

Introduction

Both residents and visitors, domestic and foreign, agree that Baja California Sur is one of the last existing paradises on earth. The pure sky and seas, the pristine beaches and arid coastal vegetation, and the kind people who radiate grace and tranquility all justify this idyllic feeling.

Ironically, isolation and aridity, the two geographic factors that have allowed for environmental health and social harmony in the region, are also the causes of slow progress in Baja California Sur's socio-economic development. People living in remote communities and those dwelling in poor neighborhoods are trapped in a cycle of poverty exasperated by a desert climate that, with the absence of modern technologies, limits economic prosperity.

Fortunately, many decision-makers and civic leaders are aware of this dichotomy. As this study highlights, there are almost 90 non-governmental organizations working to improve the quality of life for residents of Baja California Sur, to protect its natural resources, and to promote sustainable economic development. Another 40 international nonprofit organizations are also actively working in the state. To date, 40% of the territory in Baja California Sur is under some kind of protection scheme, as part of six protected natural areas. Within each of these, ecotourism, fishing, livestock raising, wildlife hunting (with strong permits and monitoring programs in place), and crafts production are actively pursued for economic benefit.¹

This investigation reviews both the community-based needs and the resources of the non-governmental sector in these issue areas. An additional objective of this research is to develop the necessary synergy to optimize the existing momentum toward improving the quality of life in Baja California Sur and to respond properly to the challenges of preserving this beautiful region.

1. Geography of Baja California Sur

Baja California Sur is located in the northwest corner of Mexico,² and occupies slightly more than the southern half of the Baja peninsula, which is the longest peninsula in the world. Surrounded almost entirely by sea, Baja California Sur is very isolated. It is separated from the continent by a sea that is difficult to sail and two deserts that are difficult to cross. Air traffic is still limited.

The state covers 45,655 square miles (including the islands), accounting for 3.7% of the country's total area. In

the north, the Vizcaino desert is adjacent to the state of Baja California; in the east, it is bordered by the Gulf of California, and in the west and south, by the Pacific Ocean. It is the longest coastal state, with 1,367 miles of coastline, which is 22% of the country's total.³

Baja California Sur is divided into four geographic sub-provinces: the desert of Vizcaino, the Sierra de la Giganta, the plains of Magdalena, and the region of Los Cabos. Along the peninsula, parallel to the coastline of Sonora and Sinaloa across the Gulf, runs a mountain range of up to 9,842 feet above sea level in the northern part and up to 6,562 feet in the southern part. Several volcanic mountain complexes form this mountain range, including La Sierra de San Francisco, Guadalupe, La Giganta, and La Laguna.

The state's climate is primarily arid, although some tropical and sub-tropical conditions occur. The weather is warm and dry, with temperatures in the summer that can reach 122° Fahrenheit (50° Celsius). The average annual rainfall is 9.84 mm³. This rainfall usually occurs during winter hurricanes (accounting for 20% of total rainfall) and summer tropical storms. Since winter rain is less violent, it recharges groundwater more easily. Rainfall is the only source of water in the entire state.⁴ The abundance of these groundwater recharge areas has created 171 oases, sustaining life for people, plants, and animals. In these oases, there is a magnification of cultural patterns dominated by isolation, endemics, and the existence of relict species, which give the oases an exceptional value.

The weather in Baja California Sur has a huge impact on travel and commerce and puts enormous pressure on aging infrastructure in municipal and rural areas of the state. From 1949 to 1997, 667 cyclones formed in the Mexican Pacific Ocean; an average of fifteen touched land every year. Between 1954 and 1997, 45 depressions and tropical cyclones affected Baja California Sur, mainly in the southern half of the state. Tropical storms (or hurricanes) affect the Gulf of California region every year. These storms may be beneficial for agriculture because they refill the aquifers, but they also represent major hazards for the state. Strong winds and intense rainfall cause impassable water channels that destroy river and stream beds, paralyze highways, roadways, and airports, flood homes and businesses, and damage power lines and other important infrastructure. Economic repercussions are inevitable, since damage to housing, infrastructure, production means, transportation, and the natural environment has short and long-term consequences.⁵

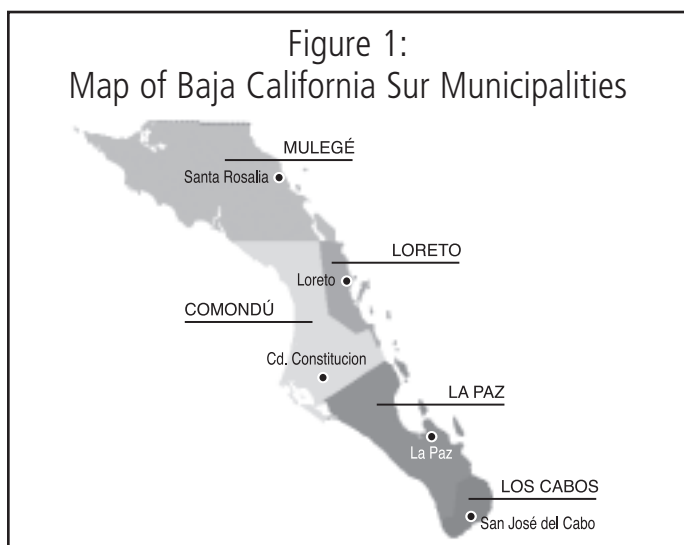
Geographic characterization of municipalities

Baja California Sur is divided into five administrative municipalities; from south to north, they are Los Cabos, La Paz, Comondú, Loreto, and Mulegé.

The Municipality of Los Cabos is in the southernmost extreme of the peninsula of Baja California Sur. It has an area of 2,175 square miles, which is 5% of the state's total territory. The relief is relatively mountainous with several large ranges: la Trinidad range reaches 2,690 feet above sea level; San Lázaro reaches 5,217 feet; and la Laguna reaches 6,857 feet. Water streams are sporadic, only formed after intense rainfall and hurricanes; the San Lázaro dam retains water to feed aquifers.⁶

The Municipality of La Paz accounts for 20% of the total area in the state.⁷ The head of the municipality and the state is the city of La Paz, but the municipal territory extends to the coastal town of Todos Santos on the Pacific side of Baja California Sur. The city of La Paz is considered mainly urban, although it is surrounded by vast stretches of undeveloped beaches, mangroves, and inland areas that are currently being targeted for tourism developments (Balandra Beach and El Mogote are examples). The city of La Paz is buffered by El Mogote and the nearby islands of Espíritu Santo, Cerralvo, and San José, which protect the city and the Bay of La Paz from most heavy storms.

The Municipality of Comondú is in the central part of the state and has an area of 7,444 square miles, with thirty localities. The head of municipality is Ciudad Constitución. Magdalena Bay is a well-known destination in Comondú, with substantial mangroves, beaches, and fishing grounds and is popular as a birthing ground for the California Grey Whale that comes to its tranquil waters during the winter months.⁸



The Municipality of Loreto includes the historical capital of the Californias, the city of Loreto, which was founded on October 25, 1697. The municipality is located in the central part of the state of Baja California Sur, along the coast of the Gulf of California. Loreto has 110 miles of coastline, three small islets, and seven islands, much of which is protected as part of the Loreto Bay National Marine Park.⁹

The Municipality of Mulegé is located in the northern part of the state, neighboring the state of Baja California; the head of the municipality is Guerrero Negro. The municipality of Mulege covers an area of 20,563 square miles, which accounts for 44.9% of the state area; it is the second largest municipality in México after Ensenada in Baja California.¹⁰ Within the municipality, there are thirteen fishing and cattle ranching communities in the region of Laguna San Ignacio, which control property and natural resource rights to some of the most important conservation and tourism areas in the state (Laguna San Ignacio is one of the most popular destinations for whale watching along the Baja California peninsula).¹¹

General data on land tenure and its impact on economic development

The land tenure situation in Baja California Sur is complex and varies among municipalities because the state has no centralized cadastral system. Each municipality has an independent system, lending itself to duplicity of ownership and sometimes even corruption. These recurring issues lead to title disputes, confusion, and a chaotic bureaucracy that further hinders the state's economic development and investment.

Land has traditionally been abundant in this sparsely-populated territory. From the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, land values were closely linked to the load capacity of the pasture, or in other words, the number of cattle the land could support. Later on, by digging deep wells and launching intensive agriculture in the state's alluvial valleys, property owners were able to value their land in relation to the potential of obtaining high agricultural yields in fertile, virgin soils, with water extracted from groundwater aquifers. This situation lasted for six decades and left behind a devastated landscape with saline intrusion in the exhausted wells.

In the 1960s, when FONATUR, the Mexican federal tourism development agency, began to develop the region, land was valuable because of its landscape beauty, particularly within the coastal strip between La Paz and Cabo San Lucas. In fact, the quick progress of tourism infrastructure (including golf courses and second-home residential developments) resulted in very high land values. Today, the coastal areas have become particularly valuable with land speculators anticipating future resort and tourism development as part of

the proposed Escalera Nautica project (now renamed the Proyecto Mar de Cortéz). This situation is not restricted to the above-mentioned zone, but extends to all land lots along the coast and adjacent properties, particularly between Cabo San Lucas and Todos Santos, and around Loreto, Bahía Concepción, and Mulegé.

This evolving scenario is further complicated by Mexico's distribution of land, which began in 1919 and ended in 1993.¹² According to the last *ejido*¹³ census, carried out in 1991,¹⁴ the state has 100 *ejidos*, occupying 13,398,657 acres, amounting to 73.6% of the state's total area.¹⁵ Private property owners control only an area of 1,935,646 acres, equal to 10.6%. The rest of the territory in the state is divided into national plots (6.4%); 75 *colonias* [neighborhoods] (1.9%); and legal estates, urban areas, and federal areas (7.5%).

Only 0.37% of the *ejido* area is sub-divided into parcels, worked by six thousand *ejidatarios* of whom almost 50% have an individual plot of land. According to a 1993 study of agricultural development from 1960-1991, of the ninety *ejidos* with over 6,178 acres, forty have more than 61,776 acres. The study found that only nine *ejidos* have less than 6,178 acres. Seventy-five percent of the surveyed *ejidos* and agrarian communities were involved in agricultural and livestock activities. Other activities account for the remaining 25%.¹⁶

It is important to mention that these data are constantly changing due to the reform¹⁷ to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution. In that civil code, the *ejido* ownership structure was radically modified. Previously, land under *ejido* control was inalienable and indivisible. The above-mentioned reform allowed *ejido* owners to sell their land through a process of certifying *ejido* rights and title deed (PROCEDE¹⁸). This situation explains why the *ejido* area in 2004 decreased by 1,442,591 acres (or almost a 9% decline), compared to the figures in 1991.

The distribution of *ejidos* varies among municipalities. The prevalence of *ejido* land in the two northern municipalities is explained by economic characteristics — mainly agricultural — and by the lack of urbanization, but especially by low population density. Since these were always the least populated areas in the territory, they were most eligible for government land distribution to rural people during the early 20th century. Furthermore, agrarian authorities also equated the flat topography with future agricultural development zones.

Large *ejidos* suffered both social and natural impacts from agrarian land reform. The process resulted in a change in the size and composition of the population because land was distributed to farmers coming from other regions of the country, thereby altering traditional farming and ranching methods. When these new techniques failed to yield substantive products, *ejido* members began to seek employment in the cities or left the state altogether. Today, these formerly productive agricultural regions are now desolate and abandoned, populated by the elderly, women, and children.

Thus, even *ejido* owners who have complete ownership of land were unable to establish a strong bond to that asset. There are very few *ejidos* that have not sold land and, of those interviewed for this study,¹⁹ 64% (16 out of 25) have the intention to sell or to continue selling their land. In addition, large extensions of *ejido* areas with low population density hamper the permanent surveillance necessary to check legal ownership or *posesionarios*. Consequently, land invasion is common, creating land tenure conflicts.

Of those *ejidos* that have sold land, several have done so to parties interested in establishing agricultural or aquaculture companies. Agribusiness is attracting a large number of day laborers and increasing pressure for municipal and state governments to introduce public services in rural areas (including water). Only parts of the region are naturally endowed with water, which in arid zones are known as *oases*. Oasis areas are under new threats from emerging tourism developments that require water resources for golf courses, residential housing, and resort services. Aquaculture and agribusiness also require infusions of fresh water, which mainly come from groundwater sources.

Figure 2:
Ejido Land by Municipality
in Baja California Sur in 2004

Municipality	Total area (mi)	<i>Ejido</i> area (acres)	<i>Ejido</i> area/total	No. of <i>ejidos</i>	<i>Ejidos</i> without PROCEDE
Los Cabos	1,333	217,176	25.46%	18	-
La Paz	7,828	855,857	17.08%	32	-
Comondú	4,625	4,602,765	115.48%*	19	1
Loreto	1,884	181,121	15.02%	2	-
Mulegé	12,777	6,099,147	74.58%	29	4
Total BCS	28,447	11,956,066	73.6%	100	5

* This percentage is explained by the fact that several *ejidos* are located in more than one municipality; this study places them in the municipality where the main village is located. *Source:* Compiled by the author from data provided by the delegation in BCS of Mexico's National Land registry, updated on September 30, 2004.

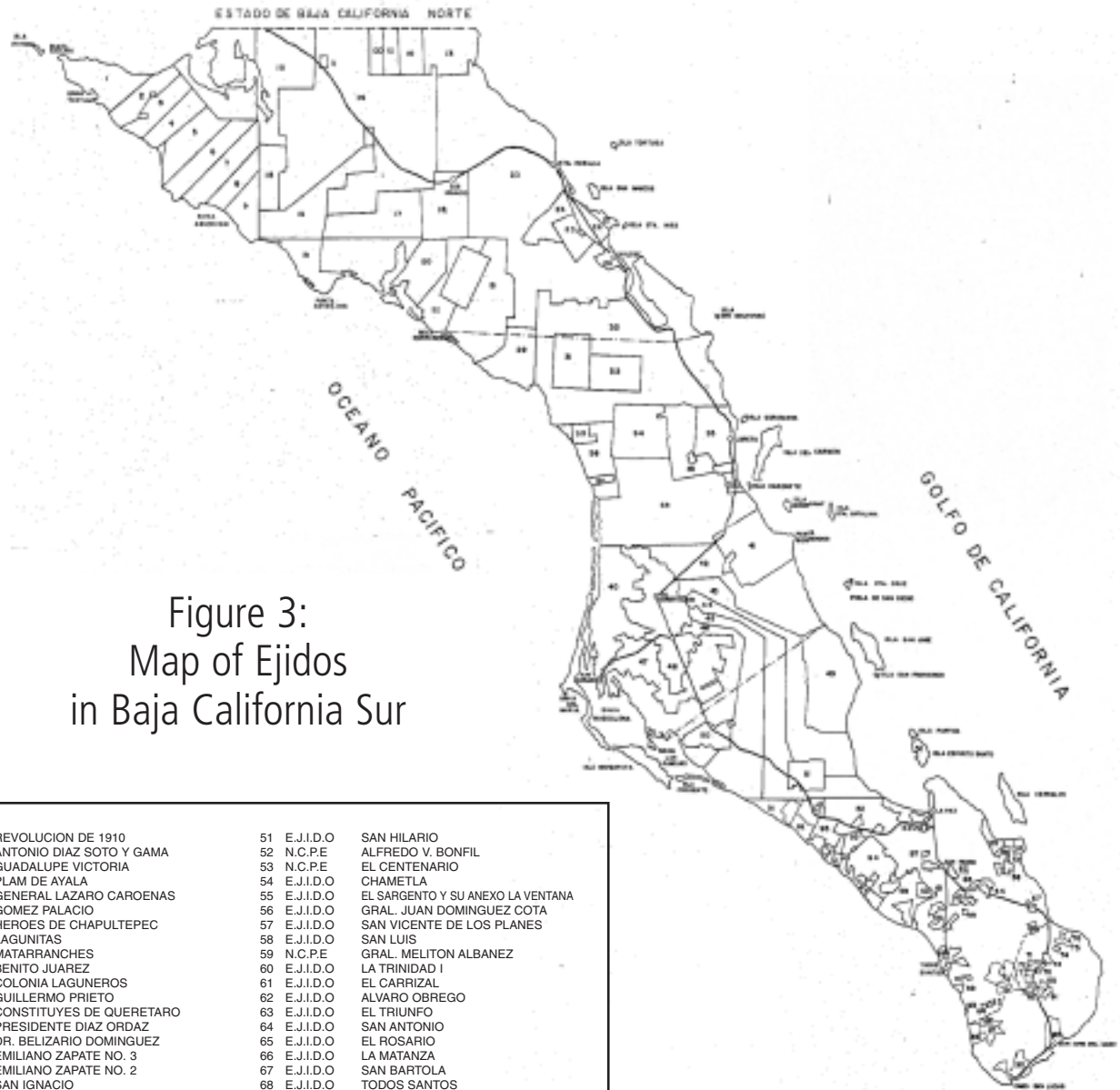


Figure 3:
Map of Ejidos
in Baja California Sur

1	N.C.P.E	REVOLUCION DE 1910	51	E.J.I.D.O	SAN HILARIO
2	N.C.P.E	ANTONIO DIAZ SOTO Y GAMA	52	N.C.P.E	ALFREDO V. BONFIL
3	N.C.P.E	GUADALUPE VICTORIA	53	N.C.P.E	EL CENTENARIO
4	N.C.P.E	PLAM DE AYALA	54	E.J.I.D.O	CHAMETLA
5	N.C.P.E	GENERAL LAZARO CAROENAS	55	E.J.I.D.O	EL SARGENTO Y SU ANEXO LA VENTANA
6	N.C.P.E	GOMEZ PALACIO	56	E.J.I.D.O	GRAL. JUAN DOMINGUEZ COTA
7	N.C.P.E	HEROES DE CHAPULTEPEC	57	E.J.I.D.O	SAN VICENTE DE LOS PLANES
8	N.C.P.E	LAGUNITAS	58	E.J.I.D.O	SAN LUIS
9	N.C.P.E	MATARRANCHES	59	N.C.P.E	GRAL. MELITON ALBANEZ
10	N.C.P.E	BENITO JUAREZ	60	E.J.I.D.O	LA TRINIDAD I
11	N.C.P.E	COLONIA LAGUNEROS	61	E.J.I.D.O	EL CARRIZAL
12	N.C.P.E	GUILLERMO PRIETO	62	E.J.I.D.O	ALVARO OBREGO
13	N.C.P.E	CONSTITUYES DE QUERETARO	63	E.J.I.D.O	EL TRIUNFO
14	E.J.I.D.O	PRESIDENTE DIAZ ORDAZ	64	E.J.I.D.O	SAN ANTONIO
15	N.C.P.E	DR. BELIZARIO DOMINGUEZ	65	E.J.I.D.O	EL ROSARIO
16	N.C.P.E	EMILIANO ZAPATE NO. 3	66	E.J.I.D.O	LA MATANZA
17	N.C.P.E	EMILIANO ZAPATE NO. 2	67	E.J.I.D.O	SAN BARTOLA
18	E.J.I.D.O	SAN IGNACIO	68	E.J.I.D.O	TODOS SANTOS
19	N.C.P.E	BATURI	69	E.J.I.D.O	EL PESCADERO
20	N.C.P.E	LIC. LUIS ECHEVERRIA	70	E.J.I.D.O	GRAL. MELITON ALBANEZ
21	N.C.P.E	SAN JOSE DE GRACIA Y SUANEXO VICENTE G.	71	E.J.I.D.O	SAN JORGE
22	E.J.I.D.O	LOS CUARENTA	72	E.J.I.D.O	AGUA CALIENTE
23	E.J.I.D.O	LIC. ALFREDO V. BONFIL	73	E.J.I.D.O	SANTIAGO
24	E.J.I.D.O	EMILIANO ZAPATA NO. 1	74	E.J.I.D.O	LAS CUEVAS
25	E.J.I.D.O	SAN JOSE DE MAGDALENA	75	E.J.I.D.O	SANTA CRUZ
26	E.J.I.D.O	SAN LUCAS	76	E.J.I.D.O	LA RIVERA
27	E.J.I.D.O	SAN BRUNO	77	E.J.I.D.O	BOCA DE LA SIERRA
28	E.J.I.D.O	MULEGE	78	E.J.I.D.O	EL ZACATAL
29	E.J.I.D.O	CADEJE	79	E.J.I.D.O	MIRAFLORES
30	E.J.I.D.O	LA PURISIMA	80	E.J.I.D.O	EL RANCHITO
31	E.J.I.D.O	SAN JOSE DE GUAJEDEMI	81	E.J.I.D.O	LAS CASITAS
32	E.J.I.D.O	LOS NARANJOS	82	E.J.I.D.O	CADUANO
33	E.J.I.D.O	EL PORTON	83	E.J.I.D.O	PLUTARCO ELIAS CALLES
34	E.J.I.D.O	COMONDU	84	E.J.I.D.O	SALTITO DE LOS GARCIA
35	E.J.I.D.O	LORETO	85	E.J.I.D.O	SAN VICENTE
36	E.J.I.D.O	SAN JAVIER	86	E.J.I.D.O	LA TRINIDAD
37	N.C.P.E	FRANCISCO VILLA	87	E.J.I.D.O	LA CANDELARIA
38	E.J.I.D.O	LA POZA	88	E.J.I.D.O	MIGRINO
39	E.J.I.D.O	STO. DOMINGO	89	E.J.I.D.O	SAN JOSE DEL CABO
40	E.J.I.D.O	SAN JUAN DE MATANCITAS	90	E.J.I.D.O	CABO SAN LUCAS
41	E.J.I.D.O	SAN JOSE DE LA NORIA	91	N.C.P.E	FLOR DE CALIFORNIA
42	N.C.P.E	LEY FEDERAL DE AGUAS NO. 1	92	N.C.P.E	IGNACIO ZARAGOZA
43	N.C.P.E	LEY FEDERAL DE AGUAS NO. 2	93	N.C.P.E	CONQUESTA AGRARIA
44	N.C.P.E	LEY FEDERAL DE AGUAS NO. 3	94	N.C.P.E	LEY FEDERAL DE REFORMA AGRARIA NO. 1
45	N.C.P.E	LEY FEDERAL DE AGUAS NO. 4	95	N.C.P.E	LEY FEDERAL DE REFORMA AGRARIA NO. 11
46	N.C.P.E	LEY FEDERAL DE AGUAS NO. 5	96	N.C.P.E	EL CORO
47	N.C.P.E	JOSEFA ORTIZ DE DOMINGUEZ	97	E.J.I.D.O	SAN PEDRO
48	E.J.I.D.O	LA GRANADA	98	E.J.I.D.O	AGUA AMARGA
49	N.C.P.E	TEPENTU	99	N.C.P.E	SAN SIMON
50	E.J.I.D.O	EL QUEMADO	100	DIVISION	ANGEL CESAR MENDOZA ARAMBURO

2. Demographic Summary

General demographic data

The 2000 census reported that Baja California Sur has 424,041 inhabitants, or less than half a percent (<0.5%) of Mexico's total population. It is the least-populated state in the country, both in number of inhabitants and population density. However, it has one of the highest growth rates in Mexico (3% in 2000), surpassed only by the states of Quintana Roo (5.2 %) and Baja California (3.9%).²⁰ The attractiveness of the tourism and agribusiness sectors may explain this phenomenon.

Spatial distribution of the population in Baja California Sur is characterized by the fact that it is polarized, with 81.3% of

the population living in a handful of towns of 2,500 inhabitants or more, and most of the remaining 18.7% living in tiny villages of less than 100 inhabitants.²¹

The population of the state has traditionally been very young, with 32.1% of the population under the age of 15, 63.9% between the ages of 15 and 64, and only 3.9% older than 65.²² However, recent data shows some demographic changes. Decreasing fertility is reflected in the decrease in the youngest portion of the population (infant through 19 years), while the number of people 20 years of age and over has increased.²³ This situation will force the state to modify its education and health planning and programming.

Baja California Sur has the second highest percentage of people 15 and over that stay in school in the country, with a state average of 8.2 years of schooling. The national

Figure 4:
Distribution of the number of locations, relative to number of inhabitants

Municipality	15,000 inhabitants or more	2,500 – 14,999 inhabitants	100 – 2,499 inhabitants	1 – 99 inhabitants	Population concentration in towns	% of population concentrated in towns
LOS CABOS Pop. 105,469	3 locations	3 locations	30 locations	419 locations	San José del Cabo (31,102 inhabitants) & Cabo San Lucas (37,984 inhabitants)	65.5%
	79,245 inhabitants	10,429 inhabitants	11,544 inhabitants	4,251 inhabitants		
LA PAZ Pop. 196,907	1 location	2 locations	41 locations	913 locations	La Paz	82.8%
	162,954 inhabitants	7,412 inhabitants	18,186 inhabitants	8,355 inhabitants		
LORETO Pop. 11,812	—	1 location	5 locations	115 locations	Loreto	84.7%
		10,010 inhabitants	753 inhabitants	1,049 inhabitants		
COMONDÚ Pop. 63,864	1 location	2 locations	28 locations	699 locations	Ciudad Constitucion (35,589 inhabitants) & Villa Insurgentes (7,654 inhabitants)	67.7%
	35,589 inhabitants	11,644 inhabitants	12,608 inhabitants	4,023 inhabitants		
MULEGÉ Pop. 45,989	—	4 locations	32 locations	444 locations	Santa Rosalía (10,609 inhabitants) & Guerrero Negro (10,235 inhabitants)	45.3%
		27,452 inhabitants	15,135 inhabitants	3,402 inhabitants		
BCS TOTAL POP. 424,041	5 locations	12 locations	116 locations	2,590 locations		

* Relative to the total population in the municipality
Source: Compiled by the author, taking as a basis 17, pp. 143-148 and INEGI, XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 2000. Tabulados Básicos. Aguascalientes, Ags. 2001, web page, updated June 2003.

Figure 5: Distribution of the population by number of minimum wages earned

MONTHLY MINIMUM WAGES	EAP	%
Less than 1	44,299	26.21
From 1 to 2.5	45,211	26.75
From 2.5 to 3.5	37,555	22.22
From 3 to	34,783	20.58
More than 10	7,166	4.24

Source: Compiled by the author with data from INEGI, *Tabulados Básicos Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, [Basic Statistics for the United States of Mexico] Tomo III, XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda, Aguascalientes, Mexico, 2001, p. 1131 and 1134.

average is 7.3 years, with the highest average (8.5 years) in Nuevo León.²⁴ In Baja California Sur, the largest number (69%) of highly-educated people 12 years old and over live in the municipality of La Paz, with a school level equal to or above secondary school, followed by Los Cabos (57%). The remaining municipalities show a lower grade of ranking: Comondú, 53%, Loreto, 52% and Mulegé, 50%. For the entire state, this indicator averages 61%.²⁵

Regarding income, data taken from the 2000 census shows that the majority of people earn at least Mexico's minimum wage or at least US\$4.32 a day.²⁶ The income percentages among the economically active population (EAP) are shown in Figure 5 which considers a working population of 169,014.

Population growth, distribution, and migration in Baja California Sur

As mentioned previously, in spite of its scarce population, Baja California Sur has the third-highest population growth rate in Mexico.²⁷

The slowing of the internal population growth in the state has been the result of a pronounced decrease in birth and fertility rates in the population. However, the positive migration to the region has offset this decrease.²⁹ This phenomenon was strongest in the municipality of Los Cabos, with a total growth rate of 9.6%, of which 6.98% was growth from migration. Thus, in spite of the fact that in this municipality there was a decrease in the natural growth rate (it went from 2.8% in the 1990-1995 period, to 2.65% in 1995-2000), migrants seeking jobs in the tourist sector have continued to populate the area.

In spite of the fact that Baja California Sur is farther from the U.S. border than Mexico City, the state has many features characteristic of a border region, among them being a migrant-receiving state. In 2000, migration accounted for 11.3% of the state's total population. Of these migrants, 95.6% came from other states in Mexico and 4.4% from other countries; Baja California Sur was ranked third as a destination for domestic migration.³⁰

Another common feature for a border region is the migrants' lack of connection to their eventual destination. For example, migrants living in Tijuana rarely call it "home"; in fact, they still relate much more closely to the region where they were raised, maintaining language, culture, and traditions from that location. This situation is replicated daily in Baja California Sur, where a citizenry is emerging that has no historical, cultural, social, or familial links to the state, with the consequent lack of civic pride and sense of belonging.

Migration flows have been an essential element of demographic dynamics in the state since 1960. When migrants began arriving in larger numbers, it was due to agricultural development in the municipality of Comondú (40.3%); later, tourism-related activities in Los Cabos attracted the majority of the migrants (35.7%).

The growth rate in Los Cabos is even higher than that of other renowned tourism centers, such as Cancún. The

Figure 6: Population Distribution in Baja California Sur²⁸

Municipality	Population 1950	Population 1970	Population 1990	Population 2000	% of the state in 2000
Los Cabos	17,622	20,442	43,920	105,469	24.87
La Paz	21,515	54,667	160,970	196,907	46.43
Comondú	7,340	33,262	74,346	63,864	15.07
Loreto	—	—	—	11,812	2.79
Mulegé	14,487	19,648	38,528	45,989	10.84
Total BCS	60,964	128,019	317,764	424,041	100.00

Source: "Baja California Sur Demográfico, Breviario 1985" CONAPO-CONEPO de BCS; INEGI, Baja California Sur XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 1990; INEGI, *Baja California Sur, XII Censo general de Población y Vivienda 2000*, Tabulados Básicos, México 2003, p.44.

primary migration flows to Los Cabos originate from the states of Guerrero (24.3% of the total migrant population), Sinaloa (14.6%), and Mexico City (9.7%), but people are also coming from abroad; in the 2000 Mexican census, 46.7% of the population declared that they had been born in a different state or country.³¹

The municipality of La Paz owes much of its population increase to natural growth, since there was a balance between emigration and immigration during the periods of 1990-1995 and 1995-2000. In contrast, Mulegé and Comondú have shown significant decreases in their growth rates, something that may be explained by the exodus of rural residents following agricultural failure.

Although Baja California Sur's overall population growth rate is decreasing, a closer analysis indicates a variation in the northern zone, where the growth rate is practically nonexistent. For example, Mulegé experienced a mere 0.01% growth from 1995-2000 and Loreto's growth rate remained practically static, with 1.6% of total migration in the year 2000.³² This trend may change substantially with planned urban expansion in Loreto, which could potentially bring upwards of 110,000 new residents to the Loreto region over the next twenty years including many from the United States and Canada. In contrast, however, the southern zone growth rate is rising very rapidly. For example, the growth rate in Los Cabos rose from 8% in the period 1980-1990, to 9.7% in 1995-2000.

The state's urban system is dominated by one central city: La Paz. This is the capital city and concentrates political and administrative functions, as well as the main equipment and service facilities for the state, such as higher education and health institutions, communications, and the state's main power distributor. Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo are also melding into one big urban center. It is likely that the linear town that is forming on both sides of the highway will link the two cities and will give rise to irregular settlements.³³

3. International context

One measurement of human development that is consistently used in sustainable development work by government, civil society organizations, and the private, academic and social sectors is the Human Development Index (HDI), the parameters of which were set forth by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The HDI evaluates the average progress of a country or region in three basic aspects:

1. Enjoying a long and healthy life, which is measured through life expectancy at birth.
2. Having an adequate education rate, which is measured through the adult literacy rate (weighted as two-thirds of the total) and the gross combined

- enrollment ratio in elementary, secondary, and tertiary schools (weighted as one-third of the total).
3. Having a decent standard of living, which is measured through GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity in the United States).³⁴

Complementary concepts are added to these criteria and indicators, concepts that reflect the level of development and social well being of a country or region. For example, measuring a long and healthy life may include reducing infant mortality, improving maternal health, and fighting major diseases; measuring an adequate education may include achieving universal education and independence of women through gender equality in education; and measuring an appropriate standard of living may include reducing poverty and hunger.

In 2003, Baja California Sur registered an HDI score of 0.817, exceeding the Mexican national score of 0.791. For this reason, Baja California Sur registered *High* in the scale of human development, as compared to the "emerging country" average, which is rated *Medium High*.³⁵ In addition, the UNDP announced in the Millennium Declaration that human development requires two fundamental conditions: environmental sustainability (ensuring sustainable development) and equity (particularly promoting gender equity and independence of women and enabling a global economic environment that reinforces partnerships between rich and poor countries).³⁶

For the World Bank's social well-being and human development indicators, Mexico finds itself in a relatively optimistic situation. In 2000, the per capita income in Mexico was one of the highest in Latin America (US\$5,070), and life expectancy had increased to 73 years. Between 1990 and

Figure 7:
Human development indicators
comparing BCS to the nation

Human development indicators	BCS	National average
Life expectancy at birth (in years)	76.3	75.3
GDP per capita in adjusted US\$	8722	7495
Life expectancy index	0.855	0.839
Literacy rate	0.958	0.905
Enrollment ratio (6 to 24 years old)	0.632	0.628
Education level index	0.849	0.813
Per capita index	0.746	0.721

Source: Prepared by the author based on data from the CONAPO
Webpage www.conapo.gob.mx.

2000, the mortality rate of children below five years of age declined from 46 to 29 per 1,000; 86% of the population has access to potable water; and the country's literacy rate exceeds 90%.³⁷

Within this world context and according to Mexico's National Population Council (CONAPO) estimates, Baja California Sur ranks as the ninth state nationwide in terms of human development (first place is the Federal District or Mexico City and last is Chiapas). It is clear that the residents of Baja California Sur are currently enjoying a higher standard of living than many other Mexican citizens. Undoubtedly, these favorable conditions explain why the state is the third most-preferred destination for Mexico's internal migration, and also why it is one of the sites that most attracts the international community.



Yet, these seemingly favorable living standards do not tell the full story of Baja California Sur. As this study's chapters on Health, Education, and Community Development will highlight there are numerous rural areas in Baja California Sur and a growing number of urban poor, where the referenced optimistic indicators do not reflect current living conditions. Also, Baja California Sur's recent increase in migration has brought it a decline in the quality of life, including the state's environmental quality, health indices and public safety. As a case in point, in 2003 Baja California Sur had the largest net growth rate of homicides in Mexico between 1998 and 2003 even though in total numbers the incidence of homicides is far below the national average.³⁸ Baja California Sur also ranks as the state with the highest mortality levels among males due to lung cancer in Mexico with 35 cases per 100,000 versus 14.7 nationally.³⁹ The number of women with lung cancer is also higher than the national average. In the case of deaths due to breast cancer, Baja California ranks second behind Mexico City.⁴⁰

4. Challenges

Given the potential negative consequences of unmanaged urban growth on Baja California Sur's quality of life, the state's key policymakers and civic leaders need to be mindful of future decisions that they will make. The challenges facing the state are complex; some have been referenced in the different sections of this executive summary and will be analyzed in detail in later chapters. It is nonetheless worthwhile to show that the work undertaken by the government, nonprofits, and community-level grassroots efforts is not superfluous; rather, quite to the contrary, this work must continue, and, better yet, be dramatically expanded to address the state's long-term needs.

*Ejid*os, land sales, and speculation

Baja California Sur residents in general, and its environmental sector in particular, need to be aware of the risks involved if *ejido* lands—which account for over 60% of the state's overall surface area—are sold. Priorities for developers and conservation organizations often overlap in Baja California Sur, as the pressure to acquire coastal lands, water sources, and residential zones increases. Opportunities for sustainable development of these landscapes still exist, and partnerships could certainly be developed to address multiple goals. It will also be important for nonprofit organizations and government agencies to monitor the rural land tenure situation with respect to the *ejidos* to ensure that fair prices are established, and that rural communities are not pushed out of their traditional lands forever.

Population distribution and growth per municipality

The different regions of Baja California Sur register significantly different population growth rates. The northern municipalities are emigration areas (Comondú and Mulegé), the southern municipalities (La Paz and Los Cabos) are immigration areas (from other regions of the state, country, and from abroad). Consequently, in the south, pressure on the environment due to land speculation, commercial land use, and demands for consumer goods and services are very strong; whereas in the north, problems are due to abandonment of regions and economic activities, leading to hardship and more transient populations.

In the southern region, Los Cabos registered a demographic growth rate of 9.7% from 1995 to 2000. According to estimates, if this trend is maintained, the municipality's population will double in approximately seven years. Presently, the southern urban areas that are growing at an

accelerated pace are Cabo San Lucas and San José del Cabo, including their adjacent settlements, such as Colonia del Sol. Although the facilities along that corridor are currently tourism-related, in the future, residential and commercial settlements may be created further inland to provide services to these resorts and gated communities. If these settlements are not anticipated and planned for by the municipal government, irregular settlements could occur instead.⁴¹ This dramatic and potentially unplanned demographic growth raises extraordinary challenges for the municipalities' and the state's public administration to provide services and infrastructure to the population. In the end, it is the public treasury that must pay the cost of economic growth.

The situation in the northern municipalities is very different as population and economic opportunities decrease. To discourage current residents from seeking employment elsewhere, productive alternatives must be made available. In addition, it is urgent that municipal agencies develop programs that incorporate young people into activities that lead to a more promising future in their region. The State Territory Regulation Program (PEOT) recommends that rural communities work together and form networks to create or take advantage of existing opportunities to strengthen their bonds. Merging together, these dwindling towns can form larger, stronger communities that can support the needs of its population, and even build a burgeoning economy.⁴² Another PEOT recommendation is to abandon the most isolated and least populated settlements "through a coherent development policy linked to tourism potentials (rural, natural, and cultural) and a reevaluation of traditional agrarian practices as more environmentally-friendly and higher quality production methods."⁴³

5. Reasons for optimism

Because of its social and natural traits, Baja California Sur is one of the few regions of the world where there is a chance to maintain a relatively high standard of living and protect existing natural resources for future generations. From the time of the explorer Hernan Cortés through the period of agrarian reform, the Jesuits, and the Bourbons, this region has inspired people to achieve things that are simply unattainable elsewhere. In today's world, this would be a state with a strong economy, high quality of life, and a healthy natural environment.

Although this report will clearly demonstrate the often desperate needs of Baja California Sur, we hope that it has also shown that there are many reasons for optimism. Baja California Sur is enriched by the following strengths:

- A wide variety of people and organizations who are committed to conservation and sustainable

development, such as nonprofits, civil servants, artists, academics, business people, and environmental instructors.

- Scientists and academicians with high levels of training who do not only work in the state but also for the state.
- A climate of peace and social safety that, although eroding, prevails throughout the entire state.
- A relatively high Human Development Index.
- High quality and progress in educational attainment.
- A high quality of life in the city of La Paz (ranking third in the country after Colima and Aguascalientes).⁴⁴
- The highest level of environmental sanitation of all the states in the country.⁴⁵

Finally, one great reason for optimism is that several sectors—including the growing number of US and Canadian citizens who have taken up permanent or temporary residence in Baja California Sur—have become sensitive to the needs of the communities in which they live, work, and visit and beginning to get more engaged as both donors and volunteers with a growing number of the state's nonprofits. In this regard, understanding how these expatriate residents approach and become part of the state's social spaces, how they become aware of the concerns of a society and make them their own concerns, could be a first step to guiding their philanthropic goodwill toward meeting the needs of their newfound home.

6. Participation of civil society in addressing community needs in Baja California Sur

Participation of Baja California Sur's civil society has become more specialized over time as nonprofit organizations have gained training, external partnerships, and the ability to finance their various programs and projects. This is due as much to the search for alternatives to remedy problems, as to having established long-term substantive solutions to meet complex needs. The arrival of external organizations and foundations has considerably favored the maturing process of civil organizations in the state by bringing financial resources to implement longer-term projects. Nonetheless, the state still has a large number of under-capitalized organizations that have no access to sources of international financing, many of which lack the most basic infrastructure such as computers, archives, office space, and Internet access. Without this critical operating support, these nonprofits can stagnate

or disintegrate, even if they are addressing a real need in the community.

The conditions under which the majority of local nonprofits operate are further aggravated by the still incipient culture of philanthropy that prevails in the country. Although history shows that Mexicans have undertaken extraordinary feats of solidarity and volunteerism, the mechanisms for effective

philanthropy have not been concretely established in Mexico. Many donations are thwarted by complicated fiscal procedures and insufficient tax incentives. Under such conditions, nonprofit organizations depend on scarce government resources to attempt to solve large and complex problems, as well as on their own ability to encourage interested individuals to work voluntarily.

Figure 8:
Mexican Federal Budget Heading 33 by State in 2004

State	Total Population 2000 ⁴⁶	Heading 33 in Billions of Pesos ⁴⁷	Heading 33 Equivalent in US \$ ⁴⁸	Heading 33 Per Capita US \$
OVERALL: MEXICO	97,483,412	251.201	22,731,122,171	233
BAJA CALIFORNIA SUR	424,041	2.090	\$189,140,271	\$446
Campeche	690,689	2.962	\$ 268,054,298	\$ 388
Guerrero	3,079,649	12.444	\$ 1,126,153,846	\$ 365
Oaxaca	3,438,765	13.223	\$1,196,651,583	\$ 347
Colima	542,627	2.060	\$ 186,425,339	\$ 343
Nayarit	920,185	3.444	\$ 311,674,208	\$ 338
Quintana Roo	874,963	3.179	\$ 287,692,307	\$ 328
Chiapas	3,920,892	14.170	\$ 1,282,352,941	\$ 327
Zacatecas	1'353,610	4.780	\$ 432,579,185	\$ 319
Durango	1'448,661	5.101	\$ 461,628,959	\$ 318
Hidalgo	2'235,591	7.649	\$ 692,217,194	\$ 309
Tlaxcala	961,646	3.055	\$ 276,470,588	\$ 287
San Luis Potosí	2,299,360	7.153	\$ 647,330,316	\$ 281
Aguascalientes	944,285	2.921	\$ 264,343,891	\$ 279
Tabasco	1,891,829	5.772	\$ 522,352,941	\$ 276
Tamaulipas	2,753,222	8.102	\$ 733,212,699	\$ 266
Yucatán	1,658,510	4.751	\$ 429,954,751	\$ 259
Michoacán	3,985,667	11.323	\$ 1,024,705,882	\$ 257
Querétaro	1,404,306	3.992	\$ 361,266,968	\$ 257
Morelos	1,555,296	4.312	\$ 390,226,244	\$ 250
Veracruz	6,908,975	18.845	\$ 1,705,429,864	\$ 246
Sonora	2,216,969	5.983	\$ 541,447,953	\$ 244
Coahuila	2,298,070	6.119	\$ 553,755,656	\$ 240
Baja California	2,487,367	6.450	\$ 583,710,407	\$ 234
Sinaloa	2,536,844	6.328	\$ 572,669,683	\$ 225
Chihuahua	3,052,907	7.093	\$ 641,900,452	\$ 210
Puebla	5,076,686	11.737	\$ 1,062,171,945	\$ 209
Guanajuato	4,663,032	9.964	\$ 901,719,457	\$ 193
Jalisco	6,322,002	12.725	\$ 1,151,583,710	\$ 182
Nuevo León	3,834,141	7.537	\$ 682,081,447	\$ 177
STATE OF MEXICO	13,096,686	24.562	\$ 2,222,805,429	\$169
FEDERAL DISTRICT	8,605,239	4.696	\$ 424,977,375	\$ 49