

ARTICLE RIOB – OECD

River Basin Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean

In the report “Water Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean: a Multi-level Approach”, OECD calls for more integrated water policies through the adoption of context-specific, flexible and multi-level governance mechanisms including at watershed scale. It reviews, amongst others, river basin governance in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Peru.

Key findings on River Basin Governance in the LAC Region

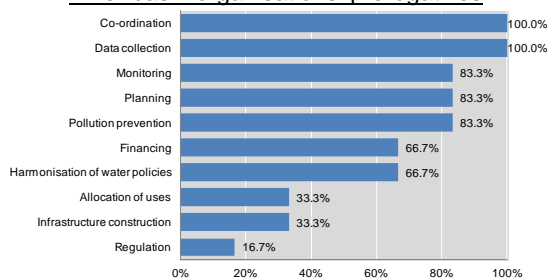
Half LAC countries surveyed have set up river basin organisations (RBOs), whether long-established and integrated into national water resources strategies (Brazil, Argentina, Mexico), or more recent and still at pilot scale (Peru); however several multi-level governance gaps persist.

Administrative gap: RBOs often play an important role to bridge the mismatch between hydrological and administrative boundaries, but lack proper planning at watershed scale;
Policy gap: RBOs’ functions vary in the LAC region. Most have coordination, planning, data, monitoring and pollution prevention prerogatives, but none have regulatory powers especially to address cross-sectoral concerns (agriculture, energy, ecosystem services etc.)
Funding gap: RBOs’ are still largely funded through central government budget though autonomous budget and grants from sub-national governments hold an important share;
Accountability gap: RBOs’ main constituencies are mainly central government ministries and public agencies, though local/regional authorities and citizens/NGOs are gradually involved;
Objective gap: Despite conflict resolution mechanisms at river basin level, RBOs still fail to engage key stakeholders as agricultural users, and are often driven by top-down approaches;
Capacity gap: RBOs’ maturity varies across the region as do their capabilities (knowledge, expertise, time, staff, facilities) to carry out fully their duties at basin and sub-basin levels;
Information gap: Scattered and fragmented water data and information are important bottlenecks to integrated water policies in LAC countries.

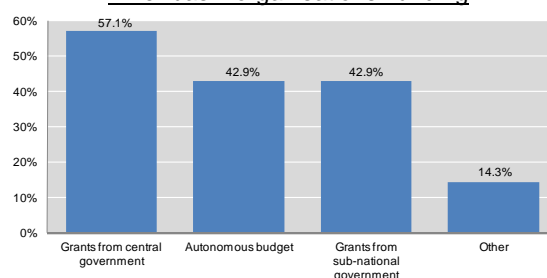
A selection of key results from the report (13 LAC countries surveyed, 7 with RBOs)

Source : OECD, 2012 Water Governance in OECD Countries : a Multi-level Approach”, OECD Publishing Paris.

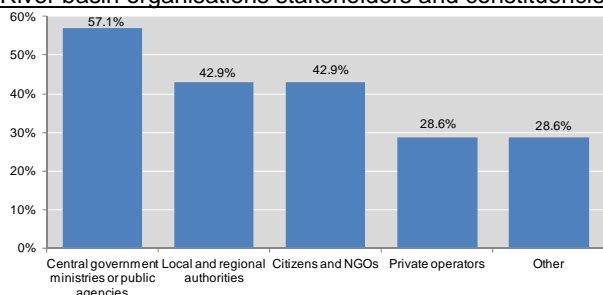
River basin organisations’ prerogatives



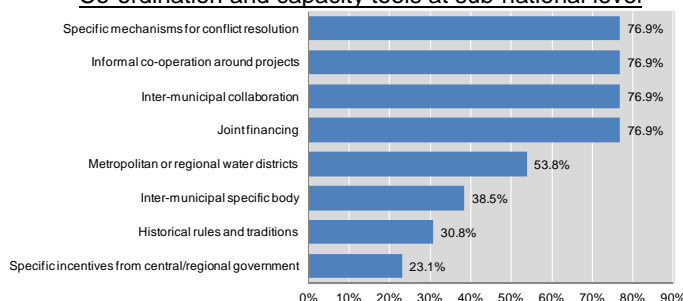
River basin organisations’ funding



River basin organisations stakeholders and constituencies



Co-ordination and capacity tools at sub-national level



OECD is now undertaking water governance policy dialogues with national and sub-national governments (including at river basin scale) to evaluate and compare the effectiveness of governance arrangements in place, and provide evidence-based policy recommendations.

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