

REINCORPORATION AND THE TERRITORIAL SPACES FOR TRAINING AND REINCORPORATION (ETCR)

After the signing of the final peace accord on November 24, 2016 – subsequently approved by the Colombian Congress on December 1st (“D-Day”) – a wave of individual decrees emerged a week later defining what would come to eventually be the 26 transitional points and zones (ZVTN) that the disarming FARC would occupy until August 15th of the current year. For those first eight months, the ZVTN were regulated by a clearly determined set of guidelines that maintained the occupants of these zones apart from surrounding communities, with a few specific exceptions. The process was monitored by the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mission (MM&V) comprising members from the GoC, the FARC, and military international observers from the U.N. The principle order of business was maintaining the ceasefire between the FARC and the GoC, and disarming the largest remaining guerrilla group in the Western Hemisphere.

By June 27th, the United Nations had completely disarmed the rebels; by September 15th, the operations for extracting the remaining weapons caches had also drawn to a close. Between those two dates, on August 15th, the ZVTN converted into Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR). With the technical change in the legal status of these zones come fundamental changes in their purpose, and operational security concerns in the zones move to the fore, both for the former guerrillas as well as the surrounding communities. This Spotlight analyzes the current conditions in these zones and the near term prospects and challenges for reincorporating guerrillas and the inhabitants in these regions. The quadrant below introduces a brief overview of some of the major changes in structures.

GOC¹ AND THE U.N.² STRATEGIES IN THE ETCR

GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA

IRENE: a “multidimensional security mechanism for reconstructing the social fabric and consolidating rural territories.”

Basic Units of Frontier Officials (UBICAR, within the National Police), who will be first responders for issues with coexistence and security; intended to guarantee state presence in rural areas and connect residents with government services; provisions for restorative justice programs

CARPA AZUL: this strategy “helps to construct secure zones for the enjoyment of one’s rights.”

Interinstitutional Command Post (PMI) that will include the National Ombudsman’s Office, the National Attorney General’s Office, Armed Forces, National Police, U.N., and members of the former guerrillas when necessary. The PMI will hold regular meetings with the purpose of tracking and supporting the security situations around the ETCR and facilitating peaceful coexistence

To realize these and other government strategies, 40 members of the National Police will remain in each of the transitional zones for three years. These officers have been trained in investigative skills, youth and adolescent attention, and other domains, and will complement an Elite Team that specializes in combating organized crime networks.

UNITED NATIONS

Start of Second Mission: The second verification mission was approved July 10th of this year, and started on September 26th. The first verification mission formally ended on August 15th, though many of the members of this mission have stayed in the zones. The second mission will replicate the geographic coverage of the first one, though some sites may be moved to more easily accessible locations.

Objectives and Size: While the first mission had nearly 500 international observers, the majority of which were from foreign militaries, this second mission will have a mere 120 observers, and they will be almost exclusively civilians. The second mission will verify Points 3.2 and 3.4 of the final accord, which refer to reincorporation and security guarantees.

Interinstitutional Coordination: The second U.N. verification mission will continue to coordinate within the United Nations at the regional, national, and international levels – ultimately reporting to the Security Council. It will work in great detail with the Commission for Monitoring, Impulse, and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement (CSIVI), the National Council for Reincorporation, and the National Commission for Security Guarantees.

Additionally, during September, more detailed statistics were made available from the socioeconomic census conducted on the FARC while they were in the transitional zones.³ Those that relate most to this next phase of the transition are included here:



Going Home

77% do not have a home to return to
36% want to live with other former guerrillas; 29% with their families



Changing Contexts

63% had been in the guerrilla group for more than 10 years; 85% for more than five years



Past Experience

72% have worked in agriculture; 62% in cooking; 39% in environmental conservation



Future Contributions

84% would be interested in environmental conservation and restoration work



Participation & Citizenship

29% look forward to joining the political party; 37% do not plan on participating in social or political groups

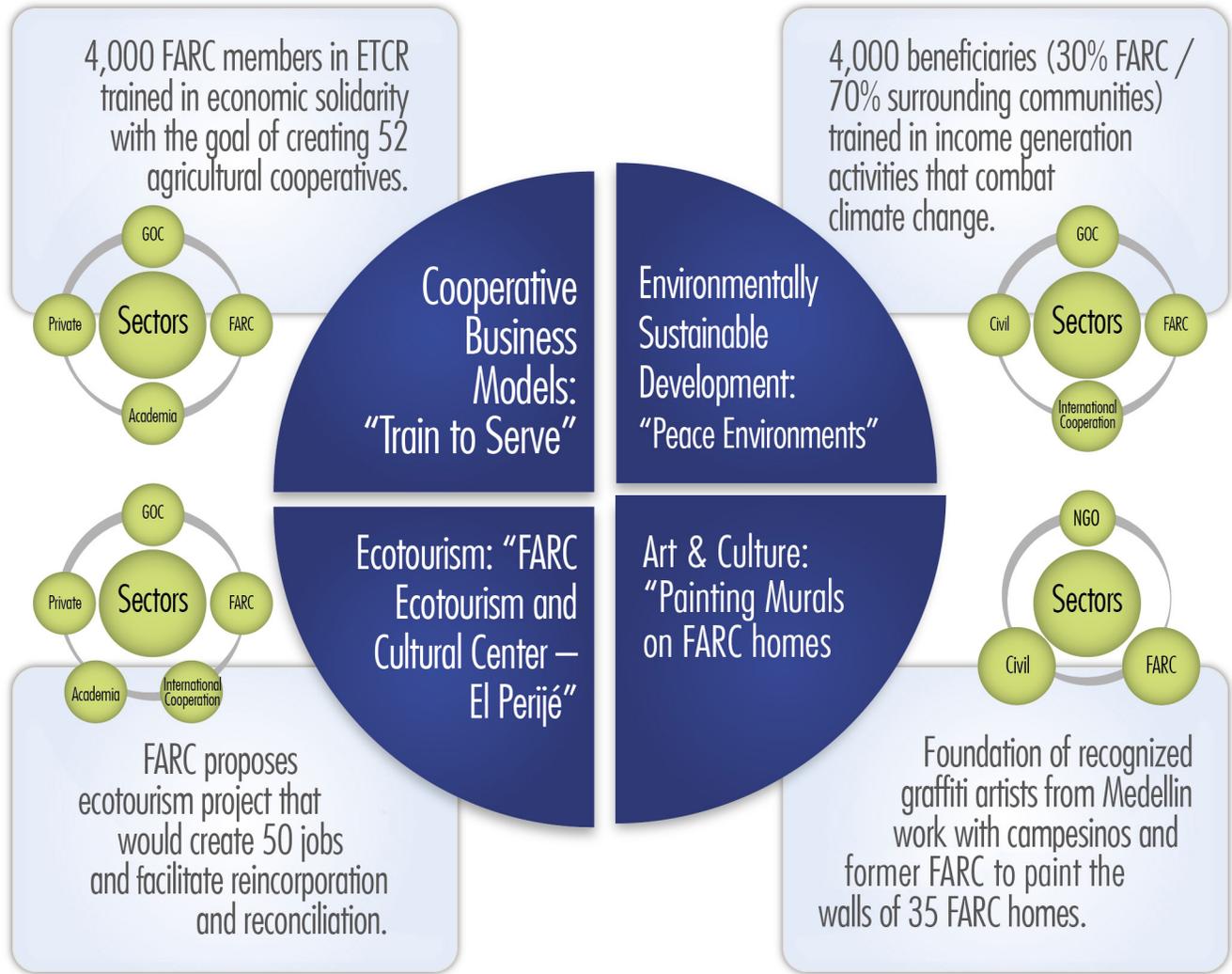
¹ <http://www.elpais.com.co/proceso-de-paz/mindefensa-responde-sobre-preocupaciones-tras-desmonte-de-las-zona-veredales.html>

² <http://undocs.org/es/S/2017/745>

³ <http://especiales.semana.com/farc-adn/civil.html>

TERRITORIAL PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES IN THE ETCR

While at the national level, the GoC and other institutions work to develop plans to deploy in the territories, local communities, governments, NGOs, and residents in and around the ETCR are launching cross-sector collaborations that facilitate development, reconciliation, and reincorporation of the former guerrillas. Below are just four examples of these territorially-focused peacebuilding initiatives.



The change from ZVTN to ETCR brings with it a certain degree of uncertainty. However, inhabitants in these areas are as quick to share their hopes for the future as they are to voice their concerns. Worries in the regions include the following: armed organized narco-trafficking interests, insufficient support for FARC social and economic reintegration, and residual issues with land ownership that trace back to the origins of the armed conflict, among others. Residents, including the FARC, also express their hopes for the coming months and years. Many guerrillas are eager to carve out their new identity as citizens, neighbors, family members, farmers, and/or entrepreneurs. Some rural residents see the ZVTN and subsequent ETCR as opportunities for an infusion of much needed infrastructure, education, health, and citizen security initiatives.

Regardless of their thoughts about what the ETCR may signify over the near term, regional inhabitants will require supports that include a tailored approach for considerations such as point in the life cycle, gender, and ethnic identity. For example, the Nasa Childhood Observatory has developed a tailored approach to reintegration for the Nasa indigenous people. Additionally, representatives from the indigenous communities of Toribio are working to restore the rights of minors who have exited illegal armed groups through an ecotourism project on the Reservation. Residents of the ETCR also have the opportunity to take a certificate course in training methods for preventing gender-based violence.