



**99-718
REPORT**

**Review of the IM/IT Planning and
Governance Processes
in the Human Resources Branch**

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Executive Summary

Authority for the Project

The Review of Information Management / Information Technology (IM/IT) Planning and Governance Processes in the Human Resources Branch (HRB), Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) was undertaken as part of the approved 1999-2000 Audit and Review Branch Annual Plan.

Objectives

The objectives of the project were to review and assess the effectiveness and timeliness of the IM/IT planning and governance processes in the Human Resources Branch (HRB).

Scope

The scope of the review included the IM/IT planning and governance processes in the HRB as well as related interfaces with the Departmental IM/IT planning and governance structure. In addition, the Departmental and HRB business planning processes were considered within the context of the Review's objectives. All organizational sectors within the HRB and GTIS as well as other organizations that have an impact on the HRB IM/IT planning and governance were included within the scope of the review.

Background

The HRB makes extensive use of technology to facilitate and support human resource management at Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC). There are several existing human resource management corporate systems including the Human Resources Management System (HRMS), WinOrg, the Integrated Training System (ITS), the Leave Information Management System (LIMS) and the HRB Intranet site.

The HRB Management Committee established the *Branch Informatics Sub-Committee (BISC)* in February 1999. The BISC has several IM/IT related responsibilities including the development of an IM/IT vision and strategic plan for the HRB. The BISC membership has broad representation from the HRB and also includes representation from the Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services (GTIS) Branch.

In addition to being a service provider, the GTIS Branch is considered a partner by the HRB as it provides technical support services to assist the HRB in managing and operating its IT systems.

Key Findings

As the HRB is undertaking the establishment of a new management control framework for IM/IT the Review did not examine, in detail, the results of previous planning cycles. The Review focused on recent and planned management initiatives to determine their potential to contribute to the effectiveness and timeliness of the IM/IT planning and governance in the HRB.

HRB IM/IT Strategy

The HRB has taken steps to articulate its IM/IT strategy and priorities by producing documents such as the *HRB IM/IT Priorities for the Next Three Years*, the *HR Intranet Vision 1998* and by providing input to the *PWGSC Information Management Plan (IMP) 1998-2000*. The HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Process Review Workshop participants indicated, however, that a clearer statement of vision relating to the HRB IM/IT strategies is needed to guide the Branch. Furthermore, the current documentation of the HRB IM/IT priorities does not provide a complete description of the HRB business objectives and how the Branch intends to support those requirements through the use of technology. There is limited information on existing systems and infrastructure as well as the implications of future technological directions. The potential consequences of the identified business drivers are not described and linked to the related IM/IT solutions. The challenges that may be faced by the HRB in providing the desired IM/IT service are not described including the integration of the intranet vision. Finally, there is no integrated high level implementation plan identifying and describing the steps to be taken and the resources required over the next several years.

The HRB has several components of a IM/IT strategic plan, however, there is currently no comprehensive IM/IT vision and strategy document to provide stakeholders with a clear description of the future business technology needs and guidance on how to provide for those requirements. Development and acceptance of a comprehensive IM/IT vision and strategy would increase the likelihood that the HRB business needs will be adequately supported by its technology investment.

HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Framework

The HRB has recently strengthened the management of IM/IT from a Branch perspective by establishing the Branch Informatics Sub-Committee (BISC) with current representation from the HR Directorates, the HR Service Centres, and GTIS. There is planned representation from Regional HR Directorates. The BISC which is chaired by the Director, Service Development and Client Relations, HRB reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister HRB Management Committee. Although the mandate of the BISC is described, its approval authority levels are not clearly stated.

Beyond the BISC mandate, the roles and responsibilities related to the HRB IM/IT planning and governance are not completely defined.

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The HRB management control framework for IM/IT is not yet developed. Not yet defined are documented planning, performance tracking/monitoring/reporting processes as well as evaluation processes. Project screening, ranking and assessment criteria as well as Branch wide management mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on projects and implemented systems are not in place.

The Chair, BISC has indicated the intention to include the definition of the HRB IM/IT management processes as part of the BISC work-plan for this year.

During the conduct of interviews and the workshop with HRB and GTIS, it was clear that there is a positive working relationship between HRB and GTIS.

Documented planning/monitoring processes, authority levels and assessment criteria would reduce risk by contributing to consistent, timely and effective decision making. The establishment of a formal post implementation review and evaluation mechanism would ensure that "lessons learned" information is used to ensure the continued effectiveness of the IM/IT management process.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. *the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Branch ensures that a comprehensive HRB IM/IT Strategic Plan, including a clear statement of vision, is developed to provide stakeholders with a description of the planned IM/IT solutions expected to meet HR business objectives.*
2. *the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Branch ensures that the roles/responsibilities and authority levels for all entities/participants in the management of IM/IT in the HRB are defined and made available to all stakeholders.*
3. *the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Branch ensures that the HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance processes and procedures are developed and formalized in the key areas of planning, tracking/oversight and evaluation.*

1 Introduction

1.1 Authority for the Project

The Review of Information Management / Information Technology (IM/IT) Planning and Governance Processes in the Human Resources Branch (HRB), Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) was undertaken as part of the approved 1999-2000 Audit and Review Branch Annual Plan.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the project were to review and assess the effectiveness and timeliness of the IM/IT planning and governance processes in the Human Resources Branch (HRB).

1.3 Scope

The scope of the review included the IM/IT planning and governance processes in the HRB as well as related interfaces with the Departmental IM/IT planning and governance structure. In addition, the Departmental and HRB business planning processes were considered within the context of the Review's objectives. All organizational sectors within the HRB and GTIS as well as other organizations that have an impact on the HRB IM/IT planning and governance were included within the scope of the review.

1.4 Approach and Methodology

The review included interviews of key personnel, review of documentation and a self assessment workshop involving HRB and Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services (GTIS) personnel to examine the IM/IT planning and governance framework used by the HRB to manage its IM/IT investment.

The self-assessment workshop was conducted using key participants involved in the planning and management of IM/IT in the HRB. The purpose of the workshop was to identify issues and barriers to effective management of IM/IT in the HRB and to collect information regarding the HRB IM/IT management control framework. The evolving HRB IM/IT planning and governance processes were compared to the *Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) Enhanced Management Framework (EMF) for Information Technology*. The workshop results as summarized in Appendices A and B were sent to all participants for validation.

The approach used in this review did not include a Preliminary Survey Report.

The review approach was consistent with the *Treasury Board Manual on Internal Audit*.

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1.5 Background

The Human Resources Branch (HRB) makes extensive use of technology to facilitate and support human resource management at Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC). There are several existing human resource management corporate systems including the Human Resources Management System (HRMS), WinOrg, the Integrated Training System (ITS), the Leave Information Management System (LIMS) and the HRB Intranet site.

The HRB Management Committee established the *Branch Informatics Sub-Committee (BISC)* in February 1999. The BISC mandate includes responsibility for development of a IM/IT strategic plan/vision, approval of specific IM/IT initiatives, allocation of IM/IT funding and approval of the IM/IT capital plan for HRB. The Committee membership has broad representation from the HRB and also includes representation from the Government Telecommunications and Informatics Services (GTIS) Branch. The first meeting of the BISC was in April 1999.

Several IM/IT initiatives were identified in the February 1999 HRB *IM/IT Priorities for the Next Three Years*. These priorities included:

- Replacement of the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) *
- Use of the Integrated Training System (ITS)
- Improved integrity of HR data
- Optimal access and use of HR information by line managers, employees and HR practitioners through various tools including the Intranet
- Development of a strong GTIS / HRB partnership

The February 1999 HRB *IM/IT Priorities for the Next Three Years* document recognized the Universal Classification Standard (UCS) implementation, La Relève, PWGSC plans and priorities as well as the HRB Business Partnering Model as major business drivers for IM/IT in the HRB.

In addition to being a service provider, the GTIS Branch is considered a partner by the HRB as it provides technical support services to assist the HRB in managing and operating its IT systems.

** In the 1st quarter 1999 the ADM, HRB and the PWGSC Information Management Committee (IMC) approved a proposal to move the HRMS to a new technology platform.*

2 Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

As the HRB is undertaking the establishment of a new management control framework for IM/IT the Review did not examine, in detail, the results of previous planning cycles. The Review focused on recent and planned management initiatives to determine their potential to contribute to the effectiveness and timeliness of the IM/IT planning and governance in the HRB. The following presents the Audit and Review Branch's findings, conclusions and recommendations in that regard:

2.1 HRB IM/IT Vision and Strategy

There is currently no comprehensive strategic IM/IT vision and plan for the HRB. The Branch, however, has taken steps to articulate its IM/IT strategy and priorities by producing documents such as the February 1999 HRB IM/IT Priorities for the Next 3 Years, the 1998 HR Intranet Vision and by providing input to the PWGSC Information Management Plan (IMP) 1998-2000.

The HRB IM/IT Priorities for the Next 3 Years document briefly outlines the HRB business context, business drivers (e.g., La Relève, UCS), desired outcomes and key IM/IT priorities. The HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Process Review workshop participants indicated, however, that a clearer statement of vision relating to the HRB IM/IT strategies is needed to guide the Branch. Furthermore, the current documentation of the HRB IM/IT priorities does not provide a complete description of the HRB business objectives and how the Branch intends to meet those requirements. There is limited information on existing systems and infrastructure as well as the implications of future technological directions. The potential consequences of the identified business drivers are not described and linked to the related IM/IT solutions. The challenges that may be faced by the HRB in providing the desired IM/IT service are not described, including the integration of the intranet vision. Finally, there is no integrated high level implementation plan identifying and describing the steps to be taken and the resources required over the next several years.

Conclusion

Although the HRB has several related components, there is currently no comprehensive IM/IT vision and strategy document to provide stakeholders with a clear description of the future business technology needs and guidance on how to provide for those requirements. Development and acceptance of a comprehensive IM/IT vision and strategy would increase the likelihood that the HRB business needs will be adequately supported by its technology investment.

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Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

1. *the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Branch ensures that a comprehensive HRB IM/IT Strategic Plan, including a clear statement of vision, is developed to provide stakeholders with a description of the planned IM/IT solutions expected to meet HR business objectives.*

2.2 HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Framework

2.2.1 HRB IM/IT Governance Structure

The HRB established the Branch Informatics Sub-Committee (BISC) in February 1999. The BISC has current representation from the HR Directorates, the HR Service Centres and GTIS. There is planned representation from Regional HR Directorates. The BISC, which is chaired by the Director, Service Development and Client Relations, HRB reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister, HRB Management Committee.

The mandate of the BISC is documented in the *Human Resources Governance Structure*, however, its approval authority levels are not clearly stated.

Beyond the statement of mandate for the BISC, the roles and responsibilities of the entities/participants involved in the management of IM/IT in the HRB are not completely defined.

Conclusion

The HRB has strengthened the management of IM/IT from a Branch perspective with the formation of the BISC. However, the definition of the roles/responsibilities and authority levels for all entities/participants involved in the management of IM/IT in the HRB is required to ensure a common understanding amongst stakeholders and effective application.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

2. *the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Branch ensures that the roles/ responsibilities and authority levels for all entities/participants involved in the management of IM/IT in the HRB are defined and made available to all stakeholders.*

2.2.2 HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Processes

Principles related to the planning, performance monitoring/reporting, and evaluation phases selected from the TBS IM/IT EMF Investment Management Process Model as well as the related findings, conclusions and recommendations from the Review are presented below:

2.2.2.1 Planning

Principle - Selection of the right mix of IM/IT projects that best meet business needs and priorities.

The planning phase entails the assessment and prioritization of current and proposed IM/IT projects and the creation of the IM/IT projects portfolio. In doing so, the planning phase helps ensure that the organization selects those IM/IT projects that will best support mission needs. As well, it ensures that a project's risks and returns are identified and analysed before spending a significant amount of project funds.

A critical element of this phase is that management makes project selection and prioritization decisions based on a consistent set of decision criteria that compare costs, benefits, risks and potential returns of the various IM/IT projects.

Planning - Findings

The key review findings pertaining to the HRB IM/IT investment management planning processes are as follows:

- Although the HRB has historically participated in the annual GTIS driven operational planning process which identified its annual IM/IT maintenance and project initiatives there was no formally defined HRB IM/IT planning process designed to assist in meeting HRB business needs.
- Business cases for proposed IM/IT initiatives were submitted to the HRB Management Committee (BMC) for approval.

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- Projects were screened and ranked although the process and criteria used were not documented.
- The IM/IT planning and approval of specific IM/IT initiatives and allocation of IM/IT funding are now included in the mandate of the newly formed BISC.
- The BISC has not yet defined the Branch IM/IT planning process including project screening information requirements required by the BISC to support Branch decision making and its assessment criteria.
- The HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Review Workshop participants were in agreement that a formal planning methodology was required along with a better understanding of the interfaces between the HRB and Departmental IM/IT planning and approval processes.

2.2.2.2 Tracking & Oversight

Principle - Controls are established to ensure that the selected projects and ongoing systems are likely to deliver the projected benefits on a timely basis.

The tracking and oversight phase entails the periodic progress monitoring of projects and ongoing systems against their projected cost, scheduled milestones, promised benefits and continued business relevance. These reviews are performed at critical project milestones or periodically in the case of ongoing systems.

Tracking & Oversight - Findings

The key findings pertaining to the HRB IM/IT investment management tracking and oversight processes are as follows:

- The HRB does not have a formal Branch oversight process to monitor and review IM/IT projects at prescribed milestones and existing systems on a regular basis.
- Workshop participants indicated that monitoring has been conducted by the BMC for larger projects where the impact from exceeding funding and missing deadlines could be significant.
- The AMS, GTIS has provided monitoring and project status reporting to HRB regarding systems such as HRMS and LIMS, however, the data and information required for management review and assessment of project and system performance has not been specified by the HRB.
- Although the role and responsibility for IM/IT project and ongoing system performance and tracking is not specifically included in the BISC mandate, the HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Review Workshop participants noted that BISC should formalize the processes.

2.2.2.3 Evaluation

Principle - Projects and ongoing systems are assessed to determine if the IM/IT investment management process is effective.

The evaluation phase provides a mechanism for continually improving the IM/IT investment process. The aim of this phase is to measure, analyse and record results to determine the extent to which each project has met its scheduled goals and fulfilled its projected contribution to the organization's mission within forecast cost. The primary tool in this phase is the Post Implementation Review (PIR), which normally is conducted once a project is complete. A PIR can assess whether a project's proposed benefits were achieved on time and can provide useful information regarding the performance of the IM/IT management process. The IM/IT investment framework is an evolving framework, therefore "lessons learned" from PIRs should feed back into the process.

Evaluation - Findings

The key findings pertaining to the HRB IM/IT investment management evaluation processes were as follows:

- The HRB does not have a defined post implementation review process.
- The HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance Review Workshop Participants indicated that GTIS currently conducts some surveys on HRB systems and that feedback is collected through "help desks".
- There are plans to conduct a survey on compensation services in the autumn 1999.

Conclusion

The HRB IM/IT management control framework is not yet developed. Among the management elements required to be documented are the planning, performance monitoring/reporting processes as well as the evaluation processes. Project screening, ranking and assessment criteria have not been defined. The Chair, BISC has indicated the intention to include the definition of the HRB IM/IT management processes as part of the BISC work-plan for this year.

Documented planning/monitoring processes, authority levels and assessment criteria would reduce risk by contributing to consistent, timely and effective decision making. The establishment of a formal post implementation review and evaluation mechanism would ensure that "lessons learned" information is used to ensure the continued effectiveness of the IM/IT management process.

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Recommendation

It is recommended that:

3. *the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Branch ensures that the HRB IM/IT Planning and Governance processes and procedures are developed and formalized in the key areas of planning, tracking/oversight and evaluation.*

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**Appendix A Workshop Results - Issues Identification and
Prioritization**

The following issues, concerns and barriers which have or may have an impact on the effectiveness of the IM/IT Planning and Governance in HRB were raised by participants during the workshop held on June 15, 1999. Each participant was then asked to identify, by voting, the top five issues according to their assessment of importance. The results are tabulated below in order of ranking.

Issue Identified	Votes
1. Lack of a defined methodology (1 vote), which would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ process review before automation; (10 votes) ◆ business case discipline (cost/benefit analysis); (7 votes) ◆ analysis of horizontal integration with other systems; (6 votes) ◆ needs analysis; (5 votes) ◆ escalation process; (1 vote) ◆ systematic post-evaluation of systems 	30
2. Lack of vision relating to HRB IM/IT Strategies	15
3. Governance process is not clear (1 vote), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ who initiates, monitors business needs? (9 votes) ◆ who makes decisions? based on what? (1 vote) ◆ decisions being validated? ◆ who does what? ◆ communication of decisions (3 votes) 	14
4. Process for establishing priorities is unclear	12
5. Timeliness of decision making process	6
6. Availability of data for decision making	1

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Appendix B Workshop Results - Strengths

The following strengths that contribute to the effectiveness of the IM/IT Planning and Governance in the HRB were identified by participants during the workshop held on June 15, 1999:

Strengths Identified by Workshop Participants	
1	Analyses (business cases) have been prepared for major projects (e.g., LIMS, ITS and HRMS) (1.1.1)
2	Good relationship with GTIS.
3	Roles and responsibilities (some) are defined (including those of the Branch IM/IT Sub-committee) (1.1.1)
4	HRB contributes to the annual IT planning process through submissions to GTIS (1.1.1)
5	Informal processes have been in place to assess and approve projects, formerly done by BMC (1.1.2)
6	Analysis of HRMS needs, options and costs was formally documented (may form the model for future projects) (1.1.2)
7	Establishment of BISC will provide some focus and structure to planning, monitoring and evaluating IT projects in the Branch (1.1.3)
8	Review schedules have been identified for larger IT projects (e.g., Intranet project) (1.1.4)
9	AMS has done some project monitoring on behalf of the Branch. (2.1.1)
10	Informal monitoring of large projects is taking place. (2.1.2)
11	Plans are in place to identify lessons learned for the ITS project (2.1.4)
12	BISC plans to define several processes this Fall for planning, monitoring and tracking IT projects.