



Natural Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean



ECLAC

Natural Resources Division

Bulletin No 4 • SEPTEMBER 2022

Basic water and electricity services as key sectors for
transformative recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean



Content

- Editorial
- Main article
- Activities, notable publications and news
- Contact
- Topics:
 - Water
 - Energy
 - Non-renewable resources
 - Agriculture and biodiversity

Editorial

Drinking water and electricity are basic services that proved essential to counter the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. At the same time, they represented an opportunity for investment to spur economic recovery in the countries of the region. Since the early months of 2022, they have been particularly threatened by the impact of the war in Ukraine on the world prices of fossil fuels, which are basic inputs for both sectors. Together with higher prices for edible oils, cereals and fertilizers, this has led to a rise in poverty and in energy, water and food insecurity in the region.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, large inequalities persist in access both to energy and to drinking water and sanitation, owing to a lack of high-quality supply infrastructure capable of providing water and energy security for all. Currently, in the region, 161 million people lack access to safely managed drinking water, 431 million to safely managed sanitation, 17 million to electricity and 75 million to clean cooking fuels and technologies. There is therefore both a need and an opportunity for investment to universalize coverage of these services to the entire population, which would also generate green jobs and new incomes, reduce environmental impacts and improve public health.

This bulletin analyses the current situation, the cost of short-term measures implemented during the pandemic and the opportunities for long-term investment in both sectors. It concludes that investing 2.6% of regional GDP annually over the next 10 years would suffice to universalize access to basic drinking water, sanitation and electricity services based on renewable sources, leaving no one behind. This would boost the post-pandemic recovery by generating up to 3.4 million direct green jobs per year in the water sector and 700,000 in the energy sector, enhance the resilience of cities by limiting the spread of COVID-19, other diseases or potential pandemics, reduce water and air pollution from emissions of greenhouse gases and other pollutants (thereby also promoting the energy transition to renewables) and contribute to progress towards a sustainable and inclusive water transition. These investments should be targeted at clean and sustainable technologies, contributing to the transformative recovery proposed by ECLAC, as this is part of the structural change needed in Latin America and the Caribbean if it is to make the big push for sustainability (understood as investments that are environmentally and socially beneficial).

Main article

Basic water and electricity services as key sectors for transformative recovery in Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Gaps in access to drinking water and electricity in Latin America and the Caribbean

a. Energy insecurity and its impact on people

Currently in Latin America and the Caribbean, 17 million people lack access to electricity and 75 million to clean cooking fuels and technologies, a situation that has exacerbated poverty and vulnerability during and since the pandemic and that may be exacerbated by rising fossil fuel prices in the context of the war in Ukraine. This energy insecurity is having physical, social and economic impacts on millions of people across the region (ECLAC, 2022).

The economic and social dimensions are directly related to lack of access to energy services or affordability problems, i.e., to families not having access because there is no infrastructure for it or because they cannot afford to pay for this service as they have other priorities, such as food, health care, etc.

[See more](#)

Activities, notable publications and news

Water

Information notes

August 2022

ECLAC opened a Public Consultation to identify water priorities of Caribbean countries, towards of the 2023 United Nations Water Conference

March 2022

Interview of ECLAC on Chilean TV Senade in the framework of World Water Day

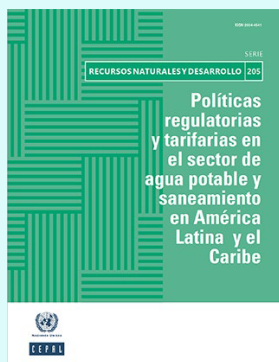
Events

August 2022

ECLAC's Natural Resources Division co-organized the session "Investing in the Future: A Paradigm Shift in Latin America and the Caribbean" at the World Water Week 2022 in Stockholm

August 2022

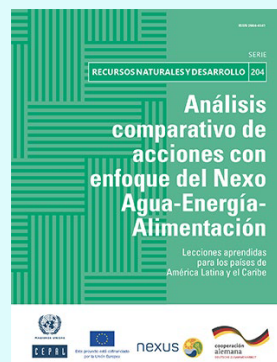
Selection of activities carried out by the members of the Regional Group of Experts on Water Resources of Latin America and the Caribbean between June and August 2022



**Políticas regulatorias y
tarifarias en el sector de agua potable y
saneamiento en América Latina y el Caribe**

73 p. | July 2021

[Download](#)



**Análisis comparativo de acciones
con enfoque del Nexo Agua-Energía-
Alimentación: lecciones aprendidas para los
países de América Latina y el Caribe**

110 p. | March 2021

[Download](#)

Energy

Information notes

June 2022

Participation in Primera Conferencia Regional de Hidrógeno Verde

April 2022

Tendências da mobilidade no Brasil e na América Latina

Events

May 2022

Seminario Virtual Nacional en Colombia para Abordar Metodología De Análisis de Diagnóstico y Planificación Eléctrica para Responder a la Electromovilidad Sustentable y Reunión del Foro Técnico Regional de Planificadores Energéticos (FOREPLEN)

March 2022

Reunión de Alto nivel de la CEPAL sobre Energías Renovables para la Adaptación y la Integración Regional



Informe regional sobre el ODS 7 de sostenibilidad energética en América Latina y el Caribe

108 p. | December 2021

[Download](#)



Definiciones del sector eléctrico para la incorporación de las energías renovables variables y la integración regional en América Latina y el Caribe

183 p. | December 2021

[Download](#)

Non-renewable resources

Information notes

May 2022

La economía circular no es ajena a las actividades mineras, ofrece oportunidades para minimizar y valorar los residuos, mejorar la eficiencia y recuperar espacios mineros con fines productivos

May 2022

CEPAL publica estudios sobre gobernanza de las empresas estatales en la industria minera y de los clústeres mineros

Events

May 2022

CEPAL inició el curso “Litio, un recurso estratégico. Gobernanza, redes globales de producción y sostenibilidad”

May 2022

CEPAL analizó los regímenes fiscales de la renta económica del litio en Argentina, Bolivia y Chile



Asignación, distribución y uso de los ingresos fiscales provenientes de la actividad minera en el Perú

91 p. | June 2022

[Download](#)



Asignación, distribución y uso de los ingresos fiscales derivados de la explotación minera en Chile: un análisis de sus efectos económicos y sociales

60 p. | May 2022

[Download](#)

Agriculture y biodiversity

Information notes

April 2022

La biodiversidad en cifras

December 2021

América Latina y el Caribe es una fuente de buenas prácticas de gobernanza innovadora e integración de la biodiversidad para el cambio transformativo

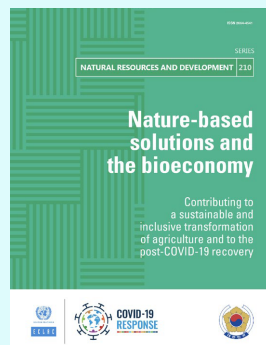
Events

January 2022

Reunión Institucional “Hallazgos y reflexiones para la definición de una agenda renovada en materia de política pública de desarrollo rural”

October 2021

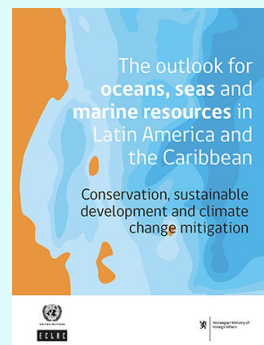
Oportunidades y desafíos para el desarrollo de una Estrategia Nacional de Bioeconomía en Guatemala



Nature-based solutions and the bioeconomy: Contributing to a sustainable Latin America and the Caribbean: and inclusive transformation of agriculture and to the post-COVID-19 recovery

75 p. | September 2022

[Download](#)



The outlook for oceans, seas and marine resources in Latin America and the Caribbean: Conservation, sustainable development and climate change mitigation

77 p. | December 2020

[Download](#)

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