



“I would like to stress that we are engaged in broad cooperation. The Merida Initiative has meant a qualitative change in the level of cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and in general against organized crime. . . the objective is really to strengthen the capacity, the capabilities of the Mexican state to face this common threat.”

*Patricia Espinosa
Foreign Secretary
Mexico*

The Government of Mexico's canine program has expanded exponentially over the past few years. Mexican law enforcement entities such as the Federal Police (SSP) and Customs (Aduanas) have recognized the importance and effectiveness of canines in interdicting narcotics, firearms, and ammunition at major ports of entry across the country and during operations. The number of canine teams has significantly increased, aging dogs that have been working beyond their years are being replaced, and the retention rate of canine handlers has also increased, making the canine units an elite part of each agency's operations.

Merida Initiative support for canine programs includes:

- Merida Initiative funds are supporting the procurement and training of canines in basic narcotics, firearms and explosive detection. In January 2010, over 50 canine/handler teams from SSP and Aduanas were trained by Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco (ATF) agencies in the United States.
- SSP and Aduanas have both recognized the importance of well-trained canine teams and have committed to building National Canine Academies for their respective agencies. Under the Merida Initiative, both facilities are in the design phase and will begin construction in 2010. These academies will focus on significantly increasing the number of canines trained across the country, particularly at key ports of entry along the U.S.–Mexico Border.
- During 2009, Merida Initiative-supported programs trained and certified over a dozen teams, including instructors, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the programs. 2010 training is already underway.
- To meet the immediate needs of all canine units, equipment for operations, training, and veterinary use has been provided to SSP and Aduanas.

