



The North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation (NAFEC)
Fonds nord-américain pour la coopération environnementale (FNACE)
Fondo de América del Norte para la Cooperación Ambiental (FANCA)

North American Fund for Environmental Cooperation Selection Committee Report to Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation

26 June 2003

During the NAFEC Selection Committee [the Committee] meeting of 26 June 2003, in Washington, DC, the members¹ discussed the details of the NAFEC grant cycle and selection process and made the following comments and recommendations.²

Call for Proposals

The Committee considered the necessity of including fuller explanation in future calls for proposals. They should include a more detailed and clearer definition of the funding criteria and project categories, as well as information related to the selection process and answers to other frequently asked questions.

The large number of proposals received by NAFEC every year, including 383 proposals in 2003, was not considered an issue. In fact, the high level of interest from the local community demonstrates nongovernmental organizations' continuing financial need. However, it was suggested that the call for proposals should clearly state that the NAFEC grant process is highly competitive and should give an estimated rate of success for proposals.

Grant Evaluation Process

The Committee felt that the proposal evaluation process was being handled in a satisfactory manner. The members suggested that more specific evaluation criteria (based on the general funding criteria described in the Call for Proposals) be provided to the Committee to allow it to better compare the proposed projects. They also suggested that experts and scientists be available for consultations during the selection review process and that CEC staff who work for programs and projects related to the NAFEC current project category be invited to the Committee's meetings.

From 1995 to 1999, NAFEC used a two-stage selection process that included:

- Stage 1: A one page pre-proposal was requested of applicants
- Stage 2: A full proposal was requested of the potential grantees

¹ From Canada: Merrell-Ann Phare (JPAC member), Charles Melville Williams (NAC member); from Mexico: Laura Silvan (JPAC member and Pablo Farías (Ford Foundation); from the United States: Arturo Duran (JPAC member), Dolores Wesson (NAC member).

² In accordance with Article 5.2 of the NAFEC Guidelines, adopted by the CEC Council in December 2002: "The Selection Committee will report to the Council once a year. This report will be submitted following approval of grants and will include comments on the NAFEC process and recommendations for improvement."

The Committee members do not favor the two-stage application process because of its additional evaluation step. However, it was agreed that more time should be allocated for the proposal screening.

New Selection Committee Structure

The new structure of the Selection Committee, established through the revised guidelines, was considered effective and it was recommended that the terms of the Committee members should be staggered in order to avoid having all members change at the same time.

NAFEC Evaluation

It was suggested that a follow-up on the long-term impacts of NAFEC-funded projects be conducted in the context of the ten-year retrospective of NAFTA/NAAEC.

NAFEC Web Page

The Committee members were generally satisfied with the NAFEC web page.

Internet Application Module

The Selection Committee members strongly supported the improvement of the NAFEC database (Gifts for Windows) through the purchase of an Internet Grant Application Module (IGAM), which would allow NAFEC staff to receive applications via the Internet and transfer the information directly to the database. This online receipt of grant applications could significantly reduce data entry, minimize incoming mail and lessen other time-intensive administrative tasks, lowering overall operating costs (e.g., hiring temporary help) and saving valuable time.

However, if the costs of additional software do not justify its implementation, other solutions should be sought. Ideally, the CEC should develop an internal database system to allow the exchange of information between NAFEC and other CEC programs.

2004 Grant Theme

The Selection Committee members supported the JPAC advice³ that freshwater conservation and management be made the theme for the 2004 NAFEC granting round.

*Approved by the NAFEC Selection Committee members
29 August 2003*

³ JPAC Advice to Council 02-10