

Advice to Council: No. 25-02**JPAC Public Forum on Building Sustainable Economies: Circular Models and Nature-based Solutions for a Resilient North America**

The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC) of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) of North America:

IN ACCORDANCE with Article 6(4) of the [Agreement on Environmental Cooperation](#) (ECA), which states that JPAC “may provide advice to the Council on matters within the scope of this agreement, and may perform such other functions as the Council may direct;”

HAVING conducted a [Public Forum](#) in Mexico City, Mexico, on 24 July 2025, on Building Sustainable Economies: Circular Models and Nature-based Solutions for a Resilient North America to explore how these approaches are being applied across the region—and how their integration can accelerate the transition to more-sustainable and more-equitable economic systems;

RECALLING chapter 24 of the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA/T-MTC /CUSMA), in particular Article 24.25, in which the governments of the three countries recognize the importance of cooperation as a mechanism to “[...] strengthen the Parties’ joint and individual capacities to protect the environment, and to promote sustainable development” and express their commitment to “[...] expanding their cooperative relationship on environmental matters, recognizing it will help them achieve their shared environmental goals and objectives [...]”

RECALLING the CEC Strategic Plan 2021–2025, in which the governments of Canada, Mexico, and the United States reaffirm their commitment to environmental cooperation through strategic priorities that include clean air, land, and water; circular economy and sustainable materials management; and resilient economies and communities;

RECALLING the CEC Private Sector Engagement Strategy, which highlights the role of business, industry associations and chambers of commerce to support and promote increased participation in addressing trilateral environmental priorities under the CEC;

SUBMITS the following comments and recommendations for Council’s consideration:

Recommendation #1: Develop a Trilateral Strategy to Promote Coordinated Action Across North America for Nature-based Solutions

During the JPAC Public Forum, participants from across North America emphasized the transformative potential of Nature-based Solutions to address interconnected environmental, social, and economic challenges. They stressed the need for a coordinated trilateral approach to scale up and mainstream Nature-based Solutions across sectors—through inclusive governance, harmonized policies and frameworks, innovation, multi-actor participation, and cross-sector collaboration.

Based on these insights, **JPAC recommends that the Council develop a trilateral strategy that advances Nature-based Solutions as a central approach to fostering environmental, social, and economic resilience in North America, a strategy that is:**

- anchored in internationally recognized standards and proven success stories;

- grounded in environmental responsibility and inclusive engagement, with full respect for Indigenous rights and leadership;
- fueled by innovation and sustainable finance; and
- driven by inclusive, multi-actor mobilization across sectors and communities;

to deliver measurable, long-term benefits for people, nature, and future generations, across the region.

To support such a strategy, the Council should leverage the CEC's unique position and institutional capacity to lead and coordinate efforts between the three countries, by **creating a Trilateral Nature-based Solutions Task Force that can serve as a strategic platform for dialogue, coordination, and knowledge exchange among Canada, Mexico, and the United States**. This Task Force, led by the CEC and a steering committee comprising appointed representatives from the three countries, could engage a diverse range of actors, from local and regional government, Indigenous peoples, civil society, academia, and the private sector. Focused on aligning Nature-based Solutions policies, the Task Force would foster cross-border cooperation and shared strategic actions (detailed in Annex 1).

Recommendation #2: Advance Enabling Conditions to Support the Effective Deployment and Expansion of Nature-based Solutions

Discussions during the forum highlighted that the successful implementation of Nature-based Solutions—and the advancement of a future trilateral strategy—depends on establishing enabling conditions that support scaling and long-term impact. Participants emphasized the need to strengthen knowledge, foster broad multi-actor participation and leadership, and catalyze private-sector engagement. Therefore, **JPAC recommends that the Council focus on initiatives that build technical capacity, enhance the participation of underrepresented groups—including Indigenous peoples, communities, youth, and women—and mobilize the private sector, leveraging the CEC's unique role as a trilateral convener of knowledge, networks, and partnerships**. Three key actions are recommended to achieve this objective (detailed in Annex 2). Among them, JPAC would like to highlight its recommendation for the following:

- **Establish the Online North American Nature-based Solutions Knowledge Platform**, hosted by the CEC, serving as a centralized digital resource offering multilingual resources, technical guidance, case studies, and open-access tools, to support practitioners, policymakers, businesses, and communities across the region. The platform could disseminate public material produced by the Trilateral Nature-based Solutions Task Force and, more importantly, support additional objectives such as:
 - **public participation**, by providing accessible tools and guidance to diverse actors, enabling meaningful engagement in Nature-based Solutions planning, implementation, and monitoring;
 - **Indigenous-led initiatives**, by amplifying initiatives and case studies that showcase Indigenous worldviews, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and innovation—emphasizing stewardship-based approaches, relational accountability, relationship-building and long-term care for nature; and
 - **private-sector engagement in Nature-based Solutions**, by disseminating capacity-building training modules and resources to strengthen technical expertise, and by sharing case studies and successful Nature-based Solutions business examples demonstrating resilience, return on investment, and co-benefits.

Recommendation #3: Pave the Way for a North American Circular Economy and Innovation Corridor

Discussions at the JPAC Public Forum highlighted a consensus: North America must urgently transition to a circular economy to address the growing environmental, economic, and social costs of linear systems. Circularity is not just a sustainability goal, but a strategic, scalable, and inclusive solution that must be embedded in policy, innovation, and education. Experts and participants stressed system redesign, coherent policies, shared metrics, capacity-building, investment mobilization, innovation ecosystems, and cross-sector knowledge exchange.

To address these priorities and overcome fragmented efforts, JPAC recommends that Canada, Mexico, and the United States pursue opportunities to develop a Trinational Circular Economy and Innovation Corridor to accelerate innovation, entrepreneurship, and circular practices. As a first step, **JPAC advises the Council to leverage the CEC's convening power and technical expertise to activate two complementary initiatives that will pave the way for the corridor:**

- **A North American Circular Economy Hub:** A trinational collaboration space convened by the CEC, that could bring together local and regional governments, businesses, industry networks, academic institutions, research centers, NGOs and civil society. The Hub will aim to align policy, mobilize investment, and foster innovation ecosystems across sectors and jurisdictions. The list of actions to be implemented by the Hub is detailed in Annex 3.
- **A Trinational Online Circular Economy Platform:** A digital platform created and maintained within the hub to consolidate resources, share knowledge, and build capacity across North America. This platform will serve as a central reference for circular economy knowledge dissemination and learning, hosting case studies, policy briefs, sectoral roadmaps, training materials, and metrics, in an accessible, multilingual format. The list of key functions of the platform is detailed in Annex 4.

JPAC recommends that the Council mandate the CEC to begin exploring potential collaborations and partnerships with key actors, to mobilize and share existing resources, avoiding duplication. This will allow both initiatives to provide practical guidance and tools already developed across the region, supporting knowledge exchange, capacity building, and the broader adoption of circular economy practices.

Recommendation #4: Enhance Systemic Enabling Conditions to Support the Widespread Adoption of Circular Economy Practices

Discussions during the JPAC Public Forum put in evidence that advancing the circular economy in North America requires more than isolated projects or sector-specific interventions. For circular practices to thrive in North America, supportive conditions must be in place. Participants noted that cultural mindsets, public awareness, workforce skills, and private-sector mobilization are critical. Strengthening these enabling factors is essential to shifting circular economy principles from siloed initiatives to integrated collaboration leading to systemic adoption.

In this context, **JPAC recommends that the Council promote long-term transformation by enhancing the systemic conditions through the following actions:**

- **Support cultural and behavioral shifts that support circular economy principles:** Organize a regional dialogue or workshop to explore behavioral drivers and cultural barriers to circularity, encouraging the co-development of strategies that reflect local values and lived experiences, along with the development of a multilingual regional public awareness and education campaign, tailored to diverse cultural contexts and informed by the findings of this activity.
- **Identify skill gaps, promote multi-actor access to training, and amplify successful models:** Collaborate with academic institutions and vocational training networks to identify skill gaps and emerging opportunities in circular economy sectors—such as remanufacturing, reverse logistics, and materials innovation—while highlighting regional distinctions and shared potential for cross-border collaboration in workforce development and re-skilling.
- **Foster private-sector mobilization:** Provide funding for a trilateral acceleration and incubation initiative inspired by CERIEC’s ELEC model, targeting a high-priority sector with strong potential for collaboration across Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The initiative would operate as a living lab, where diverse stakeholders establish a circular vision for the sector, identify barriers, and co-create solutions. CEC grant mechanisms could be leveraged in the future to support experimentation projects and knowledge transfer over a multi-year timeline.

The North American Circular Economy Hub and the Online Circular Economy Platform could further support these objectives; additional details are provided in Annex 3.

Recommendation #5: Scaling Nature-based Solutions and Circular Economy in Key Priority Areas for North America’s Resilience

Building on the Public Forum, **JPAC recommends that the CEC prioritize Nature-based Solutions and Circular Economy in the following key thematic areas.**

Nature-based Solutions:

- Water: Watershed restoration and sustainable water management
- Forests and Biodiversity: Sustainable forest management (SFM) and species recovery
- Sustainable Agriculture: Regenerative farming and agroecological models
- Urban and Coastal Resilience: Green infrastructure and climate adaptation corridors

Circular Economy:

- Plastics and Packaging: Circular design, extended producer responsibility (EPR), and regional strategies to reduce plastic waste, microplastics, and marine litter
- Critical Minerals and E-Waste: Re-use, recycling, and monitoring
- Food and Agriculture: Food waste and loss across supply chains, circular bioeconomy solutions, and linkages with regenerative farming practices
- Textiles and Consumer Goods: Repair: re-use; sustainable design; and innovation in small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs)
- Construction and Infrastructure: Materials recovery, eco-design, and urban mining

JPAC is confident that the recommendations herein are relevant to the CEC Council’s strategic priorities, and its members are unanimous in supporting this Advice to Council.

JPAC further underscores the urgency of this transition. Forum participants called for a decisive shift away from unsustainable economic models toward systems that are regenerative, equitable, and resilient. They highlighted the recognition of new rights, such as the fundamental right to know when communities are at risk due to extreme climate events, as essential to strengthening adaptation and resilience. JPAC echoes this call for urgency and rights-based approaches, stressing that action cannot be delayed if North America is to secure a sustainable future for all.

Approved by the JPAC Members
1 October 2025

Annex 1. Concrete Actions to Be Implemented by the Trilateral Nature-based Solutions Task Force

JPAC recommends the creation of a Trilateral Nature-based Solutions Task Force which will serve as a strategic platform for dialogue, coordination, and knowledge exchange among Canada, Mexico, and the United States. This Task Force, led by the Secretariat and a steering committee comprising appointed government representatives from the three countries, will reunite a diverse range of actors, from local and regional government, Indigenous peoples, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

The mandate of the Trilateral Nature-based Solutions Task Force will consist of reinforcing governance structures, and harmonizing Nature-based Solutions policy frameworks through the following actions:

- Provide an inclusive space for ongoing dialogue, trust-building, and consensus development among actors, to identify priorities, challenges, and innovative opportunities to scale Nature-based Solutions.
- Facilitate trinational alignment and coherence by mapping existing Nature-based Solutions policies and frameworks across the three countries, to identify overlaps, gaps, and opportunities for harmonization.
- Lead the co-creation of Nature-based Solutions best practices, with local and regional governments, private sector, academia, and communities—integrating public participation, collaborative governance, innovation and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK).
- Promote the use of internationally recognized standards (e.g., IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions; UNDRR; IPBES) to align definitions, metrics, and implementation and monitoring of protocols for Nature-based Solutions across countries and sectors.
- Foster knowledge exchange through lessons learned, case studies, and successful models and innovations that can be replicated regionally.
- Commission trilateral research on Nature-based Solutions co-benefits, to inform evidence-based decision-making and showcase innovative approaches.
- Convene periodic trinational gatherings (virtual or in person), to encourage peer learning, intergenerational dialogue, and cross-border collaboration. The gatherings could be organized in the margins of other CEC and JPAC events, to maximize resources use.
- As part of the CEC efforts to integrate Indigenous knowledge and foster leadership, embed TEK in CEC-led Nature-based Solutions design, governance and monitoring (incorporating Indigenous evaluation criteria such as relational indicators), actively engaging Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and ensuring alignment with the UNDRIP and the CEC's TEK principles.

Annex 2. Three Key Actions to Strengthen Enabling Conditions for the Successful Implementation and Scaling of Nature-based Solutions in North America

JPAC recommends that the Council focus on initiatives that build technical capacity, enhance the participation of underrepresented groups—including Indigenous peoples; communities; youth; and women—and mobilize the private sector, leveraging the CEC’s unique role as a trilateral convener of knowledge, networks, and partnerships.

Concretely, JPAC recommends the implementation of the following three key actions to achieve this objective:

- **Establish the Online North American Nature-based Solutions Knowledge Platform**, hosted by the CEC, serving as a centralized digital resource offering multilingual resources, technical guidance, case studies, and open-access tools, to support practitioners, policymakers, businesses, and communities across the region. The platform could disseminate public material produced by the Trilateral Nature-based Solutions Task Force and, more importantly, support further objectives, such as:
 - **public participation**, by providing accessible tools and guidance to diverse actors, enabling meaningful engagement in Nature-based Solutions planning, implementation, and monitoring;
 - **Indigenous-led initiatives**, by amplifying projects and case studies that showcase Indigenous worldviews, TEK and innovation—promoting relational accountability and stewardship-based approaches that emphasize relationship-building and long-term care for nature; and
 - **private-sector engagement in Nature-based Solutions**, by diffusing capacity-building training modules and resources to strengthen technical expertise, and by sharing case studies and successful Nature-based Solutions business examples demonstrating return on investment, resilience, and co-benefits.
- **Launch a CEC-led, trilateral, online training program focused on Nature-based Solutions design, governance, and financing.** The program should be tailored to diverse local contexts and actors, including the private sector and underrepresented groups (youth, women, Indigenous peoples), building capacity through hands-on learning and peer exchange. As part of the program, convene annual trilateral gatherings (virtual or in person), to foster peer learning and cross-sector collaboration.
- **Strengthen private-sector confidence and build investor confidence in Nature-based Solutions** by developing standardized approaches to quantifying, validating, and monetizing Nature-based Solutions benefits (e.g., carbon sequestration, water regulation, biodiversity enhancement); sharing lessons learned; and convening dialogues with PYMES, large companies and financial institutions; to improve understanding of Nature-based Solutions benefits and financing mechanisms, and foster multi-actor partnerships to co-develop and scale Nature-based Solutions initiatives across sectors and borders.

Annex 3. Actions to be Implemented under the North American Circular Economy Hub

To ensure that the Circular Economy Hub is dynamic, inclusive, regionally relevant, and grounded in real-world innovation, JPAC recommends that the Council direct the CEC to do the following:

- Engage external actors and innovation organizations—such as MexHub, CERIEC, and the North America Ellen MacArthur Foundation—to co-lead activities, facilitate stakeholder engagement, and curate content for public distribution.
- Leverage existing networks and expertise to animate working groups, host thematic dialogues, and support pilot projects, ensuring regional relevance and sectoral depth.
- Foster distributed leadership by empowering these animators to act as regional nodes within the broader Trinational Circular Economy and Innovation Corridor.

The mandate of the Hub will consist of implementing the following actions:

- Convene multi-actor trinational working groups to address priority topics such as extended producer responsibility (EPR), eco-design, circular procurement, and fiscal incentives that promote policy innovation and regulatory coherence.
- Develop a CEC-led Circular Economy Guidance Framework, outlining key principles, recommended approaches, voluntary standards and certifications, and sectoral needs and entry points, to support local and regional governments and companies.
- Advance metrics and monitoring by collaborating with academic and governmental partners to define shared indicators, track progress, and compare results across actors and sectors.
- Support the elaboration of case studies to identify scalable models in high-potential sectors (e.g., packaging, critical minerals, food, fashion, construction).
- Identify the necessary animation techniques for replicating successful accelerator labs models, inspired by the work done by CERIEC'S Ecosystem of Circular Economy Accelerator (ELEC) labs.
- Promote and adapt existing training modules, toolkits, and online resources from across the region to help businesses adopt circular economy practices—covering reverse logistics, material innovation, and eco-design—tailored to SMEs, Indigenous entrepreneurs, and informal-sector actors.

The North American Circular Economy Hub could also further contribute to mobilizing the private sector for circular innovation through the following activities:

- Convening trilateral dialogues and roundtables—both online and in-person—with businesses, industry networks, chambers of commerce, and policymakers, to address sector-specific challenges (e.g., packaging, textiles, construction), hold targeted policy discussions (e.g., on extended producer responsibility [EPR], eco-design, and fiscal incentives), explore collaborative opportunities, and facilitate the exchange of lessons learned from national and subnational initiatives.
- Promoting awareness and voluntary alignment of CE standards, certifications, and reporting tools, to facilitate cross-border business adoption.
- Supporting cross-sectoral collaboration between startups, SMEs, large corporations, and research institutions, to accelerate circular solutions.

Annex 4. Key Functions of the Online Circular Economy Platform

Key functions of the platform include the following:

- Disseminating best practices, research findings, online courses, and training programs (including those developed by partners), tailored to diverse regional, cultural, and sectoral needs.
- Promoting wide-ranging access by ensuring the platform is designed to serve local governments, businesses of all sizes, communities—including Indigenous peoples—civil society organizations, and individuals as a practical reference and capacity-building tool.
- Raising public awareness through communication materials, storytelling, and educational initiatives that position circularity as a driver of economic and environmental resilience.
- Showcasing successful case studies and real-life examples, to inspire replication, innovation, and cross-border collaboration among stakeholders.

The Platform could also support other objectives, such as these:

- **Advancing cultural and behavioral shifts that support circular economy principles.**
 - Showcasing innovative, grassroots, Indigenous, youth-led, and community-based initiatives that model circular practices and inspire behavioral change.
 - Promoting storytelling and media engagement that frame circularity as an opportunity for resilience, innovation, and intergenerational responsibility.
- **Identifying skill gaps, promoting inclusive access to training, and amplifying successful models.**
 - Promoting training opportunities by offering multilingual toolkits and online training modules through the Circular Economy Platform, tailored for SMEs, and underrepresented groups—including youth, Indigenous peoples, and informal-sector workers.
 - Supporting storytelling and visibility efforts that showcase diverse career pathways and successful circular initiatives while encouraging engagement from marginalized communities.
- **Mobilizing the private sector towards circular innovation.**
 - Disseminating case studies and thematic reports, highlighting successful circular business models that demonstrate both innovation and return on investment (ROI).
 - Highlighting success stories and business cases demonstrating ROI and scalability, to foster trust and encourage investment.
 - Engaging SMEs, Indigenous entrepreneurs, and informal-sector actors in shaping circular-economy narratives and co-developing solutions that reflect diverse cultural and economic contexts.