

STRATEGIC PLAN 2001–2005

Department of Justice Canada



Vision

To be an outstanding department of government and a leader in the national system of justice.

Mission

To support the Minister of Justice in working to ensure that Canada is a just and law-abiding society with an accessible, efficient and fair system of justice.

To provide high-quality legal service and counsel to the government and to client departments and agencies.

To promote respect for rights and freedoms, the law and the Constitution.

Values

People

The Department's strength comes from all members of the organization who are committed to working together on the basis of mutual trust, support and respect.

Integrity and Fairness

We are committed to respecting and obeying the law and upholding the highest standards of integrity and fairness.

Service

We aim for excellence and constructive contributions in serving our Minister, the government and our clients.

Our Planning Environment

How will the Department of Justice contribute effectively to an improved quality of life for Canadians in an age of transformation? The Strategic Plan is our blueprint for responding to the many changes and pressures that are influencing the work we perform. These include:

- the changing role of the Government of Canada as a leader, coordinator, partner and steward;
- the evolution of the federal government into a knowledge-based organization;
- the increasing complexity and interdependence of legal and policy issues;
- increased litigiousness; and
- the broadening role of the Department of Justice in social and economic policy.



These trends are driven by changes in the demographic and ethno-cultural makeup, values and expectations of Canadian society, including:

- ongoing demand for more government accountability, openness and transparency;
- an increasing public interest in being informed about and influencing government decisions;
- public perceptions of the justice system as an important symbol and protector of shared values such as fairness and inclusiveness; and
- continuing concern for safety and security.

Internationally, the impact of new technologies and globalization has resulted in an explosion of new products and services, international businesses, borderless knowledge-sharing and communications as well as borderless crimes. The impact of such widespread transformation on Canada's environment, society, economy and culture has raised many diverse issues—most of which have legal implications.

Strategic Directions

Building on the Justice Forums, Executive Committee has developed Strategic Directions for the Department that will assist us in adapting to the changing and growing demands on our work and in providing a work environment that responds to the concerns of Department of Justice employees:

Serving Canadians: We will strive to make the justice system relevant, accessible and responsive to the needs of Canadians and we will provide effective stewardship of that system.

Providing High Value and Making Choices: In an environment where our workload is increasing and the needs of government and our clients are changing, we will focus on efficiently and effectively delivering cutting edge leadership and excellence in those areas of law and policy that are integral to the role of government or that are focused on emerging government priorities.

Capitalizing on Our Strengths: We will integrate the law and policy dimensions of our work to better meet the needs of government. We will use our presence across Canada and in all departments and agencies to generate timely and strategic advice for the government. We will work together, share information and knowledge, and create an enabling work environment.

Highlights

- Offer useful and relevant information on the justice system to Canadians
- Improve Canadians' ability to access justice system services
- Open up the policy development process to citizen participation through meaningful public consultation and engagement
- Consistently consider the public interest when delivering legal services and developing laws
- Provide leadership in the evaluation and improvement of the national justice system

Serving Canadians

We will strive to make the justice system relevant, accessible and responsive to the needs of Canadians and we will provide effective stewardship of that system.

Canadians want to understand their justice system, to access its services easily and to play a meaningful role in the system's evolution.

The Department is moving in the right direction to respond to this goal. We are improving our Internet site. We are pursuing pilot projects to draft legislation in more straightforward, accessible legal language. A review of the legal aid program is under way. The Department is also implementing a revitalized public consultation and engagement strategy that includes a new policy and guidelines, training for officials and resourcing for innovative pilot projects in citizen engagement.

Our commitment is to reach Canadians directly and ensure that their values are reflected in the work we do. To this end, we will also develop stronger communications and public legal education programs that are better resourced. We will also establish mechanisms to ensure that the public interest, the bijural nature of the legal system and the cultural diversity of Canada are taken into account when legal services are provided and laws are developed.

Canadians are served by the collaborative efforts of the federal, provincial and territorial governments who operate Canada's justice system. Academics, 'think-tank' organizations, professional associations, interest groups and the public are also involved. Among these players, the Department of Justice, with its national and international perspectives, also plays an important role in overseeing the justice system. Our role as effective stewards of the system requires a commitment to work with these partners to promote public awareness of the system's strengths and to assertively protect and improve the system's fairness and effectiveness. This commitment includes improving our ability to assess and report to our partners and the public on the state of the national justice system.

How will we get there? Some examples:

- Renew the Department's public consultation and citizen engagement strategy
- Expedite efforts to use plain language for legislation and regulations
- Strengthen the public legal education program
- Implement an electronic system to improve our ability to respond to public enquiries
- Improve the Department's Web site to make it more accessible and relevant
- Build a virtual law library and use other business transformation mechanisms like Government On-Line to make legal information more accessible to the public
- Follow up on the results of the Department's Access to Justice symposium, held last summer, to review and improve the effectiveness of access points to the justice system such as legal aid
- Develop communications and education initiatives to promote the unique bijural nature of Canada's justice system and its advantages to the public
- Develop performance indicators to assess the national justice system in collaboration with key partners and provide an annual report to Canadians
- Extend the Harmonization Program to all legislation being drafted

Highlights

- Capitalize on our unique expertise in areas of law and policy that support the role of government
- Improve our ability to anticipate and respond to emerging issues
- Build our capacity to provide policy development and advice
- Improve our capacity to bring a national, consistent and government-wide perspective to our legal services and to provide that perspective at an early stage

Providing High Value and Making Choices

In an environment where our workload is increasing and the needs of government and our clients are changing, we will focus on efficiently and effectively delivering cutting edge leadership and excellence in those areas of law and policy that are integral to the role of government or that are focused on emerging government priorities.

The demand for legal services continues to grow. At the same time, the nature of those legal services is changing, as our clients and the government as a whole look to us to serve a different kind of role in the management of legal and policy issues. Our challenge is to manage growing workloads and changing needs by focusing our resources and unique expertise on those areas that are the most important to the government, client departments and Canadians, and to where we can make the greatest contribution. In some cases, this may eventually mean stopping some work altogether, while in others, it will mean developing or expanding our efforts. In almost all cases, it will mean working differently.

Making choices about what we do:

To provide highest value, the Department of Justice will focus on providing leadership and excellence in areas of the law integral to governance such as Charter issues, administrative law, human rights, implementation of international agreements and public security. We will assertively play a role in social and economic policy development and we will maintain our leadership in areas of unique expertise such as legislative drafting and litigation involving government issues.

Our ability to deliver high value also depends on anticipating and providing unique, high-quality legal and policy expertise on emerging priorities such as e-government, international trade and biotechnology. We have already begun to develop our ability to scan for, identify and respond to emerging issues in collaboration with other departments and organizations. We will also reinforce the research, evaluation and intergovernmental relations services required to support this effort.

As the Department is more frequently asked to contribute to social and economic policy development across government, we will also make a clear choice to expand this role by revitalizing our policy development and advisory capacity and the research, evaluation and planning activities that support it.

Rethinking how we do it:

Re-examining the nature of the legal services we provide also gives us an opportunity to take a hard look at how we deliver them. A critical element in this effort is the review of the mandate and operations of our Federal Prosecution Service and the Legal Risk Management Initiative, which is reviewing the government's approach to litigation and how it manages legal risk. These projects have laid the groundwork that will permit us to work with central agencies, our clients and the provinces and territories to address the collective management of legal services, align service demands with resources, develop choices and alternatives to more traditional and sometimes less effective approaches, and increase the efficient management of law practice in the Department.

Improving the way we deliver legal services also demands that we come to terms with our dual responsibility to both satisfy the needs of client departments and present legal advice from a government-wide perspective. We are taking steps to reconcile diverse legal components of complex cases, both within the Department and with our clients, and to ensure that a national, government-wide and consistent perspective is integrated into our advice to clients at an early stage.

This effort is linked to the broader work we are doing with our clients and central agencies to plan and set priorities so that we can make intelligent choices about how to allocate resources more effectively and provide top quality services that address client needs. Setting clear priorities across the Department will also give employees and managers the direction, information and support they need to make choices about their own priorities and to more clearly focus their efforts at the working level. Our ultimate goal is to establish a more balanced workload in the Department.

Highlights (continued)

- More effectively manage legal services in collaboration with central agencies, clients and provincial and territorial governments
- Improve our ability to assess legal risk and make more use of alternatives to prosecution
- Promote alternatives to litigation for the resolution of disputes
- When appropriate, use means other than laws to achieve public policy objectives

How will we get there? Some examples:

- Develop a strategic planning capacity and information-sharing tools that improve tracking, forecasting and management of criminal prosecution matters
- Develop a framework to improve how we identify, resource and manage mega and complex cases
- Develop a government-wide system that involves client departments and regional offices to identify and assess legal risk
- Provide the Government of Canada and client departments with additional expertise and advice in legal risk avoidance and management
- Strengthen our capacity to provide integrated, strategic policy development and advice
- Review the use of programs as a way to implement policy
- Support DLSUs to reconcile the diverse views of individual client departments as well as the needs of clients with a “whole of government” perspective
- Establish a planning system with client departments and central agencies to set priorities for the delivery of legal and legislative services and policy development
- Develop a scanning system to identify emerging law and policy issues
- Hold or sponsor conferences, seminars and workshops on national legal trends
- Continue to build research, evaluation and intergovernmental relations services for the Department
- Develop a global strategy to guide the Department’s international activities, including our participation in *la Francophonie*



Capitalizing on Our Strengths

We will integrate the law and policy dimensions of our work to better meet the needs of government. We will use our presence across Canada and in all departments to generate timely and strategic advice for the government. We will work together, share information and knowledge, and create an enabling work environment.

With the advent of a more competitive and complex work environment, the Department of Justice must do more to recognize, develop and promote the unique strengths that distinguish us from all other legal service providers. We have an unparalleled knowledge base and array of talent in our policy and legal expertise that must be integrated and made accessible in order to successfully address the changing needs of government. We enjoy an enviable infrastructure through our presence in other federal government departments and agencies and in all regions of Canada, which offers us unlimited opportunity to develop more strategic, inclusive and complete approaches to our work. We also have exceptional affiliations to provincial, territorial, national and international organizations. We are committed to capitalizing on these strengths.

Our clients, central agencies and the judiciary expect us to deliver legal advice within a policy context—to understand the law, the policy it supports and the potential impact that legal advice could have on policy issues in the longer term. Accordingly, the Department will forge closer working relationships between our law and policy dimensions. We have already begun to develop an infrastructure and tools that not only support but also require this integrated approach to our work.

We are also well on our way in our efforts to expand the regional offices to include policy and communications expertise and to recognize their important role in contributing to a broader perspective in the provision of legal services and policy development. This includes taking more strategic advantage of the possibilities offered by technology as well as increased systems connectivity to expand our reach to regional offices and legal service units in client departments.

Highlights

- Strengthen the interconnectedness of law and policy
- Clarify and integrate the roles and responsibilities of regional offices
- Enhance working relationships with provincial, territorial, national and international organizations
- Strengthen linkages within and between Departmental sectors
- Support systems connectivity as a means to share information and manage knowledge
- Strengthen our human resource and financial management functions
- Promote initiatives to establish a supportive and enabling work environment

The Department is making progress in improving our ability to work together and to share knowledge and information. But we must do more to reinforce this organizational strength. We will continue to develop a more integrated, multi-disciplinary approach in the delivery of services and policy, which will demand more and better internal communication, coordination across sectors, consultation, teamwork and collaborative work arrangements. The benefits are clear and will support our drive to provide high value to government through more effective intelligence gathering, a more strategic and collective understanding of issues, and more efficient and effective delivery of legal and policy advice.

Underpinning our pledge to capitalize on our strengths is the need to ensure that we have the right people doing the right jobs with the right level of support. We will continue to strengthen the human resources and financial management functions of the Department so that we have breadth and depth of expertise, leadership and excellence. We will also continue to support and promote the Corporate Objectives and other initiatives that aim to build an enabling work environment.



How will we get there? Some examples:

- Identify and implement best practices that advance the integration of policy and legal services
- Establish a policy and communications presence in the regions
- Provide courses for employees on the policy development process in government and its links to legal operations
- Establish a communications program to support information-sharing across the Department about Strategic Plan initiatives
- Integrate internal communications planning into everyday operations and into training provided to employees
- Use multi-disciplinary teams and forums to address legal and policy issues
- Conduct a Legal Policy Trends Forum to exchange knowledge
- Strengthen linkages between the development of legislation and regulations
- Make progress on our pledge to establish technology that permits secure remote access, messaging and connectivity throughout the Department
- Improve information management practices and implement an electronic document management system
- Make better use of existing electronic tools and services and implement new ones to foster increased collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Support federal prosecutors in exercising their prosecutorial functions and in responding to disclosure requirements by providing electronic access to information sources
- Implement the Human Resources Strategy, which includes improving human resource tools, streamlining processes and strengthening programs to identify and develop expertise and leadership skills
- Continue to implement our Corporate Objectives, which will support employees' efforts to balance their home and work lives, reduce reliance on term employment, ensure adequate professional development for all employees and foster a harassment-free workplace
- Establish a formal program to support language proficiency in the Department

