

Communities for Environmental Justice Network

1. **Project duration:** From January 2023 to June 2024 (18 months)
2. **Budget (C\$):** 190,000
3. **Short statement of the issue(s) under this topic, need/gap identified; the project objective(s) and activities to address the issue; and expected outcomes and benefits/beneficiaries (max. 200 words):**

Environmental Justice (EJ) is a broad term used to describe a range of social movements and policy frameworks which address the heightened risk of environmental harm on marginalized communities. Seeking justice in this context implies an effort to increase and enable the fair and equitable treatment among the population, leading to the elimination of inequities. For the purposes of this project, the terms "environmental equity" and "environmental justice" refer both, indistinctly, to fair and equitable treatment among the population, leading to the elimination of inequities, subordination, discrimination and exclusion, recognizing and protecting cultural and gender differences, from a human rights perspective in actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change¹.

The project "Communities for Environmental Justice Network" (CEJN), aims to create a network of Indigenous, local² vulnerable, disadvantaged, and/or underserved communities that have environmental justice concerns, in order to increase local capacity through the amplification and dissemination of community-based expertise, lessons learned, and guidance in the context of climate change. Through the Network, participating members will contribute to the facilitation of learning and knowledge

¹ Environmental Justice "Fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies". US EPA. *Environmental Protection Agency*, <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>. This is one government-centric definition, note that others exist from the NGO perspective. A historic, yet still highly recognized list of [17 Environmental Justice principles from NGOs may be found here](#).

² "The Parties recognize the importance of respecting, preserving and maintaining knowledge and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity" (USMCA, Article 24.15(3)). It is thus fundamental to guarantee their participation and interests in the efforts to confront climate change. For Mexico, Indigenous communities are descendants of the populations which inhabited the country's present territory when colonization commenced and which conserve their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, in whole or in part. The term "local communities" is considered to mean *ejidal* and communal agrarian settlements, or other recognized communities, in accordance with the provisions of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, that country's national legislation and international treaties.

exchange processes, in particular traditional knowledge and practices, and develop a virtual resource library with the goal of strengthening the climate adaptation, mitigation and other capacity building of Indigenous, local, and vulnerable communities in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

4. Select the strategic pillar(s) from the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan that the project addresses:

- Clean Air, Land and Water
- Preventing and Reducing Pollution in the Marine Environment
- Circular Economy and Sustainable Materials Management
- Shared Ecosystems and Species
- Resilient Economies and Communities
- Effective Enforcement of Environmental Laws

5. Describe how the project uses strategic, cross-cutting approaches in its implementation: Innovative and Effective Solutions and/or Diverse and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation (including gender and diversity effects and opportunities, and youth) (max 100 words).

This project supports strategic, cross-cutting approaches by engaging communities (local, Indigenous, and vulnerable—including low-income residents and people of color) through the development of an inclusive process of co-creation. As part of this process, community-led discussions, findings, and reflections are elevated through the promotion and facilitation of knowledge exchange, with the goal of advancing environmental justice to develop more healthy, sustainable, and climate-resilient communities.

6. Explain how the project can achieve more impact through trinational cooperation (max 100 words):

This project recognizes a trinational interest in and a need to support the participation of local, Indigenous and vulnerable communities in activities and strategies of adaptation to climate change and mitigation. This trinational model of network building offers an opportunity to enable greater capacity-building among communities by removing barriers to engagement, while also honoring the unique cultures, languages, and contexts each community brings to the Network. In this context, the

project will benefit from a diversity of knowledge and experience that can contribute to the generation and dissemination of accessible tools and resources and that reflect different forms of knowledge and action.

7. Describe how the project complements, or avoids duplication with, other national or international work (max 100 words):

Through the creation of the Network, this trilateral project will link local, Indigenous, and vulnerable communities that are addressing or would like to address climate change and adaptation challenges using an environmental justice framework. This Network will complement national efforts to engage local communities in knowledge exchange activities. In addition, this cross-cultural and collaborative process represents a unique approach and communications tool to help capture, facilitate, and amplify stories of local community action across the North American region (therefore enabling community capacity building beyond formal participation in the Network).

8. Describe how the project engages traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)/Indigenous Knowledge (IK) experts or Tribal/First Nations/Indigenous communities, if applicable (max 100 words):

This project will engage TEK and Indigenous Knowledge experts by engaging Indigenous communities with an acknowledgement of the ancestral knowledge that drives Indigenous-led forms of action in climate-related work. Across all activities, participating Indigenous communities and authorities are encouraged to participate in and meaningfully contribute to the generation of tools and resources for wide distribution. Indigenous communities that participate in the Network are invited to share insights from traditional knowledge foundations and perspectives.

9. Describe how the project engages new audiences or partners, if applicable (max 100 words):

This project aims to engage Network members by providing greater access to stories of resilience and collaboration in the context of environmental justice, climate adaptation, and mitigation. In addition, the project may engage, in support to Communities, a broad range of experts from academia, NGOs and international institutions, as well as other communities and organizations, whose skills can share experiences and strengthen these efforts. The project may also engage and collaborate with

the EJ4Climate grantees and communities and stakeholders from other CEC projects (i.e., projects from the environmental quality unit).

10. Identify the designated partner agencies or organizations committed to implementing this project, as well as other organizations that could be involved, or benefit from it, including through outreach efforts, collaborations or partnerships (e.g., federal agencies, other levels of government, academia, NGOs, the private sector, civil society, and youth):

The organizations, institutions, and communities outlined below represent a mix of actors that may participate in, contribute to, or promote the Network. It should be noted, however, that the primary beneficiaries of the project will be the targeted communities for this CEJN. It is important that the designated partner agencies or organizations committed to implement this CEJN project, in and with communities, will do so in ways that are community-driven, coordinated, and collaborative; support equitable and resilient community development; provide for meaningful involvement and fair treatment of communities with environmental justice concerns; and honor the community’s vision and priorities.

Lead agencies or organizations	Country
Intact Center on Climate Adaptation, University of Waterloo	Canada
<i>Instituto Nacional de Ecología y Cambio Climático (INECC)</i>	Mexico
Semarnat	Mexico
United States Environmental Protection Agency	United States

Other organizations/individuals (if applicable)	Country
Toronto Environmental Alliance (in collaboration with Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW) (#EJ4Climate Grantee)	Canada
The Resilience Institute (in collaboration with Piikani First Nation) (#EJ4Climate Grantee)	Canada
Watershed Watch Salmon Society (in collaboration with many organizations, including First Nations Emergency Planning Secretariat) (#EJ4Climate Grantee)	Canada
Kikino Metis Settlement (in collaboration with FireSmart Alberta)	Canada
Canadian Poverty Institute (in collaboration with local community leaders and municipal staff)	Canada

Sahtú Renewable Resources Board (<i>#EJ4Climate Grantee</i>)	Canada
Gitga'at First Nation (<i>#EJ4Climate Grantee</i>)	Canada
Zapotec communities of Ocotlán and Zimatlán, Central Valleys of Oaxaca - Coordinator of Peoples United for the Care and Defense of Water (COPUDA)	Mexico
Indigenous community Nuevo San Juan Parangaricutiro	Mexico
Ejido Mesa de Andrade	Mexico
United Nahua Communities in Defense of Matlalcuéyatl	Mexico
Communities of the northeastern highlands of Puebla, municipality of Cuetzalan del Progreso, Puebla - Cooperative "TosepanTitataniske" ("Unidos Venceremos")	Mexico
Ejido Úrsulo Galván, Baja California, is a local community that carries out conservation and restoration work in mangroves.	Mexico
Amatlan community of Quetzalcoatl, Tepoztlán, Morelos; is an indigenous community that manages forest resources, due to its location is considered a community vulnerable to climate change.	Mexico
Amealco and Humilpan, are indigenous communities that work in their community with forest harvesting, ecotourism, soil recovery (earthworms, among others), water use, in a community vulnerable to climate change.	Mexico
Tenkualli Cooperative, located in Chicontepec, Veracruz; they carry out a territorial management work in a private protected natural area.	Mexico
Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition (<i>#EJ4Climate Grantee</i>)	United States
Native Village of Eyak (<i>#EJ4Climate Grantee</i>)	United States
Upper Gila Watershed Alliance (<i>#EJ4Climate Grantee</i>)	United States
Conservation Trust for North Carolina (<i>#EJ4Climate Grantee</i>)	United States
Common Ground Relief (<i>#EJ4Climate Grantee</i>)	United States

11. In the following table, describe the project objective(s) and the activities and subtasks planned to achieve the objective(s); the corresponding outputs, expected results, and how they will be measured (performance measures); baselines (if known) and targets by end of the project; and the timeline and budget:

OBJECTIVE 1	Identify and engage leading environmental justice (EJ) communities in North America and create new links between them.
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Activity 1 Budget C\$50, 000	Select communities for inclusion in the CEJN and engage them as founding members of the Network.	
Output(s)	Leading communities for EJ in North America have been identified and engaged and have accepted the invitation to be recognized as founding members of the Network.	
Expected results, performance measures	Communities have formally consented to participate in the Network as founding members and actively participate in the trinational workshop and are engaged in other related activities (see activities 2 and 3).	
Baseline (current status), if known	N/A	
Target (by project end)	A strong Network of communities has been identified that is prepared to exchange best practices and carry out Network activities to strengthen their capacity to address climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges, using an environmental justice framework.	
Subtask 1.1	Identify communities based on their experiences implementing and seeking out environmental justice/equity in their cultural and local contexts to address climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges.	When: Winter 2023
Subtask 1.2	Select consultant to organize and facilitate trinational workshop and develop associated materials (methodology for the workshop, presentations, reports, recommendations, etc.).	When: Winter 2023
Subtask 1.3	Design trinational workshop and coordinate the participation and engagement of key communities (see objective 2).	When: Winter 2023/ Spring 2023
OBJECTIVE 2	Identify and amplify effective strategies and methods developed by the Network founding members through the exchange of knowledge and practices, and strengthen their capacity to address climate change adaptation and mitigation challenges, using community-defined environmental justice frameworks.	
Activity 2 Budget C\$70, 000		

	Host a trinational workshop to identify and disseminate stories, strategies, and lessons learned, as well as inform the development of knowledge-sharing tools from culturally and contextually diverse North American communities (founding members).	
Output(s)	<p>A trinational workshop report and action plan that can be easily accessed by target communities (founding members plus other communities—tbd) and can support the application of climate change adaptation and mitigation actions through an environmental justice lens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Trinational workshop report will contain information related to the identification of knowledge, practices, and strategies, as well as descriptions of lessons exchanged and learned from the communities (founding members). ○ Action plan will include the participants' recommendations regarding target communities (founding members plus additional communities—tbd) and culturally appropriate/relevant tools for knowledge-sharing, as well as methods for its dissemination. 	
Expected results, performance measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A strong Network of environmental justice communities that has actively participated in trinational workshop and identified culturally and contextually relevant strategies, methods and tools for addressing climate adaptation and mitigation in North America. 	
Baseline (current status), if known	N/A	
Target (by project end)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The identification and development of informed tools and resources ● A preliminary database of community-led environmental justice approaches to climate mitigation and adaptation has been developed and informed the development of knowledge exchange tools ● Action plan, including the participants' recommendations regarding target communities, culturally appropriate tools for knowledge-sharing, and methods for its dissemination. 	
Subtask 2.1	Conduct trinational workshop	When: Summer 2023
Subtask 2.2	Based on recommendations outlined in the action plan, develop and finalize a trinational workshop report which helps guide	When: Summer/Fall 2023

	activities and deliverables in objective 3 (e.g., directives related to the creation of resource library.)	
OBJECTIVE 3	Increase greater community access to resources, and culturally relevant information about community-led actions to adapt to climate change and mitigate its effects based on environmental justice frameworks.	
Activity 3 Budget C\$70, 000	Develop and disseminate CEJN toolkit and knowledge exchange tools and culturally relevant information.	
Output(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Environmental Justice Network (CEJN) Toolkit • Case studies and stories from selected communities 	
Expected results, performance measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recognizable and easily distributable information exchange tool that can be easily accessed online and in print and is available in English, French, and Spanish, which includes case studies and stories from selected communities (founding members) 	
Baseline (current status), if known	CEJN trilateral workshop report and action plan	
Target (by project end)	<p>North American communities (founding members plus additional communities) will have direct access to culturally relevant mitigation and adaptation resources (based on a community-defined EJ framework)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEJN toolkit serves as a reference document for North American communities. • The CEJN information exchange tool is made public and is easily accessible. • An action plan to maintain, make self sustain, and strengthen the Network and information exchange opportunities is outlined. 	
Subtask 3.1	Selection of consultant to design toolkit and information exchange tool (informed by discussions during trilateral workshop).	When: Summer/Fall 2023
Subtask 3.2	Compile information for use within toolkit/information exchange platform and design toolkit (based on the advice from the consultant)	When: Fall 2023 to Spring 2024
Subtask 3.3	Materials to be printed and distributed as necessary.	When: Summer 2024

12. Describe post-project expected impacts:

Expected impact (by when: month, year)	SMART performance measure(s)
By March 2025, a self-sustaining and active Network of leading and culturally diverse environmental justice communities will manage and update the toolkit, information exchange tool, and other associated materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of continued diversification of Network leadership, partnership, content, and engagement
By March 2025, identified EJ strategies and methodologies will serve as reference points and building blocks for community action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that toolkit has been implemented by communities outside of the founding membership • Evidence that the virtual toolkit and information exchange platform are being consulted