

Executive Summary

On June 12-14, 2002, the Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention and Environment Canada hosted the second meeting of the North American Sustainable Consumption Alliance Workgroup. The first objective of the meeting was to formulate strategic plans to move the issue of sustainable consumption in North America forward from a macro and micro perspective. The second objective of the meeting was to consult with North American organizations active in sustainable consumption on a path to move sustainable consumption onto the North American political agenda.

Of the 20 meeting participants, there were six American organizations represented, six Canadian organizations represented and four Mexican organizations represented. Representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme and the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation were also in attendance. Support for the meeting was provided by: the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, Environment Canada's National Office of Pollution Prevention, Canadian Centre for Pollution Prevention and the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production.

After identifying common themes across each country's vision of sustainable consumption, participants took part in macro discussions on how various actors will serve to advance the vision of sustainable consumption. In a small group format, participants were tasked with developing appropriate language and a framework that could be used when discussing the topic of sustainable consumption. Based on all the above discussions, the following mission statement was generated:

“The North American Sustainable Consumption Alliance is a strategic partnership of people and organizations who are working to promote more sustainable consumption patterns in Mexico, Canada and the United States. We share the common goal of encouraging individuals, businesses, institutions and governments to reduce their impact on the environment and society by changing how they consume materials and resources. The Alliance recognizes that sustainable consumption and sustainable production are inextricably linked. Our mission is to facilitate information exchange, communication and outreach and collaborative action around sustainable consumption. We strive to influence social and economic forces to make the case for sustainable choices more compelling.”

The micro discussions focused on action items to operationalize the vision. Through the use of “open space” technology, the following group project ideas were developed:

- 1) North American Sustainable Consumption Alliance Survey
- 2) Sustainable Consumption / Sustainable Production Conference
- 3) National Policy Framework Campaign
- 4) Interactive Consumption Web Site
- 5) Tri-National Buyers Campaign
- 6) Government Procurement
- 7) EnviroBuyer.com
- 8) Sustainable Households

In the short term, though electronic communication, participants committed to undertaking the following action items after the meeting:

- Setup a website and list serve
- Supply a summary of their organization's sustainable consumption activities
- Provide a paragraph for the eight potential projects that outlines the existing research on the project and key action items/plans associated with the project
- Draft a proposal on conducting a survey of the North American sustainable consumption activities
- Meet with funding agencies to discuss the plate of eight NASCA projects

Working groups were suggested as a possible configuration for future work through the North American Sustainable Consumption Alliance.

Working groups could be organized by function:

- Outreach / Getting information out
- Policy
- Research
- Survey / Database maintenance
- Conference

Or, they could be organized by target audience:

- Youth
- General Consumption
- Government
- Business

Discussions are also underway to organize a third meeting in Mexico. Participants agreed that a third meeting was necessary to advance the discussions and commitments made in the second meeting.