

Development of Framework for Improved Sustainability in the Canadian Port Sector



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Canada Port Authorities (CPAs) are federal entities responsible for managing Canada's most important ports. Despite being a federal entity, CPAs operate at an arm's length from the federal government and do not meet the same governance reporting standards as found in the private industry for financial, social and environmental performance. As a result, though some CPAs exceed these reporting standards, the inconsistency across the sectors suggests the need for a more unified reporting system. Accordingly, this paper proposes a port-specific framework to fill performance gaps in current sustainability initiatives.

APPROACH:

To address gaps in current sustainability initiatives employed by CPAs, this study develops a framework based on the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) to address relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). The study used an iterative approach to identify GRI disclosures that could fill previously identified program gaps in the Green Marine Environmental Program (GMEP), which is currently employed by all CPAs as a sustainability initiative.

MAIN FINDINGS:

- The main finding of this study is a port-specific framework with economic, environmental, and social disclosures that create direct links to relevant SDG targets.
- The framework can be used on its own or in conjunction with the GMEP. Key areas of focus that are currently not described in existing sustainability initiatives for CPAs are indicators for "Energy"; "Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation", and "Collaboration with Indigenous and Local Communities".
- In addition to aligning sustainability with the SDGs, the framework also aligns the CPAs sustainability performance with the Government of Canada's Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS), offering a unified approach. The onus to improve sustainability performance will continue to remain with CPAs, though the identification of impacts, monitoring of performance, and continuous improvement in performance can be achieved by adhering to this sustainability framework.