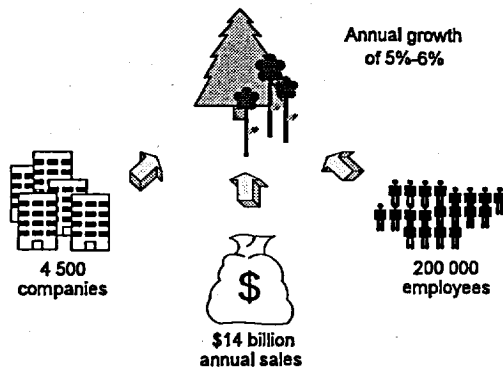


Domestic Opportunities in the Environmental Sector



Source: Environment Canada

Environmental industries are a part of our expanding knowledge economy.

environmental management systems and international standardization such as the ISO 14000 series.

We are recognizing the potential economic and social value of **biotechnology**. At the same time, advances in this area are raising environmental, ethical, risk, and public confidence issues that must be addressed. The federal government will be reviewing its National Biotechnology Strategy in consultation with stakeholders.

Not all emerging environmental solutions are based on new technologies. There has been growing interest in traditional Aboriginal and community knowledge as well as its potential applications, together with technology, to deal with many issues such as wildlife management.

Canada remains committed to finding ways of more accurately reflecting the value of nature and the environment in economic decision making. We have made changes to the tax system to provide more favourable treatment for investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy, for charitable donations of ecologically sensitive land, and for the establishment of trust funds for land reclamation. However, more needs to be done to

guarantee long-term sustainability. We will continue to look at opportunities for ecological tax reform, the use of economic instruments, and the development of economic indicators, such as the gross domestic product, which take into account environmental and social implications. We also need to ensure that individuals and businesses consider the full costs—environmental, economic, and social—when they make decisions.

STRENGTHENING OUR SOCIAL FABRIC

The First Principle of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development and are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. Social considerations in sustainable development can be understood through the concepts of human and social capital that have been developed and elaborated in recent years.

Human Capital

Countries in which people have better health, higher education, and more flexible skills seem better equipped to deal with a rapidly changing world. These are countries that should be more capable of finding innovative solutions to sustainable development. These are countries with greater capacity to prevent natural disasters and reduce the impacts of those that occur, thus safeguarding natural capital and the health and safety of their citizens.

Governments in Canada have affirmed their support for **health** by investing heavily in the health care system and in measures that promote and protect health. Canada's total health expenditures, public and private, in 1996 represented 9.5 percent of our gross domestic