

# Operational Plan 2025



COMMISSION FOR  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COOPERATION



# CEC Mission

*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.*

## Table of contents

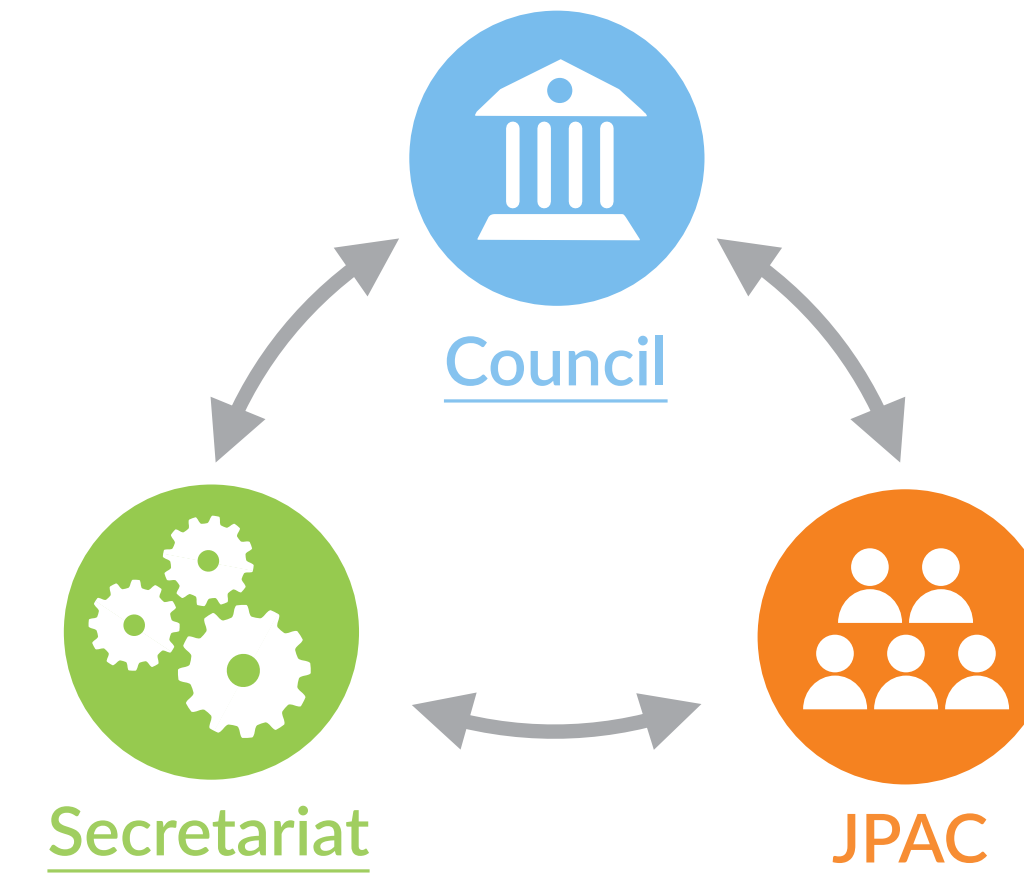
About the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)	2
2025 Budget	6
2025 Work Program	7
Council Initiatives	22
Grant Programs	33
Improving Access to Information for Decision-Making	36
Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) Process	42
Public Participation and Engagement	45
Enhancing Visibility and Public Awareness of CEC’s Work	56
Administration	57
Strategic Planning, Measuring Performance and Reporting on Progress	58
An Effective Model of Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges	59

## About the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

Since 1994, the CEC has played a pivotal role in fostering and sustaining 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 the following ways: building relations among people; supporting communities and governments; promoting effective environmental enforcement; advancing inclusive participation; fostering best practices for conservation and nature-based solutions; building capacity in communities and among practitioners; and implementing restoration, remediation and conservation activities that have focused on improving human well-being and working to reduce pollution inequities, particularly in the most environmentally-vulnerable communities. The CEC's mission is fulfilled through its three constituent bodies, with the support of various key actors:<sup>1</sup>

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



### The Three Constituent Bodies of the CEC

**The Council** is the governing body of the Commission and is composed of cabinet-level or equivalent representatives of each Party responsible for environmental affairs.

**The Secretariat** provides technical, administrative and operational support to the Council (and to committees and groups established by the Council).

**The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC)** is composed of nine members, three from each Party, who advise the Council on a wide array of environmental issues within the scope of the Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA). The alignment with the ECA is described in the following section. JPAC engages the public in open forums and public consultations, bringing together experts and interested individuals to identify options to address North America's most pressing environmental challenges.



The CEC's cooperative work program is implemented by a Secretariat staff of 46 employees<sup>2</sup> (supplemented by external personnel, who contribute to on-demand needs such as translations, editing, or other project work). In addition, the work program is supported by trilateral working groups of government experts, as well as through the engagement and involvement of interested groups and individuals representing Indigenous Peoples and local communities, nongovernmental organizations, academia, youth, the public at large, as well as the members of the private sector.

2. Information as of December 2024.

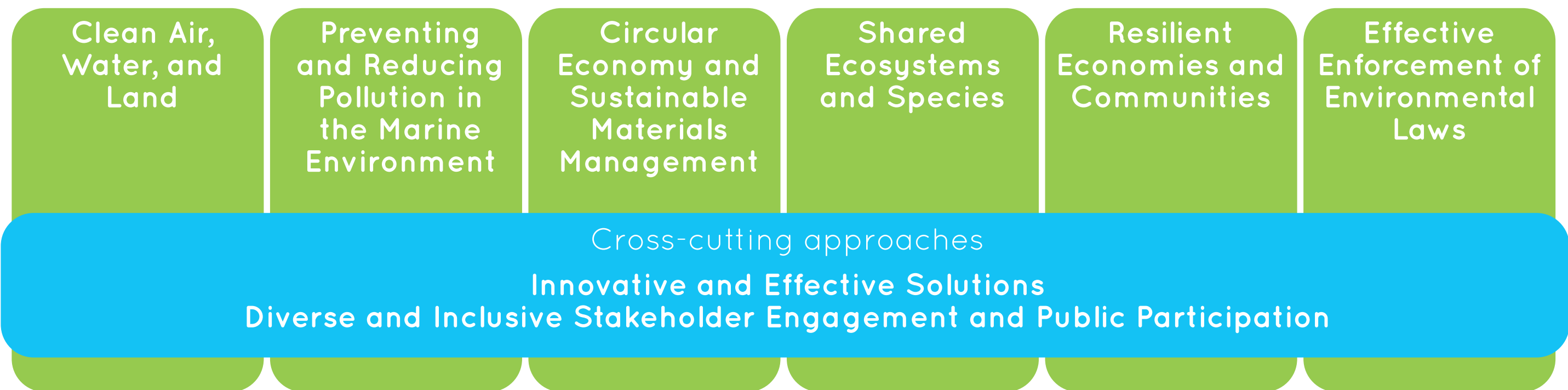




# Setting and Implementing Strategic Priorities

Guided by the Environment Chapter (Chapter 24) of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement<sup>3</sup> (“Trade Agreement”) and under the accompanying Environment Cooperation Agreement (ECA)<sup>4</sup>, the three Parties have affirmed their engagement to cooperate in promoting sustainable development and address shared environmental challenges across North America. Trilateral cooperative work has focused on addressing such topics as reducing pollution; promoting climate mitigation and adaptation for vulnerable communities; advancing environmental governance; conserving and protecting biodiversity and habitat; the sustainable management and use of natural resources; supporting sustainable economies and livelihoods; advancing meaningful participation, diversity and inclusivity, equity and non-discrimination; strengthening community resilience; data management and access to environmental tools; engaging Indigenous communities and considering Indigenous perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge.

Figure 1. CEC’s 2021-2025 Strategic Pillars and Cross-cutting Approaches



The ECA, 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.”<sup>4</sup> The Parties provide the CEC strategic focus under the [Strategic Plan \(SP\) 2021-2025](#). The SP 2021-2025 encompasses six thematic pillars and two cross-cutting approaches, see Figure 1, ensuring the work under the CEC is aligned with the Parties’ shared environmental commitments. Under the Council’s stewardship and direction, the SP 2021-2025 guides CEC efforts over a five-year period and supports the development of specific activities, projects, and initiatives to be included in the CEC’s work program.

3. Chapter 24 of CUSMA/USMCA/TMEC, available at: <<http://www.cec.org/files/documents/sem/chapter24-environment.pdf>>.  
4. Agreement on Environmental Cooperation among the Governments of the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada, available at: <<http://www.cec.org/about/agreement-on-environmental-cooperation/>>.

In line with Articles 10 and 11 of the ECA, the SP 2021–2025 helps the CEC align its work along Party priorities: increasing outreach and supporting public participation, engagement, and partnerships in the development, implementation and monitoring of activities and projects. The planning process promotes an inclusive and intersectional approach to the CEC’s engagement, ensuring that all views and partners, particularly the most vulnerable, are integrated in the CEC’s work. It also ensures that consideration be given to Indigenous perspectives, and that traditional ecological knowledge is incorporated into various facets of project design and management.

Emphasis is put in this Operational Plan on describing activities taking place in 2025 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 report of the Commission. This exercise is critical to strengthening environmental governance in the North American region and to fostering transparency, inclusive public participation and accountability (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Governance Instruments to Promote Impact and Transparency





# 2025 Budget

(All figures are in Canadian dollars.)

The allocated budget to support CEC operations and project development for the calendar year is C\$13,882,500. The table below provides line items for the main expense categories and the budget allocated for them.

REVENUES	
Parties' Contributions (Contributions US\$7,650,000) (US\$1.35/C\$ in 2024, US\$1.35/C\$ in 2024)	10,327,500
Special Contribution from US Government (US\$1,000,000) (US\$1.35/C\$500,000 US\$ in 2024)	1,350,000
Apportioned amount from Surplus Funds	2,205,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>13,882,500</b>

## EXPENSES

### PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Multi-Year	
Cooperative Projects*	210,000
Council Initiatives	500,000
Grant Programs (for example NAPECA and EJ4Climate)	3,525,000
	<b>4,235,000</b>
Annual	
Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM)	450,000
Tracking Pollutant Releases and Transfers in North America (PRTR)	175,000
CEC Interactive Platforms (Atlas)	205,000
Mandate Priorities and Emerging Issues	100,000
North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN)	100,000
	<b>1,030,000</b>

### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE

Council Support	350,000
JPAC Support	414,000
TEK Expert Group Support	170,000
Work Program Support	130,000
ECA Evaluation	100,000
Communications	408,000
Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Development	342,000
Information System Infrastructure Maintenance	191,500
Performance Measurement and Reporting	70,000
Strategic and Operational Planning	80,000
	<b>2,255,500</b>

### ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

Salaries, Benefits and Professional Development	4,792,000
Operating Expenses	760,000
External Administrative Support	335,000
Recruitment and relocation	200,000
Executive Director's Office	75,000
	<b>6,162,000</b>

\* In addition to these resources, C\$8,379,177 remains available from previous budgets for the implementation of ongoing cooperative projects.

Contingency Fund 200,000

**TOTAL EXPENSES 13,882,500**

# 2025 Work Program

Addressing Issues of Common Interest and Concern





## Cooperative Projects and Initiatives

The CEC's cooperative work program includes both core projects and Council initiatives. Core projects are multi-year cooperative projects funded from the annual contributions of the three Parties and focused on addressing key areas for cooperation under the six strategic pillars for 2021–2025 (as presented in Figure 1 and in Table 1 below).

Council initiatives are funded generally through accumulated surplus funds and announced annually by Ministers at their regular Council Session. These new Council initiatives are often designed to address the theme of the Council Session or other emerging regional priorities.

This dynamic process of introducing new projects and initiatives to reflect emerging priorities, while sustaining core projects creates a vibrant landscape of environmental cooperation on the region's most important and evolving environmental issues.

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
Transforming Recycling and Solid Waste Management in North America		•		•		•
Nature-based Solutions to Address Flooding in Coastal Cities			•	•		
Enhancing Co-Benefits of Marine Protected Areas			•	•		
Advancing Supply Chain Transparency for Chemicals in Products		•				
Communities for Environmental Justice Network (CEJN)				•		
Fast Mitigation Strategies for Short-Lived Climate Pollutants	•	•				
Stimulating Behavioral Changes to Reduce Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in North America and Expanded Promotion and Uptake of Related CEC FLW Resources	•	•		•		
Strengthening Evidence-based Collaborative Monarch Butterfly Conservation			•			
Scoping Project on a North American Center for Informed Substitution	•	•				
Strengthening Capacity to Ensure Efficient Operation of the Notice and Consent Electronic Data Exchange (NCEDE) System and Other Wastes Controlled by the Three Countries	•	•			•	
Sharing Best Practices for Environmentally Sound Management of Used Lead Acid Batteries*	•	•				
Using the World Cup and Large-Scale Events to Raise Awareness about the Importance of Reducing Food Waste*	•	•		•		
Air Quality Improvement for Environmental Justice	•					
Transitioning Remote Communities to Renewable Energy	•	•		•		
Addressing Ghost Gear in North America		•	•	•		•
Resilience of Indigenous Peoples Traditional Food Systems	•	•	•	•		
Community-led Environmental Education Initiative for Biocultural Heritage Protection			•	•		
Opportunities for Circularity in the North American Electronics Sector: Phase 1		•		•	•	
Advancing Responsible Purchasing of Wood Products			•			
Reaching Horizon 2030: an Environmental Outlook for North American Cooperation	•	•	•	•		
Approaches to Inclusive, Urban Climate Adaptation and Resilience	•		•	•		
Climate Change Adaptation Initiative: Enhancing North American Procedures for Communication of Drought Information*				•		
The North American Environmental Justice Action Center (NAEJAC)*				•		

\* Under development as of January 2025 and is aligned with the cross-cutting approach *Diverse and Inclusive Stakeholder Engagement and Public Participation*.



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. They also actively find ways to promote cross-cutting approaches of inclusive and diverse engagement and promoting innovative and effective solutions.

The following section presents the activities taking place in 2025 under the cooperative projects and initiatives, some of which have been initiated under previous Operational Plans. More detailed information on project activities and budgets can also be found in Appendix I.



# Transforming Recycling and Solid Waste Management in North America

**Project budget and duration:** C\$1,530,000  
48 months (November 2021–October 2025)

**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.<sup>5</sup> North America has the highest per capita plastic and paper consumption in the world. The region represents 21% of total plastics consumption<sup>6</sup> and four times the global average in per capita paper consumption.<sup>7</sup> 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 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.

## 2025 Activities:

- Continue work on a separate set of milestone studies for Mexico on paper, plastics, and bioplastics waste to address specific issues raised by Mexico. These studies are expected to be published in September 2025 in addition to the three milestone studies for US and Canada published in December 2024.
- Implement a joint pilot testing based on the outcomes of the studies for US-Canada, through collaboration between industry, and research institutions. This joint pilot project will be developed around poly-coated paper composting.



5. Silpa Kaza, Lisa C. Yao, Perinaz Bhada-Tata, Frank Van Woerden. 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.  
6. M. Heller, M. Mazor, and G. Keoleian. (2020). Plastics in the US: Toward a Material Flow Characterization of Production, Markets and End of Life. Environmental Research Letters, 15(9), 94034–.  
7. Mandy Haggith, Susan Kinsella, Sergio Baffoni, Patrick Anderson, Jim Ford, Rune Leithe, Emmanuelle Neyroumande, Neva Murtha and Bas Tinhout. 2018. The State of the Global Paper Industry. Shifting Seas: New Challenges and Opportunities for Forests, People and the Climate. Environmental Paper Network.





## Nature-based Solutions to Address Flooding in Coastal Cities

**Project budget and duration:** C\$560,000

42 months (November 2021–April 2025 — extended to November 2025)

**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.

Building on past collaborative experiences advancing knowledge on blue carbon, coastal adaptation, and extreme events, the CEC is uniquely placed to build capacity for coastal communities to implement NBS to manage flood risk while maximizing co-benefits to human and natural communities.

**Objective:** This project builds capacity to implement NBS by filling knowledge gaps on co-benefits, retrofitting and monitoring, and by educating community members on the use of NBS.

### 2025 Activities:

- Publish final foundational guidance report on the co-benefits of NBS, retrofitting existing infrastructure, and monitoring the efficacy of NBS reports, with accompanying briefing notes to support uptake.
- Hold at least two webinars to share practical experience on NBS implementation with practitioners.



# Enhancing Co-benefits of Marine Protected Areas

**Project budget and duration:** C\$590,000

41 months (January 2022–April 2025 — extended to November 2025)

**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:** The goal of the project is to support an ecologically and socially inclusive MPA network across North America, through three objectives stated in the project description: 1) strengthened capacity to share resilience-building approaches, 2) increased Indigenous and community leadership, and 3) strengthened connectivity.

## 2025 Activities:

- Develop knowledge on socio-ecological connectivity and facilitate connections to strengthen seascape-level conservation of sharks and whales through practitioner workshops and activities identified at the workshops.
- Publish technical briefs on the conservation of blue carbon.
- Build on existing opportunities for Indigenous and community leadership and engagement in coastal conservation and adaptation (to be determined).







## Advancing Supply Chain Transparency for Chemicals in Products

**Project budget and duration:** C\$270,000  
35 months (July 2022–May 2025)

**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 them, 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 for them; 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 improve SCT and enhance governments' abilities 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.

### 2025 Activities:

- Plan and conduct a final workshop to develop recommendations to improve SCT in North America.
- Finalize Case Studies on leading sectors implementing SCT best practices:
  - 1) Cosmetics and personal care products; 2) Electronics; and 3) Snapshot on the Health Open Declaration Standard in the building materials and construction sector.
- Draft the recommendations report based on research information, consultations and workshops.
- Compile a database on SCT tools and instruments currently used in North America from interim report information, consultations and workshops.



# Communities for Environmental Justice Network

**Project budget and duration: C\$190,000**

23 months (April 2023–February 2025)

**Context:** Many communities face heightened environmental risks, pollution impacts and climate vulnerability. Effectively addressing these disproportionate vulnerabilities implies addressing long standing and disproportionate exposure to environmental risks and impacts with a view to reducing pollution and increasing climate resilience at the community level.

**Objective:** The CEJN project was intended to increase local capacity through the amplification and dissemination of community-based expertise, lessons learned, and guidance in the context of climate change. Through the network, participating members will contribute to the facilitation of learning and knowledge exchange processes, in particular Indigenous perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge and practices, and develop a virtual resource library, with the goal of strengthening the climate adaptation, mitigation and other capacity building of Indigenous, local, and vulnerable communities in Canada, Mexico and the United States.

## 2025 Activities:

- Hold a virtual capacity building workshop to promote learning and build connection among members of the CEJN.
- Develop a transition plan to maintain, strengthen, and make self-sustainable the Network and information exchange opportunities.
- Develop and disseminate CEJN toolkit and knowledge exchange tools (such as the CEJN Story map) and culturally relevant information.







## Fast Mitigation Strategies for Short-lived Climate Pollutants

**Project budget and duration:** C\$400,000  
18 months (January 2025–June 2026)

**Context:** Reducing methane emissions is crucial for slowing and stabilizing climate-warming trends and improving air quality. Major methane emissions sources associated with human activities include: the oil and gas industry, agriculture and waste sectors. Reported emission inventories in North America have a degree of uncertainty, as demonstrated by studies that show considerable variability between reported inventories and estimates based on monitoring. Accurate emissions inventories are essential to effectively track progress on mitigation efforts, close emission gaps and improve air quality. Advancements in remote methane detection technologies provide an opportunity to improve emissions inventories.

**Objective:** This project aims to develop recommendations for improved methane quantification, measurement approaches and inventories that support effective mitigation actions. This guidance will allow for a coordinated regional approach to methane emissions quantification that will support mitigation policies and activities, including adopting best practices for methane management, such as organic waste diversion, methane capture, and leak detection and repair at landfills. This project will strengthen North American efforts and international commitments to reduce emissions and mitigate climate change impacts.

### 2025 Activities:

- Develop a working document describing the present state of methane quantification in emissions from landfills in North America.
- Conduct consultations with subject matter experts to initiate the identification of priority sources, improvements in methane quantification in the waste sector, and value-added and mitigation actions, including:
  - A comparison of emission estimates derived from surface and remote sensing measurements for selected sources across North America.
  - Explore how multi-scale methane monitoring (on-site, drone/ UAV, and satellite) and inverse modeling systems for methane emissions are being used to reconcile inventories.
- Develop recommendations for tracking and documenting landfill methane emissions.



# Stimulating Behavioral Changes to Reduce Food Loss and Waste (FLW) in North America and Expanded Promotion and Uptake of Related CEC FLW Resources

**Project budget and duration: C\$250,000**  
18 months (May 2024–October 2025)

**Context:** Food loss and waste (FLW) is an increasingly important issue in Canada, Mexico and the United States, where close to 170 million tons of food produced for human consumption are lost and wasted each year across the food supply chain, including in preharvest and consumer sectors. As food and waste biodegrades under anaerobic conditions in landfills, methane, a powerful greenhouse gas (GHG) that is more than 80 times greater than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) over a 20-year period, is produced. Through past projects, the CEC has developed and promoted content to support FLW reduction activities in North America. The CEC Council has acknowledged the importance to further build upon the success of past CEC FLW projects and visibility to support FLW reduction in North America.

**Objective:** The project will assist local policymakers, communities, and other key actors in designing and implementing actions and policies to stimulate behavioral changes to reduce FLW with support of CEC FLW resources. The project will also allow the CEC to address the current momentum by supporting the growing key actors' demands for FLW resources (particularly the “Food Matters Action Kit” and the “Practical Guide on Why and How to Measure Food Loss and Waste”) and expanding their uptake in North America.

## 2025 Activities:

- Continue the development of a Guide for Practitioners and training material on when and how to apply different behavior change theories in practice to improve the uptake and effectiveness of programs and other types of public-facing interventions to reduce FLW.
- Continued outreach, promotion, and awareness-raising of CEC products related to FLW reduction.







## Strengthening Evidence-based Collaborative Monarch Butterfly Conservation

**Project budget and duration:** C\$180,000

14 months (January 2025–March 2026)

**Context:** The monarch butterfly population has experienced a significant decline over the last few decades, with the second lowest wintering population size ever recorded during the 2023–2024 wintering season. This decline highlights the urgent need for coordinated evidence-based conservation efforts. At a strategic planning meeting convened by Mexico's Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat) and National Commission of Protected Natural Areas (Conanp) in February 2024, the Trinational Monarch Conservation Science Partnership (TMCSP) identified several priorities for conservation efforts, including conservation and restoration of habitat and addressing the impacts of climate change and pesticides. These evidence-based priority conservation themes were then presented at the XVIII Trilateral Committee for Conservation and Management of Wildlife and Ecosystems meeting and the North American Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation for Protected Areas Conservation meeting in April and May 2024, where it was agreed to support collaborative efforts in monarch conservation.

**Objective:** The project will help guide future conservation strategies and the ongoing efforts of the TMCSP and monarch conservation practitioners working for the recovery of monarchs in North America.

### 2025 Activities:

- Conduct meetings of the Trinational Monarch Conservation Science Partnership and other relevant groups to collaboratively identify priority areas for North American conservation practitioners.
- Report to TMSCP and other relevant groups on agreed evidence-based priority areas for monarch butterfly conservation actions.

# Scoping Project on a North American Center for Informed Substitution

**Project budget and duration:** C\$50,000

12 months (July 2024–July 2025)

**Context:** Chemicals are essential for the production of many goods; thousands of substances are used and emerge as industry responds to consumers demands. Traditionally, chemical risk evaluation and subsequent risk management have been used to control exposure levels or restrict the use of highly toxic chemicals of concern. The transition to safer chemicals fundamentally challenges conventional economic drivers in consumption, because it places human and environmental health as the central priority for innovation. Informed substitution (IS) involves the assessment and comparison of chemical alternatives, incorporating information on hazards, technical functionality, exposure, and economic assessments. This transdisciplinary approach requires a high level of collaboration among industry, regulatory agencies, and academia, as well as other key actors. It is often unclear who should lead such collaborations. Indeed, various parties can even lack the necessary knowledge, resources, or motivation to initiate and manage the work.

**Objective:** The project will scope out the feasibility for establishing a trilateral Center for Informed Substitution (CIS) and provide a roadmap for facilitating knowledge sharing, promoting best practices, and fostering the implementation of chemical alternatives assessment and informed substitution across North America.

## 2025 Activities:

- Identify and analyze three potential structural models and strategic options for a CIS to allow trilateral collaboration.
- Prepare for and convene a workshop with experts and interested parties to discuss the potential collaboration models and focus areas for specific chemicals of concern.
- Write final project report, including a description of the core elements of a pilot NA CIS workplan.







## Strengthening Capacity to Ensure Efficient Operation of the Notice and Consent Electronic Data Exchange (NCEDE) System and Other Wastes Controlled by the Three Countries

**Project budget and duration:** C\$200,000

18 months (February 2025–July 2026)

**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. The modernization of the NCEDE System and the successful and fully operational electronic exchange of notices between Mexico and the United States using the Application Programming Interface (API) based exchange in production was achieved in August 2022 through two recent CEC projects. Furthermore, the three countries successfully implemented a maintenance approach for the system.

**Objective:** The project will ensure the coordinated approach needed to successfully sort out technical issues and carry out timely updates at this initial stage of the new system. It will do so, building on major achievements and face current and upcoming challenges, by continuing the joint work carried out by the Steering Committee, representing areas of authorization management for transboundary movements of waste and information technology, with an emphasis on strengthening capacity for each country to maintain the system and address future regulatory changes as needed.

### 2025 Activities:

- Facilitate regular, periodic trilateral calls to support update and capacity building discussions, along with a sound maintenance of the system.
- Update the NCEDE system to implement any Party’s changes to the current regulations, as related to the import/export/transport of hazardous wastes, that might be expected to occur during the project’s scope.
- Provide IT support and capacity building to complete any additional modifications or development needed along with Operations and Maintenance (O&M) support for Semarnat’s IT system.



## Other projects in development

- Sharing Best Practices for Environmentally Sound Management of Used Lead Acid Batteries
- Using the World Cup and Large-scale Events to Raise Awareness About the Importance of Reducing Food Waste



## Council Initiatives



## Air Quality Improvement for Environmental Justice

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$1,000,000

36 months (October 2022–September 2025 – extended to October 2026)

**Context:** Black carbon (BC), or “soot” (a component of fine particulate matter, PM), is a significant air contaminant that affects not only 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. Meanwhile, millions of people across North America live 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<sub>2.5</sub>) emissions, as well as communities that potentially experience disproportionate environmental harm or risk. 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<sub>2.5</sub> /BC exposures in these communities, while increasing transparency and access to air quality information for local populations and decision makers.

### 2025 Activities:

- Finalize monitoring plans and start the deployment and testing of monitoring sensors.
- Deployment of additional low-cost PM2.5 sensors donated by the ECCC to complement the BC measurements.
- Share experiences on technology use and mitigation strategies, and disseminate and publish project results, guidance, and recommendations.



# Transitioning Remote Communities to Renewable Energy

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$500,000

24 months (April 2023–March 2025)

**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. Furthermore, old 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 and decentralized energy solutions will have the potential to bring significant socio-economic and environmental benefits.

**Objective:** To contribute to a global discussion among countries about transitioning remote communities to clean energy, 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-sector 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 regional case study completed on this topic and would provide models and strategies for countries around the world facing similar challenges. This project builds on previous CEC expertise on the topic, namely, the “Guide to Developing a Community Renewable Energy Project in North America.”

## 2025 Activities:

- Continue engagement efforts with participating communities and reflect results in a consultation report.
- Prepare the case studies report.
- Develop visual materials for project outreach and promotion.
- Conduct online meetings with participating project communities to exchange information and experiences on the implementation of their energy projects.
- Showcase community experiences in implementing renewable energy with international partners (e.g. Market Place of Ideas — Climate and Clean Air Coalition annual meeting).
- Conduct a campaign to disseminate and promote the findings of the CEC IRENA initiative and case studies.



# Addressing Ghost Gear in North America

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$1,000,000

36 months (December 2022–December 2025)

**Context:** Hundreds of thousands of tons of ghost gear (abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear—ALDFG) enter the ocean every year, harming marine life, reducing fish stocks and impacting the livelihoods of coastal communities. Our three countries are signatories to the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, an alliance of fishing industry, private sector, academia and governments focused on solving the problem of ghost gear through collaborative work.

**Objective:** This initiative aims to prevent and reduce ghost gear in Canada, Mexico and the United States by developing tools to address ALDFG best practices in fisheries, building fishing industry understanding and collaboration, identifying knowledge and data gaps, and supporting responsible management of end-of-life fishing gear in coastal fishing communities. The initiative will also identify opportunities to retrieve ALDFG and to test fishing gear tracking technologies with potential partners.

## 2025 Activities:

- Support coordination of ALDFG advocacy initiatives.
- Develop protocols for ALDFG surveys and removals.
- Conduct gear-tracking technology training and pilots in Canada and Mexico.
- Provide training on safe retrieval of ALDFG to local interested parties.
- Remove ALDFG from priority sites in Mexico to stop ongoing damages to the ecosystem.
- Establish collection points and pre-processing hubs for end-of-life gear.
- Conduct outreach to showcase project results at relevant events and through a closing webinar.







## Resilience of Indigenous Peoples Traditional Food Systems

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$300,000  
24 months (February 2024–February 2026)

**Context:** Food security is one of the major global challenges facing humanity today. Climate change, severe weather events and the depletion of natural resources have put an increased strain on food production. Therefore, promoting and ensuring diverse and sustainable food systems that contribute to human well-being, avoid the deterioration of nature and are resilient to a changing climate, are now more than ever top priorities. Indigenous Peoples have lived for thousands of years in harmony with nature and sustainably in their ecosystems. While Indigenous Peoples have demonstrated resilience and leadership in maintaining their traditional food systems, most North American Indigenous communities face traditional food system shortages and crises. Through this project, the CEC supports the greater inclusion of Indigenous leadership and Indigenous perspectives and knowledge, including Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), in activities and decisions affecting Indigenous Peoples' traditional food systems.

**Objective:** This initiative aims to better understand the current state of traditional food systems of Indigenous Peoples in North America; support the revitalization of networks and relationships among Indigenous Peoples to foster knowledge exchange and partnerships; and raise awareness and promote the respect of Indigenous resiliency and leadership in policies, activities, and decisions affecting Indigenous Peoples' traditional food systems.

### 2025 Activities:

- Produce a report documenting the state of Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Food Systems in North America.
- Organize cross-community engagement and exchange visits. The exchange visits will identify, engage and bring together one Indigenous community, nation or tribe per country to foster dialogue about traditional food sovereignty and to support transboundary networks.
- Compile and analyze information and prepare a report describing the outcomes and findings obtained from the previous activities, including experiences shared during the exchange visits. The final report will also include analysis and recommendations on how the CEC and other key actors can better support and respect Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Food Systems across North America.



# Community-led Environmental Education Initiative for Biocultural Heritage Protection

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$1,000,000  
30 months (January 2025–July 2027)

**Context:** North America grapples with diverse socio-environmental and economic challenges stemming from ecosystem degradation and climate change, which disproportionately affect under-resourced and underrepresented communities such as Indigenous and minority populations, among others. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive, multidimensional approach, recognizing the economic, ecological, cultural, social, and political diversity across regions. Evidence shows that lasting solutions emerge at the local level.

**Objective:** This initiative aims to foster reciprocal exchange between diverse knowledges (including but not limited to Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)/Indigenous Knowledge (IK), and academic knowledge) empowering systemically vulnerable communities to tackle challenges related to ecosystem conservation and climate action through knowledge dialogue and education.

## 2025 Activities:

- Define the Environmental Education Framework document to include a “Community Learning” strategy.
- Initiate stage 2 of the initiative for the planning and implementation of the pilot testing of the Environmental Education Framework — one community per country.





## Opportunities for Circularity in the North American Electronics Sector: Phase 1

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$750,000

24 months (June 2024–June 2026)

**Context:** Electronics have become the world’s fastest-growing waste stream, amounting to an estimated 57.4 million tons in 2021. This “waste” stream contains discarded products and raw materials valued at nearly \$60 billion globally. McKinsey has signaled that the electronics sector is likely to see rising demand and larger shifts in production facilities and supply chains driven by regionalization. Increasing circularity for the electronics sector in North America requires better product design, longer use through repair, refurbishment and remanufacturing efforts, and better collection and recycling at end-of-life. Preliminary research in the region shows significant potential for this sector to develop both socio-economic and environmental benefits; nonetheless, further research and efforts are needed to build a case for circularity. The electronics sector was proposed as the focus of this first CEC initiative on Circular Economy because of the high interest from North American consumers. In addition, it will advance North American conversation on circularity and raise awareness of circularity and its socio-economic and environmental benefits in this diverse and decentralized region.

**Objective:** This initiative aims to study the potential of circularity in the electronics sector in North America, focusing on opportunities related to design, innovation, sustainable production, efficient use of resources, reuse, repair, refurbishment and remanufacturing, while highlighting “bright spots,” case studies, and lessons learned for the economies of Canada, Mexico and the United States, and to identify opportunities for regional cooperation in the electronics sector and develop practical tools that support the industry, governments and society to advance circularity in each country as well as in the regional supply chain of the sector.

### 2025 Activities:

- Conduct a broad consultative process with key actors working on circularity in the electronics sector to identify collaboration and knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to advance circularity in the region.
- Through iterative research and inputs from the consultative process, develop national assessments of the potential for circularity in the electronics sector of each country and identify opportunities that could foster circularity in North America.



# Advancing Responsible Purchasing of Wood Products

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$300,000  
24 months (January 2024–January 2026)

**Context:** Illegal logging and trade in illegally logged timber, is a domestic, regional, and global issue. It has negative economic, environmental, and social impacts, including—but not limited to—forest degradation, loss of traditional homelands for Indigenous and tribal communities, and the creation of unfair market conditions that disadvantage legal and sustainable sources of wood and wood products. Public awareness about Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) and its importance is still lacking, including knowledge about the negative impacts and extent of illegal logging, and how SFM, legality, and the importance of promoting sustainable wood markets, are all linked.

**Objective:** This project will deepen the knowledge of the extent, risks, and awareness of illegal logging within each country’s forest product supply chains. This project will aim to increase the understanding of wood product consumers and how they can support SFM and contribute to fight against illegal logging through their purchasing power and by the responsible purchasing of wood products. The project will also encourage the use of key mechanisms for civic participation in environmental protection to address public complaints and by informing consumers of the consequences of purchasing illegal timber.

## 2025 Activities:

- Conduct a review of available literature and existing programs, and an analysis of the state of consumer knowledge within the three countries.
- Hold an online workshop with relevant experts, including government representatives, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, academia, wood product producers and community leaders, among others; to share and validate information that has been compiled under Activity 1.
- Finalize the report on the trinational context, based on output from previous activities
- Develop and implement non-duplicative public awareness campaigns targeting wood product supply chain actors.







## Reaching Horizon 2030: an Environmental Outlook for North American Cooperation

**Initiative budget and duration:** C\$500,000  
23 months (April 2024–February 2026)

**Context:** The initiative Reaching Horizon 2030: An Environmental Outlook for North American Cooperation (H-2030) will help ensure that the CEC's work supports trilateral commitments to the Parties' key climate and biodiversity targets.

**Objective:** Anticipating and preparing for emerging environmental and climate challenges that North America will face from now until 2030 and beyond, the initiative identifies and issues recommendations on how the CEC could contribute to addressing these challenges through its strategies, programs and partnerships, including through pilot projects in response to these recommendations. The key findings will help inform the next CEC's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan.

### **2025 Activities:**

- Conduct a series of expert meetings to provide input for the H-2030 report.
- Engage with and establish a roster of diverse environmental actors.
- Launch three pilot projects to test new trilateral work recommended under the H-2030 report.

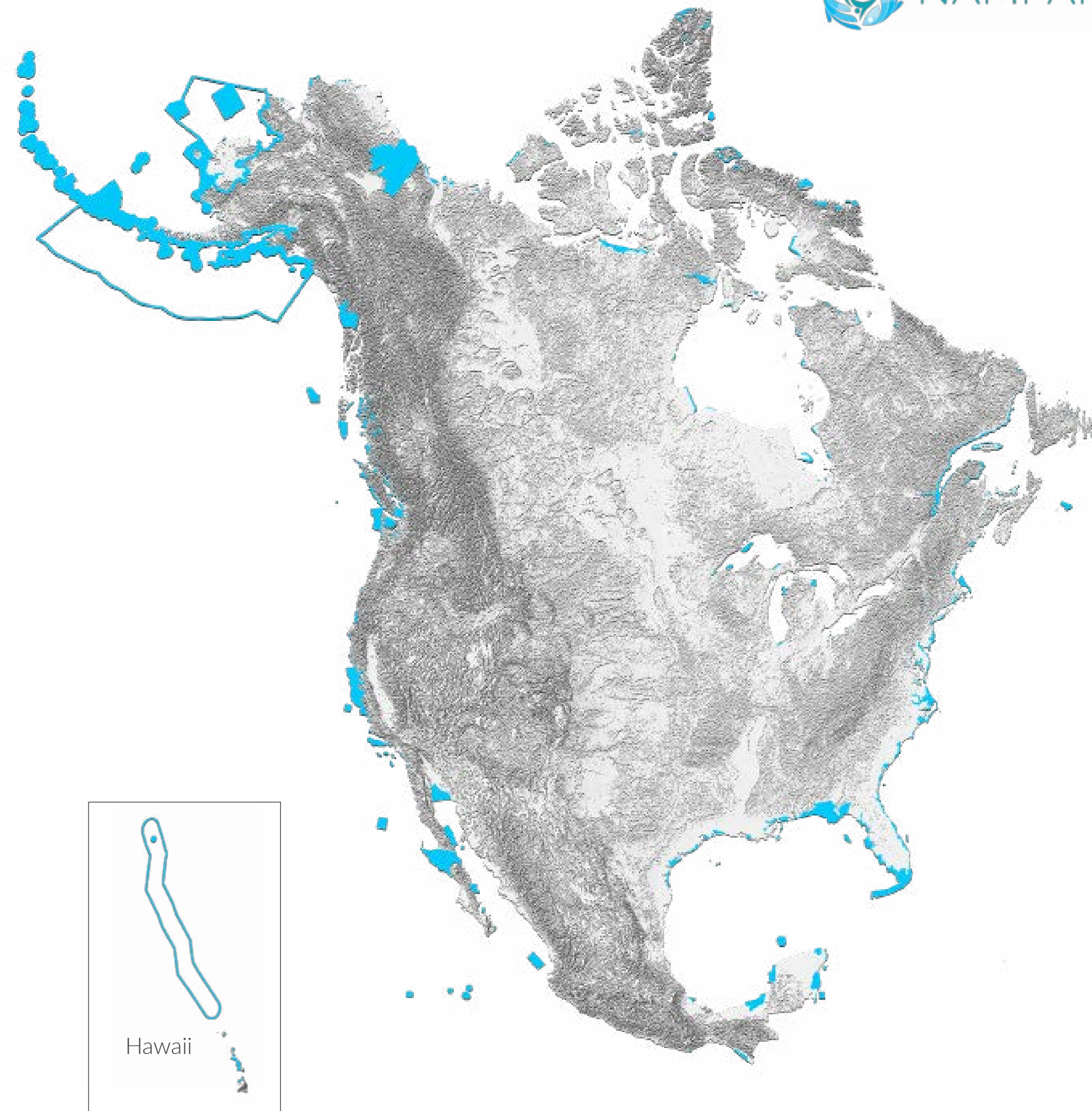


## Other projects in development

- The North American Environmental Justice Action Center (NAEJAC)
- Urban and Equity Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience
- Climate Change Adaptation Initiative: Enhancing North American Procedures for Communication of Drought Information







## The North American Marine Protected Areas Network (NAMPAN)

The North American Marine Protected Areas Network ([NAMPAN](#)) is a network of resource agencies, marine protected areas (MPA) managers, practitioners and other relevant experts in Canada, Mexico and the United States. It aims to strengthen the conservation of biodiversity in critical marine habitats throughout the region and to facilitate transboundary cooperation and information exchange among MPA experts and managers by building capacity, facilitating connections and strengthening communication.

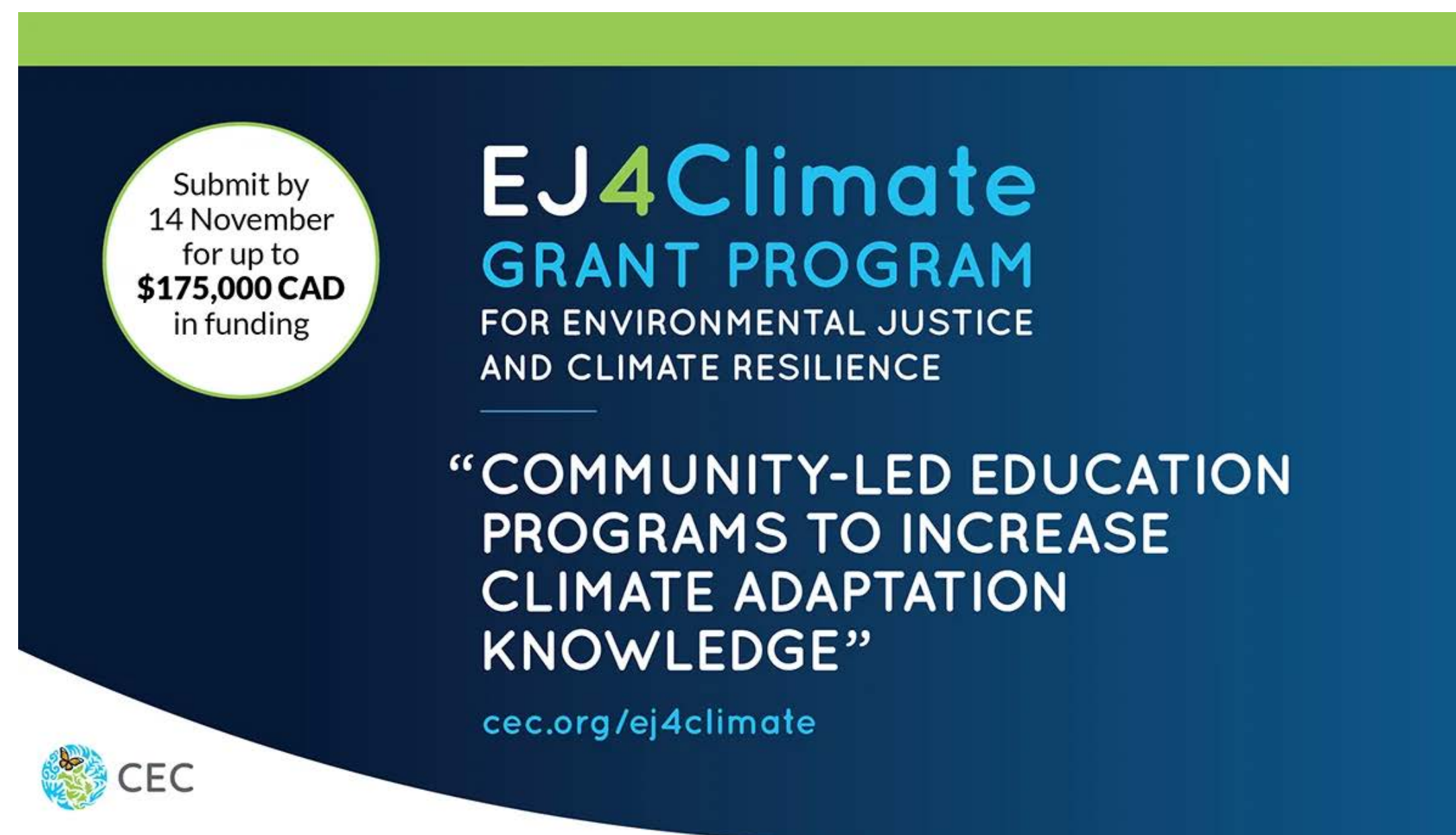
### 2025 Activities:

- Hold an online deep-dive event on the environmental and socio-economic benefits of MPAs.
- Support continued collaboration on migratory species conservation.
- Engage with other MPA networks through existing channels to strengthen collaboration and partnerships.



## Grant Programs




A promotional banner for the EJ4Climate Grant Program. It features a dark blue background with a green header bar at the top. On the left, a white circle contains the submission deadline and funding amount. The main text is in white and blue, highlighting the program's focus on community-led education for climate adaptation. The CEC logo is in the bottom left corner.

Submit by  
14 November  
for up to  
**\$175,000 CAD**  
in funding

**EJ4Climate**  
**GRANT PROGRAM**  
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

**“COMMUNITY-LED EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS TO INCREASE  
CLIMATE ADAPTATION  
KNOWLEDGE”**

[cec.org/ej4climate](https://cec.org/ej4climate)

 CEC

## Environmental Justice and Climate Resilience (EJ4Climate) Grant Program

This grant program, initiated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was launched by the Council in 2021. It provides grant funding directly to vulnerable local and Indigenous communities and community-based organizations in Canada, Mexico and the United States, for increasing their climate resilience.

For the fourth grant cycle of EJ4Climate, the CEC called for project proposals<sup>8</sup> that will integrate community-led education programs. Education, both formal and informal, can help equip communities with additional tools and resources to build on their own knowledge and resilience in facing polluting and climate-related challenges.

Community-led education programs create space for shared learning and exchange, allowing diverse perspectives to come together, building on local knowledge, and inspiring innovative and locally driven solutions. Please find more information [here](#).

8. Proposals were due 14 November 2024, and the evaluation of grants applications occurred from November 2024 to January 2025.



## North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA)

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 to improve environmental conditions at the community, Indigenous, local and regional levels. 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.

Given years of experience in conserving and managing the environment since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples and communities have invaluable knowledge systems and practices that contribute to the sustainable management and preservation of natural resources and can help with meeting environmental challenges, including the climate crisis. Please find more information [here](#).

A promotional poster for the NAPECA Grant Program. The background is a photograph of an Indigenous man and woman holding ears of corn. The man is wearing a baseball cap and an orange shirt, and the woman is wearing a blue and green patterned blouse. In the foreground, there are several ears of corn. The text is overlaid on an orange circular graphic. The main title 'NAPECA GRANT PROGRAM' is in large, bold, dark blue letters. Below it, 'NORTH AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY ACTION' is in smaller, orange, all-caps letters. Further down, 'EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND ENHANCING CLIMATE ADAPTATION BY INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE' is in white, all-caps letters. At the bottom left of the orange circle, the CEC logo (a globe with a butterfly) and the text 'CEC' are visible. At the bottom right, the website 'cec.org/NAPECA' is written in white. In the top right corner, there is a white circular callout with orange text: 'Submit by 18 January for up to \$185,000 CAD in funding'. In the top right corner of the poster, there is small text: '© Cultiva Alternativas de Regeneración'.



## Improving Access to Information for Decision-Making



The CEC's online publications library<sup>9</sup> and tools and resources<sup>10</sup> provide the public with access to high-quality environmental information and materials. These include scientific and technical reports, case studies, monitoring protocols, training resources, databases and geospatial data related to environmental research and management, all intended to support the efforts of government officials, the private sector, academic and research institutions, nongovernmental organizations and communities. The CEC's webpage hosts hundreds of publications available in English, French and Spanish. A list of CEC's most popular publications can be found [here](#).<sup>11</sup>

9. Available at: <<http://www.cec.org/publications/>>.  
10. Available at: <<http://www.cec.org/tools/>>.  
11. Available at: <[www.cec.org/top-50-publications](http://www.cec.org/top-50-publications)>.





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. The specific actions to be taken in 2025 are presented in the subsections below.



# North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (NAPRTR) Initiative

Supporting the 2021–2025 strategic pillar, *Clean Air, Water and Land*, the North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (NAPRTR) Initiative, compiles, harmonizes and presents data on the sources, amounts and management of pollutants reported by approximately 40,000 industrial facilities to the Canadian, Mexican and United States' pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs). These data are made accessible via the *Taking Stock Online* website and searchable database, as well as through analyses in the *Taking Stock* report series.<sup>12</sup> They 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, their risks, and related pollution prevention measures.

Activities in 2025 will focus on outreach and engagement, enhancing data quality and comparability, and industrial pollution prevention and sustainability efforts.

## 2025 Activities:

- Host a public meeting in Mexico City to bring together representatives of the national PRTR programs, nongovernmental organizations, industry, academia, and the public, who are interested in sharing information and ideas about pollution, sustainable industry, and access to environmental information
- Conduct a survey of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member PRTR programs, about the quality of cross-border transfer data, to be followed up with a case study analysis.
- Conduct interviews with North American PRTR officials regarding the processes and challenges involved in modifying reporting requirements, along with strategies for enhancing PRTR data comparability for the region.
- Implement Phase 2 of the Pollution Prevention (P2) Challenge, which involves engaging representatives of the automotive manufacturing sector and supply chain, to exchange information and ideas about how reported P2 information can be improved to be more useful.
- Enhance the Taking Stock Online website and database, and incorporating trilateral data for the 2023 reporting year, including updating facility-based greenhouse gas data, and providing information and resources relative to industry's pollution prevention efforts.

12. Available at: <[www.cec.org/takingstock](http://www.cec.org/takingstock)>.



# North American Environmental Atlas

The [North American Environmental Atlas](#) is an online mapping resource that provides combined and harmonized geospatial environmental data from Canada, Mexico and the United States, allowing for a continental and regional perspective on transboundary environmental issues. Downloadable North American map layers can also be examined through an online map viewer, and allow the visualization of various environmental aspects, such as terrestrial and marine ecological regions, climate zones, as well as protected areas across the three countries. The Atlas supports a wide range of governmental and academic research and analysis of environmental challenges in North America, as attested by citations in over a thousand published scientific articles and reports. The Atlas supports CEC's Strategic Plan 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.

## 2025 Activities:

- Evaluate the potential redevelopment of the Atlas map viewer to increase the platform's capabilities, updating map layers, and including, but not limited to, the North American PRTR, the North American Temperature and Precipitation layers, as well as creating brand new layers.
- Additional activities and resources will also be dedicated to improving the accessibility, visibility and reach of this online geospatial resource to the North American public, and beyond.





# NALCMS



Geospatial  
collaboration



21 million km²



19 land  
cover classes



Data  
harmonization



23 billion  
pixels



Transboundary  
data



500 scientific  
publications



Research &  
Decision-making



Knowledge-  
sharing



North America

## North American Land Change Monitoring System


The [North American Land Change Monitoring System](#) (NALCMS) is an ongoing collaborative initiative between the CEC and the Governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States and their respective mapping agencies to monitor land cover and its change over time at the North American level. Land cover refers to the classification of surface cover on the ground, whether forest, urban infrastructure, bodies of water, or agricultural land, etc., which helps to distinguish natural and anthropogenic features. The NALCMS products, available in the North American Environmental Atlas, depict information about land cover and land cover change in a seamless and consistent way across North America by assembling and harmonizing national geospatial datasets.

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 for various applications, such as carbon sequestration analysis, wildlife habitat mapping, ecosystem monitoring, environmental planning, water quality assessments, and evaluation of biofuels production potential.

### 2025 Activities:

- Publication of a reference companion document to the CEC's NALCMS digital map products which highlight the nearly 20-year trilateral partnership.
- Updating current NALCMS [Storymaps](#) based on more recent data and methodologies.
- Develop promotional and outreach material to connect with existing and new geospatial practitioners and engage them in the use of the NALCMS set of products.
- Strengthen the long-standing collaboration between the CEC and its NALCMS governmental partners.





## Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) Process



The Submissions on Enforcement Matters (SEM) process is a mechanism originally established under the former North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) that allows any person or entity in one of the three countries to raise concerns about an alleged failure of any of the three Parties to enforce its environmental laws effectively. The process has continued and is now governed by Articles 24.27 and 24.28 of the Environment Chapter (Chapter 24) of the Trade Agreement (CUSMA/ USMCA/T-MEC). The SEM process promotes transparency through exchange of information, and public participation in the effective enforcement of environmental law in North America. The CEC Secretariat is responsible for implementing key stages of this process as per the Environmental Cooperation Agreement and Chapter 24 of the USMCA/CUSMA/T-MEC. Please find more information about SEM [here](#).

## Submissions on Enforcement Matters

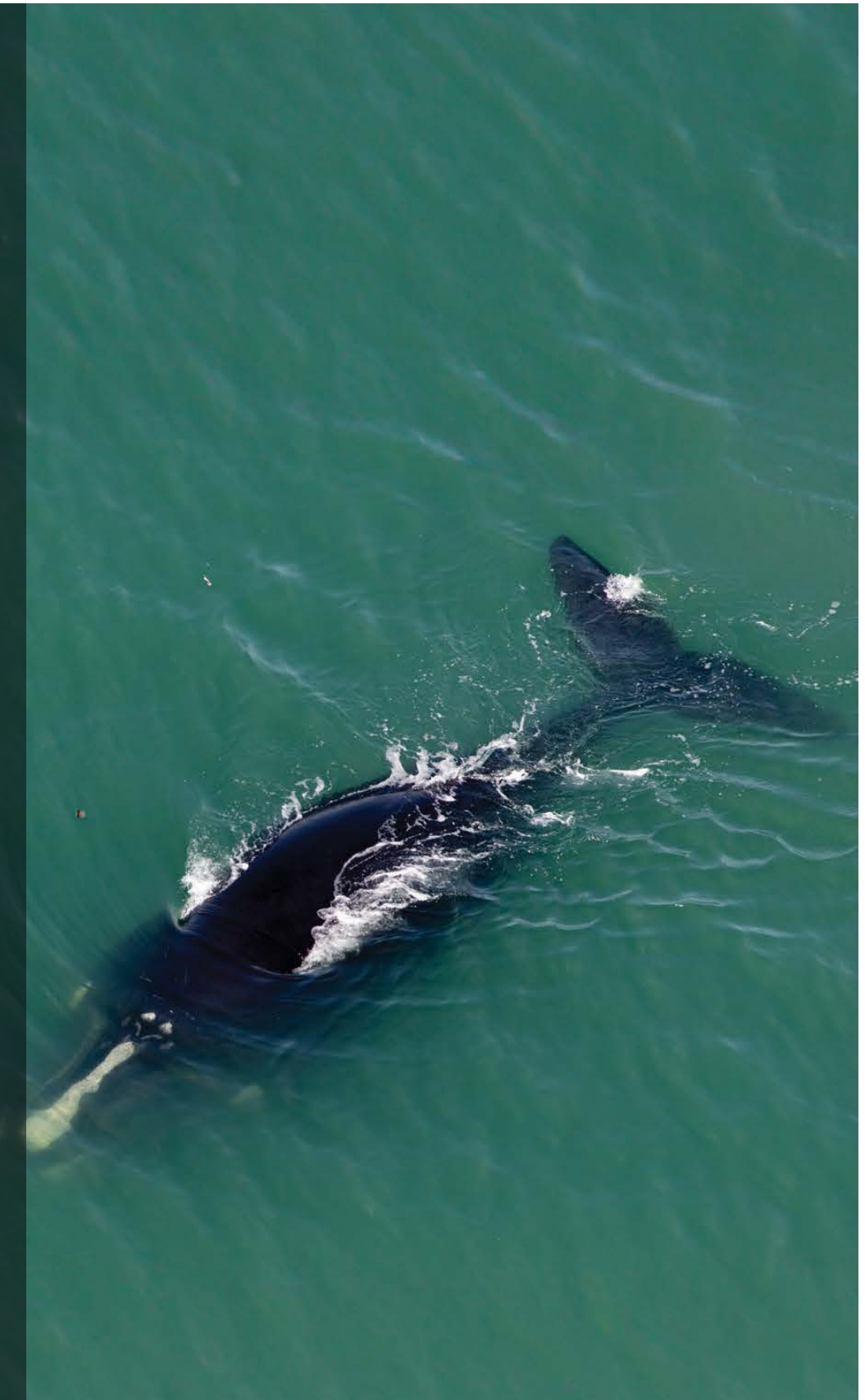
The CEC Submissions on Enforcement Matters process supports public participation and transparency in the effective enforcement of environmental law in North America.

If you have reason to believe that an environmental law is not being effectively enforced by Canada, Mexico or the United States, the SEM process may address your concerns.



cec.org

To learn more about the SEM process, scan here.







## *Hydraulic Fracturing in Nuevo León*

### **Factual Record Regarding Submission SEM-18-003**

Prepared in accordance with Article 15 of the *North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation*



In 2025, the CEC will address the following objectives, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2021–2025:

- Foster and ensure transparency throughout the SEM process by enhancing clear and comprehensive communication of the SEM procedures and timelines to the public and the Parties USMCA/CUSMA/T-MEC. Promote public participation regarding the effective enforcement of environmental law in North America.
- Encourage awareness and inform the public for a better understanding of the SEM process.
- Continue to make filing of submissions from the public simple and straightforward.
- Foster public discourse and education regarding compliance with and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.
- Continue our engagement and learning with external actors and strengthen our relationship with other transparency and accountability mechanisms as well as compliance and enforcement working groups.

As part of the Council's efforts to promote transparency and the information-sharing focus of the SEM process, the Parties agreed to continue meeting regularly through the Trilateral SEM technical calls between the three countries in order to discuss next steps for pending submissions requiring Council members' actions and assess how to streamline aspects of the SEM process. Likewise, during these meetings the three countries will discuss relevant matters related to SEM process in order to develop mechanisms to strengthen and improve the efficiency, predictability and responsiveness of this mechanism.

In 2025, the three Parties, with the support of the Legal Affairs and SEM Unit, advanced several factual records, such as the *Hydraulic Fracturing in Nuevo Leon*, *Vaquita Porpoise*, and *North Atlantic Right Whale*.<sup>13</sup> The Secretariat will continue processing other active submissions and may also host or participate in events to announce the publication of any factual records published in 2025. For the latest information, see the SEM Tracker [here](#).

Other activities that will be carried out are to continue engagements with other Secretariats in the Americas that are charged with implementing similar submission processes under other trade agreements with the United States.

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



# Public Participation and Engagement

The background of the slide features a series of overlapping, wavy shapes in shades of green and blue, creating a dynamic, organic feel. The shapes flow from the bottom left towards the top right, with some areas being more saturated than others.



## The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC)

Public participation is at the core of the CEC's mission. The Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), one of three constituent bodies of the CEC, is the principal mechanism for promoting public participation and bringing the voices and viewpoints of the Canadian, Mexican, and the US public to the CEC. Under its mandate, JPAC provides advice to the Council on any matter within the scope of the Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA) and it promotes and enhances public participation in the implementation of the ECA, engaging actively in trilateral dialogue, and ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented. JPAC members also participate as subject-matter experts in CEC activities and support efforts to increase the visibility of the Commission's initiatives.

Achieving diverse, inclusive key actors engagement and public participation are cross-cutting themes in the CEC's 2021–2025 Strategic Plan, with particular emphasis on the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, traditional ecological knowledge, and Indigenous perspectives. Private sector engagement continues to be important in CEC work, as are continuing involvements with youth, vulnerable populations, and diversity.

In 2025, in alignment with its mandate, and in support of the CEC's public participation efforts, JPAC will continue to promote and enhance public participation in the CEC's various activities and cooperative work program, through public consultations, trilateral dialogues with a wide range of key participants, and public events that provide a platform that encourages meaningful involvement in our trilateral work and environmental cooperation in shaping North America's environmental future.

To support the development of the CEC's next Strategic Plan( 2026–2030), JPAC will ensure that a wide range of public perspectives and viewpoints are reflected in their Advice to the Council, through the following actions:

- Based on the dialogue with the public during JPAC forums and consultations, identify and highlight key shared environmental priorities and opportunities for trilateral collaboration to inform decision-making during the selection of the next potential strategic pillars.
- Review and prioritize the recommendations included in recent JPAC Advice to inform discussions, once the potential pillars, cross-cutting themes, and topics for the next strategic plan have been identified.
- Conduct public consultations, as needed, to ensure that the perspectives of members of the public are reflected in the next strategic plan.
- Review and provide input on draft versions of the next strategic plan.







As part of reviewing the implementation of the ECA, to improve its operation and effectiveness within the five years of the entry into force of the Agreement (in line with Article 4(2) of the new Agreement), JPAC will support the Parties and the CEC Secretariat, as needed.

JPAC could also conduct an analysis, followed by a public consultation, to identify future trade-related environmental opportunities in strategic and highly integrated sectors across the three countries. Key sectors could include automotive, agricultural, electronic, textiles, and apparel. JPAC could then provide recommendations to the CEC Secretariat and Advice to the Parties, incorporating the public's feedback, on how to strengthen the trade and environment agenda.

The CEC's Strategic Plan 2021–2025, the Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (ECA), and Chapter 24 of the United States, Mexico, Canada Agreement, establish broad areas of cooperation in the North American region. Building upon these frameworks, and JPAC's previous work, in addition to integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) along with Indigenous and Environmental Justice perspectives as cross-cutting themes, JPAC will focus its efforts in 2025 on the following priorities:

1. Strengthen collaboration and foster dialogue to address shared environmental priorities with key actors in the region.
2. Increase public participation, dialogue, and knowledge-sharing on common environmental issues to foster cooperation and protect the North American environment.
3. Advance the Parties' initiative, *Reaching Horizon 2030: An Environmental Outlook for North American Cooperation (H-2030)*.
4. Leverage JPAC's mandate and expertise to support the CEC Secretariat and the Parties' efforts to strategically address environmental issues of common interest in North America, in both short and long terms.

To achieve this, JPAC members will carry out the following activities, among others:

- Continue to promote the participation of Council members and Alternate Representatives in JPAC activities, including the possibility of meeting more frequently, via videoconference, to provide updates on our work and hear about the Council's priorities.
- Establish a clear and accessible framework for public participation based on transparency, accountability, meaningful involvement, and the recognition and integration of a wide range of perspectives and knowledge.
- In line with the Private Sector Engagement Strategy, promote dialogue and knowledge-sharing between the Parties and private sector representatives on environmental issues of common interest, and explore opportunities to network with other organizations, including trade associations, community-led cooperatives, financial institutions, and international standard-setters.
- Provide JPAC Advice that stems from the December 2024 JPAC Forum in Mexico City, and the public consultation on H-2030, as well as from recommendations for the selection and launch by the Council of pilot projects that will test new trilateral work recommended under the H-2030 report.
- As the CEC Secretariat and the Parties reflect on the organization's future areas of work, JPAC will contribute by providing a comprehensive and inclusive perspective on North America's environmental challenges and a long-term vision for strategic priorities and results-driven initiatives through the actions described in section "Public Participation Mechanisms."
- Continue to lead the implementation of the initiative, *Advancing Responsible Purchasing of Wood Products*.
- Attend, together with the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG), the *Roundtable on Sustainable Trade in North America: Indigenous Perspective*, which is being organized by the CEC and McGill University to take place on March 24–25, 2025.





## 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Council Session and JPAC Public Forum

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

In July 2025, the CEC will convene for its thirty-second Regular Session in Mexico City, Mexico. This session (#CEC32) will bring together North America's top environmental officials and the public-at-large to learn from and engage with subject matter experts, business leaders, youth, Indigenous and community leaders and others in a hybrid meeting under the theme *Circular Economy and Nature-Based Solutions*.

The Council Session will also showcase the work of the CEC and its impact.

In 2025, the Council public meeting will pursue the following objectives, aligned with the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan:

- Offer a unique opportunity for the public to engage in-person or remotely in a dialogue with Council members and share their views on relevant topics and issues.
- Offer the public a direct opportunity to learn about trilateral environmental collaboration in the context of liberalized trade and integrated economies.
- Provide an effective forum for discussion and using the best digital tools available.
- Promote the visibility of CEC initiatives and efforts.



# Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group

Working with the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Expert Group (TEKEG) has had an invaluable impact on the CEC's work, by contributing to an improved understanding of Indigenous approaches, Indigenous Knowledge (IK), and TEK practices in North America.

The TEKEG<sup>14</sup> was created in 2015 and is the first Traditional Ecological Knowledge panel to provide advice to an intergovernmental organization such as the CEC. The creation of the group 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 protection of biodiversity, as well as the sustainable use of natural resources.

In 2025, the TEKEG will center its activities on the following objectives:

- Continue to promote opportunities to apply IK/TEK to the CEC's operations and recommendations.
- Enhance efforts to strengthen the engagement of the TEKEG and Indigenous Peoples in CEC activities.
- Advance the integration of IK/TEK, Indigenous perspectives, and Indigenous-led stewardship practices across CEC operations.
- Enhance our understanding of Indigenous environmental, social and economic concerns.
- Continue to develop and implement the CEC Protocol for Working with Indigenous Peoples and TEK.
- Disseminate the North American Guiding Principles in Relation to the Incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, available [here](http://www.cec.org/about/traditional-ecological-knowledge-expert-group/).
- Explore opportunities to promote Indigenous trade and trade economics across North America.

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







Indigenous-led ceremony at CEC event.

The CEC will continue working with the TEKEG to inform, support and enhance CEC engagement activities and identify and incorporate IK, including TEK, as well as Indigenous perspectives and stewardship practices, into its activities and recommendations. In 2025, this will be done through the completion of the TEKEG-led initiative on *Resilience of Indigenous Peoples' Traditional Food Systems in North America*.

In addition to this effort, the TEKEG will continue providing advice throughout the next phases of design and implementation for the *Community-led Environmental Education Initiative for Biocultural Heritage Protection* initiative.



## Outreach, Engagement and Partnerships Activities

The CEC recognizes the importance of increasing both its regional and international presence and highlighting its unique role in promoting trilateral cooperation in North America and serving as a platform to disseminate North American best practices at a global scale. Activities aimed at ensuring sustained, meaningful and inclusive engagement and strengthened relationships with individuals, communities, organizations and businesses, and to develop and maintain collaborations and partnerships, will be managed to optimize resources and impact.

The 2021–2025 Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships Strategy will be revised in January 2025 to align with organizational changes occurring in 2026. The main strategic objectives will include:

- Strategically communicating CEC's work to inform, share knowledge and inspire.
- Fostering outreach efforts to create connections.
- Building and maintaining reciprocal relationships and facilitating collaboration.

Thus, during 2025, the CEC will:

- Increase the visibility of key successes and best practices by sharing them with targeted audiences. This includes sharing announcements (e.g., RFPs, job/internship openings, new reports/publications, participation in events, celebration of a new partnership, results/milestone of a project/initiative, consultation, grant opening/results, survey) in our website, through social media and awareness raising campaigns or with targeted emails.
- Highlight the value of working alongside collaborators and partners. This will be done through different strategies, including promoting partnership efforts; and sharing these efforts on social media and the CEC's website; creating videos; finding spaces to share partners voices.
- Establish and maintain partnerships and strategic mutually beneficial relationships by maintaining open communication channels with potential and key partners, identifying, assessing and discussing opportunities for partnerships, supporting in attendance/participation in events and bringing CEC presence to events which mission and objectives align with the CEC.

- Facilitate collaboration for knowledge-sharing, networking and capacity-building by organizing and supporting events, including private or public events, whether in-person, online or hybrid, hosted by the CEC or co-hosted in collaboration with other organizations, meetings, workshops, webinars, and roundtables, among others.
- Expand the CEC network with key actors and ensure they are meaningfully and consistently engaged. Outreach and communication materials targeted to specific audiences, such as pamphlets, postcards, foamboards, infographics, videos, social media campaigns, posters and pull-up banners; are essential for promoting events and initiatives, engaging key actors, collaborators, and partners.
- Continue efforts to understand CEC audiences, to strategically target and meaningfully engage key actors, analyzing CEC audiences and continually updating the key actors' management platform to tailor research and engagement tools to key sectors.





*Working session with youth.*

Throughout 2025, the CEC will strengthen its commitment to finding and implementing innovative approaches and tools to promote ever more diverse and inclusive engagement, including with Indigenous Peoples, youth (see below), 2SLGBTQIA+<sup>15</sup> communities, vulnerable, underrepresented and underrecognized communities, private sector actors and other key North American actors. Identify ways to meaningfully engage individuals, communities, local governments, organizations and businesses. Outreach and partnerships efforts will include expanding and reinvigorating the CEC's engagement efforts that align with the Private Sector Engagement Strategy.

In addition, the CEC will identify and foster opportunities to share knowledge of emerging environmental priorities, disseminate best practices and tools and provide key examples to better address our region's environmental challenges. The CEC will also build and expand networks with all sectors of society in North America and globally to increase its reach and foster cooperation at all levels to address the current environmental challenges. To achieve these objectives, the CEC's efforts will be guided by the overarching Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships Strategy, the Youth Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan as well as the Private Sector Engagement Strategy. Additionally, the Partnerships Action Plan and Reference Guide will keep informing our partnership efforts to support the implementation of the CEC's 2021–2025 Strategic Plan.

Partnerships and strategic, mutually beneficial relationship opportunities will include more joint statements, events, initiatives, videos, partnership agreements and memoranda of understanding. These efforts will promote alignment between CEC's work and regional and global fora, amplify CEC's voice and impact, highlight the value of collaboration and partnerships and strengthen the commitment to leveraging efforts that support key actors and environmental topics. A special focus will be given to identify opportunities for partnerships to support the implementation of regional and international frameworks and position the North American region as a leader on environmental topics.

15. The acronym 2SLGBTQIA+ stands for "Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other identities."



# Youth Engagement

## 2024–2026 Youth Engagement Strategy

During 2025, the CEC will continue the implementation of its [Youth Engagement Strategy \(YES\)](#), which has the main objectives of improving existing youth activities to provide environmental youth leaders with capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and network-building opportunities and ensuring long-term sustainability of its youth efforts.

## Generation of Environmental Leaders Program (GELP)

The [Generation of Environmental Leaders Program \(GELP\)](#) was launched in 2024, and its second edition will be hosted in 2025. This program supports young leaders in developing the necessary skills and accessing seed funding to make a real, meaningful impact in their communities and beyond. The GELP invites teams of young leaders from North America to support communities and preserve our shared waters, lands and air. The program is aimed at youth who are 18–35 years old and are part of a team such as, but not exclusively, youth-led organizations, youth-led associations, nongovernmental organizations, not-for-profit youth-led businesses, and teams of young innovators and entrepreneurs interested in building their businesses. Youth from Canada, Mexico and the United States are invited to submit their solutions. In addition to building capacity for youth, this CEC program accelerates youth leadership by expanding youth environmental networks and provides seed funding for impactful solutions to flourish, particularly at the local level. As part of the year-long mentorship program, the selected youth also engage in knowledge-sharing sessions with experts to advance their solutions and contribute to a North American community of knowledge.



Youth environmental leaders at working session.



Youth representatives and Environmental Justice Experts.





### *Youth Engagement Week*

In 2023, the CEC hosted its first [Youth Engagement Week](#) (YEW). The YEW is now an annual event designed to embrace youth perspectives in North America by fostering their active participation in the CEC’s work and efforts.<sup>16</sup> The 2024 CEC YEW engaged North American youth to actively participate in CEC work through the JPAC’s public consultation, focusing on the H-2030 initiative. The main event was a workshop led by youth leaders which introduced participants to JPAC’s engagement mechanisms, promoting contributions to the North American environmental dialogue. The facilitators also served as panelists in the “Youth Voices on H-2030” session at the 2024 JPAC Public Forum, sharing youth perspectives and advocating for regional environmental action and meaningful youth involvement.

During 2025, the CEC will host its third YEW. The event will aim to engage with young individuals from Canada, Mexico and the United States, to learn from their expertise on youth-led initiatives, share priorities and youth engagement approaches at the CEC and have an opportunity to inspire change at a regional level.

16. The YEW aims to create an enabling environment for youth from Canada, Mexico and the United States to engage in meaningful dialogues, contribute to environmental discussions at the regional level and collaborate on impactful solutions to address pressing environmental challenges. Through workshops, consultations and collaborative projects, the CEC Youth Engagement Week supports the development of an intergenerational network committed to sustainability and environmental stewardship.



# Enhancing Visibility and Public Awareness of CEC’s Work

To increase the visibility and public awareness in the implementation of this Operational Plan and harness the momentum building across North America for action to counter climate, biodiversity and pollution crises, the CEC will communicate with the public of North American on its trilateral activities and priorities as well as on issues of common concern and interest for Canada, Mexico and the United States. In 2025, the CEC will address the following objectives, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2021–2025:

- Raise public awareness and understanding of the CEC.
- Improve modes of communication to facilitate public participation and increase a diverse, inclusive and meaningful engagement.
- Position the CEC as a prime North American information portal for environmental data, information, and analyses covering the region.

These objectives will be achieved through CEC publications, media releases, newsletters, audiovisual materials, social media strategies, web presence and by participation in regional and international opportunities online and in-person.

The overarching goal of the CEC’s communications efforts will be promoting and increasing CEC’s recognition as an example of regional cooperation, both regionally and globally, of the CEC’s cooperative work and its leadership and relevance as a convener and facilitator for knowledge-sharing opportunities and for the development of tools to address environmental challenges. The three guiding objectives of the Strategic Communications Action Plan will be to enhance visibility, public awareness and understanding of the CEC’s work and its unique role in environmental cooperation; modernize access to information for decision-makers and interested individuals and groups; and improve modes of communication to facilitate public participation and promote diverse and inclusive engagement.

Additional efforts to communicate about the CEC’s work and priorities and increase the visibility of the organization will include showcasing CEC’s work in national and international fora.



# Administration

For the CEC to deliver on its priorities, it must also align its operations (which include human resources, information systems’ support, meeting services, and finance) to better support the work program and promote workplace values, while striving to maximize efficiencies and promote sustainability.

## ***Human Resources***

The Secretariat staff is composed of 46 employees, with 11 employees focused on operations and administrative support.

In 2025, the CEC will remain committed to advancing employee development with enhanced training programs, mentorship opportunities, capacity building initiatives, including leadership training and technical skills development, as well as access to professional certifications and continuing education, all supporting employees in their professional growth.

To strengthen organizational efficiency, human resources policies will be aligned with best practices and operational needs, ensuring a smooth transition under the revised Secretariat organizational structure. In-house training will be provided to staff to strengthen adaptability to change.

Additionally, the CEC will support employees’ well-being, mental health, and work-life balance to promote their engagement and productivity. Workload distribution will be carefully monitored to prevent fatigue. Fair and competitive compensation practices will also be sought through a transparent framework for salary increases and promotions.

## ***Meeting Services***

The CEC continues to increase the number of virtual events and is becoming more effective in planning hybrid events. It also continues to improve its internal processes to ensure timely and cost-efficient meeting planning. In selecting hotels and providers, the CEC always strives to ensure they have sustainable practices in place.

## ***Information System Infrastructure***

Annual updates to CEC operating systems, cybersecurity, and application software are essential. In 2025, the CEC will continue updating its information technology (IT) equipment. The CEC will also focus on finalizing its Business Continuity Plan to prepare for any unexpected disruption in its IT infrastructure, thus improving the resilience of its operations.

## ***Accounting/Finance***

In 2025, the CEC will continue to tightly manage its resources and find efficiencies to meet inflationary pressures. With fixed contributions and no increase in budget, the CEC will continue exploring potential partnerships to share expenses on targeted activities.

## ***Sustainable Operations***

During 2025, the Secretariat will continue implementing its Sustainability Policy, which commits the Secretariat to promoting sustainability in all aspects of its operations. The Sustainability Policy was recently launched and focuses on creating a healthy work environment and on identifying opportunities to reduce emissions from travel, promote energy efficiency at the office, reduce waste, opt for greener and cleaner procurement and to make CEC meetings and events more sustainable. A set of “Guidelines for International Activities” will also promote the efficient use of CEC resources by assessing the need, impact, and alignment of the international events with the CEC’s strategic priorities. Secretariat actions have already yielded results in that it has enhanced operational efficiency in some areas and reduced resource consumption. The Secretariat will monitor and publicly report its environmental impacts and information on the measures it is taking to be more sustainable.



## Strategic Planning, Measuring Performance and Reporting on Progress

Planning, monitoring, and reporting are crucial activities that will be put into practice through the CEC's core values of transparency, excellence, collaboration, inclusiveness, and integrity. In 2025, the CEC continue to address the following objectives, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2021–2025:

- Demonstrate progress in meeting CEC environmental goals and objectives.
- Enhance CEC performance, accountability, and reporting ability.
- Re-direct action to meet the set goals and objectives.
- Evaluate CEC activities and projects.
- Share relevant accomplishments.
- Identify and document the long-term impact of initiatives in Canada, Mexico, and the United States.
- Evaluate the impact of CEC activities.

The CEC will publish its Annual Report for 2024, and the Secretariat will continue reporting regularly on the development and implementation of the cooperative projects and initiatives. During 2025, the CEC will also provide close-out reports to the Parties on completed projects and initiatives. These reports will strengthen CEC's efforts to measure and evaluate the impact of our cooperative work.

During 2025, the CEC will continue using its strategic key performance indicators, strengthened by user-based evaluation methods. This will allow key actors and collaborators to contribute to the assessment of our efforts, as it will encourage the participating audience to be involved in the activities. This approach calls for evolving, innovative thinking about the way the CEC incorporates a wide diversity of voices and will bring about improvements and positive changes in existing practices. These strategic key performance indicators will provide the CEC with more information about the impact of our cooperative work in creating collaboration and fostering inclusiveness.

The CEC will continue defining and publishing overarching institutional performance measures to provide more information about [Our impact](#), through these measures, the CEC is significantly enhancing its ability to measure environmental and community impacts and communicate it to the public. Finally, the CEC will publish the findings of the long-term impact assessment of the migratory birds projects carried out from 2015-2019.



## An Effective Model of Collaboration to Address Environmental Challenges

The CEC plays a crucial role in fostering collaboration among Canada, Mexico, and United States to address shared environmental challenges. In 2025, as we face an increasingly complex set of environmental issues, the CEC will continue to serve as a vital platform for the three countries to come together and take collective action. Whether it is managing natural resources, protecting biodiversity, or addressing pollution, the CEC helps ensure that these issues are tackled in a coordinated and efficient manner, benefiting communities across North America.

For over three decades, the CEC has been instrumental in developing and implementing initiatives that protect and conserve the environment. Through its efforts to harmonize environmental data, create collaboration and information sharing, and promote sustainable resource management, the CEC has built a legacy of regional cooperation that delivers real-world impact. By bringing together government agencies, Indigenous leaders, academics, and the private sector, the CEC ensures that environmental decisions are based on shared knowledge and a commitment to long-term solutions.

Looking forward to 2025, the CEC remains focused on advancing key initiatives that will shape the future of North America's environmental policies. For example, the Horizon-2030 initiative will help us guide the CEC's priorities for the next five years, through enhancing public participation, supporting sustainable development, and improving environmental resilience. As the CEC continues to strengthen its partnerships and broaden its reach, its work will be critical in helping our three countries meet evolving environmental needs while fostering healthier and more resilient communities.







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