



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
STRATEGY FOR  
BIODIVERSITY  
MAINSTREAMING

Tourism  
Sector  
(2016-2022)



# INTRODUCTION

The Tourism industry in Mexico has some of the most significant advances in the field of biodiversity mainstreaming, not only in their products and services, but also in the elaboration of studies, guidelines and handbooks. Some examples are “Vulnerability Studies on Climate Change in Tourist Destinations”, “Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change in Mexican Tourist Destination High-Impact Actions Local Guide”, “Sustainable Tourism Development Areas Guidelines”, “Domestic Tourism Ordinance Regulations” and “Integrally Planned Centers.” Even investment through instruments like the Regional Development Program for Sustainable Tourism and Pueblos Magicos (PRODERMAGICO), within its operating regulations, already incorporate sustainability criteria as eligibility requirements for public investment in tourism development.

Planning, economic and financial instruments are fully integrated into the legal framework that regulates tourism activities and sectoral development at three government levels. Thus, coordination mechanisms and collaboration agreements with state governments, municipal authorities and other areas of the federal public administration are available. Likewise, Mexican Official Standards (NOM) and Mexican Standards (NMX) are operating, which both control sectoral activities and encourage sustainable tourism development. Moreover, SECTUR, EarthCheck and Rainforest Alliance are using “Distintivo S”, which through World Tourism Organization and *The Global Sustainable Tourism Council encourages sustainable good practices in tourism projects development.*

Within SECTUR, important activities have been identified which promoted project developments aimed at strengthening the work with biodiversity and tourism, i.e.: gray whale-watching tourism (*Eschrichtius robustus*); ecotourism in Montes Azules;

Kantemó Bat Sanctuary; Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) Hibernating Colonies, Turtle Sanctuary visits (*Olive Ridley*, *Leatherback* and *Green turtles*); whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) swim-along activities and tourist circuits of the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca and Sian Ka’an - Maya Ka’an in Quintana Roo.

The “Strategy for Biodiversity Mainstreaming in the Tourism Sector” aims to consolidate its position as an effective coordination instrument, limited to national tourism public policies, in order to take advantage of windows of opportunity that boost inter-sectoral work and contribute to Mexico’s biological mega-diversity, becoming a key element that contributes to the economic and social development of the country.

COP-13 is a great opportunity to consolidate the collaboration and coordination mechanisms for short, medium and long term plans. Mexico will have the opportunity to demonstrate its leadership regarding the implementation of strategies for biodiversity mainstreaming in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism sectors. An important aspect is the link of sectoral integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity with the latest Mexican National Biodiversity Strategy (ENBioMEX), providing some important issues such as counting with a coordinating authority that strengthens the implementation of these actions, by taking into account collaboration between sectors as a key element to achieve biodiversity conservation and productive sustainability.

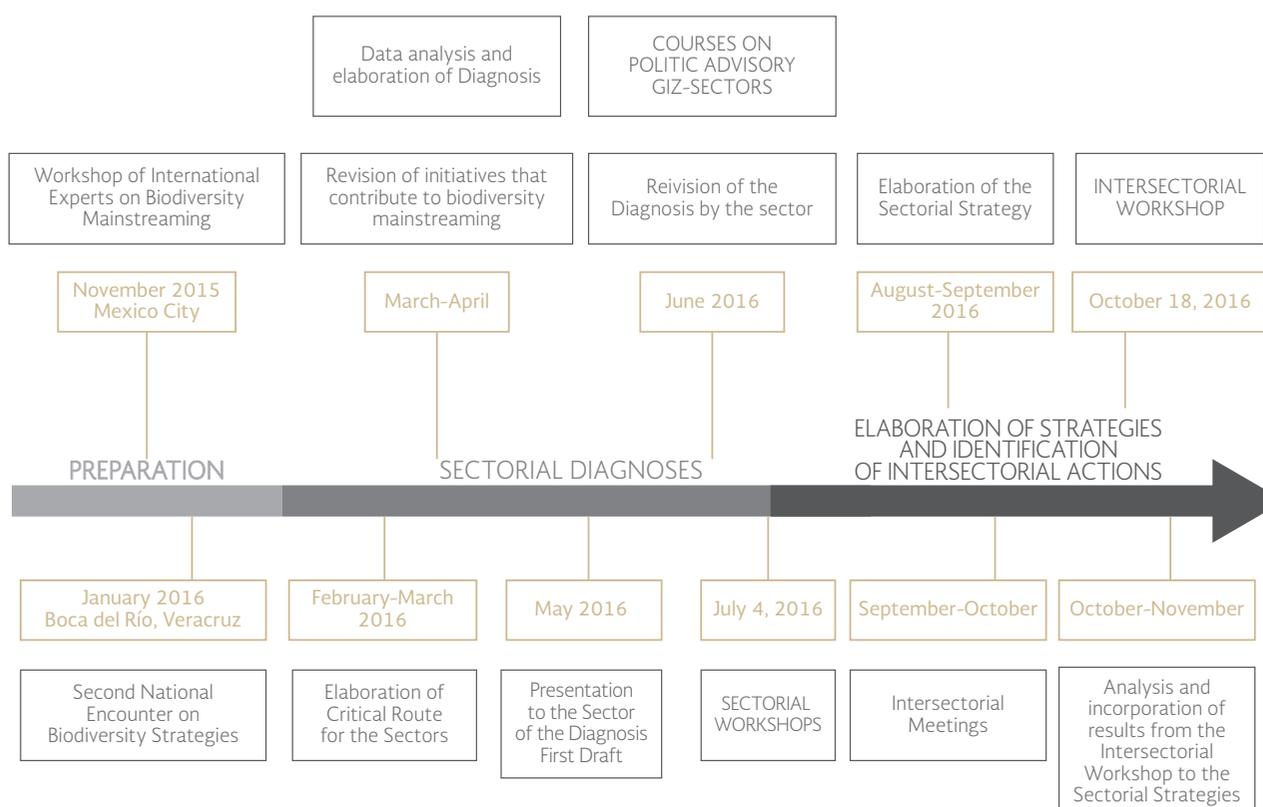
An essential part of this implementation is the formalization of the operation of strategies in sectoral programs which internalize within its goals and actions the integration of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, providing the transversality, solidity and long-term approach that is required in its effective execution.



# CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

The current strategy was made within the framework of the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, Cancun, 2016 (COP13) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB). CONABIO, German Cooperation Agency (GIZ) and Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN-Mexico) -along with the agricultural, forestry, fishery and tourism sectors- developed a series of assessments revising the public policy instruments and identifying the opportunities for the mainstreaming of conservation and

sustainable use of biodiversity in each one. With the support of those assessments, four sectoral workshops for biodiversity mainstreaming were made, with the objectives of strengthening and complementing the sectoral assessments; to socialize and make the assessments inclusive; to identify the instruments with the better opportunity for biodiversity integration and to identify the key elements in order to generate a work and coordination program for the follow-up of actions.





Finally, these four areas were able to share their acquired knowledge during the “Intersectorial Workshop for the Integration of Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity”, which had the support of SAGARPA, SECTUR, CONAPESCA, CONAFOR, SEMARNAT, CONANP, CONABIO, GIZ and BIOFIN-México. During this workshop, all four Sectoral Strategies for Biodiversity Mainstreaming were presented, and the participants worked to identify the best opportunities and mechanisms of inter-sectoral coordination and collaboration with spatial focused initiatives that contribute to achieve biodiversity integration.

## VISION

At 2022, Mexico will stand as a global power in sustainable tourism, integrating sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity within the sector, which will trigger an offer of services and competitive destinations that contribute to sustained and sustainable growth of tourism activities, with a wide range and fair distribution of tourism financial and social benefits in the receiving communities in order to establish a balanced regional development, with high social and environmental benefits.

## OBJECTIVE

To integrate criteria for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to the development model of sustainable tourism in Mexico, while decreasing the Climate Change adverse impacts, current and future, on sectoral activities.

# AXES AND STRATEGIC LINES

For strategy implementation, nine axes, grouped in three categories: substantives, coordination and support and fifty-nine strategic lines were identified:

## SUBSTANTIVE AXES

**Participation:** Actions designed to strengthen or establish cooperation schemes and shared responsibility for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and their environmental services.

- To strengthen links to inter-sectoral work and inter-agency processes in tourism and environmental areas, generating governance platforms and communication channels to ensure that information gets to all levels.
- To establish, update and implement permanent awareness and training programs on biodiversity and climate change (with a gender and inter-cultural approach), to promote capacity building of decision-makers, generators and implementers of public policies and other social groups.
- To strengthen, through the Institute of Tourism Competitiveness (ICTUR), the integration of biodiversity and climate change in research, education and training associated with tourism.
- To strengthen participatory processes (involving private initiative, civil society, academia, communities, etc.) for the analysis and development of tourism legal framework.
- To elaborate a joint agenda between private initiative, receiving communities and tourism authorities in destinations, led by SECTUR, in order to establish coordination and working mechanisms regarding regulation of industrial expansion in destinations and areas of tourist importance.
- To elaborate cooperation schemes with other agency authorities, national and international, for project and action implementation in tourism areas that integrate biodiversity.

**Sectoral Impact on Biodiversity:** Measures contributing to assess and measure the sectoral impact on the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, as well as to propose and strengthen measures aimed at reducing the impact of tourism activities on ecosystems.

- To adopt the best practices at a national and international level, as well as the technological innovation for the efficient

use of resources, materials and mitigation of the adverse impacts to the environment and biodiversity, due to new tourism destinations and the existing ones.

- To promote use and consumption of environmentally and socially responsible materials in construction and operation of tourist offer, in concordance with the laws regarding protection of endangered species and avoiding invasive species.
- To incorporate criteria of biodiversity and climate change to the guidelines of Sustainable Tourism Development Areas and Integrally Planned Centers.
- To develop and implement inter-agency coordination schemes at the three levels of government, for an effective implementation of the strategy to promote the transformation of Mexico's model of tourism integrating biodiversity and climate change as a guiding lines.
- To promote awareness of the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services that exist in Mexico among involved parties, to avoid unviable projects in areas of high environmental value.
- To promote sustainable tourism destinations, nature and community-based tourism as an alternative for its diversification in Mexico.
- To develop and promote laws so that the tourist developments have a management plan for wildlife and feral/invasive/alien species.
- To promote updating and increase the number of the CIP's (Integrally Planned Centers), incorporating sustainability criteria in their master plans.

### **Instruments and Mechanisms for Management and Development:**

Actions encouraging sustainable production and the creation of incentives through products and services of added value that consider criteria for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, alternative technology development, promotion of good practices, market opening and chains of value.

- To develop a diversification scheme for destinations, products and tourist services, taking into account Mexico's diversity in heritage, environment and gastronomic culture.
- To establish an integrated certification scheme for

sustainable tourism development, incorporating criteria for biodiversity and climate change consistent with internationally accepted standards.

- To create a Mexican Standard or use an international one based on good practices, to certify biodiversity protection and promote connectivity between key ecosystems in specific tourism activities.
- To define, along with the Mexican Promotion Tourism Board and local trusts, a national strategy for sustainable tourism, so a Mexico brand can be increasingly identified as a sustainable country and attract social, nature, and sustainable tourism markets.
- To generate schemes or sets of incentives for private or community based tourist developers that include biodiversity criteria and Climate Change in their activities.
- To develop schemes for economic and non-economic development to tourist projects that integrate aspects of biodiversity and climate change at three government levels.

## COORDINATION AXES

**Institutional Capacity and Arrangement:** Impulse to inter-institutional and inter-sectoral coordination, institutional capacity strengthening for an effective execution of conservation integration and sustainable use of biodiversity among sectors.

- To take advantage of successful project experiences and good practices implemented by existing tourism networks (networks of nature, community, ecological and alternative tourism, botanical gardens networks and Protected Natural Areas in Mexico) to replicate them.
- To encourage coordination with state tourist offices in sustainable tourism areas and seek mechanisms to strengthen their capacities.
- To promote coordination with various governmental agencies, at all levels, regarding sustainable tourism.
- To generate new instruments of national and international cooperation for sustainable tourism development.
- To generate intra and inter-agency capacities, for biodiversity integration into all aspects of public policy and tourism promotion.

**Instruments for Sectoral Planning:** Elements considered in institutional programs and policies, influencing on production processes and services, which directly or indirectly support the mainstreaming of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

- To include transversal biodiversity and climate change criteria within plans, programs and actions of the tourism sector at local, regional and national level.
- To have a coordinated internal working agenda for Biodiversity and Climate Change.
- To develop, in coordination with competent Federal Public Administration agencies, criteria and guidelines to establish tourism biodiversity safeguards and carrying capacity parameters for tourism areas subject to greater pressure or located in environmentally fragile areas.
- To include biodiversity and Climate Change criteria within the Development Planning of Regional Tourism.
- To promote the Rulings of Sustainable Tourism Development Areas.

**Communication and Divuligation:** Actions encouraging knowledge transmission as a key tool to create a culture that values biodiversity and the services it grants to productive areas.

- To develop a communication and dissemination strategy of tourism and biodiversity achievements.
- To develop targeted divulgation materials for government officials in clear and simple language.
- To identify, systematize and disseminate successful experiences and good practices in tourism and biodiversity, its value and the cost of losing it.
- To create a tourist awareness strategy about the importance of biodiversity.
- To use the existing information and knowledge about national biodiversity as a tool to be used in tourism areas.
- To ensure that all the fairs and promotional events, stands and various destinations of Mexico, always include a section explaining the government, civil society and private initiative work on sustainability and environmental conservation.

# SUPPORT AXES

**Financing:** Actions related to location of economic resources for sustainable productivity and biodiversity mainstreaming achievement, considering both the budget of authorities, and support and incentive programs for producers and service providers who follow practices in accordance with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

- To suggest federal treasury authorities a redesign of tax burdens and aliquots applicable to the tourism sector, which generate reinvestment in sustainable tourism projects.
- To help environmental authorities to gather a greater government budget supporting biodiversity mainstreaming.
- To develop innovative credit and financial instruments that allow a cost-effective incorporation of biodiversity conservation criteria.
- To increase tourism competitiveness, and its I+D (Innovation and Development), through social and environmental aspects.
- To propose a budget increase for the tourism sector in order to implement the measures and actions for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- To integrate to market analysis, competitiveness, I+D and financing, criteria for biodiversity conservation to generate credit, promotion and innovation instruments to achieve sustainable tourism.
- To generate a proposal on fiscal incentive-focused economic instruments applied to natural resources and tourism.
- To create local tax incentives for communities that care for and incorporate biodiversity inclusion.
- To generate incentive schemes to environmentally and socially responsible tourism developers.

**Legal Framework:** Establishment of strong and coherent legal instruments that promote and facilitate the execution of the goals of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, enabling the relationship of sectors with different elements of biodiversity.

- To define and include the concept of biodiversity in the sectoral legal framework.
- To develop and include criteria for the conservation

and sustainable use of biodiversity in tourism operating regulations and programs.

- To propose a NOM or NMX for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in tourist developments.
- To encourage a SEMARNAT revision of the environmental impact assessment through inter-institutional coordination schemes.
- To suggest and contribute to territorial ordering alignment, by territorial ecological ordainment and territorial tourist ordainment.
- To develop protocols for a prior free and informed participation of the inhabitants and owners of territories where is intended to establish tourist developments.
- To create a fulfillment internal agenda for the Climate Change Special Program and its tourism-related impact on biodiversity.
- To integrate environmental criteria in planning of sustainable tourism ordainment.
- To research and generate information on tourism as a human right for decision-makers and public policies generators.
- To harmonize and update the sustainable tourism legal framework.

**Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:** Creation and strengthening of information systems needed to the monitoring and evaluation of the fulfillment of the goals indicated in the biodiversity mainstreaming strategic lines,, including base lines and indicator design.

- To design a performance indicator system to monitor and evaluate sustainable tourism and fulfillment of the goals regarding biodiversity, with emphasis on impact, management and results.
- To implement effective mechanisms and procedures to follow up the effective implementation of transversal actions on sustainable tourism and biodiversity.
- To create a system of compliance indicators on biodiversity mainstreaming, transversality, cooperation and compliance to environmental regulations.
- To develop an analysis of voids in tourism and biodiversity key information, establishing working and research guidelines to obtain missing information.



# Strategy for biodiversity mainstreaming. Tourism Sector (2016-2022)

**SEMARNAT**  
SECRETARÍA DE  
MEDIO AMBIENTE  
Y RECURSOS NATURALES



**CONANP**  
COMISIÓN NACIONAL  
DE ÁREAS NATURALES  
PROTEGIDAS



**CONABIO**  
COMISIÓN NACIONAL PARA EL  
CONOCIMIENTO Y USO DE LA BIODIVERSIDAD

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Supported by:



Federal Ministry for the  
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