

2008 Operational Plan

of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation



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2008 Operational Plan

of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (page 3)

Looking to the Future

Strategic Plan of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation

2005–2010 (page 29)





2008 Operational Plan of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation

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1 Introduction

This Operational Plan presents how the goals and objectives of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) will be implemented through project activities and other initiatives in 2008. The CEC's Operational Plans are updated annually, with project planning focused on a multi-year horizon within the CEC's current 2005–2010 Strategic Plan (page 29).

Summary descriptions of the work program areas and projects follow in the body of this document. Detailed descriptions of the projects will be found on the CEC website <www.cec.org>.

2 Budget for 2008

The CEC budget is based on the Parties' contributions totaling US\$9 million for 2008. The CEC budget is complemented by staff time, expertise, and other in-kind contributions from the Parties, and contributions from CEC partners.

CEC 2008 Budget

Description	2008 budget *	% of total
REVENUES		
Parties' contributions (US\$9,000 at 1.00 exchange rate for 2008; 2007 at 1.11)	9,000.0	
Interest	100.0	
Surplus	2,856.0	
TOTAL REVENUES	11,956.0	
EXPENSES		
COOPERATIVE WORK PROGRAM		
Projects*	6,094.6	
Mexico Liaison office*	345.4	
2008 Indigenous Peoples Convening	50.0	
Information Center	36.0	
Environmental Outlook and Conference	50.0	
Managing CEC environmental Information	40.0	
TOTAL	6,616.0	55.34%
SECRETARIAT REPORT (ARTICLE 13) *	110.0	0.92%
SUBMISSIONS ON ENFORCEMENT MATTERS (ARTICLES 14 AND 15) *	807.4	6.75%
COUNCIL SUPPORT*	334.6	2.80%
JPAC SUPPORT*	466.6	3.90%
COMMUNICATIONS*	748.0	6.26%
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT		
Executive Director's Office	178.2	
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	50.0	
External Administrative Support (Insurance, audit, fiscal expertise, banking, legal)	256.0	
Relocation/orientation and Recruitment	150.0	
Operating Expenses (Telecommunications, rent, operating equipment, office supplies)	1,019.7	
Administration and Management Salaries	1,069.5	
TOTAL	2,723.4	22.78%
RESERVE FOR UNFORESEEN NEEDS	150.0	1.25%
TOTAL EXPENSES	11,956.0	100%

* Includes salaries • in thousands of Canadian dollars

2008 CEC Cooperative Work Program – Projects

Project Title		2008 Budget •
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION		325.0
1	Reporting on the State of the North American Environment	160.0
2	Mapping North American Environmental Issues	165.0
ENVIRONMENT, TRADE AND SUSTAINABILITY		1,173.1
3	Harnessing Market Forces for Sustainability	483.1
4	Environmental Assessment of NAFTA	255.0
5	Environmental Sustainability and Competitiveness in North America	130.0
6	Trade and the Enforcement of Environmental Laws	305.0
POLLUTANTS AND HEALTH		1,722.5
7	Enhancing North American Air Quality Management	360.0
8	Sound Management of Chemicals	552.0
9	Monitoring and Assessing Pollutants across North America	284.5
10	Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America	526.0
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION		705.0
11	Conserving Species and Spaces of Common Concern	220.0
12	Recovering the Vaquita and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods	140.0
13	Conserving the Monarch Butterfly and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods	130.0
14	Protecting Priority Conservation Areas from Alien Invasive Species	125.0
15	Strengthening Wildlife Enforcement	90.0
PROJECTS		3,925.6
WORK PROGRAM SALARIES AND BENEFITS		2,169.0
TOTAL PROJECTS		6,094.6

• In thousands of Canadian dollars

3 Cooperative Work Program

3.1 Introduction

The CEC Council's 2004 Puebla Declaration (see page 39) outlines three broad priorities for the cooperative work program of the CEC:

- Information for Decision-making;
- Capacity Building; and
- Trade and Environment.

To advance these priorities the CEC Council adopted the *Strategic Plan for the Commission for Environmental Cooperation 2005–2010* (page 29). This plan embraces specific five-year goals and objectives as well as several multi-year cooperative initiatives to accomplish them.

The five-year goals under these priorities are to:

- Support better decision-making by providing information on the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing North America;
- Strengthen the capacities of the three countries to manage environmental issues of common concern; and
- Promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade, and the economy.

The Strategic Plan and its initiatives are executed through the annual cooperative work program described here.

The 2008 projects support *each* of the Puebla Declaration priorities cited above. As stated in the Strategic Plan, “*We intend to pursue these mutually supporting priorities as a comprehensive effort. Capacity-building is a built-in feature in projects under all three priorities; information projects will also contribute to the achievement of the trade and the environment objectives. We will design and manage the various projects under the priorities so as to strengthen these relationships.*”

The Council, as the governing body of the CEC, approves and oversees the implementation of the work program. The Secretariat provides technical, administrative and operational support to the Council and to committees and groups established by the Council in the implementation of the cooperative work program. Throughout implementation of these projects, the Council and the Secretariat consult with JPAC and stakeholders on an ongoing basis. In addition, the CEC is expanding its efforts to partner and engage with the private sector, as well as with other institutions from the public sector, in order to leverage resources and maximize results.

The work program is updated annually as individual projects change or evolve and progress is made towards achieving the goals and objectives established in the Strategic Plan. Changes in the projects and work program are subject to approval by the Council.

What follows is a summary of the CEC's program priorities and the 2008 project initiatives intended to support them. Detailed project descriptions, including associated implementation tasks and budgets, can be found on the CEC website.

3.2 Program Priorities

3.2.1 Information for Decision-making

To resolve environmental problems that are North American in scope, decision-makers at all levels in all three countries need the best information in order to set objectives, implement solutions and monitor the effectiveness of their choices.

To this end, the CEC strives to increase the comparability, reliability and compatibility of national and subregional information and has begun developing and linking multinational databases and information networks in such areas as pollutant releases, ecological integrity, and trade-environment relationships. This work continues in 2008 and entails as well the development of common standards and methodologies for integrating various information-related activities and reporting mechanisms being used in North America. The CEC is ensuring that its science and information products are of high quality. The CEC is also building on national efforts by focusing on North American issues that the Council has identified as priority concerns.

The CEC's goal is to support better decision-making by providing information on the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing North America. Its five-year objectives (2005–2010) are to:

- Strengthen the capacity of North American decision-makers to understand continental environmental issues of common concern;
- Establish an environmental information and knowledge framework for North America;
- Develop the information needed to describe the state of the North American environment and to identify emerging trends and issues; and
- Make environmental information more widely available to facilitate local, national and regional action.

Accomplishments planned for 2008 in support of these objectives include:

- A state of the North American environment briefing book for discussion at the 2008 Council meeting;
- A report on the key drivers of environmental change in North America to 2030, and the hosting of an environment *outlook* conference to gather both expert and public opinion on opportunities for environmental cooperation among the Parties;
- Implementation of a new strategy for chemicals management in North America, focusing on regulatory cooperation, institutional sustainability, information compatibility and a comparable North American chemicals inventory;
- Dissemination of more than 10 new environmental thematic map layers through the North American Environmental Atlas page on the CEC website, including protected areas, habitat ranges and population density;
- Establishment of North American Land Change Monitoring System to use satellite data to characterize annual changes in North American land cover;
- Creation of Google Maps-based browser for the CEC's Baja-to-Bering Sea (B2B) and North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN) information; and
- Publishing the first biodiversity condition report for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in the Baja-to-Bering Sea (B2B).

3.2.2 Capacity Building

The CEC's goal is to strengthen the capacities of the three countries to manage environmental issues of common concern. Its five-year objectives (2005–2010)—focusing on Mexico—are to cooperate to:

- Strengthen capacities, where needed, to improve compliance with wildlife laws;

- Improve private-sector environmental performance through model environmental compliance approaches;
- Strengthen capacities to conserve species and habitat of common concern by, among other means, building capacity for planning, monitoring and management, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders; and
- Strengthen the Parties' abilities to assess and manage chemicals of concern.

As recognized in the Puebla Declaration and our Strategic Plan, capacity building is an objective that is shared across most CEC activities.

Accomplishments planned for 2008 in support of these objectives include:

- Continued improvement in the quality and comparability of national pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs), building upon the first trilateral analysis (2007) of mandatory pollution reporting data in Canada, Mexico and the United States;
- Updating the mobile and point source components of Mexico's National Air Emissions Inventory and developing additional capacity in Mexico to monitor ambient air and facilitate compatible methodology and analyses with the United States and Canada;
- Capacity building to develop a compatible inventory of chemicals in North America;
- Promotion of risk reduction initiatives to minimize exposure to toxics such as mercury, lindane, dioxins and furans throughout North America;
- Contribute to the program sustainability for the national monitoring and assessment initiative of Mexico (*Programa Nacional de Monitoreo y Evaluación de México*—Proname);
- Concluding a number of CEC pilot projects to “green” the supply chains of selected multinational industries and the small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) in Mexico that provide them with product components;
- Supporting collaboration among North America's automobile manufacturers to boost environmental improvements in SMEs supporting the Mexican auto sector;
- Capacity-building activities for fishers in the *Alto Golfo de California* to support the recovery of the vaquita porpoise through the use of sustainable fishing gear (*suriperas*);
- Training for local fishermen in four critical leatherback turtle nesting sites, on the use of environmentally friendly gears, and disentanglement techniques; and
- Training for customs and other law enforcement officials to detect, identify, analyze and enforce against illegal shipments of hazardous wastes and materials, invasive alien species, ozone-depleting substances, protected species and wildlife, and other illegal substances and practices that could threaten human health or the environment.

3.2.3 Trade and Environment

Promoting a better understanding of environment and trade relationships is a core reason the CEC was established. As the North American economy becomes increasingly integrated, the need to anticipate and address environmental concerns associated with increased trade continues to grow. These concerns include the need to decouple economic growth from negative environmental impacts.

The CEC's goal is to promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment and trade. Its five-year objectives (2005–2010) are to:

- Enhance North American trade in green products and services with a view to improving environmental protection, promoting sustainable use of biodiversity, removing trade barriers, and utilizing market-based approaches;
- Increase the capacity of the three countries to identify and address trade-related environmental concerns to achieve mutual benefits for trade and the environment, and improve collaboration among the three countries in these areas;
- Broaden understanding of environment and trade linkages and thereby promote policy coherence,

- at both the domestic and regional levels in North America; and
- Improve regional and national coordination, including coordination between the CEC and the NAFTA Free Trade Commission through ongoing collaboration between environment and trade officials.

Accomplishments planned for 2008 in support of these objectives include:

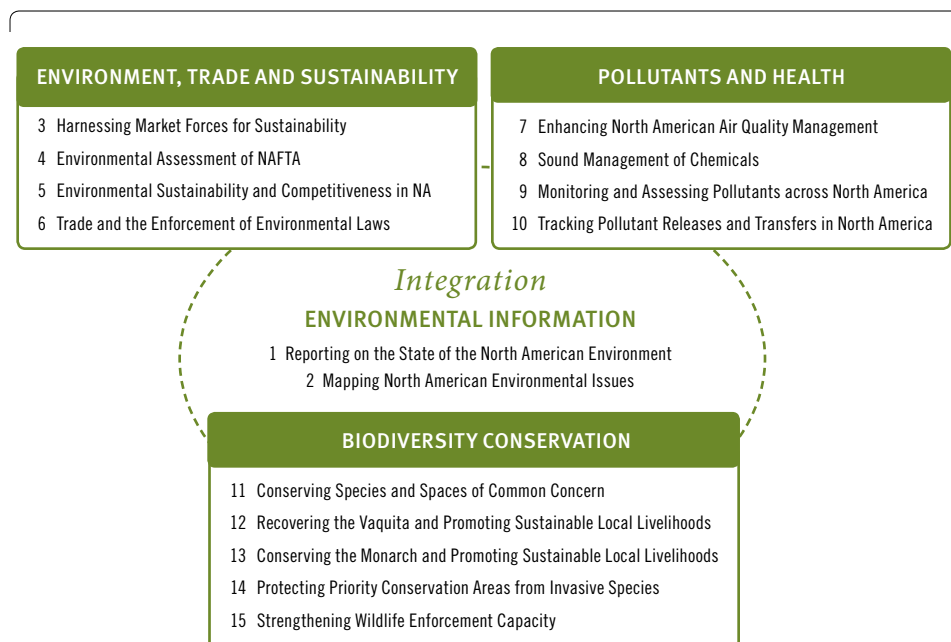
- Supporting the NAFTA Free Trade Commission's work to respond to increased pressures on North America's competitiveness by reporting on the importance of environmental sustainability to North America's competitiveness;
- Working with the NAFTA Free Trade Commission to address the environmental impacts of the lifespan and disposal of consumer electronics;
- Hosting the fourth North American Symposium on Assessing the Environmental Impacts of Trade;
- Enhancing regional capacity and addressing market barriers for production and consumption of renewable energy; and
- Harnessing the growing market for green products and the use of market-based approaches to support environmental protection, conservation, and the sustainable use of biodiversity.

3.3 2008 Projects

To advance the CEC's three *Puebla* priorities, the Parties have embraced the specific five-year goals and objectives referenced above. The CEC has also developed a set of multi-year initiatives to accomplish these objectives. Building upon our experience and results to date, these initiatives comprise an integrated effort to produce concrete results. While individual projects in the CEC's cooperative program may change from year to year, the objectives will remain the same for the life of the 2005–2010 Strategic Plan.

The following two charts describe the strategic division of activities into four areas (Environmental Information; Environment, Trade and Sustainability; Pollutants and Health; and Biodiversity Conservation) as well how each activity supports the specific five-year objectives expressed in the CEC's 2005–2010 Strategic Plan.

Cooperative work plan activity map



Priorities	Information for Decision-making			
Goals	Support better decision-making by providing information on the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing North America.			
Puebla Program Objectives	1 Strengthen the capacity of North American decision-makers to understand continental environmental issues of common concern	2 Establish an environmental information and knowledge framework for North America	3 Develop the information needed to describe the state of the North American environment and to identify emerging trends and issues	4 Make environmental information more widely available in order to facilitate local, national and regional action

Projects

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

1 Reporting on the State of the North American Environment				
2 Mapping North American Environmental Issues				

ENVIRONMENT, TRADE AND SUSTAINABILITY

3 Harnessing Market Forces for Sustainability				
4 Environmental Assessment of NAFTA				
5 Environmental Sustainability and Competitiveness in NA				
6 Trade and the Enforcement of Environmental Laws				

POLLUTANTS AND HEALTH

7 Enhancing North American Air Quality Management				
8 Sound Management of Chemicals				
9 Monitoring and Assessing Pollutants across North America				
10 Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America				

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

11 Conserving Species and Spaces of Common Concern				
12 Recovering the Vaquita and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods				
13 Conserving the Monarch and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods				
14 Protecting Priority Conservation Areas from Invasive Species				
15 Strengthening Wildlife Enforcement Capacity				

Capacity Building				Trade and Environment			
Strengthen the capacities of the three countries to manage environmental issues of common concern				Promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade, and the economy			
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Strengthen capacities to improve compliance with wildlife laws	Improve private sector environmental performance through model environmental compliance approaches	Strengthen capacities to conserve species and habitat of common concern by, building stakeholder capacity for planning, monitoring and management	Strengthen the Parties' abilities to assess and manage chemicals of concern	Enhance North American trade in green products and services, with a view to improving environmental protection, promoting sustainable use of biodiversity, removing trade barriers and utilizing market-based approaches	Increase the capacity of the three countries to identify and address trade-related environmental concerns to achieve mutual benefits for trade and the environment and improve collaboration among the three countries in these areas	Broaden understanding of trade and environment linkages and thereby promote policy coherence, both at the domestic and regional levels in North America	Improve regional and national coordination, including coordination between the CEC and NAFTA Free Trade Commission through ongoing collaboration of trade and environment officials

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In 2008 the CEC will pursue its objectives and goals via the projects listed in the following sections. Note: A complete description of each 2008 project and task-level activities will be found on the CEC website.

3.3.1 Environmental Information

The provision of high-quality environmental information is a fundamental part of the CEC's mandate. Information products, the sharing of key data and analysis, and efforts to boost the quality, comparability and compatibility of national and subregional information are common features of CEC projects. In 2008, the CEC will further enhance the information products and services that are core to CEC operations.

Project

1 Reporting on the State of the North American Environment

The objective of this project is to present key messages and concepts about current North American environmental conditions in order to inform the CEC Council's deliberations on strategic planning and cooperative activities of the CEC and the Parties.

By developing summary-level information describing the state of the North American environment (SOE) in key thematic areas, the project supports the *Puebla* goal of supporting decision-making on the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing North America.

A briefing book on North American environmental topics will be useful for the Council as well as inform decisions and discussions on future activities in this area. Activities will involve close collaboration with and direct involvement of environmental reporting experts from the Parties involved in production of state-of-the-environment reports at the national level.

The state-of-the-environment topic areas to be completed in 2008 are the following:

Pollutants

- persistent bio-accumulative toxic substances
- waste management (including industrial releases and transfers)
- acid deposition

Biodiversity and ecosystems

- species of common concern (migratory, endangered species, etc.)
- invasive species
- fisheries
- land use and habitat change (including protected areas and ecoregions)

Water

- water quality
- water use and quantity
- shared water resources

Air and atmosphere

- particulate matter
- ground-level ozone
- stratospheric ozone
- climate change

2 Mapping North American Environmental Issues

The objective of this project is to enable the visualization of North American environmental information through maps. This will be accomplished through continued development of a digital North American Environmental Atlas. The atlas will enhance awareness of environmental topics on a continental scale, provide a framework for geo-referenced environmental data, add value to ongoing CEC projects, and build collaborative networks among partner mapping agencies through cooperation on harmonized map layers.

In 2008, development of the digital North American Environmental Atlas will continue in several areas, including the following:

- A new species range map in the *Google Earth* format.
- Support the development of a North American Land Change System that will utilize remote sensing data and a harmonized land-cover classification system to produce annual land-cover maps at 250 m cell resolution.
- Create new environmental thematic map layers that are seamless, harmonized, and consensus-based. These include acid deposition, protected areas, species ranges, watersheds, land cover and elevation. Explore the feasibility of new thematic layers and innovative map dissemination methods. This task also seeks improvements in the utility of CEC information products through, for example, the creation of interactive mapping tools using *Google Earth* and *Google Maps*, including the (North American Marine Protected Areas Network) NAMPAN and Baja-to-Bering information.
- Strengthen the CEC's capacity to identify and manage information assets, and provide effective means to use them to maximum benefit—with a particular emphasis on integrated, geo-referenced or "GIS-based" information.
- Make existing key CEC data sets compatible with the North American Atlas Framework.
- Continue strengthening the collaboration among the Atlas and partner environmental agencies of the three countries.

3.3.2 Environment, Trade and Sustainability

In establishing the CEC, Canada, Mexico and the United States acknowledged the growing economic and social links between the NAFTA partners and agreed to promote sustainable development based on cooperation and mutually supportive environmental and economic policies. The CEC's 2005–2010 goal is to promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade and the economy. In 2008, CEC projects that promote environmentally sustainable production, consumption and trade across North America will support this goal.

3 Harnessing Market Forces for Sustainability

This four-part project seeks to promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade and the economy and encourage sustainable consumption, production and trade in North America by:

- Promoting renewable energy production and consumption (Component A);
- Greening supply chains in North American (including auto and electronics) (Component B);
- Promoting green purchasing (Component C); and
- Conserving Biodiversity through Trade (Component D).

Promoting Renewable Energy Production and Consumption

At the 2007 North American Leaders Summit, the three federal government leaders called for the further development of clean and sustainable energy. They expressed support for an integrated approach to climate change, energy security and economic development, and supported the development and deployment of clean energy technologies. They further noted that, “Cooperation among our major economies on a range of policy tools and sectoral approaches will advance these objectives.”

CEC work to encourage deployment of renewable energy in North America supports the above objectives as well as the objectives of the NAAEC to promote sustainable development throughout the region.

Greening Supply Chains in North America

In the *Puebla Declaration*, Parties pledged CEC assistance to governments, the private sector, environmental organizations, academia, indigenous and local communities, and others, in gradually strengthening the capacity for sound environmental management across North America. The *2005–2010 Strategic Plan* reflected this mandate and established, as part of the objectives over the next five years—focusing on Mexico, the improvement of private sector environmental performance through model environmental compliance approaches.

The CEC sought to develop this mandate through the development of an eco-efficiency model, exploring win-win opportunities for financial gain and environmental protection. The model was to be developed building opportunities to partner with existing initiatives within the region, with a view to enable its dissemination through enhancing capacity and developing suitable financial strategies.

In 2008, efforts will be focused upon assisting Mexican partners in assuming full responsibility for the greening the supply chain activities. In addition to completing the train-the-trainers program and the financing strategy work, links will be established in 2008 with related programs such as the UNDP’s supply chain work and various Mexican government programs to support supply chains, such as the funds for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the *Secretaría de Economía*. Successful adoption of this component of the project is critical to maintain the momentum achieved in Mexico.

Automobiles

In the auto sector partnership, the CEC proposes a different approach, serving as a catalyst for collaboration between related initiatives in the three countries. Given the high degree of economic integration of auto supply chains among NAFTA members, it is clear that an integrated approach to greening the supply chains makes sense in an effort to improve the overall environmental performance of the North American auto industry. This project is dependent upon the active role of specific departments within the three countries. Substantive work will take place in 2008 and is expected to continue into 2009.

Cleaner Electronics Production

The purpose of this project is to support capacity building among SMEs in the electronics sector throughout North America, and to maintain and enhance the NAFTA region’s competitiveness and sustainability.

The potential role for the CEC in addressing this issue was acknowledged by the North American trade ministers at the Free Trade Commission (FTC) meeting in Vancouver (Joint Statement on NAFTA FTC Meeting), 14 August 2007. The trade ministers agreed to work with the CEC to explore ways to address the environmental impacts of the lifespan and disposal of consumer electronics.

The CEC aims to gather information and tools existing or under development by stakeholders in the three countries and adapt them to SMEs. It also aims to partner with stakeholders to provide capacity building to those actors with least access to information. The three pollution prevention roundtables have identified a need for NAFTA countries, which have substantial trade in electronics components, products, and waste among them, to work together to share experience and build upon each others’ knowledge.

Promoting Green Purchasing

The rapid growth in green procurement initiatives in Canada and the United States, along with the increasing interest in Mexico, represent opportunities for a CEC role, not only as a catalyst of action and coordinator of efforts among the relevant stakeholders in North America, but also to promote faster dissemination of lessons learned. Particularly for Mexico, greater cooperation may foster faster and more effective implementation of green procurement policies and development of markets for green goods and services.

Thus far, CEC activities have concentrated in activities directed at removing the barriers identified in the strategic plan with regards to information, tools, and the availability of products and services.

The 2008 project work will focus on a centralized resource on green procurement as well as identify information and tools to assist and promote green procurement across North America. Activity in Mexico is expected to grow rapidly given the recent changes in legislation and its higher political profile. Mexico is also seen as having an opportunity to *leapfrog*, particularly in terms of avoiding consumer confusion arising from multiple standards. These results indicate that the CEC could aim to move away from direct development of tools and concentrate on collecting information to develop and maintain a centralized information base on green procurement activities North America. Resources will continue to be targeted at the Mexican pilot project, with an aim to conclude this activity in 2008, as well as supporting wider integration of emerging Mexican initiatives with those ongoing and developing in Canada and the United States, through NAGPI.

Conserving Biodiversity through Trade

This project addresses activity outlined in the 2005–2010 Strategic Plan to support the development of market-based mechanisms for conservation. It also seeks to enhance the availability and quality of information on best practices and analysis of methods to harness emerging green market opportunities.

Activities will center around two approaches: support for the development of market mechanisms for specific green products, and the development of tools for their wider application.

The Secretariat will seek to maximize product development by focusing on products that meet the criteria set out by the Trade and Environment Working Group and, to the extent possible, build on existing work by the CEC and relevant partners in North America. The chosen product should also contribute to poverty reduction, given that this social objective is key to the effective development of sustainable livelihoods.

The guide/toolkit will help the CEC identify and assemble existing approaches and lessons learned for the development of green markets. This guide is directed both at potential green entrepreneurs as well as support organizations assisting communities in the development of green markets as a tool for conservation.

Project

4 Environmental Assessment of NAFTA

The ongoing environmental assessment of NAFTA is a cornerstone of the CEC. This project will consider the environmental effects of NAFTA and broaden the understanding of environment and trade linkages to promote policy coherence, both at the domestic and the regional levels in North America. The project also aims to increase the capacity of the three countries to identify and address trade-related environmental concerns, and to improve regional and national coordination, including coordination between the CEC and the NAFTA (FTC).

The CEC's documentation of the environmental effects of trade liberalization in North America has produced reviews and assessments utilized by environment and trade officials, NGOs, and the public in considering environmental policies and trade throughout our three countries.

The 2008 project outputs will include ten independent studies on various aspects of the environmental effects of liberalizing trade in services, as well as the presentation of the fourth North

American Symposium on Assessing the Environmental Effects of Trade, in collaboration with the CEC's Joint Public Advisory Committee.

Project

5 Environmental Sustainability and Competitiveness in North America

The objective of this project is to enhance both environmental sustainability and competitiveness in North America. It will accomplish this by gaining a better understanding of how environmental sustainability can contribute to improved competitiveness. This project will also support the NAFTA FTC, which is developing a work plan to respond to increasing pressures on North American competitiveness.

Activities and outputs planned for 2008 include the following:

- Explore potential synergies and areas of cooperation between the work of the CEC and the work program of the FTC, including in the area of consumer electronics;
- Conduct a workshop with JPAC on environmental sustainability and competitiveness; and
- Develop a report on environmental sustainability and competitiveness in North America based on, among other things, existing research and the experiences of the CEC.

Project

6 Trade and the Enforcement of Environmental Laws

This project has three principal objectives:

- To expedite and facilitate the movement of legal materials across borders, including support for the trilateral efforts of the Parties to carry out the Smart Border action plan and related initiatives;
- To stop, in advance and at borders, illegal shipments of hazardous waste and materials, ozone-depleting substances, protected species and wildlife, and other illegal materials that could threaten human health or the environment in the territories of the NAFTA Parties; and
- To improve enforcement capacity to ensure that persons or entities that ship or attempt to ship such illegal materials are appropriately penalized, and to promote the sound management of hazardous waste.

The project will help remove from commerce materials harmful to human health and the environment, and allow for their appropriate management. It will also help create a level playing field for business across all three countries by helping to ensure successful prosecution of violations of environmental laws. The project will also help eliminate the potential for unfair advantages from lack of effective enforcement of environmental laws. Finally, the project will make possible the electronic exchange of data on export notifications and consents to improve enforcement.

This project has five tasks:

- Improve the exchange of electronic and other information on North American environmentally related trade data.
- Improve compliance assistance information for the import and export of regulated materials that pose potential environment hazards.
- Provide training to customs and other law enforcement officials.
- Address environmental threats from noncompliant imports entering North America.
- Build capacity in legal and judicial systems to support effective enforcement of environmental laws.

3.3.3 Pollutants and Health

The links between economic activity and human and ecosystem impacts are increasingly better understood. It is also more evident that regional cooperation is needed to resolve issues of mutual

concern among Canada, Mexico and the United States. The CEC plays a critical role in catalyzing such cooperation. Several 2008 projects serve to support cooperative initiatives on enhancing air quality and management of chemicals, at a North American scale, to prevent or correct the adverse effects of pollution on human and ecosystem health.

Project

7 Enhancing North American Air Quality Management

This project will provide a more complete North American picture of air quality and air emissions to support decision-making on air quality management. This will be accomplished by: identifying air quality-related information and capacity needs of the Parties; helping to ensure that the capacity exists to develop comparable air quality-related information and programs for North America; developing information products to identify emerging trends and issues; and informing decisions relevant to the shared environmental interests of the Parties.

Differences in capacity to monitor air quality and collect air emissions information can hinder the development of the North American picture. However, there is common recognition that emissions inventories and monitoring have the highest priority for cooperative work on North American air quality and air emissions. Consequently, the momentum is strong for developing common methods, techniques and capacities for estimating air emissions, and for managing the collected information in a manner that improves its accessibility to the Parties and the public.

The activities involved in this project are consistent with the specific priorities linked to fulfilling the 2005–2010 Strategic Plan and to developing a 2010–2015 Strategic Plan, and with the Council's directive on air quality. Furthermore, they complement the North American Leader's summit commitments to share air emissions information trilaterally and to collaboratively reduce air pollution.

In 2008, the CEC's air quality work will include the following:

- Conduct a comprehensive study to:
 - Assess the current state of each of the three countries' emissions inventories and networked monitoring systems (available data, methodologies, emissions addressed, databases, etc.)
 - Recommend tasks, infrastructure, and associated resources necessary to achieve comparability among the three countries' systems—with associated timelines for carrying out these recommendations
- Update components of the 2006 Mexican National Emissions Inventory (MNEI), using tools and methodologies comparable to those used in the United States and Canada, and build capacity to ensure Mexico's ability to update its inventories.
- The North American Air Working Group (NAAWG) will regularly collaborate to review and monitor the progress of the projects. The NAAWG, in collaboration with the Secretariat, will draft the initial North American Air Quality Strategy, based on the Air Vision approved by the Council and on the Parties' priorities, as well as on recommendations from the study described above.

Project

8 Sound Management of Chemicals

The Sound Management of Chemicals (SMOC) initiative provides a framework for regional cooperation for the sound management of the full range of chemical substances of mutual concern throughout their life cycles, including pollution prevention, source reduction and pollution control.

The CEC's SMOC initiative is concerned with minimizing the risks of human and environmental exposure to *chemicals in use*, or previously used in and traded as products (e.g., mercury, lin-

dane); *categories of chemicals*, including those produced as unintentional byproducts from disposal of traded products (e.g., dioxins and furans); and *industry sectors and technologies* common to the three countries (e.g., automotive, electronics). In general terms, the SMOC initiative focuses on chemicals in trade, their products, and long-range transport of chemicals across borders. To this end, the CEC facilitates discussion, coordination and mutual assistance among the three Parties.

The North American approach for sound management of chemicals has been exemplary in other international fora and provides a venue for both disseminating and collecting information of importance to the Parties respecting both domestic and international initiatives.

Key activities for 2008 include: implementation of the mercury and lindane North American Regional Action Plans (NARAPs), development and implementation of the dioxins and furans NARAP, and strengthening linkages between SMOC and various environment and trade initiatives, including the issue of management of electronic waste.

Specific accomplishments for 2008 include: a multi-hospital workshop in Mexico on reducing the risk of mercury exposure, a database on dietary lindane intake of indigenous communities in Mexico, a workshop on analytical capabilities and sources of dioxins and furans, a workshop on long-range transport modeling of dioxins and furans, and ongoing support for the development of a comprehensive chemicals inventory and other capacity building projects in Mexico.

Project

9 Monitoring and Assessing Pollutants across North America

The purpose of this project is to assist the Parties in increasing the comparability, reliability, relevance and availability of data and information on toxic substances in the North American environment. Specifically, it seeks to improve the generation and management of information needed to identify and assess trends and concerns related to contaminants and stressors that affect environmental and human health.

The information generated through the project provides the national governments and stakeholders with meaningful insight into the levels and impacts of contaminants in North America. The project also fosters and encourages cooperation and collective action in planning, conducting and reporting information from baseline surveys; and monitoring, modeling and research regarding the status, trends and effects of persistent and toxic substances. The focus of the project is to develop scientifically sound information for decision makers and build capacity through regional and international cooperation in efforts to measure, monitor and assess toxic substances across the continent.

The overall goal of this initiative is to provide environmental monitoring data that will support cooperation on trilateral agreements and actions for reducing chemical pollution in North America using a life-cycle approach. The activities have been structured to establish an overall framework for the three countries to reduce chemical pollution, with particular focus on chemical substances that are persistent and toxic and which bio-accumulate in living organisms, thus minimizing adverse environmental impacts of trade.

Principal activities include: further development and implementation of an integrated trilateral monitoring network, including quality assurance studies that help to establish and ensure data compatibility; promotion of sustainable environmental monitoring and human bio-monitoring infrastructure in Mexico; and submission of a funding proposal to an international funding institution to support such work over the longer term.

Project

10 Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America

The main objectives of the project are to compile and disseminate information on the amounts, sources, and management of toxic contaminants from industrial activities in North America; and to

promote the use of this information for the development of sound initiatives resulting in the reduction of industrial releases and transfers of pollutants of concern across the region.

In addition to publishing *Taking Stock* and making enhancements to the accessibility and analytical quality of information presented via the CEC's *Taking Stock Online*, the CEC will continue to work with officials of Canada, Mexico and the United States to improve data collection, comparability, and quality across the PRTR systems in North America. The year 2008 will mark the second year of trilateral analysis of pollutant release and transfer data from each of our three countries.

3.3.4 Biodiversity Conservation

The CEC has a long history of enhancing collaboration among Canada, Mexico and the United States in furthering the conservation and sustainable use of North American biodiversity. In 2008, the following projects will enhance the ongoing efforts of Canada, Mexico and the United States, as well as numerous other conservation partners in protecting some of the most important North American species and the habitats that support them.

Project

11 Conserving Species and Spaces of Common Concern

The purpose of this project is to support the conservation of species and spaces of common concern, by strengthening cooperation, enhancing local capacities, and understanding the underlying pressures on species and key marine habitats as identified in the CEC's North American Conservation Action Plans (NACAPs).

In 2008, the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group (BCWG) will review the progress and impact of all initiatives carried out under this project, in particular, the training component, the implementation of NACAPs, and the North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN), and will advise the Council on the ecologically significant regions and species on which to focus its cooperative work. These selected regions and species should provide an opportunity to further integrate complementary work from other CEC program areas.

Key activities include the following:

- Train and develop capacities at the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) level to assess the state of priority conservation areas, selected species, and environmental stressors, based upon long-term monitoring and assessment strategies using key indicators.
- Continue implementation of the shared trilateral monitoring program for marine protected areas situated along the Pacific coast.
- Publish the first report on the state of marine biodiversity in MPAs in the Baja-to-Bering area.
- Train Mexican fishermen in safe handling practices for de-hooking and disentangling leatherback turtles, to reduce the by-catch of species of common conservation concern (SCCC) in artisanal fisheries.
- Continue supporting field studies of pink-footed shearwater populations.
- Support the development of a SPLASH website for the humpback whale

Project

12 Recovering the Vaquita and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods

The vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*) is one of the most endangered marine mammals in the world, listed as one of the CEC's North American SCCC. Cooperation among Canada, Mexico and the United States has played a major role in the recovery of other marine mammals and in this instance it is proposed that the CEC act as a catalyst to support strategic action and to complement efforts of the Mexican government and other stakeholders to promote the recovery of this species.

The purpose of this project is to initiate North American cooperative efforts to support Mexico's recovery strategy for this species, including the elimination of by-catch of vaquita.

The NACAP will be supportive of Mexico's strategy, forging a regional alliance to integrate and coordinate conservation and sustainable development initiatives to effectively stop vaquita by-catch, and promote sustainable livelihoods in the region.

Key activities include:

- Facilitate the implementation of the vaquita NACAP, in particular its capacity building, trade-and-environment and information components, including to:
 - Support the exchange of information for decision-making, on matters such as, but not limited to: best fishing practices to eliminate by-catch; vaquita population health and status; the characteristics and condition of its habitat; and key socio-economic stressors affecting the vaquita;
 - Explore potential sustainable activities to alleviate pressure on the vaquita population and its key habitat, while promoting the socio-economic development of local communities;
 - Promote, the implementation of capacity building activities in the Upper Gulf of California, such as: training in the use of alternative fishing gear, enforcement techniques, and community training in sustainable practices that will not only promote vaquita recovery but also that will protect fishery resources; and
 - Support coordination with local, national and international nongovernmental organizations involved in the implementation of the NACAP.

Project

13 Conserving the Monarch Butterfly and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods

The purpose of this project is to support implementation of the North American Monarch Conservation Plan (NAMCP). This plan aims to maintain healthy monarch populations and habitats throughout the migration flyway, supported by a Trilateral Monarch Butterfly Sister Protected Area Network and the participation of local communities.

Throughout North America, many organizations and myriad initiatives deal with various aspects of the monarch migration. However, there is ample recognition of the need for an integrated strategy to protect and maintain the monarch's flyway, while dealing with the underlying causes of habitat deterioration. To this end, the CEC will act as a catalyst and a regional forum for action that will complement existing North American initiatives and those of the Mexican government and other stakeholders to protect the species and the flyway.

Key activities include:

- Developing a socio-economic study to assess the underlying pressures on the Monarch habitat and means to address them;
- Supporting the exchange of information among network sister websites on matters such as: the monarch population health and status in the breeding, wintering and migrating stages; the condition of habitats throughout the flyway; and key socio-economic stressors;
- Promoting the implementation of capacity building activities at local, national and regional levels, such as: training for *campesino-to-campesino* projects; North American web-based, school-to-school, monitoring/reporting initiatives; and community training on sustainable practices; and
- Promoting collaboration to improve and support regional enforcement.

14 Protecting Priority Conservation Areas from Alien Invasive Species

This project is focused on strengthening capacity and filling information gaps to address biological invasions at *hot spots* of high ecological significance and high vulnerability. In 2008, the Secretariat will identify priority sites, within Priority Conservation Regions, that are of high ecological significance and particularly susceptible to biological threats, to assist the decision making process to prevent biological invasions. The methodology to be used for identifying priority conservation areas has potential beyond the specific project for protecting these areas from unwanted movement of invasive alien species, i.e., identifying vulnerable areas, not just pristine areas, which would be helpful in invasive species monitoring and early detection programs. Also in 2008, the Secretariat will facilitate a review of the overall progress and merit of this approach, as well as a review of prior aquatic risk assessments to determine the utility of risk assessment guidelines to border customs and inspection services.

15 Strengthening Wildlife Enforcement

The objectives of this project are to stop, in advance and at borders, illegal shipments of protected species and wildlife and to improve enforcement capacity to ensure that persons or entities that ship or attempt to ship such illegal materials are appropriately penalized.

Canada, Mexico and the United States not only engage in direct cross-border commerce in various endemic North American species, but also serve as trade conduits for wildlife products from other regions and continents. In particular, Mexico, with its rich biodiversity, represents a high-potential exporter of wildlife and genetic resources. The increase in trade among the three countries following the implementation of NAFTA has led to closer cooperation to both manage the legal wildlife trade and combat the illegal trade. The wildlife trade in Canada, Mexico and the United States is regulated by national laws and through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), a treaty signed by all three countries.

In 2008, this initiative will support Mexico's efforts to institutionalize a domestic capacity building program on wildlife enforcement, and develop training materials and exchange programs in areas such as wildlife inspection and investigation and identification techniques.

4 Secretariat Reports

The Secretariat initiated its sixth report under Article 13, on Green Building in North America, in February 2006 and submitted it to the Council in December 2007. The Article 13 report has been developed with input from the Parties, JPAC, and interested members of the public, and with the assistance of independent experts and advisory groups.

The Secretariat's report examines the current status of, and future prospects for, green (or sustainable) building in North America. Addressing both new construction and existing buildings, both residential and non-residential, the report highlights the potential for environmental benefits, examines factors behind notable successes and difficulties, and outlines public and private measures for fostering the adaptation of green building practices in North America. The report identifies green building as a powerful tool to achieve energy and resource conservation among other benefits and contains recommendations from the Secretariat to the Council for future action.

An Advisory Group—made up of leading North American architects; officials from construction, real estate and development companies; and representatives from municipalities, federal govern-

ment agencies, and nongovernmental organizations—has guided the Secretariat in the development of this report. JPAC was represented on the Advisory Group and the Parties committed designated observers to attend Advisory Group meetings. The Advisory Group prepared a final statement and advised the Secretariat on recommendations to include in the report.

In 2008 the Secretariat will conduct scoping activities to identify topic areas for a subsequent, independent report.

5 Submissions on Enforcement Matters Process

The Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process has the potential to approach environmental issues that have been difficult to resolve domestically and to invigorate responsive action by the public, government, and other stakeholders. The success of the process requires that it be well known, accessible, transparent, reliable, and that it be used appropriately. Achieving these goals entails timely processing of submissions and outreach that increases knowledge and awareness of the process among potential users and interested members of the North American public. Factual records should draw upon all relevant factual information from a comprehensive range of sources. As well, the credibility of NAAEC Articles 14 and 15 depends on objective, rigorous, and consistent consideration of submissions, in accordance with the Agreement and the Guidelines for Submissions on Enforcement Matters.

The SEM budget for 2008 covers the processing of submissions, from their receipt through the publication of factual records, along with outreach and participation in official CEC activities related to SEM. The budget was based on a projection of the existing workload at the end of 2007 plus a number of new submissions estimated according to the historical average, using average costs at each stage of the submissions process. Information on the SEM process is available at: <http://www.cec.org/citizen>.

6 Institutional Support

The Secretariat provides support for and coordinates the operations of the Council to ensure that the directives and initiatives of the latter are carried out in a timely fashion. It also provides logistical and administrative support to JPAC.

6.1 Council

The Council, the governing body of the CEC, is composed of cabinet-level or equivalent environmental representatives of each country, or their designees. The Council convenes at least once a year in a regular session for the purpose of making decisions and developing recommendations on matters within the scope of the NAAEC, and to provide oversight on the operations of the CEC Secretariat. The Council's regular session also comprises a public meeting that provides an opportunity to exchange with the North American public on environmental issues of importance.

It is the Secretariat's responsibility to submit the annual operating plan and budget of the Commission for the approval of the Council and to ensure that its directives and initiatives are carried out in a timely way. This entails liaison throughout the year with the Council's designees as well as administrative and logistical arrangements relating to the planning and conduct of regular sessions of the Council. In 2008, the regular session of the Council will be held in Canada.

6.2 Joint Public Advisory Committee

The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) was established as a cooperative mechanism to advise the Council in its deliberations and to advise the Secretariat in its planning and activities. Its vision is to promote continental cooperation in ecosystem protection and sustainable economic development, and to ensure active public participation and transparency in the actions of the Commission.

JPAC is composed of fifteen citizens, five from each country. In 2008, JPAC will hold three public meetings, including one in the United States in conjunction with the fourth Symposium on Assessing the Environmental Effects of NAFTA; a second in Canada, together with the annual Council Session, focusing upon the environmental outlook for North America to 2030; and a third in Mexico in the late fall. JPAC will also continue with its efforts to engage indigenous peoples as well as other stakeholders, with support from the Secretariat.

7 Communications

Raising awareness of North American environmental issues and their relation to trade and the economy is fundamental to the CEC's mission. Moreover, effective communication of the results of CEC activity is integral to the Commission's success. Specifically, the CEC's ability to support decision-making and to be appreciated as a source of quality information depends, in part, upon the extent to which good communication practices generate visibility and support for our work with audiences throughout North America.

Communications action in 2008 is intended to raise general awareness of CEC activities as well as to inform more specialized audiences of project-related information. Activities include producing general and specific information products and managing their dissemination in print and electronic forms, outreach to target audiences, and media relations.

CEC project descriptions describe the responsibility to communicate purpose, progress and results to stakeholders and participants. More generally, the CEC has an obligation to communicate the *bigger picture*—how and the extent to which we are meeting the broader goals and objectives of the Commission.

As such, the Secretariat executes a general communications strategy in accordance with the *Operational Plan* and Commission priorities. A communications planning calendar is updated periodically, while program-specific communication plans are reviewed quarterly with project managers.

The CEC pursues its communication goals through several means, including:

- The work and accomplishments of the CEC are communicated directly to general and specific audiences.
- To the greatest extent possible, the outputs of the CEC—including research, data sets, publications and other information products—are provided to the public, via the CEC website and other means.
- Publications and information are provided to the North American public in the three official languages, and in a manner that respects the different cultural environments encompassed within North America.
- The CEC opens its meetings and activities and facilitates public participation in the work of the Commission.
- Specific initiatives are designed to involve stakeholders in program work.
- Cooperation with the communications activities and apparatus of each of the Parties.

The CEC's communications strategy aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. The public, stakeholders and decision-makers are made aware that the CEC is an important agent in protecting the North American environment and supporting sustainable development.

A limited number of program activities and outputs are selected to illustrate this objective, depending upon their utility in supporting this objective. Focus areas should be significant, interesting, new or unique. The result is a balanced set of examples that demonstrate how the CEC is providing a unique benefit in support of protecting the North American environment, and helping the Parties transcend borders in pursuit of cooperative solutions to shared environmental concerns. Focus areas are supported by a concise communications plan, which selects from a menu of tools and tactics including: critical path; identification of key audiences, messages, and media relations; news releases; backgrounders; publications; event(s); partner relations/support; web site features; and evaluation.

Communication of these focus areas is designed to:

- Communicate tangible and compelling results and benefits, with measurable outputs and outcomes
- Improve/consolidate the *corporate* image/reputation of the CEC (the “CEC brand”)
- Bundle initiatives (thematically/geographically)

Focus areas will change as projects develop and results accumulate; however, 2008 examples include:

- Air Quality initiatives (trilateral)
- *Greening* Supply Chains in North America (Automobiles)
- Conserving Biodiversity through Trade (new products)
- 4th NA Symposium – Trade and Environment (NAFTA assessment, related topics)
- Innovative environmental information products (NA Atlas data layers/Google Earth applications)
- Article 13 report on Green Building in North America (marketing and distribution)
- *Taking Stock* 2008 – the second year of full trilateral analysis of (2005) North American PRTR data
- Biodiversity conservation (high-conservation value projects—Monarch, Vaquita, NACAP species)
- Chemicals management (North American cooperation)
- Biomonitoring (North American blood monitoring results, lindane)
- Reporting on the state of the North American environment
- Emerging environmental trends assessment and 2008 Outlook conference

2. Maximize program success through effective communications with target audiences

A concise communications plan for each project as warranted is completed in accordance with the development of the *Operational Plan*. Primarily, these plans align project outputs with priority audiences.

As the communications planning calendar is revised, outputs and products will be selected for distribution, outreach, and events as opportunities arise.

Tactical options include:

- Speeches and presentations/ presentation materials
- Distribution of publications, reports, proceedings
- Web site
- Media relations, briefings
- Op-Ed/feature articles
- *TRIO*
- E-bulletins/Newsletter(s)
- Fact sheets
- Mail-Contact database
- Events

8 Administration and Management

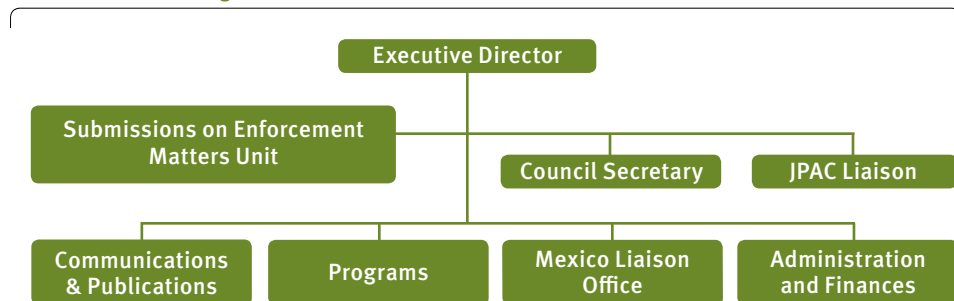
The Secretariat is responsible for providing technical, administrative and operational support to the Council and to committees and groups established by the Council. Headed by an executive director, the Secretariat has an expert and highly motivated staff of 59 people. While the Communications staff provides support integral to implementation of the cooperative work program, the Administration staff assists in the achievement of the institution's objectives by providing, in a timely manner, high-quality resources, including human, financial, material and services, as well as information.

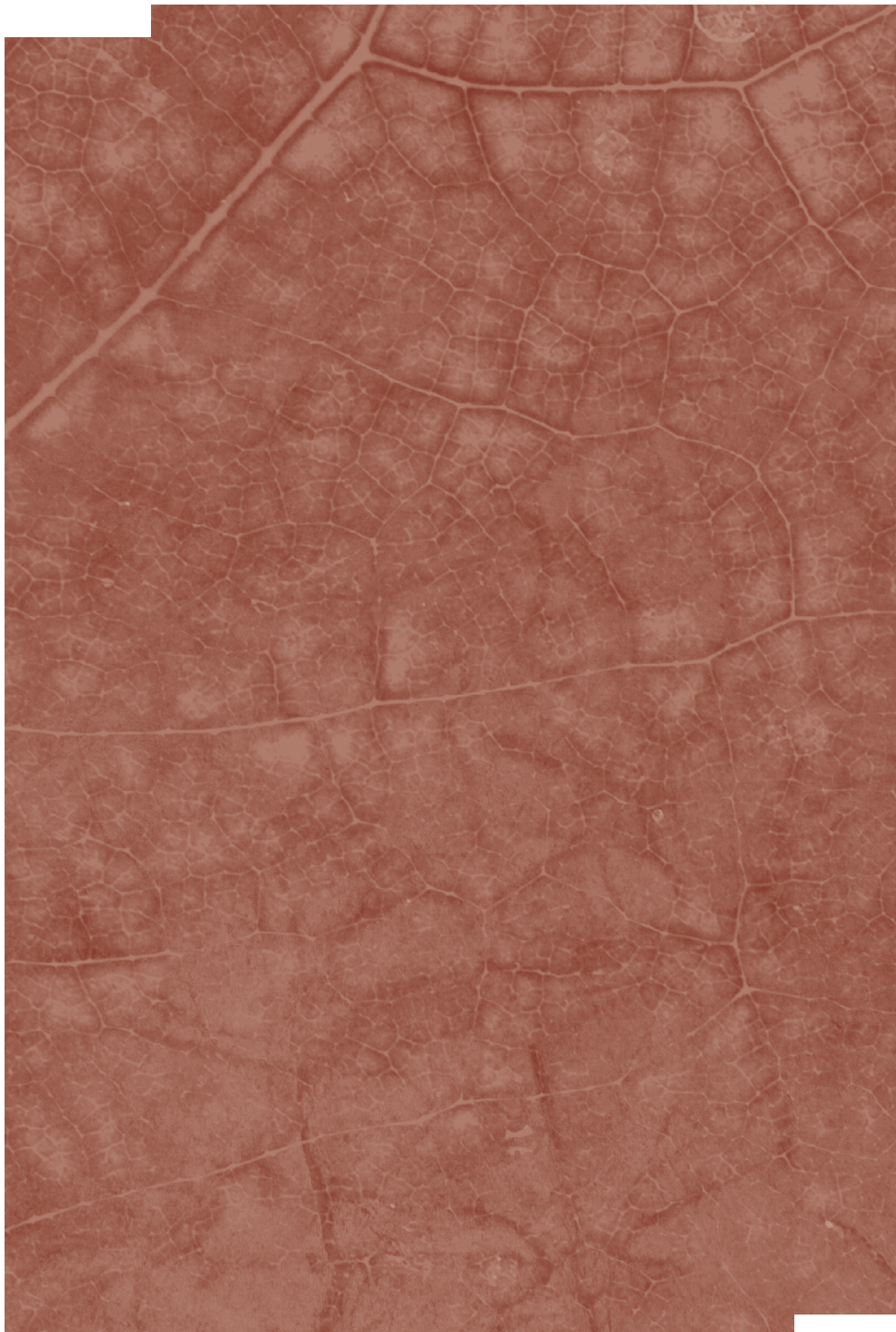
The CEC Secretariat is headquartered in Montreal, with a regional office in Mexico City. The Mexico liaison office is engaged in promoting CEC's work and facilitating the interaction between the CEC and environmental stakeholders in Mexico.

8.1 Quality Assurance

The CEC's Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures document establishes the principles and mechanisms for ensuring the objectivity, utility, accuracy and integrity of CEC research and information products and services. This Operational Plan has been prepared in accordance with that policy. Individual quality assurance project plans will specify the particular steps required for each information product or service (including Party, peer and expert review, where appropriate) to meet the requirements of the CEC's quality assurance policy.

CEC Secretariat Organization





Looking to the Future

Strategic Plan of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation 2005–2010

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1 The North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation

In North America, more than 425 million people share a rich environmental heritage, ranging from tropical rain forests to arctic tundra and including deserts and wetlands, oceans and rivers, prairies and mountains. Together, these natural resources form a complex network of ecosystems that support a unique biodiversity as well as sustain our well-being and livelihoods. Since 1994, Canada, Mexico and the United States have collaborated in protecting North America's environment through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC).

The NAAEC came into force at the same time as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In the same manner that NAFTA sought to dismantle barriers to trade and investment, the NAAEC seeks to build bridges among the three countries to promote environmental collaboration. Together, the environmental provisions of both agreements mark the determination of our three countries that economic growth and liberalization of trade would be accompanied by cooperation and continuous improvement in the environmental performance of each country.¹

More specifically, the NAAEC is intended to address potential trade-related environmental concerns, promote environmental cooperation in the region and support the effective enforcement of environmental law. The NAAEC was the first international agreement to link environmental cooperation with trade relations and the first to embed public engagement at the heart of its operations.

In addition to reinforcing the national obligations of each country to protect its own environment, the NAAEC establishes the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) to facilitate effective cooperation on the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the North American environment. The CEC partnership is unique. Through the CEC, the governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States and North American civil society work together to pursue what none of the three countries could achieve on its own.

The NAAEC describes in broad terms a number of areas of work for the CEC, including:

- a program of cooperative activities on a wide range of environmental issues (Article 10);
- the processing of submissions on enforcement of environmental laws, including factual records when warranted (Articles 14 and 15);
- reports on environmental issues of regional importance (Article 13), and periodic assessment of the state of the North American environment (Article 2); and
- the analysis of NAFTA's environmental effects and the resolution of environmental trade disputes (Article 10(6)).

1. The full text of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation is available online at <http://www.cec.org/pubs_info_resources/law_treat_agree/naaec/index.cfm?varlan=english>.

2 Who we are

The CEC accomplishes its work through the combined efforts of its three principal institutions:

- The Council, composed of cabinet-level environment officials from the three countries, is the CEC's governing body. The Council meets once a year and is responsible for setting the CEC's overall direction, including its budget, and monitoring the progress of its projects against their objectives;
- The executive director of the Secretariat, in accordance with direction from the Council, submits for approval of the Council the annual program and budget of the Commission, including provision for proposed cooperative activities and for the Secretariat to respond to contingencies. The Secretariat provides administrative, technical and operational support to the Council, and other support as the Council may direct. It also has special responsibilities in the Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) Process and the preparation of reports under Article 13; and
- The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), composed of fifteen citizens (five from each country), advises the Council on any matter within the NAAEC's scope and serves as a source of information for the Secretariat. JPAC's vision is to promote continental cooperation in ecosystem protection and sustainable economic development, and to ensure active public participation and transparency in the actions of the Commission.

In addition, both Canada and the United States have created National Advisory Committees and the United States has also established a Governmental Advisory Committee. These committees provide general and specific advice to their governments on NAAEC's implementation and the CEC's operations. In Canada, decisions regarding CEC matters are coordinated through a Governmental Committee headed by the federal environment minister and the environment ministers of those provinces who have signed the Canadian Intergovernmental Agreement (CIA), an agreement that was negotiated with the provinces and territories to create a mechanism to provide for their participation in the NAAEC. Signatory provinces include Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec. These provinces assume the obligations set out in the NAAEC, in accordance with their respective jurisdictions, and have a key role in Canada's ongoing management and implementation of the Agreement.

The Council will continue to rely on advice and guidance of government officials, any Council-established groups or committees, and others to advance the priorities described in this Strategic Plan.

The Council recognizes that the existing working groups² continue to contribute significantly to the CEC work and it is clear their assistance will be needed in this transition period in which the Council should define the future of these working groups in order to have compliance with the Strategic Plan.

The CEC Council operates on the basis of consensus, with the exception of specific instances where majority votes are called for, such as in connection with citizen submissions or Article 13 reports.

The CEC's institutions rely on the following principles in guiding their partnership:

- Flexibility and mutual support
- Openness and transparency
- Accountability

The CEC budget is US\$9 million a year, contributed equally by the three Parties. This sum is complemented with staff time and expertise contributed by each of the Parties as well as resources contributed by the CEC's partners in the completion of specific projects.

2. As of June 2005, the Council-established working groups which have been created prior to this Strategic Plan are: the North American Working Group on the Sound Management of Chemicals; the Biodiversity Conservation Working Group; the North American Working Group on Environmental Enforcement and Compliance Cooperation; the North American Air Working Group; and the Environment and Trade Officials Working Group.

3 Our first decade

The CEC celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2004. An independent ten-year review emphasized the valuable contribution that the CEC had made and pointed to several notable achievements. It found that, over its first decade, the CEC has:

- helped create a North American environmental community that provides the moral and scientific authority for the three governments to address issues of continental importance.
- achieved substantial results on key North American issues such as chemicals management and set the basis for progress on the conservation of continental biodiversity.
- built substantial environmental capacities, largely in Mexico but also in the United States and Canada.
- advanced our understanding of trade-environment linkages and has provided useful information on the North American environment to a range of audiences.
- successfully promoted citizen engagement on environmental issues and increased government accountability regarding the enforcement of environmental laws.

We have learned a great deal from our work over the course of our first decade. The CEC's efforts in assembling and analyzing environmental information on a North American scale continues to bring new attention and understanding to critical issues facing all three countries. Our successful collaboration on protecting biodiversity and managing toxic chemicals demonstrates that common approaches are effective in addressing shared problems. We also know that the CEC, working with partners, needs to invest more systematically in strengthening North American environmental management capacities. We have determined that freer trade and a healthy environment can be mutually supporting, provided countries establish and enforce appropriate environmental laws and policy. Civil society's contribution to our work reaffirms the imperative of public participation in environmental management.

We have also learned that stronger results will come from more focused and concerted action. The CEC has thus narrowed its priorities and streamlined its work program to address those critical matters on which the CEC can make a real difference. This strategic plan presents what the CEC wants to achieve over the course of the next five years and how it plans to do so. It also clarifies the roles of the CEC's bodies regarding that program.

4 A vision for the future

In June 2004, Canada, the United States and Mexico signed the *Puebla Declaration*, which sets out the Parties' vision for the CEC for the next decade, a vision of:

...an organization that is a catalyst for action by the Parties and others to ensure our air is cleaner, our water purer, and our plant and animal species better conserved and protected, as our countries' economic relationship grows. We also see the organization as a forum through which we can discuss and facilitate regional action on our common global commitments. Over the next ten years, we want the CEC to be known for concrete results and for quality information and analysis, which have policy-relevance to the three countries

The Puebla Declaration emphasizes several important attributes that the CEC will pursue over the course of the next decade:

- *The CEC as a catalyst:* as a small organization with a broad mandate, the CEC needs to work in partnership with various levels of government and stakeholders. Its role is to encourage and facilitate action by the Parties and by stakeholders through its work.

- *The CEC as a forum to facilitate regional action:* the CEC focuses on issues that are regional in scope and a high priority for each Party. Canada, Mexico and the United States face many common environmental issues and, in some cases, have made the same international commitments. The CEC can help the three countries coordinate their national approaches to these issues, leading to more effective action.
- *The CEC as a producer of concrete results:* the CEC will provide timely and policy-relevant recommendations to achieve concrete results in the areas that the Council defines.
- *The CEC as a provider of scientifically rigorous information:* the CEC will foster the greater comparability, compatibility and accessibility of high-quality information at a North American scale to support environmentally suitable decisions based on sound science.

5 Priorities for the cooperative program

The CEC's cooperative program directly engages the three countries in a united effort to contribute to protecting the North American environment. This program promotes and facilitates cooperation among the Parties and provides the tools and information to allow citizens, governments and industry alike to protect our common environment better as our continental economy grows. The Parties have chosen three broad priorities for the CEC's cooperative program over the next five years. These are:

1. *Information for decision-making*
2. *Capacity building*
3. *Trade and the environment*

To advance our three priorities, Canada, Mexico and the United States have embraced specific five-year goals and objectives, and formulated long-term cooperative initiatives to meet them. Building on the CEC's experience to date, these initiatives comprise a focused, integrated and coherent effort to produce visible and concrete results. While individual projects in the CEC's cooperative program may change from year to year, the objectives will remain the same for the life of this strategic plan. Underpinning our agenda is a quality assurance framework that supports the credibility of CEC information products and services and the integrity of its processes.

We intend to pursue these mutually supporting priorities as a comprehensive effort. Capacity building is a built-in feature in projects under all three priorities; information projects will also contribute to the achievement of the trade and the environment objectives. We will design and manage the various projects under the priorities so as to strengthen these relationships.

"We want the CEC to be an organization recognized for its credible, balanced and timely information on the North American environment, and want to ensure that this information is available and accessible to all interested parties." Puebla Declaration

5.1 Information for decision-making

To resolve environmental problems that are North American in scope, decision-makers at all levels in all three countries need the best information in order to set objectives, implement solutions and monitor the effectiveness of their choices.

To help manage cross-boundary issues, the CEC will work to increase the comparability, reliability and compatibility of national and subregional information. The CEC has already begun to develop and link multinational databases and information networks in such areas as pollutant releases, ecological integrity, and trade-environment relationships. The CEC will continue this work and will also develop common standards and methodologies to integrate various information-related activities and reporting mechanisms being used in North America. The CEC will continue to ensure that its science

and information products are of high quality. As well, the CEC will build on national efforts by focusing on trans-border issues that the Council has identified as priority concerns.

The CEC's long-term goal for this priority is to support better decision-making by providing information on the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing North America.

Specifically, over the next five years, the CEC's information objectives are to:

1. Strengthen the capacity of North American decision-makers to understand continental environmental issues of common concern.
2. Establish an environmental information and knowledge framework for North America.
3. Develop the information needed to describe the state of the North American environment and to identify emerging trends and issues.
4. Make environmental information more widely available to facilitate local, national and regional action.

The CEC will pursue these objectives through several mutually-reinforcing initiatives:

- the development of an information systems strategy including the development and application of a quality assurance framework;
- the development over time of an online North American environmental atlas depicting environmental protection, conservation, biodiversity and other information on a continental scale;
- the continued synthesis of North American air emissions and monitoring information;
- the annual publication of *Taking Stock*, the CEC's well-known report on North American pollutant releases and transfers, including more thorough integration and comparison of Mexican information;
- the improvement of monitoring information on persistent toxic substances in the North American environment; and
- the periodic publication of state of the environment reports and indicators, based in large part on the preceding work.

The CEC will focus initially on the theme of air quality, building from the momentum of recent and current work. Over time, these initiatives, taken together, will enable the Parties and others to make increasingly better-informed decisions on a variety of other North American environmental concerns, including invasive species, toxic substances and wildlife conservation.

"We recognize the different capacities of the Parties and the continuing, urgent need to focus on institutional capacity building in order to ... gradually strengthen the capacity for sound environmental management across North America." Puebla Declaration

5.2 Capacity building

Since its early days, the CEC has played an important role in strengthening the capacity of government, industry and civil society for sound environmental decision-making across North America. It has done this through initiatives whose primary purpose has been to foster progress in shared concerns such as the sound management of chemicals, pollution prevention, conservation of biodiversity, and the coordination of pollutant release and transfer registries.

Still, there is need to develop stronger institutions and to share environmental knowledge with a wider range of stakeholders in society. In this vein, the Parties aim to:

- develop model approaches that can be adapted to other settings;
- focus on improving compliance with existing environmental laws;
- emphasize institutions rather than individuals;
- address both environmental conservation and protection issues;

- work with the private sector and communities, as well as with government; and
- identify practical, short-term, targets but in the context of a long-term perspective.

Specifically, the CEC’s goal is to strengthen the capacities of the three countries to manage environmental issues of common concern. Its objectives over the next five years—focusing on Mexico—are to cooperate to:

1. Strengthen capacities, where needed, to improve compliance with wildlife laws.
2. Improve private sector environmental performance through model environmental compliance approaches.
3. Strengthen capacities to conserve species and habitat of common concern by, among others, creating capacity building for planning, monitoring and management, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.
4. Strengthen the Parties’ abilities to assess and manage chemicals of concern.

As a first step, Mexico will formulate an assessment of its environmental management capacity needs, priorities, and opportunities for cooperation in North America.

For its part, the CEC will pursue the objectives through three multi-year initiatives in Mexico:

- training for wildlife enforcement officers and other stakeholders, as appropriate;
- the promotion of better environmental management in selected industries and regions; and
- the development of processes to secure ecological integrity and promote ecosystem and species management.

While these initiatives focus mostly on Mexico, they will benefit all three countries: more effective Mexican enforcement of its wildlife laws, for example, will help protect migratory species that the three countries share; for their part, Mexican pollution prevention projects will reduce the risk that toxic substances pose to all three countries. The CEC’s Clean Electronics Pollution Prevention Partnership will involve and benefit all three countries.

“We want to build on the CEC’s recognized expertise on trade and the environmental linkages, and to address specific trade and environmental issues more effectively.” Puebla Declaration

5.3 Trade and the environment

Promoting a better understanding of trade and environment relationships is one of the main reasons the CEC was established. Since its creation, the CEC has developed methodologies to analyze these relationships and has acquired expertise in this area. The CEC has also helped to build positive links between environmental goals and trade. For example, the CEC’s assistance to coffee growers in establishing a North American market for shade-grown coffee—a practice that conserves critical species habitat—is an example of harnessing the power of markets to facilitate sustainable development and trade.

As the North American economy becomes increasingly integrated, there continues to be a need to anticipate and address environmental concerns associated with increased trade, such as the spread of harmful exotic species, and to decouple economic growth from negative environmental impacts.

The CEC’s goal is to promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade, and the economy. Its objectives are to:

- Enhance North American trade in green products and services, with a view to improving environmental protection, promoting sustainable use of biodiversity, removing trade barriers and utilizing market-based approaches.
- Increase the capacity of the three countries to identify and address trade-related environmental concerns to achieve mutual benefits for trade and the environment and improve collaboration among the three countries in these areas.
- Broaden understanding of trade and environment linkages and thereby promote policy coherence, both at the domestic and regional levels in North America.
- Improve regional and national coordination, including coordination between the CEC and NAFTA Free Trade Commission through ongoing collaboration of trade and environment officials.

To meet these objectives, the CEC will undertake the following initiatives over the next five years. It will:

- Continue documenting the environmental effects of trade liberalization in North America; improve the capacity of the CEC and the Parties to analyze and understand NAFTA's environmental effects; and support informal exchanges between Canada and the United States and with Mexico as appropriate, on methodologies for conducting environmental reviews of trade agreements, with a view to using such methodologies to better assess the environmental effects of NAFTA.
- Promote the North American renewable energy market.
- Promote North American markets for green products and services.
- Promote and facilitate training, compliance assistance and enforcement to expedite and facilitate the movement of legal materials while stopping shipments of illegal materials that could present threats to human health or the environment.
- Reduce the environmental and economic harm caused by Invasive Alien Species (IAS) through the development of guidelines for the three countries to use when conducting risk assessments of both pathways for IAS and high-risk species and through other cooperation aimed at the prevention, detection, and eradication of IAS.
- Promote better use of market-based approaches to support environmental protection, conservation, and the sustainable use of biodiversity.

5.4 Other projects

In addition to the initiatives described above, the CEC will continue its highly successful collaboration on the sound management of chemicals, focusing on the control of specific toxic chemicals and the strengthening of North American capacity for environmental monitoring.

The CEC will complete a number of existing projects in 2005. These include various biodiversity-related activities, work on disclosure of environmental information, and work on children's health and the environment.

Efforts to forge partnerships with other institutions are producing results. For example, the CEC is collaborating with the World Bank to assist Mexico in implementing the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). As well, the World Bank and the Parties are providing financial support to the CEC's monitoring of POPs and heavy metals in maternal cord blood.

6 Evaluating progress

The CEC's monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework provides specific and timely information to measure progress in each of the priorities outlined above. The CEC Council will continue to meet annually to review progress and take corrective action, if required. The results of the work accomplished will be tracked on the basis of project indicators and regular project evaluations. Such tracking will be facilitated by CEC initiatives meeting the test of being SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. These characteristics not only make measuring progress easier, but also support better-informed decisions regarding priorities, program management and budget allocation.

7 Citizen submission process

Under Articles 14 and 15 of the NAAEC, the Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process allows any person or nongovernmental organization (NGO) residing in North America to make a submission to the CEC asserting that a partner country is failing to effectively enforce its environmental laws. A submission can trigger an investigation by the CEC Secretariat, with Council's approval, and the publication of a factual record. This process contributes in important ways to greater transparency, accountability and environmental protection. The CEC will continue to process citizen submissions in an objective, rigorous and transparent manner and will prepare factual records where warranted. As stated in the Puebla Declaration, the CEC Council commits "to exploring ways for each Party to communicate how matters raised in factual records may be addressed over time."

8 Public participation

Public participation is one of the keys to the CEC's success. More so than any other trade-related international organization, the CEC encourages the public to be involved in its activities. Over the next five years, the CEC will seek to increase the involvement of the constituencies engaged in its work by engaging a broad and balanced spectrum of other levels of government, environmental groups, academics, the private sector, indigenous and local communities, civil society and others.

The Joint Public Advisory Committee will continue to play a key role in promoting active public participation and greater transparency in the actions of the Commission.

Appendix

Puebla Declaration: Eleventh Regular Session of the CEC Council

Puebla, Mexico, 23 June 2004—We, the environment ministers of Canada, Mexico and the United States, members of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC or “the Commission”), met for our annual regular session on 22 and 23 June 2004.

The year 2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and the North American Free Trade Agreement and is an occasion to assess our work. We see this as an opportunity to review our progress, re-affirm our commitment to the CEC, and set directions for the future. The report of the independent Ten-year Review and Assessment Committee has provided an important basis for our deliberations.

Looking forward, our vision of the CEC is of an organization that is a catalyst for action by the Parties and others to ensure our air is cleaner, our water purer, and our plant and animal species better conserved and protected, as our countries’ economic relationship grows. We also see the organization as a forum through which we can discuss and facilitate regional action on our common global commitments. Over the next ten years we want the CEC to be known for concrete results and for quality information and analysis, which have policy relevance to the three countries.

We recognize the value of the CEC’s work on environment, economy and trade; biodiversity conservation; pollutants and health; and law and policy. Looking forward, we commit to grounding the CEC’s work program, starting in 2005, in results-oriented strategic plans for three priorities: information for decision-making, capacity building, and trade and environment. These are priorities that the CEC is uniquely positioned to help the three countries address together—and separately—for the benefit of North America.

We want the CEC to be an organization recognized for its credible, balanced and timely information on the North American environment, and want to ensure that this information is available and accessible to all interested parties in order to provide governments, the private sector, and citizens alike with information to address the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing the region. We support strengthening the CEC’s information-gathering activities, databases, and communications, and making linkages with other information systems, such as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems.

In developing the strategic plan for information, we will build a knowledge base related to contaminants, the integrity of our ecosystems, and our ability to ensure environmental security at our borders. We will focus on information that is key to providing answers regarding the state of our North American environment, and will develop and use information technologies that will help us access and share this information.

We recognize the different capacities of the Parties and the continuing, urgent need to focus on institutional capacity building in order to sustain targeted results. We acknowledge that this is especially important for Mexico, and want the CEC to assist those concerned in the three countries—governments, the private sector, environmental organizations, academia, indigenous and local communities, and others—in gradually strengthening the capacity for sound environmental management across North America.

In developing a capacity-building strategic plan, we will focus on priorities such as our abilities to assess and manage chemicals of concern, undertake pollution prevention, participate in biodiversity conservation, and improve our enforcement efforts.

We want to build on the CEC's recognized expertise on trade and environmental linkages, and to address specific trade and environmental issues more effectively. We will enhance the positive working relationship that has been developed with our trade counterparts to ensure trade and environment policies are mutually supportive. We will continue our work with the NAFTA Free Trade Commission, under the Article 10(6) Working Group, to develop a strategic plan on trade and environment.

As we work to develop the plan, we will consider, among other priorities, areas which could include: establishing key elements to enhance markets for renewable energy; addressing issues related to trade pathways for invasive species; trade and enforcement of environmental laws, including enforcement of domestic laws that address transboundary trade in environmentally sensitive goods and materials; environmental procurement practices; market-based approaches to connect North American ecoregions; and sharing, as appropriate, information on methodologies for conducting environmental reviews of trade agreements with a view to better assessing the environmental effects of NAFTA.

The NAAEC and the CEC have been a bold ten-year initiative in building a continental framework for trilateral environmental cooperation within the context of increasing trade and economic ties amongst our three countries. We recognize the significant progress accomplished and the invaluable contribution of the Secretariat and the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), as well as the efforts of the CEC's working groups. We know it is critical to streamline the work of the CEC and to focus our work on generating concrete, measurable results that will make a difference to the environment in North America. We recognize that there will be a transition period as we adjust the work program and apply new approaches to achieve our goals.

While we are focusing on the CEC's work around three main themes, it is also important to identify and keep abreast of emerging issues, particularly those which have special relevance for North America. We continue to support the CEC's Article 13 work to identify emerging issues, and to provide recommendations to the Parties for addressing these issues.

We continue to be supportive of the process for submissions on enforcement matters, and commit to exploring ways for each Party to communicate how matters raised in factual records may be addressed over time.

As we move to the next ten years in the life of the CEC, we look to a skilled Secretariat to help us achieve our vision for the organization. We are committed to strengthening the relationship amongst all parts of the CEC—the Council, the Secretariat and JPAC. We seek to grow the constituencies engaged in the work of the CEC by including a broad and balanced spectrum of other levels of government, including local governments, environmental groups, academics, the private sector, indigenous and local communities, civil society, and others. We envision a strong role for the CEC in promoting partnerships across this spectrum. We will continue to place great value on advice from JPAC, which reflects the diversity and innovative views of its members.

We have important work ahead, and we are confident that our strong commitment to the CEC will contribute to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable North American environment for future generations.



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