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USAID/OTI'S INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE RESPONSE PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA

A FINAL EVALUATION

April 2011

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS

Acción Social. *Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional* (Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation)

AUC. *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia)

BACRIM. *bandas criminales* (criminal bands)

CCAI. *Centro para la Coordinación de Acción Integral* (Center for Coordination of Integrated Action)

Colombia Responde. Colombian government program (Acción Social)

CCR. *Centro de Coordinación Regional* (Regional Coordination Center)

CSDI. Colombia Strategic Development Initiative; U.S. Embassy (Bogotá) program

CSIS. Center for Strategic and International Studies

DNP. *Departamento Nacional de Planeación* (National Planning Department)

DTO. drug-trafficking organization

ERPAC. *Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antisubversivo de Colombia* (Popular Revolutionary Anti-Subversive Army of Colombia).

FARC. *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)

GoC. Government of Colombia

GPS. global positioning system

IGRP. Initial Governance Response Program; USAID/OTI (Colombia) program

MILGRP. United States Military Assistance Group (SOUTHCOM)

OTI. Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID)

PCIM. *Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena* (Integrated Consolidation Plan for Macarena)

PNC. *Plan Nacional de Consolidación* (National Consolidation Plan)

Progreso. Colombian government program (Acción Social)

RCC. Regional Coordination Center (also CCR)

SENA. *Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje* (National Training Service)

SOUTHCOM. United States Southern Command

USAID. United States Agency for International Development

USIP. United States Institute of Peace

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A team from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) evaluated the programs and activities that USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) undertook in Colombia from 2007 to 2011. CSIS had previously done a mid-term evaluation of OTI's Colombia work up to 2009.

BACKGROUND

The Colombian armed forces scored significant gains against insurgents following the election of Álvaro Uribe as president in 2002. The 2004 *Plan Patriota* operation reestablished security around Bogotá, the national capital, and established a government presence in eastern parts of the country that had been held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). In 2007, a new Minister of Defense, Juan Manuel Santos, recognized that the state's presence could be consolidated in areas recently cleared of insurgents and other illegal groups unless legitimate civilian institutions were available to provide services there. Colombia's security forces were now capable of taking hostile territory and blocking strategic supply and trafficking corridors used by illegal groups, but they were now being asked, for the first time, to begin working with civilian ministries as well. OTI, with worldwide post-conflict experience and expertise in political development, was asked to help.

OTI called its effort the Initial Governance Response Program (IGRP), whose objectives were to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the government of Colombia (GoC) in post-conflict areas, or "consolidation zones"; to increase the willingness and capacity of communities in consolidation zones to cooperate and interact with the GoC; and to increase the GoC's capacity to respond to community-prioritized needs in a timely and credible manner. To accomplish these objectives, IGRP worked with Acción Social, a social welfare and development agency located in the office of the Colombian presidency, and the president's Center for the Coordination of Integrated Action (CCAI), whose main job was interagency coordination.

In 2007, OTI helped the Colombian government create the Integrated Consolidation Plan of Macarena (PCIM), a project targeted at the six southern municipalities in the department of Meta near the Macarena national park, long a guerrilla stronghold. In 2009, the PCIM approach became the model for Colombia's National Consolidation Plan (PNC), a sequenced and integrated approach to establishing the state's presence. The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá launched the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) to coordinate U.S. assistance to those consolidation efforts (and other policies) among all U.S. development, diplomacy, and defense agencies operating in Colombia. Through IGRP (and in coordination with CSDI), OTI continued to support the aid component of the consolidation program in Meta once PCIM became part of the PNC. IGRP later supported consolidation efforts in the departments of Montes de María and Tolima and provided technical assistance to the formulation of operational plans in the Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, Sur de Córdoba, Nariño regions, and San Vicente de Caguan.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The CSIS-USIP team visited three consolidation zones: Meta, Tolima, and Montes de María. In all three regions, team members found improved security, new infrastructure, and the growth of economic opportunities; observed how the increased presence of government project staff contributed to positive local attitudes about the state and the communities' place in Colombian society, in spite of ongoing poverty; and heard positive comments about the speed, flexibility, and transparency of the consolidation projects that Acción Social supported.

Communities expressed widespread concern, however, that the consolidation projects provided only short-term solutions. They wanted permanent solutions as well: to strengthen their local economies,

to improve the commercial value of their products, to connect producers to markets and their communities to the outside world; to remove the stigma of isolation and insecurity; and to give locals a reason—and the means—to stay and, perhaps, to give outsiders a reason to visit.

The fact that these desires were expressed suggests the state's raised profile was creating expectations for what the state could bring: more roads, more medical facilities, more schools, and so on. That could be taken as an indicator of success, but it also presents a risk that the state might not meet these raised expectations, potentially undermining whatever trust has been built up. Moreover, in these consolidation zones, the national government has not had a presence until recently, so services are not yet being provided by “normal” government entities, such as local and regional governments and key central government ministries. If these services are not transitioned from special programs provided by special institutions, such as CCAI, to the “normal” government entities, that will call the sustainability of the gains OTI has made into question.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

OTI programs were never meant to fill in all of Colombia's development gaps, but rather to create an enabling environment for a more capable state by showing citizens that security and development are two sides of the same coin. By showing citizens that there is a future and that public safety is a right and can be sustained, communities gained the motivation to contribute their labor and to forge ahead. OTI's IGRP thus fulfilled its mandate to strengthen the GoC's credibility and legitimacy in consolidation zones, and to increase the willingness and capacity of communities in these areas to cooperate and interact with the government. OTI's efforts to help strengthen the CCAI, and its work with governors, mayors, and the consolidation programs' Regional Coordination Centers (RCCs), have helped the GoC position itself to respond to the needs of post-conflict communities in a credible fashion.

The GoC has demonstrated an increased willingness and ability to take on this task, by making consolidation an important piece of its new National Development Plan and by providing the bulk of funding for the consolidation process. It will take time for all the functions of the state to evolve. Given competing government priorities, continued security challenges, and weak municipal governments, backsliding is still possible. But Colombia has made great strides toward closing the sovereignty gap as it gains control over its territory and earns the recognition of its citizens.

The following findings and recommendations to U.S. entities operating in Colombia should help Colombia consolidate these gains:

- The relative anonymity of the OTI programs made it possible for the GoC to be seen as a credible provider of services. This approach—what might be called **“strategic non-communication”**—should be adopted for any program in which one of the main purposes is to develop the capacity and credibility of the Colombian state *as a state*. Priority should continue to be given to this approach as the project moves into its next phase.
- The quick-impact projects carried out in the consolidation zones generated credibility and legitimacy for the Colombian state. They were a potent means of showing the state had arrived and was involved, particularly in regions where the state either had not been present or where politicians had a history of promising much and delivering little. The United States should **help the Colombian government (national, departmental, and local) improve its ability to follow through on security gains as quickly as possible with civil-sector projects such as the ones developed through the OTI program**. Security gains mean little to communities in the absence of such projects and may even generate resentment of a state that is seen as having taken away the source of their livelihoods (i.e., after coca is eradicated). This poses a potential problem in those areas where the military has established a presence and fostered security faster than the rest of the state can follow.

- Methodologies that call for communities to be involved in prioritizing projects, to contribute labor or other resources to the implementation of projects, to work together as producer associations, and to link up with other state institutions serve to promote a number of objectives related to the consolidation process: they help to pull together formerly fractured communities; foster an incipient familiarity with the existence of government institutions and their functions (or, at the very least, of state-sponsored projects); encourage communities and producers to interact and work with the government and project staff; and generally encourage people to make an investment in the consolidation process. **These methodologies should be retained in future consolidation efforts.**
- Land titling constitutes an important part of the process of consolidating the presence of the state. Although the current system for granting titles to and registering land is extremely complicated, the recent experiment in titling in Vista Hermosa serves as an important demonstration of the fact that it is possible successfully to navigate the process. Further support should be given to such land titling efforts in consolidation zones. Perhaps more important, **efforts should be made to link the Santos administration's focus on land restitution firmly to the consolidation process.** Land restitution is most likely to succeed in promoting justice and development when it is linked to security, livelihoods, and community development—exactly the types of issues that have been the focus of the IGRP approach to consolidation.
- While the evaluation team found that many people within the beneficiary communities greatly appreciated the projects offered to them, their appreciation was most often expressed in a way that clearly indicated their expectations had been raised to a point that, in many cases, cannot be satisfied. While this is not uncommon in communities emerging from neglect, it clearly indicates a need to actively **manage community expectations from the beginning, starting with program design.**
- Colombians in the major cities, where the bulk of the population resides, appear to have little knowledge regarding the consolidation process, including its relevance to security issues; many of the Colombian elite who live in safe neighborhoods in major cities seem to believe the country's conflicts are largely over. This does not bode well for long-term political support for the consolidation process, important as it is to Colombia's security, including any efforts that may need to be made to allocate government resources to support for consolidation. **More effective strategic communication regarding the consolidation process needs to take place at a national level** if the process of consolidation is to have the political support needed to make it sustainable.
- There is a need **better to connect the different levels and components of the consolidation process through the RCCs.** Important work is clearly going on at the local, departmental, and national levels, but there is a need to rely on something more formalized than the committed individuals doing that work if it is to move forward. The RCCs are an obvious candidate for helping to connect these pieces of the consolidation process. It would be useful to give more support to the RCCs to ensure that regional coordinators have the respect and attention of actors at the national level and are firmly connected and accessible to actors at the regional level.
- Related to the above, further consideration should be given to the host-nation “face” that is put on USAID-supported projects. Schools, health clinics, children's parks, cold storage facilities, and other projects were labeled with plaques that read, for example, “Acción Social.” But conversations with community members suggested they did not always have a very clear understanding of what part of the government was supporting these projects. It would be helpful to **link projects not only to national projects or entities but to municipal governments and their mayors**, because those are the entities with which communities most clearly identify and are most likely to interact.
- The experience of the consolidation programs has shown that it is possible to reduce coca production with minimal replanting rates. **The integrated approach that**

characterized OTI's programs appears to have been central to the success of sustained eradication, and should be retained in future consolidation efforts.

However, the existence of legal income-earning alternatives to coca production is not likely, in and of itself, to be enough to encourage communities to embrace the legal economy—particularly as these alternatives generally yield an income lower than that earned through coca production. Although difficult to measure, sociocultural factors appear to have played an important role in encouraging families and communities to enter into and remain a part of the legal economy. What several individuals highlighted as important to them were their ability to ensure that their children would be a part of the legal economy, the sense of community that was being fostered within producer and other related groups, and the importance of being recognized as “legal” by Colombians outside the region. Although it is difficult to identify the factors that have helped to foster these attitudes, potential sources are the integrated and participatory approach employed by the OTI programs as well as the strategic communications strategy.

- Security gains have been made in the consolidation zones, but security cannot yet said to be consolidated. This is a function, in part, of the continued existence of the FARC in parts of the country. It is also a function, though, of the rise of new organized criminal groups and new types of illegal economic activity, such as illegal gold mining. These developments challenge the consolidation process and it is not clear that Colombia is presently equipped to address them. Contending with non-uniformed actors will require more police, for example, an area in which the Colombian state already has a demonstrated weakness. This issue also presents challenges for the justice system, which also is currently under strain. Efforts should be made to **work with the GoC to think through the implications that these emerging security issues pose for the process of consolidation.**
- The expenses of the consolidation model as implemented in Meta and Tolima have led some to question whether it can be replicated in other parts of Colombia. However, there are reasons to believe that **the OTI model's essential features can be replicated at a lower cost.** First, the early efforts took place in some of the most insecure parts of the country—it is estimated that half of the entire FARC organization is located in and around southern Meta, with a significant number of additional units in southern Tolima—and so it should come as no surprise that the security investment would be heaviest there. There are few other places in Colombia that would require such a heavy commitment of security forces. Second, because PCIM was a demonstration project, and the consolidation programs in Tolima were the first to replicate them, there were substantial start-up costs associated with both. Now that national consolidation bodies have been stood up, they do not need to be paid for again.

Based on the evaluation team's findings in Colombia, the following recommendations apply to OTI programming in other post-conflict and transitional settings:

- begin planning for the handover to the USAID mission much earlier in the program's life cycle;
- encourage private sector enterprises to become funding partners;
- actively manage community expectations from the beginning;
- maintain anonymity as a donor and let the partner government take the lead and the credit;
- place greater emphasis on programs that address the needs of women and the elderly; and
- emphasize community self-sufficiency and access to energy through renewable resources.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2009, a team from the Americas Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) was asked to assess Colombia's Integrated Consolidation Plan of Macarena, or PCIM (for Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena). Launched in August 2007 with support from USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), the PCIM program was intended to help the Government of Colombia (GoC) consolidate legitimate state authority in areas formerly controlled by illegal groups. The Center for the Coordination of Integrated Action (Centro de Coordinación de Acción Integral, or CCAI), the interagency coordinator of the Colombian president's office, was implementing the PCIM program in six municipalities in the department (or province) of Meta, to the south of Bogotá, and adjacent to three national parks located in and around the Macarena mountain range, an area that had been outside of the state's control until only very recently. The CSIS evaluation in 2009 was a mid-term review of Colombia's PCIM program in Meta and of the OTI program that supported it, called the Initial Governance Response Program (IGRP).¹

It was clear during the 2009 evaluation that IGRP and PCIM were making important inroads. By creating a strong state security presence, developing a visible and robust civilian response alongside security operations in the affected areas, and coordinating with various actors at the national, municipal, and community levels to promote a sustained state presence, PCIM was laying a foundation for economic development and long-term stability. By disrupting narcotics cultivation and trafficking, the program also was challenging the survival of illegal groups in the region and forcing them to seek out other sources of funding. After a field visit to Colombia, the CSIS team concluded that "the transitional process in the Macarena has the potential to be the needed agent of change":

PCIM embodies what appears to be an important shift in the government of Colombia's hitherto not fully coordinated approach to establishing effective state presence in areas formerly controlled by illegal armed groups. As a strategy for consolidation of sustained state authority, PCIM's emphasis on rapid and sequenced action coordinated on an interagency basis has much potential for success not only in the Macarena but as a pilot project for use in other areas of Colombia.²

In 2009, the PCIM approach used in the department of Meta became the model for Colombia's National Consolidation Plan (Plan Nacional de Consolidación, or PNC), a sequenced approach to establishing the state's presence: first the military would clear an area of illegal armed groups, then the police would target illegal sources of income (usually by eradicating coca crops), and finally civilian agencies would enter with rapid, high-impact aid projects to begin winning the confidence of local citizens. The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá launched the Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI) to coordinate U.S. assistance to Colombia's consolidation efforts (and other policies) among all U.S. development, diplomacy, and defense agencies operating in Colombia. Through IGRP (and in coordination with CSDI), OTI continued to support the aid component of the consolidation program in Meta once PCIM became part of the PNC, but it offered additional support to the new PNC programs in the departments of Tolima and Montes de Maria as well.

All of these efforts entered an important transition period in August 2010, when Juan Manuel Santos became president of Colombia. After taking office, Santos ordered a review of the relevant consolidation programs to determine how they should be carried out and how they should be prioritized relative to other national policies; meanwhile, he incorporated the main elements of the National Consolidation Plan into his National Development Plan (Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, or PND).

¹ Peter DeShazo, Phillip McLean, and Johanna Mendelson Forman, *Colombia's Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena: An Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: CSIS, June 2009).

² *Ibid.*, pp.12–13.

The IGRP officially closes down on June 30, 2011, and so, as of this writing, U.S. support to the consolidation programs were in transition from OTI to the larger USAID Mission in Colombia. P. Michael McKinley, who became U.S. ambassador in August 2010, also was reviewing how CSDI's support for consolidation will fit into the embassy's overall national strategy.

To inform these transitions and contribute to effective consolidation in the future, a final evaluation of IGRP and the consolidation programs it supported was carried out in February 2011 by a team consisting of three researchers from CSIS, a researcher from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and an independent local consultant from Bogotá. The CSIS-USIP evaluation covered the entire period of the program, from March 2007, when IGRP was established to support the pilot project that later became the PCIM, through March 2011. This report presents the results of that evaluation.

After providing background on the transitions taking place in Colombia's political development and U.S. support to that process, this CSIS-USIP report provides an overview of the objectives and methods that guided the evaluation (Section 2); discusses key themes that emerged from a review of the literature on consolidation in Colombia (Section 3); offers some general observations that emerged from the study (Section 4); presents the formal findings related to strategic objectives (Section 5), program objectives (Section 6), and OTI's mission (Section 7); and, after providing the main conclusions, offers a set of recommendations to OTI (Section 8). A series of appendices includes the scope of work for the study (Appendix A), recommendations to the USAID mission in Colombia (Appendix B), lessons learned for OTI and the USAID mission in Colombia (Appendix C), a discussion of IRGP field activities in consolidation zones (Appendix D), an analysis of security issues in the consolidation zones (Appendix E), and a list of formal interviews the evaluation team undertook (Appendix F).

BACKGROUND

This final evaluation comes at an important time in Colombia's political development. The country is beginning to emerge, in a serious way, from more than fifty years of war and violence. It is the site of the longest internal war in Latin America, involving several insurgent groups, the largest and most resilient of which has been a rural guerrilla organization called the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or FARC). The war has involved anti-guerrilla paramilitary organizations as well, and during the 1990s both the FARC and the largest paramilitary association, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, or AUC), became deeply involved in the illegal narcotics trade as a source of funding. The AUC demobilized in the early 2000s, and many of its leaders have since been arrested and extradited to the United States on drug or murder charges. The FARC has been reduced to around 5,900 fighters, from around 16,000 ten years ago; in 2010 alone, 2,000 fighters left the FARC and entered Colombia's reintegration program, 1,400 were captured, and 600 were killed in action, including several of its top commanders.³ As their drug income has come under pressure by Colombia's counternarcotics efforts, the FARC have placed even more emphasis on extortion and illegal mining for funding.

Drug-trafficking organizations (DTOs) have long managed coca crops, cocaine processing facilities, smuggling routes, and protection rackets throughout Colombia. In addition to having been a major source of taxes for guerrilla and paramilitary groups, Colombia's DTOs have carried out substantial violence and actively undermined the country's weak legal and judicial systems. Since the breakup of the large DTOs, especially the Medellín and Cali cartels, in the 1980s and 1990s, criminal organizations in Colombia have become more diffuse in their organizational structures. Since the mid-2000s, a growing number of organized criminal bands, known as *bandas criminales*, or BACRIM, operate throughout Colombia today, engaged in drug trafficking, kidnapping, extortion, smuggling, illegal gold mining, and a wide range of other illicit activities. As the FARC lose power, these

³ Author interviews of U.S. Embassy staff, February 2011; Alejandro Eder, High Counselor on Reintegration, March 2011, Washington, D.C.

BACRIM—groups such as Los Rastrojos, Los Urabeños, Las Águilas Negras, and the Colombian People’s Revolutionary Antiterrorist Army (Ejército Revolucionario Popular Antisubversivo de Colombia, or ERPAC)—are becoming more powerful, a growing threat to Colombia’s stability. Still, they are not an existential threat to the country as the FARC once were.

In short, Colombia has come a long way back from the brink.

Ten years ago, the country was often depicted as a failing state. Many Colombians believed the state was at risk of losing the war against the FARC, and criticism was widespread regarding the human rights record of some military and police units, and the links that some had with paramilitary units. One of the first convincing signs that a turnaround was under way came in 2004, the second year of President Álvaro Uribe’s administration, when the Colombian army swept the FARC away from the capital city and restored security to the surrounding countryside, in an operation dubbed *Plan Patriota*. Army leaders were especially anxious to assert government control over southern Meta and Caquetá (south of Meta). President Andrés Pastrana, Uribe’s predecessor, had turned that area over to FARC rule by withdrawing military, police, and other government officials as a peace gesture that ultimately failed to engage the guerrillas in serious negotiations. *Plan Patriota* became symbolically important, therefore, to the reassertion of national sovereignty over that demilitarized zone.

The United States had been providing small levels of military assistance to Colombia since 1954. During the 1980s it began offering support to help counter narcotics production and trafficking, but the main recipient of that aid was the National Police and the support was inadequate relative to the challenge presented by the burgeoning narcotics business. Included in the aid packages were requirements intended to reduce the prevalence of human rights abuses by Colombian security forces, including a provision that security assistance could not be provided to units credibly accused of serious human rights violations. In 1999, the United States intensified its engagement with Colombia’s struggle to recapture the “stateless” parts of the country, through an initiative called *Plan Colombia*. Originally billed as a drug-enforcement program, *Plan Colombia* broadened over time into a more comprehensive effort to save what was increasingly feared would be a failing state. In 2002 U.S. president George W. Bush authorized a wider use of aid, recognizing that, if Colombia was going to overcome drug trafficking and violence, U.S. assistance objectives would have to include efforts at countering not just traffickers but other kinds of illegal groups as well, including the FARC (although critics accused the Bush and Uribe governments of ignoring illegal activities by the right-wing paramilitaries and focusing solely on left-wing insurgents).

After the Colombian military’s initial successes in *Plan Patriota*, a problem arose that was given immediate and widespread attention in the press: the military presence did not quickly translate into an effective government presence. A civil-military strategy was needed to coordinate military actions with the building of democratic institutions. Some credit the initial ideas for such an approach to individual general officers in the Colombia military; others to studies by local think tanks or the Colombian War College; and others still to U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and its in-country representatives in the U.S. Embassy’s Military Assistance Group (MILGRP).

Whatever the ultimate origin of the idea, President Uribe established the CCAI within a social welfare and development agency located in the president’s office, called the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation (Agencia Presidencial para la Acción Social y la Cooperación Internacional), or Acción Social for short. CCAI’s key functions were to help coordinate consolidation activities among military, police, and civilian agencies, and, on the civilian side, to speed the authorization and delivery of assistance programs to 15 designated regions—later called “consolidation zones”—recently liberated from the rule of violent groups.⁴ One individual was responsible for coordinating activities in each of the (geographically vast) zones. Initially, a dozen agencies, often joined by private-sector aid groups, met each working day to plan joint actions and ensure bureaucratic compliance.

⁴ For a good history of CCAI, see Matthew Devlin, “Organizing the Return of Government to Conflict Zones: Colombia, 2004–2009,” *Innovations for Successful Societies*, Princeton University, <http://www.princeton.edu/successfulsocieties>.

By 2007, some within the Ministry of Defense and the military officer corps—historically reluctant to work with civilian authorities—had come to recognize that any strategy to “clear and hold” territory would require the resources and cooperation of other ministries if that territory was to be stabilized sufficiently to enable the military to transfer control to civilian agencies; the military could clear and hold, but regular government institutions were going to have to build. The military also was beginning to view the conflict they had been waging for 40 years in more of a geographical context, placing more importance on blocking and holding “strategic corridors” to deny guerrillas and traffickers the routes they used to move weapons into the country and narcotics out of it. Some civilian institutions—such as the Ministry of Agriculture, to give one notable example—were slower to participate in this new civil-military approach. A few, however, began as (or later became) enthusiastic participants. The National Parks service, for example, was initially hesitant to participate but came to see how the initiative complemented its efforts to save natural reserves. Similarly, the governor of Meta, the department most affected by the first stage of these efforts, was initially positive but passive, but as he saw results he and his administration became aggressive supporters. The National Training Service (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje, or SENA) was an eager participant from the beginning.

As the whole-of-government coordinating body for consolidation activities, CCAI had gotten off to a weak start, but its effectiveness and influence have increased over time, and its leaders are continuing to solicit even more high-level government commitment.

COLOMBIA IN TRANSITION

In August 2010, Colombian president Álvaro Uribe ended his second term in office. His departure and the election of his former defense minister, Juan Manuel Santos, as president of Colombia represented the end of an important phase in Colombia’s efforts to regain control of its national territory. During Uribe’s tenure, the AUC was disbanded, the FARC was weakened, and the security sector was expanded and strengthened under Uribe’s “Democratic Security” policies. In his second term, his U.S.-supported strategy to achieve security and political gains against illegal groups was already starting to be phased out, and a new concept for consolidating those gains was beginning to emerge.

Uribe’s vice minister of defense, Sergio Jaramillo, was the government’s main driver behind the new “consolidation” concept, which he was developing based on lessons his country had learned the hard way—especially the fragility of military gains when civilian agencies and citizens are not involved in consolidating them—and on his study of counterinsurgency doctrine, including the U.S. military’s new counterinsurgency manual.⁵ In 2006, Jaramillo asked USAID to help him test his concept. OTI responded by launching IGRP in March 2007.

Lessons from the pilot effort, in former FARC territory in the Macarena region of southern Meta, recently liberated under *Plan Patriota*, led to the development of the PCIM, and lessons from the PCIM experience were later incorporated into the PNC. (IGRP supported the PNC programs in Meta, Tolima, and Montes de María, but also provided technical assistance to the formulation of operational plans in the Bajo Cauca Antioqueño, Sur de Córdoba, and Nariño regions; as of this writing, an operational plan in San Vicente de Caguán was nearing completion as well.) Civilian agencies and citizens in the consolidation zones were reluctant partners during the earliest efforts, but early successes in bringing a military and civilian presence to those communities, and winning a degree of their trust along the way, had an important demonstration effect that attracted more participation over time.

Today, Jaramillo is President Santos’s national security adviser and is leading a whole-of-government review process to focus consolidation efforts on fewer regions, to establish a legal framework for civilian-agency participation and funding, and to build government and societal consensus for both the goals of consolidation and the whole-of-government approach taken by the regional

⁵ United States Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, Field Manual No. 3-24, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5 (2006).

consolidation program, the PCIM, and later the national consolidation plan, the PNC. This review is scheduled to conclude in June 2011, when Jaramillo will present his findings to Santos.

Consolidation is clearly one of Santos's national priorities. His National Development Plan includes a long fifth chapter called "Consolidation for Peace" that draws heavily from the PNC. He has drawn attention to the new "integrated" approach by visiting consolidation projects and leading high-level discussions, including one exceptional occasion when he invited the ambassadors of countries contributing to the effort to participate in one of his cabinet meetings.

But consolidation has much less visibility among the Colombian public than do the government's response to the past year's severe flooding crisis and the Santos government's own plans to reform policies related to land ownership and his ambitious legislative agenda for his first year in office—major policy efforts that are potential competitors to consolidation in terms of the president's political capital and the country's resources. Moreover, Colombia's population is mostly urban—about 70 percent, versus 30 percent rural—and so rural consolidation processes have, at best, a natural political constituency that is in the minority; it is not necessarily a winning campaign issue for national politicians. Nation building does involve physical activities such as road rehabilitation, but mostly it is a subtle, often invisible process.

U.S. ASSISTANCE IN TRANSITION

Just as Colombia is in a transitional period with respect to consolidation, land restitution, post-flood reconstruction, and a new presidential administration with an aggressive legislative agenda, so is U.S. assistance to Colombia in transition from the narcotics-focused *Plan Colombia* framework developed more than a decade ago—in which counternarcotics, security, and alternative-development programs were relatively disconnected from one another—to the CSDI framework meant to support the GoC's new efforts to consolidate state presence in a much more integrated manner. We are in a moment of convergence among policy reviews.

Among the most important features of the CSDI is its focus on supporting GoC efforts in at least five geographic regions, with different agencies taking lead responsibility in different regions, and an interagency working group that meets weekly to share plans and ideas and to coordinate activities on the ground, something that had not been done consistently until the recent past. Many of those involved have said the embassy's CSDI framework was consciously designed to embody OTI's overall approach.⁶ Likewise, USAID's current five-year plan is designed to combine OTI's quick, flexible approach with USAID's longer-term development agenda.

When OTI launched the IGRP in Colombia in March 2007, the program's overall objectives were

- to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the GoC in post-conflict areas;
- to increase the willingness and capacity of communities in consolidation zones to cooperate and interact with the GoC; and
- to increase the GoC's capacity to respond to community-prioritized needs in a timely and credible manner.

IGRP paid staff salaries, offered technical assistance, funded projects, and provided other forms of support to four main components of the GoC's consolidation efforts:

⁶ Author interviews, Bogotá and Washington, January–February 2011. The OTI approach is described in its institutional mission statement: "To support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs." OTI designs its programs according to 13 "strategic principles," summarized as rapid, flexible, transparent, political, targeted, community-based, tangible, short-term, catalytic, complementary to long-term development, field-focused, risk-taking, and innovative. USAID, "Transition Initiatives," OTI website, http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/transition_initiatives/index.html.

- Colombia Responde, which sponsors small infrastructure projects (e.g., health centers, roads, drainage systems, etc.) identified by communities as high priorities;
- Progreso, which provides technical assistance and agricultural inputs to producers to help them make the transition from the illicit economy to legal income-generating activities, with a focus on products for sale to local markets;
- Post-eradication projects, which help groups of families or farmers whose coca crops had recently been eradicated, and their incomes thereby diminished, to work together in informal associations to manage small productive projects that can be linked to the existing legal economy and become self-sustaining; and
- CCAI, which coordinates activities related to these components with each other and with other government activities taking place in the same areas (e.g., training, land-use management, land titling, etc.).

OTI designed IGRP in a way that was intended to be rapid and flexible in making decisions and responding to needs and opportunities; to encourage plans and integrated action by GoC personnel to ensure that consolidation efforts were properly coordinated and sequenced, especially with military forces that have cleared the area of insurgents and with police forces that subsequently led coca-eradication efforts in the area; to encourage community participation in defining needs and priorities; and to be anonymous so that Colombian agencies (such as Acción Social and CCAI), Colombian programs (such as Colombia Responde and Progreso), and local mayors and governors could be the entities that would be seen by those communities as the providers of services, even when they were managed by OTI. The point of the IGRP was to help consolidate the presence and legitimacy of the Colombian state, not of foreign governments.

OTI's support for Colombia's consolidation initiatives through the IGRP ends June 30, 2011; the contracts to continue that support under USAID were under review at the time of this writing. It remains to be seen whether the progress that has been made in Meta, Tolima, and Montes de Maria can be sustained under the embassy's CSDI framework, and whether the successful elements of the approach taken in those areas can be replicated in other consolidation zones within Colombia. Much will depend on the GoC's capacity to guarantee citizen security in the newly recovered regions through the presence of security-sector institutions (military, police, judges, and prosecutors) and on its continued commitment to community reintegration and development (especially in livelihood creation and infrastructure), property rights (especially land restitution and titling), and citizen participation in governance. Security, development, governance, and the restitution and protection of property rights are interconnected elements of sustainable consolidation. Progress will depend in large part on the effective commitment of resources to provide efficient mechanisms for rapid response in all of those areas.

II. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

To determine the degree to which OTI met its objectives in Colombia—and, by extension, to identify the degree to which its successes can be replicated in other parts of the country—the CSIS-USIP evaluation team studied relevant documents and databases; interviewed policymakers, project staff, policy research centers, academic researchers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Washington and Bogotá; and visited more than two dozen project sites in 13 population centers in Meta, Tolima, and Montes de Maria to view the projects and discuss their impact with project staff, local officials, community leaders, project beneficiaries, and other community members. The field evaluation took place over three weeks in February 2011 and involved the following population centers:

- Meta (PCIM): Granada, La Macarena, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama, Santo Domingo, Villavicencio, and Vista Hermosa.
- Tolima (PNC): Ibagué, Chaparral, El Limón, and Rioblanco.
- Montes de Maria (PNC): Cartagena and El Salado.

The two members of the evaluation team who had visited PCIM project sites in 2009 as part of the CSIS preliminary evaluation of that program returned to some of those same sites as part of this final evaluation, to reassess conditions today as compared to those observed two years earlier; other team members also visited some of those sites to provide a fresh perspective. The earlier evaluation had praised the interplay among state actors in planning and implementation, but noted shortcomings in police, justice, land titling, tertiary roads, and high-level political support. For the final evaluation, these issues were revisited to identify any progress or backsliding. In addition to those specific issues, the evaluation team sought more generally to determine the impact of the IGRP-supported projects on security, counternarcotics, agriculture, human development, and governance in the areas in question, not only in Meta but in Tolima and Montes de Maria as well.

Before undertaking the interviews and field visits, the team reviewed background materials—including project summaries, budgets, formal evaluations, survey results, papers on success stories and lessons learned, and quarterly and annual reports by USAID, its GoC partners, contractors, and the U.S. Embassy, among others—that provided an overview of the program's evolution since 2007. Additional literature in Spanish and English was collected to examine the opinions and insights of others from Colombia and elsewhere about the impact of consolidation efforts.

The literature review, site visits, and interviews all were focused on answering three questions, corresponding to the evaluation's three main objectives:

1. Did IGRP help the GoC meet its strategic objectives on consolidation?
2. Did IGRP's specific project activities help achieve the overall program objectives?
3. Did IGRP contribute to the fulfillment of OTP's mission?

Security considerations limited to some degree the evaluation team's freedom to interview community members in project sites at will. This fact made it difficult to be certain that the field research did not suffer from a form of sampling bias: since most interviewees had some direct relationship to the IGRP-supported projects, it seems clear that they would feel the state's presence much more immediately than others in their community might. Without accounting for this bias, there was a risk that the evaluation team might have concluded that the state had a stronger relationship with the communities in question than it might, in fact, have.

To mitigate this risk, the evaluation team took three main steps. First, we studied the methodologies and results of surveys that had been undertaken previously in the consolidation zones; these surveys touched on a much broader sample of the populations in question than the team had direct access to, and so gave a broader range of views. Second, we took advantage of opportunities to speak with community members as those opportunities arose, such as before and after community meetings and during walks between project sites. These conversations offered important nuances and alternatives

to the views collected during formal interviews. Finally, the team in general maintained a skeptical and at times critical perspective on claims of progress and success, insisting on detail when generalities were offered and seeking elaboration when criticisms arose. The intention was to undertake a fair, thorough, and independent evaluation.

III. DOCUMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The programs OTI supported in Colombia have been the subject of a number of previous evaluations, surveys, progress reports, and news articles.⁷ Some of these have addressed whether the consolidation programs were helping the Colombian state to be perceived as being more present in the consolidation zones than they had been in the past, and whether that presence was, on balance, positive or negative for the communities living in those zones. The point of the programs, of course, was to take advantage of early gains in security to develop some kind of positive—and permanent—relationship between state civilian agencies and the people in those communities, so it was fair game to question the existence or quality of such relationships.

The most critical perspectives on that question focused on the supposed “militarization” of the consolidation effort. This criticism was especially sharp early on, when the commitment of various civilian agencies was still uneven at best, and the main coordination mechanism in the field—the so-called fusion centers—seemed, to critics, to be dominated by the military. Even the term “fusion center” was criticized as being militaristic, so that aspect of the program is now referred to as the Regional Coordination Centers (RCCs).⁸

Other criticisms focused on the management structure that Acción Social had put in place to implement the programs, or on poor participation by local officials and community members. Part of the issue was that Acción Social had only one dedicated staff member in each of the prioritized regions to coordinate field activities with military and police advisers. Later, it assigned existing staff (who had other responsibilities) to help the coordinators. This proved ineffective; oversight was spotty and implementation not always well managed. (It was only later in the program’s history that Acción Social put a serious and effective management structure in place, with some staff living permanently in the regions for which they were responsible while still lacking the needed sectoral specialists. Jaramillo’s review addresses the question of whether the national and regional management structure has sufficient capacity and resources to coordinate consolidation.)

Many of the most important criticisms of the program, especially early on, came not from sources outside of OTI but from OTI and its partners directly. This comes through particularly well in the surveys OTI sponsored to better understand community perspectives on key issues. OTI undertook its first effort to measure community confidence in the Colombian state in mid-2007 in three of the town centers where the PCIM program was operating: Puerto Rico, Vista Hermosa, and La Macarena. The results of the individual surveys and one focus group showed that, while most responded that they felt worse off financially since their economic base (coca) was eradicated, the presence of the armed forces and the arrival of state-sponsored development activities did make them feel somewhat more secure than they had a year earlier and offered them some degree of hope in the future. For example, the majority surveyed expressed satisfaction with their government, pride in their town, and a desire to continue living there. Security gains were still felt mainly in the city centers, however; while the initial surveys did not measure results in outlying areas, they did show

⁷ See, for example, International Crisis Group, “Colombia: President Santos’s Conflict Resolution Opportunity,” *Latin America Report* no. 34 (October 13, 2010); Adam Isacson, “International Counternarcotics Policies: Do They Reduce Domestic Consumption or Advance Other Foreign Policy Goals?” testimony before the Domestic Policy Subcommittee of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, July 21, 2010; International Crisis Group, “Improving Security Policy in Colombia,” *Latin America Briefing* no. 23 (June 29, 2010); John Otis, “A Colombian experiment in nation building: An effort to combat drugs and rebels could be a model for the US in Afghanistan,” *GlobalPost*, May 30, 2010; and Adam Isacson and Abigail Poe, “After Plan Colombia: Evaluating ‘Integrated Action,’ the next phase of U.S. assistance,” *International Policy Report*, Center for International Policy, November 2009.

⁸ In 2009, when the CSIS team visited the Meta region, initial support for the fusion center had come from SOUTHCOM through the MILGRP at the U.S. Embassy. The center later evolved into a civilian structure, the Regional Coordination Center, which coordinated GoC agencies in the area. See DeShazo et al., *Colombia’s Plan de Consolidación Integral de la Macarena*. See also Isacson and Poe, “After Plan Colombia.”

that those who lived in the town centers felt the outlying areas were difficult to travel to. A year later, in 2008, some of the less secure outlying areas were surveyed, and the responses were notably more negative than the urban responses: most respondents in the outlying areas said they felt insecure, worse off economically, and doubtful of the municipal governments' willingness to follow through on promises. Surveys in those less secure zones over the next few years, however, showed steady improvements in most of the relevant indicators, suggesting the consolidation program was having the desired effect.⁹

OTI used the results from the early surveys and focus groups, as well as staff feedback, contractor reports, and a series of formal evaluations of work on the ground, to identify lessons that could inform modifications to the PCIM program (later extended to the PNC programs) to make it more effective. Early lessons included (among others):

- making sure mayors, governors, and communities (e.g., in the form of Municipal Assemblies) were involved from the beginning in identifying priorities—but making sure local officials did not get overwhelmed by too many demands on their limited time and resources;
- encouraging development and consolidation planning at different levels of government (e.g., Municipal Development Plans);
- encouraging flexibility and new methods to enable civilian agencies to take advantage of opportunities as soon as security gains were made (e.g., rapid, high-impact projects through the Colombia Responde program);
- recognizing the importance of consulting multiple sources of information (security forces, government officials, community leaders, program staff, and other organizations) regarding the security situation in an area before making important decisions;
- prioritizing working with existing agricultural producer groups (both formal and informal) over creating new ones; and
- aligning producer projects with market processes and cycles and—most important—with markets.¹⁰

All of these criticisms and lessons formed the informational baseline that the CSIS-USIP evaluation team used to begin the study of the program's successes and shortcomings, enabling the team to target interview questions to illuminate important outstanding issues and determine whether the early criticisms or shortcomings had been addressed by the end of the program. General observations that emerged, and the specific findings of the study, are discussed in the next four sections.

⁹ Creative Associates International, "Estado de ánimo y confianza en las Instituciones de los habitantes del Departamento del Meta," USAID, September 2007; Datexco, "Percepción de cambio de los habitantes de los centros poblados de la zona de la Macarena," USAID, September 2008; Datexco, "Percepción de la calidad de vida en la zona de la Macarena," USAID, May 2009; and author interviews with IGRP and PCIM staff and contractors, February 2011.

¹⁰ USAID/Colombia quarterly reports, 2008–2010; U.S. Embassy "1207" reports, 2009–2010; USAID contractor quarterly and annual reports, 2007–2010.

IV. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In all three regions evaluated—Meta, Tolima, and Montes de Maria—the CSIS-USIP evaluation team found that improved security, new infrastructure, the potential for economic opportunities, and the growing presence of security forces and government programs and project staff were having, on balance, a positive effect on local attitudes about the state and their place in Colombian society. Community spirit seemed to be on the upswing in many of the areas visited, and the speed, flexibility, and transparency of consolidation projects were generally praised and were a constant theme in the feedback the team received during field interviews.

There was, however, widespread concern that the projects that were implemented provided only short-term solutions to the communities' current needs. What citizens said they wanted were more structural—that is, permanent—solutions: to strengthen their local economies, to improve the commercial value of their products, to connect producers to markets and their communities to the outside world; in short, to remove the stigma of isolation and insecurity and to give locals a reason—and the means—to stay and, perhaps, to give outsiders a reason to visit.

The fact that these desires were being expressed at all suggests that the raised profile of the state was creating expectations for what the state might bring. That could be taken as an indicator of success, as far as it goes, but it also presents a real risk that the state might not be able to meet their raised expectations—for more roads, more medical facilities, more schools, and so on—potentially undermining whatever trust has been built up between the communities and the state. There already is widespread concern that the funding and support of the kind the PCIM and PNC programs brought to their communities might not continue for long. In fact, that concern is entirely well founded, given the IGRP's pending expiration and the unsettled questions about what resources might follow in its place—including the question of whether the GoC has sufficient resources available in the first place. One key official in Meta said that PCIM was losing energy as OTP's support wanes. In all regions, many field staff—most of whom are dedicated individuals who represent a significant investment in human resources over the past four years—said they were not certain their jobs would continue; such a loss would be fatal to the momentum toward state consolidation that has been established to date.

There has been overall progress in setting the conditions for economic development. Gains have been made in most areas studied, particularly in roads, electricity, and water. Progress has been slow—either in real terms or relative to raised expectations—and uneven, but this is not at all unusual for ambitious development programs, and the communities clearly appreciated the early efforts that were implemented quickly. Some projects were at a standstill due to the delays of local and regional governments in fulfilling their commitments; for example, cold-storage facilities for milk producers were built but the electricity had not been connected because the municipalities had not sent the building inspector to approve the construction. Whether their appreciation for services provided is sufficient to counterbalance their disappointment relative to raised expectations is difficult to judge.

This raises an important set of issues regarding sustainability. Local and regional governments, and key central government ministries, are the entities that, under normal circumstances, provide services to citizens. In consolidation zones, where until recently the national government has not had a presence, services are being provided by special programs, such as Colombia Responde and Progreso, and through special plans and institutions, such as CCAI, and not by the “normal” government entities. (Health and education services—of varying levels of quality—were always the responsibility of governors and mayors, rather than the national government, although in the most insecure areas the Catholic Church often provided those services instead.)

At the national level, despite the strategic importance of transportation and agriculture to consolidation, the Ministries of Agriculture and Transportation long have been among the entities least invested in consolidation efforts. The communities the evaluation team visited placed great emphasis on the building of roads for access to markets, schools, and the wider region, and they

clearly associated road construction and repair with the government program responsible, Colombia Responde. But municipalities, which have lead responsibility for tertiary roads in the Colombian system, have almost no resources to contribute to building roads. The Ministry of Transportation did not, until recently, provide adequate resources. Likewise, the main contribution of the producer initiatives, through the Progreso program, was to present legal alternatives to coca that could become profitable in the medium and long term. While many producers said they are poorer now than when they produced coca, most also said they were glad to be part of the legal economy. This represents an opportunity for alternative development. While the Ministry of Agriculture was not initially invested in consolidation, it has turned its attention, under the Santos government, to critical issues such as land tenure.

The commitment of local officials was quite mixed. Some mayors, for example, were reviled by locals, especially outside of the town centers, or were not unambiguously enthusiastic about the consolidation programs. Other local officials, however, particularly the governor of Tolima and some of that department's mayors, as well as a number of the mayors in Meta, were clearly committed to the success of the program. But if those projects, encouraged by national institutions, are moving forward in some places with the mayors and in some places without them, that raises the question of whether the consolidation programs "need" the mayors or are adequately promoting their participation. Some progress has been made in building local-government capacity, but it has centered mainly around the consolidation projects. The quality of management, the fiscal base, and continuing problems with transparency and corruption were issues that arose repeatedly during field interviews. The 2011 local elections will be important indicators for how much importance these communities place on the consolidation process; whenever the question was asked, there seemed to be enthusiasm for the possibility of voting in candidates who were dedicated to that process.

These are important challenges, but they should not detract from the very real progress achieved in most of the communities benefiting from the consolidation programs. In all communities, project participants and direct beneficiaries were clearly supportive and optimistic. It was more difficult to determine how widespread those positive attitudes were,¹¹ especially outside of the city centers, where many individuals still have family among the FARC and others are still hesitant to clearly associate themselves with either side in the war. Still, there were some clear social-capital benefits to the programs. Several interviewees mentioned that field staff for the consolidation programs, with their emphasis on community consultation and cooperative work by producer groups, had fostered improvements in the way many community members interacted. The model of consulting with communities and local governments seemed to be empowering them; even if they did not exactly know what the state's grievance processes were, more locals at least understood their rights as citizens—an important step in integrating them into the broader Colombian state.

¹¹ See section 2, Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

V. FINDINGS: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Did OTT's IGRP help the government of Colombia meet its strategic objectives on consolidation?

If Colombia's consolidation programs had one overarching objective, it was to establish an effective state presence in areas formerly controlled by illegal armed groups. As Jaramillo's review process has shown, there is no consensus on the concept of consolidation—either what it technically entails or how one can know when consolidation has definitively been achieved—but the national conversation surrounding it has included the introduction of government authority, the restoration of citizen rights, the extension of governance, and the integration of the region into the economic, political, and social life of the nation as important conceptual elements of state consolidation. Perhaps another way of asking how one can know when the state's presence has been consolidated in a region is to ask how the region's citizens can know when they no longer need to worry that the state might once again abandon them. Neither question invites a simple answer, and there are no simple ways to measure progress. Local perceptions of security, physical access to outlying areas, ownership of land title or credit, level of legal economic activity, access to state services, and citizen participation in governance, among others, are appropriate indicators, and have been used as such.

Still, consolidation is not a milestone or an end point, at least not one that is easily defined; it is more akin to momentum. Like a seedling that has to be watered until its roots are established, it takes active effort to hold territory against an armed opposition and to hold citizens' attention with services and other enticements. Progress is achieved only incrementally and over a sustained period of time, with many setbacks and cycles in which expectations are raised, then met or dashed, then revised, then raised again. If things go well, at some point there is no longer a question of whether the enticements and services will be funded, whether the armed groups will return, or whether the state will abandon the community. While that point has not yet been reached in the consolidation zones OTI supported—those questions continue to be asked—there clearly is momentum in that direction. The state has planted itself in those areas, and with few exceptions it has progressively set down more and more roots.

What role did OTI play in fostering that progress? First, the IGRP catalyzed effective GoC action by encouraging planning and coordination across agencies and at the national and regional levels. Second, it catalyzed U.S. government action by demonstrating the effectiveness of its approach. In both cases, it nurtured a mindset—a way of thinking about how complex policy objectives can be achieved in conflict zones—that was adopted by both Colombians and Americans working on consolidation. That is probably its most lasting legacy, from a strategic perspective. Third, moreover, it catalyzed citizens' participation in their communities' own development, not only by giving them a voice in defining development priorities but also by encouraging them to form associations and cooperatives to improve their standing in the market for their products. Taken together, these contributions have created both a sound basis for the state's presence to grow and a good template for how the state can establish its presence in other regions.

CATALYZING GOC AND USG ACTION

OTI programming played a critical role in catalyzing GoC activities in support of consolidation of state presence. It is not an overstatement to note that, absent OTT's efforts, there would most likely be no functioning consolidation program in Colombia today. Building on the seeds of an idea championed by Sergio Jaramillo and on some very real security gains achieved by the Uribe administration, IGRP helped to design and provide support for the PCIM. The PCIM then became a launching pad for the PNC and the CSDI.

OTT's success in working with the GoC was due to the ability of its staff to build on and help foster GoC interest in consolidation; its willingness to take advantage of opportunities for action rather than wait for the “right” moment to arise (e.g., initiating programs in marginally secure areas in Meta and Tolima); and its close and productive working relationships with in-country operators. OTT's

culture—its willingness to take risks and to learn from its mistakes—allowed it to make adjustments to its programs when needed. This convergence of a strategic vision and tactical operation established the basis for a new way of initiating development in the transition zones.

While OTI had some success in encouraging GoC interagency coordination, particularly through its technical assistance to CCAI, that success was somewhat constrained due to difficulties the GoC had in deciding who should have responsibility for oversight of the consolidation process. Outstanding issues included the relationships among the CCAI, Acción Social, and the new position of national security advisor, and the role of regional coordinators at the RCCs, relative to the role of the national coordinator at CCAI. There is hope that the current strategic review process will lead to some improvements in this respect. Additionally, while OTI tried to work with mayors' offices to enhance their willingness and ability to provide support for consolidation, there is, realistically, very little that resource-starved mayors can do to fulfill the responsibilities that fall within their purview. Still, despite early difficulties winning various actors' buy-in for the consolidation process, real progress has been made since the PCIM's demonstrated successes—improved security, roads built, schools repaired, illicit crops reduced—encouraged some actors to support the consolidation process.

The PCIM created a roadmap for consolidation by integrating both counterinsurgency theory and lessons learned regarding the importance of coordinating and sequencing state actions; by clarifying the goals of consolidation; and by creating specialized structures charged with supporting and coordinating activities, such as the RCCs.¹² Although government, community, and other actors did not always adhere to the operational plan that was developed, the plan at least provided a focal point for consolidation efforts in the region, and offered lessons for planners in the PNC programs that came later.

Beyond its effects on GoC, OTI was very successful as a catalyst to USG activities in support of consolidation. The need for a new five-year plan to replace the USAID Mission's Alternative Development Strategy coincided with the advent of the new Obama administration. Taking advantage of this confluence of factors, as well as the demonstrated success of the PCIM, USAID decided to focus its new five-year strategy on support to the PNC. Those efforts are designed to marry OTI's flexible and quick-impact approach with the longer-term approach characteristic of USAID, although it remains to be seen how that will work out in practice: OTI had a lot of resources to focus on a few areas; USAID has relatively few resources to focus on more areas.

CATALYZING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Only when a zone was considered relatively secure by the military did civilian programs to consolidate confidence in the state begin. Using the methodology developed by OTI programs in both Meta and Tolima, community decisions on specific projects relied on OTI's rapid-response capacity, flexibility of programming, and a community-driven set of priorities, to help demonstrate government support for integration and socioeconomic well-being. These projects were supplemented by national infrastructure projects that were often implemented through the military corps of engineers or through private contractors and local community labor, all paid for by the government of Colombia, particularly the governor.

OTI's focus on programs that supported infrastructure development and income-generating activities was both logical and feasible. Those programs—Colombia Responde and Progreso—highlighted the presence of the Colombian government and were designed to have a high impact on the communities within the window of time OTI's programs usually run, a few years. The Colombia Responde program's focus on infrastructure development probably affected nearly all members of the communities living in the green and yellow zones (i.e., anyone who uses roads, sends their children to schools, uses health clinics, etc.).

¹² "Lineamientos Básicos para el Plan Integral de Consolidación en la Región de la Macarena," Primer Informe, version 2, January 2008; See also "Lineamientos Básicos para el Plan Integral de Consolidación en la Región de la Macarena, Componentes Social y Economico," version 2, June 2008.

The Progreso program's focus on income-generating programs, especially those tied to productive activities linked to the land (e.g., cacao, cattle, milk, brown sugar, and pork production), provided direct assistance to a more limited subset of those communities. As such, it might unwittingly have marginalized individuals who had little or no access to land or those involved in the service sector of the economy. Women constitute one group to which little specific attention was given by the programs. Although women are members of some productive groups (e.g., producing brown sugar, sewing clothes), a number of women we met voiced a desire to take part in some kind of organized income-producing activity. The fact that many households in the consolidation zones are female-headed signals a need for women more consciously to be included in OTI programming of this nature.

Still, on balance, these programs drew attention to the state in a positive way: in contrast to the past, when military forces would enter a community mainly to root out insurgents and sympathizers and leave again, leaving the community vulnerable to insurgent reprisals, many of the projects being undertaken with IGRP's support looked more permanent: roads, buildings, and so on. Among those subsets of the communities who either participated directly in prioritizing, planning, or building projects, or were supported in efforts to form producer associations, there seemed as well to have been a more lasting change: community members emphasized that working cooperatively toward shared goals brought greater benefits to the community than was possible with each family working alone.

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE CONSOLIDATION ZONES

The initial focus of the consolidation programs on the Macarena region was significant for strategic, political, and symbolic reasons: it was an area that had suffered from government neglect, FARC activity, coca production, and, during Pastrana's term, complete state abandonment. Nearly the same can be said for Tolima, the region identified as the birthplace of the FARC. Montes de Maria also constituted an important area for intervention, given the history of FARC and AUC activities there, including some of the worst massacres the country has experienced. All three regions had strategic importance as well given their roles as corridors for narco trafficking.

As the nature of illicit economic activities changes in Colombia (e.g., the growing use of extortion, illegal mining activities, micro trafficking, etc.), it is possible that other regions of the country could become more important to consolidation efforts. Many of these "newer" illegal activities have been taking place in the same regions of the country in which OTI originally chose to focus its activities (e.g., extortion in Meta, illegal mining in Tolima, etc.). But criminal activity takes places in other areas of the country where the presence of the state is minimal as well.

This highlights the importance of maintaining the momentum toward consolidation. Doing so will require understanding what made that momentum possible in the first place, and what challenges remain. Four factors came together to make consolidation possible: the place was right, the timing was right, the trends were right, and the strategy was right.

- *The place was right.* The Macarena mountain range has such unique ecological features that Colombians bound themselves to an international treaty to protect it. So it was particularly offensive to many that the region had become covered in coca cultivation during the guerrilla years. Retaking it was important symbolically. In addition, the entire region has been taking on new strategic significance because improved highway access puts it, in effect, "closer" to Bogotá.
- *The timing was right.* While the Uribe government was looking for a more effective way to deal with liberated zones, the U.S. government was feeling pressure to deemphasize militarized aid and foresaw an inevitable downturn in total aid levels. The U.S. Embassy developed the CSDI and gave separate embassy units lead responsibility for different parts of the country; the Macarena region was USAID's lead. The Embassy's CSDI complemented the government's PNC. Both were driven by a desire to find a new, more effective way out of the long conflict.

- *The trends were right.* Colombian and U.S. policymakers were evolving in parallel in their thinking on a number of key issues, especially on the question of drugs. Initially a reluctant player in the anti-narcotics game, key Colombian military officials had come to accept as doctrine that drug earnings fueled the insurgency and eliminating coca was a legitimate military objective. Meanwhile, American officials increasingly recognized that aerial eradication of coca plants alienated local populations and had limited long-term impact. The promise of the PCIM model was that manual eradication could be made safer and more effective if security and government services arrived in a coca-growing zone at the same time, and that the results would be permanent.
- *The strategy was right.* Perhaps most significantly, the PCIM encouraged the belief that a coordinated and sequenced approach to consolidation could be successful in other parts of the country. Key elements included flexible, fast-disbursing projects, transparently administered in full view and with consultation of local communities, with a heavy stress on roads; the U.S. role was largely kept low-profile.

Despite this convergence of factors, five important issues remain to be addressed in a much more comprehensive way:¹³

- *Security.* The conflict and its actors are changing. As the FARC are now factionalized and in retreat, the BACRIM are on the rise. The army has succeeded in recovering national territory in various regions, but others remain under the control of illegal armed groups, and there are some concerns over the sustainability of the security presence due to the shortage of police, judges, and prosecutors. The transition from military- to police-based security in the consolidation zones is insufficiently advanced. Beyond their current mission of living among citizens, providing for their security, and countering illegal goods, the police need to strengthen their intelligence-gathering efforts to break up the emerging actors and their new sources of financing, and to have a broader presence.
- *Justice.* The lack of a functioning justice system is undermining the rule of law in the consolidation zones. Nationally, there is a strong imbalance in the investments made between the justice sector and the defense sector: justice receives about \$1 in investment for every \$7 invested in defense. Police without judicial investigators and judges means important matters are not adjudicated and resolved. There are only two *procuradoras*—judges who arbitrate and prosecute, if necessary, errors and offenses of public officials—for all land and environmental matters for much of the eastern half of Colombia. Even lower court judges are rare. In those consolidation zones where judges and prosecutors are present, they lack the police protection needed to carry out their tasks and are, in many cases, subject to harassment or extortion by illegal groups. In addition to inadequate funding, staffing, capacity, and protection, all of which make it difficult to address common crime, there is not enough specialized capacity for courts to address issues such as property rights and land restitution. Moreover, with the growing challenge of illegal gold mining, coordination will need to be improved among security and justice institutions.
- *Titles.* Large investors and landholders have an innate advantage over small farmers without title to their lands; improvements in security, roads, and government services can benefit the former at the expense, and perhaps exploitation, of the latter. Giving small farmers title to their land would help ease these concerns, enabling them to borrow and invest in their lands, and pay taxes that support municipal governments. In February 2010, IGRP began funding a pilot project to give title to the lands of 150 families living in the Vista Hermosa area of Meta. The project involved surveying and mapping, land-use plans, and legal paperwork. At this writing, the titling process was nearing completion for all 150 families. The process demonstrated that it can be done, but serious bureaucratic hurdles—and many thousands of property claims—remain. It is hoped that the new land law will accelerate the establishment of secure property rights.

¹³ See additional recommendations in Appendix B.

- *Governance.* Local and departmental governments face three central challenges: the recovery of political power from illegal actors; the development of local capacity to lead consolidation and further municipal development; and the recovery of social power and the capacity to rebuild social capital. Some gains have been made in these areas, but progress has been decidedly mixed, with some local officials more dedicated than others. The regional elections of 2011 deserve special attention as an indicator for how these issues might be addressed in the future. Moreover, consolidation, to be successful, requires more attention to RCC staffing, which at present is inconsistent across regions (in this regard, other regions should look to PCIM's staffing as a model).
- *Private sector.* A wave of development of large agricultural enterprises is taking place in Meta, and they are benefiting from the improved security, but so far very little effort has been made to engage them as funding partners in the consolidation process.

Finally, a fundamental question remains as to whether Colombia can afford such an ambitious undertaking as national consolidation. The government does not yet seem to have worked out all the costs. However, it has undertaken some efforts to make consolidation financially feasible:

- It has cut the number of zones to receive priority attention.
- It is working to reform the way royalties from the exploitation of natural resources are distributed. Currently the largest share of coal, petroleum, gold, and other mining earnings go directly to the departments and municipalities where the products were taken out of the ground. A new law being discussed would divert a larger share of the earnings to the central government for distribution on more of a needs basis, which should benefit the zones the government has targeted for consolidation. Meta, for example, will lose direct payments, but experts in the Ministry of Finance say it will gain from distributions based on its poverty and strategic location.
- The costly military and police deployments, upon which the relatively inexpensive development efforts depend, might be paid for from revenue drawn from the renewal of the “wealth tax” that Uribe put in place in his first term.

There will be a great deal of competition for any new resources, however. Unusually heavy rains brought devastation to wide swaths of the country early in 2011, and President Santos replied with a promise to sell ten percent of the national oil company Ecopetrol to finance post-flood reconstruction. One Colombian involved in the PNC wondered why that money would go to 2 million people affected by the flooding when somewhere between 6 million and 8 million Colombians suffer from organized violence; he added his wish that PNC might get part of sales revenue.

The consolidation model implemented—particularly in Meta and Tolima—was expensive, which leads some to question whether it can be replicated in other parts of Colombia. Since apparently nobody has been able definitively to calculate how much those efforts cost—including military and police deployments and reassignments of civilian personnel, in addition to the direct costs of the institutions and projects involved—it is fair to question whether the model is tenable. But there are three reasons to believe that its essential features can be replicated.

- First, the early efforts took place in some of the most insecure parts of the country—it is estimated that half of the entire FARC organization is located in and around southern Meta, with a significant number of additional units protecting FARC leader Alfonso Cano in southern Tolima—and so it should come as no surprise that the security investment would be heaviest there; there are few other places in Colombia that would require such a heavy commitment of security forces.
- Second, because PCIM was a demonstration project, and Tolima was the first to follow that demonstration, these early efforts incurred substantial start-up costs. Now that national consolidation bodies have been stood up, they do not need to be paid for again.
- Finally, perhaps the most valuable aspect of the early programs was intangible: it was not the projects that made them relatively successful; it was the interagency cooperation, sequencing, and planning surrounding the projects that made them successful. If there is

a PCIM “model,” it is not road-rehabilitation and support to associations, but flexibility and integrated action, coupled with an ongoing commitment to provide security and maintain the momentum of earlier investments.

The GoC has demonstrated a growing financial commitment to the consolidation process. IGRP’s support to the PCIM in the early stages was as much as 85 percent, but that figure fell to less than 10 percent by the end of 2010. Today, international agencies provide support to only about 16 percent of the consolidation budget in the Macarena region, and just 6 percent in all consolidation zones; the GoC funds the rest. Moreover, the Santos administration has been working with the National Planning Department (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, or DNP) to designate funding for consolidation as a permanent line item in the budget, and consolidation has been incorporated into the National Development Plan, which is a legally binding instrument. And the president’s office has recognized the need to build more municipal capacity for tax collection and financial management so that they can be better positioned to repair tertiary roads, follow up on eradication efforts with short-term food assistance, and other activities that have been associated with the consolidation process.¹⁴

LAND RESTITUTION AND CONSOLIDATION: A CRITICAL JUNCTURE

Land restitution and consolidation are two sides of the same coin.¹⁵ Consolidation—attacking insurgents, destroying their resource base, and providing security and state services to local citizens—paved the way for isolated regions of Colombia to be integrated into the nation. Land restitution—returning land to the dispossessed and protecting their property rights, including land titles, technical assistance, and access to credit—can give some rural Colombians a permanent stake in the system, but only if they have security and access to state services. For those who had been forcibly removed from their lands in the past, consolidation without restitution is a victory for the state but not for them, and restitution without consolidation is unstable: without protection, they are at risk of being dispossessed once again.

As we review the work of OTI in the consolidation of zones once occupied by insurgents, the gains made in security and development in Meta, Tolima, and Montes de Maria reflect the success of a holistic strategy that engaged both civilian government agencies and military partners in bringing the country together. With the OTI program on consolidation having ended, the importance of addressing the question of land ownership emerges as the next development issue that will determine whether Colombia can move forward toward peacefully ending its conflict in the years to come.

Unsuccessful attempts at land reform have been made by every modern government in Colombia. Unequal access to land has been at the heart of violence in Colombia since the late 1940s. As the internal conflict in Colombia grew more violent in the 1980s, and the FARC started confiscating land from peasants and displacing them from their plots, the elusiveness of addressing the land tenure issue was driven home by the use of these properties to cultivate coca. It is estimated that more than 4 million people were displaced in the last 30 years. The rise of paramilitary groups also engaged in confiscation of large land holdings made the situation of land restitution implausible. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, more than 10,000 square miles of land have been stolen from poor farmers. In the early 1990s, with up to 40 percent of Colombia’s territory threatened in one way or another by an armed insurgency, thinking about ways to change the dynamic of land ownership was out of the question. It was not until 2002, with the administration of President Álvaro Uribe, that the strategy of Democratic Security would connect the question of land to the question of citizen security. Although Uribe was successful in his quest to promote greater security and incorporate

¹⁴ Author interviews with Santos administration staff and U.S. embassy personnel, February 2011.

¹⁵ For a good overview of land issues in Colombia, see USAID, “Property Rights and Resource Governance: Colombia,” Land Tenure and Property Rights Country Profiles series, September 2010, <http://usaidlandtenure.net/usaidltpproducts/country-profiles/colombia>.

areas once outside the control of the state, he did not advance the agenda of land distribution to those who had been displaced or dispossessed of their property.

Land legalization and distribution is emerging as one of the Santos administration's cornerstone policies as it moves legislation through Congress designed to address the needs of 3.4 million people who have been displaced by the violence of Colombia's modern age. According to government sources, 40 percent of rural Colombian land is untitled. Creating a process that is transparent and fair to those who need legal title will enable a transformation of the rural economy from one dominated by cattle grazing to one that focuses on agriculture. Making land available to the rural population of Colombia and specifically to those who were victims of the conflict is possible because of the break in the conflict.

Land ownership is a way to help create citizens. Those who own land are more likely to be more involved in their communities and more likely to engage in the rebuilding of regions that were once considered outside the control of the state. Land ownership provides the most basic form of collateral that is essential in order to gain credit for future farming and property improvement. The process of restitution, which involves steps to identify community lands, the use of global positioning system (GPS) data to establish boundaries and legal titles to lands in a transparent way, and the establishment of special courts to deal with land disputes and property rights, will take time. There is a risk, moreover, that improvements in the protection of property rights and physical security will lead to perverse consequences, such as speculation, inflation, and perhaps large investors capable of squeezing smaller landholders out of the market. But if these challenges can be addressed successfully—and that will be difficult—the end result will be a revitalization of rural Colombia, something that can lay the foundation for private investment and development. None of this would have been possible but for the willingness of the government of Colombia to devise a strategy for consolidation that embraced a security-first dimension, coupled with a robust set of projects that addressed the isolation of the countryside, the access to roads and markets, and jump-started livelihood creation in some of the most challenging environments.

In short, land restitution, if it succeeds, will be among the most significant achievements of the Santos administration. For it to succeed, however, the state needs to have a strong presence in the areas where land is returned and titled to its rightful owners; otherwise there is a risk of double jeopardy for those landholders, the possibility that illegal groups or large landholders or agribusinesses could use their financial strength to coerce them into another loss of their land. Sustainable restitution, therefore, depends on consolidation. The two sets of policies go hand-in-hand.

VI. FINDINGS: PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Did the activities surrounding OTI projects help to achieve the overall objectives OTI had defined for IGRP? IGRP activities included support for Colombia Responde, Progreso, post-eradication projects, and GoC coordination. The objectives of this work were

- to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the GoC in post-conflict areas;
- to increase the willingness and capacity of communities in consolidation zones to cooperate and interact with the GoC; and
- to increase the GoC's capacity to respond to community-prioritized needs in a timely and credible manner.

Lacking a definition for the endpoint of the consolidation process, as well as concrete measures or indicators for what constitutes success, this evaluation of the degree to which program activities have contributed to the success of the PNC and regional consolidation efforts is necessarily impressionistic in nature. Interviews with program participants and beneficiaries serve as one important means of gauging whether programs were successful, even if they do not allow us to measure how much impact they had on the goals associated with consolidation.

Colombia Responde and Progreso appear positively to have affected the national and regional consolidation processes, especially in Meta where they have been in place the longest. Although Colombia Responde has been in place in Montes de María for two years and in Tolima for only one year, it has produced a number of positive effects there as well, most likely because of the manner in which the governor and mayors, particularly in Tolima, have provided support for and helped to leverage the program.¹⁶ The effects of the post-eradication projects are much more difficult to discern. Finally, the effects of support to the GoC have only recently begun to become apparent. Each of these is discussed in further detail below.

The infrastructure projects associated with Colombia Responde have generally been the first non-military symbol of state presence most communities experienced in the consolidation zones. Projects such as roads, electrification, and health centers served to connect communities with the government (although it was not always clear *which* government—municipal, departmental, or national—they identified such projects with, a factor that the Acción Social plaques placed on completed projects did not help to clarify). Such projects also served to link communities and facilitated market access. The methodology Colombia Responde employed for selecting projects (i.e., asking communities to identify and rank-order projects) helped to foster some sense of citizenship and awareness of one's rights as a citizen, at least among many members of the communities who met with the evaluation team. Colombia Responde projects have thus served to promote the belief that the government is committed to the region (there is nothing like a new swath of road to convince actors that the government is making a commitment to a zone), have contributed to providing for basic human needs (refurbished schools and clinics), have provided a foundation for economic recovery, and helped to foster the development of some sense of citizen rights.

Progreso projects have contributed to the consolidation process by providing producers with alternatives to the illegal economy. The program's focus on producer associations, its efforts to link producers to the market, credit institutions, and training programs, and the assistance it has provided groups in the creation of rotating funds has served to familiarize communities with a variety of institutional actors—such as the SENA training institute, Banco Agrario, the departmental Office of Agriculture, and various national-level programs—and has helped to build a foundation for group and citizen involvement in the process of consolidation.

We heard very little about the post-eradication projects in the communities we visited. It was also difficult to discern what effects these projects had had on the process of consolidation. We attribute the lack of visibility of this program to the fact that the activities it involved, including an initial GoC-

¹⁶ See discussion in Appendix D.

provided food subsidy following the eradication of coca crops and the development of family garden plots, had taken place some years earlier in Meta and had been superseded by the more recent Colombia Responde and Progreso programs. There was some discussion among community members in Rioblanco, Tolima, of reviving family garden plots as a means of addressing nutritional deficiencies.

Support to the GoC by OTI has taken a number of forms. These include providing technical assistance to the CCAI (including regarding its possible restructuring), paying the salaries of RCC staff in Meta, hiring consultants for development of a strategic communications plan, and supporting the formulation of operational plans for other consolidation zones in the country. In some instances the CCAI proved resistant to the recommendations that local consulting firms had made regarding the adoption of methodologies, and some of the RCCs have not adopted the operational plan that had been formulated. Most of this resistance appears to have ebbed, however, and some of the suggestions that previously had been made to the CCAI (e.g., the need to develop strategic and operational plans) have since been adopted.

OTI support for the GoC can be said to have catalyzed a process of learning by doing where consolidation first was concerned. The GoC is now going through an extensive process of reviewing the PNC, a process that seems designed not only to address issues of institutionalization, funding, and other important issues related to consolidation but also to secure the buy-in of key actors for the process. The review process has clearly been informed by the GoC's experiences with the PCIM and PNC programs as well as the assistance it has received from and interactions it has had with OTI.

A detailed review of IGRP-supported activities in Meta, Tolima, and Montes de Maria and a brief comparison of the cases are provided at Appendix D. The remainder of this section discusses each of the three IGRP objectives in turn.

GOVERNMENT CREDIBILITY

Colombia Responde and Progreso were the two programs whose components most obviously advanced this program objective with the communities visited by the evaluation team. Colombia Responde's road rehabilitation programs are a symbol of state presence; Progreso's income-generating projects provide critical follow-through for communities whose livelihoods have been harmed through the eradication of illicit crops. In addition, the Progreso team's efforts to link producers to credit associations, training institutes, marketing opportunities, and so on serve to demonstrate that the government is making a long-term commitment, that it is interested in the future of the region. Many communities mentioned the rapidity with which Colombia Responde and Progreso projects were implemented as contributing to their belief that the GoC was committed to following through on the security gains that had been made in the transition zones.

OTI's support for RCCs, assistance in developing operational plans for the different regions, and support for the CCAI did not appear to have a discernible effect on many community members' perceptions of GoC credibility. This is not surprising since most community members had little familiarity with and understanding of the roles played by these activities or institutions. There were important exceptions to this rule, however. The leaders of some producer organizations (e.g., milk producers) and community leaders in Meta were familiar with the role played by the regional coordinator of the PCIM. Municipal and departmental representatives as well as the representatives of foundations like *Semana* in Montes de Maria were familiar with and had worked with the regional coordinator there. There was little evidence among the community leaders we spoke to in Southern Tolima of interaction with that zone's regional coordinator; given his low profile and frequent absences from the region, the coordinator of Colombia Responde in the region has essentially assumed a role akin to that of the regional coordinator. OTI's interactions with the transition zone mayors and governor of Tolima, on the other hand, have served as a catalyst for their commitment to and work on consolidation. This has had the effect of increasing the presence and legitimacy of these levels of government in that region.

COMMUNITY COOPERATION

The Colombia Responde and Progreso projects played an important role in increasing communities' willingness and ability to work with the GoC. The programs' ability to deliver the goods in an efficient manner contributed to communities' belief that the government will deliver if one works with it, although generally it was the national government that benefited from this perception, as the local governments were not clearly identified with institutions such as Acción Social or more institutionally diffuse programs such as Colombia Responde. The projects and ongoing relationships with the representatives of these programs have also helped to lift the stigma of illegality with which these communities had felt they were associated.

The programs' methodologies—requiring that producers work within an association and that communities rank-order and select their preferred infrastructure projects and contribute resources and labor to the building of the projects—have helped communities organize, have fostered an incipient sense of citizenship, and have taught communities how to make some limited claims on their government. The effects of these programs have not been uniform in nature, though. Some communities, such as Santo Domingo in Meta, remain suspicious of the GoC and tend primarily to associate government presence with the presence of the military. (Santo Domingo, it should be pointed out, continues to be subject to security concerns; the FARC staged an attack there in November 2010.) Other communities, such as El Salado in Montes de Maria, show signs of becoming dependent on other actors to take action and evince some reluctance to organize to work on their own behalf.

Other program components appeared to play less of a role in contributing to communities' willingness and ability to interact with GoC, due to a lack of familiarity or direct interaction with the programs, among other reasons.

GOVERNMENT CAPACITY

OTI's work appears to be on the verge of paying off in a significant manner where this particular program objective is concerned. Interviews with municipal, departmental, and national government representatives suggest that the GoC has been struck by and seeks to emulate the quick-impact policy response modeled by the Colombia Responde and Progreso programs. The different levels of government clearly have learned important lessons regarding the benefits to be had from responding quickly and flexibly to the needs identified by communities in the wake of security gains. Whether they will be able to follow through on the lesson learned remains to be seen.

There does seem to be real hope that work currently being undertaken by the national level government will facilitate the undertaking of timely, credible, and responsive civil functions in consolidation zones. The CCAI's technical secretary noted that elements of the national government—including the national security adviser, the DNP, and the Ministry of Finance—are currently seeking to make legal changes and designate funding sources that will allow for more flexible responses where consolidation is concerned. The CCAI is working to enumerate the different ministries' responsibilities regarding consolidation and devising indicators to track progress, among other effort. What effect, if any, this will have on departments' and municipalities' ability to respond to communities in a timely and credible manner is not yet clear.

VII. FINDINGS: OTI'S MISSION

Did IGRP contribute to the fulfillment of OTI's mission? According to OTI's mission statement, OTI is expected to "support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs." Whether it fulfills its mission in any given country will depend on what the "foreign policy objectives" are in that country, what "windows of opportunity" present themselves there, and what the "key political transition and stabilization needs" of that country are. In this section we take a look at some of the key issues that touch on this mission.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE GoC

The program activity that seemed to have the most positive impact on perceptions of the GoC was road rehabilitation. Roads served to connect communities to one another, communities to municipalities (and thus the seat of local government), producers to markets, children to schools, and sick people to clinics. Road rehabilitation also helped generate employment for communities, fostered community interaction as communities often contributed labor (communities have also promised to take part in the upkeep and maintenance of tertiary roads). The improved perception of the GoC generated by the building of roads does seem to have helped support the consolidation of state presence (as attested to by the perception surveys). This type of activity definitely should be used as a model for future USAID/Colombia activities. It also suggests a broader need to examine the role of infrastructure as an integral component of immediate-response activities to demonstrate state presence.

The dismal condition of some clinics and schools and the lack of resources for these sites were considered by communities to be a sign of the extent to which they had been abandoned or were ignored by the state. Building and rehabilitating schools and clinics has therefore helped communities see the GoC as fulfilling key obligations (health and education). We did find, though, that once a clinic or school was rehabilitated, communities had much higher expectations of the government; their desire was to see clinics staffed by full-time doctors rather than nurse-technicians and for schools to be staffed through eleventh grade. These types of expectations can be considered positive in that they suggest that communities now hope that the government will remain involved in the region; expectation cycles also are a normal part of development. They may lead to frustration with the government, though, if communities' expectations are not met or if some dialogue with them regarding the nature of their expectations is not forthcoming (e.g., is it realistic for Santo Domingo to expect a full-time doctor to be allocated to the clinic?). This type of work definitely needs to be carried out. When implementing it as part of future USAID/Colombia activities, thought should be given to facilitating community discussions on these issues. The relevant government authorities should be part of these conversations as they bear the responsibility for providing resources to these institutions.

Community centers, parks, and sports facilities also resonated highly with the communities with whom we met. The fact that communities often ranked these among the top projects they wished to see completed suggests they believe these spaces are important (although not, it seems, as important as roads). The facilities provide a gathering place for communities to come together, thus helping to mitigate the degree of isolation previously experienced by families and individuals involved in the illegal economy. That said, it was difficult to judge what impact these types of projects were having on perceptions of the GoC more generally.

Infrastructure projects associated with productive activities also seem to have high value in terms of generating positive perceptions. Particularly notable in this respect was the construction of sugarcane mills and cold-storage facilities for milk in Meta. These projects solidly linked producers to the legal economy. Although, in most instances, producer groups associated with these projects are only now

on the verge of generating an income, they were generally optimistic about the future. These types of projects also have the benefit of linking several different types of actors together via the contributions they make to the implementation of the project—the national government (in the form of Acción Social), departmental or municipal governments, and the producers' association. This type of interaction bodes well for the sustainability of consolidation. It should seriously be considered as a model for future USAID/Colombia activities.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGIES

Colombia Responde's use of a methodology that included consulting with the community, asking community members to prioritize projects and select those that were to be implemented, and requesting that communities contribute resources to the construction of a project helped to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the GoC and increased communities' willingness and capability to work with the GoC. There is some question as to the degree to which other GoC institutions have the capacity to continue this approach.

A similar observation can be made regarding Progreso's use of a methodology that called for producers to work within associations, taught association members skills (such as how to operate as a business and how to use rotating funds to manage money), and connected the associations with regional and national representatives of the state. Nevertheless, the fractured social fabric resulting from the long conflict and the individualistic model of coca production are difficult challenges in some consolidation zones. Overcoming them will require special interventions in the longer term to build and strengthen partnership processes.

It is possible that Colombia Responde and Progreso agents may well also have contributed to expanding the GoC's capacity to coordinate other actors through the role that they, in conjunction with the regional coordinator, played in linking and increasing communication among a variety of different state-level institutions. Capacities to exercise timely, credible, and responsive civil functions remain to be developed.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES MOST AND LEAST VALUED BY LOCAL PARTNERS

Program activities that were valued by communities and producer associations and that helped to promote program objectives were discussed above. These types of activities also appear to have been valued by regional and national government officials who remarked on the rapid fashion in which they helped to increase state presence. Some mayors remarked on the difficulties they had in contributing to road rehabilitation, facilities construction, and so on, given their very limited resources. Other mayors, however, (e.g., in La Macarena) showed a remarkable willingness to lobby other political actors for the resources they needed to advance the goal of consolidating the presence of the state in their regions.

The nature of the activities that new Mission programs should prioritize in consolidation zones is likely to vary somewhat given the history and geography of each zone. Nevertheless, our experiences in Meta, Tolima, and Montes de Maria suggest that road rehabilitation should be a priority in each region (the poor condition of roads is seen locally as being synonymous with the absence of the state in the consolidation zones). Behind roads on the list of high priorities should be school and clinic building and refurbishment, income-generating activities (with the attendant infrastructure), social capital building, and skills training associated with these activities.

It is difficult to identify program activities that were considered to be of little value by communities and producer organizations. If anything, their comments touched on their desire for programs to take on additional activities or the need for additional programs, such as income-generating programs for women. There is some evidence, though, that mayors did not find some of the program activities directed at them to be particularly useful or appropriate, such as the computerized information systems that mayors were provided for monitoring municipal development plans. Despite this, OTI

should not have refrained from engaging in these types of activities with the mayors. The mayors are the most immediate representative of the state—and most likely one of the only elected representatives with whom many members of these communities will ever have the chance to interact. As such, they are extremely important to the process of consolidation. Ironically, however, the mayors are also institutionally weak (lacking adequate budgets, resources, trained staff, and so on). USAID/Colombia should continue to work with mayors; although some of the interactions with the mayors may not work or have an immediate pay-off, it is important for the process of consolidation to have these officials become responsive and capable actors.

SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL OPERATIONAL PLANS AND CCAI

OTI's support for the formulation of operational plans in Meta, Montes de Maria, and Tolima was an important exercise in laying the groundwork for the sustainability of consolidation. At present the consolidation process in Colombia may best be said to resemble a broken line seeking to connect two end-points—the national-level activities directed at consolidation that are currently going on within the Santos administration (e.g., the strategic review of the consolidation process; efforts to clarify and institutionalize the relationships among the national security advisor, Acción Social, and the CCAI) are at one end, and the on-the-ground activities (e.g., road rehabilitation, work with producer groups) are at the other. OTI has played a critical role at both end points of this process. What needs to occur next, however, is to create the connective tissue between these two end points. The work OTI has done with the mayors' offices and the RCCs, including assistance for the formulation of operational plans, can be seen as an important part of this latter process.

As the case of Montes de Maria makes clear, not all regional coordinators have embraced the use of regional operational plans as a tool for planning and tracking the progress of consolidation. Efforts should continue to be made to press coordinators to make use of these plans. The plans make for greater political transparency; should make it easier for national and municipal level plans to be developed; and provide an important avenue through which other actors (NGOs, international aid agencies, etc.) can seek to connect to the consolidation process. They also constitute a key point in the consolidation chain at which to attempt to evaluate the progress of consolidation.

OTI's efforts to strengthen the CCAI institutionally proved difficult in the past because of the CCAI's tenuous institutional status. That status appears on its way to being resolved as part of the current strategic review process. Although a reading of the documents provided to us suggests that CCAI was not always interested in engaging in a process of institutional strengthening in the past (CCAI representatives often failed to show up for quarterly meetings, for example), that no longer appears to be the case. A discussion with the CCAI's technical secretary indicated that efforts were being made to embed responsibility for integrated action on consolidation within each of the respective ministries (instead of relying on a process of gathering ministry representatives together within one room and hoping they would coordinate their actions); the CCAI was working to define indicators for evaluating the progress that was being made on consolidation; and the institution was working to identify the types of legal and budget changes that need to be made to ensure that the consolidation process continues in force.

Both of these examples—OTI's support for the formulation of regional operational plans and its effort to strengthen the CCAI—speak to the fact that OTI engages in work in the short term. Although some of this short-term work may not yield the hoped-for dividends in the long term, other work (such as that with CCAI) may well do so.

SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE PCIM

Although it is difficult to judge how effective the PCIM's strategic communications strategy was, we saw or heard of numerous examples of strategic communication at work in the region. One example (made available to us to view before our departure for Colombia) was an impressive documentary

focusing on the process of consolidation in Meta. A series of community radio workshops, some of which focused on the theme of the values that support the transition from the illegal to the legal economy, was also held in the PCIM. We were given a copy of a newspaper focused on consolidation; it is circulated bimonthly through the six PCIM municipalities. A number of public forums were held that provided communities in each municipality with an opportunity to discuss the impact that consolidation was having on their lives.

If, as the PCIM strategic communications coordinator explained to us, the purpose of the strategic communications strategy was to build citizen confidence in the state (and vice versa), to foster a culture of citizenship, and to help define what it means to be “legal,” then the types of participatory communication strategies that were employed in the PCIM seem well suited to this task. We were also told that another purpose of the strategy was to make the region “visible” to Colombia after a long period during which it has been invisible. In fact, the visibility of those regions can help mobilize society around the consolidation process. The documentary that was produced is an important step in this direction, although we were not able to find out whether it had ever been broadcast outside the region. There does seem to be a need for strategic communications to be focused on other areas of the country (i.e., for major cities to be made a focal point of the strategic communications strategy) in order to ensure continued support for the process of consolidation.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The OTI program was successful. Two crucial factors in that success emerged from the evaluation team's research: a light U.S. footprint, as evidenced by the near absence of comments regarding a U.S. role in the interventions; and a capacity to implement projects in a rapid, timely, and flexible manner, as evidenced by the many comments the team heard from those who had participated in the community needs assessments or witnessed project implementation.

The interventions were effective not merely because of the goods and services that were provided. Rather, they were effective because they visibly demonstrated the state's presence and did so in a way that looked different from the neglect—and in some cases the abuse—to which the state had subjected those communities in the past. That meant that security in a community was essential to allowing the projects to move forward. The interventions were effective as well when the goods and services provided were in accord with what the communities said they needed, when they needed it. Finally, the interventions were most effective because they helped changed the way people thought: helped government officials recognize the importance of coordinating their actions to protect and serve their citizens, and helped citizens recognize the importance of working together to leverage the assistance they were receiving.

Since land restitution programs are just beginning it is difficult to determine what impact these efforts will have in terms of promoting better economic integration for those who receive titles. The concept behind the restitution program, coupled with the longer horizon that has been planned for its completion, offer some optimism that the government of Colombia has finally recognized one of its most basic inequities and is ready to deal with the past.

OTI programs were conceived of in the context of the reestablishment of security in zones once considered outside the control of the state. This was very clear in the municipalities and districts we visited. The types of community consultation and the setting of priorities for projects to address the needs of the beneficiaries resulted in a greater sense of inclusion over time. But OTI programs managed by the PCIM or those in Tolima (and Montes) were never meant to fill in all of the development gaps that have affected the Colombian state. For example, OTI programming did not address questions of the rule of law. They did not train municipalities in public finance, nor did they create banking systems. What these programs did do was create an enabling environment for a more capable state by showing citizens that security and development are two sides of the same coin. By showing citizens that there is a future and that public safety is a right and can be sustained, communities gained the motivation to contribute their labor and to forge ahead. Thus, the consolidation program in all three geographic areas laid an important foundation for what has now become a more ambitious program of the Santos administration to return land, provide land titles, and connect the nation with roads that bring once-isolated Colombians back into the national fold. These programs are the beginning of a journey upon which Colombia has embarked. It will take time for all the functions of the state to evolve. But Colombia has made great strides toward closing the sovereignty gap as it gains control over its territory and earns the recognition of its citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTI

Because OTI's Colombia programs are closing in June 2011, the following recommendations apply to OTI programming in other post-conflict and transitional settings, based on lessons learned from its successful IGRP in Colombia.

- Questions and concerns about the sustainability of OTI's successes arose so frequently during the course of this evaluation that the first recommendation is to **begin planning**

for the handover to the USAID mission much earlier in the OTI program's life cycle, around mid-term at the latest.

- Likewise, many interviewees expressed concern about the cost of consolidation programs and where the resources would come from to pay for them in the short and the long terms. Since increasing levels of security make it possible for large agricultural enterprises and, potentially, other large businesses to operate in the consolidation zones—or to do so at lower cost—OTI should find ways to **encourage private sector enterprises to become funding partners** in consolidation programs.
- While the evaluation team found that many people within the beneficiary communities greatly appreciated the projects offered to them, their appreciation was most often expressed in a way that clearly indicated their expectations had been raised to a point that, in many cases, cannot be satisfied. While this is not uncommon in communities emerging from neglect, it clearly indicates a need to **actively manage community expectations from the beginning**, starting with program design, as part of the strategic communication plan.
- In places where the U.S. role, if known, would likely be disdained by the beneficiary communities—as in Afghanistan, Pakistan, or Haiti—or stigmatize the partner government, OTI should **maintain its anonymity as a donor and let the partner government take the lead and the credit** for the projects.
- While there were excellent women leaders in many of the places we visited, our interviews in the outlying districts uncovered a need to be sensitive to the potential of women who need vocational training, credit, and support for new businesses. The elderly in many of these communities also are untouched by either Progreso or the GoC's safety-net services. OTI should **place greater emphasis on programs that address the needs of women and the elderly**.
- Finally, while road rehabilitation projects were important in connecting producers to markets, thereby acting as an enabler for broader economic activities, other types of infrastructure projects can do the same while also helping communities become more self-reliant. OTI's rural programs should **emphasize community self-sufficiency and access to energy through renewable resources**. Since electricity is often unaffordable in the poorest communities, greater investment in photovoltaic systems for lighting and energy for schools and libraries, at the least, would benefit everyone. There is also a good opportunity to develop micro-hydroelectric systems to help outlying districts that are off-grid to have a means to operate lights, refrigeration, and power to run machines.

APPENDIX A. SCOPE OF WORK

INTRODUCTION

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives' (OTI) mission is to support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crises. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs.

BACKGROUND

The OTI assessment conducted in September 2006 determined that there was a regional transition taking place in Colombia as the government attempted to extend state control to areas that historically had little to no state presence. OTI launched the Initial Governance Response Program (IGRP) in March 2007, and the program's goal is to Enhance Government of Colombia (GOC) Presence and Credibility in Newly Liberated Zones. In support of this goal, IGRP's objectives are to strengthen the credibility and legitimacy of the GOC in post-conflict areas through small, community-driven activities; to increase the willingness and capacity of communities to cooperate and interact with the GOC; and to expand the GOC's capacity to exercise timely, credible, and responsive civil functions.

The program has four major components:

Small Community Activities – Once the military has provided permanent security in an area, and coca has been eradicated, OTI provides support to the GOC for small, quick-impact, community-prioritized social infrastructure projects. These projects are frequently the first concrete demonstration of government support for historically marginalized communities and serve to quickly begin building trust between communities and local government. Projects also serve as a vehicle for building trust in areas typically characterized by lack of community because of the historical illegal underpinnings of the economy. Typical projects address needs for community centers, health posts, street lighting, road and drainage systems, and school rehabilitation. The majority of these activities are Colombia Responde programs in Meta, but the program is currently implementing similar activities in Tolima.

Income-Generating Activities – OTI supports small, quick-impact economic opportunities for formal and informal groups making the transition from the coca-based economy to the legal economy. Projects build on what people already know how to do and are directed at the local market. Typical projects provide agricultural inputs, planting material, and small machinery for transformation. A key component of these activities is technical assistance to improve both production and business operations and to establish a rotating fund. These programs are branded as the Progreso program.

Transition Plans – OTI is supporting transition projects to help communities whose coca has recently been eradicated to start the transition to the licit economy. The GOC lacks a coherent strategy to support families in this post-eradication phase, and this program in Meta is a potential model for other consolidation zones. The transition projects were initially funded by the Dutch Embassy to fill this gap, and when their funding ended, OTI agreed to manage this important component in the Integrated Consolidation Plan for Macarena's (PCIM) consolidation efforts. As coca growers, individual farmers did not need to work together to produce their crops, and as a result, former coca-growing communities often lack even basic informal associations. Therefore, the Transition Projects work with individual families that group together around specific Transition Projects. The program includes an initial food subsidy that is provided by Acción Social, materials to develop a family garden plot for temporary food security, and an initial productive project. The

productive projects are limited to existing value chains to ensure that these small, initial projects can link to existing expertise in the region when the Transition Plan funding ends. In addition, the Transition Plan staff works with these nascent groups of families to begin working together as an informal association in the hope that an indirect result of the activity will be the creation of associations that can work together to make the transition to sustainable licit development after the initial support ends.

Support to the GOC – OTI’s main government counterpart in Colombia is the Center for Coordination of Integrated Action (CCAI), an inter-ministerial body within the Office of the President that is responsible for coordinating the GOC’s National Consolidation Plan. All OTI activities in Colombia have been carried out in the name of Acción Social, the institutional home for CCAI. While all program activities inherently support the GOC, the program implements a number of grant activities that provide direct technical assistance, staffing and logistical support to the government. OTI activities are funding operational plans for the regional consolidation efforts throughout Colombia, technical assistance to re-structure CCAI to implement the National Consolidation Plan (PNC), and funding to hire staff and pay for logistics and equipment for the Regional Coordination Center (RCC) in Meta.

In addition to these four main components of the OTI Colombia program, the program is also supporting other key activities in the consolidation zones.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this task order is to procure an evaluation team and logistical support to conduct an independent evaluation of the USAID/OTI Colombia country program implemented between March 2007 and March 2011. More specifically, the final evaluation of the Colombia program will focus on the impact of the USAID/OTI program on the consolidation of state presence in priority areas where the Colombian government recently re-established permanent territorial security. The evaluation will look at OTI programming at both the national level and regional levels (Meta, Tolima, etc.) in the context of the GOC’s PNC and the US Embassy’s Colombia Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI). The final evaluation report shall document accomplishments and lessons learned for the use of USAID staff¹⁷, the US Embassy interagency CSDI team, GOC counterparts, and the general public. The PCIM, as the model for the consolidation effort, was previously evaluated by external experts, and the final evaluation shall also update the status of the consolidation efforts since the previous evaluation—including a specific update of the PCIM as well as how the consolidation model is being replicated in other areas of the country.

The evaluation methodology and process shall address the questions, not to be considered inclusive, outlined below:

Evaluation of Higher Level Strategic Approach and Impact

- The overall program goal for the OTI Colombia program is to “Enhance GOC Presence & Credibility in Newly Liberated Zones.” In early 2008, OTI explicitly linked achievement of the program goal to supporting the GOC’s activities to consolidation of state presence—first, through the Integrated Consolidation Plan for La Macarena (PCIM) and then, through the creation of the PNC and CSDI. How appropriate and effective was this area of

¹⁷ An important outcome of the final evaluation shall include lessons learned for the USAID Mission in Colombia as OTI programming and management approaches are transitioned into new USAID/Colombia programs. The Mission is currently awarding new assistance and acquisitions mechanisms under the interim strategic framework for 2009-2013. These programs have intentionally incorporated elements of OTI’s programming and management approach in combination with lessons learned from other USAID/Colombia programs.

programmatic focus to achieving the overall program goal? Provide examples and analysis for this response.

- To what degree have program activities contributed to the success of the National Consolidation Plan and/or the regional consolidation efforts (Meta, Tolima, etc.)?
- How appropriate were the areas of intervention (i.e. geographic focus, specific populations, sectors, GOC and community partners, etc.) identified by the program? What areas of intervention were particularly effective, and which ones should have been eliminated or revised?
- How effectively did OTI programming catalyze GOC and USG activities to support consolidation of state presence and/or improve the coordination of Colombian government and international agencies in support of the effort? What reasons are there for success or failure?
- What lessons learned can be taken from the OTI program to apply to future USAID/Colombia programming in consolidation zones? Are there areas of intervention that should be eliminated or revised? Are there areas of intervention that OTI did not address that should be included in future programming? (These recommendations should be separate from the rest of the report, and clearly marked.)

Evaluation of Specific Activities under the Program Objectives

- How did individual activities contribute (or not) to the attainment of the program objectives? Elaborate for each of the program components (i.e. Progreso, Colombia Responde, Planes de Transición, Southern Tolima, support to RCCs, support to CCAI, etc.).
- To what extent did individual OTI program activities positively impact perception of the GOC? If so, did this improved perception also help support consolidation of state presence? If possible, please identify specific types of activities that were particularly effective and that should be used as models for future USAID/Colombia activities.
- Identify specific program implementation methodologies that were more or less effective in attainment of program objectives. How did OTI and Creative adjust their implementation methodologies throughout the program? Were these adjustments appropriate? Effective?
- What activities undertaken by the program were the most valued by local partners (community, associations, government, etc.)? Why? Did these valued activities also have a higher value in terms of attainment of program objectives? If so, should USAID/Colombia prioritize those activities in the new Mission programs in consolidation zones?
- Which activities undertaken by the program were the least valued by local partners? Why? Should OTI have refrained from these activities?
- To what extent did OTI's support for development of operational plans (Meta, Montes de Maria, Tolima, Bajo Cauca, Nariño, and Cordoba), for RCCs, and for institutional strengthening of CCAI contribute to program objectives? How and why (or why not)?
- Was OTI support for strategic communications for the PCIM effective? What lessons learned can be applied for future USAID/Colombia programming?

Evaluation of OTI/Colombia program in terms of OTI Mission Statement

- Did the program support U.S. foreign policy objectives?
- Did OTI's work reflect fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs?
- Did the program adapt, as necessary, to ongoing political developments/milestones relevant to the goal and objectives of the OTI program in Colombia?

- What impact did OTI have in strengthening democratic processes and/or increasing momentum for peaceful resolution of conflict?

TEAM COMPOSITION

The required team composition is defined below. The first three positions are considered key personnel. All key personnel are required to speak fluent Spanish and reviewed by OTI. Candidates for the senior lead evaluator and senior evaluator positions shall possess fluent written and spoken English to prepare the written evaluation and present briefings.

1. A senior lead evaluator with extensive experience evaluating activities in political transition/post-conflict programs and with specific knowledge of OTI-type programming. The lead evaluator should also have experience and knowledge of Latin America, preferably Colombia. Specific knowledge of the conflict and the GOC's past efforts to impact the conflict is desirable. This senior evaluator will serve as the team leader and will be responsible for the field review, interviews, draft and final evaluation reports, debriefs in the field and in Washington, DC, and any public events.
2. Two senior evaluators with experience designing, implementing, and/or evaluating activities in political transition/post-conflict programs and with specific knowledge of OTI-type programming. Specific knowledge of the conflict and the GOC's past efforts to impact the conflict is desirable. The senior evaluators will support the team leader and participate in the field review, interviews, the draft and final evaluation reports, and debriefs in the field and in Washington, DC. The senior evaluators will focus on the impact of the OTI program in the broader context of consolidation of state presence.
3. A 3rd senior evaluator with research and/or evaluation experience on post-conflict/fragile states. He/she should have knowledge of Colombia. Knowledge of OTI-type programming is preferred. The senior evaluator will support the team leader and participate in the field review, interviews, the draft and final evaluation reports, and debriefs in the field and in Washington, DC. The senior evaluator may also participate in any public events to share lessons learned from the Colombia program. This senior evaluator will support the evaluation of the broader context of consolidation but will also look more carefully at impact of specific OTI activities in Colombia and how those contribute to the higher-level goals of the program.
4. A local analyst with experience working in post-conflict zones within Colombia. The analyst will support the senior evaluators during the field review, interviews and preparation of the draft evaluation report. This local analyst will also work on evaluating the activity level impact of the program's activities in consolidation zones. Previous experience working in Colombia on the consolidation process is preferred.
5. A local logistician with experience organizing meetings and travel in Colombia. The local logistician shall work with Creative Associates on most logistical tasks—such as in-country travel and lodging, procuring in-country ground transportation, coordinating with Creative Associates and GOC on security requirements, and arranging interviews with GOC, USAID, and Creative for the evaluation team.
6. Additional logistics:
 - QED shall arrange and purchase all international and US travel;
 - QED shall provide per diem (lodging and M&IE) for the evaluation team both in the U.S. and in Colombia;
 - QED shall fund in-country air travel and ground transportation (travel to be arranged by the local logistician);
 - QED will submit required documentation for country clearances, visas, etc.;
 - QED and the evaluation team will work with OTI and Creative Associates to arrange interviews in Washington, DC.

TASKS

The scope of work is for the following tasks:

1. Recruit and hire the six-person final evaluation team, including up to four senior evaluators, a local analyst, and a local logistician (to be reviewed and cleared by the OTI Colombia team and Program Office);
2. Arrange for the senior evaluators to participate in a one-day OTI orientation and OTI database training. The Contractor will ensure that the evaluation team utilizes OTI's Activity Database as one of its key sources of information to evaluate the program.
3. Develop a method of evaluation in consultation with the OTI Colombia country team and Program Office.
4. Evaluate the performance and impact of the program through:
 - a. A desk study and literature review of documentation on the OTI Colombia program, and a review of literature on comparable non-OTI programming, which must be conducted prior to the interviews and the field visit. All necessary OTI documentation and database access will be provided by OTI, primarily in electronic format.
 - b. From Washington and prior to departure to field, interviews with current OTI staff, staff from Creative, and Department of State and other USAID counterparts. The contractor shall arrange interviews with the implementing partners directly; OTI will assist in scheduling interviews with USG counterparts.
 - c. Field review, including interviews with OTI staff, USAID/Colombia Mission, US Embassy, and other USG personnel as needed; Colombian government representatives, including representatives from CCAI, the Regional Coordination Centers in Meta, Montes de Maria and Tolima, and other relevant national, departmental and local government representatives; and program beneficiaries at project sites where feasible. Responsibility for arranging the interviews lies with the evaluators, in conjunction with OTI and Creative. It is anticipated that the evaluators will evaluate program activities in Meta, Montes de Maria and Tolima. The OTI Colombia team and Creative will provide a list of suggested contacts, with telephone and/or email information prior to arrival in country.
5. Provide an out-briefing to the OTI Colombia team and, in coordination with OTI, provide input to the broader USAID Mission and US Embassy in Colombia before departure.
6. Upon return to the US, provide a draft report to OTI's Colombia team (in DC and Colombia) and Program Office. The Program Office will solicit OTI feedback. The report should include: a section evaluating the impact of the OTI program on the PCIM and the GOC's consolidation efforts (this section can be prepared as a separate report looking at consolidation and the PCIM), a section looking at the activity-level impact of OTI activities, and a section looking at the OTI Colombia program in relation to the Mission of OTI. Details on the report are presented in Deliverables below.
7. Provide a teleconference briefing to OTI senior leadership, Colombia team, and Program Office in Washington prior to completing final version of the report.
8. Provide a final evaluation report for public distribution, incorporating feedback from OTI where appropriate; provide an accompanying Power Point presentation. The final report should include the sections mentioned in (6) above as well as other necessary parts: Table of Contents, List of Interviewees, List of Acronyms, Appendices (at appropriate), etc. A broader analysis of the PCIM and consolidation efforts in Colombia that updates previous evaluations can be prepared as a stand alone public document as well.
9. Provide a final presentation in Washington on the final report to OTI and other USG staff.

10. Provide other public briefings on the Colombia program agreed upon by OTI and the evaluation team.¹⁸

DELIVERABLES

The contractor shall provide the following deliverables:

1. A brief outline of the methodological approach for the evaluation. A draft approach is due to the OTI Colombia team and Program Office at least one week prior to the field study.
2. A proposed itinerary, schedule for interviews, and list of all logistical support needs for the field visit based on the desk review of documents and the grants database, proposed interview lists, and initial conversations with OTI and implementing partner staff regarding the Colombia program. This deliverable shall be submitted to the OTI Colombia Program Manager in Washington at least one week prior to departure to Colombia. Upon arrival in Colombia, any adjustments to the itinerary should be made after consultation with the OTI Colombia in-country team.
3. Provide an out-briefing to the OTI Colombia team, and in coordination with OTI, provide input to the broader USAID Mission and US Embassy in Colombia prior to field departure.
4. Draft of the evaluation report, not to exceed 30 pages single-sided with Times New Roman 12 point font, plus additional annexes (report and annexes to be submitted electronically). The evaluators will discuss the format of the report with the OTI Colombia team and Program Office. The report shall include photographs (to be taken by the evaluators and/or to be selected from OTI and partners' photograph collections). The following sections are recommended for the final report: Table of Contents, Acronyms, Executive Summary, Background (OTI's mission and general approach to programming, country context, etc.), Literature Review, Evaluation Objectives and Methodology, General Observations, Findings (answering the questions in this scope of work), Conclusions, and Recommendations to OTI. Accompanying the report should be a separate annex on Recommendations for the Mission. A due date for the draft evaluation report will be determined in consultation with the OTI Colombia country team and Program Office.
5. The final evaluation report, in English, will be delivered to the OTI Colombia team and Program Office no later than two weeks after receipt of all comments from OTI on the first draft.
6. A final Power Point presentation summarizing key findings, conclusions, and recommendations, must be submitted electronically at the same time as the final report. The date of the debrief to OTI and other USG staff will be agreed upon between the OTI/Colombia Program Manager, OTI Program Office, and the evaluation team.
7. If the evaluation team prepares a separate public document updating the evaluation of the PCIM and consolidation efforts in Colombia, a draft document shall be submitted separately to OTI for review prior to publication.
8. If requested, power point presentations for public events shall be submitted to the OTI Colombia team and Program Office at least one week prior to events for OTI comments/feedback.

The PowerPoint presentation and Final Evaluation Report should adhere to the USAID graphic standards identified at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding/acquisition.html>.

¹⁸ There is a possibility to combine the final evaluation with a roundtable in Washington, DC, to share results with the wider foreign policy community.

APPENDIX B. RECOMMENDATIONS TO USAID MISSION IN COLOMBIA

- Consolidation, to move forward, must continue to build confidence among the beneficiaries of the program. No matter who wins the contract to help implement the next phase of this program, it is essential that there be a continuity of staffing so that the gains made since 2007 are not undermined by new staffers who will have a very steep learning curve.
- The relative anonymity of the OTI programs made it possible for the GoC to be seen as a credible provider of services. This approach—what might be called “strategic non-communication”—should be adopted for any program in which one of the main purposes is to develop the capacity and credibility of the Colombian state *as a state*. Labeling projects as USAID donations “from the American people” would likely undermine host-nation credibility in consolidation zones; *not* communicating the U.S. role should be priority in consolidation projects.
- Further consideration should be given as well to the host-nation “face” that is put on USAID-supported projects. Schools, health clinics, children’s parks, cold storage facilities, and other projects we visited were duly labeled with “Acción Social” or “Colombia Responde” plaques, but conversations with community members suggested they did not always have a very clear understanding of what part of the government these names represented. People know who President Uribe was, who President Santo is, who the governor is, and who their mayor is—but Acción Social (the implementer of CCAI’s projects) and Colombia Responde (one of its programs) were much more amorphous representations of the GoC. Consideration should be given to linking projects as well to the face of government with which communities most clearly identify and will be most likely to interact—municipal governments and their mayors.
- Land titling constitutes an important part of the process of consolidating the presence of the state. Although the current system for granting titles to and registering land is extremely complicated, the recent experiment in titling in Vista Hermosa serves as an important demonstration of the fact that it is possible to successfully navigate the process. Further support should be given to such land titling efforts in consolidation zones. Perhaps more important, efforts should be made to link the Santos administration’s focus on land restitution firmly to the consolidation process. Land restitution is most likely to succeed in promoting justice and development when it is linked to security, livelihoods, and community development—exactly the types of issues that have been the focus of the IGRP approach to consolidation.
- Security gains have been made in the consolidation zones but security cannot yet said to be consolidated. This is a function, in part, of the continued existence of the FARC in parts of the country. It is also a function, though, of the rise of new groups (e.g., BACRIM) and new types of illegal economic activity (e.g., gold mining) that pose a challenge to the state. These developments constitute a set of security-related challenges to the consolidation process that it is not clear Colombia is presently equipped to address. Contending with non-uniformed actors will require more police, for example, an area in which the Colombian state already has a demonstrated weakness (in terms of numbers of police, if not also in terms of training). This issue also presents challenges for the justice system, which also is currently under strain. The Mission should work with the GoC to think through the implications that these emerging security issues pose for the process of consolidation.
- Efforts should be made to support citizen participation in the campaigns for the municipal and departmental elections that will take place in the fall of 2011 in the consolidation zones. Tolima could be looked to as a model for such an effort. The governor of Tolima indicated that universities and others are organizing electoral debates around the theme of consolidation; candidates will be asked to state where they stand on issues related to consolidation. An administrator in the department of Carmen de Bolivar also indicated that

that department is thinking of adopting such a process, although it appears to be lagging relative to Tolima in terms of preparing to implement it.

- More effective strategic communication regarding the consolidation process needs to take place at a national level if the process of consolidation is to have the political support needed to make it sustainable. Colombians in the major cities, where the bulk of the population resides, appear to have little knowledge regarding the consolidation process, including its relevance to security issues; many of the Colombian elite who live in safe neighborhoods in major cities seem to believe the country's conflicts are largely over. This does not bode well for long-term political support for the consolidation process, including any efforts that may need to be made to allocate government resources to support for consolidation.

APPENDIX C. LESSONS LEARNED FOR OTI AND USAID MISSION IN COLOMBIA

- Strategic *non*-communication regarding the role of U.S. assistance in consolidation activities helps the host nation build its capacity and credibility with its citizens.
- Quick-impact projects generate credibility and legitimacy for the state. They are a potent means of showing the state has arrived and is involved, particularly in regions where the state either has not been present or where politicians have a history of promising much and delivering little. USAID should continue to make use of such projects as well as work with the Colombian government (national, departmental, and municipal) to facilitate its ability to follow through on security gains as quickly as is possible with civil sector projects. Security gains mean little to communities in the absence of such projects and may even generate resentment of a state that is seen as having taken away the source of their livelihoods. This poses a potential problem in those areas where the military has established a presence and fostered security faster than the rest of the state can follow.
- Methodologies that call for communities to be involved in prioritizing projects, to contribute labor or other resources to the implementation of projects, to work together as producer associations, and to link up with other state institutions serve to promote a number of objectives related to the consolidation process: they help to pull together formerly fractured communities; foster an incipient familiarity with the existence of government institutions and their functions (or, at the very least, of state-sponsored projects); encourage communities and producers to interact and work with the government and project staff; and generally encourage people to make an investment in the consolidation process. USAID should continue to make use of these methodologies; retain, in the short term, some of the key Colombian staff who have been implementing them; and encourage and train Colombian government agencies and their staffs to be able to employ these methodologies themselves in the long term.
- There is a need to better connect the different levels of the consolidation process. Important work is clearly going on at the local level, as evidenced by the activities of Colombia Responde and Progreso. Work is clearly going on at the national level, as evidenced by the work of Acción Social and the CCAI. Work also goes on at the departmental level; the governor of Meta has committed to the consolidation process (as attested to by the fact that he has funded road-rehabilitation projects at a level higher than that he originally agreed to: he had agreed to match OTI's contribution 1:1, but ended up matching it more like 3:1); the governor of Tolima has taken a lead role in promoting consolidation in the region. There is a need, however, to rely on something more than committed individuals if this work is to move forward (the upcoming elections make this point all the more urgent). The RCCs are an obvious candidate for helping to connect these pieces of the consolidation process. More attention should be given to strengthening the RCCs as well as to ensuring that the regional coordinators have the respect and attention of actors at the national level and are firmly connected and accessible to actors at the regional level. Likewise, it is critically important that the "government face" that is shown to communities through these projects include local and departmental government officials to a greater extent.
- Finally, perhaps most important, it is possible to reduce coca production with minimal replanting rates, and the integrated approach that characterized the PCIM appears to have been central to this success in the Macarena region. However, the existence of legal income-earning alternatives to coca production is not likely, in and of itself, to be enough to encourage communities to embrace the legal economy—particularly as these alternatives generally yield an income lower than that earned through coca production. Although difficult to measure, sociocultural factors appear to have played an important role in encouraging families and communities to enter into and remain a part of the legal economy. What several individuals highlighted as important to them were their ability to ensure that their children

would be a part of the legal economy, the sense of community that was being fostered within producer and other related groups, and the importance of being recognized as “legal” by Colombians outside the region. Although it is difficult to identify the factors that have helped to foster these attitudes, potential sources are the integrated and participatory approach employed by the Colombia Responde and Progreso teams and the strategic communications strategy.

APPENDIX D. FIELD ACTIVITIES OF IGRP

The following sections take a closer look at IGRP activities in the consolidation zones supported by OTI.

META

The Meta region was once the heart of Colombia's coca-growing corridor. Eighty percent of the illicit crops of both the municipalities of Vista Hermosa and Puerto Rico came from a zone with the highest concentration of coca crops both in Colombia and the world.¹⁹ Today there has been a dramatic reduction in coca cultivation in Meta—from 12,000 hectares in 2007 to about 500 hectares in 2010, with a replanting rate as little as 3 percent, compared with 40 percent–60 percent elsewhere—as consolidation programs have shifted the illicit economy toward the production of legal crops. This transformation, which is still under way, represents the initial validation of the consolidation policy that was initiated by the Uribe administration and is now being refined by the Santos administration. Support for this holistic approach to integrating citizens and territory into the Colombian state started with the PCIM, and a follow-on program is expected to continue the process of consolidation over the next five years.

The pilot for the IGRP was launched in southern Meta in four municipalities—La Uribe, La Macarena, Puerto Rico, and Vista Hermosa—in March 2007. Two additional municipalities—San Juan de Arama and Granada—were added over time. Today there are a total of eight municipalities participating in the program, the most recent being the department of Caqueta's San Vicente de Caguan and Cartagena de Chaira, which were added in February 2011 and for which OTI is supporting the development of an operational plan.

Progress in security seems to be fueling a demand for a higher level of government effort. The speed and transparency of PCIM was widely praised, but there were constant calls for roads and additional investments in infrastructure. Although a number of clinics and schools have been built or rehabilitated, communities have called for additional resources of this type. In addition, some key projects, despite the speed of implementation, are just getting underway.

While the security situation has improved in many parts of Meta, a continued presence by the military in many of the communities is still needed to ensure that gains made over the last two years are not reversed. Military leaders anticipate a long-term engagement with the FARC in the region even though today the rebel group has half the number of armed members that it had two years ago. A deterioration of security has caused PCIM activities in the small village of La Cooperativa to retrench; its agronomist pulled out and machinery was transferred to another town. There was a mortar attack on Santo Domingo on November 23, 2010, a FARC aggression that is difficult to explain given the widespread belief that many individuals in the village have FARC family connections.

In 2009, when two members of the evaluation team visited the district of La Cooperativa, there was high hope for the economic transition of this community from illicit to legal crop cultivation. In 2011 we were unable to visit this area since it was determined that the on-the-ground situation now made it unsafe to do so. By comparison, the situation in the district of Santo Domingo, which we also visited in 2009, had clearly improved: more commercial ventures were evident on the main street, a number of formerly abandoned houses had been reoccupied, and citizens of the community noted that there had been many tangible signs of improvement, from the creation of a new health center (which they lamented is attended by a nurse rather than a physician) to more investments by Acción Social in support of school facilities. A new milk collection center was about to open, supported by Progreso. This center is an important outlet for local milk production. Still lacking, however, were programs that addressed livelihood creation for women, many of whom are single heads of

¹⁹ Sergio Jaramillo, "National Consolidation Policy," briefing to USIP, December 9, 2010.

households with children. What was apparent from the Santo Domingo visit was the community's dependency on support from the mayor of Vista Hermosa. Many felt that the community had been abandoned by the mayor and claimed that few of the departmental funds he controlled reached this outlying and very poor area. A number of community members indicated that they were aware that 2011 was an election year, although it was unclear from our interviews whether individuals were registered to vote or were inclined to do so, even if eligible.

Vista Hermosa, which we visited in 2009, had undergone a major transformation since our last visit. A meeting with community leaders, small entrepreneurs and teachers painted a picture of a community returning to life after years of neglect. The town was now booming, with many people on the streets, more consumer goods in the stores, and the mayor, Miguel Briceño, making the rounds of the town. When we met with Mayor Briceño in 2009 he was just beginning to address some of the problems that Vista Hermosa had experienced after years of isolation—the absence of any justice system, the lack of land titles for those displaced, and the ongoing security challenge given inadequate numbers of police to patrol the city. In 2011 Mayor Briceño was busy making deals, managing political aspirations, and appeared much more prosperous than at our first meeting. It was also clear in our conversations that, given the political powers mayors have accumulated through the consolidation program based on their role as a source of employment, those who had benefited from Mayor Briceño's largesse were more positive about the situation in Vista Hermosa than those who still felt excluded—with the latter category by far constituting the majority.

We came away with the feeling that the Meta region would not backtrack and that government efforts, promoted by PCIM, would eventually prevail. We do recognize this will be a long-term process that will require overcoming the challenges of poverty and lack of land titles, and bringing private sector investment into the region to help support local agricultural development. Citizens of these districts will also need to see evidence of state presence in the form of better respect for individual rights and a working judicial system that can adjudicate on small claims as well as render justice to those who are seeking to expand criminal networks in the region.

Poor campesinos are finding ways to connect to their larger nation, although with some hesitation and even confusion (e.g., rural women arguing over which benefits they should be receiving from the national *Familias en Acción* poverty relief initiative). Improved security and roads have led to an influx of large land investment. (The business weekly *Dinero* recently published an article about investments by three of the country's largest capitalists in the Meta region.) These investments have produced an urgent need for land titling services for *campesinos* as land prices surge in response to growing demand by outsiders for productive land. Whereas a hectare of land in Vista Hermosa sold for \$270 in 2002, the same amount of land was being sold for \$4,200 in 2011.

Our team's visit to Granada, where OTI implementing partner Creative Associates maintains an office to support projects in La Macarena and La Uribe as well as San Juan de Arama, produced a sense that programs directed at the citizens of these regions have been effective in laying a strong foundation for economic development. The heavy emphasis on livelihood creation is much in evidence, as is the success of citizen engagement in local projects. In San Juan de Arama, one of Colombia's oldest towns, located in the former demilitarized zone controlled by the FARC we were able to observe a new model of citizen security and participation. There was electricity in the conversation we had with the young mayor, Diego Meyer Artunduaga. His enthusiasm for collaborating with Colombia Responde and Progreso was apparent. Attributing the security turnaround to the work of President Uribe that began in 2006 when the national government went after the FARC, he now wants to make sure that the town remains a center for regional education and economic growth. To that end he hopes to see more youth acquire jobs, greater educational opportunities become available to the local population, and the reintegration of the region into national economic life.

San Juan de Arama has benefited greatly from a major highway construction program in which the Colombian Army Corps of Engineers is involved. The road will connect the city to other major urban centers in the country. Despite such progress, problems still remain. The mayor acknowledged, for example, that the city is home to many displaced families (450), which places additional stress on the city budget. Nevertheless, he is optimistic about the next few years. Opportunities for expanded

tourism are already opening up as the community is adjacent to the National Park and the opening of the new road that should bring many campers and outdoor enthusiasts to the area. Locals discussed the need for training in hospitality services. While in town we attended the inauguration of two Progreso projects: a sugarcane mill to produce brown sugar that was to be run by a women's cooperative and a milk-collection center for local dairy farmers. The latter was especially interesting since that cooperative of milk producers was actively negotiating a contract with large Bogotá milk suppliers that had great economic potential for the community.

TOLIMA

The Sur de Tolima region includes the municipalities of Ataco, Chaparral, Planadas and Rioblanco. These places were among the most economically depressed areas of the country in spite of the region's rich land, favorable environment for agriculture, and strategic location. Tolima's failure to thrive was the result of a long history of violence, a 40-year internal conflict with the FARC, the absence of Colombian state political legitimacy, and the resulting marginalization of the region's inhabitants from national life. Between 1987 and 2000 the Colombian military was actively engaged in fighting the guerrillas without leaving any sustainable sense of security in the area.

Like the Meta region, Tolima was also identified as a pilot to test the integrated strategy of consolidation. Applying lessons learned from the PCIM program in Meta, OTI, along with the departmental government of Tolima and the CCAI, worked together to build citizen security and public confidence in local government.

If Tolima was to be integrated into the Colombian state then it would need to be connected through the creation of roads and public works projects. Road rehabilitation underscored the importance of linking the region back into the national economy. In the course of our field visit we encountered major road-rehabilitation activity starting in the department's capital city, Ibagué, and moving south to most of the districts targeted for assistance. Local projects in each of the three communities we visited—Chaparral, Rioblanco, and Limón (an outlying district of Rio Blanco)—indicated that a strategy of connecting state and community infrastructure projects was a very visible means of demonstrating government support for socioeconomic integration. In each of these locations we were able to witness the convergence of security, participatory decisionmaking and emergent local leadership, combined with greater community inclusion in projects supported through funds from Colombia Responde and the departmental government.

Efforts to promote consolidation in Tolima beginning in June 2008 followed the work of the PCIM in Meta. It was not until February 2010, more than a year and half later, that Colombia Responde program implementation began. Only in April 2010 did the first small, quick-impact infrastructure programs in the transition zones get under way. Like the program in Meta, support from USAID was dependent upon a security strategy which the military and civilian leadership agreed to as the first step toward a consolidation program. To date there are 39 projects in 5 districts—Ataco (11), Chaparral (7), Planadas (9), Rioblanco (7), and Tolima (5).

Our team's discussions with the communities we visited as well as with the representatives of the armed forces and national police who shared space with civilians in these sites indicated a good level of rapport with and a high degree of support from local residents for the presence of security forces as the embodiment of the Colombian state. The high visibility of citizen and soldier working together in communities such as Rioblanco reinforces the notion that consolidation is really a joint civilian-military effort.

The governor of Tolima, Oscar Barreto Quiroga, has embraced the work of Acción Social by ensuring that his staff is engaged at the department and community levels in delivering services to mayors and citizens by working in coordination with and in support of CREA staff. The creation of a "Delegado de Gobernador" to collaborate with representatives of the PNC underscores the commitment of the province to consolidation needs. The governor acknowledged that "there had been a large advance in the institutional response to consolidation in a region where the FARC had been active for 47 years."

One thing that sets Tolima apart from the PCIM is the timing of project implementation. Starting activities so close to the end of the OTI-IGRP, a deliberate decision was made to work only through Colombia Responde, providing support for infrastructure. Strategically, this was an important decision since repairing streets, providing an access road to the region's hospital, repairing a health center, and creating a central plaza were highly visible demonstrations of GoC support for these newly secured areas.

When we met with community members in Rioblanco, leaders emphasized how important it was to have Colombia Responde programs in a region that lacked sewage runoff and roads. We were shown how this community was able to work together to build an access road to the only hospital that served 28 neighboring districts. Citizens were proud not only of the road, but also of the process that joined them together to work on this project. Many women who were part of the community leadership talked of how the presence of community organizers from CREA helped bring people together to reach agreements on priority needs for the district.

Similarly, a decision to rebuild a central plaza in Limón also reflected local citizen desire to have a place that could be used to promote a sense of community, a meeting place for all. All these infrastructure projects were done under banner of Colombia Responde, a part of Acción Social, which reinforces the sense of national investment in local communities.

Progress for Tolima will depend upon addressing the continuing need to build citizen confidence in public safety. Maintaining the presence of the military and the national police will help provide security; ensuring access to markets through the creation of networks of tertiary and secondary roads will enable those cultivating marketable crops to derive an income from their labors. As the mayor of Rioblanco noted, five more years of investment will be necessary in order to help sustain the progress the community has seen to date.

According to polling data we reviewed, citizens in this once excluded region are more optimistic about the possibility that they will see a brighter future for themselves and their children. Interviews with community members suggested that those who perceived themselves to be direct beneficiaries of programs like Colombia Responde, or some of the Colombian state programs addressing early childhood needs, were also more optimistic regarding the future.

Whatever the next phase of consolidation brings in terms of resources, there is a need to support civic education since the elections for governor and mayor will greatly affect the direction of the program. Not only will these municipalities need state resources; they will also need leadership, not just infrastructure. It is a first step, but citizen buy-in will require an emphasis on creating livelihoods, access to markets, and credit once land restitution programs advance into the area. Citizens will also have to sense that they are safe and secure living in their respective communities.

MONTES DE MARÍA

OTI's efforts to support consolidation in Montes de María took several forms: (1) Establishing a Regional Coordination Center in Cartagena where community representatives can gather and interact with one another as well as CCAI staff (the Centro de Coordinación replaces the Centro de Fusión which was inaccessible to many people as it was based on Armada property); (2) facilitating encounters among local community members in the Departments of Bolivar and Sucre as well as one among local and departmental governments and security sector representatives with the goal of developing an operational plan for consolidation in the region;²⁰ (3) financing the improvement of various tertiary roads; and (4) providing support for cultural activities such as the commemoration of Independence Day.

²⁰ Note: An operational plan for Montes de María has not yet been developed. The regional coordinator contends that a Plan de Acción is already in place with significant work already having been undertaken in support of this plan; that new elements can be added to the existing plan if needed; and that the expense of developing a new operational plan is not warranted.

The Montes de María region differs in important ways from Meta and Tolima. First of all, security is clearly a less pressing issue in Montes than in the other two regions. There is no active FARC presence in this region as there is in Meta and Tolima. Nevertheless, the FARC's stated desire to reclaim the region, which forms part of an important narco-trafficking corridor, means that no one takes the region's security for granted. Most people believe that should the military leave the region, security gains would erode. In addition, BACRIM are beginning to establish a presence in the southern part of Bolívar, attracted by narco-trafficking, illegal mining, and other illicit activities.

Although displaced peoples and communities exist in other consolidation zones, this issue is particularly pressing in the Montes de María region. A policy of return and relocation for displaced peoples plays a central role in the Montes region's consolidation plan. Some important achievements have been made in supporting the return of internally displaced peoples to their communities. In fact, consideration should be given to the possibility that returns should at some point no longer constitute the focal point of the zone's consolidation plan; many of the individuals and families that left their communities ten or more years ago appear to have made a decision to remain in the urban areas (e.g., Cartagena and Barranquilla) to which they fled. Attention should thus be given to providing resources (i.e., adequate housing, employment, psychosocial services) to those who have settled in these areas.

Mass displacements have also made the land issue in Montes a more complex one than in other consolidation zones of the country. Efforts to provide individuals with titles to land have been complicated by multiple claimants to the same piece of land (i.e., displaced peoples claiming ownership of lands they had abandoned which were later settled by other individuals) and forced sales of land through the use of intimidation. In addition, as the security situation has improved in the zone, land prices have skyrocketed as individuals from other areas of the country (primarily Antioquia) have sought to buy large swaths of land. This practice has been temporarily halted by the government of the Department of Bolívar.

One important factor in establishing the presence and legitimacy of the national government has been the presence of the military in the region. Community members in El Salado (the site of one of Colombia's worst massacres by paramilitaries), for example, stated that they feel more secure now that the military is present, that they believe the military's presence is permanent, and that the military has made important advances in terms of its respect for human rights. Community members in El Salado were less enthusiastic about the police, stating that they had asked the police to stay out of the community during the week, making an appearance only on weekends when there is heightened activity in the town. (The community's rationale for this request is that the police presence might actually attract attacks on the community as it is believed that the police will not give chase to attackers outside the bounds of the town.) Another important way in which a government presence is being made known in communities in the Montes consolidation zone is through the building of roads. Other infrastructural improvements include the rebuilding/improvement of schools and health centers, community centers, parks, etc. The SENA is an important national actor whose work with communities has had an important effect in terms of establishing the presence of the national government.

A productive working relationship appears to have existed between the RCC and OTT's implementing partner, Creative Associates while the latter was active in Montes. The same does not appear to be true of the relationship between the RCC and the current implementing partner, CHF International. Juan Carlos Vargas, the Civil Coordinator of the RCC, has sought to continue to advance the list of projects that was already in place before CHF won the contract for the Montes de María band and, as noted above, has resisted adopting an operational plan for the Montes region.

It is somewhat difficult to ascertain the level of the departmental government's commitment to consolidation in the Montes region. Departmental politics likely play some role in this; three governors have served during the current term. In addition, problems of corruption are rife among the governments of the Montes de María region.

A number of private enterprises and foundations have made a significant commitment to post-conflict recovery in El Salado. *Fundación Semana* has played a lead role in these efforts, linking private enterprises, government agencies, international aid, and various foundations in developing income-

earning projects and providing a variety of social services for the community of El Salado. The work being done in El Salado may well stand as one of the best examples yet in any of the consolidation zones of the role the private sector is capable of playing vis-à-vis consolidation.

CASE COMPARISON

All three areas demonstrate the primacy of security as a precondition to the consolidation process. The ongoing military presence in the targeted communities made it possible for OTI to work through CCAI to foster citizen confidence in the use of a communal approach to solving problems and setting priorities to advance their communities' social and economic integration into the Colombian state. Whether or not these initial security gains can be sustained will vary from region to region.

The increased interest in private sector investment in consolidated zones has just begun. Meta shows great promise in part due to the road that now connects it to Bogotá, a market of more than 7 million people. The potential for such investments, however, must also be balanced against the need of rural peasants who still demand their right to property after a long history of usurpation of land and displacement. Important changes regarding land issues are likely to take place if President Santos's vision of a land restitution program advances and is formally adopted into law.

In all three cases, bringing regions into the state is as much a function of confidence building as it is infrastructure investment. The government's ability to move regional integration forward has been dependent on the military's ability to push out the FARC and to end extortion by paramilitaries who have victimized Colombia's rural population. Looking at the situation in 2011, there is great promise that the initial gains made under the Uribe government, coupled with the Santos government's national development plan, are helping to advance the long-term goal of consolidation.

A final aspect worth mentioning is the staffing structure for implementation in each region. In the case of Meta, the PCIM team was large, had a high level of technical skill, and great capacity for mobilization. It has been leading and involving different actors at the national and regional level, is able to coordinate work with Colombia Responde and Progreso programs under the regional plan of consolidation, and has mobilized mayors (some more than others) and the governor in developing the PCIM. This is a special case of capabilities, resources and coordination. In the case of Montes de Maria, the RCC is one person, as the support staffs from Acción Social were transient and responded to the agenda of their own institution. The delegate of Colombia Responde became part of the RCC team, and the two of them led the project with communities. The case of Tolima was different in that it had the only government that created a departmental manager for consolidation programs and the mayors were key players in the process. A central factor that explains the progress in building trust has been the interagency work under the leadership of the governor and mayors, and the agility of action of Colombia Responde. The RCC has not played an important role in this process.

APPENDIX E. SECURITY IN CONSOLIDATION ZONES

A strategy is a theory of success, and Colombia's consolidation strategy was a theory that a particular sequence of events would lead to an effective state presence in regions outside the control of the state: first the Colombian military targets the illegal armed groups in control of the region (mainly the FARC), and takes territorial control on behalf of the state; then the police enter the area and eradicate the coca crops that acted as the main funding source for the armed groups; once the area is secured from the illegal groups and their resources, then other state institutions enter to provide security to the local population and a wide array of services meant both to make an immediate (and positive) impression upon them and to form the basis for their political, economic, and social development and integration into the rest of Colombian society.

OTI's support to this process, the IGRP, was to the final stage, with technical assistance, salary support, and other funding to help with agricultural programs, infrastructure, land surveys and titling, strategic communication, and other elements of the Colombian government's consolidation strategy. These immediate-impact efforts were meant to form the basis for longer-term development efforts, some of which are expected to be provided by the USAID Mission and other U.S. agencies in Colombia. Security will underpin all of these efforts.

There has been clear progress on security, with far more territory under state control today than was the case a few short years ago. In 2008, CCAI created a *semáforo* (traffic light) system to track progress in the consolidation zones: insecure regions that were not under the military's control were color-coded red; areas that had a military presence but were still insecure were coded yellow; and areas that had been cleared and were considered safe were coded green. Maps for all consolidation zones were colored this way to help connote the state of security, and were updated from time to time (now every three months). Judging from the maps, there has been a clear increase in the number of geographic zones that have gone from insecure (red) to more secure and approachable (yellow), as well as in the number of municipalities that have evolved from yellow to green.

Some areas, however—particularly the national parks—do not have any military presence at all. Where the military was present—in the yellow and green zones we visited—most interviewees seemed to appreciate it, and several commented on the military's progress in human rights. But there was some concern over the sustainability of the security presence. In particular, the shortage of police, judges, and prosecutors was acutely felt in the communities in question. This is particularly important because the actors in the conflict are changing; as the FARC are now factionalized and in retreat, the BACRIM are on the rise—and even the FARC are increasingly emphasizing extortion as a funding source. Organized crime is a police mission and cannot be addressed directly by the military. Nor will it be addressed adequately until institutional gaps in justice are addressed. This will be one of the most important challenges to state consolidation over the next few years.

While the army has succeeded in recovering national territory in some regions, others remain under the control of illegal armed groups, either because of difficult terrain (as in the case of the national parks) or the presence of antipersonnel mines. The army is contending as well with the FARC's *Plan Renacer* (Rebirth Plan), a new strategy that depends on more indirect attacks against state forces than on direct combat. Moreover, the number of army troops has been reduced in some zones due to be sent to other regions of the country; this poses a risk for the sustainability of security.

In those zones where meaningful levels of security have been established, the security forces could lose popular support if they do not establish the capacity to counter organized crime, and at present there is not nearly enough of a police presence to do so. Where the police do maintain a presence, their operational capacity is weak, in some zones relying on the military for protection. Common crime and microtrafficking have risen in urban centers, and so the police face a need to increase their capacity for intelligence gathering to break up illegal armed groups and their sources of financing.

Citizen perception of the security forces has changed perceptibly. The army has a high level of public approval and police relations with the public have improved, although there are still areas where the population feels that the presence of the police makes them a target for attack.

In short, the sustainability of the security gains that have been made to date is still fragile and subject to reversal.

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Community members

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Community members

Santo Domingo, Meta

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Community members

Rioblanco, Tolima

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Mayors of Ataco, Chaparral, Planadas, and Rioblanco

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