



OECD Territorial Reviews

# VALLE DE MÉXICO, MEXICO

POLICY HIGHLIGHTS



## Notes

This document summarises the key findings of OECD (2015), *OECD Territorial Reviews: Valle de México, Mexico*, OECD Publishing, Paris. The full publication is available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264245174-en>.

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# Introduction

The 2015 OECD Urban Policy Review of Mexico concluded that, as a highly urbanised nation, Mexico's performance is closely tied to the functioning of its major cities and thereby to the quality of their governance. This study of the Valle de México also concludes that there is a need for major reform of metropolitan governance to address the challenges in planning and urban development faced by the country's largest metropolitan area.

The Valle de México has complex, fragmented and often haphazard governance arrangements. Like in other metropolitan zones in Mexico and other OECD countries, in the Valle de México there seems to be an absence of clear and effective institutional arrangements for urban development and the co-ordination of urban services, including infrastructure. This context is eroding economic productivity, environmental sustainability and more generally, the liveability of the region.

The main message of this review is that serious urban governance failings are inhibiting adequate responses to critical urban development priorities – urban regeneration, access to adequate housing, reliable and safe public transport and environmental protection. Several technical tools and reform initiatives are currently being implemented in the Valle de México to reshape the metropolitan area. These tools and reforms will not, however, produce the desired solutions to urban problems in the absence of metropolitan thinking and action, strategic regional planning, and improved intergovernmental co-ordination and collaboration. Addressing the Valle de México's governance deficits would not only help the metropolitan area, but would have a significant impact on inclusive and sustainable growth on a national scale.



# How's life in the Valle de México?

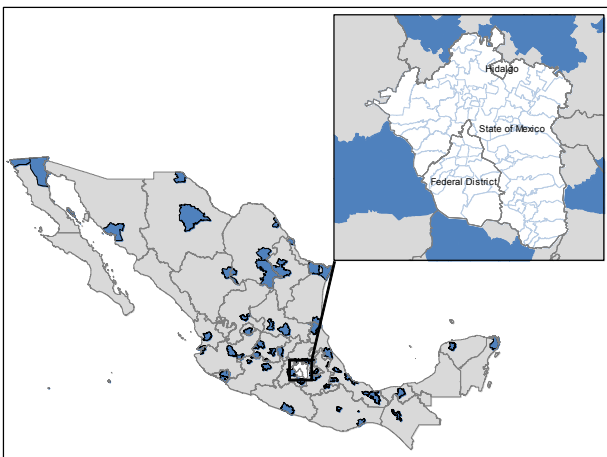
## The Valle de México is one of the world's largest metropolises, but it is not as prosperous as it could be

### The Valle de México is the third-largest OECD metropolis

The Metropolitan Zone of the Valle de México (henceforth ZMVM or the Valle de México) is the economic, financial, political and cultural centre of Mexico. In terms of its population, it is the third-largest metropolitan area within the OECD and the largest in the world outside of Asia. According to the most commonly used Mexican delimitations, the ZMVM covers approximately 7 866 km<sup>2</sup> (almost five times the size of the Greater London region, and three times the size of Luxembourg), spanning the 16 *delegaciones* (boroughs) of the Federal District, 59 municipalities from the State of Mexico and one municipality from the state of Hidalgo. The Federal

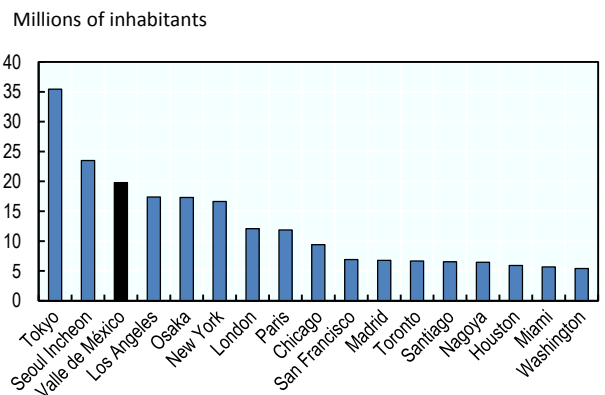
District is not a state in itself, though it is granted many state-level responsibilities and powers. Its *delegaciones* are territorial and political-administrative divisions similar to the municipalities, but with juridical and administrative differences. The municipalities and *delegaciones* are both led by publicly elected authorities, but in contrast to municipalities, *delegaciones* cannot collect their own taxes or control local police. The Federal District – also called Mexico City – is the seat of the federal government and the urban core of the metropolitan zone.

**Figure 1. The Metropolitan Zone of the Valle de México, 2010**



Source: SEDESOL-CONAPO-INEGI (2015a), *Delimitación de las zonas metropolitanas de México 2010*.

**Figure 2. The largest OECD metropolitan areas, 2012**



Note: Data for the Valle de México refers to the OECD metropolitan area definition.

Source: OECD (2015a), "Metropolitan areas", *OECD Regional Statistics (database)*

# The population of the ZMVM is still growing, mainly in the commuting zone

Today, the Valle de México has over 20 million inhabitants, which corresponds to 17% of the national population. Somewhat less than half of the metropolitan area's population lives in the Federal District. Even though population growth has slowed markedly, it has continued to average 1.2% per year over the last decade, with the commuting areas growing much more rapidly than in the urban core.

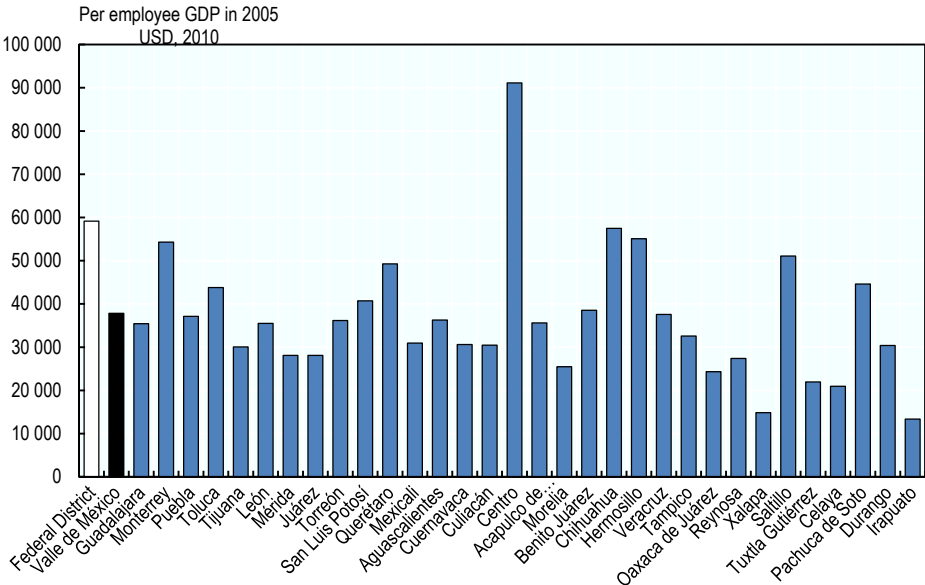
This has added to the expansion of the urban area, increasing the need for more and better urban infrastructure. Fortunately, this urban expansion has not been accompanied by a decrease in urban density. Compared to European or other Latin American cities, the Valle de México remains fairly densely populated, with 13 500 residents per square kilometre.

# The ZMVM is a major contributor to the national economy, but productivity is low by comparison with other OECD cities

The Valle de México produces almost a quarter of the Mexican gross domestic product (GDP). Under the internationally comparable metropolitan area definition used by the OECD, the Valle de México accounts for 17% of Mexico's residents and 18% of the country's employees, who produce 23% of the country's GDP. However, OECD metro-areas with a comparable population share, such as London and Paris, produce around 30% of the national GDP. Economic growth in the ZMVM has not met expectations. The GDP of the Valle de México grew by 1.7% annually between 2003 and 2010, mainly driven by the population increase. Per capita annual

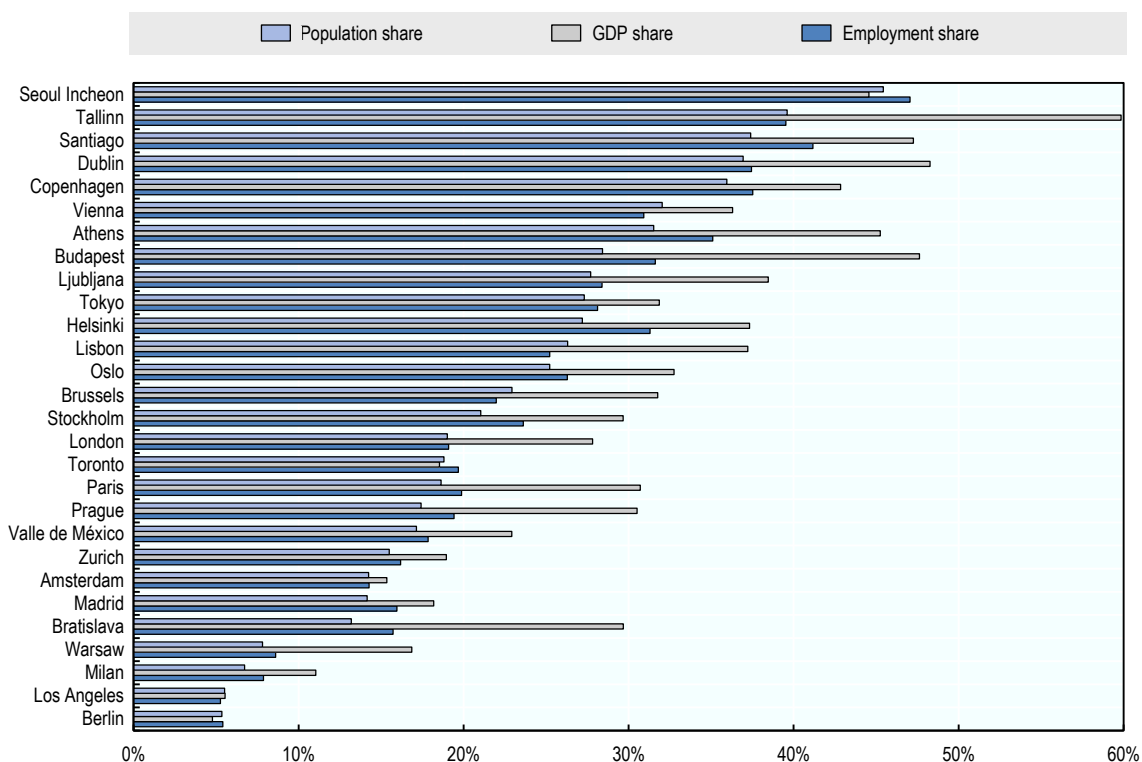
economic growth, however, averaged only 0.5%, in the mid-range among OECD metropolitan areas but well below the economic growth potential of a similar agglomeration in an emerging economy. As a result, of all 275 OECD metropolitan areas, the Valle de México remains among the 10% with the lowest GDP per capita. In 2010, the average GDP per capita in the Valle de México was USD 16 060, masking stark variations between the levels in Mexico City (USD 26 550) and the municipalities of the State of Mexico (USD 7 140).

**Figure 3. Labour productivity in Mexican metropolitan areas and the Federal District, 2010**



Source: OECD calculations based on OECD (2015a), "Metropolitan areas", OECD Regional Statistics (database), and OECD (2015b), "Large Regions (TL2)", OECD Regional Statistics (database).

**Figure 4. Largest city's percentage of national population and GDP, 2010**

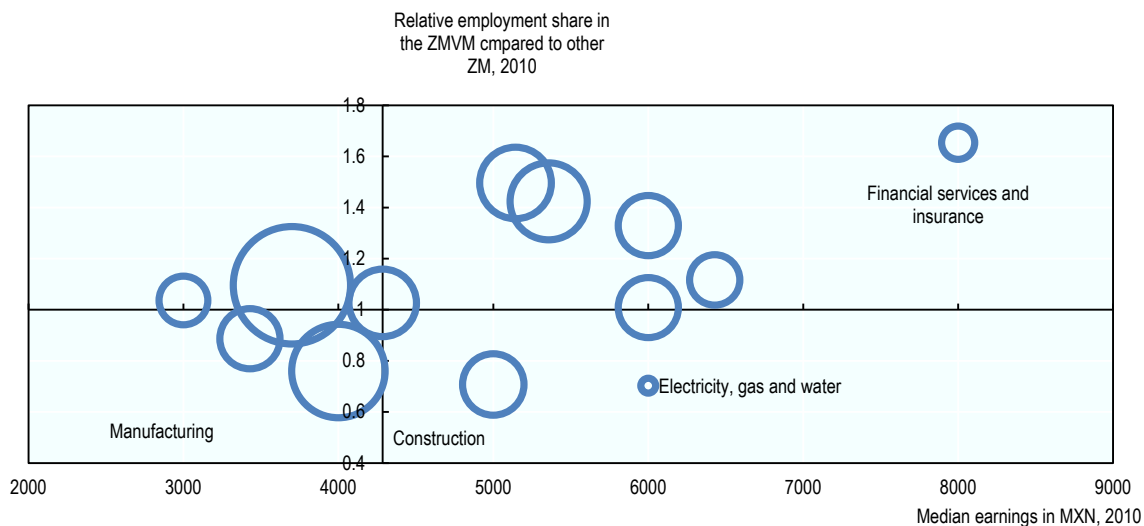


Source: OECD (2015<sup>a</sup>), "Metropolitan areas", OECD Regional Statistics (database).

The Valle de México's industrial structure is concentrated in high-value-added services, especially financial services and insurance, with transport and communications, real estate and business services accounting for a relatively high share of employment. For a capital city, the total share of employees in high-value-added service

sectors remains low, at approximately 25% of all employees. Although the opportunities available in the Valle de México attract a relatively high share of well-educated workers, skills development policies need to respond better to the demands of emerging sectors, for example, those related to a green economy.

**Figure 5. Relative specialisation and median earnings in the Valle de México, 2010**



Note: The graph depicts the percentage of employment by industry in the Metropolitan Zone of the Valle de México relative to the employment percentage across all other Mexican metropolitan zones on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis shows the median earnings in the industries in the Valle de México, i.e. 50% of employees in the industry report earnings above and below the median value. The size of the bubbles indicates the employment share of the industry.

Source: OECD calculations based on IPUMS (2014), Mexico: 2010 Population and Housing Census.

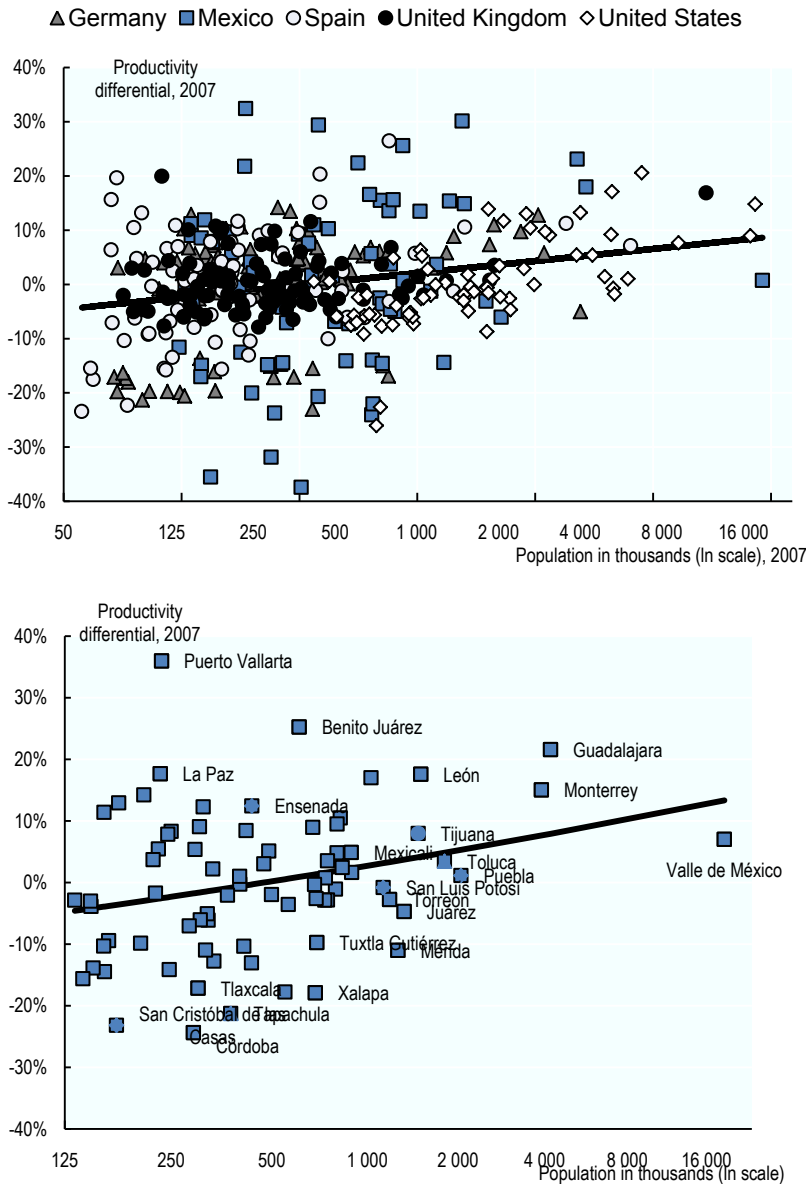


# Fragmented governance structures prevent the metropolitan zone from realising its economic potential

The Valle de México has a highly fragmented governance structure, which negatively affects its productivity levels. Compared to other Mexican metropolitan zones, economic productivity in the Valle de México is only slightly above average. OECD analysis suggests that this is lower than would be expected, given its size and the composition of its population. According to OECD research, larger metropolitan areas tend to have higher productivity, but the Valle de México has aggregate levels of labour productivity similar to that of other Mexican metropolitan areas with smaller populations, such as Guadalajara. One possible explanation is the mismatch between the actual

socio-economic area in which its businesses and residents live and work and the administrative boundaries of jurisdictions in the metropolitan area. A larger number of stakeholders increases the degree of complexity in designing and implementing policies that require co-ordination, which can put a drag on the productivity of urban agglomerations. The problem is exacerbated by the lack of strategic regional planning frameworks with sufficient financial backing at the metropolitan scale, ambiguous constitutional definitions of “metropolitan zones,” and weak co-ordination and collaboration among state- and municipal-level governments for urban development.

**Figures 6. Productivity and city size, 2007**



Note: Productivity differentials are estimated from individual earnings data using multivariate regressions. The estimates account for individual characteristics associated with productivity (e.g. education, occupation or age). The productivity differentials therefore capture the externalities of Functional Urban Areas that affect employees' earnings. Productivity differentials in the second panel account for “northing”, which controls for the impact of distance to the US border.

Source: OECD calculations based on Ahrend, et al (2014), “What makes cities more productive? Evidence on the role of urban governance from five OECD countries”, OECD Regional Development Working Papers, No.2014/05, OECD Publishing, Paris.

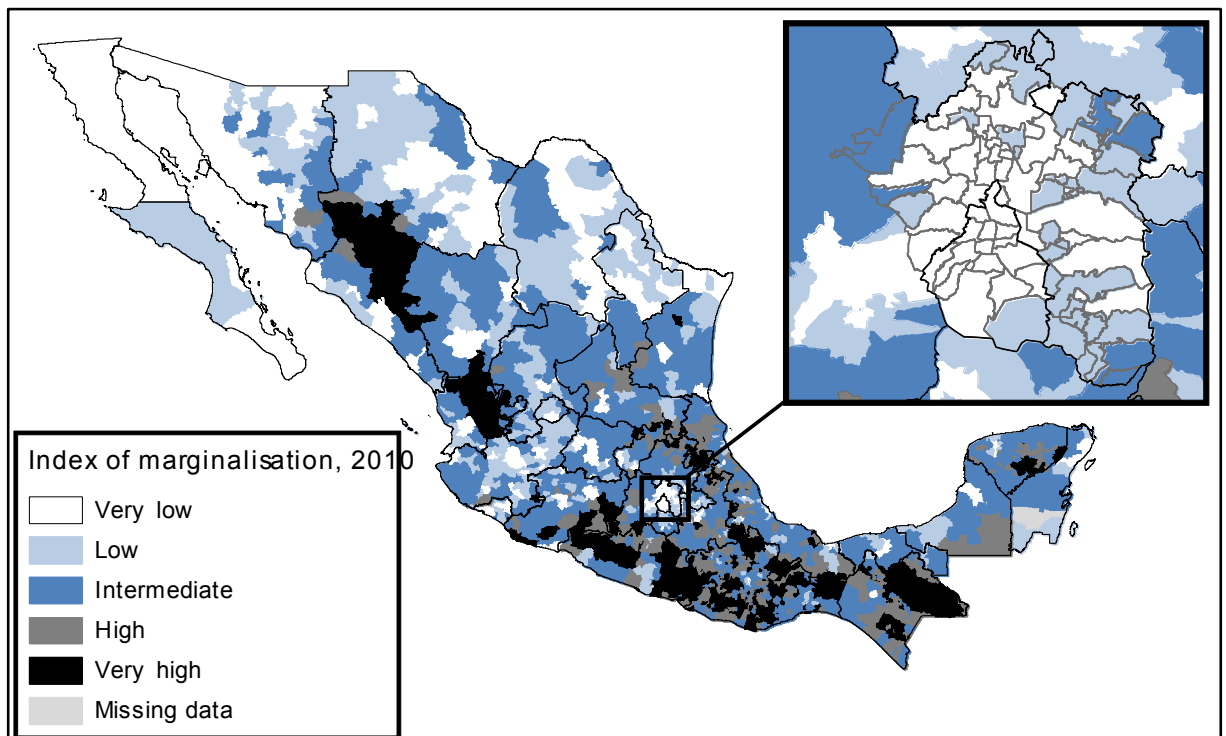
## Although levels of “marginalisation” are low, the Valle de México remains highly unequal

Nearly half of the municipalities and all but one of the Federal District *delegaciones* are considered to have a very low degree of “marginalisation”, meaning that in these areas most households have access to basic services according to Mexican standards. Nonetheless, the basic services in some neighbourhoods, in both the centre and at the periphery, are poor, leaving more than 40% of homes with gaps in electricity, running water or drainage. Neighbourhoods with high levels of public service coverage can be directly adjacent to deprived neighbourhoods. Both well-off and less affluent areas show high levels of income inequality, which affects social cohesion. High-value-added services drive higher levels of income in some areas, but also contribute to inequality. Although unemployment in the metropolitan zone is relatively

low (4.8% on average), it varies widely, ranging from less than 1% in the northeast to 7.5% in the southeast.

In terms of the distribution of the educated population, Mexico City and the municipalities to its north have a high concentration of the highly educated (in terms of upper secondary and tertiary education), typically earning comparatively high incomes. By contrast, in many peripheral neighbourhoods, the average level of schooling is below the minimum school leaving age (12 to 15 years old). Although the percentage of children between 12 and 15 who are in the labour force rather than in school fell from 7.4% in 2000 to 4.5% in 2010, serious concerns remain about equality of opportunity.

**Figure 7. Marginalisation in Mexico and in the Valle de México, 2010**



Source: CONAPO (2015<sup>a</sup>), Índice de marginación por entidad federativa y municipio, 2010.

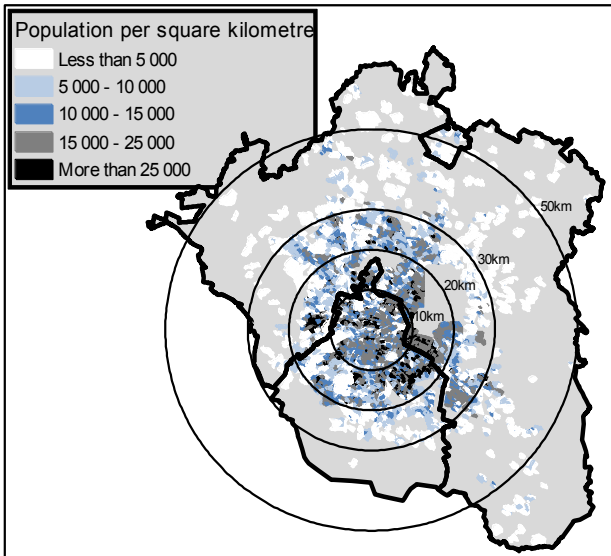
# Low-cost housing has expanded in peripheral areas, but jobs are concentrated in the metropolitan core

The transport system has not been able to match the rapid urban development. Housing and population growth have largely moved outside the Federal District, where land regulations and their enforcement tend to be less restrictive and housing is often more affordable. This process has contributed to urban expansion. However, employment remains concentrated in the metropolitan core: the four central *delegaciones* of the Federal District account for one-third of the jobs and 43% of the service-sector jobs. As a result, in the ZMVM, over 40% of residents cross at least one municipal boundary to get to work. The growing distance between housing and employment centres has resulted in longer commuting distances and travel times.

Although public mass transport is gaining momentum, low capacity and poor quality modes

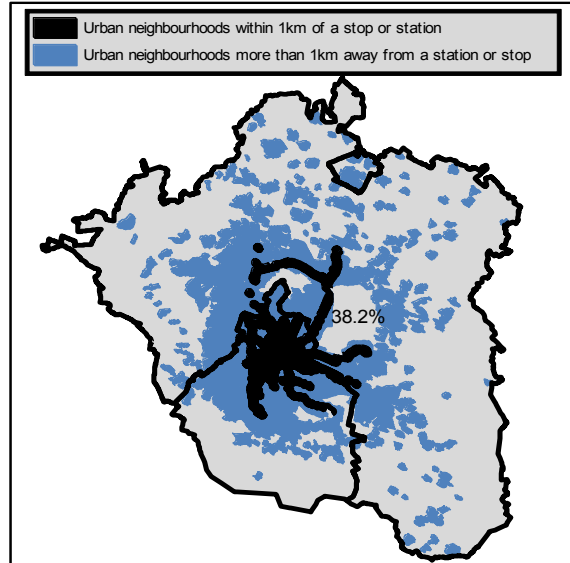
are by far the most common mode of transport. In consequence, the use of private vehicles is growing fast. Between 2010 and 2013, the numbers of cars registered grew 8.5% annually. Road traffic congestion in the metropolitan zone ranks among the highest in the world. According to the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), congestion causes an annual loss of 3.1% of GDP in the ZMVM. Mass transport continues to expand, but the provision of reliable public transport, particularly in peripheral areas of the urban agglomeration, remains a challenge. Despite heavy investment in mass transport in Mexico City, only 25% of the population lives within one kilometre of a station or a stop. Moreover, both the underground and the new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system are already operating above capacity.

**Figure 8. Population density in the Valle de México, 2010**



Source: OECD calculations based on INEGI (2010a), Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010.

**Figure 9. Urban neighbourhoods in the Valle de México within 1 km of a BRT, Suburbano or underground station.**



Fuente: OECD calculations based on INEGI (2010a), and public transport information from SEMOVI and ITDP.

*Note:* Stops of a commuter train connecting the Federal District and the State of Mexico (*Suburbano*), the underground (*Metro*) and bus rapid transit systems of the Federal District (BRT, *Metrobús*) and the State of Mexico (Mexibús) are included in the Figure 9. The population covered includes residents who live in neighbourhoods (census tracts: *AGEB*) within 1 kilometre of a stop or station. The public transport system is current as of June 2015, population figures are taken from the 2010 census.

# Addressing critical urban development challenges

## Housing and urban regeneration

### Integrated urban regeneration could improve well-being in distressed areas throughout the Valle de México

Improving the living conditions within the existing housing stock should be a priority for policy makers. The Valle de México has many demographically declining or distressed neighbourhoods, although the roots of the problem tend to be distinct in different parts of the metropolitan zone. The central area of the Federal District, for instance, has faced several decades of depopulation and deterioration, while many of the older social housing blocks (*unidades habitacionales*) built in and around the Federal District since the 1950s, present problems of ageing infrastructure, poor maintenance and overcrowding.

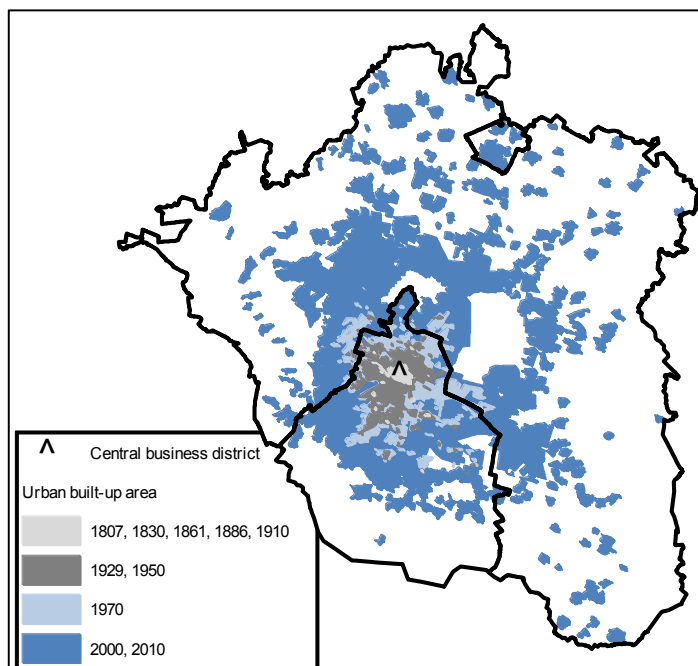
At the same time, newer social housing developments in the suburbs face rapid deterioration. The most visible manifestation of the crisis is the large percentage of unoccupied, and in some cases abandoned, homes on the metropolitan periphery. Among the reasons for this phenomenon are their remote location, the absence of employment centres within a reasonable distance, costly public transport, and deficiencies in basic public services.



Urban regeneration efforts targeting the historic district and ageing social housing stock in Mexico City have had some success in recent decades, and are an important building block for further regeneration initiatives in the metropolitan zone. A promising new development is the emergence of an urban mobility approach to regeneration, which is designed to link urban revitalisation to investment in public transport. At the same time, two parallel initiatives to upgrade portions of the extensive

social housing stock in Mexico City are under way, one led by the Federal District and the other by the National Workers' Housing Fund Institute (INFONAVIT). While progress has been made, challenges remain. First, there is no co-ordination between the two programmes, even though they share similar objectives and are operating in the same territory. Second, renovation of the older social housing in the municipalities of the State of Mexico is not being addressed.

**Figure 10. Urban expansion in the Valle de México 1800-2010**



Source: Adapted from Angel, et.al. (2010a) for data on urban expansion for all years prior to 2000; data for 2000 and 2010 are based on INEGI (2000, 2010a).

The 2015 OECD Urban Policy Review of Mexico concluded that Mexico should build cities, not just houses. Capitalising on recent pilot programmes, the Mexican authorities could now look to develop a clear, comprehensive national public policy and corresponding implementation programme for urban regeneration. Two critical elements of international experience in this field are especially relevant for Mexico: i) a cross-sectoral, comprehensive approach to urban regeneration through multi-dimensional initiatives that cover education, employment, culture, safety, public services and social cohesion; and ii) the development of national plans to support locally driven initiatives to regenerate distressed neighbourhoods. A national urban regeneration

strategy could be incorporated into the framework of national programmes for urban development and housing, led by the Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU) and the National Housing Commission (CONAVI). Such a strategy would need to broaden its focus from housing abandonment to a larger conception of urban regeneration that includes housing and the surrounding environment, access to jobs and services, and efficient public transport links. Another important component of housing regeneration strategies in other OECD countries has been the pursuit of a range of measures – including demolishing housing in the most severely distressed housing settlements – to improve inhabitants' living conditions.

## To guide future housing and urban development, three strategies could be followed

As the population of the Valle de México is projected to grow by 13% between 2010 and 2030, according to the National Population Council (CONAPO), three “smart growth” strategies to guide new developments could be pursued simultaneously:

**Strategy 1:** *Facilitate development in central areas* to make it easier to develop new, affordable housing in the metropolitan core. This can be achieved by reducing the barriers to development and densification in central areas (e.g. modifying existing parking regulations and design guidelines);

and re-introducing an inclusionary zoning policy. This could include policies to allow for higher-density development, in exchange for affordable housing. However, policies that promote higher densities are not appropriate everywhere and should be accompanied by upgrading and extension of infrastructure. Finally, introducing an affordable housing subsidy, provided by national housing institutions, could also be considered in some cases to increase housing affordability in the city centre for low-income households, but it cannot be a general solution to the housing problem.



**Strategy 2:** *Remove barriers to the development of the rental market* as a means of offering housing that is more affordable to low-income households and, in many cases, of higher quality than owner-occupied units targeting this income group. The development of additional rental housing could also increase labour mobility in the metropolitan zone. The provision of rental housing in central, accessible neighbourhoods may be a more appropriate

strategy than some current efforts that seek to concentrate rental housing programmes in peripheral areas. As in most other parts of Mexico, the majority of homes are owned by their residents. The home ownership rate in the ZMVM is among the highest across Latin American metropolitan zones, even though it is slightly below the Mexican national average of 76%. The home rental market remains underdeveloped.

**Strategy 3: Planning for smart growth in peripheral areas** to foster a more sustainable form of housing. Rather than restrict growth in peripheral areas, policy makers should develop strategies to anticipate growth in more peripheral areas, prioritising development around strategic infrastructure investments. Experience suggests that failed containment policies can have worse consequences than planned urban expansion. The

development of the New Mexico City International Airport and the Mexico City-Toluca train line constitute critical opportunities for well-planned new development and urban regeneration initiatives. More generally, these developments should allow for easy and faster commutes by public transport to the centres of employment, such as in the Federal District or the new international airport.

**Tabla 1. Projected housing credits for the entities in the Valle de México, 2015**

	Housing acquisition		Home improvements		Self-built		State total
	# of credits	Percentage of state total	# of credits	Percentage of state total	# of credits	Percentage of state totals	# of credits
Federal District	52 016	86%	8 453	14%	310	1%	60 779
State of México	79 043	71%	23 929	21%	8 655	8%	111 627
State of Hidalgo	11 389	55%	7 763	37%	1 603	8%	20 755
National	615 109	53%	4 443 623	383%	199 748	17%	1 159 480

Source: SHF (2015), "Demanda de Vivienda 2015", Dirección de Estudios Económicos de la Vivienda, Sociedad Hipotecaria Federal, January.



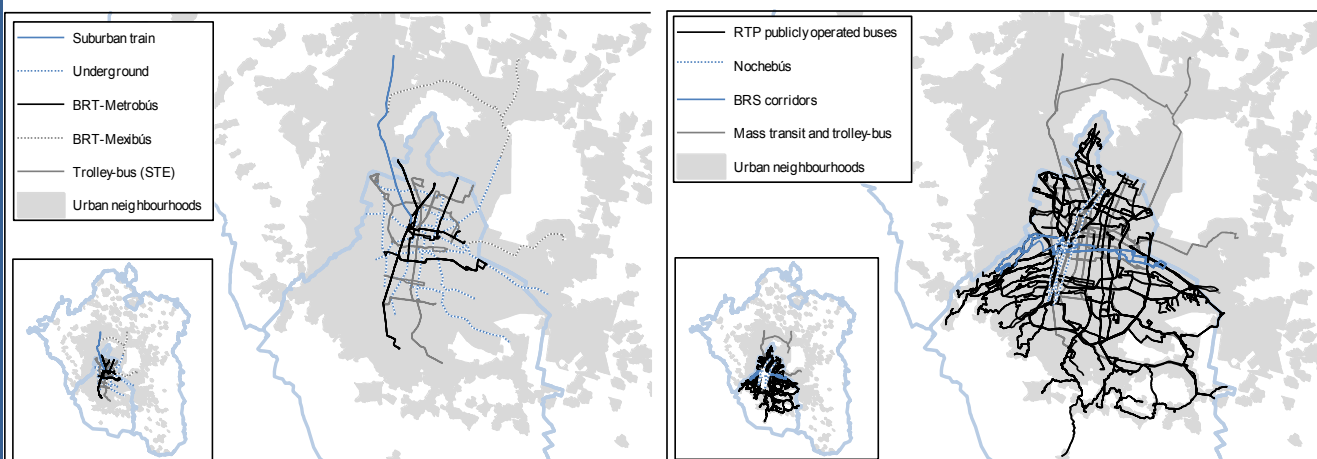
## Urban mobility

### Despite progress towards inclusive and sustainable metropolitan mobility, major obstacles remain

Recent mobility initiatives in the Valle de México have begun the transition from a policy focused on road management to an approach that favours multimodal access. This is a positive development, since car-oriented policies in the past have led to congestion, pollution, lesser productivity and lower levels of well-being. Mobility initiatives in the Valle de México are intended not only to improve air quality but also to facilitate access to services and more harmonious urban development. One of the emblematic initiatives has been the introduction of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Mexico City (Metrobús) and, more recently, in some municipalities of the State of Mexico (Mexibús). Other improvements include the suburban train and the introduction of buses with higher environmental and safety standards. The introduction of a public bike-sharing system (ECOBICI) and the expansion of bike road infrastructure is evidence of the increasing prioritisation of non-motorised transport modes.

The enactment of the Mobility Law of the Federal District has helped to transform the mobility policy framework. It defines mobility as a citizen's right, standardises the criteria for allocating road space and financial resources according to a new user hierarchy (pedestrians, cyclists, users of public transport, service providers of passenger public transport, service providers of cargo and distribution goods, and private automobile users), and sets out principles to guide policy formulation towards greater sustainability and inclusiveness. Although these initiatives are steps in the right direction, more progress is needed to build a coherent policy framework for improvements in mobility and accessibility. At least two major issues need to be addressed: the limited metropolitan co-ordination on mobility and spatial planning; and the lack of solid planning, regulatory and financial capacity at local government level.

**Figure 11. Public transport services in the Valle de México**



Nota: Except low-capacity concessioned modes and taxis.

Source: OECD based on data provided by SEMOVI.



## Putting mobility on the right track requires effective organisational arrangements ...

To achieve an efficient and high-quality mobility system, co-ordinated metropolitan planning is needed. Restoring and improving the Metropolitan Commission of Transport and Roads (COMETRAVI) may be instrumental in harmonising the legal framework and developing a long-term mobility master plan. To operate effectively, the COMETRAVI will require permanent staff and financial resources. It should also pursue close co-operation with other metropolitan commissions. Moreover, the federal government could evaluate how well project proposals intended to be funded by existing financial instruments (the Metropolitan Fund and the Federal Programme for Supporting Urban Mass Transport) align with the priorities of master mobility plans. A common framework for mobility project implementation could also be useful for building a metropolitan-wide integrated transport network. Harmonising vehicle regulation and enforcement procedures across the metropolitan area could also contribute to sustainable and inclusive mobility goals.

Improved co-ordination among a wide range of public and private agents in the transport sector is a

basic requirement for success. For example, greater co-ordination between state-level agencies responsible for transport modes as well as with private stakeholders is essential to i) build expertise for designing mobility projects, ii) synchronise routes, schedules and information and iii) integrate fares for multimodal and multi-segment trips. Better co-ordination among mobility, urban and housing authorities is critical for implementing transit-oriented initiatives, such as the mobility impact assessment of the Federal District. Authorities will need to co-ordinate public transport improvements with transport demand management strategies, such as pricing and regulation of parking. Guidelines for an optimal amount of parking spaces in different areas of the metropolitan zone need to be set by state-level governments. Parking prices should not only reflect infrastructure and operational costs, but also the opportunity costs of allocating scarce public space to parking. Finally, minimum parking requirements in new construction developments need to be eliminated. The New Mexico City International Airport is an opportunity to reorganise public transport in the metropolitan zone, but it requires a multimodal surface transport access plan.



## ... and efficient policy instruments

Mobility policy for the Valle de México needs to be more pro-active, with a long-term perspective. The current six-year mobility programmes should be just the first steps of a 20- to 25-year mobility strategy for the metropolitan zone and for each of the state-level governments. Assigning resources for improving data collection and modelling expertise within mobility agencies is required for developing a long-term, solid mobility strategy. Ex post assessments are needed to plan and monitor progress.

Reforming the bus sector requires specialised staff who can progressively acquire technical expertise to regulate the sector. Lessons from the BRT experiences (Metrobús and Mexibús) can help in developing adequate regulation and sustainable financial mechanisms for a new bus system. Moreover, the bus sector needs clear rules for granting concessions and setting tariffs, both to provide more certainty for operators and to allocate

resources to other projects. Establishing a tendering process for granting bus concessions would ensure better value for money. Incentives for incumbent operators to raise their level of competitiveness, i.e. a transition period while they consolidate into professionally run companies, may be considered.

Financial capacity to improve public transport can be achieved through: i) regular, planned and modest public transport fare adjustments, and ii) targeted subsidy schemes and differentiated fares for lower-income and vulnerable groups. The use of “betterment charges” to fund public and non-motorised transport projects in the Federal District is a positive step for strengthening financial capacity. The states of Mexico and Hidalgo could also consider making use of this financial tool. Removing the generalised subsidy for the vehicle ownership tax should also generate substantial resources for sustainable and inclusive mobility projects.



## Environmental challenges and organisational bottlenecks affect the sustainability of the ZMVM

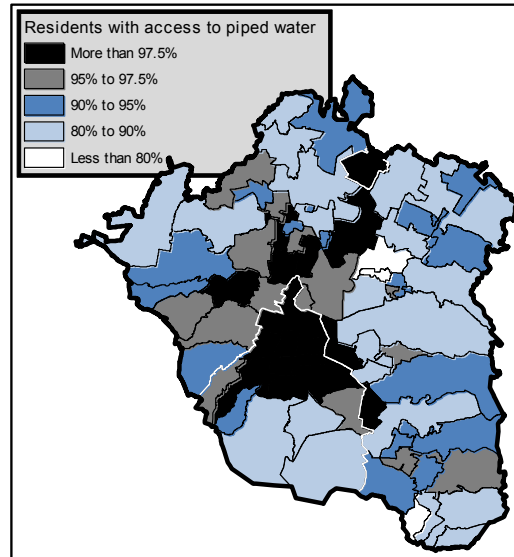
Water, air quality and solid waste management issues seriously endanger the sustainability and green growth objectives of the Valle de México.

- The metropolitan zone has a dual water challenge: there is too little potable water to satisfy current and future demand and, at the same time, the torrential rainfall during the rainy season results in frequent flooding. Unsatisfactory water quality, water wasted through leakage, insufficient water treatment and failure to collect rainwater are adding to the water problem.

- Despite the progress made in recent decades, improving air quality remains a critical challenge. Car-oriented policies, a focus on road construction, unplanned urban growth and non-compliance with environmental standards have contributed to reduced air quality.

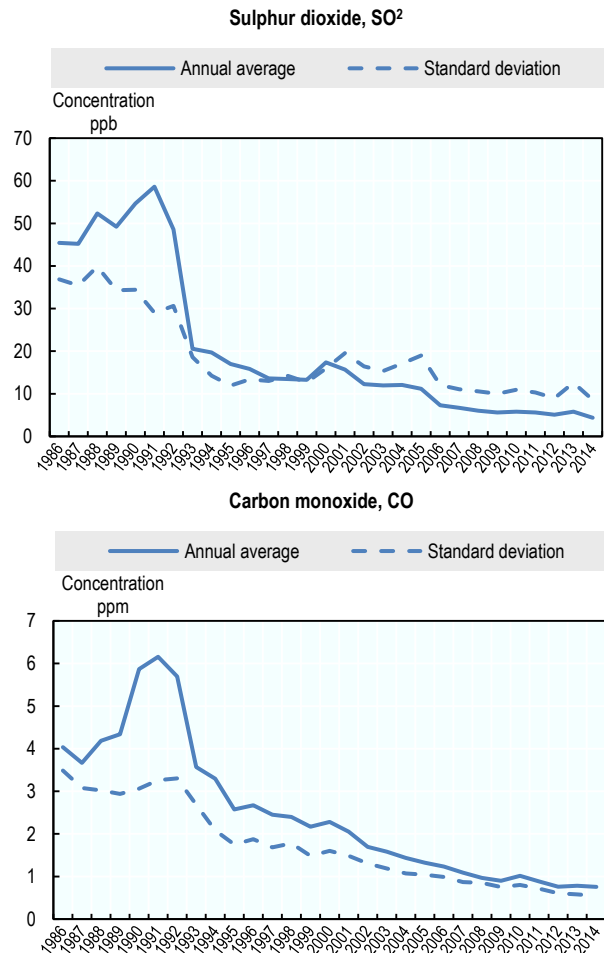
- Poor management of solid waste is threatening land, water and air quality. Insufficient and infrastructure, as well as low supervision of compliance with the norms in waste treatment, are part of the problem. There are no robust policy instruments to encourage waste reduction and recycling at metropolitan level. Moreover, the lack of planning is putting conservation land at risk, due to the spread of irregular settlements, uncontrolled landfills and deforestation.

**Figure 12. Percentage of residents with access to piped water who are supplied daily, 2010**



Source: OECD calculations based on INEGI (2010b), Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) 2010.

**Figure 13. Emissions of SO<sub>2</sub> and CO in the Valle de México**



Source: Information provided by SEDEMA.



Local authorities are working to control urban sprawl in rural areas and in particular, irregular settlements in conservation land, through ecological management and urban development programmes, but results have been limited so far. A lack of planning, conflicting goals and weak municipal capacity are obstacles to sustainability initiatives. Both national and sub-national stakeholders need to be involved, as no single entity has enough influence to implement a comprehensive sustainability policy. The limited institutional capacity of the Environmental Commission for the Megalopolis (CAME) reflected in its inadequate funding, insufficient staffing and lack of enforcement capacity,

further obstructs informed decision-making and coordinated action in environmental matters. Moreover, environmental and development goals seem to be in conflict, as there appears to be an absence of information and understanding of how environmental protection can contribute to economic development. Municipal governments, in many cases, lack the technical expertise, infrastructure and financial resources to design, implement and monitor sustainable development policies. In addition, many residents do not have environmental information and education, and often resist conforming to environmentally sound practices.



## Urban development strategies should be consistent with environmental sustainability goals

Integrating environmental considerations in urban policy and planning can reduce the impact of the urban area on the environment while improving residents' quality of life. This implies introducing environmental guidelines, standards and norms in land-use planning, mobility, urban regeneration, housing and urban infrastructure. As previously noted, effective mass public and non-motorised transport systems can be an important means of reducing emissions from transport. Architectural and urban design approaches that reduce energy consumption (and cost) through the use of eco-technologies can also contribute to environmental sustainability. An adequate waste management system that focuses on waste reduction measures

could prevent groundwater contamination, soil pollution, generation of greenhouse gas emissions and health hazards. Moreover, authorities in the Valle de México could consider building a metropolitan resilience framework to minimise the impact of future water scarcity or flooding. Mexico City's recent experience in developing a resilience strategy to mitigate the risks of climate change could be a starting point. Adapting the Valle de México to climate change can best be achieved by addressing underlying development and infrastructure deficits. Integrating climate change mitigation and adaptation into urban planning and management would be an important step in enhancing resilience in the entire metropolitan area.



To foster environmental protection, the environment should be regarded as an economic asset. Thus, sustainability policies should be underpinned by pro-growth factors. Ensuring a workforce with the right skills and competencies for a green economy, giving an environmental orientation to investments in physical infrastructure, and overcoming the barriers to innovation will be essential for shifting towards green growth. In addition, making more extensive use of market incentives for environmental policy could lead to more efficient use of natural resources and lower pollution. The federal and local governments could also promote environmentally friendly goods and activities through taxes that directly incorporate the cost of environmental damage into market prices.

Fiscal incentives to encourage a greener economy and urban development such as carbon pricing, fuel taxes, parking charges, land development taxes and road user charges should be explored. Further action is needed to reduce water demand, repair leaks, raise awareness and the availability of water, allow for the refilling of aquifers, and ensure high standards of water quality. Adjusting the price of water so that households pay for their actual consumption (including investment and operation costs) and improving the collection of tariffs are possible ways to address the water challenge. To increase the availability of water, the increased use of non-freshwater sources and the collection of rainwater are encouraged.

# Transforming the Valle de México into a well-functioning urban area

Transforming the Valle de México into a well-functioning area will require comprehensive planning for both the central city (Mexico City) and its suburbs (*municipios conurbados*) in concert.

Development plans should be regional, integrated and long-term, and their design and implementation co-ordinated among and across levels of government.

## The Valle de México needs to think and act from a metropolitan perspective

One of the biggest challenges in addressing sprawl and the social and environmental issues raised by growth is the plethora of jurisdictions – some of which are administratively independent – that complicate regional/metropolitan thinking and planning. The Valle de México is a socially divided, politically fragmented metropolis, with governance deficits and large and increasing differences in the coverage and quality of public services. While such a situation may not be uncharacteristic of other parts of the country, it imposes a particular penalty on a large metropolis with global ambitions like the Valle de México. Economic, land-use and transport patterns have evolved, and the political boundaries dividing the metropolitan zone are now ill-adapted to the needs of citizens as well as economic and social activities. Many land-use decisions are taken at the municipal level, creating contradictions, conflicts and competition that prevent co-operation and collaboration in other urban policy areas. Issues such as urban renewal, housing, public transport, environment, groundwater management and quality of life in the region all require action under a

metropolitan logic. This does not necessarily imply a uniform approach, since the challenges and contexts of different parts of the metropolitan zone are distinct and diverse.

Given that the population of the metropolitan zone is projected to continue to grow, albeit at a slower pace, strategic regional planning could assist in deciding where and how new growth should be accommodated and what it should look like. Regional/metropolitan planning could be instrumental in ensuring affordable housing that allows middle-income residents to live reasonably close to their workplaces. Regional planning could help build a metropolitan mobility framework to facilitate the physical, operational and financial integration of transport modes and the introduction of metropolitan-wide mobility projects. Planning housing, urban renewal and mobility from a regional perspective would put the authorities in a better position to achieve environmental goals such as improving air quality and ensuring the sustainable management of water.

## The Valle de México needs to modernise its governance planning

The Valle de México needs to shift from the traditional unidimensional and sectoral planning to a cross-cutting, integrated policy-making approach. Since urban development and transport infrastructure are not jointly planned, new transport projects do not fully correspond to the metropolitan area's demand for accessibility. Urban policies are still largely defined based on sectoral needs and priorities, in a reactive manner. The problem is exacerbated given that i) certain sectors, such as housing, transport and water delivery, are also administratively fragmented and ii) there is no long-term shared vision for the Valle de México. Moreover, the hierarchical system in which planning is framed does not allow for much participation by municipal governments. There are also few mechanisms, instruments and organisms to assess the results and impact of the urban development plans and projects in the medium and long term. A large number of sectoral plans, sponsored by different bodies on different geographical scales and timelines, attempt to shape metropolitan development with limited reference to one another. Most of these plans seem to be obsolete and poorly linked to the political/decision-

making channels through which public investment choices and budget allocations are taken. Even when the plans themselves are articulated in a horizontal/integrated manner, their implementation is still carried out by generally uncoordinated sectoral departments.

Authorities may wish to establish a Metropolitan Development Agency that implements development plans in full collaboration with both national and sub-national government authorities. Such a body can help galvanise support for a long-term vision for metropolitan development. This body should have clear responsibility for the issues and places of metropolitan significance. It could prepare long-term plans, provide technical assistance for urban services and advise the different metropolitan commissions on investments of high priority for the metropolitan area. Meanwhile, it could prepare metropolitan development projects, support municipal-level governments on urban development, and develop mechanisms for municipal evaluation.



## The Valle de México needs governance mechanisms that encourage co-ordination and collaboration

The importance of co-ordination for the ZMVM is reflected in the plethora of co-ordinating and planning bodies, commissions, committees and councils between the states of Mexico and Hidalgo, the Federal District and the federal government, intended to strengthen collaboration in areas of common interest. The problem does not seem to be the lack of institutions, but how these institutions operate. There are several reasons for these operational challenges. First, they are single-sector bodies and tend to be reactive to specific issues or problems. Second, these institutions do not act under a common metropolitan vision that guides how actions should be implemented, co-ordinated and monitored. Third, the regulatory framework for metropolitan co-ordination is vague in its definition of the metropolitan area. Fourth, the different actors in the metropolitan zone are subject to widely varying financial constraints. Fifth, there is poor follow-up to decisions and agreements reached, and a lack of rigorous outcome assessments. Finally, competition among states, the fiscal regime and lack of a co-operative culture also limit metropolitan co-ordination and collaboration. As in the rest of the country, institutional fragmentation leads to responsibility overlaps and confusion about who is responsible for what and accountable to whom.

To improve co-ordination and collaboration, the Valle de México could capitalise on the existing metropolitan commissions. The revival of the Executive Commission for Metropolitan Co-ordination (CECM), with the integration of the federal government and the state of Hidalgo, and the creation of the Environmental Commission for the Megalopolis (CAME) are positive steps towards better metropolitan governance. However, it is essential that i) the commissions be seen to have a mandate independent of the state-level governments, albeit based on subsidiarity; ii) all decisions reached at the interior of the commissions are legally binding on all governments and agents; and iii) the commissions have the authority to monitor, assess and establish some form of sanctions for poor performance or under-delivery of urban development projects. Ensuring that all metropolitan commissions have a permanent technical secretariat, led by professional staff, and are guaranteed the financial means to conduct their work is essential. It is important that the commissions guarantee openness and transparency in their decision-making and in the implementation of the investment projects.





Inter-municipal institutional arrangements are another means to encourage co-ordination and manage the impact of administrative fragmentation. These are based on obligatory and/or voluntary co-operation among municipalities comprising the functional urban area. Their success, however, requires effective horizontal and vertical networks among urban actors that can take the form of metropolitan-wide or single-purpose bodies. Setting up special-

function councils or inter-municipal institutional arrangements to encourage collaboration in metropolitan areas could be a starting point. The current discussions of reform in connection with the General Law on Human Settlements (LGAH) could include reference to setting metropolitan-wide joint authorities that allow local jurisdictions to work together for certain common services or investments.

## The political reform of the Federal District and the New Mexico City International Airport could stimulate metropolitan co-ordination

The ongoing discussions regarding the transformation of the Federal District into a federal state called Ciudad de México could formalise the blueprint for a long-term vision for the metropolitan zone. The reform could be critical in: i) giving municipal-level governments more incentives to engage more actively in, and be accountable for, urban planning and development; ii) making co-ordination and consultation with other levels of government and peer governments mandatory rather than voluntary; iii) ensuring a clear and consistent definition of responsibilities and resources for each level of government;

iv) adopting mechanisms for the election, appointment and removal of key elected and appointed officials; v) ensuring accountability for service delivery; vi) redefining the responsibilities of the mayor (municipal president), who would assume a more strategic role that involves thinking beyond the municipal borders; vii) adopting provisions for the installation of a council of delegados chaired by Mexico City's Mayor to discuss territorial and administrative policies; and viii) establishing mechanisms that galvanise citizens' participation.

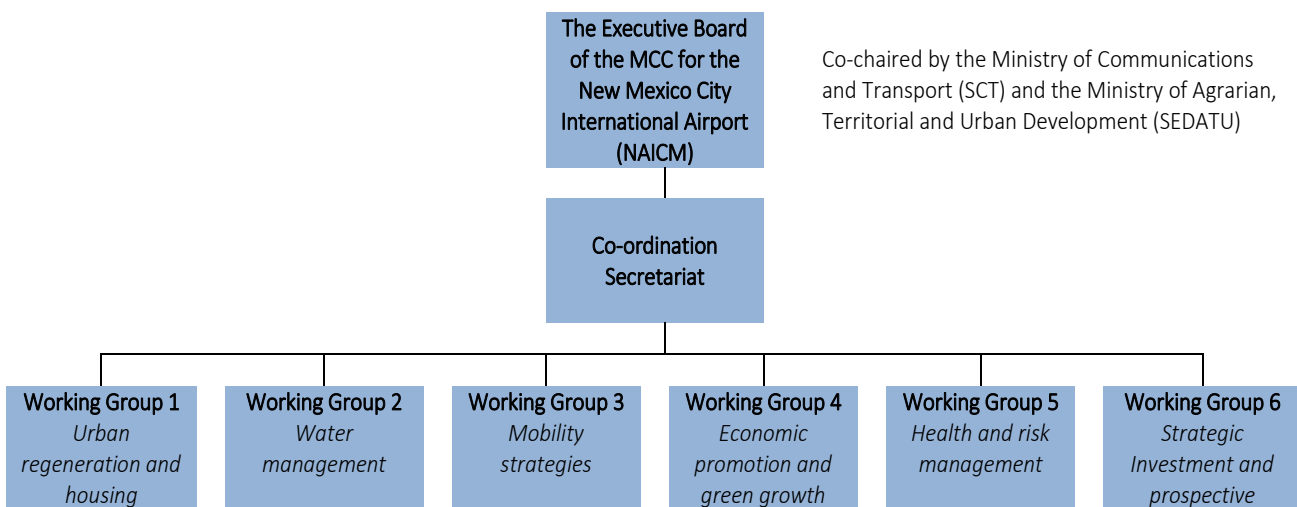




The New Mexico City International Airport (NAICM) can potentially boost economic development and urban regeneration, improve urban mobility, and position Mexico City as an international destination hub. It can also act as a catalyst for better inter-governmental co-operation in the Valle de México. The key question for the federal government is how to work with sub-national governments, the private sector and civil society organisations on building the airport and capitalising on this project for the economic and social benefit of the metropolitan zone. The federal government should be more inclusive, and more willing to draw more broadly on the knowledge, experience and perspectives of non-government actors and society

as a whole. Transparency and accountability will need to be ensured. Networks of relevant ministries, local authorities and external actors could be formed to pool practical knowledge, identify and anticipate policy issues and practical problems, and come together to develop a consensus. A Metropolitan Co-ordination Council for the NAICM – chaired by the Ministry of Communication and Transport (SCT) and the Ministry of Agrarian, Territorial and Urban Development (SEDATU) – could be established to co-ordinate and monitor the master plan of the airport and the activities of the state and municipal development plans that have an impact on the airport.

**Figure 14. Proposal for a Metropolitan Co-ordination Council (MCC) for the NAICM**



Membership should be open to all levels of government, private sector, academic organisations, think tanks and NGOs.

## The Valle de México requires municipal-level governments with sufficient capacity and capability

The complexity of the fiscal system in the Valle de México is a major barrier for urban development. State-level governments receive a large share of their income from federal transfers, which fluctuate every year, limiting long-term planning. Authorities in the Valle de México should ensure that no urban regeneration or mobility strategy is launched without the tools to recover part of the public investment, so that other projects can be viable in the future. The Metropolitan Fund, a federal subsidy to finance urban development projects, requires adjusting its operational rules under a metropolitan framework and an integrated vision for urban development. It could give priority to mass transport systems and non-motorised transport programmes, integrated treatment of water, environmental improvements and growth-enhancing infrastructure.

Authorities in the Valle de México need to invest in the skills, leadership and management capacity of the public service. Professionalising the public service and planning for the workforce strategically is a way to minimise the disruption due to changes in government. It can also protect capacity, ensure continuity of service, and avoid eroding citizens' trust in government. A critical issue for national and local authorities in the Valle de México is to ensure high levels of ethical behaviour among public officials. Meanwhile, planning and monitoring tools also need to be improved, for which gathering quality data on housing, mobility and environmental issues is a priority. A common, comprehensive knowledge database could be built to inform policy making, on a wide range of areas related to urban development. Adequate data collection and modelling, as well as detailed documentation of ex post assessments, will be essential for carrying out long-term planning.

## Conclusion

The Valle de México is well positioned to improve its governance architecture. It has the foundations and the critical mass to establish a much-needed metropolitan governance framework. Ensuring success can take time, will require some experimentation and will depend on governments' capacity and willingness to work with each other. All parties involved in urban issues will need to sharpen

their strategic focus, and identify ways to combine successful project-based sectoral initiatives with long-term, cross-sectoral strategic programming. Investing in better quality metropolitan governance would enhance urban development and improve residents' quality of life in the region, as well as improve national economic performance.



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