

Federal Background Paper Summary Accountability for Results Roundtable Follow-up Session

The goal of the Background Paper On Accountability For Results is to enhance the discussion that will take place at the January 25-26, 2005 follow-up session on Accountability for Results, by:

- outlining overarching issues;
- providing examples of perspectives on accountability and results;
- examining existing mechanisms that promote accountability;
- providing examples of accountability and reporting models;
- asking key questions about accountability and results.

Under Overarching Issues, the paper provides a definition of accountability as *an obligation to answer for performance*. It discusses issues such as the underpinning *Relationship* between parties, and proposes the following schematic (arrow = 'accountable to'):

All governments ⇒ to their citizens
Aboriginal institutions/governments ⇒ to membership/citizens
All governments administering Aboriginal programs ⇒ to Aboriginal program participants/beneficiaries and other Canadians
Funding recipients ⇒ to funding providers

It discusses Accountability for Results in the areas of:

- *Money*: an estimated \$8.8 billion is to be spent by the federal government on Aboriginal programs and services in 2004-2005. The federal government is concerned about **program effectiveness and** accountability to Canadians for those expenditures.
- *Programs and services*: an estimated 240 federal Aboriginal-specific programs, and a number of programs funded by provincial/territorial governments), raise questions around adequate involvement of affected players, clearly defined objectives and implementation, as well as mechanisms to correct in mid-course.
- *People*: Significantly more data are available for First Nations people living on reserves, than for any other Aboriginal community. As the desired information becomes more specific, data sources are fewer.
- *First Nations reporting to federal organizations*: In a 2002 report, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) found that "First Nations reporting requirements established by federal government organizations are a significant burden" and recommended that reporting requirements be streamlined.

The Background Paper then provides a number of perspectives on accountability and results, noting that the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples mentions that in traditional Aboriginal societies, “Accountability was not simply a goal or aim of the system, it was embedded in the very make-up of the system.” The Perspectives include excerpts from Government of Canada *Inherent Right Policy*, the Treasury Board Secretariat document *Results for Canadians*, Assembly of First Nations’ (AFN) *Policy Statement on Achieving Results*, and a Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development paper entitled *A Review of Literature on Fiscal Relationships*.

The Background Paper examines existing Canadian mechanisms for accountability and results in the Aboriginal context, and states that Canada does not currently have any one, clear mechanism to ensure accountability and results in the Aboriginal context.

The paper then goes on to provide some Report Card models. There are no Canadian models of a comprehensive report card in the Aboriginal context. There is at least one sectoral Aboriginal model in development, the Aboriginal Health Reporting Framework (AHRF); and there are other Canadian models not specific to Aboriginal peoples. Other countries with indigenous populations -- New Zealand, Australia – are experimenting with accountability and reporting in reference to their indigenous people.

The paper poses key questions about accountability and results: Who is reporting for what? Who is reporting to whom? How will reporting lead to improved results? It then goes on to discuss possible elements of an Aboriginal Report Card (ARC), suggesting that an ARC could outline a set number of socio-economic results to be achieved, and reporting on indicators that could be used to track and measure progress towards the desired results. It could incorporate the following elements:

- Shared outcomes: all partners (federal, provincial/territorial and Aboriginal) would agree on outcomes to be tracked over time, *e.g., health status of Aboriginal people equivalent to that of other Canadians*;
- Shared indicators: partners agree on indicators that could be used to track results, *e.g., life expectancy as an indicator of health status*;
- Shared data: partners agree to share data with each other, *e.g., provincial/territorial vital statistics aggregated to arrive at national data (or disaggregated to provide community-level data)*;
- Coordination of reporting: parties could report together or separately as long as there is agreement to prevent duplication, *e.g., provinces and territories could choose to develop separate reports on the Aboriginal population in their jurisdiction, or distinct Aboriginal peoples may choose to develop separate reports, but all could draw on common data sources*.