



Final Report on the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat and the Canadian Human Rights Commission

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada,
represented by the President of the Treasury Board, 2010

Published by Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat
90 Elgin, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0R5, Canada

Catalogue Number: BT22-203/2010E-PDF
ISBN: 978-0-660-25541-5

This document is available on the Government of Canada website, Canada.ca

This document is available in alternative formats upon request.

Aussi offert en français sous le titre : Rapport final sur le protocole d'entente entre le Secrétariat du
Conseil du Trésor du Canada et la Commission canadienne des droits de la personne



Final Report on the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat and the Canadian Human Rights Commission

Introduction

The Government of Canada is committed to making services accessible to all individuals and businesses. Sometimes however, gaps are identified such as those brought to light in the 2005 [No Answer Report](#), written by the [Canadian Human Rights Commission](#) (CHRC). The report found that the auditory disabled^[1] had a 50/50 chance of finding government TTY numbers, and a 30% chance in reaching the government successfully through published numbers for government teletypewriters (TTY). The report recommended addressing this communications gap by publishing a directory of government TTY numbers and creating government-wide approaches to improve communication services such as TTY.

The Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) accepted the report and its recommendations on behalf of the Government of Canada in autumn 2005. Subsequently, the TBS and the CHRC put in place a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in early 2006 to work together to address the issues and recommendations identified in the **No Answer Report** (See Appendix A). In fall 2006, TBS submitted to the CHRC a Progress Report that included an action plan on how TBS would improve communication services for the auditory disabled community.

This report summarizes the steps taken by TBS based on work derived from: 1) the **No Answer Report**; 2) the 2006 TBS-CHRC MoU; and 3) the 2006 TBS Progress Report.

Improving Communication Services

The CHRC's **No Answer Report** made several recommendations to improve communication services for the auditory disabled. TBS has built on those recommendations, taking a broader approach to improving communication services than was originally conceived in the **No Answer Report** or the MoU. TBS focused its efforts to make services better not only for the auditory disabled community, but all individuals and businesses.

TBS has developed Best Practices for Government Contact Information to guide departments in improving government contact information, including TTY. This is important because published government contact information is used every day by Canadians when they call or email the Government of Canada, resulting in thousands of potential opportunities for communication and information exchange. The Best Practices suggest:

- Managing contact information appropriately throughout its lifecycle. This means when it is created, once it is in place, and when it is no longer required;
- Monitoring and updating published contact information regularly; and
- Making a list of services with associated contact information – including TTY numbers – publicly available via departmental web sites.

TBS is continuing to examine forward-looking approaches to modernize government services and to improve the client experience for all individuals and businesses, including persons with disabilities. TBS will continue to support departments in their design and delivery of client-oriented services through the provision of tools, guidance documents, and policy instruments, while undertaking policy suite renewal and supporting broader GC efforts for persons with disabilities.

Finally, TBS has begun to monitor departmental commitments to improving the accessibility of services for persons with disabilities through the Citizen-focused Service Area of Management within the [Management Accountability Framework](#) (MAF).

Collaborating to Achieve Success

Collaboration is a key pillar of TBS' work to achieve management excellence within the Government of Canada. Within that context, both the TBS and the CHRC cultivated a collaborative working relationship on accessibility issues and improving communication services throughout the duration of the MoU. Regular meetings took place and both organizations worked together to address issues, consistent with their respective mandates and responsibilities.

TBS also held a consultative workshop in February 2008 with individuals from the Deaf community. Through sign language interpreters, participants described how they perceived government services based on their experiences. Solutions were discussed, and recommendations for next steps were solicited. While the workshop did not provide sufficient detail to update existing personas contained with TBS' Accessibility Domain Architecture as originally planned, it did provide insights into the service needs of the auditory disabled community. The workshop findings will also be considered in the development of future TBS policy instruments.

In completing the MoU, TBS examined the possible use of a variety of consultation mechanisms such as a task force which could be used to engage on policy issues that might affect the auditory disabled – as recommended in the **No Answer Report**. TBS will continue to use existing ways to engage on emerging policy needs related to client facing service design and delivery. Examples may include committees, communities of practice, interdepartmental meetings, among others.

TBS remains committed to working collaboratively with the CHRC to improve government services.

Conclusion

All Canadians should have confidence that they will be able to successfully reach the Government of Canada across service delivery channels in a way that is client focused, timely, easy to use, and convenient. This includes individuals with specific communication needs such as persons with disabilities and those who may need to use assistive technologies such as TTY.

Considerable work has been completed to address the key issues arising from the **No Answer Report**. The communication and service needs of individuals and businesses will vary and change over time. One constant is our commitment to improving the accessibility of government services for all Canadians.

Appendix A: Areas of Work Undertaken by TBS derived from the No Answer Report, the 2006 TBS-CHRC MoU, and the 2006 TBS Progress Report

Area of Work	Status
--------------	--------

Develop & submit action plan to the CHRC on how TBS plans to fulfill the MoU and address the issues identified in the No Answer Report .	TBS developed and submitted an action plan to the CHRC in October 2006.
Establish ongoing CHRC-TBS collaborative relationship	The relationship between TBS and the CHRC was first established in 2006. Since then, the relationship has been cultivated. It will continue after the closure of the MoU due to its ongoing implementation.
Assess on an ongoing basis new and evolving technologies for people who cannot use the regular telephone system	<p>Within the Government of Canada, new communities of practice are developing which are discussing new and emerging technologies for persons with disabilities and for all Canadians.</p> <p>There are several existing departmental Adaptive Computer Technology (ACT) Centres that currently monitor the creation and evolution of new technologies for persons with disabilities.</p>
Convene a meeting with stakeholders to inform of implementation of <i>No Answer Report</i> recommendations	TBS will continue to use existing mechanisms to consult with stakeholders as appropriate. Examples may include committees, communities of practice, interdepartmental meetings, and among others.
Develop a comprehensive government-wide accessibility strategy and framework	<p>TBS is continuing to examine forward-looking approaches to modernize government services and to improve the client experience for all individuals and businesses, including persons with disabilities.</p> <p>TBS will continue to support departments in their design and delivery of client-oriented services through the provision of tools, guidance documents, and policy instruments, while undertaking policy suite renewal and supporting broader GC efforts for persons with disabilities.</p>
Establish a yearly Government of Canada TTY Directory.	<p>Building on the recommendation to establish a TTY directory, TBS has developed draft Best Practices for Government Contact Information that suggest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing contact information appropriately throughout its lifecycle. This means when it is created, once it is in place, and when it is no longer required; ▪ Monitoring and updating published contact information regularly; and ▪ Making publicly available via departmental web sites a list of services with associated contact information – including TTY numbers. <p>Service Canada's TTY number will continue to be a key contact point for the auditory disabled community.</p>
Review communication issues such as interpretation at GC meetings; audio portion of web sites	<p>Several guidance documents cover these communications issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Common Look and Feel for the Internet 2.0 (CLF) covers the placing of audio on Internet web sites. ▪ Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) has a guide entitled "Planning Inclusive Meetings" that makes practical suggestions on how to set up and run inclusive meetings. The Guide can be found on the HRSDC web site.

Create a task force similar to the 2001 Task Force on Access to Information for the Print-Disabled	TBS will use existing mechanisms to consult with stakeholders as appropriate. Examples may include committees, communities of practice, interdepartmental meetings, among others.
Develop and integrate disability personas into the Government of Canada Strategic Reference Model (GSRM)	<p>The TBS held a pilot workshop with involvement from members of the Deaf community in February 2008. Although the workshop did not provide sufficient detail to update existing personas contained with the TBS' Accessibility Domain Architecture, the results informed further work to update the Government of Canada Strategic Reference Model (GSRM). The results will also be examined in the development of future TBS policy instruments.</p> <p>A federal, provincial, & municipal working group is now leading the work to develop a Canada-wide Strategic Reference Model, and as a result, the integration of disability personas is outside the direction of the Government of Canada. In autumn 2009, TBS suggested to the working group that personas be developed and incorporated into the work plan. At the time of the writing of this report, the working group had not yet decided whether to pursue further work on disability personas.</p>

Annex B: Memorandum of Understanding Between the Canadian Human Rights Commission and the Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat

Introduction

1. The principles of equality, inclusion, diversity and accessibility pervade the legislative and policy landscape of the Government of Canada. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, for example, guarantees equality and equal benefit and protection under the law without discrimination, particularly without "...*discrimination based on national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.*" The Canadian Human Rights Act was adopted by Parliament to give effect to the principle that all individuals should be treated equally.
2. In recognition of these important principles, and in support of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (the Commission) and the Government of Canada strongly support preventive strategies aimed at eliminating discrimination in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services to the general public.
3. In August 2005 the Commission issued *No Answer: A Review of Government of Canada Telephonic Communication with People who are Deaf, Deafened, Hard of Hearing or Have a Speech Impediment*. *No Answer* includes four recommendations to the Government of Canada aimed at ensuring accessibility to Government of Canada telephonic communications for all Canadians.
4. In a letter dated December 16, 2005, the Secretary of the Treasury Board, responding on behalf of the President, agreed with these recommendations and welcomed the Commission's invitation to support these efforts by formalizing this process through a TBS-CHRC Memorandum of Understanding. He also invited CHRC's participation in the development of TBS' ongoing development of an overarching accessibility strategy. Consequently, consultations between officials of CHRC and TBS are underway to improve the accessibility of Government of Canada services for Canadians and to ensure that the Government of Canada is an accommodating workplace.
5. To that end the CHRC and the Treasury Board have agreed to this MOU to formalize the consultation and collaboration process and to facilitate the development of the accessibility agenda.

6. This Memorandum of Understanding outlines the steps to be taken to implement the recommendations contained in *No Answer* and to ensure accessible Government of Canada services for all Canadians.

Responsibilities

7. The TBS will include, as part of its comprehensive accessibility framework and strategy, a component that addresses the provision of telephonic communication services for people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or who have a speech impairment, consistent with the recommendations and analysis contained in *No Answer*.
8. The Commission undertakes to consult with TBS, as required, on the development of the strategy and other accessibility issues.
9. The Commission and TBS will convene a meeting with key organizations representing the interests of people who are Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment to brief them on steps being taken to implement the recommendations in *No Answer* and to seek their input.
10. Within six months of the signing of this Memorandum, the Secretary of the Treasury Board will write to the Chief Commissioner outlining the commitments, including time frames, for the implementation of a comprehensive strategy and other recommendations in the report.
11. Recognizing that the issues identified in *No Answer* are illustrative of broader issues with regard to accessibility of Government of Canada program, services and employment to persons with a variety of disabilities, the Commission and the Treasury Board Secretariat agree to developing an on-going collaborative relationship to address such issues to the extent possible consistent with their statutory duties and responsibilities.

Mary Gusella

Chief Commissioner
Canadian Human Rights Commission

Wayne G. Wouters

Secretary of the Treasury Board
Treasury Board of Canada

Footnotes

[\[1\]](#) The auditory disabled include the Deaf, deaf, hearing impaired, and the hard of hearing.

Date Modified: 2010-06-18