

**Border 2012 Goal 5, Emergency Preparedness and Response
Border-wide Workgroup Face to Face Meeting**

*Tuesday, May 10, 2011
8:00 am-12:00pm
San Antonio, Texas*

Meeting Participants:

Lluvia Cervantes (SEGBOB, Protección Civil)
 Yanet Manzo Hernández (PROFEPA)
 Mark Mijoness (EPA HQ OEM)
 Beatriz Oliveira (EPA HQ OEM)
 Steve Weiner (EPA HQ OITA)
 Jim Staves (EPA Region 6)
 Brandi Todd (EPA Region 6)
 Jhana Enders (EPA Region 6)
 Maria Sisneros (EPA Region 6)
 Lida Tan (EPA Region 9)
 Syed Qadir (US National Response Center)
 Bob Mackay (NORTHCOM)
 Oziel Vela (USCG Exercise Support Team #3)
 Hanz Huth (Arizona Department of Environmental Quality)
 Ethel Garcia (Tohono O'odham Nation)
 Mike Vizzier (San Diego County Department of Environmental Health)
 Arturo Ramírez Látigo (Protección Civil)
 Eduardo Del Angel (Protección Civil)
 Ludoro Sánchez (Protección Civil Matamoros)
 Mario Rodriguez (DEPC BC)

Agency Communication Protocols	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beatriz Oliveira (EPA HQ OEM) welcomed all meeting participants and thanked them for attending. ▪ Ms. Oliveira stated that the Goal 5 program has been very successful and that the projects that have been implemented over the past several years have fulfilled many of Goal 5's objectives. However, the Goal 5 Border-wide Workgroup sees much room for improvement in agency communication protocols between the United States and Mexico. ▪ Communication between the two countries has proven to be challenging at times, and the Workgroup would like to ask Mexico for help in this area. Both countries have been asked to provide suggestions on how communications can be improved in order to solidify a structure for sharing the status of existing activities and projects, as well as for collaborating on future events. ▪ Ms. Oliveira listed several types of communication processes that are already in use by the Border-wide Workgroup: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Face to face meetings: these occur before or after planned events or activities, as well as during National Coordinators Meetings (NCM) or Joint Response Team (JRT) meetings;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regular conference calls: the Border-wide Workgroup currently holds monthly conference calls; and ○ Specific activities not previously planned. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira then asked the meeting participants for their feedback on communications protocols. ▪ Mr. Mark Mjones (EPA HQ OEM) emphasized the need to consider new budget constraints on traveling when planning face to face meetings, noting that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is cutting back travel by 25 percent for the rest of 2011. Because of these cuts, Mr. Mjones suggested that the Workgroup consider other effective and efficient ways of communication aside from face to face meetings. ▪ Ms. Lida Tan (EPA Region 9) shared that the EPA Region 9 Headquarters office holds regular calls with its field offices. Although these calls are not quite as effective as face to face meetings, they are better than audio only calls. Ms. Tan asked the Mexican participants if they might be able to participate in this type of call. ▪ Ing. Yanet Manzo Hernández (PROFEPA) responded that Mexico's Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection (Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente, PROFEPA) could establish the necessary technological capacity to host video conference calls without a problem, noting that Protección Civil and PROFEPA could convene in PROFEPA's offices during Border-wide Workgroup calls. ▪ Mr. Mjones said that this would be a good idea, stating that this type of communication could also be used in the case of a response during which the JRT would be activated. ▪ Ms. Oliveira also agreed that video conferencing would be a good addition to the Workgroup's communication protocols, stating that it is often hard to resolve issues over an audio only call. She suggested that once the technology has been established in both countries, video conference calls occur once every three months in addition to the Workgroup's monthly conference call. ▪ Mr. Jim Staves (EPA Region 6) stressed the need to consider which type of coordination mechanism is most appropriate for each type of activity conducted by the Workgroup. For example, conference calls are effective for routine reporting, while determining annual work-plans and prioritizing projects are activities best done at a face to face meeting. Mr. Staves recognized that budget constraints will make it difficult to organize frequent face to face meetings, but suggested the use of limited face to face meetings in order to conduct annual planning, which should in turn make conference calls more efficient. ▪ Mr. Mjones then addressed the need to post Goal 5 Border-wide Workgroup accomplishments online so that any interested parties can easily view past as well as planned projects, adding that this will assist communication between the US and Mexico. ▪ Ms. Oliveira stated that EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA)
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	<p>has agreed to post the Workgroup's accomplishments and activities on its website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Steve Weiner (EPA HQ OITA) acknowledged the feasibility of posting accomplishments online for the Workgoup and stated that OITA's website is public and that both sides of the border can use it.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mexico will work to establish video conference technology at PROFEPA headquarters, where Workgroup members from any involved Mexican agency (e.g., Protección Civil) can convene to take part in meetings.
Bi-national Incident Notification Process	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira explained that during an update of the Joint Contingency Plan (JCP) in 2008, both countries agreed upon the use of a PROFEPA-created diagram of the US-Mexico bi-national notification system (See Border 2012 Goal 5 Emergency Preparedness and Response Border-Wide Workgroup Face to Face Meeting PowerPoint presentation for diagram). ▪ Ing. Manzo then spoke about a series of notification exercises undertaken in Mexico in December 2010. She stated that in accordance with the bi-national notification system, any incident that occurs on the US side of the border is reported to Mexico via the National Response Center (NRC); in addition, when an incident occurs on the other side of the Border, Mexico sends a report to the NRC, which will then notify the proper US authorities. ▪ During the December 2010 notification drills, several communication mechanism issues were noted by PROFEPA. ▪ Ing. Manzo noted that confirmation by the NRC of received notifications from Mexico has been taking approximately two days. In addition, communication has been further complicated because Mexico's National Communications Center (CENACOM) is currently without a permanent direct fax line (no extensions dialing needed) due to an office move. ▪ Ing. Manzo described the internal mechanism by which notifications occur in Mexico. When an incident occurs, a telephone call is made to the appropriate local PROFEPA office. Notification is then made to the appropriate municipal Protección Civil office, which communicates the information to the Protección state representative. Once a notification has been made to PROFEPA's federal office, CENACOM is notified by fax or telephone. CENACOM then communicates with the US by contacting the NRC. ▪ Ms. Oliveira mentioned that some of the notification difficulties have been discussed during various Workgroup conference calls and that Protección Civil had stated its intent to reestablish a direct fax as a communication mechanism with the NRC. ▪ Ms. Oliveira also pointed out that <i>Appendix B</i> of the JCP contains an application form in both English and Spanish with all necessary questions for an incident notification. She suggested that this appendix may help Mexico easily submit its notifications through the NRC website while its fax line is down. She then asked Mr. Syed Qadir, director of the NRC, to comment on the described notification difficulties.

- Mr. Qadir acknowledged that the NRC experienced some difficulty during the December 2010 notification drills. He stated because CENACOM's fax line was not working during the drills, e-mail confirmation of the notification was utilized instead.
- He added that when a call comes into the NRC in Spanish, the NRC operator must put the caller on hold in order to wait for a translator from AT&T to come on the line. While this transition was taking place, calls with Mexico were sometimes dropped.
- Ms. Oliveira stated that since CENACOM's fax line is not currently functional, working through the NRC's website could be a good alternative for notifications. In addition, *Appendix B* of the JCP should be utilized, as it lists the same information that is requested on the NRC's website.
- Ms. Lluvia Cervantes (Protección Civil, SEGBOB) elaborated on the fax line issue in CENACOM, stating that a new direct fax line between CENACOM and the NRC will be established once the move between floors has been completed. She added that in the beginning of the exercise, the NRC was not accepting verbal drill notifications and that when verbal communication was accepted; there were often difficulties in getting a translator on the line.
- Ing. Manzo noted that PROFEPA does not operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This has also become an internal issue, as notifications cannot be received after work hours.
- Mr. Luduro Sanchez (Protección Civil, Matamoros) stated that in March 2011, a large bi-national exercise was held with the sister cities of Matamoros-Reynosa and neighboring areas. He noted that one of the major problems was the communication system and that notifications were not received in a timely manner. He stressed that notification exercises need to take place more often so that the coordination of municipalities and cities can be tested on a regular basis.
- Ms. Cervantes informed the meeting participants that PROFEPA and Protección Civil conduct an internal communications drill once a month.
- Mr. Qadir commented on the December 2010 notification drill previously mentioned, stating that he was not aware of any instances in which the NRC has refused a call. However, he added that there may have been confusion between the caller and the NRC operator when the operator put the caller on hold in order to contact the AT&T translator; in some cases, the caller may have thought that the call was dropped, as it can take several minutes for a translator to get on the line.
 - Mr. Qadir asked that Mexico provide immediate feedback to the NRC so that any problems can be addressed immediately.
- Ms. Oliveira asked Mr. Qadir what happens after the NRC receives a website notification. Mr. Qadir responded that the normal protocol is to use a fax line to send confirmation, but when no fax line is available then an e-mail is sent to both CENACOM and COATEA.
- Ms. Oliveira also asked that PROFEPA and CENACOM alert the NRC and EPA before a notification drill begins so that any issues can be tackled as soon as

	<p>possible. She also noted the benefits of having multiple communication mechanisms instead of only one in order to provide backup.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Mjones concluded with a summary of the discussion, stating that the use of the NRC website would be an efficient and effective way for Mexico to submit notifications.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was agreed that the bi-national notification system should be reviewed continuously, and that feedback should be provided immediately to the NRC and EPA. ▪ While these two issues are being sorted out, the NRC online notification submission process as well as notification by e-mail should be utilized.
Proposed Emergency Preparedness and Response Border-wide Workgroup Charter and Work-plan	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira informed the meeting participants that a Border-wide Workgroup charter and work-plan have been proposed and discussed during recent Workgroup conference calls. The draft charter shares the roles and responsibilities of the Workgroup as described in the JCP and contains goals, objectives and a schedule for meetings and conference calls. In addition, the development of a work-plan will facilitate agreement on priorities and major events and tasks. ▪ Mr. Staves continued discussion on the proposed charter, adding that he would like to see the JRT utilized as an umbrella structure under which all JRT partners could participate in planning for border events and activities. This will ensure that the work-plan prioritizes projects that best serve the overall goals of the JRT. Once a work-plan has been agreed upon, conference calls can be used by the Workgroup to monitor progress against the plan. ▪ Ms. Cervantes voiced her support for these two projects, adding that some of the communications issues between the US and Mexico could be resolved through the implementation of a work-plan and the use of one register containing all current exercises and projects. ▪ Mr. Mjones stressed that because of budget concerns, JRT meetings may be limited to once every other year or so. However, in the meantime a work-plan could circulate electronically, and Workgroup members could convene on video conferences to voice their comments and ideas. ▪ Mr. Mjones also suggested that the charter describe the Border-wide Workgroup as a constant evaluation organization that assesses progress on set goals, as well as the outcomes of exercises and drills. ▪ Mr. Sanchez suggested that codes for different types of emergencies be established in order to ensure effective communication with the NRC. However, Ms. Oliveira noted that during the most recent update of the JCP, PROFEPA revised its categories of incidents and emergencies. The NRC has these updated criteria. ▪ Ing. Manzo then discussed various commitments that PROFEPA, in coordination with Protección Civil, has recently undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communication: PROFEPA's communication has undergone a permanent revision and will continually be revised as more is learned about the best mechanisms for communication and

	<p>notification;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training: Ing. Manzo emphasized the need to hold not only theoretical, but practical training whenever possible. In addition, PROFEPA will be concentrating on developing audio-visual training tools this coming year; ○ Bi-national Exercises: Mexico would like to participate in more exercises with the US in order to help the two countries craft a joint response vision; ○ Lessons Learned: Ing. Manzo stressed the importance of looking at areas of improvement and opportunity.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add language to the Border-wide Workgroup Charter that describes the Workgroup as an evaluation and assessment body that will measure actual progress against established goals. ▪ Mr. Mjones suggested that the work-plan coincide with EPA's fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). ▪ A work-plan session will take place in conjunction with the August 17-18, 2011 Knowledge Exchange (KE)/Table Top Exercise (TTX) event.
New Sub-objectives for Goal 5	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira stated that the new Border Program will continue until 2020 and that the new Goal 5 Sub-objective 1 addresses the need to continue to test and update the emergency notification mechanism between Mexico and the US on an annual basis. All meeting participants agreed with the language in this sub-objective. ▪ The new Sub-objective 2 addresses the need to have the US-Mexico JRT design a comprehensive strategy for the updating of eight sister city joint contingency plans to include preparedness and response activities associated the environmental impact of (all) hazardous incidents by 2016. All meeting participants agreed with the language in this sub-objective. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sub-objective 2a addresses the need for the US/Mexico JRT strategy to address and make available technical outreach materials for distribution along the border. ○ Jhana Enders (EPA Region 6) stated that the Workgroup should be careful about the language used in this part of the sub-objective, as neither side of the border should have unrealistic expectations about "response activities." ▪ A participant from the Tohono O'odham Nation stated that its sister city plan is almost complete and asked whether the Tohono O'odham Nation could still be a part of the Goal 5 Program even though the plan is not yet finished. ▪ Ms. Tan responded that the Tri-national Emergency JCP is almost ready to be signed and that the Attorney General of the Tohono O'odham is currently looking at a final version of the document. She added that there is a proposal to exercise the Tri-national JCP in the form of a TTX within the next year or so. ▪ Ms. Oliveira then returned to the sub-objectives and presented Sub-objective 3, which states that 50 percent of sister city joint contingency plans will be

supplemented with preparedness and prevention related efforts, such as certified training, risk analysis, and capacity building by 2020. The meeting participants agreed with the language of the sub-objective.

- Sub-objective 3a was then addressed, which states that the Workgroup will investigate potential options for insurance coverage for local emergency responders through the Border Governors Mutual Aid Agreement.
- Ms. Oliveira stated that the Goal 5 Program has been working on this sub-objective for several years and that the Workgroup is looking into getting support from US and Mexico border governors. The Workgroup has been researching insurance coverage for both local and federal emergency responders. There is currently a blanket agreement in place that allows any EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) or federal responder to cross the border in the case of an emergency, but local responders are not covered.
- Ms. Tan informed the meeting participants that the Border Governors Mutual Aid Agreement is between two states (Arizona and Sonora); this means that unless a state emergency is activated, emergency responders will not be covered at the local level.
- Ms. Oliveira noted that individual cities would have to agree to modify the job descriptions of their local responders to include occasional border crossings.
- Ms. Enders suggested that the sub-objective be revised to state that the Goal 5 Program will work actively with sister cities to modify or develop documentation that will ensure coverage for their local responders.
- The group then discussed the need to cover equipment as well as responders, as equipment is often damaged or contaminated during cross-border responses.
- Mr. Staves asked Mr. Mjones if the Local Government Reimbursement (LGR) Program could be used to reimburse a US fire department that had lost or damaged equipment while responding to an incident across the border.
- Mr. Mjones stated that because the LGR Program was established under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the program's funds must be used for protecting US citizens and US soil. In addition, the program may only be used to reimburse unplanned incidents for which local funds have not been budgeted. However, Mr. Mjones indicated that he would check with the program manager on this matter.
 - *Note: Mr. Mjones later clarified that the LGR Program cannot be used to reimburse cross-border responses.*
- Ms. Enders asked the Mexican participants what kind of resources and equipment Mexico would provide in a cross-border response.
- Ing. Manzo stated that because responders in Mexico do not always have the necessary training to use response equipment, Mexico may not be able to lend equipment to the US at the same level that the US can lend equipment to Mexico.
- One participant mentioned that Baja California has had a long standing order

	<p>with US Customs and Border Protection in which responders from California will cross the border into Baja California during a wildfire situation and vice versa. This is a state level plan and involves the maintenance of a list of available equipment on both sides of the border. While this plan is specific to wildfires, it could be used as an example for hazardous materials response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was agreed that Sub-objective 3a should be revised to reflect the need to look at existing plans that cover local responders in order to gather best practices.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The meeting participants agreed that Sub-objective 3a should be modified to specify that the Workgroup will look at existing agreements (whether they be sister city plans or state level agreements) in order to gather best practices that allow trans-boundary movement of equipment and personnel for benchmarking purposes.
Goal 4: Improving Chemical Safety	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira asked the meeting participants to comment on the new Goal 4 sub-objectives regarding the use of pesticides and agricultural products and whether or not they duplicate any Goal 5 efforts. ▪ Mr. Staves stated that because Goal 5 was created to address accidental releases of chemicals in the environment and Goal 4 is related to intentional application of chemicals that may have unintended consequences, it does not appear that the sub-objectives of the two goals overlap. ▪ Ing. Manzo noted that while there may be some overlapping among Mexican agencies concerning the sub-objectives of both goals, there is no real conflict between Goal 4 and Goal 5.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mr. Mjones suggested that the Workgroup first gather and discuss comments on the new Goal 4 Sub-objectives internally and then deliver the comments to the Goal 4 Workgroup in one document.
Upcoming Border Events	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ms. Oliveira informed the meeting participants about the US-Mexico KE/TTX on Incident Command System (ICS) and Exercise Design event in San Diego, CA on August 17 and 18, 2011. She explained that this event is being funded by NORTHCOM and part of the preparation for the event will involve the professional translation into Spanish of ICS and exercise design and evaluation training materials. These materials will help Mexico adopt the response systems used in the US by the EPA, USCG and other governmental agencies. ▪ The first day of the event will involve presentations and an overview of current issues, followed by an introduction to ICS session. The second day will include an ICS for executives' overview as well as an exercise design overview, followed by a facilitated TTX. ▪ Ms. Oliveira then introduced Mr. Oziel Vela (USCG Exercise Support Team #3) to talk about the specific objectives of the event. ▪ Mr. Vela explained that the USCG Exercise Support Team (EST) provides professional support and expertise on the design and development of

exercises. The EST is capable of providing various exercise tools, including template letters and agendas.

- The two plans being exercised in the August 17 and 18 event are the US-Mexico Inland JCP and the MEXUSGULF/MEXUSPAC maritime plans, with the purpose being to validate the procedures in the plans that are being exercised. The TTX will also allow participants to practice joint response management within an Incident Command/Unified Command framework.
- Mr. Vela emphasized that the main areas of focus should be the US-Mexico notification process and the current joint response process, utilizing ICS as a model. The exercise design team will need to discuss if an overview of the plans will be presented during the event.
 - Any meeting participant wishing to become a member of the exercise design team should contact Ms. Oliveira (oliveira.beatriz@epa.gov) and Mr. Vela (Oziel.Vela@uscg.mil).
- When asked if a scenario had been developed yet, Mr. Vela stated that the exercise design team will need to take a close look at the aforementioned plans in order to determine what scenario will best fit the objectives of the exercise.
- Mr. Staves stressed that the event will provide a good opportunity to explore the “joint” in joint response between the US and Mexico and to talk about where policies align and differ.
- Mr. Mjones agreed, stating that the event should focus on transitioning the JRT from preparedness to a response body and should explore how the JRT would support a federal response from both sides of the border with regard to federal resources, directing a responsible party and other challenges.
- Mr. Vela ended his presentation by welcoming all meeting participants to join in the planning of the KE/TTX and by emphasizing the need to have input from PROFEPA, SEMAR and other Mexican agency during the exercise design process.
- Ms. Brandi Todd (US EPA Region 6) then spoke about the upcoming Brownsville/Matamoros equipment transfer and hazmat training event in June and July 2011. Ms. Todd explained that this is will be a continuation of previous equipment transfers, and that sister cities will receive about \$50,000 worth of equipment as well as training through NORTHCOM funding. Region 6 will continue to work with PROFEPA and Protección Civil to solidify future trainings for other sister cities.
- Mr. Staves addressed Region 6’s July 2011 KE on risk mapping protocols, which was postponed from last summer. The intent of the risk mapping KE is to work through the Gulf Task Force – and most likely Brownsville-Matamoros – to assemble a group of individuals who will present data on chemical risks in the form of databases or maps that could be shared with responders. Once a model is proposed, funding sources will be sought in order to develop risk databases and/or maps for the entire Region.
- Ms. Tan spoke about Region 9’s upcoming exercises, noting that the Region’s two proposed TTXs do not currently have set dates because of

funding constraints. They will most likely be postponed to late 2011 or early 2012. She also added that the Arizona-Sonora event will exercise the new Tri-national JCP with the Tohono O'odham Nation. Lastly, the Baja California-Tijuana event will occur between both states and sister cities; the sister city plan will be updated directly before the event.

- Ing. Manzo noted that PROFEPA will be coordinating with Protección Civil on activities for the rest of FY 2011. These activities include:
 - Revision of Mexico's incident notification mechanisms, including the coordination of notification drills four times per month;
 - Update of the 2008 chemical emergency risk assessment report;
 - Development of two field exercises, with possible participation of the US on the evaluation teams;
 - Organization of a national chemical materials conference by Protección Civil, to be held November 17 and 18, 2011, in Morelia, Michoacán, México.
 - Creation of audiovisual materials for chemical emergency response;
 - Inventory of risks of inspected border companies and businesses;
 - Update of the current 15 sister city plans.
- Ms. Enders spoke about her upcoming El Paso-Juarez KE event and the challenges she has faced. She developed a list of questions about her event, and once they are translated into Spanish Ms. Oliveira will send them to Mexico.
- Ing. Manzo noted that while past training has focused on hazardous materials response, she would like to see training and certification for ICS in Mexico.
- Ms. Oliveira explained that the August event is meant to act as an introduction to ICS for Mexico. This way, Mexico might be able to officially adopt the system and develop its own certification.
- Mario Rodriguez (Protección Civil, Baja California) mentioned that Baja California offers ICS training and could prepare a class for participants from Tijuana before the August event in San Diego. He noted that Protección Civil in Baja California as adopted the use of ICS and uses FEMA manuals translated into Spanish from USCG.
- Mr. Vela stated that while some border states and municipalities have learned ICS by working with EPA or USCG, ICS has never been officially instituted as law by the Mexican government. This must be done before it can become a uniform system used throughout the country.
- As the discussion closed, Mr. Vela noted that it would be a good idea for Mexico to conduct a notification drill prior to the TTX and then bring the results to the discussion at the TTX.

Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ With regard to the August 17 and 18, 2011 TTX and KE event in San Diego, CA, it was stressed that the Mexican counterpart agencies (PROFEPA, Protección Civil, etc.) be included in the exercise design group.▪ While significant ICS training has taken place at the local and state level in Mexico, it was recommended that the federal government there establish a national policy requiring the use of ICS by all agencies during a response. Furthermore, Mexico should coordinate with the US on making sure that ICS training materials reflect Inland Area response and not just Marine (USCG) response.▪ Ms. Enders spoke about her upcoming El Paso-Juarez KE event and the challenges she has faced. She developed a list of questions about her event, and once they are translated into Spanish Ms. Oliveira will send them to Mexico.
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