



Promoting Green Purchasing in North America

Cleaning products, office supplies and equipment, and electricity



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Table of Contents

1.0	Background	5
1.1	Green Purchasing	5
1.2	North American Green Purchasing Initiative	5
1.3	Council Directives on Procurement	6
1.4	Project Description and Action Plans	6
2.0	Defining “Green”	9
2.1	Green Cleaning Products	9
2.2	Green Office Supplies and Equipment	10
2.3	Green Electricity	12
3.0	Promotion Plan	15
3.1	Canada and the United States	15
3.1.1	Cleaning Products and Office Supplies	13
3.1.2	Developing Purchasing Specifications for Graffiti Removal Products	16
3.1.3	Green Electricity	17
3.2	Mexico	19
3.2.1	Cleaning Products	19
3.2.2	Office Supplies and Equipment	22
3.2.3	Green Electricity	23





This implementation plan aims to provide tools and information to encourage institutions, including governments at all levels, universities, hospitals, and private companies, to increase their purchases of:

1. green cleaning products,
2. green office supplies, and
3. green electricity.

- 1.1 Green Purchasing
- 1.2 North America Green Purchasing Initiative
- 1.3 Council Directives on Procurement
- 1.4 Project Description and Action Plans

1.0 Background

1.1 Green Purchasing¹

Green products and services have beneficial environmental and/or energy attributes, such as recycled content, energy efficiency, and little or no amounts of hazardous or toxic constituents. They often produce economic benefits from these and other attributes. The NAFTA Parties attach strong importance to the promotion of North American markets for green products and services and are committed to purchasing them and promoting their use by all levels of governments and nongovernmental entities. Applying environmental decisions to even a fraction of the one trillion dollar annual North American procurement market would stimulate the demand for green products and services and produce significant environmental benefits.

There are a number of obstacles that prevent growth of the North American green procurement market, however, such as a need to share information about successful procurement techniques, including energy or environmental attributes, market segments within and outside of the national governments, existing life-cycle or cost-benefit tools appropriate for purchasing a given product or service, and government or third-party certification opportunities. Also, there is no common baseline of energy and environmental attributes for given products or services.

Working together through the CEC, the Parties can overcome some of these obstacles and help “grow” the green procurement market across North America.

1.2 North American Green Purchasing Initiative

The CEC has created the North American Green Purchasing Initiative (NAGPI), and has taken initial steps to bring together representatives of key green purchasing programs across North America, document the level of green purchasing, and identify some success stories. The CEC-led NAGPI is composed of representatives of the three Parties, state and local

¹ Green purchasing is also called responsible purchasing, smart purchasing, socially responsible purchasing, environmentally preferable purchasing, etc.

² This plan focuses on environmental attributes. There are many social and cost benefits as well, but they are less direct.

governments, third-party certification organizations, non-profit organizations, the private sector, and academia working on green purchasing issues in North America. NAGPI's mission is "to improve, promote, and facilitate the development of green purchasing tools and activities across North America to create markets for green products and services from sustainably managed companies, thereby producing tangible economic, social, and environmental benefits.

NAGPI has, among other activities over the last two and one-half years, compiled a set of case studies and green purchasing policies, developed a database of supporting tools and procurement policies across North America, and developed a green purchasing self-assessment tool for organizations.

1.3 Council Directives on Procurement

The CEC Council directed the Secretariat in 2003 to work with the Parties and NAGPI to develop a green purchasing action plan consistent with the national and international obligations of the Parties.

As part of that plan, the Secretariat was asked to identify tools, priorities, and best practices to facilitate green purchasing, and to explore the willingness of the Parties to identify specific product categories for possible priority attention in the 2004 work program. In keeping with CEC practice, discussion of the plan has and will continue to include stakeholder input.

Members of the NAGPI steering committee proposed three specific product categories for possible priority attention in the 2004 and 2005 work programs. These were renewable energy, green office supplies and green cleaning products.

During its 2004 session, the CEC Council, in the Puebla Declaration, directed the (NAAEC Article) 10(6) Group to develop a strategic plan on trade and the environment. In February 2005, the 10(6) Group agreed to include green purchasing as a priority area within this strategic plan and to further develop a green purchasing action plan, consistent with national and international obligations of the Parties for the three products proposed by NAGPI.

1.4 Project Description and Action Plans

This document combines the action plans or implementation strategies developed by the three NAGPI steering committee subgroups—renewable energy, led by John Polak (Terra Choice Inc), green cleaning products, led by Scot Case (then at the Center for a New American Dream and now at Alvernia College Faculty Institute), and green office supplies, led by Christine Cowan (Public Works and Government Services Canada)—into one master implementation plan. These three plans with their associated budget can be found at <www.nagpi.net>.

This implementation plan aims to provide tools and information to encourage institutions, including governments at all levels, universities, hospitals, and private companies, to increase their purchases of: (1) green cleaning products, (2) green office supplies and equipment, and (3) green electricity. This plan of action supports the 10(6) Strategic Plan goal to "promote policies and actions that provide mutual benefits for the environment, trade and the economy" by providing the CEC and the broader public with tools to increase trade in products that have

beneficial environmental attributes and help develop new markets across North America for green products and services, thereby taking advantage of market-based approaches to promote environmental protection and sustainability. This implementation plan also aims to improve regional and national coordination, and capacity building objectives, while promoting policy coherence related to the purchase of these three types of products.

Preliminary studies and network contacts indicate that green cleaning products, office supplies, and green electricity markets appear to be more mature in the United States and Canada than they are in Mexico. The main differences between the countries for each product are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Main Differences in Market Maturity for Green Office Supplies, Cleaning Products and Equipment, and Green Electricity

Green cleaning products	Green office supplies and equipment	Green electricity
<p>Canada & US generally accepted standards</p> <p>Mexico standards not yet developed</p>	<p>Canada & US recognized environmental certification programs</p> <p>Mexico certification programs not yet developed</p>	<p>Canada & US recognized environmental certification programs</p> <p>Mexico generation and sale of electricity is contained within one national utility, thus there is no real marketplace for electricity, precluding a market-based approach to promote “green” electricity. Certified “green” electricity is not currently available in Mexico.</p>

In all three countries, however, there is a similar need to promote the importance and rapidly expand the use of green office supplies and equipment, green cleaning products and green electricity.

Given the different needs of the three countries, this draft action plan is divided into two concurrent efforts. The first focuses on US and Canadian needs to promote widespread use of existing standards to accelerate purchases of green cleaning products, office supplies and equipment, and electricity.

The second effort focuses on the needs of Mexico. For green cleaning products, it aims to identify those products, develop an appropriate standard, and demonstrate the products’ effectiveness. For green office supplies and printing equipment, it aims to develop adequate criteria to carry out their purchasing. Finally, if there is an interest, the possibilities of developing a green electricity program in Mexico will be explored, and could lead to a pilot project of “green” electricity procurement.

In summary, this paper first proposes definitions of “green” suitable for use by the NAGPI subcommittees. Next, a promotion plan is proposed that would encourage and foster the procurement of green electricity, office supplies and cleaning products by institutional players in North America, including a pilot project in Mexico.



- 2.1 Green Cleaning Products
- 2.2 Green Office Supplies and Equipment
- 2.3 Green Electricity

2.0 Defining “Green”

2.1 Green Cleaning Products

Cleaning products cover a wide range of product types for a variety of applications. These include household, institutional, and industrial hard and soft surface cleaners, with specific subcategories as listed in Table 2.

Table 2 Household, institutional and industrial hard and soft surface cleaners

windown cleaners	cleaners	vehicle cleaners
multi-purpose cleaners	dish cleaners	cooking appliance cleaners
degreasers	carpet cleaners	bathroom
industrial cleaners	Laundry detergents	floor cleaners
disinfectants	boat/bilge cleaners	graffiti removers

Within each category, a number of specific environmental impacts are often included in environmental leadership criteria as listed in Table 3.

Table 3 Environmental impacts included in environmental leadership criteria

aerobic and anaerobic degradability	no ether, toxic metals, alkyl phenol ethoxylates (APEOs), EGME, EFEE, and EGPE, aromatic solvents, halogenated solvents, ammonia (for window cleaners), Quats (for disinfectants), bleach (for bathroom cleaners)	limits on corrosivity and skin or eye irritability
no carcinogens		limits on aquatic and human toxicity
		minimization or absence of fragrances
		packaging limitations for volatile organic compounds
		reproductive toxics

Rather than attempt to define a set of overarching criteria, the NAGPI Steering Committee decided to accept the definitions of Green Seal and the Environmental Choice Program.

In this particular initiative, efforts will focus on the cleaning products used to clean the interiors of office buildings and elementary and secondary schools. Current promotion efforts will not address exterior cleaning or the unique needs of hospitals or healthcare and daycare facilities.

In this context, promotion will be focused on general purpose, bathroom, glass, floor care, and carpet care products and on green graffiti removers. Efforts will not at this time be spent on specialty cleaners for applications such as metal cleaning, parts cleaning, carwashes, street maintenance, or other possible uses.

2.2 Green Office Supplies and Equipment

Given the range of possible supplies and equipment purchased for use in offices, the initial promotion effort has been narrowed to paper products, printers and photocopiers. The focus will be on bulk paper for printers, photocopiers, etc., rather than specialized types of paper. For the moment, it will not address other offices supplies and equipment.

For paper, the main environmental impacts concern the source of the fibers (e.g., percentage of recycled content) and the manufacturing process. In the pursuit of green purchasing a buyer may consider:

- Whether the company that manufactures the paper exhibits environmental leadership qualities by having programs in place to conserve raw materials (including water and energy) and natural systems, minimize waste, and employ clean production techniques;
- The recycled/high post-consumer fiber content of the paper, the type of fibers used to make the paper (if specified), and whether the wood to make the paper comes from sustainably managed forests;
- The criteria used by third-party organizations to define "environmentally preferable" paper products and whether there are certified products;
- The bleaching methods the manufacturer uses; and
- Buying in large volumes through framework contracts.

Buyers should also thoroughly understand the performance attributes they require in the paper products they select for their applications. This includes not only what is required of the paper itself (i.e., its burst strength as measured in pounds or in grams per square meter) but also the allowable content of recycled fibers, and possible trade-offs (e.g., applications requiring photo quality paper do not lend themselves to high post-consumer fiber content).

In addition, buyers may want to consider developing an organizational plan to promote paper recycling and reduce paper consumption through electronic media options. Such a plan could include information on avoiding unnecessary printing, making double-sided copying the default on printers and photocopiers throughout the office, and use of print auditing software if feasible.

Since no common definition of “green paper” is available, a stakeholder meeting will be held on 29 November 2005, in Montreal, to further discuss: (1) what might constitute “green paper” in North America; (2) common terminology; (3) audit frequency, standards updates, and an incremental approach.

For photocopiers and printers, energy use and duplex copying ability tend to be the most important areas to focus on in order to reduce environmental impact. In the pursuit of green purchasing or leasing photocopiers and printers, organizations may want to consider:

- Planning for the entire life of the product. (For example, a buyer or leaser may want to consider front-end impacts such as the amount of packing material accompanying the products and whether take-back programs exist for the machines being replaced).
- Purchasing multi-function products (i.e., machine that can perform multiple functions such as copying, faxing, printing, and/or scanning).
- Incorporating energy use and duplexing ability into purchasing decisions;
- Considering total cost of ownership. The total cost of ownership is the total environmental costs of buying, operating and disposing of the machine. This would include, among other things: minimal packaging and reduced shipping requirements; the cost to make a copy (toner costs); energy costs; consideration of duplex copying; the cost to maintain the machine and having a maintenance plan; and minimizing the impact of disposal by not purchasing machines with lead in their circuit boards or selenium in their drums.
- Look at alternatives to purchasing photocopiers and printers, such as using printing services (buying pages, not machines).

- Taking advantage of available standards such as ENERGY STAR and EcoLogo and otherwise ensuring that energy savings features are engaged.
- Assessing the size and quantity of printers needed, including personal printers.
- Considering chain of custody after a machine's useful life in one organization. For instance, the organization can factor in a machine's eventual disposal in purchasing decisions, by buying products that can be easily dismantled and containing components that can be reused and recycled easily.

2.3 Green Electricity

The process of generating electricity for our daily activities can create a range of negative impacts, including the release of greenhouse gases, air pollution, habitat destruction, mercury releases and depletion of valuable non-renewable resources. Green electricity is recognized as electricity derived from renewable sources with minimal adverse environmental effects and is also sometimes called green power or renewable electricity.

The marketplace for green electricity in North America is maturing rapidly. Although the specifics of green electricity may vary from organization to organization, most definitions embrace the two fundamentals of renewability and reduced environmental impact.

Independent verification and certification of electricity is widely accepted as a means of ensuring consumer protection in the green electricity marketplace. Two such programs in North America are Green-e in the United States and the Environmental Choice™ Program in Canada. To date, no Mexican program exists for green electricity certification.

Tradable renewable electricity certificates (TRCs) (also called Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs or green tags) are also gaining acceptance in the marketplace as an alternative means of buying green electricity. TRCs embody the environmental benefits associated with generating green electricity. Currently, TRCs are being purchased by utilities, electric service providers, electricity marketers and retailers, and residential and commercial customers. Protection of, and disclosure to, consumers has also driven the development of two voluntary TRCs certification programs in North America, Green-e in the United States and Green Leaf™ in Canada.

In order to avoid the difficult process of finding a single acceptable definition of green electricity, it was decided that NAGPI's definition must be based on the state of green electricity in North America today. Although there are many definitions of green electricity, Environmental Choice™ Program (ECP), run by TerraChoice and Green-e, run by the Centre for Resource Solutions have already undertaken research into what could and should be defined as "green." They are credible, recognized as leaders in the marketplace, they have incorporated similar elements in their certifications, and they have assessed whether or not the electricity meets their definitions. Additionally, purchasing certified TRCs, with the appropriate specifications, is widely accepted as an alternative to buying green electricity. It is thus proposed that NAGPI recognize the definitions proposed by these organizations. Accordingly, green electricity is defined as the electricity from renewable resources that meet specified environmental criteria that have been verified or certified by these two independent third-party organizations.



3.0 Promotion Plan

3.1 Canada and the United States

3.1.1 *Cleaning Products and Office Supplies*

When faced with a limited budget with which to conduct an outreach strategy, the first step is to refine the scope of the intended audience. NAGPI's current membership includes organizations with very strong ties to federal, provincial/state, and local governments. As a result, it makes sense to begin NAGPI's outreach efforts by focusing on these important target audiences.

The following steps can be taken to expand the use of green cleaning products and office supplies and equipment among government purchasers. All steps would be undertaken separately for cleaning products and office supplies, as the targeted audience may vary from one product to another.

- 1. Generate NAGPI-approved fact sheets.** The Secretariat can create for approval a brief two- to four-page fact sheet highlighting the importance of switching to greener products and providing specific recommendations for making the switch. The fact sheets would highlight the successful efforts of various government bodies. They would also feature, as appropriate, information about the agreed upon certification standards, in addition to how the products meet other applicable standards. NAGPI members would then be encouraged to distribute the fact sheet through their distribution channels and to post it on their own websites.
- 2. Create a webpage on the CEC NAGPI site devoted to green products.** NAGPI can create and approve a simple webpage stressing the importance of using more environmentally responsible products and recommending that purchasers buy certified products. The pages, one for each category, can be created quite easily using the information previously compiled by NAGPI members. They would include profiles of successful efforts to switch to greener products and links to additional information.

3. **Issue NAGPI press releases.** NAGPI can issue press releases describing, as appropriate, agreed-upon third-party certifications for specific products. These would target trade press publications that cater to government purchasers and other stakeholders. The press releases would emphasize the human health and environmental benefits of switching to green products. They would also include links to the NAGPI web site and fact sheets, and encourage participation in upcoming conference calls.
4. **Host a series of interactive conference calls.** These calls would be open to government purchasers interested in learning more about green products and would feature a series of speakers to share their knowledge and expertise using PowerPoint presentations. The calls would allow for question and answer periods, with the speakers fielding questions from the listeners. A typical call would include an expert who would discuss the human health and environmental benefits of switching to greener products. The first speaker's presentation would be followed by a presentation from a certifier who would explain how his or her organization developed its standards and how purchasers are using the standard to buy green products. Each call would also highlight a government agency or department that switched to the greener products. Participants would be asked to rate the effectiveness of each speaker and the overall effectiveness of the call. Six months after each call, participants could be contacted to determine if the call encouraged them to buy greener products.

3.1.2 Developing Purchasing Specifications for Graffiti Removal Products

In 2003, the Center for a New American Dream conducted a study of graffiti removal products in Portland, Oregon. It discovered that there was no correlation between the environmental preferability of the products and their effectiveness. Others have also begun investigating the availability of green graffiti removal products. Given the broad interest in identifying green graffiti removal products, a unique opportunity is available for NAGPI to facilitate the development of purchasing specifications that can be used to identify green products.

The following steps can be taken to develop the necessary purchasing specifications:

- Review all existing studies that seek to identify green graffiti removal products. Identify all of the relevant variables affecting product effectiveness (e.g., surface type [brick, stucco, stone, metal, wood, concrete], graffiti instrument [spray paint, lipstick, oil-based paint]). List all of the chemicals of concern and their possible adverse human health or environmental impacts. Indicate areas where the studies concur with one another and areas where they differ.
- Consult with outside experts, including but not limited to EPA's Design for the Environment (DfE) program and the Zero Waste Alliance, to identify a more complete list of the chemicals of concern. Use the prioritized list and information available from MSDS sheets and other credible technical sources to develop a list of green graffiti removal products organized into several tiers, from the safest to the most hazardous.

- Narrow the scope of the project to a few designated surface types and graffiti instruments based on conversations with likely pilot project participants. [It is impossible with a small-scale project and limited budget to cover entirely the possible combinations of surface type and graffiti instrument.]
- Conduct pilot projects in several cities throughout the United States and Canada to determine if the green products are as effective as the more hazardous products. The cities should be selected to provide a variety of climates and surfaces from which graffiti needs to be removed. Document pilot project results in individual case studies and a more comprehensive overview report.
- Develop a purchasing specification that can be used to identify green and highly effective graffiti removal products.
- Promote use of the specification and the green products through case studies, fact sheets, and trade press articles.
- Identify and prioritize further research needs in the development of green graffiti removers.

3.1.3 Green Electricity

Any approach to encouraging institutional procurement of green electricity should take advantage of the drivers influencing the marketplace and existing purchasing networks (whether for green goods or not). The NAGPI Subcommittee on Electricity also needs to better understand what tools institutional procurers need to help them buy green electricity.

By the end of 2006, the subcommittee should reach the following broad goals:

- Learn lessons from organizations working on institutional green electricity purchasing (e.g., World Resources Institute (WRI), US Environmental Protection Agency).
- Stimulate institutional purchasing partnerships such as that offered by WRI.
- Join forces with other important power-purchasing groups.
- Governments consider offering procurers incentives to buy green electricity.
- Gain public endorsement from a well-known figure (e.g., Paul Hawkins, who has relationships with officials in “Fortune 500” companies).

Listed below are the tasks necessary to achieve these goals. They are specifically aimed to foster green electricity purchasing by both public and private sector buyers. They are not listed according to importance, but by stages (the first to be completed by the end of February 2006, and the second by the end of December 2006). Tasks within each stage should be performed in tandem whenever appropriate.

Phase One: End February 2006 Completion

- Assess user needs (in-kind time of subcommittee members).
 - Using the existing NAGPI network of participants and contacts, determine motivations for buying green electricity, information needs and what specific tools users would find useful.
- Develop “polished” outreach materials in electronic format, including:
 - Definitions sheet
 - FAQs (ensure it also addresses obstacles, e.g., cost and supply)
 - Available resources/web sites
 - Backgrounder
 - Contributing articles (e.g., “State of Green Purchasing,” “Why Buy Green Electricity,” etc.)
 - Rationale for buying green electricity
 - Success stories
 - A “How-To” guide with simple graphics (e.g., encourage “easy” purchases at first, such as buying tags to offset a conference)
 - Standardized presentation package for all NAGPI participants to use
- Develop and implement a communications strategy to encourage information multipliers to:
 - Place outreach materials on their web sites
 - Make references to green electricity in newsletters or presentations
 - Invite discussion about green electricity within their memberships
 - Invite NAGPI subcommittee members to speak at annual general meetings and/or conferences
 - Provide outreach materials to make available at such events
 - Strategic distribution of outreach materials to institutional purchasers through current distribution channels using structured electronic distribution (e.g., e-mail trees, etc.)

Phase Two: End December 2006 Completion

- Foster relationships with purchasing organizations, keep green electricity on their agendas and maintain quarterly contact. Assign one group to each subcommittee member.
 - General procurement groups: ISM, NIGP, PMAC, etc.
 - Green procurement groups: Governments Incorporating Procurement Policies to Eliminate Refuse (GIPPER), Association of Canadian Cities for Environmentally Sustainable Strategies (ACCESS), etc.
 - Government purchasing groups: Government Services Administration (GSA), Public Works & Government Services Canada (PWGSC), Mexican Environment and Natural Resources Ministry (Semarnat), Mexican Secretary of Energy (Sener), etc.
 - Government policy groups: Boards of Governors, etc.

- Green building initiatives: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), Green Building Initiative, the Consortium for Research on Renewable Industrial Materials, etc.
 - CSR-related groups: Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), Co-op America, etc.
 - Specific “Fortune 500” type companies (e.g., Time Inc., Starbucks, etc.)
- Specific roles for all NAGPI members
 - Become familiar with the basics surrounding green electricity.
 - Address annual general meetings / conferences of information multipliers.
 - Make outreach materials available on web site.

3.2 Mexico

In Mexico, at the federal government level there is a legal requirement in each office to develop and apply an Environment Management System (EMS), which includes green purchasing, responsible consumption, waste management, and energy and water savings in buildings. The recommendations and criteria development to assure the application of an EMS are the responsibility of the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (Semarnat), and, in leading by example, since 1996, Semarnat has overseen a Sustainable Administration Program, which establishes a green purchasing strategy.

Although there is no ecological certification system for products in Mexico, an amendment to the Federal Law for Acquisition was recently adopted. This amendment, which applies to every federal-level governmental office, includes requirements to take into account (in purchasing, leasing and hiring of services) energy efficiency and the responsible use of water. In this regard, all governmental purchasers must incorporate these criteria and assure that the products and services are, to a certain extent, environmentally friendly.

3.2.1 Cleaning Products

There are currently no efforts underway to promote the use of green cleaning products in Mexico, but the Office of the Secretary of Semarnat is interested in piloting their use. The pilot project would include reviewing the products currently being used to clean the facility, identifying an appropriate standard for green cleaners, buying locally available products that meet the standard, training the janitorial workers, tracking product effectiveness, and calculating the resulting environmental and other associated benefits.

There are currently no Mexican standards for green cleaning products. Different market dynamics might make the product testing required by the standards used in the United States and Canada cost-prohibitive in Mexico.

Like many organizations, Semarnat does not purchase its cleaning products directly. Janitorial services companies, hired by building owners, provide all of the necessary cleaning supplies. This means both the building owner and the janitorial services company will play critical roles in the pilot project.

An 18-month, three-phase process for introducing green cleaning products is proposed, which will also build a stable foundation for future expansion of Mexican green cleaning programs:

Phase One: Research (6 months)

- Contract with green cleaning experts familiar with the Mexican janitorial services industry and the products it typically uses.
- Visit the four Semarnat buildings to assess cleaning needs and inform the green-cleaning experts, who will be working closely with the local officials, to develop a green cleaning strategy that covers both the cleaning chemicals and the cleaning practices.
- Examine the existing cleaning product standards already in use in Mexico to determine if human health or environmental indicators already exist and are in use. In addition, explore the possibility of working with the existing standard-setting organizations in Mexico to integrate human health and environmental considerations into future versions of their standards.
- Review the products currently used to clean Semarnat's facilities in order to identify and prioritize the human health and other environmental hazards associated with the products. When reviewing the products, the contractor should reference the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) chemical priority list, check with EPA's Design for the Environment (DfE) Program for a list of chemicals specific to the cleaning industry, and review the Green Seal and Environmental Choice standards. The contractor will then recommend the products that should be replaced with green alternatives.
- Begin developing a standard appropriate for use in Mexico, based on the contractor's product review and consultations with Semarnat, the janitorial services company, and local cleaning product suppliers. In addition to the technical specifications necessary to identify green products, the contractor shall propose a low-cost, effective way of identifying products meeting the standard.
- Work with the janitorial service company's current suppliers to determine if green products are easily available. If not, identify alternative suppliers and begin the negotiations necessary to introduce them on a pilot basis.
- Share results of the research at a September 2005 green cleaning meeting currently being planned by Semarnat.
- Incorporate new green cleaning product standards and janitorial practices into the annual cleaning contract, which is due to be re-issued in January 2006.

Phase Two – Pilot Project (6 months)

- Design and launch a six-month pilot project to test the green cleaners. Semarnat occupies several offices within a four-building government complex. If possible, test the green cleaners and practices in two of the office buildings while continuing to use the traditional products and practices in the remaining two buildings. This approach will permit detailed comparisons of cleaning effectiveness and possible benefits to employee productivity and absenteeism rates.

Phase Three – Project Promotion (6 months)

- Upon completion of the six-month pilot project, share project results with other government agencies, local industry groups, and local environmental organizations that might be able to publicize the benefits of switching to green cleaners and practices.

3.2.2 Office Supplies and Equipment

There exists already a considerable amount of information on the lifecycle of paper, photocopiers and printers scattered throughout the Internet and various other sources. Most of the information available relates to the planning and acquisition stages. The challenge is to locate and disseminate relevant information to the appropriate users, as well as to include the other phases of the life cycle.

Common concerns for all three product groups (paper, printers and photocopiers) are:

- Sharing information between those people who possess it and those who have a stake and need greater access to it.
- Educating the end-users in the importance of green procurement and the available options.

It is slightly less important but still relevant for Mexico to develop objective criteria for paper, printers and photocopiers, given the national market potential to supply products with these characteristics. However, a Mexican certification program for green paper, printers and photocopiers is currently not in place. It is thus proposed to develop paper criteria to be presented to the suppliers and assure that purchasers can demand certain characteristics.

The following approach is proposed:

- Share the approaches and information used by EcoLogo and Terra Choice to define special criteria for the Mexican paper market (both for producers and purchasers) and apply them in Semarnat before their general application in all federal government offices.
- Organize an event to exchange information and experience with the Mexican paper industry to promote cleaner production of paper, in the framework of Life Cycle Analysis.
- Once the criteria are defined, follow the four steps proposed for the US and Canada Work Plan.

3.2.3 Green Electricity

The generation and sale of electricity in Mexico is contained within one national utility. Consequently, there is no real marketplace for electricity. Therefore, it will not be possible at this time to implement a market-based approach to promote “green” electricity. It also does not appear that generators of electricity in Mexico have had their generation facilities or electricity products certified as “low-impact renewable.” Furthermore, under the circumstances described earlier in this document, certified “green” electricity is not currently available in Mexico.

Instead of focusing on market instruments, this phase of the project will develop alternative institutional instruments to foster renewable energy development in Mexico. Some resources will be devoted to raising the Mexican government’s interest in developing a green procurement program for renewable energy. Studies could involve the following:

1. Develop a communication strategy to encourage information multipliers (as proposed for the United States and Canada in section 3.1.3 above);
2. Promote the purchasing of efficient and energy-saver equipment and systems used by the government agencies;
3. Review, with the Ministry of Energy, the opportunities and possibilities for the developing of green electricity, by means of self-generation and co-generation capacities at the federal agencies level and at the municipal level. [Possible pilot project: to develop a biogas landfill-based prototype, applicable in Mexico];
4. Support the development of the certification capacity in Mexico, harmonized with the Canadian and United States systems, through the promotion of the purchasing of green electricity and tradable renewable energy certificates (TRCs).

In cases 3 and 4 (above) green electricity could refer to:

- green electricity certified by Canadian or US programs;
- green electricity (from renewable sources) without certification; or
- green electricity certified by newly developed Mexican entity.

This implementation plan aims to provide tools and information to encourage institutions, including governments at all levels, universities, hospitals, and private companies, to increase their purchases of:

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