



THE GULF OF MEXICO STATES ACCORD

The Gulf of Mexico States Accord (GOMSA) is an international cooperative agreement, initiated in 1995 by the Governors of the eleven Mexican and US border states along the Gulf of Mexico basin. Those states are: *Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas* on the US side; *Campeche, Quintana Roo, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Veracruz, and Yucatan* on the Mexican side. The Gulf of Mexico States Accord brings state-level leadership in a well-defined sub-region of North America to define mutual interests, shape consensus and build political will for new regional initiatives in the areas of international commerce, homeland security, economic development, transportation, tourism and education. Policy officials, business executives, economic developers and academic researchers all actively participate in the Accord. The Accord's Working Groups meet biannually or on an ad-hoc basis, and in concert with the Accord Executive Committee, appointed by the Gulf governors as the governing body of the Accord. The General Secretariat, formed in 2000 at the request of the Governors, administers the operations of and planning for the Accord, and manages its website (www.gomsa.org) and its events and conferences. The General Secretariat handles all reporting for the Accord. In addition, the Accord meets in "plenary" during the transition of the Presidency from one governor to another.

The Accord's initiatives create new environmental, economic development, educational, agricultural and commercial programs, homeland security and new transportation initiatives in the border states of the Gulf of Mexico basin.

The Accord's objectives are summarized as follows:

- To work jointly to develop our common border – the Gulf of Mexico.
- To maximize the advantages of the Gulf's enormous potential for increased trade and tourism, stronger educational and cultural bonds
- To strengthen regional cooperation
- To ensure that each of our states is a better place in which to live and work.
- To promote a healthy and vibrant Gulf region for the benefit of all our collective 62 million citizens.

During the past ten years, the Accord has developed collaborative relationships with numerous government entities on both sides of the Gulf border region, among them:

- US Department of Transportation Maritime Administration

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- US Small Business Administration
- US Overseas Private Investment Corporation
- US Trade & Development Agency
- US Export-Import Bank
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish & Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior
- US Department of Agriculture
- US Department of Homeland Security
- NASA
- NOAA, US Department of Commerce
- Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Relations
- Mexican National Development Bank (NAFIN)
- Mexican Foreign Trade Bank (Bancomext)
- Mexican Secretary of the Economy
- Petroleos Mexicanos
- The World Bank
- The Inter-American Development Bank
- The Organization of American States
- Mexican Secretary of Environmental Protection (SEMARNAT)
- Mexican National Water Commission (CNA)
- Mexican National Commission for the Protection of Public Health (COFEPRIS)

Through its Working Groups and its Executive Committee, the Accord has accomplished a number of collaborative binational projects, among them:

- Completion of its first strategic plan
- Convening the first “Gulf of Mexico Transportation Summit”
- Networking state officials for trade, investment and seaport missions throughout the Gulf states
- “Doing Business with PEMEX” seminars
- Creation of a plan to build a “nautical staircase” for recreational boaters on the Mexican Gulf coast
- Designated “Mile Marker Zero” for a future “Gulf of Mexico Scenic Tourism Highway” initiative

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- Assistance to the first “car ferry” cruise service between Florida and the Yucatan Peninsula
- Creation of the first General Secretariat for the Accord
- Support for the first regional trade and transportation study in the Gulf
- Signatory to the first “Memorandum of Cooperation on Short Sea Shipping” between Mexico and the United States
- Identification of and support for a bilateral collaborative approach to study and monitor harmful algal blooms (red tide) on the Mexico Gulf coast
- Co-convenor, with US EPA Gulf of Mexico Program Office, of the first binational symposium on red tide monitoring
- Successful support for US Federal funding for the first pilot-project (through EPA and NOAA) for red tide monitoring on the Mexican Gulf coast
- Drafting the first “memorandum of cooperation” for public health and environmental collaboration between Mexican and US Federal and state entities
- Support of the formation and work of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA), an alliance of the five US Gulf states responding to the President’s “Ocean Action Plan”, with a regional initiative
- Support and collaboration for binational activities of the GOMA
- Nomination of and support for the designation of the Veracruz Aquarium as the first “coastal ecosystem learning center” outside of the United States, a White House environmental education initiative
- Support for creating binational “Gulf Guardian Awards” under the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program Office initiative

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