



Canadian Environmental  
Assessment Agency

Agence canadienne  
d'évaluation environnementale

**CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY**

# **Sustainable Development Strategy 2004-2006**



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**Canada** 

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of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency:

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Published under the authority of the  
Minister of the Environment  
Ottawa, 2003

Catalogue NO, En106-40/2004E-HTML  
ISBN 0-662-35521-0

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## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

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Our social and economic well being – present and future – is directly related to how we treat the environment. Meeting today's needs while safeguarding the future for our grandchildren is one of the Government of Canada's key priorities.

The creation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in 1995 was a clear demonstration of Canada's commitment to sustainable development.

Environmental assessment enables us to better integrate Canada's environmental goals with its economic, social and cultural values. By carefully considering the environmental effects of proposed projects, Canadians can make informed decisions that protect the environment and, at the same time, promote economic development and social equity.

The Agency's 2004-2006 sustainable development strategy reflects the vision of an increasingly efficient and effective federal environmental assessment process to support Canada's role as a world leader in sustainable development.

The October 30, 2003 proclamation of a renewed *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* advanced this vision. It established a more predictable, consistent and timely process. The renewed Act, through strengthening opportunities for the public to participate, goes a long way toward improving the quality of environmental assessment in Canada.

The sustainable development strategy and the renewed Act will, I am confident, enable the Agency to continue to make a significant contribution to Canada's sustainable development objectives.

*David Anderson, P.C., M.P.*  
*Minister of the Environment*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1. Sustainable Development	
1.2. The Government of Canada's Sustainable Development Commitment and the Federal Sustainable Development Strategies	
<b>2. BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1. Role of Environmental Assessment in Sustainable Development	
2.2. Departmental Profile	
2.2.1. Role of the Agency	
2.2.2. Key Activities	
<b>3. ISSUE SCAN</b> .....	<b>7</b>
3.1. New and Existing Challenges	
3.1.1. Managing the Transition	
3.1.2. A Shared Responsibility	
3.1.3. Effectively Engaging Canadians	
3.1.4. Balancing Divergent Interests	
3.1.5. Gathering Strength	
3.1.6. Globalization and Canadian Competitiveness	
3.1.7. Self-assessment	
<b>4. THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY'S APPROACH TO ITS 2004-2006 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY</b> .....	<b>.11</b>
4.1. Addressing the Challenges	
4.2. Role of the Agency's Sustainable Development Strategy vis-à-vis Other Strategic and Reporting Documents	
4.3. Role of the Agency's Sustainable Development Strategy Within the Federal Government's Sustainable Development Commitments	

**5. THE 2004-2006 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK . . . . . 15**

5.1. Sustainable Development Vision

5.2. Goals

5.3. Objectives

5.4. Terminology and Logic Model Framework

5.5. Furthering Sustainable Development in the Federal Government

5.5.1. The Federal Environmental Assessment Coordinator

5.5.2. Mediation and Dispute Resolution

5.5.3. Model Class Screenings and Replacement Class Screenings

5.5.4. Coverage of the Act

5.5.5. Quality Assurance Program

5.5.6. Follow-up Repository

5.5.7. Registry Internet Site

5.5.8. Clarifying the Relationship Between Sustainable Development and Environmental Assessment

5.5.9. Strategic Environmental Assessment

5.5.10. Aboriginal Advisory Committee

5.5.11. Participant Funding

5.5.12. Research and Development Program

5.6. Furthering Sustainable Development Within the Agency

5.6.1. Greening Agency Operations

5.6.2. Recruitment, Retention and Learning

**6. ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT . . . . . 27**

6.1. Internal Monitoring and Accountability

6.2. Agency Reporting Documents

6.3. Performance Measurement for the Federal Environmental Assessment Process

**7. ANNEX . . . . . 29**

7.1. Consultations

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1. Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development is a complex one that has been described in many different ways by many different people. Internationally, perhaps the most well-known and accepted definition of sustainable development comes from the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report *Our Common Future*:

*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

This definition was, in fact, incorporated into the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* when it was established in 1995. The Act was the first piece of Canadian legislation to define sustainable development, and sustainable development remains the core principle behind all activities of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

Sustainable development recognizes that social, economic and environmental issues are interconnected and must be equally integrated into the decision-making process, both with regard to when they are considered and how they are balanced against each other. Sustainable decisions help Canadians to achieve a healthy

environment, a prosperous economy as well as a vibrant and just society for current and future generations.

### 1.2. The Government of Canada's Sustainable Development Commitment and the Federal Sustainable Development Strategies

International developments in the 1990s, particularly the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and the drafting of a broad action strategy - Agenda 21 - brought about significant developments in Canada to institutionalize sustainable development practices in the public sector.

An important step in implementing Canada's Agenda 21 commitments to sustainable development was the completion of the 1995 sustainable development policy document, *A Guide to Green Government*. This document clearly outlined the Government of Canada's commitment to the goal of sustainable development.

Also in 1995, Parliament passed amendments to the *Auditor General Act* that included the creation of a legal requirement for certain departments and agencies to prepare and table sustainable development strategies in Parliament every three years. The strategies are

intended to outline the objectives and plans of each department and agency to further sustainable development within its area of responsibility.

In total, 25 departments and agencies are required to table a sustainable development strategy. Four other organizations, including the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, table their sustainable development strategies on a voluntary basis.

Essentially, sustainable development strategies are a tool for departments to incorporate sustainable development considerations systematically in the development of their policies, programs, legislation and operations, both in the medium and long term. The first set of sustainable development strategies was released in December 1997, and the second set in 2001. These strategies have helped to provide federal departments and agencies with the means to work toward the goal of sustainable development. The release of the third set of sustainable development strategies for 2004-2006 ensures that this mechanism remains an important element in the federal government's - and the Agency's - approach to sustainable development.



## BACKGROUND

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### 2.1. Role of Environmental Assessment in Sustainable Development

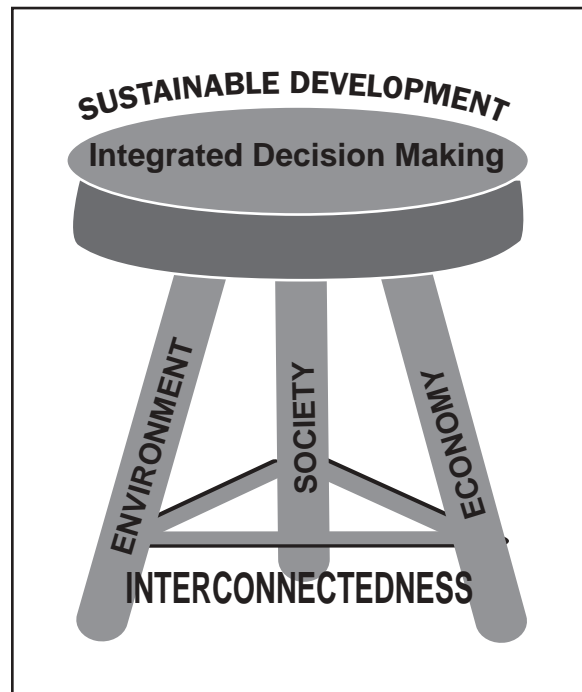
The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* requires federal departments and agencies to ensure that an environmental assessment of a proposed project is conducted if they are the proponent, provide funding or land, or issue certain licences, permits or other authorizations that allow the project to proceed.

The *1999 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals* (the Directive) complements the Act by requiring that federal departments and agencies undertake strategic environmental assessments of their policy, plan and program proposals. The Directive ensures that environmental factors are taken into account at the earliest appropriate stage of planning.

Sustainable development recognizes that the economy, society and the environment are interconnected. Sustainable development, therefore, requires balanced, integrated and sustainable decision

making that considers the potential environmental, social and economic effects equally. The relationship among the three factors has often been compared to a three-legged stool, whereby each of the factors must be present to have a stable sustainable development stool. This analogy is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 : Sustainable Development Stool**



BOX 1

The environmental assessment process creates a forum to bring various interested parties together to share their views, identify issues and help to design solutions. Critical information on environmental effects is identified and funnelled into the decision-making process. Environmental assessment fosters and enhances:

- more comprehensive project planning and design;
- environmental management of projects;
- inter-agency coordination and information exchange;
- accountability and decision making; and
- permitting and regulatory approval of projects.

Environmental assessment, at both the strategic and project levels, provides a systematic approach for identifying, predicting, evaluating and mitigating the potential environmental effects of proposed projects and policies before decisions are made. Moreover, it provides valuable information on alternative approaches. In so doing, environmental assessment is a highly effective tool to contribute toward the environmental component of integrated decisions in the interest of sustainable development. Using the stool analogy, environmental assessment supports the environmental "leg" of integrated decision making for sustainable development.

As with the rungs between the legs of a stool, the consideration of environmental factors in integrated decision making is interconnected with social and economic

factors. For example, the careful consideration of potential adverse environmental effects during the planning stages of a project or policy and the introduction of mitigation measures in response to the findings of an environmental assessment can also have a positive impact on economic development.

Environmental assessment can help proponents avoid costly clean-up requirements in the future, or provide sound, environmentally friendly alternative approaches that may be more cost-effective in the long run.

Moreover, the public participatory nature of the federal environmental assessment process provides an opportunity for Canadians to express their views and contribute to the decision-making process, thereby having a positive impact on the quality of life of Canadians.

## 2.2. Departmental Profile

### 2.2.1. Role of the Agency

Within the context of environmental assessment and sustainable development, the Agency's mission statement is:

*To provide Canadians with high-quality federal environmental assessments that contribute to informed decision making in support of sustainable development.*

BOX 2

### **The Agency as an Organization**

The Agency operates as an independent agency within the federal government. It is headed by a president who reports directly to the Minister of the Environment.

In its role as the administrator of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the Agency provides leadership and serves as a centre of expertise on environmental assessment. Every federal department and agency is bound by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and its regulations as well as those federal instruments related to environmental assessment listed in Box 3. As a result, Agency business touches on a significant portion of the activities of federal departments and agencies. Environmental assessment is a key tool to ensure that environmental factors are considered in decision making. Therefore, the Agency contributes directly to the overall goal of furthering sustainable development throughout the federal government.

### 2.2.2. Key Activities

The Agency's key activities include:

- administering the federal environmental assessment process established by the Act and its regulations;
- promoting the uniformity and cooperative nature of environmental assessment activities across Canada at all levels of government;
- promoting strategic environmental assessment at the federal level;
- providing administrative support to environmental assessment review panels;
- ensuring opportunities for public participation in the federal environmental assessment process;
- developing policy and regulations on environmental assessment;
- promoting and conducting research on environmental assessment matters; and
- promoting sound environmental assessment practices in a manner consistent with those established in the Act.

#### BOX 3

##### Mandate

Initially charged with the administration of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and its regulations in 1995, the Agency is also guided by several other instruments, including:

- the 1999 Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals (the Directive);
- the Canada-Wide Accord on Environmental Harmonization and bilateral agreements with provincial governments that set out mutually agreed upon arrangements for cooperative environmental assessments;
- international agreements containing environmental assessment provisions to which Canada is a signatory, the most notable being the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (ratified in May 1998); and
- an order-in-council designating the President of the Agency as the federal administrator of the environmental and social protection regimes set out in chapters 22 and 23 of the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement and the 1978 North Eastern Quebec Agreement.



## ISSUE SCAN

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When the 2001-2003 Sustainable Development Strategy was released, the Agency was in the midst of a review of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. The review identified operational areas of the Act that could be enhanced, and included extensive consultations with stakeholders from across Canada. The overall theme that emerged from these consultations was the need for a more efficient and effective federal environmental assessment process. Essentially, Canadians wanted better federal environmental assessment and were asking that it be done better.

The Agency's response to that request is addressed in the initiatives described in this 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy. These initiatives and the ensuing changes will alter the federal environmental assessment process and help to strengthen the Agency's ability to genuinely contribute to sustainable development within the federal government.

### 3.1. New and Existing Challenges

The Agency's ability to carry out its mission and therefore further sustainable development is based, in part, on its capacity to meet new and existing challenges and adapt to emerging trends.

The following are some of the challenges that have influenced the Agency's approach to its 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy.

#### 3.1.1. Managing the Transition

Since the release of the last Sustainable Development Strategy in January 2001, the Agency, on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, has completed the review of the first five years since the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* came into force, and the Act has been amended. Several additional commitments have been made within the Report of the Minister of the Environment on the Review of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* and the recent Government Response to the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development report entitled *Sustainable Development and Environmental Assessment: Beyond Bill C-9*<sup>1</sup>.

The renewed Act, along with the commitments outlined in the Minister's Report and the Government's Response will have a significant impact on the Agency. The Agency will use this opportunity to focus its resources, review its strategic direction, and strengthen its partnerships with federal government departments,

<sup>1</sup>Bill C-9, containing amendments to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, received royal assent on June 11, 2003 and was proclaimed on October 30, 2003. The Report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, entitled: *Sustainable Development and Environmental Assessment: Beyond Bill C-9* was released on June 5, 2003. The Government Response to this report was released on October 30, 2003.

agencies and other stakeholders. The Agency will continually monitor and measure its success in an effort to improve its performance.

Given these changes, the Agency will be undergoing a substantial transition to a stronger organization with greater roles and responsibilities. The successful management of this transition will help the Agency create a strong foundation for the implementation of its 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy and other strategic planning documents. Conversely, a strong sustainable development strategy, acting as a medium- to long-term strategic implementation document, will assist in the transition by providing the essential road map to success.

### **3.1.2. A Shared Responsibility**

Under the Constitution of Canada, responsibility for environmental management is an area of shared jurisdiction among various levels of government. To ensure minimal duplication and delay, the Agency works with its provincial counterparts to bring about greater cooperation in environmental assessment, and promote the consistent and predictable application of environmental assessment processes across Canada.

### **3.1.3. Effectively Engaging Canadians**

The Government of Canada firmly believes that public participation leads to better, more comprehensive and meaningful environmental assessment that will serve the interests of all Canadians. A continuing challenge for the Agency in this respect is to offer new and better measures to engage the Canadian public in environmental assessment, and ensure that the public's views and concerns are addressed within the context of the need for a timely and predictable process.

### **3.1.4. Balancing Divergent Interests**

Environmental assessment often serves as a forum for expressing views and concerns surrounding such sensitive issues as socio-economic development, environmental protection, Aboriginal interests, and federal-provincial-territorial relations. The complexity and profile of many projects undergoing assessment, particularly those subject to comprehensive study or assessment by review panel, are increasing. Many projects involve very different stakeholder interests. The challenge is to balance these diverging interests, or preferably, to find a win-win solution to the issue through such methods as mediation and interest-based negotiation.

### **3.1.5. Gathering Strength**

Aboriginal self-government is reshaping environmental assessment throughout Canada. Through comprehensive land claims and self-government agreements, new Aboriginal-based environmental assessment regimes are being established. The Agency is working with Aboriginal groups to develop tools to assist these communities in maintaining environmental integrity and achieving sustainable development, while respecting self-determination objectives.

### **3.1.6. Globalization and Canadian Competitiveness**

Within the global economy, countries must compete for foreign direct investment. Various factors, including project profitability, economic environment, proximity to customers and raw materials, construction costs, land and property rights, as well as political factors, play a primary role in influencing the investment decision of international firms. Although national environmental assessment regimes are not a primary factor in foreign direct decision making, environmental

assessment can affect the profitability of a project, usually by causing or contributing to project delays. The efficiency and effectiveness of an environmental assessment process, therefore, can influence foreign investment decisions. A more certain, timely and predictable environmental assessment process will also support Canada's competitiveness on the world stage<sup>2</sup>.

### **3.1.7. Self-assessment**

Environmental assessment in the Government of Canada is based on the principle of self-assessment. This means that if a screening or comprehensive study is required, the federal authority responsible for making a decision on a proposed project is also responsible for ensuring that the environmental assessment is carried out.

The Agency's work and the impact of environmental assessment are often interwoven with the sustainable development successes of other government departments. One challenge of self-assessment is that this arrangement makes it difficult to measure the success of the Agency's efforts to promote environmental assessment. The new tools provided by Bill C-9 and integrated into our strategy, including requirements for follow-up programs, the Quality Assurance Program and the Registry Internet site, will provide the means to address this challenge.

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<sup>2</sup>For a discussion on this, see the Executive Summary of the report: *A Comparative Analysis of Impacts on Competitiveness of Environmental Assessment Requirements*, available on the Agency's Internet Web site at [http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/0012/0004/summary\\_e.htm](http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/0012/0004/summary_e.htm)





## **THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY'S APPROACH TO ITS 2004-2006 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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### **4.1. Addressing the Challenges**

The renewed *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the Report of the Minister of the Environment on the Review of the Act, and the Government's Response to the Report of the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainability address many of the challenges outlined in Section 3 of this strategy. In essence, the renewed Act and the commitments associated with the above documents have provided the Agency with a long-term strategic plan. The Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy complements this long-term strategic plan by providing a medium- to long-term strategy for its implementation.

As explained in Section 2, environmental assessment plays a significant role in furthering the environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The most important activity that the Agency can undertake over the medium to long term, therefore, is to ensure the successful implementation of the initiatives associated with the renewed Act as well as with additional initiatives related to core programs, including strategic environmental assessment.

As a medium- to long-term "strategic implementation document," this strategy will help to ensure that the initiatives undertaken by the Agency are successfully incorporated into the business of the federal government over the next three years, into the next review of the Act in 2010, and beyond. The goal is to strengthen the role of environmental assessment in the federal environmental assessment process by making it more effective and efficient.

The planned results, key activities and expected outcomes for initiatives outlined in the 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy, particularly those related to the Quality Assurance Program, the Follow-up Program and the Registry Internet Site, allow for more substantial performance measurement and accountability within the federal environmental assessment process. These initiatives also enable the incorporation of a mechanism for continuous learning and improvement in the federal environmental assessment process, thereby reinforcing this process and ensuring continuing progress toward sustainable development.

The Agency's strategic-level focus in its 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy is in keeping with the guidance provided by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development's March 2003 report *Sustainable Development Strategies: Making a Difference*.

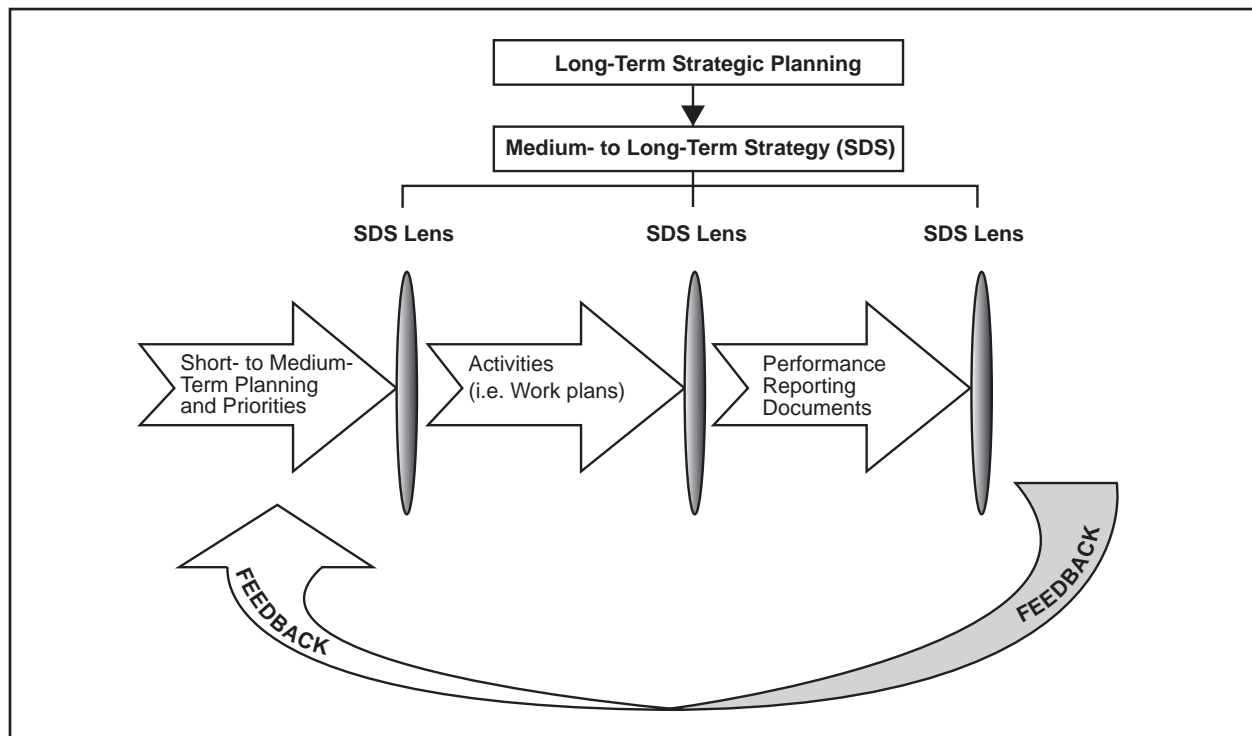
This report encourages federal departments and agencies to focus on the area where they can make the most significant contribution to sustainable development in Canada.

For the Agency, this is the federal government's environmental assessment process. The 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy will, however, include several significant internal initiatives, including those addressing the vital role of the Agency's staff and the need to continue the Agency's efforts toward greener operations.

#### 4.2. Role of the Agency's Sustainable Development Strategy vis-à-vis Other Strategic and Reporting Documents

The Agency will apply a sustainable development lens throughout the preparation of its planning and reporting documents. Commitments outlined in the strategy will be reflected in the internal Monitoring and Tracking System report to Agency executives, the Agency's internal work planning documents, as well as the Report on Plans and Priorities, and the Departmental Performance Report. In other words, while these documents report on all of the Agency's business, they will be developed within the context of the planned results outlined in the medium- to long-term Sustainable Development Strategy. The Report on Plans and Priorities and the Departmental Performance Report will remain the Agency's primary short- to medium-term planning and reporting documents.

**Figure 2: Role of the 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy in the Agency's Strategic Planning Process**



### 4.3. Role of the Agency's Sustainable Development Strategy Within the Federal Government's Sustainable Development Commitments

The Government of Canada's commitment to sustainable development has been articulated in several important documents.

The *1995 Guide to Green Government*, for example, identified five common objectives for federal departments and agencies to consider in the preparation of their sustainable development strategies.

In 2000, the Leaders' Forum on Sustainable Development identified eight additional cross-cutting themes that would benefit from increased coordination across federal departments.

Increased coordination within the federal government on these themes would also support increased progress toward sustainable development.

#### BOX 4

##### Guide to Green Government

Common objectives:

- sustaining our natural resources;
- protecting the health of Canadians and ecosystems;
- fulfilling our international obligations;
- promoting equity; and
- improving the quality of life and well-being.

#### BOX 5

##### Eight Cross-Cutting Themes in Sustainable Development from the 2000 Leaders' Forum

- sustainable development in government operations;
- international aspects of sustainable development;
- a federal sustainable development strategy for the North;
- sustainable development and healthy Canadians;
- social and cultural aspects of sustainable development;
- productivity through eco-efficiency;
- sustainability in communities; and
- sustainable development knowledge, information, indicators and reporting.

Most recently, at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Government of Canada presented a national report on sustainable development, *Progress Towards a Sustainable Development Strategy for the Canadian Government*. This report provided a synthesis of federal department and agency commitments, organized under 11 thematic headings.

These documents, along with relevant sections in the federal government's speeches from the Throne and federal budgets, provide a basis for building a coherent and cohesive federal strategy to further sustainable development.

BOX 6

**World Summit on Sustainable Development Government of Canada Sustainable Development Strategy Themes**

- Building sustainable communities;
- linking health and environment;
- sustainable management of natural resources;
- promoting an innovative economy;
- advancing the social and cultural aspects of sustainable development;
- collaboration toward sustainable development in Canada's north;
- addressing international imperatives;
- promoting learning and research, and raising public awareness;
- increasing partnership involvement;
- improving government decision making and practices; and
- greening government operations.

The Agency's work, therefore, either through policy or project environmental assessment, inherently touches on many of the overarching sustainable development objectives and themes within the federal government.

Strengthening the federal environmental assessment process provides a unique opportunity for progress in sustainable development across the federal government, and the work of the Agency gives concrete expression to the federal government's sustainable development commitments.

The challenge remains in bringing theory into practice, and establishing new mechanisms to encourage horizontal collaboration and build policy coherence across the federal government.

As indicated in Section 2 of this strategy, all federal departments and agencies are bound by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. Moreover, Agency activities in promoting and providing leadership in the environmental assessment process extend across the federal family.

## THE 2004-2006 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

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As demonstrated in the Agency's mission, mandate and key activities, the primary business of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is policy and project environmental assessment. The guidance provided by the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainable Development regarding the 2004-2006 sustainable development strategies recommends that departments and agencies concentrate on addressing those areas where they can make the most significant contribution to sustainable development. The 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy reflects this by focusing on improving the environmental assessment process and strengthening the role of the Agency within the federal government

### 5.1. Sustainable Development Vision

Building on its mission statement, the Agency has developed a vision statement that expresses what environmental assessment should be like 20 years from now, as it pertains to sustainable development. The Agency's sustainable development vision is:

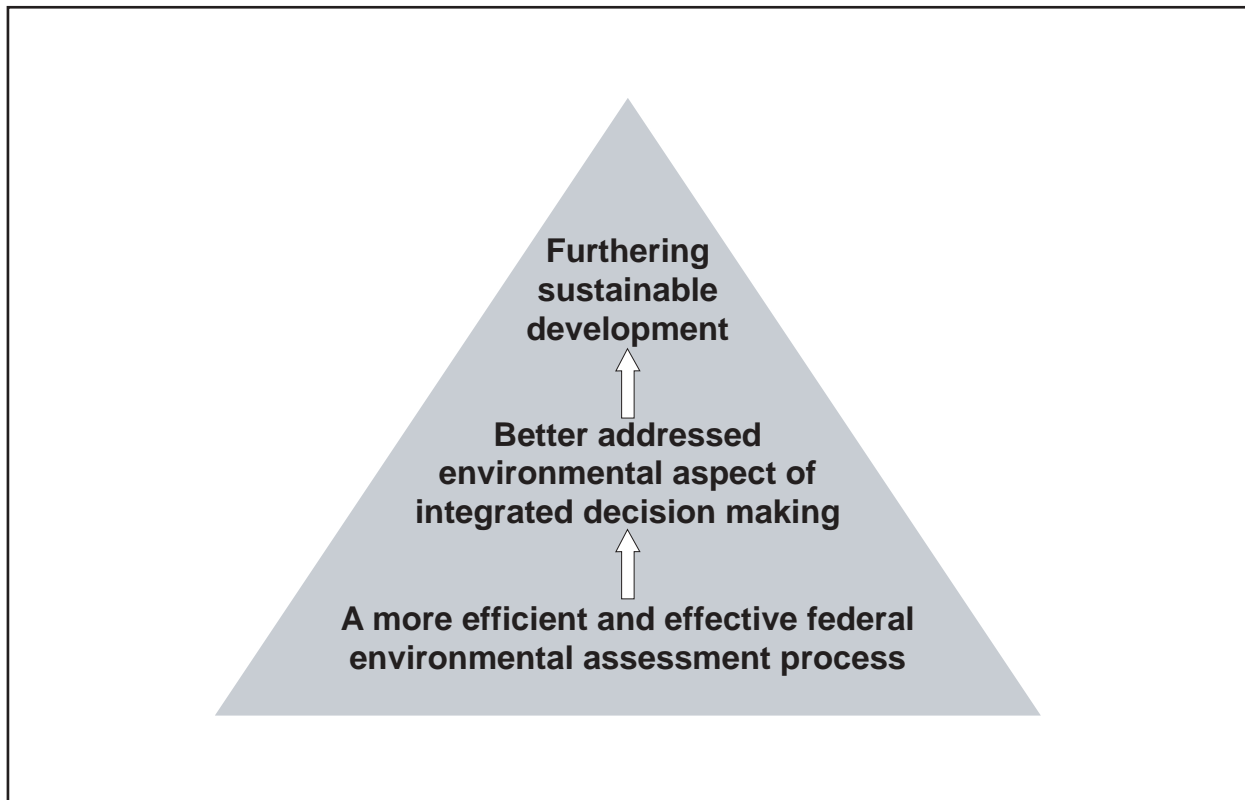
*Through the establishment of a more efficient and effective federal environmental assessment process that facilitates and strengthens integrated decision making, decision makers will have access to complete, accurate and timely environmental assessment information to help make decisions that enhance and support a healthy environment, improve the overall quality of life for Canadians and support continued economic growth, both now and for generations to come. A more efficient and effective federal environmental assessment process will support Canada's role as a world leader in sustainable development.*

### 5.2. Sustainable Development Strategy Goal

Taking into account this vision and the views of Canadians from the consultations discussed in Section 3, the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy goal is:

*To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of environmental assessment in support of better decision making.*

**Figure 3: Link Between the 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy Goals and Sustainable Development**



### 5.3. Objectives

To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the federal environmental assessment process, the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy focuses on three strategic objectives:

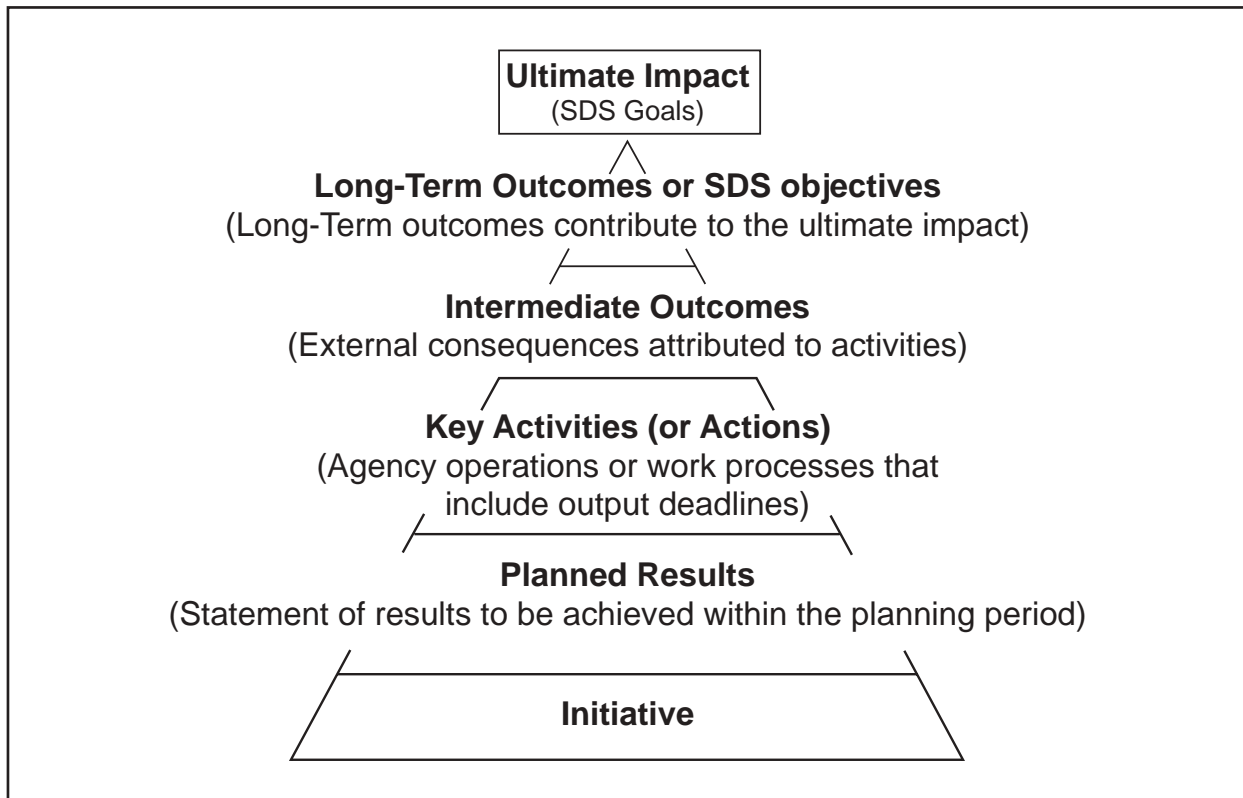
- ensuring a greater measure of certainty, predictability and timeliness in the federal environmental assessment process;
- enhancing the quality of environmental assessments; and
- seeking more meaningful public participation in the federal environmental assessment process.

These objectives are the same as those outlined in the *Report of the Minister of the Environment to the Parliament of Canada on the Review of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*.

Through the Five Year Review and the renewed Act, the Agency has developed a new way of approaching how and what we are striving for in environmental assessment.

Figure 4 illustrates how the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy is structured.

**Figure 4: Terminology and Logic Model Framework for the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy**



#### 5.4. Terminology and Logic Model Framework

The 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy uses a logic model framework and terminology that is consistent with the Treasury Board Secretariat's work on results-based management and accountability frameworks.

- **Ultimate impact** represents the Sustainable Development Strategy goals.
- **Long-term outcomes**, or the Sustainable Development Strategy objectives, represent the external consequences of Agency activities, addressed within a 10 to 20 year time frame. Long-term outcomes contribute to the ultimate impact.
- **Intermediate outcomes** represent the external consequences of Agency activities, addressed within a five- to eight-year time frame. Intermediate outcomes are attributed to key activities.
- **Key activities (or actions)** are Agency operations or work processes. Activities are typically defined within the three-year time frame of the sustainable development strategy, unless otherwise stated. Key activities include specific output deadlines.
- **Planned result** is the statement of results to be achieved within the planning period in relation to the initiative.

## 5.5. Furthering Sustainable Development in the Federal Government

The following sub-sections outline the initiatives, planned results, key activities and expected outcomes that the Agency has committed to undertake in meeting its three objectives.

<b>5.5.1. Initiative: The Federal Environmental Assessment Coordinator</b>		
<p>Bill C-9 contains amendments to the Act that create the role of federal coordinator for all screenings and comprehensive studies. The role of the federal coordinator is to facilitate close cooperation among federal departments and agencies, as well as between the federal government and other jurisdictions. Amendments to the Act also require the Federal Environmental Assessment Coordinator to ensure that federal authorities fulfill their obligations in a timely manner, including mitigation and follow-up. Early in 2004, amendments will be made to the Federal Coordination Regulations to provide criteria to guide responsible authorities in determining which responsible authority would assume the role of coordinator.</p>		
<b>Planned Result</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
<p>Incorporation of the Federal Environmental Assessment Coordinator in the federal environmental assessment process</p>	<p>Develop an evaluation model for the Agency as the Federal Environmental Assessment Coordinator by Spring 2004.</p> <p>Develop internal procedures to manage the Agency's Federal Environmental Assessment Coordination responsibilities effectively; complete the Guide to Federal Coordination for Federal-only screenings as well as the Guide to Federal Coordination for Multi-jurisdictions and Comprehensive Studies by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Using the evaluation model, evaluate the Federal Environmental Assessment Coordinator function in 2005. This evaluation will have a continual improvement mechanism where the results are fed back to the service providers.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b></p> <p>Greater and more timely cooperation and communication between federal stakeholders</p> <p>Better understanding of what expert information is required and how it will be obtained</p> <p><b>Long term:</b></p> <p>Greater certainty, predictability and timeliness in the federal environmental assessment process</p> <p>Higher quality environmental assessments</p>

<b>5.5.2. Initiative: Mediation and Dispute Resolution</b>
<p>A new section of the Act now gives the Agency a greater ability to promote collaboration and assist parties in building consensus and resolving disputes. Successful mediation and dispute resolution facilitates the process of negotiation in multi-jurisdictional projects, and encourages the development of win-win solutions.</p>



Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
<p>Increased use of mediation and dispute resolution in the context of environmental assessment</p>	<p>Implement a communications strategy to promote and raise awareness of the use of dispute resolution and the Agency's increased capacity for providing expertise in dispute resolution by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Deliver new training to build capacity internally in January/February 2005.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b></p> <p>Increased number of disputes resolved through the process</p> <p><b>Long term:</b></p> <p>Greater certainty, predictability and timeliness in the federal environmental assessment process</p> <p>More meaningful public participation in the federal environmental assessment process</p>

### 5.5.3. Initiative: Model Class Screenings and Replacement Class Screenings

The majority of projects subject to the Act are assessed through a screening assessment. The Act provides for a class screening mechanism for projects that are similar in nature and result in a limited range of predictable and readily mitigated environmental effects. With the proclamation of Bill C-9, the Act now provides for two types of class screening: model class screening and replacement class screening.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
<p>Increased use of model and replacement class screenings</p>	<p>Develop an evaluation model for the Agency's class screening program by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Using the evaluation model, evaluate the class screening program by the end of 2005. This annual evaluation will have a continual improvement mechanism where the results will be used to improve the program.</p> <p>Develop replacement class screening information material for responsible federal authorities by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Revise model class screening information material for responsible federal authorities by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Develop model and replacement class screening marketing material targeting federal departments and agencies, industry and Crown corporations by the end of 2006.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b></p> <p>The redirection of scarce resources to environmental assessments where the projects are likely to have substantive environmental effects</p> <p>A streamlined and consistent federal environmental assessment process for stakeholders</p> <p><b>Long term:</b></p> <p>Greater certainty, predictability and timeliness in the federal environmental assessment process</p> <p>Higher quality environmental assessments</p>

<b>5.5.4. Initiative: Coverage of the Act</b>		
Bill C-9 provided the means for more complete and appropriate coverage of the Act.		
<b>Planned Result</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
More complete and appropriate coverage of the Act	<p><b>Regulations for Indian Reserves</b> Initiate the formal development of a regulation for Indian band councils in Nova Scotia in 2004.</p> <p>Initiate dialogue in other regions of Canada with a view to developing band council environmental assessment regulations under the Act in 2004.</p> <p><b>Amended Regulations for Canada Port Authorities</b> Publish amendments early in 2004, to implement improvements provided in the Act regarding assessments of major projects and opportunities for public involvement in assessments.</p> <p><b>Regulations for Federal Airport Authorities</b> Complete the development of new environmental assessment regulations for the application of the Act to projects undertaken by airport authorities. The regulations will be published in 2004.</p> <p><b>Crown Corporations</b> Consult on and develop required regulations for Crown corporations by June 11, 2006.</p> <p>Update the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development every six months throughout the process.</p> <p><b>Projects Outside Canada Regulations</b> Develop new regulations for the application of the Act to projects and activities funded by the Canadian International Development Agency by the end of 2005.</p> <p><b>Clarification</b> Develop policies and procedures for periodic reviews of the <i>Inclusion List Regulations</i>, <i>Comprehensive Study List Regulations</i> and <i>Law List Regulations</i>. The first set of reviews will be completed by the end of 2005.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b> Greater certainty and consistency to the identification of projects that are subject to the Act</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> Greater certainty, predictability and timeliness in the federal environmental assessment process</p>

**5.5.5. Initiative: Quality Assurance Program**

The Agency-led Quality Assurance Program is a mandatory, ongoing federal program involving federal departments, agencies and Crown corporations that are subject to the Act. It also involves entities whose environmental assessment regimes are defined by regulations under the Act. The Quality Assurance Program draws heavily on information available from the Follow-up Repository and the Registry Internet site. The program is supported by the Quality Assurance Unit, situated within the Agency.

<b>Planned Result</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
<p>Implementation of a process of continuous improvement of environmental assessments conducted under the Act and its regulations</p>	<p>Complete consultations with participating organizations regarding program structure and priorities by the end of February 2004.</p> <p>Continuously analyze key information posted to the Registry Internet site to focus more sharply the efforts of the Agency-led Quality Assurance Program (January 2004-December 2006).</p> <p>Analyze data within the Follow-up Repository and report any important results to participating organizations as they become available (December 2005-December 2006).</p> <p>Undertake studies of specific priority topics related to quality and compliance, and report results back to participating organizations as they become available (April 2004-December 2006).</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b> Continuous learning and improvement of quality and compliance supported by accurate information on key aspects of federal assessments.</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> Higher quality environmental assessments.</p>

**5.5.6. Initiative: Follow-up Repository**

A follow-up program is defined in the Act as a program for (a) verifying the environmental assessment of a project, and (b) determining the effectiveness of any measures taken to mitigate the adverse environmental effects of the project. Previously such programs were discretionary, but under the amended Act they have become mandatory for comprehensive studies, mediations and panel reviews. Learning from follow-up programs is essential to improving the practice of environmental assessment. Such programs build the knowledge base to improve future predictions and identify situations where mitigative measures need to be adapted to meet unforeseen circumstances. In the past, there has not been a systematic process for archiving and accessing information from follow-up programs conducted for federal assessments. Consequently, the Agency will act as a central electronic repository of this information, allowing anyone to use it to improve their ability to predict effects and design mitigative measures.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Strengthened role of follow-up in the federal environmental assessment process	<p>Launch a central electronic repository for information from follow-up programs by January 2004.</p> <p>Launch a follow-up page on the Agency Web site by March 2006.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b> Improved accuracy of environmental assessment predictions</p> <p>More effective mitigation of impacts</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> Higher quality environmental assessments</p>

**5.5.7. Initiative: Registry Internet Site**

On October 30, 2003, *An Act to Amend the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* was proclaimed. In conformance with the amended Act, the Agency launched the Registry Internet site at that time to provide the public with complete, accurate and timely information on environmental assessments being conducted under the Act (and its regulations). The Registry Internet site also provides a wealth of useful input data for the Agency-led Quality Assurance Program.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Provision of complete, accurate and timely information on federal environmental assessments	Evaluate the effectiveness of the Registry Internet site in providing stakeholders with timely and accurate information on federal environmental assessments by the end of 2006.	<p><b>Intermediate:</b> More accurate, timely and complete information on federal environmental assessment</p> <p>Greater and more timely stakeholder access to this information</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> More meaningful public participation</p> <p>Higher quality environmental assessments</p>

### 5.5.8. Initiative: Clarifying the Relationship Between Sustainable Development and Environmental Assessment

Sustainable development is a fundamental objective of the federal environmental assessment process. In fact, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* encourages responsible authorities to take actions that promote sustainable development. There remains a need, however, to further clarify the relationship between environmental assessment and sustainable development, particularly in defining the role of sustainable development *within* environmental assessment and finding ways to incorporate sustainable development principles into individual environmental assessments.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
<p>a) Provision of information to stakeholders on the role of environmental assessment in support of sustainable development</p> <p>b) Tools that more clearly incorporate sustainable development principles into environmental assessments</p>	<p>Finalize and publish on the Agency's Web site, a report drawing the linkages between environmental assessment and sustainable development by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Develop and release communications materials on how environmental assessment contributes to sustainable development by the end of 2005.</p> <p>In cooperation with Public Works and Government Services Canada, develop practical tools to integrate sustainable development principles into the Public Works and Government Services Canada environmental assessment process by the end of 2005.</p> <p>Integrate the resulting tools and lessons learned into the Agency's screening workshop materials by 2006.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b> Better understanding by Canadians of the role of environmental assessment in supporting sustainable development</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> More meaningful public participation</p> <p><b>Intermediate:</b> Greater consideration of sustainable development in environmental assessments.</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> Higher quality environmental assessments.</p>

**5.5.9. Initiative: Strategic Environmental Assessment**

The Agency is responsible for the 1999 *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*. The Agency's role is to promote the application of strategic environmental assessment and, in consultation with other federal departments and agencies, provide guidance and training to improve its implementation. The Directive helps to ensure that environmental factors are considered along with economic and social considerations when decisions are made. Strategic environmental assessment is helping the federal government to move ever closer to sustainable development through integrated decision making.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Better environmental analysis in support of federal decision making	<p>Develop and implement a coordinated action plan dedicated to achieving accessible learning, sharing knowledge, building strong linkages among federal organizations on strategic environmental assessment and improving capacity.</p> <p>Host a federal workshop on strategic environmental assessment in early 2004.</p> <p>In a follow-up to the workshop, develop training, guidance and knowledge materials, with federal partners by 2005.</p> <p>Publish materials for federal departments by 2006.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b></p> <p>Better tools for federal departments and agencies to support strategic environmental assessment</p> <p>More federal departments with capacity to conduct strategic environmental assessments.</p> <p><b>Long term:</b></p> <p>Higher quality environmental assessments</p>

**5.5.10. Initiative: Aboriginal Advisory Committee**

The Agency fosters ongoing relations with Aboriginal communities. The emerging environmental assessment processes under self-government and land claims agreements are playing an increasing role in the evolution of sustainable development practices in Canada. In support of the commitments made in the Minister's Report on the Five-Year Review of the Act, the Agency will establish the Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives into environmental assessment policy	<p>Establish the terms of reference for the Aboriginal Advisory Committee by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Develop interim principles on the consideration of traditional knowledge in federal environmental assessments by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Develop finalized traditional ecological knowledge procedural guidelines by 2006.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b></p> <p>A better and more inclusive approach to environmental assessment</p> <p><b>Long term:</b></p> <p>More meaningful public participation</p> <p>Higher quality environmental assessments</p>

**5.5.11. Initiative: Participant Funding**

The Participant Funding Program was established in 1990 to provide financial assistance to members of the public and organizations to prepare for, and participate in, environmental assessment review panels. The proclamation of Bill C-9 requires the Agency to extend the current Participant Funding Program to facilitate public participation in comprehensive studies.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Promotion and facilitation of effective public participation in reviews of environmental effects of projects undergoing comprehensive study or review panels	<p>Renew the terms and conditions for the Participant Funding Program by March 2004.</p> <p>Re-evaluate and revise the program funding criteria, and the application and assessment process to meet the growing demand for participant funding by the end of 2004.</p> <p>Evaluate the quality of service and the value of funding to the client by the end of 2006.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b> Improved public participation in comprehensive studies and review panels.</p> <p>Greater efficiencies within the Participant Funding Program.</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> More meaningful public participation</p> <p>Higher quality environmental assessments</p>

**5.5.12. Initiative: Research and Development Program**

The Research and Development Program plays an integral role in encouraging and supporting research in the field of environmental assessment across Canada. The Agency annually contributes to the development of new research in the area of environmental assessment, and undertakes analysis of research and development reports through the Senior Management Committee on Environmental Assessment to determine areas of further interest to federal environmental assessment practitioners.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Information on environmental assessment and sustainable development that benefits practitioners, leads to best practices and promotes environmental assessment as a tool for sustainable development	<p>Implement the recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the Research and Development Program by 2005.</p> <p>Establish a process to regularly inform those having interest in the results of the program by the end of 2005.</p> <p>Develop communication materials to increase awareness of the Research and Development Program by the end of 2006.</p>	<p><b>Intermediate:</b> Integration of the ideas, results and findings of research and development reports into initiatives that enhance the quality of environmental assessments and the environmental assessment process</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> Higher quality environmental assessment</p>

## 5.6. Furthering Sustainable Development Within the Agency

The Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy focuses on the significant potential for enhancing sustainable development through the federal environmental assessment process. Sustainable development also relates to what each individual person or organization can do to contribute to the overall effort. Therefore, in addition to macro-level initiatives regarding the federal environmental assessment process, the Agency must also ensure that its internal activities are in keeping with the goals of sustainable development and with the cross-cutting initiatives of the federal government. The following initiatives address the key areas within the Agency's organization that will contribute to achieving sustainable development.

### 5.6.1. Initiative: Greening Agency Operations

The federal government has made a commitment to integrate sustainable development practices in its day-to-day operations<sup>3</sup>. In keeping with this commitment, the Agency will continue to reduce the environmental footprint of its operations by focusing on waste reduction and green procurement.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
Reduction of the Agency's environmental footprint	Develop new waste reduction and green procurement targets by the end of 2004. Implement these targets.	Improved environmental management of the Agency's operations

### 5.6.2 Initiative: Recruitment, Retention and Learning

The Agency is committed to being a learning organization that continues to attract, develop and retain high potential, highly qualified individuals to serve as the future foundation of Canada's environmental assessment professional community. These individuals will be required to meet the federal government's environmental assessment responsibilities.

Planned Result	Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
To attract and retain high potential, highly qualified employees in an increasingly competitive and extremely mobile labour market	Complete the recruitment and staffing strategy for the implementation of Bill C-9 by the end of 2004.  Support Agency staff in the voluntary establishment of learning plans to assist them in their career development, to be completed by April 2005.	Ongoing access to high potential, highly qualified employees to enable the successful implementation of SDS initiatives  An organizational culture of continuous learning for a sustainable work force

<sup>3</sup>See the 1995 Government of Canada document: *A Guide to Green Government* ([http://www.sdinfo.gc.ca/federal\\_sd\\_resources/green\\_government\\_e.cfm](http://www.sdinfo.gc.ca/federal_sd_resources/green_government_e.cfm)).



## **ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT**

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### **6.1. Internal Monitoring and Accountability**

In response to the need for coordination and monitoring of the Agency's Sustainable Development Strategy, a Sustainable Development Committee was established in 2001. This committee is chaired by the Policy Assessment Directorate with representation from across the Agency.

The Committee meets on a monthly basis, actively monitors Agency performance as it relates to sustainable development strategy commitments and reports to the Agency Executive Committee on the Agency's performance through such mechanisms as the Sustainable Development Strategy Monitoring and Tracking System (MATS).

The Agency Executive Committee, chaired by the President, reviews the Agency's ongoing sustainable development performance through approval of the Sustainable Development Strategy Monitoring and Tracking System.

The Executive Committee also ensures that external planning and reporting documents, such as the Report on Plans and Priorities and the Departmental Performance Report, include performance measurement reporting on the Sustainable Development Strategy commitments.

### **6.2 Agency Reporting Documents**

The primary method of reporting on the Agency's Sustainable Development Strategy is the Sustainable Development Strategy Monitoring and Tracking System. This Monitoring and Tracking System is updated twice a year to ensure that progress is made on the sustainable development strategy. In addition, the sustainable development strategy is linked with regular internal Agency functions and reports, such as the Agency's annual work plans. This provides a separate internal checklist of Agency commitments, including the sustainable development commitments, for each fiscal year.

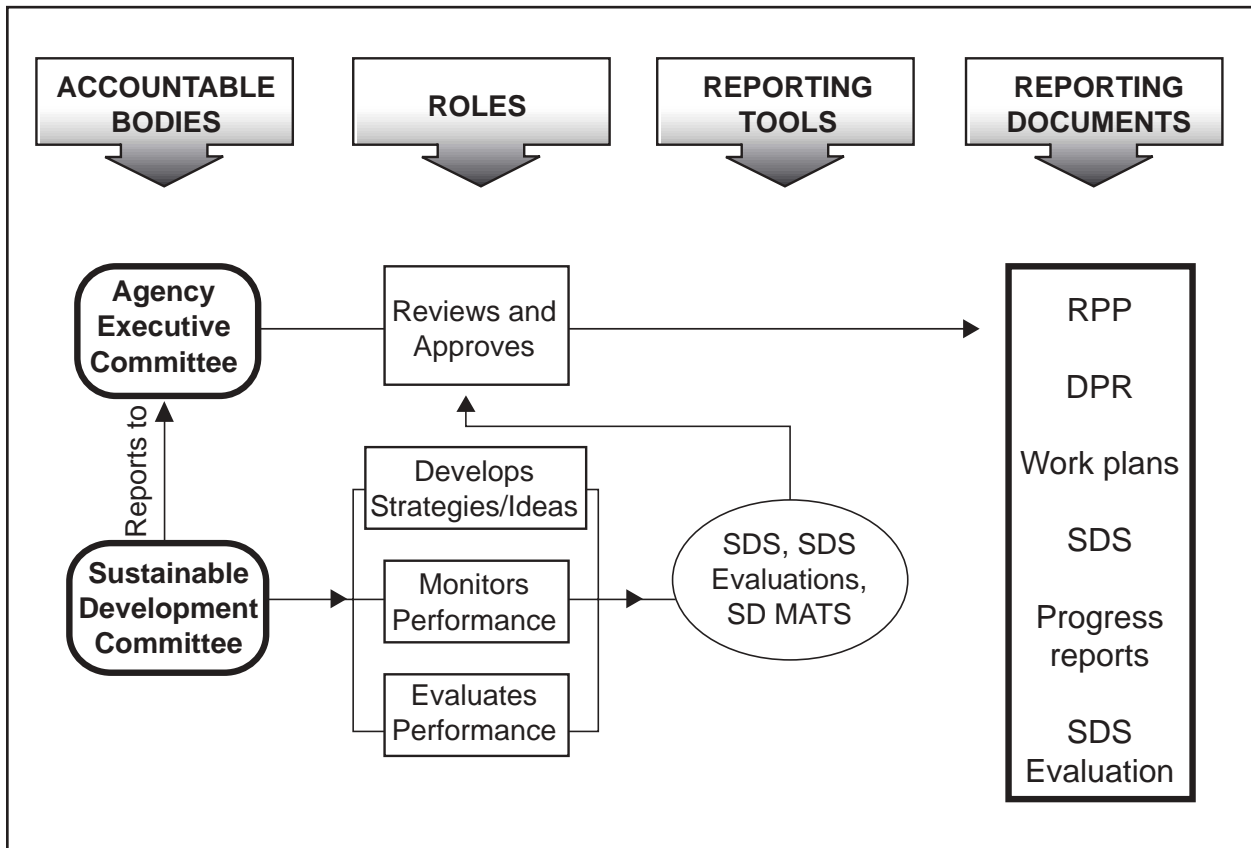
With regard to external reporting, as indicated in Section 4.2, the Agency's annual Parliamentary Report on Plans and Priorities and the Departmental Performance Report include the activities directly related to the sustainable development strategy. This provides ongoing information to Canadians on progress on the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy commitments. Canadians are also kept apprised of the Agency's sustainable development performance through the evaluation of its sustainable development strategies. An evaluation of the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy will be undertaken in 2006 and released to the public during that same year.

### 6.3. Performance Measurement for the Federal Environmental Assessment Process

With regard to the federal environmental assessment process, performance measurement will be facilitated, both within the Agency and throughout the federal government, by the mechanisms

introduced in the amendments to the Act, namely the Quality Assurance Program, the Follow-up Repository, and the Registry Internet site. Moreover, these new mechanisms will enhance the Agency's ability to show "continuous learning and continuous improvement" in the federal environmental assessment process.

**Figure 5: Internal Monitoring and Accountability of Reporting Document**



## Annex

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### 7.1. Consultations

Most of the initiatives outlined in the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy were developed as a result of extensive consultations with all interested stakeholders under the Agency's Five Year Review Process. These consultations directly influenced the Report of the Minister of the Environment on the Review of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. Initiatives included under Bill C-9 also received a thorough review by the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

The Committee made a considerable number of amendments to the Bill and the initiatives therein that were ultimately supported by the Government and passed by Parliament.

With specific regard to the 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy, Agency-wide internal consultations were held on an ongoing basis throughout the development of the strategy, primarily, but not exclusively, through the Agency's Sustainable Development Committee. Aspects highlighted in the Evaluation of the Agency's 2000-2003 Sustainable Development Strategy were also considered in the development of the 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy, along with the recommendations of the Standing Committee on the Environment and

Sustainable Development in its June 2003 Report: *Sustainable Development and Environmental Assessment: Beyond Bill C-9*.

Following approval by the Agency Executive Committee, the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy was distributed to the multi-stakeholder Regulatory Advisory Committee for their review and comment. Members of the Regulatory Advisory Committee include representatives of federal and provincial governments, Aboriginal, industrial and environmental non-governmental organizations.

This committee serves as a key forum for consulting with environmental assessment stakeholders on regulatory and policy matters. The draft strategy was also provided to members of the federal government Interdepartmental Network on Sustainable Development Strategies for their review and comment, as well as members of the interdepartmental Senior Management Committee on Environmental Assessment. Comments received during the consultation period were considered and, where appropriate, integrated into the final draft of the Agency's 2004-2006 Sustainable Development Strategy. In particular, input received during the consultation process prompted further clarification in the presentation of the strategy's terminology and logic model framework.