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The Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector

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A. BACKGROUND:

The Government of Canada is committed to strengthening citizen-centred service delivery. The federal government demonstrated its commitment to serve Canadians better with the launch of the Quality Services Initiative in 1995 and subsequently by ensuring that solid performance information on service delivery is available to Parliament and the public through departmental Performance Reports and the Report on Plans and Priorities. The government is also committed to implementing measures that will ensure the revitalization of the Public Service and its capacity to work in partnerships with other sectors in Canadian society to help build the Canada of the future.

As the government pursues citizen-centred service delivery, it is doing so in an organized and structured manner. Implementing major changes to the way government has traditionally done business requires leadership, long-term planning, citizen and government employee involvement, process management, partnering and sound organizational performance accountability. Like many other public and private-sector organizations in Canada and around the world that have made the decision to improve service delivery, the Government of Canada needs a common framework to assess organizational effectiveness.

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat with the assistance of departments, public sector organizations, quality councils from across the country, and in partnership with National Quality Institute (NQI) has developed *A Framework for Effective Public Service Organizations* to assist departments in achieving effective citizen-centred service delivery. The NQI is a not-for-profit organization committed to enhancing Canada's national well being through the adoption of quality practices and principles in all sectors.

The Framework is built on a foundation of quality principles such as co-operation, teamwork, partnering and the Quality Criteria contained in this booklet. This Framework and the supporting *Quality Fitness Test Assessment Guide and Workbook* are widely used across Canada. It is an excellent tool for planning and integrating government initiatives in our common goal of serving Canadians better.
Organizational excellence in the public sector can benefit all Canadians. By employing the *Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector*, and

following our Quality Compass to excellence, you and your organization will be setting the standard for world-class quality in public service.

The Quality Fitness Test:
What is it?

- The Quality Fitness Test (QFT) is a self-assessment tool, based on *The Canadian Quality Criteria for the Public Sector;*
- It is a user friendly tool designed to evaluate organizational performance; and
- It provides a methodology for organizations to assess strengths and identify opportunities for improvement.

What are the benefits?

- Helps an organization discover its strengths in order to start on a path to excellence.
- Improves communications within the organization.
- Achieves consistency of direction and consensus on what needs to be done.
- Enhances the understanding of how the principles of quality can be put into action.
- Integrates various quality improvement initiatives.
- Links the organizational strategy to appropriate initiatives.
- Focuses the work on improving key processes.
- Stimulates sharing quality improvement approaches within the organization.
- Facilitates benchmarking.

B.   QUALITY CRITERIA:
1.   LEADERSHIP:
This section focuses on those who have primary responsibility and accountability for the organization's performance, usually referred to as senior management. Good leadership is based on a foundation of ethics and values that reflect quality principles.

1.1   Strategic Direction:
- ✓ A mission and mandate statement is in place and has been communicated to all levels in the organization;
- ✓ Key success factors and priorities have been determined and are linked to strategic direction, for example the accountability framework for the organization;
- ✓ Strategic planning incorporates ambitious objectives necessary to achieve the mission and mandate, and is communicated to all levels in the organization; and
- ✓ Implementation of strategic planning is monitored and reviewed.

1.2   Leadership Involvement:
- ✓ The senior management team demonstrates a commitment to quality improvement, for example, through direct involvement in improvement initiatives;
- ✓ The senior management team works together to reduce barriers between functions, and promote teamwork and open communications;
- ✓ Responsibility, accountability and leadership for improvement are shared throughout the organization;
- ✓ Reward and recognition for senior management are linked to quality principles;
- ✓ Responsibility to society in general is considered in the decision-making processes; and
- ✓ Ideas and practices on quality improvement are shared internally, with other public service organizations and sectors.

1.3   Results of Leadership Actions:
- ✓ Indicators of effectiveness of leadership in setting strategic direction and demonstrating leadership in the quality principles;
- ✓ Indicators of the level of understanding in the organization, of the mission, mandate and strategic direction;

- ✓ Extent of direct involvement by senior management in the implementation of quality principles and in improvement initiatives;
- ✓ Extent to which shared leadership on quality is demonstrated throughout the organization; and
- ✓ Extent of senior management involvement in sharing ideas and quality practices internally, and with other public service organizations and sectors.

1.4   Continuous Improvement:
- ✓ The organization evaluates and works at improving its approach to leadership.

2.   PLANNING:
This section examines the planning process in regards to the linkage of planning to strategic direction/intent, in regards to improvement and the measurement of performance to assess progress.

2.1   Development and Content of Improvement Plan:
- ✓ Improvement planning is derived from overall strategic direction;
- ✓ Key improvement issues have been identified, prioritized, measured and improvement goals set, including any actions regarding external partnering arrangements for the delivery of client services; and
- ✓ The improvement plan has been communicated inside and outside the organization, and is monitored and reviewed.

2.2   Assessment:
- ✓ Formal assessments, using criteria that reflect quality principles, are conducted to determine the organizations' strengths and opportunities for improvement; and
- ✓ The organization analyzes assessment findings to help determine priorities for improvement.

2.2   Results of Actions through Improvement Planning:
- ✓ Indicators of the degree of understanding, throughout the organization, of the priorities and goals established in the improvement plan;

✓ Indicators of effective implementation of the improvement plan throughout the organization; and
✓ Levels and trends in quality assessment findings (for example ratings and/or scores).

2.4   Continuous Improvement:
✓ The organization evaluates, refines and works at improving its planning and assessment processes.

3.   CITIZEN/CLIENT FOCUS:
3.1   Voice of the client/stakeholder:
✓ Clients/stakeholders and/or client groups have been defined;
✓ Information is gathered, analyzed and evaluated to determine client/stakeholder needs, including evaluation of potential partnering and/or third party service delivery arrangements; and
✓ The future needs of current and potential clients are gathered and used.

3.2   Management of Client/Stakeholder Relationships:
✓ There is full consensus, throughout the organization, on the importance of meeting documented service standards, and of achieving client/stakeholder satisfaction;
✓ There are methods and processes in place that make it easy for clients/stakeholders to provide input on their needs, seek assistance and complain;
✓ The organization responds to client/stakeholder inquiries and complaints promptly and effectively; and
✓ The organization has developed a good level of client/ stakeholder confidence in its services and/or products provided, through meeting service delivery standards and/or product specifications.

3.3   Measurement of Client/Stakeholder Satisfaction:
✓ The organization measures client/stakeholder satisfaction to gain information for improvement.

3.4   Results of actions on citizen/client focus:
✓ Levels and trends of performance in dealing with client/stakeholder inquiries and complaints compared to established service delivery standards.

✓ Levels and trends in regard to client/stakeholder appeals, and, where applicable, in regard to product related areas such as refunds, repairs, and replacements.

3.5   Continuous improvement:
✓ The organization evaluates and works at improving its approach to citizen/client focus.

4.   PEOPLE FOCUS:
This section examines the development of a human resource plan for meeting the goals of the organization, and achieving excellence through people. Also examined are the organization's efforts to foster and support an environment that encourages people to reach their full potential. People are the prime resource of any organization and success is directly related to how the organization develops its human resources. Treating people in the organization with respect and trust, and providing them with the opportunity to contribute ideas or speak out on issues of concern, without fear of retribution, are of paramount importance.

4.1   Human Resource Planning:
✓ Human resource planning supports the organization's goals and objectives; and
✓ There are methods in place to recruit, select and manage the performance of people, and steps are taken to minimize any detrimental effects of restructuring.

4.2   Participatory Environment
✓ The organization ensures that people, at all levels, understand the strategic direction and the improvement plan, and are committed to achieving its goals and purpose;
✓ People are involved in improvement initiatives;
✓ People's suggestions and ideas are encouraged and implemented;
✓ People are encouraged to innovate and take risks in order to achieve goals;
✓ The organization involves its people in addressing issues related to well being, for example, health, safety and environmental concerns; and

✓ Barriers that prevent people from doing their best work are identified and removed.

4.3   Continuous Learning:
✓ The organization determines training and development needs to meet goals in the improvement plan, and responds to these needs;
✓ The organization evaluates the effectiveness of training and development programs; and
✓ The organization encourages people to widen and/or expand their individual skills.

4.4   Employee Satisfaction:
✓ The organization measures people satisfaction at all levels, and links the feedback to future improvement opportunities; and
✓ The organization identifies the contribution of its people, and links recognition to the quality principles and quality improvement objectives in the organization.

4.5   Results of Actions from a Focus on People:
✓ Indicators of the effectiveness of training and education, in particular in the area of quality improvement principles and methods;
✓ Indicators of involvement level in improvement activities that link directly to the goals and objectives of the organization;
✓ Indicators of awareness and involvement in addressing issues related to well being, for example, health, safety and environmental concerns;
✓ Levels and trends of employee suggestions and ideas submitted, and implemented; and
✓ Levels and trends in employee turnover rates, absenteeism and grievances.

4.6   Continuous Improvement:
✓ The organization evaluates and works on improving its focus on people.

5.   PROCESS MANAGEMENT:
This section examines how work is organized to support the organization's strategic direction, with a focus on

the management of key processes as well as continuous improvement. Process management applies to all activities within the organization, in particular to "key" processes; those that are critical for success and normally have a major impact on meeting citizen/client needs. Process improvement priorities are derived from goals established within the improvement plan. Processes are value-adding transformations involving people and other resources such as materials and information. Processes may be of two basic types: service related or product related. Service processes include data and information, and the expertise to transform them into value for the client. Product related processes include the raw materials and expertise from various functions to manufacture the product. Other factors include customer requirements, measurement data, team effectiveness, levels of individual knowledge and skills, leadership, training and development etc. It is important to focus on the key processes and to simplify and prioritize these processes as they relate to the primary mission of the organization. It is these key processes that need to be continually analyzed and improved.

5.1   Process Definition:
✓ Key processes capable of delivering services and/or products that meet client needs, are designed and documented.

5.2   Process Control:
✓ Key processes are monitored to ensure consistency in services and/or products provided; and
✓ Problems are analyzed, root causes identified, and actions taken to prevent recurrence.

5.3   Process Improvement:
✓ Key processes are analyzed to determine opportunities for continuous improvement, through incremental refinement and/or fundamental redesign, including potential for reallocation of service delivery;
✓ Process improvements are implemented and monitored, and all changes are documented to ensure consistency in service delivery and/or products provided;

✓ Clients and suppliers are involved in continuous improvement activity, for example in problem-solving and improvement teams; and
✓ External information is gathered and used to compare performance and to identify opportunities/ideas for improvement.

5.4   Results of Actions in Process Management:
✓ Indicators of the effectiveness of the design process for new services and/or products, such as cycle times and frequency of process design changes; and
✓ Levels and trends in process capability and cycle time for key service delivery and/or production processes.

5.5   Continuous Improvement:
✓ The organization evaluates and works on improving its approach to process management

6.   SUPPLIER/PARTNER FOCUS:

This section examines the organization's external relationships with other organizations, institutions and/or alliances that are critical to its meeting its strategic objectives.

6.1   Partnering:
✓ The organization selects capable suppliers/service providers through the use of appropriate information and criteria;
✓ The organization establishes cooperative working relationships with key suppliers/service providers, and encourages innovation to assure and improve the quality of services and products;
✓ The organization shares information with its key suppliers/service providers to help them improve; and
✓ The organization involves its key suppliers/service providers in the development of new services and/or products.

6.2   Results of Actions in Supplier Focus:
✓ Levels and trends of suppliers/service providers in their process capabilities and cycle times;
✓ Levels and trends in the quality and value of provided services and/or products; and
✓ Extent of involvement of suppliers/service providers in new services and/or product planning and development.

6.3   Continuous Improvement:
✓ The organization evaluates and works on improving its focus on suppliers/partners.

7.   ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE:

This section examines the outcomes from the overall efforts for quality improvement, and their impact on organizational accomplishments.

7.1   Service/Product Quality:
✓ Levels and trends of the quality of services and/or products provided, for example attainment of service standards and/or product specifications, and indicators of reliability, error rates response times, etc.

7.2   Organization Results:
✓ Levels and trends in overall performance accomplishments and measures of program outcomes, i.e., the actual impact of the organization's actions.

7.3   Client/Stakeholder Satisfaction:
✓ Levels and trends in client/stakeholder satisfaction.
✓ Levels and trends in client/stakeholder confidence.
✓ Levels and trends in client reach.

7.4 Employee Satisfactions and Moral:
✓ Levels and trends in employee satisfaction and morale.