ERADICATION AND SUBSTITUTION OF ILLICIT CROPS IN COLOMBIA: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

December 2017

This publication was produced by Management Systems International, a Tetra Tech Company, for review by the United States Agency for International Development.
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Contracted under AID-514-C-13-00003
USAID/Colombia EVAL (Evaluation and Analysis for Learning)
December 2017

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed by the authors in this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government. The contents of this study are the sole responsibility of its authors, Jorge Azad, Roberto Camargo, Daniel M. Rico, Roger Rasnake, Ana María Rivera and Management Systems International/Tetra Tech.
Acknowledgments

The consultant appreciates the support and cooperation of all of the institutions and people that participated in and contributed to this study on the current state of efforts to eradicate and substitute illicit crops in Colombia.

We are grateful for the contribution of producers, peasants, community leaders, international cooperation specialists, business people, and authorities of public and private institutions who gave their time to participate in individual and group interviews, which improved our understanding of this very complex problem.

Special thanks to the staff of MSI for providing the conditions and sharing their extensive experience and knowledge with the consultant. We especially appreciate the contributions of Roger Rasnake, Ana María Rivera, Daniel Rico, Carlos Rodríguez, and Martha Trujillo, who shared their knowledge with us, helped collect information and documentation, and gave valuable input during the study process.

Our sincere appreciation to MSI’s administrative and support staff, especially Esperanza Molina and Lisa Anderson, for making additional efforts to facilitate the logistics of this study.

Jorge Azad Ayala
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<tr>
<td>ADAM</td>
<td>Municipal Alternative Development Areas</td>
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<td>ARD</td>
<td>Associates for Rural Development</td>
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<td>BACRIM</td>
<td>Criminal Bands</td>
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<td>CADA</td>
<td>Andean Commission for Alternative Development</td>
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<td>CELI</td>
<td>Consolidation and Enhanced Livelihood Initiative</td>
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<td>CEDE</td>
<td>Center for Studies on Economic Development</td>
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<td>CFC</td>
<td>Commercial Forestry/Natural Forest Conservation</td>
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<td>CNMH</td>
<td>National Center of Historical Memory</td>
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<td>CONPES</td>
<td>National Economic and Social Policy Council</td>
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<td>CSDI</td>
<td>Colombia Strategic Development Initiative</td>
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<td>AD</td>
<td>Alternative Development</td>
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<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Rights</td>
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<td>IHL</td>
<td>International Humanitarian Law</td>
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<td>DIRECO</td>
<td>General Directorate of Agricultural Reconversion</td>
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<td>DNP</td>
<td>National Planning Department</td>
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<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defense (U.S.)</td>
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<td>DPCI</td>
<td>Directorate of the Program against Illicit Crops</td>
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<td>DPS</td>
<td>Department for Social Prosperity (EU)</td>
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<td>EEMT</td>
<td>Mid-term Evaluation Survey</td>
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<td>FEDECACAO</td>
<td>National Federation of Cacao Producers</td>
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<td>FARC-EP</td>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Popular Army</td>
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<td>FIP</td>
<td>Investment Fund for Peace</td>
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<td>IAG</td>
<td>Illegal Armed Groups</td>
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<td>GoC</td>
<td>Government of Colombia</td>
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<td>MEG</td>
<td>Mobile Eradication Group</td>
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<td>IDI</td>
<td>Comprehensive Unemployment Index</td>
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<td>JAC</td>
<td>Community Action Board</td>
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<td>FHH</td>
<td>Female head of household</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHH</td>
<td>Male head of household</td>
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<td>INCB</td>
<td>International Narcotics Control Board</td>
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<td>BL</td>
<td>Baseline</td>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>Peace Laboratories (EU)</td>
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<td>MdM</td>
<td>Montes de María</td>
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<td>MIDAS</td>
<td>More Investment for Sustainable Alternative Development</td>
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<td>MPS</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises - MPC (Public Policy Support)</td>
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<td>MSI</td>
<td>Management Systems International</td>
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<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organization of American States</td>
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<td>ODC</td>
<td>Colombia Drug Observatory</td>
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<td>ONDCP</td>
<td>Office of National Drug Control Policy</td>
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<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>OPS</td>
<td>UNDP Office of Project Services</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>PAI</td>
<td>Immediate Attention Plan</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Plan Colombia</td>
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<td>PDA</td>
<td>National Alternative Development Program</td>
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<td>PDAR</td>
<td>Regional Alternative Development Program of Cochabamba</td>
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<td>PDP</td>
<td>Regional Development and Peace Programs</td>
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<td>PFGB</td>
<td>Forest Ranger Family Program</td>
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<td>PLANTE</td>
<td>National Alternative Development Plan</td>
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<td>PLUS</td>
<td>Land Use Plans</td>
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<td>PNCT</td>
<td>National Policy for Territorial Consolidation</td>
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<td>PNDA</td>
<td>National Alternative Development Program</td>
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<td>PNCRT</td>
<td>National Policy for Territorial Consolidation and Reconstruction</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>PNIS</td>
<td>National Comprehensive Illicit-Crop Substitution Program</td>
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<td>POAS</td>
<td>Annual Operating Plans</td>
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<td>POT</td>
<td>Territorial Land Use Plans</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Productive Projects Program</td>
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<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprises</td>
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<td>RRI</td>
<td>Comprehensive Rural Reform</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>SIMCI</td>
<td>Comprehensive System for Monitoring Illicit Crops</td>
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<td>TEP</td>
<td>Productive Ethnic Territories</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDCP</td>
<td>United Nations Drug Control Programme</td>
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<td>UNGASS</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Confronting the enormous expansion of coca cultivation in Colombia presents the Government of Colombia (GOC) and USAID with unprecedented challenges. USAID has actively supported GOC efforts to develop a coherent and effective response to this phenomenon, but at the same time wishes to take advantage of lessons learned from the Agency’s past experience in other contexts. To that end, USAID commissioned this study to compare the alternative development program in Bolivia, where coca cultivation has largely been controlled and where cultivators have broadly adopted licit economic activities, with that of Colombia, where such efforts, while underway for many years, have been less successful. The objective of this study was to determine the current state of efforts to eradicate and substitute illicit crops in Colombia, and, through a comparison with the experience of the implementation of a crop substitution and alternative development program in Bolivia, describe a set of policies and programs that could have relevance for Colombia. The methodology used was qualitative, with documentary research and individual and group interviews being the tools prioritized for obtaining information.

The study is divided into three sections. First, it presents a review of the growth of the coca economy during the last decades and of the efforts and measures carried out by the Colombian government and international cooperation agencies to contain and reduce its growth and extension. Second, through a consideration of specific strategy and programming questions, the study draws on a comparison with the Bolivian experience to highlight the policies and actions that have contributed to the consolidation of the relative control that the Bolivian government has attained over the coca economy. In the third section, the team summarizes findings related to Colombia’s efforts in eradicating and substituting illicit crops and offers a series of recommendations on issues of security, governance, popular participation, rural economy, and territorial control.

The study corroborated data that show that there has been a significant increase in illicit crops in Colombia since 2013, due to the following principal causes: the situation of poverty and marginalization in the villages and municipalities affected by illicit crops; the unbalanced application of the anti-drug strategy; the weak presence of the State in the territories affected by illicit crops, and the weak coordination and communication among the institutions responsible for implementing the different components of the fight against drugs.

With regard to the eradication of illicit crops, the study found that the cessation of the aerial eradication (aerial spraying) program, the change in government policy that now prioritizes compensating voluntary substitution over forced eradication, the lack of a coca crop cadaster and registry, and the absence of property titles in the regions that produce illicit crops have caused a reduction in the net rate of illicit-crop eradication.

With regard to the substitution of illicit crops, the study found that there is no comprehensive rural development policy in the regions that produce illicit crops. There is a high level of poverty and social marginality in most of the municipalities in which illicit crops are produced. The prevailing conditions of violence and the presence of armed groups and criminal bands prevent laying the groundwork for and/or consolidating lawful development processes, which necessarily require peaceful conditions and citizen and judicial security in order to prosper.
The study has also been able to establish that most of the villages and municipalities in which illicit crops are produced do not have infrastructure to support production (secondary and tertiary roads, electric power, collection centers, commercialization, etc.), aspects that prevent the development and consolidation of lawful production.

*Key words: Eradication; substitution; illicit crops; coca.*
Introduction

The purpose of this activity is to provide USAID/Colombia with a report that summarizes the findings and conclusions regarding the current state of efforts to eradicate and substitute illicit coca crops in Colombia and, based on the Bolivian experience, to provide recommendations that can be replicated or adapted in the country around the activities and strategies proposed in relation to the substitution of illicit crops and territorial development.

Guiding questions

To guide the work, we defined a series of guiding questions in the study’s Terms of Reference (see Table 1), which question aspects related to the dynamics associated with the production, transformation and commercialization of illicit crops, and the role that alternative development should play as one of the most important tools in the fight against illicit drugs.

Table 1. Guiding Questions

| 1. | What strategies should the Colombian government adopt (supported by international cooperation) upon entering coca-growing areas with the intention of reorienting small growers toward legal agricultural products? What actions should be prioritized to combat the supply of illicit crops by small growers? |
| 2. | What should be the sequence of efforts for working with coca growers? – e.g., Begin with spraying and/or eradication first; or begin mainly with enhancing the presence of the State and institutions; or other actions? |
| 3. | What should be the role of technical assistance? Are small growers willing to accept technical assistance and incorporate it in their production methods? What incentive could be promoted in this regard? |
| 4. | What role should international cooperation play in supporting the Colombian government in its efforts to reduce the role of illicit crops in the rural economy? |
| 5. | Given the long history of social conflict in Colombia, especially involving armed groups, how should the risks of social conflict be faced and how should social peace be encouraged in the context of illicit-crop substitution and/or eradication? |
| 6. | How can small growers be involved in the interdiction process? |
| 7. | In Colombia, where there is no tradition of coca leaves consumption, small coca growers are the first link in a chain that reaches the large international drug trafficking cartels. How could this reality of the criminality of the peasant family economy be disentangled from this chain? |

Background of the Study

Without doubt, Colombia is experiencing one of the most important moments in its history due to the signing of a Peace Agreement with the FARC, putting an end to one of the hemisphere’s longest conflicts.

In the framework of the end of the conflict, one of the principal objectives is to promote the voluntary substitution of illicit crops, with a focus on alternative development to achieve the transformation of the territories and communities. This, added to the increase in illicit crops in recent years, has resulted in the issue becoming one of the most important challenges, not only in the country’s domestic sphere, but on the international agenda as well.
According to a report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 146,000 hectares of coca were reported in Colombia in 2016, compared with 69,000 hectares in 2014, an increase of 212% in just two years.\(^1\)

There has also been an increase in the price of coca leaf. Those who plant it also perceive a lower risk of loss of coca crops due to the suspension of aerial spraying and the ease of avoiding manual eradication through blockades against the police and armed forces. In addition, the signing of the Peace Agreement with the FARC has increased growers’ expectations of receiving benefits in consideration for the elimination of illicit crops.

Given that the plan of the Government of Colombia (GoC) in 2017 is to significantly expand programs that will have an impact on coca-growing areas, which include cross-cutting peace-related actions by the GoC and its institutions, it is important to have information about successful alternative development experiences in other places in the world, through which it is possible to generate recommendations for guiding efforts in this area and contributing to the transformation of the territories and communities.

**Methodology and Limitations of the Study**

*Methodology*

The methodology used in carrying out this study is qualitative, as it includes a) a desktop review of publications, studies and reports of Colombian government institutions, international cooperation programs and projects, and experts and academics from Colombian and Bolivian civil society; b) in-depth interviews with experts on issues related to alternative development and the substitution of illicit crops in both countries; and c) individual interviews with institutional actors at a national, departmental and local level, as well as with members of civil society (business people, peasants, coca growers, and members of indigenous and Afro-descendant communities).

The desktop review has been conducted in Bolivia and Colombia based on the database provided by MSI and the authors’ own documentary research. Some of the interviews were conducted in Bolivia prior to the mission in Colombia. The interviews with national and international institutional actors were conducted throughout the three-week stay in Colombia, and those with civil actors were conducted on the trip to the Municipality of Tumaco in the Department of Nariño at the end of the mission in Colombia.

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\(^1\) The United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) makes its own estimates of coca cultivation in the country and registered some 188,000 hectares, or over 464,000 acres, of coca in 2016 (DEA 2017).
Limitations of the study

Exogenous factors related to the control of the intervention

The context of violence and insecurity in the areas of intervention has been the most significant limitation faced by the mission in Colombia. The climate of social tension produced by confrontations between the police and armed forces and coca growers limited the three field visits originally planned (Nariño, Putumayo and Bajo Cauca), and only the field visit to the Municipality of San Andrés in Tumaco, Nariño was completed. For this reason, it was not possible to make the trips to the coca-growing villages or the rural communities covered by alternative development programs.
PART I: ANALYSIS OF COCA CROPS IN COLOMBIA

Guiding question: What is the state of the situation of illicit crops in Colombia?

Background

Countries in the Andean region of South America, such as Bolivia, Peru and Colombia, have produced and consumed coca for traditional (chewing, acullico, boleo), medicinal and religious uses since pre-Columbian times, although coca has also been cultivated in some Central African and Southeast Asian countries where its agroecological requirements can be met (Rocha, 2011).

Peru was the main supplier of coca leaf during the nineteenth century, although there were also reports of plantations in countries such as Java and Taiwan during the period 1910 – 1940, designed to meet the demand of the pharmaceutical industry (Gootenberg, 2001).

According to UNODC reports (1954), Peru, Bolivia, Colombia and Indonesia were the main producers of coca leaf in the nineteenth century. Peru reported an average annual production of 7,500 tons during the period 1943 – 1949. In 1952 it reported the production of 198 tons in Colombia and 193 tons in Indonesia.

In 2016, around 68% of the total coca area was cultivated in Colombia, followed by Peru (21%) and Bolivia (11%). Coca cultivation increased in the three countries that year.

The growth in coca cultivation in the region during the twentieth century is explained in part by the increase in the consumption of cocaine at an international level. The 80s saw a significant growth in the areas cultivated in Peru and Bolivia. In 1981, Peru had 50,000 hectares, Bolivia had 55,000 hectares and Colombia had 2,500 hectares (UNODC, 1989).

This predominance of production was maintained until the end of the 80s, when the increase and intensification of the crops began in Colombia, making it the world’s leading coca producer in 1997 (Figure 1).
Figure 1  
Coca crops in the Andean region, 1991-1999

[ha. Cultivadas = cultivated hectares].

Source: National Police-Anti-Narcotics Directorate (several years); United States Department of State (several years).

Today, Colombia, Peru and Bolivia produce almost all of the coca crops in the world. After a prolonged decline (2007 – 2013), cultivation increased by 73% during the period 2013 – 2016 (UNODC, 2017), mainly due to the growth in Colombia.

According to UNODC (2017), the volume of global production of cocaine hydrochloride amounted to 1,125 tons in 2016, a 25% increase over 2013. According to other UNODC reports, cocaine consumption appears to be increasing in the two main consumer regions, North America and Europe. The prevalence of consumption in the general population and testing conducted in the workplace indicate that consumption is increasing in the United States. A slight increase in cocaine consumption in Europe has also been detected through wastewater analyses in certain cities.

The total area of coca cultivation in Colombia, 146,000 hectares, is 52% larger than in 2015. The increases in coca crops in Peru and Bolivia have been smaller: 9% and 14%, respectively. Coca cultivation in the region increased by 36%, to a total of 213,100 hectares.

Although there are no data on significant growing areas in other countries in the region, regional reports (CADA, 2005) indicate that coca and poppy crops are frequently found in Ecuador (Esmeraldas, Carchi, Sucumbios, Imbabura, Napo, and Orellana provinces) and Venezuela (Sierra del Perijá National Park – border area).

Analyzing the historical behavior of coca cultivation in the region, the total area devoted to coca crops over the last 21 years has hardly changed at a regional level. However, what is observed in the historical series, especially in the last four years, is a trend toward a certain stabilization of plantations in Peru and Bolivia and a significant increase in Colombia, especially since 2014.
Coca cultivation in Colombia has increased steadily and significantly since 2013, with a historical minimum of 48,000 hectares in 2012-2013. The monitoring carried out in 2016 recorded 146,000 hectares, which approaches the maximum levels recorded in 2000 (163,000 hectares) (see Figure 3).

**Figure 2. Coca cultivation in the Andean Countries (hectares), 1995-2017.**
*Source: UNODC, ONDCP, 2017; Peru data for 2017 based on ONDCP reports.*

![Graph showing coca cultivation in the Andean Countries, 1995-2017](image)

**Figure 3. Evolution of coca cultivation in Colombia, 2001-2016**
*Source UNODC, 2017*

![Graph showing historical series of hectares with coca cultivation in Colombia, 2001-2016](image)

Figure 3. Historical series of hectares with coca cultivation in Colombia as of December 31, 2001 - 2016.
The UNODC report (2017) also states that coca leaf production has intensified in the traditional producing regions, as a result of the greater density of the plantations. Approximately 63% of the country’s coca is concentrated in the departments of Nariño, Putumayo and Norte de Santander.

**Figure 4. Coca cultivation in Colombia by region, 2008 – 2016**

*Source: UNODC, 2017*

![Coca cultivation in Colombia by region, 2008 – 2016](image.png)

Figure 5 shows the trend toward the increased density of coca crops. Thirty-nine percent of the crops are concentrated in the Pacific region, 28% in the Central region, and 24% in the Putumayo-Caquetá region. The most significant increase in relation to the 2015 reports occurred in the Central region, with a 147% increase in the crops reported in 2016 (UNODC, 2017).

According to the UNODC (2017), the increase in illicit crops in the last year may be associated with: a) the reduction in state pressure on illicit production; b) the reduction in the level of risk perceived as a result of the suspension of aerial spraying; and c) the generation of incentives for the establishment of illicit crops.
However, analyzing the dynamics associated with the increase or decrease in coca plantations from a broader perspective, several authors (Antezana, 1999; Junguito, Perfetti, & Delgado, 2017; CADA, 2005) agree that the variations are influenced by internal and external causes.

**Internal causes**

Among the internal causes that explain the variation in the extent of hectarage of illicit crops, we can note: a) changes in the national policies and strategies related to the fight against illicit crops and drug trafficking (interdiction, eradication, substitution of illicit crops, prevention of consumption, etc.); b) increases at a national and international level in the prices of coca leaf, base paste and cocaine hydrochloride; c) the actions of illegal groups (guerrillas, paramilitaries and/or criminal bands) related to producers of illicit crops; d) the fluctuation in the prices of minerals,
wood and other products that compete with the production of illicit crops; e) the crisis in rural agricultural production due to the occurrence of climatic phenomena such as droughts and floods; and f) changes in the prices of minerals or raw materials that result in the loss of income and jobs in the rural regions that produce illicit crops or their areas of influence, etc. (Antezana, 1999; CADA, 2005; Gaviria & Mejía, 2011).

Among other internal factors, we can also point to the existence of social, institutional, political and agroecological conditions that favor the development, transformation and commercialization of illicit crops. These include extreme poverty in the rural regions of producing countries; the institutional weakness and scarce presence of the State in remote rural regions; and the existence of consolidated productive chains (production – transformation – commercialization) that facilitate the growth and expansion of illicit crops.

*Peace in Tumaco happens through social and productive investment. In the villages there is no good education, there are no health posts, there is no drinking water. The rulers should come closer to the people.* (Member of the Tablón Salado Community Council)

Most of the municipalities and villages that produce illicit crops are characterized by their high vulnerability. Many of them are located in fragile ecosystems, including in indigenous reservations or natural parks exposed to processes of degradation and destruction due to the presence of illicit crops. The majority of the population in regions that produce illicit crops are poor, due to their limited access to public services (health, education, energy, basic sanitation, roads, etc.).

*The environmental, socioeconomic, cultural and political impact caused by illicit crops is taking on critical dimensions for the country. In general, the areas affected by illicit crops are characterized by situations of economic and social backwardness, weak or no institutional presence of the State with social and economic development programs, situations of conflict derived from the marginality and precarious living conditions of the population, and the presence of armed groups.* (DNP, 1994)

**External causes**

The worldwide increase in the consumption of drugs; the development and consolidation of criminal networks that link producing and consumer areas (producing countries, transit and final consumers); and the decreased efforts and resources aimed at controlling and limiting illicit crops, are some of the causes identified to explain the increase in illicit crops in Colombia. However, studies (e.g., Zuleta, 2017) show that there is no evidence that clearly correlates the increase in the consumption of cocaine in the United States with the increase in illicit coca crops in Colombia.
Current State of Eradication Efforts

The Eradication of Coca Crops

There are no legal coca crops in Colombia. The eradication programs have been developed under the modalities of aerial spraying and forced manual eradication, although in recent years the country has also implemented a voluntary substitution program through agreements between growers and the government, recently expanded in a subsidized manner based on the Peace Agreement.

Analyzing the dynamics of the coca crops and the eradication reports in the series available for the period 2001 – 2015, we can infer that, despite the efforts made over the years, eradication alone has not been able to contain the increase in illicit crops, given the high rate of replacement or planting of new crops, exacerbated by the fact that there is no registration process and cadaster of producers and production areas that allows for the planning of sustainable and effective eradication and/or substitution programs over time. Figure 6 shows that, with the exception of the years 2012 and 2013 (when, apparently, the eradication rates exceeded the crop replanting and replacement rates), the combined eradication efforts (aerial spraying and manual eradication) have not efficiently controlled illicit crops. This phenomenon was further aggravated by the cessation of aerial spraying ordered by the National Narcotics Council in May 2015.

Figure 6. Dynamics of coca crops and eradication modalities (2001-2015)

Source: UNODC/SIMCI, National Police, Anti-Narcotics Directorate and Ministry of National Defense

During 2016, the police and armed forces manually eradicated 17,593 hectares, representing 18% of the crops reported by UNODC/ SIMCI. The restriction on the aerial fumigation of crops and the increase in the price of coca leaf are among the explanations for this phenomenon. However, the same report noted that there was a downward trend in the price of coca leaf at the point of production and the price of cocaine base paste of between -3.3 and -5.5% in relation to 2015.
For 2017, the government set a goal of eradicating 100,000 hectares, of which 50,000 correspond to the forced eradication program, and 50,000 to the substitution plan under the responsibility of the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS).

According to government reports, 35,900 hectares (approximately 36% of the planned goal) were eradicated through the two programs by the middle of October 2017; 19,650 hectares under the forced eradication program, and 16,250 hectares under the voluntary substitution program.

The voluntary substitution program is carried out in concert with the communities, which sign a collective agreement under which they agree to eliminate their illicit crops and join alternative development programs (UNODC, 2017).

Forced manual eradication is carried out by the Mobile Eradication Group (GME) with assistance from the police and armed forces under the Directorate of the Program against Illicit Crops (DPCI), which is part of the Department of Social Prosperity. In addition, the National Police and the Military Forces carry out eradication actions as part of their surveillance and interdiction work. However, data reported under this modality do not comply with the parameters of traceability, objectivity and reliability to be validated and included in the UNODC’s report (UNODC, 2017).

Figure 8 shows a reversion of the downward trend in coca crops in Colombia beginning in 2013, and, as cited above, the historical maximum level of 160,000 hectares reached in 2000 was approached in the three-year period of 2014 -2016.
Figure 8. Coca crops in Colombia (hectares), 2001 -2016

Source: Cruz et. al. 2017
Current State of Coca Crop Substitution Efforts

The concept of alternative development

In its twentieth special session on International Drug Control, held in Vienna from June 8 to 10, 1998, the United Nations General Assembly recognized that, in the fight against drug trafficking and illicit drugs, there are structural causes linked to poverty, isolation and marginality that predominate among the communities that fall into the problem of illicit crops, and so it adopted the concept of alternative development, which was defined as follows:

A process to prevent and eliminate the illicit cultivation of plants containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances through specifically designed rural development measures in the context of sustained national economic growth and sustainable development efforts in countries taking action against drugs, recognizing the particular sociocultural characteristics of the target communities and groups, within the framework of a comprehensive and permanent solution to the problem of illicit drugs (UN, 1998).

It also mentioned that the objective of alternate development is “to promote lawful and sustainable socio-economic options for those communities and population groups that have resorted to illicit cultivation as their only viable means of obtaining a livelihood, contributing in an integrated way to the eradication of poverty” (UN, 1998).

Alternative development thus constitutes an important element for creating and promoting lawful, viable and sustainable economic options that replace illicit crops. It is one of the key elements of the policy and programs aimed at reducing the production of illicit drugs.

Alternative Development in Colombia

UNODC indicates that the situation of extreme poverty in rural areas is reflected by the fact that the daily income of coca growers is minimal: “Coca growers scarcely earn little more than one United States dollar a day.”2 (SIMCI 2013).

In relation to the income generated by drug trafficking, the 2002 Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) notes that only 1% of the income from worldwide drug trafficking is received by growers in developing countries, while the remaining 99% is received by the drug trafficking groups that operate at different points of the chain (ODC 2003).3

Based on these data, it can be asserted that most peasants who plant illicit crops in Colombia find themselves in the social group with the lowest income and fewest economic opportunities. For this reason, the substitution or eradication of illicit crops will be sustainable in the long term only if these small farmers are provided with a set of income-earning opportunities that enable them not

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2 SIMCI 2013. Page .3.
only to abandon the prohibited crops, but also to embark on the path towards a better quality of life.

**Alternative Development plans, programs and projects**

The "alternative development" experience in Colombia began in 1985 with a coca crop substitution project in southern Cauca, which was expanded to northern Nariño in 1989. During this period, it was shown that the projects required a multi-sectoral approach, in which comprehensive rural development processes became the means for achieving the central objective of reducing illicit crops. Within this approach, but while maintaining the criterion of focusing actions on peasant coca growers, alternative development projects were initiated in Guaviare, Caquetá and Putumayo, under the auspices of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), operated by the Office for Project Services (OPS) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).  

In this context, Colombia implemented the international postulates of the United Nations by means of the formulation of national policies. In 1994, the provisions of CONPES 2374 of 1994 created the National Alternative Development Program (PDA), whose purpose was to complement the forced eradication campaigns with social investments in order to prevent, halt and eliminate the production of illicit crops.

The program was limited to peasant economy areas where projects were formulated with community participation to create lawful income-generating opportunities, enhance the quality of life, protect the environment and promote ethical and cultural values for peaceful coexistence, in order to reduce the supply of psychotropic substances.

In relation to the problem of the increase in illicit crops and drug trafficking, in 1992 illicit coca, poppy and marijuana crops affected 212 municipalities in the country and directly or indirectly involved approximately 300,000 small producers, including peasants and indigenous people (CONPES 2734 of 1994). The areas affected by illicit crops were characterized by economic and social backwardness, weak or no institutional presence of the State with social and economic development programs, situations of conflict derived from the marginality and precarious living conditions of the population, and the presence of armed groups.  

The concept of alternative development is thus oriented toward a comprehensive policy that promotes the return of ethical and cultural values of citizens, seeking to increase the institutional presence of the State and to create alternative sources of income (CONPES 2734/94). However, during 1994, the alternative development projects served only 37 municipalities in the country, revealing a serious coverage problem.

In August 1995, through CONPES Document 2799 of 1995, the name of the National Alternative Development Plan (PNDA) was changed to PLANTE. The document notes that the PLANTE program will be aimed at providing, based on the eradication of illicit crops, an alternative legal

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4 CONPES 2734 of 1994
5 CONPES 2734 of 1994.
6 CONPES 2734 of 1994
way of life to small growers of these crops. PLANTE will be limited to peasant and indigenous economic areas where projects will be formulated and executed with community participation in order to create lawful income-generating opportunities, improve the quality of life, protect the environment and promote ethical and cultural values for peaceful coexistence (CONPES 2799/95).

During the period 1998 – 2002, the government implemented the “National Plan for the Fight against Drugs: We are All the Solution against Drugs,” which establishes six main objectives:

- alternative development;
- reduction in the supply of drugs;
- reduction in demand;
- legal and institutional capacity building;
- environmental management; and
- international policy.  

In 1999, Plan Colombia (PC) was approved, and the United States became the principal financier of the fight against drugs in Colombia. The priority and coverage for fumigation was renewed. The main objectives of Plan Colombia were to: a) reduce the production of illicit drugs (mainly cocaine) by 50% within six years; and b) improve security conditions in Colombia, recovering control of large areas of the country that were in the hands of illegal armed groups and organized crime.

With these goals, Plan Colombia was a comprehensive bilateral cooperation strategy that would contribute to economic revitalization and the achievement of peace in Colombia, while at the same time strengthening control over the supply of illicit drugs on American streets.

This agreement was based on the principle of shared responsibility, which recognizes that the global drug problem is a common responsibility that is shared by the entire international community, requiring a comprehensive and balanced vision to confront the supply of and demand for illicit drugs.

Plan Colombia lasted 15 years; the investment was approximately 9.6 billion dollars by the U.S. Government, and the national counterpart was assumed by the Government of Colombia. The Investment Fund for Peace (FIP) was formed for the execution of the plan. Two initiatives that had been created before Plan Colombia were included: the Fund for Special Programs for Peace and the National Alternative Development Plan (PLANTE). Plan Colombia was implemented in three phases.
In terms of European support, in 2002, the European Union and the Government of Colombia implemented the Development and Peace Initiatives Program, which was implemented until 2011. The Peace Laboratories were initiatives of the Government of Colombian and the European Union for accompanying the Regional Development and Peace Programs (PDP) in the midst of the conflict. They sought to transform the economic, social, cultural and political order, in order to collectively construct lasting conditions of peace based on life with dignity for all inhabitants. Three central themes were developed: a) Peace and Human Rights, which promotes the defense of life, the defense of human rights, International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and peaceful coexistence, through the strengthening of civil society and public institutions; b) Participatory Governance, which supports the strengthening of public institutions and civil society, constructing spaces and instruments of democratic participation; and c) Sustainable Socioeconomic Development, which promotes improved living conditions for the most vulnerable population, through the promotion and support of socioeconomic alternatives for local development that are respectful of the environment.12

During the period 2002-2011, the Peace Laboratories carried out 614 projects in 220 municipalities and benefited more than 300,000 people. The total financing was 113,870,000 euros, with the European Union contributing 92,000,000 euros.

The National Development Plan “Towards a Community State” was implemented during the period 2002-2006, and the following actions were proposed: a) strengthening the strategy for combating illicit drugs and related crimes through a chain approach; b) reinforcing the interdiction mechanisms, including the control of money laundering and arms trafficking; and c) expanding actions to control illicit crops through forced and voluntary eradication.

A complementary role was proposed for alternative development, with actions aimed at providing lawful options to keep small growers out of the business. A productive and social investment plan, Alternative development was included as a component of the strategy for institutional strengthening and development in conflict zones.13

In 2003, a new orientation was given to the Alternative Development Program (PDA), focusing on the generation of conditions and lawful opportunities for the productive and sustainable employment of rural labor, thereby removing it from the illegal circuit through three components: i) productive and income-generation projects; ii) Forest Ranger Families; and iii) Institutional Strengthening, Social Development and Monitoring (CONPES 3218 of 2003).14

**USAID Cooperation of the Past Decade**

Two programs financed by USAID were implemented in 2006: a) More Investment for Sustainable Alternative Development (MIDAS) and; b) Areas of Municipal Alternative Development (ADAM). The purpose of these programs was to improve the conditions of rural citizens through

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14 CONPES 3218/03
the implementation of productive projects; community participation; the development of public policies; and the strengthening of municipal governments (MSI, 2014).

MIDAS, with financing of US$180 million, provided technical assistance and support to micro, small and medium enterprises, productive forestry, conservation and agribusiness in approximately 500 municipalities. Its policy component supported reforms for development in all levels of the country (MSI, 2014). The ultimate objective of MIDAS was to create viable alternatives to the production of coca and, therefore, help to reduce coca crops, while at the same time promoting the stability and profitability of lawful rural livelihoods.

MIDAS worked together with the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation (ACCIÓN SOCIAL), supporting the policies of the national government. It was organized around five components: Agribusiness; Commercial Forestry /Natural Forest Conservation; Small and Medium Enterprises; Public Policy Support; and Productive Ethnic Territories.

The results of the MIDAS program included 571 million dollars of leveraged investments in the public and private sectors; 287,812 benefited families; 164,716 new hectares of competitive and sustainable crops planted; more than 260,000 jobs created; and 114,051 hectares of natural forests with forest management plans. Also, the beneficiaries of MIDAS had a 33.5% improvement in their quality of life over non-beneficiaries, as well as a greater capacity to reject illicit activities, with confidence in viable alternatives (MIDAS, 2011).

The ADAM program, with financing of US$189 million, was focused on productive agricultural projects, public works, municipal strengthening, and support for civil society. Its projects were implemented in 75 municipalities. ADAM’s objective was to develop and implement a sustainable, market-oriented alternative development program, promoting the eradication of coca and poppy where these crops existed, and seeking to prevent the cultivation of drugs in vulnerable rural areas that were still free of illicit crops.

ADAM’s strategy was based on the assumption that the key to economic development was the creation of strong and effective links between governmental institutions, markets and local producers. The efficiencies and integrated capacities achieved would provide the bases for the development and future expansion of sustainable value chains. The program’s three main components – Alternative Development, Local Governance, and the Displaced Population – interacted to contribute to the achievement of the main objective.

In its Final Report, ADAM reported the fulfillment of 160% of the planned objectives. It stated that 84,636 families had benefited, 143% more than the programmed goal (59,369 families). The hectares free of illicit crops reached 131% of the initial objective. The organizations were strengthened at a level of 223% of the established goal (MSI, 2014).

From 2007 to 2011, the GoC, with the support of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) of USAID, implemented the Comprehensive Consolidation Plan for La Macarena (PCIM in Spanish) in six municipalities of Meta Department: La Macarena, La Uribe, Mesetas, Puerto Rico, San Juan de Arama and Vistahermosa. The FARC exercised significant control in this region over economic and social activities, and the area was characterized by a high density of illicit crops and as a strategic corridor for illegal activities by the FARC.
The principal objective of PCIM was to achieve a comprehensive and permanent presence of the State in the area, with the goal of creating the necessary conditions for (i) recovering institutional control of the territory and reestablishing security; (ii) reinforcing local governance and effective citizen participation; (iii) eradicating illicit crops and developing the licit economy; (iv) recovering the National Natural Parks; and (v) ensuring access to justice and guaranteeing effective protection of human rights.

The intervention demanded a sequential and coordinated effort by the Army, the National Police, and civil authorities with the goal that, once the transition was completed, State presence would be permanent. The institutions in charge of program coordination were (i) the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation; (ii) The Coordination Center for Comprehensive Action (CCAI in its Spanish acronym); (iii) OTI of USAID, and (iv) the Fusion Center, established in the municipal capital of Vistahermosa.

To finance this initiative, the GoC provided USD 134.3 million; international cooperators gave USD 18.3 million, and departmental and local governments USD 27.7 million.

The PCIM is considered to be one of the most successful programs implemented in Colombia, both in the results obtained and for the contributions realized in formulating and implementing policies and actions in the fight against narcotics trafficking and in favor of alternative development.

The implementation of the Plan saw an important reduction in coca cultivation in the region, accompanied by a decrease in the productivity of these crops. The extension of lands dedicated to coca in this region was reduced from 22,127 hectares in 2005 to 2,782 hectares in 2009. A drop in potential cocaine production from 26 metric tons in 2008 to 14 metric tons in 2009 was also reported (UNODC, SIMCI 2010. P. 82).

OTI and USAID supported carrying out various programs and projects, such as Colombia Responde, which implemented small infrastructure projects (health centers, roads improvement, drainage systems, etc.) which the communities identified as of high priority; Progreso, which provided technical assistance and agricultural inputs to producers to encourage the transition to a licit economy which would permit income generation through the sale of products in local markets; and CCAI, which coordinated activities related with these components and with other governmental activities which took place in the same areas (for example, training, land use management, land titling, etc.) (USAID/OTI’S Integrated Governance Response Program in Colombia. A Final Evaluation. April 2011) (USAID 2011). The results presented in the final evaluation of PCIM showed that an important reduction in the extent of illicit cultivation was the product of a coordinated application of efforts to eradicate illicit crops with the implementation of alternative development programs and projects.

The State recovered control of the territory, reducing the rate of homicides, kidnappings, and confrontations among armed illegal groups.

With respect to socioeconomic conditions, social indicators reflecting access to land, health coverage, education, and access to justice all improved. There was a significant increase in investment in health, educational and road infrastructure. Connectivity of the zone with other regions of the country and access to markets for licit products also improved.
It is important to highlight the coordinated work that existed among different public and private actors, along with international cooperators, as well as synergies among the national, regional and municipal governments.

**UNODC Cooperation**

In parallel with the activities described above, during the period 2003 – 2013, the Colombian Government used its resources and organizational support from the UNODC to implement two alternative development programs: the Forest Ranger Family Program (PFGB) and the Productive Projects Program (PPP).

These programs have promoted the economic and social development of territories affected by the presence of illicit crops. According to reports (SIMCI, 2013), the PDA has intervened in 7,734 villages in 361 municipalities in the country, and has benefited more than 156,000 families that were linked to illicit crops or were at risk of establishing them.

The Forest Ranger Family Program was aimed at families directly involved with illicit crops or at risk of being so, and it promoted the voluntary manual eradication of coca crops, seeking to have all beneficiary families become associated with local bodies such as Community Action Boards, Community Councils and Indigenous Organizations.

It is estimated that 30,148 families were able to acquire, and formalize their ownership rights in, approximately 101,213 hectares of land. In a pilot program in Antioquia and Cordoba, titles to 1,714 properties were formalized for small growers.

The definition of a policy of “areas free of illicit crops” allowed the beneficiaries to recognize their commitments, and the government was able to verify that 2,934 villages were free of illicit crops during the implementation of the program (SIMCI, 2013).

The objective of the Productive Projects Program (PPP) was to improve the productivity, employment and income opportunities of families that depended on, or were inclined to become involved with, illicit crops for their livelihood.

In the framework of this program, the Colombian Government contributed resources for the development of productive projects, providing technical assistance, strengthening the business sector, identifying marketing channels, and supporting the attainment of quality certifications for access to fair trade markets, organic product markets and other market niches. The productive projects also received support from international organizations, members of the national trade associations of each one of the productive lines, and governor’s and mayor’s offices.

It is estimated that this program has benefited approximately 59,000 families through 644 projects that were implemented by the 613 producer organizations created or strengthened by the alternative development programs. During 2012 and 2013, this program benefited 60,716 families through the productive organizations, and invested 19.906 billion pesos. More than half of the organizations are marketing their products today. Some of these organization have obtained loans and resources of more than 21 billion pesos (SIMCI, 2013).

**Recent Policies**
Given the need to consolidate a comprehensive and complementary approach to the guidelines included in the Alternative Development Program (PDA), the Government of Colombia created a “National Policy for the Manual Eradication of Illicit Crops and Alternative Development for Territorial Consolidation” (CONPES 3669 of 2010), which established concerted strategies under a cross-cutting perspective, seeking coordination with other entities that had an impact on the comprehensive manual eradication and alternative development processes. The PDA coordinated with the National Policy for Territorial Consolidation and Reconstruction (PNCRT), which sought to strengthen the presence of the State in regions affected by armed groups and illicit crops in order to establish conditions for prosperity and the effective exercise of fundamental rights (SIMCI 2013).

Alternative development acquired greater importance during this period, influencing the Political Declaration on Drugs of 2009, which addressed the need for the application of balanced long-term criteria for dealing with the illicit cultivation of plants used in the production of narcotics and psychotropic substances, as well as the importance of implementing innovative strategies in support of alternative development (UNODC 2009)15.

Also, the Joint Ministerial Statement on the 2014 High-Level Review, considered to be the most recent instrument promoting alternative development, presented the main international guiding principles and recognized this type of development as part of the sustainable and effective strategies for controlling illicit crops, reaffirming the need to undertake drug-related policies and programs that are oriented towards development (UNODC 2014).16 According to government reports, 54% of the cacao in Colombia has been planted in the framework programs of this type. They also indicate that alternative development has contributed to 40% of rubber plantings and 25% of palm oil crops in Colombia, and has promoted the planting of 28,439 hectares of coffee crops, corresponding to 3.2% of the national total. In the forestry sector, 61,762 hectares of forests were planted under sustainable community management plans. (SIMCI 2014).

Several countries have contributed, and continue to contribute, along with the efforts of Colombia, to policies for controlling and reducing the supply of drugs. In financial terms, the main donors have been the United States, the European Union and the UNODC (Table 2).


Table 2. Main donors in the fight against drugs in Colombia. 1998-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>AMOUNT OF DONATION IN USD</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PROJECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>86,814</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAF</td>
<td>105,680</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>251,564</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>359,481</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>405,900</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>471,342</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1,475,669</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN - UNDP</td>
<td>3,308,858</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>5,002,400</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>5,492,060</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9,349,715</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN – FAO</td>
<td>9,726,886</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>14,323,050</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>39,327,709</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN – UNODC</td>
<td>40,083,860</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>167,081,980</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7,478,325,503</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL DONATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,775,678,471</strong></td>
<td><strong>72</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Justice of Colombia, 2015

Alternative development as a global concept and policy has evolved in recent decades. The concept was born with a focus on the substitution of illicit crops by legal crops, and it is currently conceived as a public health and human rights policy that integrates the promotion of development with the control of illicit crops.

Addressing the phenomenon of drugs from a comprehensive and balanced perspective requires consideration of territorial, differential, public health and human rights approaches, as set forth in the 2014-2018 National Development Plan, *All for a New Country*, and in the April 19, 2016 Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS), which poses the need for drug policies to be based on human rights and public health approaches (ODC, 2016).\(^\text{17}\)

Fifty years after the start of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, and forty years after President Nixon launched the U.S. government’s war on drugs, urgent fundamental reforms of national and global drug control policies are needed. The UNGASS was developed through a

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\(^\text{17}\) ODC 2016
general debate that resulted in the adoption of an Outcome Document titled “Our Joint Commitment to Effectively Addressing and Countering the World Drug Problem” (UNGASS, 2016).

Seven areas were defined for addressing the world drug problem in a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced manner: (a) reduction of the demand and other health-related issues; (b) availability and access to controlled substances; (c) reduction of the supply; (d) changing realities; (e) drugs and human rights; (f) strengthening international cooperation; and (g) alternative development.

The UNGASS opened the way to a broad, comprehensive view of alternative development as a strategy for contributing to sustainable development, beyond measures for controlling supply (UN, 2013). It also constructed a broader link between alternative development and the concept of Sustainable Development, established in the 2030 goals.

**Current approach to crop substitution and alternative development**

With the signing of the Final Agreement between the National Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – Popular Army (FARC-EP) in November 2016, new criteria were established for the “Solution to the Problem of Illicit Drugs” (FINAL AGREEMENT, 2016).

Point 4 of the Final Agreement, titled “Solution to the Problem of Illicit Drugs,” specifically establishes that, in order to further the purpose of laying the foundation for a stable and lasting peace, it is necessary to find a definitive solution to the problem of illicit drugs, including illicit crops and the production and commercialization of illicit drugs.

It recognizes that many regions and communities in the country that are in a state of poverty and abandonment have been directly affected by the cultivation, production and commercialization of illicit drugs. This has deepened their marginality, inequality and violence. It also concedes that the production and commercialization of illicit drugs and the criminal economies have had serious effects on the Colombian population, in both the countryside and the cities, affecting the enjoyment and exercise of their rights and freedoms.

It also recognizes the relevance and need for implementing comprehensive alternative development and illicit-crop substitution plans as tools for solving the illicit drug problem, as part of the structural transformation of the countryside sought by the Comprehensive Rural Reform, which contributes to generating conditions of well-being and a good life for the populations affected by those crops (FINAL AGREEMENT, 2016).

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21 Ibid.
The Final Agreement calls for new options focused on illicit-crop substitution processes and the implementation of Comprehensive Substitution and Alternative Development Plans that will form part of a new National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops, which will be implemented by new institutions.

Point 4 of the Final Agreement contains a commitment to create and implement a new National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS), for the purpose of generating tangible and intangible conditions of well-being and a good life for the populations affected by illicit crops, in particular for peasant communities living in poverty that currently derive their subsistence from those crops.

Three work areas are established: Comprehensive Community and Municipal Substitution and Alternative Development Plan; Immediate Attention Plan (PAI) – Family Component (PAI); and Immediate Attention Plan (PAI) – Community Component (DECREE 896/17).22

This point served as the basis for the launching of the voluntary program that will provide those families who agree to substitute their coca crops for other products with monthly stipends of COP$1,000,000 monthly for a year as well as additional resources to invest in productive projects. By early December, according to press reports, the GoC reported that nearly 30,000 families had signed agreements to voluntarily eradicate 22,000 hectares.23

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22 DECREE 896 OF MAY 29, 2017. By which the National Comprehensive Program for the Substitution of Illicit Crops (PNIS) is created.

PART II. GUIDING QUESTIONS

Initial Intervention Strategies

*Guiding Question* What strategies could be adopted by the Colombian Government (supported by International Cooperation) upon entering coca-growing areas with the intention of reorienting small growers toward lawful agricultural products? What actions should be prioritized to combat the supply of illicit crops by small growers?

While the Government and the FARC have committed to implementing the Peace Agreement, the power vacuum left by this guerilla group has generated expectations among the drug trafficking cartels, criminal bands and/or illegal armed groups that are fighting for territorial control. The government’s campaigns to forcefully eradicate coca crops have met resistance from criminal actors who promote peasant mobilizations in order to halt or obstruct the tasks of eradication and/or interdiction.

In recent months, at least 51 social and peasant leaders have been murdered in areas with large concentrations of coca plantations. Confrontations between government forces and coca growers in Tumaco, Nariño in October 2017 left six dead.

In this context of violence, the intervention in coca-growing areas to eradicate illicit crops should be preceded by a strengthening of the State’s presence in the affected territories. The State should exercise its greatest efforts to guarantee the rule of law throughout the entire national territory, especially in regions in which armed groups, criminal bands and other illegal actors attempt to impose their rule.

Once the rule of law has been reestablished, a short-, medium- and long-term alternative development program should be initiated as soon as possible. In the short term, the government should generate minimum conditions of food security and access to health services, education, basic sanitation, energy and drinking water.

The eradication of illicit crops is possible only if the minimum conditions for the subsistence and food security of the families that produce, collect or process coca have been generated.

In the Bolivian experience, the State lost control and authority in the Tropic of Cochabamba (Chapare) region during the 1970s and 1980s. Areas devoted to illicit coca crops increased dramatically. Criminal groups linked to foreign cartels promoted the production and commercialization of cocaine base paste, which was sold daily even in public places within the view of, and with the tolerance of, local authorities.

In response to this situation, in 1988 the government promulgated the Law on the Regime Applicable to Coca and Controlled Substances (Law 1008). Once the law, considered a state policy, entered into force, the State began to recover control over the affected areas and to strengthen its fight against narcotics trafficking. The presence of the State in the region was strengthened through the establishment of police and military units that reinforced the presence of the National Police, the Public Ministry and the Judicial Branch, in order to guarantee the rule of law and the implementation of interdiction activities.
The Regional Alternative Development Program (PDAR) of Cochabamba, an independent agency within the Ministry of Agriculture, was created with the objective of planning and implementing a comprehensive rural development program in charge of implementing programs and projects for economic and social development; the management, preservation and conservation of natural resources; institutional strengthening; and support for governance, democracy, and legal and citizen security.

It is important to note that alternative development efforts were unified and coordinated in a single entity. The PDAR was responsible for coordinating all alternative development program and project units in the region, and reported directly to the Ministry of Agriculture. The PDAR coordinated alternative development with the eradication and interdiction actions of the Vice Ministry of Social Defense, under the auspices of the Ministry of Government and the General Command of the Army of Bolivia. Also, in order to involve local actors, the PDAR coordinated development actions with departmental and municipal governments in the coca-growing regions of the Tropic of Cochabamba and Yungas de La Paz, with private companies and producer organizations (coca-grower unions, producer associations, etc.).

The General Directorate of Agricultural Reconversion (DIRECO), an agency that reported to the Ministry of Agriculture, was created to implement the forced and compensated voluntary eradication programs. This Directorate was responsible for planning, implementing and coordinating voluntary and forced eradication processes executed by a Joint Task Force of police and soldiers.

In a concerted process, the PDAR and DIRECO established agreements for “Coca-Free Areas” as a step prior to forced eradication. The process consisted of four stages:

1. The initial stage involved individual voluntary eradication with monetary compensation;
2. The second stage involved individual voluntary eradication with in-kind compensation (seeds, supplies, small tools, etc.);
3. The third stage involved voluntary eradication with in-kind community compensation (the community received tools, minor civil works, educational and health equipment, micro electric power projects, road projects, etc.);
4. The final stage involved implementation of the forced eradication process.

In parallel with the eradication of coca crops, projects with an immediate short-term impact were implemented in coordination with the communities (related to food security and the generation of income and jobs). Later, comprehensive medium- and long-term alternative development programs and projects were implemented, related to commercial crops, infrastructure to support production and marketing, road infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.), social infrastructure (schools, training centers, hospitals, health centers, union offices, etc.), electric power and electrification. These projects were implemented on the basis of broad social participation with departmental and municipal governments, producer organizations, and private companies, etc. The participatory alternative development projects later formed part of the Annual Operating Plans (POA) of the municipal governments in the coca-growing regions.
These projects were intended to be comprehensive in that, on the one hand, they attempted to generate a process of sustainable rural development, promoting the social and economic development of coca-producing regions, while at the same time striving to limit their environmental impact, attempting, as much as possible, to reconcile development objectives with protection of the environment.

Taking into account the specific characteristics of coca- and drug-producing regions, special emphasis was placed in implementing projects to support justice and security (such as building multi-purpose justice centers), land cadaster and title clearing, and access to capital through the creation of rural credit systems. This latter would give rural producers capital resources to support their productive projects.

The consolidation of credit permitted the different financial entities (banks, cooperatives, non-profit organizations, etc.) to develop credit programs in the coca producing areas of the Cochabamba tropics and the Yungas of La Paz, promoting the creation and development of new productive undertakings and services (such as agricultural services, packing and processing services to export alternative development products, gastronomy, tourism, artisanry, etc.)

We believe that the Bolivian experience largely achieved the objectives of the Alternative Development Program as defined by the United Nations in 1998. We also believe that the successful progress made by Bolivia in the fight against drug trafficking is due to the implementation of a State Policy (Law 1008), which in practice was in force for approximately 30 years, transcending several government, including the current administration of Evo Morales Ayma.

**Intervention strategies**

No single strategy will resolve the challenges of a transition to a licit economy and a territorial transformation away from involvement in the international drug trade. The following strategies for intervention in coca-growing areas will likely provide no surprises for those familiar with these challenges, yet nevertheless in combination are the principal tools to support communities in concrete actions that can be pursued by the Colombian Government:

(a) political strategy (establishment of conditions of peace, security and legality in conflict zones);
(b) economic development strategy (comprehensive agricultural transformation, lands, marketing, commercialization, transportation, communications, energy, tourism, and employment);
(c) social development strategy (housing, basic sanitation, health, and education);
(d) natural resources strategy (management, preservation and conservation of natural resources);
and
(e) institutional development strategy (institutional strengthening, human resources training, legal and citizen security).

In practice, these approaches constitute a plan for the implementation of *comprehensive and sustainable alternative development* in the regions in which illicit coca crops exist.

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24 See above, p. 23.
We recommend that the following actions be prioritized for combating the supply of illicit crops by small growers:

- Identify territories in which the substitution and eradication of illicit coca leaf crops will be carried out.
- Reach agreements with the communities for the eradication of illicit crops in exchange for immediate action plans. These would include rapid infrastructure works and food security projects (basic food crops and other crops), as have already begun with the “small community infrastructure projects” supported by the Territorial Renewal Agency (ART in its Spanish acronym);25
- Begin processes of joint participatory planning of comprehensive municipal and community substitution and alternative development programs to lend synergy to national-level efforts with regional and municipal development agendas;
- Promote democratic values in order to favor the participation of the communities, and encourage social responsibility with a view to establishing a civic culture that rejects illicit crops;
- Initiate short- and medium-term alternative development projects according to the specific contexts of each region (“territorial focus”) and making priorities of those best integrated into productive value chains. Productive projects should be integrated into infrastructure projects that support production (for example, road infrastructure, energy, and communications) as well as social investment (schools, training centers, union offices, hospitals, health centers, justice houses, drinking water, sewer systems, wastewater treatment and garbage).
- Implement a program of cadaster, title clearing, and land titling, as a central element of a policy to contain and control illicit crops;
- Address gender considerations, making sure that women and men participate on an equal footing in the development process and, in particular, in planning and execution tasks;
- Promote environmental protection and management actions, taking into account that alternative development programs and projects are effective instruments for preventing the expansion or displacement of illicit crops to ecologically fragile areas;
- In order to ensure the sustainability of alternative development, monitor, supervise and evaluate the corresponding projects with participatory criteria based on dialogue and persuasion, with the inclusion of the entire community as well as relevant implementing units and non-governmental organizations. The local communities and public authorities

25 This effort is manifest in the initial work related to the Development Plans with a Territorial Approach (PDET for its acronym in Spanish), which are currently under the responsibility of the ART. The short-term “small community infrastructure” projects (PIC) are one aspect of the ART’s initial work in 2018 with communities.
should mutually define goals and objectives and commit themselves under community-based agreements to reduce illicit crops until they are completely eliminated.

- Promote regional and local institutions as a principal factor that will contribute to the success of eradication and comprehensive alternative development, since this will help to consolidate the institutional presence of the state in the regions

**Sequence of Efforts**

*Guiding question:* What should the sequence of efforts be for working with coca growers? – e.g., Begin with spraying and/or eradication first; or begin mainly with the presence of the state and institutionality; or other actions?

Experiences in other countries have demonstrated that it is very difficult to undertake a development process in a context dominated by factors such as an environment of insecurity and high crime, the presence of illegal armed bands and groups, institutional weakness, the absence of state services, and poverty and social marginality. It becomes even more difficult if an illicit economy prevails in these regions, as in the case of areas that produce coca, marijuana and heroin, etc.

The first action that the State should take is to adopt modern legislation for effectively and efficiently combating the complex problems that it seeks to attack (drug trafficking, violence, etc.).

The State should then develop strong institutions based on this regulatory framework, horizontally and vertically integrating the responsible and/or relevant public and private institutions and entities. Vertical integration occurs when international and national agencies (international cooperation organizations; executive, legislative and judicial authorities; civil society institutions such as universities; the media, etc.) establish strong communication, cooperation and coordination links with regional authorities (departmental and municipal governments or civil society organizations).

In the Colombian context, where there has been no central authority that coordinates alternative development and eradication efforts, improving the internal coordination among the international cooperation agencies would be beneficial, as they work to integrate most effectively development activities with eradication and interdiction. Notwithstanding, even more important would be the creation of a single governmental entity to articulate and coordinate actions at the highest level, by preference forming part of the institutional structure of executive authority, with broad powers of mobilization and decision making. This would function as the sector head in terms of the battle against drugs, and would link alternative development efforts and eradication with interdiction and drug abuse prevention.

The rule of law in the regions affected by drug trafficking, the guerilla and the presence of illegal groups is a *sine qua non* for the application of any state policy (peacebuilding, the fight against drugs, sustainable development, etc.). The comprehensive presence of the State to regulate (in accordance with the law) the actions and coexistence of social groups is vital for municipal, departmental and national development (Colombia Drug Observatory, 2016, page 107).
Experience has demonstrated that once this general framework has been created, and speaking specifically about the policies and strategies for the fight against drug trafficking, the application of policies aimed at reducing the supply and consumption of illicit drugs should be gradual and coordinated.

The pressure to achieve eradication goals, which leads to the extirpation of illicit crops without first having established conditions of security and socioeconomic development, generates high levels of violence and conflict in regions that produce illicit crops (Rico, 2017), and is not sustainable over time.

Prior to any process of eradication, a basic premise is the prior presence of the State in the territory (territorial control by the State), that is, the police and armed forces and judicial authorities must ensure the minimum conditions for the existence of the rule of law.

The economy in regions that produce illicit crops generally revolves around their production (monocultures of coca, marijuana, poppy, etc.) and transformation, with very little economic diversification. The accelerated eradication of illicit crops leaves many families in a state of social vulnerability (food insecurity, social marginality, etc.), which generates a spiral of growing violence. Associated with this phenomenon are the actions of illegal groups (criminal bands, illegal armed groups, etc.) that promote, encourage and finance mobilizations by some social groups that lend themselves (or allow themselves to be used) to hinder and in some cases halt the efforts of the government to achieve the proposed goals.

Under these conditions, it is necessary to generate minimum conditions of trust, social peace, food security, employment and lawful income in these regions prior to the eradication process.

**Voluntary eradication**

The process of forced eradication in regions where the actors are predominantly small peasant or indigenous growers should be preceded by a process of voluntary eradication (whether or not compensated) that generates productive and economic alternatives to provide them with food subsistence and income to support their families with dignity (Antezana, 1999).

If economic compensation is offered, it should be temporary, planned and supported by a registration and cadastral process that identifies the owners or possessors of the crops, their status as owner, inhabitant or tenant of the land and the production. Efficient mechanisms for monitoring and controlling compliance with the eradication and substitution agreements must be implemented. It is also important to consider different types or forms of compensation: a) individual monetary compensation; b) community monetary compensation; c) individual in-kind compensation (seeds, supplies, small tools, etc.); and d) community in-kind compensation (works of immediate impact, e.g., health centers, drinking water systems, electric power, etc.) These forms of compensation should be adjusted to the social and economic conditions of each municipality or region.

In order to generate conditions for the sustainability of the voluntary eradication process, it is necessary to simultaneously lay the foundations for comprehensive productive economic development based on the agroecological potential of the regions. This comprehensive alternative development can include the following components:
✓ Security, institutional development, governance, participation and democracy
✓ Economic development
✓ Social development
✓ The environment

In a framework of full participation by social actors, it is necessary to promote programs and projects aimed at improving and strengthening the presence of the State and a culture of social peace and respect for human rights based on dialogue and consensus. The organizational strengthening of regional and municipal public institutions, land title-clearing and titling programs, mass registration, education and training on citizens’ rights and duties, and the implementation of integrated justice houses or centers, are some examples of prioritized programs in this component.

The economic development component is aimed at constructing, consolidating and strengthening a lawful and diversified productive economy connected to local, regional and national markets. Some examples of programs to be implemented in the economic component in these regions include technological, agricultural and forestry research and innovation; the diversification and expansion of legal agricultural products; access to productive credit; the construction of infrastructure to support production (secondary and tertiary roads, collection centers, commercialization); market research and development; support for marketing, exportation, transformation and added value; the construction and strengthening of productive chains; and the management and consolidation of international trade agreements to benefit exports.

Social projects and programs are powerful tools for building trust and citizenship in the regions affected by illicit crops.

**The Role of Technical Assistance**

*Guiding Question:* What should be the role of technical assistance? Will small growers accept technical assistance and incorporate it in their production methods? What incentives could be offered in this regard?

Technical assistance plays an extremely important role in rural development processes, and should be understood not as the mere transmission of knowledge or technical advice, but rather as an educational process within the framework of the government’s rural agricultural development strategy. However, technical assistance must be adapted to the specific needs of the small producers to which it will be offered. In the past, critics have often challenged the presuppositions of traditional forms of TA for its linear character, its contempt for non-scientific knowledge, its lack of orientation towards the demands of growers and the requirements of markets, its paternalistic approach and its attention to individual growers (Engel, 1997).

Because a large part of alternative development efforts are directed at small producers in the agricultural sector, prior to the technical assistance process, it is important to make an agroecological classification of the regions that produce illicit crops, in order to identify their productive vocation (agricultural, agroforestry, agrosilvopastoral, etc.), and their limitations and potential.
Based on that diagnosis, technological proposals should be developed through research to identify and select crops that have comparative advantages (native and improved crops). The idea is to develop legal productive initiatives with a final market focus.

The construction and consolidation of productive chains that include and coordinate research, technology transfers, production, transformation and commercialization in order to consolidate productive complexes, will ultimately tip the balance in favor of legal productive initiatives, with help from interdiction and eradication.

When sustained research and technical assistance are implemented jointly with peasant farmers, they are usually receptive and incorporate the recommendations of the technological packages in their productive systems. It comes down to demonstrating to small rural farmers that this type of agriculture is also profitable (a business that will enable them to prosper in a lawful manner).

Demonstration plots with improved and introduced crops, field days, participation in fairs, the distribution of quality germplasm, permanent and sustained technical assistance, training in transformation and marketing, organizational strengthening and even the financing of transformation industries, as well as the implementation of infrastructure to support production (secondary and tertiary roads, cable cars, cold chains, packing centers, etc.), are some examples of incentives provided to growers in Bolivia.

The Role of International Cooperation

Guiding Question: What role should international cooperation play in supporting the Colombian Government in its efforts to reduce the role of illicit crops in the rural economy?


International cooperation for combating the world drug problem is based on the principle of shared responsibility, which consists of a mutual commitment to pursue common objectives and the determination to undertake complementary policies and joint actions. These treaties are the best instruments available for confronting the world drug problem, and for protecting humanity from the consumption of drugs and the consequences of drug trafficking and the illicit cultivation of crops for the production of drugs.

The treaties are based on the fact that drugs can circulate through borders and between continents, and can move from producers to traffickers, from one society to another, and from trafficking to consumption. In signing the treaties, the governments agreed that the global problem demands a global solution, and they undertook to comply with their individual obligations under the treaties.

Drug trafficking has represented a threat to States for more than forty years, since it brings with it problems of a political, economic and social nature. For this reason, the States have, through the United Nations, demonstrated their willingness to cooperate in efforts to combat this problem, which affects all of humanity. Also, Latin America is currently classified as one of the highest-producing drug regions in the world, which is why its rates of insecurity, violence and corruption have increased, stagnating development.

The Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted in a United Nations session in Vienna in 2009, recognized that the world drug problem continued to be a joint and shared responsibility, which requires effective and growing international cooperation and a comprehensive, multidisciplinary and balanced approach in order to mutually reinforce the strategies for reducing drug supply and demand. The point related to international cooperation for eradicating illicit crops recognizes the important advances over the last 10 years in strengthening international cooperation to address the issue of illicit crops. It states that in order for the programs to be effective and sustainable, it is essential to reinforce cooperation between the States and the international community under the principle of shared responsibility, and to take a balanced approach in the framework of sustainable development (United Nations 2009).

Several measures are recommended, including, when appropriate, preventive alternative development. These measures include:

- Strengthening international assistance for the eradication of illicit crops and the production of drugs, through integrated and sustainable alternative development;
- Establishing sustainable alternative development programs, when possible, particularly in drug-producing regions, including those that have high rates of poverty, since they are more exposed to exploitation by traffickers, and are more prone to being affected by illicit crops, drug production and trafficking; and
- Studying the possibility of incorporating integrated and sustainable alternative development programs in their national development strategies, recognizing that poverty and vulnerability are among the factors that can induce illicit cultivation for the production of drugs, and that the eradication of poverty is one of the main Sustainable Development Goals.

In this regard, the United Nations states that: “The world drug problem continues to be a common and shared responsibility which must be addressed in a multilateral environment through more intense and effective international cooperation, and which requires strategies for reducing supply and demand based on a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, balanced and exhaustive approach, with measures that are mutually reinforced.”

The OAS Assembly of 2014 recognized that the world drug problem continues to be a common and shared responsibility which must be addressed in a multilateral environment through more intense and effective international cooperation, and which requires an integrated, multidisciplinary,

balanced and broad approach that is based on scientific data, with measures that are mutually reinforced. It also agreed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, observing that the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals are related to the world drug problem, and are complementary and mutually reinforced. It also reaffirmed the need to mobilize adequate resources to address and counter the world drug problem, and to provide more assistance to developing countries that request it in order to effectively apply the United Nations Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

The international cooperation support provided by the United States to solve the drug problem in Colombia is invaluable, and falls within the framework of the postulates of the common and shared responsibility of nations.

International cooperators could limit their support to budget support for national-level entities for the anti-drug effort. However, experience has shown that frequent changes that may take place in the focus, policies and strategies in the anti-drug fight as a result of changes in administrations, along with problems linked to bureaucratic inertia, the centralization of decision making, corruption, and the geographic isolation of the drug-producing regions (among other causes) have greatly limited the achievement of the objectives, goals, and commitments undertaken in the fight against drugs.

In this scenario, international cooperators should take on a more flexible role, reflecting the local situations and the ongoing national and international contexts in which actors and funders of the plans, programs and projects supporting the fight against drugs find themselves.

If weaknesses, gaps or leadership and coordination problems are identified in the implementation of anti-drug policies, the following actions are recommended:

- Improve coordination within the various anti-drug agencies in the country fighting illicit activities;
- Prioritize intervention areas based on social, economic (budgetary), geographical, political, and security criteria, trying to focus interventions in the regions most affected by crime;
- Design integrated interventions (social, economic, environmental, democracy, governance, etc.) within the international cooperation agencies themselves;
- Maximize efforts to coordinate, synergize and articulate government agendas with those of the international cooperation entities;
- Look for synergies with other aid agencies (FAO, UNODC, etc.), in order to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in the interventions;
- Improve the coordination and involvement of the departmental and municipal governments in the programs and projects of alternative development and substitution of illicit crops;
- Fund organizational and institutional strengthening projects aimed at national, departmental and municipal entities, linked to the control and fight against drugs;
- Make available and share information to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the national bodies responsible for the fight against drugs and illicit drugs.

Social Peace in a Context of Illicit-Crop Eradication and Substitution

Guiding question: Given its long history of social conflict, especially by armed groups, how should Colombia confront the risks of social conflict and promote social peace in a context of illicit-crop eradication and/or substitution?

There are valuable experiences in Colombia that need to be replicated, such as the case of the Integrated Consolidation Plan for Macarena (PCIM) funded by USAID (Case Study: La Macarena Region 2000-2015).

Alternative development processes and the substitution and eradication of illicit crops require security in the regions, and so the following principles should be supported:

- The permanent institutional presence of the State is necessary to achieve peace and security in regions with social conflicts.

- Along with the opening of democracy, citizen participation is essential for peacebuilding. It is necessary to provide guarantees to social organizations, encourage different forms of citizen association, promote citizen control and supervision, and strengthen participatory planning. Agreements should be reached with local and regional organizations (Final Agreement, Point 2).

- Point 4 of the Peace Agreement between the GOC and the FARC recognizes that many regions and communities in the country, especially those in a state of poverty and abandonment, have been directly affected by the cultivation, production and commercialization of illicit drugs, exacerbating their marginality, inequality, gender violence and lack of development. Therefore, the strategy for eradication and substitution of illicit crops should be accompanied by the provision of public goods, financing for productive projects, job creation projects and, in general, a strategy for sustainable alternative development.

- Illegal groups are currently trying to sabotage the implementation of the Final Agreement in several regions, forcing families to continue cultivating coca. Also, the national press has reported the existence of confrontations between violent groups that are trying to control the territories and crops that used to be under FARC control. This has created a climate of insecurity and social conflict in the regions, and so the police and armed forces, which are responsible for interdiction, need to energetically take control and dismantle the bands of drug traffickers and criminals. Some experts have said that: “Seizures and destruction of infrastructure are more efficient than eradication in reducing the supply of cocaine” (CEDE. Document No. 42. June 2017).

- In the Bolivian case, the problems related to drug trafficking began during the 1970s and 1980s with the uncontrolled increase in coca crops, due, among other factors, to the increase in the international demand for cocaine and an acute economic crisis, which caused high levels of unemployment and social marginality. This led, especially in the country’s poor municipalities, to a mass exodus to the main population centers of Bolivia, but above all to the main coca-producing areas of the Tropic of Cochabamba (Chapare)
and Yungas de La Paz. The situation of poverty and the lack of opportunities for the inhabitants to improve their standard of living were the main incentives for engaging in the illegal production of coca leaf and drugs.

- In 1988, Bolivia approved and implemented *Plan Dignidad* [the Dignity Plan], with the firm determination to get out of the drug trafficking circuit within five years (PLAN DIGNIDAD. 1998). It established four programs: Alternative Development, Eradication, Interdiction and Prevention.

- The specific manner in which Bolivia confronted the problem of illicit drug cultivation was supported by several strategic principles, such as working in concert with the peasant community, the link to alternative development, and the conditions for the type of eradication, which were expressly included in the law in 1988 and continue to be fully valid.

- **Policies of consensus and coordination** were applied with different social actors in the producing areas, especially with the peasants, but also taking into account entrepreneurs and investors, union associations, the municipalities, implementing units of international developments agencies, and NGOs, among others.

- All of these actors were shown that, with alternative development, it is possible to make the regions of illicit crop production into areas that are economically more robust through long-term, non-situational development, showing clearly that what is needed is a comprehensive and sustainable alternative development with the full participation of regional and municipal governments.

**The Role of Coca Growers in Interdiction**

*Guiding question:* How can small growers be involved in the interdiction process?

Interdiction in rural areas involves preventing the manufacture of drugs, blocking the networks and flow of the supply of chemical precursors and destroying the organizations that manufacture, collect, recover, refine and sell cocaine and launder money.

Effective interdiction of drug trafficking leads to increased cocaine production costs and the substitution of precursors, resulting in a lower quality product and a weakening of demand. Interdiction also results in reduced coca leaf prices and diminished coca economy profitability, thereby discouraging the planting of new crops and hindering drug trafficking, the movement of precursors and money laundering, while supporting alternative development efforts. Interdiction plays a decisive role in other sectors, to the extent their successes will only be partial without effective interdiction. Interdiction of drug trafficking is the responsibility of special institutions of the National Police and other State-delegated authorities.

In the Bolivian case, efforts were made to involve coca growers and municipalities in the interdiction of drug trafficking. The response was that interdiction was a function of other authorities and personnel, and not of the municipalities or the growers.
However, so-called “social control,” as the term came to be used in Bolivia, was applied by coca leaf growers in the legal production areas beginning in 2006, based on self-control of coca-crop production through regulations adopted by their social organizations. This has contributed to the consolidation of a policy for reducing surplus coca crops.

The promulgation of two new laws in 2017, Law 906, the “General Coca Law.” and Law 913, the “Law on the Fight against Illicit Trafficking of Controlled Substances,” introduced Community Social Control for regulating the legal production of coca and the reporting of coca-related crimes.

Article 7 of the General Coca Law recognizes and promotes Community Social Control over the production of coca without replacing State control and oversight. (General Coca Law, Law No. 906 of March 8, 2017). Article 8 b) of Law 913 on the Fight against Illicit Trafficking of Controlled Substances establishes Social Control as the participation of the population in comprehensive prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration, and in the reporting of evidence of criminal acts.

Also, Article 9 (Economic Compensation for the Risk of the Informant) provides for the payment of compensation to persons who provide useful, timely, reliable and productive information to the Public Ministry or members of the General Directorate of the Special Force in the Fight against Drug Trafficking about the preparation or commission of a crime involving controlled substances, or participation in the same. The procedure and amount will be regulated.

If the Colombian case were to follow the same pattern as took place in Bolivia, small peasant growers who cultivate coca in order to earn subsistence income for their families will probably give gradual support to drug trafficking interdiction processes when they have other sources of income from alternative development programs and projects.

Also, as has occurred in other countries, legal regulations could be established for reporting information about criminal activities related to drug trafficking in rural areas. Obviously, it will be necessary to provide security and absolute confidentiality to protect informants and their families.

**Breaking the Primary Link of Drug Trafficking**

*Guiding question:* In Colombia, where there is no traditional consumption of coca leaf, small growers have become the first link in a chain that reaches the large international drug trafficking cartels. How can this reality of criminality of the peasant family economy be unraveled (broken)?

Unfortunately, there is no short-term solution to this problem. The only way to break this reality of criminality is to promote migration away from the illicit economy, which is based on the production, processing and commercialization of illicit crops, to an alternative legal economy, which is ultimately the objective pursued by alternative development.

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29 [http://idpc.net/es/alerts/2014/07/al-son-de-otro-ritmo-el-control-comunitario-de-la-coca-en-bolivia](http://idpc.net/es/alerts/2014/07/al-son-de-otro-ritmo-el-control-comunitario-de-la-coca-en-bolivia)

30 Plurinational State of Bolivia. General Coca Law. Law N° 906 of March 8, 2017. La Paz, Bolivia
This complex process will require sustained efforts over several decades, and will involve bringing successful rural development programs and projects to coca-producing regions in order to gradually change their levels of poverty and marginality. This process will require significant investments, which should be managed under criteria of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency, in a framework that ensures the broad participation of actors at a national, departmental and local level (municipalities and villages).

**Building Trust**

**Guiding question:** How can the need for a period of trust-building with the communities before eradication be balanced with the urgency of securing quick positive outcomes? (e.g.: Plan Antioquia)?

**In the Bolivian case,** the State’s intervention in the control and eradication of illicit crops in the regions of the Tropic of Cochabamba (Chapare) and Yungas de La Paz was not an easy task. As has been described, both regions had received significant migrations of peasants from the Andean region of Bolivia due to the country’s public mining crisis and the drought that caused the loss of crops in their areas of origin.

The peasants dedicated themselves to the planting of coca crops at an accelerated pace, producing an exponential increase in the area cultivated from 2,000 to 52,900 hectares in a span of 10 years, resulting in the appearance of populations (e.g., the Shinahota in the Tropic of de Cochabamba) with high levels of crime and violence, accelerated deterioration of ecosystems, and an increase in the production and commercialization of cocaine base paste in domestic and international markets. In 1988, drug trafficking represented 9% of GDP and 80% of the value of Bolivian exports.

A climate of permanent conflict and insecurity prevailed in the Chapare region of Cochabamba due to the presence of criminal groups that incited coca growers to confront the police and armed forces who were trying to contain the criminal activities.

To make progress in achieving the eradication and interdiction goals, the State designed participatory intervention strategies, agreeing and coordinating with all social actors (peasants, business people, municipal governments, NGOs, etc.) on the implementation of social development projects (health, education, basic sanitation, drinking water, etc.), in order to generate empathy and build trust with the local population.

The municipal governments gradually became involved in the planning, co-financing and implementation of the social projects. This task required several years of work. The productive, environmental and institutional strengthening projects were implemented after the social projects, because their results are observed in the medium and long term.

Today, the municipalities in the coca-growing regions are involved in illicit-crop prevention and control processes, and the alternative development plans, programs and projects have been converted into socioeconomic development plans that are part of the municipal governments’ Operating Plans.
In the Colombian case, the Governor’s office in Antioquia, concerned by the increase in illicit crops in its region, formulated its 2014-2016 the Departmental Plan for Reducing Drug Supply and Demand. Per the SIMCI report (2017), illicit coca crops increased from 991 hectares in 2013 to 8,855 hectares in 2016. The dynamics are worrying, because crop area has increased almost nine times in a period of five years.

The Plan points out that the changing and dynamic problem at a global level is exacerbated by the characteristics of the territories affected in one way or another by drugs, and that while the State has acted, the conditions in the territories have not evolved at the expected pace and threats and vulnerabilities persist with negative effects on many dimensions of community life. This suggests the need to understand, measure and monitor this complex problem from the regions, so that the policies and strategies can be focused on a local reading of the regions’ own vulnerabilities and characteristics.

The Departmental Drug Plan of Antioquia is developed based on a regionalization, an extension to the local level, of the Drug Policy. This is an initiative designed to strengthen the implementation of a public policy that responds to the needs of each territory in order to reduce the supply, production, trafficking, distribution and consumption of drugs, and to harmonize or integrate the component for reducing the consumption of psychoactive substances in order to establish a comprehensive dialogue on the subject.

In relation to the supply of drugs, one of the Plan’s general objectives is the performance of actions to disrupt, prosecute and seize the assets of those involved in criminal activities. The focus has been on the territories facing the greatest threat from the presence of organized and common crime, supporting the strengthening and functional qualifications of the competent authorities by means of academic, scientific and logistical components, which are intended to streamline the investigative processes for imposing sanctions on those responsible.

Without doubt, the Government of Antioquia has taken the right step in assuming the commitment to control drug supply and demand in its region. However, it is necessary to mention that the trust-building processes are not immediate, and so it is very difficult to harmonize the short-term goals (eradication) with the medium- and long-term processes for generating trust and development.

The visit to Tumaco and the many interviews with local actors there have made it possible to demonstrate the importance of comprehensive interventions, prioritizing above all those related to social investment (health, education, basic sanitation, road infrastructure, energy, etc.), given their importance in the construction of processes of trust and social harmony.

Several of the producers of licit crops interviewed stressed the importance of social and productive investment in the construction of bonds of trust and processes of pacification.

Peace in Tumaco goes through social and productive investment. With integral development if you can convince people to leave coca.

- Coconut producer

Although in Tumaco there is good potential for the development and consolidation of alternative products and activities, such as coconut, cocoa, palm oil, fishing, etc., producers have identified the existence of obstacles and bottlenecks that have prevented or slowed the expansion of these
efforts. Among the most important obstacles we can point out:

- High levels of violence and insecurity;
- A lack of a development strategy that coordinates and articulates the national, departmental and local development plans;
- Imbalance in development interventions (imbalance or lack of proportionality between security interventions and those actions focusing on social, economic, environmental, and democratic ends that are implemented);
- Interventions with short-term vision. The production on the farm must be complemented with marketing and value-added processes.
- Limitations on communication routes (mainly secondary and tertiary roads); and
- Weakness in inclusion and social participation processes (a perception exists that local actors are not sufficiently involved in planning and supporting programs and projects).

According to interviews carried out in Tumaco, these problems are repeated and widespread in most of the regions affected by illicit crops, and the situation encountered leads to the following recommendations:

a) the need to strengthen the presence of the state in the territories;

b) carrying out development interventions with an integrated approach and a vision of short, medium and long-term outcomes;

c) prioritizing the development and consolidation of a road network (secondary and tertiary roads) to facilitate the provision of social services to rural communities and to link production centers with markets;

d) coordinating national interventions with departmental and local interventions; and

e) prioritizing social projects to build social trust, to work to fully include departmental, municipal and local actors in the planning, execution and monitoring of programs and projects.

The eradication of illicit crops should be preceded by social development and food security projects, which will have an immediate impact, and later by medium- and long-term rural development projects aimed at the social and economic transformation of the territories.

**Alternative Development Crops**

**Guiding Question:** With respect to the introduction of new crops, what worked and what didn’t? How were the alternative crops selected - for example, what market studies were conducted? What infrastructure was put in place in terms of marketing, transportation, and sales? Who supported the new initiatives, the government, technical cooperation organizations, the private sector, and other sectors?
The Bolivian case: Some indicators of progress

The Alternative Development Program in the Tropic of Cochabamba implemented crops that were introduced, improved and validated by the Bolivian Institute of Agricultural Technology (IBTA).

- The area cultivated with legal crops increased from 4,000 hectares in 1976 to approximately 143,887 hectares in 2005. A production of approximately 282,000 metric tons of lawful crops, valued at USD 46 million annually, left the Tropic of Cochabamba region in 2005.\(^{31}\)

- Exports of bananas, hearts of palm and pineapple increased from USD 4.8 million in 2000 to more than USD 18 million in 2004.

- Private investment increased from USD 33 million in 2000 to around USD 95 million in 2004.

- Approximately 2,300 men and 2,200 women were trained in agricultural techniques and non-agricultural trades, creating an important business culture in the region, and establishing around 24 micro-enterprises in the Tropic of Cochabamba.

- According the data from the CONCADE Project, the agricultural GDP of the Tropic of Cochabamba reached USD 90 million, representing 60% of the Cochabamba Department’s agricultural GDP and approximately 8% of the national agricultural GDP.

- Bananas and hearts of palm were the main alternative export products, with Argentina, Chile and European Union countries being the main destination markets.

- Sixty-four forest management plans have been implemented, covering 173,882 hectares and benefiting 1,635 families in the Tropic of Cochabamba region.

- In the indicated period, alternative development products from the Andean countries received special tariff treatment for accessing the United States market, under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA).

These products also benefited from preferential access to the European Union pursuant to the Andean Generalized Preference System (Andean GPS).

During the period 1986 - 2003, the Alternative Development Program installed more than 1800 km of secondary and tertiary road infrastructure in the Tropic of Cochabamba, which now has the rural road network with the highest density per inhabitant in the country. Also, approximately 100 bridges have been built in the last 17 years.

An airport was recently completed and placed in operation in this region, as was a 550 km electric power distribution network. And production-support projects were carried out to create packing centers, cable car systems, complexes for the production of urea fertilizer using natural gas, agro-industrial works and other projects that connect this region with local and export markets.

Two Road Maintenance Association (AMVIS) have been created, in Villa Tunari and Ivirgazama, for the maintenance of neighborhood roads.
Table 3. Main productive infrastructure projects carried out by the Alternative Development Program, 1986 – 2003  
*Source: VIMDESALT, 2004*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Works</th>
<th>Tropic of Cochabamba</th>
<th>Yungas de La Paz</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural roads</td>
<td>1,800 km</td>
<td>315 km</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paved rural roads</td>
<td>400 km</td>
<td>31 km</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridges built</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trunk roads built</td>
<td>20 km</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aerial infrastructure</td>
<td>1 Airport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electric Power Network</td>
<td>550 km in the Tropic of Cochabamba</td>
<td>60 localities interconnected</td>
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<td>Packing Centers</td>
<td>33 packing centers (banana and pineapple)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agro-industrial projects</td>
<td>33 agro-industries supported</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee processing plants</td>
<td></td>
<td>28 plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cable cars</td>
<td>200 km</td>
<td>12 km</td>
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PART III. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: THE CHALLENGE OF COCA

This study began with a broad overview of the history the growth of the coca economy in Colombia and of previous efforts to counteract it through programs of eradication and alternative development. This was followed by a consideration of targeted questions that were designed to draw upon the Bolivian experience to suggest lessons learned and policy alternatives that might be relevant in the Colombian context. In this final section, the team draws upon these conclusions, as well as the in-depth document review and expert interviews conducted in the course of the study, to offer the following findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Findings: Challenges to Eradication

This significant increase in coca crops can be attributed to the following reasons:

- Extreme poverty and social marginality in the villages and municipalities affected by illicit crops;
- The unbalanced application of the strategy for reducing illicit crops (eradication requires the coordinated and sequential support of alternative development programs, interdiction and prevention of domestic consumption);
- The weak presence of the State in the territories: the slowness of the State’s occupation of the areas affected by illicit crops after the demobilization of the FARC has enabled the appearance of other armed groups that are fighting for control of the territory;
- Weak coordination and communication among the institutions responsible for implementing the different components of the fight against drugs;
- The cessation of the aerial spraying program;
- The lack of a cadaster and registration system for growers of crops and coca leaf;
- The absence of titles to land affected by illicit crops.

Recommendations

There has been a significant increase in the area of illicit crops since 2013, and its control, reduction and stabilization pose significant challenges that should be considered and addressed by national and international authorities, institutions and organizations involved in the fight against drugs. The following recommendations regarding the eradication of illicit drugs arise from the analysis performed:

- Success in the eradication of illicit crops requires addressing, and structurally overcoming, the conditions of poverty and marginality prevailing in the villages and municipalities affected by illicit crop plantations. Of the multiple tools available for this task (eradication, alternative development, prevention of consumption, etc.), the most important is alternative development, given that, when well planned, managed and implemented, this process can transform and modify the conditions of poverty and social marginality that
prevail in the territories, and without which eradication and interdiction actions are not lasting and sustainable. Alternative development should be the main axis of any strategy for combating illicit crops (Antezana, 1999; Junguito, Perfetti & Delgado, 2017). The main element to address within alternative development programs is the provision of services through the implementation of projects related to road infrastructure (primary, secondary and tertiary roads), river infrastructure (ports, wharfs, etc.), electric power, drinking water and basic sanitation, as well as investments in health and education.

• The anti-drug strategy should be implemented in the long term in a coordinated, balanced and sequential manner. Eradication processes should be preceded by short-term alternative development programs aimed at generating subsistence and food alternatives for the affected populations (food security crops, projects that will have an immediate impact on the generation of jobs and income), as medium- and long-term alternative development projects (social, economic, environmental, governance, etc.) for transforming the territories are implemented. Interdiction and prevention actions applied in a differential manner based on the local context should accompany the alternative development and eradication strategies. These have the purpose of guaranteeing the rule of law and strengthening conditions of sustainable legal development.

• The use of monetary incentives and/or economic compensation for the eradication and/or substitution of illicit crops is not recommended because of the perverse effects that they generate (they incentivize the planting of illicit crops, divert monetary resources to illicit purposes, encourage the planting of new crops in other regions, etc.), except in the initial phase of a voluntary eradication process and with the sole purpose of generating acceptance, consensus and social peace. This financial incentive should be temporary and short-term, and it requires a previous plan for a registry and cadaster of growers and illicit crops, as well as the signing of agreements for the elimination, substitution and non-replanting of illicit crops that are verifiable over time and space.

• Horizontal and vertical coordination among all institutional, governmental and non-governmental actors responsible for carrying out the fight against drugs is an imperative and necessary condition for successful work (Gaviria & Mejía, 2011). Horizontal coordination is manifested mainly in the full coordination of all government institutions responsible for rural and territorial development (including alternative development), the eradication of illicit crops, the interdiction of drug trafficking activities, the prevention of consumption, financial support, international cooperation, etc. Vertical coordination is necessary between agencies of the national government (ministries), departmental government (governor’s offices) and local government (mayor’s offices, community councils, indigenous governments, etc.) in order to create synergies and align plans, programs and common projects.

• An efficient forced manual eradication program should be designed to replace aerial spraying. Experiences in Bolivia and Peru have demonstrated the effectiveness of well-planned manual eradication methods that are properly assisted by satellite monitoring systems, with land verification, and a registry and cadaster of growers and areas with illicit crops.
Findings: Challenges to Substitution and Alternative Development

Political-administrative aspects

- When a GoC administration issues the National Development Plan, it promulgates new provisions related to eradication, interdiction, prevention and alternative development policies (the CONPES and other provisions). Also, it typically establishes new agencies that in some cases overlap in functions (Office of the Comptroller General, Report on Plan Colombia – Creation of the PLANTE and FIP).

- The limited institutional coordination, among agencies responsible for eradication (voluntary reduction, mandatory eradication, and aerial fumigation) and those responsible for alternative development, reveals institutional weaknesses and communication disconnect between national entities, which assume parallel or differentiated commitments in alternative development projects. Added to this is the absence of consensus and monitoring between national authorities and those at the regional and local level.

- The absence of strong central government authorities in the conflict areas has generated tension between the central government and the regions that have for many years been on the sidelines of the growing economic and social integration in other regions, causing the loss of a sense of trust in the State’s ability to improve conditions.

- Deficiencies in participatory planning with communities that seek to be involved in the formulation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of alternative development plans, programs and projects weakens the efforts.

- The Government’s commitments to peasant communities often go unfulfilled.

- Representative institutions of the national government are absent from conflict regions, resulting in the lack of government interlocutors between peasant communities and international cooperation implementing units, sometimes requiring them to assume responsibilities of communication and facilitation outside their mandate.

- Weak relations with local administrations create challenges for including alternative development plans in local and regional development plans.

- Field evaluations of productive experiences generally show barely acceptable rates of sustainability. There are problems related to infrastructure (production support, and secondary and tertiary roads), communications, access to credit, and the marketing of products.

- Some alternative development programs have focused their attention outside areas where illicit crops exist. Plan Colombia sometimes focused the execution of alternative development projects on regions with little presence of illicit crops (Office of the Comptroller General, Plan Colombia Evaluation Report I, August 2001).
Security aspects

- Areas with illicit crops lack security. Illegal armed groups (paramilitaries, criminal bands, armed groups of drug traffickers) related to drug trafficking activity intimidate the population and undermine the implementation of development actions;

- Alternative development plans, programs and projects are paralyzed by attacks, confrontations and blockades against the police and armed forces;

- Families have been displaced and have lost relatives and their lands;

- Citizens are prevented from accessing justice services due to their limited existence.

Territorial issues

- Consequently, the daily lives of peasant, Afro-descendant and indigenous communities in various rural conflict areas are marked by economic, social, cultural and political conflict and violence in the midst of illegal armed groups with specific economic interests and which do not hesitate to use their weapons to impose their will for their private benefit, supported by their occupation and control of territories;

- The geography of the conflict has also caused vulnerable groups that inhabit the affected areas, especially Afro-Colombians, indigenous people and the most remote rural populations, to suffer disproportionately. For example, Afro-Colombians and indigenous people, who constitute between 20% and 25% of the total population of the country, make up 28% of the displaced population;

- The land on which coca is cultivated is in many cases not owned by the peasants. Land ownership is highly unequal, given that 1.2% of the population controls 52% of the land;

- In some indigenous territories, lands have been taken by armed groups to cultivate coca;

- The presence of the State is lacking in most of the villages with illicit crops;

- Most tenant farmers occupy baldios [vacant state-owned land]. They do not own land. The precarious condition of land tenure rights has become a barrier to small growers’ access to financing sources or State support;

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32 The 2005 national census indicated that approximately 16% of the national population was indigenous or Afro-Colombian (see https://www.dane.gov.co/files/censo2005/gene_15_03_07.pdf), but other sources assert that the percentage is substantially higher.

33 Victims’ Registry (RUV), Unit for Comprehensive Attention and Reparations for Victims, National Information Network, https://rni.unidadvictimas.gov.co/RNI

• Because the peasants do not own land, they do not make investments and are not involved in market dynamics;

• As a result of the process of eradication and planting of new crops, the agricultural frontier has expanded toward *baldíos* and protected areas, such as national natural parks;

• No significant impacts have been achieved in terms of transportation infrastructure and, therefore, there has been little improvement in physical connectivity between municipalities in the regions;

• Because of delays in the development of the road network, particularly tertiary roads, municipalities in the regions continue to be isolated from markets, and transportation costs remain a barrier to productive development;

**Issues related to the presence of the State**

• Problems of governance persist in regional and municipal governments in regions with illicit crops.

• The provision of public goods and services, such as aqueducts and electricity, is limited or non-existent in many areas. While almost universal health insurance coverage has been achieved, its quality and accessibility are often restricted. The figures indicate setbacks in primary education, and there are significant gaps in secondary education that need to be closed;

• The level of citizen participation in solving local problems is limited and in some cases restricted.

**Productive aspects**

• Specific knowledge about the best and most appropriate use of land in most conflict areas is unknown;

• The introduction of new crops and best agricultural practices has been hampered due to the lack of the corresponding technical, economic and environmental feasibility studies.

• In many of the regions that produce illicit crops, the infrastructure to support agricultural production is limited or nonexistent (roads, energy, communications, etc.).

• Problems linked to rural land ownership in the zones where illicit crops are produced limit the development of initiatives related to licit crops.

• Few categories of licit agricultural crops have access to a consolidated productive value chain.


**Recommendations**

The following recommendations reflect both the preceding discussion of findings as well as earlier points addressing the orienting questions. A schematic diagram that summarizes many of the following recommendations, providing both a comprehensive list of potential activities and their relative priority, can be found in Annex 4, “A comprehensive programmatic structure for alternative development.”

**Political-administrative aspects**

- The anti-drug trafficking policy should be continued as an ongoing **State Policy**, not as a policy that is modified with each change of government;\(^{35}\)

- It is essential to have a consistent and cross-governmental legal and institutional framework for effectively fighting against drug-trafficking;

- The establishment of a **single authority for coordinating** the fight against drug trafficking is essential:
  - Among government entities;
  - Among donors;
  - Between the government and donors; and
  - Among agencies of the same donor.

  The fight against drug trafficking should be pursued with a comprehensive vision (that is, control of supply and demand). There can be no anti-drug fight without the net eradication of coca crops;

- There should be an adequate institutional framework for regulating, planning and coordinating the fight against drug trafficking;

- Anti-drug policies work better when national and local actors can reach a consensus (social participation);

- The implementation of the Alternative Development Program should be comprehensive and sustainable (VIMDESALT, 2004), and should be developed in a participatory manner (Figure 9), with a comprehensive rural development vision (not only agricultural), and phased short-, medium-, and long-term implementation horizons (productive chains):
  - **Short term**: food security, generation of income and lawful jobs;

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\(^{35}\) A state policy would be reflected in an internally coherent framework of institutional and legal structures that would support a consistent change process over time, minimally subject to alteration with changes of governments. This would avoid the continual restructuring of special agencies and initiatives in which changing policies have little time to effect fundamental transformations at the territorial level.
✓ Medium term: generation of surpluses from the increase in licit agricultural production; and
✓ Long term: exportation.

Infrastructure should be developed to support production, transformation and commercialization, as well as a primary, secondary and tertiary road network to connect regions.

**Figure 9. Comprehensive alternative development model**

*Source: VIMDESALT, 2004*

![Comprehensive Alternative Development Model](image)

*With comprehensive development people can be convinced to give up coca. (Interview with a peasant farmer)*

**Security issues**

- Alternative development is impossible without security. As it does in non-conflict areas, the State should occupy the entire territory of the country on a permanent basis. The central government should do everything possible, within a framework of protecting human rights, to ensure social peace. This implies that, for conflict areas, police and armed forces must be in control of security and must ensure the population freedom of movement, freedom from intimidation, physical integrity, and basic recourse to justice institutions.

- The State should also support the strengthening of instruments and mechanisms to enable the National Center of Historical Memory to carry out memory and reconciliation exercises, particularly in rural areas of the region that are difficult to access;

- The justice system needs to develop capacities to manage the land restitution proceedings in the regions, as well as the agrarian processes for the clarification of ownership which will very likely arise in the post-conflict context;

- In accordance with USAID’s “2014-2018 Cooperation Strategy: A Road to Peace” and the postulates of the Final Agreement related to peace in Colombia, it is fundamental for USAID to support the strengthening of justice mechanisms in the regions in conflict, promote communication campaigns to make use of the institutions that address daily conflicts, and
overcome citizens’ poor perception of the effectiveness and timeliness of the formal justice system. In particular, support is required for the development of infrastructure and connectivity to enable the truth commissions and other transitional justice mechanisms to function.

**Territorial issues**

- The State should occupy the territory and maintain a permanent presence throughout the nation, with greater strength in the rural areas where illicit crops are cultivated. The State’s control of the territory constitutes a basic premise for the implementation of rural development processes;

- The presence of central government institutions in the regions (Judicial Branch, Attorney General’s Office, National Ombudsman’s Office, and the police and armed forces (Armed Forces – National Police) should be strengthened;

- Rural property titles should be issued and a cadaster process implemented in 100% of the conflict zones, a prerequisite for effective voluntary crop substitution programs;

- The emergence of previously latent conflicts related to land tenure and use is very possible. The government and the judicial branch should be prepared to resolve the high levels of informal land tenure, complete the titling and clarification processes, and expand the limits of Community Councils and Indigenous Reservations, as well as to prevent and manage land tenure conflicts between tenant farmers and social movements. The government’s prevention and management of these conflicts should be accompanied by dialogue with regional actors for the construction of an inclusive local and regional development policy;

- As the situations of land informality and illegality are resolved, resources generated can and should be directed to improve the fiscal sustainability of the municipalities, as well as investment in social and productive infrastructure;

- From an institutional point of view, it is a priority for the central government to understand the importance of strengthening its local network in these territories. Without doubt, there should be public records offices, and offices of the new National Land Agency and the Land Restitution Unit. Support from cooperation agencies, especially USAID, has been very valuable. However, collaboration in the strengthening of these agencies in the territory would make it more sustainable;

- The government should ensure support for the preparation of Land Use Plans (PLUS), Territorial Zoning Plans (POT), and Environmental Management Plans, and create or strengthen the agencies that will implement them;

- The expansion of the agricultural frontier based on the effort to continue to expand coca production should be halted and the formalization of land ownership rights promoted. Conditions, incentives and capacities should be created to enable the occupants of these territories to formalize their tenure and develop productive or environmental services activities that, in addition to being profitable, are compatible with existing environmental management categories;
• Government should implement Rural Road Construction and Maintenance Units in the regions that are responsible for opening secondary and tertiary roads, bridges, gutters, sewers and other facilities, for their interconnection with the main highways. These Rural Road Units should later become part of the municipal governments; and

• The State should provide inhabitants of the regions with opportunities for the development of productive activities in a general, and to the extent possible equitable, manner.

**Institutional aspects**

- Consistent with GoC efforts to implement the Planes de Desarrollo con Enfoque Territorial (PDET), communities should be mobilized to participate in the design, planning, execution, and monitoring of the projects and initiatives adopted in each territory so that there is local appropriation for their sustainability.

- Initiatives should be undertaken that channel the wealth and diversity of existing social organizations, by strengthening capacities for the direct participation of communities and such groups as women, young people, disabled persons, and Afro-descendants, etc. (VIMDESALT, 2004).

- The conditions of governance should be fostered by increasing the presence of State institutions and their provision of public goods and services. This includes; strengthening the capacities of municipal authorities and citizens in the exercise of social and political control and expanding access to the justice system.

- Municipal governments should be strengthened by expanding contracting mechanisms that mitigate the risk that public resources will be captured by patronage networks, political parties and relatives;

- A balance between territorial and population approaches that promotes a comprehensive vision of regional development, involving economies of scale in the provision of public goods and services, and the entire regional population, should be the cornerstone of GoC efforts, attempting to offer equal opportunities related to productive development;

- Interventions to enable local administrations to implement anti-corruption procedures should continue. It is recommended that support be given to accountability processes and the publication of reports on the municipalities’ websites;

**Production issues**

- It is indispensable to acquire knowledge about the territory through detailed studies of the areas that include such variables for developing productive systems as determining what specific agroecological innovations may be best suited to the regions; distinguishing areas with greater vulnerability to deforestation; areas in which the agricultural frontier is advancing; areas of greater ecosystem potential; and socioeconomic and cultural factors that provide solid bases for making decisions, executing projects and prioritizing areas with greater vulnerability;
• With this base of information, alternative production systems based on the vocation of land should be promoted;

• The alternative productive systems should be connected to strategies for halting the advance of the agricultural frontier through specific programs based on agroforestry, silvopastoral, agrosilvopastoral and forest exploitation models;

• Technical assistance should ensure the connectivity of alternative products with markets through:
  ✓ Creating and strengthening of solidarity economies,
  ✓ Improving infrastructure to support production (collection, transformation, and marketing centers),
  ✓ Establishing relationships with public and private companies as fundamental links in the marketing chain, and
  ✓ Entrepreneurship training focused on diversification, innovation and enrichment of the value chains of alternative products.

• Access to formal economic systems should be promoted. The conditions for access to financing should be linked to the specific characteristics of the territory so that support is given to initiatives and projects that promote environmental sustainability and reduce the advance of the agricultural frontier; and

• Communities should be encouraged to participate in the design, planning, execution and monitoring of the projects and initiatives that are implemented in each territory, so that there is local appropriation for their sustainability.
ANNEXES

Annex 1: Contacts made by the consultant
Annex 2: Document analysis guide
Annex 3: Guide on in-depth interviews for experts on alternative development and the substitution of illicit crops
Annex 4: Comprehensive programmatic structure of alternative development
### ANNEX 1. Contacts made by the consultant

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<th>Institution</th>
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<td>Aida Ortiz</td>
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<td>Ex-Director of the Integrated Consolidation Plan for Macarena</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rafael Colón</td>
<td>General and ex-Director of “Comprehensive Action against Anti-personnel Mines”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex-Director of the Program against Illicit Crops, Territorial Consolidation Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ricardo Montaño</td>
<td>Bajo Mira Community Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roger Rasnake</td>
<td>EVAL/MSI Project</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roy Sánchez</td>
<td>AMDI Tumaco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victor Manuel Mejia</td>
<td>FEDECOCO</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Cruz</td>
<td>Tucán-oriental Ethnic Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson Estucio</td>
<td>Altamira Frontera Community Council</td>
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</table>
ANNEX 2: Document analysis guide

The document analysis guide has been constructed on the basis of the following objectives:

- Take cognizance of the current state of Colombia’s efforts to eradicate and substitute illicit crops;
- Put in evidence the main political, social and economic elements (variables) associated with the eradication and substitution of illicit crops in Colombia.
- Identify the approaches, objectives, results, financing, sustainability elements, challenges and future perspectives of the Alternative Development program in Colombia.
- Identify the similarities and differences in the experiences of other countries, such as Bolivia and Peru.
- Identify lessons learned from the illicit-crop eradication and substitution processes that can be replicated in regional contexts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT ANALYZED</th>
<th>INFORMATION ELEMENTS SOUGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elements of Context</strong></td>
<td>Historical, geographical, environmental, institutional, political context in which the processes for the fight against drugs, and specifically the processes for the eradication and substitution of illicit crops, are developed in Colombia. We were also interested in exploring the social aspects linked to marginality, violence, and public security (guerrillas, paramilitaries, criminal bands) that directly or indirectly affect the illicit-crop eradication and substitution processes. <strong>Guiding index:</strong> 1. Brief summary of the history of illicit crops in Colombia 2. Areas of production, transformation, commercialization routes, destination markets, etc. 3. Social actors involved in the production, transformation and commercialization of illicit crops 4. Dynamics associated with the expansion/reduction of illicit crops (supply, demand, evolution of prices, taxes or fees (illegal), parastatal control and dominion over territories 5. Approach of the strategies for the fight against drugs, and specifically the eradication and substitution of illicit crops. 6. Territorial security and governance 7. Policies and strategies associated with the prevention of consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Elements related to eradication</strong></td>
<td>We are interested in exploring the historical and current policies, strategies and approaches of the eradication program in Colombia. In particular, the regulations, policies and strategies that have guided and currently guide this process, the results achieved, and its sustainability, cost and associated effects. A brief analysis of the relationship between eradication and the generation of focal points of violence and conflict, and the possible scenarios of responses of the police and armed forces (government), among other elements (context, external commitments), would enable us to identify the challenges and perspectives associated with this subject (eradication). <strong>Guiding index:</strong> 1. Eradication policies, strategies and approaches (previous, current)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eradication and Substitution of Illicit Crops in Colombia
Eradication and Substitution of Illicit Crops in Colombia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements related to the substitution of illicit crops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Policies, strategies, approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Alternative Development (AD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Approach - objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Intervention zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ AD actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ AD components (democracy, governance, economic – productive, social, environmental, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Financing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Results obtained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Lessons learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Future perspectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are interested in exploring previous and current policies, strategies, objectives, and approaches of the illicit-crop substitution programs, and in particular the Alternative Development Program’s role, approaches and objectives, and the intervention zones, actors, prioritized components, financing, main achievements and results, as well as the main obstacles found on the road to their implementation.

A brief analysis of the lessons learned and the program’s sustainability will enable us to identify the future perspectives of AD.

Guiding Index:

1. Brief analysis of previous and current policies, strategies and approaches regarding the substitution of illicit crops in Colombia
2. Approach – objectives of the Alternative Development Program in Colombia
3. Main actors
4. Components of the AD Program
5. Intervention zones of the Program
6. Financing
7. Main results achieved
8. Perception of the sustainability of the AD Program
9. Main problems confronted
10. Lessons learned
11. Future perspectives
12. Recommendations (perceptions)
ANNEX 3: Guide on in-depth interviews for experts on alternative development and the substitution of illicit crops

The questions of the in-depth interview guide have been formulated based on the following objectives:

- Identify and specify the Colombian Government’s current approach to the eradication and substitution of illicit crops
- Specify the current state of illicit-crop eradication and substitution efforts
- Identify bottlenecks and/or main difficulties in the illicit-crop eradication and substitution processes
- Characterize the current approach of Alternative Development in Colombia
- Identify the major political, economic, environmental, and social challenges associated with the eradication and alternative development processes
- Identify the potential and the weaknesses of the technical assistance processes in the Alternative Development programs and projects
- Identify the role of International Cooperation in relation to the substitution and eradication of illicit crops in Colombia.

QUESTIONS

1. In your opinion, what is the current state of illicit-crop eradication and substitution efforts in Colombia?
2. In your opinion, what are the causes for the significant increase in the area of illicit crops (coca) in Colombia in the last two years?
3. In your view, what effect will the final peace agreements between the Government of Colombia and the guerrilla groups have on the dynamics of illicit crops in Colombia?
   a. Increase/decrease in illicit crops
   b. Security in the regions affected by drug trafficking and in the illicit production areas (coca, marijuana, etc.)
   c. The viability of developing rural development programs in these regions
4. In your view, is there a State policy for the fight against drugs in Colombia?
5. What do you think of the current legal framework supporting the fight against drugs in Colombia?
6. What do you think of the institutional framework that is implementing the fight against drugs in Colombia?
7. What is your opinion of the approach of the fight against drugs in Colombia?
   E.g., Control of supply and control of demand, the search for peace, territorial consolidation, territorial transformation, comprehensive territorial development.
8. In your view, what are the main illicit-crop eradication and substitution strategies in Colombia?
9. In your opinion, have the illicit-crop eradication and substitution strategies fulfilled their goals/objectives?
10. What do you think about the Alternative Development Program in Colombia?
11. What do you believe is the main purpose of the Alternative Development Program? For example: a) To promote agricultural development as an alternative to illicit crops; b) To promote economic development in the regions where illicit crops are produced; c) To
promote economic development in regions that are not affected by illicit crops; d) Other purposes

12. Forced eradication provokes violent reactions by growers of illicit crops and illegal groups associated with this activity. What do you think would be the most appropriate mechanism for undertaking crop eradication and substitution processes in an environment of peace and social tranquility?

13. In many situations, the production and sale of coca is the only sources of sustenance for the growers of illicit crops. This population is often left in a situation of social vulnerability when forced eradication programs are implemented. What preliminary and/or short-term actions do you think should be taken to avoid this situation?

14. To your knowledge, what technical assistance mechanisms are provided by the government and/or international cooperation programs that work on Alternative Development?

15. To what degree are these programs linked to the system of research and/or innovation and/or technology transfers (public or private) in Colombia?

16. To what degree are alternative development programs/projects that provide technical assistance linked to Colombian universities?

17. Given the current political and social context in Colombia with the signing of the Peace Agreement, how should the illicit-crop eradication and substitution processes be addressed?
ANNEX 4. Comprehensive programmatic structure of Alternative Development

Programmatic Structure of Alternative Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>SUB-PROGRAM</th>
<th>PRIORITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Comprehensive Productive Transformation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Agricultural Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Agro-industrial Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Tourism Development</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Micro-enterprise Development</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Applied Research</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Technology Transfer System</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Credit</td>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Structuring and strengthening of productive chains</td>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Irrigation and micro-irrigation</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promotion and marketing</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Commercialization infrastructure (peasant markets, collection centers, cold chains)</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Product and market development fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing and Commercialization</td>
<td>Transportation and Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Construction, maintenance and improvement of neighborhood roads</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Development and consolidation of river and aerial infrastructure</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Construction, expansion and equipping of hospitals, health centers and health posts</td>
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<td>- Support for the implementation of epidemiological campaigns</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Job training</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Mass employment program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Expansion and improvement of drinking water, sewer, and solid waste treatment systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>Basic Sanitation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Construction, improvement and equipping of schools and housing for teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Informal training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Agroforestry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Forest management and reforestation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>Management, Preservation and Conservation of Natural Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Transformation and commercialization of forest products</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Territorial Land-Use Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Development</td>
<td>Institutional Strengthening and Training of Human Resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Strengthening of public institutions</td>
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<td>- Institutional strengthening of producer organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Communication and dissemination</td>
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<td>- Information network</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>- Cadastre and land title-clearing</td>
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<td>- Strengthening of the justice administration system</td>
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<td>- Prevention and management of conflicts</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Citizen participation and strengthening of democracy</td>
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<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VIMDESALT, 2003

A: First priority level  
B: Second priority level  
C: Third priority level
BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES


