



Communications Plan

2005–2006

Prepared by the CASA communications committee

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INTRODUCTION

This CASA communications plan contains three elements: the framework, organizational performance measure indicators, key result areas and associated action plans and was developed as a joint effort by the communications committee and the secretariat.

The framework within which CASA communications are to be managed includes communications goals, guiding principles, accountabilities, and a media relations policy as well as overall positioning statements.

To evaluate how well Albertans recognize CASA activities, the communications committee, in conjunction with the performance measures subcommittee developed two performance indicator sets (Web site indicator and media hits indicators) for the degree of recognition performance measure.

The key result areas (KRA) identify three key areas in which results are to be achieved by 2006. A KRA identifies objectives, opportunities, audiences and metrics. The KRA action plans identify specific strategies, activities, timing, action responsibilities and results.

This CASA communications plan supports and contributes to CASA's core business functions and key focus areas as described in the *CASA Business Plan*.

This CASA communications plan has also been designed to align with the goals and objectives contained within the communications committee's terms of reference.

Communications goals

1. Increase and maintain stakeholder awareness, understanding, support for, engagement and commitment to the CASA process and vision.
2. Increase individual Albertans' awareness, understanding, support for, engagement and commitment to the CASA process and vision.
3. Move toward influencing individual Albertans' decisions and behaviours related to air quality in support of the CASA vision.

Guiding principles for communication

1. Our communication efforts will concentrate first and foremost on supportive and active stakeholders and initiatives.
2. We will encourage informed dialogue between stakeholders and invite feedback wherever possible.
3. We acknowledge the diversity of opinions of our stakeholders and will customize communication to the extent needed.
4. We will use simple, easily understood language that promotes a common understanding of CASA, its goals and accomplishments.
5. We will support board members in their role as key communicators for CASA.
6. We will evaluate the effectiveness of our communications plans and ensure continuous improvement.
7. Communications related expenditures will be cost effective, focused on results and shared between CASA stakeholders.
8. We will offer support to stakeholders so they can effectively communicate about CASA as appropriate.

Communications accountabilities

Board of directors and the executive committee

- Share clear and consistent direction
- Liaise with key government decision makers
- Approve the CASA communications plan
- Approve key themes
- Represent and promote CASA its mandate and role to their respective stakeholder organizations
- Obtain and feed back to CASA input from their respective stakeholder organizations
- Sponsor periodic evaluation of communication plans.

Communications committee

- Recommend a CASA communications plan to the board of directors
- Recommend communication priorities to the board
- Participate in the identification of needs and the development of suitable communications plans
- Facilitate coordination and implementation of approved communications plans
- Ensure ongoing evaluation processes.

Secretariat

- Act as a resource and counsel in all matters related to communications
- Sensitize the board to communication issues, concerns, and opportunities
- Develop communications plans
- Staff and implement communications plans
- Support and guide project teams
- Liaise with project teams to ensure long-term alignment and integration
- Support the communications plans of regional airshed management zones as appropriate.

Project teams

- Develop with the communications advisor project-specific communications plans
- Regularly report progress to stakeholders and the board
- Promote inter-project team communication
- Positively represent CASA to their stakeholder organizations
- Obtain and feed back to their project team members input from their respective stakeholder organizations.

Communication guidelines for project teams

- Project teams are responsible for communicating with their respective stakeholder organizations during ongoing project development. The board is responsible for communicating final project team results and evaluation of the implementation process.
- Once a team has reached a consensus decision, team members will support and promote the CASA position regarding the findings to their respective stakeholder organizations.

- One-page status reports on active projects are submitted to the board and circulated to other project teams when appropriate.
- Media relations will be conducted in accordance with the CASA media relations policy.
- When developing terms of reference, project teams should consider including reference to communications.

Positioning statements and proof points:

1. CASA – a better way to manage air quality issues.
 - CASA has gained national (2005 Arthur Kroeger Award – policy leadership) and international (2004 World Bank – flaring reduction framework) recognition as a process to others on how to define an issue and successfully advance the policy process through the use of innovative leadership. One of the most important benefits of CASA is that, not only can stakeholders use it to address existing air quality concerns, but the organization also anticipates issues and finds ways to deal with them before air quality is affected.
2. CASA -- leading by example.
 - CASA's decade of leadership in dealing in air quality issues has been publicly and prominently recognized as follows:
 - **2005 Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs Award for Policy Leadership** (Carleton University, Ottawa).
 - **2004 Alberta Emerald Award for Environmental Excellence** for CASA's electricity emissions management framework.
 - **2001 Premier's Award of Excellence (Bronze)** for its initial work on an implementation plan for Alberta to meet the Canada-wide Standards on particulate matter and ozone.
 - **2000 Premier's Awards of Excellence (Bronze)** for creating a management framework to prevent harmful effects of acid deposition in Alberta. The framework puts Alberta in the enviable position of having a management plan in place prior to experiencing any effects of acid deposition.
 - **1999 Alberta Emerald Award for Environmental Excellence** for CASA's solution gas flaring management framework.

3. CASA -- a unique partnership of environmental and health groups, industry and government.
 - CASA is a one-of-a-kind, non-profit, multi-stakeholder, consensus-based partnership of senior representatives from government, industry and non-government organizations (including health and environmental groups) who have committed to developing and applying a comprehensive air quality management system for Alberta.

4. Achieving air quality management solutions by consensus.
 - The electricity emissions management framework represents a comprehensive, creative mix of management strategies that will increase long-term regulatory certainty for all parties, provide flexibility in reducing emissions, and encourage continuous improvement of the overall management system and will result in significant long-term reductions in four priority substances (mercury (Hg), sulphur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and primary particulate matter) with anticipated co-benefits for other substances.

 - CASA's management framework for solution gas flaring has received international recognition from the World Bank. Its implementation has led to the reduction of solution gas flaring by 70 per cent below the 1996 baseline in 2003, while more recent recommendations on solution gas venting have achieved a 38 per cent reduction from 2000 to 2003.

 - A provincial framework for managing fine particulate matter and ground-level ozone, two major contributors to smog was developed by CASA to help Alberta meet its commitment under the Canada-wide standards for particulate matter and ozone that was signed in June 2000 by Canadian environment ministers, except Quebec. Canada-wide standards are agreed to by federal, provincial, and territorial environment ministers to develop common environmental standards across the country. The CASA framework creates stability between environmental, economic, social and health considerations, sets out clear ground rules and reasonable costs, provides flexibility to address local circumstances, and allows equal opportunities for Albertans, industry, government, environmental and health groups to participate in its implementation.

Media relations policy

Approved SEP-2001.

Goal

To raise the CASA profile and promote its shared vision as a “better way to manage air quality issues” through a positive relationship with the media.

Opportunity & challenges

CASA’s unique consensus based, multi-stakeholder character, structure and process provide an opportunity and challenge for effective media relations. This is mainly due to the fact that CASA board and team members wear two hats. They represent CASA collectively where consensus agreement is achieved on important strategic air quality management issues for Alberta and they also represent the interests of their respective stakeholder organizations.

A powerful opportunity for CASA is to have the media view CASA messages as credible because they are consensus agreements among sectors that would otherwise have differing goals and objectives. To take advantage of this demands that each sector be on the same footing regarding information and discussions and that each contributes towards finding creative solutions to air quality management issues in Alberta.

The challenge is to maintain cooperation, without interfering in or overshadowing the views and voices of each sector on air quality management issues. This is less difficult when final recommendations have been developed and approved. It is more difficult when a team is still working on an issue and consensus has not yet been achieved.

CASA and its stakeholders have to ensure that its collective media relations activities respect the consensus based, multi-stakeholder character of the CASA process, without limiting the ability of stakeholders to engage in media relations on behalf of their respective stakeholder organizations.

Media relations practice

1. Proactive:

It is frequently appropriate for CASA to engage the media when an air quality issue is going through the Comprehensive Air Quality Management System. From receipt of a statement of opportunity to implementing final recommendations, media relations can present CASA recommendations, activities, the organization and partners in a positive way. CASA may also choose to engage the media to raise the organization profile as a “better way to manage air quality issues.”

FRAMEWORK

CASA is usually proactive with the media when CASA:

- Adopts a new issue and a new team is formed
- Gives board approval to recommendations
- Recommendations are implemented
- Wants public participation as in a pilot project or survey
- Seeks a higher organization profile by organizing or participating in special events and promotional opportunities.

CASA's board of directors will approve key themes for the media when it approves or implements recommendations.

Steps to engage the media will normally be developed and implemented by the secretariat.

When a team wants public participation in a pilot project or survey, the team chair(s) give final approval to the communications plan, based on advice from team members and the secretariat.

The CASA communications plan and actions to raise CASA's profile are developed by the CASA communications committee, approved by the board and usually implemented by the secretariat.

2. Reactive:

Media sometimes call the secretariat for general information or for the CASA position on specific air quality management issues. In these cases, the secretariat will use relevant prepared information in its response. This information may include backgrounders about a team or the issue, terms of reference, status reports, etc.

- The secretariat will not speak on behalf of any one stakeholder organization or sector.
- The secretariat will refer the media to individual stakeholders for comment on the issue from their respective stakeholder organizations or sector.
- The secretariat will advise a stakeholder of a media referral in advance whenever possible and provide media relations advice as requested.
- Stakeholders will make every effort to clearly identify whether they are speaking for CASA or for their respective stakeholder organizations. Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the CASA secretariat before or after speaking to the media about CASA matters.

Web site indicator framework

Approved JUN-2002.

Degree of recognition performance measure:

“Degree of recognition by emitters and general public of CASA as a major vehicle for delivering improved air quality management for Alberta.”

Introduction:

The communications committee examined a number of Web site statistics that could be used as indicators for the degree or recognition performance measure. Statistics such as number of hits, number of page views, number of visits and number of visitors were examined. The statistic the committee chose, as one indicator of the degree of recognition of CASA by the general public, is the number of visitors who have visited the CASA Web site more than once over a one-year period.

The section in this framework titled, “background on Web site statistics,” serves as an introduction to web analytics while the section titled “the indicator” explains why this indicator was chosen and what it means. The remaining two sections of the framework outline the methodology and the stewardship.

Background on Web site statistics:

Unlike other communication tools, it is relatively easy to gauge Web site performance and to track a visitor’s behaviour. Most of these statistics are useful to communicators, marketers and Web site developers because the statistics show who accesses the site, what information people access, how they find information and various other technical measures of site and server performance.

Data is continually recorded in a log file resident on the server that hosts the CASA Web site. A software package takes the data contained in the log file, analyzes it and generates a report. The reporting period is usually one calendar month, however for this indicator, a report will be generated for a one-year period starting January 1 and ending December 31.

When the communications committee examined the plethora of statistics, it became evident that only a small number of statistics specifically focused on how many visitors came to the site as opposed to what or how information was viewed or downloaded.

The number of visitors that have visited more than once is calculated based on the IP address information found on the server log over a designated reporting period. This statistic indicates the relative size of our Web site audience. As with all web statistics, the number of people who have visited more than once is an estimate. Since it is based on IP addresses, one IP address may serve a number of people. This is the case in the CASA office

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where access to the Internet by all secretariat staff is done through a single IP address. Conversely, one person may access the site through their work IP address and then again through their home IP address, thus counting two visitors for one person. Additionally, not all IP addresses are permanent because Internet service providers may assign a different IP address each time a person uses a dial-up connection. Even with these limitations, this statistic is widely used to estimate how many people visit a Web site.

The indicator:

The recommended indicator is the number of visitors who have visited the CASA Web site more than once over a one-year period.

This statistic is used as the indicator as opposed to the number of unique visitors or the number of visitors who visited once because it mitigates the impact of accidental one-time visitors to the CASA Web site and the impact of short-term increases in Web site traffic based on the promotion of pilot projects with a presence on the CASA Web site. This statistic implies there is a purpose to the visitor's visits and subsequently, they recognize CASA as an organization and its purpose. This assumption is strengthened further because prominently displayed on the home page and also present on other pages and sections of the Web site is a description of the organization and its overall purpose:

“The Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) is a non-profit consensus-based association of senior representatives from government, industry and non-government organizations (including health and environmental groups) who are committed to develop and apply a comprehensive air quality management system for Alberta.”

If the previous assumptions are true then the number of visitors who visited more than once should reflect the recognition of CASA by the general public, and the trend over a five-year period would indicate the change in the general public's recognition of CASA.

Other Web site statistics were not used as indicators because they report the performance of the Web site as a communication tool whereas the number of visitors reports audience size and is more suitable as an organization performance indicator.

Methodology:

1. CASA's Web site statistical report will be generated from the Web site server logs. The report will cover a period from January 1 at 00:00:00 to December 31 at 23:59:59 each year.
2. From the report, the number of visitors who visited the Web site more than once over the year will be extracted and reported to the board at its March meeting.

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3. A histogram will be generated of the number of visitors that visited the Web site more than once for each year as the statistic is accumulated over a five-year period. Thereafter the oldest year would be dropped as each New Year is added.

Stewardship:

1. The communications committee will review the results and provide the analysis of the indicator each year.
2. The communications committee will report to board members at the March board meeting each year in order to allow for the publication of the indicator results in the annual report released each June.

News stories indicators framework

Approved NOV-2002.

Degree of recognition performance measure

“Degree of recognition by emitters and the general public of CASA as a major vehicle for delivering improved air quality management for Alberta.”

Introduction:

The three indicators in this framework were chosen to show the absolute and proportional public exposure CASA receives by means of news stories in media outlets across Alberta. The three indicators are:

1. How many news stories mention CASA each year?
2. How many news stories mention CASA compared to those that mention air quality each year?
3. How many news stories mention both CASA and air quality compared to those that only mention air quality each year?

The three indicators, used over multiple years, will show how many news stories mention CASA, how many mention CASA versus stories that mention air quality, and how many mention both CASA and air quality versus stories that mention air quality.

The indicators:

1. **NUMBER OF CASA NEWS STORIES:** The total number of Alberta news stories that contain the phrase “Clean Air Strategic Alliance” and/or the acronym “CASA” (referring to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance) for a one-year period.
2. **CASA NEWS STORIES VERSUS AIR QUALITY NEWS STORIES:** A ratio of the number of Alberta news stories that contain the phrase “Clean Air Strategic Alliance” and/or the acronym “CASA”

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(referring to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance) in relation to the number of Alberta news stories that contain the phrase “air quality” for a one-year period.

3. **CASA-AIR QUALITY NEWS STORIES VERSUS ALL AIR QUALITY NEWS STORIES:** A ratio of the number of Alberta news stories with the phrase “Clean Air Strategic Alliance” and/or the acronym “CASA” (referring to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance) and the phrase “air quality” in relation to the number of Alberta news stories that contain the phrase “air quality” for a one-year period.

The key terms “Clean Air Strategic Alliance,” “CASA,” and “air quality” were chosen for three reasons:

1. The terms are specific enough to have meaning related to the performance measure.
2. Monitoring for additional terms like “Kyoto” or “pollution” would substantially increase the number of stories delivered each day and because there is a per item charge, the cost would increase substantially.
3. There is an inherent longevity associated with these terms. For example, as long as the organization exists, it is assumed the terms “Clean Air Strategic Alliance,” “CASA,” and “air quality” will have value over a long period of time.
4. The terms are used in the degree of recognition performance measure.

Methodology:

1. Using a press clipping and a broadcast monitoring service, CASA receives daily press clippings and broadcast summary notes from most Alberta media outlets.
2. The term “news story” refers to a press clipping or a broadcast summary note.
3. News stories will be counted and categorized as follows:
 - a. If a single news story contains, once or multiple times, the phrase “Clean Air Strategic Alliance” and/or the acronym “CASA” (referring to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance), and does not contain the phrase “air quality” it is counted as one “CASA only news story.”
 - b. If a single news story contains, once or multiple times, the phrase “air quality”, and does not contain the phrase “Clean Air Strategic Alliance” and/or the acronym “CASA” (referring to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance), it is counted as one “air quality only news story.”
 - c. If a single news story contains, once or multiple times, the phrase “Clean Air Strategic Alliance” and/or the acronym “CASA” (referring to the Clean Air Strategic Alliance), and the phrase “air quality”, it is counted as one “CASA-air quality news story.”
4. Each one-year period is a calendar year, starting January 1st and ending December 31st.
5. The indicators will be calculated as follows:
 - a. **NUMBER OF CASA NEWS STORIES =**
$$\text{CASA only news stories} + \text{CASA-air quality news stories.}$$

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- b. CASA STORIES VERSUS AIR QUALITY STORIES =
(CASA only news stories + CASA-air quality news stories) divided by
(Air quality only news stories + CASA-air quality news stories).
- c. CASA-AIR QUALITY STORIES VERSUS ALL AIR QUALITY STORIES =
(CASA-air quality news stories) divided by
(CASA-air quality news stories + Air quality only news stories).
6. A table will be generated showing the results for each year over a five-year period. Thereafter the oldest year would be dropped as each New Year is added.

Stewardship:

1. The first one-year period will begin on January 1, 2003 and end on December 31, 2003.
2. Each February, the communications committee will review and analyze the data and the results.
3. The communications committee will report to board members its review and analysis at the March board meeting each year in order to allow for the publication of the results in the annual report released each June.

KEY RESULTS AREAS (KRA)

The key results areas identify three key areas in which results are to be achieved by 2006 through the implementation of action plans.

1. Internal stakeholders are satisfied with CASA and its process for solving air quality management issues.

Objective: Increase and maintain stakeholder awareness, understanding, support for, engagement, and commitment to CASA and its process for solving air quality issues.

Opportunity: Communicate project team accomplishments and progress to internal stakeholders.

Internal audiences: Internal stakeholders include:

- Board members and alternates
- Working group members
- Project team members
- Implementation team members
- Committee members
- Airshed zones board members
- Funding agencies.

Metric: Results of the tri-annual CASA stakeholder satisfaction surveys.

2. External stakeholders recognize CASA as a major vehicle for delivering improved air quality management for Alberta.

Objective: Increase external stakeholders' awareness, understanding, support for, engagement, and commitment to CASA and its process for solving air quality issues.

Opportunity: Communicate CASA successes and the credibility of its process for solving air quality management issues.

External audiences: External stakeholders are not directly involved with CASA however they have a direct or indirect interest in air quality outcomes. Two examples of external stakeholders would be a member of the Legislative Assembly and an individual Albertan.

Metric: Annual degree of recognition indicators results.

3. Stakeholders know how to obtain education and outreach program information related to air quality issues and management.

Objective: Increase the ease to find and access information on education and outreach programs related to air quality issues and management.

Opportunity: Create a clearinghouse of education and outreach program information and communicate its existence and value to stakeholders.

Audiences: Internal and external stakeholders are as described in key results areas one and three.

Metric: Annual Web site statistical results and user survey.

KEY RESULTS AREAS (KRA) ACTION PLANS

1. Internal stakeholders are satisfied with CASA and its process for solving air quality management issues.

Strategies	Activities	Timing	Action by:	Results
1. Use existing CASA communications tools to communicate organizational, project team and airshed zones formation, accomplishments, progress or special events.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create and distribute the CASA Annual Report. 2. Maintain and update the CASA Web sites. 3. Create and distribute Clean Air Bulletin (CAB). 4. Create and distribute project team status reports. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. December to July annually. 2. Monthly. 3. Within three weeks after a board meeting. 4. At least once a year for each CASA project team. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GW. 2. GW. 3. GW. 4. Project managers. 	
2. Orient project team members to CASA and its process.	Provide an orientation package and presentation at the first meeting of a new project team.	When new teams are formed.	DT and project managers.	
3. Use existing communications tools to communicate secretariat accomplishments and progress.	Create and distribute executive director's monthly reports.	Each month.	DT.	
4. Ensure project team members communicate regularly with their stakeholder organizations.	Follow-up with project team members and provide briefing materials as needed.	When project teams finalize recommendations, have made significant achievements, require resources or plan to engage in significant activities (pilot projects).	Project managers.	
5. Provide face-to-face opportunities for information gathering and coordination among project team members.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan and hold a science symposium. 2. Plan and hold a coordination workshop. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Once every three years. 2. When several new project teams are formed. 	Secretariat and internal stakeholders.	

KEY RESULTS AREAS (KRA) ACTION PLANS

2. External stakeholders recognize CASA as a major vehicle for delivering improved air quality management for Alberta.

Strategies	Activities	Timing	Action by:	Results
1. Use existing CASA communications tools to communicate organizational, project team and airshed zones formation, accomplishments, progress or public events.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create and distribute the CASA Annual Report. 2. Maintain and update the CASA Web sites. 3. Create and distribute Clean Air Bulletin (CAB). 4. Create and distribute project team status reports. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. December to July annually. 2. Monthly. 3. Within three weeks after a board meeting. 4. At least once a year for each CASA project team. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GW. 2. GW. 3. GW. 4. Project managers 	
2. Develop communications plans that utilize as applicable, public relations, government relations and media relations practices and tools when there are significant project team accomplishments or initiatives (pilot projects or public consultation).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. VET transportation demand management. 2. VET diesel particulate filter test project. 3. Electrical efficiency and conservation. 4. Flaring and venting. 5. CFOs. 6. Ambient monitoring and strategic planning. 7. Renewable and alternative energy project team. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. February to April 2005. 2. March to April 2005. 3. May to October 2005. 4. May to October 2005. 5. May to October 2005. 6. October to December 2005. 7. Start in December 2005. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GW & MD. 2. GW & MD. 3. GW & KC. 4. GW & AI. 5. GW & KC. 6. GW & MD. 7. GW & KC. 	

KEY RESULTS AREAS (KRA) ACTION PLANS

3. Stakeholders know how to obtain education and outreach program information related to air quality issues and management.

Strategies	Activities	Timing	Action by:	Results
1. Create a clearing house of education and outreach program information related to air quality issues and management and develop an ongoing management plan and evaluation plan.	Create a new education and outreach Web site and implement management and evaluation plans.	January to May 2005.	Geoff Williams	
2. Promote and publicize the new clearing hose of education and outreach program information related to air quality issues and management.	Develop a communications plan that utilizes as applicable, public relations, government relations and media relations practices and tools.	January to May 2005.	Geoff Williams	

Goals

1. Increase and maintain stakeholder awareness, understanding, support for, engagement and commitment to the CASA process and vision.
2. Increase individual Albertans' awareness, understanding, support for, engagement and commitment to the CASA process and vision.
3. Move toward influencing individual Albertans' decisions and behaviours related to air quality in support of the CASA vision.

Objectives

1. To develop a clearly defined communications framework, priorities, and plans that sustains stakeholder involvement in order to:
 - Foster ongoing support and commitment to CASA's vision and process
 - Foster effective communication between different project teams
 - Communicate project teamwork and results to stakeholders and individual Albertans.
2. To ensure ongoing evaluation of progress in relation to the communications framework, priorities and plans, and report regularly to the CASA board of directors.
3. To bring together stakeholder organizations involved in education and outreach related to air quality management in order to leverage, focus and amplify efforts to influence individual Albertans' behaviours.

Role and Structure of the Committee:

The communications committee will formulate communication policy and direction for recommendation to the CASA board of directors. The communications committee will form subcommittees as needed.

Meeting Frequency:

The communications committee will meet prior to each board meeting.

Membership:

The CASA communications committee is to be comprised of board members, and/or alternates of the board of directors, and/or designated representatives chosen by stakeholder organizations, and the executive director. At least one member from each of the three sectors (government, industry, non-government organizations) will be in attendance at committee and sub-committee meetings so consensus-decisions can be made.