



Government  
of Canada

Policy Research  
Initiative

Gouvernement  
du Canada

Projet de recherche  
sur les politiques



# Business Plan



2009-2011

Canada 



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## Message from Deputy Minister, HRSDC

For 13 years now, the PRI has played a unique role in coordinating and conducting evidence-based policy research within the Federal Government with great success. It is now finding a balance between in-depth policy research and building capacity through an ever-growing range of activities of networking and knowledge transfer. The PRI team has done an amazing job at finding new ways to deliver research that is forward looking and cross-cutting to stimulate direction amongst senior policy makers. This Business Plan aims to share this direction with potential partners, but also to ensure the organization's accountability over the coming years by outlining its key objectives and how they will be met.

In the past year, the PRI has completed many successful projects, such as *canada@150*, involving 150 young and enthusiastic civil servants that reflected on the policy challenges of tomorrow. This year-long project's legacy will span far beyond the results consigned in the final report. Participants explored new ways of working together using forward technologies and created networks that will last long after the *canada@150* project has ended. Such a success is a testimonial to PRI's vision of the importance of investing in our human capital.

The PRI's future work will build on this legacy, exploring ways to develop communities of practice, bridging across traditional silos to allow experts from inside and outside of the government to pool their knowledge, skills and expertise. This will be done in close link with the Deputy Minister committees to ensure the PRI research constantly answers the government's highest policy priorities.

The PRI team encompasses a wide range of talent in research, strategic skills and new technologies acquired in government and independent organizations. With this expertise, PRI positions itself as a pioneer in both the research it performs and the use of technologies to support and disseminate it. I'm proud to see the PRI as a place of excellence and leadership in the broader policy research community.



**Janice Charette**

Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada  
Head of the Deputy Minister's Steering Committee

## Message from Executive Head, PRI

The business plan presented here has been a while in the making and represents many months of discussion with colleagues, scholars and researchers in Canada and other countries. The central point of discussion was directed to how the Policy Research Initiative could play an active role in ensuring the continued strong capability of research support for emerging policy issues of interest to the federal government. There are three dimensions of that question to which this plan responds:

- focusing effort on identifying emerging policy relevant issues and conducting early stage policy research;
- creating appetite for and providing generous access to the evidence generated through that research; and,
- anticipating and readying the federal research community for changes affecting its function.

Canada is facing an increasing number of policy problems with a high degree of underlying complexity. This complexity is being generated by elements which affect the sense making around issues on which researchers seeks to provide insight. The PRI is approaching this challenge by structuring work to take into account increased strategic time spans, new and more intricate interaction among social actors including the increased relevance of international influences, and, increased need for policy responses in the face of uncertainty. We are exploring new research frameworks, processes and tools to provide insights. Each of our practice areas – economic, social and sustainable development – is innovating both in the structure of research design and research products being produced to ensure the continued relevance of our work.

At the heart of our efforts are people, the talent we employ at PRI, and, the broad community of scholars and researchers that support policy work. The PRI has been working on creating networked approaches to dramatically increase participation in our research efforts and using improved information technology tools to close the gap between the demand and the supply of evidence. Our current efforts focus on creating a Government of Canada knowledge commons supporting medium-term planning.

The PRI has a corporate interest in the federal government's community of practice amongst policy researchers and we are active in supporting public service renewal efforts. Those efforts are focusing our attention towards the community and its continuous development to ensure that we have the collective capacity to continue to meet the Government of Canada's research requirement.



**Thomas Townsend**  
Executive Head  
Policy Research Initiative

## **Providing Insight on Emerging Issues**

### **Who we are**

The federal government requires a strong knowledge base and policy capacity to meet the increasingly complex challenges facing Canada. The Policy Research Initiative (PRI) is a policy research organization for the whole of the federal government specialized in early stage work on issues involving several federal departments. The PRI bridges the span between the policy research community inside and outside of government and the policy development community within government on issues likely to arise as policy priorities for the federal government over the coming three to five years. Its core mandate is to advance research on emerging issues, and to ensure both effective communication to researchers of the policy research priorities of policy-makers and effective use of research findings in the development of policies.

### **Our Vision**

Our vision is to promote excellence in government policy research and the use of evidence in every stage of the policy cycle. We accomplish this by:

- Creating and promoting collaborations, including technology enabled communities;
- Identifying emerging trends and policy issues;
- Acquiring and generating relevant research from a wide variety of research sources to support early-stage policy work; and
- Developing tools that help in framing, managing, and measuring of federal policy priorities.

### **Our Changing Role**

The federal policy research landscape is changing. Sources of policy research are diversifying and technology is having a great impact on how research is undertaken and how information is exchanged among researchers and policy-makers. The PRI will continue to play a significant role in connecting research efforts across departments by catalyzing and convening knowledge and by creating capacity both to communicate policy-makers' needs to researchers and to enable policy-makers to apply resulting research to policy development. The PRI must also be at the forefront in the use of technology to create communities of researchers and pioneer the use of new research techniques as a way of enhancing policy research capacity within the federal family.

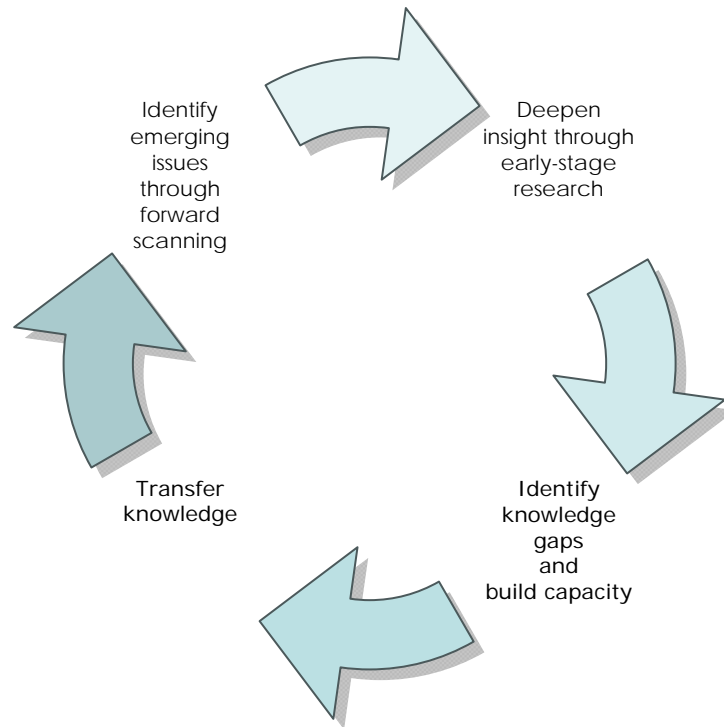
### **Our Challenge**

Over the planning cycle, the PRI will organize its efforts along four broad themes:

- Supporting the federal government's medium-term planning;
- Producing focused horizontal research products in support of policy committee workplans;
- Creating an appetite within the policy community for evidence produced by researchers and a capacity to assimilate that evidence; and
- Building capacity in the federal research community to support the policy process.

## The PRI Knowledge Cycle

The knowledge cycle depicts the PRI modus operandi, forms the basis for PRI principal business lines and identifies the broad steps from issue identification to project completion involved in policy research.



## Communities of Practice

Policy research is a dynamic function, driven by information and communications technologies. Their capacity to enable the exchange of enormous amounts of data and information across vast distances and to build worldwide networks within and between disciplines is fuelling extraordinary growth in collaborative policy research. Knowledge is often being disseminated through informal social networks. Tools such as Communities of Practice are enabling these informal networks to form, allowing people to transfer their knowledge, skills, and expertise to others. This enables an organization to more fully leverage its knowledge assets as knowledge workers are enabled to transfer knowledge they have in a subject area they are currently not responsible for but for which they have experience, expertise, or even an interest. Building a Community of Practice of policy researchers through recruitment, competency identification and training, is one of the PRI's objectives in the context of building capacity within the federal research community.

## **Governance**

PRI activities are overseen by a Steering Committee of Deputy Ministers. The Committee is composed of the Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development (Chair), the Deputy Secretary of Plans and Consultation at the Privy Council Office, the chairs of four policy committees (listed below) of the Coordinating Committees of Deputy Ministers (CCDM) as well as several other Deputy Ministers.

- the Economic Trends and Policies committee;
- the Climate Change, Energy and the Environment committee;
- the Social Trends, Policies and Institutions committee; and
- the Global Trends, Foreign Affairs and Defence Issues committee.

The DMSC provides advice and guidance on the PRI's research agenda, by:

- reviewing the PRI's annual report on plans and results, business plan, and offering guidance on forward direction;
- providing ongoing feedback on the relevance of PRI activities to the Deputy Minister community, and representing, as availability permits, the Deputy Minister community at high-profile PRI events involving members of both the federal and external research community;
- offering guidance on the direction and focus of Policy Research Data Group activities; and
- serving as an ad hoc oversight and advisory group for the forward scanning activities conducted on behalf of the Priorities and Planning group within the Privy Council Office.

## **Policy Research Initiative History**

The PRI was created in 1996 as a government-wide exercise to identify key medium-term pressure points for the government's policy agenda and to foster collaboration across departments. The Clerk of the Privy Council instructed the PRI to "prepare a report for Deputy Ministers on the pressure points that are likely to arise in Canadian society...as a result of economic, demographic and social trends...[and to] make recommendations regarding an interdepartmental research agenda and work program to address gaps in knowledge."

A permanent Policy Research Secretariat (PRS) was created in 1997 to support four interdepartmental research networks (Growth, Human Development, Social Cohesion, and Global Opportunities) and a research pilot project (Knowledge-Based Economy and Society). The emphasis was on creating ties between the federal and broader Canadian policy research community with the PRI playing a role as facilitator and synthesizer. As the networks wound down, the PRS, renamed PRI, was reorganized to support several large interdepartmental research projects including North American Linkages, Social and Economic Aspects of Productivity, and Social Cohesion.

The PRI underwent a progressive transformation, beginning in 2002, that refocused its activities on policy research. Important changes included a move from a role as facilitator to that of leader in carrying out medium-term, cross-cutting research projects, as well as a re-centering of its activities on the research needs of the federal public service community, and a refocusing of partnerships to support medium-term research projects.

Since 2006, the PRI has been asked to provide increased research support to the Deputy Ministers Policy Committees on the medium- and longer-term aspects of the policy committees' agendas. As well, an increased emphasis has been placed on the forward scanning aspects of the PRI's work and on linking its research agenda more tightly to committee workplans. All PRI research activities are now vetted and reported to their relevant Deputy Ministers Policy Committees.

## Important Accomplishments in 2008-09

### Capacity Building

- canada@150 was launched, involving 150 early career public servants in an exercise that explored the forces shaping public policy and emerging challenges for Canada over the next decade and how these will affect the federal public service as the country approaches its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### Selected Research Publications

- A paper exploring the future of the federal policy research function entitled “*Capacity, Collaboration and Culture: The Future of the Policy Research Function in the Government of Canada*” was prepared for the Committee on Public Service Renewal.
- The final results of the PRI’s project on Canada-US Cross-border Regions was presented in a publication entitled “*The Emergence of Cross-Border Regions Between Canada and the United States: Reaping the promise and public value of cross-border regional relationships*”.
- Publication of “*Governance for Sustainable Development: Meeting the Challenge Ahead*” by James Meadowcroft and François Bregha, prepared to help PRI determine with partner departments priorities for research in this area.
- Three papers on the integration of second generation Canadians were published:
  - “*Life on the Reef in the Canadian Ocean: The “New” Second Generation in Canada*”
  - “*A Survey of the World’s Oceans: International Approaches to Managing Diversity and Implications for Second Generation Acculturation*”
  - “*A Story of Reefs and Oceans: A Framework for the Analysis of the “New” Second Generation in Canada*”

### Horizons, PRI’s Flagship Publication

- A thematic issue of *Horizons*, the PRI’s flagship publication, was dedicated to Religious Diversity in Canada.
- A thematic issue of *Horizons* was published (in collaboration with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) on emerging trends, challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal youth. The PRI also hosted and published a report on a roundtable that brought together researchers, community practitioners and federal policy-makers to discuss these issues and their implications for public policy.

### Major Events

- Fourth Annual Symposium of the Population, Work and Family Policy Research Collaboration
- A workshop with the federal-provincial working group created by the Council of Energy Ministers and the energy sector on mainstreaming climate change, and the release of “*Prioritizing Climate Changes Risks and Actions on Adaptation*” by ÉcoRessources – a comparative analysis of legal and policy frameworks in a number of OECD countries to address climate change adaptation.

## Preparing for Tomorrow's Key Issues: Forward Scanning

### Staff

Peter Padbury,  
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Forward scanning involves looking at the surrounding world for drivers of change in the future. The Forward Scanning group has extensive skills in scanning, scenario development, foresight processes, qualitative and quantitative research methods, as well as hands-on experience in developing and deploying innovative technological tools that best support the research objectives (i.e., Web 2.0).

The PRI will engage in ongoing scanning to assist in the identification of emerging issues that have the potential to shape the policy agenda over the medium to longer term.

### Forward Scanning includes:

- Analysis making of trends and their potential policy implications as an integral part of all research projects undertaken by the PRI;
- Collaboration with similar organizations for the identification and monitoring of international trends, developments and priorities;
- Synthesis of non-government sources on futures scanning and trends analysis;
- Staging small discussion circles of senior public servants and experts; and
- Developing scenarios and future narratives as ways of exploring policy strategies.

### The MetaScan Project

Working with partner departments, the MetaScan will look for trends, change drivers and discontinuities that will shape Canada and federal government policy over the next decade. The project will use a range of foresight tools and collaboration software to help partners share, explore and test their assumptions about what is changing and what these changes mean for the government as a whole. The project seeks to identify the potential threats, opportunities and challenges that are of interest to policy and decision makers.

### The PRI will:

- Provide a collaborative web accessed workspace to support on-going scanning, sharing and analysis by all partners;
- Create a virtual resource centre;
- Organize capacity building, scenario and other workshops as needed;
- Conduct outreach activities to share and validate findings and to learn from others;
- Contribute analysis and other resources on insights and change drivers;
- Assist in integrating material into a forward-looking whole-of-government scan; and
- Produce complementary products.

### Activities and Products

1. Participate in ongoing, scanning, contribute insights / trends / drivers relevant to the medium-term planning.
2. Contribute internal (and some external) experts to participate in specific scenario workshops, on-line dialogues or papers as needed to develop an integrated analysis.
3. Lead, contribute and/or prepare analysis for emerging issue.
4. Contribute to an evergreen (possibly annual) scan.

### *Exercise to analyse possible impacts of the recession and recovery May-June 2009*

There is strong concern regarding the recession, how it may evolve (how deep and how long) and how we might best prepare for the period to follow. Depending on its depth, duration and "shape", the recession and recovery will have profound impacts on policy and programs in every federal department. As the economy interacts with important change drivers it could create new and unforeseen challenges.

As a first step to demonstrate the value of collaborative scanning, the PRI is working with interested departments, to identify change drivers and participate in the preparation of a matrix that explores the impacts those change drivers may have in different recession/recovery scenarios.

## **Over 13 years in Policy Research Expertise**

### **Policy Research**

The most significant deployment of PRI resources is in the development of knowledge coming from early-stage policy research projects. Policy research may involve a mix of synthesis, primary and secondary research on a wide range of emerging issues. These are examined through a government-wide lens in collaboration with federal partners and with the benefit of external experts.

The PRI contributes to the understanding of issues under consideration by collecting knowledge and research findings from completed and ongoing projects. In addition, it undertakes targeted research programs to address specific requirements. The PRI has a 13-year legacy of developing policy-relevant knowledge. Its staff has developed extensive subject matter expertise and proficiency in research methodologies.

In 2009-2011, the PRI will focus its research efforts on areas that may result in changes to the analytic frame used to assess policies in a rapidly evolving economic, social and environmental landscape. The PRI will also focus on building tools that help departments to effectively implement horizontal policies.

# Policy Research: Economic Research and Analysis Practice

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Members of the team have developed expertise at both the macroeconomic and microeconomic level as well as having specialized expertise in the use of analytical methods such as benefit cost analysis, micro simulation and qualitative assessment. They are experienced in medium-term planning, scanning, and forward-looking activities. Research results have been instrumental in the development of the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) agenda, the implementation of the Science and Technology Strategy, and the modernization of regulatory policies. Research activities have also informed discussions among senior officials (Deputy Ministers and Assistant Deputy Ministers).

## Regulatory Strategy Project

The Regulatory Strategy Project looks at the changing nature of regulation and its use in addressing public policy challenges. The Regulatory Strategy Project Research Plan (RSPRP) is a

result of several unique but inter-related efforts addressing at least one of the four established PRI business lines. There are efforts that aim to generate unique research, transfer knowledge, enhance capacity and assist with forecasts. Initiatives are either applied or strategic in focus. Most of the applied work will directly benefit government regulators and managers by assisting them with regulatory impact analyses. The strategic work is of interest to medium term decision makers who are interested in how the future regulatory environment may or can change. The PRI anticipates that the initiatives outlined below will undoubtedly evolve in scope and content as discussions with Regulatory Strategy Steering Committee (RSSC) members, co-sponsors and authors take place.

## Research Outcomes

- Provided insights on regulatory governance issues regarding:
  - Accountability;
  - Transparency;
  - Effectiveness;
  - Globalization;
  - The changing nature of technological, economic and social risks;
  - Canada as a 'first mover';
  - The potential to motivate 'other players';
  - The impact of applying resources to technical analysis (which may result in a gap between strategic and forward looking capacities).
  
- Provided knowledge transfer and capacity enhancement efforts to federal regulators.

## Products

1. Economic Value of Avoiding the Health Effects of Greenhouse Gases.
2. Economic Appraisal of Power Generation Options for North America (Carbon Capture and Storage vs. Wind/Solar).
3. Implementation Strategy for Adopting a Regulatory Budget and Agenda (with risk ranking).
4. Adapting to the Changing Nature of Risks (e.g., nanotechnology): Canada's Strategy.
5. Leadership and Economic Implications for 'moving first' for Top 3 Policy issues.
6. Enhanced quantitative Regulatory Impact Analyses and its Effects on the Capacity to Think Strategically about Regulations.

## Events

1. Deputy Minister's Dinner on Regulatory Strategy II.
2. Convening of the Regulatory Strategy Project (RSP) Advisory Council.
3. Roundtable with RSP Steering Committee regarding work plan for 10-11.
4. Regulatory Impact Analysis Conference.

## Policy Research: Economic Research and Analysis Practice (continued)

### **Economic Platforms and Project Based Innovation**

This project will draw policy insights from emerging research on changing international business practices, and from case studies, to suggest ways that the federal government might best advance the entry and participation of Canadian business in cross-border integrated industries and shared North American networks.

The project will investigate new ways for governments and the private and academic sectors to collaborate on projects that seek competitive advantage.

#### **Research Outcomes**

- Identify strategic policy development concerns that must be tackled in addressing common objectives with the United States and Mexico relating to shared industries, and to develop Canadian intra-industry competitive advantages especially in higher-value tasks;
- In conjunction with federal partners, facilitate and undertake topical studies and case studies that shed light on where various policy initiatives, joint or unilateral, might need to be enhanced, streamlined, or eliminated; and
- Develop policy options for how governments can complement the profit motive and intellectual curiosity to support innovation consistent with the public interest.

### **The Broader Determinants of Productivity**

This project will research and analyze the relationships and interrelationships between productivity and some of its non-traditional determinants, such as social policy, management techniques, institutional and regulatory frameworks, and commercial culture.

The project will also assess potential policy levers that could further support productivity growth and identify potential effects on productivity of existing policies that are not primarily targeted at productivity.

#### **Research Outcomes**

- Improve knowledge of the linkages between productivity and some of its non-traditional determinants; and
- Assess of existing obstacles to enhanced productivity growth and identification of potential policy levers that could further support productivity growth.

#### **Products**

1. Implications of Border Costs for 'Trade in Tasks' in a North American context.
2. Evidence on the Cost Impacts of the Border for Canadian Business.
3. Discussion document.
4. Test-bed Demonstrative Analytic Work Highlighting Relevance of New Methods.
5. Topical and Case Studies.
6. Framework document on collaborative innovation projects.
7. Summary and synthesis of related empirical research.

#### **Events**

1. Worldwide Immigration Consultant Services/US Think Tanks.
2. Richard Baldwin Seminar.
3. International Consultation.
4. Canada-US Summit on Integrated Industries and Cross-Border Regional Development.
5. Event on Open Innovation.
6. Roundtable with key potential partners.

# Policy Research: Sustainable Development Practice

## Research Staff

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Senior Policy  
Researcher

Members of this team have diverse backgrounds in environmental management, biology, geography, economics, political science, public administration, and public engagement. They also have wide range of experience in government, including science, economic and social policy departments and central agencies, as well as academic, private and not for profit sectors. Building on Canadian and international research and experience, the team explores innovative governance and management tools to advance the integration of environmental, social and economic considerations into existing policy processes and operations in the federal government. The work supports the elements of sustainable development: innovation, integration, measurement, societal engagement and learning.

## Products

1. Literature review on transition approaches and review of practical experiences in Canada and elsewhere.
2. Lessons learned from international and provincial experiences in collaboration and integration for Sustainable Development.
3. Integrating Sustainable Development into the expenditure management system – challenges and opportunities in Canada and other jurisdictions.
4. *Horizons* edition on Integrated Management.
5. Literature review on climate change and human rights (in-house).
6. Report of HRSD workshops on climate change and social policy (in-house).
7. Summary reports of PRI climate change adaptation research.

## Pathways to a Low Carbon Society

This project will advance understanding of governance and institutional innovations which could best support Canada's transition to a low carbon society that is sustainable, competitive and secure. Three concurrent and related streams are being explored:

- A structured scenario building exercise to explore a range of plausible futures and assumptions of what a low carbon society could look like in Canada;
- An exploration of approaches to transition governance, including practical experience and learnings in other jurisdictions. The roles and responsibilities of governments and other societal actors will be explored; and
- Selected aspects of sustainable consumption and production trends will be examined for potential to contribute to the transition approach.

## Research Outcomes

- Share knowledge and foster a learning network and community of practice on innovative approaches to governance of complex policy issues;
- Identify emerging opportunities for policy interventions and further research;

## Events

1. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada workshops on climate change adaptation and social policy.
2. Roundtable on climate change and human rights.
3. Federal workshop on mainstreaming climate change adaptation.
4. Roundtable on transition approaches.
5. Roundtable on integrating sustainable development into the expenditure management system.
6. Roundtable to discuss outcomes of climate change adaptation research.

## Policy Research: Sustainable Development (Continued)

### **Place Based Approaches to Integrated Management**

This project looks at the growing trend toward place based governance approaches, such as integrated watershed management, and the possibilities for advancing the integration of economic, environmental and social considerations in planning and management practices. Special focus is put on considerations for the role of the federal government. This work builds on a number of research documents and workshops from PRI's project on water. An issue of *Horizons* that explores the trend and related issues will be released in winter, 2010.

#### **Research Outcomes**

- Raise awareness of place based integrated management efforts underway across the federal system, and identify opportunities and tools for enhanced collaboration;
- Help strengthen capacity to implement the federal sustainable development act over the medium term;
- Support a community of practice, within and outside the federal government, that brings together expertise from different policy domains;
- Explore new tools and approaches (e.g., geospatial data; scenario building) with the objective of supporting policy-making.

### **Incorporating Climate Change and Other Environmental Risks into Management**

Climate change poses a variety of risks, each with its own degree of severity, likelihood, and imminence. Mitigation and adaptation are both necessary to address climate change risks. This project examines how federal planning processes and those developed in other jurisdictions, can integrate climate change and other environmental risks. It includes workshops with federal departments and others to help raise awareness of climate risks and adaptation approaches, as well as research to better understand how other jurisdictions are mainstreaming climate change adaptation into their management practices.

#### **Research Outcomes**

- Inform efforts across departments to address the challenges of dealing with uncertainty over the long-term, and support integration of environmental, social and economic considerations into policy and program decisions; and
- Explore mechanisms that support the integration of SD principles into government planning.

## Policy Research: Social Research and Analysis

### Research Staff

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Senior Policy  
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Jean Kunz, Director

Jennifer Robson, Senior  
Policy Researcher

Social research and analysis skills and staff come from a broad range of disciplines – including economics, political science, sociology, history and geography. They bring to their work a wide range of research and strategic skills – including trend analysis; scenario building; micro-simulation; historical, comparative and other contextual analysis; synthesis and visual presentation of complex phenomena and data – developed through a range of experience acquired in government (including both social policy departments and central agencies) and in independent think tanks or as independent researchers in different parts of Canada and abroad.

### Emerging Challenges in the Social Management of Risk

This project seeks to identify emerging or prospective shifts in exposure of Canadians to a variety of adverse risks they may

encounter over the course of their lifetimes. The project also assesses the shifts in the ability or willingness of different "social actors" to assume some of these risks or to otherwise help Canadians prevent, mitigate or cope with adverse events.

The project will involve a number of distinct streams, some of which will focus on the comparative strengths and weaknesses of different social actors in providing social support, notably families, the community sector (broadly defined), and market actors. Other streams will focus on particular kinds of risks that tend to occur at different stages in the lifecourse (e.g., "late" lifecourse risks, including retirement income and care giving risks, as well as "early" lifecourse risks related to unemployment, family needs, etc.) and how these may translate into different patterns of strengths and weaknesses among potential social support providers.

Each stream will involve the organization of web-based Communities of Practice to aid in the development of preliminary analytical framework documents, and in the identification of key research and policy gaps to be further explored.

### Products

1. Series of analytical framework documents.
2. Series of research papers and research/policy briefs.
3. Themed issue(s) of *Horizons*.
4. Final (synthesis) report.

### Events

1. Roundtables.
2. Web-based foresight and policy dialogues.
3. Short (1-day) conferences and/or sessions on future PRI-sponsored policy research symposia.

## Policy Research: Social Research and Analysis (Continued)

### Research Outcomes

Identification of changing patterns of risk and of the comparative strengths and weaknesses of alternative social support providers will help policy-makers:

- Identify emerging needs and opportunities for policy interventions; and
- Better distinguish between situations where direct government support is warranted from those where indirect support may be more likely to be effective.

### Multicultural Diversity in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Canada

Launched in summer 2006, this is a joint project between the Policy Research Initiative and the Multiculturalism and Human Rights Branch then housed in the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH), on Canada's approach to multicultural diversity. It identifies the opportunities and pressures in fostering inclusive citizenship in multicultural Canada which is increasingly diverse with successive waves of immigration. Phase one of the project consisted of roundtable consultations in eight cities across Canada on the current state of Canada's approach to multicultural diversity and policy research gaps. The results were presented to senior management at PCH for the multiculturalism file as well as public servants working on the topic such as multiculturalism champions of federal departments and agencies. Phases two of the project focused on select topics identified in the roundtable consultations, including integration of the 'new' second generation, dealing with religious diversity in the public sphere as well as spatial patterns of cultural diversity and their possible implications for policy. In addition, the project contributes to another PRI project, Canada 2017, by developing scenario analysis of Canada's 3M futures (i.e., multicultural, multi-linguistic, and multi-religious).

### Research Outcomes

In conjunction with previous studies, reports and publications under this project, remaining publications to be completed in 2009-2010 aim to provide policy-makers with a better information base and analytical framework for the design of policies in the wake of increasing ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity.

### Publications

1. Analytical framework for research and policy design.
2. Research briefs on the pattern of linguistic and religious diversity.
3. Final report.

## Policy Research: Social Research and Analysis (Continued)

### **Investing in Youth**

Ensuring that young people are adequately prepared to become active and engaged citizens is a key preoccupation for policy-makers in Canada and around the world. Started in 2007, this project examines the changing realities, issues and challenges of today's youth, including new conditions/aspects of vulnerability and implications for public policy. It develops a knowledge base and framework, by identifying methodological strategies and examining new international thinking and policy approaches for supporting analysis, measurement of and responses to, emerging youth-related issues in Canada. The main body of outstanding work planned under the Investing in Youth project will be completed in fiscal 2009-10.

### **Research Outcomes**

In conjunction with the reports and activities previous completed under the project over the course of the last two fiscal years, remaining publications to be completed in 2009-2010 aim:

- To disseminate the overall results of its research to a broad community of practice interested in youth issues; and
- To provide federal policy-makers in particular with broad context and a framework for designing potential policy changes to track the evolving needs (and increasingly diverse situations) of Canada's youth.

### **Publications**

1. Analytic framework for researching, developing and evaluating youth policy.
2. Study on evolution of youth values in Canada.
3. Study of financial autonomy among youth in Canada.
4. Series of policy briefs and fact sheets on Canadian youth.
5. Final report.

# Building Capacity within the Federal Research Community

## Staff

Thomas Townsend,  
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## Capacity Enhancement

Capacity involves the ability to generate knowledge on emerging medium-term horizontal issues within the federal government, the ability to detect and assimilate knowledge from external sources and the ability to use a wide variety of tools to address these issues.

Capacity enhancement includes:

- Collaborative exercises with selected groups (i.e., United States think-tanks, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)) to explore medium-term horizontal issues;
- Collaborative initiatives for the development of a Policy Research Community of Practice; and
- Enhanced research infrastructure through the Policy Research Data Group.

## Policy Research Data Group

The PRI will continue to guide and facilitate the renewal of the Policy Research Data Group (PRDG) through its role as Chair. In this last year of Data Gaps II funding, PRDG will oversee and administer \$9.5 million to address data gaps in cross-cutting policy areas important for the federal government and will lead an initiative to realign and restructure PRDG to better service the changing data and research needs of the federal government.

### Outcomes

- Address data gaps in cross-cutting priority policy areas for the federal government;
- Synchronize and better align the funding of new data development with emerging priorities; and
- Facilitate the exchange of ideas on data and research with the federal research and data community.

### Activities

1. Provide leadership in stimulating, assessing and funding horizontal data proposals.
2. Provide a collaborative federal forum to exchange and share ideas related to data and research.
3. Explore new directions for the future of PRDG and develop a transition strategy.
4. Initiate the development of a Policy Research Community of Practice.
5. Capacity, Collaboration and Culture: The Future of the Policy Research Function in Canada.
6. The Role of a Restructured PRDG/Data Gaps Initiative.
7. Departments Forward Research Agendas.

## Knowledge Management

### Staff

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The Knowledge Management division's role is to guide, advise and support the PRI, ensuring that the core work of the organization is disseminated to its key audiences and stakeholders. It pursues its role using proactive, strategic and innovative approaches that contribute to its achieving the goals set out by the 4 key themes of this business plan.

The Knowledge Management team contributes directly to the PRI's knowledge transfer mandate through its three key activities: communication, special events and conferences, and information technology. All three are intertwined - working together to support the PRI in several important ways by, for example:

- providing the means for the PRI to share knowledge and undertake outreach activities with key communities and stakeholders;
- putting in place innovative software and web 2.0 tools to transform PRI into a cutting edge organization;
- creating promotional messages and products to increase visibility, build capacity and facilitate the maintenance and development of new relationships;
- marshalling knowledge by packaging publications in targeted and strategic ways to reach appropriate audiences; and
- ensuring that knowledge, once acquired, remains broadly available as an essential resource for future research needs.

## Office Management Function

PRI functions at arm's length as part of the Human Resources and Skills Development Canada portfolio. The reporting structure is unique and, as a consequence, office management, finance and human resource services are specific. The salary and non-salary allotments are both affected by this support. The human resources function provides management and coordination advice regarding staffing, compensation, and classification services. The financial and office management function provides internal budget management, policy and guideline advice, as well as procurement and contracting services in support of the PRI mandate and its staff.

## **Management and Accountability**

### **Ensuring Relevance**

Work undertaken by the PRI supports the medium-term planning objectives of the federal government. To ensure that the efforts of the organization are consistent with that purpose, PRI receives its general direction from a steering committee of Deputy Ministers representing the Policy Committees and Priorities and Planning. In addition, individual research initiatives are normally vetted and reported through the Policy Committee most involved with the research being conducted. Individual projects are overseen by a steering committee composed of the participating departments.

### **Promoting Rigor**

Work undertaken by the PRI is controlled for quality through both the application of a general project methodology and subjecting individual research products to review. The approach to the formation, structuring and execution of PRI research projects is laid out in an annex to this business plan entitled “The PRI way”. Individual work is subject to three levels of review, internal PRI review by researchers involved in all practice areas, review by the project working and steering group members composed of representatives of participating departments and external peer review by scholars knowledgeable in the topic area.

### **Structuring the Work Efficiently**

Policy research and empirical evidence is a crucial component in the policy development process and evidence-based decision making. Policy research units within government must make a strategic choice between conducting policy research internally, contracting out targeted research or undertaking a combination of both. The PRI’s position, in terms of early-stage policy development for a government-wide agenda along with the provision of service to CCDM, Privy Council Office and the senior policy community, demands that the PRI examine its implicit make/buy decision tree to better reflect the new realities and the emerging potential sensitivities.

The PRI, in drafting its work plan, must systematically assess a number of crucial factors affecting the make/buy choice of policy research, including:

- Sensitivity;
- Core competencies of the PRI;
- Strategic and non-strategic materials;
- Competitive factors and the supply of research;
- Cost effectiveness and the budget constraint;
- Competing priorities;
- Timelines, deadlines, and early-stage policy development process; and
- Client considerations, most particularly the Deputy Minister’s Steering Committee and CCDM process.

PRI is committed to developing and utilizing to the government’s advantage the growing capacity resident in universities and think tanks, following as a general rule that the PRI should undertake research which no one else can do. That said, the PRI will maintain subject matter expertise to direct research efforts, manage the process, assess the quality of the final research, and synthesize research to an appropriate level for use by the senior policy community.

## **Talent Management**

To deliver successfully on the PRI's strategic priorities, the PRI must strengthen and prioritize resources internally.

In turn, this implies that the organization must develop and implement operational and human resources strategies that will appropriately support the realigned activities.

Staff must balance two essential sets of competencies: policy and research. The policy competency requires anticipating emerging issues framed in terms of government interest, identified knowledge gaps, and new research, while the research competency implies spearheading and conducting research with others, that may connect with interests and policy development concerns outside and inside government, with a view to handing off, in appropriate course, the research results to the federal policy development process. In addition to these core competencies, staff members must demonstrate strong communication skills to ensure the effective transfer of knowledge and work.

The PRI current staff strength is 34 full-time employees (FTEs). Of the 34 FTEs, 30 are indeterminate, one is a secondment and three are a result of interchange agreements. Research staff (EC-05-08) typically hold a master's degree or Ph.D. and have specific subject matter expertise. In addition to well-developed research competencies, staff members, in general, have skills that allow for flexible interchange among projects.

Work is managed on a project basis. Each project has a lead and up to two research staff. Leads in many cases fulfill three functions: management, research, and administration of the project. In addition, project leads spend approximately one quarter of their time raising and securing outside funding for their project(s).