

Planning for
a Sustainable
Future

*Projet
de société*

P R O S P E C T U S

A Partnership for Change



May 1994

**REPRESENTATIVES FROM OVER 80 SECTORS OF
CANADIAN SOCIETY PARTICIPATE IN THE NATIONAL
STAKEHOLDER ASSEMBLIES OF THE PROJÉT,
INCLUDING:**

Sierra Club • Canadian Council on International Cooperation (CCIC)
• Pollution Probe • B.C. Environment and Development Working
Group • Canadian Peace Alliance • Canada World Youth •
Inuit Tapirisat of Canada • Friends of the Earth (FOE) •
Women and Environment; Education and Development •
United Native Nations • Canadian Pulp and Paper Association •
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers •
Mining Association of Canada • Business Council on National
Issues (BCNI) • Assembly of First Nations • Indigenous Survival
International • Fallsbrooke Centre • Federation of Canadian
Municipalities • Oceans Institute of Canada •
Canadian Participatory Committee for UNCED •
Canadian Environment Network • Cultural Survival • United Nations
Association of Canada • Transport 2000 • Union québécoise pour
la conservation de la nature • Council of Forest Industries in B.C. •
Canadian Chemical Producers • Native Women's Association of
Canada • Canadian Petroleum Association •
Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC) • Canadian Manufacturer's
Association • B.C. Round Table on Environment and Economy
(BCRT) • Canadian Chamber of Commerce • Native Aboriginal
Forestry Association (NAFA) • Canadian International Development
Agency • Fisheries Council of Canada • Canadian Nature
Federation • Canadian Healthy Communities Network •
Greenprint • Canadian Environmental Industry Association •
Shell Canada • Canadian Ecology Advocates • Ecology Action
Centre • Toronto Board of Education • Canadian Bankers
Association • National Anti-Poverty Association • Forum for
Sustainability • Conseil de la conservation et de l'environnement •
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops • Quebec Centre for
Industry and the Environment • Canada Mortgage and Housing
Corporation • Clean Air Strategy • Aboriginal Non-Profit Homes •
Picton Round Table • Institute of Research on the Environment and
the Economy • VanCity Credit Union • Ontario Round Table on the
Environment and the Economy • seven federal government
departments • six provincial government ministers •
Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) •
Environment Canada (DOE) • International Institute for Sustainable
Development (IISD) • International Development Research Centre
(IDRC) • National Round Table on the Environment and the
Economy (NRTEE).

About This Prospectus

This prospectus introduces the *Projet de société*, describes its work and invites the participation of interested parties in future activities.

We are a multi-stakeholder partnership of government, indigenous, business and voluntary organizations committed to promoting Canada's transition to a sustainable future. Our primary role is as a catalyst for change, recognizing that sustainable development is a collective responsibility of all Canadians.

The *Projet de société* provides a forum for bringing sectors and individuals together to build consensus and partnerships, for linking their activities and contributions to common purpose. Although many other countries, all of Canada's provinces and territories, and many Canadian municipalities and regions have created sustainability strategies, the *Projet de société* is Canada's only national process now underway.

During its initial year, we undertook an assessment of Canada's progress since the Earth Summit, drafted a framework and process for a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), and initiated a series of practical actions to advance various elements of this approach.

Based on the lessons drawn from this experience, the *Projet de société* is now moving to a more substantive program of activity, including communication, planning and demonstration components that foster sustainability as a national mission.

For this to happen, we would welcome further commitment of resources and support from existing partners, and the association of new members from other sectors and regions.

This prospectus should be read as an invitation to participate in the work of the *Projet de société* and to invest your ideas, skills and contributions to the task of planning for a sustainable future.

The Earth Summit and Beyond

Why we must act

The era of procrastination and half measures must come to a close. We must enter a period of firm action. We need new and meaningful decisions, not repetitions of what we have already agreed

Reconvened World Commission on Environment and Development, London Statement, 1992.

The closing years of the twentieth century are a momentous time, a hinge of history. Nothing less than the future of the planet lies in the balance. Human activity is altering natural systems and processes on a global scale and at unprecedented rates. Well known effects include loss of biodiversity, thinning of stratospheric ozone, climate change, acid rain, deterioration of the resource base and resulting social and economic instability.

All countries and peoples share a common future and, by extension, joint responsibility for problem solving. This new reality revolves around taking the "inescapable actions" identified in the London Statement of the reconvened World Commission on Environment and Development: clear and unavoidable policy decisions that the international community and individual countries must make in order to achieve sustainable development.

Different policy paths were the focus of the declarations and agreements made at the 1992 Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro. Seen in this light, the real issue of sustainable development is not *whether* but *how* to change and according to what targets and time frames. Much useful advice and guidance on these questions are contained in Agenda 21, the global program of action on sustainable development concluded at Rio. Now, each country must translate these into concrete policies and practical steps that avoid the costs of inaction and seize the opportunities associated with the transition to sustainability.

Projet de société : Planning for a Sustainable Future

What we want to achieve

Mounting fiscal and ecological deficits are a matter of growing concern to many Canadians. In effect, these trends mean we are mortgaging the future in order to support present patterns of consumption. We face hard choices with profound consequences. The steps we take in the next few years to alter course may determine in large measure the kind of Canada that future generations will inherit — whether rich in potential and opportunity or ever more constrained by an irreversible liquidation of natural assets.

The *Projet de société* is an important part of Canada's response to the challenge of sustainable development. It is a multi-stakeholder coalition, drawn from over 80 sectors of Canadian society. Established in November 1992, as a follow-up to the Earth Summit, the mission of the *Projet de société* is to help promote Canada's transition to a sustainable future. For that to happen, Canadians need to understand what sustainable development means to their lives, how they need to change their behaviour, what others are doing, and how we can learn from each other's experience.

The *Projet de société* serves as a forum for focusing on these issues and encouraging creative responses that will assist Canada's transition to a sustainable society. We act primarily as a catalyst for change: involving Canadians in identifying, promoting and monitoring the plans and actions that contribute to the way forward. Our guiding premise is that sustainable development is a collective responsibility. All sectors, from governments to individuals, have a role to play in the process of change that will be necessary to achieve sustainability.

Managing economic development and human growth without destroying the life-support systems of our planet demands of Canadians a fundamental shift in values and public policy. We must aspire to be less wasteful of our natural and human resources, to place greater worth on the welfare of future generations, and to take pride in maintaining a healthy, productive Earth.

Creating Opportunity:
The Liberal Plan for
Canada

Toward a National Sustainable Development Strategy

How we are approaching the challenge of changing course

New forms of co-operation and improved processes of decision-making are needed if we are to change the way our society develops. From the start, the *Projet de société* has endorsed a proactive, participatory approach to sustainability planning and action, based on collaboration and consensus building. These principles will continue to be reflected and exemplified in the work undertaken by the *Projet de société* to support and promote sustainability plans and actions.

The immediate goal of the *Projet de société* is to design a *National Sustainable Development Strategy* (NSDS), which is identified in Agenda 21 as a pivotal mechanism for countries to implement the actions and accords agreed to at the Earth Summit. Many relevant activities

Many of the decisions we face in the years ahead demand that we find ways to listen to opposing points of view, and find ways to accommodate deeply held and different values. Conventional decision-making mechanisms tend to exclude rather than include diverse interests and do not cope well with the complexity that issues of sustainability present.

Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: An Initiative of Canadian Round Tables

Principles and characteristics of the *Projet de société*

- The process is designed to be transparent, inclusive, and accountable.
- Each partner and each sector is encouraged to identify and take responsibility for its own contribution to sustainability.
- Dialogue and co-operation among sectors and communities are key elements of problem-solving.
- A shared vision and agreement on key policy, institutional, and individual changes are necessary for the transition to sustainability.
- Strategy and action must be linked, and must build on previous and ongoing initiatives.
- Canada's practice of sustainable development and its contribution to global sustainability should be exemplary.

are already underway in Canada by governments, business and industry associations, and local communities. A NSDS must build on these initiatives and give them clearer strategic focus and linkage. This capstone will help Canada to deliver on the promises made at Rio and to mobilize the long-term changes necessary to achieve sustainable development.

A NSDS may be seen as a road map to the future. This approach must be both forward looking and practical, linking long-term societal goals and ideals with immediate ways and means for giving them effect. It should provide a context for addressing the fundamental issues and barriers to sustainable development; highlighting the options for dealing with them; specifying action plans with targets and timeframes for achieving agreed objectives; identifying the indicators and measures for monitoring and evaluating progress; and disseminating information about advances in policy and practice.

Adopting a NSDS

The experience gained through existing planning exercises should be fully used and incorporated into a country-driven sustainable development strategy. Its goals should be to ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations. It should be developed through the widest possible participation. It should be based on a thorough assessment of the current situation and initiatives.

Agenda 21, Section 8.7

Project participants are working toward defining a process that will carry on from UNCED to establish an inclusive and effective approach to sustainable development. The Committee recognizes the need for such an organization and commends the efforts of all involved in this worthy task.

David MacDonald,
Former Chair, House of
Commons Standing
Committee on the
Environment, in its
report, *Our Planet, Our
Future*.

Progress to Date

Where we are now

The inaugural year of the *Projet de société* may be considered as an experimental, pilot phase. With any multi-stakeholder coalition, start-up activities are process-rich. It takes time to learn to work together, share responsibility and build consensus. During this period, the emphasis was on laying the groundwork for launching a NSDS.

Initially, the substantive work of the *Projet de société* has focused on three complementary and reinforcing activities:

- *Report on Canadian Response to Agenda 21 and the Rio Conventions*

An assessment of our progress since the Earth Summit provides an essential first step for planning where we want to go and how we might best get there. Our report shows that many activities are being undertaken by government, business and voluntary organizations to implement the principles and guidelines contained in Agenda 21. It also identifies the additional work that needs to be done in tackling road blocks to progress toward sustainable development. These include differing views and interests on the environment and the economy; structural constraints of traditional planning and decision-making, and a lack of consensus on targets and timeframes for the transition to sustainable development.

- *Draft Framework and Process for Sustainability Planning*

The *Projet de société* has identified key components of a NSDS for Canada. These include a *framework* for integrating the environmental, economic and social agendas and a *process* for building consensus and co-ordinating the efforts of all sectors toward a common purpose. As outlined in the *Projet's* report, a national strategy must be built from the bottom-up and have top-down buy-in, with plans and programs prepared and implemented by the responsible

Each of us has our own vision and strategy for sustainability in the long term. But that will not mean very much for Canada unless we can shape a broader vision together.

The real value of the Projet is its ability to bring together the broad range of stakeholders that will have the actual responsibility to implement sustainable development.

John Dillon,
Business Council on
National Issues

agencies and jurisdictions. Key elements of the proposed approach are:

- defining a collective vision and shared values of sustainability;
 - developing a policy framework that builds on and links together federal, provincial, sectoral and local plans and initiatives;
 - promoting consensus building and multi-stakeholder negotiation of key issues and options;
 - specifying practical steps that lead from vision to action; and
 - fostering the public understanding, political will and sectoral commitments to implement the necessary changes.
- *Practical Actions for Moving Forward*

In order to test and demonstrate elements of the required approach, the *Projet de société* is undertaking several initiatives, some of which have already been completed.

- environmental harmonization — an analysis of the issues and options for reducing interjurisdictional overlap and duplication of regulations;
- green business opportunities — a report on market niches for the Canadian environmental industry, using replacement of ozone depleting substances as a test case;
- research information and tool kit — providing resource and support materials for groups, communities and organizations to develop their own sustainability strategies and plans;
- communication, public awareness and outreach — identifying how to engage all sectors, especially youth, in building the basis for long term change in attitudes and actions;
- indigenous peoples — reviewing the relationship of Inuit circumpolar and national strategies for sustainable development, and identifying conditions

We hope the Projet de société will help guide Canada's economy into the 21st century.

Gary Gallon,
Canadian Environmental
Industries Association

Projet Chronology

(November 1992 - present)

- **Projet Launch** (November, 1992). The First National Stakeholders Assembly was held to review Canadian activities and requirements for Rio follow up. There was widespread support for a "*Projet de société*" to launch a national sustainability movement. Five sustainability institutions agreed to sponsor and support the process (Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, Environment Canada, International Development Research Centre, International Institute for Sustainable Development, and National Round Table on the Environment and Economy).
- **Initial Organization** (November 1992 - June 1993). A Working Group of the *Projet de société* was formed, supported by a small secretariat drawn largely from sponsoring institutions. Two sub-committees, Documentation and Information, and Vision and Process, were responsible respectively for analyzing Canadian responses to Rio, and drafting a concept paper on sustainability planning. A progress report and recommendations were presented to the Second National Stakeholders' Assembly (June 3, 4, 1993).
- **Expanded Mandate** (June 1993 - December 1993). The Assembly decided to continue and to expand the work of the *Projet de société* by completing the assessment of Canadian responses to Rio, elaborating the proposed framework and process for sustainability planning, and moving forward with several practical initiatives.
- **Projet Review** (December 1993 - present). The Third National Stakeholders Assembly reviewed progress to date, and decided that the *Projet de société* should continue as a process for initiating a national sustainability strategy. The Assembly asked the NRTEE to assume a larger management role for the next phase of the *Projet* and the NRTEE plenary subsequently agreed to facilitate such a process.

for more effective participation of indigenous peoples in the larger planning process.

Next Steps

Where we are going

The *Projet de société* is now moving to a more intensive level of activity by fleshing out the framework of a NSDS for Canada, which will be presented to the Fourth National Stakeholders Assembly in the fall of 1994. The result could form the basis for an even broader process involving opportunities for collaboration and initiative by existing stakeholders and other interested parties, whose response is expected to advance and substantiate the strategy.

1. Mobilizing for Change

- *Building Public Awareness*

This forms a cornerstone of a NSDS. A communications strategy will be designed to:

- promote sustainability as a national mission by all sectors of society;
- position the *Projet de société* as a key mechanism for identifying and linking contributions to the national mission; and
- inform Canadians about what is happening and what needs to be done to achieve sustainability goals.

In carrying out this role, the *Projet de société* will establish a program for affiliation of activities and initiatives that advance the sustainability movement: As a further step, the *Projet* proposes to associate with the SustainABILITY program being launched by ParticipACTION and the NRTEE.

- *Information Sharing and Networking*

Knowing what others are doing is a foundation for developing a value-added approach to sustainability

*After the Earth Summit, there is a clear need for continuing North-South policy dialogue to move the planet toward sustainability, and for a complementary process at the national level. The *Projet de société* provides a very important forum to build a consensus on the economic, social, environmental and foreign policies that will facilitate the transition to sustainability both locally and globally.*

Peter Padbury,
Canadian Council for
International Cooperation

planning and action. The *Projet de société* will continue to collaborate with the International Institute for Sustainable Development on updating and improving its database as a publicly accessible, user-friendly information source. A quarterly newsletter will provide a regular means for exchange of information and views among *Projet* partners and others. In addition, the *Projet de société* intends to work with like-minded institutions on innovative opportunities for networking, conferencing and partnership building.

The Projet de société has provided representatives from different sectors with an opportunity for dialogue, for coming together as equal partners in an effort to continue creating a path toward sustainability in Canada. This is what makes the Projet de société a challenging process, yet one that is necessary in achieving a sustainable future for Canada.

- *Outreach and Facilitation*

Several programs in support of future communication and planning initiatives will be promoted by the *Projet de société*. These include:

- developing information, research and tool kits to assist communities, sectors and individual Canadians in undertaking sustainability strategies and projects;
- establishing a youth corps for sustainable development to help transfer "hands-on" skills and experience to young people;
- working with indigenous peoples to ensure they are an integral part of future initiatives; and
- encouraging the response of green industries to the opportunities found in the Rio Conventions and Agenda 21.

Zonny Woods,
Canada World Youth

2. Planning a Sustainable Future

- *Designing a NSDS*

This step will be an immediate priority. It involves expanding the outline contained in the *Projet's Progress Report: Toward a National Sustainable Development Strategy*. Sources of information and guidance include existing federal, provincial and local strategies for sustainability, and international experience with national plans. A more detailed framework will reflect the experience to date, serve as a focusing and consultative

- *Convening a National Dialogue on Sustainability Issues*

The *Projet de société*, through the National Stakeholders Assembly and its Working Group, provides a standing forum for discussion of major sustainability issues. Policy dialogues will be convened on critical social, economic, environmental and foreign policy concerns. This process involves the activities of and will be closely co-ordinated, with government, round tables, business, and non-governmental organizations. With their assistance the aim of the *Projet* is to build a broadly based consensus on the options for moving forward.

- *Catalyze Preparation of Sustainability Strategies in Sectors and Communities*

The *Projet de société* will catalyze the preparation of further sector, community and organization sustainability strategies. The *Projet* will not prepare or fund these strategies. Rather it will encourage and assist key groups to undertake appropriate multi-stakeholder approaches. Sector and community planning processes are important because they ground a national strategy in concrete actions, and test the utility, adequacy and viability of the ideas proposed in the policy framework.

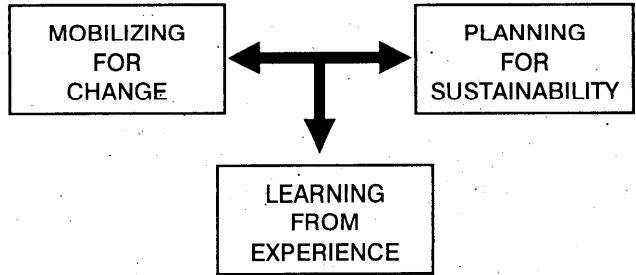
3. Learning from Experience

Mobilizing for change and planning for a sustainable future are interrelated and reinforcing functions. The *Projet de société* endorses an iterative process of engagement and action, characterized by monitoring, evaluation and feedback. Besides catalyzing activities, the *Projet* will seek innovative ways of tracking progress towards sustainable development and learning from experience. A portfolio of demonstration projects and case studies, drawn from different sectors, will be used to disseminate information and allow concrete, practical advice to be incorporated into ongoing initiatives.

The Projet de société should have as its focus the economic and ecological renewal of Canada through sustainable development. It should be a framework for concrete action, and it should help guide and direct the activities and actions of every sector of Canadian society.

Janine Ferretti,
Executive Director,
Pollution Probe, to the
House of Commons
Standing Committee on
the Environment,
November 17, 1992

Architecture of the Process



The Projet represents hope — in some ways our only hope. But it has to be backed by commitment, and that means resources — including resources for the NGO community.

Susan Tanner,
Friends of the Earth

Resource Requirements

What we need for the task ahead

Voluntary activity has formed the backbone of the *Projet's* initial work. Many individuals and organizations have contributed well beyond any normal call of duty. This level of participation and input has been crucial to the results achieved to date. It is also an international hallmark of Canada's response to the sustainability agenda.

Although collective participation defines the *Projet de société*, this process requires a further investment to function effectively. The pay-off comes at the implementation stage, when the sectors and organizations directly involved carry out agreed strategies and actions. In order to reach that point, the next phase of the *Projet's* work demands a significant increase in human and fiscal resources.

A base budget, necessary to support the core activities of the *Projet de société*, has been accorded by the NRTEE. This includes the National Stakeholders Assembly, Working Group, Secretariat communication and planning functions, as well as the participation of non-government organizations. Other proposed programs and activities will be subject to availability of funds.

Strategic Alliances

Who should join the Projet de société

We are looking to both existing and new partners to underwrite the mission of the *Projet de société*. A NSDS, as proposed by the *Projet*, will directly support the Federal Government's agenda for action on the environment and the economy. This process also is designed to meet the interests of provincial and local governments, business and industry, labour, communities, indigenous peoples, and environment and development organizations. All stakeholders, accordingly, are encouraged to find innovative ways to contribute to the next phase of the *Projet's* work.

Your support could be financial or in-kind, general sponsorship or earmarked for specific activities. Above all, the *Projet de société* depends on your commitment to the process. The approach being taken rests on the working participation of the sectors, groups and individuals engaged in activities that contribute to the transition to sustainable development. Only by this approach can real change take place in the ABCs of sustainable development — our attitudes, behaviours and choices.

Benefits of joining the Projet de société

- *recognition of being part of a national mission for sustainable development;*
- *assistance with the delivery of affiliated programs;*
- *access to information and views of key sectors and organizations participating in the sustainability movement.*

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