

## Increased Access by Rural Households to Clean Water

**Location:** El Salvador

**Type:** Sustainable water resources and water supply

**Size:** 24 decentralized water systems serving 9 municipalities

**Funding:** Total: US\$21,750,000

Private: US\$9,150,000

Public: US\$12,600,000

**Objective:** To increase rural household access to clean water.

**Duration:** 1999–2002

**Scale:** Rural

### Summary

Twenty-four decentralized water systems now serve 11,251 rural families in 9 municipalities as a result of entrepreneurial approaches to operations and management that involve active participation by local parties. These enterprises employ management models such as joint-venture companies, decentralized municipal enterprises, and nonprofit associations. In addition, 17 of 18 target municipalities now have water resources management plans in place. The project helps ensure that water resources management/regulation and water services provision are strengthened and supported at the local level.

### In-Country Principles That Attracted Nondonor Financing

- Capacity building and informed decision making
- Public participation in, and support of, sustainable development
- Institution building



Key principles that have helped attract private financing include strengthened local management that facilitates public participation in the local control of water systems, management of water resources at the watershed level, cooperation between and within watersheds, more equitable access to water, land use control through zoning, and regulating the use and abuse of water resources. Specific capacity-building activities that helped enable the success of the project included awareness and educational workshops and skills-oriented training for decision makers and staff, stakeholder partnerships and exchanges, and dissemination of best practices.

Programs in public education and communication and outreach have helped increase public knowledge of and participation in energy decision making. Educating citizens has helped them play improved roles in shaping the policies, markets, and institutions that affect their daily lives.

Other sound principles that have helped attract private support include integrated, intersectoral, and multiobjective decision making about water resources at the basin scale; informed and science-based decision making; broad stakeholder participation and empowerment in water resources decision making; the promotion of strong, effective, and culturally appropriate institutional, policy, and legal frameworks; effective coordination among sectors; an emphasis on decision making and assignment of authority at the lowest appropriate level; a commitment to creating and strengthening strong human and organizational capacity for sustainable and integrated water management in both the public and private sectors; consideration of water as an economic, social, and environmental good; conditions and mechanisms of access to capital at all levels; stable systems of access to and allocation of water; and systems of accountability and transparency.

### Financing

Total project investment has been approximately US\$21,750,000. This includes US\$12,600,000 in United States Agency for International Development (USAID) development assistance from 1999 through 2002, US\$4,150,000 from a local nongovernmental organization (CARE), and US\$-5,000,000 from private sources. Private funds sources include grantee and local government counterpart, and community participation in both labor and material.

## The Project

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In Latin America and the Caribbean, responsibility for providing water and sanitation is increasingly devolving to communities. Typically, however, local/municipal governments lack the financial, technical, institutional, and social infrastructures to provide these services. This project has helped address these needs by supporting small cities and rural communities, primarily through local governance programs and direct technical assistance for water supply and sanitation.

The project increases rural household access to clean water by improving water quality sources, performance of water distribution systems, and local management of water resources. It also promotes effective citizen actions to address water issues. The focus is on local community and municipal-level interventions in 3 critical watersheds that transcend the boundaries of 18 municipalities. The project also works at the national level by assisting with the reform of national policies and by replicating successful interventions and lessons throughout the country.

The project has resulted in increased access to clean water and sanitation facilities throughout the target area. It has also implemented watershed-protection activities to improve agricultural practices such as soil conservation, organic cropping, reforestation, and integrated pest management.

## Technical Data

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Techniques being used to improve micro watersheds and enhance the quality of water resources include the securing of behavioral changes in micro, watershed residents, particularly small farmers, in the way that they use land. Widespread degradation of surface waters from sediment/soil runoff and municipal/domestic wastes are being reduced through the promotion of soil conservation practices and wastewater treatment, and solid waste disposal utilizing appropriate technology and recycling.

## Performance Data

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Rural household access to clean water increased from 30 to 53% in the target areas from 1999 to 2001. Improved soil conservation, reforestation, organic cropping, and inte-



grated pest management practices now cover more than 22,000 ha of land. Women and children in the target area benefit from new potable water systems that improve their health and increase their economic productivity and quality of life by freeing them from the need to spend time and energy carrying water.

## Participants and Roles

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The USAID/El Salvador Mission has supported small cities and rural communities primarily through local governance programs and direct technical assistance for water supply and sanitation. CARE has assisted with institutional implementation. The private sector has contributed through counterpart support in all areas of project implementation.

## Partner Contacts

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