



## ENVIRONMENTAL RECOGNITION PROGRAM FOR INDUSTRIAL PLANTS

### *The Objectives*

*In 1988, the governments of Canada and Quebec joined forces to launch a major action plan to clean up the St. Lawrence River. The first phase of the St. Lawrence Action Plan (SLAP) targeted 50 industrial plants that were releasing their wastewater directly into the St. Lawrence River, with the aim of reducing these toxic discharges. The project was subsequently expanded to include 56 additional plants located along the major tributary rivers of the St. Lawrence, namely the L'Assomption, Boyer, Chaudière, Richelieu, Saguenay, Saint-Maurice and Yamaska rivers.*

The objective of the Environmental Recognition Program is to publicly acknowledge industrial plants that have taken part in all the activities of the Protection component and co-operated in attaining the discharge-reduction objectives of the St. Lawrence Action Plan (SLAP) and its follow-up program, St. Lawrence Vision 2000 (SLV 2000).

The Industrial and Urban Co-operation Committee evaluates a plant's efforts in view of reducing its toxic discharges. Its environmental performance, cleanup work, remedial measures, process modifications and internal practices are examined, in the presence of a third-party representative, to verify if the plant has attained the program's objectives and is deserving of a certificate of recognition.

Participating industrial plants have been divided up into four distinct groups, each with its own precise reduction objectives :

#### **Group 1 - (11 plants)**

Reduce by 90% the toxic effluents discharged without adequate treatment by industrial plants.

#### **Group 2 - (22 plants)**

Ensure optimal reduction of toxic effluents by industrial plants that have already introduced treatment technologies but that are still likely to release toxic substances.

#### **Group 3 - (23 pulp and paper mills)**

Assess the toxic discharges of industrial plants that are subject to regulation in terms of environmental objectives and determine the remedial measures required to optimally reduce their effects on the receiving environment.

#### **Group 4 - (50 SLAP Phase I plants)**

Pursue the cleanup work and continue the environmental monitoring of the 50 priority industrial plants targeted by SLAP.

Environmental profiles have been drawn up, effluent characterizations conducted, and environmental discharge objectives for the protection of the receiving environment have been established for each plant. Discharge requirements have also been defined and negotiated with the plants.

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## ***The Elements***

Recognition is based on an assessment of the three following elements:

- Regulatory compliance
- Participation in activities
- Achievement of sub-objectives

### **Regulatory compliance**

An audit is conducted to check plant compliance with federal, provincial and municipal environmental acts and regulations relevant to effluent discharges. The assessment takes account of administrative aspects and regulatory standards.

### **Participation in activities**

Another audit checks that all the program steps have been completed before the Co-operation Committee decides if the objectives of the component have been attained. Each of the following activities is evaluated:

- A plant inventory (environmental profile).
- An effluent characterization focusing on 120 substances including the 11 substances targeted for virtual elimination and an ecotoxicological assessment (PEEP).
- Calculation of the environmental discharge objectives, in order to assess the impact on use of the water body to be protected.
- The determination or review of discharge standards taking account of pollution cleanup and prevention technologies and economic considerations.
- Completion of cleanup work and/or implementation of good operating and production practices that allow for the reduction of toxic effluents.
- Implementation of monitoring mechanisms for toxic substances, including inspection reports from the Quebec Environment Ministry and the routine self-regulating reports of the plants themselves.

### **Achievement of sub-objectives**

Each plant is assessed for its accomplishments and contribution to achieving the specific sub-objective of the group to which it belongs. The component sub-objectives are as follows:

#### **Group 1 - (11 plants)**

Reduce the toxic discharges of industrial plants releasing untreated wastewater by 90%.

#### **Group 2 - (22 plants)**

Ensure the optimal reduction of toxic liquid discharges from industrial plants having already introduced treatment technologies but still likely to contain toxic substances.

#### **Group 3 - (23 pulp and paper mills)**

Assess the toxic discharges of this regulated sector against environmental objectives and establish the remedial measures required to optimally lessen the impacts on the receiving environment.

#### **Group 4 - (50 SLAP Phase 1 plants)**

Pursue cleanup work and environmental monitoring of the 50 priority industrial plants targeted by the 1989 harmonization agreement (SLAP).

## ***The Assessment Process***

Files were evaluated as a function of the following elements:

### **Plant assessment**

The case managers of the Quebec Environment Ministry evaluate the plant's compliance with provincial and municipal regulations in consultation with the plant in question. Environment Canada verifies that it complies with federal legislation.

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## Examination and validation of assessment record

An assessment committee composed of representatives of the Quebec Environment Ministry and Environment Canada examines each file and submits its recommendations to the Industrial and Urban Co-operation Committee.

## Final approval of assessment

The members of the Industrial and Urban Co-operation Committee, in the presence of a representative of *Réseau Environnement*, perform a final examination and evaluation of the plants. The Committee's decision, for each plant, is then validated by case managers of the MENV's regional directorates.

## Public Recognition of Their Contribution

Of the 107 designated plants, 72 received certificates of recognition in spring 2000. The others had until March 31, 2001, the end of the program, to meet their objectives. In spring 2001, 80 of the 107 selected plants earned certificates of recognition, 16 did not, and 11 had shut down operations. The plants having received a certificate of recognition are shown in tabular form in the appendix.

Deserving plants receive SLV 2000 certificates of recognition inscribed with the following words: "**Pour sa participation et sa contribution à**

**l'atteinte des objectifs de protection du Saint-Laurent dans le cadre de Saint-Laurent Vision 2000.**" Certificates are signed by the agreement co-chairs of both levels of government. The names of plants so recognized are also made public.

By co-operating in the attainment of the toxic discharge reduction objectives, 80 industrial plants have made a significant contribution to improving the health of the St. Lawrence River, from the perspective of sustainable development. The Environmental Recognition Program serves to underscore industry's efforts to operate in greater harmony with the environment of the St. Lawrence River and its largest tributaries.

Plants which have received certificates of recognition may use them to promote their businesses at home and abroad.

### Summary Table

<b>SLV 2000 industrial plants</b>	<b>107*</b>
Plants having received a certificate in 2000	72
Plants having received a certificate in 2001	8
Plants not having received a certificate	16
Plants having shut down operations since the start of the program	11

\* 106 plants at the start of the program, now 107 due to the separate evaluations of two plants previously operating as a single firm.

## Sample of Certificate of Recognition



### Additional information on the Environmental Recognition program:

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