



International Boundary and Water  
Commission  
United States and Mexico  
United States Section

# Binational Border Solutions

Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2021-2025

Revised September 2022

## Photo Sources

### **The cover and pictures in the International Boundary and Water Commission *Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2021-2025*:**

Image on the cover of Monument No. 72 reflects the center of the International Boundary and Water Commission shaped by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which provided for surveying and marking of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico. Border Monument No. 72 | Lat. 31°19.940' Long-109°03.715' | Cerro Puerta Blanca and Cerro La Esperanza in the distance, from *David Taylor: Monuments*, courtesy of the artist and Radius Books.

Strategic Goals and Objectives: 1) One of three new clarifiers as part of the 2009 the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP) technology upgrade located in Nogales, Arizona; 2) Amistad Dam in Del Rio, Texas-Cd. Acuña, Coahuila; 3). Rio Grande Sediment Removal, El Paso, Texas; 4) Monument No.2 at Sunland Park, New Mexico-Cd. Juarez, Chihuahua; 5). Sally Spener, Juan Uribe, Lower Rio Grande Citizens Forum Board Members, and guests participating in a Citizens Forum Meeting.

Overview picture from left to right: U.S. Secretary Sally Spener, U.S. Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner, Mexican Commissioner Adriana Maldonado Resendez, Mexican Secretary Jesus Grano Luevano.

Core Values: 1) Bing image Playas de Tijuana-Monument 258 Cross and Heart located in California off the Pacific Ocean; 2) Border Monument No. 258 | Lat. 32°32.072' Long. - 117°07.370' | Playas de Tijuana, from *David Taylor: Monuments*, courtesy of the artist and Radius Books.

Major Challenges and Risks: Nogales International Outfall Interceptor from Nogales, Mexico ends to the NIWTP in Nogales, Arizona.

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## Message from the U.S. Commissioner



**Dr. Maria-Elena  
Giner, P.E.  
U.S. Commissioner**

I am deeply honored and humbled to be appointed the Commissioner of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) and continue serving the border region through this impressive institution. It is my pleasure to continue implementing the Fiscal Years 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

As USIBWC Commissioner, my three pillars are the drivers that provide the focus on people, projects, and policy. This plan describes our approach on how we address aging infrastructure, protect against flooding, address transboundary wastewater flows, and tackle water supply and quality issues. These challenges require holistic responses and innovative approaches that are best developed through collaboration with stakeholders who each contribute a part of the solution.

The USIBWC Strategic Plan establishes a high-level framework for our programs and serves as the agency's roadmap as we navigate binational concerns, climate change and COVID. The agency is facing these challenges head-on and this plan reaffirms our commitment to providing solutions along the border that benefit from an assertive and collaborative government response. Working together with our stakeholder and Mexican partners we will identify opportunities to improve our services to the border community and provide binational solutions.

The USIBWC Strategic Plan also serves as the agency's roadmap for our short-term goals over a five-year period and provides the flexibility to reassess, adjust and to constantly strive to improve. It establishes measurable performance targets in each defined mission area while considering resources, competing priorities, and addressing risks. It provides transparency and holds us accountable to the American public and stakeholders, ensuring these investments and programs make sense and are a benefit to those we serve.

I am very proud of our employees' dedication and the challenges they overcome in meeting our mission and their goals within this Strategic Plan. I am honored to lead this agency and serve the communities along the border region, as well as provide binational solutions in the best interest of the American public.



### **Mission**

**Provide binational solutions to issues regarding boundary demarcation, national ownership of waters, sanitation, water quality, and flood control in the border region that arise during application of United States-Mexico treaties.**

### **Vision**

**To be recognized as the premier agency that identifies solutions along the United States-Mexico border through local, state, federal and binational partnerships.**

# Strategic Goals



## Goal 1

### WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Improve the quality of boundary and transboundary waters, in concert with Mexico, to address salinity and border sanitation.

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## Goal 2

### WATER MANAGEMENT

Provide flood protection, dam safety, and accurate accounting of boundary river waters.

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## Goal 3

### RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Maximize organizational effectiveness through innovative technology, effective management, accountability for agency resources, and compliance with regulations.

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## Goal 4

### MANAGE THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BOUNDARY

Manage the United States-Mexico international boundary through surveying, mapping and demarcation restoration.

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## Goal 5

### LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

Ensure successful mission delivery and performance excellence through strong leadership, a high-performing workforce and optimized business operations.

## Overview



The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (Commission) is a binational Commission, established in 1889 to apply boundary and water treaties and agreements between the United States (U.S.) and Mexico. The Commission consists of a U.S. Section and a Mexican Section. Each Section is administered independently of the other, and is headed by an Engineer Commissioner, who is appointed by their respective President. The U.S. Section receives

foreign policy guidance from the U.S. Department of State, while the Mexican Section is administratively linked to the Secretariat of Foreign Relations of Mexico.

The U.S. and Mexican Sections maintain their respective headquarters in the adjoining cities of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Each Section is responsible for maintaining its own legal counsel, engineering staff, and administrative staff, and has field offices situated along the border to operate and maintain joint works. The Commissioner, two principal engineers, a legal adviser, and a secretary, are designated by each Government as members of its Section. The Commission meets on a regular basis, alternating the location of meetings between the two countries. Pursuant to the 1944 Treaty, decisions of the Commission are recorded in the form of Minutes that, following approval by the U.S. and Mexican governments, enter into force as binding international agreements, which serve to implement treaty provisions. Minutes require prior coordination with the Department of State and consultation prior to adopting the Minute. Adopted Minutes are then reported to Congress by the Department of State in accordance with the Case-Zablocki Act, 1 U.S.C. §112b.

The Commission administers the rights and obligations that the governments of the U.S. and Mexico assume under various boundary and water treaties and agreements, and settles disputes arising in the application of these agreements. The agency is committed to exercising this authority in an environmentally sound manner benefiting the social and economic welfare of both countries and improving U.S.-Mexico relations.

As an international agency, the Commission is entrusted with the responsibility of diplomatically addressing boundary preservation, accounting for the national ownership of transboundary surface waters, providing border sanitation, addressing water quality issues, and providing flood control protection to millions of people on both sides of the 1,954-mile U.S.-Mexico border. This is accomplished through the joint construction, operation, and maintenance of four flood control systems (Tijuana River, Upper Rio Grande, Presidio Valley, and Lower Rio Grande) with approximately 500 miles of levees in the U.S. alone, five diversion dams (Morelos, International, American, Anzalduas, and Retamal), two international storage dams and hydroelectric power plants (Amistad and Falcon), three international wastewater treatment plants (South Bay, California; Nogales, Arizona; and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas), and over 700 monuments and markers to demarcate the land boundary, 15 concrete jurisdictional markers and 64 buoys to demarcate the lake boundary.

## Organizational Structure and Jurisdictional Map

The USIBWC is headed by Commissioner Maria-Elena Giner and is comprised of the Executive Office of the Commissioner and three Departments: Operations, Engineering, and Administration. The Commissioner, the Executive Office, and the Departments carry out and implement the mission of the USIBWC, consistent with statutory authorities and appropriations law and priorities set by the Commissioner, Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of State.

**The Executive Office of the Commissioner** includes the Legal Affairs Office (including the Ethics and Privacy Act programs), the Foreign Affairs Office (USIBWC Secretary), the Washington D.C. Liaison Office, and the Human Resources Office.

The Foreign Affairs Office provides foreign policy guidance to the Commission, translation of official documents, and interpretation for Commission meetings. Overseen by the U.S. Secretary, the office maintains the official record of correspondence between the two Sections of the Commission, documents the agreements and understandings from Commission meetings, develops international agreements, serves as a diplomatic liaison with the Mexican Section, and oversees public affairs.

**The Operations Department** headed by the Principal Engineer provides technical and policy advice to the U.S. Commissioner and oversees all USIBWC operations and maintenance activities to assure adherence with treaty requirements. The Operations Department, through its eight field offices, operates and maintains roughly 100 hydrologic gaging stations, 500 miles of levees, 20,000 acres of floodplains, four diversion dams, two international storage dams and associated hydroelectric power plants, over 500 hydraulic structures, two international wastewater treatment plants, and approximately one-half of all boundary monuments and markers on the land boundary, concrete jurisdictional markers and buoy reservoir markers, and ports of entry demarcation. It also administers and performs the water accounting functions to determine the national ownership of the Rio Grande and Colorado River waters jointly with the Mexican Section.

**The Engineering Department** headed by the Principal Engineer provides technical and policy advice to the U.S. Commissioner and oversees all aspects of the Engineering Department. The Engineering Department provides support for all USIBWC operations and administers the Engineering Services Division, Construction Division, Environmental Management Division, and Master Planning Office. The Engineering Department conducts and reviews environmental impact studies, water quality monitoring, hydraulic studies and geotechnical investigations. They also develop design plans and specifications for construction, renovation of buildings, hydraulic/flood control structures, hydroelectric power plant infrastructure, and wastewater treatment plant infrastructure.

**The Administration Department** headed by the Chief Administrative Officer provides technical and policy advice to the Commissioner and Executive Staff in the use of fiscal resources and management of federal assets. The Chief Administration Officer serves as the Chief Information Officer, the Internal Controls Officer, and the Senior Agency Official for Records Management. The Administration Department is responsible for overseeing the use and execution of all designated programs in the areas of financial budget and accounting, travel,



federal acquisitions, federal property and management, information technology infrastructure management, cybersecurity, and federal records management. The Department responds to these programs and the implementation of federal annual requirements in compliance with the Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA), Paperwork Reduction Act, E-Government Act, Chief Financial Officers Act, Federal Financial Management Improvement Act, Prompt Payment Act, and the National Archives and Records Administration requirements. The Department also completes the financial and information security audits; develops the Annual Financial Report and manages the real estate portfolio, which includes land, facilities, and structures, and addresses all asset management responsibilities consistent with the General Services Administration regulations and the Federal Acquisitions Regulation's competitive process. The Department also develops budget requests consistent with the goals and priorities of the Commissioner, Office of Management and Budget, and the Department of State.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Though the USIBWC is a separate federal agency from the U.S. Department of State, the USIBWC's budget requests go through the Department of State.

# USIBWC Organization Chart



**Notes:**

- The Upper Rio Grande Field Office is in El Paso, TX at the Carlos Marin/American Dam Facility and operates satellite offices in Las Cruces, NM and Fort Hancock, TX.
- The Lower Rio Grande Field Office is in Mercedes, TX, operates the Anzalduas and Retamal Dams in Hidalgo County, TX and adjacent areas in Mexico.
- The Amistad Dam Field Office is in Val Verde County, TX.
- The Falcon Dam Field Office is in Starr County, TX, near the Zapata-Starr County line, and operates the Laredo Facility.

## Core Values

### Core Values

#### *Honesty and Integrity*

Keep promises to fellow employees and stakeholders.

#### *Pursuit of Excellence*

Pledge to fulfill our mission in a manner that reflects our commitment to the highest possible levels of achievement and service.

#### *Accountability*

Promote a culture that ensures we are responsible stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

#### *Empowerment*

Recognize our employees as our most important resource.

#### *Cooperation and Partnership*

Maintain a collaborative environment with the Mexican Section and stakeholders to maximize our collective resources through teamwork and partnerships.

#### *Diversity and Equal Opportunity*

Recognize our strength lies in the diversity of our employees and in providing equal opportunity for all to realize their full potential.

#### *Safety and Security*

Ensure the safety and security of our employees and our border infrastructure, as a leading federal agency along the U.S.-Mexico border.



*“These are our core values. It is what we strive for every day. We do not prioritize it - these values are a fundamental way of thinking and conducting our business.”*

*Mario Castro - USIBWC Safety Manager*

# Stakeholder Engagement

## Stakeholders

USIBWC is continually reviewing and assessing the agency's operation programs and strategic direction. This process considers the Mexican Section's priorities and stakeholders' vested interests in alignment with our mission. Meetings with Congressional members are conducted to discuss approaches to delivering our mission, the status of pending legislation, and the agency's implementation of new laws. The goal is to gain valuable perspectives and new ideas about how we conduct our work and to ensure the USIBWC is a dynamic and modern agency that accomplishes its mission along the border region. The USIBWC recognizes its stakeholders' interests, expectations, and role in the mission. These individuals and entities having a vested interest in the USIBWC's mission include the following:

- Border residents, property owners
- State and local governments
- Water utilities, irrigators, businesses and universities
- Congress, Department of State, and other federal agencies
- Mexican Section
- USIBWC employees and executives
- Environmental organizations
- Nongovernment organizations

## Federal Agency Collaboration

Our strategic partnerships represent a diverse network of entities. The USIBWC works closely with the Mexican Section of the Commission and many other U.S. agencies to build collaborative efforts and strengthen its commitment to the border to assure the mission is accomplished. The agency coordinates programs and strategies with relevant branches of the U.S. federal government. Examples of the agency's collaborative efforts include:

- U.S. Department of State on foreign policy guidance and diplomatic support for Commission activities.
- U.S. Department of Defense/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in advancing USIBWC's efforts on dam inspections, dam safety requirements and potential remediation for deficiencies.
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security/Customs and Border Protection (CBP) on use of USIBWC controlled infrastructure. CBP accesses USIBWC's levees and flood control structures regularly to accomplish their border security mission. CBP and USIBWC coordinate on infrastructure requirements along the border in response to each agency's mission.
- U.S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Reclamation on the shared management of water resources with Mexico including construction and maintenance of flood control infrastructure, water accounting, and water quality as well as dam safety requirements.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on USIBWC-controlled land where USFWS interests or management may be beneficial to its mission.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on a wide variety of voluntary pollution prevention programs and energy conservation.

## Major Challenges



### Major Challenges

- U.S. and Mexico are sovereign nations with diverse policies, competing priorities, and separate budgets
- Collaboration and communication
- Agency-wide aging infrastructure and maintenance deficiencies
- Transboundary wastewater flows
- Safety and Security

USIBWC is continually challenged with balancing foreign policy and national concerns while building partner capacity and meeting the agency's mission. Although the Commission shares a common interest, each Section has its own priorities which may limit the USIBWC's ability to advance its agenda, resulting in setbacks to key policies that promote and protect American interests.

Stakeholders have requested that USIBWC increase collaborative efforts and provide information and data that is clear, frequent and easily accessible. The agency understands that collaboration and communication with stakeholders provides transparency which equates to trust and success. USIBWC will increase these efforts and find opportunities for improvement.

The agency currently faces the challenge of addressing transboundary wastewater flows and works diligently to protect the American public and prevent environmental hazards.

Safety and security are paramount to the USIBWC. Modernizing our facilities, dated technology systems, and securing our critical infrastructure from both physical threats and cyber-attacks pose a challenge rising from high implementation costs. Applying innovative information technology (IT) and security solutions provides the USIBWC the ability to meet evolving mission requirements.

Most of the USIBWC's infrastructure such as wastewater treatment plants, dams, power plants, and levees, are coming to the end of their lifecycle and require extensive maintenance. The agency will work with the administration to execute a multi-year capital rehabilitation plan.

More important than the safety and security of infrastructure, systems, and data, is the safety and security of our employees. We must be ready to counteract any challenges that could cause harm to our health and welfare.

## Evidence-Building

USIBWC will conduct data-driven reviews that guide decisions and actions to improve performance outcomes, manage risks and reduce costs. This assures accountability to identify best practices, assess return on investments, and inform policy and planning decisions. For each strategic objective, strategies with quantifiable performance indicators and specific planning periods provide accountability to Congress, the American taxpayers, and stakeholders as to the progress achieved.

### **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Assessment**

To shape the agency's strategic plan, many employees participated in developing a SWOT assessment to analyze the full spectrum of available evidence to understand the operating atmosphere of the agency. The agency-wide assessment identified items internal to the organization (strengths and weaknesses) and external to the organization (opportunities and threats). The SWOT assessment was an essential component in the evolution of the goals and objectives for this strategic plan.

### **External Stakeholder Surveys**

The agency surveyed external stakeholders, the general public, and the Mexican Section by asking key planning questions. Various opportunities for improvement from the general public and stakeholders were recognized by the agency such as transparency and communication, as well as activities such as flood control, sediment removal, and transboundary flows. As the strategic plan evolved, these concerns shaped the goals and strategies of this strategic plan.

### **Employee Survey**

The agency utilized the Office of Personnel Management Annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to address some of the human capital strategies for challenges with management, agency strengths and weaknesses, and employee morale. Results proved that employees like what they do and believe their work is an important part of accomplishing the agency's mission. Areas for improvement included managing resources more efficiently, inspiring employees, rewarding creativity and innovation, increasing communication from management, improving motivation and leadership from managers, all of which were considered in developing this strategic plan.

# Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Strategies



**Goal 1: Water Quality Improvement**



**Goal 2: Water Management**



**Goal 3: Resource and Asset Management**



**Goal 4: Manage the United States-Mexico Boundary**



**Goal 5: Leadership and Performance Excellence**

## GOAL 1 Water Quality Improvement

Water quality improvements to support beneficial uses for the growing populations along the border became an important part of the Commission's mission in 1944 under the United States and Mexico treaty "Utilization of Waters of the Colorado and Tijuana Rivers and of the Rio Grande."

**Improve the quality of boundary and transboundary waters, in concert with Mexico, to address salinity and border sanitation**

Achieving water quality goals requires cooperation and collaborative efforts among communities which will result in having a water supply that meets various uses. Rivers and streams provide water for drinking, farming, industry, and supporting the environment and aquatic ecosystems. These water supplies are shared, used and reused, as they flow from one community to another, often from one country to the other. Water quality monitoring programs provide the information needed to evaluate and compare the quality of the water to known standards that are protective of the water supply.

In partnership with local, state, and federal partners, USIBWC participates in ambient water quality monitoring programs in the international reaches of the Colorado River and Rio Grande to collect information related to salinity and ambient water quality. We address transboundary sanitation issues using site-specific, inclusive studies that will include our colleagues and partner agencies from the region including Mexico. We strive to promote collaboration through joint planning and monitoring, by participating and leading discussions through our established technical workgroups and public forums, and by including local leaders, always welcoming their insights.

For established infrastructure projects and reporting requirements, USIBWC will continue to report on sanitation projects along the border through our website and provide updates through our Citizens Forums and binational technical workgroups. Our goal is to maintain regulatory compliance at our San Diego and Nogales wastewater treatment facilities.

USIBWC will continue to collect scientifically sound, quality assured, consistent water quality data, and share our expertise, providing the information for use by the regulatory agencies in making technically sound, informed decisions. We will continue to convene technical workgroups, conduct focused binational studies, and seek solutions by bringing together experts and institutions from the science and regulatory community. We apply our expertise to promote a sustainable water supply by participating in matters affecting the region, which include topics such as conservation, allocation, drought, ecosystems, and other themes that rely on or can affect our region's water resources.



# GOAL 1 Objectives and Strategies

## **Objective 1.1- Wastewater Treatment**

Improve and sustain the operation, management and oversight of wastewater treatment plants and associated infrastructure.

### ***Strategies***

- Establish a team or teams of U.S. and Mexican experts on wastewater management to provide recommendations on improvements and rapid responses to emergencies.
- Work with regulators for fair and reasonable permit requirements that protect public health and the environment while respecting budgetary constraints and national sovereignty.

## **Objective 1.2- Border Sanitation**

Identify, study, and assess potential new infrastructure to improve border sanitation.

### ***Strategies***

- Undertake efforts to ensure compliance with existing Minute provisions.
- Engage with other federal agencies and stakeholders in developing concepts to analyze binational feasibility of proposed solutions to border sanitation.

## **Objective 1.3- Water Quality**

Assess water quality of transboundary waters.

### ***Strategies***

- Evaluate programs and agreements to ensure they are consistent with water quality goals and objectives.
- Provide timely information to our stakeholders through various forums and the internet.

## GOAL 2 Water Management

Finding solutions to the challenges of water management for river waters along the United States and Mexico is an important part of the Commission's mission since the early 1900's. We continue to provide equitable and efficient distribution of the Rio Grande and Colorado River waters between the United States and Mexico, and flood protection to communities along the Rio Grande and Tijuana River.

**Provide flood protection, dam safety, and accurate accounting of boundary river waters**

In collaboration with Mexico and domestic stakeholders, the USIBWC will continue to ensure timely and accurate measurement, delivery, data transmission, and accounting of Rio Grande and Colorado River waters. This assures water needs are met in both countries while accounting for water shortages. The agency will maintain its gaging stations, telemetry systems, and access roads.

USIBWC will continue to develop technological models to support water management for distribution of river waters and management of flood control systems while utilizing opportunities for environmental restoration. The agency will assess current flood risks by periodically updating existing or developing new hydrologic and hydraulic models and improving reservoir operations by conducting studies to develop new reservoir-release curves. The agency will update the design and construction criteria within the floodplain and along the land boundary. The criteria along with the models will be shared with stakeholders and project proponents.

USIBWC will continue to rehabilitate levees and drainage structures, close existing gaps in the levee system, and continue efforts to accredit levees. In areas where levees do not exist, USIBWC will communicate the current flood risk to communities.

USIBWC will perform operations and maintenance of floodways, levees, canals, and flood control structures. Maintenance of the floodway will include sediment and vegetation removal to preserve or reestablish flood capacity. The existing flood control system will be inspected annually. USIBWC will assess and repair its critical infrastructure, such as dams and power plants.

## GOAL 2 Objectives and Strategies

### **Objective 2.1 Flood Control**

Improve and maintain the capacity and structural integrity of the USIBWC flood control systems to ensure the conveyance of design flood flows.

#### ***Strategies***

- Assess and maintain flood control levees and associated structures.
- Rehabilitate flood control projects to meet Federal Emergency Management Agency levee accreditation requirements.
- Complete annual maintenance on the Rio Grande and USIBWC interior floodways, which includes Arroyo Colorado, to improve conveyance efficiency and to meet the design capacity of the system, in compliance with environmental laws and regulations.
- Develop a plan for sediment removal projects from the Rio Grande, Colorado River, and Tijuana River.
- Develop hydraulic models and corresponding floodplain maps to assess flood risks and flood capacity along the Rio Grande and Colorado River.
- Update design and construction criteria within the floodplain.

### **Objective 2.2 Accounting of Rio Grande and Colorado River Waters**

Ensure timely and accurate measurement, delivery, and accounting of Rio Grande and Colorado River waters.

#### ***Strategies***

- Improve the integrity of the agency's telemetry network system.
- Improve service efficiency through investment of work order service software.
- Continue development of hydrologic models with our binational partners in support of water management in the Colorado River and Rio Grande basins.

### **Objective 2.3 Safe Operation of Dams**

Operate and maintain dams and hydroelectric power plants in a safe and efficient manner.

#### ***Strategies***

- Implement the Commission's selected interim risk reduction project for Amistad Dam.
- Improve dam operations.
- Improve operational performance through an enhanced inspection, maintenance program, and capital improvement program.

## GOAL 3 Resource and Asset Management

The effective and efficient use of resources and assets is vital to meet the agency's planning and operational goals. USIBWC will identify and provide essential services to support mission critical requirements.

USIBWC seeks to meet all federal information and website security standards by implementing the necessary information technology (IT) security measures to meet new and updated requirements mandated by the Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The agency will acquire, configure, and install the required IT software and hardware, and update policies to achieve certification and accreditation of the IT network and industrial control systems with FISMA requirements and to improve its overall IT cybersecurity posture.

**Maximize  
organizational  
effectiveness through  
innovative  
technology, effective  
management,  
accountability for  
agency resources,  
and compliance with  
regulations**

The agency's plan is geared towards achieving records management compliance with current laws and regulations. The agency will promote and initiate the transition of all agency business processes and recordkeeping to a fully electronic records management system. The USIBWC will develop plans to archive and transfer all agency analog records to Federal Records Centers or National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and update records management policies and guidelines to ensure compliance with Office of Management and Budget Memorandum M-19-21.

USIBWC will improve the process to ensure the accurate accounting of real and personal property. The agency's asset acquisitions will be in alignment with the agency's mission, goals, and strategic objectives.

USIBWC will continue to follow the federal procurement process to obtain goods and services that provide the best value and meet our mission requirements, while ensuring full compliance with applicable federal statutes, appropriations law, and procurement laws and regulations.

USIBWC seeks to work effectively to complete appropriate analyses to guide decisions, to mitigate security threats by improving physical security controls, and continue to employ security countermeasures to mitigate threats to the security of USIBWC's employees, facilities, and physical assets.

The agency will demonstrate that effective internal controls are in place to quickly identify and correct potential waste, fraud and abuse. An enterprise risk management program will be implemented to support the agency's ability to articulate risks, align and allocate resources, and proactively discuss management and mitigation strategies and activities.

## Goal 3 Objectives and Strategies

### Objective 3.1 Information Technology Modernization

Modernize IT resources to assure effective, resilient communications and strengthen the cybersecurity and critical infrastructure to provide innovative solutions across the agency.

#### *Strategies*

- Improve agency cloud solutions and increase cybersecurity.
- Implement various hardware and software solutions to improve the administration of all agency assets, records and processes.
- Enable a stronger IT security posture.
- Implement IT solutions to enhance the performance and the efficiency of operations.
- Monitor and complete the transition of all agency business processes and recordkeeping to a fully electronic environment and transfer all agency analog records in compliance with OMB Memorandum 19-21 Transition to Electronic Records.

### Objective 3.2 Realty and Asset Management

Improve the process to ensure the accurate accounting of real and personal property.

#### *Strategies*

- Improve the real property program through asset management planning and maintenance strategies that consider operational and financial considerations.
- Complete the comprehensive renumbering and replacement of all personal property asset ID tags as directed by Department of State.
- Strengthen the internal inventory process through annual inventories and accountability reviews by developing a comprehensive and accurate database of all owned and managed real property.
- Establish scheduled reviews of all real property agreements to ensure compliance and that agreements (leases, easements, licenses, permits, etc.) continue to meet agency mission objectives.

### Objective 3.3 Security Services

Support the USIBWC's strategic goals by providing training and awareness, guidance, and management of security programs to mitigate threats to the security of USIBWC employees, facilities, and assets.

#### *Strategies*

- Develop policies and directives to improve the physical security program.
- Develop more training classes and awareness presentations that address focused security subjects.
- Implement the critical infrastructure protection program to mitigate security threats.

## Goal 3 Objectives and Strategies

### **Objective 3.4 - Ensure Compliance with Annual Management Controls and Risk Assessment Objectives**

Align resources to agency mission objectives using a risk-based management strategy.

#### ***Strategies***

- Identify and manage risks and maintain effective internal controls to address and control deficiencies.
- Develop long-term plan to identify, prioritize, and implement mitigation strategies.
- Execute the best procurement strategy based on the agency's needs.
- Communicate agency budget decisions internally throughout the budget process.
- Align fiscal year resources among programs consistent with authorized staffing levels and agency mission priorities.
- Continue with independent third-party assessments of agency compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, including risk management and internal controls.

## GOAL 4 Manage the United States-Mexico Boundary

The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo defined and provided for surveying and marking of the international boundary between the United States and Mexico from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. In 1853, the Gadsden Treaty modified the boundary and provided for survey and land markings of a new boundary from the Pacific Ocean to the Rio Grande. The Commission was established in 1889 to resolve boundary issues resulting from the meandering of the Rio Grande and the Colorado River. The Commission provided procedures to avoid the loss of territory by either country incident to future changes in a river's course. Through binational cooperation, the Rio Grande and Colorado River channels will continue to be maintained and any deviations from the national boundary will be assessed to determine new boundary delineations. The Commission will process the delineation updates of the international boundary on maps for the Rio Grande and Colorado River boundary.

**Manage the United States-Mexico international boundary through surveying, mapping and demarcation restoration**

The USIBWC is responsible for issuing leases, easements, licenses, or permits for activities within its jurisdiction. The agency will continue to survey parcel boundaries and link the surveys and associated documents in a digital tracking system, including a geographic information system (GIS). The GIS system will contain all the survey information serving as a reference to the location of the international boundary for both internal and external use, along with any associated information.

The agency works closely with the Department of Homeland Security in reviewing design plans to ensure the border wall construction does not cause adverse hydraulic or erosion impacts and does not cause obstructions or deflections of the Rio Grande or Colorado River under the 1970 Boundary Treaty. For the transboundary flows occurring along the land boundary, including the Tijuana River, the agency will ensure there are no adverse flooding impacts to either country. The agency will also verify there are no encroachments into Mexico.

## GOAL 4 Objectives and Strategies

### **Objective 4.1 Boundary Management and Mapping of the International River Boundary**

Reduce potential changes to the international boundary and continue mapping of the Rio Grande and Colorado River.

#### ***Strategies***

- Remove sediment to reduce potential changes to the international boundary between the United States and Mexico in compliance with the 1970 Treaty.
- Continue communicating with Mexico to coordinate efforts in developing a plan of action to maintain the international land and river boundary between the United States and Mexico.
- Initiate coordination with the Mexican Section to develop updated maps of the international land and river boundary.
- The agency will work with the Department of Homeland Security in reviewing design plans to ensure border wall construction does not cause an obstruction or deflection of the Rio Grande or Colorado River under the 1970 Boundary Treaty, does not increase the flood risk along the land boundary, including the Tijuana River, and does not encroach into Mexico.

### **Objective 4.2 Demarcation of the International Boundary**

Maintain and restore monuments, markers, plaques, and buoys that demarcate the boundary between the United States and Mexico at border ports of entry, international reservoirs, and on the land boundary in accordance with international agreements.

#### ***Strategies***

- Continue demarcation restoration and develop a five-year restoration plan through asset management planning and innovative maintenance strategies.
- Formalize a plan to continue maintenance of all land boundary monuments, land markers, plaques, and buoys along the U.S.-Mexico border. This includes the maintenance of the Rio Grande and Colorado River low flow channels and jurisdictional buoys at the international dams.
- Integrate GIS for international boundary demarcation.

### **Objective 4.3 Maintain the Integrity of the International Land Boundary**

USIBWC will ensure the integrity of the international land boundary through resolving encroachments and continued collaboration with Mexico to restore damage caused to either country.

#### ***Strategies***

- Identify and coordinate with Mexico to resolve international encroachments.
- Improve collaboration with Mexico to identify and repair damage within IBWC right of way caused by projects on either side of the border.



## GOAL 5 Leadership and Performance Excellence

The USIBWC vision is to become the premier agency along the border, leading the way to provide solutions in the border region. The USIBWC's strength is in its diplomatic commitment to work cooperatively and adhere to principles of improving and resolving problems in a strategic, well-coordinated manner benefiting both countries. Having responsibilities along an international border has its challenges, but it is our top priority to meet our obligations to the American public and to work closely with the Mexican Section to secure binational solutions and to ensure that treaty and statutory requirements are met. We are committed in our everyday operations to meeting our mandates and educating our stakeholders of our statutory authority and responsibilities in addressing problems along the border. A key to our continued success, is our ability to collaborate with our stakeholders to advance plans and policies towards shared stewardship goals. We can effectively promote our federal interests when we engage and collaborate, providing certainty through transparency and accountability.

**Ensure successful mission delivery and performance excellence through strong leadership, a high-performing workforce and optimized business operations**

The agency understands that people are its greatest asset. USIBWC will develop and implement a Strategic Human Capital Management Plan (SHCMP) to attract, advance, and retain an efficient and effective workforce. The SHCMP will include a variety of benefit initiatives. A work environment that provides training, development, and leadership support will translate to a maximum functioning agency. Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey scores have indicated that employees like their job and that the mission and their jobs are important, but employees do not believe they have all the tools to enable them to reach their fullest potential. Another important factor noted in the survey, is to improve collaboration, transparency, and communication between leadership and employees. To maximize employee performance, USIBWC needs to provide supervisors with improved tools and conditions for success, including policies, guidance and training. We are committed to fostering a positive organizational culture in which employees are treated fairly, valued, respected, and supported in a manner which enables them to perform at their fullest potential to maximize organizational contributions.

USIBWC will optimize business operations by developing policies and updating program processes to support data-informed decision making. The agency will increase in-house communications, processes, transparency, and will provide clear and precise guidelines for operational and internal functions. This includes the development of a capital management program for planning, designing, executing and performance management of capital construction projects to ensure these are done successfully, on time, and within budget.

USIBWC will continue to promote and improve our safety and health program for all employees and expand training by converting in-person to online learning.

## GOAL 5 Objectives and Strategies

### **Objective 5.1 Leadership Along the United States-Mexico Border**

USIBWC leads by example and with diplomacy, ensuring our mandates are properly followed and educating our stakeholders of our authority and responsibilities in addressing problems along the border.

#### ***Strategies***

- Strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of our diplomacy.
- Promote engagement and foster partnerships where there are shared responsibilities.
- Improve communication, accountability, and transparency.

### **Objective 5.2 Human Capital Management**

Recruit, retain and develop a skilled, diverse, and high performing workforce. USIBWC strives to maintain the highest level of expertise in our professional fields and employ best practices for managing people and programs.

#### ***Strategies***

- Continue to implement equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion programs and processes to proactively prevent discrimination, achieve more equitable and inclusive work environments, and more efficiently address equal opportunity concerns.
- Implement a Strategic Human Capital Management Plan.
- Improve and streamline the hiring process.

### **Objective 5.3 Optimize Business Operations**

Optimize business operations through agency policy and process improvements and continue a healthy work environment.

#### ***Strategies***

- Improve efficiencies through capital planning, quarterly reviews, and monitoring of projects.
- Drive efficiencies through continuous process improvement and updating policies and directives.
- Improve the safety program and provide training to ensure the safety and health of all employees.

## Accountability Process

The Government Performance and Results Act Modernization Act of 2010 and other regulations require agencies to identify performance goals, report progress against targets, and conduct data driven reviews. This Strategic Plan will be posted on our internet site. The Performance Plan and the Annual Performance Report will be part of our submission of the Financial Statement.

### **Annual Performance Plan**

In the Annual Performance Plan, USIBWC will identify strategies to be implemented within the next fiscal year. It will include annual performance measures with proposed targets and budget resources. At the end of each fiscal year, USIBWC will use the performance measures and targets in the Annual Performance Plan to assess the progress of the performance goals, which will be reported in the Annual Performance Report.

### **Performance and Strategic Reviews**

Frequent performance reviews provide a mechanism to keep our agency focused on an identified set of priorities, diagnose problems and opportunities through the analysis of data, and decide next steps to increase performance and productivity.

Annual reviews will be conducted to assess progress on the performance goals and take corrective actions to ensure progress.

Strategic reviews are required to be conducted annually to ensure we are on track and that we mitigate accordingly. The reviews consider the performance, as well as challenges, risks, effectiveness of internal controls and other events that may affect outcomes.

An enterprise risk management program will be implemented in fiscal year 2021 to support the agency's ability to articulate risks, align and allocate resources, and proactively discuss management and mitigation strategies.

### **Financial, Information Technology, and Internal Audits**

USIBWC contracts independent certified public accounting firms for the annual financial audit in accordance with accounting principles. Information technology audits are conducted on an annual basis. Internal audits are performed to address challenges and make improvements across all departments, functions, and processes.

### **Annual Performance Report**

USIBWC will provide an annual update to the progress of the Annual Performance Plan and the strategic plan objectives to highlight any necessary adjustments in the strategies resulting from analysis of outcomes, success criteria, and other evidence. The Annual Performance Report is submitted to Office of Management and Budget.



## International Boundary and Water Commission - United States Section

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