

InfoNorth

The Canadian Polar Commission Strategic Road Map 1999–2000

ON 10 February 1999, the federal government announced the new board of directors for the Canadian Polar Commission (CPC). At the time of these appointments, Jane Stewart, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, said: “The high quality of the new Board of Directors is a reflection of the wide-ranging input we sought and received from stakeholders, including Aboriginal and northern organizations and the scientific community.” Minister Stewart outlined some of the key recommendations made by stakeholders regarding the Commission in general and what she sees as priorities for the new Board of Directors. The Board should set priorities and establish a strategic vision for itself and the Commission with both short-term goals and long-term objectives; enhance communications with its constituencies, including finding new ways to connect northerners to the work of the Commission; and continue to ensure the efficient use of its resources.

As a result of the direction given by Minister Stewart, the board and staff of the CPC met in March to develop collectively a Strategic Roadmap for the Commission’s next three year term. Drawn from the Canadian Polar Commission Act (February 1991), the Roadmap consists of a Vision, Purpose, Values and Beliefs, and Objectives.

VISION

By the year 2002, the Canadian Polar Commission will be central to development and dissemination of northern knowledge through consultation, communication, and partnership for the benefit of all Canadians and their responsibilities in the circumpolar world.

PURPOSE

- To monitor the state of knowledge, in Canada and elsewhere, in respect of the Polar Regions and report regularly and publicly.
- To determine northern knowledge priorities and report regularly to Canadians.
- To co-operate with Canadian organizations, institutions and associations to support the development and

dissemination of knowledge in respect of the polar regions.

- To advise the Minister on any matter relating to the Polar Regions.
- To provide information about research in respect of the Polar Regions to Canadians and Canadian organizations, institutions and associations.
- To enhance Canada’s international profile as a circumpolar nation by fostering international cooperation in the advancement of knowledge in respect of the Polar Regions.
- To undertake any other activities in the furtherance of its purpose.

VALUES AND BELIEFS

We will:

- act with humanity;
- ensure equal and meaningful participation by all partners;
- work wholeheartedly and with conviction;
- work without a bias towards any particular type of knowledge;
- work with respect for all forms of knowledge;
- work closely as a group;
- recognize the necessity of our existence;
- act in a fiscally responsible manner;
- reflect the views of all Canadians;
- act to enhance opportunities for northerners;
- have respect for all cultures;
- use a consensus-based approach to decision-making;
- give priority to northerners’ concerns and views;
- act with integrity;
- have respect for individuals and each other;
- act with openness and share information;
- act in the spirit of co-management, combining and respecting both wisdom and science;
- communicate and disseminate information in a manner that is accessible and understandable for all Canadians; and
- represent the views of all regions of the North.

OBJECTIVES

- Establish a Canadian Polar Information Network by March 2000.
- Develop an e-mail discussion group for northern knowledge practitioners by May 1999.
- Market the Canadian Polar Commission as a global institution by March 2000.
- Provide a citizen perspective in the development of a northern science policy framework for research.
- Explore opportunities for greater visibility/profile in all regions by November 1999.
- Create a set of indicators to demonstrate the state of northern knowledge by December 1999.
- Report on polar issues and the state of polar knowledge starting April 1999.

- Increase representation of Canada in international organizations (Arctic and Antarctic) through the Canadian Polar Commission by March 2000.

The Canadian Polar Commission Strategic Roadmap should be seen as evolutionary. The CPC may review and alter the document at any time, using the same procedure by which they created it. Ideally, the Roadmap will be reviewed annually to ensure that objectives and strategies are being pursued and milestones are being achieved. This process will also continue the open, democratic spirit of the Roadmap's creation.

The CPC is currently working toward the objectives set out in the Strategic Roadmap, among them the creation by December 1999 of a set of indicators to demonstrate the state of northern knowledge. To achieve this objective, the CPC will host a workshop in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, on 6–7 June 1999. The workshop will address in general the task of assessing the state of polar knowledge and, more specifically, begin to develop a list of indicators that can be used for annual tracking, measurement, and analysis.

Cynthia Pyc, Executive Assistant Chair, Canadian Polar Commission (compiled from a Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development news release and documents of the Canadian Polar Commission, found at www.polarcom.gc.ca)