



**Western Economic Diversification Canada  
Government On-Line (GOL)  
Public Report 2003**

**I. Departmental GOL Strategy - Overview Information**

**Government On-Line Vision and Strategy**

Western Economic Diversification Canada's (WD) Government On-Line (GOL) vision is to provide products and services to Western Canadians through all service delivery channels: in person, correspondence, fax, telephone, video-conferencing and the Internet. The on-line products and services will complement, not replace, existing methods of interacting with external clients. On-line services will be developed where it responds to client demand and is deemed cost-effective.

WD initiated two key department-wide changes in 2003/04 to enable more effective service transformation and the delivery of GOL client services: the redesign of departmental programs to focus on informational services and partnership developments; and, a new emphasis on service transformation through the establishment of an Information Management and Technology Section to align WD's strategic objectives with electronic service delivery solutions.

The Information Management and Technology (IMT) section develops solutions to support new and existing business process models that address information and document management needs within WD. IMT will continue with the application of GOL principles and guidelines and ongoing upgrades in the areas of web process re-engineering, web redesign and web content management to enhance current and future on-line initiatives.

WD's GOL initiative is integrated into departmental programming and policy considerations. On-line products have been developed in support of the WD strategic directions: Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Communities. On-line business tools, workshop presentations and interactive guides are available to aid entrepreneurs. On-line submission guidelines are provided to enable access to business development programs.

WD has identified the following on-line priorities in light of a recent realignment. Government On-line objectives will be achieved by moving the activities from a separate unit into mainstream decision-making. This will ensure that as programs and services are evolved or new ones are developed, consideration regarding on-line delivery will naturally be included in the process. Accordingly, WD has categorized GOL activities as follows:

- Grants and Contributions Funding Service – includes all programs delivered by the department that were reflected in 2002.
- Information Sharing and Exchange Service - includes information particular to economic development within western Canada that has been developed by WD, often in partnership with other research organizations or industry associations.

Both services can be found at <http://www.wd-deo.gc.ca>.

For further information, please contact:

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## II. GOL Services Reporting

### Grants and Contributions Funding Service

WD grants and contribution (G&C) funds are distributed within a strategic framework categorized into three strategic priorities: Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Sustainable Communities. WD manages five G&C programs, each governed by a separate set of Terms and Conditions, and respective results-based management documents. WD's current programs are:

| English  | French   |
|--|--|
| Western Economic Diversification Program (WDP)     | Programme de diversification de l'économie de l'Ouest (PDEO)           |
| Innovation and Community Investment Program (ICIP) | Programme d'investissement dans l'innovation et les communautés (PIIC) |
| WD Loan Investment Program (LIP)                   | Programme de prêts et d'investissement de DEO (PPI)                    |
| Service Delivery Network Program (SDNP)            | Programme du réseau de prestation de services                          |
| Women's Enterprise Initiative (WEI)                | Initiative pour les femmes entrepreneurs (IFE)                         |
| Community Futures Program (CFP)                    | Programme de développement des collectivités                           |

WD's primary focus is on economic development that recognizes the complexities associated with diversifying the western economy. As a result, WD activities also contribute to Aboriginal, environmental, health, and other areas that affect Canadians. WD's programs are delivered in partnership with other organizations via projects that are unique to each circumstance. This targeted and customized approach requires considerable discussion and exploration to uncover mutual interests and outcomes.

At this time WD's website shares success stories and opportunities to help clients determine the appropriate funding program to pursue. This information is made available via departmental reports and news releases regarding projects receiving funding from the respective programs. Progressive efforts to refocus the website to be more client-centric in support of Grants and Contribution programs will be established with a newly formed Web Working Committee. WD recognizes the need to provide improved ease of access and navigation through significant volumes of program information currently on-line. By 2005, enhanced functionality will be created based on client and program officer input. Readiness for direct prospect/client interaction is contingent upon availability of generic Secure Channel modules and sustainability in the department's delivery of projects over multi-year durations.

Canadians will benefit in the following ways:

- Easier Access e.g. available 24/7.
- Better information leading to increased education, skills, and professional development opportunities that support increased business opportunities.
- Other non-quantifiable benefits to clients, e.g. improved ability to make decisions, elimination of geographic barriers, knowledge creation, increased transparency/accountability, greater trust. WD's flexibility in the types of projects it funds can make it difficult to convey the purpose of a particular program. News releases on projects supported by G&C funds assist the public to understand the purpose, expected outcomes and funding recipients.

Two research surveys were conducted over an 18-month period concluded in March 2002 using different types of methodologies. These included: on-line surveys for employees, telephone interviews with partner organizations, interviews and focus groups with WD's clients. Results from the Western Economic Diversification Canada Client Satisfaction Survey indicate that 75% of participants were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' overall with their most recent contacts with WD. The 2002 level of client satisfaction was compared with 2001 (77%). The other survey focused on Program Development and Strategic Services (PDSS) that indicated 90% of the participants were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their most recent contacts with WD.

With the change in the WD business model for 2003, WD staff engaged as client service officers at business service centres, have been realigned back into "WD proper" into their respective regional "Operations" branches. Additional service delivery staff are engaged dependent on the location and program being

administered, for example, additional staff have been engaged in the BC region to support the administration of funds for the Softwood Lumber program to help those communities diversify, which are being impacted by the current softwood lumber tariff dispute.

As we progress with the evolution of our public site, by 2005 we anticipate duration of response times to decrease as clients will be able to perform more diligent fact-finding on-line and self-assessment in preparation for appropriate application funding. The anticipated redesign of the public site to be more responsive to prospect and client needs will facilitate this decrease in response time. Also, any marketing collateral produced already includes the website reference.

We anticipate as programs are designed to support multi-year financed projects, complexities will increase. Complexity may increase at different phases of a funding application depending on the nature of the request and identifying the appropriate program to submit an application.

At this time, no change is expected in the physical points of presence, however the redeployment of personnel across channels may occur depending on the nature of the programs continuing and being developed during this reporting period.

Across all three strategic directions, WD uses strategic partnerships - with other levels of government, the private sector, universities and communities - to maximize the investment in Western Canada's most valuable resources, the talents, energies and ideas of its people. The goal of ensuring all Western Canadians - including Aboriginals, youth, women, and residents of remote and northern communities - have an opportunity to participate in and contribute to, the economic success of the region and our country underlies all of our activities.

Opportunities for service transformation are in the process of being determined with primary focus on internal processes to gain alignment across regions. As we progress to 2005, WD anticipates interoperability in terms of sharing timely information and being able to facilitate transactions more efficiently between regions, partners and clients. For example, we expect a common project assessment tool will provide business intelligence in the review and assessment of similar applications across regions, enabling consistent decisions to be made. In addition, significant consultation and collaboration occurs with other Regional Development Agencies and other public sector jurisdictions.

Also, the creation of the department Information Management and Technology section contributes to the implementation of Service Transformation by aligning all the information functions into one area and employing electronic service delivery as a fundamental principle for any new development. Currently, integrating services across programs within WD and across jurisdictions or sectors include: the four western provinces, municipal governments, not-for-profit and non-government organizations, and the private sector.

### **Information Sharing and Exchange Service**

WD brings a local perspective to local development issues. This grassroots approach is served by 100 points of service across the west via the Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN) [[http://www.wd.gc.ca/pos/default\\_e.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/pos/default_e.asp)] including Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs), Women's

Enterprise Initiatives (WEIs), Francophone Economic Development Organizations (FEDOs), and the Canada Business Services Centres (CBSCs).

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. Information Services include four areas: Media Centre, E-Centre for Research Excellence, E-Tools and Other WD and Partner Website information.

The Media Centre is updated regularly. Improvements may result in a review to begin in the fall of 2003. The eResearch area has been revamped. WD's transition away from direct client service may cause further development in eTools unless in partnership via the WCBSN, partner-related links and enhancements will evolve based on mutual interests.

Progressive efforts to refocus the website [<http://www.wd-deo.gc.ca>] to be more client-centric will be established with the newly formed Web Working Committee. The website needs to better target different audiences and provide direct navigation to meet specific needs. Revision to existing support tools and potential additions based on client recommendations will be considered. This will enable greater interaction providing direct support to the client.

WD's primary focus is on economic development that recognizes the complexities associated with diversifying the western economy. As a result, WD activities also contribute to Aboriginal, environmental, health, and other areas that affect Canadians. WD's programs are delivered in partnership with other organizations via projects that are unique to each circumstance. This targeted and customized approach requires considerable discussion and exploration to uncover mutual interests and outcomes.

Canadians benefit in the following ways:

- Easier Access e.g. available 24/7.
- Time Savings e.g. quicker transaction turnaround times, faster responses to information requests. WD's estimate for request and distribution on a call-in request is 3-5 business days. Estimated saved time is 2-5 business days/transaction.
- Simplified interactions with government e.g. reduction in number of steps that clients have to complete to receive the service, reduction in the amount of information they have to provide, reduction in the number of organizations they have to deal with. Better information leading to increased education, skills, and professional development opportunities.
- Better information leading to increased business opportunities.
- Other non-quantifiable benefits to clients, e.g. improved ability to make decisions, elimination of geographic barriers, knowledge creation, increased transparency/accountability, greater trust. WD's four sub-components demonstrate non-quantifiable benefits to clients and as well other information such as departmental audit reports on WD's website.

Two research surveys were conducted over an 18 month period concluding in March 2002 using different types of methodologies. These included: on-line surveys for employees, telephone interviews with partner organizations, interviews with Program Development and Strategic Services (PDSS) clients, and finally focus groups with WD's Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) clients. The Western Economic Diversification Canada Client Satisfaction Survey reported: 75% of participants indicated that, overall, they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their most recent contacts with WD. The 2002 level of client satisfaction was constant compared with 2001 (77%). The PDSS Client Satisfaction Survey resulted in 90% of the participants indicating that overall, they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their most recent contacts with WD.

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