

Hydro-energy by Design:
Conservation Plan
Basin Alta del Maule

Hydro-energy by Design: Conservation Plan Basin Alta del Maule

2018 was the starting point of a project called "**Hydro-energy by Design**". Its aim was to plan conservation actions in the Maule water catchment area.

Environmental conservation is an effective means of keeping the ecosystem in good health in a climate crisis context, mitigating threats that may affect the ecosystem, and benefiting the community by developing opportunities related to the sustainable management of eco-systemic services offered by a basin.

This project included in the first two stages an analysis of environmental, social, and economic data incorporated into a geographic information system.

In 2019, a portfolio of conservation objects was identified and, thanks to the participation of different experts, two areas of high value for the environment, the society and for Enel's operations were selected: both are located in the upper part of the basin and include La Invernada and Maule Lakes.

At the end of 2020, the conservation plans, the instruments necessary to define the actions and resources required to preserve the above-mentioned areas and maintain the integrity of their ecosystems, were finalized.

Each conservation plan is based on three main programs:

- **Verification and maintenance of conservation status**, through biodiversity monitoring, follow-up of hydrological flows and verification of the accessibility of natural attractions.
- **Ecosystem health improvement through reforestation**, implementation of techniques for the efficient use of water resources, road maintenance and firewalls.
- **Education and ecotourism programs** delivered through workshops, implementation of signaling systems and installation of ecotourism infrastructure.

This project is the first step towards preserving the area's land ecosystem, contributing to SDG 13 and 15. Apart from being a tool that aids the fight against climate change, it also promotes the sustainable management of land and aquatic ecosystems and the services they provide, in particular Andean forests, wetlands and high scrubs. To implement the conservation plans and to monitor their success indicators in a medium to long-term, it will be necessary to take joint actions, agreed by public and private players, both at a local and national level.

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