

# Ten characteristics

## OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- 1 They take a **long-term perspective** that includes present and future generations.
- 2 They take a **systems approach** that treats social, economic and environmental goals as interdependent.
- 3 They are **self-regulating**, that is, the price of a product, service or activity covers its life-long social, economic and environmental cost.
- 4 They encourage **cooperation** among diverse interests, rather than relying on regulatory mandates, in situations where cooperation can achieve the same or better outcomes than mandates.
- 5 They allow **regulatory flexibility** based on public-private consensus and commitment to long-term goals that emphasize sustainable outcomes rather than prescribing “do’s” and “don’ts.”
- 6 They reward **resource efficiency** as well as financial efficiency.
- 7 They provide a **transition** away from unsustainable behaviors.
- 8 They promote an **ecological economy** that is based on high efficiency, low waste production and consumption, and feedback signals (usually in the form of prices) that produce outcomes that are best for the environment, businesses and the broader community.
- 9 They promote **equitable solutions** and equal opportunity.
- 10 They **address root causes** of problems. For example, rather than attempting to protect the environment only by better control of the economy, policies would encourage the economy to operate in ways that protect the environment as a matter of course.