



## Tools to build Capacity in Environmental Education

***Drafted by Gareth Thomson, EECOM Board member, 16 October 2006 – for discussion***

*Background: an early draft of this table was prepared for the mid-February 2006 strategic planning session of EECOM. These approaches are suitable for work in Canada at either a provincial or national level. They are listed below in the order in which the EECOM Steering Committee ranked their relative importance (please note that this is subject to change as EECOM develops its strategic plan). The tools are not stand-alone but linked, and are best combined to create synergies. For each of these tools, EECOM should develop a case study that describes how the tool was developed and used – with contact information of those who developed their expertise during the case study.*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Creates...</b>	<b>Requires...</b>
1. Provincial / Territorial EE Associations	Create or strengthen associations of both formal and non-formal EE groups with charitable status and organizational health (NOTE: EECOM identified such groups as the FOCUS of its capacity-building activities)	Membership development, leadership training and facilitation, capacity-building. Could include deliberate linking of associations, case studies, sharing of strengths between associations.	Provincial leadership in EE, capacity-building that can create value-added products, leverage of government and corporate involvement, strengthen and enhance networks, deliver on a strategic plan, etc.	EECOM capacity, regional leadership, money, etc.
2. EE Leadership Clinic	A focused, team-centered, facilitated training and planning event that provides valuable personal and group professional development and guided team planning time. Clinic should include discussion of and orientation to all the tools listed in this table.	An application process leads to the selection of teams. Agenda is jointly crafted by teams and planning committee, and includes gives and gains of participants. Follow-up would help ensure commitment.	Highly skilled and committed regional, provincial or sectoral teams that work together on their personalized action plan to advance EE. Helps create delivery on these plans.	Money, skilled facilitators and resource people, flexibility (one size can't fit all)

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3. Summit on EE (could also be called a 'gathering' (less formal))	An inclusive set of conversations among diverse EE stakeholders within a province / territorial or at the national level to discuss and advance EE	An organized and facilitated discussion that focuses on a common interest. Could include: commentary on a comprehensive strategic plan, focus on questions of regional importance, discuss ways to strengthen the EE community, networking, increase efficiencies, develop collaborative relationships, improve communication, etc.	Depends on the identified common interest; but usually creates a stronger network and sense of community, momentum, and a physical 'snapshot' of the community	Money for venue rental, travel costs, organizer time, and a focus: a reason to meet!
4. Comprehensive strategic plan to advance EE	A broad-reaching plan that identifies themes, goals, objectives to advance formal, non-formal, and informal EE. Key actions are delivered by many organizations. Most commonly maintained and promoted by an EE Association.	Multiple stakeholders should be the authors of the first draft of plan. Consultation to ensure buy-in is essential to the success of this approach. Includes a vision and key actions.	A unifying vision and action plan. A good plan succeeds in advancing EE and moving it towards the educational mainstream; and helps create strong partnerships and synergistic relationships between leaders throughout the various EE sectors.	Central coordination body or 'secretariat' to support the process. This group needs a mandate and staff.
5. Media outreach and communications strategy	A strategy for national or provincial associations that engages media and/or provides media training for EE groups	Central body engages media through the thoughtful and strategic promotion of key EE events in the region; and provides P.D. vis-à-vis media to its members.	Media literacy within EE community, and/or greater appreciation and acceptance of EE within public	Central org. to engage media, develop media P.D.
6. On-line EE network	Provincial 'one stop shop' for EE individuals and organizations, detailing resources, P.D. opportunities, events, and links. May include hard copy (resource guide), discussion fora, etc.	Survey of providers and users, website design, on-going maintenance and updating, etc.	Cohesive picture of diverse EE community; more ready access to resources and EE opportunities; increased networking opportunities.	Money and an org. with a mandate to do this work.

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7. Promotion of Models of Excellence	Includes EE awards, EE model schools, exemplary practices and case studies of excellence in individuals, schools and other organizations, and EE associations.	Scan of activities, development of criteria, a nomination and selection process, judging and a recognition process.	Models of excellence, and possible adoption or 'copying' of these models by others. Creates media opportunities, appreciation, and recognition within the broader community. Creates credibility for hosting organization	Network of nominators, committee.
8. Guidelines for Excellence in EE	Creation and uptake of various 'EE quality assurance' mechanisms: voluntary guidelines for excellence in EE materials, teacher training, formal and non-formal EE delivery. Includes voluntary EE certification programs.	Based on available U.S. models. Consult extensively to ensure buy-in and uptake by the EE community.	Provincially or nationally agreed-to standards, benchmarks, and guidelines that help assure quality EE in region.	Permission to adapt from NAAEE, leadership, good process skills in consultation and engagement.
9. Public Polling	National or provincial polling to measure public attitudes, values, knowledge, and behaviour on the environment.	Raise funds, review U.S. precedents, interview NEETF staff, develop questions and methodology, hire pollster.	A case for EE. Creates a needs assessment of the need for EE in specific sectors or the general public; benchmark (and subsequent means of measuring) long-term trends or changes in environmental literacy	Central organization, funding.
10. Evaluation of EE	Development mechanisms of evaluation and assessment of EE programs and environmental literacy competencies	Training in EE evaluation techniques; 'tweaking' of existing provincial assessment processes to include environmental literacy	Outcome-based evaluation of the success of EE; and creates a way of documenting trends in environmental literacy	Knowledgeable trainers; funders willing to support evaluation activities; support from provincial officials

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11. Advance relevant educational policy and curriculum	Advocate for policy reform; identify relevant EE knowledge, skills, values and attitudes outcomes in existing curriculum – and work to insert and enhance these outcomes when developing new curriculum	Develop a strategy to work with other provincial groups on this.	More environmentally literate learners, and demand for EE programs and resources, and training. Helps move EE into educational mainstream.	Good consultation processes and receptivity to suggestions at provincial level, and long term investment by EE groups and individuals
12. Applied research in EE	Development of applied research programs seeking to improve the practice of EE – AND the efficient transmission of these programs to the EE practitioner community	Funding of applied research; linkage between research community and practitioner community to better identify research questions and enhance transmission of subsequent EE research findings.	Relevant and engaged research community, and EE community that is aware of and applies cutting-edge research findings to their work.	Funding of research; mechanism of long-term engagement and linkage of the two communities.
13. Political Strategy to advance EE	A campaign to raise awareness of EE at the political level; possibly to increase funding and support.	Grassroots organizing techniques	Political awareness of EE as a process and a movement; knowledge of how EE creates environmental literacy; etc.	Buy-in from EE and funding community.
14. Small grants program	Small grants program administered by national or provincial group to support innovative program	Work with a funder to create criteria and an application process.	Planning, innovation and advancement within EE community. Can be used to enhance profile of organization and promote guidelines for excellence.	Willing funder; administrative capacity.