



Ministry of  
Finance

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2008/09 – 2010/11  
Service Plan

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## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement

I am pleased to present the 2008/09 to 2010/11 Service Plan for the Ministry of Finance. This plan sets out the targets and expected results that Ministry staff will use to guide their decisions in support of the governments priorities.

With a primary goal to ensure sound fiscal management and a balanced budget, the Ministry of Finance plays a key role in supporting the programs and services that British Columbians depend upon. British Columbia maintains a balanced approach to fiscal planning to help mitigate the risks in a global economy. Our prudent fiscal management continues to be the foundation on which we can support our citizens and build our communities.

British Columbia is renewing its responsibility to the environment with a commitment to reduce greenhouse gases by one-third below current levels by 2020. The Ministry of Finance shares this goal and will take steps to reduce its own environmental footprint as well as encouraging changes to our daily activities to create a greener, healthier province.

Our service plan supports British Columbia's goals by ensuring our strong and vibrant economy continues to benefit from a fair and competitive tax environment that encourages investment and responsible growth. The service plan also requires the Ministry continue building governance frameworks that improve transparency, inform best practices and help ensure the public receives value for money.

Our past successes and future achievements are made possible by the talented and professional individuals at the Ministry of Finance. It is truly a privilege to work with them and I am confident that the opportunity to work alongside these outstanding individuals will continue to attract the best and the brightest to the Ministry of Finance.

The Ministry of Finance and Associated Entities 2008/09–2010/11 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of February 12, 2008, have been considered in preparing the plan, and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable Carole Taylor  
Minister of Finance

February 12, 2008

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## Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Finance plays a key role in establishing, implementing and reviewing government's economic, fiscal and taxation policies. The Ministry continues to focus on the priorities of fiscal sustainability and a competitive economy that will ensure the Province's success in meeting its strategic goals. The ministry conducts business in a manner that upholds government's values as identified in the Province of British Columbia's Strategic Plan.

Key financial statutes for which the Ministry is administratively responsible include the *Financial Administration Act*, *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*, *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act* and the *Financial Information Act*. These statutes prohibit the tabling of deficit budgets, establish the framework and limits for accounting and financial activity, and ensure the right of the public to open and accountable reporting, including the complete disclosure of all the assumptions upon which fiscal forecasts and provincial budgets are based. These statutes require ministries and Crown corporations to annually release three-year service plans with concrete goals and performance measures and to annually report on their performance results and other financial information of interest to British Columbians.

Services provided by the Ministry include:

- economic planning and reporting, fiscal planning and budgeting;
- management of taxation policy;
- oversight of financial, procurement and administrative governance including strategic direction in establishing policies and maintaining controls, practices and corporate capacity;
- banking, accounting, risk and debt management services for government;
- policy development to regulate the financial and real estate sectors;
- implementation and administration of a framework for government's management of its Crown corporations;
- administration of public sector employer/employee relations; and
- regulation and registration of corporate entities, the financial and real estate sectors, personal property and manufactured homes.

The Ministry publishes the government's annual Budget and Fiscal Plan, Estimates, Public Accounts, Quarterly Reports, and Financial and Economic Review. These documents are available at [www.fin.gov.bc.ca/pubs.htm](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/pubs.htm). Ministry clients include the general public, Treasury Board, Cabinet, ministries, Crown corporations, boards and commissions, agencies, businesses, public sector employers' associations, investors and financial-sector agencies.

## Strategic Context

In 2007, British Columbia's economy continued its strong performance after three straight years of over 3 per cent growth. The province's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew an estimated 3.0 per cent in 2007. British Columbia's strong pace of consumer spending and investment offset weakness in the province's export markets.

British Columbia employment grew faster than the province's labour force in 2007, pushing the annual unemployment rate down 0.6 percentage points to 4.2 per cent. This is the lowest annual rate of unemployment in more than 30 years.

The provincial government continues to implement sustainable fiscal management policies with its fourth consecutive surplus forecast for 2007/08. The importance of the province's sound fiscal management is recognized by international credit rating agencies. Moody's Investor Services, for example, is maintaining British Columbia at the coveted Aaa rating.

A diversified and robust economy, together with balanced and effective provincial fiscal management practices, puts British Columbia in a strong position to meet the ever changing challenges and opportunities that the province faces into the future.

### Key Initiatives

**Fiscal Sustainability** — Prudent fiscal management and a growing economy will allow government to meet the priorities of British Columbians in the long-term. Treasury Board will continue to ensure the responsible allocation of the province's financial resources within the policy framework set by government.

**Economic Sustainability** — While a provincial unemployment rate at 30 year lows brings many economic benefits, government is currently dealing with the challenge of a growing shortage of labour, particularly in highly skilled trades and professional areas. Other challenges faced today include a softening US economy, the strong Canadian dollar, high oil prices and the effects of the mountain pine beetle. Looking ahead, the province will continue to work to enhance the province's economic competitiveness and adapt to the needs of an aging population and to the opportunities provided by growing international markets.



## Key Economic Development Opportunities

British Columbia is in many ways uniquely positioned to meet approaching challenges as well as take advantage of potential opportunities.

**Asia-Pacific Location** — British Columbia is naturally situated to connect existing North American markets with rapidly growing Asian economies. The province's plan to develop a world class infrastructure will provide the land, air and sea links essential for the efficient movement of products to and from the immense markets of Japan, China, India and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region.

**Increasingly Diversified Economy** — While traditional resources sectors remain an important part of the provincial economy, British Columbia is evolving into an increasingly diversified economy. The ongoing expansion of non-resource sectors such as tourism, film and various high-tech activities will enhance the province's ability to weather downturns in international commodity markets.

**Diversified Trade Markets** — Significant growth in China and other Asian economies helps broaden the market for British Columbia's goods exports. The Pacific Rim is the destination for more than one-quarter of British Columbia's international goods exports. Greater diversity in export markets will help to limit the effects of possible downturns in one or more of the province's traditional export markets.

**Highly Educated and Healthy Population** — A major underpinning of the provincial economy is British Columbia's highly educated and healthy population. The province's education and training system provides the province with a highly literate and well trained workforce that can meet the changing demands of the global economy. Access to a superior public health care system is one of many factors that supports the high quality of life enjoyed by British Columbians and helps to attract people to the province. Attracting high caliber immigrants is an important source of new workers as the province's workforce ages.

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

## Goal 1: A sustainable fiscal environment built on a balanced budget

Confidence in British Columbia's economy is enhanced by a sustainable fiscal environment that provides a stable foundation on which to maintain and enhance the delivery of public services. Supporting a strong and vibrant economy provides the means to develop excellence in education, promote healthy living, support people at risk, protect our environment and create jobs for British Columbians. Fiscal responsibility applied today ensures that the cost of current public services will not be passed on to future generations.

### Objective 1.1: Effective management of government's fiscal plan

The government's ability to achieve a sustainable fiscal environment relies upon the development and maintenance of a prudent and resilient fiscal plan. The Ministry plays a critical role in overseeing the fiscal plan and works closely with the federal government, ministries and other public sector partners to ensure that government's annual and three-year revenue and expenditure targets are met.

### Strategies

- Continuous monitoring and corrective action as required.
- Implement effective and differentiated public sector labour relations and human resource strategies.

### Performance Measure 1: Taxpayer-supported debt to GDP ratio

Performance Measure	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Taxpayer-supported debt to GDP ratio.	14.1%	Declining trend	Declining trend	Declining trend

**Data Source:** The Public Accounts is the source for actual performance of taxpayer-supported debt (Debt Statistics Report basis). Statistics Canada is the source of annual GDP results.

### Discussion

This measure is the three-year moving average of the ratio of taxpayer-supported debt to gross domestic product (GDP). Maintaining a relatively low taxpayer-supported debt to GDP ratio is a key measure of fiscal sustainability, signifying a healthy balance sheet and ensuring that debt remains affordable. Rating agencies rely on this measure as a key credit rating consideration. Government is committed to maintaining a declining taxpayer-supported debt to GDP ratio on a three-year moving average.

### Performance Measure 2: Provincial credit rating

Performance Measure	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Provincial credit rating.	Aaa	Aaa	Aaa	Aaa

**Data Source:** Moody's Investor Service (Credit Rating Agency)- Aaa is Equivalent to AAA plus rating from Standards and Poor's.

### Discussion

This measure is the rating of provincial debt by Moody's Investor Services, an independent rating agency. Bonds are rated in descending alphabetical order from A to C — highest to lowest. Triple A is the highest possible rating, provided to those public and private sector organizations that offer excellent financial security and are generally considered high-grade entities. The interest rate paid by the Province when it borrows in the domestic and international capital markets is influenced by the credit ratings supplied by third party agencies. In determining the Province's credit rating, rating agencies evaluate debt as a percentage of GDP and interest owing as a percentage of gross receipts. Agencies also consider the government's track record in meeting its fiscal targets, its transparency in budgeting and reporting, the economic outlook, and business and consumer confidence in the economy.

The strength of the economy can affect the factors used by rating agencies in determining the province's credit rating and ultimately influence the rating itself. A stronger economy means higher revenues for government, reducing the proportion of government revenue spent on interest costs; and a stronger economy results in higher GDP, improving the debt to GDP ratio.

## Goal 2: A strong, competitive and vibrant economy

The Ministry of Finance plays an essential role in supporting a strong, competitive and vibrant economy. The ministry reviews provincial tax policies on an ongoing basis to help ensure that British Columbia has a competitive tax regime. Since 2001, the ministry has delivered a series of tax reductions to individuals and businesses. These initiatives include three significant personal

income tax cuts; a 25 per cent cut in 2001, the B.C. Tax reduction in 2005 and a 10 per cent cut in Budget 2007; a 27 per cent cut in the corporate income tax rate; elimination of the general corporation capital tax and the introduction of a provincial sales tax exemption for production machinery and equipment.

### Objective 2.1: A fair and competitive tax environment

The Province's ability to develop a strong and vibrant economy depends on a tax and regulatory environment that is both nationally and internationally competitive. Jurisdictions with competitive tax regimes and regulatory frameworks are successful in attracting and retaining personal and business investment. Taking advantage of these opportunities enhances economic development and creates stable revenues to support critical government services such as health care and education. In addition, a tax system that is perceived to be fair increases the confidence of British Columbians in their government.

#### Strategies

- Continue to improve the fairness, competitiveness, and sustainability of the provincial tax system.
- Ensure financial and corporate regulatory frameworks and registry services are efficient and effective while protecting the public interest.

### Performance Measure 3: Provincial corporate and personal income tax rates

Performance Measures	2007/08 <sup>3</sup> Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Provincial ranking of corporate income tax rates. <sup>1</sup>	Fourth lowest	Remain in the lowest four	Remain in the lowest four	Remain in the lowest four
Provincial ranking of personal income tax rates for the bottom two tax brackets. <sup>2</sup>	Lowest	Lowest	Lowest	Lowest

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Source: Comparison of provincial statutes for rates in effect on March 31 each year.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Comparison of provincial statutes for each tax year. B.C.'s 2008 personal income tax rates for the first two tax brackets are 5.35 per cent for the first tax bracket up to \$35,016 and 8.15 per cent for the second tax bracket up to \$70,033.

<sup>3</sup> The value for 2007/08 was determined based on provincial statutes for rates in effect as of January 2008.

## Discussion

**Provincial ranking of corporate income tax rates:** This measure compares corporate income tax rates in B.C. against the other provinces in Canada by comparing provincial statutes in effect as of March 31st each year. A competitive tax environment fosters economic growth by encouraging business investment and promoting a business friendly environment. Although measuring the overall competitiveness of the tax system is complex, a comparison of general corporate income tax rates represents a reasonable basis for assessing competitiveness.

**Provincial ranking of personal income tax rates for the bottom two tax brackets:** This measure compares personal income tax rates in effect as of March 31st each year for the bottom two tax brackets against the other provinces in Canada. British Columbia has the lowest personal income tax rates of any province in Canada for the bottom two tax brackets. Keeping these tax rates low is consistent with the objective of maintaining a fair and competitive tax system.

## **Goal 3: Provide governance frameworks that support government in effectively achieving its objectives and providing the public with value for money**

The Ministry of Finance is responsible for government's overall financial, management governance, accountability and performance frameworks for ministries and the broader public sector. This involves the establishment of appropriate legislation, policies and procedures and reporting at the corporate level to ensure the Province's resources and obligations are appropriately managed in support of effective service delivery.

### **Objective 3.1: Effective financial, governance, accountability and performance frameworks**

To be effective, financial, governance, accountability and performance frameworks need to set accountability and public disclosure standards for financial and performance information, as well as reinforce individual and corporate accountabilities for outcomes, and maintain standards for stewardship of resources, management of liabilities and risk, and the collection and disbursement of public funds. Timeliness, accuracy and completeness of government planning and financial reporting is critical to the use of the information and maintaining public confidence in government's management of resources.

Financial and management capacity, systems and guidance are needed to support decision makers in meeting their objectives by working with communities of professionals throughout government to balance legislative, policy and procedural requirements with business requirements; develop

financial systems strategy to provide appropriate management information; and develop and maintain training programs to ensure sufficient financial, governance, procurement and management capacity across government.

Risk-based approaches used in compliance and controls monitoring and internal audit project planning optimize the use of limited resources while ensuring that they examine, assess, adjust and mitigate government's most significant risk exposures. Advisory services assist ministries in ensuring efficient and effective operations.

### Strategies

- Use risk-based approaches to effectively manage government's resources.
- Provide timely and transparent information to clients and citizens.
- Meet statutory reporting requirements and comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.
- Ensure appropriate financial and management capacity, systems and guidance are in place.
- Maximize investment returns on surplus cash to minimize borrowing costs and requirements.
- Ensure Crown Agencies are publicly accountable for their programs, services and fiscal management.

### Performance Measure 4: Annual savings from Ministry programs applying risk-based approaches

Performance Measures	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Self-insurance (five-year rolling average). <sup>1</sup>	\$70.02 million	\$76.8 million	\$79.7 million	\$79.7 million
Compliance and controls monitoring, and potential Internal Audit and Advisory Services savings. <sup>2</sup>	\$15 million	\$15 million	\$15 million	\$15 million

**Data Source:**

<sup>1</sup> Source: Ministry of Finance Risk Management Branch.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Internal Audit and Advisory Services recommendations and Corporate Compliance and Controls Monitoring.

**Discussion**

**Annual savings from self insurance (five-year rolling average):** This measure demonstrates the savings achieved by government with public sector self-insurance programs, rather than insuring through third parties. Self-insurance involves government assuming the role of a traditional insurer by investigating, defending and paying claims. The Ministry of Finance’s co-ordination of public sector self-insurance programs allows the provincial government to cost-effectively retain selected risks rather than transfer them at a premium to third parties.

**Compliance and controls monitoring, and potential Internal Audit and advisory services savings:** This measure demonstrates savings from utilizing a risk-based approach for compliance and controls monitoring and potential annual benefits (five-year average) from implementing Internal Audit and Advisory Services and Activity Based Management recommendations. Activity Based Management branch provides consulting services that combine costing and process analysis to assist programs in improving performance and reducing costs.

The Ministry’s delivery of cross government risk-based financial processing and independent management review services provide a basis for evaluating the adoption of best practices and savings. Savings are achieved through the adoption of audit recommendations and more effective payment review procedures.

**Performance Measure 5: The timely release of the Public Accounts with an unqualified audit opinion from the Office of the Auditor General**

Performance Measure	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Release of Public Accounts with an unqualified audit opinion from the Auditor General by June 30.	July 11, 2007	On or before June 30, 2008	On or before June 30, 2009	On or before June 30, 2010

**Data Source:** Release of the Public Accounts.

**Discussion**

This measure captures both timeliness and completeness of government’s financial reporting. Timely release of financial reporting is critical for effective use of the information and helps instill public confidence in government’s ability to manage its resources. The *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* requires release of the Province’s financial statements (Public Accounts) by August 31st, following each March 31st fiscal year end. An unqualified opinion from the Auditor General that the public accounts comply with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles provides an objective and independent assessment that government has met the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles’ standard for disclosure of its financial information, further increasing confidence in the reliability of that information.

# Resource Summary Table

Core Businesses	2007/08 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2008/09 Estimates	2009/10 Plan	2010/11 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Crown Agencies Secretariat .....	1,605	1,629	1,654	1,654
Treasury Board Staff .....	6,382	6,495	6,586	6,586
Office of the Comptroller General .....	12,221	12,322	12,426	12,426
Treasury .....	1	1	1	1
BC Registry Services .....	1	1	1	1
Strategic and Corporate Policy .....	2,982	3,038	3,093	3,093
Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat .....	15,880	16,301	16,737	16,737
Executive and Support Services .....	19,433	20,506	21,441	21,475
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>58,505</b>	<b>60,293</b>	<b>61,939</b>	<b>61,973</b>
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000) – Other Appropriations</b>				
Insurance and Risk Management (IRMA) .....				
Operating .....	45,945	46,031	46,114	46,114
Recoveries .....	(45,945)	(46,031)	(46,114)	(46,114)
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents ( Direct FTEs)</b>				
Crown Agencies Secretariat .....	10	10	10	10
Treasury Board Staff .....	55	55	55	55
Office of the Comptroller General .....	134	134	134	134
Treasury .....	75	76	76	76
BC Registry Services .....	50	50	48	48
Strategic and Corporate Policy .....	126	133	133	133
Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat .....	13	13	13	13
Executive and Support Services .....	169	169	169	169
<b>Totals .....</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>638</b>



Ministry of Finance

Core Businesses	2007/08 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2008/09 Estimates	2009/10 Plan	2010/11 Plan
<b>Full-time Equivalents ( Direct FTEs)</b>				
Insurance and Risk Management (IRMA) .....	49	49	49	49
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
Crown Agencies Secretariat .....	9	9	9	9
Treasury Board Staff .....	163	18	18	18
Office of the Comptroller General .....	607	999	481	481
Treasury .....	1,028	828	728	728
BC Registry Services .....	2,960	3,085	2,110	2,110
Strategic and Corporate Policy .....	359	359	359	359
Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat .....	3	5	3	3
Executive and Support Services .....	702	383	1,978	1,978
<b>Totals</b> .....	<b>5,831</b>	<b>5,686</b>	<b>5,686</b>	<b>5,686</b>
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (\$000) – Other Appropriations</b>				
Insurance and Risk Management (IRMA) .....	240	370	370	370
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>240</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>370</b>	<b>370</b>

<sup>1</sup> The 2007/08 Restated *Estimates* have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2008/09 *Estimates*.

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## Hyperlinks to Additional Information

For more information on the British Columbia Ministry of Finance, please visit our website at: [www.gov.bc.ca/fin](http://www.gov.bc.ca/fin)

For more information on this and other Ministry Service Plans and Annual Service Plan Reports, please visit: [www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual\\_Reports/2007\\_2008/default.htm](http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/Annual_Reports/2007_2008/default.htm)

For other reports and publications of the British Columbia Ministry of Finance, please visit: [www.fin.gov.bc.ca/pubs.htm](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/pubs.htm)

The Minister of Finance is also the Minister responsible for the following Crown corporations, Boards and Agencies.

### **Crown Corporations:**

- Partnerships BC — for more information including their service plan and annual service plan report visit: [www.partnershipsbc.ca/](http://www.partnershipsbc.ca/)

### **Boards:**

- Accounting Policy Advisory Committee
- Auditor Certification Board — [www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/acb.htm](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/registries/corppg/acb.htm)
- B.C. Investment Management Board — [www.bcimc.com/Default.asp](http://www.bcimc.com/Default.asp)
- Financial Institutions Commission — [www.fic.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.fic.gov.bc.ca/)
- Financial Services Tribunal — [www.fic.gov.bc.ca/fst/](http://www.fic.gov.bc.ca/fst/)
- Insurance Council of British Columbia — [www.insurancecouncilofbc.com/PublicWeb/Home.html](http://www.insurancecouncilofbc.com/PublicWeb/Home.html)
- Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia — [www.realestatefoundation.com/](http://www.realestatefoundation.com/)
- Real Estate Council of British Columbia — [www.recbc.ca/](http://www.recbc.ca/)

For information about the 2007/08 performance measure methodologies, please visit the following website: [www.fin.gov.bc.ca/serviceplan/methodologies.htm](http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/serviceplan/methodologies.htm)

# Public Affairs Bureau

## Purpose of the Agency

The Public Affairs Bureau (Bureau) leads and co-ordinates communications with internal and external stakeholders, ensuring that citizens are informed about government policies, programs and services and that information is communicated in an open and transparent manner.

The Bureau ensures that essential communication mechanisms are available to give citizens quick and easy access to the information they need — when they need it — whether it is via media relations, advertising, events, community relations, publications, e-links, or cross promotional activities.

Clients include citizens of British Columbia, members of the media, the Premier's Office, members of Cabinet, senior government officials and ministry program staff.

Services provided by the Bureau include:

- fact-based information;
- corporate communications;
- information campaigns;
- communications planning;
- media relations;
- news releases;
- speech writing;
- logistical support;
- writing and graphic design services;
- event management;
- online clipping service;
- technical support to the Press Theatre in the Legislature; and
- developing online applications in support of new initiatives.

## Strategic Context

The past year has seen many gains in proactively communicating key priorities with province-wide audiences through comprehensive programs supporting international trade, BC Parks, ActNow BC, the Conversation on Health, the Budget Consultation process, forest fire prevention and the successful summer domestic tourism initiative (*Best Place on Earth*). The Bureau will seek to build on these and other key cross government priorities to maximize reach and awareness (through cross promotion) while effectively utilizing human and financial resources.

Looking ahead, the Public Affairs Bureau will work to keep British Columbians, Canadians and citizens of the world well informed about the province's policies, benefits, programs and services.

Continuing to support issues management and the use of traditional communications tools, the Bureau will continue to seek a balance between reactive issues management and strategic, proactive communications messaging. While issues management is critical to protecting the reputation of government, providing our key audiences with proactive and balanced information is central to enhancing public confidence and awareness.

The ability to create proactive strategies which link to the Five Great Goals and straddle cross government priorities will be essential to the management of risk, maximizing the full potential of the professional skills in the Bureau team and the creation of opportunities to serve and inform citizens. There will be communications research, planning, input into major submissions and policies so that proactive strategies can be developed.

The Bureau's commitment to providing the best service possible while responding to a wide range of demands in support of multiple high priority government commitments (for example, capital project announcements for schools, hospitals and transportation links including Pacific Gateway; international marketing; Climate Action, B.C.'s 150th Anniversary; the Children's Education Fund; and, health care initiatives) is an ongoing challenge.

There is an opportunity to achieve some very real gains using communications to reach out to the grassroots of our communities and to strengthen our relationship with the media not only in the regional markets of British Columbia but across North America and around the world. Given the competition in the market place to "attract the public's eye and ear," we must continue to use and develop new, innovative techniques and technologies to reach our target audiences whether at the grassroots of our communities or international investors.

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

## **Goal 1: Citizens are informed of government policies, programs and services**

British Columbians will be informed of the programs and services provided by government and understand the challenges the government faces by providing information through a variety of sources including Members of the Legislative Assembly, media, public events and forums, public policy studies, factual public information and awareness initiatives as well as a variety of communications support materials.

### **Objective 1: Communication of information that is timely, relevant and readily accessible**

Ensuring all British Columbians receive information that is timely, relevant and readily accessible regarding government policies and programs is essential to informing British Columbians of the programs and services available from government and the decisions taken by government on their behalf.

### **Strategies**

- Communicate with British Columbians through both the use of traditional mechanisms (announcements, paid and earned media) but also by introducing new marketing approaches to ensure our messages are reaching citizens where they live (for example, partnerships with the public or private sectors to distribute information);
- Expand use of e-services in support of cross government initiatives and/or themes (for example, ActNow BC electronic call to action, crystal meth electronic call to action, tips and tools, or the B.C. tourism campaign for bookings, etc.); and
- Support the development of resources in key areas of government such as health care (including ActNow BC), advanced education, budget, forest fire prevention, crystal meth, tourism, problem gambling and Climate Action.

## Performance Measures 1 and 2:

Government's ability to communicate information to the public that is timely, relevant and readily accessible can be measured by ensuring that evaluation mechanisms are included in major communications plans/campaigns and by undertaking performance monitoring activities.

Performance Measures	2007/08 Baseline	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage of major communications plans/campaigns with evaluation mechanisms.	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of clients who rate services at satisfactory or above.	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Data Source:** Customer consultation.

## Discussion

- Major campaigns are defined as significant province wide programs, new cross ministry, or high strategic priority plans/campaigns identified throughout the course of the year.
- Corporate communications is responsible for tracking which campaigns have evaluation mechanisms in place and to calculate the percentage in place at the end of fiscal year. A baseline is established at 100 per cent — target for future years will be to maintain this level.
- A customer satisfaction rating is established by conducting interviews, with Ministers and Deputy Ministers. A 30 per cent sample rate (equivalent to six ministries) is established and the rating is calculated by dividing the number of ratings at “Satisfactory” or better by the number of interviews conducted. A baseline is established at 100 per cent — target for future years will be to maintain this level.

## Goal 2: Government communicates in an open and transparent manner

Provide citizens with the information they need to understand the challenges faced by government related to the policy decisions taken on their behalf.

### Objective 1: Communication of government's policies and programs to the public

Ensuring all British Columbians have access to or receive consistent factual information regarding government's policies and programs is essential to informing citizens of government planning decisions and accomplishments; allowing citizens to form opinions based on fact and allows for informed public debate on decisions taken.

#### Strategies

- Reach out to ethnic communities/press and clients of government programs and services (such as seniors, small business operators, families, etc.);
- Make information more accessible in grassroots communities and to international media through innovative technologies and stakeholder relations; and
- Provide factual information to the media to ensure the public receives the information needed to develop informed opinions and allow for informed public debate on decisions taken by government.

### Performance Measure 3: Provide initial response to media within one hour of enquiry or within media deadline

Government's ability to communicate factual information to the public can be measured by response to media enquiries.

Performance Measure	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Provide initial response to media within one hour of enquiry or within media deadline.	97%	97%	97%	97%

Date Source: PAB Communications Offices.



**Discussion**

- Communications Offices monitor response times which are analyzed and rolled up on a monthly basis.
- Based on year-to-date results at February 28, 2007, a notional target of 97 per cent was established for 2007/08.
- PAB responds to approximately 10,000 media enquiries each year.

## Resource Summary Table

Core Business Area	2007/08 Restated Estimates <sup>1</sup>	2008/09 Estimates	2009/10 Plan	2010/11 Plan
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>				
Public Affairs Bureau .....	36,659	36,994	37,349	37,349
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>36,659</b>	<b>36,994</b>	<b>37,349</b>	<b>37,349</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents (Direct FTEs)</b>				
Public Affairs Bureau .....	216	216	216	216
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>				
Public Affairs Bureau .....	436	436	436	436
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>436</b>

<sup>1</sup> The 2007/08 Restated *Estimates* have been restated, for comparative purposes only, to be consistent with Schedule A of the 2008/09 *Estimates*.

## Public Affairs Bureau Contact Information

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For more information on the Public Affairs Bureau, please visit our website at:  
[www.gov.bc.ca/public\\_affairs](http://www.gov.bc.ca/public_affairs)

For more information on Public Affairs Bureau's Service Plan and Annual Service Plan Report please visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/fin](http://www.gov.bc.ca/fin)

