

Responsible **ACTIONS:**

A Plan for Alberta's Oil Sands

Implementation Plan



Introduction and Background

The Government of Alberta released *Responsible Actions: A Plan for Alberta's Oil Sands (Responsible Actions)* in February 2009. *Responsible Actions* is a comprehensive 20-year strategic plan and outlines the Government of Alberta's long-term vision for the oil sands:

Alberta is a global leader in the innovative, responsible, and collaborative development of oil sands. The benefits of development continue to support clean, healthy, and vibrant communities for Albertans and future generations. Communities and development reside together in a manner that balances progress with environmental stewardship.

Responsible Actions provides a platform to balance development with environmental protection, social responsibility, and economic success. This includes ensuring that development occurs responsibly, sustains growth for industry and the province over the long-term, and is done in a manner that enhances Albertans' quality of life.

Implementation of *Responsible Actions* is an important next step. Moving forward with implementation of the strategies, goals, objectives and desired outcomes outlined in this plan shows a commitment by the Government of Alberta towards responsible and sustainable development in the oil sands areas.

The implementation of *Responsible Actions* will be led and coordinated across Government by the Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat of Alberta Treasury Board.

Purpose

This implementation plan reinforces that priority items are acted upon and that effective planning is undertaken for longer-term actions. To support consistency in approach throughout the Government of Alberta and to avoid overlap and duplication, the implementation plan is being coordinated with provincial and regional initiatives. Specifically, this plan provides guidance to the Government of Alberta's Land-use Framework's regional plans with respect to responsible and sustainable development in the oil sands areas.

Our Guiding Principles

The following principles provided the foundation for the development of *Responsible Actions: A Plan for Alberta's Oil Sands* and will form the basis for consistency in decision making throughout implementation.

1. Healthy Environment and Communities

- Promote responsible stewardship of natural resources and the environment.
- Foster healthy communities by managing social impacts and improving the quality of life for present and future generations.

2. Balanced Growth

- Maximize long-term value and benefits from Alberta's oil sands while considering the economic, environmental, and social factors of development.
- Build on our strengths in developing our energy resources, and further increase our competitiveness within integrated North American and global markets.

3. Collaboration

- Collaborate and encourage co-operation, participation, and partnership with key stakeholders.



- Honour the constitutionally protected rights of Aboriginal people and their communities.
- Seek intergovernmental co-operation that respects the constitutional division of powers when addressing issues of mutual concern.

4. Public Interest and Accountability

- Respectfully consider input from all interested parties and communicate actions clearly to stakeholders and the public.
- Support the effectiveness of the free market through clear and sound government policy and economically efficient regulatory structures that are within the public interest.

Desired Outcomes

Responsible Actions is aligned with the three broad outcomes of the *Provincial Energy Strategy*: clean energy production, wise energy use, and sustained economic prosperity.

To achieve these broader outcomes a number of measureable desired outcomes have been identified, which will be achieved through implementation of the goals and objectives in *Responsible Actions*.

Implementation Approach

STRATEGIES



STRATEGY 1
Develop Alberta's oil sands in an environmentally responsible way.



STRATEGY 2
Promote healthy communities and a quality of life that attracts and retains individuals, families, and businesses.



STRATEGY 3
Maximize long-term value for all Albertans through economic growth, stability, and resource optimization.



STRATEGY 4
Strengthen our proactive approach to Aboriginal consultation with a view to reconciling interests.



STRATEGY 5
Maximize research and innovation to further support sustainable development and unlock the deposit's potential.






STRATEGY 6 Increase available information, develop measurement systems and enhance accountability in the management of the oil sands.






Short-term desired outcomes to be achieved by 2012: The oil sands are being managed strategically and regionally, which allows for increased capability to achieve value-added and environmental goals.

The following will be achieved by 2012 through implementation of the objectives:

 OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
1.1.1 Conduct regional assessments that include environmental, social, and economic impacts to establish outcomes and thresholds as part of regional planning and management of cumulative effects.	ENVIRONMENT	→ The environmental assessment review process is complete and supports cumulative effects management.
1.1.4 Explore common methodologies for evaluating oil sands development that consider economic, social, and environmental impacts.	TREASURY BOARD	→ The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan is in place which supports regional planning including social, economic and environmental activities.
1.1.6 Identify the amount of fresh and saline groundwater available in the oil sands regions to ensure water supplies are managed sustainably for our communities, ecosystems, and economy.	ENVIRONMENT	→ Sustainability of Alberta's biodiversity is established as part of regional plans.
1.2.1 Require reclamation of tailings to occur at the same rate as (or faster than) the production of new tailings on a regional basis.	ENVIRONMENT	→ A Conservation and Stewardship Strategy on private and public lands is completed.
1.2.2 Require disturbed land to be reclaimed and certified in a timely manner across lease boundaries and the entire project footprint.	ENVIRONMENT	→ Groundwater management frameworks for the Athabasca Oil Sands Area (mineable area), the South Athabasca Oil Sands Area (in-situ area), the Cold Lake Oil Sands Area, and the Industrial Heartland Area have been developed.
1.2.3 Require project reclamation requirements and milestones to be met as a condition of further oil sands development.	ENVIRONMENT	→ Regulatory requirements have been developed and implemented that specify criteria for the reduction of fluid tailings and deposits that are suitable for reclamation.
1.3.1 Establish a conservation offset program to secure high-value conservation lands in the oil sands regions and throughout Alberta to support provincial biodiversity, wetland and environmental management objectives.	LAND-USE SECRETARIAT	→ The regulatory requirements to increase the pace of reclamation in oil sands areas have been developed.
1.4.2 Recognize and account for impacts of climate change when developing outcomes and thresholds for air, water, and land as reflected in Alberta's <i>Climate Change Strategy</i> .	ENVIRONMENT	→ The Government of Alberta and the Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) have redefined, clarified and redeveloped the CEMA partnership group.
1.5.1 Strengthen the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder groups and associations to assist government with achieving environmental management outcomes across oil sands regions.	ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	

	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
2.1.1	Identify social and infrastructure needs associated with oil sands development.	TREASURY BOARD	→ A Comprehensive Regional Infrastructure Sustainability Plan (CRISP) is in place for each of the three oil sands areas.
2.1.3	Consider the shadow population in planning and funding allocations for physical and social infrastructure.	EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION	→ A long-term land release process for Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is in place that accommodates the orderly development of infrastructure.
2.1.4	Develop additional community approaches for coordinating planning, reducing the environmental footprint, and building long-term community capacity in the oil sands regions.	TREASURY BOARD	→ Planning for future community development in the oil sands areas includes green technologies and environmentally sustainable and innovative urban design.
2.1.5	Explore financial models to help coordinate and address immediate infrastructure needs and cyclical growth variances in communities.	TREASURY BOARD	→ An assessment framework for social and infrastructure needs related to oil sands development is in place with a direct linkage to Regional Plans.
2.2.3	Build on the provincial Occupational Health and Safety Program to help industry implement workplace safety training targeted at foreign labour, workers who are inexperienced, and workers with low literacy.	EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION	
2.3.1	Work with industry in the oil sands regions to develop contribution strategies for public infrastructure.	TREASURY BOARD	
	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
3.2.1	Leverage Bitumen Royalty-In-Kind volumes to develop value-added oil sands products.	ENERGY	→ A Bitumen Royalty-In-Kind (BRIK) policy and program design is completed and a Crown Agent to handle future crown bitumen volumes is designated. BRIK is leveraged to develop value-added oil sands products.
3.3.2	Identify and target key global markets that offer attractive opportunities for Alberta's oil sands products to achieve a more diverse and resilient customer base.	ENERGY	→ A policy framework is in place for encouraging the use of bitumen upgrading by-products (e.g. petroleum coke, residue, off gases) for integrated value-add cluster development in Alberta.
3.4.2	Expedite development of integrated transportation and utility corridor plans for the oil sands regions and Alberta's Industrial Heartland to appropriately facilitate growth and minimize the environmental impact.	ENERGY	→ A modernized, aligned and enhanced regulatory system for upstream oil and gas is in place that increases effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, and coordination across the regulatory bodies.
3.4.5	Increase the participation of Aboriginal communities and individuals in all areas of the workforce and support their participation in economic development of the oil sands.	EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION	

	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
4.1.1	Work with First Nations to understand the potential cumulative environmental impacts on rights and traditional uses in order to inform regional planning and consultation approaches.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	→ Pilots for Aboriginal consultation are complete and the consultation policy is being implemented.
4.1.3	Continue to meet Alberta's legal duty to consult Aboriginal communities whose constitutionally protected rights, under section 35 of <i>The Constitution Act, 1982 (Canada)</i> , may be adversely impacted by development in the oil sands regions.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	→ Initiative funding has been provided to all interested First Nations for the completion of comprehensive Traditional Use Studies. → Substantial revisions to the <i>First Nations Consultation Policy on Land Management and Resource Development</i> are complete.
	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
5.1.3	Create networks of inventors, entrepreneurs, experts, fabricating shops, and service providers to promote Alberta's grassroots culture of innovation.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	→ Implementation of <i>Alberta Innovates</i> is in place, which is a research and innovation framework that embraces a coordinated and integrated approach to research and the commercialization of technology, ensures excellence and positions Alberta to be a major player on the world stage.
5.2.3	Provide incentives for technology acquisition, development, and implementation related to oil sands extraction and processing while minimizing air, water and land impacts.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	
5.2.4	Require research agencies to share government-funded research findings with provincial departments and agencies and to publicize research objectives and achievements.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	
5.3.1	Establish mechanisms for coordinated, long-term, and responsive investment in research and innovation.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	→ A policy and regulatory framework is developed that enables the large-scale deployment of carbon capture and storage across Alberta.
	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
6.1.1	Develop sustainability indicators at the community, regional and provincial level to measure social, economic, and environmental performance, and report to the public annually to ensure continuous improvement.	TREASURY BOARD	→ Outcome based performance measures have been developed and are being reported annually.



Medium-term desired outcome to be achieved by 2020:



New milestones for environmental stewardship are being met with development and full scale implementation of breakthrough technologies.

Community growth is accomplished in a more proactive and planned manner.


Oil sands industry growth is consistent with the regional plans developed through the Land-use Framework and is expected to significantly contribute to further energy development in Alberta.


The following will be achieved by 2020 through implementation of the objectives:

	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
1.1.2	Protect human health and ecosystems by setting regional outcomes and thresholds for air, water, land and biodiversity, and by providing public assurance through coordinated monitoring and compliance systems.	LAND-USE SECRETARIAT	→ The Lower Peace Regional Plan is in place which aligns land and natural resource policy, planning and decision making with respect to social, economic and environmental outcomes.
1.1.5	Maximize water conservation, efficiency and productivity in the mineable oil sands sector to the lowest water use achievable, including but not limited to achieving the <i>Water for Life</i> targets.	ENVIRONMENT	→ The Conservation and Stewardship Strategy on private and public lands is implemented.
1.2.4	Enhance existing mining liability management programs to further protect Albertans from financial liabilities related to reclamation.	ENVIRONMENT	→ The effectiveness of other multi-stakeholder groups and associations have been strengthened and aligned with Government of Alberta directions for responsible oil sands development.
1.3.2	Review and establish protected areas in the oil sands regions to achieve biodiversity objectives, and allow for multiple uses such as traditional Aboriginal activities and recreation and tourism experiences.	SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	→ Greenhouse gas emissions have decreased provincially as identified in Alberta's <i>Climate Change Strategy</i> .
1.3.3	Develop further measures to protect species at risk and maintain viable populations in Alberta.	SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT	→ Carbon capture and storage projects are implemented to reduce the impacts of industrial greenhouse gas emissions.
1.4.1	Slow the rate of growth in oil sands greenhouse gas emissions through leading-edge technologies as outlined in the <i>Provincial Energy Strategy</i> (e.g., carbon capture and storage through an integrated CO ₂ network).	ENERGY	
1.5.2	Strengthen government leadership and participation in multi-stakeholder groups and associations.	ENVIRONMENT	
	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
2.1.2	Address the cultural needs specific to the oil sand regions through initiatives under <i>The Spirit of Alberta: Alberta's Cultural Policy</i> .	CULTURE & COMMUNITY SPIRIT	→ Community growth is accomplished in a more coordinated, planned and proactive manner.
2.1.6	Investigate opportunities to regionalize municipal service delivery and financing to facilitate effective allocation of resources to high-growth areas.	MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS	→ Regional municipal service delivery and/or financing opportunities have been identified and assessed to facilitate effective allocation of resources to high growth areas.
2.2.1	Increase emergency preparedness in the oil sands regions through enhancing opportunities for industry and community involvement and providing additional transportation routes.	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY	→ Long-term land release processes for the oil sands areas are in place that accommodates the orderly development of infrastructure.
2.2.2	Establish partnerships to support the development of regional or local strategies that focus on law enforcement, traffic safety, and prevention and treatment initiatives to reduce crime at the community level.	SOLICITOR GENERAL & PUBLIC SECURITY	

2.3.2	Support communities in managing immediate growth pressures through expediting the release of Crown lands, promoting affordable housing options, and utilizing alternative financing approaches where appropriate.	HOUSING & URBAN AFFAIRS	
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 OBJECTIVE		MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
3.1.1	As addressed in <i>The New Royalty Framework</i> , continue to ensure the oil sands royalty structure remains responsive to changing conditions and maintains investor certainty.	ENERGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Government policies are in place to encourage value-add and chemical cluster development in the province that produce higher-value products from the raw resource. Clusters could include upgraders, refineries, and associated petrochemical and chemical industries. → The Alberta Government has allocated Bitumen Royalty-In-Kind (BRIK) volumes, and a wider range of value-added products are produced in Alberta. → The transparency of the market for Alberta's bitumen resource in the province is increased. → Contingent on favourable market conditions, oil sands industry growth is consistent with the regional plans developed through the Land-use Framework, and is expected to significantly contribute to further energy development in Alberta. → Raising awareness and understanding, both at home and abroad, of the oil sands resource and Alberta's commitment to its responsible development leads to informed attitudes and positions, as well as continued investment.
3.1.2	Use Bitumen Royalty-In-Kind transactions to facilitate and expand an Alberta bitumen market.	ENERGY	
3.1.3	Facilitate establishment of a transparent market for bitumen.	ENERGY	
3.1.4	Establish a government-led organization to manage Alberta's Bitumen Royalty-In-Kind volumes to maximize the long-term benefits for Albertans.	ENERGY	
3.2.2	Use regulatory and fiscal approaches to foster and encourage value-added development to achieve the value chain's full potential.	FINANCE & ENTERPRISE	
3.2.3	Promote heavy oil tolls that accurately reflect the cost of shipment.	FINANCE & ENTERPRISE	
3.3.1	Internationally market and promote Alberta's energy and environmental expertise to realize a knowledge-based economy.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	
3.3.3	Encourage the development of outbound pipeline systems to open new markets for Alberta's oil sands products.	ENERGY	
3.4.3	Establish innovative partnerships with industry, the federal government, and municipalities to facilitate timely investment in infrastructure.	TREASURY BOARD	
3.4.4	Work toward meeting labour demands, enhancing productivity, and building expertise through removing barriers to workforce participation and enhancing educational opportunities in partnership with employers and educational organizations.	EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION	
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 OBJECTIVE		MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
4.1.2	In collaboration with industry, the federal government, and First Nations, assess and strengthen First Nations' capacity to engage in consultation.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Core capacity for consultation has been established in all participating Alberta First Nations. → The Consultation and Regional Benefits Agreement or a similar initiative is in place. → Improved relationships and communication, as well as greater consistency between Federal and Provincial consultation processes and decision making have reduced land use conflicts.
4.1.4	Continuously improve and adapt existing consultation processes to promote mutually acceptable mechanisms for resolving disputes, sharing data, and implementing consultation guidelines appropriate to the oil sands regions.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	
4.2.1	Establish a memorandum of understanding with the federal government to coordinate consultation on projects that may adversely impact the constitutionally protected rights of Aboriginal people.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	
4.2.2	Continue to strengthen government-to-government relationships through developing and maintaining appropriate agreements.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	

4.2.3	Strengthen communication and education to increase understanding among Aboriginal people, the Government of Alberta, and the federal government.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	
4.3.1	Collaborate with the Métis Settlements in the oil sands regions on a pilot project to obtain baseline data to measure how cumulative impacts of development may impact Settlement lands.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	→ Innovative new processes are in place that generated more effective dialogue, education and understanding among Aboriginal people, the Government of Alberta, and the federal government.
4.3.2	Promote consistency and clarity in communications and engagement with the Métis Settlements in the oil sands regions.	ABORIGINAL RELATIONS	→ Land management decision making reflects objective data obtained from Aboriginal sources.

 OBJECTIVE		MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
5.1.1	Evaluate current research structures and mechanisms to identify gaps and optimize an integrated, efficient, and coordinated approach to oil sands development.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	
5.1.2	Strengthen and intensify research and innovation in Alberta's strategic priority areas through coordinated funding for demonstration projects and laboratory facilities and to attract worldwide expertise and recruit highly qualified science and engineering researchers into applied learning programs.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	→ Current research and innovation initiatives, supported by Alberta Energy Research Institute, are implemented on a commercial scale to support the sustainable development of the oilsands and other energy resources in Alberta.
5.2.1	Develop additional government/industry partnerships to leverage and encourage increased investments by industry to support research and innovation.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	
5.2.2	Develop and demonstrate breakthrough and next-generation innovations for commercial readiness through government/industry partnerships.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	→ Alberta's approach to open innovation has resulted in increased knowledge, intellectual property and skill transfer within its research and innovation system, and between academia, government and industry.
5.3.2	Develop comprehensive mechanisms for monitoring research and innovation in relation to specific outcomes.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	
5.3.3	Further support research efforts that improve cumulative effects management and achievement of environmental outcomes.	ADVANCED EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY	

 OBJECTIVE		MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
6.1.2	Develop and issue performance reports reflecting the performance of individual companies and partnerships based on social, economic, and environmental outcomes.	TREASURY BOARD	→ Outcome based performance measure results show improvement in social, environmental and economic aspects of oil sands development.
6.1.3	Increase available information to improve stewardship and accountability and to facilitate and support research and innovation.	EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION	→ Reporting and data sharing is occurring for oil sands development in a planned manner with clear expectations and requirements for those parties involved.
6.2.1	Strengthen processes to enable the Government of Alberta and its partners to use official government statistics, particularly population metrics, for planning, forecasting, and budgeting purposes.	EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION	
6.2.2	Develop data-sharing protocols for the oil sands regions with industry, all levels of government, Aboriginal communities, and other shareholders.	EMPLOYMENT & IMMIGRATION	→ Alberta official statistics are available and widely used within the Government of Alberta and by its partners.



Long-term desired outcomes to be achieved by 2030:

Thirty per cent of the oil sands deposits are considered to be recoverable reserves, with a reduced overall environmental impact and maximized value.

Significant value-added processing is occurring in the province.

Alberta is recognized internationally as an important refined products and petrochemicals hub.

The following will be achieved by 2030 through implementation of the objectives:

	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
1.1.3	Require industry to use best available technology economically achievable (BATEA).	ENVIRONMENT	→ The best economically available technology is being used and is well integrated into industry planning.
	OBJECTIVE	MINISTRY/ AGENCY RESPONSIBLE	DESIRED OUTCOMES
3.4.1	Encourage the creation of new products through integration and cluster development approaches.	FINANCE & ENTERPRISE	→ Alberta has developed a world-scale hydrocarbon processing cluster based on the bitumen resource. Clusters incorporating best practice could include upgraders, refineries, and associated petrochemical and chemical industries.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat of Alberta Treasury Board is responsible to lead and co-ordinate the implementation of *Responsible Actions: A Plan for Alberta’s Oil Sands* in collaboration with Government of Alberta ministries and stakeholders including industry, associations, the public, Aboriginal communities and all levels of government.

Government ministries responsible for implementing objectives and targets (as identified in the Implementation section), will continue to engage stakeholders in implementing *Responsible Actions* through providing opportunities for involvement in various projects and initiatives.

Progress Reporting

As *Responsible Actions* is implemented, the Government of Alberta will report on progress annually and monitor and revise the implementation plan as required to support continuous improvement and achievement of the targets.

To support implementation of *Responsible Actions*, the goals and objectives will be incorporated into ministry business plans and Government of Alberta’s annual *Measuring Up* report. This will provide an additional forum to share progress with stakeholders and builds on the Government of Alberta’s existing annual performance measurement, monitoring and reporting system.

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For more information visit:

www.treasuryboard.alberta.ca

www.oilsands.alberta.ca

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