Policy & Priorities Office; Treasury Board Office; and Executive Council Office

2009–2010
Accountability Report
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Accountability Statement

The Joint Accountability Report of the Policy & Priorities Office, Treasury Board Office, and Executive Council Office for the year ended March 31, 2009, is prepared pursuant to the Provincial Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Policy & Priorities Office, Treasury Board Office, and Executive Council Office joint business plan information for the fiscal year 2009-2010.

The reporting of Policy & Priorities Office, Treasury Board Office, and Executive Council Office outcomes includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by senior management and the staff of the three offices.

The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the joint business plan for the year 2009-2010.

The Honourable Darrell Dexter, President of the Executive Council, Minister of Policy and Priorities

The Honourable Frank Corbett, Chair of Treasury Board

Gregory P. Keefe, Clerk of/Secretary to the Executive Council
Deputy Minister, Office of the Premier
Deputy Minister, Treasury Board Office

Rick Williams, Deputy Minister of Policy and Priorities Office
Message from the Minister of Policy and Priorities and the Chair of Treasury Board

We are pleased to present the joint accountability report of the Policy & Priorities Office, Treasury Board Office, and Executive Council Office for the fiscal year 2009–2010.

The Policy and Priorities Office focussed on the priorities of government and provided ongoing policy direction. The Treasury Board Office ensured we properly managed the province’s finances and the Executive Council Office acted as secretariat to the Executive Council.

This report outlines the accomplishments of the Policy & Priorities Office, Treasury Board Office, and Executive Council Office with respect to its core business areas as well as its financial results for the 2009–2010 fiscal year.

The Honourable Darrell Dexter, President of the Executive Council, Minister of Policy and Priorities

The Honourable Frank Corbett, Chair of Treasury Board
Introduction

Accountability reporting demonstrates performance by reporting on an annual basis to the House of Assembly results achieved in relation to the goals and the priorities set out in the annual business plan.

The accountability report is presented in four main sections.

• The first section defines the joint mandate, organization, and human resource plan of the Policy & Priorities Office, Treasury Board Office, and Executive Council Office.

• The second section describes the progress on the priorities as identified in the 2009–2010 joint business plan. The priorities are those major initiatives or planned accomplishments that are fundamental to the success of strategic goals and core business areas.

• The third section reviews the financial results.

• The fourth and last section outlines the desired outcomes, performance measures, and results as organized by the four core business areas. These performance measures were identified in the 2009–2010 business plan.
**Mandate**

The Offices, in their roles of providing policy and expenditure support and analysis to the Executive Council and its committees, will seek to ensure decisions are consistent with the directions and commitments of the government and communicate accordingly. In doing so, the Offices provide timely and accurate advice to the Executive Council and its committees. Furthermore, the Offices operate collectively as a group and execute its corporate mandate through horizontal leadership.

**Organization**

The Offices had a budgeted staff complement of 43.9 full time equivalents for the 2009–2010 fiscal year. The actual number of full time equivalents for 2009–2010 was 35.5 due to vacancies in existing positions.

**Human Resources Plan**

In 2006, a comprehensive human resource strategy was adopted for the former Treasury and Policy Board Office’s civil service employees. Implementation of the strategy continued in 2009-2010.

**Accomplishments:**

- Re-established the Human Resources Committee with representatives from each of the Offices;
- Worked with HR CSU OH&S staff to understand the requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* for each of the Offices;
- Established priorities to meet OH&S goals for the Offices;
- Re-established the employee Social Committee for the Offices.
Priorities and Accomplishments

The Offices identified 13 priorities for 2009-2010. These priorities are organized by the four core business areas.

**CBA #1. Support to Executive Council and its committees**

**Priority 1:  E-Cabinet**
In 2009-2010, ECO will explore opportunities for e-Cabinet to transform the way Cabinet does business. The e-Cabinet process would focus on the:
- electronic distribution and management of Cabinet papers;
- use of technologies in direct support of Cabinet meetings;
- use of technologies to improve presentation of complex issues at Cabinet

**Accomplishments:**
- ECO staff continued to investigate strategies and opportunities to advance e-Cabinet, including use of electronic signatures. No new measures were implemented in 2009-2010.

**Priority 2:  Administrative Processes of Government**
In 2009-2010, ECO will communicate and promote the understanding of the administrative processes of government and in particular, the administrative policies and procedures of the Government of Nova Scotia as contained in four Management Manuals. These manuals provide a common standard reference system of corporate policies and procedures, permitting everyone to operate under the same rules. With the consolidation of information in one place, they are crucial to the effective operation of government. Furthermore, the manuals serve as a corporate communication tool and will be a useful training resource for all employees.

**Accomplishments:**
- The Management Manuals (Corporate Policy Manuals) website and all Management Manual 100 policies were updated to reflect the new structure of the Offices;
- Government wide email communication was sent to advise of updates to the Management Manuals website and its new location due to the new structure of the Offices.

**Priority 3:  Business Continuity Plan (BCP)**
The BCP for the Offices and the Premier's Office is now largely complete. In 2009-2010, the Offices will:
- Test and fine-tune its BCP;
- Pull together all physical supplies and equipment needed to implement the plan;
- Train staff on procedures;
- Brief Cabinet and Deputies on evacuation procedures; and
- Conduct a mock emergency operation
Accomplishments:

- The Offices moved from 90% readiness in 2008-2009 to 93.4% readiness in 2009-2010.

1) Test and fine-tune its BCP

- Refreshed staff and trained new staff on emergency procedures by presenting mock emergency scenarios in each of the Offices and made changes to the BCP as required.

- Conducted an H1N1 tabletop exercise for senior managers as part of their hands-on training and noted that few changes were required in our overall strategy. In concert with this exercise, we purchased pandemic supplies and distributed them for use throughout the building during the course of the pandemic.

2) Pull together all physical supplies and equipment needed to implement the plan

- Continued to acquire equipment and supplies as we identified a need.

- Re-packaged and re-distributed the containers of emergency supplies and equipment to different people, to better reflect the composition of our Crisis Management Team and the location of their homes.

- In concert with our H1N1 tabletop exercise, we purchased the H1N1 supplies we determined most vital, distributed them for installation and used them throughout the building during the pandemic, and warehoused the rest on site until needed again.

- Updated and streamlined the contents of the Emergency Binder used by the Crisis Management Team

3) Train staff on procedures

- See 1), above:

Training for BCP Team

- The BCP Project Manager took training in:
  - Incident Command Structure for managing emergencies, earning her 100-level certificate in a Joint Emergency Operations Centre Course, in Sept. 2009;
  - Departmental Emergency Preparedness; and
  - How to use EMO's on-line emergency-management tool, E-Team.

Training for Deputies and Cabinet

- Briefed a meeting of Deputies on the BCP Plan and strategy, advising on the likely impact on them and their ministers in the event of emergency.
• Briefed Cabinet on our BCP objectives and the support they could expect from the Offices, and prepared them for a mock emergency that would be held shortly thereafter to test both our readiness to offer support, and their readiness to be supported.

4) Brief Cabinet and Deputies on evacuation procedures
• See 3) above;

5) Conduct a mock emergency operation
• Assessed various alternate sites for testing and chose one for the test.

• Created and deployed an emergency test of Cabinet in January of 2010, through a mock Cabinet relocation, with EMO observing. Based on EMO's evaluation, we made changes to the BCP in terms of notification procedures, notification lists, relocation protocols for situations when all communications systems are down, and smoother notification protocols between us and EMO.

• Preparations began to brief Cabinet on improvements made since the mock operation, and preparations have also started for the next drill.

Priority 4: Records Management
The ECO maintains the official records of the Executive Council and its committees, as well as, the operational and administrative records of the Offices. The current Standard for Operational Records (STOR) was written in 1999, and an update is required to incorporate changes to the Committees and the office structure. In 2009-2010, the ECO will:
• Develop a new Standard for Operational Records (STOR) including retention schedules and disposition plans;
• Develop a central registry and centralize files;
• Classify decentralized files; and
• Obtain a records analyst/clerk

Accomplishments:
• One FTE was allocated in ECO to work full time on the creation and implementation of a STOR for the Offices;

• ECO Staff held multiple meetings with staff of the Offices and the NSARM analyst to develop a comprehensive STOR for the Offices;

• Finalized a draft STOR for the Offices, presented it to Senior Management of the Offices, legal services and for financial review receiving necessary approval to proceed for review by the Government Records Committee in early 2010-2011.

• In June, 2009, ECO moved to new office space with requisite space to introduce a central filing room.
Priority 5: Policy Development Process
In 2009-2010, the PPO will develop and communicate a common understanding of the policy development process for the Government of Nova Scotia that will include what needs to be considered to advance governments agenda.

Accomplishments:

- The policy efforts of most departments were directed to planning and developing policy responses to the new government’s core priorities. PPO provided advice, support and tools to assist department’s with their own as well as horizontal policy development work initiatives.
- PPO assisted in organizing and communicating information and developed planning structures to advance the policy work.

CBA #2. Strategic planning, budgeting, and accountability

Priority 6: The Senior Policy Executive Forum
The Policy & Priorities Office (PPO) will establish and implement a meeting plan for 2009-2010 that will advance the goals of the Senior Policy Executive Forum (an interdepartmental committee with membership from departments and agencies). The focus of this forum is to provide analysis, research, discussion and advice on:
- Long-term trends affecting the province;
- Cross- departmental issues;
- Developing policy capacity initiatives; and
- Government's direction and its implementation

Accomplishments:

- The Senior Policy Executive Forum did not meet in its usual format in 2009-2010. Instead, senior policy official were engaged in the development of implementation plans for government’s core priorities.
- PPO assisted in the development of ‘base cases’ to identify the underlying policy challenges facing the province.
- PPO organized meetings with and between senior policy officials to facilitate work on crosscutting issues and initiatives.
- PPO worked with departmental policy leaders to ensure appropriate approvals were in place to advance multi-departmental planning, information was shared and understood, and implementation planning was consistent with the government’s core priorities.

Priority 7: Planning Budgeting and Monitoring Processes
The Treasury Board Office (TBO) will review internal processes to support the planning, budgeting, and monitoring of fiscal performance. The TBO plays a key role in the preparation of the provincial budget and monitoring of government expenditures throughout the year. Internal processes have been developed to support these roles and there is a commitment to ensure continuous improvement and use the most appropriate information technology and software.
Accomplishments:

- During 2009-2010, TBO reviewed various internal processes for budgeting, planning and monitoring. These internal processes, and new processes developed, were communicated to TBO staff and, when required, to other financial staff throughout government.
- TBO documented several internal processes in 2009-2010, and when documentation is finalized it will be reviewed and evaluate for efficiencies and effectiveness. However, during the year TBO worked closely with the New Government to communicate its internal processes, therefore continuation of this priority was deferred to 2010-2011 year.

Priority 8: Economic Stimulus Program
The TBO will lead, implement and monitor the economic stimulus program. The TBO has been working with departments to develop recommendations for a government economic stimulus program. The goal of the program is to provide an economic stimulus during a downturn in the economy and address provincial infrastructure needs. The TBO and Departments will work together to maximize potential cost-sharing programs announced in the 2009-2010 Federal Budget. All projects approved in the stimulus program will be monitored as part of the regular forecast process.

Accomplishments:
TBO led the process to implement and monitor the capital stimulus program. The process led to a capital budget of $796 million for the first year of the two-year stimulus program, double the previous year’s capital program. TBO and departments worked together to maximize cost sharing on capital projects. All capital projects were monitored by TBO through the regular forecasting process.

Priority 9: Financial Analysis Within Government
The TBO will work with other government departments to implement a corporate IT solution for financial analysis, monitoring and reporting needs. The solution should be flexible enough to meet a variety of financial information needs. Preliminary research indicates that the SAP Business Intelligence module may be a viable solution.

Accomplishments:
The TBO assessed various reporting tools and determined that Business Intelligence, in conjunction with BEx Analyzer, would integrate best with SAP to provide the reporting flexibility required for use by all government departments. The majority of the system configuration has been completed and we are now in the process of designing reports to support financial analysis and decisions.
CBA #3. Provide leadership to advance the development of policy, capacity, and horizontal government

Priority 10: Policy Excellence
In 2006, the then Treasury and Policy Board released a report titled "Policy Excellence & The Nova Scotia Public Service". This report contained several recommendations under five key areas: 1) Leadership; 2) Strategic Visioning and Planning; 3) Policy Coherence; 4) Information and Knowledge; and 5) Policy Skills and Workforce. Much progress has been made to respond to the recommendations contained in this report (see: http://www.gov.ns.ca/tpb/PolicyExcellence.htm). In fiscal 2009-2010, further progress toward the implementation of these recommendations will be made. This work will be guided by a five-year plan, which will be completed early this fiscal year and in partnership with SPEF.

Accomplishments:

- A five-year plan to implement the recommendations of the Policy Excellence initiative has been developed for implementation in 2010-2011.
- The principles of the initiative were incorporated into the priority work on cross-departmental issues undertaken during the fiscal year in relation to government’s core priorities.

Priority 11: Policy Network
The "Policy Network" was launched in 2007-2008 because of the Policy Excellence initiative. Its intention is to strengthen the government's policy capacity by:

- Engaging policy leadership across government;
- Facilitating strategic visioning and long-term planning;
- Increasing information and knowledge about horizontal policy development and best practices; and
- Creating opportunities for networking, professional development, and building capacity for policy skills and a future workforce.

In 2009-2010, the PPO will hold three Policy Network events, which will further these goals.

Accomplishments:

- one meeting of the Policy Network was held in 2009-2010 to provide information and advise relative to the preparation and submission of policy advice to Executive Council by departments, agencies and offices.
- most members of the Policy Network also received information pertaining to government’s core priorities and the ensuing policy issues.
CBA #4. Supporting effective corporate administration and governance

Priority 12: "Better Regulation - Everyone's Business"
The PPO will assess implementation of the Regulatory Management Policy across government and determine its effectiveness to date. The Policy will be reviewed, updated and placed in the official government management manual. Training on regulatory management will be provided at least two times during the year to continue to raise the capacity of policy staff and program owners for excellence in regulatory policy. Plans will be secured for making the training sustainable over the coming years. In 2009-2010, Better Forms for Better Regulation will be communicated across departments with the objective being to improve access to, understanding of, and ease of completing forms. Other priorities include improving compliance assistance in regulatory areas; continuing to reduce paperwork so that we meet the target of reducing paperwork burden by 20% by 2010; and improving turnaround times for licenses and permits service to meet government's 10 service standard by 2010.

Accomplishments:

- 2010 is the final year of the Better Regulations strategic plan developed in 2005 and the final progress report will be completed by December 2010.
- the Regulatory Management Policy has been reviewed and updated in preparation for inclusion in the government management manual.
- regulatory management training was provided and planning is under way to ensure future training events occur as required.
- departments are on target to achieve the 20% administrative burden reductions.
- information and training opportunities were provided to departments on simplifying the effort required to complete government forms. A number of common forms were revised and more complicated and repetitive versions have been replaced.
- as part of the Better Regulation initiative, a number of forms are now available on-line, including the submission of applications and renewals required to operate a business. These efforts continue to improve the turnaround times for licenses and permits, particularly for businesses.
- the new government has committed to continuing efforts to reduce the regulatory burden imposed by government, particularly on business. A go-forward strategic plan to achieve the overarching goal of making better regulation a part of the culture of all regulatory departments is under development.
Priority 13: Build Relationships and Enhance Communications Within the Financial Community

Appropriate fiscal accountability and expenditure management relies on effective two-way communication between the TBO and financial staff throughout government. The TBO requirements need to be communicated clearly to the appropriate management and staff. The TBO will review its approach to communications with a view to promoting open, clear and concise communications.

Accomplishments:

During the year, TBO worked closely with the New Government to communicate its financial processes. As new processes were developed, TBO assisted in organizing the communication of the changes to the financial staff throughout government.

Additional Accomplishments include,

• In an effort to inform the New Government of challenges and budgetary pressures across government, TBO assisted in organizing various meetings and presentations to Executive Council by senior officials of departments;

• TBO held regular meetings with senior department staff and participated on various committees; and

• TBO continued to focus on increasing its knowledge and relationships with government departments and agencies as part of a continued effort to increase effective communication.
## Financial Results

<table>
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<th>Estimates 2009–2010 ($000's)</th>
<th>Actual 2009–2010 ($000's)</th>
<th>Variance</th>
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<td><strong>Policy &amp; Priorities Office</strong></td>
<td>$1,778</td>
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<td>$1,169</td>
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<td><strong>Executive Council Office</strong></td>
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<td>$2,133</td>
<td>($247)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$5,327</td>
<td>$4,563</td>
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<td><strong>Salaries and Benefits ($000's)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Policy &amp; Priorities Office</strong></td>
<td>$1,705</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
<td>($505)</td>
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<td><strong>Treasury Board Office</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Executive Council Office</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>$177</td>
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<td><strong>Funded Staff (FTEs)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Policy &amp; Priorities Office</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>35.5</td>
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Performance Measures by Core Business Areas

The Offices assessed their performance through multiple approaches, which incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data. A key tool to measure performance is a bi-annual survey of departments, which is carried out to gain quantitative measures of satisfaction. Our most recent client survey was conducted for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. During 2009-2010, the Offices reviewed the client survey and updated the questions for relevancy. The new survey was not available to be released during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. The revamped survey will be released during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Core Business Areas, Measures, and Outcomes

Core Business Area 1: Support to Executive Council and its committees

A key responsibility of the Offices is managing submissions to, and follow-up from, Executive Council, Treasury Board Committee, Policy and Priorities Committee, and the Legislation Committee.

Desired Outcome: Effective and efficient support to Executive Council and its committees.

Measure: Client Survey. Overall positive response rate to questions pertaining to this Core Business Area.

Rational for the Measure: The ability of Executive Council and its committees to make sound policy decisions depends, in part, on the quality of information and advice they receive on cabinet submissions. Providing this information and advice is a core function of the Offices.

Where Are We Now and Reporting on 2009–2010 Targets

In 2005-2006, 85 percent of our clients reported that they were satisfied with the document submission process. Our target for 2008-2009 was to maintain overall satisfaction of at least 85 percent. At this time, the most recent data available (2007-2008 Client Survey), indicates 86 percent of our clients reported satisfaction with the document submission process. The next survey is planned during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Where Do We Want To Be?: With respect to this measure, maintain overall satisfaction of at least 85 percent for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.
Core Business Area 2: Strategic Planning, Budgeting and Accountability

A core function of the Offices is government-wide strategic planning and budgeting. As part of this, the Offices coordinate the government expenditure budget development and the business planning and accountability reporting processes for Government, departments and agencies.

Desired Outcome: Effective and efficient strategic planning, budgeting and accountability.

Measure: Client Survey. Overall positive response rate to questions pertaining to this Core Business Area.

Rational for the Measure:
Developing expenditure budgets and coordinating the business planning and accountability reporting process for government, departments and agencies is a complex undertaking. It is important that these processes be coordinated and that departments and agencies receive the support they need to prepare quality documents on a timely basis.

Where Are We Now and Reporting on 2009-2010 Targets
In 2005-2006 survey, our clients reported overall satisfaction of 66 percent, 78 percent, and 80 percent with the budget process, business planning process, and accountability reporting process respectively. Our target for 2008–2009 was to increase overall satisfaction levels above the 2005-2006 levels. At this time, the most recent data available (2007-2008 Client Survey), indicates the satisfaction numbers were 55 percent, 77 percent and 78 percent respectively. Satisfaction with the budget process declined by 10 percentage points but was roughly maintained for business planning and accountability reporting processes. The next survey is planned during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Where Do We Want to Be?:
With respect to this measure, the desired outcome is to increase overall satisfaction back to 2005-2006 levels or above. We are investigating the reason for the decline in client satisfaction and will take steps to improve satisfaction levels.
Core Business Area 3: Provide leadership to advance the development of policy capacity and horizontal government

The Offices identify major corporate policy issues and coordinate policy development with departments and agencies on issues that cross departmental boundaries. The Offices initiate, and sometimes lead, corporate projects.

Desired Outcome: Leadership that advances the development of policy capacity and horizontal government.

Measure: Client Survey. Overall positive response rate to questions pertaining to this Core Business Area.

Rational for the Measure:
A clear understanding of government priorities and goals is fundamental to making progress and achieving results.

Where Are We Now and Reporting on 2009–2010 Targets
In 2005-2006, 88 percent of survey respondents reported having a good understanding of government priorities and goals. At this time, the most recent data available (2007-2008 Client Survey), indicates this percentage declined to 83 percent. Our target for 2009-2010 was to maintain this percentage at 88 percent. We are investigating the reason for this decline and will take steps to improve understanding of government's priorities and goals for the future. The next client survey is planned for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Where Do We Want To Be?:
Increase the number of survey respondents who report having a good understanding of Government's priorities and goals back up to the 2005-2006 level of 88 percent.
Core Business Area 4: Supporting Effective Corporate Administration of Governance

The Offices continue to work to improve the administration of government by developing new policy, issuing and communicating guidelines and standards, advising on government structure and programs, and by supporting senior leadership development.

 Desired Outcome: Effective and efficient corporate administration and governance.

 Measure: Client Survey. Overall positive response rate to questions pertaining to Client Service.

 Rational for the Measure:
Useful and up-to-date administrative policies facilitate efficient government operations. The Offices maintain corporate administrative policies through the Management Manual update process.

 Where Are We Now and Reporting on 2009–2010 Targets
In 2005-2006, 70 percent of survey respondents were satisfied with the Management Manual update process. At this time, the most recent data available (2007-2008 Client Survey), indicates this percentage increased to 71 percent. Our target for 2009-2010 was to return satisfaction levels back to the 80 percent level seen in 2003-2004. We are investigating the reason for the decline in client satisfaction from the 2003-2004 level and will take steps to improve satisfaction levels for the future. The next client survey is planned for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

 Where Do We Want To Be?:
With respect to this measure, return satisfaction rating to 80 percent or above.