



2005-06
Annual Report
Executive Council



Office of the Executive Council

Annual Report

Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2006

2005-06
Annual Report

Message from the Premier



*I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Office of the Executive Council (the Office) for fiscal year ending March 31, 2006. This report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. As Premier I am accountable for the actual results reported in this document.*

The Office of the Executive Council envisions a responsive provincial government with coordinated and effective decision-making and communication processes. With this in mind, the Office is primarily responsible for supporting the work of Cabinet and its Committees; providing strategic communications advice and coordinating government-wide communication activities; and advising on protocol matters.

The following annual report presents information on the activities carried out during the 2005-06 fiscal year. It is the product of the hard work and dedication of the staff of the Office of the Executive Council, and I would like to thank all involved for their contributions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Danny Williams".

Honourable Danny Williams, QC
Premier

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1.0 Introduction

In fulfilling its commitment to being accountable to the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador, Government introduced the *Transparency and Accountability Act* (the Act) in December of 2004. This Act provides the legislative framework for strengthening accountability of government entities through multi-year performance-based plans and annual performance reports. The implementation of these planning and reporting requirements will be phased in over the next couple of years to provide government entities the opportunity to adjust their business practices, where necessary.

In accordance with this commitment, government entities have been working through the implementation process. As we move forward, all entities will progress towards the development of annual performance reports that meet the requirements of the Act.

The Office of the Executive Council (the Office) is considered a Category 3 Government Entity within the context of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The current annual report will provide an overview of key activities that occurred during fiscal year 2005-06.

2.0 Overview

For the purpose of this annual report, the Office includes Cabinet Secretariat and the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, the Communications Branch, the Protocol Office and the Transparency and Accountability Office. Other central agencies normally considered to be part of Executive Council (i.e. Women's Policy Office, Intergovernmental Affairs, Rural Secretariat, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, and the Public Service Secretariat) have developed annual reports to independently inform the public about their respective results.

Staff and Expenditures:

The Office had a staff complement of 43 (77% female and 23% male) and spent approximately \$3,292,426 for fiscal year ending March 31, 2006. The details are as follows:

Central Agency	Staff Complement	2005-06 Actual
Cabinet Secretariat and the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council	24	\$1,931,084
Communications Branch	11	\$769,411
Protocol Office	3	\$249,728
Transparency and Accountability Office	5	\$342,203
Total	43	\$3,292,426

(Source: Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended 31 March 2006)

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The mandate of the Office is to directly support the Cabinet decision-making process and to facilitate effective government policy development and service delivery processes. It is derived from government direction and informed by numerous pieces of legislation (see Appendix I). The mandate is fulfilled by offering two principal lines of business to its primary clients. These clients include the Premier, Cabinet and its Committees, government departments and public bodies, and foreign governments. The lines of business are as follows:

1. Support to the Premier, Cabinet and the Public Service:

Premier and Cabinet

The Office is the agency of the public service which provides support to the Premier in his role of setting overall government policy and coordinating initiatives brought forward by ministers. The Office is also the primary support for the Cabinet and its Committees. This role incorporates the preparation of briefing materials, the coordination and facilitation of Cabinet meetings, and the maintenance of Cabinet records.

Coordination

The Office is responsible for coordinating policy activities, the development of responses to government level issues, and as required, the implementation of strategic directions related to horizontal initiatives. Through various coordination efforts, staff also ensure consistency in the application of Government policies and procedures.

Planning and Reporting

The Office provides facilitative and supportive services to provincial government departments and public bodies in the development of multi-year performance-based plans. The Office also reviews multi-year performance-based plans and annual performance reports to provide feedback on the degree to which these documents comply with the *Transparency and Accountability Act* and to ensure consistency with Government's overall agenda.

Organizational Development

The Office works to ensure that the public service has the capacity and readiness to implement directions of Government. This is carried out through focusing on priority areas such as enhanced policy capacity within Government, the effective implementation of Government's Human Resource Management Strategy, recognition of excellence, and executive development. Executive development includes, but is not limited to, secondment and various professional development activities such as governance, planning and reporting, and policy analysis.

Communications and Consultation

Strategic communications advice and support are provided to the Premier and Cabinet. The Office also manages Government's corporate communications function and coordinates communications activities across Government. This role includes developing communications and consultation policy and procedures, advising on communications

and consultation planning, providing multimedia communications support, and managing information collection and distribution services (including media monitoring, public opinion research and news release distribution).

2. Support to Other Dignitaries

The Office advises government members and departments on official matters of provincial, national and international protocol and organizes state and ceremonial events. It also organizes itineraries for visiting diplomats, heads of state, senior government representatives and other visitors, and coordinates flag and regalia ceremonies and protocols for local and national events.

In fulfilling these responsibilities, the Office of the Executive Council fosters an organizational culture based on respect for the public and the democratic process. Professional integrity and impartiality of the Office ensures the provision of timely, accurate, and comprehensive policy advice and information. The character of the Office is promoted and explained through the following six core values:

1. **Accountability**
Each individual takes responsibility for their actions while adhering to deadlines, schedules, and timeframes.
2. **Integrity**
Each individual ensures the provision of accurate, unbiased advice and adheres to the confidentiality associated with the Office.
3. **Innovation**
Each individual exercises readiness to respond to changing priorities and identifies opportunities to address challenges in new ways.
4. **Judgment**
Each individual uses knowledge of policies, practices, and client needs as a foundation for all activities.
5. **Respect**
Each individual listens to and considers the ideas and opinions of others and works collaboratively to achieve results.
6. **Quality**
Each individual maintains established standards in all activities.

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3.0 Highlights of Activities and Accomplishments

The following section highlights the Office's progress on its key initiatives and significant accomplishments for fiscal year ending March 31, 2006.

Cabinet Secretariat and the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council:

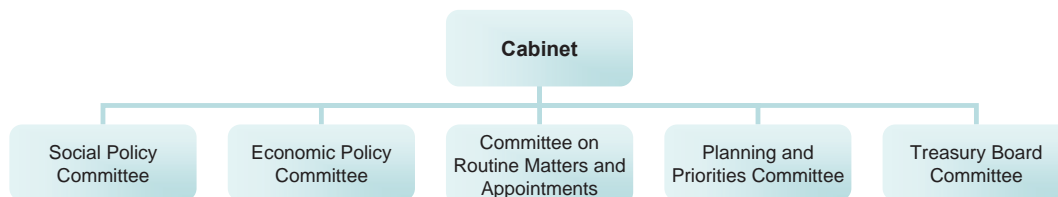
The focus of activities undertaken in 2005-06 included supporting central decision-making mechanisms and the Head of the Public Service, and enhancing internal processes.

1. Support to the Premier and Cabinet:

Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the management of the Cabinet process, including provision of administrative support to the Cabinet and its committees and the monitoring of emerging issues requiring the consideration of Cabinet. This includes arranging meetings; preparing and circulating agendas, memoranda and other documents; recording, drafting, and circulating minutes of decisions; ensuring that any necessary actions are undertaken by the appropriate departments and agencies; and maintaining the official records of Cabinet. In 2005-06, Cabinet Secretariat provided support to more than 90 Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings.

Cabinet met outside of the Capital city twice in 2005-06 as a full Cabinet – Stephenville on July 25 & 26, 2005 and Corner Brook on February 17 & 18, 2006. Cabinet Secretariat provided support to these regional visits by managing administrative processes and logistics, and by ensuring that Cabinet members had access to all necessary information to make informed recommendations and decisions.

Figure: Committees of Cabinet



2. Support to the Public Service:

Cabinet Secretariat supports the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council in its role as Head of the Public Service, through which it is responsible to the Premier for the overall effectiveness of the public service. In providing that support, the following accomplishments are identified:

Facilitating Communication

The Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council hosts retreats for Deputy Ministers each year. The purpose of the retreats is to provide a forum for Deputy Ministers to plan and discuss Government's most recent initiatives and policy decisions, as well as to set future priorities. In 2005-06 the Clerk hosted one retreat.

Similarly, the Clerk holds weekly meetings for the Deputy Minister group for the purpose of information sharing and engaging in discussion of immediate matters that affect the public service and the people of the province.

Recognizing Excellence in the Public Service

Over the past number of years, the provincial government has been actively engaging in a new human resources management strategy, “Creating Tomorrow’s Public Service”. It has been developed to ensure our public service continues to meet today’s needs and that employees are ready to embrace new challenges, approaches and opportunity.

The week of June 12 to 18, 2005 was declared by the Premier as Public Service Week throughout the province. The theme of this week was “Recognizing the Work; Celebrating the Experience”. During the period, special events were held to recognize the work of public service employees and highlighting the programs and services they deliver to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

On September 20, 2005 Premier Williams and the Clerk of the Executive Council announced the recipients of the 2004 Public Service Award of Excellence. The awards recognize exceptional performance in tasks associated with a position or project, that have positively impacted the quality of the work environment or the quality of service delivery to clients in the areas of leadership, valuing people and innovation. Seven individuals and two groups of public service employees were presented with the award at a formal ceremony held at the Fairmont Hotel.

3. Enhancing Internal Processes:

Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for establishing, coordinating and communicating throughout Government the standards and processes surrounding the Cabinet decision-making process, and for policy development and information management.

In 2005-06, Cabinet Secretariat maintained the Senior Management Intranet, a secure Web site that facilitates communication between central agencies and line departments. Through this site, Cabinet Secretariat regularly provides updated information on appointments to Crown agencies, boards, and commissions, as well as ensuring that resources, templates, and policies are regularly accessible by departments.

Information Management

In 2005-06, Cabinet Secretariat continued to focus its efforts toward enhancing the effectiveness of its role in the Cabinet process. This was undertaken, in part, through the continued improvement of information management practices and continued expansion and refinement of the electronic document management system. These efforts to improve the management of Cabinet Secretariat’s information assets will ensure the security and availability of accurate, comprehensive and current information for the Premier, the Cabinet, Cabinet committees, government departments and the public, now and in the future.

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Policy Capacity Building

Through continued communication with departmental policy practitioners, Cabinet Secretariat is able to assess and identify options for enhancing Government's policy capacity. In 2005-06, a review was conducted to determine Government's current human resources and organizational structures allocated to policy, planning and evaluation. This information is now being used to identify opportunities to establish effective partnerships and enhance professional development.

Communicating the Process

The development and implementation of the "Decision-Making Process" learning series was intended to increase employee awareness of the Cabinet process, to improve the level of communication between government departments and Cabinet Secretariat and, thereby, to increase the effectiveness of our policy development and service delivery processes. In 2005-06, the course continued to be received with great interest, and has been delivered to a number of government departments to date.

Access to Information

On January 17, 2005, Government proclaimed the access provisions of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, which replaced the 1981 *Freedom of Information Act*. A significant change in the new legislation is the provision that allows the public to access Cabinet records that have been in existence for 20 years or more. In 2005-06, Cabinet Secretariat responded to 8 Access to Information requests; 4 full disclosures, no records were found for 1 request, and 3 requests were denied. Cabinet Secretariat remains committed to openness and accountability and the protection of personal privacy.

Planning and Coordination

Cabinet Secretariat plays a central role in maintaining and facilitating the communication of government priorities between the Executive Council and government departments. Cabinet Secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of Legislative Counsel and the Leader of the House, also plays a key role in coordinating the administration of the Government's legislative agenda.

Transparency and Accountability Office:

Fiscal year ending March 31, 2006 marked the conclusion of the first year of Government's three-year transition phase for the implementation of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The focus of this year was on government departments, secretariats and central agencies of Government. The Transparency and Accountability Office (TAO) supported this initiative by providing the following supportive services:

1. Facilitation

There are a number of opportunities throughout the planning cycle to provide facilitative supports to government entities. The first opportunity is presented when a government entity recognizes the need for preliminary information on the requirements of the *Transparency & Accountability Act*. The TAO fulfills this need by providing a summary of the *Act* and

an overview of the support mechanisms provided. During fiscal year 2005-06, the TAO facilitated 31 introductory sessions.

When a government entity decides to initiate the planning process, they may choose to establish a pre-planning committee, the purpose of which is to develop, in draft format, the contextual pieces used to develop the performance plan (i.e. strategic directions, overview, mandate, lines of business, core values, vision and environmental scan). To the greatest extent possible, the TAO attempts to coordinate its work according to the schedules of the government entities. Upon request, the TAO will facilitate this process. During fiscal year 2005-06, the TAO facilitated 96 pre-planning sessions.

At the request of a government entity, staff of the TAO facilitates planning sessions. The length of these planning sessions is determined by each individual government entity and normally varies from 1 – 2 days. The total number of planning sessions facilitated by the TAO was 80 and involved approximately 31 government entities for fiscal year ending March 31, 2006.

Additionally, the TAO facilitates operational planning sessions, the length of which varies according to the needs of each individual government entity. For fiscal year 2005-06, the TAO facilitated 13 operational planning sessions.

2. Reviews

The *Transparency and Accountability Act* places the authority to review all plans and reports (i.e. government departments and public bodies) on each responsible minister. The TAO supports this process by providing information to each responsible minister regarding the extent to which each plan and report meets specific provisions of the Act and provincial policies and guidelines. The TAO supported the ministerial review process by reviewing 25 performance plans and 119 reports. To support the implementation process, the TAO offered suggestions as to how an entity may align its reporting processes to comply with legislated expectations.

As Government progresses through the transition phase, the number of plans and reports is expected to grow as more government entities come in line with the requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

3. Professional Development

Fulfillment of the planning and reporting requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires various types of skills and experience at multiple levels within an organization. In support of the government entities now expected to meet these legislated requirements, the TAO provided three forms of professional development sessions:

- One session was designed to support the work of governing body members as they fulfill the responsibilities which are assumed upon accepting their role on a governing board. This session focused on accountability, board governance, roles and responsibilities, and planning and reporting.

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- The second professional development session was designed to inform planners in the public service about the requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, their roles and responsibilities, and the expectations of Government with regards to performance plans and annual reports.
- The third type of professional development session focused on the reporting expectations of category three public bodies.

In support of Government's Human Resource Management Strategy, the TAO also partnered with the Centre for Learning and Development to develop and deliver a half day training module to managers in the public service. The purpose of this module is to inform participants of the planning and reporting requirements of the *Transparency & Accountability Act*; define accountability, its necessary mechanisms and actions, and why it is necessary; and to identify the role of the manager in these accountability processes.

4. General Supports

The Transparency and Accountability Office plays a key role in the development of various types of supportive documentation to further explain the planning and reporting expectations of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. There are two key processes associated with this responsibility – identifying new needs and developing documentation to support those needs, and revising current documentation to accurately reflect the legislation.

During the 2005-06 fiscal year, the TAO revised its documents and training materials associated with board governance, its guidelines for annual reporting and its templates for the development of performance-based plans (i.e. Strategic, Business and Activity Plans). The TAO also continued with its practice of developing and distributing quarterly newsletters. Topics covered during fiscal year 2005-06 included highlights of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, strategic directions and their role in the planning process, a summary of the planning process itself, and an overview of annual reporting expectations.

In response to the identified need for further preliminary information regarding the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, the TAO developed and distributed a brochure on frequently asked questions and a Guideline for Multi-Year Performance-Based Planning. All documentation of the TAO is distributed through government departmental contacts and made available on the Internet (<http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/cabinet/transacc/publications.htm>).

Communications Branch:

In reviewing its role and mandate (ongoing), the Branch undertook work in several areas of its operations, including:

- Launched a review of editorial style for news releases, including a jurisdictional scan of other provinces. Short-term and longer-term action items were identified
- Developed and implemented a new approach for Budget communications
- Completed preliminary research for electronic storage of newspaper clippings
- Implemented new internal procedures for news release/public announcement process
- In collaboration with Cabinet Secretariat, refined the process to ensure the online Executive Directory is updated on a timely basis

Specific activities of the Branch for 2005-06 included:

- Support to the Organizing Committee for the Council of the Federation meeting held in July 2006
- Support for the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador initiative, Public Service Week
- Continued support to the Centre for Learning and Development for its communications training
- Communications planning and co-ordination support for the inter-departmental Records Management initiative
- Collaboration with the Office of the Chief Information Officer in the development of a Web strategy
- Continued regular meetings with Communications Directors and arranged presentations for them on government-wide initiatives
- Continued management of the Public Service News site
- Conducted, in collaboration with the Public Service Commission, two Expression of Interest public competitions to ensure a roster of qualified candidates is available in the event a Communications Director position becomes vacant
- Oversaw and co-ordinated several inter-departmental initiatives, including taking the lead role in developing and implementing communications planning for Budget 2006

Protocol Office:

The Protocol Office, as a division of the Office of the Executive Council, facilitates the Protocol Policy of Government by effectively organizing and managing activities assigned in the protocol area (e.g. intergovernmental conferences, diplomatic visits and State occasions).

In 2005-06, the Protocol Office coordinated 14 diplomatic and consular visits, including visits from: H.E. David Jouanneau, Ambassador of France; H.E. William Fisher, Ambassador of Australia; H.E. Joao Pedro Silveira Carvalho, Ambassador of Portugal; H.E. David Wilkins, Ambassador of the United States; H.E. Bertie Ahern, An Taoiseach of Ireland for his State Visit; H.E. Dr. Musaed Al-

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Haroon, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait; H.E. Shyamala Cowsik, High Commissioner of India; H.E. Tor Næss, Ambassador of Norway; Mr. Leonard Hill, Consul General of the United States; Mr. Stan Keyes, Consul General of Canada to the United States; Mr. Nobutaka Shinomiya, Consul General of Japan; Mr. Marc Attali, Consul General of Israel; and Mr. Olivier Nicolas, Consul General of France (two visits). There were also several stopovers in the province from His Excellency Amadou Toumain Toure, President of Mali; His Excellency Lech Kaczynski, President of Poland; and, Her Excellency Madame Chen Zhili, State Councillor of China.

The Protocol Office also:

- Assisted with the co-ordination of the Public Service Award of Excellence
- Initiated the co-ordination of the second call for nominations for The Order of Newfoundland and Labrador (the Protocol Office was the principal division responsible for receiving, acknowledging, and preparing nominations for forwarding to the Advisory Council)
- Co-ordinated the second investiture of The Order of Newfoundland and Labrador at Government House
- Initiated the call for nominations for the third investiture of The Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and was the principal division responsible for receiving, acknowledging, and preparing nominations for forwarding to the Advisory Council
- Assisted Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat and the Premier's Office with planning for the New England Governors & Eastern Canadian Premiers Conference
- Assisted with the Co-ordination of the State visit of Ireland, An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern
- Co-ordinated Swearing-In Ceremonies for new Ministers of the Crown
- Assisted the Organizing Committee responsible for the Council of Federation Conference to be held in July 2006

4.0 Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

To ensure that the Office of the Executive Council continues to be responsive to the needs of its primary clients and effectively fulfill its mandate, it must be cognizant of any potential obstacles that may hinder these objectives and aware of any opportunities that may assist the Office in improving its function. The following section highlights some of these opportunities and challenges.

Cabinet Secretariat and the Office of the Clerk of Executive Council:

In fulfilling its responsibility to support the public service, Cabinet Secretariat plays a leadership role in the coordination of policy activities and organizational development. In this role, Cabinet Secretariat is moving forward in the development of public service policy capacity. Opportunities have been identified to establish policy networks and linkages and to play a leadership role in the development of communication avenues. Challenges are anticipated as steps are taken to effectively implement policy capacity building activities across the public service. Additionally, the Clerk of the Executive Council will play a key role in the implementation of government's human resource development framework. Through the identification of systemic human resource issues

and strategies, this framework will ensure that the public service will be able to continue to meet today's challenges, and that employees are ready to embrace new approaches, challenges and opportunities.

Transparency and Accountability Office:

As the Transparency and Accountability Office continues to champion Government's transition to performance-based planning and reporting, it is challenged by timelines identified in the Act, the number of government entities requiring support and board/public body schedules.

The focus of the 2006-07 fiscal year of the transition period will be on government corporations and several major service delivery providers. While the timelines and schedules of these entities may pose challenges, the TAO looks forward to the opportunity to continue to build strong and effective relationships across the public service.

Communications Branch:

The primary challenge for the Branch is providing effective and timely communications support and counsel in an environment that is demanding on resources and time, and where many priority tasks must be completed in very short timeframes. The Branch is meeting that challenge, but will continuously review its operations to further enhance its capabilities and refine operations.

Priorities for the Branch for 2006-07 will be:

- Refinement of government's editorial style for news releases; preparation for a style manual.
- Enhance the Branch's capability to provide support for the management of government's Web content.
- Complete new initiatives begun in 2005-06, including a procedures manual for the Branch, and a procedures manual for Communications Directors.

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5.0 Financial Statements

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended 31 March 2006 (unaudited)

	ESTIMATES		
	Actual(\$)	Amended(\$)	Original(\$)
Cabinet Secretariat (2.2.01-2.2.03, 2.2.07)			
Executive Support	\$1,416,314	\$1,442,700	\$1,162,400
Economic and Social Policy Analysis	\$511,319	\$539,100	\$515,100
Advisory Councils on Economic and Social Policy	\$3,451	\$11,000	\$130,600
Planning and Coordination	\$342,203	\$382,000	\$390,900
Total	\$2,273,287	\$2,374,800	\$2,199,000
Protocol (2.2.04)	\$249,728	\$260,200	\$250,000
Communications and Consultation (2.4.01)	\$769,411	\$785,600	\$711,500
Total: Office of the Executive Council	\$3,292,426	\$3,420,600	\$3,160,500

6.0 Appendix I: Legislative Framework

The mandate of the Office of the Executive Council is informed by the following legislation:

Legislative Responsibility:

- *Conflict of Interest Act, 1995*
- *Executive Council Act*
- *Financial Administration Act*
- *Holocaust Memorial Day Act*
- *Newfoundland and Labrador Act*
- *Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Act*
- *Parliamentary Assistant Act*
- *Parliamentary Secretaries Act*
- *Public Employees Act*
- *Volunteer War Service Medal Act, 1993*

Other Legislation that Influences the Work of the Office:

- *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Transparency and Accountability Act*