

The Master Plan for the development of the Orinoquía takes off.

Government signed an agreement with the research center of the University of Purdue, in the United States.

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Photo: Private Archive

During the signing of the agreement, the National Planning Director, Simon Gaviria and Suresh V. Garimella from Purdue University (USA), were accompanied by several attendees.

The Colombian government, Purdue University (Research Center in the United States) and the School of Public Administration (ESAP) signed an agreement that will initiate the Master Plan for the development of the Orinoquía.

This agreement with the technical support of the National Planning Department, seeks to implement 8 pilot projects: 5 in agriculture and 3 in tourism for the Orinoquía region. (See also: Purdue University will support the development of the Orinoco). In this 15.1 million hectares area that is suitable for agriculture, there are huge backlogs in infrastructure and social services.

During the signing of the agreement, Suresh V. Garimella, Executive Vice President for Research and Partnerships of Purdue University (USA) said his institution has extensive world experience in the development of agriculture and tourism. "Purdue University has experience and development in areas such as engineering, agriculture, anthropology and a holistic view of the problems that exist in the world," said the academic.

For agriculture and tourism

In the same sense, businessman Luis Carlos Sarmiento Angulo, who attended the signing ceremony, said that with Purdue University Colombia will have the highest quality assesment. "This region needs everything: roads, airports, aqueducts that represents new jobs for people, land to cultivate, new businesses; this is truly an extraordinary thing," said the businessman.

Claudia Marcela Franco, Director of the ESAP, showed her optimism. "I am sure that we will achieve this, this project related to the development of the agricultural and tourism sectors is so important, they are two potentialities for the region."

And the director of National Planning, Simon Gaviria said: "It would be great if in 50 years we can say that Purdue helped us find the Colombian Orinoquía potential that we all knew was there, but that we had not been able to develop.

The agreement will have resources for more than 4,000 million pesos and its first results are expected in late 2017. The sum of institutional efforts is one of the aspects that will ensure the achievement of expectations. The confluence of the experience of ESAP, along with that of Purdue University that has developed several similar initiatives in other countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, are reasons to expect the best results for the Orinoquía region.

As a matter of fact, Purdue University has a history of supporting development in Colombia, like the Farmer to Farmer program that it has in partnership with USAID and is focused on the development of small and medium farming enterprises and the 'Cacao for Peace' initiative.

On this occasion, it is expected that they create tools to be used by the private sector, government and social agencies to determine the feasibility of specific development plans for the Orinoquía region.

Another objective is to improve the health and welfare of the region by way of their economic growth.