WATER AND SANITATION COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT MODEL IN RURAL AREAS

Contributions from the ASIR SABA project experience in Colombia

Implementation Guide

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Embassy in Colombia
Humanitarian Aid and Cooperation (SDC).

ASIR- SABA
AGUA Y SANEAMIENTO
INTEGRAL RURAL COLOMBIA

Universidad del Valle

WATER AND SANITATION COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT MODEL IN RURAL AREAS

Contributions from the experience of the "Comprehensive water and sanitation project for the promotion of territorial peace in rural areas, Colombia ASIR-SABA"

ASIR-SABA Implementation Guides:
Community Management Model Methodological Guides for Implementation

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This document is part of a series of five texts titled **ASIR-SABA Community Management Model. Methodological guides for implementation,** developed in the framework of the first phase of the ASIR-SABA Comprehensive Rural Water and Sanitation project, implemented by the Swiss Embassy in Colombia - Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC) in agreement with the Instituto Cinara of the Universidad del Valle, the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, the Departmental Water Plans of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, and the municipal mayor's office of Trujillo, Buga, Caloto and Santander de Quilichao.

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The **Swiss Embassy in Colombia - Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC)**, creates alliances with government authorities, national and international non-governmental organizations and civil society, by means of support programs, in order to improve the protection of vulnerable population affected by armed conflict in the country.

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PRESENTATION

In the 2015 Millennium Development Goals Report, Colombia reported urban water and sewerage coverage rates close to 97% and 90% respectively, while for rural areas, coverage of access to adequate water supply methods was 73% and access to sewerage and alternative solutions was 70%. This situation evidenced the challenges that persist in reducing the gaps in access to basic services in rural areas vis-à-vis urban areas. Presently, 32% of the Colombian population resides in rural areas (Human Development Report, 2011).

Now that the Peace Agreement has been signed, it is necessary to bring together efforts to ensure the prompt recovery of areas affected by the conflict and the creation of conditions to ensure that the population in these areas can achieve sustainable development, in accordance with their needs and the characteristics of rural areas, and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this sense, it is crucial to creatively rethink the water supply and sanitation project management processes that are carried out in rural areas, so that they are approached from a comprehensive perspective and include a vision for sustainability.

In this context, the Swiss Embassy in Colombia - Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC), which has been present in Colombia since 2001, in compliance with its mandate and in order to contribute to peacebuilding in the country, capitalized the experience that its counterpart in Peru developed through the Comprehensive Rural Basic Sanitation Model in Peru - SABA Management Model. Based on the lessons learned, it structured the Comprehensive Water and Sanitation project for the promotion of territorial peace in rural areas, Colombia ASIR-SABA, and implemented its first phase between 2015 and 2017 in the rural area of the municipalities of Trujillo and Buga, in the department of Valle del Cauca, and Caloto and Santander de Quilichao, in the department of Cauca.

As SABA did in Peru, in Colombia, ASIR-SABA promotes the comprehensive improvement of access, coverage, quality and sustainability of water and sanitation services, by strengthening communities' capacities to manage their own systems; also, by including a technical assistance model, strengthening the capacities of local governments, and facilitating articulation between the national, departmental and municipal levels, to reduce the gap between urban and rural areas in terms of access to water and sanitation.

ASIR-SABA, jointly with the Colombian Vice Ministry of Water and Sanitation, the Departmental Water Plans (PDA), the municipalities and communities, share a common approach to demand and recognize that participatory processes are fundamental pillars, where people involved not only participate in the identification of problem situations, but also actively propose and participate in identifying and creating context-specific solutions. Consequently, the project has been developed in coordination with the different government levels that are part of the water and basic sanitation sector, the second level organizations that encompass rural aqueducts,

and different community stakeholders, such as users' associations that manage water and sanitation services in rural areas, and the Community Action Boards (JAC), thus promoting dialogue and an increased understanding of their specific challenges and demands. This dialogue has caused an impact on the creation of scenarios that guarantee the sustainability of the State's investments and strengthen social fabric, all of which lead to improved levels of governability and governance.

The ASIR-SABA project is also aimed at contributing to the achievement of Colombia's Sustainable Development Goals, in regards to: ensuring access to clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being (SDG 3), closing urban-rural gaps in access to water and basic sanitation (SDG 10), contributing to peacebuilding efforts and strengthening institutions (SDG 16).

The implementation of the first phase of ASIR-SABA has left multiple lessons and challenges that we considered were important to document, while drawing emphasis on the underlying processes. This lessons learned process resulted in a series of five methodological guides for the implementation of **the ASIR-SABA Community Management Model.** These guides reflect the experience of ASIR-SABA in its early stages and are aimed at strengthening water management on issues such as planning, basic sanitation in rural and school environments, and municipal technical assistance to community organizations, and to contribute to the sustainability of investments in water and sanitation. We are confident that these guides will help strengthen Water and Sanitation Community Management (GCA) in Colombia. Furthermore, we hope that the good practices and lessons learned from the ASIR-SABA experience -which are being documented-, will contribute to actions that improve the quality of life of rural communities, through access to potable water and basic sanitation.

Fabrizio Poretti
Head of Cooperation
Swiss Embassy in Colombia
Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC)

INTRODUCTION

The final goal of ASIR-SABA is to contribute to peacebuilding in Colombia, with decent conditions for the development of life, in this particular case, through access to potable water and basic sanitation for communities that have been affected by the armed conflict. This goal also considers the articulation of different stakeholders (both community and institutional stakeholders), reducing the distance between them as the starting point to achieve sustainability in investments and in service delivery processes, and also considers strengthening the capacities of community organizations that provide water and sanitation services in the rural areas of four municipalities in the departments of Valle del Cauca and Cauca, in order to enable their active involvement in each of the project stages.

Based on this experience, Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC) presents this document, the first in the series of five methodological guides, which includes the management model implemented by the ASIR-SABA project, which has enabled achieving the objectives set regarding inter-institutional articulation, health and environmental improvements; improvements in infrastructure and coverage, and strengthening institutional and community capacities.

The document begins with a description of the SABA Peru model and continues with a review of what Community Water Management means in rural areas and in the current political context in the country. The document subsequently develops each stage of the project that defines the management model, emphasizing the stakeholders involved, how they relate to each other, and the results expected from these interactions. Lastly, the document includes some conclusions, opportunities and challenges resulting from the implementation of the proposed model.

ACRONYMS

ASIR-SABA: Comprehensive Rural Water and Sanitation Project
ATM: Municipal Technical Assistance Areas
CONPES: National Economic and Social Policy Council (CONPES)
SDC: Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC)
DNP: National Planning Department
FARC: Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces
GCA: Water and Basic Sanitation Community Management
IRCA: Water Quality Risk Indicator
MVCT: Ministry of Housing, City and Territory
OCSAS: Community Organizations for Water and Sanitation Services
PDA: Departmental Water Plans
SENA: National Learning Service
SIASAR: Rural Water and Sanitation Information System
SINAS: Potable Water and Basic Sanitation Investment System

BACKGROUND: BASIC SANITATION COMPREHENSIVE MODEL IN SIERRA DEL PERU (SABA PLUS)[1]

The SABA Model, promoted by the Swiss Cooperation (SDC) in Peru and adapted in the Colombia by the Swiss Embassy in Colombia - Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC), is based on the lessons learned from the Basic Sanitation projects of the Sierra Sur (SAMBASUR) and the Pilot Project on Potable Water and Health (PROPILAS). These projects contemplated four fundamental aspects in their intervention, to increase coverage of quality water and basic sanitation services for the most vulnerable populations in rural areas of Peru: 1). Building water and sanitation infrastructure, 2). Capacity development at community level, 3). Sanitary education processes and, 4). Strengthening institutional capacities. All these aspects were integrated to allow rural communities to lead a dignified life by accessing their human right to water and basic sanitation.

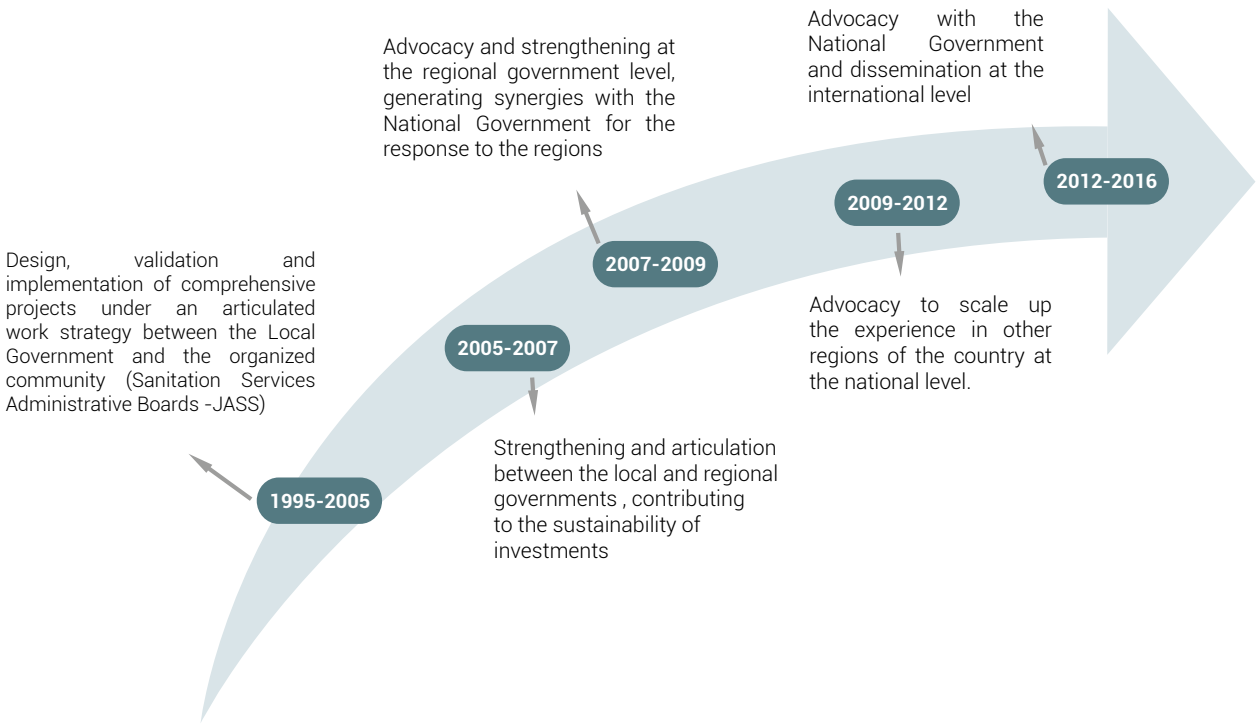
To achieve these goals, the model has supported interactions between different stakeholders, such as the Sanitation Services Administrative Boards (JASS), educational institutions, municipalities, the health sector, regional governments and the National Government, as a dialogue strategy at different levels (micro, meso and macro levels), to promote the sustainability of water and sanitation interventions.

These interactions, which represent a best practice regarding the articulation of public and private actors for the sustainable management of potable water and sanitation services in rural areas of Peru, have led to changes in the management of institutions and organizations to promote knowledge transfer, the creation and strengthening of decentralized capacities, the integrality of infrastructure, and the institutional and community component.

The model has been validated in different Peruvian regions, throughout different periods during which advocacy processes have been carried out from the micro level to the macro level, both nationally and internationally. Figure 1 illustrates the key periods of the SABA experience:

[1]Analysis of the influence of the SABA project on Rural Water and Sanitation policies. Embassy of Switzerland in Peru, 2017. Consulted at: https://ccafs.cgiar.org/sites/default/fi les/events/attachments/Informe_Final_SABA.pdf

Figure 1. Key periods of the SABA Peru experience



Source: Prepared by the author, adapted from the infographic "Rural Basic Sanitation: Elements from a successful model in Peru".

The outstanding achievements of the SABA model include:

- The creation of 3,652 JASS, which are responsible for managing, operating and maintaining water and sanitation services in their communities.

- The creation of 532 Municipal Technical Areas (ATM) responsible for the provision of water and sanitation services, since administration, operation and maintenance duties were delegated to the JASS, and they were provided with technical assistance and their work was audited.

- Leveraging S/682,102 million soles for the execution of 950 water and sanitation projects, which benefit 506,431 people.

- Contributions made to various public policy guidelines:

- A comprehensive intervention was carried out to water and sanitation services, which included technical and social aspects to achieve the sustainability of investments.

- Local governments were strengthened through their ATMs, to provide technical assistance and audit the JASS.

- A sectoral information system was built.

- Rural-area specific technical options in water and sanitation were developed and validated.

- Intersectoral coordination mechanisms were institutionalized.

Consequently, in summary, the SABA model includes four main approaches: first, political dialogue to contribute to the definition of public policies; second, knowledge to strengthen capacities and train new professionals; third, alliances to promote the articulation of the different stakeholders; and lastly, innovations in the development of new institutional mechanisms for collaborating, validating technologies, and implementing new education methodologies.

The SABA model is undoubtedly an important model and the following are the key factors for its success:

- Empowering authorities in their roles and contributing to their leadership at the different government levels, in order to influence political will.

- Aligning its objectives with sectoral policies in the framework of the decentralization process.

- Adapting the strategies to the national and international context, and continuously improving by means of a comprehensive approach and prioritization process, based on the response to demand.

- Creating strategic alliances between key stakeholders, enabling their commitments to sustainable management.

- Creating water and sanitation technical and professional teams, that are familiar with rural areas and are committed to local development.

- Developing and validate sanitation technologies that are appropriate for the reality of rural areas.

- Disseminating the experiences of the two initial projects (SAMBASUR and PROPILAS) among communities, authorities of the different government levels and internationally. Also, encourage feedback from these stakeholders regarding these experiences.

- Promoting community participation and the empowerment of local leaders and authorities.

- Encouraging transparency and accountability at the communal, local and regional levels.

- Encouraging greater dynamism in the creation and operation of the projects' Management Committees, which are composed of sector authorities at national and regional levels, to monitor and evaluate project progress, which in turn facilitates advocacy and coordination between government sectors and levels

Based on the impacts obtained by the model throughout the years it was implemented, the rural sanitation agenda in Peru regained importance and priority for the water and sanitation sector in 2012, and the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation requested the SDC to share the lessons learned in rural sanitation, in order to contribute to the National Rural Sanitation Program (PNSR).

Consequently, the SDC designed a new project titled "Boosting Impact at Global Scale - SABA PLUS" to disseminate lessons learned, and engage in knowledge management at a wider regional level. This new strategy allowed the sector, and the PNSR, to draw on the most important elements of the experience and thereby contribute with key inputs to the new national program, in the formulation and implementation of its strategies and policy guidelines for rural sanitation.

In this context, an exploratory stage was carried out in Colombia in 2013 and it evidenced the need to implement a management model to strengthen aqueducts in rural areas, as an opportunity to contribute to the country, in relation to the Peace

Agreements that were about to be signed. These agreements included, among others, an item on "Agricultural Development Policy" aimed at reducing poverty, through the provision of public services in infrastructure and social development in everything related to **health** plans, housing and **potable water.**

THE CONTEXT OF RURAL WATER AND BASIC SANATATION, AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY WATER MANAGEMENT (GCA) IN COLOMBIA

"For me, the community aqueduct is a family, it is a system that brings the community together"
President of the rural aqueduct in Santander de Quilichao – Cauca.

According to the diagnosis carried out by the National Planning Department (DNP) for the 2014[2] CONPES 3810 , 23.8% (11.2 million) of the country's population lives in rural areas and 23% of the rural population specifically lives in nucleated rural areas. The remaining 77% are in dispersed rural areas, which in turn are mostly part of category VI municipalities, characterized by low coverage of water and basic sanitation, both in urban and rural areas.

That same document cites the results of the 2012 Great Integrated Household Survey and states that aqueduct coverage in rural areas is 73% and in urban areas it is 97%, while sewerage coverage is 68% and 91%, respectively. These figures inevitably reflect the gap between the urban area and the rural area. This gap is even greater when considering water quality conditions, as depicted in that same document, which based on data from the "State of Surveillance of Quality of Water for Human Consumption in Colombia" 2012 report, states that the average Water Quality Risk Indicator (IRCA) in rural areas is 49.8% (high risk), while for urban areas it is 13.2% (low risk).

Besides evidencing the rural-urban gaps, the above also depicts the State's shortfalls in ensuring Colombian population's universal access to potable water. This problem is neither recent, nor unique and exclusive to Colombia; on the contrary, different countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa also face this challenge. In these countries, as well as in Colombia, scenarios have been promoted to encourage community initiatives aimed at ensuring that people are able to meet essential and daily needs that have not been met by the corresponding institutions.

As Enrique Aguilar Amilpa describes: *"In general, Local Small-Scale Operators (OLPE) have emerged when national, state or municipal organizations that are formally instituted to provide water and sanitation services, cannot guarantee the provision of water services and sanitation in the periphery of cities, in rural areas or in small urban areas. The different types of OLPE have a long history in the great Asian and African cities, whose work has been aimed at compensating the failures of the municipal administrations that have not been able to provide services to the populations outside their*

[2]Policy for the provision of potable water and basic sanitation in rural areas.

municipal seat". (Aguilar, E .; MDG ACHIEVEMENT FUND, 2011).
Nonetheless, community relations imply a rupture of the hierarchy that awards power to the service provider over subscribers and users, and which limits users' participation exclusively to control and monitoring activities. Community relations imply advancing in the construction of system co-management and co-administration models that in turn encourage other dynamics of political participation at the local level, and also promote local economies.

As González and Velásquez (1995) point out:

"(...) Community participation aimed at satisfying their needs constitutes an excellent opportunity to learn about methods to reach consensus with the government and to support collective organization to reach concrete goals. It is said that these are two fundamental aspects of democratic life: interacting with the authorities to obtain benefits, on the one hand, and promoting an organizational fabric that supports social initiative and generates State interlocutors, on the other ".

This is why community aqueducts are not only a technical response to a water supply problem, but they are also comprehensive water management instruments, where the technical dimension, as well as the cultural, economic, social, and ecosystem dimensions are considered. This is evidenced in the fact that, for rural communities, some of the most influential stakeholders in their territories are the figures in charge of managing water and sanitation services, who are recognized as local authorities that exercise leadership, and act as interlocutors with public institutions.

Likewise, unlike what a public service provider represents in urban areas by engaging in a mere transactional relationship when providing a service in exchange for a fee -bypassing any type of interaction, coordination or consultation process-, community water management is carried out within the community and it forges permanent relations dynamics that strengthen territorial ties. These dynamics also commit managers to carry out transparent processes so that they can render accounts to people who have democratically chosen them to perform these roles, and who have to be consulted on what they consider are the next steps regarding the system's management (the users' assembly).

Law 142 of 1994 opened the possibility of "formalizing" community aqueducts as providers of public water, sewage and waste collection services (the latter are less frequent in rural areas), under the figure of Authorized Organizations, which are mainly characterized by their non-profit nature and providing services in rural zones.

However, despite the different attempts at regulating water and sanitation in rural areas, there was no significant progress in acknowledging these organizational forms or other figures - not provision but supply alternatives-, adding fragility to community forms due to the demands imposed to them as providers of public services, which ignored particular characteristics of rural areas, mainly related to geographical, historical, cultural, economic, political and ecosystem aspects. These demands were hardly achieved in an autonomous manner, without support from state institutions in the form of technical assistance and investments for systems optimization.

Considering this panorama, the rural agenda on water and sanitation in Colombia was reactivated in 2014, through the issuance of the CONPES 3810 document issued by the National Council of Economic and Social Policy. Different regulatory initiatives were issued along with the CONPES, such as Decree 1898 of 2016 which defines differential schemes for the provision of aqueduct, sewer and waste collection services in rural areas.

This decree acknowledges the need to ensure that the differential conditions of potable water and basic sanitation services in rural areas (water quality, micro measurement and continuity) are progressive. It also draws on the need to set management plans that involve both service providers, as well as local, departmental and national governments and also guarantee the implementation of investment projects and technical assistance processes that lead to the provision of services with quality standards for users.

The above, together with the negotiation scenario and subsequent signing of the Peace Agreement between the National Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), has placed Colombia at one of the most important moments of its contemporary history, where it is necessary to unify institutional and social efforts for peace consolidation, based on the guarantee of fundamental rights of all Colombians, particularly those that have historically been violated by the different types of violence in the national territory[3]. In response to this situation, this issue has been an integral part of the peace agreement that resulted from the negotiations between the National Government and the FARC, which, in the Integral Rural Reform, includes acknowledging the rural sector's precarious conditions and the unequal treatment it has received vis-à-vis urban centers.

In this context, rurality acquires a central and highly relevant role due to two conditions: first, because historically it was (and still is) the scenario for armed conflict confrontation, which inevitably led to this area's stunted development, exposing it to institutional abandonment; and secondly, because rurality is emerging as the ideal scenario where to foster development and progress as part of the peacebuilding process.

Thus, for some years, the institutional framework, which was once absent in much of the country's rural areas, has strengthened its efforts to increase its presence and influence on the rural population's socioeconomic conditions. These efforts have focused on reducing the existing gap between cities and rural areas, particularly with regard to the recognition of fundamental rights, including the right to water, which has an intimate relationship and connection to other fundamental rights, such as the rights to life, decent housing, health, adequate food and the environment, in the context of the evolution of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

In this context, water and sanitation community managers are undoubtedly among the main stakeholders acknowledged as development mobilizers. These managers act as recipients and co-managers of water and sanitation services in their communities, provided that institutional presence is guaranteed. This presence is expressed in the support to leaders in the consolidation of efficient schemes for the provision of water and sanitation in rural areas, through investment processes to build or optimize systems, as well as technical assistance processes that contribute to sustainability

[3]One type of violence related to the poverty conditions of affected communities is the so-called structural Violence. This concept is applicable in situations where the satisfaction of basic human needs such as welfare, freedom, identity or life are affected as a result of social stratification processes. Structural Violence refers to the presence of a conflict between social groups, which -through the use of social stratification mechanisms- is resolved in favor of one of the groups (to the detriment of other groups) by inhibiting or minimizing other parties' possibility to access or use the resources (La Parra and Tortosa, 2003).

ADAPTATION OF THE PERU SABA MODEL IN COLOMBIA. ASIR-SABA COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SANATATION PROJECT FOR THE PROMOTION OF TERRITORIAL PEACE IN RURAL AREAS

"When we think of ASIR-SABA, we think about opportunity, sustainable organization, progress, enthusiasm and our community's improvement. The sun comes to our mind"
Members of ASOALMA and Morales communities, in Caloto, Cauca.

The ASIR-SABA model is a pioneer potable water and basic sanitation initiative in rural areas in Colombia, given its systemic and integrative approach that seeks to provide a sustainable solution to the provision of potable water and basic sanitation in rural communities that have been affected by armed conflict.

Even though Colombia has a potable water and basic sanitation policy and has managed to develop an institutional framework that serves this sector, it still faces great challenges to articulate, strengthen and develop interventions that adapt to the particularities of the cultural, social, environmental and economic dynamics of rural territories, and which guarantee the construction of sustainability scenarios for investments in rural water and sanitation systems.

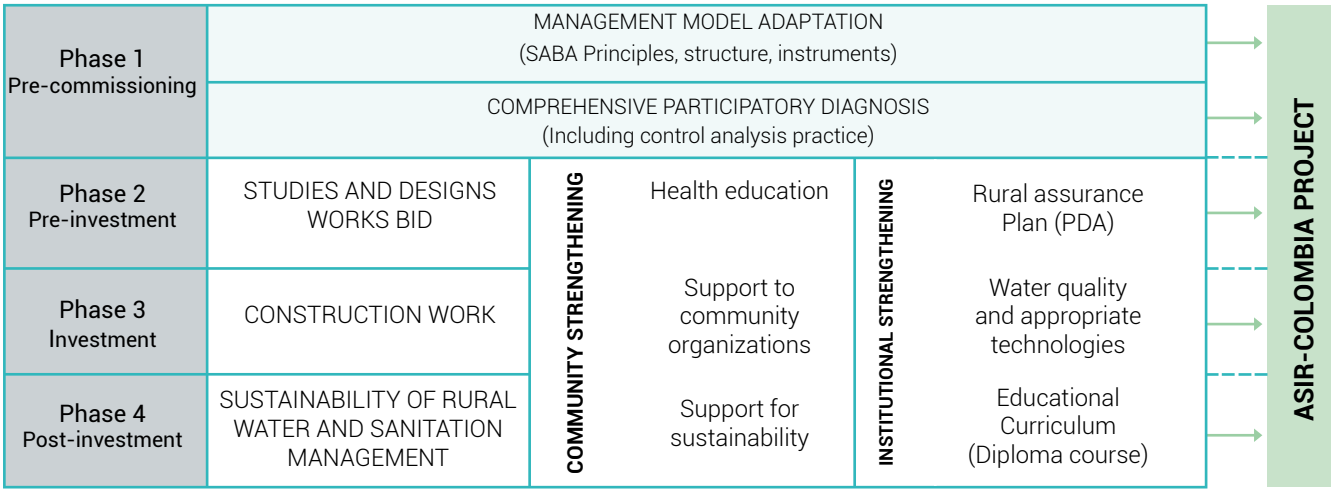
This is where the experience of the SABA PLUS model in Peru -specifically, its experience in inter-institutional articulation and supply in accordance with local demands- adds value to current efforts undertaken by the institutional level in Colombia, mainly in institutional cohesion and communities' active engagement in decision making, as key factors for sustainability.

General aspects

Based on the experience in Peru, the Swiss Embassy in Colombia - Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC), hired a consultancy in 2013 to adapt the SABA model to the Colombian context in order to formulate the project for Colombia. This process resulted in the Comprehensive Water and Sanitation project for the promotion of territorial peace in rural areas, Colombia ASIR-SABA, which was approved, in its first phase, in November 2014.

The objective set for the project was to "Improve access to water and sanitation in rural areas of Colombia (targeted municipalities), through a comprehensive and sustainable management initiative that helps reduce gaps in coverage, quality and capacity. Promote Colombia ASIR-SABA as an example of how to manage coordination between different government levels and the population, contributing to the formulation of a rural water and sanitation intervention strategy to reduce the gaps in the tentative agreement implementation areas, and for the promotion of territorial peace". Four phases were outlined for the intervention, as shown in Figure No. 2 below:

Figure 2. General structure of the Colombia ASIR-SABA intervention



Source: Prepared by the author. Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC), 2014.

Based on this structure, four main effects were defined:

1. **Advocacy and articulation** between the institutions in charge of access to water and sanitation in rural areas of Colombia, and between different levels of government.

2. **Improving environmental health** in rural areas, and reliable and complete diagnosis of access to water and sanitation in intervention municipalities.

3. Increased **coverage** in rural areas of targeted municipalities, through works to improve access to water and sanitation in nucleated rural areas.

4. **Knowledge management and improving the capacities of institutions and communities** to strengthen infrastructure and water and sanitation management in rural areas.

Once the objective, the implementation structure and the project's expected outcomes were defined, the departments of Valle del Cauca and Cauca were targeted, in order to specify the territorial location of the intervention area.

These departments were selected because the Swiss Embassy in Colombia - Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC) had some type of presence in these territories and because they are characterized by a numerous rural population and political will. Once the departments were selected, the next step was to define criteria for the selection of four municipalities where a direct intervention would be carried out. The following aspects were assessed:

- Dynamics of armed conflict
- Affectation of the humanitarian situation
- Development and institutional capacity levels
- Land restitution programs

To carry out an analysis of the above criteria, different visits were made to the territory, thereby opening spaces for dialogue with departmental and municipal authorities, community leaders,

and other key stakeholders in the territory (second level organizations[4], educational institutions, laboratories, etc.). These stakeholders not only made it easier to approach the communities, but they also provided relevant information to understand the water and sanitation problem in the territories.

Based on the analysis of primary and secondary information, the ratings were weighted by arranging the municipalities in ascending order, according to how critical their situation was. As a result, the intervention was initially focused on the municipalities of Bolívar and Trujillo (Valle del Cauca), and Caloto and Santander de Quilichao (Cauca). However, the government institutions in the Bolivar municipality did not express their interest in the implementation of the project, so the next municipality in the list -Guadalajara de Buga- was chosen (Figure 3 on the following page shows the municipalities' location).

Once the targeted departments and municipalities were identified, a technical and institutional assessment was carried out on the situation of potable water and comprehensive sanitation for rural areas in the four municipalities. This diagnosis evidenced the situation of each of the existing systems, their operating conditions, their administrative conformation, and the quality of the water that these communities were consuming.

As an added value of the assessment process, the results were delivered to the municipal municipalities as an input to be used for planning and setting priorities in the definition of potable water and sanitation goals in development plans. This enabled the inclusion of water and rural sanitation in these plans.

[4]Organizations that group different water councils, user associations or communities.

Figure 3. Geographical identification of departments and municipalities targeted **by ASIR-SABA**

Source: Adapted from Google. October 2018.

Once the assessment was carried out, the criteria for the selection of communities was identified (see Table 1). Three communities per each municipality, that is, a total of 12 communities where comprehensive actions would be carried out (formulation of infrastructure projects and institutional strengthening), and three other communities where support would be provided through out the strengthening process, since these communities had already received investments from the PDAs and/or mayor's offices.

Table 1. Community selection criteria

1	POVERTY	Extreme
		Medium
		Low
2	VULNERABLE POPULATION	High vulnerability
		Medium vulnerability
		Low vulnerability
3	IRCA	High (35.1-100%)
		Medium (5.1-35%)
		Low (0-5%)
4	COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	Participatory
		Scarcely participatory
		Non participatory
5	EXISTENCE AND OPERABILITY	Without infrastructure
		Deficient infrastructure
		In good state and operating
6	SETTLEMENT PATTERN	Disperse
		Semi-disperse
		Nucleated
7	POPULATION GROUPS	Afro and indigenous
		Peasants
		Mixed race (mestiza)
8	LOCAL AND REGIONAL ADM PRIORIZATION	Municipal and departmental priority
		Municipal priority
		Not prioritized
9	LEGAL NATURE OF PLOTS	There is a legalized plot of land
		There is a plot of land
		There is no plot of land
10	DESIGNS	Designs have been declared viable or in process of being declared viable
		Designs are being prepared
		Outdated designs or without designs

Stakeholders and organization chart for implementation

As has been pointed out throughout the document, both the SABA model in Peru and the ASIR-SABA project in Colombia, strive for permanent and effective inter-institutional articulation (governmental actors at national, departmental and municipal levels, as well as private stakeholders and the community). For the implementation of the ASIR-SABA project, and in order to foster co-responsibility and commitment among all stakeholders involved in community water management, a series of agreements were signed. The main framework agreement is implemented with the sector's governing body, the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, with the objective of joining efforts and establishing mechanisms for joint cooperation for the implementation of the technical cooperation project.

It should be noted that, from its inception, ASIR-SABA is conceived as a technical assistance project that does not include funds for investment in infrastructure. Therefore, it articulates the different stakeholders (see Figure 4) in such a way that, the cooperation agreements ensure the Colombian State's allocation of funds to carry out the works considered in the projects that focus on demand and allow for participation throughout their implementation.

Similarly, agreements were signed with the Departmental Water Plans Emcaservicios S.A. E.S.P. and Vallecaucana de Aguas S.A. E.S.P., from the department of Cauca and Valle del Cauca, respectively. Agreements were also signed with the municipalities of Caloto, Santander de Quilichao, Guadalajara de Buga and Trujillo, with the aim of joining efforts and setting joint technical cooperation mechanisms for the implementation of the technical, social and environmental components of the ASIR-SABA cooperation project.

Besides agreements with the segment of government stakeholders, an agreement was signed with Universidad del Valle, with the aim of joining efforts and setting mechanisms for joint cooperation for the implementation of some socio-technical and research components of the technical cooperation project "Rural Water and Comprehensive Sanitation", with a focus on the SABA Model. This university was the main actor responsible for the participatory construction of the infrastructure studies and designs submitted to the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory in order to approve their technical and financial viability, as well as for the Assurance Plans, strategies aimed at ensuring the sustainability of systems at the technical and community level, with the operation of the organizations responsible for administering them.

Likewise, as part of the same agreement, Universidad del Valle developed the curriculum and carried out the Diploma Course in Sustainable Management of Rural Water and Sanitation, and the forum on socio-technical innovations for the sustainable management of rural potable water and sanitation. These strategies are crucial for strengthening knowledge among government stakeholders and public service providers, as well as communities and system management organizations, to ensure that these stakeholders acquire the technical and institutional knowledge that will enable them to select the most appropriate technological alternatives for their communities, and the necessary elements to guarantee their sustainability.

Figure 4. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of the ASIR-SABA project

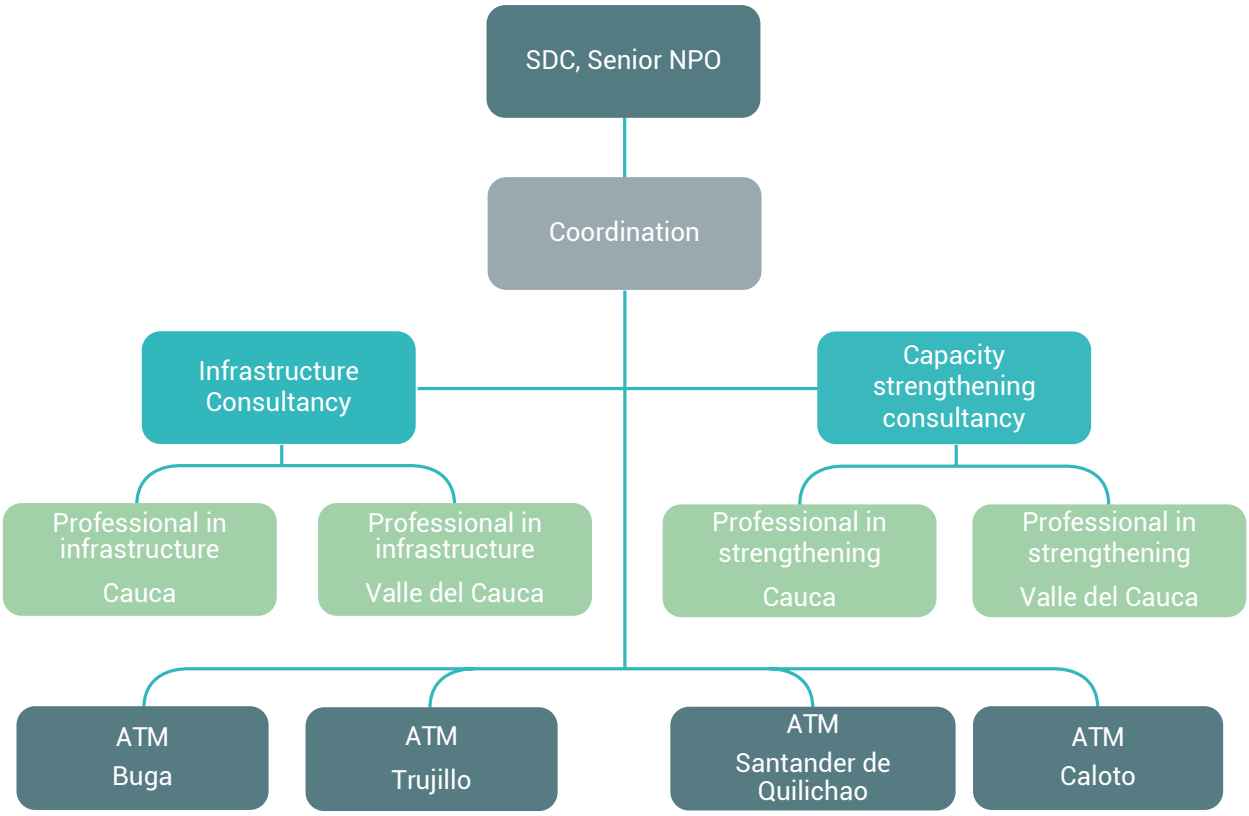
Source: Prepared by the author.

As part of the experience of SABA PLUS in Peru, the proposed model acknowledges that it is not enough to sign agreements and establish alliances with the different stakeholders; it is crucial to bring each and all of them together, in order to monitor the project in a comprehensive manner, and acquire joint commitments that optimize the expected results. Therefore, there are two monitoring, dissemination, consultation and decision-making bodies (one of a technical nature and the other of a strategic nature). These bodies are available for all stakeholders to share their level of intervention in the project's implementation, and address decisions that need to be made to ensure the effective execution of their commitments, making them ideal spaces for decision making.

The ASIR-SABA implementing team

For the implementation of the project, a basic organizational structure was designed, composed of two working teams: one national and the other regional. The first working teams: one national, includes a coordination position and two consultancies - one in infrastructure and another in capacity building, which are under the guidance and supervision of the Swiss Embassy in Colombia - Humanitarian Aid and Development (SDC), through the National Senior Programs Officer. The second team, the regional team, is composed of two professionals (one focusing on infrastructure and one focusing on capacity building) in each targeted department, as well as one technician for each municipality (see Figure 5).

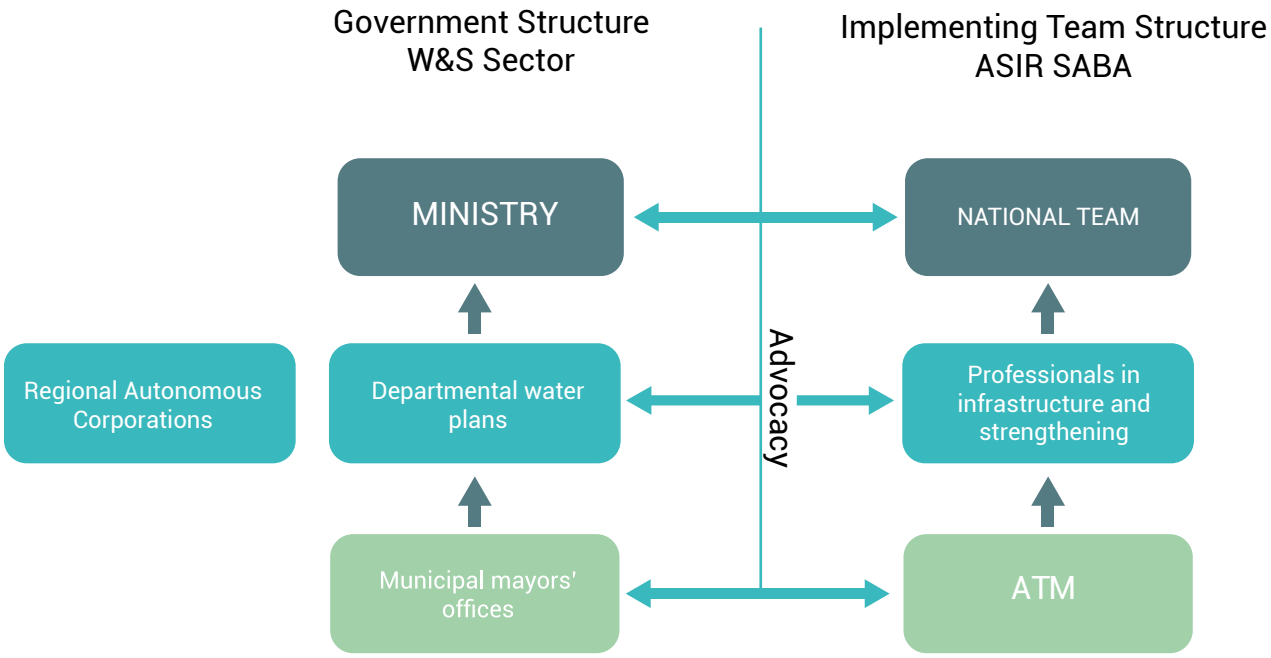
Figure 5. Implementing team organigram. ASIR-SABA Project.



Source: Prepared by the author.

It is important to highlight that in its implementing structure, the project decided to involve the different government levels - national, departmental and municipal-, in its advocacy efforts, so that they would actively support the implementation of the ASIR-SABA project while fulfilling their roles. This government involvement offered the possibility to contribute to strengthen each of the bodies, by including team members in each of them, as presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Government structure of the sector, ASIR-SABA advocacy structure



Source: Prepared by the author.

Although no agreements were signed with the regional autonomous corporations during the first two project phases, the departmental team took all relevant steps, and these institutions have always been cooperative and have provided constant support.

The implementation of the project: first phases of ASIR-SABA

The following is a summary of the processes developed in phases 1 and 2 of the project's general structure: Comprehensive participatory diagnosis, studies and designs for the participatory selection of aqueduct and sanitation technological alternatives; the cross-sectional component related to the participatory construction of Assurance Plans, the incorporation of the Municipal Technical Assistance (ATM) offices in the municipalities, and the bidding process for works. Construction works are not addressed herein, because the process was only beginning when this document was prepared.

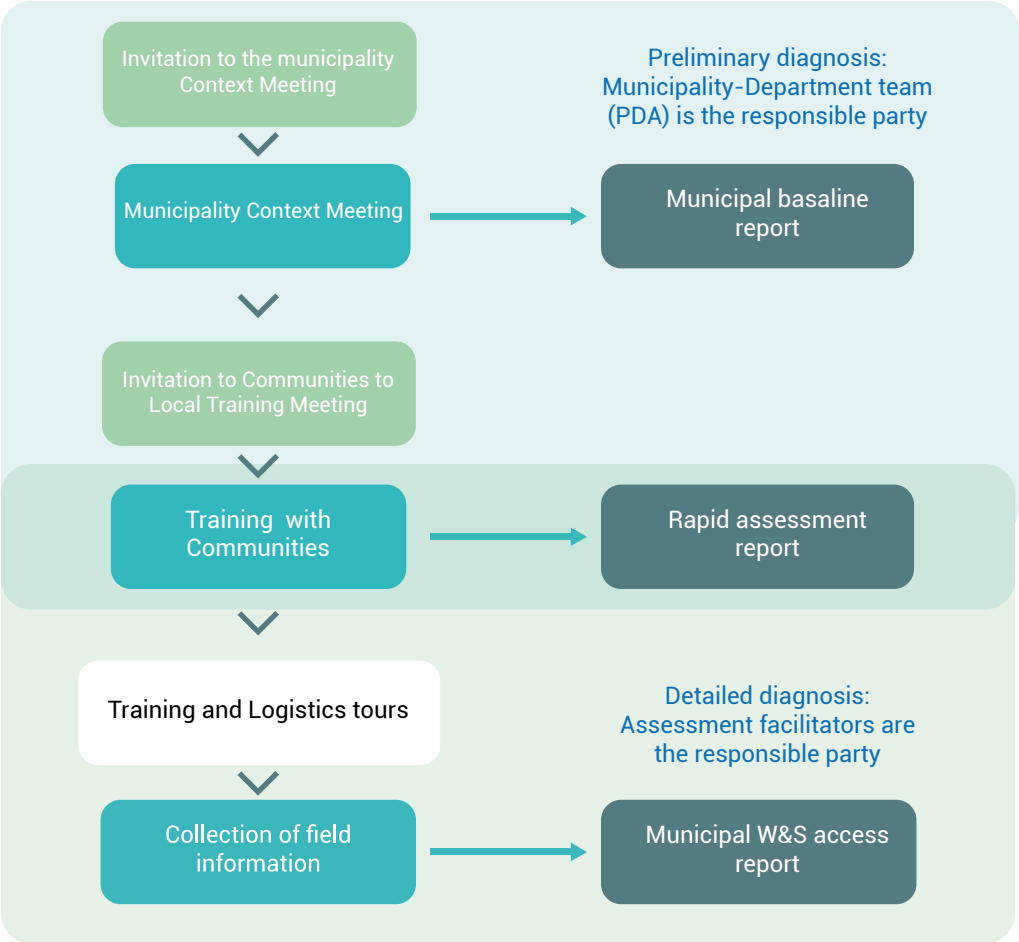
Phase I: Pre-commissioning

Technical, institutional and water quality diagnosis in the Potable Water and Comprehensive Sanitation Sector for rural areas.

This process was developed by the Municipal Public Services Company of Santander de Quilichao, EMQUILICHAO ESP, as part of a consultancy and as contemplated by the project, in close coordination with local administrations and communities (Figure 7). A roadmap was signed with the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory and the ASIR-SABA Team, and the diagnosis survey implemented in the SABA Peru management model was used as a tool and adapted to the Colombian context.

Complementary to the management model discussed in this document, and as part of the tools available to be used and replicated, the diagnosis survey was structured and updated. It is stored in the project's IT platform, in the following link: http://www.asirsabacolombia.com/asir/login.php

Figure 7. Flow Diagram, Diagnosis Methodology



Source: SDC-MVCT, VASB.

The process included meetings with leaders and municipal authorities to share the objectives, methodology and scope of the diagnostic process. Efforts were made to build trust and avoid creating false expectations among community members. Transparent processes were highly valued, in an effort to avoid breaking the existing bonds.

Besides the dissemination activities, and with the objective of strengthening community capacities, different training opportunities were created for leaders, both for the completion of the survey format and for the collection of water samples (physicochemical and microbiological analyses were carried out to water samples in certified laboratories). This strategy encouraged leaders' involvement collecting field information.

For the field work, the routes were planned according to the proximity and geographical location of the systems within the municipality (economies of scale). Also , the systems previously identified by secondary sources were visited, and additional information was collected through personal interviews with plumbers, system administrators and officials.

The following aspects were assessed throughout the diagnosis: 1. Technical aspects of the aqueduct and sewage services (physical condition of the existing infrastructure as well as operating and maintenance conditions); 2. Environmental aspects (micro-watershed, water concessions and discharges); 3. Institutional aspects (organizational form for service provision, service providers' administrative, commercial and legal elements); 4. Social aspects (general characteristics of the communities) and 5. Water quality.

As a result of the diagnosis process, it was possible to identify the actual situation of water and sanitation in the municipalities' rural areas. This information was shared with municipal administrations and served as input for the project to identify the communities to be prioritized, based on the criteria previously presented in Table 1.

Tour along the ASOALMA system in Caloto, Cauca

For more information regarding the tools used in the model proposed by the ASIR-SABA project, see **Annex 1 (digital)** of this document: Model survey, application and manual for the technical and institutional diagnosis in the Potable Water Sector and Comprehensive Sanitation for the rural area.

The four published diagnosis documents can also be consulted; one for each target municipality, with a summary of the collected information.

Phase II: Pre-investment

This phase is the cornerstone of the model, since it sets the stage to generate sustainability in the aqueduct and sewer systems adapted to the realities and specific needs of each community.

Furthermore, this phase offers the opportunity for relevant community participation, as it enables them to go beyond engaging in a critical analysis of their situation, and encourages them to propose alternative solutions and get involved in their implementation.

The Instituto Cinara of the Universidad del Valle collaborated during this process. Using Participatory Action Research (IAP) based methodologies, Cinara helped assess communities' perceptions regarding their territory, social dynamics, socio-economic aspects, water and sanitation systems, conflicts and their causes, in order to proceed to engage in collective and participatory efforts to identify alternative solutions that could have a positive impact on water management and, therefore, the quality of life of its inhabitants.

In this context, the communities actively and permanently participated in shaping and defining the designs, assessing technologies' operation requirements, sustainability-associated costs, and the steps required by the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, to issue a concept on technical and financial viability. Furthermore, this entity committed resources to finance the works, as part of the project implementation agreement.

The model's initiative to develop participatory methodologies during all implementation stages, represents the possibility to subvert the traditional approach of bringing supply to the territories without their participation and move towards the participatory definition of real demand and manage institutional supply based on this definition.

"Users' participation is the most important factor for the sustainability of water and sanitation supply in rural areas. Effective participation is considered as a means to ensure that the cultural, economic, environmental and social characteristics of each community are incorporated into the project and in the process of building and managing a system" (Correa de Faria, 2012).

Studies and Designs

For the preparation of the studies and designs, besides analyzing the information previously put together for the Technical and Institutional Diagnosis that was prepared for each municipality, secondary sources were reviewed, and participatory field activities were carried out to identify additional information that could be useful to structure the designs.

After the diagnosis information was further expanded (preliminary research, pre-diagnosis, diagnosis and dissemination among community members), the experts in conducting studies and designs carried out preliminary studies such as an analysis of the quality of water of supply sources, topographic and soil studies and percolation tests in prioritized communities. Subsequently, three technological alternatives for water and sanitation applicable to local conditions were preselected, in accordance with the regulatory provisions regulating the sector.

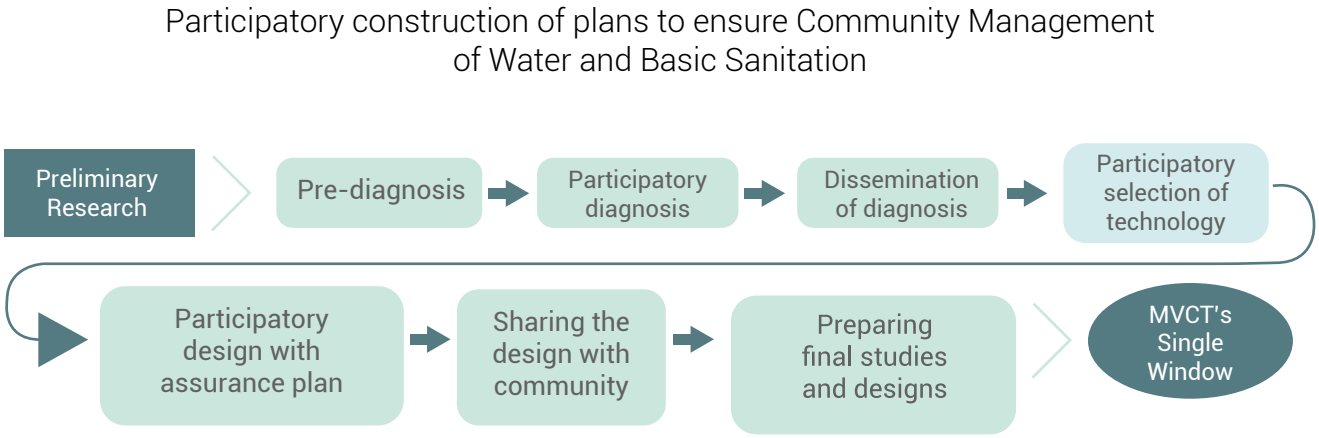
Different technological alternatives were presented to the communities during this same stage, specifying each alternative's advantages and disadvantages, operation, the costs derived from their operation and maintenance, and the technical requirements. This, in order to provide sufficient information to enable the communities to select the technology that better suits their technical and socioeconomic conditions.

It should be noted that the demand for each technology, as well as its operation and maintenance costs, are some of the most sensitive selection criteria in rural communities. For this reason, the implementation team created a model calculating the rate plan and cash flow for each alternative, and presented it to the community, so that it could be taken into account in the selection process. This, because as stated by Aguilar (2011), *"Communities need to understand the solutions and their costs".*

It is also important to note that community participation in this process was not only limited to the selection of technologies, but also encouraged the communities to provide support to designers, especially in identifying possible sites where to locate the structures, and in negotiating the land and defining and approving the easements for the layout of pipes.

Figure 8 below shows the stages that the ASIR-SABA project management model implemented throughout the preparation of the studies and designs for the formulation of the project to be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory.

Figure 8. Stages of the preparation of studies and designs



Source: Methodology for studies and designs, Instituto Cinara.

Different training processes were carried out parallel to the entire participatory technology selection and design process, in order to provide communities with technical tools for conscious and informed decision-making. As mentioned before, the University of Valle held a forum on socio-technical innovations and a diploma course in sustainable management of water and rural sanitation, as part of the ASIR-SABA project. Community members participated in these events, as well as public entity officials at the local and regional level, and second level community organizations[5].

National and international experts participated in the forum, which sought to bring communities closer to discussions regarding the use and appropriation of technology in the water and sanitation sector. During the forum, an experience exchange exercise (peer learning) was carried out, involving two community aqueducts[6] and a wastewater treatment and reuse plant, which are well known for their management processes.

Public institutions (Ministry of Housing, City and Territory and the Ministry of Health), also participated in the forum, which further explored

[5]These organizations include associative schemes that bring together several community organizations providing public services (or OCSAS, as they are called in Spanish) in order to provide technical assistance to their associates and have an impact on the institutions.

[6]Mondomo Aqueduct Users' Association - ASOMONDOMO, in the rural area of the municipality of Santander de Quilichao, Cauca; Users' Association of the Potable Water Service of South Jamundí, ACUASUR - E.S.P. in the rural area of southern Jamundí, Valle del Cauca, and the Research and Technology Transfer Station in Treatment and Reuse of Domestic Wastewater of ACUAVALLE S.A. E.S.P., in the municipality of Geneva, Valle del Cauca.

rural policy and its relation to technological options for water treatment and sanitation, management of public services, use, manipulation, appropriation and exploitation practices of environmental components, and how they relate to the effects on human health. These discussions allowed the forum to address community members' concerns, and provided valuable inputs and information on water treatment and sanitation technologies that will enable them to make better decisions according to their conditions.

The Course in Sustainable Management of Rural Water and Sanitation was aimed at strengthening the capacities of public officials, professionals, technicians, and community leaders of aqueducts and second level organizations, to analyze, reflect and encourage local governments' support strategies in favor of rural water management and sanitation. The interactions between the different stakeholders involved in community water management was crucial, since they acknowledged their differences as opportunities for increased coordination.

The Course also served as a strategy to connect the different stakeholders that would act as part of the technical assistance processes at the local level, to strengthen the administrative, legal, technical, environmental and social aspects of community organizations responsible for providing water and sanitation services in rural areas.

"The Course and the visit to other experiences has been a very nice and very positive opportunity, because we have not only been able to learn technical aspects, but we have also interacted with other communities and aqueducts, and we have realized that others endure problems similar or even worse than ours, and we have learned from their experience"

President of the San Rafael Aqueduct - Santander de Quilichao.

The above, in addition to the various processes developed in the communities to reach agreements regarding the definition and preparation of the project, constitute a key strategy to strengthen institutional and community capacities, which ultimately seek to increase communities' ownership of systems, which leads to their sustainability.

Once communities had made progress in the diagnosis processes and the selection of technologies and alternatives for water and sanitation, participatory processes were carried out for the definition of the assurance scenario that would guarantee the sustainability of the selected systems. This definition begins with the identification of the legal figure for the provision, and ends with the definition of the different activities that must be undertaken to strengthen the service provider, as well as the stakeholders that need to be engaged in a coordinated manner in order to ensure compliance. This shall be carried out based on the initial participatory diagnosis process.

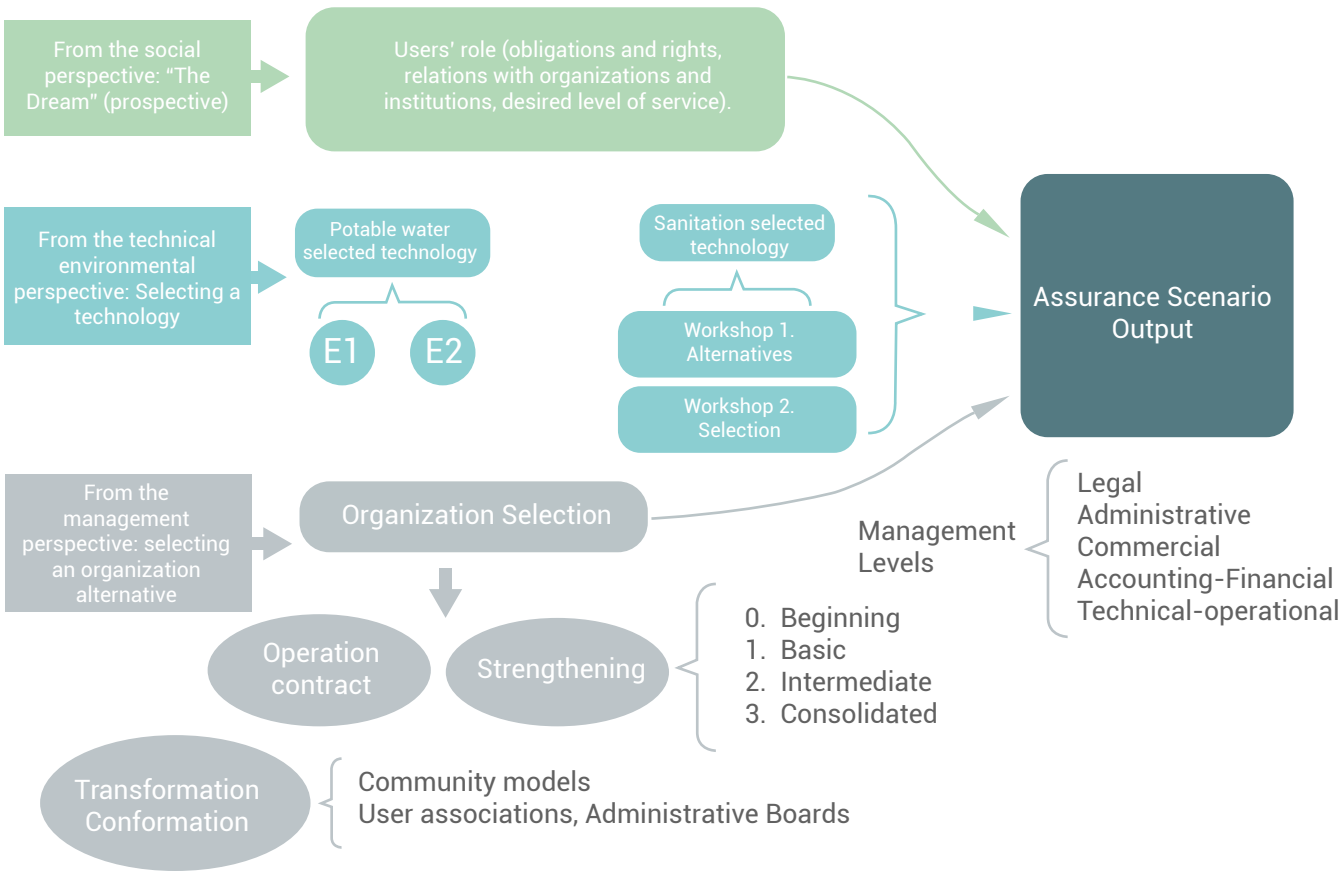
The preparation of Assurance Plans for the sustainability of water and sanitation services in rural areas, as well as the other stages of the pre-investment process, were carried out based on participatory exercises and taking into account the methodology proposed by Decree 2246 of 2012[7], adapted to

[7]This decree considers that Departmental Water Plans (PDA) will develop Assurance Plans at the municipal level, aimed at the provision of services at the municipal-urban level. Therefore, this methodology was adapted to the rural context. For this, community stakeholders were involved as directly responsible for the assurance actions

the rural context. Then, the assurance scenario is configured by integrating four key moments for the sustainability of service provision (see Figure 9 on the next page), which are included in the preparation of the plan:

- Collective construction of the community's "Dream" regarding the provision of water and sanitation services (prospective).
- Participatory selection of the technology for water purification.
- Participatory selection of individual sanitation solutions.
- Participatory selection of the organizational scenario for the provision of services.

Figure 9. Methodology for the preparation of Assurance Plans for the sustainability of water and sanitation services in rural areas



Source: Methodology for studies and designs, Instituto Cinara.

Of the four moments mentioned above, the first three (prospective and technology selection - potable water and sanitation) were discussed in the previous sections of this document, so we will focus on the last one.

Selection of an alternative for the organization and construction of the organizational scenario

Based on the data provided in the diagnosis, it was possible to determine whether there was an organization responsible for the provision of services in the communities. In cases where there aren't any formed organizations, it is important to ask the community whether it is interested in assuming the role of provider, and whether it contemplates the creation of an organization for that purpose. This was the case of the community of La Chapa, in Santander de Quilichao, which had been undertaking community water management activities without having established a service delivery community organization. With the community's initiative, the ASIR-SABA provided constant support to work on the participatory definition of the bylaws and the conformation of the organization as a user association. This is also the case of the Culebras community, where there was a legally constituted organization, but they lacked water service provision.

In the event that organizations have already been formed or there are organizations that exert the role of provider in the communities, the next step is to identify their formalization status in legal, commercial, financial, technical, administrative terms, and their relationship with the community and service users. This exercise is carried out through a participatory activity with the community in general, in which the strengths and weaknesses of the existing provider organization are first pinpointed before proceeding to identify the actions that need to be taken to strengthen the organization.

These types of activities enable leaders to recognize their current management level and collectively build the stage they want to reach and the activities necessary to achieve it. This translates into an action plan containing each component's current state, accompanied by a list of activities that need to be carried out to strengthen it, the key stakeholders that need to participate, as well as the deadlines for these activities.

The Assurance Plans for the sustainability of water and sanitation services in the rural area are developed once the summary diagnosis compilation is ready and the technologies and the organizational form have been selected. Once the Assurance Plans are prepared, they are reviewed with the management boards of the aqueducts or the organization that acts as such, as well as with representatives of other organizational bodies, such as the Community Action Boards or other previously identified influential stakeholders who have been involved in the process. This guarantees that the contents of the Assurance Plans reflect the results of different participation and consultation scenarios as well as how the communities project their community organization of water and sanitation services provision. Assurance Plans are also in line with public services regulations in Colombia.

For further information regarding participatory processes for the preparation of studies and designs, and Assurance Plans, see guides 2, 3 and 4 of the series: Methodology for Participatory Planning of Sustainable Options for the Supply of Potable Water: Towards a different approach to individual rural sanitation, and Participatory Planning in School Sanitation and Hygiene.

Works Bidding

Once the steps corresponding to the studies and designs (technical and institutional component) have been completed, the project is prepared to be presented to the mechanism defined by the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory -the governing body of the sector- for the evaluation of water and sanitation investment projects.

In the case of the model herewith presented, as part of the institutional articulation strategy and in accordance with the agreement signed between the parties, it was agreed with the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory that financial resources from the national budget required for investments in project infrastructure would be estimated, in order to guarantee the completion of the cycle (studies and designs, technical and financial viability, tender, infrastructure construction, start-up and operation of the systems) and meet the communities' expectations by addressing their needs in an articulated manner.

After the Ministry's engineers in charge of project evaluation reviewed the project and the designers made some adjustments, two comprehensive water and sanitation projects received the technical and financial viability[8]. One project refers to the aqueduct of ASOALMA, which serves several rural settlements in the municipality of Caloto, Cauca, and the other refers to the rural settlement of Culebras, located in the municipality of Trujillo, Valle del Cauca. Furthermore, four technical concepts were obtained (without resource allocation from the country's general budget) as follows: three individual sanitation solutions in the Palestina and Santa Maria rural settlements, in the municipality of Santander de Quilichao, and in the Morales rural settlement, located in the municipality of Caloto, Cauca; and another for a comprehensive water and sanitation project in Alaska, in the municipality of Buga, Valle del Cauca.

Once the viabilities were issued by the Ministry, it was in charge of initiating the works bidding process through its partner for resource administration, in accordance with Colombian regulations (see next image).

Call for National Public Bids No. PR - 2017 - 026

Water supply and wastewater management program in rural areas
IDB Credit 2732 / OC-CO
LPN No.PR - 2017 – 026 (PAA-057)

"Construction of the potable water treatment system, optimization of supply networks and construction of individual sanitation solutions for the ASOALMA system serving several rural settlements in the Municipality of Caloto" Department of Cauca.

The National Government, on behalf of the Republic of Colombia and the Inter-American Development Bank IDB, signed the loan contract No. 2732 / OC-CO for up to 60 million dollars, to cooperate in the execution of the Water Supply and Wastewater Management Program in Rural Areas.

The executing agency of the loan contract is the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, through the Vice Ministry of Water and Basic Sanitation, which in turn signed an inter-administrative contract with EPM to carry out the Comprehensive Management of the Program, through the subsidiary of the EPM Group: Aguas Nacionales EPM S.A. E.S.P.

Therefore, in development of the Comprehensive Management, Aguas Nacionales EPM S.A.E.S.P. extends an invitation to present sealed offers for the construction of the potable water treatment system, optimization of the supply networks and construction of individual sanitation solutions for the ASOALMA system serving several rural settlements in the Municipality of Caloto, Department of Cauca. - Colombia. At fixed unit prices. The term of execution of the works is eight (8) months.

The bid will be carried out in accordance with the National Public Bidding (LPN) procedures established by the Inter-American Development Bank in its Policies for the Acquisition of Goods (and works) and is open to all bidders from eligible countries, as defined in the Bidding Documents (DDL).

Eligible Bidders who are interested may consult the documentation required for the bid in the Suppliers and contractors / Contracting Processes link on the following website : www.aguasnacionalesepm.com.

Additional information about the procurement process can be requested in the email buzoncorporativo@aguasnacionalesepm.com.
Qualification requirements include:

- Authorization to enter into contracts with state entities.
- Experience in construction, replacement and/or rehabilitation of potable water supply and/ or sewerage infrastructure.
- Proof of existence and legal representation.
- Economic stability and financial capacity.

No preference margin will be granted to contractors or Participating Associations, National Consortia or Associations (APCA).
Reference budget: Two thousand five hundred seventy million pesos ($ 2,570,000,000). The offers shall be sent to the address referred to in this notice at the latest by 3:00 pm Colombia time, on June 7, 2017. Electronic offers will not be allowed. Offers received after the deadline will be rejected. The offers will be opened immediately after the deadline for submitting the offers, in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who wish to attend in person at the address indicated at the end of this call. The Offer must include a "Declaration of Maintenance of the Offer" using the form included in Section X "Guarantee Forms".

The referred address is:
Address: Carrera 58 No. 42-125, office 7-244, EPM building
City: Medellín
Country Colombia
Contracting party: Aguas Nacionales EPM S.A. E.S.P.

Source: El Tiempo newspaper.

[8]Technical concepts are issued by the Ministry when the works are going to be financed using resources other than those of the country's general budget, while viabilities are issued when investments have been budgeted using that type of resources.

Once the bidding process begins, socialization spaces are held with the mayors and communities to inform about its status. Subsequently, once the bid is awarded, support is provided to the mayors, the office responsible for managing the resources, and the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, in the subscription of the inter-administrative cooperation agreement (between the three parties) that enables joining efforts in the execution of the works and the respective audit.

Then, in coordination with the different government institutions, the contractor responsible for building the infrastructure is presented to the community. At the same time, support is provided to the community for the creation of the oversight group, by providing them with information regarding the scope and importance of this group and the procedures that must be followed to ensure that the group is taken into account. This will enable the community to follow up on the contractor's work from the beginning.

In the case of projects that only have a favorable technical concept, resource leveraging processes are carried out with other institutions such as the Departmental Water Plans (PDA) and the municipalities. Such is the case of the comprehensive water and individual sanitation project for the Alaska rural settlement, in the municipality of Buga, Valle del Cauca, which will be financed with contributions of the PDA of the Valle del Cauca (Vallecaucana de Aguas S.A. E.S.P.), the mayor's office and the Swiss cooperation.

For other projects, financial leverage with other government institutions, cooperation agencies or the private sector is foreseen.

Presentation of the contractor in Culebras rural settlement, Trujillo, Valle del Cauca

Community participation, and at the main table, representatives from the Swiss Embassy, the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and the Municipal Government of Trujillo.

Creation of ASOALMA oversight group in the municipality of Caloto, Cauca

Cross-cutting process to strengthen community capacities

Once the studies and designs have been prepared, and at the same time that the projects are presented to the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, and the bidding and adjudication activities are underway, consultation and planning processes are carried out with the communities. These processes enable starting the implementation of activities prioritized in the Plans, to ensure the sustainability of water and sanitation services in rural areas; these documents are prepared during the studies and designs stage. These consultation and planning process, as well as the entire capacity strengthening process, is carried out by the project implementing team (professionals and technicians with experience in community water management).

This planning process is crucial because communities participate in setting the time frame for the implementation of activities and defining a schedule. This prevents future conflicts related to time commitments, because in rural areas it is often the case that people need to postpone daily tasks in order to attend training and capacity strengthening activities. Hence, the model proposed by the ASIR-SABA project draws on the importance of ensuring that direct support is available in the communities (to be provided by the implementing team with strengthened capacities and with time availability to travel to rural areas). This will optimize community members' time dedication and will facilitate training opportunities with a **"learning by doing"** approach.

Once the activities have been prioritized and the time frame has been agreed, the different activities are initiated. These activities relate to strategic planning, legal, administrative, commercial, financial and technical-operational issues, which are the necessary components for an efficient and transparent administration of aqueducts. All these activities are aimed at strengthening community knowledge and skills.

Implementation of the Assurance Plan in the rural settlements of the ASOALMA system and in Morales, municipality of Caloto, Cauca

Implementation of assurance plan in Zanjón Hondo, municipality of Buga, Valle del Cauca

As part of the strategic planning component, the project provides support in identifying the vision and mission and defining the aqueduct's values, among others. Under the legal component, the project provides guidance on procedures to review the bylaws and how to register with the Chamber of Commerce, among others. The administrative component offers support for the preparation of function and process manuals; the commercial component focuses on defining collection strategies, billing processes, projection of subsidies balance and contributions to be presented to the municipalities, as well as requesting subsidies for low income population.

The financial component focuses on basic accounting and budgeting concepts, whereas the technical-operational component offers training and capacity strengthening for managing potable water treatment plants, individual sanitation and plumbing solutions, in association with strategic allies at local and regional level[9]. Depending on each community's needs, complementary processes such as digital literacy are carried out by means of a cross-cutting approach, which seeks to train managers in the use of technology for information processing and communication.

Digital literacy process in the municipality of Trujillo, Valle del Cauca

All this support provided by the project implementation team to the communities, allows connecting the knowledge acquired in collective learning spaces (business management workshops, the diploma course, sociotechnical innovations forum, among others) and implementation on a daily basis, to further strengthen the learning process. Furthermore, personalized support provided to each organization allows setting specific strategies for each community, in order to address relevant issues in each case (administrative, accounting and management issues).

This thorough work allows participants to reinforce what they have learned throughout the training activities and apply it to specific cases within the communities. It also provides an opportunity to strengthen existing and emerging community

[9]Mayors' offices, Departmental Water Plans and National Learning Service (SENA).

leaders. Training and support opportunities motivate transformations not only at the organizational level, but also at the individual level, as enabling increased self-knowledge among leaders and greater confidence, hope and stronger relationships among community members, all of which contribute to peacebuilding.

Health Education Strategy, municipality of Santander de Quilichao

Building Municipal Technical Assistance (ATM) Office

As a cross-cutting part of all Phase I processes and the advocacy and institutional articulation strategy, the model proposes the creation of Municipal Technical Assistance (ATM) offices that seek to strengthen coordination between communities and institutions, and support technical assistance and capacity building processes in water and sanitation, specifically in rural areas.

In Colombia there are entities aimed at promoting and carrying out technical assistance processes for territorial entities regarding the provision of public services, such as the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory[10] and the Departmental Water Plans[11]. Nonetheless, the municipalities are responsible for *"(...) ensuring that they efficiently provide their inhabitants with aqueduct, sewage, waste collection, electric power and basic switched public telephony services, by means of public, private or mixed public service companies, or directly by the central government of the respective municipality in the cases provided for in the article (...) "* . (Article 5, Law 142 of 1994). Furthermore, municipalities are the direct contact with the communities, so the configuration of these areas of Municipal Technical Assistance can ensure that the proposed water and sanitation policies can meet communities' specific needs by promoting and strengthening community processes that have historically met this governmental responsibility by means of individual efforts to bring water and sanitation to communities, especially in rural areas of the country.

In order to create this ATM figure, the model proposes analysis methodologies for each municipality and territory, in order to identify not only the means to include it into the municipality's organic structure or as a branch of any of the existing secretariats, but also the characteristics they need to have per the particular rural complexity.

These tools were applied through participatory exercises with decision makers at the municipal level, in order to determine how this personnel would be incorporated in each municipality. As part of the analyzes that were proposed with the municipalities, the following were discussed: the rural areas' support needs in terms of water and sanitation and the municipality's goals; the size and complexity of the municipality's rural area; the budgetary capacity to allocate economic resources for the operation of the ATM, and the socio-cultural[13] characteristics of the rural area. Once particular municipal contexts were analyzed,

[10]"(...) 5. Coordinate the execution of their plans and programs with the territorial entities and provide them with advice, co-operation and technical assistance." (Law 489, 1998).
[11]"(...) 17. Assist the Municipalities and / or Districts of the department in matters related to the provision of public water and / or sewage and / or waste collection." (Decree 2246, 2012).
[12]For example, identify whether ethnic groups located in the rural area require ATM personnel who is familiar with their native languages.

the location of the ATM in each municipality was assessed and in most cases it was located in the planning secretariats and, in a particular case, in the public works and infrastructure secretariat.

For the implementation of the ATM, the municipalities involved in the ASIR-SABA project committed themselves to allocate the salaries and transportation costs of an official with a technical profile, with significant experience in the water and sanitation sector and familiarity with the local rural context. This official's work will be aimed at supporting the municipality in the legal and environmental activities and procedures that must be carried out to ensure that the improvement projects of the prioritized systems are successful, as well as aiding the municipality in other activities such as providing advice and support to rural areas. Initially, the ASIR-SABA project financed the figure of ATM technicians for its implementation.

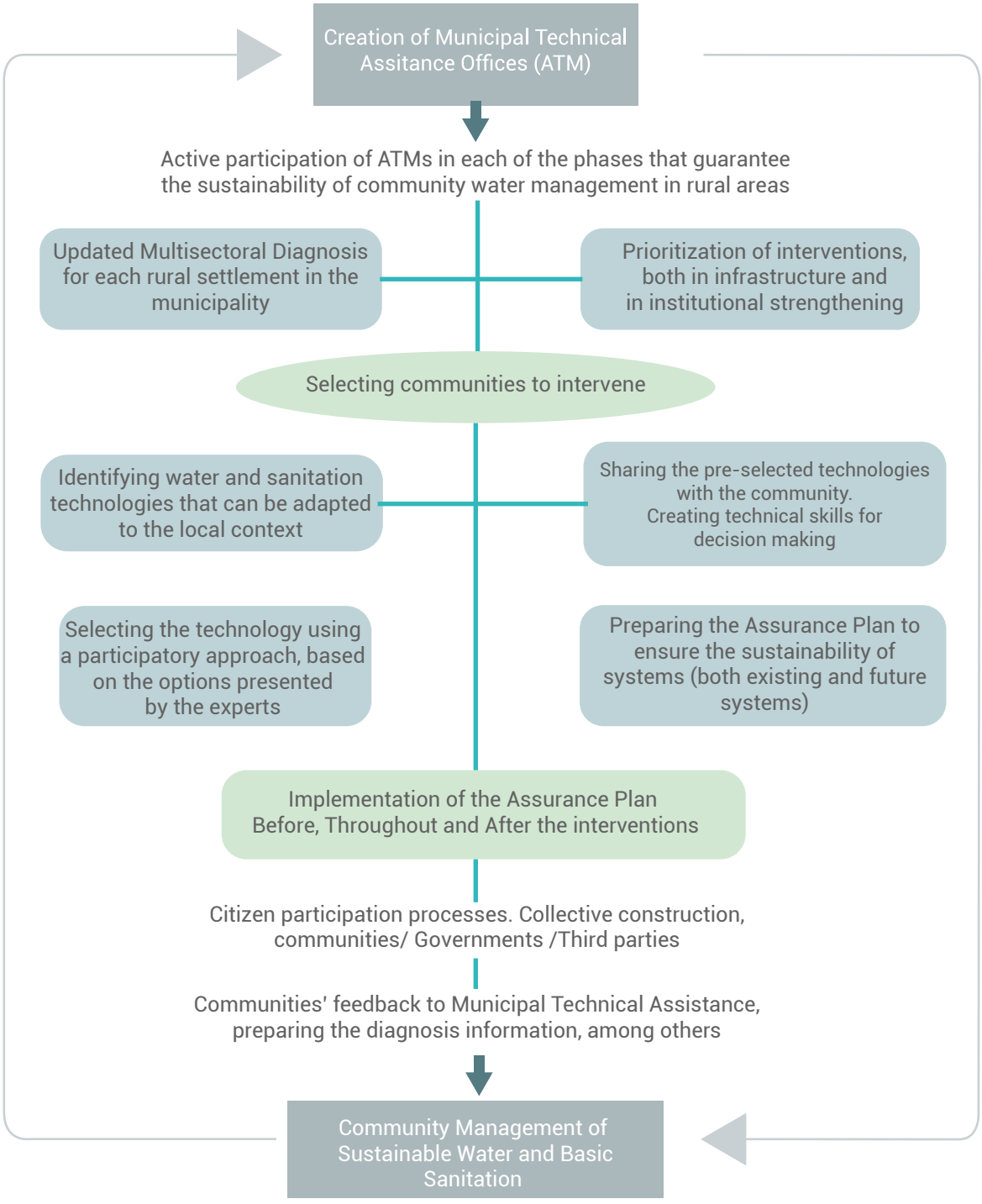
In return, the municipalities provided a physical space in their facilities as well as office equipment. This encouraged communication between the parties and the visibility of the municipal administration among rural communities, which request the municipalities to provide support and advice for the management of the aqueduct and sanitation systems in the rural areas. Likewise, the model is aimed at ensuring that the technician is incorporated and financed directly by the municipalities, based on the evidence that supports the added value of this position. To date, two of the four intervention municipalities have incorporated the figure and are paying for it with their own resources. This result can be interpreted as the municipal mayors' interest in maintaining a link between the community and the institutional framework to strengthen trust between them and which as a result of their interactions, will generate relevant information that allows them to plan differential actions in favor of and with their communities.

It is important to note that the model sets forth training incentives for people engaged in ATMs in each municipality, inviting them to participate in different capacity strengthening processes such as diploma courses, workshops on gender focus and peace building. According to the implementing team in the four municipalities prioritized by ASIR SABA, which provided direct support to the team of professionals who prepared all the studies and designs, this process facilitated knowledge transfer that provided them with skills to support the rural processes in the municipalities.

For additional information regarding the Municipal Technical Assistance proposal promoted by the model, as well as practical tools for municipal analysis, see this Series' guide: **Municipal Technical Assistance Areas to support community management of water and rural sanitation.**

ATM Trujillo, Valle del Cauca, supporting the water concession process of the Culebras rural settlement aqueduct

SUMMARY OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE ASIR-SABA COMMUNITY WATER MANAGEMENT MODEL



Source: Prepared by the author.

CONCLUSIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Following the principles and structure of the SABA Peru Model, the ASIR-SABA project sets forth a territorial approach to provide comprehensive water and sanitation services (including infrastructure and management aspects) in the municipalities' rural areas, under the coordination of departmental public entities and the support of the municipal governments, and in compliance with the Colombian norms, policies and strategies for rural water supply and sanitation.

These are some of the success factors:

- Involving the community from the beginning of the processes. This ensures that interventions focus on demand and prioritize the specific needs of the population.
- Ensuring coordination between the different governmental levels (national, departmental and municipal levels), which minimizes the duplication of efforts and promotes strategic alliances for the promotion of successful processes in infrastructure and management of water and sanitation systems in rural areas.
- Involving the academic sector, considering its role in transferring community and institutional knowledge, skills and dialogue.
- Assigning professionals with suitable technical profiles to support municipal mayors in achieving their goals in water and rural sanitation, through permanent support to aqueduct managers in rural sectors and to the community in general (ATM).
- Promoting opportunities to strengthen institutional and community capacities.
- Promoting and capitalizing on community knowledge.
- Engaging in evidence-based public policy advocacy and influencing decision makers, based on factual experiences in the particular contexts of rural areas.

The ASIR-SABA Water and Sanitation Community Management Model in rural areas also raises challenges, which include:

- Revitalizing inter-institutional and community relations, as one of the biggest challenges.
- Influencing decision makers to design public policies adapted to the particular needs of the territories.
- Allocating resources for effective processes of technical assistance in water and sanitation for rural areas, prioritizing these issues over others in the administrative agenda, and making budget lines more flexible to accomplish this.

Finally, the proposed model presents the following opportunities:

- The possibility of strengthening the institutional framework that is part of community water management, to address the concrete needs of rural communities with a differential and demand-centered approach.
- The possibility of co-managing the solutions, based on a participatory identification of conflictive situations regarding community management of water and possible alternatives to address them, which in turn will result in the creation of sustainability scenarios, based on institutional and community co-responsibility.

  Co-responsibility is an integral part of active and positive participation within the project. Co-responsibility allows each stakeholder to go beyond their role as a receptor and evaluator of activities and products, and engage as a co-author, therefore assuming specific tasks to meet the goals and engage in efforts to achieve them.

  Additionally, joint responsibility motivates stakeholders' ownership of the project and strengthens the installed capacity that will support sustainability of investments.
- Contribute to improve the quality of life of rural communities and, in turn, the construction of inclusive and peaceful territories.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. SURVEY, APPLICATION AND MANUAL MODEL FOR THE TECHNICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DIAGNOSIS IN THE POTABLE WATER AND COMPREHENSIVE SANITATION SECTOR FOR THE RURAL AREA.

This annex is available in digital version in the CD that comes with this series. It is available in the **Management Model** folder as Annex 1.

Series

ASIR-SABA Community Management Model
Methodological guides for implementation

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