

What is a program at one level of management is a sub-program at another.

For purposes of evaluation, a program component constitutes in terms of size, expenditures, homogeneity of purpose, and relative importance, a suitable entity or "lowest common denominator" for evaluation. It comprises a set of operations or processes that support a statement of objectives, and whose effects or impacts are perceived to contribute to meeting these objectives. Often a program is the prime responsibility of a unique organizational unit, and is linked to it with clear lines of accountability. Many program components, however, cross intra or interdepartmental organization lines; many also involve both headquarters and field activities.

1.1.2 Purpose

Many different purposes have been suggested for conducting program evaluations, particularly those of a retrospective nature. Many of these purposes are complementary, and none are mutually exclusive. The most common ones may be identified as follows:

- a) to assess, as objectively and rigorously as is practicable, the effectiveness and efficiency of a program;
- b) to provide a sound basis for improving the effectiveness and/or efficiency of a program through re-design;
- c) to provide better information to senior management for use in the resource allocation process;
- d) to provide accountability to the Deputy Minister, and eventually to Parliament, for the resources expended;
- e) to provide justification for resources to central agencies;
- f) to develop a better understanding of the effects, processes, issues and problems within a program, and of the program's interrelationships with other programs.

In essence, there are three fundamental questions. What is the program actually doing? Should it be continued? How can it be done better?