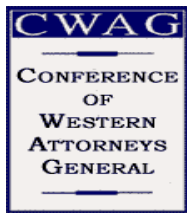


U.S. – MEXICO STATE ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIP



Report of Activities

January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2009
2nd Quarterly Report, FY 08-09

U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership

Quarterly Report

Second Quarter, January 1, 2009 – March 31, 2009

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ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIP BACKGROUND

On September 23, 2008, the Council of State Governments (CSG) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) entered into a three-year cooperative, jointly funded agreement to implement the U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership. The cooperative agreement was subsequently modified to extend activities to five years, September 23, 2008 – September 30, 2013.

The U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnership is a collaborative, multi-branch alliance comprising the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Council of State Governments (CSG) and its Western and Southern regional offices, Conference of Western Attorneys General (CWAG), National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), National Association of State Treasurers (NAST), National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) and other officials aimed at strengthening cooperation among state officials and institutions of the United States and Mexico. The Alliance Partnership promotes and convenes binational exchanges and workshops among border legislators, attorneys general and treasurers that enhance the role of state officials in addressing shared public policy concerns that transcend international borders.

The Alliance Partnership promotes the integration of activities and outreach with other binational mechanisms, as well as policy institutes and research universities, so that concrete policy objectives and reforms can be achieved through a strategic, multi-branch and multi-jurisdictional approach. The Alliance partners, their respective members, networks and linkages comprise a broad and influential coalition that can affect change. The Alliance Partnership is an innovative mechanism of cooperation that enables dynamic synergies and cross-jurisdictional cooperation.

REPORT OVERVIEW

This report highlights the activities of the second quarter for FY 2008-09 by CSG and the Alliance partners to promote and implement binational state exchanges as defined by the objectives of the U.S. – Mexico State Alliance Partnerships. The activities were carried out with the support of the USAID Mexico mission.

PROGRESS EVALUATION

The activities highlighted in this report illustrate CSG and its partner's continued effort to make significant progress in achieving the program's objectives, which are the following:

- Contribute to the objectives of the Merida Initiative related to continuing police education insofar as USAID has determined that “police” shall include state justice personnel;
- Strengthen and further expand binational exchanges and activities among state attorneys general of Mexico and the United States through the alliances established by CWAG, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG), and Mexico's

National Conference of Attorneys General, particularly through investigative and prosecutorial capacity training seminars;

- Enhance the ability of U.S. and Mexico border state legislatures to identify and enact strategies aimed towards performing an expanded policy role in addressing common concerns along the 2,000 mile border region through the ongoing implementation of the Border Legislative Conference (BLC); and
- Establish binational economic development forums among state executive branch officials, including Lt. Governors, Treasurers and others aimed at exchanging “best practices” and linkages in public finance strategies, infrastructure planning, access to capital and tourism, among others.

Border Legislative Conference

Planning for 19th BLC

On January 5-8, 2009, program staff conducted a preliminary site visit to Tampico, Tamaulipas in preparation of the 19th BLC. BLC Staff, with the support of the Tamaulipas State Legislature, including Diputado Felipe Garza Narvaez, visited sites for the forum’s receptions, dinners and meeting location. The advance visit also included meetings in Cd. Victoria, Tamaulipas’ state capitol, with the then-President of the Tamaulipas State Legislature, Diputado Ricardo Gamundi Rosas, aimed at seeking logistical and program support for the BLC.

Binational Legislative Agriculture Forum – McAllen, Texas

On January 9, 2009, program staff, along with the support of the Office of Texas Representative Ryan Guillen and the Tamaulipas State Legislature, convened the Binational Legislative Agriculture Forum in McAllen, Texas. The purpose of the forum was to bring together binational agriculture stakeholders to discuss and identify potential quantitative and qualitative frameworks to promote the development of regional, self sustaining agricultural, livestock, wildlife and fisheries policies along the U.S. – Mexico border region.

The topics discussed included enhancing economic competitiveness of agriculture along the border region; an overview of state perspectives on agriculture sustainability from the Border Governors Conference Agriculture Work Table; controlling and eradicating cattle fever ticks; and managing and enforcing fishing in Falcon and Amistad Dams. Participating border legislators also discussed next steps and recommendations for the BLC’s consideration.

Outreach New Mexico State Legislature

On February 3-4, 2009, program staff conducted a visit to Santa Fe, New Mexico during the New Mexico State Legislature's 60-day legislative session. Program staff meet with New Mexico members of the BLC to provide them an update on upcoming activities, including the upcoming 19th BLC in Tampico, Tamaulipas. Additionally, the program director met with the newly appointed member to the BLC, Senator Mary Kay Papen, and provided her a brief overview of the BLC objectives and background of policy issues previously addressed.

Cross Talk II: Building Common Security in North America

On February 10-12, 2009, the program director attended the "Cross Talk II: Building Common Security in North America" forum in Washington DC hosted by Arizona State University's North America Center for Transborder Studies, the Woodrow Wilson Center, and Monterrey's Technological Institute. The aim of the forum was to provide a unique opportunity for attendees to view security from a North America perspective. This included presentations by scholars, members of Congress and U.S. Department of Homeland Security and State Department officials.

Panels focused on illuminating the impacts of U.S. border security; local/regional solutions and sharing risks; and implementation and evaluation of joint management in North America.

Joint BLC – BGC Environment Work Table Meeting

On March 18-20, 2009, the BLC and the Environment Work Table of the Border Governors Conference convened a joint meeting in San Francisco, California focused on common border environmental concerns, including air quality and waste tires. The purpose of the joint meeting, which was the first of its kind, was aimed at strengthening legislative – executive branch cooperation along the border by providing an opportunity for attendees to review and exchange information about actions by both the Border Governors Conference and the BLC on environmental concerns, as well as to identify common strategies.

Seven BLC members attended the meeting representing California, Coahuila, Sonora, and Chihuahua. The Environment Work Table of the Border Governors Conference is comprised of the environmental secretaries of the 10 U.S. – Mexico border states.

As a result of the meeting, the BLC and the Border Governors Conference Environment Work Table identified and concurred on common goals and actions. These actions include the promotion of funds for scrap tire programs; promotion of cross-border air quality off-sets; and creating markets for scrap tires. Additionally, both groups requested Arizona State University, along with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, to provide a report on the use of crumb rubber in road pavement in Arizona.

Continued Outreach

BLC program staff has maintained ongoing communications with a wide range of individuals and cross border governmental and non-governmental organizations that focus on U.S. – Mexico relations in an effort to further promote cross-border collaboration.

Conference of Western Attorneys General

On February 9-13, 2009, CWAG facilitated the attendance and participation of 15 prosecutors from the Baja California Attorney General Office to Denver, Colorado to expose them to prosecution techniques and courtroom advocacy. Training instruction included an introduction to courtroom advocacy, opening statements, direct examinations, cross-examinations, alternative case resolutions, victim rights, and defendant's rights.

This training was part of the Alliance Partnership's ongoing effort to assist Mexico law enforcement in the implementation of reforms to the Code of Criminal Procedures in several states. The Alliance Partners, CWAG and the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) have planned several investigatory and prosecutorial trainings for the remainder of the year.

ASU NACTS

As a follow up to the joint BLC – BGC Environment Work Table meeting in San Francisco in March 2009, the BLC will work with ASU NACTS and its partners to identify concrete, state led policy actions to better manage waste tires and other common environmental concerns along the U.S. – Mexico border region. The partnership with NACTS will strengthen the BLC's legislative research capabilities by having dedicated staff to 1) identify relevant state laws, regulations and practices in each of the border states, as well as pertinent federal statutes; 2) recommend state legislative solutions pursuant to the environmental goals outlined by the members of the BLC; 3) in coordination with BLC staff, develop and recommend 10 state legislative strategy and partnership synergies; and 4) develop research publications. In addition, NACTS will assist CSG-WEST in its efforts to promote North America Competitiveness and cross-border cooperation among state and provincial leaders from the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

While the initial stages of the BLC – ASU partnership will focus on the joint efforts of the BLC – BGC Environment Work Table, it is the aim of the BLC to be able to expand similar efforts to other border topics such as border crossings; economic competitiveness; agriculture and health.

Woodrow Wilson Institute

During the Second Quarter of FY 08-09, CSG has been engaged in ongoing discussions with the staff of the Woodrow Wilson International Center to finalize a subaward. The objective of the CSG – Woodrow Wilson Institute agreement would be to strengthen the Alliance Partnership’s presence and dialogue with federal legislators and agencies in Washington DC.

The concept is that the partnership will provide state border legislators, attorneys general, treasurers and other state officials a platform to convene joint federal and state exchanges with targeted Congressional Committees. Additionally, it is envisioned that through these exchanges there will be direct dialogue with key federal officials from agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Commerce, White House Intergovernmental Affairs, and others. The CSG – Woodrow Wilson Center agreement will also support broad public policy research on several cross-border issues such as border management, public security, the environment, and other topics.