

Country report – Canada

London Group Meeting, 22-24 September 2003

Annually or biennially updated accounts:

- Asset accounts for oil, gas, minerals and timber (physical and monetary). Data series cover generally the period 1976-2001
- Energy use (1990-2000)
- GHG emissions (1990-2000)
- Environmental protection expenditures (biennial; up to 2002)

Work is under way to bring diamonds and offshore crude oil and gas extractions into the subsoil accounts.

Data for energy use and GHG emissions are presented for over 100 industries plus a wide array of household and government activities. Planning on increasing the timeliness of these accounts has started (from four to two years behind the reference year).

For the first time in 2002, environmental protection expenditures/revenues data have been collected on the sale of greenhouse gas technologies and the use of these technologies by Canadian businesses.

All asset accounts data are available electronically through Statistics Canada's socio-economic database (CANSIM). Data on environmental protection expenditures are available in the form of electronic reports while data for energy use and GHG emissions have been published irregularly at this point in time.

Irregularly updated accounts:

- Water extraction and use (latest year 1996)
- Land cover and use

Recent projects

National Balance Sheets – For the first time in 2004, the value of natural resource assets (energy, mineral and resources) has been included in the National Balance Sheets Accounts. Annually, national wealth advanced 4.9% without natural resources – 6.8% if the increase in the value of natural resources is included. The value of energy resource assets accounts for more than 50% of the resource wealth in 2003.

Land Accounts – Work is progressing in three areas: 1) analysis of the amount and growth patterns of urban areas in Canada and their impact on other land uses, including wildlife habitat and agriculture; 2) development of a Canadian land cover change matrix covering the years 1990, 1995 and 2000 using guidelines as established by SEEA; and 3)

analysis and production of various urban indicators related to urban transportation, land use mix and growth.

An analytical study on "The consumption of dependable agricultural land by urban and other non-agricultural land uses" will be released early in the next year.

General Social Survey 2003: Social engagement in Canada – Statistics Canada released in June 2004 the results of the 2003 General Social Survey. This is the first time that Statistics Canada has attempted to measure issues related to 'social capital' directly. Over the course of their lives, Canadians engage in many types of civic and social activities that play a vital role in the health and vitality of the nation. Preliminary findings of a new report show a positive relationship between the various dimensions of this 'social capital' and the satisfaction people derive in their lives.

This social capital has attracted the interest of researchers and policy-makers. Many of them wish to develop a better understanding of how social networks and norms of trust and reciprocity may contribute positively to individual and social outcomes (a network-based approach as opposed to a functional approach, which includes all social resources that facilitate collective action under the rubric of social capital).

Statistics Canada has not played a major role until now in the "operationalization" of the concept of social capital in Canada. The "Policy Research Initiative", an independent organization that receives administrative support from the Privy Council.

Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators – The Government of Canada has committed to develop three of the indicators (out of the six) as recommended by the National Round Table on Economy and the Environment in the summer of 2003. These indicators are air quality, water quality and greenhouse gas emissions. Statistics Canada will be instrumental in developing new/modified statistical surveys and for supporting the efforts on reporting the indicators (notably by linking this information to existing economic data).

The National Round Table on Economy and the Environment (NRTEE) Initiative's on Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators was a three-year initiative (2001-2003) to develop a small set of national-level indicators that take account of those assets that are necessary to sustain a healthy economy, society and environment for Canadians. One of the main recommendations of the final report, with the development of the six indicators, is that Statistics Canada expands the System of National Accounts to track all forms of capital (natural, human and, over time, social) that will contribute to future growth.