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PREAMBLE

The audit of the Northern Region was completed in June 2006 at a time when the *Federal Accountability Act* had been tabled in the House of Commons (April 11, 2006) and was awaiting Royal Assent (December 12, 2006). The Act creates a new, independent Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to prosecute criminal offences under federal jurisdiction. The DPP is also referred to as the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC).

During the period June and December 2006 it was unclear how the Northern Region would be structured if a new Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) were created whereby federal prosecution services in the North would be transferred from the Department of Justice to the ODPP. In view of this the provision of management responses to the audit recommendations was delayed pending Royal Assent. Preliminary responses were provided on December 22, 2006 and updated responses were provided on February 23, 2007. The management responses describe the action taken or proposed to address the audit recommendations.

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

We have completed the internal audit of the Office of the Northern Region. The overall objectives of the audit were to review and assess:

- the management framework in place (policies, practices, and procedures relating to planning, organizing, controlling, leading and communicating; and the management of financial, human, and materiel resources);
- the extent to which the Northern Region is effectively organized to deliver its services (including the adequacy of resource levels);
- the appropriateness of the linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region (legal and corporate services areas) as well as those between the Office of the Northern Region and the regional offices;
- the appropriateness of the linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region and Headquarters (legal and corporate services areas);
- the extent to which the management team structure is efficient and effective;
- the adequacy and effectiveness of the provision of corporate services to the Northern Offices.

The internal audit was conducted in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) *Policy on Internal Audit* and the Institute of Internal Auditors Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

- a) The audit followed the methodology outlined in Treasury Board guides on comprehensive audits. It consisted of a review of pertinent documentation, interviews in the Region and with selected staff at headquarters, and extensive audit testing to address key identified issues.
- b) The audit team developed a set of audit programs and tests to determine whether there were any serious issues that warranted further examination. The audit tests were devised to reference such polices and regulations as: *Financial Administration Act, Delegation of Financial Signing Authorities, DOJ Budget Allocation Guidelines and Supporting Information, Government Contracts Regulations, DOJ IT Governance Structure, and Public Service Employment Act.*

In our professional judgment, sufficient and appropriate audit procedures have been conducted and evidence gathered to support the accuracy of the conclusions reached and contained in this report. The conclusions were based on a comparison of the situations as they existed at the time of the audit and against the audit criteria. It should be noted that the conclusions are only applicable for the areas examined.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Department of Justice has six main regional offices (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairie Region, Northern Region, and British Columbia). The Northern Region comprises the Office of the Northern Region (ONR), situated in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, and three regional offices. The three offices that provide legal services in the Northern Region are the Yukon Regional Office (YRO) in Whitehorse, the Northwest Territories Regional Office (NWTRO) in Yellowknife, and the Nunavut Regional Office (NRO) in Iqaluit. A small sub-office is located in Inuvik and its staff report to the NWTRO.

The Northern Region is headed by a Senior Regional Director (SRD) who reports directly to the Deputy Minister. Service delivery is provided through the three main regional offices, each of which is headed by a regional director (RD). The regional offices operate independently but look to the ONR for corporate services support and legal and management guidance. In the Northern Region service delivery is divided into two main groups of legal professionals and support staff: the Civil Litigation and Advisory Group and the Criminal Prosecutions group. In the YRO and the NWTRO, each service delivery group is headed by a Group Head. In Nunavut RO there is a Group Head for Criminal Prosecutions but there is only one Civil Litigation lawyer. The ONR management team meets as the Regional Management Committee. It consists of the Senior Regional Director, the regional directors of Nunavut, NWT and Yukon, the Director of Finance and Administration, the Director of Human Resources, the Senior Policy Counsel and the Executive Advisor to the SRD.

The objectives of this audit were to review and assess:

- the management framework in place (policies, practices, and procedures relating to planning, organizing, controlling, leading and communicating; and the management of financial, human, and materiel resources);
- the extent to which the Northern Region is effectively organized to deliver its services (including the adequacy of resource levels);

- the appropriateness of the linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region (legal and corporate services areas) as well as those between the Office of the Northern Region and the regional offices;
- the appropriateness of the linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region and Headquarters (legal and corporate services areas);
- the extent to which the management team structure is efficient and effective;
- the adequacy and effectiveness of the provision of corporate services to the Northern Offices.

The audit covered all activities related to the management and operations of the offices in the Northern Region. Specifically, the audit addressed the following key issues:

- whether the overall level of resources was appropriate to meet the Northern Region's needs;
- appropriate level of integration and linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region with respect to the delivery of legal and corporate services;
- ability of the regional offices in the Northern Region to respond to increases in activity in the Territories (i.e. meet the needs of the clients or the public with respect to criminal and civil matters);
- mix of resources (including use of paralegals);
- workflow processes in the legal areas;
- unique pressures/needs of these regional offices, due to unique mandate, location, distance over which business must be carried out, and working environment.

Regional Management Framework

The Northern Region management framework includes the policies, processes, and practices used to organize, plan, lead, control/monitor, communicate, and manage the human, financial, and materiel resources with respect to the delivery of legal services in the Canadian North.

Organization. At the creation of the ONR, it was necessary for the Department to estimate the extent of resources required to operate the new Region. We noted that when the Region was created in 2001, the Department was entering into a period of budgetary restraint. Also, environmental factors in the Region (e.g. isolation, distance between offices, added cost of doing business in the Region) impact on resources. As a result, the ONR is currently operating with a deficit. A satellite office of the Northwest Territories Regional Office is located in Inuvik.

Although we found that operational roles were generally understood by all staff we interviewed, we also found that staff in the Northern Region had difficulty reconciling the distinct yet related roles of Headquarters portfolio management and their own regional management team. We found that

regional staff are as yet unclear on the role of the ONR as the regional headquarters, as it relates to the operational needs of the separate regional offices.

Planning. Planning is an essential management function that helps to ensure organizational objectives are met. There is no formal regional strategic plan for the Northern Region as a whole, and although some planning effort is made, formal operational plans do not exist in all regional offices. The SRD organized a planning retreat in September 2005 that marked the beginning of a process to create a strategic plan for the Region. This plan is to be completed by the spring of 2006.

All offices in the Northern Region have limited resources, which makes it difficult to meet current and anticipated workload. In our view there is a resource crisis in the Northern Region. Inadequate planning is both a result of and a contributing factor to the resource issue. Heavy workloads, new emerging requirements, and constant staff turnover in the Region make it a challenge to plan. Yet, without a formal, strategic plan that is well substantiated, the Region cannot put forward convincing arguments for an increase in resources.

Leading/Monitoring. Overall we found that staff in each RO understood the need to meet on a regular basis to discuss various regional level issues. Despite the difficulty in arranging in-person meetings, individuals interviewed told us they view the Senior Management Committee as an effective team and that real effort is made by the Senior Management Committee to include regional staff in discussions and resolution of regional issues. In the audit team's view this is a positive achievement.

All members of the Senior Management Committee are very conscious of the limited budget and seek alternative means of accomplishing both program and management tasks. In our opinion, effective budgeting in the Northern Region is dependent on addressing the deficit and justifying resource needs through improved strategic planning. If the deficit were addressed, there would be more opportunity for management to do appropriate planning and budget development.

Performance Measurement. In the Northern Region there is no regular capture of statistical data; no regular activity reporting with which to objectively measure productivity; nor standard tools in each regional office by which such statistics are accumulated. Although the regional offices produce ad hoc reports in response to requests for information from HQ portfolios, we were told that the production of these reports is time consuming, in part because the information is not readily available through a regular reporting process. In our view, well-designed performance measures are key to providing Headquarters management with the type of information needed to better address regional requirements. In addition, a standard toolset is required to ensure all regional offices capture and analyze performance information, and compare this information against performance measures that have been developed.

Communications. Effective communications are essential for imparting the necessary information that ensures all involved are working toward common priorities and objectives. We found that in the Northern Region there is a specific effort made to include people as much as possible. There is, however, no official communications capacity housed in the Northern Region. The Senior Regional Director's Executive Advisor carries a significant portion of this responsibility while relying heavily on the services of Headquarters, the British Columbia Regional Office or the Prairies Regional Office. As the only Region without dedicated Communications support, the Northern Region operates on a reactive basis and is only provided support as needed and when available. Media planning and strategic communications plans are not done in the Northern Region. There is an immediate need to develop a Strategic Communications Plan for the Northern Region to address both external and internal communications.

A further issue with respect to ensuring adequate communications is the staffing of key roles at the regional level. For example, the position of Regional Director, Informatics has been vacant since the summer of 2004. As a result, since then, the Region has lacked a spokesperson to contribute to discussions and decisions at the departmental level concerning IT support activities and technologies.

Summary of Recommendations

Action is recommended to:

- address the deficit;
- clarify roles and responsibilities, address unique regional requirements, and clarify lines of communication;
- complete the strategic plan for the Northern Region and make a case for a human resource position that is sustainable;
- ensure that each regional office undertakes appropriate operational planning;
- identify and analyze the present and planned future costs of the Northern Region;
- implement formal performance measurement;
- ensure the Northern Region is represented on key IT/IM meetings/conferences/teleconferences;
- ensure the role of the Informatics Director includes responsibility for IM;
- develop a Strategic Communications Plan for the Northern Region to address both external and internal communications.

Regional Corporate Services

Human Resources Management. One of the key HR services for the entire Northern Region is staffing. Although we were told that this service has improved significantly, regional office managers continue to perform significant tasks relating to the staffing process. We found that the regional offices complete staffing actions, document the process, and track progress. However, there is no one standard tool used to facilitate the tracking task. The most significant HR issue in the Northern Region is the recruitment and retention of legal and support staff. Although this issue exists in each RO, it is a much greater problem for the Nunavut RO.

The Northern Region lacks sufficient staff to carry out all HR functions and therefore relies on B.C. and Prairie regional staff to provide services such as compensation and classification to the regional offices. While overall there is satisfaction with these services, some issues were identified. We were told that the Northern Region would be better served if classification services were provided by a single source outside the region.

Regional human resources strategies to address the Northern Region's issues are required but have not been completed because of workload pressures, the constant need to replace staff, and the complexity of the issues involved. In developing HR strategies some consideration may be given to: developing a profile of the northern worker for recruitment purposes; developing a strategy to provide training in the legal professions for Aboriginal people; and reviewing with central agencies overall support for staff, including benefits, leave, and incentives.

The ONR has implemented a continuous learning plan for staff in the Northern Region, which is attached to performance appraisals. However, we were told that budget is a limiting factor in implementing these plans. With respect to learning plans, we found that all staff members interviewed were concerned about the limited access to local training. Also, because of the legal case work related to the *Criminal Code* in the Northern Region, standard departmental courses do not always apply.

Financial Management. Responsibility for financial management in the Northern Region in terms of budgetary control and expenditure approval is shared between the Regional Director, Finance and Administration in the ONR and all regional directors. We found that regional staff make every effort to ensure separation of duties for the various financial functions—sections 32, 33, and 34 of the *Financial Administration Act* (FAA). We tested 28 payments and 14 contracts for goods and services. We found that while financial delegation and overall control were adequate, measures are required to enhance financial control or ensure full compliance with financial and contracting policies. In addition, although the regional management team has implemented a series of financial

practices to accommodate the size and style of regional operations, there is little documentation available on these practices. Nor are there standard financial tools across the Region.

Resource shortages impact regional office operations. For example, in all cases the span of functional control and responsibility invested in the role of the Office Manager is significant. Staff departures or absences have resulted in multiple changes in delegations. Any loss of key staff such as the Office Manager could impair the ability of the regional management team to ensure separation of duties and adequate financial control.

Administration Services. Administration services include, for example, security, facility management, and occupational health and safety (OH&S). In all three regions, the delivery of administration services is the responsibility of the Office Manager.

As the office manager role is unique to the Northern Region and thus not standard across the Department, actual formal procedures and documentation of responsibilities do not exist for many of the functions these individuals perform. This raises the risk that the functions will not be implemented consistently or completely across the Northern Region. Furthermore, the concentration of administration responsibilities in one position raises the risk of an adverse impact on operations should the incumbent leave the position.

Management of Information Technology. The management of information technology is now a critical component of operations and an essential element in decision-making. Management is dependent on reliable information systems to support decision-making and accountability. The broad geographic spread and isolation of the Northern Region requires considerable dependence on technology for the provision of standard services.

The Northern Region has experienced significant difficulty in staffing IT specialist positions in the regional offices. The Regional Director, Informatics position in the ONR has been vacant since the summer of 2004. In all regional offices the risk exists that due to limited IT support, any loss of staff with relevant expertise could adversely affect IT operations in the Northern Region. Alternative solutions for IT support must be considered. Information Management Branch (IMB) at headquarters makes use of contract resources; the SRD should investigate as to whether contracting for IT support is feasible in the Northern Region.

The offices in the Northern Region use standard IT policies and processes that have been issued by IMB at headquarters. For the most part, these standard processes are functioning appropriately. There is no IT system development in the Northern Region, since there is little regional office expertise or capacity. The ability to support the roll-out of new hardware and software for national initiatives is yet to be proved in the Region. We found that IT connectivity as well as technology and

staff capacity are issues overall. The capacity to support the roll-out of new systems being supplied nationally will only be partially addressed by staffing the Regional Director, Informatics position in the ONR.

Management of Information. Like many other organizations, the Northern Region relies on effective and efficient management of information—both electronic and hard copy. The Northern Region is functioning without a regional strategy for information management and is reliant on knowledgeable staff. There is no regional manager for IM. As a result, there is a significant risk that the Department of Justice strategy for information management will not adequately address the needs of the Northern Region.

For the most part, the process by which criminal and civil litigation case files are managed is routine. In the Nunavut Regional Office there are significant issues with adhering to information management standards, managing the file registry, and locating case files. The other regional offices in the Northern Region have addressed past issues with records management and have more extensive experience with RIMS. However, the limited staff (one per regional office) places the offices at risk in the event of staff departures. The issues in the Nunavut RO arose partly as the result of the departure of an experienced staff member. The situation there clearly demonstrates the risk and consequences of losing key staff.

Although RIMS is the current national system for records management, the Department of Justice will be moving to Records, Document and Information Management System (RDIMS) next year. RDIMS is part of a government-wide initiative supported by Treasury Board, which was scheduled for departmental approval in November 2005. When the offices of the Northern Region implement RDIMS and iCase, they will meet the same file management standards as the rest of the Department. Due to technology restrictions, the Northern Region may not be able to easily implement these systems. The ONR has not been able to develop a strategy to address this issue in the absence of a Regional Director, Informatics.

Summary of Recommendations

Action is recommended to:

- further enhance the delivery of HR services by: obtaining classification services from one consolidated source within the Department of Justice; completing strategies for recruitment and retention; establishing standard tools to assist in the management of local HR;
- obtain additional funding for specialized training courses for regional offices;

- ensure that in the case of replacement staff the signee's name with respect to Section 34 (FAA) is always printed;
- ensure that all sole-source contracts in the Region are supported by appropriate justification, and the terms and deliverables for expert witnesses are adequately documented;
- ensure that financial procedures are adequately documented and a standard toolset is implemented in all regional offices;
- develop a strategy to ensure that all required administration services are provided in a consistent manner across the Region;
- develop a strategy for IT support throughout the Northern Region;
- develop a regional strategy for information management (IM).

Regional Operations

A Northern Vision. The population of the North represents a variety of unique cultures, which are not always understood by prosecutors in the Department of Justice. The FPS Review Report of May 30, 2001 highlighted this lack of knowledge and understanding.

As part of initial efforts to create a strategic plan for the Northern Region, the Senior Management Committee produced "Northern Directions: A Policy Vision for Justice in the North". The document explored the challenges, objectives, priorities, and future strategic direction for the Department's legal operations and programs in the Territories.

At a planning retreat organized by the SRD in 2005, the Senior Management Committee also identified some key strategies as essential to reach the goals set out in the vision. These strategies encompass a wide range of activities that are important for the Northern Region in reaching the goals of the vision but that require a substantial investment of resources. Regional management and staff also voiced a concern that the Northern Region is very vulnerable to losing key staff members, which could seriously impact any progress made to date. The Northern Region should address how to realistically implement the vision by thoroughly analyzing the issue during future regional strategic planning sessions.

One key component presented in the FPS Review Report was the need for improved coordination between the Northern Region and Headquarters. Although the report refers to the establishment of positions in each RO for this purpose, more recent interviews indicated senior management support for a central position at headquarters.

Northern Work Environment. The workload is heavy in the Northern Region and all staff told us that the office culture is one of overwork. Although as noted under "Regional Resources", the

workload differs from east to west, lack of staff across the whole Northern Region has impacted on the ability of existing staff to meet the workload demands.

In the Northern Region the office culture exerts pressure on staff to bring work home and work overtime, which we were told is often unrecognized. Burnout resulting from the significant workload is a cause of turnover among crown attorneys. Although climate and physical isolation are factors in staff turnover, we were told that burnout is the primary cause. If the Department of Justice addresses the regional resourcing crisis, the culture of overwork can be resolved.

The population of the North has increased in recent years with a resulting increase in the number of RCMP officers and charges, particularly in Nunavut. With respect to criminal prosecutions, there is a need for solutions appropriate to the specific characteristics of the Northern Region such as restorative justice and alternative sentencing approaches. The 2004 RPP cited “sustainable funding” as a key priority for the Department. However, funding for prosecutions has not increased. Regional and Headquarters management will need to explore appropriate sources of funding to support these solutions.

Summary of Recommendations

Action is recommended to:

- determine how to realistically implement the Northern vision;
- undertake the necessary measures to acquire a resource in headquarters to act in a coordinating role between Headquarters and the Northern Region;
- explore appropriate sources of funding to support the prosecutorial function in a changing environment.

The management response to the recommendations contained in this report was provided by the Senior Regional Director, Office of the Northern Region.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Department of Justice has six main regional offices (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairie Region, Northern Region, and British Columbia). The Northern Region comprises the Office of the Northern Region (ONR), situated in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, and three regional offices in each territory. The ONR provides various corporate services including human resources, finance and administration, informatics, and policy support. The three offices that provide legal services in the Northern Region are the Yukon Regional Office (YRO) in Whitehorse, the Northwest Territories Regional Office (NWTRO) in Yellowknife, and the Nunavut Regional Office (NRO) in Iqaluit. A small sub-office is located in Inuvik and its staff report to the NWTRO. Each of the three regional offices provides federal prosecution services related to various federal acts as well as the prosecution of *Criminal Code* offences. These offices also provide advisory and civil litigation services to other federal government and agencies.

The Northern Region comprises approximately 127 positions of which 101 were staffed at the time of the audit. These positions include:

- 10 in the Office of the Northern Region
- 35 in the Yukon Regional Office
- 50 in the NWT Regional Office (including 3 in Inuvik)
- 32 in the Nunavut Regional Office

Of these staff, 55 percent are classified in the LA (Law) group, 12 percent in the SI (Social Science Support) group (including Crown Witness Coordinators, one Paralegal, and one Caseview Coordinator) and the remaining 33 percent function in various capacities—from directors of finance and human resources to legal assistants and receptionists. The 2004-05 budget for the Northern Region was approximately \$10.96 million, including \$7.91 million in salaries and \$3.05 million in O&M (including cost recovery amounts from client departments).

1.2 Organizational Structure

The Northern Region is headed up by a Senior Regional Director (SRD) who reports directly to the Deputy Minister. The SRD works out of two offices. One is located in the Office of the Northern Region (ONR) in Whitehorse, and a second is located in Vancouver. Service delivery is provided through the three main regional offices spread across the Canadian North. Each office is headed by a regional director (RD) who reports to the ONR and looks to the ONR for direction on corporate services support and management issues.

Since 1995, the Department of Justice has been reorganized into a portfolio management structure that includes all major legal service delivery areas (e.g. taxation, citizenship and immigration, and Aboriginal affairs). In the Northern Region service delivery is divided into two main groups of legal professionals and support staff: the Civil Litigation and Advisory Group and the Criminal Prosecutions group.

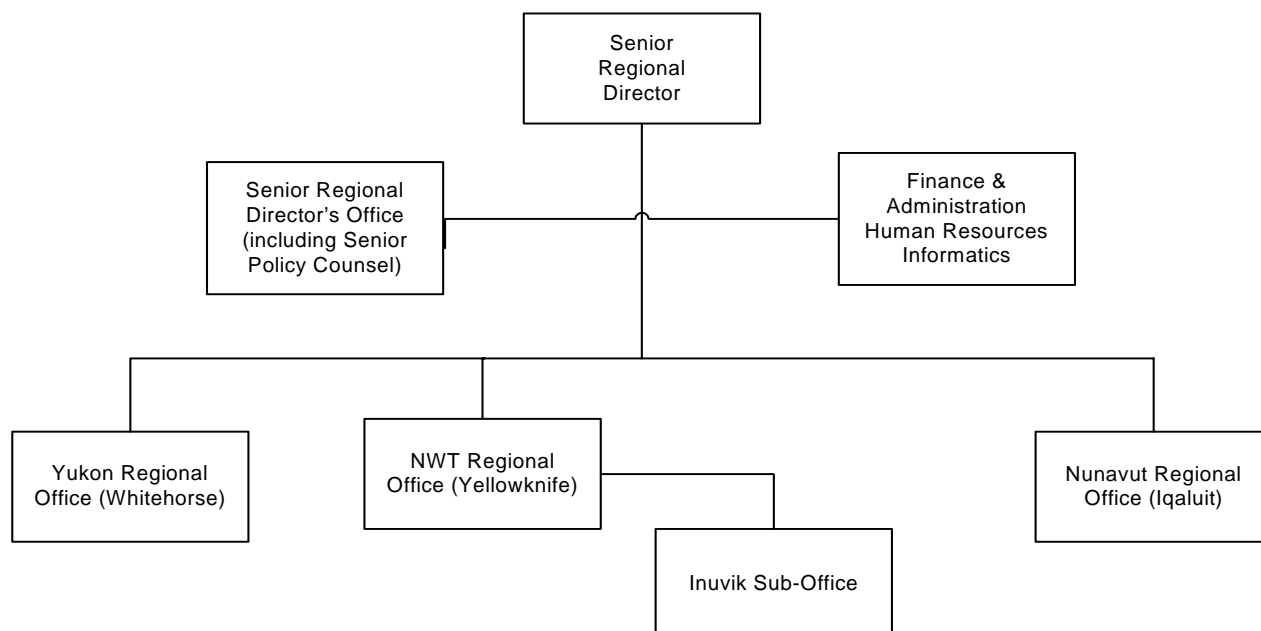
The Civil Litigation and Advisory Group provides advisory and litigation services in many areas of the law. Litigation cases include, but are not limited to, torts, contracts, administrative law, human rights, fisheries, environmental law, labour law, bankruptcy, Aboriginal affairs, and immigration. Advisory services include providing advice to clients on strategies to avoid or minimize claims and exposures during litigation.

The Criminal Prosecutions group is responsible for prosecutions of offences under federal statutes and regulations such as the *Fisheries Act*, *Income Tax Act*, and *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*. Criminal Prosecutions deals with legal and procedural issues such as Charter challenges (e.g. unlawful search, detention), Aboriginal and treaty rights (e.g. access claims to fishery, forest, or hunting), extradition, wiretap, and entrapment. However, in the Northern Region, Criminal Prosecutions also prosecutes criminal code prosecutions that in southern regions would be the responsibility of provincial jurisdictions (e.g. assault, theft).

In the YRO and the NWTRO, each service delivery group is headed by a Group Head. In the Nunavut RO there is a Director for Criminal Prosecutions but there is only one Civil Litigation lawyer.

In the ONR, Finance and Administration, Human Resources, and Informatics report to the Senior Regional Director and provide corporate services to the SRD and the regional offices. The position of Regional Director for Human Resources is staffed, and staffing was under way for an assistant position. In each regional office there are staff reporting to the regional directors who are responsible for finance, HR, and informatics. The SRD's office consists of an Executive Advisor. Also reporting to the SRD is the Senior Policy Counsel whose office is in Ottawa.

Figure 1: Office of the Northern Region Organization Chart



1.3 Objectives and Scope

The objectives of this audit were to review and assess:

- the management framework in place (policies, practices, and procedures relating to planning, organizing, controlling, leading and communicating; and the management of financial, human, and materiel resources);
- the extent to which the Northern Region is effectively organized to deliver its services (including the adequacy of resource levels);
- the appropriateness of the linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region (legal and corporate services areas) as well as those between the Office of the Northern Region and the regional offices;
- the appropriateness of the linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region and Headquarters (legal and corporate services areas);
- the extent to which the management team structure is efficient and effective;
- the adequacy and effectiveness of the provision of corporate services to the Northern Offices.

The audit covered all activities related to the management and operations of the offices in the Northern Region. Specifically, the audit addressed the following key issues:

- whether the overall level of resources was appropriate to meet the Northern Region's needs;
- appropriate level of integration and linkages between the regional offices in the Northern Region with respect to the delivery of legal and corporate services;
- ability of the regional offices in the Northern Region to respond to increases in activity in the Territories (i.e. meet the needs of the clients or the public with respect to criminal and civil matters);
- mix of resources (including use of paralegals);
- workflow processes in the legal areas;
- unique pressures/needs of these Offices, due to unique mandate, location, distance over which business must be carried out, and working environment.

1.4 Methodology

The audit followed the methodology outlined in Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) guides on comprehensive audits. Information was gathered through reviews of pertinent documentation, interviews at the regional level and in headquarters, and specific tests designed to explore the key issues. The fieldwork was concluded in June 2006.

2. FINDINGS—REGIONAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Northern Region management framework includes the policies, processes, and practices used to organize, plan, lead, control/monitor, communicate, and manage the human, financial, and materiel resources with respect to the delivery of legal services in the Canadian North. When reviewing the Region's management framework, we considered the overall environment within which the Region operates.

2.1 Organization

Prior to the creation of the Office of the Northern Region in 2001, the Northwest Territories RO was part of the Prairie/Arctic Region and the Yukon RO was part of the B.C./Yukon Region. The Nunavut RO reported directly to the Prairies Region after the creation of the Nunavut Territory.

At the creation of the ONR, it was necessary for the Department to estimate the extent of resources required to operate the new Region.¹ A precise determination could not be made at the time, as the operating budgets for the three regional offices had previously been submerged in the B.C. and Prairie regions' budgets. The initial estimates proved insufficient for putting in place the infrastructure in the areas of organization, policy, planning, corporate services, and communications that regional management and staff have been implementing since 2001. Regional managers interviewed consistently indicated that Headquarters senior management or functional heads have not sufficiently recognized the extent of resources required to operate the Northern Region. We noted that when the Region was created in 2001, the Department was entering into a period of budgetary restraint. As a result of these and other environmental factors (e.g. isolation, distance between offices, added cost of doing business in the Region) the ONR is currently operating with a deficit.

The Northern Region covers a vast geographic area of extremely isolated conditions. In addition, the populations served in the different regional offices represent distinct and diverse cultures. Although each office deals with Canada's Aboriginal peoples, their individual cultural differences impact the

¹ Northern Directions: A Policy Vision for Justice in the North. May 27, 2005.

various regional offices in terms of workload, organization, and staffing (as discussed later in “A Northern Vision”). These cultural differences may not be fully understood by Headquarters senior management. The isolation of these offices also has an effect on their organizational structure and workflow. The impact of cultural differences and isolation is more dramatic in the east of the Region and eases somewhat as one crosses the country westward. (Nunavut is the most isolated as well as the least populated and developed region.) Some staff interviewed in the YRO and NWTRO also told us that a certain amount of sharing of information, expertise, and resources was lost when the close relationship between the individual regional offices in the Northern Region and their former regions—B.C./Yukon and Prairies/Arctic—was severed by the reorganization in 2001. This loss was more keenly felt by some long-term employees.

The Nunavut Regional Office differs from the other offices in the Northern Region in that it is working with a recently created territorial government. Nunavut became a territory in April 1999. The other regional offices are working with territorial governments that have been in existence for many years (Yukon since 1898 and the NWT since 1967). The Government of Nunavut is still continuing to set up its policies, processes, and procedures. For example, as a new territory with new legislation, it was required to establish its own court system and set of procedural rulings. The needed infrastructure (i.e. a new courthouse known as the Nunavut Justice Centre) is currently under construction. Both regional management and territorial government officials are still in the process of clarifying the roles between the regional office and the territorial government. As roles are clarified, the regional office organization could change to deliver the newly defined roles.

A satellite office of the Northwest Territories Regional Office is located in Inuvik. This office is used only for prosecuting *Criminal Code* offences, including offences relating to family violence and sexual assaults and for territorial prosecutions. Because of the individual and personal nature of such offences, prosecuting staff in this office become very knowledgeable about the local population, which benefits the Department. In addition, satellite offices such as the one in Inuvik can generate economic benefits to the local community.

2.1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

We found that operational roles were generally understood by all staff we interviewed. Some roles are evolving, such as the regional human resources role. As the Regional Director of Human Resources (RD HR) is establishing new functions in the Region (e.g. compensation position), the regional HR role will continue to evolve.

In the Northern Region, Crown Witness Coordinators (CWCs) provide guidance and assistance to victims, witnesses, and Crown Counsel responsible for prosecuting *Criminal Code* offences. Many

CWCs speak some aboriginal languages and act as cultural-liaison officers demystifying courts and trials for victims and their families. We were told that First Nations witnesses or victims are often somewhat reluctant to testify or exhibit a need for support, particularly in cases that involve violence. CWCs help to ensure that victims can participate fully in the justice system. In the Northern Region we found that the CWCs are universally viewed as performing a valuable role, crucial to regional office success.

Because of the relatively small size of the regional offices, it is not possible to have specialist staff in all areas of support services required for office operation. As a result, in the Northern Region the Office Manager performs many different functions, including finance, administration, managing information holdings, informatics, and security. The Office Manager's role varies from office to office. We were told that the RD HR is planning to standardize the functions of this position across all three regional offices.

There is an increasing requirement across the Northern Region for more senior legal practitioners, as business expands and the number of large cases increase. Regional managers told us that senior practitioners are needed to provide leadership on large, complex files and to guide the more junior counsel. In the audit team's view there is a need to fully define the role of senior legal practitioners in the Northern Region.

Typically in regional offices in the Department of Justice, the legal service delivery groups reflect the Headquarters portfolios. However, in the Northern Region, there are only two service delivery groups: Criminal Prosecutions and Civil Litigation and Advisory Group. The Civil Litigation Group is responsible for all the civil services that in a larger regional office would be divided into separate portfolios (e.g. taxation, Aboriginal). We found that staff in the Northern Region had difficulty reconciling the distinct yet related roles of Headquarters portfolio management and their own regional management team. We were advised that Headquarters portfolios make requests of regional staff on a portfolio basis. These may be requests to contribute information for reporting purposes or to sit on portfolio or national committees. The number of requests and the time required to respond have a significant impact on regional resources. Also, we were told that lines of communication are not always clear to regional staff (i.e. when they should handle issues via the ONR and when they should communicate directly with the portfolio organization at headquarters).

In the past the regional offices of the Northern Region, although part of other existing regions, operated with a significant degree of independence. Given the relatively recent creation of the Northern Region, we found that regional staff are as yet unclear on the role of the ONR as the regional headquarters, as it relates to the operational needs of the separate regional offices. Staff generally had a clear understanding of their roles for service delivery, but the role of the ONR is still evolving. In this regard, however, there have been some improvements. For example, the members

of the ONR management team have now agreed among themselves that any business plans for the portfolios will emanate from the ONR. In this way all the RDs and the SRD will be involved in such activities. As we discussed, there was (and still is) a degree of scepticism as to the value of the creation of the Northern Region. It is our opinion, however, that there is clearly a need for three regional offices as well as the ONR, since each office serves a different environment and the ONR has a distinct role.

It is the audit team's view that more consideration is needed to determine how the Northern Region should operate, what the role is of the regional directors versus that of the Senior Regional Director, and what the role of the regional management team is versus that of the Headquarters portfolios.

Recommendations and Management Response

- 1. It is recommended that the SRD address with the Deputy Minister the deficit situation, as it negatively impacts organizational decisions in the ONR.**

I agree that the deficit situation must be addressed on an urgent basis. We do anticipate a significant decrease in the total deficit as a result of the departure of FPS portfolio to the DPP. We propose to address the remaining deficit primarily through A-Base reallocation from the next DM's Reserve process (fall 2007) and through increased client recovery (as needed). The Northern Region Senior Management Team will also revise the existing Business Plan in early 2007-2008 to determine the needs of the new DOJ Northern Region, and will base its future funding requests on that revised plan.

- 2. It is recommended that the SRD review the regional organization to determine how the Office of the Northern Region can best facilitate change in the Northern Region by clarifying roles and responsibilities of the various regional offices, addressing unique regional requirements, and clarifying lines of communication.**

I agree that clarifying lines of communications is necessary, particularly given the change of structure in the Northern Region. An internal communications plan will be developed in early 2007-2008 once a revised business plan has been developed. Communication of the roles and responsibilities of the new Northern Region structure will be communicated to employees based upon the above noted plan.

2.2 Planning

Planning is an essential management function that helps to ensure organizational objectives are met. Through planning, issues, activities, and initiatives are identified that contribute to the achievement of these objectives. It is also a process by which managers identify priorities—an important aspect of managerial responsibility, especially in situations where resources are scarce. The broad geographic spread of the Northern Region makes many aspects of the management framework, including planning, more complex.

2.2.1 Planning Process

There is no formal regional strategic plan for the Northern Region as a whole, and although some planning effort is made, formal operational plans do not exist in all regional offices. The significant workload and the lack of planning experience throughout the Region have precluded much initiative with regard to planning. Management and staff focus on accomplishing the work required with the limited resources available. This is most evident in Nunavut where workload is very high and resources are very limited. Management has not been able to focus on planning activities and has had to rely on management and senior staff in other regional offices to bring forward the Nunavut position on regional issues

The SRD advised us that it was necessary for the ONR to develop a strategic plan to demonstrate to Headquarters senior management the accuracy of regional workload claims and areas of additional resource requirements. As a result, the SRD organized a planning retreat in September 2005 that marked the beginning of a process to create a strategic plan for the Region. This plan is to be completed by the fall of 2006. As an initial effort, the ONR management team (Senior Management Committee) had produced a strategic vision coordinated by the Senior Policy Counsel resident in headquarters.² This policy vision for the North has been approved and the consultation process is beginning as part of this strategic planning effort. In this effort the ONR must work closely with territorial government stakeholders.

2.2.2 Regional Resources

All offices in the Northern Region have limited resources, which makes it difficult to meet current and anticipated workload. For example, at the time of the audit, the regional offices were not fully

² Northern Directions: A Policy Vision for Justice in the North was presented to the Executive Council on May 27, 2005 and approved. The SRD ONR was instructed to consult with territorial partners.

staffed to meet all aspects of the current workload. When workloads increase, it is often extremely difficult to increase resource levels to meet changes (e.g. the emergence of the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline (MGP) project.³) The lack of resources in the North has caused regional management to concentrate its efforts on managing detail and workload, to the exclusion of strategic thinking and planning. For example, when there is a significant increase in workload, managers must take on cases, which often includes travel to isolated communities (i.e. on the remote court circuit).

Our review of the organization chart dated September 2005 showed that of 127 positions, 101 were staffed. (See Appendix for a table of specific positions in each regional office.) The vacancies were concentrated in the Nunavut and NWT regional offices, with fewer noted in the Yukon Regional Office and the ONR. The vacancies in the NWT office were mostly in legal positions, whereas in the Nunavut office the vacancies were in both legal and support positions. The Yukon Regional Office is experiencing more stability in maintaining and acquiring staff than the other regional offices. We were told that in the YRO the majority of staff have been employed for 4 to 15 years either in that office or in other regional offices. In Nunavut, however, we were told that all levels of government (federal, territorial, and municipal) are having difficulty increasing their staff numbers. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement signed as part of the creation of the new territory requires 85 percent of positions at the federal level to be filled by Inuit by the year 2015. However, we were told that Inuit staff with the necessary experience and expertise are not available.

Until the creation of the Northern Region, operating budgets had been submerged in the budgets of other regional offices (BCRO for Yukon, and Prairie RO for NWT and Nunavut). Costs to operate the Northern Region were initially underestimated and real costs did not become apparent until the Region was active and generating costs as a separate entity. As a result, the Northern Region is operating with a deficit, and in some cases, monies made available by staff departures and absences (e.g. employees on leave without pay, positions that are vacated) are absorbed by the deficit.

The lack of resources is further exacerbated by the significant workload carried by all regional offices. Workload is more pronounced in Nunavut and lessens gradually from east to west.⁴ We were told that overwork results in staff departures (e.g. last summer four crown attorneys left the NWTRO at the same time). The Criminal Prosecutions group in the NWTRO were short three to four prosecutors for a year. As a result the Group Head was unavailable for managerial tasks, as the individual was required to prosecute cases. In Nunavut the Group Head has been doing circuits because of a lack of staff.

³ The Mackenzie Gas Project proposal involves a multi-billion-dollar initiative to bring natural gas resources from the Mackenzie River Delta in the Northwest Territories to markets in Canada and the United States.

⁴ The Northern Region is less populated and developed in the east (Nunavut and parts of the NWT) than it is in the western area (Yukon). The east lacks the amenities to attract and retain staff. In Nunavut, in particular, as a new territory, there are significant staff vacancies as well as a heavier workload of cases due to increased policing.

It is the opinion of the SRD that within 10 to 15 years there will be a profound change in the North due to economic development, environmental changes, increased population and traffic. The Policy Vision, the FPS Review Report, and departmental RPPs also support this view. Should this prove correct, there will be a significant impact on the Northern Region and its ability to meet client requirements.

In our view there is a resource crisis in the Northern Region. Inadequate planning is both a result of and a contributing factor to the resource issue. Heavy workloads, new emerging requirements, and constant staff turnover in the Region make it a challenge to plan. Yet, without a formal, strategic plan that is well substantiated, the Region cannot put forward convincing arguments for an increase in resources.

Recommendations and Management Response

- 3. It is recommended that the SRD complete the strategic plan for the Northern Region and, in doing so, fully analyze and document the resource situation and make a case for a resource position that is sustainable.**

I agree that a strategic plan for the Northern Region is necessary to fully analyze and prioritize the needs of the region. As a starting point, a full analysis of the feasibility of implementation of the 'Northern Vision' needs to take place for presentation to SMB. Once decisions are taken by SMB, the Northern Region Senior Management Team will undertake a strategic planning process, likely in the early part of the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

- 4. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that each regional office undertakes appropriate operational planning.**

I agree that each regional office must, within available resources, undertake operational planning however this can only take place once the Northern Region's Strategic Plan has been completed, and the transition to DPP has been properly managed. Regional operational plans will flow from the Northern Region Business Plan and the Northern Region Strategic Plan. The anticipated timeline for this exercise is early 2007-2008.

2.3 Leading/Monitoring

Directing operations and monitoring progress are key day-to-day management functions. Leadership ensures that the organization moves in a common direction to achieve its objectives, while monitoring progress gives management the information it needs to determine whether or not objectives are being met.

2.3.1 Management Meetings

The broad geographic spread of the Region makes it difficult to hold regional management team or staff meetings across the Northern Region. Telecommunications play a crucial role in facilitating the exchange of information. The SRD and the regional directors comprise the Senior Management Committee and they hold regular conference calls. A formal agenda and minutes are produced by the SRD's Executive Advisor. The regional directors make it a priority to schedule regular meetings with their staff. We were told that these are very successful. In each office visited we found an excellent team spirit despite a very significant workload. For example, each regional office management team (normally made up of the heads of Criminal Prosecutions and Civil Litigation, the RD, and the Office Manager) holds regular meetings, although minutes are not always prepared. Because of workload demands the meetings will be more sporadic at times. Also, individual group heads normally conduct meetings with their staff. At these meetings minutes are not prepared for the most part, although group heads may maintain their own "workbook" of issues to be addressed. This format was common in all three regional offices. In the Nunavut Regional Office, which suffers most from resource shortages, we were told that little time was available to address the issues recorded in the workbooks.

In-person meetings of the Senior Management Committee do not occur frequently. We note that the SRD tries to convene in-person meetings approximately four times each year. The scheduling of meetings is usually arranged so that the meetings will coincide with other planned events such as a recent conference on family violence. The key concern of senior regional management is the overall cost of bringing people together.

The Litigation Committee has been initiated in each regional office and meets regularly. This committee reviews litigation cases as necessary before they go to court to ensure that the quality of the case material is adequate and the cases address crucial issues and concerns. Northern Region lawyers told us that the Litigation Committee meetings are useful for sharing information (e.g. presentations, collegial advice) and for identifying key issues. In Nunavut there is only one civil litigator so there is no Litigation Committee. The Nunavut civil litigator confers with civil litigation colleagues at the NWTRO. We found that legal staff make time for these critical civil litigation

meetings. However, we were told staff do not regularly attend other committee meetings such as security and Occupational Health and Safety because of significant workload demands. The SRD has advised that he will be asking the regional management team to address the matter of overall participation in committees, both regional and corporate, during proposed strategic planning sessions.

Overall we found that staff in each RO understood the need to meet on a regular basis to discuss various regional level issues. Each regional office makes an effort, where appropriate, to include the ONR and the other offices in the Northern Region in meetings. In each regional office the management team meets regularly and each RD is a member of the ONR Senior Management Committee. Despite the complexity of arranging in-person meetings, individuals interviewed told us they view the Senior Management Committee as an effective team and that real effort is made by the Senior Management Committee to include regional staff in discussions and resolution of regional issues. In the audit team's view this is a positive achievement.

2.3.2 Regional Budgets

We were told that all Department of Justice regional offices are allocated an overall budget according to the Consulting and Audit Canada (CAC) "Regional Administrative Services Review" (also known as the "Footprint Report") published in June 2001. Funds are also allocated to regions from Headquarters legal portfolio heads. Portfolios are funded through a number of sources including client departments, special initiatives, and departmental A-base. The different sources of funding complicate the budgeting process. It was noted that regions are normally well into the new fiscal year before their budget is known.

The Senior Regional Director of the Northern Region in conjunction with the Senior Management Committee allocates funds for each regional office within the Region. The Regional Director, Finance and Administration manages the budget with the individual regional offices and sends monthly Financial Status Reports to each regional office for review and adjustments as needed.

The budgeting process makes it difficult to develop a meaningful budget for the Northern Region. Furthermore, costs of operating in the Northern Region are higher and the nature of some expenditures is very different from those required in other regions. Examples include: food, expensive and extensive air travel for all court circuits (the only means of conducting business in Nunavut), northern allowances, and staff re-location. A comparison of costs between the regional offices also indicates some expenses are higher in the eastern part of the Northern Region. For example, the cost of food in the Yukon is comparable to that of British Columbia whereas in Nunavut food is more expensive, as it must be flown in for most of the year.

When the ONR was created in 2001, the first budget was formulated for the Northern Region based on an estimate of anticipated costs. As evidence of actual costs since then has shown, the budget amount was significantly underestimated. The Criminal Prosecutions group had a \$2 million deficit when the current SRD arrived. Through the efforts of the entire region, monies have been redirected to decreasing the deficit, which now stands at \$700,000. The deficit adds to the complexity of the regional operation (as earlier discussed in “Organization”).

All members of the ONR management team are very conscious of the limited budget and seek alternative means of accomplishing both program and management tasks. For example, managers in Yellowknife told us that at times they have given some staff leave without pay to allow them to recover from symptoms of overwork. The O&M budget for each regional office is based on the previous year’s expenditures. The training budget is divided among all groups within each RO, which report each month on expenditures related to training. We were told that the Regional Director, Finance and Administration is working to improve the budgeting process by ensuring regional managers are more involved in the control of their expenditures and the support of budget development.

In our opinion, effective budgeting in the Northern Region is dependent on addressing the deficit and justifying resource needs through improved strategic planning. If the deficit were addressed, there would be more opportunity for management to do appropriate planning and budget development.

Recommendations and Management Response

- 5. It is recommended that the SRD, in consultation with the Senior Management Committee, identify and analyze the present and planned future costs of the Northern Region.**

I agree it is imperative that an analysis of the present and planned future cost of the region be undertaken, having regard in particular to the nature and scope of work that both exists presently and that can reasonably be anticipated in the near future. This exercise will be identified as a priority in the Northern Region Strategic Plan and will like take place in early 2007-2008.

2.4 Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is a process that establishes performance standards, measures an organization's effectiveness in meeting those standards, and produces information that management can use to enhance performance based on that measurement. In this regard, we reviewed the use of performance measures for legal services.

The audit team was told that the ability to measure performance was adversely impacted by workload pressure, budgetary limitations (e.g. the budget process and existence of a deficit), and human resources issues. The Northern Region has found it very difficult to attract and retain qualified personnel, which increases the workload per individual across the Region. Furthermore, the Region's workload is expanding, with the result that workloads are increasing in every regional office⁵. As a result, the regional directors told us that they don't have the available resources (manpower or money) to effectively measure the workload their offices carry.

We found the Northern Region is not measuring performance nor changes in workload volume. There is no regular capture of statistical data; no regular activity reporting with which to objectively measure productivity (e.g. number of cases, types of cases, resources consumed, results achieved); nor standard tools in each regional office by which such statistics are accumulated. The regional offices produce ad hoc reports in response to requests for information from HQ portfolios—for example, the number of cases involving a specific action, such as sexual assault, and the results of these cases. We were told that the production of these reports is time consuming in part because the information is not readily available through a regular reporting process.

Efforts are under way to obtain feedback from key stakeholders on the level and quality of services provided. For example, the Civil Director NWTRO meets regularly with representatives of Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), one of their main clients. The Yukon RO Civil Litigation group is developing a client satisfaction survey to obtain feedback from its main clients. In addition, we were told that regional directors and, in some cases, office managers conduct regular meetings with the RCMP to discuss common concerns and issues. However, there are no standard tools for the ROs to collect, analyze, and report on the level of client satisfaction with legal service providers.

In our view, well-designed and appropriately implemented performance measures are key to providing Headquarters management with the type of information needed to better address regional requirements (e.g. the need for staff). In addition, a standard toolset is required to ensure all regional offices capture and analyze performance information, and compare this information against

⁵ Federal Prosecution Service Review, May 30, 2001 discusses increasing workload in Northern Region.

performance measures that have been developed. Also, as discussed earlier under “Planning”, regional management is being challenged to prove the scope of the workload that has been claimed and requires effective performance reporting to do so.

Recommendations and Management Response

- 6. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that formal performance measurement is implemented for the regional offices in the Northern Region by ensuring standard tools for the purpose are developed and shared among the regional offices.**

I agree that we need to address the lack of formal performance management tools. This can be done in part through consultation with our client departments but overall it requires departmental input to ensure standardization of performance metrics. The Northern Region presently does not have the human or financial resources to undertake this type of project. It needs to be recognized that this should be a departmental initiative, rather than a regional initiative and should be based upon the RMAF and MRRS. A workload analysis, on the other hand, should be completed on an annual basis to assist with resource planning. Financial and human resource assistance would be required to undertake this analysis which would ideally commence in early 2007-2008. Part of the business planning exercise will necessarily identify factors that are widely differentiated across the North that bear materially upon the nature of the legal work required to be done.

2.5 Communications

Effective communications are essential for imparting the necessary information that ensures all involved are working toward common priorities and objectives. Communications are influenced by the organizational structures and reporting relationships that exist in an organization. As a result, we looked at communications between the Northern Region and Headquarters, and within the Northern Region (between the regional offices and the ONR). According to the departmental Report on Planning and Priorities, communications are recognized as a priority in the Department of Justice.

Each of the legal service delivery areas has a functional relationship with related Headquarters portfolios. Regional management and staff commented on the high number of requests from Headquarters for information on various matters. Also, we were told that the requests for information from Headquarters portfolios vary in frequency and nature. For small offices, these requests can be overwhelming.

Communications and linkages are difficult between offices within the Northern Region due to the isolation of the regional offices. Communications within the Northern Region are further complicated by the fact that many criminal prosecutors and CWCs are out “on circuit” (i.e. in the communities they service), often for several weeks. For example, in Nunavut there are 26 communities, all of which are accessible only by air. The concerns that were expressed to us regarding communications are for example: there are no cell phones; the telephone system uses satellites so there is a delay when speaking; and there are no telecommunication services in extremely remote communities.

Reporting to the Senior Regional Director in the ONR is the Senior Policy Counsel, who is located at headquarters in Ottawa. All regional directors told us that the Senior Policy Counsel for Northern Region provides them with valuable information about policies and initiatives under way in HQ—information she has obtained from her meetings with representatives from HQ portfolios or client departments, and information that results from research she has conducted. Also, forming part of the SRD’s office is the Executive Advisor who performs an important role in disseminating key information to regional offices.

The regional offices and the ONR rely on telephone and electronic communications (e.g. e-mail, Internet, fax) for the most part. The technology of both telephone and other electronic communications is less stable and has less capacity as you move east (e.g. bandwidth shortfall) . Despite weaknesses in technological infrastructure, most staff interviewed indicated that management at the regional level made real efforts to communicate with them and they found that these communications in the Region are nonetheless valid, useful, and reliable.

We found that in the Northern Region there is a specific effort made to include people as much as possible. For example, the Director of Human Resources is included in regional office management meetings by teleconference. The Northern Region also uses computer software to share information across the Region. Both legal and support staff post documents on-line, which can be accessed by the management team. However, there is no official communications capacity housed in the Northern Region. The Senior Regional Director’s Executive Advisor carries a significant set of responsibilities in the area of communications while relying heavily on the services of Headquarters, the British Columbia Regional Office or the Prairies Regional Office. Without dedicated Communications support, the ONR operates on a reactive basis and is only provided support as needed and when available.

We were told that media planning and strategic communications plans are not done in the Northern Region. As a result, there is little proactive work done with northern stakeholders, the media or with front-line prosecutors. There is a serious and immediate need to develop a Strategic

Communications Plan for the Northern Region to address both external and internal communications.

A further issue with respect to ensuring adequate communications is the staffing of key roles at the regional level. At the time of the audit the Northern Region was lacking certain key staff. The position of Regional Director, Informatics had been vacant since approximately the summer of 2004. As a result, since then, the Region has lacked a spokesperson to contribute to discussions and decisions at the departmental level concerning IT support activities and technologies. In addition, the Region has three information management staff members – record clerks and ICase clerks (one in each of the regional offices) and no position in the ONR to oversee and champion IM issues. The SRD has recognized this issue as far as IT is concerned (i.e. an Informatics group in ONR is planned and a regional IT management position is being staffed). However, the SRD must still address the lack of an IM focus for the Northern Region.

Managing information is crucial to carrying out any business, and the information technology in the Region is committed to managing information (discussed in “Information Management”). It is important for the Northern Region to participate in departmental forums/discussions to ensure a northern perspective is understood when departmental senior managers make decisions in the related disciplines of IM and IT.

Recommendations and Management Response

7. It is recommended that the SRD develop a Strategic Communications Plan for the Northern Region to address both external and internal communications.

Our ability to develop and implement a strategic communications plan will be a challenge given the proposed reduction of corporate services. I agree that a Strategic Communications Plan needs to be developed to address internal and external communications. The Plan will be developed in the spring of 2007, assuming we are able to maintain communications support either from DOJ or from another service provider in a sister department. This recommendation will be revisited once a decision is taken regarding corporate services in the Northern Region.

From a technical standpoint, we will look at the possibility of reviving Sharepoint hosted in Ottawa for efficient access from all Northern offices. A demonstration of Sharepoint 2007 will be given to the management team in early 2007. For internal and external communications, we will plan to create a Northern Region intranet and internet site however this will be contingent upon accessing resources to do so.

- 8. It is recommended that the SRD ensure the Northern Region is represented on key IT/IM meetings/conferences/teleconferences.**

I agree. It should be noted that since this audit was completed, a Director of IM/IT has been hired and is representing the Region at key meetings, conferences and teleconferences. The IM/IT director is a permanent member of the NIC, TAC and NIMC groups. The SRD is a permanent member of the Bit.Com group.

- 9. It is recommended that the SRD consider expanding the role of the Informatics Director to include responsibility for IM.**

I agree. It should be noted that since this audit was completed, a Director of IM/IT has been hired and his responsibilities include providing functional direction for Information Management.

3. FINDINGS—REGIONAL CORPORATE SERVICES

Under the guidance of the Office of the Northern Region in Whitehorse, all three regional offices in the Northern Region provide local human resources, finance and administration, and informatics services to support the legal service delivery groups (Criminal Prosecutions and Civil Litigation). Recruitment, retention, training, and the provision of support for local experienced staff are acknowledged as a priority in the Department and for the Northern Region.

3.1 Human Resources Management

The responsibility for managing the human resources of the Northern Region is shared among the three regional offices and the ONR. Each regional director manages the resources of his/her office, but is supported by the Regional Director of Human Resources located in the ONR. For example, the RD of Human Resources sits on selection committees via teleconference. The position of RD of Human Resources, which reports to the SRD, is relatively new. At the time of the audit, the incumbent had been working in the Region for approximately one year. The RD of Human Resources has been making efforts to increase the number of HR staff in the ONR.

3.1.1 HR Services

One of the key HR services for the entire Northern Region is staffing. Managers in the regional offices told us that this service has improved significantly now that HR staff in the ONR provide assistance in the staffing and recruitment process. In all regional offices visited, we found that the Office Manager and group heads perform significant tasks relating to the staffing process. They generate the statement of qualifications, conduct initial screening, conduct interviews, and complete letters of offer. The high turnover among legal and support staff in the Region results in a large number of staffing actions, and delays occur in the process. Although we found that the regional offices complete staffing actions, document the process, and track progress, there is no standard tool for these tasks.

The Northern Region lacks sufficient staff to carry out all HR functions and therefore relies on B.C. and Prairie regional staff to provide services such as compensation and classification to the regional offices. While overall there is satisfaction with these services, some issues were identified (e.g. accuracy of organization charts for the NWTRO and differing levels of service provided by the B.C. and Prairie regions). It was suggested to the audit team that the Northern Region would be better served if classification services were provided from a consolidated source within the Department of Justice.

A number of efforts are under way to strengthen the provision of HR services for the Northern Region and are widely recognized as having a positive effect. The ONR is attempting to build internal capability to deliver HR services. For example, at the time of the audit, the Regional Director of Human Resources was planning to staff two compensation positions in the ONR. This effort, however, represents only an initial step in a strategy to expand the regional HR role. The management plan is to staff these compensation positions and offer these services to other federal government departments as they in turn open northern regional offices. The SRD has approached Health Canada and Service Canada in this regard. The ONR plans to secure needed compensation services for the Region, while using any excess capacity to support other government organizations under cost recovery MOUs.

Human Resources Directorate at headquarters developed a report using information from the Human Resources Information System (PeopleSoft). This report outlined the status of HR activity and generated a baseline for HR performance in the Department in relation to the Human Resources Management Accountability Framework (HRMAF). The report was produced for the fiscal year 2003/2004 for all regional offices except the Northern Region.⁶ Statistics on all the indicators in the HRMAF for the Northern Region were not available when the 2003/2004 report was being produced because a significant portion of the HR activity was carried out in other regions (i.e. B.C. and Prairie). The report is not currently being produced because of changes made in the HRMAF by Treasury Board.

3.1.2 Recruitment and Retention

The most significant HR issue in the Northern Region is the recruitment and retention of legal and support staff. The SRD has indicated that this is a key concern, a view that is shared by the ADAG FPS and regional directors in the Nunavut and NWT regional offices. This issue was also addressed in the FPS Review Report and in the departmental Report on Planning and Priorities. The regional

⁶ Human Resources Management Accountability Framework status reports were subject to audit in the Audit of Regional Corporate Services 2005.

management team is considering strategies to address staff retention. However, an overall regional strategy is complicated by the differences in each RO. Some of these differences include the impact of geography (e.g. degree of isolation, climate, number of daylight hours, distance, accessibility) and the culture and characteristics of the Aboriginal populations.

It is important to recruit staff with the appropriate personal characteristics, such as the ability to handle the Northern Region's isolation, climate, and culture.

Staff retention is more of an issue in the NWT and Nunavut regional offices than in the YRO. The YRO has less difficulty attracting and retaining personnel, and staff in this office are more likely to stay for extended periods of time. Most staff interviewed in the YRO had lived in the area for many years and some intended to retire there. We were told that in the NWTRO crown attorneys stay at the most three years on average, although no official records are maintained. In Nunavut staff turnover remains a serious issue and no change is expected. We were told that the following staff changes have taken place in Nunavut in 2005 or were anticipated:

- The Regional Director and two lawyers left, and two more lawyers were actively looking for employment elsewhere.
- Two other lawyers who have been there the longest were considering leaving.
- The records clerk left, and the Office Manager was planning to leave in January/February 2006.

The departure of these staff have resulted in more lawyers being flown into Nunavut to provide legal services on an emergency basis (known as fly-ins) and group heads going out on court circuits.

In addition to the issue of staff retention, the lengthy staffing process negatively impacts the regional offices' ability to staff positions in a timely manner to meet changes in work requirements (such as staffing needs relating to the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline project). Also, regional directors have experienced difficulty recruiting applicants who are able to accommodate the demanding working environment of the Region.

We found that there are stress factors specific to the Northern Region that impact on morale and staff retention. These stress factors include:

- the significant number of difficult cases (i.e. homicides, child abuse, violence against women);
- the poor working conditions in isolated northern communities;
- the limited availability of flights to isolated communities requiring staff to be on travel status longer than would normally be necessary elsewhere in the country (with a resulting impact on family life);

- the overtime that is required for staff to effectively work in the northern environment (e.g. workload, travel on court circuits).

Regional human resources strategies to address the Northern Region's issues are required but have not been completed because of workload pressures, the constant need to replace staff, and the complexity of the issues involved. In developing HR strategies some consideration may be given to: developing a profile of the northern worker for recruitment purposes; developing a strategy to provide training in the legal professions for Aboriginal people; and reviewing with central agencies overall support for staff, including benefits, leave, and incentives. The breadth of these considerations requires significant national Headquarters input.

3.1.3 Performance Appraisals and Training

In recent years Treasury Board has placed considerable emphasis on training and developing staff.⁷ In line with this direction, all permanent employees are to be given the opportunity to have a personal learning plan. The ONR has implemented a continuous learning plan for staff in the Northern Region, which is attached to performance appraisals. However, we were told that budget is a limiting factor in implementing these plans.

We found that performance appraisals are completed annually and that there is substantiation for the performance rating (e.g. fully satisfactory, exceeds requirements). As part of the audit testing with respect to staff appraisals, we reviewed 18 files and learning plans. We found that the PREA process is followed. However, in our view, the appraisal process does not adequately capture the difficulties inherent in working in the Northern Region (e.g. long hours, unrecognized overtime, arduous travel). Also, the process does not address career paths for Crown Witness Coordinators. These positions exist only in the Northern Region and therefore CWCs have little opportunity for advancement elsewhere in the Department.

With respect to learning plans, we found that all staff members interviewed were concerned about the limited access to local training. For example, training related to the Public Service Modernization Act (PSMA) is mandatory, but the courses are only available outside the Northern Region and Headquarters is not providing additional funding for this. Training in contracts management is also mandatory in the Department but, we were told, may not be available to offices in the Northern Region. Staff interviewed expressed the concern that if they have been unable to take advantage of mandatory training, it may adversely affect their career development. We were also told that at one time local training was more available than it is now. For example, Professional

⁷ A Policy for Continuous Learning in the Public Service of Canada, dated May 1, 2002, can be found on the TBS web site.

Development Directorate previously developed and presented specialized training for offices in the Northern Region but this is no longer the case due to budgetary restrictions. Also, because of the legal case work related to the *Criminal Code* in the Northern Region, standard departmental courses do not always apply.

Staff interviewed told us that they do not find the learning plans helpful because they cannot get access to local training and the regional offices do not have the financial capacity to send them outside the Region for training. For the most part, training is available in Vancouver, Edmonton, or Ottawa but is expensive. Workload demands also make it difficult for staff to attend training. The regional directors told us they follow an unwritten policy of one course or conference per person per fiscal year. This policy severely limits the ability of staff to explore learning or career opportunities in the Department that can offer better future advancement.

To meet their objectives for training and development, staff told us they try to schedule training courses and conferences in conjunction with vacations or other business travel commitments. In addition, the regional offices work with other federal/territorial/municipal organizations to share learning opportunities and costs as much as possible. Some staff members are exploring other forms of learning such as distance courses. Management told us that they are supportive of any alternative for providing learning opportunities. In some regional offices Excel spreadsheets are used to track training in terms of attendance and cost, but there is no standard tool for this task in the Northern Region.

Recommendations and Management Response

- 10. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that the Regional Director for Human Resources explores the possibility of:**
 - a) Obtaining classification services from one consolidated source within the Department of Justice.**

I agree that receiving classification services from one consolidated source is preferable but may not necessarily be possible. We will continue to identify the need for the relocation of these services with our corporate group.

b) Completing strategies for recruitment and retention that take into consideration differences in regional offices.

I agree, and emphasize that such a strategy is critical in order to deliver high quality justice in the North as well as for the well-being of all northern employees. Work has begun on a Recruitment and Retention strategy but it requires support and funding from the Department furthering addition to a willingness to consider creative solutions.

c) Establishing standard tools to assist in the management of local HR functions such as staffing and tracking of training.

I agree and note that some tools have been implemented and others will continue to be as the Human Resource continues its evolution in the Northern Region.

11. It is recommended that the SRD make efforts to obtain from Headquarters additional funding for specialized training courses for regional office staff.

I agree and note that this must also be linked to our Recruitment and Retention Strategy as well as our business planning. That is, requests for additional funding must be focused and clearly linked to the objectives that the Northern Region has set for itself, within the context of the Department's overall needs. In order to improve access to training, and enhanced funding for training, we require support from the Centre along with enhanced funding, thereby ensuring northern employees are properly trained and are provided with adequate opportunities for career growth.

3.2 Financial Management

Responsibility for financial management in the Northern Region in terms of budgetary control and expenditure approval is shared between the Regional Director, Finance and Administration in the ONR and all regional directors. There is one financial specialist position (FI03) dedicated to financial management in the Region; the remaining positions are clerical. At the time of the audit a competition was under way to staff a second financial specialist position (FI01). Each regional office is organized differently for the provision of financial services:

- In the NWTRO, there are two financial clerks reporting to the Office Manager; one clerk is primarily responsible for Nunavut.
- The Nunavut Regional Office does not have a financial clerk at this time; the position is identified on the organization chart but it has never been staffed.

- In the Yukon Regional Office, the Office Manager is assisted by the regional financial specialist and the Regional Director, Finance and Administration of the ONR.

We found that regional staff make every effort to ensure separation of duties for the various financial functions—sections 32, 33, and 34 of the *Financial Administration Act* (FAA). Regional office group heads of FPS and Civil Litigation have been delegated responsibility for financial approval for their sections. Normally regional office managers sign for administrative expenditures and the regional directors have overall authority for their offices. In all regions a clerk enters commitments in the financial system (IFMS) at the start of the year. The appropriate form is completed and then signed by the responsible manager (Criminal Prosecutions, Civil Litigation, or Finance and Administration) to meet the requirement of Section 32. Section 34 approval for individual expenditures is provided by the responsible manager whose signature normally appears in the signature block. Section 33 approval is provided by the Regional Director, Finance and Administration at the ONR. This process ensures separation of duties. For example, in the NWTRO, the financial clerk receives an IFMS report detailing payments to be released and checks the report against the information on file. The IFMS report is verified and initialled by another regional staff member and is signed by the Office Manager. Notification is sent to the Regional Director, Finance and Administration at the ONR for review and release of payment. The Regional Director, Finance and Administration undertakes a number of desk audits and will request that certain financial documents be forwarded to her. . The other regional offices operate in a similar fashion.

Resource shortages impact regional office operations. For example, in all cases the span of functional control and responsibility invested in the role of the Office Manager is significant. Staff departures or absences (e.g. for training and leave) have resulted in multiple changes in delegations. Any loss of key staff such as the Office Manager could impair the ability of the regional management team to ensure separation of duties and adequate financial control.

We tested 28 payments and 14 contracts for goods and services. We found that while financial delegation and overall control were adequate, measures are required to enhance financial control or ensure full compliance with financial and contracting policies. For example, as a result of staff absences and departures, new signatures appear in the signature block for financial transactions. These signatures may not be easily recognized. We believe that replacement staff signing these forms should also print their name in the signature block to facilitate the review by responsible managers including the RD, Finance and Administration. With respect to contracting, we found that across the Northern Region most contracts are sole-sourced. As these contracts are for amounts less than \$10,000, this practice complies with the Department’s contracting policy. However, we found that the reasons for sole-sourcing are not fully documented and that, in some instances (i.e. expert witnesses), more detail and clarity are needed with respect to the work description and deliverables in a contract.

The regional management team has implemented a series of financial practices to accommodate the size and style of regional operations. However, there is little documentation of these practices. Local staff have put in place a number of formal management tools (e.g. computer software, spreadsheets) to track financial activities and to ensure that requests for information from managers in the regional offices and from the ONR senior management team can be met. For example, the NWTRO maintains spreadsheets on various topics such as law society fees, the Isolated Post Allowance, and air charters. These tools are not standard across the Region, and their purpose and use have not been adequately described. Written formal procedures and a standard toolset are required to ensure consistency in tracking and carrying out financial activities in the Region.

The Regional Director, Finance and Administration in the ONR monitors the budget for the Northern Region. Monthly Financial Status Reports are prepared by the Regional Director, Finance and Administration, reviewed in each regional office, and adjusted where needed. We were told that regional managers are gradually becoming more involved in the financial planning, budgeting, and reporting procedures.

Recommendations and Management Response

- 12. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that in the case of replacement staff the signee's name with respect to Section 34 (FAA) is always printed.**

I agree and note that this recommendation has been communicated across the Region and is currently the normal practice for all those, both substantive and acting, signing Section 34 (FAA).

- 13. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that all sole-source contracts in the Northern Region are supported by appropriate justification, and the terms and deliverables for expert witnesses are adequately documented.**

I agree and note that this recommendation has been implemented across the Region. The small number of 10K+ contracts in the Northern Region does not warrant a Contracts Review Committee, but that role is facilitated by the Finance section in the Office of the Northern Region, and if need be, in consultation with the Contracts and Materiel Management Section at HQ.

14. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that financial procedures are adequately documented and a standard toolset is implemented in all regional offices.

I agree and note that some tools have been implemented and others will be implemented once a new Director of Finance is in place. We anticipate this will continue as the Financial Management section of the Northern Region evolves.

3.3 Administration Services

Administration services include, for example, security, facility management, and occupational health and safety (OH&S). As with financial management, each individual regional office has a slightly different approach to administration services.

3.3.1 Role of the Office Manager

In all three regional offices, the delivery of administration services is the responsibility of the Office Manager. For example, the Office Manager in Nunavut RO carries a significant, diverse workload, which includes: managing crown housing (in which the majority of staff live), coordinating the issuance of clothing (parkas, pants, boots), coordinating circuit court travel, and maintaining and controlling the use of two vehicles. The Office Manager pursues most of these activities with little assistance or training.

In all regional offices, we were told that the office managers carry out their responsibilities to the best of their abilities, but due to workload demands some administrative areas such as asset inventory are not receiving adequate attention.

As the Office Manager role is unique to the Northern Region and thus not standard across the Department, actual formal procedures and documentation of responsibilities do not exist for many of the functions these individuals perform. This raises the risk that the functions will not be implemented consistently or completely across the Northern Region. Also, because the breadth of responsibilities is so significant, it can be difficult for the incumbents to be completely familiar with all the responsibilities associated with their positions. Yet, there is no specific program to train office managers to meet all the responsibilities of their positions. Furthermore, the concentration of administration responsibilities in one position raises the risk of an adverse impact on operations should the incumbent leave the position. We were told that despite the difficulties inherent in the Office Manager's position, incumbents in all three regional offices were recognized as extremely capable.

3.3.2 Security

Although the Northern Region does not have a standard approach to security due to lack of resources, security is part of the Office Manager's responsibilities. In all regions, the offices have installed security systems and issued contracts for system monitoring. The Nunavut Regional Office has a security guard 24/7. However, there are important issues with respect to security that need to be addressed. In the NWTRO, clients have expressed concern about security of information. The office does not have a secure fax, and clients expressed concerns about sending e-mails via the Internet. Similar concerns were expressed by staff in Nunavut RO where much of the normal business technology infrastructure is not in place (e.g. no cell phones, no BlackBerry devices, and data communications are via satellite with resulting connection delays).

3.3.3 Facility Management

There is an issue with respect to accommodation in Nunavut RO. The regional office staff in Iqaluit work out of two facilities. The RD, Group Head Criminal Prosecutions, and the Office Manager are located in a building that is separate from the rest of regional staff and are required to make many trips back and forth between the two buildings. The main facility is also extremely overcrowded and there is a potential for OH&S issues to arise. Although we were told that the NRO is renovating a new facility, staff will continue to be housed in two facilities as office space in Iqaluit is in very limited supply.

Recommendations and Management Response

15. It is recommended that the SRD develop a strategy to address identified issues with respect to administration services in the Northern Region.

I agree that a strategy to address identified issues should be developed. I anticipate that this will be undertaken as a general priority in the Northern Region's Strategic Plan and in detail in the Regional Offices' operational plans, particularly once the transition to DPP has been accomplished. Our ability to implement these recommendations may be contingent on the receipt of additional funds or, as is the case with Accommodations, contingent on negotiations with the Centre.

3.4 Management of Information Technology (IT)

The management of information technology is now a critical component of operations and an essential element in decision-making. Management is dependent on reliable information systems to support decision-making and accountability. The broad geographic spread and isolation of the Northern Region requires considerable dependence on technology for the provision of standard services.

3.4.1 Informatics Support

The Northern Region has experienced significant difficulty in staffing IT specialist positions in the regional offices. The Regional Director, Informatics position in the ONR has been vacant since the summer of 2004.

There is only one full-time IT specialist in the entire Northern Region. This employee is located in Whitehorse and reports to the YRO Office Manager. The employee also provides IT support to the ONR. In the NWTRO IT support is provided on a part-time basis by the Caseview coordinator and CGI Helpdesk. This employee depends heavily on consulting with personnel in Information Management Branch (IMB) at headquarters. No specialist IT support or expertise is available in the Nunavut RO. The Nunavut Office Manager is responsible for IT support as one of many responsibilities and has had no specific training.

Despite the lack of IT resources, all offices reported satisfaction with the IT support they receive. Given that the Yukon RO has the only full-time IT resource, we were not surprised that staff in Whitehorse (YRO & ONR) expressed satisfaction. The Yukon Office Manager indicated that the regional IT demands did not require a full-time IT resource and there is a potential for further sharing of IT services. The YRO Office Manager indicated that this needs to be analyzed further and we agree.

We were told that linkages between the Yukon RO and IMB at headquarters for IT topics and issues are good, as the YRO IT specialist attends annual conferences and participates in conference calls. Satisfactory linkages with IMB at headquarters were also reported by the NWT and Nunavut regional offices. However, the Nunavut Office Manager is also the Caseview coordinator (refer to “Information Management”) and, we were told, would be leaving the office in January/February 2006. At the time of the audit it was not clear who would take over responsibility for IT support in Nunavut.

In all regional offices the risk exists that due to limited IT support, any loss of staff with relevant expertise could adversely affect IT operations in the Northern Region. Alternative solutions for IT support must be considered. IMB makes use of contract resources. It would be important to investigate whether contracting for IT support is feasible in the Northern Region.

3.4.2 IT Procedures

The offices in the Northern Region use standard IT policies and processes that have been issued by IMB at headquarters. For the most part, these standard processes are functioning appropriately. For example, the backup process is controlled from Headquarters via the software CommVault as part of a central IT support contract; it is a very easy, smooth operation. Headquarters purchased the software, set it up on regional servers, and centrally receives reports on all backup operations across the Department. Each regional office stores backup tapes off-site.

Central Help Desk operations are provided out of Headquarters as part of a IT support contract. We were told that staff in the regional offices prefer to use the local IT support person before seeking assistance from the national Help Desk. If the national Help Desk is unable to resolve a problem, it will issue an e-mail to the regional office IT support person. We were told that the national Help Desk at HQ is referring to regional IT support staff some problems that should have been resolved centrally. Regional IT support staff are now starting to encourage all regional staff to use the national Help Desk first, especially for national system concerns.

There is no IT system development in the Northern Region, as there is little regional office expertise or capacity. The ability to support the roll-out of new hardware and software for national initiatives is yet to be proved in the Region. For example, to meet departmental priorities for enhancing knowledge management,⁸ iCase is to be rolled out by Headquarters this fiscal year (February 2006) to replace the current system, Caseview. Regional office staff told us that they are expecting considerable difficulty with the switch-over to the new system. The offices are developing a team approach involving legal and support staff to address issues, which include the following:

- We were told that the NWTRO, Civil Litigation would be losing a key support staff member and therefore it is anticipated data cleanup will slow down.
- Limited network capacity (bandwidth issue) is expected to have an impact on the operation of iCase in the Northern Region.
- There is a concern in the Northern Region that iCase and RDIMS software will affect the speed of the applications and/or that the applications will not run efficiently.

⁸ RPP 2000 to 2004 all refer to increased investment in new computer systems and the priority of knowledge management.

Connectivity is an issue that is being addressed by Headquarters. Enhanced bandwidth for the Northern Region is now anticipated in the 2006/2007 fiscal year.

A significant component in meeting the departmental priority for improved knowledge management is a need for an enhanced document management capability. This capability is particularly essential for large civil litigation cases such as the Mackenzie Gas Pipeline project, which involves thousands of documents. The Department has purchased a litigation support system known as RingTail. The Civil Litigation group heads indicated that their offices are finding it difficult to provide support for RingTail as legal expertise is needed. It was their view that the existing administrative support position for RingTail should be classified as a paralegal rather than a clerical position.

Although we did not find any major issues with the management of computer equipment, there were a number of inconsistencies in how the offices dealt with this. The Nunavut Regional Office servers are located in a room that is used by other federal departments. It has the proper cooling processes and alarms. Access is appropriately restricted. However, the room lacks proper shelving for the servers. Although the building is managed under PWGSC building services, no MOU exists between PWGSC and the Nunavut Regional Office with respect to the management of the server room. YRO servers are also in an appropriate room used by several other federal departments and managed by PWGSC. The YRO is the only regional office that has a five-year plan for equipment replacement with different cycles for replacement of different types of equipment. In our view a consistent approach to the management of IT assets should be part of a regional IT management strategy.

We found that IT connectivity as well as technology and staff capacity are issues overall. The capacity to support the roll-out of new systems being supplied nationally will only be partially addressed by staffing the Regional Director, Informatics position in the ONR.

Recommendations and Management Response

16. It is recommended that the SRD develop a strategy for IT support throughout the Northern Region that will include ensuring that:

a) Adequate administrative support for RingTail is established.

I agree that a business case for the Northern Region should be done to evaluate the cost effectiveness of efficiently using Ringtail. This will determine the cost effectiveness of a litigation support center in the Northern Region. Things to consider include but are not limited to: Volume (Number of large cases), hiring qualified resources (SI and CS), outsourcing for coding and imaging, mass printing, bandwidth. IMB is planning to visit the region within the next year to demo ringtail and have discussions with management.

A visit from the National Litigation Support Manager to demo and initiate discussions with the Northern Managers was planned for March 2007. It was decided to delay his visit by a couple of months due to do technical concerns that need to be addressed first.

b) Regional issues relating to new systems (such as iCase) are brought to Headquarters attention.

I agree and note that this is now routinely taking place with the arrival with the new Director of IM/IT.

c) The provision of contract support for IT is considered.

I agree and note that a "pay per use" contract is already in place in NWT and Nunavut with CGI. A feasibility study and costing will also be done for extended IT support services. Industry Canada is leading an IT survey in Nunavut to better understand problems and suggest solutions to solve IT issues affecting all local Federal government departments and we expect some recommendations within the year.

d) Management of regional IT assets and operations is consistent.

I agree. In the coming fiscal year, our objective is to implement the five- year renewal plan across the North, as is already the case in the Yukon.

We are waiting for a clearer definition of what assets we will have to manage (DOJ or DOJ and PPSC) before finalizing the implementation of the Yukon renewal plan elsewhere.

3.5 Management of Information

Like many other organizations, the Northern Region relies on effective and efficient management of information—both electronic and hard copy. As an organization increases in size, it is critical that formal processes and procedures for information management be in place.

3.5.1 National Focus on Management of Information

As part of a national strategic framework for the management of information, a 10-year information management plan for the Department of Justice is in draft form at Headquarters.⁹ This plan is one step toward an enterprise document management approach for the Department. We found ONR management is supportive of the approach. However, connectivity to the regional offices will continue to be a problem in the future but is expected to improve over time.

Information Management Division (IMD) is responsible for the national information management (IM) function in headquarters. We were told that IMD has found it difficult to achieve a national consensus on strategic IM concepts and approaches because training, expertise, and classification groups and levels vary widely in the IM field across the whole Department. Some IM practitioners are classified as clerical personnel, while others are administrative officers.

The Northern Region is functioning without a regional strategy for information management and is reliant on knowledgeable staff. There is no regional manager for IM. As a result, the departmental framework and plan for IM may be implemented without adequate input from the Northern Region. There is a significant risk that the Department of Justice strategy for information management will not adequately address the needs of the Northern Region.

3.5.2 Records Management

For the most part, the process by which criminal and civil litigation case files are managed is routine. With respect to criminal cases, the regional offices receive an information package from the RCMP that triggers the creation of a new case file. The records clerk creates the case file using a standard format and sends disclosures to defence counsel after they have been vetted by one of the crown attorneys. In the case of civil litigation files, legal staff in the civil litigation group create the case

⁹ A Strategic Framework for the Management of Information, Chief Information Officer Update 2.

file. The file label is generated by the Records Information Management System (RIMS), and the RIMS number is entered into Caseview (soon to be replaced by iCase) to provide a cross-reference. RIMS is the current system used in the Department of Justice for file management. Files are located in the registry (file room), in cabinets in the civil litigation area, or in lawyer or Crown Witness Coordinator offices. Archived files are sent to National Archives.

In the Nunavut Regional Office (NRO) there are significant issues with adhering to information management standards, managing the file registry, and locating case files. The current records clerk is relatively new (August 2005) and was required to learn the role and responsibilities with minimal guidance and functional direction but did receive one week of training on Caseview. RIMS, and file management processes from the Yukon Regional Office records clerk. The NRO has just started to use RIMS to track files and its staff are constantly searching for files. Although approximately 110 boxes of files were recently archived (awaiting shipment), the file room is full. There is inadequate space for storage of files. Files are located on shelves, desks, office floors as well as in the file registry.

The other regional offices in the Northern Region have addressed past issues with records management and have more extensive experience with RIMS. For example, each regional office can have 200 to 300 cases open at any one time with a considerable transfer of files between lawyers and between the office and the court so that records staff have difficulty tracking files. The Yukon Regional Office once had a manual process of sign-out cards to track files. The Office Manager now requires that the necessary information be entered into RIMS so that files can be tracked using this system. If file tracking issues occur, the Office Manager sends out a reminder to staff to use RIMS when they transfer files.

Staff knowledge and ability with regard to records management and information holdings vary across the Northern Region. We tested 32 files from all three regional offices. We found that in both the NWT and the Yukon regional offices, information management standards, file registry, and control over file content are appropriate. Current records staff in both offices have considerable experience and knowledge. However, the limited staff (one per regional office) places the offices at risk in the event of staff departures. The issues in the Nunavut RO referred to above arose partly as the result of the departure of an experienced staff member. The situation there clearly demonstrates the risk and consequences of losing key staff. It also demonstrates the importance of sharing best practices among all regional offices.

In the Northern Region, information holdings relate almost exclusively to legal case files. Although regional administrative files are defined as “records” by Headquarters¹⁰, they are not managed as such in the ONR, not entered into RIMS, and not controlled. As a result, there is a risk that staff will be unable to locate important regional records.

3.5.3 Systems Support

Although RIMS is the current national system for records management, the Department of Justice will be moving to Records, Document and Information Management System (RDIMS) next year. RDIMS is part of a government-wide initiative supported by Treasury Board, which was scheduled for departmental approval in November 2005. However, there are some issues with respect to the use of information technology in meeting the requirements of the Northern Region:

- Case files are noted as closed on Caseview but the information is retained electronically for future reference. We were told that iCase will not contain information on files closed prior to 2000. However, it is important that crown attorneys in the Northern Region have the capability to track all legal information pertaining to previous criminal activity. Although the RIMS number can be entered into iCase, a direct reference to the historical file will not be available. This issue is particular to the Northern Region because other Department of Justice regional offices do not prosecute the same number, type, and extent of criminal cases.
- The implementation of the RDIMS and iCase systems will have an impact on office operations in terms of resources required to easily roll out these core systems (e.g. training, data conversion). As stated earlier, training in the Northern Region is more costly than elsewhere in the country.

When the offices of the Northern Region implement RDIMS and iCase, they will meet the same file management standards as the rest of the Department. However, due to technology restrictions, the northern regional offices may not be able to easily implement these systems (i.e. connectivity issues). The ONR has not been able to develop a strategy to address this issue in the absence of a Regional Director, Informatics.

Recommendations and Management Response

17. It is recommended that the SRD develop a regional strategy for information management (IM) which includes: sharing best practices across the Northern Region, providing

¹⁰ “A Guideline for the Identification and Management of Corporate Records in the Department of Justice”, Information Management Services Division – IMB web site.

adequate support for Nunavut RO, managing regional administrative files as regional records, and providing for systems support.

I agree and note that the current IM/IT strategic plan does include measures to address IM concerns. This plan is scheduled to be revised once the transition to PPSC has been managed. This is currently in place as part of the Strategic IM/IT strategic plan for the Northern Region. The strategic plan includes amongst other things developing an Intranet/Sharepoint, signing an MOU with a local OGD for IT support in Nunavut Regional Office, and following the directive provided by Ottawa for the implementation of RDIMS and the new file Classification structure. IRIMS servers have been relocated to Ottawa for easier sharing of data in the last few months. Implementation of RDIMS and the new file plan will be ongoing over the next few years.

Work on the new file plan will normally start in the fall of 2007 with the implementation of RDIMS scheduled for 2008-2009. An AS-2 position has been created for this project. Funding is pending. A resource gap analysis was conducted in the last few months. Shortcomings from an IM perspective have been identified. Our ability to implement these recommendations may be contingent on getting extra resources and funds.

Refer to “Organization” for a recommendation relating IM to IT in the Office of the Northern Region.

4. FINDINGS—REGIONAL OPERATIONS

The Northern Region, which was established in 2001, was formerly part of the Prairie/Arctic Region and the B.C./Yukon Region. The Region encompasses a very broad geographic area and services some extremely isolated communities. The population of the North represents a variety of unique cultures, which are not always understood by prosecutors in the Department of Justice. The FPS Review report of May 30, 2001 highlighted this lack of knowledge and understanding.

To build and maintain public confidence in the justice system, the FPS Review Report urged the Department to find a way to deliver legal services to the largely Aboriginal population in an appropriate manner. Some suggestions were to:

- increase the level of outreach—remote communities often do not understand the role of the Department and how its activities affect them;
- provide more training to prosecutors to better understand the culture and customs of Aboriginal people.

4.1 A Northern Vision

As part of initial efforts to create a strategic plan for the Northern Region, the Senior Management Committee produced a vision document for the Region. (See “Planning” section.) This document, “Northern Directions: A Policy Vision for Justice in the North” was presented to the Executive Council in May 2005 and subsequently approved. The document explores the challenges, objectives, priorities, and future strategic direction for the Department’s legal operations and programs in the Territories. Some key issues addressed in the vision document include:

- lack of planning experience
- no communications function
- limited IT, HR, and financial support
- problems with recruitment and retention of staff
- the need to better identify and validate workload levels.

At a planning retreat organized by the SRD in 2005, the Senior Management Committee also identified some key strategies as essential to reach the goals set out in the vision. However, the implementation of these strategies requires thorough analysis of the realities of the Northern Region.

4.1.1 Vision Versus Reality

Both the ONR Senior Management Committee and senior management at headquarters indicated significant support for the suggestions contained in the FPS Review Report. However, the provision of increased outreach and training in the offices of the Northern Region will require resources that Headquarters has not provided to date.

The Nunavut Regional Office (NRO) is particularly impacted because it is dealing with a new territory that is in the process of establishing its own vision and related infrastructures and processes. There are capacity issues for the Nunavut government itself—the Nunavut Lands Claim Agreement directed that, by 2015, 85 percent of federal and territorial staff to be hired must be Inuit. We were told that qualified people are not available. In addition, on average, the education level for Inuit is low and many Inuit children do not finish high school. In Nunavut, even in Iqaluit, there are limited programs or infrastructure to support court decisions. For example, we were told that Inuit given probation often do not have access to guidance or support systems. As a result, the territory has a large number of re-offenders.

Each of the regional offices within the Northern Region is distinct. In each office travel requirements, local amenities, level of isolation, and cost of living vary. In addition, the courts differ. Because of Inuit cultural differences the judges in the NRO use restorative justice options more frequently in an attempt to adapt or accommodate the justice system to the local cultural reality. The Yukon and NWT regional offices also approach offenders and sentencing in accordance with the cultural make-up of their own Aboriginal populations and their past history (both ROs existed prior to the creation of the Northern Region). In addition, the Aboriginal populations as a percentage of the total local population differ in each part of the Northern Region—approximately 25 percent in the Yukon, 50 percent in the North West Territories, and up to 85 percent in Nunavut.

New prosecutors have little grasp of the various customs and cultural characteristics of the distinct Aboriginal peoples and need specialized training. For example, Inuit do not like confrontation or passing judgment on others. As a result, in Nunavut, prosecutors cannot be aggressive in their approach.

At the September 2005 planning retreat, some of the key actions proposed by the Senior Management Committee as necessary to meet the goals set out in the vision document included:

- consulting with northern stakeholders and other partners;
- developing mechanisms to improve service delivery and to measure improvement;
- creating new positions in each RO in the Northern Region and one at headquarters;
- preparing strategies for recruitment and retention of staff;
- developing centres of excellence.

These strategies encompass a wide range of activities that are important for the Northern Region in reaching the goals of the vision, but require a substantial investment of resources. We were told that resource limitations restrict the ability of regional directors to address the strategic goals set forth in the vision. Regional management and staff also voiced a concern that the Northern Region is very vulnerable to losing key staff members, which could seriously impact any progress made to date. The Northern Region needs to address how it can realistically implement the vision by thoroughly analyzing this issue during future regional strategic planning sessions.

4.1.2 Cultural Considerations

The vision document addresses the cultural impacts of working in the Northern Region. However, the specific needs of the Northern Region are not always taken into consideration by the Department of Justice and central agencies in Ottawa. For example: the Nunavut Regional Office must fill positions with up to 85 percent Inuit staff by 2015; however, there is no policy to recognize English/Inuktitut as valid languages for payment of a bilingualism bonus. Also, the new Public Service Commission staffing system created in support of the *Public Service Modernization Act* has not fully considered the needs of the Northern Region. The system cannot accommodate the posting of competitions in Inuktitut, which is currently a requirement for the Nunavut RO.

4.1.3 Coordination with Headquarters

The FPS Review Report recommended that better coordination be developed between Headquarters and regional offices in the Northern Region. The report stated:

The consultation process on all policy, criminal legislation, and Supreme Court criminal matters should be reviewed, and a system should be devised that allows the Northern Offices to offer meaningful input. Mechanisms need to be developed and resources allocated to take advantage of this valuable expertise in the development of criminal law policy and to ensure that Northern prosecutors are kept informed on an ongoing basis of legislative changes and relevant court decisions. One option would

be to create a full-time policy position in each of the Northern Offices to make the link between operations and policy development and also to take a proactive role in building and maintaining effective intergovernmental relationships (including Inuit, First Nations, and Métis).

We were told that, in the past, a senior staff member who had worked in one of the northern regional offices had undertaken this coordinating role in Federal Prosecution Services at headquarters to provide a reflection of northern experience and needs as well as direction and assistance for northern prosecutions. This role has not been continued. We were told by senior management at the DOJ that there is still a need for this role.

Recommendations and Management Response

18. It is recommended that the SRD determine how to realistically implement the Northern vision.

I agree that the ‘Northern Vision’ document should be the Region’s guiding document and we need to determine the feasibility of its implementation on a priority basis, subject to the differentiated needs and responsibilities of the DPP & DOJ. We believe that this document can be the foundation for improving justice for Canadians in the North. We will continue to work with northern stakeholders, other government departments and with DPP to build partnerships for the implementation of this vision. Initiatives in the ‘Northern Vision’ require long-term commitments and this will therefore be part of the Northern Region business planning for the foreseeable future. Initial discussions with the PPSC have occurred and will continue to establish leads and to implement the recommendations as best possible.

19. It is recommended that the ADAG FPS undertake the necessary measures to acquire a resource in headquarters to act in a coordinating role between Headquarters and the Northern Region.

This recommendation is no longer applicable as the FPS Portfolio is now part of the Department of Public Prosecutions, though a coordinating role between the two departments will take on even greater urgency.

4.2 Northern Work Environment

The workload is heavy in the Northern Region and all staff told us that the office culture is one of overwork. Although as noted under “Regional Resources” the workload differs from east to west, lack of staff across the whole Northern Region has impacted on the ability of existing staff to meet the workload demands.

4.2.1 Work Culture

In the Northern Region the office culture exerts pressure on staff to bring work home and work overtime, which we were told is often unrecognized. Burnout resulting from the significant workload is a cause of turnover among crown attorneys. The regional offices had experienced the following issues with respect to workload. For example:

- In the NWTRO, the new Chief Justice increased the number of court circuits. As a result, legal staff must now spend considerably more time in the communities. Staff interviewed indicated there is little help in workload planning and they are unable to accomplish their work during normal working hours. Therefore, they often take their work home or work longer hours in the office.
- All staff interviewed in the Nunavut Regional Office indicated there is a significant volume of cases resulting in a high workload. Staff shortages have resulted in the Group Head of Criminal Prosecutions doing court circuits. We were told that in the past five years there have been at least seven counsel who have left the NRO. As a result, cases cannot be addressed in a timely fashion and a backlog results.
- In the Yukon RO, the majority of criminal cases are violent crime prosecutions. CWCs undertake a key role with victims and witnesses, and accompany crown attorneys to communities. During 2005 there has been an unusually high volume of homicides, which increases stress on criminal prosecution staff.

Although climate and physical isolation are factors in staff turnover, we were told that burnout is the primary cause. If the Department of Justice addresses the regional resourcing crisis, the culture of overwork can be resolved. (This is addressed in recommendations 3 and 5.)

4.2.2 Recognizing Change

Over the years departmental reports on planning and priorities have recognized the increasing volume of work in the Northern Region. A number of priorities have been cited including:

- sustainable funding to support growth in demand for services;
- developing alternative justice programs;
- raising awareness of northern stakeholders (e.g. Aboriginal communities, territorial governments, RCMP);
- enhanced planning and accountability;
- investing in people and new technology.

With respect to criminal prosecutions, there is a need for solutions appropriate to the specific characteristics of the Northern Region, such as restorative justice and alternative sentencing approaches. However, regional and Headquarters management will need to explore appropriate sources of funding to support these solutions.

Increased growth in the North has had an impact on civil litigation. For example, in 2005, the Nunavut RO civil litigation group conducted an analysis of its workload and determined there was work for more than two lawyers. (The Nunavut RO has one civil lawyer on staff.) Although we were told that DIAND was willing to seek additional funding to support the creation of an additional position, the matter was not resolved.

The population of the North has increased in recent years, with a resulting increase in the number of RCMP officers and charges, particularly in Nunavut. The 2004 RPP cited “sustainable funding” as a key priority for the Department. However, funding for prosecutions has not increased.

Recommendations and Management Response

- 20. It is recommended that the ADAG FPS explore appropriate sources of funding to support the prosecutorial function in a changing environment.**

This is no longer applicable as it is now the responsibility of the newly formed Department of Public Prosecutions.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

- 1. It is recommended that the SRD address with the Deputy Minister the deficit situation, as it negatively impacts organizational decisions in the ONR.....18**

I agree that the deficit situation must be addressed on an urgent basis. We do anticipate a significant decrease in the total deficit as a result of the departure of FPS portfolio to the DPP. We propose to address the remaining deficit primarily through A-Base reallocation from the next DM's Reserve process (fall 2007) and through increased client recovery (as needed). The Northern Region Senior Management Team will also revise the existing Business Plan in early 2007-2008 to determine the needs of the new DOJ Northern Region, and will base its future funding requests on that revised plan.

- 2. It is recommended that the SRD review the regional organization to determine how the Office of the Northern Region can best facilitate change in the Northern Region by clarifying roles and responsibilities of the various regional offices, addressing unique regional requirements, and clarifying lines of communication.18**

I agree that clarifying lines of communications is necessary, particularly given the change of structure in the Northern Region. An internal communications plan will be developed in early 2007-2008 once a revised business plan has been developed. Communication of the roles and responsibilities of the new Northern Region structure will be communicated to employees based upon the above noted plan.

- 3. It is recommended that the SRD complete the strategic plan for the Northern Region and, in doing so, fully analyze and document the resource situation and make a case for a resource position that is sustainable.....21**

I agree that a strategic plan for the Northern Region is necessary to fully analyze and prioritize the needs of the region. As a starting point, a full analysis of the feasibility of implementation of the 'Northern Vision' needs to take place for presentation to SMB. Once decisions are taken by SMB, the Northern Region Senior Management Team will undertake a strategic planning process, likely in the early part of the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

4. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that each regional office undertakes appropriate operational planning.....21

I agree that each regional office must, within available resources, undertake operational planning however this can only take place once the Northern Region’s Strategic Plan has been completed, and the transition to DPP has been properly managed. Regional operational plans will flow from the Northern Region Business Plan and the Northern Region Strategic Plan. The anticipated timeline for this exercise is early 2007-2008.

5. It is recommended that the SRD, in consultation with the Senior Management Committee, identify and analyze the present and planned future costs of the Northern Region. ----- 24

I agree it is imperative that an analysis of the present and planned future cost of the region be undertaken, having regard in particular to the nature and scope of work that both exists presently and that can reasonably be anticipated in the near future. This exercise will be identified as a priority in the Northern Region Strategic Plan and will like take place in early 2007-2008.

6. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that formal performance measurement is implemented for the regional offices in the Northern Region by ensuring standard tools for the purpose are developed and shared among the regional offices.26

I agree that we need to address the lack of formal performance management tools. This can be done in part through consultation with our client departments but overall it requires departmental input to ensure standardization of performance metrics. The Northern Region presently does not have the human or financial resources to undertake this type of project. It needs to be recognized that this should be a departmental initiative, rather than a regional initiative and should be based upon the RMAF and MRRS. A workload analysis, on the other hand, should be completed on an annual basis to assist with resource planning. Financial and human resource assistance would be required to undertake this analysis which would ideally commence in early 2007-2008. Part of the business planning exercise will necessarily identify factors that are widely differentiated across the North that bear materially upon the nature of the legal work required to be done.

7. It is recommended that the SRD develop a Strategic Communications Plan for the Northern Region to address both external and internal communications.28

Our ability to develop and implement a strategic communications plan will be a challenge given the proposed reduction of corporate services. I agree that a Strategic Communications Plan needs to be developed to address internal and external communications. The Plan will be developed in the spring of 2007, assuming we are able to maintain communications support either from DOJ or from another service provider in a sister department. This recommendation will be revisited once a decision is taken regarding corporate services in the Northern Region.

From a technical standpoint, we will look at the possibility of reviving Sharepoint hosted in Ottawa for efficient access from all Northern offices. A demonstration of Sharepoint 2007 will be given to the management team in early 2007. For internal and external communications, we will plan to create a Northern Region intranet and internet site however this will be contingent upon accessing resources to do so.

8. It is recommended that the SRD ensure the Northern Region is represented on key IT/IM meetings/conferences/teleconferences.29

I agree. It should be noted that since this audit was completed, a Director of IM/IT has been hired and is representing the Region at key meetings, conferences and teleconferences. The IM/IT director is a permanent member of the NIC, TAC and NIMC groups. The SRD is a permanent member of the BitCom group.

9. It is recommended that the SRD consider expanding the role of the Informatics Director to include responsibility for IM.29

I agree. It should be noted that since this audit was completed, a Director of IM/IT has been hired and his responsibilities include providing functional direction for Information Management.

10. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that the Regional Director for Human Resources explores the possibility of:35

a) Obtaining classification services from one consolidated source within the Department of Justice.

I agree that receiving classification services from one consolidated source is preferable but may not necessarily be possible. We will continue to identify the need for the relocation of these services with our corporate group.

b) Completing strategies for recruitment and retention that take into consideration differences in regional offices.

I agree, and emphasize that such a strategy is critical in order to deliver high quality justice in the North as well as for the well-being of all northern employees. Work has begun on a Recruitment and Retention strategy but it requires support and funding from the Department furthering addition to a willingness to consider creative solutions.

c) Establishing standard tools to assist in the management of local HR functions such as staffing and tracking of training.

I agree and note that some tools have been implemented and others will continue to be as the Human Resource continues its evolution in the Northern Region.

11. It is recommended that the SRD make efforts to obtain from Headquarters additional funding for specialized training courses for regional office staff.36

I agree and note that this must also be linked to our Recruitment and Retention Strategy as well as our business planning. That is, requests for additional funding must be focused and clearly linked to the objectives that the Northern Region has set for itself, within the context of the Department's overall needs. In order to improve access to training, and enhanced funding for training, we require support from the Centre along with enhanced funding, thereby ensuring northern employees are properly trained and are provided with adequate opportunities for career growth.

- 12. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that in the case of replacement staff the signee's name with respect to Section 34 (FAA) is always printed.....38**

I agree and note that this recommendation has been communicated across the Region and is currently the normal practice for all those, both substantive and acting, signing Section 34 (FAA).

- 13. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that all sole-source contracts in the Northern Region are supported by appropriate justification, and the terms and deliverables for expert witnesses are adequately documented.....38**

I agree and note that this recommendation has been implemented across the Region. The small number of 10K+ contracts in the Northern Region does not warrant a Contracts Review Committee, but that role is facilitated by the Finance section in the Office of the Northern Region, and if need be, in consultation with the Contracts and Materiel Management Section at HQ.

- 14. It is recommended that the SRD ensure that financial procedures are adequately documented and a standard toolset is implemented in all regional offices.39**

I agree and note that some tools have been implemented and others will be implemented once a new Director of Finance is in place. We anticipate this will continue as the Financial Management section of the Northern Region evolves.

- 15. It is recommended that the SRD develop a strategy to address identified issues with respect to administration services in the Northern Region.....40**

I agree that a strategy to address identified issues should be developed. I anticipate that this will be undertaken as a general priority in the Northern Region's Strategic Plan and in detail in the Regional Offices' operational plans, particularly once the transition to DPP has been accomplished. Our ability to implement these recommendations may be contingent on the receipt of additional funds or, as is the case with Accommodations, contingent on negotiations with the Centre.

16. It is recommended that the SRD develop a strategy for IT support throughout the Northern Region that will include ensuring that:.....44

a) Adequate administrative support for RingTail is established.

I agree that a business case for the Northern Region should be done to evaluate the cost effectiveness of efficiently using Ringtail. This will determine the cost effectiveness of a litigation support center in the Northern Region. Things to consider include but are not limited to: Volume (Number of large cases), hiring qualified resources (SI and CS), outsourcing for coding and imaging, mass printing, bandwidth. IMB is planning to visit the region within the next year to demo ringtail and have discussions with management.

A visit from the National Litigation Support Manager to demo and initiate discussions with the Northern Managers was planned for March 2007. It was decided to delay his visit by a couple of months due to do technical concerns that need to be addressed first.

b) Regional issues relating to new systems (such as iCase) are brought to Headquarters attention.

I agree and note that this is now routinely taking place with the arrival with the new Director of IM/IT.

c) The provision of contract support for IT is considered.

I agree and note that a "pay per use" contract is already in place in NWT and Nunavut with CGI. A feasibility study and costing will also be done for extended IT support services. Industry Canada is leading an IT survey in Nunavut to better understand problems and suggest solutions to solve IT issues affecting all local Federal government departments and we expect some recommendations within the year.

d) Management of regional IT assets and operations is consistent.

I agree. In the coming fiscal year, our objective is to implement the five- year renewal plan across the North, as is already the case in the Yukon.

We are waiting for a clearer definition of what assets we will have to manage (DOJ or DOJ and PPSC) before finalizing the implementation of the Yukon renewal plan elsewhere.

- 17. It is recommended that the SRD develop a regional strategy for information management (IM) which includes: sharing best practices across the Northern Region, providing adequate support for Nunavut RO, managing regional administrative files as regional records, and providing for systems support.....47**

I agree and note that the current IM/IT strategic plan does include measures to address IM concerns. This plan is scheduled to be revised once the transition to PPSC has been managed. This is currently in place as part of the Strategic IM/IT strategic plan for the Northern Region. The strategic plan includes amongst other things developing an Intranet/Sharepoint, signing an MOU with a local OGD for IT support in Nunavut Regional Office, and following the directive provided by Ottawa for the implementation of RDIMS and the new file Classification structure. IRIMS servers have been relocated to Ottawa for easier sharing of data in the last few months. Implementation of RDIMS and the new file plan will be ongoing over the next few years.

Work on the new file plan will normally start in the fall of 2007 with the implementation of RDIMS scheduled for 2008-2009. An AS-2 position has been created for this project. Funding is pending. A resource gap analysis was conducted in the last few months. Shortcomings from an IM perspective have been identified. Our ability to implement these recommendations may be contingent on getting extra resources and funds.

- 18. It is recommended that the SRD determine how to realistically implement the Northern vision.52**

I agree that the ‘Northern Vision’ document should be the Region’s guiding document and we need to determine the feasibility of its implementation on a priority basis, subject to the differentiated needs and responsibilities of the DPP & DOJ. We believe that this document can be the foundation for improving justice for Canadians in the North. We will continue to work with northern stakeholders, other government departments and with DPP to build partnerships for the implementation of this vision. Initiatives in the ‘Northern Vision’ require long-term commitments and this will therefore be part of the Northern Region business planning for the foreseeable future. Initial discussions with the PPSC have occurred and will continue to establish leads and to implement the recommendations as best possible.

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This recommendation is no longer applicable as the FPS Portfolio is now part of the Department of Public Prosecutions, though a coordinating role between the two departments will take on even greater urgency.

20. It is recommended that the ADAG FPS explore appropriate sources of funding to support the prosecutorial function in a changing environment.54

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APPENDIX

Positions	Numbers	Filled
Office of the Northern Region		
PE05	1	1
PE03	1	
CS04	1	
CS02	1	
FI03	1	1
FI01	1	
CR05	2	1
AS03	1	1
STSCY03	1	1
Total	10	5
Yukon Regional Office		
LA03A	1	1
LA02B	2	2
LA02A	13	11
LA01	2	1
SI02	3	3
SI01	1	1
AS03	1	1
AS02	2	2
CR04	4	3
CR05	5	4
CS01	1	1
Total	35	30
NWT Regional Office		
LA03A	1	1
LA02B	4	2
LA02A	19	17
LA01	6	5
SI01	2	2
SI01	2	1
AS01	1	1

Positions	Numbers	Filled
CR05	11	11
CR03	1	1
CS04	1	
CS01	1	
STSCY04	1	1
Totals	50	42
Nunavut Regional Office		
LA03A	1	1
LA02B	1	1
LA02A	10	8
LA01	4	4
SI02	5	4
SI01	1	
AS02	1	1
CR05	7	3
CR04	1	1
CR03	1	1
Total	32	24