

Development of Indicators of Children's Health and the Environment in North America

Partnership Arrangement, Steering Group Terms of Reference, and Implementation Timeline for Phase II - Report Development

October 2003

1. Partnership Arrangement

Purpose

Institutional partnerships have been developed for this project, pursuant to Council Resolution 02-06. The purpose of the partnership is to develop indicators of children's health and the environment in North America. The partnership aims to:

- build on the expertise and interests of the respective partner organizations in the development of the indicators;
- promote the development and use of the indicators by engaging the respective constituencies of each partner organization;
- capitalize on the potential synergies and efficiencies afforded through collaboration; and
- avoid duplication of effort.

By working in partnership, the partner institutions seek to develop a single, consolidated North American initiative on indicators of child health and environment that will contribute to other initiatives in this area, including the global initiative on children's environmental health indicators, launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development and jointly led by World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, and indicators development by the Pan-American Health Organization. It is also hoped that the work done in North America through this partnership can serve as a model for other interested regions of the Americas and worldwide.

Partners

The partners include:

- Commission for Environmental Cooperation of North America (CEC)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
- International Joint Commission (IJC) Health Professionals Task Force
- World Health Organization (WHO)

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) will participate as an observer.

Upon agreement among all partners, other potential partners may be invited to join the project.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The CEC shall act as the **coordinating partner** for the project.

- The role of the CEC Secretariat will be to convene and facilitate the work of the Steering Group and provide other types of secretariat support, as needed; provide core resources to support the development of the indicators (with contributions from other partners, as appropriate); and ensure the timely delivery of project outputs in accordance with the CEC's annual work plan and budget.
- The role of the countries who participate in the CEC are to provide the data for the report, as well as expert input in the development of indicators at the national and trilateral level.

PAHO, IJC HPTF and WHO shall act as **contributing partners** to the project, providing expert input, in-kind services and/or financial support. Receipt by the CEC of financial contributions from partners shall be done in accordance with relevant CEC policies. Contributions of more than C\$25,000 need to be approved in advance by the Parties (Canada, Mexico and the United States).

The contributions of the partners for Phase II - report development - will be as follows:

- CEC: Project coordination and secretariat support; Financial contribution of C\$50,000 in 2003 for coordination activities and to hire a consultant for report development; Additional financial commitment in 2004 for report finalization and publication (amount to be determined)
- Pan American Health Organization (PAHO): (to be determined)
- International Joint Commission (IJC) Health Professionals Task Force: expert input; in-kind services in support of the development and dissemination of the indicators;
- World Health Organization (WHO): expert input; in-kind services; ensuring linkages between the CEC effort and the global indicators effort; dissemination of report and lessons learned to other regional and country initiatives.

Steering Group Participation

All partners and participating organizations shall participate actively in the Steering Group for the project (see below). The partners agree to participate in the Steering Group in accordance with the terms of reference outlined below.

Project Outputs

The final product of the partnership will be produced by the CEC Secretariat, but will acknowledge the contributions made by all partners. The document will bear a disclaimer stating that the document has been produced by the CEC Secretariat and does not necessarily reflect the views of the partner organizations or the governments of Canada, Mexico or the United States of America.

Each country and contributing partner will have the opportunity to review and comment on the final draft of the report prior to its publication, as well as other input in product development as defined in the Terms of Reference and Steering Group Timeline, and will receive an advance copy of the final document at least 30 days in advance of the release date.

The name and logo of the CEC and each contributing partner will be included on the cover of the document, unless otherwise requested by the partner.

Timeframe

The partnership operated on an ad hoc basis from August - December 2002. During this first phase of the partnership, the focus was on the preparation of the feasibility study and the development of recommendations on the framework and initial set of indicators.

The partnership will continue to operate for the second phase of the project to September 2004. Phase II will focus on the population of the indicators and the development of the first report, which is targeted for publication in the second half of 2004. At that time, the partnership arrangement may be renewed.

2. Steering Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the Steering Group is to guide the development and implementation of the project. This includes guiding the selection and population of the indicators, contributing to report development by advising on appropriate content and interpretation, and ensuring a high standard of quality in the technical and factual content of project outputs. The Steering Group serves as the forum for interaction and deliberation among the institutional partners and governments within the context of this project.

Composition

The Steering Group is comprised of at least one representative from each of the three countries (Canada, Mexico and the United States), from each of the partner institutions, and from the Expert Advisory Board on Children's Health and the Environment in North America.

Each country and/or institution may have up to three members on the steering group, in order to ensure appropriate representation from various sectors (e.g. health and environment) within that organization or country. Each country/organization will be expected to put forth a consolidated position when it comes to making decisions.

Countries/organizations also may designate up to two observers to the Steering Group, who will be copied on all pertinent Steering Group correspondence and invited to participate in meetings/teleconferences as observers.

Responsibilities of Steering Group Members

Each member is expected to participate in all teleconferences and meetings, and to reply in a timely manner to requests for information or comments. If a member is not available for a teleconference or meeting, he/she may designate someone to participate on his/her behalf.

Steering Group members shall serve as representatives of their organization or agency. As such, each member is responsible for coordinating with other relevant departments/colleagues/constituencies within their organization or agency.

Steering Group members representing the three countries have the added responsibility of liaising with other governmental departments/agencies to ensure delivery of the data needed to populate the indicators. To facilitate this, a lead member from each country has been designated, as indicated in Annex A.

During Phase II, Steering Group members will be asked to provide guidance on the specific implementation of the selected indicators, to provide the data/information needed to compile the report (particularly relevant for the governmental members) and to review and comment upon drafts of the report.

It is foreseen that the Steering Group will meet by teleconference every 1-2 months throughout the duration of the project. A face-to-face meeting will be organized in January 2004 in Montreal.

Decision-making Procedures

The Steering Group will strive to operate on the basis of consensus. The input, proposals and perspectives of all institutions and agencies represented on the Steering Group will be equally considered through the deliberations of the group. In cases where differences of opinion cannot be resolved, the project will proceed with those elements that have been agreed to by all partner organizations and countries.

Partner organizations/countries shall be free to independently pursue elements that have not been included in the collaborative project, and shall keep all Steering Group members apprised of such efforts.

Transparency

All products of the Steering Group, including meeting summaries and project outputs, will be made publicly available, in accordance with the schedule outlined in Section 3 below, via the CEC website and, as appropriate, by other means. Comments received from members of the public will also be made publicly available via the CEC website.

Secretariat Support

The CEC Secretariat (program manager for the children's health and the environment project) will serve as the Secretariat for the Steering Group and will provide the following services:

- convene and facilitate Steering Group teleconferences/meetings;
- prepare and circulate teleconference/meeting summaries;
- contract with a consultant to prepare the first report based on indicators/data/information provided by the countries and institutional partners;
- coordinate Steering Group review of report drafts;
- edit, translate and publish the final report in English, French, Spanish;

Timeframe

The Steering Group, initiated on an informal basis in August 2002, will continue operation until September 2004. The terms of the steering group may be modified, as needed, upon agreement among the members.

3. Implementation Timeline for Phase II - Report Development

The following is an approximate timeline for completion of actions within Phase II of the project:

Step	Timeframe	Description	Responsible Actor(s)
1. Obtain CEC Council approval and commitment	June 2003 <i>(completed)</i>	The commitment of the member countries at the CEC Council level is critical to ensure the appropriate involvement of senior decision-makers and timely access to the highest-quality and most relevant data.	CEC Council
2. Develop a project plan and timeline	Sept 2003 <i>(draft timeline reviewed during 11 Sept. teleconference; Rev 2 circulated for review by Steering Group and CHE Team on 15 Sept.)</i>	The project plan outlines participation by the CEC nations, Council, the CEC CHE Trilateral Team, Steering Group, and collaborators; roles and responsibilities; process for data collection and report preparation; schedules; and other information.	Steering Group, CHE Team, Secretariat
II. Data Definition and Collection			
3. Identify specific indicators by country	Sept.-Oct. 2003; - Lists due 31 Oct. 2003	Each nation articulates a set of indicators for each priority, including indicators of exposure, effect, and action, following the MEME model. Ideally, several indicators will be used for each priority. Some countries may not have any indicators for some priorities in the first year or in subsequent years.	Countries
4. Populate the indicators in a flexible manner and using available data	Oct.-Dec. 2003	Each nation gathers data to populate the indicators, beginning with existing data. The data collection methodologies need not be identical for each nation, but each approach must be fully documented. Where data are not available to fill an indicator, that indicator can be left unpopulated. Each nation should use information of the greatest depth and highest quality to populate its indicator set, even if other nations currently cannot obtain information of comparable depth and quality.	Countries

Step	Timeframe	Description	Responsible Actor(s)
5. Member countries report indicators to CEC	Reports due 18 Dec. 2003	Each nation provides a report that describes the indicators selected, including the metadata and results. A report template will be developed by the Secretariat, with Steering Group input, to guide country report preparation (to be available by 31 October).	Countries; Secretariat
6. Data systems	Oct. 2003 - Sept. 2004	The CEC Secretariat develops databases and other systems for archiving the data and making it available to the public, including mapping of the data if feasible. The databases will provide a basis for comparing all future reports.	Consultant; Secretariat
III. Preparation and Peer Review of Draft Report			
7. Develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) for report consultant; select and hire consultant	Sept. 2003 - Draft RFP, 16 Sept. - Comments due 22 Sept. - Translated and posted by 8 Oct. - Proposals due 31 Oct. - Selection completed, 7 Nov.	The RFP describes the required qualifications, the scope of work required, and the information needed for potential consultants to submit proposals. The Steering Group in consultation with the Trilateral CHE Team serves as a panel to select a consultant. The CEC Secretariat negotiates a contract with the consultant and serves as the contract manager.	Secretariat; Steering Group
8. Develop a report outline	Oct.-Nov. 2003 - Draft outline submitted by consultant, 14 Nov. 2003 - Outline translated, 21 Nov. 2003 - Comments due 28 Nov. 2003 - Final outline, 5 Dec. 2003	The consultant develops an outline of the draft report and submits it to the Steering Group in consultation with the Trilateral CHE Team for review. The consultant prepares a final outline incorporating the review comments.	Consultant; Steering Group

Step	Timeframe	Description	Responsible Actor(s)
9. Development of RFP for issue experts; select and hire issue experts	Oct. 2003-Jan. 2004 - Draft RFP, 31 Oct. 2003 - RFP reviewed, translated and posted, 14 Nov. 2003 - Proposals due 5 Dec. 2003 - Experts selected, 12 Dec. 2003 - Contracts issued, 6 Jan. 2004	Issue experts are selected to participate in the data review meeting (see #10 below) and to conduct the peer review. The RFP describes the required qualifications, the scope of work required, and the information needed for potential issue experts to submit proposals. The Steering Group serves as a panel to select the experts. The CEC Secretariat negotiates the contracts with each issue expert and serves as the contract manager.	Secretariat; Steering Group
10. Convene data review meeting	Jan. 2004	A meeting is convened in Montreal among the Steering Group members, the report consultant and the issue experts. The purpose of the meeting is to review the data submitted by each country and to discuss how they can be consolidated and interpreted in the report.	Steering Group; Experts; Secretariat; Consultant
11. Develop draft report	Jan.-Mar. 2004 - First draft (Rev. 1) submitted by consultant, 19 Mar. 2004 - Translation of first draft, 31 Mar. 2003	The consultant prepares the first draft report, which is then translated by the Secretariat (English/Spanish).	Consultant; Secretariat
12. Review of first draft report	April 2004 - First draft report (Rev. 1) circulated for comment, 1 April 2004 - Experts' and project partners' written comments due 16 Apr. 2004 - Countries submit data revisions, if needed, 21 Apr. 2004	The first draft is reviewed by the Steering Group, CHE Team and the issue experts. The issue experts submit comments to the Steering Group. The Steering Group informs the Trilateral CHE Team if the peer review suggests that one or more indicators are questionable (e.g., due to poor data quality) so that the member countries and the CEC Secretariat may identify appropriate corrective actions. The CEC Secretariat works with the consultant to revise the draft report based on comments received from the Steering Group, CHE Team and issue experts.	Experts; Steering Group; CHE Team; Consultant; Secretariat

Step	Timeframe	Description	Responsible Actor(s)
IV. Preparation of Final Report			
13. Develop draft public comment report	April-May 2004 - Internal review version of draft report for public comment (Rev. 2), 28 Apr. 2004 - Rev. 2 translated, 3 May - Comments on Rev. 2 due 17 May 2004 - Draft report for public comment (Rev. 3) completed and translated, 31 May 2004	The consultant prepares a draft public comment report and submits it to the Steering Group in consultation with the Trilateral CHE Team for review. The consultant prepares a final draft for public comment incorporating the review comments.	Consultant; Steering Group
14. Public comment	June 2004 - Public comment period, 1-30 June 2004 - Public forum as part of Council meeting? - Public comments collated and posted, 1 July 2004	The CEC Secretariat conducts a process to obtain public comments on the draft report, collects and collates the public comments, and works with the consultant to make all revisions required to the final report based on public comment.	Secretariat; Consultant; Public
15. Preparation of final report	July-Aug. 2004 - Final draft report (Rev. 4), 16 July 2004 - Final draft report translated, 23 July 2004 - Comments due on Rev. 4, 13 Aug. 2004 - Final revisions completed, 25 Aug. 2004	The consultant prepares a draft final report, which is then translated by the Secretariat (English/Spanish). The Steering Group and the Trilateral CHE Team will review and comment on the final report. The CEC Secretariat, taking into account the comments, prepares the final report.	Consultant; Steering Group and CHE Team; Secretariat

Step	Timeframe	Description	Responsible Actor(s)
16. Translation and publication	Sept. 2004 - Final report published late Sept./early Oct. 2004	The CEC Secretariat translates and publishes the final report.	Secretariat

Annex A: List of Steering Group Members

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