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# **Lithium mining in Argentina: an overview of its main impacts**

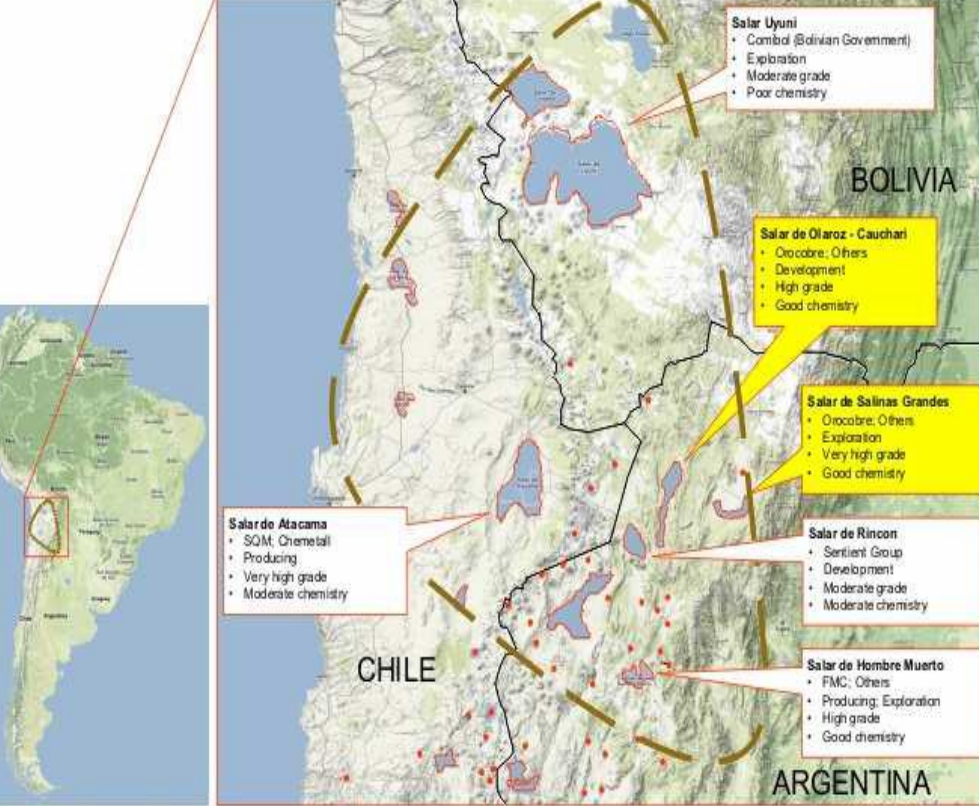
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Oeko-Institut Annual Conference

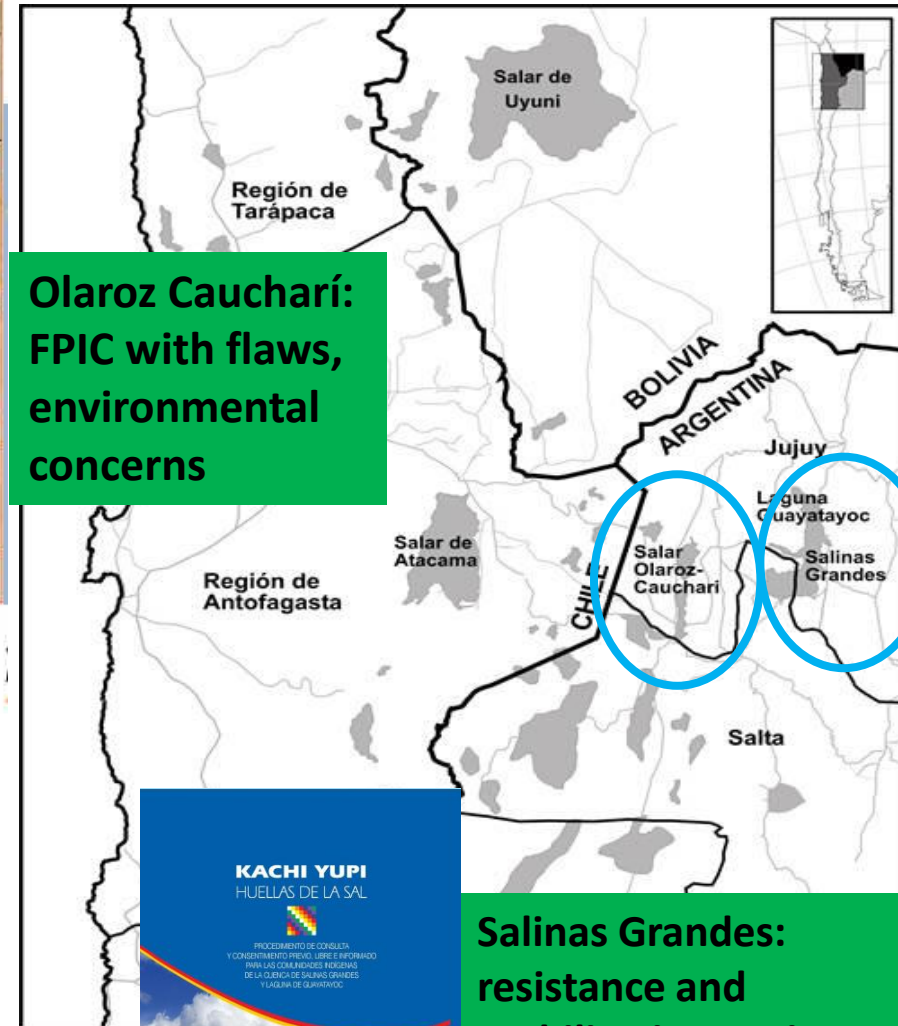
22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022



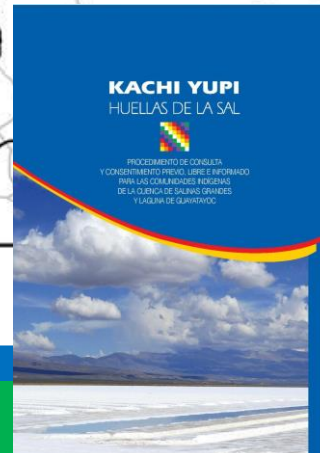


Resources: Company presentations, Roskill and independent consultants (to Orocobre) estimates  
 Note: stated resources are not NI 43-101 compliant  
 Represents smaller brines

**Resources in the lithium triangle: 65% Argentina is 4<sup>th</sup> world producer (after Australia, Chile, China); 29.5% world production by 2020.**



**Olaroz Cauchari: FPIC with flaws, environmental concerns**



**Salinas Grandes: resistance and mobilization against lithium; Kachi Yupi (community protocol on FPIC)+ litigation**

# Strategies and policies in Argentina

## Open participation of transnational capital in lithium's extraction

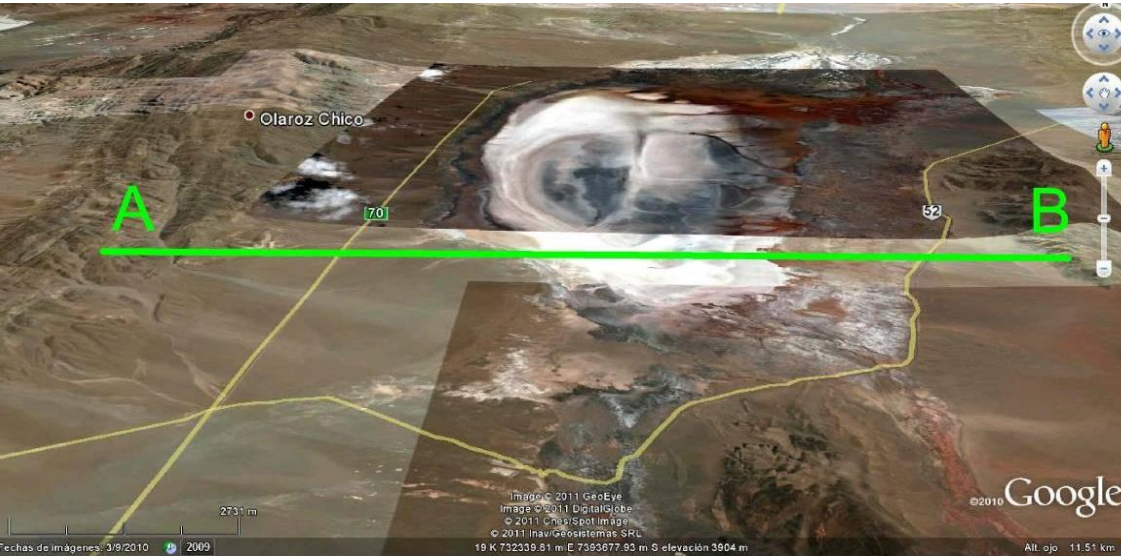
- Joint ventures between mining, provincial companies and automobile companies
- Great expectation about producing ion-lithium batteries
- Federal state: provinces own the nat. resources (approve, control projects)
- High potential for environmental conflicts (lack of participation and risks of impact on water sources due to flawed environmental assessments)



**Only of the 3 countries in which lithium can be licensed; 40+ projects in different phases; 2 in operation (1997 and 2014); 2 in construction; 23 in advanced exploration**



# Insufficient evaluation of environmental impacts and ability to prevent irreversible damages



- Endorreic water-shed 3000+ m.o.s.l.;
- Andean wetlands
- Dry climate with water scarcity throughout the year
- Complex information and gaps in the analysis of how this fragile ecosystems work; inadequate assessment of their value in decision making process (lack of environmental strategic and accumulative impact assessments)



# Biodiversity rich areas are not protected or respected in mining decision-making



Flamenco Puna (L Altoandino (R), Patricia Marconi, Andean regional Conservation group)



Vicunas



Stromatolite, microorganisms, Dr. Farias

**Including their hability to absorve CO2 and release oxygen!!**





**Reconfiguration of territories; displacement and invisibilization of ways of relating with nature and creation of a new territoriality linked to the global (Goebel, 2013)**





**Mobilization and protests in the lack of participatory channels and lack of/or deficient FPIC implementation**

# Some reflections and points for further discussion:

- **Economic:** how to avoid reinforcing the web of interrelated **inequalities and asymmetries** at the various levels (Global North and South), within the region, and with communities.
- **Economic:** How to devise a **responsible supply chains that seek to minimize extreme extraction** and encourage a move to **less material exchanges** (consumerism, work on demand side)
- **Social/cultural:** how to avoid breaking or putting at risk the complex set of social and reciprocal relationships in the territories; how to **genuinely grant community participation** in the local decision-making processes and benefits
- **Environmental:** how **to minimize impacts at a local level**; improve decision making and technical capacities of authorities to authorize and control de projects



# Some reflections and points for further discussion:

- Systemic approach: coordinate efforts to tackle consumerism involving reducing demand for transition minerals (programmed obsolescence re-use, recycling) and devising an **energy transition that involves a paradigm shift** (less material demand), not just an energy transition for the global north.
- Practical approach: **enforce local and national capacities** to engage in lithium discussions including the multiple dimensions involved in lithium: technological, environmental, economic, social. Coordinate efforts to **leverage the National and provincial States for a strong social and environmental commitment** (lithium in a debt crises)
  - FPIC and environmental impacts assessments.
  - What happens with non-European companies and standards?



**Thank you!!**

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