



*Ministry of
Skills Development and Labour*

**SERVICE PLAN
2004/05 – 2006/07**



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January 26, 2004

Honourable Graham Bruce
Minister of Skills Development and Labour

Dear Colleague:

Since June 2001, our government has been working to implement our *New Era* vision to revitalize the economy, restore sound fiscal management, and put patients and students first.

Our *New Era* platform contained 201 specific commitments that our government would undertake on behalf of British Columbians. These included a commitment to “establish service plans that include measurable performance standards and targets for all programs that are annually audited and published, for all taxpayers to see.”

On June 25, 2001, I sent you a letter of instruction setting out the key priorities for your Ministry, including a list of the *New Era* commitments assigned to your Ministry. These commitments were also included in the Government Strategic Plan and Ministry Service Plans that were tabled in the Legislature in February 2002, covering fiscal years 2002/03 through 2004/05.

The Service Plan you are tabling today represents the final year of the first three-year plans. And it shows that we have made significant progress toward honouring our commitments. Specifically, of the 10 *New Era* commitments that involved your Ministry, the province has now completed or begun work on all of these. Accomplishments in your Ministry over the past two-and-a-half years include:

- Restructured the Workers’ Compensation system to ensure the system is sustainable in the future and to provide a more timely appeals process.
- Instituted a new framework for labour and management to build modern, healthy and competitive workplaces.
- Restored workers’ rights to a secret ballot vote on certification, repealed sectoral bargaining, restored pension benefits to pensioners working in their field to restore flexibility and democratic rights in the workplace.
- Amended and simplified the *Employment Standards Act* to revitalize the economy, recognize the need for flexibility in modern workplaces and put vulnerable employees first.

.../2

In the coming year, the province will continue work on a number of priorities to honour the commitments that we have made. These are detailed in your Ministry Service Plan, and include:

- Continue to monitor the industrial relations environment in British Columbia and assist in maintaining industrial relations stability.
- Continue to work towards increased compliance with the *Employment Standards Act* and foster fair, productive and harmonious workplaces that promote prosperous businesses, quality working lives and a strong, growing economy.
- Monitor labour market trends and developments and provide information and advice for industry-led human resource planning.

It is important to note that all of the province's achievements to date, and our priorities for the year ahead, will be accomplished while balancing the budget in 2004/05, and having significantly increased funding for health care and education.

Clearly, we will do more if we can, as new resources are available, to build on the funding priorities detailed in this Service Plan — in a way that is consistent with our balanced budget commitment.

As our measures to revitalize the economy continue to create new jobs, growth and investment, this will allow us to continue strengthening public services for the benefit of British Columbians. Opportunities like the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games will showcase British Columbia to the world and generate economic benefits all across our province. Future service plans will further demonstrate those benefits.

I know that you will continue to build on the progress your Ministry has made. Let me conclude by thanking you for your commitment to serving the best interests of all British Columbians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gordon Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a period at the end.

Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier



Ministry of Skills Development and Labour



The 2004/05 – 2006/07 Service Plan establishes goals for the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour for the next three years, and lists targets and measures that will be used in assessing progress in meeting those goals. To date, the ministry has fulfilled several *New Era* commitments through changes to the *Employment Standards Act* and Regulation, the *Labour Relations Code*, and the *Workers Compensation Act*.

During the next three years, the ministry will continue making reforms and delivering services to protect workers, stimulate the economy and promote labour stability.

Skills development will continue to be important as we identify potential skills gaps and work with the private sector on solutions. With the awarding of the 2010 Winter Olympics to Vancouver and Whistler, the ministry will contribute to human resources strategies to get ready for the anticipated 130,000 person years of employment it will bring to our economy.

As a result of changes made to the workers' compensation system in 2002/03, we expect to see appeal backlogs reduced and potentially eliminated over the next three years. The restructured Workers' Compensation Board's Board of Directors and the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal will continue implementing policy and service reforms resulting from the 2001/02 core reviews.

British Columbia continues to show strong signs of growth and new job opportunities. The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour will go on finding ways for employees, unions and employers to work together to help B.C. compete in a global economy.

Honourable Graham P. Bruce
Minister of Skills Development and Labour

February 4, 2004

Accountability Statement

The 2004/05 – 2006/07 Ministry of Skills Development and Labour Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of January 30, 2004, have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Graham P. Bruce
Minister of Skills Development and Labour

February 4, 2004

Ministry Overview

The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour is working to build a modern employment environment that meets the needs of employees, employers, unions and business in British Columbia.

The core programs of the ministry involve the development, implementation and enforcement of employment standards, workplace safety standards and labour relations rules. Programs are delivered through one of the ministry's three branches:

1. Skills development and employment standards (workplace programs).
2. Industrial relations.
3. Workers' compensation.

The ministry administers 12 statutes — the *Labour Relations Code*, the *Employment Standards Act*, the *Workers Compensation Act* and several statutes concerning the collective agreements of particular service sectors. Some of these statutes are administered in whole or in part by independent agencies, such as the Labour Relations Board, the Employment Standards Tribunal and the Workers' Compensation Board.

Our key stakeholders are everyone who participates in the B.C. economy, as workers (both unionized and non-unionized), as public or private sector employers, or as unions or industry associations. Major contextual factors include the state of the provincial, national and global economies.

Resource Summary

The ministry budget will be reduced by \$6.825 million and nine full-time equivalent (FTEs) positions in 2004/05.

Effective January 5, 2004, the Labour Relations Board began to charge fees for applications made under the *Labour Relations Code* and for the mediation services it provides. The Board uses these fees to offset a portion of the costs of providing its services.

The capital budget for the ministry is \$3.5 million and will remain constant for the next three years. Most of the capital budget is for information system projects, some of which are already underway, and others that are scheduled for subsequent years. The Employment Standards Branch is developing a new case management system, which will help streamline service delivery and provide better data for performance reporting. As well, the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal is reviewing options for improving or replacing its case management system.

The ministry's budget will remain level until 2006/07. At that time, the ministry's net budget will not change; however, the gross budget for the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal will be reduced by \$3.5 million and 18 FTEs. This reduction is based on the expectation that the backlog created under the former appeal structure will have been eliminated.

Ministry of Skills Development and Labour

Core Businesses	2003/04 Restated Estimates ¹	2004/05 Estimates	2005/06 Plan	2006/07 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Skills Development and Employment Standards	13,834	10,142	10,142	10,142
Industrial Relations	8,120	5,659	5,659	5,659
Workers' Compensation	1	1	1	1
— Gross Expenditures	31,814	31,253	31,253	27,753
— Recoveries	(31,813)	(31,252)	(31,252)	(27,752)
Executive and Support Services	3,682	3,010	3,010	3,010
— Minister's Office	489	431	431	431
— Program Management	3,193	2,579	2,579	2,579
Total	25,637	18,812	18,812	18,812
Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)				
Skills Development and Employment Standards	117	109	109	109
Industrial Relations	47	48	48	48
Workers' Compensation	263	263	263	245
Executive and Support Services	24	22	22	22
— Minister's Office	4	4	4	4
— Program Management	20	18	18	18
Total	451	442	442	424
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Skills Development and Employment Standards	677	677	677	677
Industrial Relations	20	20	20	20
Workers' Compensation	2,815	2,815	2,815	2,815
Total	3,512	3,512	3,512	3,512

¹Amounts have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2004/05 *Estimates*.

Core Business Areas

1. Skills Development and Employment Standards

Skills Development

The ministry has two business areas related to skills development. The first is the development of a provincial human resource strategy that focuses on potential skill shortages that would undermine economic growth, and the second is monitoring youth employment in British Columbia.

In June 2001, the ministry was tasked with developing a provincial human resource strategy in partnership with the Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development. The focus of the strategy is to ensure that labour market planning issues are clearly linked to economic priorities, and that there are mechanisms in place to anticipate future skill shortage situations.

The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour has limited funding for the skills development policy area, which includes the salary of a full-time labour market economist. Future work on implementation of these strategies will require cabinet decision.

Employment Standards

Employment standards activities aim to increase compliance with the *Employment Standards Act* and to foster fair, productive and harmonious workplaces that promote prosperous businesses, quality working lives and a strong, growing economy.

The Employment Standards Branch administers the *Employment Standards Act* and Regulation, which set minimum standards for wage payments, overtime, vacation, statutory holidays, leaves, compensation for length of service, hours of work, employment of young persons and licensing of certain employment services.

In 2004/05, the branch will reduce its staff to a core level of 108 employees, with a budget of \$10,042,000.

In addition to administering the legislation, the branch provides education, training and early intervention to ensure all parties in the workplace are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Act.

The branch also carries out targeted enforcement in areas identified as having greater difficulties with compliance.

Branch staff answer employee and employer inquiries, receive and address complaints of contraventions, and deliver professional, neutral mediation services to assist parties to come to a mutually satisfactory resolution to workplace disputes. Where resolution is not possible, the branch adjudicates disputes under the Act and issues a determination.

Determinations made by the Director of the Employment Standards Branch can be appealed to the Employment Standards Tribunal, an independent adjudicative body, for timely, efficient and neutral resolution.

Through this program area, the ministry also assists other ministries in addressing sector-specific employment standards issues to promote a more prosperous economy. These include the development of sector-focused employment standards regulations for the oil and gas, agriculture, mining, forestry, silviculture, aquaculture and film industries.

2. Industrial Relations

Through its industrial relations activities, the ministry oversees the fair administration of B.C.'s industrial relations rules to promote a healthy labour relations environment. The ministry is responsible for the *Labour Relations Code*. The Code establishes the rights of employees to choose trade union representation, the system for collective bargaining between employers and trade unions in unionized workplaces, and mechanisms to address changes in the employment structure of the workplace.

The *Labour Relations Code* also establishes the Labour Relations Board (LRB) as an independent tribunal to govern the establishment and regulation of relationships between employers, trade unions and employees, and to resolve disputes arising in those relationships through mediation and adjudication. As a quasi-judicial tribunal, the LRB's ability to deal with industrial relations disputes is faster and more efficient than the courts. The LRB also provides alternate dispute resolution services, which focus on assisting parties in resolving collective bargaining disputes. It also assists parties in improving labour relations, preventing conflict and resolving contractual disputes during the term of their collective agreements. Votes ordered under the provisions of the *Labour Relations Code* are supervised by staff from the Employment Standards Branch.

The LRB has a budget of \$5,154,000 and 45 employees. The Chair of the LRB is also the Chair of the Employment Standards Tribunal, which has three additional employees and funding of \$505,000.

The ministry actively monitors the industrial relations environment in B.C. Self-reliance in resolving disputes through free collective bargaining is encouraged, but occasionally the ministry plays a direct role in helping parties to settle difficult disputes.

3. Workers' Compensation

The ministry oversees the *Workers Compensation Act*, which provides a framework for promoting safe and healthy workplaces and sets out the workers' compensation system for B.C. The workers' compensation system includes the following components: the Workers' Compensation Board, the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal, and the ministry-based Workers' and Employers' Advisers Offices.

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) is an independent statutory agency mandated to administer the *Workers Compensation Act*. The Board creates and enforces provincial workplace health and safety regulations. It also adjudicates claims and administers wage-loss benefits and vocational rehabilitation benefits for workers suffering injury or disease and their dependents or survivors. Under the *Workers Compensation Act*, the WCB Review Division has a role in providing reviews of the WCB's claims decisions. The board is wholly funded by employer payroll assessments (the accident fund).

Legislative changes in 2002 resulted in a new independent appeal body. Effective March 3, 2003, the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal (WCAT) replaced both the former Workers' Compensation Review Board and the former Workers' Compensation Board Appeal Division. WCAT is the second and final level of appeal in the restructured appeal system, which was introduced to simplify the process and enhance the consistency, timeliness and finality of decisions. Autonomous from the WCB, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour, and is funded by employers through the accident fund. For the first three years of operation, WCAT has been provided with additional resources to reduce the backlog of appeals built up under the old appeal system. In 2006/07, gross expenditures will be reduced from the current level of \$22.4 million to \$18.9 million, and employees will be reduced from 185 to 167 FTEs.

A third component of the workers' compensation system are the ministry-based workers' and employers' advisers, who provide support and advisory services to parties involved in claims under the workers' compensation system. The ministry administers the Workers' Advisers Office and the Employers' Advisers Office, which are authorized by the *Workers Compensation Act* and funded by employers through the accident fund.

The Workers' and Employers' Advisers Offices directly support the ministry's goal of safe and healthy workplaces and a workers' compensation system that is responsive to the needs of workers and employers.

Employers' Advisers are mandated to work with employers and the Workers' Compensation Board to resolve claims, assessments and safety issues. They advise employers on the interpretation of the *Workers Compensation Act* and any decisions made under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, and provide information and training to employers on legislative and regulatory changes to assist employers in meeting their obligation and responsibility to provide a safe work environment for their workers.

Workers' Advisers are mandated to advise and assist injured workers with respect to benefits, claims and the interpretation of the *Workers Compensation Act*. Program clients include injured workers and their dependents, professional associations, union representatives, injured workers' associations and members of the public.

4. Executive and Support Services

Executive and support services in the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour include specialized advice and assistance, policy and legislation development, financial operations and management services.

The ministry's executive staff — its Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Ministers — are sources of expert advice for public and private sector clients needing information or assistance on matters including skills development or skills shortages, employment topics and industrial relations.

The Policy and Legislation Branch provides policy analysis, legislative, regulatory and program development support to senior ministry officials, ministry program areas, the minister's office, cabinet and its committees, and other ministries needing advice or assistance on labour and employment issues.

All management services for the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour are provided by the Management Services Division of the Ministry of Education, which also serves the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Advanced Education. The Management Services Division delivers corporate support services to the ministry, including financial and administrative services, freedom of information and protection of privacy advice and support, information management and human resources services.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Results

The following pages provide an overview of key ministry goals for each core business area, the strategies that will be used to meet these goals and the measures that will be used to determine progress. During the next three years, ministry resources will be focused on achieving the goals and objectives set out here. These goals and objectives are consistent with the ministry's vision of a modern work environment for British Columbians that treats employees and employers fairly and equitably, increases productivity and contributes to the prosperity of British Columbia.

The following labour indicators illustrate the employment situation in B.C. and the broad framework within which the ministry works.

Year	B.C. Labour Force ('000)	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate	Participation Rate	Youth Unemployment Rate (15-24-year-olds)	Youth Employment Rate (% of pop.)
2001	2,103.5	59.2%	7.7%	64.1%	13.6%	52.6%
2002	2,157.8	59.4%	8.5%	64.9%	14.9%	53.4%
2003	2,202.1	60.1%	8.1%	65.4%	14.5%	53.7%

Source: BC Stats. Data are annual averages.

Year	Total number of strikes and lockouts in BC	Total number of workers involved in strikes and lockouts	Total person-days not worked due to strikes and lockouts
2001	41	51,035	435,840
2002	19	37,800	114,135
2003 (to end of September)	7	9,326	75,370

Source: Human Resources Development Canada, Workplace Information Directorate.

Each of the goals listed below is related to one of the ministry's core business areas. There have been no shifts or changes from the goals outlined in the 2003/04 – 2005/06 Service Plan Report. Most objectives, strategies and performance measures from the previous service plan have been retained. Changes are identified and explained below.

Goal 1: *Fair and balanced employment standards that promote mutually beneficial relationships between employees and employers.*

Core Business Area: *Employment Standards.*

Changes to employment standards legislation and policy in 2002/03 helped fulfill government's commitment to give employees and employers greater flexibility in negotiating mutually beneficial relationships. Regulatory changes that address the unique circumstances of specific sectors, such as high technology, aquaculture and agriculture, continued in 2003/04. Further ongoing discussions with various sectors are expected as government shifts from blanket coverage to a more industry-specific approach. The intent is to provide the appropriate combination of flexibility and enforcement to ensure these industries, their employees and their communities can grow and prosper together.

In employment standards, key players include employment standards officers, non-union employees, employers, and worker and industry associations. The actions of the ministry's external partners are central to the ministry's success in meeting its objectives. For example, Skills Development and Labour has entered into Memoranda of Understanding with three industries to facilitate education and compliance with employment standards. The British Columbia Restaurant and Foodservices Association, the BC Agriculture Council and its member organizations, and film and television industry representatives have agreed to work with the Employment Standards Branch to improve working conditions in their respective industries.

Partnerships with external stakeholders represent some of the largest potential opportunities as well as risks. While partnerships may generate additional opportunities to refine employment standards or to address compliance issues that are as yet unidentified, they challenge the ministry to balance the competing interests of employees and employers. If the expectations of any party are not met through partnership agreements, their perceptions of the ministry as neutral and effective may be damaged. In the skills development and employment standards program areas, the ministry will work actively to ensure these partnership agreements are successful.

The Employment Standards Branch has committed to providing resources to work concurrently with three targeted sectors through initiatives such as partnerships with employees and employers. Sectors will be prioritized to optimize resource utilization in those areas presenting the greatest risk to vulnerable workers. As joint objectives are realized and compliance issues improved in one sector, the branch will reassess priorities and focus on new sectors to maintain its target of three concurrent initiatives. A performance measure has been added below to evaluate the ministry's success in meeting this commitment.

Changes to the *Employment Standards Act*, as well as the restructuring of the Employment Standards Branch in 2002/03, have meant baseline data has significantly changed. The introduction of self-help materials, the shift from an investigative to a mediation and adjudication model, and compliance partnerships with industries are expected to substantially affect ministry measures.

In employment standards, the ministry has sought to identify anticipated improvements rather than specific targets due to the difficulty in determining causality. A case in point is the number of complaints received by the Branch. A decline in the number of complaints could be attributable to a number of factors, such as the improved effectiveness and efficiency of the self-help kits or the new sector-specific employment standards. Likewise, an increase in the number of complaints in the future may be attributable to a substantial upswing in the provincial economy. As the number of British Columbians finding work increases, the overall number of complaints may also increase even though, on a per capita basis, the number of complaints remains stable.

Objective 1: *Facilitate increased compliance with the Employment Standards Act.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
ESB ¹ early intervention closures ²	911	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Complaints received by ESB	6,590	6,500	5,200	4,800	4,800

¹ Employment Standards Branch.

² The measure 'early intervention closure' in this service plan replaces the measure 'early intervention attempt'. In the 2003/04–2005/06 Service Plan, an 'early intervention attempt' was considered any matter resolved during intake, education or assessment, but prior to the filing of a formal complaint. In this year's service plan, an 'early intervention closure' is a successful resolution of a workplace problem by providing information on basic requirements of the *Employment Standards Act* after the initial filing of a formal complaint but before mediation is scheduled.

- Strategies:**
1. *Increase employers' and employees' knowledge and understanding of the Employment Standards Act by working together with industry on education and awareness initiatives.*
 2. *Ensure contraventions of the Employment Standards Act are identified and corrected by focusing enforcement activities on noncompliant sectors or employers.*

Objective 2: *Create a fairer and more balanced employment standards system that benefits employers and employees.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
ESB determinations ¹	976	450	500	500	500
EST ² appeals and reconsiderations processed.....	586	575	380-420	380-420	380-420

¹ A determination is a legally enforceable decision made by the Branch regarding an employer/employee issue under the Act. The estimates are broad to indicate uncertainty in ESB activities due to substantial changes in legislation and operations in 2002-2003. As trend information emerges, better forecasts will be developed in subsequent years.

² Employment Standards Tribunal. The Tribunal provides an independent avenue of appeal of determinations made by the Branch. In specific circumstances, the Tribunal may also reconsider its own decisions.

- Strategies:**
1. *Ensure the Employment Standards Act is suited to today's workplaces and meets the needs of employers and employees by introducing regulatory changes that address the unique circumstances of specific sectors.*
 2. *Increase employers' and employees' awareness of the employment standards system, including where they can go for assistance.*
 3. *Develop a vibrant relationship with industry that promotes joint responsibility for education and training.*

Objective 3: *Resolve employment standards disputes prior to formal complaint being filed with Employment Standards Branch.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Number of sector specific initiatives concurrently in operation ¹	1	3	3	3	3

¹ Initiatives may include partnership agreements, such as Memoranda of Understanding, or targeted enforcement operations.

- Strategies:**
1. *Provide advice and support services for employers and employees through improving availability of employment standards and dispute resolution information.*
 2. *Support early intervention and alternative dispute resolution in employment standards disputes by supporting the new complaint resolution model, which mandates the use of self-help materials and mediation prior to adjudication.*

Objective 4: *Increase Employment Standards Branch efficiency and effectiveness.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Determinations upheld by the EST ¹	68%	70%	70%	70%	75%
ESB timeliness ²	180	150	130	120	120

¹ Based on 519 ESB determinations appealed to the Tribunal on substantive matters.

² The length of time from submission of complaint to closure (days). Data commenced in 2002/03.

- Strategies:**
1. *Support early intervention in employment standards disputes.*
 2. *Improve quality of Employment Standards Branch decision-making through advanced training for officers, clear policy direction and the sharing of best practices.*
 3. *Provide early intervention/dispute resolution processes.*

Objective 5: *Streamline appeal system.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
EST timeliness — oral hearings ¹	134	135	135	135	135
EST timeliness — written submissions ^{2,3}	86	85	85	85	85

¹ The length of time to decide an appeal (days) based on oral hearings. Data commenced in 2002/03.

² The length of time to decide an appeal (days) based on written submissions. Data commenced in 2002/03.

³ In this year's service plan, this measure has divided oral hearings and written submissions to provide a more accurate measure of each. Approximately 20 per cent of appeals are conducted through oral hearings, but these appeals are generally more complex and lengthy than those conducted through written submissions.

- Strategy:** *Ensure consistency in decision-making by sharing Tribunal lead decisions and high-quality Branch decisions, and by using online policy interpretations to ensure consistent interpretation by staff.*

Goal 2: *Promote productive and competitive workplaces from which good relationships in the labour relations community can be developed.*

Core Business Area: *Industrial Relations.*

The ministry is committed to initiatives that will contribute to a more positive investment climate in the province, such as a stable industrial relations environment. To that end, the ministry will continue developing a labour relations framework that balances the rights and obligations of employers, trade unions and employees, while also protecting the rights of third parties not involved in industrial disputes. Through a focused approach to industrial relations services, this core business area of the ministry helps to promote a vibrant, productive and competitive economy.

The ministry's industrial relations activities are closely tied to those of its external stakeholders, which include unionized workers, employers, unions and employers' associations. Labour Relations Board appointees are equally representative of those groups, and stakeholder interests are represented on the Board through its composition.

Numerous contextual factors may impact the industrial relations environment in British Columbia. The most significant risks and opportunities associated with the ministry's industrial relations goal of a productive labour relations climate are associated with these external factors, such as the global economy and the collective bargaining cycles of B.C.'s unionized workforce.

In order to maximize these opportunities and mitigate the risks, the ministry will continue to monitor and take appropriate action according to its industrial relations mandate.

In recognition of the power of external factors to impact the ministry's goals in this core business area, it has refined a number of its objectives and performance measures to more accurately reflect ministry activities. For example, rather than striving to decrease workdays lost to labour disputes and to decrease the number of *Labour Relations Code* contraventions, the ministry has set objectives of increasing the success rate of collective bargaining mediations and increasing the number of *Labour Relations Code* applications that are resolved prior to adjudication. These objectives are more consistent with ministry responsibilities and are therefore more accurately measured.

Objective 1: *Encourage mutual confidence between unions and employers.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate) ¹	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Number of LRB applications and complaints received ²	2,247	2,450-2,550	2,550-2,780	2,250-2,350	2,250-2,350

¹ Estimates of applications received and disposed of are based on the monthly average figures for the calendar year to date. Estimates of percentages are based on fiscal year-to-date figures and are subject to change.

² Number of applications and complaints received includes mediations and adjudications; Collective Agreement Arbitration Bureau (CAAB) applications received prior to January 1, 2003 are not included. The relatively small range of increase anticipated for 2003 to 2005 takes into account the changing profile of the labour force, the cycle of business, including expiration of contracts, and variation in union activities that may focus on broader labour relations issues and less on day-to-day issues and certification activities.

- Strategies:**
1. *Provide information to Labour Relations Board clients about the Labour Relations Code and industrial relations practices.*
 2. *Create an industrial relations environment that is responsive to the needs of employees, unions and employers by maintaining the accessibility of Labour Relations Board services to all parties and streamlining their administrative requirements.*

Objective 2: *Increase collective bargaining mediation success rate.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Percentage of mediation applications settled (ss. 55 and 74).....	74.4%	75-80%	75-80%	75-80%	75-80%

Strategy: *Encourage alternative dispute resolution processes.*

Objective 3: *Increase number of Labour Relations Code applications that are resolved prior to adjudication.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Number of applications and complaints disposed of ^{1,2}	2,075	2,500–2,600	2,350–2,580	2,250–2,350	2,250–2,350
Percentage of disputes settled ³	64.2%	60-65%	70-75%	70-75%	70-75%

¹ The range for 2003 to 2005 takes into account a number of substantial operative changes within the LRB that occurred in 2002 and 2003. These include a substantial reduction in staffing and budgetary allotments and the reduction in the number of vice chairs.

² Number of applications and complaints disposed of includes mediations and adjudications; CAAB applications received prior to January 1, 2003 are not included. “Disposed of” means an arbitrator or mediator-arbitrator has been appointed, but the case will remain open to record the final outcome. The relatively small range of increase anticipated for 2003 to 2005 takes into account the changing profile of the labour force, the cycle of business, including expiration of contracts, and variation in union activities that may focus on broader labour relations issues and less on day-to-day issues and certification activities.

³ ‘Disputes’ that come to the LRB include: unfair labour practice complaints (ss. 5-12), applications under sections 32 and 45, and Part 5 applications (ss. 57-70). Applications under sections 55 and 74 of the *Labour Relations Code* are excluded from this calculation and are instead listed separately under ‘objective 2’. “Settled” means resolved without formal decision, order or declaration.

- Strategies:**
1. *Provide information to Labour Relations Board clients about the Labour Relations Code and industrial relations practices.*
 2. *Ensure Labour Relations Board operations are suited to today’s work environment by continuing to apply the principles enshrined in the Labour Relations Code, such as encouraging cooperation between employers and trade unions in resolving workplace issues, adapting to changes in the economy, developing workforce skills and developing a workforce and a workplace that promotes productivity.*
 3. *Create an industrial relations environment that is responsive to the needs of employees, unions and employers by maintaining the accessibility of Labour Relations Board services to all parties and streamlining their administrative requirements.*

Objective 4: *Issue decisions in a timely manner.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Average number of backlog cases ¹	23	35	TBD ²	TBD	TBD

¹ In general, a case is seen as part of the 'backlog' if it has been assigned for more than 90 days and no hearing will be held, or where a hearing has been completed and more than 45 days have passed. The estimated increase in backlog for 2003 and 2004 is attributable to the reduction in staffing of adjudicators.

² The Labour Relations Board is undertaking a review and analysis of its timeliness in responding to stakeholders. This review is expected to be completed in the spring of 2004. The Board anticipates that this review will help it to specify time frames for different processes in the Labour Relations Board Rules. Future performance measures can reflect this new approach and indicate the new timelines provided in the Rules.

- Strategies:**
1. *Facilitate the use of early intervention and alternative dispute resolution processes.*
 2. *Expedite Labour Relations Board adjudication through more focused decisions and review and analysis of procedural timelines.*

Goal 3: *Safe and healthy workplaces and a workers' compensation system that is responsive to the needs of employees and employers alike.*

Core Business Area: *Workers' Compensation.*

As an independent Crown agency, the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) identifies and measures performance against its own major objectives. This includes measures for the recently established Review Division, which is the first level of appeal for workers' compensation matters in the revamped appeal system. Please visit the Workers' Compensation Board web site at www.worksafebc.com to view the agency's annual reports, statistical reports and strategic plan.

The data below refer to the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour workers' compensation responsibilities, which include the Workers' Advisers Office, the Employers' Advisers Office and the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal.

The Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal (WCAT) became operational in March 2003. WCAT is the second and final level of appeal in the new system, which was introduced to ensure fair, timely and consistent decisions. WCAT has an objective of eliminating, within three years, the backlog of appeals it acquired from the Workers' Compensation Review

Board and the WCB Appeal Division. Over the coming year, WCAT will develop other measurable objectives with respect to adjudication activity. These objectives and measures can only be accurately identified when the volume of appeals received from the WCB and the WCB Review Division under the new system matures and stabilizes.

The workers' compensation responsibilities of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour are most likely to be impacted by the activities of its two primary stakeholders — the provincial government and the Workers' Compensation Board — which provide the context for the ministry's work. The prevention activities of the workers' and employers' advisers have the potential to facilitate WCB processes, but their ability to provide adequate assistance depends upon budgetary support from government. Most services to workers and employers are provided by the Board itself, and the quality of decision-making at the Board level has a significant effect on the number of appeals that proceed to WCAT. The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour will continue to monitor progress made at the Workers' Compensation Board and the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal as a result of its recent restructuring, and will maintain support for the workers' and employers' advisers.

This year the ministry has removed one objective and its associated strategies from this core business area, to better focus on areas of ministry responsibility. The objective of fewer workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths is addressed by the Workers' Compensation Board and is more appropriate to its business activities.

However, as the Minister responsible for the *Workers Compensation Act*, Graham Bruce is currently considering the report of the Forest Safety Task Force, a task force of forest industry and WCB representatives established in August 2003 to address the unacceptable rate of death and serious injury in the forest industry, with a view to determining an appropriate course of action.

Objective 1: *Better compliance with the Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation by providing responsive, independent and expert advice, assistance and representation to workers and employers.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Inquiries responded to by Workers' Advisers Office ¹	142,062	133,850 ²	130,500	127,500	126,900
Advice/assistance provided by Employers' Advisers Office ³	11,231	9,500	8,500	10,000	10,500

¹ Documented brief service advice. Does not include general inquiries.

² The 2003/04 Base (estimate) dropped significantly from the 2002/03 Base (actual) because appeals activity increased as the backlog was addressed and because changes to the *Workers Compensation Act* in 2002 and 2003 resulted in more inquiries to the Workers' Advisers Office.

³ Advice and assistance provided to new clients that fully addressed their needs at point of contact. This does not include general inquiries. Results in a Liability Protection Form completed and signed by an Adviser only. Distinct from a File, which generally deals with appeals.

Strategy: *Facilitate workers' and employers' understanding of the workers' compensation system, including appeal processes, by providing information and assistance to workers and employers.*

Objective 2: *Decrease number of appeals filed.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Workers' Advisors Office public education seminar participation ¹	257	450	290	310	350
Employers' Advisers Office information and skills development seminar participation ²	4,801	4,000	3,600	4,500	4,700

¹ Individual participants. Includes injured workers, worker representatives, constituency assistants and other public groups who attend WAO seminars on using the workers' compensation system. Changes to the *Workers Compensation Act* in 2002 and 2003 explain the higher rate of seminar participation in 2003/04. Targets assume a modest increase due to anticipated growth in employment rates, particularly in the construction industry.

² Individual participants. Includes employers, workers, safety committee members and professionals who attend EAO seminars on various components of workers' compensation legislation. Changes to the *Workers Compensation Act* in 2002 and 2003 explain the higher rate of seminar participation in 2002/03. The 2003/04 base and targets for subsequent years are based on regular levels of seminar activity in years without significant changes to the legislation.

Strategy: *Facilitate workers' and employers' understanding of the workers' compensation system, including appeal processes.*

Objective 3: *Increase efficiency of appeal system.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Backlog of appeals acquired from old system at implementation of WCAT ¹	22,425	11,390 ²	5,695	0	0

¹ Over the coming year, WCAT will develop other measurable objectives with respect to adjudication activity. These objectives and measures can only be accurately identified when the volume of appeals received from the WCB and the WCB Review Division under the new system matures and stabilizes.

² Based on last reported figures (October 31, 2003).

Strategies: 1. *Streamline appeal system.*
2. *Eliminate appeal backlog.*

Goal 4: *Develop programs and legislation that contribute to provincial competitiveness and prosperity.*

Core Business Area: *Executive and Support Services.*

The Executive and Support Services section of the ministry will maintain activities to support the government’s goals of a strong and vibrant provincial economy, a supportive social infrastructure and safe and healthy communities, such as monitoring the results of recent legislative and regulatory changes in areas of ministry responsibility and identifying items needing further improvement. Staff will also continue to implement government policies to streamline administration and service delivery and improve transparency and accountability with initiatives such as Enterprise-wide Risk Management.

Objective 1: *Work with core business areas to ensure that legislation, policies and programs are relevant to the needs of today’s employers and employees.*

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Client satisfaction survey results.....	N/A	N/A	85 % satisfaction	85 % satisfaction	85 % satisfaction

Strategy: *Executive and Policy and Legislation Branch liaise with staff in the ministry’s program areas to monitor emerging issues.*

Objective 2: *Implement a plan for integrating Enterprise-wide Risk Management processes into ministry planning activities.*

In the fall of 2002, government adopted Enterprise-wide Risk Management (ERM) as a process to be applied to all ministry, branch and agency planning processes and activities. The ERM policy is intended to modernize and improve public sector management by integrating a systematic approach to risk management into each program or service area.

In 2003/04, the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour began formalizing its risk management activities by developing an implementation plan for ERM in the ministry. Building on its existing processes, the ministry has developed a risk management framework, which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each core business area and establishes a workplan for integrating risk management into their ongoing operations.

To begin, the ministry executive has conducted a risk assessment for the ministry service plan. It has identified the major risks and opportunities associated with each of the goals

set for the core business areas above. As noted, the major risks and opportunities for this ministry involve the actions of external stakeholders and changes to environmental conditions, such as the global economy, which have the potential to significantly change the context within which the ministry operates in any given time period.

The ministry has assessed its current level of ERM maturity at “2” on the Ministry of Finance’s Risk Maturity Model five-point scale. At level two, an organization’s risk management processes are in place but are, for the most part, ad hoc. ERM activities are applied inconsistently because they are not formalized throughout the organization.

In the next three years, the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour anticipates that its risk management culture will mature as it builds capacity through ERM awareness-building and training, and continued executive support of the initiative.

Performance Measure	2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Risk maturity assessment level of maturity ¹	2	2	3	4	5

¹ The risk maturity assessment performance measure is based on the ‘Risk Maturity Model’ document provided by the Ministry of Finance, Risk Management Branch, at www.fin.gov.bc.ca/ocg/ias/Risk_Assessment_Tools.htm. It rates organizational maturity on a scale of one through five, with one representing the lowest level of maturity (characterized by a low level of ERM knowledge, use and commitment) and five representing the highest level of maturity (characterized by integrated and proactive ERM practices at all levels of the organization).

Strategy: *Engage in ERM awareness-building and provide training where required.*

Objective 3: *Reduce ministry’s and Workers’ Compensation Board’s regulatory burden by one-third by 2004.*

Cross-government deregulation initiatives, which seek to reduce the overall regulatory burden by one-third, will continue to impact all core businesses of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour.

By the end of 2003, the ministry had reduced its regulatory requirements by 40 per cent, and the Workers’ Compensation Board had reduced its regulatory requirements by 28 per cent. The repeal of the *Barbers Act* and the *Cosmetologists Act*, effective December 31, 2003, has removed numerous unnecessary and duplicate regulations, and has assisted the ministry in exceeding its goal of reducing its regulatory requirements by one-third by the end of 2004. The workers’ compensation appeal system was restructured effective March 3, 2003, through Bill 63, the *Workers’ Compensation Amendment Act (No. 2), 2002*. This change, which involved the merger of the former WCB Appeal Division into WCAT, involved the development of a small number of new practices and procedures but eliminated a large

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number of appeal system regulatory requirements. Continuing reviews of the *Workers Compensation Act* and policies have also resulted in substantial reductions.

The ministry will continue to implement the government's smart regulation policy by simplifying and reducing unnecessary regulatory regimes and by ensuring that any new regulation is necessary.

Performance Measure	2001/02 – 2002/03 Base (actual)	2003/04 Base (estimate)	2004/05 Target	2005/06 Target	2006/07 Target
Reduction of ministry's regulatory burden — Per cent change ¹	23% reduction	17% reduction in 2003/04 for over 34% reduction by end of 2004	Compliance with the Regulatory Reform Criteria set out in the Regulatory Reform Policy	Compliance with the Regulatory Reform Criteria set out in the Regulatory Reform Policy	Compliance with the Regulatory Reform Criteria set out in the Regulatory Reform Policy
Actual change (ministry)	-2,005	-1,472 (estimate)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reduction of Workers' Compensation Board regulatory burden — Per cent change ¹	9% reduction	19% reduction in 2003/04	5% reduction in 2004/05 for 33% total reduction by end of 2004	Compliance with the Regulatory Reform Criteria set out in the Regulatory Reform Policy	Compliance with the Regulatory Reform Criteria set out in the Regulatory Reform Policy
Actual change (WCB)	-3,269	-6,623 (estimate)	-1,760 (estimate)	N/A	N/A

¹ The total reduction for the ministry by 2003/04 is a net reduction of 3,477 regulatory requirements, meaning it has exceeded its final target of 34% of the base count of 8,688. The WCB has achieved a net reduction of 9,892, or 28% of the base count of 35,308. The WCB is expected to reach its final target of 33% by the end of 2004.

Appendix 1. Strategic Context

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision: A modern work environment for British Columbians that encourages innovation, rewards creative thinking and increases productivity. Employees and employers are treated fairly and equitably. A prosperous British Columbia where employers and employees have confidence in the future.

Mission: The mission of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour is to create an employment environment with dynamic workplaces that meet the needs of workers, employers and unions. Vulnerable workers will be protected. The ministry will ensure that British Columbians have the tools they need to foster working relationships in safe and healthy workplaces. It will develop programs and legislation that contribute to provincial competitiveness and prosperity.

Values: The following values underlie the goals established by the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour:

1. **Fairness** — We seek fair and balanced workplaces in all sectors and will ensure that all related ministry decisions are made in a consistent, professional, fair and balanced manner.
2. **Competitiveness** — We support a competitive business environment that attracts investment to British Columbia and retains our skilled employees.
3. **Respect** — We will protect the most vulnerable employees in the province and ensure they are treated equitably, compassionately and respectfully.
4. **Simplicity** — We will encourage small businesses to prosper through simple and streamlined processes.
5. **Responsiveness and Flexibility** — We strive to be relevant and responsive to constantly changing workplaces.
6. **Accountability** — We promote responsible fiscal management and the implementation of affordable public policies.
7. **Teamwork** — We value the hard work and expertise of all ministry employees.

Planning Context

In developing this service plan and making decisions on programs, the ministry has considered the following strengths and challenges.

Strengths

In 2003/04, the B.C. economy experienced significant job growth, more work opportunities for youth and rising investor confidence.

- Statistics Canada data show that between December 2001 and November 2003, B.C. created over 131,000 new jobs, resulting in the highest employment increase in Canada at 6.8 per cent.
- A report prepared in October 2003 for the 2010 Winter Games Human Resources Planning Committee estimates that between 2003 and 2015, the growing B.C. economy will generate more than one million job openings, including new jobs, vacancies created through retirements, and opportunities generated by the Olympic Games, construction of the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre, Sea-to-Sky Highway improvements, and construction of the Richmond-Airport-Vancouver Rapid Transit Line.
- Other signs of B.C.'s economic improvement are increases in residential and non-residential building permits, business incorporations, retail trade, oil and gas exploration and lumber and paper shipments.

Through the preventive endeavours of workers, employers, unions, industry associations and the WCB, the injury rate in B.C. workplaces has declined steadily every year since 1991, for an overall decline of 44 per cent in 11 years.

- The Workers' Compensation Board reports that in 2002, the injury rate declined by 11 per cent from the previous year to a record-low of 3.2 accepted short-term disability claims per 100 person-years of employment.
- The Board calculates that an injury-rate reduction of one percentage point translates to 618 fewer workers experiencing a time loss injury, \$10 million in avoided costs, and approximately 30,000 productive days gained for the economy.

Challenges

British Columbia's economy is growing, but faces significant competition with international markets.

- The global economy is highly competitive for both investment and skilled workers. While B.C.'s growing economy is expected to generate over one million job openings between 2003 and 2015, there may be skills gaps — meaning demand will exceed supply unless appropriate measures are taken — in certain regions and specialized occupations.

Several public sector collective agreements will expire in 2004 requiring government to begin negotiating new contracts with the hospital employees, nurses and teachers.

- The ability of the ministry to maintain labour peace will be challenged by negotiations between these high-profile employers and unions. In 2003, government began negotiations with the Hospital Employees Union and the B.C. Government and Service Employees Union. The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia also initiated contract discussions, and B.C. Ferry Services Inc. and the B.C. Ferry and Marine Workers' Union agreed to binding arbitration in 2003.

The ministry is concerned about maintaining employment standards for the most vulnerable employees while allowing B.C. business to compete both nationally and internationally.

- The ministry is committed to protecting vulnerable employees, particularly garment workers and agricultural workers. As these groups have historically been the most disadvantaged and the least able to advance their own interests, the ministry's challenge is in trying to involve them in achieving employer compliance with employment standards.

The ministry faces the challenge of fostering continued growth in the film and television production industry in view of a labour relations climate that has the potential to limit that growth.

- British Columbia has created a positive climate for the film and television production industry with a range of programs providing financial support and incentives. The Ministry of Small Business and Economic Development reports that the industry grew from \$176 million in 1991 to \$1 billion in 2002. However, continued growth is threatened by the potential for labour unrest in this sector. In 2003, for example, the industry generated only \$800 million. The ministry's appointment of an Industrial Inquiry Commission to study labour issues in the B.C. film industry will help to ensure that B.C. continues to be an attractive destination for film production.

Highlights of Strategic Shifts and Changes from the Previous Service Plan

The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour has experienced no shifts or changes from the goals outlined in the 2003/04 – 2005/06 Service Plan Report and, as reported this year, will stay the course with those targets.

Consistency with Government's Strategic Plan

The objectives of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour are consistent with the government strategic plan. A healthy labour environment is essential to achieving government's broader goals, including a strong and vibrant provincial economy, a supportive social infrastructure and safe and healthy communities. For example, flexible and appropriate employment standards will attract businesses to B.C. and contribute to the provincial economy. Workers' compensation rates and coverage also influence the attractiveness of B.C. as a place to do business. Attracting private sector businesses to the province will increase the number of high-paying job opportunities for British Columbians and contribute to economic prosperity. The ministry's efforts to streamline services, such as in the employment standards area, are also consistent with the government's priority of responsible and accountable management of B.C.'s public resources and tax dollars.

The government's Strategic Plan 2003/04–2005/06 has been used to align the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour's strategies, achievements and plans with government's stated goals, objectives and strategies.

Government Goal 1: *A Strong and Vibrant Provincial Economy*

The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour contributes to the government's goal of a strong and vibrant provincial economy by monitoring skills development in key sectors, maintaining employment standards that protect vulnerable workers while supporting employers, promoting labour stability, and fostering safe and healthy workplaces by promoting education and compliance with the *Workers Compensation Act* and its occupational health and safety regulations.

The ministry also contributes to B.C.'s economic prosperity by participating in government initiatives to improve the management of government, such as transparent planning and accountability reporting, reducing red-tape and introducing smart regulation.

Government's Objective: A Prosperous Economy Government's Overall Strategy: Innovation and Economic Growth			
Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Skills Development and Labour Strategies	Achievement in 2003/04	2004/05 – 2006/07 Service Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a long-term economic development strategy. • Expand partnerships with the federal government to promote growth and economic development in British Columbia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the Workers' Compensation Board more responsive to workers and employers. • Develop a provincial human resources strategy to ensure British Columbia has the skilled workforce to support British Columbia's growth. • Develop fair and balanced employment standards that allow mutually beneficial relationships between employees and employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of new governance structure to ensure that the workers' compensation system is responsive to the needs of employers and employees. • Development of a framework of industry strategies for businesses that can be used to address cyclic and structural skills shortages. • Introduction of new, flexible employment standards in agriculture. • Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the agricultural sector to facilitate education and compliance with employment standards in that sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to establish or maintain three initiatives per year to facilitate compliance with employment standards in targeted sectors.

Government's Objective: A Prosperous Economy Government's Overall Strategy: Management of Government			
Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Skills Development and Labour Strategies	Achievement in 2003/04	2004/05 – 2006/07 Service Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ministries will meet their budget and service plan targets. • Promote and sustain a renewed professional public service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce unnecessary or overlapping regulations and ensure that any new regulation is necessary. • Promote the Corporate Human Resource Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry has reduced regulatory burden by 40 per cent. • In 2003, ministry executive met with all ministry staff to discuss and develop the ministry Human Resource Plan. • In 2003/04, executive began implementing the ministry Human Resource Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry will exceed its deregulation target of reducing regulatory burden by one-third in 2004. • Continue to implement ministry Human Resource Plan. • Review and update ministry Human Resource Plan regularly and tie into the government and ministry vision, service and business planning initiatives.

Government Goal 2: *A Supportive Social Fabric*

The Ministry of Skills Development and Labour contributes to the creation of a supportive social fabric by ensuring that a sustainable workers' compensation system meets the needs of injured workers and their partners and dependents.

Government's Objective: British Columbians Will Be Healthy Government's Overall Strategy: Safety			
Provincial Strategies	Ministry of Skills Development and Labour Strategies	Achievement in 2003/04	2004/05 – 2006/07 Service Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the development of socially responsible and safe industry practices. • Encourage workplaces to improve their safety practices and seek improvements from employers and industries with poor safety records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support employers in managing the risks and consequences of workplace illnesses and injuries; encourage workplaces to improve their safety practices. • Provide information, education and training programs. • Target employers and industries with poor safety records. • Inspect workplaces for compliance, order corrective action and levy administrative penalties when there is repeated non-compliance or where workers have been exposed to serious risk of injury or disease. • Ensure workers' compensation system is responsive and meets the needs of employers and employees. • Ensure WCA and OHS Regulation are suited to today's workplaces. • Facilitate employers' and employees' understanding of the workers' compensation system, including appeal processes. • Streamline appeal system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board has reduced regulatory burden by 28 per cent. • Government action to improve workers' compensation by introducing lifetime survivor's benefits for partners of workers who die from workplace injuries; extending the age to which dependent children may receive benefits; and allowing lay advocates to advise or act on behalf of employers and employees who are going through the WCB system. • Implementation of new workers' compensation appeal system to ensure that injured workers and their dependents receive timely and consistent decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete reform of the appeals process through policy and operational changes. • Introduce changes to clarify issues surrounding occupational disease compensation, compensation for chronic pain, and the regulation of occupational safety and health.

Appendix 2. Summary of Related Planning Processes

Information Resource Management Plan

1. Service delivery via the Web.
2. Shared servers for ministry applications.
3. Re-use of designs and functions across ministry development projects.
4. Data standardization.
5. Enterprise data.
6. Electronic information access and protection of privacy.
7. Data sharing.

Major Projects

Project	Completion Date	Benefits
Employment Standards Branch: Case Management System	October 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective monitoring and enforcement activities through enhancing support for officers. • Enhanced management reporting and tracking of performance metrics. • Improved systems support for the consistent application of ESB regulations .
Migration of ministry business applications to Common Information Technology Services	August 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable operating infrastructure for ministry business applications. • Standardization of application maintenance environments. • Improved vendor support for application maintenance environment.
High-level Requirements Definitions for an integrated workers' compensation appeals system	May 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better integration and reduced data entry effort. • Efficient and timely processing of reviews, appeals and any resulting implementation activity. • Timely and accurate reporting on the performance of the system to managers, executives and stakeholders.

Human Resource Management Plan

The Human Resource Plan supports the ministry service plan with strategies designed to equip employees to provide excellent services to the public.

Ministry employees have participated in the development of the Human Resource Plan. Their expertise and perspective is key to identifying the factors that are most likely to result in high employee performance.

The plan is guided by government human resource priorities. Therefore, it reflects the same goals that are stated in the Corporate Human Resource Plan:

1. Effective People Strategy
2. Proactive and Visionary Leadership
3. Performance Focused Workplace
4. Learning and Innovative Organization
5. Flexible and Motivating Work Environment
6. Progressive Employer-Employee Relations

The Human Resource Plan is a living document. It will be monitored for its effectiveness and will be updated to address emerging organizational needs or changes in ministry service provision. In this way, the ministry will remain current in its strategies to maintain a high-performing organization.

