

4.1.2 Environmentally Sound Management and Tracking of Hazardous Waste

Project Summary

This project seeks to develop a common North American approach to environmentally sound management of hazardous waste and to improve the tracking of the imports and exports of hazardous waste between the NAFTA countries.

Goals and Objectives

The goals of this project are to promote the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste in North America, and to improve compliance monitoring of transboundary movements of hazardous waste among the NAFTA countries.

Expected Results

In 2003, this project will produce four results:

- Facilitate the development of a common North American approach to environmentally sound management (ESM) of hazardous waste and begin to institute a capacity building program.
- Track progress of the prototype for the electronic notification of hazardous waste shipments between the United States and Canada.
- Make recommendations on improving the tracking of hazardous waste shipments between the United States and Mexico.
- Update a Trilateral Waste Code Dictionary in order to ensure that accurate information is available to those involved in compliance monitoring of transboundary hazardous waste on the regulatory status, country identification codes, and characteristics of individual hazardous waste.

Rationale

At the eighth Regular Session of Council, held in Guadalajara in June 2001, Council members agreed to initiate work in the area of Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Waste (ESM), recognizing the serious environmental and human health consequences of improper tracking and disposal.

In 2002, the CEC Council agreed to: continue the development of a common North American approach for environmentally sound management of hazardous waste; proceed with a pilot project to track hazardous waste movement between Canada and the United States by means of an electronic notification system; and conduct a feasibility study for a pilot project on electronic tracking of hazardous waste movements between Mexico and the United States, with particular attention to capacity building in Mexico, starting with a prioritized list of substances.

Progress to Date

In response to Council's mandate, the Secretariat, in close consultation with the government experts, created two draft reports in 2002. As a first step toward a substantive paper on ESM, the CEC has finalized a draft report summarizing the existing conditions and requirements in the three North American countries in five major areas: (1) current flow of hazardous waste and recyclables between the concerned countries; (2) application of environmentally sound management (ESM) standards to transboundary movements and domestic management of hazardous waste; (3) comparisons of regulatory requirements for managing hazardous wastes and recyclables in the three countries; (4) comparison of transportation requirements applicable to transboundary and domestic movements, as imposed by the concerned countries; and (5) revisions to existing standards.

CEC efforts related to the tracking of hazardous waste movements among NAFTA countries began in 1997 when the EWG initiated the preparation of a report on the challenges of monitoring transboundary shipments of hazardous waste and enforcing hazardous waste regulations in the NAFTA era. Results of this report indicated, among other findings, that paper-based tracking systems were unable to track shipments from "cradle to grave" when the cradle was in one country and the grave in another. As well, it showed that quality, quantity and timing of these tracking systems were deficient with respect to supporting enforcement activities. Building upon the findings of this report, and in response to the 2002 Council mandate, the CEC has drafted a report that addresses the documentation and

evaluation of information-related requirements and systems involved with hazardous waste import/export between the three North American countries, and identified options for automating and improving processes.

Actions 2003

Overview

The proposed project will have three main actions: one dedicated to the environmentally sound management of hazardous waste by analyzing major policies and regulations; the second focusing on the tracking of transboundary shipments of hazardous wastes; and the third creating a CD-ROM version of a Trilateral Waste Code Dictionary, which will support the efforts of the first two activities.

2003	Estimated Resources Required (C\$)
Action 1: Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of Hazardous Waste	85,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 1: Prepare a substantive paper on the North American approach to ESM, based on the comparative analysis of hazardous waste requirements, and report to the CEC Council. 	20,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 2: Convene a meeting of the task force and policy and technical experts. 	30,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 3: Prepare a capacity building pilot project 	35,000
Action 2: Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste	148,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 1: Facilitate the pilot project to track hazardous waste movements between Canada and the United States by means of electronic notification system and proceed with feasibility study for a pilot project on electronic tracking of hazardous waste movements between the United States and Mexico. 	80,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 2: Coordinate with OECD, Basel, and EU efforts to improve tracking of hazardous wastes and coordinate with UN international standards group. 	15,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 3: Convene a task force meeting with government Customs experts to coordinate efforts among the NAFTA environmental and customs agencies to: (1) identify issues and efforts that impact on CEC efforts to improve tracking of transboundary hazardous waste; (2) identify priority areas; and (3) make recommendations for areas where additional analysis and continued coordination is required. 	20,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 4: Convene a meeting/workshop of the task force and nongovernmental stakeholders to: (1) report on the 2002 CEC analysis and the North American business model, as well as the Trilateral Hazardous Waste Dictionary; (2) discuss goals and next steps in implementing recommendations for electronic reporting of transboundary hazardous waste reports; and (3) explore appropriate venues for participation by nongovernmental stakeholders, such as piloting electronic reporting. 	30,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 5: Report to the CEC Council on the results of the analysis and recommended next steps. 	3,000
Action 3: Trilateral Hazardous Waste Code Dictionary	45,000

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 1: Update of a Trilateral Waste Code Dictionary, available in CD-ROM format, which cross-references the regulatory status, the country identification codes, and the characteristics of individual hazardous wastes. 	45,000
Total Resources Required	278,000

2004
Action 1: Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 1: Reach agreement on which elements will be included in the North American ESM system and begin pilot implementation of that system.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 2: Begin pilot implementation of a few of the recommendations for capacity building.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 3: Produce a report to Council, providing recommendations on a North American approach to ESM and discussing ESM capacity-building successes.
Action 2: Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 1: Continue implementation of recommendations for electronic reporting of transboundary hazardous waste reports.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 2: Coordinate with international fora on ongoing international efforts to improve tracking of hazardous waste.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 3: Coordinate with Customs agencies on integrating and improving tracking capabilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 4: Evaluate progress and report to Council with recommendations on future work
Action 3: Hazardous Waste Code Dictionary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility study for integrating information into databases of environmental agencies and Customs agencies

2005
Action 1: Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue implementation of ESM system, including the capacity building component
Action 2: Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on the implementation of the recommendations
Action 3: Hazardous Waste Code Dictionary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on feasibility study

Expected Partners and/or Participants

Government experts from the environmental protection agencies at the federal, state and local levels, the Customs agencies, industry and nongovernmental agencies will be involved. In addition, task forces will consult with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations and the European Union to explore possible avenues of cooperation.

Public Participation

The task force will have at least one public workshop to discuss options and alternatives with key stakeholders.

Linkages to other CEC Projects

This project builds upon the work of the Enforcement Work Group. In addition, it is expected that some of the technical experts that will participate in the meetings and workshops will include members of other CEC projects, such as SMOC, Transportation Corridors, and Pollution Prevention.