



**33rd Annual Conference**  
**Austin, Texas**  
**May 23 - 27, 2010**

***Taking Your Administration to a Great State***  
**Merit Award**  
**Application and Criteria**

**Completed applications must be received by: March 15, 2010**

**We are requesting all applications be submitted electronically.**

**Send completed application electronically to: Jenny Acker at [jennifer.acker@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jennifer.acker@wisconsin.gov).**

Criteria:

1. Any innovative changes in your office that have been implemented which allow the office to continue or increase its efficiency; or
2. Any technology innovation that improved the efficiency of the office, service to the customer or otherwise benefited the office.
3. Innovations submitted can include process/practice improvements, operational efficiencies, internal management procedures, fiscal management or work flow.
4. Only those innovations that have not been previously selected for recognition and which are presently in operation may be nominated (projects which are planned or currently under development are not eligible).
5. Application must be accompanied by a detailed description of the innovation and must demonstrate how it has enhanced your office. Award recipients will be given time at the 2010 IACA Conference to present their innovation.
6. While specific content of the submission is not mandated, application should include: an introduction, description, results of implementation, benefits (cost, production, or customer service), and lessons learned.

**Jurisdiction:** Province of British Columbia and Province of Alberta

**Submitted by:** Richard Rogers (BC) & Laurie Shannon (Alberta)

**Date Submitted:** March 15, 2010

## **BC-ALBERTA MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF BUSINESS ENTITIES (TILMA Project)**

### **Description of the Innovation:**

In April of 2009, the corporate registries in Alberta and British Columbia implemented systems and process changes that provide for mutual recognition of companies, limited partnerships (LPs) and limited liability partnerships (LLPs). As the initiative was mandated by Article 11 of the [Alberta-British Columbia Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement \(TILMA\)](#), it was referred to by both registries as the “TILMA Project”. Implementation of the TILMA Project required three years of intense collaboration by registry and policy staff in the two provinces, in order to reach agreement on the legislative, policy, process and system changes required and to implement those changes in both provinces.

As a result of the TILMA Project, it is now possible for a company, LP or LLP incorporated or registered in one province (the home province) to automatically have its name reviewed for use in the other province and be registered to carry on business there. Once registered, it is not necessary for those companies, LPs and LLPs to submit filings to maintain or change records in the foreign (extraprovincial) jurisdiction, as changes to the records in the home jurisdiction are automatically transmitted to the other jurisdiction through a data exchange interface.

### **Results of Implementation:**

The TILMA Project required both jurisdictions to make significant changes to their existing computer systems and develop a facility for exchanging data between the provinces. As part of the project, BC also developed and implemented an online facility (Name Requests Online) for businesses to submit requests for business names to the Registry for approval.

Each province had a different approach to service delivery for corporate registration of domestic entities and other extra-provincial businesses and those service delivery models have been largely unaffected by the TILMA Project. That was a key principle for both provinces, as neither had the resources nor the mandate to embark upon a project greater than the scope of the inter-provincial trade agreement.

The TILMA Project achieved the following goals that had been identified for the project:

- It streamlined the process for businesses established in one province to register to carry on business in the other province, which satisfied one of the highest profile obligations in the inter-provincial trade agreement;
- The extraprovincial registration process is seamless and, for the most part, invisible to clients of the registries;
- Data relating to the most common transactions is exchanged automatically and electronically between the two jurisdictions, enabling both registries to implement the process with no additional staff resources;
- The online processes for obtaining the required information from businesses are reasonably easy to use;
- Current and accurate data about shared business entities is available to both provinces;
- Companies, LPs and LLPs established in British Columbia no longer pay fees for registering extraprovincially or maintaining filings with the Alberta registry and *vice versa*;
- The technical solutions are easily maintained and used existing architecture in both jurisdictions.
- Businesses in Alberta, or anywhere else in the world, may use British Columbia's Name Requests Online to:
  - research the rules for business names in British Columbia;
  - assess the viability of potential business names;
  - submit a request for approval of a proposed business name;
  - monitor the status of an application for approval of a business name;
  - receive e-mail notification of a decision on a business name request;
- For British Columbia companies that intend to carry on business in Alberta, Name Requests Online also supports the process for obtaining the NUANS® name search report and opinion required by the Alberta Corporate Registry; and

### **Benefits of the Project:**

Prior to implementation of the TILMA Project, a British Columbia company that intended to carry on business in Alberta had to contact a registry agent in Alberta, complete the required forms and pay the applicable fees to register with Alberta Registries. Each year, the company had to file an annual report with the registry in each province. Any changes would need to be filed on the required forms, fees paid and documents submitted separately to both registries. An Alberta company would face similar requirements if it wanted to carry on business in British Columbia

The primary beneficiaries of the TILMA Project innovations are businesses in both Alberta and British Columbia. Neither registry achieved efficiencies or cost-savings as a result of this project, but both registries implemented the changes without adding ongoing operational resources to support them.

Since implementation, more than 350 British Columbia companies and 500 Alberta companies took advantage of the new registration processes in order to carry on business in the other province. Those new registrations are in addition to the thousands of existing Alberta or British Columbia companies already registered to carry on business in the two provinces. Those companies will no longer have to file annual reports in the other province and any changes in corporate information need only be submitted once - to the registry in their home jurisdiction.

It is too soon to have accurate data on the savings that the TILMA Project changes have brought for British Columbia and Alberta companies. However, it is estimated that each company registered extraprovincially under the new process will save \$1,000 on that initial registration. In addition, each company should save an average of at least \$500 per year, because they only need to submit maintenance and change filings to the registry in their home jurisdiction. Total savings to businesses in both provinces could be as much as \$10 million each year. These savings will occur in the following areas:

- registry fees
- legal fees and registry agent charges;
- paper, photocopy and faxing costs;
- long distance telephone costs or data transfer fees;
- labour costs for completion of forms or instructions to legal counsel.

In addition to the savings for business, the TILMA Project has unquantifiable benefits for the registries in both provinces and the public who search the records of those registries. Because information on corporate changes is automatically transmitted to the other registry, the registries will have more accurate and up-to-date information on entities from the other province.

The Name Requests Online system implemented as part of the TILMA Project has enabled the British Columbia registry to reduce the time required to examine an application for approval of a business name from two days down to a few hours. Name Requests Online has also reduced the number and length of calls to registry staff as well as the number of complaints. E-mailing the results of the applications will save the registry \$5,000 annually, as a result of reduced costs for printing and mailing results letters. Data entry by staff has decreased by about 95% - this function previously required approximately 0.5 FTE and now requires only 45 minutes per day.

## **Lessons Learned:**

- For cross-jurisdictional projects like this, it is critical for both jurisdictions to work closely and to communicate often. Although BC and Alberta were only able to meet face-to-face on two occasions, there was a solid working relationship and regular (at least bi-weekly) meetings of a steering group, together with regular meetings of working groups.
- Ideally, there should be a joint approach to project management between the jurisdictions, with one individual charged with coordinating and monitoring project-related activities in both provinces (in addition to, or instead of a project manager for each jurisdiction).
- It is important to have a well-developed, joint communications plan for the project, to ensure that stakeholders receive consistent messages, in a timely manner.
- Both jurisdictions should have a clear understanding of the existing business processes in each jurisdiction and the impact that the legislative, policy, process and systems changes will have on those existing processes.