

**Government Renewal Submission  
Fire and Emergency Services-Newfoundland and Labrador #2  
(FES-Part 1-02)**

**Proposal Title: Transfer of Authorization Function for Air Support Services in Ground Search and Rescue (GSAR) Operations to the Department of Justice and Public Safety (JPS)**

**Summary of Proposal:**

- FES-NL currently has the authority to request air support services through Government Air Services (Transportation and Works) to assist both police forces (RCMP/RNC) in GSAR operations. This authority extends to request air support from the federal government, through the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC), in the event that air services available through Government Air Services are not able to fly. This function once resided in JPS. The proposed change would be a strategic action to increase efficiency and streamline GSAR operations and ensure it remains under police jurisdiction at all times. JPS, as the lead agency in GSAR operations, will then have full control over all tactical GSAR operations, from start to finish.

Summary of Proposal			
Annualized Dollar Value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> < \$1 million	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1 million-\$5 million	<input type="checkbox"/> >\$5 million
Alignment with Government Agenda	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Public Interest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Role of Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially Necessary	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Necessary
Partnership Opportunity	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Client Size	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> < 100 clients	<input type="checkbox"/> 100 to 1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> > 1,000 clients
Efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Effective	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Efficient	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Effective and Efficient
Affordability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Affordable	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Affordable	
Scope of Client Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrow Client Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Broad Client Group	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General Population
Client Location	<input type="checkbox"/> Localized	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provincial
Stakeholder Consultations Prior to Program Change	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited	<input type="checkbox"/> Extensive
Legislative Changes Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulations	<input type="checkbox"/> Act
Readiness to Implement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Low
Timeline for Implementation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Quarter 16-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Second Quarter 16-17	<input type="checkbox"/> Last 6 months of 16-17

**Background:**

- Initially what was known as Emergency Measures Organization (EMO), a small division of three staff, fell under the mandate of the then Department of Justice. At that time EMO assumed responsibility to support police agencies in GSAR operations (searches for lost or missing persons) by authorizing helicopter time to assist search efforts. In 1986, EMO was transferred to the then Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs and this function remained with EMO. In 2007, FES-NL was created, reporting to the then Minister of Municipal Affairs, and both EMO and the Office of the Fire Commissioner were transferred to FES-NL. The function of authorizing air support services in GSAR operations transferred with EMO to FES-NL.
- FES-NL engages air services to support ground search and rescue operations at the request of policing agencies; this is a police decision - not a decision by FES-NL. The police force that has jurisdiction is always the lead agency. The request to provide air search capabilities to a lost or missing person search must come from the Criminal Operations Division of the RCMP (not a local detachment) or the Emergency Management Division of the RNC in order for FES-NL to authorize approval of helicopter time.

- When requested by the lead policing agency to provide air search capabilities for a missing or lost person search, FES-NL contacts the Department of Transportation and Works (TW) Air Services Division. This Division has a helicopter services contract with Universal Helicopters Newfoundland Limited which provides access to a minimum of 5 helicopters throughout the province.
- This request may be after regular working hours to FES-NL's on-call system.
- The contracted air service, not FES-NL, in consultation with TW Air Services Division, determines whether conditions are favourable for flying. The agreement dictates that helicopter service shall be available at all times during the term of the contract, subject only to adverse weather. These helicopters are not capable of night flying.
- In the event that the contracted helicopter service cannot fly (adverse weather or night flying), the current standard operating procedures indicate that Search and Rescue services provided by the federal government can be requested. At the request of the police agency leading the GSAR operations, FES-NL may request humanitarian assistance of federal air resources through the JRCC based on the time of day of the request and the resources available. The JRCC officials are responsible for determining whether it is safe for federal aircraft to fly.
- In 2012, FES-NL advanced a Core Mandate Analysis proposal to transfer GSAR air support authorization services to the then Department of Justice. Advancement of the proposal was deferred on November 23, 2012 pending a broader review of the organization of provincial search and rescue operations. That review was overcome by events, including the federal quadrennial review of search and rescue announced by the federal government on May 2, 2013. No final decision was made on the transfer.
- Expenses for helicopter services are paid from FES-NL's Emergency Services Division, Transportation and Communications budget. Historically FES-NL has notionally allocated \$80,000 per year from this budget item. Actual helicopter costs over the past 8 years were:
  - 2007-08 - \$46,956.37
  - 2008-09 - \$101,727.60
  - 2009-10 - \$53,964.28
  - 2010-11 - \$89,716.35
  - 2011-12 - \$98,141.05
  - 2012-13 - \$81,680.58
  - 2013-14 - \$124,477.62
  - 2014-15 - \$196,098.82; and
  - First 2 quarters of 2015-16 - \$68,008.23.
- It should be noted that in any given year when helicopter costs exceeded the notional allocation of \$80,000, FES-NL requested transfer of funds from other budget line items to cover the shortfall. In Budget 2016 FES-NL permanently reallocated \$100,000 from Executive Support – Professional Services to Emergency Services – Transportation and Communications to address this cost pressure. However, the new contract rates have significantly reduced the amount required, as outlined below.
- TW conducted a review of their contract for helicopter services and awarded a new tender this fiscal year. As a result of this review, FES-NL had to pre-commit funds for helicopter time for GSAR based on an annual average of identified historical usage of helicopter hours. The pre-commitment of funds from FES-NL was based on 50 hours per year (it is difficult to identify yearly average usage of helicopter time as GSAR searches are demand driven, with varying costs as indicated above, so this number was determined using the average over the previous 8 year period). FES-NL's pre-commitment for FY 2015-16 is \$21,784.12 and \$30,000 for the following two fiscal years. TW advised FES-NL that its usage of helicopter time for GSAR is 1.8% of government's total usage of helicopter services. JPS currently uses 2.4% of government's total usage of helicopter services.

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- With the new contract negotiated by TW, based on the annual average of 50 hours helicopter time at the new maximum hourly rate of \$1350 (\$67,500) plus the annual pre-commitment of \$30,000, the anticipated maximum cost for GSAR air support is approximately \$97,500. In light of this, an additional \$82,500 in savings can be achieved, given FES-NL had earlier concluded that \$180,000 was required.
- FES-NL Emergency Services may also seek contracted helicopter service during emergencies in which FES-NL is administering the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements, for such things as assessment of flood conditions and delivery of supplies to isolated communities.
- As GSAR is not a core mandate of FES-NL, FES-NL is recommending transferring the function of authorizing air support services to support GSAR operations to JPS. Both the RNC and RCMP are 24/7 operations and have capacity to absorb this function with minimal impact. Furthermore, police forces in NL can authorize air support for other policing matters such as criminal operations.
- This change would increase efficiency and streamline GSAR operations and ensure it remains under police jurisdiction at all times. JPS, as the lead agency in GSAR operations, would then have full control over all tactical GSAR operations, from start to finish.
- The Provincial Government has consistently reinforced three key messages associated with GSAR: (i) enhancing search and rescue (SAR) capacity in Newfoundland and Labrador is critically important to government; (ii) government will consistently call upon the Federal Government for enhancements to search and rescue services for all Canadians; and (iii) government will continue to press for the implementation of rapid federal response times on a 24/7/365 basis, with additional resources and training.
- Additionally, the Provincial Government, through initiatives of JPS, has taken steps to improve supports for ground search and rescue, including:
  - passing legislation to provide volunteer team members with coverage against injury, while performing their volunteer duties, through the workers compensation system;
  - Announcing in March 2012 \$510,000 for the Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association to purchase a suite of thermal imaging cameras for use by volunteer ground search and rescue teams;
  - Announcing in June 2013 an agreement with the Civil Air Search and Rescue Association of Newfoundland and Labrador to augment air search support services available in the province;
  - Announcing in Budget 2014 an increase of \$116,000 to the annual grant provided to the Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association for each of the following five years to be used to update vehicles and equipment and for radio licensing fees; and,
  - Annual funding for helicopter services to support Newfoundland and Labrador Search and Rescue Association training program, an average annual expenditure of \$20,000 (this initiative has been cost-shared with FES-NL).

**Analysis:**

- **Results of the Program and Service Assessment Tests –** Regarding public interest, there is an expectation that when incidents of lost or missing persons occur, the police would utilize all resources available, including helicopters, to aid in ground searches. Regarding the role of government, policing functions are a public safety matter. There are no opportunities to partner with external stakeholders in the conduct of police-lead searches for lost or missing persons. Regarding affordability, there is a public expectation that police have the necessary tools at their disposal to find lost or missing persons. This is a demand driven service which is difficult to accurately budget. Regarding efficiency, the inclusion of FES-NL as the recognized agency to authorize air support to aid in police lead ground search and rescue operations, would appear to be inefficient, and in actual fact, adds an additional step, entity and cost to the request process since police services cannot directly authorize their own air support for GSAR operations.

- **Client Location** – A lost or missing person can occur anywhere in the province but often involve rural areas.
- **Alignment to Government Priorities** – As noted above, the Provincial Government has consistently reinforced three messages associated with GSAR, and the Provincial Government was an active participant in the 2013 Federal Quadrennial Review of Search and Rescue.
- **Readiness to Implement** – There is no cost associated with this proposal. FES-NL would agree to transfer the associated funds (maximum cost of \$97,500) to JPS.
- **Timelines to Implement** – If approval is granted to proceed, this transfer can be completed within 3 months. Standard operating procedures would require revisions and these revisions would need to be communicated to all stakeholders in GSAR operations. Low effort.
- **Client Size** – In the last 8 years, the number of annual searches ranged from 10 to 22.
- **Scope of Client Group** – The client group is the general population; anyone can become lost or missing.
- **Program Eligibility** – This is a demand driven public safety program without program eligibility.
- **Asymmetry** – Not applicable.
- **Service Delivery Model** – This service cannot be delivered through alternate means. Transferring the function of authorizing air support services for police-lead GSAR operations would result in a more efficient process as FES-NL would no longer be involved and the police services could authorize the required resource on their own. This would be consistent with Lean principles.
- **Improved Revenue** – If the Provincial Government wished to create revenue associated with the provision of helicopters to aid in GSAR operations, it could introduce a cost-recovery model for lost or missing persons or their families to pay. This is not recommended at this time.

**Legal, Regulatory and Legislative Considerations:**

- There are no legal, regulatory or legislative implications associated with this proposal.

**Stakeholder Considerations:**

- No external consultations are required; however, FES-NL and JPS will advise JRCC of procedural changes in authorization of air support services to ground search and rescue operations should this proposal be approved.

**Interdepartmental Considerations:**

- FES-NL consulted with TW on this submission. TW advised it does not have any issues or concerns with the submission.
- FES-NL consulted with JPS on this submission. JPS stated that at this time it accepts to review the possibility of a transfer of the authorization function of air support services in GSAR. Such a transfer would require time for JPS to review with the affected divisional heads completing their own extensive analysis. A final determination of transfer would be decided upon by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety.
- Should this proposal be approved, the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat would be advised that FES-NL and JPS will be making contact with the JRCC to advise of procedural change regarding requests from either the RCMP or RNC for humanitarian assistance in GSAR operations.
- There are no differential impacts on specific populations.

**Other Jurisdictions:**

- The RCMP in the Atlantic Provinces has access to its own helicopter assets to assist in GSAR operations. Ground search and rescue operations in the majority of other provinces and territories reside with departments of Justice, Solicitor General or Public Safety as lost or missing persons are police matters.

**Financial and Human Resource Considerations:**

- **Annualized Dollar Value** - Currently, FES-NL receives a notional allocation of \$80,000 under the Transportation and Communication budget to authorize air support services with a total annual budget of \$227,300; this includes a \$100,000 permanent transfer (in Budget 2016/17) from Executive Support Professional Services to Emergency Services Transportation and Communication; past budget was \$127,300. FES-NL is proposing to transfer \$97,500 and the function of authorizing of air support services in police lead GSAR operations to JPS. Furthermore, FES-NL would remit \$82,500 for FES-NL's targeted savings leaving the Emergency Services Transportation and Communication budget at \$47,300.
- **Human Resource Impact** - There are no human resource impacts for FES-NL. FES-NL is still required to maintain its emergency on-call service for all other emergency requests for service. It is estimated that on average, 25 hours per year are paid to on-call employees (over time) directly related to GSAR air authorizations. This results in a savings of approximately \$1,400 to FES-NL's salary plan for the Emergency Services Division.
- As both the RNC and RCMP are 24/7 operations and now call on FES-NL to initiate authorization of air support services in GSAR operations, there should be no human resource impacts. In fact, this transfer results in increased efficiency and streamlined GSAR operations by removing FES-NL's current role and having the lead police agency make direct contact with TW's Division of Air Services, or JRCC.

Financial and Human Resource Impacts						
Fiscal Year	Budget Requirements			FTE Requirements		
	Current	Revised	Change	Current	Revised	Change
2015-16	\$633,100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2016-17	\$641,000	\$557,100	(\$83,900)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2017-18	\$641,000	\$557,100	(\$83,900)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2018-19	\$641,000	\$557,100	(\$83,900)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2019-20	\$641,000	\$557,100	(\$83,900)	N/A	N/A	N/A
2020-21	\$641,000	\$557,100	(\$83,900)	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Note: Current for 2015-16 refers to Budget 2015, while in the out years 'Current' refers to the forecasted budget in the most recent fiscal framework.*

**Implementation and Change Management Considerations:**

- If approval is granted to proceed, this transfer can be completed within 3 months. Standard operating procedures would require revisions and these revisions would need to be communicated to all stakeholders in GSAR operations.

**Recommendation(s) (including alternatives):**

- FES-NL recommends that the function of authorizing air support services to support GSAR operations and the associated notional funding of \$97,500 from the Emergency Services Division Transportation and Communication budget be transferred to JPS.

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**Pros:**

- o GSAR is not core to FES-NL's mandate and more appropriately belongs with JPS (function once resided with JPS); and
- o Increases efficiency in GSAR operations by streamlining requests for air support services and ensuring it remains under police jurisdictions at all times.

**Cons:**

- o As a demand driven service, JPS may inherit a budget pressure if annual helicopter expenditures exceed \$97,500
- The alternative to this recommendation is that FES-NL maintains this non-core function and keeps the allocated notational budget.

**Pros:**

- o Status quo.

**Cons:**

- o FES-NL continues to be involved in a non-core function;
- o FES-NL maintains a function that places pressure the salary budget for on-call; and
- o GSAR operations are not streamlined (eg: policing services must call on FES-NL to request air support for their GSAR operations).

**Communications Plan:**

- Completed and included in MA Communications Plan.

Prepared/Approved by: D McCormack/P Rodgers/S Walsh/S Dutton

Ministerial Approval:

Date: February 17, 2016

