

Contribution of Evaluation to Improved Environmental Programming

Does evaluation really make a difference?



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Outline

- Purpose
- Examples
- Collective Lessons Learned
- Challenges for Future Environmental Evaluations



Purpose

- Identify some factors that can be changed to make evaluation more effective
 - Better decision making
 - Improved environmental outcomes
- Address the key challenges and constraints.
 - Looking at what really happens “on the ground”
 - Linking activities to results



Examples

- Species at Risk Act (SARA)
- Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA)
- Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP)
- Wildlife Stamp Program (WSP)(WHC)



Species at Risk Act (SARA)

(1 of 3)

■ Background

- Horizontal federal program (Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, Parks)
- New initiative – Species at Risk Act was passed in 2003 to protect wildlife
- Requirements highly prescribed in legislation
- Program objectives & outcomes shared across the 3 organizations
- Implementation approach varied across the 3 organizations



SARA (2 of 3)

- **Impact of Evaluation** (www.ec.gc.ca/ae-ve/default.asp?lang=en&n=53869FF3-1)
 - Resulted in changes to management approach
 - Reorganization
 - Development of Results Management and Accountability Framework and Performance Measures
 - Needed stronger focus on accountability for resources and delivery



SARA (3 of 3)

■ Lessons Learned:

- Evaluation provided impetus for change
- Catalyst for action on deficiencies
- Accountability mechanisms strengthened
- Departmental inertia needed to be overcome
- All program partners needed to be “equitably” engaged to complete the evaluation



Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) (1 of 3)

■ Background

- Key part of Department of the Environment's overall mandate to protect the environment
- Evaluation was done in anticipation of 5 year parliamentary review
- Focus was on a formative assessment of implementation – based on changes made to the Act in 1999



CEPA (2 of 3)

■ Impact of Evaluation

(www.ec.gc.ca/CEPAREgistry/review/CR_docs/form_eval/toc.cfm)

- Recognized that a summative evaluation could not be done (program conditions not in place)
- Some internal re-allocation and re-focussing of efforts to identified issues
- Evaluation was overtaken by larger processes (parliamentary review did not happen as planned)
- No evidence of any significant changes to program delivery based on evaluation



CEPA (3 of 3)

■ Lessons Learned

- Difficult to assess progress without clearly defined long term outcomes or results
- Difficult to effect change – organizational inertia
- Where organizational structure is not aligned to program objectives – difficult to assess linkage between activities, resources and outcomes
- Technical complexity – essential need for subject matter expertise



Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSSP) (1 of 3)

■ Background

- Horizontal federal program (Environment, Fisheries and Oceans, Food Inspection)
- Program dates back to the 1920's
- Program requirements designed to address food safety objectives and market access for exported product



CSSP (2 of 3)

■ Impact of Evaluation

(www.inspection.gc.ca/english/agen/eval/cssppccsm/shemosse.shtml)

- Increased inter-departmental understanding
- Created a process and forum for dialogue between the partners
- Identified some areas of concern
- Has not yet led to significant change in overall approach to program delivery



CSSP (3 of 3)

■ Lessons Learned

- Program objectives & outcomes not always shared (each partner has their own independent mandate)
- Difficult to reconcile different priorities across organizations
- Implementation approach varied across delivery organizations
- Accountability mechanisms weak
- Departmental inertia needed to be overcome
- Difficult to re-allocate resources across departmental boundaries



Wildlife Stamp Program(WSP) (1 of 3)

■ Background

- In 1985, the *Migratory Birds Regulations* were amended to require that a *Habitat Conservation Stamp* be affixed to all federal migratory bird hunting permits.
- Revenue from stamp sales are transferred through a contribution agreement between Environment Canada and Wildlife Habitat Canada
- Wildlife Habitat Canada is a non-profit organization established in 1984 for the purposes of promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife habitat in Canada
- Treasury Board Secretariat *Policy on Transfer Payments (7.3.7)* states: "Departments must assess, through a formal program evaluation, or similar review, and report back on the effectiveness of the transfer payment when requesting renewal of terms and conditions"



WSP (2 of 3)

- **Impact of Evaluation** (www.ec.gc.ca/ae-ve/default.asp?lang=en&n=AFFC427D)
 - Increased partners understanding of the program and how it was working
 - Created a process and forum for dialogue between the partners
 - Identified some areas of concern
 - Changed the relationship between Environment and Wildlife Habitat Canada
 - Provided a basis for a re-definition of the Wildlife Habitat Canada organization's priorities



WSP (3 of 3)

■ Lessons Learned

- Accountability mechanisms weak
- Program inertia needed to be overcome
- Evaluation was useful in identifying where program activities needed to be re-directed or re-aligned



Collective Lessons Learned (1 of 3)

The Key Question is “Did the Evaluation Make a Difference?” The answer in all cases is yes.

- Provided a strong framework for understanding how well things are working

- Demonstrated the difficulty in determining “program effectiveness”
 - Absence of Logic Models
 - Unclear Outcomes or Results



Collective Lessons Learned (2 of 3)

- Showed the importance of having a realistic logic model for program delivery
 - Strengthens understanding of delivery approach
 - Leads to shared understanding of objectives and priorities
 - Allows for examination of attribution of activities to results

- Showed importance of recognizing that many environmental programs typically involve multiple partners and jurisdictions
 - Need to engage all partners in the evaluation
 - Stakeholders or communities of interest must be engaged



Collective Lessons Learned (3 of 3)

- Provided impetus for change
 - A key catalyst for action on deficiencies
 - Organizational inertia needs to be overcome
- Demonstrated that program evaluation often leads to a strengthening of accountability mechanisms
 - Improved oversight
 - Improved management decision making
 - More formal and systematic performance measurement and reporting
- Evaluations tended to focus on management rather than actual environmental outcomes "on the ground"



Challenges for Future Environmental Evaluations

- Linking Activities to Results (Program Structure)
- Assessing Tangible Outcomes & Effectiveness (Knowledge and Understanding)
- Avoidance of Accountability (Responsibility and Oversight)
- Follow Through (Inertia and Organizational Change)
- Measuring environmental outcomes alongside management actions (formative vs. summative)