

# Annual Report Land in Peace

**Period** 

August 2017 - October 2018

Kadaster (Netherlands' Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency), ANT (Agencia Nacional de Tierras) and Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign

Affairs

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Pre-pilot zone in Vistahermosa on an orthophoto map 2018\*.

Less than a year after the armed conflict in Colombia ended, a Colombian-Dutch cooperation on land administration started contributing to peace building in Colombia by finding a methodology for an efficient rural land administration. The project, named Land in Peace, runs from August 2017 till December 2020.

In the first project year pre-pilots were carried out to test and fine tune a fast, affordable and participative approach for land administration in rural post conflict areas. This annual report presents the actual developments of the project, the results so far and the upcoming challenges.

<sup>\*</sup> All photos are made by Liliana Merizalde.



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#### Land in Peace / Tierra en Paz\*

The Colombian peace agreement was signed in November 2016 and ended a long during armed conflict between the Colombian state and guerrilla movement FARC. Besides the demobilisation of the armed FARC forces a principal point of the agreement is the integral rural reform. After decades of state absence and a history of violence and displacements, farmers in post conflict areas of Colombia are longing for legal security over their land. Therefor, the Colombian government has plans to have a complete nation-wide land tenure coverage in 2023.

Legalisation and registry of farmer's terrain make land work as a collateral for loans, which enables investments. The current methods for rural land titling are too complex, too costly and too slow. From the current speed of rural land formalisation it is estimated that it might take more than 100 years to cover the whole country. Therefore, the Netherlands' Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency – in short Kadaster – together with the national rural land agency (ANT) offers an alternative Fit-For-Purpose (FFP) land administration approach: a fast, affordable and participative way to establish tenure security for the rural population of Colombia.

The official name of the project, according to the contract between Kadaster and the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs is 'Land Tenure for Peace'. However Land in Peace / Tierra en Paz are the English/Spanish working titles that are used in the project's communication, among others on the websites www.landinpeace.com and www.tierraenpaz.com.

FFP methods are inplemented in several pilots in order to adapt the methodology to Colombian circumstances. At the same time, these experiences and lessons learned have to be reflected in the national policy plans.

The project started in 2017 and will be completed by the end of 2020. Other parties involved are the University of Twente (ITC), the Colombian National Land Registry (SNR), the National Rural Cadastre of Colombia (IGAC), the Cadastre of the Department of Antioquia, the Amazon Institute for Academic Research (SINCHI), the District University in Bogotá and the Colombian National Planning Agency (DNP). Within the framework of the project, additional agreements (MoU) have been signed with the SNR and the District University.

#### Results so far

The project Land in Peace started with the signing of the contract in August 2017 between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Kadaster. This report follows the structure of the envisaged outcomes as formulated in the project plan.

The main project result is the piloting of innovative methods in the registration of parcels in rural post conflict Colombia, and adapting these methods to the Colombian realities. This can only be done in close cooperation with all the governmental institutions that are involved in the administration of land. Professionals at the local level need to be trained in order to keep the administration of land up-to-date after the titling process in the pilot areas. These experiences and lessons learned have to be reflected in the national policy plans. Ultimately transparency of all our activities is essential, as well as offering a platform to monitor our advances. The focus of the first year of the project has been the pre-piloting of the methodology in post conflict area and the training of local grass root surveyors.



Kadaster offers a Fit-For-Purpose (FFP) approach for land administration at higher speed and lower costs of land registering and administration, while the legal security of landowners and others is safeguarded. In 2017 two prepilot areas were selected, where the FFP methods were adapted to the realities in the field, in cooperation with the Colombian responsible institutions. Later on in the project, these pre-pilots will be up-scaled into real pilots covering a larger amount of land and farmers.

# 2.1 Selecting pilot areas

There were several criteria for the selection of the pilot areas. They should be part of the Government's post conflict priority zones. The local communities should have legal land rights as a top priority, since their participation is an essential element in the success of the FFP method. The areas should not be too far from a town or village with (electricity) and internet facilities. As well, they should be representative for the Colombian rural area as a whole and they should allow for rural economic growth opportunities. The most important criteria was the safety of the teams performing the field work.

After long debates and several site visits, ANT, SNR, Kadaster and the Dutch Embassy agreed upon two pilot areas in June 2017: one in the municipality of Vistahermosa (Meta department) and one in the municipality of Apartadó, (Antioquia department). In Vistahermosa the village of Termales was selected for the pre-pilot, although special precautions were necessary because of remaining land mines in the area.

<sup>\*</sup> This work is done in close cooperation with Sinchi, as part of their EU funded project Mazcapaz.



Map of Colombia with pilot zones. Designed by Kaikki Estudio.

In Apartadó, originally some villages around the village of San José de Apartadó were selected, but in February 2018, when the field survey was planned, these villages were considered not safe enough by the Colombian government. Instead the village of Los Mandarinos, also in the municipality of Apartadó, was selected.



Gabriel Ruiz (farmer in Vistahermosa)
"After all the violence, and all our worries, help has finally arrived: people from the state, people from other countries, students from the university....
It looks like a dream, but it is reality".

Later on, in July 2018, ANT requested to include in the prepilots as well areas of the villages El Tigre, La Balsa and La Linda in San Jose de Apartadó. These villages suffered toughly during the intern conflict, and desperately awaiting governmental actions as a result of the Peace Agreement.

A third pilot area in Boyaca is currently under study, as part of the Memorandum of Understanding with the registry SNR.

## 2.2 Creating awareness in pilot areas

The creation of local awareness is a crucial factor for success. Especially in post conflict areas, people tend to mistrust governmental plans and actions. Together with ANT, Sinchi and the local village boards, information meetings were organised to reconfirm the commitment of the local farmers, to obtain information on the number of families and farms sizes, and to explain the procedures and field work. The local communities were eager to cooperate and welcomed the authorities investing in the development of their areas.

#### 2.3 Field work

In the FFP approach, field work is a participatory activity. The land users indicate the boundaries of their land, which local grassroots surveyors record using high end GPS antennas and a data collection app. Also essential personal data is collected to link the person(s) to their land during the field work via an interview and photos.

The field surveys in the pre-pilot villages Termales and Los Mandarinos were carried out in February and July 2018. During the February field work, addressing the logistics, technical issues and training our own teams were time consuming for the field workers. The July field work went efficiently and smoothly right from the start. Both villages were completely surveyed except for some parcels in Los Mandarinos, where no land owner, land user or representative could be found to indicate the boundary of the parcel and supply land owner/user data.

in Spanish: Junta de acción comunal



As a result of the extension of the pilot areas an additional field survey was carried out in El Tigre and La Balsa, both near to Apartadó. Thanks to the contribution of grass root surveyors, both areas could be surveyed within one week with 167 parcels in total.

The average production was almost 7 parcels per surveying group per day, varying from 22 minutes for small household plots to 1 hour and 18 minutes for 8 hectare parcels in steep and difficult terrain. As a next step in October 2018 a start was made in the neighbouring village of La Linda.

## 2.4 Public inspection

An essential part of the FFP approach is the public inspection of the survey results. Do neighbours agree on their boundaries? Does the community agree with the collected data? Do the data reflect the reality? Can they confirm that the current users are indeed the rightful claimants?

When neighbours agree on their common boundary, they are invited to sign the boundary act\*: an agreement about their common boundary. This boundary act, signed by all neighbours around the parcel, is a precondition for acquiring a land title.

As each land user points his/her own boundaries during the public inspection, overlapping claims may arise. In such cases, mediation by ANT and the village board will solve most disputes.

The participation of the whole community and the transparency of the FFP process contribute to the agreement about boundaries and the signing of the boundary acts.

The first public inspection took place in Apartadó for part of the vereda Los Mandarinos called "El Trebol" in June 2018. The digital method of the public inspection demands the availability of a solid building with electricity and preferably internet. Such premises were not available in Los Mandarinos.

<sup>\*</sup> Acta de colindancia in Spanish

During the public inspection people could indicate whether or not they agreed with each separate boundary of their parcel via a digital application. The status of the boundaries could be followed by the people through a projection on the wall.

#### The status could be:

- 1. Not considered yet (black boundary on screen)
- 2. Agreed by one neighbour (orange colour)
- 3. Agreed by two neighbours (green boundary)
- 4. Not agreed by one or both neighbours (red line).

This digital method of public inspection turned out to be transparent - thanks to the support of the linked photos made during the field work - thus gaining confidence of the local people. Despite general expectations the amount of disputes was in fact relatively low. On a total of 86 boundaries, only 2 remained disputed at the end of the public inspection. However, approximately half of the land users turned out to be absent during the public inspection.

The second public inspection concerns the complete vereda of Termales. It was held in Vista Hermosa at the end of September 2018. The attendance was higher than in Los Mandarinos: 58 of the 92 people showed up. Transport for the local people was arranged from Termales to Vista Hermosa. The same digital method was used as in Apartadó.

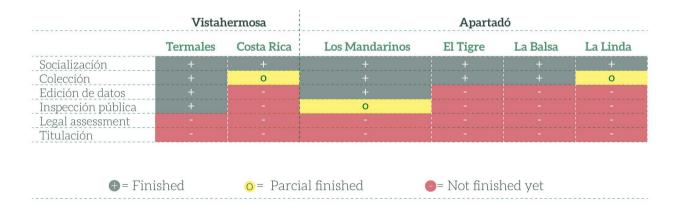
The inspection was smooth and quick, thanks to the experience from the first inspection and the use of various digital devices to sign digitally. Two minor inconsistencies were signalled during the inspection, both resolved immediately.

When scaling up the FFP land administration activities a more structured Alternative Dispute Resolution approach may be necessary. Kadaster is involved in studies on this subject by the World Bank and the SNR.

## 2.5 Supplying land titles

Preparations are done for the issuing of land titles in a part of Los Mandarinos. After the public inspections in Vista Hermosa, and later this year the ones for El Tigre, La Balsa and the remaining parcels in Los Mandarinos, the project will continue to encourage the institutions to start the formal titling process, while preventing unnecessary administrative steps in this process. The issuing of the first land titles is planned for the end of November 2018 during the visit of the Netherlands' Prime Minister.

# 2.6 Overview of progress in pre-pilot areas





## FFP at national policy level

It is important that the lessons learned in this project for fast and effective land administration, are reflected in the national policies. One of the aims of Land In Peace is to contribute to a national roll-out plan for FFP methodologies. Some activities have taken place as a preparation. The experiences in the pre-pilot areas give the basis for the technical and operational feasibility, including ideas for improvement in costs, quality and/or efficiency. Equally important are the field experiences regarding the social acceptance of land administration activities in rural post conflict areas. In the pilot areas the social acceptance is high.

Further preparations for a national rollout plan were done through two short research reports. One report deals with the legal feasibility of the FFP approach, written by top legal expert Victor Endo. The other report, written by Piet Spijkers, deals with the social and economic feasibility. Summaries of the reports can be found below.

# 3.1 Legal Feasibility of the FFP Formalisation Model

Several legal aspects are relevant in the formalisation and adjudication processes to be applied by the National Rural Lands Agency ANT. A first important distinction is whether or not a land title has been granted in the past for a piece of land. A title in the past implicates formalisation of the land; and if not, an adjudication

process follows. In both situations formalisation and adjudication are possible, but different legal procedures are required.

Formalisation and adjudication in a certain (pilot) area can be supply ('oferta') driven or demand ('demanda') driven. 'Oferta' means that ANT (or the project) takes the initiative for formalisation/adjudication. This can only be done in priority municipalities defined by the central government. To avoid lots of bureaucracy the 'demanda' option is to be preferred: the farmers approach ANT to ask for adjudication, and ANT decides to apply the unified formalization/adjucation procedure over the intervention area. A critical issue about the legal feasibility of the FFP model is the definition of the technical standards for the cadastral surveys. ANT's current official position is that defining the surveying precision standards legally correspond to IGAC's standards.

The formalisation/adjudication of land may be restricted by several types of zoning, for example environment protection areas, river banks or buffers around mining facilities. Sometimes land titling is therefor impossible and sometimes it is possible, but only with land use restrictions.

### 3.2 Social and economic feasibility

These first FFP trials have been successful. Social feasibility is most certainly assured. The contacts in several preparatory visits with the local village board and villagers are essential for the preparation and implementation of the FFP method, as well as the acceptance of the data collected in the field.



Participants Hector Timoté and his wife Adelina Capera Silva in their house in Vistahermosa.

It has also been proved that young local people, accustomed to the use of smartphones, can easily be trained in the collecting of field measurements and legal data, thus actively involving the local people in the formalisation and adjudication process.

The land tenancy patterns in these areas carry high proportions of possessions of state domain land (tierra baldía), and the historic title research is relatively simple. The situation in the Andean highlands, occupied since the 16th century, is different: the historic research of titles can go back to titles handed out by the Spanish Crown; the extensions of the agricultural plots are very small because of inheritance; and most farmers live on undivided estates\*.

Also, Colombia's Andean regions include a much higher number of rural land parcels than the lowland tropical regions like Vistahermosa and Apartadó. And, because this area was less involved in the armed conflict, less displacement has taken place. The FFP methods have to be adjusted to these circumstances.

<sup>\*</sup> Falsa tradición in Spanish

# 3.3 Evaluation pre-pilots and suggestions for work method

Termales and Los Mandarinos were pre-pilot areas specifically to find out the optimal work process, based on the Fit for Purpose principles and the Colombian spatial, judicial and institutional reality.

Hardware and software were tested by trial and error in the field based on an earlier successful Proof of Concept\*. There were high level contacts with the software supplier in order to de-bug the app and adjust it to our necessities. The software supplier is still working on it.

The work method as a whole was solid and transparent and easy to learn for grass root surveyors. The biggest gain is that the land users showed great trust in the methodology, the resulting data and the project partners. Even when the surface of a parcel is considerably smaller than indicated on the purchase agreement, the farmers trusted the data that they collected themselves, accepting the smaller plot size without much ado.

<sup>\*</sup> https://www.gim-international.com/content/article/light-mobile-collection-tools-for-land-administration

## Interinstitutional cooperation

Many institutions have a role in the titling process. There is no clear workflow in which each institution contributes for its own part. At the moment this process is not running smoothly yet. The Land in Peace project encourages the institutions to work together, both in high level meetings to discuss relevant concepts and standards, as well as finding together practical solutions in the field. It is in the interest of the country and its inhabitants. This way the project works both top-down and bottom-up.

With (financial) support of the World Bank DNP is designing a multipurpose cadastre for Colombia. As a part of this process it has set up an Expert Group\*, which is a forum of national and international experts on land reform and land administration. Also managers on board level of Colombian institutes that have a role in land reform and land administration are taking part. Kadaster's regional manager for Latin America and/ or one of Kadaster's experts participate in this forum. The Expert Group has adopted three pilot projects that each may deliver a proof of concept for a multipurpose cadastre. Kadaster's Land in Peace project is one of those proofs of concept.

<sup>\*</sup> Mesa de Expertos or Comité de Acompañamiento



Field work in Vistahermosa.

Besides contacts through the expert meeting group Kadaster has several bilateral contacts with Colombian institutions. There is a strong relation between Kadaster, the Dutch Embassy in Bogotá and ANT. This is very important, because ANT is the official authority in the land formalisation and adjudication process. Kadaster will never take any titling actions in the pilot areas without the consent and cooperation of ANT. There is a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Colombian National Land Registry (SNR), the Dutch Embassy in Bogotá and Kadaster in July 2018. Also Kadaster and the District University signed a Memorandum of Understanding to put FFP on the research and education agenda of the cadastral engineers department.

High level contacts between the Dutch Embassy and Colombian government and institutions are crucial for the success of the project.

All parties mentioned in Chapter 1 have participated in one or more field work missions. By actually doing part of the field work themselves, the institutions are better able to develop their opinion on the FFP approach, reflect on the standard requirements and adjust the FFP method to the Colombian rural realities.

ANT and SNR were involved in all field missions, Catastro Antioquia was involved in all missions in Apartadó (Antioquia), SINCHI in all missions in Vistahermosa. DNP and IGAC were involved in the February field work in Termales.

By involving both government institutions, private sector companies and universities the best of three worlds was combined. The cooperation with the University of Twente (ICT) is leading to a boundary visualization app and the underlying smart database that are better suited for the job. A database expert of the District University spent three months at ITC to developthe database for the data.

The active participation of the District University in Bogotá will lead to a curriculum that contains FFP land administration. Eventually this will lead to a generation of experts needed for building up and maintaining a nation wide land administration.

A tangible result of cooperation was the joint paper on the project (results and plans) at the World Bank conference on land and poverty in March 2018. The paper's co-authors were representatives of Kadaster, ANT, SNR, IGAC, DNP, District University and University Twente.

### Capacity development at municipal level

Although the actual capacity building for the maintenance of the cadastre did not start yet, the project did start working with grass root surveyors. These are local youngsters that under supervision of land administration and land surveying experts perform data collection activities. After first attempts with two local youngsters in Termales in February 2018, this was scaled up to five youngsters in Termales in July and even more in the villages around San José de Apartadó in August 2018. Based on the experience of the July field work a concise field manual was produced for new grass root surveyors. This manual was used in the August field work

and proved to be useful. Both grass root surveyors and

land owners could quickly and clearly be informed on



Graphic used to train grass root surveyers how to do the fieldwork. Designed by Kaikki Estudio.

### International and national communication

A variety of communication and dissemination activities has taken place.

#### 6.1 Website

A project website was developed and published. After a first version in April 2018, a second, improved version was published in August 2018.

The website has both an English and a Spanish version. The contents of both language versions are equal. The English site is www.landinpeace. com and the Spanish one www.tierraenpaz.com. The site contains general information concerning the project development, but also news items and a broad variety of photos, graphics and videos to visualize the project. A contact form makes it possible to communicate about the project. The website is responsive for all type of devices. Statistics about the findability and website visits are not available yet.

Currently improvements are done regarding speed and visibility of the project online.

#### 6.2 Social media

Social media accounts for the project were created on three platforms: on Twitter (Landinpeace1), on Instagram (Landinpeace) and on Facebook (Tierraenpaz). The Facebook page is mainly visited by Colombians, whereas Twitter and Instagram have an international character. Relevant results and activities in the project are posted on these account, both in English and in Spanish. Sometimes news items outside the project, but concerning related subjects, are mentioned in social media posts. In many cases the posts contain a hyperlink to the website for more detailed information. Replies and remarks on social media posts are monitored and taken into account.

Next to these, social media channels of Kadaster and the Dutch Embassy are being used for communication concerning the project. It concerns mainly the Twitter account of Kadaster (corporate, in Dutch), Kadaster International (in English) and the Dutch Embassy.

## 6.3 Audio-visual productions

In 2017 a 45 minutes documentary was produced with the title 'Displaced' ('Ontheemd' in Dutch).

In this documentary land right issues are shown in three areas, the Netherlands, Nepal and Colombia. Although the production of this documentary was not a part of the Land in Peace project, the Colombia part of the documentary deals with the village of Termales, which is one of the pilot areas of this project.

Another audiovisual product is a 2.5 minutes video about the field work and the role of the grass root surveyors in it. This movie was shot in both Los Mandarinos (Apartadó) and Termales (Vistahermosa) in July 2018. The production is part of this project.

A lot of professional photo and film material was shot for current and future use on any of the communication channels.

## 6.4 Radio, television and press

The project and its preparation were mentioned in several broadcasts on radio and television and in written press. In all cases the importance of land titles for the people in rural Colombia was mentioned and demonstrated. The broadcasts and publications were:

- Radio documentary 'Dit Is Mijn Land' on NPO Radio 1,
   Dutch public radio, November 2016.
- Article 'Métodos alternativos para una rápida y efectiva administración de la tierra en escenarios de construcción de paz in Revista de Ingeniería', based on a seminar led by Salomon Kalmanovitz, from Colombian University Los Andes, January 2018.
- Article 'Ja, dit is grond van een Colombiaanse boer het is alleen niet te bewijzen' in Trouw, Dutch national newspaper, Ynske Boersma, 13 July 2018.
- Radio-item in 'Met het oog op morgen', NPO Radio 1,
   Dutch public radio, 16 July 2018.
- Radio-item in 'Spraakmakers', NPO Radio 1 Dutch public radio, 31 August 2018.
- Column 'Escándalo municipal' in El Tiempo, Colombian newspaper, Rudolf Hommes, 15 September 2018.

 Report Brandpunt+, NPO 2 Dutch public television, 30 October 2018.

# 6.5 Papers/presentations congresses/conferences

- Land and Peace in Colombia; Fit for Purpose field data collection – Mathilde Molendijk e.a.
   World Bank Land and Poverty Conference, Washington DC, USA, March 2018.
- UNIGIS, VU University Amsterdam, June 2018.
   Presentation for the students and alumni of the Master programme in GIScience, at their yearly conference in Amsterdam.
- LandAc June 2018. Presentation at the yearly conference of the Land Academy, Utrecht University.
- IV Seminario Internacional de Governança de Terras e Desenvolvimento Económico: Regulariçao Simplificada, Brazil Campesinas, June 2018. Presentation at the yearly conference of the Land Governance Group of the University of Campinas.
- Alcace y estado del arte proyecto: pre-pilotos en Vistahermosa y Apartado – cooperación Holandesa 23 July 2018 Expert Group, Bogotá.
- Cancun INMECA and CPCI September 2018. Presentation at the yearly conference of the cadastres of Iberoamérica (CPCI) and the association of Mexican cadastres (INMECA).
- XX Conferencia Colombiana de Usuarios Esri 2018, Bogotá, September 2018. Presentation at the yearly conference of users of Esri geographical software in Colombia.

- Seminario Internacional y Nacional de Topografía: September 2018. Presentation at the yearly conference of professional surveyors in Colombia.
- Lecture for MSc students rural development at Universidad Externado, September 2018.
- Lectures for the students of the School for Land Administration Studies, ITC of Twente University.



17-years old Ingrid, waitress at the local restaurant in Vistahermosa, became a grassroots surveyor within a day. She is helping now the farmers in her municipality with the registering of their land.

## **Upcoming project developments**

A very tangible upcoming event is the handing out of the first land titles at the end of November by the Dutch prime minister. This will be an encouragement to conclude the pre-pilots and continue with the full pilots. Post-conflict areas around San José de Apartadó and a rural area in the Andes mountains are the first surveys to be performed.

In order to work efficiently the software for collecting and processing data urgently needs repairs and further development. High level contacts with the software supplier should lead to bug-free and user friendly software before the end of 2018.

We sense acceptance of the methodology concerning the field work. But in order to achieve the time schedule for rural reform as mentioned in the peace agreement, simplification of the extensive administrative procedures is also needed.

We will continue the strong participation with Colombian institutions, both in the field work and on board level. During the field work the institutions can experience the applicability of the FFP methodology for formalisation and adjudication. At the same time we will encourage ministries and institutions to make the FFP methodology part of the national formalisation and adjudication policies.

Plans are being made to develop a special FFP curriculum at the Universidad Distrital in Bogotá.

Students are involved in the (pre-)pilot fieldwork and will train the local grass root surveyors. And these students will be the experts, managers and policy makers of the future, which will contribute to the dissemination of the FFP methodology.

Communication has been focussed so far on informing a general international and (Dutch) audience. Upcoming months effort will be done to improve the acquaintance of Land In Peace in Colombia itself by a press letter sent from the Dutch Embassy, linking the project website to websites of our cooperation partners and organising press and communication meetings. Social media will take an important role in expanding the communication around the project in Colombia.

Having experienced the great interest and enthusiasm for Land in Peace on local scale, local radio stations and newspapers will be contacted to give attention to the project.