

WHAT DATA USE PROGRESS LOOKS LIKE

ARGENTINA – ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION AND RESTORATION (SDG TARGET 6.6)

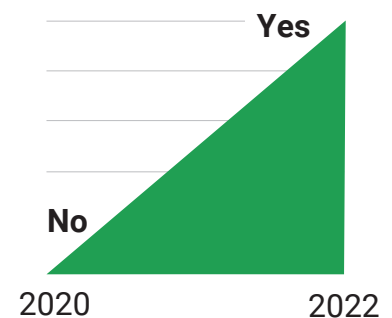


Progress indicator: Use of data on SDG indicator 6.6.1 Change in permanent river and lake extent

Level of impact: Two water basins, Esquel-Percy System (2,447 km²) and Marapa – San Francisco River Basin (ca. 7,000 km²)

Result: Evidence-based action plans to improve the protection and restoration of the freshwater ecosystems in the Esquel-Percy System (where 8% of permanent rivers and lakes have been lost over the last 20 years), and in the Marapa – San Francisco River Basin.

Progress 2020–2022:



SITUATION

Argentina is a federal republic composed of 23 autonomous provinces, and it has a population of 44 million people. The landscape is diverse, with tropical rainforest in the north, the Andes mountains to the west and Patagonia to the south.

Water basins in Argentina have been disturbed by human activity, such as fires, cattle-raising, deforestation and urbanization. The country's population is growing, increasing the demand for water services and land (for housing and food production), as well as the generation of waste and wastewater, which requires treatment. In addition, climate change has led to a decrease in mean annual rainfall and an increase in mean temperatures. This, in combination with a lack of land-use planning, has direct impacts on watercourses, modifying their

natural physical and chemical conditions and triggering a cascade of reactions that result in the loss of ecosystem functioning.

To address these issues, and to achieve various development objectives including water security, the government of Argentina (through the National Directorate of Environmental Management of Water and Aquatic Ecosystems and the National Directorate of Federal Coordination and Water Policy) is prioritizing long-term protection and restoration of its priority freshwater ecosystems. Two examples of this work, which focuses on national planning and policy action, are the establishment of a national coordination group led by the government to ensure collaboration with mandated institutions at the national and subnational levels (provinces), and the strengthening of connections with federal governance bodies (the Federal Environmental Council and the Federal Water Resources Council).



Also as part of this work, the government recently initiated a process to integrate freshwater data into sector-wide decision-making and to facilitate evidence-based land-planning and management, in order to improve the protection and restoration of the country's freshwater ecosystems. This includes data derived from earth observations and available as part of the reporting on SDG indicator 6.6.1, supporting the identification of changes in freshwater availability and quality as well as the extent of water-related ecosystems.

PROGRESS MADE

To integrate freshwater data into sector-wide decision-making, and to use this information to prioritize freshwater ecosystems, Argentina has conducted a highly consultative planning process, involving state and subnational authorities and local actors. This process has allowed Argentina to secure political interest, build technical and institutional capacity to understand and act upon freshwater changes, and identify priority ecosystems and basins that require urgent intervention.

Targeted training was provided to institutional actors (including governmental institutions at the provincial and national levels, water utility institutions and river basin organizations) as well as academia and civil society on the role and value of freshwater ecosystems within different sectoral contexts, including an overview of actions and management solutions to protect them, with a particular focus on the importance of, access to, and use of SDG indicator 6.6.1 data.

A nationwide open call to all provincial and national managers was launched, to identify priority freshwater ecosystems to conduct action planning and apply to receive support to develop a freshwater action plan. This resulted in the identification and subsequent development of action plans for the following two important freshwater ecosystems: the Marapa – San Francisco River basin in the provinces of Catamarca and Tucumán, and the Esquel-Percy system in the province of Chubut, which has seen a loss of 8 per cent of its permanent river and lake area over the last 20 years.

The action planning process was overseen and coordinated by working groups including representatives appointed by provincial authorities, the national coordination group, and the implementation team. The group were required to identify all stakeholders to involve, analyse the status of the ecosystems with the help of indicator 6.6.1 data, and define their management functions. An action plan was then developed through a consultative process involving all organizations identified as responsible for carrying out actions, as well as with representatives from the Futaleufú River Basin Committee responsible for the broader basin in which the Esquel-Percy system is situated.

To ensure ownership of the action plan for the Esquel-Percy basin, it was agreed that the Futaleufú River Basin Committee would be in charge of follow-up and coordination of the plan.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- Freshwater ecosystem protection as a national priority, existing structures for collaboration between the national and provincial levels
- Participatory process including nationwide call to provincial and national water managers to identify priority ecosystems
- Technical and institutional capacity-building on data use and action planning

LEARN MORE

- [Esquel-Percy System Action Plan](#)
- [Marapa – San Francisco River Basin Action Plan](#)
- [Freshwater Ecosystems Explorer from UNEP](#)
- [Overall progress on SDG 6 in Argentina](#)