Better Outcomes, Stronger Communities: Enhancing the BC Government Non Profit Relationship

Community Consultation Report
November 2008
Executive Summary

The Government Non Profit Initiative (GNPI) was created to explore ways in which these two partners can build on their complementary strengths in order to achieve the best outcomes for British Columbians and our communities. Much work has occurred to date to set out a new framework for this partnership. The Discussion Paper, Better Outcomes, Stronger Communities, outlines a strategic framework along with goals and strategies to enhance the relationship between the two sectors.

During October and early November 2008, the GNPI undertook community consultation to solicit input from a variety of Government and Non Profit Sector (NPS) departments and organizations on the Initiative’s recommended strategies and goals. The consultation provided opportunity for stakeholders to identify areas of opportunity and/or concern, additional priorities and obtain input for the GNPI’s strategic implementation.

Approximately 670 individuals participated, either through an online survey or regionally-based focus groups, to articulate their views. Sponsored by the GNPI and implemented by the Centre for Non-Profit Management (CNPM), participants represented the breadth and depth of the NPS (the health and social services fields in particular). Regional and small agency representation was high and Government representation, while low, was important.

This report summarizes the consultation findings, highlighting critical contextual messages, overarching themes, commonalities and differences with the proposed GNPI goals and strategies and new issues for consideration. The aim of this report is to inform discussion and decision-making at the GNPI Summit on Government/Non Profit Relations, to be held in Vancouver on November 19, 2008.

What We Heard

The consultation process generated numerous ideas and comments, some specific to individual circumstances yet a majority reflecting common concerns and priorities that would improve the Government/Non Profit Sector relationship.

Common priorities centered on factors such as the:

- Sustainability of project-based and short-term funding agreements
- Importance of multiyear contracts and long-term, stable funding
- Desire to broaden GNPI representation
- Desire to establish regional ‘planning tables’
- Desire for a human resources development strategy for the NPS (both staff and volunteer)
- Lack of mutual understanding and true partnership between different parts of the Sector and Government; and
- Desire for a structure to give the NPS a voice for unified expression
Most importantly, however, the consultation demonstrated strong interest in continuing to build on the progress made by the Initiative and a desire for improved working relations between Government and the Non Profit sector.

**Contextual Themes**

Two key concepts emerged from participant feedback in both the online survey and focus groups - 1) the desire for a concrete action plan; and 2) a broadening of scope and representation to be more inclusive of the NPS, Government and the private sector, including better acknowledgement of regional and community uniqueness in strategic implementation.

The GNPI’s work to date was recognized as a productive start. Nevertheless, stakeholders wanted to see a concrete action plan outlining specific achievements, measurable outcomes and adjoining accountabilities. Many NPS stakeholders sought more Government participation in the Initiative and a commitment from Government to follow through with the GNPI’s goals and strategies.

*Scope expansion* was another theme heard in the consultation exercise. There was general recognition of the viability of the GNPI model but a desire to see that model enhanced through a broader, more inclusive scope. Consultation participants in both the focus groups and online survey wanted to see the incorporation of a variety of stakeholders across the NPS (e.g., environment, arts and culture, sports, etc.) as well as Government and private sector representation. NPS participants felt this expansion should also include different regional and community-based NPS organizations so that regional uniqueness and individual community concerns could be adequately represented. Given the recent move to more centralization in policy making and service delivery by Government, respondents felt the creation of regional and community level planning and decision-making tables would support improved collaboration and a better awareness of local issues and needs.

**Priorities for Action in Year One**

The number one issue for Year One amongst NPS consultation participants was stable funding for the Non Profit Sector as outlined in Goal 2 of the GNPI Discussion Paper, *Better Outcomes, Stronger Communities*. The implementation of stable, long-term funding to support Non Profit operations and multiyear contracts with room for annual adjustments by both parties were cited as the top priorities for action. Funding support for leadership development amongst Non Profit boards and management was also highlighted as a priority issue.

Government respondents to the online survey expressed a different ordering of priorities. They placed Relationship Building (Goal 1) first and Developing Holistic Approaches to Human Challenges (Goal 4) second as their top priorities for the next year, with stable funding coming in third. Note that NPS participants outnumbered government
participants in the consultation process. Consequently, overall results are skewed towards the NPS perspective.

The next critical priority for action was Government and NPS relationship building – proposed GNPI Goal 1. There was general support for the creation of learning partnerships to support Government/Non Profit Sector collaboration. However, what came through clearly in the focus groups was the desire for the development of a coordinated group to represent the Non Profit Sector’s voice (Strategy B). Online survey respondents responded more cautiously to the concept of formal structures for the GNPI and/or the NPS, concerned about their potentially restrictive nature. These respondents preferred the use of existing structures where the NPS and Government currently gather rather than the creation of new entities.

Lesser support but still identified as priorities for action were Goals 3 and 4. Goal 3 - efficiency and effectiveness through accountability - was vocalized as having higher priority ranking by the focus groups while Goal 4 - developing holistic approaches to human challenges - was ranked as more important by online survey participants.

Within Goal 3, the strategy that resonated most significantly for both online and focus group stakeholders was Strategy A focused on the reduction of the administrative burden on Non Profit agencies and simplification of procedures and processes associated with contracting and accountability.

Within Goal 4, Strategy B – the assessment of new and existing programs to address complex social problems, received online and focus group support. Stakeholders noted a desire to look to existing success stories where Government and NPS collaboration have resulted in innovative, creative ‘solutions’ to challenging social issues.

New Issues

Two new issues were highlighted for discussion that were not identified in the Discussion Paper – the desire to establish regional planning tables within the GNPI and, specifically highlighted by NPS respondents, the desire for a strategy to support the implementation of equal pay scales for Non Profit Sector staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Priorities for Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priority #1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2: Funding &amp; Contracting</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Increased, long-term stable funding</td>
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<td>• Implementation of multi-year contracts</td>
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<td>• Leadership development</td>
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<td><strong>Priority #2</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Goal 1: Relationship Building</strong></td>
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<td>• Build coordinated structure for NPS voice</td>
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<td><strong>Priority #3 (tie)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3: Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Simplification of funding and accountability process (decrease admin. burden)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contracting consistency</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 4: Developing Holistic Approaches to Human Challenges</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess new &amp; existing programs to meet diverse social needs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The concept of regional ‘planning tables’ arose out of concerns with what was perceived as a trend toward centralization and the use of a “one size fits all” approach to policy making and service delivery. Respondents felt this approach cannot adequately meet the diverse needs of individual communities and regions around the province. The suggested creation of regional ‘planning tables’ was seen as a means to support the roll-out of strategies more tailored to individual communities.

A second issue raised within the focus groups by NPS participants was the desire to develop and implement a strategy supporting equitable pay and benefits to permanent staff and employees in the Non Profit sector, on par with Government. This issue was reflected in participant stories of how the NPS trains their staff and then soon after, the Government offers these individuals employment with better pay and benefits. This was noted as a major obstacle to human resource stability in the Sector.

The comments and suggestions gathered through the consultation process add critical knowledge and advance thinking about the GNPI’s next steps. Such information will help in the development of a prioritized action plan and the securing of leadership and resources necessary to move the GNPI forward.
Acknowledgements

The Government Non Profit Sector Initiative wishes to acknowledge the efforts and participation of numerous organizations and individuals who made it possible for the Initiative to conduct a province-wide community consultation.

The Centre for Non Profit Management (CNPM) planned and directed the consultation. Thanks to CNPM’s Executive Director Gilda Good for overseeing the process. Additional thanks to Matthew Broadbent of the CNPM who undertook the design and administration of the online survey and collated the data for interpretation, and to Silvia Dulc who coordinated the registration and logistics of the focus groups in nine locations over a two week period.

Focus groups were held in regional communities across the province and provided further insight into the Initiative’s goals and strategies and future direction. The GNPI wishes to acknowledge each of the nine local agencies who hosted the focus group sessions:

- BC Centre for Nonprofit Development (Abbotsford)
- Kootenay Boundary Regional Resources Cooperative (Castlegar)
- Prince George United Way (Fort St. John and Prince George)
- Kelowna Community Resources (Kelowna)
- The Centre for Non Profit Management (Victoria)
- United Way of Central and Vancouver Island (Nanaimo)
- Hecate Strait Employment Development Society (Prince Rupert)
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver (Vancouver)

Thanks to Penelope Hutchison - the consultation summary report’s principal author. A special thank you goes out to all those individuals who gave of their time to participate in the online survey and/or the focus groups.

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1.0 Introduction

By working together at all levels, and within an enhanced clarified relationship, the Provincial Government and the Non Profit Sector (NPS) in British Columbia (BC) can support the best possible outcomes for citizens and build stronger communities. Recognizing this potential, the Government Non Profit Initiative (GNPI) was created to explore ways in which these two partners can build on their complementary strengths to get the best results for British Columbians.

Much work has occurred to date to set out a new framework for an improved relationship between the Government and the Non Profit Sector. Based on three themes identified at a May 30, 2007 Roundtable, Strengthening the Government/Non Profit Relationship, the GNPI struck a Steering Committee and three joint Task Forces to build recommendations on:

- **Working Together**: How we best structure the relationship between the BC Government and the Non Profit Sector to plan, set priorities and make the best use of resources;
- **Procurement, Funding & Performance Measurement**: How we manage our business relationship efficiently, effectively and accountably;
- **Capacity Building**: How we build and sustain the necessary human, financial and capital resources, both in Government and the Non Profit Sector.

The process resulted in the Discussion Paper, Better Outcomes, Stronger Communities, which outlines a proposed working relationship between the sectors along with accompanying goals and strategies for an ongoing relationship. The Discussion Paper offers a recommended mission and vision for the relationship along with defined roles and principles to frame the activities the partners undertake together. Finally, the Paper recommends goals and strategies that build on the complementary strengths of the two partners, enhance the resiliency of the relationship, enhance the way we recognize our respective needs and sharpen mutual accountability in order to achieve results.

Consultation and community input support informed decision-making and help the community to understand and contribute positively to the future direction of the Government/Non Profit relationship as envisioned by the GNPI. Hence during October and early November 2008, the GNPI undertook community consultation to solicit input from a variety of Government and Non Profit Sector departments and organizations. The purpose was to gather feedback on the Discussion Paper, specifically on the recommended strategies and goals, identification of additional priorities and input for the GNPI’s strategic implementation.

To ensure the opportunity for broad participation in the consultation process, two formats were offered through which stakeholders could voice their opinion – an online survey and regionally-based focus groups. Invitations to participate were fanned out via the networks of the GNPI’s sixty-four participating agencies and additional community and government departments. A number of provincial umbrella organizations and funding agencies assisted with the fan-out. All respondents were encouraged to read at a minimum
the Executive Summary of the Discussion Paper *Better Outcomes, Stronger Communities* to obtain appropriate background on the Initiative. All materials were available to participants on the GNPI's website. Results from both consultation processes were compiled by the Centre for Non Profit Management (CNPM).

Approximately 670 individuals generously gave of their time, whether through the online survey or focus groups, to articulate their views regarding the GNPI’s proposed framework, goals, strategies and direction. Participants represented the breadth and depth of the Non Profit Sector (particularly the health and social services fields) with regional and small agency representation high and lesser but sufficient Government representation. This report summarizes the consultation findings. The following sections review the responses garnered from each consultation format and the report concludes with a summary of critical contextual messages, overarching themes, commonalities and differences with the proposed GNPI goals and strategies and new issues for consideration. The aim of this report is to inform discussion and decision-making at the **GNPI Summit on Government/Non Profit Relations**, to be held in Vancouver on November 19, 2008.
2.0 Online Survey Results

The online survey sought to elicit feedback on the proposed goals and strategies outlined in the consultation report *Better Outcomes, Stronger Communities*. Respondents rated the GNPI's five proposed goals and their associated strategies in terms of importance. Respondents also had the opportunity to comment on how the Initiative might achieve a particular goal and offer suggestions on strategic implementation.

A total of 451 individuals participated (351 completed) in the online survey. Participation was weighted towards respondents in the Non Profit Sector (60%) compared to Government (18%) and other categories (22%) (e.g. private sector, consultants, academics). While overall survey participation was high, the significantly elevated participation rate of the Non Profit Sector means the online survey results are skewed towards this perspective.

For demographic information and a complete summary of the online survey results, view the document *Online Survey Results – Consultation for the BC Government Non Profit Initiative*, on the GNPI website at: http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca/

2.1 Strategic Goals

Survey respondents were asked to rate all five GNPI proposed goals in terms of their importance in enhancing the working partnership between the sectors.

- **Goal 1:** Work proactively and intentionally in partnership to identify and act on mutual priorities.
- **Goal 2:** Invest strategically to promote and support stable, accountable and effective organizational capacity to deliver on mutual priorities.
- **Goal 3:** Enhance efficiency and effectiveness through accountability.
- **Goal 4:** Work across traditional silos to coordinate program efforts and more effectively address the multi-dimensional needs of people and communities.
- **Goal 5:** Modify and/or expand engagement where appropriate and effective to meet the diverse community and cultural needs of British Columbians.

Strong support was evident for Goals 1, 2 and 4 with 1 and 2 given equal importance by NPS respondents. Government participants rated Goals 1 and 4 as most important, in that order, with slightly lesser priority given to Goal 2.

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1 Approximately 451 individuals answered at least one question in the online survey. A total of 351 respondents completed the entire survey.
A common message emerged from NPS respondents about the desire to make the goals more understandable as well as specific and measurable.

There was a call to expand the scope of Non Profit Sector representation in the GNPI process, with an emphasis on increased participation from smaller agencies. “All voices from the Non Profit Sector including smaller agencies should be included in the process.” Common mention was also made of a perceived power imbalance between government and the NPS. Respondents said the term “partnership” implies equality in voice and power at the table however it was felt because the Government “holds the funding purse, they seem to control the priorities”. There was a sense that true partnership requires equal participation, accountability and flexibility.

Respondents repeatedly commented on their desire for an action plan. There was general consensus that the Initiative’s goals are good “motherhood” statements but should be backed by a concrete action plan with defined implementation dates.

In terms of achievability, survey respondents generally described the goals as overly ambitious and/or too vague. There was a desire for the goals to be more specific and measurable.

### 2.2 Goal 1: Building the Relationship

Goal 1 focuses on building the relationship. Survey respondents rated the following strategies in terms of importance:

- **a)** Establish a framework for the relationship incorporating a mutual mission, vision and joint principles.
- **b)** Build formal structures representing the non profit sector and government to give voice to their respective needs and interests and establish forums in which the sectors commit to come together.
- **c)** Develop joint priorities to realize the mission and vision.
- **d)** Create a learning partnership that supports the sharing of best practices and research in government/non profit collaboration.
Strategies C followed by D were ranked higher with lesser importance given to strategies A and B. This ranking resonated equally between both Government and NPS respondents.

Respondent commentary centered on Strategy B – building formal structures. Concern was expressed that while formal structures are important, they should be flexible and adaptable. There was a general desire to see focus placed on generating a “clear action plan for both governmental bodies and non-profits – be careful not to stop with a framework or formal structures.”

Caution was expressed around the tendency to use a “one size fits all” approach when dealing with the NPS. The needs of large and small, urban and rural Non Profit organizations are different, and it is important that smaller rural groups are not left implementing strategies that don’t work for them. Some respondents worried about creating a “mutual vision” as it may not represent the needs of individual communities.

In terms of strategic implementation, respondents overwhelmingly said existing structures should be used where Government and Non Profits are already gathering instead of creating new bodies (e.g. Interagency tables, Early Childhood Development tables).

### 2.3 Goal 2: Funding & Contracting

Survey respondents were asked to rate the following strategies in Goal 2:

- **a)** Establish performance based multi-year contracting for long term needs.
- **b)** Adopt cost-recovery models that promote stability and continuity of services by acknowledging the full range of administrative and overhead costs.
- **c)** Determine and implement best practices in sustainable funding models that do not depend solely on government funding and are scalable according to the size, scope and needs of the organization.
- **d)** Implement strategic use of grants and contracts to support joint priorities and build the human capacity and infrastructure to manage accountably and effectively.
- **e)** Establish leadership exchange and training to promote knowledge exchange and inform members
Overall, highest priority was given to Strategies A and B with descending importance given to Strategies D, E and C. However, Government respondents prioritized Strategies D and E as being of highest importance.

Respondents noted with regard to Strategy A that avenues should be built-in to allow for flexibility over the life of multiyear contracts. In addition, performance measures should take a holistic approach, taking into account qualitative and quantitative outcomes which represent the needs of the citizens and communities being served by the Non Profit organization. NPS participants stated they also do not want their agencies to be held accountable for issues out of their control. “The issues we deal with are affected by forces outside of agency control: global and national economy, addiction levels and types, societal mores, demographics, political environment, etc.”

Several respondents commented that for Strategy B, if the government is going to shift a service to the NPS, they should fund the “full cost” of the service, not just a contribution. Cost recovery should also be designated to services being offered to meet emerging community needs. In addition, a number of individuals noted that project-oriented grants need the development of strategies to recognize basic financial needs to enable organizations to sustain the project over time.

Comments around strategic implementation focused on the desire for more community program delivery support at the grass roots level rather than high level leadership exchange programs. Stress was also placed on the desire for government buy-in to the process and for “less talk, more action”.

Table 3: Goal Two Strategic Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Average Ranking</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - Performance Based Contracting</td>
<td>5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>B - Cost-Recovery Models</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - Best Practices in Funding Models</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D - Strategic Grants and Contracts</td>
<td>3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>E - Leadership Exchange and Training</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.4  Goal 3: Demonstrating Value-Add & Accountability

Goal 3: Demonstrating Value Added and Accountability by “enhancing efficiency and effectiveness through accountability” had survey participants rank the following strategies in order of importance:

a) Reduce unnecessary process and duplication, develop standard approaches and templates and use information technology in procurement to reduce the administrative burden on all parties while continuing to meet due diligence and accountability requirements.

b) Develop a model that defines:
   a. The unique ‘value add’ provided by the non-profit sector;
   b. How it can be recognized in procurement and measured in accountability processes; and
   c. How to determine if and when this is the best option to proceed.

c) Focus performance requirements on outcomes and holistic goals which reduce the number and complexity of measures to track while ensuring that core accountabilities are met.

d) Establish training and knowledge exchange programs to inform members of both sectors about best practices in funding and procurement.

Strategy A emerged as a top priority, followed by Strategy C, D and B. This ranking held true amongst both NPS and Government respondents.

Table 4: Goal Three Strategic Ranking

The main theme arising from this goal was that it was overly ambitious. There was general consensus that the goals should focus on achievable strategies. One respondent noted the first three goals had a strategy around training and knowledge transfer and suggested the creation of a separate goal around this theme, incorporating various aspects of learning, sharing and growing the relationship. “I think the key to the GNPI is the increased understanding
of how we work best together - does this not deserve a goal of its own to ensure we continue to grow and learn together.”

The majority of comments focused on Strategy C – focus performance requirements on outcomes and holistic goals. For this to be actualized, respondents stated a desire for clear and shared understanding as to what this means and for knowledge transfer to occur between Government and the NPS “so that everyone is speaking the same language”.

Regarding strategic implementation, respondents sought a grass roots level of strategic implementation with communities enabled to devise their own plans and a call for action rather than a focus on performance details. “Focusing on performance outcomes is necessary so long as the building blocks and infrastructure are in place that will reasonably lead to realistic outcomes”.

Accountability was described as a two-way street with both Government and Non Profit organizations held to account for performance.

### 2.5 Goal 4: Developing Holistic Approaches to Human Challenges

Goal 4 speaks to the desire to “work across traditional silos to coordinate program efforts and more effectively address the multi-dimensional needs of people and communities”. Survey participants rated the goal’s following two strategies:

- a) Identify and replicate where appropriate current strengths and successes in the delivery of citizen centered, horizontally administered programs and services.
- b) Actively assess new and existing policies, programs and services with respect to their ability to meet the needs of the whole individual and address the multiple determinants of complex social problems.

**Table 5: Goal Four Strategic Ranking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Identify and Replicate Successes</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Assess New and Existing Policies</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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Amongst both Government and NPS respondents, highest ranking went to Strategy B however the variation in ranking between the two strategies is minimal.
Many respondents stated they were confused by the language used to describe the strategies and requested they be made more accessible.

In terms of working across silos, respondents stated this should be well articulated, with specific actions attached and a process whereby information is shared from a bottom up perspective. It was noted “community organizations work through silos all the time and government stands to learn a significant lesson about this by listening to the Non Profit Sector.”

Comments around strategic implementation focused on the desire for Government to gain increased exposure to communities and their issues, to become “immersed in the cultural training of diverse communities”. To reduce redundancy, it was suggested the GNPI reach out to third parties such as United Ways and the Canadian Outcomes Research Institute (CORI) who are actively engaged in similar strategies. Finally, survey participants said implementation could be challenging because of the fragmentation of the NPS and finding a way to "streamline" some of the community and voluntary support within each agency to achieve integrated services could be beneficial.

### 2.6 Goal 5: Meeting Diverse Community & Cultural Needs

Respondents ranked the following strategies focused on modifying and/or expanding engagement where appropriate and effective to meet the diverse community and cultural needs of British Columbians.

- **a)** Fully engage the Aboriginal community in all areas of collaboration within the government/ non-profit relationship to explore its applicability and potential for implementation to help address Aboriginal community needs.

- **b)** Enhance regional and small community non profit sector engagement in the GNPI to better canvass this point of view and ensure strategic support for their role in promoting volunteerism, community based fund raising and self-initiated solutions to community challenges.

- **c)** Engage the private sector in this dialogue.

Table 6: Goal Five Strategic Ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 1 - Engage the Aboriginal Community</th>
<th>Strategy 2 - Regional and Small Community</th>
<th>Strategy 3 - Engage the Private Sector</th>
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<td>3.50</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<td>3.00</td>
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Goal 5: Meeting Diverse Community and Cultural Needs  
(Average Ranking 1-5)
Strategy B received the most support across both Government and NPS participants. Government stakeholders gave Strategy C second ranking whereas NPS stakeholders ranked Strategy A higher.

Regarding Strategy A some respondents questioned the focus solely on Aboriginal communities rather than all ethnic groups. Many expressed that engagement should be expanded to other minorities and youth. One participant said the strategy should be changed to say “Fully engage communities in all areas of collaboration...to help address community needs.” There was a sense that for this strategy to work, both Government and Non Profit groups must be prepared to partner, not just consult, with Aboriginal communities.

Additional comments focused on the desire to include the private sector more directly in the Initiative. “The private sector needs to be moved to a place where they feel a moral responsibility to reinvest in their communities. This is not in place of, or an excuse for government not to invest, but for the private sector to enhance investment made by government.”
3.0 Focus Group Results

Focus group consultation supported more comprehensive responses towards the GNPI’s direction and proposed goals and strategies than was available through the online survey. Hosted by regional and local Non Profit organizations and facilitated by the GNPI’s staff team leads, Government and Non Profit organization participants gathered to take part in half-day discussions in the following communities:

- Victoria (45)
- Nanaimo (22)
- Vancouver (48)
- Abbotsford (35)
- Kelowna (26)
- Castlegar (9)
- Prince George (25)
- Fort St. John (15)
- Prince Rupert (9)

Robust participation at each of the sessions (number of participants in parentheses) demonstrated the engagement stakeholders have in the work of the GNPI and the importance of the relationship between Government and the Non Profit Sector. At each session, attendees were asked the following questions:

1. Is the GNPI’s work done to date on the right track? More specifically:
   - What do you find compelling?
   - What is missing?
   - Are the goals and strategies realistic/achievable?

2. What would success look like for the GNPI? What are some indicators upon which to measure success?

3. What should be the priorities for action in Year One?

The following section summarizes the highlights from the focus group discussions. A total of 219 individuals participated in the focus groups. Similar to the online survey, participation was weighted towards the Non Profit Sector with 78% representation compared to 22% of Government and other stakeholders and therefore the results must be viewed through this lens.

Demographic information, a complete list of participants and the summaries of each of the nine focus groups can be found on the GNPI website at: [http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca/)

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2 Registration was cut off at 40 participants for the majority of focus group sessions due to space limitations.
3.1 Is the GNPI on the Right Track?

To gauge whether or not the GNPI is on the right track in terms of its mission, vision, framing of the relationship and its proposed goals and strategies, focus group participants were asked to describe what they saw as compelling and what they felt was missing in the work of the GNPI to date.

What’s Compelling

Respondents recognized the formation of the GNPI as “a positive step” or “a good start”, pleased there is awareness the sectors should work cooperatively. Recognition of the impact the NPS has in British Columbia was appreciated, especially how the GNPI acknowledges the Sector as a “true partner in community development”.

Many stated the GNPI process felt participatory at a high level (e.g. Deputy and Assistant Deputy Minister participation) and hoped this would lead to government commitment. Others noted the Mission’s focus on engaged communities resonated positively for them and liked the message about how the contribution of each partner in the relationship builds on strengths.

In terms of specific goals, Goal 2 recommending strategic investment in the Sector was noted as compelling by all the focus groups. The desire for multi-year, sustainable funding contracts and stable funding were cited as important elements of the GNPI’s recommendations.

Participants also expressed support for Goal 1, notably the creation of an overarching framework to address the complexity of the relationship and help streamline working partnerships between Government and the NPS.

A few focus groups voiced their support for Goal 3 - enhanced efficiency and effectiveness through accountability. One participant “appreciated the comments about collaborative work that leads to efficiencies. We all strive to access a small piece of the financial pie. If we all work on a collective relationship, we can increase our effectiveness to provide services.” Others found Strategy 3d compelling, noting that training and knowledge exchange programs would help many organizations in both Government and the NPS.

What’s Missing

More than any other factor, participants consistently noted the desire for the work of the GNPI to be more action-oriented. What was missing was a clear plan with accountabilities, tied together by concrete measurable goals. “Who’s going to do what and when and for how long?” was a common comment. Many focus group members expressed a desire to see government accountability, commitment and funding for the GNPI process articulated in the document.

Many felt the GNPI’s mission and vision was too narrow. “A vision should be idealistic, lofty and something always to strive for”. There was a desire to broaden representation to include smaller Non Profit organizations, cultural, multi-ethnic/multi-faith, environment and
other Non Profit Sectors as well as regional and municipal government stakeholders. A number of participants pointed to the desire for more engagement with the private sector. There was concern that the centralization of Government policy making and service delivery has resulted in regional and local issues and needs not being adequately heard or adequately taken into account. A “one size fits all” approach is not able to recognize or meet the diverse needs of individual communities. In line with this was a desire for more acknowledgment of regional uniqueness, that challenges and solutions facing urban Non Profit organizations are different from those of rural and/or smaller agencies. Similarly, social and economic drivers and issues are different from region to region. Interest was expressed in having the GNPI establish more regional planning roles with community input into the management of resources. One participant stated “it’s better for each community to determine their own needs and outline their own route.”

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**Focus Group Comments on GNPI Recommendations**

**What’s Compelling**
- GNPI a good start
- Recognition of NP sector as partner in community development
- High level participatory process
- Concept of engaged communities & building on strengths
- Goal 2: Stable funding & multiyear contracts
- Goal 1: Creation of relationship framework
- Goal 3: Efficiency/effectiveness and training/knowledge exchange

**What’s Missing**
- Lacks a clear plan with concrete actions
- Scope of GNPI mission/ vision too narrow
- Not inclusive or representative enough (regional and small NP’s, local gov’t, other NP sectors, private sector)
- Acknowledgement of regional uniqueness
- A regional/community planning role

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**Are the Goals and Strategies Realistic / Achievable?**

Responses were mixed. Some felt the goals and strategies were realistic and achievable if there was “true will to do it” and if the NPS can “speak as one voice and be heard”. Many stated the GNPI sets out a good underlying philosophy to work together but communication of the Initiative has not been sufficiently broad to effectively create awareness of the goals and strategies throughout BC’s diverse Non Profit Sector.

Criticisms focused around how the goals and strategies were too vague and broad to be useful to make desired changes. Some felt there were too many goals while others made similar comments about the number of strategies. A few focus groups said more
relationship-building work should occur between Government and the NPS for the goals and strategies to be owned and sustainable.

A few participants felt unclear as to what the GNPI is trying to accomplish and expressed concern that roadblocks and red tape will get in the way of making these goals a reality. Overall, there was a desire for a more concrete action plan with allied accountability so people know where the process is going and who is responsible for making it happen.

Non Profit Sector participants appreciated how the critical role and impact of the Sector was recognized and how it is essential Government and the NPS work together in a non-hierarchical way. Others felt the true essence of the relationship was not accurately portrayed – it is not an “equal partnership”. Rather what they saw was an unequal power relationship based on Government’s role as a funder. Nevertheless, although “It's not an equal relationship…it can be a healthy one. Respect roles but don't pretend we are equals – it’s hard to regulate regard.”

### Goal & Strategy Achievability
- Realistic and do-able with ‘will’ and commitment
- Well-articulated with underlying philosophy to work together
- Desire for fewer, more defined goals & strategies
- Desire for an action plan
- More relationship-building required
- Desire for increased respect for roles and differences

### 3.2 What Would GNPI Success Look Like?

Focus group participants were asked to describe what success would look like for the GNPI. Funding was consistently raised as a critical success factor, chiefly the implementation of stable, long-term funding to support Non Profit operations, administration and pay on par with Government for administrative staff. Also frequently expressed was the desire to move away from project-based and/or short-term funding towards multiyear contracts and more sustainable funding. However participants stated that successful multi-year contract implementation should include room for annual adjustments by both parties. One participant said in regards to funding models there should be the “creation of something that withstands the cycles of change”.

The simplification and streamlining of government funding and grant processes was similarly highlighted as critical within the GNPI’s initial roster of achievements. This included a reduction in the administrative burden associated with the contracting process for Non Profit organizations. There was also a desire to have the criteria for funding/grant applications recognize the uniqueness of different regional environments.
Another funding issue revolved around equitable pay for NPS permanent staff, on par with Government. Participants described a pattern in which the NPS trains its staff and then shortly afterwards, they are hired away by Government offering employment with better pay and benefits. Focus groups linked this situation as leading to human resource instability for the Sector.

Finally, in terms of funding, the introduction of leadership development funding for Non Profit organizations was noted as a success marker, with support for education and leadership development amongst boards and management.

Better regional and community-oriented representation, information sharing and collaboration between Government and the NPS were highlighted as beacons of success. For instance, more regional and community-oriented dialogue and tables with regular meetings between the Non Profit Sector and Government was mentioned to help establish an improved atmosphere of trust and respect between the partners.

A ‘coordinated voice’ for the Non Profit Sector was noted as important, providing the Sector with leadership and unification in its communications with Government. Some participants suggested success includes enhanced collaboration within the NPS itself, such as the development of a networking partnership framework drawing different Non Profit Sector organizations together.

Finally, participants saw benefit in a greater overall awareness of the GNPI. This would be facilitated by a permanent structure, such as a formal unit of government dedicated to overseeing the Government/Non Profit Sector relationship, backed by an accord or framework. The desire was “to see a structure in place where you can plan together and work better together”.

**GNPI Success Factors**

- Long term stable funding
- Multiyear contracts
- Stable funding for human resources/administration
- Simplified funding contracts
- Leadership development funding
- More regional & community-oriented dialogue/regular meetings
- Enhanced internal NPS voice and collaboration
- Greater GNPI awareness backed by formal structures
3.3 What Should Be Our Year One Priorities for Action?

Priorities for action for Year One of the GNPI centred on issues of:

- Funding
- Establishment of regional/community level planning tables
- Leadership development
- Creation of a coordinated group/network to express the Non Profit Sector voice
- Development of a structure responsible for overseeing the Government Non Profit Sector relationship

The implementation of multiyear contracts and increased, sustainable stable funding for the NPS were highlighted as the number one priorities for moving forward. There was a desire for long term contracts that incorporate flexibility for annual adjustments rather than lock the ‘funder’ and ‘fundee’ into an agreement that is unworkable in future years.

The desire for appropriately resourced administration and increased funding for human resources was also highlighted as a critical priority, with a desire to see more equal pay for Non Profit sector workers. Many linked equitable pay to recruitment and retention. “Staffing is a large part of our annual budget and long-term staff is key to our success,” noted one NPS participant.

In line with the call for increased funding was an appeal to simplify both funding and accountability processes, decreasing the administrative burden on Non Profit agencies by reducing ‘red tape’ to free up human resource capacity within the Sector. “We want to be able to negotiate a simple agreement in a short time frame rather than work for free for 10 months to negotiate a one year agreement.” Priority should also be given to establishing contract consistency with matching fiscal year ends and contract contents across Government.

Leadership development for Non Profit boards and administration surfaced as another priority. From training and knowledge exchange programs to mentorship projects, the desire to enhance the capacity of NPS agencies to leverage their value was a common priority. This tied in with the desire to prioritize human resource management, particularly the recruitment and retention of staff and boards.

Regional and community level planning tables based on the GNPI model was a consistent theme amongst the focus groups. Participants perceived a growing trend in Government to centralize contract negotiations and administration, resulting in Non Profit organizations negotiating contracts with public servants who are not members of their community, and therefore lack awareness of and are not responsive to local issues and environments. The creation of a strategic framework and capacity-building hubs in each community was suggested to strengthen local level planning. “Provide local level authority to implement processes with all Government levels to meet specific community needs.”

Finally, many participants felt in order to improve the relationship between Government and the NPS, precedence should be given to strengthening the capacity and voice of the Sector to come to the table as a valued partner through the building of a network or structure to support this. Along this note, a number of focus groups also called for the
establishment of an agency or Ministry “charged with the responsibility of maintaining the GNPI team and supporting structures.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Group Year 1 Priorities for Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Increased, long-term stable funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implementation of multiyear contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funding to support equitable pay for human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Simplification of funding and accountability process (decrease admin. burden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contracting consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff and board leadership development / recruitment &amp; retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish regional/community 'planning tables'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Build structure for NPS voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create body to oversee Government/NPS relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.0 Overall Themes

The consultation process generated numerous ideas and comments from the diverse group of Non Profit Sector and Government participants. Some were specific to individual circumstances but the majority reflected common concerns and priorities to improve the Government/Non Profit Sector relationship.

Common concerns centered on factors such as the:

- Sustainability of project-based and short-term funding agreements
- Importance of multiyear contracts and long-term stable funding
- Desire to broaden GNPI representation
- Establishment of regional ‘planning tables’
- Lack of mutual understanding and true partnership between different parts of the Sector and Government; and
- Desire for a structure to give the NPS a vehicle for unified expression.

Overall however, the consultation demonstrated strong interest in continuing to build on the progress made by the Initiative and a desire for improved working relations between Government and the Non Profit Sector.

4.1 Contextual Themes

Two key concepts emerged from participant feedback in both the online survey and focus groups - 1) the desire for a concrete action plan; and 2) a broadening of scope and representation to be more inclusive of the NPS, Government and the private sector, including better acknowledgement of regional and community uniqueness in strategic implementation.

The GNPI’s work to date is a productive start but commentary focused on the desire for the Initiative to be backed up by a concrete action plan outlining specific achievements, measurable outcomes and adjoining accountabilities. While cautious optimism was expressed towards the Initiative by the NPS in general, many participants in both the focus groups and online survey expressed frustration with being asked to constantly identify issues and priorities without subsequent follow through and action. Many Non Profit stakeholders noted they wanted to see more Government participation and a commitment from Government to follow through with the GNPI’s recommended goals and strategies.

The second theme focused on the recognition of the viability of the GNPI model and how that model could be enhanced if it reflected a broader, more inclusive scope.
Consultation participants in both the focus groups and online survey wanted to see the incorporation of a variety of stakeholders across the NPS as well as Government and private sector representation.

There was a desire for NPS representation to include members of the arts, recreation, environment, conservation, multi-ethnic and others. NPS participants felt this expansion should also include different regional and community-based NPS organizations so that regional uniqueness and individual community concerns could be adequately represented. In line with this was the request for increased Government representation at all levels (provincial, regional, municipal) as well as the inclusion of the private sector at the table. Given the view that Government was increasingly centralizing policy making and service delivery, respondents felt the creation of regional and community level planning and decision-making tables would support better awareness amongst all stakeholders and the tailoring of strategies to local issues.

### 4.2 Goals & Strategic Priorities

#### Year 1 Priorities for Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority #1</th>
<th>Goal 2: Funding &amp; Contracting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increased, long-term stable funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implementation of multi-year contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority #2</td>
<td>Goal 1: Relationship Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Build coordinated structure for Non Profit sector voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority #3 (Tie)</td>
<td>Goal 3: Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Simplification of funding and accountability process (decrease admin. burden)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contracting consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Developing Holistic Approaches to Human Challenges</td>
<td>• Assess new &amp; existing programs to meet diverse social needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, Goal 1 - Building the Relationship and Goal 2 - Funding & Contracting resonated amongst all consultation participants as the key concerns to be addressed immediately.

The number one issue for NPS participants was funding for the Non Profit Sector. Within Goal 2, Strategies A & B received the most support from NPS stakeholders who noted how important multiyear contracts and stable, long-term stable funding were to the sustainability of the Sector.

Government respondents to the online survey expressed a slightly different ordering of priorities. They placed Relationship Building (Goal 1) first and Developing Holistic Approaches to Human Challenges (Goal 4) second as their top priorities for the next year, with funding coming in third. Note that NPS participants outnumbered government participants in the consultation process. Consequently, overall results tend to be skewed towards the NPS perspective.

The second most important overall priority for respondents was Goal 1 – Relationship Building. Support for individual strategies however differed between online survey
respondents and the focus groups. Both constituencies expressed support for Strategy D – the creation of learning partnerships to support Government/Non Profit Sector collaboration. However, what came through clearly in the focus groups was the desire for the development of a coordinated group representative of the Non Profit Sector’s voice (Strategy B). Online survey respondents responded more cautiously to this Strategy, expressing their concern about the restrictive nature of formal structures for the Sector or the GNPI as a whole. These respondents preferred the use of existing structures where the NPS and Government currently gather rather than the creation of new entities.

Lesser support but still identified as priorities for action were Goals 3 and 4. Goal 3 - efficiency and effectiveness through accountability - was vocalized as having higher priority ranking by the focus groups while Goal 4 - developing holistic approaches to human challenges - was ranked as more important by online survey participants.

Within Goal 3, the strategy that resonated most significantly for both online and focus group stakeholders was Strategy A – reduce the administrative burden associated with procurement and accountability processes and support contracting consistency. All participants called for less paperwork and fewer reporting requirements to free up Non Profit agency human resource capacity.

The strategy receiving support from both online and focus group participants in Goal 4 was Strategy B – the assessment of new and existing programs to address complex social problems. Stakeholders noted a desire to look to existing success stories where Government and NPS collaboration have resulted in innovative, creative ‘solutions’ to challenging social issues.

### 4.3 New Issues for Consideration

Two new issues were highlighted for consideration through the consultation process – 1) the desire for the establishment of regional ‘planning tables’ mirroring the GNPI and, 2) specifically raised amongst NPS respondents, the desire for a strategy to support the implementation of equitable pay scales for NPS staff.

The concept of regional ‘planning tables’ arose out of concerns around the Government centralization of policy and service delivery, that a “one size fits all” approach does not meet the diverse needs of individual communities. The suggested creation of regional ‘planning tables’ within the GNPI structure could support the roll-out of strategies tailored to the issues facing different communities.

A second issue raised by Non Profit Sector participants during the consultation process was the desire to develop and implement a strategy supporting equitable pay and benefits to permanent staff and employees in the NPS, on par with Government. This issue was reflected in participant stories of how the NPS trains their staff and then soon after, the Government offers these individuals employment with better pay and benefits. This was noted as a major obstacle to human resource stability in the Sector.
5.0 Moving the GNPI Forward

Both the online survey and focus groups presented an opportunity for members of the Non Profit Sector and Government to share their thoughts and opinions regarding the future direction of the Government/Non Profit Sector relationship. It also enabled the exchange of ideas about the pressing priorities for action to support an improved relationship and ultimately better outcomes for individuals and communities.

The comments and suggestions gathered through the consultation process add critical knowledge and help to advance our thinking about the GNPI’s next steps. This consultation summary report will support informed discussion and decision-making at the upcoming GNPI Summit on Government/Non Profit Relations, to be held in Vancouver on November 19, 2008. The purpose of the Summit is to develop a prioritized action plan to implement the Initiative and secure the necessary commitments to support success. It also provides an opportunity to begin the discussion on the leadership and resources necessary to move the GNPI’s action plan forward.
Appendix: Consultation Participation

Focus Group Participation

A total of 219 individuals participated in the focus groups. The following table provides a breakdown of participation by region and sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>BC Gov’t</th>
<th>NP</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbotsford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castlegar</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort St. John</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelowna</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanaimo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Rupert</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A: Focus Group Sector of Employment

Focus Group Participation by Sector

- Non Profit: 78%
- BC Government: 12%
- Other: 10%
Online Survey Participation

A total of 451 individuals (351 completed surveys) responded to the online survey.

Table B: Online Survey Sector of Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non Profit Sector</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC Government</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Authority</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non Profit Demographics
The typical respondent from the Non Profit Sector had the following attributes:

- Primarily working in Service Delivery (70%)
- Working in Vancouver/Lower Mainland (41%) or Vancouver Island (27%)
- Is an Executive Director (48%) or Manager (23%)

There was an even number of respondents across large, medium and small organizations.

BC Government Demographics
The typical respondent from the BC Government had the following attributes:

- Primarily working in a Ministry specializing in Program Delivery (65%)
- Working in Vancouver Island (42%) or Vancouver/Lower Mainland (23%)
- Is an Executive Director/Director (32%), Program Manager (24%) or Program Staff (24%)

There was an even number of respondents across large, medium and small branches in the BC Government.
Other Demographics
The typical respondent that works neither for the Non Profit Sector or BC Government had the following attributes:

- Primarily worked in the Private Sector (32%), was Self-employed (14%) or was a Volunteer (12%)
- Working in Vancouver/Lower Mainland (46%) or Vancouver Island (18%)
- Is an Executive Director (20%), Volunteer (17%) or Staff (17%) in their organization
- Worked in an organization with less than 5 (24%) or more than 50 (25%) other paid employees