



Collaborative Agreement

Between

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S.-Mexico Border 2020 Program

And

U.S. Section of the U.S.-México Border Health Commission

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Purpose

This document identifies areas of collaboration between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Section of the U.S.-México Border Health Commission (BHC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with particular focus on fulfilling and strengthening each organization's strategic frameworks along the U.S.-México border, including EPA's Border 2020 Program and multiple BHC initiatives, to promote activities addressing the important relationship between the environment and public health.

Background

EPA has developed the Border 2020 Environmental Program, a binational partnership designed to improve the environment and public health along the U.S.-México border. It includes five goals and fundamental strategies to improve children's health and promote environmental health through outreach, capacity building, community-based programs, partnerships, and reducing exposures to chemicals, heavy metals, pesticides and asthma triggers.

Similarly, the BHC addresses health challenges affecting border populations by providing the necessary leadership to develop coordinated and binational actions through several initiatives, including its upcoming Healthy Border 2020 Program. Key priorities for the BHC, relevant to this collaborative relationship, include obesity and diabetes, research and data collection, and establishing academic alliances.

Program Collaboration Opportunities

The following three Program Areas are specific collaboration opportunities that have been identified by EPA and the BHC as a starting point for our collaboration:

Leaders across Borders

- EPA and the BHC will collaborate on the Leaders across Borders initiative to help build binational leadership capacity in the health and community sectors. EPA and the BHC will identify priority projects and efforts on environmental health for incoming leadership cohorts. Examples include project engagement and the development of curriculum material on environmental health topics such as integrated pest management, air quality and asthma triggers, chemical, and pesticide exposure.

Community-based Healthy Border Initiatives (includes Border Binational Health Week)

- EPA regional offices will participate in Border Binational Health Week (BBHW) and other binational and regional workshops, environmental health fairs and expositions, including planning efforts, to enhance environmental health awareness focused on lead, pesticides, asthma triggers, agricultural worker safety, integrated pest management, and other relevant environmental health topics. Key collaboration opportunities may include:
 - Work with local NGOs engaged in efforts on agricultural worker “take home” exposure and personal safety
 - Utilize schools to showcase Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs
 - Hold joint regional stakeholder meetings, when appropriate
 - Utilize health care providers, staff, and promotores/community health workers to identify asthma triggers and indoor air quality

Healthy Border 2020

- EPA will assist with developing environmental health language for inclusion in the BHC’s Healthy Border (HB) 2020, and by participating in the binational technical work group.
 - Potential language may focus on the following topics: chemical and pesticide exposure, asthma, and data gathering and sharing, which will complement and fulfill the intent of the Border 2020 Fundamental Strategies on “Working to Improve Children’s Health” and “Promoting Environmental Health.”

Areas of Collaboration

The following project priority areas have been identified by EPA and the BHC as a starting point for cooperation:

Chemical and Pesticide Exposure Prevention

- Partner with border communities to identify strategies to identify sources of chemical and pesticide exposure and actions that reduce exposure to lead, mercury, pesticides, and other heavy metals in the environment.
- Work with border communities to identify and promote best practices for the storage, handling, and disposal of excess pesticides and other chemicals used to control insect and rodent pests.
- Collaborate with state and local governments and communities to develop pilot projects that foster the adoption of integrated pest management in the school environment to reduce children’s exposure to pesticides and asthma triggers while achieving effective pest control on school property.
- Engage healthcare providers (physicians, nurses, promotores/community health workers) on the recognition and reporting of illnesses and poisonings caused by lead, pesticides, and other chemicals.

Air Quality and Asthma Education Awareness

- Partner with state and local governments and border stakeholders to identify and reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals and asthma triggers in and around the home and schools through education, awareness, and the use of best practices for vector control.
- Implement the guiding principles and recommendations of the President's Task Force on Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks to Children, to better leverage existing federal resources towards actions that address environmental and public health challenges along the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Pediatric Environmental Health Resource Units

- Explore the establishment of pediatric environmental health resource units along the border, to assist with medical information and advice on environmental conditions that influence children's health along the U.S.-México border.

Leverage Binational Expertise and Resources

- EPA and the BHC will leverage their existing resources to facilitate binational knowledge exchange on environmental and public health issues, through existing binational mechanisms and fora. Examples include:

Task Forces and COBINAS: EPA and the BHC will identify opportunities to share information and identify and address regional concerns and priorities, taking into account input from the Border 2020 task forces, **local stakeholders, and** the binational health councils (COBINAS).

U.S.-México Border Health Activities of Mutual Interest: EPA and the BHC will partner during any activities of mutual interest, such as seminars, conferences, workshops, trainings, etc., to share scientific information and findings and exploring linkages between the environment and health impacts, such as asthma, cancer, obesity, diabetes, and others.

Identify Project Funding and Leveraging Opportunities

- EPA and the BHC will collaborate and leverage their respective and external resources and partnerships to fulfill joint efforts that achieve EPA and BHC environmental health priorities and goals, as outlined in this agreement. This collaboration will consider respective budget constraints and will focus on maximum leveraging of external resources.

Data Sharing

- Compile existing border environmental health information from credible sources (such as local and state health statistics from public health authorities) to better document

environmental health conditions along the U.S.-México border in order to identify vulnerable communities, and target collaborative interventions.

- Share epidemiological/surveillance and indicator data for agreed-upon priorities (i.e., water, air quality, and public health).