



The proposed new industrial park for footwear and tanning companies in El Porvenir will go ahead, but there are serious community issues, including the fate of 500 families who have set up makeshift homes on the site, to sort out.

Hold-ups and headaches for new footwear industrial park

Peru's national congress has formally approved plans to set up a new industrial facility for the production of leather and footwear in Trujillo in the northwest of the country.

The project received 75 votes in favour after its presentation to the congress in mid-March, no votes against and six abstentions. The government will now go ahead with plans to build the new industrial park in the district of El Porvenir.

Sustainable employment

The new facility will cover an area of 102 hectares and will house micro-, as well as small- and medium-sized companies involved in producing leather and footwear. The plan is also to include manufacturers of leather goods, and to produce leather and finished products to meet the demands of the domestic and the export market.

A proposed new industrial park in Trujillo, Peru, will help local footwear and leather producers to improve their environmental impact and boost their export performance, but not everyone in the city is happy with the decision to go ahead with the project.

One member of the congress, Franco Carpio, told local media after the March debate that the leather and footwear industrial park would generate sustainable employment for the area and make an important contribution to its economic and social development.

However, two weeks after the vote in congress,

planning officials in Trujillo called a halt to the proposed new industrial park. The head of municipal development planning in Trujillo, Guillermo Malca Orbegoso, came forward to say that the necessary permits to put the proposed site to industrial use were not yet in place.

He told Peruvian newspapers: “No one can carry out any sort of investment project on that land. No one has given us any technical information about the proposed project, and we haven’t even been told how much of the 102-hectare site they intend to use.”

He also made the point that the land is not currently registered for industrial use and permission to change that will first require a series of preliminary exercises, including an environmental impact plan. Mr Malca said that he didn’t think the leather park idea was a bad one, but that the community in El Porvenir deserved to have the correct protocols followed.

Home truths

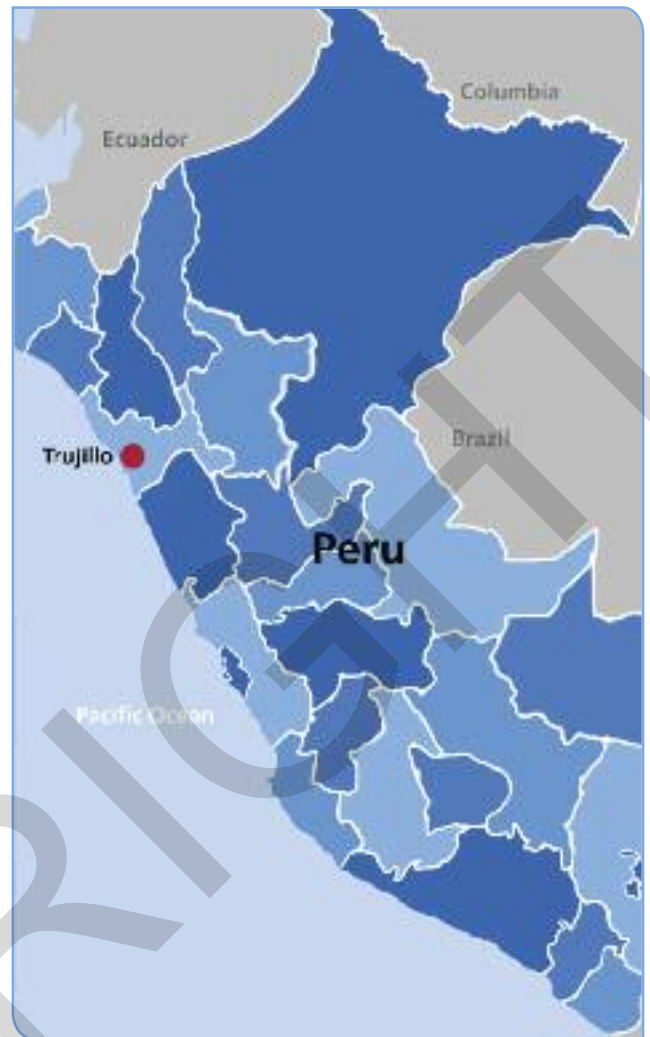
There is another complication. Housing is a problem in El Porvenir, and the open spaces of the proposed site for the industrial park have attracted around 500 families who have built makeshift homes there. Some have lived on the site for a number of years and, on this basis, have taken steps for their presence there to be declared legal. News of the new footwear and leather complex came as a shock to this community.

The president of the Trujillo Tanning and Footwear Association, Edmundo Blas Zagarra, also had a shock when, on April 13, he was standing in the main door of the tannery he runs in the city, waiting for a colleague to bring some papers for him to take to the local authorities, only to see a man carrying not one but two guns step down from a taxi in front of the building. Mr Blas is in no doubt that he was the gunman’s target, and that the dispute that has built up over the industrial park was the reason. His colleagues arrived in time to scare the assailant off before firing a shot; he jumped back into the taxi and sped away.

In the days that followed this incident, the authorities in El Porvenir became more vocal in their support of the project. The mayor of El Porvenir, Luis Sánchez Coronel, insisted that all the necessary paperwork would be put in place quickly and that the whole district would benefit from having its 80 tanneries move away from residential areas to the new, dedicated industrial site. A local university, the Antenor Orrego Private University in Trujillo, will work with the authorities on the plan and its execution. Its head of department for architecture, Nelly Amemiya Hoshi, paid an extensive visit to the site in early April and said she and her team were looking forward to working on the project.

Visit from Italy

Between May 4 and May 7, Mr Sánchez Coronel hosted a visit to El Porvenir by a group of experts in tanning and footwear production technology from Italy. This included a seminar entitled Italian Technology for the Development of Eco-Sensitive



Administrative map of Peru showing Trujillo in the northwest.

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Tanneries, which attracted 80 delegates. Carlo Milone, director of the Vigevano-based International Polytechnic for the Industrial and Economical Development, and Rossella Evangelisti, director of the Italian Institute for Overseas Trade, were among the speakers at the seminar. They focused on the need for the set-up at El Porvenir to be as eco-friendly as possible from the outset, which, naturally, they believe will be easier if the companies who move into the new industrial park use Italian tanning and footwear production technology.

In the course of 2009, seminar delegates learned, Italy exported tanning and footwear machinery and technology worth \$238 million, but Peru imported only 0.75% of that, with those purchases restricted to the biggest players in the Peruvian industry. A set-up like the industrial park could, in theory, make the technology available, on a shared basis, to much smaller companies too. All of this will be good news for a Peruvian footwear and leather sector that had export values of around \$40 million in 2009. For the mayor of El Porvenir, this prize, and the benefit to the whole community of moving tanneries and footwear factories onto a dedicated site, away from the main residential areas, are too attractive to turn down. 🌐