

Summary of Evaluation of the Western Canada Business Service Centres
 Recommendations and Action Plan– February 5, 2004

Recommendations	Action Plan or Explanation of No action on the Recommendations	Responsible for Action	Estimated Completion Date
1. MEET THE MARKET HEAD-ON			
<p>1a. Focus on business operational issues, with the objective of creating a balanced portfolio of information and knowledge products and services that meet the needs of existing businesses as well as those of start-up businesses in the SME sector.</p>	<p>The evaluators identified the core services provided to clients, and noted that CBSC's are constantly adding new tools and delivering new services to address emerging issues, and to align their offerings with client needs. Although external referrals are normally made for more complex needs, CBSC's may allow themselves mandate creep in dealing with their clients. This could ultimately impact on their ability to deliver core services well.</p> <p>CBSC Managers must ensure that they address the contractual obligations and nationally identified core services. Incremental activities must be strategically addressed and must not impair the CBSC's ability to deliver their specified core services.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>1b. Develop a customer relationship management (CRM) strategy that enhances the Centres' ability to target basic SME information and knowledge needs, while respecting privacy rights. This strategy should also be designed to move beyond activity-based data in order to provide Managing Partners with meaningful information about the SME sector.</p>	<p>The evaluators concluded that CBSC's do not systematically track clients, and have yet to capture their market as fully as they might. An improved client management information system would allow CBSC's to offer services more tailored to the SME's. CRM would assist in this endeavour as well as enhance the quality of transactions and relationships with individuals over time.</p> <p>The CBSC's, managing a portfolio for both their federal and provincial partners, indicate that proper training in client tracking coupled with a strategic approach could provide them with more information about client needs.</p> <p>The evaluators noted a significant change in the needs of clients</p>		

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	<p>from the last CBSC evaluation, for example, both an increase in the number of clients thinking of starting a business, and an increase in the number of established businesses using the services. A CRM would assist CBSC's in strategically offering their services to a changing clientele.</p> <p>A national Portal Architecture and IM strategy is being developed, which will result in a CRM strategy. A national CRM sub-committee is in place. This issue will be dealt with at the national level.</p> <p>The National Secretariat is finalizing a new Multi-Channel Service Delivery Assistant (MSDA) which will be rolled out in 2004.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	<p>Under development nationally</p>
<p>1c. Conduct market research to develop a 'best of breed' profile of potential clients in the SME sector.</p> <p>The evaluation referred to 'best of breed' specifically in relation to alternative service delivery; the recommendation, however, is aimed at information gathering.</p>	<p>CBSC's monitor activity in the marketplace, and anticipate potential needs, e.g., entrepreneur training in response to major layoffs from telecommunications companies, or start-up of trades businesses with economic downturns.</p> <p>However, the current approach may not provide sufficient scientific rigor to be of full value. Other options that should be explored include a tighter tie-in with the partners, including, for example, WD's policy focus. Information that is gathered is not always shared with WD. This could be very productive, as WD has undergone a realignment of its business lines since the evaluation was completed.</p> <p>CBSC's and WD should explore ways of gathering data on CBSC activities, analyzing their contributions to the realigned WD priorities, identifying the best of these, and sharing these within WD and among the other CBSC's. The Pan-West Work Group conference calls of the Service Partnerships Secretariat provide</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	

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	an on-going avenue for sharing this information.	WD - SPS & Regional reps	On-going
1d. Test the market potential for cost recovery and modest service charges.	Core services cannot be charged for, as their provision without fee is the CBSC mandate. The evaluators found that more than 50% of clients would pay at least direct costs for many services. The evaluation only identified a willingness to pay, but not for which specific services, however these would have to be non-core.		
	Western CBSC's will develop and share lists of services for which they charge, to explore reasonable opportunities for generating additional revenues for incremental activities, without impacting core services.	C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS	Spring 2004
	WD will review its policy on revenue generation and communicate the policy to CBSC's. A clause for revenue recovery (e.g., for training material) will be considered for the next generation contract.	WD - SPS	April 2004
1e. If a communications strategy is adopted and implemented, focus on key messages about reliable, impartial, and important value-added business data. Be specific about how SME owner/operators will benefit.	<p>CBSC has a low recognition factor, even among CBSC clients. Advertising is required if CBSC's want to increase their market penetration.</p> <p>National branding is being discussed at the National level. A key message should be that government information is free of charge. However, the uniqueness of the west should be reflected within a national communication strategy, and Boards should be prepared to provide a regional flavour.</p> <p>This item needs to be addressed in a national plan; however if no national plan is forthcoming, a Western plan should be developed, aimed at intermediaries.</p>	CBSC Pan-West Work Group	<p><i>Discuss on July 8/03 conference call, after National Managers meeting in Yellowknife</i></p> <p>Revised Completion date: June 2004</p>
1f. Explore the next generation of the one-window approach, extending single access to provide bundled	This is on-going at the national level. Needs of centres must be fully understood by National Secretariat, and CBSC's should promote their own potential in this arena. Each region is unique,		

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services in addition to bundled information packages.	<p>and bottom-up bundling should be the guiding principle. National Secretariat must take account of this in negotiations with the Business Gateway.</p> <p>CBSC's to reaffirm common understanding and ensure that concerns are communicated to National Secretariat. A pan-western CBSC meeting should be convened to ensure shared understanding.</p>	CBSC Managers	<p><i>Meeting to be discussed</i></p> <p>Done (with on-going reporting with Nat'l Secretariat)</p>
2. MEET THE COMPETITION HEAD-ON			
<p>2a. Identify best e-government practices and demonstrate that Business Service Centres in western Canada meet or exceed requirements to satisfy the criteria for success. As a first step, adopt the performance measures outlined in the Accenture Report (<i>eGovernment Leadership - Realizing the Vision</i>), and include CBSC results in its annual and other reports.</p>	<p>The Accenture Report is available at: http://www.accenture.com/xd/xd.asp?it=enWeb&xd=industries\government\gove_welcome.xml</p> <p>Canada ranks first in the Accenture Report among all countries surveyed. Of the services identified in the report, Canada makes 90% of them available on-line to some degree.</p> <p>In the section entitled, "methodology and definitions," measurement criteria are identified. These should serve as guidelines for CBSC's in their IT planning and activities. National Secretariat would be responsible for ensuring the national picture is included in the Annual Report of the CBSC's.</p> <p>CBSC's should review the measures identified in the Accenture Report, and discuss whether these performance measures meet CBSC needs. This information can be used to develop their plans in 3c), below.</p> <p>Measures not deemed appropriate. On-going discussions in terms of new generation contract.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	<p>Revised completion date: April 2004</p>
2b. Engage the Advisory Committees	As the proper role of a Board of Directors is input and advice in the		

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<p>in designing web-based services and products.</p>	<p>evolution of policy, we understand this recommendation to imply awareness by the Board on the centre's array of products and services, and input into same.</p> <p>The Board needs to be aware of its contractual obligations and restrictions, such as Common Look & Feel, and it should be involved in the gap-analysis process, to ensure CBSC products are appropriate to client needs.</p> <p>CBSCs will undertake to ensure their respective Boards and Committees have good information on client needs, and on the products and services available to address them.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>2c. Explore the feasibility of becoming GOL's lead agency for developing policy and standards related to e-government SME programs. In particular, capitalize on the Centres' competitive strategy and potential market research which could pay dividends if a CRM strategy and potential market research were deployed to best effect.</p>	<p>This activity is being undertaken by the National Secretariat. They are in consultation with the Business Gateway, and are developing Content Management systems. It appears the CBSC's will play a major role in this activity.</p> <p>No specific action to be taken. This is sufficiently covered by 1f above that no separate action is recommended. However, the National Secretariat should be requested to share the outcomes of their meetings more fully.</p>	<p>SPS</p>	<p>May 2003</p>
<p>2d. Continue to explore ways of increasing the profile of Centres and Partners. BusinessGateway.gc.ca provides a precedent - it identifies provincial partners by displaying their flag as a logo. Using logos both on-line and off may offer a simple but effective answer to participants in the Business Service Network who need recognition.</p>	<p>This activity is being undertaken by the National Secretariat. Discussion of a National Logo for CBSC's is also being examined by National Secretariat and the Managers group.</p> <p>No specific action to be taken. This is sufficiently close to 1e above that no separate action is recommended.</p>		

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3. LOOK AFTER THE FUNDAMENTALS			
<p>3a. Refine the mandate to reflect what Business Service Centres in western Canada actually deliver, and align the mission with the mandate. Specifically, focus the mission statement on the three outcomes within a Centre's control - SME access to business information and knowledge, SME use of planning and analytical practices (management skills), both supported by a single portal with multiple sources of information and knowledge.</p>	<p>Clarification of the mandate should come at the National Level from the Managing Partners, but the mandate should be reflective of western regional needs as well as national priorities.</p> <p>There is variation in the products and services offered, but core deliverables must be provided.</p> <p>This fundamental issue addresses how CBSCs operate individually and as a network. This will be addressed through the communications strategy outlined above.</p> <p>Western CBSC's will work together to identify a specific western mandate which reflects the western reality, and which supports the national mandate.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	<p>Dec 31, 2003</p>
<p>3b. Develop a strategic plan.</p>	<p>CBSC Managers did an environmental scan and developed a SWOT analysis, out of which actions will be developed at a National level, with the concurrence of the Managing Partners. There is no timeline for this at the National level.</p> <p>Although this will eventually be addressed through the national action plan, western CBSC Managers should choose parts of the SWOT to work on and to provide structure to, in addition to and in support of any work at the national level.</p> <p>Western CBSC Managers should meet more frequently as a group.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	<p>National Committees have been struck</p> <p>Regular meetings are in place.</p> <p>Status: Meeting planned for June 2003</p>
<p>3c. Continue to provide a cadre of technical support staff to enhance each Centre's capacity to exploit both current and future information</p>	<p>There is an information technology group in National Secretariat that plays a role in helping coordinate technological advancements, but CBSC's should develop their own plans to take advantage of opportunities.</p>		

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<p>technologies, and capitalize on the technology's flexibility to meet differing regional needs.</p>	<p>CBSC's should continue to provide a cadre of technical support staff to enhance their capacity to exploit current and future information technologies, and capitalize on flexibility to meet differing regional needs. Compatibility with the national system is critical, but sub-committee participants must address present needs, and actively participate in future developments at the national level. IT staff attending national meetings need to ensure their voices are heard, and that proposed solutions are appropriate for regional realities.</p> <p>CBSC's should continue to participate in national meetings and training sessions, and have appropriate knowledgeable staff in place to implement it and to participate effectively at national sub-committee meetings.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS</p>	<p>In place.</p>
<p>3d. Review the survey results with respect to CMT (Common Measurement Tools) questions. Specifically, WD and the Treasury Board Secretariat may wish to consider linking potential market research and CRM strategies with future applications of the Common Measurement Tools.</p>	<p>Certain Common Measurement Tool questions were mandatory in the survey of clients for this evaluation, and provide a snapshot of service delivery comparable across regions.</p> <p>The National Secretariat will respond to this recommendation in their action plan, which is related to the Strategic Improvement Initiative of TB.</p> <p>CBSC's need to invoke performance measurement tools. Exploration of the Ontario model is being undertaken. The implementation of these can be discussed in western meetings and conference calls.</p>	<p>C/M BSC C/S BSC Business Link C/BC BSS WD-SPS</p>	<p><i>Initial discussions by June 30, 2003.</i></p> <p>Revised: On-going through June 2004</p>