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Sustainable Development in Government Operations:

A Coordinated Approach





The Sustainable Development framework represents an important step in our coordinated efforts towards greening government operations. With its use, we aim to realize our shared objective of achieving environmental excellence in our operations.



Ronald A. Quail

Deputy Minister, Public Works and Government Services Canada

This coordinated approach represents an important next step in the Government of Canada's efforts to make its operations more sustainable. On behalf of the Deputy Ministers Sustainable Development Co-ordination Committee, I would encourage all departments to make use of this document as they set targets and actions in their next Sustainable Development Strategy.



Alan B. Nymark

Deputy Minister, Environment Canada

This Sustainable Development framework aimed at government operations is an important and timely tool. It provides guidance on furthering the greening of our operations and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from Government of Canada sources.



Peter Harrison, Ph.D.

Deputy Minister, Natural Resources Canada



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Sustainable Development in Government Operations: *A Coordinated Approach*

Purpose

Sustainable Development in Government Operations: A Coordinated Approach outlines a part of the government-wide effort to set common directions for the sustainable development strategies (SDS) that federal departments will table in Parliament in December 2000.

This paper proposes a coordinated approach to sustainability of federal operations. It is founded on the major, on-going commitments of *A Guide to Green Government* and recommends best practices in seven priority areas of operations. It proposes a toolbox of collaboratively developed performance measures and offers a sample set of concrete targets. Use of common performance measures enables measurability. Emulation of sample targets allows reportability across departments. A joint effort on shared issues provides economies of scale. The fundamental principle of this approach is that sustainability of operations is a journey of continuous improvement; the federal family can make greater progress by walking the road together.

Support for the coordinated approach translates into reflection of its goals, objectives, targets and performance measures in individual departmental SDS. Clearly, this does not entail verbatim adoption of all sample targets in *Sustainable Development in Government Operations: A Coordinated Approach* because not every department is involved in all the issues covered by the sample targets. However, where a department is involved in a particular issue with a sample target, it is anticipated that its SDS would include a parallel relevant target, even if not going as far, as fast. This is seen as the essence of a co-ordinated, integrated approach to sustainable development in government operations.

Background

In the Speech from the Throne in October 1999, the federal government affirmed its commitment to incorporate the principles of sustainable development in all decision making and promised that, "In its own operations, the Government will make itself a model of environmental excellence."

The federal government's commitment to greening its operations has grown in scope, depth and accountability since being first set down in the 1992 Code of Environmental Stewardship. The Code states, among other things, that the government commits itself to integrating "environmental concerns with operational, financial, safety, health, economic development and other relevant concerns in decision making." In 1995, the government took an important step toward converting that commitment into action by amending the *Auditor General Act* to make it a legal requirement for federal ministers, on behalf of their departments, to submit to Parliament a sustainable development strategy that sets goals for environmental improvement in all areas of business, including operations.

Federal departments and agencies are just completing the first three-year cycle of developing and implementing these strategies. They have made considerable progress in meeting their goals. During this initial process, it became apparent that the federal effort would be well served by a coordinated, overall strategy that departments and agencies would follow. *The Coordinated Federal Sustainable Development Plan* is being developed by a variety of federal agencies, and will comprise the government's sustainability commitments for 2001-2004 in eight areas, one of which is sustainable development in government operations. *The Coordinated Federal Sustainable Development Plan* will guide departments as they prepare their next sustainable development strategy scheduled for tabling in Parliament in December 2000.

Approach

This document, *Sustainable Development in Government Operations: A Coordinated Approach*, builds on the 1995 *A Guide to Green Government*, which offers a framework for federal departments preparing their sustainable development strategies. At the time of the Guide's release, federal ministers committed to the following:



“Departments and agencies must:

- adopt a pollution prevention approach;
- meet or exceed applicable federal environmental statutes and regulations;
- emulate best practices from the public and private sectors; and
- develop and implement environmental management systems, including action plans.”

With reaffirmation of those commitments as a starting block, *Sustainable Development in Government Operations: A Coordinated Approach* builds on the best practices outlined in *A Guide to Green Government* for seven priority areas: procurement, waste management, water conservation, energy efficiency, vehicle fleet management, land use management and human resources management.

Pages 3-7 set out those best practices, as well as specific performance measures (selected from the *Environmental Performance Measures for Governmental Operations: A Guidance Document*) and sample targets for each of the seven areas. This information comprises a core set of measures reflecting the government’s commitment to green its operations. Departments in turn will reflect these core measures in their individual SDS, for which they have reporting responsibility.

Points to Consider

Sustainable Development in Government Operations: A Coordinated Approach reflects the Kyoto Agreement on climate change in four of the seven priority areas. Federal organizations will have to commit in their sustainable development strategies to meet specific targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions; targets which are currently being developed by a range of issue specific working groups.

The sample targets included here are just that, samples. However, they are realistic targets that departments should keep in mind as they prepare their sustainable development strategies.

Each department is unique and therefore may not be involved in all priority areas. These two facts will have an impact on how far some organizations can go to implement the best

practices listed here. In addition, departments with Crown-owned buildings will play a different role than those without such assets when addressing environmental issues. Departments in leased facilities, for example, generally have less scope for making changes than those in Crown-owned buildings.

Many government-wide initiatives will affect some or all of the priority areas. For example, the government is responding to the recommendation from the *House Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development* to close the gap in environmental protection stemming from the fact that provincial legislation does not apply on federal land. Working groups have already produced and continue to develop regulations, guidelines, objectives, codes of practice and policies that will

ensure uniform environmental protection across Canada. Similarly, the Cabinet directive on strategic environmental assessment requires departments to undertake an environmental assessment of all policy, planning and program proposals. (See page 7, for a selected list of federal committees working in the area of sustainable development.)

Ensuring that the federal government respects the principles of sustainable development is an on-going process. Preparing the next set of sustainable development strategies is only one step. Departments and agencies will put their strategies into practice and monitor the results. Subsequent strategies will reflect what the government has learned and establish new standards for environmental excellence.

The sum of this effort will:

- demonstrate the federal capacity to achieve concrete, measurable results;
- address the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development’s criticism about the lack of co-ordination among sustainable development strategies; and
- breathe life and substance into the vision of the Speech from the Throne.

The Consultation Process

Government employees at different levels have reviewed *Sustainable Development in Government Operations: A Coordinated Approach* to ensure it is practical and helpful for departments and agencies that have to convert its principles into action. This is the type of feedback the document’s champions — Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Public Works and Government Services Canada — have been looking for. Such input has helped to build consensus and commitment to a coordinated approach in greening operations.

The champions have incorporated the feedback they received at each stage, and, in early April, sought input from the public on this document, as part of the Coordinated Federal Sustainable Development Plan.



Goals of Sustainable Development in Government Operations

The goals for this coordinated approach are firmly founded on the following major commitments specified in *A Guide to Green Government*:

- adopt a pollution prevention approach in all operations;
- meet or exceed requirements of all applicable federal regulations, guidelines and policies;
- emulate best practices from the public and private sectors; and
- integrate an Environmental Management System based on the ISO 14001 standard into the management frameworks of all departments tabling an SDS.

These goals may be accomplished by adopting recommended best practices to achieve the objectives specified for each of the seven priority areas discussed below. Individual departments will report progress using targets and performance measures such as the provided sample values.

With respect to meeting the Kyoto commitments on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, a variety of specific issue working groups are developing action plans and targets. Once finalized, these will become an integral part of the overall approach for sustainability of operations.

1. Procurement

The objectives of green procurement are to reduce resource consumption; waste; greenhouse gas emissions; environmental, health and financial risks; and costs.

A Guide to Green Government recommends the following best practices:

- evaluate potential purchases as outlined in Treasury Board's *Material Management Environmental Guidelines*;

- consistent with Canada's international trade obligations, purchase products and services that meet environmental specifications whenever possible, and consider life-cycle costs;
- provide green procurement training, such as the *Implementing Environmental Purchasing Policies* course available from Environment Canada, to officers with purchasing authority to improve decision making;
- adopt just-in-time delivery of all standard items on a competitive basis; and
- phase out all warehousing space for standard items as the just-in-time system comes into place.

Sample Targets

By March 31, 2002, adopt as the default condition the purchase of environmentally responsible goods and services, whenever available and in a manner consistent with Canada's international trade obligations.

By March 31, 2002, PWGSC will introduce environmental specifications into all standing offers, where requested by client departments.

By March 31, 2002, introduce environmental specifications into all appropriate sections of the *National Master Specifications*. Specifically by March 31, 2001, introduce environmental specifications into the 23 sections of the Specifications that address energy efficiency issues. This recognizes the primacy of Kyoto commitments with respect to greenhouse gas emissions.

By March 31, 2002, provide green procurement training to all personnel with purchasing responsibility.

By September 2004, include reports based on Treasury Board's *Green Procurement Reporting Framework* in all departmental performance reports.

Performance Measures

- total value of purchases of environmentally responsible goods and services;
- number of National Master Standing Offers with green criteria; and
- number and proportion of employees with purchasing responsibility who have received green procurement training.



2. Waste Management

The objectives of solid waste management are to reduce the negative impacts of landfill sites, resource consumption and greenhouse gas emissions; to cut costs; to comply with regulations; and to meet public expectations.

A Guide to Green Government recommends the following best practices:

- realize the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment target of a 50 percent reduction in waste by the year 2000, using 1988 as the base year;
- identify waste reduction opportunities, taking advantage of existing auditing tools and procedures;
- develop and implement a waste reduction action plan, including an awareness program for employees;
- separate waste streams at source to facilitate reuse, recycling and proper disposal;
- compost organic waste whenever feasible; and
- implement a coordinated program to reduce paper use by switching to electronic communication.

Sample Targets

By March 31, 2004, divert 70 percent of solid waste from landfill — that is, 70 percent-by-weight of all solid waste is to be recycled.

By March 31, 2004, develop and implement a protocol to use economical alternatives to hazardous materials and/or processes that generate hazardous waste.

By March 31, 2001, incorporate solid waste diversion practices into all construction, renovation and demolition projects.

Performance Measures

- proportion of solid waste diverted from landfill;
- reduction in annual amount of solid waste sent to disposal;
- number and percentage of buildings with waste reduction programs; and
- number of construction, renovation and demolition projects with waste diversion programs.

3. Water Conservation and Wastewater Management

The objectives of increasing water efficiency are to conserve water and reduce costs.

A Guide to Green Government recommends the following best practices:

- evaluate whether a facility qualifies for savings financing and, when appropriate, take advantage of the benefits afforded by such savings;
- identify water savings opportunities, taking advantage of existing tools and procedures;
- develop and implement a water conservation plan;
- optimize water efficiency, review bills, monitor flow meters and implement preventative maintenance programs;
- specify water-saving equipment and devices for future purchases, such as water-efficient fixtures;
- retrofit toilets, urinals, showers, faucets and drinking fountains to reduce water use; and
- use grey water for landscaping and irrigation purposes when feasible.

Sample Targets

By March 31, 2004, implement water conservation measures at all federal facilities, when it is feasible and cost effective to do so.

By March 31, 2001, develop and implement revised wastewater management guidelines for federal facilities.

Performance Measures

- number and percent of buildings subject to a water savings audit; and
- number and percent of buildings with a water conservation plan



4. Energy Efficiency

The objectives of building energy management are to reduce energy consumption, emissions (including greenhouse gases) and costs.

A Guide to Green Government recommends the following best practices:

- review energy use in owned and leased facilities;
- develop and implement energy management plans, including preventative maintenance;
- assess the energy efficiency knowledge requirements of building operators and managers and provide the required training;
- implement all economically attractive energy retrofits;
- take advantage of the Federal Buildings Initiative, which provides products and services in support of the above activities; and
- facilitate energy conservation efforts by building occupants.

Sample Targets

By March 31, 2001, complete a study to identify cost-effective opportunities to use more efficient and environmentally responsible energy sources in Crown-owned buildings.

By March 31, 2004, implement in Crown-owned buildings energy conservation measures associated with the Federal Buildings Initiative and other programs, when an energy assessment has demonstrated that it is cost effective to do so.

By March 31, 2001, introduce enhanced energy-efficiency specifications into the 23 sections of the *National Master Specifications* relating to equipment that uses energy.

Performance Measures

- number and percent of buildings having completed, or currently undergoing, an energy audit;
- number and percent of buildings having completed, or currently undergoing, an energy efficiency retrofit; and
- amount of energy and percentage of energy saved.

5. Vehicle Fleet Management

The objectives of fleet management are to reduce vehicle emissions to meet legislation and policy objectives, including the Kyoto commitments; to cut by-products and waste from vehicle use; and to decrease costs. This section addresses only ground motor vehicle transportation; it does not yet cover trains, ships and boats, or aircraft.

A Guide to Green Government recommends the following best practices:

- manage fleet vehicles in accordance with economic and environmental objectives of Treasury Board's *Motor Vehicle Policy (1996)*;
- maximize fuel efficiency and the use of alternative fuel to conserve energy and reduce emissions;
- when possible, use low sulphur diesel and ethanol gasoline blends that meet environmental specifications;
- purchase original-equipment-manufactured alternative fuel vehicles or retrofit vehicles when life-cycle costs are comparable to those for gasoline- or diesel-fueled vehicles;
- purchase vehicles of appropriate engine size for operational requirements;
- reduce the number of vehicles for departmental use;
- perform emission testing and regular maintenance on vehicles to ensure maximum operating efficiency;
- recycle all used vehicle liquids (i.e. oil, anti-freeze and CFCs); and
- conduct driver education for enhanced energy savings and safety.



Sample Target

By September 2002, include report on compliance with Treasury Board's *Motor Vehicle Policy (1996)* and the *Alternative Fuels Act* in all departmental performance reports.

Performance Measures

- number of vehicles and percent covered by an action plan; and
- number and percent of alternative fuel vehicles.

6. Land Use Management

The objectives of land use management are to control risk (environmental, health, financial, legal and public image), prioritize remediation efforts and steadily reduce the number of properties for which further action is required.

A Guide to Green Government recommends the following best practices:

- identify, classify and assess sites of concern using the *Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) National Classification System* or similar tool;
- manage risks to human health and the environment, through risk assessment and techniques for containment, mitigation and remediation;
- base site remediation objectives on CCME Environmental Quality Criteria or the *CCME Risk Assessment Framework for Ecological and Human Health Effects*, for risk-based remediation plans;
- review leasehold agreements between federal and private interests to ensure that they contain specific provisions designed to ensure lessees make appropriate arrangements to prevent contamination; and
- in acquisition, use and disposal of real property, adhere to Treasury Board's *Policy on Real Property Management*.

Sample Targets

Continue to assess all proposed projects to determine if they are considered projects as defined by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*.

Continue to comply with the CEAA for any proposed activity considered a project as defined by the Act.

By March 31, 2001, identify and prioritize federal contaminated sites, and prepare action plans.

Continue to remediate and monitor Crown-owned contaminated sites as determined by action plans.

Performance Measures

- proportion of sites reviewed for contamination;
- proportion of identified sites with action plans;
- proportion of fully implemented action plans; and
- percentage of projects reviewed for applicability of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*

7. Human Resources Management

In the context of greening operations, the objectives of human resources management are to ensure the health and safety of employees; to equip employees to meet the requirements of all applicable regulations, guidelines and policies; and to encourage employees to incorporate environmental considerations into their daily activities.

A Guide to Green Government recommends the following best practices:

- consistent with Treasury Board's personnel policy, adopt human resource management practices that foster innovative working arrangements, such as job sharing and working from home, that support environmental objectives; and
- infuse environmental awareness into all training programs, particularly orientation.



Sample Target

By March 31, 2002, establish and implement environmental training plans commensurate with operations. (Clearly, the plan for the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency will differ markedly, for example, from that of the Department of National Defence.)

Performance Measures

- number of environmental training courses developed;
- number of employees receiving environmental training;
- number of environmental regulatory infractions; and
- number of employees participating in Green Citizenship Networks.

Interdepartmental Committees on Greening Issues

Deputy Minister Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee

Established in 1994 and chaired by Environment Canada, this is the federal government's senior forum on sustainable development. It has a broad management and coordination mandate focused in several areas: encouraging teamwork and collaboration on sustainable development across the federal system; coordinating sustainable development initiatives; ensuring a coherent approach to the government's sustainable development agenda; and managing cross-cutting issues related to the preparation of sustainable development strategies of the departments.

Directors General Coordinating Committee on House in Order (Kyoto)

Co-chaired by Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada, this senior management committee coordinates the activities of 21 interdepartmental working groups established to ensure the federal government meets the climate change commitments it made in Kyoto.

Federal Committee on Environmental Management Systems (FCEMS)

Co-chaired by Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada, FCEMS provides an interdepartmental forum for discussion and coordination of crosscutting issues related to Environmental Management Systems.

Regulatory Gap Analysis Subcommittee

Co-chaired by Environment Canada and the Department of National Defence, this subcommittee of FCEMS ensures that federal sites are held to the same standards of environmental protection as the communities in which they operate. Regulations have already been published on storage tanks and halocarbons on federal sites, while working groups are well advanced in the development of regulations, guidelines or codes of practice for boilers, hazardous



waste, wastewater and environmental emergency prevention, preparedness and response on federal sites.

Contaminated Sites Management Working Group

Chaired by the Department of National Defence, this subcommittee of FCEMS promotes and develops a consistent federal approach to managing contaminated site issues. This approach integrates sustainable development and pollution prevention principles while meeting environmental regulations and protecting public health, safety and the environment.

Environmental Awareness and Training Working Group

Chaired by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, this subcommittee of FCEMS assesses federal environmental training needs and develops appropriate tools. The group coordinated the preparation of training materials and the production of computer-based training packages, targeting both senior management and general employees.

Interdepartmental Advisory Group on Water Conservation at Federal Facilities (WCFF)

Chaired by EC, the WCFF has been promoting water efficiency within the federal government since 1990 by sharing knowledge and experiences, developing common tools, coordinating activities and providing advice. Sixteen departments are represented by members who have policy or operational backgrounds related to water efficiency.

Pollution Prevention Coordinating Committee

Chaired by Environment Canada, this committee evaluates pollution prevention in Canada and is a forum for the exchange of information and ideas among stakeholders.

FleetWise Program Advisory Council

Co-chaired by Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat, FleetWise is a comprehensive program

aimed at increasing the operational efficiency of the federal government's vehicle fleets. The program components include driver training, vehicle maintenance, waste recycling, vehicle specifications, technology solutions and the use of alternative fuels.

Interdepartmental Network on Sustainable Development Strategies

Chaired by Environment Canada, this group is the key vehicle for promoting interdepartmental coordination on horizontal sustainable development issues.

Performance Measurement for Sustainable Government Operations

Co-chaired by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Public Works and Government Services Canada, this working group is in the final phase of developing a guidance document that provides performance indicators for the whole range of issues related to greening government operations.

Senior Management Committee on Environmental Assessment

Chaired by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, this committee is an interdepartmental forum for senior management discussion of environmental assessment issues, each of which is addressed by a subcommittee.