



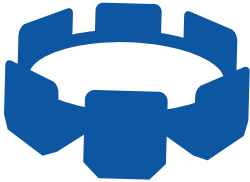
# Ten Tough Jobs 2010

PROFILES OF LEADERSHIP POSITIONS  
IN CANADA'S FEDERAL  
PUBLIC SERVICE



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## Public Policy Forum

### *Building Better Government*

The Public Policy Forum is an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of government in Canada through enhanced dialogue among the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Forum's members, drawn from business, federal, provincial and territorial governments, the voluntary sector and organized labour, share a belief that an efficient and effective public service is important in ensuring Canada's competitiveness abroad and quality of life at home.

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## About this report

In 2002, the Public Policy Forum produced a publication entitled *Ten Tough Jobs*, which profiled some of the most challenging senior-level leadership positions in the federal public service. The goal was to draw attention to specific jobs that the Forum believed would encourage readers “to appreciate just how challenging the job of a senior manager in the public service can be.” The publication was inspired by *The Prune Book: The 100 Toughest Management and Policy Making Jobs in Washington*, which has been published regularly since 1988 by the Council for Excellence in Government. *The Prune Book* serves as a counterpoint to *The Plum Book* which is published every four years by Congress and lists 7,000 positions within the US federal public service that can be filled without competition.

At the time of its publication, *Ten Tough Jobs* showcased challenging positions in the federal public service on the assumption that they were not well-known — either to the general public or within government. Nearly a decade later, new accountability requirements, increased transparency and scrutiny, and public service renewal have opened up the senior ranks to greater attention from the media, Parliament, and Canadians. Given these changes, a fresh look provides a different context for highlighting the challenges, complexities and critical nature of some of the most essential jobs in government. In addition, we believe *Ten Tough Jobs 2010* will increase awareness and understanding of the critical importance of effective public sector management.

Promoting understanding between those inside and outside government is a central objective of the Public Policy Forum. I trust this publication will help contribute to that understanding and also provide a perspective on how public sector leadership is evolving.

While the focus here is on selected leadership positions in the federal public service, we firmly believe that the

lessons gleaned from our research are relevant for public service leaders at all levels of government.

I wish to acknowledge and thank a number of individuals and organizations who have contributed to the production of this report. First, our project sponsors, who have helped make this report possible:

- **CGA-Canada**
- **Oliver Wyman, Canada**
- **Gowlings** (whose inspirational support includes official launch events for this report in both Ottawa and Toronto)
- **Lynton (Red) Wilson** (who provided the spark of initiative for this project)
- **Privy Council Office**

I also want to express appreciation for the advice, encouragement and support of numerous current and former members of the Public Service of Canada and members of the Forum. (A list of these individuals is noted in Appendix A.) In addition, I wish to thank all those who responded to our survey and who were interviewed for the research component of this report.

And, I especially want to thank my able team at the Public Policy Forum for their hard work on this important project, especially Vice President Aaron Good for his leadership, which included conducting most of the interviews for the ten tough jobs profiled, and for drafting this report. Mary-Rose Brown provided exceptional research support and overall coordination. I also want to note the contributions of Paul Ledwell, Matt LeBlanc, Jonathan Dignan and Geoff Poapst.

For all of us, it has been a labour of love.

David Mitchell  
President and CEO  
Public Policy Forum  
October 19, 2010

## A Message from CGA-Canada

The Certified General Accountants Association of Canada (CGA-Canada) is pleased to have participated in the publication of *Ten Tough Jobs 2010*.

The Public Policy Forum, in this update of the 2002 report, captures the unique challenges of the changing nature of public sector leadership. Changes that have likely been more significant during the last decade than ever before. The report is insightful; the Forum has delivered well in singling out elements on how each of the positions profiled differ and why each is tough in its own way. There are a few surprises and we invite you to delve into the report.

As leaders in the public and private sectors, Certified General Accountants are well-acquainted with the rapid pace of change in both environments. The competency-based professional education provided by CGA-Canada ensures that every CGA is able to fully serve the changing needs of clients and employers, while defending the public interest and preserving public trust.

CGA-Canada is pleased to have sponsored this initiative and to be associated with the Public Policy Forum. We think *Ten Tough Jobs 2010* will make a good contribution to further the understanding of the importance of public leadership and public service.

As a long-time member of the Public Policy Forum, we congratulate David Mitchell and his team on a very significant report.

Sincerely yours,



Anthony Ariganello, CPA (DE), FCGA  
President & Chief Executive Officer,  
CGA-Canada



## Foreword: The Changing Nature of Leadership

**Jason Ducharme**  
**Partner, Head of Public Sector Practice,**  
**Oliver Wyman, Toronto**

When the Public Policy Forum began planning an update of *Ten Tough Jobs*, I was excited and pleased to participate. I have been working with public sector leaders and crown executives for over 25 years, and it is clear to me that the leadership challenges and opportunities currently facing the public sector are unprecedented in magnitude, and urgently require attention.

The timing could not be better for this update. Think of the vital role played by the public sector in shaping responses to global events such as the 2008 financial crisis, the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and the historic deficits suffered by countries around the world, to say nothing of driving transformational change in matters such as healthcare reform and national security. The list goes on. The stakes are higher than ever, as are the costs of failure. No citizen or organization is immune from the benefits of great public sector leadership, or from the costs of poor stewardship of the public interest. With these crucial policy issues in play, it's time for all of us to deepen our understanding of public sector leadership. What are the challenges? What makes the best leaders succeed? What attracts people to the job?

Let's start with the obvious: There is no simple recipe for leadership success in the public sector. Canada's public sector leaders must make difficult tradeoffs, grapple with complexity, face intense scrutiny, manage a bewildering array of stakeholders, energize their staff, build great teams, and juggle priorities — all while ensuring that their organizations deliver top-quality

service to Canadians. To its credit, *Ten Tough Jobs 2010* does not offer a quick-fix solution for the problem of how to provide stellar leadership in the public sector. What it does offer are insights into the unique challenges of these jobs, the critical success factors for each, the common themes they share, and a perspective on how these themes have changed since the original *Ten Tough Jobs* was published in 2002.

Many success factors identified in this report apply in the private sector as well. For example, from the private sector literature, we've learned that initial efforts to distinguish between leaders and managers have created a somewhat artificial dichotomy.<sup>1</sup> Current thinking says that we may distinguish leadership and management conceptually, but rarely in practice. Leadership cannot simply delegate management. Instead, managers should be seen as leaders, and leadership seen as management practiced well. *Ten Tough Jobs 2010* reinforces the finding that great leaders — whether in the private or public sector — must also be great managers.

Another private/public sector parallel is the importance of team building, which crops up consistently as a critical success factor in *Ten Tough Jobs 2010*. I've seen great leaders from both sectors build effective teams and inspire them to deliver maximum performance. These leaders invest considerable time and effort to build a shared language and common vision of what the organization needs to accomplish. They also leverage the unique skills that each team member brings to the table; uncover and create value from differences in how people think and approach work; and surface, test, and align assumptions about what the team will accomplish and how members will work together. I've also observed that the best leaders in all sectors are

1. Warren Bennis, for example, began in the mid-1980s to explore what distinguishes leaders from managers. For example, he said, "Managers are people who do things right; leaders are people who do the right thing." More recently, Henry Mintzberg has argued that seeking to distinguish leaders from managers has led to a situation in which organizations are being "overled and undermanaged." This is because it's "easier to muse about the glories of leadership than it is to come to grips with the realities of management."

consummate artists at stick handling the challenges of matrix management structures (which occur in many corporations but are especially common in government). This takes profound emotional intelligence on the part of the leader as well as every team member, and it requires a great deal of patience.

*Ten Tough Jobs 2010* also identifies areas where private and public sector leadership differs. For instance:

- The broad reach of the public sector — the opportunity to improve the lives of millions of Canadians — is a powerful magnet for leaders who want to “make a difference” in the world. It also helps to explain a surprising finding of *Ten Tough Jobs 2010*: Despite the grueling nature of their work, the leaders interviewed for this report unanimously loved their jobs. Their commitment to the “greater good” also helps to attract, inspire, and retain socially minded staff, particularly members of Generation Y, who want more than just a paycheck for their day’s work.
- Managing multiple, competing stakeholders is another unique, must-have skill for effective public sector leaders. Indeed, given the complexity of the stakeholder picture, it is remarkable that anything gets done at all. The increasingly complicated and rule-laden processes by which government agencies operate, the extreme aversion to risk felt by public sector employees, and the highly sophisticated lobbying efforts coming from external interest groups can all create insurmountable resistance to change. Jim Collins, in his excellent social sector version of his book *Good to Great*, talks about the unique challenges of “getting things

done within a diffuse power structure” where there are “a thousand points of no.”<sup>2</sup> *Ten Tough Jobs 2010* shows that great leaders can break this progress logjam by engaging, building allegiances with, and garnering support from a wide range of internal and external stakeholders.

- Not surprisingly, *Ten Tough Jobs 2010* also confirms the existence of the “fishbowl” in which public sector leaders must make decisions. As Sir Humphrey Appleby stated in one episode of the 1980s British television series *Yes, Minister*: “Ministers must never go anywhere without their briefs, in case they get caught with their trousers down.”<sup>3</sup> The interesting twist here is that private sector leaders are increasingly facing the same level of intense news coverage, real-time social media ambushes, and demands for accountability that their public sector counterparts have long been accustomed to. Perhaps this is an area where public sector leaders can offer some sage advice to the increasing number of corporate CEOs and board chairs who are being hauled in front of the court of public opinion.

A final observation I’d like to share is that many critical success factors identified in this report can be grouped according to three traits of great leadership identified in the “Head, Heart, & Guts” framework we use extensively in our work with clients:<sup>4</sup>

- Leading with your head is about understanding and managing tremendous complexity. The leaders profiled in this report all excel at comprehending interdependencies among their organizations’ many moving parts, deciphering hidden meaning

2. Collins, Jim. (2005). *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great*. New York: HarperCollins.

3. Appleby, Humphrey, *Yes, Minister*, “A Question of Loyalty,” 1981.

4. Dotlich, David L., Cairo, Peter C., & Rhinesmith, Stephen H. (2006). *Head, Heart & Guts: How the World’s Best Companies Develop Complete Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



in others' communication, and surmounting seemingly intractable problems plaguing Canadian society. Great public sector leaders master the "the art of seeing the forest and the trees."<sup>5</sup> They discern patterns in what looks like utter chaos to others. They distinguish root causes from symptoms. They organize complexity into a coherent story that helps them make smart decisions.

- Leading with your heart is about emotional intelligence. Communicating, mobilizing support, showing compassion, listening, overcoming resistance to change, managing difficult interpersonal dynamics, building great teams—these are the "people skills" that excellent leaders need to foster greatness, commitment, and loyalty in their staff and colleagues.

5. Ibid.

- Leading with your guts is about having the courage under fire to do what's right. The profiles in this report reinforce how important it is for public sector leaders to make tough choices and then to stand by their decisions (and their subordinates' decisions) in the face of intense criticism and focused lobbying by the stakeholders affected by those decisions.

After reading *Ten Tough Jobs 2010*, I feel fortunate to have leaders who possess the head, heart, and guts to steer our government through the social, financial, and environmental turmoil that has lately characterized life not only in Canada but in other nations as well. Other countries have not fared so well during these turbulent times, and I believe that much of Canada's success can be attributed to our first-rate public sector leadership.





# Introduction



## Managing in the Public Service

### Public Service is a key driver of our quality of life in Canada

The federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal public sector comprises almost 40% of our economy and is a major contributor to the quality of life in Canada.<sup>6</sup> Canadian governments enable and support our economy through regulation and infrastructure, ensure our safety and security, promote the social and economic inclusion of Canadians, and help foster our arts and culture.

Government has a central role to play in setting the conditions that help our companies compete on the global stage, in building and maintaining the infrastructure that enables our country to function, in managing our precious natural resources, and in providing and ensuring the provision of essential services such as health care, and the education and training that is critical for Canadians to participate fully in the work force. Governments also ensure that we are safe and secure through our police services, the criminal justice system, and our military.

For many, government is the last line of defense. It is the enabling body that supports us in times of personal, local, or national crisis. In the last few years, Canadian governments have played many leading roles, including dealing with the H1N1 pandemic and in helping to address the Canadian response to the recent global financial crisis.

In addition, government is responsible for fostering and financially supporting many of the physical, social

and cultural spaces and institutions that help make Canada a great place to live. It is charged with managing our national parks, protecting our environment and promoting our arts and culture. When Canada hosts a major event, such as the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, our governments are directly and indirectly involved in a range of activities from ensuring that people can attend the events, to ensuring spectators are safe.

It is Canada's public servants who provide the strategic advice required for governments to make good decisions on how to support and improve our quality of life. Our public servants also ensure that government programs and services are delivered effectively and efficiently. With so much at stake, it is critical that our public service at all levels of government maintains strong leadership.

This research report explores ten tough jobs in the federal public service. While the focus is on senior federal positions, the insights and lessons drawn from their examination apply to many public service jobs throughout Canada at all levels of government.

### The unique challenges of public sector leadership

Providing inspiring leadership and strong management is critical for leaders in all sectors. There are, however, some elements of being a public sector leader that add an extra degree of complexity. Former New Brunswick Premier and Deputy Chair of TD Bank Financial Group Frank McKenna may have said it best

6. The OECD calculates Canadian government expenditure to be 39% of GDP, based on the year 2007. OECD Statistics, National Accounts at a Glance: 2009 edition. Available online at: <http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx>

in the Fall of 2009 at a special tribute dinner that the Public Policy Forum convened in honour of former Privy Council Clerk Kevin Lynch. In his address, Mr. McKenna compared private sector leaders with their counterparts in the public service:

*“... both of them have tough jobs. Indeed, there are many other similarities: Both must manage very sophisticated operations to the benefit of shareholders, stakeholders if you like; both must inspire employees, meet their budgets, deliver on their business plan. But, there, the similarity ends.*

*To start with, the CEO actually knows who he’s responsible to: the Board of Directors. The Deputy Minister must figure that out, since he’s appointed by the Prime Minister, works for a Minister and is accountable to the Clerk, who he works for.*

*The Deputy Minister must publicly defend his expense account, often posted on-line; must comply with the restrictions of the Privacy Commissioner, live by the very tough rules of the Integrity Commissioner, respect the extraordinarily wide-ranging rules of the Right to Information Act which means that everything you do, you do in a fish bowl. He must ensure that the provisions of the Official Languages Act are respected. He must lead a workforce that is largely, if not entirely, unionized. He must be prepared to work with the political ideology of the party in power. He balances the political interests of the Minister and his political staff with his professional obligations to the Crown. He must be prepared to be second-guessed and possibly and, in fact, usually, publicly embarrassed by the Auditor General.*

*He must be prepared to testify before parliamentary committees, often in a very unflattering way. He must submit to being pressured and second-guessed by Cabinet and by Caucus. He must resist the blandishments of lobbyists and interest groups. He must suffer the criticism of the Opposition, the press and the public.*

*He must be effectively frozen from working for years after he leaves public office — and all for a fraction of the compensation that a private sector employee is paid.*

*Other than that, the jobs are almost identical.”*

**WHILE THE FOCUS OF THE REPORT IS ON SENIOR FEDERAL POSITIONS, THE INSIGHTS AND LESSONS DRAWN FROM THEIR EXAMINATION APPLY TO MANY PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.**

Frank McKenna went even further in his comparison, suggesting that business leaders and public service leaders could be compared to the famous old dance duo of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. The public service leaders are of course the Ginger Rogers of the duo, having to dance just as gracefully and effortlessly as their partners — but backwards and in high heels!

The Public Policy Forum’s first *Ten Tough Jobs* report, published in 2002, identified four significant considerations that set management in the public sector apart from management in other sectors. In general, public sector leaders share the following characteristics.

7. To view remarks, see: <http://www.ppforum.ca/multimedia/frank-mckenna-ppf-kevin-lynch-tribute-dinner-september-24>

### ***Work in departments that are under political control***

While senior officials provide advice and carry out policy decisions, their minister and the government set the direction of the department. Priorities can change rapidly and frequently with little or no input from senior staff. In the words of one interviewee for *Ten Tough Jobs 2010*, “It requires a different style of leadership. In the private sector you’re more of a decider. In government, you’re more of an advisor.” Ministers, and even Deputies, can also change rapidly. New Ministers bring new ideas and new focus. They may or may not have deep expertise in the Department’s work. Imagine a company or non-profit organization with seven CEOs or Board Chairs over ten years.<sup>8</sup> This situation is not unheard of in the public service. When an election occurs, some public service work is put on hiatus and depending on the outcome of the election, could be permanently suspended. These may be initiatives that public servants have worked on for months or even years. Thriving in this environment requires patience and resilience.

### ***Have more complex relationships with internal and external stakeholders***

Public service leaders are generally responsible for serving a much more complex set of stakeholders with often competing needs. Stakeholders often have higher expectations and are more vocal. Businesses or even charities usually can decide to whom and where they will provide service and what services they provide. For governments, it is more challenging, if not impossible, to cease service for remote regions or isolated populations. Public servants also have a greater number and range of internal stakeholders to serve, including central agencies, commissioners, and political and public

service leaders. As described more fully below, their matrix of accountabilities is only increasing over time.

### ***Face greater process constraints***

While managers in all sectors must abide by multiple laws, professional standards, and company policies, public servants face more numerous constraints than their counterparts in others sectors. The public service is almost completely unionized, which has a significant impact on human resource practices. In an effort to ensure transparency and to limit real and perceived patronage and favoritism, there are heavy and complex controls on hiring and contracting. As a result, it can take months to enter into a \$30,000 contract and often takes more than a year to hire a person to fill a vacancy. In recent years, in response to recommendations by the Gomery Commission,<sup>9</sup> additional processes have been placed on consultation and communications. While these processes are intended to help ensure that government is coordinated and errors are avoided, they often slow public sector leaders’ abilities to get feedback in order to improve their programs and to communicate them to Canadians.

### ***Face greater exposure to intense public scrutiny***

Public servants and their political masters face greater and more intense scrutiny than professionals in other sectors. Opposition MPs challenge their execution, the media reports on their expenses, and any correspondence can become public through access to information. This dynamic has increased in recent years.

“How we do things is as important as what we do,” is a sentiment often expressed by interviewees for the 2010 report. These four enduring dynamics encapsu-

8. The Canadian International Development Agency had seven ministers from 1997 to 2007.

9. Recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into the Sponsorship Program and Advertising Activities are available online at: <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-bcp/commissions/sponsorship-ef/06-02-10/www.gomery.ca/en/phase1report/default.htm>

late much of how “doing things” to public service standards is more challenging than meeting the standards of other sectors. They also help explain why it is more difficult to achieve results in the public sector.

Consequently, public sector leaders must be more creative in how they get results (e.g. by employing indirect and incremental strategies), must be able to understand a broader set of issues, build relationships with a broader set of stakeholders, and need greater patience than their counterparts in other sectors to be successful.

## Emerging public sector dynamics

While these four enduring differences between leadership in the public and private sectors persist, recent events and changes including the Gomery Commission, introduction of the *Federal Accountability Act*, successive minority federal governments, and changes in information technology and reporting have increased the magnitude of some challenges and added others.

### ***Increased accountabilities and greater transparency***

“It used to be easy to manage public exposure. It was in the nightly news or the broadsheets. Now information is everywhere. Everyone can do analysis and everyone is a potential policy maker,” explained one interviewee. While public service leaders have always been subjected to scrutiny from the media, opposition parties, and the public, today they must manage in an even more transparent public “fish bowl”. As one individual remarked,

“some former Deputy Ministers cannot believe the level of increased scrutiny of today. There are elements of the job that did not exist 10 or 15 years ago.”

Senior public servants are more accountable today for the results they produce — which is a good thing. They have “multiple bosses and 34 million individual shareholders.” They are also more often held publicly accountable by a broader range of actors from the Auditor General, to the Privacy Commissioner, the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Integrity Commissioner and others — not only for results, but how they accomplish these results. For example, during six successive years of minority parliaments, the frequency of public servants appearing before parliament has significantly increased. Last year, 860 public servants appeared before parliamentary committees<sup>10</sup> which represents an increase of over 35% in the number of public servants called to testify before committees since 2003. While parliamentary committees are often used to embarrass the Government, public servants — unlike elected representatives — are relatively restricted in how they might respond to interrogations by committee members.

The Access to Information and Privacy Act was introduced in 1983, but it was not until ten years ago that the number of annual requests began to rise dramatically. In 1998-99, just over 14,000 requests were made.<sup>11</sup> Last year, over 34,000 requests were filed under the Access to Information program, costing almost \$50 million to process.<sup>12</sup> Shorter news cycles, more digital information sources, and growth of “gotcha” journalism have all increased the scrutiny of public service leaders.

10. Compiled using House of Commons Committees – Witness Information for the 40<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 3<sup>rd</sup> session and the 37<sup>th</sup> Parliament, 2<sup>nd</sup> session. Available online at: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

11. Treasury Board Secretariat: Infosource Bulletin: Access to Information Act, Privacy Act, 23 November, 2000. Available online at: <http://www.infosource.gc.ca/bulletin/2000-bulletin-eng.pdf>

12. Treasury Board Secretariat: Infosource Bulletin Number 32B Statistical Reporting, 18 November, 2009. Available online at: <http://www.infosource.gc.ca/bulletin/2009/b/bulletin32b/bulletin32b02-eng.asp#k>

Most, if not all, Canadians support open transparent government. Public servants are no exception. However, this comes at a cost. Every parliamentary committee appearance, media or access to information request or response to the Privacy Commissioner's or Auditor General's office requires hours of preparation by a large number of public servants. Errors, when they do occur, are often difficult to correct and can cause embarrassment to the Government and the public service even when they are honest mistakes and are corrected within minutes. While these activities are important for an open democratic process, they do not reduce the number or intensity of other important issues that public service leaders must address, and many do not directly drive results that are obviously beneficial for Canadians. Consequently, public servants must today consider an even larger array of perspectives in their day-to-day jobs and they must be even better communicators than in the past. The increased scrutiny also demands greater stamina, resilience, and thicker skin.

often as important as understanding the content itself. Public servants must have a strong knowledge of processes and systems, and solid formal and informal relationships. The number of required relationships and the breadth of types of relationships needed have expanded. Given the complexity and inter-relatedness of policy and service delivery, the public service is even more impacted than other sectors.

Public servants cannot always dictate the specific outcomes that they hope to achieve and must develop visions of a desired range of outcomes. They work in an environment of ambiguity, and need to work with many stakeholders to develop a useful range of appropriate policy outcomes. "It's not just about driving the car down the highway," explained one interviewee. "It's about knowing whether the highway is single lane, or double lane... and about avoiding the ditches." Managing complexity also includes managing risk and making sound informed judgments.

### EMERGING PUBLIC SECTOR DYNAMICS REQUIRE **NEW LEADERSHIP SKILLS.**

#### ***Increasing complexity, inter-linkages and need for coordination***

Issues addressed by the public service are becoming more inter-related and more frequently cross local, provincial, federal, and international boundaries. We increasingly recognize how new and enduring issues such as climate change or immigration cross social and economic domains. As the speed of information increases, expectations about the speed of response and action are increasing as well.

The challenge of interconnectedness and increasing complexity is that senior public servants today may not be able to develop the deep expertise in their departments once expected of them. They may have less time to focus on their own departments. Frequent meetings and information-sharing sometimes become ends in and of themselves. As consultation and need for coordination increases, it also imposes even greater process constraints, making it even more difficult to achieve results for Canadians.

While complexity is impacting all aspects of society, senior public service leaders are particularly affected. The breadth of knowledge required is increasing, and understanding the inter-linkages and their impact is

Increasing churn in senior positions adds to the challenge. While the average tenure of a deputy in the 1990s was four years, by 2005-06 it had dropped to 2.7 years and; in spite of concerted efforts to reduce churn,



the rapid rotation of public service leaders continues.<sup>13</sup> In a world where deep expertise, knowledge, and relationships are increasingly important, it becomes even more difficult to generate results when senior managers change every year to 18 months.

*INCREASED TRANSPARENCY HAS MADE MANAGEMENT MORE IMPORTANT. RESULTS ALONE ARE NOT SUFFICIENT.*

### ***A greater focus on operational management skills***

As the world becomes more complex, management skills must evolve as well. Indeed the focus on high quality management has been increasing in all sectors. The public sector's increased focus on accountability and value for money has made the management of money, people, and information more emphasized relative to other sectors than it was years ago. The Public Service Modernization Act has affirmed deputy head responsibility for managing their people, by shifting accountability for human resources management from central agencies to deputy ministers and their delegates. Planning has become more sophisticated.

While recognizing the need for refinement, senior public servants interviewed generally welcome the new management tools that are being developed. They also highlighted the need to use them effectively and to help their teams understand and harness their value.

As several interviewees pointed out, once prized analytic policy skills are no longer sufficient as a "ticket to the top". Increased transparency has made management more important. Results alone are not sufficient.

Today, public service leaders need to be able to communicate with different types of people, recognize different learning methods and adapt to a greater diversity of work styles, opinion, ethnicity, religion, and expression. Recruiting, developing, managing, and retaining teams and helping them work together are particularly important skills in an environment of high staff churn. This dynamic was exemplified by one interviewee who noted, "these days I spend a lot more time recruiting and a lot more time retaining people."

While breadth of experience is important, it takes time for new staff to come "up-to-speed" and even more time for senior leaders to learn their jobs well enough to operate at full capacity. It also takes time to manage a changing workforce. As with other emerging pressures, time spent recruiting and training staff is time that cannot be spent developing new policy options or focusing on delivering programs more efficiently. Indeed, the focus on operational skills at the expense of policy development skills risks diminishing the number and quality of new policy ideas generated from the public service. It also risks diminishing the public service's relevance and its overall impact.

*RECRUITING, DEVELOPING, MANAGING, AND RETAINING TEAMS AND HELPING THEM WORK TOGETHER ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT SKILLS IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF VERY HIGH STAFF CHURN.*

13. Destination Excellence: Canada's Public Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century [http://www.ppforum.ca/sites/default/files/ppf\\_PS\\_report\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://www.ppforum.ca/sites/default/files/ppf_PS_report_final_en.pdf)



## Selecting the Ten Tough Jobs

It is in that context that we developed the framework for *Ten Tough Jobs 2010*. To select the positions to be profiled, the Public Policy Forum surveyed over 170 leaders and experts. This group included current and former senior public servants, academics, and leaders from the private, non-profit and research sectors in Canada. For the purpose of this study we focused on jobs at the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) level (EX4 and EX5). Similar to vice presidents in the private sector, these positions generally report to the head of their department or agency.

We accepted a large number of nominations of “tough jobs.” Indeed there are many extremely challenging positions at all levels of government and we could have easily received numerous additional nominations, and written about many more jobs than we have.

In selecting from the list of nominations, we consulted a senior group of individuals (see Appendix A) in a more focused manner. We strove for a list of positions that was representative of the range of challenges and experiences faced by senior public servants. We also emphasized jobs with significant impact – those we see as essential to the well-being of our country.

For each of the selected jobs, we interviewed the current incumbent, their deputy head, the incumbent’s predecessor, and a partner with whom they work in or outside government. We recorded and transcribed each interview and synthesized the results. We believe that many of the findings from the profiles of these ten jobs can be generalized to other senior level public service positions. The jobs, listed alphabetically by department or agency, are:

1. Regional Director General, Maritimes, Department of Fisheries and Oceans
2. Assistant Deputy Minister, Consular Services and Emergency Management, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
3. Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada
4. Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Services Branch, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
5. Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
6. Assistant Deputy Minister, Spectrum, Information, Technologies and Telecommunications, Industry Canada
7. Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance and Corporate Services, National Defense
8. Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Communications and Consultations Secretariat, Privy Council Office
9. Assistant Deputy Minister, Diseases and Emergency Preparedness, Public Health Agency of Canada
10. Assistant Secretary, Expenditure Management, Treasury Board Secretariat

## Key Themes

In reviewing our findings across the 10 positions profiled, three key themes emerged.

### ***Incumbents have an enormous potential to impact the lives of Canadians***

These jobs are very important and there are huge consequences for error. They must be done well. Most of them can significantly and directly impact a large number of Canadians, by (for example):

- managing a public health crisis
- leading services to Canadians in an international disaster
- improving the lives of Canada's 1 million first nations people and providing them with health care
- ensuring that our digital economy, including our cellular and wireless networks, can function
- managing the fisheries that drive the economy of coastal Canada

Others are critical to the operations of government, by (for example) ensuring that Government:

- Spends its money effectively within and across departments and has resources it needs to operate
- Manages its human resources effectively to implement and deliver programs and services
- Communicates what government is doing in a way that Canadians can easily comprehend

### ***Doing the jobs well requires a very broad range of skills and a high degree of stamina***

While many jobs require their incumbent to be good or even very good at one or two things, these jobs require exceptional skills in multiple areas. Each of the jobs profiled requires broad knowledge and an under-

standing of history, technology, science, organizational systems and/or processes that are highly specific to the job and its subject matter. Most require very strong organizational and managerial skills. All of them require exceptional strategic skills, the ability to build strong relationships with a broad range of people, and the ability to communicate effectively. It takes time to develop the range of skills and relationships required to do these jobs well. As noted above, this can be challenging in an environment of high executive turnover. In addition to multiple skills, these positions are high pressure jobs, often highly visible and politically sensitive. Most require a high level of stamina to handle continuous pressure situations and many have long and often unpredictable work hours.

### ***Incumbents found their jobs to be exciting and deeply rewarding***

Despite the challenges, current and previous incumbents of the positions profiled had a real passion for their work and generally found their jobs to be deeply rewarding. Throughout the interviews, we consistently heard remarks such as, "these are some of the best jobs in Canada," "this is a fantastic job," or "I love this job... it's relevant... it's interesting... it's wonderful." An interviewee described one of the positions as "one of the most interesting in the country". Another suggested we should call the study "ten fascinating jobs" to reflect how exciting these positions are. Nearly everyone with whom we spoke commented on the excitement of working on the diverse challenges faced by the public service and their strong desire to serve Canada and Canadians.

Note: while this report is intended to reflect the positions rather than incumbents, we have used male and female pronouns throughout for ease of reading.





# Profiles of Ten Tough Jobs

## Regional Director General Maritime Region Fisheries and Oceans Canada

The Regional Director General (RDG), Maritimes Region manages aquatic activity along the 8,600 km coastline from northern tip of Cape Breton, down the Nova Scotia coast, through the Bay of Fundy to the New Brunswick-Maine border. On any given day, she<sup>14</sup> may grapple with issues as diverse as the actions needed to conserve and recover aquatic species at risk, to off shore oil drilling, to First Nations treaty rights, to preservation of ocean habitats. She is responsible for the effective integration of research, management, science, and fisheries activities while also enforcing the regulatory elements of the Fisheries Act.

She works with over 60 multi-stakeholder councils of scientists, fishers and fish processors, environmental organizations, and First Nations groups to ensure the productive and sustainable use of fisheries resources

in the Maritimes Region. The department must balance the current use of the resource and long-term sustainability. Often stakeholders have differing views and expectations on how this balance should be achieved and the RDG must manage these views and expectations in a fair and transparent way to provide the maximum benefit to Canadians without limiting the ability to have future generations benefit from the fishery. In some cases, whole communities may depend on the fishery. The livelihoods of 30,000 people who are directly or indirectly employed, their families and their communities, and the health of future marine stocks for 50 or 100 years depend on her making good decisions and providing good advice. If that's not enough, she is responsible for operating Canada's largest center for ocean research, and represents the department's interests with other levels of government.

### Key Facts

- Maritime Region is one of the most diverse of DFO's administrative regions, with over 8,600 km of coastline and adjacent marine areas
- The region has commercial fisheries that occur year-round with a landed value of more than \$650 million and aquaculture value of about \$340 million
- The incumbent manages a large and decentralized region of approximately 1000 science, management, and enforcement staff at over 40 sites and provides corporate services for 1000 Coast Guard employees
- Administers and is responsible for \$180M Maritimes Region's budget to deliver programs and services that affect the lives of thousands of Canadians who depend on the oceans and coastal environment for economic, social, or cultural activities

14. Note: of the 10 jobs selected, 5 were men and 5 were women. While we intend this report to be a reflection of the position rather than the incumbent, we have used the third-person singular pronoun for the purposes of writing the report.

### ***Make tough, very public recommendations that can stand up to intense public scrutiny***

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The RDG must have a broad understanding of the impacts and interrelations between different aspects of the marine environment, which often depends on limited information that is costly to collect. Her team of over 350 scientific staff produce expert information on the health of fish stocks, and fish habitat including the state of the ocean and marine species such as seaturtles, whales and other marine species at risk. Given the range of issues and the often imperfect and sometimes conflicting evidence on issues faced by the RDG, she often has to make decisions under ambiguous conditions. This sometimes means providing advice or making decisions on who gets additional access to commercial fisheries and who does not. Providing the best possible advice is critical, given the impact these decisions have on the lives of those in the region now and in the future.

#### ***“THIS JOB IS CENTRAL TO THE WELL-BEING OF COASTAL CANADA.”***

Considerable progress has been made in stabilizing access and allocations in Atlantic fisheries. Nevertheless, the Fisheries Act provides broad discretion to the Minister which, as the political landscape changes, can invite stakeholders to advocate for review of previous decisions. The RDG and her team must adjust to court decisions, such as the Marshall decision of 1999, dealing with an 18th century treaty that gives the Mi'kmaq certain rights for a moderate livelihood. Interpreting and implementing this decision and others must be considered in providing good advice.

### ***Manage complex stakeholder relationships with real trade-offs***

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Making and defending tough decisions requires solid relationships with a broad group of stakeholders. The RDG and her team must work with fishers and their associations, Aboriginal communities, shipping and port interests, fish processors, aquaculturists, recreational boaters, academics, community groups, non-profit organizations, environmental groups, and other federal and provincial government departments. She must be an excellent listener to be effective. She is an important and highly visible face of the Government of Canada in the region and meets often with provincial deputy ministers, provincial Members of Legislative Assembly and often members of Parliament who may have concerns or interests to promote or defend.

Within her region she must coordinate with other federal departments and agencies including Environment Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Industry Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the RCMP. On some files, she needs to work with the US government and with international bodies such as the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. She needs to be an agent of change. Leading change is an integral part of her day to day role. As the industry and world in which it operates evolves, so must the organization that she leads and the actors that are participating in it. The RDG plays a key role in helping move people forward to achieve desired outcomes. Fulfilling all these roles requires exceptional communication and relationship skills.

### ***Build a strong team working together***

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The RDG must also be a strong internal leader. To be effective, she must be visible and accessible to her team which is scattered across 40 different locations in the region. Just as stakeholders may have conflicting views, her staff of scientists, economists, and fisheries and aquaculture experts need to be brought together to support a common vision. She must manage different points of view and inter-generational change, and she must help staff to understand the big picture. When a new analyst tells their manager “I’ve given you the best advice, why aren’t you following it?” she has to support

that manager in explaining the broader context. Similarly, she must create a culture in which more seasoned employees understand that newer stakeholders (e.g. environmental groups) have a place at the table and must be respected.

*“SHE MUST BE AN EXCELLENT LISTENER  
TO BE EFFECTIVE.”*



## Assistant Deputy Minister

### Consular Services and Emergency Management Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Every year, Canadians take over 50 million trips outside the country. 2.5 million Canadians — roughly eight percent of our population — live and work abroad. Generally, Canadians are safe and secure when they are abroad, but occasionally they experience a personal crisis, or find themselves in the middle of a local or national disaster. When disaster strikes, impacted Canadians and their families generally call on the Government of Canada for assistance.

The Assistant Deputy Minister, Consular Services and Emergency Management is responsible for leading Canada's response. He leads the effort to find and evacuate Canadians when there is an earthquake in Haiti or a tsunami in South East Asia, or terrorist attack in London or Barcelona, or political instability in Burma. He mounts the Government's response to a kidnapping, and when a Canadian is accused of committing a crime abroad his team helps ensure that their human rights are respected and helps the government to decide whether and how to respond.

He leads the team in 260 embassies and consulates in 150 countries around the world that not only support Canadians when there are airport closures or when they lose their passport, but also provides all other

*“CANADIANS EXPECT A HIGH DEGREE OF SERVICE. HIS PERFORMANCE, BUT MORE PARTICULARLY, THOSE OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH HIM AND FOR HIM, IS GAUGED BY THE HIGHEST STANDARD YOU CAN IMAGINE.”*

consular services, such as processing visas for individuals from other countries who wish to enter Canada. Every minute of every day, they receive three requests for assistance at one of their points of service. Additionally, the ADM designs and implements the structures, systems, and agreements used to prevent and address the future crises that will occur around the world.

### Key Facts

- Support to Canadians during international emergencies, including natural disasters, terrorism, and personal crises
- Manages services to Canadians abroad
- 635 Consular and Emergency Management staff (1610 in Ottawa and 475 spread across 260 locations in 150 countries)
- \$60M Consular and Emergency Management budget

### ***Calmly lead responses to multiple unexpected crises at the same time***

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Consular Services and Emergency Management is one of the most active areas in the Government of Canada. On any given day, Canadians around the world may experience any of a range of challenges from being hurt in a traffic accident, to having documents stolen, to being kidnapped or trapped in a natural disaster. It is very difficult to predict where and when a major crisis will occur, and there is generally no “recipe book” on

build on past experience and must be able to engage his team in the country and the region, his colleagues in other foreign governments who may have faced a similar situation (e.g. a kidnapping), and local experts to understand the situation and local and national dynamics.

Negotiation and persuasion can be challenging. Foreign governments may, for example, seek the death penalty for a child who is accused of murder. In this situation, the ADM must successfully defend the rights of the

*“WHEN THINGS GO WRONG THEY GO WRONG ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE GLOBE AND MAIL, IN PARLIAMENT, WITH THE MINISTER WHO GETS CALLS FROM ALL SORTS OF PEOPLE, AND THEY GO WRONG FOR CANADIANS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WHO ARE HAVING BOMBS DROPPED ON THEM. IT’S HIS JOB TO SET THINGS RIGHT.”*

how to address them. This puts an incredible amount of pressure on the ADM and his team to calmly and objectively assess the situation and to quickly prepare an effective response. In doing so, he must marshal and coordinate a range of resources and expertise from across the Government, including other departments and agencies (e.g. Canadian International Development Agency, Fisheries and Oceans, Indian and Northern Affairs), central agencies (e.g. Treasury Board Secretariat if funds are required), staff at consulates and embassies abroad, and other parts of DFAIT.

### ***Negotiate effectively with foreign governments that often have different laws and cultures***

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To implement an effective response, the ADM must have the diplomatic skills to negotiate effectively with foreign governments that may have different laws and customs than in Canada. To do this effectively, he must

child and the interests of their family, and equally the interests of all Canadians, while limiting the insult to local laws and culture. Similar challenges must be skillfully navigated in all situations, particularly those involving kidnapping by international terrorists or criminal groups.

### ***Coordinate a 650 person, 150 country global operation and strategically and creatively build new approaches to address future challenges***

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In addition to responding to urgent, unexpected crises, the ADM must operate a 650 person system of embassies and consulates around the world. He must lead the development and implementation of new and creative initiatives, agreements, and practices to improve service to Canadians on a day to day basis and in times of crisis. Assessing and developing new consular strategies, implementing a new emergency response centre,

and building agreements with other governments require longer term strategic planning, change management and project management skills. A successful ADM, Consular Services and Emergency Management must be able to both respond to crises in the moment and to systematically and creatively plan to better address those of the future.

***Possess stamina and toughness, and the ability to motivate and retain a talented and hardworking team***

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With operations in 150 countries in almost every time zone, an emergency can occur at any hour of the day or night. When there is a crisis impacting Canadians abroad, the first call often goes to DFAIT's 24 hours a day operations centre. When it is serious, the second generally goes to the ADM, who must be available 24/7 to receive those calls. Sleep is often interrupted as a crisis evolves. "When you're dealing with fast moving cases, you tend to deal in the middle of the night."

In many cases, stories in the media include allegations — which are sometimes false — about what DFAIT is or isn't doing to help Canadians in a crisis. The ADM must help the Government to balance the pressure to respond with the requirements of the Privacy Act. If the media, a Member of Parliament (MP) or a friend or family member inquires about what is being done to help an individual, DFAIT can only provide certain

information without risking contravening the Privacy Act. As a result it is often unable to correct misinformation or to explain the good work that is being done on behalf of Canadians, and the Department can be taken to task by the media and by opposition MPs on a daily basis.

Through these situations, the ADM must be able to promote and maintain the morale of the staff that is working in service of those in crisis.

"Canadians expect a high degree of service. [The ADM's] performance, but more particularly, those of all the people who work with him and for him, is gauged by the highest standard you can imagine." Emergencies make the news, get the attention of Parliament, and if not managed properly can become embarrassing for Ministers and the Government. The high visibility commands high political attention, so the ADM must be able to clearly and concisely communicate the dimensions of the issue and the options for response to the Minister in real time and often on a daily basis. He is also often asked to appear before Parliamentary Committee and to brief MPs. He must help the Government communicate what his group can and cannot do to help Canadians in need. He must also ensure that his team helps prepare travelers and citizens for challenges they may face abroad through departmental communications (e.g. [voyages.gc.ca](http://voyages.gc.ca)).

## Assistant Deputy Minister First Nations and Inuit Health Branch Health Canada

The productivity and general well-being of our country depends on a healthy and able population. Delivering health services is an essential public service function. For most Canadians, health care is delivered by our provincial governments.

However, for our First Nations and Inuit populations, the Government of Canada bears a unique responsibility. The Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) is responsible for the delivery of health services to 660 First Nations and Inuit communities located across 10 provinces and three territories. As a result, the health and well-being of nearly one million First Nations and Inuit people are directly dependent on this job.

The ADM must (directly and functionally) lead a team of almost 2000 staff across the country to ensure that health services meet current demands, and will fulfill future needs.

*“IF PEOPLE AREN’T HEALTHY,  
IT’S HARD FOR THEM TO  
FULFILL THEIR ASPIRATIONS.  
AND TO FULLY PARTICIPATE  
IN CANADIAN SOCIETY.”*

In addition to ensuring adequate service levels, she also works with communities to promote shared management of service delivery, and to promote the transition to community-based service delivery.

### Key Facts

- Administers \$2B health services for 820,000 First Nations and Inuit Canadians in over 600 communities across the country through the delivery of non-insured health benefits and services (\$900M) and grants and contributions for community based service delivery (\$1.1B)
- Leads 540 staff in Ottawa
- Provides functional leadership to 1,460 additional staff in communities across the country

***Deliver health care and health services in 660 communities, some of which are in the most remote, least developed parts of the country***

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The ADM is responsible for the daily delivery of a diverse range of services including programs in community and public health, prevention and treatment of substance abuse, children's programs, disease prevention and control, hospital and nursing services, and care for the elderly, disabled, and chronically ill. In addition to these health services, she leads the Non-Insured Health Benefits program, which includes dental services, eye care, pharmaceuticals and medical transportation.

She leads Health Canada's largest and most complex asset/investment base, including nursing stations and health centres. For many communities, the delivery of these services takes place under less than ideal conditions. In some communities, poor living conditions including inadequate housing and limited access to clean water supplies present significant challenges to the health and well-being of communities. To ensure that services continue to be delivered to a high standard requires an ADM with the ability to focus on running the day-to-day demands of an organization dedicated to providing numerous essential services.

***Build a strategy of long-term service delivery including the transfer of service delivery to local communities***

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There are many indicators of FNIHB's success to date, including growing populations, decreasing mortality rates, and increased life-spans. However, the outcomes gap remains, and the needs of the communities continue to evolve. Given the daily pressures of service delivery,

the ADM must maintain a focus on long-term improvements and transformations in service delivery, while ensuring that current operational needs continue to be met.

A major challenge is the transfer of service delivery from the federal government to First Nations communities. This requires the design and negotiation of agreements with individual communities. The ADM must be a strategic thinker that can take information about expected changes in service needs and coordinate the necessary service changes. She must also be prepared to act as a change agent in a field where the benefits of new technology and new operating methods offer a significant possibility for improving both health and the bottom line.

***Build strong relationships with a large number of diverse and dispersed First Nations and Inuit communities, as well as a wide-range of other stakeholders***

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To deliver services effectively, the ADM must work through her management team to build relationships with many of the 660 First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada, all of which depend heavily on health services. As these communities are diverse in culture, language, geographic landscape, and state of economic development, the ADM and her team must get to know each community and its defining characteristics, to understand its unique challenges and to create the trust necessary for a well-functioning relationship. Creating a relationship based on mutual trust and respect is especially important, as less than ideal historical relationships with many communities can, at times, provide an added layer of sensitivity that the ADM must be aware of.

The ADM must also build strong working relationships with other stakeholders, including other Health Canada branches; federal departments (e.g. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada); and provincial and territorial departments of health. She must build a coalition of partners and stakeholders committed to cohesive operational delivery of programs and services, while maintaining the flexibility needed to address changing policy priorities. A significant challenge is reaching agreements with stakeholders on service levels that will generate acceptable health outcomes, as health delivery practices vary across provinces and territories,

### ***Possess technical knowledge of health services and health care delivery***

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To effectively determine goals, priorities and resource allocation for headquarters and field operations, the ADM must develop a working knowledge of a varied range of subjects, from the science behind the transfer of communicable diseases, such as H1N1, to the tools and programs used for treating and preventing substance abuse.

Balancing the advice of professional and technical experts requires that the ADM must have an understanding of both general management and technical, health-specific information.

While many senior public servants are familiar with “risk management” issues, the risk becomes especially real when it is based on the health and well-being of large populations. As many of our interviewees responded, the consequences of error in this job can be severe. The ADM needs to be knowledgeable in the real health risks posed by the issues she is must address on a daily basis.

*“DIVERSITY IS WHAT MAKES THE JOB SO INTERESTING... AND SO CHALLENGING. THERE ARE DIFFERENCES IN EVERY PROVINCE, IN EVERY REGION, AND IN EVERY COMMUNITY.”*

## Assistant Deputy Minister

### Human Resources

### Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

**W**ith 600 points of service, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) is the face of the federal government in many towns and cities across the country. Its 70 programs include flagship operations like Employment Insurance and Old Age Security and a portfolio of smaller initiatives dealing with everything from student loans, to mediating industrial relations disputes and combating homelessness. The Department's 25,000 employees range from PhD economists to call centre operators. They belong to several unions and work under 35 different collective agreements.

*“DESIGNING THE RULES AND STRUCTURES THAT MAKE SENSE FOR OUR BUSINESS. THAT’S THE OPPORTUNITY WE’RE BEING GIVEN AND IT’S UP TO US TO SEIZE IT.”*

The ADM HR leads the departmental effort to ensure that HRSDC has the right people in the right places to

*“CERTAINLY PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE ARE KEY TO SUCCESS, ALONG WITH PASSION. YOU NOT ONLY HAVE TO BE CAPABLE OF DOING THIS JOB, YOU HAVE TO WANT TO DO THIS JOB AND BE PREPARED TO STICK WITH IT OVER THE LONG HAUL.”*

effectively serve millions of Canadians. Her team supplies traditional HR functions including recruiting new talent, classifying jobs and consulting with unions so the department can meet day to day operational requirements. She must also improve the department's capacity to serve Canadians by leading the transformation of the HR function to better support the Department's ability to manage its people.

### Key Facts

- Leads the ongoing delivery and transformation of human resource support services for 25,000 HRSDC employees spread across 600 points of service across the country
- Enables the effectiveness of a \$45B departmental budget
- 940 HR staff
- \$70M HR budget

### ***Articulate a clear vision for change***

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The ADM is leading a change process that will call upon and equip line managers to play a much more active role in hiring, training, promoting, and performance managing their workforce. To be effective, her team must enable good managers to align their HR priorities more closely with their strategic business objectives. She must also develop and implement a new role for HR professionals as they transition from applying rules and procedures that came from central agencies (Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission) to understanding and supporting their clients' needs and developing HR management services and advice to help them meet their business objectives.

The ADM must present a compelling case for change to a workforce that has endured a series of major organizational changes over the past two decades. What existed in the early 1990s as the Department of Employment and Immigration, morphed into Human Resources Development Canada in 1996, then split into two separate departments in 2003 only to be reconstituted as HRSDC in 2006. In addition, HRSDC also operates Service Canada, created in 2005 to offer single-window access to a wide range of Canadian Government programs and services. Against this tumultuous backdrop, the rationale for wholesale change in HR management can easily get lost.

### ***Build and maintain senior internal support***

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The ADM must not only communicate the vision effectively, she must also continuously build and maintain momentum and support from senior executives whose collaboration is essential for the exercise to succeed.

This is particularly challenging as faces change around the boardroom table or when new pressures arise and focus shifts to new areas. For instance, to deliver on the government's recession-fighting Economic Action Plan, HRSDC had to hire, train and deploy 3,000 new employees across the country in a six month period. Maintaining a focus on long term change through this intense exercise is difficult. The challenge is not just to put a vision onto the senior management agenda, but to keep it there.

The ability to cast and communicate a clear and compelling vision is also essential for securing resources needed to move the HR transformation forward. For example, obsolete information systems add increased challenges to important activities such as succession planning and, talent management. Staff are often mired in routine data entry and paper driven processes instead of higher value work.

To get the money and people to improve HR technology systems, the HR Branch goes head to head with higher profile programs which also need to upgrade information systems. In this kind of competition, a successful outcome will be much more likely if the ADM's colleagues have bought into her vision of HR management as an enabling force and understand how that will pay off for the Department and the people it serves.

### ***Build credibility across the department***

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To effectively manage and drive change, the ADM must have credibility across the department and with her staff. It is important that she understand the intricacies of the department's mandate, the business objectives which flow from it, and how this translates into



the work that the department does. This knowledge is essential for shaping a vision of HR management as a true enabling force. Demonstrating a strong understanding of the business generates credibility among fellow executives and also models the skill set which the ADM is trying to nurture in her HR staff.

She must also understand the HR environment. Keeping the day to day business going in a 1,000-person HR branch while fundamentally changing roles and

responsibilities for getting the job done requires solid HR credibility and a track record in the federal HR community.

A major challenge is to change the way HR professionals see themselves and their role. If she has not come from their ranks, she must quickly understand the HR culture to build her credibility and to lead both ongoing activities and a change agenda.

*“PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS CAN **NO LONGER** TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT THEY CAN ATTRACT AND **DEVELOP THE SKILLS** THEY NEED **WITHOUT REALLY WORKING** AT IT.”*

## Senior Assistant Deputy Minister Policy and Strategic Direction Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

In many ways Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) looks more like a provincial government than a typical federal department. INAC's mandate is broader than almost any other federal department and the scope and complexity of its work is compounded by the enormous diversity of its client groups. The department serves an aboriginal and Inuit population of over one million people who reside in towns and cities from coast to coast to coast including some 660 First Nation's communities. As newcomers to INAC quickly discover, there is almost no statement you can make about Aboriginal Canada or Aboriginal Canadians that applies to all of them.

Through 79 programs, the Department provides basic education, housing, cultural, economic and social development, and other services to First Nations Canadians unilaterally or in partnership with provincial governments. In addition, through treaty and land claims negotiations, litigation and policy work, INAC manages

almost every aspect of the relationship between Canada and our First Nations. If the Department were, in fact, a provincial government, the Senior ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction, would perform a role along the lines of the Cabinet Secretary. It is the Senior ADM who must keep all of the component parts of INAC moving in the same direction and aligned with broader government priorities. He is the department's eyes and ears within the federal government and its voice to the Privy Council Office and Department of Finance where the Cabinet agenda and key budget decisions take shape. There are no high level communications between Ottawa and First Nations which don't pass through his office. The Senior ADM maintains a sophisticated oversight of the federal, provincial and territorial scene and of developments in the aboriginal community. By understanding the complex and changing interests of all the players, he can identify potential conflicts and also assist INAC and other federal departments to put new ideas into play to improve the wellbeing of Aboriginal Canadians.

### Key Facts

- Leads and coordinates the Government's support for 1M First Nations people living in over 660 rural and remote communities across the country, many of which are in relatively poor condition and have suffered severe historic injustices
- Ensures the coordination of almost 80 federal programs with provincial, territorial, and First Nation government programs to promote better outcomes for Canada's First Nations peoples
- \$135M budget, including \$100M for grants and contributions
- 230 staff

### ***Lead and support development of solutions to seemingly intractable problems***

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Where the Government ought to go on an Aboriginal policy issue is often clear; how to get there may be more challenging. While some ADMs deliver their impact through large budgets or regulatory authority, the Senior ADM, Policy and Strategic Direction must help his colleagues and the Government to solve some of the most difficult policy challenges in the country. There are people who think nothing really can get done in the Aboriginal community. The Senior ADM must show them that change is possible.

*“INAC IS IN MANY WAYS ANALOGOUS TO A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT. WHAT WE DO WOULD NOT BE DONE IN ONE DEPARTMENT IN FREDERICTON OR IN REGINA. IT WOULD BE DONE IN THREE OR FOUR.”*

To be effective he must have a strong understanding of the inner circles of government and the “ecosystem” of Aboriginal politics. The Senior ADM must become the “go-to” person for federal Ministers and officials wanting to do business in the Aboriginal affairs sector, and to First Nation’s leaders seeking entrées to government. He must acquire and assimilate huge amounts of information, and work comfortably in an environment where his relevance and influence comes from his ability to add value to decisions made by others.

In the federal government, leaders generally seek pan-Canadian responses to problems. This is the way Cabinet and central agencies generally do business and there is a simple and compelling rationale for the national government to be interested in national programs. At the same time, however, it is well understood at INAC that in Aboriginal and Inuit communities, “as soon as you pick away at an issue past the

first 10 minutes you find a diversity of opportunity and outcome.” There are very few “one size fits all” solutions and the Senior ADM’s job is to reconcile these conflicting views as best he can.

The Senior ADM must maintain an intimate understanding of the interests at play in the Aboriginal affairs arena inside and outside of the federal government. He must also try to make things happen with no direct control over programs. With a budget of \$135 million in a \$6.5 billion department, the Senior ADM doesn’t “own” very much of what INAC does. His influence comes from what he knows and what he can do

for others including his colleagues at INAC and other federal departments as well as provincial, territorial and First Nations leaders.

### ***Build strong relationships within the department, as well as with communities across Canada***

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The Senior ADM must also be a relationship builder. His effectiveness and relevance comes from “knowing everything” while “owning nothing” and that knowledge comes in no small part from the relationships he cultivates within INAC, across the federal government, with the provinces and territories and within the First Nation’s community. There can also be more tangible pay offs from mobilizing departments that share “policy space” with INAC to include special measures for aboriginal Canadians as they bring forward policies to address broader government priorities.

The Senior ADM's job is also to weave his relationships and line up interests inside and outside of government to create "winning coalitions". Building these coalitions requires strong interpersonal skills set — "it's about negotiating, coddling, cajoling, you cannot be too hard and you cannot be too soft in your approach". There is also a strong strategic element — knowing who to know — to move things forward.

### ***Appropriately engage the Cabinet Process to improve outcomes for Canadian First Nations communities***

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In the provincial and territorial capitals, issues in areas like education, housing or child welfare are always on the Cabinet table because they are mainstream services that the government delivers to all of its citizens. In Ottawa, it is a very different picture. Through INAC, the federal government delivers these mainstream services to less than 5% of the Canadian population. As a result,

they don't get nearly the same attention around the Cabinet table or from the Prime Minister as they do from provincial/territorial ministers and premiers.

*"YOU DON'T OWN ANYTHING BUT  
YOU HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING.  
THAT'S WHAT MAKES THIS A TOUGH JOB."*

Addressing this challenge is part art, part science, and banks heavily on relationships. The Senior ADM must encourage Ministers to invest the necessary political capital in Aboriginal issues by bringing them forward at the right time, in digestible pieces with risks and opportunities clearly identified. To shepherd issues effectively through the Cabinet, he must build strong relationships with the Privy Council Office and the Department of Finance and have personal credibility with senior officials who serve as Cabinet's gatekeepers.

## Assistant Deputy Minister Spectrum, Information Technology and Telecommunications Industry Canada

The information and communications technologies (ICT) sector and the digital economy that it supports are among the most important and fastest growing segments of the Canadian economy. ICTs are critical to the functioning and competitiveness of most industries, touching most Canadians at home or school or work; the ICT sector ranks among the most rapidly changing industries in the world. Technological changes can alter the dynamics in a segment of the industry in a matter of days, or weeks. The ADM manages initiatives which shape the future of Canada's ICT industry and, ultimately, our new digital economy. She leads the development of the Government's digital economy strategy, including stakeholder consultations, and the necessary research and analysis. She leads the development and implementation of a national strategy to strengthen innovation and growth of Canada's ICT industry sector. Her strategic stewardship of the Communications Research Centre, responsible for matters relating to national security, military communications, cyber security, and new technologies, supports government decision-making and private sector inno-

vation. Enhanced productivity and innovation depend upon her work encouraging greater use of digital technologies throughout the economy and implementing policies for safe and secure electronic commerce.

The ADM is accountable for legislation, regulations, technical standards, certification processes, and international agreements governing spectrum integrity, deployment, and use. Telecommunications and a well-functioning wireless industry require sound spectrum management. The radio spectrum is a limited and valuable national resource. The appetite for wireless applications, including smart phones and mobile broadband Internet services, has dramatically increased demand for spectrum.<sup>15</sup> There is a finite range of suitable frequencies for radio, television, cellular phone, and other wireless services. She must ensure balance between competing demands for spectrum used for commercial services, science, public safety, disaster relief, and environmental monitoring. She must ensure the efficient assignment of frequencies to users and ensure that their spectrum is free from interference.

### Key Facts

- Manages the Government's strategy to promote and manage the \$60B ICT sector and the digital economy that it supports
- Manages spectrum allocation (through auctions generating around \$4B) and usage
- 1120 staff including economists, engineers, research scientists, commerce officers and policy advisors
- \$136M budget

15. A February 2010 forecast by Cisco foresees global mobile data traffic doubling every year through 2014

### ***Understand the rapidly changing information and communications technology environment***

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To effectively promote the digital economy, the ADM must have a thorough understanding of the technologies and the companies that develop, distribute and use them. No sector of the Canadian economy is as dynamic and rapidly changing. A deep understanding of new and legacy technologies, the interplay between existing and historic regulations, marketplace trends and barriers, and the policy challenges that new technologies will present is necessary.

Developing this understanding requires building and leveraging strong internal expertise, and building and maintaining effective external stakeholder relationships. According to one interviewee, “Industry Canada is one of the most lobbied departments in the Government of Canada”. Strong players who are significant actors in the Canadian economy have a lot to gain or lose by decisions made by this ADM. She must have sufficient understanding of the issues to effectively work with, manage and build knowledge from her interactions with stakeholders.

### ***Effectively manage and drive government action in support of a healthy technology sector and digital economy***

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The ADM must make good decisions and provide authoritative advice as to how the Government can support the digital economy (e.g., anti-spam protection, online privacy, direct investments) and the respective roles of other partners and stakeholders. Doing this effectively requires bridging of technical expertise on what is possible and likely, with economic expertise

on the cost implications and who will bear them, and policy expertise on implications for Canadians, the economy, and the ICT sector. As digital issues tend to be complex and multi-faceted, they often touch on many jurisdictions and areas. An effective ADM must integrate cross-sectoral, global perspectives and implications into coherent policy advice.

A major focus of the job is the use of the finite spectrum for the benefit of Canadians. She must lead the efficient use by determining where it can be reallocated for new uses and how to do so. When demand for spectrum exceeds supply, she must effectively run large multi-billion dollar auctions to equitably allocate the resource, which generate significant revenues for the Government.

She must also ensure that clients benefit from interference-free operation and have incentives for efficient use. Managing spectrum effectively is critical to the economy and the ability of Canadians to connect and access information across the country.

### ***Recruit, build and lead a large and diverse team of technology experts, economists and policy experts***

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Technology professionals are in demand around the world as new companies emerge and the sector expands. Finding, developing and maintaining staff with the required expertise is not easy. This is a “complex technical area,” remarked one interviewee. “You have to spend more time recruiting, grooming, developing talent because you won’t be able to just recruit off the street. You won’t be able to just get it from another department so you need to spend a tremendous amount of time planning your human resources.”

## Assistant Deputy Minister Finance and Corporate Services National Defense

The military is one of the largest and most complex organizations in the country. Its people are spread across the country and around the globe. It recruits, trains, and employs thousands of Canadians each year. It makes huge investments each year purchasing and maintaining hardware, technology, land, and buildings. In some places, it literally runs all the services in a small city. Imagine managing the expenditures of this \$20B global organization — an organization that has over 110,000 employees in more than 40 locations in Canada and in 14 countries around the world.

Only a handful of Canadian companies spend as much money as the Department of National Defense (DND),<sup>16</sup> and few jobs anywhere are as complex as that of its ADM, Finance and Corporate Services. The number of products, services, and related cost lines are enormous, ranging from \$42 million<sup>17</sup> helicopters maintained, depreciated and ultimately replaced over many years,

to housing and bases for troops overseas to doctors, supplies, and schooling on bases. The ADM is the person the Deputy Minister turns to for the estimated costs of a new military strategy. If costs are high and the strategy controversial, he must be able to defend his estimates.

Additionally, the ADM runs the corporate secretariat function for the department, which includes the management of all ministerial correspondence, as well as all cabinet business.

*“PEOPLE THINK THAT YOU CAN EASILY GO FROM MANAGING \$2 BILLION TO MANAGING \$20 BILLION. YOU CAN’T. THE JOB IS MUCH MORE COMPLEX. THERE IS NOT ANOTHER FINANCE JOB LIKE THIS.”*

### Key Facts

- Manages the \$21B Defense budget
- Over 110,000 Department of National Defense and Military staff, including over 28,000 civilian staff in over 40 locations across Canada
- 855 Finance and Corporate Services staff
- \$150M Finance and Corporate Services budget

16. Financial Post, *FP500: Canada’s Biggest Companies by 2009 Revenue*. Available online: <http://www.financialpost.com/news/fp500/list.html>

17. Department of National Defense — Equipment Procurement. Available online at: <http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/pri/2/pro-pro/Afghanistan-eng.asp>

### ***Have the depth of knowledge, breadth of experience, and maturity to be an outstanding Chief Financial Officer (CFO)***

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Many CFOs have tough jobs. They must understand and manage the dollars, risks and legal obligations of their organization. DND's budget is larger and more complex than most other organizations. There are many different types of interdependent expenditures that need to be planned and managed. As equipment ages, it must be replaced, which may require new training, or possibly even recruitment. While asset replacement

*“THIS JOB OFFERS THE INCUMBENT THE CHANCE TO BE AN HONEST BROKER BETWEEN DEFENSE AND THE CIVILIAN SIDE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. SO THIS JOB IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST MANAGING THE NUMBERS.”*

can be forecasted, the engagement of forces in a combat or non-combat role to respond to conflict or an emergency is more difficult to predict. Interdependencies with other departments and other governments also make forecasting and reporting more challenging. On a daily basis, the ADM must determine which unexpected events are likely to materially impact the finances of the organization and by how much. It is not possible to manage every line item or for every contingency, so he must know where to focus. At eight percent of the overall federal budget, managing finances effectively has a material impact on the Government's financial outcomes.

The ADM's grasp of the department's culture and cost drivers must be strong enough to help the department make good trade-offs by responding quickly and accurately in emergency situations. When the military is engaged to assist in Haiti after an earthquake or to urgently enter a new conflict zone, DND can't wait to

see what costs will be or who will assure these costs. The ADM and his team must have as sufficient understanding of the numbers to quickly provide the accurate information when it is required.

### ***Gain and maintain respect and credibility of military leaders and public servants***

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“The ADM reports to the Deputy Minister, but the Chief of the Defense Staff is looking right over his shoulder.” He is in the unusual position of providing advice and expertise on military expenditures. This can be particu-

larly challenging for individuals who have not served in the armed forces. In the words of one interviewee, he must recognize and manage the “reality of two distinct cadres: civilian and military. There is a distinct culture to each group. The ADM must adapt and accept this dualistic working environment, and use it to his advantage by ensuring that the motivated, well-trained and committed military component eases management challenges as there is often a ‘spillover’ to the civilian workplace.”

He must build strong relationships with the Vice-Chief of the Defense Staff responsible for resource planning and with his team. If he is not able to manage in this dualistic culture, he cannot succeed. When DND is over budget, the ADM is the person who must explain to Colonels why their plans are too expensive. If he is doing his job well, he also helps them think through how to bring costs down. Cost restraint is particularly difficult to communicate when Canadian troops



are engaged in war zones. For a civilian to deliver that message effectively, he must present the highest quality work and build strong relationships with the military leadership.

***Possess the political and public awareness to navigate highly scrutinized files***

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The ADM is also responsible for explaining to his colleagues and the Department of Finance, the Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Privy Council Office why more funds may be required. The large defense budget, political sensitivities surrounding some military mis-

sions, and very public and prominent reporting of any negative stories surrounding military comportment can make this a “tough sell.” Being able to build and maintain strong relationships based on personal credibility with the Centre, the military, with the Deputy, and throughout the Department are critical to his success.

*“IT’S LIKE LANDING A 747 ON AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER IN HIGH SEAS.”*

## Assistant Secretary to Cabinet Communications and Consultations Privy Council Office

Communications is a central role of government, particularly in a democracy. The Government needs to be responsive to citizens' concerns. It also needs to ensure citizens are informed about current events, so they can participate as informed actors. In today's fast paced digital environment, information is everywhere and when there is a flood in Flin Flon or an attempted coup in an African or Asian country, the media and the public expect a rapid response by our national government. Imagine being responsible for setting the strategic framework for the communications of the entire Government of Canada, for providing advice on the most important press releases, speeches, and photographs that the government releases, and for developing the strategy on how government should communicate in the future. The Assistant Secretary, Communications and Consultations, has this job.

She is responsible for managing communications across the Government of Canada. She supports the Prime Minister by coordinating the network of communications functions across over 100 departments and

agencies so that their messages support one another and occur systematically. While her advice, and the messages it contains, is non-partisan, it must support the Government's priorities. In addition to managing

*“YOU NEED TO SHOW AN APPRECIATION FOR NEW WAYS OF COMMUNICATING – YOU NEED TO BE ABLE TO ACT AS A CHANGE LEADER, AND TO BE OPEN TO USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES.*

*HOWEVER, YOU NEED TO DO SO IN A WAY THAT IS THOUGHTFUL AND GROUNDED.”*

issues as they arise, the Assistant Secretary provides strategic advice on emerging issues and leads government-wide initiatives on communications, including the use of new media (e.g. Twitter). She is also the lead official across the Government on a range of related activities including advertising, public opinion research, public consultations, and media monitoring and engagement.

### Key Facts

- Coordinates communications across the Government of Canada
- Over 100 departments and agencies (274,000 total employees) served
- \$6M Communications and Consultations Budget
- 100 Communications and Consultations staff at the Privy Council Office

### ***Think strategically about delivering the Government's message now and in the future***

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The Assistant Secretary must strategically coordinate 36 Ministers<sup>18</sup> and 27 Parliamentary Secretaries<sup>19</sup> and the heads of over 100 departments and agencies to ensure they are delivering consistent messages that are coordinated in both substance and timing. Doing this well, requires strong strategic and operational skills.

*“WITH THE RISE OF THE 24 HOUR NEWS CYCLE, MORE PEOPLE ARE INFORMED, AND THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE AMONG AVERAGE INDIVIDUALS IS MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN EVER BEFORE. AS A RESULT, THERE IS A GREATER DEMAND FOR INFORMATION, TO SHOW ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION FROM GOVERNMENT.”*

The Assistant Secretary must not only respond to immediate communications needs, she must also be able to strategically plan for the future. She must think about where the Government's messaging should be going and how to develop the means and tools to deliver it in the future.

She must provide leadership and make good decisions on when and where the Government should invest in using new technologies and develop and promote standards of communication across the Government. As media and technologies change quickly, the tools of the

business may be outdated quickly in an organization that is as large as the Government of Canada.

### ***Become literate in hundreds of unique social, economic, security, international, and public service issues facing the Government***

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“At some time or another every issue facing the Government will pass across the Assistant Secretary's desk.” She has to be well enough versed in each of these issues to provide sound communications advice on a very broad range of areas ranging from the economy, to social issues, to defense, foreign affairs, or national security. This requires not only strong communications skills but also strong analytic “policy skills” so that she can provide advice to the network of communications ADMs. She must also coherently link messages to each other and to the broader government agenda. There are very few jobs in Canada that require the breadth of knowledge necessary to add value on a daily basis.

### ***React quickly, decisively, and correctly in real time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year***

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In a global, digital world, there are often two, three, or four news cycles in a day. On any given day, there can be a dozen urgent calls within a half an hour, from space debris falling on parts of Canada to leaked Cabinet documents. Many of these calls are unexpected and could not have been predicted the day or even hour before.

18. Parliament of Canada: The Canadian Ministry. Available online at: <http://webinfo.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainCabinetCompleteList.aspx?TimePeriod=Current>

19. Prime Minister of Canada Website: List of Parliamentary Secretaries. Available online at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/feature.asp?pageid=39>

It is essential the Assistant Secretary act calmly and decisively to provide advice to the government on responding, so that key facts are released in real time. “Rumours can blossom without facts being quickly inserted,” expressed one interviewee. In the absence of a quick and effective response, the story can take on a life of its own.

Responding quickly can be as important at 10 pm on Saturday night as it is at 10 am on Monday morning. The Assistant Secretary must be able to manage, motivate, find, and retain team members who can handle the relentless intensity of the work and who can help provide the necessary communications advice quickly. She must be able to work effectively with other departments, and she must also possess the stamina necessary to repeatedly respond at all hours day and night.

*“AT SOME TIME OR ANOTHER  
EVERY ISSUE FACING THE GOVERNMENT  
WILL PASS ACROSS THE ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY’S DESK.”*

## Assistant Deputy Minister Infectious Diseases and Emergency Preparedness Public Health Agency of Canada

**W**hen news breaks about a dangerous new disease heading our way from a remote corner of the world, chances are the story will also be about the steps Canadian authorities are taking to protect us. It is the ADM, Infectious Diseases and Emergency Preparedness at the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) responsibility to be plugged in to a global network that identifies risks before they make headlines, allowing time to set contingency plans into action. He must also coordinate the response to hazards that originate in our own back yard from contaminated food and water, or communicable diseases like tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C. If Canadians fall ill in unexpected numbers or disease patterns deviate from the norm, it is the ADM's responsibility to determine if and how the Public Health Agency of Canada will respond.

The ADM is an integral part of Canada's public health network. He develops and leads a battle-ready, medical-scientific team to manage known hazards like E. coli

and Listeriosis, or deal with new threats, like H1N1. He has world-renowned facilities at his disposal, like the National Microbiology Laboratory and other specialized centres and laboratories — in combination

*“EACH PROVINCE HAS SOMEONE WHO WILL PROVIDE A PERSPECTIVE ON WHAT'S BEING SAID IN OTTAWA. SO YOU EITHER INFORM OR NEGOTIATE WITH EVERYBODY BEFOREHAND, OR CLEAN UP AFTER EVERYBODY SAYS DIFFERENT THINGS.”*

forming Canada's counterpart to the US Centre for Disease Control. He must expand the knowledge base and translate evidence to public health policy, develop science-based countermeasures, and put countermeasures in the hands of local health authorities and health care providers across the country.

### Key Facts

- Manages Canada's response to prevention and control of infectious disease, including pandemic influenza and other communicable diseases
- Coordinates with an extensive network of federal, provincial and territorial agencies
- 900 staff
- \$750M as financial resources in 2009-10, including pandemic vaccines

### ***Lead a distributed network of federal, provincial, and municipal staff in multiple departments and agencies***

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To effectively respond to both the immediate challenges of managing health emergencies, as well as the ongoing commitment to health protection, the ADM must understand all the players in the network and keep them working together in a state of constant readiness. For the ADM, the challenge is to do this with little formal authority over any of the front-line public health organizations, both provincial and municipal in scope,

*“WHILE IN MEDICAL PRACTICE AN ERROR MIGHT AFFECT ONE PATIENT.  
IN PUBLIC HEALTH A SERIOUS MISTAKE CAN IMPACT POPULATIONS”*

and against a backdrop of the sometimes fractious federal-provincial relations that exists in the broader health care field.

To succeed, the ADM must build and maintain relationships with key provincial/territorial officials which allow him to lead as a “first among equals.” In this process, his leverage comes largely from the medical/scientific infrastructure at his command. By furnishing credible information on disease prevention and control to which the provinces and territories would not otherwise have ready, affordable access, the ADM gains leadership capital.

The ADM interacts regularly with other agencies that have a direct or indirect public health role, such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Canada Health Portal, the National Research Council and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, as well as with related international bodies, to ensure that his counterparts at the provincial and territorial levels are sup-

plied with all of the the most current research and information possible.

### ***Bridge the worlds of science and policy***

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You don’t have to be a medical doctor or PhD scientist to do this job well. However, the past four incumbents have fit this description. A good understanding of scientific methods essential, but leading a team of scientists is just part of the job. Each day, the ADM also connects with policy-makers, regulators, purse keepers and, of course, Ministers who bear ultimate responsibility

for public health in Canada. In these relationships, he is an advocate for science-based strategies to protect Canadians from hazardous diseases. The trouble is that science doesn’t always say things people want to hear and in some circles, people don’t want to hear from scientists at all. There’s no guarantee that sound evidence will translate into sound policy. It takes very compelling technical arguments to convince Ministers and decision-makers across the federal government and in other jurisdictions to take actions that may prove difficult, expensive, controversial or even unpopular.

A further complication lies in the difficulty of making clear connections between inputs and results. If the hoped for outcome — that nobody gets sick, or a disease like polio, HIV or even measles could be eradicated — finance people may want to shift resources elsewhere, not realizing that keeping a region or the country disease free requires continuing expenditure commitments. To play this bridging act effectively, the ADM must be a diplomat, advocate and strong commu-

nicator who understands how policy and budget decisions are made in Ottawa. The ADM also has to be familiar with the broad range of interests, inside and outside of government, that shape decisions and opinions about public health in Canada.

### ***Attract, manage and retain a strong scientific workforce***

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Building and applying scientific and medical knowledge about disease threats is the essence of prevention and control. Many members of the workforce in the Disease Prevention stream of PHAC are scientific or medical professionals, so, the ADM's success depends upon leading a team of scientific and medical experts.

*“GOOD SCIENCE DOESN'T ALWAYS  
DRIVE GOOD PUBLIC POLICY.  
BAD SCIENCE NEVER DOES.”*

In the federal government, however, the job is complicated by the fact that salaries are up to 30-40% lower than in the private sector or other levels of government. It is very difficult to offer financial rewards or other forms of meaningful recognition to exceptionally strong performers. To hold on to his best people, the ADM must spend more time and attention on workforce retention than ADMs operating in a non-technical/scientific setting. In particular, he must become an adept practitioner of “soft” human resources management

skills, using training, career development assignments, opportunities for professional growth and career planning to motivate and retain the people he needs.

### ***Work effectively under intense and continuous public scrutiny***

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A high comfort level working under intense and continuous public scrutiny is another success factor for this job. In an emergency situation — such as an epidemic — the stakes are high and the situation is often charged with emotion. Staying calm and authoritative under the television lights is key to maintaining trust and credibility in the eyes of the public which is essential if you want people to follow your advice — to stay home from work if they are sick and to get vaccinated. Similar comfort under public scrutiny is required of the ADM in dealing with diseases for which there is a high social element, such as HIV/AIDS.

In normal times, the ADM's job is essentially to manage risks to public health by building the knowledge base about disease threats and making them available to others to apply at the community level. In responding to an emergency, however, the ADM must become more of an issue manager and less of a scientist. He must move away from technical talk to providing credible assurances that the right steps are being taken and the situation is under control. Knowing when and how to make this transition is key to succeeding in this job.

## Assistant Secretary Expenditure Management Treasury Board Secretariat

As a \$260B organization, the Government of Canada includes hundreds of departments and agencies.<sup>20</sup> It has 274,000 people<sup>21</sup> and assets spread across 1600 points of service,<sup>22</sup> covering not just our vast territory, but many countries around the world. It is crucial for the Government to understand how it spends its money to ensure that taxpayers are receiving value for their money. It is also critical that Parliament has a good and accurate picture of government expenditures and has all the information required to approve the appropriations necessary for government to operate. It is the Assistant Secretary, Expenditure Management who is at the epicenter of the Government's financial management. While the budget is generally set by the Minister of Finance and his department, the Assistant Secretary is responsible for its implementation, including the apportionment of funding to departments and agencies, and the preparation of documentation necessary to receive Parliamentary approval to spend. He also provides the comprehensive picture of expenditures, necessary to prepare future budgets. During the year, when an unexpected event occurs, such as a flood in

Manitoba or the September 11 terrorist attack on the US, he is the person who needs to help the Government figure out how much can be spent to address the issue and where to get the funds.

The job does not end with counting and managing cash flows. The Assistant Secretary is also responsible for the performance management system across the Government, which ensures that Canadians receive value for money. He sets the framework used by departments to articulate their performance objectives at the beginning of the year (Reports on Plans and Priorities) and to assess their performance at the end of the year (Departmental Performance Reports). He also drives a comprehensive analysis of spending in a quarter of departments each year. His team drives the assessment of how well departments are spending their money and how to get higher value for money for taxpayers (Strategic Reviews). Through this, Ministers are able to understand departmental spending and the results being achieved, and to make smart decisions on future investments.

### Key Facts

- Manages the Government of Canada's \$260B expenditures and performance framework across 355 departments and agencies
- Coordinates documentation for parliamentary appropriations votes
- 150 Expenditure Management staff and \$13M Expenditure Management budget

20. Government of Canada: Departments and Agencies. Available online: <http://canada.gc.ca/depts/major/depind-eng.html>

21. Seventeenth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada for the year ending March 31, 2010. Available Online: <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=ar-ra/17-2010/table-eng.htm>

22. Public Service Commission of Canada: Facts and Figures About the Public Service of Canada. Available online: <http://jobs-emplois.gc.ca/centres/presentation/facts-faits-eng.htm>



### ***Understand how to effectively navigate the complex government expenditure management system and how government is spending its money***

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The Assistant Secretary needs to understand the expenditure system. He must understand the highly technical parliamentary appropriations system, which has evolved for over a century, so that he can ensure that

*“SOMEBODY HAS TO BE IN THE POSITION TO KNOW, ACROSS ALL 100 ORGANIZATIONS, WHAT IS THE ACTUAL NEED FOR MONEY, AND THEN HOW DOES THAT GET MANAGED.”*

the public service delivers cabinet and parliament what it needs when it needs it. He needs to drive the highly complex government accounting system across over 100 departments and agencies. Perhaps most importantly, he needs to understand the big picture of government expenditures, where the pressure points are and how to address them. It is particularly critical that he have a good grasp of expenditures when working with his colleagues at Finance and the Privy Council Office to help prepare the budget. While the attention in any budget tends to be on new (or reduced) expenditures, upward of 98% of expenditures in most budgets are based on the previous year’s expenditures. Forecasting effectively requires a strong grasp of current activities.

### ***Communicate clearly to Ministers and parliamentarians and build strong working relationships with colleagues across Government***

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In additions to highly technical skills and knowledge, he needs to be able to explain complex matters simply to parliamentarians and Ministers. The incumbent of this job must frequently appear before parliamentary

committees to explain the estimates. When he does appear, he must be able to answer very specific questions about individual programs in departments or agencies. He must also be able to handle questions about broad government funding decisions. A Member of Parliament may ask, “Why is the government spending more money on defense and less on the arts?” While he is the expert on what the government is spending and can provide advice on pressures and potential

reductions, major expenditure decisions are made by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and are Cabinet confidences. He must effectively communicate what he can answer and what he cannot.

To be really effective, the Assistant Secretary must build strong relationships within the Treasury Board Secretariat and across the Government. He must help to integrate information and expertise that exists across the Secretariat. He must also be able to build strong value adding relationships with his colleagues in other departments to help them prepare consistent expenditure and performance reports that can be combined to provide a common cross government picture. As one interviewee noted, “when the Assistant Secretary is leading change, something like Strategic Reviews, then the premium on communications is even higher.”

Perhaps most notably, he and his team must work effectively with departments to address unforeseen budgetary pressures. To do the job well, he cannot simply accept or deny requests for “pressure” funding. He must work with departments to find creative ways to meet expected and unexpected needs.

***Have the judgment, toughness, and stamina to correctly make difficult and, often unpopular, decisions and to stick with them in the face of adversity***

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“Judgment is critical. In a role like this you have to balance the reality that departments are facing with the obligations we are placing on them. The reality is the unexpected happens; there are crises, sudden changes. There is an earthquake in Haiti, a war in Afghanistan, new security threats, H1N1. All of this comes about without anyone being able to plan. So in those circumstances the system must be robust enough and we must be flexible enough to help departments accommodate.”

“WITHOUT THIS JOB, PARLIAMENT WOULD NOT HAVE THE INFORMATION TO APPROVE EXPENDITURES. THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT FUNCTION.”

Unfortunately tough judgments are not always popular. The Assistant Secretary must “stick to unpopular decisions when it’s the right thing to do.” This is not easy dealing with huge pressures, heavy workload, and heavily taxed staff. Yet, without tough judgments, the Government’s fiscal plan cannot be implemented.



# Conclusion



## Is Leadership Changing in the Federal Public Service?

Throughout this study we have focused on several key questions. What are the leadership attributes required to be successful in the federal public service? Are they changing? If so, how? And what are the implications for our public service?

As one might predict, we have found that several elements of leadership remain the same today as in the past. Strong leaders must inspire. They must provide clear direction and vision. They must see the big picture and make solid strategic decisions. They must be strong communicators and build effective relationships. And they must be good managers of dollars, people, process, and information. These core leadership attributes are important for all leaders regardless of sector — and they have stood the test of time.

There are, however, some important differences in the dynamics facing today's public service. There is a greater focus on accountability and transparency than in the past; complexity has increased — on individual issues and in the relationships between issues; and there is a greater focus on service delivery at the expense of policy development. These three new dynamics are causing certain skills to be more valued today than in the past. While many of the resulting changes are positive, some have real and potentially negative consequences which must be carefully managed to ensure that the public service contributes

as effectively as possible in building and delivering strong government in Canada. It is well worth examining these new dynamics and their consequences, several of which have been encouragingly addressed by the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service and by the Clerk of the Privy Council in their recent annual reports to the Prime Minister.<sup>23</sup>

*NEW DYNAMICS ARE CAUSING  
CERTAIN SKILLS TO BE MORE VALUED  
TODAY THAN IN THE PAST.*

**First, a greater focus on accountability and transparency** requires public service leaders to take into account and respond to a broader range of partnerships in the process of governance. This requires more time and effort, resulting in less time available to devote to primary goals and objectives. Accountability frameworks are important tools, but having them in place is not sufficient to ensure strong public management. In designing these frameworks, senior public servants must also ensure that they are aligning their resources and efforts behind the results that are most important for Canadians. Doing this well requires making very real and often challenging trade-offs. While clear accountabilities are essential, there is a risk of developing too many rules and regulations, thereby reducing the focus on what is most important. Senior public servants must be careful to ensure that they do

23. See, for example: Seventeenth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada for the year ending March 31, 2010. Available Online: <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/index.asp?lang=eng&page=information&sub=publications&doc=ar-ra/17-2010/table-eng.htm>

not go too far in compromising the outcomes of their work — “what they achieve” — in service of the process for obtaining them — “how those results are achieved.” They must also be careful to ensure that accountability, results, and risk management frameworks are developed and used as management tools to drive better outcomes for Canadians. Without a focus on strategic impact and organizational learning, these planning tools risk becoming processes and documents that merely explain and defend past actions.

**Finally, a greater focus on operations and service delivery** requires stronger management skills today than in the past. Better service to Canadians and stronger internal management are positive trends that should be continued. Public service leaders must, however, continue to foster the policy skills which were once the trademark of most senior public servants. The Public Policy Forum believes that public servants across Canada have important roles to play in developing new ideas and providing well-informed policy options for

**STRONG PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS NEED TO BE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL.  
THEY NEED TO LEAD WITH THEIR HEAD, THEIR HEART AND THEIR GUTS.**

**Second, the increased complexity of individual issues**, the relationships between them, and how the public service addresses them, requires more of a focus on networks, relationship building, and communications skills than in the past. While horizontal management can be important, senior leaders must be careful to ensure adequate focus on issues that are germane to their own areas of responsibility. As one observer asked: “If deputies are now spending much of their time outside their department, who is looking after the department?”

governments. Continued focus on the policy dimension of leadership positions in the public service is critical to ensuring that fresh perspectives and comparative approaches continue to percolate within government. The 10 positions profiled in this report show that balancing operational management and policy development is possible, albeit challenging.

The same question could be asked of other senior public servants. As issues become more complex, deep knowledge of the issues only grows in importance. Knowledge takes time to build. It also risks being lost as senior public servants retire in near record numbers.<sup>24</sup> As demonstrated in the positions profiled, public service leaders need time to develop a rich knowledge of their departments and issue areas in order to be able to deliver innovative policies and programs.

As Jason Ducharme highlighted in his Foreword to this publication, strong public service leaders need to be multi-dimensional. They need to lead with their head, their heart and their guts. These jobs are not easy. In the words of one interviewee:

*“What does it take to be a great public service leader? One, you need to have an extraordinary work ethic, both in terms of volume and integrity. Two, you need to have strategic perspectives; you need to be able to connect the dots in a way that other people do not see. You have to be able to maintain an external network that ensures you’re not hostage to your in-basket as*

24. For example, in a study on job mobility released in October 2008 by the Public Service Commission, it was noted that between the years of 1998-2008, the rates of retirement quadrupled, with the majority of those retirements taking place between 2003-2008 (Public Service Commission of Canada, Study on Mobility of Public Servants, October 2008. Available online: <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/adt-vrf/rprt/2008/mob/mob-eng.pdf>)

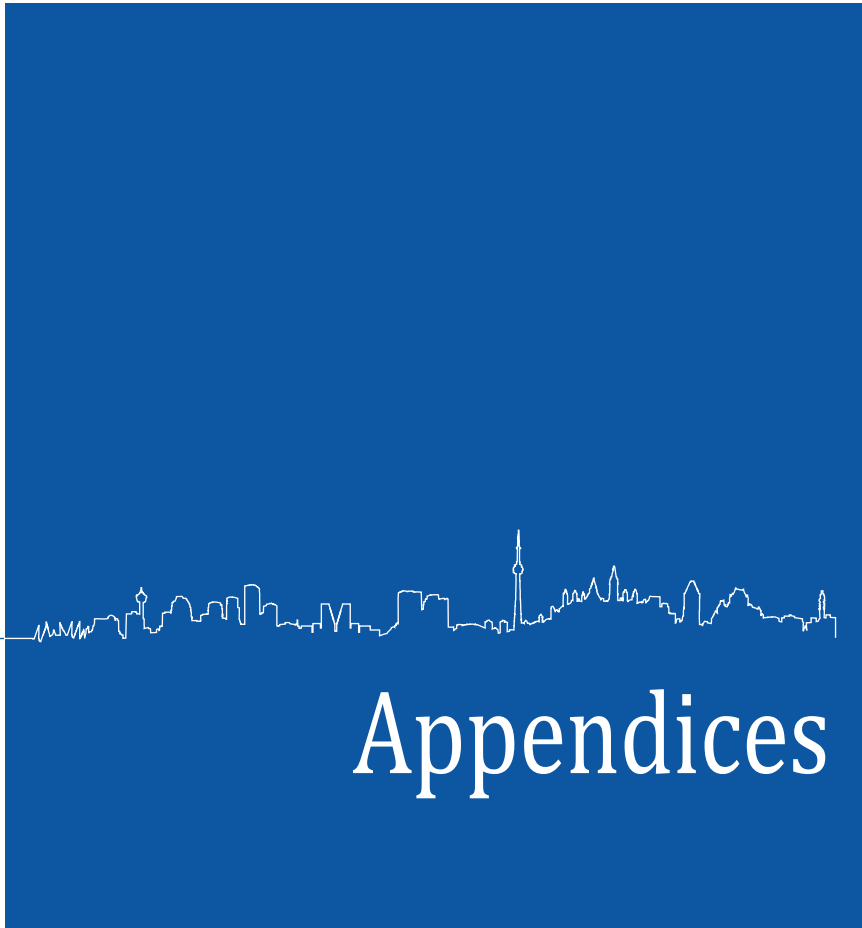
## CONCLUSION

*being the only source of information. Three, you need to have a capacity to navigate in a world of ambiguity and manage your frustration yet remain focused on achieving results – never lose sight of results. The last thing is you need to have a life, preferably be in love with someone, and, if you are a parent, have a meaningful relationship with your children. That is even more important now because leadership jobs in public service increasingly suck more out of you in the short term than they give back.”*

Indeed, large organizations demand a lot from their leaders. Senior positions in all sectors can be highly demanding and are often unforgiving. Despite the challenges, the jobs that we have profiled, and others like them, are special. People come to these positions

because they believe they can make a difference. On a day-to-day basis public service leadership jobs can take more than they give. The benefit derived is often in the medium or longer term when one can look back with pride and satisfaction on some of the major achievements that were accomplished. This can be especially satisfying and is, in fact, the essence of public service.

The 10 tough jobs profiled in this study are exemplars of the kinds of leadership positions near the top of the federal public service in Canada. They are extremely demanding positions, requiring extraordinarily talented individuals to do them well. They are also essential to our country, and our standard of living, providing Canadians with a comparative advantage of which we should be proud.



# Appendices

## Appendix A: Individuals Consulted

In addition to an extensive survey and the formal interviews for the profiles of the senior public service positions profiled in this study, the following individuals were consulted during the preparation of this report:

Margaret Bloodworth, Former National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and Associate Secretary to Cabinet

Michelle D'Auray, Secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat

Richard Dicerni, Deputy Minister, Industry Canada

Michel Dorais, President and CEO, Groupe Listal

Jason Ducharme, Partner, Head of Public Sector Practice, Oliver Wyman, Toronto

Ian Green, Former Deputy Minister, Environment Canada

Patricia Hassard, Deputy Secretary to Cabinet, Privy Council Office

Jim Judd, Former Director, Canadian Security and Intelligence Service

James Lahey, Director, Centre on Public Management and Policy, University of Ottawa

James Mitchell, Partner, Sussex Circle Inc.

Marie-Lucie Morin, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and Associate Secretary to Cabinet, Privy Council Office

Carole Presseault, Vice President Government and Regulatory Affairs, Certified General Accountants' Agency of Canada

Gerald D. Pulvermacher, Ph.D., President, Gerald D. Pulvermacher and Associates, Industrial & Organizational Psychology

Jacques Shore, Partner, Leader, Government Affairs Industry Group, Gowlings

Lynton R. Wilson, Former Chairman of the Board, CAE Inc.

David Zussman, Jarislowsky Chair in Public Sector Management, Telfer School of Management, University of Ottawa



## Appendix B: Interviewees\*

Neil Bellefontaine, World Maritime University

Michael Binder, President and CEO, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission

Louise Branch, Executive Head, Service Management, Service Canada

Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer, Public Health Agency of Canada

Janice Charette, Deputy Minister, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Robert Clarke, Former ADM of Infectious Disease and Emergency Preparedness, Public Health Agency of Canada

Bernard Courtois, President and CEO, Information Technology Association of Canada

William Crosbie, Director General, North American Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Michelle D'Auray, Secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat

Claire Dansereau, Deputy Minister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Christine Desloges, President and CEO, Passport Canada

Richard Dicerni, Deputy Minister, Industry Canada

Michelle Doucet, Treasury Board Secretariat

Len Edwards, Former Deputy Minister, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Dale Eisler, Consul General of Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Dr. Rainer Engelhardt, Assistant Deputy Minister, Diseases and Emergency Prep, Public Health Agency of Canada

Rob Fonberg, Deputy Minister, Department of National Defense

Francine Girard-Griffith, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs and Portfolio Management Sector, Natural Resources Canada

Blair M. James, Assistant Deputy Minister, Consular Services and Emergency Management, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Richard Jock, Chief Executive Officer, Assembly of First Nations

Jim Jones, Former Regional Director General, Gulf Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Simon Kennedy, Deputy Secretary, Plans and Consultations, Privy Council Office

Daniel Lavoie, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety Canada

Kevin Lindsey, Assistant Deputy Minister, Finance and Corporate Services, National Defence

John McLure, Hill and Knowlton Canada Ltd.

\*Titles of interviewees reflect those held at the time of the interview.

Helen McDonald, Assistant Deputy Minister, Spectrum, Information, Technologies and Telecommunications, Industry Canada

Jeannette Meunier-McKay, National President, Canada Employment and Immigration Union

David Moloney, Executive Vice-President, Canadian International Development Agency

Andre Morency, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Management and Crown Corporation Governance

Ian Potter, Project Manager, Health Canada

Gina Rallis, Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources Services Branch, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Anne-Marie Robinson, Assistant Deputy Minister, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch, Health Canada

Faith G. Scattolon, Regional Director, Maritimes Region, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Anne Marie Smart, Assistant Secretary to Cabinet, Communications and Consultation Secretariat, Privy Council Office

Alister Smith, Assistant Secretary, Expenditure Management, Treasury Board Secretariat

Jean-François Tremblay, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy and Strategic Direction, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Daniel Watson, Deputy Minister, Western Economic Diversification

Michael Wernick, Deputy Minister, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Wayne Wouters, Clerk of the Privy Council, Privy Council Office

Glenda Yeates, Deputy Minister, Health Canada

## Appendix C: Project Sponsors

The Public Policy Forum would like to thank the project sponsors for their encouragement and support.

OLIVER WYMAN

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