# Transportation Safety Board of Canada

**2003-2004 Estimates** 

A Report on Plans and Priorities

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#### Section 1: Chairperson's Message

Since its creation, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) has established a solid reputation, nationally and internationally, as a technically skilled and professional investigative organization. The TSB is one of only a few multi-modal investigation agencies in the world, and it pursues its mandate within a framework of independence which makes it a global leader in that regard.

The TSB is committed to continuously enhancing its value to Canadians and to the world of transportation safety. The federal government's commitment to becoming more citizen-focussed, values-driven, results-oriented and dedicated to responsible spending forms the basis for ongoing improvements within the TSB.

This report portrays an organization fully engaged in a major transition. For fiscal year 2003-2004, the focal points for the TSB's activities will be the implementation of a modernized business management framework that is functional and clearly articulated, the reshaping of our products and services to better respond to stakeholder needs, and the implementation of a strategic communications program. Short term funding for the next two years, recently approved by Treasury Board Ministers for inclusion in Supplementary Estimates, will also enable the TSB to reduce its backlog of investigations and to make significant progress in the management of information.

This agenda represents an ambitious and challenging program for the Transportation Safety Board over the coming year. However, I am confident that the organization is up to meeting these challenges and that we can be counted upon to continue making an effective contribution to a safer transportation system for Canadians and globally.

#### MANAGEMENT REPRESENTATION STATEMENT

I submit, for tabling in Parliament, the 2003-2004 Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP) for the Transportation Safety Board of Canada.

This document has been prepared based on the reporting principles and disclosure requirements contained in the *Guide to the Preparation of the 2003-2004 Report on Plans and Priorities*.

- It accurately portrays the organization's plans and priorities.
- The planned spending information in this document is consistent with the directions provided in the Minister of Finance's Budget and by Treasury Board Secretariat.
- Is comprehensive and accurate.
- Is based on sound underlying departmental information and management systems.

The reporting structure on which this document is based has been approved by Treasury Board Ministers and is the basis for accountability for the results achieved with the resources and authorities provided.

 Executive Director
Date

#### Section 2: Raison d'être

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) is an independent agency created in 1990 by an Act of Parliament (*Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act*). It operates at arm's length from other government departments and agencies such as Transport Canada, the Canadian Transportation Agency and the National Energy Board to ensure that there are no real or perceived conflicts of interest. Under the legislation, the TSB's only object is the advancement of transportation safety in the federally regulated elements of the marine, rail, pipeline, and air transportation systems. This mandate is fulfilled by conducting independent investigations including, when necessary, public inquiries into transportation occurrences. The purpose of these investigations and inquiries is to make findings as to the causes and contributing factors of the occurrences and to identify safety deficiencies which in turn may result in recommendations designed to improve safety and reduce or eliminate risks to people, to property and to the environment. The TSB has the exclusive authority to make findings as to causes and contributing factors when it investigates a transportation occurrence.

The jurisdiction of the TSB includes all transportation occurrences in or over Canada. The Board may also represent Canadian interests in foreign investigations of transportation accidents involving Canadian registered, licensed, or manufactured ships, railway rolling stock, or aircraft. In addition, the Board carries out some of Canada's obligations related to transportation safety at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

A transportation occurrence is any accident or incident associated with the operation of an aircraft, ship, railway rolling stock, or pipeline. It also includes any hazard that could, in the Board's judgement, induce an accident or incident if left unattended.









#### **Section 3: Planning Overview**

The TSB is largely funded by Parliament through an operating expenditures vote and, as a departmental corporation, it has authority to spend revenues received during the year. The TSB has recently received approval from Treasury Board Ministers to include a request for short term funding in the Supplementary Estimates. This short term funding (2003-2004 and 2004-2005) is intended to address workload pressures, thereby enabling the TSB to reduce its backlog of investigations and to catch-up on its information management activities (see Section 4 for more details).

The TSB operates within the context of the very large and complex Canadian transportation system (see Transport Canada Internet site at <a href="www.tc.gc.ca">www.tc.gc.ca</a> for details). This system is very dynamic and in a constant state of change, resulting in particular challenges for the TSB.

#### 3.1 - Public Interest in Transportation Safety

Transportation safety has always been a matter of public concern in Canada. This is largely due to the essential social and economic role that the transportation system plays in this country. New information demands have evolved in the aftermath of such accidents as the crash of Swissair Flight 111 (SR 111) near Peggy's Cove, Nova Scotia, the Via Rail train derailment in Stewiacke, Nova Scotia, the sinking of the "Lady Duck" amphibious vehicle near Gatineau, Quebec, and the December 2000 explosion of a gas pipeline compressor station in Quebec's Eastern Townships. News media expect real-time, round-the-clock, on-site coverage. The expectations of the next-of-kin for support from the investigating agencies have also increased. They have an enormous thirst for up-to-date factual information; most wish to follow closely the progress of the investigation. Given the loss they have suffered, great care must be exercised in communicating with them. The TSB also faces increasing demands for occurrence data from regulators, as well as for information through the Access to Information program, especially given the increasing trend toward litigation resulting from transportation accidents. Satisfying these evolving needs is proving to be a major challenge with existing resource levels.

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States have had a significant impact on transportation activities in Canada and abroad. Public confidence in the safety and security of air travel has been shaken. Concerns with terrorism have fundamentally changed how transportation security is viewed and delivered in all modes in order to ensure the personal safety of Canadians. The TSB was not directly affected by these events as its mandate focusses only on safety. Other federal government departments and agencies, such as Transport Canada and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, are responsible for all security matters. However, the TSB faces an indirect impact due to the heightened public concern. Increased pressure is placed on the TSB to respond and quickly deploy to investigate accidents and incidents because of the underlying

preoccupations with terrorism. Although the passage of time since September 2001 has reduced this pressure, on-going terrorist activities globally and heightened world tensions continue to sustain a high level of public concern.

#### 3.2 - Government Policy and Industry Environment

In recent years, partly as a result of government initiatives and partly in response to commercial imperatives, various changes have occurred that may influence transportation safety. Among the changes are the continued reliance on commercial interests in the transportation system to provide a safe transportation infrastructure without prescriptive regulations, and the increasing consolidation and globalization of companies. The highly competitive environment in all elements of the transportation industry and the demands by the public and shippers for an almost accident-free transportation system are also significant considerations.

#### 3.3 - Impact of Technology on Transportation

Over the last 10 years, the rate of technological change in the transportation industry has been very rapid. This is largely due to significant advances in computer and electronics technology, the development of new materials, and their application to the transportation industry. These advances affect all modes of transportation, and while many of them enable investigators to perform their work more effectively, they also make the job of investigation and safety analysis increasingly complex and specialized. The increased reliance on automation poses particular problems for analysing failures at the human-machine interface.

#### 3.4 - Level of Activity

An average of 3,500 transportation occurrences are reported each year in accordance with federal reporting requirements. The TSB bases its decision to investigate on its Occurrence Classification Policy (see TSB Internet site at <a href="http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/common/policies/occurrences.asp">http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/common/policies/occurrences.asp</a> for details) using a comprehensive risk management process aimed at evaluating the consequences of operational decisions. The prime criterion for deciding to investigate is whether an investigation is likely to lead to a reduction in risk to persons, property or the environment. Based upon these considerations, the TSB does not investigate some accidents less likely to result in safety actions, even when they involve fatalities. This has resulted in some adverse public reaction, and the TSB has come under increased public pressure to investigate more occurrences. Approximately 160 investigations are currently in progress, of which close to half are more than one year old. For a relatively small organization, the management of this backlog, combined with the sustained uptake of new cases, presents an ongoing challenge to meet the demands.

#### 3.5 - Evolving Stakeholder Needs

Stakeholder needs evolve over time. The TSB recognizes that information derived from its stakeholders is essential if sound decisions are to be made with respect to TSB processes and products, and how they can have the greatest impact towards the enhancement of transportation safety. A survey was carried out in 2002 specifically targeting "change agents" such as regulators, operators, manufacturers and associations within the transportation sector. This survey is the first time that the TSB has sought feedback from its stakeholders in a structured manner. The results of this survey will be utilized to reshape our business in terms of our product / service mix and to refocus our communications approach.

#### 3.6 - Increased Litigation

There are significant increases worldwide in litigation surrounding transportation accidents. Civil suits by survivors and next-of-kin are becoming common practice. Challenges to provisions of the *Canadian Transportation Accident Investigation and Safety Board Act* also occur more frequently. This results in a greater pressure and investment by the TSB in legal services and information management activities to preserve the integrity of our investigation process and of our legislation. The TSB has little choice but to respond to legal/court proceedings when it is named as a party in a case or when court orders are served to obtain TSB records.

#### 3.7 - Human Resources

A key risk for the TSB in delivering on its priorities is related to its workforce. The TSB has already seen a significant turn-over within its management team and investigation staff. More staff departures are foreseen in the next few years as additional employees and managers retire or move on to other career opportunities. This will leave the TSB with a significant loss of corporate memory and of well experienced staff in many facets of the operations. Succession planning measures are needed to ensure that service delivery is not hampered by gaps created by the departure of these staff members.

In 2002, the TSB participated in the Public Service Employee Survey. Although the survey results were generally positive, a number of areas of concern were identified. Employees identified concerns with: workload pressures, internal communications, career development, classification and compensation, harassment and discrimination, as well as governance. If these issues are left unaddressed, the TSB could be faced with employee retention and morale problems that could detract attention and resources from the corporate priorities. The TSB therefore plans to implement specific measures to improve the work environment and employee job satisfaction.

#### Section 4: Plans and Priorities

#### 4.1 - Strategic Outcome

The TSB is committed to providing Canadians with advancements in transportation safety through independent, objective and timely investigations and resulting analyses of safety failures in the federally regulated transportation system. The TSB's success will be demonstrated by:

- Increased and justified public confidence in the safety of the transportation system
- Timely implementation of appropriate safety actions
- Increased awareness of safety issues and a strengthened safety culture on the part of government, industry and the public
- Increased level of safety through the reduction of risk
- Effective organizational performance.

#### **4.2 - Summary**

In late 2001, the TSB initiated the development of a strategic and business planning framework. This initiative was motivated by three main factors: the requirement to function under a more structured planning and resource management framework; the resolve to strengthen internal management practices, consistent with the government's Modern Comptrollership initiative; and the imperative to define the appropriate balance between activity levels and the resource base within which the TSB must operate to successfully achieve its mandate.

This initiative resulted in the publication of a strategic plan, followed shortly thereafter by a business plan for fiscal year 2002-2003, the organization's first-ever business plan. Although recognized as being a "work in progress", focussed efforts on the plan's priorities produced many excellent results throughout the year and established a solid foundation for further improvements in subsequent years. The articulation of a priorities and resource planning cycle adapted to TSB needs, the execution of a formalized stakeholder needs analysis, the creation of a performance measurement structure, focussed training for investigative staff to improve the quality and timeliness of TSB safety products, and the integration of workplace and human resource issues into day-to-day management deliberations are just a few indicators of progress achieved during the past fiscal year.

Significant advances have been made on a variety of fronts over the past 18 months, accomplished largely through the internal reallocation of priorities and resources within the current resource base and much hard work by many. The organization is clearly on the

right path. Nevertheless, TSB's resources, both financial and human, continue to be a major focal point within the organization. A permanent increase of \$1 million to the TSB's annual budget, beginning in fiscal year 2002-2003 was valuable in contending with several pressing resource issues. The recent approval by Treasury Board Ministers of short term financial resources for the next two fiscal years to address specific projects will also assist greatly in further addressing spending pressures that have been building over the last several years. However, a common understanding of the longer term balance between allocated resources and the activity levels required to ensure the TSB is successfully achieving its mandate has not been achieved. The articulation of such a balance remains a critical element of management's focus in the first half of this planning year.

Fiscal year 2002-2003 was a transitional year in which much of the work was developmental. Therefore, the plans and priorities for fiscal year 2003-2004 are focussed to a greater degree upon implementation and beginning the measurement of outcomes. The seven priorities are described briefly in the following paragraphs. All of them are motivated by the overriding objectives of finding ways to enhance the TSB's relevancy and contribution to transportation safety in Canada and internationally and of continuously strengthening the organization from within.

#### 4.3 - Detailed Priorities for 2003-2004

4.3.1 To implement the key elements of a planning and resource management framework.

A fully defined business planning framework will be implemented this year with activities and milestones timed to coincide with the government's resource planning cycle. Three new management tools, performance measurement, internal audit planning and a risk management framework, will be employed for the first time. Clearly this will be a learning experience for the TSB and adjustments will be required in fiscal year 2004-2005 and beyond as the framework matures. The TSB will also focus on developing, in collaboration with the Treasury Board Secretariat, an assessment of the required balance between allocated resources and the activities essential for successful achievement of the TSB's mandate in the future.

The TSB will be seeking short term incremental funds in the Supplementary Estimates for fiscal year 2003-2004 to address capital asset rust-out issues. This new funding will enable the TSB to replace key assets that are essential to enable investigators for the effective delivery of the TSB mandate.

# 4.3.2 To reshape the TSB's product and service mix based upon the results of the stakeholder needs analysis.

The stakeholder needs analysis conducted in fiscal year 2002-2003 provided important insights into how key decision makers in the transportation system perceive the TSB's contribution to the advancement of transportation safety. The focus of activities under this priority will be to convert that information into a products/services mix that responds more effectively to the stated needs of our stakeholders. Current outputs will be modified as necessary, new ones will be developed, and a strategic communications plan will be developed along with a more active outreach program.

#### 4.3.3 To improve the quality and timeliness of TSB products.

The timeliness of TSB investigations, reports and safety products has always been recognized as a critical measure of the organization's relevancy and effectiveness. It has also been acknowledged for some time as being an area where improvements are required. Reinforcing the case for action, timeliness has been identified by the Chairman of the TSB as being an issue of immediate concern for him. The elements that comprise a vibrant, responsive and technically sound investigation process and the subsequent transfer of safety information and knowledge to other parties for action are numerous. Their interrelationship is often complex. A consistent application of investigative methodologies, guidelines, policies and practices to achieve high quality TSB safety products requires constant attention. Training, technical currency, streamlined processes, and the judicious application of limited resources are essential to success and are specifically targeted under this priority.

Treasury Board ministers have recently approved the inclusion of short term funding requests in the Supplementary Estimates of the next two fiscal years to help the TSB reduce its backlog of investigations in progress. The proposed investment will enable the TSB to reduce the backlog from 160 investigations to 100 and improve the mean time in process by 10% (approximately 60 days) by the end of fiscal year 2004-2005, with an objective to do even better. As part of a broader human resources strategy, staff hired with these incremental resources will be viewed as potential replacements for staff expected to depart over the next two to three years. These resources will also permit current, more experienced staff to contribute to a full range of longer-term initiatives to improve performance in future, which includes training, quality assurance and development of modern tools and procedures to aid investigative staff. This investment will also enable the TSB to significantly reduce the backlog of Class 3 unpublished reports.

#### 4.3.4 To establish the department as a learning organization.

The success of the TSB depends, in large part, on the dedication and skills of its employees. The organization cannot be successful without recruiting, training, developing and retaining highly motivated and qualified individuals. The core of the TSB business line is very technical, thereby posing a special challenge in an age of rapidly evolving and expanding technologies. At the same time, the organization cannot function without a team of knowledgeable employees in all of the specialty areas such as financial services, human resources, communications, information technology and management, data analysis, human performance, and legal services, to name but a few. Therefore, the establishment of a comprehensive departmental learning plan, encompassing training and development, is essential and is, once again this year, identified as a stand-alone priority. Activities this year include implementation of the employee and manager orientation programs and the development of multi-year learning plans based upon both organizational and individual requirements. In the longer term, this activity will be subsumed as an ongoing element within annual departmental human resources planning.

#### 4.3.5 To ensure a responsive workplace atmosphere within the department.

The principal formal mechanism for defining workplace issues within the TSB was the Public Service Employee Survey conducted in 2002. Participation in this survey by TSB employees was encouragingly high, identifying a variety of issues that must be addressed. Many of the issues parallell those identified across the Public Service while others appear to be unique to the TSB. Follow up activities in the last quarter of fiscal year 2002-2003 have identified a number of areas upon which the department will focus in this year's plan and in subsequent years. These activities will be characterized by a broader framework of collaboration and consultation between management, employees and union representatives in the definition of priorities and the formulation of solutions.

#### 4.3.6 To implement required changes to the governance structure.

A review of the governance structure of the TSB was undertaken in fiscal year 2002-2003. The requirement for this review was seen as twofold. The first desired outcome was to clarify the decision making processes within the TSB. The second was to equip all TSB managers with the tools they require to successfully assume their responsibilities and accountabilities within a management model that delegates to the lowest possible level. The focus of this year's plan is to finalize and implement the resulting model.

#### 4.3.7 To renew the management of information within the TSB.

The collection, analysis, presentation and transfer of information and knowledge is the essence of the TSB's mandate. Without sound information practices, consistently applied across the organization and supported by current business applications, the organization's

full potential and value will not be achieved. A comprehensive formal assessment of TSB's current capacity in this area over the past year has clearly made the case for priority activity in the information management area.

More detailed information, including specific initiatives, are described in the TSB 2003-2004 Business Plan available on the TSB web site at <a href="http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp">http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp</a>.

#### 4.4 - Modern Management

Modern Comptrollership is one of the Government's key priorities focussed on the sound management of public resources and effective decision-making. It provides for better performance information, sound risk management and appropriate control systems. Modern Comptrollership also reinforces values and ethics and improves the Government's accountability to Parliament and to Canadians.

The first step towards implementing Modern Comptrollership within the TSB consisted of a self-assessment of our current management practices against thirty-three criteria of sound organizational management. The report, issued in March 2002, identified a number of areas of the management framework where important changes are needed in order to achieve a state of modern comptrollership. The Capacity Assessment report is available on the TSB website at <a href="http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp">http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp</a>.

Understanding the importance and the value of modernizing management practices and the risks to the organization if strong comptrollership capabilities are not entrenched in daily operations, the TSB senior management committee identified priorities for action and integrated Modern Comptrollership activities and projects in the departmental 2002-2003 Business Plan. Good progress and results have been made in the areas of planning, resource management and managerial commitment. In 2003-2004, the TSB will carry-on its work towards the implementation of Modern Comptrollership using a similar set of priorities, once again fully integrated in the annual Business Plan. The Modern Comptrollership priorities for 2003-2004 are identified in the 2003-2004 Business Plan available on the TSB web site at <a href="http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp">http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp</a>. The TSB is also committed and actively involved in working with other departments and agencies on Modern Comptrollership innovation projects.

The recent tabling in Parliament of legislative changes to modernize the management of human resources in the Public Service will have a significant impact on the TSB. Although it is too early to articulate specific departmental plans on the modernization of human resources, staff are currently reviewing the potential implications in order to prepare for the development of an action plan soon after the new legislation is approved by Parliament.

#### 4.5 - Government On-Line

In 2002-2003, the TSB redesigned its web site and achieved full compliance with the common look and feel requirements. Work was also undertaken in partnership with Transport Canada. That work was to improve the quality of TSB data, improve the mechanism by which we share the data with Transport Canada, and contribute to the construction of the Transport Canada safety data warehouse project. The objective of the partnership project is to eventually provide easier access to transportation safety data for the public. A more detailed Government on-line plan was developed to improve the TSB's on-line presence. However, this plan was temporarily set aside due to other higher operational priorities and lack of adequate resources. For fiscal year 2003-2004, we anticipate being able to continue with the partnership project with Transport Canada, but not initiate significant work against our own Government on-line plan.

#### 4.6 - Resource Allocation

The following table summarizes the human and financial resources allocated to the seven departmental priorities for 2003-2004 and to the on-going day-to-day operations.

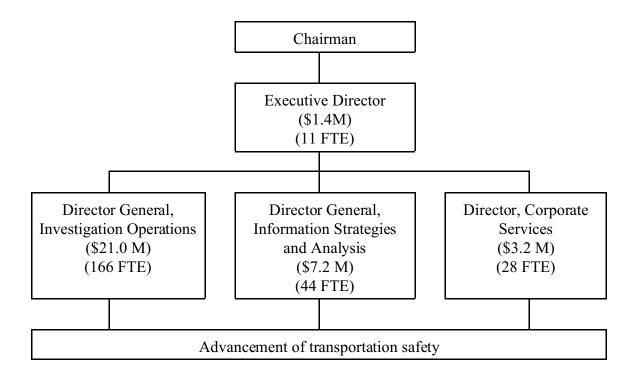
#	Priorities	FTEs	Budget (\$000)
1	Planning and Resource Management Framework	1	\$ 1,093
2	Reshaping Products and Services	0.5	\$ 178
3	Improving Quality and Timeliness	13	\$ 2,225
4	Learning Organization		\$ 1,353
5	Responsive Workplace		\$ 170
6	Governance		\$ 35
7	Management of Information	1.5	\$ 503
	On-Going Activities	233	\$ 27,283
TOTAL		249	\$ 32,840

#### 4.7 - Monitoring

The TSB has developed a detailed Business Plan which describes the 2003-2004 priorities in greater detail. Resources are allocated to specific initiatives, responsibilities are clearly defined, and time lines are well defined (see TSB web site at <a href="http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp">http://www.tsb.gc.ca/en/publications/index.asp</a>). Progress against the Business Plan will be continuously monitored and reported to the TSB senior management committee on a quarterly basis. Senior management champions will also be required to provide regular updates on the priorities for which they are responsible. Progress will be measured in a comprehensive manner at year-end and results will be reported in the Departmental Performance Report. As noted before, the TSB will also implement a balanced score card performance management framework during 2003-2004. This new tool will assist TSB management to measure results and progress towards the achievement of its strategic outcome.

# **Section 5: Organization**

The TSB's Planning, Reporting and Accountability Structure identifies a single business line: the advancement of transportation safety. The Chairman, assisted by the Executive Director and three senior managers, is responsible for all activities associated with this business line.



#### **Section 6: Additional Information**

Additional information about the Transportation Safety Board of Canada and its activities is available on the TSB's Internet site at <a href="https://www.tsb.gc.ca">www.tsb.gc.ca</a> or by contacting us at:

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#### **Section 7: Annexes**

#### **Departmental Planned Spending**

(thousands of dollars)	Forecast Spending 2002-2003*	Planned Spending 2003-2004	Planned Spending 2004-2005	Planned Spending 2005-2006
Budgetary Main Estimates (gross)	24,766	25,713	25,714	25,714
Adjustments **	7,717	4,119	3,262	1,054
Net Planned Spending	32,483	29,832	28,976	26,768
Plus: Cost of services received without charge	3,015	3,008	3,008	3,008
Net Cost of Program	35,498	32,840	31,984	29,776

<sup>\*:</sup> Reflects best forecast of total planned spending to the end of the fiscal year. Includes incremental costs of \$3,126,000 for the investigation of the Swissair flight 111 accident, \$1,249,000 for short term resource pressures, \$1,698,000 for collective bargaining adjustments, \$406,000 for Modern Comptrollership initiatives, \$118,000 for the investigation of the Lady Duck accident, \$68,000 for the spending of proceeds from the disposal of surplus assets and the carry forward of previous years surplus in the amount of \$1,052,000.

The current TSB reference levels as stated in the Main Estimates are approximately \$25.7 million. Over the three year planning period these reference levels will increase by \$1 million on a permanent basis. This increase relates to incremental funding requested by the TSB to deal with program integrity issues. In 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 additional short term adjustments are also planned through Supplementary Estimates to deal with specific resource pressures. Additional short term funding is requested to reduce the backlog of investigations, catch-up on information management and address capital asset rust-out issues.

<sup>\*\*:</sup> Adjustments are to accommodate approvals obtained since the Main Estimates, and include transfers from Treasury Board Votes and Supplementary Estimates.

# Net Cost of Program for the Estimates Year

(thousands of dollars)	Total
Net Planned Spending	29,832
Plus: Services Received without Charge	
Accommodation provided by Public Works and Government Services Canada	1,700
Contributions covering employers' share of employees' insurance premiums and expenditures paid by Treasury Board Secretariat	1,221
Workers' compensation coverage provided by Human Resources Development Canada	27
Audit services provided by the Office of the Auditor General	60
	3,008
2003-2004 Net Cost of Program	32,840