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Evaluation of the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS)

SUMMARY REPORT

Ce rapport sera également disponible en français

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Public Service Staffing Modernization Project (PSSMP) is a multi-year, government-wide initiative, led by the Public Service Commission (PSC), to transform staffing in the federal public service (FPS). The PSSMP is comprised of two streams of work.

1. The first stream (Stream I) has been focused on the development, implementation and deployment of an interim electronic solution for external recruitment - the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS) - to address high priority *Public Service Modernization Act* (PSMA) and *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) as well as government direction to increase Canadians' access to FPS jobs through the National Area of Selection (NAoS) requirement. PSRS was implemented nationally in 2005. PSRS was deployed to select departments and agencies in a phased approach (12 departments had direct access to PSRS as of March 2008 and four more as of June 2008); other departments have access to the system through PSC regional offices¹.

The PSRS is a Web-based recruitment tool that screens external applications automatically based on responses to a customized online application form. The PSRS is currently a functional national system, through which over 1 million applications were received in 2006-2007.

2. The PSRS will eventually be replaced (2010/2011) by Stream II – E-Staffing – a long term staffing solution to modernize both internal and external staffing across the federal government through the use of enabling technologies, by providing a suite of easy to use “interoperable” tools, to departments and agencies in a phased approach that responds to the integrated needs of three key user groups: job seekers, hiring managers and human resources professionals. The long-term solution of Stream II will support HR Modernization, renewal of the federal public service and the Area of Selection Policy (NAoS requirement). Project Definition for Stream II is currently underway to define business requirements, scope of Stream II options and develop a business case.

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of Stream I of the PSSMP, conducted for the Public Service Commission. The purpose of this evaluation was to conduct research, data collection and analysis to support an objective and neutral assessment of the progress being made in the implementation of Stream I and in achieving its intended outcomes. The research examined the system's relevance, design, development, implementation, operation and progress towards outcomes to the extent possible. The evaluation included the following lines of evidence: a document review; a series of key informant interviews with PSRS managers, Super Users in Direct Access Departments, PSRS Service providers from PSC

¹ This means that regional PSC staff access the system on the department's behalf to complete transactions (e.g. post advertisements, screen applications, communicate with applicants, etc.)

regional offices, and HR specialists using the PSRS; an on-line survey of PSRS applicants; an on-line survey of departmental and PSC users² of the PSRS to inform on progress and further development; a series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews with departmental HR advisors and PSC regional support staff; and a preliminary cost-effectiveness analysis.

Evaluation Conclusions

1. Relevance

PSRS is perceived to be **supporting the implementation of the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA)** and other government priorities, particularly the implementation of the Area of Selection Policy, by making it possible to manage large volumes of applications. Most Departmental and PSC users (97 per cent - Figure 1) believe that the system is helping to ensure that recruitment processes are in accordance with legislative and PSC requirements. Furthermore, study findings point to a definite ongoing need for an electronic system to handle recruitment. It is not considered to be feasible to conduct manual screening for most external appointment processes where a national area of selection is used.

Evaluation findings suggest that PSRS is indeed **a necessary system that is helping to make the Government of Canada accessible and attractive as an employer**. Most Departmental and PSC users (94 per cent - Figure 1) believe that the PSRS is supporting a single window for externally advertised federal public service positions. Applicants appear to be making significant repeat use of the PSRS; and say they are more apt to apply to federal public service positions with the electronic access offered by the system (82 per cent). Although applicants have to use the PSRS to apply to federal public service positions, they may find it easier to apply on-online than to have to mail in their application.

2. Implementation

2.1 Design

The **implementation** of PSRS appears to have largely **gone according to plan**. In terms of project management and monitoring, the PSSMP appears to be meeting most Project Management Institute's generally accepted knowledge areas and processes related to project integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resources, communications, risk, and procurement management, but the planned performance measurement strategy has not yet been finalized. A project management office is in place to track progress and deliverables. The project is also supported by a VP Governance Committee chaired by the Vice President of the Staffing and Assessment Branch. Ongoing feedback is being obtained from the

² For the purposes of this evaluation, "users of the PSRS" encompasses PSC and departmental employees who use the system either directly (i.e. direct access departments) or through a PSC regional office (i.e. regional PSC staff access the system on the department's behalf to post advertisements, screen applications, communicate with applicants, etc.). Persons applying on externally advertised positions through the PSRS are referred to as "applicants". Results are presented separately for users and applicants.

Super Users group, and data are collected on the use and performance of the system. Most design and implementation deliverables were completed on time except for a Stream II related RFP process that was significantly delayed (six months) due to a situation outside of the PSC's control. This in turn could potentially have an impact on the decommission date of the PSRS. As for the legacy systems, their functionality has been integrated into PSRS and all systems but one have been decommissioned as planned.

Overall, the perception that the PSRS is being well-managed is corroborated by the internal audits conducted of the project which have found that appropriate financial and project management controls were in place. In addition, there have been regular maintenance releases since the inception of PSRS on March 31, 2003. These releases were all geared to enhance the functionality of PSRS which affect both the Applicant and the Administrator sites. Moreover, the PSC and the Canada School of the Public Service have designed and implemented an E-learning product for PSRS training – available on line.

2.2 Delivery

The PSRS **appears to be applicant-friendly**; with most applicants reasonably satisfied with the ease of finding the site (81 per cent - Figure 4), with the information and instructions provided, the ease of completing forms and the overall user-friendliness of the site. Departmental HR advisors and PSC users, however, seem less convinced that the system is sufficiently applicant-friendly, based on the number of errors they see in applications suggesting that fields to be completed may not be as straightforward as they appear.

The system is **not perceived to be as user-friendly by 61 per cent of Departmental and PSC users** (Figure 11). A recurring theme throughout findings from research conducted of users is that the system requires significant practice by the user to gain proficiency. Furthermore, suggestions to improve the user-friendliness of the system are at or near the top of the list of suggestions for potential changes identified by study respondents.

Users of the system largely perceive that the system has had a **positive impact on the transparency of the recruitment process** (73 per cent - Figure 22) and on its fairness (68 per cent); providing an impartial recruitment process. On the other hand, the **system is more opaque to applicants**. Indeed, applicants do not seem to have a sound understanding of the scope and process of the system and the screening process. Furthermore, applicants are largely **dissatisfied with the extent and timeliness of feedback they receive** (Figure 5), and seek improvements to feedback throughout the recruitment process. Lack of awareness of the electronic communication function among departmental users (41 per cent - Figure 6) contributes to the problem of insufficient feedback.

Support services are not well known among applicants and relatively few access them (Figure 8). Among those that do, the on-line help features or help buttons are the most popular (40 per cent). Those who have used them are generally satisfied with the feature used.

Based on evaluation research, departmental and PSC users appear only **moderately convinced that the system is flexible enough** to tailor the application process to the needs of the hiring manager, particularly when recruiting for senior or specialized positions (57 per cent - Figure 13).

Overall, **lack of training and general information about the system** (its functions, best uses of different features, best practices/best results scenarios, etc) seems to be one of the central weaknesses of the PSRS. Those with access need better, and more timely, training to be able to understand and use the system well. Those without direct access need at least enough training to fully appreciate the system and make the best decisions about its use.

3. Results Achieved to Date

In the course of this evaluation, the primary focus was on relevance, design, implementation and immediate outcomes of the PSRS and whether it has been unfolding as intended. Progress towards longer term outcomes and cost-effectiveness was explored to the extent possible.

One expected immediate outcome is the use of PSRS by Departments. Evidence show that departmental and PSC users have used the PSRS, often several times or more within the last year to post job advertisements; however, the breadth of use in terms of the system's screening functionality is uneven. In particular, the experience questionnaire and essay questions are used only sporadically (Figure 17). Research findings suggest that the extent of functionality used depends on a variety of factors, including the level of comfort of the user with the system, the nature of the position being advertised, the nature of the user's responsibilities and frustrations with the experience questionnaire/toolkit. Findings also suggest that lack of awareness or understanding of the various components or screening options available within the system may contribute to limiting the breadth of use.

Other expected immediate outcomes include greater screening capacity; more manageable number of referrals and reduced workload; faster impartial screening and improved quality of referrals. Evaluation findings reveal that PSRS is clearly perceived to have had a positive impact on the management of large volumes of applicants (83 per cent - Figure 22) and that this system has made it possible to meet the requirements of the NAOs. These elements all support the non-duplication of departmental efforts. In addition, most users and interview respondents believe that the system contributes to a more manageable number of referrals and also agree that the system has had a positive impact on the transparency of the recruitment process, on hiring in the federal public service, and on the fairness/impartiality of the recruitment process. Some feel, however, that the gains in transparency may be limited by a lack of communication or feedback to applicants.

While users report an overall level of satisfaction with the screening process using PSRS, it is important to note that screening is simultaneously identified by users as both a strength and as a weakness of the system. On the one hand, users talk about the imperfections of the experience questionnaire for screening, enabling applicants to over-rate or under-rate their experience; and on the other hand, they appreciate the system's ability to screen applicants electronically based on education, language and

experience, facilitating the management of large volumes of applicants. While the impact of the PSRS on referrals is largely seen to be positive (60 per cent - Figure 22), most users (73 per cent - Figure 19) feel that candidates referred are only moderately well matched to job criteria. Multiple factors can contribute to this unintended outcome (e.g. the misalignment between the merit criteria on the advertisement and the actual job requirements; the use of experience statements that are not specific or relevant to the position or the limited capacity of the PSRS to discriminate unqualified applicants from those who meet the merit criteria used to screen).

Most users (60 per cent - Figure 22) believe that the PSRS has sped up the recruitment process, although this view is not unanimous. Some users with direct access note that it has provided them with control over the recruitment process, eliminating the need to wait for the PSC and thus reducing the length of the recruitment process. Other users state that electronic screening makes it possible to speed up the recruitment process dramatically, but caution that reliance on electronic screening alone is imperfect. Few participants feel comfortable relying uniquely on electronic screening given the reliance on self-reporting by applicants and therefore rely on a combination of electronic and manual screening. Some are of the view that this largely eliminates any time savings in terms of screening. There is a perception among at least some users (Figure 12) that the PSRS has placed an increased workload on HR specialists particularly in direct access departments given their added responsibilities formerly performed by PSC regional offices. This evaluation mainly gathered qualitative data on speed of process due to respondents' inability to quantify time savings.

Most users report satisfaction with the amount (83 per cent - Figure 24) and utility (77 per cent) of the information available to them from the system. Many users, however, appear to lack familiarity with what the system can offer in terms of reporting functions (55 per cent - Figure 23) and how they can best use reports generated by the system. Very few (12 per cent) are making use of data provided by the PSRS for planning or reporting purposes (e.g., SMAF requirements). PSRS managers interviewed do note, however, that a reporting database for the system is under development.

4. Alternatives and Cost-Effectiveness

Given the clear increase in volume of applications and the need to accommodate the National Areas of Selection (NAoS), there seems to be no question that an electronic system is needed and that the PSRS serves the intended purpose reasonably well. In terms of cost savings, PSC staff and HR departmental staff do not have specific numbers on savings in time required to collect and vet applicants, however, the strong sense is that the PSRS represents a significant time savings.

Users interviewed believe that PSRS is resulting in a more efficient recruitment process, although they provided no hard numbers to substantiate this claim. Having automated the process, the PSRS is seen to have shortened the process and resulted in faster referrals. Some, however, believe that the increased responsibilities shifting to HR specialists and the additional time required to prepare an advertisement offsets some of the savings from faster screening and referrals.

Applicants compare the system favourably to other on-line job application systems they have used in the past (Figure 26), including on clarity of information (62 per cent), ease of navigation (59 per cent), and visual layout (58 per cent). Applicants compare PSRS somewhat less favourably, however, in terms of the feedback provided on applications (42 per cent).

Interview respondents identify other recruitment approaches or systems (including Monster, Workopolis, RecruitSoft and USAJobs), but no single system is cited as being superior or preferred to PSRS. Interview respondents believe that PSRS has proven to be more effective and efficient in terms of managing volumes, screening and referrals than systems used in the past. Since the PSRS was designed to comply with the PSMA, PSEA and appointment policy, other existing systems (e.g., Workopolis, Monster) may not be readily deployable or usable in this context. Moreover, when considering other options, the PSC has to ensure that the screening capacity of existing systems is free from systemic barriers and supports targeted approaches to increase representation of equity groups to reflect workforce availability. Until a system that meets these criteria becomes available, the PSRS is likely the only viable option at this point.

The results of a preliminary cost-effectiveness analysis show that PSRS direct costs per screened out application (\$31) appear lower than the estimated costs per unit of the manual screening alternative (\$51). In this case PSRS is considered more cost-effective than manual screening. However, when factoring in the cost of additional screening done by hiring managers on automatically screened-in applications, it increases overall program costs by 92 per cent resulting in a cost per screened out application of \$59 compared to \$51 for manual screening. This additional step is required because interview and focus group participants indicated they do not rely uniquely on the system's screening. As a validation measure and in order to further reduce the pool of applicants to assess and the resulting costs, departments normally conduct additional screening once they receive applications screened in by the system.

To reach a break-even point of \$32 per unit for both PSRS and manual screening, the system would have to screen out 50 per cent of applications. It should be noted that non economical attributes or intangibles, such as staffing values being upheld, the system's accuracy and the ability to better manage inventories could also contribute to the system's cost-effectiveness. If these are added in, they increase the cost-effectiveness of PSRS.

Recommendations

Evaluation findings suggest that the PSRS has made significant strides towards the achievement of many of its overall objectives. There are, however, a few clear weaknesses in the existing system which should be addressed, and objectives and additional outcomes which are not yet being met. This is not entirely unexpected, given that this system is relatively new and was only designed as an interim measure to be replaced in Stream II by a more integrated and all encompassing system that accommodates both recruitment and staffing.

Recommendations from the evaluation study are as follows:

Applicants and Users

1. Facilitate improvements in feedback and transparency to applicants

While communications to applicants is not within the control of the PSC, there should be some overall plan for the process that brings all of the parties and functions together to ensure that no particular area goes unmet. Steps should be taken to increase awareness and understanding of the communications function and its potential among users (including those without direct access), through additional training and information. Some type of message board could also be built into the system to provide all PSRS users (direct and indirect) some method of communicating with successful and unsuccessful applicants.

There is also a need to clarify the recruitment process for applicants, to increase the transparency of the process for applicants. This could be achieved by providing additional information to applicants through the application process and even in the advertisement (expected length of the process, steps in screening, basis for screening). This would help to address questions and expectations about feedback and length of time before it can be expected. Similarly, it could help to alleviate some of the tendencies to over-report experience, if applicants understand that the application is merely the first step and that more extensive testing and screening will be subsequently carried out.

2. Increase the user-friendliness of the system

The system is not perceived to be sufficiently user friendly by all Departmental and PSC users. Findings suggest that there is a certain learning curve involved in mastering the use of this system. The limited satisfaction with user-friendliness of the system may be contributing to the fact that the full breadth of the system is not being used in many instances. The screening functions, communications functions, and reporting functions are not widely or consistently used by all users. This points in large part to a need for support and training, however, some elements of the interface itself could be reviewed for how to structure the menus and functions to make the system less counterintuitive. More and clearer documentation, as well as instructions right in the system itself will also help to address part of this issue.

3. Increase information available to users, and ensure all users have sufficient understanding of system

There is a need to ensure that all users fully understand the system and what it is capable of doing/producing once users commence using the system, directly or indirectly. Study findings indicate a need for an increase in knowledge of the various functions available on the PSRS (including all screening options, communications functions and reporting functions) to increase the breadth of use, particularly among those who do not use the system directly. Given the turnover in staff across the federal public service, it would be particularly efficient if training/information materials were made available online as references and tutorials so that anyone using the system can reference them on an as needed basis. An

introduction to the system could perhaps be packaged in two streams: a first use guide; and as a refresher/follow-up/more applied set of instructions and references (e.g., FAQs, best practices, guidelines, scenarios, etc), with live support for those using the system in an ongoing fashion as problems arise.

System

4. Improvements to screening to ensure a high quality of referrals

Current screening methods are perceived to rely too heavily on the objectivity and honesty of applicants. As well, a number of users do not feel that the system is sufficiently flexible to accommodate their needs when recruiting for specialized or senior positions. Again, a lack of sufficient training may be contributing to the improper use of the system, or an inability to obtain the full benefits available from electronic screening. Particular attention could also be paid to helping HR advisors (and in turn hiring managers) to develop screening materials (e.g., statements, criteria, thresholds, etc) that follow best practices and have been shown to cultivate good results.

5. Improved decisions-making information, and enhanced reporting capability on resourcing activities

The system is not widely used for planning and reporting purposes. The potential of the system to contribute to planning, monitoring and reporting could be further explored. Those responding to the evaluation research (surveys, interviews and focus groups) were not well placed to provide useful direction on reporting. Most were not familiar with the capacity of the system to provide useful reporting information. Some users of the system who do access reports from the system suggested that the reports available may not in fact be the most useful information and that more useful automatic reports could be developed.

Program Management

6. Responsiveness in supporting the current system requires attention

Although the current system is due to be replaced in just a few years and considerable effort is likely being expended in the development of Stream II, Stream I is currently the only system in place and there are many users that rely on it and work with it on a regular basis. Continued support and changes to the system are needed. Although it may not make sense to expend considerable effort to re-vamp the structure of the current system, some changes may not require too much effort and may make a big difference to those who are currently using it. Presumably, most changes made to Stream I will also be an investment into continued development into Stream II, making the investment even more worthwhile.

7. Further define the performance measurement strategy

While a logic model was developed, a considerable amount of data is being collected on a regular basis, and that the data collection capacity is increasing with the implementation of a data warehouse, targets and benchmarks still need to be defined and integrated in the project's performance measurement strategy in order to better support decision-making. A performance measurement strategy makes it possible to assess the achievement of outcomes identified much more readily. A suggested performance measurement framework (PMF) closely aligned with the PSC's PMF is appended to this report (Appendix A). Cost and performance information on comparable systems should also be collected to facilitate future cost-effectiveness analyses.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

a) Profile: The PSSMP and PSRS

The Public Service Staffing Modernization Project (PSSMP) is a multi-year, government-wide initiative, led by the Public Service Commission (PSC), to transform staffing in the federal public service (FPS). The PSSMP is comprised of two streams of work. The first stream (Stream I) has been focused on the development, implementation and deployment of an interim electronic solution for external recruitment - the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS) - to address high priority Public Service Modernization and Employment legislations (PSMA and PSEA) as well as government direction to increase Canadians' access to FPS jobs through the National Area of Selection (NAoS) requirement. PSRS was implemented nationally in 2005 and is now operational. PSRS was deployed to select departments and agencies in a phased approach (12 departments had direct access to PSRS as of March 2008); other departments have access to the system by working with staff in PSC regional offices³. In the spring of 2003, expansion of the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS) was determined to be the best and most logical choice to meet the interim external staffing needs of departments and agencies. The purpose of Stream I is to make key enhancements to the existing PSRS to support the full implementation of PSMA and NAOs as well as those enhancements that will better serve the PSC's clients. The PSC intends to continue development of PSRS as an interim solution until the system is stabilized and the requirements for the long-term solution (Stream II), including compatibility with existing government systems, are fully defined. From the applicant's perspective, it facilitates on-line job application for all external recruitment in the federal public service.

The PSRS will eventually be replaced (2010/2011) by Stream II – E-Staffing – a long term staffing solution to modernize both internal and external staffing across the federal government through the use of enabling technologies, by providing a suite of easy to use “interoperable” tools, to departments and agencies in a phased approach that responds to the integrated needs of three key user groups: job seekers, hiring managers and human resources professionals. The long-term solution of Stream II will support HR Modernization, renewal of the federal public service and the Area of Selection Policy (NAoS requirement). This next Stream will focus on resourcing (recruitment and staffing). Resourcing⁴ includes both recruitment – hiring from outside the public service – and internal appointments. It is the term used in the federal public service to describe activities required to fill a vacant position or a future job vacancy. Hiring managers may choose to fill a position with an employee from within the GOC – this is referred to as “staffing”. Alternatively, they may hire from outside the GOC – this is referred to as “recruitment”.

³ This means that regional PSC staff access the system on the department's behalf to complete transactions (e.g. post advertisements, screen applications, communicate with applicants, etc.)

⁴ 2006-2007 PSC Annual Report – Glossary - <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/arp-rpa/2007/appendice-annexe-eng.htm#app7>

The PSRS is a Web-based recruitment tool that has been designed to screen external applications automatically based on responses to a customized online application form. To this end, the system supports all federal government external recruitment and is intended to facilitate the handling of large volumes of applications or federal public service jobs that are expected as a result of the new Area of Selection policy. The PSRS is currently a functional national system, through which over 1 million applications were received in 2006-2007.

Prior to its broad-based implementation within the federal public service, the PSRS had been in use within the PSC since 2003 in the National Capital and Toronto regions, and had been available to all Public Service Commission offices since the fall of 2005.

As a result of the PSSMP, federal departments and agencies have the option to obtain direct access to PSRS and to conduct their own recruitment. However, although organizations are fully delegated to do their own recruitment, they may still choose to use PSC services for recruitment or may choose a hybrid arrangement where the PSC can provide selected services and the organization does the remainder of the work.

The objective of PSRS is to enable the organization with Direct Access to:

- Create their own customized advertisement and online application form;
- Post job opportunities open to the public;
- Accept and process applications;
- Undertake electronic screening of candidates based on the Statement of Merit Criteria developed by the Organization;
- Produce their own flat files for transfer into their HR information system; and
- Refer qualified candidates to the authorized manager.

The vision and overall business objectives of the PSSMP are as follows:

VISION

A government-wide approach to staffing that focuses on attracting, deploying and advancing talented individuals to meet the current and future needs of the public service by:

- › Enabling a flexible environment for differing organizational needs;
- › Providing common staffing tools and support; and
- › Supporting accountability, oversight and the values of fairness, transparency and access.

Project Strategic Goals

The following goals set out the core thrusts of the project and will serve as the basis for measuring and assessing performance improvements over the next five years.

- › Enhance the protection of merit and non-partisanship by providing delegated organizations with common staffing standards, tools and processes
- › Improve the quality of hiring across government
- › Significantly reduce the time & cost to fill a position (internal and external)
- › Improve client satisfaction (including ease of use) for managers, employees, applicants

The key drivers for PSSMP are:

- › The PSC's mandate to implement the *Public Service Employment Act (PSEA)* and, ensure a staffing system that respects the values of fairness, access transparency & representativeness;
- › The need to reduce time and cost to staff a federal public service job, the need for quality hires and the need to increase user satisfaction in the staffing process (job seeker, hiring manager & human resource professionals);
- › The PSC policy, supported by Parliamentarians and Canadians, to increase access to GOC job opportunities through the expanded use of a National Area of Selection (NAoS), i.e., removal of geographic restrictions;
- › PS Modernization, in particular PSEA, which provided departments with more flexibility in the staffing process and resulted in delegation of staffing authority to departments under a broad policy framework developed by the PSC;
- › PS Renewal, with a focus on recruitment and enabling infrastructure to support recruitment and development;

- Demographic shifts, which have resulted in an aging public service (PS) workforce (with a large number of PS staff eligible for retirement soon) and one that needs to better reflect the diverse Canadian population; and
- An increasingly competitive labour market.

b) PSRS Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

There are multiple levels of stakeholders and clients among the users of the PSRS, as identified in Table 1.1. Key beneficiaries of the system clearly include hiring managers within the federal public service. While hiring managers do not use the system directly, they benefit from an electronic system to recruit applicants nationally in a manner consistent with public service values and policies, as well as the ability to screen applicants electronically. The Human Resources Community of the federal public service, as the direct users of the PSRS, are also key beneficiaries of the system, as are the Canadians applying to federal public service positions using the system. More broadly, the PSC is a key stakeholder from a number of perspectives in terms of the development, deployment and use of the system

Table 1.1: PSRS Stakeholders

Project Development and Deployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Service Commission (System Managers) ➤ Public Works and Government Services Canada (e.g., contracting technology advice.) ➤ Canada School of Public Service (i.e., e- training) ➤ Service Canada (1-800 support, Job Search, alternate access services)
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hiring Managers ➤ Human Resources (HR) Community ➤ Departments (including departmental Executive Committees)
Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Current government of Canada employees ➤ Canadian citizens ➤ Permanent residents, non-Canadians, etc.
Stewardship and Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Service Commission (PSC) ➤ Canada Public Service Agency (CPSA) ➤ Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) ➤ TBS Chief Information Officer Branch (re Internal Services Modernization Program, CASS) ➤ Parliament ➤ Public Service Staffing Tribunal (PSST) ➤ Staffing-related committees (including the HR Council, National Staffing Council, Regional Federal Councils)

c) System Resources

The PSRS represents a substantial investment for the federal public service in a modernized recruitment system. Table 1.2 lists the operational and developmental resources required to implement the Stream I of PSSMP (PSRS) at or up to March 31, 2008, as well as forecasts of the resources required in the remaining three fiscal years to develop and operate this electronic recruitment system.

Table 1.2: Actual and Intended Financial Resources*

	Actuals							Forecasts			
	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	Total
Salary	412,405	1,427,233	3,731,617	2,368,811	2,584,223	3,252,166	4,082,471	4,498,989	3,880,431	3,950,262	30,188,608
Non-Salary	206,928	2,515,129	1,859,555	1,576,859	7,465,773	3,440,701	4,852,436	3,806,489	2,013,496	2,016,987	29,754,353
Sub-Total	619,333	3,942,362	5,591,172	3,945,670	10,049,996	6,692,867	8,934,907	8,305,478	5,893,927	5,967,249	59,942,961
EBP ⁵	82,481	285,447	746,323	473,762	516,845	650,433	816,494	899,798	776,086	790,052	6,037,722
PSC Req's	701,814	4,227,809	6,337,495	4,419,432	10,566,841	7,343,300	9,751,401	9,205,276	6,670,013	6,757,301	65,980,683
Acc. Costs ⁶	53,613	185,540	485,110	307,945	335,949	422,782	530,721	584,869	504,457	513,534	3,924,519
Total Costs	755,427	4,413,349	6,822,606	4,727,378	10,902,790	7,766,082	10,282,122	9,790,144	7,174,470	7,270,835	69,905,202

* This table includes expenditures from 2001 to 2003 as well as those related to Stream II project definition. However, these were outside of the scope of the evaluation given that the system was not used for general recruitment prior to 2003-2004 and that Stream II cannot be evaluated prior to its implementation.

In addition to financial resources invested in the development and operation of the system, the PSC has staff dedicated to the ongoing operations and development of the PSRS. A total of 21 full time employees were dedicated to the operation and development of PSRS in 2005-2006, which rose to 38 employees in 2006-2007 and 49 full-time employees in 2007-2008 (as identified in Table 1.3). As PSSMP built its internal capacity, reliance on contracting work wended down. This explains the significant decrease in non salary resources in 06-07.

⁵ EBP: Employee Benefit Plan (20% of salary expenditures)

⁶ Accommodations costs (13% of salary expenditures)

Table 1.3: Human Resources (FTEs)

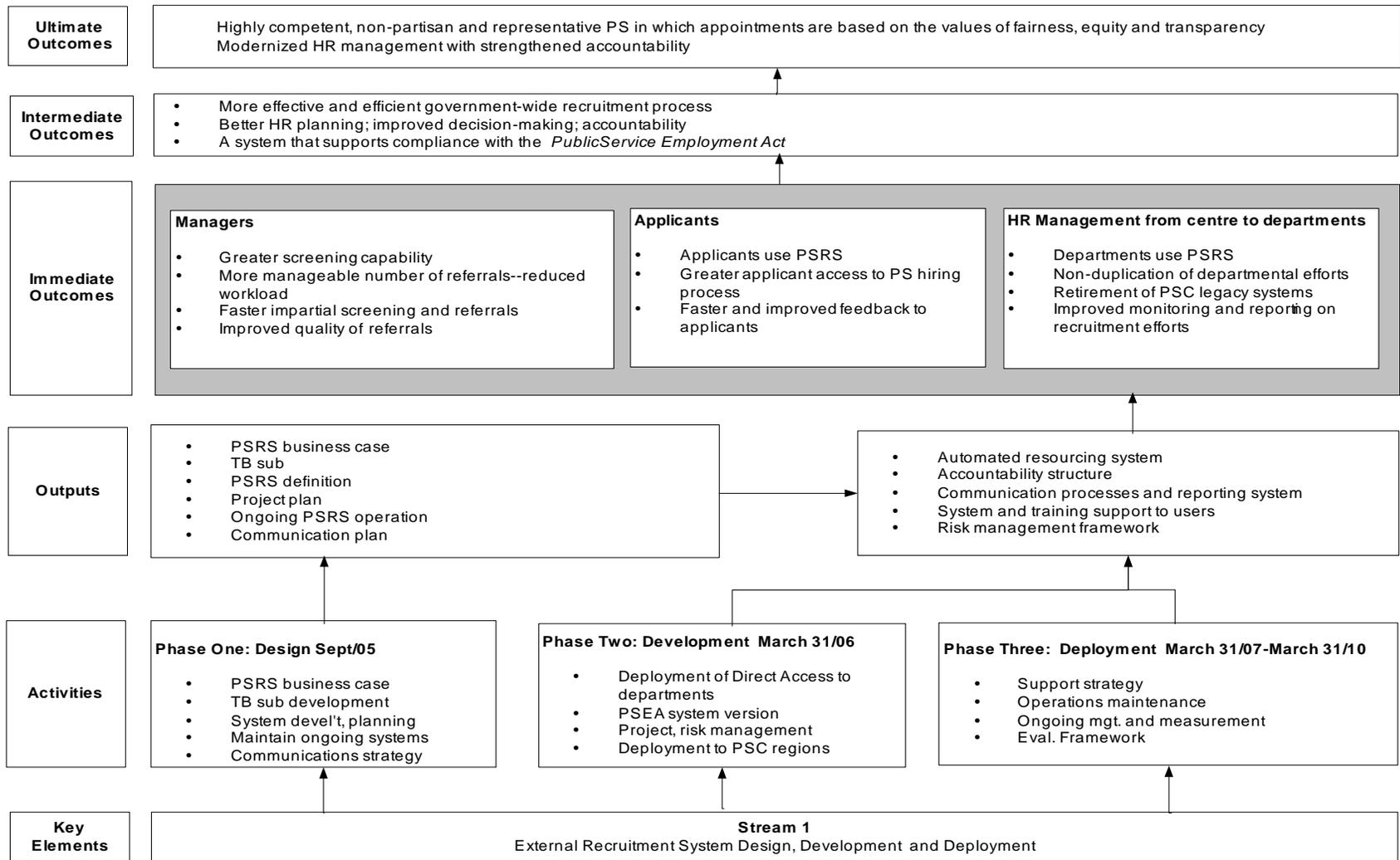
Full Time Employee	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Ongoing Operations	9	10	16
Development	12	28	33
Total	21	38	49

Excludes FTEs dedicated to Stream II

d) Intended Outcomes

A logic model for the PSSMP was prepared by the PSC prior to the conduct of this evaluation and was used for the purposes of this evaluation study. Given that this logic model focuses more on project process and outputs and is not sufficiently geared towards the program's target audience, expected results and performance measurement, PSC's Internal Evaluation Division has developed a revised logic model, presented in Appendix A. The latter is intended to assist in the development of a performance measurement strategy and future evaluation frameworks.

Table 1.4: Logic Model: PSSMP Stream I- Public Service Resourcing System



Immediate outcomes of the PSRS can be identified for three key stakeholder groups, which are hiring managers, applicants, and HR management:

- **Hiring managers:** The PSRS will assist hiring managers by providing greater screening ability and the ability to control the volume of referrals. The electronic screening process is intended to reduce workload and shorten appointment processes by controlling the number of referrals, provide faster impartial screening and referrals and improve quality of referrals. This will ultimately lead to greater satisfaction with staffing.
- **Applicants:** By using the PSRS to apply to federal public service positions, applicants have greater access to and understanding of FPS opportunities. The electronic process also provides applicants the potential to receive faster and improved feedback; ability to track progress; and a more user-friendly experience. The electronic screening will furthermore help ensure a good match between candidates and opportunities.
- **HR management: shift from the PSC and central agencies to departments:** Departments have the opportunity to obtain direct access to the PSRS or to use the functionalities of the system through the PSC. The existence of one electronic system will furthermore reduce reliance on manual systems and avoid duplication of effort across departments. The PSC, central agencies and departments will also benefit from improved monitoring and reporting on recruitment efforts.

Intermediate outcomes include a more effective and efficient government-wide recruitment process; better HR planning, decision-making and accountability; and a single cost effective and efficient system that supports compliance with the PSEA and meets clients business needs.

Ultimate outcomes include a highly competent, non-partisan and representative public service, in which appointments are based on the values of fairness, access, representativeness and transparency; as well as modernized HR management with strengthened accountability.

1.2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation was to conduct research, data collection and analysis to support an objective assessment of the progress being made in the implementation of Stream I of the Public Service Staffing Modernization Project and in achieving its intended outcomes. The research was conducted between June 2007 and May 2008 and was intended to examine the system's design, development, implementation, operation and outcomes.

The statement of work further identified the following general issues this evaluation was intended to explore:

- Whether there are ways to improve project delivery of Stream I of the Public Service Staffing Modernization Project from either an effectiveness or efficiency perspective?

- Whether Stream I of the Public Service Staffing Modernization Project is being delivered/implemented as intended?
- What changes should be made to ensure the PSRS will achieve its objectives?
- Whether appropriate performance information is being collected, captured, safeguarded and used? And whether data quality is being assured?

The main audience for this report includes:

- PSC President and PSC Executive Management Committee

This evaluation report will support the progress report to Treasury Board (TB) in the fall of 2008.

Given that Stream I was intended only as an interim solution, and specific to the recruitment function only, it seems reasonable to assume that most of the major lessons learned and suggested changes and recommendations coming from this research will be applied in the development of Stream II, rather than focusing efforts on changes to a system that will be decommissioned within two to three years.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

This report involves an evaluation of Stream I of the PSSMP. The evaluation was designed to address a broad range of issues, including relevance, design, and success. The evaluation research was conducted for the Corporate Management Practices and Evaluation Directorate of the Public Service Commission. It included multiple lines of evidence:

- A document review⁷, which helped to ensure that the evaluation team was well versed in the policy and legal environment in which the PSRS and PSSMP have been developed and implemented, and familiar with the PSRS;
- A series of 30 key informant interviews with PSRS managers, Super Users in Direct Access Departments, PSRS Service providers from PSC regional offices, and HR specialists using the PSRS⁸;
- An on-line survey of PSRS applicants, conducted from January 21 to 29, 2008, which was completed by 4,763 applicants;

⁷ A full listing of the materials reviewed can be found in the Interviews, Document Review and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis Technical Report.

⁸ A full listing of respondents interviewed can be found in the Interviews, Document Review and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis Technical Report.

- An on-line survey of departmental and PSC users of the PSRS⁹, implemented between February 27 and March 12, completed by 295 respondents;
- A series of focus groups and one-on-one interviews with departmental HR advisors and PSC regional support staff, completed in April 2008; and
- A preliminary cost-effectiveness analysis was conducted in order to compare PSRS costs per screened out application to the estimated costs of the manual screening alternative.

With regard to evidence from the online surveys, two caveats should be kept in mind:

1. In the case of the applicant survey, data collection took place over a relatively short period of time and, therefore, captured applicants to specific advertisements that were in place at that time. In fact, the largest proportion of applicants was submitting applications for a position at a department that does not typically post many positions. The sample of applicants captured by the survey, therefore, may not be completely reflective of the diversity of experiences and skills held by the overall population of applicants over the course of a longer period of time. Nor were they necessarily responding to the “typical” array of screening tests as found throughout the year.
2. In the survey of departmental HR advisors (and PSRS users), there is an overrepresentation of users from departments with direct access. Users in Direct Access Departments (DADs) are typically more familiar with the PSRS than those in departments without direct access. As such, overall results from this survey may show a greater understanding of the system than what would normally be the case.

The evaluation matrix detailing the issues and questions to be addressed through the evaluation and corresponding data method is provided in Appendix B.

1.4 NOTE ON REPORTING

With respect to reporting interview findings, given the qualitative nature of the interview data, the results are presented in a format that uses qualifiers rather than percentages. For the sake of consistency, qualifiers such as “small number”, “minority”, “few” or “some” refer to two to four respondents. Qualifiers such as “several” or “many” refer to more than four but less than half of respondents. “Most” refers to more than half of respondents.

⁹ For the purposes of this evaluation, “users of the PSRS” encompasses PSC and departmental employees who use the system either directly (i.e. direct access departments) or through a PSC regional office (i.e. regional PSC staff access the system on the department’s behalf to post advertisements, screen applications, communicate with applicants, etc.). Persons applying on externally advertised positions through the PSRS are referred to as “applicants”. Results are presented separately for users and applicants.

2. FINDINGS

2.1 RELEVANCE

The evaluation first addresses the question of alignment with broader government priorities. As part of this overall question, the research more specifically examined three issues or questions:

- How does the PSRS support government priorities that the system was designed to support;
- Is there an ongoing need for the PSRS; and
- Is there additional unmet need that should be addressed (either by Stream I or by Stream II).

The overall research question: ***Is the PSRS consistent with government-wide priorities and does it respond to the original intent of the system?***

The PSRS is perceived to be supporting the implementation of the *Public Service Employment Act* and other government priorities, particularly the implementation of the Area of Selection Policy, by making it possible to manage large volumes of applications. Most Departmental and PSC users believe that the system is helping to ensure that recruitment processes are in accordance with legislative and PSC requirements. Furthermore, study findings point to a definite ongoing need for an electronic system to handle recruitment as it is not considered feasible to conduct manual screening for most processes where a national area of selection is used particularly in the context of current demographics and trends.

Evaluation Question 1: How does the PSRS support implementation of the Public Service Employment Act and related government priorities?

For over 100 years, the Public Service Commission's core mandate has been to ensure that the appointment and promotion of federal public service employees is free of political patronage and is based on merit. This essential responsibility was reaffirmed by the recommendations detailed in the Second Report of the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service concerning human resource governance and accountability structure.

One of the Government's five priorities, detailed in the November 2007 Speech from the Throne, is to modernize our federation and democratic institutions. The PSC continues to modernize its staffing and assessment services and systems and the manner in which they are made available. These services and systems can be tailored to the needs of departments and agencies, and some are currently offered on a cost-recovery basis, although PSRS services are offered at no charge to the client departments. Through these efforts, the PSC supports the Government of Canada's vision of a modern, renewed federal public service that can adapt to the evolving needs of Canadians. PSSMP is a key initiative for realizing the vision for a renewed federal public service and supports the government priorities through

its goals of enhancing the protection of merit and non-partisanship by providing delegated organizations with common staffing standards, tools and processes; improving client satisfaction and the quality of hiring across government; and reducing the time & cost to fill a position.

The PSRS has provided the federal public service with a means of meeting a number of priorities linked to recruitment. As noted in the introduction, the PSSMP is intended to address a number of federal government priorities, including the implementation of the PSMA. The PSMA and the PSEA are a cornerstone piece of legislation for modernizing human resources management in the federal public service. The PSEA has numerous implications including increased delegation of staffing responsibility and accountability to departments and agencies.

Modernized recruitment is equally identified as a priority by the Privy Council of Canada in the Fourteenth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada¹⁰. It is noted that goals with respect to recruitment are to ensure that a) the public service as a whole has the people and the skills it needs for the future, b) that each department and agency is equipped to meet its needs for new personnel, and that c) recruitment processes are accessible, credible and efficient.

The National Area of Selection (NAoS) is a related driver of change. The expansion of NAOs will provide the Canadian public with more access to federal public service job opportunities¹¹. The Policy on Area of Selection requires that a national area of selection – rather than specific geographic areas – be established for all external advertised appointment processes for specific occupational groups¹². The PSC has taken a phased and measured approach to implementing the Area of Selection Policy. In April 2006, NAOs was applied to officer-level positions in the National Capital Region (phase 1). In April 2007, the PSC extended the use of NAOs to include officer-level positions open to the public in all regions across Canada (phase 2). Officer-level positions include scientific and professional, administrative and technical functions. The PSC will now move forward with full implementation by December 2008 (phase 3), once it can ensure government-wide readiness to meet the increased volume of applications resulting from this expansion. Full implementation of NAOs will mean that all externally advertised jobs will be open to all Canadians regardless of their area of residence.¹³ Further to NAOs pilot projects conducted in 2002, the PSC found that the volume of applications increased significantly and that screening time became a critical concern when using NAOs. It also concluded that it would be counter-productive to further expand the generalized use of NAOs, without first introducing better electronic tools to improve the current recruitment system (i.e. to facilitate the receipt and screening of high volumes of applications and ensure the expedient referral of suitable candidates to hiring manager¹⁴. In this regard, the PSRS supports the NAOs phased implementation.

¹⁰ http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/docs/information/Publications/ar-ra/14report2007/14th_annual_report_e.pdf

¹¹ March 2007 News Release - <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/centres/newsrelease-communiques/2007/new-com-03-29-eng.htm>

¹² Policy on Area of Selection - <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/frame-cadre/policy-politique/naos-zns-eng.htm>

¹³ November 2007 News Release - <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/naos-zns/index-eng.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/abt-aps/rprt/aos-zns/2002/index-eng.htm>

The system was therefore designed to address a number of issues or problems related to the implementation of the PSMA, the PSEA and the Appointment Policy¹⁵. These include:

- National Area of Selection (NAoS) expansion which increases the volume of applications for positions with the federal public service;
- Workforce demographics (with a large number of public service staff eligible for retirement), which will further amplify the volume of applications and the number of positions to advertise;
- Delegated authority to departments and agencies for recruitment as per the delegation conditions outlined in their Appointment Delegation Accountability Instrument¹⁶ ;
- The continued need to focus on merit criteria in recruitment;
- Screening needs to support targeted initiatives (e.g., employment equity);
- Risk of investment in and development of multiple solutions, given that departments and agencies have delegated authority for all recruitment; and
- Better management of resourcing.

The primarily manual process used across much of the federal public service was not optimal to adequately support the modernized resourcing approach expected under the PSMA and the PSEA, to ensure implementation of NAOs, or to meet other federal priorities as highlighted by the PCO and TBS. The prior process was paper-based, labour-intensive, slow and vulnerable to abuse (e.g., manual methods did not allow for adequate tracking). The PSC had developed an automated, web-based tool, the Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS) to facilitate the screening process. This readily available system was, therefore employed as the initial response to addressing these needs. The system was designed to provide a quicker turnaround, but also to provide referred applications in a more flexible, consistent and structured format.

Question 1 above was also posed to system users in the survey and in interviews. Interview respondents across all categories generally agree that PSRS has supported the implementation of the PSEA and other federal government priorities. More specifically, interview respondents agree that the PSRS has supported the implementation of NAOs¹⁷, making it possible to manage large volumes of applicants, and facilitating the management of these large applicant pools by providing a means to communicate with applicants electronically. As well, many interview respondents believe that the PSRS has improved the quality and speed of service they can provide a hiring manager on an external recruitment process, although others did not see this as being the case.

¹⁵ <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/frame-cadre/policy-politique/index-eng.htm>

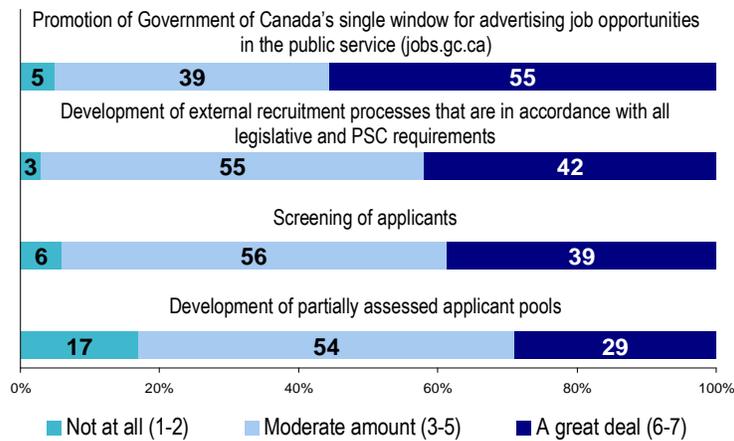
¹⁶ <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/frame-cadre/delegation/policy-politique-eng.htm>

¹⁷ Enhancing Canadians' Access to Federal Public Service Jobs p. iii - <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/abt-aps/rprt/aos-zns/2002/aos-zns-eng.pdf>

PSRS users surveyed similarly suggest that the PSRS is supporting a number of government priorities. As shown in Figure 1, the priority seen as being most strongly supported by the PSRS is the promotion of the Government of Canada's single window for advertising federal public service opportunities. As well, over half agree that the PSRS moderately supports the development of recruitment processes in accordance with all legislative and PSC requirements; and the development of partially assessed applicant pools.

FIGURE 1
PSRS Support of Priorities

“To what extent do you feel that the PSRS assists you with each of the following...?”



EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=237

Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

Results from the survey of users, discussed in outcomes under Evaluation Question 20 further demonstrate that the PSRS has been instrumental in making it possible to handle large applicant volumes.

Evaluation Question 2: Is there an ongoing need for PSRS?

Interview respondents all agree that there is an ongoing need for an electronic system to handle the large volumes of applicants, which are anticipated to continue as a result of the Area of Selection Policy and retirement of baby boomers in the federal public service. Based on PSRS data, the number of applications rose from 40,363 in 2002-2003 to 1,071,365 in 06-07 which represents an increase of more than 2500 per cent. See the cost-effectiveness analysis for more information on application rates. Several interview respondents suggested that there is a need for modern tools to make automated job posting and screening possible. Others said that they appreciate the control that an electronic system provides them over the process, or that an electronic approach makes it much easier to manage the appointment process. Others observed that an electronic tool is essential in terms of ensuring that screening is neutral, fair and impartial.

While all interview respondents agree that there is an ongoing need for an electronic recruitment tool, several (seven out of 30 across all respondent types) expressed uncertainty about whether the PSRS is the right tool, given that it does have some flaws or drawbacks (which are explored under section 2.2 below).

Evaluation Question 3: Are there any additional needs which remain to be met?

While there is a recognized ongoing need for an electronic system to support recruitment, some interview respondents note that the current PSRS system (as part of an interim measure) does have certain weaknesses and limitations to be addressed. These are discussed further under sections 2.2 and 2.3. Additionally, many interview respondents also noted the need for one system to support both recruitment and staffing needs which Stream II will be designed to do.

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION

The major focus of the study was on relevance, design, implementation and immediate outcomes of the PSRS and whether it has been unfolding as intended. Most of the evaluation questions, therefore, focus on evidence of improved design/delivery as the initiative's lifecycle processes unfold and on the results achieved to date.

Evaluation Question 4: To what extent were system design requirements and expectations met? How did the evolution of the expectations for the system affect implementation?

Evaluation Question 5: To what extent did other government policies and requirements affect the system?

As noted, the PSRS was initially launched as a pilot project in 2003 to facilitate the federal public service external staffing screening process. In November 2005, PSRS was deployed to all PSC regions where PSC regional staff access the system on the department or agency's behalf to complete transactions (e.g. post advertisements, screen applications, communicate with applicants, etc.). PSRS is

available to the public from the site www.jobs.gc.ca. Beginning in April 2006, interested departments and agencies began to obtain direct access to the system. A total of 16 federal departments and agencies have elected to obtain Direct Access to the system as of June 2008, and the PSC continues to offer Direct Access to interested organizations. While enhancements are being made to PSRS, the long-term solution will gradually replace the interim system (PSRS) within the next two years subject to availability of funding. However, the ongoing operation of PSRS is expected to continue until 2010/2011, at which time it will be retired.

Ongoing feedback from users of the PSRS has been gathered through Super Users, the HelpDesk and change requests. Since the introduction of PSRS, a number of system enhancements have been made, including PSRS systems releases to improve functionality and address user concerns. While the PSC determined in 2003 that the best option was to develop a system in house, it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess the soundness of this decision. A thorough options analysis should however be conducted in the context of Stream II.

Based on the updated project charter (v. 3.8), evidence shows that most design requirements and expectations were met given that all Phase I and II deliverables were completed on time. As for Phase III and IV, some deliverables were completed with a delay of up to three month (i.e., PSRS deployment strategy, short-term training strategy and Take-up Report); however, others had an actual finish date prior the planned finish date (i.e., Info Tel Modernization, Documentation of PSRS (Business Rules) and Psychometric Analysis of PSRS Functions). As expected, functionality from existing PSC legacy systems (OPF, OAF, ASR and FSWEF) was integrated into PSRS, resulting in the centralization of staffing systems and eliminating the need to maintain legacy systems which have all been decommissioned with the exception of the ISS scheduled to be integrated in the third quarter of 2008. The PSRS was also upgraded as planned to enable its deployment to PSC regional offices in the fall of 2005 and to federal government organizations that chose to acquire direct access to the PSRS between April 2006 and April 2007. :At June 30, 2008, 16 organizations subject to the PSEA had direct access to the system, up from 12 in March 2008. Moreover, system reports indicate that the PSRS had a 98 per cent stability rate in 2007-2008.

Results from key informant interviews also indicate that there has been an evolution of expectations. For instance, additional changes and system releases were deployed based on unplanned urgent needs and policy requirements.

There are also indications that other government policies and requirements affected the system. For instance, the PSC made the decision in 2007 to use a NAoS for FSWEF recruitment (or campaigns) which required the use of a different selection algorithm. Moreover, in view of phase 3 of the NAoS expansion, the system will be amended to offer the option of random selection as part of a scheduled system release. One key informant respondent also made reference to the Management of Information Technology Security Standard (MITS) which required additional security work as well as the Common Look and Feel 2.0 requirements, and the new authority to cost recover a number of assessment services and tools offered by the PSC Staffing and Assessment Services Branch also responsible for managing the PSSMP. The evolution of expectations and policy requirements impacted or will impact scheduled system

releases (three to four annually) by limiting the number of change requests submitted by users that can be addressed.

Evaluation Question 6: Does the system design make the Government of Canada attractive as an employer?

Evaluation findings suggest that PSRS is indeed a necessary system that is making the Government of Canada accessible and attractive as an employer. Most Departmental and PSC users (94 per cent - Figure 1) believe that the PSRS is supporting a single window for advertising federal public positions¹⁸. Applicants appear to be making significant repeat use of the PSRS and say they are more apt to apply to federal public service positions with the electronic access the system offered.

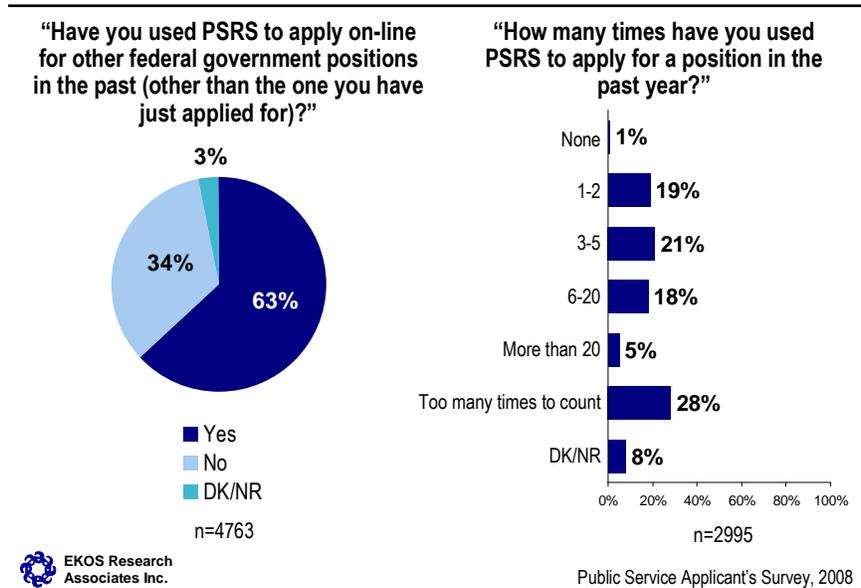
Results from the survey of applicants indicates that the PSRS is receiving significant repeat use from applicants (Figure 2). Over six in ten applicants surveyed have used the PSRS previously to apply for other federal government positions. Only one-third report using the PSRS for the first time. However, given that applicants have to use the system to apply to federal public service jobs, repeat use of the PSRS is expected.

Furthermore, many indicate having used the system to apply for positions numerous times in the 12 months preceding the survey. Overall, applicants (who have previously used the PSRS and are able to specify the number of times they used the system) report using the system an average of 16 times within the 12 months prior to the survey.

¹⁸ While Jobs.gc.ca advertises the jobs and must be used, departments and agencies do not have to use the PSRS to receive applications. They can invite potential applicants to apply through a different system via a hyperlink on Jobs.gc.ca.

FIGURE 2

Prior Use of PSRS by Applicants



Virtually all applicants surveyed also indicated that they plan to use the PSRS again in the future to apply for another federal government job (95 per cent). In addition, the majority of applicants surveyed agree that they are more likely to apply for a federal government job now that they can apply on-line (82 per cent). Although applicants have to use the PSRS to apply to federal public service positions, they may find it easier to apply on-online than to have to mail in their application.

Evaluation Question 7: Was there appropriate policy and senior management/leadership, guidance, decision-making?

Evaluation Question 8: Was project progress monitored and managed appropriately?

Evaluation Question 9: Is appropriate and reliable performance information being collected and used?

Evaluation Question 10: Were there unanticipated problems?

The implementation of PSRS appears to have largely gone according to plan. In terms of project management and monitoring, a project management office is in place to track progress and deliverables. A governance structure is in place with appropriate secretariat support. A Record of Decision Log is maintained with a strong follow-up mechanism. A number of teams and committees are overseeing different aspects of the PSSMP. An overview of their roles and responsibilities is available in the *Technical Report: Interviews, Document Review and Cost-Effectiveness Analysis*. The list of committees is as follows:

- PSSMP VP Governance Committee
- PSSMP Steering Committee

- PSSMP Delivery Team
- Project Management Office
- PSSMP ADM Interdepartmental Advisory Committee
- PSSMP Interdepartmental Staffing Working Group

In addition, established project management practices and tools were developed to assist in the management of the PSSMP. They include:

- Project Charter
- Pulse Report
- Executive Snapshot
- TB Progress Report
- Project Controls Framework
- PSSMP Governance Framework
- PSSMP Procurement Management Plan
- PSSMP Responsibility Matrix
- PSSMP Risk Management Approach
- Risk Register (updated monthly)
- Deliverables Tracking

These tools, along with the governance structure appear to be covering most Project Management Institute's recommended project management knowledge areas and processes which include the management of project integration, scope, time, cost, quality, human resources, communications, risk, and procurement¹⁹. (More details available at Appendix F)

The project is supported by the PSSMP VP Governance Committee – chaired by the Vice President of Staffing and Assessment Branch with the participation of the President and two other vice presidents. Ongoing feedback is being obtained from the Super Users group, and data are collected on the use and performance of the system. Interview respondents largely agree that the PSRS project is being appropriately managed. This is corroborated by the internal audit conducted of the project, which notes that the project was well managed and monitored in terms of progress, with a project management office.

¹⁹ *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*, Fourth Edition (2008) - http://www.pmi.org/PDF/pp_pmbokguidethirdexcerpts.pdf

The PSC has a performance measurement framework in place (mandatory as per MRRS policy). In addition, the PSC monthly report is presented to the PSC Executive Management Committee as well as a detailed PSRS Data Book which provides indicators on performance of PSRS and operational usage by the PSC and Direct Access Departments. Analysis of the data is also completed and results provided to client groups. However, there is opportunity for improvement given that most of the information collected can only be compared to historic data in the absence of specific targets to be reached. A new performance measurement strategy for the PSSMP was planned for February 2008; but this deliverable will be postponed to a later date in 2008.

The most recent audit report (May 2007)²⁰ indicated a sound management control structure for both project and financial management. Rigorous reporting and strong controls have strengthened the financial management within PSSMP and Treasury Board analysts have indicated their confidence in the project management and leadership within this project. Through the examination of five project management control objectives, Internal Audit found evidence supporting the following conclusions:

1. The PSRS Stream 1 project has adequate mechanisms in place to ensure that its delivered system and business processes will meet stated business requirements as well as be consistent with PSC and Government wide strategies and priorities.
2. Accountabilities are established, clearly defined, and delegated authorities are specified.
3. The project team is adequately experienced and trained to work within PSC corporate disciplines and TBS best practices for IT project management.
4. Project management decisions are based on risk management.
5. The project applies a core management process consistent with Treasury Board approval requirements and is supported by appropriate management tools and techniques.

In terms of the financial component, the three internal audits conducted between 2004 and 2007 have shown that the PSRS Stream I financial management controls have been considerably strengthened which should enhance the team's ability to manage the operational risks related to this project. The May 2007 report states that a number of new processes have been put in place by the project management office to enhance its financial and project management capability, e.g., time tracking; a new work-breakdown structure; MS project support; and Salary Management System reconciliation to allocations by task. Evidence has lead Internal Audit to conclude that:

- Reliable financial information, in terms of accuracy, completeness and compliance with authority, is recorded on the project.
- Processes are in place to ensure that financial reporting is done and communicated on a timely basis to assist decision making.
- Budgets are appropriately managed.
- Management action plans from previous internal audit reports are implemented.

²⁰ Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS), Stream 1 – Final Status Report <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/abt-aps/inta-veri/2007/psrs-rsfp/index-eng.htm>

The PSC has conducted or commissioned a number of research projects since the inception of the PSRS. Feedback from applicants and HR advisors was obtained via online surveys in 2004 and 2005. Furthermore, the Personnel Psychology Centre (PPC) was asked by the Resourcing Services Directorate (RSD) of the PSC to evaluate the E-Screening on Experience component of the e-recruitment approach. This evaluation included a quantitative review and evaluation of the decision-making accuracy and fairness of e-screening on experience. A key finding of the study was that the on-line experience questionnaire was found to be a more accurate measure of experience than manual screening, justifying its continued use. That said, the study indicated that this screening tool is less than optimally accurate if the experience statements are too general, too specific and literal to the job requirements or not a good reflection of the requirements of the position. They also indicated that this screening has the potential in some cases be too restrictive if the criteria are set at too high a threshold, and if they require experience that applicants are only likely to have coming from government. The study provides recommendations to enhance the accuracy of the e-screening process.

As noted earlier, a number of system enhancements have been made since the introduction of PSRS, including PSRS systems releases to improve functionality. There have been regular maintenance releases since the inception of PSRS on March 31, 2003. These releases were all geared to enhance the functionality of PSRS, which affect both the Applicant and the Administrator sites.

PSRS managers interviewed note that PSRS was designed specifically with government needs in mind, but caution that this was only planned to be an interim tool and acknowledge that it requires improvements.

In terms of management, PSRS managers also note that a project management office is in place to track progress and deliverables on this project (Phase I to V), and that ongoing feedback on the system is being obtained from Super Users and through data collected on the use and performance of the system. The progress report of PSSMP Deliverables indicates that the majority of Stream I deliverables (Phase I to III) were completed on time. Less than a quarter were approximately 3 months late. The planned finish date for all of Phase V deliverables is towards the end of the current calendar year.

As noted in the introduction, the logic model for the PSRS has been revised to put a greater emphasis on external outputs and outcomes and to facilitate the development of a meaningful performance measurement strategy which has yet to be developed. Potential performance indicators have furthermore been identified by the PSC's Internal Evaluation Division, and are provided in Appendix A. The initial methodology also included a literature review, which was to involve a comparison of other automated, internet-based systems used by governments to receive and screen job applications from the public. However, given that the program committed to conducting its own extensive benchmarking exercise, this element was excluded from the evaluation. The program is currently exploring benchmark measures for staffing, but this exercise does not include a comparison of other automated systems.

In terms of unanticipated problems at the implementation stage, in its Report on the Update on Implementation of Direct Access, the PSC indicated that the lack of readiness of departments due to the low

human resources capacity and high turnover has hampered direct access implementation. On several occasions, despite the commitment of senior management within an organization, departments have pulled out from a scheduled Direct Access deployment at the last moment for operational reasons. Both the capacity of the receiving organization to implement new systems and tools and the high turnover of HR staff have been identified as key reasons. In one instance, eight out of ten HR advisors scheduled for training left the department within a three week period. Naturally the plans for Direct Access were abandoned in the short term, while they rebuilt capacity. This HR capacity is an ongoing issue for departments and was referenced by the PSC President in the Annual Report tabled in November 2007.

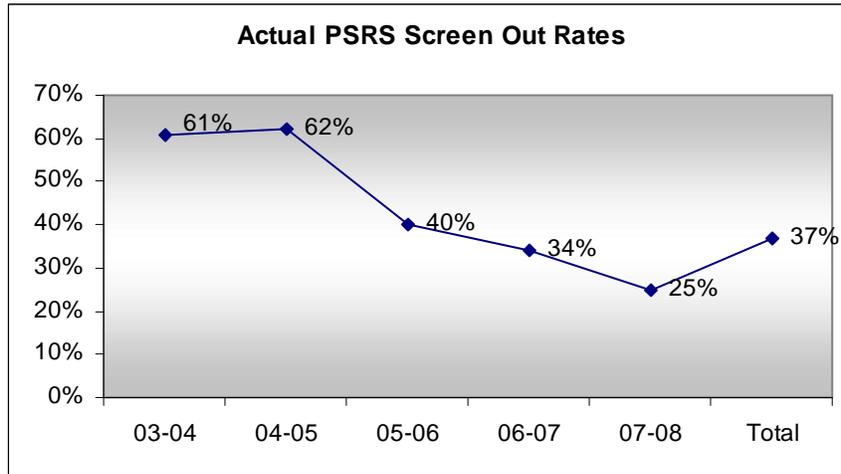
This has had a significant effect on the PSSMP project as resources are aligned to support the deployment of the system and then plans are abandoned with no repercussions for the department. Although there is a stated desire by departments to take up PSRS, operational requirements often affect the actual deployment. While PSRS was initially deployed according to schedule (March 2007), the number of departments that elected to have direct access could have been higher if not for capacity issues within departments. One of the PSSMP's team solutions to support departments and their operational realities has been to implement, with the Canada School of the Public Service, an E-learning product for PSRS training – available on line.

In addition, the project experienced a minimum 6-month delay on Stream II of the project as a result of contracting issues with PWGSC. The entire request for proposal process had to be restarted. The impact on Stream I is unclear at this point, but may put added pressure on PSRS to exist beyond 2011 if a new solution is not in place. It is important to note that the system's platform may not be supported beyond 2010-11. In fact, there is already a component of the system that is no longer supported by the manufacturer. This exposes the PSC to risks in terms of its capacity of delivering recruitment and screening services if this essential component malfunctions and cannot be fixed internally.

Following the PSRS implementation, an unanticipated problem with the usage of screening features emerged. A number of users experienced difficulties and frustrations with the experience questionnaire and toolkit (discussed further under results pertaining to outcomes and success, section 2.3). Users express dissatisfaction with the experience questionnaire based on its reliance on self-reporting and the tendency of applicants to over-rate or under-rate their experience, limiting the effectiveness of electronic screening. Use of the experience questionnaire declined sharply from 2006-2007, to 2007-2008 (discussed Evaluation Question 21). This is also illustrated in the decline of the proportion of applications screened out by the system, or screen-out rates over time (Figure 3). The PSC has attempted to address this issue through several measures. The PSC has recently put on jobs.gc.ca a notice to applicants about the consequences of potential fraudulent information (i.e. rejection of application, revocation of job, corrective action and investigation). The applicant is required to confirm that he/she has read and understood the contents of the notice before submitting a job application. Time will tell if this will have a positive impact and reduce the occurrence of overrepresentation. Furthermore, the program mentions in its training material that the occurrence of this can be reduced (increased screen out rate) by using more than one screening tool. For instance, if in addition to the experience questionnaire, the manager asks applicants to write an essay

explaining how and when they gain such experiences, unqualified (inexperienced) applicants may decide to withdraw from the process at that point.

FIGURE 3
PSRS Screen-Out Rates

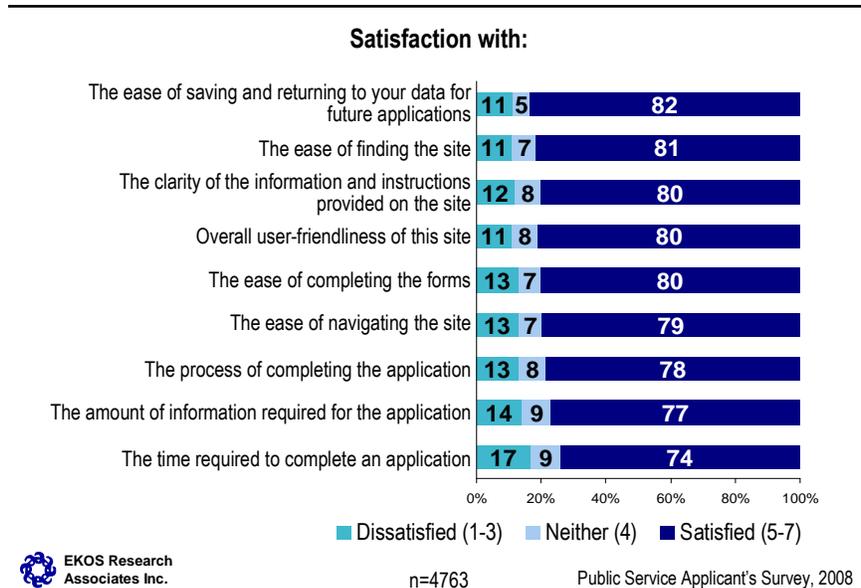


Source: PSRS

Evaluation Question 11: To what extent is the system applicant-friendly?

Most applicants are satisfied with the PSRS on each aspect or feature tested in the on-line survey (Figure 4), including ease of finding the site and navigating within it, as well as the clarity of information and instructions provided. The process of completing the application, and the amount of information required to complete an application were also rated positively along with the ease with which they can save and return to data for future applications and the overall user-friendliness of the site. Furthermore, applicants (and users) are satisfied with the level of privacy protection afforded by the site. Applicants did not rate the time required to complete the application as high as the other aspects of the system, although 74 per cent still expressed satisfaction. Departmental HR advisors and PSC users participating in focus groups, however, seem less convinced that the system is sufficiently applicant-friendly, based on the number of errors they see in applications. They indicated that while it may seem easy to complete the electronic forms, applicants can inadvertently be screened out based on incomplete information which in some instances could be prevented with clearer instructions or conditional menus.

FIGURE 4
Satisfaction of Applicants with PSRS



While satisfaction among applicants is generally high it does decline with the number of times the respondent has used the system. Satisfaction with the PSRS is also higher among applicants applying for clerical and secretarial positions (compared to those applying to other positions).

When asked about suggestions for changes to PSRS, applicants cited improving the entry or loading of CVs in the system; improved job search function (which is not a PSC tool); lengthening the user session or enabling applicants to save data for a future session; increased clarity in instructions;

improvements to the education section; and improved navigation and user-friendliness. Clearly, while some applicants suggest that the ability to save data for future sessions as an improvement, many others do not experience this difficulty, based on the high satisfaction rating in Figure 4.

While applicants surveyed tended to express fairly high levels of satisfaction with the system, PSRS users participating in focus groups expressed concern about the ease of completing forms accurately for applicants. They felt that based on their experience; there is significant room for error by applicants. If an applicant neglects to fill one field of many, or if they fill one incorrectly, they may get screened out or eliminated from consideration (and not even be aware of the fact as many do not know how to check their profile). These focus group participants feel that there are simply too many steps to complete and too many fields of entry for the applicant, making it is too easy to make a mistake or to miss a field. They also note that applicants can be screened out accidentally due to an unrecognized postal code, or small errors in the education section (e.g., by filling out a Masters degree but neglecting to fill in fields on primary or secondary education, or due to variations in the description of specializations from one school to another). This suggests that applicants may not always be aware that they have made errors in their application, or are being screened out unnecessarily due to errors or missing information on applications. It is important to note, however, that the PSRS does provide visual indications if sections of the application have not been completed.

Evaluation Question 12: Is there useful feedback to applicants?

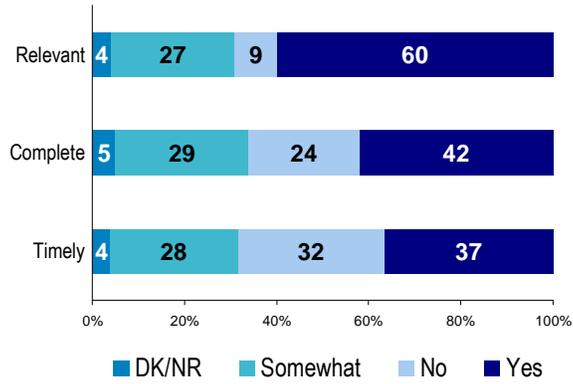
Study findings indicate this to be an area of weakness in the process. The applicant survey revealed a relatively high level of frustration or dissatisfaction among many applicants with feedback received (Figure 5). The frustrations with feedback also resurface elsewhere when applicants are asked to provide suggestions for improvement to the system. Improvements to feedback top the list of suggested changes to the system made by applicants. It should be noted, however, that responsibility for feedback to applicants lies with the hiring department and not with PSRS. Feedback to applicants is therefore a weakness of the process and not the system.

Although three-quarters of the applicants surveyed indicate that they were informed about whether or not their application was referred to the hiring organization, a not insignificant minority (18 per cent) were not. Added to this is the time-frame in which this feedback is received, which varies significantly. The average lag was reported to be just over 10 weeks. It is important to note however, that if electronic screening is used, applicants may view screening results in their applicant file shortly after screening is completed.

Applicants also provided only moderate satisfaction with the relevance, timeliness and completeness of the feedback received (Figure 5). Six in ten applicants feel that the feedback they received was relevant and less than half judge the feedback they received to be complete. Applicants also appear to view the time-lag between application and feedback to be too lengthy, as only 37 per cent describe the feedback received as timely.

FIGURE 5
Applicant Satisfaction with Feedback

“Did you feel the feedback you received was...?”



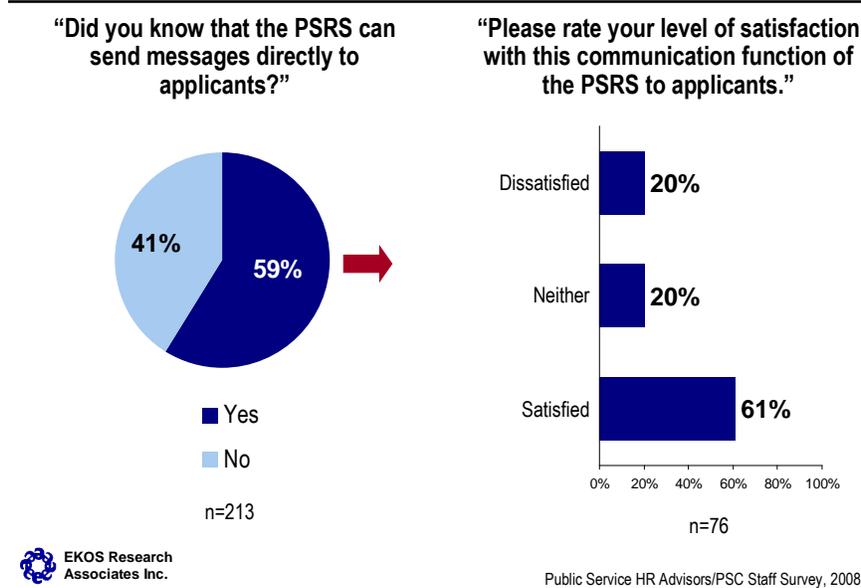
n=1520

Public Service Applicant's Survey, 2008

The concerns expressed by applicants regarding feedback from the system are likely explained by the fact that the communications function of the PSRS is not well communicated to or understood by users. According to survey results, many system users are not aware that they can use the PSRS to send messages directly to applicants (just over half are aware of this feature). Of those aware of this function, two-thirds appear to have made use of this feature. Of those who have used the PSRS to communicate with applicants, roughly six in ten are satisfied with this option (Figure 6). Therefore, while feedback functions are in place within the system, users are either not aware of these, or simply not making use of them.

FIGURE 6

Communication with Applicants



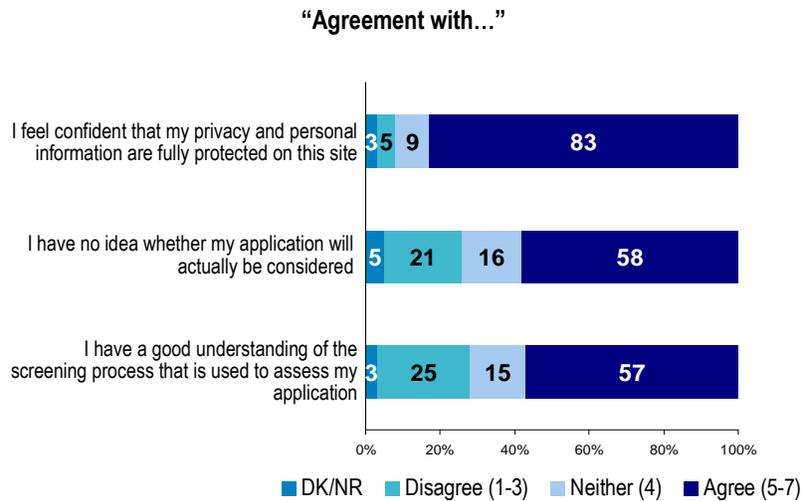
Consistent with survey findings, several HR assistants and specialists participating in focus groups said that they were largely unaware of the communications function of the PSRS, and were not aware that the system could be used to communicate electronically with applicants. PSC staff participating in focus groups, on the other hand, were generally very familiar with the communications capacity of the PSRS, and use the system regularly to communicate with applicants (e.g., to communicate any changes to the poster, or other pertinent information about the appointment process).

Evaluation Question 13: Is the system perceived to be fair, equitable and transparent to applicants?

Users of the system largely perceive the system to be fair, transparent and equitable; providing an impartial recruitment process. On the other hand, the system is less transparent or clear to applicants. Many applicants are uncertain of how their application is screened or what consideration it receives. Further, applicants do not seem to have a sound understanding of the scope and process of the system and their application. They are not aware that the application is but one step in the sequencing of events. Findings point to a need for improvement in the amount of feedback that applicants receive and the timeliness within which they receive it. Desired improvements in feedback include confirmation when an application is received; information on the selection process and time-line; information on the status of the application and process; and more detailed feedback on recruitment outcomes. While applicant feedback is the responsibility of the hiring department, it may be beneficial to provide general information on the steps in the recruitment process and how electronic screening functions to applicants to the system. General timelines if known could also potentially be communicated in job advertisements. Lack of awareness of the electronic communication function among users contributes to the problem of insufficient feedback, and additional training or information to users may help alleviate this situation.

Survey results suggests that applicants do not have a good understanding of the screening process their application receives, perhaps because of the lack of feedback that they are receiving. Fewer than six in ten agree that they have a good understanding of the screening process used to assess their application and a similar number believe that they have no real sense of whether their application will get serious consideration (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7
Access and Screening: View of Applicants



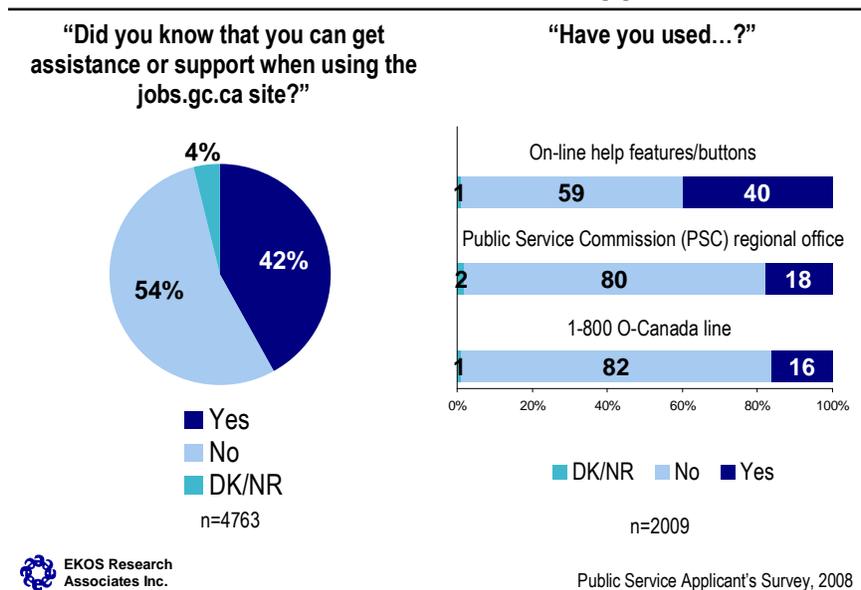
Some system users express concerns about the experience questionnaire and over-reporting of experience by some applicants (further discussed under Evaluation Question 21 concerning the breadth of use of the PSRS). With regard to equitable and fair treatment, some users noted fairness is compromised by the issue of over reporting of experience. Focus group participants also felt that the system's impact on fairness may be compromised in some instances when electronic screening is used because of the issues with the experience questionnaire.

Evaluation Question 14: To what extent do applicants use support services?

Support is available to applicants via on-line help options, PSC regional offices and the Service Canada 1-800 number. These features do not seem, however, to be generally well advertised on the system, as fewer than half the applicants surveyed were aware that support or assistance is available to them when using the web-site. Of those who have used support, on-line help features or buttons are the form of assistance most commonly used, whereas considerably fewer turned to a PSC regional office or the 1-800 line for assistance (Figure 8)²¹. To the extent possible, available support options could be more prominently displayed on the system.

FIGURE 8

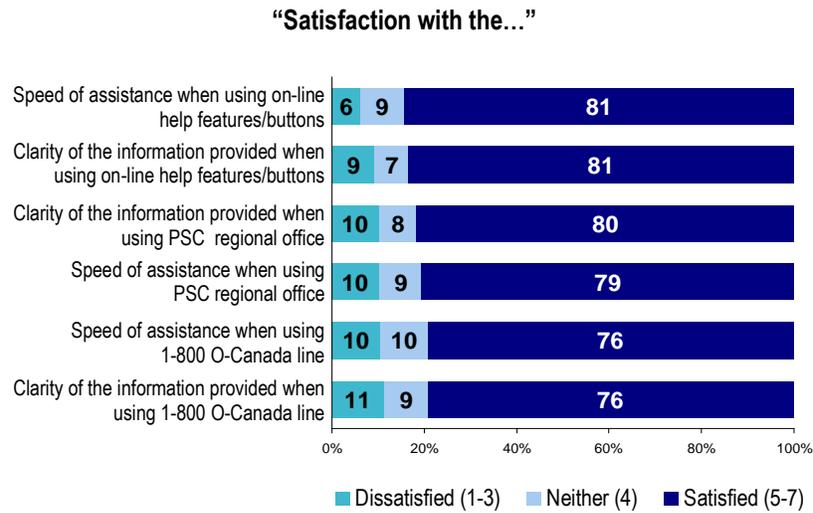
Awareness and Use of Support



²¹ Note that the 1-800 line is not managed by the PSRS or the PSC.

Although relatively few applicants access support services, there is a reasonably high level of satisfaction with the support and assistance available. Of those who have used these support features, over three-quarters are satisfied with each one. Applicants tend to be most satisfied with the on-line help features (which is also used most frequently), followed by speed of assistance and clarity of information from a PSC regional office. Although still rated highly by most, the results are marginally lower for these same elements of the 1-800 line (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9
Applicant Satisfaction with Support



 EKOS Research Associates Inc.

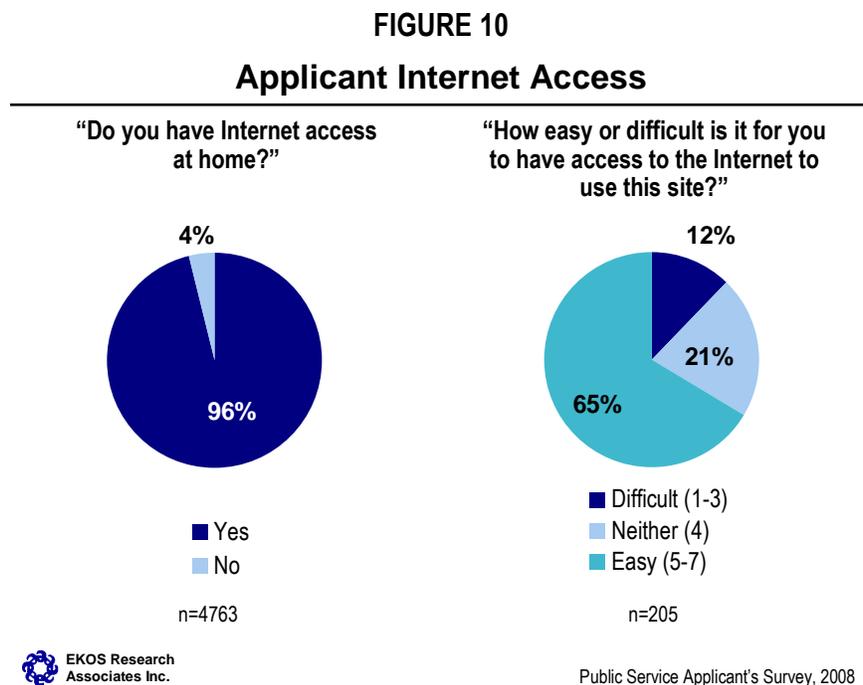
n=331-803

Public Service Applicant's Survey, 2008

Evaluation Question 15: Do those without Internet Service have adequate access to apply to the PS?

As only online applicants were surveyed through this study; the evaluation cannot state with confidence whether Canadians without Internet access have adequate access to apply to the federal public service. PSRS users are not necessarily in a good position to judge accessibility issues, and system applicants, by definition, were not prevented from accessing the system. A survey of the broader public would be needed in order to develop a comprehensive picture on this issue.

Among the applicants surveyed, access to the PSRS was not a significant issue (Figure 10). Even among those applicant survey respondents without home Internet access, most said that it was easy to access the Internet, although 12 per cent experienced difficulty.



Evaluation Question 16: Is the system HR/Hiring manager-friendly?

A recurring theme throughout findings from research conducted of users is that the system is very complex and requires significant practice by the user to gain proficiency. A number of users (in both interviews and focus groups) suggested that the system is too complicated and requires too many steps to complete a poster or application effectively; that the directions or instructions provided to users are insufficient or unclear; and that the system is not sufficiently intuitive or user-friendly. The user-friendliness of the system will clearly be an important consideration for Stream II.

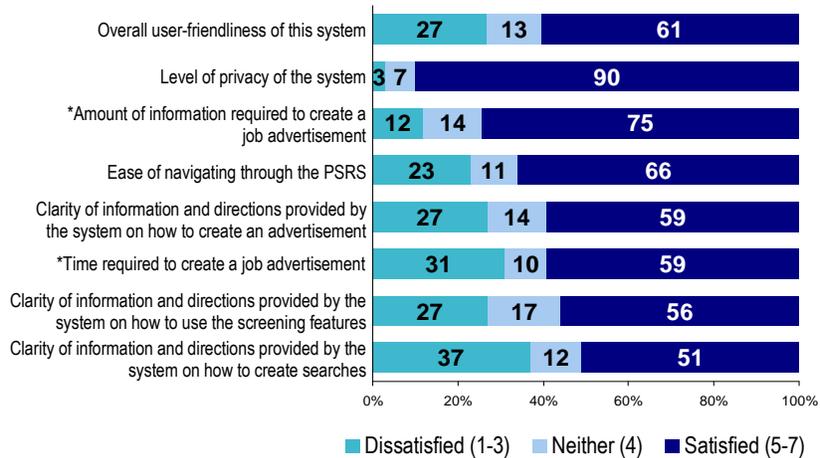
Unlike applicants (previously described) users are only moderately positive about the user-friendliness of the system (Figure 11), with information and directions provided by the system at the top of the list of concerns. As with applicants, the aspect of the PSRS which garners the highest level of satisfaction is the level of privacy provided by the system. Most users are also satisfied with the amount of information required to create a job advertisement on the system. Fewer, however, are satisfied with the ease of navigation of the system, the overall user-friendliness of the system; the clarity of information and directions provided on how to create an ad; and the time required to create a job advertisement. In fact, a fairly significant proportion are dissatisfied with these elements.

Users surveyed are even less enthusiastic in their assessment of the clarity of other types of information and directions provided by the system. In particular, almost one in four are dissatisfied with the clarity of information and directions on how to create searches.

FIGURE 11

Satisfaction with System Features and User-Friendliness

“Please rate your level of satisfaction with the PSRS on each of the following points...”



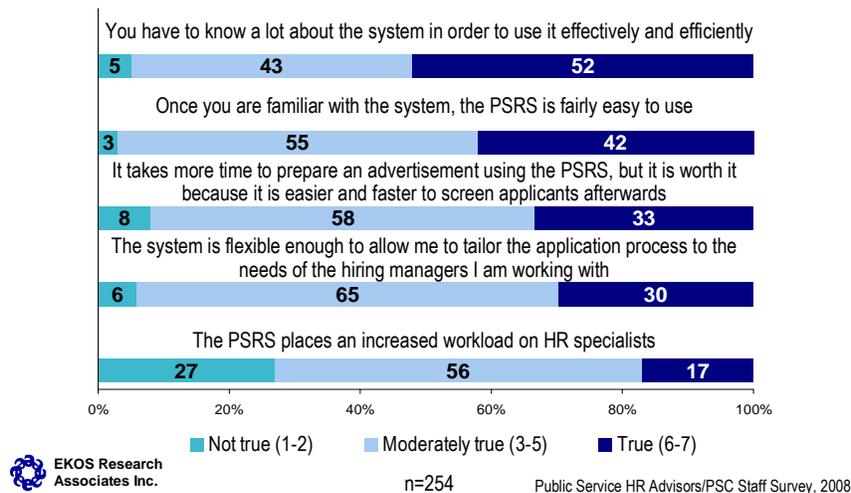
n=141/*261

Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

These same issues arise in other areas of survey results (Figure 12). Users surveyed only moderately agree that the additional time required to create an advertisement is compensated by faster screening, or that the system is sufficiently flexible to tailor the process to the needs of the hiring manager. Furthermore, many feel that the system increases the workload of HR specialists.

FIGURE 12
Perceptions of PSRS: Ease of Use

“Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following statements concerning the PSRS are true?”



HR advisors in other departments generally expressed considerably less satisfaction than PSC staff with the time required to create a job advertisement. They are also considerably less likely than PSC staff to say that the system is easy to use once you are familiar with it or that the increased time to prepare an advertisement is compensated by the electronic screening.

Among focus group participants, those who felt knowledgeable, comfortable and experienced with the PSRS generally expressed a high level of satisfaction. As with survey evidence, criticisms of the system made by some focus group participants include: too many steps required to complete a poster (for users) or application (for applicants); insufficient or confusing instructions and directions provided; and that the system is not sufficiently intuitive or user friendly.

Again, focus group participants and interview respondents underscored the fact that the system requires a lot of practical experience and regular system use to be able to use it effectively (e.g., to use the full breadth of functions). Even some PSC focus group participants said that they do not find the system to be particularly obvious in the way that it is laid out or where one can expect to find certain elements.

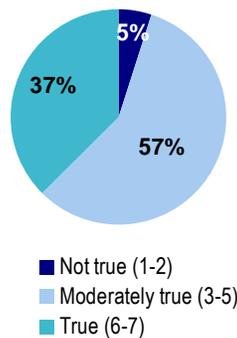
Some repeat users said that they find themselves relying on memory for the sequence of steps to follow in using the PSRS. Related comments and concerns include that the terminology and text used on the system is not sufficiently clear or easy to understand for applicants or users and that it is difficult to make any changes to settings, screening requirements or data for an advertisement once it is entered.

Evaluation Question 18: Are managers restricted unduly by the system?

Users surveyed do not seem to feel unduly restricted by the system, but neither are they completely satisfied with the flexibility it provides. Based on the evaluation research, departmental and PSC users appear only moderately convinced that the system is flexible enough to tailor the application process to the needs of the hiring manager, particularly when recruiting for senior or specialized positions (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13
Flexibility of PSRS

The PSRS facilitates the creation of customized job advertisements.



Evaluation Question 16b: Is training and support for users appropriate?

Evaluation Question 17: Did departmental managers have the expertise to use the system effectively?

Overall, lack of training and general information about the system (its functions, best uses of different features, best practices/best results scenarios, etc.) seems to be one of the central weaknesses of the PSRS. Those with access need better, and timelier, training to be able to understand and use the system well. Those without direct access need at least enough training to fully appreciate the system and make the best decisions about its use. PSC staff also need to work proactively with non-direct access

departmental staff on a consistent basis, to advise them on which features and approaches to use under what circumstances and provide explanations about the advantages and benefits of different approaches (and the benefits of the upfront investment that is required).

PSRS classroom training was designed, developed and implemented for over 700 Users and Super-Users. The PSC has also developed, in partnership with the Canada School of Public Service, a PSRS E-learning course to deliver training for new PSRS users, refresher training and training on new PSRS releases. The E-learning course, launched in April 2008 is part of a blended learning strategy that includes coaching, help desk support, learning circles, Smart Shops, and various support tools available on the PSRS extranet Web site.

Furthermore, as part of its maximizing the use of PSRS, the PSC reached out to hiring managers at the federal Middle Managers Conference in Vancouver in April 2008 through planned information sessions and workshops. The PSC also started conducting PSC SmartShops on E-Staffing in June 2008 to expand the knowledge and maximize the use of all PSRS features.

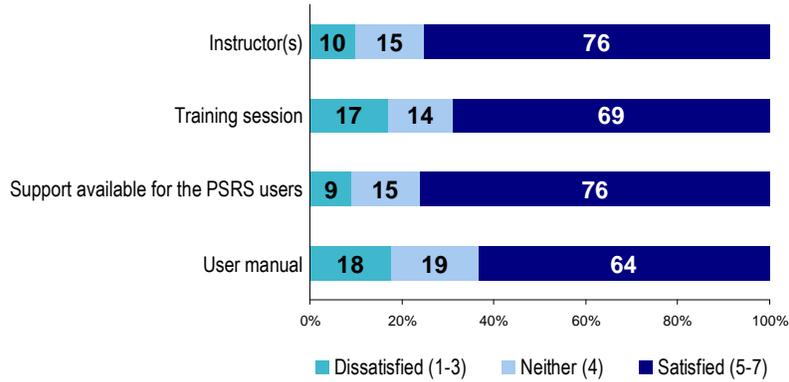
Perhaps one of the most striking findings in the study is that only half of Departmental and PSC users surveyed (56 per cent) have received training on the PSRS before starting to use the system. Although those using the system directly, such as HR advisors in a direct access department or agency and PSC resourcing officers are more apt than others to have received training before using the system (63 and 70 per cent, respectively), these proportions are still low, driven at least in part by ongoing turnover in staff. It should be noted, however, that PSRS procedure is to provide access only to trained users. It is, therefore, likely that respondents who have not received training are not direct access users. Although many focus group participants said that they did receive training before using the system, exceptions included a couple of PSC participants who began using the system before any manual was in place; and HR assistants without direct access to the system.

Of survey respondents who received training, most users expressed satisfaction with various aspects of the training and the support available to them as users of PSRS. Three-quarters of users report being satisfied with the training instructor; and over two-thirds report satisfaction with the training session (Figure 14). Six in ten are very confident in their ability to obtain assistance when needed. Despite this, users are only moderately confident that they have the ability and expertise needed to use the system, or that the training they received was sufficient to prepare them to use this system (Figure 15).

FIGURE 14

Satisfaction with Training and Support

“Please rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following aspects of the training and support you have received.”



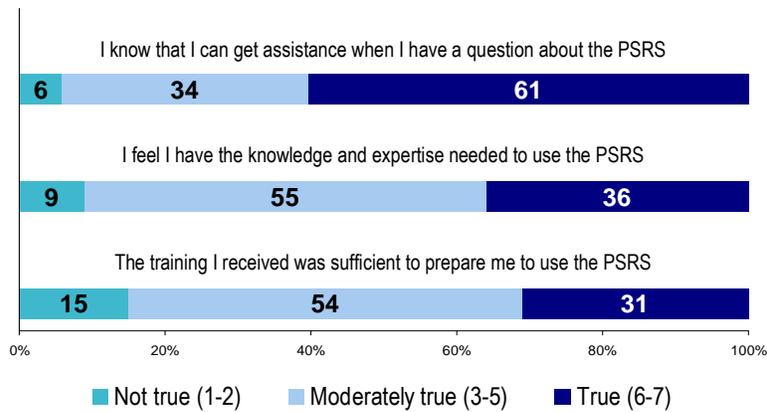
n=134

Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

FIGURE 15

Perceptions of Training and Support

“Please indicate the extent to which you believe that the following statements concerning the PSRS training and support provided to you are true.”



n=151

Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

Feedback on training received through key informant interviews and focus groups was even more mixed. While a number of respondents reported complete satisfaction with the training received, others found the training to be too general given the complexity of the system. Some interview respondents and focus group participants indicated that the system seems straightforward during training, but when they return to work and try to use it, they find that it is more complex or difficult than expected and that they do not feel well prepared to work with it. Some similarly remarked that the training was a good theoretical introduction, but that it lacked a practical element. They suggested additional follow-up support to users as they begin using the system, or a follow-up training session following initial use. Furthermore, additional training and updated training is one of the most frequently cited suggestions for improving the PSRS users surveyed.

When users were asked to identify the primary weakness of the PSRS, the second most frequently cited drawback of the system is the fact that users must know the system well to obtain its full benefits (with the primary weakness being linked to screening functions). Users note that a significant amount of training and experience is needed to be able to use the PSRS with ease (an area that is generally lacking). Once familiar with the system, however, many users (Figure 12) do find it easier to use.

Several focus group participants noted that the gap between training and use of the system was too large, and that they had forgotten much of what they learned before having the opportunity to work hands-on with the system.

Several HR specialists without direct access said that it would be useful to have some training to learn more about the various functions and capabilities of the system (including the communications function and reporting capabilities, of which they were largely unaware). Many focus group participants (PSC, direct access and indirect access alike) said that HR advisors do not feel that they know enough about the system and what it can do for them to be able to capitalize on the system to their fullest advantage. Further, the manual is seen to be too technical to offer a great deal of help in generally understanding the capacity and features of the system. This general lack of information results in less than a full appreciation (particularly among those without direct access) of what benefits exist from the system for the investment made in setting up the job poster initially. This, in turn, results in less than optimal use of the system and contributes to a general mistrust of the system. Further to this, several departmental HR representatives expressed that while PSC staff do generally review what they set up and input it for them into the system, they do not always offer strategic advice about how best to use the system.

The new E-Learning program recently deployed may help address some of these concerns. This program allows users to return to the training site to obtain new information or just for refresher training

From the focus group input provided by PSC staff and HR advisors, there appears in some cases to be a considerable gulf between the perceptions of the two groups in terms of how much departmental HR advisors know and are comfortable with the system. While cognizant of the lack of knowledge that some HR advisors have about the system (and general discomfort with it), PSC staff are not overly concerned with the fact that HR advisors are not adequately prepared to use the system optimally,

because they believe that they (PSC staff) are providing the necessary support. HR advisors, on the other hand, feel that they should (but do not) know enough about the system to use it (or at least make decisions about what and how to use of the system), which they can then convey to PSC staff.

Evaluation Question 19: Has system support and maintenance kept pace with demand?

Turning to support in using the system, many users surveyed have accessed a range of support services. Over four in ten have obtained support or assistance from a regional PSC office; one-third from a Super User within their department or agency; and one-quarter from the PSRS Help Desk. Two in ten received support or assistance from other sources, which include internal staff, colleagues or co-workers.

Interview respondents and focus group participants generally expressed satisfaction with the support available to PSRS users. Most interview respondents and focus group participants had access to a Super User and/or the PSRS Help Desk. A few focus group participants cautioned, however, that while they have been largely satisfied with the assistance received when they have turned to the Help Desk, they occasionally obtained service from an individual with limited experience with the system. They emphasized that it is only by using the system often that you become proficient at using it; and that it is important that any support people (Super Users or Help Desk) have extensive practical experience using the system. Finally, while only a small number of interview respondents reported having used the HelpDesk to submit a change request, they had found it to be a slow process, without any guarantee of change.

2.3 OUTCOMES AND SUCCESS

This report examines the extent to which outcomes have been achieved to date.

a) Immediate Outcomes

Evaluation Question 21: To what extent do government departments use the system?

The PSRS is currently a functional national system supporting external government recruitment. Over one million applications were received through PSRS in 2006-2007, which represents a 54 per cent increase in volume from the previous year. The PSRS is now being used by all PSC Regional Offices and had been deployed to 16 direct access organizations as of June 2008. The majority of organizations subject to the PSEA use PSRS to post job advertisements on jobs.gc.ca as per policy requirements. However, a minority of them choose to only include a hyperlink that brings the applicant on the hiring department's Web site where they can then submit their application without using PSRS. In 2007-2008, 864 advertisements were posted this way out of a total of 6,366 job advertisements (14%). This is referred to as "alternate advertisements".

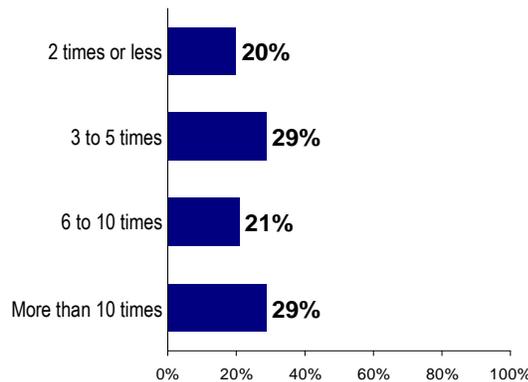
Departmental and PSC users are using the PSRS, often several times or more within the last year, although the breadth of use in terms of the system's functionality is less certain. In particular, the

experience questionnaire and essay questions are used only sporadically. Research findings suggest that the extent of functionality used depends on a variety of factors, including the level of comfort of the user with the system, the nature of the position being advertised, the nature of the user's responsibilities and frustrations with the experience questionnaire/toolkit. Findings suggest that lack of awareness or understanding of the various components or screening options available within the system may also be limiting the breadth of use.

The extent of use or experience with the PSRS of PSC and Departmental users surveyed varied significantly (Figure 16). Close to four in ten respondents have been using the PSRS for one year or less, while one-quarter have been using the system for over two years. The number of times users surveyed used the PSRS within the 12 months preceding the survey also varied significantly, but most Departmental and PSC users also report using the PSRS for recruitment several times within the last year.

FIGURE 16
Frequency of Use in Last Year

“Over the last 12 months, roughly how many times have you used the PSRS for recruitment (whether through direct access, a PSC regional office or National Client Services)?”



n=187

Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

Users surveyed most commonly report that they are using the PSRS directly, on their own, although it should be kept in mind that HR advisors from Direct Access Departments were over-represented in the survey of users. Three in ten are using the system with the assistance of a PSC resourcing officer (indicating that they are likely not in a direct access department or agency), and one in ten are using it with the assistance of a Departmental HR specialist.

HR assistants are most often the individuals who do the actual input of information into the system, while one-third indicate that this role is filled by the HR specialist. Data input is rarely performed by the hiring manager or Super User.

Data collected by the PSRS suggests that overall use of screening functions increased from 2006/2007 to 2007/2008 although use of the experience questionnaire declined significantly. Data collected by the PSRS indicates that yes/no screening questions were used in 23 per cent of job advertisements in 2006/2007 and in 48 per cent of cases in 2007/2008. Use of the experience questionnaire declined from 2006/2007 to 2007/2008; and the same is true for the text essay option (Table 2.1). However, the proportion of job advertisements using at least one screening tool grew²².

Table 2.1: Use of Screening Tools

Screening Functions	% of Advertisements Using Screening Functionality	
	Fiscal Year 2006/2007	Fiscal 2007/2008
Yes/No Screening	23%	48%
Experience Questionnaire	23%	13%
Text Essay	6%	3%
At least one screening tool	43%	57%
No screening tool used	57%	43%
Total advertisements	5671	5146*

Source: PSRS Databook, March 2008

* The actual number as per the PSC 2007-2008 Annual Report is 5,032

Data collected by the PSRS²³ also indicates that use of screening tools is highest in the NCR, where at least one screening tool is used in 73 per cent of job advertisements in 2007/2008. This is followed by Quebec region, where at least one screening tool is used 63 per cent of the time (2007/2008).

Based on PSRS data, use of screening tools is also highest for clerical and secretarial occupations, followed by professional and administrative positions. Screening functions are rarely used for executive positions, and used infrequently for labour and trades²⁴.

Interview, survey and focus group findings also suggest that the extent of utilization of PSRS functions varies significantly. In particular, the experience questionnaire and essay questions are used only sporadically, according to both system users and applicants. Just over four in ten applicants surveyed indicate that they were required to complete an experience questionnaire during their most recent job application on PSRS, although the applicant survey was only open for a period of days and came from applicants to positions posted in that brief time interval.

²² PSRS Databook, March 2008

²³ PSRS Databook, March 2008

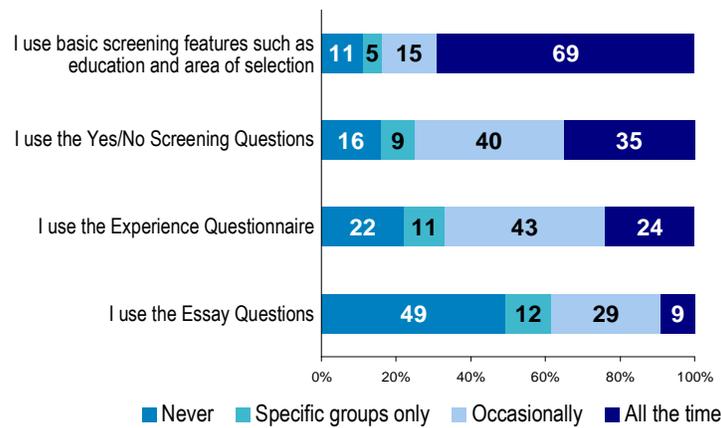
²⁴ PSRS Databook, March 2008

Users surveyed most often indicate that they always use the basic screening questions such as education and area of selection; while only one-third always use the yes/no screening questions; one-quarter always use the experience questionnaire; and only nine per cent use the essay question feature all of the time (Figure 17). Respondents more often report using the experience questionnaire and yes/no screening questions on an occasional basis; and close to half indicate that they never use the essay feature. HR specialists are somewhat more apt than other users to indicate that they “always” use the experience questionnaire and essay question.

FIGURE 17

Use of PSRS Functions

“Please indicate whether and to what extent you use each of the following functions or options available within the PSRS when creating advertisements...?”



n=281

Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

PSRS users who indicated that they do use each of the screening features listed either regularly or occasionally (experience questionnaire, yes/no screening questions, essay question and basic screening questions) were asked to indicate if there are ever occasions when they use the PSRS without any screening functionality whatsoever. Just over one-third of respondents indicate that they do sometimes use the system without any screening function. PSC resourcing officers are more apt than other users to indicate that they sometimes use the system without any screening functionality.

Results from interviews, focus groups and the survey of users suggest that the extent of functionality used depends on a variety of factors, including the level of comfort of the user with the system, the nature of the position being advertised, the nature of the user’s responsibilities and concerns about the experience questionnaire/toolkit. Concerns with the experience questionnaire stem largely from perceptions that applicants often over-rate or under-rate their experience when using the questionnaire, thereby compromising the effectiveness of electronic screening. Focus group participants indicate that they use the experience questionnaire and tool kit the least frequently, given that they cannot rely on applicants to be

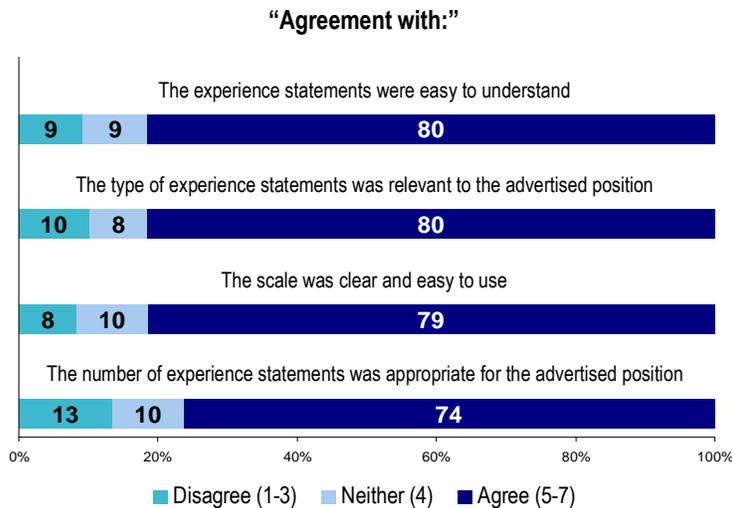
entirely objective or honest in evaluating themselves. They are more apt to use the experience questionnaire in very high volume positions (e.g., administrative positions), or positions where very specific skills are sought (e.g., using a particular software). PSC focus group participants indicated that some external clients and hiring managers dislike the experience questionnaire and toolkit, for the reason mentioned. Focus group participants largely indicate that the screening tool they use most often is the yes/no screening questions in combination with an open-ended question where applicants are asked to demonstrate and describe their experience (basically to substantiate their “yes” claim). If an applicant clicks “yes” to the screening question but does not fill out the open-ended portion, they get screened out. Several HR specialists participating in focus groups indicated a preference for developing their own screening questions using this function. One noted that if you use the toolkit, their sense is that you end up with applicants who know the system best, and not the applicants who are qualified and may be the right fit for the position. It takes more time to screen manually using the yes/no question with open-ended specification, but their belief is that you end up with better candidates. Some interview respondents also find the toolkit confusing or difficult to use, with a wide range of questions available.

As noted, the screening function selected also varies depending upon the nature of the position being advertised. The experience questionnaire or other screening functions are often bypassed when users are recruiting for professional or specialized positions, and/or positions where small numbers of applicants are expected (limiting the need for electronic screening). In instances where large numbers of applicants are not expected, managers often prefer to look at all applications. Focus group participants further indicate that it is more common to see an advertisement with no screening in regions. In some regions, fewer applications are typically received, reducing the need for screening. In the NCR, however, there is great awareness of federal government jobs and thus a higher demand or number of applicants on most competitions.

Finally, findings suggest that lack of awareness or understanding of the various components or screening options available within the system may also contribute to limiting the breadth of use. For example, one HR assistant participating in focus groups had not used any screening functions to date due to a complete lack of understanding or knowledge of the screening functions or how to use them. This assistant was very new to the system and to this role as she had never been responsible for the development of job advertisements until their department obtained direct access (this was the role of the specialist who dealt with the PSC to create advertisements).

It is perhaps not surprising to see that applicants have a different point of view from users in terms of the ease of use of the experience questionnaire. Most applicants do not appear to have experienced any undue difficulty in completing the experience questionnaire (Figure 18).

FIGURE 18
Applicant Perceptions of Experience Questionnaire



 EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=1953

Public Service Applicant's Survey, 2008

Despite the view of users that applicants tend to over-rate their experience, the vast majority of PSRS applicants surveyed who were required to complete the experience questionnaire believe that they were entirely honest in completing the experience statements (95 per cent). Applicants are much less apt, however, to believe that other applicants are honest in completing the experience questionnaire. In fact, fewer than half believe that others are honest.

Evaluation Question 20: Compared to other approaches, does the system:

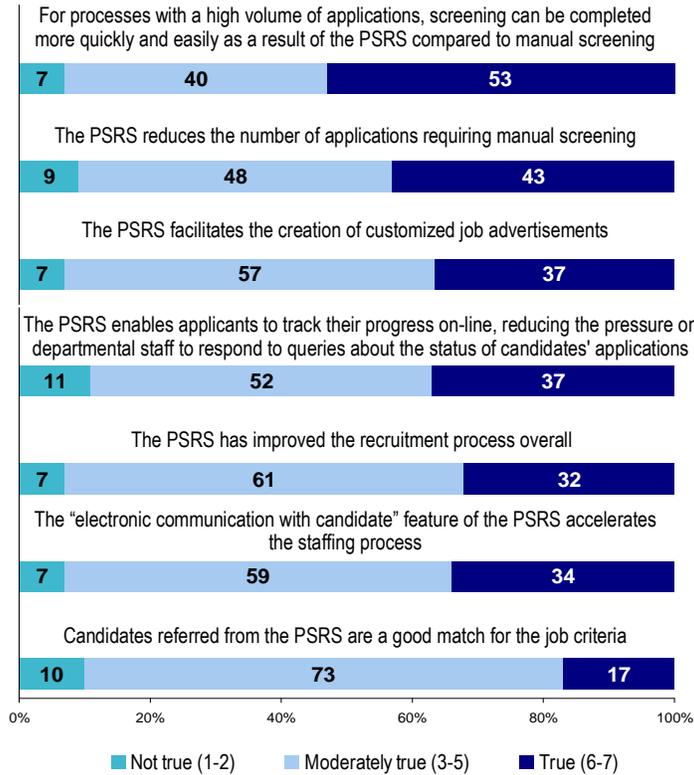
- **Provide appropriate referrals (screened in and out, including smaller volume of referrals and better quality of referrals)?**

The PSRS is also generally viewed to have had a positive impact on referrals as a result of the electronic screening process. Furthermore, Departmental and PSC users of the PSRS generally report satisfaction with the screening and referrals provided by the system. While users report an overall level of satisfaction with the screening, it is important to note that screening is simultaneously identified by users as both a strength and as a weakness of the system. Indeed, they referred to the imperfections of the current approach to screening, enabling applicants to over-rate or under-rate their experience; as well as the ability to screen applicants electronically based on education, occupational certification and experience, facilitating the management of large volumes of applicants. Some users surveyed also note that the PSRS has made it possible to collect much more information than previously on candidates, as well as varied ways to screen them.

FIGURE 19

Perceptions of PSRS: Features and Impacts

“Please indicate the extent to which you believe the following statements concerning the PSRS are true?”



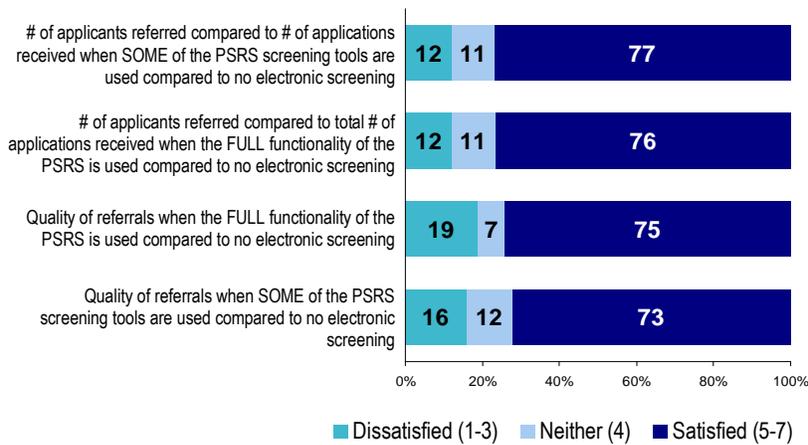
n=238

Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

Departmental and PSC users of the PSRS generally report satisfaction with the screening and referrals provided by the PSRS, based on both interview findings and results of the survey of users. Roughly three-quarters of users surveyed are satisfied with the number and quality of referrals made when the full functionality of the PSRS is used; and the level of satisfaction with the number and quality of referrals using some of the screening functions available is very similar (Figure 20). It is interesting to note that satisfaction is no different when only some, versus all, of the screening functionality is used.

FIGURE 20
Satisfaction with PSRS Screening and Referrals

“Please rate your level of satisfaction with the PSRS on each of the following points...”



n=226

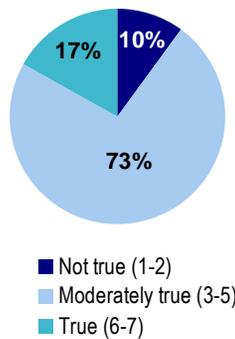
Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

Despite the fact that most users surveyed report being satisfied with the number and quality of referrals received when using the electronic screening offered by PSRS, most users (73 per cent) indicate that candidates referred from the PSRS are only a moderately good match for the job criteria (Figure 21). Only 17 per cent of users surveyed feel that candidates referred are definitely a good match to job criteria.

Consistent with survey results, many interview respondents and focus group participants tend to believe that the accuracy of applicant screening is the weakest feature of the PSRS. While hiring managers, HR specialists, and others can set the parameters of the screening, and the results of the screening process are accurate according to these parameters, applicants do not always meet these requirements in actuality (based on the perception among users that applicants tend to over-rate or under-rate their experience).

FIGURE 21
Match Between PSRS Referrals and Job Criteria

Candidates referred from the PSRS are a good match for the job criteria

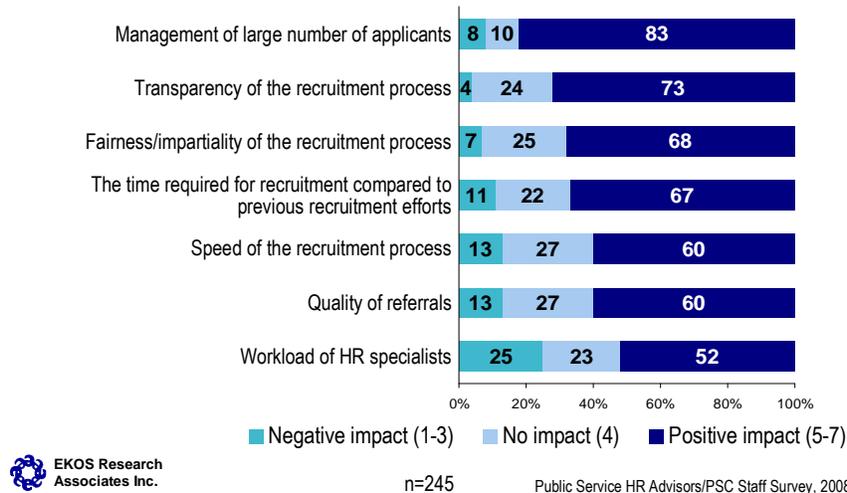


Furthermore, six in ten PSRS users surveyed indicate that the PSRS has had a positive impact on the quality of referrals, while over one-quarter feel that it has had no impact at all. Over one in ten feel that the PSRS has in fact had a negative impact on the quality of referrals (Figure 22).

FIGURE 22

Impacts on Recruitment Process and Quality

“On each of the following points, please rate the impact that you believe the PSRS has had on the recruitment process and quality of recruitment within your organization?”



As noted earlier (Evaluation Question 13), applicants appear to be less certain about the evaluation or screening their application is receiving. Applicants regard the screening process and consideration of their application as ambiguous, although this may have more to do with communications and feedback to applicants than the screening process itself.

➤ ***Provide better managed volume of applicants?***

PSRS is clearly perceived to have had a positive impact on the management of large volumes of applicants and that this system has made it possible to meet the requirements of the NAOs.

A clear majority of users (83 per cent) surveyed agree that the PSRS has had a positive impact on the management of a large number of applicants (Figure 22). Similarly, interview respondents perceive the management of volumes of applications as the greatest impact of the PSRS, making it possible to meet the requirements of the Area of Selection Policy. The automated screening process allows for a quick and non-labour intensive method of managing large volumes of applicants. Focus group participants echo this sentiment.

➤ ***Provide impartial, competitive screening?***

Most users and interview respondents also agree that the system has had a positive impact on the transparency of the recruitment process, on hiring in the federal public service, and on the fairness/impartiality of the recruitment process. Some focus group participants feel, however, that the gains in transparency may be limited by a lack of communication or feedback to applicants.

Over seven in ten users surveyed agree that the system has had a positive impact on the transparency of the recruitment process; and on hiring in the public service (Figure 22). Roughly two-thirds agree that the system has had a positive impact on the fairness/impartiality of the recruitment process; and on the time required for recruitment. Interview respondents note that the PSRS was custom designed for this process and therefore, respects all the federal public service values in terms of fairness, access, transparency, and representativeness. With one central venue of federal job advertisements, all applicants have an equal opportunity to apply and be evaluated for a position. (That said, a few focus group respondents said that they believe that there was equal access before the PSRS, given that many ads were placed in national papers such as the Globe and Mail.) Furthermore, given that screening is conducted electronically, the PSRS is perceived to ensure a highly impartial screening process (by interview respondents).

Focus group participants were less certain of the impact of the PSRS on the transparency, fairness and impartiality of recruitment, noting that it has had both positive and negative impacts on this point. The provision of a single window for applying to federal public service positions is a benefit of PSRS, increasing the fairness and transparency. The fairness of the system was reported by some to be limited however, by the drawbacks of electronic screening (i.e., that applicants can over-rate themselves, getting screened in over more qualified candidates). Some also note that the transparency of the system is limited by the fact that applicants do not know when or why they were screened out.

➤ ***Have better processing speed and/or capacity?***

➤ ***Reduce the workload for managers and other staff? (Could include greater hiring capacity, reduced volume & increased quality of referrals)***

Most users (60 per cent - Figure 22) believe that the PSRS has sped up the recruitment process, although this view is not unanimous. Some users with direct access note that it has provided them with control over the recruitment process, eliminating the need to wait for the PSC and thus reducing the length of the recruitment process. Other users state that electronic screening makes it possible to speed up the recruitment process dramatically, but caution that reliance on electronic screening alone is imperfect. Few participants feel comfortable relying uniquely on electronic screening given the weaknesses noted earlier and therefore rely on a combination of electronic and manual screening. Some are of the view that this largely eliminates any time savings in terms of screening. There is a perception among at least some users that the PSRS has placed an increased workload on HR specialists.

Six out of ten users surveyed feel that the system has had a positive impact on the speed of recruitment (and over one in ten feel that the system has had a negative impact in this area) (Figure 22). Only just over half agree that the system has had a positive impact on the workload of HR specialists, and one-quarter identify the impact as negative).

It is important to note that survey respondents who had received training were more apt than those who did not to see the positive impacts on the management of a large number of applicants, on the speed of the recruitment process, and the time required for recruitment. Similarly, PSC staff surveyed was also more likely than HR specialists and HR assistants to agree that the system has had a positive impact in most of the areas tested.

The views of focus group participants and interview respondents on the impacts of PSRS on the speed of recruitment are also varied. They indicate that PSRS generally does speed up recruitment, but it also involves added steps to the recruitment process. On the positive side, interview respondents and focus group participants with direct access note that it has provided them with control over the recruitment process, eliminating the need to wait for the PSC and thus reducing the length of the recruitment process. Focus group participants note that the system provides time savings by eliminating the need for cutting and pasting and use of flat files. Interview respondents believe that the reduction in screening and referral time, along with the benefit of having electronic applicant information to work from made for a more efficient process. Focus group participants note that the electronic screening makes it possible to speed up the recruitment process dramatically, but caution that reliance on electronic screening alone is imperfect. Relatively few participants feel comfortable relying uniquely on electronic screening given the weaknesses noted earlier and therefore rely on a combination of electronic and manual screening. This reduces time savings in terms of screening. Furthermore, some HR Advisors feel that the system takes more time upfront before posting the advertisement, again hindering time savings.

Interview respondents do not perceive any significant shifting in the roles of those involved in the recruitment process (HR specialists, hiring managers) as a result of the introduction of the PSRS. Some perceive an increase in responsibilities for HR Advisors in Direct Access Departments, given their increased control over the recruitment process. While this is viewed positively by interview respondents (including Super Users interviewed) they caution that HR Advisors do not always welcome the change initially, until they gain comfort with the system.

Finally, perceptions of focus group participants varied as to the impact on workload. Most PSC staff participating in focus groups had a sense that the PSRS saves them time and reduces their workload, but they were unable to put any figures to time savings. One HR assistant had no experience with recruitment prior to the PSRS and was unable to comment, while another HR assistant with direct access notes that the system has largely added to her responsibilities, given that she had never been responsible for creating job advertisements prior to direct access. Yet another HR assistant noted that there is no net time savings as she is unwilling to use the toolkit and/or rely entirely on electronic screening.

Evaluation Question 22: Does the PSRS provide Canadians with increased access to job opportunities in the federal public service?

Repeat use of the system by applicants; as well as the fact that most applicants agree that they are more likely to apply to a federal public service position as a result of the electronic access PSRS has provided; suggest that the PSRS facilitates access to job opportunities in the federal public service.

As noted under design and delivery (Evaluation Questions 6 and 15) access to the PSRS was not a significant issue for applicants surveyed. Most applicants surveyed report having Internet access at home.

Most interview respondents view the impact of the PSRS on the access to federal public service jobs as either minimal or positive. While it is undisputed that the PSRS allows for all external jobs to be accessible, many felt that federal jobs were accessible through the job site, national newspapers, or other means prior to PSRS. Therefore, while PSRS is an effective method of allowing for access to federal public service jobs, some respondents tend to feel that this accessibility was a reality prior to the system. Others note that PSRS has greatly facilitated access and made it easier for Canadians to access all job advertisements on one site.

Similar to the impact on the accessibility of federal jobs, respondents feel that the PSRS has had either a neutral or moderately positive impact on the representativeness of the federal public service. The low impact has more to do with the fact that many feel that candidates were already representative of the Canadian work force prior to the implementation of the PSRS. It is widely agreed that the PSRS allows for anyone with Internet access to apply for jobs. Additionally, employment equity criteria can be advertised in the job advertisement, addressed when the candidate self-identifies, and assisted by using search functions within the system (e.g., organizational need or area of selection).

PSRS system data do, however, suggest that the number and proportion of equity group members applying to positions through PSRS has increased over the past two fiscal years. PSRS system data also suggests that there has been an overall increase in the proportion of applicants belonging to one or more equity groups over that time period.²⁵

²⁵ PSRS Databook, March 2008

Evaluation Question 23: Are there any factors that either impede or facilitate use of the system within departments?

Based on the results of all research conducted with users (survey, interviews and focus group), factors exist that facilitate and impede use of the PSRS can be identified. Facilitating factors include:

- The need to manage large volumes of applications and accommodate requirements under the Area of Selection requirement; and
- That the system provides a means of managing the recruitment process electronically, enabling users to post advertisements more quickly, and communicate with applicants more easily.

Impediments include:

- Lack of awareness of all the tools or functions available within the system;
- Lack of familiarity or comfort with the system;
- Complexity of the system and the learning curve required to gain comfort and confidence using the PSRS;
- Lack of confidence in the experience questionnaire and the system's ability to screen applicants effectively; and
- Tendency of applicants to over-rate or under-rate themselves, limiting the effectiveness of the electronic screening.

b) Intermediate Outcomes

Evaluation Question 24: Does it support the PSC with accountability information for Parliament?

Evaluation Question 25: Does the system contribute information helpful for HR planning, decision-making and reporting?

Evaluation Question 26: To what extent is the data used to improve planning and decision-making?

Some users report satisfaction with the amount and utility of the information available to them from the system. Very few, however, are making use of data provided by the PSRS for planning or reporting purposes. PSRS managers interviewed do note, however, that a reporting database for the system is under development. It may therefore be too early to assess whether PSRS supports the PSC with accountability information for Parliament; and contributes information helpful for HR planning, decision-making and reporting.

The only report that is available for users to generate on their own is a report that keeps users informed of the progress of the receipt of applications. This is an important tool to manage volume. For example, at any time before the closing date, the user can generate a report that will reveal the number of

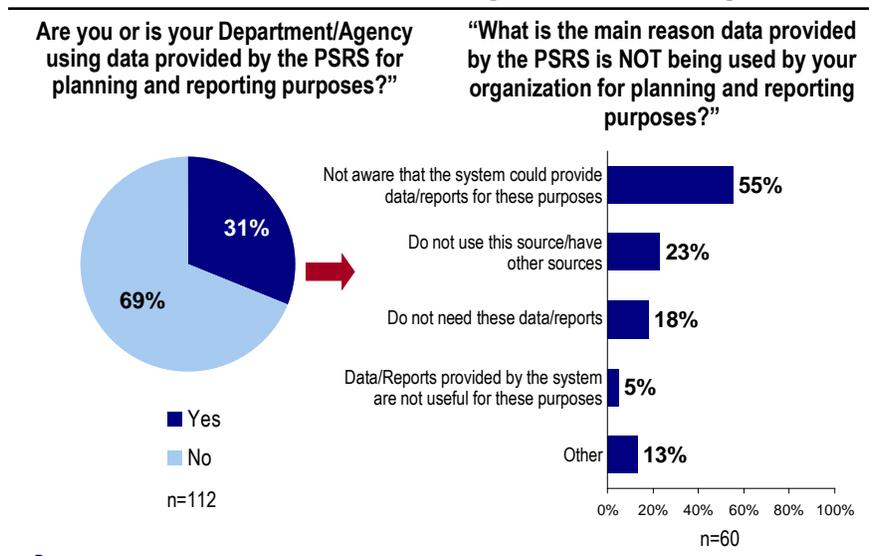
applications received, the number of applications in progress (not yet submitted), the number of applications screened out. This allows the HR advisor to extend the closing date if there are insufficient applications. Departments can also contact the help desk to request reports that can be useful for HR planning (results of past processes), although this service has not been promoted to any great extent.

Many focus group respondents said that they are not familiar with what the system can offer in terms of reporting functions and how they can best use reports generated by the system. PSC staff also indicated that the reports are not well utilized and that the standard reports generated by the system are not particularly useful (e.g., providing counts of advertisements, etc.).

As illustrated in Figure 23, less than one-third of PSRS users surveyed indicate that they or their department/agency are making use of data provided by the PSRS for planning or reporting purposes (e.g., SMAF requirements). It is important to note, however, that six in ten respondents did not know or did not respond to this question. This would mean that only 12 per cent of all respondents are using PSRS data for planning or reporting (when those responding “don’t know” are included). Those who are not using PSRS data for planning and reporting were asked to indicate the primary reason for this. Most are simply not aware that the system can provide them with data or reports, while some say that they do not need this data or have other data sources for planning/reporting purposes.

FIGURE 23

PSRS Use for Planning and Reporting



Public Service HR Advisors/PSC Staff Survey, 2008

Interview findings were largely consistent with survey results. Most interview respondents indicated that they do not use the PSRS in any formal manner for Human Resource planning and decision making, or for monitoring and reporting on recruitment. Several interview respondents did report that they monitor the number of applicants within a job advertisement and the impact on numbers when screening criteria are applied. However, others were not aware of monitoring and reporting capabilities of the PSRS. PSRS managers interviewed did note, however, that a reporting database for the system is under development.

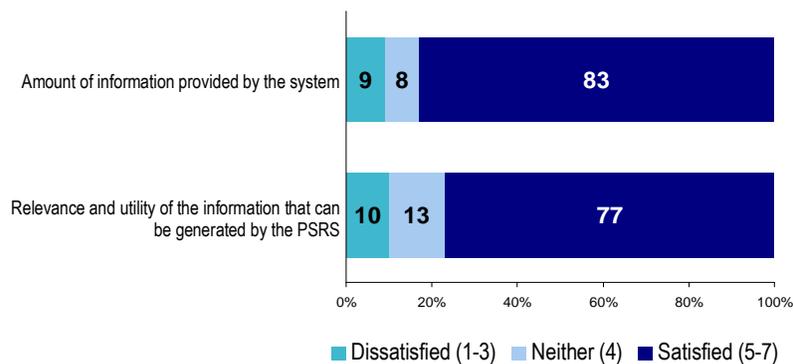
Very few focus group participants had used any reporting functions available on PSRS, and many were not even aware of any reporting capabilities. The few that were aware of reporting capabilities indicated that they are not able to produce reports on their own. Participants did not generally have any reporting needs that they could identify and had no comment on potential indicators or reports. Several noted that no specific reporting requirements have come to light as yet, or no demands for information have been made of them.

Most users surveyed are, however, satisfied with the amount and utility of information available from the system (Figure 24). Over eight in ten users report being satisfied with the amount of information provided by the system; and three-quarters are satisfied with the relevance and utility of information generated by the system. Again, however, it is important to note that one in five did not respond to questions concerning satisfaction with information, confirming once more that many are not using information generated by the system.

FIGURE 24

Satisfaction with Information Provided by PSRS

“Please rate your level of satisfaction with the PSRS on each of the following points...”



c) Ultimate Outcomes

Evaluation Question 27: Has the quality of recruitment improved?

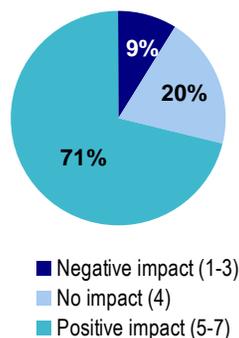
While there is insufficient evidence to fully address this question at this time, findings do suggest that where the PSRS is being effectively employed (using the full extent of its capacity) and there has been an overall perceived improvement in recruitment quality. Overall, it can be noted that:

- The PSRS is providing Canadians with open and equal access to federal public service job opportunities;
- Electronic screening ensures that all applicants have a fair opportunity to be considered for a position; and
- Large volumes of applicants are being accommodated, respecting the Area of Selection policy.

Additionally, the survey of users did include some overall or general measures related to PSRS' contribution toward improved recruitment. Seven of ten users surveyed agree that the PSRS has had a positive impact on hiring in the federal public service. Fewer than one in ten believe that it has had a negative impact (Figure 25). While the overall impact is seen to be positive, there is clearly work remaining to be done to address weaknesses within the system. This is further reinforced by the fact that only just over half of users surveyed feel that PSRS has had a positive impact on the satisfaction of hiring managers with the recruitment process.

FIGURE 25
Overall Impacts of PSRS

Overall impact of the PSRS on hiring in the public service



2.4 ALTERNATIVES AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS

Given the clear increase in volume of applications and the need to accommodate the National Areas of Selection (NAoS), there seems to be no question that an electronic system is needed and that the PSRS serves the intended purpose reasonably well. In terms of cost savings PSC staff and HR departmental staff have not collected specific numbers on savings in time required to collect and vet applications, or a clear indication of how much less time recruitment is taking them with this system. It should also be noted that the manual system in place prior to PSRS involved considerable screening efforts on the part of the PSC prior to departmental users receiving a screened list, so departmental users themselves may not have a solid appreciation for the amount of time saved, as they were not responsible for all efforts prior to the PSRS. There is, nonetheless, a strong sense from some that the PSRS represents a significant time savings.

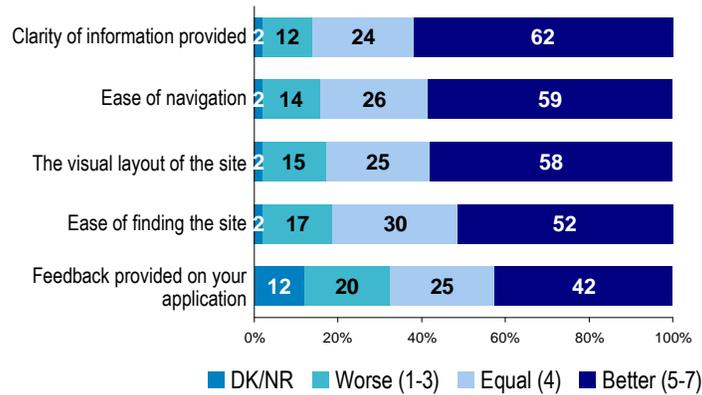
Having automated the process, the PSRS is seen by many to have shortened the process and resulted in faster referrals. Some, however, believe that the increased responsibilities shifting to HR specialists and the additional time required to prepare an advertisement offsets some of the savings from faster screening and referrals. Interview respondents are similarly divided on the issue of whether the PSRS is cost efficient. That said, there are also considerable differences in the perceptions of those who are adequately trained and experienced with the system and those who are not, suggesting that either investment in training and information materials might go a long way toward making the PSRS cost efficient consistent across the HR community, or that those with direct access (who also have training) have a much better understanding and appreciation for what the system can do for them.

Over two-thirds of applicants surveyed have also used other job application sites and tools other than job.gc.ca in the past. Other sites most commonly used by applicants within the 12 months preceding the survey include Workopolis.com and Monster.ca. Sites used by fewer than one in ten applicants include provincial government sites, Forces.ca, jobboom.com (Quebec), the HRSDC site or federal job bank, company-specific sites, university job sites, charityvillage.com (non-profit sector), and careerbeacon.com (Atlantic Canada).

Applicants compare the system favourably to other on-line job application systems they have used in the past, including on clarity of information, ease of navigation, and visual layout (Figure 26). As previously described, the weakest area is in the feedback provided on application.

FIGURE 26
Applicant Comparison of PSRS to Other Sites

“Compare PSRS to other sites that you have used in the past year on...?”



n=3278

Public Service Applicant's Survey, 2008

Interview respondents identify other recruitment approaches or systems (including Monster, Workopolis, RecruitSoft and USAJobs), but no single system is cited as being superior or preferred to PSRS. Interview respondents believe that PSRS has proven to be more effective and efficient in terms of managing volumes, screening and referrals than systems used in the past.

A preliminary cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) was conducted within the scope of this evaluation. A CEA²⁶ is a comparison of the costs and outcomes of policy, program, or project alternatives such that ratios of costs per unit of outcome are calculated and compared. For the purposes of this analysis, the cost per screened out application was used as a proxy to measure greater screening capacity and more manageable number of referrals. In the absence of information on comparable systems, the comparison was made with the manual screening alternative which is currently used for internal staffing. Because this is not the most appropriate comparator and a number of assumptions and limitations influenced the analysis, the results are indicative only.

The analysis revealed that based on PSRS direct costs only, the system is more cost-effective than its manual alternative. However, when other screening costs born by the GoC are factored in, the system has to have a screen out rate of 50 per cent to remain cost-effective.

²⁶ McDavid, J.C., Hawthorne, L. (2006). *Program Evaluation & Performance Measurement*, p. 438.

Three add-on scenarios were used to help test whether the system is cost-effective:

- **Scenario 1** is a comparison between **PSRS direct costs** (operating and development) vs. estimated **manual screening costs**.
- **Scenario 2** is a comparison between **total screening costs** (including PSRS direct costs and departmental additional screening costs) vs. estimated **manual screening costs** given that managers generally conduct additional screening on screened in applications. Since this is a cost born by the GoC, it was felt that it needed to be factored in as an indirect program cost. This is referred as “Total program costs”.
- **Scenario 3** is the break even point where the cost per unit is similar for both alternatives (automatic vs. manual screening). This scenario was used to find the screen out rate that would enable the system to reach a break even point with manual screening. Therefore, various projected screen out rates were introduced in the model until one produced a similar cost per outcome as manual screening.

All three scenarios were based on five year historical financial and screening data (2003-2008) and three year forecast data (2008-2011). Therefore, the total direct costs for the system used in these scenarios are \$58.5M²⁷ (Table 2.2). This excludes 2001 to 2003 expenses given that the system was not used for general recruitment at the time and it did not have extensive screening capacity.

Table 2.2: Total PSRS Costs 2003-20011 (Including EBP and Acc.)

	Actuals					Forecasts			Total
	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	
Operating	\$3 898 959	\$3 636 415	\$3 134 029	\$3 688 337	\$4 333 308	\$6 136 651	\$6 674 469	\$6 770 835	\$38 273 003
Development	\$2 923 647	\$1 090 963	\$5 359 273	\$4 077 744	\$4 349 655	\$1 400 000	\$500 000	\$500 000	\$20 201 282
Total	\$6 822 606	\$4 727 378	\$8 493 302	\$7 766 081	\$8 682 963	\$7 536 651	\$7 174 469	\$7 270 835	\$58 474 285

Total costs forecast exclude Stream II project definition costs

Findings

Findings from **scenario 1** show that when considering PSRS direct costs alone, the system appears to be more cost-effective than manual screening. Indeed, with the system, the cost per screened-out application is established at \$31 (58.5M/1.9M) compared to \$51 (97.1M/1.9M) for manual screening (Table 2.3).

²⁷ This amount also excludes Stream II project definition costs as Stream II is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

Findings from **scenario 2** indicate that the additional screening done by departments has a significant impact on total program costs resulting in a cost per screened-out application of \$59 compared to \$51 for manual screening.

Finally, the results from **scenario 3** indicate that a projected screen out rate of 50 per cent would generate a similar cost per screened-out application for both the electronic and manual alternative (i.e., \$32). This break even point could also be considered a target to reach. While the screen out rate decreased to 25 per cent in 2007-2008, the average screen out rate for the first three years (2003-2006) was at 50 per cent which makes this a difficult but realistic target. Moreover, non economical attributes (intangibles) also contribute to the system's cost-effectiveness (i.e., upheld values, system's accuracy, inventories management, etc.).

TABLE 2.3: Cost per Screened Out Application

No.	Scenario Description	PSRS Cost/ Screened Out Application	Estimated Manual Cost/ Screened Out Application	Is PSRS as or More Cost Effective than Manual Screening?
1	PSRS direct costs 2003-2011 (no additional departmental screening)	\$30.82	\$51.20	Yes
2	PSRS and additional departmental screening costs 2003-2011	\$59.34	\$51.20	No
3	Break-even point and target 2003-2011: 50%	\$31.78	\$31.68	Yes

Cost-effectiveness will likely remain an issue for the PSSMP. Therefore, it is recommended that cost and performance information be collected on alternate systems to have a better sense of PSRS cost-effectiveness.

In addition to conducting a preliminary cost-effectiveness analysis, changes in operating and development costs were also assessed. Findings show that while a decrease in operational costs may have been expected with the rising number of Direct Access Departments (DADs), given their ability to do their own transactions, these costs have actually increased as shown in table 2.2. In 2006-2007, seven departments elected to have direct access to the system. During that fiscal year, operating costs increased to nearly \$3.7M, representing an 18 per cent increment. In 2007-2008, there were 12 Direct Access Departments and operating costs rose to \$4.3M representing another 18 per cent increase. This can partially be explained by the additional training and technical support required to assist departments in their transition. As expected, development costs are planned to decline significantly in the last three years of the system's service life. In 05-06, development costs represented 63 per cent of all program spending and they are expected to reach a low of 7 per cent in 09-10 and 10-11.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation research findings suggest that the PSRS has made significant strides towards the achievement of many of its overall objectives, namely:

- Facilitating access to federal public service job opportunities to the Canadian public;
- Accommodating applicant volumes that have and are rising based on the PSMA and NAoS requirements;
- Enabling departments to implement delegated resourcing-related accountabilities associated with PSMA and PSEA implementation through direct access;
- Ensuring a recruitment system that is based on the values of fairness, equity and transparency;
- A common approach to resourcing, including a common interface for the Canadian public and common tools for managers; and
- Providing a single system to drive cost efficiencies by reducing the likelihood of multiple resourcing systems being developed.

Similarly, many of the immediate outcomes sought in the logic model are being met, namely:

- For managers:
 - ◇ Greater screening capability;
 - ◇ More manageable number of referrals and management of applicant volumes; and
 - ◇ Faster screening and referrals (where the full breadth of the system is employed).
- For applicants:
 - ◇ Use (and repeat use) of the system; and
 - ◇ Open and equal access to the PS hiring process.

- In terms of HR management:
 - ◊ Use of PSRS within Departments;
 - ◊ Non-duplication of departmental efforts; and
 - ◊ Retirement of legacy systems.

There are, however, a number of clear weaknesses in the existing system, and objectives and additional outcomes which are not yet being met. General system weaknesses that can be identified include:

- The full scope or breadth of the system is not being consistently employed, limiting the advantages that it can provide to recruitment within the federal public service;
- The current screening methods are perceived to be imperfect. While merit-based, it is seen to be limited by a lack of objectivity or consistency among applicants. The experience questionnaire is the largest source of concerns and may reflect the degree of difficulty in getting the right questions/statements in place so that they are not too general or too restrictive, and are a good reflection of the job skills required;
- Applicants to the system are not receiving timely and consistent feedback;
- Applicants are also not receiving desired information on the parameters of screening and timelines for each posting. More information about the process may also help to reduce over reporting of experience and other qualifications;
- Training is not accessed by all users of the system (i.e. those who need to go through PSC regional offices), and is not always considered to be sufficient to prepare the user to employ the PSRS fully;
- The user-friendliness of the system is evaluated less positively by Departmental and PSC users; and
- System data or reports are not widely used for planning, monitoring and reporting purposes.

Furthermore, some Super Users and PSC regional office staff did express frustration with the lack of responsiveness to suggested changes among those supporting Stream I. Even though Stream I does not have a long horizon in front of it, it is still the only system available and currently in use on an ongoing basis. Basic changes that can be accommodated within Stream I may facilitate users' ability to work effectively and efficiently with the system to achieve their goals. It may also be argued that changes to Stream I that address users concerns can serve as good design and testing grounds for Stream II.

Consequently, this is not entirely unexpected, given the age of the system and that PSRS is intended as only an interim measure to be replaced in Stream II by a system that accommodates both recruitment and staffing. While there are areas in which improvement is needed in the system, it may not be

cost-effective to address all identified shortcomings within Stream I. Rather, some of the noted weaknesses will likely contribute lessons learned for Stream II.

Ultimately, the system is seen to be a strong tool that is essential to recruitment into the federal public service. With increasing need for very large volumes of applications, there is no question that an electronic system such as this is required. And, no other existing system is seen as a viable alternative. The PSRS is addressing most of the requirements that are being placed on it, and is a good interim system that can be used across the federal public service while the next, more consolidated system is being created. There are a number of fundamental issues that have been cited by study participants, but for the most part, these could largely be addressed with a few key adjustments. Information and training is the primary area where a number of the weaker areas could be addressed. A comprehensive and consistent understanding of the system, along with some support and best practices about what to use, under what circumstances, and how best to craft screening tools that do the best job possible would alleviate some of the concerns expressed. Secondly, better communications about the process to applicants, and a better protocol to manage communications with applicants would also address several issue areas. Lastly, some key reports that help to keep track of basic counts and stats, along with better information about what reports the system can generate and how they can be used (which could be addressed in the training and information materials) is a third area that would make a fundamental difference. Some additional changes that could also be considered in Stream II would be more intuitive structuring of some elements and clearer direction and instructions on the system to assist users in finding their way around, particularly for users who are only required to work with the system every few months or so.

3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from the evaluation study are as follows:

Applicants and Users

1. Facilitate improvements in feedback and transparency to applicants

While communications to applicants is not within the control of the PSC, there should be some overall plan for the process that brings all of the parties and functions together to ensure that no particular area goes unmet. Steps should be taken to increase awareness and understanding of the communications function and its potential among users (including those without direct access), through additional training and information. Some type of message board could also be built into the system to provide all PSRS users (direct and indirect) some method of communicating with successful and unsuccessful applicants.

There is also a need to clarify the recruitment process for applicants, to increase the transparency of the process for applicants. This could be achieved by providing additional information to applicants through the application process and even in the advertisement (expected length of the process, steps in screening, basis for screening). This would help to address questions and expectations about feedback and length of time before it can be expected. Similarly it could help to alleviate some of the tendencies to over-report experience, if applicants understand that the application is merely the first step and that more extensive testing and screening will be subsequently carried out.

2. Increase the user-friendliness of the system

The system is not perceived to be sufficiently user friendly by all Departmental and PSC users. Findings suggest that there is a certain learning curve involved in mastering the use of this system. The limited satisfaction with user-friendliness of the system may be contributing to the fact that the full breadth of the system is not being used in many instances. The screening functions, communications functions, and reporting functions are not widely or consistently used by all users. This points in large part to a need for support and training, however, some elements of the interface itself could be reviewed for how to structure the menus and functions to make the system less counterintuitive. More and clearer documentation, as well as instructions right in the system itself will also help to address part of this issue.

3. Increase information available to users, and ensure all users have sufficient understanding of system

There is a need to ensure that all users fully understand the system and what it is capable of doing/producing once users commence using the system, directly or indirectly. Study findings indicate a need for an increase in knowledge of the various functions available on the PSRS (including all screening options, communications functions and reporting functions) to increase the breadth of use, particularly among those who do not use the system directly. Given the turnover in staff across the federal public service, it would be particularly efficient if training/information materials were made available online as references and tutorials so that anyone using the system can reference them on an as needed basis. An introduction to the system could perhaps be packaged in two streams: a first use guide; and as a refresher/follow-up/more applied set of instructions and references (e.g., FAQs, best practices, guidelines, scenarios, etc), with live support for those using the system in an ongoing fashion as problems arise.

System

4. Improvements to screening to ensure a high quality of referrals

Current screening methods are perceived to rely too heavily on the objectivity and honesty of applicants. As well, a number of users do not feel that the system is sufficiently flexible to accommodate their needs when recruiting for specialized or senior positions. Again, a lack of sufficient training may be contributing to the improper use of the system, or an inability to obtain the full benefits available from electronic screening. Particular attention could also be paid to helping HR advisors (and in turn hiring

managers) to develop screening materials (e.g., statements, criteria, thresholds, etc) that follow best practices and have been shown to cultivate good results.

5. Improved decisions-making information, and enhanced reporting capability on resourcing activities

The system is not widely used for planning and reporting purposes. The potential of the system to contribute to planning, monitoring and reporting should be further explored. Those responding to the evaluation research (surveys, interviews and focus groups) were not well placed to provide useful direction on reporting. Most were not familiar with the capacity of the system to provide useful reporting information. Some users of the system who do access reports from the system suggested that the reports available may not in fact be the most useful information and that more useful automatic reports could be developed.

Program Management

6. Responsiveness in supporting the current system requires attention

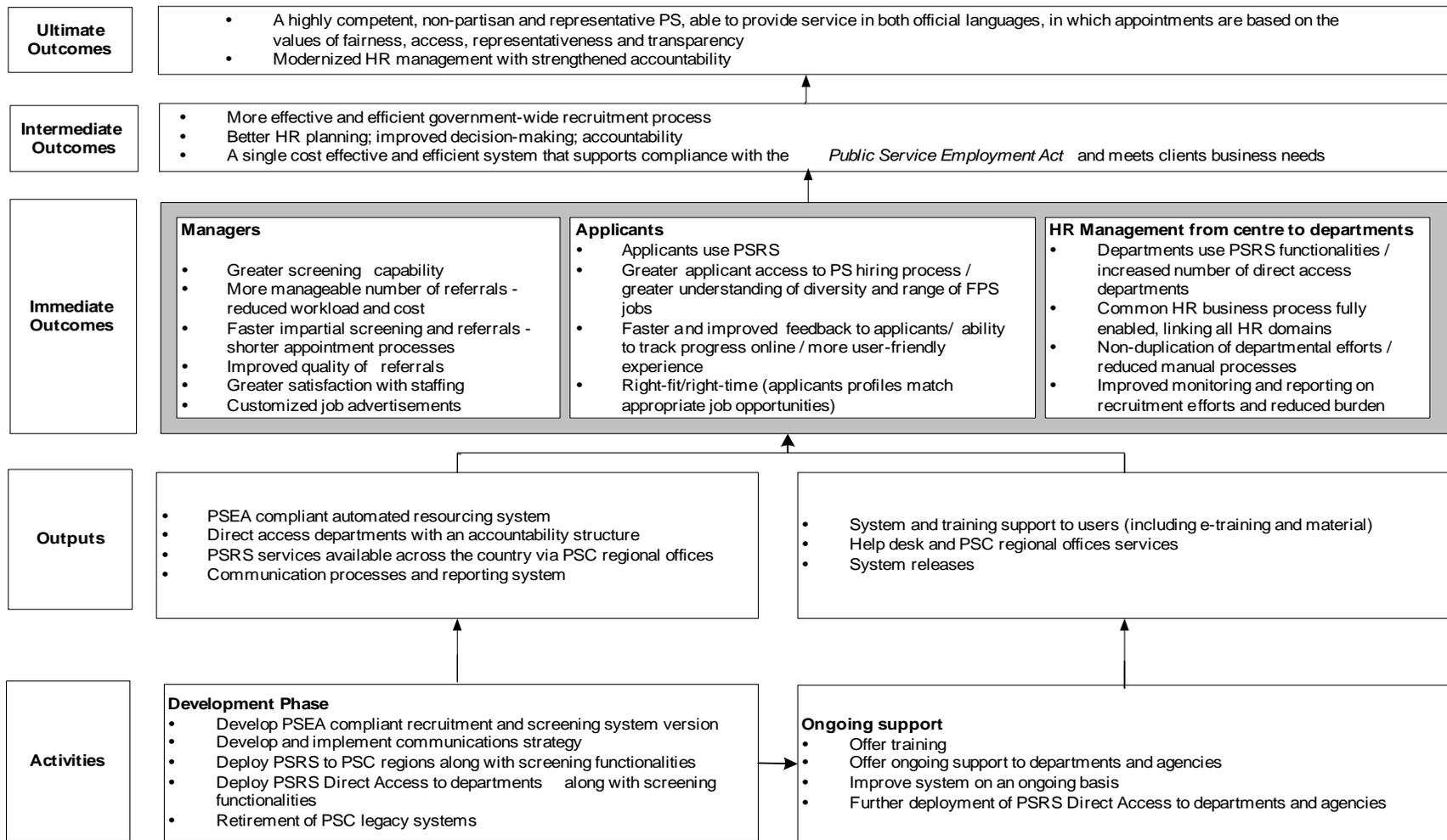
Although the current system is due to be replaced in just a few years and considerable effort is likely being expended in the development of Stream II, Stream I is currently the only system in place and there are many users that rely on it and work with it on a regular basis. Continued support and changes to the system are needed. Although it may not make sense to expend considerable effort to re-vamp the structure of the current system, some changes may not require too much effort and may make a big difference to those who are currently using it. Presumably, most changes made to Stream I will also be an investment into continued development into Stream II, making the investment even more worthwhile.

7. Further define the performance measurement strategy

While a logic model was developed, a considerable amount of data is being collected on a regular basis and that the data collection capacity is increasing with the implementation of a data warehouse, targets and benchmarks still need to be defined and integrated in the project's performance measurement strategy in order to better support decision-making. A performance measurement strategy makes it possible to assess the achievement of outcomes identified much more readily. A suggested performance measurement framework (PMF) closely aligned with the PSC's PMF is appended to this report (Appendix A). Cost and performance information on comparable systems should also be collected to facilitate future cost-effectiveness analyses.

APPENDIX A
PROPOSED LOGIC MODEL
AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT
STRATEGY

DRAFT Proposed Logic Model: PSSMP Stream I- Public Service Resourcing System



We recommend that the proposed PSRS logic model above be used when reporting on program performance and for the next evaluation if one is planned. While the current evaluation was conducted using the existing logic model, it was felt that it needed to be updated prior to further defining the performance measurement strategy. Such a strategy has to be based on proper outputs leading to immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes.

A logic model describes the program theory which is why strong linkages need to exist between each level of outputs and outcomes. It serves as a road map, showing the chain of results connecting activities to the final or ultimate outcomes and what progress looks like along the way.

The current logic model lists some activities and outputs that are not geared towards the clients needs (e.g. TB submission, project plan, business case – these outputs are internal to the program). Therefore, the link between PSRS outputs and the achievement of its outcomes is somewhat weak.

In the output section, it is preferable to state what the target populations receive from the program (e.g. PSRS services, direct access, training sessions). This is an area under the program's control. As for the immediate and intermediate outcomes sections, they should state how the target populations respond to the program's outputs and immediate outcomes. They represent areas where the program has a strong influence (e.g. More manageable number of referrals – while the program cannot make departments use the screening tools, it can influence them to do so). Finally, the ultimate outcomes are external consequences that the intermediate outcomes contribute to and they are generally tied to the organization's ultimate outcome(s). They reflect the reason for the initiative and take place over the longer term. Consequently, the program only has limited influence on such outcomes. This also explains why indicators related to ultimate outcomes may be outside the program's scope.

Recommended Performance Indicators, Strategy, Target and Reporting Frequency

The following table identifies potential additional performance indicators, measurement strategies and targets for reporting on the achievement of the PSRS outputs and outcomes on an annual basis. Outputs and outcomes below are those from the revised logic model. Most indicators tied to intermediate and ultimate outcomes can be measured through the new Staffing Management Accountability Framework (SMAF) which is based on leading indicators. Measures related to internal staffing were removed given that PSRS currently assists managers with external recruitment only, but such indicators could be considered once Stream II is available.

Proposed Performance Measurement Strategy

Ultimate Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A highly competent, non-partisan and representative public service, able to provide service in both official languages, in which appointments are based on the values of fairness, access, representativeness and transparency Modernized HR Management with strengthened accountability 	
Performance Indicators	Strategy, Target & Reporting Frequency
Merit/Competency <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manager satisfaction – quality of hires (Survey of Appointments Managers Q37: "To what extent are you generally satisfied with the quality of hire/s for the reference period") 2. % of non-imperative appointments where person does not meet the official language profile within the time periods prescribed by regulations 3. Appointees' agreement with Survey of Appointments Q32(c): "The statement of qualifications or merit criteria reflects the requirement for the position to be filled" 4. Appointees' agreement with Survey of Appointments Q32(d): "The posted qualifications and criteria for positions are bias-free and barrier-free" 	Performance Measurement Strategies: Assessed through monitoring activities (SMAF), periodic audits, evaluations and/or surveys on appointment processes and investigations Target: Under development Reporting Frequency: Annual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of federal public service employees about competency of people hired 	Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through periodic surveys of public service employees (PSES) Target: 85% Reporting Frequency: Annual
Non-partisanship <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perception of Canadians about non-partisanship of the federal public service 2. Managers' response to Survey of Appointments Q42 (a): "To what extent did you perceive the following in your specific context? – External pressure to select a particular candidate" 3. Number of founded complaints related to political influence in staffing 	Performance Measurement Strategies: Assessed through periodic surveys, ongoing oversight activities and review of alleged infractions Target: Under development Reporting Frequency: Annual
Fairness <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Perception of federal public service employees about fairness of appointment processes 	Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through periodic surveys of public service employees (PSES) Target: 85% Reporting Frequency: Annual
Access <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. External processes advertised nationally to total 	Performance Measurement Strategy: Collect data from PSC information systems Target: Increase from previous years; 29% in 2006, should increase to 55% for 2007-2008 and to 100% by 2009-2010 (excluding casuals and short terms)

<p>6. Managers' response to Survey of Appointments Q27: "Through what route did the appointee enter into consideration? (advertised, non-advertised, student recruitment, other)</p>	<p>Reporting Frequency: Annual Performance Measurement Strategy: Collect data from surveys on appointment processes Target: TBD Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>
<p>Representativeness</p> <p>7. Number of EE groups for which representation in the public service is below workforce availability</p> <p>8. Staffing strategies – employment equity (EE) (distribution of hires versus work-force availability)</p> <p>9. Number and % of external staffing advertisements with EE provisions – to enhance access of EE group members to public service positions</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategies: Collect data from the Canada Public Service Agency and Statistics Canada Target 1: Zero Target 2: equal or higher Target 3: Increase compared to previous year Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>
<p>Transparency</p> <p>10. Perception of public service employees about transparency of appointment processes</p> <p>11. HR plans and staffing strategies are communicated on departments' Web sites, and contents are communicated to employees and managers</p> <p>12. Organizations demonstrate consultation and communication of staffing-related information to unions</p> <p>13. Length of time job openings posted</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through periodic surveys of public service employees (PSES); Target 1: 85%</p> <p>Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through periodic monitoring activities (SMAF/DSAR); Target 2 and 3: 100%</p> <p>Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through PSRS; Target 4: 2 days or more Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>
<p>Modernized HR Management</p> <p>14. Number and % of collective processes</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through the monitoring of advertisements Target: Increase compared to previous year Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>
<p>Intermediate Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More effective and efficient government-wide recruitment process • Better HR planning; improved decision-making; accountability • A single cost-effective and efficient system that supports compliance with the PSEA and meets clients business needs 	
<p>Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Strategy, Target & Reporting Frequency</p>
<p>Efficiency</p> <p>15. Average length of time for external hiring processes (<i>Ideally, AIAD should be able to link appointment data to process numbers. This would allow for an automatic calculation of the time to staff of all processes rather than having to rely on a surveyed sample</i>)</p> <p>16. Manager satisfaction with flexibility in making appointments</p> <p>17. Appointee satisfaction regarding duration of</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through follow up study on time to staff in the federal public service Target: Decrease compared to previous year after full implementation of NAOs Strategy: Survey on appointment processes Target 2 and 3: Continuous improvement Frequency: Annual</p>

appointment process	
HR Planning and decision-making 18. Number and % of PSEA organizations that have an HR plan integrated with their business plan 19. Staffing strategies strategically linked to Business Plans and HR Plans 20. Staffing strategies meet key requirements	Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through SMAF/DSAR Target: 100% Frequency: Annual
Accountability 21. Variance between plans/targets of HR staffing activities vs. actuals: Are these assessed? Are they sufficiently explained? Are they clearly reported? 22. In-house assessment of any problems (as per above) plus corrective action	Performance Measurement Strategy: Assessed through SMAF/DSAR Target 1: Variance explained in all cases Target 2: Existence of in-house assessment and corrective action Frequency: Annual
Clients Needs and PSEA Compliance 23. Level of client satisfaction with PSC staffing and assessment services and products 24. Degree of consistency of staffing and assessment services and products with the new PSEA and the PSC's strategic outcome	Performance Measurement Strategy: Consultations and surveys Target: Satisfactory results Reporting Frequency: Annual against three-year plan Performance Measurement Strategy: Audits and studies Target: Satisfactory audit and study findings Reporting Frequency: Determined by audit, study and evaluation plan
Effectiveness 25. Number and % of unproductive recruitment processes (Proxy)	Performance Measurement Strategy: Link required between pay system and PSRS Target: 0 Reporting Frequency: Annual
Cost-effective system 26. a) Cost/referral and cost/screened out application b) Quality of referrals (see ind. 1 + breakdown by internal and external appointment processes or include specific question in SASB consultations / surveys or NAOs impact assessment)	Performance Measurement Strategy: a) Program costs/output or outcome compared to manual screening or to comparable systems b) Manager's survey Target: a) Lower cost for automatic screening and b) Increased satisfaction with quality of referrals Reporting Frequency: Annual

Immediate Outcomes	
<p>Managers Greater screening capability 27. % and average number of screened out applications/process More manageable number of referrals 28. Average number and % of referrals/process and compared to total # of applications Faster impartial screening and referrals 29. Average PSRS screening time and Ind. 19 Improved quality of referrals – see ind. 30 b) Greater satisfaction with staffing – see ind. 20-21 and 27 and 30. Manager satisfaction with timeliness and quality of staffing information systems Customized job advertisements 31. Managers satisfaction level with flexibility in tailoring advertisements</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategy: Ind. 31-33 – PSRS; Ind. 34 Assessed through SMAF/DSAR; Ind. 35 Assessed through SASB consultations and surveys Targets Target 1 (31): Increase over previous years once NAoS fully implemented Target 2 (32): TBD Target 3 (33): within a few hours Target 4 -5 (34-35): 85% or higher Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>
<p>Applicants Applicants use PSRS 32. Number and % of applicants that use other means for applying (e.g. fax, mail, email, etc.) Greater applicant access to PS hiring processes/greater understanding of diversity and range of FPS jobs 33. Number of unique PSRS profiles Faster and improved feedback to applicants / ability to track progress online and more user-friendly experience 34. Average departmental feedback time to applicants via PSRS communications tool 35. Applicants satisfaction level with PSRS user-friendliness Right-fit / right-time 36. Applicants perception regarding how well their profile matches potential appropriate job opportunities</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategies: Ind. 36 – Tracked via regional offices? Ind. 37, 38 – PSRS Ind. 39, 40 – SASB client consultations and surveys Targets Target 1 (36): More than 95% Target 2 (37): Increase over previous year Target 3 (38): As low as possible depending on number of referrals Target 4 (39): 85% or higher Target 5 (40): 85% or more surveyed applicants believe their profile matches appropriate opportunities Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>
<p>HR Management from centre to departments Departments use PSRS functionalities 37. Overall use of PSRS Screening Tools (breakdown by screening tool type + tool combination, by department and region) 38. Average number and % of referrals for recruitment processes where multiple screening tools were used compared to processes with no screening tools. To be compared to Ind. 30 b)</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategies: Ind. 41-43 – Tracked via PSRS Ind. 44-45 – Assessed through client consultations and surveys Targets Target 1 (41): Increase over previous year Target 2 (42): TBD but as low as possible Target 3 (43): Increase over previous year Target 4 (44): Moderate to high extent Target 5 (45): 85% or more</p>

<p>Increased number of direct access departments (DADs)</p> <p>39. Number and % of DADs compared to all PSEA organizations</p> <p>Common HR business process fully enabled, linking all HR domains</p> <p>40. Extent to which PSRS information can be used for planning and reporting purposes + see Ind. 34</p> <p>Non-duplication of departmental efforts / reduced manual processes</p> <p>41. Departments confidence level in PSRS screening capacity + Ind. 41</p> <p>Improved monitoring and reporting on recruitment efforts and reduced burden – See Ind. 44</p>	<p>Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>
<p>Outputs</p> <p>PSEA compliant automated resourcing system – See Ind. 28</p> <p>Direct access departments with an accountability structure</p> <p>42. Extent to which DADs committed to complying with the PSEA and appointment policy framework (e.g. # of signed conditional MOUs)</p> <p>PSRS services available across the country via PSC regional offices</p> <p>43. Extent to which PSRS services are being offered/region (clients survey) + Ind. 41</p> <p>Communications processes and reporting system</p> <p>44. Existence of formal communications processes and reporting systems between departments and PSRS program</p> <p>System and training support to users</p> <p>45. Number of trained users and % of active users/trained users + cost of training program</p> <p>46. Satisfaction level of trained users and their comfort level with the system</p> <p>Help desk and PSC regional office services</p> <p>47. Number of requests (breakdown by type of request and by region) and average time to close tickets</p> <p>System releases</p> <p>48. Number of system releases (breakdown by type of change – e.g. simple, moderate, complex)</p>	<p>Performance Measurement Strategies:</p> <p>Ind. 46 and 48-49, 51, 52 – Tracked via PSRS Team</p> <p>Ind. 47, 50 – Assessed through client consultations and surveys</p> <p>Targets</p> <p>Target 1-2 (46-47): High extent</p> <p>Target 3 (48): TBD</p> <p>Target 4 (49): TBD but ratio of active users/trained users should be high</p> <p>Target 5 (50): 85% or more and high comfort level</p> <p>Target 6 (51): Decrease in processing time</p> <p>Target 7 (52): TBD</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Annual</p>

Once the Program has decided what indicators it wants to include in its performance measurement framework, it should also consider including the following information:

- Indicator's Characteristics
 - ◇ A clear definition of the indicator
 - ◇ How it is calculated (if quantitative)
 - ◇ How it should be broken down (by year/department/region, etc.)
 - ◇ Who are the potential users of this information
 - ◇ Who has the responsibility of collecting it, through what mechanism, system or database

- Comparison Base and Targets
 - ◇ What should it be compared to (benchmarking or compared to own baseline)
 - ◇ What are the specific targets; are they the same for all regions, etc.
 - ◇ What variations or other calculations could be used
 - ◇ What other indicators can assist in interpreting each indicator

- Graphic Representation
 - ◇ How will the indicator be displayed (a single number, a chart identifying the trend over the years compared to the objective, etc.) and where will it be displayed.

- Potential Interpretation and Use
 - ◇ What could it mean if targets are not reached (changes in the program environment – e.g. policy change)
 - ◇ What intervention could be considered in such cases (modify the objective, reallocate resources, etc.)

APPENDIX B

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation Framework for the PSSMP Stream 1: Public Service Resourcing System (PSRS)

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
Relevance: Is it consistent with government-wide priorities and does it respond to the original intent of the system			
<p>1. How does the PSRS support the implementation of the <i>Public Service Employment Act</i> and other government priorities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Area of Selection • Better, impartial, fair access/fair notice • Faster referrals • Service to Canadians • Delegated responsibility for recruitment • Shift from rules based to values based staffing and recruitment • Screening needs to support targeted groups (e.g., employment equity) • Implementation of PSMA <p>2. Is there an ongoing need for the PSRS?</p>	<p>Document review PSSMP management, stakeholder and expert interviews</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis of documentary evidence, interviews and surveys</p>
	<p>User surveys PSRS performance data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application, screening and referral processing speeds and capacity • Accuracy, quality • Applicants per region • %EE/OL applicants 	<p>PSRS Project</p>	<p>Review and test of PSRS charter</p> <p>Indicator trend analysis</p>
<p>3. Are there any additional needs which remain to be met? What are some examples of these?</p>	<p>PSSMP management, stakeholder and expert interviews User surveys</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Interviews and surveys</p>

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
Success - Design, Delivery and Operations: Evidence of improved design/delivery as the initiative's lifecycle processes unfold			
<p>4. To what extent were system design requirements and expectations met?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the evolution of the expectations for the system affect implementation? 	<p>PSRS manager, project manager, stakeholder and expert interviews (re. PSMA, PSEA, CASS, Stream 2, etc.) (3, 4)</p> <p>Applicant survey (5)</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis of documentary evidence and interviews</p> <p>Project management analysis, corporate decision analysis</p> <p>Requirements/expectations compared to system performance</p>
<p>5. <i>To what extent did other government policies and requirements affect the system?</i></p> <p>6. Does the system design make it appealing for job seekers to apply with the Government of Canada as an employer?</p>	<p>Project management records: plans, schedule, cost, adjustments (3, 4)</p> <p>Project approval documents</p>	<p>PSRS Project</p>	<p>Desired expectation vs. physical limitations of the system</p> <p>System analysis</p>

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
<p>7. Was there appropriate policy and senior management leadership, guidance, decision-making? Who has ultimate responsibility for/owns the system?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Planning • Communications • Operations • Reporting • Evaluation 	<p>Policy and governance documents Project management record: schedule, cost, adjustments PSRS management, stakeholder and expert interviews</p>	<p>Internal Audit (unless final audit points to gaps in information)</p>	<p>Analysis of documentary evidence Assessment of governance structure and ownership Determine place and potential of PSRS within the total hiring process</p>
<p>8. Was project progress monitored and managed appropriately? Was the project appropriately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned? • Phased? • Paced? • Sequenced? • Resourced and Financed? <p>9. Is appropriate and reliable performance information being collected and used? 10. Were there unanticipated problems?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were risks identified and managed appropriately? • Were corrective actions taken? 	<p>Project management record: Schedules, costs, adjustments, risks</p>	<p>Internal Audit (unless final audit points to gaps in information)</p>	<p>Analysis of documentary evidence Project management and activity-resource analysis</p>
<p>PSRS management, stakeholder and expert interviews</p>	<p>Internal Audit (unless final audit points to gaps in information)</p>		

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
11. To what extent is the system applicant- friendly? E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to find • Site easily navigated • User-friendly forms • Privacy security/data retention 12. Is there useful feedback to applicants? E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate information on whether screened in or out/qualify • Reasons for screening out • Information on where application rests 13. Is the system perceived to be fair, equitable and transparent to applicants?	Applicant surveys (10, 12)	PSRS Project	Analysis of applicant survey and focus groups
	Applicant focus groups (10, 11)	Evaluation	
14. To what extent do applicants use support services? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory services and support line • Web-based tools 15. Do those without Internet service have adequate access to apply to the PS?	Applicant survey and/or focus groups (12) PSRS data for applicants (12)	PSRS Project	Analysis of interviews, focus group and survey data Trend analysis of service usage
	PSRS management interviews (12) Regional offices and Services Canada (13)	Evaluation	

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
16. Is the system HR/Hiring manager-friendly? E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful posting templates • Easy screening processes • Applications easily accessible • Useful system reports 16b. Is training and support for users appropriate?	Hiring/HR manager survey Job placement organizations interviews Availability of PSRS support: manuals, guides, sample forms (15)	Evaluation	Comparative and thematic analysis of manager survey data, managerial interviews Analysis of course feedback forms and availability of support information
	PSRS data (e.g., reposting frequency as a result of error(s)) Course feedback forms	PSRS Project	
17. Did departmental managers have the expertise to use the system effectively?	Hiring Manager/HR specialist interviews and/or survey Quality HR reviews	Evaluation	Assessment and analysis of managers' interview results, PSRS evidence
	PSRS data (e.g., reposting frequency as a result of error(s))	PSRS Project	
18. Are managers restricted unduly by the system? How has the introduction of the PSRS affected the recruitment process, the role of those involved (e.g., HR specialists, hiring managers), and are these changes accepted/how are they viewed?	Hiring Manager/HR Specialist interviews and/or survey	Evaluation	Thematic analysis of managerial interviews, survey
19. Has system support and maintenance kept pace with demand? E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent did resources meet applicant and management volume and function needs? 	Document review PSRS manager interviews Hiring Manager/HR Specialist survey	Evaluation	Comparative analysis of applicant survey data, interviews, measures, service level standards
	PSRS performance data (e.g., % downtime of operating time) Helpdesk data (e.g., volume, types of calls, response time)	PSRS Project	

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
Success - Immediate Outcomes: Whether the initiative met the intended outcomes			
20. Compared to other approaches does the system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide better managed volume of applicants? • Provide appropriate referrals (screened in and out, including smaller volume of referrals and better quality of referrals)? • Have better processing speed and/or capacity? • Provide impartial, competitive screening? • Reduce the workload for managers and other staff? (Could include greater hiring capacity, reduced volume & increased quality of referrals) • Improve the monitoring and reporting on recruitment efforts? 	PSRS management and expert interviews Hiring Manager/HR Specialist interviews, focus groups and/or surveys Trend of NAOS competitions	Evaluation	Assessment and analysis of documentary evidence, interview, focus groups and survey results Comparative analysis of time-dated measures
21. To what extent do government departments use the system? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do the managers and HR specialists (i.e., officers and assistants) use the system? 	Document reviews PSRS management and system operator interviews Hiring Manager/HR Specialist interviews and/or survey	Evaluation	Analysis of interview and survey data, and documentary evidence Analysis of departmental take-up of PSRS
	PSRS data (# of user departments)	PSRS Project	
22. Does the PSRS provide Canadians with increased access to job opportunities in the Federal Public Service? (Could include ability to apply online, ease of understanding application)	Survey of Applicants Hiring Manager/HR Specialist survey PSRS data	Evaluation	Analysis of survey results and documentary evidence
23. Are there any factors that either impede or facilitate use of the system within departments? For Managers? For HR specialists?	Document reviews PSRS management and system operator interviews Hiring Manager/HR Specialist interviews and/or survey	Evaluation	Analysis of interview and survey data, and documentary evidence

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
Success - Intermediate Outcomes			
24. Does it support the PSC with accountability information for Parliament?	PSRS reports Information used for accountability	PSRS Project	Compare overall quality and availability of information obtained before and after the advent of PSRS
	Central agency interviews	Evaluation	
25. Does the system contribute information helpful for HR planning, decision-making and reporting? E.g., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PS demand and HR supply data by classification 	PSRS manager and stakeholder interviews Hiring manager /HR Specialist survey	Evaluation	Analysis of interviews and survey
26. To what extent is the data used to improve planning and decision-making?	PSRS data: departmental demand and human resource supply data by classification, region, EE, OL category	PSRS Project	Analysis of supply-demand data by classification category, region, employment equity, official languages
Success - Ultimate Outcomes			
27. Has the quality of recruitment improved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of applicants/referrals Non-partisan Representative of Canadian population 	Hiring/HR manager interviews and/or survey PSC recruitment data	Evaluation	Analysis of interviews and survey Analysis of comparative data and trends
	PSRS data (e.g., % employment equity/OL, % regional representation, PSRS utilization data)	PSRS Project	PSC Appointments Information and Analysis System Number of successful appointment complaints and challenges

Evaluation Question/Issue*	Data Source/Indicators	Responsibility	Evaluation Method
Cost-Effectiveness/Alternatives			
<p>28. What are the benefits of the PSRS compared to the costs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has duplication been reduced? • Have legacy systems been retired? • Is it resulting in a more efficient and effective government-wide recruitment process compared to other alternatives? • What would have occurred in the absence of PSRS? • What costs were avoided as a result of the system 	<p>Hiring/HR manager interviews and/or survey</p> <p>PSRS data and cost data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # applicants • Cost per applicant screened • Cost per applicant screened manually (prior to system implementation) • % Development/operating costs • % Referrals/Applicants • % Qualified applicants/referrals • Cost per referral • Cost per screened-out applicant • % of departments which have Direct Access • % of usage of Direct Access by departments which have it • No. of other screening, recruitment systems in use 	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>PSRS Project</p>	<p>Analysis of interviews and/survey</p> <p>Case study</p> <p>Applicant volume trends</p> <p>Cost-analysis and trend analysis</p> <p>Analysis of existing systems in use, amount of duplication and legacy systems</p>
<p>29. Is the system cost efficient?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save management time? What is the cycle time for the 	<p>Document review</p> <p>Hiring manager survey</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis documentary evidence and survey results</p>

<p>PSRS process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms and funding in place for continuous system improvement • Cost savings 	<p>PSRS data:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System time per candidate vs. baseline system time per candidate • Cost per referral vs. pre PSRS cost per referral and screened-out applicants • Avg. no. of days per referral process • System testing, troubleshooting data <p>Management quality review processes</p>	<p>PSRS Project</p>	<p>Previous limited, one-off studies Comparative and trend analysis</p>
<p>30. Are there other systems under development, or has the PSRS helped to contribute or ensure a common approach to resourcing?</p>	<p>Interviews</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis of interview results</p>
<p>31. Are there alternative systems/approaches that are/could be used now?</p>	<p>Hiring manager/HR specialist interviews</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis of interview results</p>
<p>32. Have there been expected side effects or benefits of this project/system?</p>	<p>All sources</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>All methods</p>
<p>33. Are there any lessons learned from the implementation of Stream 1? What are the key strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities associated with the PSRS?</p>	<p>Interviews</p>	<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis of interview results</p>

APPENDIX C
PMI KNOWLEDGE AREAS AND
PROCESSES AND PSSMP DELIVERABLE

PSSMP Deliverables by Project Management Knowledge Area

1. Project Integration Management

- 1.1 Project Plan Development
- 1.2 Project Plan Execution
- 1.3 Integrated Change Control

- PSRS Deployment Strategy
- PSRS Deployment Strategy Amendment
- Initial Roadmap & Master Plan
- Preliminary Business Case
- Client Engagement Strategy for Direct Access Departments
- Integrated Project Plan
- PSSMP governance Framework
- Project Controls, Processes & Procedures

2. Project Scope Management

- 2.1 Initiation
- 2.2 Scope Planning
- 2.3 Scope Definition
- 2.4 Scope Verification
- 2.5 Scope Change Control

- PSRS Releases
- Research Report
- Problem Definition & Vision
- Target Business Design
- Project Charter
- Work Breakdown Structure (Internal Audit)

3. Project Time Management

- 3.1 Activity Definition
- 3.2 Activity Sequencing
- 3.3 Activity Duration Estimating
- 3.4 Schedule Development
- 3.5 Schedule Control

- PSRS Deployment Strategy
- Short-Term Training Strategy
- Consultation Strategy
- Detailed Start-up & Plan
- Operational Support Strategy
- Integrated Project Plan
- Evaluation Framework Strategy
- Time Reporting

4. Project Cost Management

- 4.1 Resource Planning
- 4.2 Cost Estimating
- 4.3 Cost Budgeting
- 4.4 Cost Control

- System Readiness
- TB Submission (Revised PPA)
- Treasury Board Submission (Stream II)
- Time Reporting
- Budgets

5. Project Quality Management

- 5.1 Quality Planning
- 5.2 Quality Assurance
- 5.3 Quality Control

- Technical Readiness Review
- System Readiness
- Release 2: PSMA Readiness
- 2006-2007 Psychometric Analysis of PSRS Functions
- System Performance and Stress Testing
- Review & Improve QA Process
- CLF2.0 for PSRS

6. Project Human Resource Management

- 6.1 Organizational Planning
- 6.2 Staff Acquisition
- 6.3 Team Development

- Short-Term Training Strategy
- Develop Training & support materials for Direct Access Departments
- Detailed Start-up & Plan
- Long-Term Training Strategy
- Integrated Project Plan
- Develop e-learning product for PSRS Training
- Project Responsibility Matrix

7. Project Communications Management

- 7.1 Communications Planning
- 7.2 Information Distribution
- 7.3 Performance Reporting
- 7.4 Administrative Closure

- TB Submission (Revised PPA)
- Develop Training & Support Materials (regions)
- Direct Access Letter of Agreement Template
- Take-Up Report
- Reporting Database - PSRS Reporting Solution Implementation
- Documentation of PSRS (Business Rules)
- Consultation Strategy
- Communication Strategy, Plan & Materials
- Client Engagement Strategy for Direct Access Departments
- Data & Reporting
- Project Reports
- Evaluation Framework Strategy
- Evaluation Report
- Performance Measurement Strategy
- Documents/Records Management Strategy

8. Project Risk Management

- 8.1 Risk Management Planning
- 8.2 Risk Identification
- 8.3 Qualitative Risk Analysis
- 8.4 Quantitative Risk Analysis
- 8.5 Risk Response Planning
- 8.6 Risk Monitoring and Control

- Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)
- Threat & Risk Assessment (TRA)
- TRA Action Plan
- Technical Readiness Review
- System Readiness
- Release 2: PSMA Readiness
- SOS/TRA/PEN Test
- Risk Management Approach

9. Project Procurement Management

- 9.1 Procurement Planning
- 9.2 Solicitation Planning
- 9.3 Solicitation
- 9.4 Source Selection
- 9.5 Contract Administration
- 9.6 Contract Closeout

- Direct Access Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Template
- Procurement Management Plan

