

PILOT PROJECT

Support to the establishment of the "Greater Mexico" Metropolitan Organization for Drinking Water, Urban Sewerage and Stormwater Drainage and to the Mexico Valley Basin Council on Integrated Water Resources Management for adaptation to climate change

**Cooperation between France and Mexico
COP21 – Paris 2015 – Water and Adaptation Day**

The "**Metropolitan Area of Mexico Valley**" (ZMVM), covers an area of 7,854 km², including the Federal District, as well as 62 adjacent municipalities of the State of Mexico, 39 of the State of Hidalgo y 4 of the State of Tlaxcala, with a population of **22,815,500 inhabitants**. **It is the largest city in the world!** This endorheic Valley (without outlet) is located at an altitude of 2,000 meters and suffers from **permanent water stress** that already forces it to turn to water transfers over several hundred kilometers and water pumping 1,000 meters deep for its water supply.... The former Aztec Lake is now dry and **overexploitation of the aquifer** generates severe land subsidence problems.

The notoriously inadequate wastewater collection and treatment facilities and systems are causing serious contamination of the receiving environment and real health risks. Indeed, the Mexico Valley Basin has a wastewater treatment index among the lowest in Mexico, estimated at just 6%...!

With the combination of increasing soil sealing and the effects of climate change, ZMVM is increasingly **facing major flooding risks and stormwater management challenges**, awfully destructive in "areas of spontaneous urbanization".

The urgent adaptation to the effects of climate change, which are already very sensitive in this area where 20% of the Mexican population live, as indeed in all of Mexico, made the water issue a priority for President Enrique Peña Nieto , who reaffirmed it again during his visit to France in July 2015.

These multiple difficulties related to an explosive demographic situation and a difficult climatic and geographic location, are amplified by **recurrent institutional problems**, coming first from fragmented water management by many political and administrative strata of the agglomeration, then from a weakness in urban and basin planning, and finally from a complex situation regarding the management methods used by the public water supply and sanitation utilities, resulting in efficiency of these services being far below international standards.

The Mexico Valley Basin Council (CCVM), which appears on paper to be close to the French system, is still lacking essential integrated management tools and necessary financial and technical resources to apply a water resources policy which is becoming crucial. In 2006, the Council and the Basin Committee / Seine Normandy Water Agency had signed a twinning agreement that unfortunately remained without result up to now; it was about time to reactivate it.

The establishment of a Mexico Valley Metropolitan Organization (OMVM) and the strengthening of the Mexico Valley Basin Council (CCVM) are the institutional responses of the Mexican Government to the water crisis in Greater Mexico.

To carry out these essential reforms, **the 50-year French experience in basin policy, and its establishment, first of large water and sanitation syndicates in Paris region, then today in "Greater Paris", and its territorial reform** are considered by our Mexican partners, and, foremost among them, the National Water Commission - CONAGUA, which is the strong arm of the Federal Government in the water sector, **as examples for moving forward more quickly and efficiently.**

In such a perspective, **a 4-year French Mexican cooperation project was developed to accompany the Mexican partners** on issues such as governance and sustainable development, integrated water resources management (Basin Committees / Councils, planning, monitoring, action plans, stakeholder participation,...), establishment of the Metropolitan Organization (statutes, mandate, operation, transfer of responsibilities and technical and human means, financial mechanisms, etc.), integration of planning and technical approaches to development of large cities and capacity building, and management of human resources, in a context of urgent adaptation to climate change.

This water cooperation project between France and Mexico in the context of climate change for the strategic area of the agglomeration and Mexico Valley was drafted with CONAGUA. **It has received the approval of the Mexico Valley Basin Council that has made a formal request.**

Two "cooperation agreements on water between France and Mexico in the context of climate change", for this strategic Mexico Valley basin, were prepared and signed on 2 December 2015 during the "water and adaptation" official day of the COP21, respectively by the National Water Commission (CONAGUA) and the French Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, (MEDDE) on the one hand, and by the Mexico Valley Basin Council and the Seine-Normandy Water Agency, on the other, in the presence of Mrs. Ségolène Royal, French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy.

Beside CONAGUA and the Mexico Valley Basin Council, the French partners of this project are mainly the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy, (MEDDE), the Seine Normandy Water Agency (AESN), the Public Sanitation Utility of Greater Paris (SIAAP), the Seine-Great Lakes basin public authority, the public drinking water suppliers of Paris region and the International Office for Water (OIWater), which takes care of the technical coordination of the project, to which could be associated several companies in the technical aspects of the project....