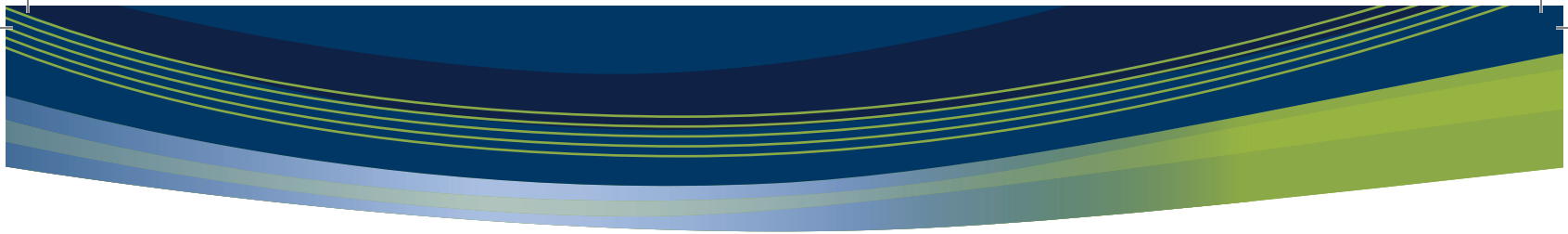




# Program Review Office Annual Report 2013



## Minister's Message

It is my pleasure to introduce the Department of Finance's **2013 Annual Report for the Program Review Office**. This report is the first of its kind. It sets out to provide background information on the development of the Program Review Office and to provide insight to the work that has been completed, is underway, and that is targeted for the future.

The Program Review Office was transferred from the Department of the Executive to the Department of Finance effective April 1, 2014. This transfer will support the integration of the Program Review Office's work plan into a more streamlined government-wide planning process, serve to enhance the business planning function, and help to ensure sound fiscal management government-wide.

Furthermore, the results of program reviews can address the information needs of senior managers, Cabinet and its Committees, Standing Committees, and the Legislative Assembly as an effective management and accountability tool. It increases a manager's knowledge of the program, helps identify aspects of program delivery that need attention, and assists managers to focus on outcomes as well as processes. Governments across Canada have recognized the value of regular program reviews and have incorporated this function into their planning processes.

The Program Review Office staff are trained professionals who work within national standards and guidelines of the Canadian Evaluation Society. I encourage all employees of the GNWT to read this document and to work with Program Review Office staff to obtain advice and guidance in the areas of program design or review.



Michael Miltenberger, Minister of Finance



## Department of Finance

### Mission Statement

To obtain, manage and control the financial resources required to support the priorities identified by the Legislative Assembly by implementing Government of the Northwest Territories' policies and programs and ensuring effective, efficient and economical management of financial information resources.

### Principles

1. A strong focus on ethical behaviour
2. The adoption of formal risk based management practices
3. Improved accountability and stewardship of resources
4. A focus on the results being achieved for the dollars spent

The Department of Finance has the mandate for obtaining, managing, and controlling the financial resources required to implement the Government of the Northwest Territories' (GNWT) policies and programs. This mandate includes, negotiating major financial arrangements with the federal government, providing analysis and advice to the Financial Management Board (FMB), and ensuring that financial and information resources are managed effectively, efficiently and economically.

The Program Review Office (PRO) was established in 2008 to advance the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly's goal of an *effective and efficient government*. The goal *conducting program review* has also been adopted by the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly and is supported by the Refocusing Government Deputy Ministers and Cabinet Committees. To reach this goal PRO has been given a mandate to:

- Conduct targeted reviews of programs and services to address specific issues of effectiveness or sustainability and to recommend modifications
- Lead on-going review of programs and services to clarify and confirm mandates, determine program effectiveness, and report on results achieved
- Work with departments and their program staff to improve review, evaluation, monitoring, and results reporting so that effectiveness and efficiency is demonstrated.

### WHAT'S INSIDE?

What is Program Review?

PRO Work Plan Establishment

Contributions toward a more Effective and Efficient GNWT

A Look Ahead

## What is the Program Review Office (PRO)?

One of the key areas the Department of Finance is responsible for achieving results in is coordinating and supporting the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives and actions to support government goals. The Department recognizes the importance of setting targets, measuring, monitoring, and reporting on the achievement of its goals and objectives.

Government programs should be reviewed strategically throughout their life cycle for good program information to guide managers in their decision-making. Ineffective programs waste scarce program dollars. Regular program review benefits senior management and program staff by providing valuable program information for more informed decision making, as well as providing accountability for tax dollars to the public. However, with a finite level of resources available to departments, program review is often neglected in light of more immediate issues. PRO was established to help address this concern.

Guided by national codes of ethics for meaningful program evaluation, PRO was established to help ensure that all GNWT programs are producing the intended results. This is accomplished by coordinating reviews of specific programs and services to clarify and confirm mandates, determine program effectiveness and recommend actions such as service improvements. PRO also supports internal program evaluation throughout the GNWT by assisting Departments with evaluation projects and helping to build evaluation capacity.

Program review is the systematic collection and analysis of information about program activities, characteristics, and outcomes to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness and/or inform decisions about future programming.

- Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)



## How is the PRO Work Plan Established?

Guided by the Refocusing Government Committee of Cabinet (RFGCoC) and with input from the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning (SCOPP) a Three Year Work Plan was developed and approved in 2012-13 to guide PRO activities for the remainder of the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly.

The Three Year Work Plan included four major elements:

1. The identification and conduct of specific review projects;
2. The development of a risk based project selection methodology to select priority projects for each coming planning period, including methods to integrate recommendations and findings into other GNWT review, planning and budgeting processes
3. Development of templates and guidelines for the conduct of evaluations and reviews by departments
4. Capacity building and training so GNWT staff can do more internal review and evaluation

Each of these elements is reported on further in this Report.

### Conduct of Specific Review Projects

Based on an inventory of reviews, audits, and evaluations recently completed, underway, or planned across the GNWT, and a risk analysis of proposed projects, a short list of potential projects was developed and reviewed with Cabinet and SCOPP before a final list was proposed. A number of specific reviews and project reports are discussed in the **Highlights** section of this Report.

The Three Year Work Plan also includes a number of joint projects with departments to review programs, services, processes, or initiatives in priority areas. PRO continues to undertake projects where improvements in program design, assessment and delivery can be achieved and will continue to identify opportunities to reduce the Government's liabilities, waste and redundancy.



## Risk Based Project Selection and Integration into GNWT Planning Processes

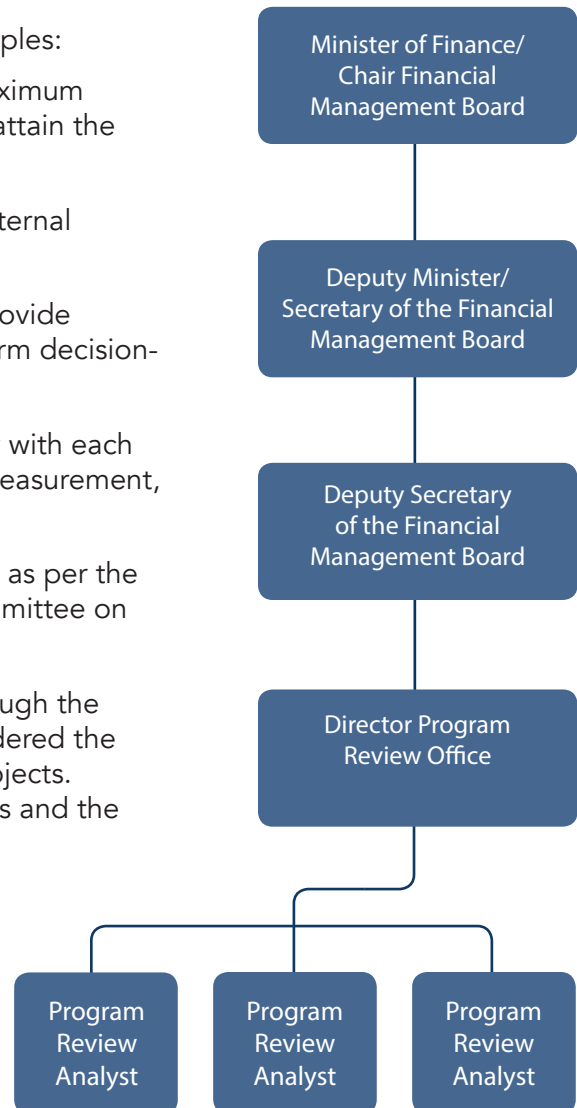
### *Project Selection Process*

Work planning by PRO is guided by the following principles:

- All government programs should be designed for maximum effectiveness in order to achieve their mandates and attain the outcomes for which they were created.
- Departments are encouraged to take advantage of internal resources and expertise wherever possible
- Programs should be reviewed on a regular basis to provide management with program information to better inform decision-making
- Departments will be encouraged to work interactively with each other to increase the program review, performance measurement, and program planning function in the GNWT
- PRO will utilize guidelines for best practice and ethics as per the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation

Project selection and prioritization was determined through the development and use of a risk matrix. The matrix considered the scale and scope of the various programs and review projects. Discussions were held with departments to clarify details and the level of PRO assistance required.

## Organizational Chart



### *Integration into GNWT Review, Planning, and Budgeting Processes*

In 2013-14 Cabinet and the Financial Management Board moved PRO from Executive to the Department of Finance. This transfer has supported the integration of PRO's work plan into a more streamlined government-wide planning process, and will serve to enhance the business planning function, and help to ensure sound fiscal management.

The results of program reviews can address the information needs of senior managers, Cabinet and its Committees, Standing Committees, and the Legislative Assembly as an effective management and accountability tool. It increases a manager's knowledge of the program, helps identify aspects of program delivery that need attention, and assists managers to focus on outcomes as well as processes. Governments across Canada have recognized the value of regular program reviews and have incorporated this function in their planning processes.

PRO will continue to work with Departments to address GNWT-wide barriers to effective program management as identified by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

One such barrier was the absence of corporate level risk management reporting. During 2013/14 PRO has assisted with the development and implementation of a GNWT-wide Risk Management Framework, which will help integrate existing department risk management efforts into GNWT-wide planning and review processes. It is intended that Departments will use the Risk Management Framework as a decision instrument for more effective and efficient programs.

### **Capacity Building and Training**

Progress to meeting these two objectives is discussed further in the section **Building Evaluation Capacity within the GNWT** beginning at Page 14 of this report.





## How has PRO Contributed Toward a More Effective and Efficient Government?

Since its inception, PRO has completed reviews, evaluations, and other projects which have led to specific recommendations for change and areas for further in-depth review. The nature of these recommendations varies from issues of efficiency and duplication to areas identified for improved program management and streamlining. During the development of the office's current Three Year Work Plan, over 150 areas were identified by Departments as requiring some level of review or evaluation work, or having just completed a review or evaluation. Recommendations from these reviews and evaluations represent significant potential change to government operations.

PRO continues to work collaboratively with other GNWT departments to advance projects that were identified on the Three Year Work Plan. Over the years PRO continues to work with Departments to conduct targeted program reviews in order to address specific issues associated with program effectiveness or sustainability, and to make recommendations for service improvements. The nature of PRO work takes on various forms depending on the subject matter, the issues at hand, and requests made by Departments. Some of the ways PRO provides assistance are:

- Program Reviews
- Evaluation Frameworks
- Program Design
- Data Analysis
- Results measurement/Program monitoring
- Advisory and Support Services
- Evaluation Contract Management
- Capacity Building in program evaluation/design and performance measurement
- Capacity building in research methods and tools
- Evaluative guides and materials
- Provision of a resource library
- Establishment of an evaluation database

This inaugural Annual Report from PRO covers work completed in the period from 2009-2013. Future PRO Annual Reports will report work completed on a yearly basis.





### Highlights from 2009-2013

The following section describes the objectives, main findings and recommendations of review projects completed from 2009 to 2013. It is important to note that PRO's role is to conduct rigorous research in order to provide neutral and objective facts and recommendations to decision makers. PRO does not have authority or control over the actions that decision makers may take in relation to the recommendations made.

- The K-12 Education Cost Drivers Review and the Pupil Teacher Ratio and Inclusive Schooling Review examined expenditure growth in the education system between 2000/01 and 2008/09, identified cost drivers, and analyzed the results obtained. Recommendations from these projects contributed to starting the current reform initiative in the K-12 education system and improvements to early childhood education under the leadership of the Minister of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and the Social Envelope Committee respectively.
- The Health Cost Drivers Review set out to identify which program areas, policies, practices, or pressures were driving increased health expenditures. The review identified areas of significant expenditure growth and made recommendations for targeted reviews. These included the continuum of care for seniors, managing system performance, medical travel, and several areas of acute care.
- The Inventory of Adult Education and Training Programs in the GNWT set out to inventory the training programs being offered to adults by GNWT entities and departments and review the mandates for those programs. The analysis concluded that there were no major mandate overlaps but did recommend improved coordination and strategic priority setting. Targeted reviews of both the Aurora College credit programming and Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) programs were recommended. The department set out to review the effectiveness of ALBE programs. See *Effectiveness of ALBE Evaluation*, on the following page.

- The Effectiveness of Adult Literacy and Basic Education Evaluation was conducted by the consulting firm Terriplan Consultants with guidance and support from PRO, ECE and Aurora College. This evaluation found considerable support and continuing relevance for ALBE programs. This evaluation led the Department of ECE to develop a new statement of objectives for the ALBE program. Recommendations were made for improvements to program administration, delivery, relevance, and student support.
- The Rationalizing Phones, Faxes, & Printers Review examined current management practice and technology use in the HQ operations of two departments. The review identified areas where significant short and long-term savings could be obtained through improved management and upgraded technology.
- The Harvester Support Program Review inventoried current programs and examined the purpose, cost, utilization and results of each. The review found that the suite of programs are positively viewed in smaller communities and effectively support community residents both economically and culturally. This review led to a renewed MOU with WSCC, and increased support for harvesters and trappers through the Genuine Mackenzie Valley Fur Program and Community Harvesters Assistance Program.
- The Growing Forward Evaluation examined the immediate outcomes of the *Growing Forward* suite of programs as set out in a bilateral agreement with Canada. The evaluation noted the success of the *Small Scale Foods* program and the value it brings to communities and made suggestions for program improvements in data collection to better determine progress toward program outcomes in the future.
- The General Purpose Office Space Review examined the balance of owned compared to leased office space used by the GNWT, the impacts of the GNWT's approach, and comparative costs over the long-term. Recommendations in this review led to a change in the balance between leased and owned office space, and the construction of new GNWT-owned office space with projected savings of \$100M over 40 years.



- A program review of the Single Window Service Centres (SWSC) Pilot Project examined the first year of operation of the new SWSCs which were established to provide single-point of access for government programs to residents in several small communities. The review found that the offices had successfully filled a need in all of the pilot communities. Given this success, five new SWSCs were established in Sachs Harbour, Fort Liard, Gameti, Tsiigetichic, and Tulita during the summer/fall of 2012. Recommendations were made for improved data collection.
- A Review of the Sport and Recreation Council (SRC) examined how the SRC was meeting its mandate. The review noted that the relatively young organization had made considerable progress towards creating a more cohesive sport and recreation sector with its five partner organizations. The review made recommendations to work on streamlining administrative functions in the sector with a view to reducing the administrative expense so more lottery funds can be directed into program delivery.
- An Evaluation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Inuvik National Event was undertaken as a GNWT support to the TRC. PRO did survey design, data collection and analysis of the immediate impact of the gathering using survey results from 280 interviews. The results were provided to the TRC. The methodology and report were given as a template for the TRC to be able to use for future events so they could do comparable studies at other National Events across Canada.
- An Evaluation of Travel Administration for Casual Health Staff was conducted to determine if increased efficiency and improved service could be obtained by changing the method of managing travel for casual nurses. The study examined three years of travel times, cost, length of stay, points of departure/return and the efficiency of the various government offices which were booking travel arrangements for casual health staff. The evaluation concluded that managing travel for casual nurses from the administrative centre closest to the nurses' work location would be best. A recommendation to ensure that policy directives would be developed and followed by all parties in all regions.
- The Medical Travel Review to Support Service Delivery Planning examined the clinical and administrative factors that influence the decisions for medical travel referrals. Recommendations centered on developing clearer service delivery and governance structures as well as improved accountability.



In addition to the reviews noted previously, PRO also assisted departments with the following initiatives:

- The Public Service Capacity Initiative Evaluation Framework
- Assistance on the Framework for Renewal of Early Childhood Development
- Labour Market Development Agreement Evaluation
- Evaluation Framework for Continuing Care Services in the NWT
- The Financial Shared Services Evaluation Framework
- The Human Resources 20/20 Evaluation Framework
- The Family Law Mediation Program Evaluation Framework
- The Parenting After Separation Evaluation Framework
- The Capital Planning Process Performance Metrics and Evaluation Framework
- Contract management for the Business Development and Investment Corporation Evaluation
- Contribution to an evaluation approach to the Healthy Choices Strategy
- Performance Measurement Strategy Framework for Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk Highway
- Anti-poverty Working Group and Roundtables
- Participating in the Establishment of a GNWT-wide Risk Management Framework
- Reducing Red Tape within the GNWT



## Building Evaluation Capacity within GNWT

In its Three Year Work Plan, PRO affirmed its commitment to capacity building to increase and support the use and quality of program evaluation and design. Quality program evaluation and strong program design are valuable management tools and effective mechanisms to monitor and readjust programs and services. PRO builds evaluation and program design capacity in the GNWT in the following ways:

### Support & Advisory Services

- Assisting departments with ad hoc requests for support and expertise
- Goal and measurement development
- Program monitoring assistance
- Assistance in the joint coordination efforts of the government wide risk management initiative
- Data analysis
- Methodological guidance for studies
- Instrument and data collection design
- Assistance with writing and evaluating Requests for Proposals
- Peer review of draft studies or evaluations

### Formal Training

In 2013 PRO delivered reasonable-cost training opportunities for staff in the following areas:

- Social Return on Investment
- Program Design
- Evaluation Frameworks
- Evaluation Foundations
- Qualitative Data Analysis
- Turning Statistics into Stories
- Understanding and Interpreting Data

To date PRO has provided training to approximately 156 participants from various departments.



## A Look Ahead

The nature of PRO's work is multi-faceted as the demands for services are often unpredictable and challenging to quantify. Conducting program reviews constitutes only one piece of a diverse work plan. PRO is often requested to participate and assist with cross government projects and initiatives as they arise. Even with limited resources, PRO continues to strive to address all requests for assistance and to help promote informed decision making based on quality information.

This section identifies work PRO has committed to undertake during the 2014-15 period.

### Reviews currently underway

- Comparative Analysis of Pharmaceutical Management
- Yellowknife Airport Governance Model
- Aurora College Student Housing
- Evaluation Framework for the Territorial Midwifery Program

### Capacity Building

- Coordination of a Graduate Certificate in Program Evaluation through the University of Victoria and Carleton University
- Risk Management Training
- Program Design Training
- Provision of Program Evaluation training sessions as part of the Department of Human Resources management series

### Templates, Guidelines, and Supporting Materials

Development of a PRO Handbook which includes:

- A PRO Process and Procedure Manual
- A Program Evaluation Standards and Workbook
- A Program Design Standards and Workbook

### Additional Efforts

- Update PRO Three Year Work Plan
- Update inventory of GNWT Evaluations and Reviews
- Continue support on the GNWT Risk Management Initiative
- Finalize the 2014-15 Review Project Work Plan

### Need Help?

A large number of other evaluation projects are being undertaken by departments using their own resources independent of PRO, while some departments call on professional support and guidance from PRO staff.

The analysts at PRO are trained professionals who work within national standards and guidelines of the Canadian Evaluation Society. The staff at PRO can offer advice and guidance in many areas of program design or review.

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