

# Performance assurance in Canadian federal corrections

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**A**ny well performing organization is constantly striving to improve its performance. While every staff member has that as a responsibility in the context of their duties, the Performance Assurance (PA) Sector's primary role is to independently measure Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) performance and provide the results to staff and managers so that action can be taken to make improvements. In order to ensure that the results will be objective and seen to be objective, the Performance Assurance Sector has recently become a corporate function, whose staff are located in regional locations as well as at National Headquarters.

## Discussion

**P**erformance Assurance implements its mandate in a number of different ways. The Sector is responsible for the traditional statistical measurement and reporting of performance. This includes the preparation of CSC's performance report to Parliament and Canadians, the Departmental Performance Report. A related role is to develop information-based tools that make information, including performance information, readily available to staff and managers to help them to manage their work. Several of these tools are described elsewhere in this issue: RADAR (Reports of Automated Data Applied to Reintegration), CRS (the Corporate Reporting System) and PRIME (Portal on Results, Information, Measurement and Evaluation).

In addition, the Sector is responsible for Internal Audit, Investigations of incidents in the community and institutions and Program Evaluation and Review. These functions are focused on assessing how well CSC is doing from a number of different perspectives and alerting management about areas that need improvement.

Also, PA is responsible for managing the process of accreditation of correctional programs and the sites that deliver them. Program and site accreditation is discussed elsewhere in this issue, but briefly, the accreditation of programs and sites ensures that only programs that meet international standards for good programming are provided, and that they are delivered well.

The achievement of results related to its mandate and mission is perhaps the most important component of CSC's performance measurement, but there are

other important components. It goes without saying that compliance with the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) and all other applicable legislation is mandatory, and must be assured. However, it is also important to ensure that CSC policies and processes are efficient and effective and that they are complied with. These policies and processes are developed and implemented to ensure that CSC operates consistently across Canada and in accordance with the approved standards and approaches that have been determined to be those most likely to result in success. The achievement of good correctional results involves the management of risk, and the ability to explain to Canadians how this risk is managed. Also, demonstrating the consistent application of approved risk management approaches is crucial to retaining public support when things go wrong.

It is also important to measure performance in the corporate service areas such as technical services, food services, institutional services etc. Without performance measures of some sort, it is not possible to determine whether improvement is required.

Any discussion of performance assurance or performance measurement must recognize that the Correctional Service of Canada is an agency in the federal Public Service of Canada. As a federal agency, CSC is not only responsible for carrying out its correctional mandate, but in addition, is responsible to contribute to the achievement of the broader objectives of the Government of Canada, as well as to comply with all government policies and directions.

In arriving at a conclusion about CSC's overall performance it is necessary to assess all of these different dimensions. I would like to comment on two important areas: correctional results, and public service results.

## Correctional results

The ultimate outcome for CSC is its contribution to public safety. The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* requires that during the sentence the safety of the public, staff and offenders is the paramount consideration both while offenders are in institutions and while under supervision in the

community. In order to demonstrate its results in managing offenders who are under supervision in the community, CSC reports on the proportion of all offenders who are on some form of conditional release (day parole, full parole, statutory release) each year, who are convicted of an offence, with a breakdown of violent and non-violent offences. To complete the picture, CSC reports on incidents occurring in institutions including escapes, deaths, disturbances, assaults on staff and assaults on inmates.

Our mandate requires us to prepare offenders for safe reintegration into the community. CSC reports on the successful reintegration of offenders into the community after the completion of the sentence by determining what proportion of federal offenders have not been convicted of another offence within a specified period after the end of the sentence. Currently, the follow-up period is two years, however, as additional analysis is performed, the follow-up period will be extended. The analysis looks at all re-convictions whether the new offence results in a provincial sentence or another federal sentence.

Offenders who receive indeterminate or life sentences do not have an end to their sentence. Therefore, a longitudinal follow-up from release date is conducted to determine successful reintegration of these offenders.

It is important to state that the results measured in this way can be affected by factors outside of CSC's control. For example, there are many reasons why an ex-offender may commit another offence. It is not reasonable to expect that CSC can be responsible for all behaviour of offenders after their sentence is completed, nor during their sentence for that matter. However, CSC expects that if it is doing a good job, that it will be eventually reflected in these results.

The reader is referred to the Departmental Performance Report for 2002/2003 at [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/02-03/CSC-SCC03D\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/02-03/CSC-SCC03D_e.asp) for specific results information in all of the above areas.

There are a myriad of other measures of success, including compliance with policies and processes. All of these results support the achievement of the correctional results described above.

### Public Service results

The Treasury Board of Canada has developed and published a comprehensive Management Accountability Framework that describes its expectations of deputy heads in the management

of their organizations. It reflects the Government management objectives that all federal departments and agencies are expected to meet.

For each component this framework describes the expectations, indicators of success and specific measures that will be used. More information can be obtained at [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/maf-crg/index\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/maf-crg/index_e.asp).

There are ten components in this framework:

1. Governance and Strategic Direction
2. Public Service Values
3. Results and Performance
4. Learning, Innovation and Change Management
5. Policy and Programs
6. People
7. Citizen-Focused Service
8. Risk Management
9. Stewardship
10. Accountability

This framework has become an umbrella framework that incorporates other management improvement initiatives, such as modern comptrollership, active monitoring and risk management.

CSC is in the process of integrating this framework into its management processes, including performance measurement. The ongoing commitments for Executives in CSC are based directly on this framework.

Current performance indicators are already available in CSC for a number of the elements and we will be ensuring that we have indicators for all of them. The indicators will be based on those established by Treasury Board, with interpretation and modification to relate them directly to CSC.

### Conclusion

Performance measurement in CSC is complex. It must address correctional and non-correctional activities, as well as consider its contribution to government-wide priorities. It can be difficult to interpret performance information and even more difficult to know what causes changes in performance. Managers must know their results if they are to take appropriate action to improve them. ■

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