

Administration and Funding Guidelines

North American Partnership for Environmental Community Action (NAPECA) of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC)

2015–2016

Revised 9 July 2015

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1. Background

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

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

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

The Council may direct support for specific topics in any given cycle. Selected topics will be outlined in the Call for Proposals.

2. Eligibility

The NAPECA program seeks to support efforts at the grassroots level. The objective is to empower and build the capacity of local peoples and organizations to improve their health and environmental quality. For this reason, priority will be given to action-driven projects with dynamic community involvement, implemented by local groups or organizations.

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

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

The CEC cannot accept applications from an applicant who is, or whose immediate family member(s) is/are:

- An official of a NAAEC Party (i.e., the Government of Canada, the Government of the United States of America, or the Government of the United Mexican States) who served in that position within the past year;
- An official of the CEC Secretariat;

- A present or past member (within the past year) of the CEC Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC); or
- A member of the domestic advisory committees (“Immediate family” includes spouses, parents, siblings and children).

The following projects and activities are not eligible for funding:

- Activities for which the local, state/provincial or federal government is responsible (e.g., construction of roads, bridges, sewage treatment plants);
- Purchase of motor vehicles, property, or land;
- Renovations;
- Pursuing legal action;
- Projects dedicated exclusively to planning;
- Projects meant only to beautify an area;
- Lobbying or advocacy;
- Annual or regular organizational events/campaigns;
- Expenses to attend general conferences; and
- Projects implemented outside the territory of the three NAAEC countries.

3. Funding

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

The total available budget per cycle will be distributed equally amongst the three countries.

While there is no specific cap on the amount of funding that can be requested in a project proposal, applicants should realize that the total monies available to the NAPECA program are limited. In each of the two granting cycles conducted thus far (2011–2013 and 2013–2015), 19 and 18 projects, respectively, were funded and the average amount awarded in each cycle was approximately US\$70,000, although between projects, there was considerable variation above and below that figure. Any proposal requesting US\$500,000 or more will be subject to particular scrutiny.

4. Grant Selection Criteria

The NAPECA grant process is designed to support projects that:

- Address the focus area identified by Council: for 2015–2016, this is *Sustainable Communities/Urban Initiatives*;
- Will achieve positive results for the environment at the community level within the timeframe of NAPECA support;
- Include a sound implementation plan;
- Achieve goals and measurable objectives, and clear, tangible results;
- Measure progress;
- Include a clear timeline for implementation of project activities, including a target end date for NAPECA support;
- Create formal or informal partnerships or linkages at the state, local or indigenous community level, within the North American region;

- Identify beneficiaries if intended to build capacity; and
- Are presented on time and through the established process.

5. NAPECA Approval Process

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

Grant applicants will submit a proposal consisting of an executive summary and a more detailed breakdown of their proposed project, explaining how it meets each of the NAPECA grant selection criteria and will include a comprehensive description of the requested funding. See Section 6.3 below for the proposal outline.

Applicants must submit their application by the posted due date. The CEC Secretariat will review the executive summary and will make a first cut based on the NAPECA grant selection criteria included above (Section 4). Successful proposals retained after that first screening will then be reviewed by the NAPECA Selection Committee in a final grant selection round. The Secretariat will assist the Selection Committee in screening and reviewing proposals, and will administer the grant funds.

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

5.1 Evaluation of NAPECA

A performance evaluation of NAPECA will be conducted annually. Grantees must demonstrate, through periodic reporting, that they are implementing the activities set forth in their workplan, meeting the stated goals, and achieving the expected results. In addition, a financial statement on NAPECA will be included in the annual external audit of the CEC.

5.2 Official Languages

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

6. Grant Application Timeline and Process

6.1. Summary of the Process

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

Once the Call for Proposals is issued, the deadline for submission of the proposals will be six weeks later. During this period, the CEC Secretariat may provide initial feedback to an applicant regarding the eligibility and completeness of the proposals. Proposals can be submitted electronically through the online application form available at <www.cec.org/napeca>. They can also be mailed or hand delivered to the CEC Secretariat offices in Montreal, Canada, or to the CEC's Mexico City Liaison office, but

application online is encouraged. Only one application per organization per country will be considered. The Secretariat will provide personalized assistance at any point during the application process to potential grantees through phone calls, Skype, e-mail or regular mail, or in person in order to assist applicants with the process. Once an application is submitted, the Secretariat will not provide oral or written feedback on its evaluation.

The first screening of proposals should be completed eight weeks after the Call for Proposals closing date. The final review of proposals will be conducted by the Selection Committee.

The Selection Committee will notify successful applicants of the grants to be awarded after 23 October 2015 (Canadian federal elections), and the Parties will aim to have the Council make the public announcement by the first week in December 2015.

6.2 Request for Proposals and Review Process

1. The CEC Secretariat will release a Call for Proposals (executive summary and detailed proposal together) that outlines eligible applicants and the sorts of projects/activities that are not eligible for funding, provides information on how to apply, and supplies a decision timetable and an outline for the project proposals. This document will be sent to the Parties, JPAC, and CEC stakeholders, and made publicly available.
2. The Secretariat will screen the executive summary proposals and prepare documentation for the Selection Committee. For each proposal submitted, the Secretariat will develop and manage a file. The Secretariat will review this documentation and select projects for which the detailed proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Committee.
3. The Selection Committee will evaluate the detailed proposals on how well they meet each of the NAPECA selection criteria (as specified in Section 4, above).
4. The Selection Committee will then approve or decline the grant applications.
5. The Secretariat will administer the grant funds.

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

6.3 Proposal Format

Proposals must include the following information:

Contact information

1. Project lead contact information: First name, last name, telephone, fax, e-mail.
2. Organization contact information: Name, address, country, e-mail, phone, fax, website, twitter, Facebook, etc.

Section 1. Executive Summary (maximum two pages)

3. Project title
4. Budget requested¹
5. Project duration. Project starting date; project end date.
6. Environmental priority. Explain *how* the project and project results address the focus area: *Sustainable Communities/Urban Initiatives*. (max. 100 words)
7. Geographic location of the project. Indicate the country or countries where the project will be implemented.
8. Communities benefited by the project. List the community/ies that will benefit directly from the project. (max. 200 words)
9. Goals and objectives. Provide a brief explanation of the goals and objectives of the project, including the problem the project proposes to address. (max. 200 words)
10. Main activities. Briefly describe the main activities to be undertaken during the implementation of the project. (max. 50 words per activity)
11. Results. Briefly describe the expected results and how will they contribute to the overall goal of improving health and environmental quality, e.g. by improving environmental conditions, environmental awareness and/or increase capacity in the community. Results must be achieved within the timeframe of NAPECA support. (max. 100 words)
12. Partnerships. Please provide the names of any other organizations involved in the project, including partners and/or beneficiaries.
13. Identify clearly the beneficiaries and target population. (max. 50 words)
14. Other funding sources. Other funding sources and/or opportunities to leverage funding. (max. 150 words)
15. Mission of the lead organization/institution/"group/community." (max. 100 words)

Section 2. Proposal Details

16. Goals, Objectives and Performance Indicators. Provide a detailed statement of the project's goals and objectives. Provide details of the performance indicators to measure the objectives. Fill in the worksheet provided online.
17. Work Plan. Provide a detailed description of the specific activities to be undertaken and their associated timelines (work plan). Use the template provided online.
18. Budget breakdown. Use the worksheet template to provide details of the project budget (in US\$). Break this information into the following categories:
 - a) Salaries and benefits
 - b) Equipment and supplies
 - c) Travel²
 - d) Consultant services (if applicable)
 - e) Overhead (not to exceed 15 percent)³

¹ For more information on available funds, see Section 3 above.

² The CEC will not fund expenses related to travel in excess of 15 percent of the total grant amount.

f) Other costs

19. Innovation. Describe any innovative approach to be adopted in this project. (max. 50 words)
20. Replicability. Explain how this project could be replicated in other North American communities. (max. 100 words)
21. Résumé. Please upload a résumé of the Project Leader/person responsible for project activities. (max. 200 words)
22. Applicant Organization. Please upload a certificate of non-profit status of the applicant organization.
23. Declaration of acceptance of impartiality and independence. Please print, sign and upload the Declaration of impartiality and independence.

6.4 Grant Distribution Process

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

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

Progress reports will be made publicly available.

7. Revision of the NAPECA Administration and Funding Guidelines

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

³ The CEC will not fund expenses related to overhead and administration (such as rent, telephone, fax, and photocopies) in excess of 15 percent of the total grant amount.