Project 5: North American Online, Interactive Informational Platform on Climate Change	**Operating Year(s): 2013–2014**
Planned Budget for two years: $210,000 **Year 1: $100,000** **Year 2: $110,000**	

Strategic Priority/Objective: Climate Change–Low Carbon Economy

Project Summary

The project builds on the first two phases of the North American Online, Interactive Informational Platform on Climate Change project, begun under the 2011–2013 Operational Plan. By the end of 2013, we expect to have completed the development of the Platform's database and Web services structure, and to have populated the database with national greenhouse gas (GHG), black carbon (BC) and related pollutant emissions estimates of the three countries. The phases proposed here consist of further developing the emissions database and extending the Platform to include information from other climate change-related projects under the CEC. The emissions database tasks will include populating the emissions database with available data at the Subnational level (including from states, provinces, and municipalities); populating the database with detailed information on methodologies used to achieve source-category estimates; improving cross-expert communication, via enhanced social media tools, on emissions estimation and the analysis of emission mitigation options; working with emissions data providers, establish web service access to original emissions databases and incorporate methodological information in their electronically-available emissions data sets; and promoting the emissions data web services and their use in other applications. This work will be coordinated with the project "North American Black Carbon Emissions Estimation Guidelines." The Platform relates to other CEC projects in that it will incorporate information from the work on forest carbon, blue carbon and green building construction.

Short-term Outcomes (at halfway point)

By the middle of 2014, we propose to have:

- Begun incorporation of some subnational data into the emissions database.
- Implemented a Knowledge-Management System Framework that can be used to facilitate information exchange between emissions and green-building experts.
- Identified next steps to link information from the emissions database to information from the CEC's forest carbon and blue carbon work, and North American Environmental Atlas.

Long-term Outcomes (by the end of the project)

By the middle of 2015, users should be able to:

- Explore available GHG, black carbon, or criteria air pollutant emission inventories from the most recent national and state/provincial inventories.
- Conduct side-by-side comparisons of national, sectoral, geographic, or pollutant data in pie or bar graphs.

- Access historical emission trends plot graphs.
- Access and compare information about the emissions estimation methodologies used to produce the estimates.
- Communicate with other experts about the emissions estimation methodologies, data, analyses and availability of mitigation options.
- Access information and communicate with other experts who have participated in the CEC's green building construction work.

The Parties will have identified a path forward to link geospatial information related to climate-relevant emissions, carbon sinks, and the North American Environmental Atlas.

Longer-term, environmental outcome (post-project):

Through the interaction of experts using the platform and the improved access to emissions information and other climate relevant information, the platform will lead to individual country mitigation policies and consequent reduction in GHGs and BC, along with coordination among the three countries, by way of the following:

- Improved communication among experts across the three countries and across geographic scales (i.e., national, state/provincial, municipal, company).
- Improved capacity and methods for developing emissions estimates and evaluating mitigation options.
- Improved emissions estimates and mitigation analyses.

Tasks necessary to reach the environmental outcome:

The proposed work is divided into three tasks focused on the emissions database, building on the design developed under the previous operational plan; a knowledge management system to facilitate expert to expert communication, building on information from other climate-related CEC projects; and the management of climate-relevant geospatial information.

Task 1) Complete development of a trinational database of climate-relevant emissions information and then expand the database to incorporate subnational data, improve available estimation methodology information, and implement web service connections to data originators.

Subtask	**Project outputs**	**How does the subtask/output move the project towards the environmental outcome**	**Timing**	**Budget** (activities)
1.1 Complete the second phase of Platform development, begun under the previous operational	A trinational database of GHG, BC, and related CAC emissions estimates (along with information about the	Providing such emissions information will help inform emissions mitigation	July 2013–Dec 2013	Year 1: $65,000 Year 2: $0

plan, including finalizing the database and web services structure; implementing a simple analytics framework; developing import, query, visualization, and export tools; populating the database with the most recent GHG, BC, and CAC national inventories; and developing end-user documentation.	estimation methodologies), accessible through a web-based user interface or unattended web services	policies		
1.2 Continue to populate the emissions database with information developed on the subnational scale, including available data from states, provinces, and municipalities. To the extent possible, incorporate detailed information about the estimation methodologies, factors, and assumptions used in producing emissions estimates at the source category level	Subnational GHG, BC and other climate relevant emissions information available through the Platform for analysis and download; thoroughly documented emission estimates (enabling analysts to determine how much of the differences in the estimates may be due to methodological differences and providing emissions inventory developers with a resource for estimation methods)	Additional subnational data and improved methodological information will lead to improved emissions estimates, leading to improved policy decisions.	Jan 2014–June 2015	Year 1: $10,000 Year 2: $30,000
1.3 Work with emissions data providers at the national and subnational scale to establish web service access or other direct connections to the original emissions databases and to incorporate appropriate methodological information in their electronically-available emissions data sets.	At least some of the data available through the Platform will be provided through direct access to the data originators. Thus, as data are updated by the data originators, the data available through the Platform will be updated.	Improved access to the original data will help ensure that the CEC platform is providing the latest, most up-to-date information, leading to improved policy decisions.	Jan 2014–June 2015	Year 1: $10,000 Year 2: $45,000

Task 2) Develop a Knowledge Management System (KMS—consistent with Section 4.3 of the Online Informational Platform on Climate Change Needs Assessment and Platform Design report from August 2012) to facilitate expert-to-expert communication. Incorporate content into the KMS based on information from two concurrent CEC projects: a) North American Black Carbon Emissions Estimation Guidelines and b) Improving Conditions for Green Building Construction in North America				
Subtask	**Project outputs**	**How does the subtask/output move the project towards the environmental outcome**	**Timing**	**Budget** (activities)
2.1 Implement a Knowledge Management System (KMS, such as Mind Touch) as part of the Platform, working with the CEC Secretariat.	A publicly accessible, web based knowledge management system that can be used to serve as a clearinghouse for information from climate relevant CEC projects and to facilitate continued communication between North American experts around specific climate-related topics.	Providing access to the latest information on best practices and facilitating expert to expert communication will improve the information basis for policy decisions, leading to better decisions.	July 2013–June 2014	Year 1:$15,000 Year 2: $0
2.2 Incorporate content into the KMS, based on the project “North American Black Carbon Emissions Estimation Guidelines.”	Guidelines, presentations, lists of experts, and other relevant material developed in the BC Guidelines project will be available through the KMS.	Participants in the BC Guidelines project will be able to communicate with one another as the issue continues to evolve. Improved access to information and expert to expert communication will improve decision making.	July 2014–June 2015	Year 1: $0 Year 2: $15,000
2.3 Incorporate content into the KMS based on the project “Improving Conditions for Green Building Construction in North America”	Guidelines, presentations, lists of experts, and other relevant material developed in the green building project will be available through the KMS.	Participants in the Green Buildings project will be able to communicate with one another as the issue continues to evolve. Improved access to information and expert	July 2014–June 2015	Year 1: $0 Year 2: $15,000

		to expert communication will improve decision making.		
Task 3) Assessment of opportunities to link other CEC projects to the Platform, with a particular focus on geospatial information.				
Subtask	**Project outputs**	**How does the subtask/output move the project towards the environmental outcome**	**Timing**	**Budget** (activities)
3.1 Assessment of opportunities to link geospatial information from the emissions database, other climate-related CEC projects (including the Forest Carbon and Blue Carbon projects), and the North American Atlas	A list of projects recommended for incorporating geospatial information into the platform or other CEC web application.	The development of geospatial analysis capabilities will help North American experts integrate information from multiple areas of work, creating a fuller understanding of the climate change issue and options for mitigation.	July 2014–June 2015	Year 1: $0 Year 2: $5,000

Explain how this project meets the selection criteria adopted by Council in the Strategic Plan (See below)

The goal of all projects funded by the CEC will be to support the efforts of the Parties to conserve, protect and/or enhance the North American environment. The following criteria will guide the Secretariat, Working Groups, Committees, and other appropriate officials of the Parties in considering cooperative activities for Council approval under operational plans. These selection criteria do not apply for activities to be funded through the NAPECA grant program.

- **How does the project contribute to achieving Council's strategic objectives as described within the current Strategic Plan, or as related to other priorities subsequently confirmed by Council?**

This project contributes to the Council's strategic objective of addressing climate change and advancing a low-carbon economy in North America, and builds upon the CEC's experience in providing trinational databases and facilitating trinational exchange between experts.

The platform will enable the exchange of information about climate change and climate change mitigation by harnessing cutting-edge information technology and social media tools. The platform is intended to provide information and tools to inform decision-making; facilitate

communication between experts; enhance comparability of national and Subnational data and analyses; providing standardized analytical tools; and facilitate training and capacity building.

- **Are the proposed objectives North American in scope? In other words, how are the proposed results relevant to protecting the environment in North America? (For example, what would Council members announce to the press at the successful completion of this project?)**

The proposed objectives are focused on providing information relevant to climate change and climate change mitigation in North America. Some of the products of the work will provide models that other regions of the world may adopt, but the content of the products will be limited to North America.

- **What are the specific, clear and tangible results that will be achieved and how will progress toward each result be measured over time? Identify performance measures to be used to indicate success at reaching all outcomes and/or performance.**

Specific outputs associated with each subtask have been described above. Most of these outputs are specific sets of information that will be made available via the platform. The success of the project will be measured in terms of:

- Delivery of the required outputs
- Conformity of the required outputs to available international information formatting standards
- Use of the platform by experts, as tracked by web analytics software

- **Explain why the CEC is the most effective vehicle for the Parties to undertake the project, considering:**
  - **The value-added of doing it under the CEC cooperative program**
  - **Any other public, private or social organizations that work on such activities**
  - **Opportunities to cooperate and/or leverage resources with such organizations**

Although there are many sources of climate change-related information on the World Wide Web, the CEC platform is a unique resource for information developed through CEC projects and provides an opportunity for climate-change relevant information developed in other contexts to be presented in a North American context. The information that will be provided through the platform, related to emissions, emissions estimation methodology, green building practices, and carbon sources and sinks will be valuable for public, private, and social organizations working on the issue of climate change mitigation. As was done in the first phases of development under the 2011–2013 workplan, the work must proceed incrementally with considerable consultation with the Parties and with other relevant organizations so that the work may be coordinated with and leverage the investments in related work by other organizations.

- **Does the project propose a clear timeline for implementation of the activities, including a target end date for CEC's involvement? Where applicable, describe how the work will continue after CEC involvement ends.**

This project does include clear timelines for the development of specific aspects of the platform. However, the overall platform is intended to form a lasting infrastructure for dissemination of climate-relevant information and facilitation of expert-to-expert communication. It is anticipated that the CEC will continue to invest in the maintenance of the platform and contribute to the development of the platform through incorporating relevant information from other projects.

- **Where applicable, identify with reasonable specificity:**

    - **Linkages with other relevant CEC projects, past or present, in order to create synergies, capitalize on experience, or avoid duplication**

This project builds upon a long history of CEC investment in improving the comparability of emissions inventories in North America dating back to Council Resolution 01-05 (2001). It directly builds upon efforts under the previous operational plan to assess the comparability of GHG and BC emissions inventories and to design an online information platform. It leverages a number of concurrent CEC projects, including work on BC emissions inventory methods, forest carbon and blue carbon quantification, and green building practices, and provides an integrating element to all of the CEC work on climate change / low-carbon economy.

    - **The target audience, as well as its receptivity and capacity to use the information that may be produced as a result of the project**

The primary target audience for the platform is emissions inventory developers and policy analysts working at the national and subnational scales in North America. Based on the scoping study performed last year, we believe that the audience will be interested and able to use the information provided.

    - **The beneficiaries of capacity building activities that the project may include**

Although there is not a direct capacity building element of the effort, the provision of detailed information and facilitation of expert-to-expert communication will aid capacity building efforts, particularly at the subnational level.

    - **The relevant stakeholders, with particular attention to communities, academia, NGOs and industry, and their involvement and contribution to a successful outcome**

Once the CEC makes information available to emissions and policy experts at the national and subnational levels, it will also be available to a wide range of other audiences, including community groups, academia, industry, and advocacy groups. Eventually, we expect that these

groups will be significant consumers of the data that are provided. We will track their use of the data and be able to solicit their input on further modifications and additions to the platform.