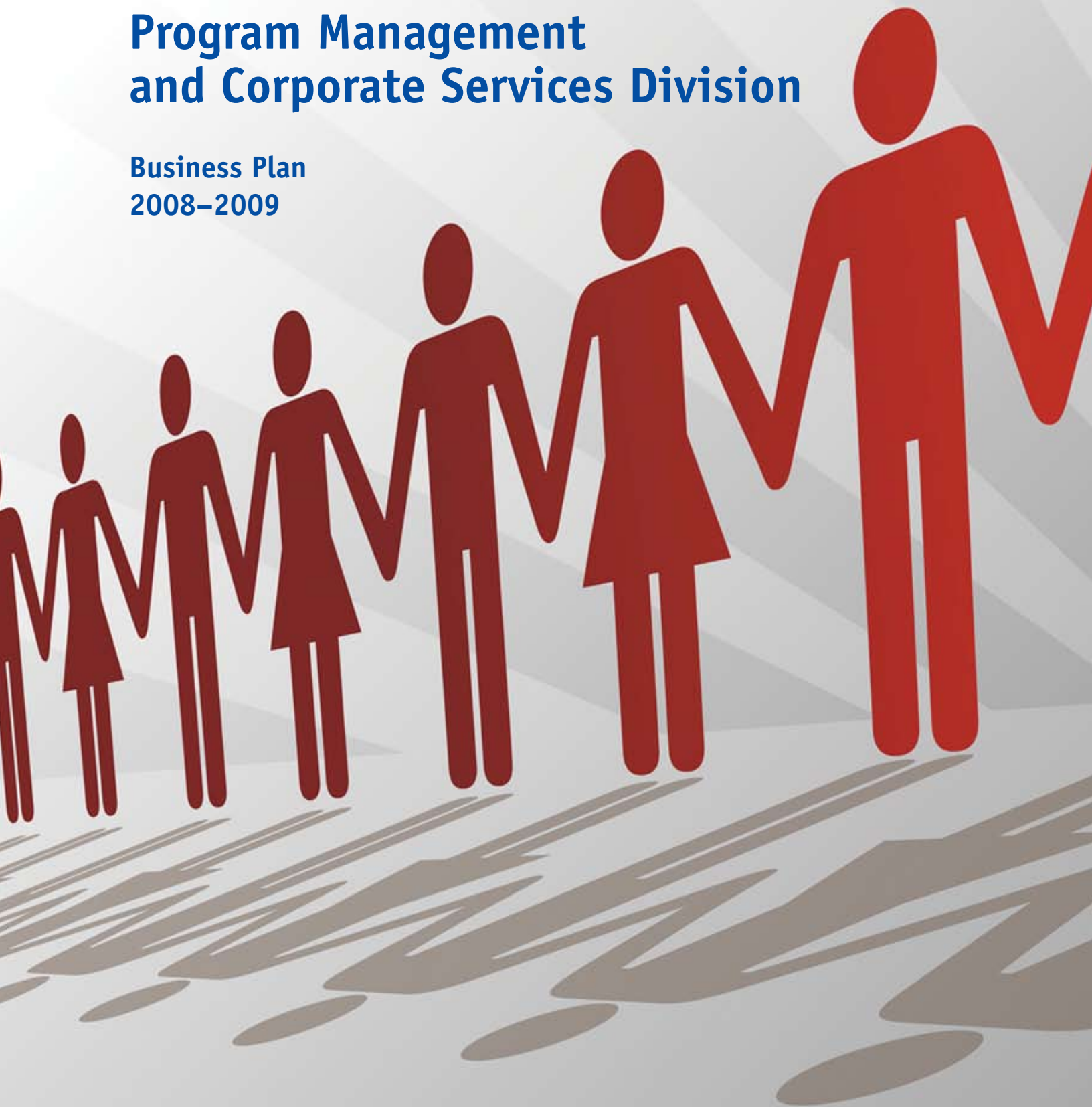


Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

# Program Management and Corporate Services Division

Business Plan  
2008–2009



**Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations**

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**Business Plan  
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**Department of Service Nova Scotia  
and Municipal Relations**  
Program Management and Corporate Services Division

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## Message from the Executive Director

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In our daily lives, many of us create or encounter opportunities to help others. Sometimes it's as simple as holding a door for someone else. Other times, we invest our time or money to improve another's quality of life.

As public servants our professional lives also present opportunities to contribute to the well-being of others. In our daily interactions with citizens, businesses, and other government officials, we can model the courteous, helpful behaviour we appreciate ourselves. Additionally, in Program Management and Corporate Services, our ability to lend a hand can happen on a large scale.

This business plan outlines the goals, priorities, and activities that will guide the Program Management and Corporate Services Division of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. More simply put, it's a document that describes how we plan to help others.

Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work. These cautionary words, by noted writer and management consultant Peter Drucker, will be well heeded. Managers and staff in this division will work energetically throughout the next 12 months to achieve our priorities and our goals. The commitments made in this document will be fulfilled, so citizens and businesses receive the help they need.

Cameron MacNeil  
Executive Director  
Program Management and Corporate Services

# Mission, Vision, and Values

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## Mission

Advance the policy, regulation, and administration of programs and services for business, consumers, and internal clients in a fair, consistent, and timely manner.

## Vision

Our efforts support a level playing field for business, consumers and the Nova Scotia taxpayer. The revenues administered by the division fund crucial programs and services for citizens. The support services we provide within the department and to external partners and government clients are second to none, and are recognized for the value they add.

## Values

- Fairness and consistency guide our interactions with clients, consumers, and taxpayers.
- Activities and services are timely and efficient, without compromising quality.
- Progress, innovation, and consultation are encouraged.
- Clients and staff deserve respect, privacy, confidentiality, and the highest standards of integrity.
- Staff have important contributions to make and merit investment in their professional development.
- Collaborative approaches to problem solving are favoured.

# Goals

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## Division Goals

Our goals describe the outcomes we hope to achieve. They remain fairly constant over time, but this year marks the addition of goal 6, which reflects the focus now being placed on organizational excellence.

1. Improve the protection of the revenue base assigned to the department by fair and effective enforcement and collection activities.
2. Enhance tax compliance through the effective development and consistent application of tax policy, legislation and regulations that support government objectives and minimize unnecessary burden on businesses.
3. Enhance consumer protection services and promote an orderly market place through improved program design and delivery.
4. Enhance the effectiveness of human resources and financial services delivery within the department.
5. Improve the quality of corporate support services provided by the division.
6. Increase organizational excellence by enhancing the department's decision-making and accountability framework.

## Department Framework

By achieving our goals Program Management and Corporate Services contributes in a significant way to the goals of the larger department. Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is organized into two divisions and one branch that has three divisions:

- Program Management and Corporate Services
- Access Nova Scotia
  - Service Delivery
  - Information Management Services
  - Strategy, Integration and Registries
- Municipal Services

## Department Goals

The department works collectively to accomplish the following five goals:

1. Partner with municipalities to promote effective local government and healthy and vibrant communities
2. Improve accessibility and quality of government information and services in a cost-effective manner, while maintaining security, integrity, and accuracy of records/data and revenues
3. Modernize departmental programs and infrastructure to support citizen-centred service models and to address emerging issues
4. Provide a motivating work environment and develop staff to meet current and future departmental needs
5. Enhance the strategic decision-making capacity in the department

## Tax Policy and Administration

**Frank Moore**  
Provincial Tax Commissioner

### What We Do

We provide an effective and efficient taxation system that optimizes provincial revenues and promotes consistency, fairness, and service excellence through the development and consistent application of tax policy, legislation, regulations, and communications.

Areas of focus include gasoline and diesel oil tax; tax on private purchase of motor vehicles, boats, vessels, and aircraft; tobacco tax; and international fuel tax for inter-jurisdictional carriers based in Nova Scotia.

### Our Priority

Fair administration

- We will create a level playing field for businesses that are compliant in the remittance of taxes by ensuring that taxes are applied in a fair and consistent manner and by enhancing the knowledge base of program staff.

### Our Activities

In 2008–2009 we will

- enhance our compliance assistance program, including a website redesign
- lead a social marketing campaign targeting illegal tobacco; this will include brochures directed at retailers and truckers, and two Crime Stoppers public service announcements directed at suppliers and consumers
- implement an information services agreement with Nova Scotia Crime Stoppers
- redesign and improve the Your Energy Rebate Program
- carry out staff training to ensure a consistent knowledge base among program employees
- continually update public information to reflect new developments in tax programs

## Measuring Our Success

Our success will be measured by

- a reduction of reported errors in processing claims and providing information to clients
- a reduction in the number of queries to the tax information line by staff, who should be able to self-serve most of their information needs
- an increase in the number of tips received by our Compliance Unit respecting illegal tobacco
- a positive comparison between the cost of the social marketing campaign, the information services agreement with Crime Stoppers, and the value of seized tobacco products

## Statistics

### Estimated Gross Tax Revenues

Gross tobacco tax revenue	\$140 million
Gross fuel tax revenue	\$257 million
Gross tax revenue on private purchase of vehicles, vessels, etc.	\$14 million
HST (provincial component) on vehicle importations	\$8.2 million
<b>Total Gross Tax Revenues</b>	<b>\$419.2 million</b>

### Estimated Rebates and Refunds

Fuel tax rebates, refunds, IFTA transmittals, commissions	\$8.2 million
Tobacco tax refunds and rebates	\$35 thousand
Your Energy Rebate (provincial component of HST)	\$46.7 million
Other rebates of HST (provincial component)	\$165 thousand
Rebates and refunds on private purchases	\$200 thousand
<b>Total Refunds and Rebates</b>	<b>\$55.3 million</b>

Number of public and client inquiries	3,000
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# Audit and Enforcement

**Bernie Meagher**  
Manager

## What We Do

Our activities protect the revenue base by providing audit and enforcement functions under the Revenue Act, the Petroleum Products Pricing Act (PPPA), and the Corporate Capital Tax Act.

## Our Priorities

- Implement an updated Audit and Enforcement strategy to increase visibility among vendors and consumers through more and appropriately targeted audits, inspections, and investigations
- Increase collaboration with the RCMP and other law enforcement agencies
- Implement the replacement International Fuel Tax Agreement processing system to come into compliance with IFTA and to meet SNSMR's business processes and IT requirements

## Our Activities

Implement an updated Audit and Enforcement strategy:

- We will develop an Audit and Enforcement strategy document and distribute it to staff. This will detail the numbers of investigations, audits, inspections, and compliance checks to be completed across fuel, tobacco, sales and corporate capital tax programs.
- We will restructure the Audit and Enforcement section and develop new job descriptions to help the section attract and retain qualified staff.
- Initially, the number of assessments and compliance actions (charges, letters of non-compliance, letters of warning, permit suspensions, etc.) will increase. Over several years, this should start to decrease as more vendors and individuals become compliant.
- We will implement the findings and action plan from the Quality Assurance project undertaken to address shortcomings in the Audit, Risk and Assessment Management System (ARAAMS) reporting system.

Increase collaboration with RCMP and other law enforcement agencies:

- The Compliance and Special Investigations section will work to further our partnership and collaboration with the RCMP Excise Section, CRA Investigations Directorate, and other agencies to combat tobacco smuggling.
- Two staff may be seconded to work with RCMP Customs and Excise, as well as joint forces operations, for a specific investigation or series of investigations.

- To enhance our ability to conduct investigations, we have reviewed the training needs of the compliance section. Some training will be provided by the Supervisor of Compliance and Special Investigations, and other training will be obtained externally. Regulatory enforcement training will be offered to all compliance staff, and a compliance manual will be developed.

Implement the replacement International Fuel Tax Agreement processing system:

- We will continue to work with the Access Nova Scotia branch to ensure that the implementation of the replacement International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) system meets all of our operational requirements as well as procedural requirements under IFTA. This includes ensuring that legacy data is converted onto the new system.

## Measuring Our Success

Our success will be measured by

- production and distribution of an Audit and Enforcement strategy document by September 30, 2008
- completion and implementation of a review of the Audit and Enforcement structure, including new job descriptions, by fall 2008
- achieving progress on the Quality Assurance action plan on ARAAMS, and reporting is available for all activities and outcomes of each section of the action plan
- monthly reporting of audits, inspections, investigations, and compliance actions, including charges and assessments
- tracking the number of investigations/charges from joint efforts with the RCMP and other partners
- monitoring the number of tobacco seizures in the province as well as the number of referrals from Crime Stoppers that are handled
- implementation of the International Fuel Tax Agreement replacement system that meets all of our operational requirements

## Statistics

	2006–2007	2007–2008
Fuel inspections	1,282	858
Tobacco inspections	382	417
Petroleum Products Pricing Act inspections	1,158	1,639
Tobacco investigations	26	84

## Collection Services

**Sharon Glazebrook**  
Manager

### What We Do

Collection Services has a strong legislated mandate to collect debts on behalf of all government departments and units. Staff in this section strike a balance between meeting the financial objectives of clients, while also recognizing the personal circumstances or difficulties that may have led to a debt default.

### Our Priority

We will increase the role of Collection Services in overall government debt recovery.

### Our Activities

In 2008–2009 we will

- motivate staff by providing training and development opportunities
- ensure that departments and government units are actively transferring debts that are more than 90 days delinquent
- foster positive working relationships by meeting regularly with client departments
- highlight the benefits of Collection Services to prospective new departments
- expand collection services to include collection of municipal fines

### Measuring Our Success

Our success will be measured by

- monitoring the percentage increase in revenues
- the status of efforts to implement an employee performance management program
- the number of new client departments recruited
- the quality of our relationship with existing client departments

### Statistics

Total number of accounts assigned	Over 132,000
Number of client departments	14 departments, 24 programs
Client department/program revenue collected	\$47 million over 5 years
Tax revenue monitored and recovered	\$2.1 billion in payments over 5 years
Recovery rate	Average of 68% of assigned files resolved
April 2008 recoveries for non-tax programs	\$1.9 million

# Consumer Programs

**Mike Duda**  
**Director**

## **What We Do**

We promote the interests of consumers through the regulation of business activities and by providing information and dispute resolution services. Areas regulated include cemeteries and funeral homes, direct sellers, collection agencies, lenders, consumer reporting agencies, and mortgage brokers.

Registration of condominiums and administration of the residential tenancies program also fall under the Consumer Programs mandate.

## **Our Priorities**

Consumer protection

- Enhancing protection for consumers continues to be a priority. We will focus our efforts on reviewing and updating legislation and regulations that provide marketplace protection for citizens and on developing information to help consumers in their dealings with businesses.

Process improvement

- We will review internal processes and improve them where possible to better serve those customers who rely on us for the licences they require to operate in Nova Scotia.

Petroleum products pricing

- Nova Scotians benefit from more stabilized gasoline prices as a result of retail gasoline price regulation. We will continue to administer a fair regulatory model for petroleum product pricing, with a focus on compliance activities.

Heating Assistance Rebate Program

- We will provide help to low-income Nova Scotians who are struggling to heat their homes.

## Our Activities

In 2008–2009 we will

- review the Condominium Act to identify opportunities for improvement
- complete a review of construction standards and warranty programs for newly built houses and condominium units
- implement a new regulatory regime for payday lenders
- develop regulations related to gift card expiry dates and fees
- update and develop new consumer information items
- enhance licensing and inspection processes to improve turnaround times
- review the findings of an independent evaluation of the petroleum products pricing regulatory regime to determine possible recommendations for improvement
- implement the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) to help low-income Nova Scotians who are struggling to heat their homes

## Measuring Our Success

Our success will be measured by

- completion of a review of the Condominium Act
- completion of the Homeowner Protection Review, and development of an action plan
- the implementation of a payday lender regulatory regime
- whether regulations related to gift card expiry dates and fees have been prepared
- the production and distribution of information material for consumers
- improved turnaround times for licensing and inspection activities
- completion of an independent evaluation of the petroleum products pricing regime
- successful implementation of the Heating Assistance Rebate Program

## Statistics

Number of licenses/permits/registrations issued annually	5,000
Number of business licensees inspected annually	70
Number of residential tenancies disputes mediated or arbitrated annually	2,500
Number of consumer inquiries and complaints received annually	800
Value of licensing and condominium registration fees collected annually	\$550,000

# Corporate Development

Rae Owen  
A/Director

## What We Do

Corporate Development is the engine of organizational excellence, the fifth strategic priority for SNSMR. By providing leadership, training, and support across the department in the use of the tools and techniques of continuous improvement, i.e., quality assurance, risk management, business continuity planning, occupational health and safety, etc., better decisions are made and our organization becomes even more effective, efficient, and customer centred.

## Our Priorities

Business continuity management

- A business continuity plan helps to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of critical customer services in the event of an emergency. A strategy has been completed. Site assessments, business impact analysis, and mitigation plans are ongoing.

Enterprise risk management

- ERM helps the department achieve the business goals and objectives in the business plan, minimizes operational disruptions and losses, prevents inconsistencies and gaps within policies, procedures, and guidelines, and helps ensure service delivery and program objectives are achieved. Based on the recognized standard within the public sector around the world – the Australian/New Zealand Risk Management Standard – we are developing a plan to integrate risk assessment into key departmental processes.

Departmental operational infrastructure

- The operating infrastructure of the department includes the physical assets (buildings, furniture, and equipment) and the internal processes that enhance the working environment and help staff achieve their career and job-related goals. Program enrichment and improvements in the physical environment will continue through 2008–2009.

## Our Activities

### Business continuity management

- In 2008–2009 we will complete a plan to ensure uninterrupted delivery of key department services during an emergency.
- When approved, the plan will move to the next phase, which involves ongoing monitoring, training, and developing a culture of continuous risk assessment.

### Enterprise risk management

- A transition plan will take enterprise risk management from the pilot stage to integration into the business planning process and several key processes in the department.
- We will train and support staff at the operational business planning level in the use of “best practices” risk assessment tools.

### Department operational infrastructure

- Quality assurance activities this fiscal year will target the 19 programs that have yet to undergo a QA process.
- Efforts will be carried out to create within Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations a culture of continuous quality improvement.
- We will review the Service Delivery Strategy in order to maximize integration with the department’s lease strategy as opportunities arise.
- Development of a project tracking system to provide regular updates of items required by central agencies is in progress.

## Measuring Our Success

### Our success will be measured by

- whether we have a comprehensive business continuity plan, along with a process for keeping it current
- completion of the outstanding 19 quality assurance activities
- an assessment of the benefits gained by better aligning leasing strategies with the Service Delivery Strategy
- the percentage of treatment plans integrated with business planning, Treasury and Policy Board submissions, and project proposals

## Statistics

Number of facilities managed	51
Staff satisfaction level with the quality assurance initiative content and delivery	95%
Number of Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy applications processed	42

## **Financial Services**

**Pamela Muir**  
**Director**

### **What We Do**

Financial Services provides financial advice, accounting, and budgeting services that help the department achieve its priorities.

Our goals are as follows:

- **Strategic:** to become strategic advisors to all our clients in the context of financial management; we seek to provide leadership and bring our expertise to all aspects of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations
- **Stakeholder management:** to assist the department in managing key stakeholders, from a financial perspective, by communicating departmental requirements, results, and issues with integrity and transparency
- **Financial risk management and internal control:** to implement a framework for financial best practices in risk management and internal control
- **Policy management:** to develop a policy framework based on current and best practice for financial management
- **Financial and accounting services:** to perform all financial and transaction processing activities with efficiency and integrity and provide decision makers with quality information
- **Financial management:** to lead and guide the Finance Corporate Services Unit's vision and direction in alignment with overall departmental and government-wide strategies

### **Our Priorities**

To align with the department goal of organizational excellence, Financial Services will focus on two key areas:

- **Documenting financial services processes**  
Clear documentation of processes will ensure that those processes are effective and efficient in meeting client needs. This will also allow for the most efficient use of resources.
- **Risk management and internal control**  
An appropriate system of internal controls over financial information is critical to the success of an organization. Identifying and mitigating financial risk also helps to ensure that financial resources are used to maximum effect.

## Our Activities

In 2008–2009 we will

- research, implement, and monitor an internal control and governance framework
- shorten the time required to reconcile bank deposits to revenues; the number of unreconciled items will be reduced
- improve the financial policies and internal controls by reviewing the process documentation that was carried out in 2007–2008
- consult with the management team to develop an audit plan; once audit staff have been hired, and based on the outcomes of the audits, develop financial policies to address any control weaknesses

## Measuring Our Success

Our success will be measured by

- creation of a set of policies and guidelines, known as the Financial Risk Management Framework, that sets the tone, expectations, and controls for the department
- having documented financial processes, adequate internal controls, and financial policies for Financial Services that satisfy stakeholders, such as the Controller's Office and Office of the Auditor General and result in the best utilization of resources
- how punctually and completely revenues are reconciled
- increased assurance that appropriate financial controls exist for financial processes outside of Financial Services

# Human Resources

**Isabel Haché**  
Director

## What We Do

It is the responsibility of the Human Resources unit to design and deliver a full complement of human resource services. These include staff relations, labour relations, compensation and benefits, staff development and training, human resource planning, organizational effectiveness, and recruitment and selection.

## Our Priorities

Succession planning

- The impact of employee departures will be mitigated through the development of a succession plan. Extensive work has already been completed on this project.

Resources

- Web-based resources that have been developed to help managers with recruitment, training and retention will be refined so they are even more useful to managers.

Employee training

- Staff effectiveness will be enhanced through role-specific training and by developing web-based information resources.

## Our Activities

Succession planning

- We will pilot a succession program in the Program Management and Corporate Services Division in the first six months of the fiscal year.

Resources

- Newly developed web resources, such as a bank of interview questions, will be improved, and we will promote them as a resource for managers.
- Work will be carried out to streamline the competition process. We will initiate a pilot with one management group for evaluation.

Employee training

- We will deliver recruitment and selection workshops to managers of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

## Measuring Our Success

Our success will be measured by

- employee satisfaction survey results
- evaluating results of the pilot succession program
- manager usage of online resources

## Statistics

Overall SNSMR staff satisfaction	81%
Employees who strive to improve their department's results	87%
Employees who are inspired to give their very best	81%
Employees who feel they have the qualifications to meet job needs	96%
Employees who feel they have access to training opportunities	75%

# Human Resource Renewal

Persistent labour shortages have been described as the most significant economic problem in Nova Scotia. In eight years, labour supply won't be enough to meet employment demand. According to Isabel Haché, Director of Human Resources for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, the near future also threatens unprecedented retirements from civil service and public sector employers.

Isabel has the data to back up her view. Chart after chart clearly shows the aging of the public service. "The persistent labour shortage is a new reality, and it's already becoming evident in our recruitment efforts," says Isabel. "Building leaders for the future, at a time when talent will be scarce, requires much more focus on planning and coming up with creative ways of delivering HR service. Our clients, both managers and candidates, are expecting simpler HR processes and more technology-based services."

Human resource planning has become a critical tool for executive and senior managers. The 2007 Human Resource Renewal initiative was developed to make sure that Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations can thrive as an organization in the face of these emerging challenges.

The plan has four areas of focus:

1. Further develop the human resource infrastructure and competencies and implement a service delivery model
2. Streamline and improve human resource processes
3. Use technology as a management tool in delivering human resource services
4. Implement a succession management program

The renewal initiative will result in a more strategic and effective effort to address human resource needs today, and into the future.

## **Infrastructure, competencies and service delivery model**

Human Resources will help managers by providing strategic human resource advice and by identifying opportunities for organizational improvement through continuous consultation. The initial internal focus will be on providing high-quality advice in a timely manner. An advisory council will also be created to provide staff and manager input into ongoing and new HR initiatives. This ground-breaking approach will help ensure that human resource efforts achieve maximum effect.

### **Streamlining processes and improvements**

Managers have identified that the length of time to recruit is an issue when faced with competition for talent. Human Resources will develop and pilot a streamlined and decentralized staffing process.

### **Using technology as a management tool in delivering HR service**

Managers, staff, and clients are expecting more of their interactions to be facilitated by technology. Web-based posting has been with us for a significant time, but there are more HR transactions and services that can benefit from technology, such as recruitment with enhanced applicant-tracking capability and online training initiatives. In addition, with improved human resource management information system reporting capabilities, the Human Resources CSU will be able to address workplace issues with senior managers.

### **Succession planning**

This is a key strategy for ensuring sustained organizational leadership and effectiveness and will involve developing leadership capacity throughout the organization. Twelve full-time equivalent positions will be dedicated to providing staff with opportunities to develop new skills and competencies through six-month

reassignments throughout the department. Creating a new approach to Human Resources is not without its risks. For HR Renewal to succeed, stakeholders must “buy in” to the process and role changes.

According to Isabel Haché, those risks pale when compared to the risk of doing nothing. Despite best efforts, the balance of power is shifting to the employee. It’s becoming an employee’s market. That likely means increased costs for labour, and gaps in services.

“Our success as an organization will hinge on our ability to identify and recruit talent, retain the talent we have, and find innovative ways to deliver services,” says Isabel. “I think we’re on the right path.”

The Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations HR Renewal initiative is supported by the HR Renewal initiative recently announced by the Public Service Commission. The two programs will work closely together to ensure maximum support for our managers while continuously challenging both organizations to change “how it has always been done.”