

BORDER GROWING WATER SMART

Connecting Transborder Water and Land Use

A changing climate, declining surface water and groundwater availability, seasonal flooding, prolonged drought, and increasing growth pressures are contributing to significant challenges around water management, availability, quality, and access in communities across the US-Mexico border region. This has caused agencies from the local to the bi-national level take action to conserve, replenish, manage, and protect water resources.

Historically, planning for water resources and land use have been conducted separately. Yet, where and how cities develop directly impacts the quantity of water needed and the quality of water that supports the aquatic environment.

Elected officials, water resource managers, urban developers, land use planners and regional entities can increase resilience and create water smart communities even as development occurs by collaborating to identify and implement strategies that address local, regional, and transborder water concerns.

Growing Water Smart is a joint program of Sonoran Institute and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy's Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, and is administered in the US-Mexico border region with support from the North American Development Bank (NADBank).

The Border Growing Water Smart Program

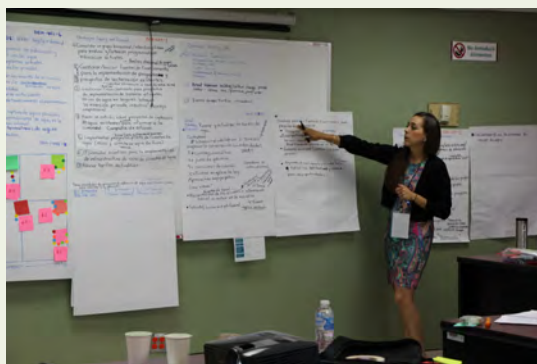
The Border Growing Water Smart Program consists of a multi-day workshop, follow-up support to pursue technical assistance grants, and ongoing support for integrating water conservation, efficiency, green infrastructure and low impact development strategies into land use plans and policies.

The workshop exposes participants to public engagement, planning, communication, and policy tools to ensure that local and regional governments, water and land managers, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations can collaborate to reduce water demand, further water quality and watershed health, and ensure equitable access to water.

The program is designed to build local capacity around planning and policymaking, bi-national collaboration, and border-wide learning with focuses on green infrastructure, low-impact development, zoning and land use policies, and community engagement and education.

Eligibility: 'Sister cities' representing cross-border metropolitan areas.

Costs: The workshop is free for participants, including meals. Participants cover their own travel.



Communities participating in this program gain:

Insight. Achieve a better understanding of how land use and climate trends impact water supply and demand in the border region.

Tools. Explore the strategies and tools to align water and land use planning to meet national, bi-national, regional, state, and local goals.

Collaboration. Engage with colleagues and counterparts from key disciplines, agencies, and organizations to establish common goals around water and growth.

Messaging. Develop clear and concise language to communicate goals around water resilience and gain support for proposed actions.

A path forward. Establish a local water resiliency action plan based on your community's needs and goals.

Follow up. Post-workshop resources and assistance to acquire funding and work towards achieving goals.

Program at a Glance

The Growing Water Smart workshop offers teams the time to collaborate and focus on the water resource and urban planning challenges that are influencing border cities' growth and development. The workshop is comprised of the following elements:

Key Learning: Live presentations and written guidance documents provide knowledge and training around integrating water conservation, efficiency, green infrastructure and low impact development strategies into land use plans and policies.

Team-Oriented Work Sessions: Teams assess community data, trends, and existing policies; develop opportunities for cross-border collaboration; identify strategies to align land use plans and policies with water resource management goals; and develop an action plan to implement these strategies. Sessions are facilitated by professionals in the field who guide teams through these strategic discussions.

Peer-to-Peer Networking: Participants meet and exchange ideas with their peers and counterparts from their sister city.

Team Composition

The workshop is designed to build and foster interdisciplinary teams from sister cities, counties, and regions committed to taking collaborative action around water. Teams are comprised of approximately 10 mid- to senior-level individuals with diverse knowledge, skills, and perspectives. Team composition varies, and often includes:

- Local, state, and regional government elected and appointed officials
- Current and long-range land use planners
- Representatives from water utilities, retailers, and management agencies
- Economic development leaders
- Sustainability and resilience officers
- Parks and public works staff
- Representatives of regional planning organizations
- Bi-national agencies

Questions?

If you are interested in participating in an upcoming workshop or have any questions for our team, please contact us at: growingwatersmart@sonoraninstitute.org



"I attended the Growing Water Smart convening between the border cities of Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta, Sonora, which was very well organized, inclusive, and provided an important platform for binational collaboration regarding water management and land use. The effort and teamwork of the Growing Water Smart team were evident and set the stage for important conversations to take place between a range of actors who are not normally in the room together. I found the border Growing Water Smart workshop to be a meaningful mechanism for cross-border dialogue on complex water issues." - Dr. Sharon B. Megdal, Director, University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center

Sonoran Institute

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Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy

The Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, a Center of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, seeks to advance the integration of land and water management to meet the current and future needs of Colorado River Basin communities, economies, and the environment.

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