

Experiences of Trade Team Participants at COP21

Prepared by Norval Collins, Part-President of the Environmental Services Association of Nova Scotia, now known as ESAM

A trade team comprising eight Nova Scotia businesses and organizations recently returned from attending the international climate change meeting in Paris. The trade delegation, which was self-funded without support from government, was coordinated by the Environmental Services Association of Nova Scotia (ESANS), and represented a range of local companies and enterprises that have been working in climate change risk management and green energy at the community, provincial and international levels, and with concerned consumers. The clear message from this delegation is that the Nova Scotia government appears to be out of step with the changing multi-billion dollar climate change investment climate, and in not recognising the economic and employment potential provided by the global move to climate resilient green energy, runs the danger of creating serious obstacles in the path of forward thinking and progressive businesses in the province.

Members of the private sector trade delegation included several Nova Scotia businesses, which have been regularly attending the annual meetings of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (termed the UNFCCC COP). Attendance at these international climate change meetings by Nova Scotia companies dates back over 10 years when the Provincial Department of Environment worked closely with Federal government counterparts and the provincial private sector to showcase leading edge climate change technologies and services to an international audience. With considerable experience having been gained from attendance at these meetings, a number of the provincial businesses reported highly successful outcomes from the Paris climate change conference.

In addition to the summaries provided below, Sean Fleming from Solar Global Solutions, Julian Boyle, Director Smart Grid/Smart Energy at Butterfli IoT Utility Services, and Lil MacPherson from the Wooden Monkey attended COP 21. A number of people cancelled after the Paris terrorist attacks, including Tara Oak and Wayne Lewis, who both operate consulting practices. Peter Hayes, a long time participant at COP, Team Leader, Coffey (DFID Climate Resilient WASH Design for Low-Income Countries) and President of Inter-Cultural Development Innovations (IDI) had planned to attend but emergency issues in the Philippines prevented his attendance. LED Roadway Lighting and Minas Energy considered participation.

George de Romilly – de Romilly & de Romilly Limited

George de Berdt Romilly, President of de Romilly & de Romilly Limited, a Halifax-based environmental law and policy consulting firm which has been attending COP meetings for 15 years, reported that he was one of the key-note speakers (shared with the Deputy Premier of the British Virgin Islands) at a side event convened in the Wider Caribbean Pavilion of the Paris Conference facility to showcase leading models of good governance practices for climate change adaptation management. This event, which was sponsored by the European Union and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) provided his company with the platform to promote corporate expertise to a wide international audience.

The Paris conference provided his company with unprecedented access to key decision-makers and business leaders in several target markets. During the two weeks of the Paris meeting, he had detailed discussions and lengthy negotiations with the State Minister of Environment for Sudan who requested his company - in light of previous experience in the country - to work with the Government of Sudan on an exclusive basis to develop a multi-million dollar waste to energy and integrated waste management program for the capital City of Khartoum. During the Paris meeting, he also undertook negotiations with a number of Ministers of Environment representing several Caribbean countries to assist with developing the legal, institutional and policy framework for climate change management. Before departing from the Paris conference, the company secured an exclusive contract to assist one country develop a US\$50 million renewable energy program that is to be funded by the Green Climate Fund. Following on from contacts made during the Paris conference, other international sole source contracts are to be concluded by de Romilly & de Romilly Limited over the coming weeks.

Robert Leth – NH3 Canada

NH3 Canada Inc. is an NS based corporation, which specializes in the development and commercialization of Innovative Technologies, and especially so, within the Renewables Industry.

Robert Leth, V.P. of Business Development for NH3 Canada Inc, is a veteran of the UN COP program, going back to the NS led mission to COP15, in Copenhagen, in 2009. This year he attended once again, both as a delegate on behalf of ESANS (now ESAM, Environmental Services Assoc. of the Maritimes), and in conjunction with their sister company, NH3 Europa ApS, based in Horsens, Denmark, as a member of that countries exhibitor team, known as State of Green, as featured in Paris, within the "COP21 Solutions" Pavilion. This time he was accompanied again by 2 of his partners, and their team held high expectations going in, based on the building momentum that there just might be a signed agreement achieved this year, as well as the resolve of both Paris and the COP programme, to persevere, immediately following the terrorist attacks, in that city.

In terms of direct access to the vast majority of national teams, agencies and programmes, with whom one could ever expect to work with, COP21 was unprecedented, both in scope and scale, and at the very highest of decision making levels, and of course as galvanized by the actual signing of the Paris Agreement.

Already, many of those discussions and agreements to pursue further, have turned into tangible business negotiations, with their minimum current projection being \$10M-\$20M in new signed contracts this year, and as only being the early Phases, in the further expanding / deploying Pilot Projects / Demonstration Projects, internationally, following on for the next 3-5 years. This would also result in 20-50 new jobs, based in Nova Scotia, as well as others, at project sites.

The company is also especially delighted to have used COP21 to fully engage the new Federal Government, and especially so the new Ministers and their Teams, at the Ministry of the Environment & Climate Change, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and as led personally by Prime Minister Trudeau, and as well, the other Canadian Provinces.

NH3 Canada could not possibly be more satisfied with their participation in COP21, and looks to doing so again, at COP22.

ME Donovan – QUEST NS

My purpose in attending COP 21 was twofold. Firstly, as Chair of QUEST NS I wanted to see what the world energy players (which includes Google etc.) brought to COP 21 as their vision of the future regarding the management of climate change through technology and other means. Secondly, as a partner in a smart energy technology startup I wanted to see what the world competitors were promoting in that particular technology space.

A key requirement to maximize the opportunity was access to all that was on offer for which passes were required. The opportunity presented by COP 21 was significantly hampered because of the limited access. And there were problems even getting into Canadian events because of oversubscription that advance planning would probably have avoided.

In addition to my two objectives, there was no question that COP 21 represented a real opportunity for Canadians to identify export opportunities. That was the opportunity recognized by every private sector participant and their primary reason for attendance regardless whether the private sector entity was Google or a Nova Scotia company. In future utilizing the advantages of the opportunity would be greatly enhanced, because of the challenges arising from the numbers of attendees, the large number of venues, and the number of events, if there were an organizer helping with securing passes for anyone who wants to invest in attending such events and helping identify where to invest one's time. This does not require attendance by the organizer at COP, but rather requires someone at least 6 months in advance doing the on the ground organizing.

Gina Patterson – Clean Foundation

Clean Foundation was deeply appreciative of the opportunity to attend our first Conference of Parties this year with ESANS. We learned much about the political process, and heard from many business and thought leaders from around the world on the global trends that affect our work, and the social and economic direction of our province and our country.

We were able to make connections with Arctic divers and global eco schools for our environmental education work, companies with expertise in adaptation and restoration in Spain, Colombia and Portugal, and numerous governments interested in our energy efficiency program design, to name a few.

Without exception, the businesses and organizations in Paris were open and willing to share knowledge and develop partnerships. Borders are not applicable to global issues like climate change. It is these new cross-border relationships and ways of thinking that we are bringing back with us to accelerate the impact we hope to see in our region.”

Gina focused on making many connections, which the Clean Foundation will be following up on strategically over the next few months to determine potential relationships.

“We are confident that some of these relationships will result in strong, international collaborations which will expand our programming, scope of work, and green job opportunities in Nova Scotia.”

Catherine Abreu – Ecology Action Centre

Catherine Abreu, Ecology Action Centre’s Energy Coordinator, made the following statement as parties negotiate the adoption of a global climate deal at the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris.

“Today the President of COP21 delivered the first global climate agreement that, if adopted, would see all countries in the world agreeing to phase out fossil fuels. While there are gaps in the agreement that require further work, its historic significance cannot be overstated.”

Representatives from every province and territory save Newfoundland & Labrador were present during the Paris talks. Though New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have made notable progress in mitigating climate change in the last decade, their showing during the negotiations was lack luster. While the majority of the tens of thousands of participants in the talks were focused on the renewable energy revolution, New Brunswick Premier Brian Gallant chose the moment to extol the virtues of an oil pipeline - TransCanada’s proposed export project, Energy East.

Meanwhile, Nova Scotia’s official presence in Paris was easily missed. A large contingent of Nova Scotian civil society - from business, environmental, academic, and youth communities - represented the province proudly throughout the conference. Interim Environment Minister Randy Delorey declined the opportunity to meet with representatives of this diverse group while at the conference. He also cancelled a meeting with the Canadian Youth Delegation, four of whom are from Nova Scotia, even as Canadian negotiators, Federal Ministers and staff, and Premiers and Ministers from other provinces found time to meet with them.

In contrast, Prince Edward Island shone as Premier Wade McLauchlan distributed P.E.I wind turbine pins and discussed the Island’s affinity with other small islands states at risk of being swallowed by rising seas.