

Evaluation of Complex Initiatives / Programs

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124 Merton St., Suite 502
Toronto, Ontario M4S 2Z2
Telephone: (416) 469-9954
Fax: (416) 469-8487
E-mail: info@cathexisconsulting.ca

Agenda

- Introductions
- Intro to complex evaluations
- Complex evaluation challenges
- Being a Project Authority for a complex evaluation
- Designing a complex evaluation
- Collecting data
- Analysing and reporting data
- Wrap-up



Presenters

- Martha McGuire, Cathexis Consulting
- Maximilien Tereraho Audit & Evaluation Directorate, HRSDC
- Rochelle Zorzi, Cathexis Consulting
- Emily Zbieranowski, Cathexis Consulting



Introductions

- Name, affiliation
- My expectations will be met if . . .

“We have seen the emergence of a class of problems whose causes are so complex, and whose solutions are so multi-factorial, that they require a multi-agency response.”

Thomas Ling, 2002



Intro to Complex Evaluations

- Overview:
 - Background on the HRSDC Horizontal Project
 - Factors Contributing to Complexity
 - Terminology
 - TBS Guidelines for HRMAF

Background to HRSDC Project

- History
- Purpose
- How it is Currently Being Used

Factors Contributing to Complexity

- Multiple partners
 - Horizontal across a government
 - Vertical between federal/provincial/municipals jurisdictions
 - Including different disciplines
- Multiple components
 - Broad initiative with many organizations responsible for implementation
- Policies, regulations and legislation with broad goals
 - Not easily measured
- Political sensitivities
 - New government
- Time Span
 - May take years to see results e.g. Population Health

Terminology

- Complex
 - Horizontal
 - Joined Up
 - Rolled Up
 - Whole of Government
- Addresses common complex issues involving more than one jurisdiction, sector or discipline;
 - Requires the involvement of more than one organization and/or level of government;
 - Shares common goals in relation to the issues;
 - Involves shared authority and responsibility among the partners; and
 - Includes mechanisms for shared governance and

TBS Guidelines

- **Development of the Team**
- **Five Main Components of an RMAF**
- **General Guidance**
 - Get Senior Management Support
 - Assess the Relative Value of the Initiative
 - Remain Flexible
 - Set Realistic Timelines
 - Communicate/Build Consensus
 - Involve Stakeholders
 - Engage in Continuous Learning
 - Access Other Sources of Information

What are some of the challenges?

- Go to page 4 of workbook.

Complex Evaluation Challenges

Challenges	Some Suggested Solutions
<p>Addressing horizontality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriateness ▪ Contribution to effectiveness ▪ Effect on evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish an evaluation committee with representation from the partners (joined up evaluation) ▪ Do rolled up evaluations ▪ Determine which factors have 'first order' effects

Complex Evaluation Challenges

Challenges	Some Suggested Solutions
<p>Data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different types of data collected by different partners ▪ Poor quality and incomplete data ▪ Different definitions of indicators ▪ Different information being collected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreed upon indicators ▪ Mutual accountability framework with common reporting tools ▪ Common databases or fields that can be readily linked ▪ Simplified administrative processes ▪ Use external databases such as Statistics Canada for measuring long-term outcomes over time ▪ Use case studies to provide in-depth exploration and illustration

Complex Evaluation Challenges

Challenge	Some Suggested Solutions
<p>Measuring Results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different indicators of success ▪ Different targets across regions/sectors ▪ Different ideas on the goals and objectives of the program ▪ Timeframes are not realistic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A horizontal RMAF developed by all of the partners ▪ Realistic measurable results with common metrics linked to performance indicators ▪ Results chains/theory of change models

Complex Evaluation Challenges

Challenges	Some Suggested Solutions
<p>Determining attribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External influences ▪ Difficulty in establishing comparison groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where external factors are industry/sector specific, establish comparison groups within the industry or sector ▪ Look for lessons rather than comparisons

Being a Project Authority with Complex Evaluations

- Preparation
- Analysis
- Approval
- Reporting
- Addressing Complexity
- Alternative Evaluation Delivery
- Coordination and Integration Mechanisms

Designing a Complex Evaluation

- Understanding the program/initiative
- Nested logic models & theories of change
- Evaluation questions
- Common performance measures
- Data collection
- Analysis
- Reporting

Understanding the Program

- All of the components and systems
- Specific goals and objectives for each partner
- Common goals and objectives
- Roles and responsibilities of each partner
- Governance structure

Nested Logic Models

- Overall logic model
- Logic model for each component
- Show linkages towards common outcomes

Theory of Change Models

- Articulates the underlying assumptions of the logic model
- Should show the dynamics among the partners

Performance Measurement Strategy

- Keep performance indicators as simple as possible – with so many players the list can grow and become unmanageable
- Use a group process to identify indicators for outputs and outcomes based on the logic model – but set priorities
- These can be used to develop a common data collection system

Different Approaches

- Joined up
- Rolled up
- Single department

Potential Evaluation Questions

- To what extent does the complexity of the initiative effect the overall relevance, success, efficiency and cost-effectiveness?
- To what extent does the complexity of the initiative contribute to achieving more integrated and collaborative policies/programs?
- To what extent do the relationships among the partners contribute to achieving expected outcomes?
- How does the initiative compare to programs delivered by a single department?
- What are the characteristics and conditions that generally contribute to the success of the initiative, looking at the dynamics among the partners?

Collecting Data

- Meeting Standards
- Privacy & consent
- Common reporting tools / databases
- Data Collection by Staff at Multiple Sites

Meeting Standards

- Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation
 - Utility
 - Feasibility
 - Propriety
 - Accuracy
- Tri-Council Policy Statement
 - Respect for human dignity
 - Respect for free and informed consent
 - Respect for vulnerable persons
 - Respect for privacy and confidentiality
 - Respect for justice and inclusiveness
 - Balancing harm and benefits
 - Minimizing harm
 - Maximizing benefit

Privacy and Consent

- Accountability
- **Identifying purposes**
- **Consent**
- **Limiting collection**
- **Limiting use, disclosure and retention**
- **Accuracy**
- **Safeguards**
- Openness
- Individual access
- Provide recourse

Common Reporting Tools / Databases

- Collect as little information as you can
- Consider ways of minimizing error
- Do a feasibility assessment
- Develop tools & a data dictionary
- Do a test run (or two) to identify issues

Data Collection by Site Staff

- Need to plan time for data collection
- Training is essential:
 - Schedule of activities
 - Data definitions
 - Purpose of the data
 - Who to call for help
- Send reminders
- Be diligent about quality control

Group Exercise

- Use the case study in Appendix D
- Refer to p. 20 of the workbook
- Develop a mechanism for gathering data across multiple partners for **a single performance measure**

Analysing & Reporting Data

- Combining databases
- Unit of analysis
- Evidence matrices

Combining Databases: Same Fields, Different Sites

- Technical issues
 - Databases need to be converted to a common format
 - Ensure field definitions are the same in all
 - Restrict to relevant fields
 - Keep a record of where each case came from
 - Keep a log of decisions made along the way

Combining Databases: Same Sites, Different Fields

- Ethical issues
 - Potential to compromise anonymity
 - Informed consent

Unit of Analysis

- What is the appropriate unit of analysis?
Individual / Group / Program / Initiative
- Considerations:
 - At what level were the data collected?
 - What conclusions do you want to draw?
 - Are participants' experiences comparable across sites/programs?
- Consider multiple levels of analysis & reporting

Evidence Matrices

- A tool to provide an overview of patterns across, for example, participants, sites, topics, or data sources
- Shows a summary of the data in a table so you can examine:
 - Variables of interest
 - Data sources or methods of data collection
 - Periods of time
 - Individuals or groups

Example Evidence Matrix

Site	Implementation			Outcomes		
	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
A – Unit 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A – Unit 2	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
B	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
C	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
D	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
E	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Group Exercise

- Use case study in Appendix D
- Refer to page 26
- Explore units of analysis and variables

Wrap-Up

- Any remaining Q&A
- Were your expectations met?
 - 1 = not at all
 - 10 = completely
- Evaluation forms