

Peace Fund

Helping to implement the Colombian peace agreement

Background

Colombia faces a major challenge in implementing the peace agreement signed in Cuba in November 2016. The agreement between the Colombian Government and the left-wing guerrilla group the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia–People's Army (FARC-EP) was reached with the help of international mediators after 50 years of armed conflict. Following its rejection by voters in a national referendum, and after various changes were made, the agreement was passed by a slim majority in the country's parliament. The task now is to make progress in the five areas specified in the peace agreement: 1. comprehensive land reform; 2. action to promote political participation among citizens and civil society; 3. a ceasefire and the disarming of rebel groups; 4. tackling the illicit drugs problem; and 5. compensation for victims. Given that Colombians still have little confidence in the state, tangible results need to be achieved rapidly. Social inequality in the country is high, and violence remains widespread in many areas of life. Not all former FARC combatants have yet laid down their arms as provided for in the agreement and many are joining criminal gangs. Moreover, paramilitary groups still use armed violence to exercise control over several parts of the country, and the smaller guerrilla force ELN has not yet signed a peace agreement.

The full potential of the peace agreement as part of the wider peace and reconciliation process in a post-conflict Colombia can be realised only if, among other things, Colombians actually see positive change. To date, however, there have been few opportunities for people to put forward their own ideas

and projects to help implement the five-point peace agreement. Civil society organisations also lack the capacity and financial resources to implement their own projects.

Objective

The main objective of the Peace Fund is to promote projects and project ideas that will help make the peace agreement more tangible for people living in the regions.

Commissioning party	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
German contribution	Up to EUR 3,173,000
Lead executing agency	Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-Colombia)
Implementing organisations	A range of civil society organisations, partly in collaboration with state institutions
Project regions:	Countrywide
Overall term	May 2017 to June 2019

Method

To achieve its objective, the Fund has adopted a regional and local focus in two complementary fields of activity: supporting projects, and developing the capacity of cooperation partners involved in the peace process. This approach is intended to strengthen these stakeholders in their future role and to create and develop opportunities for networking. The Fund can support projects flexibly and respond to current needs. It also



Staff of the organisation Equitas search for missing persons and possible mass graves in Casanare

operates in conjunction with the Support for Peacebuilding in Colombia project (ProPaz). This project's objective is to implement peacebuilding policies efficiently and in a participatory way. The experiences and results from the Peace Fund's intervention regions can be made available through knowledge transfer to other regions in which ProPaz is active, thereby boosting potential. The Fund is open to civil society and state organisations and addresses the issues listed in the peace agreement. Funding priorities for calls for proposals are established four times a year. A committee made up of representatives of the German Embassy, the local partner (the Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC-Colombia)), and GIZ selects project proposals on the basis of predefined criteria. Selected projects then receive financing of up to EUR 100,000 for a maximum of 10 months.

Results

In the first call for funding, which focused on victims' rights (point 5 of the peace agreement), five projects across three regions of the country received support to conduct systematic searches for missing persons. Over 10 months, the initiative documented a total of almost 500 new cases of missing persons, trained hundreds of family members in reconstructing and tracking their cases, provided psychological support, and trialled new search strategies using forensic, genetic and digital methods. The results were passed on to the newly created special unit set up to search for missing persons. Projects from the other three rounds of calls for funding tackle issues of reconciliation and coexistence, peace communication, (self-)defence for social activists, and collective reparations. Involvement of civil society in implementing the peace agreement

makes the agreement more tangible for regional populations. It also increases trust within society - between former combatants, internally displaced persons, returnees, those who stayed behind, and victims - and between the state and society. Projects selected on the basis of sustainable strategies have the potential to continue to be effective beyond the term for which they are supported. The focus is on alliances with other state and non-state institutions and collaboration with other projects in the priority regions of German development cooperation.

Four short videos on the issues covered by the calls for proposals illustrate the experience of the project and serve as a model for potential results in other regions.

Innovation Fund: the forerunner

Since 2012, German cooperation has expanded the support given to Colombia in implementing peacebuilding measures through 'funds'. The aim is to create scope for a rapid and flexible response to innovative approaches and ideas and to support them as pilots. This helps create synergies with other development cooperation projects and meet needs that projects approaching the end of their term have been unable to tackle. As the forerunner of the Peace Fund, the Innovation Fund supported a total of 25 project ideas up to March 2017. More than half served as models for other regions in the country. These include the House of Memory Museum in Tumaco, economic and business initiatives that offer alternatives to illegal coca cultivation (including with internally displaced persons in Caquetá Department) and innovative digital approaches, such as the video game for mobile phones 'Reconstrucción'.

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