

U.S. – Mexico
21st Century Border Management

2013 Progress Report

The Governments of the United States and Mexico are committed to improving infrastructure, facilitating legitimate trade and travel, and strengthening security cooperation on our common border. In 2010, our countries issued a Joint Declaration on 21st Century Border Management that acknowledged our shared interest in creating a border that promotes economic competitiveness and enhances security through the secure, efficient, rapid and lawful movement of goods and people and recognized the need to fundamentally restructure the way we manage our border. In 2013, there was real progress in facilitating the efficient flow of goods and people across our border. Each of the three Subcommittees of the Executive Steering Committee (ESC) had a number of notable achievements in 2013.

INFRASTRUCTURE

At the World’s busiest crossing at San Ysidro-El Chaparral, which connects San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico and the United States coordinated the opening of five new northbound lanes as both countries continued the expansion and renovation of their respective sides of the crossing. These new lanes greatly contribute in reducing border crossing wait times. Nearby, at the Tijuana Airport, Mexico has started construction of the Cross Border Facility, an innovative public/private partnership that will allow tourists and business travelers with a valid airline ticket and travel documents to cross between the U.S. and Mexico via an enclosed pedestrian bridge connecting our two countries. Construction on the U.S. side will start later this year, and the crossing is slated to open in the summer of 2015. Also in the San Diego area, the U.S. and Mexico began construction on the 2.5 mile stretch of State Route 11, which will link the future Otay Mesa East Port of Entry to key regional, state and international highways. The port will help to decongest existing infrastructure between Baja California and California by establishing a new border crossing facility and major freeway connection to State Route 11 and Mexico.

At the Nogales-Mariposa Port of Entry, where more than half of the Mexican winter produce enters the United States, four new lanes have doubled the port’s cargo capacity. A new northbound pedestrian access began operations in December 2013, and maintenance work is being carried out on the road that connects the port with Sonora’s highway network. The United States has also completed a new pedestrian inspection facility, which opened on December 1st.

Construction on the Mexican side of the new Tornillo-Guadalupe International Bridge began in December. The U.S. side of the bridge is complete and the inspection facilities are moving towards completion. This bridge, when finished, will have six lanes, three in both directions and will give passenger and cargo vehicles in the region a new and important option for international crossing.

Expansion of the Veterans-Tomates International Bridge, which spans Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, was completed in April 2014. The project doubles the capacity of the bridge and separates commercial and passenger traffic. The bridge is a vital link between the U.S.

highway system and the Mazatlán- Durango highway which will connect the Pacific Coast of Mexico to markets in the eastern United States.

These infrastructure improvements required close coordination between our two federal governments as well as with state, local, and regional bodies on both sides of the border. In 2013, the Infrastructure Sub-committee supported the finalization of Regional Border Master Plans for Arizona/Sonora, El Paso/Santa Teresa/Chihuahua, and Lower Rio Grande Valley/Tamaulipas and ongoing efforts in California/Baja California and New Mexico/Chihuahua. These plans allow local stakeholders to provide input into infrastructure planning along the shared border. Both governments hosted a series of workshops on public-private partnerships and are committed to exploring new opportunities to finance future infrastructure projects.

An important aspect of every infrastructure project in our common border is, without any doubt, the community outreach. The Governments of the United States and Mexico have agreed on binational joint statements to inform the general population of the benefits of specific infrastructure projects. Such communications have been published regarding the El Chaparral-San Ysidro expansion project, the construction of the new Guadalupe-Tornillo International Bridge, set to be finished in the second half of 2014, as well as the Veterans-Tomates expansion.

Today, the United States and Mexico continue close cooperation in planning new ports of entry, modernizing existing ports of entry, and upgrading infrastructure along the U.S.-Mexico border.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SECURITY COOPERATION

The United States and Mexico continued to deepen and expand cross-border law enforcement cooperation and made considerable progress in implementing the Border Violence Prevention Protocols (BVPP) in 2013.

We increased the sharing of law enforcement information, including regular incident and statistical information. This improved our ability to jointly identify trends and cooperatively target high risk areas along the U.S.-Mexico border. It also has facilitated collaborative enforcement operations, improved communications, and supported joint assessments and planning.

We have continued to work closely in assessing common general and regional risks and have monitored the development of the Cross Border Coordination Initiative (CBCI). Built on an April 2013 framework developed by both countries, the CBCI successfully began coordinated law enforcement patrols between the United States Border Patrol (USBP) and Mexican Federal Police (PF) in South Texas/Coahuila, South Texas/Tamaulipas, and Arizona/Sonora. In these areas, both agencies collaborate on developing common priorities and strategic plans in order to improve regional security and diminish incidents of violence.

The BVPP are a framework for a holistic approach to both preventing and responding to violence at our mutual border. As part of our commitment under the BVPP to share law enforcement “best practices,” United States Border Patrol (USBP) hosted a Mexican Delegation visit to the Federal

Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) facilities located in Artesia, New Mexico. The Departments of Homeland Security and Justice also provided the Government of Mexico with a presentation on U.S. Use of Force policies where USBP outlined the findings of a third party review of its use of force policy and initiatives it has implemented as a result of the study.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security invited the Government of Mexico to return to the FLETC facilities in Artesia, and to visit the new Center of Excellence that will be located in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. With these visits, the Mexican delegation will observe how agents are trained to use de-escalation techniques during enforcement actions by exposing the agents to simulated enforcement scenarios in realistic enforcement environments while conversation on the use of force continues.

The United States and Mexican governments continue to develop the Cross Border Security Communications Network (CBSCN), which streamlines emergency and law enforcement communication and coordination on both sides of the border. On July 24, 2013, the countries signed an agreement which officially sanctioned further development of a cross-border communications network. Once completed, the network will be a robust communications infrastructure that can be used by U.S. and Mexican law enforcement and emergency response personnel.

On the investigative side, both countries continued efforts to advance cross-border law enforcement cooperation through reciprocal information sharing practices and bilateral coordinated actions in order to combat fire arms, ammunitions, and explosives trafficking. The Subcommittee also continues its work on information exchange to identify priority targets for coordinated investigations.

SECURE FLOWS

Our countries have worked to enhance binational risk management, expedite legitimate trade and travel, engage the border communities, and reinvigorate policy coordination to ensure strong, collaborative border management.

The United States shared border wait time data and stakeholder input from multiple binational working groups with Mexico to find ways to reduce wait times. Both countries also are coordinating traffic management strategies like lane segregation to facilitate faster border crossings. They are developing pilot programs to grant front-of-line privileges in Mexico to trusted traders and other express lane authorized participants. These programs allow expedited processing for trusted traders in both countries.

In 2013, Mexico implemented the *Programa Viajero Confiable (PVC)*, which speeds processing for previously authorized travelers at designated Mexican airports. Programs like Mexico's PVC and the United States' *Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI)* and Global Entry segment border-crossing traffic based on risk. This allows law enforcement to expedite legitimate trade and travel while concentrating resources on potential threats. Both countries strongly encouraged the enrollment in and use of these programs to expedite border crossing.

The United States and Mexico have also collaborated on active lane management, where lanes are designated to expedite lower-risk travelers and traders. Through these active lane management strategies, including the use of “Ready Lanes” for those with *Radio Frequency Identification Device* (RFID) enabled travel documents, we have realized substantial processing time savings that have helped reduce border crossing wait times at several of the busiest crossings.

We also are working to harmonize toll payment mechanisms at our land ports of entry. This will give travelers flexibility to choose the fastest port of entry based on traffic congestion information without having to obtain multiple electronic toll payment devices. This effort includes allowing SENTRI cardholders to use any designated SENTRI crossing along the border.

Mexico’s Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Program (*Nuevo Esquema de Empresas Certificadas* (NEEC), in Spanish) for cross-border trade started the carrier enrollment process on April 10, 2013 and it is currently running a pilot with customs brokers. Both countries are looking to further expand the benefits of the program. Since the startup of the NEEC, Mexican customs authorities have certified 320 Mexican exporters, and 58 are in the final stage of their approval process.

The United States and Mexico are exploring ways to coordinate southbound inspections. Both countries are making continued progress in addressing the flow of third country nationals and contraband across the border.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2014, we will continue to build on the substantial achievements made in managing our common border. During this year we will reach major infrastructure milestones, such as the completion of the new Tornillo-Guadalupe International Bridge, the Nogales-Mariposa Port of Entry and the Brownsville-Matamoros West Rail Bypass, the reconfiguration of the customs facilities on the Mexican side of the Port of Entry, as well as the expansion of the Veterans-Tomates International Bridge. Both governments will continue working to explore options for construction and operation of new freight facilities by 2015, in the Anzalduas International Bridge; in addition, Mexico and the United States also will consider new options to guarantee better traffic management in the San Luis Río Colorado area. Law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border will continue our work on expanding information exchanges, strengthening coordination, and harmonizing cross-border communication systems. Deterring and preventing border violence, including through a constructive dialogue on use of force, and continuing to enhance coordinated law enforcement efforts remain of the utmost importance. We also will continue to expand and promote trusted trader and traveler programs along with traffic segmentation at our borders to reduce wait times and concentrate security resources on the greatest risks.

Both countries continue to promote outreach efforts and have established 21st Century Border Management Initiative webpages. These public websites provide information about the Executive Steering Committee and its activities. They also include links to useful information and additional resources about the border.

United States: <http://www.dhs.gov/21centuryborder>

Mexico: <http://www.sre.gob.mx/en/index.php/archived-press-releases/1897-meeting-of-the-mexico--us-executive-steering-committee-on-21st-century-border-management>
<http://mex-eua.sre.gob.mx/index.php/frontera>