

**U.S.–Panama  
Environmental Cooperation Commission  
2018–2022 Work Program**

**Introduction**

The Environmental Cooperation Commission (Commission), established pursuant to the "United States-Panama Environmental Cooperation Agreement" (ECA) has developed the following Work Program through 2022 that identifies specific goals and objectives and areas for cooperation that reflect national priorities for each Government.

**Background**

The Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Panama signed an Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA) on May 2, 2012. In so doing, the Governments recognized the importance of protecting the environment and of promoting sustainable development in concert with the expansion of bilateral trade and investment associated with the U.S.-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA).

The ECA, a parallel agreement to the TPA, establishes the means and types of cooperation between the two governments and calls for the Commission to develop a Work Program that reflects each country's priorities. In the ECA, the Parties agreed to promote the development of opportunities for public participation in the development and implementation of cooperative environmental activities.

The Governments take note of the bilateral and regional cooperation efforts underway in other forums and intend to supplement and expand this work, including by exploring opportunities for collaboration in priority areas with other countries in the region.

The Governments may update or modify the objectives and activities under this work program through future consultations. Implementation of activities will depend on the availability of funds and other resources from the Governments and other sources.

**Priority Areas for Cooperation and Related Activities**

The Work Program focuses on the priority goals and objectives listed below:

**A. Strengthening the Capacity to Develop, Implement, and Enforce Environmental Laws and Regulations**

*Objectives*

- (1) Ensure that each Government's laws and policies provide for and encourage high levels of environmental protection and continue improving those laws and policies;
- (2) Strengthen the Governments' ability to effectively enforce environmental laws and regulations, including those that implement their obligations under Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); and
- (3) Improve exchange of best practices on innovative mechanism that promote compliance with environmental laws, including those related to technology and data.

### *Activities*

1. Provide technical capacity building to officials, including prosecutors and district attorneys, investigators, customs and other inspectors, and judges from regulatory entities in the areas of enforcement and compliance (e.g., inspection, investigation, judicial proceedings, prosecution, and permitting) and adjudication of environmental laws and regulations.
2. Support the Panamanian Ministry of Environment (MiAMBIENTE) in strengthening and revising regulations, policies, and procedures in areas such as environmental impact assessment and environmental permitting; strategic environmental assessment; wastewater treatment and solid waste management, including marine debris; chemical waste and other dangerous substances; mining and related issues; and air quality monitoring and mitigation strategies.
3. Exchange information and best practices on implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), including by promoting enforcement of CITES regulations through continued strong Panamanian participation in the Central American and Dominican Republic Wildlife Enforcement Network (CAWEN) and improved data collection and sharing related to arrests, seizures, and judicial actions.
4. Support fisheries enforcement and exchange information on best practices to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, including the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), and the protection of marine mammals.
5. Support Panama's efforts to reduce illegal logging and improve forest management and forest governance.
6. Promote improved environmental performance at seaports through the strengthening of environmental management units and support implementation of the MARPOL Convention

## **B. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Protected Areas and Other Ecologically Important Ecosystems**

### *Objectives*

- (1) Promote and encourage the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and all of its components, including plants, animals, and habitats; and
- (2) Improve the management of land and marine protected areas and other ecologically important ecosystems.

### *Activities*

1. Exchange best practices in marine and terrestrial protected area management, rehabilitating reserves/protected areas, managing wildlife, law enforcement, and supporting sustainable tourism.
2. Share experiences in working with communities, including indigenous communities, located in protected areas and buffer zones on management of protected areas, biodiversity conservation, and management of economic benefits from the associated natural resources.

3. Exchange information and best practices on implementation of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention), including potential impacts of development projects on sensitive coastal wetland ecosystems.
4. Support conservation and management activities to protect endangered sea turtles, such as training on the use of turtle excluder devices (TED), and develop community management strategies in conjunction with coastal communities to reduce illegal sea turtle trade.

### **C. Improved Private Sector Environmental Performance and Compliance with Environmental Laws**

#### *Objectives*

- (1) Support enhanced private sector environmental performance through the adoption of sound practices and strategies for cleaner production;
- (2) Promote voluntary private sector mechanisms to improve compliance with environmental regulation; and
- (3) Advance public-private partnerships to strengthen environmental protection and compliance with environmental laws.

#### *Activities*

1. Facilitate public-private sector collaboration among Panama and U.S. companies, business associations, and financial institutions to increase capacity to adopt cleaner, environmentally friendly, and economically-efficient production methods via market-based mechanisms. Include U.S. environmental technologies and services where feasible.
2. Support MiAMBIENTE in drafting and publishing practical manuals on environmentally friendly production and guides on pollution reduction, recycling, and waste treatment, as well as expanding the scope of action of the Good Environmental Practices Guides for different sectors.
3. Work with micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Panama to promote the adoption of cleaner production practices.
4. Seek to engage the private sector through roundtables, environmental technology trade shows and conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

### **D. Environmental Education, Transparency, and Public Participation to Improve Environmental Protection and Enforcement of Environmental laws**

#### *Objectives*

- (1) Strengthen civil society mechanisms for participating in, managing, and monitoring environmental matters and practices;
- (2) Promote informed and timely citizen participation in environmental management decision making and enforcement;
- (3) Exchange knowledge and experiences on environmental education strategies and programs, with a focus on community-based education; and

(4) Support programs that promote the implementation of public access to environmental information laws.

*Activities*

1. Strengthen informed citizen participation in and monitoring of environmental matters and environmental governance, including through the Secretariat for Environmental Enforcement Matters (SEEM).
2. Make reliable information easily accessible, provide forums, and implement processes and procedures, as determined by environmental law, in order to involve and train communities and the public on how to take part in environmental decision-making and monitoring.
3. Support MiAMBIENTE through capacity building in website management, for sections of its website that contains public information such as Environmental Impact Assessments.

**E. Benchmarks, Monitoring and Evaluation**

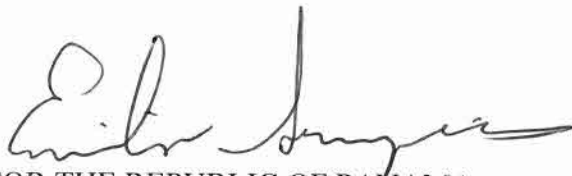
Following approval by the Governments of the activities under the Work Program, implementing partners will identify performance indicators and benchmarks to measure progress in furthering the goals and objectives of these activities and to facilitate public reporting of that progress.

The Governments recognize that a variety of government agencies and civil society groups may be involved in implementing the activities under this Work Program, and that the agency or group that leads implementation for a particular activity will do its utmost to encourage public participation, information disclosure, and performance tracking.



FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Environment, Bureau of Oceans and International  
Environmental and Scientific Affairs



FOR THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA  
Minister of Environment

ANNEX 1: List of U.S. and Panamanian Agencies / Acronyms

| United States  | Panama  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of State (DOS)</li> <li>• Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR)</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture (USDA)</li> <li>• U.S. Forest Service (FS)</li> <li>•</li> <li>• National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)</li> <li>• Department of Energy (DOE)</li> <li>• U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)</li> <li>• Department of Homeland Security (DHS)</li> <li>• Customs and Border Protection (CBP)</li> <li>• U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)</li> <li>• Department of Interior (DOI)</li> <li>• U.S. National Park Service (NPS)</li> <li>• U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)</li> <li>• U.S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service (FWS)</li> <li>• U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)</li> <li>• Department of Justice (DOJ)</li> <li>• Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</li> <li>• National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA)</li> <li>• National Invasive Species Council (NISC)</li> <li>• U.S. Trade Development Administration (USTDA)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Environment (MiAMBIENTE)</li> <li>• Ministry of Trade and Industry (MICI)</li> <li>• Panama Canal Authority (ACP)</li> <li>• Panama Maritime Authority (AMP)</li> <li>• Panama Aquatic Resources Authority (ARAP)</li> <li>• National Public Services Authority (ASEP)</li> <li>• Panama Tourism Authority (ATP)</li> <li>• Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC)</li> <li>• Interagency Commission on the Hydrographic Basin of the Panama Canal (CICH)</li> <li>• National Council for Sustainable Development (CONADES)</li> <li>• RAMSAR Regional Center (CREHO)</li> <li>• Electrical Transmission Company (ETESA)</li> <li>• National Water and Sewer Institute (IDAAN)</li> <li>• Ministry of Education (MEDUCA)</li> <li>• Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF)</li> <li>• Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA)</li> <li>• Ministry of Foreign Relations (MINREX)</li> <li>• Ministry of Health (MINSAL)</li> <li>• Ministry of Housing (MIVI)</li> <li>• Ministry of Public Works (MOP)</li> <li>• National Secretariat of Science and Technology (SENACYT)</li> <li>• National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC)</li> <li>• Panama Industrial Union (SIP) Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute</li> </ul> |