

Veterans Affairs
Sustainable Development Strategy
Strategic Integration

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Executive Summary

Veterans Affairs (VA) has been moving towards more sustainable programming and environmentally responsible physical operations. Starting with the Federal Code of Environmental Stewardship, the Department has been taking steps to identify and reduce negative environmental impacts of activities and operations. The approach towards sustainable development (SD) planning, in support of the Federal Greening of Government initiative, is to leverage past accomplishments and current initiatives with overall federal sustainable development objectives.

The principal focus of the VA Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) lies in the strategic integration of the concept into the activities, decision-making processes, and organizational culture of the Portfolio. The SDS recognizes that integration is the optimal means of influencing behavioral change: this integration is strategic in that the change in culture required by the initiative is long term in nature and best facilitated by corporate coordination and communication.

A basic premise of the SDS is that many of the Portfolio's existing activities and initiatives are consistent with sustainable development principles and objectives. The major challenge for the VA strategy is to define the goals and action plans that will legitimize and operationalize sustainable development within Portfolio business lines and related activities and administration.

To effect this change the SDS combines a system of both new and existing activities that fit with or reinforce the concept of sustainable development. These activities form a pattern that demonstrates how the Portfolio intends to address the needs of the initiative. The resulting plan displays a high degree of strategic fit or consistency with both external issues and forces and internal organizational capabilities and core competencies.

The Department has adopted three strategic goals which speak to the medium and long-term sustainable development challenges in relation to social, economic and environmental considerations. These three goals are as follows:

- 1. to integrate sustainable development into the decision-making processes and the organizational culture of the Veterans Affairs Portfolio;**
- 2. to sustain and improve the health status and resulting quality of life and well-being for Portfolio clients and their families;**
- 3. to improve the delivery of benefits and services using clean products and advanced information technology in an ecologically efficient manner.**

These goals position the Portfolio to simultaneously meet the requirements of both the overall federal objective of the sustainable development initiative and the specific VA mission and mandate. Many current strategic initiatives in the Portfolio have objectives supporting the mission that can be placed within the sustainable development context. Therefore, the activities arising from these initiatives can be viewed as a pattern of actions that contribute to both Portfolio and sustainable development objectives.

To meet the challenge of incorporating sustainable development with the way the Portfolio defines its business and makes decisions there are new activities woven into this existing pattern. These activities focus on influencing organizational variables such as systems and culture to facilitate the integration of the concept.

To assess performance and maintain accountability, the strategy strives to be as results-oriented as possible. Performance will be assessed against these results and reported where appropriate within those documents representing the expenditure management system, such as the spring Report on Plans and Priorities, and the fall Performance Report.

This monitoring and assessment function will be applied to assist in the continuous improvement and enhancement of this initiative within the Portfolio context. It is reasonable to expect that this commitment will take time and effort to implement. However, the long-term benefits of integrating sustainable development with the planning, administrative, and decision-making processes of the Portfolio can be appreciated when considered in a broad, government-wide perspective.

The strategic intent of the Veterans Affairs SDS concentrates on using existing core competencies to enrich the social well-being of clients and their families within the context of sustainable development. These competencies will be supported with a technological infrastructure cognizant of the need to reduce the environmental burden through the effective application of information and knowledge. Operational activities will be conducted in the spirit of good environmental stewardship, facilitated by the design and implementation of an Environmental Management System. The guiding theme behind the strategy is the need to integrate sustainable development into the business lines and decision-making processes of the Portfolio to influence behavioural change and bring about desired outcomes.

1 ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

Federal environmental stewardship is the vehicle being used to demonstrate the government's commitment to sustainable development. First announced in Canada's Green Plan, implementation of the initiative progressed through the use of the Code of Environmental Stewardship and the development of *A Guide to Green Government*. The initiative was advanced with the implementation of the Greening of Government Cabinet Directive, Directions on Greening Government, and amendments to the *Auditor General Act* in 1995. These amendments require ministers to prepare sustainable development strategies, with specific action plans to implement them, and to table these strategies by December of 1997.

1.2 Purpose

Sustainable development provides a framework for the integration of environmental considerations into social and economic policies and recognizes that development is essential to satisfy human needs and improve the quality of human life. Moreover, such development must be based on the efficient and environmentally responsible use of society's scarce resources: natural, human and economic.

The Veterans Affairs sustainable development strategy will clarify the Department's role within this federal initiative and describe undertakings by which the Department is planning to achieve its sustainable development goals.

1.3 Objectives

The overall federal objectives of sustainable development are outlined in *A Guide to Green Government* as follows:

1. Sustaining our natural resources - sustainable jobs, communities and industries
2. Protecting the health of Canadians and of ecosystems
3. Meeting our international obligations
4. Promoting equity
5. Improving our quality of life and well-being

1.4 Sustainable Development Strategy within the Veterans Affairs Context

To contribute to the accomplishment of these overall federal objectives, VA has developed a strategy that serves to link the means through which the Portfolio carries out its mission and achieves its objectives with sustainable development concepts and principles.

The strategy formulation stage included analysing and assessing internal capabilities such as human resources, core competencies and organizational variables. The strategy was then aligned with both these variables and external environmental forces such as demographic trends and technical change. This analysis identified that much of what the Portfolio already does is sustainable development, especially as it pertains to the social and economic dimensions. Given that the Portfolio resides in the social affairs policy sector of the federal government, this finding was a logical extension of the mandate and scope of operations.

The implementation of the strategy deals mainly with two key organizational variables. The first variable requires actions that influence the culture of the organization to consider sustainable development principles and practices in conducting business and activities. The second variable deals with enhancing the systems of the organization including the design and development of an Environmental Management System (EMS). This system will provide a framework for monitoring, reporting, and improving the Portfolio's environmental performance as it relates to operations and day-to-day activities.

The strategy will be subject to continuous improvement and updating based on the monitoring and control functions inherent within the EMS. Special alert controls and procedures and a rapid means of communicating information pertaining to environmental performance and to unique or exceptional cases of environmental crisis or emergency will also be included.

In alignment with organizational structures, roles, and responsibilities, the corporate planning group for the Portfolio focused on the formulation of the strategy and with those policy and program issues related to the social and economic dimensions of the initiative. The more specific operational issues and impacts related to environmental stewardship and performance were grouped under the auspices of the design and implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS). As such, management services staff concentrated on this aspect of the initiative, in coordination and collaboration with the overall Portfolio SDS.

Therefore, the SDS concentrates on integrating the objectives of the business lines that enable the organization to fulfill its mission with the objectives and principles outlined in the *Guide to Green Government*.

This approach facilitates the integration of sustainable development into the ongoing activities and operations of the Portfolio. This integration will help to defray the notion that sustainable development is a separate and distinct initiative: it will situate the concept as a required cultural change that will permeate all business activities and decisions.

2 PORTFOLIO PROFILE

2.1 Programs, Mission & Mandate

The Veterans Affairs Portfolio consists of two Programs:

1. The Veterans Affairs Program, which operates under the direction of Veterans Affairs Canada, consisting of business and service lines devoted to providing client service, commemorative functions and the required degree of administrative support necessary to deliver programs and operations.

The mandate of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) is to meet the needs of Canadians who served their country during wartime and to honour those who gave their lives in that service. The authority for this Portfolio Program is contained in the *Department of Veterans Affairs Act*, 16 other acts of Parliament, and 32 sets of regulations and Orders-in-Council.

Under the authority of the *Department of Veterans Affairs Act* and related acts and regulations, the Department provides a wide range of benefits and services to eligible veterans and certain civilians as well as their dependants and survivors.

2. The Veterans Review and Appeal Board Program operates under the direction of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) which is an independent, quasi-judicial agency board reporting to Parliament through the Minister of Veterans Affairs. The Program renders decisions in reviews and appeals of disability pension cases. Effort is also devoted to final appeals of War Veterans Allowance decisions.

The Veterans Review and Appeal Board's mandate is full and exclusive jurisdiction to hear, determine and deal with all applications for review and all appeals that may be made to the Board under the *Pension Act*, the *War Veterans Allowance Act* or any other act of Parliament. All matters related to those applications and appeals are authorized under the *Veterans Review and Appeal Board Act*.

The broad-based objectives of the Programs are reflected in the Portfolio Mission Statement as follows:

To provide veterans, qualified civilians and their families with the benefits and services to which they are entitled; to promote their well-being and self-sufficiency as participating members of their communities; and to keep the memory of their achievements and sacrifices alive for all Canadians.

For a more detailed description of the resources and organization of the Portfolio, please refer to Appendix B.

2.2 Capabilities & Strategy

To fulfill this mission VA applies a unique blend of organizational capabilities and strategic initiatives to deliver benefits and services to a clientele rapidly approaching very old age.

Physical operations primarily consist of office administration and information management, with the exception of health care activities related to client counselling functions and the work conducted at Ste. Anne's Hospital. Accordingly, the implementation of the EMS is intended to deal with the relatively limited environmental impacts of these operations.

However, the overall strategy must also consider the implications of the social and economic dimensions of this initiative as relates specifically to the Portfolio and its mandate within the social affairs sector of the federal government.

It is within this area that the core competencies of the organization must be considered as an integral component of the strategic plan.

These competencies or capabilities are mainly centred around the human resources and the organizational variables of culture and systems. These elements comprise the key success factors of the organization, and, by inference, the SDS. In essence, the distinctive competence of the organization lies in establishing and maintaining a close and personal relationship with clients, and in anticipating and adapting to the evolving needs and requirements of these clients. This relationship is facilitated by ensuring that trained and flexible staff are enabled with modern and innovative technologies and information systems to deliver quality service.

For sustainable development to be relevant and meaningful within the VA context and sphere of influence, its concepts and principles must be integrated within the organizational capabilities and decision-making processes in areas where the Portfolio can make a difference. To help define these areas and develop subsequent objectives and action plans, management and front-line service staff were consulted to refine and clarify those issues and impacts of highest priority to clients and stakeholders. The unique client/service provider relationship both simplified and enhanced this process.

3.0 ISSUE SCAN

As discussed in the previous section, the mission and mandate of the Portfolio dictate a strong focus on the social and economic dimensions of the initiative.

VA has been and will continue to be an active participant in the Social Affairs policy sector of the federal government. As such, VA has been actively engaged in the development of Canada's social welfare programs for many years. The dominant theme of the current generation of VA programs is the promotion of independence and self-sufficiency.

To ensure the aging veteran population has access to an integrated and flexible program of health and other services, VA has been conducting an ongoing review of its programs and services. This review, coupled with fiscal restraint and streamlining operations, highlights the following program areas as being relevant in terms of their impact on sustainable development. There are also a number of issues and impacts included in this section pertaining to the nature of operational activities as relates to environmental considerations and the associated greening of office operations and administration. Changes to established processes or actions necessary to become more sustainable, or opportunities to foster a sustainable development business ethic, are outlined in more detail in section 6 of this report.

3.1 Client Demographics

In fiscal year 1996-97, VA forecasts delivery of services and benefits to approximately 218,000 clients, including an estimated 124,000 veterans projected to receive income benefits or disability pensions that qualify them for non-insured health benefits and services. The client total also includes more than 70,000 survivors, mostly widows of veterans who receive compensation, and approximately 23,000 regular force (peacetime) clients who receive pensions and other benefits related to their military service.

During the next decade, Canada's wartime veteran population will be reaching very old age, defined as people 80 years of age and beyond. In relation to the total Canadian seniors' population, one of every four men over the age of 65 is a veteran.

These demographics highlight two important client population trends.

Firstly, the average age of a veteran client is projected to increase from 76 years at the end of this fiscal year to 79 years in 2002 and to 84 years in 2008. Since almost two thirds of the wartime veteran population were born between 1920 and 1925, VAC will be serving a client population of considerable size that will reach very old age in the near future. Secondly, as the total veteran population (estimated at 460,000 as of March 31, 1997) declines by approximately 17% between April 1997 and March 2000, the proportion of survivor and peacetime pensioner clients will increase. By 2005, less than half the VAC client population will be wartime veterans while the remainder will be older women (survivors) and peacetime pensioners who served in Canada's military after the Second World War.

The conclusion to be drawn from these two trends is that while overall numbers of clients may be diminishing, a considerable population of wartime veterans, predominantly men, will be reaching very old age.

Impact:

The concept of sustainable development includes that of intergenerational equity, that is, preservation of resources or equitable allocation of today's resources to provide future generations the same quality of life which we currently enjoy.

VA believes that this principle of intergenerational equity must look backwards as well as forwards. As a government body, it would not be sustainable to fund forward looking programs at the expense of the aged.

The Portfolio will be faced with the ongoing challenge of providing programs and services to an aging veteran population. The future direction of these programs and services will continue to be influenced by the relationship between independence, advancing age, and veteran status. Providing benefits and services to large numbers of clients who reach very old age presents a new scenario to VA and other organizations with similar client demographics. A very significant impact of this aging client population is that a higher proportion of clients will be widows of veterans.

A key premise in ensuring an acceptable quality of life for this population segment is the notion of maintaining independence and self-sufficiency.

In doing so, the individual benefits from the potential to grow old with dignity, the care giver benefits from reduced burdens and stress, and the community benefits from the continued contributions of an increasingly large segment of society.

3.2 Strategic Objectives

The Portfolio is engaged in a number of corporate objectives and priorities that support key commitments related to providing high-quality, efficient and cost-effective service to clients. The Benefits Redesign Project, Pension Streamlining, and Business Renewal initiatives represent specific examples of how the Portfolio intends to refocus programs based on client needs and create an innovative organization capable of rapid response and adaptation.

All of these initiatives and projects seek to combine those work processes and functions most applicable to the organization and the client with the most modern and appropriate technology operated by the most suitable staff.

Some of the expectations of these strategic priorities can be summarized as follows: service delivery will have a strong client focus; work functions will be organized around outcomes; and information technology will supply the tools needed to perform work functions in an expeditious and efficient manner.

Impact:

The migration towards new technological platforms and work processes intended to improve client service contributes to the evolution of the knowledge-based organization. This evolution introduces a new set of transition problems for both the organization and its human resources. The organization will be focused on implementing high performance work systems while staff embrace a culture of continuous learning and knowledge-intensive work.

The potential of using information with clean technology products to add value and increase productivity with little negative impact on the environment is a guiding tenet of the information age. Investment in the technologies of the future should help to minimize waste and reduce the environmental burden through a reduced need to move people and materials around in the delivery of service and benefits.

3.3 Partnerships

Since the implementation of the Federal Code of Environment Stewardship in 1992, VAC has been developing programs to green its operations. Factors such as declining resource base, complexity of environmental issues, and changing socio-economic dynamics prohibit VAC from achieving its sustainable development goals in isolation of other federal departments or levels of government. The Department, therefore, has established a partnerships strategic objective and intends to pursue joint initiatives with other levels of government to promote greening of government concepts and ventures.

Impact:

Working in concert with other government departments, other levels of government, and the academic and professional sectors should enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of sustainable development initiatives. This collaboration will require new skills, new management processes, and new management agendas and culture.

A good example of this approach is the current Knowledge Economy Partnership (KEP) strategic initiative. This initiative involves a coalition of federal and provincial government departments, the University of Prince Edward Island, Holland College, and private sector businesses on P.E.I. These elements are working together in collaborative partnership, to identify and act upon opportunities for partnerships that will provide improved client service through the achievement of common goals.

This strategic initiative is closely linked to the concept of developing sustainable jobs for future generations in that one of the expected outcomes of the initiative is job creation in knowledge-based industries and information age services. KEP represents a pilot project that will demonstrate how federal and provincial governments can work together for the common interest of all Canadians.

3.4 Environmental Stewardship

In carrying out its mission to deliver benefits and services to clients, the Portfolio provides grants and contributions to clients and operates, maintains, and funds various facilities and commemorative sites. These arrangements carry a degree of responsibility and accountability to mitigate harmful impacts to the environment resulting from activities and operations. To provide reasonable assurance and demonstrate due diligence towards these responsibilities, federal departments are expected to have in place an adequate managerial infrastructure.

This infrastructure or framework is intended to facilitate the management of environmental risk and responsibilities. Based upon ISO 14000 guidelines VA has assessed its ability to continually assure compliance and implement measures to improve the Department's capacity in this regard. The process of developing the SDS enhanced the environmental management framework of the Portfolio by instituting traditional management control elements such as the following:

- development and approval of a Sustainable Development Policy;
- definition and commitment to environmental objectives and targets;
- implementation of monitoring and reporting processes;
- clarification of accountability frameworks for environmental responsibility;
- development of environmental action plans; and
- preparation of methodologies and schedules to conduct environmental audits or other corporate reviews that will demonstrate due diligence and assist in risk analysis and management.

The ongoing development of these controls demonstrates commitment to effective management of the impacts and requirements of the SD initiative. More detailed and specific activities are laid out in the action planning framework. The following section provides an analysis of the management of expenditures, facilities and real property from an environmental management perspective.

A. Program Expenditures Management

Program expenditures in the form of grants and contributions are forecast as approximately \$1.4 billion for 1997-98. Although the use of these funds may have sustainable development implications, clients have complete discretion over the expenditure of funds classified as grants. In terms of contributions, clients exercise personal choice in the use of funds restricted by the requirement of the expenditure to meet the program intent of the contribution arrangement. The Portfolio's influence is limited to assessing if these expenditures do indeed meet the program intent. Therefore, the Portfolio's accountability for these expenditures cannot extend beyond ensuring that the intent of the contribution arrangement does not conflict with sustainable development policy.

Approximately \$1.2 billion in transfer payments classified as grants are forecast for 1997-98. Contributions are forecast to be approximately \$164 million, consisting of \$158 million in funding to clients to assist in defraying the costs of extended health care not covered by provincial health programs and \$6.1 million in contributions to the respective

provinces in accordance with the agreements of transfer of departmental hospitals.

Transfers of capital to the provinces for the construction of contract beds are subject to individual Environmental Assessments conducted at the time of construction. The institutions that provide and maintain beds for veteran clients are under provincial jurisdiction and are regulated and inspected by provincial authorities.

The transfer of departmental hospitals was subject to extensive environmental investigations and assessments at the time of transfer, as required by federal real property policy. VA has reviewed the various regulatory regimes in place at these facilities and is hence assured that adequate environmental protection standards are in place.

Departmental operating expenditures are forecast as approximately \$513 million for 1997-98. Of this amount, about \$340 million pertains to client related expenditures in treatment benefits and non-departmental institutions under the Other Health Purchased Services category. Of the remaining \$173 million, about \$35 million reflect non-salary expenditures. Exclusive of Ste. Anne's Hospital, departmental operating expenditures less salaries are approximately \$23 million.

Impact:

Based on this analysis, the VA SDS will concentrate on dealing with the environmental implications of operating expenditures only. Relative to the social and economic implications of expenditures made in the form of grants and contributions, existing corporate review structures and processes will continue to provide the necessary control and evaluation functions. However, as part of the Action Plans outlined in section 6 and in Appendix D of the SDS, the audit and evaluation function will work towards integrating sustainable development requirements into existing review processes and procedures.

B. Facilities Management

As previously discussed, the VA Portfolio resides in the social affairs policy sector of the federal government: the primary function of the Portfolio is to administer benefits and services.

This delivery has little impact on the physical environment, given that office operations and the related information technology infrastructure result in a relatively small degree of environmental burden. To provide some context and detail on the nature of VA operations and the various types of operational facilities, the following discussion is provided.

(i) Administrative Facilities

Where facilities are owned by the federal government, they must be in compliance with

the federal framework of laws and guidelines respecting health safety and the environment. Where the facilities are leased from private sector companies, they fall into provincial jurisdiction and it is the landlord who is responsible for compliance.

Impact:

The physical operations of the Department are relatively modest within the federal government; however, administrative facilities represent an ongoing impact on sustainable development and will be addressed in the SD action planning framework. Administrative office activities consume water, energy, and consumer products (electronic equipment, motor vehicles, paper, etc.) and generate waste. Vacant facilities may contain environmental liabilities that require attention. Accordingly, an EMS Project Manager has been established to develop and implement the management system to address these ongoing environmental impacts. A baseline survey of owned and/or operated facilities has been undertaken and appropriate procedures and processes based on the results of this survey will be incorporated within the implementation of the EMS.

The Quebec Regional Office has already demonstrated the financial merits of SD. Through “rent blended” renegotiations with the landlord, where utility charges are a portion of the rent, the office was able to demonstrate a reduction in water and electrical usage and generation of less garbage, hence a “green dividend” was returned to Canadian taxpayers.

(ii) Health Care Facilities

Over the course of the last decade, almost all health care facilities have been transferred to provincial jurisdiction, in order that the care-giving authority be located closer to the client and for efficiency of operation. Although the department retains ownership of Saskatoon Veterans Home and the Rideau Veterans Home in Ottawa, the former operation is now administered by provincial authorities while the latter is a vacant property as the result of a transfer process.

Impact:

Throughout the transfer process, precautions have been taken to mitigate any environmental impacts which might have occurred during the transfer. As well, environmental assessments were conducted prior to facility transfers to identify any existing environmental liabilities so that they might be addressed as part of the transfer process. This has been completed successfully and will continue for the last potential transfer of Ste. Anne’s Hospital, discussed in more detail below. As such, the physical aspects of facility transfer do not pose any sustainable development issues.

(iii) Ste. Anne’s Hospital

Ste. Anne’s Hospital is the last major health facility the Department owns and operates. The facility provides approximately 600 active long-term care beds for veteran clients and conducts specialized hospital operations related to this care with an operating budget of

approximately \$61 million.

As the largest single operation in VA, accounting for more than 30% of the Portfolio's human resources, Ste. Anne's has initiated its own framework of practices, procedures, responsibilities and resources to ensure adequate management of environmental issues and effective environmental performance. This includes a review and upgrade of underground storage tanks, a program aimed at virtual elimination of PCBs, recycling of CFCs, paper, cardboard, wood and metal, a series of water and electric audits, as well as an awareness campaign for staff and clients.

The potential for a future transfer of the facility to the provincial jurisdiction has prompted a number of environmental projects directed at exposing any environmental liabilities and improving environmental performance in anticipation of this transfer process, including an exhaustive environmental audit in 96/97 and a comprehensive environmental assessment.

As well, "sustainable development and environmental protection" is a regular agenda item at hospital management team (CEG) meetings, where performance is reviewed and priorities are set.

Impact:

The strategy will ensure that ongoing monitoring and reporting functions related to the Portfolio's EMS are installed and implemented to address responsibility and accountability concerns.

Due to its distinctive operations, Ste. Anne's will not be included in the overall departmental EMS, but rather, develop an independent system which better meets the unique needs of the hospital; this system will then feed data directly into the departmental system. This strategy will ensure that strategic surveillance and special alert functions exist to address emergency situations and enhance the capability of both the SDS and the hospital's environmental performance to adapt and evolve to future changes and pressures. Environmental performance reporting linkages to the EMS and the resulting annual environmental report will be established.

C. Real Property Management

The Department conducts operations through a national network of administrative offices, service centres, and health care facilities. Most health care facilities (i.e. hospitals and lodges) already have been or are in the process of divestiture to the provinces, as discussed above. There is also one vacant health care facility (Rideau Veterans' Home in Ottawa) awaiting disposal. This facility will be included in the EMS baseline survey and managed under "caretaker" status to protect the Department's interests during the disposal process and as such is not considered to be an SD issue.

There are, however, two aspects of real property management identified during the scan exercise: commemorative sites and real property retained under the title of Director, *Veterans Land Act*.

(i) Commemoration

The Department is responsible for the appropriate maintenance of several commemorative sites and monuments, as well as approximately 250,000 graves widely distributed across Canada. There are two departmental cemeteries (Fort Massey in Halifax and Esquimalt in Victoria), 32 large veterans' plots, and many single graves scattered throughout private cemeteries. Many of these cemeteries and graves are restored on an ongoing basis. There is also maintenance carried out in memorial parks and battlefield memorials in Belgium and France for which the Department is also responsible.

Capital works and maintenance projects such as these maintenance activities may have significant environmental impacts if not managed properly.

Impact:

All capital works, or funds provided for capital works, are subject to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA)*. As such, any negative environmental impacts are identified during the planning stages of the project or activity and mitigated upon implementation through the contracting process. A monitoring program will be instituted to ensure that the prescribed mitigation procedures are followed and are effective.

Maintenance activities at commemorative sites may also have negative environmental impacts. Again, the emerging EMS is being designed to include monitoring and management of environmental risks posed by contracted operations.

(ii) Property Management

Property management and other services are provided by the Property Management directorate of the Finance Division as regards property contracts falling under the terms and conditions of the *Veterans' Land Act*. Approximately 2,400 outstanding accounts are still under the administration of the Department.

Impact:

Except for a small number of third party transactions, conveyance of these properties to agreement holders is not subject to federal Environmental Assessment requirements. Third party transactions are subject to these requirements if the situation warrants such action, but these cases are the exception. Therefore, no further action is required and this issue is not identified within the Action Planning Framework.

4.0 Consultations Strategy

In formulating the SDS, consultations with targeted groups and individuals were carried out to refine and clarify issues and problems to be addressed in the Action Planning Framework in section 6 of this report. Given the consultation environment, (i.e. similar consultations being conducted by all other federal departments at approximately the same time), VA decided to use a more focused approach to the process.

Having identified an initial stakeholder community, consultations were conducted to assist in addressing the overall federal initiative and determining the planned response of the Portfolio. In the spirit of continuous improvement, the stakeholder audience will be expanded if it is determined that the implementation of the strategy would benefit from this enhancement. For the interim, the stakeholder group consists of the following:

- Clients, dependants and immediate families
- Portfolio executive management
- Operational management and staff

Of particular interest is the approach used to elicit information and perspectives from clients. Given their advanced average age, the relatively low environmental impact of lifestyle, and the “consultation fatigue” factor, veteran clients were not directly included in the consultation process. Instead, frontline service delivery staff were engaged in a focus group exercise to clarify the concerns and priorities of Portfolio clients. Qualitative data from this exercise supported the validity of using this consultation by proxy approach. The focus group also indicated that future coordination with other stakeholders such as veterans’ organizations and suppliers would be beneficial in implementing action plans.

Consultations with management and staff were greatly facilitated by the creation and ongoing participation of a national departmental Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC), made up of staff from across the country actively engaged in environmental operational activities. A series of presentations and communications with senior managers, both at the branch committee and at the individual level, also contributed to the overall quality and relevance of the emerging strategy.

At the inter-departmental level, VA representatives regularly attended meetings and training sessions sponsored by both the Inter-departmental Network on Sustainable Development Strategy (INSDS) and the Federal Committee on Environmental Management Systems (FCEMS). Discussions and information exchange with other departments and agencies were also part of the consultation process in the development of the strategy.

Research into gaining access to existing data sources such as the annual Environmental Monitor survey and relating findings and trends from such sources to the VA client and stakeholder group provides another plank in the consultation platform. Data sources such as this survey provide an independent global perspective of public opinion and behavior regarding environmental issues and sustainable development. If this perspective can be related to distinct segments such as VA clients and stakeholders, the resulting analysis could serve as a truly global component of a consultations strategy, and could be conducted efficiently and economically on an ongoing basis.

This type of technology-based research and development reflects the spirit of the VA SDS goal and associated objectives related to clean technology and eco-efficiency. If there are existing databases that could serve the intent of SDS consultations through the application of specialized technology and knowledge, using such a process saves time, energy and resources while adding to the quality and comprehensiveness of the exercise.

5.0 Sustainable Development Goals & Objectives for VA

Sustainable development goals have been derived from the departmental profile, issue scan and the consultation process. VA intends to achieve these goals through a framework of objectives which are supported by a number of actions featured in the Action Planning Framework (APF) in the following section of the SDS.

The SDS features three goals pertaining to the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. These goals fit with, or are congruent to each other, and have been linked back to the Portfolio mission and *Guide to Green Government* high level objectives.

Goal #1 To integrate sustainable development into the decision-making processes and the organizational culture of the Veterans Affairs Portfolio.

To facilitate the integration of sustainable development into the decision-making processes and organizational culture of the Portfolio, it becomes imperative to blend SD principles and concepts with decision-making criteria, planning processes and administrative activities. This particular goal recognizes that integration has the highest ability to influence change in behaviors.

To contribute to influencing cultural change and decision making at the operational level, an integral component of the SDS relates to developing environmental management capacity through the design and implementation of an EMS using ISO 14000 guidelines as a model. This development effort has three capacity enhancing objectives: (1) Build an EMS; (2) Reduce operational environmental impacts; and (3) Enhance environmental commitment.

Operational environmental impacts have been identified and quantified during a baseline study in the spring and summer of 1997. Based upon this study, specific targets have been set for reduced waste generation; pollution prevention is a key concept in the EMS. Please refer to Appendix D for more detailed information related to the EMS Action Plan.

Goal #2 To sustain and improve the health status and resulting quality of life and well-being for Portfolio clients and their families.

The Portfolio has viewed sustainable development through the “lenses of its mandate,” as directed by *A Guide to Green Government*. As identified in the Portfolio mission statement, the promotion of the well-being and self-sufficiency of clients is a key purpose of the organization. This purpose dovetails closely with the overall SD objective of improving the quality of life and well-being of Canadians.

The perspective of the VA SDS is to regard independence as a prime determinant of quality of life; in turn, health and wellness can be interpreted as primary determinants of independence. Since it is anticipated that the greatest gains in health care in future will result from healthier life-styles and environments, actions that contribute to improving life-styles and environments can be said to support both the sustainable development initiative and the Veterans Affairs mandate. Accordingly, actions and expected results that follow this line of reasoning are outlined in the APF under objective 2.1.

Objective 2.2 deals more with cultural attributes related to quality of life objectives of sustainable development. In the context of the VA SDS, activities that support this objective contribute to both a sense of place and identity for individual clients and to the nation's inventory of social capital -- the intangible elements of a community that enhance productivity and make a society more than a collection of individuals meeting their basic needs.

These activities are intended to engage participants in a memorable experience that stimulates interest and awareness of Canada's military heritage and historical development as a nation: the legacy of the veteran community. Many activities are focused towards youth and education, enabled by the application of exceptional information technology and telecommunications products and services. This increased awareness should contribute to the social integration of clients by fostering intergenerational relations between the veteran community and the general population.

Furthermore, warfare represents the most unsustainable activity imaginable. The tremendous socio-economic and ecological costs are borne by current and successive generations. Commemorative ceremonies and activities remind the community of the price of warfare, of the honor due those who served in the past, and of the need to avoid future wars for the benefit of current and future generations.

Goal #3 To improve the delivery of benefits and services using clean products and advanced information technology in an ecologically efficient manner.

As outlined previously, the Portfolio is engaged in two basic activities: administration of economic, social, and health care programs, and the management of facilities and staff who support these programs. The third SDS goal is to ensure that programs are delivered to its clients as effectively and efficiently as possible. In this context, efficiency means delivering entitlements and services in a time-sensitive fashion.

The concept of environmental or “eco-efficiency” has been accepted as legitimate and is being actively implemented by focusing on replacing material with information and knowledge. In many cases, the search for environmental efficiency has led to economic efficiencies.

For example: the move to print benefit cheques on recycled paper and mail them in envelopes made from recycled paper was replaced by a move to direct deposits, thus reducing the need for paper consumption and improving program effectiveness by ensuring timely delivery of benefits.

As technology advances and knowledge and understanding expand, the challenge will be to learn how to use such progress to maximize the social, economic and environmental benefits while minimizing the costs. As the Portfolio improves its systems and processes and uses technology as a key enabler of quality service delivery, sustainable development considerations will be taken into account and will influence decision-making and day-to-day operations.

6.0 Sustainable Development Action Planning Framework

Action plans for achieving the objectives outlined in the previous section are summarized here. These tactical plans are presented as succinctly as possible by SDS goal.

SD Goal #1: Integrate sustainable development into decision-making processes and the organizational culture of the Veterans Affairs Portfolio.

Objective 1.1: Creating the management structures and procedures necessary to identify environmental impacts, assign resources, monitor and report progress.

ACTIONS	EXPECTED RESULTS
1.1.1. Prepare reports on an annual basis against SDS targets and recommend revisions as deemed necessary.	A. Include SD requirements in corporate planning documents. B. Report SD achievement annually through the new Fall Performance Report.
1.1.2. Create Green Teams at HO and all regional offices as a means to integrate SD into the VAC organizational and management structure.	A. HO Green Team established in Fall 1996. B. All regional offices to have active Green Teams by October 1, 1998.
1.1.3. Develop and promulgate a sustainable development policy, which includes an accountability framework for its implementation.	A. Policy approved by management. B. Communications strategy developed and implemented in fall of 1997. C. Program evaluation framework to be developed and implemented by October 1, 1999.
1.1.4. Develop a Portfolio environmental management system, based upon the ISO 14000 model.	A. Full time project manager hired in winter 1997. B. Baseline study, gap analysis and implementation plan developed by fall 1997. C. Development of departmental-level structure by fall 1998. D. Full implementation by summer 1999.
1.1.5. Develop an accountability framework for SD within VA and ensure that SD performance is evaluated as part of the regular human resources management process.	A. Accountability framework included in VA SD policy, approved by management in 1997. B. Review all first, second and third level management job descriptions and revise as required to ensure that appropriate SD accountabilities are reflected. C. Review and revise where necessary, the standard performance evaluation checklist / criteria to include SD considerations.
1.1.6. Consider SD implications of all policy and program decisions.	A. Developing and promulgating management procedures for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) concepts by October 1, 1998.

<p>1.1.7. Establish an SD audit and evaluation program and build internal capacity to ensure proactive management and due diligence.</p>	<p>A. Include “environmental risk” as an element in the annual Portfolio risk assessment and report to the DM. B. Include environmental aspects in the standard internal audit checklist. C. Internal audit staff to attend formal training on ISO 14000 based procedures. D. Undertake an internal audit to determine: the level to which staff adhere to SD policy and procedures, the extent to which the established environmental management framework demonstrates due diligence. E. Where appropriate, confirm that the environmental investigations associated with previous property transfers meet new and emerging standards.</p>
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Objective 1.2: Ensure responsible stewardship of the environment in business functions.

ACTIONS	EXPECTED RESULTS
<p>1.2.1. Amend procurement policies and procedures to favour environmentally responsible products and services.</p>	<p>A. Development and promulgation of a “green” procurement policy. B. Duplexing facilities and procedures to be standard on all printing apparatus.</p>
<p>1.2.2. Undertake a review of standard operating practices for contracted restoration and maintenance operations at cemeteries and memorials to determine environmental impacts and to develop mitigation strategies.</p>	<p>A. Implement mitigation strategies by April 1, 1999. B. Develop and publish managerial guidelines and procedures regarding contracted maintenance operations at cemeteries and memorials as part of the EMS Procedural Guide.</p>
<p>1.2.3. Include environmental quality assurance specifications in any lease conditions.</p>	<p>A. As a leaser, to ensure that all liabilities are addressed and that, within federal expectations, SD is integrated into facility operations. B. As a tenant, to require that leased facilities are capable of meeting the Department’s physical requirements for environmentally responsible management of waste, energy and water. C. Including landlord representatives on Green Teams wherever facilities are leased from PWGSC or privately.</p>
<p>1.2.4. Establish a battery drop at major facilities so as to encourage SD practices at home and in the office.</p>	<p>A. Reduce hazardous waste going to local land fill. B. Demonstrate Portfolio support of the growing SD work ethic.</p>
<p>1.2.5. Revise the parking policy at major facilities to favor car pooling and establish a coordination capacity.</p>	<p>A. Revise policy at HO by April 1, 1998 and identify other facilities where such a policy would be effective. B. Use electronic and promotional methods to coordinate car pooling.</p>
<p>1.2.6. Reduce the consumption of resources by recycling where possible.</p>	<p>A. Continue to develop innovative operational practices related to recycling material goods such as functional geriatric aids like wheelchairs and walkers.</p>
<p>1.2.7. Undertake an inventory of all administrative and vacated facilities and develop plans to mitigate any negative environmental impacts.</p>	<p>A. All properties to be included in EMS baseline, any follow-up inspections to be completed by October 1, 1998.</p>

SD Goal #2: To sustain and improve the health status and resulting quality of life and well-being for Portfolio clients and their families.

Objective 2.1: To sustain the independence and health of clients through active health promotion strategies and research and development programs.

ACTIONS	EXPECTED RESULTS
<p>2.1.1. Establish a systematic research program at departmental, national and international levels to contribute to knowledge about aging. As part of this program, engage in meaningful and relevant research and discussions with colleague agencies, provincial governments, academics and professional groups, to adapt VAC policies and programs to meet the evolving needs of clients.</p>	<p>A. Establish a departmental research program in fiscal year 1998-99. B. Develop and implement a VAC Gerontological Advisory Council to provide expert advice and guidance on the development or adjustment of policies and programs that meet the needs of the veteran community. C. Attend the UN International Year of Older Persons Conference in Montreal in 1999. D. Attend the International Association of Gerontology Congress in Vancouver in 2001. E. Increase interaction with the network of research and service providers in the field of gerontology. F. Ensure VAC staff maintain a high level of awareness of the latest developments in care for the elderly. G. Develop partnerships with Health Canada and with Health ministries of provincial governments.</p>
<p>2.1.2. Publish / promote research, advice & information on programs and service models to meet veterans' specific needs.</p>	<p>A. Present and publish papers resulting from those activities associated with the VAC research program and Gerontological Advisory Council. B. Conduct a Symposium on Aging and Independence issues during fiscal year 1998-99. C. Publish findings and results presented as a result of this or similar research and development activities.</p>
<p>2.1.3. Proactively use the concept of "health promotion" to improve the quality and longevity of veterans by involving clients in healthier lifestyles that foster independence through improved access and distribution of health improvement materials.</p>	<p>A. Establish, by October 1, 1997, dedicated organizational capacity to research "health promotion" as applied to the veteran population. B. Develop, by October 1, 1998, a Health Promotion framework and strategic departmental approach to advance this important initiative for Canadian veterans.</p>

Objective 2.2: To contribute to the cultural aspects of sustainable development through the conduct of commemorative activities that expand the awareness of the nation's military heritage and assist in defining the legacy of the veteran community.

ACTIONS	EXPECTED RESULTS
2.2.1. Seek to shape social values relating to global conflict towards more sustainable ones.	<p>A. Begin to document in electronic format, by April 1, 1998, archival information as a public resource for Canadians to access and consider in shaping their attitudes towards global and international conflict.</p> <p>B. Use electronic digital technologies to promote WWI & WWII veteran interviews, by April 1, 2000.</p> <p>C. Use electronic media to create virtual tours of monuments and cemeteries located in Canada and abroad, by October 1, 1999.</p>
2.2.2. Seize opportunities to enhance promotion through use of emerging information technologies.	<p>A. Using archival materials, create "virtual" products which simulate wartime conditions, as awareness medium.</p> <p>B. Make electronic awareness material available on the Internet.</p> <p>C. Promote Veterans' messages through the VAC Internet Web Site.</p> <p>D. Use of IT to streamline "family tree" enquiries.</p>
2.2.3. Continue to promote and support established awareness campaigns.	A. Continue ongoing programming.
2.2.4. Maintain cemeteries and memorials to a standard befitting the respect due to Canada's war dead.	<p>A. Restoration of Canadian Veterans' war cemeteries by April 1, 1998.</p> <p>B. Continuation of established maintenance standards.</p>
2.2.5. Continue to sponsor and coordinate Remembrance Day services nationally and internationally.	A. Continue ongoing programming.

SD Goal #3: To improve the delivery of benefits and services using clean products and advanced information technology in an ecologically efficient manner.

Objective 3.1: The Department will adopt modern and clean technologies in providing client services, as a means to eliminate waste, reduce energy consumption and improve service effectiveness and efficiency.

ACTIONS	EXPECTED RESULTS
3.1.1. Develop an electronic Sustainable Development bulletin board and other functions, on the departmental Intranet, including pages on awareness, best practices, awards and recognition.	A. SD bulletin board up and running by fall of 1998. B. Reduced use of paper through automation of guides and manuals.
3.1.2. Adjust the departmental financial tracking and reporting system such that SD activities can be recorded and financial saving attributable to SD can be reported as such.	A. Development and implementation of revisions to the VA chart of accounts by April 1, 1999.
3.1.3 Include life cycle assessment processes when specifying the new CSDN technology platform.	A. To complete the assessment before implementation to assure that hardware components of the platform are as environmentally benign as possible.
3.1.4 Development of an Electronic Document Management System under the BRP initiative.	A. The system will reduce the need for paper files, but training and awareness will be required to change the "hard copy" working culture. Promotion has started in fall 1997. B. Benchmark the average "turn around" time for applications and inquiries, by April 1, 1999, and seek reduction over time.
3.1.5 Enhancements to the Corporate Information System to digitize paper documents to reduce storage and handling requirements.	A. Less paper used in distribution, e.g. eliminate procedures to produce and distribute hard copy reports. B. Less office space and storage equipment required. C. Reduce energy required to distribute.
3.1.6. Use of appropriate, cleaner, technology and improved business processes to reduce "turnaround times" in responding to client correspondence, enquiries and applications.	A. Plus or minus 5% of published "General Standards for Portfolio Service" standard. B. Establishment of "rules-based" system to enhance the pensions approval and review process and to reduce the amount of paper used in these processes.
3.1.7 Seek to adapt emerging technologies as a means to reduce financial and environmental impacts of the Department.	A. Reduce costs and resource consumption by placing archival information on the Internet, as per 2.2.1., above. B. Use of emerging animation technology to create virtual visits to monuments and simulated battlefields, to reduce the need for client travel and to increase client and public exposure.

Objective 3.2: To provide VA staff sustainable development awareness training and ensure that appropriate staff are trained in the optimal use of technology so that they might develop innovations which will further reduce energy consumption, waste generation, and water usage.

ACTIONS	EXPECTED RESULTS
3.2.1. Establish incentives for staff to generate initiatives which reduce environmental impacts of operations.	A. By April 1, 1999, create an annual employee award for the staff member(s) whose suggestions modify current procedures or processes towards SD objectives.
3.2.2. Undertake a strategic review of Portfolio training programs to ensure that staff are adequately equipped for the shift to sustainable operations, particularly in the areas of facility management, procurement and policy development.	A. Once SDS is tabled and reporting elements of EMS are defined, undertake a review of training requirements. B. Integrate SD training requirement into established departmental training program.
3.2.3. Ensure that staff are aware of SD expectations and their responsibilities.	A. Review the established framework of Portfolio communications instruments (including electronic) to determine opportunities for effective SD Messaging. B. Development of a regular "Green Corner" in the Portfolio monthly newsletter. C. Concentrated Messaging during Earth and Environment Week. D. Use of departmental IT to disseminate SD information.

7.0 Measurement, Analysis and Reporting Performance

VA understands that the art of performance measurement within government programs is emerging as a complex science that is necessary to validate government expenditure and restore public confidence. The Department is involved in the TBS-led Government Performance Indicator project and fully intends to integrate its ongoing SD monitoring with business line planning and reporting processes.

This new reporting requirement will necessitate an enhanced data collection, research and analysis support capacity. For example, achievements against targets set within the EMS will be reported centrally and integrated in the annual environmental report to executive. This report will also include progress reporting on the SD action plan and an explanation of results achieved in performance measurement areas. The environmental report may eventually become a Portfolio publication, much the same as many industry Annual Environmental Reports.

Expenditures for paper purchases will be tracked through a new set of resource codes established within the departmental chart of accounts. These expenditures shall be managed through the regular business planning process and reported annually in the departmental Report on Plans and Priorities.

VA believes that success of the overall program framework can best be measured through a relatively modest performance measurement strategy at this time. Specifics of an adequate performance management framework include defining goals and objectives, devising operational action plans, tracking and measuring performance and communicating results. As regards commitment and accountability, the Portfolio Sustainable Development Policy, included as Appendix A in this report, addresses these elements to a significant degree.

As work progresses at the government-wide level to develop effective performance measurement strategies and indicators, this aspect of strategic management will be refined and adjusted in the SDS in the spirit of continuous improvement. For the interim, the objective was seen as creating indicators that are clear and meaningful to VA clients and other stakeholders. The Department's approach to measurement is to use three simple indicators of success at this juncture of development, as listed below:

1. Average age at which veterans require full-time institutional care.
2. Percentage of expenditures on environmentally responsible products.
3. EMS indicators

1. Average age at which veterans require full-time institutional care

Fundamental to VA programming is the notion of quality of life. The quality of life for all seniors is deeply rooted in their degree of independence and self-sufficiency.

Current geriatric science has established that active, happy and emotionally well adjusted seniors tend to live fuller and longer lives than those who are isolated and sedentary. Therefore, the Department has devoted substantial resources to promoting active, healthy and independent living for clients. A measure of success as relates to these objectives involves a comparison of the average age of institutionalization between VA clients and the general Canadian population.

2. Percentage of expenditures on environmentally responsible products

Given that the mandate and mission of the Department is not expected to change in the near- to mid-term, no dramatic changes in the nature of procurement are forecast. The Department will, however, make a concerted effort to increase the percentage of its purchases that are Enviro Choice or Eco Logo.

3. EMS indicators

As the Portfolio's reporting structures become more aligned with the recently developed business line structure and become more results-based in line with the objectives of the Improved Reporting to Parliament Project (IRPP), the performance measurement and reporting aspects of the SDS will also evolve. As the overall performance framework of the Portfolio is adapted to the business line structure, the requirements of the SDS will be integrated and addressed during the natural course of development and implementation.

The EMS represents the Portfolio response to improving environmental performance and practicing good environmental stewardship in relation to ongoing operational activities. As outlined in the EMS Action Plan in Appendix D, three objectives and associated action items have been developed. These objectives have been established to enhance environmental capacity and to provide reasonable goals against which to gauge performance in the initial stages of EMS development. The action items that work towards fulfilling these objectives feature a number of quantifiable expected results, such as the following:

- ▶ rates of compliance in contract and purchasing decisions related to SD;
- ▶ waste reduction targets;
- ▶ compliance rates with provisions of the *Alternate Fuels Act*; and

- ▶ compliance rates with job description environmental responsibilities.

As the system development process progresses towards full implementation of the EMS, other applicable performance indicators will be developed where practical and feasible. As best practices from other departments are identified and shared, and as internal development efforts progress, future indicators will be incorporated in the performance management process as part of the continuous improvement theme of the SDS.

Appendix A Veterans Affairs Sustainable Development Policy

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1. Introduction

Sustainable development is a broad concept that influences the mandates of all federal government departments. The concept includes environmental, social and economic aspects that will be defined and integrated within the context of each department's mandate. This concept has become a key goal of public policy within Canada and throughout the world. The Government of Canada recognizes that sustainable development should be an integral part of the way government defines its business and makes its decisions.

To facilitate this process of integration, the *Auditor General Act* was amended in 1995 to establish a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development within the Office of the Auditor General. The amendment also requires each federal government department to develop a sustainable development strategy to be tabled in Parliament by December 1997. These strategies are then to be updated at least every three years, with annual reporting on environmental performance to be included as part of the departmental performance reporting process.

These strategies will provide an outline or blueprint of the Department's goals and action plans for the integration of sustainable development into its planning, policies, programs, activities and operations. They will also provide a framework to guide the integration of sustainable development into the working of the federal government while also serving as benchmarks against which the progress of this initiative on a government-wide basis can be measured and evaluated.

In April of 1995, the government released a policy that commits federal organizations to address a number of specific issues in these strategies. The primary requirement of this policy on Greening of Government Operations is the development and implementation of environmental management systems and action plans. Environmental Management Systems (EMS) will incorporate best practices and compliance management in ensuring that the Department's environmental stewardship responsibilities are integrated into day-to-day activities and operations. The EMS will also provide the vehicle on which the Department's progress towards sustainable development objectives can be reported and communicated.

1.1 Definitions

Sustainable Development - "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs.

The core concepts of sustainable development are centred around incorporating the integration of economic and social development with environmental protection in planning and decision-making processes. The primary objectives of the sustainable development concept are to sustain natural resources, to protect the health of Canadians and ecosystems, to meet international obligations and to improve quality of life and well-being.

Sustainable Development Strategy - an outline or blueprint of the Department's goals and action plans for integrating sustainable development concepts and objectives into planning processes, policies, programs and operations.

Environmental Management System - the framework for monitoring, reporting and improving the Department's environmental performance. The system will ensure that the Department's environmental mandate and stewardship responsibilities are incorporated into day-to-day activities and operations.

Environmental Stewardship - applying "best management practices" in areas such as waste management, procurement, natural resource conservation and day-to-day human resource management.

2. Policy Statement

Veterans Affairs Canada will integrate sustainable development concepts, principles and objectives with the Portfolio's policies, programs, operations and decision-making processes.

2.1 Sustainable Development Concepts

Three core concepts serve as important guides for public policy concerning sustainable development. These concepts are as follows:

- To be sustainable, development must recognize that quality of life and well-being are determined not only by economic welfare but also by factors such as the state of people's health, their level of education, cultural diversity, environmental quality and the beauty of nature. These factors all contribute to sustainable development, as does economic growth that provides the wealth to improve our well-being.

- The multi-faceted nature of sustainable development necessitates an integrated approach to planning and decision making to ensure progress in all three of the dimensions of sustainable development -- social, economic and environmental. The state of the environment influences the health and economic prospects of Canadians, just as a healthy economy provides jobs and incomes that stimulate social development and ensures a healthy environment.
- Sustainable development also includes a commitment to equity in that there is a need not only to create wealth and conserve the environment, but to ensure their fair distribution. The legacy of future generations in terms of natural heritage, economic opportunities and health determinants is a particular concern of many Canadians. One of the keys to making sustainable development operational lies in this inter-generational aspect of the concept.

2.2 Sustainable Development Principles

In committing to this policy, Veterans Affairs will strive to adhere to the following principles:

- Meet or exceed the letter and spirit of applicable environmental laws.
- Prevent rather than capture and treat pollution.
- Use the best available technology for pollution reduction where feasible.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to foster sustainable development.
- Understand the economic, social and environmental dimensions of decision making and balance all three in consideration of departmental and governmental objectives.
- Promote awareness, acceptance and integration of this policy among VAC employees, clients and stakeholders in those geographic areas where Veterans Affairs is a major employer, or in those buildings where it is a major tenant. Veterans Affairs will also aspire to provide leadership, coordination and assistance to other tenants, employers, organizations and government departments in protecting and sustaining the environment.

2.3 Sustainable Development Objectives

The following objectives are taken from "The Guide to Green Government." These objectives are intended to serve as a common starting point from which individual departments can build and expand to include a fuller range of economic, environmental and social considerations in the developing their own strategies.

- Sustaining Our Natural Resources -- Sustainable Jobs, Communities and Industries
- Protecting the Health of Canadians and of Ecosystems
- Meeting Our International Obligations
- Promoting Equity
- Improving Our Quality of Life and Well-being

3. Purpose and Scope

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support a management framework that facilitates the convergence of the Portfolio's economic, social and environmental considerations. This framework will facilitate the integration of sustainable development into the way the Portfolio defines its business and makes its decisions.

3.2 Scope

This policy applies to all VAC management and staff and encompasses all Portfolio activities in terms of integrating sustainable development into policy, programs, planning processes and operations. This process of integration will require the definition and approval of specific sustainable goals and objectives in the economic and social aspects of development as well as in the environmental protection dimension of sustainable development. These goals and objectives will be supported by departmental action plans designed to achieve those goals in all three areas of sustainable development.

Specific operational environmental policies and procedures will be dealt with in the VAC Environmental Management System Policy and Procedural Guide.

4. Policy Requirements

- The integration of social, economic and environmental goals into all activities and decision making throughout all levels of management and staff;
- the adoption of preventive environmental care as the foundation of sustainable

development through the design and implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS). More detail will be provided on this policy requirement in the EMS Procedural Guide now being developed;

- measures and mechanisms that will promote awareness of sustainable development concepts and principles and that will foster an organizational culture that recognizes and supports environmental policy, practices, systems and procedures;
- the establishment of an appropriate environmental management framework to provide planning, implementation and monitoring for environmental stewardship and sustainable development;
- appropriate training programs to ensure that management and staff can effectively integrate sustainable development and environmental stewardship practices in all their responsibilities and work activities; and
- public reporting on an annual basis on progress towards environmental goals and objectives and updating of the Portfolio Sustainable Development Strategy based on a three-year cycle.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 The Minister, Veterans Affairs, is responsible for:

- reporting to Parliament on the Veterans Affairs Portfolio;
- tabling a sustainable development strategy in the House by December 15, 1997; and
- providing updates to these strategies every three years.

5.2 The Deputy Minister of Veterans Affairs and the Chairperson of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board are responsible for:

holding ultimate authority and responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

5.3 The Departmental Executive Board is responsible for:

- approving the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) and recommending its presentation to the Minister for tabling in the House;
- ensuring the Sustainable Development policy is implemented throughout the Portfolio and that resources are assigned to implement this policy;
- approving action plans and annual progress reports;
- receiving and reviewing reports on the Portfolio's overall environmental performance and providing guidance on required adjustments to the Environmental Management System; and
- ensuring that communications strategies are in place to effectively communicate sustainable development and environmental stewardship initiatives to managers, employees and stakeholders.

5.4 The Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services is responsible for:

a) assuming the role and associated responsibilities of Chief Environmental Officer for the Portfolio, and as such:

- is accountable for overall environmental performance of the Portfolio;
- will provide a leadership role to ensure the development of an effective Environmental Management System for dealing with environmental aspects of departmental policy, programs and legislation;

- ensuring the conduct of periodic environmental audits and evaluations to verify compliance with environmental laws and regulations and good environmental management practices and assess the performance of the Portfolio's environmental program;
- ensuring that adequate processes and mechanisms are in place to enable the financial system to track and report environmental expenditures; and
- assisting in the design and implementation of an environmental awareness and training program that will provide a framework for helping staff understand what sustainability means and how their efforts can contribute to improved environmental performance.

5.4.1 The Director Management Support Services is responsible for:

- providing a leadership role to ensure the development of an effective Environmental Management System (EMS) for dealing with the environmental impacts of the Portfolio's physical operations;
- providing support and guidance to the Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC);
- assisting in the preparation of the Portfolio Sustainable Development Strategy; and
- developing and operating a compliance assurance program.

5.5 The Director General Corporate Planning is responsible for:

- developing and updating the Sustainable Development strategy; and
- recommending the approval of the Portfolio Sustainable Development Strategy to the Departmental Executive Board.

5.6 The Director General Communications is responsible for:

- ensuring the development and implementation of an effective communications strategy to promulgate the policy and related responsibilities; and
- assisting in enhancing the level of awareness of sustainable development and environmental management to departmental management and staff.

5.7 The Senior Counsel Legal Services is responsible for:

- a) determining degree of legal liability of the Department in areas of environmental management such as vacant property management, departmental properties or facilities leased to third parties, departmental properties and facilities subject to transfer agreements, and client mortgages and properties released from the custody of the Department;
- b) identifying legislative or regulatory changes that impact environmental management in the Department; and
- c) ensuring compliance with all applicable legal requirements.

5.8 Responsibility Centre Managers are responsible for:

- implementing environmental policy within their respective units;
- ensuring that management systems are in place for environmental compliance, and reporting systems are established for any instance of non-compliance;
- maintaining records pertaining to environmental matters and making them available when requested by persons carrying out environmental audits or reporting on environmental stewardship;
- providing input to departmental planning for sustainable development and environmental stewardship; and
- supporting employees' efforts in working towards sustainable development environmental stewardship and providing access to departmental training and awareness programs.

5.9 VAC employees at all levels are responsible for:

Within the scope of their responsibilities, all Veterans Affairs employees will be required to integrate sustainable development principles and environmental stewardship best practices into operational, financial, safety, health and other relevant concerns in their job duties and decision-making processes.

Staff are also encouraged to identify improvements and innovations that contribute towards improved environmental performance.

6. Monitoring

This policy will be subject to regular departmental monitoring through the Portfolio's Environmental Management System administered by Management Support Services as well as regularly scheduled environmental internal audits and program evaluations.

7. Authority and References

This policy was approved by the Departmental Executive Board effective November 6 1997, and is based on the following authorities:

- Bill C-83, which amended the *Auditor General Act* in December 1995 to require all departments of government to prepare and submit to Parliament by December 1997 a Sustainable Development Strategy;
- Code of Environmental Stewardship for the Government of Canada, released in 1992, which states the Government of Canada's commitment to incorporating the principles of sustainable development in all aspects of its operations and activities;
- federal policy on Greening of Government Operations, released in April 1995, which commits federal organizations to address a number of specific issues in their Sustainable Development Strategies;
- A Guide to Green Government, released in 1995, which contains a commitment to sustainable development signed by the Prime Minister and all Cabinet Ministers.

For Internet access to these and other environmental documents and initiatives, please refer to the Environment Canada Home Page on the Internet at:
<http://www.ec.gc.ca/envhome.html/>

Other References

- Treasury Board policy relating to personal accountability (TB Real Property, Material and Risk Management: Risk Management Chapter 2-2)
- VAC Environmental Management Systems Procedural Guide (to be developed);
- ISO 14000 series on Environmental Management systems

8. Inquiries

Please direct all inquiries about the implementation or application of this policy to:

ADM, Corporate Services Branch
Veterans Affairs Canada
P.O. Box 7700
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 8M9

Telephone: (902-566-8047)

Appendix B Portfolio Profile

The following profile is organized around the key organizational capabilities of resources and organizational variables. This discussion adds detail and background to section 2 of the SDS.

1. Resources

Human Resources

The business and service lines concerned with provision of direct benefits and services include providing and maintaining client information, adjudicating client eligibility and entitlement, providing comprehensive case management services, assessing risk, determining needs, providing and implementing action plans and following up and monitoring client service. VA staff also provide advocacy services, medical examinations, benefit administration and payment, client redress services, trust management and property contract management.

The staff engaged in service delivery at Ste. Anne's Hospital possess skills in the multi-faceted areas of hospital services and administration devoted to caring for the needs of approximately 600 clients.

In the Commemoration service line, staff ensure the war dead are appropriately commemorated, and that the memory of their achievements and sacrifices is kept alive for all Canadians.

The Corporate Administration business line has professional staff specialists in all corporate functions such as finance, human resources, information technology, communications, planning, and corporate review.

The management and staff of the Veterans Review and Appeal Board (VRAB) business line provide clients with full opportunity to review and appeal hearings in the disability pension and War Veterans Allowance adjudicative process.

Information Technology Resources

Veterans Affairs uses information technology as a key enabler of ongoing operations and service delivery.

The location of the Head Office function in Charlottetown P.E.I. has necessitated the implementation of an extensive technology and telecommunications network to conduct day-to-day business while situated outside the Ottawa-Hull region.

For example, the Portfolio makes extensive use of videoconference facilities in both the delivery of specialized client services such as advocacy and redress services, and in conducting the corporate functions that require both intra and interdepartmental participation.

Besides the mainframe legacy systems that currently serve mainly client benefits and services requirements, the Portfolio has installed and implemented Local Area Networks (LANS) in all VA locations in Canada. This infrastructure is the first step in a progression to a client/server architecture toward which industry and government are moving and which is consistent with the Treasury Board *Blueprint for Renewing Government Services Using Information Technology*.

Other components of the infrastructure include bilingual network servers, a national Remote Help Desk, LAN-based electronic mail and a Wide Area Network (WAN) connection with another federal agency (ACOA).

Recent developments related to the use of the Internet and World Wide Web pages have led to the Portfolio being selected as one of the Government of Canada's top ten web sites on the Internet. Other exceptional technologies are being explored and assessed for future Portfolio use in delivering innovative services to an expanding audience of clients and stakeholders, such as presenting commemorative archival data like the *Books of Remembrance* and veteran video interviews through this media.

To apply the hardware and telecommunications resources the Portfolio has invested in, staff must necessarily be familiar with a wide array of software applications, ranging from the generic products such as WordPerfect, Lotus and GroupWise applications to the more specialized products such as data retrieval, statistical, and case management programs and packages.

As is apparent, the geographical location and the nature of the business have yielded a considerable experience curve as relates to VA human resources in terms of the technology and skills required in the information age and knowledge-based economy. These skills combined with the growing capacity of information technology have resulted in a flexible and adaptable management and staff well positioned for the challenges of future work and transition.

Core Competencies

The core competencies, or unique skills of Veterans Affairs reside in the people who make up the organization.

While the previous discussion on human and information technology resources highlights the capacity and expertise of the people who make up the Portfolio, it is their dedication and compassion for the clients they serve that sets the organization apart.

Part of this dedication to service is reflected in the ability of management and staff to adapt and evolve with the changing needs and requirements of the veteran population. This evolution is also evident in terms of adapting to changing organizational structure, technology, government priorities and strategic initiatives. Through all of this, staff have continued to deliver first rate service in a professional and dedicated manner. It is this ability to integrate change in working systems, structures and processes in order to continue to deliver quality services that address the changing needs of the client population that constitutes the strongest core competency of the overall organization.

2. Organization

Structure

The physical VA organizational structure is based on three levels of administrative offices: Head Office (HO), Regional Office (RO) and District Office (DO); and three modes of client service: mail, telephone and face-to-face.

The Veterans Services Branch, under the ADM Veterans Services, is responsible for the delivery of the direct client benefits and services.

The activity features a large HO contingent (mainly mail and telephone services in the Pensions and Allowances benefits category), as well as five ROs with approximately thirty-two DO sites (mainly telephone and face-to-face services in the Health Care services category). Each RO operates as an autonomous division, reporting to the ADM; each RO features corporate services functional specialists reporting to the Regional Director General and taking functional guidance from HO corporate services management.

Corporate Services Branch, under the ADM Corporate Services, is responsible for the Corporate Administration business line, ensuring that service delivery management and staff are supported by an effective and efficient corporate services backbone.

The Commemoration service line, located at HO, is directly under the Director General Commemoration, who reports to the ADM Veterans Services Branch.

The VRAB business line, also centred at HO, is the responsibility of the Chairperson, VRAB, who reports to Parliament through the Minister of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Systems

The various DO, RO, and HO sites are connected by a LAN/WAN network of telecommunications, hardware and software platforms that provide the necessary connectivity and communications required to deliver services on a national basis. Both mainframe and microcomputer information and benefit delivery systems are utilized in this delivery of service, with the pending migration of the Portfolio to a Client Service Delivery Network (CSDN) basis of operations scheduled to be implemented before the turn of the century.

The design and implementation of the EMS are currently underway, with a scheduled full implementation date of March 31, 1999.

The EMS will provide an organizing framework that will support the effective direction of the Portfolio's operational environmental activities as both internal and external factors change and evolve.

Culture

The organizational culture of VA has been described in the core competencies discussed above. Some of the primary cultural beliefs and expectations of the Portfolio revolve around the concept of providing client-centred quality service, of applying cutting-edge technologies and systems to enable this delivery, and of working in an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork to ensure effective, efficient and economical service delivery.

An intrinsic goal of the strategy is to influence and change organizational culture through improving decision making at the management and operational levels. The approval of a Portfolio Sustainable Development Policy with accompanying guidelines, the implementation of an EMS with an associated Procedures Manual, and the active involvement of VA staff in related initiatives and projects at the community level are pertinent examples of how this improvement can be achieved.

Appendix C Communications Plan

Communications Plan Veterans Affairs Sustainable Development Strategy

Business Goal(s)

To meet the overall federal objectives of sustainable development, Veterans Affairs has adopted three strategic medium to long-term goals related to social, economic and environmental considerations.

- ▶ To integrate sustainable development into the decision-making processes and the organizational culture of the Portfolio.
- ▶ To sustain and improve the health status and resulting quality of life and well-being for Portfolio clients and their families.
- ▶ To improve the delivery of benefits and services using clean products and advanced information technology in an ecologically efficient manner.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Public Environment

The federal government announced its Green Plan initiative in 1990, and in 1995, named a Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development with authority for federal activities in these areas. The initiative requires all federal agencies and departments to table their Strategy on Sustainable Development by December 15, 1997.

Therefore, a Portfolio policy and strategic plan have been developed to ensure the integration of sustainable development concepts within the Portfolio, and an Environmental Stewardship Committee, with representation from across the Portfolio, has been formed. In addition, an Environmental Management System (EMS) will be developed and implemented to meet the requirements of the overall federal government objectives.

The Environmental Stewardship Committee is planning and organizing activities to create awareness of environmental issues and concerns throughout the Portfolio.

Opportunities to promote sustainable development through partnerships with other federal departments, provincial and municipal governments and the private sector will also be explored to identify areas of common concern and develop strategies for implementing sustainable development concepts. Although Veterans Affairs is committed to sustainable development concepts, as a social policy Portfolio, there is less scope to develop projects like those found in the economic and natural resource sector departments.

Target Audiences

Commissioner of the Environment & Sustainable Development
Parliamentarians
All Portfolio employees
All levels of government
Veterans/Clients
General public

Communications Objectives

- ▶ To promote the integration of sustainable development (SD) concepts, principles and objectives into the Portfolio's policies, programs, operations and decision-making.
- ▶ To create an awareness of the Federal Greening of Government among employees and encourage their support in adopting the concepts.

Messages

- ▶ VAC has developed strategies to create an awareness of sustainable development within the organization and to integrate sustainable development into its operations.
- ▶ Government must provide leadership in this area, so departmental strategies are critical to the advancement of federal sustainable development.

Strategic Considerations

The principal audience for this strategy is the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. The report will be produced to the specifications outlined in *A Guide to Green Government*, and tabled in the House of Commons before the December 15th deadline.

The strategy will be supported through the development of the EMS and the work of the Portfolio's Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC), which was mentioned earlier. (For more details on these activities, see Appendix "D" of the sustainable development strategy.) Therefore, the components of this communications plan will focus more on providing employees with a well-rounded perspective on sustainable development, including the social and economic components. Since they are complex issues, the action items will focus on demonstrating sustainable development rather than explaining it.

Communications Action Plan

Action Item	Objective	Responsibility	Time frame
Publish the Veterans Affairs Strategy for Sustainable Development	to share our strategy with the Commissioner of the Environment and SD & other departments	Corporate Planning	last week of November
Prepare a briefing note for the Minister	to answer any questions that may arise when the strategy is tabled	Corporate Planning	by Nov. 21
Prepare questions & answers on Veterans Affairs strategy	to be prepared to respond to any enquiries	Corporate Planning & Communications	by Nov. 21
Put our strategy on an electronic medium	to share info with employees using suitable technology	Corporate Planning & IT or Communications	ongoing
Publish health promotional material for inclusion in VAC's Health Care web site	to help maintain the quality of life of our veteran clients in an environmentally sustainable way	Health Promotion Directorate	ongoing
Publish Portfolio sustainable development involvement in <i>Carillon</i>	to promote all aspects of sustainable development in Veterans Affairs	ESC, Corporate Planning & Communications	ongoing
Continue commemorative / remembrance activities on the VA web site	to help maintain the quality of life of veterans in an environmentally sustainable way	Commemoration & Communications	ongoing
Participate in Portfolio Environment Week activities	to promote all aspects of sustainable development	MSS & Corporate Planning	annually in June

Appendix D EMS Action Plan

Veterans Affairs Canada
 Environmental Management System Action Plan
 April 1997 - April 2000

<i>EMS Objectives</i>	<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Targets / Deliverables</i>
1. Develop Environmental Management System	1. Develop and Finalize Environmental Stewardship Committee Terms of Reference.	1. Obtain approval of ESC Committee's terms of reference by winter 98. 2. Complete framework of Green Teams and EMS coordinators by spring 98. 3. Action regular schedule of telemeetings and annual workshops by fall 97.
	2. Develop audits and checklists and an implementation schedule.	1. Develop best practices checklists and use locally by spring 98. 2. Include environmental audit criteria in standard internal audit protocol by fall 98. 3. Include environment in annual departmental risk assessment by spring 98. 4. Complete one inspection at each facility by winter 99. 5. Complete EMS system audit in spring 00.
	3. Create the EMS Procedural Guide and ensure adequate records management of EMS documentation	1. Include procedural guidance on: management commitment, EMS policy, accountability framework, green procurement, monitoring, inspection, auditing, reporting, management review, water, energy and waste reduction, reward and recognition.
	4. Obtain approval of and then promote the Senior Management Environmental Commitment.	1. Appoint a senior manager as Corporate Environmental Officer to oversee the departmental environment programme in 97/98. 2. Include the commitment in Carillon in 97/98. 3. Use the "commitment" in an SD awareness campaign prior to Environment Week 98. 4. Include as page in EMS Intranet site.

EMS Objectives	Action Items	Targets / Deliverables
	5. Establish the VAC Environmental Network of Green Teams and Environmental Coordinators.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a list of duties/functions undertaken by Green Team Chairs and Environmental Coordinators. 2. Complete network by appointment of members by spring 98. 3. Develop a contact list of environmental representative for each facility.
	6. Continue membership and support to EMS and the Awareness and Training Working Group to access interdepartmental EMS expertise and best practices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance at FCEMS, Regional EMS and Provincial Council meetings. 2. Membership on at least one FCEMS sub-committee or working group. 3. Attendance at Atlantic Regional EMS and PEI federal regional EMS committees.
	7. Create artwork and slogan for VAC Environmental Programme to establish it as permanent programming entity within the Department and to be used as a recognizable symbol to associate with on-going promotion and awareness raising.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain artwork approval by spring 98. 2. Use of artwork in senior management "commitment" campaign.
	8. Undertake a review of the department's EA procedures and performance to ensure compliance to CEAA and to promote EA as a broadly applied, legitimate decision-making tool.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Include review plan by the end of 00. 2. Appoint review manager by end of 00. 3. Ensure action of review findings by end 98/99.
	9. Establish mechanisms to measure more accurately VAC environmental impacts of operations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Install water and electrical meters where feasible by 99/00. 2. Undertake a detailed baseline survey to more accurately establish use of natural resources and other on-going environmental impacts by 98/99.

EMS Objectives	Action Items	Targets / Deliverables
	10. Publish an annual environmental report or bulletin.	1. Publish first annual public report on environmental programme performance by fall 98. 2. Present first biannual bulletin to executive for management review by winter 98.
	11. Develop and complete EMS Action Plan and forward to Chief Environmental Officer for review.	1. Forward detailed EMS implementation action plan to CEO by fall 97. 2. Complete resourcing for inclusion into 98/99 business plan.
	12. Develop an environmental management resource centre.	1. Collect thirty five best practices from other departments and levels of government. 2. Create an EMS page on the VAC Intranet and add twelve new best practices per year.
2. Reduce Environmental Impacts	1. Establish working partnerships with facility landlords and seek to reduce the environmental impacts of these facilities over time.	1. Negotiate working agreements with landlords and property managers: - 50% of facilities by 98/99 - 100% of facilities by 99/00
	2. Include an SD clause in all contracts, including packaging reduction where appropriate.	1. Develop and implement packaging clause in 98/99. 2. Implement two awareness campaigns to reduce packaging by 99/00.
	3. Develop and promulgate a policy on Green Procurement and then monitor performance. Provide training as appropriate.	1. Baseline procurement of office supplies by 98/99. 2. Implement Green Procurement policy for office supplies by 99/00. 3. Establish target for "green" expenditures by 98/99. 4. Deliver one awareness green procurement campaign per year for Acquisition Card holders.
	4. Seek to reduce waste through a progressive waste reduction strategy.	1. Confirm departmental baseline in 97/98. 2. Implement paper reduction strategy in 97/98. 3. Eliminate incineration of classified waste by 99/00. 4. Implement 100% recycled paper procurement policy by 99/00. 5. Commit to reducing solid waste generation by 5.6% of the previous year's total volume for each of the next three years, using 1996-97 as the baseline year.

EMS Objectives	Action Items	Targets / Deliverables
	5. Implement best management practices to reduce water usage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish more effective measures to quantify water consumption. 2. Post at least four water conservation best practices on EMS intranet web page by 99/00. 3. Work with PWGSC to help reduce water usage by 15% over the next three years, in federally owned buildings where VAC is a 20% or greater tenant.
	6. Implement best management practices to reduce energy usage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish more effective measures to quantify energy consumption. 2. Post at least four energy conservation best practices on EMS Intranet web page by 99/00. 3. Work with PWGSC to help reduce energy consumption by 15% over the next three years, in federally owned buildings where VAC is a 20% or greater tenant.
	7. Convert motor vehicle fleet to alternate fuels.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet the letter and spirit of the Alternate Fuels Act. 2. Undertake three alternate fuels conversion projects by 99/00 and promote them as “best practices”.
3. Enhance the Departmental Environmental Commitment	1. With a Human Resources Division partner on the ESC, develop a long term strategy to achieve integration of SD into the corporate culture.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negotiate a working partnership arrangement by 97/98. 2. Undertake a review of each type of job description and include appropriate environmental responsibilities by 98/99. 3. Establish a partnership agreement with the Learning Centre to ensure proper training materials are available there for staff.
	2. With a Communication Division partner on the ESC, develop a long term strategy for sustained environmental messaging both inside and outside of the Department.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negotiate a working partnership arrangement by 97/98.

EMS Objectives	Action Items	Targets / Deliverables
	3. With an Information Technology Division partner on ESC, develop a long term strategy which will best use the corporate information distribution network to achieve our environmental management objectives.	1. Negotiate a working partnership arrangement by 97/98.
	4. Review existing policies and create new policies to support environmentally sound work practices and a higher degree of sensitivity to the environment.	1. Review the parking policy at all facilities to ensure that it encourages environmentally responsible use of private motor vehicles. 2. Develop a “scent free” policy for implementation as appropriate in the various regional and district offices.
	5. In the accordance with Federal commitments laid out in CEPA, VAC will act in cooperation with the governments of the provinces, and the private sector, to undertake joint initiatives and to share best practices and lessons learned.	1. Secure membership on one regional interdepartment committee. 2. Create one provincial / regional / private / public sector environmental committee of at least eight member by 98/99.