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## COLOMBIA AND PERU: BUILDING BRIDGES ACROSS THE WATERSHED, UPSTREAM AND DOWNSTREAM

### Partnering for Adaptation and Resilience (PARA-Agua)

Duration: 2013–2017

#### Challenge

Rising temperatures and changes in the amount, timing, and intensity of precipitation throughout Latin America and the Caribbean are impacting water resources and affecting crop productivity and biodiversity. In Colombia and Peru, shrinking Andean glaciers and extreme drought and floods threaten the water supply for millions of people living in downstream communities, impacting drinking water, agriculture, and hydropower. But there is no scientific consensus on downstream impacts. Policymakers, researchers, and water resource managers across the Latin America and the Caribbean region urgently need help informing water management decisions with data and science.

#### Opportunity

USAID established the Partnering for Adaptation and Resilience (PARA-Agua) initiative to help governments and communities address these challenges. PARA-Agua is a multi-year collaboration that brings together scientists, decision-makers, and stakeholders from across the region to help communities adapt and become more resilient in the face of a changing ecosystem. PARA-Agua is helping researchers generate policy-oriented data on watershed management for

*Local women representing the Chancay-Lambayeque board of water users tour the Bocatoma Racarumi intake on the Chancay River. Photo credit: Caty Quiroz/PARA-Agua*

integration into decision-making processes, establishing new regional networks across watersheds, and creating linkages between national agencies and their regional counterparts. Through PARA-Agua.net—an online community of practice—PARA-Agua has engaged key researchers, governments, local stakeholders, and community members in conversation and action. With more than 1,500 registered members, PARA-Agua.net serves as a hub for research, trainings and webinars, discussion forums, and other updates from the regional water sector.

This engagement and outreach has yielded results such as the creation of a regional water fund in northern Peru for the Chira-Piura watershed that commits all key water users to the integrated management of water resources throughout the length of the watershed. The fund relies on contributions from the private and public sectors to support actions upstream that improve water management, creating a shared sense of responsibility among those using water resources in the middle and lower basin and those who live near the headwaters.