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Type of Study: Policy Material/related Library  
Date of Report: 1989  
Author: G.n.w.t. - Interdepartmental Working  
Group On Sustainable Development  
Catalogue Number: 11-42-3**



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES:  
BALANCING CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**A PUBLIC DISCUSSION PAPER**

Prepared by

Interdepartmental Working Group on Sustainable Development  
Government of the Northwest Territories

July 1989

# THE PATH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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*"Whatever we do to improve our economy, we must ensure that we protect and promote our basic values. Though these basic values may be expressed in different cultural terms, they all seem to come down to the same realities: economic independence, protection of the land and the environment, a sense of self-identity and control over our lives, meaningful work, the ability to live meaningful lifestyles, and a sense of community and personal worth."*

**Special Committee on the Northern Economy, 1989**

*"Our decisions about resource management and development will reflect the traditional knowledge which can be found in our northern communities."*

**"Direction for the 1990's",  
GNWT 1988**

*"A careful balance [is needed] between large industrial undertakings, small sustainable community developments, and traditional pursuits of hunting, fishing and trapping that depend so heavily on continuing protection of the environment"*

**Task Force on Northern Conservation, 1984**

*"The Government of the Northwest Territories will support development when its overall economic, social and environmental implications are judged to result in net benefit to the people of the Northwest Territories."*

**Northwest Territories Resource Development Policy, 1983**

*"Policy makers guided by the concept of sustainable development will necessarily work to assure that growing economies remain firmly attached to their ecological roots and that these roots are protected and nurtured so that they may support growth over the long term."*

**Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development,  
1987**

*"More and more people are aware that sustainable economic development depends upon sound environmental management. Concerns about conservation, preservation and environmental quality are now finding their way into economic calculations. Sound economic planning and sound environmental management do not, in this light, conflict; rather they reinforce each other."*

**State of the Environment Report for Canada, 1986**

*"Environmental factors can no longer be separated from economic decisions. If we continue to trash our environment, the economy -and ultimately, the planet and all other life forms, including the human race itself - will perish."*

**Federal Minister of Environment,  
1988**

*"Environmental protection, now and in the future, must be an essential part of all economic and industrial planning."*

**Federal Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, 1988**

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# INTRODUCTION

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## Purpose of this Paper

The purpose of this paper is to get people talking about sustainable development in the Northwest Territories. The information and advice obtained as a result of this discussion will be used to prepare a GNWT Sustainable Development Policy.

This paper gives background information and ideas for consideration by all individuals, organizations or agencies interested in promoting sustainable development in the NWT. After reading this paper, people should have a good idea as to:

- What sustainable development is all about.
- Basic terms, principles and guidelines on which to base a Sustainable Development Policy.
- How sustainable development could be applied in the NWT.

In order to build a Sustainable Development Policy which reflects a wide range of interests, we need your detailed comments on the material presented in this document. Are there points you disagree with? Are there principles or objectives which should be added?

We would also like to know your ideas or suggestions on how to implement the Sustainable Development Policy from your point of view or that of your organization. Can you suggest specific projects which would show sustainable development in action? What role would you as an individual, organization or agency play in promoting sustainable development in the NWT?

Once the Sustainable Development Policy is completed, several public workshops and meetings will be held to identify concrete ways to implement the Policy. During these sessions, the concept of sustainable development will be discussed in relation to specific resource sectors in the NWT. This second phase of consultation will result in the preparation of an Action Plan which will describe specific actions to promote sustainable development in the NWT. This Action Plan, together with the Policy, will be known as the NWT Sustainable Development Strategy.

## What is Sustainable Development?

During the 1980's, the world has begun to recognize the fact that long term plans for developing the economy can be successful only if the environment is conserved. In the Northwest Territories, this interdependence between development and conservation is especially clear given its traditional lifestyles

and native cultures which are closely tied to a healthy natural environment.

Sustainable development is a new term to describe an old belief which many industrialized societies have forgotten: "We do not inherit the land and its resources from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children". Fundamental to sustainable development is the need to use resources and the environment in ways that do not limit opportunities for their use by future generations. Defined simply, sustainable development is:

***A way of managing natural resources and the environment so that economic, social and cultural needs are met while maintaining ecological processes and biological diversity.***

Behind this definition are several assumptions which capture the philosophy of sustainable development, no matter how it is defined:

- A healthy economy depends on a healthy environment.
- More attention should be paid to the long term effects of environmental and economic decision-making.

- The needs of the present can be met without sacrificing resource use options available to future generations.
- The benefits and costs of development should be measured in environmental, social and cultural terms in addition to economic ones.
- Regular communication among different conservation and development interests benefits everyone.
- Development goals should include local self-reliance and involvement in decision making.
- New approaches are needed to promote high environmental standards in economic development projects.
- Research and education programs should give more attention to environment/economy linkages and make full use of local knowledge.
- Jurisdictions which share ecosystems or resources such as water or wildlife should work together to maintain their long term quality.

The need to promote sustainable development has been called for in a series of major international and national studies including the World Conservation Strategy, the United Nations Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development and the National Task Force on Environment and Economy.

Sustainable development is not a legally enforced process administered by a central government agency. It is not a process designed to put additional constraints on development strictly in the interests of conservation. Nor is it a disguised way of declaring the north wide open to development with only principles and guidelines to protect the environment. Rather, sustainable development is a balanced and practical approach to the management and use of resources which can only be achieved through the joint endorsement and participation of government, industry, native organizations and special interest groups.

This paper proposes a variety of economic, environmental, social and cultural principles, guidelines and objectives which should be considered to achieve sustainable development. These conditions for sustainable development are presented in full recognition that, at a project-specific level, trade-offs between developing a resource and conserving the environment will continue to occur. The ultimate aim of sustainable development

is to promote "win-win" situations in which both development and conservation interests benefit.

In implementing the Sustainable Development Policy, government departments and agencies organizations will continue to retain and exercise their authority over the various aspects of resource development and conservation in the Northwest Territories. However, they will be challenged to review their existing legislation, regulations and policies to ensure they are consistent with the principles of sustainable development. Native organizations may wish to do the same and will find guidance in the Territorial Government's Sustainable Development Policy.

### **The Importance of Sustainable Development in the NWT**

Sustainable development is all about respecting the interdependence between the economy and the environment. For most northern residents, the words sustainable development may be new, but the practise is not, as summed up by the saying, "the land is our bank". A healthy land means a healthy economy, as measured for thousands of years by the success of hunting, fishing and trapping.

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Today, the northern economy is growing and diversifying with many challenges and opportunities on the horizon to improve the quality of life in our communities. For example, current development trends in the NWT show a rapidly expanding mining industry, good prospects for several large oil and gas projects in the near future, growing interest and support for renewable resource development projects, and a strong commitment to developing the NWT's tourist resources.

Along with these opportunities for development, northerners face significant obstacles which the sustainable development approach may help to overcome. From an economic perspective, development is constrained by outside market forces which can cause great shifts in the price of resources such as minerals, oil, gas and fur products. Other obstacles include underdeveloped transportation systems, high production costs and a shortage of trained local workers. Sustainable development's emphasis on promoting long term self reliance in the local economy would help overcome some of these obstacles.

From an environmental perspective, development is constrained by low biological productivity, slow growth rates and low species diversity. As a result, northern ecosystems are susceptible to long term or even irreversible changes following disturbance. The re-

newable resources of this sensitive environment are coming under increasing pressure from a rapidly growing population which in some communities is growing at over 3% per year. For such communities, this means that harvesting pressures could double along with the population in less than twenty years.

The sustainable development approach involves a commitment to applied research which, in the NWT, could help improve biological productivity for such industries as forestry or agriculture, enhance our understanding of environmental sensitivities and resource potentials, identify new forms of appropriate technology and develop new approaches for restoring disturbed northern ecosystems.

In addition to these internal obstacles to development, air and water pollution from outside the NWT have the potential to reduce the quality of the northern environment and its resource base. Recent events such as the Valdez oil spill, the proposed pulp mills in northern Alberta and the discovery of chemical pollutants in northern seal meat show that planning for the NWT's future should account for important global influences which effect not only our economy but also our environment. The sustainable development approach calls for close communication and cooperation among neighbouring jurisdictions - whether regions, territories, provinces

or countries - to help minimize such trans-boundary impacts so that the quality of shared ecosystems or resources is maintained.

The potential role of non-renewable resources to contribute to sustainable development deserves special attention since their development and use add significantly to the well being of Northwest Territories residents and its economy. Non-renewable resource exploration, development and associated support services provide the greatest source of private employment in the NWT. Such development also provides products which are a necessary part of all northern lifestyles -- from vehicles to tea kettles. When carefully managed, non-renewable resource development can be carried out in ways that protect the productivity and diversity of northern ecosystems which provide the ultimate foundation for sustainable development in the NWT.

Unlike trees, fish or caribou, minerals, oil and gas cannot be renewed once removed and therefore their development is unsustainable over the long term. But such resources can be developed in ways which generate lasting benefits from revenues, technical skills, research information and supporting infrastructure to help move the NWT towards a more diverse and stable economy. In this light, non-renewable resource development



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should be viewed as part of a long term investment strategy for building the necessary capital and knowledge to support a sustainable northern society.

In short, sustainable development aims to maximize the social and economic benefits of development while ensuring that environmental quality is maintained over the long term. For the NWT, sustainable development offers a philosophy balancing development and conservation which could help guide northerners through this time of rapid evolution and growth towards a secure and stable future.

### **GNWT Commitment to Sustainable Development**

In northern Canada, the concept of sustainable development was first proposed by the Task Force on Northern Conservation which recommended the development of a broad policy to help bring the processes of conservation and development into closer harmony. The recommendations of this Task Force were formally endorsed by the Executive Council in the spring of 1985.

Since 1985, the GNWT has been working toward the implementation of several of the Task Force recommendations. In the area of policy development, major headway was made during a public workshop held in August, 1987. Acting on recommendations

from this workshop, the GNWT established an interdepartmental working group to develop a Territorial Conservation Policy for subsequent review by all interested organizations. This working group included representatives from the Departments of Renewable Resources, Economic Development and Tourism, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Culture and Communications plus the Priorities and Planning Secretariat and the Northwest Territories Science Institute.

Another workshop held in February, 1988 provided more input to the working group which reached consensus on a draft policy later that year. During this process, it was re-titled as the Sustainable Development Policy to emphasize its more balanced orientation towards conservation and development.

In May of 1989, the Legislative Assembly released a Background Study on Sustainable Development prepared for the special Committee on the Northern Economy. Entitled "Towards a Sustainable Approach", this study will help the Committee develop recommendations on an Economic Strategy for the NWT.

That same month, the Executive Council made a formal commitment to pursue sustainable development by endorsing the principles and guidelines of the draft Sustainable Development Policy. Further public

consultation was called for to gather the wide range of input required to finalize this policy.

# PURPOSE AND GOAL STATEMENT

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## **The Role of a Sustainable Development Policy**

As the GNWT prepares for increased resource management responsibilities through devolution and the settlement of land claims, it is in a unique position to recognize the importance of sustainable development in formal government policy. Such a policy would provide a consistent set of guidelines and a common direction for numerous initiatives related to resource development and conservation, for example:

- preparing an economic development strategy
- taking on greater responsibilities through devolution
- preparing for the settlement and implementation of further land claims
- finalizing provisions of the Northern Oil and Gas Accord
- developing an efficient environmental assessment process
- improving Territorial legislation to protect environmental and archaeological resources
- developing management policies for various resource sectors such as minerals, petroleum, forests, agriculture and parks.

Promotion of a more integrated approach to resource management will result in increased cost-effectiveness and compatibility of the GNWT's resource management programs.

A commitment to sustainable development will provide policy direction to the GNWT's participation in the land use planning process, particularly in resolving conservation and development issues.

Beyond the GNWT, the Sustainable Development Policy will provide direction for any organizations or agencies interested in the management of NWT resources.

For private industry, the sustainable development concept offers increased economic benefits over the long term through such means as energy conservation, improved communication, more predictable access to resources, more certainty with respect to regulatory roles and requirements, creative approaches for meeting or exceeding environmental standards (e.g. incentives or rewards), and an emphasis on environmental planning and prevention rather than expensive clean up and restoration.

Finally, this policy will help provide a clear message from the NWT to other Canadian and international jurisdictions on how we want to manage shared ecosystems and resources.

## **Overall Goal Statement**

*The GNWT recognizes that sustainable development of resources is essential to the long term economic security, self-sufficiency and social well-being of northern residents. The GNWT shall therefore adopt the principles of sustainable development to guide its decisions and actions related to all resource activities in the NWT.*

# DEFINITIONS

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## Conservation

During the preparation of this discussion paper, over fifteen definitions of the term conservation were discovered and these applied to northern Canada alone. The main reason for this is that different organizations - whether a land use planning commission, native organization or government department - are interested in protecting different aspects of the environment such as wildlife, water or archaeological resources. In the context of sustainable development, a broad definition of conservation is needed which accounts for a wide range of resources and emphasizes the need to ensure long term benefits.

*Conservation means the wise use of renewable, non-renewable and heritage resources so that long term benefits can be enjoyed by present and future generations.*

## Resource Development

Most non-renewable resource development projects have several phases, each of which should be considered in the context of sustainable development. As well, there are four other main kinds of resource development which occur in the NWT. These considerations are included in the following definition.

*Resource development includes the exploration, construction, operational and abandonment phases of non-renewable resource development. It also includes the development of commercial renewable resources, energy resources, transportation infrastructure and tourism.*

## Resource Conservation Area

The GNWT's goal to promote wise land and water (including marine) management throughout the NWT will be partly achieved through the establishment of designated areas that have special management regimes to maintain their resource values. The proposed definition includes a wide range of resources that may need special management on a seasonal or year round basis. Examples could include wildlife sanctuaries, caribou protection areas, forest management areas, territorial parks, ecological reserves or areas of high non-renewable resource potential.

*Resource conservation area means an area of land or water that provides special management measures, either seasonal or year round, to maintain natural, heritage, scientific, recreational, tourism, aesthetic or economic values.*

## Environment

Human beings and their cultures are as much a part of the northern landscape as the animals and plants on which they have long depended. This fact of life will be built into the Sustainable Development Policy by including heritage resources in the definition of environment.

*Environment means the air, water, ice, snow and land of the NWT, all animal and plant life and heritage resources.*

## Heritage Resources

From ancient stone tools to present day sites of religious significance, evidence of the long history of human use in the north must be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

*Heritage resources are the material remains or places of past human use or occupancy. They consist of sites and artifacts of historical, archaeological, ethnological and ongoing cultural or religious significance.*

## Integrated Resource Management

The United Nations Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development identified sectoral fragmentation of resource manage-

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ment responsibilities as one of the greatest obstacles to achieving sustainable development. The Brundtland report emphasized the need to integrate all levels of resource management including the development of resource policies, legislation, institutions, and procedures for administration and enforcement. By following an integrated approach to resource management, a government department would rely heavily on the assistance and support of other departments and outside interests in carrying out its legislated authorities and responsibilities.

An integrated and open approach to resource management can result in closer ties, improved understanding, and increased cooperation among various environmental and economic sectors as they move toward a "common future".

*Integrated resource management is a coordinated process in which all components of resource management (policy development, land use planning, environmental assessment, legislative and regulatory mechanisms) are formally linked and complementary. The process is characterized by the sharing of values, information and advice among various interests.*

### **Round Table on Environment and Economy**

The concept of a Round Table on Environment and Economy was first developed in 1987 by the National Task Force on Environment and Economy. As conceived by the Task Force, its role is to provide a forum for key environment and economy stakeholders to discuss issues of mutual concern and make recommendations to the First Ministers of their respective province or territory. Since 1987, Round Tables have been formally established in six provinces. Round Tables are in the planning stages in three other provinces and the Yukon. For the NWT, a Round Table on Environment and Economy would be:

*A senior level advisory body which would advise the Government Leader on sustainable development issues of territorial significance. Its membership would include appropriate representatives from government, native organizations, private industry, and public interest groups.*

# PRINCIPLES

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## **How Will Sustainable Development Be Guided in the NWT?**

The World Conservation Strategy, published in 1980, clearly showed that protecting the earth's biological productivity and environmental quality is absolutely essential to long term economic security. It stated that, "for people to gain a decent livelihood from the earth without undermining its capacity to go on supporting them, they must conserve the biosphere". This important perspective is reflected in the first principle of the Sustainable Development Policy which incorporates the three main goals of the World Conservation Strategy.

***• The GNWT shall promote economic development which maintains essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and harvestable resources at sustainable levels.***

A common theme of the World Commission on Environment and Development report is the need to integrate economic and ecological considerations in decision making. As the report states, "they are, after all, integrated in the workings of the real world". The need to balance these factors in decision making is expressed in the second principle.

***• The GNWT shall routinely combine and equally weigh conservation and development factors in decision making processes for the use of resources.***

Sustainable development offers more than just economic benefits to northern residents. The benefits of such development can also be measured in social and cultural terms.

***• Sustainable development of resources is essential to the long term economic, cultural and social well being of northern residents.***

Encouraging public participation in decision making is a high priority with the GNWT. This commitment to consultation and consensus is clearly expressed in the Territorial Government's 1988 "Direction for the 1990's" document: "Throughout our society, we encourage everyone to take part in making decisions. Nowhere is this more important than in making decisions about how we develop ...".

***• Northern residents shall be assured meaningful input and participation in decisions related to conservation and resource development.***

The settlement of the Inuvialuit Land Claim resulted in the establishment of new mechanisms for the conservation and development of resources. Similar mechanisms will be established when the Dene-Metis and TFN claims are settled. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Policy will be undertaken in a way that fully recognizes and supports the important role of these mechanisms.

***• Initiatives associated with this policy shall be consistent with or complement all agreements, policies and legislation related to the settlement of aboriginal land claims as they relate to conservation and development of resources.***

The GNWT is committed to making full use of local knowledge, understanding and interpretations about the environment and resources, not only where information is unavailable but also to complement and improve existing information from conventional scientific sources.

***• Conservation and development practices shall take into account the local knowledge, values and experience found among the regular users of the environment as well as the information developed in academic institutions, industry and government.***

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Resource management decisions made today affect the availability and quality of resources for the future. For example, clearing a forest for agriculture may mean lost opportunities for forestry or commercial wildlife development. Similarly, the establishment of a National Park will reduce possibilities for mineral development or sport hunting. Sustainable development promotes a form of decision making that accounts for future resource use options with an aim to maximize long term benefits.

**• Natural resources should be managed so that opportunities for future resource uses are maximized.**

Resource development projects which demonstrate a commitment to environmental protection measures are in the best long term interests of northern residents and industries. The need to incorporate such measures early on in the life of a project is encouraged by the GNWT.

**• Conservation commitments in resource development proposals shall be a major consideration in determining the degree of GNWT's political and financial support.**

Resource conservation areas will represent designated areas of land or water that require special management. Whether under

Territorial or Federal jurisdiction, the GNWT will encourage a form of management which supports sustainable development objectives.

**• The GNWT recognizes the need for resource conservation areas to maintain special values related to wildlife and wildlife habitat, prime forests, productive agricultural soils, areas of high non-renewable resource potential and heritage, recreational, tourism, scientific, and aesthetic resources.**

As NWT residents enter the 1990's and beyond, they will face increasing threats to the quality of their resource base and environment from external influences beyond the NWT borders. Pollution of transboundary waters, arctic haze, global warming and depletion of the ozone layer represent significant constraints to achieving sustainable development in the NWT. Joint agreements with our national and international neighbours to control such impacts will help maintain the full potential of our resources.

**• Enhanced cooperation with other circumpolar and neighbouring jurisdictions is important in addressing transboundary concerns related to resource management and the maintenance of environmental quality.**

As increasing demands are made on government, there is a continuous need to ensure the economic efficiency of government programs and projects.

**• As far as possible, implementation of this policy will rely primarily on existing mechanisms and processes or those already under development through land claims or other processes.**

# SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

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## How Will Sustainable Development Projects be Promoted?

In order to balance the many dimensions of development, a common and consistent set of guidelines is needed to provide concrete direction for all projects influencing the NWT's environment, whether a Territorial Park or a gold mine. These guidelines should be applied to a wide range of initiatives, from a small scale community based project to a large scale regional development program. These guidelines would be used as a general checklist for assessing programs or projects in the context of sustainable development.

It is recognized that few projects could meet all of these guidelines. Rather, a combination of complementary projects should contribute to the overall goal of sustainable development for a particular community or region. The GNWT shall promote projects which strive to meet all, or a combination of, the following guidelines.

### **ECOLOGICAL**

- *maintain essential ecological processes*
- *maintain or enhance biological diversity*
- *maintain harvestable resources at sustainable levels*

### **ECONOMIC**

- *promote economic self-reliance at the local level*
- *increase employment opportunities for the resident labour force through education, training and job creation*
- *maximize opportunities for local retention and investments of profits*
- *influence the pace of development to promote long term resource benefits*

### **SOCIAL**

- *maintain or strengthen community values and identity*
- *build a sense of meaningful participation and responsibility in project development and implementation*

### **CULTURAL**

- *support and maintain traditional activities and relationships*
- *maintain or enhance heritage resources*

# PROPOSED GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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Several sustainable development goals have been identified. These goals and associated objectives were drawn from three main sources:

- recommendations from public workshops and the Interdepartmental Working Group on Sustainable Development;
- recommendations of the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development and the Task Force on Northern Conservation; and
- a review of relevant provisions in existing or proposed land claims agreements.

Five main goals are being considered as a focus for implementing sustainable development in the NWT:

- 1. Promote an integrated approach to resource management.**
- 2. Maintain and enhance environmental quality.**
- 3. Establish resource conservation areas.**
- 4. Develop non-renewable resources in ways that contribute to a sustainable economy.**

## **5. Promote cooperation in the management of transboundary resources.**

These goals and associated objectives provide a starting point for ideas on how to achieve sustainable development in the NWT. Do you agree with the goals and objectives which are presented? Are there additional areas in which sustainable development should be pursued?

In addition to your feedback on the goals and objectives which should be included in the Sustainable Development Policy, we are looking for your ideas on concrete actions for implementing sustainable development. Examples could include community-based sustainable development projects, waste recycling programs, new incentive programs for industry, or specific regulatory reforms. Your initial ideas on such actions will contribute to the development of an Action Plan which will be prepared through a series of public workshops and meetings following completion of the Sustainable Development Policy.

The proposed sustainable development goals and objectives are presented below as they might appear in the Sustainable Development Policy.

## **1. Integrated Resource Management**

Recognizing that resource development decisions usually involve numerous management objectives and interest groups, the GNWT will promote an integrated approach to the management of all land and water resources. This goal will be pursued in five main areas:

### **Decision Making**

- Establish a Northwest Territories mechanism such as a Round Table on Environment and Economy to provide the Executive Council with advice on major sustainable development issues.
- Identify opportunities for enhancing the capability of community and regional organizations to respond effectively to proposed conservation measures or resource development projects.
- All major Executive level Decision Papers and related documents shall take full account of environmental, economic, and social and cultural factors.
- Establish clear and consistent policies for the management and use of all resource sectors over which the GNWT has some authority.



- Develop a comprehensive impact assessment process for resource development projects. Appropriate policy and legislation shall be developed as required within the context of devolution of resource management responsibilities and the settlement of land claims.

#### **Development Assistance**

- Ensure that all GNWT programs which give funding or loan guarantees for resource development shall consider including special environmental, economic, social and cultural conditions as part of the guarantee.

#### **Management Mechanisms and Processes**

- Undertake a systematic review of Departmental mandates, policies and legislation to ensure that they are consistent with the principles of this policy.
- Promote proper sequencing and minimal duplication between the planning, assessment and regulatory stages of resource development, giving special attention to 1) the integration of land and water management processes; and 2) the incorporation of economic and social factors.

#### **Resource Information**

- Establish a process and identify geographic and sectoral priorities for conducting integrated resource surveys to evaluate resource development potentials and environmental opportunities and constraints.
- Identify options for developing an integrated and publicly accessible information system for renewable, non-renewable and heritage resource data derived from government, academic, industrial and local sources.

#### **Science, Technology and Education**

- Support the development of northern based research facilities and programs undertaking applied environmental research and monitoring studies related to economic development projects.
- Support research and development of technology designed to minimize the economic and environmental costs of northern development. Such technology should include but not be limited to:
  - Pollution control and monitoring systems
  - Waste disposal and recycling
  - Renewable energy systems
  - Energy efficiency and conservation

- Remote sensing and resource evaluation
- Boreal forestry and fire management
- Cold climate agriculture
- Impact mitigation and industrial site restoration
- Heritage resource preservation
- Develop environmental education programs giving special attention to the positive links between conservation and economic development

## **2. Maintenance of Environmental Quality**

Recognizing that the NWT's society and economy are deeply rooted in the environment, the Government of the Northwest Territories shall ensure that overall environmental quality is maintained to support long term social and economic security.

#### **Environmental Standards**

- The GNWT shall promote maintenance and enhancement of the environment so that:
  - Future resource use options are maintained.
  - Irreversible change and long term adverse effects to the environment do not occur.
  - Cumulative and indirect environmental impacts are minimized.

- Where feasible, the environment is restored following human-caused disturbance.
- Long term protection of species and habitats is ensured.
- The quality and natural diversity of genetic resources are maintained.
- Domestic, recreational and commercial uses of renewable resources are developed on a compatible basis.

#### **Environmental Research and Monitoring**

- The GNWT shall encourage and support environmental research and monitoring programs related to:
  - Long term baseline studies of environmental quality.
  - Factors influencing biological productivity.
  - Levels of existing and potential resource use.
  - Positive and negative effects of resource development projects.
  - Distribution, abundance, productivity and quality of renewable resources.

#### **Renewable Resource Harvesting**

- The Government of the Northwest Territories will promote the maximum fulfilment of allowable harvests with a minimum of waste through:

- Efficient techniques for harvesting wildlife so that the number struck but not recovered is minimized.
  - Efficient preparation, handling and storage of renewable resource products.
  - Regeneration of productive forest land.
  - Integrated approach to forest and wildlife management.
  - Inclusion of a safety margin in determining allowable harvests which recognizes limits of reliability in existing biological information.
  - Determination of harvestable quotas in accordance with the principles of this policy.
- The Government of the Northwest Territories will promote the secondary use of renewable resources for the purpose of developing the northern arts and crafts industry.

### **3. Resource Conservation Areas**

Whereas the GNWT will promote the consistent application of sustainable development principles to all lands and waters within the Northwest Territories, it recognizes the need for conservation areas to maintain special values related to wildlife and wildlife habitat, prime forests, productive agricultural soils, areas of high non-renewable resource po-

tential and heritage, recreational, tourism, scientific and aesthetic resources.

#### **Framework for Conservation Areas**

- In preparation for increased land management responsibilities resulting from devolution and the settlement of land claims, the GNWT will develop the necessary policy and legislative framework for managing territorial lands and waters especially for conservation. Existing mechanisms such as the Territorial Parks Act will be used.

#### **Principles**

- The following principles shall provide general direction to the GNWT in pursuing its own programs related to conservation areas or in negotiating proposals put forward by other agencies. The GNWT shall:
  - Promote a coordinated and systematic approach to establishing conservation areas which reflects local, territorial, federal and international conservation and development interests;
  - Promote recognition and use of a range of conservation measures which may be applied on a year round, seasonal or temporary basis, depending on the nature of values being protected;

- Support the identification of potential economic benefits and negative impacts resulting from the establishment of conservation areas;
- Encourage a form of management which maintains or enhances traditional renewable resource activities and maximizes local opportunities for sustainable economic development;
- Support applied research and monitoring in conservation areas which contributes to sustainable development in the surrounding region;
- Support meaningful involvement of local residents and directly affected interest groups in the establishment and management of conservation areas; and
- Support the multiple use concept in conservation areas for human activities that are compatible with the values being protected.

#### **4. Non-Renewable Resource Development**

##### **Investment of Capital and Knowledge**

- Apply the lasting benefits of non renewable resource projects towards the development of a more diverse and stable economy through such means as:

- identifying alternative uses for project infrastructure such as roads, ports, power stations or buildings
- redirecting technical skills
- applying research and monitoring information to other projects
- investing revenues into development projects based on renewable resources or tourism
- Work with industry to identify technologies and practices which increase economic performance while reducing pollution and waste generation through such means as:
  - conversion of waste material into marketable byproducts
  - recycling of spent fuels or processing materials
  - co-generation of energy from waste heat
  - increased energy efficiency and conservation

##### **Regulatory and Policy Instruments**

- Work with industry to develop clear, efficient and consistent regulatory mechanisms, performance standards and information requirements for non-renewable resource projects.
- Develop education and awareness programs to improve industry's capacity to

meet or exceed performance standards and play an increasing role in regulating its own activities.

- Develop a program of incentives and disincentives to encourage industry to develop non-renewable resources in ways which are in keeping with the principles of sustainable development.
- Support industry initiatives to develop and implement environmental policies and codes of practice.

##### **Pace of Development**

- Promote development schedules which take into account the need for adequate training of the resident labour force, environmental research and planning and anticipated future resource needs.
- Encourage a phased approach to project development to provide both industry and affected northern residents with beneficial periods of adaptation and adjustment.
- Encourage a pace of development which is in keeping with the affected community's or region's capability to benefit fully from present projects while continuously keeping options open for future resource development.

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### **Energy Use and Development**

- Promote a planned and orderly transition to a broader and sustainable mix of energy sources through such means as:
  - developing appropriate energy pricing policies
  - increasing support for energy conservation programs
  - promoting high energy efficiency standards in the manufacture and sale of domestic and industrial technology
  - supporting research and development of alternative energy sources
  - developing appropriately scaled hydro electric projects
- Promote the local use of energy from northern oil and gas development projects to help offset the loss of resources and contribute to achieving energy self sufficiency.

### **Project Closure**

- Promote the early preparation of plans for project closure to ensure that sites disturbed by non-renewable resource development are reclaimed in a manner which produces sustainable benefits to northern residents, or that at least does not represent an ongoing net cost.

## **5. Transboundary Resource Management**

Bilateral or multilateral cooperation with other circumpolar and neighbouring jurisdictions will greatly help to prevent or abate transboundary environmental or socio-economic impacts.

### **Transboundary Agreements**

- The GNWT will pursue transboundary agreements with other circumpolar and neighbouring jurisdictions regarding:
  - General obligations to cooperate.
  - Timely exchange of relevant information.
  - Prior notification and impact assessment of planned activities having potential transboundary impacts.
  - Consultation mechanisms or processes.
  - Collaborative scientific research and monitoring programs.
  - Contingency plans regarding emergency situations likely to cause transboundary impacts.
  - Development and implementation of regional plans influencing shared resources or common concerns.
- These agreements should be developed for, but not be limited to, the:
  - management of shared wildlife populations

- management of shared drainage basins
- management of adjacent coastlines
- management of transboundary resource harvesting
- management of heritage resources in transboundary areas
- development of adjacent non-renewable resource deposits
- forest fire management
- control of transboundary air and water pollution
- monitoring of northern climate changes
- control of biological pests and disease
- rehabilitation of markets for wildlife products
- control of military training and testing activities

- The GNWT shall undertake a review of existing interjurisdictional agreements related to each of the above categories to identify gaps, obstacles and opportunities for improved effectiveness. Affected user groups will be closely consulted prior to introducing any new or revised agreements or processes arising from this review.

### **Circumpolar Conservation Strategy**

- The GNWT shall work together with other circumpolar jurisdictions and relevant federal departments to develop a circumpolar conservation strategy to address common concerns related to resource management and the maintenance of environmental quality.

# BUILDING THE STRATEGY

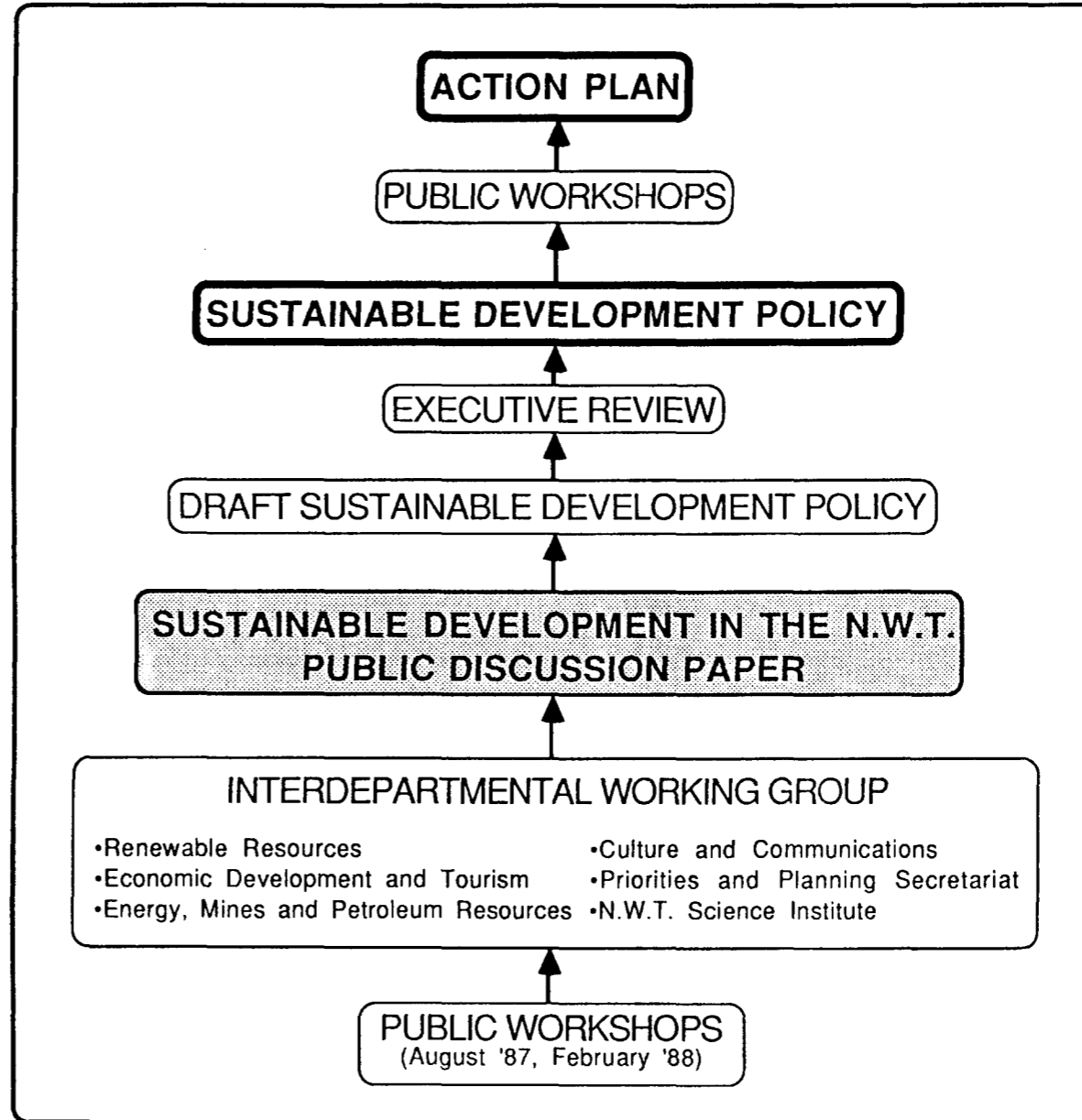
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The Northwest Territories Sustainable Development Strategy will consist of the Sustainable Development Policy and an associated Action Plan providing concrete direction on how to implement the Policy. This paper has focused on principles, guidelines and objectives which will provide the GNWT with a formal policy foundation to pursue sustainable development. This paper was prepared to promote discussion on these elements of the Sustainable Development Policy. Your views will be a very important part of shaping the final Policy.

Your specific ideas on how to move from sustainable development objectives to action are also needed so that initial drafting of the Action Plan can begin. Demonstration projects, industry incentive programs, technological research and development, and education programs are just a few of the many areas in which to think about applying sustainable development. Your comments on implementation will be used as a basis for drafting the Action Plan which will be further discussed once the Sustainable Development Policy is finalized.

An outline of steps in the development and implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy is presented on the following page.

# BUILDING A NORTHWEST TERRITORIES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT LOGO

Through words, this discussion paper has expressed the idea of sustainable development and how it might be realized in the N.W.T. The best expression of sustainable development will be through projects on the ground which clearly demonstrate the lasting benefits of integrating environmental and economic objectives right from the start.

Another way of spreading the message of sustainable development is through an easily recognized symbol or logo which captures the essence of the concept. Such a logo could appear on all written material about sustainable development and be used as a "seal of approval" for all projects which demonstrate sustainable development in action.

The three diagrams below have been designed as possible logos to advertise sustainable development in the N.W.T. We want you to select the one which you like best and send us your choice with your comments on the public discussion paper.

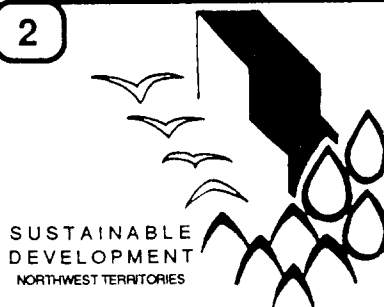
1



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The environment in this logo is represented by blue water at the base, a thin line of brown, representing soil, some trees, and the ever present caribou. Representing the economy is a silhouette of a building which could be a mine head-frame or a sawmill. Through the use of common, easily recognized images, this logo shows the close interconnectedness of the northern economy and environment.

2



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

This logo shows the environment as stylized drops of blue water on the right, green shapes at the bottom representing forest or tundra vegetation, and birds on the left representing air. Nested into the environment is a human built structure or an upward sloping growth curve which points to future economic prosperity. The abstractness of this logo allows for its wide application to different situations and presents a picture of the northern environment and economy in a unified and well balanced relationship.

3



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

In this, the simplest of the three logos, the environment is represented by a fish caught in a net. Hauling in this net is a man fulfilling his livelihood through resources provided by the environment. Whether supporting a domestic or commercial economy, such activities will continue for generations to come so long as environmental and economic ties are respected.