



## **Colombia Public Land Mapping Project Proposal**

### **Executive Summary**

In accordance with the goal of Fundación por la Educación Multidimensional (FEM) to reduce the social and economic inequality faced by marginalized ethnic groups in Colombia, FEM would like to propose a spatial and temporal mapping of titled public land in Colombia. In order to connect local communities with the technical and legal resources to protect their cultural lands and territories, it is necessary to develop a more concrete understanding of public land titling in Colombia.

### **Background and Problem Statement**

Since 1991, recognition of collective land tenure rights in Colombia has benefited from constitutional backing. However, though the Constitution recognizes the collective rights of indigenous and afro-descendent communities in the Pacific and Caribbean regions of the country (Caribe no Insular), indigenous reservations (resguardos) remain vulnerable to developmental initiatives (e.g. mining, tourism) that facilitate large-scale violations of collective rights. In addition to natural resource extraction and conflicts with local farmers, ethnic groups face impending issues as Colombia changes its regulations on land access without effectively considering collective land rights.

Colombia is one of the few countries in Latin America without a detailed map of public lands. Many of the areas not yet mapped have traditionally been inhabited by ethnic groups, and though Colombia has officially recognized large tracts of land in forested regions, understanding the distribution and legitimacy of pending land titling requests requires further research and study.

In order to establish a productive discourse between ethnic communities and the government, it is necessary to rectify the contradictory regulations on land use and natural resources, and to determine the locations and extent of pending land claims initiated by ethnic groups. Establishing a comprehensive temporal map of Colombian public land would help to codify a framework for understanding collective land rights in Colombia and facilitate these goals.

The need to construct a territorial memory is also a key aspect of Colombian peace keeping efforts given that a key issue in the armed conflict has been the control of large portions of land, and the consequent dispossession of its legitimate owners. Public land, being legally “stable,” offers a great measure to analyze land grabbing practices and the contemporary use of those lands. Creating a GIS base for historical analysis will empower historians, researchers and journalists of new perspectives to explain the armed conflict.

### **Proposed Work Plan**

As there has been no detailed mapping of public lands in Colombia to date, the project will require collaboration from varied partners to establish a concrete timeline, funding, and action plan.

#### **1. Establishing the Project**



- a. Identify key partners to collaborate on the academic research and technical mapping of public land data.
2. Exploratory Phase
  - a. Document the state of Colombian public land data and establish parameters for encoding the information into preferred formats.
  - b. Identify key deliverables.
3. Acquire Funding
4. Establish GIS Team
  - a. Establish and facilitate the work of a GIS team capable of mapping the data.
5. Ongoing Project Support