

INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE?

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AN EVALUATION OF DEVELOPMENT
MECHANISMS AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS
IN POST-CONFLICT COLOMBIA

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Colombia

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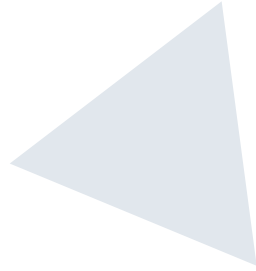
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

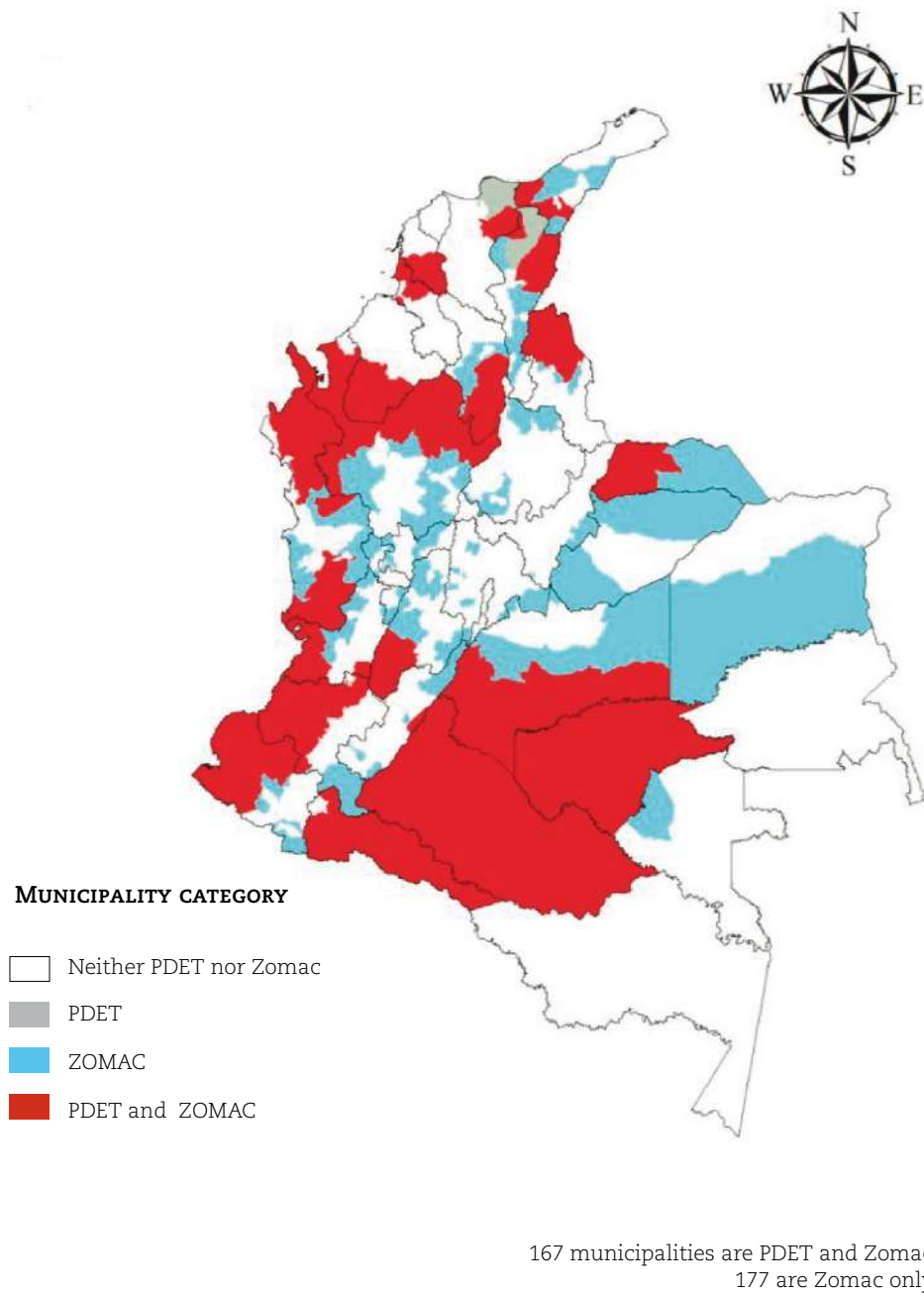
ANT	National Land Agency
ART	Territorial Renovation Agency
Dane	National Administrative Department of Statistics
Dian	National Directorate of Taxes and Customs
ICA	Industry and Trade Tax
MPI	Multidimensional poverty index
UBN	Unsatisfied basic needs
Ocad-Paz	Collegiate Administration and Decision-Making Body for the resources of the General Royalties System for the implementation of the Final Peace Agreement
PATR	Regional Transformation Action Plan
PDET	Development plans with a territorial approach
PGN	General National Budget
PES	Payments for environmental services
SGP	General System of Participation
SGR	General Royalties System
Zomac	Zones most affected by the conflict

WHAT THE PROJECT CONSISTED OF AND THE QUESTIONS WE CONSIDERED

Following the 2016 signing of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace [Acuerdo Final], the Colombian Government created two programs, intended to stimulate development and thereby help consolidate peace in the country: the areas most affected by the conflict (Zomac) and the development plans with a territorial approach (PDET). The former is intended to benefit a set of 344 municipalities, prioritized by their behavior in variables that include levels of multidimensional poverty, fiscal performance, degree of incidence of the armed conflict and levels of rurality (Decree 1650 of 2017).

Under the latter, the State prioritized 170 of the Zomac municipalities that, besides having the characteristics of the Zomacs, had a significant presence of illicit crops (Decree 893 of 2017). The PDET municipalities, in turn, were grouped into sixteen subregions ([Figure 1](#)). In both cases, the measures were expected to help reduce the gaps between these areas (mainly rural) and the rest of the country (urban).

Figure 1. Where are the PDETs and Zomacs?



Source: authors

STATE PROGRAMS PERTINENT TO THE PROJECT AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

PDETs

A participatory exercise was conducted between 2017 and 2018 in the PDET municipalities at three levels (rural, municipal, and subregional). The exercise prompted a series of covenants, in which the communities expressed what they expected from their territory, on various topics, organized into eight pillars: (1) social management of rural property and land use; (2) infrastructure and land suitability; (3) rural health; (4) rural education and

early childhood; (5) housing, drinking water, and basic rural sanitation; (6) economic reactivation and agricultural production; (7) system for the progressive guarantee of the right to food; (8) reconciliation, coexistence, and peacebuilding.

Various sources of financing were available to fund the projects derived from the PDET participatory exercises and to promote development in these municipalities. These are detailed in Table 1¹.

1 See Conpes 3932 of 2018: <https://colaboracion.dnp.gov.co/CDT/Conpes/Econ%C3%B3micos/3932.pdf>.

Table 1. PDETs funding sources

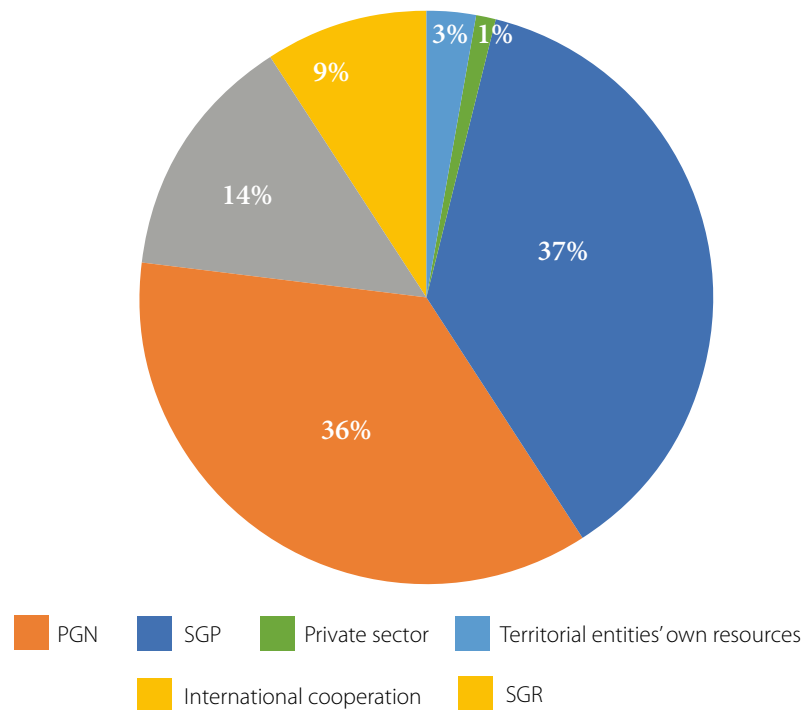
GENERAL NATIONAL BUDGET (PGN)	These are all the resources from the nation's income and from the income received by the national public establishments themselves, in the normal development of their activities.
GENERAL ROYALTIES SYSTEM (SGR) UNDER OCAD-PAZ DECISION	In accordance with Decree-Law 1534 of 2017, the Collegiate Body of Administration and Decision for the SGR resources destined for the implementation of the Final Agreement is called Ocad-Paz. The entity is responsible for defining the investment projects to be financed with the resources from the surplus of territorial pension savings from the General Royalties System and the Allocation for Peace.
GENERAL SYSTEM OF PARTICIPATION (SGP)	The resources from the SGP are transfers that, by constitutional mandate, the national government makes to the territorial entities so that these may autonomously invest in health and education.
LOCAL AUTHORITIES' OWN RESOURCES	These are the investment resources appropriated in each fiscal year that come from territorial taxes, such as the property tax, the Industry and Commerce Tax (ICA) or the surtax on fuel tax.
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	They may be used to implement PDETs in the prioritized municipalities.
PRIVATE PARTICIPATION THROUGH PROJECTS FOR TAXES	International cooperation revenues are divided according to the origin of the resources, the nature of the cooperation, the financing, and the ways in which these resources are channeled. These mainly come from sources of Official Development Assistance, philanthropy, and the international private sector.

Source: Ministerio de Justicia y del Derecho (Rodríguez-Llach y Martínez, 2022)².

2 For more information, see: <http://bit.ly/3hBBLtC>.

By 2020, funding for PDETs, according to their sources, has come mainly from the SGP (37%), the PGN (36%) and the SGR (14%) and, to a lesser extent, from international cooperation and the private sector (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Sources of PDET funding



Source: Authors based on Mora-Cortés (2020)³.

³ For more information, see: <http://bit.ly/3AFqHSP>

ZOMACS

No participatory exercises were conducted in the Zomac municipalities. However, a special tax regime was implemented for companies created or formalized (Zomac companies) in the municipalities. The

idea of this was for the economy to be boosted by the creation of companies, which would contribute to overcoming the socioeconomic inequity that is, among other things, one of the causes of the continuing violence in Colombia.

PROJECTS FOR TAXES

In addition to the tax incentives for Zomac companies, the State adopted another strategy called “projects for taxes,” to encourage companies’ participation in peacebuilding, through the implementation of development projects to close socioeconomic inequality gaps between Zomacs and the rest of the country (art. 238 of Law 1819 of 2016). This Figure enables companies liable to pay income tax and complementary taxes to pay up to fifty percent (50%) of the value of such tax, through direct investment in the implementation of socially significant projects in Zomac municipalities. There are two types of projects for taxes (trust and covenant). Below is an explanation of the characteristics and the process of creating a trust, which has been the most widely used figure by the companies.

Operating through a trust, the projects for taxes figure can be used to implement projects in the road infrastructure, education and public health, drinking water, sewage and energy sectors. Implementation is based on the following steps:

1. *Define which works may be executed by means of projects for taxes.* In order for a project to be executed by a company as part of projects for taxes, it must be registered in a project bank⁴, managed by the Territorial Renovation Agency (ART)⁵. ART, in turn, consolidates the

development initiatives suggested by local, departmental and national territorial entities, as well as those submitted by companies. In order to be listed in the project bank, the proposed works must meet a number of technical requirements and be approved by the National Planning Department and other authorities of the corresponding sector (Ministries).

2. *Presentation of interest in the project and authorization by ART.* Once the project is listed in the project bank, the company may request to have the work assigned to it to be executed through the projects for taxes mechanism. ART must authorize the company to participate in the implementation of the work, once it has verified a number of requirements.
3. *Creation of a trust and project execution.* Following ART’s approval, the company may deposit the money corresponding to the implementation of the work in a trust fund to begin the procedures for the execution of the work.
4. *The company’s acceptance of the work and declaration of compliance with the contract.* Once the company executes the project and this has been received to the satisfaction of the territorial entities, the National Tax and Customs Directorate (Dian) declares that the company has fulfilled its tax obligation.

4 The projects for taxes bank is public and available here: <http://bit.ly/3hufcH7>.

5 The Territorial Renovation Agency was created to coordinate the intervention of national and territorial entities in rural conflict affected areas, prioritized by the national government, through the

implementation of plans and projects for their territorial renovation. This allows their economic and social reactivation and their institutional strengthening, so that they can be sustainably integrated into the country’s development.

PROJECT QUESTIONS AND TOPICS OF INTEREST

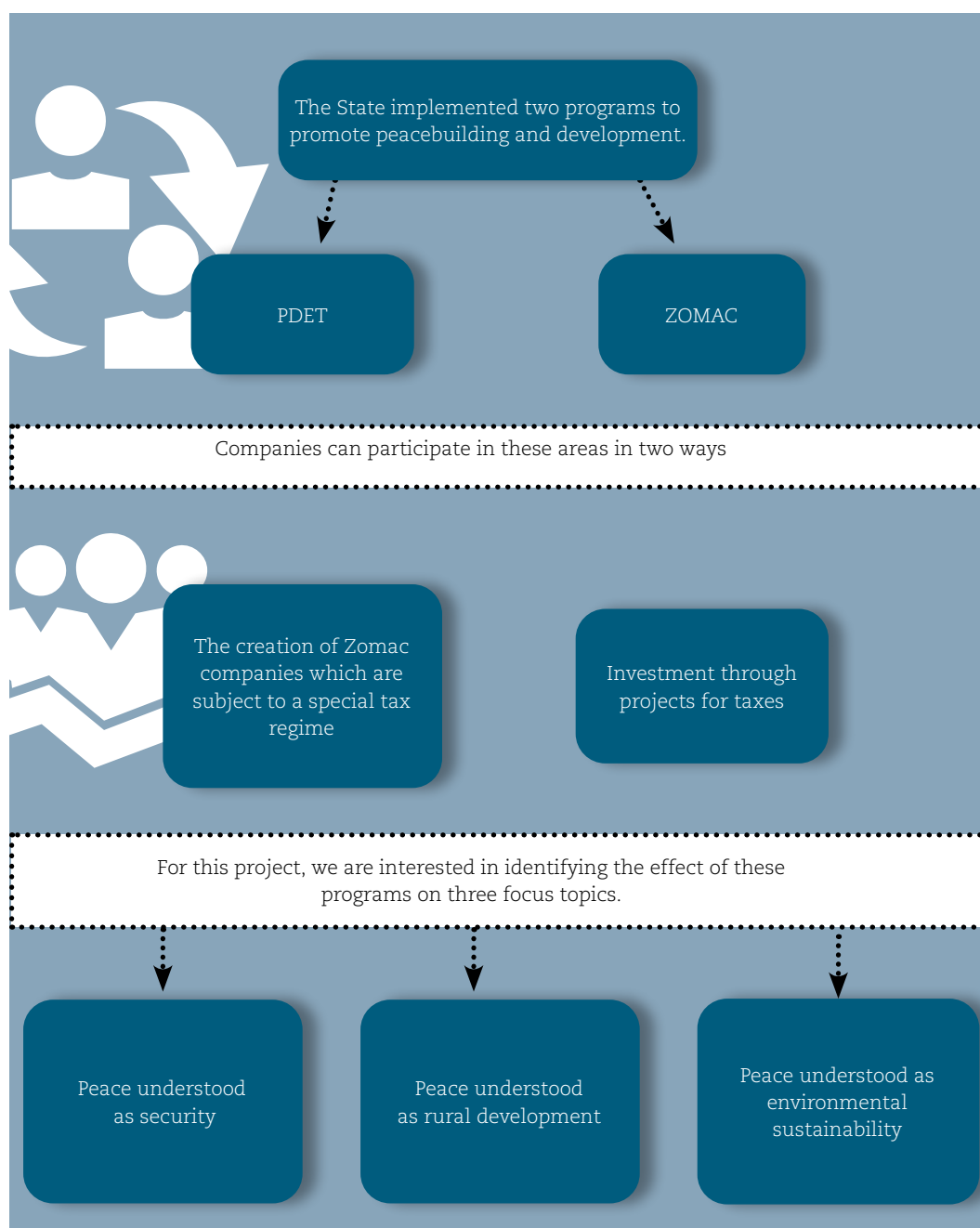
The PDET and Zomac zones were designed as two different approaches to building peace through development: in one, the aim was to give communities control over development (PDET) and, in the other, the companies were entrusted with the peacebuilding function, allowing them to dynamize local economies (Zomac). Thus, PDETs could be categorized as a bottom-up peacebuilding strategy, in which it is the communities that, according to public policy design, determine and drive development and by doing so, build peace. In contrast, Zomacs could be categorized as a top-down peacebuilding strategy, in which companies would drive development through direct investment in the territories, thus generating positive cycles that could potentially contribute to peacebuilding.

Based on the foregoing, this study primarily inquired into two issues. First, we explored the *implementation* of these programs to determine whether PDETs and Zomacs are in fact as different as they were designed to be. Second, we assessed whether

there is evidence that one or the other approach (bottom-up or top-down) *has better peacebuilding effects*.

However, the project team understands that peace goes well beyond the absence of violence -negative peace, from Galtung's (1996) perspective. Therefore, peace was approached from three different and complementary perspectives: peace understood as *security* (absence of violence); peace understood as *rural development* (supply of goods, public services, and promotion of licit rural economies); and peace understood as *environmental protection* (environmental sustainability, especially deforestation). These different concepts of peace will be referred to throughout this document as the study's *issues of interest* (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Project focus: peace as security, rural development, environmental sustainability



Source: authors.



WHAT WE DID AND HOW WE DID IT

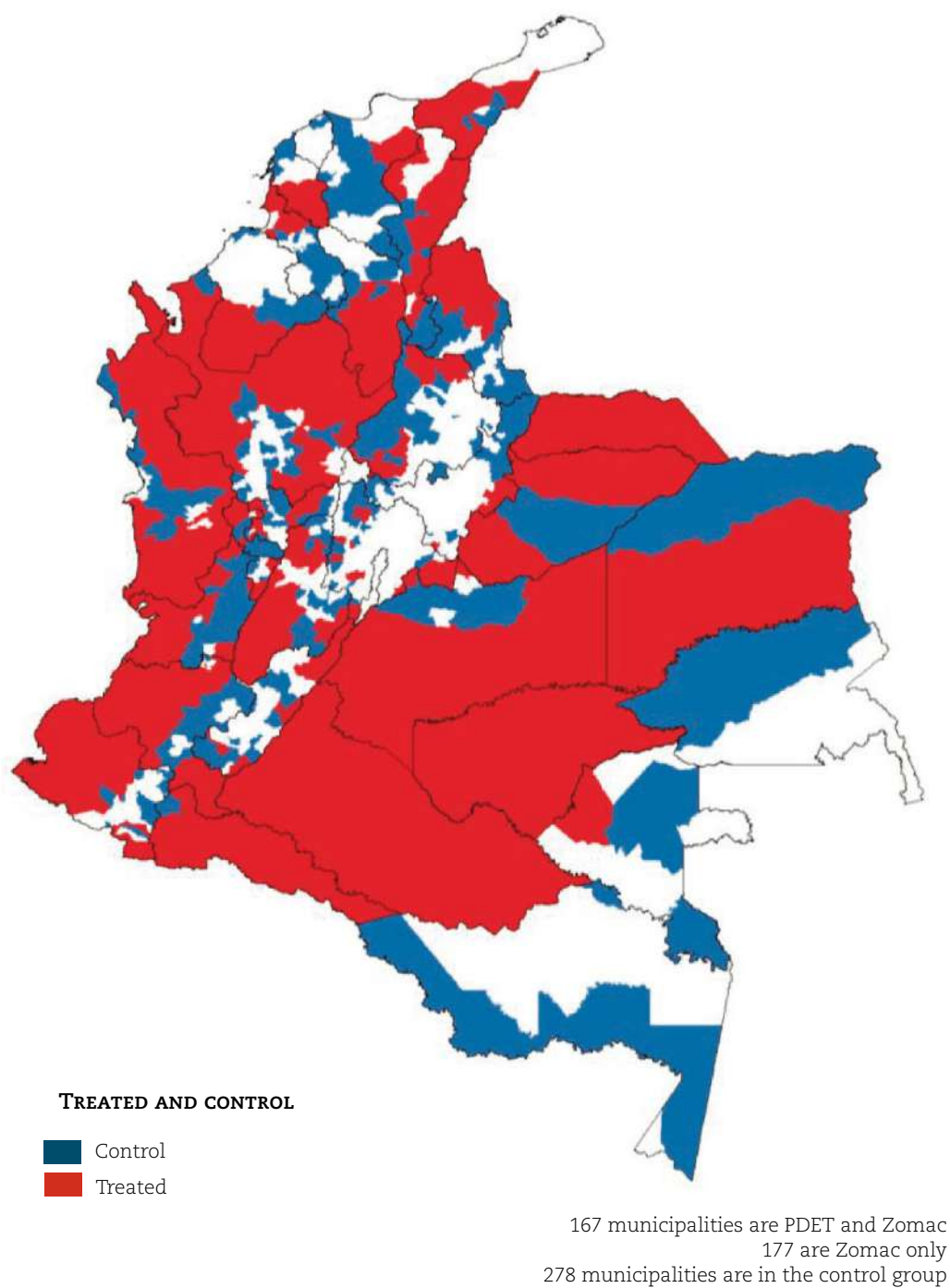


Two types of analysis were carried out to answer the project questions described above: one quantitative (through database analysis) and the other qualitative (interviews and review of standards and documents).

The quantitative analyses was based on official data, and used to determine whether the performance of PDET and Zomac municipalities is different, when making comparisons in relation to the variables of interest. To this end, we compared the municipalities that belong to the programs (treatment group), with those that are sufficiently similar to the former, in variables related to socioeconomic conditions and levels of incidence of armed conflict (control group, i.e., municipalities without interventions).

The variables used in this component included information on the performance of the municipalities in the treatment and control group, on issues such as levels of unsatisfied basic needs, participation processes, presence of illicit crops, exposure to armed conflict and other related socioeconomic variables. We also collected data related to each variable of interest for the security, rural development, and environmental sustainability components ([Figure 4](#)).

Figura 4. Distribución espacial de los grupos de tratamiento y control (622 municipios)



Source: authors.

The qualitative analyses were conducted with a view to identifying, according to the perceptions of different actors on program implementation, the effects that the programs have had on their experiences of territorial peace and on the project's topics of interest (peace understood as security, rural development and environmental sustainability). As part of the project's qualitative component, 66 interviews were held with local- and national-level actors. Locally, we interviewed, among others, social leaders, members of the watchdog group⁶, secretaries at municipal mayors' offices, officials at municipal mayors' offices, coordinators of "victims' roundtables"⁷ and corporate sector representatives.

Nationally, interviews were held with experts in rural development, academics, officials, and former officials of entities such as the ART and the

National Land Agency (ANT), civil society organizations and PDET coordinators in different parts of the country. In the local interviews, we inquired about the changes derived from the Final Agreement and, in the case of the PDET and Zomac municipalities, about the perceptions regarding the functioning of these mechanisms. In the national-level interviews, we asked about the origin of the PDET and Zomac programs, their institutional structure, and the challenges of their implementation at government level.

Four municipalities were identified for this analysis, allowing us to compare (1) a PDET municipality that, until then, had received high levels of private investment; (2) a PDET municipality that, until then, had received limited private investment; (3) a Zomac municipality; and (4) a municipality that had not received interventions, but that resembles the other municipalities in other characteristics (Table 2)⁸.

6 The PDET watchdog groups are made up of delegates elected during the PDET participative development phase. These groups "are responsible for reporting on the status of project implementation; co-responsible for implementation management, articulation and positioning; and monitoring the execution of PDETs in order to comply with commitments" (FIP, 2021, p. 5).

7 The "victims' roundtables" are "theme-based spaces for the effective participation of victims, designed for discussion, dialogue, feedback, training and monitoring of the provisions contained in Law 1448 of 2011 [...]. They are made up of victims' organizations and organizations defending victims' rights at municipal, departmental, and national levels. Here, victims can influence the drafting of territorial action plans for attention to and comprehensive reparation of victims" (Unidad para las Víctimas, 2022).

8 In selecting the municipalities, the researchers also took into account the security conditions for carrying out fieldwork. This is due to the fact that the conditions of violence and insecurity have persisted after the signing of the Final Agreement, particularly in rural areas (Pinzón, 2020). According to Indepaz (2021), since the signing of the Agreement until November 2021, 1270 social leaders and 299 signatories of the Peace Agreement had been assassinated; and, between January 2020 and November 2021, 179 massacres were perpetrated (Pinzón, 2020).

Table 2. Identification of the four municipalities that allowed a comparison of the impact of the programs

MUNICIPALITY TYPE	HIGH INVESTMENT PDET MUNICIPALITY	LIMITED INVESTMENT PDET MUNICIPALITY	ZOMAC MUNICIPALITY	ZERO INVESTMENT MUNICIPALITY
MUNICIPALITY NAME	El Bagre (Antioquia)	Zambrano (Bolívar)	Tauramena (Casanare)	Campohermoso (Boyacá)
UNSATISFIED BASIC NEEDS INDEX (UBN), 2018⁹	35.51	41.84	14.44	20.96
MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX (MPI), 2018¹⁰	53.7	62.4	27.2	52.3
RURALITY INDEX, 2018¹¹	36.71	11.55	38.16	75.42

Source: authors.

- 9 The UBN index provides an approximation of the population's access to basic goods and services such as education, public services, food, health and housing, among others. It takes values between zero and one hundred (0-100) and the higher the index value, the lower the municipality's access to these goods and services.
- 10 The MPI is complementary to the UBN index, as it takes into account the educational conditions of the household, children and youth, access to work, health and basic housing conditions and public services. Its interpretation is similar to that of UBN: a higher MPI means higher levels of multidimensional poverty.
- 11 The rurality index indicates the proportion of rural population in relation to the total population.



WHAT WE FOUND



WHAT WE FOUND CONCERNING THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PEACEBUILDING IN PDET (BOTTOM-UP) AND ZOMAC (TOP-DOWN)

The PDET programs' bottom-up approach was reversed at the beginning of initiative implementation, so that both programs (Zomac and PDET) currently operate under a top-down logic. In both high and low private investment PDET municipalities, people recalled the participatory exercises with positive emotions, including hope, recognition, solidarity, and communion. Indeed, for some, the initial phase of PDETs strengthened community processes and promoted the emergence of new leaderships in the municipalities.

Despite the above, the contrast in perceptions during the PDETs' implementation phase is striking. A sudden change is also observed in the case of some of the mayors of the PDET municipalities, who went from being the State's ambassadors and "favorites" to those having to travel to Bogotá to collect a document or certificate that guarantees that a project will be considered nationally.

This evidence suggests that, in practice, the two State programs (Zomac and PDET) privilege decisions made by the regional and national State, and that they do not provide room for community participation. It was also found that citizen oversight bodies for the control and monitoring of PDET resources were neither created nor strengthened. Also, leaders do not have the capacity to know where the information is or how to create the oversight mechanisms, and resource oversight activities have traditionally put community leaders at risk.

Satisfaction with PDET and Zomac programs varies substantially among the municipalities' inhabitants. In El Bagre (high-investment PDET), satisfaction with the PDET works and the perception of the well-being they have brought to the municipality is heterogeneous and varies according to individual proximity to the works and to the municipal capital. While some actors celebrate the program and directly perceive its benefits, others consider that the results have been concentrated in the municipality's urban area, thus breaking the mission of PDETs to narrow the urban-rural gap.

In Zambrano (low-investment PDET), the level of satisfaction with the program is low across the board. People say that they have no knowledge of how the scarce benefits are allocated, which, in any case, are insufficient in view of the level of unsatisfied basic needs in the municipality and the commitments agreed upon in the Action Plan for Regional Transformation (PATR)¹².

12 The PATR are “the instruments that make PDETs operational, as they record the various participatory

In the case of Tauramena (Zomac), major investments have come unilaterally from oil companies and through the projects for taxes mechanism, while the incorporation of Zomac companies has not been successful. This figure (Zomac companies) was never socialized (Lozano and Saavedra, 2019) and those who decided to take advantage of it to create their micro and small companies are not supported by the Chambers of Commerce or the local administration.

exercises and define the specific initiatives designed to promote the comprehensive development of the prioritized territories. The PATRs organize the initiatives proposed at the subregional level under the following pillars: social management of rural property and land use; infrastructure and land suitability; rural health; rural education and early childhood; rural housing, drinking water and basic rural sanitation; economic reactivation and agricultural production; system for the progressive guarantee of the right to food; and reconciliation, coexistence, and peacebuilding” (Ramírez-Sarmiento, 2021).

WHAT WE FOUND WHEN COMPARING MUNICIPALITIES WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTERVENTION FOR PEACEBUILDING THROUGH DEVELOPMENT (CAMPOHERMOSO, TAURAMENA, ZAMBRANO AND EL BAGRE)

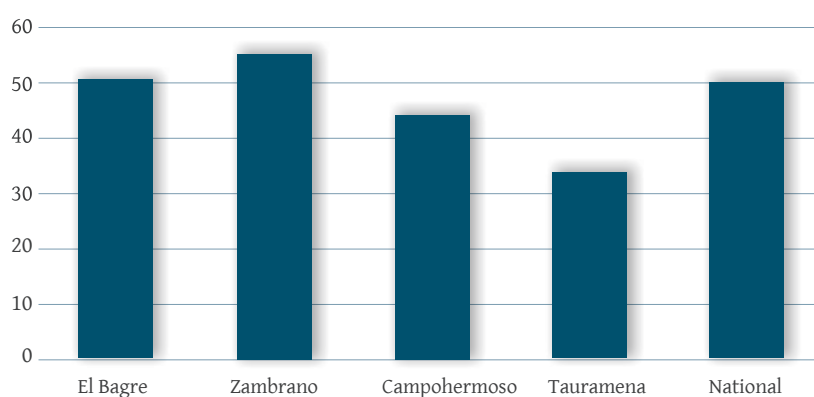
The exercise of prioritizing municipalities to receive some kind of preferential attention (e.g., PDET or Zomac municipality status) may be perceived as arbitrary or unjustified by municipalities that do not benefit. Indeed, questions were raised at all levels (national, regional and local) about the decision making concerning which municipalities should be prioritized for

PDET. Given that resources are scarce, any choice is perceived as capricious by different actors, since, in one way or another, the municipalities in the control group (those that did not receive any type of intervention) have had a victim population, and been subject to State neglect and low institutional presence.

For example, **Figures 5-7** show that Campohermoso had a higher UBN index in 2005 than Tauramena and very close to that of the other municipalities, despite the fact that it is not a Zomac municipality. It is clear, however, that, in comparison with the other municipalities in the study and

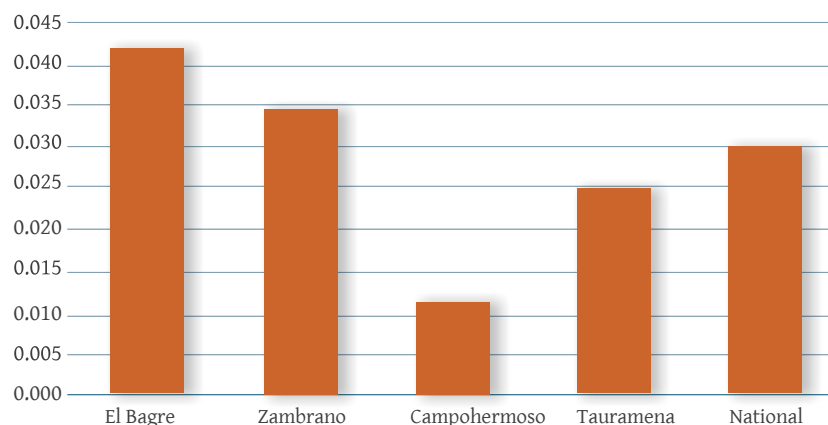
the national average, Campohermoso had a lower incidence of armed conflict, but a higher rurality index than all the others. Despite the above, business and state actors reiterated the need to use criteria to prioritize the application of public policies, without ignoring the fact that these should be universal and progressive.

Figure 5. Unsatisfied basic needs index, 2005



Source: authors based on the *Censo Nacional de Población y Vivienda* (Dane, 2005).

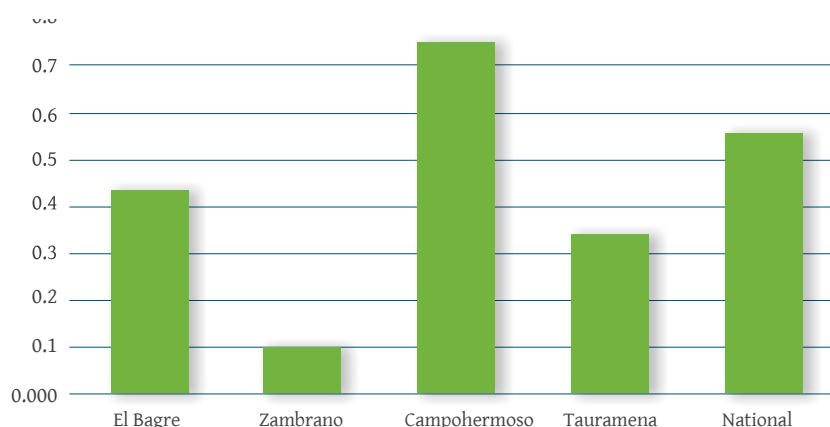
Figure 6. Conflict incidence rate, 2018



Source: Authors based on DNP (2018)¹³.

¹³ The armed Conflict incidence rate was calculated with data obtained in 2013, but was published in 2018.

Figure 7. Rurality index average, 2014-2019



Source: authors based on Dane (2019).

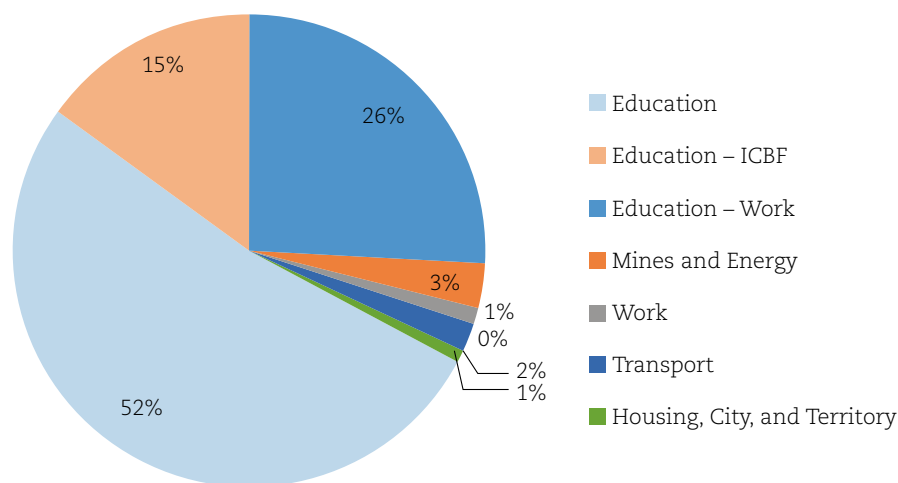
WHAT WE FOUND CONCERNING PEACE, UNDERSTOOD AS INCREASED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The projects for taxes mechanism has been welcomed by all stakeholders. Although this was not the main source of funding for PDET projects, local administrations have found it to serve as an opportunity to attract investment to the municipalities, while positioning their management efforts favorably before the inhabitants of their municipalities. Companies have found it to provide an opportunity to invest in their area of influence and improve their relationship with the communities, while national authorities have found that it serves as a way to finance peace initiatives.

In turn, the communities perceive that the projects for taxes mechanism means that they can guarantee that the resources stay in the territory, that the works are executed, and that there is at least a “little” control with regards corruption. So far, according to ART, 141 works have a company linked to the mechanism, benefiting 89 PDET municipalities (52% of the municipalities) and 93 Zomac municipalities (27% of the municipalities). Investments, amounting to 944,343 million pesos, have been concentrated mainly in the transport, housing, and education sectors (Figure 8)¹⁴.

¹⁴ For more information, see: <https://www.renovacionterritorio.gov.co/#/es/publicacion/160/resultados-oxi>.

Figure 8. Projects for taxes: total amount of money invested by sector



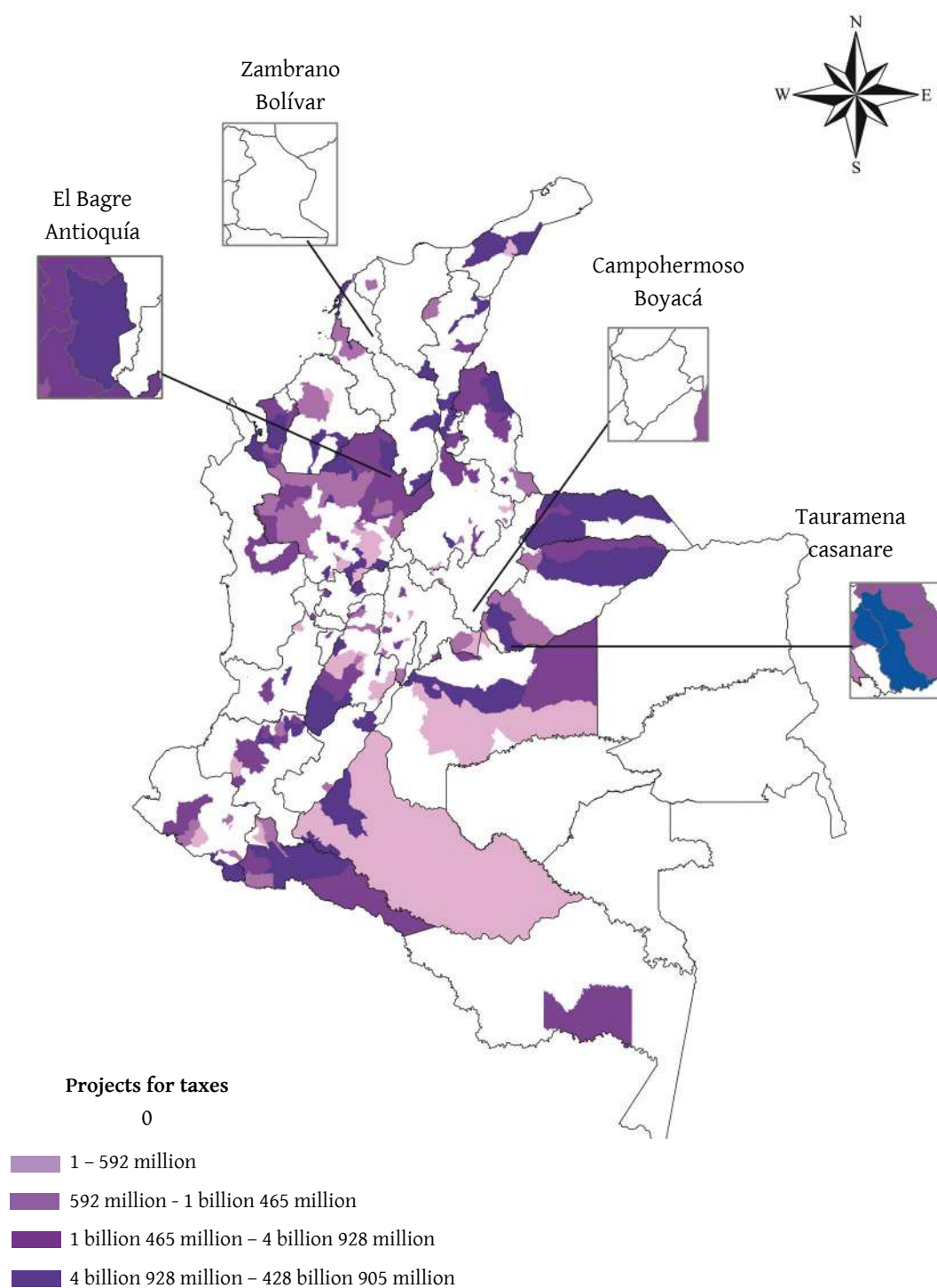
Source: authors based on ART (2022).

Despite the above, during the fieldwork, we identified that the mechanism raises questions around the following issues:

1. Projects for taxes benefit municipalities where large companies (which pay high taxes) or political or international cooperation actors are present that make them visible. Thus, there are Zomac municipalities that, despite having the required characteristics in terms of unsatisfied basic needs and other criteria, will

not benefit from this mechanism, given that there are no companies interested in them (Figure 9). Thus, works are often concentrated in certain municipalities of the sub-region that have leaders who promote their interests (e.g., María la Baja and Ovejas in the Montes de María area), leaving other municipalities out (e.g., Zambrano in the Montes de María area).

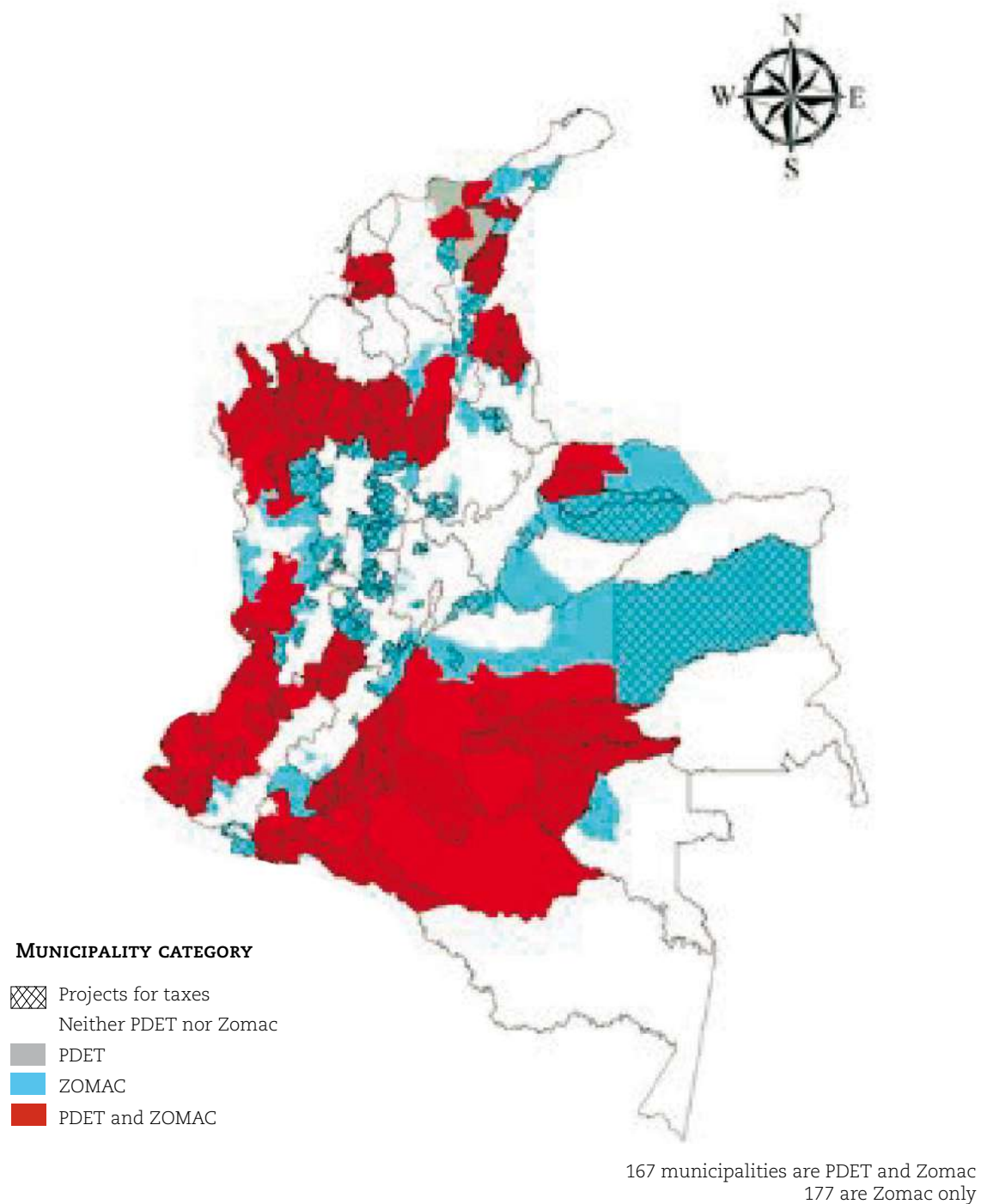
Figure 9. Map of projects for taxes



Source: authors based on ART (2022).

2. Projects for taxes have to meet various technical requirements in order to be included in the project bank and be eligible for funding. Thus, actors must be involved in the proper structuring of the projects in order for them to be considered at the national level. This, in turn, requires high technical capacities and the availability of resources. In addition, companies prefer to invest in projects that they themselves have designed directly, believing that, otherwise, the project may have design flaws which make it unfeasible and difficult to implement.
3. In PDET municipalities, projects implemented as part of projects for taxes should be clearly related to initiatives derived from participatory exercises (PATR). However, for communities, this relationship is not clear (Vergara and Duque, 2020; Fundación Ideas para la Paz -FIP, 2022), and associated with the fact that, broadly speaking, the watchdog groups and control groups do not feel involved in the implementation of PDETs, which is transferred to the execution of projects for taxes (Figure 10).
4. For companies, although the mechanism is attractive and interesting, there are still many disincentives, given the red tape involved and the requirements of applying the public law regime (FIP, 2022).
5. Mayors consider the projects for taxes mechanism a “blessing.” Thus, in practice, there is little incentive for municipalities to intervene in the type of works to be financed through projects for taxes, given that any investment will serve the purpose of legitimizing their management. Therefore, negotiations are concentrated at regional and national level, leaving little room for maneuver in terms of the participation of communities and other local leaders.

Figure 10. Location of projects for taxes, PDETs and Zomacs projects



Source: authors.

State presence, be it strong or weak, is reflected in terms of the presence of projects. People do not usually identify clear state institutions or policies—except for the programs for the elderly and *Familias en Acción* in some cases— but rather calls for projects. *Proyectitos* or small-scale projects were identified as reaching, or at least being recognized by people in the municipalities. For example: the delivery of fifteen chickens, two heads of cattle and three packs of animal feed, etc. These are the projects that, with the exception of the most optimistic beneficiaries in the urban areas of El Bagre (PDET-high investment), people identify and which, according to different participants, have been assigned in the municipalities based on “politics.”

We also identified that there are various *proyectos* or large projects, for example, those derived from projects for taxes, in which both communities and local governments do not have a major say, despite the fact that they belong to the PDET programs. Communities interact with these projects as indirect observers, while local governments act as intermediaries between the companies and the State, at departmental and national level. This results in the legitimacy of the PDET process once again being weakened as it is controlled by national and departmental agendas that centralize the process and move it away from peace as a more territorial process.

This is even more problematic if we consider that, as stated by some interviewees, there is no clarity as to which works are the PDETs'; which are the municipality's; and, in general, what is the origin of the resources and to whom responsibility should be attributed for their management. In this regard, a reiterated complaint in the PDET municipalities was that there were actions prior to the arrival of the programs, or completely unrelated to the ART's management, which were nevertheless

presented as PDET products in order to meet goals. Communities also repeatedly pointed out the importance of having the PDET “stamp” on the works, so that they could recognize where the funding came from. There was a shift from PDET jackets and caps at the participatory stage, to a dilution of the brand at the implementation stage.

Resources are perceived to be used inefficiently. According to some communities, the resources available for the implementation of PDET projects are not properly managed. For example, projects are subcontracted out (intermediaries) and large amounts of the budget are spent on training, accommodation, and logistics. This reduces the amount available to finance the projects' essential elements, meaning that the impact of investment on the communities' most fundamental needs is low.

Social organizations' level of strength is critical to the successful development of peace initiatives. However, funding mechanisms intended to promote “bottom-up development,” through associative-colaborative schemes to access peace resources, were identified as giving rise to dynamics that do not strengthen community action but, rather, weaken it.

Social organizations (particularly those that must be incorporated and registered as legal entities) were found to be used by political and armed actors as vehicles for capturing peace resources and concentrating benefits, for example, for groups with greater political affinity to local governments.

On the other hand, the creation of community associations and organizations that participate in the execution of PDET resources is promoted, but rather than empowering and strengthening communities, this generates tensions and fragmentation around the competition for resources.

In all municipalities, even those that are not PDET or Zomac, communities perceive that benefits are allocated according to convenience, depending on how power and politics are managed in each municipality. Communities describe the processes as arbitrary and lacking in transparency. This is observed both in social policies associated with the reparation of victims (for example, in Campohermoso), and in the delivery of subsidies for agricultural activities (for example, in Zambrano), or the delivery of projects associated with PDET initiatives. A concrete example of the latter is the donation of cows to landless people in the municipality of Zambrano (Figure 11).

To this extent, we find that the allocation of peace resources could not transcend the political logics of resource allocation in the municipalities,

thus engendering the idea that there are “first and second-class citizens,” depending on political affinity. Another example of this form of resource allocation in a regional dimension is the recent scandal of resources stolen through the Ocad-Paz mechanism. According to allegations, some 500 billion pesos of money from this source were appropriated through corruption schemes. In this case, despite Ocad-Paz being made up of technical bodies such as the DNP, centralized processes in Bogotá did not prevent corruption dynamics from being triggered¹⁵.

¹⁵ For more information, see: <https://bit.ly/3X8elfl> and <http://bit.ly/3DUpJ60>.

Figure 11. Cow wandering around the municipal capital of Zambrano: “Here they give cows to those who have no land”



Source: photo by Laura Bernal Bermúdez.

WHAT WE FOUND CONCERNING PEACE, UNDERSTOOD AS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There has been an increase in deforestation post 2017 for both Zomac and PDET areas. This finding in no way implies that the evidence suggests that peace programs have led to deforestation (**Figure 12**)¹⁶. According to the academic literature on the subject, there are several mechanisms by which this result can be understood, as follows:

1. The dynamics of the internal armed conflict itself may have directly or indirectly protected the ecosystems from the actors that incite deforestation (e.g., cattle ranchers, landowners, and farmers), resulting in some forest protection (Salazar *et al.*, 2021; Reardon, 2018).
2. The FARC-EP arguably left a power vacuum that was not replaced by a State institution to exercise control and monitoring over the

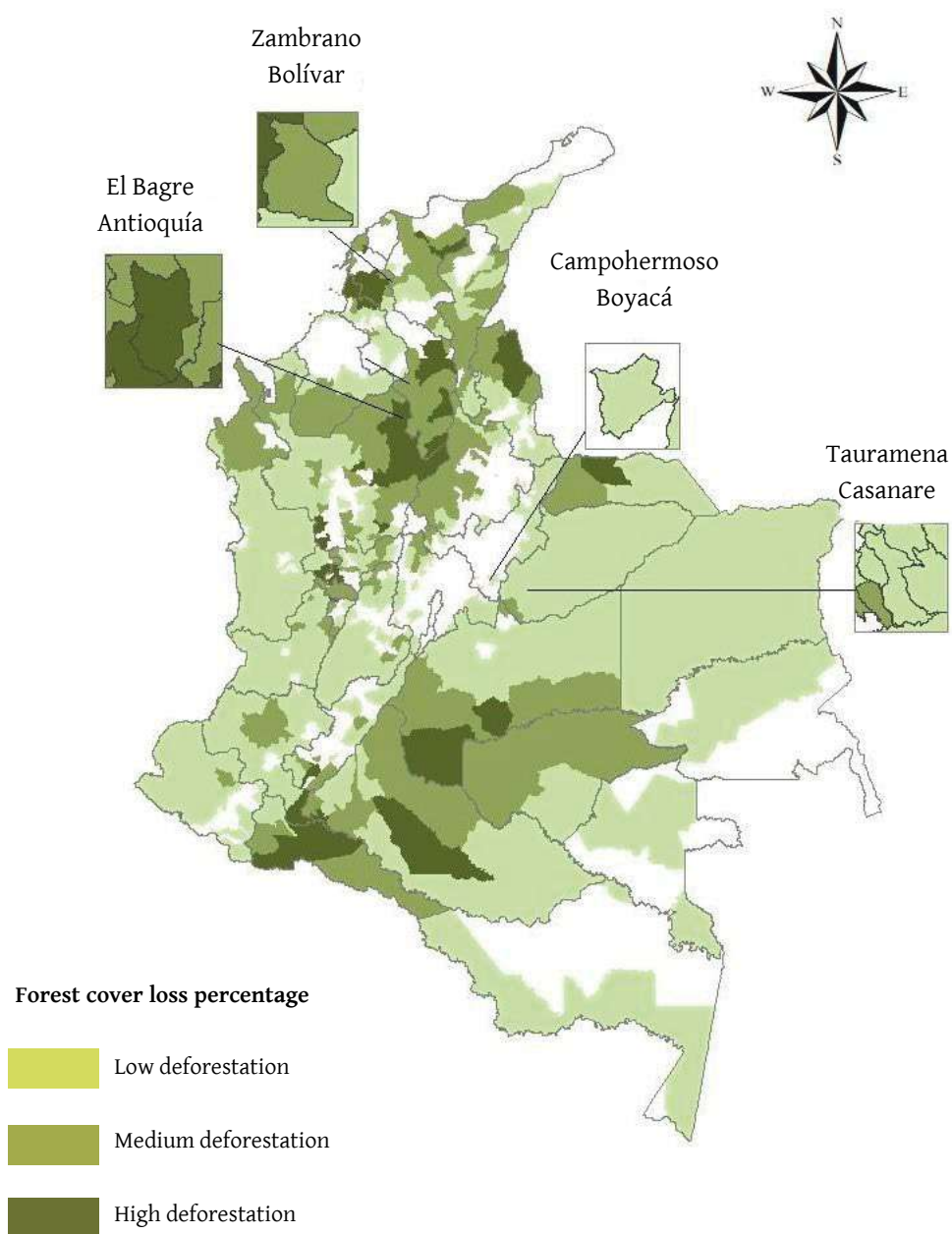
country's forests, leading to increased forest cover loss (Murillo *et al.*, 2021).

3. It should also be noted that the PDET and Zomac programs did not consider environmental issues as one of the pillars, which, as explained, was addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

Thus, the absence of specific objectives geared towards mitigating the main drivers of deforestation, such as licit and illicit timber exploitation, agricultural production, mining, and cattle ranching, may have had an impact on the deforestation observed. However, according to the exercises conducted during the project, the participants pointed out that deforestation is a complex phenomenon in which many causes specific to each territory converge, and that the return of some people to land that had previously been taken from them should also be considered.

¹⁶ The approximation to deforestation in this document is given through the variable of changes in the percentage of forest cover in the municipalities, developed by the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (Ideam), between 2010 and 2019 (Ideam, 2021)

Figure 12. Forest cover loss map



Source: authors based on data from the Instituto de Hidrología, Meteorología y Estudios Ambientales (Ideam, 2021).

Nature conservation efforts are led by local administrations and have no association with post-conflict development programs in PDET or Zomac areas. Entities such as environmental corporations are the most widely-recognized by the community (e.g., *Corporchivor* in *Campohermoso*), while in the PDET and Zomac municipalities it is the community that mobilizes the environmental agenda through community control (e.g., control of forests and wetlands in *El Bagre* and *Zambrano*) and citizen participation (e.g., monitoring of the Popular Mining Consultation in *Tauramena*).

Furthermore, the PDET programs had no specific pillar dedicated to the environmental issue, which was considered to be a cross-cutting issue. Thus, discussions on the issue were inserted in other pillars (mainly in the social organization of rural property and economic reactivation), making it more difficult to track its implementation, as this is dependent on other initiatives.

However, the relationship between communities and the environment is much more complex. Indeed, although there is a latent concern for environmental protection, other participants perceive that this protection is an obstacle to the implementation of actions contemplated in PDETs, or of projects associated with environmental issues. This is explained by the fact that they consider that, on occasion, protecting the environment implies

complying with other requirements that delay or impede the continuity of some projects (for example, in the case of occupations of Forest Reserve Zones under Law 2 of 1959). There are even those who believe that protection initiatives become a “blackmail mechanism” for different actors or a burden for the communities¹⁷.

17 On this point, one of the participants in the event organized to socialize the preliminary results of the project stated that: “It becomes another form of blackmail used by many actors, from the national government and the environmental agencies to the communities themselves, when they say, in the case of the PDET roads, they asked for road Y and bridge X, and when there is someone to do it, the community itself stops the project because there was no public hearing. The community itself stops it because there were no prior consultations. It stops infrastructure development...” Some other participants agreed with this opinion, in other terms such as “it becomes transactional (...) everything is an element of pressure in the end.”

WHAT WE FOUND CONCERNING PEACE, UNDERSTOOD AS THE ABSENCE OF VIOLENCE

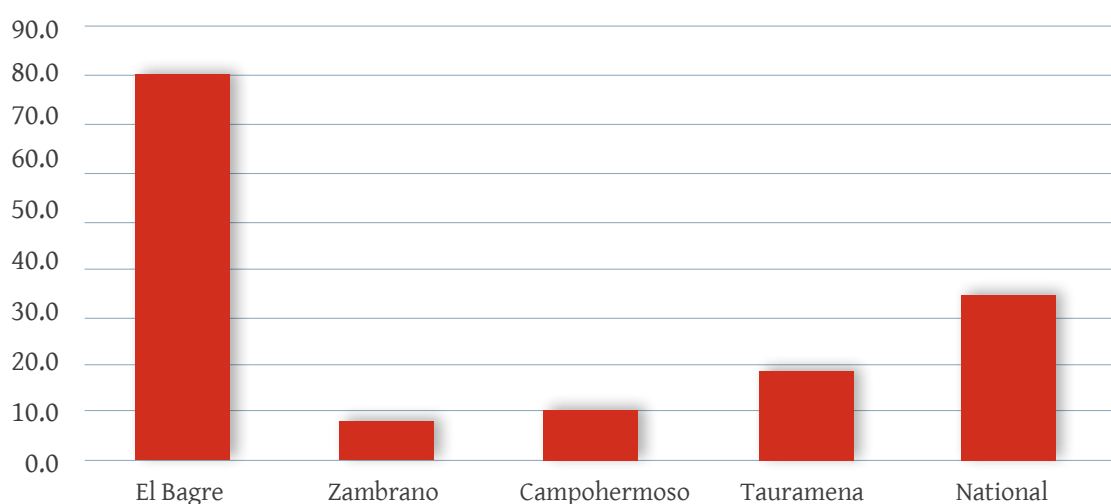
Some municipalities had been enjoying an atmosphere of peace even before the signing of the Final Agreement, partly due to the demobilization of paramilitary groups and partly due to the withdrawal of guerrilla groups. Also, during a period of time, which according to interviews coincides with the signing of the Peace Accord, better security levels were reported in areas with a mainly guerrilla presence (e.g., Zambrano and El Bagre). Despite the above, high rates of threats and homicides are once again being reported, while there is a perception that violence could erupt at any moment, as reflected in the existence of early alerts for forced recruitment (e.g., Zambrano).

Despite development interventions to reduce levels of violence, PDET areas have seen an increase in violence,

as measured by municipal homicide rates. Recognizing that there are multiple forms of violence, and that its measurement is multidimensional, it has been identified that, following the implementation of the Peace Accords, there was a differential increase in the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in the PDET and Zomac municipalities (Figure 13).

This finding does not imply, in any way, that the evidence suggests that the peace programs have led to this violence. However, it is a phenomenon that is differentially and representatively present in these municipalities and not in the control municipalities (those that did not receive PDET or Zomac interventions). This may be due to the fact that, in some municipalities, the FARC-EP was not the only illegal actor, so that now the territory is being disputed between the remaining illegal groups.

Figure 13. Average homicide rate per one hundred thousand inhabitants, 2014-2019



Source: authors.

Some project participants suggest that this finding could also be explained by the fact that the presence of the PDET program and the associated institutional framework may have led to strengthening community claims and greater visibility of social leadership, which entails greater exposure and risk to personal integrity. This is also related to a perception that the implementation of the PDET and Zomac programs is not connected to the reduction of generalized violence, meaning that, according to their design, they did not have the ambition to improve security conditions in the municipalities.

A decrease in the homicide rate has been recorded in Zomacs, post 2017. This may be because, on the one hand, several municipalities that were designated Zomac were not affected by other illegal actors

and, on the other, security increased in these areas, for example, due to the arrival of the army to restore security and thus provide investment opportunities for the private sector.

This finding coincides with the qualitative evidence collected, according to which the actors state that life is calm, but that the army is present to protect the oil infrastructure (e.g., Tauramena), so the State's military and police presence is differentiated (it is present according to the needs or interests to be protected). It also coincides with the evidence collected by the Private Investment Observatory (2022), according to which, since 2020, the amount and quantity of investments in Zomac (non-PDET) municipalities have increased, while investment in exclusively PDET municipalities decreased.



¿OUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STATE, COMPANIES, AND CIVIL SOCIETY BASED ON THE OBSERVATIONS



The recommendations are grouped into two components: the programs' participatory component and the peace dimensions (security, rural development, environmental sustainability).

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE PROGRAMS' PARTICIPATIVE COMPONENT

- Create horizontal communication spaces appropriate to the context of the municipalities, to ensure greater dissemination and access to information, so that communities do not depend solely on the watchdog groups.
- Include co-responsibility components in PDETs' operational guidelines that show that communities have a role in policy implementation that goes beyond the demand or pressure to implement the initiatives agreed upon in the PATR.
- Redefine the community and participatory nature of PDETs during program implementation, for example, through participatory budgets, in order to recapture successful experiences, without repeating the participatory exercise that characterized the initial phase of PDETs.
- Promote the equitable distribution of resources among the municipalities most affected by the armed conflict. This implies creating a system that allows for the redistribution of resources among municipalities to avoid the concentration of public and private investment in particular municipalities. For example, review the experience of the Forec model (González, 2003).

- Guarantee public access and widespread dissemination of information on the calls for proposals and resources available for financing PDET projects, especially productive projects, in order to guarantee transparency in this process.
- Design capacity-building programs and processes for community leaders, so that they can effectively participate in PDET project formulation and implementation.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PEACE, UNDERSTOOD AS RURAL DEVELOPMENT RURAL

- Mobilize community and state spaces that allow for multilevel and multi-stakeholder dialogues on the implementation of PDETs. This implies, on the one hand, taking advantage of and improving existing instances (such as citizen oversight bodies or promotion roundtables) and, on the other, avoiding the creation of new spaces that lack legitimacy and recognition.
- Establish budget efficiency criteria for resource execution during PDETs implementation phase, so that maximum amounts are established for secondary expenses (such as training and other logistical expenses), as well as limits on the number of subcontractors and intermediaries.
- Encourage community oversight initiatives for rural development projects, thereby strengthening the local governance system and guaranteeing the safety of the participants in this process.
- Create sponsorship programs for regions with little public-private investment, in order to create synergy between actors (national, departmental and local governments, academia, companies, and civil society), to compensate for the structural deficiencies of some of the country's municipalities. This implies adopting a broad conception of resources, which is not limited to money, but incorporates other aspects such as investment in human capital (for example, providing advisory services or assigning professionals for project structuring).
- Adopt equity criteria to assign ratings to projects in projects for taxes. For example, assign a special rating to projects to be carried out in municipalities without business presence, with higher rurality indexes, lower investment, etc.
- Encourage the participation of the private sector in projects for taxes, through the creation of "works packages" and consortiums that promote joint collaboration between companies to formulate and implement high-impact projects¹⁸.
- Evaluate the relevance of reforming the Zomac program in its post-conflict business creation component (Lasso *et al.*, 2020; Sandoval *et al.*, 2020; CGN *et al.*, 2019).

18 Projects for taxes was born in Peru, from where this option has been explored (D+I Llorente and Cuenca; 2014; Salinas-Rivas, 2016).

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PEACE, UNDERSTOOD AS SECURITY

- Recognize that improving personal and collective security conditions is a comprehensive part of the PDET policy objectives, by strengthening pillar 8 on reconciliation, coexistence, and peacebuilding.
- Adopt differential individual and collective security policies and strategies for PDET and Zomac municipalities that recognize the specific increase in violence compared to the rest of the territories.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PEACE, UNDERSTOOD AS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Create the necessary economic incentives to strengthen the payment for environmental services (PES) and similar programs, particularly for the projects for taxes agreement modality, so that communities find sustainable livelihood alternatives within the framework of the PDET programs.
- Adopt measures to ensure that the implementation of the PDET policy generates co-responsibility mechanisms between the State, companies, peasant communities, and civil society in general, in relation to environmental protection.
- Evaluate the relevance of Law 2 of 1959 in the terms currently applied, in order to recognize the existing historical colonizations and guarantee that the people located in these areas have access to basic goods and services.

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