

Part II. GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING ON NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The 1997 Special Session of the UN General Assembly set a target date of 2002 for the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development (NSDS). It also reaffirmed that all sectors of society should be involved in their development and implementation. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation urges States to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of NSDS and begin their implementation by 2005.

The NSDS global map, distributed at the eleventh session of the CSD, attempts to capture the status of development and implementation of NSDSs at the global level, based on information contained in the 2002 Country Profiles and in the National Assessment Reports, prepared for the WSSD. The purpose of the map is to encourage those countries that have not yet completed the process, to proceed in their efforts to meet the goal of 2005, while at the same time serving as a tool for the CSD to monitor progress in this area.

In order to properly track broad progress in the area of NSDS development and implementation, the CSD Secretariat intends to issue an updated version of the map for distribution at the CSD sessions on an annual basis until 2006.

Please indicate the stages of NSDS development/implementation in your country, by responding to the questions below:

1. Does your country have a NSDS approved by the government: **NO, please see question 7 for a description of Canada's approach to sustainability planning.**
If **yes**, please give name and year of approval: _____
If **no**, please go straight to questions 5-7.
2. How is your NSDS being implemented? Give specific actions/activities undertaken for this purpose: _____

3. Has your NSDS been evaluated and if so, when and how? _____

4. Do you have, and if so, what are the other relevant strategies in place supporting the NSDS? Please choose from the following:
Water (name and year of being implemented): _____
Sanitation (name and year of being implemented): _____
Human settlements (name and year of being implemented): _____

Other strategies: _____

5. Have multi-stakeholder consultations, training or workshops for NSDS development been undertaken?

If yes please give the nature and type of consultations/training/workshops held:

6. Do you have a national coordination body for NSDS development established? If so, please give the name and nature of such body (eg. composition):

7. Where a NSDS does not exist, do you have other relevant strategies, plans and activities in place? :

(please specify) _____

In following up on the commitment made at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to develop a national sustainable development plan, the Government of Canada chose to focus its attention first on building an approach to sustainable development planning at the federal level of government, while recognizing that as a federal state the preparation of a truly National Sustainable Development Strategy in Canada would ultimately require a joint effort of the federal and provincial governments. The intent was to ensure the federal government had its own house in order as a first step.

As a direct response to this challenge, the Government of Canada, through amendments to the *Auditor General Act* in 1995, established the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD) within the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). The amendments to the *Auditor General Act* also required that federal Ministers prepare Sustainable Development Strategies (SDSs) outlining their departments' objectives and plans for action to further sustainable development, and that they update the Strategies at least once every three years.

The Government also released in 1995 *A Guide to Green Government*, which firmly states its belief that Canada's economic health depends on its environmental health. The Guide outlines the Government's commitment to adopting economic and environmental agendas that converge and provides guidance to federal departments in preparing Sustainable Development Strategies in terms of key concepts, objectives, and key policy tools, as well as on the process issues of

how to prepare a Strategy. The process emphasizes issue scanning, consultations, establishing clear goals and objectives and measurement and reporting of performance.

The SDSs encompass many of the aspects outlined in the questions above:

1) **Implementation of SDSs:** Departments prepared their first Strategies in 1997. A set of revised Strategies were completed three years later in early 2001, and the third round of Strategies will be completed by the end of December 2003 (the current versions of departmental SDSs can be found at www.sdinfo.gc.ca).

2) **Evaluation of SDSs:** Since the tabling of their first Strategies, Departments have reported annually on their performance in implementing their commitments through their annual Departmental Performance Reports to Parliament. The Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has also reported every year on the Government's performance on environment and sustainable development matters, with a particular focus each year on progress and challenges in implementing sustainable development strategies (the reports of the CESD can be found at www.oag-bvg.gc.ca).

3) **Complementary Strategies:** There are of course many other relevant strategies in place that support Canada's efforts to move toward sustainable development in addition to the twenty-eight departmental sustainable development strategies. These include, *inter alia*:

- the Agriculture Policy Framework
- the Oceans Strategy
- the Climate Change Plan for Canada
- Canada's Innovation Strategy
- Canada's Sustainability in the Federal House Initiatives
- the National Forest Strategy
- the Minerals and Metals Policy of the Government of Canada.

4) **Multi-stakeholder consultations:**

The 1995 *Guide to Green Government* emphasized the importance of public consultations and engagement to building strong sustainable development strategies. All departments in preparing their SDSs were required to consult with stakeholders and to report publicly on both their consultations processes and the results of these consultations in their Strategy documents. In a number of instances since 1997, departments have worked with other departments with shared interests to host coordinated consultation events where stakeholders could gather in one place and speak to several government departments at the same time about their issues. This not only reduced the burden on individual stakeholders, but also strengthened the consultative process by introducing departments in some cases to stakeholders with whom they have not been traditionally engaged.

5) A Federal Coordinating Body for SD:

In addition to the twenty-eight departmental strategies, Canada recognizes the need for stronger coordination between its federal departmental SDSs, and work is underway toward a government-wide vision and set of priorities on sustainable development. Through a Deputy Minister-level committee co-chaired by the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources, work has begun and will continue on the elaboration of a vision and a strategy for sustainable development at the federal level in Canada that will provide guidance to the next round of departmental strategies.