

## Backgrounder: BC Progress Board 2001 Report

The BC Progress Board has two broad mandates:

- Benchmarking BC's performance over time and relative to other jurisdictions; and,
- Providing strategic advice to the Premier and government on measures to improve BC's economic performance and its social policy supports.

The Progress Board believes that BC has all the necessary ingredients to be an economic and social leader in what United Nations surveys have described as one of the best countries in the world. By establishing a “Competitive Benchmarking Framework” (i.e. an outward look at BC’s performance against other jurisdictions), the Progress Board believes that public policy can be positively influenced to improve British Columbians' standard of living and quality of life. The 2001 Report includes six core targets linked to two overall goals for BC. Twenty performance indicators have been included to further track BC's progress on the six core targets.

### Economy, Innovation and Education

The Progress Board's first overarching goal is: ***Make BC an Economic Leader in Canada by 2010***. To anchor this objective, the report highlights three specific targets: economic growth, standard of living and jobs.

- **Economic Growth:** Target 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> among the provinces in the growth of real GDP per capita by 2010 - In 2000, BC ranked fourth in the level of real GDP per capita, and sixth for growth. From 1991 to 2000, BC ranked tenth in progress for this target.
- **Standard of Living:** Target 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in Canada for the level of real personal disposable income per capita by 2010 - In 2000, BC ranked third for the level of real personal disposable income per capita in Canada, but ranked tenth in Canada for progress between 1991 and 2000.
- **Jobs:** Target 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in Canada for the level of employment to population ratio by 2010 - In 2000, BC ranked fifth for the employment to population ratio (age 15-64) among Canadian provinces. BC ranked tenth for progress between 1991 and 2000.

Additional indicators to track BC's progress on the three overall targets include: average hourly earnings; productivity; total exports per capita; taxpayer supported debt to GDP; per capita tax burden (provincial and local); top marginal personal income tax rate; provincial deficit/surplus levels; net inter-provincial migration; total fixed business investment; secondary school graduation; university completion; research and development; and, employment in natural sciences and related occupations. Supplemental comparisons with the US states of Washington, Oregon and California are also included where comparable data is available.

### Environment, Health and Society

The second overarching goal is: ***Make BC a leader in Canada on Environmental Quality, Health Outcomes and Social Condition by 2010***. To anchor this objective, the Progress Board identifies three specific targets: environmental quality, life expectancy at birth, and low-income incidence.

- **Environmental Quality:** Target first in Canada for environmental quality by 2010 - BC currently ranks first in Canada for overall environmental quality based on an average of its performance rankings for urban air quality, wastewater treatment, greenhouse gas emissions per capita, and protected areas.

- **Health Outcomes (Life Expectancy at Birth):** Target 1<sup>st</sup> in Canada for life expectancy at birth by 2010 - In 1998, BC was first in Canada for life expectancy at birth for both men and women and ranked first for progress between 1990 and 1998. This is a key outcome measure of a jurisdiction's overall health.
- **Social Condition (Low Income Incidence):** Target 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> in Canada for having the smallest percentage of families and unattached individuals living below the 'low-income cut-off level' by 2010 - Measured by the percentage of individuals and families below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Offs, in 1999 BC ranked sixth among the provinces for the lowest percentage of its population living in low-income circumstances, and seventh for progress from 1990 to 1999.

The report also includes performance indicators for: air quality; greenhouse gas emissions per capita; wastewater treatment; protected areas; cancer mortality; low birth weight newborns; and, personal and property crime rates. Supplemental US comparative information is included for air quality, low birth weight newborns, and personal and property crime rates.

## BC Regional Comparisons

A preliminary effort has been made to compare "large urban BC" (Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area) with "Regional BC". Vancouver CMA and "Regional BC" have nearly identical populations: Vancouver CMA accounts for 49.5% of BC's total, while "Regional BC" accounts for 50.5%. Noteworthy benchmarking highlights for Vancouver CMA and "Regional BC" include:

- **Jobs (Employment Rate):** The employment to population ratio has widened between the two regions, and is a factor leading to higher relative incomes in Vancouver CMA. In 2000, Vancouver CMA's employment to population rate stood at 71%, while Regional BC's ratio was 67.2%
- **Tax Filer's Employment Income:** Vancouver CMA saw strong growth in employment income during the decade, while Regional BC posted less growth. In 1998, Vancouver CMA's tax filer's employment income stood at \$31.2 billion, while Regional BC's was \$25.6 billion.
- **University Completion:** In 2000, 32.8% of Vancouver CMA's population (age 25-54) had completed university. In Regional BC, 21.7% of the population had completed a university education.
- **Natural and Applied Sciences and Related Occupations:** British Columbia posted steady growth in the percentage of the population employed in natural and applied sciences since 1991. In 2000, 6.99% of Vancouver CMA's population was employed in the natural and applied sciences, compared to 5.42% in Regional BC.
- **New Business Formation:** In 2000, Vancouver CMA posted a total of 14,441 net businesses formed. In stark contrast, Regional BC experienced only 5,965 net new business formations.

Additional supplemental information is included on 12 other regional performance indicators.

## Next Steps

The Progress Board will soon release "An Economic Development Strategy Framework for BC", a document exploring policy options available to build prosperity in small, open market economies such as British Columbia. Between now and the next reporting (December 2002), the Progress Board will also make any necessary changes to the progress measurement framework. We welcome public comments on the report: E-mail us at: [ideas@bcprogressboard.com](mailto:ideas@bcprogressboard.com). Further information on the BC Progress Board, including a downloadable version of the 2001 Report is available at [www.bcprogressboard.com](http://www.bcprogressboard.com).