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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

It is my pleasure to present the 2008/09–2010/11 service plan for the BC Public Service Agency. The Agency’s mandate is to provide human resource leadership for the ministries and agencies and the 30,000 employees working to serve British Columbians. Meeting this challenge has never been greater as we face an increasingly competitive labour market and an aging workforce, where many employees are poised for retirement.

Just like private sector employers, the BC Public Service faces the same human resource challenges. By 2011 it is expected that exits from the B.C. labour force will exceed entrants for the first time. Within the BC Public Service, we project to lose 45 per cent of managers and 35 per cent of bargaining unit staff through retirement, by 2015.

Through our efforts to address this emerging challenge in previous service plans, the BC Public Service was named one of British Columbia’s top 40 Employers in 2007. We intend to build on this reputation to attract and retain the people we need to provide effective, high-quality services and programs to British Columbians. Our strategic approach to address this challenge is outlined in the Corporate Human Resources Plan for government — by building internal capacity, improving competitiveness and managing for results, we are supporting B.C. in becoming the best public service employer in Canada.

Over the last year, we’ve seen important and significant strides toward this goal through implementation of the Corporate Human Resources Plan. All employment opportunities are now open to external, as well as internal candidates, leading to a 59 per cent increase in the number of hires from the external market. We’ve reduced the use of outside consultants and directed cost savings to fund other recruitment and retention activities. The launch of the Pacific Leaders program offers scholarships and student loan forgiveness to employees to support their career development; scholarship opportunities for government employees’ children, and fellowships opportunities to attract new employees.

In launching the brand “Where Ideas Work”, the BC Public Service continues to promote itself as an employer that values employees’ ideas and ingenuity.

The latest Work Environment Survey of provincial employees, meant to seek opinions on issues impacting their work experience, shows a five-point gain in overall employee engagement, which is regarded as a significant move for an organization of 30,000 employees.

This Service Plan outlines the strategies the BC Public Service Agency will continue to implement as it leads and supports public service excellence, making a positive difference in the lives of the more than four million citizens in this province.

As Minister responsible, I believe this plan will contribute to a public service of the highest standard. The 2008/09–2010/11 BC Public Service Agency Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 12, 2008 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in this plan.



Honourable Ida Chong, FCGA
Minister of Community Services

February 12, 2008

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Purpose of the Agency

The BC Public Service Agency provides leadership and services in people management. The Agency was formed in 2003 to provide a consolidated human resource service to the public service. The Agency is a shared service accountable to our Province's Deputy Ministers' Council through a Memorandum of Understanding, and to individual ministries through service level agreements. As established in the *Public Service Act*, the Agency supports its clients (government ministries, agencies, etc.) in achieving their human resource needs and improving overall effectiveness of the public service through the provision of human resource management policies and frameworks and a variety of human resource services, products and programs.

The public service has approximately 30,000 employees in ministries and agencies that provide an amazing volume and variety of services to the people of British Columbia. Government takes seriously the role and responsibility of the public service and knows that the positive changes desired for our province are possible only with the energy and ability of its staff.

In response to the looming succession challenge faced by the public service and in support of ministries delivering government's Five Great Goals, the Agency's service plan is focused on an integrated approach to talent management within a supportive human resource policy, labour relations and client services environment. The corresponding goals and objectives in this service plan are reflective of the stewardship role played by the Agency on behalf of ministries. The achievement of results will be in partnership with ministries and will provide a better yardstick for assessing how the public service as a whole is doing in relation to human resource management.

Strategic Context

Planning Context and Key Strategic Issues

The BC Public Service is the largest corporate workforce in the province, servicing over 280 communities across the province. From frontline workers to researchers and analysts, to systems technicians and others, there is virtually no area of expertise unrepresented. Public servants provide a wide range of services to British Columbians including health care, public safety, education, and environmental management, to name a few.

The government's strategic plan calls for the achievement of Five Great Goals for a Golden Decade in order to realize the long-term vision for British Columbia as a prosperous and just province, whose citizens achieve their full potential and have confidence in the future. The British Columbia Public Service is vital to making government's goals a reality. The ongoing provision of these services is challenged by a number of internal and external factors that are helping to change human resource management policies and practices in the BC Public Service.

Internal Factors

- By 2015, 45 per cent of managers and 35 per cent of bargaining unit staff will be eligible for retirement. Consistent with other employers, the BC Public Service is facing an aging workforce, but unlike other employers, the BC Public Service has a lower percentage of younger workers. People under thirty represent about a quarter of B.C.'s labour force but account for less than 8.3 per cent of the public sector.
- Historically, nine out of ten vacancies in the BC Public Service were filled with internal candidates. Given the number of projected retirements in the next few years, this practice is unsustainable. The BC Public Service is making all of its opportunities available to the broader labour market in order to maintain a vibrant and skilled workforce.
- Between 2001 and 2005, the average age at retirement was 58. Only three per cent of public service employees in British Columbia are 60 years of age or older. Many people are choosing to retire at a relatively early age.
- Projected skills for the future are shifting and the number of public servants employed in more senior positions is increasing. Between 1996 and 2005, for example, the percentage of jobs in the executive cadre rose while the number of junior and mid-level managers decreased.

External Factors

- Research conducted by the Human Capital Institute in Washington, D.C. shows that *“the market for talent may already be the world’s most competitive and it is intensifying daily in the face of aging workforces, lower unemployment rates and an inexorable demand for more skills, knowledge, experience and education.”*
 - In British Columbia, falling birth rates and a growing and changing economy will result in increasing competition for labour in all sectors of the province.
 - In 2006, the province’s employed population grew faster than its labour force, causing the annual unemployment rate to fall to 4.8 per cent. This drop of 1.1 percentage points from 2005 to 2006 resulted in the lowest annual unemployment rate in 30 years.
 - Over the next ten years, B.C. is expected to have one million job openings — 350,000 more openings than people graduating from high school.
 - By 2015, the demand for workers will increase by 50 per cent in some sectors.
 - By 2013, the BC Public Service will face 28 per cent more competitors in some fields.
- Based on the demand for skilled resources, candidates can afford to be more selective and will choose organizations that provide an engaging work environment, good opportunities, and competitive salaries and benefits.
- Market research shows that many eligible applicants do not consider public service careers. Enhanced efforts are needed to market public service careers.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Government is supported by a professional public service that has the knowledge, skills and abilities to achieve current and future objectives

The BC Public Service faces a potential labour shortage brought on by an aging population and increasing competition in the marketplace. At the same time, the public service is undergoing significant transformation and will need to ensure the right skills are available in the right place, at the right time, to deliver critical public services. The Agency will improve and streamline hiring policy, process and tools for hiring managers across government to facilitate faster and better hiring decisions. To attract high-quality applicants, the BC Public Service must be not just visible in the labour market but considered an attractive employer.

This goal is vital to ensure the continuation of a high-quality public service.

Objective 1: The recruitment policy, process and tools in the B.C. provincial government facilitate hiring of highly competent employees

Faster decision-making and more effective recruitment is necessary to support and deliver government's business goals.

Strategies

- Facilitate Workforce Planning activities across government and lead the development of a revised Corporate Human Resource Plan.
- Facilitate targeted recruitment campaigns.
- Provide training and tools to support managers to make sound hiring decisions.

Objective 2: The B.C. provincial government is recognized as an attractive employer

As Canada ages, falling birth rates and strong and sustained economic growth in Western Canada will create an increasingly competitive labour market. Consistent with Goal 2 in the Corporate Human Resources Plan, the BC Public Service will need to improve its competitiveness so that it can vie with the private sector for talented people to meet its workforce needs now and in the future. A higher profile in the marketplace through marketing and recruitment efforts will form one part of a larger, multi-faceted human resource strategy to address the projected workforce challenges.

Strategies

- Ongoing marketing and branding program to raise the visibility and appeal of government as an employer.
- Increased career advertising to heighten awareness of employment opportunities within the public service.

Performance Measure 1: Percentage of individuals appointed to the public service based on merit

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage of individuals appointed to the public service based on merit.	96%	100%	100%	100%

Data Source: Office of the Merit Commissioner 2006/07 Annual Report — The report is available at www.meritcomm.bc.ca/Annual%20Reports/2006_2007%20Annual%20Report.pdf.

Discussion

Merit means that appointments will be non-partisan and made on the basis of an assessment of competence and ability to do the job. The *Public Service Act* states that the matters to be considered in determining merit must, having regard to the nature of the duties to be performed, include the applicant's education, skills, knowledge, experience, past work performance and years of continuous service in the public service. The Merit Commissioner monitors the application of the merit principle in the BC Public Service. Random audits examine whether appointments are the result of a merit-based process and that the individuals appointed are competent and qualified to do the job. Merit is also monitored by reviewing appointments on request for employee applicants who believe that the merit principle was not applied to specific appointments for

bargaining unit positions. In 2006/07, 308 appointments were audited. Compliance with the merit principle was confirmed in 296 of the investigations (96%). This sample represents the largest audit undertaken by the Office of the Merit Commissioner representing eight per cent of all appointments made during the year.

Goal 2: The Public Service promotes a safe and healthy workplace that supports the well-being of employees

Government is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is safe for all of its employees all of the time. We are also committed to improving workplace health and the health of our employees. Every ministry in government is promoting and providing employees with opportunities to learn more about their health and take steps to healthier living. From our newly introduced Quittin'Time smoking cessation program, corporate flu vaccine programs to the ActNow BC strategies that ministries are pursuing, we expect to see results from more employees focused on their health and on improving the health of their workplace.

Objective 1: Safe workplaces

Strategies

- Provide client organizations the direction, knowledge, tools and support necessary to implement and maintain effective safety management programs.
- Enhance safety reporting.

Objective 2: Safe and timely returns to work for individuals who are ill or injured

The Government of British Columbia is committed to providing an efficient and effective public service and recognizes the importance of managing health-related absences to enhance this commitment.

Strategies

- Reposition the Disability Case Management function so that specialized expertise is available to clients and employees as needed.
- Implement enhanced reporting for clients.

Objective 3: Healthy and productive work environments

Strategies

- Evaluate needs and develop a health strategy proposal for the public service.
- Develop and implement appropriate workplace programs and tools to help reduce health risks.
- Assess needs and implement regular reporting.

Performance Measure 2: Percentage of employees who say that a safe and healthy workplace exists in my work unit

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage of employees who say that a healthy workplace exists in my work unit.	66	75	85	95

Data Source: BC Public Service Agency Work Environment Survey 2007.

Discussion

Data for this measure is based on the following question in the BC Public Service Work Environment Survey, “A healthy atmosphere (e.g., trust, mutual respect) exists in my work unit.” Employees originally answered the question using a five-point scale, which ranged from ‘1’ (Strongly disagree) to ‘5’ (Strongly agree). Responses were converted into a new value ranging from 0 to 100 and then averaged for comparative purposes:

5-point Survey Scale	New Values
1 (Strongly disagree)	0
2	25
3	50
4	75
5 (Strongly agree)	100

Tracking the percentage of employees who agree or strongly agree with a question does not consider the full range of responses. Using average scores for benchmarking is more appropriate.

Goal 3: The public service is a versatile workforce that can adapt to meet changing needs

Public service work is predominantly knowledge work and employees of government are predominantly knowledge workers. Knowledge is different from every other historical means of production. In a knowledge society, a person's and the organization's ability to acquire and share knowledge is their most important competency. In an era of increasing labour market competition, sustained investment in human capital is necessary to attract and retain the required talent and provide high-quality public services that adapt to changing needs.

Objective 1: Development of people for key roles across the public service is accelerated

Based on recently completed workforce plans, ministries identified vulnerable or high-risk roles that will be affected by anticipated attrition. Government must ensure that suitable candidates are ready to fill critical roles and positions as more people retire. By rapidly training and developing a continual supply of qualified and ready candidates, government will ensure that its business goals are met and organizational performance is enhanced.

Strategies

- Target learning to key and critical roles, such as in the finance and management streams.
- Target developmental assignments to areas of highest need. This approach is a key component of accelerated leadership development used to broaden skill sets and develop executive competencies.

Objective 2: Sharing knowledge across the organization is facilitated

Given the volatile nature of knowledge and pending succession challenges faced by the government over the foreseeable future, the transfer of knowledge for reuse, awareness, and training is an essential element of government's desire to build internal capacity and keep pace with social, economic, and technological changes.

Strategies

- Implement initiatives designed to improve the transfer of knowledge and the sharing of best practices, such as "Communities of Practice" — a forum used by staff to learn from the experience of colleagues.

Objective 3: The Public Service is a learning organization

In fast moving and competitive environments, complacency and rigidity are fatal. Learning promotes perspective and innovation and is a key driver of change. Empirical studies in both public and private sector organizations have shown that learning investments produce substantial economic returns to the organizations through reduced costs, increased efficiencies and other direct and indirect benefits that improve the performance and competitiveness of the organization.

Strategies

- Encourage employees to develop their careers by taking advantage of the recently introduced Pacific Leaders program. The program has three components including:
 - graduate student fellowships;
 - student loan forgiveness; and
 - scholarships for public servants and their children.
- Balance the focus of employee learning between formal and informal opportunities to learn job-related skills.
- Enhance our learning by increasing our use of technology and e-learning strategies.

Performance Measure 3: Percentage of managers who report their employees have the skills to meet current and future needs

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage of managers who report their employees have the skills to meet current and future needs.	58%	60%	65%	70%

Data Source: Data for this measure is based on the following question in the Client and Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Agency, "My employees have the skills to meet current and future needs."

Goal 4: Public service employees understand their roles, how their work contributes to achieving the goals of government, and are focused on results

A public service striving for service excellence and innovation requires a workforce that is engaged, flexible to adjust to emerging priorities and supported to get the right results. Performance management practices vary widely across government and better tools to support ministries in managing performance across the public service are required. This goal is intended to ensure employee understanding of their roles and to focus their contributions to most effectively support the organization's goals and objectives.

Objective 1: Employee engagement is measured, addressed and improved

Research shows that organizations with more engaged employees tend to outperform organizations with less engaged employees. In the private sector, highly-engaged organizations tend to be more productive and profitable, experience less turnover and absenteeism, and retain more employees. By measuring employee engagement in the BC Public Service and developing specific, targeted strategies to improve annual results, management hopes to strengthen the work environment, consistent with Goal 3 of the Corporate Human Resource Strategy, Managing for Results. The ultimate aim is to make the BC Public Service a more productive workforce — one that results in better public services.

Strategies

- Administer annual Work Environment Survey, which measures employee engagement and develop strategies to address issues that arise out of the survey results.
- Benchmark employee engagement across Canada.
- Identify best practices and disseminate a toolkit to assist ministries with improving employee satisfaction and commitment.

Performance Measure 4: Employee Engagement in the Public Service

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Employee engagement in the public service.	63	Improvement	Further Improvement	85

Data Source: BC Public Service Work Environment Survey 2007.

Discussion

This measure looks at the annual employee engagement rating for the BC Public Service as determined by BC Stats in the annual Work Environment Survey. This survey recognizes that employee engagement is a multi-dimensional concept comprised of how satisfied employees are with their job and their organization, and how committed they are to it. Ratings for each element of engagement (commitment, organization satisfaction and job satisfaction) are averaged based on a 100-point scale. Results are not expressed as a percentage.

The BC Public Service is continuing to strive for continuous improvement in our employee engagement scores over the next three years with the goal of being the highest rated public service jurisdiction in Canada. Improvement in employee engagement requires a long term investment and we are realistic in setting goals that will continue to stretch the organization while ensuring that we remain realistic in our expectations, recognizing that the top 50 companies in Canada can expect to achieve an engagement score of about 80 points out of 100. (The BC Public Service already outranks the average private sector company score of 59.)

Objective 2: Employees receive a comprehensive orientation to their jobs and the public service

New employee orientation helps to effectively integrate a new employee into the work environment; assists with retention, motivation, and job satisfaction; and enables the individual to become a contributing member of the work team. Orientation contributes to productivity through employee engagement; it promotes clarity from the moment of hiring and helps to establish loyalty.

Strategies

- Implementation of corporate orientation program.

Objective 3: Facilitate performance management best practices

Employee performance management is a process a manager and employee participate in throughout the year. The process and supporting tools encourage an approach that increases success in achieving business goals.

Strategies

- Implement a corporate standard for performance measurement across the Public Service.
- Provide online tools to improve how government manages employee performance.

Performance Measure 5: Percentage of employees who have had a formal performance review in the last year

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage of employees who have had a formal performance review in the last year.	70%	100%	100%	100%

Data Source: Exploring Engagement in the BC Public Service July 2007.

Discussion

This measure is based on the percentage of employees who “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “Have you had a performance review in the last 12 months.” Individualized performance plans define the role of every employee in relation to government’s objectives, and set out appropriate training and development opportunities. Annual performance reviews enable employees to understand their contribution to organizational goals. Constructive feedback enables us to recognize and reward high performance.

Goal 5: Public Service employees exhibit the highest standards of conduct

The public service is held to a high standard due to its responsibility to the citizens of British Columbia. In order to ensure the standard is met, individual public servants must be keenly aware of the expectations of them in terms of their work and conduct on the job.

Objective 1: Ensure all employees fully understand their roles and obligations as public servants

Strategies

- Introduction of corporate orientation and formal oath ceremonies.
- Implement an annual program for all employees to ensure their understanding of and commitment to the standards expected of all public servants.
- Development of an internal survey to monitor the standards of conduct amongst Public Service employees.

Resource Summary Table

Core Businesses	2007/08 Restated Estimates ¹	2008/09 Estimates	2009/10 Plan	2010/11 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Business Transformation and Learning Division.....	30	30	44	44
Client Services.....	2,259	3,341	4,507	4,507
Talent Management.....	5,439	5,965	6,695	6,695
Employee Relations.....	233	466	694	715
Compensation, Benefits and Policy.....	1	1	1	1
Executive and Support Services.....	1,571	1,713	1,830	1,830
Total.....	9,533	11,516	13,771	13,792
Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)				
Business Transformation and Learning Division.....	14	14	14	14
Client Services.....	197	197	197	197
Talent Management.....	48	48	48	48
Employee Relations.....	30	30	30	30
Compensation, Benefits and Policy.....	61	63	63	63
Executive and Support Services.....	13	11	11	11
Total.....	363	363	363	363
Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)				
Business Transformation and Learning Division.....	1,299	1,299	1,299	1,299
Client Services.....	0	0	0	0
Talent Management.....	0	0	0	0
Employee Relations.....	0	0	0	0
Compensation, Benefits and Policy.....	0	0	0	0
Executive and Support Services.....	270	270	270	270
Total.....	1,569	1,569	1,569	1,569

¹ The 2007/08 Restated Estimates have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2008/09 Estimates.

Ministry Contact Information

For more information please visit our website: www.bcpublicserviceagency.gov.bc.ca/

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Hyperlinks to Additional Information

For more information about job opportunities in the BC Public Service please visit:

www.employment.gov.bc.ca/

For more information about the Pacific Leaders program please visit:

www.pacificleaders.gov.bc.ca/

For more information about Quittin'Time our newly introduced smoking cessation program for employees of the BC Public Service, their spouses and dependents please visit:

www.quittintime.gov.bc.ca/

For more information about Being the Best: the Corporate Human Resources Plan for the BC Public Service please visit:

www.employment.gov.bc.ca/documents/HRPlan_2008.pdf

For more information about the Office on the Merit Commissioner please visit:

www.meritcomm.bc.ca/

For Agency locations and contact information please visit:

www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/2008/sp/bcpsa/default.html#6

