

I understand that you hold a unique position within the federal government as the "Science Champion". What does it mean to be the Government of Canada science champion?

The Clerk appointed me Deputy Minister Champion of Science and Technology in September 2009. The role of a Deputy Minister Champion is to:

- provide guidance to the community's Executive,
- generate awareness of the issue with the Deputy Minister community,
- attend public and special events, and
- demonstrate a personal commitment to the issue.¹

As Deputy Minister Champion of *Science and Technology* more specifically, I am committed to:

- Encourage innovative research and development and strengthen the capacity of federal science and technology in support of government priorities.
- Lead interdepartmental collaboration to improve federal government science communications tools and information-sharing between the federal science community and the media.
- Lead interdepartmental efforts to address critical challenges to collaboration in science and technology.
- Provide leadership and direction to improve the measurement of federally-performed science and technology

Potential supplemental question: What have you done to advance your commitments as Champion?

- In December 2009, I convened an Ad Hoc Deputy Minister's Science and Technology Committee to engage my colleagues from other science-based departments and agencies in identifying priorities for action in support of my commitments as Champion.
- Last year, the Ad Hoc Committee endorsed a forward plan that is designed to meet these commitments.
- We meet two or three times a year to monitor progress on the plan.

Specific progress has been made as follows:

1. Science communications:

- I have been spearheading efforts to address issues that the media has raised regarding science communications by federal departments and agencies.
- I convened a meeting last January between myself, a few of my Deputy Minister colleagues, and several senior executives from Canadian Science Writers Association to discuss the issues. We agreed to pursue a second meeting, the purpose of which would be to bring together representatives from the CSWA, Heads of Communication from key federal organizations as well as members of the Science and Technology Integration Board to continue to discuss issues of concern and to start a process for establishing shared objectives and a menu of collaborative activities to improve both our mutual understanding of, and our capacity to address, the current challenges to effective communication of government science.

¹ From letter from the Clerk to DM Dansereau dated September 22, 2009.

- My Department has been leading discussions among Heads of Communication from large science-based departments on this issue. For example, we convened an information-sharing session between large science-based departments and the Science Media Centre of Canada in late April, where participants collectively explored how we can improve and leverage current communications practices.

2. Fostering collaboration on scientific research

- I have directed executives in my organization to propose ways that we might foster collaboration between federal departments/agencies and academia on scientific research.

3. Strengthening the capacity of federal science

i. Auditor General on the management of scientific research

- I invited the Auditor General of Canada to speak to the Ad Hoc Deputy Minister's Science and Technology about the chapter of her Spring 2010 Report on Scientific Research at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.
- The group was consequently able to engage in a discussion on the common implications of the audit for the effective management of federal science. For example, we spoke about the importance of clearly articulating the objectives federal scientific research and of measuring results against those objectives.

ii. Values and ethics – conflict of interest

- Last March, the Executive Director of Values, Ethics, and Conflict of Interest from my Department presented to the Ad Hoc Deputy Minister's Science and Technology Committee a proposed approach for addressing the issue of employee participation on Boards of Directors, including a requirement that all employees report when they are on external boards.
- The proposed approach is based on one that has been adopted at Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and will help employees and their managers better understand and address the risks around participation on external boards, ensure consistent treatment of employees, allow Deputy Heads to meet their obligations, and respond to recent recommendations by the Auditor General on managing conflict of interest in the public service.