



Canadian Council
of Ministers
of the Environment Le Conseil canadien
des ministres
de l'environnement

Strategic Directions for Water

Three Year Action Plan

Section 1. Overview

Water is an important priority for Canadians. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) is actively engaged in Canada-wide water issues, and has built on its commitment to provide leadership on water through the development of a collaborative, strategic Canada-wide vision. This vision was announced by Ministers in October 2009 in *Strategic Directions for Water*.

Strategic Directions for Water provides a strategic, forward-looking framework to guide CCME in all future actions and activities related to water under its members' jurisdiction.¹

Vision: Canadians have access to clean, safe and sufficient water to meet their needs in ways that also maintain the integrity of ecosystems.

Mission: CCME facilitates forward-thinking research and integrated policy, standard and/or guideline development, that contribute to the sustainable management, protection, restoration and conservation of Canada's water.

Goals:

1. Aquatic ecosystems are protected on a sustainable watershed basis.
2. The conservation and wise use of water is promoted.
3. Water quality and water quantity management is improved, benefiting human and ecosystem health.
4. Climate change impacts are reduced through adaptive strategies.
5. Knowledge about the state of Canada's water is developed and shared.

This three-year action plan, presented in Section 2, identifies deliverables and desired outcomes for CCME's work on water between 2011-2014.

In identifying these deliverables, CCME considered its members' priorities for water; work underway by other organizations; and emerging water management issues.

¹ Drinking water, a shared environment and health responsibility, is coordinated outside of CCME through the federal-provincial-territorial Committee on Drinking Water and is not expressly considered in *Strategic Directions for Water*.

1.2 Management, Monitoring and Review

CCME's existing management structure will implement *Strategic Directions for Water*. The Environmental Planning and Protection Committee (EPPC) will oversee implementation of the water action plan and will maintain its role of providing strategic oversight on annual workplans. CCME water groups, currently Water Agenda Development Committee (WADC), Municipal Wastewater Effluent Coordinating Committee (MWWEC) and Water Quality Task Group (WQTG), will coordinate the delivery of the water action plan deliverables.

Many organizations are active in water policy work in Canada. In implementing *Strategic Directions for Water*, CCME will strive to ensure its work compliments and minimizes duplication with other organizations, and ensure an adaptive, flexible approach to achieve its goals for water. The three CCME water groups will review and update the action plan annually to ensure on-going relevance of deliverables, consider emerging priorities and work underway by other organizations, and propose a new third year of activities to ensure a rolling three-year action plan.

1.3 Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

Implementing *Strategic Directions for Water* may include engagement with interested parties and stakeholders. For engagement with the broader stakeholder circle, CCME draws on the information and advice of its member jurisdictions. CCME respects the roles and responsibilities jurisdictions have for engaging stakeholders and citizens; these do not change under the water action plan.

CCME stakeholders include organizations and individuals with Canada-wide, international or multi-jurisdiction expertise in environmental management and governance, in particular relating to CCME priority issues. CCME seeks guidance and advice from stakeholders on its proposed policies, guidelines and standards, but does not delegate its decision-making.

There are a number of organizations and agencies in Canada actively engaged in water issues and playing a vital role in advancing knowledge, discussion and action on water management. Throughout the implementation of *Strategic Directions for Water*, CCME will seek the appropriate level of discussion and dialogue with government agencies and non-government organizations working on water issues in Canada.

Emerging issues: Through its member jurisdictions, CCME welcomes input on its action plan for implementing *Strategic Directions for Water* and is open to discussion with interested parties on emerging water issues. CCME members discuss emerging issues raised by stakeholders as part of CCME's annual workplanning and priority-setting discussions.

CCME member jurisdictions generally share responsibility for water resources management and protection in Canada.² Through CCME governments work cooperatively and with a commitment to take action within their areas of jurisdiction on agreed-upon approaches. Each Minister of Environment remains responsible to act and to be held accountable within his or her jurisdiction.

² In Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs manages water resources.

Section 2: Three Year Action Plan

Activity	Deliverable	Outcome
Goal 1: Aquatic ecosystems are protected on a sustainable watershed basis.		
1.1 Identify principles for Integrated Water Resource Management.	CCME Integrated Water Resource Management principles.	1. Jurisdictions have enhanced capacity to apply Integrated Water Resource Management principles.
1.2 Develop a compendium of Integrated Water Resource Management, including: watershed governance; integrating existing IWRM approaches; addressing issues of scale; best management practices and case studies for integrated community-based watershed management.	Compendium of best management practices for using Integrated Water Resource Management principles to improve ecosystem health.	
Goal 2: The conservation and wise use of water is promoted.		
2.1 Scope opportunities to increase the capacity of jurisdictions to use social marketing techniques, including case studies, to promote positive behavioural changes for water conservation and efficiency and water quality.	Report on opportunities for promoting positive behavioural changes for water conservation using social marketing techniques.	2. Jurisdictions have tools to promote water conservation, water efficiency and water quality.
Goal 3: Water quality and water quantity management is improved, benefiting human and ecosystem health.		
3.1 Explore opportunities to transition science into policy and enhance progress on nutrient management.	Report on best management practices for nutrients and opportunities to transition science into policy.	3A. Jurisdictions share knowledge and lessons learned about water budgeting, allocation and quality.
3.2 Identify and share policy instruments for responding to and improving water security, including short- and long-term water scarcity.	Water security and water scarcity policy instruments.	

Activity	Deliverable	Outcome
3.3 Identify and share best management practices for in-stream flow (ecosystem) needs, water allocation and budgeting.	Best management practices for in-stream flow (ecosystem) needs, water allocation and budgeting.	
3.4 Continue to develop Canadian Water Quality Guidelines, indexes, and monitoring & reporting tools.	Canadian Water Quality Guidelines , and guidance tools as per the Water Quality Task Group workplan.	
3.5 Review implementation of the Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent. 3.6 Address issues outlined in the Strategy relating to northern performance standards, risk level criteria and implementation timelines for wastewater facilities in Canada's far north.	Jurisdictions continue to implement as appropriate the Canada-wide strategy for the management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent. Five-year review of the implementation of the Canada-wide Strategy for the Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent is completed.	
3.7 Develop, pilot and revise a framework and indicators for sustainable groundwater management.	Framework for sustainable groundwater management.	3B. Jurisdictions have the knowledge and tools for the sustainable management of groundwater and surface water.
3.8 Develop guidance on groundwater monitoring, including a technical review of jurisdictional monitoring and science.	Groundwater monitoring guidance document.	
3.9 Explore approaches of 1) making groundwater data easily available and 2) augmenting existing groundwater databases capabilities, including guidelines on the management of groundwater data to promote consistent approaches across Canada.	Guidance on approaches for groundwater data availability. Guidance on approaches for augmenting existing groundwater databases' capabilities. Guidance on groundwater data management.	
3.10 Develop tools to facilitate accessibility and sharing of ground and surface water data Canada-wide.	Tools to facilitate accessibility and sharing of ground and surface water data.	

Goal 4: Climate change impacts are reduced through adaptive strategies.		
4.1 Prepare a guidance document to assess water monitoring networks for climate change adaptation	Guidance document to assess water monitoring networks for climate change adaptation.	4. Jurisdictions have enhanced capacity and knowledge to support watershed resiliency to climate change.
4.2 Develop tools for climate change vulnerability assessments for watersheds.	Tools for developing climate change vulnerability assessments for watersheds.	
4.3 Develop short- to long-term measures to address the identified watershed vulnerabilities and to increase adaptive capacity.	Measures to address climate change watershed vulnerabilities and increase adaptive capacity available for use by jurisdictions.	
Goal 5: Knowledge about the state of Canada's water is developed and shared.		
5.1 Identify opportunities to enhance knowledge through communications, outreach and education on CCME's water activities.	Recommendations for CCME on promoting CCME's water activities.	5. Jurisdictions have enhanced capacity to inform Canadians about CCME's water priorities.
5.2 Facilitate internal processes to allow sharing of knowledge among CCME members.	Improved processes to share internal information among CCME members.	
5.3 Survey CCME members to determine usefulness and uptake of water action plan deliverables.	Survey results of usefulness and uptake of water action plan products.	