



ESTIMATES

## National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy

1999-2000  
Estimates

Part III - Report on Plans and Priorities

Canada

# **The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy**

## **1999-2000 Estimates**

### **Part III – A Report on Plans and Priorities**

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean Chrétien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Prime Minister

## Table of Contents

### Section 1: Messages

A. <i>Chair's Message</i> .....	1
B. <i>Management Representation Statement</i> .....	3

### Section II: Departmental Overview

A. <i>Mandate, Roles and Responsibilities</i> .....	4
B. <i>Objectives</i> .....	4
C. <i>Operating Environment</i> .....	4
D. <i>Financial Spending Plan</i> .....	6

### Section III: Plans, Priorities, Strategies and Expected Results

A. <i>Summary of Key Plans, Priorities and Strategies</i> .....	7
B. <i>Program Plans</i> .....	8
C. <i>Consolidated Reporting</i> .....	11

### Section IV: Supplementary Information

Table 1: Spending Authorities – Ministry Summary Part II of the Estimates .....	12
Table 2: Planned Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) .....	13
Table 3: Departmental Summary of Standard Objects by Expenditure .....	14
Table 4: Details of Revenue by Program .....	15
Table 5: Listing of Statutes and Regulations .....	16

## **Section I: Messages**

### **A. Chair's Message**

The relationship between the environment and the economy is an extremely broad and complex subject — many issues are global in nature, and solutions require international cooperation; existing scientific and policy research is generally inadequate, and where it does exist it is often inconclusive or contradictory; finally, stakeholder groups, of which there are many, typically have conflicting views and interests. The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) was created in 1988 to respond to many of these challenges, its primary goal is to promote sustainable development by providing decision makers and opinion leaders with reliable information and objective views on the “state of the debate” for identified issues. The NRTEE provides neutral fora in which stakeholders can meet, explore issues and determine areas of agreement and disagreement; from there it produces recommendations for action.

The year 1998/99 was pivotal for the NRTEE. Its work in a number of important program areas — including Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading, the Sustainable Cities Initiative and Eco-efficiency — is coming to a close, while new programs that build on the strengths and experience of the NRTEE have been identified and will be implemented. In particular, initiatives in four priority program areas have been targeted for this planning period:

- a Millennium program, which will identify and communicate the dominating sustainable development challenges and opportunities for Canada during the 2001-2010 period;
- studies and deliberations; pertaining to health, the environment and the economy;
- non-renewable resources development in Canada's North, and the impacts of such development on local aboriginal communities; and
- a broad set of recommendations to the Minister of Finance for the 2000 federal budget.

I am pleased to submit the NRTEE's Report on Plans and Priorities for 1999-2000, outlining the major results that will be achieved in each of these areas over the coming year. The NRTEE

is increasingly recognized by decision makers and the media as a source of objective information on the environment and the economy. We are confident that, by implementing this plan, we will continue to make a valuable contribution to the understanding and management of sustainable development issues.



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Stuart L. Smith, M.D., Chair  
National Round Table on the Environment  
and the Economy

## B. Management Representation Statement

I submit, for tabling in Parliament, the 1999-2000 Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP) for The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy.

To the best of my knowledge the information:

- accurately portrays the agency's mandate, plans, priorities, strategies and expected key results of the organization;
- is consistent with the disclosure principles contained in the *Guidelines for Preparing a Report on Plans and Priorities*;
- is comprehensive and accurate; and
- is based on sound underlying departmental information and management systems.

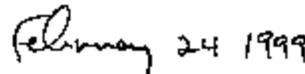
I am satisfied as to the quality assurance processes and procedures used for the RPP's production.

The planning and reporting structure on which this document is based has been approved by Treasury Board ministers and is the basis of accountability for the results achieved with the resources and authorities provided.



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David McGuinty  
Executive Director and CEO



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Date

## **Section II: Departmental Overview**

### **A. Mandate, Roles and Responsibilities**

The formal mandate of the NRTEE is derived from the *National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy Act*. The stated purpose of the Round Table is ... *to play the role of catalyst in identifying, explaining and promoting, in all sectors of Canadian society and in all regions of Canada, principles and practices of sustainable development.*

### **B. Objectives**

At the heart of the NRTEE's work is a commitment to improve the quality of economic and environmental policy development by providing decision makers and opinion leaders with the information necessary to make reasoned choices on a sustainable future for Canada.

The NRTEE promotes a round table and multistakeholder approach to analyzing sustainable development issues and acts as a forum in which all points of view can be freely expressed and debated. Round Table members and stakeholders involved in NRTEE programs strive to define the relationship between the environment and the economy, to determine where consensus exists on resolving particular issues, and to identify clearly the nature of the issues that remain unresolved.

Having representatives at the Round Table from a variety of regions and sectors — business, labour, academe, First Nations and environmental groups — provides a significant opportunity to investigate sustainable development issues from a national perspective.

### **C. Operating Environment**

Sustainable development is all-encompassing and complex. At the broadest level, it is defined as “... *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*” (1987 World Commission on Environment and Development). The concept of sustainable development is based on a recognition of the interdependence of human beings and the global natural environment. Efforts

*4 National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy*

to resolve sustainable development problems rely on cooperation among individuals, industry and governments both within Canada and between nations.

The federal government has become increasingly active, both internationally and domestically, in sustainable development issues. For example, Canada has supported international agreements that address such problems as climate change (the 1992 Climate Change Convention), ozone depletion (1987 Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances), and resource conservation (United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992).

These are complemented by a variety of domestic strategies and policies, including the National Forest Strategy, the Agriculture-Environment Strategy, the Ocean Management Strategy, the Toxic Substances Management Policy and the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy. In 1995, legislation was enacted requiring ministers to have sustainable development strategies prepared for their departments. As well, the *National Process for Climate Change Mitigation* and the Climate Change Secretariat were recently established to address Canada's commitment to reduce its level of greenhouse gas emissions.

Clearly, the area in which the NRTEE operates is one of growing concern and activity. The issues are broad, complex, interdependent and immediate; views regarding the nature of sustainable development problems and related solutions are diverse; the impacts of these problems, moreover, can be devastating. Policy and decision makers, in determining appropriate action on sustainable development issues, often are required to make difficult choices and trade-offs in a context of uncertainty. The NRTEE, as an advisory body, strives to assist decision makers, by providing accurate diagnoses and judgments about the direction and prospects for action.

## D. Financial Spending Plan

The NRTEE comprises one business line:

*The provision of objective views and information regarding the state of the debate on the environment and the economy@*

( \$ thousands )	Forecast Spending 1998-99 <sup>(1)</sup>	<b>Planned Spending 1999-00</b>	Planned Spending 2000-01	Planned Spending 2001-02
<b>Gross Program Spending</b>	3,377	<b>3,308</b>	3,308	3,308
<i>Less:</i> Revenue Credited to the Vote	-	-	-	-
<b>Net Program Spending</b>	3,377	<b>3,308</b>	3,308	3,308
<i>Less:</i> Revenues Credited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund <sup>(2)</sup>	(15)	<b>(20)</b>	(20)	(20)
<i>Plus:</i> Estimated Costs of Services by Other Departments <sup>(3)</sup>	161	<b>161</b>	161	161
<b>Net Cost of Program</b>	3,523	<b>3,449</b>	3,449	3,449

<sup>(1)</sup> Reflects best forecast of total planned spending to the end of the fiscal year.

<sup>(2)</sup> During 1996-97, the NRTEE commenced cost recovery for the organization's publications. Under the NRTEE Act, and Section 29.1 of the Financial Administration Act, the NRTEE has authority to spend any revenues received.

<sup>(3)</sup> The estimated costs of services provided by other departments consist of:

	(\$000)
C accommodation received without charge from Public Works and Government Services Canada	156
C cheque issue and other accounting services received without charge from Public Works and Government Services Canada	3
C pay and benefit services received without charge from Environment Canada	2

### Section III: Plans, Priorities, Strategies and Expected Results

#### A. Summary of Priorities and Expected Results

The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) has a budget of \$3,308,000:

<b>To provide Canadians with:</b>	<b>to be demonstrated by:</b>
Objective views and information regarding the state of the debate, on the environment and the economy, for specific (sustainable development) issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Useful and credible information and advice provided to opinion leaders and decision makers</li><li>• Programs and activities that are relevant, effective and efficient, and that involve appropriate stakeholders</li><li>• Policy makers, opinion leaders and the media viewing the NRTEE as a reliable and impartial source of information and advice on the state of the debate on the environment and the economy, for specific issues.</li></ul>

## **B. Program Plans**

The activities of the NRTEE are organized in a series of programs, each related to a particular issue or aspect of sustainable development. The identification of specific programs, part of the NRTEE's overall planning process, entails the assessment of potential issues in relation to the nature or magnitude of the problem; the activities of others involved in the area; the skills, expertise and interests of current members of the Round Table; and the specific contribution that could be made by the NRTEE.

Many programs — including Education, Foreign Policy, Sustainable Transportation, Eco-efficiency, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading — come to a successful conclusion in the year 1998-99. Future activities in these areas will be minor and will focus on the on-going communication of findings, conclusions and recommendations to appropriate decision makers. For instance, Finance Canada has already acknowledged that the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading program played a key catalytic role in raising the profile of the issue and in preparing the ground for the federal government to collaborate with provincial governments, industry and environmental groups to further pursue specific policy measures.

With the completion of these programs the NRTEE is now identifying and prioritizing work for the future. Following preliminary investigations of a number of different issue areas and consultations with various stakeholders and experts involved in these areas, the NRTEE has decided to focus its efforts in the next two years on four programs:

- Millennium Program;
- Environment, Health and the Economy;
- Aboriginals and Northern Resource Development; and
- Green Budget Reform

Since all four programs are in the scoping and planning phases, specific details regarding activities and outcomes have still to be finalized. However, the following descriptions provide a general summary of the objectives and strategies to be pursued in each area.

### **The Millennium Program**

The Millennium program, a retrospective and future oriented exercise, is intended to identify and prioritize sustainable development challenges and opportunities for the country to 2010. The program will explore and assess issues through a process in which international and national experts and senior representatives of a large range of stakeholder interests present their views and positions to the NRTEE over the course of a year. Some of this information will be the subject of discussion at regional workshops for the general public; reactions will then be taken into account by National Round Table members as they formulate the contents of the final report. In this manner, the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in this final

report will be based on inputs and evidence from a large cross section of experts and stakeholder interests and a sampling of the general public.

The intended results of this process are, through the provision of advice on priorities for the future, better policies and decisions for the environment and economy; heightened awareness of, and more citizen engagement in, environment and economy linkages; as well as increased recognition of the NRTEE as a source of useful and credible information on issues important to Canadians. The Millennium program will also have important operational impacts, by making more effective use of Round Table members as a decision-making body and helping to define the NRTEE's priorities and programs for the next few years.

Although program budgets for 1999-2000 have not been finalized, the Millennium program is expected to be the most resource-intensive of the four priority areas.

### **Environment, Health and the Economy**

The encouraging results of the issues exploration and preliminary scoping in this area have prompted the National Round Table to launch a program. In particular, consultations with stakeholder experts and government officials have confirmed the need to improve policy - and decision-making processes with respect to the integration of scientific information; the assessment of risk and hazards; the establishment of connections between environmental, health and economic considerations; public input and transparency; and the structure of government. The Minister of Health, in endorsing the program, emphasized the importance of arriving at advice that would assist in redesigning decision-making processes as truly inclusive, transparent and grounded in the country's health priorities.

The program plan will be finalized in April, 1999. Publication of the final report containing the findings, conclusions and recommendations is scheduled for the summer or fall of 2000.

### **Aboriginals and Northern Resource Development**

While environmental issues and concerns related to the extraction of non-renewable resources in northern Canada have existed for many years, the recent discovery and subsequent mining of diamonds near Lac de Gras, Northwest Territories, has substantially raised the profile of this subject. Coupled with the growing debate regarding the inherent rights and future of Aboriginal people in Canada is the important and timely question of how northern development can be undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner that also improves the quality of life for those living in the the North.

The NRTEE is currently involved in a scoping process to define the specific program to be

undertaken in this area. To date, consultations have been held with 30 to 40 groups representing industry, business, environmental groups, aboriginal communities and government; there is widespread support for the NRTEE to convene relevant stakeholders, stimulate discussion, analyze areas of agreement and disagreement, and communicate the associated findings and recommendations. The specific activities and outputs of the Aboriginal and Northern Resource Development Program will be confirmed in May, 1999; a final report will be published by the summer or fall of 2000.

### **Green Budget Reform**

The NRTEE believes that the Minister of Finance may be prepared to consider the environment as a major theme or focus for the federal budget in 2000. The Round Table will collaborate with the departments of Finance, Environment, Natural Resources and Industry to identify which environmental issues could be addressed in that budget. From there an intensive round of analyses and stakeholder consultations will be conducted to arrive at recommendations for presentation to the Minister of Finance in the late fall of 1999.

Although the four programs discussed above are new priority areas for the next one to two years, the NRTEE will continue to administer the LEAD Canada Program and plans to refine and strengthen three components of its operations.

### **LEAD Canada**

LEAD Canada's mission is to foster a new generation of decision makers with the knowledge, values and skills to develop national and international policies that emphasize the sustainable use of the earth's resources. It fulfils this mission through the annual selection of 15 promising mid-career professionals to take part in an intensive training program that exposes them to critical environment and development issues and enhances their leadership skills.

Since it joined LEAD International in 1994, LEAD Canada has been funded primarily by Canada's International Development Research Centre while being supported in kind, and its programs implemented, by the NRTEE. The Round Table will continue to deliver the program in its current form to the end of 2000. In addition, LEAD Canada is moving from a less formal governance structure to one harmonized with that of LEAD International; this will be accomplished primarily through the establishment of a National Steering Committee, comprised of a chair, a National Program Director (these first two from the NRTEE), one LEAD Canada Fellow and one independent representative.

### **Operational Priorities**

*10 National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy*

The NRTEE's operational priorities in 1999-2000 are three-fold:

- completion of a major redesign of the client database;
- installation of an activity-based costing system to track NRTEE costs more effectively and, thereby, to support improved budgeting, planning, evaluation and reporting processes; and
- minor adjustments to computer systems to complete the NRTEE's Y2000 upgrade.

### **C. Consolidated Reporting**

As has been described in the preceding sections, the NRTEE is a small agency that works with relevant stakeholders to explore sustainable development issues and to identify actions that will balance economic prosperity with environmental preservation. Consequently, all NRTEE programs relate to sustainable development strategies; all rely as well on partnerships with representatives from a large variety of sectors, including all levels of government, business, labour, academe, and non-governmental organizations. Within the federal government, the NRTEE collaborates most closely with the departments of Environment, Finance, Natural Resources, Industry, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Transport.

## Section IV: Supplementary Information

### Privy Council

<b>Table 1: Spending Authorities - Ministry Summary Part II of the Estimates</b>		
<b>Vote (thousands of dollars)</b>	<b>1999-00 Main Estimates</b>	<b>1998-99 Main Estimates</b>
<b>National Round Table on the Environment and The Economy</b>		
40 Program expenditures	<b>3,057</b>	3,003
(S) Expenditures pursuant to Paragraph 29.1 (1) of the <i>Financial Administration Act</i>	<b>20</b>	15
(S) Contribution to employee benefit plans	<b>231</b>	237
Total Agency	<b>3,308</b>	3,255

## Personnel Information

**Table 2: Planned Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs)**

	1998-99 Forecast	<b>1999-00 Planned</b>	2000-01 Planned	2001-02 Planned
Order-in-Council appointments	1	<b>1</b>	1	1
Executive group	1	<b>1</b>	1	1
Scientific and professional	1	<b>0</b>	0	0
Administrative and foreign service	15	<b>17</b>	17	17
Administrative support	4	<b>3</b>	3	3
<b>Total</b>	22	<b>22</b>	22	22

Note: Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) is a measure of human resource consumption based on average levels of employment.

## Additional Financial Information

**Table 3: Departmental Summary of Standard Objects by Expenditure**

(thousands of dollars)	Forecast Spending 1998-99*	<b>Planned Spending 1999-00</b>	Planned Spending 2000-01	Planned Spending 2001-02
<b>Personnel</b>				
Salaries and wages	1,121	<b>1,094</b>	1,094	1,094
Contribution to employee benefit plans	237	<b>231</b>	231	231
Other personnel costs	64	<b>60</b>	60	60
	1,422	<b>1,385</b>	1,385	1,385
<b>Goods and Services</b>				
Transportation and communication	500	<b>455</b>	455	455
Information	295	<b>320</b>	320	320
Professional and special services	985	<b>985</b>	985	985
Rentals	20	<b>30</b>	30	30
Purchased repairs and upkeep	15	<b>15</b>	15	15
Utilities, materials and supplies	55	<b>43</b>	43	43
Other subsidies and payments	-	<b>-</b>	-	-
Construction and acquisition (land, building and works)	85	<b>75</b>	75	75
	1,955	<b>1,903</b>	1,903	1,903
<b>Gross budgetary expenditures</b>	3,377	<b>3,308</b>	3,308	3,308
<b>Less: Revenue Credited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund</b>	(15)	<b>(20)</b>	(20)	(20)
<b>Net budgetary expenditures</b>	3,362	<b>3,288</b>	3,288	3,288

\* Reflects best forecast of total planned spending to the end of the fiscal year.

**Table 4: Details of Revenue by Program**

<b>Revenue Credited to the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) (\$ Thousands)</b>	<b>Forecast Revenue 1998-99</b>	<b>Planned Revenue 1999-00</b>	<b>Planned Revenue 2000-01</b>	<b>Planned Revenue 2001-02</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Revenue pursuant to Paragraph 29.1 (1) of the <i>Financial Administration Act</i></b>				
- Sales of Publications	15	20	20	20
<b>Total Revenue</b>	15	20	20	20

**Other Information**

**Table 5: Listing of Statutes and Regulations**

The Minister has sole responsibility to Parliament for the following Act:

*National Round Table on the Environment and the  
Economy Act .....S.C., 1993, c.31*