



Program Overview

The U.S.-Mexico Border XXI Program (Border XXI) is an innovative binational effort between the United States and Mexico to manage the natural resources and environment of the border region. The mission of Border XXI is to achieve a clean environment, protect public health and natural resources, and encourage sustainable development along the U.S.-Mexico border. Sustainable development is development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Border XXI brings together federal, tribal, state, and local entities from both countries to work cooperatively toward achieving these goals.

Historical Background

The Agreement for the Protection and Improvement of the Environment (La Paz Agreement) signed by both governments in 1983 provided the first formal basis for cooperative environmental efforts between the United States and Mexico. However, the environment of the border region continued to decline, and additional international efforts were necessary. In 1992, the U.S. and Mexico released the Integrated Environmental Plan for the Mexican-U.S. Border Area (IBEP). The agreement was recognized as not going far enough to protect the environment of the border region.

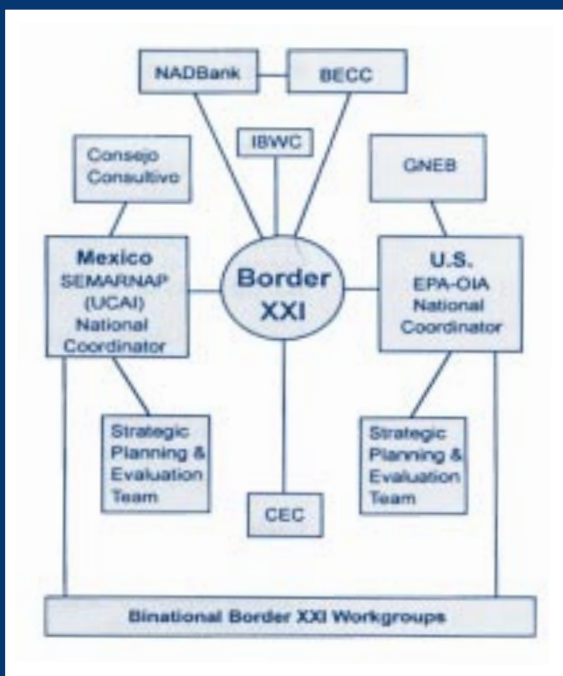
In 1993, U.S.-Mexico efforts were continued with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other related environmental agreements. As a side agreement to NAFTA, the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the North American Development Bank (NADBank) were created to develop, certify, and finance environmental infrastructure projects in the border area between the United States and Mexico. The Border XXI Program, established in 1994, builds on the efforts of the IBEP and other previous environmental agreements and expands the scope to include environmental health, natural resources, and environmental information. ►



Implementation: Border XXI Workgroups

The Border XXI Program is implemented through nine binational workgroups: (1) water, (2) air, (3) hazardous and solid waste, (4) pollution prevention, (5) contingency planning and emergency response, (6) cooperative enforcement and compliance, (7) environmental information resources, (8) natural resources, and (9) environmental health. The Border XXI Program has identified 5-year objectives for each of the nine workgroups, and each year the workgroups develop *Border XXI Annual Implementation Plans*. These plans identify U.S. and Mexico federal funding levels for a given year and, based upon available funds, describe specific projects that will advance the long-term objectives of the program. The *Annual Implementation Plans* will also identify federal funding levels for a given year to determine the availability of resources and establish project priorities.

Figure 1: Border XXI



The *Border XXI Framework* document outlines the long-term objectives of the Border XXI Program extending through the year 2000. The *Framework* document was developed by identifying and incorporating views expressed by a broad spectrum of public, private, and governmental stakeholders on border issues. As the cornerstone for planning and implementation efforts, the *Framework* document will be revised periodically as it benefits from the experiences of various stakeholders. Copies of the *Framework* document can be ordered from the Border XXI's homepage listed on the back of this factsheet, or by calling (800) 334-0741.

In recognition of the diversity of the border area and the need to promote integrated regional planning, the *Framework* document is organized to address five geographic regions with a specific chapter dedicated to each: California-Baja California, Arizona-Sonora, New Mexico-Texas-Chihuahua, Texas-Coahuila-Nuevo Leon, and Texas-Tamaulipas.

Strategies

Border XXI uses the following strategies to accomplish its mission:

- ☐ Ensure public involvement in the development and implementation of Border XXI
- ☐ Build capacity and decentralize environmental management to augment the participation of federal, state and local institutions in implementing Border XXI
- ☐ Ensure interagency cooperation to maximize available resources and avoid duplicate efforts on the part of government and other organizations, while reducing the burden that coordination with multiple entities places on border communities

Participants

Border XXI involves numerous federal, state, and local government entities from the United States and Mexico. The following key government agencies currently participate in Border XXI activities:

Environmental Protection: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Mexico's Secretariat for Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries (SEMARNAP); and Mexico's Secretariat for Social Development (SEDESOL)

Natural Resources: U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and SEMARNAP

Border Water Resources: U.S. and Mexico sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), DOI, EPA, and SEMARNAP

Environmental Health: the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Mexico's Secretariat of Health (SSA)

Other key participants include the U.S. Department of State (DOS); the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID); the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ); the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT); the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE); Mexico's Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE); Mexico's National Institute for Statistics, Geography, and Information (INEGI); Mexico's Secretariat of Interior (Civil Protection); Mexico's Secretariat of Communication and Transportation (SCT); and Mexico's Secretariat of Energy (SE).



Figure 2: Border XXI Region

In a parallel agreement to NAFTA, the United States and Mexico established the BECC and the NADBank to improve environmental infrastructure in the border area. The BECC and the NADBank are integral partners in fulfilling the goals of Border XXI.

To further encourage public participation in Border XXI, both governments are enlisting the assistance of their respective advisory boards: the Good Neighbor Environmental Board (GNEB) for the United States and the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development (Region 1) for Mexico.





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