

- to reduce the adverse effects of the business
- to be accountable to stakeholders
- to ensure that utility employees understand the environmental implications of their actions and have the knowledge and skill to make the right decisions.

A number of specific measures (e.g., public reporting of environmental performance) and indicators (e.g., publicly available report on environmental performance) are associated with each of these principles. These environmental elements are to be measured in assessing "continual improvement" on the environment. While no cross-industry environmental improvement targets have been established, it is believed that these will be forthcoming as member utilities become acculturated to measuring environmental performance against the above-noted measures and indicators.

The ECR Program places substantial importance on the role of Environmental Management Systems (EMS). Association members must each implement an EMS that is consistent with the ISO 14001 framework. These management systems must be audited by a certified auditor.

Members are required to file an Annual Improvement Report signed by their Chief Executive Officer. This annual report documents a utility's implementation of the various elements of the ECR Program.

A Public Advisory Panel provides for public involvement in the Program. This Panel comprises seven members from the general public and non-government agencies. It is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the industry's progress on the ECR initiative and goals and making recommendations for ongoing action.

The Program also includes an Independent Verification Process. Verification teams, made up of public and industry representatives, will visit utilities and check the accuracy of progress documented in annual reports and audits.

The environmental effects of this initiative are yet to be demonstrated. CEA member utilities are in the process of compiling and submitting their first Annual Improvement Reports. It will be some time before specific environmental effects can be documented.

The ECR Program is serving to acculturate the electric utility industry on the need to manage performance on the environment more effectively. As the initiative moves companies toward measuring and reporting on environmental elements, performance against these elements will improve. The Public Advisory Panel and the Verification Process will also serve to increase the transparency of the industry's environmental management practices, thereby increasing accountability.

Effects of VNRIs on Trade and Investment

A number of Canada's electric utilities engage in export activity. This activity includes the export of electricity as well as expertise such as consulting and engineering services. The principal market for electricity exports is the United States. Services are most often exported to developing countries.