

Evaluation of Canadian Coast Guard Marine Navigation

The marine navigation programs are responsible for ensuring that Canada's waters are safe, efficient and navigable for mariners. The Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) has the responsibility of providing Aids to Navigation (AtoN), channel maintenance, icebreaking, ice management services and Marine Communications and Traffic Services.

About the Evaluation

The objective of the evaluation was to assess the value of, resources for, effectiveness of and transition toward the digitalization of marine navigation services.

Summary of Key Findings

Overall, the marine navigation programs deliver essential services that support marine safety, sovereignty and economic activity.

Despite resource constraints, the programs generally achieved their intended outcomes, notably in providing timely navigational information to mariners. Performance in supporting the maritime economy is mixed: The AtoN program and Icebreaking Services did not fully meet their respective targets, and the Waterways Management Program faced challenges with dredging in the Great Lakes.

The programs engaged with Indigenous Peoples in various ways, but there is a need for centralized guidance that would support the marine navigation programs in advancing reconciliation. Program delivery is constrained by materiel, financial and technological challenges, including limited vessel access, outdated equipment and climate change impacts.


In the transition to the S-100 standard, collaboration and information sharing were generally effective. Nonetheless, internal roles and responsibilities as well as communication can be improved to support modernization and digitalization.





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Recommendations

As a result of the evaluation findings, four recommendations have been developed to strengthen marine navigation programs:

 It is recommended that the Deputy Commissioner, CCG Programs—in collaboration with the Director General, CCG Planning, Engagement and Priorities and the Director General, CCG Integrated Technical Services—develop and implement national guidance to support the CCG marine navigation programs in advancing reconciliation, building off CCG's and DND's Indigenous relations strategic frameworks.

 It is recommended that the Deputy Commissioner, CCG Programs develop and implement a change management strategy to support the modernization of marine navigation services and advance digitalization. This strategy should enhance internal collaboration, clarify roles and responsibilities, and improve communication. Additionally, it should leverage existing committees and foster collaboration with other government departments and agencies involved in S-100.

 It is recommended that the Deputy Commissioner, CCG Programs undertake a review of the AtoN program. This review should examine the program's activities and expected outcomes to identify areas for improvement and enhance the effectiveness of the program, including opportunities for modernization and prioritization.

 It is recommended that the Deputy Commissioner, CCG Programs—in collaboration with the Director General, Chief of Programmes—review and improve performance measurement for the AtoN and Marine Communications and Traffic Services programs.