

Project Information Document/ Identification/Concept Stage (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 23-Sep-2020 | Report No: PIDC232628

BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project ID	Parent Project ID (if any)	Environmental and Social Risk Classification	Project Name
P175111		Moderate	SPF Colombia: Emergency COVID-19 Response for Migrants and Refugees from Venezuela and Host communities
Region	Country	Date PID Prepared	Estimated Date of Approval
LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN	Colombia	23-Sep-2020	
Financing Instrument	Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency	
Investment Project Financing	Gerencia de Fronteras	World Food Program	

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PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

SUMMARY

Total Project Cost	3.70
Total Financing	3.70
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	3.70
Special Financing	3.70

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

The COVID-19 emergency is having significant impacts in Colombia and globally which are intensified by pre-existing FCV factors. During the last 60 years, Colombia has been facing one of the longest internal conflicts

registered, with over 8 million victims -nearly a quarter of its population-, and the largest IDP population in the world. Additionally, from 2015 Colombia has welcomed 1.8 million refugee-like Venezuelans, becoming the main host of this population in the world. From March 2020, Colombia has been facing COVID-19, with 15,097 lives lost (as of August 16, 2020), devastating impacts on the health system, and significant economic stress caused by mitigation measures. World Bank estimates indicate that nearly 70% of workers nationwide will lose a part of their labor income. Informal and low-skilled workers are at higher risk, both because of the nature of the economic activities they perform, and because of limited social protection coverage.

Migrants and refugees from Venezuela are among the most vulnerable groups to the COVID-19. Many of them not only fall below the poverty line but are also highly dependent on informal jobs. A survey from the UN (2020) concludes that 91% of migrant households were dependent on paid work pre-COVID, however, this proportion has reduced today to only 20%. Furthermore, 48% of migrant households report having no source of income at the moment, with only 15% consuming three meals or more a day and most of them reporting diets lacking micronutrients. Additionally, crisis management led to the closure of key social assistance services such as shelters, community kitchens, school feeding programs, and other protection services -among others- causing higher demand than ever in access to housing. Over 50% of Venezuelan households are lacking shelter, and thousands are today living in the streets, making them more vulnerable to contagion.

To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Colombia deployed a comprehensive social response to protect the poor and vulnerable. This includes: (i) extraordinary payments through existing social assistance programs (Familias en Acción, Jóvenes en Acción and Colombia Mayor); (ii) acceleration of the implementation of the VAT refund program (originally planned as a pilot for 100,000 families but expanded to one million) targeted to households who are recipients of cash transfer programs; and (iii) implementation of Ingreso Solidario, a new unconditional cash transfer program targeted to three million vulnerable households not registered for other social programs. As a result of these measures, it is expected that 7.5 million individuals will receive temporary economic support, helping mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on levels of poverty and inequality. Despite this, emergency measures are targeted to Colombian citizens and therefore do not cover migrants and refugees. For instance, Ingreso Solidario is only reaching around 45,000 migrant families in total.

Therefore, most migrants and refugees from Venezuela will not receive emergency transfers from the government, leaving them with no means to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. This would increase the overall vulnerability of the country to surmount the crisis, as migrants and refugees will be less likely to enforce social distancing measures, increasing the chances of new outbreaks.

The health emergency has deepened the feelings of rejection and xenophobia towards migrants from Venezuelan, adding significant pressures to the Government's open borders policy. During the pandemic, unfavorable opinions towards migrants from Venezuelan among Colombians have rapidly increased from 67% to 81% in just three months. Also, 87% of Colombians would prefer that the border with Venezuela remains closed after the pandemic. Regarding access to services and the labor market, it is observed a generalized drop in the number of Colombians who agree that migrants from Venezuela should be granted access to health, education, and jobs compared to a year ago. This may eventually affect the capacity of the Government to continue supporting policies of open borders and social and economic integration of migrants.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

Migración Colombia (MC) is the branch of the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of managing Venezuelan migration. It is responsible for the administrative registry of Venezuelan migrants (*Registro Administrativo de Migrantes Venezolanos RAMV*), for issuing the special stay permits (*Permiso Especial de Permanencia, PEP*) and the border mobility card (*Tarjeta de movilidad fronteriza, TMF*). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on the other hand, has been mobilizing the support of bilateral, multilateral and humanitarian partners to respond to this crisis, and, to mitigate the impacts among Venezuelan migrants and refugees, with limited success given the global nature of the crisis.

Homelessness, income losses, increased food insecurity and other vulnerabilities led over 55,000 migrants to try to return to Venezuela. Although less than 1% of all migrants and refugees in Colombia have been returning to Venezuela so far, this sudden mobilization of people is adding pressure to host areas close to the border, with elevated COVID-19 related health risks at border crossing points. As a result, the Government of Colombia deployed a strategy (through MC and subnational authorities of Norte de Santander) to facilitate the safe return of migrants to Venezuela and to mitigate potential health risks due to the agglomerations at border crossing points.

Relationship to CPF

The proposed project closely resonates with the objectives postulated in the Country Partnership Framework 2016-2021 between the Government of Colombia and the World Bank Group. It must be highlighted that resonance with CPF is despite the project responding to two specific junctures that have unfolded after the CPF was developed in 2016: i) the surge in Venezuelan migration in 2018 and ii) the spread of Covid-19 in Colombia since March 2020. Specifically, the project is closely linked to Objective 3 (Improved Access to and Quality of Service Delivery in Target Areas) under Pillar II (Enhancing Social Inclusion and Mobility through Improved Service Delivery), as it seeks to prevent that particularly disadvantaged groups are disproportionately affected in the context of the pandemic and are further submerged in poverty.

The CPF is clear in emphasizing that significant, but insufficient progress has been made in reducing exclusion and inequality for the poor. Specifically, the CPF highlights that the joint World Bank Group and Government of Colombia program will pay close attention to the uneven territorial development characterized by unfinished economic integration and persistent disparities in standards of living has resulted in poor physical and social connectivity, weak local governance and high exposure to natural disasters, all of which discourage growth, inclusion, and sustainability. The context diagnosed in the CPF has become significantly more acute by 2020, making this project highly relevant in achieving its intended objectives. As thousands of families have forgone income during the Covid-19 pandemic, food security and nutrition have been greatly affected—cash relief must be provided to affected families, so they prevent falling into malnutrition shocks with long-lasting effects.

Furthermore, the surge in Venezuelan migration has multiplied the number of pockets in the population where the progress of the past decade is not yet evident. It has now become clear that, as with previously unattended population groups, the social progress of the country as postulated in the CPF, requires that effective social and economic inclusion reaches all members of society, including migrants.

C. Project Development Objective(s)

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To provide emergency support to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable migrants and refugees while avoiding potential migration-related conflicts with host communities in Colombia.

Key Results

1. Number of migrant and refugee households receiving one round of lump-sum unconditional cash transfers (disaggregated by gender)
2. Percentage of beneficiaries reporting satisfaction with cash transfers (disaggregated by gender)
3. Percentage of beneficiaries (local communities) with improved perceptions towards Venezuelan migrants and refugees

D. Preliminary Description

Activities/Components

The grant has two main components, Component 1 will be a Recipient Execute (RETF) through the UN World Food Program (WFP) and Component 2 will be Bank Execute (BETF).

Component 1 (RETF): Emergency Cash Transfers to Migrants from Venezuela (Implementing Partner: WFP). This component aims to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants from Venezuela in Colombia by providing one round lump sum cash transfers of COP 480,000 (USD 129 approx.) to up to 18,890 migrant households (75,560 people) who have lost their ability to earn a living due to the COVID-19 lockdown and who are not receiving emergency response cash transfers from the Colombian government, other subnational authorities or other development partners. The benefit amount is aligned with the initial transfer provided by the *Ingreso Solidario* Program to vulnerable Colombian households, which was designed to cover some of the more pressing basic needs, including food and shelter. Geographical areas of intervention are Bogotá, Soacha, Cali and Bucaramanga. Cash transfers are expected to be delivered in a 4 months period.

Component 2 (BETF): Strengthened response coordination, policy-making and anti-xenophobia, and project supervision (Bank Executed TF): The lack of experience dealing with massive displacement and overstretched operational capacity due to the COVID-19 emergency, is hindering coordination roles at all levels. This component will support the Colombian Government in its ability to timely and effectively respond to COVID 19 challenges targeting migrants and refugees. The aim is to provide technical assistance and capacity strengthening to the *Gerencia de Frontera*, especially given that Colombia probably has to face a large incoming influx of migrants and refugees displaced by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Venezuela. The component will include the following activities:

- (i) Address unconscious bias among decision-makers by creating spaces for positive inter-group interactions through (virtual) between-group activities. Behind these activities is the rationale that these interactions have shown to change the perceptions of Colombians about Venezuelan migrants and refugees in a way that reduces discrimination/xenophobia.
- (ii) Mitigate rising xenophobia in the framework of the emergency, through the implementation of an ample campaign and stakeholder sensibilization for creating the political space for continued social and economic integration of migrants. Strategic communications will be used to highlight the contributions of migrants and refugees to host communities to support successful integration.
- (iii) Support the supervision of the grant.

For activities (i) and (ii) the team will monitor perception changes over time, measuring the impact of these activities rigorously and recommending options for future scale-up. The decision on which specific perceptions/indicators will be monitored will be defined at a later stage. Support from the World Bank in designing and implementing this activity in a rigorous way would serve as proof of the concept of the potential impact of these behavioral interventions that could be then tried in other spaces and communities across Colombia. The perceptions monitoring would allow a complementary budget to the proposed activities to evaluate and monitor perception changes over time, measuring the impact of interventions rigorously, and recommending options for future scale-up.

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Environmental and Social Standards Relevance

E. Relevant Standards

ESS Standards		Relevance
ESS 1	Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	Relevant
ESS 10	Stakeholder Engagement and Information Disclosure	Relevant
ESS 2	Labor and Working Conditions	Relevant
ESS 3	Resource Efficiency and Pollution Prevention and	Not Currently Relevant

	Management	
ESS 4	Community Health and Safety	Relevant
ESS 5	Land Acquisition, Restrictions on Land Use and Involuntary Resettlement	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 6	Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Living Natural Resources	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 7	Indigenous Peoples/Sub-Saharan African Historically Underserved Traditional Local Communities	Relevant
ESS 8	Cultural Heritage	Not Currently Relevant
ESS 9	Financial Intermediaries	Not Currently Relevant

Legal Operational Policies

Safeguard Policies	Triggered	Explanation (Optional)
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No	
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No	

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

Environmental risk is considered Low. The activities supported by this project are not expected to have any negative environmental impacts. No rehabilitation or construction of infrastructure or other actions having an impact on the environment will be financed through the project. The project will be implemented in four regions (Bogotá, Soacha, Cali y Bucaramanga). Like any other activity during this pandemic, this project presents risks of exposure of project personnel to COVID-19. To mitigate this risk, the project proposes implementation alternatives that minimize exposure. Cash transfers will be delivered by WFP contracted financial service providers, which for the time being is Western Union with whom WFP has a global agreement. Exposure of personnel to COVID-19 contagion: to mitigate this risk the project proposes implementation arrangements with WFP and WU (Western Union) to minimize exposure and agglomerations, provision of necessary personal protective equipment and training on their use and disposal, and implementation of proper prevention strategies in alignment with WHO and Ministry of Health guidelines. These mitigation measures will be described and integrated into Labor Management Procedures under ESS 2. Social risk is considered Moderate. There may be resistance from local authorities to give support to migrant, to mitigate this risk, the grant builds upon partnerships developed by the National Government with local authorities, sensitizing them on the benefits for the local community of supporting migrants and refugees. Also, to minimize the risk of social conflict between migrants and host communities - aiming to champion a close collaboration with the Local Governments in the targeted areas- up to 10% of the beneficiary vulnerable families could belong to host communities that currently do not receive any other type of cash transfers or social assistance. In this case, the selection of local vulnerable beneficiary families will use the Colombian traditional targeting tool SISBEN (Social Programme Beneficiary Selection System), using the same scores applied for targeting the Ingreso Solidario Program. The team will coordinate with the National Government on this topic to ensure the utmost equity in the distribution of the benefits in host communities. Negative perceptions towards migrants from Venezuela have sharply raised during the

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pandemic and any effort to support this population could exacerbate this trend. To mitigate this risk, all targeting approaches are aligned with the accountability to affected populations, protection and gender policies, messages and sensitization campaigns. WFP will apply stringent monitoring through CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) tools like WhatsApp or face to face strategy with beneficiaries, implementing partners and financial service providers to ensure that cash transfers doesn't go only to the men in the family.

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