



UPDATE

Voluntary Sector Initiative

SPECIAL EDITION

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ACCORD ANNOUNCED: FRAMEWORK NOW IN PLACE

The framework agreement between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector was announced on December 5, 2001 in Ottawa and across the country. Working together, the voluntary sector and the Federal Government have developed and endorsed this new Accord as a first step in the continuing process to strengthen their relationship and create more cooperative ways to work together.

In launching the landmark Accord, this major initiative goes forward to strengthen the 180,000 non-profit groups and charities that enrich the social, cultural, spiritual, environmental and recreational lives of communities across the country.

The Accord between the voluntary sector and the Government of Canada documents shared values, principles and commitment that will shape future practices, including the right of each to independence, and the contribution of the voluntary sector and its advocacy activities to the development of better public policy. It focuses on what unites the two sectors, honours the contributions of both and respects their unique ways of working.

“We are confident that this Accord is the first step toward a constructive, collaborative approach to serving Canadians, including the development of public policy informed by community experience,” said Lynne Toupin, voluntary sector co-chair of the Joint Accord Table. “We look forward to the development of the tools and processes that will put it into practice in the coming months.”

Accord Highlights :

VALUES

The Accord is based on the following six Canadian values that underpin the relationship between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector:

- Democracy
- Active Citizenship
- Equality
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Social Justice

The Accord is based on guiding principles:

- Independence
- Interdependence
- Dialogue
- Cooperation and Collaboration
- Accounting to Canadians

The values and principles of the Accord are the starting point for the development of the relationship. Success in building the relationship will be reflected in the actions and practices of both the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector for the benefit of all Canadians. Commitments to action – by each sector and shared commitments – are also part of the Accord. A shared commitment is to develop the mechanisms and processes necessary to move the Accord forward.

Update is written, produced and distributed by the VSI Secretariat to inform voluntary organizations about the work of the initiative. Please feel free to photocopy and circulate this newsletter. It can also be viewed or downloaded as a PDF file from www.vsi-isbc.ca. Or contact VSI Secretariat, 85 Albert Street, Suite 1110, Ottawa, K1P 6A4, fax (613) 238-9300, phone 1-800-821-8814.

Taking The Accord Forward

The Accord is the beginning of a journey. To implement its provisions the voluntary sector and the Government of Canada have agreed to develop:

- Appropriate organizational structures in the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector to give effect to the provisions of the Accord;
 - ◆ Processes for monitoring the Accord, reporting to Canadians on the status of the relationship and the results that have been achieved, resolving disputes, agreeing on next steps, and discussing the strategic opportunities for future collaboration;
 - ◆ Codes or standards of good practice to help guide interactions between government departments and voluntary sector organizations on aspects of the relationship such as policy dialogue, funding, and other issues as identified;
 - ◆ A regular meeting between Ministers and sector representatives to discuss the results that have been achieved; and
 - ◆ Ongoing actions to increase awareness about the Accord within the sector and the Government of Canada, and among Canadians.

The goal is that the Accord and its implementation plan will provide an enabling framework that will help both the voluntary sector and the Government of Canada better serve Canadians.

NEXT STEPS

In the coming months, the Joint Accord Table will bring together thinkers and actors from the voluntary and other sectors to develop the means for implementing and monitoring this Accord.

Canada Volunteerism Initiative Launched

The Canada Volunteerism Initiative is the result of a year-long effort by the National Volunteerism Initiative Joint Table. This joint table was comprised of seven representatives from voluntary organizations and six representatives from the Government of Canada. Their task was to develop proposals that would sustain and enhance volunteerism in Canada and serve as a lasting legacy of the International Year of Volunteers 2001.

The Canada Volunteerism Initiative will provide funding to:

1. Establish regionally based, nationally connected volunteer resource networks that will provide a range of capacity/ knowledge-building services to grassroots organizations. These networks will be developed by enhancing existing organizations.
2. Support ongoing research into the dynamics of volunteering and enable innovative pilot projects for recruiting and administering volunteer resources.
3. Develop a multi-year promotion, recognition, awareness and outreach campaign to help Canadians to better understand and appreciate the contributions of volunteers and to encourage Canadians of all ages and backgrounds to volunteer.
4. Promote an ongoing dialogue between the voluntary, public, private sectors and individuals about the role of volunteerism in building the kind of society Canadians want for the future.

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