



Monitoring the Progress of the Implementation of SDG 13 in Mexico 2018 - 2021

Executive Summary:

Faced with unprecedented global challenges such as climate change, in 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda, containing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2030 Agenda's 17 SDGs are individual goals that seek to guide member states in promoting peaceful and comprehensive development. SDG 13 - one of the goals - seeks to carry out concrete actions for the mitigation and adaptation of climate change.

The 2030 Agenda has follow up mechanisms in place to track the implementation of the SDGs. These mechanisms include conducting periodic and inclusive reviews of progress in the implementation of the SDGs at the national and subnational level. These voluntary processes are known as Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). They set the tone for conversations at the annual High-Level-Political-Forums (HLPFs) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

This document was prepared between the months of May and June 2021 by the team at the [Centro de Colaboración Cívica](#) (CCC), a neutral and nonpartisan civil society organisation, with the support of the Advisory Group for Climate Change at the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC). This document seeks to complement the VNR of Mexico by exemplifying the data and progress around the **fulfilment of SDG 13 on Climate Action**.

The findings, gathered through the review of documents, conversations with key actors, and the creation of electronic surveys shared with civil society organisations allowed us to recognise that the **climate crisis** continues to be at the **centre of concern in both academic and civil society communities**. However, climate change was **not seen as a priority from the standpoint of the Mexican government in the 2019-2021 period**.

We are happily surprised with the positive role that **the private financial sector plays in addressing the climate crisis, which is a risk to the stability of investments and the financial market**. This understanding does not seem to have permeated into the public sector in a similar way. According to some people surveyed and interviewed for this project,

the public sector seems to deny the impact that climate change can have on economic and social development.

It should be acknowledged that **the climate policy of the current administration of Mexico is a result of the work carried out by the Mexican State in multilateral spaces.** According to many people, as well as from information obtained from the review of documents, **Mexico has a robust regulatory framework to meet and comply with the goals of SDG 13.**

However, at the national level, the current Mexican climate policy relies on outdated information from 2015-2017 and, in some cases, even from 2012.

One of the main challenges surrounding the climate policy of the government is to ensure that it is materialised through national public decisions and policies supported by a **sufficient budget** for its implementation. **The Federation's Expenditure Budget for 2020, the largest for climate change so far, allocated 70% to the Federal Electricity Commission for natural gas and transportation while less than one percent went to research on climate change, sustainability and green growth in the environmental sector.**

There are also significant **design flaws in one of the key programmes designed to combat climate change in the 2018-2021 period, *Sembrando Vida*.** This programme is presented as the most ambitious to date for the promotion of the sustainable use of fruit and timber trees, and for the expansion of the country's tree coverage. However, interviews and surveys carried out revealed that **Sembrando Vida has incentivised beneficiaries** to clear and cut trees, and to then plant new species instead. In the long run, this practice translates into a loss of the national capacity to sequester carbon.

The current government has placed attention on the SDGs combating poverty, hunger and inequality yet **their economic development policy is largely supported by the extraction and use of hydrocarbons.** This presents a rather limited way of compliance with the objectives of SDG 13. The **current government's austerity policy has seriously cut funding allocated to the environmental sector and the institutions in charge of designing and implementing actions** specifically focused on mitigation and adaptation to climate change. This, in the long term, poses an obstacle to the progress of SDG 13.

Although the scenario is classified as critical by some sectors, **opportunities for progress are present so long as there are solid foundations with innovative and committed actors and sectors.** Also, institutions within the government must continue to promote efforts that require greater visibility.

One of the central aspects which can contribute to the fulfilment of climate goals is **to begin building bridges between elements that seem to be disjointed, such as the environmental agenda, and the political and social rights agenda.** In this sense, the role of the Mexican government's ratification and entry into force of the **Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean**, better known as the Escazú Agreement, is an example of what multistakeholder work can achieve and how it is possible to bring environmental,

climate and human rights agendas into the same discussions, simultaneously supporting the goals of SDGs 13 and 16.

Both the 2030 Agenda and the Escazu Agreement provide an opportunity to design participatory methods of advancing global and regional commitments based on the exchange, dialogue and participation of people within local spaces and in the most remote areas. This is essential to communicate between governments, civil society organisations and private sector chambers about the joint strategies to combat climate change. With this, it is essential to continue **acting collectively, generating alliances, finding allies and key actors to give continuity to efforts beyond any specific authority.**

Beyond the opportunities offered, it is also necessary to pay attention to issues such as the energy transition. To address the climate crisis, it is essential to **reopen the discussion and reactivate the energy transition processes based on the great potential that Mexico has in this regard.** Although there are conflicting arguments around the way in which the opening for the transition was made, today there is the opportunity to do it again without leaving anyone behind, attending dialogue processes and respecting the environmental and energy regulatory framework.

The responsibility of the national government in Mexico in addressing climate change cannot be set aside. Since the last Mexican VNR, undertaken in 2018, political decisions have led Mexico to deviate from its initial route to tackle the challenges posed by climate change. In this context, the climate agenda increasingly permeates other sectors and the opportunity to collaborate continues to be present.

Today is still the best time to act.