

*In the spirit of the*  
**VANCOUVER AGREEMENT**  
*A Governance Case Study*

December 2003



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Vancouver Agreement, signed on March 9, 2000, is a five-year, unfunded urban development agreement. It was designed to coordinate the work of three governments – British Columbia, Canada and the City of Vancouver. The stated purpose and main objectives were “to develop and implement a coordinated strategy to promote and support sustainable economic, social and community development” through a process whereby the three governments would “work together, within their respective jurisdictions and mandates, and with communities in Vancouver”.

Evaluations of activities under the VA have focused on specific programs and projects. To date, there has been no evaluation of the Agreement itself. In August 2003, the VA Management Committee leads agreed to initiate such an evaluation process and commissioned the Macleod Institute to develop an evaluation framework that would describe the VA in terms of its original intentions, actual operations and people’s perceptions of it, and to make recommendations for a governance framework, including the basis for accountability and evaluation. The unusual nature of the VA as a collaborative partnership makes it a difficult initiative to describe especially in terms of special benefits and particular results that derive from different governments with different jurisdictions and mandates that also have common clients and interests. The challenge in the study was to go beyond traditional models and approaches in order to assess and evaluate governance issues.

### Methodology

In developing a profile that described the Vancouver Agreement as it was originally conceived, how it developed and how it was perceived, a multi-faceted approach

was undertaken. The methodology involved key informant interviews, document reviews and formative feedback from VA management teams. In this process, a total of 31 personal interviews were completed either in face to face meetings or by telephone. (Appendices 1 and 2) Over 110 documents were reviewed (Appendix 3). These materials included summaries of community and VA management team meetings; sundry background and other VA materials; current and past reports on issues in the DTES; media coverage of DTES issues; reports and historical material from all three governments; consultant reports; as well as current literature on governance and accountability. Two presentations were made to VA management representatives on October 16 and November 7, 2003 respectively and feedback from those sessions was used in shaping this report.

### Findings and Conclusions

The Agreement was initiated in the midst of a broad set of pressing economic and social issues in Vancouver, particularly the Downtown Eastside (DTES). This area of the City had fallen into serious social and economic decay by the 1990s. Government cutbacks and general decline in the economy had exacerbated the challenges faced by governments in delivering services effectively. Early efforts to better coordinate government services such as the Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams adopted by the City in 1994 helped to address some issues although their scope of authority was limited. Experience with this initiative was an important precursor to the Agreement.

The VA’s profile revealed a dynamic collaborative arrangement involving dedicated partners who are driven by passion and commitment to achieve results in social as well as economic terms. The management of the process is by unanimity

and consensus among the members of the Policy and Management Committees, thus ensuring equality among them.

The VA has proven its ability to mobilize the forces and resources needed to succeed in urban centers and, in particular, the DTES. While an Integrated Strategic Plan did not emerge until 2002, the experience of working together resulted in new and innovative ways of addressing problems.

As an urban development agreement designed to coordinate the work of three governments, the Vancouver Agreement has had many successes. It has succeeded in forging shared objectives and in helping to correlate multiple agencies in a common effort to deal with multi-faceted challenges. Key informants highlighted agencies or programs working together in ways that had not happened before the VA. For example, collaboration between the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Vancouver Police Department resulted in more effective management of drug abuse situations in DTES.

The interaction of the partners also led to other significant benefits. Almost 80% of the key informants said the VA had influenced their organization's objectives and/or outcomes. But each respondent had his or her own idea of what the VA means. Lacking a unified concept for the whole, responses tended to focus on specific projects and committee processes rather than the essence of the Agreement itself. Documents reflected the same fragmentation, primarily speaking to a series of separate initiatives or committee meetings. Even so, common themes such as government cooperation, working together on common objectives and relationships across government boundaries emerged from the study. The degree of collaboration was substantiated through interview results, and 62.5% identified

increased cooperation among the three levels of government as the VA's main objective.

There was also a desire to involve the community and this took many forms. Eleven community meetings had been held to discuss a draft version of the Agreement in 1999 before it was finalized. Community representation was included on the task teams. As many of the program and project committees in each jurisdiction included community members, this was also seen as a vehicle to enhance participation. But no wholistic approach to community involvement was developed under the Agreement. For the most part, the Policy Committee determined whether or how the public would be involved.

With particular reference to governance, four issues were identified. These were

#### *1. Decision-making criteria*

Two kinds of decision processes were identified: VA management decisions, and decisions about what projects would be brought under the VA's umbrella. In both situations, the VA lacks standards or criteria that are important to decision making. Transparency in decision-making in particular requires standards.

#### *2. Community participation*

Although it is one of the main principles of the Agreement, a community input strategy has not been clearly defined. Two-thirds of the key informants thought that the roles and responsibilities for communities and NGOs were unclear. A starting point in addressing this issue will be to identify the types of roles that a community or NGO might play in the VA governance process. These range anywhere from customer, a fairly passive role, to fully active in making collaborative decisions.

### *3. Structure of authority*

The VA was designed to operate as a vehicle for co-operation with each partner working within its own jurisdiction, mandate and budget. The VA's model of distributive authority allowed maximum flexibility for multiple decision makers and managers. But the VA is now experiencing a pull toward a more centralized structure (delegated authority). As a result of becoming a recipient of some dedicated funding, the VA must decide on the type of structure it wishes to carry forward into the future. The analysis suggests, however, that the value of collaborative partnership may be lost if a more centralized command and control model is adopted. Overall, experience has demonstrated that money is not the solution when integrated service delivery is the goal. As one key informant observed, "The VA seizes opportunities between governments to pull together in one direction to get things done. We need to do more of that."

### *4. Evaluation*

Evaluation of the VA has proven to be a challenge, primarily because a clear distinction has not been drawn between project outcomes and outcomes of the collaborative partnership itself. Evaluation efforts to date have been concentrated on project-level outcomes, which is undeniably worthwhile, but the VA itself has yet to be evaluated. The VA's performance needs to be evaluated against a set of measurable standards set forth in a Governance Framework. Desired objectives would be expressed in terms of collaboration and social policy networks, for example, and include indicators such as those used in this Case Study.

In more general terms, the study includes discussion and observations that focus on a number of issues respecting the emergence, nurturing and development of new governance and accountability frameworks that are appropriate for collaborative partnerships such as the VA. This discussion encompasses developing a policy paradigm to elaborate and operationalize the VA's guiding principles. In addition, observations are made about creating social capital, and the investments that are realized by the process; the challenges of network management created by cross-jurisdictional relationships; and modern accountability requirements that result from new forms of public management such as partnerships.

### **Recommendations**

The case study's findings and conclusions lay the groundwork for accountability and evaluation processes. Five recommendations were presented.

1. Development of a Governance Framework to complement the Vancouver Agreement, based on a policy paradigm that explicitly acknowledges the VA as an inspired partnership driven by passion and commitment in response to community needs and demands.
2. The Governance Framework should embellish the framework of the VA and set measurable standards by defining and describing relationships; roles and responsibilities; decision making criteria and processes; goals and strategic thinking processes, a community participation model; and accountabilities.

3. Development of a metaphor by VA participants, based on the policy paradigm in the Governance Framework, to provide a succinct, immediately identifiable phrase that communicates the VA's pith and substance to participants and the community.
4. Development of three brief Companion Guides to the Governance Framework to assist VA participants and the community in determining when to participate, how services are integrated overall and how to manage their participation.

5. Implementation of an evaluation that assesses the VA's performance objectives in terms of measurable standards stipulated in the Governance Framework. Indicators should be specifically chosen to measure how the partnership has performed, including measures of social capital.

As the VA expires on March 9, 2005, it would be important to move forward fairly expeditiously. A possible timeline is offered by way of suggestion. The timeline allows for both stakeholder consultations and lead time for internal discussions by the respective governments.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*"A key objective of the Vancouver Agreement was to bring three levels of government together to make joint decisions – collaboration instead of blame – to clarify roles and overcome duplication and gaps."*

Community representative's  
comment during interview

Signed on March 9, 2000, the Vancouver Agreement (VA) is a five-year, unfunded urban development agreement. It was designed to coordinate the work of three governments – federal (with 12 participating departments), provincial (with 12 to 14 participating ministries), and municipal (the City of Vancouver). The VA's definition of purpose addresses both its objectives ("to develop and implement a coordinated strategy to promote and support sustainable economic, social and community development") and how they will be carried out ("commitment of the three governments to work together, within their respective jurisdictions and mandates, and with communities in Vancouver").

One of the guiding principles embedded in the VA is the evaluation of programs, projects and actions under the Agreement. The VA, however, presents a challenge to evaluators who are used to looking at more traditional programs operated by one department or ministry of a government where governance, accountability, funding and implementation are relatively linear. It is more difficult to describe and evaluate the special benefits and particular results that arise when different governments, each of which has separate mandates and jurisdictions but all of which have common clients and interests, come together to share information, align priorities and coordinate actions. The VA was not meant to implement or deliver services and programs, and this, of course, alters how an evaluation is performed.

### **Accountability and Evaluation Frameworks**

In August 2003, the VA Management Committee Leads (Canada's ADM, Western Economic Diversification; BC's ADM, Olympic Secretariat and the City of Vancouver's General Manager) and the VA Management Committee agreed to initiate an evaluation process.

The Macleod Institute of the University of Calgary was retained to develop the groundwork for accountability and evaluation frameworks as a first step in the evaluation process. Western Economic Diversification agreed to cover the cost of this first phase of the project.

### Case Study Objectives

The Institute was asked to take a case study approach to achieve the following project objectives:

*This report outlines*

- *a profile of the Vancouver Agreement*
- *observations and findings*
- *recommendations for a governance framework*

- develop a profile describing the VA and an understanding of
  - a. what it was meant to be,
  - b. what pressures, internal and external, shaped it,
  - c. how people saw it, and
  - d. what it turned out to be;
- provide observations and findings; and
- make recommendations for a governance framework, including the basis for accountability and evaluation.

In undertaking its work, the Institute adopted a formative approach with VA management teams. Two key presentations were made that helped provide feedback and direction on the Case Study.

*Interviews with Key Informants included*

- *participating agencies, departments and ministries of all three levels of government*
- *community organizations*
- *individuals involved in creating the VA*
- *members of the VA management teams*

### Methodology

The Case Study was based on key informant interviews, document reviews and formative feedback from VA management teams.

#### *Key Informant Interviews*

An initial list of over 43 potential interviewees was compiled in consultation with the VA Leads. Over a period of four weeks, a total of 31 personal interviews were completed, either in face-to-face meetings or by telephone (Appendix 1).

A 34 question interview guide (Appendix 2) was developed to ensure consistency between interviews while allowing respondents flexibility in answering questions. It focused on five key areas:

- Governance
- Collaboration/consultation/community input
- Outcomes
- Public commitment/signals
- Focus for accountability and evaluation frameworks

It is important to note that, during the time interviews were being conducted, there was considerable community debate and focus on the new Supervised Safe Injection Site in Vancouver's downtown eastside (DTES). This debate possibly led to an enhanced focus by interview respondents on health issues in the DTES.

#### *Document Reviews*

*In addition to the key informant interviews, over 110 documents were reviewed for the Case Study*

Over 110 documents were reviewed for the Case Study. Summaries and minutes of community and VA management team meetings; sundry background papers, briefing notes and planning, communications and committee materials; current and past reports on health, safety, and economic development issues in the DTES; media coverage of DTES issues; reports and historical materials from all three governments; consultants reports; and literature on governance and accountability were included in the review. Appendix 3 gives a list of references.

#### *Management Team Reviews*

The Institute worked directly with staff of the VA's Coordinating Committee for assistance in collecting materials and information for the Case Study. On two occasions, the Institute formally met with VA management teams to gain feedback and direction. The Management Committee Leads provided their perspective on October 16, and the Management Committee provided feedback on November 7, 2003.

## 2 PROFILE of the VANCOUVER AGREEMENT (VA)

*"Generally, people ... wanted to make sure that governments worked together to take quick action on critical issues."*

Final Report, *Community Review of the Draft Vancouver Agreement*  
November 1999

*The VA's vision is "creating healthy, safe and sustainable communities [where] all organizations, from informal groups to governments, work effectively together to improve the quality of everyone's life."*

Vision Statement  
*Vancouver Agreement*

*11 specific purposes cover organizational, strategic and operational aspects of the VA. Key features of the Agreement's original intent include building*

### What the VA was meant to be

In the spring of 1999, political direction was given to officials of the three levels of government to prepare a draft agreement. The agreement was intended to lay out a framework and principles for governments to work together in addressing Vancouver's social and economic issues, particularly in the downtown eastside (DTES). A draft version was initiated in July, 1999 and taken to the community for review. The document was translated into four languages (French, Chinese, Vietnamese and Spanish) before being distributed widely and discussed at 11 community meetings. A final report was issued in November which included the core elements of what later became Schedule A to the Vancouver Agreement.

### *Core Elements*

Schedule A to the VA is organized under five main headings: Vision, Purpose, Guiding Principles, Implementation and First Focus of the Agreement: the DTES.

The Purpose section enunciates an overall purpose and then proceeds to stipulate 11 specific purposes. As mentioned earlier, the VA's overall purpose is to have "the three governments work together, within their jurisdictions and mandates, with the communities in Vancouver to develop and implement a coordinated strategy to promote and support sustainable economic, social, and community development."

The 11 specific purposes cover organizational, strategic and operational issues, as follows:

1. Formation of a Policy Committee;
2. Efforts directed to those parts of Vancouver where the need is greatest;
3. First focus on the DTES;
4. Establishing processes to engage members of the community;

What the VA was meant to be

5. Developing an implementation schedule within 3 months;
6. Linking of initiatives to build on one another;
7. Working within each government's jurisdiction, mandate, policies, strategies and fiscal direction;
8. Making balanced investments in support of economic and social change within their respective mandates;
9. Financing activities initially through existing government resources;
10. Encouraging funding from non-government partners; and
11. Using individual authorization procedures for committing funds when a government agrees to support an activity under the Agreement.

*12 guiding principles provide broad direction for making decisions and carrying out activities under the VA.*

The Guiding Principles section lists 12 principles: appropriate delivery of services and programs (complementarity and working within individual mandates); strategic planning; community diversity; gender and cultural diversity; heritage areas; communications; innovation; participation; build on existing work; sustainable, local economic development; partnerships; evaluations.

*Ultimate responsibility for the VA is given to the Policy Committee, whose decisions must be unanimous.*

The Implementation section sets out the composition and brief terms of reference for a Policy Committee and a Management Committee. Decisions and activities under the Agreement are the responsibility of the Policy Committee comprised of a Federal Minister, a Provincial Minister and the Mayor or Vancouver. The Management Committee administers the VA and consists of nine senior public officials, three to be appointed by each government, with one of the provincial representatives being from the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. In addition, the Policy Committee is given the task of establishing processes for community participation "which will provide advice to the Management Committee."

*The Management Committee administers the VA.*

*Community participation processes are set by the Policy Committee and "provide advice to the Management Committee."*

*Community Health and Safety, Economic and Social Development and Community Capacity Building in Vancouver's downtown eastside (DTES) is the VA's first area of focus.*

The First Focus for the Agreement is Vancouver's downtown eastside (DTES). This section of the VA outlines a proposed strategy for addressing DTES issues in three key areas: Community Health and Safety, Economic and Social Development and Community Capacity Building. Five objectives are stipulated, as follows:

1. Creating a community in which people can live, work, visit, and do business, while promoting and supporting positive linkages with neighbouring communities and the rest of the city;
2. Access to affordable and safe housing and job opportunities;
3. Heritage and cultural development;
4. Sustainable economic growth and community health; and
5. A "framework for women and men to influence decisions that affect them."

*"It was good to start without money – people had to work together to decide what was important first. Money off the bat was not needed."*

Federal representative's comment during interview

#### *Reach, Budget and Other Resources*

No new funding was committed by the governments to the VA. Rather, "the expectation was that by working together, the governments could maximize resources in existing areas" (Cavanaugh, 2000). Funds were to be identified in existing programs and applied to priority areas of the Agreement.

An Implementation Schedule was announced on September 29, 2000 (six, not three, months after the VA was signed). It contained a list of proposed initiatives under the VA that ultimately included a \$13.9 million package for an integrated health and safety initiative focused on Main and Hastings (\$3.9M); street improvement including graffiti removal and needle pick-up (\$0.2M); community and economic development with Partners in Community and Economic Help (\$2.3M); and new housing developments (\$7.5M).

*Almost \$100 million from existing programs was collaboratively focused on priorities as mutually agreed between April 2000 and March 2003.*

*In the 1990s, fiscal constraints, economic decline and a popular wave of reinventing governments set the stage for innovative approaches to program delivery .*

In total between April 2000 and March 2003, the three governments have contributed approximately **\$97 million (\$74M from BC; \$7M from the City and \$16M from Canada)** for activities under the VA. The contributions included funding for both capital investments and operational activities. In addition, each level of government has provided significant human capital in administering the VA, strategic planning, and coordinating collaborative activities.

#### **VA Origins:**

##### **Impelling forces for change**

The 1990s was a decade of change. By 1993, Canada's economy was in decline and the federal government was experiencing chronic deficits and growing debt loads. A new government was elected that year with a mandate to pursue economic recovery and stabilize the country's fiscal situation. A new government had been elected in 1991 in BC, but deteriorating fiscal environments nevertheless constrained government spending, which resulted in decreased transfer payments to municipal governments. Vancouver, which had gone through a period of rapid economic and population growth in the early part of the decade, following EXPO 1986, also found itself struggling in later years with the consequences of such economic factors as the 1997-1998 Asian meltdown and the US-Canada softwood lumber dispute.

In addition to the twin challenges of fiscal shortfalls and economic decline, a popular wave of government reform swept through many countries in the western world. Demands for more meaningful citizen engagement and a strong desire to change the way governments do business were epitomized in Osborne and Gaebler's 1992 book *Reinventing Government*. Roger Douglas, Minister of Finance in New Zealand's Labour Government, also helped to popularize government reengineering when he published *Unfinished Business* after he retired in 1990.

### VA Origins: New Approaches to Service Delivery

All three levels of government in Canada have developed new ways of doing business over the past decade. Although these approaches now reach ten years of experience, governments are still considered to be experimenting with integrated service delivery through various collaborative models. (Institute for Citizen-Centred Service, 2003)

*"The answer for every problem cannot always be another program or more money. Instead, we must radically change the way government operates – shifting from top down bureaucracy to front line decision making. Employees and communities want to change the way we work from the ground up".*

Ken Dobell, Vancouver City Manager  
*The First Steps to Better Government*, November 1994

The City of Vancouver began to work on alternative approaches early in the 1990s. In September 1994, City Council adopted a framework for integrated service delivery at the neighbourhood level. Systems-based integrated delivery teams were established to focus on finding collaborative solutions across traditional lines of authority. The goals for these Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams (NIST) were to

- ensure accessible, efficient, effective and friendly service and delivery;
- establish approaches at a neighbourhood level on issues and service;
- involve the community in issue identification and problem-solving;
- result in creative, collaborative problem solving; and
- provide the community ready access to City information.

Interdisciplinary NIST work teams include designated representatives of various City departments. NIST members are based in the community and are delegated the responsibility and authority to resolve community problems and issues. NIST members are encouraged to form linkages with established community groups and serve as the single entry and follow up points for public issues. This particular feature was seen by the public to be very positive and contributed to the success of the Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams.

*"Partnerships are the key to effective and efficient delivery of services to communities."*

BC Integrated Service Delivery Framework website

British Columbia has more recently developed its own Integrated Service Delivery Framework. The Framework aims to provide a means for government stakeholders to work together to ensure that projects across the province do not work at odds with each other and to improve the delivery of public services.

From a federal perspective in Western Canada, Western Economic Diversification (WD) took an early lead in building partnerships as a model of integrated service delivery to address urban issues. In March 1995, for example, Canada, Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg signed Canada's first urban development agreement (UDA). The \$25 million, five-year UDA was designed to support the renewal of Winnipeg's core areas. Also in 1995, Canada, Alberta and the City of Edmonton signed an unfunded UDA "to support long term sustainable economic development in Edmonton, to streamline program coordination and delivery and seek out resources to support proposed projects."

*Vancouver's downtown eastside (DTES) seriously deteriorated throughout the 1990s, which created an environment conducive to drug use and other criminal activities.*

#### **VA Origins: Vancouver's urban challenges – the DTES**

Like all large, modern urban centres, Vancouver has experienced increasing disparities in terms of social, health and economic well-being among its citizens. In the decade leading up to the VA, the city's downtown eastside (DTES) was falling into serious social and economic decay. The community had once been vibrant with retail, manufacturing and resource-based businesses operating out of Vancouver's original center of commerce. When the venerable and long established Woodward's store on Hastings closed in 1994, it significantly contributed to the decline of the DTES' commercial sector. In 1998, 27% of the stores along one major thoroughfare were vacant and two-thirds of the area's residents were living below the poverty line. (Cavanaugh, June 2000)

By the middle of the decade, public health officials became seriously concerned about the number of heroin overdose deaths and incidences of HIV/AIDS in the DTES. Dr. Cain, BC's former chief coroner, led a 1994 provincial inquiry which recommended that the heroin issue be dealt with from a health perspective rather than a criminal perspective. Three years later, the BC Ministry of Health released a report entitled *Something to Eat, a Place to Sleep and Someone Who Gives a Damn* (the Penny Parry Report). The Report declared that a major HIV/AIDS epidemic was occurring in Vancouver, and that the epidemic was concentrated in the DTES.

By 1999, the DTES had deteriorated to the extent that 61% of Vancouver's drug related arrests and 18% of the city's crimes against persons took place in the DTES, notwithstanding that it comprised only 3% of the city's total population. (Coyne, 2002)

*A lack of integrated service delivery was one of the major factors contributing to the HIV/AIDS epidemic declared by public health officials in Vancouver.*

BC Ministry of Health, the *Penny Parry Report*, September 1997

#### **VA Origins: Complexity and cooperation**

DTES merchants and the Vancouver community at large became frustrated with the apparent inability of governments to solve crime and safety issues. Despite the engagement of 25 federal, provincial and municipal departments, and expenditures of approximately \$1 million per day, health, safety, crime, social services and housing needs were not being met.

Over 300 community organizations were also involved in providing services in the DTES. Many of these organizations received government funding to deliver alcohol and substance abuse services, counseling services, employment services, immigrant and refugee services, family and childcare services, welfare services, economic development services and advocacy. With that number of organizations, competition for government funding was fierce; it was difficult for governments to determine who to work with; and service offerings and impact were fractionated.

*"Confusion and uncertainty has created a window of opportunity for good community development ... There is no absence of goodwill around the table. The key to making a difference is the commitment across sectors and jurisdictions."*

Evaluation of the *DTES HIV/AIDS Action Plan*, November 1998

The *Penny Parry Report* had urged immediate action to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS by providing integrated government services for people most at risk for spreading the infection. The Vancouver/Richmond Health Board (now known as the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority) responded by developing the *DTES HIV / AIDS Action Plan* in 1997. Among other things, the *Plan* called for cooperation between five different levels of participants to address the complex issues involved in halting the spread of disease. Success was seen to be dependent on inter-sectoral (health, justice and social services) and cross-jurisdictional action (federal, provincial and municipal). (Wolfe-Gordon Evaluation, 1998)

On a parallel track, the City of Vancouver mobilized the Mayor's Coalition on Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment in 1997, a partnership between civic agencies and wide-ranging community groups and social service agencies. A strategic action plan followed a year later, and application was made to the newly formed National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) in 1999.

Initially framed as a demonstration project focusing on the role of mediation and conflict resolution between various sectors in the DTES, community pressure helped recast the initiative as a "crime prevention through social development research and evaluation project." (NCPC, 2001) Subsequently known as the DTES Community Development Project, funding was contributed by NCPC, Status of Women Canada, Heritage Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and the City of Vancouver.

Community pressure also led the City to pull various DTES activities in separate municipal departments under the umbrella of one Downtown Eastside Revitalization Program, which proceeded to operate out of the City Manager's office. A Neighbourhood Integrated Services Team helped coordinate municipal service delivery in the DTES.

*"The [Vancouver] Agreement demonstrates the commitment of the three governments [Canada, British Columbia and the City of Vancouver] to work together, within their mandates and jurisdictions, and with communities in Vancouver...."*

Vision Statement  
*Vancouver Agreement*

*No clear picture of the whole Vancouver Agreement emerged when people were asked to describe it – everyone had a piece of the picture, but no-one could paint the whole.*

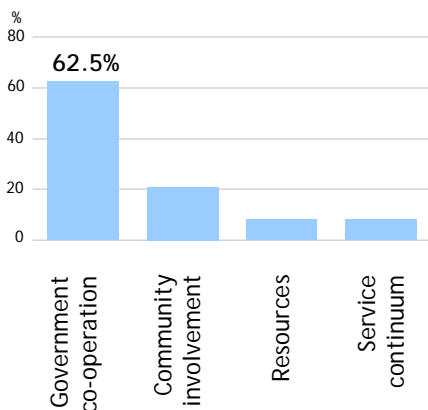
In early 1999, the Mayor' Office approached Health Canada for support in applying practices that had proven successful in dealing with drug-related problems in European urban centers. Recognizing the need for commitment across sectors and jurisdictions, a number of other federal and provincial officials responsible for service delivery in the DTES were invited to participate in the discussions. Following extensive community consultations and intensive inter-governmental analysis of both programs and service gaps, the Vancouver Agreement was pulled together. Stating that "Canada, British Columbia and the City of Vancouver wish to cooperate in promoting and supporting sustainable economic, social and community development of the City of Vancouver, focusing initially on the area known as the Downtown Eastside", the VA was signed in March 2000 by two federal ministers, one provincial minister and the Mayor of Vancouver.

#### **How people saw the VA**

When people were asked to describe the VA during Case Study interviews, no clear picture emerged. Most individuals had their own view based on the role that their own organizations played in delivering services to the downtown eastside (DTES). Thus, health service providers tended to portray the VA in terms of how it helped or failed to help them address factors often associated with drug use that contribute to community-wide and individual incidences of ill health, while employment service providers were more inclined to speak about their experience in aligning policies, procedures and practices across various government departments and agencies to achieve an integrated approach designed to work with clients who frequently exhibit symptoms of low esteem and chronic unemployment. Community representatives, on the other hand, tended to see the VA as part of the perennial struggle between top-down versus bottom-up solutions, and illustrated their point of view with examples in which community-based approaches excelled over those mandated by governments.

**How people saw the VA**

*Key Informants clearly saw government cooperation as the Vancouver Agreement's main objective*



The multiplicity of responses was reminiscent of the old fable attributed to the Persian poet Jalal al-Din Rumi (d 1273). The 'Blind Men and the Elephant' is a many-layered fable about the limits of human perception. The story tells of six blind men who fell to arguing about the elephant's shape and form, although none had ever encountered one. They therefore determined to seek out an elephant in order to settle their dispute. As all six men were blind, none could see the whole elephant and each approached it from different directions. One touched its side and proclaimed the elephant to be a wall; another touched its tail and declared that the elephant was like a rope; a third, having come in contact with the elephant's leg, pronounced the beast to be a tree; and so on. Similarly, each key informant's point of view about the VA was valid, but the picture that emerged represented each participant's project or role-specific view of an Agreement designed to deal with complex, multi-task situations.

Nevertheless, some common themes emerged from the Case Study. When key informants were asked about the VA's objectives, for example, 62.5% mentioned government cooperation. Working together on common objectives was also a frequent sub-text in the illustrations interviewees offered when talking about the VA. In addition, the value of building relationships across organizational boundaries was frequently mentioned. As one federal official said, "The first two years was about getting to know other levels of government. It took a while to sort through and focus on what we could do together versus what we could not do, or could not fund. So the plans together have been very helpful." A community representative put it this way: "We have been able to broaden our connections into the broader society .... Industry wanted connection with the community for the Olympic bid. The vehicle of the VA helped grease these skids."

A survey of VA sub-committee members conducted three years ago provided similar themes. The opportunity to work with partners across jurisdictions was seen to be one of the VA's major strengths. The Agreement offered a safe environment in which to discuss issues and policies, and was valued as a vehicle for coordinating activities and leveraging funds.

*The VA is a collaborative partnership to work together to produce joint results, based on the belief that concerted action can solve the problems being addressed.*

#### **What the VA turned out to be**

To a large extent, the Vancouver Agreement has turned out to be what it was meant to be – a collaborative partnership in which each partner exercises equal power in the decision-making process. Only decisions that are unanimous (in the case of the Policy Committee) or consensual (and hence unanimous, in the case of the Management Committee) are acted upon under the VA. It is a contractual commitment among the parties “to work effectively together” to produce joint results based on the belief that the problems to be addressed can only be solved through this kind of concerted action.

*An Integrated Strategic Plan was developed during 2002. When finalized in 2003, it provided VA participants with a focus on four areas of activity addressing health, safety, and social and economic development issues.*

Still, not everything has worked out quite the way the VA's originators planned. For example, a formal strategic plan did not appear until 2002. A Management Committee workshop was held in March of that year, from which a draft strategic framework was developed. The final Integrated Strategic Plan was issued in 2003 and defined 31 priority strategies and actions under four headings:

- Revitalize the Hastings Street Corridor
- Dismantle the Open Drug Scene
- Turn Problem Hotels into Contributor Hotels
- Make the Community Healthier and Safer for the Most Vulnerable.

The 31 strategies and actions correlate fairly well with two of the three strategic components originally proposed (Health and Safety, and Social and Economic Development). The third strategic component, Community Capacity Building, was not included as a separate line item.

*The Policy Committee has yet to define what community participation means in the context of VA governance processes.*

The VA used the term 'Community Capacity Building' in the sense of community input. The Policy Committee was originally given the task of devising a process by which community input is gathered, and the proposed DTES Strategy set 5 objectives:

- develop and pilot new networks of communications;
- develop processes that empower the community and include them in decision-making;
- establish participation processes (including representation from DTES communities) to advise the Policy Committee and make proposals;
- develop opportunities for the community to consult with experts; and
- hold symposiums and workshops, and draw on experts as required.

To date, no formal participation processes have been established and about two-thirds of the key informants felt that the roles and responsibilities of communities and NGOs were not clearly delineated. The VA itself is somewhat ambivalent about the role of communities. In the Implementation section (page 4), it clearly states that their role is to advise the Management Committee. In the DTES Strategy section (page 10), it says their role is two-fold – to participate in decision-making and to advise the Policy Committee.

*"The vulnerable community is a tough group to participate with, although they need to be involved. There has not been a clear process to hear this voice."*

Community representative's comment during interview

Defining what community participation means in the context of VA governance remains a piece of unfinished business. When the VA was initiated, governments and communities did not arrive at a common view of what should be done. Governments believed that consultation and empowerment were vital components, but many communities felt themselves to be separate, with an obligation to remain focused on their own mandates. In addition, the vulnerable community was rarely organized in a way that allowed for consistent representation in committee processes.

**What the VA turned out to be**

Some attempt has been made to rationalize the lack of a formal community presence in the VA's governing structures by relegating this function to other programs operating concurrently in the DTES. For example, the *2001 Project Evaluation Report* which reviewed progress under the National Crime Prevention Centre's (NCPC) Community Development Project, stated that

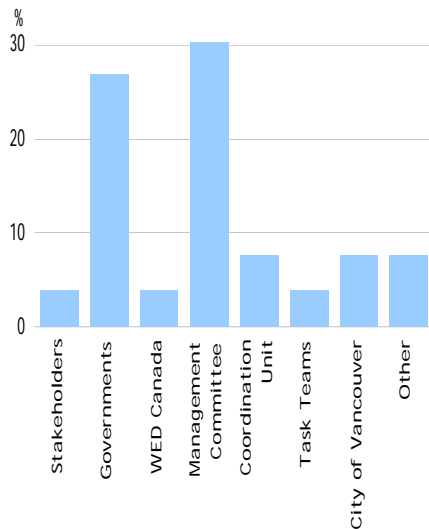
The NCPC-funded Community Development Project is understood as the channel through which individuals and groups in the community can determine their needs and priorities and make plans to address the situation. The grassroots mobilization and capacity building processes are treated as the obverse of and prerequisite to the Vancouver Agreement process. The two processes intersect at the point where the community proposes its plans to government agents for political support and material resources. (page 69)

However, the *Evaluation Report* went on to say that the sheer complexity of the Community Development Project and the VA "has militated against easy interconnections". One of the *Report's* recommendations was to establish a clearer definition of the relationship between the two initiatives.

*Extensive public consultations have been carried out with respect to specific planning and project design exercises. To this extent, the intent of the VA has been implemented, although formal governance roles for community participation have yet to be worked out.*

Although no formal participatory processes related to VA governance have been established as yet, communities have been consulted extensively with respect to broad activities such as the Integrated Strategy, as well as specific activities related to actual projects. Community representation is also included in the Task Teams that prepare detailed activity proposals for consideration by the Management Committee and the Policy Committee. To this extent, the intent of the VA has been followed through. The remaining question is not whether, but what kind of, community participation will be incorporated in the Agreement's governance structure.

*Many key informants were not clear as to who is responsible for implementing the VA.*



Other governance issues that arose in the Case Study related to a lack of clarity around responsibilities for implementation, and a lack of decision making criteria.

As can be seen from the graph at the left, key informants were not unanimous in their view as to who is responsible for implementing the VA. In governance terms, the Management Committee is responsible for administering and managing the Agreement with support from the Coordination Unit. The fact that many interviewees felt that governments, Western Economic Diversification (WED) Canada, the City of Vancouver or 'stakeholders' were responsible is again attributable to their tendency to focus on participants' project or role-specific views rather than on the essence of the VA itself – collaboration and commitment.

Decision making criteria, another essential component of good governance, have not been made explicit. None of the documents reviewed, including minutes of committee meetings, records of decision and other papers dealing with VA operations, outlined what criteria are used to make decisions related to the Agreement. Furthermore, key informants had no uniform idea of what constitutes a 'Vancouver Agreement project' as opposed to a DTES project that does not fall under the VA's umbrella. When asked how they decide which of their projects should be included in the VA, interviewees had a variety of responses, as follows:

*Decision making criteria, a component of good governance, are either non-existent or lack uniformity.*

- Guidelines met 20%
- Trial and error funding 14%
- All projects fall within the VA 14%
- Plan of action review 10%
- Project assessment 10%
- Community structure 10%
- "Does it make sense?" 10%
- Other 10%

*Two forces are pulling the VA toward a more centralized structure than originally intended – labour intensity for managers, and dedicated funding.*

Finally, from an organizational point of view, the VA is being pulled toward a more centralized structure than was originally intended. Two forces are responsible for this thrust: labour intensity at senior and intermediate management levels, and dedicated funding.

*Management labour intensity at senior and intermediate levels*

The initial intent of the Agreement was to work within existing governmental jurisdictions, mandates, policies, strategies and fiscal directions. In pursuing initiatives, the Management Committee usually identified a lead actor to liaise within each government and report back on opportunities and commitment from relevant program managers. Any approvals for individual participation were required to come from the respective government agencies *before* the Management Committee took further action. The challenge was often to persuade line managers they should bring the initiative under the VA umbrella, especially when internal or even inter-governmental cooperation could be achieved through alternative collaborative networks outside the VA.

*"We're managing the VA off the side of our desks" was a phrase frequently heard throughout the Case Study interview, giving a vivid sense of the intensity of effort required of managers operating within the VA.*

Much of the initial horizontal management by members of the Management Committee, therefore, was focused on getting various line agencies working with each other and developing common approaches that could be captured within VA activities. Key informants frequently said "we're managing the VA off the side of our desks", a phrase which aptly depicted the situation of individuals who, being fully engaged in their own direct line responsibilities, had to 'moonlight' (during the day) to accomplish the work of the VA.

With experience, this rather cumbersome process was somewhat simplified. A broader understanding and awareness within various jurisdictions of the role and purpose of the VA also meant that more opportunities were spontaneously brought to the table. In addition, a Coordination Unit was created to support the Management Committee's efforts.

**What the VA turned out to be**

Labour intensity at the senior and intermediate management levels does not in itself change an organizational structure. However, it does give rise to a predisposition for solutions that eliminate the work pressures. Delegating the work to a separate, autonomous agency then becomes an attractive option.

*Dedicated funding versus 'going dutch'*

The intent of the VA was, initially, to finance activities through existing government resources and to use individual authorization procedures for committing funds. It was also intended that the investments would be balanced and additional money might be levered by encouraging partnerships with the private sector.

The issue of separate funding for the VA has been around since before its inception. A comparison of the VA in early 2000 with the Winnipeg Agreement noted that the latter had dedicated resources of \$25 million and a permanent secretariat. Moreover, the results of a survey of VA sub-committee members conducted between August and October 2000 included the identification of the lack of dedicated funding as a major weakness of the VA process and structure. Communities have also been skeptical from the beginning about the efficacy of an unfunded Urban Development Agreement. The initial perception was that this would inhibit process and programming.

*"The premise before the VA was signed was that the issue was not money for the DTES – it was coordination."*

Federal representative's comment during interview

The situation was abruptly changed in April 2003 when the three governments announced an investment of \$20 million in the Vancouver Agreement. Funding was initiated by the provincial government which had, as part of its Olympic Bid, made a commitment to create a \$10 million legacy for the downtown eastside (DTES).

**What the VA turned out to be**

BC made its legacy funding conditional on a matching grant from the federal government, which condition was met through a combination of new and incremental program funds. The \$20 million is dedicated to "support revitalization of the Downtown Eastside through economic and social investments."

*"The addition of funding to the VA has changed it significantly – rather than coming to the table to talk about policy and priorities, partners now focus on how to spend the funds on one-off projects."*

Provincial representative's comment during interview

The VA is experiencing a fundamental culture shift as a result of receiving the dedicated funds. Key informants at the Management Committee level reported that the nature of their discussions has changed radically, since much more time is now spent on determining appropriate administrative structures and processes. The nature of potential projects has also changed. As one respondent said, "Funding influenced a focus towards more individual, and less collective, proposals."

The legacy funding is not the only example of dedicated funding, however. The provincial government also gave a grant to the VA Management Committee for the purpose of implementing an employment strategy for multi-barriered residents in the DTES. The initiative involves the Committee leads in a bid process for selecting a service provider to deliver the pilot projects, which the VA Coordination Unit will administer on the Management Committee's behalf. Although existing federal programs with sufficient capacity also support the initiative (which maintains an element of the collaborative model), this initiative has introduced 'a new way of doing business' for the VA. Again, the focus is more on delivering services rather than on coordinating collaborative relationships.

### 3 MANAGING in a COMPLEX ENVIRONMENT: OBSERVATIONS

The processes of government have become more complex and more problematic in recent decades. The assumption that government acts alone and depends upon its legal authority as the basis for legitimizing its actions has been rendered largely redundant. Governments of course still have the constitutional and legal authority, but they are less able to manage issues through traditional hierarchical structures. As governments have become involved in a broader range of issues in a wider variety of ways, a fragmentation or decentralization of institutional structures has resulted, combined with a tendency to concentrate management direction at the centre to provide coordination across government. As a consequence, the modern issues of government have become governance issues that involve not only the actors and institutions that formulate and implement public policy, but also those individuals and groups whose involvement and support are needed to achieve desired results.

The following observations address governance and partnerships in the modern context which, for today's managers, means managing in a complex environment.

#### **Governance**

In a contemporary setting, governance involves a range of governing relationships within governments and between governments and different societal interests. Broadly speaking, it has been defined as "the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented". (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) But governance is more than decision-making. It also involves "how power is exercised, how citizens are given a voice, and how decisions are made on issues of public concern". (Institute on Governance)

*Governance has been defined as "how power is exercised, how citizens are given a voice, and how decisions are made on issues of public concern."*

Institute on Governance

*Three governance topics are raised below:*

1. *Transparency in decision-making*
2. *Community participation*
3. *Accountability*

*Transparency in decision-making is an essential component of good governance. It entails both open communications and effective standards.*

Thus, governance involves processes that engage those who are responsible for making and approving decisions, those who carry them out, and those whose acceptance and support is needed to implement them. Governance requires a capacity on the part of governments to provide direction and an involvement on the part of those affected by government actions.

Three governance topics are raised below: transparency in decision-making, community participation and accountability.

#### *Transparency in decision-making*

Transparency in governance involves effective communication of actions and process that can be clearly understood within and outside an organization. Transparency in decision-making requires a clear articulation of roles and responsibility. Transparency is important for it is seen to be an important counter to public distrust and lack of confidence in our governments. As technology provides greater and greater access to information, the public is demanding more openness and completeness of information from governments has increased. Governments have responded to the need for more openness through access to information legislation as well as broadening the access of citizens to electronic means of communication. But they have responded more slowly to developing the standards that are needed to govern effectively in a transparent fashion.

Standards are also important for accountability. Information is needed to monitor results and to make adjustments as needed in the management or operation of public services. When partnerships are involved, it is essential that the parties have set up prior agreements on information sharing, means of access and decision-making criteria.

*Communities may play a variety of roles in governance, including that of*

- *advisors*
- *service providers*
- *customers or clients*
- *partners, and*
- *(more traditionally) voters*

### *Community participation*

As governments have reformed and restructured, the nature of community participation in forming and implementing public policy has changed. In the recent past, the primary objective of governments has been to improve service delivery to the public and to provide greater opportunity for access to government services and information. But we have passed the 'customer revolution' in government reform and need to focus on finding new forms of community participation that will result in sustained relationships between publics and their governments. In efforts to reduce the democratic deficit, attention needs to be paid to the different roles that the community may play in those relationships – whether as advisors, service providers, customers, partners or, more traditionally, as voters.

### *Accountability*

Although accountability is often treated as a separate subject, it too is an essential component of good governance.

In the Canadian system of government, power must be exercised responsibly and those who exercise it must be held accountable for their actions. Nevertheless, accountability is a multi-faceted concept. Accountability and its accompanying mechanisms may be derived from a number of sources. For example, the source of control may be political (elections); constitutional (ministerial responsibility); legal (legislative mandates); administrative (rules and procedures); or professional (norms and standards of conduct).

*Accountability is another essential component of good governance.*

*The emergence of New Public Management has changed the nature of accountability in some respects.*

The emergence of New Public Management with its new structures and processes directed to increasing efficiency and effectiveness in service to the public has changed the nature of accountability in some respects.

Rather than replacing the traditional models and systems of accountability in governments in Canada, New Public Management has required an enhancement of accountability measures especially where the governance relationships have bridged jurisdictional boundaries between governments and where external groups and individuals have become part of the relationship.

While methods and mechanisms to account for 'horizontal management' initiatives may be found in all jurisdictions, the federal Auditor General has identified three kinds of accountability required from partnering arrangements to include

*Accountability is no longer a straight line proposition. It involves accountabilities up, down and sideways when managing in a complex environment.*

- vertical accountability within each jurisdiction;
- internal accountability among the partners; and,
- horizontal accountability from parties involved to the public and the affected communities of interest (Desautels, 1999)

The current Treasury Board Secretariat's guidelines for integrated management provide further direction to federal agencies. Treasury Board defines a collaborative arrangement (or partnership) as "an arrangement between a government institution and one or more parties (inside or outside government) where there is an explicit agreement to work cooperatively to achieve public policy objectives and where there is

- delineation of authority and responsibility among partners,
- joint investment of resources (such as time, funding, expertise),
- allocation of risk among partners, and
- mutual or complementary benefits."

*(Managing Collaborative Arrangements: A Guide for Regional Managers)*

*"There are few hard and fast rules to horizontal management – it is an art form more than a science."*

Treasury Board Secretariat  
*Managing Collaborative Arrangements*

The *Guide* advises that, to be successful, "any partnering arrangement needs clearly defined objectives, well-defined roles and responsibilities (which are often refined as the relationship progresses) for each of the parties, effective governance structures, accountability mechanisms, transparent decision-making, including dispute resolution processes, performance measures and results reporting."

Horizontal management is, according to the Treasury Board Secretariat, an art form more than a science. (*Managing Collaborative Arrangements*) Integration of services requires a desire to think outside the structured lines of government organizations and adopt a systems view.

Systems thinking author Peter Senge maintains that the challenge for contemporary organizations is to move power and control away from the top. "In an increasingly dynamic, interdependent, and unpredictable world, it is simply no longer possible for anyone to 'figure it all out at the top'. The old model, 'the top thinks and the local acts', must now give way to integrated thinking and acting at all levels." (Senge, 1990) Leading collaborative organizations are focusing on an approach that "requires seeing the systems that control events. When [organizations] fail to grasp the systemic source of problems, [they] are left to 'push on' symptoms rather than eliminate underlying causes." (Senge, 1990) It is this approach, not only within organizations and communities, but also between the two, that is integral to good collaboration.

Collaboration of this sort creates ramifications for traditional requirements of accountability in a parliamentary system, which must be adapted to ensure accountability in horizontal alliances (whether with other governments or individuals or groups in the community). Adaptations include standards of behaviour and accounting for social capital.

For example, the questions that need to be answered tie into respective roles and responsibilities of the various players; the standards by which responsibilities are discharged; and the 'value' that the respective contributions make to desired outcomes. In particular, accounting for the 'learning achieved through the arrangement' could be an important feature not only in obtaining accountability, but also in determining the kind of social (as opposed to financial) capital reinvestment that might be needed. There is a case to be made for measuring both the 'hard' and the 'soft' outcomes from these partnerships.

### **Partnerships**

The following observations are a brief summary of relevant theoretical concepts extracted from the literature and from the Institute's practical experience, with the intent of providing assistance in developing a clearer conceptualization of partnerships and their attributes, especially those that help sustain the vitality of relationships over time. We have adopted working definitions of policy-making as "the establishment of governing relations between the government and the governed" (Vickers), and of governance as "how power is exercised, how citizens are given a voice and how decisions are made on issues of public concern" (Institute on Governance), for the purpose of this discussion.

*To help conceptualize partnerships and their attributes, topics are briefly explored under the following four headings:*

1. *Partnerships as a policy paradigm for the VA*
2. *Partnerships as social capital*
3. *Partnerships as policy networks*
4. *Managing partnerships (new models of governance)*

In the age of New Public Management, partnerships have become popular Alternative Service Delivery Mechanisms that are used by governments to advance a broad range of policy objectives. (Zussman, 2002) Government agencies in many jurisdictions have developed 'tool kits' for designing and implementing partnerships with external organizations, not only the not-for-profit sector but also the commercial sector. The literature provides classification schema (Kernaghan, 1993) and compilations of case studies recounting the success and, sometimes, the failure of these undertakings.

At base, partnerships involve sets of relationships between and among governmental and, often non-governmental interests. In particular, partnerships are considered to be a potentially more innovative, cost-effective and efficient way to deliver programs and services. Some of the documented experience has focused on critical success factors of partnerships across a range of jurisdictions and policy issues. The common factors that emerge include leadership; vision; sustained political support; shared objectives; partnering 'properly'; communication; enhanced citizens' capacity; and choice. (Bent, Kernaghan, Marson, 1999)

*A policy paradigm is a set of standards which guide action and which suggest solutions in a given policy field.*

*In the case of the Vancouver Agreement, which already has embedded 12 Guiding Principles, adopting a policy paradigm does not mean rewriting the Agreement. Rather it means that more explicit standards are established in order to flesh out the framework outlined in the VA and to sustain dynamic behavioural and operational norms.*

#### *Partnerships as a policy paradigm for the VA*

The experience offered by the VA may allow us to think more broadly of partnerships as a policy paradigm rather than simply as a collaborative arrangement.

The concept of a policy paradigm provides an umbrella for a variety of attributes, including organizational culture and behavioural norms, that may be considered elements of an effective partnership. In looking at a policy paradigm, one usually identifies the series or sets of standards which guide action and which suggest solutions in a given policy field. The paradigm renders principles operational at the middle and micro levels of analysis and decision-making. The paradigm becomes entrenched in the thought processes and education of professionals and other interests who are working together in any given policy network or policy subsystem. It provides a kind of macro-policy framework for specific sub-sets of actions and undertakings.

A policy paradigm does not take the place of guiding principles – it embellishes them by making them more concrete. Developing the paradigm provides measurable standards which are useful not only in day-to-day management, but also in evaluating results of partnerships like the VA.

*The policy paradigm offered by the Vancouver Agreement may be viewed as an 'inspired partnership' driven by passion and commitment in response to community needs and demands.*

The paradigm offered by the Vancouver Agreement may be viewed as an 'inspired partnership' driven by passion and commitment in response to community needs and demands. The pattern of governance that it creates is one that values shared objectives, innovative approaches, transparent decision-making, problem-solving, sustained commitment, and community input.

The 'operational culture' of the VA may be thought of as one in which benefits of collaboration among government are understood to have greater value than the actions or activities of any individual jurisdiction in obtaining the desired results and outcomes for the community. The assumptions and values of this particular partnership transcend those of organizations that partner simply with a view to achieving very specific goals in a defined time frame. The VA provides an over-arching framework that can create an environment for many different initiatives and activities directed to a variety of specific ends and outcomes.

#### *Partnerships as social capital*

*Social capital may be thought of as 'networks of social relations'.*

Social capital is a concept closely linked to concepts of human capital and social cohesion. National and international studies of social capital have attempted to define the term in a comprehensive way. (OECD, 2001) An abbreviated definition of social capital as 'networks of social relations' may be applied to understanding how partnerships work. Whereas human capital focuses on the individual agent, social capital is concerned with relationships.

Since governmental institutions are an integral part of social networks, they have a key role to play in developing and sustaining the conditions that can lead to collective problem-solving and community well-being especially in the areas of education and health.

Issues of values, membership and participation are paramount when considering social capital. Moreover, the outcomes of social capital investment include not only economic achievement but social cohesion as well. By its nature, social capital yields more social capital since the process is both interactive and iterative.

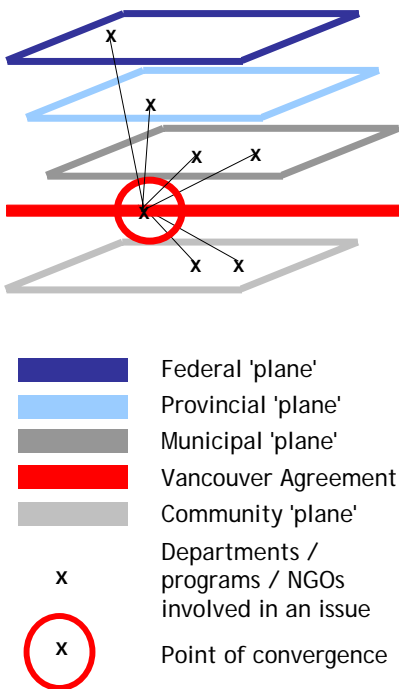
A partnership such as the VA not only creates social capital but can reinvest it. Social interactions provide opportunities for learning values and competencies by those who are developing policies and programs and by those who are affected by them. "Social capital requires attention to be paid to relationships which shape the realisation of human capital's potential, for the individual and collectively." (Schuller, 2000) The pattern of governance under the Agreement, therefore, is an important element in supporting positive and enduring outcomes that not only provide a 'value-added' component to specific achievements, but also ensures that the treatment of future issues may benefit from the social capital that was previously created and the policy learning that has accompanied it.

*Partnerships create social capital internally and externally. Social capital measures can be used to evaluate the depth, dynamics and durability of partnerships themselves.*

Another link that can be made is the 1999 study called *Challenges and Opportunities in Applying a Population Health Approach to Mental Health Services*. The general proposition that health is strongly influenced by forces and factors beyond the health care system is substantiated by human health and social capital research. For example, these studies show that years of formal schooling are the most important correlate of good health. (Grossman, 2000) Other studies have shown a strong correlation between measures of social capital and educational performance, health, tax evasion and self-assessed welfare (Putnam, 2001)

Social capital measures can be applied to partnerships themselves, to help evaluate their depth, dynamics and durability.

*Partnerships can be viewed as dynamic and fluid policy networks that converge at a single point to provide common services.*



*Partnerships as policy networks*

The formulation and implementation of public policy and program delivery is often conceived as involving 'policy communities' – a "constellation of actors who share clusters of interests in a broad policy domain". (Lindquist, 1992) 'Policy networks' are those configurations of actors from the policy community who come together on particular issues.

The concept of policy networks becomes more complex when applied to a multi-jurisdictional setting. Christopher Bryant (1999) has developed a spatial model to help understand the influence and structures of policy issues that cut across jurisdictional boundaries from local governments to international organizations (see graphic to left, adapted to the particulars of the VA).

The VA may be viewed as operating in at least four different planes – federal, provincial, municipal and community. Each governmental plane includes clusters of actors, institutions, ideas, formal and informal organizations and networks (shown as an 'x' in the diagram) that interact with counterparts in other jurisdictions. The networks converge to provide a single point of contact for the community on that service and/or program. In the diagram, the VA is shown as the point of convergence (an 'x' circled in red).

Policy networks are both dynamic and fluid. They reconfigure as issues/problems require. To the extent that community actors or organizations participate in the networks, there will be a variety of 'trans-boundary relationships' to be included in any given policy network.

*Network management has become a current issue in modern governance. Since networks are layered on top of existing hierarchies, new management and accountability regimes must be developed to complement established structures and authorities.*

*Managing partnerships (new models of governance)*

The consequence of developing and enabling partnerships such as the VA has been to layer complex networks on top of hierarchical organization and as such a different management and accountability regime must be developed to *complement* existing structures and authorities. At the same time, we live in an era where transparency is viewed as the foundation for trust and confidence in government. Transparency involves effective communication of actions and processes that can be clearly understood within and outside an organization. The challenges for the future will not involve looking for ways to replace hierarchy and authority but rather looking for ways and means of adapting and addressing enduring issues of governance. In the case of partnerships, the way in which networks are managed therefore becomes important.

Network management has become a current issue in modern governance. Few ministries or departmental units in any government operate in isolation. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities and effective communication are imperative for any collaborative undertaking. Usually, there will be a single lead agency that has overall responsibility for any one undertaking and that is, accordingly, primarily accountable. When external collaborators are introduced, whether governmental or non-governmental, however, the number of relationships and interactions is increased and so are accountabilities.

A partnership arrangement among three governments creates additional challenges since it brings together the 'managed networks' of the other jurisdictions along with the variety of models and methods of citizen participation that may be involved. In an age of fiscal prudence, one might expect that this process would help ensure a minimum of overlap and duplication among the parties or, perhaps, lead to simplification through restructuring if that became an apparent problem.

To date, few, if any, models of network management have emerged from research studies and analyses. Case studies in specific policy domains and other experience provide some clues that can be used as guidelines in the development of an appropriate management regime. Elements that contribute to successful network management frameworks include

- developing shared goals and objectives – each partner must be working towards the same objectives;
- focusing on outcomes. In this way, problem-solving will be a dominant influence in addressing obstacles and challenges;
- developing an effective and inclusive process of communication. In this context, information is not just power, it is basic effectiveness;
- working and thinking strategically. More opportunities may be created that way; and
- organizing competently. Leadership and vision are essential, as are certain basic competencies for all managers in the network.

*A successfully managed network is organized around shared goals, a focus on outcomes, pooled information, a strategic orientation and basic managerial competencies that create and sustain these characteristics of a successful network.*

The organizational culture that is developed around a partnership will assist in its success. Building new sets of skills commensurate with the tasks will not only provide an important investment in human capital, but will enhance the quality of the social capital that is being developed. Network management in a partnership can be expected to require the reconfiguration and replacement of existing processes and procedures as well as the realization of outcomes that are relevant to all participating parties. Commitment to change is a long-term process that must be sustained by the key actors in that process.

## 4 FINDINGS and CONCLUSIONS

*In many contemporary Canadian urban centres, "coordination and cohesive strategic decision-making is currently lacking to ensure ... maximum social, economic and environmental benefits."*

Canada's Urban Strategy: *A Blueprint for Action*, November 2002

*"The Vancouver Agreement is a vehicle to address issues across governments (at both political and bureaucratic levels), to support each other with common objectives and to move targeted resources to areas of strategic importance."*

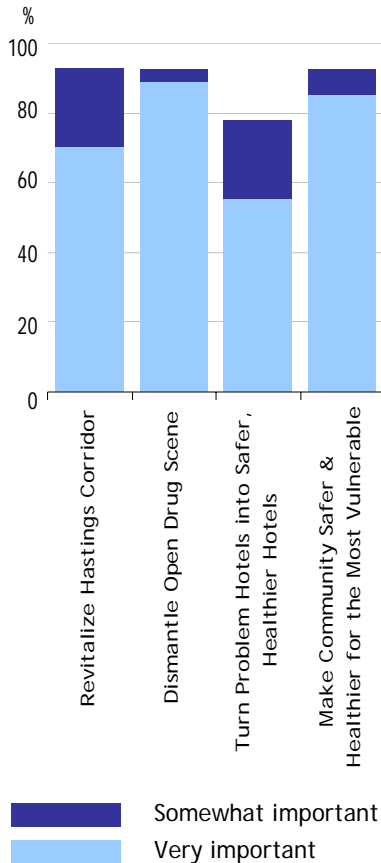
Municipal representative's comment during interview

The Vancouver Agreement (VA) presents an intriguing model for addressing urban challenges in a contemporary context. Large modern cities have generated complex environments in which both prosperity and poverty flourish. Achieving economic well-being, social cohesion and healthy communities in this environment calls for innovative approaches.

Coordination and integration was listed as the first key element of *Canada's Urban Strategy* (2002). The *Strategy* called upon the Prime Minister to designate a minister responsible for federal efforts in urban regions, and made collaboration with all orders of government and urban partners the first order of business. On his first day in office, Prime Minister Paul Martin followed through on these recommendations by appointing a Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister with "special responsibilities for cities to focus on implementation of a New Deal", and establishing an urban secretariat in the Privy Council Office. Clearly, urban strategies are high on the agenda for the new federal administration.

The VA has proven its ability to mobilize the forces and resources needed to succeed in today's urban centres. It has coordinated the activities of three orders of government in Vancouver's downtown eastside since its inception, developed a formal Integrated Strategic Plan in consultation with stakeholders, and facilitated strategic decisions that resulted in focused, collaborative delivery of services to targeted areas. It is also pioneering in a new domain, with the consequence that not all systems are fully developed as yet. VA participants still struggle to find cohesive explanations of what the Agreement really is, although they have intuitively adopted language and behavioural norms that produce results, and governance issues remain outstanding, although VA management teams continue to explore appropriate systems.

*Key informants strongly endorsed the Vancouver Agreement's Integrated Strategic Plan.*



*The VA's successes*

The VA has succeeded in forging shared objectives and helping to correlate multiple agencies in a common effort to deal with multi-faceted challenges.

Key informants strongly endorsed the Integrated Strategic Plan. Not surprisingly, since they view all four elements of the Plan as essential, interlinked components of the whole, support was fairly uniform. The Integrated Strategic Plan was frequently cited as one of the VA's success stories, having been developed in concert with communities and other stakeholders.

Other success stories related by the key informants generally highlighted agencies or programs working together in ways that had not happened before the VA. One example told how the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Human Resources Development Canada, BC's employment standards branch, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and municipal building inspectors collaborated to solve problem hotels. Another featured the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the VPD. Prior to the VA, each agency treated drug abusers solely within their own mandate. After the VA (and years of experience working with initiatives such as the Four Pillars Drug Strategy), they coordinated their efforts so that both health and public safety issues were addressed, regardless of which agency was first on the scene when encountering a drug abuser on the streets.

The VA's successes provide powerful evidence that coordination and strategic decision-making can indeed produce positive results in a large Canadian urban setting.

*The VA is more than the sum of its parts*

The VA has demonstrated that coordinating the commitment of three orders of government with focused intent creates a collective that is more than the sum of its parts. This 'collective' can be detected by observing its influence – 78% of the key informants said the VA had influenced their organization's objectives and/or outcomes. However, it is difficult to describe the collective because its chief characteristic is commitment rather than authority (although the three partners bring authority with them), and because its chief purpose is collaboration rather than program delivery. Traditional ways of defining an organization are therefore not helpful since statutory references or program labels are not applicable to the VA.

*Key informants lacked a unified concept for the whole VA, but common themes emerged which reflected the sum of the Agreement, rather than its parts. Common themes included working together on common objectives, cross-jurisdictional relationships, community participation and passionate dedication.*

The difficulty in describing the VA was evident when key informants were interviewed for the Case Study. Each respondent had his or own idea of what the VA means, but the picture that emerged was fragmented rather than cohesive. Lacking a unified concept for the whole, responses tended to focus on specific projects and committee processes rather than the essence of the Agreement itself. Documents reflected the same fragmentation, primarily speaking to a series of separate initiatives or committee meetings. The elephant syndrome was very much in evidence – detailed descriptions of a wall, rope, and tree but none of the elephant itself.

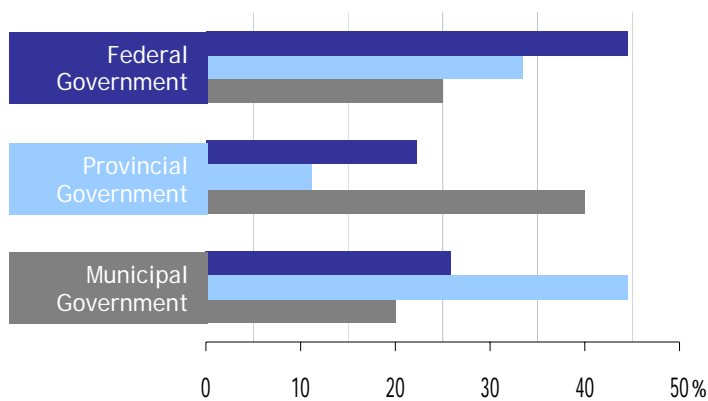
Common themes nevertheless emerged from the interviews, and these reflected the sum rather than the parts of the VA. Government cooperation, working together on common objectives and relationships across governmental boundaries were frequently mentioned. In addition, several common attributes were praised. Passionate dedication was seen to be a hallmark of VA participants. Common objectives were valued, as were innovative, shared activities.

A desire to involve the community was also fairly common, although the challenge of sorting through the large number and diversity of interest groups had yet to be addressed systematically. Finally, the beginnings of a common language were observed. For example, projects were often described as being "in the spirit of" the VA, and participants across the board described the intensity of their involvement in the VA as "managing off the side of my desk."

The degree to which VA participants collaborate with one another was demonstrable. Two measures of social capital were used to assess whether participants had truly engaged in collaborative efforts. Asked how often they support one another's goals, and whether they change their work based on lessons learned from collaborative efforts, about 85% said 'very

often' to the first question and 72% replied 'very often' to the second. These answers indicate a high level of collaboration between VA participants.

*Collaboration and cross-jurisdictional activity is a well established pattern among key informants.*



Another measure of social capital yielded evidence of well-established cross-jurisdictional networks. Key informants were asked to identify (by title and organization) their three 'most valued contacts outside one's own organization'. As illustrated in the graph to the left, all key informants mentioned valued contacts in other governments. Provincial representatives

were more likely to interact with officials from other levels of government (only 10% of their most valued contacts were within the provincial government), while federal officials were less likely to interact with officials from other levels of government (50% of their most valued contacts were within the federal government itself).

*VA participants have an implicit understanding that the Vancouver Agreement is the sum of more than its parts. Developing a policy paradigm to codify standards of commitment and collaboration would help make this understanding explicit, and therefore sustain the VA over the longer term.*

*A commitment and collaboration policy paradigm, once written, would not replace the Vancouver Agreement, nor require it to be rewritten. Like the VA's Integrated Strategic Plan, it would complement and expand upon the Agreement.*

Municipal officials, on the other hand, most often named contacts in other levels of government, although their contacts were more likely to be provincial rather than federal (see graph on previous page).

Listening to the common themes, and reviewing the measures of behavioural norms, it is apparent that VA participants have intuitively chosen language and patterns of interaction that support their goals. Their understanding of what the Vancouver Agreement is (what we earlier called the 'collective') is implicit and therefore not easily articulated. However, to achieve long term viability, it would be efficacious to make this understanding explicit so the VA's successes are not dependent on the personalities and instinctive knowledge of current participants. Adopting a policy paradigm that 'operationalizes' current standards of behaviour (as previously discussed) would help sustain the VA in the long run, and ensure that the social capital which has accumulated in the past three and a half years will be reinvested.

Policy paradigms have been used to good effect in the federal government from time to time. Sustainable development is one example. The concept of sustainable development is a somewhat fuzzy one, and yet departments are required to articulate Sustainable Development Strategies (SDSs), in effect codifying measurable standards of behaviour in the course of stipulating action plans. Because they are measurable, SDS standards are susceptible of evaluation and lessons learned in implementation are therefore carried forward in the continuous improvement cycle.

A commitment and collaboration policy paradigm, once written, would not replace the Vancouver Agreement, nor require it to be rewritten. Like the VA's Integrated Strategic Plan, it would complement and expand upon the Agreement.

### *Outstanding governance issues*

Four issues of governance are outstanding:

1. Decision-making criteria,
2. Community participation,
3. Structure of authority, and
4. Evaluation.

*Criteria need to be made explicit for two kinds of decisions — VA Management Committee decisions, and decisions about what projects are expected to be brought under the Vancouver Agreement's umbrella.*

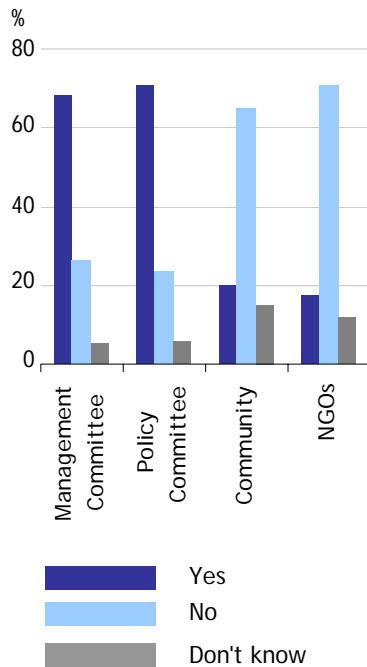
#### 1. Decision-making criteria

Decision-making criteria have not been established and need to be made explicit. Two kinds of decision processes are involved — VA management decisions, and decisions about what projects will be brought under the VA's umbrella.

Transparency in decision-making requires that standards be set. Developing criteria for VA management decisions would amplify trust between VA participants and thereby strengthen the partnership and policy networks. It would also assist Task Teams in their work of developing specific project proposals.

Criteria delineating what projects are expected to fall within the ambit of the Vancouver Agreement would help guide VA participants and potential participants in developing collaborative service delivery. In addition, it would clarify relationships between the VA and other projects occurring contemporaneously in the downtown eastside. The Community Development Project (CDP) is an example that comes to mind. Its latest interim report states that "the relationship between the two initiatives has not been more clearly defined, [but] there is greater awareness of the roles of each and somewhat of a greater comfort level with the different roles." (Coyne, 2003, page 32) The 'comfort level' has presumably been enhanced by the fact that CDP staff now sit on VA Task Teams, which allows them "to have input into the VA process." Explicit, descriptive 'VA project' criteria would clarify the relationship even further.

*Key informants thought the roles and responsibilities of communities and NGOs were not clearly defined.*



## 2. Community participation

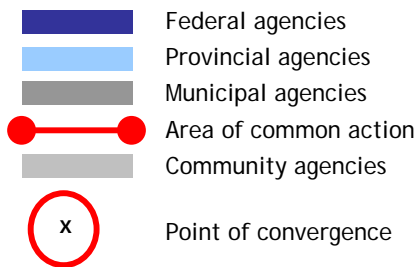
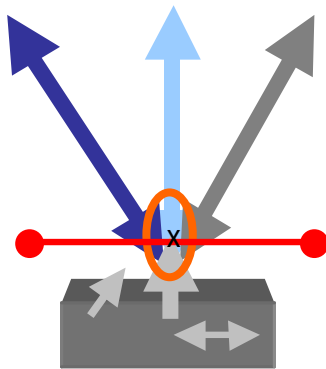
Although it is one of the main principles of the Agreement, a community input strategy has not been clearly defined. Two thirds of the key informants thought the roles and responsibilities for communities and NGOs were not clearly defined, in stark contrast to those of the Management and Policy Committees. That is not to say that the community is not engaged. In fact, the evidence is to the contrary but the pattern of that engagement does not reflect an inclusive, integral approach that some community groups may expect.

A starting point in addressing this issue will be to distinguish the types of roles that a community or NGO might play in the VA governance process. These range anywhere from customer, a fairly passive role, to fully active in making collaborative decisions. A second point will be to determine where each type of participation is appropriate or desired. The VA has stipulated government-only membership on the Policy and Management Committees, for example, so full community participation in decision-making at those levels is not an option. A third point will be to map out the roles currently being played (many communities or NGOs are active on the Task Teams, for instance), and to note which communities and NGOs play more than one role. Ultimately, a model of community participation can then be constructed, based on clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

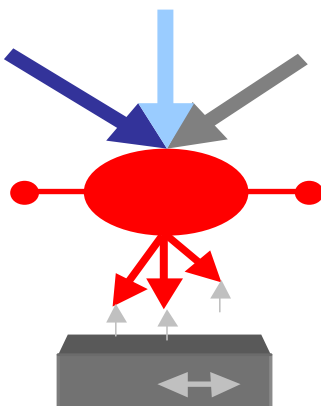
## 3. Structure of authority

The VA was designed to operate as a vehicle for co-operation. This approach (referred to as a model of distributed authority) allows maximum flexibility for multiple decision makers and managers to operate both within their own jurisdictions and across government boundaries, using existing funding mechanisms. One consequence of this approach is labour intensity at the senior and intermediate management levels.

**Distributed Authority Model**



**Delegated Authority Model**



The VA is now experiencing a pull toward a more centralized structure. This approach (referred to as the delegated authority model) creates a separate entity to manage expenditures from a segregated fund. One consequence of the delegated approach is loss of flexibility and horizontality.

*Distributed authority*

The VA pointed to the need for "a complementary mix of national, regional, and local delivery" and stated that the appropriate mix would be achieved through cooperation (Purpose and Guiding Principles sections). In this model of distributed authority, several independent decision-makers and service providers discharge the responsibilities of their own programs or mandates, but they come together at a point of convergence (shown in the diagram as an 'x' circled in red). Convergence occurs when the VA partners decide that results will be better for the people of Vancouver if their programs are directly linked to one another. Each player brings a contribution in kind and in cash to the table and, through cooperative effort, a single coordinated and complementary initiative emerges. Accountability is, for the most part, maintained through the accountability systems of the separate organizations (depicted in the diagram by two-way arrows).

*Delegated authority*

In the delegated authority model, several independent decision-makers make a one-time decision to transfer authority and funds to a separate entity. The United Way is an example of this model. The delegated authority (DA) takes on the tasks of deciding who will receive funds, how much will be granted and what accountability systems will be maintained between the grant recipient and the DA. The area of common action is therefore entirely internal to the DA, and there is often little horizontality between the multiple implementers (grant recipients).

*The VA is at a crossroads. A decision needs to be made as to whether it will continue as intended (a shared, distributed decision-making model) or move to become a delegated authority (a centralized command and control model).*

*The VA is at a crossroads*

The Vancouver Agreement is at a crossroads. A decision has been thrust upon VA's management teams as an unintended consequence of being the recipient of dedicated funding. The question is whether the VA will

- continue as originally intended, namely as a collaborative partnership designed to coordinate tri-level government action and cohesive strategic decisions to benefit citizens of the City of Vancouver; or
- become a separate funding agency, one among dozens of departments, ministries and other governmental organizations currently active in the City's downtown eastside.

Essentially, the issue is one of moving from a shared, distributed decision-making model to a centralized command and control model.

If the VA continues as a collaborative partnership, then it will rank among the nation's leading examples of how *Canada's Urban Strategy* may be put into action. It is a model of how to set the standards and norms that govern the implementation of individual initiatives and thus facilitate horizontal collaboration.

If it is decided to transform the VA into a kind of 'holding company', then other questions must be explored. For example, what specific mandated authority does or should the delegated authority exercise? Are the authorities appropriately delegated by each of the three government partners? What role should the VA play as an independent delegated authority?

Most key informants interviewed for the Case Study clearly valued the benefits delivered by VA as a collaborative partnership. They highlighted government cooperation, common goals, cross-jurisdictional relationships and shared strategic planning processes.

*Overall, experience has demonstrated that money is not the solution when integrated service delivery is the goal.*

Nevertheless, one municipal representative noted that it is "hard to engage the community without funding", and many participants have been frustrated from time to time with the effort it took to achieve coordination between line managers. Over the past three years, dedicated funding has frequently been touted as a remedy for whatever ailed the VA. As early as the fall of 2000, for instance, a survey of VA sub-committee members listed a lack of separate funding as one of the Agreement's weaknesses, along with the absence of a clearly stated strategic plan, cumbersome coordination processes and "politicized" decisions. These latter ailments have, by and large, been remediated in the course of gaining experience with the VA – without the aid of dedicated funding.

*"The VA seizes opportunities between governments to pull together in one direction to get things done. We need to do more of that."*

Municipal representative's comment during interview

Overall, experience has demonstrated that money is not the solution when integrated service delivery is the goal. The City of Vancouver's NIST initiative proves this point, as does the City of Edmonton's unfunded Urban Development Agreement. As one municipal representative said, "The VA seizes opportunities between governments to pull together in one direction to get things done. We need to do more of that."

#### 4. Evaluation

Evaluating performance is a key part of the management cycle (plan, implement, evaluate and feedback). At its simplest, performance is judged against desired objectives, based on two questions: What was meant to happen? and, What did happen?

*Evaluation of the VA has proven to be a challenge, primarily because a clear distinction has not been drawn between project outcomes and outcomes of the collaborative partnership itself.*

The Vancouver Agreement, however, presents a challenge because it is not a traditional program operated by one department or ministry of a government where services have been delivered and inputs, outputs and results can be neatly described in a linear progression. The VA was not meant to implement or deliver services and programs, and this, of course, alters how an evaluation is performed. The VA's performance instead needs to be measured in terms of the particular results that arise when different governments, each of which has separate mandates and jurisdictions but all of which have common clients and interests, come together to share information, align priorities and coordinate actions.

The distinction between programs or projects and what we have called the VA collective has not been articulated with any degree of clarity over the past three and a half years. This lack of precision has led to a certain amount of misdirection regarding the nature of what should be evaluated.

*Evaluation efforts have been concentrated on project-level outcomes, which is undeniably worthwhile, but the VA itself has yet to be evaluated.*

The misdirection has been evident from the earliest days when the VA was being designed. The 1999 *Report of the Community Review* of the draft VA, for example, observed that "In relation to the [VA's 12<sup>th</sup> Guiding] Principle on program evaluation, the community expressed a need to evaluate existing as well as new programs to determine their success. If organizations or programs do not demonstrate desired outcomes, then funds should be cut or changes made to the programs." (page 5) Early emphasis was thus placed on programs or projects rather than on the collaborative partnership itself, and evaluation efforts since then have primarily been concentrated on project-level outcomes. While this approach is undeniably worthwhile, it fails to assess the effectiveness of the Agreement itself.

In 2001, a report was commissioned to begin looking at an overall approach to evaluating the VA itself (*VA: Measuring Performance*). The struggle to distinguish between projects and programs, on the one hand, and the Agreement's performance, on the other, is again evident when reading *VA: Measuring Performance*. In the end, the study recommended that a monitoring program be instituted to track socio-economic indicators in Vancouver's downtown eastside (which is being implemented), and that VA principles be used as the basis for an evaluation of the Agreement's process. The City of Winnipeg's Urban Development Agreement was cited as a precedent for a principles-based evaluation.

The difficulty that then faced the VA's management teams was how to evaluate 12 Guiding Principles which are stated in the broadest possible terms, as is appropriate for such clauses in any agreement. Not only are the Principles a mixture of values (community, gender and cultural diversity, heritage areas, and participation), process (appropriate delivery of services and programs, strategic planning, communications, innovation, build on existing work, partnerships and evaluation) and desired outcomes (sustainable, local economic development), they are also presented in non-measurable terminology.

*The VA's performance needs to be evaluated against a set of measurable standards set forth in a Governance Framework. Desired objectives would be expressed in terms of collaboration and social policy networks, for example, and include indicators such as those used in this Case Study.*

What is missing is a set of measurable standards which (as has been said before) are useful in both day-to-day management and in evaluating results of partnerships like the VA. Such standards need to be stipulated in a Governance Framework. From there, they can be translated into desired objectives and used as the foundation for appropriate indicators in an evaluation strategy for the Vancouver Agreement. Examples of indicators could include the social capital measures of collaboration and social policy networks employed in this Case Study.

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Case Study's findings and conclusions lay the groundwork for accountability and evaluation frameworks as a first step in the evaluation process.

Notwithstanding the dynamic environment in which the VA operates, it will be important to move forward with the next stages of the process. To sustain and achieve long term viability of the Vancouver Agreement as a leading example of how collaboration and commitment can successfully address the challenges inherent in a large, modern urban centre, we recommend that

1. *A Governance Framework be developed to complement the Vancouver Agreement, based on a policy paradigm that explicitly acknowledges the VA as an inspired partnership driven by passion and commitment in response to community needs and demands.*
2. *The Governance Framework should embellish the framework established by the Vancouver Agreement and set measurable standards by defining and describing*
  - *relationships,*
  - *roles and responsibilities,*
  - *decision-making criteria and processes,*
  - *goals and strategic thinking processes,*
  - *a community participation model, and*
  - *accountabilities.*
3. *A metaphor be developed by VA participants, based on the policy paradigm laid out in the Governance Framework, to provide a succinct, immediately identifiable phrase that communicates the VA's pith and substance to participants and the community.*

4. *Three brief Companion Guides to the Governance Framework be developed to assist VA participants and the community in determining when to participate, how services are integrated overall and how to manage their participation. The three Guides would consist of*
  - a. *a checklist of criteria describing what kinds of projects are anticipated to fit within the umbrella of the Vancouver Agreement,*
  - b. *a systems map to help visualize shared objectives, and the integrated nature of projects or activities that contribute to overall solutions, and*
  - c. *a profile of competencies for managers who participate in the Vancouver Agreement. Examples of competencies include*
    - *leadership, vision, ability to motivate,*
    - *problem-solving skills in complex, multi-dimensional systems,*
    - *network management skills,*
    - *ability to think in non-linear ways,*
    - *commitment to change, innovation and diversity, and*
    - *communications skills.*
  
5. *An evaluation of the VA be conducted to assess performance objectives defined in terms of measurable standards stipulated in the Governance Framework. Indicators should be specifically chosen to measure how the 'inspired partnership' has performed, including measures of social capital.*

Given that only 14 months remain until the Vancouver Agreement expires on March 9, 2005, time constraints are a factor to be considered in moving forward. It is nevertheless feasible to develop a Governance Framework and complete an evaluation within the available timeframe, and both would assist in making decisions in preparation for March 2005.

A possible timeline is offered by way of suggestion, as follows:

*January 1 to March 31, 2004*

- Prepare an outline of the Governance Framework, including a preamble that briefly delineates the policy paradigm.
- Map the VA's policy network and develop options for appropriate community participation models.
- Work with the VA Coordination Unit to describe existing decision and planning processes.
- Develop a draft Governance Framework.
- Workshop the draft Framework with the VA Management Committee.

*April 1 to June 30, 2004*

- Define performance objectives for evaluation purposes, based on the draft Governance Framework, and select appropriate indicators.
- Finalize draft Governance Framework.
- Consultations with key stakeholders.
- Begin evaluation.

*July 1 to September 30, 2004*

- Finalize Governance Framework.
- Draft Companion Guides.
- Finish evaluation.
- Develop metaphor, and communications strategy.
- Consultations with key stakeholders.

*October 1 to December 31, 2004*

- Seek approval from respective governments for the VA post-March 2005.

*January 1 to March 9, 2005*

- Prepare documents regarding the VA post-March 2005.
- Announce decision regarding the VA's future.