

# INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP: WOMAN IN FEDERAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## *Towards Becoming the Employer of Choice*

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## **WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES**

This workshop is designed to share recent research into issues that affect Science & Technology (S&T) women in the federal public service workplace and the resulting recommendations. A federal study will be presented as well as the practical experience of a parallel study undertaken at the departmental working level by Environment Canada. Participants will then be asked to share their thoughts and recommendations on making the Canadian Federal Public Service the “Employer of Choice”.

Specific attention will be paid to topics such as balancing work and personal life, the impact of leave on career advancement, alternate work arrangements, and career development and management.

## **CONTEXT**

With changes in the role of women in society, the increased labour market participation rates of women, and the increased enrollment of women in post-secondary institutions, women have begun to make progress into what have been thought of as traditionally male-dominated occupations. Work environments and cultures have often not changed sufficiently to accommodate the changing reality of the increasingly diverse workforce.

At work, non-traditional occupations and career advancement generally mean longer workdays, more travel, mobility and job stress. Within the Scientific and Technical group, many employees must meet additional requirements to be considered for promotion such as continuous study, research, and publishing and presenting papers.

Recognizing these realities while acknowledging the fact that women are clearly a critical component of Canada’s Science and Technology (S&T) workforce, a *Working Group on Women in Federal S&T* was established in April 1998.

The mandate of the Women in Federal S&T Working Group was to advise on how to create an environment that encourages and supports greater participation and retention of women in federal government science.

The first phase was extensive research in to the current situation. It included a demographic review of the more than 25,000 S&T workers at the federal level. In addition, an Exit Survey was undertaken to determine why people actually leave the government as well as a comprehensive review of government policies and procedures. In Environment Canada, a national consultation was done which included focus groups, roundtables, and email survey and one-on-one interviews across the country.

The second phase was the search for answers to the problems posed, many of which have been around for as long as there have been women in science. The thoughts and solutions to date will be presented in the workshop. Participants will then be asked to assist in finding additional, creative ways of changing the federal work environment and bringing women to federal science as their chosen career.