

Canada's Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

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1 Introduction

This ESDN Case Study provides an in-depth look into the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy of Canada, which was adopted in 2010. It aims to identify the specific approach of strategic policy planning for sustainable development in Canada, one of the most important countries of North America. We have already included Canada in our [ESDN Quarterly Report of September 2009](#) that gives an overview of sustainable development strategies beyond Europe, but the newly adopted federal strategy and the recent progress report of 2011 make a fresh look into the Canadian experience worthwhile. Moreover, we provide a comparison of Canada's SD Strategy and the renewed EU SDS of 2006.

Canada is a large country of vast distances and a dispersed population, characterized by a northern climate and a high population growth. With its economy based on production and export of natural resources, it is highly dependent on the health and sustainability of natural resource industries. Canada has set up a [Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#) (FSDS) to improve life quality and human health, conserving the environment using natural resources efficiently and establishing long-term economic performance. As outlined in the strategy itself, it is based on sustainable development by taking into account its three dimensions of environmental responsibility, economic competitiveness and social solidarity, but puts environmental considerations in first place (Environment Canada, 2010). And it stands for actions on all levels, involving citizens, industry and governments ([Environment of Canada: Sustainable Development](#)).

1.1 History of the FSDS

The objective of sustainable development is a reaction to the worldwide changes that have marked the last four decades. In 1995, the Canadian [Auditor General Act](#) required federal departments and agencies to create their own individual departmental strategies for sustainable development. In the same year, the office of the [Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development](#) (CESD) was created "with a mandate to monitor the extent to which departments met the objectives of their sustainable development strategies" (Environment Canada, 2010, 10).

However, the departmental strategies did not deliver the expected results, as there was no government-wide strategy and no common goals and targets set. As a result, the achievements of the strategies

History of the FSDS in short

1995: Auditor General Act requires federal departments and agencies to develop their individual strategies in Parliament.

1995: Creation of the Office of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD). In the following years, the decentralized approach is recognized as a beginning of the implementation of SD principles, but yet shows a number of weaknesses which are highlighted in annual reports published by the CESD. A period of persistent criticism remarks the beginning of a change in the system.

2007: Review of Canada's previous 10 years of SD planning.

2008: The FSDS is developed and requires the Government of Canada to develop a comprehensive SD strategy.

2010: The FSDS is adopted on October 6th

2011: The first progress report on FSDS is published in June 2011.

could not be measured or monitored (also due to inadequate performance measurement, monitoring and reporting), and environmental issues were pushed to the margins of federal planning and reporting. Moreover, the CESCD published reports on the implementation of sustainable development in federal planning (annually since 1998) which pointed to several weaknesses in the decentralized approach of the departmental sustainable development strategies.

The criticism was also supported by the Parliamentarians, several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders, and in 2007 led to a review of the previous ten years of sustainable development planning in Canada. At this time, it became obvious that a change in the approach to sustainable development was needed. In 2008, as a response to the failure of the previous sustainable development planning, the Parliament developed and passed the Federal Sustainable Development Act (FSDA; the Act). The objective of the Act was *"to provide the legal framework for developing and implementing a Federal Sustainable Development Strategy that will make environmental decision-making more transparent and accountable to Parliament"*. The Act responded to international commitments Canada had made to develop such a strategy, such as at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992) and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (2002) ([Environment Canada: Sustainable Development](#)).

Effectively, the Act required the Government of Canada to develop a comprehensive FSDS. Before the FSDS was adopted in Parliament on October 6th 2010, it was submitted for **public consultation** for a period of 120 days. The consultation process was undertaken by the [Sustainable Development Office](#) at [Environment Canada](#) and included the participation of Canadian citizens, Parliamentarians in the House and Senate, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development as well as the Sustainable Development Advisory Council. This policy is coherent with the efforts of the Government of Canada to involve the Canadians in decision-making processes and to increase the transparency and accountability of the FSDS.

The FSDS will be **updated every three years** to report on the progress of the implementation of sustainable development related policies and to highlight areas where further action will be necessary. *"The development and implementation of the FSDS is a collaborative process across the whole of the Government of Canada that is based on an approach to improve transparency and accountability."* (Environment Canada, 2010, 19).

The first **European Sustainable Development Strategy** was adopted by the European Council in Gothenburg in 2001. The first version was then complemented by an external dimension in 2002 by the European Council in Barcelona, in view of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 (Council of the European Union, 2006). The European Council of June 2006 adopted an ambitious and comprehensive **renewed SDS for an enlarged EU**. It builds on the [Gothenburg strategy of 2001](#) and is the result of an extensive review process that started in 2004 ([DG Environment: Sustainable Development](#)).

2 The Canadian Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS)

The FSDS of Canada is mandated by the Federal Sustainable Development Act (FSDA; the Act). The Minister of the Environment is responsible for the FSDS, which was developed as a response to the previous approaches to the implementation of sustainable development, and adopts a whole-of-government approach which involves all levels of government and enables the linking of sustainable development to the Government's general and budgetary planning and reporting processes.

2.1 The key elements of the FSDS

The FSDS is focused on **three key elements**:

1. *An integrated, whole-of-government approach of actions and results to achieve environmental sustainability;*
2. *A link between sustainable development planning and reporting and the Government's core expenditure planning and reporting system; and,*
3. *Effective measurement, monitoring and reporting in order to track and report on progress to Canadians (Environment Canada, 2010, vii).*

1. **An integrated, whole-of-government approach of actions and results to achieve environmental sustainability:** The development and implementation of the FSDS is a collaborative process which involves the whole of the Government of Canada. It is based on an effort to increase transparency and accountability of governmental decision-making.
2. **A link between sustainable development planning and reporting and the Government's core expenditure planning and reporting system:** Linking the FSDS to the Expenditure Management System (EMS) ensures that federal decision-makers take into account the environmental consequences of their policies and programs. Moreover, it *"provides a much stronger basis for improving the transparency and accountability of environmental decision-making"* (Environment Canada, 2010, 13).

Under the EMS, the reporting on plans and the tracking of progress is provided through two key documents:

- **The Reports on Plans and Priorities (RPPs)** are submitted annually by departments and *"outlines activities and expenditures for each department and agency. It outlines, over a three year period, an organization's priorities and where it will allocate the resources to address those priorities"* (Environment Canada, 2011, 8).

- **The Departmental Performance Reports (DPRs)** are submitted annually and “provides an overview of the accomplishments achieved by the organization compared to what it proposed in the RPP” (Environment Canada, 2011, 8).
3. **Effective measurement, monitoring and reporting in order to track and report on progress to Canadians:** These improvements will help improve and increase accountability for the progress of the FSDS. For themes 1–3 (climate change, water, nature protection; see more details on page 8) of the FSDS, environmental indicators (provided by the [Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators](#) (CESI) and other federal departments, e.g. [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#), [Fisheries and Oceans Canada](#), [Health Canada](#) and others) are used to track progress of sustainable development. For theme 4 (environmental footprint), each department will report on the implementation of the FSDS in their RPPs and DPRs. The environmental indicators are based on a long-term monitoring of programs with more than 15 years of data and provide national coverage over a wide range of issues. Over the next few years, CESI will work on the expansion of the current set of indicators to ensure accurate monitoring of progress of sustainable development.

Canada's environmental policy is generally guided by the **precautionary principle**, which states that “*were there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation*” (United Nations, 1992). Canada demonstrates its commitment to this principle in the outlined environmental policies of the current FSDS.

The EU SDS's Policy Guiding Principles:

- Promotion and protection of fundamental rights:
- Solidarity within and between generations: Open and democratic society:
- Involvement of citizens:
- Involvement of business and social partners:
- Policy coherence and governance:
- Policy integration:
- Use best available knowledge:
- Precautionary principle:
- Make polluters pay: (Council of the European Union, 2006, 5).

The implementation of sustainable development is supposed to have some **positive effects** on the life situation of the citizens of Canada:

- It will support investment in **education and employment**, making Canada a good place for business and industries;
- It will make Canada the best place for **families**, enhancing national safety and security and contributing to the local community;
- It will stand up for **what is right in the world** and support global security, human rights, good health standards, financial market regulation and address climate change on a global level;

- It will **strengthen a united Canada** in changing world, pursuing democratic reforms, improving the immigration and refugee system, and helping the North to realize its vast potential concerning natural resources and the protection of the wildlife (Environment Canada, 2010).

Conclusion: many policy principles of the **Canadian FSDS** are comparable with the **EU SDS's** policy principles, even though not all of them are explicitly presented in an overview. In contrast to the EU SDS's policy principles, the Canadian FSDS puts its focus mainly on environmental issues. In the FSDS, environmental issues are supposed to be balanced with economic and social considerations, but the strategy clearly focuses "on environmental sustainability as a first step in integrating environmental concerns with economic and social considerations" (Environment Canada, 2010, vii). The actions taken on the improvement of environmental conditions are supposed to improve in the long-term the overall sustainability in all three pillars of sustainable development.

What is **similar between both strategies** is that they both outline the importance of human rights, involvement of citizens, businesses, and social partners, and the use of the best available knowledge in policy-making as well as the application of the precautionary principle where scientific certainty cannot be given to the full extent. Policy coherence on the various levels of governance is important for both strategies, too. Education and training, as well as research and development are defined by the EU SDS as "*cross-cutting policies contributing to the Knowledge Society*", while in the FSDS they are viewed as an outcome of a successful implementation of the environment-oriented FSDS.

Still, the **strategies differ in other aspects:** The FSDS does not explicitly outline the importance of solidarity within and between generations. However, the idea of conserving natural resources and the overall aspired improvements in various areas that concern human life give a hint that the principle, while not explicitly articulated, is clearly enclosed in the FSDS.

It is noticeable that the FSDS does not mention the urge to establish or maintain an open and democratic society. This might be due to Canada's generally high standards of democracy, in that its existence is not questioned or explicitly outlined. However, the "polluter pays" principle does not appear in the FSDS.

2.2 Overview of themes and goals of the FSDS

The **four priority themes** of the FSDS are as follows:

- *"I. Addressing climate change and clean air;*
- *II. Maintaining water quality and availability;*
- *III. Protecting nature; and*
- *IV. Shrinking the environmental footprint – beginning with the government"* (Environment Canada, 2010, vii).

The first three themes are not new to the Canadian Government because they have been the priority to the citizens for many years, but providing a horizontal overview across government is new in Canada.

The fourth theme underlines the whole-of-government approach of the strategy: it lays out goals and targets that will reduce the ecological footprint of its own operations.

“The FSDS itself does not set new goals and targets, with the exception of those for greening government operations (GGO); rather it makes the outcomes of decision-making more transparent and accountable to Parliamentarians and Canadians” (Environment Canada, 2011, 4).

The FSDA requires 27 **departments** to prepare their **own departmental strategies** that are coherent with the FSDS and are supposed to contribute to achieving the goals and targets set in the fourth theme: “Shrinking the environmental footprint – beginning with the government” (Environment Canada, 2011). Experiences with departmental sustainable development strategies exist in some EU Member States, most notably in the UK ([mandatory departmental SD Action Plans](#) under the previous Labour Government; [review of departmental business plans](#) in relation to SD in the current Coalition Government) and Germany ([voluntary departmental SD reports](#)).

The **aim of the FSDS** is to set in motion a process that will, in the long term, improve “the way in which environmental, economic, and social issues are considered” (Environment Canada, 2010, vii).

The 4 themes of the NSDS include a total of 8 goals which we outline in the box below:

Theme I: Addressing Climate Change and Air Quality

Goal 1: Climate Change: *Reduce greenhouse gas emission levels to mitigate the severity and unavoidable impacts of climate change.*

Goal 2: Air Pollution: *Minimize the threats to air quality so that the air Canadians breathe is clean and supports healthy ecosystems.*

Theme II: Maintaining Water Quality and Availability

Goal 3: Water Quality: *Protect and enhance the quality of water so that it is clean, safe and secure for all Canadians and supports healthy ecosystems.*

Goal 4: Water Availability: *Enhance information to ensure that Canadians can manage and use water resources in a manner consistent with the sustainability of the resource.*

Theme III: Protecting Nature

Goal 5: Wildlife Conservation: *Maintain or restore populations of wildlife to healthy levels.*

Goal 6: Ecosystem/Habitat Conservation and Protection: *Maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations.*

Goal 7: Biological Resources: *Sustainable production and consumption of biological resources are within ecosystem limits.*

Theme IV: Shrinking the Environmental Footprint – Beginning with Government

Goal 8: Greening Government Operations: *Minimize the environmental footprint of government operations* (Environment Canada, 2010).

Regarding climate change objectives, which are prominently addressed in the FSDS, it needs to be mentioned that Canada formally pulled out of the Kyoto Protocol on 13 December 2011, one day after an update was agreed upon at the Durban climate change conference. Canada, Japan and Russia said last year that they would not accept new Kyoto commitments, but Canada is the only country to repudiate it altogether. The Canadian environment minister, Peter Kent, said Canada was invoking its legal right to withdraw. Kyoto did not represent the way forward for Canada or the world, as Mr. Kent put it. He said that “the Kyoto protocol does not cover the world’s largest two emitters, the United States and China, and therefore cannot work. It’s now clear that Kyoto is not the path forward to a global solution to climate change. If anything it’s an impediment. [...] Withdrawing allows us to continue to create jobs and growth in Canada.” ([The Guardian, 13 December 2011](#)). Moreover, the withdrawal will save Canada \$14 billion in penalties for not achieving its Kyoto targets. However, Canada is willing to negotiate a new global climate change agreement given that all major emitters will be included.

In comparison, these are the 7 key challenges of the renewed EU SDS:

EU SDS's key challenges:

1. **Climate Change and clean energy:** limit climate change and its costs and negative effects to society and the environment;
2. **Sustainable Transport:** ensuring that the EU's transport system meets society's economic, social and environmental needs whilst minimizing the negative impacts on these sectors;
3. **Sustainable consumption and production:** promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns;
4. **Conservation and management of natural resources:** improving management and avoiding overexploitation of natural resources, acknowledging the value of ecosystem services
5. **Public Health:** promoting a good public health on equal conditions and improving protection against health threats;
6. **Social Inclusion, demography and migration:** creating a socially inclusive society, ensuring solidarity within and between generations, securing and increasing the quality of life and the overall well-being;
7. **Global poverty and sustainable development challenges:** promoting sustainable development worldwide, ensuring that the EU's policies are consistent with global SD and its international commitments (Council of the European Union, 2006).

Conclusion: When comparing the Canadian FSDS with the EU SDS, a lot of similarities can be found (see Table 1 below). It is, however, noticeable that the Canadian FSDS does not explicitly address migration and global poverty issues.

| EU SDS | Canadian FSDS |
|--|---|
| Climate change, clean energy | Climate change, clean energy, clean air |
| Sustainable transport | Clean transportation |
| Sustainable consumption and production | Sustainable consumption and production of |

| | |
|--|--|
| | biological resources, as in fisheries, aquaculture and forest ecosystems |
| Conservation and management of natural resources | Wildlife Conservation: terrestrial and aquatic wildlife conservation (e.g. species at risk, protection of ecosystems and national parks, ocean areas and marine ecosystems; reducing environmental emergencies) |
| Public Health | Public Health is improved through actions in the areas of indoor air quality, chemicals management and health-based water guidelines |
| Social inclusion, demography and migration | Not explicitly mentioned in the strategy; but <i>"strengthening a united Canada in a changing world"</i> is supposed to improve the immigration and refugee systems |
| Global poverty and sustainable development challenges | Addressing global poverty is not mentioned in the strategy |

Table 1

2.3 Goals, targets and implementation strategies

The preparation of the first FSDS *"has been guided by best practices and international experience that demonstrate the benefits of a strategic and targeted approach to planning and reporting"* (Environment Canada, 2010, 17). The goals, targets and implementation strategies are presented transparently in the FSDS. They are taken from existing key commitments made by the Government of Canada in policy and planning documents and show the following characteristics:

- The **goals** are based on a long-term view, address important challenges and problems, and reflect national and international priorities and commitments. It is important that they remain attuned to environmental information and flexible in the choice of strategies for achievement.
- The **targets** are supposed to take a medium-term view, meet the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) and the precautionary principle, and remain consistent with the Government of Canada's priorities;
- The **implementation strategies** are also based on a short-term view and should meet the SMART criteria, too.

2.4 Jurisdictions involved in the implementation of the FSDS

Several administrative units are involved in the development, implementation and monitoring of the FSDS:

- The [Minister of the Environment](#) is responsible for the development of the FSDS;
- The [Sustainable Development Office](#) (SDO) within Environment Canada is responsible for *“developing and maintaining systems and procedures to monitor progress on the implementation of the FSDS”* (Environment Canada, 2011, 7);
- Within the [Cabinet](#), a Cabinet committee provides oversight of development and implementation of the FSDS, with the [Privy Council Office](#) as the official secretary to the Cabinet;
- The [Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development](#) reviews the draft FSDS and decides whether the described targets and implementation strategies can be assessed;
- [Public Works and Government Services Canada](#) (PWGSC) is assigned to establish targets, implementation strategies and performance measures in collaboration with the federal community. Its task is the implementation of the FSDS's theme four: *“Shrinking the Environmental Footprint – Beginning with Government”*, with each department responsible for its own strategy;
- The [Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat](#) (TBS) *“will assess whether the FSDS can make use of existing reporting tools, such as Canada's Performance Report, to better demonstrate the integration of environmental, economic, and social dimensions of reporting on results to Canadians”* (Environment Canada, 2010, 14)

2.5 Contribution of the Government of Canada to Sustainable Development

With the new FSDS, the Government of Canada is making two significant contributions to national sustainable development:

1. *“The FSDS provides a new level of transparency to environmental decision making by providing a complete picture of the federal environmental goals, targets and implementation strategies”* (Environment Canada, 2010: 7); and
2. Environmental considerations are more integrated into federal government decision-making processes through the use of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

This means that Ministers and Cabinet are committed to support the **application of SEA** in the federal government by ensuring that environmental goals are taken into account when economic and social goals are pursued. In detail, this means that:

- Departments and agencies describe the **impact** of their initiatives on federal environmental goals and targets in their **SEA public statements**;

- Departments and agencies **report on the extent** to which these implemented initiatives have affected or will affect progress toward federal environmental goals and targets.

"In addition to strengthening the application of SEA, there are other important and innovative ways that the Government of Canada is working to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development" (Environment Canada, 2010, 8). For example:

- Development of a Northern Strategy in 2009 which integrates the principle of sustainable development in the Northern part of Canada;
- Support of environmental assessment in trade negotiations applied by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

2.6 Contribution of other levels of government to sustainable development

The collaboration between the Canadian Federal Government and provincial and territorial governments is strongly maintained regarding action upon sustainable development principles. Some **provincial governments** have developed their own sustainable development strategies, e.g. [Manitoba](#) and [Quebec](#).

Moreover, the government supports many sustainable development related activities of **municipal governments**. *"The federal government supports municipal action through the Green Municipal Funds administered by the [Federation of Canadian Municipalities](#) (FCM) and funded by a federal endowment of \$550 million. The Fund provides below-market loans and grants, as well as education and training services to support municipal initiatives that improve air, water and soil quality, and protect the climate"* (Environment Canada, 2010, 10).

In addition, Environment Canada has set up a [website on Action and Learning](#) for **citizens** where vast information on several environmental issues is provided. It is intended to bring the idea of sustainability in everyday life closer to Canadians. The underlying concept is that households account for a big percentage of greenhouse gas emissions, which can be reduced by responsible action, e.g. recycling, conserving energy and water, reducing waste, choosing alternative forms of mobility, and several other practices that promote environmental sustainability.

The **EU SDS** is the main strategy for sustainable development in the European Union, with each Member State having developed its own National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), considering specific circumstances for each single country.

Conclusion: Both strategies promote coherence between the main strategy and national, regional and local activities (in the EU SDS) respectively between the main strategy and provincial and municipal activities (in the FSDS) in order to enhance the overall contribution to sustainable development.

3 Progress Report of the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy

The [first Progress Report on the FSDS](#) was presented in June 2011 and covers the period from October 2010 (when the strategy was tabled in Parliament) to April 2011. At the time that the report was prepared, departmental reports on plans and priorities (RPPs) had not yet been tabled. The FSDA requires that a Progress Report is presented to each House of Parliament as well as to the Minister of Environment “at least every three years after June 2008 (the date the Act came into force)” (Environment Canada 2011, 5). The first Progress Report focuses on the systems and procedures put in place to implement the 2010 - 2013 FSDS.

The **progress report on the EU SDS** is submitted every two years by the European Commission. It is drawn on a comprehensive set of sustainable development indicators and takes into account the EUROSTAT SD Monitoring Report (which is updated every two years, too). Furthermore, on the basis of the Commission report and contributions of the Council, the December European Council reviews progress and priorities of the strategy every two years as well. Further input and views are prepared by the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).

“This [FSDS] report is a snap-shot of the current state of implementation of the FSDS and outlines how the picture will be presented in the future. Collecting and reporting on the actions in support of the government priorities included in the FSDS will help to inform future actions by identifying areas for improvements. In doing so, as results are gathered, future progress reports will contribute to improved transparency and accountability by communicating government actions on sustainable development” (Environment Canada, 2011, 15).

The next and second Progress Report will be prepared in fall 2012 and will be more substantive. The current Progress Report uses the management approach to implementing the FSDS – the “Plan, Do, Check, Improve” system as presented in Figure 1 below:

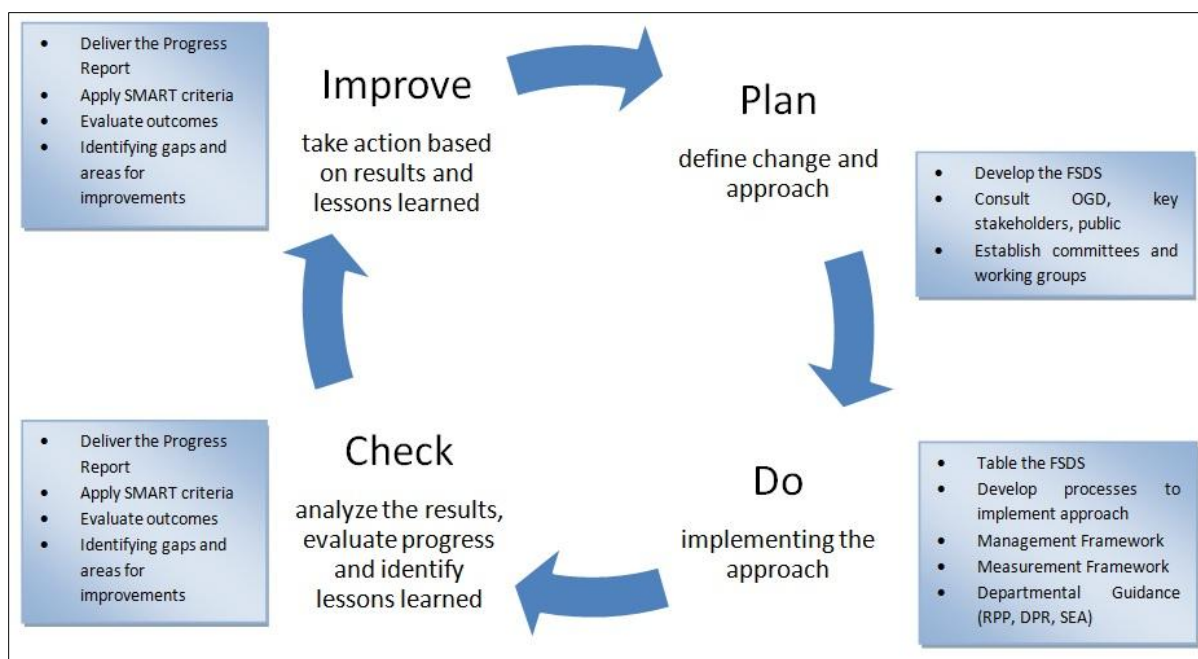


Figure 1 (Environment Canada, 2011, 6)

As outlined in the Progress Report, the **major accomplishments** of the FSDS are:

- “Establishing a **Sustainable Development Office (SDO)**;
- Putting in place a **management framework for the FSDS**;
- Putting in place a way to integrate Departmental Sustainable Development Strategies into the **Expenditure Management System (EMS)** for the first time;
- Developing **greening government operations targets**, implementation strategies, and guidance;
- Revising the guidelines for **strategic environmental assessment** requiring consideration of, and public reporting on, FSDS goals and targets; and,
- Establishing a **performance measurement system** for the FSDS to effectively monitor and report on progress. This includes a suite of environmental indicators and performance measures for Themes I-III, and common performance measures for Theme IV” (Environment Canada, 2011, 6).

Measuring results against goals and targets includes:

- Analyzing FSDS Targets – Are they SMART?
- Measuring Results with Environmental Indicators
- Measuring Results on Greening Government Operations (Environment Canada, 2011, 13)

The establishment of the **Sustainable Development Office (SDO)** was a strong step towards improved management of the FSDS, since the SDO “is responsible for developing and maintaining systems and procedures to monitor progress on the implementation of the FSDS” (Environment Canada, 2011, 7).

SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound

The FSDS **management framework** gives a clear picture of the roles, responsibilities and accountability of all involved departments, committees and stakeholders. It focuses on clear and measurable outcomes and has its own communications strategy and risk management strategy to control and mitigate expectable risks. Last but not least, it makes use of a reporting strategy for the FSDS as well as departmental sustainable development strategies.

Integrating sustainable development planning and reporting within the Government's core **Expenditure Management System** has provided a stronger basis for improving the transparency and accountability of environmental decision-making.

The **greening of government operations** has successfully taken place in Canada. Since the FSDS has been adopted, the Government of Canada has made efforts to enhance greening operations. Many departments and agencies have also made substantial progress in reducing the environmental footprint of their own operations. **Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)** supports departments and agencies in the implementation of FSDS greening government operations by allocating implementation guidelines and organizing interdepartmental meetings, presentations, workshops, and conference calls. It also helps departments and agencies with planning and reporting regarding the Theme IV targets.

The FSDS brought the Government of Canada a huge step forward by strengthening the **application of SEA**, ensuring that the government's environmental goals are taken into account when social and economic goals are pursued. Federal departments and agencies are supposed to apply FSDS goals and targets in their SEAs and report on their results in Departmental Performance Reports (DPRs). *"It is now explicitly clear that it is the responsibility of the sponsoring minister or ministers to ensure that the environmental implications of the proposed initiative are fully reflected in their policy, plan, or program proposal"* (Environment Canada, 2011, 10). Since the adoption of the FSDS, Environment Canada and the [Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency](#) have assisted several departments and agencies in updating their own SEA guidance documents to reflect the updated Guidelines. *"Moreover, an analytical framework and evidence base to support departments in considering the potential impacts of their proposals on the FSDS goals and targets has been developed"* (Environment Canada, 2011, 10).

Performance measures were established to measure progress in implementing the FSDS and are key elements of the **FSDS Logic Model** and **FSDS Performance Management Framework**. *"Performance measures provide fact-based information that will show whether the outcomes described in the FSDS logic model are unfolding as expected and will help in identifying gaps and areas for possible adjustment in how the FSDS is being managed"* (Environment Canada, 2011, 11). Several different methodologies will be used to get information on these measures, as *"web analytics, stakeholder reports and comments, surveys, and reviews of departmental/agency RPPs and DPRs"* (Environment Canada, 2011, 11).

The targets should show the SMART criteria; an initial analysis of the FSDS targets shows that about half of the targets are SMART or are moving toward being SMART.

Environmental Indicators and Performance Measures for air, water, and nature have been designed as part of the new approach to monitoring and reporting on results of measures under the FSDS. *“The Commissioner has noted that good information, well-founded science, measurement based-data, and statistics (set out in advance of an initiative being implemented), are necessary to gauge how much progress has been made towards achieving sustainable development goals and targets”* (Environment Canada, 2011, 11). The application of multi-departmental FSDS environmental indicators and performance measurements accessible in one place ensures transparency regarding the process of the implementation of the FSDS. In the future, the SDO will continue to work with scientists and other experts to develop a fuller set of environmental indicators for the FSDS.

3.1 Improvements in the FSDS' key elements

The following status in the implementation of the three key elements of the FSDS has been described in the Progress Report:

1. **Key element #1:** an integrated, whole-of-government picture of actions and results to achieve environmental sustainability: *“The FSDS is already being used in a number of ways to reflect Canada's domestic priorities in its international activities. For instance:*

- *The FSDS is contributing to Canada's preparations for Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) 19 and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development.*
- *The FSDS is being used to inform and strengthen Canada's response to the OECD 2004 Environmental Performance Review of Canada”* (Environment Canada, 2011, 15).

2. **Key element #2:** Linking sustainable development planning and reporting and the Government's core expenditure planning and reporting system: There are no measurable improvements yet.

3. **Key element #3:** Effective measurement, monitoring and reporting: There are no measureable improvements yet.

The second progress report on the 2010 - 2013 FSDS will be published in late 2012 and will be able to give a more complete picture of the progress in implementing the first FSDS. The first progress, however, meets the reporting requirements under the Act and has laid the foundation for future progress reports. In future reports, economic and social considerations related to the FSDS environmental goals and indicators will also be considered.

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