



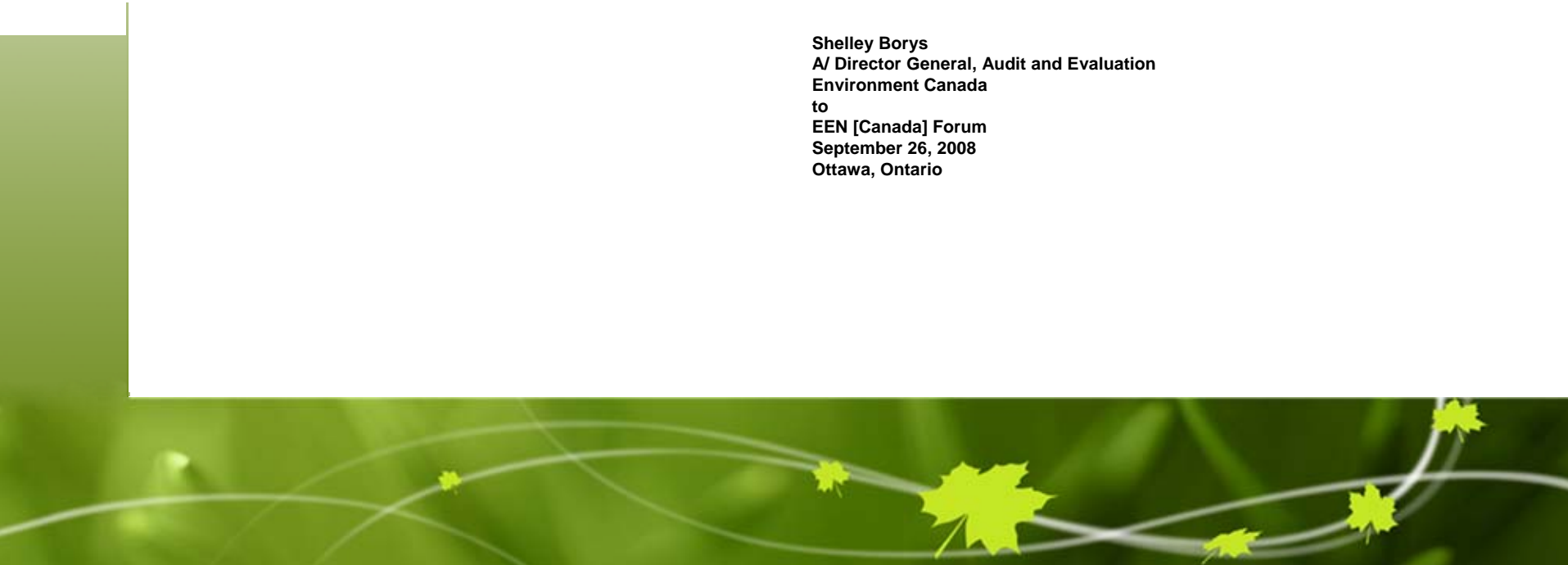
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Evaluating Environmental Programs

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Environment Canada
to
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Outline

- My background
- Evaluation at Environment Canada
- The scope of EC evaluations
- Tools for evaluation
- What is different about environmental evaluation
- Gains by measuring environmental outcomes
- How much environmental outcome measurement
- Scientific measurement and evaluation
- Some good practices
- Forthcoming challenges



My Background

- Evaluation practitioner (21 years)
- Application of evaluation to environment (3 years)
- Links across federal departments with resource interests and internationally with US Environmental Protection Agency



Evaluation at Environment Canada

- Environment Canada has formal processes for selecting, planning, managing, implementing, approving and releasing their evaluations
- Direction/client is our Deputy Minister
- Evaluations can be done only by professionals knowledgeable of evaluation
- The amount of formal environmental knowledge varies and is not a required competency



The Scope of EC Evaluations

- The size, range, complexity and investment varies greatly
- Recent increase in multi-partnered horizontal evaluations (e.g. Species at Risk Act , Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program, Clean Air Regulatory Agenda)
- Policy framework set by central agency – Treasury Board; new policy coming; need to connect with Strategic Review (reallocation/reinvestment)
- Upcoming revised Evaluation policy directed to 5 year evaluation of universe of direct spending programs



Tools for Evaluation

- Fundamentals of analysis and tools are comparable if one evaluates whether programs, projects or initiatives are achieving their outcomes whether they are environmental or not
- Most traditional tools work for a broad range of evaluation topics (e.g., document review, interview, survey, performance measurement of management actions)
- One technique that does not work is randomized control trials



What is Different about Environmental Evaluation

- Difference lies in the complexity of outcomes as well as with timescale of impacts
- Many evaluations are management-focused with outcomes only inferred; many stop there
- “On the ground effects” of environmental outcomes are complex mix of social and environmental dimensions
- Few evaluations go to such attribution



Gains in Measuring Environmental Outcomes

- Knowing “on the ground effects” actually ensures that the desired environmental outcomes are occurring
- Adds confidence to your management actions
- Adds credibility to the program and/or decision
- Would robustly deal with question of attribution



Scientific Measurement and Evaluation

- Scientists throughout Environment Canada do collect many and diverse types of environmental data (e.g., water, air, wildlife, etc)
- Disconnect between using scientific measures in evaluation because:
 - Level of detail
 - Timescale (environmental changes are in decades yet management actions are in years)
 - Lack of frameworks and techniques to allow for easy integration into evaluation



How much Environmental Outcome Measurement

- Very little. Why?
 - Time pressures
 - Resource limitations (staff)
 - Requisite need for universal coverage of departmental programs
 - Need for specialty cross-disciplinary skills
 - Need for innovative tools



Some Good Practices

- Programs should have basic building blocks (logic model, performance measurement implemented)
- Performance measurement must be detailed with clear accountabilities linked to resources, measures with supporting databases
- Focusing on the needs of the primary client and not multiple parties



Forthcoming Challenges

- Using fora such as the EEN to help build environmental dimension to evaluations of the environment
 - Sharing cross disciplinary knowledge
 - Innovation of tools and techniques
 - Building networks of professionals
 - Improving links between evaluations and decision-makers
 - Balancing policy requirements with depth of coverage of evaluations
 - Maximizing science measures into evaluation

