



**Office of the
Executive Council
Activity Plan
2011 - 2014**



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Message from the Premier

In accordance with my responsibilities under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, I am pleased to present the 2011-14 Activity Plan for the Office of the Executive Council.

The Office of the Executive Council (OEC) plays a critical role in supporting the effective operation of government including Cabinet and the public service. Over the last number of years, the environment in which the public sector operates has rapidly changed. Increased globalization, new technologies and changing demographics has meant that we must learn to meet challenges in new ways.

The goals and objectives outlined in this plan were developed with a view to creating a public service environment that is conducive to innovation in public sector management. The actions support the development of the skills, knowledge, tools and processes necessary to provide excellence in the delivery of services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Office of the Executive Council is a Category 3 government entity under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. It must, therefore, prepare an activity plan that sets clear direction for the Office, taking into consideration the strategic directions of government (see Appendix A), its legal mandate and current budget. As Premier, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of its goals and objectives.

This plan is the product of a consultation process with staff of the OEC. I would like to thank all involved for their contributions and I look forward to working with them, as well as our other partners, to implement this plan.

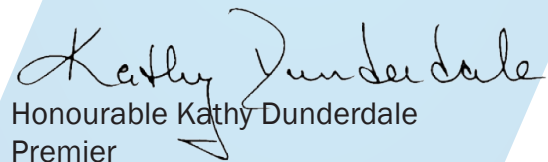

Honourable Kathy Dunderdale
Premier

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Plan at a Glance	1
Introduction	2
Overview	3
Mandate	3
Lines of Business	4
Primary Clients	5
Values	6
Vision	6
Mission	7
Issues	8
Issue 1: Public Sector Excellence	9
Issue 2: Evaluation	11
Issue 3: Planning and Coordination	13
Issue 4: Capacity Enhancement	15
Appendix A – Strategic Directions	17
Appendix B – Legislative Framework	19

PLAN AT A GLANCE

VISION

The vision of the Office of the Executive Council is an accountable, innovative government committed to excellence in public service.

MISSION

By 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have improved the capacity of the public service to effectively manage the public sector in support of the implementation of government's agenda.

	PUBLIC SECTOR EXCELLENCE	EVALUATION	PLANNING / COORDINATION	CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT
	By 2014 the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented a framework for managing public sector excellence through performance benchmarking.	By 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have established government-wide evaluation practices to strengthen evidence-based decision-making that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and programs.	By 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have enhanced cross-functional planning processes and coordination of government-wide initiatives.	By 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have enhanced capacity for policy development and public sector management.
2012	An approach to benchmarking public sector performance is developed.	A strategic approach to enhanced evaluation practices is implemented.	Current processes are assessed towards improved efficiency and effectiveness.	Initiatives towards enhanced policy capacity and strengthened organizational capacity are undertaken.
2013	A framework for evaluation is developed.	A process to monitor ongoing evaluation activities is initiated.	Options for enhanced planning and coordination are implemented.	Opportunities for capacity enhancement are implemented.
2014	The evaluation framework is implemented.	Implementation of the evaluation policy is finalized.	Planning and coordination efforts for effective and efficient implementation of government's agenda are enhanced.	Improved organizational capacity for effective public sector management and implementation of government's agenda is facilitated.



INTRODUCTION

The Premier serves as the Minister of the Executive Council of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. As the Premier's department, the Office of the Executive Council (OEC), combined with the role of the Clerk of the Executive Council, plays a critical role in supporting the effective operation of government including the Cabinet operations and public service.

The lines of business for the OEC are included on page four of this document. The OEC has four key roles: leadership, coordination, and the provision of advice and support. Many of the activities of the OEC focus on ensuring informed, effective decision-making and public sector management which supports the strategic priorities of the government. Ultimately, these actions contribute to government's efforts to meet its overall agenda.

The 2011-2014 planning cycle marks an opportunity for the OEC to build upon previously identified priority action areas. In particular, the next three years will be focused on defining a framework to motivate and develop our capacity for excellence in public service, further strengthening evaluation practices, enhancing planning and coordination processes, and implementing additional capacity building initiatives. These initiatives combined, are intended to further support an environment conducive to excellence and innovation in public sector management.

The Public Service Secretariat recently launched the "We Are" campaign which highlights the diversity of jobs within the public sector. During the course of this plan, the OEC will continue to engage and support initiatives which promote the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador as an employer of choice and one which is characterized by excellence in public sector management.

Based on these priorities, and using the measures and indicators specified, each year annual performance reports will be presented in the House of Assembly to identify the OEC's progress in achieving the goals and objectives set out in this activity plan.

For the purpose of this activity plan, the Office of the Executive Council includes the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet Secretariat, the Lieutenant Governor's Establishment, the Transparency and Accountability Office, the Communications and Consultation Branch, the Provincial Government Programs Office, the Protocol Office, the Strategic Human Resource Management Division, and the Financial Administration Division.

Other central agencies of Executive Council, including the Women's Policy Office, Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat, Rural Secretariat, Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat, the Public Service Secretariat, the Office of Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Emissions Trading, and the Research and Development Corporation have each developed separate plans to independently inform the public of their respective priorities.



OVERVIEW

Mandate

The mandate of the Office of the Executive Council is derived from government direction and informed by numerous pieces of legislation (see Appendix B). It includes the following:

- Support the Premier and the work of Cabinet and its committees
 - » Facilitate, coordinate and support the Cabinet decision-making process, formulate orders, and communicate decisions of Cabinet
 - » Facilitate and coordinate advice and initiatives on matters related to economic policy, social policy, and government operations
 - » Facilitate and coordinate strategic/business/activity and operational planning within government
 - » Facilitate and coordinate the evaluation of policy and program effectiveness
- Support the role of the Lieutenant Governor
- Advise on protocol matters
- Provide strategic communications, advice and support to the Premier and Cabinet and coordinate government-wide communications
- Provide leadership of the provincial public service to ensure that Government has the policy, management and human resource capacity it needs to develop and deliver effective policies and programs.

Staff and Expenditures

The OEC has a staff complement of 80 (71% female and 29% male) and an estimated budget of \$7.7 million. The details are as follows:

Central Agency	Staff Complement	Annual Budget
The Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet Secretariat ¹	37	\$4,002,500
Lieutenant Governor's Establishment	13	\$759,000
Communications and Consultation Branch	9	\$1,027,100
Financial Administration and Strategic Human Resource Management	21	\$1,869,500
TOTAL	80	\$7,658,100

Source (financial information): 2011-12 Estimates

¹ Cabinet Secretariat includes the Transparency and Accountability Office, the Protocol Office, and the Provincial Government Programs Office.

Lines of Business

In delivering its mandate, the OEC provides the following lines of business:

1. Support to the Premier and Cabinet:

Premier and Cabinet

The OEC is the agency of the public service which provides support to the Premier's 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 and provides for the effective and efficient operation of the cabinet process. This role incorporates policy analysis, the preparation of briefing materials, the coordination and facilitation of Cabinet meetings, coordination of the legislative agenda, and the maintenance of Cabinet records.

2. On behalf of the Premier and Cabinet, the OEC also provides support and leadership to the public service through the following lines of business:

Coordination

The OEC is responsible for leading broad policy establishment and coordination, focus and coordination in support of evaluation activities, and the development of responses to government-level issues. Through various coordination efforts, staff also ensure consistency in the application of government policies and procedures.

Planning and Reporting

The OEC leads and provides support services to Provincial Government departments and public bodies in the development of multi-year performance-based plans and reports and reviews these documents to provide feedback on the degree to which they comply with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The OEC also provides support services to ministers and deputy ministers in the development and monitoring of deputy ministers' performance contracts.

Organizational Development

The OEC works to ensure that the public service has the capacity and readiness to implement directions of government. This is carried out by providing leadership in 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.

Communications and Consultations

The OEC also leads 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, managing information collection and distribution services, and establishing and maintaining content and visual standards for government's web presence.

3. Support to Lieutenant Governor and Other Dignitaries

The OEC provides executive, administrative, and household support to the Lieutenant Governor. It also advises government members and departments on official matters of provincial, national and international protocol and organizes state and ceremonial events. The OEC 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 addition to the core lines of business, the work of the OEC is supported by its two corporate services divisions.

Corporate Services

Within the Office of the Executive Council, corporate services activities are provided by the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Financial Administration Divisions. The SHRM Division provides human resource management advisory and consultative services to the Office of the Executive Council. The division plans, develops and delivers programs, policies and services in the areas of employee relations, human resource planning, integrated disability management and organizational development.

The Financial Administration Division provides financial management and advisory services to various departments/divisions within the corporate structure. Responsibilities include the provision of financial, budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, and general operations services to the designated agencies. The division also ensures that all employees are informed of departmental and general government guidelines and procedures relating to the above services, thereby ensuring financial stewardship, facilitating the delivery of programs and services, and enabling those entities within Executive Council to achieve their strategic and operational objectives.

Primary Clients

The Office of the Executive Council defines its primary clients as those individuals, groups and organizations who are the principle beneficiaries of its lines of business. These clients include the following:

- Premier
- Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Ministers
- Lieutenant Governor
- Departments and Public Bodies
- Public Servants
- Diplomatic Corps



Values

The Office of the Executive Council directly supports the Cabinet decision-making process and facilitates effective government policy development and coordinated public services. In fulfilling these responsibilities, the OEC fosters an organizational culture based on respect for the public and the democratic process. Professional integrity and impartiality of the OEC ensures the provision of timely, accurate, and comprehensive policy advice and information. The character of the OEC is promoted and explained through the core values identified below.

The following actions flow from the value statements and will guide the OEC during the subsequent three years:

- Innovation** Each individual actively supports continuous learning, responds to changing priorities and identifies opportunities to address challenges in new ways.
- Respect** Each individual listens to and considers the ideas and opinions of others and works collaboratively to achieve results.
- Accountability** Each individual takes responsibility for their actions while adhering to deadlines, schedules, and timeframes.
- Leadership** Each individual initiates opportunities to advance priorities and is exemplary in that role to others.
- Integrity** Each individual ensures the provision of complete, accurate, unbiased advice.

VISION

The vision of the Office of the Executive Council is of an accountable, innovative government committed to excellence in public service.

MISSION

Over the last number of years, economic and global impacts, changing technology, demographic change and workforce turnover has changed the environment in which government operates. While Newfoundland and Labrador has realized and taken advantage of a number of opportunities over this period, there have also been a number of challenges. The recent global economic crisis, the volatility of oil prices, and recent environmental disasters demonstrate that the province must be prepared to operate within an environment that it cannot completely control.

Within the context of the public sector, this rapidly changing environment is reflected in policy, program, and service delivery requirements that have become increasingly complex and issues that more frequently cross multiple sectors and jurisdictions. This evolving environment requires new approaches to public sector management and a public service that is positioned for excellence in the delivery of information and advice to support decision-making. It is the role of the OEC to ensure the public service has this capacity.

Capacity enhancement involves the development of core skills, capabilities, resources and organizational structures towards improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness. As the lead and central agency of the public service, over the next two planning cycles, the role of the OEC will be to lead and support the establishment of the necessary conditions - knowledge, skills, organizational structures, processes, and resources - to facilitate innovative ideas and approaches to public sector management while maintaining stewardship of the province's resources.

Mission: By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have improved the capacity of the public service to effectively manage the public sector in support of the implementation of government's agenda.

Measure: Improved capacity to effectively manage the public sector

Indicators:

- Increased policy capacity (including policy development, performance monitoring, evaluation, and results-based planning)
- Provided leadership for the establishment of evaluation policies and practices for improved decision-making
- Enhanced planning processes for more efficient and effective development and delivery of policies and programs
- Provided leadership for implementation of government's Human Resource Management Strategy
- Enhanced information management for more innovative approaches to sharing of information
- Benchmarked and measured the performance of the public service compared to other Canadian jurisdictions



ISSUES

A public sector environment supportive of innovative management requires support and leadership in three main areas: provision and dissemination of reliable information required to make informed decisions; improved processes to allow more efficient sharing of information and coordination across departmental and functional areas, and; the strengthening of the skills and knowledge required to undertake this work. Underlying these actions is the necessity to measure our performance against established benchmarks to ensure we are providing the best possible public service to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In consideration of government's strategic directions and the mandate and financial resources of the OEC, the following areas are proposed as the key priorities of the Office of the Executive Council for the next three years.

1. Public Sector Excellence
2. Evaluation
3. Planning and Coordination
4. Capacity Enhancement

These four issues were selected based on their importance to facilitating innovation and excellence in public sector management. They are inter-related and do not exist in isolation of one another. In this way, each plays an important part in the facilitation of new approaches and new ideas.

The goals identified for each issue reflect the results expected in the three-year time frame while the objectives provide an annual focus. Measures and indicators are provided for both the goal and the first year's objective to assist both the OEC and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

Issue 1: Public Sector Excellence

The public servants in our province are dedicated to achieving the highest excellence in service delivery and policy development to contribute to the social and economic advancement of the province.

As the lead government agency, the OEC is responsible for leading the overall progress of the provincial public service and for advancing efforts in support of excellence in public sector management.

While all goals and objectives within this plan are aimed at developing excellence in public sector management, particular attention will also be given to the research and measurement of our success in this area.

In order to effectively manage our progress in this area, it is necessary to know what standard of performance an exceptional public service could be expected to achieve. As such, over the planning period, the OEC will establish a framework that will guide the evaluation of public sector performance against a number of key measures, thereby allowing us to understand where we are performing well and where we can make improvements.

In the short term, the results can be used to aid in decision-making processes. In the longer term, the benefits of this initiative extend beyond the immediate results. The opportunity to learn from each other and to identify and share best practices will continue to be invaluable as we work towards a common goal and the OEC's vision to be "an accountable, innovative government committed to excellence in public service".

Goal 1: By 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented a framework for managing public sector excellence through performance benchmarking.

Measure: Implemented a framework for managing public sector excellence

Indicators:

- Completed environment scan of other benchmarking initiatives
- Identified and collected comparable performance measures across jurisdictions
- Developed framework



Objectives:

1.1 By March 31, 2012, the Office of the Executive Council will have developed an approach to benchmarking public sector performance.

Measure: Developed an approach to public sector benchmarking

Indicators:

- Reviewed other current benchmarking initiatives
- Identified potential indicators
- Assessed indicators for relevance and measurability

1.2 By March 31, 2013, the Office of the Executive Council will have developed a framework for evaluation.

1.3 By March 31, 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented the evaluation framework.

Issue 2: Evaluation

Government is regularly asked to introduce or expand policies and programs to benefit citizens. To do this, decision-makers need reliable information to ensure that policies are effective and programs being delivered are doing what they were set up to do and are doing it in a cost effective way. Public funds must be invested wisely. If something is not working well, adjustments need to be made or alternative solutions found. Innovative solutions will depend on the provision of reliable information.

In 2009, the Provincial Government Programs (PGP) office was established within the Office of Executive Council (OEC) for the purpose of formalizing evaluation policies and practices that will guide departments in assessing how well their policies and programs work and how efficient they are. Formalizing evaluation policies and practices ensures a consistent, ongoing approach to evaluation across government. Such an approach will supply a reliable base of evaluation evidence needed to support policy and program improvements, expenditure management, and decision-making processes.

Over the 2011-2014 planning period the OEC will lead the implementation of the new evaluation policy. The implementation of this policy supports government's strategic direction relating to the on-going improvement of good governance and program effectiveness and efficiency. Evaluation practices differ across departments: some departments evaluate more frequently than others, some rely more heavily on external evaluators, and some by nature of their programming require more complex evaluations. Building evaluation knowledge and skills within the public service is critical to creating a consistent approach to evaluation across government.

Goal 2: By 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have established government-wide evaluation practices to strengthen evidence-based decision-making that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of policies and programs.

Measure: Established evaluation practices

Indicators:

- Implemented evaluation policy
- Enhanced evaluation capacity within the public service
- Developed a government-wide evaluation plan
- Facilitated performance monitoring and evaluation activities of departments



Objectives:

2.1 By March 31, 2012, the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented a strategic approach to enhanced evaluation practices.

Measure: Implementation of enhanced evaluation practices

Indicators:

- Implemented evaluation capacity development initiatives
- Led and facilitated the development of departmental evaluation plans
- Developed a government-wide evaluation plan
- Facilitated performance monitoring activities of departments

2.2 By March 31, 2013, the Office of the Executive Council will have initiated a process to monitor ongoing evaluation activities.

2.3 By March 31, 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have finalized implementation of the evaluation policy.

Issue 3: Planning and Coordination

As a central agency, the OEC has a clear role to play in promoting effective policy coordination across the public service. Innovation in public sector management is dependent on the ability of the public service to work together across departments.

The OEC provides leadership to advance government's capacity to work horizontally by supporting the coordination of corporate strategies and initiatives and by promoting a cross-departmental and cross-functional approach to planning and policy development. Improved coordination also supports the avoidance of unnecessary costs and can improve efficiencies by supporting inter-departmental cooperation.

For the duration of the planning cycle, the OEC will investigate ways to define roles to ensure that cross-departmental and corporate work is conducted in a collaborative environment through a well-described horizontal policy model and enhanced integration and alignment of corporate planning processes. The OEC will also lead a review of a number of broad-based internal processes with a view to reducing administrative burden, eliminating redundancies and creating a more efficient public service.

Goal 3: By 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have enhanced cross-functional planning processes and coordination of government-wide initiatives.

Measure: Enhanced planning processes and coordination

Indicators:

- Completed the review and made recommendations on a revised framework for horizontal policy management
- Implemented priority options for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of cross-functional and government-wide administrative processes
- Improved management of information



Objectives:

3.1 By March 31, 2012, the Office of the Executive Council will have assessed current processes towards improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Measure: Assessed current processes

Indicators:

- Examined inter-departmental planning processes
- Examined various internal procedures and processes towards reducing internal red tape burden and improving efficiency
- Examined current planning-related processes towards improved streamlining and reducing redundancies
- Reviewed centralized processes for lessons learned in change management
- Assessed current OEC information management capacity
- Initiate review of transparency and accountability legislation

3.2 By March 31, 2013, the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented options for enhanced planning and coordination.

3.3 By March 31, 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have enhanced planning and coordination efforts for effective and efficient implementation of government's agenda.

Issue 4: Capacity Enhancement

The core function of the OEC is to provide corporate leadership to government departments and agencies. A key element of this corporate leadership role and, underlying all other innovation supports, is ensuring that the public service has the knowledge, capabilities and tools for effective decision-making and public sector management. Government must have the capacity to be innovative in identifying emerging needs and determining policy requirements as circumstances change.

Over the last planning period, the strengthening of government's capacity in the area of policy development, in particular, was identified as a priority area on which to focus. Over the next three years, the OEC will continue its efforts in this area through further development of the policy community and expansion of opportunities for networking, research, information sharing, professional development, and executive development.

In addition, in partnership with the Public Service Secretariat, the OEC will lead the implementation of new initiatives throughout government aimed at human resource development that will maximize the effective and efficient management of the public sector and implementation of government's agenda. Combined with the other capacity enhancement measures noted above, these initiatives will help position the public service for excellence in the provision of policy advice and in the delivery of programs and services.

Goal 4: By 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have enhanced capacity for policy development and public sector management.

Measure: Enhanced capacity for policy development and public sector management

Indicators:

- Led initiatives towards enhanced policy capacity
- Engaged with Memorial University to identify opportunities to conduct research in support of government's policy agenda and encourage the development of programming in public policy
- Provided leadership for strengthened organizational and management capacity
- Implemented enhanced executive development processes



Objectives:

4.1 By March 31, 2012, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives towards enhanced policy capacity and strengthened organizational capacity.

Measure: Undertaken initiatives towards enhanced policy capacity

Indicators:

- Enhanced recruitment processes for policy positions
- Formalized a structure for professional development/skill enhancement of policy practitioners
- Developed an approach to succession planning for policy practitioners

Measure: Undertaken initiatives towards strengthened organizational capacity

Indicators:

- Learning and development plans completed for OEC staff
- Initiated implementation of a performance management system for all government executive and senior management
- Investigated requirements and opportunities for enhanced executive capacity development

4.2 By March 31, 2013, the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented opportunities for capacity enhancement.

4.3 By March 31, 2014, the Office of the Executive Council will have facilitated improved organizational capacity for effective public sector management and implementation of government's agenda.

APPENDIX A – STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Strategic directions are the articulation of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by government through platform documents, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents, and other communiqués. The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This action will facilitate the integration of planning practices across government and will ensure that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.

1. Title: Effective and Efficient Government

Outcome: Continue to improve effectiveness and efficiency of government.

Strategic Direction Components	This component is addressed in the entity's...		
	Activity Plan	Operational Plan	Work Plans
On-going improvement of good governance including program effectiveness and efficiency	✓		
Facilitate and communicate the advancement of government priorities			✓

2. Title: Transparency and Accountability

Outcome: Continue to improve transparency and accountability of government entities.

Strategic Direction Components	This component is addressed in the entity's...		
	Activity Plan	Operational Plan	Work Plans
Multi-year performance-based planning		✓	
Annual performance reporting		✓	
Performance contracts		✓	
Proactive and early release of information			✓



3. Title: Strategic Communication

Outcome: Continued strategic communication of government's agenda to increase awareness/understanding of the key priorities of government.

Strategic Direction Components	This component is addressed in the entity's...		
	Activity Plan	Operational Plan	Work Plans
Planning and enabling the coordination of government's communication in an effective/focused manner			✓

APPENDIX B - LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

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

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

