

Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative

How did the CCI get started?

Environment and Labour delivers many of the major regulatory programs of the Government of Nova Scotia. Its broad span of statutory responsibilities includes protection of workplaces, workers, public safety, communities, and the environment. Having these responsibilities within a single department presents opportunities for cross-cutting initiatives that will improve our effectiveness and capacity at achieving these mandates.

In May 2005, the Government approved an initiative designed by the department to improve our regulatory systems, and achieve better compliance with our regulations by business and other regulated organizations. This initiative is called the Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative (CCI). This reflects an integrated, multi-year effort across the department's programs to build on existing expertise and add capacity to ensure an effective, modern regulatory environment.

How does the Department's CCI fit with Government's broader Better Regulation Initiative?

The CCI is a key part of the Government's Better Regulation Initiative. As a major regulatory department, Environment and Labour plays a leadership role in the design and implementation of the province-wide Better Regulation Initiative.

The Better Regulation Initiative represents the next phase of the Government of Nova Scotia's actions to address the costs that unnecessary regulations, and uncoordinated and duplicative regulatory requirements, can represent for Nova Scotia's businesses and citizens. The first phase of this work was launched in 2000 with the establishment of the Red Tape Reduction Task Force. In its final report in Fall 2004, the task force noted several achievements, and concluded that a sustained effort is required for the continuous improvement of our regulations. In response, the Province launched the Better Regulation Initiative in Spring 2005.

The Better Regulation Initiative is a "whole of Government" process to improve the laws and regulations in Nova Scotia. *Better Regulation* will protect the things all Nova Scotians value – such as public health and safety, communities, and the

environment. At the same time, *Better Regulation* will make it easier for businesses to comply with regulations, reduce unnecessary administrative costs associated with regulations, and help make Nova Scotia's economy more competitive. The CCI is one of the four initial priority areas of the Better Regulation Initiative.

What is CCI's goal?

Broadly stated, the goal of the CCI is to achieve "regulatory excellence" across the programs of Environment and Labour. The words Competitiveness and Compliance are important.

Competitiveness – The CCI will make a significant contribution to the competitiveness of Nova Scotia's economy, by ensuring regulations are well designed, clearly communicated and administered, and enforced with consistency and dependability. The elimination of regulatory requirements that are no longer necessary or are duplicated by other agencies or programs, and the expanded use of electronic technologies, will result in streamlined processes for business and citizens to reduce the unnecessary administrative complexity and costs often associated with regulations.

Compliance – The CCI will allow the department to enhance our ability to protect and enhance the environment, public health, and employee and public safety, by making sure our programs use regulatory and non-regulatory tools effectively to achieve compliance outcomes, by making it easier for our regulated clients to understand and achieve compliance, by supporting our inspectors with better training and electronic tools, and by improving our ability to measure and monitor our performance.

These two words summarize the two complementary goals of the CCI. Competitiveness does not need to be traded off against Compliance – these goals are mutually reinforcing and need to be considered together as the department works with public and private partners to develop and implement programs to achieve our statutory mandates.



What is the CCI doing?

The CCI is changing the way Environment and Labour performs the role of regulator. It's changing how we think about laws and regulations, how we design them, and how we apply them.

The CCI is not a 'quick fix.' It is a systematic, ongoing approach to improving laws and regulatory programs over the long term. It is taking a consistent approach to making new laws and regulations, considering their impacts on business, and enforcing them. The CCI is also looking at existing laws and regulations to see if some can be improved and supplemented with non-regulatory initiatives that reinforce the objectives of the regulations. At the same time, the CCI is working with various organizations, the business community and the public to improve awareness of and the ability to comply with regulations.

How does the CCI work?

The CCI is working through four streams:

1) Regulatory Framework

This stream is helping Environment and Labour better design, administer and enforce our regulatory tools. We are already working on policies and procedures for deciding if or when new laws are needed, for designing them, and for engaging stakeholders. We are also creating performance measurement approaches, a common compliance model and an activity tracking system to be used across divisions.

2) Science Strategy

Better regulation must be based on good science. We are developing a multi-year science strategy to make sure our decisions reflect the most up-to-date scientific and technological information available. In addition, we want to exchange knowledge with our stakeholders and the public to build our mutual capacity and awareness. This strategy will include a series of science forums on issues important to Nova Scotians. We have already held science forums on Biosolids and Air Quality. These sessions involve business, academics, non-government organizations, government and local community members.

3) Learning Strategy

To be better regulators, we must provide top-quality training to our staff. We are developing a multi-year learning strategy to ensure that staff have the knowledge, skills and support they need to develop and deliver quality regulatory programs. This strategy will help us ensure consistent and dependable regulatory programs – now and in the future.

We are already holding staff sessions, our departmental Knowledge Days, across the province so we can share and reinforce what we're learning about best regulatory practices. We are also developing a common basic training program for all inspectors, investigators and prosecutors in the department. This training will improve consistency in how our laws are enforced.

4) Compliance Promotion

Many of the complaints we receive are not about the laws themselves, but businesses and our stakeholders say they don't always understand the regulations or what they need to do to comply with them. This is where the compliance promotion stream comes in. It develops ways to make laws and regulations easier to understand and follow.

We're tackling this issue from several angles. We're reaching out to the business community and our stakeholders with easy-to-understand information about regulations and how to follow them. We're also targeting specific regulatory programs in need of review, including: our on-site septic system regulations to provide a faster turnaround on approvals, as well as increased in-field inspections to improve consumer protection; regulatory amendments to allow licenses to be renewed on a three year cycle rather than annually; and a review of our liquor licensing regulations to ensure they reflect modern business practices.

Yes, but what does CCI mean to me?

The CCI is a long-term process that will lead to real and noticeable improvements in our laws and regulations and improve compliance and consistency across the province. As a result, you will see safer communities, fairer workplaces and a cleaner environment.

Business owners will notice that running a business can be simpler when regulations are easy to understand and follow. They will avoid costly penalties brought on by non-compliance. Improved compliance will mean a level playing field for our businesses. All these factors help Nova Scotia businesses be more productive and more competitive at home and abroad.

CCI will lead to more dependability and consistency in the programs we run and the decisions we make every day in Environment and Labour. This will make sure we keep protecting the things that matter to Nova Scotians. Better regulation is the CCI's main goal. By helping us regulate better, you ensure a brighter future for our people, our economy, our environment and our communities.

Where can I get more information on the Competitiveness and Compliance Initiative?

Find out more about the CCI at its Web site at:
www.gov.ns.ca/enla/cci



Environment and Labour