

TOWARD AN INTEGRAL APPROACH OF THE PDET: OPPORTUNITIES FOR TERRITORIAL PEACE

The Development Plans with a Territorial Focus (PDET) are the main tool of the Colombian State to carry out socio-economic development to the municipalities most affected by violence in the context of the armed conflict. However, they are also part of a comprehensive commitment of the Peace Agreement to build peace and strengthen State presence in territories where institutions have historically had a limited presence.

This Spotlight explores the current state of the PDET, and analyzes their interdependence with other components of the Final Agreement to End the Armed Conflict and Build a Stable and Lasting Peace (from now on, the Final Agreement), such as the Integral System of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition (SIVJRNR), the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS), the security guarantees for social leaders, and the guarantees for the opposition in the process of democratic opening, among others. This Spotlight examines how the implementation of the PDET can become a tool that can strengthen the reintegration process, and in turn, how the participation of People in the Process of Reincorporation (PPRs) in the PDET can enhance the construction of territorial peace. The argument aims to demonstrate the integrality of the Peace Agreement as a guiding principle for the implementation of the PDET, in a context of growing political and social volatility and increasing organized armed violence.

THE FINAL AGREEMENT AND THE PDET

By its nature, the Final Agreement is a comprehensive plan. That is, the achievement of its objectives is determined by the achievement of each of its interdependent components. The first point of the agreement contains the Comprehensive Rural Reform (RRI) which is meant to materialize through the PDET. The PDET primary objective is to promote progress in rural areas and, concomitantly, to close the gap between urban and rural areas in terms of equity. This section of the agreement explicitly sets all the processes and thresholds for the PDET. In section 1.2.2, it also stresses the need to prioritize some areas over others and spells out the criteria upon which this selection must be made.

This section of the agreement, and the provisions for its materialization, are interdependent to other points, such as the fourth point related to the PNIS and the fifth point linked to the SIVJRNR. If the implementation of one of these points is not upheld, the implementation of the others will fail. The relationship with the fourth point is relevant insofar as the failure to fulfill the commitments toward the communities which chose crop-substitution, or the decision to eradicate crops in a different way than agreed, will erode trust and legitimacy. In addition, the failure to carry out crop substitution processes will lead illegal groups to seek control of areas where there is a power vacuum.

The PDET are also linked with the fifth point of the agreement, in the sense that they complement the SIVJRNR's collective reparations (Oficina del Alto Comisionado para la Paz, s.f.); indeed, the populations of these prioritized areas represent almost 80% of the victims of the armed conflict. Non-compliance with the PDET is also a non-fulfilment of the rights of victims, and failure to carry out these plans is likely to generate mistrust in the State. In such a case, the State's legitimacy would be questioned and may give way to a return to violence.

After the signing of the Peace Accords, the PDET came into

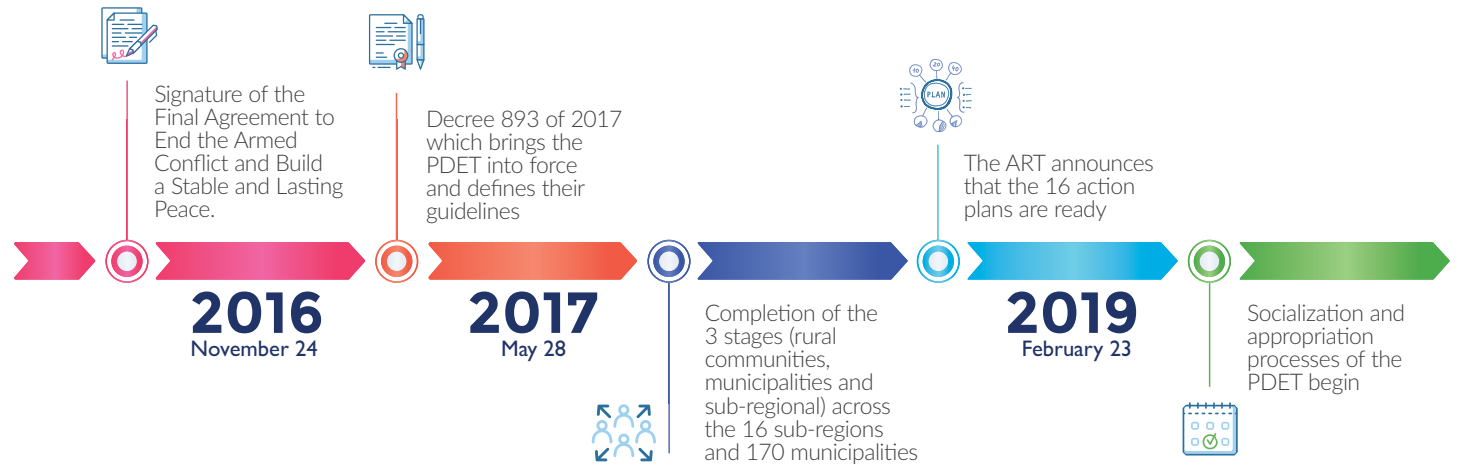
force with Decree 893 of 28 May 2017. This decree defines the 16 sub-regions and each of the 170 municipalities prioritized through the PDET and grants them a 10-year validity. The coordination of the territories is entrusted to the Agency for Territorial Renewal (ART). Also, additional guidelines were created for the PDET in which ethnic groups are represented.

The implementation of the PDET is divided in three major stages, which all place the communities, which are the ones that ultimately build the initiatives to respond to their needs, at the center of the decision-making processes. The stages are divided following a territorial approach: 1) rural communities; 2) municipalities; and 3) sub-regional. In the first stage, an evaluation and analysis of the local context, opportunities, problems and local initiatives is conducted in coordination with local communities. In the second stage, the different processes established at the level of rural communities are integrated together with information from local government, community leaders and the private sector in order to create a Community Pact for Regional Transformation (PMRT). In the sub-regional phase, the Action Plans for Regional Transformation (PATR) are consolidated and approved, based on the plans elaborated in the previous stages.

Initiatives at each stage should be aligned with one of the 8 pillars of the PDET: social distribution of rural property and land use; economic revival and agricultural production; rural education; housing, drinking water and sanitation; the right to food; reconciliation, coexistence and peace; infrastructure and land management ; and rural health.

Through these three stages, each of the 16 regions, as well as each of the 170 municipalities, created initiatives and development plans that addressed the needs prioritized by the community. In total, more than 32,000 initiatives were formulated. As a result, prioritization, coordination, and continuous engagement with local communities are required in order to carry out such a variety and quantity of actions.

TIMELINE



IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES FOR THE PDET

The Colombian State projects economic development, peace and security to the municipalities most affected by the armed conflict through the PDET, which are part of the comprehensive Peace Agreement. In this sense, this is a long-term and highly important strategy, which, in consequence, must become a State policy in order to ensure it is adequately implemented. However, these objectives are faced with different challenges that can be classified into two categories: those that are inherent to the PDET features, due to their territorial and temporary scope; and those related to the prevailing environment in the selected sub-regions.

Part of the challenges related to the implementation of the PDET arise from the plurality and diversity of the communities living in these territories. The implementation of the three initial stages led to the formulation of a total of 32,000 initiatives addressing different issues; the challenge for the State is now to align goals, efforts and objectives. This alignment must be carried out both in terms of planning and budgeting, together with national and local authorities, as well as with the communities. It must also maintain open communication channels to avoid misinformation.

Each project should take the ethnic, gender and life cycle components into consideration, and should also include a sustainable development perspective to the decisions made. These aspects are of high importance since the territories prioritized by the PDET include 452 indigenous reserves, 6 peasant reserves, and cover 45% of the National Natural Parks of the country (Enfoque Territorial, 2019). Given the diversity of the PDET sub-regions, each of them must be approached in a differential manner, in order to guarantee continued participation and leadership of the community.

On the other hand, given the nature of the agreement which introduces the PDET, a major challenge for the State will be to comply with the other points of the agreement, given that the successful implementation of one is codependent on the successful implementation of the others.

In addition, the State is faced with several other challenges that relate to the current security context in the PDET areas. When analyzing the localization of the PDET sub-regions, it appears that

RETOS DE IMPLEMENTACIÓN DE PDET

1 INTERNAL

Diversity of issues and priorities which requires a consolidation of the agenda.

Interdependence with other points of the agreement.

2 BY CONTEXT

High density of coca cultivation.

High number of leaders assassinated.

Ares of **high electoral risk** in regional elections.

most of these territories coincide with parts of the country with high density of coca cultivation (MinJusticia ODC, s.f.), where most assassinations of social leaders were registered in the last year, and where greatest electoral risks were reported by the Electoral Observation Mission (MOE) prior to the regional and local elections of October 2019 (Puentes, 2019).

When the armed conflict with the FARC came to an end, the State's failure to recover the zones previously under control of the FARC led to a power vacuum, and these areas are now being disputed by several illegal groups. The above-mentioned challenges demonstrate that the PDET zones are located in unstable and conflict-affected security contexts. Although the

milestone for the realization of the PDET objectives is set at 10 to 15 years, the current situation in the prioritized areas requires to

consolidate peace and security in the short term in order to create the conditions for the implementation of development plans.

PDET AND REINCORPORATION

According to the ART, the agency in charge of coordinating the PDET, one of the prioritization criteria in the selection of the PDET zones was the presence of Rural Transitory Standardization Zones (ZVTN). These areas are the precedent of what is today known today as the Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR), following the transformation promulgated on 15 August 2017. The reincorporation spaces for ex-combatants have been transformed into the New Reincorporation Points (NPR) and have relocated to new areas of the country where groups of ex-combatants transit to civilian life. Former combatants have moved into these new spaces for various reasons, yet they pursue their reincorporation.

In several of the municipalities that form the PDET, there are also groups of ex-combatants in process of reincorporation, either inside ETCRs or NPRs. Ex-combatants' community work, which can also support their own personal development, helps to strengthen community ties in these areas. The following three examples present PDET municipalities that coincide with reincorporation spaces, where the projects undertaken benefit to the community as a whole.

1) Mutatá, Antioquia

Mutatá is a PDET municipality that is part of the sub-region of the Urabá Antioqueño. Mutatá has also received a group of ex-combatants which was initially located in El Gallo, Tierra Alta (Córdoba) and which relocated because that land was unsuitable for agricultural production. The group formed an NPR and is under the auspices of the United Nations. In this municipality, ex-combatants work for the community. One of the main works realized by ex-combatants is the construction of local roads and

houses. They also developed projects that are expected to generate long-term benefits for all, including tourism projects, the commercialization of eggs and fish, and even the construction of an aqueduct (El Tiempo, 2019).

2) La Paz y Manaure, Cesar

The municipalities of La Paz and Manaure (Cesar) are PDET zones that are part of the Sierra Nevada - Perijá sub-region. Ex-combatants living in an ETCR nearby these two municipalities work hand in hand with the local communities to bring water to their municipalities. This project has been supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the European Fund for Peace in Colombia. Since access to water is a necessary for food security, there was an urgent need to bring water to both the community and ex-combatants. By joining efforts, ex-combatants and local communities started this project for the benefit and development of all, which may also lead them to consider new productive projects (Quintero, 2019).

3) Remedios e Ituango, Antioquia y Caldon, Cauca

These PDET municipalities are part of the sub-region of Bajo Cauca (Northeast of Antioquia and Alto Patía - Northern Cauca). In each of these municipalities there is also an ETCR where projects that seek to economic stability are being implemented. These projects include: Hass avocado cultivation; cattle farming; fish farming; and pig farming, among others. The impulse of the legal economy and industries in these municipalities can generate long-term economic stability, and in turn, creates conditions for reconciliation and coexistence (Embajada de Francia en Colombia, 2019).

CONCLUSIONS

With the end of the conflict with the FARC and the signing of the peace agreement, Colombia enters a phase of reconstruction in which several interdependent issues are at stake. The PDET are part of the Integral Rural Reform and aim to generate development in each of the municipalities most affected by violence. Yet, their achievements are linked to the implementation of other points of the agreement and to the prevailing context in terms of violence and coca growth. Although the PDET are only projected to bring about results in the long run, their immediate implementation along with other projects, and with the active participation of the communities, is conceived as an instrument to prevent a resurgence of violence. For example, the articulation of the PDET with processes of reincorporation provide a unique opportunity to strengthen coexistence, reconciliation and non-stigmatization between ex-combatants and host communities, as well as to deploy the restorative dimension of transitional justice.

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