

Working Groups General Terms of Reference

(November 2003, updated March 27, 2004)

Introduction

In connection with its new *Business Plan, 2004-2008*, the Canadian Council on Ecological Areas (CCEA) is currently establishing working groups to concentrate on priority topics pertaining to the selection, protection and stewardship of protected areas in Canada.

Currently eight working groups are being established to deal with critical themes associated with protected areas, and five working groups are being established to focus on critical support work important to protected areas and CCEA's mandate.

Council has established the following generic guidelines to assist the working groups to structure themselves and operate in a consistent manner.

Purpose

The general purpose of CCEA working groups is to advance work on protected area themes and associated areas of need that have been identified as high priorities among Canadian jurisdictions.

In order to establish a clear charge and guide its activity, each working group will be requested to develop specific terms of reference.

Working Group Goal

The goal of CCEA Working Groups will be to catalyze interest, to mobilize expertise, and to coordinate activities associated with thematic areas and corporate needs approved by the CCEA Board of Directors.

In particular, working groups will be oriented to generating products and services that respond to the needs, challenges and opportunities associated with their assigned topic, and their combined activities and outputs will be a primary means for CCEA to serve the protected areas constituency across Canada.

Composition

There is no fixed formula for the size or composition of CCEA Working Groups. Generally, a working group will be comprised of at least a core team of 4-6 individuals or more, as determined by the group. Each working group will include the following:

- at least one jurisdictional representative from a territorial, provincial and federal department active in the thematic or corporate area;

CCEA Working Groups

Thematic Working Groups

- Climate Change
- Ecological Integrity
- Private Land Conservation
- Criteria and Indicators
- Canadian Conservation Areas Database
- Protected Areas Reporting
- Marine protected areas
- International

Corporate Working Groups

- Communications
- Fundraising and Recruitment
- Jurisdictional Liaison
- Business Planning
- Administration and Governance

- leading experts from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, consultancies or other areas of civil expertise; and,
- at least one member of the Board of Directors, who will serve as the primary contact with the Board.

Responsibilities

Tasks and responsibilities of CCEA Working Groups may vary, depending on the nature of the work. However, the core charge to each working group will involve:

- 1) Developing a more specific terms of reference, a work plan and a budget for review and approval by the CCEA Board of Directors. This charter should include:

Title: the working group name assigned by the CCEA Board;

Composition: a list of the working group members;

Context: a statement of context on the topic and its relevance to CCEA's mission and work on protected areas. The interest and past activities of CCEA in the topic should be noted, along with highlighting of any past, present and emerging issues;

Goal/Objectives: a definition of the goal and the objectives of the working group;

Information Needs: a description of knowledge gaps and needs required to understand the nature of the challenges related to the thematic topic and the conservation of protected areas;

Work Plan: a work plan of activities (e.g., research, knowledge gathering, information dissemination) aimed at better understanding the needs and providing guidance and solutions in support of managing protected areas. The work plan will detail *what projects* will be completed, *what products* will be produced, *what method(s)* of consensus-building will be employed and *what communications* will be used (e.g., workshops or conferences, the CCEA newsletter, occasional paper series, and on the CCEA website, teleconferences);

Budget: a summary of funding needs, to be updated each year, for annual CCEA Board review and approval.

- 2) Implementing and completing work plans;
 - 3) Keeping abreast of Canadian/North American needs and key initiatives dealing with the topic;
 - 4) Maintaining a list of key contacts of organizations, individuals and experts active in the work area;
 - 5) Reporting regularly on working group activity and associated business to the CCEA Board;
 - 6) Developing and submitting any annual budgetary requirements for the working group to the CCEA Board;
 - 7) Providing expert advice, on request, to jurisdictions, agencies and organizations on initiatives and activities relevant to the working group.
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Normally, terms of reference for specific working groups will be developed and submitted to the CCEA Board of Directors for its review and approval within three months of the group being established by the Board.

Mode of Operation

CCEA working groups will normally conduct their business through tele-conferencing and e-mail. These methods can provide an effective and inexpensive means to communicate and share information. As working groups become more established, and as they carry out their program of work, other means may become available, such as workshops or meetings.

CCEA Board Role

The CCEA Board of Directors will:

- Review and approve terms of reference, work plans and annual budgets.
- Participate in the working group through a Board representative.
- In conjunction with the working groups, develop funding and sponsorship strategies in support of the working group activities. A co-ordinated program of activities that is relevant to jurisdictions, NGO's, academics and others, is expected to be of interest to these organizations and should be eligible for their financial support. With such support, CCEA will aim to leverage additional investment through other sources. CCEA's position as a national non-profit charity is well suited to achieve this.

Work Planning

The move to establish working groups provides the CCEA Board with an important mechanism to assist with corporate annual work planning, budgeting and resourcing.

Work plans and budgets developed by individual working groups will be assembled and assessed to determine overall organizational needs and strategic directions.

In particular, working groups will be an important means to generate key products and services with specific attention to CCEA AGMs, occasional papers, newsletters and website reporting.

Work plans and budgets will be filed with the Board, as they are developed, and in time for the Board to consider any particular funding needs as part of its corporate work planning process.

The corporate work plan arising from this process will position CCEA to develop and to respond to opportunities for resourcing and utilizing working group outputs most effectively.
