

DOING BUSINESS

with Public Works and Government Services Canada

Fall 2008

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As Public Works and Government Services Canada's (PWGSC's) external newsletter, **Doing Business** supports the Department's role as a common service provider by informing colleague departments, Canadians and all other interested parties about interesting and innovative PWGSC services, activities, projects and initiatives. Written, designed and published quarterly by PWGSC's Communications Sector, it is also available on-line at www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/bulletin/fa-db/nm-ci-eng.html.

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Doing Business welcomes feedback and suggestions for future stories. Please address your comments to: Lisa Pridmore Barreca; Editor, Doing Business; Communications Sector, PWGSC; 16A1, Portage III; 11 Laurier Street; Gatineau, QC; K1A 0S5. Fax: 819-956-0573. E-mail questions@pwgsc.gc.ca

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DB EXPRESS

Doing Business Express is an e-mail bulletin that keeps you informed about the latest developments, tools and services from PWGSC. If you would like to receive these updates, send your name and e-mail address to questions@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca.

Here are some highlights from recent bulletins:

Who We Are: Our Vision and Mission

Clear and compelling vision and mission statements can play a key role in an organization's success, by creating a common understanding of who it is, what it does, and where it's going. They help ensure that everyone pulls together in the same direction.

PWGSC has created new vision and mission statements to help guide us in our work of serving the Government of Canada and Canadians.

The Vision: To excel in government operations

The Mission: To deliver high-quality services and programs that meet the needs of federal organizations and ensure sound stewardship on behalf of Canadians

The new statements speak to our vital role as a provider of quality services to other federal departments and agencies, and our equally important responsibility in ensuring good value for Canadians' tax dollars.

Combined with our corporate values of Leadership, Excellence, Respect and Integrity, these statements provide the

big picture of our Department, its dedicated people and the work we do.

Read more about PWGSC and its Vision and Mission at: www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/apropos-about/prps-bt-eng.html

Choosing not to print

Did you know that publishing the annual Employee Pension and Benefits Statement (EPBS) for all members of the Government of Canada pension plan uses up to 70 tons of paper?

To save paper and keep with the Green Procurement Policy (www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/greening/text/proc/pol-e.html), PWGSC has introduced a new feature that lets Compensation Web Applications' (CWA) users stop the publication of their annual EPBS. By viewing the EPBS on-line, users could save 6.5 tons of paper in the first year alone.

In addition to saving paper, viewing the annual EPBS on-line will give users access to information that will be updated quarterly (January, April, July and October) instead of yearly with the paper statement.

Employees with access to the CWA can select the secure Employee Benefits Statement option under Personalized Tools (found on the left-side navigation bar of this site) to start the process. Once registered, they can choose to not have their annual EPBS printed. The printing of the EPBS can be reinstated at any time.

For more information, visit Your Public Service Pension and Benefits Portal at <http://pensionandbenefits.gc.ca> **DB**

PWGSC Can Help

Is your Department or Agency receiving inquiries...

about how government contracts are posted?

MERX is an easy and efficient prospecting tool for government tenders allowing businesses to browse and bid on a wide array of contracts.

www.merx.com



PWGSC



Do you use fewer and less correctly?

Check out the Translation Bureau's latest linguistic reminder to learn more.

www.translationbureau.gc.ca



Jupiter Images

Building a better laboratory — halfway around the world

Laboratory network uses knowledge and expertise to help build biological containment facility in Kyrgyzstan

When it comes to building specialized laboratories — even when they're halfway around the world — the National Laboratory Knowledge Network (NLKN) has the know-how to make it happen.

Formed in 2003 by PWGSC's Real Property Branch, the network pools the Department's experience in lab design, operation, maintenance and management. While it's meant to be a centre of knowledge for other government departments embarking on their own laboratory projects, the NLKN has also demonstrated that it can also share that expertise abroad.

Working with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the NLKN is providing project management and advisory services so the Kyrgyz Republic (located in Central Asia) can build a new Biosafety Level 3 biological containment laboratory.

It's part of the Government of Canada's Global Partnership Initiative, a commitment made by G8 countries to work together to reduce global threats such as weapons and materials of mass destruction. Still in the planning stages, the lab is expected to be complete in five years.

“Our goal is to make sure the lab is designed, constructed and equipped to

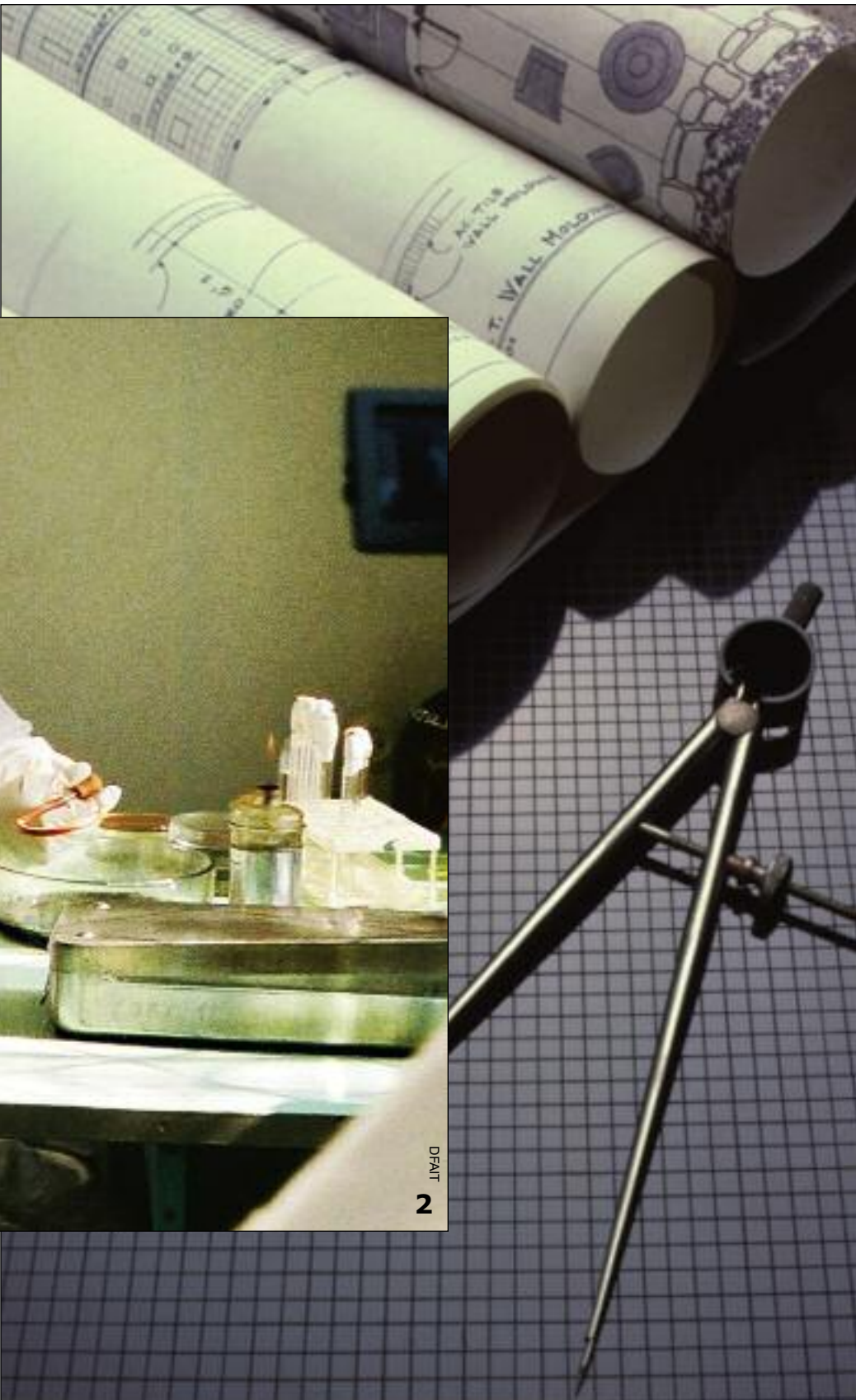
World Health Organization (WHO) standards, and to train individuals to operate the laboratory once it's built,” says Dwayne Willmer, National Director of the Laboratory Market Segment.

Since the team's initial trip to the Kyrgyz Republic, Timothy Ma, Project Manager and NCR Regional Champion of the NLKN, has returned twice to research existing design elements and practices in the country.

The Network has a varied and extensive track record of work for a long list of government departments and agencies, including the RCMP, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the National Research Council, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Atomic Energy of Canada. In addition



(1) A generation after the collapse of the USSR, outdated supplies and methodologies are still in common use in biological laboratories across the former Soviet Union, such as the one pictured here. (2) In many biological laboratories scientists and researchers conduct their work on dangerous human and animal pathogens without the benefit of appropriate protective equipment. Here, scientists are pictured wearing traditional protective equipment



DFAIT

2

Jupiter Images



DFAIT


3

that may not be adequate. The NLKN is advising on the latest in laboratory design, operation and protective equipment for a new lab to be built in the Kyrgyz Republic. (3) Facility improvements: the replacement of decades-old equipment makes a tangible contribution to biosecurity and biosafety.

to its national reputation, the NLKN has developed international relationships with other countries such as New Zealand and the United States to exchange and share best practices.

“Our Network has the capacity and expertise in laboratories so that we are able to provide other government departments with the architectural and engineering aspects of their lab projects,” says Ma. “Our role in this project ends only after we’ve made sure that the lab is working up to the standards we strived for.”

As well, the Network teamed up with LabWize, a non-profit educational society, to host a two-day national laboratory conference in Ottawa earlier this year. Best practices in laboratory planning, design and operation were presented to a group of 200 attendees from other federal departments, other levels of government, industry, and the academic community.

For more information about the National Laboratory Knowledge Network, including best operating practices and guidelines for labs, visit: <http://nlkn.gc.ca> 

A green idea you can buy into

Green procurement helps the government lessen the impact on environment

Of the \$21 billion worth of goods and services purchased every year by the Government of Canada, PWGSC procures on average \$13 billion on behalf of other departments and agencies. Because of its expertise in procurement and development of standing offers for commonly purchased items, the Department is in an ideal position to help all departments and agencies with purchasing practices that lessen the impact on the environment.

In 2006, Treasury Board Secretariat approved a policy on green procurement. The policy, which was developed by PWGSC's Office of Greening Government Operations (OGGO), Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada, requires that the environmental impacts and relevant costs of the planning, acquisition, use, operation, maintenance and disposal of goods and services are appropriately considered.


For example, when buying office furniture, purchasing officers consider environmental factors such as:

- Recycled content in fabrics, metals and plastics
- Length of warranty of item
- Low chemical emissions (off-gassing)
- Minimal packaging
- Supplier commitment to environmental performance

There are currently 25 categories of mandatory standing offers with environmental criteria developed for goods and services that represent a large portion of government spending; these include commodities such as printers and print services, fuels and lubricants, IT hardware, furniture, office supplies and vehicles.

The Policy on Green Procurement also gives government departments the flexibility to set their targets based on their own needs and buying patterns.

For more information on the policy, visit:
www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/greening/text/proc/pol-e.html **DB**



The Office of Greening Government Operations was created in April 2005. It leads the greening of the government's operations and works closely with other federal departments, particularly Treasury Board Secretariat, Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada.

Jupiter Images

Need stuff? Just click...

When it comes to selling government surplus, eBay-style sales are around the corner



PWGSC

Tim Eamon wanders around an Ottawa warehouse packed with items that logically shouldn't be in the same room. There's office furniture, an electric sander, bicycles, jewelry, watches and a set of hockey cards. Something in the corner catches his eye. He picks up a bass guitar, plays a few notes and inspects the neck of the instrument. He then walks over to a table and fills out a form listing how much he would be willing to pay for the guitar before dropping it into a locked bidding box.

Welcome to a Government of Canada auction.

Run by PWGSC's Crown Assets Distribution (CAD), the scene is repeated every month in locations across the country. Surplus goods from federal departments and agencies are put up for sale—either individually or in lots—to anyone who's interested. Many assets seized at the border and proceeds of crime seized by the RCMP are also sold.

The way these public sales are held will soon change as CAD makes them more accessible to the public. Its inspiration? On-line auction giant eBay.

“The goal is to eventually have on-line, real-time auctions, just like eBay,” says Robb Flemming, Director of CAD. Today, potential buyers have to make a trip to one of four locations across Canada to make a bid for most items.



The goal is to eventually have on-line, real-time auctions, just like eBay



» The sales currently operate on a closed bid system. Participants write down and submit their bids without knowing how much other bidders have offered. The highest bidder gets the item.

“I like the auctions here,” says Mr. Eamon, “but I prefer eBay because you can see how much other people are bidding.”

Right now, the CAD Web site has photos and descriptions of only some of the items for sale. Later in the year, CAD plans to expand its on-line catalogue to include all items, and start electronic tendering. Down the road, the plan is to make sales open so that participants can bid repeatedly on-line and see the current high bid amount for a specific lot.

“On-line auctions will expand our customer base beyond just those who can visit our warehouse locations. It will really be accessible to anyone with access to a computer,” says Mr. Flemming. “On-line bidding means more customers, which means greater sales proceeds for our client departments.”

CAD has already seen the difference that on-line auctions can make. The British Columbia government, which partners with CAD to sell off surplus Crown assets in the Pacific Region, introduced real time on-line bidding a few years ago and revenues have doubled.

While the bidding box will become a thing of the past, customers will still have the opportunity to come to the

First choice for government departments and agencies

Once on-line auctions are fully functional, CAD will give other government departments first priority to view and express interest on items through a password-protected page. This will encourage the re-use of surplus assets within government. After a few days, anything unsold will move to pages that the public can browse.

warehouses and look at the items for sale. Instead of a box, they’ll be directed to a computer to place their bid.

For more information about Crown Assets Distribution, visit: <http://crownassets.pwgsc.gc.ca> **DB**

PWGSC Can Help

Is your Department or Agency receiving inquiries...

About how government buys goods and services?

Business Access Canada is an on-line portal that has basic information on how government purchasing is done, who the contacts are and how businesses can find opportunities.

www.contractscanada.gc.ca
1-800 811-1148



Jupiter Images

Jupiter Images

The Canada Pavilion goes GLOBE-al



Natural Resources Minister Gary Lunn makes an announcement from the Canada Pavilion.

PWGSC's Canada Pavilion was front and centre at the GLOBE 2008 Trade Show in Vancouver. Seventeen Government of Canada departments and agencies were part of the Pavilion, promoting more than 30 programs and services to about 8,000 visitors.

The mid-March trade show and conference brought together government decision makers, business people and leaders of environmental organizations to discuss issues and solutions.

In addition to coordinating the Pavilion itself, PWGSC had a departmental booth to showcase our many roles in greening government, including our work on green buildings, the *Policy on Green Procurement*, and contaminated site cleanups. The PWGSC booth also promoted the Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) to small business owners, and spoke to university students and program administrators about the exciting career opportunities the Department has to offer.

The Pavilion featured more than just displays during the three-day event. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada filmed several video podcasts from the Pavilion each day, interviewing leading Canadian businesses to promote the work of DFAIT's Trade Commissioner Service.

Natural Resources Minister Gary Lunn stopped by the Pavilion to announce a \$500,000 Government of Canada commitment to help fund an

outdoor solar lighting project in Kelowna, BC.

According to the people who staffed the booths in the Pavilion, GLOBE was a great success. "We were able to have some good in-depth conversations with people about our programs, and we made a lot of great contacts," says Nancy White from Transport Canada. She was at GLOBE to promote Transport's ecoFREIGHT and Urban Transportation programs.

Nancy adds that having all Government

of Canada displays under the same Canada Pavilion roof makes it easier for the public to see who does what.

Sebastien Fournier, an Environmental Advisor with the Department of National Defence, led a booth to highlight the Army's efforts to keep their operations green. "The Canada Pavilion gives us the chance to connect with Canadians face-to-face and to focus on the environmental aspects of DND's work, both on military bases and out in the training areas."

According to Mr. Fournier, the Canada Pavilion's turn-key approach makes it easy for departments to participate. "Not only does the Pavilion provide great visibility, but their people take care of pretty much everything. They build your display, they ship your materials, and they provide terrific on-site logistical support. All you have to worry about is staffing the display and telling your story to people." **DB**

What is the Canada Pavilion?

The Canada Pavilion is part of PWGSC's Exhibitions Program, which oversees and coordinates Government of Canada exhibition activities. The Pavilion travels to major events across the country to talk face-to-face with Canadians, providing information about Government of Canada programs and services, and how to access them.

It also coordinates interdepartmental participation at various exhibitions and trade shows like GLOBE. By putting all participating departments and agencies under the same umbrella, the Exhibitions Program makes it easy for visitors to find the service or program they're looking for.

For more information, visit www.expo.gc.ca, e-mail exhibitions.expositions@pwgsc.gc.ca or call 613-996-1388.

It may not be the first Canadian city that comes to mind when one thinks of earthquakes, but Ottawa does feel a few tremors each year. That's enough shaking for PWGSC—the custodian of Canada's Parliament Buildings—to partner-up with several universities to test how the Hill would handle a large earthquake, and what can be done to make the structures stronger.

Currently, there is very little scientific information available about how heritage masonry structures hold up to earthquakes.

“The rehabilitation of the Parliament Buildings is a big project and we want to be sure we do the job right,” explains Robert Wright, the Project Executive Director in charge of the restoration of the buildings on Parliament Hill. “That’s why we are taking an evidence-based approach.” The seismic testing is part of a larger long-term plan to renovate the West Block, East Block and Centre Block buildings, which were built between 1859 and 1927.

Using the combined research skills and resources from the University of Alberta, the University of Manitoba and the University of Calgary, the tests will yield valuable information that can be applied beyond the work on the Hill to thousands of historic buildings around the world.

“PWGSC is not a research organization,” says Jack Vandenberg, Director of the Heritage Conservation Directorate. “Through partnerships, we have access to expertise, knowledge and resources that we would not otherwise have.” The partnership was made through a research network called Intelligent Sensing for Innovative

SHAKING UP PARLIAMENT HILL

TESTS COULD PREDICT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO CANADA'S PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS IN THE EVENT OF A POWERFUL EARTHQUAKE



If we can learn how such buildings behave in an earthquake, we can learn the best way to preserve them



LAB PHOTOS: PWGSC

Structures (ISIS), which brings together universities, industry, government and not-for-profit organizations.

“The construction of the Parliament Buildings is very typical of the way buildings were made at that time,” says Mr. Vandenberg. The walls, like many from that era, are made of stone. The exterior sandstone wall is backed by an interior wall of limestone. A layer of mortar mixed with rubble holds the two walls together to give it strength.

To test it, replica walls were built using the same technique that the original masons used to build the actual Parliament Buildings. PWGSC masons built the replica walls in September 2007, using the same types of stones used in the original construction.

Jupiter Images

A fake quake

Those walls are being tested inside a lab at the University of Calgary, where a crane lifts a 10' by 5' section onto a platform. Researchers begin shaking the replica wall with the force of a mild earthquake – about 10 percent as powerful as an earthquake regularly experienced in the Ottawa area.

Sensors and gauges meticulously placed on the wall measure what happens as it endures the stresses of the simulated earthquake and researchers note

where cracks begin to form. Power is then increased on the platform in increments until the full force of the strongest earthquake expected to hit Ottawa (about once every 2,500 years) is simulated.

A second series of tests ensures the walls can still carry a load. “The idea is, if the walls can sustain the maximum amount of damage that can be caused by a one-in-2,500-year earthquake, and still carry the load that is going to come onto them afterwards, then the building won't fall down,” says Dr. Nigel Shrive, the lead researcher on the masonry project and an engineer at the University of Calgary.

The University of Manitoba is providing the expertise and facilities needed to assemble and test different possible kinds of masonry anchors (pieces that fasten to the masonry), while the University of Alberta is testing the strength of the mortar.



Through partnerships, we have access to expertise, knowledge and resources that we would not otherwise have

The results will help PWGSC find the best methods to protect the Parliament buildings and other heritage masonry structures. They will also help the Department ensure the restorations meet the current building codes for seismic reinforcement.

“If we can learn how such buildings behave in an earthquake we can learn the best way to preserve them,” says Mr. Vandenberg.

Beyond the Hill, the work could have far-reaching implications, since

the federal government is the custodian of hundreds of heritage masonry buildings. The research could also be useful to European governments, where countless buildings have been made in the same fashion.

“The results are sure to become an important piece of the international dialogue on heritage building conservation,” says Mr. Wright.

Researchers expect to complete the study by the end of 2008 with results to be published in peer-reviewed technical journals and shared internationally. **DB**

For more information about the restorations on Parliament Hill visit: www.parliamenthill.gc.ca



Researchers examine a replica wall after a round of testing.



Replica walls made of the same stone as the Parliament Buildings.



PWGSC / Jupiter Images

New lab, new opportunities

State-of-the-art laboratory keeps Translation Bureau's interpreters among the best trained in the world

PWGSC's Translation Bureau has expanded its training resources with a newly renovated interpretation laboratory in Ottawa. The lab will serve as a training centre for staff and new recruits breaking into the field.

The facility has been completely reconfigured with new audio-visual equipment and ten soundproof interpretation booths to simulate working conditions, which is crucial for the training and ongoing development of interpreters.

"We sometimes forget how essential the Bureau's interpretation services are to the smooth running of Parliament," says Francine Kennedy, the Bureau's CEO. Parliamentary interpreters simultaneously interpret speeches and other statements made by Senators and MPs so that debates can be understood in both official languages. The Translation Bureau is the exclusive provider of these services.

In addition to supporting seasoned professionals who are fine-tuning their skills, the lab opens the opportunity for new recruits to work and learn alongside experienced interpreters. This mentoring is an important element in the Bureau's recruitment and retention strategy for the future. By 2011, almost a third of the Bureau's 1,190 translators, interpreters and terminologists will be eligible for retirement.

"Ensuring that the next generation of interpreters benefits from the experience of their seasoned colleagues is key to meeting future challenges," explains Ms. Kennedy. "The equipment will enable them to practise in conditions that recreate a very realistic working environment similar to what they will face in their profession."

The new lab will also be used for internal promotion exams and accreditation exams for private-sector interpreters wanting to freelance for the Bureau. **DB**

For more information about the Translation Bureau, visit: www.translationbureau.gc.ca

Interpretation: A unique profession

The language barrier is a tough obstacle in communications. Add complex topics, tone, body language and participants speaking several languages into the mix, and the obstacles can sometimes seem insurmountable. That is where the interpreter comes in.

An interpreter's role is not to provide a rote interpretation of every word. Instead of mechanically repeating what they hear, they need to analyze and extract the underlying meaning. A well-rounded education lays the groundwork, but it also takes familiarity of the subject matter. Interpreters must

also be very tactful and, in the case of parliamentary interpretation, understand the nature of issues being debated on the political stage.

In Canada, a freelance interpreter at a conference can earn between \$450 and \$700 a day. In the federal government, the annual salary for a qualified conference interpreter ranges from roughly \$58,500 to \$86,000.

For more information on working for the government, tips on applying, information on programs, job opportunities and PWGSC employee profiles, visit: www.pwgsc.gc.ca/carrieres-careers/index-eng.html