

Multi Method Evaluation –
Tools that work and ones that don't



Evaluating Environmental Legislation in Canada

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What will we discuss?



Our experience in evaluating 3 pieces of environmental legislation in Canada:

- Obligatory evaluations; part of public / parliamentary accountability
- Involve large, complex initiatives with multiple programs delivered under a horizontal governance framework
- Design based on existing performance frameworks and legal requirements
- Formative in nature (assessing process, progress and outcomes)
- Multiple methodologies, focused on obtaining 'evidence', and integrating multiple perspectives
- Common issues encountered and lessons learned

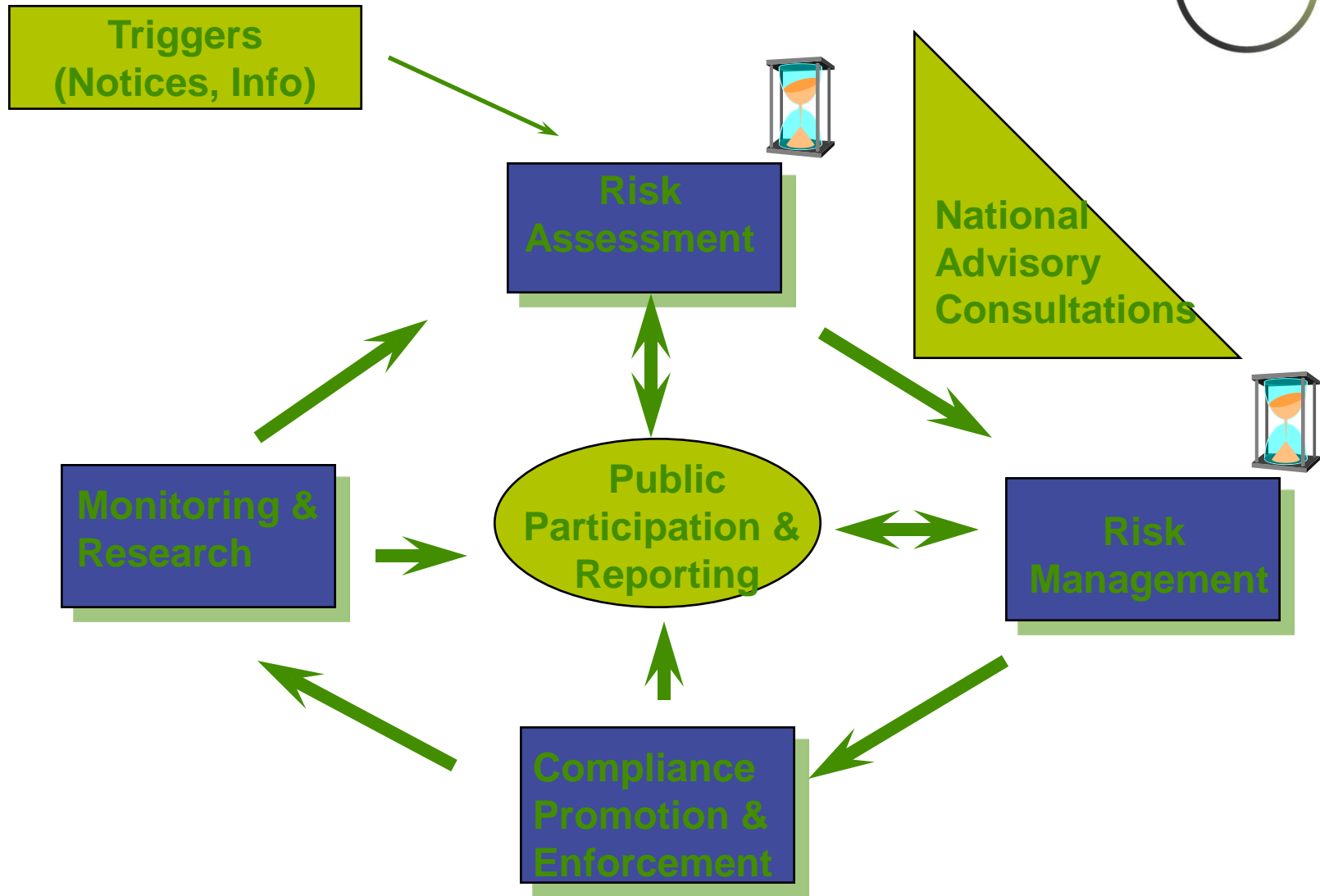


What was evaluated?



Legislation	Summary
<i>Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), 1999</i>	Canada's primary piece of environmental legislation: Promotes pollution prevention and the protection of the environment and human health in order to contribute to sustainable development. Implemented by Environment & Health. ~\$200M annually in programs.
<i>Species at Risk Act (SARA)</i>	Canada's legislation to prevent wildlife species from becoming extinct and secure the necessary actions for their recovery. Implemented by Environment, Parks & Fisheries. ~\$100M annually in programs.
<i>Canadian Shellfish Sanitation Program (CSSP)</i>	Driven by the <i>Fisheries Act</i> , seeks to reduce consumer illness from consuming contaminated or poor quality shellfish by monitoring the water quality of growing areas, identifying pollution sources, and regulating the harvest, transport and processing of shellfish. Implemented by Environment, Fisheries & Food Inspection. ~\$15M annually in programs.

How does CEPA work?



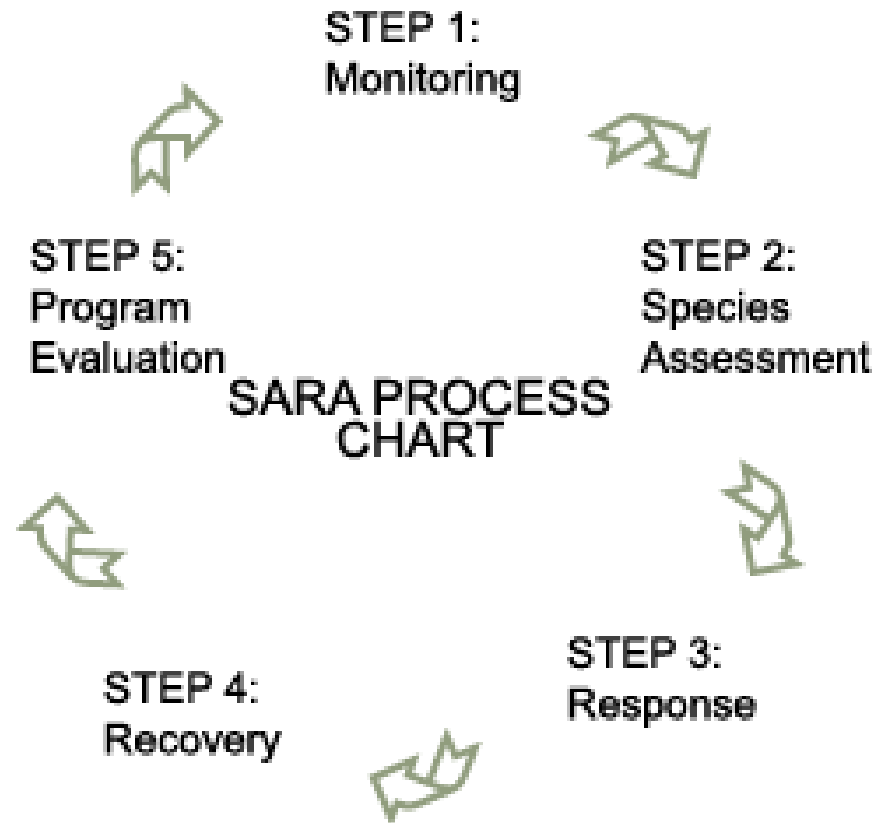
CEPA Logic Model



Simplified CEPA Logic Model

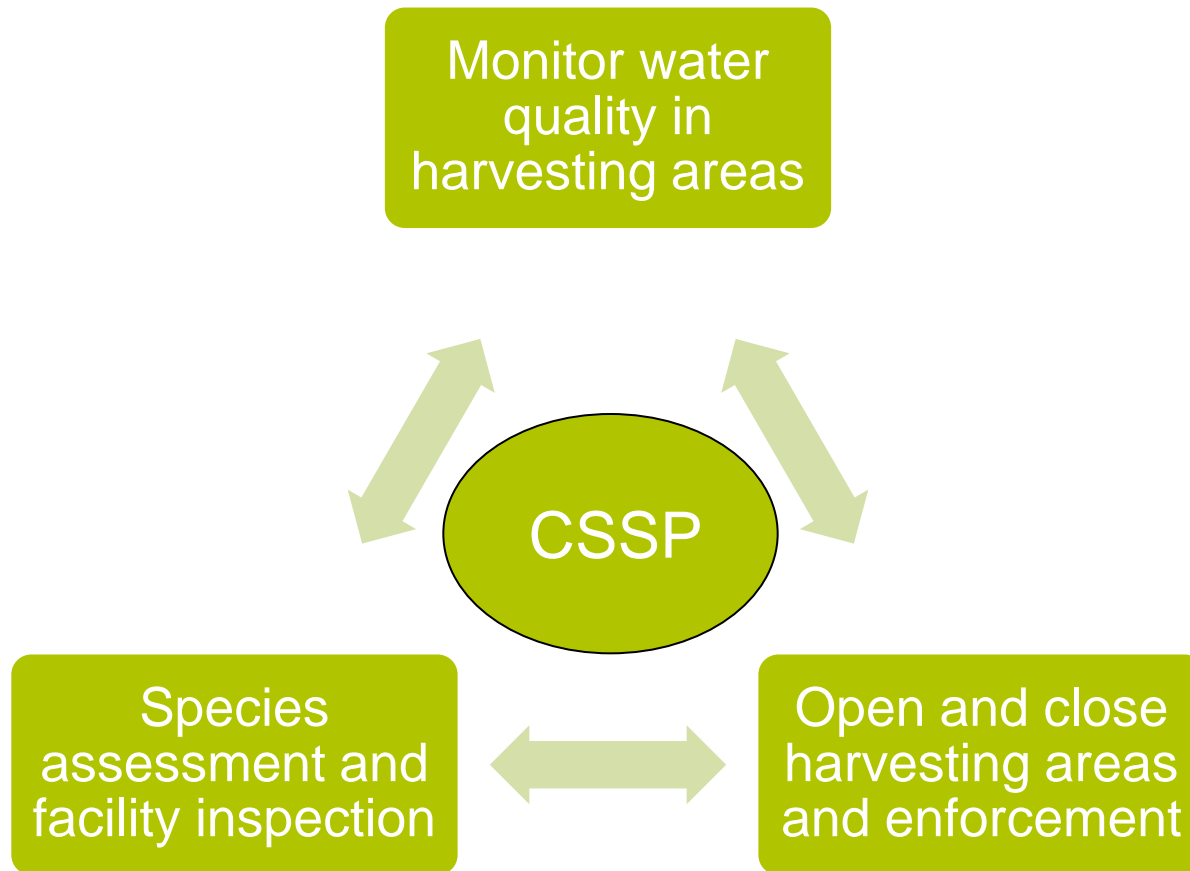
Final Outcomes	Environment sustained and preserved		Health of Canadians Improved		
Intermediate Outcomes	Reliance on toxics decreased & waste reduced	Releases of toxics prevented or reduced		Trans-border pollution reduced	
Immediate Outcomes	Environmental awareness and behaviours improved in private, public & federal sectors; individuals; and partners				
Outputs/ Activities	S&T	Risk Assessments	Instruments	ComPro & Enforcement	Governance

How does SARA work?



Simplified SARA Logic Model						
Final Outcomes	Canadian indigenous species are protected from becoming extirpated or extinct					
Intermediate Outcomes	Species at risk are identified, legally protected and actions are taken for their protection			Landowners are aware of and conserve priority habitats		Programs are effective and efficient
Immediate Outcomes	Assessment and Listing of SAR	Implementation of Recovery Plans	Enforcement of SARA	Habitat stewardship projects	Aboriginal involvement in protection of SAR	Programs coordinated
Outputs/ Activities	Status reports, Surveys, Research	Strategies, Action Plans, Critical habitat	Prohibitions and permits	Funding for conservation	Funding for capacity	Common support mechanisms

How does CSSP work?



CSSP Logic Model



Simplified CSSP Logic Model

Final Outcomes	Health risks from the consumption of molluscan bivalve shellfish are minimized					
Intermediate Outcomes	Commercial shellfish activities consistent with regulatory requirements		Coastal communities and non-commercial harvesters have access to safe harvesting areas		Aboriginal communities have access to safe harvesting areas	
Immediate Outcomes	Tools in place to manage health risks	Increased level of compliance with regulations	Ability to meet international standards	Increased knowledge of pollution impacts	Resources allocated to risk	Understanding of demand
Outputs/ Activities	Monitoring and classification of harvest areas		Regulatory and policy controls		Outreach	Research and Improvement

How were the evaluations planned?



Part of Act	Obligations and Expected Outcomes	Evaluation Issues / Questions	Sources of Evidence			Indicators for Reporting
			Documents	Interviews	Case Studies / Focus Group	

- Based on Act and Results-based Management & Accountability Frameworks (RMAF)
- Integrated planning assumptions (e.g., for every 20 substances declared toxic, develop 8 new regulations)
- Used to ensure program endorses basis and scope for evaluation (e.g., this is what we aim to achieve)...not necessarily same as original performance framework
- Used to develop variety of tailored evaluation instruments
- Selected case studies/detailed analyses to: profile critical functions/ programs, illustrate successes, and/or probe problem areas

What methodologies were used?



1. Document Review

- Evidence Base
- Analysis against pre-defined templates
- Source for detailed analyses

2. Interviews and Surveys

- Broad base for multiple perspectives
- E-surveys for understanding of activities and outputs
- Internal interviews to fill gaps
- External interviews to assess perceived impact

3. Expenditure tracking against plans

4. Case Studies / Expert focus groups

- To develop deep understanding of issues or processes
- To discuss alternative approaches to governance and delivery

5. Analytical Framework

- Have obligations been satisfied?
- What has been done (activities/outputs)?
- What is likelihood that outcomes will be achieved?
- What learning / changes or contextual factors have taken place?
- What major issues or challenges have affected success?

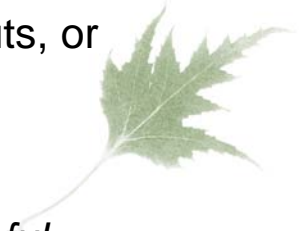


How did the methodologies work?

1. Document review key for evidence base, but...
 - Not all activities and outputs recorded in documentation.
 - Documentation not verified as accurate (taken at face value).
 - ✓ *Tip: Work with your client to organize documents by outcome or indicator.*
2. Interviews/surveys less 'fact based', but...
 - Important to solicit multiple perspectives, to determine 'core messages', but...not all equal.
 - Recognize core knowledge resides with a few.
 - Need to separate intentions (what is said) from reality (what is done). Follow-up with evidence.
 - Useful to increase awareness of and buy-in for evaluation recommendations.
 - ✓ *Tip: Recognize evaluation is a distraction to many... those that need it least, value it most.*



How did the methodologies work?



3. Expenditure tracking highlights issues, but...

- Very difficult as systems and process change, not aligned to activities, outputs, or outcomes.
- Not able to assess cost effectiveness (inadequate financial tracking and comparisons).
- ✓ *Tip: Comparing programs within a regulation or legislation can provide a useful benchmark.*

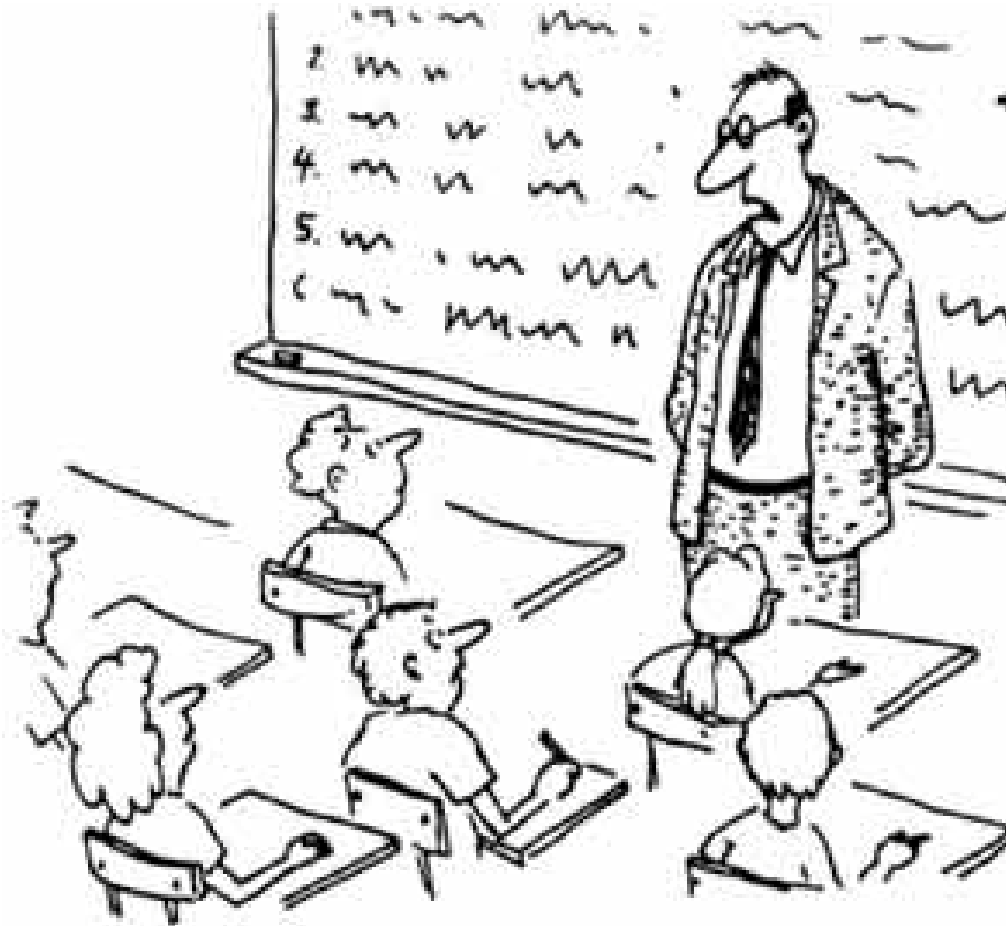
4. Case studies / Focus groups illustrate how programs work, but....

- While effective for understanding issues, processes, etc.; still difficult to determine environmental outcomes.
- ✓ *Tip: Focus groups can be an excellent tool for identifying and discussing alternative governance and or implementation options, which can lead to substantive program improvements.*

5. Analyses frames findings...

- Useful to assess wealth of findings and communicate to decision-makers.
- Need to use expert judgment and 'weight of evidence'.
- ✓ *Tip: Discussions about results are most effective when held with evaluators and program experts.*

Lessons Learned



“I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!”

Lessons Learned



- Establish clear evaluation framework – understand what is required by each part of the legislation and what programs are included.
- Focus on evidence.
- Assess both short term obligations and potential for longer term outcomes.
- Have multiple methods and perspectives – but weigh carefully.
- Validate findings with evaluators and program experts.
- Be aware of context for delivery, how this changes, and how resources spent – adapt measures for success.
- Look for indications of future success:
 - Common understanding of what is to be done and why (facilitators vs. regulators)
 - Clear accountabilities and good governance
 - Strategic and integrated planning
 - Funds allocated as planned
 - Active learning and risk management processes
 - Focal point (and resources allocated) to monitoring and reporting
- Understand the audience (believers) - believe they are doing the ‘right thing’ - need to separate from ‘doing it right’.