) activities will comply with clearly delineated priorities and objectives; (b) the various partners' participation will be based on clear and predetermined equality, eligibility, and merit criteria; (c) allocation of resources to various initiatives and partners will be transparent and non-discretionary; (d) cooperation, learning exchange, and teamwork among CONDESAN partners and allies will be encouraged; (e) participation of partners with fewer capabilities will be guaranteed as a way of helping to strengthen them; (f) information on the use of resources and on the results and effects achieved will be available to the public.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The processes of monitoring and evaluating a platform like CONDESAN that facilitates dialogue and cooperation among diverse players must be oriented primarily toward promoting learning processes that contribute to improving the Consortium's performance and relevance and the quality of its activities, results, and products. We have therefore adopted a basic self-evaluation criterion.

CONDESAN's committees focusing on work (CONDESAN initiatives), participation (Technical Committee), and administration (Steering Committee) are responsible for monitoring and self-evaluation of the processes and results of implementing the Road Map.

Every year CONDESAN issues a public report on the results and effects promised in this Chart and on its annual work plans.

CONDESAN is committed to strictly evaluating the quality of its processes, products, and results using peer review systems.

For monitoring and evaluation, the usual instruments available from the CGIAR will be used in addition to those stipulated in the contracts with various contributors.

Since top priority is given to self-evaluation oriented toward learning, approximately at the beginning of this Road Map's third year of implementation, CONDESAN will contract an external evaluation centred on the aspects of this issue-related agenda's relevance to Andean societies, quality of results, and effectiveness.

7. STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE ROAD MAP

To implement the Road Map, CONDESAN shall:

- a. Introduce the Road Map to its partners at meetings and seminars, and introduce it directly to our main allies.
- b. Develop a medium-term plan and present it to the appropriate CGIAR committees for their evaluation no later than mid-May 2005.
- c. Define the InfoAndina terms of reference in accordance with the guidelines established in this Road Map for that instrument.
- d. In consultation with the Technical Committee and in cooperation with CONDESAN partners who specialize in the areas included in the Road Map, develop the Concept Notes and proposals used to generate the various instruments listed in Section 5 and obtain funding for such purpose.
- e. Redirect as yet unallocated financial resources from the 2005 budget toward establishing the exchange fund.

The Coordination Unit will issue reports on this implementation process to the Steering Committee as part of its regular reporting schedule.