

New national environment and natural resources policy

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On 7 July 2020 the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) published the Environment and Natural Resources Sector Programme for 2020 to 2024, which is the nationwide policy on the environment (Environment Policy).

The Environment Policy sets out five main objectives that will serve as a guide for all other federal and local environmental policies, strategies and decisions:

- promoting the conservation, protection, restoration and sustainable use of natural resources while safeguarding human rights;
- strengthening climate action in order to transition to a low carbon-based economy;
- promoting water as a cornerstone of wellbeing, administered by transparent, efficient, trustworthy institutions;
- promoting a water-contamination free environment; and
- strengthening environmental governance through citizen participation.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Environment Policy considers various strategies to be implemented throughout the federal, local and municipal administrations. Paramount among these are:

- guiding forest-related harnessing activities towards sustainable management, favouring local communities;
- coordinating actions with the relevant sectors that prioritise the transition to clean energies;
- favouring low-emission and efficient transportation technologies;
- implementing a circular economy;
- implementing greenhouse gas emission reduction across the public administration;
- protecting available water resources and ensuring access to clean water for all communities; and
- regulating water basins and aquifers in order to prevent overexploitation.

Considering that the Environment Policy's strategies and goals focus on water resources and climate change, additional regulations from the National Waters Commission, the National Ecology and Climate Change Institute and SEMARNAT can be reasonably expected in terms of water and wastewater usage, forestry land use and harnessing, greenhouse gas emissions control and reporting and waste management.

Finally, the Environment Policy includes various methods for determining the progress made on the implementation of its strategies and achieving the goals set for 2024; thus, changes to the related administrative provisions, regulations and rules can be expected across various environmental activities and persons and companies should pay close attention to the elaboration, modification and enactment of such provisions.

For further information on this topic please contact [Brenda A Rogel Salgado](#), [Jeanett Trad Nacif](#), [Mario Jorge Yanez](#) or [Javier Camacho](#) at Hogan Lovells BSTL, SC by telephone (+52 55 5091 0000) or email (brenda.rogel@hoganlovells.com, jeanett.trad@hoganlovells.com, jorge.yanez@hoganlovells.com or javier.camacho@hoganlovells.com). The Hogan Lovells BSTL, SC website can be accessed at www.hoganlovells.com.

AUTHORS

[Brenda A Rogel Salgado](#)



[Jeanett Trad Nacif](#)



[Mario Jorge Yanez](#)



[Javier Camacho](#)

