

Office of Climate Change

Business Plan

2017-20





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Climate change is one of the most challenging long-term issues facing the world and our Province today. Newfoundland and Labrador's communities and economy are already being impacted by climate change which has been seen through an increase in extreme weather events, flooding, coastal erosion, and melting permafrost in northern areas. Action is needed to prevent worse impacts and build resilience. Climate change is not just an environmental concern, it is also an economic and social issue that presents new opportunities as well as risks, including job growth and advancements in areas such as sustainable resource development and the green economy, and an increase in extreme weather events and pests and invasive species.

The December 2016 Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF) is a landmark commitment from Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments to facilitate a transition to a lower carbon, climate-resilient economy. The Province has committed to develop a made-in-Newfoundland and Labrador approach to implementing the PCF, and work on this is underway. Newfoundland and Labrador has already put in place legislation to tackle climate change through the Management of Greenhouse Gas Act and, in The Way Forward, government has committed to develop a new climate change action plan.

This plan was prepared in consideration of the strategic directions of the Provincial Government, including those outlined in The Way Forward. In accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act, the Office of Climate Change is categorized as a category 2 entity, meaning it plans and reports at an output level. I am pleased to present the Office of Climate Change's 2017-20 Business Plan, and as the Minister responsible, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for achieving its goals and objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Perry Trimper'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Perry Trimper
Minister Responsible for Climate Change

Departmental Overview

The Office of Climate Change (OCC) is located within Executive Council and has lead responsibility for policy and strategy development on issues relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and energy efficiency within the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Given the complex, cross-cutting nature of climate change, OCC works collaboratively across government to integrate climate change considerations into the work of all departments and agencies.

For a complete listing of our mandate, lines of business, values, vision and primary clients please visit: <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/occ/office/index.html>

To fulfill its mandate, OCC is currently composed of six staff (four females, two males) and is located on the 5th Floor, West Block, Confederation Building, and St. John's.

For the fiscal year 2017-18, OCC has an operating budget of \$1,259,500.00.

Issue One – Transitioning to a Low-Carbon, Climate-Resilient Economy

The Earth's climate is changing. Globally, each of the last three decades has been the warmest on record. The science is clear that climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the planet, and it is being caused by human activities. Impacts include the warming of air and ocean temperatures, permafrost and sea ice melt, sea level-rise, more extreme weather events, coastal erosion, and invasive species. However, there will also be new opportunities associated with a warming climate and the transition to a low-carbon economy, such as longer farming and summer tourism seasons, reduced heating demand in the winter months, and greater energy efficiency in building construction and transportation.

As greenhouse gases are not bound by jurisdictional boundaries, there is increasing recognition that all jurisdictions must do their part to reduce emissions. Governments in Canada and beyond are considering and moving forward with a range of approaches to mitigate climate change, including carbon pricing, new building codes and standards, and fuel regulations. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Province by 10 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, and 75 to 85 per cent below 2001 levels by 2050. This is a challenging goal that requires concerted action. While the Province has taken action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, it is not currently projected to meet its 2020 reduction target. This is due to a number of factors, including industrial growth, changes in the federal accounting methodology that significantly increased the transportation greenhouse gas emissions attributed to the province and, looking ahead, a later date for the closure of Holyrood than anticipated in 2011. However, government is committed to doing more to close the gap to the set target.

In 2016, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador passed the Management of Greenhouse Gas Act, the Province's first climate change legislation. Overseeing the development of regulations necessary to meet the Act will be a key focus for OCC over this planning cycle.

As a result of the greenhouse gas emissions that have already accumulated in the atmosphere, the Earth is committed to a certain amount of warming - some impacts are now unavoidable and some are already being felt. These impacts can affect communities, infrastructure, health and public services. The Provincial Government is working to enhance the resilience of the Province and embrace the opportunities that exist, such as improving our planning and construction practices and decision-making tools for the public and private sectors.

Energy efficiency can drive significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions where it reduces reliance on the burning of fossil fuels for energy, thus lessening the environmental impact of energy use in homes, buildings and transportation. Improvements in energy efficiency also offer additional benefits such as reducing energy costs to consumers, improving household comfort, improving business competitiveness and reducing local air pollutants.

Taking action on climate change presents significant opportunities for the development of the Province's green economy. Businesses that invest in research and development activities and that provide innovative products and services will benefit from the global shift toward a low carbon economy. This in turn holds significant potential for technological advancement, innovation, export opportunities and employment.

Goal:

By March 31, 2020, the Office of Climate Change will have advanced initiatives to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen resilience to the impacts of climate change and increase energy efficiency to support growth in the green economy in the Province.

Indicators:

- Released a new strategic framework on climate change.
- Developed regulations pursuant to the Management of Greenhouse Gas Act.
- Worked with internal stakeholders to continue to integrate climate change and energy efficiency considerations into policy development, planning and decision-making.
- Engaged and collaborated with external stakeholders and the public to raise awareness and understanding on climate change and energy efficiency.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2018, the Office of Climate Change will have developed a new five-year plan for taking action on climate change.

Indicators:

- Continued to engage internal and external stakeholders and entities in the development of a new plan for taking action on climate change in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Released a new plan for taking action on climate change in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2019, the Office of Climate Change will have further built capacity and understanding of climate change and energy efficiency.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2020, the Office of Climate Change will have advanced implementation of the new five-year plan for taking action on climate change in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Issue Two – Advancing the Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change and Clean Growth

Addressing climate is a global challenge, and governments around the world are increasingly collaborating on joint initiatives. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is working with the Federal Government and other jurisdictions to advance action on climate change.

In December 2016, Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments launched the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change (PCF), which builds on actions of the Provincial and Territorial governments to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and identifies actions that will promote clean economic growth. The PCF is based on four key priority areas of action: implementing carbon pricing; advancing other policy, regulatory and technology-based measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; building resilience to climate change; and advancing clean technologies, innovation and employment.

Going forward, governments across Canada, including Newfoundland and Labrador, will implement the PCF. OCC will seek to ensure fair and flexible approaches to taking action on climate change are advanced that take account of provincial circumstances and priorities.

In addition, Provinces and Territories, including Newfoundland and Labrador, are playing a significant role in driving action on climate change by collaborating among themselves and with other jurisdictions. This includes collaborative initiatives through the Council of the Federation, Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, the Compact of States and Regions and the Climate Summit of the Americas. OCC will continue to work with and participate in these forums to advance action on climate change.

Strategically engaging and working with other governments and intergovernmental organizations will be a priority for OCC over this planning cycle. Through these efforts, OCC will work to advance the Province's interests, leverage the experience and expertise of other jurisdictions, support climate change mitigation and adaptation in the Province, and identify areas for new action where collaboration would be beneficial.

Goal:

By March 31, 2020, the Office of Climate Change will have worked with other jurisdictions to advance implementation of the PCF.

Indicators:

- Participated in intergovernmental processes to advance PCF actions and commitments.
- Worked with stakeholders to build understanding and capacity to implement PCF actions and commitments.

Objective 1:

By March 31, 2018, the Office of Climate Change will have worked with other departments and jurisdictions to establish a governance framework and work streams to implement the PCF.

Indicators:

- Participated in PCF intergovernmental processes such as meetings and working groups.
- Incorporated priority actions and commitments under the PCF into the new provincial Climate Change Action Plan.

Objective 2:

By March 31, 2019, the Office of Climate Change will have built capacity and engagement among partner departments and entities to initiate priority actions under the PCF.

Objective 3:

By March 31, 2020, the Office of Climate Change will have implemented priority actions and commitments and monitored progress under the PCF.

Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes that normally require action by, or involvement of, more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents such as The Way Forward and other communiqués. The Transparency and Accountability Act requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments. The strategic direction identified below comprises a number of focus areas, each of which will be addressed in OCC's Business Plan.

Title: Climate Change

Outcome: A Province that has advanced its capacity to: reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase its resilience to climate change, improve energy efficiency and support growth in the green economy through collaboration across jurisdictions and sectors.

Components of the Strategic Direction:

- Reduce provincial greenhouse gas emissions,
- Adapt to climate change impacts,
- Improve energy efficiency,
- Support growth in the green economy,
- Collaborate on the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change; and
- Raise public awareness and understanding.