

Natural Resources Centre

2020 WORK PLAN

2020 AND BEYOND

As the world population continues to grow, urbanize and be lifted into the middle class, the demand for Canada's resources is both growing and changing. Canada's metal and mineral resources are needed to produce the world's infrastructure, from solar panels to LED light bulbs to electric vehicles. And Canada's energy resources are being used to power a global economic transformation. At the same time, there is increasing pressure for Canadian resources to be produced in a way that is responsible and aligned with both environmental and social values.

Our work in 2020 will address the challenges that come with a world of rapid transformation, immense opportunity, and partisan divides. Regulations, market access, public perception, infrastructure, climate and energy policies – issues that need to be solved for Canada to make its way to the front of the line as a preferred, responsible supplier.

The future of responsible energy

In 2020, we will continue helping Canadians understand what responsible energy development should look like – and we will continue pushing for the choices that make sense both locally and globally. Specific projects include:

- A validated performance framework for the oil sands. Oil sand production is perceived by some – both at home and abroad – as dirty, as a major contributor to global climate change and as something that should be stopped. This negative public opinion has translated into serious and costly regulatory and policy barriers, and growing concerns from global investors. This project will provide recommendations for action by Canadian oil sands producers to build trust. The strategy for a validated

performance framework will build on lessons from the chemical, mining and forestry industries in their efforts to address very similar challenges.

- The Energy Innovation Brief, a monthly round-up of energy innovations, from new technology breakthroughs to smaller system improvements, that are changing the way we think about and use energy.

Carbon and climate policies

Managing carbon emissions and implementing climate policies are intrinsic factors in how natural resources are developed in Western Canada. They present both a risk and an opportunity for existing and prospective businesses, and for society as a whole. While they already receive a lot of attention in the media and among researchers, there are some important gaps in the conversation. In 2020, we will continue to shine a light on what works, and what doesn't.

- We will continue analyzing the new federal Clean Fuel Standard to ensure that good intentions translate into good implementation and good outcomes.
- We will continue looking at current and proposed approaches to national and subnational Green House Gas accounting – and whether these approaches lead to smart decisions around reducing global GHG emissions in a way that doesn't put Canada out of business.
- We will start a project that examines how emissions-intensive trade-exposed (EITE) industries are affected by different types of carbon policies, and what types of policies and trade agreements can be put in place that best protect these industries while also addressing emissions.

The Natural Resources Centre champions
the responsible development of Western Canadian resources
to safeguard Canada's prosperity.

Getting to 'Go'

Getting Energy Innovation Adopted

Innovation is key to Canada's transition to a cleaner energy sector. But there are numerous hurdles facing the adoption of innovations that could reduce GHG emissions and lower costs. These include regulatory processes that aren't optimized to handle innovation; adopters that are reluctant to take on risk; and difficulties in proving technology at a commercial scale. We are working with a broad range of partners – energy innovators, regulators, technology adopters, accelerators and others – on a major study to identify barriers and supports and recommend changes that increase flexibility and adaptability without sacrificing the environment or well-being.

In 2020, we will continue working on this project – including working with the Clean Resource Innovation Network (CRIN) to identify how well the energy innovation ecosystem is functioning.

We will track the progress of oil and gas companies as they move toward their net zero carbon emissions goals.

Getting things built in Canada

Throughout 2020, we will remain focused on the increasingly urgent issue of how to get energy infrastructure built in a way that is both responsible and keeps Canada globally competitive. The regulations for the new *Impact Assessment Act* are still being developed, and we will continue to provide suggestions to ensure the Act is implemented in a way that is both effective and functional. And we will also continue to monitor the progress of applications for proposed energy infrastructure projects – a story that is important to politicians, industry decision-makers, investors and the general public.