

PROJECT NAME: Indigenous approaches to freshwater management in North America

1. Project duration: from November 2021 to February 2023 (16 months)

2. Two-year budget (C\$): C\$500,000

Budget Year 1 (Nov. 2021–Aug. 2022): C\$376,000

Budget Year 2 (Sept. 2022–Feb. 2023): C\$124,000

3. Short statement of the issue(s) under this topic, need/gap identified; the project objective(s) and activities to address the issue; and expected outcomes and benefits/beneficiaries (max. 200 words):

Water is at the core of the six pillars under CEC’s Strategic Plan: water management, water cleanliness, ecosystem health, marine pollution, and supporting economic sectors heavily reliant on the sustainable management of water. Indigenous Peoples’ traditional cultures and knowledge systems are globally recognized as holding critical information related to achieving sustainable practices in environmental management. As such, a fuller appreciation of Indigenous Peoples’ perspectives is essential to advancing inclusive and diverse sustainable environmental management approaches in meeting the goals and priorities of the CEC, and to institutionalizing the inclusion of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in the activities of the organization.

This initiative will document Indigenous approaches to freshwater management in North America and make lessons learned available to the public through an online portal on CEC’s website. This initiative will include a series of successful case studies identified by the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG), an exchange of experiences through a knowledge dialogue to complement the successful case studies, and a workshop with water experts on potential opportunities to apply TEK to the CEC’s operations and policy recommendations.

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

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

5. Describe how the project uses strategic cross-cutting approaches in its implementation: Innovative and effective solutions and/or diverse and inclusive stakeholder engagement and public participation (including gender and diversity effects and opportunities, and youth) (max 100 words):

In its Strategic Plan, the CEC recognized the importance of Indigenous Peoples' approaches to generating innovative and effective solutions. Water is central to the spiritual, cultural and personal aspects of Indigenous life, and these holistic relationships and intergenerational knowledge transfer inform traditional approaches to sustainable management. This project will reflect upon these unique perspectives and engage Indigenous communities, promoting the participation of women and youth in North America, and increasing the CEC's diverse and inclusive stakeholder engagement efforts. Engagement with other groups will also be achieved via an exchange of experiences through a knowledge dialogue and the workshop. This engagement effort will allow for meaningful consideration of Indigenous Peoples' perspectives when sustainable freshwater management is addressed.

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

Within each country there are diverse Indigenous peoples' perspectives and cultures born from relationships to specific ecosystems and environments that can contribute to innovative approaches in freshwater management. The CEC offers a unique platform to increase collaboration and knowledge sharing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in the three countries, and to assess potential opportunities to apply TEK to the CEC's operations and policy recommendations, while respecting data/knowledge sovereignty and seeking free, prior and informed consent. All three countries share ecosystems and migratory species that rely on sustainable freshwater management and will benefit from a continental approach.

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

Canada, Mexico, and the United States are all increasing their efforts to consider and integrate the approaches of Indigenous Peoples and TEK in decision-making and sustainable resource management, with respect to their national priorities, characteristics, and issues. This project will complement and inform those efforts at the North American scale. All three countries share ecosystems and migratory species that rely on sustainable freshwater management and will benefit from a continental approach. Furthermore, this project proposal is the result of previous efforts of the Parties, recognizing the importance of the approaches of Indigenous Peoples and communities in addressing shared priorities and goals and successfully implementing the CEC 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

8. Describe how the project engages traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) experts or Indigenous Peoples and communities, if applicable (max 100 words):

The project seeks to document Indigenous Peoples and communities approaches and TEK related to freshwater management while respecting Indigenous oral traditions and work within the respective cultural contexts and protocols, capturing Indigenous perspectives

through interviews, storytelling, and demonstrative displays of cultural teachings associated with water management in diverse contexts, with their free, prior and informed consent.

TEK experts, and Indigenous Peoples and communities will be actively engaged throughout the implementation of the project, including during the documentation of the successful case studies, the experience exchange through a knowledge dialogue, and the workshop that will include water experts from the three countries. The project will provide opportunities to increase the integration of ancestral knowledge in the CEC’s work.

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

The project will provide the CEC the opportunity to reach out and engage Indigenous communities in the three countries in culturally appropriated ways. The project will also broaden CEC’s audience by targeting freshwater experts from Indigenous Peoples and communities, NGOs, private sector and local communities, to participate in a workshop.

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):

Lead agencies or organizations	Country
ECCC – Canada Water Agency Project (Tim Gull)	Canada
USEPA – Office of International and Tribal Affairs (Wenona Wilson, Andrew Baca)	United States
US State Department – Office of Conservation and Water OES/ECW (Julien Katchinoff, Allison Davis)	United States
Semarnat	Mexico
INPI – Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas [National Institute of Indigenous Peoples] (Saúl Vicente Vázquez, María Isabel Reyes Guerrero)	Mexico
Conagua (Dulce Carolina Salcedo García)	Mexico
Consejos de Cuenca	Mexico

Other organizations/individuals (if applicable)	Country
Indigenous communities	Canada, Mexico, United States
Academia/water research institutes	Canada, Mexico, United States
NGOs	Canada, Mexico, United States
Provincial and State agencies	Canada, Mexico, United States
Community/ municipal/ regional authorities	Canada, Mexico, United States
Private sector representatives, TBD	Canada, Mexico, United States
Assembly of First Nations	Canada
Inuit Taparit kanatami	Canada
Métis National Council	Canada
Water Security Agency	Canada
The National Tribal Water Center (NTWC)	United States
Secretaria de Pueblos y Barrios Originarios y Comunidades Indígenas Residentes	Mexico
Indigenous Guardians (from Indigenous Guardian Programs)	Canada
California Fish and Game Commission	United States
Waterlution	Canada, México
Coastal First Nations	Canada
National Council of Indigenous Peoples	Mexico

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

OBJECTIVE 1	Advance the integration of TEK, Indigenous Peoples’ perspectives and stewardship practices in freshwater management led by Indigenous Peoples in CEC operations and across North America.	
Activity 1 Budget	Document Indigenous Peoples’ approaches to freshwater management in North America through six successful case studies, including site visits to each community, should public health conditions permit. It is anticipated that communities should be directly involved in gathering feedback on the possibility to synthesize information. In the case that public health conditions do not allow for in-person visits, successful case studies will be completed through virtual meetings. Year 1: \$246,000	
Output(s)	Report documenting successful case studies (at least 2 per country) of Indigenous Peoples’ approaches to freshwater conservation and sustainable use.	
Expected results, performance measures	Recommendations on how TEK can be used for the sustainable management of freshwater in North America to address different environmental issues.	
Baseline (current status), if known	Some information on Indigenous Peoples’ approaches to freshwater management exists but has not been analyzed and synthesized at the North American scale. New successful case studies will also increase the body of knowledge on the use of TEK for freshwater management.	
Target (June 2022)	Report on Indigenous Peoples’ approaches to freshwater management in North America disseminated and lessons learned shared with CEC departments to allow for their integration in CEC activities.	
Subtask 1.1	Development and analysis of six successful case studies, including site visits and feedback from communities to document Indigenous Peoples’ approaches to freshwater management in North America.	When: November 2021-June 2022
Activity 2 Budget	TEKEG-led experience exchange through a knowledge dialogue on Indigenous approaches to freshwater management in North America. Year 1: \$20,000	
Output(s)	Summary report on outcomes from the experience exchange complementing the successful case studies.	
Expected results, performance measures	Documenting Indigenous Peoples’ approaches to freshwater management in North America. Number of comments/responses received from Indigenous communities.	

Baseline (current status), if known	Some information on Indigenous Peoples' approaches to freshwater management exists but has not been analyzed and synthesized at the North American scale. The dialogue will also increase the body of knowledge on the use of TEK for freshwater management.	
Target (May 2022)	Report on Indigenous Peoples' approaches to freshwater management in North America is disseminated and lessons learned shared with CEC departments to allow for their integration in CEC activities.	
Subtask 2.1	Elaborate an outreach and engagement plan.	When: February 2022
Subtask 2.2	Liaise with other regional or international initiatives to leverage network resources, efforts.	When: February 2022
Subtask 2.3	Conduct the knowledge dialogue	When: April 2022
Subtask 2.4	Compile and analyze information collected as part of the knowledge dialogue.	When: May-June 2022
Activity 3 Budget	Assess potential opportunities to integrate TEK, Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and stewardship practices in freshwater management led by Indigenous People in CEC operations and across North America. Year 1: \$70,000, Year 2: \$114,000	
Output(s)	Workshop report. Assessment report to the Council.	
Expected results, performance measures	<p>The Parties and the CEC have increased their capacity to integrate TEK, Indigenous Peoples perspectives and Indigenous communities-led stewardship practices in freshwater management in CEC operations and across North America.</p> <p>The workshop allowed for the identification of other potential areas of work related to Indigenous Peoples approaches to address environmental issues affecting the three countries under future operational plans.</p> <p>Identification of potential Indigenous Peoples and communities' partnerships for future work.</p> <p>Number of participants at the workshop and the diversity of organizations represented (e.g., governmental, local communities, NGO, private sector, etc.)</p> <p>Number of leads for future projects.</p> <p>Number of Indigenous Peoples and communities' partnerships identified for future work.</p>	
Baseline (current status), if known	CEC projects with Indigenous communities in the three countries.	
Target (November 2022)	CEC constituents have been informed of ways to integrate Indigenous approaches and TEK freshwater management into the organisations' activities.	

Subtask 3.1	Hold a hybrid workshop (in-person and virtual) involving water experts (Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts) to share results from the successful case studies and knowledge dialogue and assess how to integrate lessons learned in policies, programs, and projects at the local, regional, national, and international level.	When: September 2022
Subtask 3.2	Workshop summary on key findings.	When: September 2022
Subtask 3.3	Elaborate an assessment report including recommendations for the integration of TEK to programmes, policies and projects in North America including to CEC's activities.	When: October- November 2022
Activity 4 Budget	Creation of an online portal on CEC's website showcasing Indigenous Peoples' perspectives on freshwater management and sustainable use. Year 1: \$40,000, Year 2: \$10,000	
Output(s)	Online portal on CEC's website on "Indigenous Peoples' approaches to freshwater management in North America"	
Expected results, performance measures	Information about Indigenous Peoples' approaches to freshwater management in North America is publicly available in three languages. All relevant materials are easily accessible on-line. Number of visitors (traffic) on the portal.	
Baseline (current status), if known	The CEC has a general section on local and Indigenous ecological knowledge but with limited information on Indigenous Peoples' approaches to environmental management.	
Target (November 2022)	The online portal has been launched.	
Subtask 4.1	Develop a user-friendly webpage and post all relevant project outputs in the three languages.	When: November 2021- November 2022
Subtask 4.2	Elaboration of videos documenting freshwater management practices for outreach and communication purposes.	When: November 2021-October 2022
Subtask 4.3	Elaborate a communication campaign to inform the public and stakeholders of the creation of the online webpage.	When: August 2022-November 2022

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12. Describe post-project expected impacts:

Expected impact (by when: month, year)	SMART performance measure(s)
Integration of Indigenous Peoples and communities' approaches and TEK in CEC operations and recommendations. Dec., 2027	Number of times the approaches of Indigenous Peoples and communities have been used as part of CEC operations and policy recommendations.
Increased visibility of Indigenous Peoples and communities' approaches and TEK in environmental management. Dec., 2027	Traffic on the "Indigenous Peoples and communities' approaches to freshwater management in North America" webpage.