State of the environment reporting and anticipating environmental change

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The State of the Environment Reporting (SOER) organisation is an agency of Environment Canada charged with providing Canadians with regular, timely, authoritative and credible information on the state of Canada’s environment. Under Canada’s Green Plan a number of initiatives are underway to deliver on this charge. A comprehensive national report on The State of Canada’s Environment, containing 27 chapters on all aspects was released in April 1992. Four specialized reports and three facts sheets on specific topics have been published. The first of a forthcoming comprehensive series of Environmental Indicator Bulletins was released in November and another will be forthcoming in March.

The organisation is fostering the creation of a network of EcoScience Centres which will carry out comprehensive and intensive ecological monitoring and research. The objective is to establish at least one centre in each of Canada’s major ecozones. By focusing on cross-disciplinary research and the linkages between processes and issues, the hope is to improve our understanding of how ecosystems function, how they are being affected by human activity, both local and global, to devise suitable indicators of ecosystem functioning, to enable anticipation of undesirable ecosystem damage and, ultimately, to be able to take action to prevent it.