

# Taking the Accord Forward:

The First Report to Canadians on  
Implementing An Accord Between the  
Government of Canada and the  
Voluntary Sector

**Background Paper:**  
**Government of Canada Implementation**

**Prepared by the Government of Canada**  
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# About this Paper

## *Some context*

When *An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector* was signed in December 2001, it committed the two sectors to reporting annually about their progress in implementing the Accord. *Taking the Accord Forward: The First Report to Canadians on Implementing An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector* fulfills that promise, providing a joint assessment of government and voluntary sector accomplishments from October 2002 to September 2003. The report serves another purpose as well, identifying the sectors' joint priorities as they move forward to build a revitalized relationship through the implementation of the Accord and Codes of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue and on Funding. (*Taking the Accord Forward* is available on the Voluntary Sector Initiative Web site: [www.vsi-isbc.ca](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca))

## *Purpose, scope and organization*

This is one of two background papers to *Taking the Accord Forward*. As a resource for those wishing more in-depth information about the Government of Canada's activities in this area, it provides a detailed accounting of progress and plans for putting the Accord and Codes of Good Practice to work in federal departments and agencies. While it may appear that much focus is on processes, it is important to remember that addressing process is a necessary foundation for changing culture.

Like *Taking the Accord Forward*, Section A of this paper describes key accomplishments in the five activity areas set out in the Accord:

- *A solid foundation*: setting up organizational structures in the federal government and the voluntary sector to put the Accord into action
- *Awareness is key*: raising awareness of the Accord within the voluntary sector and the federal government, as well as among Canadians
- *Putting the Codes to work*: developing codes of good practice to help guide interactions between the two sectors
- *Tracking our progress*: establishing processes for monitoring the Accord, reporting to Canadians about progress and moving forward on priorities
- *A shared journey*: holding regular meetings between ministers and sector representatives

Section B of the paper looks ahead, setting out the priorities that will guide the federal government's work over the coming year.

## *For more information...*

A companion document that outlines the voluntary sector's recent progress and priorities for the future is also available on the Web site noted above. To find out more about these reports, the Accord and Codes of Good Practice or the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), contact the Voluntary Sector Affairs Directorate, Department of Canadian Heritage, 12 York Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0M5, (613) 998-7207.

# A. Our Achievements so Far

## A SOLID FOUNDATION

When the first phase of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) ended in October 2002, many of the VSI's governance structures came to an end as well. Since then, the federal government has launched new governance bodies appropriate to the second phase of the VSI mandate.

### MCC MEMBERSHIP

In January 2003, the Minister of Canadian Heritage invited some of her Cabinet colleagues to participate as members of the VSI's Ministerial Consultative Committee.

- Minister of Human Resources Development Canada (Vice-Chair)
- Minister of Health
- Minister of Industry
- President of the Treasury Board
- Minister for International Co-operation
- Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women)
- Minister of National Revenue
- Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

### *Ministerial support*

One of the Government of Canada's first tasks was to identify the Minister of Canadian Heritage as Minister Responsible for the Voluntary Sector. The Minister is supported by a Ministerial Consultative Committee (MCC) that provides high-level support for an enhanced government-voluntary sector relationship (see box on this page).

### *Horizontal leadership*

At the departmental level, an Assistant Deputy Minister Steering Committee (see box on page 3) supports the MCC and offers strategic advice to the Joint Steering Committee, the VSI's governing body. The committee members, who represent key departments and all central agencies, are also charged with sustaining and building on the VSI's horizontal approach, and ensuring that the interests of the broader federal community are taken into account.

### *Institutionalizing change*

To promote commitment at the highest levels, the Clerk of the Privy Council has made deputy heads accountable for ensuring that the Codes of Good Practice are adopted within their organizations. This responsibility is now an aspect of each deputy's commitment to consultation and citizen engagement as reflected in their performance agreement. To assist them, each deputy head has been called on to identify a senior official or champion responsible for promoting the Accord and Codes, and for leading by example. This network of champions helps avoid duplication of effort among departments by ensuring effective horizontal co-ordination and communication. As of fall 2003, champions were in place in virtually all federal departments and agencies.

At the first champions' meeting – held in April 2003 – representatives from 41 institutions met to share insights and to discuss some of the opportunities and challenges of putting the Accord to work in their own departments. The meeting generated enthusiasm and support for future initiatives, such as a joint workshop for government champions and voluntary sector leaders to share best practices, develop a common understanding of the issues and demonstrate the Government's commitment to a renewed relationship.

### *Federal focal point*

Staff support for voluntary sector issues and partnerships is housed in the Department of Canadian Heritage. It's a good fit. As the principal promoter of shared citizenship, values and culture, the Department has strong links to the voluntary sector. Moreover, the VSI complements the Department's mission of contributing to a more cohesive and creative Canada, and builds on its objectives of promoting active participation and engagement in the country's future. Assigned responsibility in

### **ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER STEERING COMMITTEE**

Eileen Sarkar (Chair)  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Citizenship and Heritage  
Canadian Heritage

Andrew Treusch (Vice-Chair)  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Human Investment Programs  
Human Resources Development  
Canada

Bill McCloskey  
Assistant Commissioner  
Policy and Legislation Branch  
Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

Scott Broughton  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Population and Public Health Branch  
Health Canada

Mike Sheridan  
Assistant Chief Statistician  
Social Institutions and Labour  
Statistics Field  
Statistics Canada

Mary Carman  
Associate Assistant Deputy Minister  
Spectrum Information Technology  
and Telecommunications  
Industry Canada

Yaprak Baltacioglu  
Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet  
Social Policy Development  
Privy Council Office

Bill Austin  
Assistant Secretary  
Social and Cultural Sector  
Treasury Board Secretariat

Réal Bouchard  
Director, Social Policy  
Finance Canada

Josée Touchette (replaced by  
Jennifer Benimadhu in August 2003)  
Vice-President  
Canadian Partnership Branch  
Canadian International  
Development Agency

October 2002 for spearheading the Government's implementation activities, the Department has been collaborating closely with other departments and agencies, and the Voluntary Sector Forum, on a variety of awareness-raising and other activities.

### AT THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CANADA

Responding to a progress questionnaire circulated to government Departments and agencies in the summer of 2003, the Department of Justice Canada reported that various structures were in place for planning and reviewing implementation, including:

- VSI Implementation Team
- Policy Priorities Committee
- Excellence in Programs Committee
- Senior Management Team (Policy Sector)
- Deputy Minister Team Meetings

### AWARENESS IS KEY

Officials at the Department of Canadian Heritage have been working hard to enhance awareness about the Accord and Codes across the public service. One of the Department's first priorities was to ensure that all federal departments and agencies knew about the Accord and Codes. Copies of key documents were also sent to some provincial/territorial authorities, public libraries, academics and consultants.

Working with the voluntary sector, the Department of Canadian Heritage developed a series of resources designed to inform government departments and provide them with practical resources for implementing the Accord and Codes. These include:

- a *10-minute video* providing context and background about the Accord and Codes, case study examples of how they can be applied in the workplace, and testimonials endorsing them as strong building blocks for a revitalized relationship between the two sectors;
- a *plain-language workbook* featuring easy-to-use checklists and a variety of exercises to help both sectors apply the Codes in their daily work. *The Rubber and the Road: A Workbook for Implementing the Codes of Good Practice* provides concrete tools for assessing current relationships, moving forward on policy dialogue and funding issues, and setting out an action plan for the future; and
- a *series of workshops and train-the-trainer sessions* that give participants essential background information on the Accord and Codes, and provide a detailed introduction to using *The Rubber and The Road*. More than 100 people from both sectors took part in pilot sessions of the workshop, held in Fredericton in the fall of 2003.

A “toolbox” containing the video, workbook and a presentation on the Accord and Codes has also been distributed through the Government’s network of champions.

### **MILLIONS OF “HITS”**

Since the Accord was signed in December 2001, the VSI Web site has had:

- more than 4.5 million hits; and
- almost 200 000 visits – each visit averaged almost 17 minutes, with five pages reviewed.

### *Out in the field*

Over the past year, the Department of Canadian Heritage staff have made a number of presentations, for example, to the first meeting of departmental champions as well as to individual departments, to help inform managers about progress and expectations with respect to the Accord and Codes. More frequently, staff takes part in informal discussions and meetings with departments and agencies across the public service. Many departments are also using the tools provided by the Department of Canadian Heritage to make their own presentations to employees.

### **AT HEALTH CANADA**

The Department has:

- briefed staff and Branch and Regional executives across the Department;
- developed a communications strategy and support materials (e.g., backgrounders) about the Accord and Codes; and
- broadcast information about the Accord and Codes via the Department’s Intranet.

### **AT THE CANADIAN CENTRE FOR MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT**

The Centre has:

- distributed copies of the Accord and Codes to all members of the Management Committee with a request that they inform their staff of the initiative;
- published an article highlighting the Accord and the Centre’s courses and learning events that involve participation by voluntary sector representatives;
- informed managers and employees about the availability of training tools for the Accord and Codes; and
- organized an armchair discussion entitled “The Voluntary Sector and the Government: A Critical Relationship that Challenges Us All.”

## **PUTTING THE CODES TO WORK**

Many of the federal government's awareness-building initiatives have focussed on practical ways of making the Codes of Good Practice play out in the day-to-day relationship between the federal government and the voluntary sector. In addition to developing resources, such as the video, workbook and presentation, the federal government has canvassed departments and agencies to submit their best practices for implementing the Accord and Codes. Planning is under way to distribute best practices widely across the public service so that departments can benefit from each other's experience.

### **AT CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA**

The Department is collaborating with the voluntary sector's settlement organizations on the Strengthening Settlement Capacity project. Supported by four national working groups, the project has a mandate to explore important settlement policy and program issues. To date, it has sponsored two national conferences, one in June 2001 and one in October 2003.

### **AT PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES CANADA**

As part of its implementation efforts, the Department has:

- briefed senior management on the Accord and the Codes of Good Practice;
- requested that its Policy Network, composed of senior representatives of all branches, consider how best to integrate the Accord and Codes into business practices;
- invited participation from the voluntary sector on specific standards committees, often as consumer representatives; and
- begun work to carry out the changes to contracting policy and operations that would allow the sector to compete with commercial enterprises.



## AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE

The Department's activities include:

- the *Forum on Diversity and Culture*, co-hosted by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women), which brought together culturally diverse communities and cultural decision-makers from across Canada. The event – as well as a series of cross-Canada meetings – resulted in commitments designed to ensure that all Canadian voices, regardless of their forms of cultural expression, have an opportunity to be heard; and
- the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI), the legacy of the International Year of Volunteers, showcases the potential of a joint relationship between the two sectors. Designed and implemented in close collaboration, the program will improve the capacity of organizations to benefit from the contribution of volunteers; encourage Canadians to participate in voluntary organizations; and enhance the experience of volunteering.

## AT HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CANADA

The Department is working with the voluntary sector to strengthen the ability of voluntary sector organizations to attract, support and retain skilled, committed employees. The *Developing Human Resources in the Voluntary Sector* project, led by Community Foundations of Canada and in partnership with two national organizations, resulted in the creation of a Web site ([www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca](http://www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca)) with information on employment legislation, human resource policies and procedures, and employee and retirement benefits. Plans are under way to feature a range of additional human resource topics on the site, as well as assessment and planning resources, and upcoming training opportunities. This project is one of many capacity-building projects developed through Human Resources Development Canada as part of the Capacity Joint Table.

## AT THE TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat has taken a number of steps aimed at implementing the Accord and Codes of Good Practice. For example, it:

- amended its contracting policy to allow voluntary sector organizations to access the federal government bidding and contracting process. Effective June 9, 2003, the policy gives voluntary organizations the opportunity to compete for government contracts along with commercial enterprises; and
- conducted training sessions for program analysts to provide them with the tools they need to champion the Accord in their dealings with other departments.

## TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

One of the federal government's priorities over the past year has been to put in place a system for monitoring and reporting on its progress in implementing the Accord and Codes of Good Practice.

### *A reporting framework*

The Department of Canadian Heritage took the lead in developing a government-wide approach to reporting. One of the main challenges was to meet the diverse needs of departments and agencies responsible for implementing the Accord, while also ensuring that the results could be aggregated consistently for reporting to Canadians.

With these goals in mind, 19 federal departments and agencies took part in workshops to develop a framework and performance indicators for reporting on progress. Several important principles helped to guide the process: keep the data collection process simple; put the focus on quality rather than quantity; provide a menu of response choices for participating departments; and focus on progress rather than performance. There was also broad-based agreement that data collection should be organized around the five key activities/outputs identified in the Accord.

Data collection started in mid-July 2003, with questionnaires distributed to 57 departments and agencies. By October 1<sup>st</sup>, 49 departments (86%) had responded to the questionnaire. Staff at the Department of Canadian Heritage analyzed the data later that month, submitting the findings for incorporation into the first annual report to Canadians.

## WHO RESPONDED?\*

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Canada Customs and Revenue Agency
- Canada Economic Development Agency for Québec Regions
- Canadian Centre for Management Development
- Canadian Coast Guard
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Canadian International Development Agency
- Canadian Polar Commission
- Canadian Space Agency
- Canadian Transportation Agency
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Communication Canada
- Correctional Service Canada
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Department of Justice Canada
- Department of the Solicitor General of Canada
- Elections Canada
- Environment Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Health Canada
- Human Resources Development Canada
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- Industry Canada
- Infrastructure Canada
- Law Commission of Canada
- National Archives of Canada (also representing the interests of the National Library of Canada)
- National Battlefields Commission
- National Defence
- National Parole Board
- National Research Council Canada
- Natural Resources Canada
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
- Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Parks Canada Agency
- Privy Council Office
- Public Service Commission of Canada
- Public Works and Government Services Canada
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
- Statistics Canada
- Status of Women Canada
- Transport Canada
- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat
- Veteran Affairs Canada
- Western Economic Diversification Canada

\* as of October 1, 2003

## ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP

- Most departments described vibrant, meaningful interaction with the voluntary sector and acknowledged the importance of the relationship to meeting their mandate.
- A minority of institutions reported limited or non-existent relationships with the voluntary sector.

### *Key findings*

#### *Implementation is at an early stage*

Most federal government activity has focussed on raising awareness, for example, ensuring that senior management and staff are aware of the Accord and Codes; writing articles in departmental newsletters; putting in place implementation structures; and developing action plans for the coming year.

#### *A broad range of initiatives are under way*

The activities reported by government departments include conducting extensive reviews of financial terms and conditions to improve efficiency and effectiveness; initiating projects to engage non-traditional and diverse groups in the policy-making process; and implementing programs to build capacity in voluntary sector organizations.

#### *Some departments are further ahead than others*

While a majority of departments have developed an implementation plan and begun awareness-raising activities, a few have also begun implementation measures, such as developing detailed strategies, gathering baseline data, or circulating good practices within the department. Still others, although they acknowledge the importance of the voluntary sector to their mandate, have yet to develop an implementation plan.

#### *Greater collaboration is needed*

One of the recurring messages from departments was the need for enhanced collaboration, information sharing and joint activities with the voluntary sector. These kinds of challenges are often associated with broad-scale horizontal initiatives.

## AT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

In its 2003-04 Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP), the Department identified “the engagement of all citizens, levels of government and the voluntary sector in criminal justice policy development” as one of the strategic outcomes. As a result, the Departmental Performance Report will track the Department’s progress in achieving this goal.

## **A SHARED JOURNEY**

Preparations are under way for the first meeting of the Ministerial Consultative Committee and members of the Voluntary Sector Forum. Planned for 2004, the meeting will give leaders from both sectors the opportunity to review the progress described in *Taking the Accord Forward*, and to consider the priorities established for the coming year.

## **AT HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CANADA**

- The Minister actively engages the voluntary sector on a variety of social and economic issues.
- The Minister has participated in a variety of voluntary sector conferences and symposiums since the launch of the VSI in May 2000 and will continue to do so on issues of importance.

## B. Priorities for the Future

As described in this background paper, the federal government has made progress in putting into place preliminary measures for implementing *An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector*. As agreed to in Section V of the Accord: “Taking the Accord Forward,” governance structures are up and running, and tools and processes have been developed to enhance awareness and use of the Accord and Codes of Good Practice. An important first step, these initiatives help to set the stage for realizing the Government’s longer-term commitments to building a strong and vital relationship with the voluntary sector (see box on this page).

### *Looking ahead*

With these goals in mind, the Government of Canada has identified a number of clear priorities for achieving further progress on building a better relationship with the voluntary sector. The following priorities for action are based on input from federal government leaders in the

VSI, as well as feedback from government organizations. They will guide the federal government’s work in this area over the coming year.

### **1. Lay the foundation for fully integrating the Accord commitments into departmental operations and culture by:**

- developing a voluntary sector lens or approach to ensure that the implications of legislation, regulations, policies and programs on voluntary sector organizations are considered;
- integrating the Accord into existing reporting mechanisms (e.g., departmental reports on plans and priorities and departmental performance reports); and
- promoting career exchanges between the voluntary sector and Government to increase understanding and knowledge about each other.

### **OUR COMMITMENTS**

The Accord sets out the federal government commitments for enhancing its relationship with the voluntary sector, including:

- recognizing and considering the implications of legislation, regulations, policies and programs on voluntary sector organizations, including funding policies and practices;
- engaging the voluntary sector in open, informed and sustained dialogue; and
- addressing the issue of ministerial responsibility for continued development of the relationship with the voluntary sector.

In addition, the Accord outlines the shared commitments of the federal government and the voluntary sector. One of these commitments is to promote awareness and understanding of the contributions that each sector makes to Canadian society.

## **2. Pursue short-term implementation activities that will:**

- raise the profile of the Accord and Codes, as well as understanding about them (e.g., by visibly acknowledging the importance of the relationship between interested ministers and voluntary sector leaders);
- strengthen interdepartmental collaboration (e.g., by hosting a second meeting of interdepartmental assistant deputy minister champions and establishing interdepartmental working groups on issues, such as training, progress reporting and funding); and
- increase Government-sector collaboration on issues jointly identified as requiring further collaboration (e.g., directors' liability) and joint research (e.g., models for dispute resolution mechanisms), and identify, promote and share outcomes from the over 60 projects undertaken to identify innovative ways of including the sector's voice in policy development (i.e., Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) projects).

### **WHAT WE HEARD FROM DEPARTMENTS**

“Over the next year, our priority will be to increase awareness and implementation of the Accord and Codes, both nationally and regionally – part of that work will involve developing an implementation strategy and an internal communication strategy to get employees on board.”

“Give us some tools we can use to help us implement the Accord and Codes – for example, sharing best practices will help us by pointing out what other departments are doing, where they've been successful and what challenges they've faced.”

“Some of the government-wide efforts that should be explored are providing temporary funding to support implementation efforts, organizing a joint meeting of government/voluntary sector champions and helping evaluate pilot projects.”