

Voluntary Sector Initiative

The Journey Continues

The **Second 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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Voluntary Sector

Canada

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About this Paper

A little background

Almost five years ago, the Government of Canada announced the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), a joint initiative between the federal government and the voluntary sector aimed at: enhancing their relationship; improving the regulatory framework in which the voluntary sector operates; and strengthening the voluntary sector's capacity over the long term.

From the outset, a major focus of the VSI was the development of a joint accord or framework agreement that would provide visible and concrete recognition of the importance of the relationship. Signed on December 5, 2001, *An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector* also called for practical guidelines to support implementation of the Accord. Less than a year later – in October 2002 – the *Code of Good Practice on Funding* and the *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue* were launched.

The Journey Continues: The Second Report to Canadians on Implementing An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector fulfills the sectors' commitment to report annually to Canadians on their progress in implementing the Accord and the two Codes of Good Practice. A collaborative effort, the report provides highlights of the two sectors' accomplishments from October 2003 to September 2004. In addition to looking back over the past year's activities, it sets out joint priorities for the sectors in the coming year. (*The Journey Continues* is available on the VSI Web site at www.vsi-isbc.ca.)

What this paper does

One of two background papers to the joint report, this document is intended for those wishing more detailed information on the activities of federal government departments and agencies over the past year (the background paper outlining voluntary sector activities is available at www.vsf-fsbc.ca.) It focuses on the results of a survey of federal government departments undertaken in the summer of 2004 to assess progress on implementing the Accord and Codes of Good Practice across the federal government. A forum for sharing good practices as well, the report includes tangible, practical examples and ideas to help departments and agencies implement the Accord and Codes more broadly within their own departments.

The paper describes the Government's activities and accomplishments in the areas established as priorities by the federal government in the previous year's supplementary report, *Taking the Accord Forward: Background Paper – Government of Canada Implementation*. These priorities were to:

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; and
- promoting career exchanges between the voluntary sector and Government to increase understanding and knowledge about each other.

2. PURSUE SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES THAT WILL:

- raise the profile of the Accord and Codes, as well as understanding about them;
- strengthen interdepartmental collaboration; and
- increase Government-sector collaboration on issues jointly identified as requiring further collaboration and joint research, and identify, promote and share outcomes from the Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) projects.

The last section of this paper looks to the future, describing the federal government's priorities for the coming year as it continues its work in implementing the Accord and Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue.

Find out more!

For more information about these reports, or to find out more about the Accord and Codes of Good Practice or the VSI, see www.vsi-isbc.ca. For information about the voluntary sector report, see www.vsf-fsbc.ca.

A. The Foundations for Change

The past year has seen some changes in government oversight of the VSI, including responsibility for initiatives related to the Accord and Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue.

A new departmental lead

Last year, federal government responsibility for the leadership of the VSI was transferred from Canadian Heritage to Social Development Canada (SDC). As part of the transfer, SDC assumed lead responsibility on behalf of the Government of Canada for shaping the relationship with the voluntary sector, including government-wide monitoring and reporting on Accord implementation. As Minister of SDC, the Honourable Ken Dryden provides leadership for the continuing work of the VSI. At the same time, responsibility for enhancing the sectors' relationship is shared across government as individual departments and agencies put the Accord and Codes of Good Practice to work in their daily interactions with the voluntary sector.

Horizontal structures

At the departmental level, an Assistant Deputy Minister Steering Committee (ADMSC) acted as the Government of Canada's decision-making body on matters concerning the VSI. The ADMSC, which met three times during the past reporting period (October 2003 to September 2004), recently recommended the establishment of a Director General Steering Committee (DGSC) to provide strategic advice and guidance to the VSI's Joint Steering Committee. In the coming year, the DGSC will advise SDC on ways to strengthen horizontal integration and implementation of the tools and mechanisms developed through the VSI, including the Accord and Codes of Good Practice.

ADM STEERING COMMITTEE

Susan Scotti (Chair)
Assistant Deputy Minister
Income Security Programs
Social Development Canada

Marie-Josée Thivierge (Vice-Chair)
Assistant Deputy Minister
Learning Branch
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Stephen Rigby
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

Bill Austin
Assistant Secretary
Treasury Board Secretariat

Réal Bouchard
Director, Social Policy
Finance Canada

Jennifer Benimadhu
Vice-President
Canadian International Development Agency

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

What individual departments are doing

At a departmental level, substantial efforts have been made to put in place organizational structures that support implementation of the Accord and Codes. As the government-wide survey demonstrated, of the 39 departments that submitted completed surveys:

- three quarters said they have a champion in place to oversee their implementation progress
- slightly more than half have an implementation team to support the champion
- almost three quarters have a structure established for discussion and analysis of issues related to the Accord
- two thirds have structures in place to bring departmental and voluntary sector people together to examine issues of mutual interest
- of the 30 reporting departments with regional offices, more than half have regional involvement in Accord implementation and four out of ten have a regional structure in place for implementation

AT THE CANADIAN INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH ...

The President's Voluntary Sector Committee meets regularly to discuss current and emerging voluntary sector issues. As well, each of the organization's 13 institutes has an advisory board that includes at least one voluntary sector representative and one person who focuses on partnerships with the voluntary sector. CIHR also has a "Partnerships Best Practices" working group that explores ways of enhancing its relationships, including collaboration with voluntary sector partners.

AT THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AGENCY ...

Describing its relationship with voluntary sector partners as "solid and dynamic," the CEAA uses a broad range of public consultation mechanisms, including a public registry, to promote effective public participation in environmental assessments. As well, the CEAA's regulatory multi stakeholder committee includes environmental and Aboriginal groups, as well as industry associations.

AT VETERANS AFFAIRS CANADA ...

Working in partnership with Health Canada and voluntary sector organizations, the department supported the flow of funding to various community-based veterans organizations through the Population Health Fund.

B. Progress on Priorities

As set out in the Accord, the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector are accountable for reporting on their progress in implementing the Accord and the Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue. Following is an overview of government activities and accomplishments during the current report period – October 2003 to September 2004 – in the areas identified as priorities in the Government of Canada background paper to the first report to Canadians, *Taking the Accord Forward*.

About the Government-wide survey

Much of the information contained in this background paper is based on a survey of federal departments and agencies conducted during the summer of 2004. Building on lessons learned from last year's process,

the questionnaire framework was designed to better accommodate the diverse relationships that exist between the voluntary sector and government departments, and to enhance comparability between the two sectors' responses. More streamlined than the 2003 version, the 2004 questionnaire solicited input on:

- overall awareness in each institution of the Accord and Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue
- actions taken or planned to implement the Accord and Codes
- good practices that have been implemented related to funding

WHO RESPONDED?

A total of 39 departments and agencies submitted a completed survey questionnaire*:

- Agriculture and Agri-food Canada
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Canada Economic Development Agency of Canada for Québec Regions
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Canada School of Public Service
- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
- Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Heritage
- Canadian Human Rights Commission
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Canadian International Development Agency
- Canadian Transportation Agency
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- Correctional Services Canada
- Environment Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Health Canada
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
- Industry Canada
- Infrastructure Canada
- Justice Canada
- Law Commission of Canada
- National Battlefields Commission
- National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces
- National Parole Board
- Natural Sciences and Engineering Council
- Parks Canada Agency
- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
- Public Service Commission of Canada
- Public Works and Government Services
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Social Development Canada
- Statistics Canada
- Transport Canada
- Veterans Affairs Canada
- Western2 Economic Diversification

* An additional eight departments/agencies indicated that the questionnaire was not applicable due to their organization's limited involvement with the voluntary sector.

- good practices that have been implemented related to policy dialogue
- progress on priorities identified in the institution's last progress report

The 2004 questionnaire was sent to deputy heads across the federal government in August. In addition to highlighting major findings from the survey, this background paper showcases some of the creative and effective ways individual departments and agencies are making the Accord and Codes of Good Practice part of the way “they do business” with the voluntary sector.

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*

Although the federal government did not institute any broad-based initiatives to develop a government-wide voluntary sector lens during the current report period, individual departments and agencies undertook a number of related activities. Practices such as these can serve as useful models for other departments and agencies as they work towards integrating the Accord and Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue into their daily work.

AT CORRECTIONAL SERVICES CANADA ...

The department uses a “Code lens” to modify the terms and conditions of their programs and for the overall management and administration of its programs.

AT HEALTH CANADA ...

A voluntary sector lens has been developed for reviewing Cabinet documents.

- *Integrating the Accord into existing reporting mechanisms;*

As the government-wide survey points out, departments and agencies are moving forward on initiatives that support ongoing monitoring and reporting systems. For example:

- half of responding departments and agencies are seeking voluntary sector input on the relationship
- about four out of ten have benchmarked their relationship with the voluntary sector
- more than half have a process for reporting on progress – some more informally than others

AT THE ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE ...

The department's progressive performance management regime is being considered as a tool for monitoring progress on the Accord's principles.

AT CANADIAN HERITAGE ...

Branches and regional offices have included Accord and Code implementation in their work planning processes.

AT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA ...

The *Departmental Performance Report* and the *Report on Plans and Priorities* describe plans for and progress in implementing the Accord and Codes as a horizontal initiative across the Government of Canada.

- *Promoting career exchanges between the voluntary sector and Government to increase understanding and knowledge about each other*

Although data on the number and nature of career exchanges are not available, anecdotal information suggests that a variety of *ad hoc* exchanges took place between the two sectors during the current reporting period. For example, an SDC employee worked with the Voluntary Sector Forum on the issue of liability insurance (see page 8 of this report).

2. PURSUE SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES THAT WILL:

- *Raise the profile of the Accord and Codes, as well as understanding about them*

The Government of Canada carried out a variety of activities aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the Accord and Codes.

At the Ministerial level

The federal government recognizes the need for dialogue between the two sectors at the highest levels. During this reporting period, the Honourable Liza Frulla, then Minister of Social Development Canada, held a meeting with key voluntary sector representatives. Members of the voluntary sector took the opportunity to reinforce the importance of moving forward on the commitments made in the Accord and Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue. Unfortunately, due to two Cabinet changes during the current reporting period, a meeting between the Ministerial Consultative Committee and voluntary sector leaders did not take place.

Survey says ...

- half of responding departments said they have an awareness strategy in place, while many others have taken a less formal approach to awareness raising
- two thirds said that all parts of their department have a general awareness of the Accord
- the most commonly used awareness-raising techniques are: Accord and Codes distribution, management briefings, staff presentations, workshops and staff e-mails

Network of champions

Although departmental champions (responsible for encouraging implementation efforts in their own departments) and voluntary sector representatives were unable to meet as planned last year, a meeting of the two groups will take place in the fall of 2004.

AT HEALTH CANADA ...

A new manual of Grants and Contributions Standard Operating Procedures is helping to harmonize processes in the Population and Health Branch. The manual, developed in keeping with the spirit of the Accord and Codes, is being promoted extensively across the department.

AT HUMAN RESOURCES AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ...

The Director at one regional office is a member of the Collaborative Granting Funders Table, which offers voluntary sector organizations a venue to market their proposals to a cross-section of public and private sector funders. The Table has improved the sector's access to funded programs, while reducing overlap and duplication.

AT INDUSTRY CANADA ...

At the end of each year, the department conducts a post-mortem assessment of funding requests and award processes. This approach helps staff to identify needed improvements, including making program delivery processes more transparent and user friendly. As a result of these efforts, applicants submit higher quality project proposals that are more likely to produce higher quality research reports.

Meetings between the sectors

Many individual departments and agencies met with and involved voluntary sector representatives – formally and informally – in their ongoing work over the past year. Consider the following:

- more than half of responding departments/agencies reported that their Minister met with representatives of the voluntary sector during the reporting period
- one third had a regularly set forum for their meetings, while more than half held *ad hoc* meetings as issues arose
- about half of departments/agencies have a strategy in place for implementing the *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue*

Training initiatives

Over the past year, the two sectors joined forces to provide training to departments and sector organizations across the country on how to implement the Accord and Codes. Building on lessons learned from earlier training sessions, the training methodology was redesigned to provide local trainers, federal government champions and others with flexible modules that can be tailored to meet individual needs. Following each session, organizers reviewed the outcomes to determine how the training sessions might be improved. (link to training section in joint report) A range of federal departments benefited from this training.

On January 14, 2004, SDC conducted a training session with 17 employees representing all regions and sectors of Canadian Heritage. The session was designed to: help employees understand the links between the Accord and their responsibility area in the department; prepare participants to deliver Accord and Codes workshops; and support the development of a departmental implementation strategy.

■ *Strengthen interdepartmental collaboration*

A coordinated government-wide approach

Since the Accord and Codes were first developed, departments have highlighted the need for collaboration and learning across the federal government. To address this need, SDC coordinated an interdepartmental training session on January 29, 2004. The goals of the session were to demonstrate joint government-voluntary sector training tools and the approach used at regional training sessions, and to share information on other departmental Accord and Codes training strategies. Attended by a representative each from 16 departments plus eight representatives and trainers from SDC, the session helped to build cross-government understanding and knowledge about the various training tools and approaches being used in departments.

In the Code of Good Practice on Funding, the Government of Canada committed to (among other commitments)

- include as one criterion the “particular value” that voluntary sector organizations bring to specific activities they undertake with the Government of Canada
- use multi-year funding agreements and develop and implement mechanisms to facilitate their use, in appropriate circumstances, in order to enhance organizations’ stability and capacity for longer-term planning
- be flexible in implementing new programs that address broad federal priorities and, where appropriate, tailor these programs to meet local needs

In early 2004, an informal interdepartmental working group chaired by SDC met several times to share good funding practices and to promote their use across the federal government. Many of these good practices were based on input from last year’s government-wide progress reports, which highlighted a range of innovative practices. For example, departments reported using the Code to:

- analyze current and potential funding relationships with the sector
- guide renewal of terms and conditions for funding programs
- carry out gaps analyses of departmental processes and procedures, including risk assessment, transfer payment policies and departmental action plans on grants

In July 2004, Social Development Canada (SDC) began discussions to establish a task force that will examine current funding mechanisms and make recommendations on approaches to facilitate investments in communities by the federal government. This work will commence during the next reporting period.

Progress reporting

An internal working group with representation from across the federal government was established to oversee the development of an improved survey questionnaire focusing on departmental implementation of the Accord and Codes. In the interest of ensuring comparability between government and voluntary sector survey questionnaires, a representative of the Voluntary Sector Forum attended the meetings of this working group.

Survey says:

- three fifths of responding departments provide funding to the voluntary sector
- one fifth have an implementation strategy for the Code of Good Practice on Funding

- *Increase Government-sector collaboration on issues jointly identified as requiring further collaboration and joint research, and identify, promote and share outcomes from the Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) projects.*

Acting on the above priority, the federal government made significant contributions in the following areas:

Liability insurance

One of the key issues facing voluntary sector organizations is the cost and accessibility of liability insurance. Although no joint work was carried out in this area, the Government of Canada – through the Policy Internship and Academic Fellowship (PIAF) program – supported the placement of a public servant at the Voluntary Sector Forum to undertake a series of regional consultations and an on-line survey concerning the insurance challenges most commonly faced by voluntary sector organizations. The results of this research are set out in a report entitled, *Liability Insurance and the Voluntary Sector – Framing the Issues*, which is available at www.vsf-fsbc.ca. Additional work is underway in both sectors to develop solutions to these challenges.

Dispute resolution

Both the federal government and the voluntary sector have identified successful collaborative partnerships as a key element of doing business together and a fundamental indicator of the success of the Accord and Codes of Good Practice. To address this issue, SDC is working with the Voluntary Sector Forum on a pilot project to develop a collaborative problem solving approach for the Accord and Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue. The project is designed to enhance the ability of the two sectors to serve Canadians and their communities through partnerships in areas where they have identified common goals. Selected departments and their respective sector stakeholders will test the pilot.

SURVEY SAYS ...

According to the federal government survey, almost four out of ten responding organizations have a process in place to resolve disputes with their voluntary sector partners.

Policy dialogue

A key element of the VSI, the *Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD)* was designed to enhance the voluntary sector's capacity to participate in policy development by exploring how to involve voluntary sector stakeholders in all phases of the public policy process. A formative evaluation of SIDPD, completed in March 2004, points to some important lessons learned to help implement the *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue*. The evaluation findings are posted at www.vsi-isbc.ca. An outcome evaluation of the program is scheduled for the coming year.

IN THE CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON POLICY DIALOGUE, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA COMMITTED TO (AMONG OTHER COMMITMENTS):

- respect and seek out the expertise and input of the voluntary sector and include it in the analysis and design of policy initiatives;
- ensure that policy initiatives capture the fullest spectrum of views and give due consideration to all input received, paying particular attention to those likely to be most affected by policy proposals.

AT AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA ...

The Department is developing recommendations for a new advisory board – with representation from stakeholder groups, the public health sector and consumer groups – to advise the Minister on matters affecting the Canada Food Inspection Agency.

AT THE CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY ...

As a governmental regulator, the Agency is engaged in regular consultations on new and proposed revisions to existing regulations, as stipulated by the Regulatory Policy and Canada Gazette consultation process. Plus they engage stakeholders in early stages of legislative and regulatory initiatives.

AT CANADIAN HERITAGE ...

A working group on sport for people with a disability includes voluntary sector representatives. The group is developing a national policy in this area.

AT CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA ...

Following two national conferences involving the voluntary sector, a “joint committee on policies and programs for settlement and integration” was put in place. They also have four joint working groups which look at: “How to maximize actual work in settlement”, “Smaller Community Strategy”, “An Accord on Settlement”, and “Settlement Standards/Professionalization and Accountability”.

AT NATIONAL DEFENCE ...

The department’s Policy Dialogue Program includes a series of roundtable discussions that have been held over the past year with experts from voluntary sector and other organizations.

AT PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ...

The Minister and Deputy Minister are regular speakers at voluntary sector conferences and meet with representatives of national voluntary organizations. The Minister also participates in the Corrections Roundtable, which is attended by representatives of 12 voluntary sector organizations active in corrections and criminal justice.

C. Looking Ahead

One of the aims of the survey on federal government departments' work on implementing the Accord and Codes of Good Practice was to identify areas where resources and energy should be directed over the coming year. These priorities for action – which are also set out in the joint federal government-voluntary sector report (*The Journey Continues*) – will guide the Government of Canada's activities from October 2004 to September 2005.

1. INTEGRATE THE ACCORD AND TWO CODES WITHIN AND ACROSS THE SECTORS AS "THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS" BY:

- improving the flexibility, responsiveness and consistency of funding arrangements between the federal government and the voluntary sector
- deepening the dialogue between the federal government and the voluntary sector in order to create better public policies for the benefit of Canadians
- measuring progress in meeting our commitments

2. ENSURE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS SHARE GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN IMPLEMENTING THE ACCORD AND CODES.

WHAT DEPARTMENTS SAID:

Asked what the federal government should focus on, survey respondents identified several key themes:

- standardize funding practices (e.g., applications, monitoring) across the federal government
- enhance accountability – by simplifying the reporting questionnaire; reducing overlap; and developing government-wide indicators
- engage the voluntary sector in meaningful discussions about policy and programs, in the true spirit of this historic agreement

Asked what voluntary sector priorities should be, government respondents mentioned such activities as:

- sharing information on areas of common concern and successful implementation strategies – especially at the grassroots level
- sharing good practices by putting in place a system to twin organizations that are at different levels in implementing the Accord and Codes
- providing information-sharing opportunities to discuss good practices with departments
- supporting voluntary sector organizations in building in-house research and analytical capacity in new strategic areas of work