



The 3rd International Forum
on Water and Food
Tshwane, South Africa
November 14 – 17, 2011



Co-hosted by:



Sharing the Benefits of Improved Water and Soil Management in Basins: Limitations and Potential

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Session: Basin (Andes) and Benefit Sharing Mechanisms

Key Message

Several documented experiences in the Andes have demonstrated that improving water and soil management practices can be translated into improved livelihoods for the basin population, if the basin's stakeholders agreed on a mechanisms to share the hydrological ecosystem service benefits. The challenge is scaling out these specific practices from one basin to many, and from the Andes to other basins around the world.

Summary

CPWF and CONDESAN research for the past 6 years has found two main obstacles to scaling out: 1) lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the connection of the management practices and their hydrological service; and 2) the existing legal framework is putting insufficient consideration on equity and efficiency issues.

At the same time, the analysis of current cases shows that in order to keep the potential of the benefit sharing mechanisms (BSM) to improve the livelihood of the farmers in the basins, we require transparency on the information associated with the benefits that are generated by improved water and soil practices. We also require caution. Decisions should not be promoted if there is not sufficient information regarding their possible impacts, and we require that the stakeholders work together to

monitor the impacts and have dialogue mechanisms to analyze the observed results and agree on the redistribution of the benefits obtained.

We have also learnt that any policy framework to enable the implementation of such BSM should look at the ecosystem as a whole and not specifically on the issue of ecosystem service.