



THEIR FUTURE IS  
OUR RESPONSIBILITY

helping Canada move towards a more  
sustainable electric future







Canadian  
Electricity  
Association

Association  
canadienne  
de l'électricité

# SUSTAINABLE ELECTRICITY

## Sustainable Development...

...Their Future is Our Responsibility

The electricity industry in Canada is at the forefront of protecting the environment. In 1997, the electricity industry was one of the first major industries in Canada to establish an environmental stewardship initiative: The Environmental Commitment and Responsibility (ECR) Program.

Based on a set of core principles, the ECR Program monitored and tracked specific measures and indicators as a means of demonstrating the industry's commitment to continual improvement in environmental performance. Over the last decade, the electricity sector has made many important improvements in its environmental performance, including the implementation of ISO 14001 consistent Environmental Management Systems, a core commitment under the ECR Program.

However, the industry recognizes that there is an intrinsic link among the economy that drives us, the society that we live in, and the environment that surrounds us. Decisions made today in each of these settings will have profound impacts on the lives and livelihoods of future generations.

*Sustainable Electricity* is about pursuing innovative business strategies and operating activities that meet the needs of members, stakeholders and the communities in which we operate, while protecting and enhancing the legacy we leave for future generations. By committing to the *Sustainable Electricity* program, CEA utility members will integrate the program's guiding principles into their daily business activities and improve their overall sustainable development practices and performance.

“ In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations. ”

— Great Law of the  
Iroquois Confederacy

The Electricity Industry's Answer to  
the Question of a Sustainable Tomorrow...

# ... Sustainable Electricity


## Overview

*Sustainable Electricity* is an industry-wide sustainability initiative developed and implemented by the electric utility members of the Canadian Electricity Association (CEA).

By focusing on a three-pronged vision of sustainability – environment, society and the economy – the electricity industry takes a holistic approach to managing our impacts and securing our collective future. The program is built on the foundation of a thorough and rigorous process involving all utility members, as well as insight and leadership from a Public Advisory Panel.

The electricity industry is committed to a shared future. Participation in *Sustainable Electricity* is a condition of CEA membership.

*Sustainable Electricity* comprises the following four elements:

- 1) A Policy for Sustainable Development – Corporate Responsibility** – CEA member utilities have committed to implementing the program's policy, operationalized by key guiding principles which form the basis of the program.
  - 2) Performance Indicators and Reporting** – Each of the guiding principles is supported by specific indicators and metrics that will be used track overall industry sustainable development performance. Utilities will report on the performance of these key indicators, and overall industry results on sustainable development will be published in an annual report to stakeholders.
  - 3) Public Advisory Panel** – A Public Advisory Panel, made up of distinguished and qualified Canadians, will provide independent opinion and advice to the CEA Board of Directors on the implementation of, and improvements to, *Sustainable Electricity*.
  - 4) External Verification** – The implementation of *Sustainable Electricity* will be verified by an independent external verifier.
- 

# Program Structure

Sustainable Development –  
Corporate Responsibility Policy

SD-CR Policy Implementation Guides



Performance Indicators

Performance Measurement Protocols  
and Guidance Documents

Annual Report

Third Party Verification

## Governance Structure



The CEA Board of Directors has overall responsibility for the *Sustainable Electricity* program. The Sustainable Electricity Executive Council, chaired by a Board member, is responsible for providing strategic guidance to the Sustainable Electricity Steering Committee and monitoring the program on behalf of the Board. The Steering Committee is responsible for managing implementation issues, including the development of appropriate performance indicators. The Steering Committee is also responsible for liaising with issue-specific CEA committees for guidance on reporting methodologies for particular indicators and metrics.

# Sustainable Electricity

## A Policy for Sustainable Development - Corporate Responsibility

The CEA and its member utilities are committed to sustainable development, which for us means “pursuing innovative business strategies and activities that meet the needs of members, stakeholders and the communities in which we operate today, while protecting and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future.”

CEA member utilities will continue to improve their overall sustainable development performance by committing to the following principles:

- 1. Environment:** Minimize the adverse environmental impacts of our facilities, operations and businesses
- 2. Stewardship and Biodiversity:** Manage the environmental resources and ecosystems that we affect to prevent or minimize loss and support recovery
- 3. Climate Change:** Manage greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate the impact of operations on climate change, while adapting to its effects
- 4. Health and Safety:** Provide a safe and healthy workplace for our employees and contractors
- 5. Workplace:** Support a fair, respectful and diverse workplace for our employees and contractors
- 6. Communications and Engagement:** Communicate with and engage our stakeholders in a transparent and timely manner
- 7. Aboriginal Relations:** Communicate with and engage Aboriginal people in a manner that respects their culture and traditions
- 8. Economic Value:** Provide economic benefits to shareholders, communities and regions in which we operate
- 9. Energy Efficiency:** Produce, deliver and use electricity in an efficient manner while promoting conservation and demand side management
- 10. Security of Supply:** Provide electricity to customers in a safe, reliable and cost effective manner to meet current and future needs

The CEA Sustainable Electricity Executive Council Chair is accountable for monitoring and reporting progress in implementing this policy on behalf of the CEA Board of Directors. CEA member utilities are accountable for implementing this policy within their organizations.



## Performance Indicators and Reporting

The Sustainable Development – Corporate Responsibility Policy is supported by a set of indicators, which will be used to track the overall sustainable development performance of the electricity industry. The table below provides an overview of some of the key performance indicators:

### Environmental

- » Air Emissions
- » Climate Change Adaptation
- » Implementation of Environmental Management Systems (EMS)
- » Commitment to Biodiversity

### Social

- » Health and Safety (illness/injury rates)
- » Workplace Diversity
- » Aboriginal Relations
- » Stakeholder Engagement

### Economic

- » Cost of Electricity
- » Investment in New Infrastructure
- » Energy Efficiency and Conservation
- » Service Interruption

“Milestones bring a focus to the process, marshal key resources, and mark progress towards consensus.”

– NRTEE Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future

CEA member utilities' reporting on their overall sustainable development performance is integral to *Sustainable Electricity*. To assist members in completing their annual reporting commitments, CEA will provide a series of reporting guidelines each year.

The results of the yearly utility performance reporting will be presented in the *Sustainable Electricity* Annual Report. The Annual Report will be the primary public disclosure and reporting vehicle for *Sustainable Electricity*. The report will feature background information on the *Sustainable Electricity* program and principles; annual performance highlights; composite industry performance results for key indicators; and a profile of the Public Advisory Panel and its role.

*Sustainable Electricity* is also about rewarding the exceptional sustainable development performance of CEA member companies. Many of these members invest in innovative and cutting edge projects that have lasting benefits to the communities in which they operate. The *Sustainable Electricity* awards program aims to recognize those companies that reduce adverse impacts and contribute to environmental, social, or economic sustainability and the long-term success of the electricity industry.

The specific awards include:

- » Environmental Stewardship
- » Social Responsibility
- » Economic Excellence
- » Company of the Year

The awards submissions will be evaluated by *Sustainable Electricity's* Public Advisory Panel.



---

## The Public Advisory Panel

### Mandate

The Public Advisory Panel is an important part of the *Sustainable Electricity* program. The Public Advisory Panel will be comprised of a diverse group of individuals, each of whom has demonstrated leadership and presence in the sustainable development community. The Panel will present an informed point of view on the economic, social, and environmental performance of the electricity industry in Canada, against the backdrop of the principles and indicators foundational to the *Sustainable Electricity* program.

### Core Responsibilities

- » Provide advice on implementation of the program
- » Provide advice on how to improve the overall sustainable development performance of the industry
- » Highlight new areas of focus for the program to ensure it continues to evolve in line with stakeholder expectations
- » Review Sustainability Awards submissions from *Sustainable Electricity* participating companies once a year, and select the winners for each category
- » Provide an annual letter to the CEA Board of Directors to be published in the CEA *Sustainable Electricity* Annual Report
- » Meet with the CEA Board of Directors and/or the program's Executive Council once a year on the program's effectiveness in addressing the electricity industry's sustainable electricity priorities

### Membership

The Public Advisory Panel will be comprised of a minimum of five representatives holding two year terms, with the possibility of renewal for an additional two years.

The selection of members for the Public Advisory Panel members will be conducted by CEA in consultation with the Sustainable Electricity Executive Council. Membership may include, but is not limited to, former government officials, industry leaders, academics, environmental scientists, and representatives from First Nations, environmental and labour groups.



## External Verification Process

A key element of *Sustainable Electricity* is the program's external verification process. An independent, qualified verifier is retained by CEA to review utility implementation of the *Sustainable Electricity* program on a rotational basis using a three year, geographically distributed cycle.

The verifier reviews the Utility Progress Reports submitted by individual utilities for data integrity and quality of information provided. This will include, but not be limited to, test checks of the indicators and metrics provided by utilities through the reporting process. The review also looks at the degree to which the utility embraces and communicates with internal and external stakeholders on their *Sustainable Electricity* program activities.

The implementation of management systems and programs necessary to support the utilities' commitment to the program principles, in particular the establishment of an EMS consistent with ISO 14001, is also assessed. This is done by reviewing the scope and nature of the systems to ensure they are adequate to cover each utility's operations, and examining key system elements such as third-party certifications, internal audits and senior management reviews to gain assurance that the systems have been implemented and are being continuously improved.



350 Sparks Street, Suite 1100  
Ottawa, Ontario  
Canada K1R 7S8

[www.SustainableElectricity.ca](http://www.SustainableElectricity.ca)

