

Chapter 3.

A territorial approach to food security and nutrition policy: The case of Colombia

The government of Colombia aims to provide an integrated response to food security and nutrition (FSN) challenges, tackling economic, social and health dimensions through a cross-sectoral approach involving several key ministries. The country struggles with geographic disparities, and FSN issues are more severe in poor and remote rural areas, where the institutional capacity to deal with those further tends to be low. In addition, the armed conflict has put many people's livelihoods and security at risk. It also further complicates the gathering of territorial information to support policy making to reach the food insecure (e.g. size of local communities, displaced populations, etc.). Despite these challenges, however, promising examples exist, as in the department of Antioquia, where the successful implementation of a multidimensional FSN policy inspired both national policy makers and international development organisations. This example shows the viability of territorial approaches to tackle place-specific FSN issues through local institutions.

Key findings

The case of Colombia provides an instructive illustration of the need for territorial approaches to food security and nutrition (FSN) policy. In Colombia, issues of FSN are especially prevalent in poor rural communities. Issues of FSN are attributable to several factors, including: extreme poverty, high levels of informality, scarce regional accessibility, and of course, the armed conflict. Recognising this, the national government has developed a multidimensional FSN strategy that aims to increase communities' structural resilience to food insecurity and malnutrition. The implementation of the strategy has proved challenging, and issues related to FSN have persisted. The multidimensional approach that characterises the national strategy, for example, has been lost sight of in the implementation of the policy. Policies have largely been spatially blind and mostly based on the direct provision of foodstuffs and cash transfers. Moreover, policies, programmes and investment have clustered in urban areas and more accessible regions, despite the concentration of FSN challenges in rural areas.

Features of food insecurity and malnutrition in Colombia

Food security and nutrition challenges are more intense in poor and/or rural communities

In Colombia, 40.8% of the population is affected by issues related to FSN (ENSIN, 2010). There is, however, considerable cross-territorial variation in the prevalence of these issues that reflects the disparities in income per capita that exist across Colombia's territorial communities (OECD, 2012). Colombia is composed of 32 departments, plus the district of Bogotá, which are in turn subdivided into 1 102 municipalities. Granular territorial data are unfortunately not available for all 32 departments. The analysis that follows is therefore based only on a selection of departments for which suitable statistical information is available.

Sixteen of Colombia's 32 departments display levels of food insecurity and malnutrition at the household level that exceed the national average (40.8%). Perhaps not surprisingly, extreme poverty is also pervasive in the departments where issues of FSN are especially pronounced. Of these 16 departments, the highest levels of extreme poverty are found in La Guajira (38%) (DANE, 2010), a department situated on the Venezuelan border in the north of the country that is also home to a large aboriginal community (Table 3.1).¹

There is also cross-territorial variation in the average dietary energy consumption (DEC). Average DEC reflects the number of calories consumed per person per day. In order to assess the regional disparities in calorie consumption, the FAO divided Colombia into six regions (*Norte, Atlantica, Oriental, Central, Pacifica* and Bogotá) and measured DEC in each of them. Atlantica's average DEC of 1 881 kcal/person/day was the lowest of the regions considered. The highest levels of average DEC, by contrast, were found in Bogotá, where DEC was approximately 1 000 kcal/person/day greater than in the *Atlantica* region. Average DEC in the four other regions considered ranged from 2 353 kcal/person/day in the Eastern region to 2 002 kcal/person/day in the Archipelago region.

Food insecurity and malnutrition are more severe in rural Colombia (ENSIN, 2010). The number of rural households affected by food insecurity is 57.5% and 17% of children in rural areas display growth delays as a result. In urban areas, only 38.4% of urban households are affected by food insecurity and 11.6% of children suffer from growth

delays.² There is also evidence to suggest that this urban-rural food insecurity divide is manifested in average DEC as well. That said, rural-urban variation in DEC is less severe than it is for other measures of food insecurity and malnutrition.

Table 3.1. **Food insecurity and extreme poverty in Colombian departments**

	Departments with a concentration of households exposed to food insecurity above the national average	Percentage of households living in extreme poverty at the department level
Nariño	67.7%	18.6%
Choco	64.2%	33.5%
Sucre	62.9%	28.6%
Bolívar	61.7%	14.9%
Magdalena	61.4%	23.5%
Cordoba	60.2%	25.6%
La Guajira	59.1%	37.6%
Cauca	57.6%	35.9%
Caquetá	54.4%	9.9%
Atlántico	54.4%	9.4%
Cesar	53.9%	18.6%
Norte de Santander	47.3%	11.0%
Huila	43.8%	25.9%
Boyacá	43.6%	19.2%
Antioquia	43.5%	10.5%

Note: Data on extreme poverty are not available for all departments in Colombia.

Source: DANE (2010), DPS, OECD (2012); ENSIN (2010), National Survey of Food Security and Nutrition.

Income inequality tends to be greater in rural areas. Several rural departments have levels of income inequality that exceed the national average. Colombia's income inequalities are reflected in, among other things, patterns of land ownership. Fieldwork has revealed that access to land is one of the main determinants of poverty in rural communities. The Gini index measuring concentration of land ownership confirms that a relatively small number of individuals own a disproportionately large percentage of land in Colombia. Colombia's relatively high Gini coefficient of 0.86³ (UNDP, 2009) is consistent with those of other Latin American countries, in particular Brazil and Argentina (World Bank, 2004). Rural dwellers who do not own land – of which there are many – are left with little choice but to work as informal labourers in agriculture. They are, as a result, exposed to greater income fluctuation, at greater risk of falling into poverty, and are more likely to face issues of food insecurity.

Remote areas are vulnerable to food insecurity and malnutrition

Remote rural regions are frequently subject to food insecurity and malnutrition, given the difficulty of supplying food to isolated locations and of establishing physical markets there. Colombia has a polycentric urban structure, and in 2014, 47 of its cities had a population larger than 100 000. However, its stock of transport infrastructure is grossly underdeveloped relative to its Latin American counterparts and also to numerous Asian and OECD countries (OECD, 2014). Transport costs are thus relatively high.⁴ The roads mostly connect rural areas with urban centres, rather than with other rural areas. This is also true for adjacent communities even within the same department: roads link the communities to cities but not to each other. The immediate consequence of the functional isolation of rural regions is that the bulk of agricultural output is absorbed by city markets, which is also where the price of products is set.

Table 3.2. Average dietary energy consumption

	Average dietary energy consumption (DEC; kcal/person/day)	Share of DEC from protein (%)	Share of DEC from fat (%)	Share of DEC from total carbohydrates and alcohol (%)
Total	2 238	11.00	28.91	59.27
Area				
Urban	2 273	11.50	30.33	57.17
Rural	2 126	9.26	23.98	66.55
Region				
Atlántica	1 881	10.33	28.67	60.05
Oriental	2 353	11.12	28.52	59.63
Central	2 088	11.00	28.41	59.79
Pacífica	2 197	10.07	27.46	61.40
Bogotá	2 843	12.20	31.21	55.99
Archipelago	2 002	12.46	33.04	52.94

Source: FAO elaboration based on household survey data (2007).

The inaccessibility of many rural areas has a paradoxical effect. Because rural areas are so cut off, farmers must ship their production to cities. The cities then redistribute food, among other places, to rural areas. This not only renders rural environments dependent on urban ones, but rural dwellers may face prohibitive prices for the food they consume because of high interregional transport costs.

The armed conflict is a systemic cause of food security and nutrition challenges

Armed conflicts go hand in hand with food insecurity. In Colombia, sustained low-intensity conflict has caused structural distortions in regional economies and societies that contribute to food insecurity and malnutrition. The implications of the conflict are numerous. Among them are the erosion of institutions and the rule of law in conflict-stricken territories and the outmigration of population. The International Displacement Monitoring Centre estimates that 5.7 million people (*desplazados*) have been forced to leave their communities (iDMC, 2014) and have lost (or are not in possession of) a formal property title for their holdings. As a result, most are suffering from severe food insecurity and extreme poverty. Developing and implementing policies to resolve the challenges faced by these displaced individuals – issues of FSN included – is hampered by the lack of data on their numbers and whereabouts.

The armed conflict, which has persisted in some territories since the 1950s, has contributed to the reinforcement of the urban-rural divide (OECD, 2012). In urban areas, security is not a major issue. Rural areas, on the other hand, suffer from social unrest and the lack of basic public institutions. The persistent conflict has created a highly fragmented territorial system, which in turn has limited the country's capacity to capitalise on its relatively high level of urbanisation. Armed conflict and illegal activities have also contributed to the wide variations in sub-national governments' capacities.

The governance system of the food security and nutrition policy

There are a number of entities responsible for the governance of FSN policies in Colombia. That issues of food insecurity and malnutrition are managed by not one, but several entities, is a reflection of Colombia's recognition of the multidimensionality of FSN. The national definition of food security and nutrition is based on five dimensions: 1) the availability of food; 2) food accessibility; 3) consumption; 4) biological value; and

5) food safety and quality. Based on these factors, the government has engineered a broad policy framework that incorporates economic and socio-economic dimensions and cuts across different policy sectors, with the ultimate aim of providing an integrated response to FSN challenges. The policy framework prescribes roles for a variety of institutional actors, including several that may not be directly linked to FSN policy.

Colombia's National Department for Welfare and the Family Welfare Institute

The National Department for Welfare (Prosperidad Social) is one of the pillars of Colombia's FSN policy. It was created in 2011, with a mandate to co-ordinate and implement national interventions promoting peace, social inclusion and FSN. It is composed of the following subentities:

- Unit for the Care and Reparation of Victims (*Unidad de Atención y Reparación Integral a las Víctimas*)
- The Colombian Family Welfare Institute (*Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar*)
- The Centre of Historical Memory (*Centro de Memoria Histórica*).

The National Department for Welfare and the agencies associated with it are responsible for the delivery of some of Colombia's most important social policies – many of which address issues of FSN either directly or indirectly. These include: *Mas Familias en Acción* and *De Cero a Siempre*. Both these initiatives are designed to promote social inclusion – one of the key priorities of the Colombian government in its National Development Plan 2014-2018 (OECD, 2014).

Mas Familias en Acción aimed to provide 3 million households with conditional cash transfers in 2015. The overarching objective of the programme is to break the cycle of poverty via the provision of economic opportunity and key public services. Cash is transferred to poor citizens on condition that they fulfil a series of obligations, including: enrolling their children in public schools and ensuring their children are vaccinated and attend regular medical check-ups. *Mas Familias en Acción* is perhaps the policy with the greatest potential for reducing food insecurity in Colombia's poor communities. Its 2015 budget was USD 340 million.⁵

De Cero a Siempre is Colombia's strategy for the provision of integral early childhood care. It is managed by the Colombian Family Welfare Institute in co-ordination with several other administrative bodies, including international organisations, donor agencies and Colombia's civil society. The programme's primary aim is to provide support to early childhood development providers in vulnerable communities – i.e. Afro-Colombians and indigenous groups – through access to health, nutrition, education and other services for the most vulnerable communities. The programme has a network of more than 200 local offices across the country. It aimed to provide support to 1.4 million children in 2015, with the objective of reaching 1.7 million in 2018.

The National Department for Welfare is also responsible for the implementation of more granular policies to improve FSN across Colombia. It is, for example, piloting an initiative to reconnect citizens with food production. The policy is based on three phases. The first phase involves the provision of both a small agricultural holding and agricultural training to food-insecure households. The second phase focuses on agricultural productivity, aiming to help households generate a surplus from their holdings. The third

phase consists of measures designed to help households convert their surplus production into a stable source of income.

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection

The Ministry of Health and Social Protection is a second key actor in Colombia's efforts to address issues of FSN, in large part due to its responsibility for the 10-year National Plan for Health (2012-2022). Sub-national governments are formally obliged to produce their own health plans as well. These plans, however, must reflect the priorities and the overall approach of the national plan, and sub-national governments are provided expert assistance to ensure they are capable of doing so. This, in theory, promotes coherence between sub-national- and national-level health policies.

A Vice-Ministry for Health, set up in 2013, is responsible for issues related to FSN. and works closely with the *Observatorio de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional*. The *Observatorio* is in charge of monitoring FSN trends in connection with key variables such as age, health conditions and gender. Insights and data it produces inform the design of evidence-based policies. Information it collects is disseminated via a dedicated Internet site.⁶ The Ministry of Health operates a network of 31 observatories and is working with the *Observatorio* to improve integration of FSN-related information across sectors.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Annual budget allocations indicate that agricultural policy is one of Colombia's foremost priorities, not least because of its implications for FSN.⁷ Colombia's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is responsible for several important FSN policies.

The ministry co-ordinates the work of several agencies; many of which explicitly address FSN. The two most relevant are the Colombian Institute for Rural Development and the Vice-Ministry for Rural Development. The institute helps to reconnect displaced rural citizens with their landholdings, and also provides agricultural inputs and capacity building to farmers to improve their productivity and allow them to generate income from their agricultural activities. Since 2013, the Colombian Institute for Rural Development has worked closely with the Vice-Ministry for Rural Development, which has three branches. The first is concerned with the land property rights of displaced citizens. The second focuses on increasing agricultural productivity. The third works to improve access to services in rural communities. Efforts to improve access to services have relied on a territorial approach to rural development, a significant development in Colombia's FSN policy framework (OECD, 2014). The *Programa de Desarrollo Rural Integral con Enfoque Territorial* is perhaps the most tangible outcome of the recently adopted territorial approach to development. It is a quasi-experimental policy implemented in partnership with local governments in eight regions, with the aim of improving rural households' accessibility to public services.

The National Department for Planning

National investment in Colombia is guided by four-year national development plans drawn up by the National Department for Planning. FSN is a priority of the current (2014-18) national development plan. Sub-national levels in Colombia are required to produce their own development plans – with technical assistance from the National Department for Planning – in accordance with nationally identified aims and priorities. The importance of addressing FSN is thus reflected in both the national and sub-national development plans.

The National Department for Planning's role in the national FSN policy framework has been formalised by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy. This council is chaired by Colombia's president and is the highest authority in the country. In 2008, the National Council for Economic and Social Policy restructured and reoriented Colombia's FSN policy. Several bodies were created as part of this renewal, each of which is addressed in subsequent sections.

Sub-national entities and international FSN stakeholders: Antioquia's experience

Colombia's regions exhibit considerable variation in both economic performance and institutional capacity (OECD, 2014). Institutional and economic challenges often go hand in hand, especially in poor territories. Municipalities and departments that suffer from economic and institutional deficiencies are often less capable of delivering policies that support FSN. Where regional economic conditions are more favourable, however, there is evidence to suggest that sub-national governments can, and do, work synergistically with other entities to pioneer new policy solutions to address FSN.

In 2002, the department of Antioquia implemented a multidimensional FSN policy, the *Mejoramiento Alimentario y Nutricional de Antioquia* (MANA). The policy has achieved international visibility and attracted the FAO, World Food Programme and other donor agencies to Antioquia. The policy's success has influenced Colombia's national FSN policy and been replicated to some degree in other policies.

Antioquia is one of the wealthiest departments of Colombia (OECD, 2014). Its regional capital, Medellín, recently devised and implemented a local economic development strategy that contributed to the successful revitalisation of the city and its business community. The city benefits from reasonably well-functioning institutions, as indicated by the availability of administrative information on citizens facing food insecurity and malnutrition. Despite its wealth, however, the percentage of its households suffering from some form of food insecurity is above the national average.⁸ In the early 2000s, the regional government thus decided to implement an evidence-based, multidimensional policy to promote food security.

The department allocated USD 360 million over four years (2010-2014) to the *Mejoramiento Alimentario y Nutricional de Antioquia* policy. It is composed of a series of sub-initiatives. The most relevant are:

- **A supplementary feeding programme for young children.** *Mejoramiento Alimentario y Nutricional de Antioquia* provides children aged 6 and under with food enriched with vitamins and nutrients. Its scope is narrower than that of the *De Cero a Siempre* policy. Efforts have been made to co-ordinate the programmes and avoid inefficient duplications and overlap.
- **A school feeding programme.** *Mejoramiento Alimentario y Nutricional de Antioquia* provides children aged 6-14 with access to food and nutrition. The window of age eligibility is greater in rural areas.
- **Initiatives to increase citizen awareness of FSN principles and to improve access to basic services, including health care.** Citizens are heavily involved in these actions. Citizen engagement is expected to facilitate the dissemination of good practices and increase awareness of challenges related to malnutrition, especially within vulnerable populations. *Mejoramiento Alimentario y Nutricional*

de Antioquia thus encourages the generation of social capital that, in turn, facilitates the delivery of public policies more generally.

- **Direct support to households that engage in small-scale farming.** The *Huertas Familiares* initiative provides selected households with access to small holdings, inputs and capacity building to improve their food and nutrition security. It also helps households generate a surplus that can be sold in local markets and serve as a stable source of income. This programme is delivered with the direct support of the FAO.

Local stakeholders attribute the success of the *Mejoramiento Alimentario y Nutricional de Antioquia* policy, at least in part, to its continuity and relative budgetary stability in the past decade. This has allowed it to transition from the status of a “programme” to that of a full-fledged “policy”. The policy is also mainstreamed through departments and regional policies to ensure that other policies are coherent and foster FSN objectives.

Co-ordination mechanisms

Co-ordinating the actions of the many bodies involved in Colombia’s FSN policy is essential to ensure that interventions are executed efficiently and effectively. Colombia has relied on two main tools to promote co-ordination since the creation of the National Council for Economic and Social Policy and the restructuring of FSN policy. The first is the intersectoral commission for FSN, the *Comisión Intersectorial de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional* (CISAN). This functions as a mechanism for various stakeholders to keep each other informed of policy decisions, so they can articulate their concerns and offer opportunities for co-operation and co-ordination. The second key tool is the eight-year National Plan for FSN 2012-2019 (*Plan Nacional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional – PNSAN 2012-2019*). This collects information on the policy initiatives from the various actors associated with the *Comisión Intersectorial de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional* and synthesises it in a common national strategy.

Challenges for effective food security and nutrition policy

Colombia exemplifies the need for the adoption of a territorial approach to FSN. Empirical evidence suggests, first, that the impact of the country’s efforts to address food insecurity and malnutrition has been limited, and, second, that any reduction in the number of households and individuals exposed to FSN may in fact be a product of Colombia’s economic development – manifested in, among other things, rising household incomes – rather than of concerted FSN policies.

National stakeholders and international experts have identified the shortcomings and challenges facing Colombia’s FSN policy. These are discussed in subsequent sections.

Food security and nutrition policy is space-blind, due to the lack of regional data

Colombia is making a concerted effort to improve the availability of sub-national statistics (OECD, 2014). The design and implementation of policies, however, including those oriented towards FSN, are hampered by a lack of data and consequently tend to assume a space-blind character. Public authorities lack basic information on the size of most local communities – especially in rural areas; the number of displaced citizens (*desplazados*) and property rights. They are thus unable to tailor interventions to the

needs of heterogeneous territorial communities and are left with little choice but to implement “one-size-fits-all” policies. FSN issues, however, are best addressed in evidence-based policy frameworks tailored to territorially unique features, opportunities and challenges.

Conditional cash transfers, for example, are delivered to poor households without taking into account the conditions and characteristics of the areas where they live. One consequence is that rural inhabitants may encounter more difficulty than their urban counterparts in satisfying the sometimes stringent conditions on which transfers are based, due to their limited access to schools and hospitals.

The food security and nutrition policy governance system lacks coherence and co-ordination

The governance of FSN policy in Colombia faces several challenges. One is the adoption of different narratives and definitions of FSN by the various Colombian authorities and institutional stakeholders that manage FSN policy. The definition used by the Ministry of Health, for example, differs from that used by the National Department for Welfare. Certain institutions emphasise subsistence – the mere availability of food – while others stress access to food, which, in turn, involves multiple dimensions, including income. These variations detract from FSN policy coherence and reduce the likelihood of developing a policy that uses all available financial and human resources to make territorial communities more resilient to food insecurity and malnutrition.

On paper, the Colombian approach to FSN is multidimensional. In practice, however, governance of the policy is fragmented and lacks leadership and vision. Colombia has pursued several programmes and policies to promote FSN. International organisations and donor agencies and the initiatives they implement add an additional layer of complexity. The various co-ordination tools relied upon by the Colombian government have proved insufficient. The *Comisión Intersectorial de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional*, for example, does not actually require its stakeholders to co-ordinate with each other. Stakeholders are only obligated to inform counterparts about their policies. This has the effect of undermining the premise on which the commission was founded.

Implementing FSN policy at the sub-national level has proved particularly challenging. The incoherency of policy frameworks constitutes a profound challenge at the local level. There is an urgent need to encourage co-ordination across the FSN policy interventions and the programmes of various departments and municipalities. Most departments and municipalities lack the capacity, funds and political will to implement their own FSN actions. Interterritorial co-operation would seem to be one avenue for mitigating these constraints and perhaps even revealing synergies and complementarities. Instead, department and municipalities remain dependent on the aid provided by central-level bodies as the Colombian Family Welfare Institute.

Food security and nutrition policy is not linked to the policy agenda for competitiveness

Food insecurity and malnutrition are more pronounced in poor communities. Social programmes like conditional cash transfers⁹ have been implemented in some of these communities. The current FSN policy framework does not, however, prioritise the mobilisation of local non-agricultural assets and investment opportunities to promote the economic development and competitiveness that are inevitably linked to issues of FSN.

The classification of FSN policy as a social policy and its association with agriculture – small-scale and subsistence agriculture in particular – prevents regional agents who are working to implement the FSN policy from capitalising on their knowledge of local conditions and development opportunities (OECD, 2014). Because FSN measures are generated within the framework of agricultural policy, policy makers lack the instruments and flexibility to attend to competitiveness in sectors beyond agriculture. OECD data (2014), however, show that the richest departments are those in which both agriculture and manufacturing represent a large share of the local economies, suggesting that sectorial diversification is essential.

Food security and nutrition policy has an urban bias, and is not adapted to the specific needs of ethnic groups or women

Even though food insecurity and malnutrition are more severe in rural areas, most programmes and investment are channelled to densely populated, accessible and relatively rich territories. This urban bias of FSN policy reflects the ease with which policies of national agencies, international organisations and donor agencies can be delivered in more favourable socio-economic and institutional environments. The only programmes implemented in rural regions tend to either be direct responses to emergencies or based on direct cash transfers. This is compounded by the fact that welfare programmes in Colombia are designed primarily for urban workers who are not involved in farming activities. As a consequence, most rural workers struggle to access basic rights such as land ownership and welfare.

The FSN policy framework does not adequately meet the needs of aboriginal and ethnic communities in the north (La Guajira) and along the Pacific coast. These communities are among the poorest in the country and are especially exposed to food insecurity and malnutrition. The contextual rigidity of the policy framework inhibits its capacity to deliver in distinctly different social and cultural contexts.

Greater effort could also be made to empower women in the framework of FSN policy. Recent initiatives show that women can, and do, play a key role in addressing FSN. *Fundación NU3* – a non-profit organisation in Barranquilla – for example, focuses on the empowerment of women in efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger. *Fundación NU3*'s interventions operate across three main axes: 1) nutrition and food safety; 2) nutritional recovery; and 3) education. The foundation also operates an education and awareness-oriented pregnancy prevention programme for young people aged 12-19. Policy initiatives like these that could be mainstreamed and scaled up in all departments.

Concluding remarks: What would a territorial approach look like in Colombia?

A territorial approach to FSN is a viable avenue for developing and implementing a broad, resilient policy framework in which state institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), citizens and businesses can co-ordinate their actions to ensure that all citizens have access to adequately developed regional networks of public goods and services. Instituting a territorial approach to food security means addressing three main sets of challenges.

Evidence-based policy making

The collection of granular, sub-national statistics is the first step in putting into practice a territorial approach. Colombia is actively upgrading its national information systems (OECD, 2013b). Increased availability of sub-national data will undoubtedly

benefit FSN initiatives. It would, for example, help public authorities actively monitor regional situations and quickly intervene in places that need special attention – i.e. conflict-stricken territories or areas with high numbers of *desplazados*. The availability of updated and granular regional statistics would also permit the more accurate and precise identification of populations at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, which can facilitate long-term planning. Evidence-based policy making has the added benefit of clarifying the rationale for policies for the general public, enhancing government accountability.

Multi-level governance and co-ordination of policies

Efforts to improve the governance of FSN policies have thus far focused on the central level. However necessary, they have overlooked the importance of integrating sub-national governments into policy planning and delivery. Involving sub-national authorities can inform policy making and help tailor policy delivery to communities' specific needs and conditions. Regions are heterogeneous entities, and the coastal Atlantic region, for example, requires treatment distinctly different from the mountainous Andean region. Uniform implementation of a single policy is not the most efficient way to solve a problem that manifests itself in very different ways in heterogeneous territories. The engagement of sub-national authorities is essential for diagnosing and addressing regional differences.

Empirical evidence suggests that aligning policy agendas across levels of government and adapting national policy frameworks to sub-national characteristics and conditions would improve policy efficiency and effectiveness, using “knowledge pooling”. This means aggregating information collected from various levels of government and relevant stakeholders about the needs of and opportunities in a given territory. Multi-level governance systems encourage participation and citizen engagement, thus facilitating processes of knowledge pooling. Moreover, multi-level governance helps assess the effect of policies, generating information that feeds into subsequent knowledge pooling and policy design.

Identifying complementarities and managing trade-offs among different strands of policy are essential for ensuring that scarce resources are deployed as efficiently as possible. The boundaries of sectoral policies are well defined at the national level. Most FSN policies are delivered by national authorities as a social policy (welfare), with only two exceptions: some interventions are delivered through the national health care system; and to a lesser extent, part of the policy is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture. National-level co-ordination mechanisms minimise overlap and duplication in the provision of policies by these independent bodies. No such co-ordination mechanisms exist at the sub-national level or between the national and sub-national levels. This prevents synergies within and between levels of governments.

Co-ordination across policy sectors is also critical for developing a holistic approach to competitiveness in the context of FSN policy. Farming is presumed to be the only business opportunity available for people exposed to food insecurity and malnutrition. Policies to provide poor households with opportunities for generating new income have therefore been based in the agricultural sector. Meanwhile, armed conflict has deprived many rural residents of their land, starting large-scale rural-to-urban migration. Policy makers must acknowledge that income-generating opportunities for the poor exist outside agriculture. Policies supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship, as well as employment in the manufacturing and service sectors, for example, could help address

household poverty and the associated FSN issues it often generates. Simply stated, the importance of the non-farm rural economy should not be underestimated, or the role of entrepreneurship and job creation in offering opportunities to new arrivals in the cities.

Notes

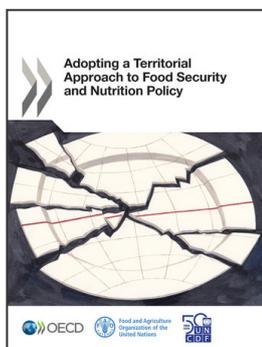
1. Extreme poverty data are not available for the department of Putumayo. It should be noted, however, that levels of household food insecurity in Putumayo (57.2%) exceed the national average. Similarly, food insecurity and extreme poverty data are not available for Amazonas.
2. Exact figures for food insecurity and malnutrition are to some degree dependent on the definition of rurality used. Using an alternative definition of urban/rural based on population density and proximity to urban centres could conceivably yield lower estimates for food insecurity and malnutrition (cf. OECD, 2014).
3. As a benchmark, the lowest value for the Gini Index of land distribution is that of Japan, with 0.382 (World Bank, 2004).
4. For a discussion of the factors that led to a rural-urban divide in Colombia, see OECD (2014).
5. *Familias en Acción* alone represents 0.5% of Colombia's total consolidated budget in 2015, USD 68 billion.
6. www.sispro.gov.co.
7. Approximately USD 2.2 billion was allocated to agricultural policy in 2015. The current budget compares with USD 250 million allocated to the sector in 2004. Also, budget allocation to agriculture has become more stable in recent years, facilitating policy design and delivery.
8. It is important to note, however, that the magnitude of this figure is probably forced upward by: *i*) the completeness of FSN data, thanks to the use of a better monitoring system and the implementation of a specific policy to monitor FSN; and *ii*) the potentially positive correlation of a programme supporting FSN and the percentage of citizens that self-identify with the challenge.
9. Monetary transfers to poor families, while necessary to eradicate poverty, may also create dependency. Recipients have little incentive to improve their conditions, because they risk losing the benefit. The large number of citizens who depend on social policy also affects the sustainability of the policy. This translates into a high variability of transfers – which, in turn, depend on the budget allocated to welfare at the national level. Thus, poor citizens are also exposed to unpredictably large variations in their income. This negatively affects not only resilience but public trust in the capacity of the public sector to reduce extreme poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition.

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