



MAPBIOMAS  
VENEZUELA

## **VENEZUELA EXPANDING: 40 YEARS OF URBAN GROWTH**

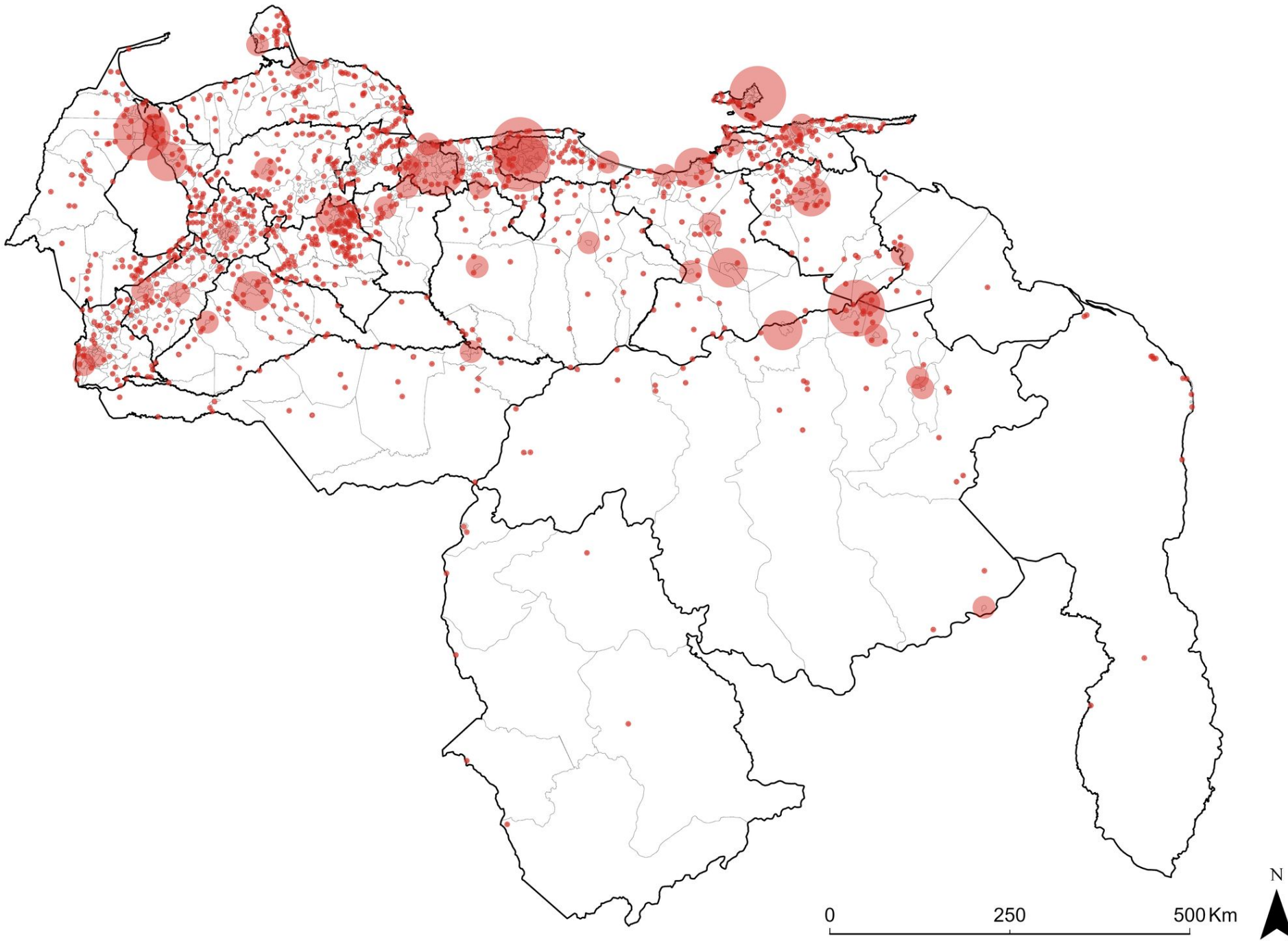
Transformation of Venezuela's urban areas  
(1985-2024)

Collection 3 of Annual Land Cover and Land Use Maps  
Urban Module (Beta)

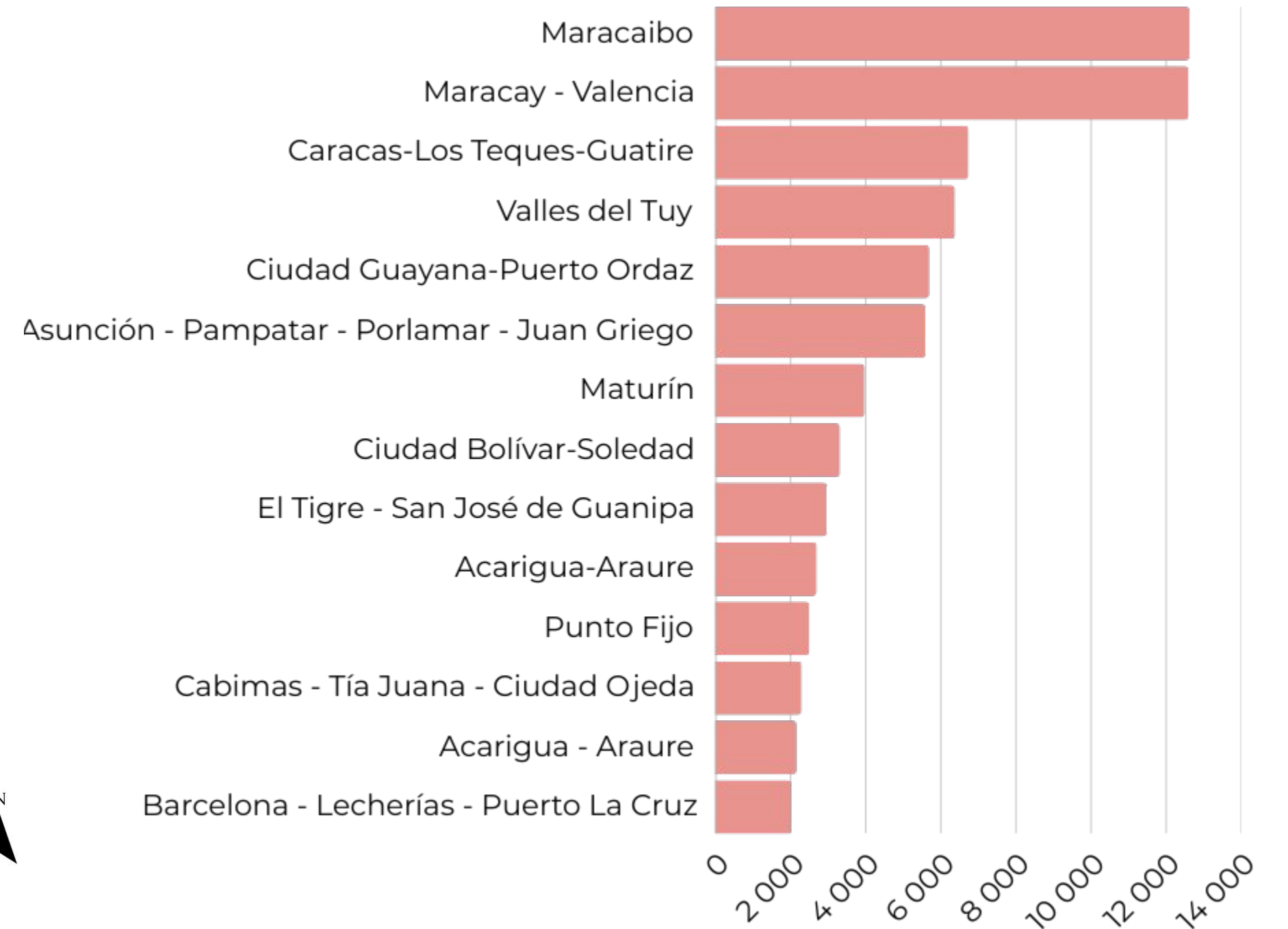
**1985-2024**

# NATIONAL OVERVIEW

From 1985 to 2024, urban land use increased by **72%**, adding **159,771 ha** to the **222,521 ha** originally existing. This expansion brought the total to **382,292 ha** by 2024



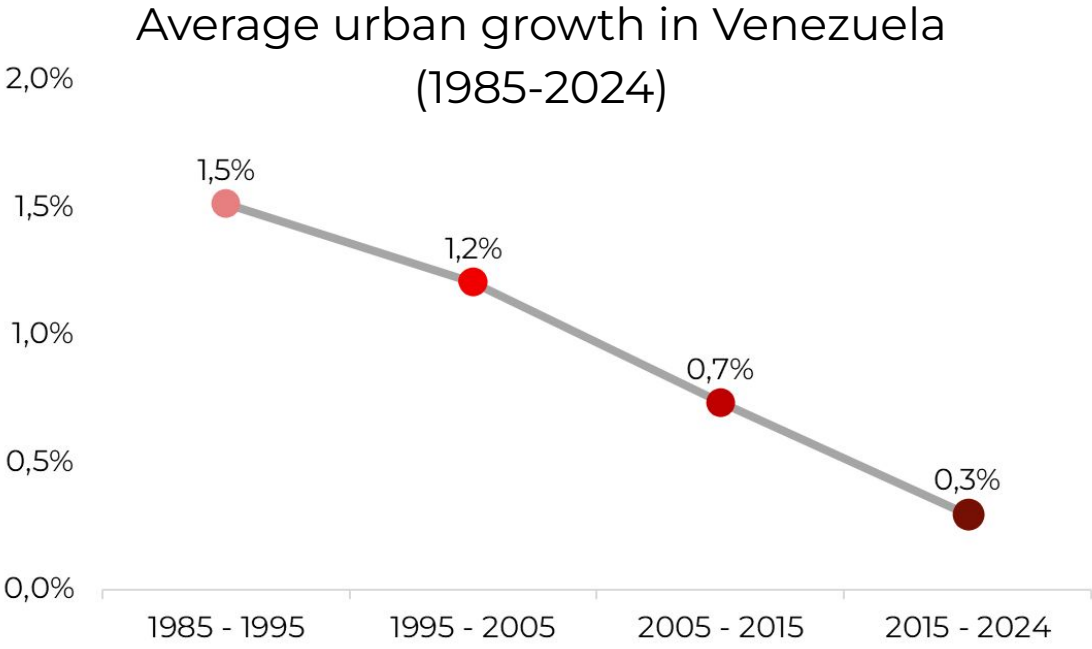
**Absolute growth of Urban Areas in Venezuela, 1985 - 2024**



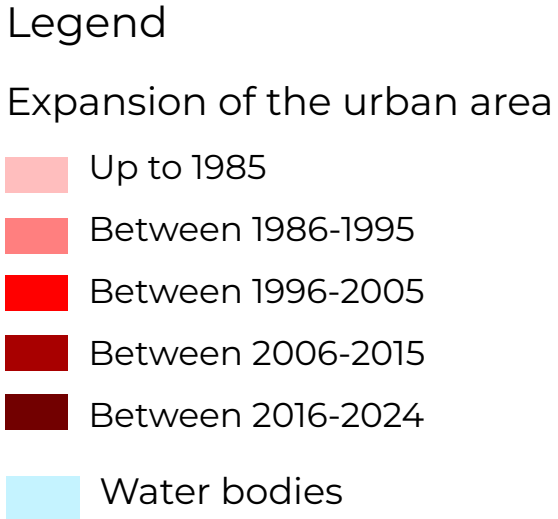
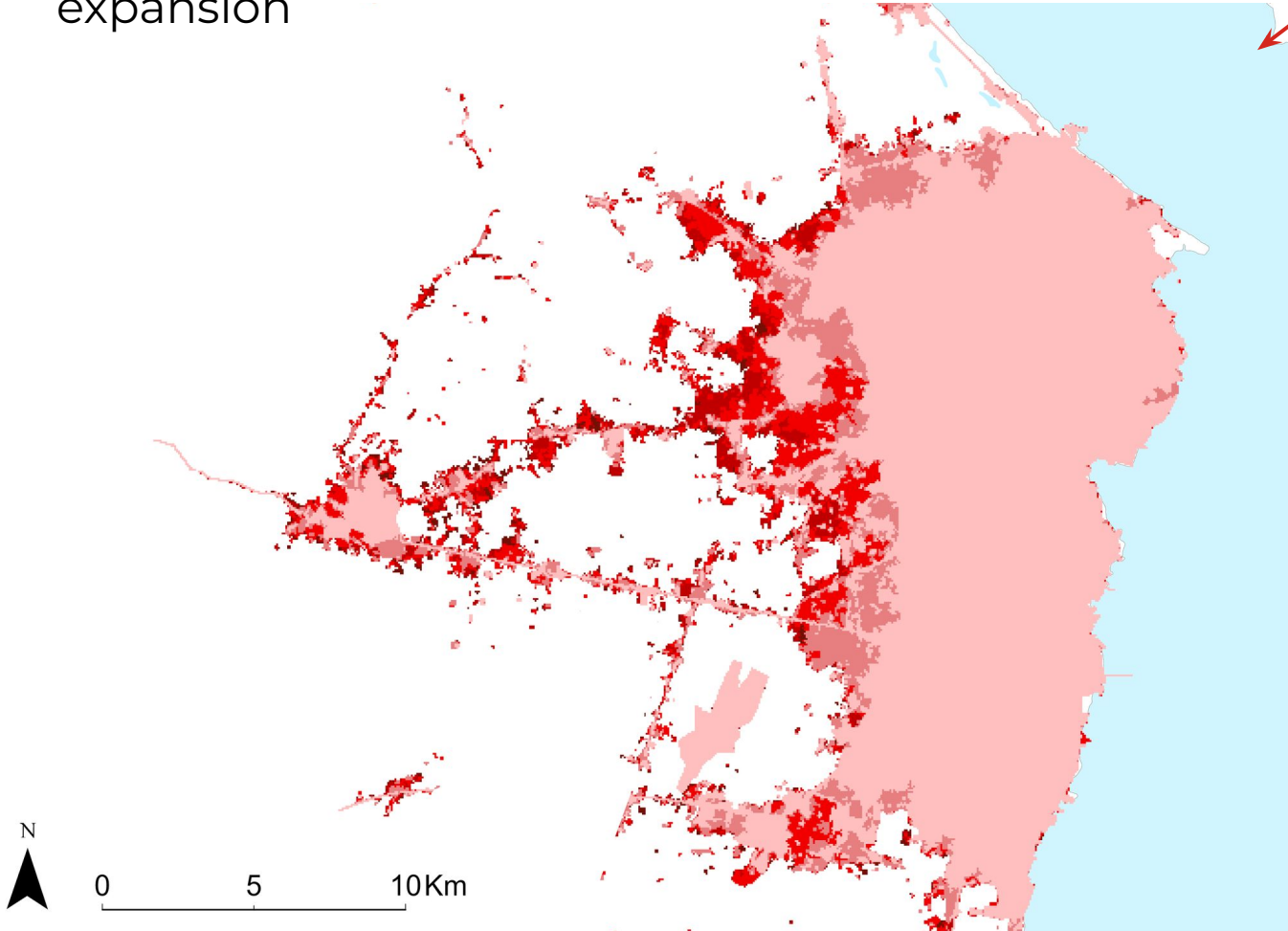
Urban areas currently occupy **0.5%** of the national territory.

# GROWTH BY DECADE

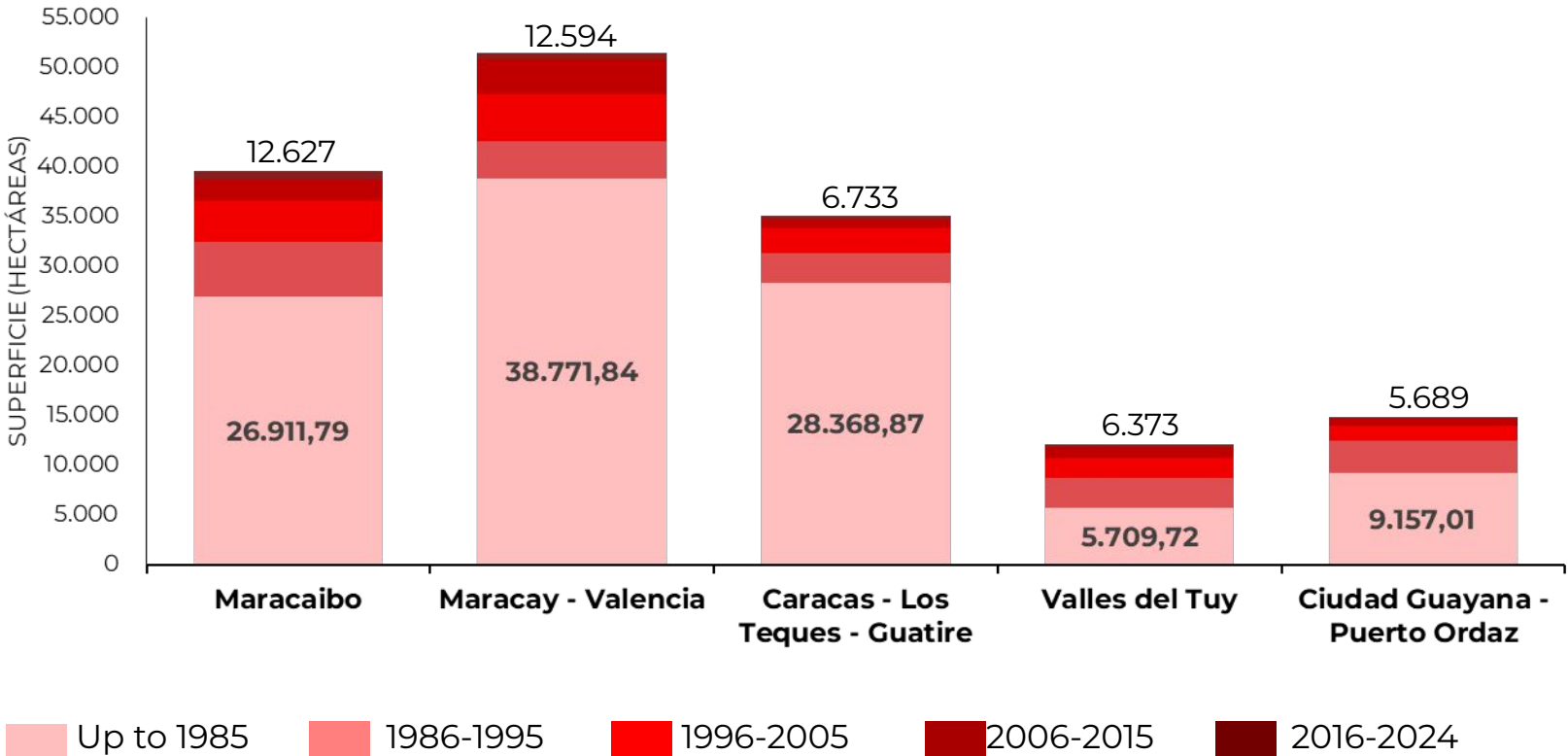
Venezuela's urban expansion peaked **in the 1985-1995 period**, recording the highest average annual growth rate: **1.5%**.



**Maracaibo:** The area with the greatest absolute expansion



## Urban areas with the greatest absolute territorial expansion: base year (1985) and decades through 2024

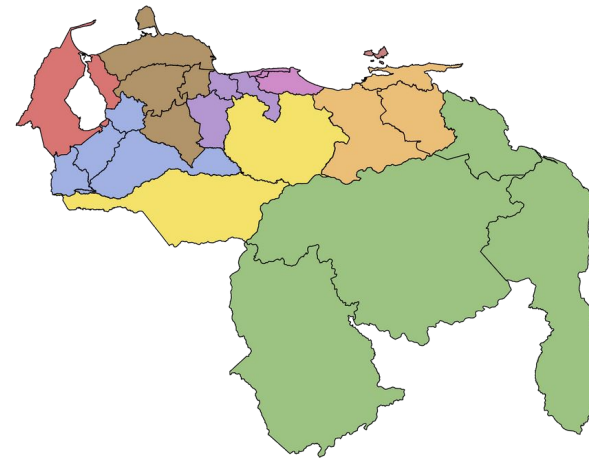


As the main center of absolute growth, Maracaibo added **12,627 hectares** of newly occupied land between 1985 and 2024.

This increase is equivalent to a relative expansion of **47%** of its urban footprint over 40 years.

# REGIONAL GROWTH: STATES AND REGIONS

Over the last 40 years, **the states of Bolívar, Zulia, Anzoátegui, Miranda, and Carabobo** have led urban expansion in Venezuela, concentrating the largest number of hectares gained since 1985.



**25** Federal entities

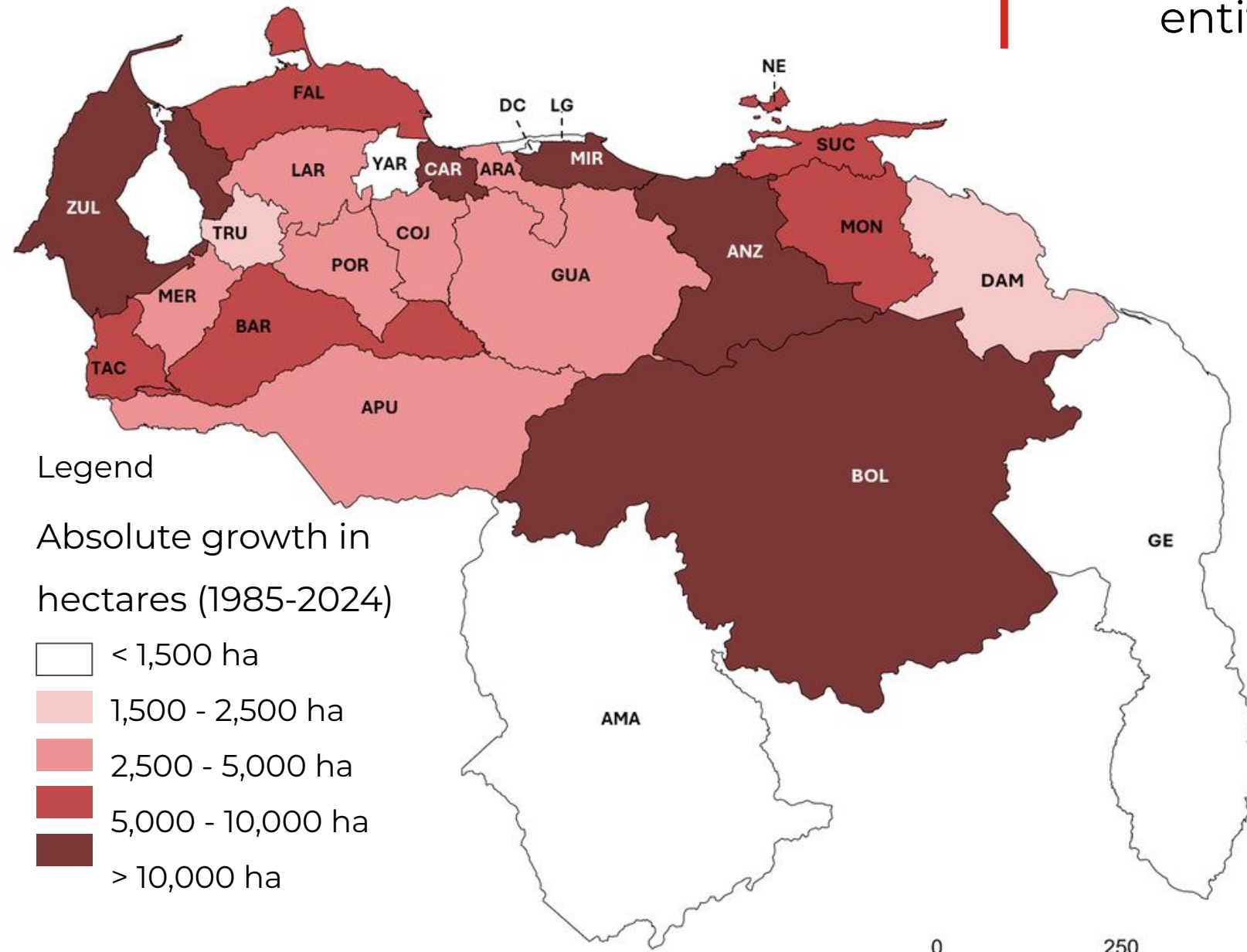
**9** Regions

## Absolute growth in Urban Areas by Region in hectares (1985-2024)

The Eastern and Zulian regions exceeded **24 thousand hectares** of urban growth between 1985 and 2024

The **Llanos and Insular regions** grew less in area (< 7 thousand ha), but show some of the country's highest annual growth rates.

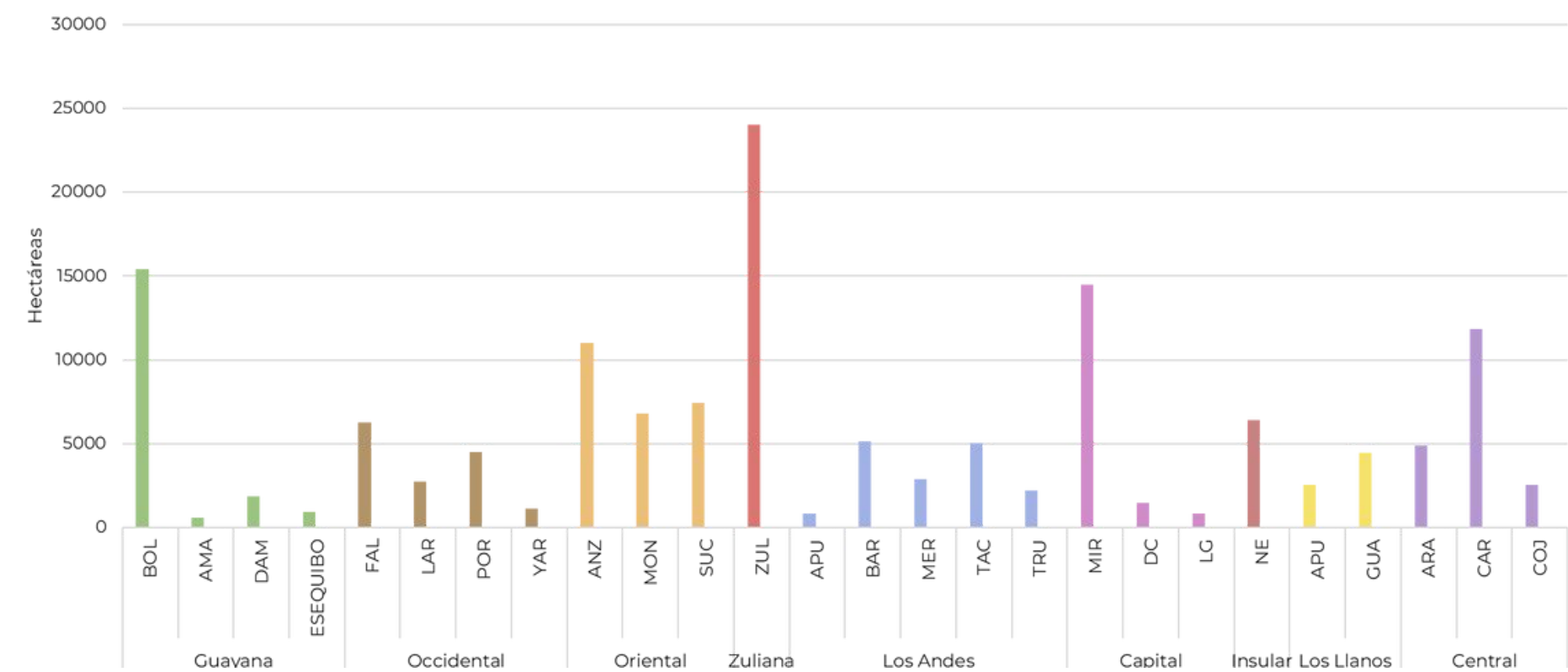
Regiones	Crecimiento absoluto	Tasa de crecimiento medio interanual
Insular	6.406 ha.	1,21%
Los Llanos	6.958 ha.	1,20%
Occidental	14.621 ha.	0,54%
Los Andes	15.984 ha.	0,95%
Capital	16.790 ha.	0,86%
Guayana	18.785 ha.	1,30%
Central	19.265 ha.	0,83%
Zuliana	24.023 ha.	1,00%
Oriental	25.239 ha.	1,35%



Legend  
 Absolute growth in hectares (1985-2024)

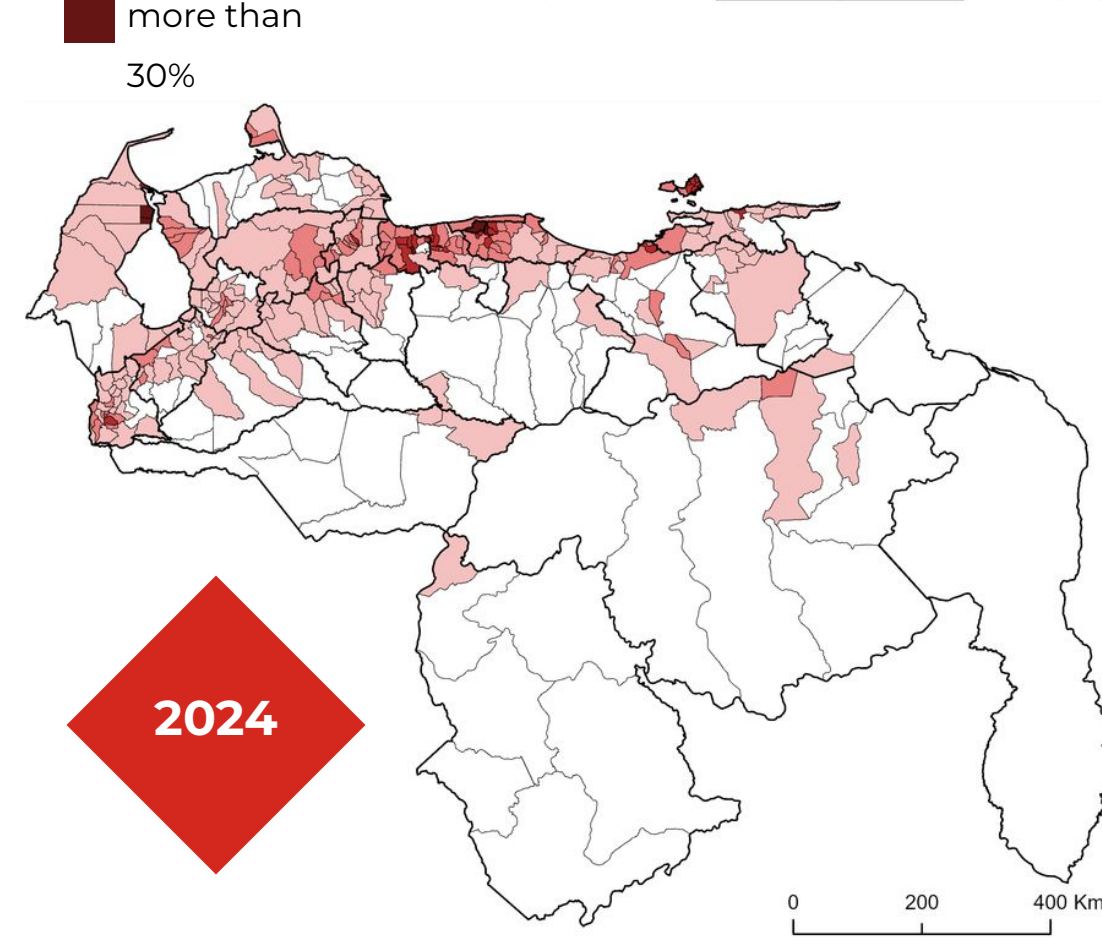
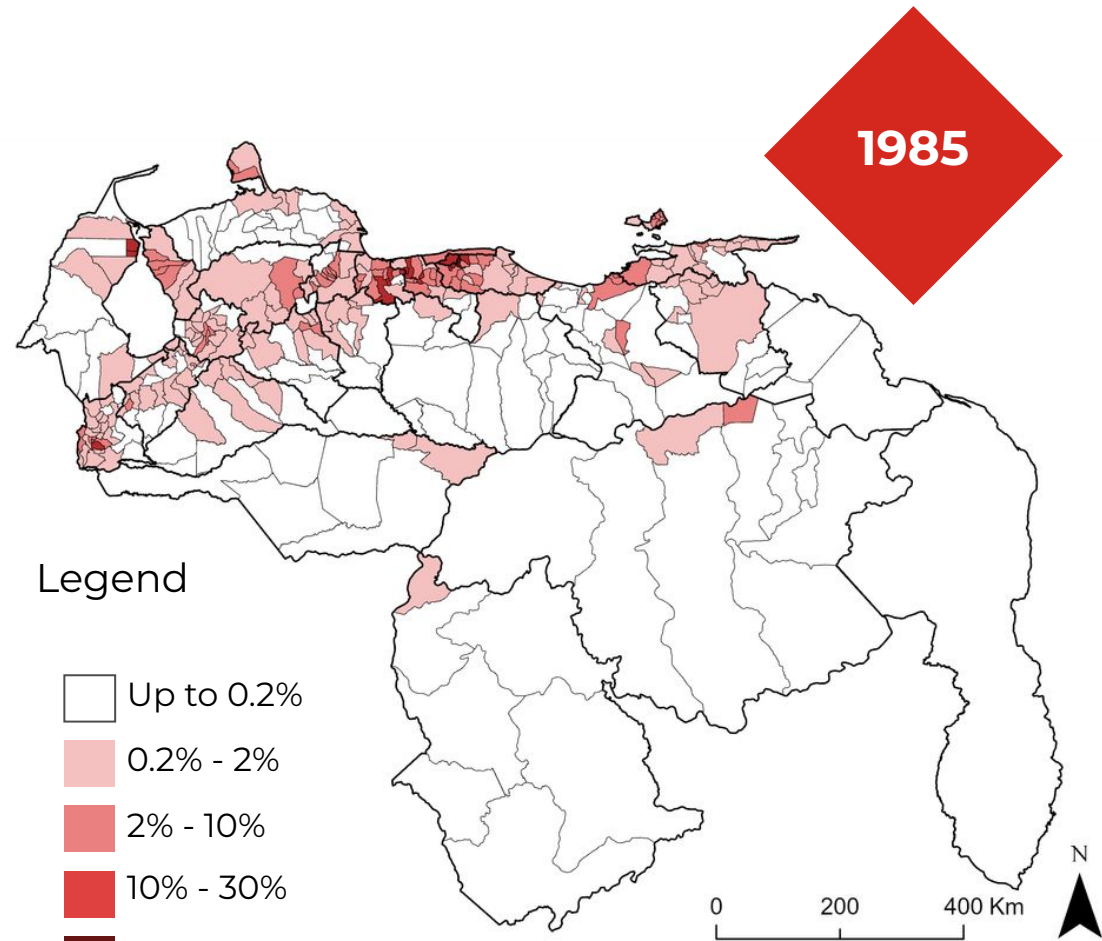
- < 1,500 ha
- 1,500 - 2,500 ha
- 2,500 - 5,000 ha
- 5,000 - 10,000 ha
- > 10,000 ha

## Absolute growth of Urban Areas by state in hectares (1985-2024)



# A LOCAL LOOK: MUNICIPALITIES IN EXPANSION

## Percentage of urban area by municipality



**335** municipalities

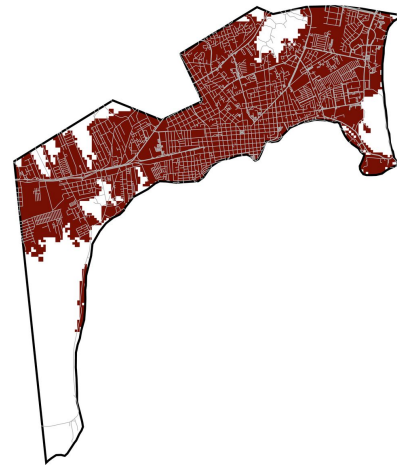
More municipalities are becoming urban

In **1985**, on average, 50% of municipalities had less than **0.5 % urban area**.

By **2024**, the threshold had risen to **0.8% urban area**.

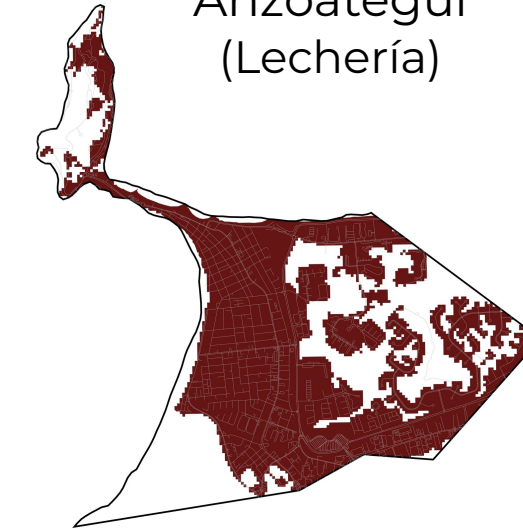
## Municipalities with the highest proportion of urban area in 2024

Mariño,  
Nueva Esparta  
(Porlamar)



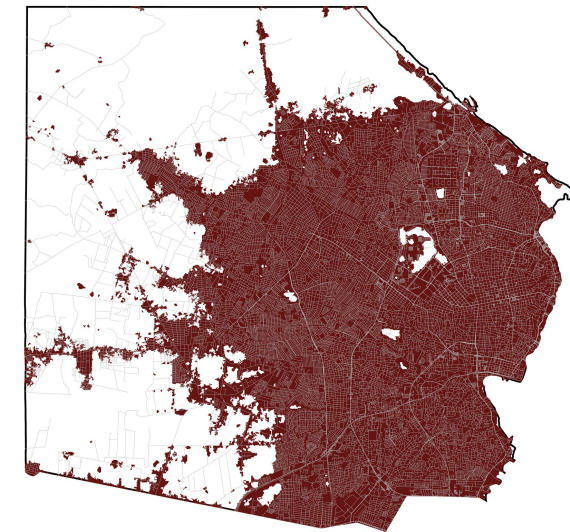
**70%**

Diego Bautista Urbaneja,  
Anzoátegui  
(Lechería)



**65.1%**

Maracaibo,  
Zulia



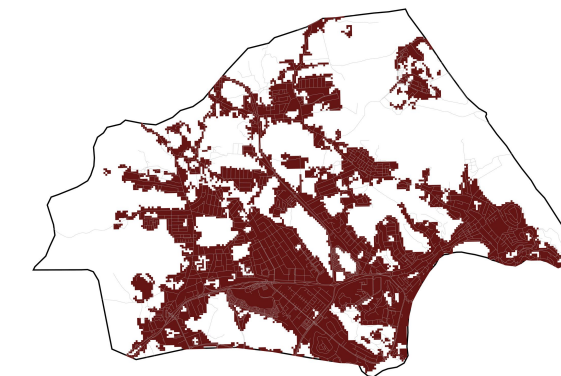
**48.8%**

Francisco Linares Alcántara,  
Aragua



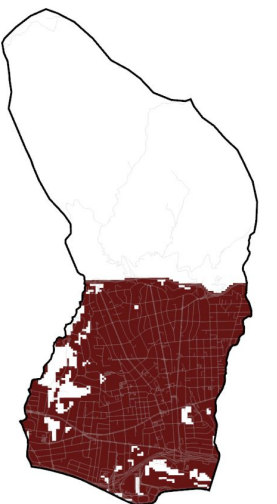
**47.5%**

Maneiro,  
Nueva Esparta  
(Pampatar)



**44.5%**

Chacao,  
Miranda

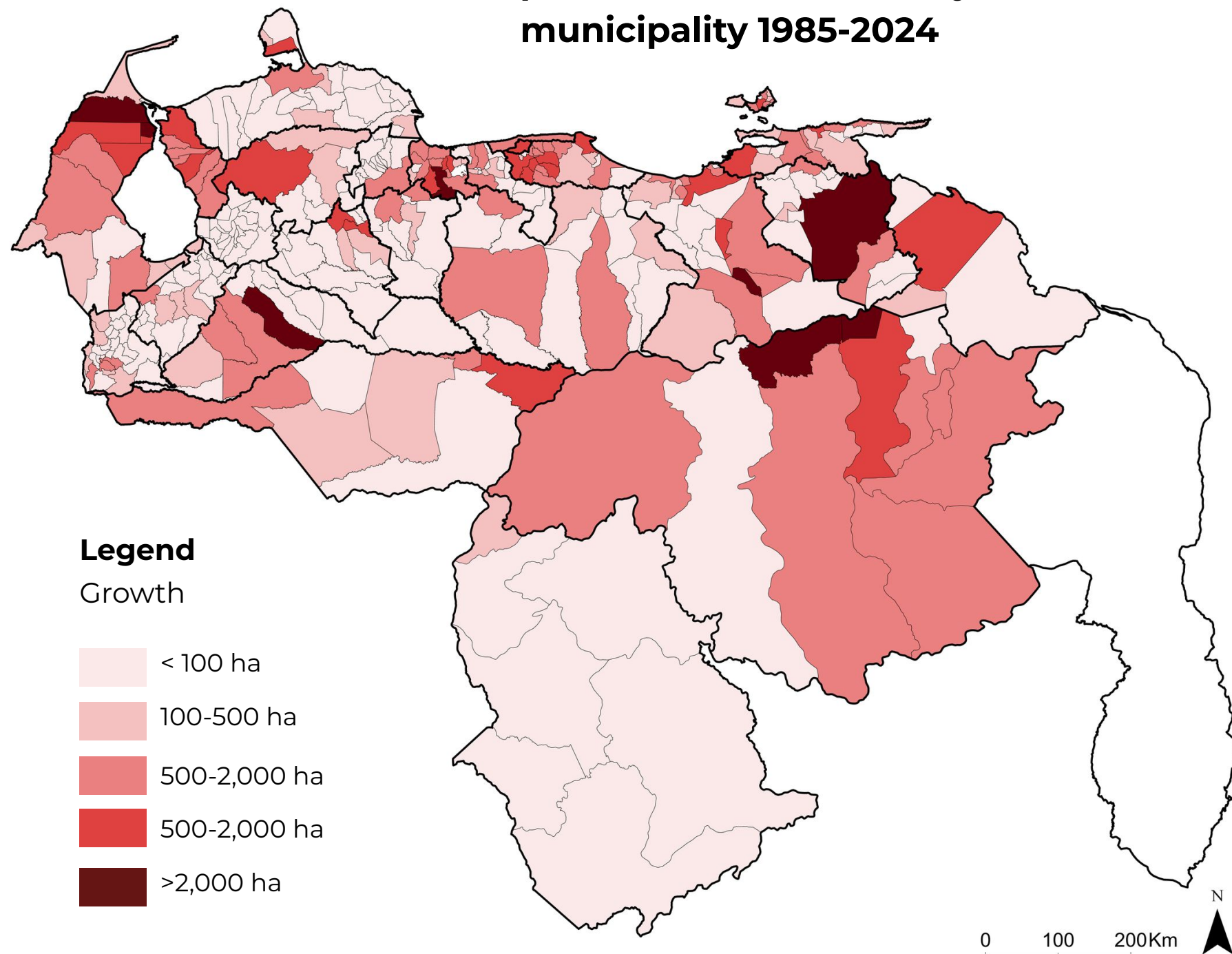


**42.1%**

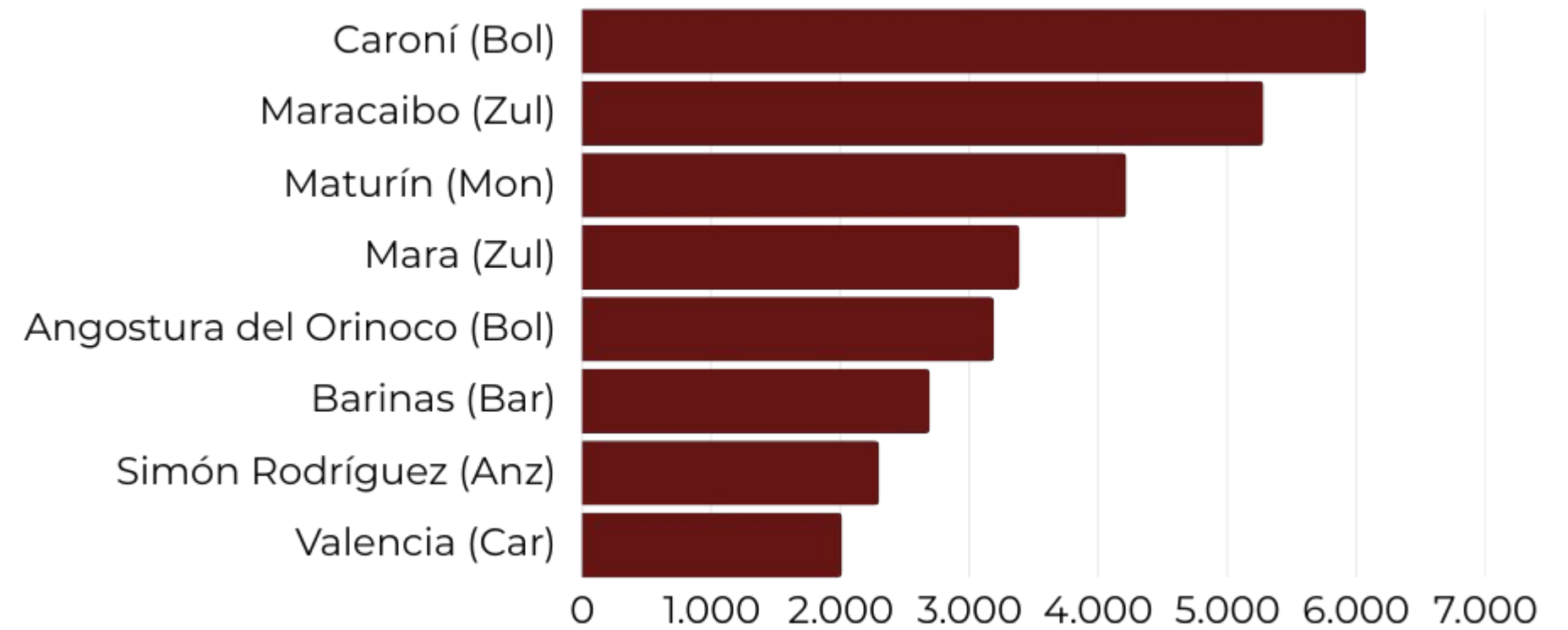
# A LOCAL LOOK: MUNICIPALITIES IN EXPANSION

**Urban expansion** is concentrated in centers leading growth in absolute terms: Caroní and Angostura del Orinoco (Bolívar), Maracaibo and Mara (Zulia), Maturín (Monagas), among other municipalities showing greater expansion.

**Expansion of urban area by municipality 1985-2024**



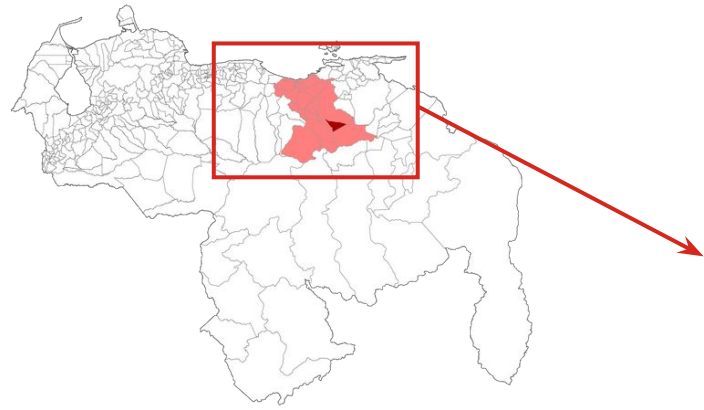
**Municipalities with the greatest urban area growth in 1985-2024**



Of the 335 municipalities analyzed between 1985 and 2024, **55.82% (187 municipalities)** recorded an increase in urban area of less than 250 hectares over the 40-year period. Within this group, cases with no change in the urban footprint were identified, such as the municipality of San Genaro de Boconoito (Portuguesa).

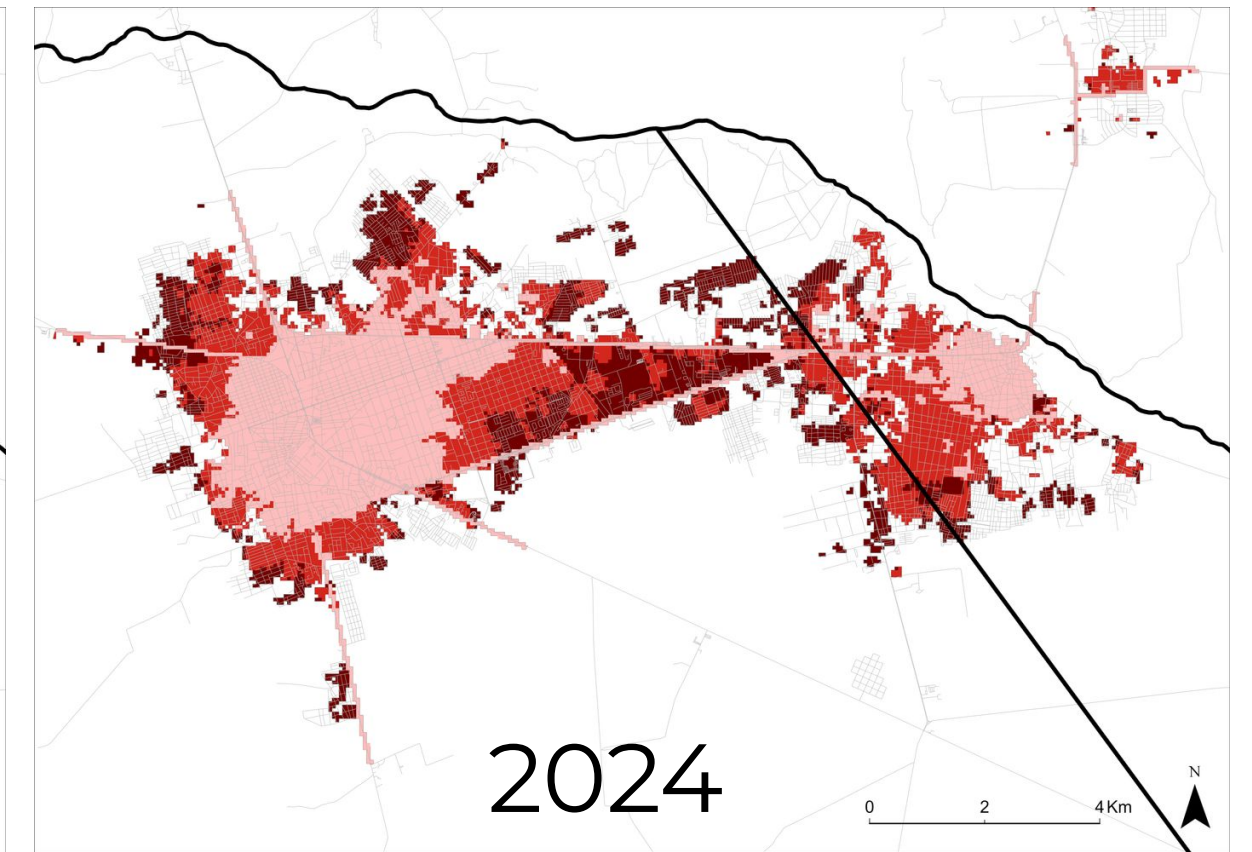
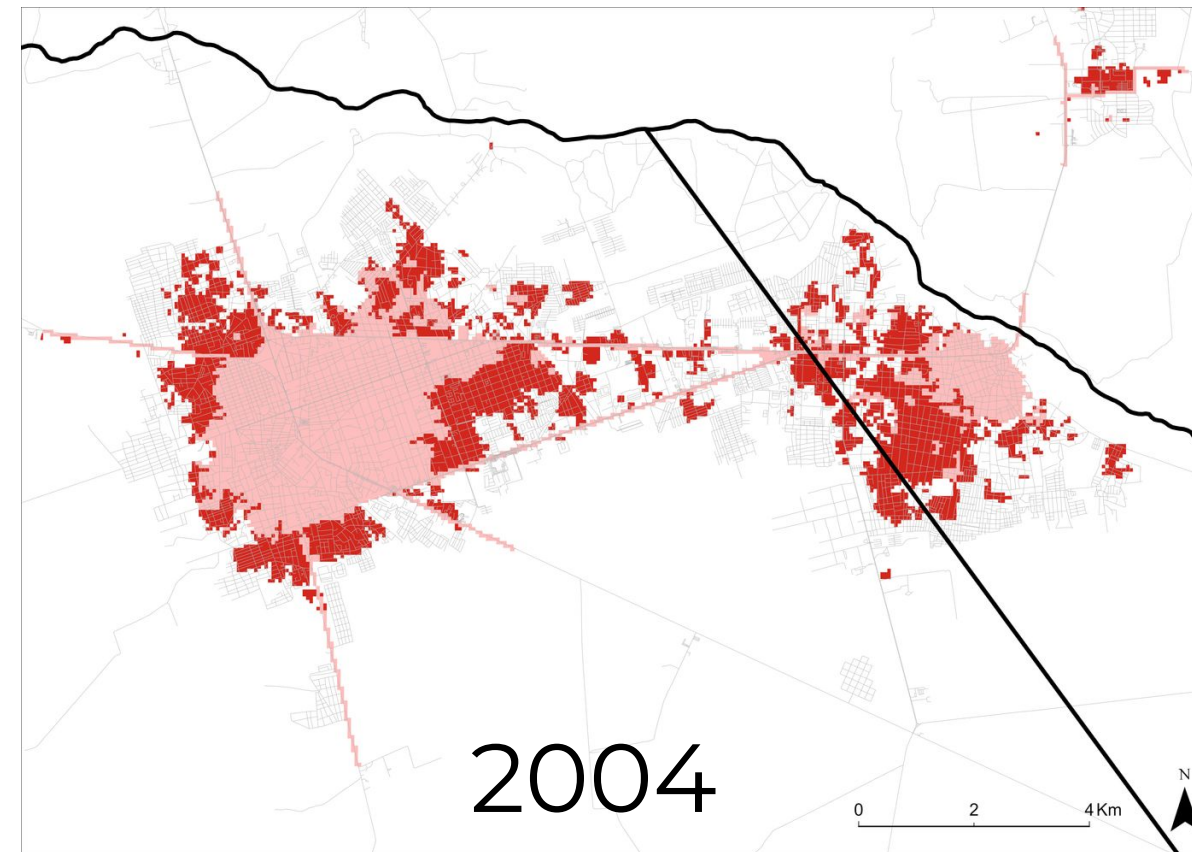
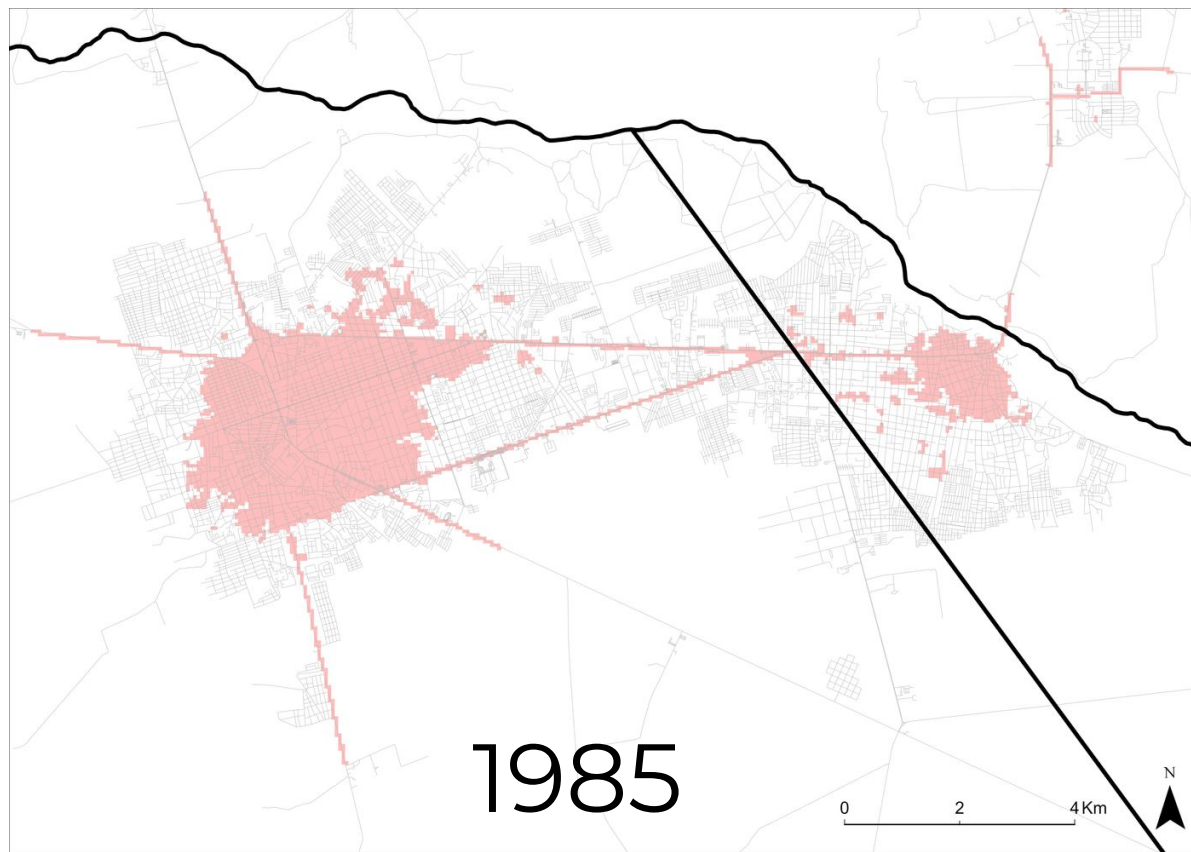
# NATIONAL OVERVIEW

## PATTERNS OF EXPANSION: HOW DOES THE CITY GROW?



**Urban growth patterns are dynamic:** they begin with linear expansion along main roads and later become transverse by occupying adjacent vacant spaces.

### The Pattern of Linear and Transverse Growth in El Tigre-Guanipa (1985-2024)



Expansion up to 1985

Expansion up to 2004

Expansion up to 2024

This cartographic sequence details the expansion of the conurbation that recorded the highest annual growth rate: **2.48%**. The city shifted from linear expansion along roadways (1985) to transverse densification (2024).

**El Tigre-Guanipa  
(1985-2024)**

**Conurbation as the dominant model.** This phenomenon—cities growing until they merge and spill beyond their administrative boundaries—is the most common pattern in urban expansion.

## HOW TO CITE:

“MapBiomas Venezuela. (2026). Appendix: MapBiomas Urban Venezuela Module - Delimitation of Urban and Peri-urban Areas (Beta version). In Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document (ATBD): MapBiomas Venezuela - Collection 3 (Version 1). [\[Link\]](#).”

The full description of the methodology applied in the Beta Version of Collection 3 of the MapBiomas Venezuela Urban Module is available at: [\[Link\]](#)

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Learn more at <https://venezuela.mapbiomas.org>

