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# ST RA TE GY

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2023-26



# OUR MISSION

TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
EFFICIENT, SAFE, ORDERLY,  
AND ENVIRONMENTALLY  
RESPONSIBLE  
DEVELOPMENT OF ENERGY  
RESOURCES IN ALBERTA  
THROUGH OUR REGULATORY  
ACTIVITIES



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# OUR VISION

THE AER IS A TRUSTED  
REGULATOR THAT DELIVERS  
EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT  
OVERSIGHT OF RESOURCE  
DEVELOPMENT

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# OUR VALUES

THESE VALUES GUIDE OUR WORK,  
BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

## ACCOUNTABILITY

EACH OF US IS RESPONSIBLE  
FOR OUR WORK, OUR ACTIONS,  
AND OUR RESULTS.

## TRANSPARENCY

WE ARE COMMITTED TO  
TIMELY, OPEN, AND CLEAR  
COMMUNICATION.

## TRUST AND RESPECT

WE ARE COMMITTED TO FOSTERING  
AND GROWING RELATIONSHIPS  
BASED ON INTEGRITY, TRUST, AND  
RESPECT. WE WORK TO ENSURE  
CONFIDENCE IN OUR WORK  
AND OUR DECISIONS.

## COLLABORATION

WE ARE CURIOUS, AND WE  
LISTEN, LEARN, CONTRIBUTE, AND  
CREATE TOGETHER THROUGH  
MUTUAL SUPPORT.



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# OUR STRATEGY

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

We at the AER are conducting critical work on behalf of Albertans. It's humbling to work alongside a team that delivers on our mandate with such dedication, passion, and expertise. We are fortunate to live in a province so rich with vibrant communities, natural beauty, and abundant resources, and we take the part we play in ensuring modern, efficient energy regulation very seriously. The four focus areas outlined in this strategy provide a direct link between our priorities and the core work we do every day as we adapt to keep pace with emerging knowledge and technology.

**Taking care of our people** underlies our performance. We are a service business, providing technical expertise and judgement to manage the performance of the industries we regulate. We can't do that without supporting our people. We are focused on ensuring the AER is a welcoming and inclusive place that supports professional growth, and rewards our teams' contributions.

**Leading operational effectiveness and innovation** is how we will keep pace with knowledge and technological change, build a modern IT and data system, and create an environment where innovation is encouraged, facilitated, and nurtured.

**Enhancing our regulatory framework** speaks to how we will collaborate to keep our regulations effective in ensuring industry compliance, accommodating innovation, and keeping pace with the ever-changing world.

**Strengthening our credibility and trust** outlines how we will build positive and meaningful relationships across Alberta, including with Indigenous communities. We recognize that Albertans have given us a big responsibility, and through transparency, accountability, and hard work, we will meet our stakeholders' expectations.

Driven by this robust strategy, our operational plans will provide specific intention statements outlining what we will do this year to advance our goals across the four focus areas. In all we do, we remain committed to strengthening our ability to deliver our mandate from Albertans to ensure responsible development while protecting our environment, public health, and safety.

**Laurie Pushor, President and CEO**

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# STRATEGY 2023–26

## INTRODUCTION

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Energy development is constantly evolving to align with new policies, make use of new technology, and face new challenges, including the emerging global energy transformation. Expectations have also changed. Whether landowners, Indigenous communities, community members, or stakeholders we interact with, people want to know more about where and how development will occur and how it might affect them—and they want to be part of those discussions. With so many changes surrounding energy development, we know that we need to continue to adapt. We need to change the way we regulate and create a more modern and efficient regulatory system—one that keeps pace with innovation, considers the development of new resources, and can easily adapt to meet future challenges and support new government policies. We need to be bold in recognizing challenges as opportunities and looking at ways to leverage them to create new and innovative ways of solving problems. It also means making sure that we are keeping Albertans, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders informed about energy development activities and communicating in a clear, open, and transparent manner.

Establishing a more efficient way of regulating while strengthening the AER's culture and ensuring we are meeting Albertans', Indigenous communities', and stakeholders' expectations are significant drivers of this multiyear strategy. We remain focused on what matters most: protecting the public and the environment while ensuring responsible development, and the guidance outlined in this strategy lays the foundation for us to continue to build on our success.

## LINKING OUR STRATEGY TO OUR CORE BUSINESS

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The four focus areas in our strategy provide the foundation to excel and continuously improve in delivering on our mandate. Having staff who feel safe and supported, systems and data to meet our evolving needs, an adaptive and innovative regulatory system, and positive external relationships will enhance our ability to deliver on all aspects of our work.



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# FOCUS AREAS

TO PRIORITIZE AND GUIDE THE  
ORGANIZATION'S EFFORTS IN ACHIEVING  
OUR MISSION AND VISION, FOUR FOCUS  
AREAS WERE DEVELOPED

## TAKING CARE OF OUR PEOPLE



## LEADING OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND INNOVATION



## ENHANCING OUR REGULATORY FRAMEWORK



## STRENGTHENING OUR CREDIBILITY AND TRUST



# 2023-26 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



FOCUS  
AREAS

TAKING CARE OF  
OUR PEOPLE



LEADING OPERATIONAL  
EFFECTIVENESS AND INNOVATION

OBJECTIVES

- The AER retains engaged, diverse, contributing employees
- The AER empowers and develops talent in a manner that is transparent
- The AER attracts talent aligned with our values and culture

- The AER will integrate data between Integrated Resource Management System (IRMS) partners using cloud technologies
- Increase organizational effectiveness by improving internal business processes
- Increase accessibility of high-quality data to internal and external users





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## ENHANCING OUR REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

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Long-term net reduction in liabilities  
of AER-regulated assets

Use relevant data within the broader  
regulatory context to make risk-  
informed, evidence-based, and  
timely regulatory decisions



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## STRENGTHENING OUR CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

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Build the AER's credibility  
and trust

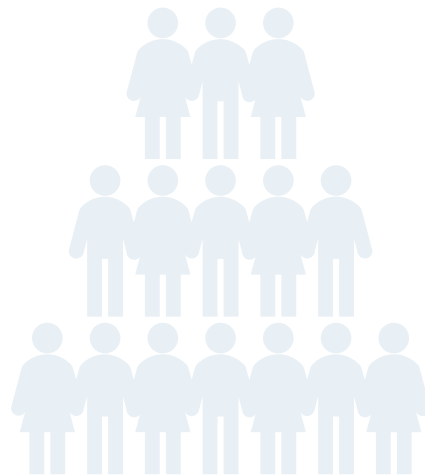
The AER understands and respects  
the relevance of Indigenous  
worldviews and considers risk of  
harm to Aboriginal rights, treaty  
rights, and Indigenous interests  
when making regulatory and  
corporate decisions

## TAKING CARE OF OUR PEOPLE

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Building the foundation of a trusted regulator starts within our organization and centres around taking care of our people. Continuing to develop and empower our people will be critical to our success. The AER strives to be a great place to work, where our people feel valued and equitably compensated. We continue to ensure that we have the right people with the right expertise in the right place to move us forward. By providing a respectful, safe, diverse, and inclusive work environment, our people feel supported to do their work, empowered to voice their opinions, and driven to be their best. The AER strives to attract and retain engaged people who are committed to contributing to the success of the organization and are aligned with our values and culture.

We will ensure that we have the right processes in place and that our people have access to the right tools and training to enable them to be successful. Our people will be given the opportunity to develop their career and acquire new skills to tackle new challenges created by new technology and an evolving energy industry; this can only be done by creating an environment where continuous learning and innovation is encouraged.



## LEADING OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND INNOVATION

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Meeting our mandate of efficient, safe, orderly, and environmentally responsible development of Alberta's energy resources will require the organization to innovate and promote operational effectiveness.

To be a truly effective regulator, we must constantly evaluate our systems and processes to ensure they continue to serve us in the best way and meet our ever-changing needs. The AER will continue our work to streamline, right size, and improve. We are committed to increasing the operational effectiveness of risk-informed and evidence-based regulatory decisions throughout the entire regulatory life cycle. High-quality data will continue to inform our evidence-based decision-making processes through authorizations, regulatory appeals, inspections, and audits. In order to improve seamless sharing of information, we will transition from point-to-point interfaces to cloud technologies among Government of Alberta (GoA) ministries and agencies (Integrated Resource Management System [IRMS] partners). The AER will also expand and enhance the amount of non-confidential information it shares publicly on its website to invite Albertans, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders to be part of the regulatory conversation.

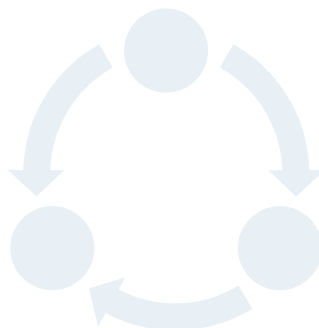


## ENHANCING OUR REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

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The AER's regulatory framework ensures strong environmental oversight while minimizing the costs for stakeholders and industry. This includes audits, inspections, approvals, enforcement, and other regulatory interventions enabled by AER processes, data, and technology. We will continue to enhance the AER's regulatory framework to deliver on Government of Alberta policy direction, support the energy transition, and ensure that the regulatory framework is efficient, adaptive, and innovative. The AER's regulatory framework will better enable risk- and evidence-informed decision making in order to meet the challenges of regulating emerging energy and mineral resources and ensure that the costs of regulation are proportional to the risks being managed. We will continue to work with Albertans, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders to consider their perspectives in our decision making and enhancement of our regulatory framework.

The AER ensures that liabilities are managed throughout the life cycle of energy development and that obligations and environmental responsibilities at the end of a project's life are met. We are working to reduce the inactive infrastructure inventory by implementing the GoA's *Liability Management Framework* (LMF) and *Directive 088: Licensee Life-Cycle Management*, which will hold industry accountable for end-of-life closure activities (i.e., reclamation and remediation activities). In addition, the Area Based Closure (ABC) approach will assist in reducing the inactive inventory and increase the efficiency of closure activities, with the intent of decreasing the overall liability in Alberta. As the implementation of the LMF and associated directives progresses, additional actions will be taken to drive down liabilities over the long term.



## STRENGTHENING OUR CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

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Every conversation that we have with Albertans, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders is an opportunity to understand expectations and to build a mutually beneficial relationship. However large or small these interactions might be, these moments grow into relationships, which ultimately influence how Albertans, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders view us. We will continue to foster positive relationships with all those we serve.

The AER's mandate includes a responsibility to consider potential adverse impacts on existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in our regulatory decisions. We will follow through on this responsibility by engaging consistently with Indigenous communities and the Government of Alberta. To support our relationships with Indigenous peoples, we will continue to develop intercultural competency across the organization. Our Resident Elder provides counsel to the organization to help us find common ground in our relationships with Indigenous peoples by implementing the teachings of *Voices of Understanding*. Also, we offer training on historic and contemporary Indigenous peoples, Indigenous worldviews, oral systems, and the relationship between Aboriginal and treaty rights and our core regulatory functions.

We have a responsibility to ensure that companies in Alberta develop energy resources in a safe and environmentally responsible manner, including holding them accountable for following our requirements at every stage in the energy development life cycle. Ensuring industry understands what is expected of them, are compliant with requirements, and are held accountable if they fail to follow the rules are key to this relationship.

Data drives our decisions. As we move forward, and data becomes integrated across the organization, it will further improve our risk-informed, evidence-based decision making. We will engage with Albertans, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders to better understand their data accessibility needs. We will make non-confidential data more easily accessible so everyone can better understand Alberta's complex energy landscape. For the AER, that means publicly reporting on our ability to meet key aspects of our mandate and using data when we tell our stories. For industry, that means expanding the type of information we share about their performance and updating that information on a regular basis.

Trust and credibility are earned through everyday interactions. Whether landowners, Indigenous communities, community members, or others we interact with, each email and phone call, every order and decision, can enhance or harm credibility and trust in the AER. Every single one of us contributes to building, maintaining, and improving the AER's reputation by understanding the impact that our everyday actions, behaviours, and decisions have on Albertans, Indigenous communities, and stakeholders. We will continue to show how we're doing, and should we fall behind, we'll show what we're doing to improve. We hold ourselves and industry accountable, and in doing so, we will improve trust and confidence in our ability to effectively regulate energy development.







