



# THE RECEPTION OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN AID, DEVELOPMENT AID AND PEACEBUILDING IN COLOMBIA



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## ABSTRACT

To achieve better coordination between actors involved in humanitarian aid, development aid, and peacebuilding, the ‘triple nexus’ approach has been proposed for the design and implementation of international cooperation programs. This report presents the reception of this approach in the Colombian cooperation dynamics. To this end, we present an overview of international cooperation in the last ten years based on (i) a database built with the incoming resource flows reported by the Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC), (ii) a series of semi-structured interviews, (iii) informal conversations with actors from the cooperation sector, as well as (iv) access to data from different organizations. We conclude that, in Colombia, there is not enough articulation for the triple nexus to be consolidated.

### KEYWORDS:

Triple nexus, humanitarian aid, development aid, peacebuilding, articulation, international cooperation, Colombia.



## INTRODUCTION

The triple nexus between humanitarian aid, development aid, and peace-building is a proposal that seeks to articulate the actors involved in these types of interventions. This approach suggests the need to articulate funders, state policies, and the implementation of projects that address the three articulating axes.

Initial discussions on the triple nexus arose in the context of the First World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016. The triple nexus was proposed as a possible response to the critical situation that was being experienced at that time, this is, the most significant increase in violent conflicts in the world in the last 30 years. It was conceptualised as a new way of working which seeks humanitarian and development actors to work collaboratively and jointly whenever the context permits with the aim of building long-lasting peace (IECAH, 2022a).

There is no consensus on what is meant by humanitarian aid<sup>1</sup>, development aid and peacebuilding. However, there is a traditional, or mostly accepted, distinction between humanitarian aid and development efforts. For

Schmitz, this distinction has been approached from three main elements: time frame, purpose, and mode of action. Development actions have traditionally been conceived as requiring long-term investment and implementation to reduce poverty, generate prosperity and social cohesion, and improve citizens' quality of life (Schmitz Guinote, 2019, p. 3). These types of interventions usually require strengthening state institutions, and empowering people so that they can contribute to their sustainability and the nation's well-being (Schmitz Guinote, 2019).

Humanitarian aid has traditionally been conceived "as an emergency measure of a temporary and exceptional nature, given to people in need" (Red Cross, n.d.) aimed at saving lives, meeting immediate needs, and alleviating human suffering, especially in emergency and/or rehabilitation situations. Humanitarian aid may consist of direct assistance in the form of food packages, hygiene kits, and immediate medical assistance, among others.

The concept of peacebuilding is also a contested terrain. On the one hand, the literature distinguishes between positive and negative peace. Negative peace is understood as the absence of armed conflict, while positive peace, in addition to the absence of belligerence, also includes a peacebuilding programme that covers social justice concerns (Harto de Vera, 2016). On the other hand, there are also different political visions on the concept of peace. For example, as we explained in another paper, during the negotiation that led to the 2016 Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC for its acronym in Spanish), there was tension between who should decide what peace entails. The notion of territorial peace emerged to highlight the importance of designing peacebuilding responses from the perspective of victims and the communities most affected by conflicts. Territorial peace lies in contrast to liberal peace, a conception of peacebuilding focused

on incorporated conflict-affected territories into global market dynamics (Cortés-Nieto et al., 2023b).

Despite the difficulties in agreeing on the definitions of the elements of the triple nexus, the new way of working that it suggests has been supported by important actors of the international community: several UN agencies, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and a large number of donors and international NGOs with various mandates (OECD, 2018; OXFAM, 2019).

According to the official narrative, the triple nexus makes it possible to fulfil common objectives related to the specific humanitarian and protection needs of vulnerable communities, while contributing to the sustainable reduction of the population's vulnerability levels (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2022). This new way of working also seeks to reinforce, but not replace, the roles of national and local actors in conflict prevention and assistance delivery. Despite these agreements on the advantages of the triple nexus, there are different definitions of what it entails. For example, for the OECD, this approach involves strengthening collaboration, coherence, and complementarity in three main areas: 1. joint conduct of risk-informed, gender-sensitive and participatory analyses of the structural causes and drivers of conflict, as well as identification of resilience factors and collective outcomes that incorporate humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actions; 2. provision of appropriate resources to empower leadership for efficient coordination along the three axes of the nexus, which may include support to national and regional authorities and the UN system, as well as collaborations with multilateral development banks; and 3. use of political commitments and other tools and approaches to prevent crises, resolve conflicts and build peace (OECD, 2023). The OECD emphasizes the importance of capitalizing on the comparative advantages of each

actor according to the needs of each context, as well as of setting collective goals that are measurable.

Similarly, the UN emphasizes four pillars: 1. joint situation or problem analysis to identify priorities and collect reliable data; 2. joint planning and programming among humanitarian and development actors to reach agreement on expected collective results taking into account comparative advantages; 3. consolidating leadership and coordinated capacity development that facilitates joint problem-solving and the identification, implementation and financing of collective results; and 4. multi-year, flexible, predictable and diversified programming funding mechanisms (United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, 2022).

The UN prioritised some regions for the implementation of the triple nexus, considering the long-lasting character of the armed conflicts they face: the Horn of Africa, Sahel, Lake Chad Basin, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Sundi, 2023). Following that logic, one of the next countries chosen may be Colombia since the armed conflict has been fierce, with more than 220,000 dead, 6,000,000,000 forcibly displaced, and some 27,000 kidnappings, and has lasted more than 50 years (Tamayo-Agudelo & Bell, 2019). As a study advanced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2018 stated, “Colombia is the perfect laboratory for the nexus” given the country’s long-standing conflict, the peace agreement reached in 2016, and the importance of articulating humanitarian and development actors in the context of transition to peace (Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), 2021). Here it is important to mention that despite the 2016 Peace Agreement, illegal armed groups continue to exert territorial control over several areas of the country (IOM, 2019).

Colombia has been recipient of international cooperation funds for

peacebuilding for a long time. However, discussions on the triple nexus are relatively new to the country. This report presents an overview of international cooperation for peacebuilding, as well as of the implementation of the triple nexus in recent years. We claim that there is still insufficient articulation between the State, project funders, and executors to consolidate the triple nexus approach. Furthermore, the research suggests that the implementation of the triple nexus in Colombia faces challenges in terms of localization, local participation and accountability which ought to be addresses for the “new way of working” to produce meaningful changes in how aid is delivered.

This report is divided into four parts. The first provides an overview of the elements of the triple nexus found in the country. The second section explores the Development Programs with a Territorial Approach (PDET) created in 2016 Peace Agreement, considered by many as an example of the implementation of the triple nexus in Colombia. In the third part, we evaluate the implementation of the triple nexus in Colombia. The fourth section presents some conclusions and hypotheses.



# 1 ELEMENTS OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS FOUND IN COLOMBIA

This section analyses the elements of the triple nexus present in Colombia. Drawing on document analysis -of secondary sources and written information provided by some organization<sup>2</sup>, semi-structured interviews<sup>3</sup>, and several informal conversations with various governmental and non-governmental actors, we argue that no joint coordination accurately addresses the pillars of the triple nexus as conceptualized by the UN, i.e., joint analysis, joint planning and programming, leadership and participation, and articulated financing. However, some coordination mechanisms between humanitarian and development actors seem to have been strengthened in the context of the transition towards peace.

The section is divided into four parts. The first answers the question of who explicitly employs the triple nexus approach. The second examines the spaces of articulation between actors involved in the triple nexus. The third explores financial articulation scenarios. The fourth refers to recent efforts of the United Nations System to prioritize some local municipalities to implement the triple nexus.

## 1.1 WHO USES THE TRIPLE NEXUS PILLARS

According to data collected, the following organizations have explicitly adopted the triple nexus approach in Colombia:

United Nations system organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2018)</li> <li>• United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2021)</li> <li>• Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2021)</li> <li>• World Food Program (World Food Programm, 2021)</li> <li>• United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) (UNHCR Colombia, personal communication, December 6, 2022)</li> <li>• International Organization for Migration (IOM, n.d., 2019)</li> <li>• UN Women (S. L. Arias Valencia, personal communication, December 19, 2022)</li> </ul>
Other international organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Abellán &amp; Rey Marcos, 2022)</li> <li>• Center for Justice and Peace (CEPAZ) (2022)</li> <li>• International Committee of the Red Cross (Schmitz Guinote, 2019)</li> <li>• CooperaSalud (2020)</li> <li>• Organizations of the Humanitarian NGO Forum Colombia (2022)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• Assembly of Cooperation for Peace (2022)</li> <li>• Generation Equality (2022)</li> <li>• International Solidarity (2019)</li> <li>• Swiss Cooperation Program (Swiss Confederation, 2021)</li> <li>• Colombia Food Security Cluster - Colombia Nutrition Center (n/d)</li> </ul> <p>We should also note that the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan developed by the participants in the Country Humanitarian Team (EHP for its acronyms in Spanish, see next section) also explicitly mentions the triple nexus (Equipo Humanitario País, 2023).</p>

Table 1. Entities that have explicitly adopted the triple nexus approach in Colombia.

Governmental authorities do not explicitly use the language of the triple nexus. The Colombian Presidential Agency for International Cooperation (APC), responsible for managing and coordinating public, private, technical, and financial non-reimbursable international cooperation received by the country, acknowledges knowing the concept but indicates that it is not being implemented (APC, personal communication, December 14, 2022).

In informal conversations, some officials also state that they are aware of the approach but indicate that it is not explicitly used in official documents and activities (Cortés-Nieto, 2021, 2022). Nevertheless, some mechanisms reveal joint analysis, planning, and programming exercises, as discussed in the following section.

## **1.2 SPACES OF ARTICULATION OF HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT, AND PEACE ACTORS**

The United Nations activities in Colombia are coordinated by a Resident Coordinating Office (RCO). It is responsible for creating bridges between humanitarian and development actors within the UN system (United Nations Colombia, n.d.). Besides the RCO, there are also three other coordination frameworks:

The first one is the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which contains the humanitarian agencies' coordinated and strategic plan devised to meet the needs of people affected by emergencies (OCHA, 2022a). The Country Humanitarian Team (EHP for its acronyms in Spanish) is responsible for implementing of the plan. It serves as a space for bringing together UN agencies, national and international NGOs -such as the International Committee of the Red Cross- and donors. The EHP has Local Coordination Teams (LCT) divided into Local Humanitarian Teams (LHT). It is also divided

into 8 clusters that seek to coordinate humanitarian efforts around seven sectors: protection, water, sanitation, and hygiene; early recovery, health, food security, and nutrition; emergency education; and shelter and settlements (Humanitarian Country Team, 2023).

The second one is the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020-2023 (UNSDCF), which contains an agreement between the UN and the Colombian Government on how to reach the SDG. According to it, the UN will support three pillars identified in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2022: the implementation of the “Peace with legality” Presidential policy in the areas prioritized by the Government emphasising the implementation of the PDETs, the reincorporation of ex-combatants and support for the substitution of illicit crops; the attention and socio-economic integration of mixed migratory flows from Venezuela; and technical assistance to accelerate the SDGs. The UNSDCF indicates that the expected results of the framework, especially the first two pillars, reflect the triple nexus (United Nations, 2020).

The UNSDCF constitutes a coordination effort between the UN and the Colombian Government, product of an agreement between the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE) and the UN RCO. A Steering Committee composed of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Planning Department (DNP for its acronyms in Spanish), APC, the RCO, and three representatives of the UN Country Team in Colombia, is in charge of its implementation. This Committee meets once a year to review the annual results report and approve the Annual Action Plan. This framework also has results groups composed of “technical officers from concerned government entities in each strategic area and from the MRE, DNP, APC Colombia, and officers from country team entities led by a participating agency in the corresponding Strategic Priority” (United Nations, 2020, p. 35). These groups execute

joint work plans and review new project proposals and technical assistance every quarter. There is also a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Knowledge Management Group (United Nations, 2020).

Thirdly, there is the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (RMRP). This plan is implemented by the Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM), co-led by IOM and UNHCR, which provides a space for coordinating responses to the needs of the refugee and migrant population in Colombia<sup>5</sup>. The GIFMM has 8 local committees that work together with local governments (International Group on Mixed Migratory Flows, n.d.).

The EHP and the GIFMM collaborate through Strategic Coordination Committees that bring together the Coordination Teams of each cluster of the EHP and the coordinators of each sector of the GIFMM. This coordination is possible because the two frameworks work around the same sectors: protection; water, sanitation, and hygiene; early recovery, health, food security, and nutrition; education in emergencies; and shelter and settlements. Joint analysis and response strategies are developed in these coordination spaces<sup>6</sup>.

An information system called the Colombia Information Management and Analysis Unit (UMAIC) was launched in 2016 to create synergies between humanitarian and development actors. This initiative of OCHA, UNDP and the RCO helps to conduct joint analyses and provides elements for coordinated decision-making (OCHA, 2017b). In 2017, OCR signed an agreement with the National Department of Statistics (DANE) to cooperate on statistical matters and strengthen UMAIC's capacities (DANE, 2017). UMAIC helps monitor the behaviour of phenomena such as forced internal displacement, restrictions to basic services, and confinement due to armed conflict, armed

actions and other security events, natural disasters, and mixed migratory flows (OCHA, 2022b).

At the government level, APC is the agency responsible for managing and coordinating public, private, technical and financial non-reimbursable international cooperation funds (APC, 2021). Since 2007, each President has prepared a four-year National Cooperation Strategy that prioritises areas towards which the government seeks to direct international cooperation. For example, in the 2019-2022 strategy, priority was given to the areas of territorial stabilization (which includes funding PDETs), rural development, conservation and environmental sustainability, entrepreneurship and, attention to migrants (APC, 2019).

The APC is part of Colombia's National System of International Cooperation, created in 2022 to create synergies between international donors and the different levels of government (national and territorial). The APC, the DNP, and the MRE are part of the Strategic Committee of this system. The creation of the system seeks, among other purposes, to align international cooperation with the priorities defined in the socioeconomic planning carried out by the national authorities and to gather information on international cooperation funds received by the country. To this end, the regulations impose information reporting duties on cooperating partners (Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 2023).

The APC works with donors through mechanisms such as the signing of Framework Cooperation Agreements (such as the UNSDCF), the organization of donor roundtables, and direct negotiations with specific donors, such as USAID (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

### 1.3 SPACES FOR COORDINATING FINANCIAL EFFORTS

Colombia has some multi-donor funds to support humanitarian and development actions that contribute to peacebuilding. Their objective is to bring together the financial efforts of various donors and the national government in light of common goals. The main ones are the United Nations Multi-Donor Peace Sustaining Fund (MPTF), the European Peace Fund (EFF), the Colombia in Peace Fund (CPF), the Sustainable Colombia Fund, and the World Bank's Post-Conflict Fund.

The MPTF was created in 2016 to channel resources from different donors to deploy actions to support the 2016 Peace Agreement. Its main objectives are, on the one hand, to fund the creation of the agencies related to the Agreement and, on the other hand, to support projects that serve peacebuilding, such as the reincorporation of ex-combatants, and territorial stabilization (United Nations Multi-Donor Fund, 2015). Norway, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the UN Peacebuilding Fund are its main donors. As of December 2022, the MPTF had received US\$ 223,040,732 and most of its funds have been directed towards entities of the United Nations System (Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia, n.d.).

The coordination of donors and other actors take place in several ways. First, the National Government, the United Nations System, international donors, and representatives from civil society sit at the Steering Committee. Additionally, since 2018, communities can prioritise the initiatives to be funded in accordance with the PDETs (Trust Fund for Sustaining Peace in Colombia, n.d.). The MPTF also held planning workshops with government authorities that led to the adoption of its work plan (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

The EFF was created in 2016 to facilitate the implementation of the 2016

Peace Agreement. Its income came from donations from EU countries, the EU itself, and other donations (European Commission and Donors 2016). It has invested €130 million, with counterparts from beneficiary entities of around €16 million. Its investments focus on supporting items 1 and 3 of the Peace Agreement related to Comprehensive Rural Reform and Reincorporation of ex-combatants (European Fund for Peace in Colombia, n.d.). As of September 30, 2022, the EFF had implemented 31 projects associated with peacebuilding (European Fund for Peace in Colombia, n.d., p. 2).

The PEF coordinates with the Colombian government through its Strategic and Steering Committees, where a representative of the Colombian government participates as a guest (United Nations Multi-Donor Fund, 2023). In addition, the PEF claims that its projects are designed under the participation of civil society, guaranteeing “a participatory territorial approach” (United Nations Multi-Donor Fund, 2022, p. 190).

The CPF is an autonomous trust created in 2017 to manage resources for implementing the 2016 Peace Agreement. Its objective is to articulate the different sources of post-conflict funding (including other funds with similar purposes) and direct them towards prioritized areas and strategic projects (Conpes, 2015). Its resources come mainly from the Colombian Government, but it can also receive non-reimbursable international cooperation funds and private donations (Decree Law 691 of 2017). Its Board of Directors is currently composed of 6 officials subordinated to the President of the Republic and a private sector representative<sup>7</sup>; there is no participation of international cooperation or community organizations in the fund’s governance (Fondo Colombia en Paz, s/f-a).

This fund is linked to international cooperation through an investment

portfolio with 16 sub-accounts<sup>8</sup>. Donors may contribute to specific lines or projects according to their interests. One of the subaccounts is earmarked for financing PDETs. The Fund also maintains constant dialogues with donors to align priorities and allows their participation in strategic committees. However, some donors have decided not to rely on the CPF, such as USAID (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

The Sustainable Colombia Fund was created to manage resources obtained by the Colombian government through a loan granted by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and donations from other donors. Its resources are oriented to peacebuilding projects related to environmental protection (Conpes, 2015). Its Steering Committee is composed of the director of the DNP, the director of the APC, the ministers of Agriculture and Environment, the Stabilization Council, the vice minister of Finance, one representative from each donor, one from the IDB, one from the CPF, and one from the ART. Finally, there are Local Consultation Instances through local committees. The local committees comprise local stakeholders and members appointed by the government (United Nations Multi-Donor Fund, 2015).

According to APC, in the 2018-2021 period, the multi-donor funds that received the most resources were the FEP and MPTF (Pachón Pinzón 2021).

<b>Peace Funds</b>	<b>Amount of Projects Launched in 2018-2021</b>	<b>Donor Contributions to Funds Since 2016</b>	<b>Projects</b>
European fund for peace	152.697.938	146.105.171	32
United Nations Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Peace Sustainment - MPTF	100.005.058	194.325.582	80
Colombia Sostenible Fund	33.244.399	35.677.449	19
World bank fund	915.000	7.110.186	3
Grand Total	284.862.395	383.218.388	134

Table 2. Resources collected between 2016 and 2018-2021. From Pachón Pinzón (2021)

## 1.4 FINANCING IN THE APC SPACE

According to APC figures on non-reimbursable international cooperation resources, there was a slight increase in the money received by the country after the signing of the 2016 Peace Agreement, a slight drop in 2018, and a significant increase since 2019. Non-reimbursable cooperation went from US\$635.5 million in 2016 to US\$1,465.7 million in 2021 (Agencia de Cooperación e Inversión de Medellín ACI, 2023). Up to 2021, the main donors were the United States (38.33%), the European Fund for Peace (10.95%, the MPFT (6.8%), and the EU (5.62%) (APC, 2022).

There is no precise official information on how many of these resources are related to the three types of interventions that the triple nexus seeks to connect. APC estimates that between 2018-2021 49.98% of non-reimbursable cooperation resources went to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, especially to the item on Integral Rural Reform (Pachón Pinzón, 2021). These data indicate nothing about articulating these projects with humanitarian and development issues.

For this reason, we built a database that would allow us to understand how cooperation funds for peacebuilding have been captured and allocated in the past ten years (2012-2022) (Rodríguez-Morales et al., 2023). The database was built on APC's record of non-reimbursable cooperation resources. The APC registry includes the following data for each of the international cooperation projects: registration number, project name, general objective, start date, end date, cooperation modality, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), government sectors, actor's name, actor's country, actor's role, type of assistance and amount or contribution in dollars. This information is loaded into a database and is available to the public (<https://portalservicios-apccolombia.gov.co/mapal>). We downloaded all available

records from the APC registry to build our own database.

The administrative registration of APC has several limitations. For example, several international cooperation projects use cooperation agreements that allow the donor to request reimbursement when the obligations are fulfilled, and such reimbursements are not recorded. Projects implemented by for-profit corporations are also excluded. The main incentive for reporting to this entity is the possibility of getting tax exemptions. This could explain why international organizations in Colombia (such as those of the UN system) do not report since they are exempt from paying taxes. There were a total of 24940 records. Due to this significant number, we decided to include only records after 2012 when the Victims Law was enacted. We call this starting spreadsheet “decanted APC.” Unfortunately, only records up to 2021 are included because we started the hard work of building our database that year. That spreadsheet has 9767 records in total. This implies that only 39.2% of the international cooperation projects have to do with the broad concept of peace.

To counteract these limitations, we searched for information on each project online. We included 22 descriptors that aim to understand how international cooperation resources have been allocated to peacebuilding and eventually formulate hypotheses that could explain the landscape of resource allocation. It is also important to clarify that, unlike the report of our colleagues from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the data we use are not based on the cooperation actors but on the projects reported.

As far as the objective of this report goes, the database shows two interesting findings. First, the Global Environment Facility donated 48% of the resources explicitly allocated for peacebuilding (more than US\$ 20 million). This multilateral fund comprises several UN agencies whose purpose is to

address the negative effects of climate change and natural resources exploitation (IEACH, 2022, p. 8). It is followed by the Canadian government, with a 34% share of total resources. The third donor is the United Nations Fund, with 10%.

This finding is interesting since the literature points out that USAID and the European Union have been the historical donors (concerning constancy and resources) in peacebuilding in Colombia (Pérez De Armiño, 2023). This may be because these organizations do not report to APC.

Second, 81% of the projects are development aid projects, 13% are humanitarian aid projects, and only 6% follow both purposes. We used the previous categorization present in APC's administrative records to construct these classifications. However, after consulting if project information was available on the internet, we updated the classification of some projects. These 6%, which has both humanitarian and development aid purposes and are related to the peace agenda, could be the subject of future academic research on the triple nexus.

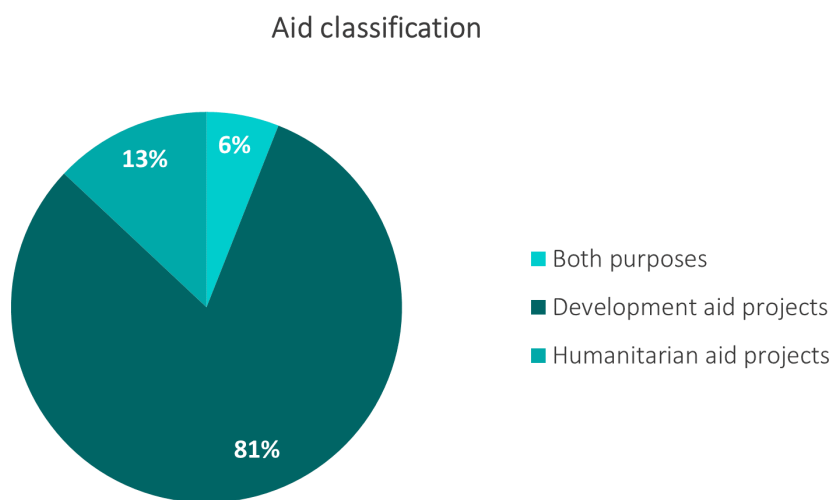


Figure 1. Ranking of international cooperation 2012-2022

However, it is also important to note that 99% of the resources allocated are earmarked for development aid:

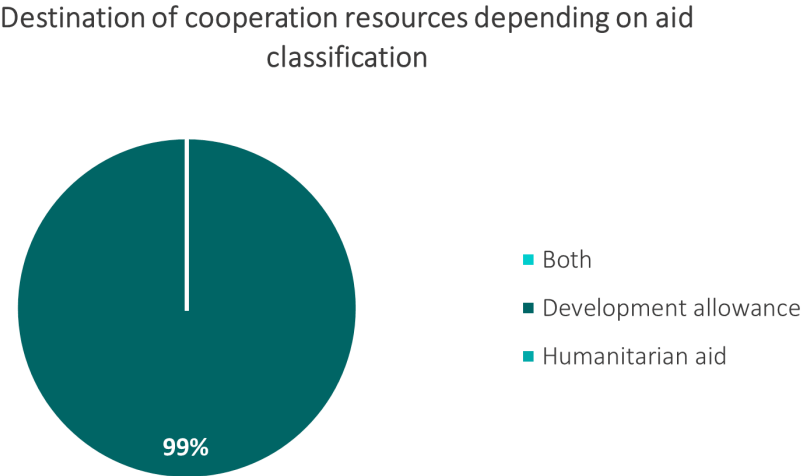


Figure 2. Destination of international cooperation resources 2012-2022

There has not been a significant increase in peace cooperation projects for both development and humanitarian aid in the 2012-2022 period, as shown in the following graph:

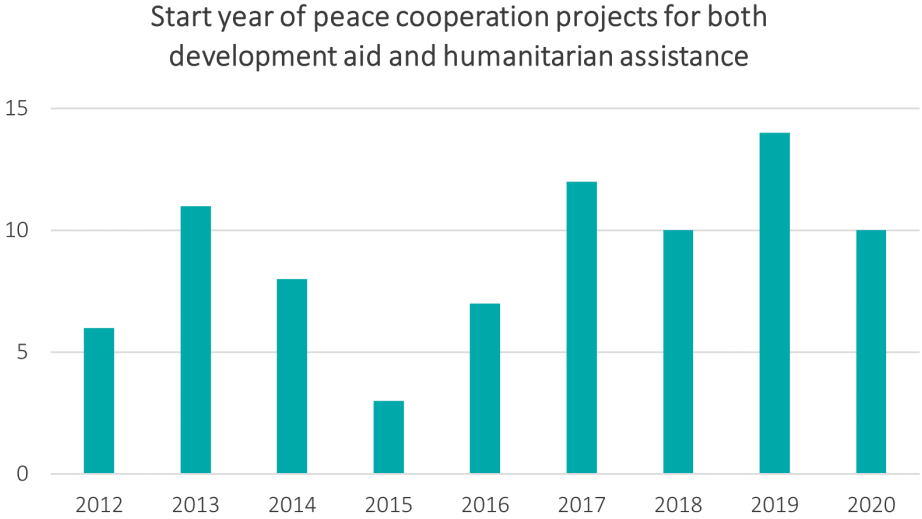


Figure 3. Year of start of peace cooperation projects destined for both development and humanitarian aid.

In summary, these data show that the percentage of projects registered by APC linking humanitarian aid, development, and peace in the period under study was low: only 6% of the projects identified as peace-related combined humanitarian and development aid resources.

## **1.5 PRIORITIZATION OF MUNICIPALITIES FOR APPLICATION OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS**

In December 2022, the EHP Early Recovery cluster identified 144 municipalities to be prioritized for applying the triple nexus. Of these, only 45 are PDET municipalities (OCHA, 2022a). The 2022 Humanitarian Response document identified common results that can be achieved in conjunction with peace and development actors, as well as 108 projects to be implemented in 2023 built upon the triple nexus approach (Humanitarian Country Team, 2023)<sup>10</sup>. These initiatives are only now beginning to be implemented.

## **1.6 APPLICATION OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS IN SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND INTERVENTION**

Interviews and documentary analysis led us to identify several specific projects and interventions in which the triple nexus has been employed.

One of the first cases of implementation was the intervention in the face of the avalanche that almost destroyed the municipality of Mocoa in 2016. An investigation into this intervention concluded that the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding elements remained separate domains. Although some actors, such as NGOs, showed thoughts about the nexus, this was not integrated into written policies or government programming (Kuipers et al., 2019). The triple nexus also guided UN agencies' interventions to the emergencies generated by hurricanes Eta and Iota in La Guajira, Antioquia,

Chocó, Norte de Santander, and the Archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina (OCHA, 2021).

Recently, we have identified several projects that integrate the triple nexus since the design stage. For example, the project “Assurance and quality control of humanitarian demining operations carried out by Humanicemos DH in Colombia to be implemented by UNMAS” aims to perform quality assurance and control of humanitarian demining work carried out by people in the process of reincorporation linked to Humanicemos DH, explicitly mentions seeking to materialize the triple nexus. This project has an implementation period from June 1, 2022, to February 28, 2023 (UNMAS 2022)<sup>11</sup>.

We also identified the project “Weaving community ties for education, reconciliation, and peacebuilding in the municipalities of Carmen del Darién and Riosucio within the framework of their PDETs.” This is a UN interagency project implemented by UNDP, UN Women, and UNICEF and financed by the MPTF. The information found on the project identifies that it was designed to address some structural causes of the crisis faced by the municipalities, such as the educational and gender gap in the territory. The project was designed for 18 months, which, in terms of the triple nexus, is insufficient to achieve measurable common objectives.<sup>12</sup>

The EHP mentions 108 projects with a triple nexus approach under implementation in 2023 (Humanitarian Country Team, 2023); however, we were unable to identify them.



## 2 PDETs AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS

One of the strategies included in the 2016 Peace Agreement to comply with the first item on comprehensive rural reform is the Development Programs with a Territorial Approach (PDET). These development programs focus on the regions most affected by the conflict (Vergara Argüello & Duque Duque, 2020). These programs are the result initiatives identified and prioritized by the inhabitants of these territories through direct participation mechanisms (Ramírez Sarmiento, 2021). These initiatives should be translated into projects to be executed and receive funding (Cortés-Nieto, 2021). During the peace negotiations, it was anticipated that international cooperation would play an essential role in implementing the Agreement, especially regarding rural development. For several governmental entities and international organizations, the PDETs are an example of the triple nexus, which is why we dedicate this section to their analysis (S. L. Arias Valencia, personal communication, December 19, 2022; Equipo Humanitario País, 2023).

The PDETs are inspired by the vision of territorial peace embodied in the Agreement, which entails recognizing the territorial features of the

Colombian armed conflict (Cairo et al., 2018). This concept also implies that the conflict dynamics are different in each territory and are associated with structural causes that need to be addressed to achieve lasting peace. In addition, this type of peace also requires peacebuilding policies built in a decentralized and democratic manner, as well as strengthening local and community institutions and organizations (Bonilla Valencia, 2018; Olarte-Olarte, 2019).

The institution responsible for coordinating the design and implementation of the PDETs is the Territorial Renewal Agency (ART), a decentralized entity subordinated to the President. The PDETs are focused on municipalities significantly affected by the conflict, which have been grouped into sixteen sub-regions: Alto Patía - Norte del Cauca, Arauca, Bajo Cauca and Nordeste Antioqueño, Catatumbo, Middle Pacific, Pacific and Nariño Border, Putumayo, Sierra Nevada - Perijá, Sur de Bolívar, Sur de Córdoba, Tolima, Urabá Antioqueño, Chocó, Caguán Basin and Piedemonte Caqueteño, Macarena - Guaviare and Montes de María. These subregions group a total of 170 municipalities, as shown in the following map:

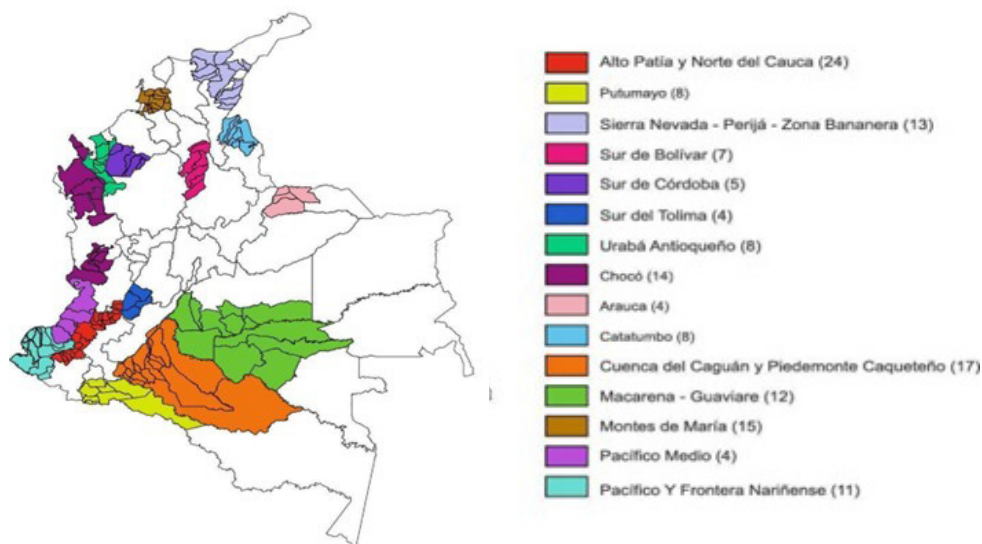


Figure 4. PDET sub-regions. Source: (Presidency of the Republic, 2017).

PDETs are funded through mechanisms as the following ones. i) Works for taxes, which is a mechanism that allows taxpayers to carry out PDET works and deduct the invested resources from income tax (Decree 1147 of 2020). Up to 2021, 61 projects were funded through this mechanism for approximately 530 billion Colombian pesos (ART, 2021). ii) Royalties obtained from the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources projects. Up to 2021, 511 projects received funds from this source for 5.6 billion Colombian pesos (ART, 2021). iii) Resources from the national budget (Legislative Decree 893 of 2017, 2017). Unfortunately, it is difficult to establish what specific amount of these resources have been allocated to fund these projects because there is no consolidated list of PDET initiatives executed by the entities covered by said financial instrument. However, as of 2021, the national government had appropriated 3.6 trillion Colombian pesos to fund PDET projects (ART, 2021). iv) International cooperation resources. The Agreement stipulates that these resources will be a key measure of its implementation (República de Colombia & Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia- Ejército del Pueblo, 2016, p. 198).

Private individuals can also finance PDET projects. However, ART's information in this regard is not of good quality as it is collected only "for reference and/or indicative for the Agency's analysis" (ART, 2021, p. 2). ART records show private parties have committed resources for 1.9 billion Colombian pesos. However, there are only records of the amounts of some investments by Gran Tierra Energy and Ocesa. In total, there are 30 initiatives funded by these parties. 14 of them are for the Bajo Cauca sub-region, 13 for Putumayo, 2 for Macarena-Guaviare and 1 for the South of Córdoba (Cortes-Nieto et al., 2021).

## 2.1 DIRECT FUNDING OF PDET INITIATIVES BY INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

According to information provided by ART, four sources of international cooperation are providing resources to PDET projects. In this section, we describe these sources and their governance.

This report only lists international cooperation resources directly related to implementing PDET initiatives. For this reason, two groups of resources are not included: international cooperation resources that, via donations, enter the national budget, and funds of the Colombia in Peace Fund (Decree Law 691 of 2017). Although the latter has a PDET subaccount, which during the 2020 fiscal year had a budget of 52 billion Colombian pesos, we excluded these resources from our calculations because they are incorporated in the national budget (Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, 2021, p. 1)<sup>13</sup>.

By 2021, more than 32 billion Colombian pesos have been obtained from international cooperation for PDET projects:

<b>Contributing entity</b>	<b>Investment in COP</b>
U.S. Agency for International Development- USAID	\$ 60.000.000,00
United Nations Multi-Donor TrustFund for Sustaining Peace	\$ 7.632.901.127,00
PADF counterpart budget	\$ 618.271.667,67
UNDP counterpart budget	\$ 7.253.454.795,87
USAID- Colombian Transform	\$ 14.496.846.784,03
USAID- FINTRAC	\$ 2.384.432.621,00
Total	\$ 32.445.906.995,56

Table 4. Own elaboration

By September 2021, this amount was equivalent to approximately US\$8.4 million. This is a small amount compared to the international cooperation resources that Colombia receives annually. According to APC, in 2020, US\$503 million were received from international donors (APC, 2020). Since the PDET initiatives were created in 2017 and until 2021, only approximately

1.7% of the cooperation resources managed in a single year had been allocated to PDET projects. This implies that the total resources allocated to PDET projects are as follows:

Financing mechanisms of PDET projects and/or initiatives	Amount of financing (COP)
Works for taxes	\$530.000.000.000
Royalties from natural resources exploitation	\$56.000.000.000.000
Private financing	\$1.901.705.928
International cooperation	\$32.445.906.995
Total	\$56.564.347.612.924

Table 5. Own elaboration

This means that international cooperation funding for PDET projects is 0.006%, that is, a marginal figure.

The main international donor for PDET is USAID. Its contributions amount to more than 16 billion Colombian pesos, that is, 52% of the resources, as can be seen in the following graph:

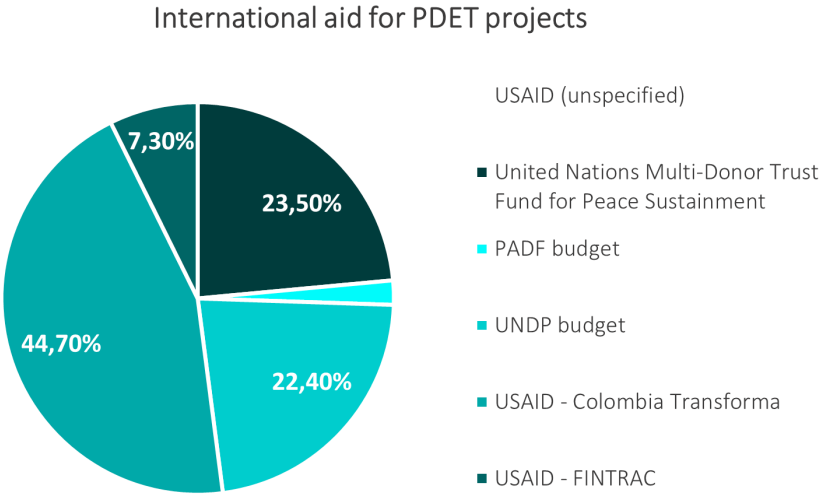


Figure 5. Own elaboration

As can be seen in the following graph, the subregions that have received the most international financing are Catatumbo with 29%, the Pacific subregion

and Nariño border with 20%, and the subregion of Bajo Cauca and north-eastern Antioquia with 16%.

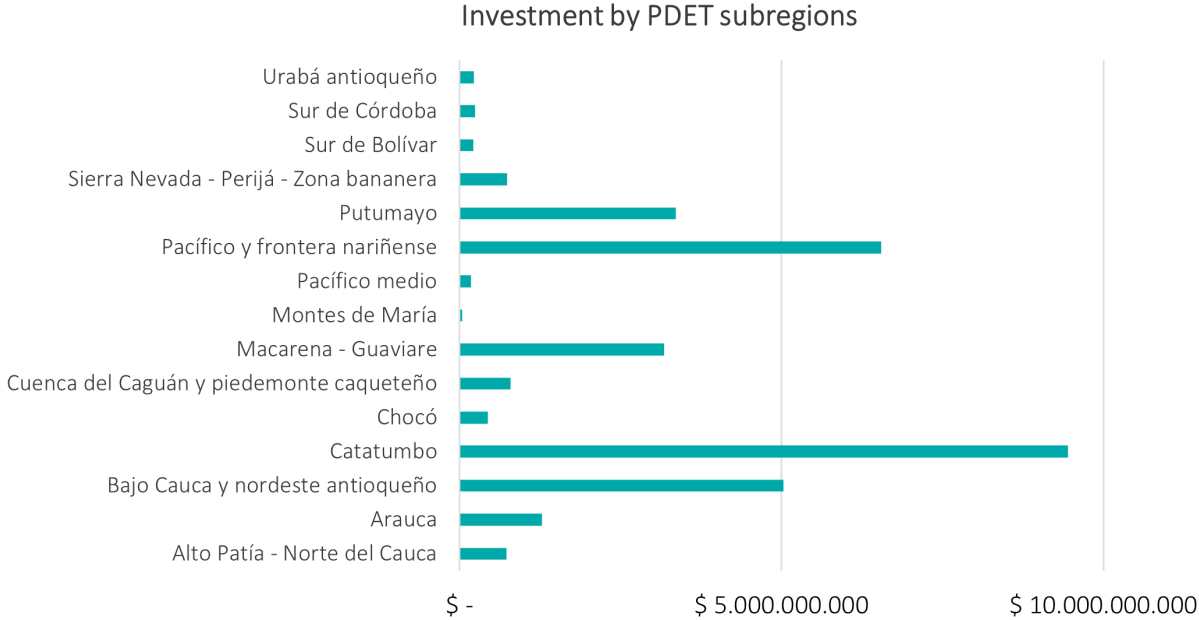


Figure 6. Own elaboration

29% of the resources are concentrated in municipalities of the department of Norte de Santander, followed by Nariño (21%), Antioquia (16%), and Putumayo (10%), as can be seen in the following graph:

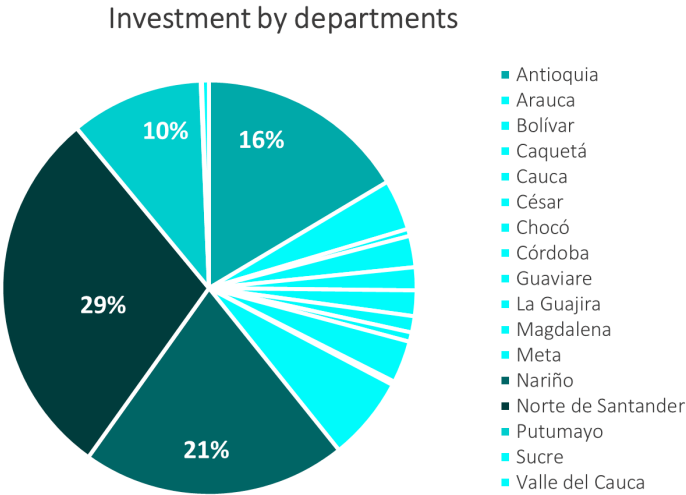


Figure 7. Own elaboration

Most of the resources are concentrated in the department of Norte de Santander. In fact, this department is the only one in which the investment is higher than nine billion Colombian pesos, as can be seen in this graph:

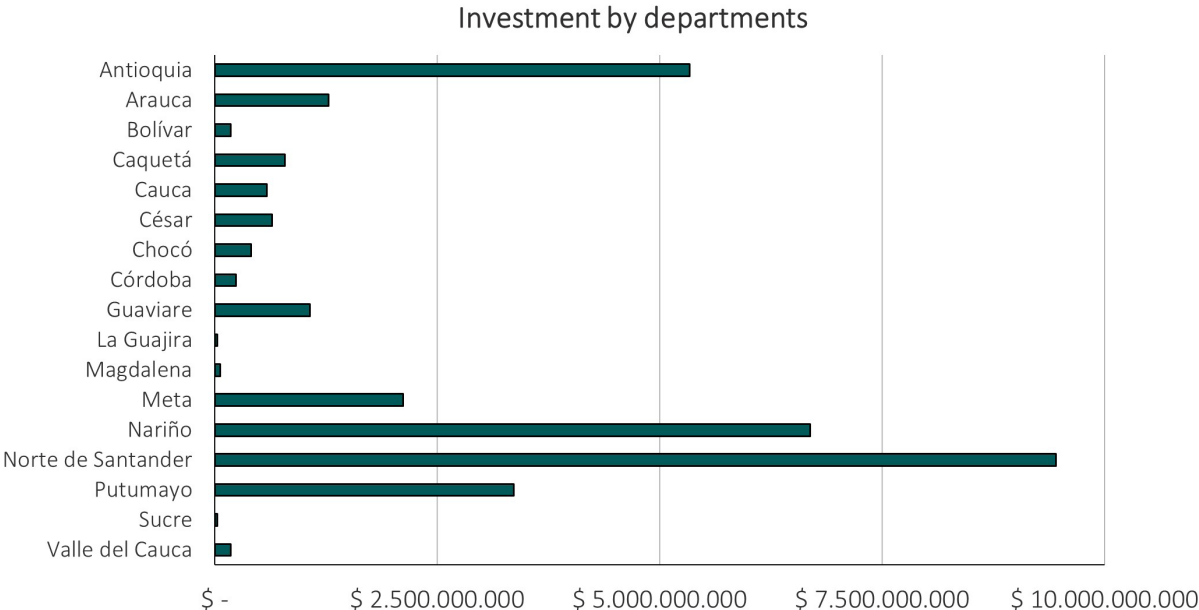


Figure 8. Own elaboration

36% of the resources were allocated to infrastructure and land suitability, followed by rural education and rural early childhood, as shown below:

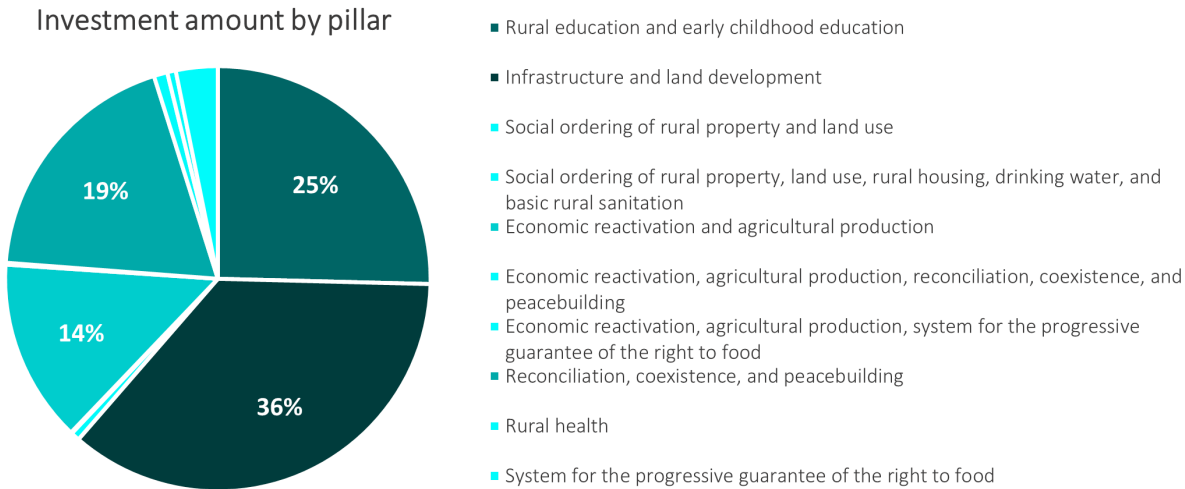


Figure 9. Own elaboration

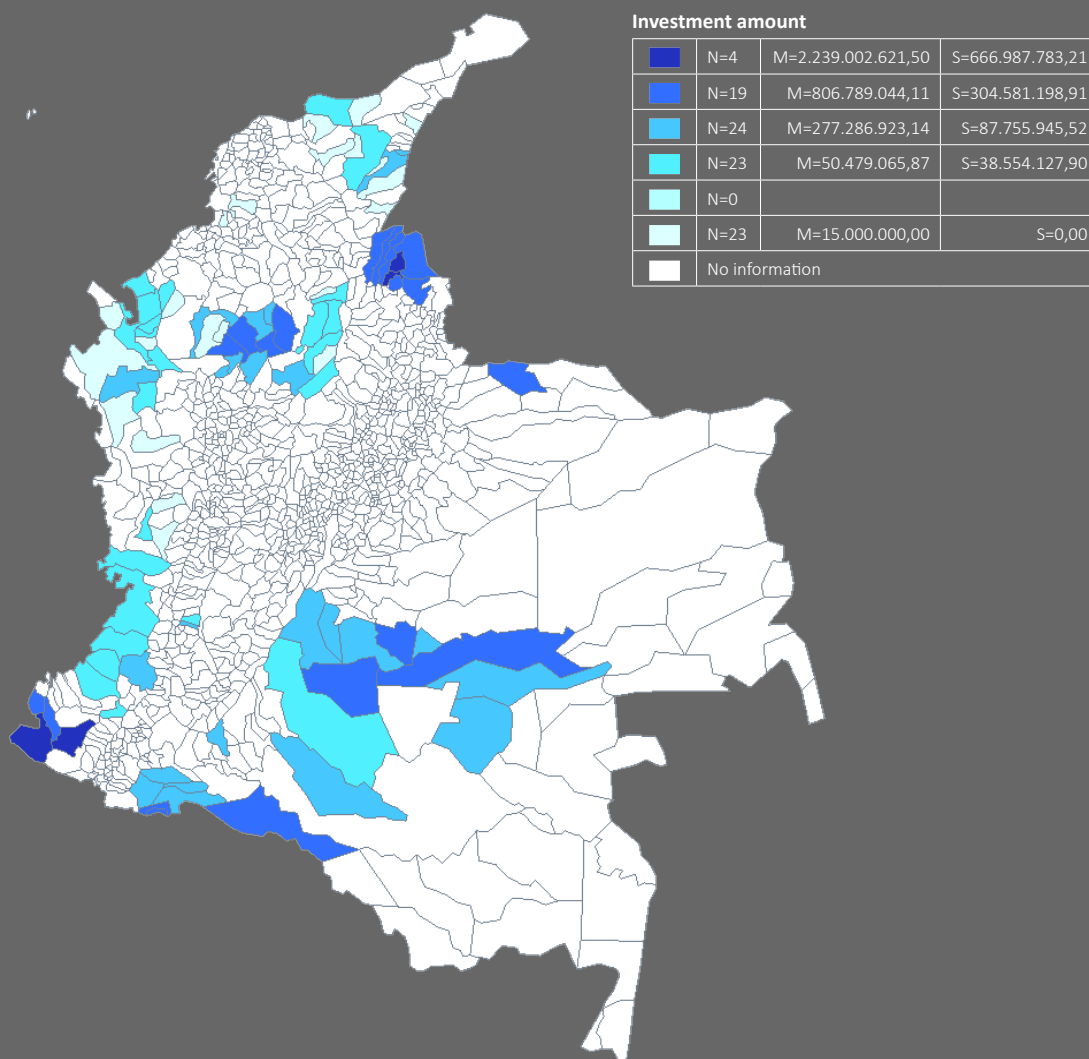


Figure 10. Own elaboration

The following map refers to territorial distribution. The darker colours represent the percentiles with the highest concentration of resources, while the lighter colours represent the percentiles with a lower concentration of money. As seen in the map, the municipalities of San Andres de Tumaco, Barbacoas (Nariño), El Tarra, and San Calixto (Norte de Santander) concentrate most international cooperation resources for PDET projects.

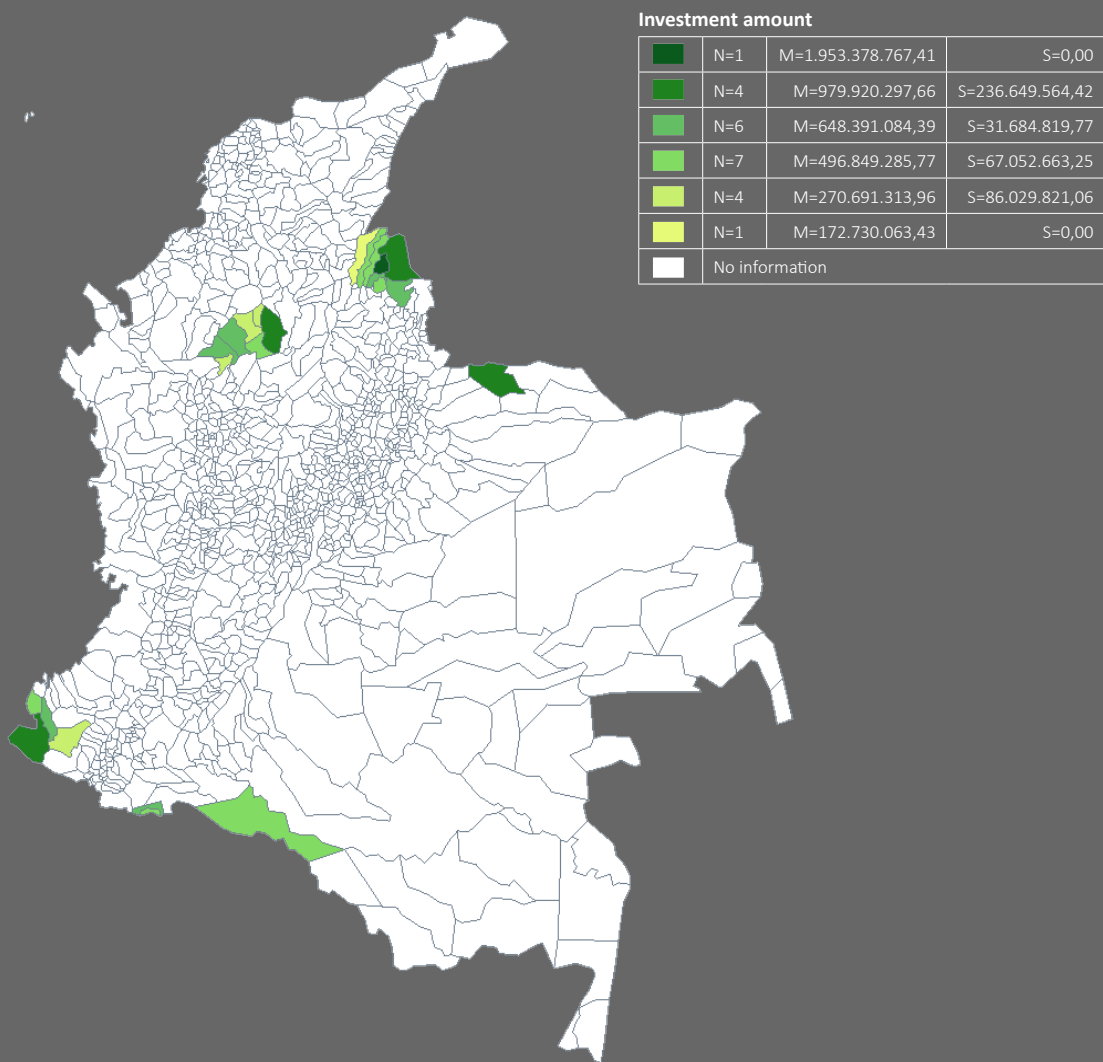


Figure 11. Own elaboration

Funds from USAID Colombia Transforms Fund are concentrated in Tumaco and the Catatumbo region (in municipalities such as Tibú, El Tarra, and Teorama). They are regions with high level of illicit crops at the border with Ecuador and Venezuela, respectively.

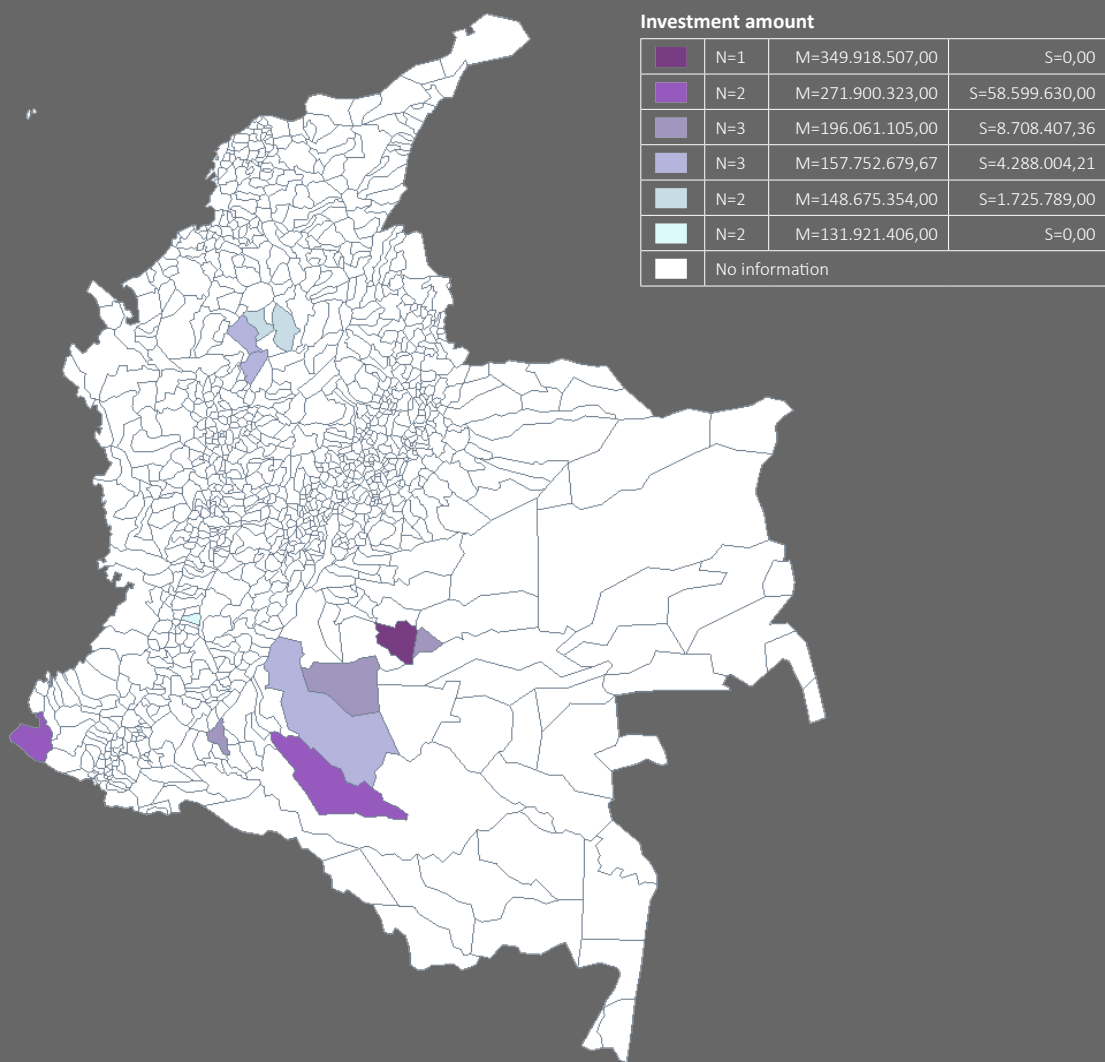


Figure 12. Own elaboration

USAID FINTRAC Fund, on the other hand has no investments in the Caribbean coast, Cauca, or the Catatumbo region. The municipalities with the highest concentration of resources from this fund are Puerto Rico (15%), Tumaco (14%), Belén de los Andaquíes (9%), and Cartagena del Chairá (9%), also regions with high levels of illicit crops.

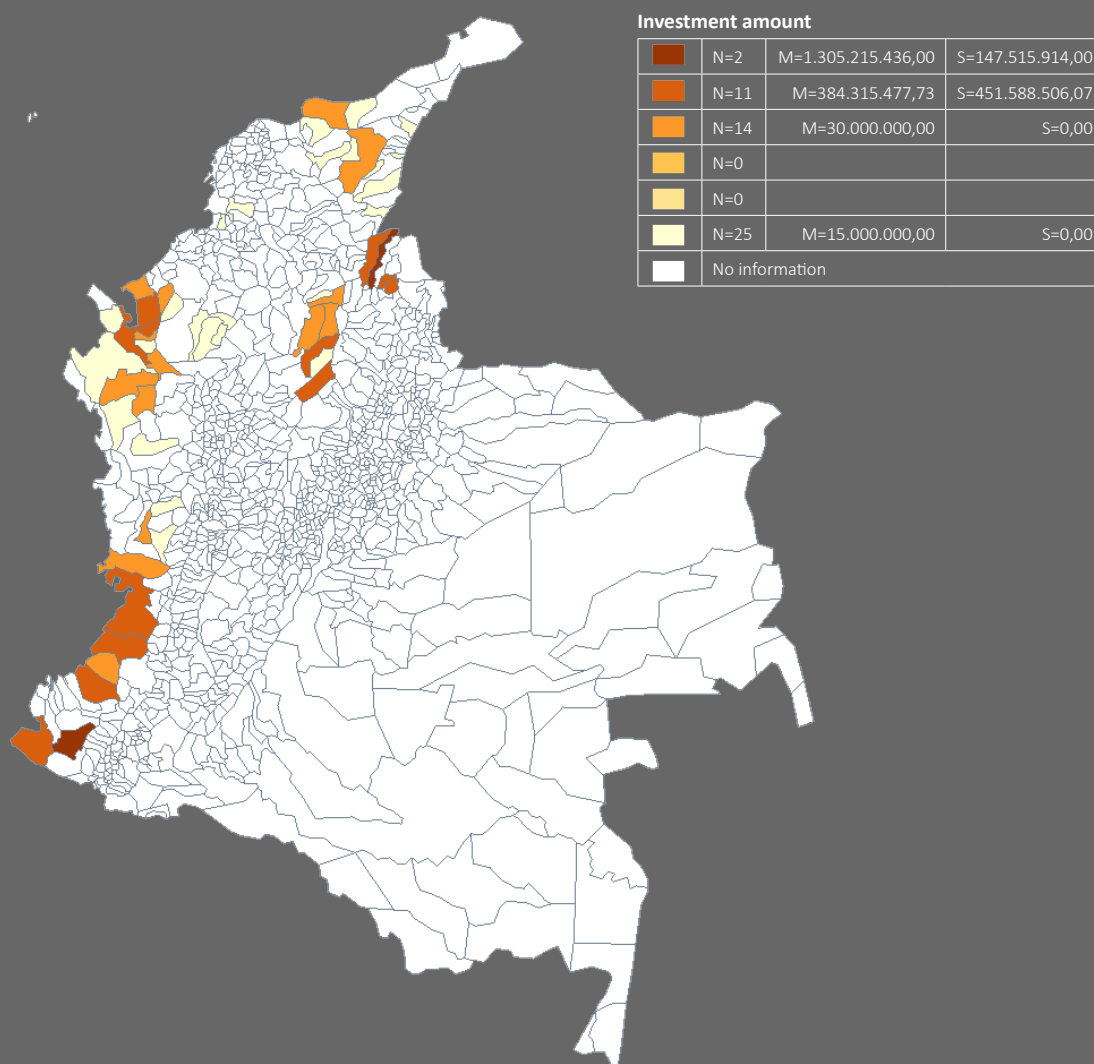


Figure 13. Own elaboration

The Multidonor Fund has not made as many investments in the Catatumbo subregion as the other funds already studied, nor did it invest in the Arauca, Macarena - Guaviare, Sur del Tolima, and Putumayo subregions.

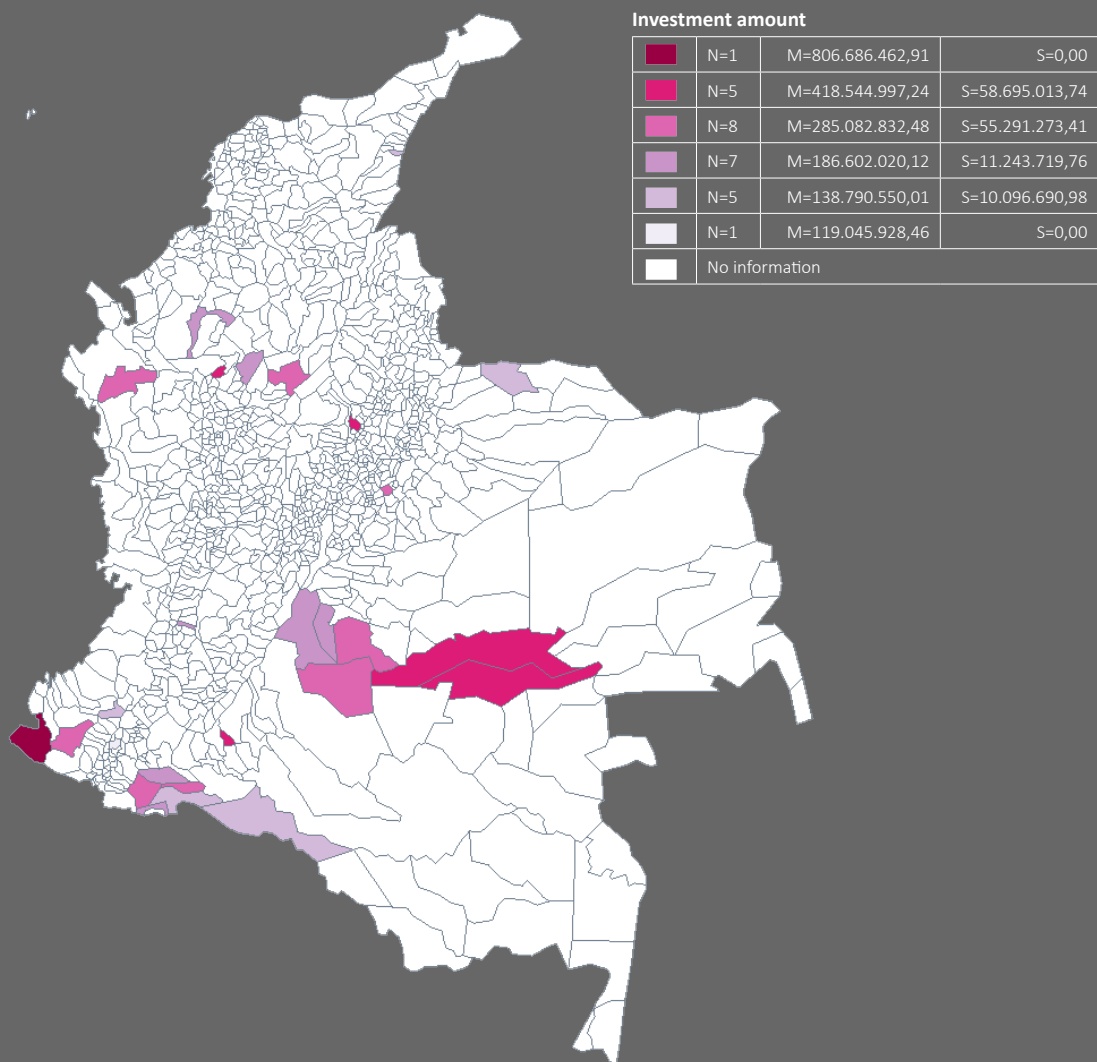


Figure 14. Own elaboration

UNDP, like the USAID FINTRAC Fund, does not invest in the Caribbean Coast or the Catatumbo subregion. This fund also includes the San Andrés de Tumaco, San José del Guaviare, and El Retorno (Guaviare) municipalities.

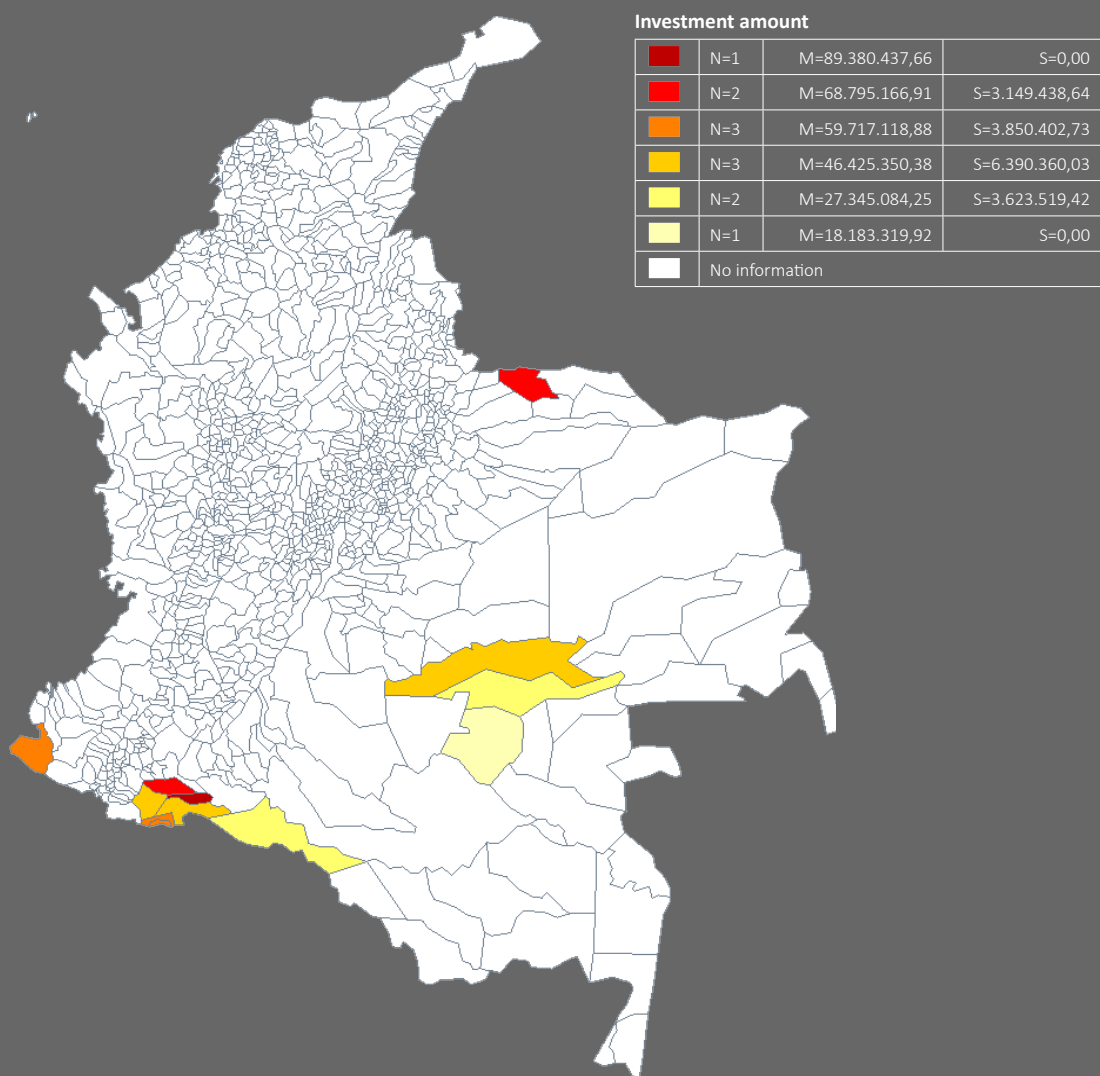


Figure 15. Own elaboration

Finally, the PADF has not invested in the subregions of Sierra Nevada - Perijá, Urabá Antioqueño, Sur del Huila, Caguán Basin, Caqueteño foothills, and Putumayo. Unlike the other funds, this NGO concentrates its resources in the Putumayo subregion, especially in the municipality of Puerto Caicedo.

## 2.2 WHAT DOES THIS DATA SHOW?

These figures show that international cooperation funds disbursed to implement PDETs has been low. Although more than US\$ 8 million dollars have been obtained from this source since 2017 to finance PDET (excluding those entering the CPF), this amount is low considering the cooperation resources entering the country every year. It is also very low in the face of projections of how much is required for PDET implementation. According to 2018 estimates from the Colombian government (Conpes, 2018), 36.8 billion Colombian pesos are required to fund PDETs (Mora Cortés, 2020, p. 3).

The data also suggest that most municipalities that have received international aid for PDET projects are also municipalities prioritized by security and illicit crop control policies. Many of these resources are also invested in border regions with high levels of illicit crops (Norte de Santander, Arauca, Nariño). This seems to indicate that the allocation of such resources is aligned with foreign geopolitical interests in the region rather than local needs (Cortés-Nieto et al., 2023a).

Another issue to highlight is that PDET projects funded by international cooperation are frequent in areas where extractive industries have historically operated (e.g., Northeast Antioquia or Arauca) or agribusiness (e.g., Urabá Antioquia). One possible hypothesis is that this responds to the interest in incorporating areas affected by violence into international trade flows. Another pattern that seems to confirm this hypothesis is that a considerable percentage of the resources are concentrated in infrastructure and land adaptation, that is, in projects that seek to generate material conditions of possibility for the insertion of the regions into the dynamics of global value chains (Cortés-Nieto et al., 2023a).

Regarding the low financial flows of international cooperation to PDET projects, it is important to explore how the arrival to the Presidency (2018-2022 period) of a government that did not support the peace negotiations impacted the relationship with donors. For example, in informal conversations, we were told that some donors decided not to fund PDETs due to the priorities established by the national government. Additionally, donors such as USAID decided to allocate resources to PDET municipalities outside the institutional framework established by the national government. Donors have also claimed discretion to support PDET projects aligned with their priorities, which occurs, for example, in the CPF, since in this space, they can decide which PDET initiatives from the portfolio they choose to support (Cortés-Nieto, 2021). These comments suggest that there has been a redistribution of power after the signing of the Agreement linked to the financial support required for its implementation.



## 3 EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRIPLE NEXUS

### 3.1 EVALUATION AGAINST THE TRIPLE NEXUS PILLARS

We found that the humanitarian aid, peace, and development components continue to be planned and executed separately at the level of donors and the Colombian government. Despite the efforts described in previous sections that seek to bring together analysis, planning, and financial programming, there is a significant gap between the components of the triple nexus. Although changes can be observed, the way of working and articulation has mostly stayed the same in light of the requirements of the triple nexus.

At the UN System level, the analysis of the country's context in the humanitarian, development, and peace domains continues to be carried out separately and individually through the three aforementioned response frameworks<sup>14</sup>. Although there are spaces for joint analysis between the GIFMM and the EHP, we did not find similar spaces that incorporate development issues. The national government also conducts its own context analysis through surveys, or technical cooperation roundtables led by the APC, sometimes supported by international organizations (S. L. Arias Valencia,

personal communication, December 19, 2022), which can be included in each response framework's analysis (Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), 2021). No joint analysis brings together the three UN response frameworks, the national government, and civil society.

There is also no evidence that the three UN response frameworks are planning their interventions in a complementary manner over medium-term periods. As of today, the planning frameworks for humanitarian and development responses are still separate. We also found no evidence of coordination settings between donors and the Colombian government for joint planning under the triple nexus pillars.

Within the UN System, planning is carried out separately by the three response frameworks mentioned above. Each donor has separate planning and programming forms. In turn, Colombia's International Cooperation Strategy is prepared by APC in accordance with the NDP and other national planning instruments, without the participation of donors. Donors participate at a later stage in donor roundtables and other meeting spaces; however, in the spaces provided by the Colombian government, rather than programming jointly, APC seeks to align international cooperation with the priorities of the Presidency. During informal conversations, it was brought to our attention that the disagreement of the donors with the priorities of the Presidency of Iván Duque (2018-2022) led many of them to choose to direct their support to the Truth, Justice and Reparation System created by the Peace Agreement, since the system enjoys constitutional autonomy, which allows it to manage its resources independently from the priorities of the Presidency (Cortés-Nieto, 2021, 2022).

There is also a lack of coordination in planning between donors, the national government and with subnational authorities. A state official with whom

we spoke informally mentioned that to fulfil the tasks of the triple nexus, it is necessary to strengthen and work with subnational governments. However, international donors fund few activities related to strengthening territorial decentralization (Cortés-Nieto, 2021, 2022).

Finally, in terms of financing, although the multi-donor funds have indeed served to channel and articulate the financial efforts of donors, there needs to be a clear articulation between the humanitarian and development sectors and the financial efforts of the Colombian Government. The CPF, which is the one that comes closest to these goals, has not received the expected international funding for reasons such as the disagreements between donors and the Presidency expressed in previous paragraphs and because of the difficulty imposed at the beginning by the obligation to contract according to national regulations on public procurement (Cortés-Nieto, 2021, 2022).

### **3.2 THE TRIPLE NEXUS AND THE PRINCIPLES OF A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**

The human rights-based approach proposes a set of principles to ensure that public policies follow a minimum of core associated with human rights. It seeks to mediate the tension that sometimes arises between development objectives (mainly economic) and the protection of rights. These principles are participation, equality and non-discrimination, and transparency and accountability. They seek to provide democratic legitimacy to decision-making processes, account for beneficiary populations' needs and vulnerabilities, and make interventions sustainable over time (Cortés Nieto, 2014; Jokubauskaite et al., 2023).

Our first concern is related to participation. To this end, we ask the reader

to refer to the comments in the following section on localization and the absence of spaces for communities' participation. Our second concern in this regard is related to the principles of transparency and accountability, as we needed more data on the existence of mechanisms to raise the visibility of damages caused by these projects to local populations and to claim the corresponding reparations.

In terms of transparency, we found global data on amounts and distribution of resources. For example, the MPTF's web page shows resource allocation in almost real-time (<https://mptf.undp.org/country/colombia>). Similar data can be found on the FEP website. The APC prepares annual reports presenting figures on international cooperation funds and general data on their distribution. However, finding detailed information in an accessible form is difficult.

We also note that donors such as USAID finance projects related to transparency and accountability in PDET municipalities, such as the project "Together for transparency," which seeks to strengthen open government and citizen control mechanisms (Cortés-Nieto, 2021; USAID, n.d.), but there are no similar mechanisms in their governance scheme.

In requests for information, we inquired about donors and national government's accountability mechanisms. For APC, transparency and oversight of spending depends on the donors, and their reports cannot be questioned. In their own words:

The information on projects and programs received by APC-Colombia corresponds only to what is reported directly by donors, based on the principle of good faith (...). This information does not include the list of contracts or how the resources received from International Cooperation are spent (...) [E]ach cooperant has its own supervision and control mechanism, which is

agreed directly between the implementer or executor of the resources and the cooperant or donor within the framework of a project or program (this may be through annual execution reports, steering committees, implementation progress reports, among others). The periodicity of these reports depends on the agreement between the parties (K. Mendoza Manjarrés, personal communication, November 2, 2021, pp. 1-2).

The Unit for the Attention and Integral Reparation of Victims (UARIV) (L. L. Villegas Gutiérrez, personal communication, April 27, 2021), the Truth Commission (M. Katz García, personal communication, September 21, 2021), and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) (P. Cobo Arrango, personal communication, April 28, 2021) responded in a similar direction: since the cooperation agencies spend the money, the governmental entities do not supervise the fund and only benefit from their effects.

As shown by these responses, it is difficult for transparency and accountability to exist, given the diversity of donors that come together in the country. In addition, many national organizations and donors do not want these mechanisms to exist, as they fear government interference in the distribution of resources and the impact on their relations with local communities (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

### **3.3 THE TRIPLE NEXUS AND LOCALIZATION**

Localization implies considering the voice and active engagement of the people mostly affected by a situation that requires international assistance, as well as bringing the affected people to the centre of the discussion (OECD, 2022). It also implies a transfer of leadership in the design of strategies and their implementation at the local level, which requires moving

away from a welfarist humanitarian model towards the recognition of the autonomy of local communities. This vision of strengthening local capacities is key to achieving lasting solutions (IECAH, 2022b).

The first aspect to highlight is that the conceptualization of the triple nexus says little about localization and community participation in decision-making. While there is talk about considering local needs in the UN and OECD documents, little is said about spaces for direct involvement of targeted communities (VOICE & Thomas, 2019).

In the case of Colombia, the data collected indicate that local communities have little participation in the analysis and planning stages at strategic levels. Usually, they are involved in the design of specific projects and in implementing concrete plans and interventions (S. L. Arias Valencia, personal communication, December 19, 2022; Cortés-Nieto, 2021). For example, there is little space for community participation in UN response frameworks. There are opportunities for NGOs integrated into the EHP or allies of the sustainable development framework to express their opinions. Still, there are no spaces for direct representatives of the target communities to intervene in defining priorities and orientations of the national intervention strategies. The same occurs in the case of USAID because although it promotes the institutional strengthening of municipal governments and community organizations, its governance does not provide opportunities for civil society to participate in the definition of intervention priorities at the country level (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

Something similar is noted in the governmental sphere. Communities and subnational governments indirectly participate in the elaboration of the NDP (through their representatives in Congress and in the National Planning Council), which informs the National Cooperation Strategy. However, the

latter is mainly determined by the priorities of the Presidency. In practice, communities cannot influence the definition of the national international cooperation strategy.

APC data also suggest that the participation of communities and grassroots organizations in decisions about the allocation of funds is low. According to APC (2021, p. 32), “71.2% of the resources [non-reimbursable international cooperation resources] are implemented by international entities, and only 28.8% are executed by national actors, with a 13% participation of the public sector”. For the agency, this distribution of resources raises concerns about whether or not cooperation resources are serving to strengthen organizational processes and small local enterprises. Related to this observation, it was also explained during informal conversations that the regulations governing several donors (such as USAID and the EU) prohibit the direct delivery of funds or direct contracting with community actors and grassroots organizations. Therefore, cooperation resources are used for technical assistance and institutional strengthening or are executed by third parties (Cortés-Nieto, 2021). Because of these criticisms, the FEP and the MPTFF opened funding windows for civil society organizations, not for communities directly (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

The 2018 Mid-Term Evaluation of the MPTF also expressed concern about the low impact of the projects financed by the Fund on the communities surrounding the interventions, as well as the low levels of involvement of subnational authorities. For the evaluators, “the benefits and impacts of most projects implemented through the Fund fail to extend to communities at large, being limited to direct beneficiaries.” Additionally, “the limited scope of its intervention and the weak involvement of the State’s territorial entities generates serious difficulties to sustain, replicate and scale its actions” (Fundación Ideas para la Paz, 2018, p. 44). These observations

connect with another point brought to our attention related to the absence of incentives for technology transfer. It was suggested that many projects connected to peacebuilding are neither sustainable nor have the expected impact on communities because they do not contemplate incentives for people in the municipalities to learn and develop capacities for their sustainability over time. The emphasis has been on bringing technology to the regions but not transferring the necessary knowledge to operate and further develop it (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

A fourth aspect to consider is how projects that receive international funding are conceived. On the one hand, during informal conversations, our attention was drawn to the complexity of presenting projects financed by international donors or the national government. We have been told that the methodology designed by the DNP to enable projects that benefit from cooperation funds administered by the State is complex and that something similar occurs with the TORs of multi-donor funds. Additionally, communities and subnational governments lack technical capacities to elaborate successful projects (Cortés-Nieto, 2021). On the other hand, projects proposed by donors to receive financing from funds such as the EFF are based on erroneous premises that ignore the communities' needs and the territories' characteristics, constituting a formula for failure (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).

The PDETs exemplify several of these problems. Although the construction of the PDETs was based on direct participation exercises in the beneficiary municipalities, the prioritization of specific projects has been done without the participation of the communities (Cortés-Nieto, 2021). The national government in the 2018-2022 period carried out a prioritization process of PDET initiatives that mainly took into account their alignment with the strategies of the NDP and with its security strategy; that is, the prioritization of PDET initiatives did not take into consideration the voice of the

communities of the PDET municipalities. During informal conversations, it has been suggested that this “centralization of PDETs” generated distrust with the 2018-2022 Presidency in the PDET villages (Cortés-Nieto, 2021). Only 15% of CPF resources are allocated to the PDET sub-account (Colombia en Paz Fund, s/f-b) and flow of resources to PDET municipalities, but outside the institutionality of these programs (Cortés-Nieto, 2021), suggesting that donors have also overlooked the exercises of defining development and peacebuilding priorities carried out by the communities in these regions.

### **3.4 THE TRIPLE NEXUS AND PEACEBUILDING**

As we suggested in the section on PDETs, we hypothesize that international cooperation promotes a liberal vision of peace centred on the inclusion of communities in value chains and markets. Several facts lead us to this observation.

First, until 2021, the MPTF area that has received the most funding is stabilization (US\$ 76.3 million), followed by Victims and transitional justice (US\$ 34.2 million), Reincorporation (US\$ 24 million) and Communication (US\$ 8.3 million) (Multidonor Fund for the Sustainment of Peace in Colombia, n.d.). Second, the Colombia en Paz Fund also focuses the execution of resources on elements related to the liberal peace agenda. The two subaccounts with the most funding are crop substitution (44.3%, more than US\$ 2.5 million) and reincorporation into civilian life (19%) (Colombia en Paz Fund, n.d.).

Finally, according to the management report published by the APC on its management during the previous government (2018-2022), it can be seen that the items with the highest allocation of resources are the migratory phenomenon (46.94%), territorial stabilization (22.56%), entrepreneurship

and orange economy (14.37%), conservation and environmental sustainability (6.93%) and rural development (6.07%) (Presidential Agency for International Cooperation, 2021). It is important at this point to consider the language used in the report. As explained by Carreño Ordóñez (2020), the term “stabilization” was related to the phrase “Peace with legality.” Both were used by the previous government, which was against the Agreement, to focus on the reinsertion of ex-combatants and deny the social causes of the conflict.



## 4 CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL THOUGHTS

The implementation of the triple nexus approach for allocating international cooperation resources is still in its early stages for three reasons. First, given that the largest funder of international cooperation is USAID (Rojas, 2013), a good part of the “success” of using the triple nexus in the country and in allocating funds to projects depends on its will. At least at the time of writing this report, USAID has yet to issue official documentation on the triple nexus in Colombia.

Secondly, we found that something similar happens with the most prominent donors reflected in the database (Rodríguez-Morales et al., 2023) since, by not using the triple nexus in their projects and programs, the allocation of funds in the country does not reflect it as well. Thus, we can assert that the discourse of the nexus, its variables, and others depend on the funders, and therefore, they are the ones who set the international cooperation agenda.

Third, the few existing studies on the implementation of the triple nexus in the territory argue that using this conceptual framework requires expert,

technocratic, and administrative knowledge that, as built by the funders, excludes the possibility of discussion by local actors and forces States to accept the “terms and conditions.” This situation prevents the solidarity and social leadership referred to in the great covenant for localization (Cochrane & Wilson, 2023). Added to this is the lack of pronouncement by Colombian institutions regarding the nexus today.

There is also insufficient evidence to conclude that the implementation of the triple nexus is positive. According to the academic literature, there may be risks associated with its implementation. First, the uncertainty surrounding the concept of peace in Colombia may make it difficult to foresee the effects of its entry into the country. Secondly, as the political and social processes that would substitute or replace the triple nexus (the framework that currently governs international cooperation) are not sufficiently documented, the implementation of the triple nexus could lead to new conflicts derived from the failure to take into account the historical and political context of the communities where international cooperation funds are allocated. In this sense, we agree with Laura Hammond’s (2021) proposal to analyze from the international political economy perspective the discourse that enables, perpetuates, endorses, or substitutes the consolidation of the triple nexus. Likewise, we consider it necessary to conduct empirical studies of distributive analysis of the logic governing international cooperation in terms of the triple nexus (Buchely Ibarra, 2012; Halley, 2018).

Third, we could forever continue changing the governance of international cooperation resources by adding elements to the nexus. Previously, the dual nexus between humanitarian aid and development aid was already added to peace as a third element. Several publications have proposed the need to consider climate change in the formula and move towards a quadruple nexus (Ensor, 2022; Mena et al., 2022; Van Sluijs & Masoliver, 2022).

Although we are not unaware of the importance of taking forceful actions to mitigate the effects of the planetary crisis in the Anthropocene era (Gibbard & Walker, 2014), continuing to add elements to the nexus could cause us to lose sight of what was the usefulness of the original approach and could cause an overspecialization of international cooperation, leaving aside other critical social aspects, such as poverty reduction, favoring fairer working conditions and land redistribution.

# NOTES

1. This article is part of the project “The Law of Protracted Conflict: Bridging the Gap between Humanitarian and Development Aid”, funded by the Universidad del Rosario, the University of Glasgow and the Freie Universität Berlin. For more information: <https://pure.urosario.edu.co/en/projects/the-law-of-protracted-conflict-bridging-the-gap-between-humanitar>. The project is part of the “Endless Conflicts” initiative. For more information: <https://endlessconflicts.org/>. The research and publication of this report is partially funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council under the project The Law of Protracted Conflict: Understanding Humanitarian-Development Divide [AH/ T013613/1]. Liliana Palacios served as a research assistant for this report.
2. The authors of this report consider that there is not a single definition of development, this is a contested term that is used to legitimize particular political, economic and social interventions aligned with the interests of elites and other powerful actors (Bhupatiraju & Verspagen, 2013; Escobar, 2007; Guzmán Cuevas & Fontela Montes, 2003; Ordóñez Tovar, 2014; Oriol Prats, 2006).
3. UN Women, UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, IOM, UNMAS, NRC, OECD, World Bank, ICRC, FINTRAC, Humanicemos DH, Save the Children, JEP, APC, ART, UARIV, Equipo Humanitario País, Resident Coordinator’s Office, and the Interagency Group on Mixed Migratory Flows (GIFMM for its acronym in Spanish). We submitted 24 requests for information and received responses from nine international organizations, NGOs, and UN agencies, and four replies from government entities. Only eight of these responses contain information related to the triple nexus.
4. We received the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of the Universidad del

Rosario by means of Act No. DVO005 489- CS310 issued on July 15, 2021. We obtained informed consent to conduct semi-structured interviews with UN Women, Victims Unit officials, and OECD. In the other cases, we only accessed informal conversations referenced as field notes.

5. The following NGOs are part of the Forum: ActionAid, Action Against Hunger, Alliance for Solidarity, ACTED, Actionaid, Care, Corporación Infancia y Desarrollo, Caritas Germany, Caritas Switzerland, Norwegian Refugee Council, Danish Refugee Council (2021), Diakonie, Lutheran World Federation (2021), Halü Foundation, iM-MAP, Doctors of the World, Medical Teams International, Tierra de Paz Foundation, Geneva Call, Hope, Humanity & Inclusion, Mercy Corps, Save the Children (2022), Samaritan's Purse, Solidarités International, Première Urgence Internationale, Plan International, OXFAM (2021), War Child, International Rescue Committee and World Vision International (2022) (Humanitarian NGO Forum- Colombia, n.d.).
6. A list of GIFMM's 81 members is available at <https://www.acnur.org/media/gifmm-colombia-preguntas-y-respuestas>.
7. See for example the Colombia Protection Cluster and GIFMM (2021).
8. Until 2022, it was made up of two well-known businessmen in the country (Cortés-Nieto, 2021).
9. These are: "Substitution- PNIS, Subaccount Development Programs with Territorial Approach - PDET, IDB Loan, Reincorporation - ARN, Environment and Sustainable Development- ADS, Operation, German Development Bank- KFW, Implementation, Special Justice for Peace-JEP, ICBF Sacúdete, Early Childhood, IDB Facility, Multipurpose Cadastre, Substitución PNIS- ANT National Land Agency 2, Colombia Heritage- HECO, IDB Loan - Amazon Vision, ZEII Catatumbo, IDB Facility - IDB Loan, Special Assets Company- SAE, Amazon Vision, Sustainable Colombia, ANT 2- National Land Agency 2, ZEII Catatumbo Cadastre, ANT- National Land Agency, French Development Agency - AFD" (Fondo Colombia en Paz, s/f-b).

10. PDET, DNP and FAO databases were used for this exercise. See the methodology in (iMMAP, 2022).
11. We requested information on implementing the nexus in this project from the United Nations Mine Action Service in Colombia (project executor) and the MPTF. We did not receive a response from them. Additionally, we consulted Humanicemos DH, a non-profit organization for Integral Action Against Antipersonnel Mines (AICMA) created in the framework of the Peace Agreement between the Government and the FARC-EP. They stated that they are not in charge of the project, so they do not know how the triple nexus is being carried out (Humanicemos DH, 2023).
12. To complement this information, an interview was requested with the UN Women Field Officer in charge of project implementation in Chocó. However, it was not possible to have his participation.
13. As mentioned above, international cooperation resources are challenging to track, as donors only have a legal duty to report basic project information to APC (APC-Colombia, 2022, p. 1).
14. See for example the individual evaluations of GIFMM (2021)

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