

Western Economic Diversification Canada Government On-Line — Public Report 2001

Departmental Mandate



The mandate of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is to promote the development and diversification of the Western Canadian economy and to advance the national economic policy interests of the West. The departmental mandate is achieved through three core

business lines supported by a strong program of economic research and analysis:

1. Innovation
2. Business Development and Entrepreneurship
3. Partnership and Coordination

WD assists its clients through all service channels: face-to-face, correspondence, fax, telephone, video-conferencing and the Internet.

Government On-Line Vision and Strategy



WD's 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. 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.

WD's GOL Strategy resulted from over six months of consultations with WD staff, Western Canada Business Services 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 scalable, demand-driven, self-regulating and economical. WD's strategic action plan will be implemented gradually over a number of fiscal years. WD has identified on-line priorities to implement as funding becomes available.

Key External Client Services Planned

The GOL Action Plan is proposed to include:

1. Innovation



WD is supporting innovation in Western Canada through strategic investments in the key economic sectors of telehealth, geomatics, genomics, fuel cells, ocean industries, new media, Canadian Light Source, Greenhouse Gas Sequestration, Design Engineering and Advanced Transportation.

These types of science and technology projects will result in an exchange of high-level information among diverse groups. The projects will be enhanced through the use of information and communication technology. All levels of government, the university research community, and corporate research and development organizations will participate and collaborate on innovation projects. Innovation project partners will be able to share critical information on-line in a timely fashion through the WD Website. This will enhance the growth of the research and development base in Western Canada.

Projects, such as Fuel Cells research in Vancouver and the Synchrotron initiative at the University of Saskatchewan, will establish leading-edge research centers and institutions in Canada as well as create spin-off companies and industries. The economic benefits of such projects may span many jurisdictions and provinces. Vertical and horizontal supply chain and integration opportunities may develop as a result of the on-line exchange of information.



2. Business Development and Entrepreneurship

Develop a suite of virtual e-tools to expand the reach and clientele of WD to include as many Western Canadians as possible, and to serve international clients who wish to know more about doing business and investing in Western Canada.

The e-tools will provide tutorials and expert advice on a wide range of small business and Western Canadian economic development topics.

A key goal will be to deliver those projects, business seminars, business planning and analysis tools which provide the best impact for our clients, and focus strategically on those initiatives that are achievable by 2004.

3. Partnership and Coordination:



A new Partners On-Line (POL) Program, called the GOL Investment Fund, is proposed. This new generation of POL would allow partners to use the suite of e-tools developed by WD for promotion and information purposes. The opportunity may also exist to collaborate with our partners on the development of other on-line projects.

The POL program has been used to assist partners in the Western Canada Business Services Network (WCBSN) to acquire web technology. The WCBSN partners include the following groups in Western Canada: Community Futures Development Corporations, Women's Enterprise Organizations, Canada Business Services Centres, Francophone Economic Development Groups.

Developing Web Capacity



Web-Based Products and E-Tool Development. A new Suite of E-Tools would be developed for the WD Website based on consultations with staff, clients and WCBSN partners. The tools would include virtual presentations and interactive learning e-workshops on topics of interest identified by WD clients such as innovation, marketing and e-business. The Website will be continually updated and improved to provide enhanced public access to government services funded through WD.



Staff Training. Staff would receive extensive corporate-based training and support on how to use the Internet to better assist clients and partners, and how to use the new web-based products and e-tools that would be created within the Department and with partners.



Information Technology Infrastructure Upgrade. A major upgrade of WD's Internet (www.wd-deo.gc.ca) infrastructure is proposed to keep pace with changing technology requirements and rising client expectations. The upgrade would involve a new video-conferencing capability, the installation of a new wide-area network (WAN), along with other Internet-related hardware and infrastructure equipment.

Note: GOL initiatives identified in this action plan are dependent on available resources, client demand and departmental priorities. The on-line services are subject to change as departmental funding and priorities evolve.

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