

## **Alert** | Energy & Natural Resources



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### **Digital Platform – Sustainable Forest Development Law in Mexico**

On Sept. 6, 2018, the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), along with the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fishery and Food (SAGARPA), published a new agreement establishing the digital information platform mandated in Article 24, Paragraph 3 of the Sustainable Forest Development Law (the Agreement). The agreement sets out the guidelines that SEMARNAT and SAGARPA will use to identify forest territories and agricultural lands, and includes details about the digital platform that will be used to determine which forested land is eligible to receive government support and economic stimulus to help develop agricultural activities.

The digital platform will also be used to help determine whether land located within a proposed project area is considered a forest territory. If the land is considered a forest territory, prior to any activity, authorization for a change in land-use must be obtained from SEMARNAT must be secured.

The agreement is effective as of Sept. 7, 2018.

#### **Digital Platform Overview**

According to the publication, a single digital platform that integrates geographic information as well as information from other databases will be used to identify forest territories or agricultural lands.

SEMARNAT and SAGARPA will leverage the digital platform to identify those lands within Mexico that should be considered forest lands or lands with forest vegetation, for the purposes of planning and

determination of which zones are eligible for subsidies. The digital platform will also contain information defining the criteria for assignment for budgeting purposes.

The platform will help the authorities visualize, analyze, and generate reports of environmental and agricultural information relevant to the subsidy applications for any lands that are geo-referenced. These reports are expected to provide government agencies with information to make decisions on whether to grant economic support for certain activities based on natural renewable resources, such as farming and forestry, as long as these activities are not performed in deforested zones, do not require a land-use change, or increase the agricultural boundary.

### Information Contained on the Digital Platform

The digital platform will integrate Mexico's land area map with information systems, databases, and geo-referenced data to identify whether lands eligible for support and economic stimulus for the development of agricultural activities are within forest lands or lands with forest vegetation. The digital platform will also include:

**Environmental Information** - geographic information and information from various SEMARNAT databases (including information from the National Commission of Protected Natural Areas and the National Forestry Commission); this also includes forestry zoning information, information related to changes in land-use, and information about land that has been approved for forest resources, timber, or lumber.

**Agricultural Information** - data from the Agricultural and Fishery Information Service will be integrated into the digital platform with vector data of the agriculture of Mexico; the digital platform will also store information about agricultural patterns, information about lands that support PROAGRO, and other pertinent agricultural information.

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