

Operational Plan of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation

2009

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This Operational Plan was approved by the Parties to the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation.

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1 Introduction

The year 2009 will mark the 15th anniversary of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its environmental side accord – the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC). This year will also see conclusion of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation’s (CEC) current 2005–2010 Strategic Plan.

As such, 2009 is a pivotal year for the CEC—providing a timely opportunity to take stock of progress implementing NAFTA’s innovative environmental side accord, in particular, the lessons-learned from 15 years of tracking the environmental impact of free trade in North America—as well as to measure the progress of cooperative work undertaken since 1995.

For some long-standing projects, 2009 will mark their conclusion. In some cases, for example, this will mean issue-, species-, and ecoregion-specific work will come to an end, including the research, capacity building and pilot projects designed to support these initiatives. CEC work scheduled to conclude in 2009 includes: marine conservation pilot projects along the Baja-to-Bering marine region (including support for the vaquita and other marine North American Conservation Action Plans); risk analysis of invasive alien species; support for the implementation of conservation activity throughout the continental flyway of the monarch butterfly; capacity building to secure Mexico’s institutionalization of wildlife enforcement training, and hazardous waste training for customs and environmental inspectors.

Moving forward, the lessons learned, the collaborative networks built, and the opportunities identified from the CEC’s cooperative work program will inform new and innovative work, and where appropriate, with the application of market-based approaches, to protect and enhance North America’s environment. Accomplishments in 2009 will include:

- Establishment of a North American strategy for air quality management;
- Identification of Priority Conservation Areas in *new* marine regions (e.g., Arctic, Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico)—shifting the CEC’s focus to support conservation action in new ecologically significant seascapes;
- Elaboration of approaches to help *green* new and existing building stocks, increase the supply of renewable energy, and support conservation goals with mutual benefits for the sustainable use of biodiversity and economic development;
- Support to the private sector and the Parties in accomplishing relevant greenhouse gas mitigation and contribute to public and private sector initiatives related to climate change, including facilitating development of renewable energy, green buildings and sustainable transportation in North America.
- Dissemination of more than 10 new environmental thematic map layers through the North American Environmental Atlas, including forests, groundwater, invasive species, greenhouse gas emissions, and transboundary shipments of hazardous wastes;
- Further development of a North American Land Change Monitoring System to characterize and display annual changes in North American land cover using satellite data;
- Building a North American foundation of consistent, comparable information on toxic chemicals of mutual concern, including the first comprehensive chemicals inventory for Mexico;

Finally, and looking further ahead, in 2009 the CEC Council will lead the development of a new strategic plan for 2010–2015 that will set the course for the next five years of cooperative action to protect and enhance the North American environment.

2 2009 Budget

The CEC's 2009 budget is based on total Party contributions of US\$9 million. The operational budget is complemented by staff time, expertise, and other in-kind contributions from the Parties and project partners.

CEC 2009 BUDGET

DESCRIPTION	2009 budget (in thousands of Canadian dollars)	% of Total
<u>REVENUES</u>		
Parties' Contributions (US\$ 9,000 at US\$1.04/C\$. Exchange rate for 2008 at par)	9,360.0	
Interest	100.0	
Surplus	2,996.1	
TOTAL REVENUES	12,456.1	
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Cooperative Work Program		
Projects	6,616.9	
Mexico Liaison Office	345.4	
Information Center	36.0	
Managing CEC Environmental Information	40.0	
Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting	90.0	
	7,128.3	57.23%
Secretariat Report (Article 13)	200.0	1.61%
Submissions on Enforcement Matters (Articles 14 and 15)	808.1	6.49%
Council Support	303.8	2.44%
JPAC Support	471.0	3.78%
Communications	754.6	6.06%
Administration and Management		
Executive Director's Office	178.2	
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)	1,093.0	
Administration and Management Salaries	963.1	
	2,640.3	21.20%
Reserve for Unforeseen Needs	150.0	1.20%
TOTAL EXPENSES		100.00%

2009 CEC Cooperative Work Program – Projects

(In thousands of Canadian dollars)

Project Title		2009 Budget
Environmental Information		345.0
1	Mapping North American Environmental Issues	180.0
2	Reporting CEC Results and Performance 2005–2010	165.0
Environment, Trade and Sustainability		1,366.0
3	Environmental Assessment of NAFTA	215.0
4	Supporting Sectoral Environmental Sustainability and North American Competitiveness	125.0
5	Harnessing Market Forces for Sustainability	
5A	Supporting the Growth of Green Building	90.0
5B	Enhancing the Production and Use of Renewable Energy	105.0
5C	Conserving Biodiversity Through Trade	105.0
6A	Trade, Transportation and the Environment	100.0
6B	Greening the North American Auto Industry	90.0
7	Trade Flows of North American Used Electronics	102.0
8	Trade and the Enforcement of Environmental Laws	434.0
Pollutants and Health		1,761.0
9	Sound Management of Chemicals	500.0
10	Monitoring and Assessing Pollutants across North America	405.0
11	Enhancing North America Air Quality Management	405.0
12	Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America	451.0
Biodiversity Conservation		1,023.0
13	Conserving Marine Species and Spaces of Common Concern	383.0
14	Conserving the Monarch Butterfly and Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods	165.0
15	Protecting Priority Conservation Areas from Invasive Alien Species	125.0
16	Recovering the Vaquita and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods	125.0
17	Conserving North American Grasslands: Building Capacity for Grasslands Biodiversity Conservation in Northern Mexico	150.0
18	Strengthening Wildlife Enforcement	75.0
PROJECTS		4,495.0
WORK PROGRAM SALARIES AND BENEFITS		2,121.9
TOTAL PROJECTS		6,616.9

3 Cooperative Work Program

3.1 Strategic Framework

This Operational Plan presents how the CEC's goals and objectives will be implemented through project activities and other initiatives in 2009. 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 (Appendix C).

The CEC Council has adopted three broad priorities for the cooperative work program of the CEC, stemming from the 2004 Puebla Declaration (Appendix B):

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

To advance these priorities, the Council adopted the *Strategic Plan for the Commission for Environmental Cooperation 2005–2010* (Appendix C). This plan embraces specific five-year goals and objectives as well as several multi-year 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 plan states, “*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.*”

Accordingly, each project described in the 2009 Operational Plan supports the achievement of one or more Puebla Declaration priorities. The Parties are guided in their adoption of annual projects by the application of selection criteria that ensure projects support these priorities with tangible results, and, wherever appropriate, North American scope. The projects described in this Plan represent, in many cases, the culmination of several years' effort as guided by the current five-year Strategic Plan. A comprehensive review and report on the specific accomplishments under the 2005–2010 Strategic Plan will be published in 2009 as part of the CEC's preparation of its next five-year plan.

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.

3.2 Program Priorities

The following is a summary of the CEC's long-term program priorities and the 2009 project initiatives planned to support them. Detailed project descriptions, including implementation tasks and budgets, can be found in Appendix A.

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 sub regional 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 2009 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. Throughout, the CEC ensures that its science and information products are of the highest quality.

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.

Anticipated outcomes for 2009 in support of these objectives include:

- A North American Strategy for Air Quality Management and the assembly of continent-wide data on air quality and air emissions to support decision-making on air quality;
- Dissemination of more than 10 new environmental thematic map layers through the North American Environmental Atlas page on the CEC website, including land cover, forests, groundwater, invasive species, greenhouse gas emissions and power plants;
- Further development of a *North American Land Change Monitoring System* to characterize and display annual changes in land cover using satellite data;
- Compilation and dissemination of integrated North American data on the release and transfer of chemical pollutants;
- Update the database on the air emissions profile of power plants across North America, including criteria air contaminants and green house gas emissions;
- Building a foundation of consistent, comparable and compatible information on toxics of mutual concern in North America;

- Promoting regionally consistent and validated monitoring and assessment of chemicals in environmental and human health media;
- Identification of a potential network of Priority Conservation Areas in new marine ecologically significant regions of the Arctic, Atlantic, or Gulf of Mexico;
- 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 competitiveness in our region.

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.

Anticipated outcomes for 2009 in support of these objectives include:

- Conclusion of the CEC's three-year initiative to support Mexico's institutionalization of a training program for the continued improvement of its wildlife enforcement personnel;
- Complete the point, mobile and area 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;
- Build Mexico's capacity to participate in environmental monitoring and assessment of substances deleterious to human health—including laboratory validation and securing long-term international financing;
- Development of a chemicals inventory for Mexico compatible with current inventory programs in both Canada and the United States;
- Training for customs and environmental officials to enforce fully the global ban of 1 January 2010, on the consumption and production of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs);
- Enhance coordination of customs and law enforcement officials to combat the importation of non-compliant imports and the illegal traffic in protected species and wildlife; and
- Training for local fishermen in critical leatherback turtle nesting zones on the use of environmentally-friendly fishing gear and disentanglement techniques and, in the *Alto Golfo de California*, to support the recovery of the vaquita porpoise through the use of sustainable fishing gear.

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 benefit 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 benefit 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.

Anticipated outcomes for 2009 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 link between environmental sustainability and regional competitiveness;
- Promoting policy and action to enhance development of North America's renewable energy capacity and facilitate transmission access;
- Encouraging the growth of green building by examining the opportunity for building owners and developers to access new sources of investment from carbon market financial instruments and the removal of trade barriers;
- Completing an analysis of leading green enterprises in North America, with particular relevance to biodiversity conservation and improve on-line resources to support green entrepreneurs; and
- Supporting North American trade corridor associations in greening transportation and accomplishing regional environmental goals.

3.3 2009 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 its 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 chart depicts how each activity supports the specific five-year objectives expressed in the CEC's 2005–2010 Strategic Plan.

In 2009, the CEC will pursue its objectives and goals via the projects listed in the following sections. Note: A complete description of each 2009 project and task-level activities is attached as Appendix A.

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 2009, the CEC will further enhance the information products and services that are central to CEC operations.

1. 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 the continuing development of a digital North American Environmental Atlas. This project will enhance awareness of environmental topics of continental scale, add value to other CEC projects, provide a framework for geo-referenced environmental data, and build networks among partner mapping organizations through collaboration on harmonized map layers of mutual interest.

In 2009, development of the digital North American Environmental Atlas will continue in several areas, including the following:

- Create new map layers of environmental themes that are seamless, harmonized, and consensus-based. These include land cover, forests, groundwater, invasive alien species, greenhouse gas emissions and power plants. 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 CEC's air quality- and PRTR-related initiatives
- Support the development of a North American Land Change Monitoring 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.
- Strengthen the CEC's capacity to use information assets to maximum benefit—with a particular emphasis on integrated, geo-referenced or "GIS-based" information. In 2009, for example, one planned output would be mapping of sites of potential avian and bat species impact from wind power development, as determined by the Secretariat's Renewable Energy project activity.
- 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.

2. Reporting CEC Results and Performance, 2005–2010

The year 2009 represents the final year of project activities in support of the specific objectives expressed in the CEC's 2005–2010 Strategic Plan. This project will prepare a comprehensive report on the results and accomplishments the CEC has made in fulfillment of this five-year plan of action. A preliminary and high-level summary of results will be prepared for consideration at the 2009 Council Session. This report and assessment will also provide the Council, JPAC and

the Secretariat with an analytical foundation for the purposes of expressing the goals, objectives and performance measures to be included in the CEC's strategic plan for 2010–2015.

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 goal for 2005–2010 is to promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefit for the environment, trade and the economy.

3. Environmental Assessment of NAFTA

The ongoing environmental assessment of NAFTA is a cornerstone of the CEC. This project will monitor the environmental effects of NAFTA and broaden the understanding of environment and trade linkages to promote policy coherence, at both the domestic and the regional levels in North America. The project also aims to support the ongoing collaboration and information exchange among trade and environment officials of the three countries, with a view to improve regional and national coordination, including between the CEC and the NAFTA Free Trade Commission (FTC).

The 2009 project activity will establish an independent panel of experts who will seek to build upon the CEC's extensive research and documentation of the environmental effects of trade liberalization and begin preparation of a comprehensive report on NAFTA at 15.

4. Supporting Sectoral Environmental Sustainability and North American Competitiveness

This project aims to gain further knowledge and policy insights on the link between environmental sustainability and North American competitiveness to promote policies and actions that will result in improvements to both environmental and economic performance.

Building on the ongoing examination of this work, in 2009, it is expected that an integrated report on *Environmental Sustainability and North American Competitiveness* will be made available to the NAFTA Parties.

5. Harnessing Market Forces for Sustainability

To promote policies and actions that will expand the use of market forces as drivers to achieve environmental improvements, with a focus on renewable energy, green building and biodiversity. This project will assist developers and conservation interests in accomplishing this global aim by identifying trade-related and other barriers to market entry, facilitating access to new and emerging sources of finance, and assessing the conditions required to increase the scale of emerging markets. Specific components will:

- Promote policies and actions to enhance the production and use of renewable energy in North America by addressing market barriers and improving regional capacity to enhance the generation, transmission and consumption of renewable energy;
- Accelerate the uptake of green building by examining trade and market barriers to products, technology and financial investment for both new and retrofitted buildings throughout North America; and

- Complete an analysis of leading green enterprises in North America, with particular relevance to biodiversity conservation, and improve on-line resources supporting green entrepreneurs.

6. Trade, Transportation and the Environment

This project has two components. First, to support the environmental performance of North American *Trade Corridors*, and to foster the transportation sector's compliance with trade-related environmental regulations, and second, to support the North American auto sector in promoting policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade and the economy with the establishment of a North American Partnership for the Environment.

Key activities in 2009:

- Work with North American Trade and Transportation Corridor Associations to enhance environmental planning and performance in transportation, including a consultation process with key stakeholders;
- Work to develop a North American *Roadmap* to Green the Auto Supply Chains, assessed and adopted by stakeholders within the Auto Sector; and
- Complete the establishment of a continent-wide partnership to green the supply chains for the auto sector as a whole, providing support for more sustainable consumption, production and trade in North America.

7. Trade Flows of North American Used Electronics

Discarded electronic equipment is one of the fastest growing categories of waste worldwide. Ensuring environmentally-sound management of it at the end of its life-cycle is an important issue, the difficulty of which is compounded by the transboundary movement of used equipment, notably from developed to developing countries. One challenge to the effective management of this waste relates to the availability of information on trade flows—the complex channels within and outside North America through which used equipment and components are sent if they are to be reused, recycled, or refurbished. No organization has yet conducted a systematic and relatively complete collection of data on North American flows of used electronics and there is no widely recognized data on them.

Better information on imports and exports of used electronics could help inform policy development in the three countries and help identify the most important issues pertaining to the governance of this sector. This project aims to characterize and/or quantify used electronics product flows within North America and between North America and the rest of the World. Recognizing that the complexity and the lack of information on this issue may limit the effective characterization and/or quantification of trade flows, this project will undertake, as a first phase, a feasibility study of limited scope of used electronic products, to assess opportunities and challenges for an effective characterization of trade flows of North American used electronics.

8. Trade and the Enforcement of Environmental Laws

This project seeks to:

- Expedite 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;
- 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

- 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. Finally, the project will make possible the electronic exchange of data on export *notifications* and *consents* to improve enforcement.

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 2009 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.

9. 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, through pollution prevention, source reduction and pollution control.

In 2009, continued implementation of North American Regional Action Plans for mercury and lindane, and development of risk reduction initiatives for dioxins, furans and hexachlorobenzene (D/F/HCB) will be joined by the development and implementation of new strategies to enhance cooperation in chemicals management among Canada, Mexico and the United States. A priority activity will be continued work to establish a national chemicals inventory for Mexico.

10. 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.

This project will also assist the Parties in meeting shared international objectives concerning the sound management of chemicals. The project 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. A major focus will continue to be assurance and control of the quality of both chemical analyses and the resulting data.

Principal outputs in 2009 include: further development and implementation of an integrated trinational monitoring network; promotion of sustainable environmental monitoring and a human bio-monitoring infrastructure in Mexico; and support for a Mexican funding proposal to an international funding institution to sustain its ongoing monitoring work.

Multiple trilateral monitoring initiatives will be developed and undertaken, including monitoring for mercury in air and water, lindane in dairy products, dioxin/furans emissions from specified sectors and PBDE in both humans and the environment. Data from these projects will support decision makers who need information to promote national and trilateral policy directions, as well as support the development of baseline and hotspot maps for persistent toxic substances.

This project supports the general objectives of the CEC's SMOC initiative and will help establish a compatible foundation of information from which the Parties can make informed decisions.

11. Enhancing North America Air Quality Management

This project will provide a more complete picture of North American 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.

In 2009 the key milestone in this work will be the completion and adoption by the CEC Council of a North American Air Quality Strategy for 2010–2015. This work is based on the Air Vision approved by the Council in 2007, and a comprehensive assessment of North American air emissions inventories and ambient air monitoring networks completed in 2008.

A direct outcome of this work will be an implementation plan for enhancing North American Air Quality Management defining objectives, tasks, infrastructure and resources necessary to achieve comparability among the three countries' emissions inventories and air quality monitoring systems. In 2009 this project will also complete the update of Mexico's National Emissions Inventory, bringing it fully into line with the tools and methodologies used in the United States and Canada, as well as updating the CEC's power plant emissions database allowing for tracking of changes in emissions, the assessment of comparability of emissions estimates, and the provision of base-level information for binational and trinational air quality management initiatives.

12. Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America

The 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 2009 will mark the third year of trilateral analysis of pollutant release and transfer data from each of our three countries. This project also will continue to examine innovative ways to improve the process of gathering, storing, and accessing North American PRTR data in order to increase its usefulness in existing or future projects or applications (e.g., *Taking Stock Online*, North American Environmental Atlas mapping, and other reporting for CEC projects).

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 2009, 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.

13. Conserving Marine Species and Spaces of Common Concern

This project has assisted the Parties in strengthening their continental capacities and knowledge baseline to conserve priority species and habitats in a region of high ecological significance in North America.

The year 2009 represents the culmination of the B2B pilot and related marine NACAPs under the auspices of the CEC. Following the successful implementation of the North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN), the CEC will be in a position to expand the NAMPAN approach to other shared ocean ecosystems (e.g., Atlantic, Arctic, or the Gulf of Mexico).

14. Conserving the Monarch Butterfly and Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods

Project activities in 2009 are aimed at supporting the ongoing implementation of the North American Monarch Conservation Plan (NAMCP) as completed and presented to the CEC Council in 2008.

The NAMCP aims to maintain healthy monarch populations and intact habitats throughout the migration flyway in North America. This effort is supported by a trilateral monarch butterfly protected-area network, monitoring efforts along the flyway in Mexico, the United States, and Canada, and wherever possible the promotion of sustainable economic activity to promote conservation of over-wintering and flyway habitat, supporting improved livelihoods in conjunction with local communities.

CEC-led activities in 2009 will include:

- Developing a plan of action to identify and support sustainable market-based approaches that will contribute to conservation efforts and the improvement of local livelihoods;
- In partnership with local communities and organizations, support targeted sustainable economic activities in the region of the Mexican over-wintering sites, which will contribute to habitat conservation efforts and improve local livelihoods;
- Ongoing support to trinational monitoring efforts to build the knowledge base of monarch butterfly habitat and population levels/distribution for informed decision-making—through targeted support to local monitoring efforts and the development of common standards for data sharing.

The year 2009 represents the conclusion of CEC-led activities in support of this plan. Ongoing implementation will be supported by conservation, community and local authorities throughout the monarch's international flyway.

15. Protecting Priority Conservation Areas from Invasive Alien Species

The objective of this project is to contribute to the protection of Priority Conservation Regions in North America from the harmful effects of invasive alien species (IAS).

The project will take stock of current work on IAS risk assessment, specifically with respect to early warning and prevention of invasive species associated with trade and economic process in North America. In addition, the project will assist in establishing a framework for potential future trilateral engagement on this issue.

Implementation of the 2009 project activities will draw to a close the CEC's efforts with regard to alien invasive species under the current Biodiversity Strategy.

16. Recovering the Vaquita and Promoting Sustainable Local Livelihoods

The vaquita (*Phocoena sinus*) is one of the most endangered marine mammals in the world and is listed as one of the CEC's North American Species of Common Conservation Concern. The purpose of this project is to support Mexico's recovery strategy for this species and to steward the implementation of a North American Conservation Action Plan (NACAP), to eliminate incidental bycatch of vaquita.

Launched in 2008, the Vaquita NACAP supports Mexico's significant commitment of financial and other resources towards accomplishment of its conservation and socio-economic goals related to the recovery of this species. In 2009 the CEC will continue to support Mexico's strategy, particularly with the application of Canadian and US expertise related to capacity building and the elimination of bycatch, as well as the exploration of sustainable economic approaches to assist the development of alternative fisheries and marine-based activity that does not threaten the vaquita's survival.

17. Conserving North American Grasslands: Building Capacity for Grasslands Biodiversity Conservation in Northern Mexico

This project builds on past CEC-sponsored work that established the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), and is committed to the conservation of North America's birds and the associated biodiversity making up their habitat. It also supports the goals outlined in the CEC's *Grasslands, Toward a North American Conservation Strategy* (2003), specifically to:

1. Support establishment of a Northern Mexico Regional Grassland Conservation Alliance;
2. Support comprehensive grassland bird monitoring and inventory programs; and
3. Contribute to ensuring the long-term protection and management of key grassland tracts across North America.

18. Strengthening Wildlife Enforcement

The objectives of this project are to:

- Stop illegal shipments, in advance and at borders, and improve enforcement capacity to ensure that persons or entities that ship or attempt to ship such illegal materials are appropriately penalized; and
- Develop training materials and exchange programs for areas such as wildlife inspection, and investigative and identification techniques.

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 conduit 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 2009, this initiative will conclude the CEC's support for Mexico's efforts to institute a domestic capacity building program on wildlife enforcement and assess the current training activities.

4 Secretariat Reports

The Secretariat's most recent independent report under Article 13 of the NAAEC, *Green Building in North America: Opportunities and Challenges*, was published in March 2008, <http://www.cec.org/pubs_docs/documents/index.cfm?varlan=english&ID=2242>.

In 2009, the Secretariat will initiate work on a new 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 2009 covers the processing of submissions, from their receipt through the publication of factual records. The submissions budget was based on a projection of the existing workload at the end of 2008, plus a number of new submissions estimated according to the historical average, using average costs at each stage of the submissions process. The budget also considers activities to promote the process with persons and organizations not presently engaged in the mechanism; collaborative efforts on timeliness and accountability of the SEM process; and official CEC participation in activities related to SEM.

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 features 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 2009, the regular session of the Council will be held in the United States.

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 2009, JPAC will hold three public meetings, including one in Canada early in the year, one in the United States in conjunction with the annual Council Session, 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 its work with audiences throughout North America.

Communications action in 2009 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, 2009 examples include:

- Air quality initiatives (trilateral)
- *Greening* transportation corridors
- Market-based initiatives to boost green buildings, renewable energy, and conservation initiatives
- Innovative environmental information products (NA Atlas data layers/Google Earth applications)
- *Taking Stock 2009*
- Biodiversity conservation (high-conservation value projects—Monarch, Vaquita, NACAP species)
- Focus on Arctic, Atlantic or Gulf of Mexico as new areas for marine conservation activity
- Chemicals management (North American cooperation)
- Biomonitoring (North American blood monitoring results, lindane)

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:

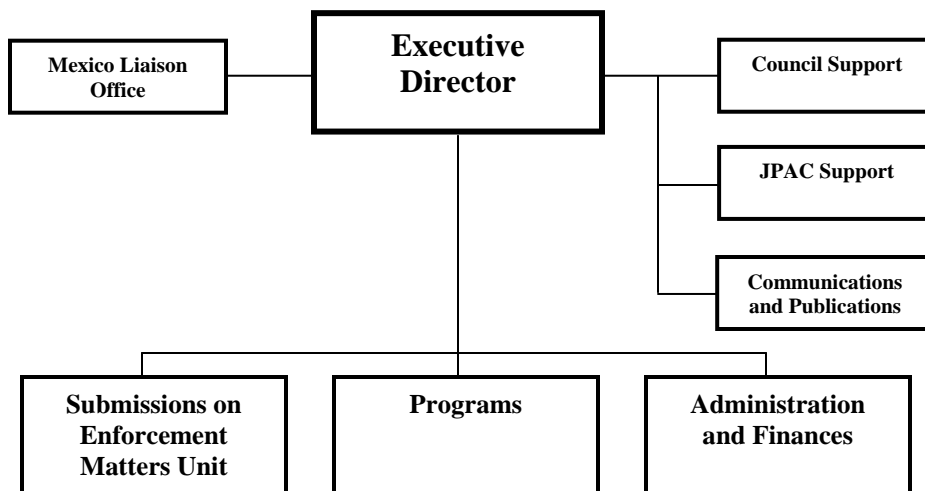
- Speeches and presentations/ presentation materials
- Distribution of publications, reports, proceedings
- Website
- Media relations, briefings
- Op-Ed/feature articles
- *TRIO*
- E-bulletins/Newsletter(s)
- Fact sheets
- Mail–Contact database
- Events

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.

CEC Secretariat Organization



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.

Appendix A: CEC 2009 Project Descriptions

Appendix B: Puebla Declaration

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 with 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.

Appendix C: CEC Strategic Plan 2005–2010

Looking to the future

Our mission

To facilitate cooperation and public participation to foster conservation, protection and enhancement of the North American environment for the benefit of present and future generations, in the context of increasing economic, trade and social links among Canada, Mexico and the United States.

*Strategic Plan of the
Commission for Environmental Cooperation
2005–2010*

17 June 2005

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Appendices

- NAAEC objectives (Article 1)
- Puebla Declaration

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.

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)).

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 groups* 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.

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.

* 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 Environment and Trade Officials Working Group.

- 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.

5.1 Information for decision-making

“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

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:

- 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.
- 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.

5.2 Capacity building

“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

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.

5.3 Trade and the environment

“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

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

NAAEC Objectives

Article 1: Objectives

The objectives of this Agreement are to:

- (a) foster the protection and improvement of the environment in the territories of the Parties for the well-being of present and future generations;
- (b) promote sustainable development based on cooperation and mutually supportive environmental and economic policies;
- (c) increase cooperation between the Parties to better conserve, protect, and enhance the environment, including wild flora and fauna;
- (d) support the environmental goals and objectives of the NAFTA;
- (e) avoid creating trade distortions or new trade barriers;
- (f) strengthen cooperation on the development and improvement of environmental laws, regulations, procedures, policies and practices;
- (g) enhance compliance with, and enforcement of, environmental laws and regulations;
- (h) promote transparency and public participation in the development of environmental laws, regulations and policies;
- (i) promote economically efficient and effective environmental measures; and
- (j) promote pollution prevention policies and practices.