

TOWARD A
National Sustainable
Development Strategy
for Canada

PUTTING CANADA ON THE PATH TO
SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN A GENERATION



David
Suzuki
Foundation

SOLUTIONS ARE IN OUR NATURE

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Toward a National Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada

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SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN A GENERATION



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Putting Canada on the Path to *Sustainability within a Generation***

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“The economy is a wholly owned subsidiary of the environment.”

– HERMAN DALY
SENIOR ECONOMIST, WORLD BANK

Executive Summary

According to several recent studies, Canada has among the worst environmental record of any developed country, ranking 28th out of 30 OECD countries.¹ Without changes, Canada risks continuing deterioration of its environment, human health, quality of life, and international reputation. Action to address Canada's poor environmental performance is therefore urgent.

Canada committed to addressing its environmental challenge by developing a national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) in 1992 at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, the Earth Summit + 5 in 1997 and the World Summit in 2002 (see table 1). More than 20 nations have fulfilled their commitment to develop an NSDS. *Canada, however, has not met its international obligations to develop an NSDS.*² According to the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the failure to develop an NSDS “will leave Canadians and parliamentarians without a clear idea of the government’s overall plan for sustainable development, how it will get there, and what progress it has made”.³

In 2004, the David Suzuki Foundation responded to Canada’s failure to develop an NSDS by producing its own plan to achieve sustainability entitled *Sustainability within a Generation*. The purpose of this report is to outline a policy proposal to help implement *sustainability within a generation*, and fulfill Canada’s international commitment to develop an NSDS.

The proposal is for the federal government to adopt a *National Sustainability Act (NSA)* that will provide the legal framework for developing a National Sustainable Development Strategy in Canada that will make Canada a world leader in sustainable development. It is also proposed that provinces adopt a provincial version of the *National Sustainability Act* to provide a legal framework for developing provincial sustainable development strategies that complement the national strategy.

The report begins with an overview of sustainable development planning in Canada. Sustainable development planning is then evaluated against international best practices. The evaluation shows that Canada does not fully meet any of the eight international best

practices criteria for sustainability planning and only partially meets three criteria. Major deficiencies in Canada's sustainability planning include:

- Lack of comprehensive sustainability goals and targets
- Absence of an integrated national sustainable development strategy
- Poor linkage between strategies and targets
- Weak leadership from senior levels of government
- Weak linkage of progress monitoring to sustainability goals and targets
- Deficient legal framework
- Weak accountability for achieving goals and targets
- Inadequate stakeholder engagement in development of the NSDS

The proposed *National Sustainability Act* will address these deficiencies and make Canada and the provinces world leaders in sustainable development. The major feature of the proposed *NSA* is the legal requirement to prepare a National Sustainable Development Strategy that sets measurable targets for all environmental objectives, implements strategies to achieve targets, and provides independent reporting on progress. A draft of the proposed *NSA* is provided in appendix one of this report.

TABLE 1
Canadian Commitments to Develop an NSDS

DATE	FORUM	COMMITMENT
1992	Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro	Develop NSDS
1997	Earth Summit +5	Develop NSDS by 2002
2002	World Summit, Johannesburg	Develop NSDS
2002	Privy Council Request	Develop NSDS by September 2004
2005	Ad Hoc Cabinet Committee on Sustainability and the Environment	Develop NSDS by mid-2006



Sustainable Development Planning in Canada

Despite Canada's failure to meet its international commitments to prepare a national sustainable development strategy, Canada has instituted some important elements of sustainability planning. While a comprehensive review of Canada's sustainability planning is beyond the parameters of this report, key features of the current system are discussed below. The overview will focus on the environmental component of sustainability planning. Those wishing a more detailed review of Canadian sustainability planning should consult Boyd, OECD, and Toner and Frey.⁴

Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development

The most comprehensive initiative in sustainability planning in Canada is the passage of amendments to the *Auditor General Act* in 1995 to create the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD) and require federal government departments to submit a Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) to Parliament every three years. The mandate of the CESD is to assess progress of government departments in implementing SDSs, to receive and monitor petitions received from the Canadian public on sustainability matters, and to report annually to the House of Commons on environmental sustainability issues.

To date, four rounds of departmental SDSs have been submitted. The first strategies were tabled in December 1997 and the most recent were tabled in December 2006. The legislation does not specify the contents of the plans. However, in 1995 the federal government's *Guide to Green Government* provided a framework for preparing strategies. More recently, the CESD provided an updated framework for preparing strategies that includes the following elements:⁵

- **Role and fit.** The role of the strategy and how it fits with other plans and strategies is clearly indicated.
- **Vision.** A vision for sustainable development is included.

- **Goals and objectives.** Goals and objectives clearly express the long-term results to be achieved.
- **Linking goals and objectives with targets and actions.** Targets and actions are clearly linked to goals and objectives.
- **Clear targets.** Targets are clear – they are clearly stated and understandable.
- **Measurable targets.** Targets provide a deadline and a clear deliverable.
- **Lessons learned.** Lessons learned from previous strategies are included.
- **Changes.** Changes between previous and current strategies are identified.

The preparation of departmental SDSs was assisted by various committees over the years. The most recent process included the Ad Hoc Committee of Cabinet on Sustainability and the Environment, which was established in 2004 to review key environmental priorities and initiatives. In 2005, the Deputy Minister Policy Committee on Environment and Sustainability was established to provide coordination. Both these committees have since been disbanded.

Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals

Another important initiative in sustainability planning is the 1990 Cabinet directive to federal departments to consider environmental concerns at the strategic level of policies, plans and programs development. The directive was amended in 1999 to clarify obligations of departments and to link the directive to the implementation of departmental Sustainable Development Strategies.

The directive constitutes a non-binding stipulation that a strategic environmental assessment of a policy, plan or program proposal be conducted when the following two conditions are met:

- the proposal is submitted to an individual minister or Cabinet for approval; and
- implementation of the proposal may result in important environmental effects, either positive or negative.

National Environmental Indicators Initiatives

Environment Canada developed the National Environmental Indicator Series to measure progress in environmental sustainability. The National Environmental Indicator Series includes thirteen indicator categories, each supported by up to five specific indicators to monitor environmental conditions. The indicators are updated regularly and are available on-line.

Environmental Legislation

Much of the environmental sustainability planning in Canada is undertaken under the umbrella of environmental legislation. Key federal legislation includes: *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, *Species at Risk Act*, *Oceans Act*, *Canada Water Act*, *Fisheries Act*, and *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, among others.

The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA) is an important component of Canadian sustainability planning because it mandates target setting, planning, monitoring, and reporting. CEPA identifies a number of long term objectives for Canada, including pollution prevention, protection of environmental and human health, sustainable development, elimination of the most persistent and bioaccumulative toxic substances, control of pollutants and wastes, protection of biodiversity, and fulfillment of any international environmental obligations regarding the environment.

CEPA requires government to develop pollution prevention plans (s.44) and empowers government to request pollution plans from other parties within Canada, complete with specific direction and timelines for action (s.56, 57). CEPA also mandates implementation and public progress reporting for certain activities.

The *Oceans Act* supports sustainable development of marine resources. The *Oceans Act* mandates the government to fulfill two planning exercises: develop a national Ocean Management Strategy based on principles of sustainable development, integrated management, and the precautionary approach (ss.29 and 30) and develop integrated management plans. The *Oceans Act* also provides for establishment of marine protected areas (s.35), and empowers government to set marine environmental quality standards (s.32). Multi-stakeholder involvement is provided for in sections 29, 31, 32, and 33.

The *Canada Water Act* provides for water quality management, research, and planning to ensure optimum use for the benefit of all Canadians. The *Canada Water Act* enables the federal government to work with provinces on water resource management, planning, and policy (ss.4 and 5), provides for enforcement, the establishment of advisory committees (s.28), and the undertaking of public information programs.

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) was introduced in 2002 to protect Canada's biological diversity. SARA commits Canada to act cost-effectively to prevent species reduction or loss and to conserve wildlife habitat and protected areas by assessment of species health and mandatory preparation of recovery plans.

The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA) requires that any development involving federal lands, funds, or federal permitting requirements is assessed for environmental impacts.

The *Fisheries Act* attempts to achieve sustainability of the fisheries by providing for the development of fish harvesting plans and protection of habitat.

Sector Initiatives

To augment sustainable development planning, the federal government also undertakes sector specific environmental planning for high priority areas such as climate change, acid rain, and smog. These plans often involve the setting of targets and development of strategies to achieve objectives. A review of recent Canadian environmental initiatives was completed by the OECD.⁶

Evaluation of Canada's National Sustainable Development Planning

Evaluation of the Canadian NSDS planning system can be focused on answering two questions.

- Does the NSDS planning system meet international best practices?
- Are the environmental outcomes of NSDS planning satisfactory?

Evaluating Canada's NSDS Planning System

The international commitment to prepare national sustainable development strategies has led to development of best practice guidelines prepared by international agencies⁷, the Canadian government⁸, and independent researchers⁹. Although the best practice guidelines vary in terminology and content, guidelines contained in these reports can be summarized under eight evaluative criteria (see table 2). These eight criteria are used to evaluate Canadian NSDS planning. The evaluation under each criterion includes: discussion of relevant information, an assessment rating based on three categories (met, partially met, and not met), and examples of countries with best practices.

1. COMPREHENSIVE GOALS AND TARGETS

Criterion: Goals should be set that cover all aspects of sustainability and include measurable short, medium and long term targets with timelines.

Discussion: Canada has goals for some components of an NSDS within legislation such as *CEPA* and within departmental SDSs. However, these goals statements are fragmented across sectors and departments. There is no comprehensive statement of sustainability goals. The CESD also found that only 5 of 24 departmental goal statements contained in departmental SDSs were adequate¹⁰. Canada has measurable targets for some sustainability goals and Environment Canada recently attempted to develop national environmental objectives. However, there is no comprehensive statement of short, medium, and long term measurable targets covering all key aspects of environmental sustainability. Even in

TABLE 2
Best Practice Guidelines for National Sustainable Development Planning

1. COMPREHENSIVE GOALS AND TARGETS

Goals should be set that cover all aspects of sustainability and include measurable short, medium and long term targets with timelines

2. EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

The NSDS should quantifiably show how sustainability targets will be met.

3. INTEGRATION

The NSDS should be integrated sectorally and spatially.

4. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Responsibility for developing an NSDS should reside with the most senior levels of government and responsibility for implementation should be clearly delineated.

5. PROGRESS MONITORING AND REPORTING

There should be regular, independent public reporting to assess progress in implementing strategies and achieving targets.

6. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

There should be mandatory adjustments to NSDS plans to address deficiencies identified in monitoring.

7. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Development, implementation, and monitoring of an NSDS should be collaboratively managed through permanent and institutionalized multi-stakeholder processes.

8. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The process and requirement for NSDS planning should be enshrined in legislation.

those limited areas where there are measurable targets with timelines, such as emissions of sulphur, greenhouse gases, and ozone depleting substances, the targets do not include short, medium, and long term timelines.¹¹

Assessment: Not met.

Best Practice Examples: Sweden's NSDS provides a good example of comprehensive goals and targets. The Swedish NSDS has an overarching goal of passing onto the next generation a country in which all major environmental problems are solved. This "generation goal" means reducing pressures on the environment by 2020 to levels that are sustainable in the long term. Sweden has adopted by legislation 16 Environmental Quality Objectives covering all aspects of environmental sustainability (see table 3) and 71 measurable targets with timelines.¹² Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom also provide good examples of comprehensive goals with targets and timelines.¹³

2. EFFECTIVE STRATEGY

Criterion: The NSDS should quantifiably show how sustainability targets will be met.

Discussion: Each federal department has a sustainable development strategy. The problem is that the strategies list a series of initiatives without showing how the initiatives will meet overall sustainability targets. This problem is caused by two deficiencies. First, measurable targets do not exist for most sustainability goals. Second, even where there are measurable

TABLE 3
Sweden's Environmental Quality Objectives

1. REDUCED CLIMATE IMPACT
2. CLEAN AIR
3. NATURAL ACIDIFICATION ONLY
4. A NON-TOXIC ENVIRONMENT
5. A PROTECTIVE OZONE LAYER
6. A SAFE RADIATION ENVIRONMENT
7. ZERO EUTROPHICATION
8. FLOURISHING LAKES AND WATERCOURSES
9. HIGH-QUALITY GROUNDWATER
10. A BALANCED MARINE ENVIRONMENT, FLOURISHING COASTAL AREAS AND ARCHIPELAGOS
11. THRIVING WETLANDS
12. HEALTHY FORESTS
13. A VARIED AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPE
14. A MAGNIFICENT MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE
15. A GOOD BUILT ENVIRONMENT
16. PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY (OBJECTIVE UNDER DEVELOPMENT)

SOURCE: OECD (2004)

targets, the strategies do not show quantifiably how the target will be attained. A good example is greenhouse gas emissions. There is a measurable target based on Kyoto. While the current strategy for greenhouse gas reductions is in flux, the previous strategy to meet greenhouse gas emissions targets was the most comprehensive Canadian example of a SDS strategy that we could find. However, the greenhouse gas strategy did not meet the criterion for an effective strategy because it did not show quantitatively how the initiatives would meet the reduction targets. In fact, independent assessments of the strategy showed that it would not meet the reduction targets and that the strategy was poorly conceived and poorly implemented.¹⁴ A further deficiency noted by the OECD is that Canadian strategies do not adequately utilize a mix of economic and regulatory instruments.¹⁵ Also, strategies do not exist for many of the key aspects of sustainability. Even where legislation such as *SARA*, *CEPA*, and *the Oceans Act* provides for development of strategies, the strategies are not developed because the provision to develop a strategy is in most cases discretionary, not mandatory.

Assessment: Not Met

Best Practice Examples: A good example of an NSDS that meets the effective strategy criterion is the United Kingdom climate change strategy.¹⁶ The strategy shows quantitatively how the initiatives will achieve the targets. The U.K. strategy also includes a good mix of economic and regulatory instruments. Sweden also provides a good example of effective strategies relying on a good mix of economic and regulatory instruments and quantitative assessment of initiatives relative to targets.¹⁷

3. INTEGRATION

Criteria: The NSDS should be integrated sectorally and spatially.

Discussion: Canada is the only country of 19 countries reviewed in a recent evaluation of sustainability planning that does not have an integrated NSDS.¹⁸ Instead, Canada has a separate SDS for each federal department with no attempt at integration by senior government entities. Canada also faces a challenge integrating spatially because of the constitutional division of powers between the federal and provincial governments. The existence of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME), federal provincial committees in sector specific areas such as energy and forestry, and sector specific multi-level advisory committees such as the National Advisory Committee under *CEPA* provide the opportunity for some coordination of federal and provincial environmental policies. However, absence of integrated federal and provincial SDSs precludes effective integration.

Assessment: Not Met

Best Practice Examples: Most OECD countries have a single comprehensive NSDS and use senior government coordinating committees to prepare and implement their NSDS.¹⁹ The United Kingdom provides a good example of effective integration. The U.K. has a single, integrated strategy document.²⁰ The U.K. also effectively coordinates national and regional strategies.²¹ Sweden²² and Denmark²³ also have sectorally integrated strategies that are coordinated by central agencies and with local governments.

4. GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Criterion: Responsibility for developing an NSDS should reside with the most senior levels of government and responsibility for implementation should be clearly delineated.

Discussion: Although Canada recently experimented with ad hoc cabinet and deputy minister committees on sustainable development, these committees were not fully institutionalized and have been disbanded. The failure to prepare a single, integrated NSDS and absence of senior government integrating mechanisms to provide overall leadership and coordination of sustainable development initiatives is noted as a major deficiency of the Canadian system by the CESD (2005).²⁴

Assessment: Not Met

Best Practice Examples: Responsibility for developing the NSDS in most OECD countries resides with senior levels of government. In Sweden²⁵ and Denmark²⁶, the NSDS is developed by central agencies. In Germany, responsibility for NSDS is housed in the Prime Ministers office²⁷. The U.K. has a sustainable development cabinet committee to coordinate development and implementation of its NSDS and responsibility for implementation is part of the management contracts with senior civil servants.

5. PROGRESS MONITORING AND REPORTING

Criterion: There should be regular, independent public reporting to assess progress in implementing strategies and achieving targets.

Discussion: Canada has an independent agency, Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, that regularly evaluates progress in implementing SDSs and reports findings publicly. The problem is that there is no comprehensive set of sustainability goals and targets that can be used to assess progress. The CESD is therefore restricted to assessing whether the SDSs meet the limited goals and targets set by the government; not whether the SDSs meet more comprehensive sustainability goals. The National Environmental Indicators Initiative (NEII) uses environmental indicators to report progress in 13 areas covering most components of environmental sustainability. The problem with the NEII is that the reporting does not link progress with targets except for a limited number of indicators where targets exist. Secondly, the NEII does not include some key aspects of sustainability such as water quality. The NEII therefore assesses trends, but does not assess whether sustainability objectives are being achieved or benchmark Canada's performance relative to other jurisdictions. In sum, Canada has some of the key elements of progress monitoring in place but the progress monitoring does not adequately assess progress towards sustainability.

Assessment: Partially Met

Best Practice Examples: Several countries have made good progress in sustainability reporting. The United Kingdom has a comprehensive set of 68 sustainability indicators, 20 of which are assessed relative to quantifiable goals.²⁸ The U.K. also evaluates its progress relative to other jurisdictions to benchmark its performance and has an independent agency, Commission on Sustainable Development, that evaluates progress. Germany and Sweden also monitor progress relative to sustainability objectives. Switzerland benchmarks its performance on 115 sustainability indicators relative to other countries.²⁹

6. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Criterion: There should be mandatory adjustments to NSDS plans to address deficiencies identified in monitoring.

Discussion: The lack of comprehensive sustainability targets makes it difficult to identify deficiencies in performance. Without identifying deficiencies, it is not possible to make adjustments. Even in those areas where there are targets, such as greenhouse gas emissions, there is no mechanism that ensures that adjustments are made to strategies to meet the targets. When it became clear that Canada was in danger of not meeting the Kyoto targets, the targets were changed; not the strategy. The CESD also concludes that mechanisms for ensuring that federal government departments meet the goals in their SDSs are weak. For example, performance agreements with senior managers do not specify achievement of NSDS goals and there are no consequences for not achieving objectives.³⁰

Assessment: Not Met

Best Practices Examples: There is inadequate information to identify countries with good mechanisms for adaptive management.

7. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Criterion: Development, implementation, and monitoring of an NSDS should be collaboratively managed through permanent and institutionalized multi-stakeholder processes.

Discussion: Canada has permanent multi-stakeholder structures such as the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) to seek stakeholder input on various NSDS initiatives. The NRTEE is not, however, integrated into the NSDS development process. The CESD has an institutionalized process of allowing the public to submit petitions on concerns regarding sustainable development. While useful, this process of petitions does not provide stakeholder collaboration in the development of SDSs. The government also engages in stakeholder consultation in the development of environmental policy on a case by case basis. The case by case stakeholder collaboration is not permanent or institutionalized. The federal government also does not have a formal process of stakeholder collaboration to develop the departmental SDSs. Therefore, the government has some mechanisms for stakeholder involvement, but lacks a comprehensive collaborative process for developing its NSDS.

Assessment: Partially Met

Best Practice Examples: Many OECD countries use permanent multi-stakeholder processes to develop their NSDS: Germany (Council on Sustainable Development), France (Sustainable Development Council), Belgium (Sustainable Development Council), Austria (Government Council for Sustainable Development), Finland (National Commission on Sustainable Development), and the United Kingdom (Sustainable Development Commission). The Finnish and Austrian processes are particularly good examples of integrating stakeholders into the preparation of their NSDS.³¹

8. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Criterion: The process and requirement for NSDS planning should be enshrined in legislation.

Discussion: Canada has enshrined the process and requirement for preparing its departmental SDSs in the *Auditor General Act*. While this legislative basis for departmental SDS planning is an important advance, most of the key components of an NSDS process and the desired outcomes of an NSDS are missing from the legislation.

Assessment: Partially Met

Best Practice Examples: No OECD country provides a good overall example of a comprehensive legal foundation for their NSDS. Some countries provide good examples of legislating components of their NSDS. Sweden, for example, legislates its goals and objectives, and other OECD countries legislate stakeholder participation in preparing their NSDS.³² Within Canada, Manitoba's *Sustainable Development Act* and Quebec's *Sustainable Development Act* provide good examples of legal frameworks for sustainability planning.

Evaluating Canada's NSDS Environmental Outcomes

The second question in evaluating Canada's NSDS planning is to assess sustainability outcomes. Three recent studies evaluating Canada's environmental performance are summarized in table 4. Two studies rank Canada 28th out of 30 OECD countries while the third ranks Canada 9th. The difference in Canada's ranking is due to different environmental

TABLE 4
Canada's Environmental Performance Relative to 30 OECD Countries

STUDY	CANADIAN RANK
Gunton et al. (2005)	28
Esty et al. (2006)	9
World Wildlife Fund (2006)	28

indicator definitions in the respective studies. All three studies concur, however, that Canada has poor performance in key areas including greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, and emissions of air pollutants. The studies conclude that there is insufficient information on water quality to assess Canada's performance. The recent OECD evaluation of Canadian environmental policy also highlights problems in air pollution and water quality monitoring.³³ The CESD identifies serious deficiencies in policy implementation, particularly in the area of greenhouse gas emissions.³⁴ All the evaluations of Canada's environmental performance illustrate serious deficiencies that need to be addressed by more effective sustainability planning.

Evaluation Summary

Evaluation of the Canadian NSDS planning system is based on answering two questions.

1. *Does the NSDS planning system meet international best practices?*

No, Canada does not fully meet any of the eight best practices criteria and only partially meets three criteria (see table 5).

2. *Are the environmental outcomes of Canadian NSDS planning satisfactory?*

No, the outcomes of Canadian NSDS planning are not satisfactory. Two recent evaluation of environmental performance rank Canada 28th out of 30 OECD countries. A third evaluation that ranks Canada 9th out of OECD countries also identifies areas of serious weakness in Canadian environmental performance.

In sum, the evaluation reveals serious deficiencies in Canadian NSDS planning.

TABLE 5
Summary Evaluation of Canada's NSDS Planning System

BEST PRACTICE CRITERION	ASSESSMENT	BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES
1. Comprehensive Goals and Targets	Not Met	Sweden, Austria, Germany, U.K.
2. Effective Strategy	Not Met	U.K., Sweden
3. Integration	Not Met	U.K., Sweden, Denmark
4. Governance and Leadership	Not Met	U.K., Sweden, Denmark, Germany
5. Progress Monitoring and Reporting	Partially Met	Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, U.K.
6. Adaptive Management	Not Met	
7. Stakeholder Participation	Partially Met	Austria, Finland
8. Legal Framework	Partially Met	Sweden, Manitoba, Quebec

Policy Options

1. Status Quo

Evaluation of the current system indicates that it does not meet any of the best practices criteria for NSDS planning. According to the CESD, the current NSDS planning system leaves Canadians without a plan for sustainable development.³⁵ The OECD also concludes in its recent evaluation of Canadian environmental policy that “sustainable development ... still largely remains to be translated into practical institutional and market-based integration”.³⁶ The major weaknesses of Canada’s current NSDS planning system and the poor environmental performance indicate clearly that the status quo is not a viable option.

2. Improved Framework for Sustainability Planning: A National Sustainability Act

Canada currently has a departmental SDS planning framework in the *Auditor General Act* that can be used as the foundation for an NSDS framework. Option 2 is to augment this existing SDS planning framework so that it meets the eight best practices criteria for effective NSDS planning. This can be done by passage of a *National Sustainability Act*.

As emphasized earlier in this report, the provinces also play a major role in sustainability planning. Therefore, the provinces also need to enact provincial versions of the NSA to ensure effective sustainability planning. The proposed NSA is structured so that it can easily be adopted by provincial governments with minor adjustments tailored to the unique circumstances of individual provinces.



A National Sustainability Act

The elements of the proposed *National Sustainability Act* are summarize in table 6 and a draft of the *NSA* is provided in appendix one. It is important to note that the *NSA* does not involve the repeal of any existing environmental legislation. Instead, the *NSA* provides a framework for sustainability planning that complements existing legislations. The *NSA* also incorporates some of the existing provisions in the *Auditor General Act*. The key additions to the current sustainability planning system proposed in the new *NSA* are as follows:

- Preparation of comprehensive national sustainability goals and measurable targets
- Preparation of a single, integrated National Sustainable Development Strategy
- Design Departmental Sustainable Development Strategies to help implement the National Sustainable Development Strategy
- Comprehensive national sustainability monitoring and reporting based on goals and targets
- Requirement to link strategies more clearly to goals and targets by quantifying strategy impacts on targets
- Mandatory modification of plans where deficiencies are identified by monitoring
- Increased stakeholder collaboration in the preparation and implementation of the NSDS
- Appointment of a Cabinet Committee on Sustainable Development and a Secretariat to the Cabinet Committee on Sustainable Development to provide overall leadership and management of sustainable development planning
- Increased coordination of provincial and federal sustainability planning

TABLE 6
National Sustainability Act

1. VISION AND GOALS

Statement of comprehensive environmental sustainability goals.

**2. COMMISSIONER OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
(EXISTING IN THE AUDITOR GENERAL ACT)**

Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development shall be appointed by same process as Auditor General.

3. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF CABINET

The Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet shall be appointed to oversee development and implementation of the NSDS.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SECRETARIAT

Sustainable Development Secretariat shall be established to support activities of Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet.

5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Sustainable Development Advisory Council shall be appointed. The Sustainable Development Advisory Council shall be comprised of the Minister of Environment and representatives from provinces and territories, First Nations, Non-governmental organizations, business, and labour.

6. PREPARE NSDS

Environment Canada shall prepare a draft NSDS every three years. The first draft plan shall be prepared and submitted to Parliament for approval no later than two years after coming into force of this Act.

The Plan shall include:

1. Short (1-3 years), medium (5-10 years) and long term (25 years) measurable targets with timelines for all goals and objectives. The targets shall include but not be limited to the target categories in table 1 of the NSA (see appendix one).
2. Strategies specifying how the targets will be met and who is responsible for implementing strategy.
3. A fee schedule for substances released into the environment listed under goal of reducing waste and pollution in table 1 of the NSA (see appendix one).

7. APPROVAL OF NSDS

The draft of the NSDS shall be submitted to the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, the CESD, relevant Parliamentary Standing Committees, and the public for review and comment. The draft shall then be submitted to Cabinet through the Cabinet Committee on Sustainable Development for approval as the official government NSDS. The official government NSDS shall be submitted to Parliament for ratification. Targets and fees shall be enacted as regulations pursuant to the Act.

8. PREPARE DEPARTMENTAL SDS (EXISTING IN THE AUDITOR GENERAL ACT)

Each government department shall prepare a Departmental SDS consistent with the NSDS. Draft Departmental SDSs shall be submitted to Environment Canada for review. Environment Canada will evaluate departmental SDS to ensure consistency with the NSDS. Departmental SDS plans shall be revised based on Environment Canada recommendations and submitted to Cabinet through the Cabinet Committee on Sustainable Development for approval as the official departmental SDS.

TABLE 6 (CONTINUED)
National Sustainability Act

9. UPDATING OF SDS

Environment Canada shall submit an updated NSDS and NSDS targets at least every three years. Government departments shall submit an updated Departmental SDS at least every three years.

10. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The CESD will create a national sustainability monitoring system to track progress on the NSDS plans and targets, report on the overall state of the Canadian environment nationally and by province and track Canada's environmental progress relative to other industrial nations nationally and by province. Monitoring reports will identify where goals and objectives are not being met and make recommendations to address deficiencies. Monitoring reports shall be prepared annually and submitted to Parliament and the relevant government agencies.

11. ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Environment Canada and departments shall provide responses to all recommendations from the CESD. Responses shall indicate what actions Environment Canada and departments plan to implement in response to recommendations from the CESD. Environment Canada and departments shall modify their SDS plans and implementation based on monitoring reports from CESD to ensure SDS goals and targets are met.

12. ACCOUNTABILITY

Performance contracts with senior managers shall include meeting goals and targets of the national and departmental SDS.

13. PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS (EXISTING IN THE AUDITOR GENERAL ACT)

The CESD will receive and must record all public petitions and must forward all submissions within 15 days to the appropriate government organizations. When forwarding a submission, the CESD may make recommendations to the appropriate organization. The organization must report to the CESD its response to the submission. The CESD must make reference to the number and nature of submissions in the CESD annual report to Parliament.

14. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The preparation of NSDS plans and targets shall include public consultation.

15. PUBLIC ACCESS

All NSDS reports and comments produced under any section of this Act shall be publicly available. CESD shall maintain a publicly accessible record of all reports and comments.

16. ENABLING REGULATIONS

The government may make regulations under this Act specifying the content of NSDS plans and the process for preparing plans and targets. The government shall make regulations for the targets and fees established in the NSDS.

Table 7 provides a summary evaluation of the proposed *NSA* against the eight best practices criteria. The evaluation shows that the *NSA* fully meets all eight criteria.

TABLE 7		
Evaluation of proposed NSA		
CRITERIA	EXISTING SYSTEM DEFICIENCIES	CHANGE UNDER NEW NSA
Comprehensive Goals and Targets	There is no overall statement of comprehensive sustainability goals and no measurable targets with timelines for many sustainability goals.	Mandatory setting of goals and measurable targets.
Effective Strategy	There is no requirement to show how strategies will meet goals and targets.	Mandatory requirement to show how NSDS will meet goals and targets.
Integration	There are sector SDSs, but no integrative NSDS.	Requirement to prepare a unified national sustainable development strategy
Governance and Leadership	There are no senior government mechanisms to coordinate development of NSDS.	Appointment of Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet.
Progress Monitoring and Reporting	There is independent evaluation of SDSs by CESD, but evaluation is constrained by absence of measurable sustainability goals and targets. There is environmental indicator reporting but the reporting is not independent, comprehensive, or related to targets.	Mandatory, independent national sustainability monitoring to assess progress in meeting targets.
Adaptive Management	There is no obligatory adjustment to NSDS plans to address deficiencies identified in monitoring and no accountability for poor performance.	Mandatory requirement to address deficiencies identified in NSDS monitoring and accountability through performance agreements with senior managers.
Stakeholder Participation	Institutionalized engagement of stakeholders in NSDS planning is absent.	Create a multi-stakeholder advisory committee to review NSDS, mandatory requirement for public collaboration, and public disclosure.
Legal Framework	Key elements of NSDS planning are not specified in legislation and are left to the discretion of agencies and departments.	All the key elements to be specified in legislation and/or regulations.



Feasibility of Proposed NSA

The experience of most OECD countries, including Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, Austria, and the United Kingdom, shows that comprehensive NSDS planning systems are feasible and effective in achieving environmental sustainability.

The experience of Canada in fiscal policy also documents the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed *National Sustainability Act* approach. Canada and the provinces faced profound financial challenges in the 1990s characterized by unsustainable deficits and debt levels. To address these challenges, Canada and the provinces implemented new systems of fiscal management based on:

- setting measurable short, medium, and long term targets
- developing an integrated strategy that showed how the targets would be met
- senior coordination and leadership through cabinet and deputy minister committees
- independent monitoring and public reporting
- adaptive management
- stakeholder engagement
- enacting the system, including setting of targets, in legislation

The fiscal planning system was remarkably successful in achieving its objectives. The proposed NSA applies the same planning approach that was used so successfully to achieve fiscal sustainability to the environment. Successful implementation of the NSA simply requires governments to place the same commitment on the environment that they place on finance.

Conclusion

Canada's environmental record is among the worst of OECD countries. Canada's poor record is in part due to its failure to meet its international commitments to develop a national sustainable development strategy. While NSDS planning in Canada has improved over the last decade, the current NSDS planning system does not meet any of the best practices criteria for NSDS planning, and the environmental outcomes based on the current system are poor.

Without changes, Canada risks continuing deterioration of its environment, human health, quality of life, and international reputation. Canada can address these deficiencies with passage of a new *National Sustainability Act*. With the passage of the proposed *National Sustainability Act*, Canada will meet its international obligations to develop a national sustainable development strategy, and become a world leader in environmental sustainability.

APPENDIX 1

Draft National Sustainability Act

DEFINITIONS

“**appropriate Minister**” has the meaning assigned to that term by section 2 of the Financial Administration Act.

“**category 1 department**” means any department named in Schedule 1 to the Financial Administration Act.

“**Commissioner**” means the Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development.

“**Crown Corporation**” has the meaning assigned to that term by section 83 of the Financial Administration Act.

“**ecosystem based management**” means an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities to maintain spatial and temporal characteristics of ecosystems such that component species and ecological processes can be sustained, and human wellbeing supported and improved.

“**emissions trading system**” means a system that involves a contractual right to emit a specified quantity of substance into the environment for a specified time period that can be owned by a legally defined entity and bought or sold to other legally defined entities.

“**full cost accounting**” means accounting for the economic, environmental, land use, human health, social and heritage costs and benefits of a particular decision or action to ensure no costs associated with the decision or action, including externalized costs, are left unaccounted for.

“**government agency**” means an agency of the Government of Canada or other body established by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament that is ultimately accountable through a Minister of the Crown in right of Canada to Parliament for the conduct of its affairs.

“**government department**” has the meaning assigned to that term by section 2 of the Financial Administration Act.

“**precautionary principle**” means that when an activity raises threats to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.

“**regulatory caps**” means a legally defined maximum quantity of a substance that can be emitted into the environment for a specified period of time.

“**sustainability**” means the capacity of a thing, action, activity, or process to be maintained indefinitely.

“**sustainable development**” means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs.

“**target**” means a measurable objective

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Act is to provide the legal framework for preparing and implementing a National Sustainable Development Strategy that will eliminate all major environmental problems for the next generation by 2030 and achieve environmental sustainability.

GOALS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

2. The Government of Canada adopts the following goals for sustainable development.
 - a. Canada becomes a world leader in innovative ways of living sustainably and protecting the environment.
 - b. Canada becomes a world leader in the efficient and effective use of energy and resources, enabling improvement in its quality of life while reducing energy and material use.
 - c. Canada becomes a world leader in modifying production and consumption patterns to mimic nature's closed-loop cycles, thus dramatically reducing waste and pollution.
 - d. Canada moves to the forefront of the global clean energy revolution, reducing fossil fuel production, use, and export, and harnessing low-impact renewable energy sources.
 - e. Canada becomes a world leader in air quality by reducing air pollution and achieving air quality standards necessary to eliminate human health impacts.
 - f. Canada becomes a world leader in water stewardship by protecting and restoring the quantity and quality of fresh water in Canadian ecosystems.
 - g. Agriculture in Canada provides nutritious, healthy foods for Canadians as well as people around the world, while safeguarding the land, water, and biodiversity.
 - h. Canada becomes globally renowned for its leadership in conserving, protecting and restoring the health and diversity of its ecosystems, parks and wilderness areas, and the natural beauty of the nation.
 - i. Canadian cities become vibrant, clean, liveable, prosperous, safe, and sustainable.
 - j. Canada promotes sustainability in the developing world.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF CABINET

3. The Governor in Council shall appoint the Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet chaired by the Minister of Environment to oversee development and implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy.
4. The Sustainable Development Secretariat shall be established by the Governor in Council to support activities of the Sustainable Development Committee of Cabinet.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

5. The Governor in Council shall appoint, on the advice of the Minister of Environment, the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, which will be comprised of the Minister of the Environment, one representative from each province and territory, and three representatives from each of First Nations, environmental non-governmental organizations, business, and labour.
6. The Minister of Environment will be the chair of the Sustainable Development Advisory Council.

SUBMISSION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

7. The Governor in Council shall submit a National Sustainable Development Strategy to Parliament at least every three years. The first National Sustainable Development Strategy shall be prepared and submitted to Parliament for approval no later than two years year after coming into force of this Act.

PREPARATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

8. The Minister of Environment shall prepare a draft of the National Sustainable Development Strategy. In preparing the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy, the Minister of Environment shall consult with the Commissioner, the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, relevant stakeholders and the public.
9. The National Sustainable Development Strategy shall be based on the precautionary principle and shall include:
 - a. Short (1-3 years), medium (5-10 years) and long term (25 years) measurable targets with timelines for all goals and objectives. The targets shall include but not be limited to the target categories in table 1 and targets should be set to achieve the goal of eliminating all environmental problems by 2030.
 - b. Strategies specifying how the targets will be met and who is responsible for implementing the strategy. Strategies should include:
 - i. Regulatory caps on emissions by sector and region consistent with the overall targets.
 - ii. Economic instruments such as emission trading systems with a declining cap.
 - iii. Penalties for non-compliance.
 - iv. Ecosystem based management.
 - v. Full cost accounting.
 - c. Pollution emission fees for substances released into the environment identified under goal 4 (reducing waste and pollution) in table 1 of this Act.

PUBLIC REVIEW OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

10. The draft National Sustainable Development Strategy shall be submitted to the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, the Commissioner, relevant

Parliamentary committees, and the public for review and comment for a period of not less than one hundred and twenty days.

11. The Minister of Environment will record all comments received on the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy and provide responses to all comments.
12. The Minister of Environment will revise the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy in response to comments received and submit the revised draft to the Sustainable Development Advisory Council, the Commissioner, relevant Parliamentary committees, and the public for review and comment for not less than sixty days. The Minister of Environment may revise the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy based on comments received during the sixty day comment period.

APPROVAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

13. After the review process under section 12 is completed, the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy shall be submitted to the Governor in Council through the Cabinet Committee on Sustainable Development for approval as the official government National Sustainable Development Strategy.
14. The official government National Sustainable Development Strategy shall be submitted to Parliament for ratification.
15. Targets and fees developed under sections 9 (b) and 9 (c) of this Act shall be enacted as regulations pursuant to this Act.

DEPARTMENTAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

16. The appropriate Minister of each government department that is a category 1 department and each Crown corporation shall cause the department and Crown corporation to prepare a draft Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy indicating how their departments will comply with the National Sustainable Development Strategy at least once every three years and within one hundred and twenty days after the approval of the National Sustainable Development Strategy by the Governor in Council.
17. Draft Departmental Sustainable Development Strategies shall be submitted to the Minister of Environment for review. Departmental Sustainable Development Strategies shall be revised based on Minister of Environment recommendations.
18. Once approved by the Minister of Environment, Departmental Sustainable Development Strategies shall be submitted to Cabinet through the Cabinet Committee on Sustainable Development for approval as the official Departmental Sustainable Development Strategies.
19. Performance contracts with senior managers in government departments and Crown corporations shall include meeting goals, objectives, and targets in the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Departmental Sustainable Development Strategies.
20. The Governor in Council may on the recommendation of the Minister of Environment direct that the requirements of sections 16, 17, 18 and 19

apply to any government department or agency not defined as a category 1 department or Crown corporation.

COMMISSIONER OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

21. A Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development shall be appointed under the same terms and conditions as the Auditor General.
22. The purpose of the Commissioner is to provide advice and to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development.

PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

23. The Commissioner shall evaluate and provide recommendations on the draft National Sustainable Development Strategy submitted by the Minister of Environment.

DEVELOP SUSTAINABILITY MONITORING SYSTEM

24. The Commissioner shall develop a national sustainability monitoring system to assess the overall state of the Canadian environment nationally and by province and territory. The national sustainability monitoring system shall:
 - a. assess progress in implementing the National Sustainable Development Strategy;
 - b. assess progress in meeting national and provincial sustainability targets contained in the National Sustainable Development Strategy;
 - c. assess Canadian and provincial performance in sustainable development relative to the performance of other industrial nations based on the target categories contained in Table 1.

PREPARE SUSTAINABILITY MONITORING REPORT

25. The Commissioner shall prepare and submit to Parliament each year a sustainability monitoring report that:
 - a. assesses progress in implementing the National Sustainable Development Strategy;
 - b. assesses progress in meeting national and provincial sustainability targets contained in the National Sustainable Development Strategy;
 - c. assesses performance in sustainable development for Canada and each province relative to the performance of other industrial nations based on the target categories contained in Table 1;
 - d. identifies deficiencies in implementing the National Sustainable Development Strategy and where goals, objectives, and targets in the National Sustainable Development Strategy are not being met;

- e. identifies causes for deficiencies and makes recommendations for addressing deficiencies;
- f. reports on disposition of public petitions received under this Act;
- g. includes any other matters that the Commissioner considers important in relation to environmental and other aspects of sustainable development.

MINISTER'S RESPONSE

26. The Minister of Environment shall provide responses to all recommendations from the Commissioner.

PETITIONS TO THE COMMISSIONER

27. The Commissioner shall receive petitions from the public on matters related to sustainable development.
28. The Commissioner shall make a record of the petition and forward the petition to the Minister of the relevant government department within fifteen days after the day on which the petition was received

MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO PETITION

29. Within fifteen days after the day on which the Minister receives the petition from the Commissioner, the Minister shall send to the person who made the petition an acknowledgement of receipt of the petition and shall send a copy of the acknowledgement to the Commissioner.
30. The Minister shall consider the petition and send a response to the person who made the petition and a copy of the response to the Commissioner within one-hundred and twenty days after the day on which the Minister received the petition from the Commissioner.

PETITION FOLLOW-UP

31. The Commissioner shall contact the person who made the petition within fifteen days after the response was sent to the person by the Minister asking the person if the response was received and if the person is satisfied with the response. The Commissioner shall advise the person that if they are not satisfied with the response they may resubmit the petition to the Commissioner with an explanation why they are not satisfied with the Minister's response.
32. The Commissioner shall review resubmitted petitions and may request the Minister who responded to the petition to reconsider the petition.

MULTIPLE PETITIONERS

33. Where the petition is from more than one person, it is sufficient for the Minister and the Commissioner to send the acknowledgements and responses to one or more of the petitioners rather than to all of them.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

34. The Commissioner shall maintain a publicly accessible record of all written documents produced under any section of this Act in a manner consistent with privacy legislation.

POWERS OF COMMISSIONER

35. The Commissioner shall have the same powers and authorities as the Auditor General to perform their duties under this Act

GREEN FUND

36. A Green Fund shall be established to assist in the implementation of the National Sustainable Development Strategy.
37. The Fund shall be comprised of:
- a. all fees established under section 9(c) of this Act;
 - b. the revenue derived from fees, charges, permits or other amounts collected under the Acts or regulations under the administration of the Minister of Environment, including revenue from economic instruments for the purpose of achieving sustainable development;
 - c. the fines paid by offenders for an offence against a provision of an Act or regulation under the administration of the Minister of Environment;
 - d. damages, including punitive damages, paid following a civil suit instituted on behalf of the Minister of Environment;
 - e. the sums paid into the Fund pursuant to the appropriations granted for that purpose by Parliament;
 - f. the gifts, legacies and other contributions paid into the Fund to further the achievement of the objects of the Fund; and
 - g. the income generated by the investment of the sums making up the Fund.
38. The fiscal year of the Fund ends on March 31st.

REGULATIONS

39. The Governor in Council may make regulations for the purposes of achieving any goals and objectives of this Act.

TABLE 1
National Sustainability Act Targets

1. GENERATING GENUINE WEALTH	Publish Genuine Wealth Index
2. IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL EFFICIENCY	Energy Consumption Water Consumption Materials Consumption
3. SHIFTING TO CLEAN ENERGY	Non Renewable Energy Dependency
4. REDUCING WASTE AND POLLUTION	Greenhouse Gas Emissions Sulphur Emissions Nitrogen Emissions VOC Emissions Carbon Monoxide Emissions Hazard Waste Generation Ozone Depleting Substances Municipal Waste Recycling Rates Nuclear Waste Particulate Emissions Carcinogens Neurotoxins Reproductive Toxins Toxic Waste (including targets for all substances listed in the NPRI)
5. PROTECTING AIR	Concentrations of Pollutants in Urban Air including: Sulphur Nitrogen VOC Carbon Monoxide Particulates
6. PROTECTING WATER	Concentration of Pollutants in Drinking Water and Surface Water including: Aluminum Arsenic Cadmium Chromium Copper Iron Lead Magnesium Manganese Mercury Zinc Bacteria

TABLE 1 CONTINUED
National Sustainability Act Targets

6. PROTECTING WATER <i>(CONTINUED)</i>	Viruses Protozoa Ammonia Sodium Ph Sulphate Total Dissolved Solids Total Suspended Sediments Turbidity
7. PRODUCING HEALTHY FOOD	Pesticide Use Fertilizer Use Livestock Density Organic Agriculture
8. PROTECTING AND RESTORING NATURE	Protected Area Species at Risk Timber Harvest Ecosystem Risk Forested Land Agricultural Land
9. BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CITIES	Urban Land Consumption Automobile Dependence Public Transit
10. PROMOTING GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY	Official Development Assistance

SOURCE: Based on Boyd (2004)

APPENDIX 2

Draft National Sustainability Act

INDICATOR	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
Genuine Wealth Indicator	Indicator published		
Energy Use	10% reduction	30% reduction	50% reduction
Water Use	10% reduction	30% reduction	50% reduction
Materials Use	10% reduction	20% reduction	30% reduction
Greenhouse Gas	15% reduction	30% reduction (2012)	50% reduction
Renewable Energy for Electricity	10% of supply	25% of supply	50% of supply
Municipal Waste		50% reduction (2014)	
Toxic Substances	20% reduction	60% reduction	
Nitrogen Emissions	30% reduction	80% reduction	
VOCs Emissions	30% reduction	80% reduction	
Sulphur Emissions		75% reduction	
Sewage Treatment	100% at least primary	100% tertiary	
Pesticide Use	30% reduction	90% reduction	
Organic Agriculture	10% of supply	30% of supply	
Species at Risk	10 species recovered	80 species recovered	
Ecosystem Based Management	Applied to 30% of land base	Applied to 100% of land base	
Transit Use per capita – major cities	10% increase	25% increase	50% increase

SOURCE: Boyd (2004)

NOTES

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According to several recent studies, Canada has among the worst environmental record of any developed country, ranking 28th out of 30 industrialized nations. Without changes, Canada risks continuing deterioration of its environment, human health and international reputation. Action to address Canada's poor environmental performance is therefore urgent.

Canada made an international commitment, at the UN Earth Summit in 1992 and the World Summit in 2002, to address its environmental challenges by developing a National Sustainable Development Strategy. While 20 of the planet's top environmental performing countries have already fulfilled this commitment, Canada is still no closer to putting in place a national strategy.

In 2004, the David Suzuki Foundation responded to Canada's failure to develop a national strategy by producing its own plan to achieve sustainability entitled *Sustainability within a Generation*. The purpose of this report is to outline a policy to help achieve sustainability within a generation and fulfill Canada's international commitment to develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy.



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