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# THE DREE APPROACH

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DRAFT May 1979

The Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE)  
combats regional disparities by encouraging slow-growth  
regions to realize their potential for contributing to  
the economic and related social development of Canada.

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## BACKGROUND

The goal of regional development is to distribute economic growth across the country to provide equal access to opportunities for Canadians wherever they live. In pursuit of this goal, governments over the last few decades have introduced a variety of programs to reduce economic disparities between the prosperous and relatively underdeveloped regions of Canada.

During the 1930s, the depression clearly revealed the unequal economic growth and the consequent fiscal weaknesses of the poorer regions of Canada. The federal government responded in 1937 by establishing the Rowell-Sirois Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations to investigate the economic disparities among the provinces and regions, as well as other basic needs of federal-provincial relations.

After the Second World War, a 'fiscal equalization' program was introduced to ensure acceptable standards of public services

across Canada. Although its purpose was not 'regional development' as the term is understood today, the program has played an essential role in preventing regional disparities from widening.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Canada experienced rapid economic growth concentrated mainly around the major urban centres of southern Ontario and in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary and Montreal. This strong performance by the economy, however, tended to accentuate the disparities between slow-growth and rapid-growth regions and to increase awareness of the persistence of regional imbalances.

The government reacted with a greater emphasis on regional development through a selection of programs aimed specifically at reducing regional disparities. The programs introduced were a reflection of the kinds of problems and special needs of particular parts of the country rather than an attempt to outline a general regional development strategy and program. Some were concerned with the problems of the rural areas of Canada; some with the need for infrastructure in the less industrialized regions; and still others with the regional distribution of activity in the manufacturing industries. These programs were carried out by various federal departments and agencies.

Although moderately successful in reaching their objectives, the programs did not, collectively, represent the kind of integrated and coordinated approach to regional development that was then considered necessary to deal effectively with the growing disparities in employment and income opportunities in many regions of the country. It had become clear that a more concerted and comprehensive approach was needed. This called for the setting up of a new department to draw together the existing programs, to evaluate them to discover their strengths and weaknesses, and to devise a coordinated approach that would be appropriate for the different parts of Canada.

This new department was the Department of Regional Economic Expansion - DREE.

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF DREE

The Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) was established on April 1, 1969, to mount a new and comprehensive federal effort to combat regional economic disparities in Canada. It evolved from the Department of Forestry and Rural Development which, in the prior year, had consolidated the various regional development programs that had been operating through federal departments and agencies.

#### PREVIOUS PROGRAMS

In its early years, DREE was responsible for maintaining these inherited programs, many of which have since been phased out, transferred to other agencies, replaced by new programs, or revised and incorporated into the new coordinated strategy for regional development.

The Area Development Incentives Act (ADIA) provided industrial development incentives in designated areas where employment and incomes were especially low. Relatively prosperous areas within slow-growth regions were excluded. The program was phased out and replaced by the less restrictive Regional Development Incentives Act (RDIA) in 1969, although projects were accepted under ADIA until December 31, 1969 and continued into 1974.



The Agricultural and Rural Development Act (ARDA) was passed in 1961 to alleviate rural problems of unemployment and social disadvantage, and operated in all provinces except Prince Edward Island. Cost-shared federal-provincial projects have included land use and farm adjustment, economic development of rural areas, as well as soil and water conservation. The last ARDA agreement, that with Ontario, ended March 31, 1979. The legislation remains in effect, however, and commitments are continuing on projects approved before termination of the various agreements with the provinces. In most provinces, ARDA-type activities are now being carried out through subsidiary agreements under the General Development Agreements, described in the section "Present Responsibilities and Organization".

The Atlantic Development Board was an agency responsible for fostering economic development in the Atlantic provinces. The Atlantic Development Board Act was repealed in 1969. The board has been replaced by the Atlantic Development Council, an advisory agency to the DREE Minister.

The Atlantic Provinces Power Development Act (APPDA) provided for federal-provincial agreements through which the federal government could provide assistance for the generation, control and transmission of electric power. The assistance was usually in the form of long-term loans for the construction of thermal power plants or related to transmission lines. The agreements were administered by the Northern Canada Power Commission. Assistance under APPDA ended in 1970.

The Canada Land Inventory was a federal-provincial program to produce data on land capability, primarily for land-use and rural development planning. Land was classified according to capability for agriculture, forestry, recreation, wildlife and sports fish. Each province undertook the inventory within its borders with financial and technical assistance from the federal government. The program was absorbed by the Department of the Environment in April 1972.

The Canada NewStart Program originated in the Department of Manpower and Immigration in 1966. It was an experimental program to develop and test new methods of helping disadvantaged people to prepare themselves for continuing productive employment. All NewStart activity ended by 1973.

Fund for Rural Economic Development (FRED) activities were tailored to the particular needs of regions such as Prince Edward Island, the Mactaquac and northeastern areas of New Brunswick, the lower St. Lawrence and Gaspé regions of Quebec, and the Manitoba Interlake region. Activities included infrastructure development, better use of resources, recreational development, basic education, and counselling. The Prince Edward Island Comprehensive Development Plan (1969-84) is the sole FRED program still in operation. The FRED Act was repealed in 1969, but commitments are being carried to completion.

The Maritime Marshlands Rehabilitation Act (MMRA) of 1948 gave the federal government responsibility for providing main protective works for some 100 000 acres of agricultural marshland in the Maritime provinces. Operation and maintenance of the works constructed under the MMRA program were gradually transferred to the provinces from 1966 to 1970. The last project was completed in the 1971-72 fiscal year.

The Newfoundland Resettlement Program provided federal-provincial financial assistance to families moving within the province from small, declining centres to others where better employment and educational opportunities and other public services were available. It expired March 31, 1977.

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration was established in 1935 to combat drought and soil drifting on the prairies. In 1969 it was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to DREE where, with added responsibilities, it continues to play an important role.

## FIRST INITIATIVES

In 1969 DREE introduced two programs which represented significant new directions in regional development. Both programs aimed at promoting economic expansion and stimulating job creation in the less developed regions of Canada. These new programs were the Special Areas program and the Regional Development Incentives Act.

### Special Areas

Under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion Act, the department was given authority to assist provincial and municipal governments in improving community infrastructure in certain areas of the country, and in implementing related social adjustment measures. Altogether, 23 Special Areas were designated from 1970 to 1973, after consultation with the provincial governments concerned.

Each area was considered to be the major activity centre within a region with inadequate employment opportunities. The aim of the program was to promote economic expansion by increasing their attractiveness as locations for new job-creating activities. The various types of infrastructure assistance included the construction of roads, schools, water and sewage systems, industrial parks, port facilities and residential and assembly. As well, financial incentives were granted to entrepreneurs under the Special Areas program and the Regional Development Incentives Act (RDIA). The program continued in some areas until March 31, 1975. Since then, similar assistance has been available through specific subsidiary agreements under the General Development Agreements, described in the section "Present Responsibilities and Organization".

Regional Development Incentives Act (RDIA)

The Regional Development Incentives Act was established in 1969 to attract investment into slow-growth regions and to create improved employment opportunities. It was less restrictive than the former Area Development Incentives Act, which it replaced. A vital part of DREE's present programming, RDIA provides for incentive grants and loan guarantees to manufacturing and processing industries to establish, expand and modernize in the designated regions; and for loan guarantees to some commercial projects.

## REORGANIZATION

The first few years after DREE was formed were a period of regional development experimentation and naturally changes were eventually required. Accordingly, in early 1972, the department began a comprehensive review of its regional policy and programs.

This review, which was carried out jointly with the provinces, revealed that although existing programs were instrumental in dealing with some factors affecting economic development in slow-growth areas, they were not sufficient to slow the trend towards increased concentration of economic activity in the industrial heartland of the country. They were often limited in scope and tended to be concentrated more on isolated problems than on the potential economic and social development of an area.

As a result, the review concluded that the department needed a new approach in its regional development policy: a comprehensive strategy that would concentrate not only on solving problems but on identifying and pursuing the "developmental opportunities" that are unique to each slow-growth region. As well, the review pointed out that this innovative process of regional development would require the closer cooperation of many federal, provincial and private bodies.

The method selected to facilitate the new approach and to provide the framework for federal and provincial government cooperation in regional development was the General Development Agreement (GDA).

Most of the existing programs were to continue for an interim period but would increasingly become part of this approach.

A General Development Agreement was signed in 1974 with every province except Prince Edward Island where a comprehensive 15-year development plan, which provides essentially the same framework, was signed in 1969.

To complement this GDA process, the department developed a decentralized structure during 1973-74, which brought considerable staff, administrative and decision-making authority to selected points across Canada. Regional offices were established in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto and Saskatoon and the existing offices in provincial capitals were strengthened through the addition of more staff.

The new structure was to enable DREE to respond more efficiently to local needs as they arose. As well the department would be closer to the provinces with which it cooperated, and would be better equipped to examine development problems and opportunities of slow-growth areas.

The department has since decentralized further by opening several branch offices in most provinces and in the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

## PRESENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANIZATION

The present DREE approach to regional development relies on the support of various federal and provincial departments, whose programs contribute to the better balance of economic growth across the country. Through a General Development Agreement with each of the provinces, DREE coordinates particular development activities aimed at assisting and encouraging each region of Canada to realize its economic potential. These development activities attempt to broaden regional and local economic bases, expand production and employment opportunities and assist particular areas in dealing with problems of economic growth and related social adjustment. As well, the department administers the regional development incentives program, which provides incentives to business and industry, and other programs, such as Special ARDA and the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA), which serve the needs of some of Canada's rural areas.

### GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

Since it was initiated in 1974, the GDA process has become the principal instrument of DREE's regional development policy.

The 10-year agreements are formal mechanisms for encouraging coordinated action in regional development by federal and provincial governments. They provide a statement of objectives and corresponding development strategies which are tailored to the needs and opportunities of areas requiring special economic and social measures.



Although the objectives differ with the circumstances and opportunities of each province, the agreements generally seek to improve employment opportunities, living standards and access to development opportunities. The GDA strategies are basically similar. Each notes that the federal and provincial governments will attempt to coordinate their application of relevant federal and provincial policies and programs by continually:

- analysing and reviewing the economic and social circumstances of the province, and the province's relationship to the regional and national economy, as these may be relevant to achieving the stated objectives; and
- identifying development opportunities, and implementing the specialized measures required to exploit them.

Within each GDA is a brief analysis of the province's socio-economic circumstances, from which a more elaborate statement of development objectives for the province is developed. The agreement also presents a general outline of priority initiatives for federal-provincial action.

The vehicles by which the strategies and objectives of GDAs are to be met are subsidiary agreements. In these the program details are spelled out: the objectives, cost, and means of implementation. Also included is provision for monitoring and evaluation to ensure consistency with the overall GDA objectives.

Such agreements may:

- coordinate existing federal and provincial programs in support of a particular development opportunity;

- provide specific support not available through other government programs; and
- establish continuing programs to fill gaps in the existing range of government development programs.

Subsidiary agreements are often co-signed, cost-shared, and co-managed by other federal departments in cooperation with DREE and the provincial governments concerned. In almost all cases other federal departments aid in drawing up the agreements and defining initiatives.

DREE shares in the cost of subsidiary agreements on a graduated scale: up to 90 per cent for Newfoundland; 80 per cent for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; 60 per cent for Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan; and 50 per cent for Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

As of April 30, 1979, 94 subsidiary agreements had been signed with the provinces. Since 1974, DREE has committed nearly \$2.2 billion through these agreements; and other federal government departments have committed \$142 000 million. The provinces have committed \$1.3 billion, and a minimum of \$600 million is expected to come from other sources such as municipal governments and industry. During 1977-78, DREE expenditures under the PEI Comprehensive Development Plan amounted to \$29 782 000.

The range of activities being carried out through these many agreements is necessarily vast.

In the Atlantic Region -- comprised of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland -- opportunities are being pursued through the development of natural resources and industry, assistance to urban growth centres, and various types of secondary support. Initiatives include agreements for the development of agriculture, tourism, industry, forestry and fisheries with particular provinces. Others involve assistance to some urban centres of the region -- Halifax-Dartmouth, Charlottetown, St. John's, Moncton and Saint John -- to maintain and enhance their role as the growth and support centres of the Atlantic economy. Further activities are designed to provide secondary support of various kinds, including highways, planning and, in the case of PEI, housing, water, sewers and schools.

Economic growth and resource development are also of major concern in the Quebec region. Current activities include: improved highway networks and forest access roads; setting up a bleached kraft pulp mill in Saint-Félicien; development of forests, tourism and minerals; agricultural and industrial development; and water treatment facilities for the Montreal area.

Present activities in Ontario focus largely on the development potential and socio-economic concerns of the disadvantaged and slow-growth regions of the province. Subsidiary agreements have

been signed to provide measures to stabilize and diversify the economies of some single-industry communities, to assist in the economic and social development of key growth centres such as Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Timmins, and to ensure a strong rural resource community in northern and eastern Ontario.

Development initiatives in DREE's Western Region -- Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories -- are mainly related to the western northlands, rural areas, and industrial development. The aim of the western northlands agreements is to provide options and opportunities for northerners to participate in the development of the areas in which they live. A major goal of the rural programs is better balanced economies through agricultural and industrial diversification in secondary and rural communities. Examples of such programs include the nutritive processing agreement with Alberta and the agricultural and rural development agreement with British Columbia. Industrial growth is aided through agreements related to transportation, minerals and tourism, as well as specific industrial development agreements.

#### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES PROGRAM

DREE's program of incentives to industry and business continues to play a significant role in regional development.

Under the Regional Development Incentives Act (RDIA), grants and loan guarantees are available to encourage manufacturing and processing industries to establish, expand or modernize facilities in broad designated regions. These regions cover all four Atlantic provinces, the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, most of the province of Quebec, and the northern portions of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

In addition, special investment incentives for selected industries in Montreal and its environs have been established under the Department of Regional Economic Expansion Act. The area includes metropolitan Montreal and certain areas within a 100-kilometre radius.

From the inception of the program in July 1969 to December 31, 1978, DREE committed over \$2.2 billion in grants to projects, generating an estimated total investment of more than \$3.5 billion; more than 78 000 direct new jobs had actually been created; and another 58 000 jobs were expected to be created by the time all the firms have completed their control periods.

Incentives may take the form of outright grants, repayable incentives or loan guarantees. Loan guarantees are available for new commercial projects such as business offices, warehouses and freight-handling facilities, shopping centres, hotels, and convention, recreation and research facilities. Montreal and the surrounding area are eligible for incentives

mainly for high-technology industries. The strengthening of the role of Montreal as the province's main development centre is expected to help stimulate economic recovery in the Province of Quebec. The amount of the incentive depends on the project's location and size, type of development to be undertaken, the number of jobs expected to be created, and the anticipated contribution of the project to the region's economy.

Eligible industries in RDIA-designated regions may claim a higher rate of both the investment and employment tax credits.

#### SPECIAL ARDA

The original Special Agricultural and Rural Development Agreements - Special ARDA - were signed in 1971 and 1972 with the four western provinces. At present, agreements exist with the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. These agreements provide for programs to ensure that rural residents, particularly those of Native ancestry, are able to benefit from rural development programs in terms of increased employment and income, and better living conditions.

Specifically, Special ARDA provides incentive grants to encourage Native people to start commercial ventures, and helps to improve the incomes of those engaged in fishing and trapping and other primary producing activities. Financial incentives to commercial enterprises are funded wholly by DREE; other socio-economic development activities are cost-shared by DREE and the provinces. In some instances, additional federal financing is provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

#### PRAIRIE FARM REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION (PFRA)

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, with headquarters in Regina, Saskatchewan, began in 1935 and was incorporated into DREE when the department was established in 1969. Initially, it was designed to assist in the reclamation of agricultural lands seriously affected by drought and soil drifting in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

PFRA now provides for ongoing projects designed to develop and promote improved systems of farm practice, tree culture, water supply and land utilization that will result in greater economic stability for the agricultural community of the prairie provinces.

As well, PFRA administers the Agricultural Service Centres program, which was introduced to develop water-supply and sewage-disposal systems in selected prairie communities which function as major service centres for the surrounding agricultural areas.

#### ADVISORY AGENCIES

The Minister of DREE is also responsible for the following advisory agencies, which contribute to some of DREE's regional development programs.

The Cape Breton Development Corporation (DEVCO) promotes and assists in the financing and development of industry on Cape Breton Island and seeks to provide employment outside the coal industry and to broaden the economic base of the Island. DEVCO is also concerned with the rehabilitation and modernization of mines in the Sydney coal field.

The Regional Development Incentives Board, which consists of senior public servants from DREE and other federal departments, reviews all major incentives projects and recommends to the Minister their approval or rejection.

The Atlantic Development Council (ADC) advises the Minister on plans, programs and proposals for economic expansion and social adjustment in the Atlantic Region.



The Newfoundland and Labrador Development Corporation is funded by the federal government and the Province of Newfoundland and provides small business with industrial information in addition to financial, management and marketing assistance.

#### DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION

The department of fully decentralized with headquarters in the national capital region at Hull, Quebec; regional offices at Moncton, Montreal, Toronto and Saskatoon; a provincial office in each provincial capital; and several branch offices across the country. This decentralized structure gives DREE a strong presence in the regions and enables close cooperation with the provinces in identifying and carrying out regional development activities.

#### Headquarters

Three groups report to the Deputy Minister: Planning and Coordination; Finance and Administration; and the Departmental Secretariat.

#### Planning and Coordination

Headed by an assistant deputy minister, this group is divided into four branches:

- . Analysis and Liaison undertakes social and economic analysis on an interregional, national and international basis;

monitors initiatives proposed by the regions in terms of their national or interregional implications; maintains liaison both within the department and with other departments to promote policy consistency.

- . Project Assessment and Evaluation monitors and evaluates the departmental programs.
- . Incentives Administration prepares operational guidelines for program application across the country and reviews major incentive cases.
- . Public Information is responsible for developing a national public information program; for providing specialized services and support to other units; and for ensuring coordination of the national, regional and provincial public information components.

#### Finance and Administration

This group, headed by an assistant deputy minister, consists of five branches:

- . Legal Services;
- . Personnel Services;
- . Financial Services, which is responsible for overall budgetary planning, accounting and auditing, based on input from the regional and provincial offices;
- . Administrative and Technical Services; and
- . Management Information and Computer Services, which develops and operates management reporting systems.

Departmental Secretariat

In cooperation with the assistant deputy ministers, the Secretariat is responsible for matters such as parliamentary returns and the final preparation of correspondence for the signature of the Minister or Deputy Minister. It also provides general staff support to the Deputy Minister.

Regional Offices

Four assistant deputy ministers are located outside the national capital region and supported by the staff resources necessary to oversee the planning, implementation and administration of all departmental activities in their respective regions. Regional offices normally include the following components:

- . Regional Development, which identifies industrial projects and major development opportunities throughout the region and works with other federal government departments, the provinces and private industry in attempting to realize them;
- . Regional Analysis, which maintains an overview of regional economic circumstances;

- Industrial Incentives, which processes major incentives applications forwarded by the provincial offices;
- Program Coordination and Technical Services, which coordinates departmental activities among the various provinces of the region and provides technical advice;
- Administration and Program Services, which includes legal, financial, personnel, administrative and data services; and
- Regional Information Services, which plans and implements regional public information programs and supports provincial information activities.

#### Provincial Offices

These offices are headed by a director general, and are located in the provincial capital cities. In Ontario, where the regional headquarters and the provincial offices are combined in Toronto, many of the provincial office functions are performed by a major branch office in Thunder Bay.

Provincial offices generally include the following units:

- Development and Analysis, which works closely with the provincial government concerned in analysing economic conditions and identifying and pursuing development opportunities in the province;

- . Industrial Incentives, which processes major incentives applications originating in the province;
- . Financial and Administrative Services; and
- . Public Information.

Branch Offices

DREE branch offices in each region provide on-the-spot assessment of specific projects and activities.

ADDRESSES

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