

# Minutes

NAGPI Conference Call: Wednesday, 17 November 2004, 14:00–14:30 EST

## 1. Welcome to participants and roll call

### Participants

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Chantal Line Carpentier     | Dmitriy Nikolayev   |
| Christine Cowan             | John Polak          |
| Marcia Deegler              | Mary Ann Remolador  |
| Loretta Legault             | Véronique Robichaud |
| Jackie Libricz              | Roger Peniche Sala  |
| Pablo Eduardo López-Vazquez | Jeff Stephens       |
| Rahumathulla Marikkar       | Paul Thomson        |
| Luz Aida Martinez           |                     |

*As there were new participants, John briefly introduced the NAGPI work and objectives.*

## 2. Annual meeting: proceedings

As no comments were received, and given that there is information missing from one of the breakout sessions, it was agreed that Véronique will send the minutes back to the group. Loretta will try to fill in the blanks.

## 3. Meeting in March

It was decided that the next workshop should be hosted in Santa Monica on 31 March 2005.

## 4. Committee update

All committees now have terms of reference that have been sent around to the NAGPI group. Everyone is invited to join one or the other subcommittee, and to send the information to other people who might be interested in participating.

Christine, head of the office supplies committee, brought to our attention a forum, taking place on 21 January 2005, which will focus on bringing buyers and producers together. It will discuss, among other things, the attributes of printers, copiers and paper. Dmitriy is aware of work related to these issues, so he joined the subcommittee on office supplies. In addition, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is in the process of running a survey on green purchasing; Christine will send around the results from that process. She will also identify a contact working on renewable energy, and forward the information to John and Véronique.

The renewables committee is working on a background on renewable energy in and outside North America. John suggested a conference call amongst the members of this committee in order to discuss work further.

As Marcia is aware of a current contract in Massachusetts for cleaning products, she volunteered to participate in the activities of the subcommittee working on these issues.

Véronique will send the list of people who have shown interest in participating in these subcommittees.

## **5. Other**

Jackie invited the participants to communicate with her if they would like to participate in the Annual Chlorine-Free Summit to be hosted in Florida next February. She will share the agenda as soon as it is completed.

## **6. Next Meeting**

Next conference call: Wednesday 15 December, 14:00 EST.

## **Annex 1 Briefing Note**

### **Background**

The consideration of the environmental and public health attributes of products and services is being included in an increasing number of government procurement bids throughout Mexico, Canada and the United States. This movement is due to the recognition that there can be substantial and measurable differences in these important attributes among products that serve the same purpose and meet or exceed traditional performance requirements. As with any new movement, the entry of environmentally preferable products and services into the market place can be fraught with financial, institutional and perceptual obstacles. NAGPI's efforts, as summarized in this report, address the status, constraints and opportunities related to the advancement of environmentally preferable procurement programs in government.

### **Current NAGPI Initiative**

Greening the procurement process can be accomplished in a variety of ways, ranging from asking suppliers to identify the environmental aspects of their products to requiring suppliers and their products to be certified against environmental leadership standards. NAGPI is promoting a three-level process, and has begun with three product categories: cleaning agents, electricity and office supplies/equipment (paper products and photocopiers/printers).

- (1) At very least, institutional purchasers should request suppliers to provide targeted and standardized information that is unique to each specific product. Purchasers can then assess the environmental performance of each product from the perspective of what is most important to the institution. Annex A identifies the key environmental attributes for the three product categories.
- (2) When the institution raises the environmental bar on their purchasing, they adopt environmental leadership criteria and include them in their purchasing activities. Annex B includes examples of different criteria that are currently being used in North America.
- (3) When the institution raises the environmental bar to the highest notch, thereby ensuring the highest level of credibility and transparency, it requires independent verification according to the environmental leadership criteria, or it requires "certification." Annex B includes the names and web site addresses of a number of certification bodies in North America that have certified products in the three categories.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that:

1. CEC Ministers continue to support the ongoing work of NAGPI; and
2. CEC Ministers assess how effective their own agencies and governments have been in implementing green purchasing. This can be accomplished through their support of OECD's questionnaire and assessment process (to begin fall 2004), and through NAGPI's ECO-SAT tool.

The NAGPI team stands ready to assist governments as needed and has developed some tools to aid in the evaluation of current purchasing practices.

## **Annex 2: Puebla Declaration**

Puebla, Mexico, 23 June 2004—We, the environment ministers of Canada, Mexico and the United States, members of the Council of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC or “the Commission”), met for our annual regular session on 22 and 23 June 2004. The year 2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation (NAAEC) and the North American Free Trade Agreement and is an occasion to assess our work. We see this as an opportunity to review our progress, re-affirm our commitment to the CEC, and set directions for the future. The report of the independent Ten-year Review and Assessment Committee has provided an important basis for our deliberations.

Looking forward, our vision of the CEC is of an organization that is a catalyst for action by the Parties and others to ensure our air is cleaner, our water purer, and our plant and animal species better conserved and protected, as our countries’ economic relationship grows. We also see the organization as a forum through which we can discuss and facilitate regional action on our common global commitments. Over the next ten years we want the CEC to be known for concrete results and for quality information and analysis, which have policy relevance to the three countries.

We recognize the value of the CEC’s work on environment, economy and trade; biodiversity conservation; pollutants and health; and law and policy. Looking forward, we commit to grounding the CEC’s work program, starting in 2005, in results-oriented strategic plans for three priorities: information for decision-making, capacity building, and trade and environment. These are priorities that the CEC is uniquely positioned to help the three countries address together—and separately—for the benefit of North America. We want the CEC to be an organization recognized for its credible, balanced and timely information on the North American environment, and want to ensure that this information is available and accessible to all interested parties in order to provide governments, the private sector, and citizens alike with information to address the key environmental challenges and opportunities facing the region. We support strengthening the CEC’s information gathering activities, databases, and communications, and making linkages with other information systems, such as the Global Earth Observation System of Systems.

In developing the strategic plan for information, we will build a knowledge base related to contaminants, the integrity of our ecosystems, and our ability to ensure environmental security at our borders. We will focus on information that is key to providing answers regarding the state of our North American environment, and will develop and use information technologies that will help us access and share this information.

We recognize the different capacities of the Parties and the continuing, urgent need to focus on institutional capacity building in order to sustain targeted results. We acknowledge that this is especially important for Mexico, and want the CEC to assist those concerned in the three countries—governments, the private sector, environmental organizations, academia, indigenous and local communities, and others—in gradually strengthening the capacity for sound environmental management across North America.

In developing a capacity-building strategic plan, we will focus on priorities such as our abilities to assess and manage chemicals of concern, undertake pollution prevention, participate in biodiversity conservation, and improve our enforcement efforts.

We want to build on the CEC's recognized expertise on trade and environmental linkages, and to address specific trade and environmental issues more effectively. We will enhance the positive working relationship that has been developed with our trade counterparts to ensure trade and environment policies are mutually supportive. We will continue our work with the NAFTA Free Trade Commission, under the Article 10(6) Working Group, to develop a strategic plan on trade and environment.

As we work to develop the plan, we will consider, among other priorities, areas which could include: establishing key elements to enhance markets for renewable energy; addressing issues related to trade pathways for invasive species; trade and enforcement of environmental laws, including enforcement of domestic laws that address transboundary trade in environmentally sensitive goods and materials; environmental procurement practices; market-based approaches to connect North American ecoregions; and sharing, as appropriate, information on methodologies for conducting environmental reviews of trade agreements with a view to better assessing the environmental effects of NAFTA.

The NAAEC and the CEC have been a bold ten-year initiative in building a continental framework for trilateral environmental cooperation within the context of increasing trade and economic ties amongst our three countries. We recognize the significant progress accomplished and the invaluable contribution of the Secretariat and the Joint Public Advisory Committee (JPAC), as well as the efforts of the CEC's working groups. We know it is critical to streamline the work of the CEC and to focus our work on generating concrete, measurable results that will make a difference to the environment in North America. We recognize that there will be a transition period as we adjust the work program and apply new approaches to achieve our goals.

While we are focusing on the CEC's work around three main themes, it is also important to identify and keep abreast of emerging issues, particularly those which have special relevance for North America. We continue to support the CEC's Article 13 work to identify emerging issues, and to provide recommendations to the Parties for addressing these issues.

We continue to be supportive of the process for submissions on enforcement matters, and commit to exploring ways for each Party to communicate how matters raised in factual records may be addressed over time.

As we move to the next ten years in the life of the CEC, we look to a skilled Secretariat to help us achieve our vision for the organization. We are committed to strengthening the relationship amongst all parts of the CEC—the Council, the Secretariat and JPAC. We seek to grow the constituencies engaged in the work of the CEC by including a broad and balanced spectrum of other levels of government, including local governments, environmental groups, academics, the private sector, indigenous and local communities, civil society, and others.

We envision a strong role for the CEC in promoting partnerships across this spectrum. We will continue to place great value on advice from JPAC, which reflects the diversity and innovative views of its members.

We have important work ahead, and we are confident that our strong commitment to the CEC will contribute to a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable North American environment for future generations.

Alberto Cárdenas Jiménez, Government of the United Mexican States

Michael O. Leavitt, Government of the United States of America

Norine Smith, Government of Canada

### **Annex 3: Public Comment Period**

#### **US EPA EPP Program Announces Public Comment Period for 4 Draft Purchasing Guides**

Today, June 30th, EPA published a *Federal Register* notice announcing the availability for public review and comment of four draft Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Guides. These guides provide information to federal procurement officials for making EPP decisions that can help protect human health and the environment. They include the following:

"Greening Your Purchase of Carpet: A Guide For Federal Purchasers"

"Greening Your Meetings and Conferences: A Guide For Federal Purchasers"

"Greening Your Purchase of Cleaning Products: A Guide For Federal Purchasers"

"Greening the Purchase of Your Copiers: A Guide For Federal Purchasers"

EPA is providing a sixty-day public comment period that will end August 30, 2004, so all interested parties can provide their comments and suggestions. Stakeholders can access these documents and submit comments electronically through the EPA internet site for Federal Register Dockets. Interested parties should go to <http://www.epa.gov/edocket/> to submit or view public comments, access the index listing of the contents of the official public docket, and to access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. The guides are also available on EPA's EPP website at <http://www.epa.gov/epp/documents/pfs.htm>. Stakeholders can read the draft guides on the EPP website but comments must be submitted through the channels described in the Federal Register Notice. To view the complete details of the public comment period for the draft purchasing guides including other ways to submit comments, please see the complete Federal Register Notice at <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/06jun20041800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2004/04-14831.htm>.

EPA would like comments to address the following questions:

1. Is the discussion on the potential environmental impacts of the product categories useful for Federal purchasers?
2. Is there any more recent information that is germane to or would enhance the discussion of these product categories?
3. Can Federal purchasers act easily upon the stated recommendations in the product guides?
4. Is this an approach you would like EPA to take in addressing Environmentally Preferable Purchasing?

Commenting individuals can use the questions as a general guide for comments and feel free to expand on any topic they would like relating to the EPP Program and the purchasing guides.

For more information on these guides, contact Terry Grogan at (202) 564-6317 or [grogan.terry@epa.gov](mailto:grogan.terry@epa.gov). For more information on the review and comment process, contact Jesse Eaves at (202) 564-8867 or [eaves.jesse@epa.gov](mailto:eaves.jesse@epa.gov).