



# BORDER 2020: U.S.-MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM

## Summary



The Border 2020 Program is the latest environmental program implemented under the 1983 La Paz Agreement. It builds on the Border 2012 Environmental Program, emphasizing regional, bottom-up approaches for decision making, priority setting, and project implementation to address the environmental and public health problems in the border region. As in Border 2012, the new Program encourages meaningful participation from communities and local stakeholders.

The Border 2020 Program also strengthens its focus in regional areas where environmental improvements are needed most: establishing thematic goals, supporting the implementation of projects, considering new fundamental strategies, and encouraging the achievement of more ambitious environmental and public health goals.

The **Guiding Principles** support the mission of the Border 2020 Program and will ensure consistency by continuing the successful elements of previous binational environmental programs:

- Reduce the highest public health risks and preserve and restore the natural environment
- Adopt a bottom-up approach
- Address disproportionate environmental impacts
- Improve stakeholder participation
- Foster transparency, public participation, and open dialogue
- Strengthen capacity
- Achieve concrete, measurable results
- Measure program progress through the development of environmental and public health-based indicators
- Recognize tribal sovereignty of U.S. Tribes and address issues impacting tribes on a government-to-government basis

### MISSION STATEMENT

*As a result of the partnership among U.S. Border Tribes and federal, state and local governments in the United States and Mexico, the mission of the Border 2020 program is to: Protect the environment and public health in the U.S.-Mexico border region, consistent with the principles of sustainable development.*

In this program, sustainable development is defined as “conservation-oriented social and economic development that emphasizes the protection and sustainable use of resources while addressing both current and future needs and present and future impacts of human actions.”

- Address the specific concerns and protect and preserve the cultural integrity of Mexican indigenous communities

Border 2020 has established six **fundamental strategies** that complement and inform the way we achieve the goals and objectives of the program:

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|--|---|--|
| 1. Working to Improve Children’s Health                | 3. Protecting Disadvantaged & Underserved Communities | 5. Promoting Environmental Health                                      |
| 2. Building Capacity towards Climate Change Resiliency | 4. Promoting Environmental Awareness                  | 6. Strengthening Tribal, State, Federal and International Partnerships |

Border 2020 has identified five long-term **Goals** with specific **Objectives** to address the most serious environmental and environmentally-related public health challenges in the border region. Some objectives and sub-objectives targeted by these strategic goals are broad and are expected to serve as guidance in the development of biennial action plans.

Biennial action plans establish priority and near-term targets that pay attention to the particular needs of a geographic area, region, or community, and adapt to emerging issues and/or unanticipated resource constraints.

#### Goal #1: Reduce Air Pollution

- Continue to focus on air pollution reductions in binational airsheds
- By 2018, maintain effective air quality monitoring networks and timely access to air quality data
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency and alternatives or renewable energy projects

#### Goal #2: Improve Access to Clean and Safe Water

- By 2015, increase homes connected to safe drinking water (DW) and waste water (WW) treatment
- Help DW and WW utilities become more efficient and sustainable
- Reduce levels of metals, sediment, or bacteria entering rivers and watersheds

#### Goal #3: Promote Materials and Waste Management and Clean Sites

- Develop capacity to improve collection and recycling of e-waste, plastics, and trash
- Develop scrap tire pile prevention and recycling capacity
- Develop institutional capacity to clean up contaminated sites
- Continue to share information on border area hazardous waste facilities

#### Goal #4: Enhance Joint Preparedness for Environmental Response

- Update eight sister city joint contingency plans with risk identification and reduction of all hazards
- Facilitate easier trans-boundary movement of equipment and personnel
- Continue updating the U.S.-Mexico Joint Contingency Plan

#### Goal #5: Compliance Assurance and Environmental Stewardship

- Improve information sharing between enforcement agencies on the movement of hazardous waste across the border
- Use Toxics Release Inventory (in the U.S.) and the Emissions and Contaminant Transfer Registry (RETC, in Mexico) to identify top polluters of toxic releases
- Training and information exchange on laws and regulations of respective countries

#### **Key differences between Border 2012 and 2020**

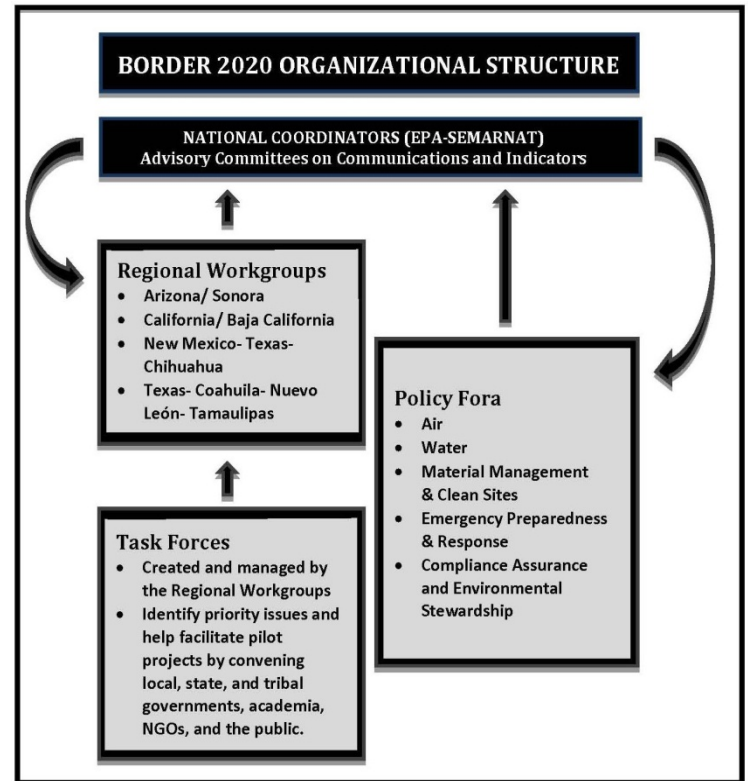
##### **Border 2020 includes:**

- An 8-year implementation horizon
- Six Fundamental Strategies
- 2-Year Action Plans that account for resource and priority changes and that consider the particular needs of a community or geographic area
- Indicators and Communication Committees
- A stronger communication component
- Updated goals and objectives

To complement and support the goals and objectives, Border 2020 encourages the use of **Border 2020 Tools**. The tools are not intended to be all-inclusive. They include:

- Pollution Prevention Techniques
- Public Health Interventions
- Sustainable Management of Water Resources
- Environmental Information
- Regulation and Policy Development
- Cooperative Enforcement and Compliance Assistance
- Environmental Education and Training
- Infrastructure Planning and Development

**Organizational Structure and Coordinating Bodies (see figure)** remain similar to the previous Border Environmental Program. Consistent with the La Paz Agreement, **National Coordinators** from each country manage overall program implementation, and ensure cooperation, coordination and communication among all coordinating bodies. **Policy Fora** focus on *border-wide* and *multi-regional issues* (identified as a priority by two or more regional workgroups), *primarily federal in nature* (requiring direct, high-level, and sustained leadership by federal program partners in the United States and Mexico) and that require broad policy considerations. Each of the five Policy Fora has a federal co-chair from the United States and Mexico. **Regional Workgroups** are *multi-media* and *geographically-focused*, and emphasize regional public health and environmental issues. They coordinate activities at the regional level and support the efforts of local Task Forces and coordinate with U.S. Tribes and Mexican indigenous communities. Each Regional Workgroup has one state and one federal co-chair from each country. The Regional Workgroups may create **Task Forces** to identify priority issues and help facilitate pilot projects by engaging with local, state and tribal governments, academia, NGOs, and the public.



**Communication** is an essential element of past and present U.S.-Mexico Border Environmental Programs. Border 2020, like the previous program, Border 2012, depends on a bottom-up communication approach. In order to ensure effective and timely communication and engagement with the public, program partners, and stakeholders, a communication strategy has been developed and will be updated regularly to ensure that efforts are streamlined and effective.

**Interagency Cooperation and Leveraging of Resources** – In order to maximize interagency cooperation, Border 2020 considers the relevant activities implemented by other institutions and the input provided by organizations that represent a broad spectrum of programs and perspectives from governmental, non-governmental, academic, and private sectors. Achievement of the goals of Border 2020 depend on continued availability and efficient utilization of funding from federal, state, and local governments as well as from public/private partnerships and collaborations. Border 2020 encourages all parties to participate in leveraging resources when developing projects, policies, and programs to meet its goals and objectives.