

Greening of Conferences, Large Meetings and Events

1) Summary Rationale for the Greening of Conferences, Large Meetings and Events

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Stemming from the federal government's Greening of Government initiative, DFAIT is required to integrate sustainable development considerations into all aspects of its operations and decision-making. This means implementing sound environmental management practices, in Canada and at missions abroad. Moreover, DFAIT's sustainable development performance will be subject to ongoing scrutiny by the public, Parliament, and the Auditor General. Missions' efforts to green conferences provide practical and visible means to effect changes that will demonstrate environmental stewardship and integration of sustainable development considerations.

The department's Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS), to be tabled in Parliament by December 1997, will integrate sustainable development fully into DFAIT's way of doing business and will provide concrete benchmarks against which the department can measure its progress. The SDS will lay out DFAIT's environmental principles and objectives from a corporate perspective. The operational part of the SDS will be supported by the Environmental Management Plan (EMP). In the departmental EMP, DFAIT has committed to applying sound environmental practices to the management of its operations in Canada and at missions abroad, including: environmental stewardship, environmental impact assessment and environmental reviews. In addition, DFAIT's Code of Environmental Stewardship reflects the commitment to actions intended to ensure sustainable development.

Environmental Services Division (JEN)

Environmental Services Division (JEN) was created in 1992 to ensure that the department meets environmental legislative and policy requirements. JEN's work includes: co-ordinating the preparation and implementation of DFAIT's SDS; co-ordinating education, training and awareness; co-ordinating and assisting with environmental impact assessment and environmental reviews; and preparing annual reports.

Since 1994, JEN has been active in promoting a comprehensive environmental program for the department. The program objectives include: defining the department's policy and legal compliance issues and developing products and services that enable managers to meet environmental performance expectations. At the present time, JEN is seeking to integrate established and emerging environmental "best practices" into standard DFAIT operating practices. This is required to ensure compliance to policy and regulation and also to provide on-going support to the federal sustainable development initiative.

JEN has already undertaken a comprehensive awareness and promotion campaign to inform staff of their responsibilities under the Federal Code of Environmental Stewardship and the Greening of Government. To sustain an enhanced environmental performance, DFAIT must now adopt business practices and operating procedures which support and promote these new imperatives.

2) Management Overview

This circular is designed to help implement the federal government's sustainable development policy in the area of physical operations. It is understood that, because of local constraints, not all events can meet consistently high environmental standards. Therefore, the attached planner is organized such that, from the outset, organizers can establish the "green standard" that they are seeking to achieve and then plan accordingly. Table 2 lists the basic requirements to implement this policy. For those seeking to achieve a higher standard of environmental stewardship for their event, the "planner" lists dozens of procedures and activities that can be undertaken to minimize environmental impacts. These "enhanced" activities are listed in tabular format so as to assist organizers in selecting the initiatives that they will undertake. Most of these stewardship initiatives require few resources and