



Government  
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# THE FRAMEWORK TO BUILD A **GREEN PRAIRIE ECONOMY**

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Catalogue: lu98-4/1-2023E-PDF

ISSN: 978-0-660-69285-2

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This publication is also available in French under the title: Cadre pour le développement d'une économie verte dans les Prairie

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Cadre pour le développement d'une économie verte dans les Prairie

## Message from Minister Vandal

As the world moves towards a net-zero green economy, people on the Prairies are already taking action and are eager to lead with creative ideas and innovative solutions. It is clear the Prairie provinces have what it takes to innovate, adapt, compete on a global stage, and continue creating jobs for workers across Canada.

Last December, through the *Building a Green Prairie Economy Act*, Parliament tasked me and my department, Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan), with consulting widely. Officials and I met with members of the private sector, provincial and municipal government representatives, Indigenous leaders, communities and organizations, and employer and employee groups in the development of a framework for greater collaboration in the implementation of federal programs to advance a green Prairie economy.

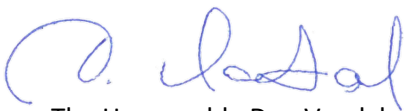
Through our conversations, five themes for increased collaboration emerged:

- Growing our key regional sectors, including natural resources, agriculture and manufacturing.
- Building stronger corridors to more effectively move goods, people and information.
- Expanding and capitalizing on various clean energy solutions and infrastructure.
- Enhancing capacity and skills development in our communities to grow their businesses.
- Working with our partners to advance economic reconciliation and build stronger, more inclusive communities.

The **Framework to Build a Green Prairie Economy** is our roadmap. It represents a commitment to working differently, to collaborating more closely with Prairie partners for a prosperous and sustainable Prairie economy. PrairiesCan can be a strong advocate for delivering federal programs and driving more investment across the Prairies. The outcome will be a stronger, more inclusive, less polluting economy that leaves no one behind.

This report would not be possible without the late Honourable Jim Carr, my friend and colleague who spearheaded the legislation. At its core, he saw the *Building a Green Prairie Economy Act* as a new way of doing business – to better focus federal programs on growing regional economies and creating well-paying jobs across the Prairies. We owe much to Jim and his leadership and dedication for championing the Prairies.

I am thankful for the input from all who shared their views. We have begun an important dialogue, the impact of which will be felt for years. We are at a critical point and our dialogue and work together need to continue to ensure we can capitalize on new growth opportunities to leave a more sustainable and reliable economy for generations to come. The Government of Canada is committed to partnering with Prairie governments, organizations and people to make that happen. I know we can achieve it by working together.



The Honourable Dan Vandal  
Minister of Northern Affairs,  
Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada, and  
Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Prairies are an economic, energy and agricultural powerhouse, contributing significantly to Canada's prosperity. The Prairies have an abundance of rich natural resources, including world-leading reserves of commodities such as oil, natural gas, potash and uranium. There are also promising wind, solar and hydrogen capabilities. The Prairies' vast landscape spans nearly two million square kilometers of land and freshwater and includes more than 80% of Canada's farmland. The region is also home to a diverse, young and highly skilled growing population. With these rich assets, the Prairies is poised to seize the economic opportunities of the future.

The global economy is changing rapidly and the people on the Prairies are rising to the challenge – adapting to opportunities and diversifying the economy to create good-paying jobs and deliver results that keep Canada as a world leader in sustainable, responsible natural resource development. People living and working on the Prairies are finding new ways to deliver more sustainable goods, services and practices to Canadians and the world, while building on regional strengths and economic opportunities in areas of clean technology, digital industries, life sciences, tourism and advanced manufacturing. They see a low carbon future as a generational opportunity to grow a resilient economy with good-paying jobs and strong communities; businesses capturing more value; seamless movement of goods, people, and information; and more inclusive economic outcomes.

People living on the Prairies have a long history of cooperation and know that realizing the full value of a net-zero future will only be possible when partners come together with a shared purpose, drawing upon the local assets and strengths across the region. They have shared that to achieve real change, we need to build on the strong collaboration that has helped to grow the economy and support communities across the Prairies. People on the Prairies have told us:

- They want meaningful opportunities to shape federal policy and program development, particularly in areas that directly impact the Prairie economy. They want to see federal economic priorities informed by local priorities and knowledge.
- They want stronger coordination across federal programs that can enable ambitious actions to advance sustainable economic growth. With more collaboration, the Prairies can further capitalize on these larger economic opportunities.
- They do not want a one-size-fits all approach. They want to see programs and supports that respond to the diverse opportunities and challenges within and across the Prairie provinces.

The *Building a Green Prairie Economy Act* is a catalyst for these efforts.

At its core, the *Act* outlines the federal government's commitment to establish a framework that enhances local cooperation and engagement in the implementation of federal programs across various sectors to build a green economy in the Prairies. The Government of Canada will also regularly report to Canadians on what we achieve together<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> An Act respecting the building of a green economy in the Prairies <https://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/bill/C-235/royal-assent>

The development of the **Framework to Build a Green Prairie Economy** has been informed by discussions across the federal government, with provincial governments, Indigenous and municipal governments, industry, unions, academia and others. Additional feedback was gathered through an online public portal.

The framework will guide how we continue to work together to ensure all people living on the Prairies can seize opportunities in, and benefit from, a green economy. A stronger and more sustainable Prairies economy means a stronger Canadian economy.

## 2.0 A Renewed Commitment

The **Framework to Build a Green Prairie Economy** represents an opportunity to renew how the Government of Canada collaborates with people on the Prairies to deliver results that sets up the Prairies as a world leader in the green economy. It proposes a model that will guide federal government engagement and action.

In alignment with this model, the Government of Canada is committed to working in partnership with all people on the Prairies in a way that:

- Embraces multiple roles such as convenor, pathfinder, investor and advisor.
- Supports more local and regionally driven dialogue.
- Takes an integrated and informed approach to the green economy.
- Bolsters economic opportunities to support green economic growth.
- Embraces its role in economic reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples; and
- Proactively seeks out a variety of voices in engagement.

With the framework's tabling in Parliament, the work begins. Together, we are working to build a green economy where all people on the Prairies can thrive.

## 3.0 The Framework to Build a Green Prairie Economy

### 3.1 Vision for a Green Economy

***A green Prairie economy that is prosperous, sustainable and benefits all people living and working on the Prairies***

People living and working on the Prairies have an ambitious vision for their future. It's clear from our conversations that in the face of a changing climate, people on the Prairies see the path to a low carbon future as a generational opportunity to grow a resilient economy. They are committed to building a sustainable future where their children, and generations to come, can continue to thrive. Realizing the full value of a green economy will increase our competitiveness around the world, creating demand for high value professionals and new skills, while helping the environment. A strong, green Prairie economy will continue to amplify its contributions to the national and global economy.

People who live on the Prairies want good-paying jobs in a regional economy that is globally competitive, vibrant and inclusive. This economy would harness the Prairies' innovation and growth in clean resource development, agricultural and manufacturing sectors, and expansion in service and knowledge-based industries (e.g., digital technology). To support future growth, the Prairies need the right building blocks. This includes more seamless transportation and connectivity, more accessible opportunities for training and labour attraction, and innovative infrastructure to build more sustainable communities.

People on the Prairies have told us they want to build on their strengths and seize new economic opportunities. And they know that any one government, industry or organization cannot attain this future alone. Deliberate partnerships are required between businesses, governments and post-secondary institutions, among others, to advance regional solutions to global challenges. Continued progress requires deeper cooperation to understand and harness the economic capacity and competitive advantages of the Prairie region.

Ongoing and meaningful dialogue and coordinated actions are necessary to accelerate ambitious ideas and thrive in a competitive world. Renewed relationships and partnerships focused on opportunities in, and for, the Prairies are needed. Together, we are putting in the hard work to get there. We all play a valuable role in building the future that people on the Prairies want.

### 3.2 Foundational Principles

Achieving results under the framework will be guided by the following principles:

#### **Regionally and Locally-Focused**

The Prairies is not a homogenous region. Place-based solutions need to reflect and adapt to the unique interests, priorities and circumstances of Prairies' communities including urban, rural, northern and Indigenous.

#### **Economic Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples**

Respect for the rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of the Prairies to set their own economic priorities and pursue their visions for economic prosperity. The Government of Canada will strive to support priorities aligned with objectives for the green economy through distinctions-based responses.

#### **Openness**

Relationships are based on a spirit of co-operation and partnership to acknowledge differences, understand and address challenges, and enable innovative ways of achieving results.

#### **Jurisdictional Roles**

The roles and responsibilities of Canada's federal government, provincial governments, Indigenous and municipal governments are respected.

#### **Federal Coordination**

Focus on aligning federal initiatives to be simple, easy to access and timely.

## 4.0 Approach

### 4.1 Partners

Led by the Minister for Prairies Economic Development Canada, the Ministers of the following federal departments will work together to advance a green economy in the Prairie provinces:

- Agriculture and Agri-Food
- Environment and Climate Change
- Finance
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development
- Natural Resources
- Transport

Other partner departments include Employment and Social Development, Indigenous Services, and Infrastructure. Additional federal Ministers with mandates that support the framework may also be included.

We welcome provincial governments, Indigenous and municipal governments, and others (e.g., NGOs, industry, post-secondary institutions, labour unions) whose work aligns with the framework to work with us as well.

The Prairies is home to diverse Indigenous communities and businesses that are contributing to building a green Prairie economy. On a pathway to economic reconciliation, we are committed to an ongoing dialogue with First Nation, Inuit and Métis partners in areas that align with the framework.

### 4.2 Responsive Federal Programs

We must do better to ensure federal programs are responsive to the unique Prairie context. Progress under the framework will be achieved through enhanced interdepartmental coordination to better deliver federal programming.

People on the Prairies will see the difference with more efficient pathfinding to relevant federal supports. Where possible, departments under this framework will share project information, coordinate priorities and use collaborative decision-making to help partners seize ambitious green economy opportunities.

### 4.3 Enhanced Engagement and Collaboration

Moving forward together to build resilient and thriving communities across the Prairies will see continued, meaningful engagement with partners and stakeholders under this framework. Changing how we engage with each other, and how we work together is, in itself, major progress. Broadening the conversation to include a variety of voices is a way in which we continue to grow a green economy that works for everyone.



We are committed to continued dialogue with partners and stakeholders to ensure diverse perspectives and insights are incorporated into the design and implementation of federal programs. The success of the framework will depend on the quality of engagement, as much as the achievement of outcomes. Through this enhanced engagement, we will build on our progress and deliver more economic opportunities for the Prairies.

#### 4.4 Goals

The federal government commits to working collaboratively with partners to support the advancement of local priorities and capitalizing on local skill sets to advance the green economy. This work will entail developing key objectives in support of the following aspirational goals:

- Good-paying jobs.
- Strong and resilient communities of all sizes.
- Thriving and competitive businesses that capture global and domestic opportunities.
- Efficient and reliable movement of people, goods and information.
- All people on the Prairies have opportunities to benefit from, and participate in, economic growth.

#### 4.5 Results and Reporting

During framework implementation, the Government of Canada will track and report on outcomes from actions contributing to a green Prairies economy.

Engagement with framework partners, including federal government departments, will help to establish and refine indicators that measure progress, link economic and environmental performance, and communicate the Prairies' story. Where data is available, reporting will aim to capture outcomes measuring the progress of increased economic participation of under-represented groups.

- Early outcomes of the framework will be centered on engagement and collaboration to inform the coordination of federal programs and initiatives. The gathering of performance measures and results from existing programs and initiatives will inform this work.
- Mid-term outcomes will track ongoing, coordinated federal program delivery to advance regional projects and develop more responsive federal programming.
- Long-term outcomes will be focused on the overall social, economic and environmental domain in the regions that may be influenced by activities under the framework.

In a commitment to transparency and accountability, the Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada will report results to Canadians. The first progress report will be tabled two years after this framework is tabled in both Houses of Parliament. Every five years after that, the Minister will prepare subsequent reports on the progress of the framework, as well as future actions.

## 5.0 Next Steps

In alignment with the framework's principles, vision and goals, the first phase of implementation will include:

- Advancing actions under priority areas identified during engagement with Prairie stakeholders and assessing the progress of aligned federal actions already underway<sup>2</sup>. These priority areas will include:
  - **Growing key regional sectors, including natural resources, agriculture and manufacturing:** Advancing clean technologies, value-added agriculture and sustainable energy, among other sectors.
  - **Effective movement of goods, people and information:** Supporting economic corridors, low-emission transportation and the expansion of broadband access.
  - **Expanding and capitalizing on clean electricity:** Exploring opportunities in electricity generation, infrastructure and energy efficiency.
  - **Community economic development:** Strengthening skills and talent development for workers and businesses, regional economic planning and investment attraction, among other initiatives, to create the sustainable jobs of the future.
  - **Economic reconciliation and inclusive growth:** Meaningfully engaging on regional economic opportunities through responsive programming, capacity building and access to capital.
- Establishing mechanisms to support enhanced engagement and collaboration, such as:
  - Regularly convening relevant Federal Ministers and senior-level departmental officials to examine programs, projects and potential actions in the above priority areas.
  - Efforts will be made to leverage existing tables, committees and program supports for collaborative discussions on implementation of the framework.
- Exploring further tools to advance these priorities, in discussion with partners, including new forums for dialogue.

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<sup>2</sup> The sequencing of actions under these priority areas will be determined through engagement with framework partners.

Indigenous participation and perspectives are critical to the success of the framework and will be included in the creation of new collaboration methods and improvements to existing mechanisms. The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring alignment with the UN Declaration (UNDA) to advance reconciliation and meaningful partnerships.

As an enduring framework, with a commitment to ongoing engagement with partners and stakeholders, new or emerging areas of focus may be identified. While priority areas may change over time, the vision of creating a prosperous and sustainable Prairie economy will remain constant.