

**COMMUNICATIONS OPPORTUNITIES
FOR THE
NEW MILLENNIUM**

**Prepared For
Consulting, Marketing and Communications**

Western Economic Diversification Canada

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The analysis is my own and of course, any errors entirely my responsibility.

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The firm specialises in two key activities:

- leading co-operative processes among business leaders and senior government officials to develop and implement practical, cost- efficient public policies that have a results-based focus and
 - providing small business clients with the tools they need to form dynamic, successful alliances.

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Areas of Special Interest

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Objective

This paper will identify co-operative inter-departmental opportunities to enhance the communications effectiveness and profile of the Department of Western Economic Diversification (WD), in the context of the priorities set out in the 1997 Speech From the Throne and in the 1998-99 WD Business Plan. Collaborative activities with five key federal government departments are canvassed, and specific ideas for mutually beneficial communications policies and activities proposed. These five departments are Human Resources Development Canada, Canadian Heritage, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Industry Canada. As well, five broader strategic proposals are provided for further analysis.

Although beyond the scope of this paper, several ideas are good candidates for development into creative and dynamic millennium projects, designed to provide a lasting legacy of support and service to western Canadians and an enhanced reputation for excellence for WD.

Introduction

The current Speech from the Throne¹ emphasises that, as we look to the beginning of a new millennium, the single most important commitment of the Government is to keep Canada united, with a strong message that “...*collaboration is an essential ingredient for the success of Canada. More than ever, Canadians want their governments to work together in partnership.*” Western Economic Diversification, within its mandate to strengthen the economy of Western Canada, makes a significant contribution to the achievement of this broad and powerful objective.

Indeed, in several specific areas of activity announced in the Throne Speech, collaboration with representatives of other government departments, other government levels and the private sector, is already part of the WD commitment. In new programs for youth, in investing in knowledge-based technology, in support for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), in initiatives that ensure greater mobility and integration for people with disabilities and in programs that enhance opportunities to Canadians living in rural communities, the Department works closely with other ministries and agencies to fulfil the Government mandate.

As well, the Department collaborates with others to further the cultural commitments outlined in the Throne Speech, to promote environmentally sustainable economic development, to help fulfil Canada’s international objectives and commitments and to expand opportunities in Aboriginal communities.

A Well Kept Secret

One would think, then, that WD would be broadly recognised as a key department in the delivery of Canada’s Agenda. However, when most Canadians think about the term, Western Economic Diversification, their strongest perception is of an investment organization, delivering interest-free loans to businesses in western Canada - chiefly through the Western Diversification Program.

¹ Speech from the Throne to Open the First Session, Thirty-Sixth Parliament of Canada, 1997.

While this is an impressive accomplishment for the Department - investing more than \$1.2 billion in more than 4000 business in the first eight years of it's mandate - WD has much more to offer.

In the last three years, the WD mandate has broadened, to become a state of the art client service organization. WD has developed a dynamic network of effective partnerships among governments and organizations that help western Canadians grow their economies and create jobs. WD services now include:

- assisting SMEs to access loans from financial institutions, through CFDCs and Women's Enterprise Centres, as well as helping them with general inquiries;
- Co-ordinating economic adjustment initiatives and delivering the Infrastructure Works Program;
- Providing timely, proactive assistance that was critical to the response to the massive flood in Manitoba's Red River Valley;
- Providing a substantial financial contribution to promoting linguistic duality in the West through the Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues de Manitoba;
- Providing youth programming that complements the Youth Employment Strategy and
- Implementing companion programs to the International Trade Personnel Program.

WD's current Business Plan² continues this commitment to collaboration in several areas. Partnership Agreements to promote stronger economic competitiveness are under negotiations with each of the four Provinces within WDs area of jurisdiction. As well, WD is forming strategic partnerships with municipal governments, industry, academia, the private sector and community groups through the Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN).

Further, Secretary of State Duhamel, in his twofold capacity as Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development and Western Economic Diversification, is playing a key role in implementing the Throne Speech commitment to the Canada Foundation for Innovation, both within the western Provinces and right across Canada. Indeed, in just one example, the Science and Technology Strategy for Western Canada will provide a number of opportunities for announcements and initiatives.

Positioned for the New Millennium

Three circumstances well described in the Throne Speech and WDs Business Plan form the rationale to enhance the efficacy of the WD communications mandate now. First, there is a general shift towards co-operative alliances and partnerships throughout Canada's business and community activities. Second, the West is moving towards broader, more inclusive economic development across sectors associated with natural resources industries. Third, there is a growing awareness, as we approach the new millennium, of the benefits of Canadian unity. WD is an ideal Department to provide collaborative leadership in policies and programs for Western Canada in all three of these areas.

However, WDs ability to provide optimum services for western Canadians - both within its historical mandate and in the context of the emerging opportunities outlined above - is limited to the extent that current and potential partners, government colleagues, and most importantly, WDs primary

² The Department of Western Economic Diversification 1998-99 Business Plan.

clients - western Canadian citizens - understand and support WDs objectives. Unfortunately, most Canadians are only vaguely aware of WDs existence, and many of those who do know about the department think of WD as primarily a provider of loans.

In fact, the three broad economic areas that comprise today's WD mandate³ are often largely unknown. These are:

- Co-ordination of federal economic activities in the west: development of strategic initiatives, delivery of national programs and administration of legacy programs;
- development and diversification of the economy in the west, including financial assistance programs, information services and specific SME mentoring services and
- promotion of western interests - advocacy at all levels to support economic development in western Canada and to represent western interests in national decision making.

WDs current and future partners and all western Canadians will benefit by becoming more familiar with these three WD areas of leadership, as well as with all WDs programs, policies and activities. Indeed, the third area, promotion of western interests, specifically mandates pro-active, effective communications activities⁴.

Enhancing Our Partnerships

There are, among WDs initiatives, co-operative activities that serve Canadians and educate and inform others about WD, while furthering the objectives of the partner organizations as well. These collaborations are a good place to look for opportunities for further leverage to achieve mutually beneficial objectives.

Following is a brief canvass of some of the programs and activities provided by five key federal departments, chosen to demonstrate similarities (in initiatives and/or target clients), current collaborations and potential for future and/or enhanced partnership with WD. Ideas that might be considered for improving effectiveness and enhancing the WD profile are included for analysis.

I. Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)

This is one of the most active Departments in the western provinces, with many opportunities for collaborative effort. Following are examples to illustrate this point.

1. The Canada Youth Employment Strategy⁵ (YES) is a comprehensive, high priority Government initiative, designed to provide work experience and access to relevant employment information to young Canadians, to help them make the transition from school to work. The four primary Canada YES initiatives are Youth Internship Canada, Youth Services Canada, Student Summer Job Action and Information and Awareness Initiatives.

³ The Department of Western Economic Diversification 1998-99 Business Plan, pg. 6 and 7.

⁴ "Greater effort needs to be focused on...improving federal visibility in the west." WD Business Plan, pg. 9.

⁵ See Attachments pg. 11a - 11f.

- WD events could be planned around the Canada YES, in conjunction with other WD and HRDC initiatives – one example would be activities during Canada Career week in November⁶, to provide leverage to HRDC activities and enhance WD profile.
- WD could collaborate with HRDC to produce a variation of the standard HRDC Youth Info Fairs – perhaps one focussed on accessing the information highway and youth entrepreneurship – WDs First Jobs in Science and Technology (FJST) and International Trade Personnel Program (ITPP) could be featured.
- Another variation on this theme would be a WD/HRDC Small Business Youth Info Fair - to bring together prospective employers and youth, to learn about each other, to explore program assistance available from the two departments and to network for business development

2. Aboriginal Relations Offices⁷ in the west provide programs such as the Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiative⁸. And a professional development organization, the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO), works with and for development officers serving Indian, Inuit and Métis communities. CANDO has a strong partnership with HRDC⁹.

- WD could ensure positive working relationships with AROs in the west, in order to capitalise on the services of each department. And CANDO might be approached by WD to explore mutually beneficial economic development initiatives.

4. At the conference, ‘Meet the North’ in Edmonton November 30, 1998, Secretary of State Blondin-Andrew announced the Government decision to foster new networks and strengthen the relationship between Northern and Southern Canada¹⁰.

- WD could explore the possibility of participating in the business exposition portion of events such as this.
- Secretary of State Duhamel could partner with Secretary of State Blondin-Andrew to produce an Aboriginal Youth event, to multiply the program benefits of each department.

5. The HRDC Persons with Disabilities initiatives provide an excellent opportunity for collaborative effort. WD funded the first project, Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities¹¹.

- Secretary of State Duhamel could participate at the 1999 roundtable being planned for this sector.

II. Canadian Heritage

One of the six objectives of the Canadian Heritage Portfolio¹² is, “*to contribute to Canada’s economic growth and prosperity*”. This broad goal is identical to many articulated in the WD mandate.

⁶ See Attachments pg. 12.

⁷ From website: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/aro/common/home.shtml>

⁸ See website: <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/aro/uaei/uaei.shtml>

⁹ From website: <http://www.hrdc.sectors+contacts.htm>

¹⁰ See News Release, Attachments pg. 13.

¹¹ See News Release, Attachments pg. 14.

¹² *Strengthening and Celebrating Canada for the New Millennium* – Canadian Heritage Planning Document for 1997-98 to 1999-2000.

1. In terms of sectors, the responsibilities of the Portfolio are clustered under six main sectors of activity. Four of these provide WD with opportunity:

- Canadian Identity: includes Official Languages Support; Multiculturalism; Sport; Canadian Identity (includes Canadian Studies and Youth Participation and Ceremonial and Canadian Symbols Promotion) and Citizen Participation (includes Human Rights, Native Citizens' Programs and Community Partnerships);
- Cultural Development: Cultural Industries and Broadcasting Policy;
- Arts and Heritage: Arts Policy, Heritage programs and
- Parks Canada: National Parks and historic sites.

➤ WD should identify key areas where stronger linkages and partnerships could increase awareness of initiatives and thereby enhance the effectiveness of both departments and increase the profile of the Government of Canada the west. For example:

2. The Western Cultural Fund, a WD/Canadian Heritage initiative, is a granting instrument providing up to \$30,000 to eligible not-for-profit organizations.

➤ WD, as the partner in this pilot project, should be present and featured in all events and publicity describing this initiative. This is an opportunity for Secretary of State Duhamel and Minister Copps to collaborate on a pan-western Canada launch event and also to release joint announcements when projects are awarded grants and when projects become successful.

3. The Department provides an extensive package of Native Citizens Programs¹³ that facilitate participation in quality of life issues for Indian, Métis and Inuit people who are not resident on Reserves. These include:

- The Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program (AROP);
- The Aboriginal Friendship Centre (AFCP);
- The Aboriginal Women's Program (AWP);
- The Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP);
- The Canada-Northwest Territories Co-operation Agreement for French and Aboriginal Languages and
- The Canada-Yukon Co-operation and Funding Agreement on the Development and Enhancement of Aboriginal Languages.

➤ WD, within its mandate to provide assistance to Aboriginal economic development, could monitor and assess these programs for opportunities that provide leverage for the two departments and address key WD objectives.

➤ WD could collaborate with Minister Copps initiative to establish twenty Aboriginal youth centres in urban areas across Canada¹⁴. This could include cross-promotion, electronic information links and participation in consultations and round tables.

4. February 8-15, 1999 is Citizenship and Heritage Week¹⁵ for the Department.

➤ WD could explore possibilities for adding western value and profile to the exercise.

¹³ From <http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/english.htm>

¹⁴ Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centres Initiative – December, 1998 article in the National Post.

¹⁵ From website: www.pch.gc.ca/scp99chw/english/week.htm

5. Parks Canada - Minister Copps and Secretary of State (Parks) Andy Mitchell announced December 21, 1998, the creation of the Parks Canada Agency¹⁶, to preserve historic sites and heritage areas.

- Those areas that are within WDs geographic jurisdiction and mandate are opportunities for exploring joint activities.

6. The Network of Francophone Community Radio Stations, announced¹⁷ December 17, 1998, will provide \$1.1 million towards creating a satellite network for the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada (ARC). HRDC is already a partner in this initiative.

- WD could assess the western implications of this program, negotiate participation in appropriate activities and announcements.

7. On December 9, 1998, the Department, in partnership with the Council of Ministers of Education (CMED) announced¹⁸ the continuation of a broad exchange program for students to improve their first language and to learn their second language.

- WD could monitor the activities, encourage and facilitate western participation, and assist with program implementation.

8. A \$200 million fund created in the fall of 1996 is now called the Canadian Television Fund¹⁹. This fund, recently extended to the year 2001, is designed to maintain and increase the quantity and quality of Canadian programming in English, French and Aboriginal languages.

- Effort could be focussed on informing western Canadians about this fund, identifying and assisting potential applicants.

9. The Museum of Science and Technology reports to Parliament through Canadian Heritage.

- Opportunities could be explored for Secretary of State Duhamel, in his capacity as Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development, to collaborate on activities and announcements initiated by this Agency.

III. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

The Department's Framework for Action²⁰ describes INAC's policy direction as, "...to strengthen Aboriginal communities and to build new partnerships with Aboriginal people". The framework goes on to explain that this means striking a balance between progress on rights issues and progress on social and economic issues.

A primary component of the INAC agenda is contained in *Gathering Strength*, the Government response to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Issues, an action plan to address the needs of the Aboriginal communities across Canada. It is committed to the concept of partnership and a co-ordinated approach to Aboriginal economic development issues. The eleven objectives identified to

¹⁶ See December 21, 1998 News Release, Parks Canada Agency Proclaimed, Attachments pg. 1.

¹⁷ See December 17, 1998 News Release, Attachments pg. 2.

¹⁸ See December 9, 1998 News Release, Attachments pg. 3.

¹⁹ From website: www.pch.gc.ca/culture/brdcstng/ctf-fct/english.htm

²⁰ From website: www.inac.gc.ca/info/action.html

strengthen Aboriginal people and organizations include one that has obvious opportunities for WD – “increased Aboriginal business access to capital and markets”²¹.

As well, under the broad topic of Supporting Strong Communities, People and Economies, there are commitments to improving community infrastructure, strengthening economic development, improving access to capital and increasing market access.

- Each of these has implications for WD partnership, collaboration and increased profile. As well,
- WD could contribute to the BC and other western editions of the publication *Dreamspeaker*, an INAC periodical²² that has substantial readership among Aboriginal entrepreneurs.
- WD could explore ways to enhance its participation in interdepartmental initiatives for urban Aboriginal economic development²³.

IV. Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)

1. This Department includes several endeavours within its Priorities and Strategies mandate that offer opportunity for collaboration with WD. These include the SME export support unit that provides international business development (IBD) programs, the WIN Exports business client data base and the Team Canada Inc. trade mission program. WD could increase its profile in DFAIT initiatives that expand the reach of export preparation and assistance programs, so that more capable and committed firms in western Canada are encouraged to export.

- WD could negotiate higher profile participation by Secretary of State Duhamel at Team Canada Inc. preparatory events and other promotional activities initiated by DFAIT in the four western Provinces. For example, WDs International Trade Personnel Program (ITTP) could be featured in DFAIT activities in western Canada.
- As part of the WD ‘ready to export’ package of services, all WD officers should be familiar and comfortable with assisting clients to benefit from the excellent information, programs and business services available on the DFAIT website²⁴;
- WD could participate in the interdepartmental procurement teams being established to target large international capital projects and international financial institutions.

2. Canada’s International Business Strategy²⁵ (CIBS) includes a program that supports Aboriginal business development. Recent activities have included roundtables with Aboriginal exporters in Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Vancouver. A plan is being pursued to form a private sector-led National Sector Team (NST) to, “...*identify the focus, priorities, resource requirements and specific activities to be undertaken by the Aboriginal Products, Services and Technologies sector*”.

- Since about 48% of Aboriginal exporters are in the four western provinces, WD is well positioned to be actively involved in this initiative.

²¹ Gathering Strength, Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan, from www.inac.gc.ca/strength/change.html

²² see <http://www.inac.gc.ca/pubs/dreams/fall98/index.html>

²³ Included as an important priority in the 1998-99 WD Business Plan, pg. 9.

²⁴ <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca>

²⁵ From website: www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/TRADE/CIBS/english/strategy/1s.htm

V. Industry Canada

Opportunities for activities and partnership²⁶:

1. Minister Manley is under great demand at business functions in western Canada. Often, the speeches provided for him make no mention of WD or Secretary of State Duhamel²⁷.

- WD could place a high priority on learning in advance when Minister Manley is in the west, offering to have Secretary of State Duhamel participate/assist in events, and at least, having the WD program mentioned in IC speeches to be delivered in Western Canada.

2. The Industry Portfolio provides a wide range of Aboriginal services. One of these, Aboriginal Business Canada²⁸ (ABC), works with Aboriginal entrepreneurs to improve access to business capital, open and expand domestic and international markets, encourage technology adoption²⁹ and participation in knowledge-based industry and support entrepreneurship among Aboriginal youth³⁰. Another is the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB). In one recent example³¹, a CAP was announced for Port Edward BC, with no mention of WD.

- WD could develop strong linkages with colleagues in Aboriginal business areas of Industry Canada, in order to add value and gain profile on initiatives that have western implications.

3. In the Industry Canada website, under the description of mandate, no mention of WD is made. As well, in the Business Support and financing section of the IC website, 'strategis', again no link to WD (although CBCs and Fed-Nor are there). A user must know to go on through 'Business Support and Financing', and further to 'Business Aid Programs', before WD surfaces.

- WD could canvass all IC website references, in order to provide user-friendly, practical, and higher profile references to WD. As well, the WD website could be made more current, with ongoing messages from Secretary of State Duhamel as to his activities, media releases and speeches.

4. WD participates in small business info fairs, working with the Industry Portfolio Offices (IPOs) in the four western Provinces.

- Secretary of State Duhamel could co-host, provide assistance for and participate in similar events elsewhere that emphasise science and research & development.

5. In April 1999, a nine-week real-time and 'virtual' Canadian Heritage Interactive Journey³² will take place to help Canadian youth develop Internet skills and learn about their heritage. The project was developed by a British Columbia based company, Ingenuity Works.

- WD could analyse this initiative to explore opportunities to get involved to mutual advantage.

²⁶ Note: These are gathered from research and discussions, noted as worthy of analysis - some are new, others may be under consideration or in planning.

²⁷ See speaking notes for Minister Manley's December 17 - 18, '98 Vancouver visit: Attachments pgs. 4-6.

²⁸ See website: <http://abc.gc.ca>

²⁹ through the Community Access Program (CAP) - see <http://cap.unb.ca>

³⁰ Aboriginal Youth Business Initiative - see <http://abc.gc.ca>

³¹ See Attachments pg. 9.

³² See Attachments pg. 10.

6. As mentioned at the outset, Secretary of State Duhamel's twofold capacity as Secretary of State for Science, Research and Development and Western Economic Diversification provides the mandate to implement Canada's commitment to the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

- Secretary of State Duhamel could co-host, provide assistance for and participate in cross-Canada events that emphasise science and research & development.

Strategic Recommendations for Analysis and Consideration:

If WD is to continue to provide successful leadership/partnership for government priorities such as these, the WD Communications Department must have the necessary mandate and resources to acquire information, to devise and assess alternative response options and to provide timely strategies that capitalise on emerging opportunities. Effective, in-house communications development and analysis capability is the key to the provision of this important effort.

Five broad strategic recommendations flow from this observation:

Recommendation #1

“... that the Department place a high priority on communications initiatives that educate and build support among partner departments and agencies for the mutual benefits and leverage inherent in WD activities, with the further purpose of developing Cabinet support for the WD mandate in order to ensure that the downward pressure on its financial resources is contained or reversed.”

Rationale: The revenue structure of Western Economic Diversification has resulted in massive reductions in its grants and contributions budget over the past several years³³. This reality, together with WDs growing dependency on revenues generated by diminishing repayments of legacy program contributions, mean that the Department is facing critical financial challenges in the management of its commitments to effectively deliver federal government programs to western Canadians and to maintain excellence in services to western Canadian business clients.

Recommendation #2

“...that the WD Communications Branch be assured appropriate mandate, financial resources and personnel to manage and maintain pro-active, in-house strategic communications activities necessary to successfully accomplish the communications components of the relevant commitments announced in the Speech from the Throne and the commitments outlined in the WD 1998-99 Business Plan.”

³³ From WD 1998-99 Business Plan, pg. 10.

Rationale: Ongoing, mutually beneficial communications strategies must continue to be developed and implemented by WD around Government priorities that affect the four western provinces, designed to, for example³⁴:

- Improve Canada's profile in all WCBSN activities³⁵;
- Assist colleague Secretaries of State, Ministers and other Members of Parliament to respond to key regional issues in the West;
- Participate in Pacific coast fisheries readjustment;
- Expand co-operation with francophone communities and entrepreneurs and
- Provide leadership in all initiatives that fall into the category of Science, Research and Development³⁶.

Recommendation #3

“... that WDs Communications Branch develop and implement a specific strategy to heighten awareness of the WD Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN)”.

Rationale: The WCBSN consists of 95 Community Futures Development Corporations, six Women's Enterprise Centres, four Canada Business Service Centres and six WD offices, to provide over 100 points of service to Canadians in rural, urban and remote communities. An effective, internal and external communications strategy is a critical component of an overall commitment to achieve the WD business plan objective of forming partnerships with municipal governments, industry, academia, the private sector and community groups through this program. If developed and implemented sensitively, this strategy could also make a substantial contribution towards alleviating the confusing and sometimes difficult relationships among these partners.

Recommendation #4

“...that WD develop an inventory of multi- and cross- departmental economic development and business assistance programs for Aboriginal Canadians in western Canada, in order to enhance the provision of cost-effective, focussed, results oriented programs.”

Rationale: There is growing awareness of and interest in promoting economic development and co-operation among Aboriginal peoples – here in Canada and around the world³⁷. As may be seen in the notes describing activities within the five departments canvassed for this report, there are economic development programs for Aboriginal Canadians within many departments. It may be

³⁴ These ideas are all mentioned, one way or another, in the WD 1998-99 Business Plan.

³⁵ The October 21, 1998 Media Release, renewing federal funding for \$75 million did not include regional Ministers, and made no mention of WD or other delivery agencies. See Attachments pg. 7.

³⁶ See excellent example of collaborative announcement – Attachments pg. 8.

³⁷ Examples include: 1993 – UN declared an International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples; Organization of American States (OAS) developed a program to support Aboriginal trade initiatives; World Bank consultations on a new Indigenous Policy...

that some overlap in substance, focus, and/or mandate. The overall effect may even leave gaps in service for some target clients, regions and groups.

It would be useful to all departments if WD were charged with the responsibility of keeping an up-to-the minute tally of the available programs and services. Perhaps the impetus for this activity could be found in the WD mandate to provide for, “*Interdepartmental initiatives for urban Aboriginal economic development*”³⁸.

Recommendation #5

“...that in the context of the WD mandate to effectively deliver federal government programs to western Canadians, WD be provided with the necessary resources to increase and improve the provision of promotion, information sharing, facilitation, partnering, business consultation, co-ordination of federal-provincial relations, government advocacy and resource leveraging for relevant federal departments in western Canada.”

Rationale: Besides the five key departments canvassed for this paper, WD has beneficial existing or potential links with several other government departments and agencies, such as Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada. Current and emerging government priorities that WD is ideally positioned to deliver in western Canada include for example, the Canada Youth Employment Strategy, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, the Rural Strategy and the Canada Jobs fund. And WD has a role to play in the evolving Climate Change initiative and developing and implementing Millennium projects in western Canada. Only by capitalising on these opportunities to their utmost can WD be truly effective in demonstrating to western Canadians the excellent Government of Canada programs of which they are significant beneficiaries.

Conclusion

The Department of Western Economic Diversification is particularly well positioned to multiply its strengths by combining talents and pooling resources with others. The ideas in this brief canvass constitute opportunities to enhance the Departments effectiveness in its primary mandate - to build a strong regional economy in Canada’s west - an important component of the Government of Canada’s overall policy agenda.

Specific initiatives that improve federal visibility in the west will demonstrate to western Canadians the benefits that the Canadian Government brings to the four western Provinces. And they will highlight the benefits that the western Provinces bring to the rest of Canada, thereby contributing to the Throne Speech “*commitment to keep Canada united*”. Further, if effective, these initiatives will contribute substantially to the WD purpose – to strengthen the economy of Western Canada, through heightened awareness of, support for and consequent participation in WDs broad spectrum of services to and for western Canadians.

³⁸ Included as an important priority in the 1998-99 WD Business Plan, pg. 9.