

REGIONAL STATISTICS

Reliable data describing Mexico's regional industrial structure are difficult to obtain. Most of the nation's industrial production data are in the form of indexes based on the 1988 industrial census. Similarly, demographic profiles are extrapolations based on the 1990 population census.

The most reliable indicators of industrial activity are employment statistics published by the *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS)*, Mexican Institute for Social Security. This government agency is responsible for social welfare programs covering private-sector workers. Public-sector employees are covered separately by the *Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado (ISSSTE)*, Institute of Social Security and Services for Public Employees.

The *IMSS* collects mandatory premiums for a wide variety of employee benefits, ranging from pensions and health benefits to compensation for industrial accidents. There is, therefore, a fairly good database of premiums that includes employment levels and salaries by industry and location. This database suffers from the fact that it covers only the "formal sector." These are companies that are registered with the government and comply with the mandatory reporting requirements.

The official statistics exclude the nation's large "informal sector," which consists of self-employed individuals and small, family-based companies. In some industries, such as construction, informal employment is estimated to account for half of the workforce. One study estimated Jalisco's informal sector at 26 percent of the economically active population. Another problem with the data is that people who work 15 hours or more per week are classified as "employed."

Nationally, the informal sector is proportionately larger. In May 1996, there were only 8.7 million registered private-sector workers in a country of almost 100 million. According to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) statistics, in 1992 Mexico's employed civilian labour force was 26 percent of the population compared with 43 percent in Canada.

The state's economic development plan stresses the development of aquaculture, forestry and fishing, as well as manufacturing. There is also an electrification program underway. Nayarit has an area of 27,000 square kilometres with a population of almost 900,000. The capital city is Tepic.

COLIMA

Colima is a very small state of about 5,000 square kilometres and a population of almost 490,000 located on the Pacific Coast about 125 kilometres southwest of Guadalajara. It is linked to that city by a modern highway and by rail to the rest of Mexico. The state is mountainous and is known for its beautiful beaches. It is an important producer of limes, peanuts, coffee and palm oil including the industries that process those products. The ocean port of Manzanillo provides the region's principal access to the Pacific Rim. This was one of the first ports to be privatized, and concessions for a container terminal and a multiple-use terminal were awarded in March 1995. The capital city is also named Colima.

AGUASCALIENTES

Aguascalientes is one of Mexico's smallest states, with less than 6,000 square kilometres of land area and a population of more than 862,000. It is at the geographical centre of Mexico, bordered by the state of Jalisco on its southwest side. The state benefits from excellent road and rail infrastructure and a diversified economy. About one third of the land area is used for agricultural purposes, most notably for growing grapes. Textiles and food processing are the traditional industries, but the electronics and automotive sectors are growing rapidly. The state capital is Aguascalientes.

SINALOA

Sinaloa is on the Pacific Coast, to the north of Nayarit with a population of about 2.4 million. The state benefits from excellent road and rail connections to the United States, as well as international airports and sea ports. Agriculture is the principal industry, but the state is also Mexico's top fisheries producer, and fish processing is also a major industry. The state has valuable forest resources and a number of paper plants. The capital city is Culiacán.