



Treasury Board of Canada  
Secrétariat

Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor  
du Canada

# **A Policy Framework for Service Improvement in the Government of Canada**

**FINAL DOCUMENT**

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Service Improvement Initiative  
Service and Innovation Sector  
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Canada**

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## Summary



**R***esults for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada* commits the Government of Canada to achieve a significant, quantifiable improvement in client satisfaction with its services over the next five years.

To deliver on this commitment, the Treasury Board has approved a five-year *Service Improvement Initiative*. Treasury Board Ministers have established a target of a minimum 10% improvement in Canadians' satisfaction with the delivery of key Government services by 2005.

The *Service Improvement Initiative* was initially developed by an interdepartmental working group established by the ADM Advisory Committee on Service and Innovation (ACSI); it was refined and approved by ACSI; and it was presented by a steering committee of ADMs to the Treasury Board Secretariat Advisory Committee (TBSAC) where it was strongly endorsed by Deputy Ministers.

The *Service Improvement Initiative* is a key component of the Government's commitment to *Citizen-Centred Service Delivery*. Canadians have told us that they have two needs and priorities for improving Government service delivery:

- easier, more convenient, more seamless *access* to government services; and
- higher levels of *quality and performance* in service delivery by government organizations.

The *Service Canada* initiative will help us to address the access challenge. The *Service Improvement Initiative* addresses the challenge of improving citizen satisfaction with the quality of government service delivery. *Government On-Line* is a key enabler for improving better access and service performance.

The essence of the *Service Improvement Initiative* is that the continuous and measurable improvement of client satisfaction is the most reliable indicator of improvement in service quality and service performance: it is what quality and continuous improvement should now mean, and how they should be primarily, though not exclusively, measured. Leading-edge service organizations in the public sector, like their counterparts in the private sector, now use a results-based approach to the continuous improvement of client satisfaction, integrated with the annual business planning cycle.

Accordingly, the policy framework approved by the Treasury Board for the *Service Improvement Initiative* provides that, when fully implemented, departments and agencies which have significant direct service delivery activities with Canadians shall:

- adopt a comprehensive continuous improvement planning and implementation approach to service improvement and client satisfaction;
- establish documented baseline measures of citizen satisfaction for key services to the public, using the metrics of the Common Measurements Tool developed by the award-winning Citizen-Centred Service Network;

- 
- prepare and implement annual service improvement plans based on clients' priorities for service improvement;
  - establish a minimum 10% improvement target for improved client satisfaction over the five years of the *Initiative* for each key service to the public;
  - adopt and publish core service standards for each service channel;
  - incorporate results-based service improvement accountability for managers as part of existing performance management systems, commencing with Deputy Ministers;
  - report within the existing annual RPP/DPR planning and reporting process on:
    - ◆ service standards for all key public services;
    - ◆ performance against service standards;
    - ◆ annual improvements in client satisfaction;
    - ◆ progress toward five-year satisfaction targets.

The *Service Improvement Initiative* will be implemented through a phased-in approach. A small number of "mission critical" departments – those whose service performance will have the greatest immediate impact on Canadians – will be identified and will serve as "lead departments" for the initiative, moving at a faster pace and showing the way for others. In Phase One, in 2000-2001, all departments with key services to the public are asked to identify and report on service standards for key public services and establish client satisfaction baseline measures. In addition to these basic steps, the "lead departments" will also set initial targets for service improvement; develop service improvement plans based on client priorities; take action against these priorities; and report on performance against service standards.

In Phase Two, all departments with key services to the public will begin to implement the steps undertaken by the "lead departments" in the first phase, while the lead departments will begin to report client satisfaction measures against the baseline established in Phase One. In the third phase, both lead and other departments will have reached the same level and will be reporting annually on progress toward the minimum 10% improvement objective over five years.

## Purpose



**T**his document describes a policy framework for use by departments and agencies to improve service to Canadians. It is designed to provide a common understanding of the *Service Improvement Initiative* necessary for a successful and co-ordinated implementation across the Government of Canada.

This policy framework has been approved by the Treasury Board, as well as the Treasury Board Secretariat Advisory Committee. It has been developed in conjunction with members of the federal service delivery community through the Assistant Deputy Minister Advisory Committee on Service and Innovation (ACSI).

The *Service Improvement Initiative* provides a framework for identifying citizen expectations and priorities for service improvement, and instituting a program of continuous improvement in service delivery.

## Results for Canadians – A Management Framework for the Government of Canada

*Results for Canadians* presents an agenda to guide Canada's public service managers. A



'Citizen focus' and a commitment to 'Citizen-centred service delivery' are central to this management agenda. To meet this commitment, the Government of Canada plans three major initiatives. The first initiative is *Service Canada* which will help Citizens find government services easily and in both official languages. The goal is to help citizens get the services they are entitled to, in a way that is fast, convenient, seamless and connected. The second initiative – addressed by this policy framework – is the *Service Improvement Initiative*, which focuses on the performance of Government of Canada services. The *Service Improvement Initiative* is a key means to support *Results for Canadians* by achieving significant, quantifiable improvement in client satisfaction with services over the next five years. The third initiative, *Government-On-Line*, is a key enabler for improving both access and service performance.

## Citizens First



**I**n April 1998, the President of Treasury Board reported to Parliament the government's new "outside-in" citizen-centred approach to Government of Canada service delivery. Shortly thereafter, Treasury Board Ministers approved an initiative to put a new "service face" on the Government of Canada within two years.

In 1998 the Canadian Centre for Management Development's Citizen-Centred Service Network, composed of 220 senior service delivery officials from the three orders of government in Canada, produced the *Citizens First* report which documented Canadians' expectations, satisfaction and priorities for service improvement.

Through *Citizens First*, Canadians indicated that they want:

- a) Improved access to government services; and
- b) Improved service delivery performance.

In the fall of 1998, TBS created the Assistant Deputy Minister Advisory Committee on Service and Innovation (ACSI) to help develop the citizen-centred service strategy for the Government of Canada that would respond to citizen needs. A series of working groups were established to undertake its work, including the Service Improvement Planning and Implementation (SIPI) Subcommittee.

The objectives of the interdepartmental SIPI Subcommittee were to help Ministers, departments and agencies achieve significant, measurable and sustained improvement in Canadians' satisfaction with the quality of Government of Canada services. The Subcommittee mandate was to identify good practices in service improvement, recommend government-wide methods and guidelines for achieving continuous improvement in citizen satisfaction, and to work with departments and agencies to implement the recommended guidelines and approaches.

Using research into good practices in the public sector, the Subcommittee developed the SIPI approach to the continuous improvement of Government of Canada service quality.

The *Citizens First* national survey reported that Citizens rate a range of federal public services at 6.0 out of 10 - about the same as a range of private sector services but slightly behind a range of provincial (6.2 out of 10) and municipal services (6.4 out of 10). When public organisations meet citizens' expectations for timeliness, courtesy, competence, fairness and outcome, they can achieve scores of 8.0 out of 10 or higher. Problems with access, telephones and timeliness are the sources of greatest frustration for citizens.

Currently, departments and agencies are responding to these demands. Some departments have implemented client surveys to measure client satisfaction and much work has been undertaken to develop service standards. The *Service Improvement Initiative* facilitates this work by establishing an overall strategy for the Government of Canada, including individual departmental Service Improvement plans, to respond to citizen priorities for improving service delivery. Throughout the course of implementing this initiative over the next five years, in addition to client satisfaction measurement activities at the departmental level, Treasury Board Secretariat will continue to work with departments and other levels of government within Canada to undertake the *Citizens First* national survey bi-annually in order to monitor the success of the Service Improvement Initiative.

## Objectives of the Service Improvement Initiative



The goal of the *Service Improvement Initiative* is to improve Canadians' satisfaction with the quality of Government of Canada services. To achieve this, the Initiative provides departments and agencies a framework for service delivery improvement which adopts a citizen's 'outside-in' perspective, is results-based, and is anchored in clients' own service expectations and improvement priorities. Extensive research undertaken by ACSI on

## ***Service Improvement Initiative Objectives***

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- Departments to achieve the *target* of a minimum 10% increase in client satisfaction with their services by 2005.
- Annual service improvement plans based on clients' improvement priorities.
- Strengthen *accountability* for service improvement results.
- Instil a culture of *continuous service improvement* within the public service.
- *Support* front-line staff.

high performance organizations demonstrates that continuous improvement in client satisfaction is best achieved by setting ongoing improvement targets within the business planning process, then ensuring that annual service improvement plans are based on clients' own priorities for service improvement.

The *Service Improvement Initiative* commits departments to achieve a minimum 10% increase in client satisfaction with key, significant direct service delivery activities by the year 2005.

Results-based Service Improvement Planning and Implementation reinforces the Government of Canada's commitment to citizen-centred service delivery. In summary, the Initiative aims to:

- Achieve a minimum 10% improvement in Canadians' satisfaction with the delivery of government services by 2005.
- Establish a comprehensive annual planning and implementation approach to the improvement of client satisfaction, based on clients' priorities for service improvement.
- Strengthen accountability for service improvement results.



## Scope



**T**his policy framework applies to departments and agencies, which have significant direct service delivery activities with Canadians. Relevant Crown Corporations will also be invited to participate.



## Guiding Principles



### Implementation of the Service

Improvement Initiative is to be guided by the following principles:

- ***Citizen/Client Driven:*** Citizen and client expectations, satisfaction levels, and service improvement priorities are to be measured annually using the Common Measurements Tool.
- ***Coordinated Leadership:*** Make continuous service and client satisfaction improvement a corporate and departmental management priority at all levels. Ongoing consultation within TBS to ensure open lines of communication between sectors so that departments are provided up-to-date information.
- ***Integration:*** Service improvement is to be systematically planned at the departmental and corporate levels and integrated into existing business planning processes and reporting mechanisms such as the Departmental Report on Plans and Priorities and Performance Report (RPP/DPR).
- ***Staff Involvement:*** Involving staff in the service improvement planning process is key. This can be achieved through sharing with staff the results of client surveys and focus groups, as well as obtaining information on staff satisfaction and priorities for service improvement and workplace quality.
- ***Continuous Improvement via Service Improvement Plans:*** Each department and agency will be responsible for establishing an annual Service Improvement Plan based on the measurement of client needs, expectations and priorities for improvement. This plan will need to address the key drivers of service satisfaction: timeliness, competence, courtesy, fairness and outcome. Developing and implementing annual service improvement plans based on clients' own top priorities for service improvement is central to the *Service Improvement Initiative*.
- ***Ongoing Progress and Performance Measurement:*** Establishing and monitoring performance against service standards is a key feature of the Initiative and essential for managing client expectations. But real service improvement depends on achieving a measurable increase in client satisfaction and integrating both targets and results measures into the organization's systems of business planning and accountability for results. Using core questions and standardized metrics from the Common Measurements Tool will ensure consistency and comparability in measurement and benchmarking.

### *Service Improvement Planning & Implementation Principles*

- 'Out-side' In Citizen/Client Driven Approach to Service Improvement
- Integration into internal business planning and reporting processes
- Partnership Approach Involving Co-ordinated Departmental and Central Agency Leadership
- Staff Involvement
- Continuous Service Improvement Planning Implementation and Performance Measurement
- Accountability for Results and Reward Good Performance

- ***Accountability for Results and Reward Good Performance:*** Departments are asked to report on their results achieved and encouraged to recognize and reward progress in improving client satisfaction. The Initiative encourages celebrating success through the development of recognition programs such as the President of the Treasury Board's Service Award that will recognize excellence in service improvement.

## Policy Framework



The *Service Improvement Initiative* policy framework commits those departments and agencies which have significant direct service delivery activities for Canadians to:

- Adopt a comprehensive continuous improvement planning and implementation approach to service improvement and client satisfaction.
- Establish documented baseline measures of client satisfaction for key services to the public according to the proposed time schedule outlined in this submission, using Common Measurements Tool metrics.
- Prepare and implement annual Service Improvement Plans based on clients' priorities for service improvement.
- Establish targets for improved client satisfaction in key services to the public (minimum 10% improvement by 2005 compared to 2000 *Citizens First* survey results, or the organisation's own year 2000 baseline surveys).
- Adopt and publish core service standards for each service channel (e.g. timeliness standards for telephone service, in-person service, electronic service, and mail service) that are linked to clients' expectations.
- Incorporate results-based service improvement accountability for managers as part of existing performance management systems, commencing with Deputy Ministers.
- Report within the existing annual RPP/DPR planning and reporting process (using common Public Service-wide metrics) on: a) service standards for all key public services; b) performance against service standards; c) annual improvements in client satisfaction; and, d) progress toward satisfaction targets.

The *Service Improvement Initiative* will be implemented through a phased-in approach. Phase I will be undertaken in 2000-2001 and involves identifying "mission critical" lead departments for the initial development of the Initiative. Phases II and III of the Initiative will build on lessons and examples developed during Phase I. At the conclusion of Phase I, the Treasury Board Secretariat will report to the Treasury Board on the lessons and approaches for Phases II and III.

A Treasury Board President's Award will recognise outstanding performance by departments and agencies in improving citizen satisfaction with the quality of service.

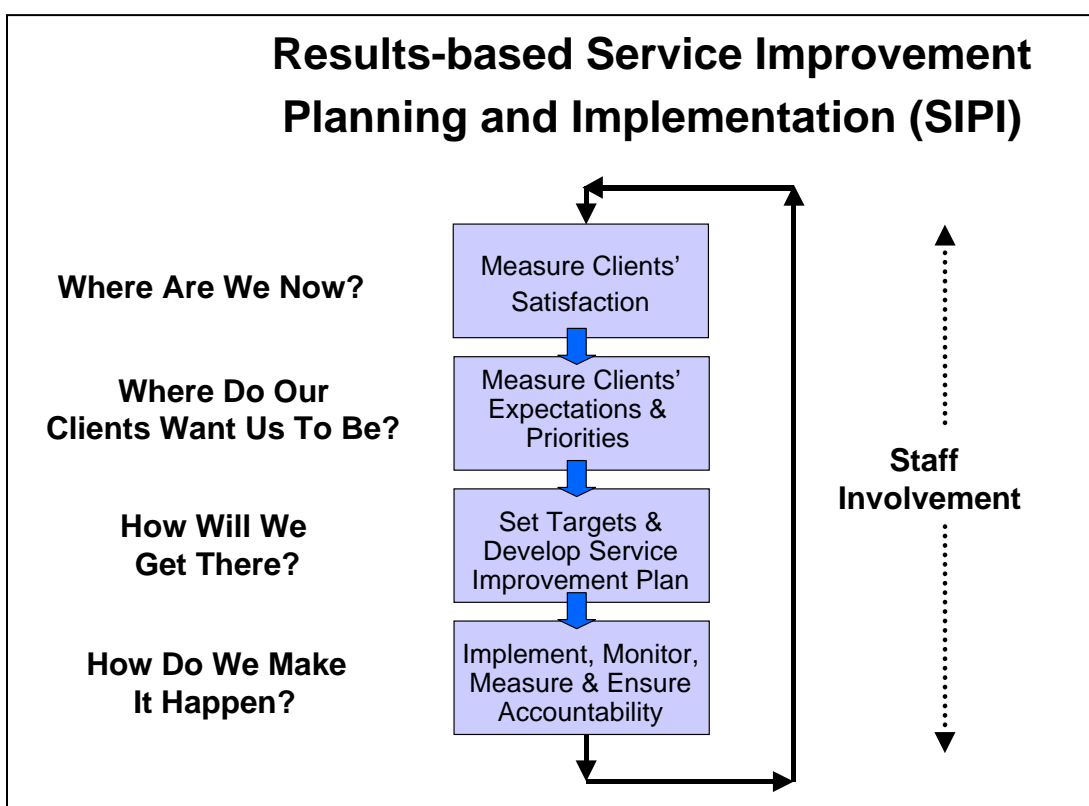
## Service Improvement Planning and Implementation Approach



The Interdepartmental Committee on Service Improvement Planning undertook research on high performing public organisations, which have achieved significant improvements in client satisfaction. The methodology adopted for the *Service Improvement Initiative* is based upon this research and consists of a four-step model for service improvement.

### *Step One: Client Satisfaction is to be measured at regular intervals*

As a first step, departments and agencies, which have significant direct service delivery activities with Canadians, will measure their present levels of client satisfaction. In depth interviews, focus groups or questionnaires will be used to determine what service improvement priorities are



most important to clients.

In order to conduct similar and comparable surveys, the Common Measurement Tool (CMT) has been identified as the standard tool for measuring client satisfaction. The CMT uses a five-point scale that can easily be converted to a rating out of one hundred. By having a standard for measurement, public organisations with similar business lines will be able to compare results and benchmark with each other.

### ***Step Two: Clients' Expectations and Priorities for Service Improvement will be Identified***

Equipped with the client satisfaction survey information, and an understanding of the satisfaction gap, service delivery teams will be able to identify priorities for improvement in areas such as:

- Five Drivers of Satisfaction – ‘timeliness, courtesy, fairness, competence and outcome.’
- Visibility and Access – All Government services must be as easy as possible to find and access.
- Information Technology – how can electronic service delivery make all of the above priorities easier and more seamless for employees and clients alike?

An excellent example of this can be found in the quarterly satisfaction surveys of 680 passengers at the Vancouver International Airport. The resulting improvements have increased passenger satisfaction from 68 percent to 84 percent. This 16% increase in satisfaction can be attributed to focusing improvements in the service areas most important to the passengers.

### ***Step Three: Service Improvement plans and satisfaction improvement targets will be integrated into the departmental business plans***

Based on the results of the first two steps, departments and agencies should develop Service Improvement Plans based on client priorities for improvement. As well as satisfaction improvement targets, annual improvement plans should establish service standards for key public services in order to assist in the management of client expectations.

### ***Step Four: Implementing and Measuring Progress; Celebrating Successes***

Finally, the Service Improvement Plan must be implemented and monitored. Feedback should be sought from both clients and employees, with those findings assessed and used to reshape and improve the program. Performance against service standards and progress towards satisfaction targets should be reported in the annual Departmental Performance Report.

The organisation may want to implement a staff recognition program, which ensures the hard work that goes into improved service delivery is rewarded.

Together, these four steps provide a path to improved client service and higher citizen as well as client satisfaction.

## **Implementation Targets**



**P**hase I of the Initiative will be undertaken in 2000-2001 and involves identifying “mission critical” lead departments for the initial development of the *Service Improvement Initiative*. Phases II and III involve a staged rollout of the Initiative based on lessons and examples developed during Phase I. Each of these phases is described below.

## Phase I: 2000-2001

Implementation of the *Service Improvement Initiative* will begin through lead departments to establish the approach prior to a full government-wide rollout. Lead organizations will include the major, “mission-critical” service delivery departments and agencies. Specific activities include:

*Roles for All Departments and Agencies (with significant direct service delivery activities with*



*Canadians)*

- Identify key services to the public for inclusion in the Service Improvement Initiative.
- Identify and report on service standards for key services to the public.
- Establish client satisfaction baseline benchmarks.

### *Additional Roles for Lead Departments*

- Develop Service Improvement Plans based on client priorities.
- Set annual targets for improvements in client satisfaction.
- Act on key client priorities.
- Identify, monitor and report performance, to the extent possible during the first year, within existing annual RPPs and DPRs. This should include annual targets for service improvements and plans. As well, it should include service standards for all key public services for each service channel. (For example, it would include standards of timeliness for service by

telephone, service in-person, electronic communications, and surface mail). Finally, it should include performance results measured against service standards.

#### *Privy Council Office*

- TBS will work with the Privy Council Office to incorporate targets for service improvement into accountability agreements with deputy ministers.

### **Phase II (2001-2002)**



During this phase, *all departments and agencies* (with significant direct service delivery activities with Canadians) will undertake the activities outlined for lead departments in Phase I. Other activities within phase II include:

#### *Additional Roles for Lead Departments*

- Report improvements in client satisfaction against baseline data.

#### *Specific Roles for Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat*

- Provide a summary of results from departments and agencies in the President's annual report to Parliament.
- Initiate a Treasury Board President's Service Award to recognize excellence in improving service satisfaction.

### **Phase III (2002-2005)**

- All departments and agencies with significant direct service delivery activities with Canadians engage in the full range of Service Improvement activities. They report annually on progress toward their own targets for improving client satisfaction (minimum 10% increase by 2005).

## **Measuring Success**

### ***A) Identifying Key Programs and Services***

**A** first step to implementing the *Service Improvement Initiative* will be to identify the key services to be included in the *Service Improvement Initiative*. The following criteria are among those to be used for identifying programs and services included in the Initiative:

- reach a significant number or group of Canadians;
- are related to the top priorities identified by the *Citizens First* survey; and/or
- involve direct interaction with Canadians at large, with business, or with significant groups or communities of Canadians.

### ***B) Reporting to Parliament and Canadians***



The Treasury Board President's Report to Parliament and individual departmental reports to Parliament (Departmental Report on Plans and Priorities and the Departmental Performance Reports) will be the central vehicles for reporting on the targets and results of the Initiative. While all departments are already required to report on service quality, specific guidelines will be developed with lead departments and tested during the first phase of the *Service Improvement Initiative*. These guidelines will then be made available to all departments during Phases II and III.

### C) *Milestones*



In the first months of fiscal year 2000-01, TBS will be working with departments to identify participating departments and programs and services.

The table below outlines key milestones for Phase I of the Initiative.

<i>Service Improvement Initiative Key Milestones -- Phase I</i>	
Dates	Deliverables
<b>June 2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consortium of lead departments established</li> </ul>
<b>July/August 2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead department work plans established</li> <li>• Learning events take place in the NCR and regions to launch the <i>Service Improvement Initiative</i> officially</li> </ul>
<b>September 2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead department produce internal assessments and client feedback strategies</li> </ul>
<b>November 2000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of initial benchmarking of survey results on client satisfaction and determination of client priorities by lead departments</li> <li>• Multi-channel service standards established for key services to the public</li> </ul>
<b>January 2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead departments' Service Improvement Plans developed and implementation started</li> </ul>
<b>February 2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead departments assess performance against service standards</li> </ul>
<b>March 2001</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First-year report card of the Initiative in TBS President's report</li> <li>• Interim assessment by lead departments</li> <li>• Government-wide rollout plan established</li> </ul>



## TBS Support to Departments



Service Improvement Planning and Implementation methodology to be used for the *Service Improvement Initiative* is based upon good management practices. The Treasury Board Secretariat will provide resource tools and advisory services to assist departments and agencies develop and implement service improvement.

Service Improvement tools available include:

- an on-line federal Web site established by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat : <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/> (under construction)
- the detailed text *A How -To Guide for the Service Improvement Initiative* : <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/> (under construction)
- the Common Measurements Tool : <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/> (under construction)
- advisory services (call (613) 952-7089)

A Service Improvement Implementation Team within Service and Innovation, TBS is being created to:

- Provide ongoing, high quality advisory services to departments and agencies on developing and implementing service improvement action plans, monitoring and reporting on client satisfaction; developing and implementing client-centred service standards; and, undertaking service delivery improvements;
- Measure client satisfaction bi-annually, nationally and regionally to monitor and report on success;
- Undertake ongoing learning events within NCR and regionally for all departments and agencies over the course of the Initiative;
- Prepare implementation tools to assist departments and agencies in developing client satisfaction surveys, improvement plans, etc...
- Research and communicate best practices and the latest developments in service improvement at the provincial, federal and international levels;
- Work with departments and agencies in preparing implementation and reporting guidelines; and,
- Strengthen and support external networks for departments.

## Departmental Leadership for the Service Improvement Initiative



Successful development and implementation of the *Service Improvement Initiative* will



require continued departmental leadership, with support from the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Within government-wide objectives and principles, departments and agencies will have the authority and flexibility to set:

- The pace and roll-out towards the five-year objective;
- Service standards and monitoring;
- Satisfaction targets for program and service level.

The ADM Advisory Committee on Service and Innovation (ACSI) will provide overall direction for implementing the Initiative. A Service Improvement Team within the Service and Innovation Sector, TBS, will provide support to departments and agencies. This team will be available to brief departments and agencies on an ongoing basis.

A Steering Committee of lead departments has been established to guide the initiative, including developing and reviewing relevant policies, frameworks, and tools to support service improvement.

## Conclusion



The Government of Canada is committed to achieving “citizen-centred service delivery” and a quantifiable improvement in Canadians’ satisfaction with the delivery of its services over the next five years. To achieve this, the Treasury Board and its Secretariat will work with departments and agencies to implement a government-wide *Service Improvement Initiative* anchored in citizens’ priorities for service improvement. For this *Initiative* to be successful, central agencies, departments and agencies will need to work together. The adoption of a culture of continuous improvement takes time but is necessary if we are to successfully enhance Canadians’ satisfaction with service delivery.