

MORE DATA TO CONTROL,
LESS DATA TO GOVERN

THE DETERIORATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN MEXICO



AUGUST 2026

SIGNOS VITALES
EL PULSO DE MÉXICO



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IN MEXICO**

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It is a non-profit, non governmental organization that is structured by a Council built up of people with an outstanding track record, with high ethical and professional level, which have national and international recognition and with a firm commitment to democratic and freedom principles.

The Council is structured with an Executive Committee, and Advisory Committee of Specialists and a Communication Advisory Committee, and a Executive Director coordinates the operation of these three Committees.

One of the main objectives is the collection of reliable and independent information on the key variables of our economic, political and sociocultural context in order to diagnose, with a good degree of certainty, the state where the country is located.

Vital Signs intends to serve as a light to show the direction that Mexico is taking through the dissemination of quarterly reports, with a national and international scope, to alert society and the policy makers of the wide variety of problems that require special attention.



Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity is a nonprofit civil association established in 2016 aimed to strengthening the Rule of Law in Mexico through a comprehensive agenda of researching and reporting systemic corruption and impunity, in the public and private sectors.

Over the course of a decade, the association has established itself as a leading authority in anti-corruption research by combining investigative journalism, applied research, and an innovative communications approach. This effort has resulted in more than 850 original investigations published, which document potential misappropriation of resources amounting to at least 31 billion dollars.

Within this agenda, the Applied Research Unit aims to identify and analyze the main causes, risks, and consequences of corruption and impunity, in order to provide reliable information to citizens that enables them to demand accountability from the government and other relevant public actors.



Weak or absent pulse can have many causes and represents a medical emergency.

The more frequent causes are the heart attack and the shock condition. Heart attack occurs when the heart stops beating. The shock condition occurs when the organism suffers a considerable deterioration, which causes a weak pulse, fast heartbeat, shallow, breathing and loss of consciousness. It can be caused by different factors.

Vital signs weaken and you have to be constantly taking the pulse.

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A JOINT EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC EVIDENCE IN MEXICO

This report is the result of a collaborative effort between *Signos Vitales* and *Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity (MCCI)*, two civil society organizations that, while working in distinct yet complementary areas of expertise, share the conviction that access to reliable, independent, and timely public information is one of the fundamental pillars of any democracy.

The partnership between these two institutions arises from a shared concern over the rapid deterioration of the institutional capacities that, for decades, enabled Mexico to understand, assess, and monitor the country's most pressing public challenges. The disappearance, weakening, or transformation of specialized institutions, the loss of public databases, the reduction of transparency mechanisms, and the increasing difficulty of accessing official information represent a challenge that extends well beyond technical considerations. It is a phenomenon with profound implications for the quality of public decision-making, government accountability, and the effective exercise of citizens' rights.

This report is grounded in the premise that democracy requires far more than periodic elections. It demonstrates that democratic governance depends on institutions capable of producing independent evidence, mechanisms that allow government performance to be verified, and citizens who have sufficient access to information to understand reality, demand results, and participate meaningfully in public affairs. The evidence shows that when these elements are weakened, transparency is not the only casualty; society's capacity to identify problems, improve public policies, and develop evidence-based solutions is diminished as well.

Guided by this shared vision, Signos Vitales and MCCI conducted a joint investigation combining institutional analysis, the examination of official information, documentary research, and the systematic compilation of evidence from a wide range of national and international sources. Consistent with the standards that have long guided both organizations, the objective is to provide a rigorous, verifiable, and well-substantiated assessment that captures the magnitude of the transformations experienced by Mexico's public information system and their consequences for the functioning of the State.

Each organization brings complementary strengths to this undertaking. Signos Vitales contributes its expertise in public policy analysis, the monitoring of strategic indicators, and the production of comprehensive assessments of Mexico's national development. MCCI, in turn, contributes its extensive experience and well-established record in investigative research, anti-corruption efforts, transparency, access to information, and public accountability. The convergence of these capabilities has made it possible to produce a broader and more comprehensive analysis that connects the availability of public information with institutional quality, democratic governance, and the design of more effective public policies.

Beyond documenting the disappearance or transformation of specific institutions, this report seeks to draw attention to the gradual erosion of the conditions that enable the State to understand itself while providing society with reliable tools to evaluate the exercise of public power. As documented throughout this report, when public information ceases to be independent, comparable, or accessible, not only are mechanisms of public oversight weakened, but the ability to design effective pol-

icies, measure outcomes, and correct what is not working is also significantly constrained.

Institutions responsible for producing public information, evaluating government programs, auditing public resources, and guaranteeing access to government data constitute an essential part of the democratic infrastructure of any nation. Their strength benefits not only specialists or research institutions; it generates greater certainty for society as a whole, including citizens, governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society organizations.

Through this joint effort, Signos Vitales and MCCI seek to contribute to an informed public debate grounded in evidence and aimed at strengthening Mexico's institutional capacities. The objective is not merely to document a process of institutional decline, but to provide the analytical tools needed to understand its scope, stimulate informed public discussion, and reaffirm that independent information is an indispensable public good for preserving transparency, strengthening accountability, and consolidating a democracy capable of learning from itself and responding effectively to the country's challenges. ●

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Statistics and evaluations made it possible to identify lags, observe social and economic changes, assess public policies, and determine whether the decisions made met the population's needs.

1 WHEN DATA NO LONGER EXPLAIN REALITY: the Deterioration of Public Information in Mexico

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For decades, Mexico invested in building a technical and institutional framework designed to ensure that government decision-making would no longer remain the bureaucratic domain of a privileged few, but would instead be grounded in evidence, independent evaluation and genuine transparency capable of measuring the performance of the State. This process marked the transition from a model based primarily on internal governmental decision-making to one in which evidence, independent evaluation and transparency became essential pillars of democratic governance.

The true value of this effort did not lie merely in accumulating data, but in understanding how to use it. Statistics, diagnoses and public records made it possible to reveal the country's structural shortcomings, monitor the performance of the economy and assess whether public spending was truly fulfilling its purpose of improving people's lives. These statistics and evaluations enabled the identification of persistent gaps, the observation of social and economic change, the assessment of public policies and the determination of whether government decisions were effectively responding to the needs of the population. However, the strength of an information

Statistics and evaluations made it possible to identify lags, observe social and economic changes, assess public policies, and determine whether the decisions made met the population's needs.

system does not depend solely on the existence of databases or digital platforms. It also requires institutions capable of preserving methodologies, maintaining historical data series, safeguarding technical independence and transforming available information into knowledge that is useful for society.

In recent years, Mexico has undergone a significant transformation in the way it generates, manages and uses public information. Unfortunately, this transformation has not represented progress in the production, management, or dissemination of data and indicators; rather, it has moved in the opposite direction. Some of these changes have resulted from visible institutional reforms, while others have occurred more subtly through methodological modifications, the erosion of technical capacities, budget reductions for data-generation activities, less frequent information updates, or the loss of tools that previously made it possible to evaluate policy outcomes. This report examines precisely that transformation. The central question is not simply how much information currently exists, but whether Mexico still possesses the institutional capacities required to understand its problems, measure them accurately and make evidence-based decisions.

The following sections illustrate how the deterioration of public information can manifest itself in different ways. In some cases, it occurs through the disappearance of institutions; in others, through platforms that remain operational but gradually lose their usefulness, indicators that cease to be updated, information that becomes increasingly difficult to access, or official narratives that crowd out spaces once occupied by verifiable data. The weakening of an information system rarely occurs suddenly or through an abrupt interruption. More often, it advances gradually, silently undermining citizens' ability to understand their environment, rigorously scrutinize institutional performance and demand better public solutions.

1.1 PUBLIC INFORMATION as the Foundation of Democracy and Accountability

For several decades, Mexico built institutional capacities aimed at transforming the relationship between society and public authority. The creation of specialized institutions, statistical systems, transparency mechanisms, auditing processes and independent evaluations responded to a fundamental need of the country's democratic development: the availability of information capable of contrasting government

Does Mexico retain the necessary capabilities to understand its problems, measure them accurately, and make evidence-based decisions?

decisions with verifiable evidence. Unlike the current situation, this transformation enabled issues of fundamental importance to Mexico to cease depending solely on the interpretation of the government in office. The evolution of poverty, water supply, educational outcomes, environmental quality, health conditions, public expenditure, security and institutional performance began to be assessed through information generated under technical standards, publicly available methodologies and reviewable processes.

The fact is that public information did not eliminate the country's structural problems, but it did transform the ability to understand them. It made it possible to determine their magnitude, compare outcomes across different periods, identify territorial disparities and assess whether government actions were genuinely responding to the needs of the population and to the scale of the problems they sought to address. In this sense, information became an indispensable instrument for reducing discretionary decision-making and strengthening accountability. The value of this institutional framework lies precisely in its ability to generate evidence-based checks and balances. A democracy is strengthened when citizens possess sufficient information to observe and evaluate the exercise of public power. It is not enough to

have institutions or electoral processes; it is equally essential to understand how decisions are made, how public resources are managed and whether implemented policies effectively address the problems they are intended to solve.

Over more than two decades, Mexico developed one of the most significant transparency systems in Latin America. The establishment of citizen access-to-information mechanisms made it possible to document public decisions, scrutinize government actions and open areas of the State that had historically remained beyond public oversight. At the time of the dissolution of the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) in 2025, the National Transparency Platform contained more than 14 million accumulated records, the result of years of citizen requests, transparency obligations and the generation of public information. The disappearance of the INAI leaves society blind in the face of power, meaning that the government now monitors and absolves itself. Without an autonomous institution to guarantee access to public information, the risk increases that public decisions, contracts, mistakes and acts of corruption will remain concealed. The most profound consequence is a society with a diminished capacity to hold public

Over the course of more than two decades, Mexico developed one of the most significant transparency systems in Latin America.

The INAI held a repository of over 14 million records, the result of years of citizen requests, transparency obligations, and the generation of public information.

officials accountable and a government with greater room to construct its own version of reality without verifiable evidence.

Recent developments concerning several public information instruments reinforce these warning signs. The datos.gob.mx portal, created to centralize and facilitate access to government databases, declined from 12,570 datasets available in 2023 to 6,920 in 2026, representing a reduction of 44.9%. This decline does not necessarily mean that all of the information has disappeared; however, it does reflect a significant change in the ease with which citizens, researchers and specialists can access organized public information. The institutional challenge extends beyond simply producing data; it also involves ensuring that such information remains accessible, comparable and useful. A database that remains available but is no longer updated, a statistical measure that loses continuity, or a platform that retains incomplete information all diminish the capacity to adequately assess public problems.

This same challenge has reached institutions responsible for evaluating outcomes and correcting public policies. The dissolution of Coneval and the transfer of its functions to INEGI altered the institutional



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framework through which Mexico assessed poverty trends and the performance of social policy for many years. The debate extends beyond determining which institution retains the legal responsibility for evaluation. The real challenge lies in ensuring the existence of the technical capacities, resources and institutional independence necessary for these evaluations to preserve their quality and continue functioning as effective instruments for identifying and addressing public problems.

Public expenditure oversight, to cite another exam-

The loss of the INAI leaves us blind in the face of power, meaning the government now monitors and absolves itself.

ple, faces a similar concern. The existence of audits or government reviews does not, in itself, necessarily reflect a greater capacity for accountability. In recent years, the recovery of questioned public resources declined from more than 68 billion pesos during the previous administration to just over 12 billion pesos in the most recent period, representing a reduction of nearly 80%. The difference between carrying out administrative procedures and achieving meaningful consequences constitutes one of the principal challenges faced by any public oversight system.

These developments demonstrate that the discussion surrounding public information in Mexico extends far beyond the number of available databases, reports, or official documents. The problem arises when information ceases to fulfill its primary function: helping society understand reality and improve public decision-making. The loss of capacities to produce, analyze and use evidence not only affects the functioning of government; it also limits the tools available to citizens to identify institutional failures and contrast official narratives with verifiable information.

Beyond the disappearance of dozens of databases or the discontinuation of information production, the principal concern is that it is becoming increasingly

difficult to determine whether the available data are still capable of explaining what is actually taking place in the country. Even if the institutions responsible for generating information remain formally in place, their purpose becomes diluted if they can no longer accurately diagnose conditions in classrooms (teachers and students), healthcare services, social programs, or public security. The consequences of this technical dismantling are already evident. The abolition of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE) eliminated the independent assessments that made it possible to map student achievement and regional disparities, thereby hindering the effective allocation of resources. Likewise, the dissolution of Coneval deprived the country of an autonomous and rigorous institutional counterweight for measuring poverty, opening the door to a situation in which the very agencies responsible for implementing social policy become the judges of their own performance.

The greatest threat, regardless of the loss of data itself, is living in a country where the available information no longer has the capacity to challenge those in power and instead becomes a tool for justifying government decisions rather than recognizing mistakes and correcting public policies. From this perspective, the real danger lies in the possibility of transforming

The greatest threat, beyond the loss of data, is living in a country where available information no longer has the capacity to challenge those in power—and where, instead of serving as a tool to acknowledge errors and correct public policies, it is used to justify government decisions. From this perspective, the true risk lies in the possibility of turning that information into an instrument of government and ideological control.

information into an instrument of governmental and ideological control. This warning becomes evident, for example, in child nutrition indicators, where the absence of updated and comparable measurements makes it impossible to determine accurately how malnutrition and overweight are evolving among Mexican children and hinders the effective targeting of programs toward the regions where they are most needed. A similar situation exists with healthcare infrastructure and medical equipment, where the lack of reliable information regarding the actual condition of hospitals, clinics and medical equipment makes it impossible to determine whether public investment is reducing regional disparities or merely perpetuating a deficit that remains insufficiently quantified. The same occurs in the area of migration, where gaps and outdated records on migration flows and shelter conditions prevent the design of effective responses to a phenomenon that continues to grow.

In Mexico, the lack of reliable information is already affecting people's daily lives. Without clear diagnoses, mistakes persist, public services fail and solutions arrive too late—or fail to arrive altogether. Ultimately, the cost of losing reliable information is not measured by incomplete databases, but by the consequences borne by people. Families living with-

out guaranteed access to water, patients with mental health conditions who receive no care and workers trapped between unemployment, informality and uncertainty while official diagnoses fail to reflect the true magnitude of the problem. For this reason, the controversy surrounding the management of public data in Mexico extends far beyond any administrative or bureaucratic dispute. At its core, what is truly at stake is the maturity and very viability of the State to honestly identify its own structural weaknesses, accurately assess the condition of its institutions and formulate effective institutional responses to the country's real needs.

EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION IN MEXICO:

Without child nutrition indicators—or up-to-date, comparable measurements—to track trends in malnutrition or overweight.

Without information on health infrastructure and equipment, or the actual condition of hospitals, clinics, and medical apparatus.

Without migration data, records on migratory flows, or information on shelter conditions.

1.2 THE PROGRESSIVE EROSION of the Capacities for Generating, Preserving and Disseminating Public Information

Public information is one of the most important tools a country possesses to understand what is taking place within its own society. When institutions no longer maintain robust systems for recording and analyzing that reality, they lose the capacity to clearly identify where problems lie and how severe they are. In Mexico, this institutional infrastructure—which took many years to consolidate—made it possible to generate evidence in areas that are fundamental for public decision-making. Its strength depended on more than simply producing statistics; it required maintaining comparable methodologies, preserving historical data series and relying on teams of specialists capable of interpreting increasingly complex phenomena.

The loss of these capacities produces effects that typically become evident over time. A survey that is no longer conducted, an indicator that loses its timeliness, or a methodology that is no longer updated does not generate an immediate crisis, but it progressively limits the capacity of both the State and society to understand how public problems evolve. In

recent years, one of the most significant transformations has occurred within the systems responsible for evaluating social policy.

In the field of education, Mexico modified its institutional framework twice within a relatively short period. First, with the dissolution of the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE) in 2019 and later with the elimination of its successor, Mejoredu, in 2025. Beyond the administrative changes, the principal challenge concerns the continuity of the technical capacities that made it possible to produce comparable diagnoses of the progress and shortcomings of the National Education System. Educational evaluation serves a function distinct from the day-to-day operation of the school system. It makes it possible to identify regional disparities, understand differences in learning outcomes and assess whether implemented policies are producing the intended results. The interruption of these mechanisms leaves public decision-makers with less evidence to identify where the greatest deficiencies exist, which interventions require adjustment and which policies should be maintained or discontinued.

A similar process can be observed in the evaluation of social policy. For many years, Coneval developed specialized institutional capacities to measure poverty,

In the realm of education, Mexico modified its institutional structure twice within a short period: first with the dissolution of the INEE in 2019, and subsequently with the elimination of its successor, Mejoredu, in 2025.

evaluate social programs and generate independent information on public policy outcomes. Following its dissolution, these functions were transferred to INEGI, an institution that also retains responsibility for producing the country's official statistical and geographic information. This change entails the assignment of new responsibilities that had previously been carried out by an institution with its own organizational structure and an approved budget of 411.3 million pesos in 2024, its last full year of operation. Under these circumstances, this decision raises important questions regarding the future of social policy evaluation in Mexico. Assuming greater responsibilities with fewer resources creates the risk of having less independent evidence to determine whether public policies are genuinely improving people's lives.

The case of INEGI reflects a broader tension within Mexico's public information system. Between 2019 and 2025, its executed budget experienced an approximate real increase of 3.7%; however, during that same period, the institution's responsibilities and public expectations also expanded. Beyond the budgetary figures themselves, what truly matters is the institution's actual capacity to sustain new responsibilities, develop additional instruments and respond to emerging information needs. In the past, much of

INEGI's value was associated with its ability to expand the frontier of available information in Mexico. The development of satellite accounts in economic, social, environmental and cultural fields made it possible to observe phenomena that had previously remained outside traditional statistical measurements. This type of statistical innovation depended on collaboration among institutions, adequate budgetary resources and a sustained demand for information from different levels of government.

Specialists consulted by Signos Vitales warn that one of the current challenges is related less to budgetary constraints than to a declining institutional demand for the generation of new information. When government agencies and subnational governments cease requesting diagnoses, updating administrative records, or developing new measurement instruments, the public information ecosystem loses dynamism and the incentives to expand existing capacities diminish. This decline may particularly affect statistical exercises that depend on technical cooperation and external funding. One example is the National Child Labor Survey (ENTI), for which INEGI received funding from the United States Department of Labor amounting to US\$22.4 million in 2019 and US\$19 million in 2022. The continuity of specialized statistical

In the past, part of the INEGI's value lay in its ability to expand the frontiers of available information in Mexico.

Statistical innovation depended on inter-institutional collaboration, the availability of budget resources, and a constant demand for information from various levels of government.

exercises depends both on strong national institutions and on conditions that enable the maintenance of long-term partnerships and technical capacities.

The erosion of information systems may also become evident in areas where data continue to exist, yet significant differences remain regarding their interpretation, consistency, or use. In sensitive areas such as public security and forced disappearances, specialists have emphasized the need to strengthen coordination among institutions and improve the traceability of records in order to produce more accurate assessments of the magnitude of these problems. The challenge does not necessarily lie in the complete absence of information. In many cases, data continue to exist, but problems emerge regarding their timeliness, accessibility, comparability across sources, or the institutional capacity to explain discrepancies. This makes it more difficult for society to distinguish between genuine changes in public problems and changes resulting merely from the way those problems are measured.

The generation of public information requires institutions endowed with institutional memory, professional independence and the capacity to adapt. The loss of specialized personnel, the interruption of

methodological continuity, or the reduction of incentives for innovation can undermine capacities that took many years to build and that are extremely difficult to recover in the short term. The gradual erosion of these capacities represents one of the principal risks facing public decision-making. Mexico may continue to possess substantial amounts of data while simultaneously experiencing increasing difficulty in transforming those data into meaningful evidence. The weakening of the institutions responsible for measuring reality expands the space in which interpretations gradually replace verifiable diagnoses.

In Mexico, public information has historically been a fundamental tool for identifying the gap between announced objectives and actual outcomes. Its value becomes particularly evident when it enables society to answer questions that shape the country's future—for example, determining whether decisions regarding water management adequately consider the real pressure on aquifers and water-stressed regions; assessing whether infrastructure projects incorporate their environmental impacts; identifying the costs and benefits of energy-related decisions; or measuring whether economic growth genuinely improves the living conditions of the population. When these evaluation mechanisms lose their effectiveness, the

Generating public information requires institutions with technical institutional memory, professional independence, and adaptability.

The loss of specialists, the disruption of methodologies, or reduced incentives for innovation can undermine capabilities built up over many years—capabilities that are difficult to recover in the short term.

consequences cease to be merely institutional. Insufficient information regarding water availability makes it more difficult to anticipate crises such as those already observed in several metropolitan areas of the country; the reduction of environmental evaluations limits the timely identification of the impacts of major development projects on ecosystems and communities; and the lack of transparency regarding energy costs, subsidies and investments reduces the capacity to evaluate decisions that will commit public resources well into the future.

What happens inside the National Palace does not remain confined to the Zocalo. When the federal government abandons the practice of grounding its decisions in technical, independent and verifiable evidence, it not only transforms its own relationship with evidence but also redefines the standards of what is considered acceptable among the levels of government that observe it, emulate it, or simply adapt to the signals emanating from the federal level. In Mexico, the weakening of public information capacities at the federal level is being replicated—with varying degrees of intensity and speed—across state governments and municipal administrations. This is not the result of an explicit transfer of responsibilities or a formal directive; rather, it is the natural con-

sequence of a deteriorated institutional environment in which the demand for rigorous information has diminished, the institutions responsible for producing it have either disappeared or lost their autonomy and evidence-based accountability has ceased to be a genuine political expectation.

Under this deeply detrimental scenario for Mexican democracy, the incentives for local governments to generate their own diagnoses, update administrative records, or invest in technical capacities have been substantially weakened. The result is a country moving toward increasingly intuitive, discretionary and less publicly scrutinized decision-making. When this pattern is replicated simultaneously across all three levels of government, what is ultimately lost is not merely a database or an outdated indicator; it is the very possibility that the Mexican State—in any of its territorial expressions—can recognize its own mistakes before their consequences become irreversible. Government mediocrity does not always arise from a lack of intent, but from an inability to recognize the complexity of public problems. The Mexican government has squandered knowledge and evidence, confusing politically popular decisions with genuinely effective solutions.

The weakening of public information capabilities at the federal level is being replicated—at varying intensities and speeds—within the federal entities and municipal governments.

The same concern is evident in economic performance. Without complete and comparable information, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine whether higher public spending translates into better public services, whether an investment generates benefits proportional to its costs, or whether an economic policy is effectively addressing structural problems. One lesson that the current administration has struggled to learn is that the absence of evidence does not eliminate public problems; it merely reduces the capacity to identify them before their consequences become significantly more difficult to correct. Public information derives its value from enabling Mexico to assess its own performance beyond official government narratives. When that capacity is weakened, the country loses something far more fundamental than a statistical indicator or an information platform: it loses part of its ability to recognize emerging risks, correct flawed decisions and develop solutions grounded in reality.

Public information is valuable because it allows Mexico to examine its own results beyond government rhetoric. When that capacity is weakened, the country loses its ability to recognize risks, correct decisions, and build solutions grounded in reality.

1.3 FROM THE ABSENCE OF INFORMATION to the Construction of Official Narratives

No government can invent its own version of events if there is information capable of disproving it. At its core, this is the most uncomfortable function of public information: it not only serves to diagnose a country's problems but also places limits on those who govern. As long as complete data, strong technical institutions and independent evaluations exist, government decisions must be measured against evidence that the government does not fully control. The real damage caused by weakening these systems extends far beyond the loss of a few databases or incomplete records; what ultimately changes is the country's entire institutional equilibrium. With fewer independent actors scrutinizing government performance, the government gains greater latitude to decide which figures to disclose, which indicators to highlight and which version of reality to construct based on its own results.

In Mexico, this phenomenon has become widely known as *otros datos* ("other data"). What began as a phrase used in a particular political context ultimately

"Other data." What began as a phrase born of a specific moment ended up becoming the perfect summary of a much broader dispute:

who decides what information is valid, and who has the authority to tell the country's story.

became the perfect summary of a much broader dispute: who determines which information is valid and who has the authority to tell the country's story. There is nothing unusual about a government defending its performance while society questions it; this is a normal and continuous feature of any democracy. The real danger emerges when the technical institutions that once established methodological standards and produced official data are weakened, leaving society without a common evidentiary foundation for debating issues of both transparency and governance. Under such circumstances, public debate ceases to be resolved through evidence and instead is dominated by the most forceful narrative, particularly when it enjoys the support of the government itself.

However, the problem does not begin with the institutions that disappeared. It begins with something far more difficult to document—and even more difficult to reverse: the loss of the desire to know. Since 2018, following the election of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador as President and the establishment of the political project known as the Fourth Transformation, Mexico has experienced not only a visible institutional reconfiguration but also a profound change in the culture of government that often goes unnoticed in conventional analyses. Information gradually ceased

to function as a tool for governing more effectively and instead became a resource for governing with fewer questions and less scrutiny.

It is not that all available information has disappeared during these eight years; information still exists and in some areas it remains abundant. The real question is what purpose it serves. The information that continues to be produced or receives greater emphasis from the government increasingly functions to reinforce an official narrative rather than to challenge it. What confirms the government's position is measured; what supports it is published; and the mechanisms capable of revealing contradictory evidence are progressively defunded or dismantled. The result is a State that has lost its appetite for evidence. A State without an appetite for evidence does not merely make poorer decisions; it constructs a parallel reality in which its own decisions always appear reasonable, always appear sufficient and always appear to be moving in the right direction. For such a State, independent information is not an input—it is a threat.

Within this context, government communication can deceptively become a substitute for public evaluation. As has occurred in Mexico, when certain indicators receive greater visibility than comprehensive policy as-

The problem does not begin with the institutions that disappeared. It begins with something more difficult to document and more difficult to reverse:

THE LOSS OF THE APPETITE FOR KNOWLEDGE

The State has ceased to hunger for evidence; it does not merely make poorer decisions—it constructs a parallel reality, where independent information is a threat.

assessments, there is a risk that partial achievements will be presented as definitive solutions while the true scale of problems that remain far deeper and more complex is artificially minimized. One of the clearest examples can be found in the discussion surrounding social well-being. The official narrative has presented the expansion of social programs and direct cash transfers as one of the principal indicators of the country's transformation. These benefits undoubtedly provide important sources of income for millions of households; however, evaluating well-being also requires examining effective access to public services, healthcare, education and the conditions necessary to expand long-term opportunities.

The distinction between communicating a public policy and evaluating its outcomes is fundamental. A program may expand its coverage while simultaneously coexisting with other social problems that continue to require attention. Mexico still has more than 50 million people without access to healthcare services, a reality that underscores the importance of assessing well-being across multiple dimensions rather than solely in terms of income or the distribution of financial assistance. The danger of constructing a narrative around a single indicator is that it oversimplifies the complexity of public problems. Rather than serving

Financial support and direct transfers represent income for millions of families; however, assessing well-being also requires analyzing effective access to public services, healthcare, and education, as well as conditions that enable the improvement of long-term opportunities.

to confirm government decisions, social information should function as a tool for identifying what continues to fail and what still requires correction.

A similar situation can be observed in the areas of economic performance and accountability. The stability of certain indicators may coexist with financial pressures that require continuous monitoring. For this reason, public information is indispensable for assessing not only immediate outcomes but also the long-term consequences of government decisions. Between 2018 and 2024, the Historical Balance of the Public Sector Borrowing Requirements increased by approximately 7.1 trillion pesos. This increase places greater pressure on public finances by requiring a larger share of public resources to be allocated to servicing government obligations, thereby reducing future fiscal space for priorities such as infrastruc-

ture, healthcare and public security. Without sufficient information, there is a risk of evaluating only current fiscal stability while overlooking the commitments that the country will inherit in the future.

The construction of misleading narratives may also occur when certain policy areas no longer have sufficient public information available for proper evaluation. In strategic sectors, the availability of data enables specialists, businesses and citizens to assess risks, costs and outcomes beyond official institutional explanations. In the energy sector, the Operating Reserve Margin of the electricity market has not been publicly reported since July 2024 after being classified as information subject to restriction on the grounds of national security. The public absence of this type of indicator reduces the possibility of conducting independent analyses of elements that are fundamental to assessing both the current operation and the future capacity of the electricity system. Limited access to this information weakens the ability to anticipate risks affecting the reliability of electricity supply, evaluate future investment needs and determine whether existing infrastructure will be sufficient to support the country's economic growth and rising energy demand.

The use of concepts such as national security to justify restricting public information represents one of



Images: Sceneries of the press conference "La Mañanera" of Lopez Obrador (2022) and Sheinbaum (2025) at <https://www.gob.mx/>

Concealing, limiting, or altering security information does not reduce violence or improve the country's conditions; however, it does diminish society's ability to understand the magnitude of the problem and demand responses.

the most important debates concerning the relationship between information and the State. There are circumstances in which withholding information may be justified; however, in a democratic system such decisions require robust institutional safeguards capable of balancing the protection of legitimate state interests with public accountability. Public security arguably represents the most visible point of tension between official narratives, public information and citizens' lived experiences. In this area, information does not merely describe crime rates or statistical indicators; it also reveals the State's actual capacity – or lack thereof – to protect its citizens. Consequently, when available data reveal an increasingly wide gap between official results and the reality experienced by communities, such information may become politically inconvenient for the government. Concealing, restricting, or modifying security-related information neither reduces violence nor improves the country's conditions; it merely diminishes society's ability to understand the true magnitude of the problem and to demand effective government responses.

Between 2019 and 2025, Mexico recorded more than 190,000 homicides, a figure that underscores the need to evaluate public security not only through year-to-year variations but also in terms of the over-

all magnitude of the violence confronting the country. The selective use of particular indicators may shape public perceptions, but it cannot substitute for a comprehensive assessment of the problem. The crisis of disappearances illustrates this same need for verifiable information. While reviewing and updating official records may be necessary to improve the quality of databases, such processes require methodological transparency and sufficient public explanation. With more than 120,000 missing and unaccounted-for persons, any statistical modification carries direct consequences: it may affect search efforts, delay responses for families, alter the allocation of public resources and reduce the State's capacity to assist those living with the consequences of violence.

These examples demonstrate that the construction of official narratives does not always depend on concealing or eliminating information. As the experience of the past eight years has shown, it can also occur when certain data receive greater emphasis than others, when statistics are presented without the necessary context, or when the independent institutions capable of reviewing and challenging government performance are progressively weakened. The problem arises when information ceases to function as a tool for understanding reality and instead becomes

The crisis of disappearances reflects the same need for verifiable information as do homicides. Processes for reviewing and updating records are necessary to improve databases, and they require methodological clarity and sufficient public explanation.

primarily a means of sustaining a particular interpretation of it. Under such circumstances, public debate loses its shared evidentiary foundation and becomes increasingly centered on competing narratives about what is actually happening in the country.

For this reason, preserving robust public information systems means preserving the ability to test any narrative against evidence. What Mexico needs is to consolidate, rebuild and strengthen the institutions that, in the past, were capable of both safeguarding and scrutinizing government decisions, thereby preventing reality from becoming dependent upon a single political perspective or ideological vision. What we are witnessing in the country today is only widening the gap between the indicators promoted by the current administration and the reality experienced daily by citizens. That growing divergence constitutes one of the principal challenges for understanding the current state of public information in Mexico.

When data reveal a widening gap between official results and the reality experienced by communities, they can become an uncomfortable issue for this government.

1.4 THE GROWING GAP BETWEEN Official Data and People's Everyday Experiences

Public information fulfills one of its most important functions when it enables comparisons between the results reported by public institutions and the actual conditions experienced by citizens. As we know, indicators help identify progress and setbacks, but their true value lies in their ability to explain what occurs in people's daily lives. In recent years, one of the principal tensions in Mexico has emerged precisely along these lines. While official discourse highlights progress in areas such as well-being, public security and economic development, a significant share of the population continues to face difficulties in accessing adequate public services, finding security within their communities, or maintaining economic stability in their households.

The discussion is not about denying the progress reflected by certain indicators, but rather about recognizing that part of reality may remain invisible when available measurements fail to fully capture people's lived experiences. A country may improve according to certain statistical indicators while simultaneously maintaining structural problems that continue to

affect the daily quality of life of millions of people. Healthcare provides one of the clearest examples of this gap between formal coverage and effective access to services. From the perspective of an ordinary citizen, the performance of the healthcare system is not measured solely by enrollment in a public institution or inclusion in an administrative registry. It is measured when a medical consultation, medication, surgery, or long-term treatment is actually needed. In other words, public policy succeeds only when it effectively resolves the problems that were correctly identified in the first place.

Over the past several years, millions of Mexicans have experienced a fundamentally different relationship with the public healthcare system. Persistent shortages of medicines and medical supplies demonstrate that institutional access does not always translate into comprehensive care. In 2024, only about six out of every ten users of public healthcare services received all the medications prescribed to them, forcing the remaining patients either to purchase medicines with their own resources or seek alternatives outside the public system. The expansion of low-cost private medical practices and clinics attached to pharmacies reflects this new reality. For many families, these facilities have ceased to be merely occasional alterna-

tives and have instead become routine solutions to problems of timeliness, availability and continuity in public healthcare services.

The distinction between being legally entitled to a service and actually receiving it in a timely manner is fundamental. When a patient obtains a medical consultation but must purchase medications, pay for diagnostic tests, or seek treatment in the private sector, the costs of institutional shortcomings are transferred directly to the household. A statistical measure of healthcare coverage loses much of its explanatory value when it fails to incorporate the quality, timeliness and continuity of the services actually received. A comparable pattern can be observed in the education sector. Over time, Mexico has expanded school enrollment and increased student retention within the educational system. Nevertheless, school attendance alone provides no information about the quality of learning achieved or the competencies developed by students.

The presence of millions of students within the educational system undoubtedly represents an important achievement, but the true measure of success lies in what happens afterward: how much students actually learn, what opportunities that education creates and

HEALTH

In 2024, only about 6 out of 10 users of public health services received all the medications prescribed to them.

EDUCATION

Mexico succeeded in expanding school coverage. However, the key questions remain: how much do students learn, what opportunities does that education generate, and does it truly enable the reduction of existing inequalities?

whether it genuinely contributes to reducing existing inequalities. The results of the PISA 2022 assessment showed that Mexico continues to face significant deficiencies in fundamental learning outcomes. The country obtained 395 points in mathematics, 410 in reading and 410 in science, scores that remain below the OECD average and reveal persistent difficulties in ensuring that students acquire the competencies necessary to access better educational and labor-market opportunities. The problem becomes even more profound when minimum performance levels are considered. In mathematics, approximately two out of every three Mexican students failed to reach the basic proficiency level established by PISA, demonstrating that a substantial proportion of young people advance through the educational system without acquiring essential foundational skills.

These findings demonstrate that the discussion of education cannot be limited solely to school coverage, enrollment, or student retention. Keeping students in classrooms loses much of its meaning if the educational system fails to transform those years of schooling into genuine learning capable of expanding their life opportunities. Public information is indispensable precisely because it allows this distinction to be made between school attendance and effective

learning. Consequently, Mexico may achieve higher average years of schooling without necessarily producing a better-prepared population. Young people who progress through the educational system without acquiring sufficient knowledge and skills face greater difficulties in accessing quality employment, while the country simultaneously loses productivity, competitiveness and its capacity to reduce inequality. The costs are not confined to classrooms; they are reflected in fewer economic opportunities and in a society with fewer tools for building a more prosperous future.

The gap between aggregate statistical indicators and everyday experience is equally evident in household economic conditions. Macroeconomic indicators make it possible to assess stability, economic growth and investment, but people experience the economy from a far more immediate and tangible perspective. The everyday question is not how rapidly the national economy is growing, but rather how much household income remains after paying for food, transportation, housing, utilities and healthcare. Although certain income indicators have improved in recent years, Mexico's labor market continues to exhibit persistent structural fragility. Nearly 55% of the employed population remains in conditions of labor informality,

ECONOMY

Nearly 55% of the employed population remains in informal employment, meaning that millions of workers earn an income without full access to social security, job stability, or adequate economic protection mechanisms.

meaning that millions of workers earn income without fully benefiting from social security, employment stability, or adequate mechanisms of economic protection. This explains why having a job does not necessarily mean enjoying economic security. For a significant proportion of Mexican households, any medical emergency, temporary loss of income, or unexpected increase in prices can completely undermine their financial stability. The result is that millions of families remain employed while continuing to live in conditions of vulnerability.

In the area of public security, the distance between official statistics and citizens' daily experiences represents one of the greatest challenges to understanding the country's reality. Traditional indicators capture only part of the criminal phenomenon, while other forms of violence profoundly affect communities, businesses and families without always being fully reflected in official statistics. Extortion provides a particularly clear illustration of this discrepancy. While some aggregate security indicators report improvements, merchants, transportation operators and small business owners continue to face pressures that directly affect their day-to-day operations. This crime represents not only an economic threat but also fundamentally alters the way citizens and

businesses make decisions, conduct their activities and interact with public authorities.

The problem becomes even more profound when considering that a substantial proportion of crimes never enter official records. According to victimization surveys, approximately 93% of crimes committed in Mexico belong to the so-called dark figure (*cifra negra*), because they are either never reported or do not result in the opening of a formal criminal investigation. This means that a significant share of insecurity remains outside conventional statistical measurements. Consequently, an important gap may exist between the level of security suggested by official indicators and the level of security actually perceived by citizens. A community may exhibit statistical improvements while simultaneously experiencing extortion, threats, or other conditions that continue to disrupt everyday life.

The provision of public services reflects a similar situation. People's daily experiences with highways, infrastructure, transportation, water availability and municipal services ultimately constitute one of the most direct ways in which citizens evaluate government performance. Approved budgets and announced public programs have meaning only when

EXTORSION

Algunos indicadores generales de seguridad reportan avances, pero comerciantes, transportistas y pequeños empresarios enfrentan presiones que afectan directamente su operacion diaria.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Some general security indicators show improvement, yet merchants, transporters, and small business owners face pressures that directly affect their daily operations.

people perceive tangible improvements in their quality of life. When a persistent gap exists between reported achievements and the problems experienced by citizens, the most fundamental element in any relationship between society and the State begins to erode: public trust.

For this reason, public information should not be understood merely as a tool for documenting progress, but rather as a mechanism for identifying what continues to malfunction. Its value lies precisely in revealing discrepancies, identifying unresolved problems and demonstrating where public decisions require adjustment. A country needs information capable of explaining the full complexity of its reality, even when the results are difficult to acknowledge. Only what is clearly observed can be effectively addressed through better public solutions. The growing distance between available data and citizens' everyday experiences confirms the importance of preserving robust systems of measurement, evaluation and accountability that allow the country's actual conditions to be understood with greater precision.

Public information should not be viewed solely as a tool for tracking progress, but rather as a mechanism for identifying what is not yet working.

1.5. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE

on the Deterioration of Public Information Systems

The indicators of a country's institutional strength do not derive solely from the diagnoses or evaluations produced by its own institutions. Rather, it is independent assessments that make it possible to observe how the fundamental dimensions of a country evolve, including the rule of law, control of corruption, democratic quality, freedom of expression and governments' capacity to ensure accountability. In the case of Mexico, various national and international assessments have documented the challenges the country faces in preserving reliable information, evaluating public policy outcomes and maintaining effective oversight of the exercise of power.

These assessments should not be understood merely as a country's position in an international ranking. Their true significance lies in their ability to facilitate comparisons, identify long-term trends and detect changes that often remain invisible when a country is evaluated solely through its own official statistics. From this perspective, external indicators provide an additional benchmark for assessing institutional

strength and the actual capacity of institutions to respond to public problems. One of the most relevant assessments is conducted by the World Justice Project, which evaluates essential elements of the rule of law, including constraints on government powers, the absence of corruption, regulatory enforcement and access to justice. According to the 2025 Rule of Law Index, Mexico ranked 118th out of 143 countries, reflecting persistent difficulties in consolidating institutions capable of monitoring the exercise of power and ensuring that legal rules function effectively.

This result has implications that extend well beyond the judicial sphere. Accountability requires understanding how public decisions are made, how public resources are used and what outcomes government actions actually produce. When the available information cannot answer these questions, society loses essential tools for identifying institutional failures, demanding corrective action and evaluating the performance of public institutions. Indicators of corruption reveal similar concerns. According to Transparency International, Mexico scored only 26 out of 100 in the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking 140th out of 180 countries. This result demonstrates that the mere existence of laws and institutions is insufficient in the absence of effective mechanisms

to prevent abuses, detect irregularities and sanction the misuse of public resources.

Corruption increases when it becomes difficult to determine how and why public decisions are made. Information regarding government contracts, public budgets, audits and policy outcomes makes it possible to understand how public resources are allocated and whether they actually achieve their intended objectives. When such information is incomplete or difficult to examine, not only is transparency weakened, but the likelihood also increases that unjustified expenditures, poor decisions, or potential acts of corruption will remain undetected for longer periods.

At the national level, specialized organizations have identified similar concerns regarding both the availability and the usefulness of public information. The deterioration of public information systems does not always occur through the immediate disappearance of data. More often, it develops gradually through datasets that are no longer updated, databases that become less comparable over time, methodological changes implemented without sufficient transparency, or information systems that technically remain available but progressively lose their capacity to explain public problems. This distinction is important because transparency cannot be measured solely by

In the 2025 Rule of Law Index, Mexico ranked 118th out of 143 countries evaluated, reflecting difficulties in consolidating mechanisms capable of overseeing the exercise of power and ensuring that rules function effectively.

the existence of publicly available information. The real consequences emerge when these shortcomings cease to be merely statistical and begin directly affecting people's lives—that is, patients facing shortages of medicines or delayed medical care, communities living with inadequate water services, insecurity, or deteriorating infrastructure and families receiving public benefits or services without knowing whether those interventions are genuinely addressing their needs. The absence of information does not eliminate public problems; it merely allows them to persist without being identified and corrected in a timely manner.

Democratic quality also depends upon the existence of institutional checks and balances capable of scrutinizing official information. In this regard, Freedom House has classified Mexico as a “Partly Free” country, assigning it a score of approximately 60 out of 100, while identifying concerns related to violence, institutional performance and the conditions necessary for the effective exercise of political rights and civil liberties. Similarly, the Democracy Index produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit classified Mexico as a hybrid democracy, assigning it an overall score of approximately 5.1 out of 10. These assessments demonstrate that democratic governance requires more than electoral mechanisms; it also depends

upon independent institutions, effective systems of oversight and public spaces in which information can be openly examined and challenged.

In a democracy, public information does not originate exclusively from government institutions. Universities, civil society organizations, research centers, specialists and journalists perform an indispensable role by analyzing data, verifying official results and documenting problems that may remain absent from government statistics. For this reason, freedom of expression constitutes another fundamental dimension of democratic governance. A society's capacity to understand what is happening also depends upon those who investigate, publish and generate independent information.

According to the 2025 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders, Mexico ranked 120th out of 180 countries, remaining one of the world's most challenging environments for journalism because of persistent levels of violence, threats and attacks against journalists. This diagnosis is consistent with the findings of national organizations dedicated to defending freedom of expression. Article 19 has documented the murder of more than 160 journalists in Mexico since 2000, a figure

The quality of democracy also depends on the existence of checks and balances capable of scrutinizing official information.

Freedom of expression constitutes a fundamental dimension. A society's ability to understand what is happening also depends on those who investigate, publish, and generate independent information.



Image: Report on Free Press in the World 2025 "Reporteros sin Fronteras". Mexico appears in "difficult situation" at <https://rsf-es.org/clasificacion-mundial-de-la-libertad-de-prensa-rsf-2025-el-debilitamiento-economico-de-los-medios-constituye-una-de-las-principales-amenazas-para-la-libertad-de-prensa/>

that reflects the serious risks faced by those who investigate and produce public information across different regions of the country. When journalism encounters increasing obstacles, the consequences extend well beyond the profession itself. Society as a whole is affected because one of its most important sources of information on corruption, violence, abuses of authority and institutional failures is weakened – issues that are often unlikely to emerge through other channels.

Institutional quality also has important implications for economic performance. The availability of reliable information, clear rules and regulatory certainty are internationally recognized criteria used to assess investment risk and guide investment decisions. Both public confidence and economic confidence depend, to a considerable extent, on the ability to understand how institutions function and what outcomes they produce. The various national and international assessments reviewed here converge on a common conclusion: information systems constitute an essential component of a country's broader institutional infrastructure. In the Mexican case, their deterioration affects not only the availability of data but also society's capacity to evaluate institutions, anticipate emerging risks and improve public decision-making.

The findings presented in this section demonstrate that Mexico's institutional challenges are also clearly visible from an external perspective. Multiple independent assessments identify signs of declining institutional capacity, increasing difficulties in exercising effective oversight and the gradual loss of the mechanisms that transform information into public knowledge. Looking ahead, the central challenge is not merely to restore statistical indicators or digital platforms. Rather, it is to preserve the institutional capacities necessary to generate reliable information, analyze it independently and translate it into better public policies and more effective public decision-making Table 1.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, the true value of public information in Mexico lies in its capacity to distinguish between the results presented by the government and the actual conditions experienced by society. The challenge is not simply to ensure that data are available, but to preserve the institutions and mechanisms capable of verifying whether public decisions produce tangible improvements in people's lives. When Mexico loses independent evaluation bodies, weakens its technical capacities, or reduces the spaces in which

TABLE 1. WHEN DATA CEASES TO EXPLAIN REALITY: THE DETERIORATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN MEXICO

CONCEPTS	FINDINGS	CONSEQUENCES
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY	Institutions that enabled the monitoring of power and the evaluation of results have been weakened.	Reduced access to verifiable information and diminished capacity for citizens to hold authorities accountable.
EROSION OF TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES	Capabilities for generating, preserving, and evaluating information have been lost.	Risk of reduced production of specialized evidence and loss of institutional technical memory.
FROM DATA TO NARRATIVES	The reduction of checks and balances makes it easier for narratives to supplant independent evaluation.	Reduced capacity to cross-check official statements against verifiable evidence.
GAP BETWEEN DATA AND EVERYDAY REALITY	Official indicators do not always reflect the population's experience.	Problems in health, education, employment, and security persist that are not always visible in the indicators.
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE	Independent bodies detect consistent institutional deterioration.	Weaknesses observed internally are also identified by external evaluations, with implications for the country's investment and development.

Source: Signos Vitales, 2026.

information can be independently verified, it also diminishes its ability to identify public problems, correct ineffective policies and understand the country's reality with greater precision.

In Mexico, the consequences of weakening public information are reflected in the disappearance of institutions that made it possible to understand, evaluate and scrutinize the functioning of government. The elimination of the INAI, Coneval, INEE and Mejore-

du, together with the erosion of technical capacities within other public institutions, represents the loss of specialized bodies that provided more independent assessments of public policy outcomes. Mexico is no longer supported by institutions specifically created to determine whether students are actually learning, whether social programs are achieving their objectives, whether public resources are generating meaningful results and whether citizens are able to access

A reflection of the weakening of public information: the disappearance of institutions that made it possible to understand, evaluate, and question the functioning of the government.

government information. The underlying problem is that the country is not merely losing institutions; it is losing the tools needed to recognize its shortcomings, correct its mistakes and make better public decisions.

Today, Mexico faces a challenge that extends far beyond the loss of particular indicators. The real danger is that official narratives are gradually replacing independent evaluation, while government performance is increasingly assessed by the very actors responsible for making the decisions themselves. This represents an undemocratic and ultimately ineffective arrangement on which to base public trust in official results. Without robust mechanisms of independent oversight, the gap between the country portrayed in official discourse and the country experienced by millions of citizens will continue to widen. For this reason, restoring the strength of public information systems is neither a technical nor an administrative matter; it is an indispensable condition for preserving the Mexican State's capacity to understand, evaluate and correct its own decisions. As emphasized throughout this chapter, without institutions capable of producing reliable and independent evidence, the Mexican government is losing the few remaining mechanisms available to identify policy failures, measure results and remain accountable to an increasingly demanding

society. The deterioration of these institutional capacities is creating conditions in which public decisions depend less on verifiable evidence and increasingly on interpretations constructed by those in power.

What Mexico has experienced over more than eight years demonstrates that when interpretations of reality are constructed by those in power and when fewer institutions remain capable of challenging them, public information loses one of its most fundamental purposes: serving as a shared point of reference for understanding the country's reality. When a single interpretation comes to dominate the explanation of public problems, it becomes increasingly difficult to identify policy failures, acknowledge insufficient results and adjust decisions that are not producing the intended outcomes. Information has gradually ceased to function as a tool for improving public policies and has instead become an instrument for justifying decisions that have already been made. In this context, society has lost much of its capacity to evaluate government performance through independent evidence.





2.

Limited capacity to drive new statistical initiatives and coordinate inter-institutional efforts.

2 WHAT INFORMATION HAS BEEN LOST OR RESTRICTED and What are the Implications for Transparency?



A country's transparency is strengthened when institutions are capable of producing reliable information, preserving it over time, evaluating its outcomes and making it available to society in order to improve public decision-making. Over the past two decades, Mexico succeeded in building a network of specialized institutions and information systems that transformed the way government performance was observed and evaluated. For the first time, it became possible to examine in greater detail how public resources were being used, what results public policies were producing and what the country's principal challenges were in areas such as education, poverty,

corruption and institutional performance. This information infrastructure strengthened accountability, facilitated the identification of institutional shortcomings, enabled the evaluation of public policies and generated the evidence necessary to better understand the country's realities.

However, during the last two federal administrations, the governments led by Morena have weakened these institutions, thereby reducing the State's capacity to generate, preserve, disclose and oversee public information. The elimination of the INAI, INEE, Mejoredu and Coneval has significantly diminished the State's capacity to produce and safeguard inde-

Morena governments have weakened institutions, and this has reduced the State's capacity to generate, preserve, disclose and oversee public information.

pendent public information. At the same time, the growing constraints faced by INEGI, the deterioration of several government data platforms and the reduced oversight capacity of the Federal Superior Audit Office (ASF) have weakened the mechanisms that once enabled society to monitor, evaluate and scrutinize government performance. Given the magnitude of the institutional dismantling that has taken place, rebuilding these capacities is unlikely to be an immediate process. Reconstructing information systems, recovering the technical expertise accumulated over decades and reestablishing credible public evaluation mechanisms will require time, resources and a genuine commitment to strengthening the institutional checks and balances of the Mexican State. This chapter examines what information has been lost, restricted, or made less accessible as a result of these institutional changes, as well as the consequences for transparency, accountability and society's ability to evaluate the performance of the Mexican State.

Rebuilding information systems, recovering accumulated technical expertise, and re-establishing reliable public evaluations will require time, resources, and genuine will.

2.1. KEY INSTITUTIONS: INEGI AND ASF with Reduced Evaluation Capacity

INEGI

The National System of Statistical and Geographic Information (SNIEG), coordinated by INEGI, is responsible for generating and making available to both society and the State statistical and geographic information that is reliable, relevant, accurate and timely. To fulfill this mandate, the system is built upon four fundamental pillars: the production of statistical and geographic information; its dissemination through mechanisms that facilitate public access and consultation; the promotion of its use and understanding; and its preservation to ensure long-term availability (INEGI, n.d.). The effective fulfillment of these functions requires sufficient human, financial and technological resources, particularly for the implementation of large-scale projects such as population censuses and intercensal surveys.

In this regard, over the past fifteen years the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) has exhibited a cyclical expenditure pattern. Periods of higher spending coincide with the implementation of the Population and Housing Censuses (2010 and 2020) and the Intercensal Surveys (2015 and 2025).

In 2018, INEGI's executed budget amounted to 7.9 billion pesos; in 2019—the first year of the Lopez Obrador administration—it increased to 11.2 billion pesos; and by 2025 it reached 14.9 billion pesos (INEGI, n.d.-a). Between 2019 and 2025, INEGI's executed budget increased by 3.7% in real terms.

In 2025, the budget originally approved for INEGI totaled 12.2 billion pesos (INEGI, n.d.-a). During that same year, however, the Institute received an additional 2.8 billion pesos in budgetary appropriations to conduct the 2025 Intercensal Survey. The Lopez Obrador administration had intended to discontinue this survey. Had this budget increase not been authorized under the federal administration of Claudia Sheinbaum, INEGI's budget would have represented a 12.3% real reduction relative to 2019. When compared with 2015—the previous year in which an Intercensal Survey was conducted—the 2025 budget represented a 9.7% real increase (Graph 1).

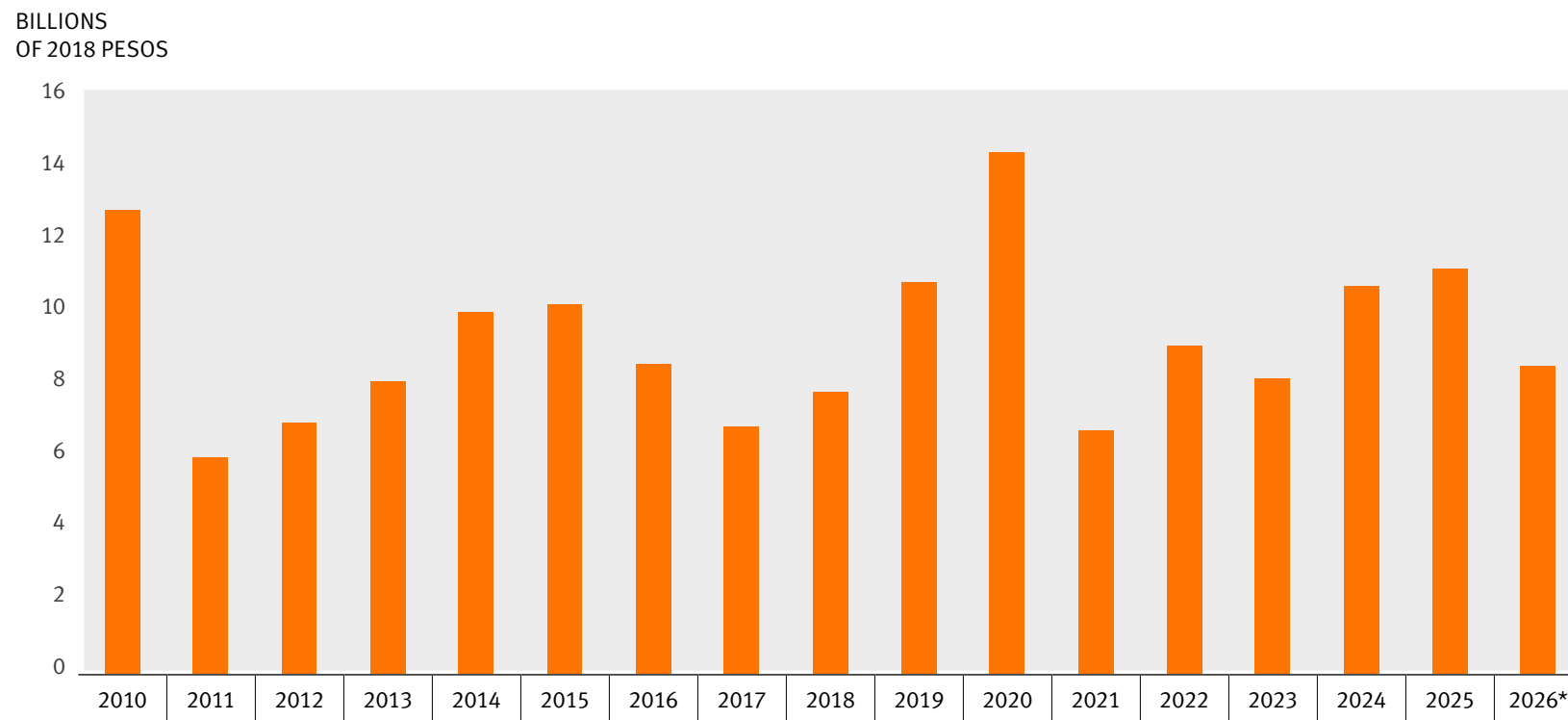
Another factor placing additional pressure on INEGI's operations is, as noted previously, the dissolution of Coneval (the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy). In July 2025, INEGI formally assumed the functions previously carried out by Coneval, modifying its organizational structure

through the creation of a new unit—the General Directorate for Poverty Evaluation and Measurement—while operating with essentially the same budget it had in 2016. In 2024, the last year in which Coneval remained fully operational, its approved budget amounted to 411.3 million pesos (Coneval, 2024). INEGI's limited budget constrains its capacity to undertake new statistical initiatives or to expand, enrich and improve existing ones.

According to specialists consulted by Signos Vitales, another factor explaining the decline in revenues is what they describe as a diminishing institutional appetite for information and evidence among state governments and federal executive agencies. The production and use of public information face significant distortions stemming from reduced institutional demand and the limited development of new statistical products. More broadly, there appears to be less interest across different levels and branches of government in generating new information or maintaining existing datasets up to date, while INEGI itself does not appear to be sufficiently proactive in encouraging government agencies to continue producing and updating public information.

The production and use of public information face significant distortions stemming from lower institutional demand and the limited generation of new statistical products.

GRAPH 1. INEGI EXECUTED BUDGET (2010–2026*)
(BILLIONS OF 2018 PESOS)



Note: * For the year 2026, the figure refers to the approved budget.

Source: In-house elaboration with information from INEGI (s.f.a.). *

In the past, ecological, economic, social, scientific and cultural information expanded considerably through the development of satellite accounts¹. These initiatives resulted from collaborative efforts between INEGI and other public institutions. Unfortunately, today there is virtually no comparable innovation. Several specialists consulted by Signos Vitales argue that INEGI has reduced its capacity to promote new statistical initiatives and coordinate interinstitutional efforts aimed at expanding the availability of public information.

Among the principal risks associated with the government's austerity policies and the growing tensions with the United States are the potential loss of regional and local representativeness, the reduction or elimination of important data attributes and the loss of information dependent on external financing, as is the case of the National Child Labor Survey (ENTI). In 2019 and 2022, INEGI received US\$22.4 million (INEGI, 2022) and US\$19 million, respectively (ILO, 2024),

¹ Satellite accounts present the economic value of a specific sector and its contribution to the national economy. The general objective of these accounts is to provide an integrated, detailed study of the sector—viewed through the lens of the supply and demand for goods and services—by generating macroeconomic aggregates and specific indicators, such as the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), that facilitate economic analysis of the sector.

from the United States Department of Labor to conduct this survey.

According to the specialists consulted by Signos Vitales, the Morena administrations do not appear to have pursued a systematic effort to manipulate official statistics. However, they do perceive a clear bias toward presenting the federal government in a favorable light, together with a deliberate effort to make information less accessible. Three cases are particularly illustrative: poverty measurement, the current account and construction activity. As will be discussed later, after distortions became apparent in the measurement of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), no meaningful effort was made to correct either the methodology or the current account data, despite the atypical behavior observed in several components—particularly imports and exports—especially following the growing influence of organized crime and its increasing involvement in the economy through the smuggling of fossil fuels.

According to several specialists consulted by Signos Vitales, institutional limitations hinder the verification and auditing of the quality of the information that INEGI receives from other public agencies. In this regard, Schettino (Schettino, M., June 12, 2026) has argued that the Institute depends, to a significant

Various specialists consulted by Signos Vitales point out that the INEGI has reduced its capacity to drive new statistical initiatives and coordinate inter-institutional efforts aimed at expanding the range of public information available.

extent, on the accuracy of the information provided by the entities serving as primary data sources, while lacking sufficient authority to verify that information independently. Based on his analysis of several economic indicators, the author contends that certain inconsistencies observed in specific areas—such as government activities and sectors linked to state-owned enterprises—represent an increasing risk to the credibility of Mexico’s official statistics and underscore the importance of strengthening the mechanisms for validating, supervising and ensuring transparency in the information that feeds the national statistical system.

The absence of formal institutional responses to significant discrepancies among different official data sources raises legitimate questions regarding the role that INEGI should play in harmonizing and contextualizing public information. It is difficult to explain why the Institute has issued no official position concerning the discrepancies among different homicide statistics. According to the specialists consulted, there are both structural and short-term issues in which greater institutional cooperation would be desirable, or in which INEGI could assume a more active role, yet this has not occurred. One such issue is the crisis of missing persons.

Three factors have been fundamental to INEGI’s institutional resilience and have helped prevent more direct confrontation with the federal government. Nevertheless, under a context of increasing concentration of decision-making authority within the Executive Branch, INEGI can hardly fulfill the role of an independent technical counterweight:

1) Institutional safeguards and procedural frameworks protect INEGI. Much of the Institute’s work and institutional practice is governed by operational manuals and internationally recognized statistical standards. INEGI is subject to regular reviews by various multilateral organizations, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), among others. In addition to these institutional reviews, the Institute is also monitored by private-sector observers, including credit rating agencies. In this context, INEGI’s human capital is particularly valuable because it embodies the institution’s accumulated technical expertise and institutional memory. Conversely, the removal of highly specialized Directors General constitutes a warning sign that should not be overlooked.

These concerns have become particularly relevant in light of the institutional changes that accompanied

It is inexplicable that there has been no official statement regarding the discrepancies between the various homicide figures. In the view of experts, there are both structural and situational issues where greater cooperation could exist—or where the INEGI could play a more active role—yet this is not happening. One such issue is that of disappearances.

Graciela Marquez Colin's appointment as President of INEGI. During this transition, 11 of the Institute's 12 highest-ranking positions were replaced, including four Vice Presidencies and eight General Directorates (DGs). Within the Governing Board, the transition combined continuity with renewal: Graciela Marquez Colin was promoted from Vice President to President; Jose Arturo Blancas Espejo moved from the General Directorate of Economic Statistics to a Vice Presidency; and Adrian Franco Barrios remained in his existing position. However, turnover was virtually complete at the level of the General Directorates, where all eight positions changed leadership (Table 2).

Of particular significance is the fact that six of the eight General Directorates were filled by individuals with no prior professional career within the Institute². Although these appointments involved professionals with experience in public administration and academia, the scale of the turnover raises important questions regarding the preservation of institutional memory and the availability of experienced internal technical personnel to occupy strategically important positions.

² Only Luis Gerardo Esparza Rios and Susana Perez Cadena had significant experience at the INEGI before assuming those positions.



Image: Julio Santaella, director of INEGI 2016–2021 at <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2020/07/10/julio-a-santaella-presidente-del-inegi-dio-positivo-a-covid-19/>



Image: Graciela Marquez, director of INEGI 2022–2027 at <https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2021/12/15/graciela-marquez-ex-secretaria-de-economia-sera-propuesta-para-presidir-el-inegi/>

TABLE 2. GOVERNING BOARD AND GENERAL DIRECTORS OF INEGI
2020 AND 2024 (1/3)

GOVERNING BOARD AND GENERAL DIRECTORS		TRAJECTORY OF THE MEMBERS OF INEGI 2021–2024			
CHARGE	2020	2024	¿FROM INEGI?	DATE OF JOINING INEGI	PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND (INCUMBENT 2024)
President of the Institute	Julio Alfonso San- taella Castell	Graciela Marquez Colin 	No	Recently hired (post-2021)	» Economist (UNAM, Colmex, and Harvard). » Professor-Researcher at El Colegio de Mexico. » Secretary of Economy (2018–2020).
Vice-Presidency 1	Enrique de Alba Guerra	Mauricio Mar- quez Corona	Yes	INEGI career staff	» Over 30 years at INEGI. » State coordinator in Hidalgo for two decades. » President of INDAABIN before returning to the Institu- te.
Vice-Presidency 2	Paloma Merodio Gomez	Rosa Isabel Islas Arredondo	No	Recently hiree (post-2021)	» Ph.D and Master's degree in Economics from Colmex. » Experience at the SHCP, the Senate, and Sedesol.
Vice-Presidency 3	Graciela Marquez Colin 	Adrian Franco Barrios 	Yes	INEGI career staff	» Training at Manchester and CIDE. » Experience in the SFP and transparency. » Director General and subsequently Vice President of INEGI.
Vice-Presidency 4	Adrian Franco Barrios 	Jose Arturo Blancas Espejo 	Yes	INEGI career staff	» Actuary (UNAM). » Over three decades of experience in statistics and censuses. » Director General of Economic Statistics prior to beco- ming Vice President.

TABLE 2. GOVERNING BOARD AND GENERAL DIRECTORS OF INEGI
2020 AND 2024 (2/3)

GOVERNING BOARD AND GENERAL DIRECTORS		TRAJECTORY OF THE MEMBERS OF INEGI 2021–2024			
CHARGE	2020	2024	¿FROM INEGI?	DATE OF JOINING INEGI	PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND (INCUMBENT 2024)
Directorate General for Sociodemographic Statistics	Edgar Vielma Orozco	Mauricio Rodriguez Abreu	No	Recently hired, after 2021	» Actuary specializing in demography and inequality. » Researcher at Colmex and UDLAP. » Experience at Conapo."
Directorate General for Government, Public Security and Justice Statistics	Oscar Jaimes Bello	Dwight Daniel Dyer Leal	No	Recently hired, after 2021	» Specialist in government information. » Head of the General Directorate of Health Information (DGIS). » Experience with public information systems.
Directorate General for Economic Statistics	Jose Arturo Blancas Espejo	Susana Perez Cadena	Yes	INEGI career	» Actuary (UNAM). » Professional career at INEGI. » Specialist in economic censuses and economic statistics."
Directorate General for Geography and Environment	Maria del Carmen Reyes Guerrero	Luis Gerardo Esparza Rios	Yes	INEGI career	» Degree in Computer Science. » Specialist in cartography and spatial data. » Internal promotion within INEGI.
Directorate General for Integration, Analysis and Research	Sergio Carrera Riva Palacio	Monica Laura Vazquez Maggio	No	Recently hired, after 2021	» PhD in Social Sciences from UNSW (Australia). » Specialist in economic development and innovation. » Academic and research background.

TABLE 2. GOVERNING BOARD AND GENERAL DIRECTORS OF INEGI
2020 AND 2024 (3/3)

GOVERNING BOARD AND GENERAL DIRECTORS			TRAJECTORY OF THE MEMBERS OF INEGI 2021–2024		
CHARGE	2020	2024	¿FROM INEGI?	DATE OF JOINING INEGI	PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND (INCUMBENT 2024)
Directorate General for SNIEG Coordination	Maria Isabel Monterrubio Gomez	Silvia Elena Meza Martinez	No	Recently hired after 2021	Director of Performance Information Analysis. Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit. Director of Social Program Monitoring, Coneval.
Directorate General for Communication, Liaison and Public Information Service	Eduardo Javier Gracia Campos	Julieta Alejandra Brambila Ramirez	No	Recently hired, after 2021	Specialist in government information. Head of the General Directorate of Health Information (DGIS). Experience with public information systems.
Directorate General for Administration	Luis Maria Zapata Ferrer	Ricardo Miranda Burgos	No	Recently hired, after 2021	Actuary (UNAM). Professional career at INEGI. Specialist in economic censuses and economic statistics."

Nota: Gathering this information proved complex. The official INEGI website provides only a few biographical sketches—primarily for the presidency and vice-presidencies—while information regarding most director's general is withheld. This practice violates the General Law on Transparency (Article 65, Section XVI), which mandates that obligated entities make available to the public—and periodically updated—information regarding the professional backgrounds of public servants holding department-head positions or higher, including the head of the institution (Chamber of Deputies, 2025).

Source: In-house elaboration based on public information from INEGI, professional profiles and press reports.

Since Graciela Marquez assumed the Presidency of INEGI and through March 16, 2026, a total of 51 appointments approved by the Institute's Governing Board (Junta de Gobierno, JG)³ have been recorded.

³ The analysis presented in this section was conducted based on a review of the Governing Board minutes, spanning

During the presidency of Julio Santaella (2016–2021), 44 appointments were approved⁴. The Governing

from the first recorded session (Monday, October 13, 2008) through the fourth session of 2026 (March 26, 2026).

⁴ In both cases, the appointment of the Head of the Internal Control Body is not taken into account, as that authority

INEGI is losing its most experienced personnel and modifying its regional and local structure.

Board is responsible for approving appointments to senior managerial positions, including General Directorates (DGs), Deputy General Directorates and Regional Directorates (DRs). Of the 51 appointments made during Marquez's tenure, 18 have replaced officials appointed during Santaella's administration. In other words, 40.9% of the officials promoted during Santaella's presidency have been replaced⁵.

Changes to the organizational structure have also been driven by new institutional responsibilities and legal obligations, including those associated with the transfer of Coneval's functions and several appointments within the Internal Control Body (Organo Interno de Control, OIC). Since the beginning of Marquez's administration, five Regional Director appointments have been made. Across the administrations of Santaella and Marquez, seven regional leadership changes⁶ have occurred out of a total of ten regional offices: North-Central, Northwest, Northeast, Central, North, South and West. As a result, INEGI is losing some of

rests with federal legislators.

- 5 Removed should be understood to mean that they have ceased to hold the position, but this does not necessarily imply that they have stopped working at the INEGI.
- 6 Three regional appointments were made under Santaella, though one of the appointees was reappointed by Marquez. Two of the regional directors appointed during Santaella's tenure remain in their posts.



Image: Dwight Daniel Dyer Leal, General of Government, Public Security and Justice Statistics at INEGI at x.com.

its most experienced personnel while simultaneously restructuring its organization at both the regional and local levels.

At this point, it is possible to observe the participation of the new members of the Governing Board in its plenary decisions, a process that falls short of standards of clarity and transparency. Perhaps the most illustrative case is the appointment of Dwight Daniel Dyer Leal, who previously served in the Ministry of Health, where he was responsible for health statistics and pandemic-related data under the leadership of Hugo Lopez-Gatell and who currently serves as Director General of Government, Public Security and Justice Statistics (DGEPSIJ). Dyer's appointment has been one of the few to generate significant controversy since Graciela Marquez assumed the Presidency of INEGI— and, more broadly, one of the few such controversies in the Institute's history.

It is possible to observe the participation of the new members of the Governing Board in its plenary decisions, a process that falls short of standards of clarity and transparency.

FROM EXCESS MORTALITY TO VIOLENCE STATISTICS

The current head of INEGI's unit responsible for Government, Public Security and Justice Statistics (DGECSPI) previously served in the Ministry of Health. Dwight Daniel Dyer Leal, who currently serves as Director General of Government, Public Security and Justice Statistics, was responsible for health statistics during the COVID-19 pandemic under the leadership of Hugo Lopez-Gatell. His appointment was controversial.

During the Governing Board (JG) meeting held on July 31, 2023, Vice President (VP) Adrián Franco Barrios expressed his disagreement with the appointment and cast a dissenting vote. In Franco's words:

Candidate Dyer has no experience whatsoever in the statistical information topics and subtopics under the responsibility of that [General Directorate]; he lacks the necessary competencies and knowledge to lead the production of the statistical information generated by that [General Directorate]... " (SNIEG, 2023) (p. 2).

For his part, VP Mauricio Marquez voted in favor of the proposal, *since the candidate was responsible for the statistics area of the Health Sector, which is widely recognized...* Likewise, then-Vice President Paloma Merodio voted in favor, although¹, aunque “she asked the President to share her assessment of the candidates who had been interviewed..., to which the President replied that she had interviewed both external and internal candidates..., considering that the internal candidates possessed a high degree of specialization..., *although they lacked broader knowledge regarding the cross-cutting activities carried out with the other areas of the [General Directorate] [DG]”.* (SNIEG, 2023) (p. 2).

¹ The vote concluded with three votes in favor—including that of the president—and one against. At the time, a vice president was yet to be appointed. However, the question remains as to how Arturo Blancas (the current vice president) would have voted. Arturo Blancas (actual VP).

Under Marquez's selection criteria, it is highly likely that at least three of the four current Vice Presidents would themselves have been ineligible to occupy their present positions

Dyer assumed the position of Director General of Government, Public Security and Justice Statistics (DGECSPI) on August 1, 2023. On February 20, 2025, he presented the timetable for conducting the Public Consultation on the methodological update of the National Survey on the Dynamics of Household Relationships (ENDIREH). Dyer proposed two highly significant methodological changes:

1. The inclusion of vicarious violence perpetrated by former intimate partners. The risk of introducing new indicators into the survey is that the results may no longer remain comparable with previous survey rounds. Dyer acknowledged that *incorporating new forms of violence may alter the estimates and it is anticipated that, in the case of violence by former partners, even greater changes will be observed...* (SNIEG, 2025a).
2. El VP Marquez pointed out that *it was striking that the proposal called for questions on domestic and intimate partner violence to be moved to the beginning of the questionnaire; he noted that, because this is a sensitive subject, it should be addressed gradually...* (SNIEG, 2025a) ².

Following these questions Dyer revealed that *the statistical test is being designed to determine whether modifying the order of the questionnaire results in changes in prevalence estimates, which will allow for greater precision* (INEGI, 2025). Dyer made it clear that he was experimenting with violence statistics.

² Although VP Marquez qualified his objection –noting that *when the rationale is to avoid underreporting due to fatigue...*– he considered that *the section on community violence should, at the very least, be placed before the topics of domestic violence and intimate partner violence* (SNIEG, 2025a). (SNIEG, 2025a).

During Dyer's subsequent presentation before the Governing Board on June 30, 2025³,

he stated that a pilot cognitive test had been conducted in Queretaro and that the results were being analyzed. Regarding the statistical test, it would be carried out in seven thousand households across the national territory, representing a sample size sufficient to measure the effects of the methodological changes being introduced... (SNIEG, 2025b) (p. 3).

On March 26, 2026, Dyer presented a report to INEGI's Governing Board. Without providing further details regarding its contents, Vice Presidents Arturo Blancas and Mauricio Marquez agreed that it was necessary to clarify *the origin of the proposed modifications to the questionnaire –whether they originated within the Administrative Unit itself or resulted from contributions made by participants during the Public Consultation* (SNIEG, 2026). This introduces another potential risk: should the results of the next survey exercise prove inconsistent in the eyes of public opinion; Dyer could argue that the survey design reflected the participation of all relevant stakeholders. In doing so, he shields himself behind what appears to be a democratic consultation process against the likely collateral effects of the redesign, since, based on his recent studies and public statements, he already appears to anticipate the consequences that the redesign of ENDIREH may produce.

Dyer appeared before the Governing Board as an invited participant several months before his appointment as Director General, in his capacity as Director General of Health Information at the Ministry of Health. On March 30, 2023, he proposed eliminating the following Key Indicator from the National Catalogue of Indicators: *Proportion of the population living with HIV and advanced*

³ At the time, VP Isabel Islas requested the inclusion of a document (specifically, a report). This report was to outline the expected impacts, the development of new indicators and the potential impact on criteria regarding quality, accuracy, veracity, or timeliness.

infection who have access to antiretroviral medication, on the grounds that the indicator will no longer be updated.

General Directors occupy a level immediately below that of the Vice Presidents. Recent evidence indicates that serving as a General Director has become the most direct pathway to appointment as a Vice President. As evidence of this trend, three of the five current members of INEGI's Governing Board previously served as General Directors.

The institutional trajectories of INEGI personnel—their origins, their conduct while in office and the positions they assume after completing their terms—also provide valuable information. On April 30, 2019, Manuel Rodríguez Murillo was nominated by the Political Coordination Board for consideration by the full Chamber of Deputies as Head of INEGI's Internal Control Body (Órgano Interno de Control, OIC)⁴. At the time, the Political Coordination Board was chaired by Mario Delgado Carrillo. Rodríguez concluded his tenure on April 9, 2025, when he submitted his resignation. On that very same day, the Senate of the Republic approved his appointment as an Electoral Magistrate for the State of Jalisco⁵. Only five days later (April 14 of the same year), Rodríguez assumed the Presidency of the Electoral Tribunal of the State of Jalisco LLLLL.

INEGI therefore runs the risk of becoming a political training ground, particularly now that members of the judiciary are also selected through popular elections, rather than serving as part of a career system dedicated to the continuous development of highly specialized technical expertise.



⁴ The proposal was approved by a qualified majority with 375 votes in favor.

⁵ By a qualified majority—with 86 votes in favor, 34 against and one abstention—the Plenary of the Senate of the Republic appointed 56 electoral magistrates from 30 federal entities.

The lack of interest among government agencies in generating or demanding public information is evident and materializes through a variety of administrative mechanisms. During the Governing Board (JG) session held on March 30, 2023, following presentations by Maria de Lourdes Atilano, Director of Educational Statistics at the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and Eric Manuel Rodriguez Herrera, Director of Planning at INEGI, the Governing Board revoked the designation of the Statistical Information of the Education Information and Management System as Information of National Interest⁷. The members of the Governing Board voted unanimously to approve the proposal, while also expressing their intention to seek alternative sources for generating the corresponding data. However, to date, no tangible progress toward that objective has been observed.

⁷ Statistical and geographic information of national interest (IIN) is that which is essential for understanding the country's reality regarding demographic, economic, social, governmental, public security and justice aspects, as well as environmental and territorial and urban planning matters; it is produced using scientifically grounded methodology and aims to inform decision-making for the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies necessary for the country's development. IIN is official and mandatory for use by the Federation, federal entities, municipalities and the territorial divisions of Mexico City.



Image: <https://imco.org.mx/la-sep-promueve-acciones-que-afectan-la-generacion-periodica-el-acceso-y-la-calidad-de-la-informacion-educativa/>

The National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) has also moved away from the generation of indicators capable of documenting human rights violations. During the Governing Board session of July 19, 2024, it was announced that the President of the CNDH had resigned as Chair of the Specialized Technical Committee on Human Rights Information (CTEIDH)⁸⁻⁹.

⁸ Dwight Daniel Dyer Leal is the Technical Secretary of the CTEIDH.

⁹ In accordance with the agreement establishing the CTEIDH, its objective is to serve as the inter-institutional coordination body for identifying and developing joint actions to formulate and review the technical standards, guidelines, methodologies, projects and processes required for the collection, integration, production, processing, systematization and dissemination of human rights information. This information must form part of the National Information Subsystem on Government, Public Security and the Administration of Justice and be linked to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies with a national scope.

The withdrawal of the CNDH cannot be viewed as a mere bureaucratic formality. It represents a deliberate decision to forgo documenting the scale of the Mexican disaster (Azuela, M., 2026)

That position was subsequently assumed by the Ministry of the Interior (Segob), through the Head of the Unit for the Defense of Human Rights, while the President of the CNDH became an ordinary committee member. According to journalistic sources, the CNDH may eventually withdraw completely from participation in the CTEIDH. In this regard, Azuela argues that *the withdrawal of the CNDH cannot be interpreted as a mere bureaucratic procedure. It represents a deliberate decision to stop documenting the true scale of Mexico's human rights crisis.*" (Azuela, M., May 7, 2026) (Table 3).

The minutes of the Governing Board (JG) also reveal an evident distancing from the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP). In 2023, Graciela Marquez stated that

contact has been maintained with the Undersecretariat of Expenditures [of the SHCP] to address questions regarding the proposed budget that was submitted, but no comments have been received.

On February 22, 2024, Ricardo Miranda (Director General of Administration) informed the Governing Board that INEGI faced a budget shortfall of 1 billion pesos between its preliminary budget proposal and the budget ultimately authorized. The Institute faces

the risk of institutional implosion, but it is also being weakened by external pressures.

1. POLITICAL CONTROL OF THE GOVERNING BOARD¹⁰.

The Governing Board is INEGI's highest governing body and is composed of five members appointed by the President of the Republic with the approval of the Senate. The current President of INEGI previously served as Secretary of Economy during the Lopez Obrador administration, which confronted the COVID-19 health crisis and whose economic legacy included the closure of more than one million micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (INEGI, n.d.-b). Rosa Isabel Islas Arredondo (Vice President) was confirmed for the 2025–2032 term at a time when Morena held a majority in both chambers of Congress.

» According to INEGI's official website, Islas Arredondo served as Director General for Integration, Analysis and Research at INEGI beginning in 2023—only two years before assuming the

The Governing Board minutes also reveal an evident distancing with the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP).

¹⁰ The powers of the Governing Board include determining which information is to be considered of National Interest, determining the production of any other information of National Interest to be produced by the Institute and approving the Institute's annual work program—which must be prepared based on the Annual Statistics and Geography Program—as well as the preliminary annual budget, among others.

TABLE 3. LAG (IN YEARS) IN THE CONDUCT OF INEGI SURVEYS (1/4)

ACRONYM	NAME	YEARS NOT HELD	FREQUENCY	WHAT QUESTIONS DID IT ANSWER?
1 ECOSUP	National Survey of Consumers of Psychotropic Substances	-	It has no editions. The project was cancelled in 2019.	» What is the true scale of the synthetic opioid crisis in Mexico? » How did patterns of substance use change following the COVID-19 lockdown? » The average age of first exposure to psychotropic substances.
2 ENCCUM	How did patterns of substance use change following the COVID-19 lockdown?	14	Data is available for only one year (2012). The survey was conducted with the support of the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Conaculta).	» What cultural activities do Mexicans attend? Frequency with which families attend cultural events (theater, cinema, archaeological sites, museums, newspaper archives, etc.). » How are reading materials and audiovisual media consumed? Newspapers, movies, TV programs, music downloads. » How much do households spend on culture? The cost of accessing culture and the share of culture in the family budget. » Barriers to accessing culture and the types of community cultural expressions that take place.
3 ECOPRED	The average age of first exposure to psychotropic substances.	12	Data is available for only one fiscal year (2014).	» What are the risk factors and exposures to violence or crime that affect the development of young people (aged 12–29)? » What is the level of social cohesion and safety in their environment? » How does the family unit influence violence prevention? » What is the perception of the police among young people?
4 ESIDET	Survey on Research and Technological Development	9	It is held every two years, but the last time it took place was in 2017.	» How much money is invested in science and technology? » How many researchers does Mexico have? » What is the profile of the scientific workforce?

TABLE 3. LAG (IN YEARS) IN THE CONDUCT OF INEGI SURVEYS (2/4)

ACRONYM	NAME	YEARS NOT HELD	FREQUENCY	WHAT QUESTIONS DID IT ANSWER?
5 ENAPROCE	National Survey on Productivity and Competitiveness of Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises	8	It is being carried out after a lack of information since 2018.	» What managerial skills do micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Mexico possess? » To what extent do MSMEs face uncertainty within global value chains? » Do they have access to credit or government support?
6 ENCEVI	National Survey on Household Energy Consumption	8	Do they have access to credit or government support?	» What is the end-use of energy in the country's households by region? » What appliances and equipment do households have and how old are they? » What practices do households adopt to save energy and fuel?
7 ENAID	National Survey on Access to Public Information and Personal Data Protection	7	It comprises two data collection rounds (2016 and 2019). The most recent data collection took place in 2019.	» To what extent is the public aware of the existence of rights regarding access to information and personal data protection, as well as the mechanisms to exercise and guarantee them? » How much trust does the public have in the information generated by the government?
8 ENCRIGE	National Survey on Household Energy Consumption	6	Results were obtained in 2016 and 2020, with the latter representing data from the most recent survey.	» To what extent does the regulatory framework pose an obstacle to the success of economic units (establishments)? » What is the level of trust among companies that interact on a daily basis? » Do companies face issues regarding collections or contract non-compliance? What problems hinder business growth in each federal entity?

TABLE 3. LAG (IN YEARS) IN THE CONDUCT OF INEGI SURVEYS (3/4)

ACRONYM	NAME	YEARS NOT HELD	FREQUENCY	WHAT QUESTIONS DID IT ANSWER?
9 ENVI	National Housing Survey	6	Six-year frequency. It comprises two editions: 2014 and 2020. Data for 2026 will not be available, as it is not part of the current operations.	» How satisfied are residents with their housing spaces and services? » How many housing units do households in Mexico require? » What are the sources of financing for purchasing a home, by state?
10 ENPOL	National Survey of the Deprived-of-Liberty Population	5	It has two editions (2016 and 2021).	» Who are the people living in conditions of incarceration? » What are their experiences during the criminal and judicial process? » What are the conditions within correctional facilities –regarding security, the incidence of crime or corruption and access to healthcare?
11 ENTI	National Child Labor Survey	4	Previous framework (up to 2017): INEGI administered the MTI (Child Labor Module) biennially as a supplementary questionnaire to the fourth-quarter ENOE survey. ENTI (2019): Starting in 2019, the project became institutionally independent, involving the Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare and the ILO. It features a more detailed questionnaire.	» The transition from the ENOE to the ENTI introduced a classification for working minors based on two categories: 1) prohibited employment and 2) unsuitable domestic chores. The first category refers to employment below the legal minimum age (15 years) or the performance of hazardous or unhealthy activities by minors under 18. The second refers to household tasks performed by minors under dangerous conditions or for extended periods that interfere with school attendance. » This survey provides insight into the employment characteristics (hazardous work or unsuitable chores) of the population aged 5 to 17. These factors can impede minors' right to education, a matter that must be viewed through a gender perspective.

TABLE 3. LAG (IN YEARS) IN THE CONDUCT OF INEGI SURVEYS (4/4)				
ACRONYM		YEARS NOT HELD	FREQUENCY	WHAT QUESTIONS DID IT ANSWER?
12 ENASIC	National Survey for the Care System	4	Data is available for only one reference year (2022) and there is no set schedule for conducting the survey. No data will be available for 2026, as it is not part of INEGI's current statistical operations.	» How many children (aged 0–5 and 6–17) require daily supervision and assistance? » How many older adults need support to carry out basic activities? » Who provides the care, how many hours do they dedicate to it and do they receive any financial support? (Among other questions.)

Source: In-house elaboration with public information from INEGI.

position of Vice President. However, between 2019 and 2022, she served as Head of the Performance Evaluation Unit within the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP). Although this would not be the first time that a Vice Presidency has been filled under circumstances generating significant controversy, the Senate's current majority, controlled by the governing party, makes it possible to approve appointments without meaningful institutional checks and balances¹¹.

¹¹ In April 2017, various research centers and subject-matter experts spoke out regarding a similar case during the Peña Nieto federal administration. The appointment of Paloma Merodio as Vice President of INEGI for the 2017–2024 term

2. OTHER DATA. From the beginning of his administration, Lopez Obrador frequently invoked the phrase “other data” (otros datos), which became one of the defining expressions of his presidency. This phenomenon avoided direct confrontation with INEGI; however, it also contributed to discouraging the use of technical and statistical evidence as the foundation for public deliberation and policymaking. On numerous occasions, decisions at the highest levels of government were based on alternative interpre-

sparked criticism, with detractors arguing that she lacked the necessary credentials for the position. These criticisms went unheeded.

Confidence in official statistics depends not only on the formal autonomy of the INEGI but also on its capacity to validate the quality of the information it receives from other government agencies (Schettino, M., 2026).

tations of reality, or on interpretations that at times diverged from the diagnoses produced by technical institutions. Within this context, Schettino (Schettino, M., June 12, 2026) argues that confidence in official statistics depends not only on INEGI's formal institutional autonomy but also on its capacity to validate the quality of the information it receives from other government agencies. When technical evidence loses its central role in public debate and the institutions responsible for producing official statistics face constraints in independently verifying their primary data sources, the likelihood increases that official data will become the subject of public questioning, thereby weakening both public confidence and the role of statistical systems as instruments of accountability.

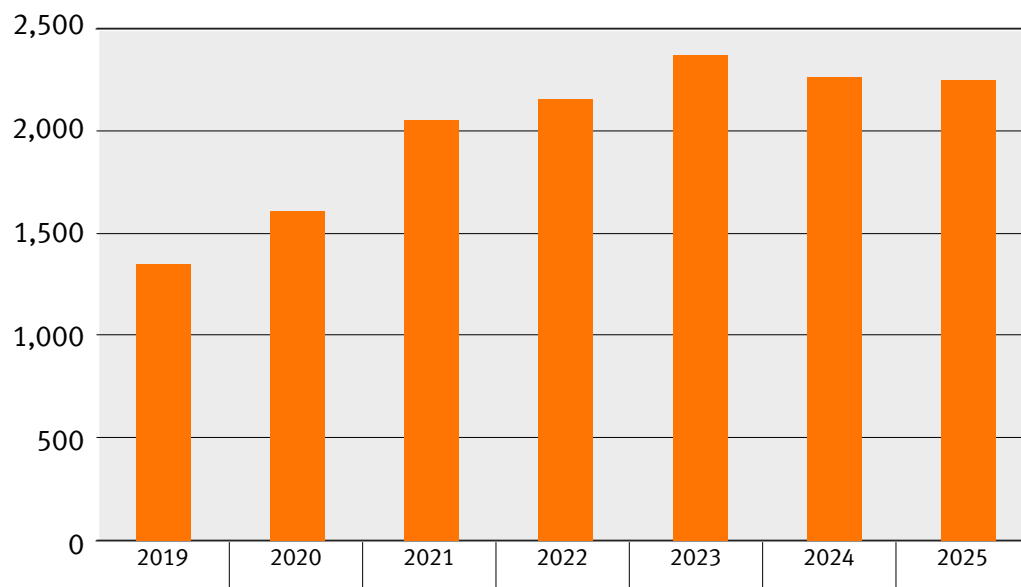
According to the specialists consulted by Signos Vitales, the role that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will play in the Institute's future operations constitutes one of the principal challenges it will face. Nevertheless, these experts anticipate an unfavorable outlook given the ongoing erosion of institutional capacities and the limited incentives for recruiting data scientists. Consequently, INEGI may lack the necessary capabilities to adopt, effectively manage and fully capitalize on the opportunities offered by artificial intelligence.

THE FEDERAL SUPERIOR AUDIT OFFICE (ASF)

The Federal Superior Audit Office (ASF) is the principal external auditing institution of the Mexican State and one of the cornerstones of the country's accountability system. Its mandate is to oversee the use of federal public resources, detect irregularities, promote administrative accountability and file legal complaints when there is evidence of possible corruption or the misappropriation of public funds. In a democracy, transparency does not depend solely on a government's stated commitment to openness, but also on the existence of independent institutions capable of verifying how public resources are spent and of generating meaningful consequences when irregularities are identified. For this reason, the performance of the ASF constitutes a key indicator for assessing the strength of accountability in Mexico (Fundar, 2021).

Throughout the Morena administrations, the official discourse has consistently maintained that corruption has declined significantly and that the country has entered a period of greater governmental integrity. Against this backdrop, the recent evolution of the ASF is particularly relevant for evaluating the consistency between the government's official transparen-

GRAPH 2. EVOLUTION OF THE NUMBER OF ASF AUDITS
2019–2025



Source: In-house elaboration with information from ASF (2026).

cy narrative and the actual performance of Mexico's oversight mechanisms.

At first glance, indicators of institutional activity appear to portray a strengthened ASF. Between the 2019 and 2024 Public Accounts, the number of audits conducted increased substantially, reaching historically high levels. Whereas approximately 1,348 audits were scheduled for the 2019 Public Accounts, the 2023 and 2024 Public Accounts reached histor-

ic records with 2,369 and 2,264 audits, respectively (ASF, 2026). For 2025, a total of 2,244 audits were scheduled (Marin, 2026) (Graph 2).

However, a more in-depth analysis reveals a significant paradox: the increase in the number of audits has not been accompanied by a corresponding improvement in the capacity to correct irregularities or recover public resources. On the contrary, several indicators suggest a decline in the effectiveness of su-

During the Morena administrations, the official narrative has repeatedly maintained that corruption has been significantly reduced and that the country is experiencing a period of greater government honesty.

preme auditing. According to information published by the Federal Superior Audit Office (ASF) itself, during the tenure of Auditor General David Colmenares (2018–2026), slightly more than 12 billion pesos were recovered through audit actions, whereas under the previous administration led by Juan Manuel Portal (2012–2017), recoveries exceeded 68 billion pesos (Carabaña, 2026a). This represents a reduction of nearly 80% in the effective recovery of public resources, despite the ASF continuing to identify significant observations and irregularities. As an illustrative example, the final year of the Lopez Obrador administration closed with 65 billion pesos in public expenditures that remained “pending clarification” (Carabaña, 2026b).

The comparison between the administrations of Portal and Colmenares is particularly relevant because it distinguishes institutional activity from institutional results. An institution may conduct more audits, issue a greater number of audit observations and produce more reports; however, if these findings do not lead to the recovery of public resources, the imposition of sanctions, or the implementation of administrative corrective actions, its actual capacity to influence accountability is substantially diminished. In this regard, although the increase in audit activi-



Image: Juan Manuel Portal, ex auditor of the Superior Audit Office: incomprehensible mistakes of the audit. (Cuartoscuro/File at <https://www.milenio.com/politica/error-asf-naim-incomprensible-manuel-portal>

ty was presented by the government as evidence of broader and more comprehensive oversight of public expenditure, the available evidence suggests that the ASF has lost its ability to translate its findings into concrete consequences for those responsible for the improper management of public resources (Carabaña, 2026a).

This trend is also reflected in the declining number of legal complaints arising from audit findings. Several analyses have documented that, during David Colmenares’ tenure, the number of formal complaints submitted to the competent authorities decreased, thereby limiting the likelihood that detected irregularities would lead to administrative or criminal in-

An analysis reveals a significant paradox: the increase in the number of audits has not been accompanied by an increase in the capacity to correct irregularities or recover public funds.



vestigations. As a result, a smaller proportion of the ASF's audit findings ultimately evolved into proceedings capable of generating meaningful sanctions or establishing effective accountability (Garcia, 2026).

Concerns regarding the institutional performance of the ASF have also been reinforced by the Evaluation and Oversight Unit (Unidad de Evaluación y Control, UEC) of the Chamber of Deputies, the body responsible for supervising the ASF. In an institutional assessment conducted in 2025, the UEC identified delays in the preparation of case files, deficiencies in the follow-up of audit observations and risks that potential administrative or criminal liabilities could expire under the applicable statute of limitations (Sanchez Jimenez, 2026). The report concluded that these shortcomings had contributed to weakening



supreme audit functions and had reduced the institution's capacity to fully achieve its objectives of overseeing and monitoring public expenditure.

Furthermore, the ASF's institutional independence has been questioned by several experts and academic studies. Among the most emblematic episodes was the decision in 2021 by the ASF to withdraw and revise its findings regarding the cost of canceling the New Mexico City International Airport (NAIM) only days after President Lopez Obrador publicly challenged its conclusions, raising serious concerns about the institution's independence (Ramos, 2021). Similar concerns emerged regarding the audits conducted on flagship government projects such as the Maya Train and the Dos Bocas Refinery. Several experts questioned both the scope and the depth of

Images:

David Colmenares Paramo, head of ASF 2018–2026. Fotoarte: Mariana Flores at <https://elceo.com/politica/asf-david-colmenares-polemica-complacencia-poder/>

Aureliano Hernandez Palacios head of ASF 2026–2034 at <https://aristeginoticias.com/1003/mexico/eligen-a-cercano-a-sheinbaum-como-auditor-superior-de-la-federacion/>

the ASF's reviews given the enormous volume of public resources involved in these projects.

Throughout the Morena administrations, the official narrative has consistently argued that the reduction of corruption and the implementation of government austerity policies have diminished the need for oversight and accountability institutions. However, the available evidence suggests that government transparency cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of political declarations, but rather according to the strength and effectiveness of the institutions responsible for overseeing the exercise of public power. Far from supporting the narrative of strengthened transparency, the recent evolution of the ASF constitutes one of the clearest examples of how accountability mechanisms have weakened in recent years.

The decline in the effectiveness of the ASF is not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, it forms part of a broader process of weakening the institutional mechanisms that guarantee transparency and access to public information, a trend that is also evident in the dissolution of the INAI, the erosion of autonomous institutional counterweights and the growing concentration of strategic information within agencies of the Executive Branch. Within this context, the dimin-

ishing capacity of the country's principal supreme audit institution represents a significant challenge for transparency and accountability in Mexico.

2.2 TRANSPARENCY: The Dissolution of INAI and the Deterioration of the National Transparency Platform

The dissolution of the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) represents one of the most significant institutional changes affecting Mexico's democratic system in recent years. Following the approval of the constitutional reform in 2024, INAI was formally dissolved in March 2025. As previously reported by Signos Vitales, INAI was one of the autonomous constitutional bodies (Organos Constitucionales Autonomos, OCAs) that had been subjected to continuous attacks from the presidential podium during Lopez Obrador's administration, while also experiencing substantial budget cuts that had already constrained its operations and institutional autonomy (Signos Vitales, 2024). Following the definitive approval of the reform during the Sheinbaum administration, the Institute's primary function—guaranteeing the rights of access to public information and the protection of personal data—was

The decline in the effectiveness of the ASF is part of a broader process of weakening institutional mechanisms for transparency and access to information.

transferred to the newly created Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Government (Secretaría Anticorrupción y Buen Gobierno, SABG) and its newly established decentralized agency, Transparency for the People (Transparencia para el Pueblo). Likewise, the National Transparency System (SNT), which had been responsible for regulating the National Transparency Platform (PNT), came under the operation and administration of the SABG. It is worth noting that, at the time of INAI's dissolution, the Platform contained more than 14 million data records.

Since its establishment in 2002, INAI—formerly the Federal Institute for Access to Public Information (IFAI)—had become a cornerstone institution for ensuring transparency in the exercise of public power. Through its rulings, several emblematic cases of corruption and the misuse of public resources came to light, including La Estafa Maestra (The Master Scam), cost overruns associated with the Estela de Luz monument, confidential government contracts and various mechanisms of opacity in public procurement. INAI's autonomous institutional design ensured that government agencies were subject to review by an authority independent of the Federal Executive.

Numerous specialists, civil society organizations and policy analysis platforms have warned that the elim-



ination of INAI has weakened institutional checks and balances and deteriorated the conditions necessary for exercising the right of access to information. Furthermore, the new institutional arrangement effectively makes the government “judge and jury” (Yañez, 2025), since responsibility for guaranteeing access to information now rests with entities subordinate to the Executive Branch itself. This creates significant risks of administrative discretion, particularly regarding matters involving public security,

Image: <https://www.tabascohooy.com/gobierno-garantiza-liquidaciones-y-reubicaciones-a-trabajadores-del-inai/>

It is worth noting that, at the time of the INAI's closure, this platform held more than 14 million data records.

large-scale infrastructure projects, public contracts and the management of federal financial resources.

The available data appear to confirm these concerns. Between March 21 and December 31, 2025, a total of 15,828 complaints related to access to information were registered, compared with 39,081 during the same period in 2024. Regarding the protection of personal data, the number of complaints declined from 3,593 in 2024 to only 633 in 2025 (Government of Mexico, 2026). This reflects a substantial reduction in the number of requests submitted. Although such a decline could be interpreted as an improvement in the indicator, it may also indicate a lower propensity among citizens to exercise their right of access to information and, consequently, a deterioration in effective transparency (Signos Vitales, 2026).

Regarding administrative resolutions, between March and December 2025, 3,025 complaints—equivalent to 18% of the total—were dismissed, whereas during the same period in 2024, 7,151 complaints, representing 16% of the total, were dismissed (Signos Vitales, 2026). Other sources suggest an even more alarming situation: of the 2,253 appeals received during the first three months of operation, the agency Transparency for the People processed only 457 cases, while classifying 99.6% as inadmissible (Garcia, 2025).

Moreover, following INAI's dissolution, recurring operational failures have begun to affect the National Transparency Platform. Throughout 2025, various reports documented problems accessing requests, errors in information searches and difficulties in filing appeals against administrative decisions (Montes, 2025). National media outlets reported that users encountered persistent error messages and limitations when attempting to consult active case files (El Diario, 2025). This deterioration has occurred in a context in which the institutional capacity to monitor compliance with transparency obligations has also weakened.

Information available for 2026 indicates that this trend toward greater opacity has continued. According to official data published by the Transparency for the People portal, as of May 15, 2026 (the latest available update), 10,144 review appeals had been received, of which 7,469 were reported as resolved. However, after applying the available search filters, it becomes apparent that only 4,153 of these cases correspond to requests submitted during 2026. Of these, 479 were rejected (11.5%), 3,343 were admitted for review and 331 remain “*under review*” (Government of Mexico, 2026). Nevertheless, the website does not allow users to filter or disaggregate the ap-

There has been a significant decrease in the number of requests; while this could be interpreted as an improvement in the indicator, it can also be seen as a reduced propensity among the public to exercise their right of access to information—and, consequently, a deterioration in effective transparency (Signos Vitales, 2026).

peals resolved during 2026. Several organizations have questioned this limitation, arguing that the relevant indicator for evaluating the effectiveness of the transparency system should compare the number of admitted appeals with those that ultimately receive a substantive decision.

The weakening of the National Transparency Platform (PNT) is undoubtedly more than a technological problem; it is a symptom of democratic regression. The Platform previously functioned as a public infrastructure for accountability, allowing government decisions to be documented in real time. Its deterioration directly undermines citizens' capacity to monitor government actions while also limiting the work of journalists and academic researchers. Moreover, concerns have emerged regarding the management of the vast database accumulated over many years by the National Transparency System, which is now administered by agencies directly dependent on the federal government.

Criticism has also come from international organizations and civil society groups. During hearings before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), civil society organizations and experts argued that Mexico's new institutional model violates



international standards concerning institutional independence and the right of access to information. Civil society organizations –including Article 19, Fundar and Mexicans Against Corruption and Impunity (MCCI)– have warned that the institutional framework developed over more than two decades to guarantee transparency and protect personal data is being dismantled through the concentration of these powers within the Executive Branch (Fundar, 2024; Ruiz, 2024).

Although the government has argued that the new institutional arrangement would be more efficient and operate with only 35% of INAI's budget, it has not

Image: Vicente Peredo, Alejandro Encinas, Raquel Buenrostro and Tanivet Ramos Reyes (Transparency for the People). Photo: Berenice Fregoso/El Universal at <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/periodistas-y-ongs-lamentan-desecho-de-recursos-de-revision-por-transparencia-para-el-pueblo-996-han-sido-desechados/>

presented an autonomous, disaggregated budget for the new agency, Transparency for the People, making it impossible to independently verify the savings that were allegedly achieved. During the final year of its existence, INAI requested a budget of 993.99 million pesos. Meanwhile, the total budget authorized for the Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Government in 2025 amounted to 1.699 billion pesos, although this allocation finances all of the Ministry's responsibilities and not exclusively its transparency-related functions (Segob, 2025). These figures illustrate a significant paradox: while the government argues that the dissolution of INAI was motivated by considerations of efficiency and transparency, the absence of sufficient public information to verify these claimed benefits reproduces precisely the problems of opacity and limited accountability that transparency institutions were originally created to address.

From a political perspective, the dissolution of INAI also reflects a broader transformation of Mexico's institutional model. The reform forms part of a broader strategy of power centralization promoted by the governing party, which has included the elimination or weakening of several autonomous institutions established over recent decades. As previously noted by Signos Vitales, this process reduces democratic checks

and balances and makes independent oversight of government decision-making increasingly difficult.

The deterioration of transparency has tangible consequences for citizens. Reduced access to public information weakens accountability, makes corruption more difficult to detect and undermines citizens' right to know how public resources are used. It also diminishes the quality of public debate, since journalists, academics and civil society organizations depend on official information to analyze public policies and evaluate government performance.

In conclusion, the dissolution of INAI and the deterioration of the National Transparency Platform represent a profound transformation of Mexico's system for guaranteeing access to public information. Although the government has defended the reform on the grounds of austerity and administrative efficiency, numerous analyses warn that eliminating an autonomous institution weakens democratic checks and balances while concentrating control over transparency within the government itself. The recent operational failures of the National Transparency Platform reinforce concerns about a potential democratic setback in both accountability and citizens' access to public information.

The disappearance of the INAI reflects a transformation of the Mexican institutional model: a strategy of centralizing power and eliminating or weakening various autonomous bodies.

This process diminishes democratic checks and balances and hinders independent oversight of government decisions.

2.3 EDUCATION:

The Dismantling of INEE and Mejoredu, Methodological Changes and Growing Opacity

The evidence accumulated over recent years confirms that Mexico's National Education System (Sistema Educativo Nacional, SEN) has undergone a series of changes and institutional reforms that have undermined the quality of education available to children and young people. First, the dismantling of the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (INEE)¹² in 2019, together with the constitutional reform of Article 3 enacted that same year, led to the creation of the National Commission for the Continuous Improvement of Education (Mejoredu), whose mandate was to promote improvements in student learning outcomes and the professional development of teachers. However, on May 31, 2025, Mejoredu ceased operations, leaving behind a vast body of data, research, publications and analytical tools

¹² By way of brief background: The INEE was established in 2002, marking two key advances in the evaluation of the education sector. First, educational evaluation assumed a pivotal role in planning and accountability. Second, the bodies responsible for evaluation were restructured; prior to the INEE's creation, the SEP had been the dominant actor in evaluation, with only limited participation from state education authorities.

produced over five years without any guarantee of preservation or meaningful interest on the part of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP). This outcome revealed the inability of the education system to fulfill Mejoredu's mission of generating high-quality educational information capable of accurately assessing the state of education in Mexico and enabling comparisons over time.

The 2013 constitutional reform on education established that educational evaluation should guarantee the right to a quality education based on principles of equity while also ensuring its continuous improvement. To achieve this objective, the National System for Educational Evaluation (Sistema Nacional de Evaluación Educativa¹³, SNEE) was created under the framework of a National Policy for Educational Evaluation, with the INEE serving as its lead institution (DOF, 2013). Consequently, beginning in 2013, the INEE no longer operated under the authority of the federal government, although its institutional autonomy remained subject to the legal provisions govern-

¹³ The National Educational Evaluation System (SNEE) was an organized and coordinated set of institutions, processes, instruments and actions that distributed and coordinated tasks among the various stakeholders involved in the design and implementation of educational evaluation—ranging from federal authorities within the SEP and the INEE to state authorities.

ing other autonomous public bodies with respect to budgeting, the accountability of public officials and transparency requirements (Bracho, 2018).

Between 2013 and 2018, the INEE coordinated a broad range of analyses and research initiatives that led to the development of indicators used in both national evaluations and major international assessments, including the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) (Signos Vitales, 2022). Through its research on education and its policy guidelines prioritizing educational equity, the INEE became a leading center for research, analysis and policy development on education in Mexico. Its principal functions were: (1) evaluating the National Education System (SEN); (2) coordinating the National System for Educational Evaluation; and (3) issuing policy recommendations to educational authorities (Signos Vitales, 2023).

In 2019, during the administration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (Lopez Obrador), educational evaluation underwent a profound transformation. The government decided to abolish the INEE and in October 2019, Mejoredu formally began operations.



Image: "High school dropout rate in Mexico City exceeds the national average" Photo: Luis Castillo/archivo en <https://www.jornada.com.mx/noticia/2025/03/09/sociedad/desercion-del-bachillerato-en-cdmx-supera-la-media-nacional>

Although its creation sought to move beyond traditional standardized testing through the implementation of the Diagnostic, Formative and Comprehensive Evaluation (Evaluación Diagnóstica, Formativa e Integral, EDFI) model, its implementation exhibited serious technical and methodological shortcomings. While the new institution retained important responsibilities related to conducting specialized research and disseminating information intended to improve educational quality, the design of the EDFI—which targeted elementary and lower-secondary students on a voluntary basis—failed to establish a robust and methodologically sound evaluation framework (Sanchez & Backhoff, 2024).

2025–2026 school year. These exercises contain no specific mathematics or reading questions, instead emphasizing open-ended tasks that are inherently difficult to measure, making it impossible to accurately determine students' learning levels (Backhoff, 2026). As if dismantling an institution such as the INEE and replacing it with an unsuccessful alternative were not sufficient, the educational information that already existed has also begun to disappear. By the end of 2025, extensive digital educational archives had been removed. This information blackout encompasses two decades of research, indicators and databases generated by both the INEE and Mejoredu, all of which the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) decided to eliminate. Among the most notable examples were the removal of the INEE's official website and the disappearance of the official links through which documents associated with Mejoredu's Diagnostic Report had previously been accessible¹⁴.

As a consequence, public access was lost to historical series documenting learning outcomes, studies of school infrastructure and equity assessments that

¹⁴ Implementation of the diagnostic learning assessment and workshop with a formative approach (<https://planea.sep.gob.mx/Diagnostica/>) and the Database Management and Results Delivery System (<https://saber.mejoredu.gob.mx/login/>).

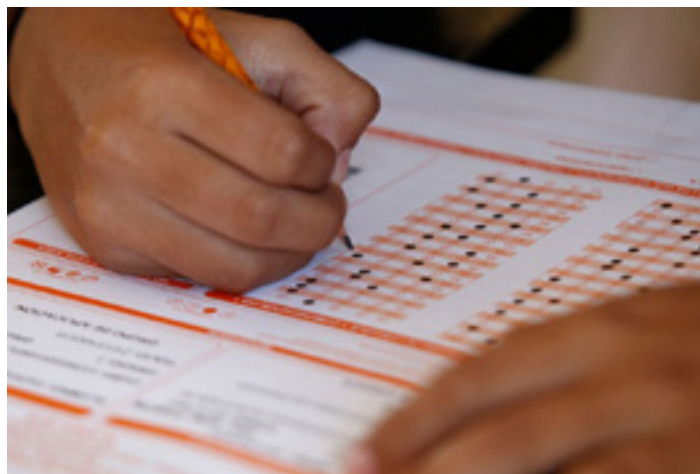


Image: "Student assessment using the test PLANEA has been discontinued in Colima" at <https://elcomentario.uco.mx/?p=135990>

had enabled comparisons of educational progress across successive presidential administrations. This, in turn, has direct implications for educational policymaking, as decision-makers now confront an informational void that prevents the identification and correction of policy shortcomings.

Unfortunately, this is not the first instance in which educational statistics have been undermined. In Signos Vitales (2023), we warned about the loss of information essential for understanding Mexico's educational system. On April 10, 2023, it was announced that the Education Information and Management

By the end of 2025, digital repositories of educational information had disappeared. This information blackout encompasses two decades of research, indicators, and databases generated by the INEE and Mejoredu –materials that the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) decided to eliminate.

In practice, the institution addressed its responsibilities for technical assessment and public communication only superficially, resulting in processes for analyzing and reporting results that departed significantly from accepted scientific standards and internationally recognized academic best practices.

In summary, Mejoredu failed to generate high-quality information capable of accurately assessing the shortcomings of Mexico's educational system. Unlike the INEE, which administered nationally standardized assessments (such as PLANEA) specifically designed to ensure comparability over time, Mejoredu shifted toward diagnostic assessments characterized by serious methodological deficiencies and implemented through voluntary rather than mandatory testing.

Ultimately, following a disappointing institutional performance and in a contradictory move, the government decided to abolish Mejoredu. Prior to this decision, in February 2024, former President Lopez Obrador introduced a constitutional initiative proposing the elimination of seven autonomous institutions and—somewhat inexplicably—Mejoredu was included among them. It is worth recalling that the official justification for eliminating autonomous constitutional bodies (OCAs) was that they imposed excessive

costs on the State and represented a legacy of neoliberalism that hindered efforts to benefit the country's most vulnerable sectors. In this respect, it appeared ironic that the government sought to eliminate an institution that it had itself created, given that Mejoredu was neither autonomous nor “neoliberal.”

During the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum, Mejoredu officially ceased operations on May 31, 2025. The Commission was dissolved without establishing an equivalent institution capable of guaranteeing the production of high-quality, independent and reliable educational information, analysis and statistics, thereby paving the way for increasing opacity regarding the actual condition of Mexico's educational system. Without institutions capable of providing independent assessment and technical oversight, the country becomes increasingly vulnerable to unilateral decision-making unsupported by rigorous diagnoses or meaningful accountability. To this day, a substantial debt remains owed both to the education sector and to Mexican society as a whole.

The role of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) has been reduced to replacing Mejoredu's assessments with the Integrated Learning Exercises (Ejercicios Integradores del Aprendizaje, EIA) during the

Mejoredu failed to generate quality information that would allow for an assessment of the scale of deficiencies within the education system.

Unlike the INEE, which administered standardized national tests (such as PLANEA) designed to be comparable over time, Mejoredu shifted to diagnostic assessments—conducted via voluntary rather than mandatory tests—that suffered from serious flaws.

TABLE 4. COMPARISON INEE VS MEJOREDU

CRITERION	INEE TESTS (PLANEA/EXCALE)	MEJOREDU TESTS (EFDI/DIAGNOSTIC)
OBJECTIVE	Formative and accountability-oriented: To assess the state of the national education system and measure the achievement of key learning outcomes.	Identify the students' starting point at the beginning of the school year to provide teacher support.
NATURE OF PARTICIPATION	Mandatory and Census/Sample-based: Designed using nationally and state-representative samples.	Volunteer: This created biases by excluding vulnerable communities.
TYPE OF TESTS	Standardized: Objective exams aligned with international metric standards.	Alternatives/Integrative exercises: Focused on open-ended tasks and qualitative rubrics that move away from scientific standards.
HISTORICAL COMPARABILITY	High: It allowed for the precise assessment of learning levels in subjects such as mathematics or reading and for comparisons over the years.	Decrease: The historical series was broken due to changes in criteria and methodology.
USE OF RESULTS	Public policy design: Data made it possible to audit federal programs, allocate budgets and target areas of underdevelopment.	Internal use: Information intended for the teacher in the classroom, but of no use for public policy design.

Source: In-house elaboration with information from Rodriguez & Ruiz (2021) and Sanchez & Backhoff (2024).

System (Sistema de Informacion y Gestion Educativa, SIGED) would no longer be classified as Information of National Interest. Among other consequences, this decision meant that the system would cease producing detailed information regarding student enrollment by educational level, teacher payrolls and evaluation results. This decision was made without establishing any alternative mechanism for generating information that is unquestionably fundamental and so important that it has even been used in the design of the National Development Plan. Consequently, this information should unquestionably continue to be regarded as information of national interest (Signos Vitales, 2023).

High-quality information within the education sector constitutes an essential input for understanding educational dynamics. The surveys conducted by the INEE, together with the information from the SIGED that is now no longer publicly available, helped answer fundamental questions about Mexico's educational system: How many children are served by different types of schools? What are the ages of students enrolled in different educational institutions? How many teachers work in each type of school? Which children are not attending school? What are the principal reasons for early school dropout? What obstacles prevent timely access to education, contin-

ued school attendance and successful educational progression? (among many others) (Terrazas, Soriano & Robles, 2015).

Today, Mexico faces a landscape in which opacity and restrictions on transparency have become increasingly evident. The country has moved from an autonomous evaluation system to one based on institutional self-assessment, with serious consequences. The autonomy enjoyed by the INEE made it possible to critically evaluate SEP policies without fear of political retaliation. Following the dissolution of Mejoredu, the SEP assumed responsibility for evaluating its own performance. Educational information has thus shifted from being an accessible public good—available through direct public consultation—to becoming information controlled by the state bureaucracy, thereby making social oversight of programs such as La Escuela es Nuestra (“The School Is Ours”) and the effectiveness of the New Mexican School (Nueva Escuela Mexicana) considerably more difficult.

Moreover, the absence of an independent technical institution has prevented the country from producing an official national assessment of the true educational impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the absence of national data, only four states—Nuevo Leon, Que-

The administration of various surveys by the INEE, together with the now-hidden data from SIGED, helped answer key questions regarding the education sector:

How many children do the different types of schools serve?

How old are the students?

How many teachers are there in each type of school?

Who are the ones not attending?

What are the reasons for early dropout? (Terrazas, Soriano, and Robles, 2015).

retaro, Jalisco and Guanajuato—have financed their own educational assessments (such as Nuevo Leon Aprende and RIMA in Guanajuato) or have voluntarily collaborated with academic institutions to document successful educational policies and identify challenges capable of informing the design of strategies at both the federal level and in other states across the country¹⁵. These efforts have been undertaken in an attempt to fill the information vacuum left by the federal government.

In conclusion, an educational system that neither prioritizes learning nor evaluates the conditions under which learning takes place ultimately affects society as a whole. Weak learning outcomes undermine critical thinking, facilitate the spread of misinformation, produce professionals with inadequate competencies and reduce the country's scientific and innovative capacity. Educational information plays a decisive role in identifying problems before they develop into irreversible crises. Mexico is losing its capacity to measure student learning systematically and, with it, the ability to monitor educational progress over time. This prevents deficiencies from being corrected

¹⁵ This is the case in Queretaro under the “Aprender Parejo” initiative, spearheaded by Mexico Evalua and the School of Government and Transformation at Tec de Monterrey (Mexico Evalua and Tec de Monterrey, 2026).

and the risks are considerable: a silent deterioration that continues to deepen as educational information and statistics become increasingly opaque. The disregard for evidence and the lack of meaningful efforts to generate high-quality educational information make it impossible to formulate educational policies capable of addressing persistent learning deficits. This situation reflects weak institutional capacity and a profound lack of political commitment to making Mexico a country at the forefront of educational development. Ultimately, it can be interpreted as a political renunciation of the constitutional right to receive a quality education.

Following the dissolution of Mejoredu, the SEP assumed the role of self-evaluation.

Educational data has shifted from being an accessible public good (available through direct inquiry) to information controlled by the state bureaucracy, thereby hindering social oversight of programs such as "La Escuela es Nuestra" or the assessment of the "Nueva Escuela Mexicana's" effectiveness.

2.4. POVERTY AND WELL-BEING: The Dissolution of Coneval, the Loss of Technical Rigor and the Risk of Politicization

To understand the recent changes in poverty measurement in Mexico, it is necessary to consider a fundamental institutional transformation: the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) has directly assumed responsibility for measuring multidimensional poverty, a task that had historically been carried out by the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (Coneval). This shift points to a potential decline in credibility and the loss of a fundamental technical counterweight. But how and why has this occurred? Since 2008, Coneval had been responsible for producing information on multidimensional poverty, which identifies poverty through three complementary dimensions:

1. the dimension of economic well-being¹⁶ (related to income);

¹⁶ This specifies the minimum amount of financial resources required to meet individuals' basic needs, as defined by the income-based poverty line. Following Coneval's most recent methodological update, the terms "income-based poverty line" and "income-based extreme poverty line" are used instead of "well-being line" and "minimum well-being line," respectively (Coneval, 2019b).

2. the dimension of social rights (education, health, food, social security and housing);
3. and (3) the territorial context (social cohesion and access to roads) (Coneval, 2019a).

Within this framework, multidimensional poverty is defined as the condition in which an individual is unable to exercise at least one of the rights necessary for social development –that is, an individual experience at least one of the six social deprivations¹⁷– and, in addition, lacks sufficient income to acquire the goods and services required to meet basic needs. Extreme multidimensional poverty refers to individuals whose income is so low that, even if they devoted all of it exclusively to purchasing food, they would still be unable to obtain the nutrients necessary to maintain a healthy life, while simultaneously experiencing at least three of the six social deprivations (Coneval, 2019a).

The current methodological definitions are the product of years of deliberation involving experts, academics and researchers. In 2001, the Technical

¹⁷ 1) Deprivation due to educational lag; 2) Deprivation due to lack of access to health services; 3) Deprivation due to lack of access to social security; 4) Deprivation due to housing quality and space; 5) Deprivation due to lack of access to basic housing services; 6) Deprivation due to lack of access to nutritious, high-quality food (Coneval, 2019a).

Committee for Poverty Measurement (Comite Tecnico para la Medicion de la Pobreza, CTMP) was established and entrusted with the task of developing an indicator capable of accurately measuring poverty in order to evaluate changes in living conditions and assess the effects of social development policies and programs on poverty reduction¹⁸ (Coneval, n.d.).

In 2004, the General Law on Social Development (Ley General de Desarrollo Social, LGDS) was enacted, establishing Coneval as a public institution endowed with technical and managerial autonomy and composed primarily of academic researchers possessing the technical expertise required to fulfill its responsibilities. Coneval formally began operations in 2006, assuming two principal mandates: first, regulating and coordinating the evaluation of social development policies and programs; and second, establishing the criteria for defining, identifying and measuring poverty from a multidimensional perspective using information generated by INEGI through the National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares, ENIGH). Poverty estimates were produced at

¹⁸ The academics who made up the CTMP were: Fernando Cortes, Rodolfo de la Torre, Enrique Hernandez Laos, Luis Felipe Lopez Calva, Luis Ruvalcaba, John Scott and Graciela Teruel (Coneval, n.d.).

least every two years at both the federal and state levels, while municipality-level estimates were generated every five years.

One of Coneval's greatest challenges was designing a methodological framework that would simultaneously comply with the legal provisions established under the LGDS and remain sufficiently responsive to Mexico's social realities. Following extensive national efforts and international consultation, Coneval produced the document entitled "Methodology for the Multidimensional Measurement of Poverty in Mexico," which was further refined throughout 2009. As a result, Mexico became the first country to adopt an official methodology for measuring poverty from a multidimensional perspective.

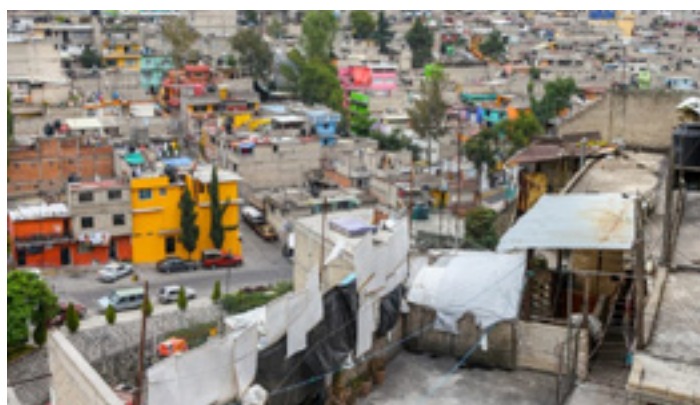
Working in coordination with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), Coneval specifically developed the Socioeconomic Conditions Module of the National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (Modulo de Condiciones Socioeconomicas de la Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares, MCS-ENIGH). This module became the principal source of information enabling the measurement of all dimensions of poverty and the disaggregation of those estimates for each of Mexico's federal enti-

Coneval developed the "Methodology for the Multidimensional Measurement of Poverty in Mexico" –which was further refined in 2009– making Mexico a pioneer in establishing an official poverty measurement methodology.

ties. The significance of this information was formally recognized in September 2012, when INEGI's Governing Board designated the Socioeconomic Conditions Module as Information of National Interest. Likewise, in December 2012, the inclusion of fourteen key poverty indicators in the National Catalogue of Indicators was approved¹⁹. These developments resulted from the work carried out by the Specialized Technical Committee on Statistical and Geographic Information for Social Development, in which Coneval actively participated.

A particularly important development occurred in 2016, when INEGI conducted the 2016 National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (ENIGH) using an expanded sample that allowed sufficient information to be collected for estimating multidimensional poverty at the national and state levels, as well as by area of residence (urban and rural). Consequently, the MCS-ENIGH was no longer required as a separate survey instrument. Nevertheless, recognizing the importance of preserving the consistency and comparability of statistical exercises across different years, INEGI developed the 2015 Statistical Model

¹⁹ Agreement approving the inclusion of a set of key indicators for measuring poverty in Mexico in the National Catalog of Indicators (December 28, 2012). DOF (n.d.).



Some poverty indicators: :

- » *no water in the house,*
- » *dirt floor,*
- » *no access to health services.*

Images:

<https://www.cronica.com.mx/metropoli/2025/06/04/vivir-sin-agua-el-alto-costo-de-habitar-la-capital-mexicana/>

<https://www.puntopropunto.com/secciones/punto-de-encuentro/ocho-de-cada-10-casas-son-estructuras-inadecuadas-cimentadas-en-la-informalidad-o-autoconstruccion/>

<https://elpais.com/mexico/2025-06-09/la-saturacion-del-sistema-publico-aboca-a-mas-de-la-mitad-de-los-mexicanos-a-la-salud-privada.html>

for Continuity (Modelo Estadístico 2015 para la Continuidad, MEC) for the MCS-ENIGH. This model was delivered to Coneval on August 28, 2017, in order to provide one of the fundamental inputs necessary for producing multidimensional poverty estimates at the municipal level, while simultaneously preserving historical continuity and allowing the analysis of changes in poverty between 2010 and 2015. Using this new information provided by INEGI, Coneval produced the 2016 poverty estimates, thereby extending the official multidimensional poverty series previously generated for 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014. In 2018, Coneval undertook a comprehensive update of the Methodology for the Multidimensional Measurement of Poverty in Mexico, which was expected to remain in force for at least the following six years (Table 5).

Thus, from 2008 through 2022 (with biennial publications), Coneval provided comprehensive information on poverty in Mexico based on well-established and methodologically rigorous technical standards. Over time, Coneval earned a strong national and international reputation owing to its transparency, methodological rigor and the decennial schedule governing updates to its poverty measurement methodology. This cycle began in 2008, was updated in 2018 and was due for its next revision in 2028. This periodicity

was not arbitrary; rather, it struck a balance between maintaining the relevance of poverty indicators in light of evolving social conditions—which require periodic methodological adjustments—and preserving the stability necessary to ensure robust comparisons over time. Today, however, responsibility for determining when and how to transition to a new methodological framework rests entirely with INEGI.

As noted previously, INEGI has assumed responsibility for poverty measurement following the dissolution of Coneval. On August 13, 2025, INEGI released the most recent Multidimensional Poverty Measurement, corresponding to 2024. This institutional transition has created a context in which technical strength coexists with political vulnerability. According to INEGI's estimates, multidimensional poverty declined by 13.4 million people between 2018 and 2024. This figure immediately raised significant concerns because such a dramatic reduction coincided with methodological adjustments introduced to two of the six social deprivation indicators used in the 2024 poverty measurement.

The most troubling difference between the previous institutional model and the current one lies in the structure of decision-making. Whereas Coneval relied

INEGI absorbed the poverty measurement function of the now-defunct Coneval. According to INEGI, multidimensional poverty fell by 13.4 million between 2018 and 2024. This figure raised significant suspicion, as the drastic decline coincided with methodological adjustments made to two of the six social deprivation indicators in the 2024 measurement.

TABLE 5. DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY MEASUREMENT (1/2)

YEAR	REFORM OR LAW	DESCRIPTION
2004	General Law on Social Development	Unanimous approval of the General Law on Social Development (LGDS) by the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate on January 20, 2004.
2009	Methodology	Publication of the methodology for the multidimensional measurement of poverty in Mexico (1st edition).
2010	2010 Guidelines	Publication of the general guidelines and criteria for the definition, identification and measurement of poverty in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF) on June 16, 2010.
2012	Reform	Amendment to Article 3 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States.
2013	Reform	Reform of article 36 of the LGDS: » Degree of social cohesion. » Accessibility to paved road.
2016	Reform	» Amendment to Article 36 of the LGDS: » Nutritious, high-quality food*
2018	2018 Guidelines	Publication in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF) on October 30, 2018, of the Agreement updating the general guidelines and criteria for the definition, identification and measurement of poverty.
2019	Methodology	Publication of the methodology for the multidimensional measurement of poverty in Mexico (3rd edition).

TABLE 5. DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY MEASUREMENT (2/2)

YEAR	REFORM OR LAW	DESCRIPTION
2021	ENIGH 2020	Publicacion de la Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) 2020 por parte del Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (INEGI), insumo para la estimacion de la medicion multidimensional de la pobreza**
	Poverty measurement	El Coneval difunde en 2021 los datos de pobreza multidimensional a nivel nacional y estatal 2016 - 2020 en su pagina oficial y redes sociales.
2023	ENIGH 2022	Publication of the 2022 ENIGH by INEGI, an input for estimating the multidimensional measurement of poverty.
	Poverty measurement	Coneval releases the figures from the multidimensional poverty measurement at the national and state levels, in accordance with the criteria established in the Methodology (3rd edition).
2025	ENIGH 2024	Publication of the 2024 ENIGH by INEGI, an input for estimating the multidimensional measurement of poverty.
	Poverty measurement	INEGI releases figures on the multidimensional measurement of poverty at the national and state levels, in accordance with the criteria established in the Methodology (3rd edition).

*The amendment to Article 36 of the General Law on Social Development (LGDS), published in 2016 in the Official Gazette of the Federation (DOF), incorporated the requirements of nutritional value and quality into the definition of access to food. This aligns with the “General guidelines and criteria for the identification and measurement of poverty,” published in the DOF on June 16, 2010. To ensure continuity in poverty measurements, it was essential that the methodology allow for such continuity and that the underlying methodological criteria remain unchanged for a specific period. Consequently, any amendments made to the poverty indicator components—as well as any potential adjustments—must remain in effect for a set interval (no less than ten years, in the case of the Guidelines published in the DOF in 2010, which were used for the initial 2008 multidimensional poverty measurement).

* **In accordance with Article 36 of the LGDS, which establishes the definition and measurement of poverty.

Source: In-house elaboration with information from Coneval (s.f., 2019a and 2019b).

on a Technical Committee composed of independent researchers affiliated with higher education institutions and specialized in poverty measurement and the evaluation of social programs, major decisions within INEGI are made by its Governing Board, whose members are nominated by the President of the Republic. Their professional profiles differ substantially from those that would have been considered appropriate for leading Coneval (Leyva, 2026).

Some of the principal implications of this institutional change are as follows:

» EVALUATION VERSUS MEASUREMENT:

Historically, Coneval was responsible not only for measuring poverty but also for evaluating the effectiveness of social programs. With Coneval's disappearance, the Federal Government eliminated the institution responsible for determining whether programs such as Sembrando Vida ("Sowing Life") or Jovenes Construyendo el Futuro ("Youth Building the Future") were actually reducing poverty. Consequently, in the absence of the independent impact evaluations previously conducted by Coneval, the allocation of social spending is now driven increasingly by political discretion rather than by robust technical evidence.

» WEAKENING OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY MEASUREMENT:

Another consequence of Coneval's dismantling has been the loss of technical depth. Although INEGI retains the institutional capacity to conduct surveys such as the National Household Income and Expenditure Survey (ENIGH), upon which poverty estimates are based, it lacks the specialized research structure that enabled Coneval to interpret social deprivations within a human rights-based methodological framework. Indeed, during the 2025–2026 period, official poverty reports have become noticeably more simplified. Information concerning specific population groups, such as Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, has become increasingly limited.

» DISRUPTION OF THE HISTORICAL STATISTICAL SERIES:

For poverty studies to be useful, they must remain comparable over time.

» METHODOLOGICAL DISCONTINUITY:

Numerous academic forums have warned that the administrative integration of poverty measurement into INEGI has served as a justification for "*adjusting*" the methodologies used to estimate poverty.

Implications of the change:

- » *Evaluation vs. measurement*
- » *Weakening of multidimensional measurement*
- » *Interruption of the historical series*
- » *Methodological break*
- » *Restrictions on microdata transparency.*

These methodological changes interrupt the historical statistical series that began in 2008. Once current data are no longer comparable with previous observations, it becomes scientifically impossible to determine whether poverty has genuinely declined or whether “other data” are simply being employed in ways that reinforce the official narrative.

» RESTRICTIONS ON THE TRANSPARENCY OF MICRO-DATA:

Under Coneval, a strong commitment to Open Data ensured that any citizen could freely download complete datasets to replicate official analyses. Under the current institutional arrangement, however, it has been reported that access to specific and georeferenced microdata—particularly municipal-level poverty data—has been delayed by bureaucratic procedures. This limitation prevents state and municipal governments from designing their own evidence-based poverty reduction strategies grounded in local realities.

The loss of Coneval signifies that Mexico has moved from a social policy grounded in evidence to a social policy grounded in narrative, where the erosion of technical rigor makes it exceedingly difficult to correct policy direction when social deprivations—par-

ticularly in health and education—continue to worsen. Today, profound concerns exist regarding both the precision and the robustness of official data. In the context of a government that dismisses evidence, dismantles institutions and eliminates information, there is a genuine risk that the country’s actual conditions will no longer be understood in sufficient detail. Restoring methodological rigor is the only way to ensure objective comparisons of both progress and setbacks in a country as diverse and socially complex as Mexico.

The loss of Coneval signifies that Mexico has shifted from "evidence-based social policy" to "narrative-based social policy," where a lack of technical rigor makes it nearly impossible to correct course if social deprivations—particularly in health and education—continue to rise.

2.5. DATOS.GOB: Fewer Available Datasets and the Risk of Merely Apparent Transparency

The loss of public information does not always occur through the outright disappearance of institutions or platforms. In many cases, it takes place more gradually, as systems remain operational while the quantity, timeliness, or usefulness of the information they contain steadily declines. The case of datos.gob.mx illustrates this transformation. In 2023, Mexicanos Contra la Corrupción y la Impunidad (MCCI) analyzed the state of Mexico's national open data portal and identified 12,570 publicly available datasets (MCCI, 2023a). By April–May 2026, this number had fallen to 6,920 datasets, representing a 44.9% reduction, equivalent to the disappearance of 5,650 datasets. This decline raises a fundamental question: did the system improve because existing datasets began to be updated, or because a substantial portion of the information was simply removed from the universe being evaluated?

Over the past three years, the reduction of nearly half the datasets available on the portal has had an immediate and significant impact. In 2023, MCCI reported that only 28% (3,583) of the datasets had been

updated within the previous 24 months; 71% (8,890) had not been updated for at least 24 months and were considered abandoned; and 1% (101) contained no information at all (MCCI, 2023a). By the end of May 2026, every dataset hosted on the portal had been published within the preceding 24 months. The oldest dataset, “Impact of Drought on Agricultural Activity,” produced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (SADER), had last been updated on May 27, 2025. In other words, the oldest dataset on the platform had gone only 13 months without being updated.

This apparent improvement requires careful interpretation. Applying the same criterion used by MCCI—whether datasets had been updated within the previous 24 months—the portal could appear to achieve nearly 100% compliance in 2026. However, this result follows a substantial reduction in the total number of datasets available. If the 5,650 deleted datasets were primarily those that had previously been outdated, then as much as 63.6% of the non-compliance identified in 2023 would have disappeared from the indicator not because the information had been updated, but because it had been removed from the population under evaluation. Put differently, part of the observed improvement may simply reflect the

Three strategic cases were analyzed due to their economic and public significance: the production and sale of petroleum products, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), and the Historical Balance of Public Sector Borrowing Requirements (SHRFSP).

existence of less information, rather than a genuine increase in the institutional capacity to maintain it.

To determine whether this apparent improvement reflects a genuine strengthening of the open data system, three strategically important cases were examined because of their economic and public relevance: the production and sale of petroleum products, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the Historical Balance of the Public Sector Borrowing Requirements (SHRFSP). Taking the energy sector as an example—an issue of considerable public importance—the statistics on petroleum production within the National Refining System (Sistema Nacional de Refinación, SNR) formally satisfy the portal’s compliance criterion (updated within the previous 24 months). The same applies to data on the value and volume of domestic sales of products refined within the SNR. For all three datasets, the most recent update available on the datos.gob.mx portal is dated September 24, 2025. However, the most recent official and timely data published directly by Pemex correspond to April 2026²⁰.

A more detailed examination reveals similar shortcomings in datasets maintained by the Ministry of Economy, including those related to Foreign Direct

20 This data can be viewed at: <https://ebdi.pemex.com/bdi/bdiController.do?action=cuadro&subAction=applyOptions>

Investment (FDI), which account for five of the nine datasets hosted by the portal. These datasets are listed as having been updated on June 13, 2025. Nevertheless, once downloaded, the information they contain extends only through the second quarter of 2024. By contrast, the official figures published on the Ministry’s own website are available through the fourth quarter of 2025²¹. This lag alone substantially reduces the usefulness of the information for decision-makers. In other words, the date displayed on the dataset’s information page does not correspond to the actual content, which is nearly two years behind the most recent official data. This discrepancy illustrates one of the principal risks facing public information systems: maintaining platforms that remain formally operational while the information they provide steadily loses its timeliness and practical value. The mere existence of data does not guarantee effective transparency; information must be complete, current and available while it can still inform decision-making.

A similar pattern is evident in the area of public finance. The Historical Balance of the Public Sector Bor-

21 They can be consulted at: <https://www.gob.mx/se/acciones-y-programas/competitividad-y-normatividad-inversion-extranjera-directa?state=published>

Evidence shows a progressive decline in the utility of the portal: datos.gob.mx as a centralized platform for public information: fewer available datasets, backlogs, fragmented data, etc.

rowing Requirements (SHRFSP)—Mexico’s broadest measure of public debt—was last updated on June 3, 2026, using data through March 2026. However, the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (SHCP), through its Timely Public Finance Statistics, provides more recent monthly information corresponding to April 2026²². Likewise, although the portal offers access to quarterly public finance information, those series are available only through the fourth quarter of 2014. Consequently, the information available on the portal regarding public debt cannot be considered timely.

The available evidence points to a gradual decline in the usefulness of datos.gob.mx as Mexico’s principal repository of public information. The problem lies not only in the reduced number of available datasets but also in the fact that several of the datasets that remain are outdated relative to the information published directly by government agencies. Pemex provides a clear illustration of this situation: of the 34 datasets hosted on the portal, only two contain recent and operationally useful information. This trend increases the risk of returning to a fragmented model of public information, in which data continue to exist but become dispersed across multiple sources,

²² Public finance information can be viewed at: <http://presto.hacienda.gob.mx/EstoporLayout/estadisticas.jsp>

more difficult to locate and increasingly demanding of technical expertise to access and use effectively.

In 2023, the Applied Research Unit of MCCI reached the following conclusion:

This government [the Lopez Obrador administration] has failed to meet the minimum standards of transparency and open data; what we observe is a regression: today we have less information and fewer data. We have greater opacity and fewer tools to monitor the exercise of public power (MCCI, 2023a, p. 4).

As of June 2026, the available evidence indicates that several of the risks identified by MCCI remain in effect. The principal challenge does not necessarily lie in the immediate disappearance of public information, but rather in a process that is more difficult to detect: maintaining platforms that remain publicly accessible while their scope, timeliness and ability to explain relevant phenomena progressively diminish. An open data platform does not generate transparency simply by existing. Its value depends on the quality, timeliness, integrity and accessibility of its data, allowing citizens, specialists and decision-makers to transform those data into meaningful public knowledge.

MCCI (2023a) proposed two hypotheses:

- 1. The information was no longer being generated and, consequently, was no longer being published (the more serious case).*
- 2. The government chose to stop sharing the information.*

At the time, MCCI proposed two possible hypotheses:

1. The information was no longer being generated and, consequently, was no longer being published (the most serious scenario).
2. The government chose to stop making the information publicly available (MCCI, 2023a).

The evidence regarding public economic information points more strongly toward the second scenario. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that financial and economic information—particularly major macroeconomic aggregates such as public debt, gross domestic product, the current account, foreign investment, among others—is subject to scrutiny by a broad range of observers. These include international organizations (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), credit rating agencies and both domestic and foreign investors. Accordingly, this conclusion applies only partially to the broader universe of public information and, as will be discussed later, is generally applicable to economic information as a whole.

Even so, in the economic sphere, the most significant impacts occur at the microeconomic level, particularly within highly specialized markets. In the energy sector, the most striking example is the Operating Re-

serve Margin, the benchmark indicator for the electricity market. This indicator has not been publicly available since July 2024, after being classified as information potentially subject to national security restrictions. It is now accessible only to market participants. The evolution of datos.gob.mx demonstrates that the deterioration of information systems can occur even while the platforms themselves remain publicly visible. The greatest risk is not always the complete disappearance of data, but rather the preservation of formal institutional structures that gradually cease to fulfill their original purpose. A genuine open data system should not be evaluated solely by the number of files it contains, but by its capacity to generate evidence, enable independent evaluation and strengthen public accountability (Table 6).

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The evidence presented in this chapter reveals a complex phenomenon: Mexico is systematically losing the eyes and ears that once enabled it to understand itself. What is taking place is not merely a reorganization of government structures or the bureaucratic elimination of a handful of public agencies; rather, the country is witnessing the erosion of the technical infrastructure essential for determining whether

EDUCATION

The successive dissolution of the INEE and Mejoredu interrupted the continuity of national assessments.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The abolition of Coneval left poverty measurement in the hands of the INEGI, without technical or budgetary support.

TABLE 6. WHAT INFORMATION HAS BEEN LOST/RESTRICTED AND WITH WHAT EFFECT ON TRANSPARENCY? (1/2)

AREA	LOSS OR RESTRICTION OF INFORMATION	EVIDENCE (KEY FIGURES)	CONSEQUENCES FOR TRANSPARENCY
TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION	» Dissolution of the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI). » Transfer of functions to the Secretariat for Anti-Corruption and Good Governance (SABG). » Deterioration of the National Transparency Platform (PNT).	» INAI abolished in March 2025. » Access-to-information complaints: 39,081 (2024) → 15,828 (2025). » PNT with over 14 million records prior to the change.	» Reduced institutional autonomy. » Government acting as both "judge and party." » Reduced citizen oversight.
EDUCATION	» Elimination of the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education (INEE). » Dissolution of the National Commission for the Continuous Improvement of Education (Mejoredu). » Elimination of historical datasets and series; weakening of the Educational Information and Management System (SIGED).	» INEE eliminated in 2019. » Mejoredu closed on May 31, 2025. » Loss of ~20 years of educational data.	» Reduced capacity to measure learning. » Less evaluation of educational policies. » Greater lack of transparency in the sector
POVERTY AND SOCIAL POLICY	» Dissolution of the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (Coneval). » End of independent evaluations of social programs. » Methodological changes to poverty measurement without public scrutiny.	» INEGI absorbed certain functions in 2025. It does not evaluate social programs. » Drastic reduction in poverty (13.4 million people between 2018 and 2024), accompanied by methodological adjustments. Experts question the impact of the methodological change.	» Risk of politicization; lack of independent scrutiny. » Reduced historical comparability. » Less evidence-based evaluation to improve social programs.

TABLE 6. WHAT INFORMATION HAS BEEN LOST/RESTRICTED AND WITH WHAT EFFECT ON TRANSPARENCY? (2/2)

AREA	LOSS OR RESTRICTION OF INFORMATION	EVIDENCE (KEY FIGURES)	CONSEQUENCES FOR TRANSPARENCY
PUBLIC STATISTICS (INEGI)	» Greater institutional burden. » Reduced generation of new information. » Limitations in validating data from other agencies	» Real budget +3.7% (2019–2025). » Absorption of Coneval’s functions without a commensurate increase in resources.	» Reduced capacity to produce and validate strategic information. » Risk to statistical credibility.
OVERSIGHT AND OPEN DATA	» Reduced effectiveness of the Federal Superior Audit Office (ASF). » Reduction in datasets on datos.gob. » Backlogs in public information	» Audits: 1,348 (2019) → more than 2,200 (2023–2025). » Recovery of funds: MXN 68 billion → MXN 12 billion. » Datos.gob.mx: 12,570 → 6,920 datasets (–44.9%).	» Reduced accountability. » Reduced capacity to detect irregularities. » Less information available for public scrutiny.

Source: Signos Vitales

government institutions function effectively, whether public resources are used responsibly and whether public policies are grounded in evidence rather than in official rhetoric.

The dissolution of the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) represents the clearest example of this regression. A transparency system that took more

than twenty years to build –and that safeguarded more than 14 million records within its National Transparency Platform– was absorbed into the Executive Branch itself. The practical consequences are already evident. Between March and December 2024, more than 39,000 citizen complaints regarding denied access to public information were filed. During the same period in 2025, that number fell dramatically to just

The dissolution of the INAI represents the clearest example of this regression: Mexico is systematically losing the eyes and ears that once enabled it to understand itself.

over 15,000. Interpreting this decline as evidence of improved performance would be a mistake. On the contrary, it reflects a citizenry that is increasingly discouraged from exercising its right to know or that faces growing obstacles in defending that right.

This pattern of institutional weakening is repeated across other strategic sectors:

- » EDUCATION: The successive elimination of the INEE and Mejoredu interrupted the continuity of national educational assessments. Today, the country is effectively navigating without reliable instruments capable of identifying where the most severe shortcomings of the education system actually lie.
- » SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: The dissolution of Coneval transferred responsibility for poverty measurement to INEGI. However, these additional evaluation responsibilities were assigned without providing the Institute with a comparable increase in financial or technical resources. The result is an institution operating under increasing strain, with limited capacity to innovate or respond to emerging information needs.

Moreover, the erosion of transparency does not always require the elimination of institutions; sometimes it is enough simply to empty them of their sub-

stantive purpose. The datos.gob.mx portal provides a clear example of this silent digital blackout. Between 2023 and 2026, the platform lost nearly half of its information assets, declining from more than 12,500 datasets to only 6,920. Although official indicators suggest that the platform has improved in terms of data updating, the methodological distortion is evident: the apparent increase in compliance resulted simply from deleting 44.9% of the outdated datasets. In other words, the problem was not solved—it was merely removed from view.

This phenomenon demonstrates that transparency extends far beyond maintaining publicly accessible websites. A public database has little value if it is fragmented, outdated, or dispersed across multiple sources. Once information loses its practical usefulness, citizens, researchers and policymakers alike lose the ability to transform data into evidence capable of informing better public decisions.

This same disconnect between bureaucratic activity and substantive outcomes is also evident in the auditing of public expenditures. The Federal Superior Audit Office (Auditoria Superior de la Federación, ASF) reports that it has expanded its oversight activities to more than 2,200 audits annually. Yet this

The pattern of institutional weakening is repeated across strategic sectors such as Education and Social Development.

substantial increase in administrative activity has not translated into stronger public accountability. Under the previous administration of the ASF, led by Juan Manuel Portal (2012–2017), audit activities resulted in the recovery of more than 68 billion pesos in public resources. During the most recent period, however, that amount fell to just over 12 billion pesos—a decline of nearly 80%. Conducting more audits has not resulted in recovering more public resources.

Viewed in broader perspective, Mexico is not only losing key institutions; it also faces the risk of preserving little more than bureaucratic shells—formal organizational structures that continue to exist on paper but have been stripped of the technical capacity required to fulfill their original mission. The deterioration of public information systems rarely occurs through an abrupt interruption. Instead, it unfolds gradually: when the budget of a research center is quietly reduced, when a national educational assessment is no longer administered, or when a public information portal remains online but progressively ceases to reflect the realities experienced by society.

In broader perspective, Mexico is not only losing key institutions; it also faces the risk of preserving little more than bureaucratic shells—formal organizational structures that continue to exist on paper but have been stripped of the technical capacity required to fulfill their original mission.





Image: "The faces of the disappeared in Mexico haunt the streets. Families fear they will be erased." Marco Ugarte/Associated Press at <https://www.latimes.com/espanol/mexico/articulo/2026-03-02/los-rostros-de-los-desaparecidos-en-mexico-acechan-en-las-calles-las-familias-temen-que-se-borren>

3.

It must be ensured that the information is complete, consistent, and useful for gauging the reality of the situation.

Mexico is losing the ability to measure, understand, and –consequently– correct its own errors.

3 HOW HAS THE TRANSPARENCY SYSTEM BEEN WEAKENED?

–Areas of Growing opacity



3.1. CORRUPTION AND THE SHADOW ECONOMY:

Environment, Ports, Energy, Strategic Projects and Public Expenditure

In recent years, the availability of public information in strategic sectors of the Mexican State has faced a new challenge: the existence of official data that, although still being published, exhibit inconsistencies when compared with the observed behavior of other economic and operational variables. The erosion of transparency does not always occur through the disappearance of information; it may also manifest itself when the available data no longer adequately

explains significant economic phenomena or require additional validation processes to understand the true magnitude of public policy challenges.

One of the most significant examples can be found in the energy sector, particularly in the fossil fuel market, where discrepancies between recorded imports, domestic sales and economic activity raise important questions regarding the institutional capacity to accurately measure phenomena such as fuel smuggling and the illegal economy. Since 2015, Mexico has been a net importer of fossil fuels. In 2025, the balance of trade in petroleum products (exports minus imports) registered a deficit of US\$25.6 billion

Official data that, despite continuing to be published, show inconsistencies when compared to the observed behavior of other economic and operational variables.

(Banxico, n.d.a). This deficit originated primarily from trade with the United States, where the trade balance reached –US\$29.3 billion (Banxico, n.d.b), while trade with the rest of the world produced a surplus of US\$3.7 billion (Banxico, n.d.c). The negative balance is explained largely by the decline in the volume of crude oil exports, particularly those destined for the United States. This contraction, in turn, is the result of two decades of declining oil production ²³

As domestic oil production has fallen, Mexico has become increasingly dependent on imported energy. This dependence –particularly on gasoline, diesel and natural gas– has translated into rising imports. This trend became evident both in the current account and in the volume of imported cargo entering the country through its ports. Between 2005 and 2018, the average annual growth rate of imported petroleum and petroleum-derivative cargo reached 9.5% ²⁴. In 2018, imported cargo of these products reached a historic high of 39.072 million metric tons (Semar, 2025).

²³For further details on the reasons behind the decline in oil production, see: <https://signosvitalismexico.org/petroleos-mexicanos-la-devastadora-patologia-que-enfrenta-el-pais/>

²⁴This growth is driven by the increase in imports of petroleum products (gasoline, diesel and jet fuel, among others). Natural gas enters via the pipeline network that Mexico shares with the United States.

During the same period, the value of petroleum imports increased from US\$8.2 billion to US\$36.9 billion ²⁵. Between 2005 and 2018, imports of refined petroleum products, such as gasoline and diesel, expanded substantially in both volume and value.

Beginning in 2019, however, the reported volume of imported cargo began exhibiting an atypical pattern that warrants closer examination alongside other economic and energy-related variables. In 2019, imports of petroleum and petroleum derivatives declined by 5.1% year-over-year (approximately 2 million metric tons) (Semar, 2025), while in 2020 they fell by an additional 31.5% (approximately 11.668 million metric tons) (Semar, 2025). Following the COVID-19 lockdown, imports experienced a modest recovery through 2022. Nevertheless, by 2025, import volumes remained 31.6% below their 2018 level and 27.9% below that of 2019. Indeed, the volume recorded in 2025 was only 5.1% higher than that observed during 2020. Thus, the volume of imported petroleum and petroleum derivatives²⁶ record-

²⁵In 2005 and 2018, total imports amounted to \$16.4 billion and \$53.8 billion, respectively.

²⁶Although the category refers to the importation of oil and derivatives, as of the first quarter of 2026, Mexico reports no data on crude oil imports. In other words, both the volume and the value figures relate primarily to petroleum derivatives.

In 2025, the level of imports is 31.6% lower than the level observed in 2018 and 27.9% lower than in 2019. In 2025, the cargo volume was just 5.1% higher than that observed in 2020.

ed at the country's customs facilities and ports has remained at levels comparable to those registered during the pandemic.

Mexico's economy contracted by 0.4% in 2019 and then collapsed by 8.4% in 2020 (INEGI, 2026). Compared with many other economies around the world, Mexico's economic recovery was relatively slow. Nevertheless, the recovery in imported petroleum cargo was even weaker and ultimately continued to decline. Between 2022 and 2025, the volume of imported petroleum and petroleum derivatives maintained a downward trajectory. The decline recorded during the final year was particularly pronounced—14.3%, equivalent to 4.643 million metric tons—and was comparable only to the dramatic contraction observed in 2020 (31.5%, or 11.668 million metric tons) (Semar, 2025). While the Mexican economy recovered and returned to its pre-pandemic levels, the volume of officially imported petroleum derivatives moved in the opposite direction.

The divergence between economic recovery, expected fuel consumption and the continuing decline in officially reported imports raises a fundamental transparency question: if energy demand did not decline in the same proportion, what mechanisms explain

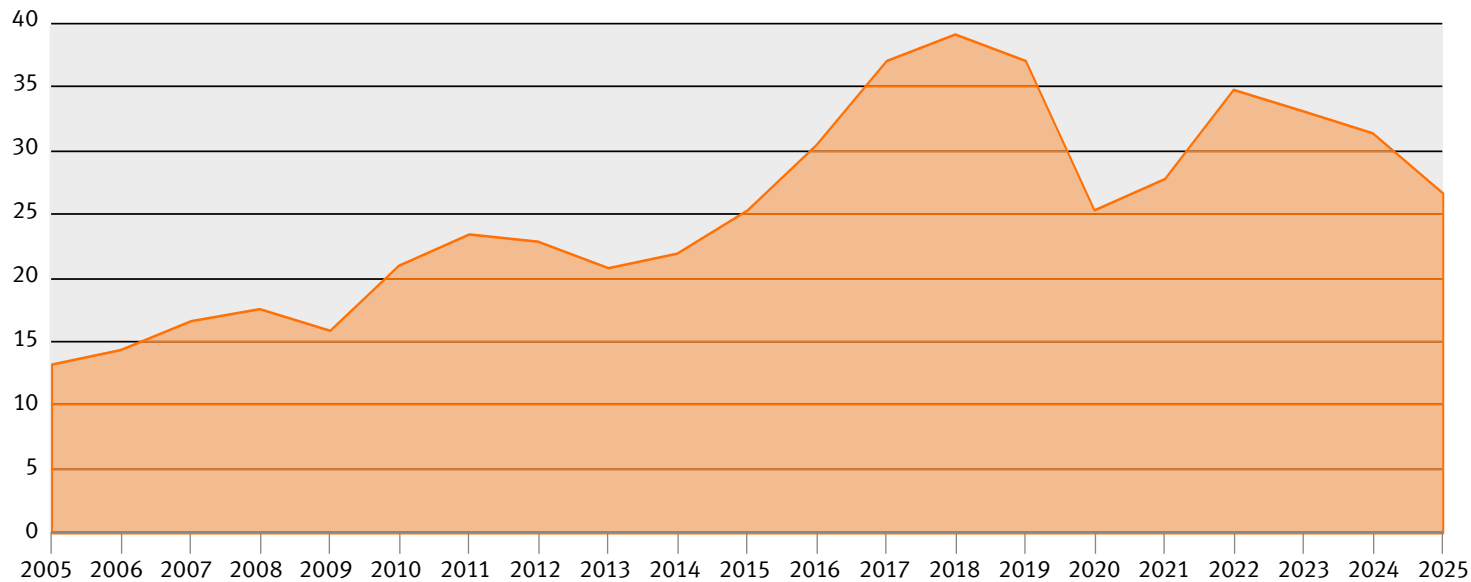


the discrepancy between observed consumption and the formal import records?

According to the Tax Administration Service (Servicio de Administración Tributaria, SAT), in 2021 the black market for fossil fuels—comprising both technical fuel smuggling and illegal fuel extraction from pipelines—accounted for 21.2% of total domestic demand, equivalent to 101.6 million barrels (SAT, 2022). According to the same agency, fuel smuggling and theft declined by 34.3% the following year, equiva-

Image: "Mexico is vulnerable due to its reliance on U.S. natural gas, warns Pemex" at <https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/cartera/mexico-es-vulnerable-por-depender-del-gas-natural-de-eu-advierte-pemex-llama-a-considerar-a-proveedores-de-otros-paises/>

GRAPH 3. IMPORT VOLUME OF OIL AND OIL PRODUCTS
2005–2025



In 2025, Pemex's sales volume is lower than in 2018:

- » *liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) decreased by 11.1%,*
- » *gasoline by 11.8%,*
- » *and diesel by 16.8% (Pemex, n.d. a).*

Source: In-house elaboration with information from Semar (2025).

lent to 34.9 million barrels (SAT, 2022). As a consequence, both Pemex and private-sector distributors, which were required to import fuels through legal channels, increased their sales during 2022. Yet even as the crisis associated with technical fuel smuggling (huachicol fiscal) intensified, the volume of imports officially recorded at the country's ports continued to decline sharply (Graph 3).

By 2022, the Tax Administration Service (Servicio de Administracion Tributaria, SAT) estimated that Pemex had regained a larger share of the domestic fuel market. However, the agency discontinued publishing these estimates in subsequent years. Although Pemex experienced a considerable increase in fuel sales during 2022, sales declined again the following year and eventually stabilized at levels comparable to those recorded in 2005 for gasoline and 2001 for

diesel. By 2025, domestic sales volumes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), gasoline and diesel were 11.1% (18.2 thousand barrels per day), 11.8% (90.2 thousand barrels per day) and 16.8% (55.7 thousand barrels per day) lower, respectively, than in 2018 (Pemex, n.d.a). Between 2018 and 2025, Pemex steadily reduced its domestic sales of refined petroleum products.

In recent years, significant inconsistencies have also emerged in Pemex's financial statements. The differences between the company's unaudited and audited financial reports are substantial. The largest absolute discrepancy occurred in 2024: while the preliminary financial statements reported a loss of 620.6 billion pesos (Pemex, n.d.b), the audited statements ultimately reported a loss of 780.6 billion pesos, a difference of 160 billion pesos (Pemex, n.d.b). Under the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum, Pemex's preliminary financial results reported a loss of 45.2 billion pesos, whereas the audited statements reflected a loss of 81.7 billion pesos (Pemex, n.d.b). These discrepancies reveal significant changes between preliminary and audited financial information, underscoring the need for stronger mechanisms to ensure explanation, traceability and transparency regarding Pemex's financial performance.

Higher revenues do not necessarily imply that Pemex has expanded its market share as a result of declining fuel smuggling. According to Barnes (Barnes, J. F., May 20, 2026), part of the improvement reported in Pemex's refining financial results can be attributed to changes in the internal transfer prices used between the company's business divisions. The author notes that crude oil destined for export was recorded at an average value of US\$58.4 per barrel, whereas crude transferred internally for refining purposes was valued at only US\$16.9 per barrel (Barnes, J. F., May 20, 2026).

This pricing difference significantly altered the distribution of financial results across Pemex's business units. According to Barnes' estimates, had comparable market prices been used, the Exploration and Production division would have reported substantially higher operating profits, while the Industrial Processing division would have continued to record operating losses. Consequently, the apparent improvement does not necessarily reflect greater productive efficiency in refining but rather a change in the internal allocation of costs and revenues within the company. This case illustrates the importance of ensuring that financial information produced by strategic state-owned enterprises remains comparable, transparent

*As the crisis of technical fossil fuel smuggling (*huachicol fiscal*) intensified, imports recorded at the ports were in freefall.*

and fully traceable, particularly when such information is used to evaluate national energy policy.

The presentation of stronger financial results in the refining segment helped reinforce the government's public narrative regarding the recovery of Pemex and the success of its strategy of energy self-sufficiency. However, operational indicators tell a different story: declining domestic fuel sales, reduced marketing volumes and only limited improvements in productive efficiency. This divergence between reported financial performance and operational indicators represents an important transparency challenge, as it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish genuine improvements in corporate performance from changes resulting from accounting or administrative criteria.

The black market for fossil fuels remains active and exhibits pronounced spikes during federal election periods. Between 2019 and 2024, the estimated value of diesel tax smuggling (huachicol fiscal) amounted to US\$851 million, US\$1.348 billion, US\$2.958 billion, US\$704 million, US\$850 million and US\$2.320 billion, respectively. Cumulatively, diesel tax smuggling accounted for approximately US\$9.031 billion in illicit imports (Barnes, J. F., July 10, 2025). It is particularly noteworthy that the highest levels of smuggling

occurred during 2021 and 2024, both of which coincided with federal electoral processes. In 2021, the trade deficit in petroleum products totaled US\$24.5 billion. However, when the estimated volume of illegally imported diesel is incorporated, the deficit may have reached as much as US\$27.4 billion. Thus, the actual deficit may have been at least 12.1% higher than the figure officially reported by INEGI and the Bank of Mexico. Similarly, the current account balance (the net balance of trade in goods and services) officially stood at US\$4.5 billion in deficit. Incorporating the estimated value of diesel tax smuggling

Under the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum, Pemex's preliminary financial results reported a loss of 45.2 billion pesos, whereas the audited statements reflected a loss of 81.7 billion pesos (Pemex, n.d.b).



Image: "Huachicol: how gasoline theft networks operate in Mexico" at <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-46818927>

would increase this deficit to approximately US\$7.4 billion, representing a 65.9% larger shortfall. This issue is far from trivial: it suggests that the federal government is obscuring the true magnitude of the country's current account deficit.

The problems occurring at Mexico's customs facilities extend well beyond fuel smuggling and now encompass more complex goods such as automobiles and capital goods, including those used by the Armed Forces themselves. According to an investigation conducted by Mexicanos Contra la Corrupcion y la Impunidad (MCCI),

an average of 3,400 smuggled vehicles crossed through these customs offices in Tamaulipas each month, resulting in the illegal entry of approximately 40,000 vehicles annually through cloned license plates (Duran, October 7, 2025).

The investigation also documented cases involving as many as 728 vehicles entering the country under a single import permit (Duran, October 7, 2025). By the end of 2024, this illicit activity was estimated to have generated more than US\$2.2 billion in profits for organized crime (Duran, October 7, 2025).

The role of the Armed Forces has extended well beyond customs administration. Their participation in

the construction sector has fundamentally altered the composition of infrastructure investment (fixed capital formation) by type of investor (public versus private). As previously documented by Signos Vitales, revised Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures (measured from the expenditure side) indicate that between 2018 and 2024, the value of private investment was overestimated by 124.1%, equivalent to 421.8 billion pesos. By contrast, public investment was underestimated by 280.2 billion pesos (Signos Vitales, 2026). This statistical distortion contributed to reinforcing the misleading perception that Mexico was experiencing a surge in private investment driven by the so-called nearshoring of global value chains.

The evidence presented throughout this section demonstrates that the principal macroeconomic aggregates continue to be produced and published on a regular basis. Nevertheless, several strategic indicators now require more robust validation mechanisms capable of addressing increasingly complex economic phenomena. The expansion of illegal markets, administrative changes within state-owned enterprises and new institutional arrangements governing public expenditure have all made the interpretation of key economic variables substantially more difficult. Under these circumstances, the challenge facing

The expansion of illegal markets, administrative changes within state-owned enterprises and new institutional arrangements governing public expenditure have all made the interpretation of key economic variables.

institutions responsible for producing economic information extends well beyond simply maintaining the publication of statistical data. It also requires strengthening the mechanisms needed to identify inconsistencies, explain methodological changes and ensure that public information more accurately reflects the country's underlying economic reality²⁷.

3.2. SECURITY: Data Manipulation, Enforced Disappearances and Attacks on Journalists

The security situation in Mexico has increasingly revealed a contradiction between the official narrative of declining violence and a range of indicators pointing to a structural deterioration in transparency, institutional quality and access to public information. Numerous reports have warned that the federal government has prioritized a narrative of success based primarily on reductions in intentional homicides, while other forms of violence continue to increase or remain partially concealed because of methodolog-

²⁷ It is important to clarify that foreign trade data is generated from customs declarations processed at Mexican customs offices. However, this information serves as an input for compiling the trade balance, a process involving INEGI, Banxico and the Secretariat of Economy.

ical shortcomings, underreporting and institutional opacity.

One of the principal concerns relates to the construction of Mexico's official crime statistics. A substantial proportion of criminal data depends directly on the information reported by state prosecutors' offices to the Executive Secretariat of the National Public Security System (*Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Publica, SESNSP*). Consequently, national crime statistics are not the product of an independent federal verification process but rather of classifications made by local authorities operating with unequal technical capacities and frequently inconsistent criteria. Numerous specialists have warned that this fragmented system facilitates the reclassification of crimes, delays in opening criminal investigations and methodological changes that may distort the true extent of violence.

The issue of enforced disappearances clearly illustrates these problems of transparency and institutional reliability. Although the federal government highlighted a decline in homicides during 2025, civil society organizations and independent experts argued that part of the violence may simply be shifting toward forms that are less visible statistically, partic-

Although the federal government highlighted a decline in homicides during 2025, civil society organizations and independent experts argued that part of the violence may simply be shifting toward forms that are less visible statistically, particularly disappearances.

ularly disappearances. The available figures support this concern. As previously reported by Signos Vitales, the record number of disappearances registered at the end of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's administration has not been reversed under the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum (Signos Vitales, 2026). As of June 2026, the National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons (*Registro Nacional de Personas Desaparecidas y No Localizadas, RNPDO*) contained 134,812 missing or unlocated persons since records began (Segob, 2026), while Mexico's forensic crisis continued to involve approximately 70,000 unidentified bodies nationwide (Yañez, 2026).

According to RNPDO data, 7,056 disappearances were recorded between January and June 2024, corresponding to the final months of the administration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. During the same period in 2025, already under the administration of Claudia Sheinbaum, the number increased to 9,899 disappearances, representing a 40% increase compared with the previous year (Segob, 2026). During the first half of 2026, 6,602 disappearances were recorded, representing a decline relative to the same period in 2025. However, this comparison should be interpreted with caution because the RNPDO records appear to have been updated retroactively. For

example, when consulting the same database in January 2026, Signos Vitales reported 7,399 disappearances during the first half of 2025 and 6,275 during the corresponding period of 2024 (Signos Vitales, 2026). These figures are substantially lower than those currently reported by the RNPDO.

Consequently, although the currently available data indicate fewer disappearances during the first half of 2026 than during the same period in 2025, they also indicate a higher number than that reported for 2024. This variation underscores the importance of accounting for retrospective revisions to the database when analyzing temporal trends in disappearances.

In addition, in March 2026, the federal government announced that approximately 40,000 individuals previously registered as missing “*could still be alive*” following cross-checks with tax records, marriage registries and other official databases (Eisenhammer, 2026). According to Reuters, 5,269 individuals were subsequently reclassified as located, although search collectives and independent experts warned that these procedures could result in irregular data cleansing or the artificial removal of records (Eisenhammer, 2026). Furthermore, the government acknowledged that of the 132,534 individuals registered

As of June 2026, the National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons (RNPDO) contained 134,812 missing or unlocated persons since records began (Segob, 2026), while Mexico's forensic crisis continued to involve approximately 70,000 unidentified bodies nationwide (Yañez, 2026).



Image: "Mothers and relatives of victims of disappearance protested along the main avenues of Mexico City." Efe at <https://www.articulo14.es/internacional/la-imparable-labor-de-las-madres-de-desaparecidos-en-mexico-20240512.html>

as missing or unlocated, 46,724 cases (approximately 36% of the total) lacked sufficient information to support search efforts, including basic details such as names or the location where the disappearance occurred. Moreover, only 3,869 cases had an active criminal investigation file (Eisenhammer, 2026). These figures demonstrate that a substantial portion of the national registry relies on incomplete case

files, opaque administrative procedures and methodologies susceptible to retrospective modification.

These inconsistencies are explained, at least in part, by the methodology used to compile the data. According to information provided by the RNPDO itself, more than 64% of all records originate directly from state prosecutors' offices, which do not apply

Some entities record disappearances immediately, while others wait hours, days, or even longer before formally entering them into the system.

standardized criteria when opening investigations, classifying disappearances, or updating case files. Some states register disappearances immediately, whereas others wait hours, days, or even longer before formally incorporating cases into the national system. Consequently, these differences generate temporal discrepancies between the actual occurrence of events and their appearance in official records, as well as inconsistencies between state and federal statistics.

The case of Jalisco clearly illustrates this methodological problem. In January 2026, the state government reported having received 222 disappearance reports, yet only 138 corresponded to disappearances that had actually occurred during that month; the remaining reports related to cases from previous years that had only recently been formally incorporated into the registry (Sanchez, 2026).

Similar situations have been documented in Veracruz. In February 2026, the State Search Commission reported 65 missing and unlocated persons during the first two months of the year, whereas the National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons recorded only 52 cases for the same period. Comparable discrepancies had already been observed during 2025,

when the State Search Commission documented 106 disappearances during the first quarter, compared with only 44 cases recorded by the RNPDO. Search collectives and civil society organizations questioned these discrepancies, pointing to possible shortcomings in the integration and consistency of official records (Aleman, 2025).

Significant discrepancies have also been identified in Guanajuato. According to a report by Causa en Comun, the number of recorded disappearances increased from 623 individuals in 2024 to 954 in 2025, representing a 53% increase (Causa en Comun, 2026). However, the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Guanajuato challenged this estimate, arguing that an alternative processing of the RNPDO database indicated an increase of only approximately 28%. The divergence between these figures reflects the difficulties associated with different reporting periods, retrospective updates and varying methodologies used to compile disappearance statistics.

In Coahuila, relatives of victims and civil society organizations have also reported that numerous cases involving women who were initially reported missing but were later found deceased are prosecuted primarily as femicide or concealment of a corpse, with-

Institutional weakening is also reflected in the role assumed by search collectives:

family members and civil society organizations continue to carry out search and investigative activities that primarily fall to the State.

out recognizing the preceding disappearance as an independent criminal offense within judicial proceedings (Muñoz, 2026). According to these organizations, this practice obscures an important dimension of violence against women and hinders the comprehensive reconstruction of victims' disappearance and recovery trajectories.

Similar inconsistencies are also evident in the official registry of clandestine graves. According to information compiled by the Citizen Platform on Clandestine Graves (*Plataforma Ciudadana de Fosas*), between 2006 and 2024, state prosecutors' offices reported the discovery of 5,532 clandestine graves, whereas the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic (*Fiscalía General de la República*) officially recognized only 630 during the same period (*Plataforma Ciudadana de Fosas*, 2025). In 2024 alone, state prosecutors reported 786 discoveries, compared with only 18 acknowledged by the federal authority (*Plataforma Ciudadana de Fosas*, 2025). Specialized organizations have suggested that these discrepancies may result from the absence of standardized reporting criteria among prosecutors' offices as well as possible institutional underreporting. Compounding this problem, in 2025 the National Search Commission (CNB) removed its public registry containing data on clan-

destine graves. Consequently, Mexico currently lacks an official public government registry of clandestine graves (*Plataforma Ciudadana de Fosas*, 2025). This situation is further aggravated by the institutional weakness of the country's search and investigative system. As of May 2025, states such as Chihuahua, Durango, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosi, Sonora and Yucatan still lacked specialized prosecutor's offices dedicated to investigating enforced disappearances, despite federal legislation requiring their establishment since 2017 (*Camara de Diputados*, 2017).

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that official statistics on disappearances do not necessarily constitute a homogeneous and stable measure of violence but are instead the product of fragmented systems, inconsistent methodologies and administrative processes capable of retroactively altering the data. Under these conditions, the figures presented by both state governments and the federal government should be interpreted with caution, as they may reflect administrative changes rather than genuine reductions in violence.

At the end of 2025, President Claudia Sheinbaum announced a comprehensive review of the National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons (RNP-

Between 2006 and 2024, state prosecutors' offices reported the discovery of 5,532 clandestine graves, whereas the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic officially recognized only 630 during the same period (Plataforma Ciudadana de Fosas, 2025).

NO), including the requirement that a formal criminal investigation be opened for every reported disappearance. The President also stated that the new process would seek to distinguish between individuals who had been located, voluntary absences, cases linked to organized crime and files with active criminal investigations. However, specialists warned that these modifications could once again alter the criteria used to compile the registry and further deepen uncertainty regarding the historical consistency of the records. Moreover, the evidence presented here shows that inconsistencies and opacity persist.

Consistent with these concerns, the Mexico Peace Index 2026 warned that serious structural problems associated with disappearances, criminal violence and institutional weakness remained unresolved (IEP, 2026). It is worth noting that the government used the findings of the Peace Index to support its narrative of success in public security policy, once again emphasizing an alleged decline in homicides while omitting disappearances from the official narrative. Signos Vitales has maintained that these inconsistencies reflect growing political control over the statistical narrative surrounding public security. In addition, several specialists have argued that disappearances help reduce pressure on homicide sta-

tistics, since many victims are not immediately incorporated into official records of lethal violence.

The crisis reveals not only a public security problem but also a structural challenge to transparency and accountability. The absence of standardized registration criteria, inconsistencies across official databases and dependence on information generated by authorities with differing institutional capacities make it difficult to assess accurately the true evolution of violence in Mexico. Under these conditions, changes observed in certain indicators may result both from genuine variations in the phenomenon itself and from administrative, methodological, or reporting modifications. Strengthening independent mechanisms for the validation of public information is therefore essential.

Institutional weakening is also reflected in the increasingly prominent role assumed by search collectives. Across different regions of the country, relatives of missing persons and civil society organizations continue to carry out search and investigative activities that, according to both national and international standards, should primarily be the responsibility of the State. At the same time, violence against these groups has intensified. Several journalistic investiga-

The government used the findings of the Peace Index to support its narrative of success in public security policy, once again emphasizing an alleged decline in homicides while omitting disappearances from the official narrative.

tions document that between 2010 and May 2025, at least 44 searchers –most of them women belonging to family search collectives– were murdered or disappeared while participating in search activities. Notably, the administration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador accounted for the majority of these cases, with 17 murders and 1 disappearance during that period. Moreover, 2025 became the deadliest year on record, with 7 murders and 6 disappearances. As a result, the administrations of Morena account for 73.81% of all lethal attacks against searchers recorded since 2010 (Article 19, 2026).

Finally, the transparency problems surrounding public security described above are compounded by an environment in which journalism faces increasingly adverse conditions. By performing an essential role in documenting human rights violations and exposing inconsistencies in official information, journalists serve as a fundamental mechanism of democratic oversight. Nevertheless, they continue to be subjected to threats, assaults and killings, making Mexico one of the most dangerous countries in the world for practicing journalism outside contexts of open armed conflict. Since 2000, at least 176 journalists have been murdered and 32 remain missing in Mexico (Article 19, 2026).

As previously reported by Signos Vitales, particularly during the administration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, alarming levels of violence against journalists were recorded. In 2023 alone, 561 attacks against members of the press were documented, most of them involving intimidation, harassment and threats, as well as the illegitimate use of public authority through stigmatization and judicial harassment (Signos Vitales, 2024). Overall, violence and attacks against the press during the Lopez Obrador administration increased by 62.13% compared with the administration of Enrique Peña Nieto (Signos Vitales, 2024). In addition, 37 journalists were murdered between December 1, 2018 and April 2024 (RSF, 2024).

During the current administration of Claudia Sheinbaum, a report by Article 19 documented 451 attacks



Abuses of public authority increased by 7.30%, rising from 114 cases of judicial harassment in 2024 to 153 cases in 2025 (Article 19, 2026). Moreover, practices such as the Lie Detector continue to stigmatize the press during the morning conferences.

Image: "Sheinbaum announces weekly "Lie Detector" program headed by Luisa Alcalde" at <https://altavoztamaulipas.com/panorama-nacionales/sheinbaum-lanza-detector-de-mentiras-contra-desinformacion/>

against journalists and media organizations during 2025, equivalent to one attack every 19 hours (Article 19, 2026). The same report recorded seven murders of journalists during 2025, two more than in 2024. Meanwhile, the National Citizens' Observatory (ONC) reported the murder of nine journalists during 2025 alone (ONC, 2025).

Although Article 19 reported that the federal government had adopted a strategy aimed at reducing the daily stigmatization of journalists during the presidential morning press conferences that characterized the Lopez Obrador administration, the apparent decline in certain forms of aggression does not mean that incidents have ceased during President Claudia Sheinbaum's morning briefings. On the contrary, abuses of public authority increased by 7.30%, rising from 114 cases of judicial harassment in 2024 to 153 cases in 2025 (Article 19, 2026). Moreover, practices such as the Lie Detector (Detector de Mentiras) continue to stigmatize the press during the morning conferences. This illustrates how Mexico has evolved from a country characterized by political rhetoric into one marked by indirect censorship and, above all, by the abusive use of laws and legal instruments, placing the country second only to Cuba in this regard (Article 19, 2026).

Violence against journalists not only silences individual critical voices but also generates a broader climate of intimidation and self-censorship. This, in turn, limits the capacity of the media to document abuses, investigate irregularities and challenge official narratives and statistics, thereby weakening mechanisms of public scrutiny. As a consequence, problems of transparency and accountability deepen, society's access to independent information becomes increasingly restricted and the fundamental guarantees necessary for democratic governance continue to erode.

Taken together, the available evidence demonstrates that Mexico's security crisis cannot be understood solely through the lens of intentional homicides. The persistence of mass disappearances, inconsistencies in official records, violence against searchers and the growing number of attacks against journalists all reflect a progressive erosion of the country's mechanisms of transparency and accountability. Beyond the violence itself, the central challenge lies in the increasing difficulty of accurately understanding the true magnitude of Mexico's security crisis.

In the health sector, access to key data –such as budgets, public procurement, and even public health data crucial for research and the implementation of public policies– has been restricted.

3.3. HEALTH & HUMANITARIAN CRISIS: COVID-19, the Invisibilization of Diseases and Medicine Shortages

Among the many crises facing Mexico, another concerns the availability and quality of information on health indicators. At Signos Vitales (2024a), we have made sustained efforts to bring attention to this issue. The weakening of the transparency system in the health sector has not been an isolated phenomenon but rather the result of an institutional and administrative restructuring that has limited access to key information, including budget data, public procurement records and even critical public health data essential for research and the formulation of public policy.

According to the General Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information (Camara de Diputados, 2025), the national transparency system includes a transparency subsystem for each federal entity. This means that all public information generated by obligated entities in the exercise of public resources—including state and municipal governments—must be accessible, timely and verifiable.

Accordingly, the reporting and disclosure of high-quality official information is also an obligation of the public health sector in each federal entity. Howev-

er, this obligation is not always fulfilled. According to the State Fiscal Information Transparency Index²⁸ (Aregional, 2026), there was profound polarization in the accountability of state health expenditures across Mexico in 2025. This problem affected 28 of the 32 states, which scored below 60 points (on a scale from 0 to 100)²⁹, placing them in the category of deficient transparency (Aregional, 2026). This indicates significant weaknesses in the availability of public information on the official websites of State Ministries of Health and Decentralized Public Agencies (OPDs), as assessed through six indicators: regulatory framework (planning, revenues and public expenditure); operating costs (service provision and responses to social demands); accountability (official reports); results evaluation; and statistics.

The findings indicate that 27 of the 32 state health systems do not publish information related to pharmaceutical inventory control. Furthermore, 59.3%

²⁸It is an indicator that quantifies the level of availability, currency and quality of fiscal information generated and published by the governments of the federal entities on their official websites.

²⁹The national average is 37.8 points on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 represents zero transparency and 100 represents high transparency. The states with the best results were Jalisco, Queretaro, Sinaloa and Guanajuato. The lowest results were recorded in Chihuahua, Morelos, Nuevo Leon and Nayarit. (Aregional, 2026).

Public information weakened across five indicators:

- 1. Regulatory framework (revenue and public expenditure planning);*
- 2. Operating costs (service provision and addressing social demands);*
- 3. Accountability (official reports);*
- 4. Results evaluation;*
- 5. and Statistics.*

of the states do not provide complete financial, accounting and budgetary reports, despite these being required under the Government Accounting Law (Ley de Contabilidad Gubernamental, LCG) to ensure proper harmonization of public information. Likewise, nearly half of the states (46.8%) present incomplete or missing information regarding the reporting formats required by the Financial Discipline Law for the Health Sector, which establishes principles of fiscal and financial responsibility for local governments and regulates limits on allocated public resources. In addition, 14 of the 32 states failed to publish information on internal or external audits for the 2023 and 2024 fiscal years. These findings reveal substantial disparities across the federal entities and underscore the persistent challenges to ensuring accountability in one of the most sensitive areas of public policy: public health expenditure (Aregional, 2026).

These concerns persist because the lack of transparency directly affects both healthcare performance—through declining quality of services—and public trust, by undermining accountability, facilitating corruption and weakening informed decision-making. Ultimately, this generates greater inequality, discrimination and increased costs and risks for patients, healthcare professionals and the population

at large (Alizadeh *et al.*, 2025). In Mexico, however, the health crisis extends well beyond issues of transparency. Health policy decisions, together with institutional reforms—including the elimination of Seguro Popular, the replacement of Insabi and the transition to IMSS-Bienestar—have had profound consequences, not only financially but also directly on people's health and well-being.

Changes in the governance of pharmaceutical procurement fundamentally altered the way medical supplies were acquired, relying on fragmented contracts negotiated with limited advance planning. This resulted in widespread shortages and significant disruption throughout the healthcare system, all while the country was confronting the COVID-19 public health emergency. In 2020, the Government of Mexico decided to overhaul the public procurement system with the objective of reducing supplier concentration and ensuring the timely availability of medicines. In practice, however, this new strategy evolved into a series of experimental procurement approaches that ultimately led to severe supply-chain disruptions and widespread shortages of medicines and medical supplies.

During the 2020–2021 period, the Government transferred pharmaceutical procurement responsibilities

Reporting and ensuring the transparency of high-quality official information is an obligation that also applies to the public health sector in each state, yet it is not always met. According to the State Fiscal Information Transparency Index (Aregional, 2026), there is a profound polarization regarding accountability for health spending across the states in 2025.

from the Ministry of Finance's Office of the Chief Procurement Officer (Oficialia Mayor de Hacienda) to the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), which provided technical assistance to the now-defunct Insabi in carrying out consolidated pharmaceutical procurement. However, insufficient logistical experience resulted in widespread delays and numerous contracts being left unfulfilled (Signos Vitales, 2024b).

An analysis of the effects of the changes in the procurement model between 2018 (prior to the reform) and 2022 found that the share of pharmaceutical purchases concentrated among the ten largest suppliers to the government decreased from 76% to 30%. However, this outcome came at a considerable cost: higher prices for procured medicines³⁰, reduced competition in public health procurement procedures, rushed purchasing processes, inadequate planning and coordination among public health institutions and the underutilization of existing systems for the internal distribution of medicines ³¹(IMCO, 2023).

³⁰In 2022, 20% of the total procurement value was allocated to contracts under 5 million pesos, whereas in 2018 this proportion was only 5%. This ran counter to the objective of purchasing in large volumes at wholesale prices (IMCO, 2023).

³¹Public tenders went from accounting for 47% of the total procurement value in 2018 to just 10% in 2022 (IMCO, 2023).

Subsequently, the procurement model evolved toward consolidated purchasing through Birmex (Laboratorios de Biologicos y Reactivos de Mexico), which was granted authority and responsibility for the procurement and distribution of medicines and medical supplies for the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS), the Institute for Social Security and Services for State Workers (ISSSTE) and the Health Services of the Mexican Social Security Institute for Well-being (IMSS-Bienestar) (DOF, 2023).

Following the reforms and regulatory amendments enacted in 2024 and 2026 (DOF, 2024 and 2026), Birmex became the government's operational arm for pharmaceutical procurement. Under this arrangement, the Ministry of Health determines healthcare needs, while Birmex formally executes consolidated procurement. On the one hand, the agency became responsible for signing contracts with pharmaceutical companies, managing international public tenders and imposing penalties on suppliers (DOF, 2024). On the other hand, Birmex is expected to become the central authority responsible for inventory distribution. Historically, pharmaceutical companies delivered medicines directly to warehouses and hospitals. Under the new model, Birmex is mandated to coordinate the national storage, transportation and

Birmex became responsible for signing contracts with pharmaceutical companies, managing international public tenders and imposing penalties on suppliers (DOF, 2024). On the other hand, Birmex is expected to become the central authority responsible for inventory distribution.

supply network, supported by a system of national warehouses (DOF, 2026).

The key aspect of the latest agreement (DOF, 2026) lies in its regulatory rationale. The Government proposes that Birmex provide an integrated service encompassing the procurement, storage, supply and distribution of medicines and medical supplies, thereby allowing the health sector to consolidate its relationship with the pharmaceutical industry and laboratories under a single contractual framework. In other words, Birmex will no longer serve solely as the agency responsible for centralized procurement of medicines and medical supplies but will also operate an integrated service that includes procurement, storage and distribution.

This development has generated considerable concern given Birmex's performance over time. As of May 2026, more than 14 million units of medicines remained undelivered. The available data indicate that these unfulfilled deliveries account for 8.1% of the total. This figure is compounded by an additional 10.2% of medicines reported as in transit and another 13.7% pending delivery validation, resulting in approximately 32% of all pharmaceutical units not yet fully delivered. The remaining 68% have report-

edly been delivered –a figure that differs substantially from the 97% availability rate repeatedly cited during the government's morning press conferences (Ramirez, 2026). Furthermore, Birmex's management has been marked by serious irregularities according to procurement records for 2025–2026, including price overcharges amounting to 13 billion pesos and irregularities involving the acquisition of medicines lacking sanitary registration (Oropeza, 2025).

Moreover, the disruption caused by the COVID–19 pandemic exposed the fragility of healthcare systems worldwide and highlighted the strategic importance of maintaining domestic capabilities for the development and production of biological products. In this context, countries with well-established scientific and technological infrastructures substan-

As of May 2026, more than 14 million units of medicines remained undelivered. The available data indicate that these unfulfilled deliveries account for 8.1% of the total. This figure is compounded by an additional 10.2% of medicines reported as in transit and another 13.7% pending delivery validation, of 32% of all pharmaceutical units not yet fully delivered.



Image: "operates in chaos... yet is in charge of making purchases." at <https://estadosmx.com/operas-Birmex-en-caos-y-le-dejan-compras/>

tially increased investment in vaccine research and manufacturing. Mexico, however –which had once been a regional leader in this field– faced a scenario characterized by limited response capacity, institutional weakening and the progressive abandonment of investment in science and technology (Signos Vitales, 2026a). Evidence indicates that the deterioration of the country’s vaccine industry, resulting from reduced investment, the limited organizational flexibility of Birmex and the absence of a comprehensive public policy strategy, has led to the loss of national autonomy in vaccine manufacturing (Perez y Castillo, 2023).

Mexico’s productive capacity has shown a sustained decline (Signos Vitales, 2026a). At present, the country does not produce sufficient quantities even of the vaccines included in its own national immunization schedule³², resulting in a high degree of dependence on international pharmaceutical companies. Birmex maintains agreements with companies such as Glaxo, Merck and Sanofi (Tamez, 2016; Cuevas, 2023), highlighting the technological and productive gap that has widened since the 1990s in comparison

³² By 1990, Mexico had positioned itself as one of the seven countries in the world capable of producing all the vaccines for the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI).

with global advances in vaccine development and production.

Transparency is indispensable for understanding the health status of the population and for making sound public policy decisions. In Mexico, public health has faced profound challenges that were further intensified during the health emergency. Yet the lessons left unlearned reveal a troubling reality: Mexico experienced not only exceptionally high mortality but also extraordinarily high levels of premature mortality³³. Furthermore, the country recorded the highest number of deaths among healthcare workers worldwide³⁴ and ranked fourth globally in excess mortality, with 833,473 excess deaths (Sanchez y Sepulveda, 2024).

The evidence demonstrates that public health decisions produce effects that extend far beyond the administrative organization of the healthcare sector. The continual restructuring of institutions, procurement models and distribution mechanisms has al-

³³ COVID–19 was the leading cause of death among the 35–44, 45–54 and 55–64 age groups; the second leading cause of mortality for the 25–35 age group; and the fifth for the 15–24 age group (Sanchez & Sepulveda, 2024).

³⁴ From January 2020 to November 2021, 4,572 healthcare workers died from COVID–19. This figure was 1.6 times higher than in the United States. If the period is extended to May 2023, the number rises to a total of 4,843.

Mexico’s productive capacity has shown a sustained decline (Signos Vitales, 2026a). At present, the country does not produce sufficient quantities even of the vaccines included in its own national immunization schedule, resulting in a high degree of dependence on international pharmaceutical companies.

TABLE 7. HOW HAS THE TRANSPARENCY SYSTEM BEEN WEAKENED? – AREAS OF OPACITY

AREA	OPACITY / WEAKNESS	EVIDENCE (KEY FIGURES)
ENERGY AND THE ILLEGAL ECONOMY	» Inconsistencies between imports, consumption and smuggling. » Reduced financial traceability for Pemex.	» Imports of oil and derivatives: -31.6% vs. 2018. » Black market: 21.2% of national demand (2021). » Accumulated fiscal fuel fraud: \$9.031 billion (2019–2024).
PUBLIC SPENDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE	» Distortions in the measurement of public and private investment linked to strategic projects.	» Overestimated private investment: 421.8 billion pesos. » Underestimated public investment: 280.2 billion pesos..
DISAPPEARANCES AND SECURITY	» Fragmented records. » Methodological changes. » Discrepancies between databases..	» 134,812 missing or unlocated persons. » 70,000 unidentified bodies. » 46,724 case files with insufficient information.
JOURNALISM AND SEARCHERS	» Violence against those producing independent information.	» 44 searchers murdered or disappeared since 2010. » 176 journalists murdered and 32 disappeared since 2000. » 451 attacks against journalists in 2025
PUBLIC HEALTH	» Incomplete information on spending, medicines and system performance.	» 28 out of 32 states with poor transparency. » 27 out of 32 states lacking information on medicine controls. » As of May 2026, a shortfall of over 14 million units of medication.

Source: Signos Vitales 2026.

tered not only the operation of the healthcare system but also its capacity to monitor outcomes in a timely and effective manner.

The problems observed over recent years—from deficiencies in consolidated procurement to medicine shortages and the erosion of national vaccine production capabilities—underscore the importance of maintaining public information that is verifiable, continuous and comparable over time. Transparency in healthcare is not merely an administrative obligation; it constitutes an essential instrument for anticipating risks, correcting failures and ensuring that public policy decisions effectively respond to the health needs of the population.

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The real challenge facing transparency in Mexico is not limited to a digital blackout or the disappearance of government websites; the current phenomenon is far more subtle and, consequently, far more complex. Data continue to be produced, yet the institutional machinery is failing in its most fundamental responsibility: ensuring that this information is complete, consistent and useful for understanding reality. Modern opacity does not always consist of concealing the

numbers; sometimes it consists of publishing information that no longer reflects what is actually happening on the ground.

In the economic and energy sectors, this disconnect becomes evident when attempting to map the thin line separating the formal economy from illegal markets. The figures simply do not add up. Although Mexico ended 2025 with a US\$25.6 billion deficit in petroleum products, the official volume of imported crude oil and petroleum derivatives fell by 31.6% compared with 2018. This substantial discrepancy becomes particularly alarming when one considers that, according to estimates by the Tax Administration Service (SAT) itself, fuel smuggling accounted for more than one-fifth (21.2%) of national demand. These inconsistencies reveal an alarming loss of technical oversight and underscore the urgent need to rebuild the systems responsible for tracing and validating strategic economic information.

In the field of public security, deficiencies in data recording carry devastating human consequences. The political fixation on homicide statistics has ultimately obscured far deeper tragedies. As of June 2026, Mexico faces a historic burden of more than 134,000 missing or unlocated persons, compounded by a fo-

Data continue to be produced, yet the institutional machinery is failing in its most fundamental responsibility: ensuring that this information is complete, consistent and useful for understanding reality.

rensic crisis involving approximately 70,000 unidentified bodies. Rather than providing certainty, official databases have become a quagmire of contradictions between state and federal records, retrospective revisions and methodological criteria that change as the process unfolds, making it nearly impossible to determine the true magnitude of the crisis.

This institutional weakness is compounded by direct violence against those attempting to fill these information gaps. Since 2010, at least 44 individuals engaged in the search for missing relatives have been murdered or disappeared. This violence has also extended to journalism, with 176 journalists murdered and 32 disappeared since 2000. The message is unequivocal: when social counterweights and independent investigators are silenced through violence, the country loses its last line of informational defense and is left confined to the official narrative.

The health sector provides another example of how administrative fragmentation disrupts the continuity of public policy. Medicine shortages are not merely a matter of perception; they are a management failure clearly reflected in the data. As of May 2026, the system reported a backlog of more than 14 million undelivered pharmaceutical units, with only 68% of

medical supplies having reached their intended destinations. This structural inability to process technical information and anticipate crises is not new. It had already manifested itself dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in more than 833,000 excess deaths, exposing the severe limitations of the Mexican State in responding effectively to public health emergencies in real time.

Taken together, these sectors point to the same underlying crisis of institutional capacity: Mexico is progressively losing its ability to measure, understand and ultimately correct its own shortcomings. Transparency is not merely the bureaucratic act of uploading a document to a government website; it is the existence of a reliable, comparable and verifiable information system capable of holding public authorities accountable and evaluating the real impact of government decisions. The most serious long-term danger is not simply a shortage of data, but the normalization of a system of public administration that designs the country's future on the basis of broken diagnoses. When a State relinquishes its capacity to understand its own reality, it also relinquishes any meaningful possibility of transforming it.





4.

The new laws strengthened the State's capacity to collect, centralize, and classify strategic information based on arguments related to public security, intelligence, and national security.

4 WHAT NEW INFORMATION CAPABILITIES HAS THE STATE ACQUIRED?

–Asymmetry in the exchange of information



4.1. LEGAL RESTRICTIONS and the Expansion of “National Security”

In recent years, the relationship between the Mexican State and public information has undergone a significant transformation. While certain institutional capacities aimed at ensuring transparency, independent evaluation and citizens’ access to information have weakened, other capacities related to the collection, concentration and processing of governmental and citizens’ information have been strengthened. Within this context, recent administrations have expanded the use of legal and administrative mechanisms that permit the restriction of

information under criteria associated with national security, public security and intelligence. Although these instruments may respond to legitimate state needs, their expansion requires robust mechanisms of oversight, democratic accountability and institutional checks and balances.

Although the government’s official discourse maintains that the right to access information remains intact, a series of institutional and legal changes has raised concerns among civil society organizations, journalists and international organizations regarding a possible weakening of the institutional checks and balances that safeguard transparency.

Sheinbaum’s government has established a new institutional framework that grants the State greater capacity to gather, process, and manage strategic information, altering the balance between government powers to manage data and the mechanisms available to citizens to oversee its use.

Beyond the dissolution of the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) already examined in this report, the legal mechanism most frequently employed to restrict information has been the classification of public works, contracts, technical studies, costs and government documentation under the justification of national security. Although this practice began during the administration of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (see Signos Vitales, 2024), the Sheinbaum administration has maintained these decrees and institutional arrangements in force. Consequently, information related to projects such as the Maya Train (Tren Maya), the Felipe Angeles International Airport and infrastructure projects operated or administered by the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena) and the Ministry of the Navy (Semar) continues to be reserved or subject to restricted access. In practical terms, this has enabled the continued withholding of contracts, supplier agreements, costs and cost overruns, as well as construction and infrastructure records.

In addition, in 2025, Sheinbaum introduced several legislative reforms and initiatives aimed at strengthening intelligence capabilities, expanding the integration of government databases and consolidating coordination mechanisms in the field of public se-

curity (Castillo Jimenez, 2025). Although the original proposals were amended in response to criticism from opposition parties and civil society organizations, Sheinbaum ultimately secured the enactment of the General Law on Transparency and Access to Information, the National System for Investigation and Intelligence in Public Security Law and the General Law of the National Public Security System.

Broadly speaking, these new laws strengthened the State's capacity to collect, centralize and classify strategic information under arguments related to public security, intelligence and national security. While one of the most significant institutional changes was the dissolution of the INAI and the transfer of its functions to entities subordinate to the Executive Branch, the new security and intelligence legislation introduced structural changes that extend well beyond the reservation of information associated with specific government projects. Whereas the principal controversies during Lopez Obrador's administration centered on the classification of information related to strategic infrastructure projects, Sheinbaum's legislation significantly expanded the State's capacity to consolidate information originating from multiple government sources within permanent intelligence and public security systems.

Sheinbaum ultimately secured the enactment of the General Law on Transparency and Access to Information, the National System for Investigation and Intelligence in Public Security Law and the General Law of the National Public Security System

These new laws strengthened the State's capacity to collect, centralize and classify strategic information under arguments related to public security, intelligence and national security.

In particular, the National System for Investigation and Intelligence in Public Security Law establishes mechanisms to integrate information derived from administrative, fiscal, asset, vehicle and public security records into platforms coordinated by the National Intelligence Center (Camara de Diputados, 2025a). It also strengthens interoperability among federal, state and municipal agencies to facilitate the real-time exchange of information and the production of intelligence products intended to support criminal investigations and public security. In parallel, the General Law of the National Public Security System reinforces the integration of national criminal information systems, detention registries, databases containing information on public security personnel and coordination platforms linking police forces, prosecutors' offices and other institutions responsible for security functions (Camara de Diputados, 2025b). These legal provisions are particularly significant in sensitive areas such as the administration of biometric databases, the use of identification and surveillance technologies, the large-scale processing of government information and the exchange of data between civilian and military institutions.

Although the government has defended these measures as necessary instruments to combat organized

crime, numerous specialists have warned that the new legal framework expands the State's authority to classify or restrict information under arguments related to national security, public security, the protection of ongoing investigations, or institutional stability. At the same time, the elimination of autonomous transparency institutions fundamentally alters the mechanisms through which citizens can oversee, challenge, or appeal such decisions.

While the restrictions applied to strategic megaprojects represent a continuation of policies developed during the previous administration, Sheinbaum's intelligence and public security reforms introduce new forms of information centralization under the concepts of national security and public security. From this perspective, the principal transformation under the Sheinbaum administration lies not only in determining what information may be classified, but also in establishing a new institutional framework that grants the State greater capacity to collect, process and manage strategic information, thereby altering the balance between governmental authority over data management and the mechanisms available to citizens for monitoring its use.

Various institutional and legal changes have raised concerns among civil society organizations, journalists, and international bodies regarding a potential reduction in transparency-related checks and balances.

4.2 NEW REGISTRIES and Access to Private Data

The mandatory registration of mobile phone lines has its closest precedent in the National Registry of Telecommunications Users (RENAUT), launched in April 2009 during the administration of Felipe Calderon. The registry was abolished only two years after its implementation (April 2011). Finally, in March 2012, the then Federal Institute for Access to Information and Data Protection (IFAI) ordered the destruction of the RENAUT database.

In 2011, the Senate decided to eliminate RENAUT after recognizing that it had failed in its objective of combating crime. At the time, crime rates increased rather than declined: extortion and kidnapping rose by 45.4% and 8%, respectively (R3D, 2020). In 2008, before the implementation of RENAUT, approximately 4,400 extortion calls were recorded. By 2010, this figure had reached 6,400 daily calls (Monroy, J., February 14, 2011).

It was not until 2019 that the discussion surrounding a Mobile Telephone Users Registry returned to the Mexican Congress. The initiative was introduced by then-Federal Deputy Mario Delgado (currently Secre-

tary of Public Education). The explanatory memorandum explicitly stated that

given the intensive and growing use of mobile telephony, it has become necessary for the State to regulate its use through rules that ensure this communication system is employed solely for lawful purposes (SIL, 2019).

From the outset of the legislative debate, specialists in digital rights questioned the effectiveness of mandatory mobile phone registration as a mechanism for combating crime. Garcia (cited in R3D, 2020 and co-founder and former director of the Network in Defense of Digital Rights) warned that such systems can easily be circumvented by criminal organizations through the use of unregistered SIM cards, secondary markets, identity theft, or foreign telecommunications services. The central issue is not merely the State's ability to collect information, but rather its capacity to demonstrate that such data collection effectively improves public security without creating new risks for users.

According to the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (CRT), as of May 13, 2026, the number of mobile phone lines linked to the verified identity of their owners reached 48 million. According to

The legal mechanism most frequently used to restrict information has been the classification of projects, contracts, technical studies, costs, and government documentation on the grounds of national security.

the same agency, by the third quarter of 2025, Mexico had 144.6 million active mobile phone lines. This means that only one out of every three mobile lines has been registered. This disparity reflects one of the principal challenges facing public policies based on large-scale digital registries: achieving an appropriate balance between legitimate security objectives and public confidence regarding the management, protection and future use of personal data.

As of the third quarter of 2025, America Movil (Telcel) and AT&T alone accounted for three-quarters of the active mobile line market, holding 57.9% and 16.4%, respectively. Likewise, these two companies concentrated the majority (72.7%) of active mobile internet connections, representing 56.2% (81.4 million connections) and 16.5% (24 million connections), respectively (CRT, 2026b).

On January 10, 2026, less than 24 hours after mandatory registration officially began, it was reported that Telcel's official registration portal contained a critical security vulnerability exposing users' identities, CURP numbers, RFC taxpayer identification numbers and email addresses. On January 12 of the same year, the Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance initiated more than 20 investigations into alleged data



breaches. The Ministry acknowledged that users' personal information had been placed at risk and that the incident "may affect the most intimate sphere of individuals' private lives" (Ministry of Anti-Corruption and Good Governance, January 12, 2026).

According to The Competitive Intelligence Unit (TCIU), two out of every three users are aware of the obligation to register their mobile phone lines, yet only 45% of them have completed the registration pro-

By the third quarter of 2025, Mexico had 144.6 million active mobile phone lines. As of May 13, 2026, the number of mobile phone lines linked to the verified identity of their owners reached 48 million. This is, one of every three lines.

Images:

Registration of cell phones at <https://criteriohidalgo.com/noticias/mexico/habra-amparos-contr-el-registro-celular-lo-que-debes-saber-sobre-tu-linea-telefonica>

Mario Delgado at <https://heraldodepuebla.com/2026/03/09/mexico-abre-debate-sobre-celulares-en-escuelas/>

cess. Distrust is the principal reason users have not registered their lines (70%). All other reasons have considerably lower incidence rates. Only 13.3% of users indicated that they did not know how to complete the registration process (CIU, 2026a). TCIU estimates that one of the principal effects on the mobile telecommunications market has been a slowdown in the expansion of the subscriber base (CIU, 2026b).

These security breaches affect private companies, users and governments alike, extending across multiple aspects of everyday life. The federal government, as well as local government agencies, has also been exposed to cyberattacks. At the end of January 2026, a cyberattack resulted in the leakage of 2.3 terabytes of information belonging to public institutions and political parties. This amount is equivalent to the personal data of approximately 36 to 36.5 million Mexicans. The compromised information included full names, residential addresses, CURP numbers, RFC taxpayer identification numbers, social security numbers, telephone numbers and institutional email addresses. Among the exposed datasets was the membership registry of the Morena political party, containing information on 26,900 party members.

The accumulation of vast quantities of information by the State also increases its institutional responsibility

to safeguard that information. The capacity to collect data must be accompanied by equivalent capabilities to ensure cybersecurity, protect sensitive information and respond effectively to security breaches. Mexico ranks second in Latin America in terms of cyberattacks. Between 2022 and 2025, through the Digital Transformation Agency, the federal government identified 16 critical cybersecurity incidents affecting various government agencies as well as private and educational sectors. It also identified an additional five incidents detected through preliminary reports or unofficial data leaks (Latinus, January 30, 2026). Those affected included the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena), the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transportation (SICT), the Office of the President's Legal Counsel, the Credit Bureau, the Bank of Mexico, the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Grupo Bimbo and FEMSA, among others (Latinus, January 30, 2026).

Perhaps the most emblematic case is that of the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena). In 2022, the extraction of classified information from Sedena became public knowledge. The breach was carried out by several hacker groups, most notably the self-proclaimed "Guacamaya" collective, which released six terabytes of data to various organizations, journalists

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and researchers. According to MCCI (MCCI, 2023b), the leaked material was equivalent to approximately 39 million pages of documents. The scale of this incident demonstrated that the accumulation of strategic information by the State requires equivalent investments in technological protection, digital infrastructure and incident response protocols.

The growing frequency of cyberattacks, as well as their increasing probability of success, is largely explained by insufficient investment in technological infrastructure. Animal Politico and the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness (IMCO) report that between 2018 and 2022, government spending on information technology—including cybersecurity—declined from 26.3 billion pesos to 23 billion pesos (Roldan, N., December 8, 2022). This reduction represents a 16% decrease (4.2 billion pesos). Following the major data breaches that occurred during those same years, the government reversed these cuts and allocated 26.6 billion pesos in 2023 (Roldan, N., December 8, 2022).

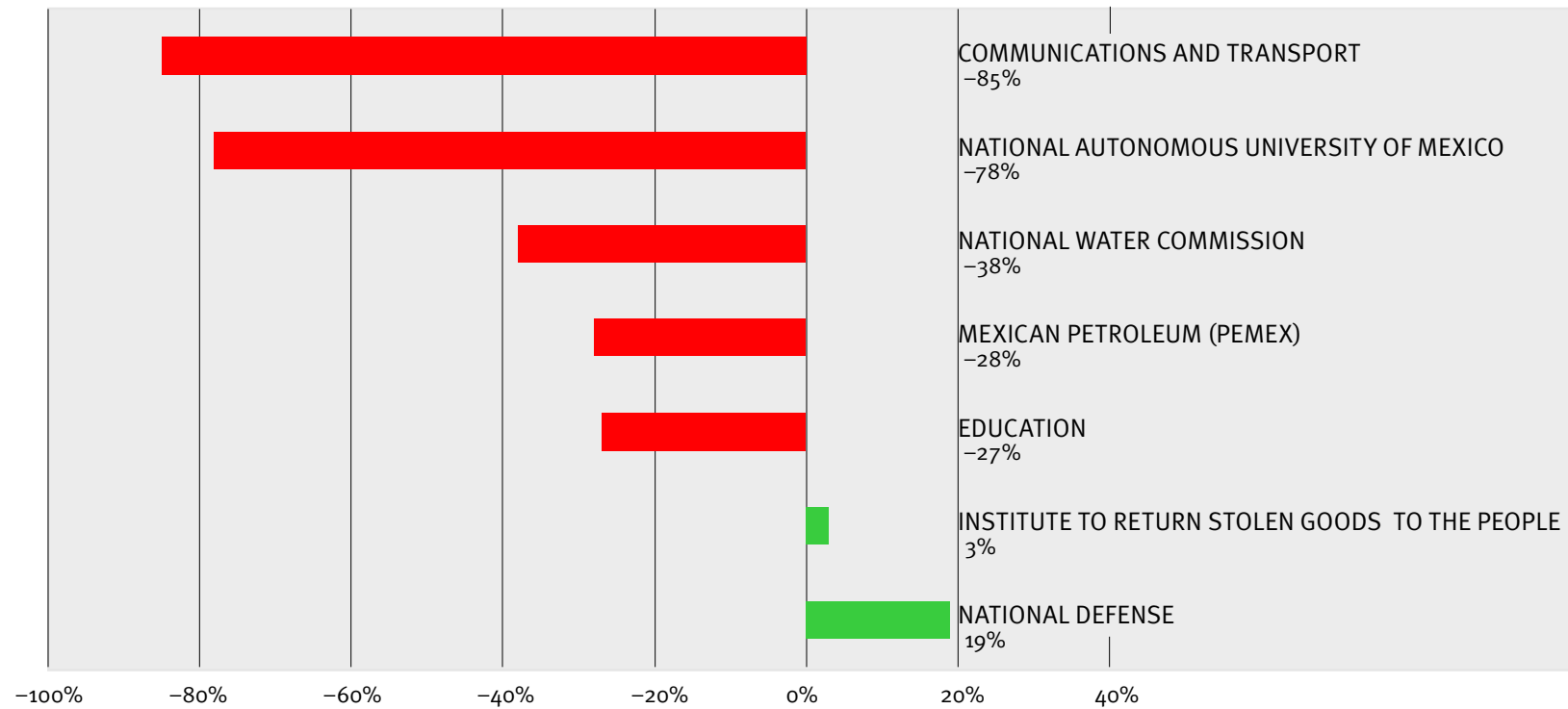
Between 2018 and 2022, the SICT, one of the institutions most severely affected by cyberattacks, experienced budget reductions of up to 65% in areas related to information technology (Roldan, N., December 8, 2022). The so-called Republican austerity policy quickly revealed its costs and by the end of 2022 the

SICT suffered a cyberattack that paralyzed its operations. Between October 24, 2022 and December 31 of the same year, both the SICT and the Federal Civil Aviation Agency suspended administrative deadlines and legal procedures. Among the affected services were the issuance and renewal of Federal Driver's Licenses, as well as procedures for issuing permits related to federal motor transport, private transport and their auxiliary services (Graph 4).

The reduction in investment in critical infrastructure did not end after the first cyberattacks. According to an investigation conducted by El Universal and IMCO, several government agencies that had been exposed to cyberattacks continued reducing their spending on digital security. These reductions included expenditures on software, information technology assets and computing infrastructure. The Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transportation (SICT) remains the most emblematic case in terms of budget cuts: between 2018 and 2025, spending on information technology declined by 85.2% (Castillo, J. & Hernandez, M., April 11, 2026). In 2018, the SICT allocated 1.8 billion pesos to information technology expenditures, but by 2025 this amount had fallen to 265.5 million pesos (Castillo, J. & Hernandez, M., April 11, 2026).

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GRAPH 4. VARIATION IN IT SPENDING BY INSTITUTION
2018 – 2025 (%)



Source: IMCO (2026).

The cyberattacks have taken different forms, ranging from fraud to ransomware attacks. In 2019, Pemex and later in 2023, the National Water Commission (Conagua), became victims of ransomware attacks. Between 2018 and 2025, their respective information technology budgets declined from 2.7 billion pesos and 1.1 billion pesos to 2 billion pesos and 660.5 mil-

lion pesos, respectively (Castillo, J. & Hernandez, M., April 11, 2026). In another case, a subdomain of the Institute to Return Stolen Goods to the People (IN-DEP) was subjected to a website defacement attack, involving unauthorized alteration of its web content. Likewise, multiple alerts concerning identity theft cases have

The SICT remains the most emblematic case regarding budget cuts: between 2018 and 2025, IT spending was reduced by 85.2%. (Castillo, J & Hernandez, M., April 11, 2026).

been documented since 2021, when extortion schemes involving fraudulent emails impersonating then-director Ernesto Prieto were detected (Castillo, J. & Hernandez, M., April 11, 2026).

It is highly likely that, although numerous cyberattacks have been documented, the overwhelming majority have never been publicly disclosed. Despite the documented incidents, specialists warn that the known cases may represent only a fraction of the actual problem. Castillo and Hernandez (2026) argue that “the opacity surrounding these incidents reflects a strategy aimed at avoiding political costs and the obligation to notify those affected.” This underscores the need to strengthen reporting obligations, traceability mechanisms and public communication requirements for incidents involving government information or personal data.

The government is not the only actor responsible for violating data privacy. The federal government itself has also infringed upon individuals’ privacy through the extensive use of the Pegasus spyware. State-sponsored surveillance remained in place during the Lopez Obrador administration. According to WhatsApp, between April and May 2019, 456 individuals in Mexico were targeted using Pegasus. This

represented 37% of all documented cases worldwide during that period. Consequently, Mexico became the world’s largest user of this malware, surpassing India (100 cases) and Bahrain (82 cases) (R3D, 2025a). According to investigative reporting, the purchaser was the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena), while the end user was the Military Intelligence Center (R3D, 2023).

Today, the Mexican State possesses significantly greater capacity to collect and process information about its citizens. However, this expansion has not been accompanied by a comparable strengthening of technological infrastructure, data protection, or independent oversight mechanisms. The available evidence reveals an institutional paradox: while the government’s capacity to concentrate information

The Mexican government is considered the world's leading user of Pegasus, surpassing India and Bahrain (R3D, 2025a). According to journalistic investigations, the purchaser was Sedena, and the end user was the Military Intelligence Center (R3D, 2023).



Image: Activist protests against Government espionage. Photo: Miguel Tovar, Getty Images at <https://elpais.com/mexico/2021-07-25/el-caso-pegasus-asi-evoluciono-la-amplisima-red-de-vigilancia-sostenida-desde-el-gobierno-de-mexico.html>

continues to expand, vulnerabilities that may expose sensitive personal data remain unresolved. Public trust depends not only on the State's ability to obtain information, but also on its ability to protect that information, justify its use and remain accountable for how it is managed.

4.3 DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE and the Fragility of Data Protection

The interception of telephone communications and the extraction of personal data, including geolocation information, are authorized under applicable law when conducted in the investigation of organized crime offenses and illicit financial operations, pursuant to Article 400 Bis of the Federal Criminal Code.

The Federal Public Prosecutor's Office has significantly expanded its surveillance activities. According to information provided by the National Center for Justice Specialized in the Control of Investigative Techniques, Arraignment and Communications Interception (the Center)³⁵, the number of requests for the

interception of private communications resolved by the Center increased from 5,576 in 2019 (OAJ, 2019) to 8,528 in 2025 (OAJ, 2025). Over the past six-year federal administration, requests for the interception of private communications increased by 52.9%.

In 2019, interception orders were authorized in 3,755 cases (67.3%), while 809 requests (14.5%) were denied (OAJ, 2019). By 2025, interception orders were granted in 5,334 cases (62.6%), while 1,310 requests (15.4%) were denied (OAJ, 2025). Although the overall distribution of the Center's decisions has remained relatively stable, the total number of authorized interceptions continues to rise (42.1% cumulative increase), broadly following the growth in the number of requests. By contrast, the greatest increase has occurred in cases dismissed or resolved on other procedural grounds, rising from 745 cases (13.4% of the total) in 2019 (OAJ, 2019) to 1,769 cases (20.7% of the total) in 2025, representing a 137.4% cumulative increase (OAJ, 2025).

Pursuant to Article 303 of the National Code of Criminal Procedure, the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office may require telecommunications concessionaires, authorized service providers, or providers of digital

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Between 2019 and 2025, the number of requests for the interception of private communications increased from 5,576 to 8,528 (OAJ, 2019, 2025).

³⁵ The Center began operations on May 16, 2017. Its creation was a response to the workloads of the District Courts specializing in precautionary measures and the oversight of investigative techniques; consequently, it was deemed necessary to alter the organizational model and establish this

Center—based in Mexico City—to assume the jurisdiction of those courts.

applications and content to provide real-time geolocation information or retained telecommunications data. Between 2019 and 2025, the Center increased the number of requests resolved to obtain information from telecommunications companies from 10,344 to 19,791 (OAJ, 2025). Over the past six years, such requests increased by 91.3%.

In 2019, orders compelling telecommunications companies to provide information were granted in 6,653 cases (64.3% of all decisions), while 1,919 requests (18.6%) were denied (OAJ, 2019). Six years later, in 2025, such orders were granted in 15,517 cases (78.4% of all decisions), while 3,111 requests (15.7%) were denied (OAJ, 2025). The number of judicial orders requiring telecommunications companies to provide information continues to increase (133.2% cumulative growth), doing so at a faster pace than other types of judicial decisions (Graph 5).

Although the upward trend appears to be clear, it is not actually possible to determine with precision the number of telephone lines or requests made to telecommunications companies on a per-user basis. According to the Network in Defense of Digital Rights (R3D), “authorities often request data concerning multiple individuals through a single request” (R3D,

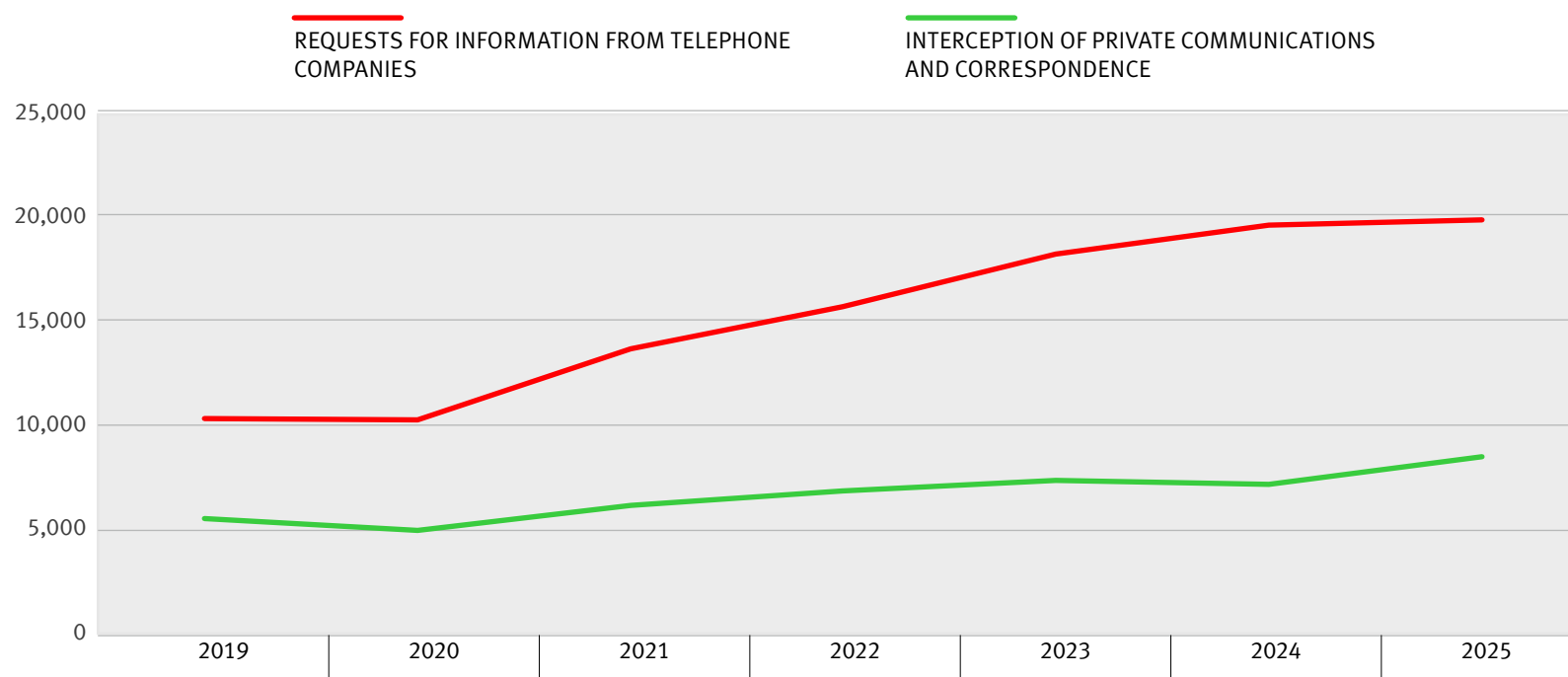
2025b). Consequently, the reported figures reflect the number of requests submitted rather than the number of individuals, telephone lines, or mobile users affected.

According to R3D, one of the principal challenges in assessing the scope of digital surveillance in Mexico lies in the discrepancies between the information reported by public authorities and that reported by telecommunications companies (R3D, 2025b). These inconsistencies make it difficult to determine accurately how many requests were submitted, which institutions initiated them and how many individuals, telephone lines, or devices may have been affected. Such discrepancies are evident at both the federal and state levels. Several telecommunications companies reported receiving requests for access to retained data from institutions such as the Center for Investigation and National Security (CISEN), the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit and the Ministry of the Navy, even though these agencies reported zero requests through transparency mechanisms or lacked explicit legal authority to make certain types of requests (R3D, 2025b).

At the state level, the discrepancies are equally significant. In 2020, the Attorney General’s Offices of

The number of requests for information sent to telephone companies pursuant to orders issued by the Center continues to rise (a cumulative increase of 133.2%), and it is doing so at a higher rate than other types of resolutions.

GRAPH 5. INTERCEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION REQUESTS TO TELEPHONE COMPANIES
2019 – 2025



Source: In-house elaboration with information from Federal Judiciary Council and the OAJ.

the State of Mexico, Guanajuato, Hidalgo and Tamaulipas reported to the National Transparency Platform that they had submitted 1,728, 21, 3,988 and 1,578 requests, respectively, for access to retained telecommunications data and geolocation information. However, in response to freedom of information requests submitted by R3D, these same institutions

reported only 37, 96, 116 and 586 requests, respectively (R3D, 2025b). A similar pattern was observed at the federal level. The former Office of the Attorney General of the Republic (PGR) reported submitting 10,444 requests for access to retained telecommunications data in 2016 and 7,073 in 2017. However, records provided by telecommunications companies

The figures for the interception of private communications rose by 52.9% between 2019 and 2025.

indicated 13,052 requests in 2016 and 12,160 in 2017, representing discrepancies of approximately 25% and 72%, respectively (R3D, 2025b).

The available evidence demonstrates a significant expansion in the State's capacity to access digital information. Between 2019 and 2025, the number of requests for the interception of private communications resolved by the National Center for Justice Specialized in the Control of Investigative Techniques increased from 5,576 to 8,528, representing a 52.9% increase, while the number of interception orders granted rose by 42.1%. During the same period, requests submitted to telecommunications companies for access to information increased from 10,344 to 19,791 (91.3%) and the number of requests for which judicial authorization was granted increased by 133.2% (OAJ, 2019; OAJ, 2025).

Nevertheless, the principal challenge is not merely the growth of these surveillance tools, but rather the institutional capacity to determine their actual scope. R3D warns that official statistics may substantially underestimate the number of individuals affected because a single request may encompass multiple users, telephone lines, or devices. Furthermore, the organization identifies significant discrepancies between official government records and the

data reported by telecommunications companies. For example, in 2016 and 2017, the former PGR reported figures that differed by 25% and 72%, respectively, from those reported by telecommunications providers (R3D, 2025b).

Additionally, R3D reports that between 2016 and 2019, at least 57.3% of the reported requests were carried out without prior judicial authorization (R3D, 2025b). These findings demonstrate that the expansion of the State's technological capabilities must be accompanied by equivalent mechanisms of transparency, oversight and accountability to ensure that such powers are exercised under appropriate institutional safeguards (Table 8).

CHAPTER CONCLUSIONS

The evidence analyzed in this chapter reveals an alarming contradiction in Mexico's institutional design: a profound asymmetry in the control of information. As the tools available to citizens to monitor those in power continue to erode, the State has strengthened its legal and technological apparatus to monitor both public and private life. This is not merely a case of administrative neglect, but rather a quiet reconfiguration of the balance of power: citi-

The State requires intelligence tools to combat phenomena as complex as organized crime; the real danger is that these technological superpowers are growing without democratic controls.

As the tools available to citizens for monitoring those in power wither away, the state apparatus strengthens its legal and technological machinery to oversee public and private life.

TABLE 8. WHAT NEW INFORMATION CAPABILITIES HAS THE STATE ACQUIRED? – ASYMMETRY IN INFORMATION EXCHANGE (1/2)

AREA	NEW CAPACITY / RESTRICTION OF INFORMATION	EVIDENCE (KEY FIGURES)	CONSEQUENCES FOR TRANSPARENCY
NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE	» Centralization of government information under new intelligence and public security laws.	» General Law on Transparency and Access to Information; Law on the National Public Security Research and Intelligence System; and General Law on the National Public Security System. » Integration of tax, asset, vehicle, criminal and administrative records into platforms coordinated by the CNI. » Dissolution of the INAI and transfer of its functions to the Executive Branch.	» Reduced capacity for citizens to oversee decisions regarding the classification, use and exchange of strategic information.
MEGAPROJECTS AND INFORMATION WITHHOLDING	» Continued use of the national security rationale to restrict access to public information.	» Restrictions remain in place regarding the Maya Train, AIFA and projects operated by the Ministry of Defense and the Navy. » Limitations on access to contracts, agreements, costs, cost overruns and technical dossiers.	» Reduce expenditure traceability and hinder the independent evaluation of public projects.
CITIZEN RECORDS AND PERSONAL DATA	» Expansion of databases directly linked to citizens' identities.	» 48 million telephone lines registered as of May 2026. » 144.6 million active mobile lines (Q3 2025). » Approximately 33% of the lines are already linked to the holder's identity. Electronic CURP.	» It increases the state's capacity to identify and track users, raising concerns regarding privacy and data protection.

TABLE 8. WHAT NEW INFORMATION CAPABILITIES HAS THE STATE ACQUIRED? – ASYMMETRY IN INFORMATION EXCHANGE (2/2)

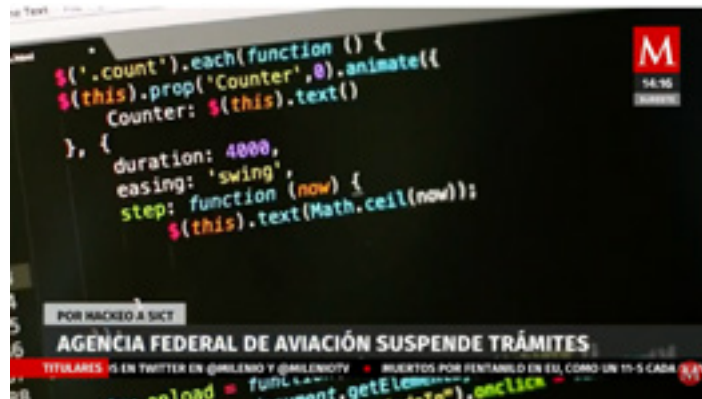
AREA	NEW CAPACITY / RESTRICTION OF INFORMATION	EVIDENCE (KEY FIGURES)	CONSEQUENCES FOR TRANSPARENCY
CYBERSECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION	» The concentration of sensitive information is increasing without a corresponding strengthening of technological infrastructure.	» Leak of 2.3 TB of public information in 2026, potentially affecting 36–36.5 million people. » Sedena hack: 6 TB of leaked information (ff 39 million pages). » 16 critical cybersecurity incidents identified between 2022 and 2025. » SICT IT spending fell by 85.2% between 2018 and 2025.	» Increased risk of personal and strategic data breaches, undermining public trust in the handling of government information.
DIGITAL SURVEILLANCE AND TELE-COMMUNICATIONS	» Expansion of state capabilities for communications monitoring and access to digital information.	» Communications interceptions: 5,576 → 8,528 (2019–2025; +52.9%). » Requests to telephone companies: 10,344 → 19,791 (+91.3%). » Authorized orders: 6,653 → 15,517 (+133.2%). » R3D documented that 57.3% of requests between 2016 and 2019 were made without prior judicial oversight.	» The State is acquiring greater surveillance capabilities, while transparency issues persist regarding the true scope of these tools and the controls over their use.

Source: Signos Vitales (2026).

zens are becoming increasingly visible to the government, while the government is becoming increasingly invisible to its citizens.

This transition has been consolidated through several complementary mechanisms. On the one hand, the dissolution of the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI), the expansive use of the concept of “national security” as a broad legal justification and successive intelligence reforms have weakened society’s ability to challenge or scrutinize government secrecy. On the other hand, the State has centralized unprecedented volumes of information. Tax, financial, property, vehicle, biometric and public security records now converge within integrated information systems that represent an unprecedented degree of data concentration.

The fundamental problem is that this growing appetite for collecting data has not been accompanied by an equivalent commitment to protecting it. The vulnerability of the system is critical. Between 2022 and 2025, the country experienced at least 16 major cyberattacks targeting key infrastructure. The most emblematic case was the attack on the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena), where the leak of six



Images:

"Guacamaya Leaks: 5 revelaciones de the massive hacking that the Mexican military suffered"· at <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-63167331>

"Because of hacking, SICT (Federal Aviation Agency stops all negotiations" Milenio TV at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT42V3WabDw>

The system's vulnerability is critical. Between 2022 and 2025, the country suffered at least 16 massive hacks targeting key infrastructure.

terabytes of information –equivalent to approximately 39 million pages– exposed the fragility of Mexico’s national security infrastructure. Rather than reversing course, investment in technological infrastructure continued to decline in strategic sectors. The case of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transportation (SICT) is particularly striking: between 2018 and 2025, its information technology budget was reduced by 85.2%, leaving critical digital infrastructure increasingly vulnerable in the face of an ever more sophisticated cybercriminal ecosystem.

At the same time, digital surveillance has expanded dramatically. Between 2019 and 2025, the number of authorized interceptions of private communications increased by 52.9%, rising from 5,576 to 8,528 cases annually. During the same period, requests for information directed to telecommunications companies nearly doubled, increasing from 10,344 to almost 19,800 requests, while the number of judicial authorizations granted increased by 133.2%. There is little dispute that the State requires intelligence capabilities to confront complex threats such as organized crime. The real concern is that these increasingly powerful technological tools are expanding in an environment where democratic oversight remains insufficient.



Image: "A protester hangs from a surveillance street camera" Pedro Pardo/AFP/Getty Images at <https://ifex.org/digital-surveillance-and-the-specter-of-ai-in-mexico/>

Monitoring the use of these surveillance powers has become an increasingly difficult task. Organizations such as R3D have documented significant inconsistencies between the information reported by prosecutors’ offices and that reported by telecommunications companies –an informational black hole that makes it impossible to determine how many individuals or devices are actually being subjected to surveillance. The risk of abuse is therefore systemic. Historical evidence had already shown that more than half (57.3%) of surveillance requests were carried out without the prior judicial authorization required under the Constitution.

The risk of abuse is therefore systemic. Historical evidence had already shown that more than half (57.3%) of surveillance requests were carried out without the prior judicial authorization required under the Constitution.

Taken together, these developments point to what will undoubtedly become one of Mexico's most complex political challenges in the years ahead: How can the State be equipped with the technological capabilities necessary to restore public security without becoming an unchecked surveillance leviathan? The reality of this double standard is deeply concerning. Mexico is moving toward a model in which the State knows increasingly more about its citizens, while citizens know progressively less about the State. Restoring this balance is neither a technical nor a bureaucratic matter –it is a democratic imperative. Unless independent oversight institutions and robust cybersecurity safeguards are rebuilt without delay, public information will cease to function as a common good and instead become an instrument of discretionary state control.

How can the State be equipped with the technology needed to pacify the country without turning it into a leviathan of unchecked surveillance?

The reality of this double standard is dangerous: we are moving toward a model where those in power know everything about us, yet we know less and less about them.



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5.

The dismantling of data and institutions followed a consistent logic.

While the information citizens could obtain from the State was being reduced, the State was expanding the information it could obtain from citizens.

5 GENERAL Conclusions

Mexico is experiencing a public information crisis of unprecedented magnitude in its recent democratic history. Databases have disappeared, platforms have been emptied and key indicators have ceased to be published –not through an abrupt collapse, but through a sustained process of institutional dismantling that has made it nearly impossible to determine with precision what is failing, where it is failing and at what cost to the population. As a result, the State has lost its institutional capacity to use that information to identify and communicate when government policies are not working. The National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) compelled the Executive

Branch to disclose records it would have preferred to keep closed. The National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy (Coneval) measured poverty using a methodology beyond government control. The National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE) published learning outcomes that held the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) accountable. These functions were not weakened through neglect; they were either eliminated or absorbed into the very branches of government they had been created to oversee. What changed was not the quantity of available data, but rather who holds the authority to interpret those data and to whom they are accountable.

PUBLIC INFORMATION CRISIS

Platforms were emptied and indicators ceased to be published –the result of a sustained institutional dismantling that today makes it nearly impossible to know with precision what is failing, where, and at what cost to the population.

The dismantling followed a consistent institutional logic. The INAI was dissolved in March 2025 and its responsibilities were transferred to a federal ministry within the Executive Branch. Coneval was dissolved in July 2025, with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) assuming its responsibilities under the same budget that Coneval had received in 2016 –411.3 million pesos– and under a governing board appointed by the Presidency. The INEE had already been abolished in 2019; its successor, Mejoredu, ceased operations in May 2025 without the Ministry of Public Education establishing an alternative institution with equivalent technical capacity. Although the official justifications varied –fiscal austerity, institutional duplication, or the legacy of the previous development model– the outcome remained the same in every case: wherever an independent external referee once existed, there is now either an internal subordinate body or an institutional vacuum.

The effects on Mexico’s information systems are already measurable. The *datos.gob.mx* portal declined from 12,570 databases in 2023 to 6,920 in 2026, representing a 44.9% reduction. Official indicators reported improvements in update rates because outdated databases were removed rather than updated. Foreign Direct Investment data available on the por-

tal extend only through the second quarter of 2024, whereas the Ministry of Economy publishes figures through the fourth quarter of 2025. The Federal Superior Audit Office (ASF) conducted more than 2,200 audits in 2024 –a historic record– yet recovered only 12 billion pesos in irregular public expenditures. The previous administration recovered 68 billion pesos. Of the first 2,253 appeals received by the institution that replaced the INAI, 99.6% were classified as inadmissible. Citizen complaints concerning denial of access to public information fell from 39,081 between March and December 2024 to 15,828 during the same period in 2025. This decline did not occur because access to information improved, but because citizens increasingly ceased to believe that filing complaints would produce meaningful results.

Within the energy sector, opacity has acquired an economic dimension that official macroeconomic aggregates fail to capture. Mexico’s petroleum products trade balance closed 2025 with a deficit of US\$25.6 billion, yet the officially reported volume of petroleum and petroleum-product imports through the country’s ports declined by 31.6% relative to 2018, despite the broader recovery of economic activity. The most extensively documented explanation is the expansion of the black market. The Tax Administration Service

IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

*The **datos.gob.mx** portal went from 12,570 datasets in 2023 to 6,920 in 2026– a 44.9% reduction.*

IN ENERGY

Lack of transparency has an economic dimension that official aggregates do not capture. The deficit in the balance of petroleum products closed 2025 at \$25.6 billion, yet the official volume of cargo imported through ports fell by 31.6% compared to 2018 –a period during which the economy was recovering.

(SAT) estimated that illegal fuel trafficking accounted for more than 21% of domestic demand, generating cumulative losses of US\$9.031 billion in diesel alone between 2019 and 2024. The largest spikes coincided with federal election years—2021 and 2024. Pemex has introduced additional inconsistencies. In 2024, the company reported a preliminary loss of 620.6 billion pesos, while its audited financial statements revealed an additional 160 billion pesos in losses that were never publicly explained. Since July 2024, the Operating Reserve Margin of the national electricity system—the principal indicator used to assess whether the country possesses sufficient capacity to satisfy electricity demand—has ceased to be publicly available after being classified as a matter of national security. Between 2018 and 2024, private infrastructure investment was overstated by 421.8 billion pesos, while public infrastructure investment was understated by 280.2 billion pesos. The narrative surrounding nearshoring rested, at least in part, upon these statistical distortions.

In the field of public security, the problem is not the absence of data, but rather that the available data are subject to retroactive modification and frequently diverge across official sources. The federal government chose to focus public debate on intentional

homicides—an indicator that is comparatively easier to manage than others. As of June 2026, the National Registry of Missing and Unlocated Persons recorded 134,812 missing or unlocated individuals. Between January and June 2025, disappearances increased by 40% compared with the same period of the previous year. Approximately 36% of the files lacked sufficient information to conduct search operations, while only 3,869 cases had an active criminal investigation. Sigmos Vitales documented that disappearance figures for the first half of 2025 had been revised downward between successive consultations of the same database. In Jalisco, of the 222 disappearances reported in January 2026, only 138 corresponded to incidents that had actually occurred during that month. State prosecutors' offices and federal authorities do not apply uniform criteria for registering disappearances. Under these conditions, an apparent statistical reduction may reflect methodological revisions rather than genuine improvements in public security. Those attempting to fill these informational gaps pay a tangible price: since 2010, 44 search activists have been murdered or disappeared while performing functions that should properly belong to the State; governments led by Morena account for 73.81% of these cases. During 2025, 451 attacks against jour-

IN SECURITY

The problem is not a lack of data, but rather that the available data are modified retroactively and do not match across sources.

IN HEALTH

The figures regarding the shortages directly contradict the official narrative.

nalists were documented –equivalent to one attack every 19 hours– including seven murders.

Within the health sector, medicine shortages are reflected in figures that directly contradict the official narrative. As of May 2026, the national system recorded more than 14 million undelivered units of medicine, with only 68% of supplies having been delivered, compared with the 97% coverage repeatedly claimed by government officials during daily press conferences. Birmex –the institution entrusted by the current administration with the centralized procurement and distribution of medicines– accumulated 13 billion pesos in overpricing, in addition to multiple irregularities involving the acquisition of pharmaceuticals lacking sanitary registration. Fiscal transparency in the health sector follows the same pattern. Twenty-eight of Mexico’s thirty-two states scored below 60 points in the Fiscal Transparency Index, with a national average of 37.8 out of 100. Moreover, 27 of the 32 state health systems do not publish information concerning pharmaceutical inventory management. The COVID–19 pandemic had already demonstrated the consequences of this model: Mexico recorded more than 833,000 excess deaths, ranked fourth worldwide on this indicator and registered the highest number of healthcare worker deaths globally. In-

formation concerning this crisis remains incomplete and lacks comparability across states.

As the volume of information accessible to citizens declined, the amount of information accessible to the State expanded. The intelligence reforms enacted under the Sheinbaum administration integrate tax, property, vehicle, biometric and public security records into platforms coordinated by the National Intelligence Center. Between 2019 and 2025, interceptions of private communications increased by 52.9%; requests for information directed to telecommunications providers increased by 91.3%; and judicial authorizations granting access to users’ data rose by 133.2%. R3D documented that historically more than 57% of these requests had been executed without prior judicial authorization. This expansion has not been accompanied by corresponding investments in data protection. Between 2018 and 2025, the information technology budget of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Communications and Transportation (SICT) declined by 85.2%. Between 2022 and 2025, Mexico experienced at least 16 major cyberattacks, including the 2022 breach of the Ministry of National Defense (Sedena), which exposed six terabytes of strategic documents. In January 2026, less than 24 hours after the mandatory mobile telephone registra-

Between 2019 and 2025, interceptions of private communications grew by 52.9%; information requests to telephone companies increased by 91.3%; and court orders granting access to user data skyrocketed by 133.2%. R3D documented that, historically, more than 57% of these requests were carried out without prior judicial oversight.

tion system entered into force, the Telcel registration portal exposed users' CURP, RFC and personal identities. Days later, another cyberattack compromised the personal data of between 36 and 36.5 million Mexicans. Seventy percent of individuals who have not registered their mobile lines cite lack of trust as the primary reason. The available evidence fully supports those concerns.

What cannot be reconstructed by decree is precisely what is most important to understand when reading this report. A future administration may create new institutions bearing the names Coneval or INAI, but it cannot recreate the decade-long methodological framework that took Coneval fifteen years to consolidate, the historical learning assessment series accumulated by the INEE before the Ministry of Public Education removed its digital archives in late 2025, or the public trust that the INAI built one ruling at a time. Over the coming years, Mexico will make decisions concerning poverty, education, health and public security without diagnostic tools that can be independently validated by institutions possessing sufficient autonomy. The 2024 poverty measurement reported a reduction of 13.4 million people living in poverty between 2018 and 2024, accompanied by methodological adjustments affecting two of the six

social deprivation indicators. No institution with recognized technical authority currently exists to determine whether this outcome reflects genuine progress or merely a change in measurement methodology. A question that once had an institutional answer now has no institution capable of answering it.

Over the coming years, Mexico will make decisions concerning poverty, education, health and public security without diagnostic tools that can be independently validated by institutions possessing sufficient autonomy.

A question that once had an institutional answer now has no institution capable of answering it.





Image: <https://www.datacentermarket.es/mercado/los-cuatro-componentes-mas-importantes-de-los-centros-de-datos-modernos/tes-mas-importantes-de-los-centros-de-datos-modernos/>

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