



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Central America and Mexico

REGIONAL PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Over the last 20 years, Central American countries have made social and economic advances, including improved literacy rates, reduced infant and maternal mortality, increased trade, and generally, a succession of free and fair elections and peaceful government transitions.

Despite these gains, challenges that hinder economic and social development remain. Violence and insecurity, generated by gangs, narco-trafficking, and trafficking in persons, poverty and lack of economic opportunities inhibit growth and investment, particularly in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, and drive irregular migration to the United States. Democratic backsliding and widespread corruption weaken governance and undercut progress on economic opportunity, protection of human rights, and citizen security.

Through its Central America and Mexico (CAM) Regional Program, USAID works with the governments of the region, the private sector, and local organizations to address underlying security, governance, and economic conditions driving irregular migration from Central America to the United States. Programs address regional challenges to economic prosperity, governance and security, and environment and health.

PROSPERITY

USAID works with the private sector and governments to address the lack of economic opportunity within the region as a driver of migration. Activities help expand regional trade to create jobs and economic opportunities. An efficient trading system, border control and harmonized customs administration across the region help increase regional economic integration. Transparency and simplification of laws, regulations and procedures also allow businesses to formally comply with international best practices, improve economic competitiveness and promote increased access to regional and international markets. USAID improves the ports and land border posts in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala and export processes throughout the region, making them more efficient, harmonized, and less burdensome for exporters. Activities will focus on an efficient facility infrastructure, modern information technology systems, transparent and predictable processes, and harmonized regulations and standards for products and services. Programs improve regional value chain networks by linking complementary production, distribution, and marketing capacities and by enhancing cross-border cooperation among public and private stakeholders. USAID will also develop finance and investment products that are regional and require economies of scale to be commercially viable, such as a regional infrastructure fund or a regional climate insurance facility.

CITIZEN SECURITY AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

USAID helps improve regional security by coordinating regional security data systems and data dissemination, formation of citizen security policy, and sharing of information and best approaches between governments to counter transnational crime. Regional trainings and campaigns on violence prevention for target demographic groups (such as youth in violent areas) and to combat gender-based violence incorporate data and best practices. USAID strengthens respect and protection of human rights by working with civil society and media across the region to support legal analysis and awareness campaigns concerning potential infringements to human rights, human rights training, and coordinated responses to human rights violations and closing spaces, drawing on observatories and early warning systems established under previous activities. Activities also include assistance to LGBTQI+ organizations and private enterprises in Central America to promote labor opportunities for marginalized groups, and research on topics affecting vulnerable groups, such as domestic work and exploitation of indigenous people. Regional programming fosters collaboration and knowledge



sharing between entities working on anti-corruption and improving democratic governance. USAID assists returned migrants with their most immediate needs and works closely with border authorities of Central America and Mexico to improve the reception processes for returnees. In addition, USAID works with nonprofits, civil society, and local communities for the safe, dignified, and effective reintegration of returnees into their communities.

ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

USAID develops regional climate data systems and coordinates with regional stakeholders to analyze that data and implement measures to combat the effects of climate change. Initiatives include regional and country-based integrated operations plans to mitigate and adapt to climate change. At the more local level, USAID provides climate data, analyses, and tools to end users such as government officials, agricultural and fishing cooperatives, and civil society groups. Activities help improve natural resource management, including for water security and biodiversity conservation. USAID addresses threats to biodiversity and decreases illegal and unsustainable trade in natural resources extracted from transboundary ecoregions by promoting safe, legal, and environmentally-friendly livelihoods that reduce poverty. In health, USAID will strengthen health systems to improve the surveillance, coordination, and response of governments and health systems in the region to prevent, prepare for, and respond to pandemics in the region. Regionally, for HIV/AIDS, USAID supports testing, prevention, and treatment. Assistance expands testing sites for new patients and patients who have been lost to follow-up. Activities will provide HIV testing and counseling, including mobile units to increase access to HIV testing services.

USAID CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO REGIONAL PROJECTS

Regional Coastal Biodiversity (\$13.4 million)— Contributes to local economic development and the generation of income for women and youth, based on best natural resource management practices to reduce the threats on key ecosystems in three border sites in Central America.

Trade Facilitation and Border Management Project (\$17.5 million)- Contributes to broad-based economic growth by enhancing regional integration and improving trade facilitation by reducing time and cost of trading across borders to achieve greater trade competitiveness in the region.

Upper Lempa Transboundary Water Resource Management (WRM) Activity (\$12 million) - Supports transboundary and national institutions to effectively manage water resources and address water security risks while conserving the environment to improve resilience of the Northern Central American region to prosper in the face of increasing climate variability and change.

DCA Loan Portfolio Guarantee (\$2 million) - Increases the availability of loans for micro, small and medium enterprises through loan guarantees.

InfoSegura (\$31 million)—Strengthens evidence-based policy making and increases regional coordination and collaboration on effective citizen security strategies.

Regional Human Rights and Democracy (\$39.4 million)—Facilitates strategic alliances among organizations involved in strengthening human rights. This program addresses human rights violations resulting from internal displacement and irregular migration and informs policies and strengthens government response to this regional phenomenon. The project focuses on protecting human rights for the most vulnerable populations.

Integrated Responses on Migration from Central America (\$57.7 million)—Provides services to help returning migrants reintegrate into local communities, and to alert the public on the risks of irregular migration.

For more information on USAID El Salvador and USAID Central America Regional Programs, please call: (503) 2501-3411; 3344; 3432 or visit www.usaid.gov/el-salvador

