



Office of the Executive Council  
**activity plan**

2014-17



## Message from the Premier



In accordance with my responsibilities under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, I am pleased to present the 2014-17 Activity Plan for the Office of the Executive Council (OEC).

The OEC plays a critical role in providing leadership to, and supporting the effective operation of, all provincial government departments and agencies. In doing so, the OEC must maintain an active understanding of the environment in which the public sector operates, employing innovative policies and practices to ensure excellence in government performance. This plan outlines actions towards improving the leadership functions of the OEC to achieve these outcomes.

The 2014-17 planning cycle will see the OEC focus on supporting the policy capacity of the public service, reviewing required planning processes, and supporting the governance of agencies, boards and commissions. These issues are reflective of the leadership role that the OEC fulfills for the public service as well as the public bodies who are entrusted to make decisions on behalf of the public.

Based on the priorities identified, annual performance reports will be tabled in the House of Assembly each year to report on the OEC's progress on achieving the goals and objectives set out in this activity plan.

The OEC is a category three government entity under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. Therefore, an activity plan must be prepared that sets clear direction for the Office, taking into consideration its mandate, current budget and strategic directions of Government. As Premier, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of its goals and objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Marshall'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Honourable Tom Marshall  
Premier

# Table of Contents

Plan at a Glance.....	3
Introduction/Overview .....	4
Mandate.....	6
Lines of Business.....	7
Values .....	10
Primary Clients .....	10
Vision .....	11
Mission.....	11
Issues/Priorities .....	12
Issue 1: Policy Capacity.....	13
Issue 2: Planning and Coordination.....	14
Issue 3: Governance and Oversight of Agencies, Boards and Commissions .....	16
Appendix A: Legislative Framework.....	18

## Plan at a Glance

**Vision:** The vision of the Office of the Executive Council is of an accountable, innovative government demonstrating public service excellence.

**Mission:** By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have improved the capacity of the public service to effectively manage the public sector in support of the implementation of government's agenda.

		Policy Capacity	Planning and Coordination	Governance and Oversight of Agencies, Boards and Commissions
		<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p>By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have enhanced the public service's capacity for policy development.</p>	<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p>By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have improved planning and coordination requirements across government.</p>	<p><b>Goal</b></p> <p>By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have supported effective governance by government's agencies, boards and commissions.</p>
Objectives	2015	By March 31, 2015, the Office of the Executive Council will have initiated improvements to support policy capacity.	By March 31, 2015, the Office of the Executive Council will have commenced work to identify improvements to planning and coordination requirements.	By March 31, 2015, the Office of the Executive Council will have assessed governance policies and practices for agencies, boards and commissions.
	2016	By March 31, 2016, the Office of the Executive Council will have continued to implement improvements to support policy capacity.	By March 31, 2016, the Office of the Executive Council will have developed new policies, processes and practices which streamline and refine required planning and coordination processes.	By March 31, 2016, the Office of the Executive Council will have developed revised policies and governance supports for agencies, boards and commissions.
	2017	By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have reviewed the enhanced supports provided to further build policy capacity.	By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have evaluated the effectiveness of changes implemented to planning and coordination efforts.	By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented new policies and governance supports for agencies, boards and commissions.

## Introduction/Overview

The Premier serves as the Minister of the Executive Council of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. As the Premier's department, the Office of the Executive Council (OEC), combined with the role of the Clerk of the Executive Council, plays a critical role in supporting the effective operation of government - both the Cabinet operations and public service.

The OEC has three key roles which are: leadership, coordination, and the provision of advice and support. Many of the activities of the OEC focus on ensuring informed, effective decision-making and public sector management. These activities support the strategic priorities of government and ultimately contribute to the development and delivery of effective public services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The main focus areas for the 2014-17 planning cycle include improving existing leadership and coordination functions, adapting existing planning and reporting requirements, introducing innovative ways to support the public service's capacity to develop policy, and supporting effective governance of agencies, boards and commissions.

For the purpose of this activity plan, the OEC includes:

- the Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet Secretariat;
- the Lieutenant Governor's Establishment;
- the Policy Innovation and Accountability Office;
- the Communications Branch;
- the Protocol Office; and,
- the Financial Administration Division.

Other central agencies of the OEC, including the Human Resource Secretariat, the Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs Office, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, the Office of Public Engagement, and the Women's Policy Office, that report to ministers other than the Premier, have each developed separate plans to independently inform the public of their respective priorities.

## Staff and Budget

The OEC has a staff complement of 76 (52 female and 24 male) and an estimated budget of approximately \$7.7 million<sup>1</sup>. The details are as follows:

<b>Central Agency</b>	<b>Staff Complement</b>	<b>2014-15 Budget</b>
The Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council and Cabinet Secretariat <sup>2</sup>	42	\$3,666,000
Lieutenant Governor's Establishment	10	\$647,900
Communications Branch	13	\$2,343,400
Financial Administration Division	11	\$1,010,100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>\$7,667,400</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Source (financial information): 2014-15 Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> Cabinet Secretariat includes the Protocol Office and the Policy Innovation and Accountability Office.

## Mandate

The mandate of the OEC is derived from government direction and informed by legislation (see Appendix A). It includes the following:

- Support the Premier and the work of Cabinet and its Committees;
  - Facilitate, coordinate and support the Cabinet decision-making process, formulate orders, and communicate decisions of Cabinet;
  - Facilitate and coordinate advice and initiatives on matters related to economic policy, social policy, and government operations;
  - Facilitate and coordinate performance-based planning and reporting throughout government and its public bodies; and,
  - Facilitate and coordinate the Regulatory Reform Initiative and the Policy on Evaluation.
- Support the role of the Lieutenant Governor;
- Advise on protocol matters;
- Provide strategic communications, counsel and support to the Premier and Cabinet and coordinate government-wide communication activities; and,
- Provide leadership of the provincial public service to ensure that Government has the policy, human resource, and management capacity it needs to develop and deliver effective policies and programs.

# Lines of Business

In fulfilling its mandate, the OEC provides the following lines of business:

## 1. Support to the Premier and Cabinet

The OEC is the agency of the public service that provides support to the Premier's role of setting overall government policy, coordinating initiatives brought forward by Ministers, and developing responses to government-level issues. The office is also the primary support for Cabinet and its Committees and provides for the effective and efficient operation of the Cabinet process. This role incorporates policy analysis, preparation of briefing materials, coordination and facilitation of Committee and Cabinet meetings, coordination of the legislative agenda, and maintenance of Cabinet records. General operational support is also provided to the Office of the Premier.

## 2. Support and Leadership to the Public Service

On behalf of the Premier and Cabinet, the OEC also provides support and leadership to the public service through the following:

### Planning and Coordination

The OEC ensures consistency in the application of government planning and coordination efforts as noted below:

**Performance-based Planning and Reporting:** The OEC leads and provides support and guidance to Provincial Government departments and public bodies in the development of multi-year performance-based plans and reports and reviews these documents to provide feedback on the degree to which they comply with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The OEC also provides support services to ministers and deputy ministers in the development and monitoring of deputy ministers' performance contracts.

**Regulatory Reform:** The OEC leads and provides support and guidance to Provincial Government departments and public bodies on the implementation of the Regulatory Reform Initiative. This includes tracking and maintaining the regulatory count, providing analyses of the regulatory impact of policy proposals, and providing support and advice on the development of Regulatory Improvement Plans and Regulatory Impact Analyses.

**Policy on Evaluation:** The OEC leads and provides support to Provincial Government departments on the implementation of the Policy on Evaluation. This includes assisting departments and agencies in the development of evaluation plans and accountability frameworks, as well as providing evaluation advice on new and existing initiatives.

## Capacity Development

The OEC ensures that the public service has the capacity and readiness to implement the directions of government. This is carried out by providing leadership in priority areas such as noted below:

**Policy Capacity:** The OEC actively contributes to government's capacity for better informed and coordinated policy advice to Cabinet and executive decision makers. By establishing a professional standard for policy development in government (the NL Policy Model), strengthening a community of practice for policy practitioners through PolicyNL, and by facilitating ongoing networking and learning opportunities, the OEC is helping to enhance government's policy capacity and to encourage innovation which supports modern policy development and improved service delivery.

**Recognition of Excellence:** The Public Service Award of Excellence is a peer-nominated award and is presented annually by the Clerk of the Executive Council to employees of any department or central agency of government. It recognizes individuals and teams who have made outstanding contributions to the public service and is the highest honour an employee can receive from the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Recipients of the Public Service Award of Excellence are selected by a committee made up of persons who are familiar with, but outside of, the public service.

**Executive Development:** The OEC provides executive development to ensure that the public service maintains and develops executive capacity. Development includes, but is not limited to: Executive OnBoarding for new appointees to executive positions; learning plans; speaker series; and other learning development activities and secondment opportunities in a variety of areas such as governance, planning and reporting, evaluation, and policy analysis.

**Communications** The Communications Branch provides strategic communications counsel and support to the Premier, Cabinet and its Committees; manages corporate communications; co-ordinates communications activities across government; manages the provincial brand strategy; and manages government's corporate social media profile. Roles include developing communications and consultation policies and procedures; advising on communications and consultation planning; managing news release distribution services; overseeing government's web content standards; providing multimedia communications support; and through the brand strategy, helping to establish Newfoundland and Labrador as one of the world's most enviable places to live, work, and do business.

### **3. Support to Lieutenant Governor and Other Dignitaries**

The OEC provides executive, administrative, and household support to the Lieutenant Governor, including the care and operations of Government House. It also advises government members and departments on official matters of provincial, national and international protocol and organizes state and ceremonial events. The OEC organizes itineraries for visiting diplomats, heads of state, senior government representatives and other visitors, and coordinates flag and regalia ceremonies and protocols for local and national events.

### **4. Financial, Operational and Administrative Services**

The Financial Administration Division provides financial management and advisory services to various departments/divisions within the corporate structure (OEC, the Department of Finance, the Public Service Commission and the Consolidated Fund Services). Responsibilities include the provision of financial, accounting, financial reporting, budgeting, and general operations services to the designated departments/divisions. The division also ensures that all employees are informed of departmental and general government guidelines and procedures relating to the above services.

## Values

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the OEC fosters an organizational culture based on respect for the public and the democratic process through the promotion of the following five core values:

**Leadership** Each individual leads by example and takes the initiative to collaborate with others to achieve objectives.

**Accountability** Each individual takes personal responsibility for the quality and timeliness of their work.

**Respect** Each individual is considerate, fair and recognizes the important contributions made by each member of our diverse organization.

**Innovation** Each individual seeks out and welcomes opportunities to do our work better and more efficiently.

**Integrity** Each individual is honest and conducts themselves impartially in a manner befitting their role in a professional public service.

## Primary Clients

The OEC defines its primary clients as those individuals, groups and organizations who are the principle beneficiaries of its lines of business. These clients include:

- Premier
- Cabinet and Cabinet Committees
- Lieutenant Governor
- Departments and Public Bodies
- Public Servants
- Foreign Governments

## Vision

A vision statement describes the ideal state an organization is striving to achieve in the long term. The vision of the OEC is based on the overarching goal of excellence in the public service, driven by accountability and innovation.

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**The vision of the Office of the Executive Council is of an accountable, innovative government demonstrating public service excellence.**

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## Mission

The OEC is fundamentally responsible for providing leadership for the work of government departments and agencies in a dynamic and ever-changing environment. As a function of this role, the OEC must ensure that government has the best advice and information in order to make informed decisions. To this end, our mission is founded upon the need to ensure that the public service is positioned to support effective public sector management.

Over the last number of years the environment in which government operates has changed. Within the context of the public sector, this rapidly changing environment is reflected in policy, program, and service delivery requirements that have become increasingly complex and issues that more frequently cross multiple sectors and jurisdictions. This evolving environment requires new approaches to public sector management and a public service that is positioned for excellence in the delivery of information and advice to support decision-making. The OEC has a responsibility to ensure the public service has enhanced capacity to operate in this environment, including the development of core skills, capabilities, resources and organizational structures towards improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

The OEC will continue to lead and support the establishment of the necessary conditions - knowledge, skills, organizational structures, processes, and resources - to facilitate innovative ideas and approaches to public sector management while maintaining stewardship of the province's resources through 2017.

**Mission:**

By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have improved the capacity of the public service to effectively manage the public sector in support of the implementation of government's agenda.

**Measure:**

Improved capacity to effectively manage the public sector

**Indicators:**

- Increased policy capacity (including policy development, performance monitoring, evaluation, and results-based planning)
- Provided leadership for the establishment of evaluation policies and practices for improved decision-making
- Enhanced planning processes for more efficient and effective development and delivery of policies and programs
- Enhanced information management for more innovative approaches to sharing of information

## Issues/Priorities

In consideration of the mandate and financial resources of the OEC and the strategic directions of government, the following areas are the key activity plan priorities of the OEC for the next three years.

1. Policy Capacity
2. Planning and Coordination
3. Governance and Oversight of Agencies, Boards and Commissions

The goals identified for each issue reflect the activities and results expected in the three-year time frame while the objectives provide an annual focus. Measures and indicators are provided for the goals and first-year objectives to assist both the OEC and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

## Issue 1: Policy Capacity

The OEC supports the broad development of policy capacity to ensure that the public service is prepared to address the complexities of modern policy development, and to ensure that departments and individual policy practitioners have the resources they require to contribute to effective policy development. In providing this support, the OEC is helping to ensure that government's decisions are well informed and that policies are well developed. In the previous planning cycle, the OEC initiated new measures to enhance our capacity to provide policy advice to Cabinet and executive decision makers. In 2014-17, the OEC will build on the success of PolicyNL and the establishment of the NL Policy Model, to further promote excellence in standards of practice, to continue networking and learning within government's policy community, and to explore best practices and innovative methods of addressing complex and varied issues associated with public policy and public administration. The OEC will also revisit resources provided to government staff to enable them to contribute to the policy development and decision-making process in a consistent and effective manner. The OEC's overall management of information processes will also continue to be explored as the OEC works to adapt new technologies and practices to better facilitate the provision of information to Cabinet and its Committees.

### Goal:

By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have enhanced the public service's capacity for policy development.

### Measure:

Supported the public service's capacity to develop policy

### Indicators:

- Facilitated networking, engagement and professional development opportunities for the policy community
- Strengthened policy capacity building initiatives
- Reviewed Cabinet decision-making process training and resources
- Improved information and documentation processes

### Objective 1:

By March 31, 2015, the Office of the Executive Council will have initiated improvements to support policy capacity.

**Measure:**

Initiated improvements to support policy capacity

**Indicators:**

- Initiated a review of policy capacity initiatives
- Strengthened the PolicyNL community of practice, with a focus on new professionals
- Pursued new competency development opportunities for policy practitioners
- Promoted networking and information sharing among policy professionals
- Developed resources on the Cabinet decision-making process
- Identified areas for improvement of information and documentation processes

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2016, the Office of the Executive Council will have continued to implement improvements to support policy capacity.

**Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have reviewed the enhanced supports provided to further build policy capacity.

## **Issue 2: Planning and Coordination**

In addition to the performance-based planning and reporting requirements overseen by the OEC (as informed by the *Transparency and Accountability Act*), the OEC is also responsible for providing oversight for government's Policy on Evaluation and the Regulatory Reform Initiative. These processes help to ensure that government operates in a transparent and accountable manner; that programs and policies are evaluated for their efficacy and efficiency; and that regulations do not impose undue burden on the public. During 2014-17, the OEC will embark on a process of review and renewal of these processes, based on experience to date and consultation with stakeholders. The aim will be to ensure that, where required, these processes are adapted to become more integrated across government and that their products are meaningful to the general public, while maintaining the integrity and original intent of these processes. Regarding the Policy on Evaluation and the Regulatory Reform Initiative, the aim will be to streamline these planning and reporting requirements in an effort to improve administrative efficiencies and increase plan synergies.

The public performance-based planning and reporting requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* have served as an extensive and far-reaching transparency mechanism for government entities. The Act has been in place since 2006 and therefore to ensure planning and reporting is being executed in the most efficient and meaningful way, it is appropriate to revisit the associated policies that support these requirements.

**Goal:**

By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have improved planning and coordination requirements across government.

**Measure:**

Improved planning and coordination requirements across government

**Indicators:**

- Streamlined and refined planning and reporting requirements
- Improved performance-based planning and reporting policies
- Developed tools and training to implement revised policies and procedures

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2015, the Office of the Executive Council will have commenced work to identify improvements to planning and coordination requirements.

**Measure:**

Commenced work to identify improvements to planning and coordination requirements.

**Indicators:**

- Initiated a review of the policies that support the *Transparency and Accountability Act*
- Developed recommendations regarding streamlining and refining regulatory reform and evaluation planning processes
- Developed tools and training to support proposed changes to regulatory and evaluation planning processes

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2016, the Office of the Executive Council will have developed new policies, processes and practices which streamline and refine required planning and coordination processes.

### **Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have evaluated the effectiveness of changes implemented to planning and coordination efforts.

## **Issue 3:**

# **Governance and Oversight of Agencies, Boards and Commissions**

The OEC is responsible for the policies and governance supports for agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs). Members of ABCs are responsible for a broad range of administrative, adjudicative, regulatory, and advisory roles. It has been estimated that the operating grants to ABCs represent approximately 55 per cent of total provincial program spending, and that ABC staff comprise approximately 75 per cent of total provincial public sector employment. As such, the governance supports provided by the Provincial Government to ABCs are important to consider. Over 2014-17, the OEC, in collaboration with key stakeholders, will review the governance supports provided for ABCs.

### **Goal:**

By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have supported effective governance by government's agencies, boards and commissions.

### **Measure:**

Supported effective governance by government's agencies, boards and commissions

### **Indicators:**

- Reviewed existing governance supports provided to agencies, boards and commissions
- Implemented new policies and governance supports for agencies, boards and commissions
- Provided governance supports to appointees

### **Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2015, the Office of the Executive Council will have assessed governance policies and practices for agencies, boards and commissions.

**Measure:**

Assessed governance policies and practices

**Indicators:**

- Initiated review of existing governance supports provided to agencies, boards and commissions
- Explored potential governance supports for appointees
- Reviewed governance practices in other jurisdictions

**Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2016, the Office of the Executive Council will have developed revised policies and governance supports for agencies, boards and commissions.

**Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2017, the Office of the Executive Council will have implemented new policies and governance supports for agencies, boards and commissions.

## Appendix A: Legislative Framework

The mandate of the Office of the Executive Council is informed by the following legislation:

- *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Bravery Award Act*
- *Conflict of Interest Act*
- *Evidence Act*
- *Executive Council Act*
- *Financial Administration Act*
- *Holocaust Memorial Day Act*
- *Management of Information Act*
- *Newfoundland and Labrador Act*
- *Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Act*
- *Parliamentary Assistant Act*
- *Parliamentary Secretaries Act*
- *Public Employees Act*
- *The Rooms Act*
- *Transparency and Accountability Act*
- *Volunteer Service Medal Act*
- *Volunteer War Service Medal Act*



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