



Government  
of Canada

Gouvernement  
du Canada

May 2009

## Overview of the *canada@150* Project

The *canada@150* project brings together 150 early-career public servants to look at the policy challenges the country is likely to face in 2017 (Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday) and to explore the implications for the Federal Public Service. Participants come from across the country and every department, bringing a broad array of educational and professional backgrounds to the discussion. The project will last for one year (June 2008-June 2009) and is organized around four conferences.

## Summary of Phase II (October-February) Leading to the Québec City Conference

In October 2008, at its second conference in Vancouver, *canada@150* launched Phase II of the project. Participants reflected on the major policy challenges Canada will face in the coming decade based on the emerging issues and trends identified in the first phase of the project. Through an innovative scenario process, participants identified the key policy challenges of the next decade and subsequently set up working groups to study them.

After the Vancouver conference, each group prepared an analysis of their policy challenge and developed policy options that could address the impacts of the challenge ten years in the future. *canada@150* is a participant-driven project, and as such participants themselves were responsible for developing their own work plans and timelines. At the same time, substantial support for group work was provided through online facilitation, Assistant Deputy Ministers acting as mentors for each group, reference documents explaining the policy development process, and check-ins with the *canada@150* Secretariat.

Another important component of Phase II was the participant-driven peer review process. Each policy challenge group was required to test their ideas with another group, who then gave constructive criticism and offered suggestions for improvement. The peer review component helped to avoid silos in the *canada@150* process, encouraging participants to use the interactive features of the collaborative website to provide feedback on each others' work.



### Contact us:

*canada@150* Secretariat  
56 Sparks St, First Floor,  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5A9  
[canada150@prs-srp.gc.ca](mailto:canada150@prs-srp.gc.ca)  
[www.pri-prp.gc.ca](http://www.pri-prp.gc.ca)

## Policy Challenges

How Canada can contribute to bringing together emerging economies and traditional powers to work on key international challenges	Removing barriers to engaging in the knowledge-based economy
Ensuring security while protecting human rights to encourage cohesion	Integrating diverse groups into Canadian society, politics and the economy
Repositioning Canada in the global marketplace	Move towards responsive governance
Federal-Provincial-Municipal distribution of power	Unlocking the potential of marginalized groups
Encourage a shift from raw natural resources to value-added goods and services for competitiveness and sustainability	The urgent need for a holistic approach to health
Reconciling economic growth and environmental protection at the national and global scales	Seizing new opportunities and meeting new challenges in Canada's North
Greening transportation technology, infrastructure, and corridors	Adapting Federal government structures to address complex issues coherently
Preserving cities local space to preserve cities global place	

## The Third Conference: 23-24 February 2009 in Québec City

The third *canada@150* conference was held in Québec City in February 2009. The project's co-champions, Jean-François Tremblay, Assistant Secretary, Priorities and Planning at the Privy Council Office, and Thomas Townsend, Executive Head of the Policy Research Initiative, welcomed participants and set the context for the conference. With eight months of work elapsed since the beginning of the project, the final phase was now in view. The goals of the third conference were to:

- review the work of the policy challenge groups and
- begin to explore how the Public Service may need to adapt to meet future challenges.





### **Selected examples of initiatives beyond the official renewal plan**

The Natural Resources Canada wiki (and the subsequently launched government-wide wiki at <http://www.gcpeia.gc.ca/>)

Public servant voices like An Inconvenient Renewal (<http://sites.google.com/site/aninconvenientrenewal/>) and the [www.cpsrenewal.ca](http://www.cpsrenewal.ca) blog

The youth network-developed Young Newcomer Internship Program (YNIP) at Citizenship and Immigration

### **Five questions to think about when considering Public Service renewal**

1. What kinds of people and skills will we need in the Public Service?
2. How will we manage our talent?
3. How will we do our work?
4. What tools will the government use?
5. Who else will we work with, and in what ways?

Underlying question: What is the role of the Public Service in 2017?

This conference would initiate a discussion on the future of the Public Service, leading to the creation of a new working group responsible for integrating policy challenge group insights into an overall Public Service renewal piece.

## **Critical Review with Expert Panels**

On the first day of the conference, sixteen policy challenge groups spent the morning discussing their work with expert panels, which included Assistant Deputy Ministers and public policy experts invited from academia. These expert panelists came to the conference prepared, having reviewed each groups' work in advance. At the conference itself, each group also delivered a presentation on their work – some of which were quite innovative, involving multimedia and even skits. Panelists offered advice on how participants could strengthen their work, including sharpening the scope of their policy challenges, assessing the different options proposed, and refining their methodology.

## **From Policy Challenges to Public Service Renewal**

After defining and analysing policy challenges during phase II, groups were introduced to the notion of Public Service renewal and began to reflect on how the Public Service of today may need to adapt to meet the policy challenges of tomorrow. Anatole Papadopoulos, Senior Analyst at the Privy Council Office, argued that how we work in the Public Service matters to what we want to achieve and presented an overview of Public Service renewal. He focused both on the Clerk of the Privy Council's official renewal plan as well as on the many 'unofficial' initiatives that have been undertaken to improve how the Public Service works. He noted that while there is sometimes scepticism about changing the Public Service, many past renewal efforts have led to real improvements in areas like performance management (e.g. through performance pay for executives), gender equity, and leadership and development programming.

'Unofficial' renewal initiatives are like "spin offs" from the official renewal agenda. These initiatives explore new ways of working, including adapting external models to Public Service business (e.g. the NRCan wiki or the new GEDS 2.0, which is a Facebook-style concept applied in a professional context). Such initiatives are often bottom-up, with individuals, networks and communities showing leadership and making a difference in their work environment.

At the close of the presentation, participants were encouraged to consider key questions about Public Service renewal (see questions at left) in relation to their policy challenges, covering both the people who make up the Public Service as well as the nature of Public Service work.

## Panel: Learning About the Future of Governance

Jacques Bourgault, Université du Québec à Montréal,  
Louis Coté, École Nationale d'Administration Publique, and  
Alain Noel, Université de Montréal.

Questions asked of panelists: *Describe two or three trends that have influenced the public service. What will influence the next 10 years? What is your vision of the public service of 2017?*

The three panelists outlined their view of the future of public sector organizations, management, policy instruments and competencies. While financial management and results have become critical in the current environment, there is an increasing emphasis on citizen-centered services. This will become a defining feature of the future public service.

Panelists described a future in which the Public Service will become agile with dynamic 'smart' rules. It will give more autonomy to its employees, allow for more creativity, and be increasingly governed by broad directions and norms. Future public servants will have to manage complex issues of governance: it is likely that individual regions in Canada will host several political, social, or financial centers, resulting in potential struggles over jurisdiction and authority.

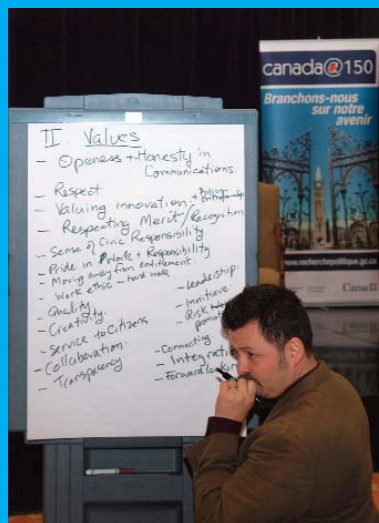
Panelists noted that demographic change will have a great influence on policy development. A layer of senior management will be leaving, which will create a significant disruption unless we find ways to transmit the knowledge they will take with them. At the same time, policy development will be pushed to include new voices to participate in decision-making.

## Guided Visioning Exercise: Implications for the Public Service

Participants took part in a guided visioning process to elaborate on findings from the policy challenge groups and explore the demands they put on the Public Service in the future. This session provided a foundation for the work on the Public Service implications and renewal options that groups will explore in the final phase of *canada@150*.

Some examples of ideas arising from this brainstorming session include:

- Devolve management: the level of the organization closest and most affected by a problem is the most appropriate for addressing it
- Create meaningful relationships and spaces (online and physical) within departments, within government, between governments, between regions and with the public
- Recognize and value different streams of employees (i.e. leaders, managers, specialists, generalists), and discuss these various streams with employees early in their careers



- Develop a less risk averse culture
- Reduce hierarchy and work across departments
- Use modern technology (e.g. Web 2.0 tools)

## Keynote address: The Future of the Public Service

Gilbert Charland, Secretary General of *Services Québec*, presented a public sector initiative put forward by the Government of Quebec: *Services Québec*, an organization that offers more direct and efficient services while reducing costs through the use of new technologies. He described the challenges of service delivery, including answering citizens' needs, offering services from many departments with varying priorities, and ensuring confidentiality. He noted that while new technologies offer many interesting solutions, they cannot replace the expertise public servants bring to their work.

Mr. Charland also spoke to the evolving relationship between politicians and public servants. He described a world in which decisions must be made ever more quickly and over which politicians will demand greater control. Civil servants will need to find ways to be responsive to the priorities set by politicians, while still providing the essential service of offering accurate information before decisions are made and ensuring sound implementation of policies.

## Launching the Final Phase of *canada@150*

Before closing a successful and stimulating two-day conference, participants took a look back over the first two phases of the project, and engaged in a discussion on the third and final phase of their work (February-June 2009). Overall, an impressive amount of work had been completed to date: participants had undertaken a major scan of the policy environment; they had identified key challenges for Canada in 2017 based on their scan; and they had begun their policy challenge analysis and to draft papers that will propose intellectually solid and thought-provoking options for change.

Phase III of the project will see participants refine their policy challenge work as well as extend their analysis to address the future implications for the public service. Participants reviewed their working arrangements and merged some groups. A new Public Service Renewal Group was also created and is working in parallel to provide an integrated paper on their vision for an effective Public Service in 2017. Both the policy challenge and Public Service analyses will be featured in the final *canada@150* report.



**Services Québec**  
(<http://www.gouv.qc.ca/portail/quebec/pgs/commun>)

