

Executive Summary

State Party

Mexico

State, province or region

State of Puebla and State of Oaxaca

Name of property

Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

The Tehuacán – Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica is a national serial and mixed cultural and natural heritage nomination. The property consists of three components or zones: Zapotitlán–Cuicatlán, San Juan Raya and Purrón.

ID No.	Name of the component part	Regions/ District(s)	Coordinates of the Central Point
001	Zapotitlán- Cuicatlán	Puebla and Oaxaca	17° 59' 23.86" N 97° 11' 13.75" W
002	San Juan Raya	Puebla	18° 18' 05.30" N 97° 35' 17.98" W
003	Purrón	Puebla	18° 12' 01.41" N 97° 07' 07.85" W

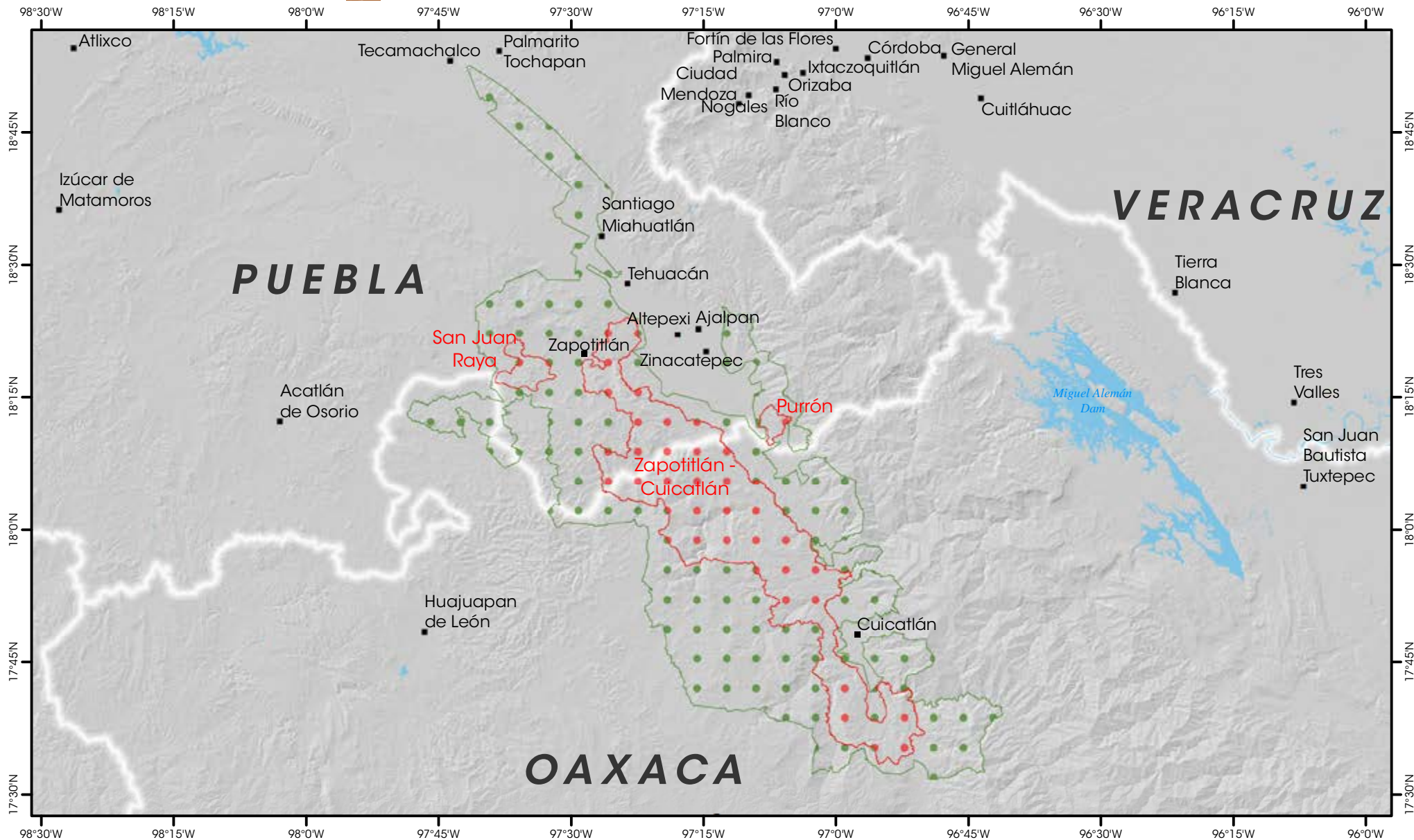
Textual descriptions of the boundaries of the nominated property

The Tehuacán-Cuicatlán: originary habitat of Mesoamerica is located in central-southern Mexico, at the south-east of the State of Puebla and north of the State of Oaxaca. The nominated property has a surface of 145,255.20 ha composed of three zones: the Zapotitlán-Cuicatlán zone, the San Juan Raya zone and the Purrón zone. All these share the same buffer zone of 344,931.68 ha. The entire property is located within the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve.




Situated where the Neotropic and Nearctic realms intersect, in the middle of the Mesoamerican cultural region, the property encompasses the most representative and best-preserved characteristics and attributes of the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley, which is situated in the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán floristic province, the southernmost arid and semi-arid region in North America.

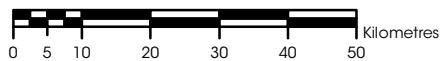


Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica



MAP LEGEND

- Nominated property, Boundary 
- Buffer zone, Boundary 
- Administrative division 



Scale 1:1 100 000



LOCATION MAPS



PROJECTION

Datum: Mexico ITRF92
Spheroid: GRS 1980

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Criteria on which the property is nominated

The Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica is nominated to the UNESCO World Heritage List as a national serial, mixed cultural and natural heritage site under criteria iii, iv, vi and x.

Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica is the arid or semiarid zone with the greatest biological diversity in North America, giving rise to human adaptations crucial to the emergence of Mesoamerica, one of the cradles of civilisation in the world.

Located in central-southern Mexico, where the Neotropic and Nearctic realms intersect, the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley is a world biodiversity hotspot. It contains biomes characterized by high levels of endemic and endangered species, rare flora and plant communities. Its faunistic diversity surpasses that of any other dry-lands of the planet and, moreover, it is an outstanding agrobiodiversity centre.

Of the 36 plant communities, 15 different xeric shrublands are exclusive to the Valley. All possible forms of plant life and 70 percent of the flora families worldwide are represented. The extraordinary biodiversity includes over 3,000 species of vascular plants of which ten percent are endemic to the Valley. It is also a world centre of diversification for numerous groups of plants, in which the cacti stand out, with 28 genera and 86 species of which 21 are endemic. Large “cacti-forests” shape some landscapes of the Valley making it one of the most unique areas in the world.

The vast biodiversity of the Valley, combined with the adverse conditions of a desert, gave rise to one of the largest and best documented cultural sequences in the Americas. The archaeological evidence reveal the long sequence of human adaptations that took place in the area for over 14,000 years. The Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley is an exceptional example of a long process of adaptations and ancient technological evolution that defined the cultural region known today as Mesoamerica.

The arid conditions of the Valley triggered innovation and creativity, originating two of the major technological advances of human history. The first advance was plant domestication, which in the Valley is one of the most ancient worldwide, dating back to 9500 to 7000 B.C. By then water management technologies began to develop resulting in a major irrigation system composed of a wide array of water management elements, such as canals, wells, aqueducts and dams which make it the most diversified ancient irrigation system of the continent. Consequently water technological systems were the ruling guide for the civilisational process that was developed in the Valley throughout thousands of years. Furthermore, these technological advances had a multiplying effect and fostered the discovery of other innovations like salt industry and pottery, which were essential to the organisation and complexity of the first civilisations.

The long interaction between humans and environment was also reflected in the rise of the proto-Otomanguean languages, the oldest and most diversified linguistic family in the Americas. The linguistic groups emerging from this family are still spoken in the region denoting the cultural continuity for millennia. That continuity along with cultural legacy was manifested years afterwards through the development of a pictographic writing of the highest historical, iconographic and aesthetic value. There is no other region in the continent that has produced as many manuscripts of this sort.

The Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica is an invaluable and irreplaceable heritage of humanity and of all living things.



Justification for criteria

Criterion (iii):

The linguistic diversity that exists nowadays in the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley gives an exceptional evidence of the ancient Otomanguan Tradition that played a key role in the foundation of Mesoamerican civilisations. The majority of the living languages spoken in the Valley are exceptional testimonies of the cultural continuity of this ancient tradition in an ever-changing environment. These languages also establish a strong bond between the evolution and adaptations of indigenous societies and the archaeological sites found in the region.

Criterion (iv):

The technological ensemble of water management of the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley, along with other archaeological evidences such as the remains found in caves, plant domestication sites, salt ponds and pottery, mark a stage of the utmost importance for the Mesoamerican region: the appearance and development of one of the oldest civilisations in the world. Located throughout the Valley, these technologies bear unique evidence of the constant adaptation of humans to the environment and reflect their innovative capacity to face the adverse environmental conditions in the area. Also the vast production of salt and pottery allow us to understand the social organisation of the area since pre-Hispanic times, as well as the modernization and commercial development of the Valley.

Criterion (vi):

The Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley is directly associated with a series of pictorial documents of great historic, iconographic and aesthetic universal value that represent the ritual and political life of the pre-Hispanic world. These aspects were depicted in codices, paintings and manuscripts that were passed on as a communication tradition even after the Conquest of the New World. There is no other region in the continent that has produced as many manuscripts of this sort. These documents strengthen our understanding of the historical development of the peoples from their origins, foundation and daily life in Mesoamerica.

Criterion (x):

The Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica is the arid or semiarid zone with the greatest biological diversity in North America. It is a world biodiversity hotspot that contains biomes characterized by high levels of endemic and endangered species, rare flora and plant communities. Its faunistic diversity surpasses that of any other dry-lands of the planet and, moreover, it is an outstanding agrobiodiversity centre. It is also a world centre of diversification for numerous groups of plants

Declaration of Integrity

The nominated property contains the most representative habitats and plant communities of the floristic province Tehuacán-Cuicatlán and all the relevant cultural elements that convey its Outstanding Universal Value. It is precisely for this representativeness and its integrity, connectivity as well as for its legal protection and functional management, that the size and boundaries of the property were set. The property and its buffer zone have effective legal protection. The management mechanisms consider the various threats to the area and establish objectives, strategies and specific actions in coordination with key local, national and international stakeholders to address this threats including adverse effects of development.



Declaration of Authenticity

The proposed sites for the present nomination still maintain their original condition, with the obvious weathering effects of time over millennia, but without any major disturbance in their main attributes. Investigations by renowned national and international academics have been based mainly in carbon and sediment dating, as well as the study and dating of clay remains considered relevant to determine the time limits of the sites. Thanks to the investigation methods used, the sites are still unaltered and so the spiritual character inherent to each one of them and to the system of sites as a whole has been preserved. The *genius loci* of the ancient Otomangueans transmitted through millenia survives and warrants the recognition of the sites' authenticity.

Protection and Management Requirements

The property Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Valley: originary habitat of Mesoamerica has effective legal protection to ensure its Outstanding Universal Value including the natural and cultural conditions of integrity and its cultural conditions of authenticity.

The nominated property is completely included within the boundaries of the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve (TCBR), which was designated by the Mexican federal government as a natural protected area under the category of biosphere reserve since 1998. In 2013 the TCBR consolidated the management plan that was designed with the aim of maintaining the biodiversity and ecological processes as well as the cultural and historical heritage. The archaeological sites also receive effective legal protection under the Federal Law on Monuments and Archaeological, Artistic and Historical Sites.

The institutions in charge of implementing protective measures are the Ministry of Environment, the National Commission for Protected Areas, Federal Attorney General for Environmental Protection and the National Institute for Anthropology and History. For monitoring of biodiversity the National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity and the National Forestry Commission coordinate with CONANP. All these institutions work together with the Administration Office of the TCBR, in charge of executing the majority of fieldwork throughout the area. These institutions count with the active participation of local communities.

Name and contact information of official local institutions

Name: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) / National Institute of Anthropology and History
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Name: Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP) / National Commission of Natural Protected Areas
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