



Affaires indiennes
et du Nord Canada

Indian and Northern
Affairs Canada

2005 Government On-Line Public Report

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I. Department GOL Strategy

Overview

The [Government of Canada's initiative](#) to provide information and key services on the Internet by 2006 was titled "[Government On-Line](#)" (GOL). This multi-year initiative, launched in 2000, aimed to use information and communication technology to provide Canadians with enhanced access to improved citizen-centred, integrated services, anytime, anywhere and in the official language of their choice.

The Government accomplished GOL by leveraging information technology and the Internet to promote client-centric business service delivery. While technology was an important component of GOL, business service transformation was the key to its successful implementation.

[Indian and Northern Affairs Canada](#) (INAC) viewed GOL as opportunity to confirm the services delivered to First Nations, Inuit and Northern partners and, to examine, redesign and streamline the service delivery processes.

INAC's successful implementation of its GOL commitments required the buy-in of INAC staff and stakeholders. The Department needed to ensure that both groups were aware of the Department's GOL goals and the progress being made towards achieving the goals. It was also important that both groups knew that they had the opportunity to provide input and voice concerns, and that those concerns were being addressed. INAC also needed to develop a framework of policies to support GOL to clarify INAC's role with respect to sharing data and systems with partners, and to accommodate security and privacy concerns.

Vision

INAC provides benefits to First Nations, Inuit, Metis, Northerners and all Canadians through its focus upon five Strategic Outcomes - the Government, the People, the Land, the Economy and the Office of the Federal Interlocutor.

INAC envisioned GOL as a new service delivery channel that, when fully implemented, would improve connectivity and communications between the Department and its partners. The Department viewed GOL with the potential to provide better access to departmental information and services, to promote information exchange and the use of technology in Aboriginal and Northern communities, and to foster the creation of an e-Smart INAC. Moreover, GOL would support the aspirations of Aboriginal peoples and Northerners for sustainable economic development and strong local governance, and thereby, promoting the Department's strategic objectives of Gathering Strength. GOL was a critical step in the development of the INAC vision of "An environment that fosters a more promising future for all First Nations, Inuit and other Northern peoples and promotes self-sufficiency, economic independence, and a level of accountability similar to other governments in Canada" as stated in the *INAC Report on Plans and Priorities 2000-2001*.

The Department also viewed GOL as an integral part of its service improvement strategy which sought to improve service delivery through coherent and streamlined operations. While GOL may suggest service delivery through the Internet, the GOL principles were equally valid for other channels of service delivery. The Department was committed to adopting these principles to ensure that information and services provided across all service delivery channels were consistent, and that service standards were established and respected. Assisting in the integration of GOL principles with service improvement was the *Supporting Front Line Operations* initiative, an ongoing departmental change management endeavour that is aimed at improving the capacity of front line employees to effectively address critical business issues with both internal and external clients and partners.

Guiding Principles

INAC committed to implementing GOL in a manner that promoted improved program and service delivery capacity at the community level, supported stronger First Nation governments, and supported the development of sustainable self government as set out in the following principles.

- the involvement of First Nations, Inuit and Northern representatives as partners,
- create opportunities, prosperity and choices for First Nations, Inuit and Northern peoples,
- provide fair and equitable access for First Nations, Inuit and Northern peoples,
- reflect a continuous improvement philosophy, through business re-engineering,
- provide for open, transparent, inclusive and accountable decision-making,
- ensure respect for diverse cultures and traditional values,
- endorse fiscal responsibility,
- enable client-centric service delivery,
- ensure that privacy is respected and protected,
- support the development of feedback mechanisms to allow First Nations, Inuit and Northern peoples to assess progress and success, and
- promote partnerships with the private sector and other government departments.

Delivery Strategy

INAC established a GOL Project Management Office which was responsible for coordinating, planning and reporting the Department's GOL initiatives. The Department's program sectors and business units were responsible for re-engineering the services and for exploring opportunities for service improvement prior to implementation of on-line service delivery.

A departmental GOL Committee had also been established to coordinate departmental GOL activities both internally and with external partners. The objective of the GOL Committee was to serve as a forum for consultation, coordination, and information exchange, to ensure that INAC's GOL initiative adhered to the [Treasury Board Secretariat's](#) (TBS) *Framework for Government On-Line*, and were consistent with departmental priorities and strategic directions. The GOL Committee consisted of departmental representations from headquarter program sectors and regional offices, external representations from the TBS and three Aboriginal organizations.

The GOL Committee also provided input and recommendations on the Department's GOL Plans and related activities. Input and suggestions were brought to the GOL Committee through other intra-departmental committees such as the INET Committee which was responsible for the Department's Intranet and Internet operations

For each of the services transformed for on-line delivery, Aboriginal representatives were invited to participate as members of the project working groups to ensure that their views and concerns were considered and addressed.

As the on-line transaction services became fully deployed, the Department conducted periodic focus group surveys and user interviews to obtain feedback for future system enhancement and service improvement.

Collaboration

A major part of the INAC GOL delivery strategy was the use of the [Government of Canada's Canada Portal](#), which consists of the Canadians, Non-Canadians and Canadian Businesses gateways with information organized into specific subjects called clusters. INAC led the creation of the Aboriginal Peoples cluster in collaboration with other federal and provincial governments, and Aboriginal organizations through the development of the [Aboriginal Canada Portal](#) (ACP).

The ACP is a single-window to Canadian Aboriginal on-line resources, contacts, information and government programs and services. It offers ease of access and navigation to listings of Aboriginal associations, businesses, organizations, bands, communities, groups, news and peoples.

Communications

INAC's communications goal was to increase and sustain momentum for the GOL initiative, which involved building both internal and external awareness. A Communication Strategy was produced as part of the Department's *GOL Action Plan* in September 2000.

The plan addressed communication requirements for external and internal stakeholders with different objectives for each target audience.

The external communications objectives were to:

- Make First Nations, Inuit and Northerners aware of INAC's commitment to improve services by providing choice of delivery channels.
- Build awareness of the benefits of electronic service delivery and of the re-engineering process.
- Provide First Nations, Inuit and Northerners with the information they need to get involved in the design process and encourage them to do so.
- Manage expectations and link communications to deliverables.
- Encourage First Nations, Inuit and Northerners to use electronic channels to access INAC information and services.

The internal communications objectives were to:

- Educate staff about what GOL is and what its impact will be.
- Convey the message that GOL is not about technology, it's a partnership between business areas and technology.
- Build and sustain engagement on GOL – foster a common understanding of the GOL agenda and deadlines.
- Promote a collaborative approach to electronic service delivery.

Highlights

INAC continues to provide better access to departmental information and services, promote information exchange and the use of technology in Aboriginal and Northern communities, and to foster the creation of an e-Smart INAC.

The Northern Information Network (NIN) Web site has been updated to better meet the needs of their clients. The update includes greater interdepartmental coordination and input, as well as a new look and feel for NIN.

Also new to the NIN Web site is an improved geo-metadata query form. Through a partnership with NRCan's Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (CGDI), a search option was developed which allows users to search through hundreds of geo-spatial metadata entries pertaining to the Canadian North.

A new training tool for Aboriginal businesses is now on the Internet. It provides information about how to find and bid on federal government contracts with the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business. The site is located on the INAC Web site at under "[Web-based guide to doing business with the federal government.](#)"

The First Nations Water Management Strategy announced in Spring 2003 a plan to improve water and wastewater systems on reserves across Canada. Information about the First Nations Water Management Strategy and what is being done to keep your water clean can be found at "[Water - Source for Life](#)".

INAC is engaged in Bilateral co-operation agreements with Russia to co-ordination activities concerning Northern Development and Aboriginal Issues. Key activities include: a project to foster northern commercial linkages and strengthening capacity of Chambers of Commerce; northern municipal partnerships; capacity building to promote Northern and Aboriginal Women entrepreneurship; sharing Canadian experience in mediation to enhance relations between Aboriginal Communities and resource development companies in the oil and gas sector; and the marketing of northern products, especially reindeer. The departmental Web site will be use to assist with these activities.

Conclusion

The GOL Initiative ended its mandate in fiscal year 2005–2006. INAC's investments to date have helped support the increased availability of the Government of Canada's most commonly used services by providing clients convenient access to the services, and by enhancing the overall service functionality.

The GOL Initiative provided the Department with the opportunity to re-think the very concept of service delivery by focussing on the need to integrate and streamline current offerings to build partnerships with stakeholders in the public and private sectors. Benefits mentioned in the reports on a number of GOL services include faster service, less complexity and/or number of program process steps, and cost savings to both the clients and the Government.

Although the GOL initiative has ended, INAC will continue to look at innovative ways to continue to improve on the information and services provided.

Questions or comments on the *INAC GOL 2005 Public Report* are welcomed.

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II. GOL Services Reporting

The departmental public report highlights achievements for each of the following services;

- Aboriginal Employment Program
- Environmental Management and Protection
- First Nations and Inuit Transfer Payments
- Indian Registry System/Certificate of Indian Status
- Land Management
- Northern Environmental Management and Protection
- Northern Natural Resource Management
- Northern Science and Technology and Circumpolar Liaison
- On-line Access to Corporate Information

Aboriginal Employment

The [Aboriginal Employment Program](#) (AEP) was implemented by [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada](#) (INAC) in consultation with the [Committee for the Advancement of Native Employment](#) (CANE) and authorities granted by the [Public Service Commission](#) (PSC) in 1995. The goal of the program is to increase representation of Aboriginal peoples at all levels in INAC.

An on-line application system and national Aboriginal inventory is a recruitment tool that will allow potential applicants access to vacancies in the Department, and managers access to Aboriginal individuals who possess the qualifications being sought. This system will improve INAC's ability to meet its Aboriginal employment commitments. The system will also support the goals of other departmental partners in the area of Aboriginal employment. Access to data contained in the inventory will be limited to selected individuals in order to ensure the privacy of applications.

The client group benefiting from this on-line service is Aboriginal peoples seeking employment at INAC.

Benefits to the client include convenient access to the service (i.e. clients can register at their preferred time and location), and immediate on-line acknowledgement of their registration.

Elimination of geographic barriers, increased access to opportunities across the federal Public Service and on-going access to information relating to specific job opportunities and/or application status are other benefits that the client will receive by having this service on-line.

The service can be accessed via the [Aboriginal Peoples](#) cluster under the [Canadians](#) gateway, or through the INAC Web site.

A description of the AEP, including how to apply, and contact information are posted on the [INAC Web site](#).

Through partnerships with the PSC, the maintenance of the Aboriginal Employment Web site, and participation at Aboriginal Employment Forums across the country, INAC continues to assist Aboriginal peoples seeking employment.

In 2004, the Department launched the [Aboriginal University Recruitment Inventory](#) (AURI), which is designed to promote targeted recruitment of Aboriginal university graduates through the PSC's Post-Secondary Recruitment process.

INAC plans to enhance this on-line service through the implementation of basic interactive on-line forms to capture competencies, and job skills for positions within INAC.

Environmental Management and Protection

Through this service INAC develops policies and programs for the management of contaminated (hazardous waste) sites in the territories. Also, through this service INAC develops and implements environmental assessment processes, addressing federal requirements under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) and legislation resulting from claims negotiations.

This service consists of the following five sub-components:

- Administration of fuel storage tanks including registration, assessment and decommissioning,
- Administration of waste sites including regulation, assessment and decommissioning,
- Maintenance of an environmental assessment registry,
- Management of contaminated sites including tracking environmental issues and remediation plans, and
- Management of the Environmental Capacity Development Initiative (ECDI).

First Nation communities, departmental staff, and provincial and federal governments benefit from this service.

Benefits to the client include the elimination of geographic barriers, knowledge creation and increased transparency/accountability.

The service can be accessed via the [Aboriginal Peoples](#) cluster under the [Canadians](#) gateway, or through the INAC Web site.

The [Environment and Natural Resources](#) Web site was launched in 2003-2004. The site offers client groups current information regarding environmental policies and directives. INAC will continue to enhance the Web site by including an on-line registry of on-reserve environmental assessments, an inventory of on-reserve natural resources and on-line interactive training material on environmental management and protection or reserve lands.

In 2004, the Environmental Stewardship Strategy Information Management System (ESSIMS) was implemented in order to maintain an accurate and up-to-date list of contaminated sites and comprehensive environmental information for fuel storage tanks and contaminated site management to First Nations.

To support this priority, INAC also modernized operations by developing an Indian and Inuit Affairs Program Environmental Management System. The implementation was completed in fiscal year 2005/2006.

The Department is also investigating the possibility of a partnership with [Natural Resources Canada](#) to provide cartographic interfaces to data on contaminated sites on reserves.

First Nations and Inuit Transfer Payments

This service involves the transfer, in an emerging government-to-government relationship, of grants and contributions (\$5.1 billion in fiscal year 2004/2005) for the delivery of essential services to First Nations and Inuit governments and their community members, and the corresponding accountability and performance reporting and evaluation. Combined with the Canada / First Nation Funding Arrangement, this service can become a multi-jurisdictional, single-window Internet access to authorized users for on-line processing of business transactions, both financial and non-financial.

Key transactions that can be conducted through an on-line Transfer Payment service will include the application for and approval of funding, electronic scheduling and adjustment of cash requirements, transfer of funds, and filing of financial and non-financial reports to meet performance and accountability requirements. Financial reports will include audit statements that are consistent with National Accounts schedules, and non-financial reports will consist of administrative data and performance indicators for programs such as education, social development and support, capital and housing, Indian government support services, economic development, land and environment management, population statistics, etc.

The on-line transfer payment process will enhance the government-to-government transfer of resources to First Nations and Inuit governments, increase transparency and accountability to the community members and the [Government of Canada](#), and reduce processing time and duplication through a single-window service.

On-line reporting and retrieval of financial and non-financial data will make the process more responsive to community needs. These reports, which include administrative data on programs such as social, education, capital and housing, band governance, etc., are collected at varying times and frequencies throughout the year.

Reporting results through a consolidated on-line process will improve the quality and consistency of the data. Equally important, experience with this core business on-line will contribute to building capacity in First Nation and Inuit communities to bridge the digital divide.

The client groups benefiting from this on-line service include First Nations and Inuit governments and organizations.

Benefits to the client include First Nations access to transfer payment information, increased transparency, improved ability to make decisions and increased trust relationships with First Nations.

In April 1999, INAC launched the Non-Registered On-Reserve Population (NRORP) system, designed to allow First Nation administrators to file annual statistics of on-reserve non-registered population on-line.

The Housing and Infrastructure Assets system (H&IA) was implemented in June 1999. H & IA is an on-line system for First Nation administrators to file annual reports on conditions of housing, water and sewer servicing on reserves.

Clients had access to an on-line reporting of National Post-Secondary Education Program data in March 2002.

In fiscal year 2003/2004 [Treasury Board Secretariat](#) and INAC temporarily shelved the First Nations and Inuit Transfer Payment Project (FNITP). The FNITP project was re-launched in November 2004.

The management of Transfer Payments is essential to INAC's Management Accountability Framework. As a result the FNITP project seeks to achieve the following main objectives:

- Establish best possible Transfer Payments business processes that are efficient, sustainable and automated, to the extent practical and cost effective;
- To streamline the Transfer Payment business processes consistently across all regions, Sectors, and NCR (National Capital Region);
- To re-engineer the Transfer Payment Management tools in support of Transfer Payment business and service standards; and
- To provide Web-Enabled On-Line Access capability to First Nations, Inuit and Northerners, while maintaining the Reporting Manual Submission capability when necessary.

A multi-phased approach is being used to ensure a balance between the technology and the process improvements, alignment of project and business objectives and, to manage project and operational risks. The overall implementation and deployment of FNITP is planned for fiscal year 2007/2008.

More information on this service can be found on the [INAC Web site](#).

In 2004, the Department also launched a major data collection review with the objective of significantly streamlining the reporting requirements of First Nations. In parallel this effort was accompanied by the conversion of the current Transfer Payment Management System (TPMS) to a new Web-enabled platform. This system constitutes the first step in the development of a re-engineered, single-window, on-line venue for transferring federal funds and reporting results.

Indian Registry System/Certificate of Indian Status

This service is for the registry of eligible First Nations (FN) individuals as Status Indians under the *Indian Act* in the Indian Registry. The Indian Registry also issues a Certificate of Indian Status (Status Card) to identify FN persons as eligible for services and benefits that are specially designed for Status Indians.

The objective of the Indian Registry System / Certificate of Indian Status project (IRS/CIS) is to improve access to services, including benefit entitlement for registered FN individuals.

This service will provide improved access for FN peoples to services and benefits provided by other federal government departments, provincial / territorial governments, and Canadian businesses. Currently, some clients are denied access to services and benefits because their status identity cannot be easily determined and authenticated. Primary transactions include uninsured healthcare and provincial sales tax exemption.

The registration of life events and the update of identity information will also be improved through authorized secure on-line access to the IRS by other federal government departments and Indian Registration Administrators (IRAs) in FN membership offices.

Access to the on-line Indian Registry is restricted to authorized users because of privacy and security requirements. Information on registration and CIS, however, can be accessed via the [Aboriginal Peoples](#) cluster under the [Canadians](#) gateway, or through the INAC Web site.

In 2004, the Department completed a project to modernize the existing IRS and re-engineer the associated business process to enable on-line access to, and update of, Registry information.

In 2004/2005 a national horizontal strategy to implement a secure CIS card was completed — 102,000 Certificates of Indian Status were issued. Issuance of the CIS and the recording of life events was once done at two separate physical locations. In the future both will happen in one location.

Nationally 4,195 applications for registration as Status Indians were process and 5,547 new applications were received. As of March 31, 2005 the total Status Indian population was 733,626.

The Department will be developing and issuing a more secure identification card to minimize the misuse of the existing CIS. The enhanced identification card will improve access by FN individuals to programs and services that require identity authentication.

To complete the work for this on-line service, INAC is planning a national deployment of IRS in regional offices and FN membership offices, and a phased national deployment of the enhanced CIS.

Land Management

This service administers and manages reserve land in accordance with the *Indian Act* and the *First Nations Land Management Act*.

Four sub-components of this service are delivered on-line:

- land transactions are recorded and maintained in the Indian Land Registry System (ILRS),
- land leases and permits are tracked using the NetLands system,
- the historical reserve land sales are recorded in the Land Sales System (LSS), and
- land information is displayed graphically as First Nation Community Maps using Geographic Information System (GIS).

A fifth sub-component service that can be delivered on-line is the use of GIS for integrated community planning. This service will provide spatial and related textual data on land parcels. The information will include legal survey fabric and registered interests.

The client groups benefiting from this on-line service include Aboriginal land administrators, solicitors, departmental staff, researchers, and claims negotiators.

The benefits to the client include faster and more cost effective service by eliminating the need for an individual to travel to a regional office or the Registry Office to obtain the necessary information.

The service can be accessed via the [Aboriginal Peoples](#) cluster under the [Canadians](#) gateway, or through the INAC Web site.

In June 1999, NetLands, a restricted-access on-line system that tracks land transactions including leases and permits, was implemented.

The restricted-access on-line ILRS, which provides users with records of transactions of all on-reserve land parcels, was implemented in February 2001. The system was then upgraded in November 2002.

Enhancement of the First Nations community maps database, including digitization of additional maps and translation of subject field names was completed in 2003.

As a result of the successful outcome of the NRCan / ILRS Proof of Concept project undertaken in November 2003, the Department continues to work jointly with the Legal Surveys Division of [Natural Resources Canada](#) (NRCan) to establish a partnership to integrate access to both the Indian Land Registry Records of INAC and to the Canada Lands Surveys Records of NRCan.

The Corporate Spatial Data Infrastructure project, initiated in fiscal year 2003/2004, deployed a Geo-Portal using a corporate spatial data infrastructure. The project included building a server-based system to make spatial data and geographic visualization available to INAC and its clients.

Having this technology available by the end of fiscal year 2005/2006 facilitated the use of geography and geographic tools by several INAC business areas and their clients. The delivery mechanism included a Web client which provides a visualization window into the spatial data allowing queries, data overlays, and distance measurements.

Northern Environmental Management and Protection

Through this service INAC develops policies and programs for the management of contaminated (hazardous waste) sites in the territories. Also, through this service INAC develops and implements environmental assessment processes, addressing federal requirements under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) and legislation resulting from claims negotiations.

The client groups benefiting from this on-line service include researchers, contractors, project proponents, First Nations, Inuit and other Northerners, regulatory boards, academics, land use planners and the general public.

Clients and the general public will benefit from improved information available on the Web site to increase their ability to understand and make decisions about issues related to environmental impacts.

The service can be accessed via the [Aboriginal Peoples](#) cluster under the [Canadians](#) gateway, or through the INAC Web site.

The [Northern Information Network](#), went on-line in 1993. Map metadata and links to other northern sites were added to the service in January 1995.

The [Oil and Gas](#) information Web site, which includes maps, data on wells and information on rights issuance, was created in 1996.

[Mines and Minerals](#) information, was added to the INAC Web site in June 2001.

The [Northern Contaminants Program](#) (NCP), available on-line since January 1995, provides documents that guide the strategic directions and funding of the program, details on the management of the program, a list of funded projects and information, and forms and supporting documents for preparation of proposals. An on-line registration system was included for a NCP symposium held in 2003.

The [NCP Publications Database](#) lets clients search a database containing descriptions of more than 1110 publications that have resulted from the NCP. NCP publications are continuously being included in the database.

INAC continues to work with Treasury Board Secretariat, Environment Canada and other departments to rationalize and group information related to federal contaminated sites on the Web.

The Department plans to develop and implement an on-line system for managing submissions to the annual NCP Call for Proposals. The system will be linked to the NCP database to track proposals and the funded projects.

Northern Natural Resource Management

This service, which includes the following component services, provides for the management of land and natural resources in Canada's three northern territories:

- activities include issuing mineral titles; collecting royalties and fees, and monitoring and inspecting mining activities, and
- provision of Geoscience information on the geology and mineral deposits of the territories in the form of maps, studies, reports and databases.

The client groups benefiting from this on-line service include researchers, contractors, private companies in the oil and gas and mineral sectors, project proponents, First Nations, Inuit and other Northerners, regulatory boards, academics, land use planners and the general public.

Client benefits from on-line delivery include improved project planning, access to northern research data and information on environmental, social and economic conditions, improved access to historical data, reports, rights information, streamlined administrative processing for royalties and rights administration, and improved notification of program initiatives such as rights issuance.

The service can be accessed via the [Aboriginal Peoples](#) cluster under the [Canadians](#) gateway, or through the INAC Web site.

The [Interactive Oil and Gas Rights Query Tool](#), an interactive query for all oil and gas licences, was implemented in 2003. The tool gives users access to oil and gas licences, and queries can be performed based on Representative (Company), Licence Number, Licence Type, Issue Date, Expiry Date, Size and Region.

The Geology Division of INAC, Northwest Territories (NWT) region, continues to research and enter data in an accelerated manner into [NORMIN.DB](#). NORMIN.DB is a database of mineral showings in the NWT and Nunavut, as well as a database of information about publications, exploration reports, and other references to geology and mineral exploration in the NWT and Nunavut.

INAC's [Spatially Integrated Dataset](#) (SID), now provides access to view current data on mineral claims in the NWT and Nunavut; research geographical data on-line; and produce customized maps using Geographic Information System (GIS) information with specific focuses such as minerals and land claims areas.

The Department completed the design and development of a Land Information Management System (LIMS). LIMS includes integration of nine district offices along with data distribution to INAC's headquarters and the Nunavut Planning Commission. Many of the legal reports provided as a service to the end-client are made available utilizing this document integration process.

With increased northern exploration activity and an increased interest in Delta gas on the horizon, modernizing of the prescribed manual royalty submission forms in today's environment has become a priority hence the Department has started development of an electronic Oil and Gas Royalty Management system to facilitate on-line royalty submissions and to provide a mechanism for assisting in administration, assessments and audits of royalties.

A guide to Legislation Affecting Mineral Development Web site, a cross referenced index/database of legislation and mineral activities, is also under development. This service will provide advice on legislation and regulations, information about contacts, permits and licences.

Northern Science and Technology and Circumpolar Liaison

This service delivers the Northern Scientific Training Program (NSTP) and the Northern Science Award, and provides federal coordination with respect to Northern Science and Technology in Canada.

This service also promotes cooperation among the Arctic nations through the implementation of the new Northern Dimension of Canada's foreign policy, including the engagement in Arctic Council and other international work.

INAC is committed to maintaining and strengthening the Canadian presence in circumpolar fora and leadership among circumpolar nations. Arctic co-operation provides opportunities for collaboration with other Arctic states on issues affecting them collectively and of direct relevance to Canada, such as sustainable development, or advancing indigenous peoples' participation in Arctic decision-making.

The Arctic Council is at the centre of Canada's involvement in multilateral circumpolar cooperation. The Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental forum and is the only forum to bring together all of the eight Arctic states: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States of America. It is also the only forum to fully include in its membership international Aboriginal organizations representing the Aboriginal peoples of the North.

INAC currently holds the secretariat for The Future of Children and Youth of the Arctic, an initiative sponsored by Canada and adopted by the Arctic Council in September 1998. The long term objective of this initiative is to engage the youth of the circumpolar North in activities that will contribute more effectively to the sustainable development of the region.

As well the Department is participating in Canada's initiative to adopt a more strategic "capacity building" focus in the work of the Arctic Council. The focus is on increasing self-sufficiency to ensure that northerners, including Aboriginal peoples, have the skills and expertise to shape solutions to northern challenges. This initiative draws heavily on INAC's experience in the area of capacity building, based on efforts in Canada to build a new and stronger relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

The client groups benefiting from this on-line service include students and professors at Canadian universities, and the general public.

Benefits to clients include on-line registration for grants, and faster response times as a result of improvements made to the NSTP repository of applications, through which staff can more easily compare and track information. Another benefit for clients from this service stems from the fact that eight other countries contribute to this science and sharing of best practices. There is also input from other federal government departments including the science.ca cluster.

The service can be accessed via the [Aboriginal Peoples](#) cluster under the [Canadians](#) gateway, or through the INAC Web site.

Grant application forms and all supporting documentation for the NSTP have been on-line since April 1997. Also since September 2000, applicants are able to complete forms on-line and print them for submission through their nearest university by visiting [Northern Scientific Training Program Electronic Forms](#).

The Commission's Web site was expanded with the addition of new links, including the Canada International Polar Year 2007-2008 Web site, which the [Commission](#) developed and hosts.

The [Polar Science Forum](#) continued to expand this year with the addition of 200 new subscribers. This brings the total number of polar specialists using this resource to about 1,150.

The [on-line directory](#) of polar researchers expanded by approximately 100 listings to bring the total to more than 2,000.

On-line Access to Corporate Information

This service provides on-line access to discussion fora, INAC's corporate data warehouse, and various departmental information holdings such as program data (i.e., education, population, capital assets, housing, etc.) and the departmental library catalogue. Via this service, citizens can find complete and accurate departmental data, including information on First Nations, Inuit and Northern communities. Providing access to on-line discussion fora will allow for interactive collaboration and consultation between the Department and its First Nations, Inuit and Northern partners in policy development and other endeavours.

INAC's corporate data warehouse is an important source of information for First Nations communities, businesses, researchers, and the general public. This information is vital for various planning and policy development work at the community level (i.e. education, economic development, housing and infrastructure, etc.). It is also an effective tool for educating the public about issues and challenges facing Canada's First Nations and Aboriginal people.

The client groups benefiting from this on-line service include Administrators, educators and staff in First Nations and Aboriginal communities, businesses and economic/community development planners, and researchers.

In September 1999, the First Nations Community Profiles went on-line. This is a user-friendly, Web-based system which allows quick and easy on-line access to current profiles of First Nations communities. Re-design of the system with links to more departmental databases and expanded First Nations information is being planned.

Implementation of a collaboration tool in the INAC British Columbia regional office has streamlined the negotiating process by improving communications, better sharing of information and the development of closer working relationships between parties. More on-line discussion / collaboration fora are being implemented as determined by business needs.

In 2003, the Department Web-enabled the departmental library catalogue management system, Virtua, creating an [INAC Library Portal](#).

Also, the 1-800 information service was put in place to assist clients seeking information about the Department's services.

The Nunavut Regional Office completed the digitization of geological assessment reports. In total, 2,799 reports were scanned and archived, and are now publically available in [electronic format](#).

In 2004, the Department conducted food price surveys in about 30 communities using the Food Mail Program and southern supply centres, and published the results of all surveys on its Web site. All publications related to the [Food Mail Program](#) are available.

The INAC Web site receives approximately 200,000 hits per day and over 10,000 visitors per day. One quarter of the visitors to the INAC site are returning visitors.