



Strengthening the evidence-based culture

Departmental Evaluation Plan:
2017-18 to 2021-2022

June 2, 2017

Evaluation Directorate
Strategic and Service Policy Branch
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**Departmental Evaluation Plan 2017-18 to 2021-2022 -
*Strengthening the evidence-based culture***

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List of Acronyms

EI	Employment Insurance
ESDC	Employment and Social Development Canada
FAA	Financial Administration Act
HR	Human Resources
PIPs	Performance Information Profiles
PMEC	Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee
PMS	Performance Measurement Strategies
SRDC	Social Research and Demonstration Corporation
TB	Treasury Board
TBS	Treasury Board Secretariat

Deputy Head Departmental Evaluation Plan Confirmation Note

I approve the Departmental Evaluation Plan of Employment and Social Development Canada for the fiscal years 2017-18 – 2021-22, which I submit to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat as required by the Policy on Results.

I confirm that this five-year rolling Departmental Evaluation Plan:

- includes evaluation of all ongoing programs of grants and contributions with five-year average actual expenditures of \$5 million or greater per year at least once every five years, in fulfillment of the requirements of subsection 42.1 of the Financial Administration Act;
- meets the requirements of the Mandatory Procedures for Evaluation; and
- supports the requirements of the expenditure management system including, as applicable, Memoranda to Cabinet, Treasury Board submissions and resource alignment reviews.

I will ensure that this plan is updated annually, and I will provide information about its implementation to the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, as required.

Executive Summary

The Department of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) delivers over \$120 billion annually in programs and services such as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, Canada Child Benefit and other programs that profoundly impact the lives of Canadians. The Evaluation Directorate's role is to provide ESDC decision-makers with timely, balanced and relevant evaluations of these programs, and to offer expert advice on performance measurement and evaluation requirements. To deliver on its mandate, the Directorate places priority on the core actions of collaborating, innovating, streamlining and strategizing. Over the past few years, the Evaluation Directorate has transformed its approach by strengthening its internal evaluation capacity, stimulating innovative methodologies and disseminating results. In the process, it has become a centre of expertise for the provision of trusted advice to ESDC's departmental portfolio.

Strengthening the culture of measurement and evaluation

The Evaluation Directorate's role reaches beyond delivering evaluation reports to enhancing the culture of measurement and evaluation within ESDC. Expanding our stakeholder networks and engaging them to manage change responds to the evolving environment, and in particular to the *Policy on Results* launched by the Treasury Board of Canada in July 2016. The Evaluation Directorate has been an early adopter of the *Policy on Results* by establishing key governance bodies, streamlining processes and contributing to a culture of evidence, positioning ESDC to meet the new directives.

The new *Policy on Results* introduces more flexibility into the five-year cycle of program evaluation compared to the former *Policy on Evaluation*. In response, the Evaluation Directorate has improved its ability to engage with stakeholders, built capacity in measuring performance, tested innovative approaches, and become more efficient in producing evaluation work. The Directorate, while producing reports based on the old evaluation policy, is transitioning to the new policy by adjusting the scope of evaluations to focus on policy-relevant questions and instituting interim reports that provide more timely results. The Directorate also invested in feedback mechanisms and improved management systems to prepare for a surge in the number of evaluation publications and demand for performance measurement expertise to support the implementation of the *Policy on Results*.

Fostering experimentation to inform policies and program development

Experimentation and innovation are important to advancing the evidence base for policy decision-making. The Directorate's significant investment over several years in the development of medium term indicators has made it possible to measure the net impact of training programs, which has been influential within ESDC and led to interest from other programs. In 2016-17, this methodology informed numerous reports, including technical reports at the national and provincial/territorial levels relating to the Labour Market Development Agreements evaluation. This innovative approach has significantly reduced the need to conduct costly surveys, and has provided strategic and evidence-based advice that supports program and policy development.

Disseminating knowledge and strengthening relationships

Through active engagement, the Directorate has stimulated organizational learning and leveraged relationships with other federal departments. By disseminating evaluation knowledge throughout the broad network of policy, program and delivery areas, including other federal departments, the Directorate supports policy discussions and program development at many levels. For example, the Evaluation Directorate shared findings and impacts from its evaluation on Labour Market Development Agreements with key policy makers working on labour market issues from the provinces, territories and federal government at a conference on “Best Practices in Employment Services and Training.” Evaluation staff also presented numerous papers at various scientific or public policy conferences in the last year.

Managing challenges

Identifying and managing risks that have the potential to affect quality, timeliness or the ongoing advancement of the Evaluation Directorate’s work is essential for planning purposes and for the organization’s ability to anticipate and respond to changing circumstances. Three key risks demanded attention during this planning cycle: (1) availability and quality of data, (2) maintaining human resources capacity to address the anticipated workload, and (3) obtaining final approvals from provinces and territories for the bilateral evaluations of the Labour Market Development Agreements.

The availability and quality of data is a challenge faced by program authorities, and central to evaluation and performance measurement. To mitigate data risks and strengthen the relationship between the availability and quality of data and the delivery of robust evaluations, the Evaluation Directorate provides guidance on data requirements. This, in turn, is part of the evolution towards a department-wide, evidence-based culture at ESDC.

Strong capacity is needed to meet a significant increase in the number of evaluations (36 projects over 2017-19 compared to 13 in the previous two years), greater efforts to measure and advise on results, and the heightened focus on disseminating results and innovating. To mitigate the capacity risk, the Directorate has produced its first three-year strategic HR plan, aimed at supporting practices for strong human resource management. Finally, to maximize the success of timely completion of Labour Market Development Agreements evaluations, ESDC evaluators will continue with ongoing communication of deadlines and collaboration with provincial and territorial officials.

Key Achievements in 2016-17

- Advised on 12 Memoranda to Cabinet and 10 Treasury Board Submissions
- Completed 41 Technical Reports and 6 Evaluation Reports
- Led 26 advisory/steering committees
- Disseminated findings from the evaluation on Labour Market Development Agreements to key policy makers from the provinces, territories and federal government
- Submitted an article on “Making Evaluations More Responsive to Policy” for publication in the *Canadian Journal of Evaluation*

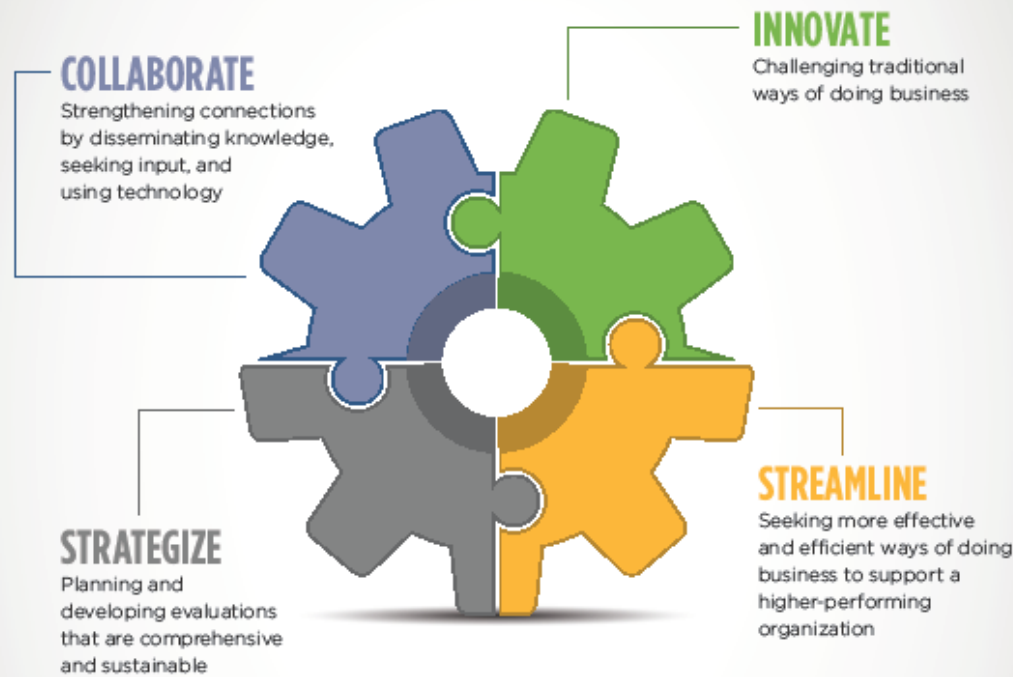
- Organized a workshop in collaboration with the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) on Social Innovation in Action
- Briefed the EI Service Quality Review Panel (Parliamentary Secretaries and Members of Parliament) on the EI Modernization and Automation evaluation, which has informed policy recommendations to the Minister
- Conducted a Social Innovation and Social Finance workshop to advance discussions of “what works”

In the coming five years, the Evaluation Directorate is well positioned to move forward with the new policy in delivering results for Canadians, and will continue to build on a strong foundation to further the contribution of evaluation findings in program and policy development. In collaboration with the Head of Performance Measurement, the Evaluation Directorate will continue to provide expert advice on results measurement and evaluation and support innovation in program delivery and policy development.

STRENGTHENING THE EVIDENCE-BASED CULTURE

ESDC DEPARTMENTAL EVALUATION PLAN

4 CORE ACTIONS TO DELIVER 52 EVALUATION PROJECTS OVER 2017-2022



KEY RESULTS IN 2016-17

92% of surveyed ESDC programs indicated that they have used or plan to use evaluation findings and recommendations

83% agreed that overall, the evaluation was useful

16 programs received advice on their Performance Measurement Strategies

5 supplemental studies completed to support improvements to EI program design



Best practices and lessons learned shared with the Forum of Labour Market Ministers

Using evidence generated by net impact analysis to better design and to deliver programs for maximum impact

6 evaluation reports, 41 technical reports and 13 capacity building exercises completed

10 Treasury Board Submissions and 12 Memoranda to Cabinet were informed by evaluation

Departmental Context

As the fourth largest federal department, ESDC oversees Employment and Social Development, the Labour Program and Service Canada. ESDC is responsible for developing, managing and delivering social, labour market and economic programs and services. This includes delivering over \$120 billion in benefits each year directly to individuals and organizations through the distribution of some of the Grants and Contributions' major programs and services, such as Employment Insurance, Old Age Security, Canada Pension Plan, and the Canada Student Loans Program.

In addition, through grants and contributions, ESDC provides \$1.8 billion in funding each year to other levels of government, charitable and community organizations, private sector companies, and educators. How these programs and services are implemented and delivered is critical to the Department's success in becoming a higher-performing organization that offers efficient and effective services to meet client expectations and respect service standards.

A renewed focus on results and delivery

To improve the policy development process, program design and service delivery, ESDC is adopting new technologies, using a new basis for partnerships, applying data more intelligently, and implementing or testing new ways of supporting Canadian communities.

ESDC is also committed to delivering results and professional government to Canadians. A Departmental Results Framework is being developed through consultation to set out core responsibilities, results and results indicators. Performance Information Profiles (PIPs) are being created for each ESDC program to ensure adequate program-level information, aligned with the government-wide *Policy on Results* implemented July 2016. This policy places a renewed focus on managing *to* and *by* results, and encourages a culture where this information can be used to enable course corrections as well as to improve policy development, program design and service delivery.

Role of the Evaluation Directorate

The mandate of the Evaluation Directorate is to provide ESDC with impactful evaluations that focus on key policy questions, thereby supporting the Department's commitment to deliver results and professional government to Canadians.

The Evaluation Directorate has been an early adopter of the 2016 *Policy on Results* by calibrating evaluations, establishing key governance bodies and streamlining processes to position ESDC to meet the new directives. This leadership is demonstrated through the Directorate's support in establishing ESDC's Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee and contributing to capacity-building that is essential for the Department to develop meaningful performance measurements (e.g. Performance Information Profiles).

Chief Results and Delivery Officer

Under the new *Policy on Results*, each department has appointed a Chief Results and Delivery Officer (CRDO) to be the key contact for the Results and Delivery Unit of the Privy Council Office. These officers play an important role with regard to how results in the department are measured, tracked and delivered, and their work upholds the goals of the Policy by identifying top departmental priorities in support of the government-wide Results Agenda. The Chief Results and Delivery Officer also ensures that departmental structures are in place to enable achievement of these priorities. Further, this Officer encourages collaboration with other governmental departments and participates in the inter-departmental Chief Results and Delivery Officer committee (chaired by Privy Council Office). At ESDC, the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of the Strategic and Service Policy Branch holds this position. The Chief Results and Delivery Officer is supported by the Head of Evaluation, the Head of Performance Measurement, the Chief Data Officer and the Director General coordinating Deliverology, including Departmental Charters.

Head of Evaluation

The key responsibilities of the Head of Evaluation are to assess departmental evaluation needs; to undertake departmental evaluation planning, directing and reporting; to support the use of performance information; and to advise the Deputy Head on evaluation findings and issues. The Head of Evaluation reports to the Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee (PMEC), the key governance body that provides guidance and oversight on evaluations. PMEC reviews Management Action Plan implementation annually, as well as adherence to the Departmental Evaluation Plan, the quality of performance information available to evaluators, and the impacts of evaluations.

The Head of Evaluation has also been supporting the Head of Performance Measurement and the Chief Data Officer to strengthen the department's capacity to comply with the *Policy on Results*. Expert advice is provided to program areas that require assistance with developing their performance measurement strategies (including indicators and logic models). The demand for this foundational work is significant; in 2016-17, the Evaluation Directorate provided advice on performance measurement strategies for 16 programs and initiatives. It is expected this demand will rise as implementation of the *Policy on Results* matures in the coming years. In addition, evaluation supports the policy and program development evidence base by providing expert advice on Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board Submissions.

Collecting quality data

One of the challenges faced by program authorities and central to the performance measurement initiative is the availability and quality of data used to measure performance. Quality data has a number of characteristics: accuracy (trusting the data), availability, relevancy (data collected is meaningful to what is being measured), and consistency (reliability of the data). Identifying quality data has implications for evaluability assessments and the development of data collection tools, including automating data collection to facilitate analysis. Performance Information Profiles are being created for each ESDC program to ensure adequate program-level information.

Laying the foundations for future evaluations

The Evaluation Directorate strives to be a centre of expertise for the Department, and has been making efforts to establish the foundations for future evaluations. This has involved working with policy and program officials to enhance performance measurement and put greater emphasis on communication and dissemination. Through the publication of evaluation reports and the delivery of trusted advice to ESDC's departmental portfolio, the Evaluation Directorate fulfils its role of providing decision-makers with timely and relevant information.

Key Achievements in 2016-17

Over the past few years, the Directorate has transformed its approach to become more strategic in its planning and operations. The 2016 *Policy on Results* supports this approach by allowing for modified evaluation requirements and greater flexibility in planning, leading to improved impacts and utility of evaluation work. Depending on users' needs, evaluations now have more latitude to examine key strategic issues that would inform policy/program efficiency and effectiveness, including alternatives to existing interventions.

To deliver on its mandate, the Directorate focuses on four core actions: collaborating, innovating, streamlining and strategizing. In 2016-17, the Directorate collaborated with key stakeholders and strengthened its connections by disseminating knowledge, seeking input and using technology. It innovated by modernizing the way it communicates results to a wider audience. The Directorate streamlined its processes by seeking more effective ways of doing business to support a higher-performing organization. Finally, the Directorate planned and developed comprehensive evaluations while providing strategic advice.

The following are highlights of key achievements in these four core actions during 2016-17.

Collaborating

Knowledge was disseminated and promising practices shared widely among external stakeholders through

conferences, and technical studies were shared with provinces and territories. For example, the Directorate shared findings and impacts from its Labour Market Development Agreements evaluation with key policy makers working on labour market issues from the provinces, territories and the federal government at a conference on "Best Practices in Employment Services and Training," which was organized by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation and the Forum of Labour Market Ministers.

Post-Evaluation Questionnaire

A post-evaluation questionnaire was administered to program managers to obtain feedback on evaluation quality and service. Fully 92% of respondents indicated that they have used or plan to make use of evaluation findings and recommendations.

The results also indicate that the Directorate could improve the accessibility of real-time information. In response, the Directorate identified knowledge dissemination as a priority, and is producing more technical reports to share with program officials, enhancing information sharing during the evaluation process.

Collaboration on several other levels is an ongoing process for the Directorate, including:

- **Seeking feedback** from clients through surveys to improve the Directorate’s performance. Input on innovative projects, participation in discussions and sharing of best practices is also sought via professional networks, working groups and EvalConnex.
- **Using software technologies** such as SharePoint and the Planning and Reporting on Evaluation Projects database to improve efficiencies, facilitate engagement and disseminate information across ESDC, and to improve monitoring and reporting.
- **Supporting policy dialogue** by providing strategic advice, including reviewing policy documents and sharing evaluation evidence to strengthen decision making. The Directorate also adjusted the scope of some evaluations to focus on policy relevant questions and instituted interim reports providing timely results. In 2016-17, the Directorate led 26 evaluation advisory/steering committees, fostering a culture of collaboration and communication between program officials and evaluators. The Directorate supported the review of Cabinet documents (12 Memoranda to Cabinet and 10 TB Submissions) by providing advice on measuring outcomes.
- **Engaging provincial and territorial officials** responsible for delivering labour market programming to discuss program performance, design and delivery. Using evidence generated by net impact analysis as a basis for program performance discussions enables the Directorate’s partners to better design and deliver programs for maximum impact.

Collaborative Workshop with the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) on Social Innovation in Action

This seminar strengthened ESDC officials’ knowledge of provincial initiatives designed to improve the effectiveness of employment and training programs and fostered innovation.

Innovating

Innovation was demonstrated in program development and renewal through the utilization of new evaluation techniques. For example, the Directorate used the system of National Medium Term Indicators to measure the incremental impact of labour market programs delivered by provinces under Labour Market Development Agreements. The results have been used to identify which labour market interventions work for whom and the importance of early intervention which inspired policy work on the modernization of Canada’s labour market transfers; for policy work on early referral and targeting of unemployed Canadians to labour market training; and in the development of a Pay for Performance concept to program delivery. Innovative ideas are put to the test in pilot projects to explore and refine their utility for program/policy improvements, including:

- **Developing a web analytics methodology** as a tool to improve departmental programs that provide service and/or information through ESDC websites. For example, the evaluation of Learning and Labour Market Information as provided to Canadians through the Job Bank website used web analytics as one line of evidence. The analysis explored the use of Google analytics to understand which pages were accessed and for what duration, which helped inform improvements to the

website. The same methodology is currently being used in the Providing Services and Information to Canadians through Service Canada evaluation.

- **Making greater use of program data** from the provinces and territories enables the measurement of medium and longer term employment and earnings outcome, and the portion attributable to training interventions. Maximizing the use of existing administrative data makes possible the production of timely, high-quality evaluations for provinces and territories that allows them to continuously improve their programs. In the past, evaluators had to rely on expensive surveys to conduct very limited labour market evaluations.
- **Responding to rising service delivery expectations** by providing analysis and focusing on the impact of service improvements. This work enables our internal partners and clients to use real-time information found in technical reports, preliminary findings, methodological strategies and expert advice for ongoing decision-making and program improvements to better serve Canadians.

National Medium Term Indicators Project

Generating tailored, integrated analytical files enables the Directorate to measure program net impacts throughout the year. This innovative concept has significantly reduced the need to conduct costly surveys and has provided strategic and evidence-based advice that supports program and policy development. It also allows the Evaluation Directorate to continuously assess programs and issues related to the integration and reintegration of unemployed Canadians into the labour market.

Streamlining

More work was conducted internally leading to improved savings and turnaround times. A greater reliance on in-house evaluations has reduced costs and increased the relevance and impact of each evaluation, as evaluators are better engaged with program officials and program delivery agents throughout the process of an evaluation. Between 2011-12 and 2015-16, the Directorate's non-salary expenditures (primarily contracting) have been reduced by approximately 75%. With increased flexibility under the *Policy on Results*, the Directorate has the opportunity to further streamline and build on improvements, such as:

- **Calibrating evaluations** by increasing the timeliness, cost-effectiveness and usefulness of evaluation findings. When programs intersect, the Evaluation Directorate considers bundling them into one evaluation to increase timeliness. Cost effectiveness was also enhanced by holding on-site training, for example, in leading key informant interviews, focus groups and developing infographics. Evaluation also takes advantage of existing resources and research to inform its evaluation projects. For example, the Labour Program funded a literature review of international labour agreements which Evaluation used as part of its Bilateral and Regional

Employment Insurance Automation and Modernization Evaluation

Published in 2016, this evaluation examined the extent to which there were improvements in the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery of Employment Insurance.

The Evaluation Directorate provided briefings to Parliamentary Secretaries and MPs on the evaluation conducted. The resulting report, [*Making Citizens Central*](#), puts forth recommendations based on a number of the evaluation findings.

Labour Affairs Evaluation, saving time and resources, and obtaining valuable context for the evaluation project.

- **Making evidence-based decisions** by measuring how the Directorate meets its objectives. Evaluation has developed a monitoring database to collect information on its performance.

Strategizing

By making technical reports, short evaluation reports and studies available to internal and external stakeholders, the Directorate demonstrated its nimbleness. For example, a technical report on the Official Language Minority Communities Literacy and Essential Skills Initiative was shared with Canadian Heritage to support a horizontal initiative. Such real-time information better enables programs and senior management to respond to emerging policy issues. Working closely with our clients and partners often presents opportunities to strategize better ways of working together, such as:

- **Filling knowledge gaps** when performance data is not available for evaluations. In 2016-17, the Directorate provided advice on 16 performance measurement strategies (PMS). These included input on the logic model and performance indicators of the Foreign Credential Recognition Program and a PMS for the Canada Apprentice Loan Program. Evaluation is also helping to develop a PMS for ESDC's Integrated Framework on Mental Health initiative for employees.

- **Following up on management responses to evaluations** through annual reports to P MEC. The Directorate monitors the implementation of actions identified in management responses to evaluation recommendations. These exercises aim to reinforce implementation, resolve outstanding items, assess progress and strengthen program area accountability.

Additionally, the information collected is used as business intelligence when planning future evaluations. The majority of ESDC's planned actions are well underway. In 2016-17, a total of 123 actions from 14 evaluation reports were monitored by the Evaluation Directorate. Of these, 87 actions were completed, 29 are in progress, and 7 are in the planning stage. Of the 14 Management Action Plans, 4 have been completed.

Summative Evaluation of the Wage Earner Protection Program

Based on the recommendation of the Evaluation Directorate, the program continues to monitor the time required to approve applications, and to examine options for reducing the processing time for applications under review or in appeal.

The Program exceeded its 2015-16 target of 80%, with 99% of applications being processed within the established service standard. Consequently, the service standard was lowered from 42 days to 35 days.

Evaluation Reports completed in 2016-17

In 2016-2017, the Directorate completed 22 evaluation strategies/frameworks and 8 evaluability assessments. The Directorate also completed 41 technical reports, which provided information required for evaluations and informed program management. Five supplemental studies were completed to help inform the EI Monitoring and Assessment Report to Parliament. Evaluation summaries which provide

citizens with clear, concise information on ESDC programs are planned as part of a commitment to expanding communications and increasing the impact of evaluation reports.

The table below shows the evaluation reports that were completed in 2016-2017. Of the 10 planned reports, 6 have been completed and published, while 2 further reports have received senior management approval by the end of the fiscal year 2016-17. Two non-mandatory evaluations have been moved to the following fiscal year (2017-18). Ongoing work for 36 evaluations in various stages of completion also took place over the 2016-17 fiscal period.

Table 1: Completed Evaluation Reports (2016-17)

EVALUATION REPORT	STATUS
1. Evaluation of Employment Insurance (EI) Automation and Modernization (2001-02 to 2011-12)	Completed ¹ : April 2016
2. Evaluation of the Employment Insurance Special Benefits for Self-Employed Workers	Completed: April 2016
3. Summative Evaluation of Budget 2008 Enhancements of the Canada Student Loans	Completed: June 2016
4. Evaluation of the Extended Duration of Employment Insurance Regular Benefits Initiative and the Pilot Project 15 Relating to Extended Benefits	Completed: September 2016
5. Evaluation of the Targeted Initiatives for Older Workers Program	Completed: January 2017
6. Summative Evaluation of the Canada Pension Plan Retirement Pension and Survivor Benefits	Completed: February 2017
7. Evaluation of the Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities	PMEC Approval ² : March 2017
8. International Trade and Labour and Occupational Health and Safety	PMEC Approval: March 2017
9. Learning and Labour Market Information as disseminated by ESDC using a web-based consolidated approach	Carried Over ³ : 2017-2018 Q1
10. Bilateral and Regional Labour Affairs	Carried Over: 2017-2018 Q1

1 Completion date is the date of Deputy Minister's approval.

2 PMEAC Approval is the last step in the approval process before a report receives DM approval and is published.

3 "Carried over" indicates evaluation projects that are carried over to FY 2017-18 in compliance with the FAA and Policy on Results.

Evaluation Planning

ESDC conducts an annual exercise to identify, assess and prioritize its five-year evaluation coverage needs. The plan is produced in accordance with the Mandatory Procedures for Evaluation as outlined in the Treasury Board *Policy on Results*.

To inform coverage, the planning framework focuses on three pillars: 1) mandatory requirements; 2) ESDC's Priorities and Risks; and 3) ESDC's Evaluation Considerations. This process takes into account legal and policy requirements, the department's priorities and associated risks, programs' needs, and the overall context to ensure that evaluation planning is strategically integrated with the management practices of the department.

The department is required to evaluate specific programs based on two authorities: the *Financial Administration Act* (FAA) and the *Policy on Results*. The FAA requires that every five years, departments evaluate ongoing grants and contribution programs with five-year average annual allocations of \$5 million or greater. Other mandatory requirements such as commitments in TB submissions and centrally-led evaluations requested by TBS are captured in the *Policy on Results*.

Another important consideration that impacts evaluation planning is the recognition that each project is different and presents unique challenges. The Evaluation Directorate develops evaluation strategies (high-level overviews of the evaluation plans for programs) for individual projects, and invests time and resources in the planning and pre-evaluation stages to:

- recognize potential challenges, such as the availability of useful performance information, and explore innovative processes and methodologies for overcoming challenges;
- calibrate individual evaluations to maximize value and efficiency, which includes focusing on the most relevant questions and seeking opportunities to evaluate more than one program in one project⁴;
- reduce duplication of efforts and maximize cost-effectiveness by involving key partners in the early planning phase of evaluations, such as continuing collaboration with the Internal Audit Branch to reduce reporting burden and to leverage work; and
- engage senior management at the PMEC meetings, which supports the *Policy on Results* and ensures that evaluation information is more useful and relevant to the decision-making process.

Planning consultations also take place with program areas to present the changes introduced by the *Policy on Results*, discuss timing of evaluations to ensure proper coverage, and emphasize the importance of collecting performance information throughout the lifecycle of programs. To minimize the risk of delays in obtaining final approvals from provinces and territories for the bilateral evaluations of the Labour Market Development Agreements, evaluators are engaged in ongoing communication of deadlines and collaboration with provincial and territorial officials.

⁴ Two projects are assessing four programs: (a) Employment Equity Programs and the Workplace Opportunities: Removing Barriers to Equity; and (b) Occupational Health and Safety Grants and the International Trade and Labour – both under the Labour Funding Program.

Finally, the Evaluation Directorate uses its Planning and Reporting on Evaluation Projects database as a central repository of key information on all ongoing evaluation projects for both planning and communication. This database contains an evaluation project planning checklist and has easily accessible Evaluation Project Descriptions.

Structure, Capacity and Resource Planning

Greater emphasis has been placed on communicating results, developing strategic evaluation strategies and building stronger working relationships. These relationships are essential to strengthening the quality and relevance of evaluation work to help improve services to Canadians. For example, to ensure the delivery of real-time results to support ongoing decision making and program improvements, technical reports and studies related to those evaluations are shared with program areas throughout the evaluation process as well as with senior management through the PMEC committee.

In order to respond to its commitments and remain flexible, the Evaluation Directorate continually assesses its human and financial resource capacity.

Organizational Structure

The Evaluation Directorate currently consists of about 55 employees across 3 divisions: Statutory and Grants and Contributions Evaluation, Partnership Evaluation and Strategic Planning and Methodology, and the Office of the Director General. The Directorate also uses external experts, consultants and temporary staff (e.g. co-op students) to increase its capacity.

Capacity

Evaluations are conducted both internally and with the assistance of contracted consultants; however, the Directorate's internal capacity is subject to ongoing turnover and attrition. Attrition in the Directorate in 2015-16 was at 12%, compared to 8.7% for ESDC in that same year. Exit interviews indicate that this is due in part to more advancement opportunities elsewhere in government. Greater demand for experienced analysts, methodologists and evaluators across government has put pressure on available human resources in this segment of the government workforce. In response, the Evaluation Directorate is committed to developing talent in junior analysts and collaborating externally to increase the pool of competencies to support evaluation and performance measurement now and in the future.

Ensuring strong capacity is key to maintaining momentum in the ongoing transformation of the Directorate, given the ambitious change agenda in the coming years. The Directorate's three-year strategic HR plan includes key objectives such as recruiting staff with the specific skills to conduct evaluations in-house, and retaining junior level analysts who develop expertise that will contribute to the Directorate's capacity in the longer term.

Strategic HR Plan for 2016-17 to 2018-19

The *Policy on Results* and the Government's commitment to experimentation places an increased emphasis on building capacity in the evaluation community. The Directorate has responded by providing opportunities to further develop competencies.

The Evaluation Directorate's HR Plan identifies eight action areas: official languages, retention, development, workplace health, succession planning, learning/training, staffing processes and diversity. Examples of development activities in the learning/training area include broadening experiences with assignments within the Directorate, and enhancing on-the-job-learning by extending invitations to attend meetings with clients and senior management as learning opportunities.

The Directorate has also organized a number of collective training sessions, which are both effective and economical, on a range of topics such as conducting interviews, focus groups and infographics.

The HR plan is regularly updated, and the Directorate's management is responsible for informing employees of changes to the plan, including new staffing processes. The HR plan has resulted in 30 action items which are being implemented by the Directorate's extended management team. Managers implement these actions with employees, and commit to ongoing feedback and career development discussions.

To capture valuable employee operational knowledge, the Evaluation Directorate develops and maintains resource tools, such as the Guide on Evaluation and Professional Practices. This guide, which explains ESDC evaluation and approval processes, has become an essential tool for new and experienced employees alike, and a key resource for evaluation requirements.

Evaluation Workforce Engagement Exercises

Team members of the Evaluation Directorate were consulted under the guidance of an experienced HR consultant, and provided input into the Directorate HR Strategic plan.

The Evaluation Directorate is also participating in a national workplace pilot that aims to promote mental health, reduce the stigma around mental illness, and help build psychologically safe and supportive work environments.

Financial Resources Dedicated to ESDC's Evaluation Function

The Departmental Evaluation Plan is based on its initial budget of \$6.44M as summarized in the table below. The Directorate continues its commitment to seeking cost-effective ways of conducting evaluations while ensuring the relevance and impact of its evaluations.

Table 2: Summary of Evaluation Spending and Number of Full Time Equivalents

	Actual Spending						Forecast Spending
	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Salaries	\$5.16M	\$5.17M	\$4.72M	\$5.51M	\$5.23M	\$4.58M	\$5.32M
Operations and Maintenance	\$4.06M	\$2.87M	\$2.55M	\$2.01M	\$1.02M	\$998,975	\$1.13M
Total	\$9.22M	\$8.04M	\$7.27M	\$7.52M	\$6.25M	\$5.57M	\$6.44M
FTEs	64	61	56	62	57	52	60

Notes:

-Actual salary spending includes all employees except students; forecast spending includes further human resources staffing actions planned for 2017-18.

-Operations and Maintenance expenses include training, travel, printing, students, utilities, materials and supplies, special services, construction/acquisition machinery and equipment, other business services and tenant services.

- Spending for 2016 – 2017 are estimates; final numbers from CPMD and CFOB are pending.

Departmental Evaluation Schedule for 2017-18 to 2021-22

As required by TBS, Annex A includes the five-year evaluation plan schedule, in accordance with section 42.1 of the FAA, the *Policy on Results*. ESDCs Program Alignment Architecture is provided in Annex B.

Through its five-year evaluation plan (2017-18 to 2021-22), ESDC ensures that it is compliant with federal laws and policies. These include 17 ongoing, non-statutory (voted) programs. A number of other voted non-ongoing programs will also be covered by evaluation. The late buy-in of a number of program areas to have their programs evaluated and comply with the Policy on Evaluation implemented in 2013 explains in part the large number of reports to be completed by the spring of 2018 (which is five years after the implementation of the former Policy).

The plan encompasses 52 evaluation projects slated for completion during the five-year period from 2017-18 to 2021-22, including some not required by either the Policy or the FAA. Despite being outside legislative requirements, these evaluations are crucial to assessing programs related to important social and economic issues on the Government of Canada’s policy agenda (e.g. Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan), as well as departmental initiatives such as ESDC’s Integrated Framework on Mental Health for employees. Accordingly, the Evaluation Directorate invests resources and effort to determine whether Canadians are receiving value for money and to provide senior management, Parliamentarians and citizens with information to use for future decision-making and for accountability purposes.

The plan, therefore, aligns with the Department's annual planning, budgeting and reporting processes; it also ensures that evaluation activities take into account departmental objectives and priorities, and that the required resources are available.

Advancing the Evaluation Function

In achieving its mandate and vision while implementing the *Policy on Results and Blueprint 2020* objectives in 2017-18, the Directorate will continue to act on its identified core actions – collaborate, innovate, streamline and strategize – with a strong emphasis over the coming year in these areas:

- **Improving the impact of evaluations:** By focusing on key policy questions in line with the Government's expectations, the Directorate is working to establish evaluation and impact measurement strategies, including greater experimentation, to strengthen the evidence base.
- **Collecting quality data:** The Directorate will work with program authorities to optimize data collection to support evaluation, including impact analysis.
- **Providing trusted advice:** The Directorate will continue to provide guidance on data requirements, Memoranda to Cabinet, Treasury Board Submissions and innovations, and will periodically revise Performance Information Profiles.
- **Innovating:** Through the application of Medium Term Indicators to other ESDC programs beyond Labour Market Development Agreements, Evaluation will strengthen the analysis of net impacts that can be attributed to programs.
- **Communicating results through infographics and other mechanisms:** Evaluation will represent evaluation information, data or knowledge in ways that are more accessible and useful to stakeholders. Evaluation summaries will be produced to provide a clear, concise source of information on ESDC's evaluations in plain language for various audiences, including Canadians, Parliamentarians, program stakeholders, and government managers and executives.
- **Disseminating knowledge:** One of Evaluation's priorities in the coming years will be to communicate the value and usefulness of evaluation to stakeholders. Evaluation is planning to participate more in conferences and symposiums, and to publish lessons learned and findings. The Evaluation Directorate will continue to hold discussions, learning series and workshops for policy and program staff, senior management, and other departments. The Directorate will also strengthen and broaden its network with the academic community to explore new avenues of knowledge dissemination and collaboration.
- **Hiring and developing highly qualified evaluators:** Evaluation will enhance experience as well as knowledge by offering training and participation in conferences and other learning opportunities, and continue to develop valuable employee knowledge.

Conclusion

To deliver on the priorities of the Government of Canada and ESDC, and to benefit Canadians, the Evaluation Directorate has focused on collaborating, innovating, streamlining and strategizing. In supporting the department's goals to develop an evidence-based culture and enhance the strategic use of high-quality performance information, Evaluation has greatly enhanced its contribution in recent years and is becoming a centre of expertise for the provision of timely and strategic advice.

In 2017-18, the Directorate will continue to improve the quality of results and the delivery of the service it provides within ESDC. Embracing innovation and experimentation, reaching out to partners to share knowledge, and building internal capacity and skills through thoughtful hiring and training practices will allow us to strengthen the culture of measurement, evaluation and innovation at ESDC, and to be leaders in the Government of Canada in the assessment of program impacts.

Annex A: Five-year Evaluation Schedule and Evaluation Coverage of Ongoing Grants and Contributions Programs

Programs planned to be evaluated in the next five years

Fiscal year DH Approval	Title of the evaluation	Completion of last evaluation ¹	Link to department's Program Inventory ⁵
2017-18	Connecting Canadians with Available Jobs (CCAJ) – Evaluation	Not applicable	2.1.1 Employment Insurance
2017-18	EI Monitoring and Assessment Supplemental Studies	Not applicable	2.1.1 Employment Insurance
2017-18	Learning and Labour Market Information (LLMI) as disseminated by ESDC using a web-based consolidated approach – Evaluation	Not applicable	2.1.12 Job Bank
2017-18	International Trade and Labour and Occupational Health and Safety (Gs&Cs) Evaluation	2011	3.1.4 International Labour Affairs
2017-18	Bilateral and Regional Labour Affairs (BRLA) – Evaluation	2014	3.1.4 International Labour Affairs
2017–18	National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking	Not Applicable	2.1.18 Temporary Foreign Worker Program
2017–18	Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OFPD) Phase 1 - Summative Evaluation	2014	2.1.5 Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OFPD)
2017–18	Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC) - Evaluation	2013	2.1.8 Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities (OLMC)
2017–18	Working While on Claim Pilot Projects - Evaluation	Not Applicable	2.1.1 Employment Insurance
2017–18	Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) - Summative Evaluation	2014	4.2.1 Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS)
2017–18	Pathways to Education Canada - Evaluation	Not Applicable	Pathways to Education Canada

⁵ See Annex B for more details on the Employment and Social Development Canada's 2017-2018 Program Alignment Architecture.

Fiscal year DH Approval	Title of the evaluation	Completion of last evaluation ⁱ	Link to department's Program Inventory ⁵
2017–18	Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children (PMMC) - Evaluation	Not Applicable	4.2.6 Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children (PMMC)
2017–18	Multilateral Labour Affairs - Evaluation	Not Applicable	3.1.4 International Labour Affairs
2017–18	Labour Standards	2005	3.1.3.1 Labour Affairs
2017–18	Literacy and Essential Skills	2012	2.1.14 Literacy and Essential Skills
2017–18	Second Cycle of the LMDA Evaluations	2012	2.1.2 Labour Market Development Agreements
2017–18	Providing Services and Information to Canadians	Not Applicable	1.1.1 Government of Canada Telephone General Enquiries Services 1.1.2 Government of Canada Internet Presence 1.1.3 In-Person Points of Service
2017–18	Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)	2005	3.1.2.1 Occupational Health and Safety
2017–18	Employment Equity Programs - Evaluation	2013	3.1.3.2 Workplace Equity
2017–18	Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) - Summative Evaluation	2012	4.2.5 Enabling Accessibility Fund
2017–18	Sectoral Initiatives Program	Not Applicable	2.1.13 Sectoral Initiatives Program
2017-18	Old Age Security – Phase 1	2012	4.1.1 Old Age Security (OAS)
2018–19	Canada Disability Savings Program (CDSP) - Summative Evaluation	2014	4.1.4 Canada Disability Savings Program

Fiscal year DH Approval	Title of the evaluation	Completion of last evaluation ⁱ	Link to department's Program Inventory ⁵
2018–19	EI Benefits and Post-Claim Outcomes - Evaluation	Not Applicable	2.1.1 Employment Insurance
2018–19	EI Sickness Benefits - Evaluation	Not Applicable	2.1.1 Employment Insurance
2018–19	Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPDs) - Review	Not Applicable	2.1.4 Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPDs)
2018–19	Benefit for Parents of Critically Ill Children - Evaluation	Not Applicable	2.1.1 Employment Insurance
2018–19	Old Age Security (OAS) Phase 2	2012	4.1.1 Old Age Security (OAS)
2018–19	Wage Earner Protection Program (WEPP) - Evaluation	2014	3.1.3.3 Wage Earner Protection Program
2018–19	Job Bank - Evaluation	2011	2.1.12 Job Bank
2018–19	Apprenticeship Grants (AG)	2014	2.1.16 Apprenticeship Grants
2018–19	Passport Program Delivery	2015	1.2.1 Passport Program
2018–19	Workplace Dispute Prevention and Resolution (WDPR) - Evaluation	2014	3.1.1 Labour Relations
2018-19	Canada Job Fund Agreements - Evaluation	Not Applicable	2.1.3 Canada Job Fund Agreements
2019-20	Building Aboriginal Support for West Coast Energy Projects Initiative – Skills and Partnership Fund Review - Evaluation	2015	2.1.10 Skills and Partnership Fund
2019–20	OAS/GIS Service Improvement - Evaluation	2012	4.1.1 Old Age Security
2019–20	Guaranteed Income Supplement Take-up Evaluation	2012	4.1.1 Old Age Security
2019–20	Canada Apprentice Loan – Phase 2	Not Applicable	2.2.1 Canada Student Loans and Grants and Canada Apprentice Loans Program

Fiscal year DH Approval	Title of the evaluation	Completion of last evaluation ⁱ	Link to department's Program Inventory ⁵
2019–20	Social Development Partnerships Program (SDPP) - Summative Evaluation	2014	4.2.2 Social Development Partnerships Program
2019–20	New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) - Evaluation	2015	4.2.3 New Horizons for Seniors Program
2019–20	Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OFPD) Phase 2 - Summative Evaluation	2014	2.1.5 Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OFPD)
2019–20	Youth Employment Strategy (YES) - Summative Evaluation	2015	2.1.6 Youth Employment Strategy (YES)
2019–20	Foreign Credential Recognition Program (2019) - Summative Evaluation	2015	2.1.17 Foreign Credential Recognition Program (2019)
2019–20	Post-2016 Aboriginal Labour Market Programming - Evaluation	2015	2.1.9 Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS)
2019-20	CSLP Effectiveness at Achieving Outcomes	2016	2.2.1 Canada Student Loans and Grants and Canada Apprentice Program
2019-20	Workplace Information and Research Activities of Labour Program Branch – Evaluation	2015	3.1.1 Labour Relations
2019-20	Canada Education Savings Program - Evaluation	2015	2.2.2 Canada Education Savings Program
2020–21	Federal Workers' Compensation Service - Evaluation	Not Applicable	3.1.2.2 Federal Workers' Compensation
2020–21	Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) Benefits (Return-to-work supports) –Summative Evaluation	2011	4.1.3 Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPPD) Benefits
2020-21	Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP)	2013	2.1.18 Temporary Foreign Worker Program
2021-22	Student Work-Integrated Learning Program (SWILP)	Not applicable	2.1.19 Student Work-Integrated Learning Program
2021–22	Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Service Improvement Evaluation	Not Applicable	4.1.2 Canada Pension Plan (CPP)

Programs with no planned evaluations in the next five years

Link to the departmental Program Inventory	Completion of last evaluation	Rationale for not evaluating in the current five-year cycle
2.1.7 Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TIOW)	2017	Program is sun-setting in March 2017.
1.2.2 Other Government Department Programs	Not Applicable	No applicable government programs.
	OECD Name Grants – Summative Evaluation	This program will not be included in the department's planned evaluation coverage for the upcoming five-year cycle because it has been determined that it represents a low risk, following an assessment of the department's needs, risks and priorities. The program is of low materiality, and it was last evaluated during the 2013-14 fiscal year.
4.1.5 National Child Benefit	Not Applicable	Program has sunset
2.1.15 Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship (Red Seal Program)	Not Applicable	Red Seal Program is funded with EI Part II funds converted to O&M. There is no associated evaluation requirement.
4.2.4 Universal Child Care Benefit	Not Applicable	Program has sunset

2.1.11 First Nations Job Fund	Not Applicable	This program will sunset March 2017.
Internal Services	Not Applicable	No applicable government programs

i. The Directorate uses “not applicable” under the following circumstances: for programs that have not yet been evaluated; for any sub-sections/initiatives of larger programs that have not yet been evaluated; and for new programs that will be evaluated for the first time.

Annex B: 2017-2018 ESDC Program Alignment Architecture

Strategic Outcomes	1 Government-wide service excellence		2 A skilled, adaptable and inclusive labour force and an efficient labour market		3 Safe, fair and productive workplaces and cooperative workplace relations	4 Income security, access to opportunities and well-being for individuals, families and communities		5 Internal Services	
Programs	1.1 Service Network Supporting Government Departments	1.2 Delivery of Services for Other Government of Canada Programs	2.1 Skills and Employment		2.2 Learning	3.1 Labour	4.1 Income Security	4.2 Social Development	5.1 Internal Services
Sub-programs	1.1.1 Government of Canada Telephone General Enquiries Services 1.1.2 Government of Canada Internet Presence 1.1.3 In-Person Points of Service	1.2.1 Passport 1.2.2 Other Government Department Programs	2.1.1 Employment Insurance 2.1.2 Labour Market Development Agreements 2.1.3 Canada Job Fund Agreements 2.1.4 Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities 2.1.5 Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities 2.1.6 Youth Employment Strategy 2.1.7 Targeted Initiative for Older Workers 2.1.8 Enabling Fund for Official Language Minority Communities 2.1.9 Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy 2.1.10 Skills and Partnership Fund 2.1.11 First Nations Job Fund 2.1.12 Job Bank 2.1.13 Sectoral Initiatives Program 2.1.14 Literacy and Essential Skills 2.1.15 Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship (Red Seal Program) 2.1.16 Apprenticeship Grants 2.1.17 Foreign Credential Recognition Program 2.1.18 Temporary Foreign Worker Program 2.1.19 Student Work-Integrated Learning Program		2.2.1 Canada Student Loans and Grants and Canada Apprentice Loans Program 2.2.2 Canada Education Savings Program	3.1.1 Labour Relations 3.1.2 Workplace Health and Safety 3.1.2.1 Occupational Health and Safety 3.1.2.2 Federal Workers' Compensation 3.1.3 Labour Standards and Equity 3.1.3.1 Labour Standards 3.1.3.2 Workplace Equity 3.1.3.3 Wage Earner Protection Program 3.1.4 International Labour Affairs	4.1.1 Old Age Security 4.1.2 Canada Pension Plan 4.1.3 Canada Pension Plan Disability Benefits 4.1.4 Canada Disability Savings Program 4.1.5 National Child Benefit	4.2.1 Homelessness Partnering Strategy 4.2.2 Social Development Partnerships Program 4.2.2.1 Children and Families 4.2.2.2 Disability 4.2.3 New Horizons for Seniors Program 4.2.4 Universal Child Care Benefit 4.2.5 Enabling Accessibility Fund 4.2.6 Federal Income Support for Parents of Murdered or Missing Children	5.1.1 Management and Oversight Services 5.1.2 Communications Services 5.1.3 Legal Services 5.1.4 Human Resources Management Services 5.1.5 Financial Management Services 5.1.6 Information Management Services 5.1.7 Information Technology Services 5.1.8 Real Property Services 5.1.9 Materiel Services 5.1.10 Acquisition Services
Sub-sub-programs									