

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An aspect of management which has been assuming increasing importance in recent years is the carrying out of periodic in-depth evaluations of program efficiency and effectiveness. Treasury Board issued a policy circular in late 1977 which directed deputy heads of departments to establish a comprehensive evaluation plan to ensure that such evaluations are carried out for all their departmental programs. This report documents the results and approach followed during a study directed towards assisting the Department of External Affairs (EA) to establish an evaluation function and develop an evaluation plan.

Background

The first chapter of the report gives an overview of program evaluation and its genesis in the Department. Program evaluation differs from the ongoing self-evaluation that is part of the management process in that it is more objective, broader in scope, strategic rather than operational in nature, and directly serves senior management. The most common of the various purposes which have been suggested for program evaluation are listed in section 1.1.2 of the report.

Three generic evaluation types are presented, namely conceptual, process and effectiveness evaluations. These form a sort of hierarchy in the order stated, where the latter types include elements of the preceding ones. The type selected for any particular program depends on various factors including management needs, resource availability and technical feasibility.

The Comptroller General is acting as a catalyst for the introduction of program evaluation in the Public Service. The Department of External Affairs created the Office of Internal Evaluation and Audit (EAP) to carry out the evaluation function under the general supervision of an Audit and Evaluation Committee. A study team composed of EAP and consultants has been working to develop an evaluation plan and capability and the report documents their progress to date.