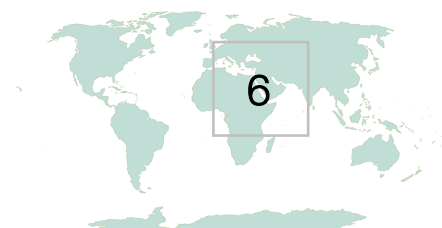


IN-Between Metropolitan Strategies Programme Interview #6 | Medellín, Colombia



The INTA' Community of Competence on Metropolisation¹, and Deltametropool Association jointly designed the *IN-between Metropolitan Strategies* programme to pursue earlier discussions and exchanges on territorial strategies. In a first phase, a series of interviews were conducted with several metropolitan stakeholders covering a broad range of themes: scale the metropolitan area, governance and municipal cooperation, new forms of urbanity, metropolitan eco-system, innovative economy within the metropolitan area, and metropolitan sustainability. These interviews are now published to take further the debate on socio-economic development and governance of large territories.

Medellín Metropolitan, Colombia

Interview with Françoise Coupé, Professor at Colombian National University and President of the urban territorial Council of Medellín

1. The metropolitan area

How extensive is the metropolitan area and how are the metropolitan values and identity formed for this the area? What makes your metropolitan area internationally attractive?

The following maps identify the metropolitan territory within the American continent, within the Country - Colombia – and the Department – Antioquia.



¹ <http://www.inta-aivn.org/en/communities-of-competence/metropolisation/metropolisation-home>

The metropolitan area covering 1164 km² **consists of 10 municipalities; among those 9 are parts of the entity AMVA** (Área Metropolitana del Valle de Aburrá, or Metropolitan Area of Aburrá Valley)

- Medellín is centrally located both in the valley and in the metropolitan area;
- North-East of Medellín are the municipalities of Barbosa, Girardota, Copacabana and Bello;
- Southwards of Medellín, the municipalities of Itagüí, Envigado (this last one is not part of AMVA, although the decision to join the metropolitan is under discussion), La Estrella and Caldas Sabaneta.

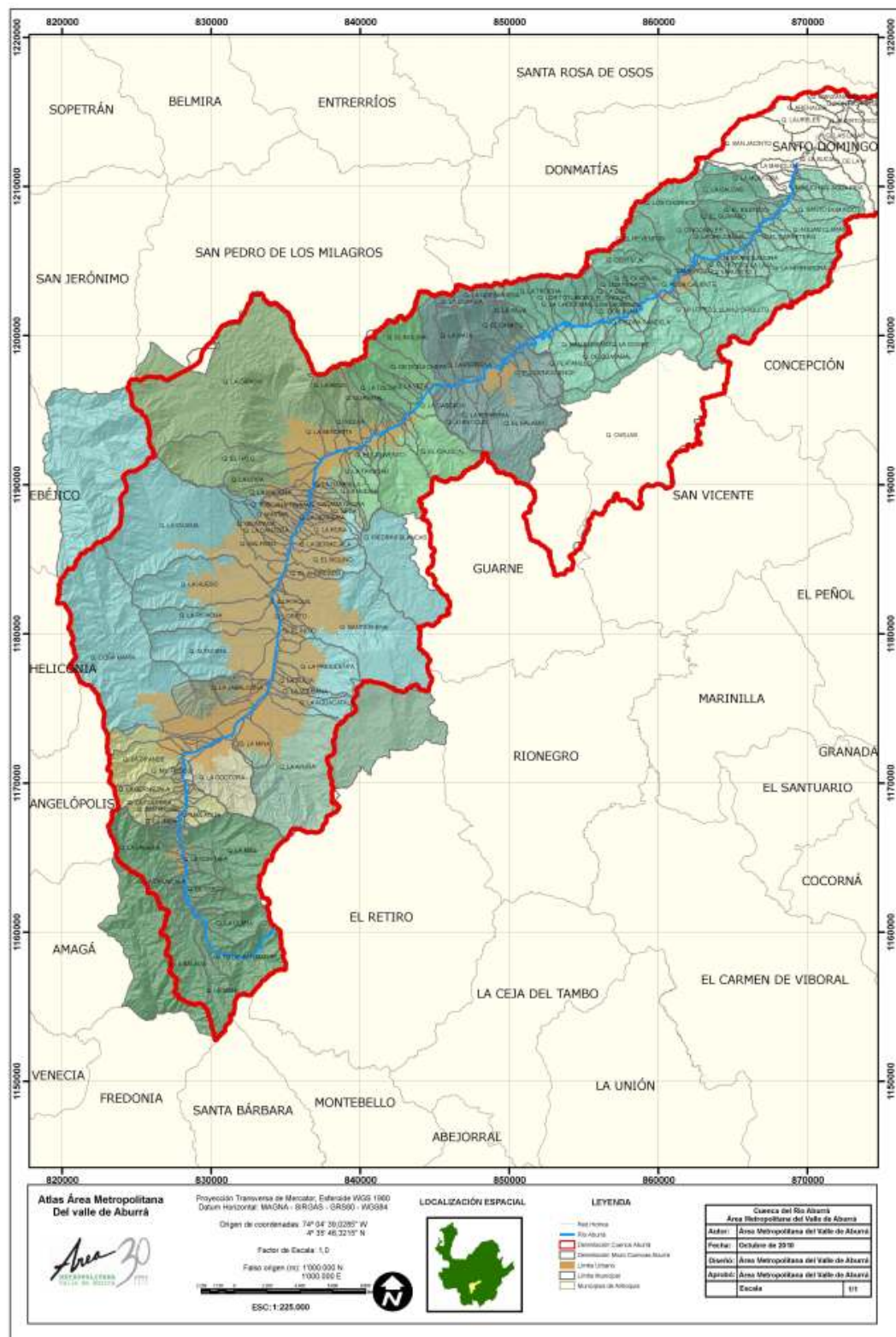
These 10 municipalities are close to each other in physical, environmental, economic and social terms, which gives the area the sense of a whole entity, grown up under the same influence, with similar territorial morphology, and crossed by the same structural axis, the river, with intertwined but different development conditions.

These relations date back to the pre-colonial times, as evidenced by ancient roads and traditional events, kept alive over time, and even strengthened since 1970 through the agglomeration process.

The map shows the different municipalities, the perimeter of the valley (red line), the urban areas and the agglomeration (in the ochre colour):



Photo : AMVA. The Valley seen from the South



Metropolitan values have been forged over time.²

As the majority of people in the Department, the inhabitants of Aburrá Valley define themselves as holding work-based values, respectful of family ethics, and committed to their beliefs.

- A rural-based economy is still today the principal income outside the urban areas. From the nineteenth century, the industry played an important role especially in Medellín, Bello and Itagüí where the first textile factories were established, followed by chemistry, engineering, and packaging industries.
- Today, but mainly in Medellín, the tertiary sector is expanding at the detriment of the industrial sector that moved to the valley and beyond it, towards the international airport and along the road to Bogotá. Over time despite the transformation of the productive sectors, the society always recognised itself in the work-based values.
- Respect for the family was held by both "macho" behaviours and women's attitudes. Families have for a long claimed their origins from Medellín, from the Valley or another municipality within the Department, their political affiliation to one of the two traditional parties (Conservative and Liberal), and their Christian faith.
- Commitment to Catholic beliefs, closely related to Spanish culture, is still strong despite the recent influence of sects and different denominations of Protestantism coming from the United States.

However, from 1945, conflicts between conservatives and liberals introduce violent forms of political expression ranging from verbal and physical abuses to expulsion and killings of population ...

From the 80s, globalization (internet, international travels, wider knowledge ...) brought profound changes, especially when drug trafficking introduces new "values" more related to easy money, rapidly transforming families and social relationships, and generating further violence to control territory.

Attractiveness of the metropolitan area is mainly related to the initiative of the Municipality of Medellín that, for ten years, give considerable attention to restore a clean identity. The goal was to create a new image of the city. After the years of Pablo Escobar and its kind, the transformation leads to a rebirth of the Metropolitan through major urban renewal programmes (Library parks, metro and metro-cable, renovated public spaces, among others). Medellín starts being recognised as the place where education and citizens' participation play an important role to design the new city, even if the struggle for the control of the territory still keeps on mostly in the periphery.

The city seeks to make visible its new image; and this process generates ripple effects in other municipalities especially in the largest and closest to Medellín. This was evidenced during the Olympic Games in South America and the Caribbean, the Assembly of the Inter-American Development Bank, or the concert of Madonna, etc. Being the host city of the next United Nations Conference on Habitat in 2014 is another example, as well as hosting the Youth Olympic Games.

In addition, Medellín is one of the three candidate cities for "*the most innovative city in the world*". The city describes its process of moving "from violence to hope," through social and urban improvement projects and technological development, as a basic condition to open up to the world.

² AMVA values are described below under *governance and cooperation*

2. Governance and Cooperation

Is there a form of metropolitan strategy in place and what fields of policy does it entail? Which stakeholders are involved and what is their role and responsibility in this metropolitan strategy? How are the different territorial levels associated to the metropolitan governance? And how is the cooperation of different territorial levels maintained in the planning process that is increasingly subject to a rapid changing economic, social and technological environment?

Metropolitan strategies

The AMVA has been created by the Assembly of Antioquia by law 34 - 1980, in response to the Decree-Law 3104 - 1979, in order to guide the development of Aburrá Valley without hindering the municipal autonomy, established in the National Constitution, but providing technical assistance to local administrations and to help developing regional projects.

The 1991 Constitution introduced important changes. **Today, AMVA is an "administrative entity of public order, which entails administrative autonomy.** AMVA has its own assets, powers, and special rules set by law regulating promotion, planning and services delivered to the municipalities under its jurisdiction. "

Its functions go far beyond planning, development and implementation. The AMVA is the referent authority for the environment and mass public transport in the nine municipalities composing the metropolitan area.



Photo: AMVA

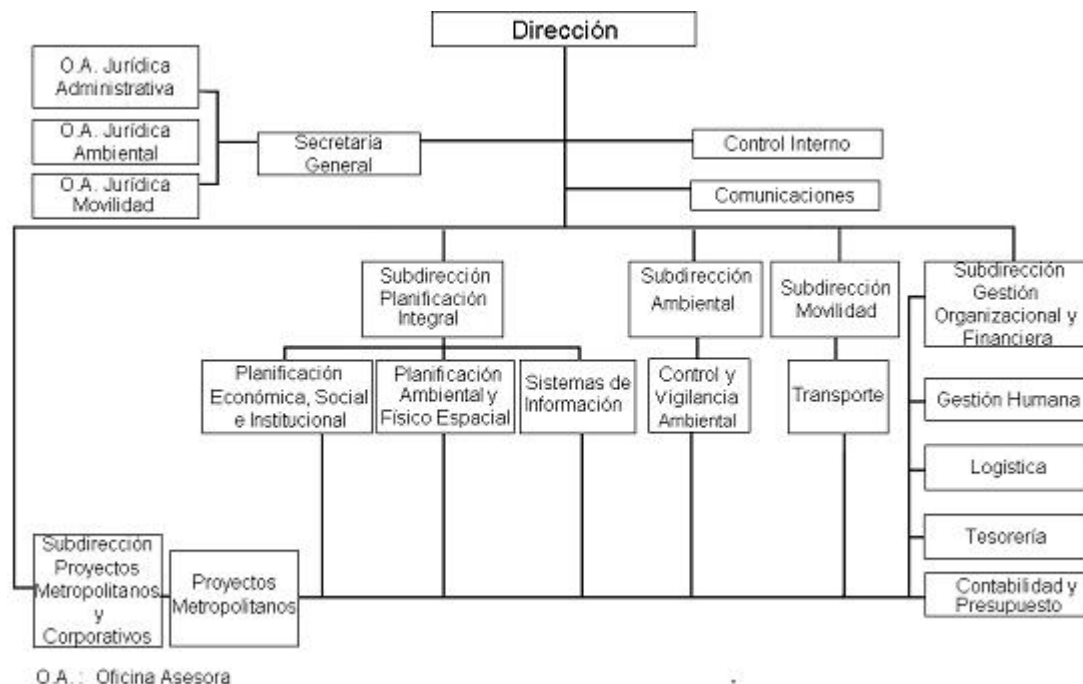
The actors:

The main decision-making body is the Metropolitan Council or AMVA Council which is composed of the Mayor of Medellín as chairperson, and the mayors of the nine

municipalities of the Aburrá Valley (with the exception of Envigado whose mayor is nevertheless invited to the meetings), a representative of the Municipal Council of Medellín, a representative from the other municipal councils, and the Governor of the Department or his delegate.

- **However, the AMVA is one of the few institutions, if not the only one, where the decision-making bodies do not include direct representatives from the citizenship.**
- In addition to the AMVA, a special “decision-making space” was created where 3 privileged actors meet, the so-called “tripartite” made of the Governor of the Department representing the State, the Mayor of Medellín and the Director of AMVA, or at a lower level, Directors of Planning of Antioquia and Medellín and AMVA. This “organisation” produce sporadic activities and its effectiveness depends on the willingness of the political authorities.
- The AMVA pays particular attention to neighbouring regions, and especially to the valley of Saint Nicolas located at 2 500m of altitude and the Cauca Valley to the west at 800m of altitude. The idea of a large 3 levels macro region is the subject of intense discussions.³

To develop its activities, the AMVA created a special management structure:



Source : web page from the AMVA website

AMVA Staff is, in general, highly qualified but limited in number. Many professionals are hired for set periods of time, depending on the projects, and many studies have been commissioned to Universities and specialized NGOs.

This chart above described the AMVA functions and the four sub-directions corresponding to the institutional functions as defined by the National Constitution of 1991:

³ This will be further developed below.

- The first sub-division is the one closest to the AMVA initial responsibilities. The sub-division is responsible for planning and implementation of various programmes and projects, and performs all duties related to sub-division 3.
- The second sub-directorate is in charge of the environmental management and acts as Environmental Authority in the urban areas. Environmental authorities (Independent regional corporations and metropolitan regions) are institutions that contribute to the Environmental national System, SINA⁴, and are responsible for the national environmental implementation policies. Their functions are:
 - o Regulate, through permits, authorizations, licenses and concessions, access and use of natural resources according to the law and regulations
 - o Monitor citizenship behaviours so they do not interfere with the natural resources and the environment
 - o Make decisions necessary to maintain a healthy environment.
 - o Apply sanctions for violation of the norms of natural resources and environmental protection
 - o Promote and coordinate cross-institutional processes and improve the quality of the environment.
- The third sub-directorate is responsible for mobility and metropolitan transport system that means planning, controlling, monitoring, regulating all over the territory under its jurisdiction. The transport network includes regional train⁵, metro, metro-cable (low capacity), bus (medium capacity) and buses lines connecting to metro lines (Envigado municipality is included in this case).

The transport programme was established by law n.105 - 1993 and n. 310 and 336 of 1996, and consider all necessary operations for the movement of people or goods from one place to another, separately or together, using one or more means that can be individual, collective or massive. The AMVA fixed the rates and give its agreement on the calls for bids.

- The fourth sub-directorate is in charge of the management of the AMVA territory and its resources. Heritage and resources of the metropolitan regions are defined by law:
 - o The profit from the tax on the 2 x 1000 cadastral value of the properties located within the jurisdiction;
 - o The annual budget allocated by municipalities and the Department;
 - o Other contributions such as contributions from generated valued by the implementation of metropolitan projects, contracts for services, services and good sale and real estate property acquisition.

AMVA Metropolitan values are spelled out in the Mission, in the Vision and in the Institutional principles:

- Mission: "Give directions to the sustainable development of Aburrá Valley based on the articulation between the metropolitan society and its environment."
- Vision 2015: "harmonious land development, improving residents and inhabitants quality of life, and consolidation of the metropolitan culture."
- Principles:
 - o o Teamwork
 - o o Innovation
 - o o Sense of belonging
 - o o Respect of municipal autonomy
 - o o Consultation and dialogue

⁴ Sistema Nacional Ambiental, SINA, created by the Constitution of 1991, Law 99 /1993.

⁵ This train does not exist anymore.

- o Actions' quality
- o Community Involvement

These topics are widely developed in the development objectives:

- General objectives:
 - Boosting inter-generational change at all levels of the organization in order to improve the inhabitants' quality of life in the metropolitan region
 - Actively assist the process of creation and consolidation of the metropolitan culture, governance, competitiveness, social inclusion and innovation, with a strong sense of belonging and trust, which act as an engine for integration and development throughout the metropolitan area
 - Integrate public and private efforts to build and strengthen the eco-region model
- Specific objectives:
 - Improving the standard of living for the inhabitants of the metropolitan region
 - Give directions and coordinate territorial planning and institutional processes
 - Perform environmental functions
 - Take care of the integral development of Aburrá Valley and surrounding areas
 - Contribute to strengthening local territorial entities (Ref.: Municipalities)
 - Establish agreements on the structural elements of the region
 - Promote and implement programs and projects of strategic regional character

Territorial levels associated to the Metropolitan governance are clearly defined:

- Antioquia Department
- 9 municipalities of Aburrá Valley

However, we must add several elements:

- The AMVA is part of the Environment National System (SINA), which defines, among other things, a hierarchical structure:
 - o Ministry of Environment
 - o Autonomous Regional Corporations and Metropolitan Regions⁶ whose autonomy is relative because the Ministry is above them and is responsible for receiving administrative appeals and complaints of general and specific matters.
 - o Departments
 - o Municipalities.
- According to the Department's decisions, AMVA must adopt different global policies and especially those that have been defined in the United Nations Conference (Rio de Janeiro, Stockholm, ...). Outcomes from Rio are incorporated in many documents. The same goes for agreements signed on biodiversity (ratified by Law n.165 - 1994) and climate change (Law n.164 - 1994).

Cooperation is maintained by different mechanisms despite the rapidly economic, environmental, social and technological changes, and the significant differences among the municipalities in the metropolitan area.

On the one hand, objectives are clear, as summarized above and expressed in the "Metropolitan Plan 2008 - 2020" and in the Management Plan 2012 - 2015, with programmes and projects. These objectives are also accepted and shared by the municipalities⁷.

On the other hand, resources are redistributed among all municipalities in the context of regional and municipal projects, even if the central city, Medellín, provides the highest

⁶The metropolitan areas are environmental authorities for urban areas (except the rural part of the municipality) with more than one million inhabitants.

percentage of these resources. The political narrative stemming from to this process is quite important insofar it is about solidarity and equity (not equality).

Finally, programmes and projects are generally well evaluated and generate a certain level of confidence among the municipalities, although Medellín plays an important role sometimes becoming over preponderant. In fact one of the first AMVA's tasks has been to change the notion of "the Metropolitan area of Medellín" into the "Metropolitan area of Aburrá Valley".

3. New Forms of Urbanity and Metropolitan Environments

What are the key development projects (flagships, major infrastructure, social or cultural equipment, etc.) and programs (information, incentives, investments), of your metropolitan strategy? How is the dialogue carried between the specific ambitions of local key projects and the ambition of the metropolitan territory?

The guidelines can be summarised under 5 chapters:

Planning process:

- Improved mobility in the metropolitan area
- Metropolitan area integrated management
- Promotion of the Metropolitan Development
- Construction of planning instruments for the ecosystems' conservation and restoration
- Aburrá River Valley Management Plan
- Strategic Metropolitan Plan for Housing and habitat with an environmental perspective

Social Development

- Guarantee the quality of food in the metropolitan area
- Safety and well-being projects in the metropolitan area
- Cultural transformation of the metropolitan inhabitant
- Enhance metropolitan economic development strategies
- Educational improvement in the metropolitan area

Environmental management

- Air: information system on air quality; setting of a metropolitan network monitoring air quality, emissions inventory; noise mapping;
- Optimization of water resources' quality and supply
- Protection, recovery and rehabilitation of flora, fauna and natural ecosystems
- Reducing the impact of natural disasters
- Implementation of the "best environmental practices".

Physical management

- Management and implementation of metropolitan and municipal public spaces and facilities
- Improvement of mobility and accessibility in the metropolitan area

Institutional management

- Support to strengthen the information management in the region and in each municipality
- Planning and implementation of the metropolitan system for disaster prevention
- Tools' definition for territorial planning, social development and environmental management
- Improved control and institutional management in the municipalities of the region
- Authority for Transport
- Monitoring and control on natural resources

Some metropolitan projects developed between 2009 and 2012:

Medellin North

- Mobility hub at the boundary between Medellín and the northern region in the municipality of Bello. It is a project including commerce and business development actions that should improve the circulation system.
- «Ciudadela⁸» environmental and educational project "La vida" in Copacabana;
- Landscape project and recreational and sport center in Barbosa;
- Project and implementation of the educational center Luis Eduardo Pérez Molina Barbosa

Medellin South

- Neighbourhood's improvement in the municipality of Caldas, in the South.
- This project includes several interventions:
 - o 1. Housing: 201 apartments in three sectors (AMVA is not involved in this aspect of the project, but it has defined guidelines for that).
 - o 2. Public space: football and beach volleyball fields, skateboarding track and cycle-cross, street games and children's games, sports center, climbing wall, nature trails, green spaces and squares.
 - o 3. Facilities: pottery, engineering and projections rooms, offices, auditorium, library, café, spaces for *Action Communale*, INDER (Institute of Sport Institute), commercial areas, 34 car parks and 10 for motorcycles, and services area.
- Construction of the distribution channel for the different transport system of Aburrà, in the south of the municipality of Medellín

4. Innovative economical sectors

Is the regional level competitive enough in a globalised economic and innovation-led system clusters and does it remove the obstacle of the vertical organisation of public policy?

Innovative economical sectors are:

- Health services within the country and to many foreigners from the Caribbean and USA
- Fashion
- IT (Information Technology)
- Tourism. Medellín used to be worldwide known as the centre of drug trafficking. Today keywords are: regional attractiveness and the ability to organize international meetings.
- Textile and manufacturing production.

These economic sectors should be maintained at the forefront if they do not want to lose their importance. But this requires high IT investments that are not so many in the Country. Colciencias⁹ just comes out of a crisis and starts to allocate resources coming from taxes and compensations paid by the mining and the energy sectors.

5. Sustainable development

On which central themes and key policies is your metropolitan strategy set upon? How do these themes and policies overcome the short-term instability of any long-term vision and deliver a performing and resilient territorial development?

⁸ Regional Centre

⁹ Equivalent to a National Research Fund.

The **central themes** are clear when making the list of projects. Policies and strategic guidelines are approved in two important documents and shared in Aburrá Valley:

- The Integrated Plan for the Metropolitan Development, "Metrópoli Plan 2008 - 2020" gives directions to the AMVA. It contains the programs and projects at the metropolitan scale and defines how to perform planning functions, environmental and transport authority. It directs and manages the internal processes of territorial management in the valley in terms of integrated sustainable development, main reason for the municipalities of the valley to cooperate.
- Management Plan 2012-2015 identifies strategic projects to guide the management seeking rationality and efficiency in resources use, and requiring effective decision making and implementation at all levels and in all areas. Its formulation is based on the participatory planning experience gathered in the years and provided by different actors, public, private and academic to build a better human development of the population.

This plan has an impact on quality of life, competitiveness and governance of the territory, and requires compromises between the metropolitan and municipal governments and the other institutions of the State as well as with the private sector, integrated into the fundamental strategic process to obtain quality standards and higher equity in accordance with the objectives set in the *Metropoli Plan 2008-2020*.

In this regard, it is important to note two important strategic trends in the metropolitan area: one related to environmental issue through the Antioquia Central Park project, and a second, related to social and economic issues through the notion of the 3 valleys mentioned previously.

Antioquia Central Park

Antioquia Central Park is a land use and environmental management strategy to protect in a sustainable way the ecological and cultural offer of the area. This area corresponds to the contact area and the natural boundary of the territorial systems of Aburrá Valley and San Nicolas to the east and Cauca to the west. This location allows the connection with strategic North-West natural ecosystems.

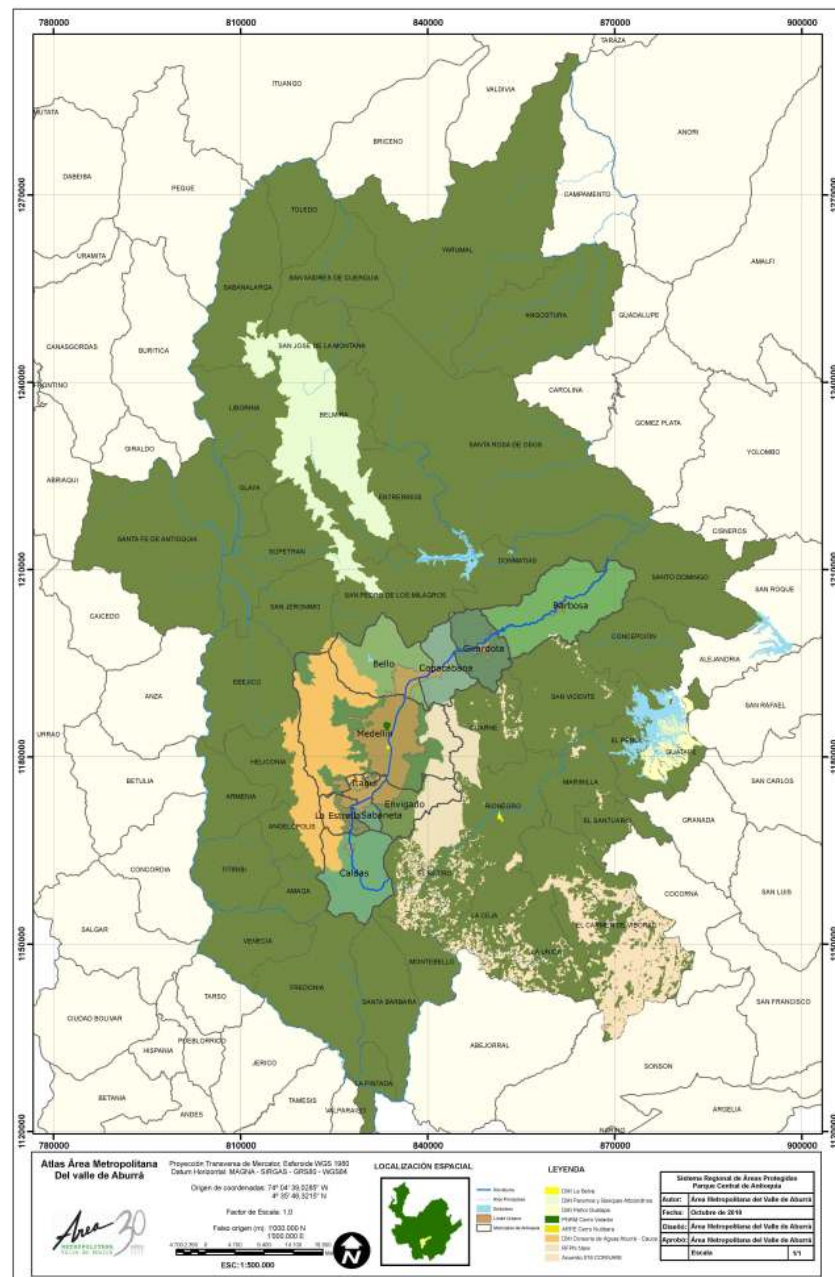
This strategy seeks, in addition, to strengthen protected areas, to integrate them into the urban-regional system recognizing and rewarding them for their rich biodiversity, ecotourism, water supply, appreciable public space and archaeological heritage. Antioquia Central Park, located in the metropolitan Aburrá Valley and central to the Department, is a strategic ecosystem for the protection of natural and cultural heritage.

This park is also the result of 2 projects already approved and implemented:

- The Forestry system and Andean Cordilleras North West of Antioquia is established by Decree 1974 of 1989 and said "Integrated Management of Renewable Natural Resources District". This region lies between 3,300m and 2,600m North of Medellín and is shared by two rivers. Conservation and protection of this ecosystem from which depends hydroelectric generation that meets regional and national demand of water supply - network of local communities and a large part of Aburrá Valley metropolitan region - is crucial.
- The Regional System of Protected Territories, SIRAP¹⁰, Antioquia Central Park, which is located in the District and it is concerned in the construction of the inter-institutional strategy in the area to ensure sustainable development which accommodates the majority of the population and, consequently, environmental and social problems are more severe.

¹⁰ Protected Areas System, SIRAP

The following map shows the extent of Antioquia Central Park (olive green) and its strategic importance around the metropolitan area of Aburrá Valley.



Antioquia Central Park (olive green) and its strategic importance around the metropolitan area of Aburrá Valley

3 Valleys

The dynamics of the metropolitan area and the rapid increase of population due to different processes of migration flows make it necessary to look at the area in two directions: east to the valley of Saint Nicolas and west to the valley of Cauca. This perspective has close links with Antioquia Central Park.

In the past, these regions used to have intense connections, which have increased over time and especially in the last 20 years:

- The Valley of Saint Nicolas is located to the east at 2 500m, higher than Medellín with a colder climate. Located in the valley are the International Airport with its related services, the road to Bogotá and the Magdalena River, a railway and a major inland waterway, a free industrial zone, new factories and those that have left the Aburrá Valley, shopping malls and new urbanised areas, built to be second homes that turned to be now permanent houses for families coming from Medellín. This valley is connected to Medellín through four important ways: Highway to Bogotá, two roads leaving from Medellín and the last coming out from Envigado. There's a project to build a tunnel still in stand-by waiting for the environmental license.
- Cauca Valley and mainly the municipalities of Ebéjico, Sopetrán, San Jerónimo and Santa Fe de Antioquia are located to the west and at a lower altitude than Medellín: 800 m with higher temperatures and a drier climate. These municipalities face a rapid transformation due to the construction of a tunnel that allows better accessibility to the Valley and thanks to favourable climatic conditions and to the architectural heritage (especially in Santa Fe, the capital of the Department during the colonial era) they are becoming holiday destinations for the inhabitants of Medellín, although so far they have been able to maintain their traditional activities: gold mining, fruit, handicraft.

Between these three valleys, exchanges are becoming more and more significant and during the last 10 years, urban planners aware of Aburrá Valley resources and geographical limitations, and of the potential of neighbouring territories, are thinking to establish more stable links among the three valleys and formulate common development projects as already testified by the transport system.