

2022

Operational Plan



COMMISSION FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL
COOPERATION



Foreword

The adoption of the Strategic Plan 2021–2025, which outlined the priorities of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) in delivering a successful work program for the immediate and medium term, coincided with the entry into force in 2020 of a new free trade agreement between Canada, Mexico, and the United States,¹ along with the accompanying Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA).

In this respect, our renewed focus on environmental cooperation in the context of liberalized trade among the three countries is contributing to the continued confidence in our ability to make substantive progress together and our commitment to keep building on a long history of engagement with a vast array of partners and collaborators.

In seeking ways to modernize our efforts, the CEC welcomes the opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of environmental cooperation and increase public participation across all areas of our work. We are poised to capitalize on emerging opportunities to address shared transboundary issues and promote

environmental and socio-economic benefits across the North American continent.

Despite our shared ambition for greater success, the path toward sustainable development, both regionally and globally, is replete with challenges, such as identifying and supporting innovative solutions, mitigating and adapting to climate change, reducing risks posed by natural hazards and overcoming unexpected barriers related to operational effectiveness and efficiencies. Namely, the global challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic triggered the reorganization of modes of work at the CEC to shift toward virtual collaboration. With sustained improvements in the CEC's organizational capacity, there is a reenergized sense of optimism and enthusiasm in our ability to tackle important environmental and socio-economic issues and address many of the most pressing challenges of our time.

Our history of success is due in large part to the fact that the people living in the North American continent have become increasingly connected and our inherent interconnectedness through our shared environment

binds us together. Our countries offer myriad environmental features, such as vast areas of natural resources, vibrant ecosystems, rich biodiversity, and diverse landscapes that underpin our well-being as well as our identities. In addition to the recognition of our mutual responsibility for environmental stewardship, we understand the many opportunities for synergies with economic and health benefits for our communities across the region. Moreover, results achieved through our work continue to contribute to a sustainable and competitive regional economy and provide support to our citizens, including support for vulnerable and underserved communities, through efforts such as environmental justice initiatives, pollution prevention and reduction, and promoting green growth and sustainable innovation.

This Operational Plan 2022 (OP) presents the work that the CEC will implement this year, which by and large continues work initiated in 2021. This OP builds on recent successes and our strength as a catalyst for action, our unique role in promoting cooperation trilaterally, and our responsibility for implementing and facilitating meaningful projects and initiatives.

1. CUSMA/USMCA/T-MEC, available at: <www.international.gc.ca/trade-commerce/trade-agreements-accords-commerciaux/agr-acc/cusma-aceum/index.aspx?lang=eng>; <www.trade.gov/usmca>; <www.gob.mx/t-mec>

A faint, light gray map of North America, including Canada, the United States, and Mexico, is positioned in the background of the left page.

CEC Mission Statement

In the context of environmental, economic and social linkages between Canada, Mexico and the United States, the CEC facilitates effective cooperation and public participation to conserve, protect and enhance the North American environment in support of sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations.

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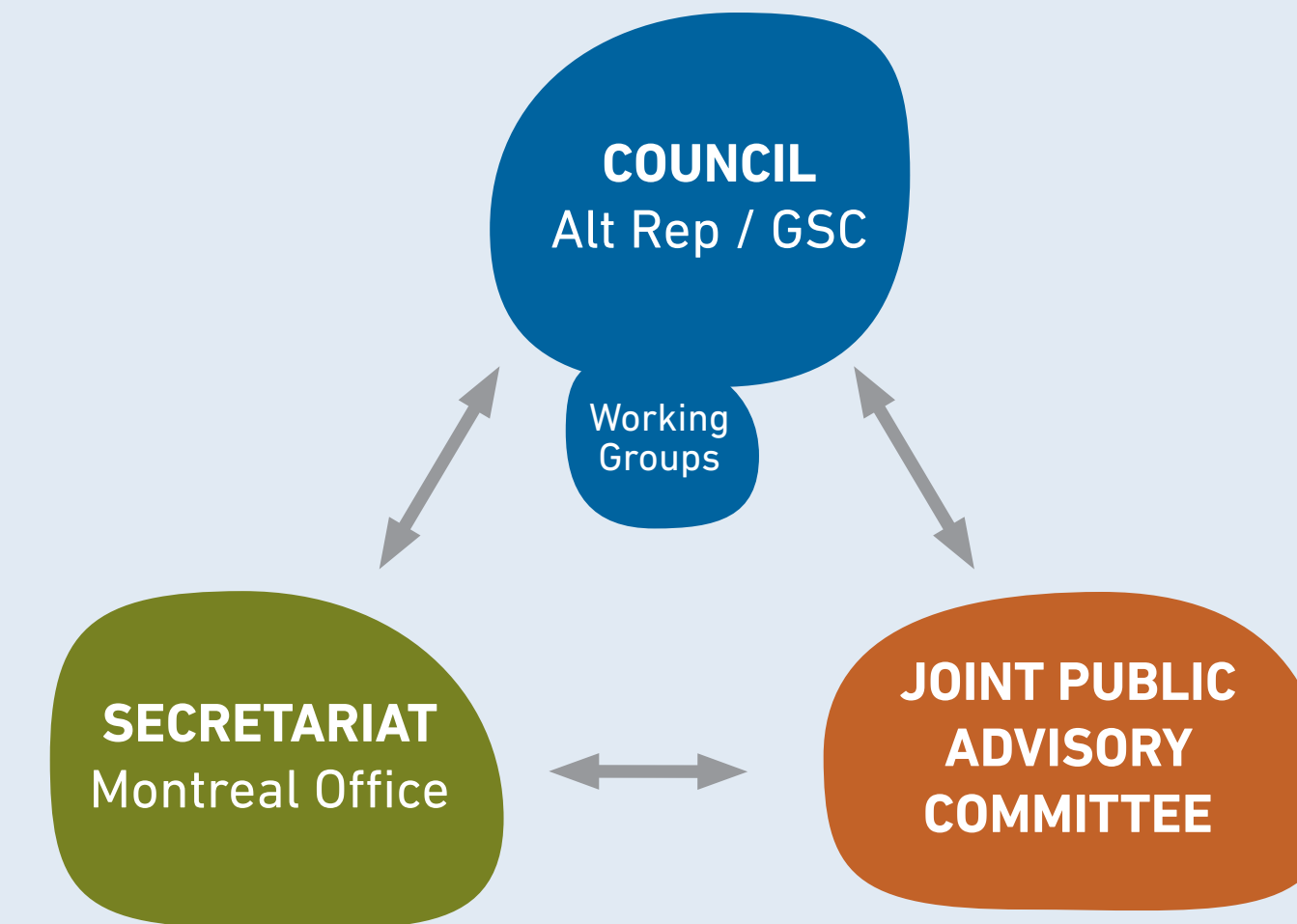


About the CEC

For more than 25 years now (since 1994), the CEC has been an effective instrument to facilitate sustained environmental cooperation between the Governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States for the conservation, protection and enhancement of our shared environment.

The cooperative work program of the CEC has helped strengthen environmental governance across the North American region in ways such as: building relations among people; supporting communities and governments; promoting effective environmental enforcement; promoting inclusive participation (with an emphasis on vulnerable populations); fostering best practices for conservation and nature-based solutions; building capacity in communities and among practitioners; and implementing restoration, remediation and conservation activities, with a focus on improving human well-being and promoting environmental justice. The CEC's mission is fulfilled through its three constituent bodies²:

2. For more information, please refer to Articles 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation available at: www.cec.org/about/agreement-on-environmental-cooperation/.



- **The Council**, which is the governing body of the Commission, comprises cabinet-level or equivalent representatives of each Party responsible for environmental affairs.
- **The Secretariat**, which provides technical, administrative and operational support to the Council (and to committees and groups established by the Council).
- **The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC)**, which comprises nine citizens, three from each country (Canada, Mexico and the United States) that advise the Council on a wide array of environmental issues within the scope of the ECA. JPAC engages the public in open forums and public consultations that bring together experts and interested individuals to identify options to overcome North America's most pressing environmental challenges.

The CEC's cooperative work program is implemented by a Secretariat staff of 41 employees (supplemented by external resources and interns). Additionally, the work program is supported by trilateral working groups of government experts, as well as through the engagement and involvement of stakeholders representing the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, academia, the public at large, as well as Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

In accordance with Article 10 of the ECA, this OP ensures that the areas of cooperation are aligned with the CEC's Strategic Plan 2021–2025. For each area, the OP identifies specific objectives, and wherever possible, short-, medium- and long-term activities undertaken to achieve results. It provides rationale for action, while describing efforts in 2022 to address issues of common interest and concern through its cooperative work program, as well as by means of direct support for community projects and initiatives.





Moreover, this OP outlines activities of JPAC and the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG), as well as other cross-cutting CEC endeavors aimed at ensuring transparency and public participation in support of environmental law enforcement, providing relevant and reliable environmental data and information for decision-making, encouraging diverse and inclusive stakeholder engagement, raising awareness, promoting sustainable behaviors, facilitating outreach efforts and fostering partnerships. The final section of this Operational Plan presents the CEC's framework to measure and report on our performance, which is anticipated to demonstrate our progress in meeting the CEC's goals and objectives and show how these achievements help the three Parties reach national priorities. The framework serves to enhance the CEC's performance, accountability and strengthen future planning processes.

Institutional Priorities

In addition to considering the commitments under the Environment Chapter of the trade agreement, with the accompanying ECA, the three Parties affirmed their commitment to cooperate on activities in areas such as the reduction of pollution, environmental governance, the conservation and protection of biodiversity and habitats, the sustainable management and use of natural resources and supporting green growth and sustainable development. This Agreement, as its first objective states, “seek[s] ways to modernize and enhance the effectiveness of environmental cooperation between the Parties, building upon their long history of environmental cooperation.”³ The strategic focus provided under the SP 2021–2025 is a major step in this direction as it encompasses the following six thematic pillars and two cross-cutting approaches:

Figure 1. CEC’s Strategic Pillars and Cross-cutting Approaches



The SP 2021–2025 reflects Council guidance and direction for CEC efforts over a five-year period and supports the development of specific projects and initiatives to be included in the CEC Work Program.

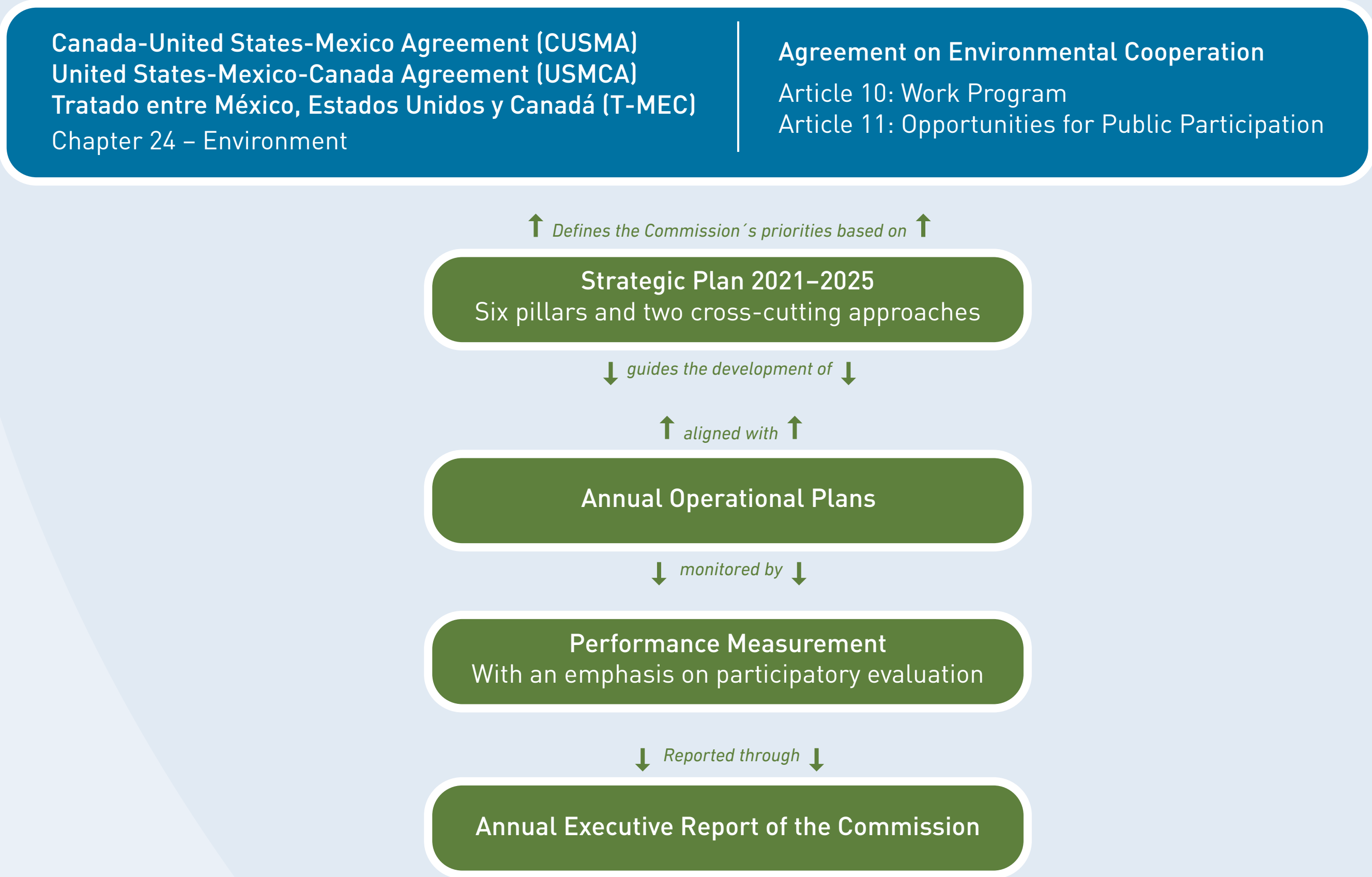
3. [Agreement on Environmental Cooperation among the Governments of the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada](#) (see Article 1).

In line with Articles 10 and 11 of the ECA, the SP promotes the CEC’s efforts to plan and evaluate its work effectively and in a meaningful manner and emphasizes the importance of strategies to increase outreach and support public participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of activities and projects. The planning process will ensure that consideration be given to the unique nature of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge in various facets of project design and management.

Given that many of the projects and initiatives are based on multi-year commitments, emphasis is put on describing which activities will take place in 2022 and how these will be implemented to help achieve their stated objectives.

All projects and initiatives include workplans, as well as performance measures and indicators to assist in monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving results (including through participatory evaluation). The latter requirement supports ECA Article 8, which refers to making public an annual executive report of the Commission. This exercise is critical to strengthening environmental governance in the North American region and to fostering transparency, public participation and accountability (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Governance Instruments to Promote Impact and Transparency



2022 Budget

The CEC's 2022 budget is based on total revenues of C\$16,812,500, of which each Party has contributed an equal annual share of US\$2.55 million, supplemented by the allocation of surplus funds from previous years' contributions and an additional contribution of C\$1,250,000 from the United States. The operational budget is complemented by staff time, expertise, and travel support, as well as other in-kind and financial contributions from the Parties and other partners. In 2021, the Council authorized the transfer of C\$6,000,000 from the CEC's unrestricted surplus to undertake a set of larger-scale initiatives and a new grant program, which are described later in this Operational Plan.

REVENUES

2022 budget

Parties' Contributions (Contributions US\$7,650,000, at exchange rate US\$1.25/CDN\$)	9,562,500
Apportioned Amount from Surplus to Supplement Parties' Contributions	0
Special Contributions from US Government	1,250,000
Apportioned amount from Surplus Funds	6,000,000

TOTAL REVENUES 16,812,500

EXPENSES

2022 budget

PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Cooperative Projects	997,500
Large-scale Initiatives	4,250,000
Council-Supported Initiatives	1,000,000
JPAC -led Initiative	300,000
TEK -led Initiative	300,000
EJ4Climate	2,500,000
North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action	0
Submissions on Enforcement Matters	345,000
Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America (PRTR)	175,000
CEC Interactive Platforms (Atlas)	135,000

TOTAL PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES 10,002,500

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE

Council Support	285,000
JPAC Support	350,000
TEK Expert Group Support	150,000
Communications	365,000
Stakeholder engagement and Partnership Development	270,000
Information System Infrastructure Maintenance	240,000
Performance Measurement and Reporting	115,000
Strategic and Operational Planning	60,000

TOTAL INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE 1,835,000

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Salaries, Benefits and Professional Development	3,480,000
Operating Expenses	625,000
External Administrative Support	365,000
Relocation/Orientation, Recruitment	250,000
Executive Director's Office	65,000

TOTAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT 4,785,000

Contingency Fund (Work Place Adjustment & Improvements) 190,000

TOTAL EXPENSES 16,812,500



2022 Work Program

Addressing Issues of Common Interest and Concern

Cooperative Projects and Initiatives

The three countries aim to develop a work program that is realistic and conducive to stakeholder engagement, while building and promoting capacity in communities across the region. CEC projects and initiatives encourage teamwork, promote outreach, support learning opportunities, and foster the exchange of knowledge, reflecting a vast array of modalities and forms of cooperation. All cooperative projects and initiatives support at least one of the SP 2021–2025 strategic pillars (see Table 1).

The following section presents cooperative projects and initiatives for 2022, some of which were initiated in 2021. Further information on project activities and budgets can be found in Appendix I.



Table 1. Projects Supporting Each Strategic Pillar

	Clean Air, Land and Water	Circular Economy and Sustainable Materials Management	Shared Ecosystems and Species	Resilient Economies and Communities	Effective Enforcement of Environmental Laws	Preventing and Reducing Pollution in the Marine Environment
Strengthening Implementation and Effective Enforcement of CITES for Timber in North America			●		●	
Grasslands Conservation and Migratory Birds			●	●		
Reduction of Marine Litter	●		●			●
Transforming Recycling and Solid Waste Management in North America		●		●		●
Nature-based Solutions to Address Flooding in Coastal Cities			●	●		
Trilateral Data Exchange System on the Import and Export of Hazardous Waste–Maintenance, Implementation, Testing, and Launch of US-Mexico API Exchange in Production	●	●			●	
Enhancing Co-Benefits of Marine Protected Areas			●	●		
Ecolnnovation Network–Transition	●	●		●		●
Preventing and Reducing Food Loss and Waste: Continued Outreach, Enhancement, and Promotion of CEC-related Products and Stakeholder Engagement	●	●		●		
Advancing Pollinator Conservation throughout North America			●	●		
Advancing Supply Chain Transparency for Chemicals in Products		●				
Community Environmental Justice Network (CEJN)				●		
Indigenous Approaches to Freshwater Management in North America	●	●	●	●		
Air Quality Improvements for Environmental Justice	●					
Transitioning Remote Communities to Renewable Energy				●		
Addressing Ghost Gear in North America	●	●		●		●
Environmental Education for Community-led Ecosystem Conservation			●	●		

Strengthening Implementation and Effective Enforcement of CITES for Timber in North America

Project duration: 24 months (Initiated in November 2021)

Context: CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) provides mechanisms to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants is carried out in a controlled manner that does not threaten the survival of species. This CEC project helps reduce illegal trade in CITES Appendix II timber species in North America by bringing together and leveraging the knowledge and roles of management and scientific authorities, enforcement officers, wood identification experts and forensic scientists, and other relevant experts to address specific needs within CITES regulations and enforcement activities.

Objective: This project will develop information on CITES enforcement relevant to the trinational North American context, enhance the capacity of enforcement officials to identify CITES timber species reaching our borders, explore methods and systems for tracking timber species in trade, and support scientific assessment of a new CITES source code related to timber species.

2022 Activities:

- Share information on, and assess similarities and differences between national legislation, regulations, and processes for implementation of CITES by enforcement officers.
- Provide training, including information on novel tools and risk assessment, to enforcement officers to improve their ability to determine if a timber import is at high risk of being illegal.
- Form an alliance of the laboratories providing forensic and research capacity for wood products identification, in order to harmonize databases, share reference samples, and facilitate accurate, rapid and expedient species identification of timber evidence.
- Identify potential methods and processes, exchange best practices, and deliver recommendations to improve North American capacity to track the origin of timber in trade.
- Coordinate exchanges and produce information to increase guidance to CITES Parties on CITES source code Y implementation in North America.

Grasslands Conservation and Migratory Birds



Project duration: 36 months (Initiated in November 2021)

Context: The central grasslands of the Great Plains are a shared ecosystem stretching from southern Canada, through the United States, into northern Mexico. These grasslands are one of the most endangered ecosystems in North America, home to many endemic grassland-dependent species that are at-risk, threatened, or endangered. The central grasslands also provide other valuable environmental services (e.g., carbon sequestration, water supply and flow regulation, and erosion control), and play a crucial role in agricultural sustainability for rural communities and economies.

Objective: The three countries have made commitments to conserve at least 30 percent of our respective land and waters by 2030. To help fulfill these commitments, the CEC will support central grasslands cross-sector, mainstreamed management, restoration, and conservation in Canada, Mexico and the United States by raising awareness on the importance of grasslands, providing new knowledge for decision-making, and strengthening collaboration, through inclusive network-building and strategic planning.

2022 Activities:

- Produce a social science analysis of challenges, constraints, and drivers for grasslands conservation, analyzing socio-economic factors and human dimensions (motivations, values, economics, needs of communities and barriers) to inform grasslands conservation strategies.
- Identify a standardized, annually updated trilateral framework for monitoring grasslands change, indicator species and methodology to track loss/gain in native grasslands.
- Create and support (virtual) events and materials focused on intentional engagement of those less represented in or absent from the Central Grasslands Roadmap and JV8 conservation strategy, such as private and communal landowners (ejidos) in Mexico, Central Grasslands Indigenous communities, and other potential partners.

Reduction of Marine Litter

Project duration: 30 months (Initiated in November 2021)

Context: As a growing problem that negatively affects economies and threatens ecosystems and potentially human health, marine litter is a high-priority global issue being addressed from several different angles. It is estimated that 80 percent of marine litter originates from land-based sources, often due to the improper disposal of items or uncollected waste that becomes litter and travels through watersheds to the oceans. To prevent and reduce marine litter, actions are needed across the lifecycle of products.

Objective: Building on previous CEC efforts, the project will build public awareness about marine litter, deploy litter capture devices, collect comparable data across the three countries, and reduce land-based marine litter, including single-use plastic products and packaging, in communities located inland along waterways and river systems in North America. By demonstrating, educating, and communicating to the public about the flow of commonly littered items downstream to the ocean, using low-cost technology and a variety of communication tools, the project will help prevent and reduce marine litter originating from inland cities.

2022 Activities:

- Install trash capture devices in small to mid-size streams or urban waterways (one inland pilot city per country).
- Implement community science activities.



Transforming Recycling and Solid Waste Management in North America

Project duration: 48 months (Initiated in November 2021)

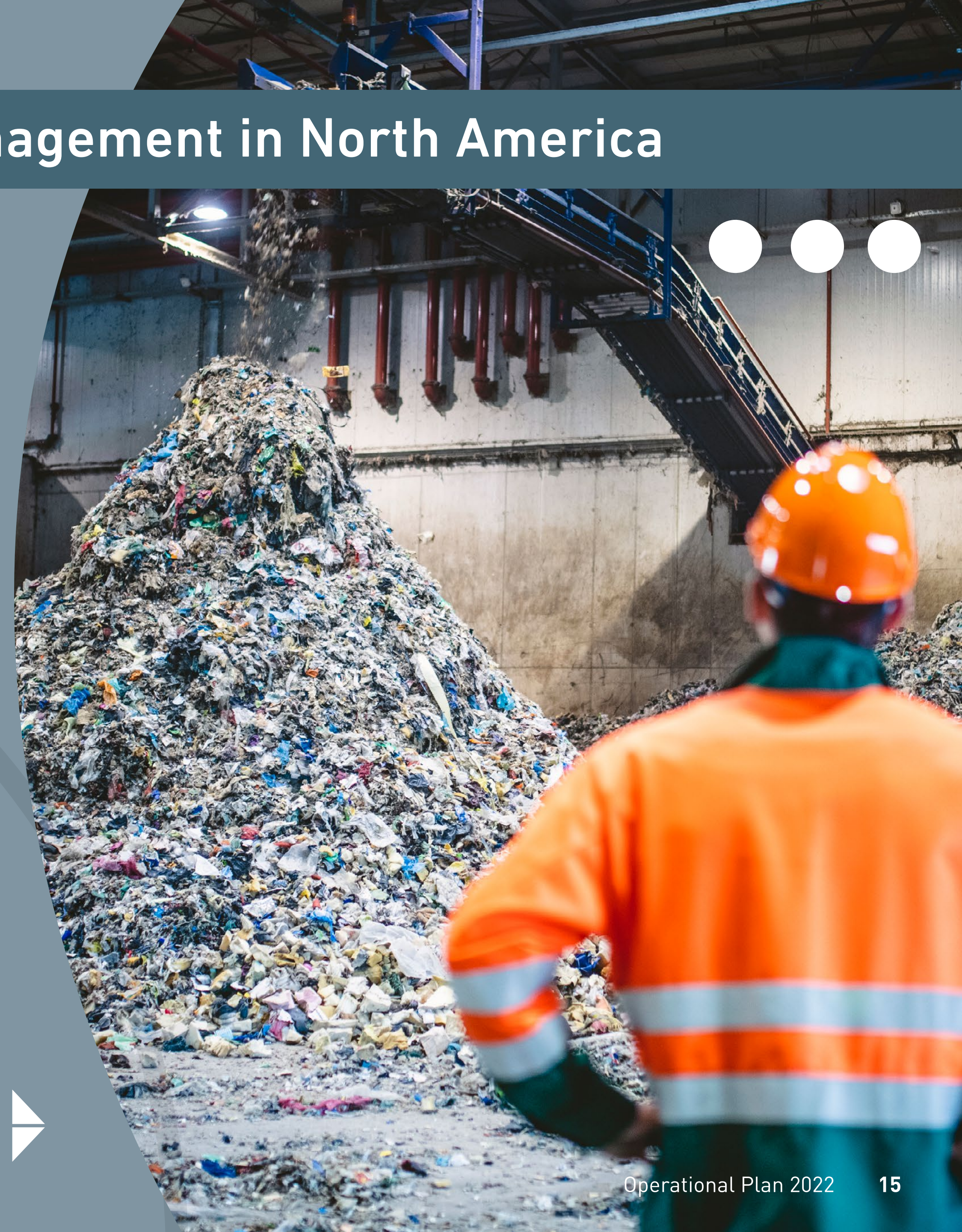
Context: The World Bank estimates that around 2 billion tons of municipal solid waste were generated in 2016, with Canada, Mexico and the United States generating 0.4-1.5 kg more waste per capita per day than the global average.⁴ North America has the highest per capita rate of plastic and paper consumption in the world. Reducing waste and closing material loops will help minimize the environmental impacts along the value chain of resources and products, as well as presenting considerable economic opportunities and solutions to mitigate climate change.

Objective: This project aims to accelerate the uptake of circular economy and sustainable materials management practices that are needed to transform North American recycling and solid waste management and to realize the economic and environmental benefits for the region. The project will address information gaps, inform policymaking across Canada, Mexico and the United States, identify potential areas for policy coherence, and advance circularity and sustainable material management practices.

2022 Activities:

- Generate milestone studies to evaluate the current state of recycling, opportunities and barriers, emerging technologies, best practices, etc., with a focus on the paper, plastics, and bioplastics waste streams.
- Stakeholder engagement: Develop a work program to identify relevant stakeholders and interested partners and promote their engagement into collaborative work on the topics related to the studies.

4. Kaza, Silpa; Yao, Lisa C.; Bhada-Tata, Perinaz; Van Woerden, Frank. 2018. What a Waste 2.0: A Global Snapshot of Solid Waste Management to 2050. Urban Development. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. License: CC BY 3.0 IGO <<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/30317>>.



An aerial photograph showing a coastal residential area. In the foreground, a road is partially flooded with murky water. Several houses are visible, including a prominent blue two-story house and a white house. The background shows more houses and a beach area with waves breaking. The image is used as a background for the slide.

Nature-based Solutions to Address Flooding in Coastal Cities

Project duration: 30 months (Initiated in November 2021)

Context: Many North Americans live in coastal cities that produce a high value of goods and services but are vulnerable to flooding. The risks associated with coastal flood hazards are escalating due to land-use changes, ecosystem loss or transformation, population growth in coastal zones, sea-level rise, changes in the frequency and severity of storms, and ageing flood protection infrastructure. Nature-based solutions (NBS) reduce flood and erosion risk through the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of natural coastal environments, and the construction of new features that mimic or work with ecological processes.

Objective: This project provides a first opportunity for NBS practitioners, working across North America in a broad range of disciplines, to lay the foundation for a North American community of practice that can offer an interdisciplinary approach to implementing NBS. It also addresses barriers to using NBS by filling knowledge gaps on co-benefits, retrofitting and monitoring, and by training practitioners and educating community members on the use of NBS.

2022 Activities:

- Establish trilateral intersectoral collaboration to support the use of NBS to address coastal flooding in cities.
- Provide knowledge and tools for communities to support NBS implementation.

Trilateral Data Exchange System on the Import and Export of Hazardous Waste–Maintenance, Implementation, Testing, and Launch of US-Mexico API Exchange in Production

Project duration: 18 months (Initiated in December 2021)

Context: Pursuant to the legal frameworks controlling imports and exports of hazardous wastes across North America, Canada, Mexico and the United States exchange notice and consent notifications prior to shipping hazardous wastes. The “Notice and Consent Electronic Data Exchange” (NCEDE) is a system developed through the CEC in 2012 to enable the three countries to process these notifications efficiently and effectively and thus protect the North American environment through appropriate control of transboundary hazardous waste movements. This is a follow-up project to the CEC’s OP 2019–2020 project “Modernizing the data exchange system for hazardous waste transfers” and is needed to consolidate the modernization of the system given unexpected delays caused by contract lapses related to the security certification for the US IT system.

Objective: This project continues the joint work carried out by the trilateral working group/Steering Committee, representing areas of authorization management for transboundary movements of waste and information technology. The aims of the project are to: 1) test implementation of the maintenance approach created in 2021 for the node-based and API-based exchanges, including, at the trilateral level, an optimization and update of the data catalogs (operational codes) developed, and the incorporation of the regulatory changes on cross-border movements between the three countries; 2) complete testing of the US-Mexico API exchange in production; and 3) ensure IT support for a full period after the US-Mexico API exchange is successfully launched.



2022 Activities:

- Regular, periodic trilateral calls to ensure a sound maintenance of the system.
- Testing of US-Mexico API exchange after US launch of exchange in production in US system via virtual meetings.
- Provide Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and development support for the IT system used by the Mexican Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat).

Enhancing Co-benefits of Marine Protected Areas



Project duration: 36 months (Initiated in January 2022)

Context: Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are key to conserving and restoring coastal and marine ecosystems, delivering many natural and socio-economic co-benefits. Over several projects, the CEC has provided a unique forum for North American MPA practitioners, bringing them together to identify and describe the marine ecoregions of North America and priority conservation areas; communicate the vital roles MPAs play for communities, the economy, scientific knowledge and conservation; gather scientific information on the impact of climate change on MPAs; and develop tools to assess conditions and identify vulnerabilities in coastal and marine ecosystems and respond to these vulnerabilities.

Objective: This project aims to enhance co-benefits by increasing Indigenous and local leadership in MPA networks; facilitating seascape-level conservation through collaboration; and identifying and sharing best practices for climate change adaptation and mitigation, habitat restoration, and blue carbon and other critical habitat work. By providing a platform to learn from Indigenous and community-led conservation and for practitioners to identify opportunities for adaptation, mitigation, conservation and restoration in their MPAs, within shared seascapes, and across the marine ecoregions of North America, the project will support the development of an ecologically and socially inclusive MPA network across North America, for the benefit of coastal and marine ecosystems, coastal communities, and a more resilient North America.

2022 Activities:

- Identify and share best practices for coastal/marine climate change adaptation, and conservation and restoration of blue carbon and other critical habitats.
- Build on existing approaches and ongoing and upcoming opportunities for Indigenous and community leadership and engagement

EcoInnovation Network – Transition

Project duration: 24 months (Initiated in December 2021)

Context: The CEC launched the EcoInnovation Network (EIN) at its annual Council Session in 2019. The Network's mission is to encourage the creation of innovation centers at academic institutions across North America and connect them in order to enhance education and provide tools for students and communities related to entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable design for green growth. As a last activity of the 2019–2020 project, a transition plan was developed to create a path for moving the Network to a new host institution. The University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) has agreed to host the EcoInnovation Network starting in 2022 and committed to additional financial and in-kind contributions in support of this endeavor.

Objective: This follow-up project aims to create a financially independent and sustainable EIN by 30 June 2023, transferring the financial, operational and governance responsibilities of the Network from the CEC to the EIN members, partners and the managing institution, and by building the necessary operation and financial capacity to continue its efforts in the future. CEC funds will be combined with financial contributions from other sources, including membership fees, project funding from other organizations, and corporate contributions from private sector sponsors and partners.

2022 Activities:

- Support and ensure the proper transition of the Network's financial, operational and governance responsibilities from the Commission to the University of Waterloo.
- Support the operations of the EcoInnovation Network during the two-year transition period to further promote the creation and interconnection of innovation centers at academic institutions across North America and provide tools for youth and communities relative to entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable design for green growth.
- Support dissemination of EIN activities to increase visibility of the network and promote activities.



Preventing and Reducing Food Loss and Waste: Continued Outreach, Enhancement and Promotion of CEC-related Products and Stakeholder Engagement



Project duration: 18 months (Initiated in December 2021)

Context: Food loss and waste (FLW) is an increasingly important issue in Canada, Mexico and the United States, where close to 170 million tonnes of food produced for human consumption are lost and wasted each year—across the food supply chain, including in pre-harvest and consumer sectors.⁵ Disposal of food waste in landfills produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas many times more potent than carbon dioxide. FLW also has environmental and socio-economic impacts, including the inefficient use of natural resources, economic loss, biodiversity loss and public health issues. Therefore, preventing food from becoming waste in the first place is one of the most impactful approaches Canada, Mexico and the United States can take to reducing the environmental harm associated with FLW.

Objective: The main goal of this follow-up project is to build upon the success and momentum achieved through the previous CEC projects on FLW prevention and reduction. The CEC will actively work to elevate the visibility of preventing, recovering, recycling, and reducing food loss and waste through continued outreach, awareness-raising, enhancement, and promotion of CEC-related products and stakeholder engagement.

2022 Activities:

- Ongoing promotion, awareness raising and CEC content dissemination of the “Food Matters Action Kit”
- Ongoing promotion, awareness raising and CEC content dissemination of the “Practical Guide 2.0: Why and How to Measure Food Loss and Waste”

5. Source: CEC Foundational Report. [Characterization and Management of Food Loss and Waste in North America](#), 2017.

Advancing Pollinator Conservation throughout North America

Project duration: 24 months (Initiated in July 2022)

Context: Pollinators support the reproduction of about 80% of wild vascular plants and 75% of crop species, and as such are crucial to food security, human well-being and ecosystems. The population sizes of pollinators have declined worldwide. This decline requires urgent conservation actions and the engagement of stakeholders in different sectors. Canada, Mexico and the United States established foundations for regional collaboration on pollinator conservation through an initial project. Over two years, the project held targeted workshops and supported a literature review to inform the drafting of a first North American Pollinator Framework. The framework highlights the need for long-term, harmonized monitoring data to design and implement effective pollinator conservation strategies.

Objective: By sharing best practices and strategies to organize and mobilize native bee inventory and monitoring, this project will lay the foundations for more robust and standardized data repositories to inform conservation actions across the continent. In addition, the project will develop tools and communication materials to raise awareness about native bees and their importance, and to drive action through citizen science and community involvement.

2022 Activities:

- Share best practices for native bee inventories and monitoring through an emerging North American community of practice.
- Communicate the environmental, social, and economic benefits of native bees for communities, food production, and natural ecosystem functioning.



Advancing Supply Chain Transparency for Chemicals in Products



Project duration: 24 months (Initiated in February 2022)

Context: A fundamental assumption in a circular economy is that materials re-introduced within value chains are safe for human health and the environment. However, a lack of composition data for chemicals in products, and industry awareness of those chemicals, poses challenges to identifying risks. Increased chemical supply chain transparency (SCT) will help governments and industry to 1) identify problematic chemicals or classes of chemicals, and suitable alternatives; 2) inform trade and procurement decisions for raw materials, product components, and final goods at various points within value chains; 3) inform recycling and waste management systems; 4) improve the ability of industry to comply with chemical reporting and other regulations; and 5) meet growing consumer demand for product ingredient information.

Objective: The goal of this project is to foster collaboration among North American countries to improve SCT and enhance governments' ability to identify and prevent products containing chemicals of concern, or chemical substitutes of concern (e.g., regrettable substitution), from entering or re-entering the economy. The information derived from this project will also help industry build resilient supply chains that respond to consumer demand for safer products and information on their chemical composition.

2022 Activities:

- Conduct a review and assessment of existing chemical supply chain transparency (SCT) current practices, tools, challenges, and regulations.

Community Environmental Justice Network

Project duration: To be determined. (This project is still in development)

Context: In September 2021, the theme of the CEC's annual Council Session focused on environmental justice and climate change solutions, two topics that are particularly relevant for vulnerable communities, as well as Indigenous and local communities, as the impacts of climate change intersect with social, cultural, gender and economic inequalities.

The Community Environmental Justice Network (CEJN) will aim to generate opportunities for vulnerable North American communities, as well as Indigenous Peoples and local communities, to meet, collaborate and share knowledge, experience, actions and resources with one another. Members of this network will contribute to the creation of an information exchange platform, as well as communications materials and other resources that support the development or implementation of climate adaptation and mitigation efforts—in short, to the creation of a virtual resources library (including lessons learned, case studies, etc.) that will be shared broadly to support knowledge mobilization in communities across North America.

Objective: The objective of the proposed project is the creation of the CEJN. The goal of this network is to strengthen the capacity of local, Indigenous and vulnerable communities in Canada, Mexico and the United States to adapt and thrive in a changing climate. By facilitating peer-to-peer learning and resource-sharing between network members, the CEJN will serve as an on-the-ground catalyst with tools that take account of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts and will focus on addressing social, cultural, gender and economic inequalities in communities, based on an environmental justice framework.

2022 Activities: In development.





Council-supported Initiatives



Indigenous Approaches to Freshwater Management in North America

Initiative duration: 16 months (Initiated in November 2021)

Context: Water is at the core of the six pillars under the CEC's Strategic Plan 2021–2025: 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.

Objective: 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 the CEC's website. This initiative will include a series of case studies identified by the TEKEG, a knowledge dialogue to complement the case studies and a workshop with water experts on potential opportunities to apply TEK to the CEC's operations and policy recommendations.

2022 Activities:

- 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.
- Conduct a TEKEG-led experience exchange through a knowledge dialogue on Indigenous approaches to freshwater management in North America.
- Conduct a workshop to 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.
- Creation of an online portal on CEC's website showcasing Indigenous Peoples' perspectives on freshwater management and sustainable use.



Air Quality Improvements for Environmental Justice

Initiative duration: 36 months (Initiated in October 2022)

Context: Black carbon (BC), or “soot,” (a component of fine particulate matter, PM) is an important air contaminant that not only affects public health but also our climate. Sources of these emissions include agricultural burning, domestic wood combustion, and fossil fuel combustion from transportation and industrial activities. Our countries’ systems for monitoring air pollution have limited coverage, with millions of people across North America living in communities that have no means of measuring local air quality conditions.

Objective: This initiative aims to build partnerships that will respond to community-identified poor air quality conditions, from exposures to high levels of BC and particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) emissions, as well as communities that potentially experience disproportionate environmental harm or risk, and/or have environmental justice concerns. The initiative will select and deploy low-cost air pollution sensors (in at least one community per country) to better document, understand, and mitigate PM_{2.5}/BC exposures in these communities, while increasing transparency and access to air quality information for local populations and decision makers.

2022 Activities:

- Selection of and partnership with communities interested in air quality monitoring and pollution abatement (at least one per country)
- Identification of the PM_{2.5}/BC sources, monitoring strategy, and mitigation priorities



Transitioning Remote Communities to Renewable Energy

Initiative duration: To be determined
(This initiative is still in development)

Context: In North America, many rural, isolated, and remote communities lack proper access to traditional electrical grid infrastructure and often rely on small, mainly diesel-based, mini-grids for their electricity supply. These mini-grids are inefficient, expensive, and contribute to local pollution. Further, ageing, inefficient generators leave communities vulnerable to power outages, including damage from extreme weather events, while capacity limitations and unreliability hinder many communities from expansion and economic growth. In many cases, Indigenous communities are disproportionately impacted by these issues. Transitioning these communities to clean, decentralized energy solutions has the potential to bring socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Objective: The CEC will develop case studies of best practices from across North America on transitioning communities to cleaner, more affordable, and reliable sources of clean energy that will improve environmental conditions, enhance energy security and promote self-sufficiency and community-ownership of energy generation projects. These case studies will be integrated in a “Multi-stakeholder Platform for Transitioning Remote Communities to Renewable Energy,” developed by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which will serve as a global communication platform on the topic of energy transitions for remote communities. It would be the first North American effort on this topic, and would provide models and strategies for countries around the world facing similar challenges. It would also be the first attempt to consolidate North American-wide proven practices on the topic.

2022 Activities:

- Development of workplan
- Review and selection of case studies



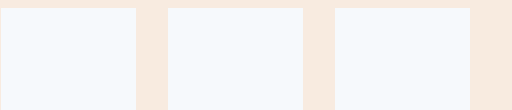
Addressing Ghost Gear in North America



Initiative duration: 36 months (Initiated in December 2022)

This CEC initiative on marine debris (i.e., ghost gear) will focus specifically on abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG). Addressing this source of marine debris is an issue of trilateral importance, as signaled by the United States and Mexico joining Canada in becoming signatory countries of the Global Ghost Gear Initiative.

This initiative will implement immediate actions to reduce ALDFG, as well as assist in developing protocols and strategies for sustainable fisheries, build fishing industry understanding and collaboration, and ensure that end-of-life fishing gear is responsibly managed in coastal fishing communities.



Environmental Education for Community-led Ecosystem Conservation

This initiative is still in development.





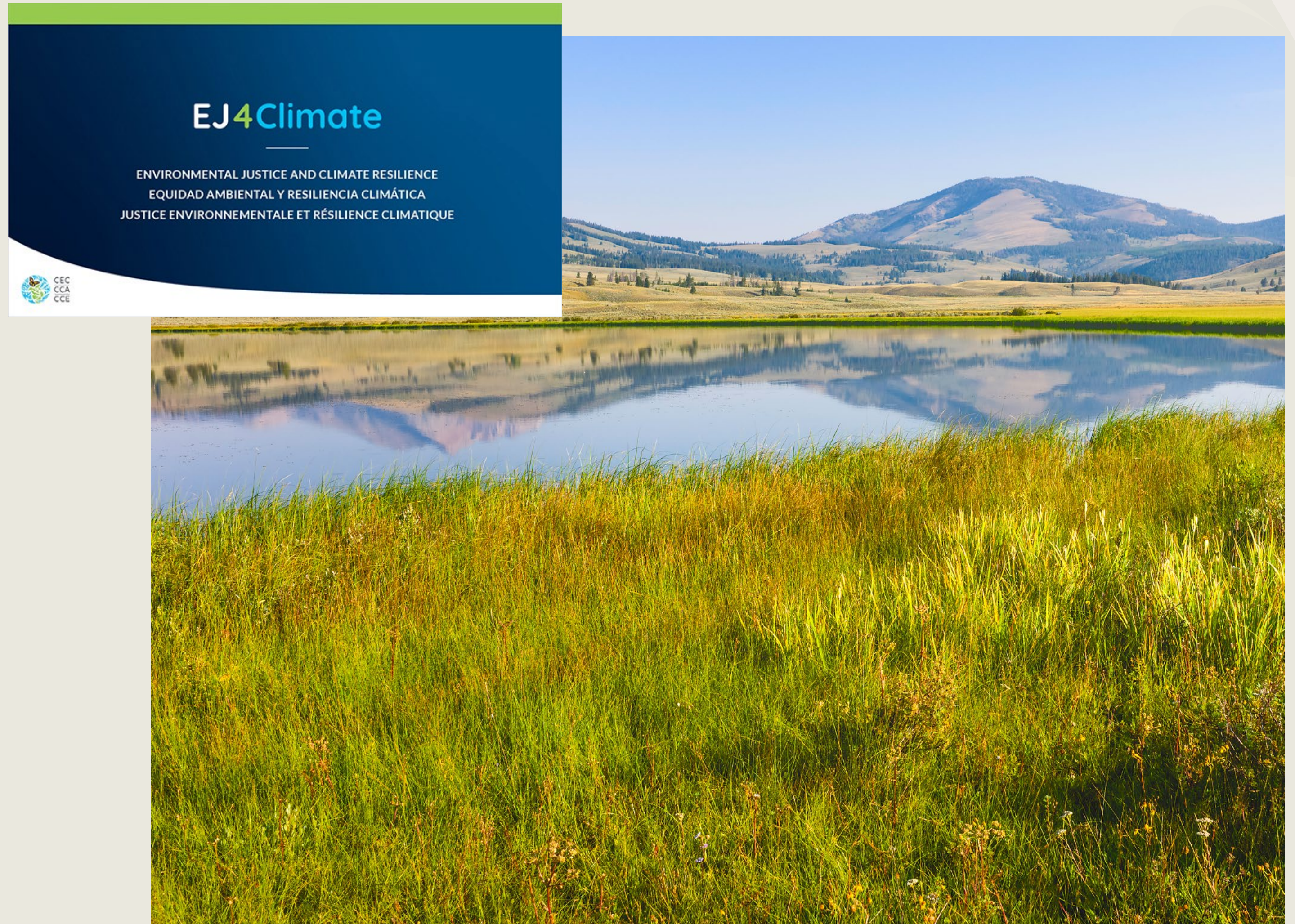
Supporting Communities



Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience (EJ4Climate) Grant Program

This new grant program, launched by the Council on 10 September 2021, provides funding directly to local and Indigenous communities and community-based organizations in Canada, Mexico and the United States, supporting underserved and vulnerable communities to prepare for climate-related impacts. Recognizing that building resilience to the climate crisis is urgent for those North American communities, this new US\$2 million grant program seeks to support environmental justice by facilitating the involvement of communities in the pursuit of innovative and effective local solutions and the development of partnerships that address the unequal distribution of environmental vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

In 2022, the following 15 organizations have received grants to deliver their community-based initiatives over a 24-month time span:



Canada

- Toronto Environmental Alliance, project: Community-led Climate Solutions for Vertical Communities, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/community-led-climate-solutions-for-vertical-communities/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/community-led-climate-solutions-for-vertical-communities/)
- The Resilience Institute, project Seeding the Future – Adaptation to Climate Impacts through Healthy Ecosystems and Traditional Plants in the Piikani First Nation, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/seeding-the-future-adaptation-to-climate-impacts-through-healthy-ecosystems-and-traditional-plants-in-the-piikani-first-nation/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/seeding-the-future-adaptation-to-climate-impacts-through-healthy-ecosystems-and-traditional-plants-in-the-piikani-first-nation/)
- Watershed Watch Salmon Society, project: Increasing the Flood Resilience of Lower Fraser First Nations Communities, While Rebuilding Damaged Salmon Habitats, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/increasing-the-flood-resilience-of-lower-fraser-first-nations-communities-while-rebuilding-damaged-salmon-habitats/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/increasing-the-flood-resilience-of-lower-fraser-first-nations-communities-while-rebuilding-damaged-salmon-habitats/)
- Gitga'at First Nation, project: Gitga'at Seafood Safety and Food Sovereignty in the Context of Climate Change, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/gitgaat-marine-food-system-resilience-in-the-context-of-climate-change/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/gitgaat-marine-food-system-resilience-in-the-context-of-climate-change/)
- Sahtú Renewable Resources Board, project: Dene Béré Harvesting Programs for Women and Youth, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/dene-bere-harvesting-programs-for-women-and-youth/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/dene-bere-harvesting-programs-for-women-and-youth/)

Mexico

- *Consejo Civil Mexicano para la Silvicultura Sostenible*, project: Rural Women Leaders in the Adaptation to Climate Change, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/rural-women-leaders-in-the-adaptation-to-climate-change/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/rural-women-leaders-in-the-adaptation-to-climate-change/)
- *Conservación de la Naturaleza en Oaxaca, A.C.*, project: Community Mangrove Restoration and Regenerative Ecotourism, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/community-mangrove-restoration-and-regenerative-ecotourism/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/community-mangrove-restoration-and-regenerative-ecotourism/)
- *Ko'ox tani Fundación para el desarrollo comunitario y la inclusión social, A.C.*, project: Women Saving to Confront Climate Change, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/women-saving-to-confront-climate-change/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/women-saving-to-confront-climate-change/)
- *Guacamayas Calentanas A.C.*, project Environmental Restoration Strategies to Increase Resilience in Rural Areas that are Extremely Marginalized, as well as Important for Biodiversity, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/environmental-restoration-strategies-to-increase-resilience-in-rural-areas-that-are-extremely-marginalized-as-well-as-important-for-biodiversity/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/environmental-restoration-strategies-to-increase-resilience-in-rural-areas-that-are-extremely-marginalized-as-well-as-important-for-biodiversity/)
- *Paisajes y Personas Resilientes A.C.*, project: Community Participation in the Development of Climate Change Resilience Strategies for Coastal Areas, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/community-participation-in-the-development-of-climate-change-resilience-strategies-for-coastal-areas/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/community-participation-in-the-development-of-climate-change-resilience-strategies-for-coastal-areas/)

United States

- Conservation Trust for North Carolina, project: Seeding Resilience in Princeville II: Community-driven Adaptation to Climate, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/seeding-resilience-in-princeville-ii-community-driven-adaptation-to-climate/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/seeding-resilience-in-princeville-ii-community-driven-adaptation-to-climate/)
- Native Village of Eyak, project: Sustainable Ecosystems and Resilient Economies through Mariculture, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/sustainable-ecosystems-and-resilient-economies-through-mariculture-serem/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/sustainable-ecosystems-and-resilient-economies-through-mariculture-serem/)
- Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, project: Silver City Carboneers, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/silver-city-carboneers/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/silver-city-carboneers/)
- Common Ground Relief, project: Marsh Restoration at Grand Bayou Indian Village, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/marsh-restoration-at-grand-bayou-indian-village/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/marsh-restoration-at-grand-bayou-indian-village/)
- Greater Baltimore Wilderness Coalition, project: Turner Station Witness Trees, available at: [<www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/witness-trees/>](http://www.cec.org/ej4climate/ej4climate-grants/witness-trees/)

North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)

With C\$7,488,903 disbursed since its launch in 2010, the CEC's North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) grant program has supported the delivery of projects led by nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations that build partnerships and drive action at the local level. This program promotes a sense of shared purpose and responsibility for the environment and has served as an important mechanism for bringing direct benefits to local communities in the region and for engaging the public in addressing the CEC's priorities. Indeed, all supported projects have complemented the work of the CEC by addressing one or many of its strategic pillars and carrying out innovative and effective solutions.

The 2021–2023 NAPECA grant program has provided a total of C\$1,500,000 to the following organizations to support their projects that help communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and increase their resilience:



Canada

- South Saskatchewan River Watershed Stewards, project: Building Pandemic Recovery and Response through Access to Safe Drinking Water at Beardy's Okemasis Cree Nation, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/building-pandemic-recovery-and-response-through-access-to-safe-drinking-water-at-beardys-okemasis-cree-nation/>
- SeaChange Marine Conservation Society, project: Revitalization of Indigenous Place-Based Conservation for Coastal Restoration, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/revitalization-of-indigenous-place-based-conservation-for-coastal-restoration/>
- N-EAT Project at Simon Fraser University, project: Enhancing Food Sovereignty & Resiliency of Remote, Indigenous Communities in BC, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/enhancing-food-sovereignty-resiliency-of-remote-indigenous-communities-in-bc/>

Mexico

- *Mixbaal Fondo para el Fomento de la Educación, A.C.*, project: Maya Peasant Community Agricultural School for Regenerative and Agroforestry Techniques, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/maya-peasant-community-agricultural-school-for-regenerative-and-agroforestry-techniques/>
- *Grupo para Promover la Educación y el Desarrollo Sustentable, A.C.*, project: Local Action to Mitigate Climate Change in Zapotec Communities of the Central Valleys of Oaxaca, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/local-action-to-mitigate-climate-change-in-zapotec-communities-of-the-central-valleys-of-oaxaca/>
- *Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro*, project: Co-generation of sustainable alternatives to confront the post-COVID period in vulnerable communities of the Querétaro semidesert, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/co-generation-of-sustainable-alternatives-to-confront-the-post-covid-period-in-vulnerable-communities-of-the-queretaro-semidesert/>

United States

- Remy's Good Day Fund, project: Regenerative Agriculture, Solar Power, and Economic Development for Community Health and Resilience, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/regenerative-agriculture-solar-power-and-economic-development-for-community-health-and-resilience/>
- Florida International University Foundation, project: Enhancing Local Food Security through the Farmer-to-Farmer Model as a Rapid Response to the COVID-19 pandemic, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/enhancing-local-food-security-through-the-farmer-to-farmer-model-as-a-rapid-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Río Bravo Restoration, project: Socio-environmental Capacity Building for COVID and Climate Change in Rural Communities of the Rio Grande/Río Bravo, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/socio-environmental-capacity-building-for-covid-and-climate-change-in-rural-communities-of-the-rio-grande-bravo/>
- Center For Large Landscape Conservation, project: Strengthening the Capacity of Biosphere Regions; Place-based Solutions for North American Sustainability, available at: <www.cec.org/north-american-partnership-for-environmental-community-action/napeca-grants/strengthening-the-capacity-of-biosphere-regions-place-based-solutions-for-north-american-sustainability/>



Improving Access to Information for Decision-Making

The CEC's online publications library⁶ and data tools and resources⁷ provide the public with access to high-quality environmental information and resources. These include scientific reports, databases and geospatial data, to support the efforts of government officials, the private sector, academic and research institutions, nongovernmental organizations and communities related to environmental research and management.

The following initiatives further the Council's commitment to facilitate cooperation and knowledge-sharing in North America toward decision-making that supports environmental protection and sustainable development.



6. Available at: <www.cec.org/publications/>

7. Available at: <www.cec.org/tools/>

North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (NAPRTR)

Supporting the Strategic Pillar 2021–2025 *Clean air, water, and land*, the NAPRTR initiative compiles, integrates and presents data on the sources, amounts and management of industrial pollutants reported by approximately 30,000 industrial facilities to the Canadian, Mexican and US pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs). These data, accessible via the *Taking Stock* report series and Taking Stock Online website⁸ and searchable database, are used by governments, industry, researchers, NGOs and the public to explore and better understand the pollutant releases and transfers reported by North American facilities, potential risks associated with these pollutants and the effectiveness of pollution prevention measures.

Coordination with the national PRTR programs will continue in 2022 to enhance the quality, comparability and accessibility of PRTR data across the region. In collaboration with the national programs and representatives of the transportation equipment

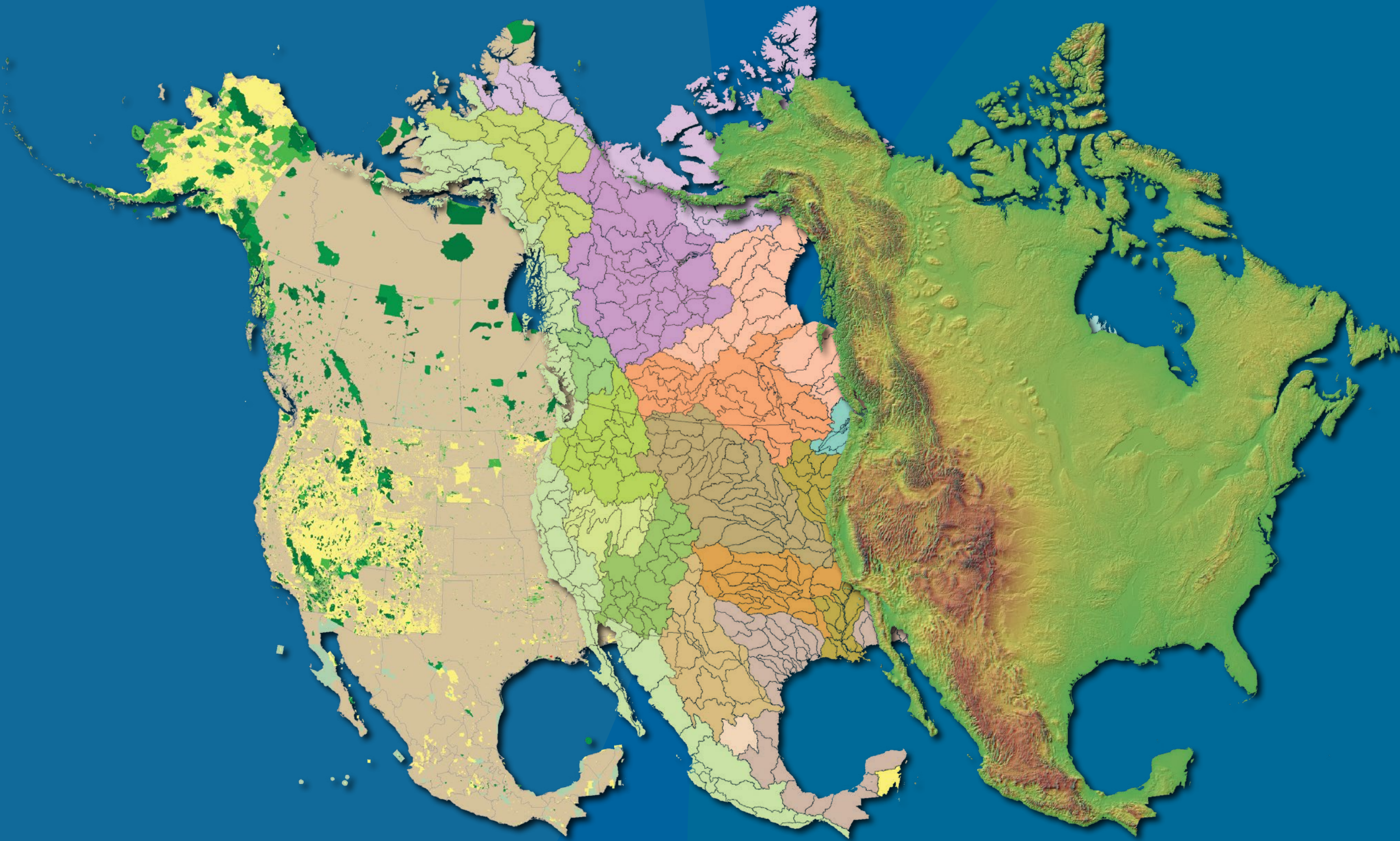
manufacturing sector and supply chain, the CEC will launch a voluntary pollution prevention challenge initiative for industries, the first phase of which involves assessing the level of pollution prevention reporting by facilities in the sector.

Access to the Taking Stock Online website will be further enhanced through a “dashboard” presentation featuring charts and contextual information to help guide data users. The site will also be updated with 2019 and 2020 data (the most recent available for all three countries). Additionally, options for providing access to facility-specific greenhouse gas data are being explored. Feedback from stakeholders on the proposed enhancements will be sought during an online workshop.

The latest edition (volume 16) of the *Taking Stock* report, featuring a special analysis of off-site transfers to disposal during the 2014–2018 period, will be published this year.

8. Available at: <www.cec.org/files/tsinteractive/index-en.html>

The North American Environmental Atlas



The North American Environmental Atlas is an online mapping resource providing combined and harmonized geospatial data from Canada, Mexico and the United States. Downloadable North American map layers can also be examined through an online map viewer, allowing a continental and regional perspective on environmental issues that cross boundaries. The Atlas supports a wide range of research and analysis of environmental challenges in North America, as attested by citations in over a hundred published scientific articles.

Activities in 2022 will focus on updating individual map layers, including (but not limited to) North American Forests, PRTR Reporting Industrial Facilities, and North American Wetlands. Additional activities and resources will also be dedicated to improving the visibility and dissemination of this online mapping resource.

The Atlas supports the SP 2021–2025 by providing geospatial information that can be associated to all strategic pillars. New and updated thematic map layers are often based on data generated by CEC initiatives/projects.

North American Land Change Monitoring System (NALCMS)

The North American Land Change Monitoring System (NALCMS) is a collaborative initiative between Canada, Mexico and the United States to monitor land cover—the observed physical cover on the surface of the Earth—and its changes over time. Through the CEC, federal agencies specialized in mapping and cartography collaborate on the elaboration of a North American product combining national datasets. The NALCMS product depicts information about land cover and land cover change in a seamless and consistent way across North America.

NALCMS provides valuable indicators to help the three countries better understand the dynamics of land cover and its changes over time and can be used in analyses for decision-making on different applications such as carbon sequestration analysis, wildlife habitat mapping, ecosystem monitoring, environmental planning, water quality assessments, and evaluation of biofuels production potential.

Activities will be undertaken in 2022 to finalize the North American 2020 land cover dataset and publish it as part of the North American Environmental Atlas, and to initiate the North American 2015–2020 land cover change product. These activities will also include the development of promotional and outreach material to connect with existing and new geospatial practitioners and engage them in the use of the NALCMS set of products.



Stakeholder Participation and Engagement Mechanisms



Public participation and stakeholder engagement are at the core of the CEC's mission. For more than 25 years, the CEC has developed a strong network of stakeholders who have been engaged through different mechanisms, including the implementation of projects, initiatives, grant programs and participation in the annual Council session, in JPAC public forums and consultations, outreach and partnership activities, and through the Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process. Furthermore, the importance of achieving *Diverse and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation* was identified as a cross-cutting theme in the CEC Strategic Plan 2021–2025, especially with regard to private sector engagement, the inclusion of TEK and Indigenous perspectives, vulnerable populations and environmental justice, and gender and diversity perspectives.

In 2022, the CEC will build on its recent successes and increase its engagement efforts with a diversity of stakeholders. These will continue to enhance the relevance of the CEC as a unique organization in North America and support its mandate for convening and facilitating collaboration. To achieve this, the CEC's efforts will be driven by existing and new guiding tools, including the overarching 2021–2025 Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Strategy. Engagement efforts targeting specific stakeholder groups will also be implemented through the 2021–2022 Youth Engagement Plan, the Private Sector Engagement Strategy, and the 2021–2025 Gender and Diversity Action Plan. In addition, the Partnerships Action Plan will inform our partnerships efforts to strengthen our collaboration with key stakeholders.



Council Session

Every year the Council holds public sessions during its regular annual Council Session. Council public sessions offer a unique opportunity for citizens to engage in-person or remotely in a dialogue with Council members and share their views on relevant topics and issues.

On 9 and 10 September 2021, the Council held its twenty-eighth Regular Session virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the first Regular Session under the new trade agreement and ECA. The theme of the Session was *Climate Change and Environmental Justice Solutions*.

On 14 and 15 July 2022, the Council will convene for its twenty-ninth Regular Session in person and virtually in Mérida, Mexico. The theme of the Session will be *Community-led Environmental Education for Sustainable Development*.

Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) Activities

The Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process is a mechanism originally established under the 1994 North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) that allows any person of a Party to raise concerns about an alleged failure of any of the three Parties to effectively enforce its environmental laws. The process, continued and now governed by Articles 24.27 and 24.28 of the Environment Chapter of the trade agreement (CUSMA/T-MEC/USMCA), aims to promote transparency and public participation by providing information to enhance understanding of environmental law enforcement in North America. The CEC Secretariat is responsible for implementing key stages of this process as per the new ECA and the trade agreement. The Secretariat is now implementing the SEM process under the stricter timelines of the trade agreement, conducting thorough analyses of new submissions, and filing recommendations to the Council whenever a factual record is warranted.

In 2022, the Legal Affairs and SEM Unit will finalize the Metrobus Reforma and the City Park Project factual record and undertake the development of any new factual records as directed by the Council⁹. Other activities will include increasing awareness about SEM in the three countries.

9. See Registry of Submissions, available at: <www.cec.org/submissions-on-enforcement/>



Joint Public Advisory Committee Activities

JPAC provides advice to the Council on a wide array of environmental issues within the scope of the ECA. To inform its recommendations, JPAC engages the public through open forums and other stakeholder engagement mechanisms that bring together experts on North America's most pressing environmental issues. JPAC subsequently submits its recommendations to Council in the form of an Advice.¹⁰ As the core mechanism for transparency and public participation in the CEC's work, JPAC will continue to engage extensively with stakeholders and the public in all three countries through public forums and consultations; and will provide advice to the Council on matters within the scope of the ECA.

With Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Indigenous perspectives as cross-cutting approaches, JPAC's 2022 annual plan of activities will focus on the following broad topics and issues of interest described in the Strategic Plan 2021–2025:

- Increased collaboration with the other CEC constituent bodies and the TEK Expert Group (TEKEG)
- Climate change
- Water
- Trade and environment

10. The documents archive can be found at: <www.cec.org/documents/?q=&category=advice-to-council>





To achieve this, JPAC members proposed the following activities:

- Public consultations
- Meetings with the other CEC constituent bodies and the TEK Expert Group (TEKEG)
- Pre-Council Session workshop in Tlalmanalco, Mexico, with Indigenous communities, youth, and other key constituents
- JPAC Public Forum (hybrid) on environmental education within the margins of the Council Session in Mérida, Mexico
- JPAC Regular Session 22-02 in Canada (Exact theme TBD)
- Post-Council Session workshop with youth and Indigenous communities (virtual) (TBC)
- Virtual round table on trade and environment
- JPAC-led initiative

By considering TEK and Indigenous perspectives as part of all its activities and by increasing collaboration with the TEKEG, JPAC's work will contribute to the *Resilient Economies and Communities* strategic pillar and will employ the: *Innovative and Effective Solutions and Diverse and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation* cross-cutting approaches.

The JPAC Public Forum on environmental education will also showcase initiatives led by local communities and offer a platform for communities to learn from each other and increase their resilience which supports the *Resilient Economies and Communities* strategic pillar. JPAC will continue its efforts to reach new and diverse stakeholders as part of all its public engagement activities in collaboration with the CEC secretariat in support to the cross-cutting approach

Diverse and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation. Finally, JPAC will also develop and lead a new initiative starting in 2022. The initiative is in development.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group Activities

Working with experts in traditional environmental practices from across North America has had an invaluable impact on CEC work, by contributing to an improved understanding of ecological processes and ultimately to enhanced better results for the environment.

The Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG),¹¹ created in 2014, is the first traditional ecological knowledge panel to provide advice to an intergovernmental organization such as the CEC. This recognizes the importance of preserving the traditional knowledge and practices of local and Indigenous communities to help address the effects of climate change and contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and to the protection of biodiversity.

The CEC will continue working with the TEKEG to inform, support and enhance CEC engagement activities, and identify and incorporate traditional ecological knowledge, Indigenous perspectives and stewardship practices into its activities and policy recommendations, as appropriate. In 2022, this will be done through the implementation of a TEKEG-led initiative on *Indigenous approaches to freshwater management in North America*, among others. This project will help inform how to better integrate TEK and Indigenous perspectives into CEC activities and it will support the following strategic pillars: *Clean Air, Land and Water; Circular Economy and Sustainable Materials Management, Shared Ecosystems and Species; Resilient Economies and Communities*. The TEKEG will also develop and lead a new initiative starting in 2022. The initiative is still in development.

11. For more information about the TEKEG, please visit: <www.cec.org/about/traditional-ecological-knowledge-expert-group/>



Outreach and Partnerships Activities

The CEC recognizes the importance of increasing both its regional and international presence, and its crucial role in ensuring a sustained and substantial effort in promoting trilateral cooperation in North America. Activities aimed at ensuring sustained engagement and strengthened relationships with stakeholders and collaborators, that develop and maintain partnership linkages and channels as well, will be managed to optimize resources and impact.

Outreach and partnership efforts will continue to be guided by the 2021–2025 Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Strategy and will focus on strengthening the relationship with collaborators and partners. Outreach efforts will highlight CEC's leading role in convening key collaborators and will focus on the implementation of innovative engagement tools and communication channels for key target audiences, such as youth, in alignment with the 2021–2022 Youth Engagement Plan. Engagement with the private sector will also be enhanced by expanding and reinvigorating CEC's engagement efforts with that group in alignment with the Private Sector Engagement Strategy. Finally, diverse and inclusive tactics will be implemented to foster broader engagement in line with the 2021–2025 Gender and Diversity Action Plan.

Enhancing Visibility and Public Awareness of CEC's Work

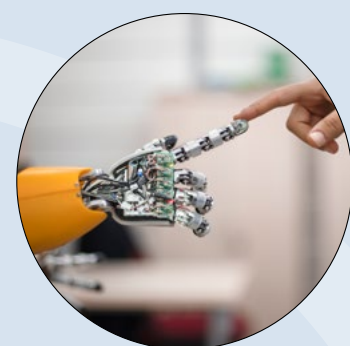


To increase public participation in the implementation of this OP and harness the momentum building across North America for action on environment and sustainable development, the CEC will communicate with an array of target audiences on its trilateral activities and priorities as well as on issues of common concern and interest for Canada, Mexico and the United States. These objectives will be achieved through CEC publications, media releases, more frequent newsletters, new audiovisual products, participation in events, more robust social media, a modern web presence, and by utilizing emerging regional and international opportunities.



The overarching goal of CEC's communications efforts will be a growing and widespread recognition, both regionally and globally, of CEC's values, relevance, leadership and distinct role in catalyzing sustainable development. The three guiding objectives of the 2022–2023 Strategic Communications Action Plan will be to enhance visibility, public awareness and understanding of CEC's work and role in environmental cooperation and public participation; modernize access to information for decision-makers and interested individuals and groups that can make a difference with their actions; and improve modes of communication to facilitate public participation and promote diverse and inclusive stakeholder engagement.

Efforts to increase CEC visibility will include promoting attendance and participation in national and international fora and facilitating joint events.



Measuring Performance and Reporting on Progress

The Planning and Performance framework activities at the CEC are powerful mechanisms to strengthen environmental governance. Evaluation of the CEC's work must account for the different benefits generated from its focus on public participation and stakeholder engagement.¹²

To account for these benefits, the CEC will refine its approach and techniques in measuring performance and reporting on how its activities help deliver on the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 priorities. This will help determine the extent to which the CEC has directly and specifically contributed to the achievement of the ECA objectives. Through this user-based evaluation method, stakeholders and collaborators will be able to contribute to the assessment of our efforts, as it will encourage the participation of the audience involved in the activities. This evolving approach calls for innovative thinking about the way we incorporate a wide diversity of voices, which will be used to bring about improvements and positive change to existing practices.

In 2022, activities will also include the long-term impact assessment of CEC projects and initiatives, which, in turn, will feed into the planning and design of future work by the CEC.

12. For more information about public participation evaluation and its benefits, please read: Complexity Thinking to Evaluation. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 47(2), 177-197.; and Creighton, James. 2005. *The Public Participation Handbook: Making Better Decisions through Citizen Involvement*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



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