



## Arizona/Sonora Regional Workgroup 2021-2025 Action Plan Summary On-going activities\*

(October 2024)

The purpose of the Arizona/Sonora 2021-2025 Action Plan is to track, assess, and provide information on progress made towards achieving Border 2025 Goals and Objectives. The Action Plan includes program commitments, timeframes and outputs for activities undertaken by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S.EPA) and Program partners working to improve environmental conditions in border and tribal communities of the Arizona-Sonora region.

**\*Note:** *This summary entails information starting in 2021. Final assessment will be completed in Fall 2025.*

### **Summary of 2021-2025 Action Plan**

The Action Plan summarized 85 projects and initiatives. Thirty projects have been completed and 55 efforts are on-going (see Table 1). Assessment of progress made showed: 65% of the projects achieved significant progress or were completed.

### **On-going Activities**

Below is a summary of new, on-going, and completed efforts funded through several U.S.EPA resources including program Border 2025, Clean Air Act 105 funding, Solid Waste Disposal Act, and other resources from Border 2020 partners.

## **Goal 1 – Reduce Air Pollution**

- Through the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's (ADEQ) work, the "Air Monitoring Progress Effort" continues in Nogales, Sonora. This effort includes the operation and implementation of regular equipment maintenance and a quality assurance (QA) assessment and Quality Control (QC) monitoring. The produced data is shared with Sonoran representatives of CEDES (Comisión de Ecología y Desarrollo Sustentable del Estado de Sonora) on a regular basis.
- The "Inventory of Emissions Inventories of Summary of Methodologies for Mexico and US National Emissions Inventories" is an EPA led and co-developed effort in coordination with SEMARNAT which supports a border-wide effort to encourage communication on the methodologies used to develop existing emissions inventories to better understand releases in the border region. This effort is for a better understanding of the content and development of future releases of the U.S. and Mexico national emission inventories. Report will be shared with state and local agencies.

- Staff of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) and CEDES (Comisión de Ecología y Desarrollo Sustentable del Estado de Sonora) have initiated the School-based Air Quality Monitoring and Education Program in Ambos Nogales. The effort focuses on the implementation of an education program in four (4) high-schools across the communities to raise awareness of air quality and pollution. The project will provide students the opportunity to learn about air quality and provides hands-on with PM<sub>2.5</sub> sensors.

## **Goal 2 – Improve Water Quality**

- In Nogales, Sonora, the development of the *Colinas del Sol and Colonia Bella Vista Wastewater Collection and Wastewater Treatment Plant* effort continues. This project is to construct a wastewater collection and treatment system, providing first time service to the undeserved communities in the Colinas del Sol and Colina Bella Vista communities of Nogales. The NEPA ([National Environmental Policy Act](#)) review was completed in September of 2023, and project certification by the North American Development Bank is expected in spring of 2025.
- As a follow up to the "Ambos Nogales Sustainable Strategies for Stormwater and Sanitary Sewer Overflows Control 2019 effort" program partners have continued green infrastructure initiatives in the region. Staff of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is working with Arizona State University (ASU), the University of Arizona, and Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF) in coordination with the U.S. and Mexican consulates on a Green Infrastructure (GI) education initiative. They have developed a training program for teaching staff at public middle schools for the design, construction, and maintenance of school rain gardens. These efforts aim to cultivate water resiliency in the Ambos Nogales region. coordination with ASU team, Arizona Public Media News released *Tapped*, a podcast report on water issues in Nogales, Sonora: <https://originals.azpm.org/p/tapped3/2024/9/26/221985-nogales-reviving-arroyos-and-cultivating-water-resiliency/> (Summer 2024).
- The Watershed Management Group ([WMG](#)) implemented the Rain Harvesting project. This project worked to increase local capacity for rainwater harvesting and water security in the ejido communities of the San Pedro River basin in Sonora, Mexico. WMG held training sessions for the design and implementation of rainwater harvesting systems and selected several sites for system installation. Final accomplishments were presented at the Water Quality Task Force Meeting held in city of Nogales, Sonora (June 2024).

## **Goal 3 – Promote Sustainable Materials and Waste Management and Clean Sites**

- The State of Sonora's *Environmental and Health awareness Campaign to prevent waste burning in Naco, Sonora* project addresses the burning of solid waste near the Ambos Naco communities located in the Arizona/Sonora region. This effort follows a multi-phase approach focusing public education efforts to address waste-handling, burning of solid waste and eventually a disposal demonstration project. Phase I will consist of an assessment of what is being burned and create an outreach education campaign in both

sides of the border to stress the impacts of trash burning in people's health and communities.

- Through the [Consultative Mechanism](#), Border 2025 Program partners continue to track and annually report new and established border area hazardous waste facilities (treatment, storage, and disposal), spent lead-acid batteries and electronics recycling facilities within 100 km of the US-Mexico border. October 2024- Request for input to Program partners on the 2024 US-Mexico Border Consultative Mechanism was initiated by EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM). Foresee update efforts to carry through 2025.
- In the months of March-May 2024, staff of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's Border Program Unit and Solid & Hazardous Waste Section gave a series of lithium-ion battery management trainings to communities in Douglas and Ambos Nogales, with emphasis on diverting them to recycling facilities.
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (AZDEQ) has produced and made available, via YouTube, the "[Biggest Reducer](#)" video series, which educate residents on the importance of reducing and reusing instead of using single-use products. With EPA R9's encouragement, AZDEQ added Spanish subtitles to the thirteen videos, making them more accessible to Spanish-language communities.

#### **Goal 4 –Improve Joint Preparedness for and Response to Hazardous Materials**

- The Sister City-Plans of the Arizona/Sonora and California/Baja California regions were assessed and reviewed for better accurateness to support future efforts to update the plans. The effort led by Arizona State University and local municipality and community representatives. The Plans identify policies, responsibilities, and procedures required to protect the health and safety of the populace, environment, public and private property from the effects of any incident. These efforts are done in close coordination with local fire departments, universities, and other appropriate community representatives.
- Completed ~40 Emergency notification drills in the Arizona/Sonora region to ensure that notifications system works efficiently. This effort was done in coordination with PROFEPA (Federal Attorney General's Office for Environmental Protection), Proteccion Civil of the state of Sonora and regional Task Force Co-Chairs of the region.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Environmental Health & Environmental Justice

- The Bisbee Science Exploration and Research Center (BSERC) has been awarded the Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) grant to create several prototypes and final designs for five field stations focusing on the most pertinent environmental issues in the Bisbee community (water, agriculture, mining reclamation, renewable energies, and one other emerging issue. Project activities includes 3-4 Community Engagement events with community members and interested parties to give input on field station designs before they are finalized. This effort builds off of BSERC's Backyard Project, which seeks to develop a regenerative learning ecosystem and public space in a roughly 8-acre backyard yard in collaboration with the Bisbee Unified School District, Copper Queen Library, and local community.
- The City of Yuma is part of a Brownfields Coalition Assessment grant in the amount of \$600K that expires in 2024. The focus of the grant is on revitalization of a largely vacant brownfield area known locally as Old Town South. This contaminated and blighted area next to the downtown is being explored for development of an Innovation Center and Hub to support long-term business development, foster business collaboration, provide cultural and social amenities for our residents, and to help create a sense of community among residents and businesses. A key redevelopment goal is to provide an incubator for local businesses and workforce that will provide the necessary resources to create and grow a more diverse business community so that the residents have the option to remain in Yuma and Yuma County. The EPA Brownfields grant is advancing this goal by supporting about 14 environmental assessments of brownfields sites and multiple re-use planning efforts, including area-wide plans, redevelopment renderings, and infrastructure studies.
- Actions are being taken to increase awareness and minimize exposures to lead. One of such is sharing information through the Border 2025 quarterly newsletters. Another is bringing [Community Lead Awareness](#) educational sessions to communities. On August 30, 2024, a “train-the-trainer” community lead awareness session was held in Somerton, Arizona. A future training is currently being scheduled with Arizona Department of Health Services ([AZDHS](#)). Additionally, AZDHS has been the recipient of an [EPA WIIN grant](#). Currently, 22 charter schools, 92 childcare facilities, and 14 public schools have been enrolled in the program. All 328 facilities have had their water tested with 14 of them having samples that exceed the action limit of 15ppb.

*\* see next page for a summary of active, on-going and completed projects to date of the Action Plan 2021-2025. For past action plans, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/region-9-action-plansplanes-de-accion-de-region-9>*

**Summary of active and on-going projects  
Arizona-Sonora Action Plan 2021-2025**

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Air</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Waste</b>	<b>Emergency Prep. &amp; Response</b>	<b>Community Efforts/Env. Health &amp; Env. Justice</b>	<b>Totals</b>
Deliverable Achieved	9	6	6	4	5	30
Significant Progress	5	3		2	13	21
Moderate Progress	3	4		1	7	16
Initial Progress	3	2	1	4	6	17
No Progress	1					1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>85</b>