

Background note

Item 3.1.2 Cooperating on air quality management

Vision for North American Air Quality Management

Air is a natural resource shared between and among our Countries. As a consequence, that air is affected by emissions at the local, regional and North American levels, as well as from outside North America. It is vital, therefore, that the Parties work collaboratively to develop efficient and effective North American-wide strategies to preserve and improve the quality of our shared air sheds.

Cooperation will be important in developing data, information, and analyses to identify our shared North American needs and priorities and to coordinate policies, strategies, and programs to reduce emissions and their environmental impacts. We must also inform and engage the public, industry, and other stakeholders.

Our vision, then, is to collaborate through the CEC, and to coordinate and leverage other relevant programs between and among our Countries, to work towards:

- Engaging in building capacity to ensure self-sustaining comparable inventory, monitoring and other air quality efforts.
- Developing accurate, meaningful, and comparable data and analyses at the local, regional, and North American level;
- Achieving comparability, consistency, quality, and synchronicity of the three Countries' emissions inventories and emissions monitoring capabilities.
- Developing and mapping information on air quality, trends, emissions impacts and recommended air quality management strategies at the local, regional, and North American airshed level;
- Facilitating coordination, coherence, and effectiveness of emissions reduction and air quality policies, regulations, strategies, and voluntary programs to maintain and improve North American air quality and public health.

Initial work aimed at Enhancing North American Air Quality Management will see the Parties develop the capabilities for comparable and synchronized emissions inventories and monitoring systems. Data and analyses from these systems, as well as data, information, and knowledge from our other shared programs, such as Border 2012, will inform our strategies and initiatives for our air quality and emissions work in 2010-2015.