

New community planning and development models try to minimize environmental impacts such as a reliance on private cars for transportation. This can be done through intensified land use. Rural land use is also changing to preserve farmland and ecosystems.

Canada's strength in housing and urban settlement issues has created a wealth of knowledge and expertise that we share with developing countries. International partnerships are in place to draw on the experience of Canadian institutions, experts and local governments.

Freshwater Resources

The impact of agricultural, industrial and urban development on waterways is now receiving increased attention by Canadian governments and major groups. Policy makers now see waterways as parts of larger ecosystems. They know that a reduction of pollution is essential, and increasingly recognize that waterways must support multiple uses, including the needs of non-human species.

The special needs of waterways in heavily populated parts of Canada and in the Arctic require specific consideration. Partnerships that include governments, major groups and other interests are coming together to determine how best to clean up and manage these waterways. Canada's experience in providing safe water to its citizens and managing water resources is also being translated into the projects of Canadian development assistance organizations.

Toxic Chemicals and Wastes

Governments, the private sector and consumers have worked to control the environmental impacts of toxic chemicals and wastes for many years. Through redesigning processes to reduce, reuse and recycle these products, businesses and governments are making real progress toward their targets of cutting the amount of solid and hazardous waste to half their former levels. Governments and business have found innovative means of cutting waste, and are working with international agencies to find global means of controlling toxic chemicals and hazardous or radioactive wastes.

Challenges

Building sustainable communities and a sustainable economy requires new ways of thinking and acting. Understanding the complexity of ecosystems and the effects of human activity is essential. More efficient use of resources and restrained consumption are other critical steps at home. Development assistance and trade policies are important internationally. Most of all, building sustainability requires a commitment to co-operation. Canadians are working together to achieve consensus on real, practical solutions. We are working with the international community to bring that approach to bear around the world.