



Western Economic Diversification Canada Government On-Line Public Report

Government On-Line Vision and Strategy



Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) Government On-Line (GOL) vision is to deliver the department's mandate by providing products and services to Western Canadians through all types of service channels: in person, correspondence, fax, telephone, video-conferencing and the Internet. The challenge is to meet the diverse needs of our clients and to offer a variety of on-line products and services that meet those needs. The on-line products and services will complement – not replace – the use of existing methods of interacting with external clients. The departmental mandate is achieved through three core business lines supported by a strong program of economic research and analysis:

1. Innovation
2. Entrepreneurship
3. Sustainable Communities

WD's GOL Strategy resulted from over 16 months of consultations with WD staff, Western Canada Business Service Network partners, and clients. The strategy focuses on transposing WD's business lines into an electronic delivery service on the Internet. This electronic delivery channel will be designed around client needs and a GOL process will be developed that is scaleable, demand-driven, self-regulating and economical. WD's strategic action plan will be implemented gradually over a number of fiscal years. WD has identified the following on-line priorities to implement as funding becomes available.

Planned Key External Client Services

Innovation Services:



Innovation is more accurately defined as a process through which knowledge can be translated into new products, new services or an increase in productivity through new production methods. WD works to support the directions of the Government of Canada Innovation Strategy within Western Canada. Innovation is an important element in developing regional economies, capitalizing on new opportunities, and accessing global markets. Western Canada has generally high levels of productivity in some resource-based industries and is strengthening its capacity to exploit knowledge-based opportunities for economic growth. Innovation plays a large role in WD's activities, particularly through the Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPA's) and other initiatives. WD has identified a number of opportunities which appear to merit further investigation and is now working to determine the development and growth potential of opportunities associated with Canadian Light Source, Fuel Cells, Geomatics, Telehealth, and Technology Assessment Services.

Key components of Innovation Services are:

- Environmental Assessment Projects Database – ongoing database listing all WD projects that require environmental assessment. Current oversight provided by Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency for the Federal Environment Assessment Index (FEAI).
- E-Centre for Research Excellence – WD research documents, opinions on key topics, best practices, links to key innovation and economic development sites.
- Western Diversification Program (WDP) – access funding information on repayable contributions to businesses providing value-added activities directed at non-commercial research centres / universities.
- Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPA) – investment in non-commercial projects; 5-year bi-lateral agreements; provincial partners indicate interest in building on-line capacity.
- Canadian Innovation Centre (CIC) – Technology Assessment Services program offered by WD and the CIC. Through this program, WD and CIC have partnered to provide western Canadian technology owners and developers with credible evaluations of their technology-based products or business ideas.

- First Jobs in Science and Technology Program (FJSTP) – The First Jobs Program for recent science and engineering graduates helps to provide businesses with valuable technological expertise and provides western Canadians with their “first jobs” in areas related to their field of training.

Entrepreneurship Services:

WD is committed to helping western Canadian small and medium-sized businesses grow, diversify and create jobs. WD offers a network of business professionals to help with business planning and development, accessing capital, export or trade development, selling to government markets, and providing information and links to government programs and services.

Key components of Entrepreneurship Services are:

- Western Canadian Business Service Network (WCBSN) – unique to WD, this “Partnership Network” provides access to citizens in virtually every western Canadian community. The use of this network will be emphasized in the on-line delivery of direct entrepreneurship services to the public.
- E-Consulting – consulting services on-line with partners.
- E-Tools – suite of e-tools on-line for partners.
- Business Training and Counselling Services – virtual presenter, e-quizzes, PowerPoint templates.
- Small Business Pathfinding Loans – loans for small business pathfinding and tutorial tools.
- International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) – financial assistance available to hire recent graduates to help businesses grow and succeed in today’s competitive marketplace.

Sustainable Communities Services:



WD works to develop and diversify the western economy; coordinate federal economic development activities; represent western interests in national decision-making; partner with western provinces and cities, private industry, Aboriginal peoples, and other stakeholders; and, ensure that western business has fair access to industrial and regional benefits associated with major projects. WD brings a local perspective to local development issues.

This grassroots approach is served by 100 points of service across the west. Building communities requires major initiatives and partnership agreements designed to build communities that are healthy economically, socially and environmentally. These initiatives are part of WD's innovative, inclusive, sustainable and diversified approach to community development: Western Economic Partnership Agreements; Infrastructure Canada Program; Francophone Economic Development Initiatives; Urban Development Agreements; The Canada-Manitoba Partnership Agreement on Red River Valley Flood Protection; and, Western Canada Business Service Network.

Key components of Sustainable Communities Services are:

- Urban Development Agreements (UDA's) – developing web-based tools related to UDA's across western Canada; on-line briefings.
- Western Economic Partnership Agreements (WEPA's) – developing web-based tools related to WEPA's across western Canada; on-line briefings.
- Infrastructure Program – collaborative initiative lead by TBS to create an on-line electronic service delivery system for submitting funding proposals, receiving funding, and tracking financial data; on-line briefing.

Electronic Infrastructure Upgrades



WD is planning changes in its agency-wide, information technology infrastructure to support the delivery of these and other services, on-line and off. These include:

- Internet Infrastructure – upgrades to fibre-optic based links to enable WD Internet growth into the future.
- Web Processes – re-engineer business practices to support web-based delivery.
- Web Redesign – redesign content and appearance of WD Web pages and linkages.
- Web Content Management – establish content management system driven by templates designed to enhance the quality, accuracy and timeliness of information on WD on-line.
- Electronic Document Management System – install integrated suite of products to address WD's core electronic document and records management requirements.

- "Unite the Webs" – establish consistent standards to ensure interoperability, compatibility and shared usage of WD resources for the department's Internet, Intranet and Extranet sites.
- Client Service Content – develop e-business fact sheets, client comment card and other e-products for staff and client training that could be utilized by the WCBSN partners, particularly the Western Canada Business Service Centres. Examples of previous e-products developed by WD for use by its Partnership Network include the Interactive Business Planner and the Interactive Export Planner.
- E-Learning – develop an e-learning plan for the department; identifications of core on-line competencies.
- Chief Information Officer Branch (CIOB) – creation of a CIOB to integrate and oversee the various information functions (Information Technology, Information Management, Information Systems, Government On-Line & Business Services).

Electronic Communications Strategy

WD's GOL activities will be primarily marketed using two channels:

- On-line Media Centre – featuring corporate and ministerial information (events, announcements, news releases, speeches, success stories) presented in multi-media format.
- Internet Marketing – outreach and communications to drive traffic to WD's public web site among key audiences and, in particular, to encourage regular media use of the Media Centre.
- Regular internal promotion of WD's Intranet and Internet.
- Development of the Extranet web site as a stronger promotional vehicle for the Partnership Network with enhanced links to WD's internal and public web sites.
- Further development of on-line employee surveys, chat rooms and "talk back" tools and on-line consultation with partners and clients.
- On-line promotion and information about the realignment of WD's programs and services focused around awareness-raising and advocacy of the strategic directions: Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Communities.

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