

U.S.-Mexico Strategic Dialogue on Illicit Finance (SDIF)

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Theme: Economic Security and Policy

Overview

Goal Statement

- By September 2019, increase U.S. and Mexican effectiveness against transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), including drug trafficking organizations (DTOs), operating in the United States and Mexico through the Strategic Dialogue on Illicit Finance (SDIF) by taking enforcement actions, sharing key illicit finance information, safeguarding our financial systems against threats, and increasing the effectiveness and capacity of AML/CFT regimes.

Challenge

- Applying the Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence's (TFI) tools and authorities in the most strategic and effective way to identify, disrupt, and dismantle TCOs, including Mexican DTOs.
- Coordinating and collaborating with Mexican counterparts to track and disrupt criminal networks by addressing systemic AML/CFT issues. This effort requires Treasury to work with Mexican partners and the U.S. interagency to leverage diplomatic engagement, law enforcement, intelligence, and regulatory tools.
- Threats to the international financial system are constantly evolving, and it is imperative that the U.S. and Mexico address these increasing challenges to U.S. and Mexico national security.

Opportunity

- Treasury's Office of Terrorism and Financial Intelligence (TFI) has broad tools and authorities to address national security risks such as TCOs and narcotics trafficking. We will focus our combined efforts on disrupting illicit networks and protecting the international financial system through information sharing; targeted actions, including but not limited to sanctions; and other multilateral AML/CFT efforts.
- The Administration is leveraging the SDIF to address larger illicit finance concerns since it is an established mechanism agreed to by both the U.S. and Mexico, with leadership and working level partners in place to propose policies and best practices that reduce and prevent the flow of illicit proceeds
- This effort directly supports Treasury strategic objective 3.1: Strategic Threat Disruption; and 3.2: Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism Framework.

Goal Structure & Strategies

Strategies

- **Strategy 1:** Strengthen U.S./Mexican cooperation on improving AML/CFT capabilities to prevent, combat, and sanction illicit finance activities associated with Mexican DTOs, transnational criminal organizations, and other illicit actors
- **Strategy 2:** Identify and evaluate emerging illicit finance threats, vulnerabilities, and trends
- **Strategy 3:** Promote best practices for the use of existing civil authorities to more effectively target illicit finance actors
- **Strategy 4:** Share operational information on illicit finance activities in the U.S. and Mexico

Key External Factors

- Geopolitical factors
- Emerging/evolving national security priorities

History

- Established in 2014, the SDIF was created in an effort to deliver greater economic growth and opportunity for the citizens of Mexico and the United States by safeguarding our financial systems against the threats of illicit finance. The co-chairs are the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público. Together these two entities work together to propose policies and best practices that reduce and prevent the flow of illicit proceeds within and between the United States and Mexico, while continuing to facilitate the flow of licit funds.

Summary of Progress – FY18 Q2

- In December 2017, Treasury co-led the second principal-level meeting of the Strategic Dialogue on Illicit Finance (SDIF) in Mexico City.
- Following the dialogue and at the request of Mexican authorities, Treasury shared best practices information with Mexican authorities regarding U.S. administrative petition regulations and procedures in domestic sanctions cases.

Key Milestones

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone (associated strategy)	Milestone Due Date	Strategy Alignment	Milestone Status	Comments
Assist with U.S./Mexico domestic sanctions reforms	Ongoing	3	On Track	OFAC has shared best practices information with Mexican authorities on U.S. administrative petition regulations and procedures in domestic sanctions cases.
Provide additional information about illicit financial activities to Mexican officials for use in potential law enforcement operations	Ongoing	4	On Track	Treasury has shared information on specific illicit financial activity with Mexican authorities and received initial feedback from Mexico.
Participate in annual SDIF senior level meetings.	Q3 FY 18 Q3 FY 19	3	On Track	Treasury is coordinating potential dates with Mexican authorities.
Participate in annual SDIF working level meetings.	Q4 FY 18 Q4 FY 19	3	On Track	Treasury is coordinating a June meeting in Mexico.
Develop requirements for data matching and regulatory harmonization project.	Q3 FY 18	1	On Track	Treasury and Mexican authorities are looking at the potential to compare data on cash crossing the border.
Confirm mutual understanding of FY 2018 illicit finance trends and threats associated with Mexican DTOs.	Q4 FY 18	2	On track	
Establish timeline for the data matching and regulatory harmonization project.	Q1 FY 19	1	On track	See fifth milestone above.
Confirm mutual understanding of FY 2019 illicit finance trends and threats associated with Mexican DTOs.	Q4 FY 19	2	On track	

Key Indicators

Due to the sensitive nature of this goal, OMB and Treasury hold internal quarterly discussions to track measurable progress toward the desired outcomes.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security (HSI and CBP), and the Department of State

Regulations: Bank Secrecy Act

Policies: Sanctions under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (“Kingpin Act”), Executive Orders, etc.

Other Federal Activities: Presidential Executive Order 13773 – Enforcing Federal Law with Respect to Transnational Criminal Organizations and Preventing International Trafficking (February 2017)