

Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Official Designation (title):

The Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation & Management.

2. Mandate:

The Canada/Mexico/US Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management hereinafter referred to as the Trilateral Committee, was established in 1995 to facilitate and enhance coordination, cooperation, and the development of partnerships among the wildlife agencies of the three countries, and with other associated and interested entities, regarding programs and projects for the conservation and management of species and ecosystems of mutual interest in North America.

3. Goals:

The Trilateral Committee will pursue the following goals:

- Foster collaboration to ensure conservation, management and recovery of North American wildlife;
- Contribute to conserving the ecological integrity of key ecosystems in North America;
- Help stakeholders achieve effective, efficient, and mutually beneficial biodiversity conservation in North America;
- Foster continental communication regarding the management, conservation, and sustainable use of biodiversity.

4. Objectives:

In cooperation with associated entities:

- Implement the Memorandum of Understanding which establishes the Committee, in accordance with existing international treaties and Conventions as well as continental bird management plans, federal, state, provincial, and local laws, and the conservation priorities of each country;
- Identify priority actions, and opportunities for conserving and managing species and ecosystems in North America;
- Identify and address current and future threats to biodiversity in North America;
- Identify areas of emerging interest or opportunities for biodiversity conservation, as well as implementation approaches, and funding opportunities, including innovative public/private partnerships;
- Develop outreach mechanisms to effectively engage with other organizations;
- Develop, implement, review, and coordinate specific cooperative conservation projects and programs;
- Integrate projects and programs into the conservation priorities of the country in which those projects and programs take place;
- Promote exchanges of information, technology, best-practices and training; and,
- Strengthen collaboration for capacity building in law enforcement.

5. Membership:

Composition: The Trilateral Committee is headed by the Director General of the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Head of the International Affairs Coordination Unit (UCAI), of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico (SEMARNAT).

Major participants include: the Deputy Director of the US National Park Service (NPS-DOI); US Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USDA-FS); US Department of State (DOS); US Geological Service (USGS-DOI); the President of the National Institute of Ecology of Mexico (INE); the President of the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas of Mexico (CONANP); Mexico's Direction General for Wildlife (DGVS), Mexico's National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), and Mexico's Office of the Attorney General for Environmental Protection (PROFEPA). The Trilateral Committee welcomes and encourages participation from other interested entities in the three countries.

Partnerships: Formal invitations to other entities to participate are issued by each Head of Delegation in-country.

6. Structure:

The work of the Trilateral Committee is implemented by six working tables:

- Executive;
- Species of Common Concern (including migratory, transboundary, endangered, threatened, invasive, and species of special concern);
- Migratory Birds and Bird Habitat (including wetlands issues not related to RAMSAR);
- Ecosystem Conservation (including protected areas, wildlife refuges, and RAMSAR-related wetlands issues);
- Law Enforcement; and,
- CITES.

Each working table is co-chaired by one representative from each country. (See Annex I for Instructions for Working Table Co-Chairs.)

In addition, a Coordinating Committee, composed of representatives from each of three countries, assists with the organization of the annual meeting and the preparation of agendas and Action Item Reports.

7. Role of the Executive Table:

The Executive Table has the following functions:

- Oversees and directs the overall functioning of the Trilateral Committee, which includes reviewing past and ongoing work of the committee in order to incorporate past experiences and keep track of progress;
- Approves Terms of Reference for the working tables;
- Oversees the implementation of action items identified at annual meetings;
- Provides direction to the tables on priorities to be pursued or actions to be taken;
- Reviews and responds to recommendations from the tables and/or from the other Parties;
- Identifies emerging issues of mutual interest and assigns them to the tables for review and recommendations;
- Pursues links with other organizations and sets up meetings with them as needed;
- Confirms agenda for annual meeting during a conference call scheduled two months before the meeting; and,
- Leads efforts to search for funds to carry out priority activities identified by the Trilateral Committee.

8. Country Chair:

The chair rotates among the wildlife agencies of the three countries on an annual basis. The functions of the Country Chair include:

- Hosting the annual meeting;
- Leading in integrating the working agenda and coordinating with the other two countries to finalize the agenda;
- Producing the annual meeting’s summary reports and Action Items Report.

9. Meetings:

- The Trilateral Committee will meet face-to-face once a year (see Annex II for Procedures for Organizing the Annual Meeting);
- The Country Chair, assisted by the Coordinating Committee, will convene the annual meeting;
- Tables will present Action Items Reports to the Executive Table for review at the annual meeting;
- Tables can meet or hold conference calls during the year, as needed, subject to availability of funds;
- The format of the annual meeting will be as follows:

Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrival & Registration ▪ Opening & Plenary Session ▪ Field Trip
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working tables in session

Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working tables in session ▪ Executive table in session
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Working tables in session ▪ Executive Table and Working Table Co-chairs/Facilitators Join Session (Presentation of Reports) ▪ Executive table responds/endorse the reports. ▪ Closing Ceremony ▪ Signature of Cooperation Declaration ▪ Finalization and distribution of Action Items to be reported on at next year's meeting (within 14 days of meeting closeout)

10. Decision-Making Procedures:

The Trilateral Committee works on the basis of consensus.

11. Access to Information:

All documents, recommendations and other outputs of the Trilateral Committee will be made publicly available through the Trilateral's website (www.trilat.org).

12. Follow-up Mechanism:

Action Items produced by the tables, serve as annual work plans. Co-chairs complete the Action Items Reports. These reports are to be reviewed by the tables at the annual meeting, as the first agenda item.

13. Official Language: English and Spanish. Translation at the tables is provided by Committee members proficient in these languages. Agenda and Action Item Reports shall be produced in the official language of the host country and shall be translated by the Coordinating Committee to be disseminated in both languages.

Annex I

Instructions for Working Table Co-Chairs

The responsibilities of the Co-chairs include the following:

- Co-chairs must work together between Trilateral meetings to establish the agenda for the next meeting;
- Co-chairs must work together between Trilateral meetings to develop Action Items Report for that year and submit to the Coordinating Committee in the format provided at least one month before the meeting.
- The host Co-chair must designate a Reporter¹ for the annual meeting to record the actions, responsible parties, and deadlines agreed upon at the working table;
- The host Co-Chair must ensure before the table convenes that translation² is available for the duration of the working table session (usually provided by regular table participants);
- The Co-Chairs must endorse working table's Action Items and make a brief presentation of actions and recommendations (if needed) to the Executive Committee at the annual meeting;
- The Co-chairs must ensure that the Trilateral Coordinating Committee is provided with an electronic copy of the working table's Action Item Plan in English and Spanish;
- Throughout the course of the year, Co-chairs must promote and facilitate completion of projects agreed upon at the Trilateral meeting through regular communication with their counterpart Co-chairs.

¹Reporters

- Take notes of discussions conducted at the table and prepare the summary report of Action Items in the following format:
 1. List of Participants (names, affiliations, titles, telephone numbers, e-mails);
 2. Issue/Agenda Item:
 - a. Action (s)
 - b. Responsible Party
 - c. Expected Date of Completion/ Phase Out
 - d. Date Completed
 3. Decisions requested of the Executive Table (if any)
 4. Endorsement from the Parties (Signature from three Co-chairs).
- Coordinate Spanish/English translation with Translator.
- Deliver Action Item Plans to the Trilateral Coordinating Committee (TCC).

²Translators

- Provide English-Spanish translation for the duration of the working table. Translate the table's Action Items Plan.

Annex II

Procedures for Organizing the Annual Meeting

1. Before each annual meeting, the host Co-chair for each table appoints a Facilitator for their table (the Facilitator may be a regular table participant). The function of the Facilitator is to assist the table Co-chairs to maintain coordination (among table participants and among Co-chairs from the three countries); ensure continuity of work throughout the year; follow-up; and, timely preparation and delivery of agendas, Action Items Plans and Reports.
2. Co-chairs from the three countries develop annual meeting agendas during months 5 and 6 (see attached Planning Schedule). Agenda items are to be action-oriented and should include the following sections: issue; description; background; objectives; purpose of discussing at the annual meeting; expected output; products; and contacts.
3. At month 7, the Co-chairs update the Action Item Reports and conduct a conference call, in coordination with the TCC, to: (1) discuss status of the action items; and (2) discuss preliminary agendas.
4. Co-chairs submit preliminary agendas to the TCC in month 8.
5. Final Agendas to be submitted to the TCC in month 9.
6. Final agendas adopted in month 10.
7. Complete Action Items Reports due; submit to the TCC in month 10.
8. Final agendas posted and distributed by the TCC in month 11.
9. Annual meeting of the Trilateral Committee in month 12.
10. Within 1 month after the annual meeting, the Cohost country prepares/distributes the new Action Items Plans and submits to the TCC.

Planning Schedule for the Trilateral Annual Meeting

Month 1	Months 2, 3 & 4	Months 5 & 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Host of previous year's meeting distributes new AIP to parties	Implementation of action items	Agenda development	Co-chairs and TCC conference calls to discuss AIP and draft agendas	Working table Co-chairs submit first draft agendas to TCC	Final agendas are submitted to the TCC	Final agendas adopted. Previous year's AIR submitted to the TCC	Final preparations for the annual meeting	Annual meeting

¹AIP = Action Items Plan

²AIR = Action Items Report