



NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA

Sustainable Development Strategy
NOW AND FOR THE FUTURE



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Minister's

Message



Canada in the 21st century must become and remain the world's "smartest" natural resources steward, developer, user and exporter — the most high-tech, the most environmentally friendly, the most socially responsible, the most productive and competitive — leading the world as a living model of sustainable development.

Developing our resources sustainably is crucial to Canada's future. Sustainable development is absolutely essential if the resources sector is to fulfil its role as a major engine of economic growth and job creation in this country, helping to provide the highest standard of living and quality of life to Canadians in the 21st century.

Sustainable development is a constantly-evolving process of identifying and seizing new opportunities to improve the environmental and economic performance of the natural resources sector to maximize social and economic benefits to Canadians.

Natural Resources Canada will capitalize on these opportunities to maintain Canada's status as a global leader in sustainable development so that the resources sector remains a powerhouse of the new economy. We will advance sustainable development through scientific knowledge, technological innovation, stewardship, and building capacity for sustainable communities.

Canadians will continue to show the world that innovation and the integration of technologies make it possible to diminish adverse environmental impacts from resource development and use. This will achieve a cleaner environment for all of us, while creating value-added, globally competitive and ecologically responsible industries that maintain a vibrant economy.

Factoring social, economic and environmental considerations into decision-making, and respecting the needs, values and property interests of all users of the land and its resources is essential to making progress on sustainable development. Equally essential is maintaining the integrity of natural ecosystems and safeguarding our quality of life for Canadians, now and for the future.

We have a shared responsibility to ensure this future comes to fruition so that our children, and their children, will continue to enjoy the extraordinary advantages that make Canadians the envy of the world.

Ralph Goodale

NOW and for the FUTURE





Vision

NRCan's Vision of a Sustainable Future

This vision represents Natural Resources Canada's scenario for a future based on sustainable development - a vision that cannot possibly be achieved by a single department, nor by governments alone. It requires ideas, determination and action on behalf of all Canadians, across all sectors of society.

Canada in the 21st century is a society that successfully integrates economic, environmental and social considerations into all resource-related decision making. Canadians make sound decisions about resource development and use – decisions that consider ecological limits; factor in social dynamics that reflect local and global priorities; and capitalize on innovations and technological solutions that overcome environmental challenges to keep Canada competitive in the international marketplace. People of all ages, all regions and all sectors work cooperatively and strategically to minimize the risks and maximize the rewards of responsible natural resources development.

It is a nation that takes full advantage of scientific knowledge and new technologies to harvest and extract resources in ways that maintain the integrity of natural ecosystems and that protect the nation's landmass, water, air and wildlife. Human impacts on biodiversity have been dramatically reduced and mediated.

Canadians have access to an abundance of water of superior quality. Forests are utilized and respected for multiple uses, including recreation, resource extraction as well as the pursuit of Aboriginal people's traditional lifestyle. Healthy communities make optimal use of resources such as water and energy, and manage end-of-life issues in ecologically benign ways. A generation accustomed to recycling and reusing – mining above-ground resources through resource recovery – fails to understand society's previous reliance on landfill sites. Energy efficiency, and renewable and alternative fuels are part of the mainstream.

Communities thrive as a result of technological innovation, economic diversification and increased local decision-making. Up-to-date, leading edge information is broadly available and utilized, creating equitable opportunities for education and poverty alleviation through a technologically skilled workforce capable of capitalizing on job creation.

The private sector assumes greater responsibility for, and realizes the benefits of, the development of products with a longer life that reduce and manage wastes, and free up landfill space for other uses. Canadian firms market their knowledge and expertise to the world, satisfying global demand for ecologically-responsible products and services. These innovations enable companies to realize productivity gains, contributing to Canada's competitiveness and ongoing economic growth, ensuring Canada maintains its reputation as a global leader in sustainable development.

Beyond the natural resources sector, the focus has shifted to community needs and shared values. Communities are virtually connected, enabling environmentally-friendly patterns of urban and rural land use and activity. Common-place practices including telework and telehealth mean a reduced reliance on the automobile.

To make this vision a reality, Natural Resources Canada has established a set of goals, each of which have multiple objectives and actions that will enable the Department to advance sustainable development through its programs, policies, science and technology, legislation and regulations, and operations.

The actions of this Sustainable Development Strategy are framed within the context of the anticipated outcome that will support this vision of a sustainable future. Progress towards this vision is measured against the Department's objectives, which support Natural Resources Canada's sustainable development goals, both now and for the future. Further, Canada's progress towards this vision will be measured through national indicators of sustainable development – refer to **Measuring the Vision** at the close of this document, on page 76.

Canadians who continue to commute rely more on car pooling, cycling or walking as a result of a changed behaviour and outlook.

Natural Resources Canada demonstrates leadership by carrying out the necessary scientific research and making its knowledge widely available to translate sustainable development ideals into common practice. Government sets for itself – and meets – the highest standards that individuals, corporations and communities can be confident are achievable and are motivated to emulate.

Future generations will look back on the turn of the century as a watershed in our nation's history – a time when there was a strong cohesion of views among governments, industry, communities and a well-informed public that led to a joint commitment to action.



Table of Contents



Introduction	4
Putting Sustainable Development Into Context	4
Sustainable Development Challenges for the Natural Resources Sector	5
Moving Forward: NRCan's Contribution to Sustainable Development	6
Operating Principles	7
Highlights of NRCan's first Sustainable Development Strategy	8
NRCan's Evolving Strategy: The First Three Years	8
Accountability for Sustainable Development at NRCan	9
A Framework for Action	12
The Public View	14
Horizontal Themes for Sustainable Development across the Government of Canada	15
<i>NRCan's Six Priorities for Action</i>	18
Vignette: The Climate Change Challenge	22
Goal 1: To provide Canadians with information to make balanced decisions regarding natural resources	25
1.1 Accessible, integrated knowledge	25
Vignette: SeaMap	30
1.2 Cooperation and consensus	34
1.3 Policy instruments	37
Goal 2: To provide Canadians with sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits derived from natural resources	38
2.1 Innovation and opportunity	38
2.2 Trade and markets	43
2.3 Sustainable communities	45
Goal 3: To provide Canadians with strategies that reduce environmental impacts in the natural resources sector	51
3.1 Limit and adapt to climate change	51
3.2 Reduce environmental impacts	56
3.3 Safeguarding the environment	61
Goal 4: To provide Canadians with safety and security in the natural resources sector	63
4.1 Safeguard Canadians	63
4.2 Spatial positioning, mapping and boundary maintenance	64
4.3 Safe use of explosives and pyrotechnics	66
4.4 Enhance safety and security	67
Goal 5: To provide Canadians with a department that is efficiently and effectively managed	68
5.1 Responsible management	68
5.2 Continuous improvement	70
5.3 Sustainable development in NRCan operations	72
Measuring the Vision	76
Appendix A: Measuring our Progress – NRCan's Performance Measurement Framework	78
Appendix B: Operating Principles for Sustainable Development	83
Appendix C: Preparations for SDS – Now and for the Future	84
Appendix D: Departmental Mandate and Organization	88

