

Developing a Community Sustainability Vision – Handbook





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Introduction

The Government of Canada selected Canada's plan for the long-term management of used nuclear fuel in June 2007. The plan, called Adaptive Phased Management, involves the development of a large infrastructure project in an informed and willing host community. The NWMO is federally mandated to implement this project and is leading a multi-year process for selecting a host for this national facility. The plan calls for the construction of a deep geological repository to safely and securely contain and isolate Canada's used nuclear fuel in an informed and willing host community.

The NWMO provides support to interested communities to think through their interest in the project. Early in the site selection process, the NWMO provides support to communities to consider their long-term community sustainability vision before they begin to consider their interest in hosting the deep geological repository and associated facilities. Such a broad approach would help highlight the resources (social, economic, environmental) of the community and pave the way for thinking about how the project may affect the community on a variety of dimensions.

For over a decade now, municipalities and regional governments have been developing sustainability plans that allow a community to identify a future vision to which they aspire and to establish specific goals and initiatives which will move them towards their "ideal" future state.

Sustainability can be defined in many different ways; however, most definitions recognize it as encompassing the economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations associated with programs, projects and activities. A sustainability vision supports a community's desire for the future and provides a foundation upon which short- and longer-term goals and priorities can be based.

The process of developing a vision can provide a community with the opportunity to identify its desired future, help to organize the community's priorities and set out a plan of action for achieving its desired future.

This document outlines a possible framework for community sustainability visioning.

Purpose of this Handbook

This handbook outlines a step-wise process description describing how a visioning exercise could be executed. It builds upon and provides additional details on the process described in *Community Sustainability Visioning*, a backgrounder which can be found on the NWMO website.

This handbook is provided to assist communities in the development of a Community Sustainability Vision. The guidance, while detailed, is not intended to be prescriptive. Rather it is intended to provide a framework which can be adapted to meet communities' unique situations.

The suggested approach to developing a Community Sustainability Vision consists of three phases:

- » **Phase 1: Planning and Preparing for Community Sustainability Visioning** – The purpose of Phase 1 is to assist the community: (a) identify a Sustainability Visioning leader; (b) make arrangements for a Sustainability Visioning Facilitator; (c) establish plans; and (d) notify the community members of the Sustainability Visioning exercise.
- » **Phase 2: Developing the Community Sustainability Vision** – The purpose of the second phase is to undertake the visioning exercise.
- » **Phase 3: Finalizing the Community Sustainability Vision** – The purpose of Phase 3 is to: (a) finalize the Community Sustainability Vision in order to prepare for future discussions about whether or not the siting of a deep geological repository and associated facilities in the community might be compatible with the vision.

Each phase in visioning is supported by a series of action steps. The phases and actions are shown in the figure that follows. The balance of this document focuses on the actions and tasks associated with each of the three phases and provides associated high-level suggestions and direction.

Community Sustainability Visioning Approach



PHASE

1

Planning for Community Sustainability Visioning

The intent of Phase 1 is to ensure that the community is sufficiently prepared to undertake the visioning exercise. This proactive planning phase:

- » Lays the foundation, by gathering necessary background information on the community, for informing interested parties participating in the visioning;
- » Identifies and secures the resources that will be required to effectively and efficiently develop the community sustainability vision;
- » Develops plans, protocols and processes for undertaking the visioning; and
- » Prepares the community at large for the activities associated with the visioning.

This phase helps ensure that: (a) the community has the necessary materials and resources required for developing the sustainability vision; and (b) the members of the community are aware of the visioning initiative and their opportunity to participate.

Phase 1 consists of four action items (as outlined in the figure below).

<i>Sustainability Visioning Action Item</i>	<i>Objective / Intent</i>
1 Community Identifies a Sustainability Visioning “Champion” / Leader	<i>An individual identified by the community's leadership who will champion the sustainability visioning activity to its conclusion.</i>
≡	
2 Community Identifies a Facilitator to Carry Out Sustainability Visioning	<i>Assessment of community's capacity to undertake vision development. Identification and procurement (as needed) of the services of skilled facilitator to undertake all work required to develop a sustainability vision for the community.</i>
≡	
3 Facilitator Develops a Communication / Engagement Plan	<i>Outline the strategy which will be undertaken to ensure all interested parties (e.g. the public) are appropriately informed in terms of activities related to the sustainability visioning.</i>
≡	
4 Community Notice Related to the Sustainability Visioning	<i>Ensure that the community is fully aware of the intent to undertake sustainability visioning and are provided opportunities for participation.</i>

PHASE

1

**ACTION
ITEM 1*****Community Identifies a Sustainability
Visioning "Champion"/Leader***

Action Item 1 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»»	<i>An individual identified by the community's leadership who will champion the sustainability visioning activity to its conclusion</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»»	Community Lead Organization
Timing	»»	After NWMO accepts expression of interest in learning more
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Define the role and responsibilities of the "Champion"/Leader		Community Lead Organization
2. Identify a community sustainability visioning "Champion"/Leader		Community Lead Organization
Key Considerations		• The Champion/Leader should be a community member (citizen or elected official) that is viewed as neutral and fair, and is well respected. • The key role of the Visioning Champion is to ensure that the visioning process is developed, guided, and implemented in such a way that meets the needs of the community and fulfills contractual requirements. • This person should be seen by the community as being the public face of the visioning process.

PHASE

1

ACTION ITEM 2

Community Identifies a Facilitator to Carry-out Sustainability Visioning Activity

Action Item 2 is supported by four key tasks.

Objective	»	<i>Assessment of community's capacity to undertake vision development. Identification and procurement (as needed) of the services of skilled facilitator to undertake all work required to develop a sustainability vision for the community.</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»	Visioning "Champion"/Community Leadership
Timing	»	After community identifies a sustainability visioning "Champion"/Leader
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Define the role and responsibilities of the facilitator		Visioning "Champion"/Community Leadership
2. Determine whether an experienced facilitator exists in the community or whether an external contractor is needed.		Visioning "Champion"/Community Leadership
3. Undertake steps necessary to retain a facilitator		Visioning "Champion"/Community Leadership
4. Secure the services of a facilitator		Visioning "Champion"/Community Leadership
Key Considerations		• The facilitator is the party responsible for executing the visioning process. He/she must develop and implement the process that results in the development of a community vision. • The facilitator should be viewed by the community as being objective. • The facilitator should have appropriate experience and skills associated with the development of visions or strategic plans.

PHASE

1

**ACTION
ITEM 3*****Facilitator Develops a Communication/
Engagement Plan***

Action Item 3 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»	<i>Outline the strategy which will be undertaken to ensure interested parties (e.g. the public) are appropriately informed in terms of activities related to the sustainability visioning</i>	
Overall / Lead Responsibility	»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership	
Timing	»	After community hires / identifies a facilitator to carry-out sustainability visioning activity	
Key Tasks		Responsibility	
1. Develop communication/engagement plan (including techniques/activities and schedule) for visioning		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”	
2. Design and Approve Community Notification Campaign		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership	
Key Considerations		• The plan should include the development of a communication strategy that outlines effective methods for providing the community with information and notice of the visioning process. • Engagement activities may include a range of techniques; however, the plan should allow community members the opportunity to “just sit and talk”. Strategies should reflect those best suited to community members, allowing them to feel comfortable providing insight to inform the community’s vision. Techniques may include workshops or community meetings (supported by a series of posters and print material and workbooks, checklists, etc.); booths at local venues such as libraries, grocery stores, coffee shops; use of social media; or ‘kitchen table meetings’ etc. • Approaches for involving a range of specific audiences such as the general public, youth, elders/seniors, seasonal residents, and community organizations should be noted.	

PHASE

1

ACTION ITEM 4

Community Given Notice Related to the Sustainability Visioning Undertaking

Action Item 4 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»	<i>Ensure that the community is aware of the intent to undertake sustainability visioning and are provided opportunities for participation</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»	After facilitator develops a communication/engagement plan
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Logistical activities undertaken for community notification		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
2. Notify the community and address questions		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/ Community Leadership
Key Considerations		● Notice of the process and engagement activities should be communicated. ● Ensure that members of the community are able to participate (e.g. account for those who may not be fluent in the common language of the community, varying age groups).

PHASE

2

Developing the Community Sustainability Vision

The purpose of Phase 2 is to engage the community and develop an understanding of its goals, interests and priorities that will ultimately inform the community's sustainability vision. The process related to the development of a sustainability vision should be informed by a wide range of community interests.

This phase promotes an informed approach to the development of the vision by providing the community with appropriate information that facilitates insight into the current state of affairs within the community. It also helps ensure that any plans or priorities related to the future direction of the community – and any identified trends – are also shared, since such information may help to inform the community's perspective and input.

Ultimately, this phase helps ensure that a collaborative process is undertaken to develop a well-informed community sustainability vision that is reflective of the community's interests, goals, priorities and needs.

Phase 2 is comprised of five action items.

Sustainability Visioning Action Item Objective / Intent

5 Develop/Assemble Community-Based Profile

Assembly of existing community-based documents (e.g. demographic profile, land use plans, environmental scans) that can provide insight into community priorities, directions, and interests.



6 Preparation of Materials to Support Sustainability Visioning

Ensure all materials required to support the sustainability visioning sessions (e.g. presentation material, workbooks, checklists, websites) are developed and ready for public consumption.



7 Notice of Community Engagement Opportunities

Provide community members with information on how engagement related to visioning will take place (e.g. workshops, workbooks, online).



8 Conduct Sustainability Visioning Activities

Carry-out engagement initiatives which provide insight into the short and longer-term interests, values, priorities, etc. of community members.



9 Develop a Draft Community Sustainability Vision

Analyze the input and develop a draft community sustainability vision reflective of what was heard.

PHASE

2

ACTION ITEM 5

Development of Community-Based Profile

Action Item 5 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»	<i>Assembly of existing community-based documents (e.g. demographic profile, land use plans, environmental scans) that can provide insight into community priorities, directions, and interests.</i>	
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”	
Timing	»	After community given notice related to the sustainability visioning undertaking	
Key Tasks		Responsibility	
1. Assemble all community-based documents to aid in the development of a community-based profile (see Key Considerations below for examples)		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/ Community Leadership	
2. Prepare or update the Community Profile		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”	
Key Considerations		- Community-based documents may include (as appropriate): - Demographic profile (highlighting historic / recent trends in the community); - Traditional Knowledge / Aboriginal interests documents; - Strategic plan, environmental scans, integrated community sustainability plan, and land use plan; - Council decisions and community vision (if it exists), goals, priorities, plans; and - Any input from the community obtained through previous consultative events. - A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis is a good first step when undertaking any form of strategic planning. It operates by conducting a detailed internal inventory of all relevant documents which provide insight into the community's direction, its plans and priorities, and actions undertaken to date. The analysis can ask the following questions: “Are we accomplishing what we set out to do?”; “How well are we accomplishing it?”; “Why are we unable to accomplish what we set out to do?”; “What do we need to accomplish our goals?”; “What do we have within our community to help us accomplish our goals?”; and “What is the impact if we do not accomplish our goals?”	

PHASE

2

**ACTION
ITEM 6**

*Preparation of Materials to Support
Sustainability Visioning*

Action Item 6 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»»	<i>Ensure all materials required to support the sustainability visioning engagement activities (e.g. presentation material, workbooks, checklists, website) are developed and ready for public release</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»»	After development of community-based profile
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Develop a tool (e.g. Workbook) containing overview and focused questions for use during discussion		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership
2. Develop a publically accessible location for engagement material		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Key Considerations		Effective engagement is facilitated through the use of numerous (as opposed to a single) techniques which align to the community’s needs and requirements. Outlined below are potential options: ● workbook; ● social media; ● websites; ● mail-outs; ● checklists; ● guiding questions for one-on-one conversations.



ACTION ITEM 7

Notice of Community Engagement Opportunities

Action Item 7 is supported by three key tasks.

Objective	»»	<i>Provide community members with information on how engagement related to visioning will take place (e.g., workshops, workbooks, online)</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»»	After the preparation of materials to support sustainability visioning
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Facilitator undertakes logistical activities for community notification.		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
2. Strategies developed, approved, and implemented to address community questions following notification and review of materials.		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership
3. Notify the community and address questions.		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership
Key Considerations		● Notice of the process and engagement activities needs to be communicated throughout the community; ● Ensure that members of the community are able to participate (e.g. account for those who may not be fluent in the common language of the community, varying age groups).

PHASE

2

**ACTION
ITEM 8**

Conduct Sustainability Visioning Activities

Action Item 8 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»	<i>Carry-out engagement initiatives which provide insight into the short and longer-term interests, values, priorities, etc. of community members</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»	After notice of community engagement activities
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Undertake logistical activities to host engagement activities		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
2. Host engagement activities to obtain input.		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership/Public
Key Considerations		● Community engagement activities can include workshops or other group engagement activities; ● Community events should be carried out in a manner which is appropriate to the audience. Give consideration to language, the needs of specific audiences such as elders and youth, local work needs (e.g. timing of meeting), complexity of communication/input materials, availability of residents (e.g. hunting, seasonal residents) and choice of forum. ● Ensure input received during engagement is captured. ● Present participants with various options for providing their input (e.g. workbook, comment form, notes taken during one-on-one discussions). ● Discuss where community is now, and where they would like to be in the future (vision and goals).



ACTION ITEM 9

Develop a Draft Sustainability Vision

Action Item 9 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»	<i>Analyze the input and develop a draft community sustainability vision reflective of what was heard</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»	After community sustainability visioning session(s) are conducted
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. At the conclusion of the engagement activities, summarize all findings from engagement activities, identify key trends, and produce a “What Was Heard” document		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership
2. Guided by “What Was Heard”, develop a draft community sustainability vision		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/Community Leadership
Key Considerations		• Vision should be easy to understand, use simple language, and reflect what was heard from the community. • Information in the vision document may include: – Overview of Visioning Process – Community Profile – Community Values and Vision – Community Goals – Measures for Success • The vision should address social, economic, cultural and environmental considerations.

PHASE

3

Finalizing the Community Sustainability Vision

The purpose of Phase 3 is to finalize the community's sustainability vision.

Phase 3 gives the community an opportunity to confirm that the draft sustainability vision reflects its interests prior to being finalized.

Phase 3 is comprised of three action items.

Sustainability Visioning Action Item	Objective / Intent
10 Community Notice to Review and Provide Input on Draft Sustainability Vision	Provide the community with the opportunity to review and provide input on the draft sustainability vision to ensure that the sustainability vision is reflective of interests.
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11 Review and Consider Community Input	Review and consider all feedback received and incorporate, as appropriate, into a revised sustainability vision.
≡	
12 Develop Finalized Community Sustainability Vision	Draft the finalized sustainability vision for the community.

PHASE

3

**ACTION
ITEM 10*****Community Notice to Review and Provide
Input on Draft Sustainability Vision***

Action Item 10 is supported by three key tasks.

Objective	»» <i>Provide the community with the opportunity to review and provide input on the draft community sustainability vision to ensure that the sustainability vision is reflective of interests</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»» Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»» After the draft community sustainability vision is developed
Key Tasks	Responsibility
1. Logistical activities undertaken for community notification to review draft sustainability vision	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
2. Strategies developed and implemented to receive community input (e.g. Hotline, email account, website portal) following notification	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/ Community Leadership
3. Notify the community of review opportunity and receive/compile input	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Key Considerations	● The draft community sustainability vision should be reviewed by the community. The process should include opportunities for interested parties to provide comment. ● Use relevant local media/communication tools to inform the community of the opportunity. ● Approaches for involving a range of specific audiences such as the general public, youth, elders/seniors, seasonal residents, and community organizations should be used.

PHASE

3

**ACTION
ITEM 11***Review and Consider Community Input*

Action Item 11 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»	<i>Review and consider all feedback received and incorporate, as appropriate, into a revised sustainability vision</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»	After the Community provides input on draft community sustainability vision
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Summarize all changes suggested		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/ Community Leadership
2. Identify areas where changes will be made		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/ Community Leadership
Key Considerations		Documentation should be traceable; if comments are not addressed, note why.

PHASE

3

**ACTION
ITEM 12*****Develop Finalized Community Sustainability Vision***

Action Item 12 is supported by two key tasks.

Objective	»»	<i>Draft the finalized sustainability vision for the community</i>
Overall/Lead Responsibility	»»	Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Timing	»»	After community input is reviewed and considered
Key Tasks		Responsibility
1. Revise sustainability vision to reflect community input		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”/ Community Leadership
2. Notify community of the finalized community sustainability vision		Facilitator/Visioning “Champion”
Key Considerations		The final community sustainability vision should be available to community members.

Summary

Sustainability visions are being used to help guide community development across Canada. They are typically prepared to define the future direction of a municipality or region and to assist with priority setting.

The process of developing the sustainability vision provides communities with the opportunity to reflect on the direction they are headed. The visioning exercise within the NWMO's Siting Process provides an opportunity for the community to reflect on their long-term direction before beginning to assess interest in participating in the site selection process. This handbook and associated support material describe a step-by-step approach that can be used to undertake community sustainability visioning.

Communities interested in obtaining further information should contact NWMO at the address provided below:

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