

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR U.S.-Mexico Border 2025 Program

BACKGROUND

The U.S. – Mexico Border 2025 Program is the latest cooperative effort under the 1983 La Paz Agreement, which encompasses a five-year binational environmental program between the United States and Mexico. The Border 2025 Program aims to protect the environment and public health along the U.S.-Mexico border region, building off its predecessor, Border 2020.

The National Coordinators represented by Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and SEMARNAT (Mexico's Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources) identified four long-term goals as well as objectives addressing public health and the environment. Under this effort, the U.S. and Mexico will successfully implement the goals and objectives identified throughout the duration of the program.

The Border 2025 strategic goals are:

Goal 1: Reduce Air Pollution

Goal 2: Improve Water Quality

Goal 3: Promote Sustainable Materials Management and Waste Management, and Clean Sites

Goal 4: Improve Joint Preparedness for and Response to Hazardous Environmental Emergencies

Communication is key to the success of the Border 2025 Program. The Border 2025 National Coordinators have developed this Communication Strategy with the goal of keeping border stakeholders well informed, engaged, and committed to Border program activities and being efficient, effective, and transparent. The communication strategy also has been prepared with an environmental justice focus, to reach the most underserved and vulnerable communities in the border region.

This communication strategy identifies target audiences within two categories: internal and external.

Internal Communication is the exchange of information amongst Border 2025 Program coordinating bodies and key participants: National Coordinators offices, Policy Workgroups, Regional Coordinators, U.S. and Mexican Border States, U.S. Federally recognized Tribes, indigenous communities and Afro-Mexican people in Mexico, and other federal partners.

External Communication is the dissemination of information for the external audience, not directly involved with Border 2025. This includes federal and state organizations, U.S. federally recognized Tribes, indigenous and Afro-Mexican people, academia, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the general public, and others who are interested in Border 2025's progress, success, and activities. The information is disseminated through various communication tools: The Border 2025 Program website, Action Plans, newsletters, accomplishment reports, e-mail campaigns (listservs), official EPA and SEMARNAT social media outlets, and public meetings of Regional Coordinating Bodies and local Task Forces.

Each coordinating body, especially at a regional/local level, can adapt these tools or develop its own communication approach or individual strategy to address its needs.

COMMUNICATION TEAM

The National Coordinators represented by the Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) in U.S. EPA and the International Affairs Coordinating Unit (UCAI) in SEMARNAT developed this strategy to provide effective, transparent, and timely communication. They will delegate and implement it with U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT border program staff by establishing a **Communication Team**. The National Coordinators will support the Communication Team's efforts on disseminating information related to program's progress and success and will ensure this is shared and made public in a timely manner, and the information is bilingual.

Communication Team Tasks:

- Identify communication issues requiring the attention of the National Coordinators and/or other coordinating bodies.
- Maintain close collaboration with Border 2025 operational staff to maximize communication opportunities within the program.
- Publish Border 2025 successes using one or more of the following tools: U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT websites, e-mail listservs, virtual meetings, press releases, social media, fact sheets, and progress reports. In addition, it may be necessary to identify venues and public events to share program progress and activities such as National Coordinator meetings, Regional Coordinator meetings or Task Force meetings.
- Strive for bilingual communication (reports, agendas, press releases, meetings) in English and Spanish.
- Analyze website communication metrics through online tools, electronic and social media statistics to improve and increase program awareness.
- Use diverse communication tools from social-media, websites, and traditional media (e.g.

- radio), as appropriate.
- Consider targeted outreach to vulnerable, underserved communities and use environmental justice tools to inform communication needs.
- Create a well-developed social media plan to engage with stakeholders.
- Identify new tools, if any, on an annual basis, to better communicate internally and externally.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Objective: Promote effective and timely communication of Border 2025 activities and progress to improve, coordinate and implement a successful Border 2025 Program. Various platforms (see Appendices) will be used to enhance or allow close collaboration with key stakeholders and keep the public informed about Program progress.

The internal Border 2025 audience includes: National Coordinators and their representatives, Policy Workgroups, Regional Coordinators, Task Forces, U.S. federally recognized Tribes, Mexican indigenous and afromexican communities, and Border States, among other partners, along the border area.

Guidelines for effective internal communication

- National Coordinators will produce, distribute, and post the Joint Communiqué for the Border 2025 following a National Coordinators meeting.
- Policy Workgroups, Regional Coordinators, Task Forces, and the communication team should ensure that meeting agendas and handouts are provided and published on U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT websites.
- The Communications Team will coordinate and distribute reports on progress and successes which will be housed on U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT¹ Border Program websites.
- U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT will promote effective binational communication to discuss specific and or short-term opportunities.
- U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT will attend Policy Workgroups, Regional Coordinators, and Task Force meetings in-person, or virtual, based on available resources.
- U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT will update the Border Program websites: www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder and http://www.semarnat.gob.mx/temas/internacional/Paginas/Regional.aspx) or those designated by the program.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Objective: Communicate Border 2025 progress and other related information in a timely manner to border communities and other interested parties as well as provide opportunities for public input.

¹ To the extent permitted by the website construction for the Border 2025 Program.

The external audience includes federal and state organizations, U.S. federally recognized Tribes, indigenous and Afro-Mexican people in Mexico, academia, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, foundations, and members of the public interested in Border 2025 progress, success and activities.

Guidelines for effective external communication

EPA and SEMARNAT will:

- Provide border communities and other external partners with thorough, clear, concise, and pertinent information related to Border 2025 Program, policies, and initiatives.
- Facilitate adequate resources to provide translation of written materials and interpretation services, to the maximum extent possible.
- Ensure that the border public meetings and Program sponsored events are announced at least **21 days** in advance on the U.S. EPA's Border Program webpage.
- Communicate results to the public and the media in a timely and clear manner to ensure that Border 2025 Program is widely recognized.
- Communicate Border 2025 information, via U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT Border Program websites, to border communities and interested parties in different ways, including but not limited to, press releases and press reports and the posting of program related information.
- Identify additional communication needs as the program is implemented, addressing ongoing Border 2025 Program policies, and initiatives.
- Respond in a timely manner to public requests for information on Border 2025 Program.
- Ensure that border staff provide timely and effective communication to border communities and interested parties.
- Increase efforts to involve elected federal, state, tribal indigenous communities and local public sector representatives in Border 2025 Program meetings and events.
- Highlight Border 2025 Program efforts in U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT Binational Accomplishments Report.
- Coordinate with North American Development Bank to share Program news with U.S.-Mexico border residents, including but not limited through the NADB website.
- To the extent practicable, strive to provide prepare and post public meeting notes on the Border 2025 website.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR FUNDED PROJECT PRODUCTS

U.S. EPA has a cooperative agreement with the North American Development Bank (NADB) to fund projects along the U.S.-Mexico border. U.S. EPA provides funds for these projects and the NADB administers them. The projects are funded through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, which generally occurs every two years, whereby binational state and local governments, US tribes, Mexican indigenous and afro-Mexican people, organizations, or academia, recognized as subgrantees under this funding process, provide proposals set to address the goals and objectives within the Border 2025 program. NADB and U.S. EPA review available proposals based on criteria met and available funds.

For Border 2025, U.S. EPA is committed to providing information on subgrantee projects that are awarded through the NADB, the grantee. Once projects are completed, the NADB will house and post subgrantee products, such as fact sheets, studies, reports, and videos on its internet website. U.S. EPA and SEMARNAT ² will provide a link through the Border 2025 website to the available subgrantee materials on NADB's website.

COMMUNICATION and OUTREACH TOOLS

The following tables provide the type and schedule of communication activities to be implemented by the National Coordinators, Policy Workgroups, Regional Offices and Task Forces, as appropriate and subject to available resources. Each group is encouraged to augment and complement the current list with additional tools and materials as deemed appropriate by the respective program or office. While the designated lead office is responsible for the implementation and delivery of each communication activity, many of these deliverables may require additional input and review.

² To the extent permitted by the website construction for the Border 2025 Program.

Appendix A. National Coordinators', Policy Workgroups, and Borderwide Communication Task Force Activities

Type of Communication	Purpose	Audience	Lead	Minimum Frequency
National Coordinators Meeting	Engage public, update, inform, discussions	All stakeholders	OITA, SEMARNAT-UCAI	Biennially
Joint Communiqué	Statements of NCM proceedings and commitments	All stakeholders	OITA, SEMARNAT - UCAI, NPMs, U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9	Biennially
Borderwide focused (press releases, advisories)		Media, all stakeholders	SEMARNAT- UCAI, OITA, U.S. EPA Regions 6 & 9	Periodic, as needed
National Coordinator Video calls with program co-chairs		OITA, NPMs, Regions 6&9	OITA, SEMARNAT-UCAI (could be by country if needed)	Periodic, as needed
Border Program Conference Calls/ Communication with Program Partners			OITA, SEMARNAT-UCAI	Periodic, as needed
Borderwide Newsletters and Fact Sheets	Communicate progress on goals and objectives	All stakeholders	SEMARNAT- UCAI, OITA, U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9	Periodic, as needed
Border Program Highlights Reports	Report on program accomplishments	All stakeholders	SEMARNAT- UCAI, OITA, U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9	2023 & 2025
Policy Workgroups Action Plans	Identify priority projects/activities	All stakeholders		2021 and 2023, if needed
Borderwide Webinars Webcasts (where available)	Broadcast live events and speeches, Communicate Border 2025 events or presentations to coordinated groups	All stakeholders	SEMARNAT- UCAI, OITA, U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9	Periodic, as needed
Borderwide Listservs (Constant Contact, NADBank & others)		All stakeholders Listserv	SEMARNAT- UCAI, OITA, U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9	Periodic, as needed
U.S. EPA Border Program Website updates	Communicate all relevant program information and links	All stakeholders	OITA, U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9	Periodic, as needed
SEMARNAT Border Program Website updates	Communicate all relevant program information and links	All stakeholders	SEMARNAT-UCAI	Periodic, as needed

Appendix B. Regional Coordinators and Task Forces Communication Activities within EPA Regions 6 & 9

Type of Communication	Purpose of Communicatio	Audience	Content Lead	Minim um
Regional coordination with states or partners	discuss action planning	Border 2025 Regional Coordinators and Task Force Co- chairs		As needed
Regional Border Newsletters and/or Factsheets	Project updates, goal progress	All stakeholders	US. EPA Region 6 & 9	As needed
Regional focused: (press releases, advisories)	Broadcast news, updates, and event information Programmatic progress announcements	Media, all stakeholders	_	Periodic, As needed
Action Plans	Identify priority projects/activities/ outcomes	All stakeholders	SEMARNAT (BC, SON, CHIH, COAH, TAUM, NL), U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9, Task Forces	2021 and 2023
Regional Coordinators and Task Force Meetings in-person and virtual meetings (dependent on resources available)	Engage public, provide updates on progress, and share information. Communicate meeting announcements, summaries, and outcomes.		9, SEMARNAT (BC,	Regional Coordinators – Annual Task Forces – Yearly or As Needed
U.S. EPA Border Program Website	Communicate relevant program information	All stakeholders	U.S. EPA Region 6 & 9	Periodic Updates