

**CANADA**  
**National Reporting to CSD-16/17**  
**Thematic Profile: Rural Development**

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| <p>1. Integrating rural development strategies into Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs) or other economic/development strategies.</p> |
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Poverty reduction and the protection and management of the natural resource base for economic and social development are essential requirements for sustainable development. The Government of Canada is working through a number of avenues, both at home and abroad, to advance the objectives of Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). Pursuant to Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, Canada is making progress through a number of initiatives aimed at fostering and enhancing the conditions for sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Sustainable development is a cornerstone of Canada's strategy to reduce poverty in developing countries, especially in rural areas. Rural development through agriculture is important to Canada's international assistance efforts. Canada funds programs in the areas of democratic governance, environmental sustainability, health and education, and private sector development, including rural entrepreneurship and agriculture. The work of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has contributed to increased [agricultural productivity](#) leading to better nutrition in a number of developing countries, growth in exports, and greater access to financial services, including credit. CIDA also contributes to initiatives that have resulted in greater economic independence for women, greater equality in education and a [stronger role for women](#) in decision-making

Canada's [International Development Research Centre](#) (IDRC) continues to foster the development and dissemination of knowledge to advance sustainable rural development and global poverty reduction. IDRC's [Rural Poverty and Environment](#) program is supporting research that helps rural poor to participate in natural resource management, to uphold their access to and rights to benefit from economic opportunities, and to increase local ecosystem quality and productivity. For example, IDRC is currently supporting work that is identifying policies and processes that will expand global [economic opportunities](#) for the rural poor and increase the ways the rural poor can develop their own capacities and define their own [productive strategies](#) to improve their livelihoods. IDRC also provides support for the [Rimisp – Latin American Center for Rural Development](#) including new tools and approaches for rural territorial development to reduce poverty.

Since last reporting on the theme of rural development and sustainable agriculture at CSD-8, Canada has continued to build and enhance a national cross-government approach to domestic rural challenges, guided by priorities identified by rural citizens. At the provincial/territorial level, a number of jurisdictions have launched rural or regional development strategies. Canada's [actions](#) to address the concerns of rural Canadians and communities have encompassed a variety of social and economic initiatives.

Sustainable agriculture development is a key component of current government approaches to rural development; however, natural resource and service industries and manufacturing also play key roles in Canada's rural regions. Accordingly, sustainable rural development in Canada requires a broad-based approach that considers a wide variety of rural economic bases, social and environmental circumstances, and incorporates the need for economic diversification.

At the federal level, rural development involves a number of departments and agencies with diverse economic, social and environmental mandates. These responsibilities include the reduction of regional economic and income disparities, the promotion of equal opportunities for all Canadians, economic growth and diversification, and human resource and social development. Federal departments work with provincial/territorial and local governments and non-government organizations (NGOs) to advance strategies and initiatives in order to increase the economic and social well-being of Canada's citizens, communities and regions while preserving and enhancing the quality of the natural environment.

Since 1998, the [Canadian Rural Partnership](#) (CRP) has been the key policy framework supporting federal government coordination efforts in rural and remote parts of Canada. Led by the Rural Secretariat (RS) within the federal department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the CRP is a horizontal initiative, supporting collaboration within and between governments to ensure that federal policies, programs, services and activities provide coherent support to rural communities. The RS's Rural Development Network, for example, supports collaboration and coherency at the federal level by providing a forum to raise awareness of rural issues across federal departments and share best practices and lessons learned. Overall, the work of the RS and the goal of the CRP is to enhance the quality of life in rural Canada and foster the conditions for more sustainable communities which are better equipped to compete in a global economy. The CRP complements other federal activities aimed at strengthening national prosperity and quality of life, and aims to support provincial/territorial rural and regional development and poverty reduction initiatives.

The reduction of poverty in both rural and urban Canada is a long-term, multi-dimensional challenge faced by all levels of government. At the federal level, strategies have been developed to improve economic and employment opportunities for all Canadians and reduce poverty through income support measures, the tax system, and a variety of economic and social programs and services that work together to improve self-sufficiency. National level strategies are complemented by broad-based social assistance and income support measures at the provincial/territorial and local levels.

Rural poverty is currently the subject of a special study by the Government of Canada's Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. As the Committee has heard throughout its hearings and affirmed in its [interim report](#) of December 2006, poverty is a multi-faceted challenge; it crosses sectoral and geographic boundaries, and no single policy is capable of eradicating poverty on its own. A single policy response also cannot respond effectively to the geographic, economic and social diversity of rural Canada.

Canada's regional development agencies and organizations are mandated to address the diverse economic circumstances and challenges that exist in Canada's regions.

- [Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency](#) (ACOA) is the principal federal agency overseeing economic development in Canada's Atlantic region (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador), primarily focused on increasing employment opportunities and earned income through support for small-medium sized enterprise development and strengthening its community base. Through partnerships and co-ordination with federal departments, other levels of government and non-governmental organizations, ACOA works to develop strategies and approaches for strengthening the economy of Atlantic Canada, which is mainly rural.

- [Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions](#) (CED-Q) promotes economic development in the regions of Quebec where low incomes and/or slow economic growth are prevalent or where opportunities for productive employment are limited. CED-Q emphasizes long-term economic development and sustainable employment and income creation and focuses on small-medium sized enterprises and on the development of entrepreneurial talent. It does so through its network of 14 business offices located across all regions of Quebec via two programs: the Community Diversification Program and the Business and Regional Growth Program.
- [Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario](#) (FedNor), an organization within the federal department of Industry Canada, promotes community economic development, diversification, job creation, and sustainable, self-reliant communities in northern and rural Ontario. FedNor uses a community-based approach and works with a variety of business and community partners to improve access to capital, information and markets in support of economic growth and job creation. FedNor's range of programs includes the Eastern Ontario Development Program and the Northern Ontario Development Program.
- [Western Economic Diversification Canada](#) (WD) is mandated to promote the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba). WD contributes to community economic development in urban centres and rural areas with initiatives that capitalize on opportunities for growth and development and enable communities to adjust to challenges that hinder competitiveness and quality of life.

[Indian and Northern Affairs Canada](#) (INAC) has broad responsibilities for fostering the economic and social development of Canada's aboriginal peoples and northern territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut). The department supports First Nations and Inuit peoples in developing healthy, sustainable communities and is responsible for delivering provincial-like services such as education, housing and community infrastructure, and social assistance and support services to Status Indians on-reserve. INAC's role in the North includes settling and implementing land claims, negotiating self-government agreements, advancing political evolution, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and fostering leadership in sustainable development, both domestically and among circumpolar nations.

## 2. Causes of rural-urban migration, and policies to reverse this trend.

As in most countries, a pronounced rural-urban migration trend has been observed in Canada over the past several decades. This general trend, however, obscures some variations. Some rural areas within the country, particularly those close to urban centres, are growing. Overall, however, many rural areas are experiencing [population](#) decline. Of particular concern to rural communities is a continuing high level of youth out-migration, the causes of which include limited post-secondary education, employment and career opportunities, and low levels of youth engagement in community life. [Measures](#) to encourage youth to remain in their communities and strategies to attract youth back are being promoted in a number of rural areas.

Rural out-migration is compounded by low levels of in-migration. In general, immigrants to Canada choose to live in larger urban centres rather than rural areas and the majority of immigrants settle in Canada's three largest cities – Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. Thus, in several rural areas, strategies to attract more new Canadians to rural areas are being

developed. [Agreements](#) between the Government of Canada and provincial/territorial governments also help to coordinate and share the benefits of immigration across all regions.

A number of federal strategies aim to foster local opportunities and stimulate local businesses in rural areas. The Government of Canada's successful [Community Futures Program](#) helps communities develop and implement local solutions to local problems and contributes to stronger, more sustainable communities. The program supports Community Futures Development Corporations and Community Business Development Corporations in every province and territory. These organizations (over 250 across Canada) collaborate with other partners and stakeholders to assess their local economic situation and develop strategies to meet their needs, to provide support to small-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and social enterprises, and to undertake appropriate community economic development initiatives.

Population retention and attraction approaches are being tested through the Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP) Models for Rural Development Program. The model, [Réseau Migration – Foire des Villages](#), currently operating in Quebec, encourages rural communities to adopt activities that will attract and retain new residents from urban centres. This model has had some success; information derived from its testing and implementation will be made available to all levels of government to support policy and program directions and decisions.

In Atlantic Canada, a region experiencing significant population out-migration, the CRP has initiated and contributed to multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives concerned with Atlantic population challenges. The Atlantic Population Strategy, though not yet fully implemented, has been developed by ACOA, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the four Atlantic provinces, with additional support from the CRP and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, to address the challenges of attracting and retaining a skilled regional population. Existing ACOA initiatives aimed at supporting local entrepreneurs are having some success. An [evaluation](#) of the SEED Capital Connexion Program shows that the majority of its clients (58%) indicated they would have moved from their community without the Program's assistance.

In Ontario, FedNor works to reverse rural to urban migration through a networked local presence and an integrated, community-based approach to program delivery. Through policies and programs that enhance Northern and rural Ontario communities' innovation capacity and infrastructure, FedNor is helping to support the transition and evolution of traditional economies relying on resource-based industries (e.g., grain shipping and forestry) to new knowledge-based economy industries, including bio-technology and value-added forest products. The results of this policy focus include the establishment of many new SMEs.

<p>3. Main driving forces for economic growth and social development in rural areas (e.g. agriculture, small and medium enterprise development, employment and other non-agricultural sector).</p>
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Over the past few decades, Canada's rural communities and regions have experienced dramatic reductions in farm and other primary sector employment and now depend on a wide range of economic activity for growth. Globalization, technology, reduced transportation costs for goods, changing trade patterns for commodities, and demographics are additional drivers of change in Canada's rural areas. The transformation to a knowledge-based economy has been accompanied by the emergence of new sectors and opportunities in areas such as information technology and bioscience.

Economic diversification is critical to long-term community sustainability. Single-industry communities are particularly vulnerable to sectoral downturns, which can result in population loss, skill shortages, diminished public services, smaller tax bases, and reduced overall capacity to deal with economic and social challenges. At the same time, in many rural areas, other opportunities often exist for development, and government initiatives have focused on facilitating the conditions for small business growth and economic diversification.

Improving the competitiveness of SMEs in Atlantic Canada is a major focus of the ACOA. Its [Atlantic Innovation Fund](#) (AIF) contributes to research and development (R&D) activity in Atlantic Canada. For example, in the region's rural communities, the AIF promotes innovation in manufacturing activities related to the agriculture, aquaculture/fisheries and forestry sectors. Through the [Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership](#) (ATIP), ACOA has enhanced small business counselling to assist micro and small business in smaller communities to explore global market and investment opportunities.

In Quebec, CED-Q focuses on diversification to allow rural communities to adjust to economic shocks due to changes in the natural resources sectors such as forestry and fisheries. By helping communities to diversify and through supporting SMEs, CED-Q sustains long-term growth and rural development in the province. Between September 2003 and August 2005, CED-Q carried out 318 projects with [a sustainable development content](#).

FedNor investments in northern and rural Ontario aim to foster economic diversification, growth and job creation. FedNor has contributed to successful initiatives that are advancing the presence of [women in the business world](#), enhancing entrepreneurial skills for the unemployed and underemployed, and merging economic, environmental, and social goals for enhanced community sustainability and revitalization.

In western Canada, WD promotes rural diversification through support for projects that will increase the capacity in rural communities to undertake applied R&D and value-added production and encourage new opportunities for skilled employment. WD also works to facilitate economic recovery from depressed economic circumstances, and supports initiatives that allow communities to sustain their economies and adjust to changing and challenging economic conditions. The [Softwood Industry Community Adjustment Initiative](#), coordinated and delivered by WD in British Columbia, targeted forest-dependent communities that had experienced permanent local employment loss and resulted in enhanced community diversification.

Canada's Model Forest Program was created by the Government of Canada to address the challenges of balancing the extensive range of demands that are placed on Canada's forests, which are of significant ecological and economic importance to numerous rural communities throughout the country. Through research and testing, the [Canadian Model Forest Network](#) and its partners have been at the forefront of developing forestry practices that help to manage forests in a way that benefits both forest managers and the environment. Many countries around the world have recognized the vision and value in this innovative concept and have developed Model Forests of their own.

The Model Forest approach was first brought to the world's attention at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) where Canada promised to "internationalize" its innovative Model Forest Program. To support this effort, the International Model Forest Network Secretariat (IMFNS) was established in 1995 to facilitate the creation of a global network of model forests dedicated to managing the world's forest-based landscapes in a sustainable manner. There are now more than 40 Model Forests in existence or under

development in 20 countries and this number continues to grow. They are linked together through the International Model Forest Network (IMFN), whose [Secretariat](#) is housed at the Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resources Canada.

4. Improved access to basic services and infrastructure in rural areas (e.g. adequate shelter, education, employment opportunities, health, sanitation).

Improving access to basic services and infrastructure is a challenge in many parts of rural Canada due to distance and cost. Despite these challenges, the Government of Canada, through successive programs since 1994, has made significant investments aimed at improving access to infrastructure in rural areas, including projects in the areas of water/wastewater systems, local roads and bridges, public transit, solid waste management, community energy systems, broadband access, and cultural, tourism and sport infrastructure.

[Federal infrastructure programming](#) has been designed to address the needs of rural areas. For example, under the Infrastructure Canada Program, a minimum percentage of federal infrastructure funding in each jurisdiction was set aside for projects in rural communities. Under the [Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund](#), at least 80 per cent of funding for each provincial jurisdiction is being dedicated to communities with a population of less than 250,000. Infrastructure in rural Canada will also benefit significantly from the new, seven-year \$33-billion [Building Canada Plan](#). The Plan includes base funding for municipalities and will support large and small projects in major cities as well as in small communities.

Industry Canada has worked with other government departments and the private sector to bring broadband to un-served rural, remote and Aboriginal communities. From 2002 to 2007, the [Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Pilot Program](#) provided broadband internet access to 900 communities. Broadband projects continue to be eligible for funding through Infrastructure Canada programs.

In Northern and rural Ontario, FedNor focuses on creating employment opportunities and enhancing top-quality education opportunities so Northern and rural Ontario communities can attract and retain students in their areas. FedNor collaborates with Northern Ontario colleges and universities to identify shared priorities for enhancing Northern Ontario's capacity to develop highly qualified graduates, particularly in innovation-related programs in key sectors such as mining or bio-medical research. FedNor also promotes a successful Youth Internship Initiative to help attract, develop and retain a highly skilled workforce with particular emphasis on jobs related to the knowledge-based economy in rural areas. Over 80% of FedNor youth interns remain employed in Northern Ontario following their internship.

INAC supports First Nations' water management by providing funding to First Nations and First Nation technical organizations to support the Circuit Rider Training Program, which is the main vehicle by which most First Nations operators receive the required training to operate their water systems. The number of water treatment system operators who have achieved the first level of certification or greater increased from eight percent of all operators in 2003 to 37.4% of all operators in 2007, resulting in 875 water and wastewater operators who are receiving ongoing training. The program is being expanded to ensure that it is available to all First Nations. Training is being adapted to ensure that operators will be able to achieve certification under provincial regimes. Through programs such as this, Canada is working to build capacity in rural areas to maintain and manage systems to deliver water services.

## 5. Access to land and property.

In Canada, a number of initiatives are focused on developing and enhancing access to sustainable land and water use information for decision-making purposes. Urban sprawl and the loss and fragmentation of agricultural land are important issues in many areas of the country. AAFC supports land-use planning authorities, provincial and local government land-use planning initiatives, and local informal decision-makers in addressing land issues by providing expertise, decision support tools and environmental and economic data about the agriculture sector including:

- environmental systems (e.g. air, biodiversity, soil, water and their interactions);
- sustainable agricultural production systems;
- rural systems (e.g. communication, program delivery, measuring and evaluating impacts on rural communities and their economic well-being);
- land-use planning partnerships;
- development of tools and environmental information that supports and informs local and regional agricultural land-use planning decision makers;
- knowledge and information systems; and
- geographic information systems (GIS)

The National Land and Water Information Service (NWLIS), based on GIS technology, is an Internet-based service currently being developed to provide access to agri-environmental information to help Canadians make responsible land-use decisions. When completed in 2009, the NWLIS will be a major source of information, analysis and interpretation of agri-environmental data on land use, soil, water, climate and biodiversity to assist land-use decision makers, such as governments, community groups, researchers, agricultural producers and industry. Access to this reliable, consistent and up-to-date information will contribute to regional and rural economic growth and help balance economic development and environmental sustainability by encouraging responsible land-use decisions.

For more than 70 years, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) has been providing research and extension expertise in the area of sustainable land and water resource use and management, mainly for the Prairie provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta) and the Peace River region in British Columbia. PFRA contributes to the development of tools that help producers assess their operations and determine environmental risks and opportunities, such as environmental farm plans. PFRA provides analysis of land and water use issues and trends, conducts innovative applied research at both large and small scales, and develops planning tools and information to integrate landscape, agro-climatic and economic considerations. PFRA supports planning, design and analysis of rural water supplies that contribute to economically and environmentally sound approaches.

## 6. Improved access for producers to local markets (for example, farm to market roads).

Local markets play an essential part in rural development, as poor infrastructure and transportation links can inhibit economic opportunities. This is a significant issue for small resource-based communities, farmers and producers. A strong linkage between local food sectors and local urban populations can strengthen the economy of an entire region.

In northern Ontario, FedNor has undertaken initiatives to help expand local agricultural markets. It has supported the Foire Gourmande de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue et du Nord-Est Ontarien. FedNor has also hosted a Northern Ontario pavilion for producers to successfully market their products at the Royal Winter Fair. In six years, the FedNor-supported pavilion has given over

100 Northern producers and exhibitors exposure to over 2 million visitors, resulting in over \$1.4 million in direct sales and a 100% increase of follow-up sales each year. In November 2007, FedNor will be supporting an Eastern Ontario pavilion at the Fair for the first time.

The Government of Canada has also acted to facilitate access to markets (JPol 43e) in western Canada, through investments in transportation improvements. The [Prairie Grain Roads Program](#) was a \$175 million five-year federal initiative (2001-2006) established to improve municipal grain roads and provincial secondary highways. Through federal, provincial and municipal government contributions, the Program generated approximately \$318.5 million in road construction in Western Canada.

7. Improved access to reliable and affordable energy services and to modern biomass technologies and fuel wood sources; commercialization of biomass operations in rural areas.

The Government of Canada's [national comprehensive strategy for renewable fuels](#) includes a component to assist farmers to seize new opportunities in this sector. This strategy supports the JPol goal of developing frameworks that will help to create the necessary conditions to improve access to reliable, affordable and environmentally sound energy services. The Government of Canada is committed to expanding the production and use of cleaner, renewable biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel. Its four-pronged [biofuels strategy](#) aims to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions resulting from fuel use, encourage greater production of biofuels, accelerate the commercialization of new biofuel technologies, and provide new market opportunities for agricultural producers and rural communities.

The agriculture sector will be a central player in this strategy, which aims to regulate an annual average renewable content of five per cent in gasoline by 2010, and two per cent in diesel fuel and heating oil by 2012. The bioeconomy holds great promise for Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry. The decreasing cost of biomass and advances in processing technology that allow sustainable mining of biomass as an industrial feedstock are driving new industries in Canada. The agriculture and agri-food and products sector will be a major contributor of the biomass needed to fuel this emerging industry.

The [Canadian Biomass Innovation Network](#) facilitates collaborative research and development among governments, industry, and academia in the area of bio-innovation (bioenergy, biofuels, and industrial biotechnology). Advances in this area are intended to reduce the consumption of fossil fuel energy, reduce GHG emissions, and seed the development of Canada's bio-based economy. AAFC participates in the network through research on the use of agricultural crops and crop residues to generate biofuels (such as ethanol and biodiesel) and bioproducts. It is also developing a GIS tool that models biomass quantity and quality and the associated energy, water, and transportation infrastructure available for exploitation of the biomass resource. This tool will be linked to remote sensing technology to provide predictive capacity for regional biomass availability.

In addition to the energy goals of the JPol, the Government of Canada also aims to meet the goal of changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production by promoting the development of renewable sources through the [ecoENERGY for Renewable Power](#) program. The program provides an incentive on a per-kilowatt-hour basis on electricity produced from qualifying renewable sources. The Government of Canada, additionally, provides support for space heating and cooling and water heating from renewable sources through the [ecoENERGY for Renewable Heat](#) program, which offers a 25 percent incentive towards eligible project costs.

In the rural economy, solar wall units are being taken up at a significant rate in the farming sector, where such installations supply energy in chicken and hog farming operations.

In further support of the JPoI energy objectives, Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) continues to explore, develop and disseminate information regarding renewable and affordable energy sources. Recognizing that access to energy is one of the key pre-requisites for achieving development, NRCAN has developed innovative tools such as the [RETScreen Clean Energy Project Analysis](#) software, a unique decision-support tool for assessing energy projects. The software, which can be downloaded free-of-charge, is being used world-wide to evaluate the energy production, life-cycle costs and GHG emission reductions for various types of proposed energy efficient and renewable energy technologies. The RETScreen software has been translated into 21 languages, covering roughly two thirds of the world's population.

With support from INAC's [Aboriginal and Northern Community Action Program](#) (ANCAP), aboriginal and northern communities across Canada have undertaken numerous projects involving energy efficiency and renewable energy in recent years. ANCAP, which ran from 2003 to 2007, sought to reduce GHG emissions through activities and projects which yielded economic development and social benefits for the community. It was a "Partnership Platform" that promoted collaboration between the federal government and Aboriginal and northern communities, with the participation of provincial and territorial government, utilities, energy efficiency and renewable energy companies, and other stakeholders.

#### 8. Enhancement in sustainable tourism development.

Canada's federal, provincial and territorial tourism ministers signed the [Quebec Declaration](#) in November 2003, in which they committed to work together to foster economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable tourism development and to finalize a national tourism strategy. Both Northern and aboriginal tourism were identified by ministers as emerging sectors with significant potential for growth.

An industry code of ethics for sustainable tourism has been in existence since the 1990's. The code was [updated](#) in 2005 in collaboration with Parks Canada. The code's guidelines promote the protection of natural and cultural heritage resources, respect for the rights and values of host and local communities, property owners and aboriginal peoples, and aim to limit negative impacts on the natural and cultural environment.

Ecotourism, as a form of sustainable tourism, is growing in popularity. Ecotourism experiences, including northern and aboriginal adventure- and nature-based activities, are [offered throughout Canada](#). Agricultural tourism is another expanding activity. Agri-tourism combines agricultural or rural settings and products within a tourism experience ranging from fruit and vegetable stand shopping to winery, orchard, garden and alpaca tours, from farm-based bed and breakfast accommodation, to participation in harvest festivals, farmer's markets and cattle drives. For rural communities and regions, agri-tourism can be a vehicle for diversifying and stabilising rural economies by creating jobs, providing a broader market base for local businesses, and attracting other businesses and small industries.

#### 9. Environmental consequences of rural development efforts.

The Government of Canada works to prevent and mitigate undesirable environmental consequences from development activity and promotes sustainable development through a variety of programs, policies and initiatives. Environmental farm planning, for example, is

supported by AAFC and provincial governments across Canada. Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs), as outlined in AAFC's [Sustainable Development Strategy for 2007-2009](#), are voluntary self-assessment tools used by producers to identify environmental risks and opportunities related to their operations. At AAFC, EFPs are being developed for community pastures and research sites to serve as a tool to manage the local environmental impacts of operations. Once plans are completed, action plans are developed to address the issues raised.

The EFP process for producers begins with a workshop that introduces farmers to the program. Farmers use a series of worksheets to conduct an environmental risk assessment of their farms. A second workshop guides them through the preparation of an action plan to address environmental issues identified in the assessment. The plan is then submitted for a confidential review by a local peer-review committee. Producers with reviewed plans can apply for technical and financial assistance to implement beneficial management practices identified in their EFP. Assistance is provided through a number of Agriculture Policy Framework programs. EFP programs have been implemented in all provinces and one territory. Over 43,000 producers have participated in the program.

#### 10. Capacity building for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).

SMEs in rural Canada face particular challenges related to lack of labour, infrastructure, capital and networks. To support capacity enhancement, a variety of federal and provincial training, education and skill enhancement programs have been developed for individuals, businesses and communities. These strategies support the JPol goal (10c) of promoting the development of micro and small-medium sized enterprises through training, education and skill enhancement.

The Rural Secretariat's [Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Building program](#) is currently testing approaches to community development and capacity building with a variety of community partners across the country to build a better understanding of the most effective approaches to community development and capacity building. The Micro-Credit Financing model and the Sustainable Community Learning model, for example, foster support for local small businesses.

The National Research Council's [Industrial Research Assistance Program](#) is a primary vehicle for stimulating SME innovation capabilities. The Program stimulates wealth creation through technological innovation by providing technology advice, assistance and services to SMEs to help them build their innovation capacity. Through expert technical and business advice, financial assistance, access to business information, contacts, and national and international networks, the program provides customized solutions to some 12,000 SMEs annually.

Natural Resources Canada supports SMEs with energy saving project assistance, which further supports the JPol's energy and sustainable production and consumption goals. The [ecoENERGY Retrofit](#) program provides financial support to homeowners, SMEs, public institutions, and industrial facilities to help them implement energy saving projects that reduce energy-related greenhouse gases and air pollution, thereby contributing to a cleaner environment for all Canadians.

In Atlantic Canada, ACOA's [Business Development Program](#) (BDP) responds to access to capital constraints. The BDP fills important gaps in the availability of conventional financing in the region's rural areas; a 2003 evaluation confirmed that client firms showed significantly greater increases in employment and incomes than did non-assisted firms. ACOA also provides contributions to a network of Community Business Development Corporations, offering an

essential source of investment capital that focuses on rural small business as well as business counselling and skills development.

In Quebec, a key component of CED-Q's [Community Diversification Program](#) focuses on increasing new and promoting existing sustainable enterprises. Another important initiative is CED-Q's [Business and Regional Growth Program](#), with its SME Competitiveness and Sectoral and Regional Growth components. This program aims to improve competitiveness, innovation, and the performance of enterprises through technology transfer, research and development.

In northern Ontario, FedNor maintains a focus on capacity building for SMEs in its business support activities and its program areas, including funding to Community Futures Development Corporations. FedNor provides capital to community-based investment funds that enhance access to capital for SMEs and works closely with private sector partners to increase the supply of capital available to SMEs. Private sector organizations receiving FedNor support have reported average increased revenues of close to \$200 thousand; 55% have indicated some other type of growth, such as employment, new services and new capabilities or have developed innovative products, processes or services. FedNor has also initiated its [Trade Network](#) as the cornerstone of trade service to SMEs in Northern Ontario to increase the number of export-ready firms and export sales.

11. Empowerment of local rural communities, especially those living in poverty and their organizations.
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Consistent with Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, Canada has developed strategies to support citizen engagement and participation in decision-making, and foster the empowerment of individuals, groups and communities in rural areas. Initiatives are delivered by governments at all levels.

At the national level, Canada's Rural Secretariat has developed a [Community Decision-Making Toolkit](#) to support community leaders in enhancing community engagement and achieving positive social and economic benefits. The toolkit highlights and disseminates community experiences, successes and lessons learned. A variety of empowerment initiatives at the local level are also being researched and tested by the Rural Secretariat through the Models for Rural Development and Capacity Building Program. The [Community Information Database](#) is a free, web-based resource of socio-economic data and indicators at the community level, which aims to provide communities, non-profit community organizations, other stakeholders and government decision-makers with information to support sustainable community development.

INAC's [Comprehensive Community Planning](#) process is a tool to support First Nations in building healthy and sustainable communities that improve the quality of life for their people. This community-based initiative helps communities develop a long-term vision of their communities, and a comprehensive and integrated plan to achieve this vision. INAC is expanding its support for the process.

In Atlantic Canada, ACOA's [Innovative Communities Fund](#) (ICF) works to provide the tools communities need to identify opportunities for their sustainable economic growth. CED-Q's Community Diversification Program helps empower local rural communities in Quebec by maintaining and developing their economic activity base. In northern Ontario, 80% of projects funded by FedNor from 2002-2005 involved community capacity outcomes.

12. Waste management systems in the rural areas – waste prevention and minimization, reuse and recycling, and environmentally sound disposal facilities.

Canada continues to promote the objectives of JPoI (22a,b) to prevent and minimize waste and maximize reuse, recycling and use of environmentally friendly alternative materials. Canada was one of the first countries to implement a wide-ranging residential curb side waste collection system for recycling. More than 20% of municipal and solid waste in Canada is diverted from landfills for recycling, resource recovery and incineration. Waste prevention, diversion and energy re-capture initiatives are being advanced and implemented by all levels of government throughout Canada, reflecting the fact that waste management is a shared jurisdiction.

The Government of Canada contributes to the development and dissemination of tools and resources that support municipal government capacity building concerning waste minimization and management. Environment Canada (EC) and Natural Resources Canada, for example, have supported the development of a [guide to assist municipal governments](#) in developing waste management minimization systems. EC also promotes the capture and conversion of landfill gas into reliable energy sources. Infrastructure Canada has supported a number of [infrastructure projects](#) aimed at improving waste water systems and solid waste management.

13. Economic incentives to promote adaptation of low-cost technologies pertaining to the areas of rural development.

Canada continues to develop and foster technology transfer initiatives at the international, national and regional levels, in support of JPoI (7j). Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) places a high value on Canada's technical expertise and capacity-building activities in the agricultural sector in developing and transitional economies. AAFC has partnered with governments and organizations in all areas of the world. The expertise that Canada offers is outlined in [Canadian Agriculture Capabilities: A Global Resource](#).

In northern Ontario, FedNor has helped to increase the number of rural and remote communities with access to high speed Internet and cellular telephone service. Over the last five years, FedNor has assisted in increasing broadband coverage from 30% to close to 85% across Northern Ontario. In 2007-08, FedNor will focus on connecting the remaining Northern Ontario communities to broadband infrastructure and concentrate more resources on information and communication technologies applications. Connecting remote Aboriginal communities has been a priority. Communities which only five years ago had virtually no phone service, now have broadband connectivity, fully networked governments, and sophisticated telehealth suites that allow for the examination and diagnosis of patients by doctors hundreds of kilometres away. FedNor has also assisted in developing the Ontario Telemedicine Network, which is one of the busiest and most comprehensive telemedicine programs in Canada, supporting the delivery of clinical care, professional education and health-related administrative services at more than 360 urban and rural sites across the province.