

The federal government's principal means of improving decision making is to build sustainable development into policies, programs, and operations of all federal departments and agencies through the following:

- a legislated requirement that each department and agency prepare a results-oriented sustainable development strategy;
- the establishment of a legislated accountability mechanism—the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, who will monitor and report to Parliament on the government's performance in integrating the principles of sustainable development into decision making; and
- environmental assessment legislation to integrate sustainable development into federal project planning.

Most provincial and territorial governments have now developed sustainable development plans and passed environmental assessment legislation. These plans and legislation are important means of integrating environmental considerations into their planning and decision-making activities. Various Canadian industries have undertaken the development of guidelines, codes of practice, and other initiatives in an effort to incorporate environmental factors into the design of their activities, products, processes, and services.

The 1994 federal Task Force on Economic Instruments and Disincentives to Sound Environmental Practices was the first well-defined exercise to incorporate environmental considerations into a budget-making process in Canada. The 1995 federal budget addressed a number of the task force's short-term recommendations. Longer term proposals are now under study.

Integrating Environment and Development in International Legal Instruments and Mechanisms

The role of international legal instruments in promoting sustainable development is demonstrated by Canadian actions in recent international negotiations. An important objective of Canadian negotiators has been the integration of environmental and developmental concerns. This integration is reflected in provisions of, among others, the high seas fishing agreement and the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy.

To advance progress in global negotiations on sustainable development issues, Canada has on a number of occasions provided assistance to the developing world to participate in international negotiations. Regionally, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation is an example of an international agreement that emphasizes the complementary roles of cooperation and enforcement.

Protection of the Atmosphere

Canada is working in a number of ways to protect the atmosphere. It is contributing to the expansion of scientific understanding of atmospheric and climate issues through domestic research and cooperation with international atmospheric research programs.