

Controversial hydraulic project in coastal Uruguay: conflict around privatization and lack of social participation

Natalia Dias Tadeu, Micaela Trimble, Marila Lázaro



Context



60% of Uruguayan population live in the Metropolitan Region



Santa Lucía River Basin is strategic because it is the main water source



Several problems relate to water quality (agriculture, livestock, industries)



Hydraulic project in discussion (“Proyecto Neptuno”)

Constitutional Reform (Article 47) - 2004



Source: www.elpais.com.uy



Source: Comisión Nacional en Defensa del Agua y la Vida (CNDAV), 2004

Santa Lucía River Basin and water supply system



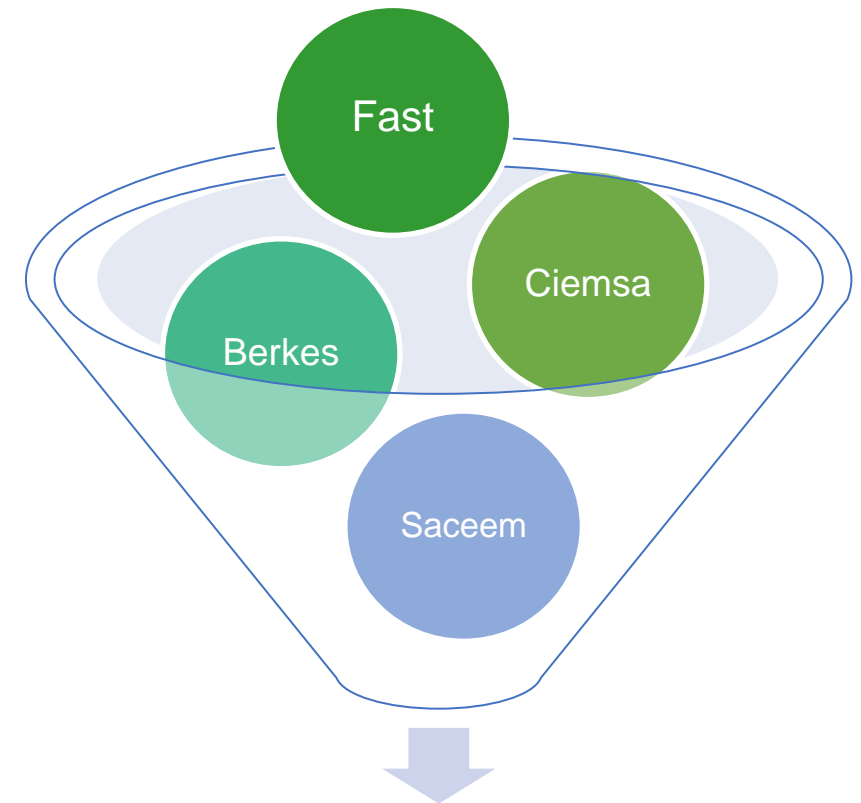
Source:
<http://informecuenca.blogspot.com/2016/07/informe-cuenca-rio-santa-lucia.html>

Neptuno Project

“Improvement of Water Quantity and Quality in the Metropolitan Area of Montevideo”



Source: Junta Departamental de San José, Leg. 49 Sesión 034-Extraordinaria (08/10/2021)



**Consortium of private companies
“Aguas de Montevideo”**

Involved actors

Actors (supporting)

Private consortium

Environmental Ministry

Uruguay Presidency

OSE (Water State Company)

Actors (contesting)

Social organizations

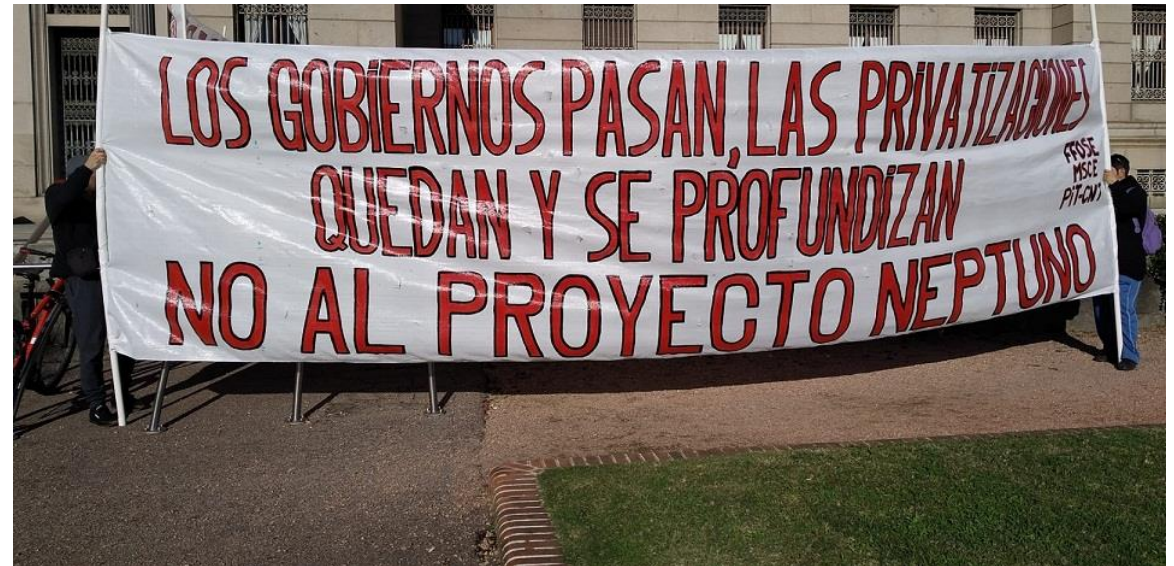
Unions

Academics

INDDHH (Human Rights Instit.) / Res. 1.157/2022



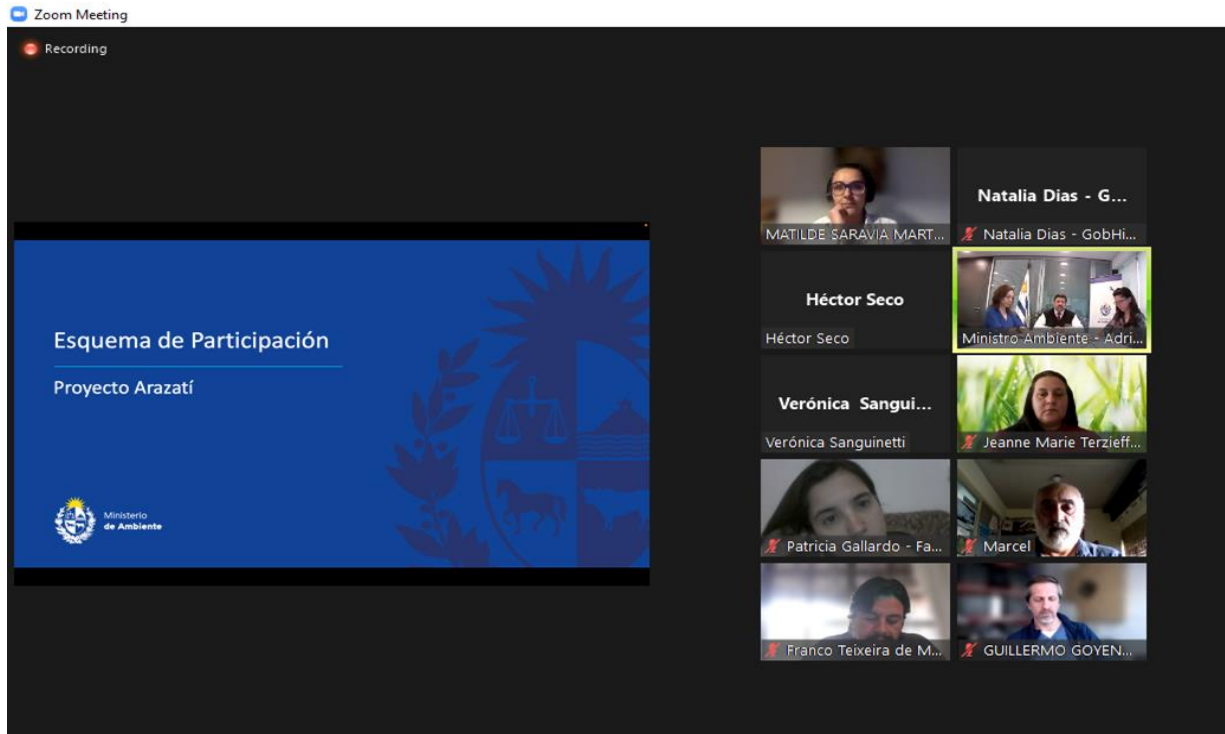
<https://www.antimafiadosmil.com>



<https://www.laizquierdadiario.com.uy>



<https://www.sanjosehora.com.uy>



Virtual Meeting of the Regional Council for Water Resources of the Río de la Plata and its Maritime Front



President and General Manager of OSE in the Departmental Board of San José

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/OSUuguay/photos/a.929533513798142/4448155595269232/?type=3>

Impacts

Eutrophication and salinity in the Rio de la Plata

Loss of vegetation, fauna and alterations of coastal dynamics (beach loss)

Water management

Low control over activities upstream of water intake (Mercosur agreements)

Low transparency about the project

Risk of discontinuity and non-monitoring of the recovery measures for the Santa Lucía river

Water policy

Discussion in formal forums (e.g., basin committees and regional council / (“Mesa de Trabajo” or “Work group”))

Constitutional reform

Prioritization of investment in hydraulic projects

Final considerations

- Insertion of new actors in the sociotechnical water network (private sector)
- Persistence of low transparency (access to information)
- Creation of new spaces for participation
- Risk of "consultative" participation (not taken into account in decision making)



www.saras-institute.org

E-mail: gobhidrosantalucia@saras-institute.org



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