

Summits: Best Practices for Canada

1998

John Hay

Summary

DEAFF's public consultation efforts demonstrate that some aspects have worked well while others remain wanting. In particular, DEAFF's commitment to the consultation process is viewed as essential and important while NGO contributions are perceived as practical and informed. At the same time, DEAFF and NGOs were not entirely discouraged by the experience that far too many NGOs are not consulted. The experience has demonstrated the importance of the public consultation process and the need to expand on these new relationships. Special attention is made to the importance of the public consultation process for the Southern and Northern regions. The experience has also demonstrated the need for a more structured approach to public consultation. The policy or outcomes of the consultation process should be clearly defined and the process should be well planned and managed. The process should be well planned and managed. The process should be well planned and managed.

**CIVIL SOCIETY AND SUMMITS**

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Policy recommendations

- Increase clarity about the priority of public consultations, the principle of public participation, and the role of NGOs in the routine of the department.
- Efforts should be made to reach agreement among policy-makers and NGOs about the objectives of public consultation.
- DEAFF should make timely and adequate information available to the NGOs about government policy and positions on, for example, decisions to be taken and international negotiations.
- Improved feedback and follow-up by DEAFF which thus far has been scant and unsatisfactory, especially regarding specific activities in the consultation process.
- Development of excellent, regular, and close relations with NGOs and other groups willing to form long-term relationships in the policy process.
- Integrate financial and personnel requirements of public consultation into DEAFF budget planning.
- NGOs to identify among themselves participants in consultation processes to ensure the participation at efficient levels.

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MAY 17 2006

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