

**PROJECT NAME: EcoInnovation Network – Transition**

---

**1. Project duration: 24 months**

**2. Budget (C\$)**

Year 1: C\$150,000

Year 2: C\$75,000

**3. Short statement of the issue(s) under this topic, need/gap identified; the project objective(s) and activities to address the issue; and expected outcomes and benefits/beneficiaries:**

The CEC launched the EcoInnovation Network (EIN) at its Annual Council Session in 2019. The Network’s mission is to encourage the creation of innovation centers at academic institutions across North America and link them to enhance education and provide tools for students and communities relative to entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable design for green growth. One of the initial objectives of this project was for the network to be self-sustaining after 2020. The CEC’s 2019–2020 EcoInnovation Network project was successful in establishing the Network’s core membership, developing foundational and strategic documents, and coordinating activities that built rapport among the members and young entrepreneurs and informed the development of useful resources and tools.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, prevented the project from reaching its full potential and achieving self-sustainability. The academic institutions, forced to focus on short-term survival, turned their attention away from the Network: in-person activities to develop new services and resources did not take place and the recruitment of new members could not begin. As a last activity of the 2019–2020 project, a transition plan was developed to create a path for moving the Network to a new host institution. As a result of these discussions, the University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) came forward in March 2021 with a proposal to pay for a 2/3’s full-time equivalent (FTE) employee to serve as a Manager at the University of Waterloo, and to make additional financial and in-kind contributions. With financial support from the CEC to continue Network operations during the transition period, this new Manager will manage the operations, develop the Network’s services and resources, establish new Network governance, and look for funding for long-term self-sustainability.

Within this context, this follow-up project aims to create a financially independent and sustainable EIN by 30 June 2023, transferring the financial, operational and governance responsibilities of the Network from the CEC to the EIN members, partners and the managing institution, and by building the necessary operation and financial capacity to continue its efforts in the future. CEC funds

will be combined with financial contributions from other sources, including membership fees, project funding from other organizations, and corporate contributions from private sector sponsors and partners.

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

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

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

Innovation centers can play a key role in sustainable economic development and job creation within the communities they serve, and beyond. A key feature of such centers is to provide inclusive and equal access to students and the public to capitalize on training, tools and resources for innovation, sustainable design, entrepreneurship, and business development and sustainable innovation for students and communities in North America. Additionally, the network facilitates a platform to create and share the diverse and inclusive learning experiences offered by innovation centers from academic institutions throughout North America. Through this transition, youth engagement with the Youth Ambassador programme of the EcoInnovation Network will be strengthened. For this purpose, youth are considered both target audiences (students and young entrepreneurs) and key partners in the successful implementation of stated activities (Youth Ambassadors). In addition, Youth Ambassadors from member organizations will be engaged in a consistent and formal manner as advocates for youth needs to be addressed by the broader network.

**6. Explain how the project can achieve more impact through trilateral cooperation:**

The trilateral characteristic of the network of innovation centers from academic institutions from Canada, Mexico and the United States will increase the quality and impact of this project by: 1) leveraging the best expertise in entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainability from all three countries to create or enhance centers on innovation and entrepreneurship for green growth; 2) making these centers and their services available and useful to youth, students, experts and communities in all three countries; 3) increasing

the network's overall reach and opportunities for new and culturally diverse partnerships, collaborations and memberships to support project objectives; and 4) offering a neutral, trilingual platform for the exchange of publications, research, knowledge, and best practices between innovation centers from academic insititutions in North America.

**7. Describe how the project complements, or avoids duplication with, other national or international work:**

The EIN fills the heretofore lack of youth entrepreneurship organisations that could link sustainability, green economics and environmental entrepreneurship, by working with academic institutions to develop and share successful models that will help build their capacity to support the incubation, growth, and commercialization of environmental entrepreneurship. Currently, no similar North American model exists that focuses on advancing youth innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainability led by innovation centers in each country. The Network creates a unique combination of international, national and local expertise, dedicated to bringing state-of-the-art models and tools that will support and accelerate the transition toward eco-responsible innovation and entrepreneurship, connected by academic institutions for the benefit of communities across North America.

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

The transition of the EcoInnovation Network will benefit from the Indigenous Initiatives Office at the University of Warterloo and allow for an inclusion of Indigenous entrepreneurs in EIN acitivites. In addition EIN implementation creates opportunities where Indigenous students and the public are welcome to participate and gain knowledge through student exchanges and collaborations with local communities. Additionally, the network can be informed by programs focused on Indigenous/local community entrepreneurship currently being delivered in academic institutions in North America.

**9. Describe how the project engages new audiences or partners, if applicable:**

During this transition the EIN will continue work with the current members and seek the recruitment of new ones with the additional intent of increasing diversity among member institutions and/or building capacity among institutions that serve culturally diverse communities – particularly focused on youth. These efforts will be supported by a cross-unit strategy for encouraging engagement through recruitment to the Youth Ambassadors programme for students and entrepreneurs associated with the member insititutions of the network. Through outreach efforts and finding partnership opportunities in collaboration with CEC's Outreach and Partnerships Unit, this project will also engage new audiences aiming at increasing the visibilty of the Network.

At the end of this transition, the EIN will continue to provide a line of communication for the CEC to hear the voices of academic institutions, experts, and youth representatives directly engaged in sustainable, environmental, and social innovation, and draw from concrete examples of entrepreneurship on topics of interest to the CEC, including resilient communities, environmental equity, Indigenous perspectives, clean technologies, circular economies, and resource efficiency.

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

<b>Name of Project Steering Committee Member</b>	<b>Affiliation (Country)</b>
Sarah Lubick Robert Woodbury Halil Erhan	Business of Design, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Anna Ehrhardt Carmela Cucuzzella	District 3, Concordia University, Montréal, Québec, Canada
Daniel Forget	Université Laval, Quebec city, Québec, Canada
Jean Andrey Brock Dickinson	Economic Development Program, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
Tom Wavering Brandt Smith Daniel Moses	Tom Love Innovation Hub, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, USA
Jeff Moore Cassandra Rigsby Haley Rader	Ronnie K. Irani Center for the Creation of Economic Growth (I-CCEW), Norman, Oklahoma, USA
Klaudia Manuela Sánchez Espíndola Miguel Ángel Santinelli Ramos	Facultad de Responsabilidad Social, Universidad Anáhuac, Mexico City, Mexico
Omar Chávez Alegría Adriana Gomez Castañeda	Facultad de Ingeniería, Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, Queretaro, Queretaro State, Mexico
Germarilis Ruiz Gallosa	Neeuko, Centro de Innovación Colaborativa, Sagrado Corazón University, San Juan, Puerto Rico

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

<b>OBJECTIVE 1</b>	<b>Transit the governance of the EcoInnovation Network from the CEC to a Network Manager at the University of Waterloo</b>
<b>Activity 1 Budget \$175,000</b>	Support and ensure the proper transition of the Network’s financial, operational and governance responsibilities from the Commission to the University of Waterloo.
<b>Output(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A CEC-independent EcoInnovation Network, with renewed and strengthened membership, that has a sound framework and strategy and that operates within a governance scheme led by the University of Waterloo during its initial period of self-sustainability</li> <li>- A CEC/EIN partnership that keeps the CEC linked to the Network and that contributes to strengthening each other’s mandate, particularly with respect to supporting different youth initiatives and addressing sustainability, entrepreneurship and innovation topics</li> </ul>
<b>Expected results, performance measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proper documentation to support the full and formal transition of EIN governance from the CEC to the University of Waterloo</li> <li>- Proper legal and administrative documentation regarding this transition has been developed, agreed upon and instrumented, as applicable. These instruments should include the formal definition of the roles that the CEC and the University of Waterloo would play on the transition and thereafter.</li> <li>- Membership strategy and agreements (developed and implemented) to confirm participation of founding members and expansion of membership to new institutions (including EcoInnovation Youth Ambassadors). These should also include the formalization and establishment of roles, responsibilities and commitments for all members (including EcoInnovation Youth Ambassadors)</li> <li>- Action plan (developed and implemented) that builds on the Transition Management Plan and that includes key activities and timeline for transition and establishes a formal action path to expand network and develop operation guidelines</li> <li>- Implementation of financial guidelines to operate and sustain the Network (considering the existing EIN funding strategy and including the development of a membership fee structure and fundraising effort)</li> </ul>

	- Development of performance metrics for the Network measurement, completion of first review of impacts	
<b>Baseline (current status), if known</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EcoInnovation Network Charter (2019)</li> <li>- Partnership and Funding Strategy (2020)</li> <li>- Transition Management plan (2021)</li> </ul>	
<b>Target (by project end)</b>	A self-sustained EcoInnovation Network managed by the University of Waterloo	
<b>Subtask 1.1</b>	Define, develop and implement, as applicable, the proper legal, financial, operational and administrative documentation and actions to formalize the transition of the governance of EIN from CEC to the University of Waterloo.	<b>When:</b> First quarter, year 1
<b>Subtask 1.2</b>	Update membership and establish management roles (including announcement of new members, Youth Ambassadors, and website updates).	<b>When:</b> First and second quarter of year 1
<b>Subtask 1.3</b>	Develop formal written agreements between members and/or partners to establish roles and degree of participation, including formalized role and responsibilities Youth Ambassadors.	<b>When:</b> First quarter of year 1
<b>Subtask 1.4</b>	Support the development of a formal workplan for the transition and to deliver programming and support to network members. The workplan should include clear performance metrics to monitor and report progress and impact.	<b>When:</b> Second quarter of year 1
<b>Subtask 1.5</b>	Support the implementation of initial membership recruitment activities, in partnership with the University of Waterloo, to expand the network.	<b>When:</b> Third and fourth quarter of year 1
<b>Subtask 1.6</b>	Support the development and execution of financial guidelines for a self-sustained network including activities to engage with private sector, government agencies, charitable foundations and other relevant parties.	<b>When:</b> Third quarter to End of the project
<b>Subtask 1.7</b>	Review the transition and verification by members and partners of financial and operational self-sufficiency, and commitment to continued operations.	<b>When:</b> Fourth quarter of year 2
<b>Subtask 1.8</b>	Review second year performance and impacts, and conclusion of transition process to a standalone organization.	<b>When:</b> Fourth quarter, year 2
<b>OBJECTIVE 2</b>	<b>Support of the EcoInnovation Network's purpose and operation during the two-year transition period.</b>	
<b>Activity 2 Budget \$50,000</b>	- Support the operations of the EcoInnovation Network during the two-year transition period to further promote the creation and interconnection of innovation centers at academic institutions across North America and	

	<p>provide tools for youth and communities relative to entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable design for green growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support dissemination of EIN activities to increase visibility of the network and promote activities.</li> </ul>	
<b>Output(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support for the implementation of the EIN workplan and activities, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- delivering original green innovation and entrepreneurship programming designed to demonstrate the EIN's value and provide EIN members with services and initiatives they will perceive to be of value;</li> <li>- increasing the capacity of individual innovation centers to support new entrepreneurial ventures in the environmental space;</li> <li>- enhancing outreach opportunities for improving and expanding education, and partnerships in the field of green entrepreneurship education and training;</li> <li>- communicating best practices in green entrepreneurship support across jurisdictional, cultural and linguistic lines;</li> <li>- first EcoInnovation Network Conference and other EIN related events and activities;</li> <li>- collaboration and engagement with independent activities carried out by the Youth Ambassadors of the EIN.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Increased dissemination and visibility of the EIN and its activities through outreach efforts and in partnership with other organizations.</li> </ul>	
<b>Expected results, performance measures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Report on the specific support provided by CEC to different activities of the EIN workplan</li> <li>- Active participation of CEC staff on EIN conferences and events</li> <li>- Report of CEC outreach and dissemination activities to increase visibility of the EIN</li> <li>- Report of CEC youth initiatives that were implemented in collaboration with the EIN</li> </ul>	
<b>Baseline (current status), if known</b>	<p>EIN past achievements to enhance education and provide tools for students and communities relative to entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable design for green growth. These include the trilingual delivery of green entrepreneurship training (including the Green entrepreneurship series in partnership with the University of Waterloo), the facilitation of youth exchanges between CEC member countries, the sharing of valuable studies and resources, and active contributions to international discussions regarding sustainable and environmental innovation.</p>	
<b>Target (by project end)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CEC has supported the EIN workplan and activities during the transition period and has established a partnership with the Network for future collaboration.</li> </ul>	
<b>Subtask 2.1</b>	Provide support to the EIN to carry out different activities included in its workplan.	<b>When:</b> Third quarter year 1 to fourth quarter year 2
<b>Subtask 2.2</b>	Support the development and execution of events and educational activities for green entrepreneurs within academic institution.	<b>When:</b> Third quarter year 1 to fourth quarter year 2

<b>Subtask 2.3</b>	Support collaborative and partnership efforts to increase the dissemination of the EIN activities.	<b>When:</b> Third quarter year 1 to fourth quarter year 2
<b>Subtask 2.4</b>	Support, in partnership with the Outreach Unit, initiatives and activities to engage with youth interested in green entrepreneurship and sustainability.	<b>When:</b> Third quarter year 1 to fourth quarter year 2

**12. Describe expected impacts post-project:**

<b>Expected impact (by when: month, year)</b>	<b>SMART performance measure(s)</b>
By December 2025, the financial, operational and governance responsibilities of the EIN will have been transferred from the CEC to the institution chairing the EIN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proper legal, financial, operational and administrative documentation and actions to formalize the transfer of the EIN from the CEC to the institution chairing the Network exist.</li> <li>- The Network will have fully developed and adopted its own governance scheme.</li> </ul>
By the end of the project, the support provided by CEC for the EIN operation will have resulted in increased network exchanges among academic institutions and/or resources to promote Green Entrepreneurship and innovation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Number of workshops/activities of the EIN supported by the CEC</li> <li>-Number of co-hosted events by network members</li> <li>-Number of EIN resources (tools, publications, etc.) supported by the CEC</li> </ul>
By December 2025, the CEC will be collaborating with the EIN according with the model of partnership adopted.	-The proper documentation regarding the model of partnership between the CEC and EIN has been developed.