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Santiago Water Fund
Chile
SANTIAGO WATER FUND

PHASE  Design
COMPONENT Deployment of Program Activities
STEP  Pilot Projects

How many people collaborated to complete this step for this water fund?
15 people

Specify who these people work for:
5 people from TNC Southern Andes staff, 2 people from TNC LAR staff, 3 people from partner organization, 5 people from other organizations supported selection of study site and methods during first stage of the plot project (1 from Condesan-IMHEA, Perú, 1 from Instituto Ecología Regional, Universidad Nacional de Tucumá, Argentina, 1 from NASA and 2 independent consultor)

How much time was required to complete this step?
9 months
PROCESS

1. To define what’s the specific problem that our team was going to face through a pilot project, which at the same time was consistent with our Water Fund initiative, and to map possible funding opportunities to achieve this

2. To design a wetland monitoring project proposal to promote green infrastructure in the Maipo watershed

3. To obtain funding by adapting this proposal to specific funding opportunities

4. To formalize partnership with local experts (academia)
SYNTHESIS

1. To establish an advisory committee (TNC staff + staff and consultors from other institutions)
2. To select the study site
3. To work with local stakeholders (e.g. owners of the lands, local water utility, the community)
4. To establish a monitoring protocol to measure water availability and water quality
5. To implement/build experimental plots (5x5 meters plots with fences. This allow us to compare wetland development with and without protection from tourists and animals)
6. To install monitoring instruments and to select equipment to measure river flows and monitor water table
7. To identify main challenges during the project (e.g. protection of monitoring instruments from animals) and to find the way to solve them
8. To scale up our results and analysis to other areas
9. To organize outreach activities (seminars, workshops)
LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson Learned #1
One of the most important lessons was that by putting together an advisory committee (TNC staff + staff and consultors from other institutions) during the first stage of the pilot project we were able to make good decisions easily, since people in this committee had great experience in similar projects. We believe now that an advisory committee should be part of many different types of environmental projects, especially in Water Funds pilot projects.

Lesson Learned #2
We have learned that up in the Andes Mountains ANYTHING could happen. Climate conditions can be very tough and planning in advance is essential. We haven’t have any accidents or health issues since we have applied all available security tips, and have also learned many things from the local community who works or lives there, in order to do our work in a safety way.
LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson Learned #3
We have learned that tourism has great impact over the wetlands that we are aiming to protect and that in addition to protecting this area, environmental education will be essential. One of our objectives is to bring at least 150 people (including 50 children) to the wetland to show them our work and why it is so important to protect these areas. We will also have a big open seminar by the end of the project so private and public institutions can learn about it.

Lesson Learned #4
We have learned that a pilot project should aim to be extended in time in order to become an important contribution to society and the environment. So far with our monitoring activities we have obtained daily data for water table measurements and weekly data for flow measurements. We aim to find funding to keep these monitoring activities for at least 2 more years and after that we want to be able to build capacity within the Water Fund organization, so this monitoring can be permanent, and decisions about the wetland protection and management can be based on the best information.
LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson Learned #5
We have learned that TNC staff can do much more than we ever imagined. Thanks to the good relation and connection we have with TNC staff from other countries, we have been able to learn many things we did not know within the local staff by the beginning of this project. TNC international staff support and advice has been essential, and we want to keep on expanding our TNC internal network.

Lesson Learned #6
We have learned a lot about science in relation to wetland functioning and monitoring techniques. We have learned about high Andean hydrology, wetland water retention, and sediments filtering processes, all of which are essential to provide enough good quality drinking water to Santiago city. It’s amazing how a city with 6 million people is so connected to the services that nature provides, with natural processes beginning only a few kilometers away from the city. By working in this project we are more convinced than any time before that the Santiago Water Fund is a great initiative. Through this project we have been also able to show that to local stakeholders, who are essential for this Water Fund to be implemented.