**2004-613**

**Final Report**

**Evaluation Framework for Gateways and Clusters**

**October 27, 2005**

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# Introduction

This evaluation framework for Gateways and Clusters was developed for the interdepartmental Gateway Directors Committee by the Evaluation Directorate of Public Works and Government Services Canada with the assistance of Consulting and Audit Canada (CAC). Developed as a companion piece to the evaluation framework for the Government On-Line initiative[1] it is designed to provide management with a more detailed assessment of Gateways and Clusters community's activities, achievements, impacts and opportunities for service improvements. As a component of the Government On-Line (GOL) initiative, Gateways and Clusters were developed as a means to organize departmental information and services so that they could be made available on the Canada Site on a client-centric basis.

The evaluation framework was developed in consultation with members of the Gateway Directors Committee. A review of documentation and existing reports and key stakeholder interviews were undertaken in order to identify evaluation issues that reflect areas of interest to management.

This document provides a profile of Gateways and Clusters, describes its role within the Government of Canada, presents a logical sequence of activities and outcomes, identifies evaluation issues, and provides an evaluation framework to measure the outcomes and impacts of key activities as well as a discussion of the proposed study methodology to be employed. The objective of the evaluation framework is to provide management with timely and credible information as to the outcomes and impacts of Gateways and Clusters community activities. The evaluation framework also provides for the review of service direction and the identification of concrete value propositions.

For any advice on the application or use of this evaluation framework please contact:

*Gateways and Clusters Directorate*
*Government Information Services Branch*
*Public Works and Government Services Canada*

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[1] *Evaluation Framework of the Government On-Line (GOL) Initiative*, Evaluation Directorate, PWGSC, 2005

# 1.    *Profile - Gateways and Clusters*

The evolving role of government and the increasing demands and expectations of the public for timely and cost-effective programs, services and information are creating pressures on the public sector to modernize services in order to provide better results for Canadians, make effective use of technology, and leverage scarce government resources. In such an environment, the use of the Internet to deliver government services represents an opportunity not only to improve the effectiveness of government, but to enhance the relevance of government itself.

## 1.1    Government On-Line Initiative

In 1999 the Government of Canada[2] made a commitment to provide Canadians with Internet access to all government information and services at the time and place of their choosing. This announcement marked the launch of the Government On-Line (GOL) initiative. In the *2001 Speech from the Throne*, the Government confirmed its' commitment to better connect with citizens by continuing its efforts of providing *key* services online by 2004. Later that year, in the *2001 Federal Budget*, the Government of Canada acknowledged that given the rapidly changing technology, the GOL initiative would be extended to March 2006.

The overall objective of the Government On-Line (GOL) Initiative is to increase the availability of on-line federal services by putting the government's 130 most commonly used services on-line by 2005. The approach is both citizen/client-centered and "whole-of-government". In practical terms this means improving citizen/client satisfaction by designing services in response to their needs, rather than those of government organizations, while increasing the efficiency of service delivery.  GOL has been laying the foundation for fundamental service transformation - the integration of services federally and across jurisdictions to significantly increase benefits to clients, such as a reduction in the number of steps required to complete a transaction, and to generate further cost savings and cost avoidance for governments.

Launched in response to increasing demands by Canadians to make information and services available online while continuing to provide services through traditional methods, GOL is about using information technology to[3]:

- Make government more accessible;
- Make services better and more responsive to the needs of citizens;
- Build trust and confidence in transacting online; and
- Lay the foundation of service transformation, the next major government-wide initiative.

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[2] *1999 Speech from the Throne*, Government of Canada
[3] *Government On-Line Annual Report 2005*, Public Works and Government Services Canada

Although often conceived of as a technology initiative, GOL represents a key component of the Government of Canada's service modernization strategy. This is evidenced by the two principles that have guided the GOL initiative from its conception[4]:

- Organizing services and information around the needs and expectations of citizens and business (client-centric); and

- Taking a "whole of government" approach to provide access to the entire range of government services regardless of what channel is used or which department, agency or level of government is responsible for the service (horizontal).

Although technology is a key enabler of horizontal, client-centric service delivery, integrated service delivery involves many elements, notably[5]:

- Identification of various client groups and their needs;
- Developing a shared vision across government;
- Addressing organizational culture and skills;
- Business process change;
- Partnership mechanisms and collaboration principles;
- Shared information resources and common content management practices; and
- A common technology infrastructure.

From its conception, the GOL initiative has been positioned primarily as a service transformation initiative driven by business issues that were to be solved primarily by the reconfiguration of business processes[6]. In order to provide the direction and funding necessary to ensure a coordinated approach to service transformation, the GOL initiative focused on the following four activities[7]:

***Leadership and Direction:*** development of policies and strategies to direct and coordinate the Government of Canada's online presence (Policy) and public service skills development (Organizational Readiness Office).

***Common Infrastructure:*** development of a "whole of government" secure channel to provide secure, responsive and economical online access to the federal government

***Online Services:*** implementation of online service delivery for government programs with the greatest reach, i.e. for those services that touch the lives of the greatest number of Canadians

***Gateways and Clusters:*** creation of client-centric portals based on information and service clustering

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[4] *ibid*

[5] *The TIGERS Report (Trials in Integrated Government Electronic Regional Service), Program Summary*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2003 (modified)

[6] *A Framework for Government On-Line: Tier Two Guidelines*, Treasury Board Secretariat, 2000.

[7] *Performance Measurement for the Government On-Line Initiative*, Treasury Board Secretariat, 2004.

By creating the foundation for client-centric, whole of government, online service delivery the GOL initiative is providing the infrastructure that will lead to increased satisfaction with federal services while, at the same time, improving the operational efficiency of the Government of Canada.

## 1.2    Gateways and Clusters

Gateways and Clusters represent a key element in the delivery of client-centric online information and services. By providing Web-based groupings of service offerings designed from the perspective of the needs of clients, the Canada Site, Gateways and Clusters continue to integrate information about and access to services which were previously scattered across various departmental Web sites.

As a component of the Government On-Line (GOL) initiative, Gateways and Clusters were developed as a means to organize departmental information and services so that they could be made available on the Canada Site on a client-centric basis. Early and consistent public opinion research and client feedback revealed that many Canadians searching for Government of Canada information and services on the Internet were often confused by the departmental organization of services. In order to render online services more relevant and accessible to clients, the Cluster Blueprint was implemented in 2000 as the framework for the reorganization of the Canada Site into three access "gateways" – Canadians, Non-Canadians and Business – that represent the three main client groupings of the Government of Canada. Within these major groups, numerous portals ("clusters") reorganize and position information and services found on departmental Web sites to provide more effective access to government by subject (e.g., health) or by audience (e.g., seniors).

The role of the Gateways and Clusters is to act as the catalyst for the integration of information and services across federal departments and agencies by bringing together partners with related interests serving common clients. As such, Gateway and Cluster partners share a common vision and mandate to support whole of government, client-centric service delivery through ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Of the $880 million GOL funding, roughly $95 million was allocated to the envelope for Gateways and Clusters over the six year period of 2000-01 to 2005-06. However, just over $29 million of this was allocated to "pathfinder" projects in the first two years. It was the remaining $66 million that supported the actual implementation and development of the Gateways and Clusters. Exhibit 1 provides an overview of the allocation of Gateways and Clusters funding.

| Exhibit 1<br>Gateways and Clusters<br>Funding Allocation (FY2000 – FY2006) | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Funding | |
| | ($,000) | (%) |
| Pathfinder projects | $29,286 | 31% |
| Gateways (development) | $13,175 | 14% |
| Clusters (development) | $21,877 | 23% |

| Public opinion research | $2,375 | 3% |
|---|---|---|
| Outreach (promotion and communications) | $4,240 | 4% |
| Information technology | $1,370 | 1% |
| Information management | $5,400 | 6% |
| Governance | $2,107 | 2% |
| **Funding (FY2000 – FY2005)** | **$79,830** | **84%** |
| Funding (FY2006) | $15,455 | 16% |
| **Total Funding ($,000)** | **$95,285** | **100%** |

Gateway and Cluster management and governance is provided through the interdepartmental Gateway Steering Committee, Gateway Directors Committee and Gateway Working Group. Central coordination is provided through the Gateways and Clusters Directorate at Public Works and Government Services Canada.[8] While the interdepartmental committee structure facilitates collective management, responsibilities for service delivery remain with the respective departments and agencies. In order to create an environment in which parties can easily collaborate with each other, memoranda of understanding, content management policies and guidelines, and the endorsement of shared principles to collaborate provide the foundation of a future framework for service integration.

As the Government of Canada moves forward with its service modernization agenda beyond the GOL initiative, the role and function of the Gateways and Clusters will continue to evolve. Seven guiding principles have been endorsed by the Gateways and Clusters community to facilitate the transition to future states. Specifically developed to enable and guide horizontal, cross-jurisdictional, client-centric service delivery the collaboration principles comprise the following:

*Coherence:* providing "a single window" to clients through the Internet channel, as part of a multi-channel strategy for the Government of Canada

*Client-centricity:* facilitating service delivery outcomes that meet the needs of both the client and the Government of Canada

*Horizontality:* leveraging service integration and transformation opportunities across government to drive greater efficiencies in service delivery, management and cost

*Improved service:* enhancing the service delivery experience of our clients

*Rationalization:* reducing overlap and duplication in Government of Canada content

*Scalability:* moving from pilot (Gateways and Clusters) to a phased approach to online coherence across the Government of Canada

*Sustainability:* making service delivery a part of departmental culture and budgets; ensuring effective use of funds to drive efficiencies that are whole of government

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[8] In December 2003, the operational management of the GOL initiative was transferred to Public Works and Government Services Canada from the Chief Information Office Branch of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.

Key stakeholder groups include: clients and end-users of government information and services; departments and agencies that provide service delivery; central agency organizations that are mandated with providing common direction and leadership in the implementation of government-wide initiatives; as well as other levels of government and non-governmental organizations that are responsible for the delivery of federal programs.

## 2.    Logic Model: Activities to Outcomes

### 2.1    Activities and Outputs

Exhibit 2 illustrates how Gateway and Cluster activities contribute to the achievement of its mandate and desired outcomes. Four types of activities are undertaken by the Gateways and Clusters:

*Leadership and Direction*
These activities centre on the development and communication of clustering priorities and principles. Key outputs include horizontal governance and accountability structures, strategic frameworks, funding submissions, policy and standards, and performance reports.

*Community Building and Partnerships*
These activities relate to the nurturing of valued horizontal and vertical collaborative relationships among cluster partners. Key outputs are the establishment of working groups and communities of practice, the development of principles to collaborate, partnerships and collaborative agreements.

*Clustering*
Implementation of client-centric web sites and the development of common information and content management guidelines based on general preferences of client groups represent the key outputs of Clustering activities.

*Client Insight*
Public opinion research and focused surveys in order to understand client priorities and needs represent the key outputs for this activity. Other outputs include the Cluster Blueprint, segmentation and branding as well as communications and marketing strategies.

### 2.2    Immediate Outcomes

The design and implementation of horizontal governance and strategic frameworks are expected to lead to transparent processes, enhanced coordination and harmonization of initiatives, and reduced redundancies. Community development and partnership mechanisms are expected to result in improved and sustainable collaboration, enhanced knowledge sharing and learning, increased integration, and better utilization of resources. The implementation and management of client-oriented government sites, the development of common information and content management guidelines, as well as common infrastructure and language standards will improve navigation across government sites and enhance the consistency and accuracy of the information provided while improving both client understanding of content and search results. Client insight obtained through public opinion research and client surveys will result in an increased

understanding of client needs and priorities as well as an increased ability to target specific client groups while providing government decision makers with timely and credible information in support of decision making.
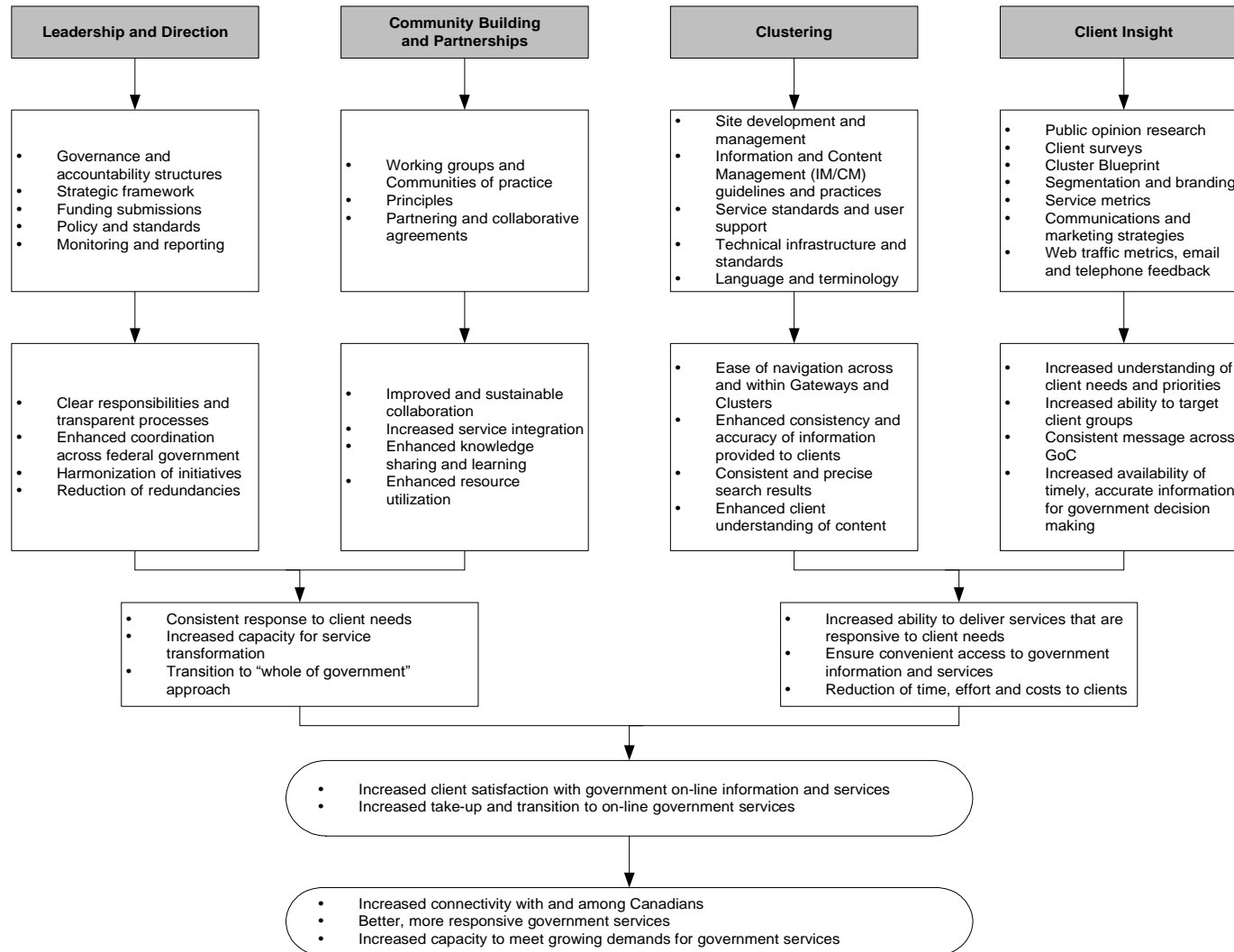
## 2.3    Intermediate Outcomes

Enhanced coordination and sustainable collaboration are expected to result in consistent responses to client needs, increased capacity for service transformation and provide the foundation for the transition to a "whole of government" approach to service delivery. Enhanced consistency and accuracy of information combined with increased ease of navigation and search capabilities along with an increased ability to target the needs of client groups will result in an increased ability to deliver services that are responsive to client needs and ensure convenient access to government information and services while reducing the time, effort and costs to clients.

## 2.4    Final Outcomes

Benefits such as easier and more convenient access to services, more timely delivery and more consistent service across departments contribute to the increased relevance and satisfaction with government online services and an increased take-up of online service delivery as the channel of preference. This, in turn, contributes to an increased connectivity with and among Canadians and an increased capacity to meet growing demands for government services while providing better, more responsive government services.

**Exhibit 2**
**Logic Model: Gateways and Clusters**

| Leadership and Direction | Community Building and Partnerships | Clustering | Client Insight |
|---|---|---|---|

**Leadership and Direction**
- Governance and accountability structures
- Strategic framework
- Funding submissions
- Policy and standards
- Monitoring and reporting

**Community Building and Partnerships**
- Working groups and Communities of practice
- Principles
- Partnering and collaborative agreements

**Clustering**
- Site development and management
- Information and Content Management (IM/CM) guidelines and practices
- Service standards and user support
- Technical infrastructure and standards
- Language and terminology

**Client Insight**
- Public opinion research
- Client surveys
- Cluster Blueprint
- Segmentation and branding
- Service metrics
- Communications and marketing strategies
- Web traffic metrics, email and telephone feedback

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- Clear responsibilities and transparent processes
- Enhanced coordination across federal government
- Harmonization of initiatives
- Reduction of redundancies

- Improved and sustainable collaboration
- Increased service integration
- Enhanced knowledge sharing and learning
- Enhanced resource utilization

- Ease of navigation across and within Gateways and Clusters
- Enhanced consistency and accuracy of information provided to clients
- Consistent and precise search results
- Enhanced client understanding of content

- Increased understanding of client needs and priorities
- Increased ability to target client groups
- Consistent message across GoC
- Increased availability of timely, accurate information for government decision making

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- Consistent response to client needs
- Increased capacity for service transformation
- Transition to "whole of government" approach

- Increased ability to deliver services that are responsive to client needs
- Ensure convenient access to government information and services
- Reduction of time, effort and costs to clients

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- Increased client satisfaction with government on-line information and services
- Increased take-up and transition to on-line government services

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- Increased connectivity with and among Canadians
- Better, more responsive government services
- Increased capacity to meet growing demands for government services

## *3.*     *Evaluation Strategy*

The purpose of the evaluation strategy is to identify issues and associated study questions that provide management with valuable information as to the outcomes and effectiveness of Gateway and Cluster activities. The evaluation issues were developed in accordance with the stated activities and outcomes, consultations with Gateway Directors Committee members and Treasury Board Secretariat guidelines.[9] The evaluation framework, presented in Exhibit 3, provides an overview of the proposed evaluation issues and study questions as well as existing and additional information sources.

## 3.1     Evaluation Issues

The objective of the evaluation is to assess the success and effectiveness of Gateway and Cluster activities in order to provide management with information on the extent that the Gateways and Clusters are achieving their objectives in an appropriate and effective manner. The evaluation is also designed to provide management with valuable information as to the service direction of Gateways and Clusters as well as the identification of concrete value propositions. To this end, the following evaluation issues have been selected for the study:

*Program Effectiveness*
- To what extent have Gateways and Clusters advanced a client-centric approach to service delivery within the Government of Canada?
- To what extent have Gateway and Cluster activities advanced a "whole of government" culture and environment?
- To what extent have Gateway and Cluster works provided additional stakeholder benefits?
- What other impacts, if any, have resulted from Gateways and Clusters?

*Program Delivery and Design*
- To what extent does the organization and management of Gateway and Cluster activities contribute to the achievement of its objectives?

*Alternatives*
- Are there more efficient or effective alternatives to implementation of the principles of client-centric, integrated service delivery?

*Value*
- Do clustering principles provide value?

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[9] *Evaluation Policy*, Treasury Board Secretariat, 2001

| | Exhibit 3 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Evaluation Framework for Gateways and Clusters** | | |
| **Evaluation Issues** | **Evaluation Questions** | **Existing Information Sources** | **Additional Data Collection** |
| **PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS** | | | |
| To what extent have Gateways and Clusters advanced the development of a client-centric approach to service delivery within the Government of Canada? | ▪ What is the degree of understanding and adoption of clustering principles by key stakeholders?<br>▪ Are outreach and communications adequate to ensure stakeholder awareness and understanding of clustering principles?<br>▪ To what extent have Clusters fostered the advancement of client-centric service delivery?<br>▪ To what extent have Gateways and Clusters works contributed to convenient and accessible GoC Internet services? | ▪ Gateways and Clusters funding and grant submissions<br>▪ Gateways and Clusters communications plan<br>▪ Gateways and Clusters studies and reports<br>▪ GOL publications and reports<br>▪ Advisory committee reports<br>▪ Omnibus surveys<br>▪ Annual reports<br>▪ TIMS presentations | ▪ Key informant interviews<br>▪ Survey of key stakeholders<br>▪ Case studies<br>▪ Survey of end users<br>▪ Focus groups |
| To what extent have Gateways and Clusters activities promoted a "whole of government" culture and environment? | ▪ To what extent have partnerships and common infrastructures been implemented?<br>▪ To what extent have Gateways and Clusters created an inclusive and collaborative environment for various stakeholders and interest groups?<br>▪ To what extent have Clusters been implemented?<br>▪ To what extent has the capacity for seamless on-line service delivery been achieved? | ▪ Gateways and Clusters funding and grant submissions<br>▪ Gateways and Clusters studies and reports<br>▪ GOL publications and reports<br>▪ Omnibus surveys<br>▪ TIMS presentations | ▪ Key informant interviews<br>▪ Survey of key stakeholders<br>▪ Case studies<br>▪ Survey of end users<br>▪ Focus groups |
| To what extent have Gateways and Clusters works provided additional stakeholder benefits? | ▪ To what extent have Gateways and Clusters provided a forum for community development and knowledge sharing?<br>▪ To what extent have Gateways and Clusters provided a forum for public service skills and competency development?<br>▪ To what extent have Gateways and Clusters organizing principles enabled GoC service transformation?<br>▪ Have Gateways and Clusters activities provided additional stakeholder benefits? If so, what are they? | ▪ Gateways and Clusters studies and reports<br>▪ GOL publications and reports<br>▪ Advisory committee reports<br>▪ Omnibus surveys | ▪ Key informant interviews<br>▪ Survey of key stakeholders<br>▪ Case studies<br>▪ Survey of end users<br>▪ Focus groups |

| | Exhibit 3 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Evaluation Framework for Gateways and Clusters** (cont.) | | |
| **Evaluation Issues** | **Evaluation Questions** | **Existing Information Sources** | **Additional Data Collection** |
| **PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS** (cont.) | | | |
| What other impacts, if any, have resulted from Gateways and Clusters? | ▪ What impacts, if any, have Clusters had on the federal government's service delivery culture?<br>▪ What impacts, if any, have Clusters had on GoC service delivery practices?<br>▪ What impacts, if any, have Gateways and Clusters had on other GoC service delivery channels?<br>▪ What impacts, if any, have Clusters had on targeted client groups?<br>▪ Have Gateways and Clusters works had other impacts? If so, what are they? | ▪ Gateways and Clusters studies and reports<br>▪ GOL publications and reports<br>▪ Advisory committee reports<br>▪ Omnibus surveys | ▪ Key informant interviews<br>▪ Survey of key stakeholders<br>▪ Case studies<br>▪ Survey of end users<br>▪ Focus groups |
| **PROGRAM DELIVERY AND DESIGN** | | | |
| To what extent does the organization and management of Gateways and Clusters activities contribute to the achievement of its objectives? | ▪ Do Gateway and Cluster management structures and practices support the achievement of stated goals and objectives?<br>▪ To what extent do funding mechanisms promote collaboration and take-up of Gateways and Clusters principles?<br>▪ Is the Gateways and Clusters governance structure appropriate? If not, how can it be improved? | ▪ Gateways and Clusters Strategy<br>▪ Cluster Blueprint and Validation report<br>▪ Gateways and Clusters funding and grant submissions<br>▪ Gateways and Clusters studies, reports and presentations<br>▪ Annual reports<br>▪ TIMS presentations | ▪ Key informant interviews<br>▪ Survey of key stakeholders<br>▪ Case studies<br>▪ Focus groups |
| **ALTERNATIVES** | | | |
| Are there more efficient or effective alternatives to implementation of the principles of client-centric, integrated service delivery? | ▪ Are there alternatives to investing in Clusters to affect networked, integrated service delivery? If so, what are they?<br>▪ How have other governments implemented Internet service delivery? | ▪ Government publications and reports (USA, UK, Australia)<br>▪ Advisory committee reports<br>▪ GOL publications and reports | ▪ Key informant interviews<br>▪ Survey of key stakeholders<br>▪ Case studies<br>▪ Focus groups |
| **VALUE** | | | |
| Do clustering principles provide value? | ▪ What is the perceived value of Clusters and the client-centric blueprint upon which they are based?<br>▪ Do stakeholders consider that service Clusters provide value? If so, in what ways?<br>▪ Do federal departments and agencies consider that clustered service delivery provides concrete benefits or savings? If so, what are they? | ▪ Gateways and Clusters studies and reports<br>▪ GOL publications and reports<br>▪ GoC publications and reports<br>▪ Advisory committee reports<br>▪ Omnibus surveys | ▪ Key informant interviews<br>▪ Survey of key stakeholders<br>▪ Case studies<br>▪ Focus groups |

## 3.2    Methodology

The proposed methodology for the evaluation study incorporates six lines of evidence: a documentation review, key informant interviews, client and stakeholder surveys, case studies, a comparative analysis, and focus groups.

**Documentation Review**

Relevant documents and studies will be reviewed in order to obtain contextual information relative to the development, structure and achievements of the Gateways and Clusters. Documentation related to previous studies and performance reports will also be reviewed to identify common themes and issues related to the implementation and immediate outcomes of Gateway and Cluster activities. This information will be used in the development of data collection tools for the key informant interviews and survey guides. Documents will also be reviewed in order to obtain quantitative measures that will be used to support the qualitative data collected in the evaluation study.

**Key Informant Interviews**

Interviews with individuals involved with the implementation and development of Internet service delivery represent a rich source of information regarding Gateway and Cluster activities, achievements, impacts and opportunities for service delivery enhancements. Key informants include individuals from the following stakeholder groups:

- Departmental directors and managers with varying degrees of involvement and responsibility for Internet service delivery;
- Gateway director generals and directors, Cluster managers, as well as members of the various Gateway and Cluster working groups;
- Central agency analysts as well as non-governmental subject matter experts and policy development researchers familiar with the development and evolution of the Gateways and Clusters; and
- Inter-jurisdictional partners (actual and potential).

Key informants will be selected in relation to their roles and responsibilities, their familiarity with Gateway and Cluster activities, their involvement in the development and/or funding of Internet service delivery, and their knowledge of the key issues surrounding Gateway and Cluster implementation and development.

**Survey of Client and Key Stakeholders**

A national survey of end-users will be undertaken in order to assess the degree to which the Internet service delivery channel meets the needs and expectations of key client groups. The survey guide will be developed based on a review of previous client surveys and public opinion research. The questions will be designed to provide information as to the degree to which clients are satisfied with key aspects of Internet service delivery of government information and services, the perceived utility and benefits of online services, opportunities for service improvement, as well as the identification of key inhibitors to take-up.

A survey of key stakeholders, representative of both federal public servants and inter-jurisdictional partners, will be undertaken in order to obtain information on the current level of implementation of Internet service delivery within the federal government, the perceived value and challenges of service harmonization, the perceived role and mandate of the Gateways and Clusters community, opportunities for service improvement, as well as the identification of critical success factors related to the further development and sustainability of horizontal, client-centric service delivery.

**Case Studies**

Case studies of a representative group of Clusters will be undertaken in order to provide more detailed information on issues such as the funding of Internet service delivery, horizontal partnership mechanisms, content management practices, and Cluster implementation and development activities. Possible criteria to be used to select Clusters for inclusion in the case study portion of the evaluation include: number of partners, funding mechanisms, degree of maturity, targeted client group(s), and perceived degree of success within the community (e.g., take-up, relevance and innovation).

Key documentation will be reviewed for each Cluster included in the case study. This information will be supplemented by interviews with two or three key partners responsible for the implementation and management of the Cluster. A synopsis will be prepared for each of the Clusters studied outlining key aspects such as funding and governance mechanisms, collaboration principles, site development and management, perceived successes and challenges, and lessons learned.

**Comparative Analysis**

In order to assess alternatives to the clustering approach taken by the Government of Canada, an analysis will be undertaken of comparative Internet service delivery initiatives such as those launched by the British, Australian and American governments. Based on a review of key documentation and telephone interviews with key informants the analysis will focus on central aspects of the respective online service delivery initiatives; notably, the following: implementation strategies, funding mechanisms, governance mechanisms, policy development,

cross-jurisdictional partnerships, targeted service levels, degree of integration and service maturity, perceived successes and challenges, and lessons learned.

**Focus Groups**

In order to clarify and validate concepts and issues raised during the evaluation, focus groups of representative stakeholder groups will be undertaken as required. For example, client focus groups represent a very rich source of information for the identification of underlying factors that impact on the propensity of citizens and businesses to utilize online services. On the other hand, management or partner stakeholder focus groups would provide the evaluation team with feedback regarding the pertinence and logic of the study observations and conclusions.

## 3.3    Discussion of the Methodology

The proposed evaluation study is designed to provide evidence-based information on the outcomes and effectiveness of Gateway and Cluster activities. The evaluation is also designed to provide management with valuable information as to the service direction of Gateways and Clusters as well as the identification of concrete value propositions. The proposed methodology is grounded within the current knowledge and, therefore, will build upon the knowledge base.

The evaluation study design incorporates a number of methodological considerations that enhance the quality and utility of the study findings. The validity of the study results is enhanced through the use of multiple lines of inquiry that include both qualitative and quantitative methods. The accuracy and reasoning of findings is enhanced through the triangulation of data sources and the validation of key findings with stakeholder groups.

The study design provides for the introduction of a number of practical methods to safeguard individuals from potentially harmful effects. First, questionnaires and interview guides will be designed in such a manner as to protect the identity of individuals. Second, only aggregated data composed of a minimum of 2% of responses will be presented in order to protect the identity of individuals. Third, the study will comply with Treasury Board Secretariat professional and ethical guidelines.

## 3.4    Evaluation Options

The evaluation costs depend upon the extent to which existing data sources are accessible and new data sources and data collection tools need to be developed. For example, costs associated with stakeholder interviews are dependent upon the methodology used (e.g. in-person or telephone interviews), and the number of individuals consulted. Exhibit 4 provides a summary of factors that impact on cost estimates for various evaluation activities.

| Exhibit 4 | |
| --- | --- |
| **Factors Impacting on Cost Estimates** | |
| **Methodology** | **Key Factors** |
| Documentation Review | ▪ Number of documents reviewed<br>▪ Documents provided by client or not<br>▪ Level of analysis required (metrics, benchmarking, methodologies, findings)<br>▪ Extent of analysis and summary of findings |
| Comparative Analysis<br>Case Study | ▪ Number of entities reviewed / assessed (sample size)<br>▪ Number and source of documents to be reviewed<br>▪ Interviews/Consultations (sample size, tools development, method)<br>▪ Extent of analysis and summary of findings |
| Key Informant Interviews<br>Stakeholder Survey<br>Client / End user Survey<br>Focus Groups | ▪ Number of stakeholder or subgroups included in targeted population<br>▪ Number of entities assessed (sample size)<br>▪ Number and source of documents to be reviewed<br>▪ Interviews/Consultations (sample size, tools development, method)<br>▪ Extent of analysis and summary of findings |
| Reporting | ▪ Degree of analysis (triangulation of results)<br>▪ Level of detail required<br>▪ Number of individuals involved in debriefings and draft review comments<br>▪ Presentation decks and Appendices |
| Project Management | ▪ Number and complexity of project activities<br>▪ Frequency of interaction with project authorities<br>▪ Level of detail and frequency of updates required<br>▪ Number of committees and working groups involved<br>▪ Degree of consultations and debriefings required<br>▪ Clarity of project mandate and modifications |

Exhibit 5 presents estimated costs for three evaluation study options. Cost variations for each of the options presented are linked to the number of lines of inquiry undertaken (breadth of analysis) and the robustness of the methodology employed (depth of analysis). The more lines of inquiry and the greater the robustness of the data collection methods, the greater the reliability of the findings and, therefore, the greater the value of the information for decision making purposes.

Option 1 represents a minimalist approach in which three lines of inquiry are provided, and the scope is limited to key informants and stakeholders. Option 2 enhances both the scope of information collected and the data integrity through the introduction of two additional lines of inquiry and more rigorous sampling techniques. Through the introduction of two more lines of inquiry, Option 3 provides for the identification and analysis of alternative approaches to Clustering as well as a mechanism for the validation of study findings and the testing of service direction options identified through the other lines of inquiry. Option 3 will, therefore, offer management the most complete and robust evaluation of the activities, achievements, impacts and opportunities for service improvements related to Gateways and Clusters.

| Exhibit 5 Estimated Costs for Various Study Options | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Methodology** | **Option 1** | **Option 2** | **Option 3** |
| Documentation Review | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| Comparative Analysis | | | 15,000 |
| Case Study | | 25,000 | 25,000 |
| Key Informant Interviews | 20,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Stakeholder Survey | 15,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Client / End user Survey | | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Focus Groups | | | 50,000 |
| Reporting (analysis) | 15,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| Project Management | 15,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 |
| **Totals** | **$75,000** | **$135,000** | **$200,000** |

## 4. Conclusion

As indicated in section 1.2, Gateways and Clusters central coordination was originally supported and managed through the Chief Information Officer Branch (CIOB) of the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS). On December 12, 2003, the responsibility to provide this centralized support and coordination role to GOL participating departments and agencies and to the GOL governance structure was transferred to the Information Technology Services Branch (ITSB) at PWGSC. Subsequently Gateways and Clusters moved to Government Information Services Branch (GISB).

The GOL initiative relies on oversight by the Deputy Minister-level Treasury Board Senior Advisory Committee - Information Management Subcommittee (TIMS) and Assistant Deputy Minister-level Service Management Board (SMB). A network of GOL leads in the 34 participating departments and agencies ensures consistency of approaches and initiatives for the whole of government strategy. Boards of Directors, with Deputy Minister champions, lead the development of the integrated portals (Gateways and Clusters). Specific project funding is subject to the scrutiny of Treasury Board Secretariat and respects related Treasury Board policy requirements.

At the May 5th, 2005 meeting of SMB, approval was granted to Gateways and Clusters to invest $200,000 in the assessment of Gateways and Clusters as a Common Gateway and Cluster project. As discussed in 3.4 Evaluation Options, a $200,000 investment in an evaluation will "…offer management the most complete and robust evaluation of the activities, achievements, impacts and opportunities for service improvements related to Gateways and Clusters."