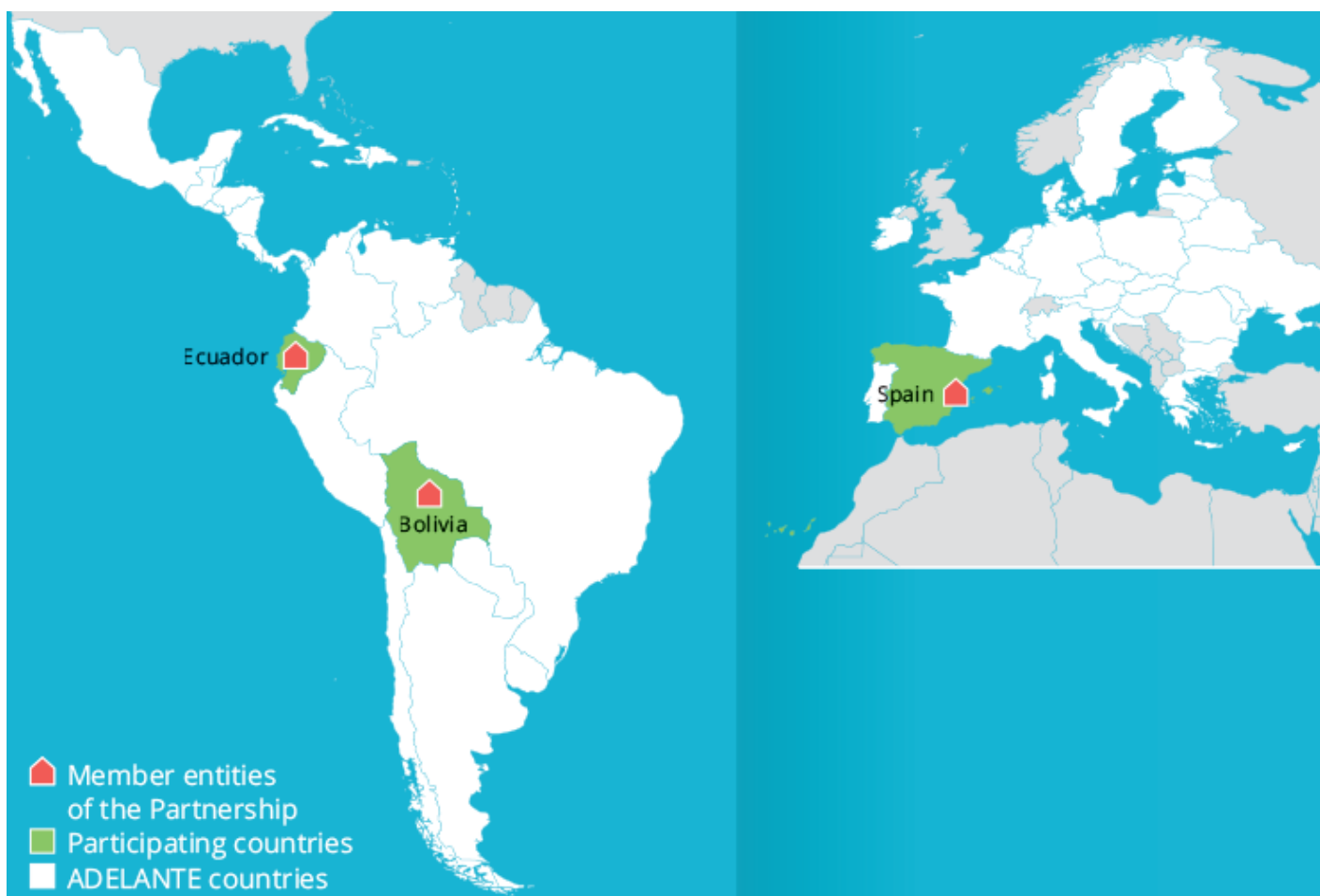


Creation of a Collectors Network in Bolivia

PARTNERSHIP



Background

Roots for Sustainability - R4S (Spain) is a positive impact agency with extensive experience in social impact measurement, inclusive business development and the creation of social innovation programmes, as well as relevant experience in supporting the formalisation of associations.

The **Red Nacional de Recicladores del Ecuador** (National Network of Waste Pickers of Ecuador - RENAREC) is a grouping of more than 50 associations of waste pickers, organised at the national level in Ecuador. Their work revolves around promoting the rights and interests of waste pickers and recyclers at the grassroots level, providing them with a platform to help drive processes and policies for change to improve their

collective well-being.

The **Asociación de Recuperadores de Residuos Sólidos - Bolivia Unida** (Association of Solid Waste Collectors), in Bolivia, is an association of grassroots waste pickers from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, which acts as a representative for 9 other grassroots waste collector associations in the country, with more than 1,000 members.

These three entities are united by their previous collaboration experiences with R4S, which has supported RENAREC in improving its management and organisational processes, as well as Bolivia Unida in formalising its association, with financial support from Latitud R; an entity formed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), CocaCola, Pepsico, Nestlé and Dow Chemical. Thanks to these successful experiences, Bolivia Unida was interested in learning from RENAREC's experience in formalising a national network of collectors and, together with R4S, developed a Triangular Cooperation Partnership that sought to develop the necessary tools to establish and manage a national network of waste pickers in Bolivia.

Three collaborating entities also joined the efforts. Two waste picker associations in Santa Cruz were identified, the **Red de Recolectoras de Santa Cruz** (Waste Collectors Network), in Bolivia, and the **Asociación de Recicladores de Santa Cruz** (Recyclers' Association), also in Bolivia, whose support was key to ensuring grassroots participation and coordination with other associations in the country. They were joined by the Red Latinoamericana de Recicladores - RedLACRE - Latin American and Caribbean Network of Waste Pickers (Colombia), an entity that represents different waste picker groups in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Entities and roles

BENEFICIARY ENTITIES



BOLIVIA UNIDA
Asociación de
Recuperadores
de Residuos Sólidos

Asociación de Recuperadores de Residuos Sólidos - Bolivia Unida

Bolivia

FIRST PROVIDER ENTITIES



[Red Nacional de Recicladores del Ecuador](#)

Ecuador

SECOND PROVIDER ENTITIES



[Roots for Sustainability - R4S](#)

Spain

COLLABORATING ENTITIES

[Red Latinoamericana de Recicladores, Colombia](#)

[Red Recolectoras Santa Cruz, Bolivia](#)

[Asociación de Recicladores de Santa Cruz, Bolivia](#)

Development challenges

The majority of waste pickers and recyclers in Latin America belong to the informal sector, with very precarious working conditions that prevent them from making a decent living. The restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the increased vulnerability of these groups, essentially paralysing their activities and putting their livelihoods at serious risk. The precariousness experienced during the pandemic highlighted the need to equip grassroots pickers and recyclers with the tools to defend their rights and ensure access to decent work.

Thanks to this Initiative, RENAREC's experience in the creation of a national network of waste pickers and recyclers, and R4S's expertise in sustainability, social impact and inclusive business was harnessed to formalise a network of waste pickers and recyclers in Bolivia, as a tool for social action, advocacy and protection of their rights.

INITIATIVE

This Triangular Cooperation Initiative aimed to maximise the knowledge of the Partnership's provider entities in order to transfer their model of establishing associations of waste pickers, focused on ensuring their rights, advocacy and social entrepreneurship.

Triangular approach

Faced with the exponential growth of cities, waste management is at the forefront of urban management challenges. In many Latin American cities, there is no effective recycling system, which results in usable materials being deposited in landfills, thus reducing their useful life. The small amount of recyclable waste that is used is largely recovered through private initiatives, largely thanks to the work of waste pickers.

Despite the important labour carried out by these groups, their work is still largely unrecognised by the authorities, who are sometimes reluctant to work with the associations, and by the public, who consider such work to be undignified.

In order to tackle the challenge of managing recyclable materials in Latin American cities, and especially in Bolivia, it was important to support the associations of waste pickers in their formalisation process and raising awareness of their work. To this end, the knowledge gained by RENAREC through its formalisation process and in the initial stage of managing the national network was of great use, in addition to the knowledge of RedLACRE in terms of the network building capacity of waste pickers in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to this knowledge, R4S provided training and capacity building support in inclusive business management, urban waste systems and open innovation processes, along with a vision of high social impact and long-term sustainable entrepreneurship.

With Bolivia Unida leading the coordination process with the associations of collectors in the country, the aim was to lay the foundations for the formalisation of a national network; one which had the tools for long-term sustainability. This network of collectors in Bolivia was developed with the purpose of being able to adapt to other Latin American and Caribbean contexts, which will be facilitated through coordination with RedLACRE.

Sectoral approach - Contribution to the 2030 Agenda

PRIMARY SDG



Goal 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

SECONDARY SDG



Goal 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

ADELANTE SDG

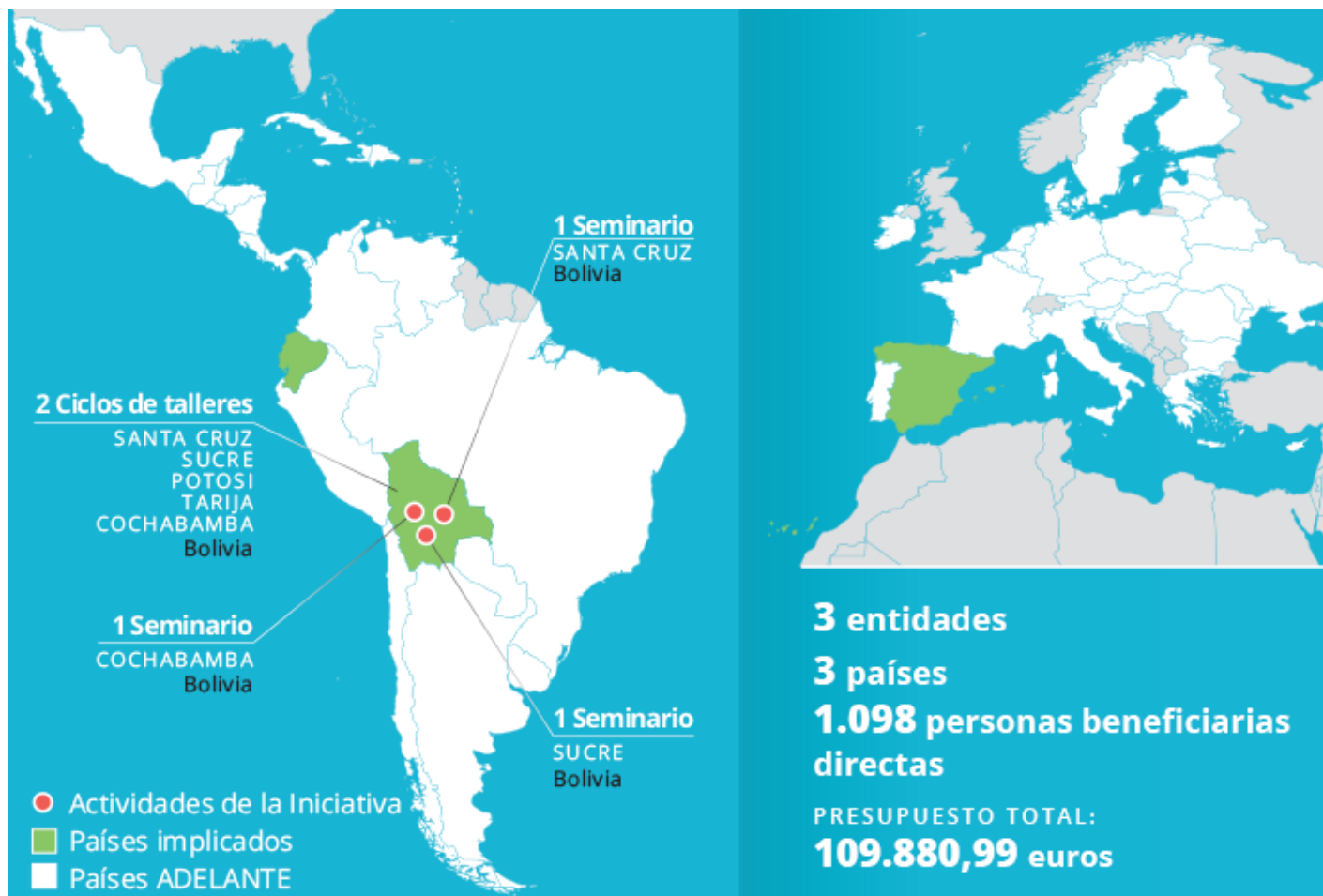


Goal 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status



Goal 17.7 Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed

Territorial approach



Intervention methodology

The work plan of this Initiative ensured that the associations that will form the network of collectors in Bolivia had the necessary knowledge to participate in the design of the organisational structure of the new entity, providing them with the basis for understanding and participating in the development of the constitutive framework. In addition, it promoted an entrepreneurial vision of their work, providing them with the tools for sustainable management and social entrepreneurship.

To this end, **eight activities were carried out**, most of them face-to-face, in which the Partnership member entities worked directly with waste pickers in different Bolivian cities that would form part of the network.

The initiative kicked off with **a series of workshops in five cities**, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Sucre, Potosí, Tarija and Cochabamba, in which the benefits of forming an association were presented so that collectors could learn about and appreciate the advantages of belonging to this type of organisation.

Following the cycle of introductory workshops, **a seminar was held in Sucre** that was open to all associations of waste pickers, in which each one of them presented the agreements and expectations they had regarding the creation of the network. RENAREC also participated in the meeting, sharing their experience during its creation process and current functions. Representatives from RedLACRE also participated in this seminar, sharing other experiences from the region.

A second cycle of workshops was held in the five cities, providing information on the basic requirements for formalising associations, including obtaining legal status. These workshops provided the knowledge necessary for collectors to manage their associations and eventually participate in the management of the national network.

After the training cycle, **a second seminar was held in Cochabamba**, open to the leaders of the collectors' associations, in which RENAREC and R4S shared their expertise to establish the organisational structure of the national association. They also provided the participants with the relevant tools to inform their local communities of the progress made in the creation of the national network, through a new cycle of workshops that was held in the five cities.

These activities were accompanied by **two consultancies**, one on legal matters, which provided the necessary documentation and legal procedures to draw up the constituent documents, formalise the national network and grant it legal status. The second consultancy was to develop a website and web application to provide information tools to collect the materials produced during the Initiative and, at the same time, to facilitate grassroots coordination on the pricing of materials and on future meetings.

Lastly, the Initiative concluded with a **seminar in Santa Cruz de la Sierra**, open to all associations of waste pickers and in which all Partnership entities and relevant public and private actors participated. During this event, the results of the Initiative were presented and the establishment of the network of waste pickers in Bolivia was formalised.

Direct beneficiaries (individuals)

According to Rule 9 of the Guidelines for Applicants: all persons participating in the activities of the Initiative.

This initiative had **1,098 direct beneficiaries**, of which 1,059 belonged to the collectors' associations in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Sucre, Potosí, Tarija and Cochabamba. These collectors benefited particularly from the series of training workshops held in their cities and the knowledge provided in the seminars, as well as from the creation of the national network itself.

In addition to the collectors, more than 15 people linked to the Partnership member entities benefited, sharing their knowledge and participating in the creation of the Bolivian collectors' network, while contributing to the creation of a model that can be adapted to other Latin American contexts.

Budget

EU contribution: 81,771.48 €

Co-financing - Triangular Cooperation Partnership: 28,109.51 €

Total budget: 109,880.99 €