

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE PRESENTS RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FEASIBILITY OF FRACKING IN MEXICO

On August 6, 2026, during President Claudia Sheinbaum's morning press conference, the main preliminary conclusions of the Scientific Committee formed to assess the feasibility of exploiting unconventional natural gas deposits in Mexico (the "**Committee**") were presented.

The Committee's preliminary conclusions propose a phased evaluation process to determine the technical, environmental, and social feasibility of hydraulic fracturing ("**Fracking**"), subject to compliance with various conditions. It was also reported that these conclusions will continue to be analyzed before the federal government determines, if appropriate, the corresponding actions to be taken.

The most relevant aspects are summarized below.

I. Background

Fracking is a technique used to extract natural gas and oil from unconventional reservoirs by injecting water, sand, and chemical additives at high pressure to release hydrocarbons trapped in low-permeability rock formations. Unlike conventional reservoirs, these resources require specialized methods for extraction.

In this context, on April 15, 2026, the Federal Government announced the formation of the Committee tasked with evaluating the feasibility of Fracking in Mexico, at the instruction of the President of the Republic and to be coordinated by the head of the Ministry of Science, Humanities, Technology, and Innovation. The Committee is composed of 54 specialists from various academic, scientific, and technical institutions across the country, including the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the Mexican Petroleum Institute, and the Mexican Institute of Water Technology. Its role is technical and advisory in nature, so its conclusions do not constitute regulatory provisions nor do they, by themselves, modify the applicable legal framework or the powers of the competent energy and environmental authorities.

Subsequently, during the President's morning press conference held on August 6, 2026, some of the elements considered by the Committee in its analysis of the feasibility of this technique in Mexico were presented. Among them, Mexico's dependence on imported natural gas was highlighted, noting that approximately 75% of the natural gas consumed in the country is imported and that a significant portion of those imports corresponds to gas produced through Fracking in the United States.

As a result of this analysis, the Committee formulated a series of preliminary recommendations regarding the areas in which the implementation of Fracking could be evaluated, as well as the social, environmental, and technical conditions that should be observed for its potential development, the main aspects of which are described in the following section.

II. Key Recommendations of the Committee

Preliminarily, the Committee concluded that the assessment of Fracking's feasibility should focus on the Sabinas-Burro-Picachos and Burgos basins. In contrast, it determined that the Tampico-Misantla basin should be excluded from the analysis and that the use of this technique should be prohibited there due to environmental, social, and biodiversity considerations.

Furthermore, the Committee considered that any potential development of Fracking projects should only be analyzed if certain social, environmental, and technical conditions aimed at mitigating their risks are met.

Among the main recommendations are:

- Conducting consultation processes with affected communities;
- Protection of aquifers and ecosystems;
- Proper management of water and materials used during operations;
- Exclusive use of deep saltwater and/or wastewater, excluding surface water or groundwater intended for human consumption or other uses; and
- Reusing and recycling at least 75% of the water used.

In addition, the Committee noted that each project must be supported by technical studies demonstrating the availability of resources, environmental protection, and economic viability.

III. Next Steps

During the morning press conference, President Claudia Sheinbaum clarified that the Committee's recommendations do not constitute a final decision by the Federal Government. In this regard, she noted that the conclusions will continue to be analyzed before the Federal Government defines, if applicable, the guidelines that will shape public policy regarding Fracking in Mexico.

IV. Conclusions

While the Committee's recommendations represent a significant shift in the discussion on Fracking in Mexico, they do not currently amend the regulatory framework or authorize the development of projects using hydraulic fracturing. However, they reflect a potential willingness to re-evaluate this technology based on scientific criteria and under strict environmental and social safeguards.

In this context, it will be important to monitor the guidelines that the Federal Government may issue, as well as any regulatory changes that may result from this process, particularly for the hydrocarbon exploration and extraction, electricity generation, and natural gas infrastructure sectors.

At Von Wobeser y Sierra, we are available to advise you on the factors that must be considered in the event of the development of projects of this nature. If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our partners and associates who are experts in this field.

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