



# **Bolivia Strategy Document**

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# Foreword

## Country Strategy Process

The process of country strategy identification was rolled out by VLIR-UOS in the context of the implementation of the Political Agreement signed in 2010. In this agreement, VLIR-UOS committed itself to formulate a strategy for each of its 20 VLIR-UOS partner countries.

A country strategy is in fact a road map for cooperation. It is the result of numerous inputs and consultations with a wide spectrum of actors in Flanders and the country in question. The basis of the country strategy paper is a desk study comprising a context analysis of higher education and development priorities in the country. Each country engagement results in a country strategy paper. It is a policy document that will be used by VLIR-UOS to guide its funding decisions.

The country strategy represents the **strategic niche** for future VLIR-UOS cooperation in a specific country. A strategy can contain a geographical and/or thematic focus. It should be multi-disciplinary and include an optimal balance between the different levels and types of intervention of VLIR-UOS.

## Framework for programming and selection

A country strategy reflects the objectives and the choices of instruments for university cooperation for development between the country in question and Belgium/Flanders. A country strategy serves as a reference framework for programming, leading to strategy-based calls for proposals.

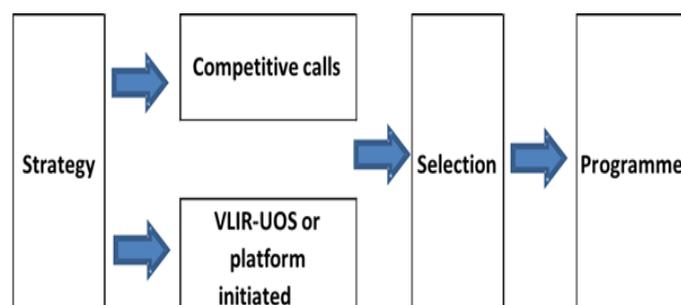
A strategy assures relevance and complementarity. Relevance because it focuses on the needs and priorities of the partner country, and complementarity because it takes into account what other development partners do. As such, a strategy starts from the needs of the partner country, and in particular the national priorities in terms of poverty reduction and national policies for Higher Education. Furthermore it takes into account the ambitions, capacities, expertise, and interest for cooperation among the Flemish academic community.

## Time frame

The development of academic capacity requires a long-term framework that is often precluded by current policy dynamics, which are characterized by constant changes and shifts at the international and country level in both North and South. Therefore, VLIR-UOS has opted for a strategic framework covering, in principle, 12 years.

## From country strategy to country programme

The country strategy paper is the basis for working out a fully-fledged country programme. A country programme consists of a portfolio of specific cooperation projects according to different intervention types. In order to achieve this, both competitive open calls and strategically earmarked partner selection will take place as appropriate.



A country programme will consist of a portfolio of different intervention types – mainly as existing today in VLIR-UOS, complemented by national-level initiatives where required.

LEVEL OF RESULTS AND INTERVENTIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF COUNTRY STRATEGY			LEVEL/NEED/OBJECTIVE
National Network University Cooperation, Research platforms and other national-level projects			More direct contribution to country-level priorities and capacity building
	Institutional University Cooperation (IUC)		Institutional strengthening and capacity building
		TEAM and South Initiatives	
			Scholars

**Country level objectives and results**

VLIR-UOS facilitates academic partnerships and related initiatives within the context of a long-term country strategy with a general objective. Furthermore, VLIR-UOS has defined a range of indicators (Key Result Areas) on the basis of which individual initiatives are expected to report. Apart from tangible key result areas, VLIR-UOS also tracks more qualitative results. In a country programme, results from individual projects are brought together in order to come to a set of clear country-level results.

# Acronyms

AECID	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation)
ARES-CCD	Académie de Recherche et d'Enseignement supérieur – Commission de la Coopération au Développement (Academy for Research and Higher Education – Commission for Development Cooperation)
a.s.l.	above sea level
BTC	Belgian Technical Cooperation
CAINCO	Camara de Industria y Comercio
CEUB	Comite Ejecutivo de la Universidad Boliviana (Executive Committee of the Bolivian University)
CIAT	Centro de Investigación Agrícola Tropical
CRISCOS	Consejo de Rectores por la Integración Centro Oeste de América del Sur
CSI	Country Strategy Identification
DGD	Directorate General for Development Cooperation
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation)
HDI	Human Development Index (UNDP)
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institute
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGLU	Instituto de Gestión y Liderazgo Universitario
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDH	Impuesto directo a los Hidrocarburos (Direct Tax on Hydrocarbon)
INIAF	Instituto Nacional de Innovación Agropecuaria y Forestal
ICP	Indicative Cooperation Programme (of the Belgian bilateral cooperation)
ICP	International Course Programme (VLIR-UOS supported MSc-programmes)
IRD	Institut de recherche pour le développement (French Institute for Development Research)
ITP	International Training Programme (VLIR-UOS training programme)

IUC	Institutional University Cooperation
KOI	Korte OpleidingsInitiatieven (VLIR-UOS programme for Short training Initiatives)
MSc	Master of Sciences
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NUFFIC	Expertise and service centre for internationalisation in Dutch education
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
OUI	Organización Universitaria Interamericanal
PCM	Programme/Project Cycle Management
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PND	Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: “Bolivia Digna, Soberana, Productiva y Democrática para Vivir Bien”
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PUCP	Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú
R&D	Research & Development
REI	Reisbeurzen (VLIR-UOS travel grants for Flemish students)
SFM	Sustainable forest management
SI	South Initiatives (VLIR-UOS short term projects)
ToR	Terms of Reference
UA	University of Antwerp
UABJB	Universidad Autónoma del Beni ‘José Ballivián’, Trinidad
UAGRM	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno, Santa Cruz
UAJMS	Universidad Juan Misael Saracho, Tarija
UAP	Universidad Amazonica de Pando, Cobija
UATF	Universidad Autónoma Tomás Frías, Potosi
UMSA	Universidad Mayor de San Andres, La Paz
UMSS	Universidad Mayor de San Simon, Cochabamba
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIBOL	Universidad Indígena Boliviana
UNSXX	Universidad Nacional ‘Siglo XX’, Potosi

UPEA	Universidad Publica de El Alto, El Alto
UPIEB	Universidad de Postgrado para la Investigación Estratégica en Bolivia
USFX	Universidad San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca, Sucre
UTO	Universidad Tecnica de Oruro, Oruro
VLIR	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (Flemish Interuniversity Council)
VLIR-UOS	Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad – Universitaire OntwikkelingsSamenwerking (Flemish Interuniversity Council – University Cooperation for Development)
VVOB	Vlaamse Vereniging voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Technische Bijstand (Flemish Association for Development Cooperation and Technical Assistance)
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organization

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. General Info<sup>1</sup>

Bolivia, officially known as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, is a landlocked country with an area of 1,098,581 square kilometers, located in western-central South America. It is bordered by Brazil to the north and east, Paraguay and Argentina to the south and Chile and Peru to the west.

Prior to Spanish colonization, the Andean region of Bolivia was a part of the Inca Empire, while the northern and eastern lowlands were inhabited by independent tribes. Spanish conquistadors arriving from Cuzco and Asunción took control of the region in the 16th century, starting centuries of colonial rule. After the first call for independence in 1809, 16 years of war followed before the establishment of the Republic on 6 August 1825. Bolivia has since endured periods of political and economic instability, including the loss of various peripheral territories to its neighbours, such as Acre, parts of the Gran Chaco and its coast.

Bolivia has been governed by democratically elected governments since 1982, when a long string of military coups came to an end. The current president is Evo Morales, the first indigenous Bolivian to serve as head of state. Morales' 'Movement for Socialism' party was the first to win an outright presidential majority in four decades, doing so both in 2005 and 2009. In 2014, Morales was re-elected for a third term.

Modern Bolivia is a democratic republic that is divided into nine departments. Its geography varies from the peaks of the Andes in the West (highest point: Nevado Sajama, at 6.542m a.s.l.), to the Eastern Lowlands, situated within the Amazon and Paraguay Basin (70m a.s.l.). This wide geographical range creates several ecoregions and a high level of biodiversity (Bolivia is considered one of the seventeen megadiverse countries in the world).



<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia Bolivia, Worldbank and EU strategy paper

The Bolivian population (10,027,254 in 2012), is multi-ethnic, including Amerindians (55%), Mestizos (30%), Europeans (15%), Asians and Africans. The main language spoken is Spanish, although the Guarani, Aymara and Quechua languages are also common. These four languages, together with 34 other indigenous languages, are official. Bolivia's diversity has contributed greatly to its rich art, cuisine, literature, and music.

Some 62.43% of Bolivians live in urban areas, while the remaining 37.57% in rural areas. The biggest part of the population (70%) is concentrated in the departments of La Paz, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba. At national level, the population density is 8,49, with variations marked between 0,8 (Pando Department) and 26,2 (Cochabamba Department). Bolivia has a young population. According to the 2011 census, almost 60% of the population is younger than 25 years of age.

Bolivia's main economic activities include agriculture, mining (Bolivia is rich in minerals, among others lithium (50%-70% of world reserves) and tin), forestry, fishing, and manufacturing goods such as textiles, clothing, gas (second largest natural gas reserves in South America) and refined petroleum. In the last decades, (the income from) tourism has become increasingly important.

Being a resource rich country, Bolivia's economy was historically based on natural resource extraction. Following a disastrous economic crisis during the early 1980s, reforms spurred private investment and stimulated economic growth in the 1990s. The period 2003-05 was characterized by political instability and protests against neo-liberal policies. In 2006, newly elected president Morales launched an economic reform which stabilised the situation. This reform included a major modification of the Constitution, the strengthening of the role of the state in the economy and the application of a variety of social programs. Between 2006 and 2009 the economic growth was higher than at any point in the preceding 30 years. In 2009, Bolivia recorded the highest growth rate in South America. Moreover, this growth led to a reduction in moderate poverty (from 63% in 2002 to 45% in 2012) and was accompanied by a moderate decrease in inequality. Between 2002 and 2011, average income of the poorest 40% of the population grew three times more rapidly than average income, and the Gini Index fell from 0.60 to 0.46 in the same period.

Once Bolivia's government depended heavily on foreign assistance to finance development projects and to pay the public expenses. At the end of 2002, the government owed \$4.5 billion to its foreign creditors. But the country has had significant current account surpluses since 2003 (among others thanks to tax collection mainly from the profitable exports of natural gas to Brazil and Argentina: hydrocarbons account for 34% of total public sector revenue, and gas exports account for 49% of total export revenue in 2012) and the fiscal balance became positive beginning in 2006. Due to this performance and the overall debt relief, public debt declined from 94% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2003 to less than 40% in 2013.

Despite these advances, Bolivia faces significant challenges. Moderate poverty affects 45% of the population and income inequality remains high. In addition, several social indicators still fall short of regional averages.

For more information on the country we refer to the [\*\*Country Fact Sheet\*\*](#) and [\*\*Country Strategy Identification Report\*\*](#), available on the VLIR-UOS website.

## 1.2. Development priorities

The current Bolivian development plan (“Plan Nacional de Desarrollo: Bolivia Digna, Soberana, Productiva y Democrática para Vivir Bien” (PND), 2006-2011 and updated with the “Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social 2012–2015”) was elaborated by the National Ministry of Development Planning. The “Agenda 2025”, can be understood as the National Development Plan 2015 – 2025, mentions 13 pillars for a Dignified and Sovereign Bolivia:

- Eradication of extreme poverty
- Universal basic services
- Health
- Education and sports for an integral human development
- Scientific and technological sovereignty with own identity
- Community financial sovereignty
- Productive sovereignty with diversification and integral development
- Sovereignty over natural resources, through nationalization, industrialization and commercialization in harmony with nature
- Food sovereignty
- Environmental sovereignty
- Complementary integration of sovereign nations
- Sovereignty and transparency of public management
- Enjoyment of culture and traditions, happiness and prosperity.

The current development plan is the base to build a multinational state which allows the empowerment of social movements and emerging indigenous peoples in order to improve the well-being of all Bolivians. It aims to change the economic development pattern of the country from export of primary resources (with little added value) to an internal production and accumulation of wealth. The plan attributes a pivotal role to the State as development actor.

The document articulates several long-term development policies and programmes and attaches great importance to science, technology and innovation and aims for more locally contextualised, applied and participative research to contribute to the solution of Bolivian development challenges.

The policies of the PND in relation to science and technology include:

- **Science, Technology and Innovation for productive development, with sovereignty, National integration and social inclusion**
  - creation of a **‘technology base’** (Sistema Boliviano de Innovacion)
  - institutional strengthening of productive services
  - alternative products for **food sovereignty**
  - **environment** and clean technologies
  - **biodiversity**
  - development of **hydrological** potential of Bolivia
  - combat **desertification** and erosion
  - production of **biofuels**
  - **textile** technology based on natural resources

- improvement of leather production
- **social and economic** studies
- **Inclusive scientific culture for the construction of an endogenic knowledge society**
  - **popularization** of science and technology
  - **training** of human resources in research and innovation
  - centres for technological training
- **Recovery, protection and utilization of local and ancestral local knowledge**
  - local knowledge and intellectual property rights
  - coca

This complements the general priorities of the Development Plan of which is expected they will remain in force:

1. Industrialisation of natural resources
2. Diversification of the economy generating a greater role for government in the economy with a focus on industrialization of renewable and non-renewable resources.
3. Protection of the environment, sustainable forest management (SFM)

### 1.3. The Bolivian higher education system

Education in Bolivia is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Bolivia devotes 23% of its annual budget to educational expenditures, a higher percentage than in most other South American countries. Nevertheless, a divide between the rural and urban areas persists: urban illiteracy decreases, whereas rural illiteracy levels remain high.

The Educational Reform projects its objectives on the long term (20 years). In the current phase (2004-2015), three main areas can be highlighted:

- Quality education that meets basic learning needs of children and adolescents;
- Education and vocational training that responds to the development of productive and competitive capacities of youth and adults;
- Participative and efficient management which leads to quality and equity in education and training.

Primary education in Bolivia consists of a five-year primary cycle, theoretically compulsory between the ages of seven and fourteen. Although primary education registration rates have increased over the years, school absence and dropout rates are still high, especially among the indigenous population. The primary cycle is followed by three years of intermediate school and four years of secondary education.

The Bolivia higher education landscape consists of universities (in total about 50), technical institutes (Industry, Natural resources, Trade and Services) and 27 teacher training schools. Roughly, Bolivian Universities can be divided into four groups: the Public Autonomous Universities, the universities under special regime (the first 2 categories forming the "National System"), the indigenous universities (UNIBOL) and the Private Universities (including some foundations).

The traditional history of Bolivian higher education starts with the foundation of the Royal and Pontifical University of San Francisco Xavier in La Plata (Sucre), by the Jesuits in 1624. Following the Bolivian independence, more universities were established. Today, Bolivia counts 11 public autonomous universities:

1. Universidad San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca (USFX), Sucre, founded in 1624
2. Universidad Mayor de San Andres (UMSA), La Paz, founded in 1830
3. Universidad Mayor de San Simon (UMSS), Cochabamba, founded in 1832
4. Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno (UAGRM), Santa Cruz, founded in 1880
5. Universidad Técnica de Oruro (UTO), Oruro, founded in 1892
6. Universidad Autónoma Tomás Frías (UATF), Potosí, founded in 1892
7. Universidad Juan Misael Saracho (UAJMS), Tarija, founded in 1946
8. Universidad Autónoma del Beni 'José Ballivián', Trinidad, founded in 1967
9. Universidad Nacional 'Siglo XX', Potosí, founded in 1985
10. Universidad Amazonica de Pando, Cobija, founded in 1993
11. Universidad Pública de El Alto, El Alto, founded in 2000

These public universities are fully funded by the state based on a percentage of the national budget established by the Constitution. Public universities are totally autonomous in all their economic, academic and educational decisions. They are managed through a system of co-government. This means that the maximum authority is a University Council, in which students and academics combined with administrative staff have each a representation of 50% (Exceptions are the UNSXX (Universidad Nacional Siglo Veinte en Llalagua) and the UPEA (Universidad Pública del Alto), with a slightly different representation, involving civil society). The line ministry for higher education is the Ministry of Education, more specifically the 'Directorate General of University Higher Education' of the 'Vice Ministry of Higher Education and Professional Training'.

Apart from this 11 public autonomous universities, there are 4 more higher education institutes with a 'special regime':

1. Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo, founded in 1966
2. Escuela Militar de Ingeniería, La Paz, founded in 1950
3. Universidad Andina Sión Bolívar, Sucre & La Paz, integrated in 1985
4. Universidad Policial Mariscal Antonio José de Sucre, integrated in 2009

These 15 higher education institutes form together the 'Sistema de la Universidad Boliviana' (Bolivian University System). The 'Comité Ejecutivo de la Universidad Boliviana' (CEUB) (Executive Committee of the Bolivian University) was established in 1978 in order to represent and coordinate the Bolivian University System.

In 2008, 3 Indigenous Universities were created by Presidential Decree, one for each of the main indigenous language and culture groups of Bolivia:

1. Universidad Aymara Tupac Katari in the La Paz Department
2. Universidad Quechua Casimiro Huanca in the Cochabamba Department

### 3. Universidad Guaraní Apiaguaiki Tupa in the Chuquisaca Department, in the Chaco region

The indigenous universities are grouped as the 'Bolivian University' (Universidad Indígena Boliviana / UniBOL).

The indigenous universities were created with the double aim to improve access to Higher Education for people belonging to indigenous groups, and to adapt the pedagogic structure and curricula to the indigenous reality, by means of (social and anthropological) research. The UniBol universities have an academic dependence of the Education Ministry. They offer technical (engineering) studies (agronomy, veterinary, agro-industry) and have each a research centre for indigenous language and culture. The purpose of these research centres is to adapt and enrich the curricula of the technical disciplines with its research on indigenous language and culture to generate a curriculum which responds better to the demands of the specific indigenous groups.

About 40 private Universities are active in Bolivia. In comparison to other countries in the region, they have a very recent history (about 35 years) and are attended by only 20% of the University students' population. Private Universities were created by religious or commercial organizations. These universities are organized through the ANUP (National Association of Private Universities). The Private Universities have authorities, appointed by their respective boards, mainly controlled by their respective corporations or shareholders. This is less democratic compared to the public institutions, but offers a more flexible and stable management structure.

For their programme and institutional accreditation private universities are entirely dependent on authorizations by the Education Ministry. This process is considered as very long and bureaucratic, with little technical considerations.

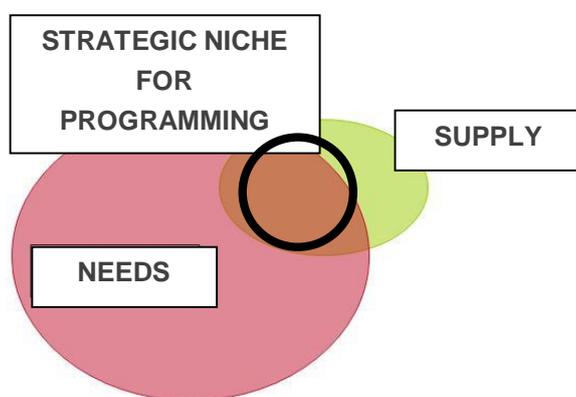
This leads to the paradox that private universities – fully funded by students and the private sector –are totally dependent on the state to assure their academic standards, and that on the other hand, public universities – fully funded by the state – are academically totally autonomous.

## 2. Country Strategy development

### 2.1. Background

#### 2.1.1. Bolivia country strategy formulation process

The Country Strategy Identification (CSI) process started with the development of a desk study in which the Flemish areas of interest in working with Bolivia have been captured (supply side) and initial input from the South (Bolivian Embassy) has been analysed. On 8 January 2015, a North seminar was organized in Brussels, in order to listen to the experiences and ideas of the interested Flemish academics and other Belgian stakeholders. The CSI mission meant to identify the needs (demand side) and identify (thematic, regional, institutional) the space and opportunities for both to match. Need identification was done through visits to pre-selected HE institutions, authorities and other stakeholders. In addition, the hosting of a local seminar on 19 March 2015 allowed for further inputs and discussions.



#### 2.1.2. Higher education and research: policy environment

##### ***National education priorities of Bolivia***

The Education Ministry aims at access for anyone to productive, socially relevant education, with emphasis on participation and improved quality. The Vice ministry of Science and Technology is the department of the Education Ministry that is closest to University Education. Nevertheless, no direct mention of activities or projects with Universities is made in its mission; this is to be explained by the – almost absolute – university autonomy, which makes universities completely responsible for their own academic and financial management. The Vice Ministry is creating the Bolivian System of innovation and the Bolivian system of scientific and technological information, in which Universities should play a role, but not as protagonists.

The only way the state has an influence in University policy is through financing. Basic financing is determined by law and cannot easily be modified. The additional financing last years through IDH can be controlled by modifying investment regulation. The state is willing to improve relevance of investments by more flexibility, adding extra investment possibilities, and more strict regulations to have more control. The current regulations are currently under revision.

The only national actor directly involved in formulating University policy is the CEUB. It formulates common policies and regulations for all (public and special status) universities. For this purpose it organises Congresses and has eight technical secretaries that address issues as accreditations, international relations, postgraduates and research policies, etc. These policies can only be adopted in the congresses if universities agree, due to the autonomy system.

Despite the autonomy of the universities, in 2007 the Minister Felix Patzi negotiates five topics to give more social relevance to the autonomous universities including the deconcentration to rural areas, native language in the curricula, recovery of ancestral knowledge, salary reduction and inclusion of much more training in the last years of education in the University.

### ***Higher Education and research in Bolivia***

Research is not a high priority within the Bolivian Universities, their main objective is education. Student numbers are increasing continuously and as a result the resources available are focused on responding to the increased demand for education. In general, as the country's investment in R&D is estimated to be 0.16% of GDP, in comparison with 0.32% as a regional average and 2.4% in OECD countries (World Economic Forum, 2013). Private sector participation in research is low and in general, innovation is not a key element in national economic policy or strategy. As a result the production of internationally indexed research papers is very low. The number of researchers in Bolivia is about a third from the regional average and only 1% of these is employed in the productive sector, compared to 16% in Latin America (World Bank, 2012, *Development Indicators*). Only 10% of researchers holds a PhD degree.

All this has to be considered in the context of a strong economic growth in Bolivia in recent years which is not followed by a growth in research and innovation investment. In terms of research and innovation, Bolivia has some serious structural problems.

- Research and innovation is not an integral part of the university institutional policy
- There does not exist a public innovation and research system and as a result university research focus is not related to national needs.
- There are no clear national public policies to involve universities in the innovation process and as result articulation is slow and limited
- Public and Private sector investment in innovation is very limited

### ***Alliances and networking of Universities in Bolivia***

Most universities have agreements with the public sector (including research but mainly focused on internships for students). However, the link between university research and private sector, which should be the driving force of innovation, is considered very weak. Contacts among Bolivian universities are often externally motivated, mainly by international cooperation.

Most universities organize extensions in the provinces of their region to improve access for students and to gain some visibility in the region with extension activities. A lot of universities, both public and private, offer master studies financed with tuition fees in other regions than their home region, to increase their number of (paying) students. Universities are often considered as islands in Bolivian society by other actors.

*International Relations of Bolivian Universities:*

The international alliances mentioned by universities are generally agreements for internships of students. International Alliances of Universities exist directly between Bolivian and international universities, or through the CEUB. These alliances are mostly focused on exchange of academics and training initiatives, for students or at MSc and PhD level and some investment in equipment and research operational costs.

Most contacts are with Spanish and Cuban Universities, followed by other European and Latin American Universities. International financial support comes mainly from Europe (62%), other South American Universities (17%) and the United States and Canada (9%). Language limitations (English) have without doubt their impact.

Most universities participate in regional networks, but most networks seem to be meetings at the higher level (rectors), without a clear impact on university performance. These networks include: *Consejo de Rectores por la Integración Centro Oeste de América del Sur* (CRISCOS); *la Organización Universitaria Interamericana* (OUI); *el MERCOSUR EDUCATIVO*, *el Convenio Andrés Bello*; *Instituto de Gestión y Liderazgo Universitario* IGLU and others.

Internationalization of Bolivian Universities is very limited and in many cases not even part of institutional policy. Most forms of internationalization are based on development aid projects or research projects and involve exchange of student and training for researchers but no long term sustained relations with universities in other countries. There are very limited actions in terms of exchange of learning outcomes or accreditation, something which would be enormously beneficial to Bolivian Universities. As mentioned before, Bolivian Universities are very isolated within the country itself but even more internationally. To start working on a NVAO type accreditation for example would have an enormous impact within Bolivia Universities. Belgian Universities could play a role in this.

## 2.2. Views and themes expressed (based on survey, interviews and seminar, and mission and seminar)

### 2.2.1. Expressions of interest by the Flemish (academic) stakeholders

In general the **broad themes for cooperation** of the past prevailed during the North Consultation rounds and are in line with the country's priorities and with the Belgian-Bolivian bilateral cooperation.

The following themes were confirmed, but somehow reorganised in view of fitting with the general VLIR-UOS approach:

**Strategy in development - summary matrix of current strategic opportunities from the North versus National priorities, Belgian ICP & other donors** (discussed at level of the Bureau UOS of 23 January 2015)

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	PND	BTC	IDB	EU	AECID	GIZ
		BOL	BEL			ESP	GER
<b>FOOD SOVEREIGNTY</b>	(family) agriculture, nutrition, link with environment and climate change	x	x			x	x
<b>ENVIRONMENT &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES (WATER)</b>	Sustainable management of natural resources (water resources, use of land for production, pollution from mining and effects on health), biodiversity, ecology, impact of climate change	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	society and psychosocial health, social insecurity and safety, indigenous rights, multiculturalism, urbanisation, migration, link with governance and indigenous rights, cultural identity, health related to social development	x	x	x		x	x
<b>CROSSCUTTING/ SUPPORT DOMAINS</b>							
<b>RESEARCH SUPPORT</b>	PhD training, language training (academic English), scientific writing, statistics, data management, ICT support and intellectual property rights	x	x	x		x	

It was considered important to limit the number of (sub) themes and make sure there is an integrated, multidisciplinary approach starting from the central theme of 'vivir bien' and linking up for instance biodiversity, food sovereignty with natural resources management (mainly water and effects of climate change and health) and societal problems (children at risk, related health, community development, decentralisation) and also taking into account economic development (technology for productive sectors, software for technology) and not address all of these as separate development problems.

A number of issues are crosscutting and instrumental for all activities in Bolivia:

- 'enhancing of research quality' as a 'crosscutting' theme to be addressed possibly through a more national approach/project whereby the link is made with research policy and practices (research based education, scientific writing, academic English).
- Importance of regional embedding. Possibilities of cooperation over the borders, in particular with the other Andean countries (themes as water, effects of mining, ecology, social psychology)

and development (cfr Peru cooperation with PUCP) could be crosscutting topics resorting under the general cooperation themes linked with government and society).

Current partner universities of VLIR-UOS are Universidad Mayor de San Simon (UMSS), Universidad Mayor de San Andres (UMSA) and Universidad Católica de Bolivia San Pablo (UCB). ARES-CCD focuses on cooperation with Universidad Mayor de San Simon (UMSS) and continued an Institutional University Cooperation after the ending of the VLIR-programme in 2008. In terms of future partner universities, further investigation was considered needed during the North seminar, but since the field is not so wide, a possible focus could be on public universities (11) + a restricted number of private universities (or universities with an intermediate statute).

In terms of VLIR-UOS intervention types, the cooperation with UCB seemed to have potential to develop into other cooperation modalities. There should be potential for TEAM and South Initiatives around strategic themes and guidance of the new indigenous universities (more focus on professionalization) could be envisaged through smaller, more accessible south initiatives in which also institutes for higher education in Flanders could play a role in particular in areas of teacher training and more practical approaches.

Maybe some national-level projects could arise around crosscutting themes (research quality) and in the future network style projects (post IUC or research platforms) or regional cooperation projects (Andes, Latin America) are not to be excluded.

Also, a great number of Flemish travel grant students have Bolivia as a destination and there are opportunities to strengthen Bolivia as a country in our North programmes as for the moment the numbers of Bolivian students in KOI, ITP and ICP are limited.

## 2.2.2. Expressions of interest by the South (government and academic stakeholders)

### *Input and themes from national documents and government stakeholders*

From Bolivia's National Development Plan, a number of general and specific priorities can be taken into account whereby there is an increased attention towards fomenting quality and relevance of research and higher education; focus on science & technology; innovation and productive development.

Specific topics as food sovereignty, environment, biodiversity, water are included in the policy document. For a selection of priorities for VLIR-UOS cooperation these priorities could be taken into account.

### *South Seminar*

The South seminar showed the diversity and richness of possibilities for university cooperation between Flemish and Bolivian universities. In spite of various identified limitations there was a strong call to search for strengths and potentialities and to look for synergy and complementarities.

The main problems of the Bolivian universities that came out of the discussions were the lack of incentives and framework for research (the general lack of a scientific culture), lack of interuniversity relations and interdisciplinary research, bureaucracy and inadequate management models and tools.

When discussing the possible solutions to these problems, the following general proposals were mentioned:

- Improve research policy and capacity:
  - o Elaboration of a strategic research plan
  - o Increase in scientific postgraduate programmes
  - o University programmes to improve publishing capacity
  - o Increase hours to be dedicated to research
  - o University programmes to reinsert scientific academics trained abroad
  - o Salary scale for teaching/research
- Strengthen Internationalization:
  - o Improve university programmes for internationalization
  - o Forge strategic international alliances
  - o Exchange of students and academics (international and national)
- Improve Relations (State – University – civil society/private sector):
  - o Creation of a National Fund for Research and open competitive calls for research
  - o Diagnose of supply of and demand for research among private sector / universities / institutions / other organizations
  - o Incorporation of technology / innovative processes for improving administrative processes
  - o More (participatory) R&D projects
  - o Training for development of “scientific culture”
  - o Coordination forums and development of a shared agenda

The main thematic areas that came out of the next discussion were:

- Social vulnerability and Public Health:
- Food security – Family Agriculture
- Natural resources, Climate Change and Environmental pollution
- Innovation

The South seminar did not really contribute to a regional focus, although VLIR-UOS was invited not to limit its activities to the central axis (La Paz, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz), as most donors do.

The discussion during the south seminar confirmed mainly the mission findings, and gave some interesting additional details, useful for proposals for VLIR-UOS interventions.

### ***General conclusions from the mission***

The general conclusions of the country strategy identification mission to Bolivia can be summarized as follows:

- Infrastructure and equipment is acceptable, no major investments seems to be required
- Universities focus more on their educational tasks than on research but feel that there exists a real need in terms of fulfilling their research responsibilities.
- A national policy regarding research is felt as a necessity. Proposals do exist, but there is a lack of formal discussion platforms. CEUB could play an important role here.
- The financial resources provided by the tax on gas and petrol, as direct funding to universities is important and can be used for strengthening research (among others), but it is not always clear how to use these funds. An important issue for institutional strengthening is to clear this

out, probably working on regulations at university and national level. CEUB could also play a role here. They can use and IDH funding for scientific research but they need to: 1) Define the rules for each University (like Oruro and La Paz) 2) Design research projects in coordination with the society partners 3) Report not only expenses but results regarding benefits to the society and the students.

- International relations are reduced and focus mainly on students and academics exchanges. (examples: 3 universities are working with VLIR-UOS, some universities have cooperation with IRD (France), UMSS was working with NUFFIC in 1997-2005. Some participate in Alpha CE projects, in INCO DC projects (UMSA and UMSS)).
- Institutes linked to research outside the university feel a need to improve the academic level of their staff, but see a limited offer in national universities.
- Links to the private sector are extremely weak, having a direct negative impact on innovation.
- Most universities visited have the predisposition to include scientific research into their main objectives at the same level as education, but this purpose needs practical proposals

## 3. Country Strategy framework – conclusions

### 3.1. Areas of focus (regional, partners)

#### 3.1.1. Regional focus

No exclusion of geographical areas, but the intention is to increase the cooperation with institutes outside the central axis (La Paz – Cochabamba – Santa Cruz) so as to reach the poorest parts of the country as well, which are often neglected by other donors (f.e. Chuquisaca).

#### 3.1.2. Strategic themes

Matching the topics mentioned in South and North, the following thematic areas are identified as strategic themes for future cooperation with Bolivia:

- ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES: water, irrigation, climate change, pollution, biodiversity
- FOOD SECURITY & SOVEREIGNTY: family agriculture, nutrition
- SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: social insecurity and safety, public health, indigenous rights, multiculturalism, immigration

The following crosscutting theme is relevant for all activities in Bolivia:

- RESEARCH SUPPORT: PhD training, IDH management, Academic/scientific English, Data management & statistics, Networking and internationalization, Accreditation, Staff training policy, Research policy development, Private sector involvement, Development research methodology and innovation, Intellectual property rights.

#### 3.1.3. Partners

The higher education landscape in Bolivia is diverse. There are considerable differences between public ('national system') universities, indigenous universities (UNIBOL) and private universities. Given the 'for profit' profile and the lack of quality research at the latter, private universities (excluding the 'special status' university UCB) aren't suitable first partners for VLIR-UOS cooperation. Because the number of public universities in Bolivia is rather limited (11), all public universities, plus the 3 indigenous universities and UCB (given their special status labelling them as an institute of 'public interest') are included in the partner list. This list can be adapted according to the corresponding instruments:

1. Universidad San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca (USFX), Sucre
2. Universidad Mayor de San Andres (UMSA), La Paz
3. Universidad Mayor de San Simon (UMSS), Cochabamba
4. Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno (UAGRM), Santa Cruz
5. Universidad Técnica de Oruro (UTO), Oruro

6. Universidad Autónoma Tomás Frías (UATF), Potosi
7. Universidad Juan Misael Saracho (UAJMS), Tarija
8. Universidad Autónoma del Beni 'José Ballivián', Trinidad
9. Universidad Nacional 'Siglo XX', Potosi
10. Universidad Amazonica de Pando, Cobija
11. Universidad Pública de El Alto, El Alto
12. Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo
13. UNIBOL – Aymara 'Tupac Katari', Warisata
14. UNIBOL - Guaraní 'Apiaguaiki Tüpa', Machareti
15. UNIBOL – Quechua 'Casimiro Huanca', Chimoré

There are considerable differences between universities on the 'central axis' ('eje central': La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz) and in the other regions. The universities on the central axis receive in general a lot more attention from international donors, so concerning the geographical focus, it can be suggested to focus more on cooperation with institutes outside the axis.

Apart from the suggested partner institutions listed above, interesting secondary partners were identified during the mission. Some institutions that could be interesting second partners within IUC, TEAM or South initiatives are listed below, but are not eligible as a direct partner. This is not an exhaustive list:

- Private universities
- Ministerio de Agua y Ambiente
- Ministry of Production
- CEUB
- Proinpa
- INIAF
- CIAT
- CAINCO
- UPIEB
- Museo de Historia Natural

### 3.2. Partnership modalities (portfolio of intervention types)

Level	Remarks
National & transversal	Given the perceived lack of institutional heritage of the IUC programme at UMSS, a network with UMSS as hub seems not to be the best way forward. However, given the general need for research strengthening (and the importance of research in international (VLIR-UOS) cooperation), a <u>national crosscutting project on research support</u> (with all partners or with partners from the national system) is advisable. Moreover, regional integration can be sought, especially with other Andean countries (Ecuador, Peru), on topics like food security and the link to climate change
Institutional	IUC is a possibility in Bolivia. Most obvious potential partner for a fully-fledged IUC programme is UCB. Other potential partners for a

	smaller and thematically focused IUC programme are UAJMS and UATF (twinned or separate), USFX and UMSA.
Departmental (sub-institutional)	Opportunities for TEAM projects with well-established partners (national system). SI are ideal to explore new cooperation possibilities, especially so with UNIBOL
Individual (scholarships)	Apart from incorporating scholarships in south projects, (priority) access of staff of non-university research institutions to individual scholarships (ICP and ICP PhD) can be considered. Bolivia is an important country for Flemish travel scholarship opportunities.

### 3.3. Possible synergies with the activities of the Belgian cooperation in Bolivia

The on-going Belgian bilateral indicative cooperation programme in Bolivia focuses on two sectors (a) health and (b) water management and environment, with a total budget of 40 million Euros (ICP 2008).

Partners are Ministries (Health, Environment and Rural development) and local partners (municipalities and departments). Interventions are concentrated in the departments of La Paz, Cochabamba, Potosí and Chuquisaca, with a focus on institutional strengthening.

The new intervention (ICP 2014) concentrates on one sector: Water and environment, and a smaller intervention in intercultural issues, with a total budget of 18.000.000 Euros, which is complementary to research interests as expressed by Universities in both North and South. An important intervention is a contribution through basket funding for the national watershed plan. The DGD office is closing down, but the operational presence (BTC) will go on for the time being.

More clarity about the intentions of the Belgian bilateral cooperation in Bolivia is needed before long term synergy with the HE sector can be elaborated. However, complementary topics with themes mentioned in the North and South Seminars are natural resources management, climate change, and – to a lesser degree – health and rural development.

### 3.4. Other non-academic partners and stakeholders

There is considerable potential to collaborate with several non-academic partners in research projects that would directly impact on the lives of communities and enterprises (NGO's, private sector, etc.).

### 3.5. Contribution and opportunities for Flemish non-university HE institutions

There is a potential for Flemish non-university Higher education Institutions to contribute to the strategy through SI and REI scholarships.

### 3.6. SWOT analysis of a VLIR-UOS strategy with Bolivia

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last five years changes in funding, good financial means available, especially the IDH (<i>Impuesto directo a los Hidrocarburos</i>) (although depending on international prices, prospects are good due to the fact not all of the assigned funds are used)</li> <li>• Good infrastructure, reasonable equipment, including ICT and network infrastructure</li> <li>• Teaching staff available</li> <li>• Good experiences and capacities present</li> <li>• Education mission of University taken very seriously</li> <li>• High level of academic autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research capacity is weak in general</li> <li>• Rigid administrative management</li> <li>• Status of teaching / research staff: most academic staff is paid for teaching, not for research</li> <li>• Formation level of research staff is low on average</li> <li>• Very weak knowledge of English</li> <li>• Experiences and capacities in research not linked to each other or to institutional policies</li> <li>• Link research – education – society is weak</li> <li>• Links with private sector are weak</li> <li>• Poor performance in terms of innovation</li> <li>• Internationalization is weak</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some good, but recent interinstitutional contacts</li> <li>• Good acceptance of CEUB</li> <li>• Research policy in development</li> <li>• Institutional plans available</li> <li>• Good external research capacities and experiences (outside of University)</li> <li>• Alignment with Government policy (National Development plan), more mutual approach noticeable in recent years</li> <li>• Public Universities are normally strongly linked to local environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discontinuity in management in most universities: all policies are recent</li> <li>• Lack of incentives for research, hence motivation for research and post-graduate formation (MSc, PhD) is low</li> <li>• Lack of a quality assurance system (for public universities)</li> </ul>

# ANNEXES

## 1. Bolivia Country Strategy grid

Themes	Sub-theme areas	Domains of Intervention								
		Education			Research		Extension		Management	
		Master	PHD	Short training / recycling	Multi-disciplinary research	Research output	Collaborative training	Workshops /societal activity	HRD	Int'l networking and linkages
ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES	Water & Irrigation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Climate change	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Pollution	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Biodiversity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	...									
FOOD SECURITY & SOVEREIGNTY	Family agriculture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Nutrition	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	...									
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	Social insecurity & safety	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Public health	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Immigration	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Indigenous rights	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	Multiculturalism	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
	...									
INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING	Research support	X	X	X			X	X	X	X

## 2. Bolivia Country Strategy Identification (mission) report (see VLIR-UOS website)

## 3. Country Fact Sheet (see VLIR-UOS website – Bolivia Country info)