Integrated Resource Management Implementation Committee's

Annual Report on the Implementation of Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management

April 1999 – August 2000

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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Message from the Integrated Resource Management Implementation Committee Chair

On March 28, 1999, the government of Alberta released the policy *Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management*. I am pleased to be involved with the implementation of this policy, which will form the cornerstone of the province's natural resource management approach into the next century.

As the chair of the Integrated Resource Management Implementation Committee (IRMIC), I am directly accountable to the Sustainable Development Coordinating Council to put this policy into action.

One of the first actions of the IRMIC was the creation of the Integrated Resource Management Division within Alberta Environment. This division's mandate is to focus the efforts of four key Alberta government departments, which include Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Economic Development; Resource Development; and Environment.

This is the first Annual Report on the Implementation of Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management, for submission to the Sustainable Development Coordinating Council. Of particular importance during the year was the completion of the following:

- Regional Sustainable Development Strategy for the Athabasca Oil Sands Area;
- initiation of the Northern East Slopes Sustainable Resource and Environmental Strategy; and
- initiation of the Integrated Landscape Management process through the Alberta Chamber of Resources.

In the coming years, we will maintain our focus on implementing the commitment to sustainable resource and environmental management on a cross-department basis.

I am very pleased with the rapid response of companies and government agencies as they work cooperatively toward integration at the operational and policy level.

C.Henderson

C. J. Henderson
Chair

Introduction

This is the first Annual Report on the Implementation of Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management.

In 1999, the Alberta Government identified Integrated Resource Management (IRM) as one of the mechanisms to implement the above-mentioned policy. Four government departments (Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Economic Development; Resource Development; and Environment) are charged with incorporating IRM into their business.

For almost 30 years, the Alberta Government has embraced the concept of Integrated Resource Management. Over the years, IRM has evolved and now must address cumulative effects. IRM is an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach to decision-making for natural resource management.

In February 1999, the Sustainable Development Coordinating Council approved the document "Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management – Implementation Plan". This document included a table that outlined the range of tasks that needed to be completed by the four responsible departments. This annual report reflects what the status is for each of those tasks. The table provides information on the subject area, the associated tasks to be completed, the responsible agency, the proposed completion date as outlined in the February 1999 Implementation Plan and what action has taken place as of June 2000.

Almost 300 examples of integration have been identified. They include a variety of Land Management Plans, Protected Area Plans, Water Management Plans, Air Quality Plans, Species Management Plans, Framework Plans, Conservation Initiatives and Environmental Impact Assessments. The report "Highlights of Integrated Resource Management in Alberta – Year 2000" details some of these good integration examples.

Implementation Plan — Status as of June 2000

Subject	Task	Responsible	Proposed Completion as outlined in the Feb/99 Implementation Plan	Action to Date
Regional Strategies – Content, Process and Delivery	1. Develop Alberta Oil Sands Regional Sustainable Development Strategy (RSDS[1]).	North East Boreal Board of Directors	Strategy completion targeted July/99	• Completed July/99.
	2. During and upon completion of strategy, monitor process and assess outcomes to develop implications for further development of strategies in other regions. Recommend whether other regions should develop strategies simultaneously, or only where issues warrant them.	IRMWG	Pending completion of Strategy. Timetable for other regions to be determined later.	• Initial phase completed (monitoring development of RSDS document). • Ongoing monitoring of implementation phase. • Timetable for other strategies will be determined as part of provincial framework (#4).
	3. (Develop Northern East Slopes [NES] Regional Strategy as prototype for regional strategies elsewhere[2]).	(NES ERC)	(Spring 2002)	• Terms of Reference complete. • Citizen/government Regional Steering Group appointed. • Organization being set up. • Initial consultation/communication under way.
	4. (Develop provincial framework for regional strategies.)	(IRMD)	(August 2000)	• Developing provincial framework for regional strategies: - Stakeholder workshop held in Dec/99. - Framework being developed in parallel with NES prototype (#3). Framework completion date – January 2001.

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[1] Winner of a Bronze Medal at the Premier's Award of Excellence 2000.

[2] Bracketed items ( ) were not included in the Feb/99 Implementation Plan.

Implementation Plan — Status as of June 2000

Subject	Task	Responsible	Proposed Completion as outlined in the Feb/99 Implementation Plan	Action to Date
Operational Integration	5. Support and encourage operational pilots led by industry designed to: - improve government/industry and industry coordination; and - identify barriers to integration – policy, information, etc.	All Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) support and encourage	Open-ended	• Ongoing communication with industry (AFPA, CAPP, selected companies). • Alberta Chamber of Resources has initiated an Integrated Landscape Management (ILM) initiative building on an Al-Pac/Gulf pilot. • Developing communications package of operational IRM best practices in industry and government. • Highlights of Integrated Resource Management in Alberta – Year 2000 report completed. • Developing a Public Lands Operational Handbook.
Review of Existing Provincial Policy and Legislation	6. Coordinate regulatory reform programs of Environment (AENV), Resource Development (RD), Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AFRD) and Economic Development (ED) to: - ensure consistency with one another; and - eliminate overlap and duplication.	All ADMs	Ongoing	• Developed IRM process model as a tool for regulatory and policy review/reform. • No formal action to coordinate existing regulatory reform programs of the four departments under the Commitment document. • Some effort to coordinate existing regulatory reform programs within AENV. • Action on hold pending direction from SDCC, and Council of Economic Dev. Ministers.
	7. Review policies, guidelines, standards, etc. of AENV, RD, AFRD and ED to: - ensure consistency with principles of sustainable development and IRM; - eliminate unnecessary, out-of-date and redundant policies and other guidance documents; and - ensure consistency of language and approach between departments.	All departments	Ongoing	• Developed IRM process model as a tool for regulatory and policy review/reform. • No formal action to coordinate existing regulatory reform programs of the four departments under the Commitment document. • Some effort to coordinate existing regulatory reform programs within AENV. • Action on hold pending direction from SDCC, and Council of Economic Dev. Ministers.

Implementation Plan — Status as of June 2000

Subject	Task	Responsible	Proposed Completion as outlined in the Feb/99 Implementation Plan	Action to Date
Resource Decision-Making	8. Develop guidelines for consultation so resource decisions: - are taken in provincial context: - consider the broad public interest; - include input from communities and industries most directly affected; and - provide a role for provincial and national interests.	IRMIC	Following analysis and recommendations in regional pilot (#1, above)	• Guidelines being drafted.
	9. Review ERC Terms of Reference for consistency with IRM and to provide compliance reporting for annual report (#17).	ERCs	Mar/99 (Terms of Reference) – reporting ongoing on an annual basis	• Complete. Existing Terms of Reference are consistent with IRM principles and able to provide annual report information.
	10.Review referral and approval systems to support: - timely decisions; - early resolution of conflicts; - application of best information; and - input from appropriate affected stakeholders and its consideration.	Individual ADMs	Ongoing	• Developed IRM process model as a tool for regulatory and policy review/reform. • No formal action to coordinate existing regulatory reform programs of the four departments under the Commitment document. • Some effort to coordinate existing regulatory reform programs within AENV. • Action on hold pending direction from SDCC, and Council of Economic Dev. Ministers.
Business Plans	11.Incorporate support for IRM into SDCC members' departments' business plans.	Business planners from respective departments.	Apr/99	• All business plans contain references to the concepts of Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management. However, in several plans, Sustainable Development and Integrated Resource Management are not mentioned by name.
	12.Integrate content of business plans of AENV, RD, AFRD and ED regarding: IRM/resource management.	Business planners from respective departments.	Ongoing	• No activity in this business cycle.

Implementation Plan — Status as of June 2000

Subject	Task	Responsible	Proposed Completion as outlined in the Feb/99 Implementation Plan	Action to Date
Communication	13.Develop external communications plan for IRM, including: - release of Commitment document; - information regarding IRM principles and activities, public internet access to legislation and policies; and - consolidated inventory of regulatory requirements and types of approvals.	IRMWG, AENV Communications Division	IRMWG, AENV Communications Division	• Commitment document released. • Most legislation and policies now available on internet. • Developed IRM Communication Strategy and Framework. • No communication action regarding inventory of regulatory requirements and approvals. • Internally within AENV, the development of ERMViews (Environmental and Natural Resources Management Views).
	14.Develop and implement staff communications and training regarding IRM principles and new procedures.	IRMWG, AENV HR	Spring 1999	• Ongoing communications through presentations to a variety of groups. • No action on training.
Monitoring and Compliance	15.Develop performance measures and measuring processes for IRM.	IRMIC	Sept/99	• Framework drafted per Auditor General's and Treasury's staff advice. • Preliminary work begun on actual measures for the Integrated Resource Management Division's (IRMD) Operational Plan.
	16.Develop organization and authority to hold decision-makers accountable for compliance with regional and provincial IRM policy.	IRMWG	Sept/99	• Establishment of the ADMs' IRM Implementation Committee.
	17.Provide annual report to SDCC on progress in implementing the Commitment document.	IRMIC	Mar/99 (and yearly)	• Final report completed.

Note: Bracketed items ( ) were not included in the Feb/99 Implementation Plan.

Responsible Authorities:

IRMIC	Integrated Resource Management Implementation Committee
ERC	Environmental Resource Committee
IRMWG	Integrated Resource Management Working Group (previously known as ITF Implementation Task Force)
AENV HR	Alberta Environment, Human Resources