

**Alberta's Commitment to
Sustainable Resource
and
Environmental Management**

Implementation Plan

**Integrated Resource Management
Implementation Committee
February 1999**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Government of Alberta has affirmed and renewed its commitment to sustainable development in the document: *Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management*. It outlines a shared vision and provincial direction, and highlights the importance of effective and fair decision making processes and an effective and up-to-date legislative/regulatory regime. These directions will be achieved through Integrated Resource Management (IRM). Its goal is to improve coordination, streamline decision-making processes and clarify policy, legislation and processes at all levels. Alberta's natural resources covered under IRM include air, public land, water, timber, fish, wildlife, range, oil, gas and mineral resources.

IRM is an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach to decision making for the management of natural resources. IRM integrates decisions, legislation, policies, programs and activities across sectors to gain the best overall long-term benefits for society and to minimize conflicts. This approach recognizes that the use of a resource for one purpose can affect both the use of that resource for other purposes and the management and use of other resources. IRM is based on:

- Co-operation, communication, coordination and the comprehensive consideration of all resource values. This philosophy is centred on the belief that efforts to manage natural resources will be more successful if they are coordinated at all levels within government; and,
- Appropriate consultation before action. Those who are significantly affected by a decision should have the opportunity to participate in the decision making process.

2.0 UNDERLYING VALUES

The following are the important underlying beliefs (cultural values) that will guide IRM decision-making by government. These are priorities that significantly impact how IRM is implemented. They express the highest ideals.

- *Respect* (understanding others' motivations, needs and desires first before making judgements)
- *Fairness and Integrity* (acting fairly, consistently, ethically, honestly and professionally)
- *Stewardship* (working in partnership with Albertans to manage our natural resources for current and future generations)
- *Excellence* (searching for new and better ways to do business)
- *Inclusiveness* (involving and consulting with those affected by decisions before making them)

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles will translate these values into action, by guiding the delivery of IRM. These are the essential guidelines that support IRM throughout all resource and environmental management.

- *Comprehensive and Integrated* - natural resource management decision making will consider the full range of environmental, social, health and economic interests and values and integrate their management into an effective whole.
- *Proactive and Predictable* – IRM will be future-oriented. It will attempt to anticipate natural resource management issues and needs to provide a more-predictable context for those who wish to use or enjoy Alberta’s natural resources.
- *Responsive and Flexible* - management will also be adaptive, responding to experience, new information, shifts in social preference, technological innovations and unexpected situations.
- *Consultative* - those affected by decisions will be consulted before action is taken. Open communication will be supported.
- *Procedurally Fair* - decision-making processes will adhere to the principles of administrative fairness, and will provide public access to relevant information.
- *Knowledge-based* - decision making will be based on understanding the potential consequences of choices.
- *Timely and Results-oriented* - decision making processes will strive for efficient use of time and financial resources. Decisions should contribute to achieving the government’s goals and objectives.
- *Accountable* - lines of accountability for processes, products and implementation must be clear. Decision-makers will be accountable for their decisions.
- *Clear and Understandable* - products and processes will be straightforward, not open to a wide range of interpretations. Roles and responsibilities will be well defined.

All the principles will be considered together at the start of, and during, decision making and in subsequent implementation. They will serve as guideposts, and are a basis for evaluating the success of decisions and plans.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The essence of IRM is that all resource managers see consideration of others’ interests as part of their jobs, and are held accountable for doing so. At the same time, there must be clear delegation of responsibility for making decisions. Consideration of the broader interest must not mean a diffusion of accountability. The following outlines the roles of individuals and committees as they relate to IRM.

- **Decision-maker:** Makes decisions according to legally delegated responsibilities, while considering the interests of other internal and external stakeholders, whether or not such consideration is formally required by legislation or policy.
- **Environmental Resource Committee (interdepartmental regional directors):** Provides a forum for resource managers and other affected agencies to discuss issues of common concern. Plays a key role in integration and in community-level service. Not a decision-making or

approval body except for shared decisions, such as approval of plans that require shared implementation. Responsible for reporting on IRM progress and results to the ADM Committee on IRM.

- Implementation Task Force (interdepartmental working group): Develops materials for consideration by the ADM Committee on IRM. Not a decision-making or approval body.
- IRM Implementation Committee (interdepartmental ADM committee) Key responsibility for implementing IRM throughout represented departments. Responsible for preparing an annual report on the progress in implementing IRM and on its success.
 - The chair is accountable to SDCC for the effective design, organization and execution of the IRM Implementation Project.
 - Members are accountable to their respective deputy ministers and to the chair for consideration of their respective ministries and stakeholders, and for identifying where IRM deliverables are inconsistent with ministry or stakeholder needs.
- Sustainable Development Coordinating Council (SDCC) (interdepartmental DM committee): Broad oversight of integration activity and the IRM Implementation Project. Review of provincial initiatives with policy implications for resource and environmental management. Not normally a decision-making or appeal body.

5.0 IRM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

There is a range of tasks to complete in order to incorporate the philosophy of IRM into the daily business of the responsible departments. The implementation plan is outlined in table form by subject area, the associated tasks to be completed, the responsible agency, and the expected completion date.

Subject	Task	Responsible	Completion
Regional Strategies— Content, Process & Delivery	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alberta Oil Sands Regional Sustainable Development Strategy as pilot for regional strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Alberta Oil Sands Regional Sustainable Development Strategy • 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 	<p>NEB Board of Directors in conjunction with stakeholders per Terms of Reference; NEB ERC advisory</p> <p>ITF</p>	<p>Strategy completion targeted July 1999</p> <p>Pending completion of Strategy.</p> <p>Timetable for other regions to be determined later.</p>
Operational integration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Support and encourage operational pilots led by industry designed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve government/industry & industry coordination • Identify barriers to integration—policy, information, etc. 	<p>All ADMs support & encourage</p> <p>-Industrial stakeholders (lead pilots)</p>	<p>Open-ended</p>
Review of existing provincial policy & legislation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Coordinate regulatory reform programs of EP, DOE, AFRD & ED [CD, p. 10]; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure consistency with one another • To eliminate overlap and duplication 	<p>All ADMs</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Subject & legislation	Task	Responsible	Completion
	4. Review policies, guidelines, standards, etc. of EP, DOE, AFRD & ED [CD, p. 10, 12]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure consistency with principles of sustainable development and IRM • To eliminate unnecessary, out-of-date and redundant policies and other guidance documents • To ensure consistency of language and approach between departments. 	All departments	Ongoing
Resource decision-making	5. Develop guidelines for consultation so that resource decisions [CD, p. 8]: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are taken in provincial context • Consider the broad public interest • Include input from communities & industries most directly affected • Provide a role for provincial & national interests. 6. Review ERC Terms of Reference for consistency with IRM and to provide compliance reporting for annual report (#14, below). 7. Review referral and approval systems to support [CD, p. 8] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely decisions • Early resolution of conflicts • Application of best information • Input from appropriate affected stakeholders and its consideration 	IRM IC ERCs Individual ADMs	Following analysis and recommendations in regional pilot (#1, above). March 1999 (terms of reference); reporting ongoing on an annual basis Ongoing
Business plans	8. Incorporate support for IRM into SDCC member departments' business plans [CD, p. 11].	Business planners from respective departments	April 1999

Subject	Task	Responsible	Completion
Communication	9. Integrate content of business plans of EP, DOE, AFRD & ED re IRM/resource management [CD, p. 11].	Business planners from respective departments	Ongoing
	10. Develop external communications plan for IRM, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of <i>Commitment</i> document • Information re IRM principles & activities • Public internet access to legislation & policies [CD, p.10; also FOIP] • Consolidated inventory of regulatory requirements & types of approvals [CD, p. 10]. 	ITF, EP Communications Division	Pending approval of Commitment Document & Implementation Plan
Monitoring & compliance	11. Develop & implement staff communications and training re IRM principles & new procedures.	ITF, EP HR	Spring 1999
	12. Develop performance measures & measuring processes for IRM [CD, p. 11; TOR].	IRM IC	September 1999
	13. Develop organization & authority to hold decision-makers accountable for compliance with regional & provincial IRM policy [TOR; CD, p. 11].	ITF	September 1999
	14. Provide annual report to SDCC on progress in implementing IRM, success of IRM [TOR].	IRM IC	March 1999 (and yearly)

Notes:

Responsible authorities:

IRM IC = Integrated Resource Management Implementation Committee

ERC = Environmental Resource Committee

BoD = (Environmental Protection Regional) Board of Directors

ITF = Implementation Task Force.

EP HR = Environmental Protection Human Resources

Source references (in square brackets []):

CD = Commitment Document, *Alberta's Commitment to Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management*

TOR = IRM Task Force Terms of Reference