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E-BULLETIN

USAID support leads to US \$548M GOC investment in Gran Darien

Contrato-Plan: harmonizing national, departmental and local budgets and priorities



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Departmental Governors of Gran Darien Region (Chocó, Antioquia, and Córdoba) celebrate joint plans for the region.

Colombia is one of the most decentralized nations in the world, with over 50% of the nation's US \$94.5B annual budget managed at the territorial level. Colombia's 32 departments and 1,123 municipalities have administrative autonomy to plan and execute local GOC service delivery. National planning and budgeting is done on a sectorial basis with no reference to regional planning processes. Yet, policies for rural development, consolidation, and victims' assistance require a coordinated multi-sector and multilevel response from all levels of government. ***Contrato-Plan*** is an integral planning, high-impact mechanism that harmonizes sectorial policies, national policies with local implementation, and budget execution from the national, departmental and local level.

Since 2011, the **USAID Public Policy Program** has supported the inclusion of ***Contrato-Plan*** in the National Development Plan, the Royalties and Territorial Administration Laws, and the Land and Rural Development Bill. The Program is also supporting planning and negotiation processes between regional and national governments to implement pilot programs in three consolidation zones: Chocó, Sur del Tolima and Montes de Maria. The Tolima and Montes regions also receive USAID support as ***Rural Development Programs with a Territorial Focus*** zones. The Nation (President Santos) and Gran Darien governors will sign the first ***Contrato-Plan*** agreement on September 13.

The **Gran Darien** pilot consists of three departments: Chocó, Antioquia and Córdoba; Urabá and Sur de Córdoba were chosen as the focus areas, with 25 municipalities participating. In stage one of the process, technical teams identified areas of common interest and defined investment and co-financing priorities. In stage two, nation-region negotiations initiated; areas of joint work were explored in accordance with existing services, budget availability and sectorial priorities. In the third stage, the Nation and the region are finalizing an agreement to invest an expected US \$548M to address joint priorities.

The Gran Darien ***Contrato-Plan*** aims to overcome extreme poverty via work in 4 areas: social and productive development, housing and public services, and connectivity. Specific focus areas include family and early childhood assistance, income generation projects, education, health infrastructure, tourism, agricultural productive chains, rural and urban housing, potable water, and connectivity (roads, energy, ICT).

The **Program** will support the ***Plan's*** operational structure—board of directors, executive management team, financial administration team, and technical secretariat; it is estimated that operations initiate in October. The GOC is additionally supporting ***Contrato-Plan*** mechanisms in Norte del Cauca, Arauca, Nariño, Boyacá, and Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.