



Sustainable Development

Opportunities for Sustainable Development

*Encouraging
environmental efficiency
and innovation*

December 1997



Atlantic Canada
Opportunities
Agency

Agence de
promotion économique
du Canada atlantique

*Building a stronger economy together
Ensemble, pour une économie plus forte*

Canada

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Message From the Minister



Canada is a country with a high standard of living and growing economy. The United Nations consistently ranks us as one of the best countries in the world to live. At the same time, we exist in a world where our economy is being challenged to respond to increasing globalization, rapid scientific and technological change and mounting environmental pressures.

Canadians want a sustainable economy that offers a high quality of life now and in the future. Sustainable development offers a way of achieving this, by meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Knowledge is a key driver of economic growth, competitiveness and national prosperity. An economy based on knowledge offers significant opportunities for managing economic activity and sustainable development. By bringing together the key departments and agencies responsible for science and technology, regional development, marketplace services and micro-economic policy, the federal government's Industry Portfolio has an important role to play in building a knowledge-based, sustainable economy.

Increasingly, Portfolio members are integrating sustainable development into the way they do business and make their decisions. A significant step in this direction is the tabling of Sustainable Development Strategies for four members of the Portfolio: Industry Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Federal Office of Regional Development - Quebec, and Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Our strategies emphasize three key areas. We will work with our clients and stakeholders to promote sustainable businesses and communities in all regions, with a focus on Canada's small and medium-sized firms. We will encourage the development of environmental technologies and practices, so that Canadian companies become more competitive and gain access to new markets. As well, we will provide an example in our own operations, by making sustainable development an integral part of the way we do business.

The sustainable development strategies of Industry Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Federal Office of Regional Development - Quebec, and Western Economic Diversification Canada, along with those of other federal departments, set the direction for a challenging journey toward a more secure economic, environmental and social future. We have the opportunity to increase our prosperity, enrich our lives and create a better tomorrow for our children. We are committed to working with others to establish sound directions and specific actions to advance sustainable development. The strategies of these four Industry Portfolio partners offer a solid basis for moving forward to achieve a more secure and sustainable future.

The Honourable John Manley
Minister of Industry



Message From the Secretary of State



I am pleased to present this sustainable development strategy as part of the contribution by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) to the federal government's commitment to make government greener.

As Atlantic Canadians we not only share many common values, we also share an excellent quality of life, a sense of security and well-being that we wish to extend to our children and grandchildren. Such a legacy cannot be assured if we destroy the very foundations upon which our happiness and well-being are built, namely a healthy environment and a just society in which everyone can rightfully aspire to steady and fruitful employment.

The old economic models seem to ask us to create and accept "jobs at any cost." But that model is not just detrimental to the environment, it belies the efficiency and competitiveness of the new "eco-efficient" industries. Where industries have complied with strict environmental regulations, they have prospered. The fact is that they have become more efficient and more competitive, and the results show on the bottom line. So much so that, according to one study of the world's top 50 chemical and pharmaceutical companies, leading "eco-efficient" companies out-performed others financially by 27.5% on a global level.

Since its beginning, ACOA has played a major role in helping to create an economic climate in Atlantic Canada that is compatible with the principles of sustainable development. ACOA ensures that all projects which it supports undergo environmental assessment in accordance with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. The Agency has also strongly supported the emerging, and very promising, environmental industries.

ACOA's commitment to the long-term development and competitiveness of Atlantic Canada focuses on fostering innovation and

"eco-efficiency" in small and medium-sized businesses across the region. Sustainable development, competitiveness and job creation are the watchwords of the new economic models.

ACOA itself will attempt to set an example in the region by managing its own internal operations as effectively and efficiently as possible. To guide its actions, the Agency will implement an environmental management system (EMS) based on the best standards and practices available.

ACOA will continue to work with its partners in the four Atlantic provinces in advancing the goals of sustainable development. Most of the initiatives contained in the strategy are best implemented with the active support and participation of *all* the partners.

In preparing this strategy, ACOA has consulted with a variety of stakeholders and discussed how it can address a broad range of issues affecting both the present and future of Atlantic Canadians. In addition to outlining many commitments specific to ACOA, the strategy encourages public and private-sector organizations to incorporate sustainable development in their own decision-making processes. ACOA will also review this strategy at least every three years.

I would encourage you to read—and put into effect—these same principles of sustainable development as you carry out your own activities.

The Honourable Fred J. Mifflin



Executive Summary

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

ACOA's main role is to continue supporting SMEs as key vehicles for more sustainable communities and employment, and to act as a partner with other departments and governments to help support the sustainable development of Atlantic Canada

Sustainable development is in many ways compatible with long-term economic development and the current role of ACOA in the region. Sustainable development means achieving social and economic goals without harming the environment on which present and future generations depend. Environmental factors influence competitiveness, since businesses that are able to reduce resource consumption and obtain savings through the use of more efficient processes will have a comparative advantage. With respect to ACOA's mandate, sustainable development involves the development of more competitive, resource-efficient and sustainable businesses in the Atlantic region.

ACOA already ensures that all projects which it supports are subject to appropriate environmental assessment. The agency has also provided assistance to many environmental industries under its existing programs. ACOA can enhance its role in helping Atlantic Canadians seize further opportunities for a sustainable path of development. It will adopt a balanced approach which considers and responds to the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development.

In the preparation of its sustainable development strategy, ACOA held a series of external consultations with partners and those stakeholders expressing an interest in the sustainable development of the region. Extensive consultations were also held with representative groups of ACOA employees

The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission)

on policy and program delivery, as well as on the management of ACOA's internal operations.

These consultations confirmed the identification of key sustainable development issues in the region and identified areas where ACOA has a strategic role to play. ACOA's main role is to continue supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as key vehicles for more sustainable communities and employment, and to act as a partner with other departments and governments to help support the sustainable development of Atlantic Canada.

ACOA has identified the following three broad strategy goals:

Goal 1. *Setting an example in the environmental management of ACOA's operations.* ACOA will build capacity among ACOA staff to recognize and capitalize on sustainable development opportunities, make more efficient use of resources, and reduce or prevent pollution and waste. To assist in the implementation and management of these objectives, ACOA will implement an enhanced environmental management system (EMS).

Goal 2. *Promoting sustainable communities and businesses in the Atlantic region.* ACOA will continue to encourage environmental efficiency and innovation among clients and other businesses, in keeping with ACOA's mandate and strategic



ACOA's sustainable development strategy will be delivered through existing business plan priorities for economic development

priorities. In cooperation with its partners, ACOA will also aim to promote awareness of sustainable economic development opportunities at the community level, and to provide better information for ecosystem-based management. The agency will foster greater cooperation and consultation with departments, governments and non-governmental organizations.

Goal 3. Advancing the environmental industry sector in Atlantic Canada. ACOA will continue to encourage the creation of opportunities in environmental industries.

ACOA's sustainable development strategy will be delivered through existing business plan priorities for economic development. The implementation of the strategy will vary from province to province, taking into account differing needs and priorities.

ACOA will continue to work with all stakeholders (communities, businesses, governments and individuals) to further sustainable development in the Atlantic region. This strategy will also involve working with others in the community to ensure ACOA's operations are environmentally sound.

ACOA is also putting into place, as part of its EMS, performance measures which will permit the agency to monitor, report on, and improve its capacity to achieve specific targets on an ongoing basis.

A sustainable development strategy includes the following elements:

- **Departmental Profile.** Identification of what the department does and how it does it.
- **Issue Scan.** Assessment of the department's activities in terms of their impact on sustainable development.
- **Consultations.** Perspective of clients, partners and other stakeholders on departmental priorities for sustainable development and how to achieve them.
- **Goals, Objectives and Targets.** Identification of the department's goals and objectives for sustainable development, including benchmarks for measuring performance.



Part I: Introduction

The mission of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) to foster long-term economic development of the region is compatible with the concept of sustainable development

International studies show that a sound natural and social environment is an asset which helps attract investment and enhance competitiveness

Since its inception, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) has worked to foster economic growth and prosperity in the Atlantic region. The mission of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)—to foster long-term economic development of the region—is compatible with the concept of sustainable development. ACOA already contributes to sustainable development in many ways. It works with clients to help them become more innovative and productive by promoting the efficient use of resources and the development of competitive products and services. The agency uses its extensive network of district offices to encourage its clients and

stakeholders to pursue sustainable development goals. The agency has also provided assistance to many environmental industries under its existing programs.

ACOA is one of many federal departments with programs that influence the sustainable development of the region. Other governments and organizations also contribute to sustainable development of Atlantic Canada. As a result, many of ACOA's activities are undertaken in partnership with other stakeholders. For example, ACOA works with the four provinces on their programs targeted primarily at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Since ACOA's direct programming represents less than two percent of the total federal spending in the Atlantic region, it is essential for the agency to work closely with its federal partners.

Sustainable development involves the creation of more competitive, efficient and lasting enterprises in the Atlantic region. It implies building on the natural resources of the region, working to sustain the quality of life in Atlantic communities and fostering a milieu in which a strong regional economy can thrive. International studies show that a sound natural and social environment is an asset which helps attract investment and enhance competitiveness. ACOA is well positioned to promote businesses and communities throughout the Atlantic region. The agency can enhance its role in helping Atlantic Canadians seize further opportunities for a sustainable path of development.

In the current global economy, trade and investment decisions are increasingly related to the competitiveness of nations, regions and firms. The most competitive firms succeed in obtaining market share and profit from the

“The environment [is] a regional development asset which needs to be conserved: it is apparent ...that the quality of the environment can be an asset for regional development purposes. This is true with respect to the resource industry regions, tourist regions, higher-level tertiary regions or urban deconcentration regions. In these regions ...people and activities are prompted to locate there [because of] quality of the environment, whether this concerns the quality of life, diversity of types of natural environment, the quantity of resources, the low level of pollution, the absence of risks, or lastly, the quality of the environmental heritage.

OECD, *Strategies Towards Sustainable Regional Development*, 1996.



global economy. Likewise, the most competitive locations (be they nations or regions) are able to attract foreign investment.

According to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the competitiveness of an investment location depends on a number of factors, of which social and environmental factors are very important.

Environmental factors influence the competitiveness of firms since firms that are able to reduce resource consumption and obtain savings through the use of more efficient processes will have a comparative advantage. In addition to seeking a clean natural environment, firms also look for locations with social stability, pleasant communities and good public safety. Atlantic Canada has a comparative advantage relative to these factors (see box).

Sustainable development makes good business sense and sound environmental stewardship represents a key competitive advantage for regions working to attract new investment. Sustainable development means long-lasting employment and stable communities. The efficient use of natural resources, the mobilization of the skills in communities and the reduction of waste and pollution are all elements supporting economic success. A balanced approach which considers and addresses the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development is therefore central to ACOA's sustainable development strategy.

ACOA recognizes the importance of economic, social and environmental factors that can impact on the future of the Atlantic region, and will continue to integrate sustainable development principles into its program delivery and internal operations.¹

Environmental factors influence the competitiveness of firms since firms that reduce resource consumption and obtain savings through more efficient processes will have a comparative advantage

Sustainable development makes good business sense and sound environmental stewardship represents a key competitive advantage for regions working to attract new investment

Research by Informetrica Limited, the North American Policy Group and the University of Dalhousie, commissioned in 1996 by ACOA, concluded that the Atlantic region had a marked advantage over other regions of the world in the availability of a clean environment and good quality of life. These factors contribute to the overall competitiveness of the Atlantic region and help position the region as a good investment location. These results were also reported by KPMG in their recent study of business costs in Atlantic Canada, Europe and the United States, *The Atlantic Canada Advantage*, as being the major factors in making Atlantic Canada one of the world's best investment locations.

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- ¹ Sample sustainable development principles from the Rio Declaration (1992):
- people are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature;
 - we should use the precautionary approach to protect the environment;
 - environmental protection should be an integral part of development;
 - the polluter should bear the cost of pollution.

Key business principles for a sustainable and competitive future from the Business Council on National Issues (1992) include:

- meet or exceed environmental laws; set company standards where no laws exist;
- evaluate sustainability of any proposed project, product or service;
- use life-cycle management, from initial research through to ultimate disposal;
- facilitate transfer of environmental technologies.



Each department will use the lens of its own mandate to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development

Strategy Requirements

The *Auditor General Act*, as amended in 1995 (s. 24), requires each federal government department and certain agencies (including ACOA) to prepare a sustainable development strategy and to table it in the House of Commons by December 15, 1997. Each department or agency must report annually on its progress, and each strategy will be updated at least every three years.

The 1995 amendments to the *Auditor General Act* also created the position of Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development. The Commissioner will monitor and report on the extent to which each department or agency implements its action plans and meets the objectives set out in its strategy. Thus, departments and agencies will be held accountable for their progress toward sustainable development.

In designing its strategy, ACOA has followed the direction set out in *A Guide to Green Government* in 1995. As outlined in the Guide, ACOA has prepared a sustainable development strategy that is:

- comprehensive, dealing both with its policies and programs that influence others and with how the agency manages its internal operations
- results-oriented, identifying results which the agency intends to achieve as well as how it will measure its performance
- developed in consultation with staff, clients, partners and other stakeholders.

In its strategy, ACOA has included the three core concepts of sustainable development outlined in the *Guide*:

- quality of life, recognizing that it is not just the traditional measures of economic welfare that matter
- integrated decision-making to ensure that progress is made on each and all of the dimensions—social, economic and environmental—of sustainable development
- equity, with fair distribution of the costs and benefits of development between and within nations, and between generations (e.g. the intergenerational legacy of natural heritage, economic opportunities and the determinants of health).

Other Legislative and Policy Requirements

As part of the Greening of Government initiative, the Government of Canada is committed to meeting relevant environmental laws and regulations and, where appropriate, provincial and international standards. ACOA will continue this commitment because regulatory compliance is seen as a key element for improving environmental performance.

At the international level, Canada is signatory to a number of agreements, including ones that address ozone-depleting substances, climate change, biodiversity, export of hazardous waste, acid precipitation and ocean dumping. International commitments under these conventions are implemented under various federal laws and policies, as are domestic commitments for environmental protection that successive governments have made to Canadians.

In addition to the *Auditor General Act*, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) is a key federal environmental law with which ACOA must comply for its programs. The CEAA provides a framework for environmental impact assessment of

All departments must become sustainable development departments, both in terms of their policies that influence the decisions of others, and in how they manage their internal operations



ACOA will integrate sustainable development into its internal operations in accordance with the Greening of Government Operations framework

All projects being considered for funding through ACOA receive environmental screening according to the procedures established under the CEAA

federal projects:

- to ensure that the environmental effects of projects receive careful consideration
- to promote sustainable development
- to ensure that projects do not cause significant adverse environmental effects outside the jurisdictions in which the projects are carried out
- to ensure that there is an opportunity for public participation.

The CEAA requires departments and agencies to have environmental assessment review procedures in place for physical works and activities. The Act applies directly to ACOA and, therefore, all projects being considered for funding through ACOA receive environmental screening according to the procedures established under the CEAA. For those projects identified as having potential negative environmental effects, mitigation measures are prescribed as part of the conditions of a letter of offer. Projects which cannot meet the CEAA requirements are not funded. In its normal course of business, ACOA has no management or control of activities governed by other key environmental laws such as the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* the *Fisheries Act* and the *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act*. If at any time ACOA becomes directly involved in activities governed by these acts, they would become more relevant.

The scope of ACOA's internal operations is limited mainly to office work. Since ACOA employees use inter-office transportation, one other federal environmental law, the *Alternative Fuels Act* (AFA), applies directly. The AFA requires that federal vehicle fleets use alternative fuels whenever it is cost-effective and operationally feasible and that departments adhere to a schedule for procuring vehicles that operate on alternative fuels. While use of alternative fuels is not yet feasible in most parts of the Atlantic region, as alternatives become available, ACOA will be required to respond.

ACOA is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities in accordance with the *Greening of Government Operations* framework to ensure federal departments integrate sustainable development into their internal operations. The framework asks that departments meet or exceed standards which are prescribed in environmental statutes and regulations and conform with provincial standards and guidelines as appropriate. The framework encourages federal departments to emulate best practices from the private and public sectors in areas such as procurement, waste management, water and energy use, motor vehicle fleets and land use.



Part II: Consultations

ACOA has acted to obtain the views of Atlantic Canadians to assist in the development of this strategy

Sustainable development is a shared responsibility involving individuals and organizations. ACOA has acted to obtain the views of Atlantic Canadians to assist in the development of this strategy. In preparation for the consultations, ACOA circulated a discussion paper, *Sustainable Development Strategy: Background for Consultations*, outlining suggested priorities and directions being considered for its sustainable development strategy. Information was expressly sought through the consultations on the:

- current issues of importance to Atlantic Canadians which pertain to elements of sustainable development
- current role of ACOA relative to these issues
- potential role of ACOA in dealing with these issues
- tools which ACOA may use in carrying out its role.

To ensure the views obtained were representative of a range of interests, ACOA held an extensive series of external consultations with partners and those stakeholders expressing an interest in the sustainable development of the region. These consultations were held in St. John's, Charlottetown, Fredericton and Halifax.

Invitations were extended to a wide variety of people involved in business and industry associations, community organizations, academia, non-governmental organizations, provincial and federal departments, and Aboriginal communities (see Appendix C). Participants in the consultations included a broad range of representatives from these groups. The sessions provided ACOA with

input for its strategy and program delivery.

Key input received in public consultations included the following:

Opportunities

Participants indicated support for:

- a continued focus for ACOA on SMEs in the region
- consideration for inclusion of a range of businesses (e.g. aquaculture, informatics, ecotourism, environmental consulting services) in ACOA programs to enhance environmental industries
- an enhanced role for ACOA in fostering awareness, knowledge and skills to take advantage of sustainable development opportunities
- widening the sphere of ACOA's influence beyond traditional clients, with emphasis on the provision of advice, technical support and education for businesses and communities
- emphasis on financial savings and direct benefits from investment in environmental management practices and purchases of environmental technologies, services and products
- adoption of a wide approach for future consultations and collaboration, including youth, women, business associations, universities, municipalities, provinces, federal departments and First Nations
- priority areas and directions suggested in the discussion paper circulated to all participants prior to the consultation sessions.



Certainly, sustainable development, as far as we are concerned, makes good business sense and I think we have to look at that as a philosophy and make sure that the average person realizes and understands why it makes good business sense.

Burf Ploughman, Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters of Newfoundland, St John's Consultations, September 16, 1997.

Constraints

Participants registered their concern relative to the following areas, which may act as constraints on sustainable development for the region:

- apparent duplication and/or lack of coordination between various governments and ministries, particularly in providing information, harmonizing review procedures and providing ease of access to businesses and communities
- lack of easy access to information on key sustainable development or green business opportunities
- any increase in time or labour-consuming environmental review procedures associated with access to support from ACOA programs
- the possibility that, on the one hand, environmental aims could overshadow ACOA's traditional emphasis on

economic development and, on the other hand, short-term and medium-term needs for employment could overshadow priorities related to the environment.

To supplement the consultations with external stakeholders, extensive consultations were held with representative groups of ACOA employees on policy and program delivery, as well as on specific areas of internal operations. Internal consultations were held in St. John's, Moncton, Charlottetown, Fredericton, Halifax and Ottawa, as well as in Sydney with Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) employees involved in delivering ACOA programs in Cape Breton. These sessions provided ACOA's employees with the opportunity to contribute to the development of the strategy. Employee input focused on the effects of current programs, review procedures, compliance monitoring, logistics of delivery and the greening of internal operations.

Key areas of input received from employees include:

Opportunities

- support for the development and implementation of an environmental management system (EMS) at ACOA
- support for training and tools which would allow employees to respond better to the challenge of integrating sustainable development principles and practices into their activities
- support for greening the workplace, where cost savings could be generated from efficiency in resource use.

Constraints

- concern that new duties associated with implementation of the SDS would be required without appropriate resources



Both internal and external consultations focused on the specific commitments that would be adopted in this strategy; additional consultations will follow in years to come as part of ACOA's commitment to continuous improvement

- demand for quick turnaround limits ability to factor in efficiency and environment
- lack of access to a “green procurement” catalogue limits use of recycled products and green hotels
- little or no control over management of facilities and choice of cleaning products and techniques
- security imperatives that require shredding of paper, thus reducing opportunities for recycling
- higher costs for recycled material and for collection in Atlantic region can reduce opportunities for recycling and green purchasing
- small-screen computer monitors that cause employees to have to print out copies to read or review documents and that may impede effective use of electronic forms
- lack of access to propane and ethanol in many parts of Atlantic Canada limits alternative fuel use
- little encouragement of flexible working hours affects reduction of vehicle use and human stress
- inadequate public transportation and absence of shower facilities reduces ease of employee use of alternatives to cars, such as walking or bicycling
- poor indoor air quality and natural light affects working conditions.

ACOA has begun a number of initiatives to green the workplace, including extensive use of electronic mail and teleconferencing, use of recycling where there is a municipal system in place, and use of electronic forms to replace paper. Most opportunities available have been realized. The development of the EMS for the agency will facilitate the identification of further opportunities and will also address the removal, where practical, of the constraints.

Both internal and external consultations focused on the specific commitments that would be adopted in this strategy. Additional consultations will follow in years to come as part of ACOA's commitment to continuous improvement.

The public consultations served to confirm the strategic role for ACOA in supporting the viability of small businesses and through them the communities in which they are located. Given the major economic, social and environmental concerns in the region, it was recognized that no one agency or organization has the capacity to provide all the solutions.

There was general support for a continued focus for ACOA on small and medium-sized enterprises as a catalyst for more sustainable development in Atlantic Canada. In particular, the consultations revealed a number of opportunities for ACOA to make its current policies and programs more supportive of sustainable development, and several opportunities for ACOA to act as a facilitator of cooperation among other departments and governments active in the long-term development of the region.



Part III: Departmental Profile

The legislated mandate of ACOA is to “increase opportunity for economic development in Atlantic Canada and, more particularly, to enhance the growth of earned incomes and employment opportunities in that region.” ACOA seeks to provide people with the encouragement, advice and access to information, capital and technology they need to start and expand their businesses.

Mission: To foster, in a strategic partnership with the people of Atlantic Canada, the long-term economic development of the region through the renewal of the Atlantic entrepreneurial spirit.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, 1997-1998 Estimates, 1997.

To fulfill its mandate, ACOA pursues two distinct goals:

- to ensure that a wide variety of business development tools and resources serve the diverse needs of the region’s emerging and existing entrepreneurs
- to ensure that all economic development programs and activities in Atlantic Canada are coordinated and designed to improve the climate for business growth.

Since January 1996, ACOA has operated within the Industry Portfolio of the federal government. The portfolio structure brings together 13 key organizations responsible for science, technology, regional development, marketplace services and micro-economic policy.

The Head Office for ACOA is in Moncton, New Brunswick. Each Atlantic provincial capital (St. John’s, Halifax, Charlottetown and Fredericton) has a regional Vice-President responsible for the delivery of ACOA programs. The Ottawa office, also headed by a Vice-President, advocates the interests of Atlantic Canadians in the development of national policies and programs, including the interests of the region’s entrepreneurs related to federal procurement, and carries out research related to economic development.

In total, ACOA has 384 full-time equivalent positions in its work force (1997-98). The agency occupies space in 16 locations: the four provincial capitals, plus Moncton, Ottawa and ten smaller centres. It owns various office furniture and office machines. Its fleet consists of 19 vehicles. It is a significant consumer of paper used to keep records, publish reports and circulate information. All offices are linked by an electronic mail system.

Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) is a federal Crown corporation with its own mission and activities; however, it has a close working relationship with ACOA and delivers some of ACOA’s programs in Cape Breton. The Vice-President and staff of ECBC are located at head office in Sydney, with a satellite office in Port Hawkesbury.²

² Unless otherwise noted, reference to ACOA in this strategy also applies to the delivery of its programs by ECBC. For additional information on ECBC, see Appendix A.



ACOA's activities are divided into two main areas (*Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, 1997-1998 Estimates*):

- development, which supports and promotes opportunities for economic development through advocating the interests of Atlantic Canada, with particular emphasis on SMEs
- corporate administration, involving the internal operations of the agency, to manage ACOA's resources efficiently and effectively and to provide administrative systems and services to enhance management decision-making, accountability and operational control.

ACOA has six strategic priorities (*Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, 1997-1998 Estimates*). As detailed below, each of these has the potential to be integrated with the emerging sustainable development focus:

- **Access to Capital and Information** to provide greater access to capital and information for Atlantic SMEs. Capital markets are increasingly building risk assessment into their investment decisions. Investors seek assurances that their investments are free from environmental and other liabilities. As well, stable social and economic conditions can attract new investment. Access to capital for smaller enterprises can be a key building block for sustainable communities.
- **Business Management Practices** to promote increased awareness and use of better management practices by SMEs. Environmental management systems, use of standards such as ISO 14000, and compliance with a range of workplace, environmental and other standards may provide enhanced market access. These can also yield benefits in waste reduction, production efficiency and product quality.

- **Entrepreneurship Development** to contribute to an increase in the number of Atlantic Canadians who choose to start their own business. One of the fastest growing sectors for new businesses is the environmental industries sector, providing emerging opportunities which range from cleanup technologies to informatics and monitoring to ecotourism.

- **Innovation and Technology** to foster increased SME productivity and revenues from development and commercialization of new products or processes and technology diffusion. Atlantic Canada already has some success stories in, for example, environmental monitoring, composting and informatics.

- **Tourism** to implement activities that will enhance the framework in which tourism operations can increase economic growth and activity. Sustainable tourism development and the emergence of ecotourism and community-based tourism as new niches may provide opportunities for Atlantic Canada.

- **Trade** to help develop an increased number of new exporters and increased sales by existing exporters in current and growing markets. Opportunities exist for those companies that become more eco-efficient and cost-effective in their process, thereby enhancing their competitiveness, and also for those environmental industries that have developed products and services for a growing international market.

ACOA links its strategic priorities to its clients through the delivery of the following programs:

- **Advocacy, Coordination and Procurement**—to advocate Atlantic Canada's interests, priorities and concerns in federal government policy making,



program design and project selection using a network of strategic alliances and partnerships on a local and regional basis

- *Business Development Program (BDP)*—to provide Atlantic SMEs with financial assistance by offering access to capital in the form of interest-free, unsecured, repayable contributions
- *Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs)*—to provide access to information to help the potential or existing entrepreneur in sorting out the process and requirements in starting, expanding and/or managing a business
- *Communications*—to promote favourable economic change in Atlantic Canada by providing communication services that directly support and enhance the program and development activities of the agency
- *Community-Based Economic Development (CBED)*—to encourage communities to take increased responsibility for their own economic development by delivering programs and services which support small business growth

- *Federal-provincial programs (e.g. COOPERATION)*—to improve the climate for economic growth by means of comprehensive federal-provincial cost-shared agreements (and/or regional economic development agreements).

ACOA is also involved in the delivery of the following programs on behalf of the Government of Canada:

- *The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS)*—to assist communities affected by the closure of the groundfish fishery by providing project investments and long-term employment opportunities
- *Base closure adjustment activities*—to provide special funds in a number of communities in Atlantic Canada recently affected by Canadian Forces Base closures
- *Borden-Cape Tormentine redevelopment programs*—to fund development opportunities
- *Canada Infrastructure Works Program (CIWP)* a national program to invest in public construction projects.



Part IV: Issue Scan

Aspects of ACOA Activities Related to Sustainable Development

ACOA is present at many of the key fora where its influence may be able to help in the choice of sustainable development paths

The agency can influence sustainable development in two ways: through policies and programs which inform and fund private sector businesses, and through the management of internal operations.

- *Policies and Programs.* ACOA addresses Atlantic Canada's socio-economic concerns through its efforts to increase the incomes of Atlantic Canadians by increasing regional employment opportunities. The agency has also been involved in a variety of initiatives that have helped achieve environmental objectives in many sectors. These are reflected in ACOA's strategic priorities. However, opportunities exist to better address in concert these interrelated issues. Environmental concerns are now being recognized as increasingly important and are linked to the region's capacity to address socio-economic concerns. ACOA ensures that all projects receive environmental assessment according to CEAA provisions.

Since its inception, ACOA has invested in thousands of SMEs across the Atlantic region. At the same time, ACOA provides information, counselling and advice to current and potential entrepreneurs. The businesses ACOA supports may exploit or help conserve natural resources, produce or reduce pollution, alter landscapes, or change the distribution or size of plant and animal populations, while concurrently offering particular groups of people employment and investment returns. Through its extensive network of partners in the public and private sectors, ACOA is well

ACOA can help influence funding applicants, recipients, and the region's business community to adopt sustainable development by setting an example for others

equipped to raise awareness of sustainable development and foster behavioural change among SMEs in rural and urban areas. ACOA also has broad experience in regional coordination and consultation activities. Thus, there is potential to expand ACOA's influence on sustainable development of the Atlantic region through information and/or funding. As well, ACOA is present at many of the key fora where its influence may be able to help in the choice of sustainable development paths.

- *Internal Operations.* Compared to the potential of the businesses in which ACOA invests to influence the Atlantic region's sustainable development, ACOA's internal operations are likely to have a very minor effect. Nonetheless, ACOA can help influence funding applicants, recipients and the region's business community to adopt sustainable development by setting an example for others. ACOA is developing an EMS for its operations and will work to green its offices through, for example, reduction of waste, reduction of paper and energy use, and sensitization of its employees about sustainable development and sound environmental management.

Issues Affecting Sustainable Development in Atlantic Canada

ACOA's activities take place in the context of the broader concerns and issues of Atlantic Canada. In some areas, ACOA can play an active role; in other areas, matters are in the purview of other governments or federal departments and form the milieu in which ACOA operates.

ACOA's consultations for this sustainable development strategy were the main vehicle



for identifying key sustainable development issues, along with a review of economic, social and environmental studies which focused on Atlantic Canada. Participants recognized that ACOA is only one of many players in the development of the region, but that its activities are often set within the context of these broader regional issues.

Social, economic and environmental values are integral to sustainable development. Key socio-economic values include the maintenance of health and well-being, equity, peace and security, culture, employment and income. Key environmental values relate to the conservation of natural resources and the prevention of pollution. Where these values are compromised, serious concerns result.

There are many concerns affecting the sustainable development of Atlantic Canada,³ including:

- *Natural Resource Depletion.* The Atlantic economy is largely based on sectors which make use of natural resources. The fisheries sector, for example, has seen a substantial decline in stocks, particularly northern cod. Efforts to offset the decline in fisheries activities have encouraged diversification to other sectors such as aquaculture, energy, food processing, and hotels and catering for tourists. Other renewable resources are also under intensive pressure, with timber supplies in deficit in some areas

³ For a more extensive report on the sustainability of the Atlantic region, see the 1994 *State of the Environment for the Atlantic Region*, which identifies key problem areas and describes conditions and trends regarding air, water, land and wildlife resources of the region (see Appendix B). The report describes the relationship between human activities and environmental quality, human health and the economy as a basis to improve decision-making within government and industry. For further information on the Atlantic economic environment, please refer to ACOA's *Performance Report to Parliament*, 1996.

for the next decade or more.

- *Pollution.* For many years, chemicals and wastes from industry and communities were released untreated into Atlantic Canada's air, water and soil. Even so, Atlantic Canada has a comparative advantage through its relatively clean environment. The need for continual reduction of pollution remains a public concern.
- *Physical Degradation of Land and Landscapes.* Soil erosion, due to intensive cultivation and land use practices, remains a concern in parts of the Atlantic region. Eroded sediments have harmed some watercourses and, in some cases, adversely affected shell fisheries.
- *Changes in Biodiversity.* The protection of rare and endangered species and the preservation of unique and representative ecosystems are increasingly in demand by the public. The designation and protection of parks and areas of ecological significance is important to the quality of life and the economic well-being of Atlantic Canadians, including those who work in the region's large tourism industry.
- *Unemployment.* Unemployment rates in Atlantic Canada are the highest in the country. Loss of jobs in natural resource sectors has been a significant concern. The loss of traditional jobs in resource sectors, and the creation of long-term employment in new and competitive sectors (such as tourism, telecommunications and environmental technologies), represent key challenges for the region.



The challenge is to find ways to help create long-term economic opportunities and contribute most effectively to the sustainable development of Atlantic Canada

Unsustainable Communities. A major social concern for the region is the disruption of communities due to plant shut-downs in resource-based industries and closure of military bases, with the related loss of social infrastructure. In many cases, out-migration—especially the departure of younger individuals—has compromised the ability to provide the range of services necessary for sustainable communities.

The challenge for ACOA is to determine how its programs can best contribute to the creation of long-term economic opportunities for the region, and thus contribute most effectively to the sustainable development of Atlantic Canada.

Overall, what may be most important, rather than the impact from any particular industry or toxic chemical or particular practice, may be the cumulative effects of many seemingly insignificant small damages to the environment ... Assessing cumulative impacts will require greater ecological knowledge and greater understanding of the consequences of the impacts of human activities.

Environment Canada, 1994. *The State of the Environment Report for the Atlantic Region*, p.17.



Part V: The Framework for Action

ACOA will continue to encourage environmental efficiency and innovation among clients and other businesses, in keeping with ACOA's mandate and strategic priorities

ACOA has a recognized role as a facilitator for enterprise development in Atlantic Canada. Its role as a lender, provider of information, facilitator for joint projects, and advisor on opportunities suggests certain areas where ACOA can have the greatest impact on the sustainable development of the region. In particular, ACOA has a strong presence in the support for small and medium-sized enterprises, which can be a strong building block for sustainable communities and continuing employment.

ACOA has already established its priorities for economic development in its business plan in the areas of access to capital and information, business management practices, entrepreneurship development, innovation and technology, tourism, and trade. ACOA's sustainable development strategy will be delivered through these existing priorities. The strategy also has a component dealing with improving the environmental performance of ACOA's internal operations.

The implementation of the strategy will vary from province to province, taking into account differing needs and priorities

In ACOA's framework for action, the rationale for ACOA's actions to support sustainable development is presented. This framework includes the identification of three broad goals which provide an overall sense of direction and guidance for its actions. Under each goal, several more specific objectives have been defined. These objectives outline ACOA's main areas of effort to support sustainable development for the region. Where possible, specific, time-bound, measurable targets have been defined along with the actions which will be taken to achieve these targets (see Tables, Part VIII). Efficiency and economy will be key factors in the definition of specific actions. These commitments respond to the results of the consultations and to the work done to identify ACOA's role and strategic capability in the region.

ACOA's strategy consists of three broad goals:

Goal 1: Setting an example in the environmental management of ACOA's operations

Goal 2: Promoting sustainable communities and businesses in the Atlantic region

Goal 3: Advancing the environmental industry sector in Atlantic Canada.

ACOA must work with all stakeholders (communities, businesses, governments and individuals) to further sustainable development in the Atlantic Region. ACOA's strategy will also involve working with others in the community to make sure systems are in place to allow ACOA to make its operations more environmentally sound (e.g. recycling facilities).

The goals, objectives, targets and actions which are being presented also respond to remarks made by the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development in his first report to Parliament. The Commissioner noted the need to redress the traditional imbalance among the many elements of sustainable development by paying particular attention to the environment. At the same time, ACOA will continue to seek to support economic and social sustainability through its policies and activities. In particular, ACOA will work through its programs to help Atlantic Canadians make the adjustment to a sustainable path.

While this strategy as a whole applies to ACOA and its regional offices, its implementation will vary from province to province, taking into account differing needs and priorities.



The following sections summarize the contents of the tables and the rationale for the elements of the strategy.

Goal 1: Setting an Example in the Environmental Management of ACOA's Operations

A key element in ACOA's strategy is the development and implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS) for all of its operations

ACOA's direct impact on the environment through its own internal activities is small relative to larger departments and organizations; however, the agency is prepared to demonstrate its leadership by example. For the agency to be successful in helping businesses and communities work towards sustainable development, it cannot ask others to be less resource-intensive in their activities and to reach a certain level of standard if it is not prepared to do likewise (see Table, Part VIII).

A key element in ACOA's strategy is the development and implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS) for all of its operations. This system will identify opportunities, responsibility for action, and the means of monitoring, reviewing and improving ACOA's internal environmental performance. ACOA will be seeking the most cost-effective means to achieve its targets and objectives. In some cases, it is expected that cost savings will occur, for example, through the reduction of paper usage.

Owing to its widespread reach and influence in the business community, ACOA has an opportunity to make a difference by improving and showcasing its own environmental performance, particularly in the areas of strategic planning, human resource management, communications and environmental auditing. ACOA will build capacity among its staff to deliver the sustainable development agenda, make more efficient use of resources, and reduce or prevent pollution and waste in its operations. Key areas for action include the

implementation of training programs for staff, the review of opportunities for savings in paper, energy and water, and changes to procedures which will enable employees to be more efficient in their day-to-day activities. The agency will continue its existing efforts towards sound environmental management, share information with stakeholders, adopt new targets and take new actions to set an example from which others can learn.

Goal 2: Promoting Sustainable Communities and Businesses in the Atlantic Region

Key to ACOA's mandate is the support of economic activity in the Atlantic region. Economic success depends on the region's continuing environmental integrity and sustainable management of natural resources, as well as maintenance of the region's social fabric. There is an important role for ACOA in ensuring that the interdependency of society, the biophysical environment and the economy is recognized. A new focus is on increasing the efficiency of resource use and innovation, reducing and/or controlling pollution, and mitigating physical disturbances. According to a study by the Hamburg Environmental Institute of the world's top 50 chemical and pharmaceutical companies, the leading eco-efficient companies out-performed others financially by 27.5% on a global level.

As a priority, ACOA will continue to encourage environmental efficiency and innovation among clients and other businesses, in keeping with ACOA's mandate and strategic priorities. ACOA will examine its current project review procedures with the objective of providing enhancements, where appropriate. This will help minimize negative impacts on the biophysical environment resulting from the activities of its small and medium-sized enterprise clients. Since sustainable

According to a study by the Hamburg Environmental Institute of the world's top 50 chemical and pharmaceutical companies, the leading eco-efficient companies out-performed others financially by 27.5% on a global level



Sustainable development is a smart business idea whose time has come

development makes good business sense, ACOA will work to help identify and enhance the positive benefits of client activities, with a focus on eco-efficiency and natural resource management. ACOA will also strengthen its efforts to provide information on sustainable development opportunities related to businesses and communities within the region, in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders.

ACOA will promote awareness of sustainable development opportunities at the community level through better access to techniques and information and specific support for sustainable development initiatives. Information exchange on tools and opportunities is important to small and medium-sized enterprises and can help sustain the livelihood of inhabitants in rural communities. ACOA will also work with existing structures by providing greater opportunities for consultation with relevant government departments, community organizations, universities and First Nations. These efforts will explore ways to benefit from ecosystem-based management, for example, in the tourism sector.

ACOA will also provide enhanced information on how sustainable development concepts can be integrated into the Atlantic region's businesses. Where appropriate, it will encourage and help businesses to meet suitable environmental standards and receive certification. ACOA will encourage clients and other businesses to go beyond compliance. It will facilitate the adoption of environmental management systems and recognized standards for businesses or groups of businesses. While there are costs associated with environmental certification such as ISO 14000, studies and experiences elsewhere show that there are direct financial benefits in the short and long term when an organization adopts certain standards and practices to improve its environmental

performance and become more efficient. In addition to these market incentives, ACOA has an important role in providing information and researching links between efficiency standards and competitiveness, and could consider direct incentives in its review of current funding.

ACOA will foster greater cooperation and consultation between governments and other stakeholders to promote harmonization in sustainable development strategies, the environmental assessment process and consultative processes.

Sustainable development depends on ecosystems which can continue to perform critical life-support, social, cultural and productive functions over time. Ecosystem-based management means making decisions based on a broad understanding of the likely effects of activities on these ecosystems and their components. The health of ocean and

Certification for the sake of certification should not be the goal— it should be the encouragement of responsible environmental stewardship.

Bishop's Falls Development Corporation.
Submission made to ACOA. September 16, 1997.

ACOA will foster greater cooperation and consultation between governments and other stakeholders to promote harmonization in sustainable development strategies

forest ecosystems directly determines whether there are fish or trees. Atlantic jobs and Atlantic communities can be sustained only if the oceans and forests are protected.

Ecosystem-based management involves understanding the carrying capacity, resilience and sustainability of ecosystems for particular stresses, and calls for conservation, stewardship and respect for nature. The federal government has recognized its role in encouraging all sectors of society to use



ecosystem-based management and in enhancing the flow of information among scientists, governments and the business community.

ACOA will work to create opportunities in environmental industries by facilitating access to information and to market opportunities for current and potential enterprises

ACOA can play an important role in promoting ecosystem-based management by making it a priority to facilitate the use of ecological information in decision-making. ACOA will help businesses and other organizations to improve their understanding of the state of the Atlantic environment. It will work with stakeholders, other governments and departments to assist in the preparation of sustainable development strategies.

In concert with other organizations such as Atlantic-area universities, ACOA will work to improve access to the information needed to support ecologically sound decisions. ACOA will act as a catalyst to coordinate the

Goal 3: Advancing the Environmental Industry Sector in Atlantic Canada

Environmental industries are among the fastest-growing business sectors in Canada. Environmental industries include those that produce technologies, goods and services that address environmental problems, such as new hazardous waste disposal methods, energy-efficient office equipment, and ecotourism. The sector creates obvious economic benefits in employment, export earnings and local multiplier effects. However, the sector also has potential to reduce pollution and resource consumption through new technologies that are cleaner and more efficient.

ACOA will further encourage the advancement of environmental industries, thus creating both economic and environmental benefits for the region. Efforts to advance the environmental industry sector will compliment ongoing priorities of ACOA to take advantage of opportunities that exist in other sectors such as ocean technology, telecommunications, biotechnology, the agri-food industry, the fishery/aquaculture industry and the tourism industry.

ACOA will work to create opportunities in environmental industries by facilitating access to information and to market opportunities for current and potential enterprises. ACOA will continue cooperating with environmental industry associations concerning market opportunities. It will encourage new environmental industries in business start-up or development and existing industries in all sectors to purchase environmental technologies, products and services. It will also work to reinforce its support for pilot projects and studies in this sector.

The earlier we adopt the competitiveness-resource efficiency framework for our economy, the more opportunities we shall create and the more successful we shall become

“Eco-efficiency is reached by the delivery of competitively-priced goods and services that satisfy human needs and bring quality of life, while progressively reducing ecological impacts and resource intensity throughout the life cycle, to a level at least in line with the Earth’s estimated carrying capacity.”

Business Council for Sustainable Development,
Getting Eco-efficient, Geneva, 1993.

use of existing networks to provide the greatest degree of access to sound social, ecological and economic information to improve planning in the region.



Part VI: Performance Measurement

ACOA will monitor and report on its performance regarding the extent to which it meets the specific commitments that it has already set in its sustainable development strategy

Only through measurement of performance is it possible to determine whether programs and actions have made a difference. In the preparation of this sustainable development strategy, ACOA has begun to identify appropriate performance measures which relate both to the sustainable development of Atlantic Canada and to ACOA's specific contribution.

A key challenge for ACOA is to move beyond the identification of its outputs towards assessment of its impact on society, the economy and the environment—sustainable development. Overall, the success of the strategy will depend on whether it is implemented with due regard to economy, effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the environment.

In several cases it has been necessary to begin establishing baselines against which future progress can be assessed. These performance measures will be used to evaluate the actions shown in the action plan (see Tables).

ACOA's accountability plan will develop these initial performance measures into effective and efficient management and decision-making tools. This process will be integrated into the current initiative on performance, review and accountability at ACOA. As well, specific targets and performance measures will be developed simultaneously as part of ACOA's EMS. These performance measures will supplement or replace those currently in use.



Part VII: Conclusion

ACOA has developed this strategy to help ensure that its actions and policies are as supportive as possible of the sustainable development of Atlantic Canada. Building on its programs, which already aim to support economic and social development in the region, ACOA will be working to strengthen its planning and management procedures so that a balanced approach to social, economic and environmental factors is intrinsic to its activities.

Lasting economic development, good quality of life in Atlantic communities, and a stable and productive environment are all closely linked. ACOA will continue to work with its clients and other stakeholders in the region and will seek continuous improvement in its actions and policies as it strives to achieve the goal of sustainable development for Atlantic Canada.

ACOA will be working to strengthen its planning and management procedures so that a balanced approach to social, economic and environmental factors is intrinsic to its activities

ACOA's efforts will focus on areas where its role and capacity are most relevant—in the promotion of sustainable businesses and communities, and in the stimulation of environmental industries in the region. ACOA will also strive to manage its own operations in an environmentally sound fashion as a direct contribution to the sustainable development of the region.



Part VIII: Tables of Strategy Goals, Objectives, Targets and Actions⁴

ACOA's Goal 1: Setting an Example in the Environmental Management of ACOA's Operations

OBJECTIVE 1:	TARGET	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
To build capacity among ACOA staff to recognize and capitalize on sustainable development opportunities	An Environmental Management System (EMS) that meets recognized standards	Design standard EMS components (e.g. environmental policy, resource allocation, accountability framework, review of operating procedures and performance measurement system)	EMS that shows compliance with recognized standards
	100% of management and staff are informed and aware of sustainable development principles and ACOA's commitments and plans by December 1999	Circulate ACOA's new environmental policy and information on environmental management and success stories (e.g. electronic distribution)	Survey of whether staff have seen and understood sustainable development information
		Establish and communicate "award/recognition" criteria for environmental performance in and outside ACOA (e.g. funded via cost savings)	Number of staff and clients eligible for awards (nominated on basis of positive contributions)
	100% of Account Managers receive ongoing training on environmental management, beginning in September 1998	Identify training needs and develop curriculum with partners and stakeholders, as appropriate	Number of Account Managers/staff completed training
		Provide training and tools to Account Managers and other staff, as appropriate	Number of Account Managers/staff using tools
	OBJECTIVE 2:	TARGET	ACTION
To make more efficient use of resources and to prevent and reduce pollution and waste	Reduction in office waste	Establish and/or improve waste recycling programs in all offices	Develop as part of EMS
	5% annual reduction in information material that does not meet environmental criteria in each of the first three years	Work with other departments and agencies to determine criteria for green information material	Reduction of information material that does not meet criteria
		Encourage suppliers to meet criteria	

⁴

Specific resourcing for actions under each goal will be undertaken as part of the EMS and will reflect the most effective and efficient means of delivery.

<p>5% annual reduction in paper consumption in each of the first three years</p>	<p>Purchase or lease photocopiers and printers with double-sided features, as part of regular replacement procedures</p> <p>When purchasing new computer monitors, adopt 17" standard</p> <p>Communicate list of best practices on paper usage (e.g. used paper for printing and making note pads)</p> <p>Expand use of electronic forms (leave, travel), examine e-mail practices, develop policies and procedures</p>	<p>Reduction in paper consumption (to be developed as part of EMS)</p>
<p>Increase in travel efficiency</p>	<p>Develop travel policy for efficient/energy-efficient travel (as part of EMS)</p> <p>Make list of car rentals using alternative fuels available to all employees</p> <p>Increase teleconferencing and shift towards video conferencing, where feasible</p> <p>Share conference rooms and spaces with other departments, where feasible</p> <p>Study feasibility of shower facilities to facilitate alternative forms of commuting (cycling and walking)</p>	<p>To be developed as part of EMS</p>
<p>Adoption of best practices and more efficient methods in energy use</p>	<p>Work with other tenants to encourage owners to retrofit buildings (participating in Federal Building Initiative where possible)</p> <p>Encourage staff to use natural light and shut off lights when possible</p>	<p>To be determined as part of EMS</p>
<p>Improved indoor air quality in ACOA offices</p>	<p>Work with owners to alleviate problem areas</p>	<p>Number of complaints</p>

ACOA's Goal 2: Promoting Sustainable Communities and Businesses in Atlantic Canada

OBJECTIVE 1:	TARGET	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
<p>To encourage environmental efficiency and innovation among clients and other businesses, in keeping with ACOA's mandate and strategic priorities</p>	<p>Effective environmental screening of all projects</p>	<p>Continue to undertake environmental scan of all projects under CEAA</p> <p>Participate in government-wide study to identify impacts and barriers to sound environmental practices, with respect to ACOA-funded projects</p> <p>Examine current project review procedures with the objective of providing enhancements, where appropriate</p>	<p>Number of projects screened</p> <p>Other measures to be determined (will address outcomes of reviews)</p>
	<p>Compliance with mitigative measures included in the terms and conditions of the letter of offer for projects funded, or partly funded, by ACOA</p>	<p>Ensure efficient and effective verification process for compliance with mitigation requirements</p> <p>Increase in-house expertise in environmental impact monitoring</p>	<p>Number and proportion of projects in compliance with terms and conditions of letter of offer</p>
	<p>Sustainable development is integrated into all of ACOA's relevant outreach instruments (e.g. advice, counselling, marketing, conferences and publications)</p>	<p>Target research studies on application of sustainable development to ACOA program areas (e.g. links between eco-efficiency and competitiveness, social benefits, direct savings, success stories)</p> <p>Review and revise outreach instruments (e.g. Business Plan Booklet), as part of normal updating process</p> <p>Ensure, in cooperation with partners, access points for information on SD, markets and technologies, by expanding the hot links on ACOA's Web site and information in CBDC</p> <p>Facilitate (with partners) access to an inventory of expertise to which clients can be referred for advice on sustainable development</p>	<p>Number and proportion of outreach instruments that contain sustainable development information</p> <p>Number of enquiries related to sustainable development</p>

	Increased use of appropriate environmental management systems for eco-efficiency and innovation in businesses in the Atlantic region	<p>Conduct studies on environmental management systems suitable for small and medium-sized businesses (e.g. success stories of how standards can help businesses)</p> <p>Review feasibility/approaches to supporting best environmental management practices, including certification, leading to developing a policy</p> <p>Facilitate access to information on environmental management standards and practices</p>	Number of businesses or groups of businesses in the Atlantic region adopting EMSs (number aware, number adopting, and potential outcome measures to be determined)
OBJECTIVE 2:	TARGET	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
To promote awareness of sustainable economic development opportunities at the community level	Participation in the development of community-level strategies, in partnership with other agencies	<p>Work with other departments and stakeholders in helping develop strategies</p> <p>Reinforce the current network of community contacts</p> <p>Facilitate exchange of success stories for sustainable communities</p>	Level of participation (specific measures to be determined)
	Enhanced access to very small contributions to start community-based low-impact businesses	<p>Continue to support, in collaboration with partners, a micro-finance program (e.g. under \$10,000)</p> <p>Participate in ongoing research program (e.g. eco-efficiency guidelines for SMEs in Atlantic Canada)</p>	Number of viable businesses started (surviving)
	Improved access to information	Improve access points for rural communities for electronic information, in collaboration with partners	% of small centres with access points

OBJECTIVE 3:	TARGET	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
To provide better information for ecosystem-based management	Increased support for businesses and communities in their understanding of the state of the Atlantic environment	Host discussions with stakeholders on tracking the effects of development and on accurately predicting the potential effects of new proposals	Number of stakeholders involved in ongoing discussions
	Improved access to information-providers and decision-makers for ecosystem-based management	Facilitate access to an inventory of information-providers and decision-makers in Atlantic Canada Link information-providers and decision-makers through symposia and ACOA's Web site, including links to other sites	Size of network
OBJECTIVE 4:	TARGET	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
To foster greater cooperation and consultation with departments, governments and non-governmental organizations	Harmonized sustainable development strategies	Facilitate and support discussions among government departments and provincial governments	Precise measures to be defined
	Clear and consistent environmental assessment of projects between agencies		
	More inclusive public consultations	Expand access to a network for sharing information on sustainable development, using conferences, symposia and electronic communications, in particular Initiate discussions, in cooperation with other government departments, with schools and post-secondary institutions to focus on and support youth education and sustainable entrepreneurship Examine opportunities for an expanded role for regional coordination bodies	Number of stakeholders consulted on sustainable development initiatives

ACOA s Goal 3: Advancing the Environmental Industry Sector in Atlantic Canada

OBJECTIVE 1:	TARGET	ACTION	PERFORMANCE MEASURE
<p>To create opportunities in environmental industries</p>	<p>Increased number of small and medium-sized environmental businesses</p>	<p>In collaboration with industry associations and other government departments, provide access to market information and information on opportunities to current and potential industry via advice, publications, symposia and ACOA's Web site</p> <p>Create and market inventory of existing environmental industries for the entire region</p> <p>Support pilot projects and studies, in cooperation with others, which could lead to advances in, or application of, environmental technologies</p> <p>Through existing publications, encourage businesses to develop or purchase environmental technologies, goods and services</p>	<p>Number of businesses created in environmental industries</p> <p>Number of businesses created in ACOA-sponsored environmental technology initiatives</p> <p>Value of sales from ACOA-supported environmental technology businesses</p>
	<p>Increased exports in environmental technologies, goods and services</p>	<p>In cooperation with other organizations, provide information on developments in environmental technologies and management systems outside the Atlantic region for possible use by clients, potential clients and stakeholders</p> <p>Continue to identify and work with other organizations to remove barriers to Canadian exports in environmental technology areas</p>	<p>Value of exports in environmental industries</p>

APPENDIX A: ACOA Regional Profiles

ACOA New Brunswick

ACOA's presence in New Brunswick includes a head office in Moncton, serving the entire Atlantic region, and a regional office in Fredericton. Combined, the two offices have 202 full-time equivalent positions. The agency's New Brunswick offices own various office equipment, furniture and a fleet of five vehicles. The regional Vice-President is responsible for the delivery of ACOA's programs in New Brunswick. It is these core programs that link ACOA's regional strategic priorities to those of its clients.

During the past few years, a number of initiatives have been undertaken by ACOA to ensure environmental considerations become part of the agency's project evaluation and approval process. ACOA New Brunswick, in conjunction with Public Works and Government Services Canada and ACOA Head Office in Ottawa, spearheaded the creation of a comprehensive environmental screening and registration process which satisfied the requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA). CEAA-approved projects are now registered under the Federal Environmental Assessment Index.

ACOA New Brunswick is involved in a number of activities relating to key sustainable development issues in the sectors of tourism, forestry, mining, fishing (including aquaculture) and agriculture:

- *Aquaculture development.* Environmental lobbyists have regarded existing legislation as inadequate, allowing for site concentration and unsustainable management practices. The agency has a process in place to consider criteria related to sustainable development in its assessment of applications for aquaculture development. ACOA is encouraging the provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture to undertake a comprehensive review of the industry's current regulatory framework.
- *Large-scale tourism development.* One of ACOA's priorities is to assist in the development of New Brunswick's tourism industry. To mitigate adverse environmental impacts of large-scale tourism developments, ACOA ensures that environmental screening is carried out in accordance with existing legislation.
- *Resource management.* Although not directly involved with assistance to primary industries, ACOA is aware that major concerns exist in the province in relation to environmental management practices, particularly in mining (effluent and site management), fishing (stock depletion), agriculture (erosion and pesticides) and forestry. The effects of these activities can influence the economic prospects of ACOA's clients.
- *Pollution.* On-going environmental concerns include water purity and the treatment and disposal of wastes from many industries.
- *Infrastructure.* The Canada/New Brunswick Infrastructure Program has supported a large number of projects which have contributed substantially to a cleaner environment and better environmental standards, including projects to promote greener products and enabling technologies. For example, ACOA funded a Kennebecasis Valley project which involved importing a



patented membrane technology that could be used to purify drinking water.

Key issues that were presented during the external consultations include:

- *Harmonization* of sustainable development (SD) strategies between federal departments and between all levels of government (i.e. federal, provincial and municipal). It was suggested that ACOA, being a cross-disciplinary agency, was already well-positioned at the federal level to coordinate and integrate SD strategies on behalf of the Atlantic provinces.
- *Catalyst role* for ACOA in fostering and assisting developments in areas such as health, academic research and community- and volunteer-based SMEs.

ACOA Prince Edward Island (PEI)

ACOA PEI occupies a regional office in Charlottetown. In total, the office has 28 full-time equivalent positions. The agency owns various office equipment, furniture and a fleet consisting of two vehicles. The regional Vice-President is responsible for the delivery of ACOA's programs in PEI. Like those of other regional offices, these core programs link ACOA's regional strategic priorities to those of its communities and clients.

At ACOA PEI, all projects are subject to an initial environmental assessment. If a project is determined to be a CEAA project, then environmental screening is required. This will identify any environmental concerns and mitigation measures required. For project funding, environmental requirements are specified as a condition of letters of offer and environmental conditions must be met prior to payment of claims. ACOA's PEI office retains two environmental consultants on contract to review and screen all projects for CEAA compliance.

There are a number of environmental issues of importance to the region, including land and waste management (agriculture and domestic), groundwater quality, expanding aquaculture and genetic alteration of plants. ACOA has a number of specific activities that directly relate to environmental issues:

- *Agriculture and Food Processing.* Souris Food Park is a project with a significant environmental dimension. As part of the Eastern Kings Redevelopment Strategy, support was provided to industrial infrastructure, including waste water treatment. At Souris Food Park, potato flakes are made from culled potatoes. The establishment of a potato dehydration plant will permit the removal of waste from this industry. The agency has also been able to influence the provincial potato storage and grading policies.
- *Environmental Industries.* ACOA's involvement with environmental industries includes the Aquaculture Roundtable Consultation held June 24-25, 1996, at the Atlantic Veterinary College. This meeting brought together academia and industry representatives to discuss common interests in the areas of research, regulatory issues, and the export of expertise. Other Atlantic Veterinary College projects have included start-up funds for the University of PEI's Clinical Research Centre, expansion funding for the Canadian Aquaculture Institute and Atlantic Fish Health Inc., and development funds for a remote monitoring and an inventory system for pigs. The agency has also contributed to enabling technologies, processes and services such as water and sewer utility software development for cost allocation and rate design, and geomatics software to support community planning and redevelopment.



- *Tourism.* ACOA's BDP has developed guidelines to target assistance to the province's tourism infrastructure and the development of quality products.

Key views that were presented during the external consultations conducted in Charlottetown include:

- building sustainable businesses and communities through greater consultation, collaboration and information (e.g. greater awareness and education) and through ACOA's support to SMEs in achieving the appropriate industry standards;
- understanding and improving ecosystem-based management practices by building environmental criteria into BDP applications and ensuring community-based conservation strategies are not compromising socio-economic elements;
- creating jobs in the environmental industries sector, which ACOA could support through contributions for greening and by holding regional symposia on environmental industries focusing on opportunities for the region.

ACOA Newfoundland

ACOA's programs in Newfoundland are delivered under the management of the Vice-President, and carried out with the assistance of 61 full-time equivalent positions engaged in the main office (which is Crown-owned) in St. John's and branch offices (all leased from private owners) in Grand Bank, Corner Brook, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The agency operates a fleet of six cars.

Due to the legislated requirements of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA), no projects are approved by ACOA until an environmental screening and/or an environmental assessment has been

completed. In the ACOA Newfoundland region, the Environmental Services section of Public Works and Government Services Canada assists our account managers in screening all our projects and in conducting environmental assessments where appropriate. ACOA Newfoundland is actively involved in a number of initiatives that relate to the environment and sustainable development agenda:

- ACOA worked with Foreign Affairs and International Trade and with Public Works and Government Services Canada to conclude an appropriate environmental remediation package with the United States (worth US \$100 million) for former American military sites in Canada. On the basis of that agreement, ACOA also advocated an immediate start to the \$81 million clean-up effort required at former US Naval Facility Argentina.
- ACOA has supported local groups that are involved in watershed management. Some outstanding work by groups such as the Indian Bay Ecosystem Corporation and the Gander River Management Association demonstrates how sustainable development is a win-win proposition: it supports community self-sufficiency, provides good models for ecosystem management, and contributes to a viable sports fishery.
- The agency provided support and guidance in the establishment of various parts of the Newfoundland T'Railways system, part of the TransCanada Trail project.
- ACOA supplied organizational funding and support for the Newfoundland Environmental Industries Association and helped set the Newfoundland Environmental Industry Virtual Office (Web site).



The agency assisted, through funding for start-up and innovation, various internationally recognized firms specializing in green products and/or services: SCC Environmental Group Inc. (site remediation, hazardous waste management), Genesis Organic Inc. (composting of pulp mill waste and fish offal), Hi-Point Industries (1991) Ltd. (peat-based oil absorption material), EDM International Ltd. (environmental engineering) and BioGreen (Nfld) Ltd. (waste water technology adapted for Canadian climate from Japanese technology).

The following key points were made at the external consultations:

- Sustainable development can be an opportunity for businesses through eco-efficiency, cost savings, and new openings for companies able to export their expertise.
- Businesses and communities need to incorporate sustainable development into their plans and projects.
- The promotion of ecosystem-based management should be supported.
- The strategy should recognize the diversity of the Atlantic environment and be adaptable to conditions in Newfoundland.
- The strategy should include realistic goals and measurable results, and proceed in small steps. In other words, the strategy should be translated into a management plan that can be implemented.
- The strategy should not be a side issue; it has to permeate the agency's activities.
- Education in sustainable development is vital if all are to do their share. ACOA needs to help build capacity for

sustainable development in its partners.

- ACOA can assist in communicating information on how the economy and the environment are linked (e.g. success stories).
- ACOA can be a good facilitator for sustainable development through its many ties and daily contacts with stakeholders.
- ACOA needs to work through its partners to implement its sustainable development strategy effectively.
- ACOA can assist in ensuring that a particular project is the most sustainable project for an area, and can be mindful of cumulative environmental impacts.
- ACOA must not impose a strategy; it should assist in its implementation.

ACOA Nova Scotia

ACOA Nova Scotia comprises a regional office in Halifax with 62 full-time equivalent positions. The agency owns various office equipment, furniture and one vehicle. The regional Vice-President is responsible for the delivery of ACOA's programs in Nova Scotia, in keeping with the same mission and mandate as other regional offices. It should be noted that all the projects carried out under the agency's programs are subject to an environmental review process.

There are a number of issues of importance to the province, such as the Halifax harbour clean-up, fish resource depletion, shellfish plant closures due to pollution, deforestation, acid rain, municipal and industrial waste disposal, and water quality. Opportunities are also emerging in the development of an environmental industries sector, trade and international marketing (e.g. in Caribbean markets). Key environmental issues



concerning small and medium-sized enterprises and relating to waterfront development, manufacturing, tourism and ecotourism, aquaculture and resource extraction have had a direct impact on ACOA Nova Scotia.

ACOA is actively involved in a number of initiatives which relate to sustainable development in the province:

- Under the Sustainable Economic Development Agreement, over 200 projects were implemented, providing assistance for business support, education and public information efforts relating to sustainable development.
- Under the BDP program, ACOA Nova Scotia has given support to companies for projects related to green or ecological products, for example: Good Earth Organic Resources Ltd. (site composting and compost manufacturing), Aluminum Recovery Ltd. (smelting scrap into saleable products), Inland Technologies (recycling petroleum-based products), and Nova Environmental Systems Inc. (testing of oil products and waste water).
- In conjunction with the province and in consultation with the industry, a strategic plan has been prepared under the Economic Diversification Agreement, to focus development efforts on environmental industries.
- In addition, ACOA Nova Scotia is a member of the Management Consortium for Environmental Technologies, an industry-government committee set up to promote the environmental sector in the province.

Key issues at external consultations were as follows:

- People must have better access to

information and resources. ACOA has a role to play in ensuring that people are aware of the available information and resources.

- The new information technology industry must be main focus but a change of scope is also essential (e.g. environmental companies and other environmentally-friendly ventures).
- Sustainable communities should be first and foremost, and then build from there.
- The agency's mandate has to balance economic, social and environmental objectives.
- It is important that we know the impact of ISO 14000 on the viability of SMEs.
- There is concern over duplication and lack of coordination in the programs of the various agencies in the economic development field.
- The sustainable development strategies of various departments should complement each other.

Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation

The mission of the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC) is as follows: "Recognizing the importance of the world economy to the future, ECBC will take the lead in creating a business environment which fosters sustainable job development and economic growth on Cape Breton Island and the Mulgrave area, through practice and innovative leadership in partnership with private and public sectors and other relevant organizations."

The ECBC operates from its head office in Sydney, Nova Scotia, and has a satellite office in Port Hawkesbury. There are 53 staff that work at these offices.



The ECBC is controlled by a Board of Directors comprised of the President, Vice-President, and five Directors. The President and CEO is also the President of ACOA. The corporation has a wide mandate to foster business growth outside the coal industry and, in addition to its own programs, it is responsible for the delivery of the economic development programs of ACOA.

Cape Breton County is home to a large concentration of heavy industry. While the environment is suffering some effects from this industry, the ECBC sees the problem as a positive opportunity for economic renewal. Environmental expertise in heavy industry clean-up and reclamation will become increasingly more marketable in the future.

The ECBC has taken a number of steps towards sustainable development. Between September 1, 1995 and September 1, 1997, 61 projects warranted a detailed environmental impact review prior to approval. The ECBC has also recently approved two new projects, one to develop technology to reduce toxic emissions and the other to set up an environmental services lab.



APPENDIX B: Stresses on the Atlantic Environment

The 1994 State of the Environment Report for Atlantic Canada⁵ identified a number of stresses on the natural environment of the region. Many of these have implications for the resource-based businesses of the region, for the health of communities, and for the attractiveness of the region's environment for both residents and visitors. This section summarizes these stresses and areas of concern. While responsibility for resolving these issues lies with other federal and provincial departments and agencies, they nevertheless affect the conditions under which ACOA and its clients operate.

Pollution Stresses⁶

Air Pollution

- Air quality in the Atlantic region is degraded by pollutants released from industries.
- Primary sources include: combustion of coal and oil at thermal generating stations (SO₂), transportation sources (NO_x, CO, THC, CO₂ and toxic pollutant emissions), fossil-fuel burning (CO₂ and toxic contaminants), mining, quarrying, fuel wood combustion, and industrial activities (TSP).
- The air of the region is also heavily affected by the long-range transport of air pollutants, particularly from the northeast US and central Canada.

⁵ Environment Canada, 1994. *State of the Environment in the Atlantic Region*.

⁶ The following symbols and abbreviations are used: SO₂ (sulphur dioxide), NO_x (nitrogen oxides), CO (carbon monoxide), THC (total hydrocarbons), CO₂ (carbon dioxide), TSP (total suspended particles), VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons).

Industrial Pollution

- Chemical industries such as petroleum refineries, chlor-alkali plants, fertilizer plants and wood preservation plants release pollutants, including oil and grease, phenols, sulphide, mercury, suspended solids and fluoride.
- Natural resource industries such as pulp and paper mills, fish processing plants, and food processing plants discharge effluents containing biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), suspended solids, high-strength oxygen-demanding wastes and other substances.
- Maritime provinces are heavily dependent on fossil fuel generation of electricity. Emissions have been decreasing because new plants are now being built with pollution control mechanisms to reduce emissions.

Pollution from Diffuse Sources

- Agricultural runoff (nitrates), urban runoff (nutrients, chlorides, oils and greases) and transportation emissions (NO_x, CO, VOCs) are the main contributors to non-point source pollution. CFCs are also a serious problem.
- Pollutants from sewage discharges include oxygen demanding wastes, disease-causing pathogens, plant nutrients, heavy metals and synthetic organic chemicals. Municipal sewage discharges are the major cause of contamination of shellfish growing areas in the region.
- A typical winter in the region involves the application of over 530,000 tonnes of



road salt. The most significant impact of road salt use is possible contamination of nearby wells.

- There is no systematic hazardous waste inventory in Atlantic Canada; some waste disposal is carried out in the region, while other wastes are shipped out of province for disposal.

Environmental Accidents

- The major causes of spills are land transportation accidents, storage tank leaks, sea transportation accidents, equipment malfunctions and tank overfills.

Pesticides

- The use of bactericide (chlorine gas) in municipal water and sewage treatment is the largest single use of pesticides in the region.

Resource Utilization

Commercial Fisheries

- Atlantic Canada groundfish stocks are currently at their lowest observable levels in terms of abundance, total biomass and spawning stock biomass, due to fishing above recommended levels, foreign over-fishing, predation by seals, and environmental conditions that are limiting stock recovery in areas where conservation measures have been initiated.

Aquaculture

- There is an increasing number of finfish and shellfish aquaculture operations in the Atlantic region.

Forest Harvesting

- The annual Atlantic region forest harvest has increased to record levels, almost all of it removed by clearcutting. The environmental impacts of this harvesting method include: soil erosion, siltation of waterways, reduction in forest diversity, diminishing wildlife populations of sensitive species, accelerated nutrient losses, loss or alteration of wildlife habitat, altered hydrology, changes in vegetation, increases in water temperature and negative visual impacts.

Agricultural Practices

- There are many problems associated with farm practices, including soil degradation, sedimentation of fish habitat, pollution of freshwater ecosystems and contamination of groundwater.

Significant Alterations

Dams

- There are 130 large dams in the Atlantic provinces with a wide range of impacts, such as the elimination or modification of freshwater wetlands, loss of fish habitat and obstruction to fish migration, and elevated levels of mercury in fish and other aquatic organisms.

Causeways

- Causeways have disrupted the natural flow of sediments and accelerated their accumulation.
- Causeways have prevented exchange in estuarine waters, reduced the dilution of industrial discharges, and affected the natural distribution of critical life stages of commercial fish species.



New Species

- Throughout the region, habitats have been altered or lost and new species of plants, insects, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians have been introduced, either intentionally or accidentally.
- A potential source for the introduction of exotic species into marine or freshwater ecosystems is the discharge of ballast water by ships entering Canadian waters.

Low-Level Military Flying

- Low-level military jet flights, to be conducted in the future over Labrador and northeast Quebec, have been the subject of debates as to the significance of impacts, particularly on the traditional lifestyle and land claims of the indigenous peoples of these areas.

Transportation and Utility Corridors

- The development of transportation and utility corridors in the region has resulted in significant land use changes and impacts on agricultural and forest land, ecologically significant areas, fish habitat, water quality, wildlife and wildlife habitat, flood plains, historic development, and aesthetics and noise.

Recreation

- Off-road vehicle use is one of the more obvious recreational activities that alters the landscape. Bogs have been heavily marred by the frequent passage of off-road vehicles.
- Another problem resulting from recreational use is marine litter.



APPENDIX C: Consultation Participants

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APPENDIX D: Acronyms

ACOA	Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
AFA	Alternative Fuels Act
BDP	Business Development Program
CBSC	Canada Business Service Centre
CEAA	Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
CIWP	Canada Infrastructure Works Program
ECBC	Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation
EMS	Environmental Management System
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TAGS	The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy



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