

SI FRONTERA

Supporting host communities for refugees and migrants in the border regions of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru

Context

Due to the humanitarian, political, social and economic situation in Venezuela, more than 7.89 million people – around 25% of the total population in 2016 – had left the country by December 2024. Of the roughly 6.71 million who remained in South America, 2.81 million are in Colombia, 1.66 million in Peru and 444,800 in Ecuador.

As the main destination countries, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are facing major challenges as a result of the large number of Venezuelan refugees and migrants, ongoing and shifting migration flows, slow economic recovery, crime and political unrest.

The communities hosting refugees and migrants from Venezuela often reside in cities, or in more remote border regions of the three countries, where a mainly disadvantaged population faces difficult living conditions. The adverse economic conditions, the lack of access to social, education and health services and limited access to rights and protection mechanisms are giving rise to social tension and insecurity.

In addition, criminal groups engaged in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, smuggling and human trafficking are operating in the border regions of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, which puts both refugees and migrants, as well as the local population at risk.

The governments of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are committed to providing refugees with education and health services, handling their residence status, enabling their economic integration and protecting them from human trafficking, violence and exploitation. Nonetheless, the demand for services relating to regularisation of residence status, essential services, employment generation,

peaceful coexistence and access to protection systems, both for refugees and migrants and for the local population, exceeds the countries' response capability.

Support from German development cooperation and the European Union (EU)

In this context, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has commissioned the Supporting Host Communities for Refugees and Migrants in the Border Regions of Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (SI Frontera) programme, which is being implemented as part of the BMZ Special Initiative on Displaced Persons and Host Countries and is cofinanced by the EU.

The objective is to put state and civil society actors in the border regions and along the migration routes through Colombia, Ecuador and Peru in a better position to manage the large numbers of displaced people from Venezuela and Colombia in a socially responsible manner and to create employment prospects.

To achieve this, the programme operates in five complementary fields of action:

- (1) Conditions conducive to upholding the rights of refugees and migrants from Venezuela and Colombia and the host communities in the region of Ecuador bordering Colombia and Peru have been created;
- (2) the conditions for state action to address refugee and migrant flows from Venezuela in the project area have been improved;
- (3) the range of social and legal services that are available to refugees, migrants and the host population has been expanded;
- (4) the conditions for peaceful coexistence of the various



SI Frontera supports state and civil society offers for the protection of victims of violence, human trafficking and exploitation.



SI Frontera works with the private sector to support the creation of formal jobs for refugees and the local population.

population groups have been improved in selected communities; (5) state and civil society services to protect the victims of violence, human trafficking and exploitation have been upgraded.

In line with the priorities defined by partner country governments, the programme places special focus on the socio-economic integration of refugees and migrants, especially women, children and young people. In the spirit of the 'do no harm' principle, both refugees and migrants from Venezuela and vulnerable people from the host communities are included.

The programme has been supported in the three countries by two European Union cofinancing arrangements as part of the European Support Programme for Refugees, Migrants and Host Communities in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (ProMiRe I and II). In Ecuador, SI FRONTERA implemented the Peace and Development Project for the Northern Border together with the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) and the United Nations and is also implementing the Dialogue as an Instrument for Peace programme.

National priorities

In Colombia, the emphasis is on promoting employment. This includes partnerships with the private sector to create new jobs, microfinance products to support start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), job placement and vocational training. In Ecuador, the programme supports the national ombudsman's office in developing a crisis early warning system, advises cities, towns and communities on integrating refugees and migrants through participatory planning and information systems, and boosts young people's political participation. In Peru, SI Frontera facilitates integration by means of improved regularisation and registration processes and support for the recognition of professional qualifications, as well as stronger protection measures for victims of violence.

Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) European Union (EU)
EU cofinancing:	Total (BMZ, special funding and EU): EUR 89,600,000 (including EUR 6,100,000 in COVID-19 special funding and EUR 46,000,000 in cofinancing from the European Union)
ProMiRe I: Cris no.: ICSP/2020/414-841	Colombia: EUR 36,060,000 (including EUR 3,200,000 in COVID-19 special funding, plus European Union: EUR 5,100,000 under ProMiRe I, EUR 9,000,000 under ProMiRe II)
ProMiRe II: Cris no.: NDICI/2021/426-819	Ecuador: EUR 28,170,000 (including EUR 1,100,000 in COVID-19 special funding, plus European Union: EUR 2,200,000 under ProMiRe I, EUR 3,000,000 under ProMiRe II, EUR 10,000,000 under Northern Border, EUR 1,000,000 under Dialogue as an Instrument for Peace)
Northern Border: Cris no.: LA/2019/406-993	Peru: EUR 25,370,000 (including EUR 1,800,000 in COVID-19 special funding, plus European Union: EUR 2,700,000 under ProMiRe I, EUR 3,000,000 under ProMiRe II, EUR 10,000,000 under Peru Social)
Dialogue as an Instrument for Peace: Cris no.: NDICI/2022/440-569	
Peru Social: Cris no.: NDICI/2023/61-853	
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