

Overview of The Department

Mandate

Environment Canada's mandate (under the *Department of the Environment Act*) covers preservation and enhancement of the quality of the natural environment, renewable resources (including water, migratory birds and other non-domestic flora and fauna), meteorology, enforcement of the rules of the Canada-U.S. International Joint Commission, and coordination of federal environmental policies and programs.

While the Department's mandate has not changed since it was founded in 1971, the range and character of the issues and challenges it faces have evolved considerably.

Vision

We want to see a Canada where people make responsible decisions about the environment; and where the environment is thereby sustained for the benefit of present and future generations.

Mission

To make sustainable development a reality in Canada by helping Canadians live and prosper in an environment that needs to be respected, protected and conserved.

Strategic Priorities

Sustainable development is a national goal, a policy of the Government of Canada, and the context in which Environment Canada interprets its mandate. The Department plays two distinct but complementary roles in advancing sustainable development. The first is a transitional leadership and advocacy role in integrating sustainable development into decision making processes throughout the federal government. The second is an abiding role of providing leadership in environmental sustainability.

In this continuing role, Environment Canada aims to further the following strategic priorities through all of its Business Lines:

- Provide leadership nationally and internationally on matters pertaining to the sustainability of the environment;
- Act on behalf of all Canadians to address environmental issues of national concern and to administer and enforce federal environmental laws and regulations;
- Deliver services to Canadians that enable them to adapt to their environment in ways which safeguard their health and safety and optimize economic efficiency;
- Build capacity throughout society to take decisions that lead to environmental sustainability, and cooperate with others having similar objectives.

In each of these priorities science is the foundation of Environment Canada's policies, programs and regulations, and is essential to achieving results.

