

Institutionality, logistics and international cooperation for the economic and social development

The case of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

Oswaldo Barriga



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Abstract

The limitations faced by landlocked countries have an impact upon economic and social development since landlocked countries are highly dependent on the transportation infrastructure of neighboring countries to access maritime routes. This results in an increase in the time and cost to trade —factors which can significantly reduce the competitiveness and complementarity of the exports of a landlocked country as well as increase the price of imports.

Studies indicate that the Plurinational State of Bolivia's landlockedness results in losses estimated at 0.5% to 2% of GDP annually. However, some studies, as well as international evidence, conclude that developing adequate logistics and infrastructure is a way of increasing efficiency and contributing to the overall economy. In some countries, the investment in logistics reaches almost 25% of GDP.

In this vein, investing in infrastructure, transportation and logistics are significant factors in fostering economic and social development. With this vision in mind, the Chamber of Exporters of Santa Cruz (CADEX in Spanish), has been developing initiatives to foster economic and social development in the Plurinational State of Bolivia over the last 28 years. These initiatives — accomplished through ongoing collaboration with the public sector and international organizations— include, among others, proposing public policies with measurable results.

A National Meeting of Exporters (ENEX in Spanish) took place in 2013. This national meeting —the first of its kind in the Plurinational State of Bolivia— was an open forum where the export sector, the public sector and international organization met to identify problems affecting the export sector and provide adequate solutions. The ensuing dialogue resulted in a public-private collaboration that will focus on addressing bureaucratic and administrative issues, trade facilitation matters and work toward establishing the development and improvement of logistics as an ongoing economic policy in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, both in the present and the future.

I. Infrastructure and logistics in the Plurinational State of Bolivia

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is located in the center of South American region. This is a key fact to make it a hub for regional logistics integration because it is surrounded by 40% of South American countries including Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Argentina, and Peru. The Plurinational State of Bolivia also has fluviarium access to the Plata and Amazon Basins through a mesh of 5.000 km navigable rivers. Moreover, it is also an air knot of central-west South America given its strategic position and equidistant position to major capital cities that surround it.

Due to logistics complementarity with neighboring countries, road networks, shared fluviarium access and inter-oceanic corridors, the country can —and has— all of the capacities to become an integral logistics area for the region.

According to the features described above, the Plurinational State of Bolivia's potential markets for goods and services are:

- Brazil (Rondonia, Acre, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goias), 12.743.811 inhabitants;
- Paraguay, 6.541.591 inhabitants;
- Argentina (Jujuy, Salta, Tucuman, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero, La Rioja), 4.911.412 inhabitants.

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