



**Partnership Strategy for Horizontal Initiatives**  
**Partnership Strategy and Framework**  
**May 2003**

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## Project Leadership

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# Background

## *Project Overview*

The Ontario government, like governments around the world, is under pressure to manage continuous change and deliver more and better service within fiscal constraints. Citizens and businesses are demanding that their governments adopt a customer-centric, outside-in approach to delivering services, while decreasing the complexity and cost of complying with government requirements.

This pressure is forcing governments to work in a more integrated way – to partner across horizontal boundaries with other ministries, jurisdictions, the broader public sector or the private sector.

However, there is no standard “play book” for creating successful partnering initiatives, either in Ontario or in other jurisdictions. The Canadian Centre for Management Development notes that when it comes to managing horizontal initiatives, *“little in the way of practical advice is available. ... We do not yet have evaluation tools that can fully assess the value of horizontal initiatives.”*

At the same time, the Ontario Public Service (OPS) has been engaging in partnerships of various types for many years. Some notable successes include Common Counters and Government Information Centres, Life Event Bundles, the Inspections, Investigation and Enforcement Secretariat, and the Shared Services Bureau.

These partnerships are created largely on a project-by-project basis, usually without the benefit of a consistent approach. The partners have not been able to collectively leverage methodologies and best practices, and projects are often undertaken without the benefit of being able to build on past experience.

In order to improve the overall ability of the OPS to address horizontal initiatives, the Deputy Ministers’ Committee on OPS Transformation identified a need to develop a systematic approach, and create a deeper capacity for collaborating, cooperating, and sustaining equitable horizontal relationships. In response, the Integrated Service Delivery Division (ISDD), Ministry of Consumer and Business Services (MCBS) has developed a strategy and framework to support projects and organizations across the OPS that are facing the challenges of developing partnerships across traditional boundaries.

The tools, templates and approaches developed for the Partnership Strategy, outlined in this report and its companion documents, begin to fill the partnering knowledge gap and become a valuable resource for the increasing number of horizontal initiatives being undertaken across the OPS. Specifically, it is envisioned that the framework will:

- Articulate the role partnering can and will play in achieving the government's strategic goals.
- Improve the ability to measure the health of partner relationships through "partner satisfaction" tools and methodologies.
- Improve the ability to expand the scope of horizontal initiatives through effective and focused partner engagement.
- Reduce the risk of divergent expectations and partnership breakdowns/failures.
- Enhance the capacity to manage change during program transition and reduce time to changing needs.

## ***Approach***

Recognizing that there is no "play book" upon which to base a strategy, but that there is considerable partnering experience both within and outside the OPS on which to draw and to begin to build upon, this initiative includes several components:

- An inter-jurisdictional literature scan was performed to synthesize the best practice research already conducted.
- A series of approximately 30 expert interviews was conducted to integrate the learning of people who had experience in complex partnering projects. These interviews included people from the OPS, the broader public sector (BPS), and the private sector.
- Private sector experts with extensive experience in developing partnerships were consulted regularly to provide advice and expertise on how to develop and sustain partnerships.
- A full day workshop with 130 participants from across the OPS, including Secretary of Cabinet and Head of the OPS Tony Dean, was conducted. The **Best Practices: Working Together for Customer Service Excellence** workshop helped to identify barriers and develop strategies to overcome them. It also helped to initiate a community of practice that will help foster a support mechanism across the OPS for people who are involved in these kinds of challenging initiatives.
- A series of case studies that exemplify a number of the key characteristics of successful partnering arrangements was documented.
- The concepts, knowledge and experience garnered from the research, workshop and consultations formed the basis for a workbook to support ongoing partnerships. This resource is called the **Partnership Strategy for Horizontal Initiatives Partner Workbook**, which is designed to provide a practical approach to identifying, engaging and managing service delivery partnerships.

# Partnering in Context

## *Partnership Drivers*

Increasingly, cross-ministry and inter-jurisdictional partnerships are becoming the common way to do government business. To date, these initiatives tend to be singular, and have met with varying degrees of success. In order to support the transformation from “one-off” projects to a standard approach to partnering, it is important to acknowledge and understand the partnership drivers.

As noted in the Background section of this report, governments are under pressure to deliver services differently. There are a number of trends forcing governments to work in a more integrated way, both internally and with its public and private sector partners, and at the same time address significant infrastructure, program renewal and customer service issues. These are discussed in more detail below.

### **Increased Expectations Among Citizens and Businesses**

The expectations of citizens and businesses are changing. Not only do citizens and businesses expect more streamlined government services, they also expect different levels of government to work together on overarching issues. They are not concerned with which level of government they are dealing with. Rather, they are looking for government to provide a more integrated, seamless approach to service delivery, and expect governments to approach issues in a way that will provide higher-order solutions.

While government is seen as retaining a clear policy and regulatory role, increasingly citizens and businesses are demanding seamless service and co-operation among governments in support of this.

### **Increased Expectations from Other Jurisdictions**

Given that individuals and businesses cross borders with relative ease, governments need to work more closely with other jurisdictions on such trans-jurisdictional issues as identity, privacy, security and integration. Ontario can expect other jurisdictions to seek greater integration and coordination among all levels of government.

As globalization affects the business community, the need for integration, harmonization and coordination across jurisdictional boundaries increases. Business customers are currently faced with a myriad of licensing, reporting, registration and approval requirements. Each of these interactions happens with a different program area and often with different jurisdictions. Findings from the Red Tape Commission identified that the complexity and volume of government's

requirements already exceed the capacity of small and medium sized businesses. Citizens are frustrated by the number and location of places they need to go to interact with government. Business constituents are demanding that governments decrease the complexity and cost of compliance.

### **Aging Infrastructure**

The infrastructure across Ontario is getting old. From sewers to roads to computer systems, delivery systems need significant investment to ensure they continue to meet the safety, transportation and economic needs of Ontario. The need to restore infrastructure in a relatively short timeframe, combined with the ongoing fiscal restraints, will require more complex and imaginative partnerships between Ontario, its federal and municipal counterparts, and private sector partners.

### **Pace of Change**

Business models are changing, often due to technological changes, at a far greater speed than ever before. Along with this change comes higher expectations. No longer can governments sit in isolation or remain idle in their ability to serve the public.

One way of mitigating the risks inherent in this pace of change is through the use of standards and common approaches to doing business. As these standards emerge and gain more momentum, the potential for creating connected communities with capabilities to provide better service for less cost comes closer to being a reality. This standards-based evolution requires government to not only support the movement towards a standards-based approach, but to seek out and cultivate effective horizontal working relationships to ensure citizens and businesses are well served at a reasonable cost.

### **Fiscal Environment**

Ontario is under continual pressure to remain competitive in the global marketplace, and has faced the challenge of reducing debt and lowering taxes while maintaining and improving services. Funding transfers between levels of government have also been reduced. Since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the pressure for increased security within an uncertain economy has exacerbated these pressures.

These pressures will continue. While some areas may experience relief due to increased investment based on public priorities, the overall trend is likely to be one of decreased funding with increased demands for service. Addressing these pressures will require ministries, programs, and the broader public sector to work together in an integrated way. It will also require the government to work with its private sector delivery partners to deliver services more cost effectively.

## ***Key Characteristics of Partnering***

For the purposes of this report, the terms *partnering* and *horizontal management* are used interchangeably to mean two or more organizations working together towards a joint interest. Intuitively, a partnership involves a common interest that is beneficial to both parties but in which the two parties play different roles. The CCMD Roundtable on the Management of Horizontal Initiatives framed it this way:

Horizontal Management is about more than interdepartmental cooperation.... it is the challenge of bringing diverse people together and lining up authorities in a complementary way to achieve a common purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Partnering relationships are critical to achieving the government's goal of client-centricity, effectiveness and efficiency. Partnerships may be mandated or ad hoc and voluntary. Members of informal partnerships may choose to belong based on common interest or bi-lateral responsibilities. Members of mandated partnerships may be required to participate in order to meet a broader corporate goal. While there are different types and configurations of partnerships, each with its own set of characteristics, generally speaking most partnering relationships fall into two main categories: *communities of interest*, and *ministry-driven and corporately-driven partnering relationships*.

### **Communities of Interest**

Communities of interest, also known as communities of practice or of function, are extremely important in developing relationships and a culture of working across silos. These types of partnerships already exist, and there are many examples of these relationships working effectively within the OPS (e.g., Deputy Ministers Committee on Transformation, CAO Forum), and outside of the OPS (e.g., Public Sector Service Delivery Council). These types of partnering relationships are not only effective in their own right, they also play a crucial role in the ability to carry out the ministry driven and corporately driven partnering relationships. It is likely that this type of partnering relationship will be a key element of public sector transformation.

Effective partnering relationships tend to be characterized by their orientation around commonalities, such as geography or similar job descriptions, and may be role- or topic-based. Whether they are formal or informal arrangements, with or without formal partnering agreements, they tend to have limited governance structures and minimal funding requirements. These partnerships support and

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<sup>1</sup> *Moving from the Heroic to Everyday, CCMD Roundtable on the Management of Horizontal Initiatives, Chaired by Jim Lahey, by Mark Hopkins, Chantal Couture, Elizabeth Moore*

are supported by effective leadership across organizations, focus energies on common areas of interest, perform an advisory role, and present excellent networking opportunities.

The primary need of communities of interest is the continued support from senior leadership in terms of both time and funding.

A community of practice supporting organizations involved in partner relationships could help bring together those with expertise and those looking for direction in partnering. The purpose would be threefold:


- First, to support new and complex partnerships in ensuring that these initiatives are established with the foundation needed to make them successful.
- Second, to create and maintain an inventory of expertise on employees who have experience in working in complex partnerships. This inventory would be used to enable effective strategies and techniques to flow from one partnership to another. It could also provide a forum to introduce new partnering skills into the organization by providing forums for discussing specific concepts relating to partnerships.
- Third, to develop and maintain a repository of tools, templates, approaches and best practices in order to support partnership initiatives. The repository could also be a centralized clearinghouse for success stories, case studies, relevant literature and lessons learned.

### **Ministry-driven and corporately-driven partnering relationships**

These partnerships have been identified as presenting the most challenges in achieving the anticipated results of the partnerships. There are many examples of these relationships working effectively within the OPS (e.g., MTO/MOHLTC card production facility in Kingston, Shared Services Bureau). Within these large and often complex enterprises, diverse cultures, specific service delivery needs, and financial and technological requirements come into play.

There are usually compelling reasons for the partners to participate, particularly where sharing infrastructure clearly benefits the project participants (e.g. the partnering ministries). Benefits may not only be financial, but also political or social in terms of meeting program mandates. In some cases, however, infrastructure projects may benefit the organization as a whole (e.g. the Government of Ontario) but not all of the project participants. The latter are often more difficult to negotiate.

Participation may be voluntary or mandated, and the formality and complexity of governance structures and agreements, as well as funding arrangements, will reflect the representation of each partner.



These types of initiatives require a clearly focused alignment of stakeholder goals, or of partner and corporate goals. Complex outcomes with many stakeholders, or with an overarching corporate mandate, require a more thorough understanding of the project's underlying assumptions and expectations, a high level of negotiation, rigorous agreements, and more complex governance and accountability.

## Challenges to Cross-Organizational Initiatives

It is important to remember that government is a unique environment with deeply rooted processes, values and systems that provide the context for its work. While there is a strong imperative within government to work more effectively, in many cases these processes, systems and values make working across boundaries more difficult. These difficulties can inhibit achieving the level of synergy necessary to enable a substantive difference in the ease with which partnerships achieve their mutual objectives. Some of the challenges to partnering, such as vertical accountability, are a fundamental element of how government works, and are therefore very complex to address. Others, such as a common culture and shared goals, can be addressed more readily.

Generally speaking, the challenges to effective partnership within government can be divided into three broad categories:

- Systemic barriers
- Cultural barriers
- Capacity barriers.

Some of the key issues within each category are examined in more detail below. It is important to remember that some issues surface in more than one category, but may be particularly distinct in a primary category.

### ***Systemic Barriers***

There are some major structural barriers that put limitations on the extent to which the OPS can achieve its objectives. These barriers, which include governance and accountability, business process, policy and legislation, will take time and may be difficult to address, but until changes in these areas are made, the OPS will be limited to incremental improvements in its ability to operate as an integrated organization.

The OPS governance structure is one based on ministerial accountability. While this vertical governance model enables the optimization of resources within a specific ministry, it presents difficulties in dealing with initiatives that are complex and involve multiple ministries, or initiatives that primarily benefit the corporate good often at the expense of one or more Ministries.

While most ministries are willing in principle to participate in projects that move the corporate agenda forward, working with these ministries and gaining agreement on the specifics without a defined and proven approach to corporate governance is difficult, time-consuming and expensive.

Similarly, business processes and standards also tend to be vertical. Processes such as the corporate budgeting process, the processes for obtaining new

facilities, or program review processes operate independently of high-priority corporate projects. The Business Planning and Appropriations process, for example allocates funds to individual ministries, thereby complicating cross-ministry project funding.

Forcing corporate projects to receive and report on funding in a “siloe” fashion has significant implications for overall accountability. It requires each ministry to show the financial benefit for their ministry, when the benefit may be to the corporation as a whole. It also introduces significant complexity in the preparation and submission of these funding requests. Ensuring the appropriate coordination and reconciliation of requests from multiple ministries is time-consuming and expensive for all the involved ministries. Furthermore, the management board analysts handling these requests often are experts in one ministry only and are not required to have expertise in the overarching implications of the more corporate projects. This is particularly true in multi-year initiatives when analysts can change. These coordinating processes escalate exponentially with the number of ministries involved.

Siloe funding also introduces significant complexity and additional costs. A variety of administrative workaround processes are required to ensure that funding is distributed appropriately, and that report-backs are effectively coordinated. These processes can remain in effect for years until the overall impact of the project has been absorbed, or until the people involved in the original agreement have moved on and the need for the journal corrections has been forgotten. Costs can escalate both in the time spent justifying resource requirements on an annual basis and in the cost of decreasing and increasing the scope of project activities to adjust to the changing funding allocations. Furthermore, projects that have external partners or consultants involved typically cost significantly more because vendors must put in place risk management strategies to accommodate the risk of changing project scope.

A more streamlined approach to multi-year funding that balances the need to maintain parliamentary control over the timing of expenditures and provides the funding stability required to enable the effective functioning of strategic projects would help alleviate some of these challenges. The objectives of a multi-year funding project would be to clearly understand the drivers and legal limitations associated with the current annual funding process and the corresponding needs of strategic projects with respect to stable funding sources. This would also require a comprehensive set of criteria for the type of projects for which multi-year, multi-organization funding would be applicable.

The Program Review process and the corporate facilities management processes currently don't effectively integrate the requirements of corporate priorities. If the corporate objective, for instance, is integrated service delivery, then theoretically the program review process should be evaluating the need for stand-alone services as part of the process. Similarly, if the objective of

Government Counters is to reduce the service and space redundancies, then requests for new or changes to space where existing counters are located should highlight the need to consider a potential integration or co-location at that point. Funding processes should require specific analysis of the implications on corporate initiatives as part of the business case templates used. Each of these corporate processes needs to be examined in order to integrate the corporate priorities with the individual initiatives being addressed.

Vertical governance and business process also have an impact on the design/build and implementation phases of partner projects. The complexity and unique skill sets required in horizontal initiatives often requires the hiring of consultants to support the partner team during transition and implementation (e.g., the skills to implement complex enterprise-wide information systems such as WIN, IFIS or the ISDD infrastructure require unique skill sets). The current corporate governance structure within the OPS forces consultants to essentially deal with 22 different organizations in doing their work. This results in significantly increased consulting costs.

While these processes currently may be problematic, they also offer natural opportunities for ensuring the alignment of ministry-based priorities with corporate goals. Representation of corporate projects at budgeting discussions, for instance, would help to identify opportunities for integrating ministry-specific priorities with the overall corporate goals of increasing efficiency and effectiveness. Similarly, integrating the facility requests process would highlight opportunities for co-location or integration of business processes into already existing facilities. And where the program review process analyzes programs on an individual basis, incorporating corporate goals into the review would help to support a shift from a siloed to a more corporate culture.

Policy and legislative structures within the OPS are not always conducive to horizontal initiatives. For example, access to information and knowledge across ministries is fundamental to supporting integrated solutions, but raises issues of privacy and security. Legislation, policy and collective bargaining agreements are often embedded and can impede an enterprise-wide approach to planning and decision-making.

## ***Cultural Barriers***

Cultural barriers include risk aversion, insular reward systems, inconsistent performance metrics, and mismatched priorities among partners.

The government is in a unique position because of the level of scrutiny that it is required on a daily basis. It cannot perform its function effectively without the confidence of the public. The need to both be and be perceived as being effective and fair is often as crucial as achieving real gains in these areas. This

level of scrutiny leads to the need to be extremely careful as to how and when information is shared. In addition, confidentiality is legally imbedded in many of its leadership processes, including advice to Cabinet and in collective agreements. This culture of non-disclosure operates between ministries as well as between the government and outside partners.

One of the cornerstones of effective partnerships is trust and openness. The myriad of requirements that prevent openness and sharing leads to complex and timely approval processes and imposes barriers to effective partnering.

The need to be perceived as fair also introduces process impediments that affect the ability to partner effectively. Lengthy and time-consuming procurement, communication and HR processes (particularly when dealing with severance) affect the ability to move forward quickly. While these processes affect dealings with other ministries, they have the most impact when dealing with the private sector. There is a steep learning curve for the private sector in understanding the need for government to be fully accountable. The perception that the government needs to be “perfect” is viewed as a significant barrier to partnering. Speed is a crucial component in dealing effectively with the private sector. It tends toward getting a project up and running quickly, then improving it over time. The government’s need to be fully accountable tends to lead to lengthy processes that are layered on top of each other, slowing its ability to maintain the pace of its private sector counterparts. The slower pace can significantly reduce the value equation for the private sector partner.

Organizations and processes designed to view things corporately often don’t include the culture of other participants or take into consideration the needs of corporate projects. This is particularly true for organizations that operate from line ministries. Each ministry has perspectives that may not be consistent with those of potential partners, and these must be balanced. Similarly, different perspectives can lead to complications when measuring results and determining marketing and branding strategies.

## ***Capacity Barriers***

Capacity barriers include human resource issues, relationship management, and organizational limitations.

While the government has extensive experience in consultation and the acquisition of advisory information, it has far less experience in initiating and creating partnering relationships aimed at achieving specific objectives in a defined timeframe. As a result, the time, effort and skills required to initiate and manage these are often underestimated.

Intuitively, people value fulsome collaboration and recognize the importance of having open and honest discussions in order to achieve organizational goals. In

practice, however, it is difficult to find the time required to do the research or to enter into the level of discussion necessary to gain a true commitment from all stakeholders involved. In the desire to achieve and demonstrate momentum, critical issues are often sidestepped or agreed to at a superficial level. These issues then emerge at a more detailed level of the project and result in time-consuming and conflicted discussions at the working level. The delays in resolving these issues during execution result in project team conflicts, reduced morale and eventually complacency towards the timing and results of the project.

The norms of the government hierarchy can also make it difficult to perform this function effectively. In many organizations, a single individual (the account manager) is given the responsibility for understanding and developing relationships throughout a large organization (or portion thereof). This individual begins to understand the partner organization so well that they are able to identify and gain agreement to win/win solutions to critical issues. Alternatively, a large cross-level and cross-functional group is brought together to understand the challenges and opportunities of moving forward together. Either of these practices can be difficult to implement in the government. There is an unwritten norm that discussions happen between similar levels of the hierarchy. (ADMs negotiate with ADMs, managers with managers, etc.) This mirroring of discussions at multiple levels has a number of implications:

- There can be a division of information – senior people understand the strategic issues but do not understand some key operational implications. Similarly, operational people understand the operational details but do not understand the implications of the strategic framework that has been determined.
- There are extensive time delays as the senior people are informed of and work through the myriad of decisions required. Senior levels become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of work required, while more operational people are frustrated by the delays and assume decisions have been made of which they have not been informed.
- Different images and assumptions continue to exist at different levels due to the nature, level of detail, and timing of these discussions. The result of having these different assumptions within the system is extensive discussions and conflict at an operational level as the details of the partnership evolve.

Current HR structures and processes makes it difficult for major corporate projects to recruit and retain qualified resources. Many large corporate initiatives are temporary structures by their very nature. Personnel for these projects are seconded from home positions throughout the government. Unfortunately, the nature of these secondments and current HR policies put the job security of these people at risk long before the project is over. In order for project employees to ensure their job in the OPS is retained they are forced to look for new work as their secondments near completion.

The experience gained on these projects is recognized as highly valuable by leadership throughout the OPS. As a result, employees involved in these strategic projects are often recruited to more senior positions before the project life-cycle is complete. This also results in a high turnover within the project, resulting in extensive delays and costs over the life of the project.

Reward and recognition systems also work against strategic projects. The government has relatively little ability to reward high performance on strategic initiatives. While there is a system of pay for performance in the management group, these bonuses are a relatively small percentage of overall pay, are limited in number and are often applied to a very broad range of initiatives. This blending of initiatives into one performance measure makes it difficult to create an incentive that places a high degree of focus on any single initiative. Additionally, the multi-year nature of strategic projects makes it difficult to reward employees based on the completion of major milestones. This inability to reward people based on the achievement of major objectives makes it difficult to retain critical resources during the peaks and valleys inherent in project work.

The overall result is high turnover rates, increased costs, and extensive delays in some of the more strategic work being carried out by government.

The ability to acquire and retain key resources on strategic projects and to have these resources remain committed to the project throughout the life-cycle is critical to the success of complex horizontal initiatives. It would be beneficial to identify ways to ensure the job security of people who join strategic projects and to ensure that performance contracts focus on overarching priorities as well as a spectrum of ongoing activities. Incentive mechanisms could be developed to reward overall project outcomes and contribution to government goals and objectives.

Throughout this project, it was clear that while pockets of expertise in partnering exist, the necessary competencies around negotiation and relationship management would benefit from a more explicit and consistent approach. Recognizing these and other partner-related competencies as core to the OPS and ensuring mechanisms are in place for their evolution (e.g. training and coaching etc) would contribute strongly to the government agenda.

## Critical Success Factors for Horizontal Initiatives

The results of the literature scan, the input from private sector experts, the interviews with stakeholders who have experience in horizontal initiatives and our Best Practice workshops all identified similar factors that are critical to making complex horizontal initiatives successful. Overall, effective partnering requires:

- Committed leadership
- Shared purpose and culture
- Clearly articulated governance and accountability
- Integrated planning; and
- Ongoing relationship management.

### ***Committed Leadership***

As with any major initiative, effective and engaged leadership at all levels (political, sponsor and program) is crucial to its success. Leadership that is committed to the delivery of results and supports the evolution of culture is particularly important in initiatives that cut across traditional boundaries and change the day-to-day norms at an operational level within the organization.

Leadership at the political level is important in order to ensure alignment among the ministries. Cross-ministry initiatives that are not high on the government's agenda are extremely difficult to implement, particularly when the issues have HR implications or other implications that will be visible to the public. Having political support and an understanding of the full implications of an initiative is extremely important in moving through the barriers. For example, the Minister of Management Board Secretariat (MBS) provided solid support for the integration of certain Ontario Housing Tribunal transactions to common counters. The Minister championed the value of integration and played a key role in supporting the transition of these services throughout the project.

At the sponsor level there are three factors that are important.

First, sponsors need to be senior enough to span the scope of the work being done. This will ensure appropriate commitment of resources and time.

Second, sponsors need to be actively engaged in the project. Moral support isn't enough, they need to actively work with the project team to create the necessary environment. If a sponsor becomes disengaged and delegates all work downward, the project almost immediately begins to stall.

Third, sponsors need to champion the project by helping to resolve issues, providing direction and support, and creating an environment in their organization that enables success. The Deputy Minister and Assistant Deputy Minister at MCCR demonstrated this type of leadership in the initial development of Teranet.

The Deputy and Assistant Deputy understood the value in having a private sector partner involved in the development and operation of a land title system. They worked closely with a private sector group to develop a 50/50 partnership. Both the government and private sector contributed start up capital and resources, and a governance structure was set up to ensure that a customer-centric mindset was maintained. This was a new and complex arrangement, and a large part of its success can be attributed to the leadership that ensured the vision was maintained. The leaders spent the time necessary and continually worked through the challenges and barriers to create an extremely successful endeavor.

Overall, leaders need to create an environment within their own organizations that will enable the evolution of a culture that will be supportive to the partnership. For example, the Secretary of Cabinet played a key role in the evolution of inter-ministerial councils, recognizing that these councils would be critical to breaking down the barriers between ministries and creating the environment necessary to move towards a more horizontal organization. The Secretary encouraged the leadership that emerged spontaneously in the field. She put the support of the inter-ministerial councils in Deputy Ministers' performance contracts, and gave them performance bonuses at the end of the year. In addition to these tangible supports, the Secretary mentioned the councils frequently during speaking engagements, assigned a deputy sponsor to each region, and met with the chairs of the councils three times per year to confer and ask what type of support they needed. She created an environment where the councils could flourish, and because of this they have created a sense of interdependency among ministries at a local level and have produced remarkable results with very little investment. (A full report of the story of the interministerial councils is provided in the Case Studies.)

## ***Shared Purpose and Culture***

All partners must share a common understanding of the project mission, goals, outcomes, strategy, roles and responsibilities. As well, the common culture must be developed organically within the context of a given initiative, so that it is a combination of the elements required for that particular relationship to work, and not one that is imposed by one of the partners. Reaching this frame of reference is a key turning point in many partnering initiatives, and the identification of shared interest can lead to a sense of shared urgency among the partners.

It is often acknowledged that shared purpose and culture is critical to a partnership's success, but it is also often the most misaligned. Inevitably, as projects get underway, it becomes clear when not enough time has been spent ensuring a complete and consistent vision of where the project is going, how it is going to get there, and what it is going to look like, is understood by all stakeholders. Partnerships require sufficient time for **joint planning**. The vision and strategies developed need to be understood not only among partners but

within the individual organizations as well. Usually, the vision is developed and understood by the leadership, but the operational stakeholders have a different understanding. Sometimes the leadership sets the objectives and delegates the vision and details to the operational level without a complete framework being put into place. This can lead to high levels of conflict at the operational level during the transition.

The most effective way to ensure this alignment is a two-stage process. First, the leaders of the partnership must work together to define the overall framework, purpose, objectives, givens, and performance measures. They will sketch out the overall vision as well as the background that forms the context for the discussion, and outline decisions already made that must be incorporated into the final results.

The leaders will then work in conjunction with operational levels to begin the scoping and definition of the details of the products and processes to be produced. This ensures the alignment of the vision and goals within the context set by the leadership. As the vision evolves into details, the operational level takes on the responsibility for working out the details, with leadership ensuring the overall results by testing the evolving product against the outcomes and givens already developed.

The Business Transformation Project, a joint public-private sector venture to transform the delivery of social assistance in Ontario, took an approach similar to this. First, the leadership developed a clear vision and operating principles. These principles were used as a guide to debating ideas and options. The leaders then chose to engage staff in creating the specifications in an iterative fashion, rather than doing detailed specifications at the outset. The leaders spent a month creating an overview of the system and how it would work. This overview enabled the key stakeholders to create a shared understanding of what was being done, and facilitated the development of the more detailed level vision. At the same time, there was an ongoing focus on how to get the field ready for the project. The field was engaged throughout the project, so by the time the project was ready for implementation, so was the field.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) has also spent considerable time in developing effective partnerships with its private sector counterparts. MNR was faced with very significant funding cuts several years ago. In order to deal with the cuts, the ministry was forced to look to private sector partners to deliver services. The transition team identified a number of partner organizations; some of these were stakeholders such as forestry companies upon which MNR also place operating restrictions. Others were lobby groups. In order to get these partnerships to work effectively, MNR developed a clear framework that outlined both the possibilities and the areas that were still restricted. It created an environment where discussions happened and different roles were created to achieve a joint outcome. In some cases, MNR had to provide initial supports,

such as paying for staff members in order to provide the capacity and competence for the partner to take on the needed role. In every case, MNR invested time and money to ensure aligned mission, goals and strategies. The result is that MNR now achieves the same objectives within fiscal and resource restrictions.

The joint Inspections, Investigations and Enforcement (IIE) project, administered by the Ministry of Labour, was extremely successful in engaging energy and ensuring alignment through this process. Time was spent outlining the goals, objectives and framework for the project at the outset. This framework was taken to a number of program areas throughout the OPS to identify opportunities where current needs could be matched with the IIE mandate. By creating opportunities for discussion and enabling programs to find themselves in the overarching strategies, IIE began the process of creating a shared culture. Using this process, IIE has combined the leadership skills associated with fostering emerging leadership and the development of a shared culture to create considerable momentum within the OPS.

The inter-ministerial councils are another example where the development of a shared culture has produced practical results. Through the process of bringing together participants from different ministries on a regular basis, the boundaries between ministries began to dissolve and a sense of interdependence began to emerge. This culture has been a critical factor in supporting the implementation of a number of corporate initiatives at the local level.

## ***Clearly Articulated Governance and Accountability***

There are a number of critical factors that need to be negotiated early in a partnership opportunity, to ensure understanding of issues and clarity around roles and responsibilities. This negotiation takes time, yet having the discussions saves countless hours downstream. A complete description of the discussions that need to occur, along with detailed questions to be considered, is included in the companion workbook to this report. The following, however, is an overview of the areas that need to be included in the initial discussions:

- Overall Purpose
- Minimum Value Proposition
- Givens
- Real Nature of the Partnership
- Performance Measures
- Effectiveness
- Financial
- Relationship
- Membership Criteria
- Governance/Decision-Making
- Accountability
- Maintaining Commitments
- Financial Investments/Rewards
- Human Resources Required for Project
- "Infrastructural" Resources
- Risks
- Record-Keeping and Reporting
- Dispute Resolution
- Exit Strategy
- Communication

Typically, these discussions need to take place at a very senior level. In order to maximize the time of senior management and minimize duplication, ideally the discussions should take place on a tiered basis.

First, the principles that form the foundation for each of these areas need to be developed. Then the actual structures, processes, and formulas can be calculated. Having the two-tiered discussion helps to ensure that the spirit of the deal is understood, as well as the details that will occur in the formal agreement. More important, beginning the discussions at the level of principles enables the leadership to negotiate a partnership that spans several services or transactions. This enables the timely negotiation that needs to occur up front to happen once at the senior level, so that the next level of management can negotiate the terms of specific services within that overarching agreement.

Key amongst these initial discussions is agreement on governance and accountability structures. These discussions should ensure that the structures include:

- Steering committees of individuals with the authority to make decisions
- Change management processes
- Issues management and escalation processes
- Timelines for securing approvals; and
- Implications of not meeting agreed-upon commitments.

The research turned up few projects that put sufficient time into negotiating the terms of the agreement in all the above areas on both a principle and a detailed level. Some negotiated details and not principles. Others had discussions, but at a relatively superficial level that didn't ensure an alignment of overall expectations. This process takes considerable time that is often difficult to find. Unfortunately, time omitted in the early stages will escalate exponentially in later stages of a project.

## ***Integrated Planning***

Partnership projects are necessarily more complex than single-ministry initiatives, and the planning must reflect this. The following are some of the key areas where lessons learned will be useful in moving forward.

### **Communication**

There are two sides to communication that need to be considered:

- Communications to key stakeholders
- Communications within the project team

*Communications within multi-ministry stakeholder teams* is difficult because of the need to achieve two conflicting objectives:

- The synchronization of key communications processes (i.e. when communicating to stakeholders, one partner's employees cannot be informed before the other); and
- The timeliness of communications for effective decision-making.

This process is particularly difficult within government because of the time-consuming approval processes for communications. Effective and timely communications within a project team is critical, and ongoing operational processes associated with approval of communications packages do not generally support these needs. It is essential that all Communications Branches within each partner organization and the senior sponsors of the partnership sit down and negotiate processes and turnaround times for the different types of communication that will support the needs of the project team. This negotiation is a critical component in ensuring that communications backlogs don't have a negative impact on the overall momentum of a project.

*Ongoing communication within the project* is critical as well. An investment is required in this area, not only in the knowledge and information-sharing infrastructure required to support the project team, but also in face-to-face meetings. Unfortunately, face-to-face meetings tend to be expensive, but they do provide a deeper level of communication than is otherwise possible. Using the project leadership as a hub is not sufficient to retain the alignment of the project team throughout the project. Meetings are required to ensure ongoing alignment, resolve issues, and maintain overall energy and momentum. In fact, one of the main tasks of the project leader is to facilitate a deeper exchange of views and ideas amongst the project team members.

The Shared Services Bureau (SSB) is a good example of supporting ongoing communication. Early in its life, the leadership recognized the challenge of creating an integrated organization with a single culture in 58 sites across the province. The bureau invested heavily in a number of communications vehicles to ensure that its employees remain aligned with the corporate vision. Managers ran a number of workshops for employees on key themes, and held an annual series of one- or two-day workshops that bring together groups of 100 to 150 employees at a time to work on the understanding, evolution and implementation of key strategies and directions. This has resulted in all employees having a clear understanding of the new directions being taken by SSB, and an ability to move towards those directions on a day-to-day basis.

### **Human Resources**

Complex projects need "infrastructural" staff as well as project staff to complete the analysis and the implementation and operational requirements of the project. Ensuring the necessary financial, contract management, project management and HR, change management and communications resources are committed to the project are often areas that are often overlooked when staffing projects. Project management in particular is an area that needs significant attention.

Ensuring that the project manager selected has the level of experience necessary to accomplish this type of integrated project is critical. It is also extremely important to ensure the project manager is vested with enough authority to accomplish the task effectively. A number of project participants have identified a shift in management as a key turning point in the project.

### **Funding**

The need for long term sustainable funding is critical for integrated projects. There is considerable cost in scoping and re-scoping projects, and supporting the reporting and funding request processes associated with unclear funding commitments. This is particularly true when attempting to partner with the private sector. When the private sector is committing funds and resources, stakeholders require clear commitments from the government in order to commit their own resources.

### **Risk/reward sharing and management**

Partnerships involve shared risks and rewards among the partners. The management of risk and reward needs to be clarified and understood by all stakeholders.


### **Implementation**

There needs to be a shared understanding of what is possible, how it will happen, and in what timeframes. In addition, there needs to be an ongoing commitment in order to effect a sustainable transformation.

## ***Ongoing Relationship Management***

Trust is a crucial factor in any partnership. Trust is developed between individuals, not organizations, and emerges from relationship-building that is not always strictly associated with the project at hand. Trust requires investment at all levels, and is based on transparency, knowledge, and competence, which in turn build credibility within the relationship.

Sustained relationship-building requires regular face-to-face meetings, committed staff with the time, skills and resources to invest in the relationship, and the willingness to adjust to changing circumstances. There needs to be an ongoing effort to ensure the agreements made at the outset are still valid during any given point of the lifecycle of the enterprise. This ongoing function also helps to deal with any issues immediately when they arise when they are relatively simple to solve.



There are several examples of organizations that have invested on an ongoing basis in relationship management. One that illustrates the importance of an ongoing investment in relationships is the Policy and Consumer Protection Division of Consumer and Business Services, which manages the relationships with a number of industry associations as well as with Teranet. The relationship with Teranet started out on extremely good footing, and a number of objectives were accomplished. Over the years, the ongoing investment in relationship management dwindled, and gradually the needs of the partnership became secondary to the diverging expectations of the two partners. Fortunately, this dynamic was identified and there was significant effort put in by both partners to rectify the situation. It became obvious that the partnership needed new governance structures, as it had outgrown the existing ones, and both partners worked hard to resolve issues. Today, the partnership is healthy, and there is an ongoing investment in the Teranet relationship to ensure that any emerging issues are identified and resolved before they become issues that could destroy the overall partnership and its goals.

## The Partner Workbook

The concepts, knowledge and experience gathered through research, workshops and consultations for the Partnership Strategy for Horizontal Initiatives form the basis for a **Partner Workbook** to support ongoing partnerships. The Partner Workbook is a companion piece to this strategy document and is designed to provide a practical approach to identifying, engaging and managing service delivery partnerships. The goal is to build strong and healthy partnerships to lead to customer service excellence while at the same time streamlining the resources needed for initiatives across ministries, jurisdictions and sectors.

The Partner Workbook is divided into two sections:

- Part 1 – Concepts – gives an overview of the case for partnering
- Part 2 – Formal Partnering Process – a “how to” guide for the partnership practitioner that documents a step-by-step approach to developing and managing partnership proactively.

Use of the workbook enables:

- A clearly defined and understood value proposition
- Improved understanding of partner needs, expectations and drivers
- A stronger basis for negotiating the terms of the partnership
- Clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- A better and shared understanding of the benefits of partnering
- The potential for better, faster and more cost effective results allowing various organizations to concentrate on their core businesses

Some of the tools in the Workbook draw on already-established processes such as Project Management and Risk Management principles and guidelines. In so doing, there is a recognition that the OPS is well on its way to having some of the foundational pieces in place. Other tools and templates, especially those more specific to partnering, are new to the OPS. We expect that as a greater understanding of the partnering process evolves, a process of continuous improvement will be necessary to have the processes and tools evolve in parallel.



## **Partnership Strategy for Horizontal Initiatives**

### **Case Studies**



## Case Studies

### Introduction

While there are many other examples of successful partnering initiatives in the OPS, the following three case studies are presented both as examples of successful partnership initiatives of different types, and as illustrations of how key critical success factors contributed to the outcome of the projects. As well, the case studies demonstrate that there is a wealth of experience within the OPS to draw upon and build from.

## ***Interministerial Councils***

### **Critical Success Factors Demonstrated**

Committed Leadership  
Shared Purpose and Culture  
Integrated Planning  
On-going Relationship Management

### **Background**

The following case study shows how the development of cross-ministry relationships can emerge and flourish despite minimal resources and have a tangible impact on the effectiveness of the Ontario Public Service (OPS).

The foundation of the Interministerial Councils in the 1980s was driven by a search for efficiencies as a result of government cutbacks. Senior staff from a number of ministries located in the same community came together to form groups that crossed ministry boundaries. Councils were developed in such communities as London, Thunder Bay, Barrie, and Kitchener.

Initially, there was no attempt to standardize these committees; committees had different names (e.g. Public Service Liaison Committee, Senior Management Interministerial Committee) and each operated based on the needs of its own community. As the role of the committees became more crucial to the government's agenda, however, their form of functioning was increasingly formalized.

The committees began to flourish in the mid 1990s, when the Secretary of Cabinet began to champion the agenda of breaking down ministry silos. As part of this agenda, she supported the Interministerial Committees and Regional Councils that were emerging. Based on her endorsement the committees grew, became more standardized, and began to work together across the province. Through this period, the number of committees grew from five to twenty local committees, and two models began to emerge. In Eastern Ontario, in 1992, the Eastern Regional Directors' Council was established to exchange strategic information about regional economic development. In time, local committees were established in the main administrative centers: Ottawa, Kingston and Peterborough. In the North and West, the reverse happened. The local committees and councils came first and the regional organizations evolved afterwards. A provincial coordinating body called the Chairs' Forum was established; it is now known as the Provincial Interministerial Council. As the number of councils grew, the consistency between them also evolved. All councils now have a common Terms of Reference and common names.

## Committed Leadership

The Secretary of Cabinet's support of these councils was unwavering and they were clearly viewed as a key component of integrating the work of the OPS. This support was demonstrated on an ongoing basis in a number of ways:

- A Deputy Minister sponsor was assigned to each of the four regions. The role of these sponsors was to help facilitate the breaking down of silos and help enable the cross-ministry integration of activities.
- The Interministerial Councils were endorsed in a variety of arenas including executive dialogues and other public forums.
- The Secretary of Cabinet met with the councils several times a year to understand the progress they were making, the challenges they were facing and the support they required.
- Support for the Interministerial Councils was included in the performance contract of each Deputy Minister.
- Results of these councils were rewarded with a pay for performance bonus of 1%.

This was clearly an example where formal leadership helped to endorse and galvanize the leadership that had emerged naturally in each of the local communities.

Not only were leaders at the executive level committed, but the leaders at the working level also took on the challenge of making the Interministerial Councils successful. As participants in the Partnership Strategy for Horizontal Initiatives Best Practices Workshop identified "The most successful client projects seem to be at the local level. A good strategy is to take these best practices and scale up to a provincial level. The one caveat is to give some thought on how pilots can be scaled up before you get too far down the pipe."<sup>2</sup>

## Shared Purpose and Culture

From the outset, the purpose of the Interministerial Councils has been clearly articulated while being flexible enough to evolve. The initial purpose of these groups was to share:

- Information. The role of think tank was always and continues to be one of the most significant priorities. Ministries face many of the same issues by discussing the strategies used by each organization to tackle them, the most innovative and efficient ideas can be leveraged.
- Training. Both interministry courses and access to each others' training initiatives.

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<sup>2</sup> Best Practices Workshop, Report #3, Relevancy & Currency

- Efficiencies. There is an abundance of examples where ministries saved money by working together to operate more efficiently.
- Staff. The sharing of local expertise in specialized areas such as human resources (HR) or information technology (IT) has enabled all ministries to operate more effectively.

As the councils evolved and matured their objectives changed to reflect this. The councils have become a key mechanism for delivering integrated service delivery at the local level. Currently, the activities of the Interministerial Councils fall into three areas:

- Integrated Service Delivery
- Developing Human Resources
- Providing input and support to corporate initiatives that have cross-cutting implications.
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### **Integrated Planning**

The successes of the Interministerial Councils are too numerous to provide an exhaustive list in this case study. The following examples of tangible results are provided to underscore the opportunities and value of integrated planning.

- The councils were instrumental in helping bring the common counters into existence. Each of the regions had an initiative around establishing common counters in various communities. One director was appointed as lead for each location to make it happen. The council was the forum where people would come together, solve problems and report progress as the project evolved. Through the councils, the ministries provided the initial staffing for common counters out of their own resources. Leadership and shared purpose were key ingredients in this success.
- In Timmins, in the days before the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) road maintenance was outsourced, heavy equipment used by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Ontario Parks program was loaned to MTO through the winter. This increased MTO's capacity to maintain roads, saved MNR the costs associated with winter storage, and, from a corporate perspective, made more effective use of expensive assets.
- The Interministerial Councils were a large reason for the province's effective emergency response to the ice storm in 1998. By using the network created by the Interministerial Councils, ministries were able to respond in a coordinated fashion to the emergency through integrated communications, sharing of physical resources, and establishing volunteer systems.
- The co-location of ministry offices in cities such as London, Kingston, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins and Peterborough was led or implemented by local or

regional councils. This has led to improved customer service and millions of dollars of savings.

- In the early 90s, the Interministerial Councils brokered a major administrative purchasing exercise through Wellington County. The Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) identified major areas of purchasing needs, and then staff from the OPS, Wellington County, and the Cities of Guelph and Cambridge came together to set up standing agreements and tenders on a joint basis. When they started combining their needs the costs dropped substantially – particularly in the area of leased vehicles.
- The Centre for Leadership (CFL) provides valuable training for managers across the OPS, but it is very expensive for northern managers to attend the courses because of the travel costs involved. Before the Interministerial Councils addressed this issue, northern managers were only taking an average of one course each year compared to the three courses attended by managers in the South. By working together to get a critical mass of participants, the CFL could offer courses in North, which enabled more managers to attend and kept costs down by having participants drive to Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie or Timmins rather than fly to Toronto.
- An integrated succession plan has been developed for OPS feeder groups in Northern Ontario. This plan provides an opportunity for each ministry to bring forward a feeder group list that is supported by all ministries. Secondments and acting assignments are offered to those on feeder list first. The system has proven to work very well; approximately one assignment is filled every month using this system. As this case study is being written, there is a proposal in place recommending a web-based recruitment program to enable people who are part of a feeder group to access postings more easily. This will likely further increase the success of the program.
- The Ontario Internship Program in the North is coordinated by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) on behalf of the Northern Council. In the past, first year intern opportunities were unfilled and interns were not placed because of the geographical challenges of accepting a position in the North. MNDM approached the Northern Interministerial Council and offered to coordinate all processing of applications and interviewing of candidates in Northern Ontario. Having this work coordinated in the North has enabled interns to stay in their home communities and still achieve cross-ministry exposure and experience.
- Regional Interministerial Human Resources Councils exist in Eastern and Western Regions. They provide a networking opportunity for HR professionals, and provide a forum to work on common initiatives.

- The Interministerial Councils are also involved in training and other learning opportunities such as staff conferences, leadership forums, and a number of cross-jurisdictional conferences to enable employees at different levels to interact across ministry boundaries. Through the Interministerial Learning Opportunity Program, training experts from a cross-section of ministries meet to analyze common learning needs that staff have identified as a high priority. This group then finds a provider, arranges for a location, and administers the course. This coordinated planning and implementation ensured training needs are met in diverse areas of the province.
- The Interministerial Councils are a forum to support a number of corporate initiatives such as the Workforce Information Network (WIN), the Integrated Financial Information System (IFIS), and the Shared Services Bureau (SSB).

### **On-going Relationship Management**

Another key to the success of the Interministerial Councils was the development of a culture of interdependence. Through the relationships built in these groups, the individuals began to operate from a holistic rather than ministry-by-ministry mindset. Without the forums for this interdependence to be built in, negotiations often focus on position and there are necessarily winners and losers. Forums such as the Interministerial Councils foster an environment of trust where one partner is willing to give a little in one situation knowing that the other partners will reciprocate at a different time.

### **Looking to the Future**

In looking to the future, the councils hope to take a leading role in completely eliminating the traditional vertical silos at field delivery level. They hope to promote a common visual identity across the government where citizens would identify primarily the Government of Ontario rather than individual ministries. They also see themselves building on their success by using their interministerial model to break down jurisdictional barriers among the province, the federal government, and the municipalities.

## ***Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal and Government Information Centres***

### **Critical Success Factors Demonstrated**

Committed Leadership  
Shared Purpose and Culture  
Integrated Planning  
On-going Relationship Management

### **Background**

The partnership between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal (ORHT), the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services (MCBS), and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) was selected as a case study because it demonstrates a clear improvement in customer service while at the same time realizing cost efficiencies. The ministries worked together to provide ORHT services at the MCBS Government Information Centres (GICs); MNDM operates the GICs in the North through a Memorandum of Understanding with MCBS.

The ORHT is a Schedule One Agency that was established five years ago. There is one head office, 17 distributed offices, and a virtual call centre that unites the offices across the province. The tribunal has two primary functions:

- Resolving disputes between landlords and tenants
- Providing information on the Tenant Protection Act.

The ORHT fields approximately 80,000 disputes and 800,000 telephone calls per year; its work represents nearly 50% of the government's total adjudication caseload.

Counter services across the province are critical to the ORHT's success. While clients can choose to file applications through other channels, most prefer to make their application in person. Initially, the ORHT used the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) Private Issuers' Network (PIN) as the point of access for counter clients, but began to look for another network as it became clear that the cost was not only prohibitive to the ORHT, but that their clients were not comfortable sharing their information with a private sector intermediary. In October 2001, the ORHT, MCBS and MNDM began to explore the idea of partnering to deliver ORHT services.

An agreement was reached in which ORHT application services would be transferred from low-volume private Document Filing Centres to the GICs, and higher volume ORHT Customer Service Offices would be co-located with the GICs.

The opportunity was clearly beneficial to both parties: the ORHT has realized a onetime savings of approximately \$500,000 with another million dollars in savings expected over the next three years, while MCBS benefited from the addition of a new stream of revenue at the GICs. The mutual advantage was derived from the fact that the volume at some ORHT offices was not enough to support more than one full-time staff member. Logistically, however, at least two people are required in an office to allow for lunch breaks, vacations and sickness, etc. The issue of physical security can also not be underestimated. ORHT staff had typically been housed in a relatively isolated location yet were facing angry tenants and landlords. Co-location has diffused this issue and allowed the sharing of security costs. Furthermore, staff at the co-located offices feel more part of a team than they did prior to this initiative. MCBS has benefited from the support for its corporate Over-the-Counter Strategy as will the showcasing of the GIC network as a viable alternative for other ministries delivering counter programs.

### **Committed Leadership**

Critical to the success of this partnership has been the clear leadership from all levels of the partner organizations. At the political level, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing provided clear direction and support for the integration. One clear indication of this support was ensuring the integration project was put into the Deputy Minister's performance contract. In MCBS, the ADM and the Director responsible for the GICs provided similar direction and support, and ensured that MCBS paved the way for a smooth integration of ORHT services. All leaders provided clear direction throughout the project and supported champions at all levels in the organization with their enthusiasm.

### **Shared Purpose and Culture**

An important factor in any relationship is developing a shared purpose or objective, and to the extent possible, this should be developed by the partners rather than imposed by one on the other(s). Managers at the working level from the partner organizations held a series of clear and open discussions on the outcomes and givens that were required to make the project a success. The financial framework was also clearly established at the beginning of the project. A business case was developed to assess the impact of the transition. This supported a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each group and paved the way for a strong relationship based on a shared understanding of the broad objective: providing the public with convenient access to government services and information.

The ORHT did not, at the time of negotiation, have a backlog of cases, and it was vital to them that this level of service continue. Clear direction on requirements versus negotiables meant a common understanding of the importance of the customer and has led to a positive impact on customer service. The ORHT clients like the idea that while multiple services are available at the same physical location, a separate person addresses their ORHT needs. In a survey conducted by MCBS at counters where services were transferred from Document Filing Centres, clients responded positively about the change and, in fact, commented that GICs were preferable to Document Filing Centres.

### **Integrated Planning**

Regular meetings were held to define, together, all aspects of the transition to integrated service delivery of ORHT services through the GICs. This includes operational environments, process concerns and customer service standards. More specifically, cancellation of the existing contract with the MTO PIN was coordinated with MTO well in advance of the formal notice to ensure a smooth service transition.

### **Lessons Learned**

In hindsight, the areas that did not go as smoothly as they could involved the logistics of the project itself. More clarity was needed up front in terms of communication processes and meetings. An agreed upon framework to allow “synchronized yet speedy” results would have helped to streamline some of the interactions. There was also more effort needed to ensure there was a consistent vision from all people in the vertical organizations. Some inconsistencies were identified between the different locations – both in philosophy and energy level. Finally, there was room for improvement in achieving more effective interaction at the local level and delegating decision-making to the lower levels.

### **On-going Relationship Management**

There is a sense by both partners that the overall process has been a resounding success. As a result of the overall success of this initial phase of the partnership, MCBS and ORHT have agreed to expand the partnership to provide service at more than 60 GICs. Work is currently taking place to streamline areas where the pilots showed inefficiencies. There is a shared culture of cooperation and commitment to continuous improvement by each of the stakeholders. And, as in any good partnership, the details of the agreement are evolving based on the changing context and needs of those involved.

## ***Recruiting Youth into the OPS***

### **Critical Success Factors Demonstrated**

Committed Leadership  
Shared Purpose and Culture  
Clear Governance and Accountability (underway)  
Integrated Planning (underway)  
On-going Relationship Management (underway)

### **Background**

This initiative was led by Deputy Ministers John Burke of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Kevin Costante of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) as part of the Partnership Strategy on Horizontal Initiatives. Deputy Minister Sandra Lang of the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services (MCBS) has also lent her full support to the partnership. The objective of this partnership is twofold:

- To develop an overarching agreement that leads to specific customer-facing initiatives that involve all four partners and demonstrate improvements in customer service and/or efficiency and effectiveness.
- To test the principles, recommendations, tools and templates of the Partnership Strategy for Horizontal Initiatives.

The following describes the sequence of events in the initiation of the model partnership, and demonstrates the value of devoting resources from the outset of any cross-boundary relationship:

- The objectives for the partnership held by the sponsoring Deputy Ministers were determined through an interview process.
- To ensure a common understanding of the objectives of the overall Partnership Strategy for Horizontal Initiatives, a formal kickoff meeting was attended by the Deputy Ministers, Assistant Deputy Minister, and key Directors and Managers from the partner organizations. The discussions on specific initiatives for the partnership could not have been successful without clarity on the objectives of the relationship.
- Work then began to identify potential initiatives where a public-facing service could be delivered as a partnership between the ministries. Of the possibilities that emerged, Youth Employment, was seen as both timely and key to core mandates. It was immediately identified that MBS was a stakeholder in this initiative and it was invited to join the partnership.

- Each partner's basic requirements prior to committing to the partnership were the focus of the next meetings. This helped the partners understand the different perspectives at the table, which was necessary to prevent issues from arising later when investment and expectations would be much greater. An agreement was reached on the outcomes and givens that would form the basis of a high level framework for the engagement of a broad level of stakeholders.
- The development of the framework continued in a one-day workshop with approximately 30 stakeholders from the partner ministries.
- To demonstrate their full commitment to both the relationship and the tangible deliverables of the initiative, the Deputy Ministers of MNR, MTCU, and MCBS opened the session. Ministries then split into groups to establish the minimum outcome they would require to see the partnership as a success. In the process of sharing this information with the other partners, negotiations, discussion and validation produced a set of minimum outcomes for the overall partnership.
- Using these minimum outcomes as "givens," the participants then worked to develop the principles (e.g. performance measures, accountability, investments and rewards) that would form the foundation of an overarching agreement to govern the relationship between the four ministries. Any specific initiatives they decided to undertake would follow these guidelines and principles.
- This framework (principles, outcomes and givens) was presented to a broader group of operational stakeholders in a second one-day workshop.
- Since relationships are formed between people and not organizations, continuity in any project is very important to its success. With this in mind, 15 participants who had participated in developing the framework were chosen for the second day workshop. Fifteen new participants were chosen specifically to introduce an operational perspective for the initiative Recruiting Youth into the OPS.
- The session closed with the Deputies committing their ongoing involvement and support on three levels:
  - Addressing overarching issues that make partnerships difficult
  - Supporting the overall partnership between the four ministries
  - Ensuring the necessary support on the specific Recruiting Youth into the OPS initiative.
- By developing the agreement together, each partner felt a sense of ownership in the success of the relationship.

### **Committed Leadership**

From the outset, the co-sponsors have been fully engaged in this relationship and have ensured that their organizations are not only committed to the concept of working together, but also to the tangible deliverables that will result from the partnership. This strong leadership includes investing significant time and

interest to provide direction and advice and commit the necessary resources from their respective organizations.

The ADMs performed the overall framing of the partnership and the specific opportunity. They attended both workshops and also ensured the appropriate participants from their respective organizations attended each of the workshops.

### **Shared Purpose and Culture**

Heavy demands on the time of senior staff means that it is often difficult to schedule meetings, especially in larger groups. This was the case in the early planning stages of this partnership, and the initial framing discussions were largely bilateral. This led to some misunderstandings, which were eventually resolved when all four partners met together. This points to the importance of committing time at the exploration stage of the relationship so that the right individuals are at the table together for multilateral discussions.

Through a series of discussions, stakeholders from throughout the vertical organizations of all partners began to gain an increased level of clarity of what had to be accomplished, and strategies for achieving those goals. High level understandings were explored and understood further as the recruiting Youth into the OPS initiative was discussed. Outcome expectations for the overall partnerships were shared and agreed to by all partners in the workshop, and where necessary differences were negotiated so the final result was a set of overall outcomes that all four ministries could endorse.

The workshop on Youth Recruitment and Retention started the process of developing a shared culture by supporting relationships, a shared language and vocabulary, and a working culture among the partners involved in this initiative.

It will be necessary to continue to engage the partners and potentially expand this to other groups as this initiative evolves. Discussions on how and when to expand the stakeholder community were raised by the stakeholders present at the Recruiting Youth into the OPS workshop.

### **Other Critical Success Factors**

The other critical success factors will not be explored fully until the partnership progresses further. There is commitment on the part of all of the partners to continue to invest the time in the relationship to ensure the success of both the relationship and the initiative.



## **Conclusion**

The case studies demonstrate that a concentrated focus on embedding the key critical success factors into a partnership initiative will improve the chance of developing a sustainable partnership over the lifecycle of the project. As well, the case studies illustrate that partnerships are not just an adjunct to regular work, but represent a culture shift. Successful partnerships are competency based, and require dedicated commitment at all levels, and recognition of effort and energy contributed by team members. By drawing on this experience to document best practices and develop tools and templates to support partnerships, the partnership strategy is a transformation enabler.