



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

State Secretariat, Peace and Human Rights Division PHRD

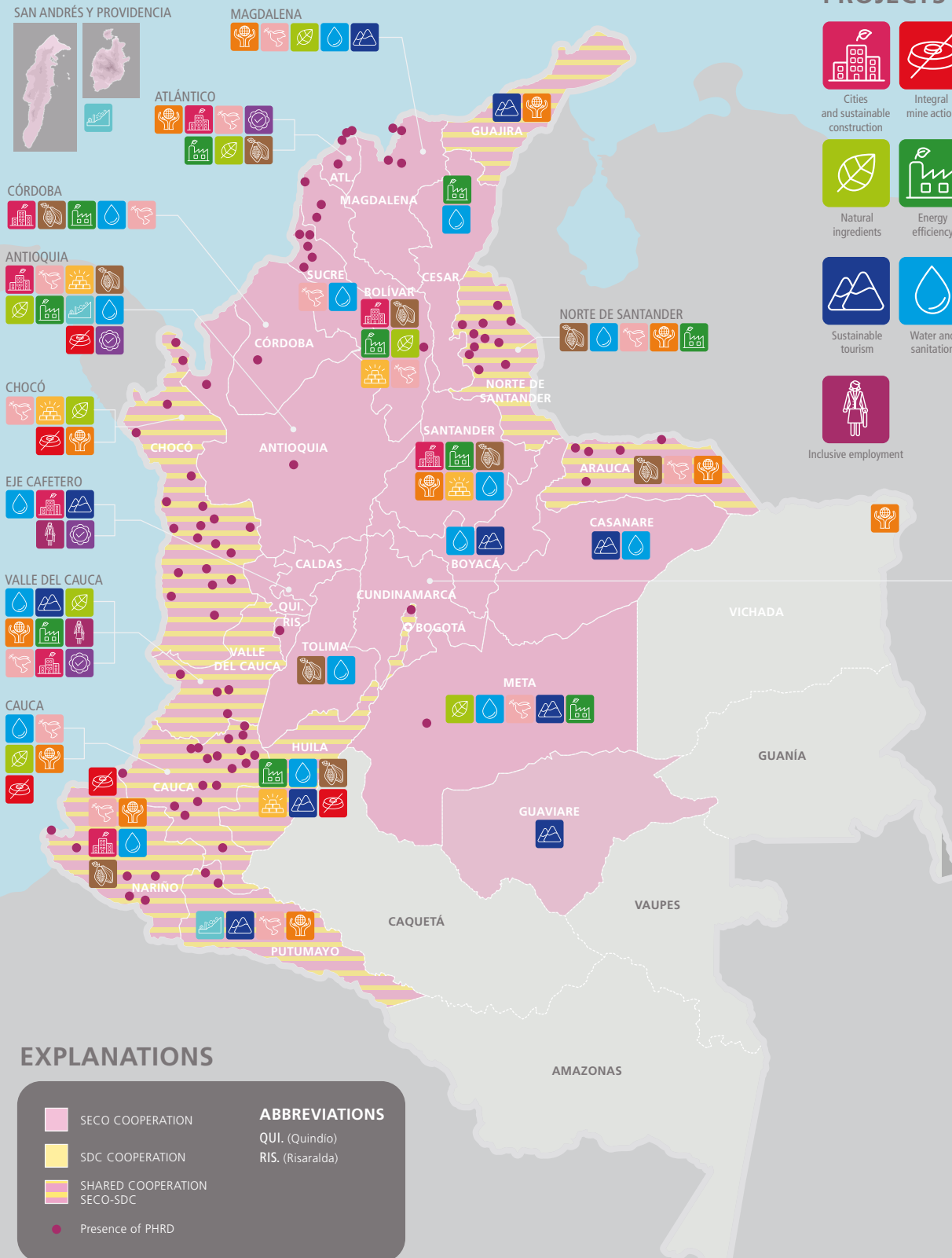
# Colombia

Swiss Cooperation Programme 2021–2024



# Swiss cooperation in Colombia

The main areas of engagement



## PROJECTS BY AREA



28

DEPARTMENTS

111

CITIES AND MUNICIPALITIES

+140

PROJECTS

100

MIO USD IN COOPERATION 2021–2024

NOTE: Indicative illustration, subject to change during the implementation of the Swiss Cooperation Programme in Colombia 2021–2024

# Editorial

The good relationship between Colombia and Switzerland is based on a broad joint agenda. The two countries share numerous interests, such as the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, or the mitigation of the effects of climate change and the protection of the environment. The joint agenda ranges from fostering trade to investments to promoting scientific collaboration. The quality of the relationship between Colombia and Switzerland encompasses the multilateral and bilateral realm and extends to international cooperation. Indeed, Colombia is one of few countries in the world where Switzerland maintains a presence of all its three cooperation entities: the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD).

Colombia has embarked upon an important transition process to end a 50-year armed conflict, build lasting peace and deepen its integration into the world economy. This transition process is a long-term venture that extends beyond a peace agreement and the accession to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Colombia is characterised by an enormous diversity: Mostly due to the armed conflict, certain regions lag behind in their development. An urban–rural divide illustrates Colombia’s different realities and is one reason why the country has one of the most unequal societies in the world. Current challenges range from economic competitiveness to environmental matters. Other issues to tackle include the lack or deficiencies of infrastructure, basic service delivery as well as the extreme poverty of certain communities. In addition, Colombia is still affected by armed violence and

illicit economic activities. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has exposed and aggravated the enduring structural issues the country is facing.

Switzerland has been active in Colombia with its international cooperation since 2001. The integrated Cooperation Programme 2021–2024 is based on the combination of current and emerging needs in Colombia, a solid track record of Swiss international cooperation in thematic areas that provide strong added value, as well as growing Swiss interest in Colombia. Through its three complementary cooperation entities, Switzerland is in a good position to help overcoming the above mentioned complex challenges. For this purpose, it collaborates with a wide range of partners, consisting of government institutions, the private sector, civil society and multilateral organisations – partners who were closely consulted in the development of this new Cooperation Programme 2021–2024.

This document describes the cornerstones of this programme and its approach for the coming years. Switzerland’s overall goal is to strengthen Colombia’s institutions, communities and civil society on their path to lasting peace through sustainable and resilient economic development and the reduction of inequalities and addressing humanitarian needs. The document consists of the common framework of Switzerland’s cooperation with Colombia, and of its Annexes 1 and 2 that detail the operational orientation of SDC, PHRD and SECO. Taken together, it lays out how Switzerland aims to contribute to the transition towards a prosperous, inclusive and peaceful Colombia.



  
**Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch**  
State Secretary, Director of SECO



  
**Patricia Dąnzi**  
Director of the SDC



  
**Livia Leu**  
State Secretary of the FDFA

# Executive summary

**Colombia's recent history has been marked by serious contrasts.** On the one hand, Colombia is one of the oldest and most stable democracies in Latin America, the region's fourth largest economy and, since the end of April 2020, formally an OECD member. On the other hand, Colombian society is one of the most unequal in the world in terms of income disparity, and the country continues to be strongly affected by armed violence and illicit economies. In several regions, the presence of state institutions remains weak, sometimes non-existent. COVID-19 has increased uncertainty regarding the future development of Colombia and has exposed and exacerbated structural challenges in Colombian institutions, economy and society.

**The comprehensive programme involving three Swiss cooperation agencies is designed in response to the multifaceted challenges** of an emerging economy in a post-peace-agreement period, marked by the implementation of the agreement while armed violence in some parts of the country continues. Switzerland is supporting Colombia in key areas that are aligned with priorities of the government and are of the utmost importance for this pivotal moment in the peace process and development stage of the country. This includes the protection of civilians from armed violence, demining, climate change mitigation, job creation, sustainable urban development, water and land management, and the consolidation of peace. A common programmatic framework for the 2021–2024 period will ensure that the three programmes are aligned to achieve a joint objective while recognising the difference of modalities and instruments. The three cooperation agencies have the distinct advantage that they tackle immediate needs, contribute to peace and the prevention of conflicts, and support sustainable development.

**The Swiss Cooperation Programme 2021–2024 is aligned with Colombia's long-term development plans and the government's priorities.** The programme sees the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018–2022, the Roadmap for International Cooperation, the implementation plan of the peace agreement (PMI), and the Development Programmes with Territorial Focus (PDET) as key reference points.

**Switzerland's Cooperation Programme aims to contribute to positive development in Colombia over the next four years.** The main lines of intervention and the smart combination of Switzerland's various cooperation instruments are a feature of continuity from earlier programmes. Changes will include an even stronger focus on combining the cooperation programme with long-term Swiss interests. Switzerland will therefore further concentrate its thematic portfolio around these key topics that benefit from strong Swiss added value and help to foster joint interests. This can also strengthen institutional relations between the two countries and therefore contribute to the sustainability of the Swiss cooperation programme beyond 2024. Furthermore, the humanitarian programme will transform into a regional hub for protection.

# In its Cooperation Programme 2021–24, Switzerland will strive towards a **prosperous, inclusive and peaceful Colombia**

Switzerland’s overall goal is to strengthen Colombia’s institutions, communities and civil society on their path to lasting peace through sustainable and resilient economic development, the reduction of inequalities and addressing humanitarian needs.

To achieve this goal, Switzerland engages in policy dialogue; knowledge exchange; provides technical assistance, humanitarian aid and protection measures; creates local capacities; and works with all parts of society, including migrants and refugees.

## Swiss portfolio outcomes:

**1** Protection, early recovery and access to basic services

**2** Peace promotion and conflict prevention

**3** Sustainable cities and territories, stronger institutions and better public services

**4** Regional competitiveness and decent jobs

Switzerland takes gender equality, climate change and good governance into account in all its activities.

# Content

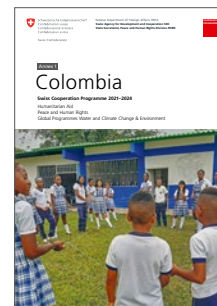
	Country context	7
--	-----------------	---

	Development cooperation context	13
--	---------------------------------	----

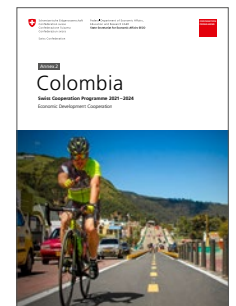
	Swiss contributions 2017–2020	17
---	-------------------------------	----

	Implications for the Cooperation Programme 2021-24	21
--	--	----

## Annex 1



## Annex 2







# Country context



1

## **Colombia is a country of tremendous disparities.**

It is one of the oldest and most stable democracies in Latin America and the fourth-largest economy in the region. In line with this aspect, Colombia has been a formal OECD member since the end of April 2020. However, these indicators of stability and development are in stark contrast with the enormous challenges the country faces. Peripheral areas of the country in particular suffer from a weak presence of state institutions and high levels of poverty. This contributes to Colombian society being one of the most unequal in the world in terms of income disparity. Moreover, armed violence continues to greatly affect the country.

## **Two external factors increase the uncertainty of Colombia's future development.**

On the one hand, COVID-19 has exposed and exacerbated structural issues in Colombian institutions, economy and society. On the other hand, the crisis in Venezuela has a large impact on Colombia in terms of migrants and security issues along the border. Both factors will likely result in changes in priorities in the short term. Therefore, Switzerland will closely monitor the impact of these factors and allow for enough flexibility to continuously adjust the implementation of the programme in coordination with its Colombian partners.



3



4

**1** Switzerland supports financing mechanisms for resilient infrastructure, such as through capital markets.

**2** Identification of protection risks for boys and girls in zones of armed conflict.

**3** A priest approaches a village to meet participants in a workshop on participatory capacity building in the department of Chocó.

**4** Women leaders and human rights defenders in Chocó participate in a project supported by SDC.

## Political and institutional

### **While Colombia is a long-standing democracy, fundamental state functions are still incomplete.**

Government elections and changes have been mostly smooth, and Colombia is considered a consolidated democracy. However, the provision of security, land distribution and management, a functioning judicial system and the provision of public goods are only partly effective. The high level of social and economic inequality has been both a cause and a consequence of the decades-long conflict. Over the years, the conflict has spiralled into a vicious cycle of armed groups financing themselves through illegal mining and lucrative drug trafficking, among other illegal activities, which in turn has further cemented their influence and their control over territories with little or no state presence.

### **The historic peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), signed in 2016, reduced the levels of violence in the short term and broadened the political agenda, but challenges in the peace process remain.**

Guerrilla fighters were successfully demobilised and important efforts are being made to integrate them into civilian life. However, the state has not yet managed to fill the vacuum left by FARC in peripheral regions where rival armed groups are competing for control of vacated territory and lucrative illicit economies. While topics such as corruption, security (exponents for social, environmental and indigenous concerns), peace, equality, social justice, a more inclusive education system and environmental protection have been on the political agenda for some time, new topics such as pensions, labour and tax reforms have been added to the list of public debates and protests, indicating the growing expectations of the expanding middle class.

### **Colombia has a sophisticated institutional framework; however, limited state presence in several regions hinders effective policy implementation.**

The country has a regulatory framework that is oriented towards international good practices and counts on strong planning capacities. However, policy implementation is a challenge, hampered by burdensome bureaucratic hurdles, red tape and vested interests, specifically in key development areas that would help to reduce inequality and in regions with the greatest needs. While the country formally has a decentralised system of governance, state institutions – particularly in the peripheral regions – are weak and budgetary resources are largely controlled at the national level. Efforts are being made to increase public trust, improve governance performance and counter corruption, including by strengthening public institutions at the subnational level. The Territorial Development Plans for municipalities most affected by

the conflict (PDET) that have been developed together with local stakeholders are an important milestone.

### **Foreign policy has been marked by strong ties with the United States, while policy issues are increasingly coordinated using regional platforms.**

Colombia has traditionally maintained strong relations with the United States, especially in the area of security and drug policies as well as in bilateral trade. With the pressing issue of migration from Venezuela (1.8 million people), Colombia has made an effort to coordinate international support, e.g. through the Lima Group, the Quito Process, and the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Platform (RMRP). The country is also part of the Comunidad Andina (CAN) and the regional platforms Pacific Alliance and Prosur.

---

**Identified needs:** Strengthen institutions and create incentives to effectively implement economic, social and environmental policies at the local level in coordination with regional governments, the private sector and civil society.

## Economic and environmental

### **The country has continuously engaged in a reform-oriented path, culminating in its OECD membership in April 2020, but further reforms are needed.**

The post-accession plan will continue to put pressure on the reform agenda. In some thematic areas at the national level, OECD membership can be seen as a proxy for a transition process from international development cooperation. However, in order to boost inclusive growth, further structural reforms to increase productivity and foster a more diversified and greener economy are key in order to reduce socioeconomic inequalities as well as regional disparities and increase the country's resilience.

### **Over the past two decades, Colombia has had solid macroeconomic fundamentals and growth, but the trend seems to be reversing.**

High commodity prices, a boom in the construction sector and domestic consumption combined with sound macroeconomic policies led to an average growth in gross domestic product (GDP) between 1.4% and 7.4% in the 2010s. Thus, the country successfully maintained its investment rating since 2013. In terms of GDP and income per capita (USD 6'432 in 2019), Colombia followed a path of strong growth similar to that of other upper-middle-income countries, which helped to significantly reduce poverty in the last two decades. How-



ever, in 2015, the growth trend was interrupted by the fall of the oil price before stabilising once more at around 3% pre-COVID-19. Even so, poverty increased again slightly in 2019 and will most likely continue to do so in the coming few years as a result of COVID-19. Similarly, Colombia's unemployment rate has begun to rise in recent years and is today one of the highest in the region. Women, young people and migrants are the groups most affected. Around 50% of the economically active population works in the informal sector. The tax system is rather regressive and contains a lot of exceptions, leading to tax evasion issues.

**Limited productivity and innovation, weak infrastructure and regulatory issues result in low competitiveness in non-extractive sectors.** Major constraints affecting competitiveness include the quality of the education system, lack of adequate skills, limited research and innovation, high transport and logistics costs due to a considerable infrastructure backlog, and pending structural reforms, including comprehensive tax and judiciary reforms. There is also an opportunity to increase the economic participation of women, as only 62.9% of all women participate in the formal and informal labour market (in comparison to 85.1% of men). The difference between men and women in terms of workforce participation can be explained by the amount of unpaid work, access to labour opportunities, the gender wage gap and cultural bias, among other factors.

**Colombia has traditionally been an inward-looking country with relatively low levels of trade integration and immigration that could stimulate competition, innovation and additional investments.** The country has increased its regional and global integration through a set of free trade agreements (FTA), its participation in the Pacific Alliance and its OECD membership. Despite the 16 FTAs giving the country access to more than 60 markets, Colombian exports are concentrated among very few products and exporting companies. Levels of protectionism are still high, mainly taking the form of non-tariff barriers to trade. A certain deindustrialisation occurred in Colombia and the country does not currently have what would be considered a modern industrial policy. There is potential to strengthen certain value chains and foster their integration into international markets.

**Colombia can play an important role in environmental conservation as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation, and is at the same time particularly vulnerable to climate change.** The diversity of the country's ecosystems and the fact that more than half of the country itself is covered by forests makes Colombia the second-most biodiverse

country in the world and relatively rich in terms of water. Similar to other middle-income countries, Colombia's natural resources are under pressure. Unsustainable agricultural practices, extractive industries, road traffic and urbanisation exert major pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems. One-third of hydrographic zones are in critical state in terms of water quantity, quality and inundation risks. Additionally, large parts of the population have settled in coastal areas prone to flooding or in the Andean mountains, where land instability and water shortages are already a reality. Due to its geographic location, the country is exposed to a high recurrence and magnitude of extreme weather events (e.g. El Niño).

**Environmental protection efforts continue to be hampered by powerful economic interests.** Illicit economies, especially in mining, cause enormous environmental impacts and growing concern (e.g. around 80% of the gold exported from Colombia is produced informally). As a consequence, deforestation continues at an alarming rate, reinforced by the demobilisation of FARC (who used to prevent access to many geographic areas) and the expansion of the agricultural frontier and land appropriation.

**Reduction of deforestation, reforestation, electric mobility, green finance and sustainable urban development are key areas for dealing with climate change.** Within the framework of the Paris Agreement, Colombia has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 20% with the potential to cut them by 30% compared to projections for 2030 with the support of international cooperation. In the process of updating Colombia's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in 2020, Colombia even announced a 51% reduction. The country has a solid institutional system for coordinating climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

---

**Identified needs:** Support in key areas, such as more inclusive framework conditions and integration of sustainable value chains into international markets, promoting sustainable finance, climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as sustainable water management, also in coordination with regional initiatives (e.g. the Pacific Alliance).

## Social, humanitarian and security

Thanks to efforts over a period of more than a decade, Colombia has achieved an **impressive reduction of poverty, but wealth distribution remains highly unequal amongst the population**. According to the World Bank, national poverty has fallen from 53.2% in 2002 to 27.8% in 2018, and extreme poverty from 14.3% to 4.1%. In absolute terms, the number of poor individuals in Colombia amounts to approximately 12.8 million, of which 2 million live in extreme poverty. This major reduction notwithstanding, Colombia's poverty rate in 2018 was still higher than the Latin American average. Despite having expanded the quantity and coverage of social programmes, Colombia's inequality level remains one of the highest in the world, with a slight change in the Gini coefficient from 0.553 in 2008 to 0.503 in 2018. Women are more affected by poverty and inequality than men. In 2018, for every 100 men who lived in poor households, 118 women were in the same situation. Due to COVID-19, Colombia's achievements in poverty reduction are at risk of being at least partially reversed. It is also likely that the level of inequality will increase again.

**The provision of basic social services is a challenge in several parts of the country**, with a long-term trend of low indicators of access to and use of education, health and water services in rural and conflict-affected areas. The armed conflict was therefore not only cause for human suffering due to violence. It was also the result and – in a vicious cycle – the cause of the limited presence of state institutions. Beyond basic services, this also deprived people of access to justice, land and protection from violence. The resolution of armed conflicts and a lasting peaceful environment are therefore also preconditions for state institutions to establish a full presence and provide services that allow for real progress and reduction of inequality in these regions.

**Against this backdrop, the peace agreement with the FARC was a milestone in Colombian history**. It led to the demobilisation of the largest insurgent group in Colombia with almost no security incidents, accompanied by an architecture of tools for transformation towards peace that was widely considered exemplary. It also generated high hopes for an improvement of living conditions for the most vulnerable populations and put women and gender equality at the forefront of peace implementation. The 170 municipalities that were most heavily affected by armed conflict and poverty are at the centre of the implementation of the peace agreement. Socio-economic programmes (PDET)

are implemented to boost development in these parts of the country. These efforts notwithstanding, enormous challenges remain as the results achieved so far have not lived up to the expectations of the affected populations.

This is especially the case because the decrease of violence at national level contrasts with the continued presence of the National Liberation Army (ELN) guerrillas as well as **a recent surge of violence and reappearance of armed groups** in many rural areas of Colombia. The security situation in these areas is difficult. The population is confronted with various forms of violence, such as social control imposed by armed groups, limited mobility, land evictions, recruitment of children, selective killings and extortion. Furthermore, the presence of anti-personnel mines and other explosive hazards has increased in 2019 and 2020. The situation is particularly critical for social and environmental leaders, as well as human rights defenders, who are threatened, attacked and killed in alarming numbers. The situation is even more complex than before the peace agreement. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has identified at least five non-international armed conflicts in Colombia since 2018.

**Internal displacement continues to be a major challenge in Colombia**. The peace agreement briefly led to a decrease in the annual number of newly displaced people since 2012, only for that number to increase again between 2018 and 2020. The number of refugees and immigrants from Venezuela has increased drastically and currently stands at 1.8 million. Many of them, as well as internally displaced people (IDP), live in precarious conditions. The large numbers and humanitarian needs have surpassed the national capacity to cope and, as a consequence, refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons face risks posed by drug trafficking, smuggling, human trafficking, forced recruitment, gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, among others.

---

**Identified needs:** Support in protecting the population from armed violence, meet short- and medium-term humanitarian needs, prevent conflict and continue the progress made in terms of the implementation of the peace agreement.



A tourist guide shows the fauna and flora of Casanare in the Llanos Orientales as part of the Safari experience supported by SECO.





# Development cooperation context



2



3

## Partner country national frameworks

There are four national frameworks that serve as a policy frame for Colombia:

**National Development Plan 2018–2022:** The government's NDP is based on the formula Legality + Entrepreneurship = Equity. The aim is to enhance equity based on two pillars: the rule of law and entrepreneurship. The NDP seeks to improve state presence and justice services. It also strives to increase access to the labour market and boost income generation by fostering entrepreneurship. The NDP continues to have a strong regional focus, pledging to support strategic projects in the areas of infrastructure and clean energy, among others.

Based on the NDP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the **Strategy for International Cooperation 2019–2022** focuses on five pillars: rural development, migration, peace and territorial stability, entrepreneurship and creative economy (so-called “orange economy”), as well as conservation and environmental sustainability. In addition, the roadmap highlights the important role of international cooperation in supporting the implementation of the SDGs.

**1** Cocoa is considered a “peace crop” in Colombia as it provides economic opportunities for people in areas most affected by conflict.

**2** Activities for the protection of children's rights in areas affected by conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

**3** Switzerland continues to support the corporate development of water companies throughout the country and at the policy and financing levels.

### **Implementation plan for the peace agreement**

**(PMI):** In order to transform the peace agreement with the FARC into real change, the Colombian government has operationalised the various commitments made in the PMI. The plan defines how the peace agreement is put into practice over a period of 15 years. To that end, it contains 578 specific tasks distributed over the six main topics of the peace agreement. In addition to this long-term plan, the current government has also issued its “Peace with Legality” policy as a framework for the implementation of the peace agreement.

The fourth national framework, and part of the PMI, consists of the **Development Programmes with Territorial Focus (PDETs)**. The PDETs are based on the idea that sustainable peace can only be achieved if the structural conditions of inequality, injustice, social exclusion and discrimination of rural areas are addressed holistically. The “territorial focus” stands for a participatory bottom-up planning process in which the rural communities of 170 municipalities in 16 sub-regions historically affected by the armed conflict have defined a 10-year collective vision and agreed on key proposals and priorities to transform their territories in this timeline.

### **Cooperation partner landscape and presence of Swiss organisations**

According to official figures, **Official Development Aid (ODA) in Colombia amounted to only 0.6% of the gross national income (GNI) in 2018**. This indicates that the implementation of the peace agreement as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts continue to largely depend on national resources. The role of ODA in this context is to fill critical gaps. Multilateral cooperation is characterised by a strong presence of the World Bank Group, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations (UN) system<sup>1</sup>. As for bilateral cooperation in Colombia, its main partners are the United States, the European Union (EU), Spain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Canada and Switzerland.

### **Between 2015 and 2020, Switzerland ranked fifth to seventh among cooperation partners in terms of the overall volume of its cooperation.**

It is one of the few cooperation partners that focuses on longer-term economic reforms and combines economic development cooperation with humanitarian aid and peace promotion, thus working in the triple nexus. In addition to its official presence in Colombia via its embassy, numerous Swiss non-governmental organisations maintain their own individual cooperation programmes. An existing exchange platform for Swiss non-governmental organisations (NGO) coordinates the efforts of organisations with a permanent presence in Colombia<sup>2</sup>. They implement activities in various parts of the country, focusing mainly on human rights and humanitarian challenges.

### **Cooperation with like-minded countries and active participation in coordination mechanisms improves the impact of the Swiss Cooperation Programme.**

A coordination architecture (*Grupo de Cooperantes (GruC)*) was established in 2010 by the main cooperation partners in order to improve the coordination and efficiency of cooperation. Since 2015, the GruC, which is comprised of 27 members<sup>3</sup>, is focussed on supporting the efforts for the implementation of the peace agreement. Additionally, a humanitarian cooperation partner group led by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) was established in 2014 (OCHA, ECHO, PRM/US, Sweden, Germany, Canada, Norway, Switzerland) and seeks to strengthen coordination of efforts and increase the visibility of humanitarian needs.

Within the GruC, Switzerland takes the lead or participates actively in the following thematic groups: Public Financial Management, Land Management, Competitiveness and the Private Sector, Human Rights, Environment, Gender, and Peace and Transitional Justice. Switzerland will further strengthen its coordination efforts and cooperation with specialised bilateral and multilateral partners, including with multi-donor trust funds.

<sup>1</sup> The UN system is active in Colombia with almost all of its agencies, including its Verification Mission, UNDP, OCHA, UNHCHR, WFP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO and UN WOMEN.

<sup>2</sup> The members of the platform are HEKS-EPER Swiss Church Aid, Swissaid, Swisscontact, Terre des hommes Switzerland, Basel and Lausanne, Fundación Doctora Clown, Caritas Switzerland, Federación Luterana Mundial, Comundo, and Fastenopfer/Cordep.

<sup>3</sup> Such as Switzerland, other embassies including the EU Delegation, foreign cooperation agencies, the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the World Bank Group.

## Switzerland’s long-term interests in Colombia

**Good bilateral relations with Colombia are in Switzerland’s long term interest** in accordance with Article 54 of Switzerland’s constitution. This is true in general because of Colombia’s political and economic weight in the region and also because it is a like-minded partner in many ways, e.g. in terms of multilateral processes and implementing the 2030 Agenda. Additionally, but not exhaustively, Switzerland has the following five important long-term interests in Colombia.

**Peace, respect for human rights and good governance** are goals in their own right and a precondition to ensuring human security and protecting democratic principles. Switzerland’s main interest, as reflected in its Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–2023, is to support Colombia in these areas, including fighting corruption and promoting a stable and safe environment, which is also the basis for economic growth. This is why Switzerland has seized the opportunity to support the peace process. It is doing so in line with Swiss core values such as peaceful conflict resolution, inclusivity and impartiality.

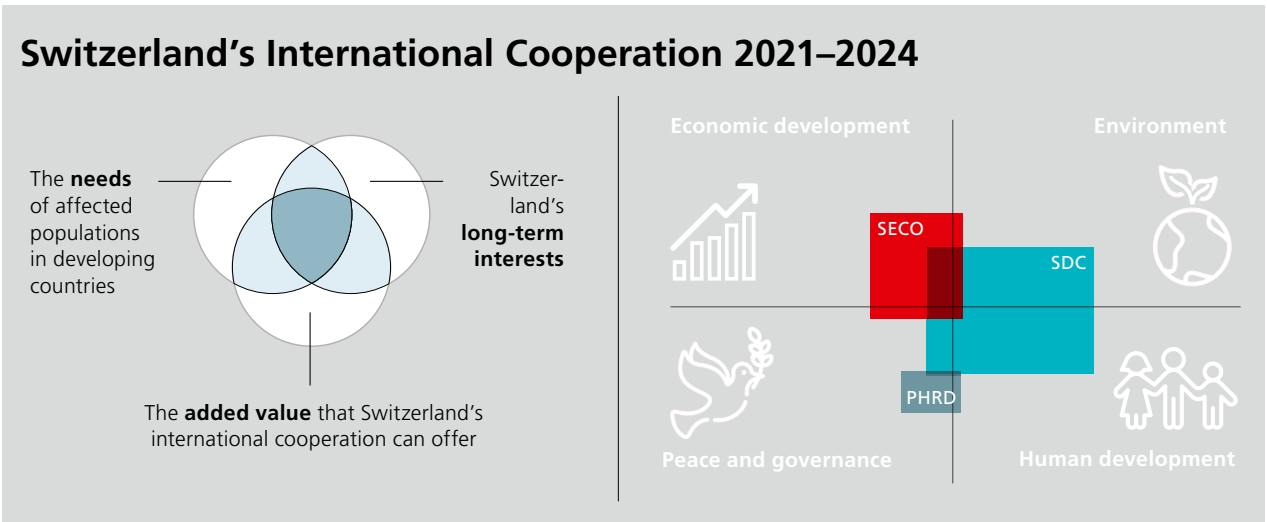
**Economic development and trade.** Switzerland can build on good economic relations with Colombia, including a comprehensive institutional framework of agreements on technical and scientific cooperation, investment protection and double taxation, as well as a free trade agreement with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). There is potential for further expansion of the trade relations in terms of Swiss exports and

imports. In the past, trade balance has traditionally been in Colombia’s favour, but Switzerland has had a trade surplus since 2017. Swiss economic cooperation can help to develop new sectors and standards, diversify trade, make it more sustainable and therefore encourage better utilisation of the EFTA-Colombia free trade agreement. It can also help to improve framework conditions for Swiss investments and Colombia’s integration in the global market.

**Climate change and environmental protection** in Colombia are important issues for Switzerland in view of the country’s natural conditions and biodiversity, which is of global importance. There is also potential to increase the existing collaboration on climate change mitigation, e.g. through the mechanisms established under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

**Humanitarian tradition.** The humanitarian tradition of alleviating suffering and saving lives is in Switzerland’s interest. In Colombia, Switzerland implements its universal humanitarian mandate with a focus on protecting and helping people who are in distress because they had to leave their homes, because of armed violence or because of both. Switzerland can also provide help quickly in the event of sudden catastrophes such as natural disasters.

**Scientific and academic collaboration** is one of the main areas of interest for Switzerland’s academic institutions and has increased considerably with Colombian partners, especially in the area of applied sciences. Joint projects, e.g. in engineering, contribute to practical solutions in Colombia and nurture innovation in both countries.









# Swiss contributions 2017–2020



1

## Assessment of the Cooperation Programme 2017–2020

**Overall, the Swiss Cooperation Programme 2017–2020 has been implemented successfully, with mostly positive results in all key topics.** This assessment is underpinned by several external programme evaluations, peer reviews and the mid-term review of the Programme. As confirmed through dialogue with Colombian partners, Switzerland is supporting Colombia in terms of key topics that are highly relevant for the country's current development stage and the historic moment of the peace process. These include protection, mine action, peace, climate change mitigation and adaptation, creation of decent jobs, sustainable urban development, and water and land management.

**However, the years 2017–2020 have also demonstrated that peace and development processes are not linear.** While Colombia made continuous progress in terms of key indicators from 2002–2016, some positive tendencies such as reduction of poverty and inequality came to a halt or even reversed. There have also been important external factors such as the Venezuela crisis and COVID-19. Within this dynamic context, the Swiss Cooperation Programme has been adaptive enough to stay relevant while still focussing on long-term structural transformations.



3

**1** Deminers reaching an area for clearance of explosive hazards in Algeciras (Huila).

**2** Innovative financing like social bonds provide better access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises.

**3** Sustainable infrastructure projects such as the Transmicable in Bogota, provide better social and economic perspectives for the next generation.

**There is room for Switzerland to further concentrate its thematic portfolio on the most important key topics that correspond to Switzerland's areas of added value and interests.** This would also foster institutional relations between the two countries and therefore contribute to the sustainability of the Swiss cooperation beyond 2024. Furthermore, Switzerland sees the potential to capitalise even more on the triple nexus, thus using the interlinkages between stakeholders in humanitarian aid, economic development and peace promotion. Switzerland aims to foster policy dialogue at different levels of government and support multi-stakeholder platforms that help to elaborate a joint vision in terms of development and strengthen Colombia's implementation capacity.

## Lessons learned and Swiss added value

This chapter draws some general lessons learned from the previous implementation of Switzerland's cooperation in Colombia and explores some of the features where Swiss cooperation adds value.

■ **Complementary efforts require connection and dialogue:** Colombia is home to an impressive amount of initiatives that aim to address the needs outlined in the chapters above. These initiatives are implemented at all levels of the state (national, regional, local), and by a wide range of stakeholders (national and local institutions, civil society organisations, private sector, international community). Often, initiatives do not sufficiently benefit from potential synergies with other efforts, and links between different areas (humanitarian, security, economic, political, etc.) are rarely made. On many occasions, overlapping responsibilities and insufficient coordination has led to friction. While there are some platforms for exchange, those often lack concrete mechanisms to reach binding conclusions and resolve existing disagreements. Swiss cooperation has three distinct aspects of added values with respect to this challenge:

- ▶ Firstly, the three cooperation programmes coordinated under the roof of the Swiss Embassy are aware of their own thematic and geographic synergies and capitalise on them, including input from headquarters and between multilateral and bilateral cooperation. Their broad network of partners allows them to connect crucial stakeholders and initiatives.
- ▶ Secondly, Switzerland's strength in terms of sustaining policy dialogue through the combination of its different levels of engagement adds value and fosters innovation. This includes connecting crucial

stakeholders and initiatives through Swiss engagement with UN organisations, multilateral development banks and a broad network of partners through well-established feedback loops that sustain Swiss policy stances.

- ▶ Thirdly, with its tradition of participation and dialogue, Switzerland has useful tools to offer in this respect as well. The three cooperation programmes can help build bridges between different sectors, strengthen the social fabric and promote community participation, and bring together different stakeholders who can foster Colombia's peace-building efforts and development.

■ **Flexibility is key:** Colombia is a highly dynamic context. While this results in many opportunities for change and improvements where needed, it is also a challenge due to limited predictability. Although the overall needs and priorities are somewhat stable, the specificities of engagement strategies, both by state and non-state stakeholders, are subject to constant change.

- ▶ Switzerland has flexible cooperation mechanisms, and is therefore a meaningful partner in a dynamic environment such as Colombia. Thanks to its innovative approaches and technical expertise, as well as its willingness to take risks, Switzerland is able to make solid contributions at short notice. Its transparent and permanent dialogue with all its partners makes sure that those contributions respond to actual humanitarian and development needs (demand driven).

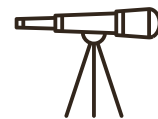
■ **Knowledge exchange:** Given Colombia's progress on many socioeconomic indicators, access to knowledge becomes more important than financial volumes over time. The country is increasingly looking for new cooperation modalities with a stronger focus on knowledge exchange and mutual learning. This will enable Colombia to increasingly serve as a reference for other developing countries in specific areas in which it has progressed significantly.

- ▶ Switzerland places a strong emphasis on technical know-how, expertise and the use of international networks to share experience and best practices. Using those characteristics of its cooperation and further strengthening them, it can act as a knowledge broker and help Colombia capitalise more on peer-learning platforms, including for south-south learning and triangular cooperation, and connect the country to international knowledge hubs.



Adventure and nature tourism have a great potential in Colombia and can also create jobs.





# Implications for the Cooperation Programme 2021–2024



1

The implication of the complex Colombian context and the broad-based Swiss development cooperation described above point towards the current programme with features of continuity and aspects of gradual adjustments – all with a view beyond 2024.

**Features of continuity** are the main programmatic lines of intervention and the combination of Switzerland’s various instruments of international cooperation with a focus on the triple nexus and the link to the Swiss private sector and academia. Furthermore, in a context of increased unpredictability in the coming years, Switzerland will continue to adapt flexibly and swiftly to changes and challenges as they emerge. Lastly, midway into the implementation of this programme, its aims will be reviewed and adapted to the changing context if necessary.

**Aspects of adjustments** include an increased focus on combining policy work and impact in the different regions of Colombia in order to reduce inequalities. The programme will also place an even stronger focus on combining the Cooperation Programme with long-term Swiss foreign policy and economic interests. Indeed, in Colombia, Switzerland can explore how to further concretise the paradigm shifts in international relations. For some years now, the boundaries between global issues, bilateral relations and development



3

**1** Switzerland contributed to the framework for denominations of origin – including for cheese – thereby valuing the local culture, which in turn leads to higher incomes for local residents.

**2** Mine clearance operations in Cajibío municipality in Cauca.

**3** Child-friendly space for protection of children in Tumaco.

objectives – including the imperative to *Leave No One Behind* – have been dissolving. Switzerland and Colombia can capitalise on the common framework of the 2030 Agenda and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

For Switzerland in Colombia, this implies the deepening of high-level knowledge exchanges that are of interest to both countries – tapping into centres of excellence that can be found globally and in the broad Swiss networks. It also means an even more intensive engagement on the regional and multilateral level in selective areas of interest in collaboration with the strong network of Swiss representatives in the Americas (south-south cooperation). And, first and foremost, it signifies a heightened awareness of and agility in seizing opportunities.

With regard to the humanitarian programme in Colombia, an even stronger focus on protection is foreseen, as is the transformation into a regional protection hub by 2024, taking into account the challenges arising from the Venezuela crisis.

### **Priorities and overall objective of the Cooperation Programme 2021–2024**

In response to Colombia’s multifaceted political, social and economic challenges and contributing to the implementation of the SDGs and Switzerland’s International Cooperation Strategy 2021-2024, Switzerland has set the following overall objective and priorities for the next four years.

## In its Cooperation Programme 2021–24, Switzerland will strive towards a **prosperous, inclusive and peaceful Colombia**

Switzerland’s overall goal is to strengthen Colombia’s institutions, communities and civil society on their path to lasting peace through sustainable and resilient economic development, the reduction of inequalities and addressing humanitarian needs.

To achieve this goal, Switzerland engages in policy dialogue; knowledge exchange; provides technical assistance, humanitarian aid and protection measures; creates local capacities; and works with all parts of society, including migrants and refugees.

### **Swiss portfolio outcomes:**

**Protection, early recovery and access to basic services**

**1**

**Peace promotion and conflict prevention**

**2**

**Sustainable cities and territories, stronger institutions and better public services**

**3**

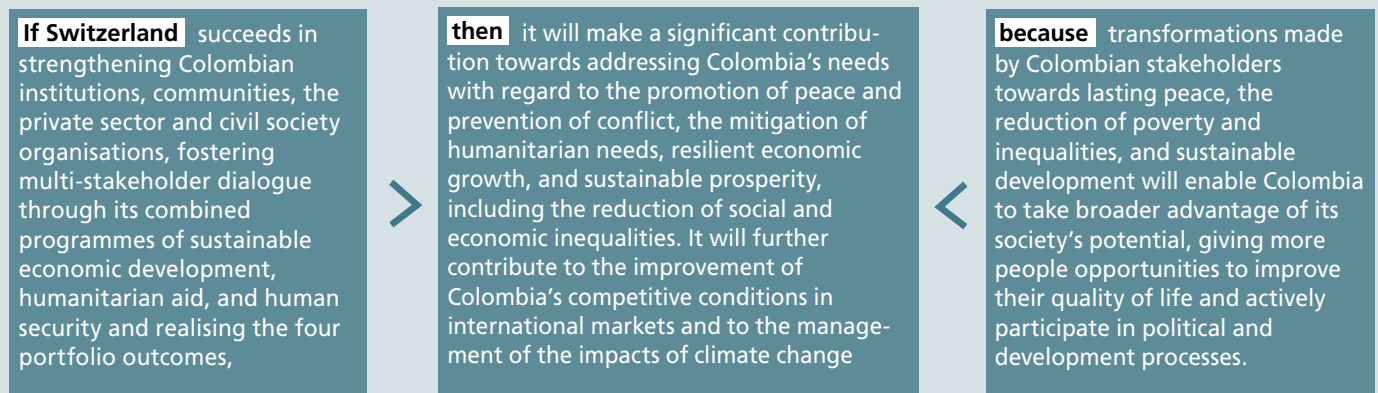
**Regional competitiveness and decent jobs**

**4**

Switzerland takes gender equality, climate change and good governance into account in all its activities.



## Theory of change



## Programme implementation

The Cooperation Programme will be implemented by the three agencies in Colombia coordinated under one embassy roof:

- The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) with its Economic Development Cooperation Programme.
- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) with its Humanitarian Programme (HA) and its Global Cooperation (GC) Water as well as Climate Change and Environment Programmes.
- The Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD) with its Peace and Human Rights Programme.

The operational aspects of programme implementation are described in two annexes and include the

specific lines of action with detailed objectives, the modalities of implementation, overarching issues, monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and financial resources:

- Humanitarian Aid, Peace and Human Rights, Global Cooperation Water and Climate Change & Environment annex
- Economic Cooperation and Development (SECO) annex



# Overall goal and budget of the Swiss Cooperation Programme 2021–2024: a prosperous, inclusive and peaceful Colombia

Switzerland’s overall goal is to strengthen Colombia’s institutions, communities and civil society on their path to lasting peace through sustainable and resilient economic development, the reduction of inequalities and addressing humanitarian needs.

Swiss portfolio outcomes	Protection, early recovery and access to basic services	Peace promotion and conflict prevention	Sustainable cities and territories, stronger institutions and better public services	Regional competitiveness and decent jobs
Objectives	Mitigate the impact of the humanitarian crises and address priority needs such as basic services, recovery of livelihoods and access to protection	Contribute to sustainable peace via the implementation of the peace agreement with the FARC and the resolution and prevention of other conflicts	Transition towards sustainable cities and territories, stronger institutions and better public services by strengthening public finance management as well as planning and financing of sustainable infrastructure	Transition towards improved regional competitiveness and decent jobs by supporting innovation, skills development, sustainable finance and integration into responsible global value chains
Main measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Strengthening protection mechanisms</li> <li>– Supporting integrated mine action</li> <li>– Providing humanitarian emergency assistance</li> <li>– Advancing basic services and improving livelihoods in conflict-affected regions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Dealing with the past</li> <li>– Promoting the safe and effective political participation of communities at the territorial level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Supporting a strong regulatory framework in the areas of public and private finance and strengthening implementation capacity</li> <li>– Strengthening planning and investment capacities of cities in sustainable urban development</li> </ul> <p><i>Joint complementary measures between SECO and the SDC Global Programmes Water and Climate Change &amp; Environment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Natural infrastructure and ecosystem services valuation as well as conservation</i></li> <li>– <i>Promoting energy efficiency and thermal comfort in buildings</i></li> <li>– <i>Enhancing water governance and scaling-up of corporate water stewardship</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Contributing to an efficient, sustainable and inclusive business environment, including in terms of the labour market</li> <li>– Improving access to sustainable finance for SMEs</li> <li>– Fostering export-oriented, responsible, compliant value chains</li> <li>– Fostering the integration of ESG factors in the private sector</li> </ul>
Planned budget	SDC/HA: CHF 48 million PHRD: CHF 4.4 million		SECO: CHF 45 million  SDC/GC: CHF 2.3 million	
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>CHF 100 million</b>			

Switzerland takes gender equality, climate change and good governance into account in all its activities, as well as conflict-sensitive programme management and Do No Harm as an integrated approach (SDC and PHRD).

## Abbreviations

<b>CAN</b>	Comunidad Andina (Andean Community)
<b>CHF</b>	Swiss franc
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>ECHO</b>	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
<b>EFTA</b>	European Free Trade Association
<b>ELN</b>	National Liberation Army
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FARC</b>	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
<b>FDFA</b>	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>FTA</b>	Free trade agreement
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GNI</b>	Gross national income
<b>GruC</b>	Grupo de Cooperantes
<b>HEKS-EPER</b>	Swiss Church Aid
<b>ICRC</b>	International Committee of the Red Cross
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally determined contribution
<b>NDP</b>	National Development Plan
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organisation
<b>OAS</b>	Organisation of American States
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Aid
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PDET</b>	Development Programs with Territorial Focus
<b>PHRD</b>	Peace and Human Rights Division
<b>PMI</b>	Implementation plan of the peace agreement
<b>PRM/US</b>	Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration/US Department of State
<b>RMRP</b>	Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Platform
<b>SDC/GC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation/Global Cooperation
<b>SDC/HA</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation/Humanitarian Aid
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SECO</b>	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USD</b>	United States dollar
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

---

**State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO –  
Economic Cooperation and Development**

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO is part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER). SECO's Economic Cooperation and Development division implements economic cooperation and development activities with middle-income developing countries, with countries of Eastern Europe as well as the new Member States of the European Union. It coordinates Switzerland's relations with the World Bank Group, the regional development banks and the economic organizations of the United Nations.

---

**Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC –  
Humanitarian Aid and Global Cooperation**

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is Switzerland's international cooperation agency within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). SDC is responsible for implementing the Federal Council's foreign policy on humanitarian aid and development. Swiss Humanitarian Aid is involved in protecting the interests of vulnerable population groups prior to, during and after periods of conflict, crises or natural disasters. SDC's Global Programmes work worldwide to promote a globalisation conducive to development.

---

**State Secretariat FDFA, Peace and Human Rights Division**

The Peace and Human Rights Division (PHRD) is the centre of expertise for the promotion of peace, human rights and the protection of the individual. It works to prevent armed conflicts, bring about a peaceful resolution to existing conflicts, strengthen the international normative framework, particularly in the field of human rights, and protect those affected by armed conflicts, other situations of violence and disasters.

## Imprint

### Publisher

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,  
Education and Research EAER  
**State Secretariat for Economic Affairs  
SECO**  
Economic Cooperation and Development  
Holzikofenweg 36, 3003 Bern  
Phone: +41 (0)58 464 09 10  
info.cooperation@seco.admin.ch  
www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
**Swiss Agency for Development and  
Cooperation SDC**  
Freiburgstrasse 130, 3003 Bern  
Phone: +41 (058) 462 34 75  
deza@eda.admin.ch  
www.eda.admin.ch/sdc

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA  
**State Secretariat  
Peace and Human Rights Division PHRD**  
Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Bern  
Phone: +41 58 462 30 50  
sts.afm@eda.admin.ch  
www.eda.admin.ch

### Editing/Coordination

SECO Economic Cooperation and Development Division  
SDC Humanitarian Aid and Global Cooperation  
PHRD Peace and Human Rights Division

### Design and layout

Publications section, SECO

### Print

Suter & Gerteis AG

### Photos

SECO Cooperation Colombia: 1, 12 (3), 16 (3) / HEKS Colombia: 6 (3) / HEKS Colombia: 6 (3) / UN Women Colombia: 6 (4) / Ministerio de Hacienda: 6 (1) / Swisscontact: 11, 12 (1), 19 / Corpoema: 11 / Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas: 16 (1) / Bancoldex: 16 (2) / Save the children Colombia: 6 (2), 12 (3), 20 (3) / IPI COLIPRI: 20 (1) / Humanity & Inclusion Colombia: 20 (2)

### Sources

This publication contains data based on statistics from World Bank, the IMF and other international bodies as well as national statistical services from Colombia.

The publication and maps used therein do not imply the expression of any opinion concerning the legal status of any country or territory of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its borders.

Copies of this publication may be downloaded from [www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch](http://www.seco-cooperation.admin.ch) or ordered by e-mail to [info.cooperation@seco.admin.ch](mailto:info.cooperation@seco.admin.ch).