

**Transport Canada's
Security & Emergency Preparedness
National Recruitment Campaign**

- Assessment of Lessons Learned -

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Background

- Departmental Evaluation Services was requested to compile an inventory of lessons learned from the National Recruitment Campaign for Security Emergency Preparedness (SEP) inspectors at the TI-06 level. The campaign was coordinated by Transport Canada's (TC) Regulatory / Inspection Recruitment Centre (RC).
- Although an online recruitment system already existed within the department, the campaign was a unique initiative for TC:
 - It was held immediately following September 11, 2001. As a result, it was conducted with a sense of urgency to meet the increased demand for SEP inspectors.
 - It was the first recruitment campaign to use exclusively on-line applications.
 - The accompanying national advertising campaign generated a large volume of applications (over 11,000).
 - The campaign was SEP's inaugural use of the competency-based staffing approach for their inspectors.
 - This was the first time that SEP adopted a national assessment process for their TI-06 inspectors (i.e. using national generic work descriptions, statement of qualifications, written technical knowledge exam, etc.)
- The main objectives of the study are to develop key lessons learned from the campaign to apply to future campaigns and to identify best practices.
- To achieve these objectives, 28 interviews were conducted with TC employees involved with the campaign. Respondents were asked to identify what went well with the campaign, challenges encountered, and suggested improvements.
- Interviews were conducted with employees from three directorates: SEP, Human Resources (HR), and Information Management / Information Technology (IM/IT).

Best practices identified / success stories

- A large majority of respondents note that the candidates identified through the National Recruitment Campaign are of a high calibre.
- Despite the longer than anticipated timelines, most respondents are satisfied with the screening process and the resulting quality of selected candidates.

- A best practice identified by some respondents was the weekly teleconferences held with those involved with the campaign to keep everyone informed on the status of the campaign.
- Several respondents identify the opportunity to experience working in virtual teams as a success story from the campaign.¹
- Another best practice identified is the spreadsheet developed by the RC to track visible minorities throughout the recruitment process. In future campaigns, it will permit them to monitor the status of employment equity groups through the stages of the recruitment campaign and identify problems early.
- Most respondents are satisfied with the outcome of the campaign and its potential future use as a model for similar recruitment initiatives.
- All those involved with the campaign herald the professionalism and courteousness of the RC staff.
- The partially assessed inventory was also used to assist in meeting an unexpected increase in demand for marine inspectors. This was an unintended benefit of the campaign.

Overall lessons learned

The following overall lessons learned were identified, based on the campaign's successful elements and challenges noted by study respondents:

- Fostering communication between directorates, groups, and regional offices is essential for a successful recruitment campaign of this nature (i.e. involving different regions and groups). It is also important to manage carefully expectations throughout the process.
- Planning at the beginning of the initiative is crucial. This includes involving all relevant technical experts early in the process.
- Ensuring appropriate plans are in place to manage emerging problems efficiently and effectively is key. Professional and courteous staff in the coordinating role is essential for addressing emerging problems.
- Incorporating feedback and comments when possible contributes to the success of the campaign. When input is not incorporated, it is effective when the decision rationale is communicated clearly.

¹ A "Virtual Team" can be described as a team of individuals across the country working on a specific project.

- Considering regional differences and their specific operating context is an essential step for developing a campaign approach (i.e. national or regional in scope). When a national approach is used, incorporating regional considerations is valuable for ensuring regional recruitment needs are effectively addressed and regional expertise is incorporated fully.
- It is critical that all partners involved (i.e. clients, technical support, HR specialists, regional offices, etc.) be fully committed to the campaign for an initiative of this magnitude to be successful. The campaign resulted in 47 appointments across Canada as of July 2003. HR staff note that the number of appointments could have been higher had all partners been equally committed to the campaign.
- Developing strategies to address the difficulties resulting from the increased workload of operational participants, particularly when the campaign occurs during a “crisis” situation, is important. It ensures that the required technical experts are available to provide input into the design of the recruitment tools.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities early in the campaign and revisiting them frequently is important for ensuring a successful campaign.
- Providing adequate training to those working on the campaign, especially when new approaches and tools are introduced, is important to ensure they are comfortable with the innovative approach and tools.

Summary of areas for improvement

Roles and Responsibilities

- In future similar campaigns, some respondents suggest that senior management should present clear guidelines concerning the roles and responsibilities of national and regional HR offices.

Communication

- In terms of future improvements, respondents suggest improving communication between directorates, groups, and regions. This includes communicating better between organizational groups in the same directorates (i.e. SEP, HR and IM/IT).

Planning

- In the view of some respondents, the process would have been improved by involving closely IM/IT and regional HR staff during the initial planning stages of the initiative.
- Respondents agree that better insight into the potential volume of traffic on the website would have assisted them in providing better technical advice and support.

Background

In August 2002, the Director General of Human Resources requested that Departmental Evaluation Services assist the Regulatory / Inspection Recruitment Centre (RC) in developing a data collection strategy to assess program results.

Further discussions with RC management resulted in a decision to conduct an assessment of the National Recruitment Campaign for SEP inspectors at the TI-06 level in two phases.

Phase 1: Assessment of Lessons Learned

The first phase of the study, the subject of this report, is an assessment of lessons learned from the recruitment campaign. The focus for this phase is to outline procedural improvements for future similar recruitment campaigns.

Phase 2: In-depth evaluation of program results

The second phase of the project, currently scheduled to take place in 2004-5, will be a more in-depth evaluation of the results of the campaign. This phase will assess whether the campaign was successful in achieving its desired results (e.g. high quality candidates, satisfaction with the application process and manager's awareness, use, and satisfaction with the on-line pre-screened inventory).

SEP national campaign for TI-06 inspectors

In February 2002, the RC launched a National Recruitment Campaign for security inspectors at the TI-06 level. Although an electronic recruitment inventory was already being used to recruit other types of positions in Safety and Security, Security Inspectors were not yet part of this on-line recruitment approach. In response to the demand to increase the SEP Inspector workforce, the RC created an electronic inventory that would accept on-line applications generated from the National Recruitment Campaign.

This campaign was a unique initiative for the department for several reasons:

- It was the first time a national campaign of this magnitude had ever been carried out using only on-line applications.² This online process facilitated managers' access to the online partially assessed inventory.
- The campaign simultaneously developed an innovative recruitment approach and new recruitment tools.
- The campaign included the development and implementation of an enhanced website design for the initial screening of applicants.

² In some instances, efforts were made to accommodate paper applications. These were an exception.

- SEP used a competency-based approach for the assessment of candidates, which focuses heavily on the behavioural characteristics of candidates in addition to technical qualifications and experience.
- It included a national advertising campaign, which generated over 11,000 on-line applications.
- The campaign was held to address the increased demand for SEP inspectors due to the events of September 11, 2001 and also because of the high level of anticipated retirements for this group.
- Due to the scale of the campaign, it required the coordination and input from three departmental areas (SEP, HR, and IM/IT). It included TC staff from both TC headquarters and the regions.

Study objectives

The purpose of this study is to develop an inventory of lessons learned from the RC campaign. Accordingly, the study seeks to identify:

- What went well during the campaign?
- What challenges did TC staff encounter?
- What are some suggested areas for improvement?
- Based on these findings, what are the key lessons for future similar campaigns?

Approach

Departmental Evaluation Services conducted interviews with TC employees involved with the campaign, who were identified by the RC Manager. A total of 28 employees participated in the study of the 34 identified as possible interviewee candidates.

Interview respondents represented a cross-section of regional and headquarters staff from three TC directorates: SEP, HR and IM/IT.

Three separate questionnaires were developed to properly target each group of employees involved with the campaign. These are available in *Annexes 1 to 3*. A list of study participants is available in *Annex 4*.

Considerations

Some key considerations should be noted to provide context to the study's findings:

- The campaign was developed immediately following the events of September 11th, 2001. At the time, HR employees were occupied addressing the heightened demand for security inspectors in the department. SEP directors, managers, and

inspectors were focused on addressing the increased security demands. As a result, the campaign was developed with a heightened sense of urgency and without the normal amount of time for adequate planning. Moreover, security inspectors were unable to contribute much of their time towards the campaign due to increased operational demands.

- Some of the responses received during the conduct of the study were conflicting in nature, indicating the different views and perspectives on the campaign held by those who participated. This observation serves to emphasize the main lessons-learned from the campaign—that there is a need for clear roles and responsibilities, good communication, and carefully managed expectations.

Report structure

The reporting of key findings is broken into four sections:

The first section, “Overall Lessons Learned,” outlines overall lessons for future campaigns of a similar nature. These are drawn from the best practices and lessons learned from the campaign and are intended to serve as a “checklist” guide for future campaigns.

The subsequent three sections (SEP, HR, and IM/IT) outline findings specific to respondents from each of the respective directorates. Each section starts with a key findings section summarizing the main themes or findings for the group. The interview responses are then grouped under the lines of inquiries addressed in the interview questions. It should be noted that in some instances the criteria addressed in the interview questions were collapsed together when the responses made it appropriate to do so. For example, there were similar responses from the communication and working relationship questions from HR respondents. In this case, the responses were noted in one section.

Overall Lessons Learned

Several key lessons are apparent from the experiences of the SEP National Recruitment Campaign. **These are based on both the successful elements of the campaign and the challenges noted by study participants.** Many of these observations could be broadly applied to any departmental initiative that is national in scope, involving multiple groups or regions.

Fostering communication between directorates, groups, and regional offices is essential for a recruitment campaign of this nature: One of the main difficulties encountered during the campaign was communication. Communication difficulties arose between the different directorates involved (HR, SEP, and IM/IT) as well as between headquarters and regional groups. It is important for all involved to be knowledgeable of timelines, roles and responsibilities, expectations, decisions made, and the status of participants' input into the process. A best practice identified by some was the holding of weekly teleconferences with those involved with the campaign. Others noted that frequent email updates assisted greatly in keeping them abreast of developments in the campaign.

Managing expectations throughout the process is key: The experiences of the campaign demonstrated the need to carefully manage the expectations of everyone involved with the process. Part of managing expectations would be to communicate timelines, risks, roles and responsibilities, and expectations to everyone involved.

Planning at the beginning of the initiative is crucial: The experiences of the campaign highlighted the need to plan carefully at the outset of the initiative, regardless of the timelines involved. This includes setting realistic timelines, identifying possible risks and delays, and seeking out and incorporating relevant expertise.

Ensuring plans are in place to manage emerging problems efficiently and effectively is important: Invariably, campaigns of a large scope involving many players will have unforeseen problems and technical difficulties. This is especially true for complex initiatives, such as this recruitment campaign, that simultaneously adopted and enhanced TC's existing online recruitment tools and developed new candidate assessment mechanisms. A success story for this campaign was the ability of those involved to address problems quickly once they were identified (e.g. when the website crashed due to larger than anticipated volume).

Incorporating feedback and comments when possible contributes to the success of the campaign: It is important that feedback is either incorporated or, if not, then sufficient rationale be provided. Many regional HR Staff feel that their input was not given appropriate consideration. When a decision was made during the process, there was a sense among some respondents that adequate rationale was not provided.

Considering regional differences and their specific operating context is an essential step for developing the campaign approach (i.e. national or regional in scope):

Throughout the campaign, there was an assumption at headquarters that a national approach would be more efficient, consistent, and respectful of merit, equity, and fairness. Interview results challenged this assumption. Balanced consideration should be given to the need for national consistency with the individual needs and operating context of the various regions. A suggested improvement identified was to use a national approach for the initial screening and then allow the regions to hire according to their individual requirements.

Developing strategies to address difficulties resulting from the workload of operational participants, particularly when the campaign runs concurrent with other demanding situations, is important: One of the difficulties identified during the campaign was that the availability of SEP managers to participate in aspects of the campaign was hindered by the operational demands encountered following the events of September 11, 2001. According to some interview respondents, this had an impact on the RC's ability to meet specified timelines. Developing strategies to address this challenge is an important lesson from the campaign. One respondent suggested that having a dedicated SEP representative at the operational level might have addressed this challenge.

Clarifying roles and responsibilities early and revisiting them frequently is important for ensuring a successful campaign: For a campaign of this magnitude, it is important for all to have a clear understanding of their role in the process. Some regional HR staff in particular expressed a desire to see their role clarified. SEP Directors would have liked to see the role of regional staffing actions clarified by a clear directive from Senior Management (i.e. that everyone would use the National Campaign approach).

Providing adequate training to those involved in the campaign is important-- especially when new approaches and tools are introduced: It was apparent that despite the timelines involved, both HR and SEP employees involved with the campaign expressed a desire for more training. For HR respondents, some expressed a desire for more training on the competency-based approach and use of the behavioural-based interviews. SEP Directors involved with the National Screening Committee noted a need for greater training on how to properly screen candidates. A general observation from the study was that there was a lack of comfort working with the competency-based approach. As a result, more training is requested by the respondents in order to become more familiar in applying this approach.

Having professional and courteous staff in the coordinating role is essential for addressing emerging problems: Many of the study respondents noted that despite the challenges encountered during the campaign, the calm professionalism of the RC staff was quintessential in moving the campaign forward and addressing problems as they arose.

Security and Emergency Preparedness

Overall findings

Respondents from SEP identify the following overall lessons learned and suggested improvements:

- The general consensus among respondents is that the National Recruitment Campaign went well considering that it was the first time a campaign of this magnitude had ever been launched.
- Most of the respondents think that the approach of the campaign may have been too ambitious given the desired timeframe.
- A majority of the respondents state that Senior Management at headquarters should have presented clear guidelines concerning recruitment practices from the outset (i.e. stating all regions and sectors had to participate fully with the National Recruitment Campaign and not run their own regional recruitment campaigns).
- In terms of suggested improvements, some respondents feel that better communication and coordination was needed and that roles and responsibilities should have been clearly articulated.

Development of national / generic competencies

- Most of the respondents are generally satisfied with the statement of qualifications, although they added that it needed to be broader in scope. In their view, it was too focused on experience, thereby limiting the selection criteria to ex-law enforcement officials. A large majority of respondents felt this limited the scope of potential candidates and that individuals with equivalent qualifications were over-looked.
- A few respondents note they would like to see the technical requirements divided into separate categories of knowledge and abilities, making it easier to assess individuals.

Development of the website and advertising campaign.

- Most of the SEP directors had a minimal role in the development of the website and advertising campaign. Their involvement was limited to reviewing and providing comments on drafts.
- Some respondents perceive that the “Additional Experience” section of the website was not clearly defined. Individuals were allowed to mark off “yes” in the experience section, but didn’t have an opportunity to describe in detail their level of experience. This made it difficult to use the additional information in the screening process.

Development of national assessment tools

- A majority of the SEP directors had a role in reviewing and providing comments on the assessment tools that were developed and drafted by the RC.
- Some of the SEP directors had a role on the development of the exams and guidelines. Others were involved in reviewing and providing feedback.
- Some respondents note that the knowledge exam needed more questions and that the exam should have been more difficult in order to ensure a higher quality of candidates.
- There is a feeling among respondents that there were too many steps in the process and that it should be simplified.

Process used to have a National Screening Committee of inspectors

- One respondent feels that the computer software should have been more sophisticated to assist in the screening of candidates. During the week of screening candidates, a team of 6 SEP Directors had to screen 2500 applications by hand. In their view, more sophisticated computer software may have aided this process.
- Most respondents feel that the scoring process was inconsistent, as it was measured and assessed differently in each Region. In their view, this was not fair for the candidates. They feel that there should have been one consistent national scoring approach.

Screening process (for education and experience)

- Overall, most respondents are satisfied with the screening process and the quality of candidates that were selected. They state that it was worth the wait of the process as the quality of the candidates was excellent.
- Most respondents are satisfied with the quality of education and experience of the selected candidates.
- One respondent states that the screening process was long and too rigid. In his view, there were too many steps in the process.

Coordination and leadership role of RC

- Overall, most respondents are extremely satisfied with the coordination and leadership role of the recruitment centre. They feel the RC did a commendable job given the challenges the RC faced (e.g. innovative approach and demanding timelines).
- The majority of respondents state that from the beginning of the campaign, headquarters should have presented clear guidelines for recruiting security inspectors (i.e. guidelines specifying that all regions and sectors had to participate fully with the National Recruitment Campaign and not run their own recruitment campaigns).

- Some respondents express a concern that, in some instances, regions were in direct competition with one another for the same candidate. As a result, it is noted that some regions offered candidates better incentives to attract them away from other regions.

Development of the guidelines for the final interview process

- Most respondents note that they were not satisfied with the final interview process. SEP Managers were under the impression that the final interviews were intended to be an opportunity for them to assess the individual on a personal level. Instead, the regional directors expanded it to be a more formal assessment mechanism.
- Some respondents state that the final interview process was not consistent nationally and that it was unfair to the candidates. Some regions used the opportunity to conduct a further extensive interview of the candidate, while others conducted a short informal interview.
- Some respondents feel that the final interview process was an unnecessary and inefficient step in the process.

Collective management decision to proceed with a national recruitment approach

- Most of the respondents feel that it was an excellent idea to proceed with a National Recruitment Campaign.
- A few respondents note that some regional directors may not have taken the campaign seriously and only “paid lip service” to the project. Respondents feel that some regions may have had their own agenda, continuing their own recruiting practices in parallel with the National Recruitment Campaign.
- Some respondents feel that in order for the campaign to be totally successful there needed to be a collective effort and full participation by all regions. All involved needed to be “on the same page.”

Support provided for this initiative (financial / human resources / management involvement / technical expertise)

- A majority of the respondents feel that the support provided from all areas (in terms of financial resources, human resources, management involvement and technical expertise) was satisfactory.

Working relationships

- Most respondents are satisfied with the working relationships of all involved.
- Most respondents note that having a regional champion, Paul Kavanagh, as their representative helped in their working relationship with the RC. It allowed them to convey their thoughts and messages more clearly and accurately.

Roles and responsibilities

- Most respondents state that the roles and responsibilities from the onset were not defined clearly.
- As the campaign progressed, respondents feel that the roles and responsibilities became clearer.

Communication

- Overall, a majority of the respondents feel that communication between all partners involved was satisfactory.
- Weekly teleconferences helped keep all informed and assisted in fostering support for the initiative.
- Some respondents perceive that there was resistance and lack of communication from some regions to work as a team.

Timelines

- A large majority of the respondents feel that the campaign took too long.
- There was a consensus among respondents that it was too optimistic to expect that the campaign's goals could be achieved within the desired timeframe.
- One respondent notes that it was difficult running a campaign of this magnitude and carrying out work operations at the same time. An improvement suggested by the respondent is to have individuals assigned to work on the National Recruitment Campaign on a full time basis, which would allow the process to run effectively and in a timely manner.

Satisfaction with the quality of candidates in the partially assessed inventory

- A majority of respondents note that the candidates hired from this campaign are of a high calibre. In this respect, the campaign served its purpose despite the long timelines.
- A majority of the respondents feel that in order to maintain this high standard of quality of candidates, the inventory needs to be updated and renewed frequently.

Anticipated future use of electronic inventory

- A majority of the respondents confirm that they would use the electronic inventory as they have made a commitment and have an obligation to use it.
- Some respondents feel that it is important that the inventory of candidates be constantly updated to ensure the quality of candidates. Respondents noted that this would be an incentive to continually use the electronic inventory.

Human Resources

Overall findings

Respondents from HR identify the following overall lessons learned and suggested improvements for the campaign:

- Overall, representatives from HR feel that, despite the challenges encountered, the campaign was useful for working out the difficulties of holding a national on-line recruitment campaign. Most are satisfied with the outcome of the campaign and its potential future use.
- The professionalism and courteousness of the RC staff is heralded by all of those who participated in the process.
- There is a strong sense among respondents from the regions that the RC could have made fuller use of the depth of experience of regional HR staff (in the planning stages and during the campaign).
- The main improvements suggested are to improve communication, ensure feedback is taken into consideration, and, when it is not, provide adequate decision rationale.

Development of the national / generic statement of competencies

- There is a feeling among HR respondents that support among SEP Managers for the competency-based approach was minimal. In their view, this hindered the implementation of competency-based staffing.
- RC staff note that it took a long time for SEP Managers to provide comments on the statement of competencies. There is, however, an appreciation among RC staff for the operational and time demands on SEP staff during the time of the development of the competency profiles.
- Some respondents note that Senior Management support for the competency-based approach was not evident.
- Respondents feel more training was required on the competency-based approach for both HR staff and SEP managers.

Development of the website and advertising campaign

Website

- Most respondents note that the traffic volume on the applicant website was far greater than anticipated (approximately 11,000 applications versus the 8,000-10,000 anticipated).
- There is a consensus among respondents that despite the high volume and technical difficulties experienced with the website during the campaign, both the RC and IM/IT did an excellent job in correcting problems once they were identified.

- A few respondents express some concern that good candidates may have been screened out by filling out the application fields incorrectly. A few respondents note that the wording of the competency statements might have misled some candidates.

Advertising Campaign

- Some respondents express a concern that the advertising campaign created too many applications. In terms of alternatives, one respondent notes that word of mouth and the Public Service Commission website would have been sufficient in generating an ample amount of potential candidates.
- It is noted by some that the advertising campaign may have been too broad in its targeting of applicants. As a result, it generated applications from candidates beyond the intended audience of the campaign.
- One respondent notes that the advertising campaign was worthwhile as a means of promoting TC as a workplace to potential candidates in specialized groups. Another respondent notes further that this also contributed to positive staff morale. In their view, the advertising campaign made their workplace look like a professional and high quality place to the general public.

Development of the national assessment tools

Technical Knowledge Exam (TKE)

- Most respondents agree that the TKE required more thorough testing before being used in the campaign to identify potential problems with the assessment tool.
- A couple of respondents indicate the TKE could have been more specialized towards the TI-06 SEP position.
- Respondents overwhelmingly agree that the TKE had too few questions to provide meaningful distinctions between candidates (i.e. most scores were bunched in the middle).
- It is acknowledged by RC staff that it was difficult to get SEP to provide timely comments on the TKE, due to operational time constraints during the campaign.

Written Communication Test (WCT)

- Some respondents feel that the WCT was not a good measure of the communication skills for the position. In their view, the test assessed editing skills more than the required written communication skills for the position (i.e. writing reports).

Behavioural-based Interviews

- There was a sense among some of the respondents that more training was required for interviewers. They note that regional variations in the interview results were an indication that more training was required.

- An improvement suggested by one respondent is to have a set of trained interviewers that would interview all of the candidates, using a staggered approach. In their view, this would ensure a level of consistency in the assessment of the interviews.

Weighting of the competencies for the selection process

- Half of the respondents did not comment on the weighting of the competencies for the selection process.
- Among those responding, the majority are satisfied with the weighting for the competencies and did not identify any suggested improvements.

Development of the cut-scores for each competency

- Some of the respondents express a concern that the cut-scores changed during the recruitment process.
- Two respondents feel the cut-scores were too low, leaving too many candidates in the remainder of the process.
- Two respondents feel the cut-scores were too arbitrary and may have resulted in the loss of potentially good candidates.
- RC staff express a concern that the cut-scores, coupled with the limited number of questions for the TKE (26) left too many candidates “bunched” in the middle. As a result, it was difficult to use the test as a useful tool to distinguish candidates.

National Screening Committee process

- A couple of respondents are satisfied with the process and think the National Screening Committee process was consistent, fair, and equitable.
- The majority of respondents feel the process led to the screening out of some candidates in an inconsistent fashion. Part of this, in their view, was due to the “screening fatigue” experienced by reviewers (i.e. as a result of screening 2500 candidates in one week).
- A majority of respondents note that more training for participants of the committee would have improved screening consistency.
- Respondents suggest the following improvements: rotate participants through the process to avoid fatigue, conduct screening in the regions, ensure consistent application of a screening criteria, and reaffirm criteria / roles throughout the process.

Respect for merit, equity, and fairness

- Roughly a third of the respondents agree that the process respected merit, equity, and fairness.
- The majority, however, express a concern with the equity and fairness of the National Screening Committee process. For example, there was a sense that the focus on experience may have left many younger candidates at a disadvantage. Moreover,

respondents note that the fatigue of the screeners might have negatively impacted the accuracy of the screening process.

- Those closely involved in the process think that the low number of visible minorities could have been addressed earlier in the process.
- It was noted that only 4 out of the 150 candidates to get through the screening process were visible minorities.
- There was broad agreement that more training of the screeners involved with the National Screening Committee, as well as greater quality of assurance, would have made the process more equitable and fair.
- A best practice identified was the spreadsheet developed by the RC to track visible minorities throughout the recruitment process. In future campaigns, it will permit the RC to monitor the status of employment equity groups through the stages of the recruitment campaign and identify problems early.

Coordination and leadership role of the RC

- Overall, respondents are satisfied with the leadership and coordination role of the RC.
- Despite this satisfaction, some feel that better planning on the front end of the initiative would have prevented some of the difficulties encountered.
- Regional HR participants feel that their input and expertise was not incorporated fully into the initiative.

Communication and working relationships

- Overwhelmingly, respondents are highly satisfied with the professionalism and helpfulness of the RC staff.
- Most respondents think the weekly conference calls provided an excellent opportunity to communicate with other colleagues involved with the initiative.
- Some respondents indicate that the meetings may have been too frequent and that the information could have been communicated through other means (e.g. email). It was suggested that *ad hoc* meetings might have been more appropriate.
- Respondents from the regions feel the incorporation of their input and feedback could have been greater. When decisions were made, they feel their input was not given adequate consideration. They also indicate that sufficient rationale was not provided when input was not incorporated.
- Some respondents, particularly from the regions, feel the RC could have benefited from a greater level of operational staffing experience.

Development of guidelines for the final interview process

- While it is acknowledged that the guidelines were a suggested tool for managers to use for the final interviews, most respondents express a concern about the consistency of the interviews conducted.

Roles and responsibilities

- It is evident from responses provided that the roles and responsibilities evolved throughout the process.
- Some employees temporarily assigned to the project note a challenge in seeking approvals from their “new” and “old” superiors during their participation in the campaign.
- Regional HR staff express some confusion concerning their role in the process.

Timelines

- Respondents are divided as to whether the initiative respected identified timelines.
- Some respondents note that some of the difficulties in the timelines were due to the fact that the SEP representatives were focused on post-September 11 priorities, busy at the time and, therefore, could not comment on documents in a timely manner.

The decision to proceed with a national recruitment approach (in retrospect and for future opportunities)

- Despite the challenges encountered, the majority of respondents feel that there are long-term benefits to the approach. It leaves TC well placed to undertake similar recruitment initiatives in the future.
- A couple of the respondents feel it was a good decision to proceed with the national recruitment approach, but the majority question the merit of using a national approach throughout the entire recruitment process. It was noted from several respondents that each region is unique in their staffing operations and organizational staffing needs.
- While some anticipate that the inventory produced from the campaign will facilitate the hiring process, others question the merit of this approach. In their view, the inventory is soon outdated and only leaves the lower qualified candidates. For technical positions, it would be better to have another competition to ensure the department is always recruiting the top candidate.
- A suggested improvement was to have a national recruitment approach for the front end of the campaign and then push the recruiting down to the regions at an earlier stage.

Information Management / Information Technology

Overall findings

Respondents identify the following overall lessons learned and suggestions for the improvement of the campaign:

- Overall, the respondents feel that despite the problems, the partners involved in this project are now better prepared for similar future projects.
- Better communication, more collaboration and more planning are key. Respondents felt that IM/IT also needs to be more involved in the initial planning stages of the campaign.
- More experience is required from HR and IM/IT for campaigns of this magnitude.
- It is important to clarify roles and scope at the front end. Some respondents were only brought in after the fact; thus their roles were not clear. As for the scope, respondents agree that better insight into the volume of applications is necessary in order to be more efficient and effective.

Support provided for this initiative

Senior Management Support

- Some of the respondents feel that senior management provided good support as soon as problems emerged.
- Other respondents feel that senior management support could have been provided earlier and not only when problems arose.

Technical Expertise

- Most respondents are of the opinion that the technical expertise provided for the recruitment campaign was very good and accessible when required.
- One respondent notes that, although individual technical expertise was excellent, it needed to be better coordinated. Each section works well individually, but efforts should be made to work together, and not in “silos.”

Working relationships

- There is a consensus among respondents that teamwork and good working relationships were present throughout the campaign.
- The respondents who worked directly with the RC staff note a good working relationship.
- While some respondents had minimal contact with the RC (working only with other IM/IT groups) they feel that IM/IT working relationships were positive.

- Some respondents note the lack of process (problem management³) during the campaign, which they attribute to the RC's lack of experience with IM/IT processes.
- One respondent feels that IM/IT should have done a better job of educating the client upfront with regard to problem management.
- In terms of suggested improvements, some respondents agree that in the future, individuals on RC helpdesk should have more IM/IT experience and have more contact with IM/IT.

Roles and responsibilities

- There is a feeling among some respondents that the roles and responsibilities were clearly defined from the start.
- Others found that their roles and responsibilities were clear to them by experience, or by job description, but not as a result of the RC clearly defining them.
- Some respondents did not find the roles and responsibilities clearly defined. In their view, meetings were needed along the way to not only clarify roles and responsibilities, but also to manage the expectations of what IM/IT could do.

Scope of the project

- While a few respondents feel that the scope was defined clearly from the start, the majority did not share this sentiment. The volume was unexpected and caught everyone by surprise. A few respondents feel that the scope was very exploratory and that since TC had not done anything of this magnitude before (i.e. with this volume of applicants), many adjustments and new demands had to be addressed as the project developed.
- Others were not aware of the scope since they were not involved from the beginning and were only brought in once problems surfaced. One respondent notes that many web applications exist at TC and that the External Recruitment Application (ERA) was just seen as one of many.
- It was suggested that the scope of the project be better communicated from the start and that IM/IT be more involved in the planning of future projects. In the respondents' view, input from every group is needed.

³ Problem Management - Problem management provides a mechanism for tracking technical and functional problems as well as resolutions. As system users report problems, technical and other helpdesk staff enter these into the system, including information such as:

- Problem description,
- Problem resolution
- Dates
- Contacts

The system is a tool for technical staff that enables them to research solutions to problems, which have been encountered by technicians in the past as well as tracking their current problems. This system also provides a mechanism for escalating problems to management.

Communication between partners and stakeholders

- Some respondents note that communication was adequate between partners. Some also feel that communication was especially good during meetings.
- While communication was good between some partners, some respondents feel that this was not the case with the overall communication (i.e. between all the partners). For example, there were some instances of breakdowns in communication between RC and IM/IT.
- One respondent was of the opinion that the RC should have made greater efforts in communicating their needs and expectations.
- Another communication breakdown occurred at the Recruitment Centre helpdesk phone lines, as information was not being passed on to application support (IM/IT).
- A few respondents note that communication was also not strong from a process point of view (problem management process).

Reporting procedures used by RC for technical problems

- A few respondents are satisfied with the reporting procedures used by the RC.
- The majority of respondents, however, feel that the reporting procedures were problematic at the beginning of the campaign, as the department's problem management process was not being followed. The problems that applicants were experiencing and relaying to the help desk were not being formally registered and the problem management process was bypassed.
- Some respondents feel that since there was no official problem logging, management was not aware of the ongoing problems; therefore, Problem Management could not proceed with escalation⁴. The severities of the problems were not being reflected adequately to IM/IT management.
- The majority of respondents agree that once the problem management process was made clear, the reporting procedures and problem logging improved.

Ability to respond to technical problems

- The majority of respondents agree that the IM/IT groups had a good ability to respond to problems once they were identified. There was good communication and cooperation between the different IM/IT groups in order to solve identified problems.
- Most of the respondents express concerns with regard to the volume. They felt that many of the problems were related to an overwhelming number of applications and

⁴ Problem management relates to the severity of the problem. For example, for Severity one or two problems - Immediate notification, and hourly updates to Chief, TISM, GTIS Manager, and TC Support Service.

After 2 hours, Director of CONS, Client Operations Support.

After 4 hours, escalation or update occurs to Director, CONS, and the Customer Relationship Manager.

After 6 hours, escalation or update occurs to Director General, TIMSD, and the Director General, NCS/PWGSC.

traffic and that TC was not technically prepared, nor had the experience to deal with this size of campaign.

- Many of the respondents also feel they were put in a reactive role and would have liked to be more proactive.

Effectiveness of corrective actions for technical problems

- Most of the respondents are of the opinion that once problems were identified, the effectiveness of their actions was as good as was permitted under the circumstances (time and volume). The different IM/IT groups worked well together given the situation.
- A few respondents note that the application was always being adjusted as the project progressed and that solutions were reactive as a result.
- Even though some problems were resolved, many respondents express concerns with the corrective actions. Some respondents felt as though they were muddling through the technical problems, and were not able to give them proper attention. The respondents felt that some of the solutions brought to the technical problems were a “quick fix,” and would have liked to address the problems more thoroughly and give it proper attention (if time and resources permitted).

Advantages / disadvantages to IM/IT (as a result of the National Recruitment Campaign)

- Many advantages are noted as a result of this campaign. Most respondents agree that this exercise has given IM/IT more experience with the type and size of campaign, and it is now better prepared for future electronic recruitment.
- A few respondents feel that communication has improved as a result of this campaign and that the processes are now being adhered to consistently.
- One respondent feels that after this experience, pilots or testing on a smaller scale before the launch would be better received.
- Another respondent notes that this project was very *avant-garde* and that it was good for TC’s visibility.
- In terms of disadvantages, some respondents point to the disgruntled applicants. TC was only accepting applications electronically and because of the problems related to the volume and the system, some applicants had difficulties or were not able to submit their application electronically. The respondents felt that backup solutions should have been made available to applicants.

Changes to processes⁵ within IM/IT (as a result of the National Recruitment Campaign)

- All respondents are of the opinion that there have been no changes to the processes within IM/IT as a result of the National Recruitment Campaign.
- Some respondents, however, note that processes are now more established, reinforced and better understood as a result of the campaign.
- One respondent feels that the campaign highlights the need for more education and awareness with regard to the IM/IT processes and procedures.
- Although there appears to be no changes to the IM/IT's formal internal work processes, many respondents are of the opinion that the need for better communication is now essential for future campaigns.
- It was also noted that changes were made to the infrastructure as a result of the technical problems that occurred during the campaign (i.e. purchase of software products to perform online backups which allow application processing to continue, restoration of two servers midway through the campaign, resources brought in from Toronto to deal with software problems).
- It was noted that two new servers were added to the infrastructure, replacing "lower capacity" servers.

Key considerations for future initiatives

- More planning is required from the onset and IM/IT should be more involved in this process.
- Better estimation of volume is needed from the start.
- The client's needs and expectations should be better communicated to IM/IT.
- All players should be at the table from the start. It is suggested that a steering committee or working group be established from the start and maintained during the length of the entire project (i.e. a "swat team" that brings together both the business and technical at one forum).
- A pilot on a smaller scale should be considered.
- Since many applicants ran into technical problems when submitting their applications electronically, alternatives means to submit applications should be offered as backup to applicants.

⁵ The term "processes" is understood here as mechanisms specific to IM/IT put in place to ensure delivery of products/services, and to deal with different issues. For example, as previously mentioned, the problem management process is a mechanism put in place to track technical problems.

Annex 1: Questionnaire for Security Emergency Preparedness

1. What was the nature of your involvement with the SEP Recruitment Campaign?
2. Please describe how you were involved in the development and approval of the national generic statement of competencies?
 - Were you satisfied with the outcome of the statement of competencies?
 - If not, what improvements would you recommend?
3. Please describe how you were involved in the development and approval of the website and advertising campaign?
 - Were you satisfied with the outcome of this campaign and on-line application process?
 - If not, what improvements would you recommend?
 - Do you feel there are any long terms benefits associated with this web site initiative? Please explain.
4. How were you involved in the development and approval of the national assessment tools (i.e. technical knowledge exam, written communication exam, behaviour-based interview and reference check material)?
 - Were you satisfied with the outcome of the quality of these assessment tools?
 - If not, what improvements would you recommend?
5. Were you satisfied with the process that was used to have a National Screening Committee of inspectors? If not, what other options would you recommend?
6. Were you satisfied with the outcome of the screening process in terms of education and experience criteria?
7. To what extent were you satisfied with the coordination and leadership role of the Recruitment Centre in the National Recruitment Campaign?
8. To what extent were you satisfied with the development of the guidelines for the final Interview process?
9. In retrospect, how would you rate the collective management decision to proceed with a national recruitment approach?
10. How would you describe the support provided for this initiative in terms of:
 - Financial resources?
 - Human resources?
 - HQ support?

- Recruitment Centre?
 - Regional support?
 - Senior management?
 - Technical expertise?
11. Of all stakeholders involved, with whom did you have a working relationship and how would you describe your relationship with them? (Please list ALL work partners)
 12. Do you feel that roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and understood from the onset?
 13. How would you describe the level of communication between all partners and stakeholders throughout the process?
 14. What degree do you feel that all players involved respected specified timeframes?
 15. Do you have any final comments regarding the recruitment process or other suggestions for improvement?
 16. Now that the selection process is completed, to what extent are you satisfied with the quality of candidates in the partially assessed inventory?
 17. Will you use the electronic inventory as part of your recruiting strategy when the partially assessed inventory is depleted?

Annex 2: Questionnaire for Human Resources

1. What was the nature of your involvement with the SEP Recruitment Campaign?
2. Please describe how you were involved in the development of the national/generic statement of competencies?
 - Were you satisfied with the outcome of the statement of competencies?
 - If not, what improvements would you recommend?
3. Please describe how you were involved in the development of the website and advertising campaign?
 - Were you satisfied with the outcome of this campaign?
 - Were you satisfied with the process of on-line application only?
 - If not, what improvements would you recommend?
 - Do you feel there are any long terms benefits associated with this web site initiative? Please explain.
4. How were you involved in the development of the national assessment tools (i.e. technical knowledge exam, behaviour-based interview and reference check material)?
 - Were you satisfied with the outcome of the quality of these assessment tools?
 - If not, what improvements would you recommend to each of these tools?
5. How were you involved in the determination of the weighting of the competencies for this selection process?
 - Were you satisfied with the overall weighting of each competency?
 - If not, what improvements would you recommend?
6. How were you involved in the development of the cut-scores for each of the competencies?
 - Were you satisfied with the cut-scores established for each of the competencies?
7. Were you satisfied with the process that was used to have a National Screening and Selection Committee of inspectors? If not, what other options would you recommend?
8. Do you feel that this recruitment process has respected merit, equity and fairness throughout? If not, in which instances do you feel that these principles were not respected and why?

9. To what extent were you satisfied with the coordination and leadership role of the Recruitment Centre in the National Recruitment Campaign?
10. To what extent were you satisfied with the development of the guidelines for the final Interview process?
11. Looking back, how would you rate the decision to proceed with a national recruitment approach?
12. Looking forward, how would you rate the decision to proceed with a national recruitment approach?
13. Of all stakeholders involved, with whom did you have a working relationship and how would you describe your relationship with them? (Please list ALL work partners)
14. Do you feel that your roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and understood from the onset?
15. How would you describe the level of communication between all partners and stakeholders throughout the process?
16. What degree do you feel that all players involved respected specified timeframes?
17. Do you have any final comments regarding the recruitment process or other suggestions for improvement?
18. Will the electronic inventory be a primary tool in your recruiting strategy when the partially assessed inventory is depleted?

Annex 3: Questionnaire for IM/IT and HRIS

1. What was the nature of your involvement with the SEP Recruitment Campaign?
2. How would you describe the support provided for this initiative in terms of:
 - Financial resources?
 - Human resources?
 - Senior management?
 - Technical expertise?
3. Of all stakeholders involved, with whom did you have a working relationship and how would you describe your relationship with them? (Please list ALL work partners)
4. Do you feel that your roles and responsibilities for this project were clearly defined and understood from the onset?
5. Do you feel that the scope of the project was clearly defined and understood from the onset?
6. How would you describe the level of communication between all partners and stakeholders throughout the project?
7. To what extent were you satisfied with the reporting procedures used by the Recruitment Centre when technical problems occurred? If not satisfied, what improvements would you recommend?
8. Looking back, how would you assess your ability to respond to the technical problems that were experienced throughout the campaign?
9. How would you describe the effectiveness of the corrective actions taken by all partners when technical problems occurred?
10. Looking forward, have there been long-term advantages/disadvantages to the department in IM/IT as a result of this National Recruitment Campaign? If so, what are they?
11. Have changes been made to processes within the IM/IT organization as a result of this on-line recruitment campaign? Please elaborate.
12. In retrospect, what are key items for consideration before taking on such projects?
13. Do you have any final comments regarding the recruitment process or other suggestions for improvement?

Annex 4: Study Participant List

Security Emergency Preparedness

Jean Barrette, Director, Security Operations Branch – NCR

Brian Bramah, Regional Director, Security and Emergency Preparedness – Pacific Region

Julien Flowers, Regional Director, Security and Emergency Preparedness – Quebec Region

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Sanjeeve Edward, Regulatory / Inspection Recruitment Centre – NCR

Clark Glassford, Human Resources Assistant – Pacific Region

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Carol Mclellan, Regional Staffing Officer, Human Resources – Atlantic Region

Bill Moran, Human Resources Manager, Human Resources – Pacific Region

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Nancy Simmons-Wright, Manager, Regulatory/Inspection Recruitment Centre – NCR

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