

Administration and Funding Guidelines
North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)
of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

June 2011

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1. Background

The three countries in North America have had a rich history of cooperation on the environment, but with the prospect of increased trade due to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), they negotiated the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC), which came into force at the same time as NAFTA. Together, the environmental provisions of both agreements mark the three Parties' determination to ensure that economic growth and liberalization of trade would not displace ongoing cooperation and continuous improvement in the environmental performance of each country.

The provisions of the NAAEC mandated the establishment of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) to support and facilitate the Parties' work on the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the North American environment. Recognizing that ecosystems do not follow political boundaries but rather often cross state, provincial and national borders, and that individual investments made by each country can achieve greater success if a shared sense of responsibility and stewardship for the environment across North America is developed, the Parties, through the CEC, established a grant program, the North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) in 2010. NAPECA is intended to support a flexible and diverse set of project types that will improve access to resources provided by the Parties through the CEC for smaller, more hands-on organizations and that build partnerships at the community level to support healthy communities and ecosystems, encourage climate change activities through the transition to a low-carbon economy, and advance innovative projects to assist in greening the economies of all three nations.

Project types can include, but are not limited to building capacity, sponsoring demonstrations, transfer of innovative technologies, conducting outreach or education, sharing best practices, training environmental leaders, reducing risks to the environment, and many other types of non-regulatory efforts.

2. Eligible Organizations

The NAPECA program seeks to support efforts at the grassroots level. The objective is to empower and build the capacity of local peoples and organizations to improve their health and environmental quality.

Eligible applicants include nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), environmental groups, community-based associations, academic institutions, Tribal nations, and indigenous peoples and communities. Grantees must be located in Canada, Mexico or the United States.

NAPECA will not support businesses, private individuals, municipal, provincial/state, territorial and federal governments. However, proposals from qualified organizations partnering with the private sector or local government are eligible. Additionally, NAPECA will not support potential applicants who are currently receiving or applying for funding from Environment Canada for their proposed projects.

3. Grant Selection Criteria

The NAPECA grant process is designed to support projects that:

1. Address one or more of the three priorities identified by Council:
 - a. Healthy Communities and Ecosystems
 - b. Climate Change – Low-Carbon Economy
 - c. Greening the Economy in North America
2. Are environmentally significant for the community and for North America
3. Include a technically or scientifically sound approach
4. Achieve goals and measurable objectives, and clear and tangible results
5. Measure progress
6. Achieve results which are relevant to protecting the environment in the community and the North American region
7. Include a clear timeline for implementation of the activities, including a target end date for NAPECA support
8. Create partnerships or linkages at the state, local or indigenous community level, within the North American region or beyond
9. Identify beneficiaries if intended to build capacity

4. NAPECA Approval Process

NAPECA management will consist of staff from the CEC Secretariat and a Selection Committee.

Grant applicants will submit preliminary project proposals by posted due dates. The CEC Secretariat will review the preliminary proposals and will make a first cut based on the NAPECA grant selection criteria, as directed by Council in the CEC's 2010–2015 Strategic Plan and included above (Section 3). Successful applicants at the preliminary proposal stage will be invited to submit full proposals for the final grant selection round. The Secretariat will assist the Selection Committee in screening and reviewing full proposals, and will administer the grant funds. (See Section 5 below for further description of the process.)

The Selection Committee will approve or decline grant applications. It will consist of five members: one General Standing Committee (GSC) representative from each country, the Chair of the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), and the CEC Executive Director.

4.1 Evaluation of NAPECA

A performance evaluation of NAPECA will be conducted annually. In addition, a financial statement on NAPECA will be included in the annual external audit of the CEC.

4.2 Official Languages

The official languages of CEC are English, French and Spanish, and proposals may be submitted in any of these languages. The full proposals considered by the Selection Committee will be translated as appropriate and as requested by the Selection Committee.

5. Grant Application Timeline and Process

NAPECA will have one grant cycle per year, allowing sufficient time for proposal review, as well as for follow-up and evaluation of the funded projects. The annual grant cycle will have a two-step proposal review process.

Once the Call for Preliminary Proposals (pre-proposals) is issued, the deadline for pre-proposal submission will be two months later. During this period, the CEC Secretariat may provide initial feedback to an applicant regarding the eligibility and completeness of pre-proposal. If the evaluation of the pre-proposal is favorable, the applicant will be invited to submit a full proposal. The deadline for full proposals will be approximately two months after the full proposals are invited. The Secretariat will assist the Selection Committee in screening and reviewing full proposals and will administer the grant funds. The Selection Committee will award grants, which will be announced within two months following the deadline for submission of the full proposals.

5.1 Request for Proposals and Review Process

- a) The CEC Secretariat will release a Call for Preliminary Proposals (pre-proposals) that outlines eligible projects and applicants, provides information on how to apply, a decision timetable and an outline for a pre-proposal. This will be sent to the Parties, JPAC and CEC stakeholders, and made publicly available.
- b) The Secretariat will screen pre-proposals and prepare documentation for the Selection Committee. For each pre-proposal, the Secretariat will develop and manage a file. The Secretariat will review this documentation and select projects for which full proposals will be invited.
- c) When full proposals are received, the Selection Committee will evaluate proposals on how well they relate to the NAPECA selection criteria (as specified in Section 3).
- d) The Selection Committee will then approve or decline the grant applications.

Upon completion of this stage, grants will be publicly announced, including the possibility of Council announcing individual projects in the respective countries. Announcements will include: the name of the organization and its location, the name of the project, the amount of the grant and an executive summary of the project goals.

5.2 Proposal Format

Preliminary proposals must include the following information:

Personal contact information

1. **Key contact information of applicant:** first name, last name, telephone (and fax, if applicable), e-mail

Organization information

2. **Lead organization:** name, address, country, brief description of mission

3. Names of other organizations involved in the project

Project information

4. **Title of the project** (maximum 15 words)
5. **Geographic location(s)** of the project
6. **Estimated overall budget requested** (specifying currency)¹
7. **Other funding sources and/or leverage opportunities**
8. **Brief summary of how the project meets the NAPECA grant selection criteria** listed above

Full proposals will be expected to:

1. Explain more fully how the project meets each of the NAPECA grant selection criteria
2. Provide a comprehensive description of the requested funding, broken down into each of the following categories: 1) salaries and benefits, 2) equipment and supplies, 3) travel, 4) consultant services (if applicable), 5) overhead (not to exceed 15 percent), and 6) other costs.

5.3 Grant Distribution Process

Grants will be disbursed through quarterly installments to ensure that funded projects proceed in a realistic time frame.

Grantees are required to submit progress reports and financial statements to the Secretariat that demonstrate how the funding is being used to generate tangible results. These reports and statements should be submitted according to the Payment and Reporting Schedule of the NAPECA Funding Agreement. Payments are contingent on the receipt of satisfactory progress reports from the grantees and will be withheld if the conditions of the grant are not met. Approximately five percent of the grant will be held back until of a satisfactory final report is received.

Progress reports will be made publicly available.

Projects will be funded over one or two years. Multi-year grants may be considered, but funding is contingent on the positive assessment of quarterly financial and progress reports on outcomes, as well as on the availability of NAPECA funds.

6. Revision of the NAPECA Administration and Funding Guidelines

Any modification to these Guidelines must be approved by the Council prior to its taking effect.

¹ The grant will not fund expenses related to overhead and administration (such as rent, telephone, fax, photocopy) in excess of 15 percent of the total grant amount.