FEDERATION OF LAW SOCIETIES OF CANADA

STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2015

(Revision - September, 2012)

VISION

The vision of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada is:

"Acting in the public interest by strengthening Canada’s system of governance of an independent legal profession, reinforcing public confidence in it and making it a leading example for justice systems around the world."

MISSION

Acting in the public interest, the Federation of Law Societies of Canada is committed to:

1. Bringing together Canada’s law societies to enhance open and transparent governance of an independent legal profession in Canada, and to set national standards and harmonize provincial and territorial rules and procedures;

2. Promoting the cause of justice and the Rule of Law;

3. Providing a forum for the exchange and analysis of information of mutual interest to Canada’s law societies;

4. Undertaking national initiatives on behalf of Canada’s law societies;

5. Speaking nationally and internationally on behalf of Canada’s law societies;

6. Informing the public, governments and members of the legal profession about the role, responsibilities and activities of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and of Canada’s law societies; and

7. Sharing the expertise of Canada’s law societies to contribute to the development of effective regulation of an independent legal profession around the world.
VALUES

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada fulfills its mission in a manner which is:

1. Focused on the public interest;
2. Responsive and accountable;
3. Consistent with the highest standards of professionalism, excellence, ethics and good governance; and
4. Respectful of Canada’s bilingual and bi-juridical nature.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2012-2015

The strategic objectives of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada for 2012-2015 are:

1. To develop and implement high, consistent and transparent national standards for Canada’s law societies in core areas of their mandates.

In order to achieve this objective, the Federation will:

(a) develop national competency and good character standards, as well as harmonized evaluation practices for admission to the legal profession in Canada;

2013-2014 PRIORITIES:

- completion of a draft national good character standard for admission to the legal profession in Canada for Council’s consideration and approval, with a view toward referring such standard to Canada’s law societies for their ultimate approval and implementation;

- develop recommendations for a plan to implement a national competency profile and a good character standard on a consistent basis throughout Canada;

(b) set common benchmarks to measure how law societies process complaints about members of the legal profession and implement systems for monitoring compliance with such benchmarks, all with a view to improving law society complaints handling procedures and outcomes;
2013-2014 PRIORITY

- refine proposed national standards following the completion of the National Discipline Standards Pilot Project and work on meaningful engagement with law society elected leaders and staff with the goal of achieving a national consensus on the standards and a commitment to meet or exceed them;

(c) harmonize the rules of professional conduct for members of the legal profession across Canada.; and

2013-2014 PRIORITY

- ensure the effectiveness of the Federation’s Standing Committee on the Model Code of Conduct as the central clearinghouse for law society and other stakeholder recommendations for improvement to the Model Code, with a view to ensuring that the Model Code is implemented in a consistent fashion across Canada;

(d) review national mobility arrangements to ensure that they are effective and consistently applied.

2. To collaborate with other participants in Canada’s justice system to foster greater public satisfaction with access to legal services.

In order to achieve this objective, the Federation will:

(a) play a meaningful role in the work of the National Action Committee on Access to Justice led by the Chief Justice of Canada;

(b) facilitate the exchange of information between Canada’s law societies about local initiatives relating to legal service providers and the affordability of legal services; and

(c) work to identify, within the mandates of the Federation and Canada’s law societies, possible initiatives designed to help alleviate barriers to public access to legal services.

2013-2014 PRIORITY

- consideration by the Standing Committee on Access to Legal Services, in consultation with Canada’s law societies, any reports issued by the Action Committee on Access to Justice in Civil and Family Matters
and other justice system stakeholders that deal with access to legal services and other matters falling within the jurisdiction of law societies, for the purpose of determining whether and in what manner the Federation and the law societies should address specific recommendations arising from such reports;

3. **To enhance the Federation’s internal and external communications, including how it conveys information about its mission and activities to Canada’s law societies and external audiences, as well as how Canada’s law societies exchange information of mutual interest.**

In order to achieve this objective, the Federation will:

(a) gather and make available relevant information and provide analysis relating to the work of Canada’s law societies including statistical, practical and technical information, as well as research and policy information, all with a view toward fostering a better understanding of the similarities and distinctions between them and avoiding duplication of work, where appropriate;

(b) enhance opportunities for law society volunteers and staff to meet with each other and with those of the Federation for the purpose of exchanging information; and

(c) develop common policy positions and key messages on all matters where it is appropriate for a national perspective to be expressed in relation to the work of Canada’s law societies.

4. **To contribute to the improvement of effective regulation of an independent legal profession around the world.**

In order to achieve this objective, the Federation will:

(a) consult with Canada’s law societies about resources that may be available for the purpose of sharing their expertise with international stakeholders involved in the development of systems of governance of the legal profession;

(b) explore how it may collaborate with other stakeholders in Canada’s legal system and abroad in order to share such expertise; and
(c) seek opportunities to actively engage with legal regulators outside of Canada and international legal organizations in order to share knowledge and expertise relevant to the effective governance of the legal profession.