



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC)

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Environmental Cooperation

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Multilateral

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Signed by Canada September 14, 1993
- In force in Canada January 1, 1994
- In force internationally January 1, 1994
- Trilateral Projects are supported on a two-year cycle, strategic priorities and objectives for the organization overall are set on a five-year cycle. Implementation of the NAAEC is ongoing.

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Environment and Climate Change Canada

United States (US) Environmental Protection Agency, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (Mexican Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources)

Partners: Other government departments dependent on the approved trilateral projects.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Web Links:

[Commission for Environmental Cooperation](#) internet site

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

January 2020

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

Since 1994, Canada, Mexico and the United States have collaborated in protecting North America's environment through the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC).

The NAAEC came into force at the same time as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and marks a commitment that liberalization of trade and economic growth in North America would be accompanied by effective cooperation and continuous improvement in the environmental protection provided by each country.

Accordingly, the NAAEC established an intergovernmental organization - the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) - to support cooperation among the NAFTA partners to address environmental issues of continental concern, including the environmental challenges and opportunities presented by continent-wide free trade.

OBJECTIVE

This Agreement aims to promote sustainable development, encourage pollution prevention policies and practices, and enhance compliance with environmental laws and regulations. The NAAEC promotes transparency and public participation, with the objective of enhancing environmental performance of each country and furthering trilateral cooperation.

KEY ELEMENTS

The NAAEC requires that each Party ensure its laws provide for high levels of environmental protection without lowering standards to attract investment.

Each Party must provide a report on the state of its environment; develop environmental emergency preparedness measures; promote environmental education, research, and development; assess environmental impacts; and promote the use of economic instruments.

The NAAEC established the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, comprised of a Council, a

Secretariat and a Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC).

The Council is the CEC's governing body comprised of cabinet-level representatives of the Parties.

The Secretariat supports the Council and related committees. The Secretariat also administers the submissions on enforcement matters process which allows North American residents to file a written complaint asserting that any of the three countries is failing to effectively enforce an environmental law. This process may lead to the development of a factual record if deemed warranted by the Secretariat and so instructed by the Council.

The JPAC is composed of fifteen citizens (five appointed by each Council member) and provides advice to the Council on matters within the scope of the NAAEC. It can also serve as a source of information for the Secretariat. The JPAC promotes active public participation and transparency in all activities under the NAAEC.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The CEC promotes trilateral cooperation amongst the three Parties to address common environmental issues and concerns.

The NAAEC supports the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) environmental provisions by establishing a level playing field to avoid trade distortions and promote environmental cooperation.

The CEC strategic priorities align with, support and promote Canadian interests and domestic priorities with respect to environmental concerns in North America, potential trade and environmental conflicts among the NAFTA partners, and the enforcement of domestic environmental laws in the three countries.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Through the NAAEC, Canada demonstrates its commitment to addressing potential environmental impacts from North American trade. The trilateral pursuit of environmental cooperation is consistent with our highly integrated North American economy. This work supports the protection and promotion of Canada's environmental interests internationally. In particular, it supports the expected result that Canada's relations with other governments and partners are effectively managed in support of environmental priorities.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

In June 2019, Canada participated in the [annual Council meeting](#) hosted by Mexico in Mexico City. The theme of this year's Council Session was "Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency" and focused on exploring synergies and opportunities between domestic and regional efforts and the activities of civil society and the private sector to achieve positive results in addressing marine litter and food loss and waste.

Canada contributes to [the Submission on Enforcement Matters](#) process by considering and responding to citizen submissions on environmental laws in Canada, the US and Mexico.

Reports

Canada has provided input on its environmental actions for inclusion in the Annual Reports of the CEC (17 published in total) to ensure compliance with the NAAEC. They can be found at [Commission for Environmental Cooperation](#).

Results

In July 2015, the Council endorsed the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, which sets out the strategic priorities and objectives for the CEC to address key regional environmental challenges and to complement the work of each of our governments domestically and internationally. Under this Strategic Plan, biannual operational plans support these strategic priorities and objectives and facilitate cooperative projects. Further information on these projects can be found on the [Commission for Environmental Cooperation](#) website.