# STRENGTHENING EVALUATION PRACTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

by

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# ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine evaluation practice in environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Specifically, it aims to ascertain and understand their current evaluation activities, determine the effectiveness of their assessments, and develop recommendations for strengthening their formal evaluation efforts. After a review of the literature on evaluation, the Canadian non-profit sector, ENGOs and qualitative research, this study is based on standardized interviews with ten ENGOs and five of their funders, and on an analysis of evaluation documents produced by the interview participants.

This research process reveals that ENGOs are informally and formally evaluating their environmental programs, primarily in order to obtain information that can satisfy their funders' accountability standards and improve their programs. They tend to rely more on internal evaluators than on external evaluation consultants, and they are using a variety of data collection strategies to collect fairly credible and useful qualitative and/or quantitative information. However, ENGOs focus more on meeting their funders' information requirements than on satisfying their own information needs; consequently, their evaluations do not always collect the right evidence for program improvement purposes. As well, ENGOs lack adequate resources to implement more formal and outcome evaluations, to develop and nurture in-house evaluation expertise, and to hire external evaluators for advice and guidance during their internal evaluation process.

This study also provides a number of recommendations for ENGOs and their funders with respect to how they can collectively strengthen evaluation practice in the environmental community. ENGOs should attempt to cultivate an organizational commitment to learning and reflection, ask their donors for evaluation funds, establish partnerships with other organizations, and create a long-term stable funding base for the environmental sector as a whole that generates revenue for evaluation and other organizational capacity-

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) in Canada are interested in providing high-quality information about the implementation and effectiveness of their environmental programs.[1] This interest appears to stem from external pressures, most notably increasing demands for evaluation from their funders, who need to use the findings to determine, on behalf of their donors, the extent to which their dollars are making a difference in the world. However, it is also based on internal considerations: a recognition that evaluation can lead to program improvements. In other words, ENGOs realize that evaluation can tell them how well their programs are doing and what changes should be made; consequently, it is an invaluable tool for improving the impact of their work, and ultimately, the state of the natural environment.

According to the few studies that exist on evaluation in the environmental sector, this interest in assessment has, fortunately, translated into action. Many ENGOs, like other types of non-profit organizations, are systematically evaluating their programs (Pinho, 2001). However, due in large part to a lack of funds to cover evaluation costs and the absence of in-house evaluation expertise (Juillet et al., 2001), they are not assessing the performance of their programs as often or as meticulously as they would like to. Most of their evaluations, for example, report on easily-measured program processes—inputs/resources (e.g. how much was spent) and outputs such as activities (e.g. what had to be done to achieve results, for instance, provide workshops, establish a telephone hotline and create and distribute publications) and implementation objectives (e.g. the number of goods and services org  Tw (puo4s7Tw w edsa fis,at changes ) Tj-54.2  Tc p3t.7.e5. Tjd28.xnonn0c Tcs4 l6 0 i8ast6t8 0  7Glpcha.1y0 improve their environmental programs, and green funders who have to determine, on behalf of their stakeholders, if their funds are being used as expected.

### 1.2 Purpose Statement

Within this context, then, the purpose of this study was to: (1) ascertain and understand evaluation activities[2] and needs in ENGOs in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, (2) determine the effectiveness[3] of ENGO evaluations, and (3) develop recommendations for strengthening formal evaluation practice in these environmental groups. As such, the questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. Why are ENGOs evaluating?
2. What evaluation activities are ENGOs carrying out?
3. How effective are ENGO evaluations?
4. What are green funders' evaluation requirements for ENGOs?
5. How do ENGOs and green funders feel about these requirements?
6. How do ENGOs and green funders feel about ENGO evaluation capacity?
7. How can evaluation practice in ENGOs be strengthened?

A secondary purpose of this study was to facilitate the exchange of information between ENGOs and green funders, by disseminating copies of the completed study to the ENGO and green funder research participants. Through a review of this report, for example, ENGOs will obtain feedback about the overall quality of their evaluations and their funders' perceptions with respect to ENGO evaluation capacity. Green funders, as well, will learn how ENGOs feel about their evaluation requirements and grantmaking practices, amongst other issues.

### 1.3 Key Definitions

A number of terms and concepts are used throughout this publication. They include the following (in alphabetical order):

- *Accountability*: "Accountability is the requirement to explain and accept responsibility for carrying out an assigned mandate in light of agreed upon expectations" (PAGVS, 1999, p. 11). "It involves: taking into consideration the public trust in the exercise of responsibilities; providing detailed information about how responsibilities have been carried out and what outcomes have

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[2] This study considers 'recent' evaluation activities (i.e. those occurring at the time of the study and/or those completed in the past three years).

[3] "Effectiveness is a measure of the quality of [an] output" (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992, p. 351). Since, in this study, 'output' refers to ENGO evaluations and 'quality' refers to credibility and usefulness, effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which an ENGO evaluation is credible and useful.

- *Target Audience/Clients/Program Participants*: Who a program is intended to serve; for example, the target audience for an environmental education program may include students, teachers and local community residents.
- *Useful Evaluation*: An evaluation that is useful provides "information that project staff and other stakeholders can utilize directly to make decisions about the program" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 99).

### 1.4 Research Methods

Theoretical and empirical research was conducted in four stages, with the latter three stages constituting the use of the 'between method' or 'across-method' approach of methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1989). In the first stage, informal telephone conversations and personal unstructured interviews with evaluation consultants and a green funder confirmed the 'should-do-ability' (it should be done) and the 'do-ability' (it can be done) of this study (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In the second stage, a review of literature on evaluation, the non-profit sector in Canada, ENGOs and qualitative research was conducted. In the third stage, based on the exploratory conversations and the literature review, two interview schedules were designed to elicit information to answer the research questions. They were administered during standardized interviews with a sample of participants working for ENGOs and funding organizations in the Lower Mainland. In the final stage, documentary evidence obtained from the interview participants (e.g. evaluation surveys, evaluation plans, and grant application forms) was reviewed. All of the information collected in the last three stages was analyzed and summarized, thus pro -0.00p1.4 -180218 TD -0.0.00p1.4 -175.96 -18.96 TD 0.0

and supplemented with a content analysis of relevant and available evaluation documents produced by ENGOs and their funders in the course of everyday events.

### 1.7 Significance of the Research

The significance of this research lies in two areas. First, there is very little information on the non-profit sector in Canada (Hall & Banting, 2000; CCP & CPRN, 1998; CPRN, 1997). As such, few studies investigate the non-profit *environmental* sector, particularly the topic of evaluation in the environmental community (Pinho, 2001). Second, there is a lack of literature on the role of evaluation within the funding community (McNelis & Bickel, 1996), as well as the impact that funders have on evaluation practice in ENGOs. This study, therefore, represents one step towards building a better understanding of these issues.

Additionally, it is hoped that the findings from this research will be of use to the ENGOs and green funders that were interviewed for this study, and other ENGOs and green funders in British Columbia, the rest of Canada, the United States and elsewhere. Independent evaluation consultants, environmental associations (e.g. the Canadian Environmental Network and affiliated chapters) and organizations that provide services and programs for the environmental community (e.g. in Vancouver: IMPACS or Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society and The Hollyhock School; in Seattle: TREC or Training Resources for the Environmental Community and ONE/Northwest Online Networking for the Environment) may also be interested in the results of this project.

### 1.8 Organization of the Research

This research is divided into six chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of this study and establishes the significance of this research. Chapter 2 reviews evaluation concepts, tools and practices, including such topics as the purposes of evaluation, the types of evaluation, and the evaluation process. Chapter 3 presents previous literature with respect to evaluation practice and funding circumstances in non-profit organizations at large and ENGOs in particular. Chapter 4 reviews this study's methodology, including the research design, role of the researcher, data collection methods, data sources, data analysis procedures and methods of verification. Chapter 5 introduces the findings from the interviews and document review. Finally, Chapter 6 presents key themes that were tested and verified during the course of conducting this study, as well as recommendations for strengthening evaluation practice in ENGOs, suggestions for further research, limitations of this study, and some final conclusions.

# CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION CONCEPTS, TOOLS AND PRACTICES

This chapter assesses the existing knowledge base in the multidisciplinary literature on the subject of evaluation. Following a definition of this concept, the purposes of evaluation and some common types of evaluation are examined. Next, the steps to follow in order to conduct a high-quality evaluation *from within an organization* are presented. Since most of the evaluation manuals on the market are "difficult to locate, are too technical in nature, encourage external evaluation [which most ENGOs cannot afford] and are not flexible regarding organizational capacity and skills", it is hoped that the evaluation process presented here will be a practical tool that ENGOs can use to help them evaluate their programs (Bozzo & Hall, 1999, p. 17).

## 2.1 A Definition of Evaluation

Evaluation, the determination of the value, merit or worth of 'something' (Robson, 2000), is performed everyday by everyone. Most of the time, it is an informal activity (Paddock, 2001); for example, as when a program is judged based on a subjective assessment derived from ad hoc observations of individuals or events, and/or conversations with people, either in-person, on the phone or through other avenues. When very little time or money is invested in a program, or when very few people are affected by it, then this kind of evaluation is usually sufficient (Milstein et al., n.d.). However, when a program becomes more resource-intensive or impacts more people, then the formalization of evaluation is recommended (Milstein et al., n.d.). A formal evaluation is "the systematic collection, analysis and reporting of information about a [planned] program [in order] to assist in decision-making" (Public Health Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health et al., 1997, Definitions #3). As an established component of program management, it makes explicit the following three factors: "(1) the object of [the] review [i.e. the program], (2) the criteria with which value will be assigned and a judgment based, and (3) the behaviour or outcomes necessary if the object of the evaluation is to be judged as having met standards or expectation" (Paddock, 2001, p. 359).

A formal evaluation (hereafter referred to as 'evaluation' in this chapter and the rest of this study) can range in intensity from large-scale to small-scale. As depicted in Table 1, a large-scale evaluation tends to have a regional, national or international focus, takes more than six months to complete, and is carried out by an external evaluator or large evaluation team with sufficient resources at their disposal. In contrast, a small-scale assessment is likely local in focus, takes six months or less to complete, and is carried out by an internal evaluator or a small evaluation team with limited resources.

**Table 1: The Likely Characteristics of a Large-Scale and Small-Scale Evaluation**

| LARGE-SCALE EVALUATION | SMALL-SCALE EVALUATION |
|---|---|
| • Regional, national or international in focus;<br>• Takes a long time to complete (more than 6 months);<br>• Carried out by an external evaluator or large evaluation team representing multiple organizations; and<br>• Takes place with sufficient resources (time, money, personnel, expertise). | • Local in focus;<br>• Takes a short time to complete (1 to 6 months);<br>• Carried out by an internal evaluator (i.e. a staff member) or a small evaluation team (2 or 3 members); and<br>• Takes place with limited resources. |

Source: Robson (2000)

Contrary to popular opinion, a large-scale evaluation is not any 'better' than a small-scale assessment. In fact, as long as certain criteria are considered (see Table 2), a simple, quick and low-cost evaluation can provide as much quality information as a more complex, lengthy and extensive assessment (Milstein et al., n.d.).

**Table 2: Some Ways to Ensure a High-Quality Small-Scale Evaluation**

| |
|---|
| • Learn and follow an evaluation process from the very beginning of a program (see Section 2.4 for more information);<br>• Limit the number of evaluation questions to be answered;<br>• Collect information that only answers the evaluation questions;<br>• Select data collection methods that are inexpensive, easy to use and require the least amount of time to apply;<br>• Select at least one individual to coordinate and monitor the planning and implementation of the evaluation; and<br>• Consider using volunteers to collect data. |

Source: Favaro & Ferris (1991)

## 2.2 Purposes of Evaluation

One of the most important purposes of evaluation is to improve programs; however, many obstacles impede this type of usage, such as resource constraints, staff turnover, and conflicting priorities and interests between departments (Weiss, 1998). In particular, since "continuous improvement requires a commitment to learning", the absence of a learning culture within an organization can prevent evaluation results from being used for program improvement (Preskill, 1994, p. 292 quoting Garvin, 1993, p. 78). A non-learning organization does not recognize the need to evaluate; it is not hungry to reflect on its experience, identify problems and experiment with proposed solutions. Fortunately, a non-learning organization can transform itself into a learning organization through various means. For example, management can adopt and communicate a deep commitment to organizational learning, as evidenced in organizational policies and procedures. Staff members can learn about the benefits associated with this transformation (e.g. risk-taking in a supportive atmosphere) and receive training in conflict resolution, team-building, critical thinking, evaluation and other relevant topic areas (Preskill, 1994). The very act of evaluation, with the active involvement of program staff, can also serve as a means through which an organization can establish and nurture a learning culture (Forss & Cracknell, 1994). Evaluation can bring staff "together to reflect on previous and current practices, engage in dialogue, and plan for future action", all necessary activities for ensuring the development of a learning organization (Preskill, 1994, p. 294).

Setting aside this improvement intent of evaluation, there are, of course, other important reasons for conducting an evaluation, as noted below:

- Evaluation focuses and guides program planning (Suvedi, 2001);
- Evaluation can increase knowledge and understanding about "what [a] program is and does" (Weiss, 1998, p. 24);
- Evaluation can provide lessons learned or "principles of effectiveness" that can be adapted to other programs or organizations (Patton, 1996, p. 133);
- Evaluation identifies unintended negative and positive effects (USAID, 1997);
- Evaluation determines whether or not a program is accomplishing its goals and objectives (Paddock, 2001);
- Evaluation provides information to guide resource allocation (Favaro & Ferris, 1991) so that money is spent on programs that work;
- Evaluation ensures accountability to key stakeholders, such as funders, board members, staff, volunteers, partners and the general public;
- The evaluation results, when they are included in grant applications/proposals, can be used to attract new sources of funding (Lackey et al., 1997);
- Evaluation can improve the reputation and credibility of an organization (Camozzi & Rice, 1995);
- When properly disseminated, 'positive' results (i.e. good news) can motivate staff and enhance public support for the organization's activities (Camozzi & Rice, 1995);
- The mere fact that an evaluation is being conducted can legitimize the program under investigation (Weiss, 1998);
- Staff and other stakeholders engaged in the evaluation process can develop a wide range of skills in such areas as consensus-building, problem-solving, critical-thinking, program planning, data collection/analysis, and report writing; and
- Participating in the evaluation process can improve communication between stakeholders (e.g. between front-line staff and program managers or between program providers and the target audience) (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998).

## 2.3 Types of Evaluation

There are many different types of evaluation. Most of these types (context evaluation, process evaluation, outcome evaluation, input evaluation, cost-benefit evaluation, cost-effectiveness evaluation and metaevaluation) focus on *what* is being evaluated. Other types (internal evaluations, external evaluations and participatory evaluations) refer to *who* is conducting them. Formative, summative and theory-based evaluations, on the other hand, emphasize *when* evaluations occur as well as the *intention of the evaluator*. The following is a brief description of each of these types of evaluations:

- *Context Evaluation*: This evaluation identifies the external contextual factors (e.g. social and political conditions) and internal contextual factors (e.g. the organizational climate) influencing program implementation and success. It sets the stage for process and outcome evaluations since it "explain[s] why a project has been implemented the way it has, and why certain outcomes have been achieved and others have not" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 24). Examples of this kind of evaluation include a community needs assessment and an organizational assessment.
- *Process or Implementation Evaluation*: This evaluation examines the operation or implementation of a program (e.g. inputs/resources and outputs such as activities, the number of goods and services provided and the number of people served) (Council of Foundations, 1993). Monitoring, the collection of information "on a regular basis to provide feedback about the level of performance…without questioning the logic or structure of the programme design", is a key component of this type of assessment (Clarke & Dawson, 1999, pp. 5-6). Examples of questions asked during a process evaluation include, "How many workshops did we provide?", "How many people participated in our program?", "What are the strengths and weaknesses of our program?", "Is our target audience being served?", and "Is our program being implemented as intended?"
- *Outcome or Impact Evaluation*: This evaluation investigates whether or not a program achieved its short-term, intermediate and/or long-term objectives (Murray & Balfour, 1999; HCU, 2001). These objectives may refer to changes in individuals or participants (e.g. "Did the attitudes, knowledge or behaviour of the target audience change as a result of our program?") or changes in the larger community/environment (e.g. "What impact or effect did our program have on water quality?") (HCU, 2001). They may even refer to impacts on the staff/organization that delivered the program (e.g. What new skills did our program staff acquire?") (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998).
- *Input Evaluation*: This

- *Internal Evaluation*: This evaluation is conducted by a person (i.e. internal evaluator) who works for the organization responsible for carrying out the program (Clarke & Dawson, 1999).
- *External Evaluation*

### 2.4 The Evaluation Process

One of the best ways to ensure a high-quality (i.e. credible and useful)[4] evaluation is by carefully designing and implementing an evaluation (Robson, 2000) with the assistance of program staff and other interested stakeholders (e.g. the target audience, funders and board members) (Aubel, 1999; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998). For this reason, the evaluation literature is replete with various steps to help guide organizations through the process of planning and implementing an evaluation while a program is underway and/or upon completion. Table 3 depicts thirteen of the most commonly-cited stages found in the evaluation literature. These stages are intended to be followed in sequence *from within an organization*; however, budgetary constraints, lack of time and personnel, and other "real world" circumstances such as a "program's history and organizational climate" may necessitate their flexible application (Milstein et al., n.d., p. 5).

**Table 3: The Stages in the Evaluation Process**

| STAGE | EVALUATION ACTIVITY |
|---|---|
| 1 | Describe the Program to Be Evaluated |
| 2 | Overcome Resistance to Evaluation |
| 3 | Budget for Evaluation |
| 4 | Select the Evaluator/Facilitator |
| 5 | Identify the Stakeholders |
| 6 | Create an Evaluation Team |
| 7 | Identify the Evaluation Questions |
| 8 | Determine the Indicators |
| 9 | Select the Evaluation Design |
| 10 | Choose the Data Collection Methods |
| 11 | Collect the Data |
| 12 | Analyze the Data |
| 13 | Disseminate and Use the Findings |

Sources: Milstein et al. (n.d.), HCU (2001), W.K. Kellogg Foundation (1998) and USAID (1997)

#### 2.4.1 Stage 1: Describe the Program to Be Evaluated

According to Milstein et al. (n.d., p. 8), "how a program is described sets the frame of reference for all future decisions about its evaluation." As such, the program that will be evaluated must be clearly and

[4] As noted in Chapter 1, a credible evaluation contains information that is perceived "by stakeholders as believable, trustworthy, and relevant to answer *their* [evaluation] questions" (Milstein et al., n.d., p. 14). A useful evaluation provides "information that project staff and other stakeholders can utilize directly to make decisions about the program" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 99).

logically outlined.[5] Summarizing what a program is attempting to accomplish involves three steps: (1)

**Table 4: The Basic Structure of a Program Logic Model**

| PROCESSES | | | OUTCOMES | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INPUTS** | **OUTPUTS** | | **SHORT t478 do** | |
| **RESOURCES** | **ACTIVITIES** | **IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES** (e.g. to provide, give, deliver) | | |
| *What does this program need to function?* | *What do we have to do to achieve our intended results?* | *How much do we do for how many people? Who do we serve?* | | |

**Table 5: A Sample Program Logic Model for an Environmental List Development Project**

| **PROCESSES** | | | **OUTCOMES** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INPUTS** | **OUTPUTS** | | **SHORT-TERM and INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME OBJECTIVES** | **GOALS (LONG-TERM OUTCOME OBJECTIVES)** |
| **RESOURCES** | **ACTIVITIES** | **IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES** | | |
| Staff:<br>- 1 Project Director<br>- .5 FTE Database Manager<br><br>Volunteers:<br>- Database entry<br>- Phone calling<br><br>Setting:<br>- Office space with 4 or more phones<br><br>Linkages:<br>- Other environmental organizations<br><br>Service Technologies:<br>- Voter turnout lists<br>- Environmental membership lists<br>- List merge software<br><br>Funding:<br>- Foundation grants | Obtain membership lists from coalition organizations<br><br>Merge membership list with voter turnout list<br><br>Two-hour training workshops for coalition members on using enhanced lists<br><br>Do0LiSV51ai6dhs9j0 -11.52 TD 0 Tc 0.03 -j0 -11.52 TD -0.0191 Tc 0 Twl Tj0 -11.52 TDo8U7TD 0<br>ll0h.48 rc 0.0283 Tw (coalition members ) Tj0 -1t Tcu-11.52 TD 0.0f0 -11.3uTDo8U7TD 0.0257 T5<br>m<br>grantsc o a 927.069T a5.96 5 h 2 -14.5TTj243g g | | | |

eliminated. For instance, with respect to the above example, the theory guiding this program calls for the design and implementation of an activity that teaches individuals about the biophysical environment. Consequently, the PLM should include a strategy that takes this into account (e.g. nature walks lead by a biologist).

With or without concerted attention to program theory, using a PLM to describe a program is advantageous for several reasons. First, the process of creating a PLM enhances staff understanding about a program (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998), especially if the model is adopted at the beginning of a program rather than mid-way or upon completion (Framst, 1995). Second, a PLM can be used to quickly explain a program to funders (e.g. in grant proposals), board members, the target audience, the general public, the media and other interested individuals or groups (Rush & Ogborne, 1991; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998). Third, a PLM can guide and improve program planning (Rush & Ogborne, 1991). It does this by highlighting “vague, unrealistic or conflicting objectives” (Rush & Ogborne, 1991, p. 105), thus ensuring that changes to the program are made based on a “logical process rather than on personalities, politics, or ideology” (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 36). Lastly, a PLM can provide a working “frame of reference” for the evaluation of a program (Milstein et al., n.d., p. 10). This model, including its subsequent updates as the evaluation is carried out, provides an evaluator with an understanding of the program, including its underlying assumptions (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998) and intended outcomes. It can also help to identify and prioritize the evaluation questions that need to be answered, thus ensuring that resources are efficiently employed and the findings end up being used (Rush & Ogborne, 1991).

### 2.4.2 Stage 2: Overcome Resistance to Evaluation

Evaluation is not a top priority in many organizations, despite the benefits associated with its adoption (as noted in Section 2.2). Reasons for this include the following:

- A lack of resources (e.g. time, money, personnel and expertise) to devote to evaluation;
- A fear of being judged (Bennett, 1988-89);
- A fear that evaluation drains resources from service delivery (Posavac & Carey, 1997);
- A fear that the program will be terminated once problems are identified (Posavac & Carey, 1997);
- Reactions of avoidance caused by the perception that evaluation is a complex and time-consuming endeavor (Bennett, 1988-89);
- The evaluation is “usually imposed or mandated” (Favaro & Ferris, 1991, p. 6 citing Pancer, 1985) by, for example, upper management and funders;
- It is a difficult and time-consuming endeavor to develop indicators (see Stage 8) which accurately reflect program goals and objectives (Murray & Balfour, 1999); and

•

organization responsible for carrying out the program (e.g. an executive director, program manager or staff member), and an external evaluator, "an independent consultant who is commissioned to undertake an evaluation on behalf of a service providing agency [i.e. the organization implementing the program] or funding organization" (Clarke & Dawson, 1999, p. 22). When an assessment is carried out from within an organization, an internal evaluator can be hired to take on full responsibility for conducting the evaluation (e.g. identifying the evaluation questions, selecting the data collection methods, collecting and analyzing the information, and writing the final report). If resources permit, he or she may obtain the services of an external consultant, so that the organization can take advantage of the strengths of both types of evaluators (and, conversely, minimize the weaknesses associated with the use of only one type). For example, an internal evaluator can plan and carry out the entire evaluation, while an external consultant can help collect some of the data, statistically analyze the

### 2.4.7 Stage 7: Identify the Evaluation Questions

Once the evaluation team has been created, it is up to the members to determine the questions that the evaluation should answer. Table 8 presents examples of possible questions to ask, as well as the type of evaluation they each correspond to (thus revealing that the evaluation type, as noted in Section 2.3 of this chapter, becomes apparent once the evaluation questions are finalized).

**Table 8: Some Possible Evaluation Questions About a Program**

1. What are the external and internal contextual factors influencing the program? (context evaluation)
2. Does the program meet the needs of the target audience? (process/implementation evaluation or outcome/impact evaluation)
3. What happens while the program is being implemented? (process/implementation evaluation)
4. Did the program attain its goals? (outcome/impact evaluation)
5. Did the program attain its short-term/intermediate outcome objectives? (outcome/impact evaluation)
6. How do costs and benefits compare? (cost-benefit evaluation)

Source: Robson (2000)

Some questions may need to be broken down into more specific questions in order to arrive at an answer (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998). For instance, to answer Questions #2-5, the following sub-questions[7] may need to be asked:

- *Evaluation Question #2*: Does the program meet the needs of the target audience?
  - *Sub-Question:* Did the program increase contact between environmentally concerned constituents and their legislators?
  - *Sub-Question:* Has the program increased turnout among low frequency voters on the merged list?
- *Evaluation Question #3:* What happens while the program is being implemented?
  - *Sub-Question:* Did we deliver five half-day training workshops as originally planned? : Doeses #

following[8]: existing documents (e.g. the initial project proposal, commitment letter from funders containing their evaluation questions, the PLM, etc.); program managers, staff, and volunteers; the program's target audience; board members; community leaders; collaborating or partner organizations; relevant literature; or similar programs (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998).[9]

Since the list of possible questions to ask is enormous (Robson, 2000), some organizations may wish to narrow and prioritize their evaluation questions. This can be accomplished by considering the following three factors:

- *The evaluation budget*: The number of questions that can be addressed will be influenced by

**Table 9: Examples of Indicators for Specific Evaluation Questions**

| EVALUATION QUESTIONS | INDICATORS |
|---|---|
| Did the program increase contact between environmentally concerned constituents and their legislators? | Legislators will report increased contact with environmentally concerned constituents. |
| Has the program increased turnout among low frequency voters on the merged list? | Number and percentage of low frequency voters on our merged list that vote in the next election. |
| Did we deliver five half-day training workshops as originally planned? | Number of training workshops provided. |
| How many people with near perfect voting records did we contact? | Number and percentage of people with near perfect voting records that we contacted. |
| Did the program result in the goal of increased election of legislators supportive of environmental policies? | Number and percentage of environmentally supportive legislators that were elected after the program. |
| Did the workshop participants improve their political strategic thinking skills? | Participants in the workshops will report increased political strategic thinking skills. |

### 2.4.9 Stage 9: Select the Evaluation Design

An evaluation design is "the master plan" for collecting data from the people who have the information you need to answer the evaluation questions (Reisman & Clegg, 1999, p. 40). There are two types of designs to choose from: the analytical or experimental design and the descriptive, non-experimental or pre-experimental design. The decision as to which type of design to use is governed by two factors: (1) the availability of resources (i.e. time, money, personnel and expertise), and (2) whether you want to demonstrate that a program directly *caused* an outcome (i.e. show cause and effect) or whether you want to *describe* program process and outcome (HCU, 2001).

*The Analytical/Experimental Design*

To determine if a program directly *caused* a particular outcome, impact or result, the analytical or experimental design can be used. There are two types of experimental designs: true experimental designs and quasi-experimental designs, both of which aim to maximize the "impartiality, accuracy, objectivity, and validity of the information generated" (Little, 2002, A Few Questions Explained #2).

As depicted in Figure 1, true experiments involve comparing changes in randomly selected individuals who participated in the program (i.e. the experimental group) with changes in randomly assigned individuals who did not participate in the program (i.e. the control, comparison or non-treatment group). These groups, which usually share certain demographic characteristics, may be studied before *and* after the program (the pre-program/post-program design), or only after a program (the post-program design).

**Figure 1: Types of Experimental Designs**

(1) The Pre-Program/Post-Program Design

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | R | O | X | O |
| Control Group | R | O | | O |

(2) The Post-Program Design

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | R | X | O |
| Control Group | R | | O |

R = Random Assignment O = Observation or Measurement X = Program

Sources: (1) HCU (2001), (2) Singleton & Straits (1999)

Due to randomization, this type of experimental design is the best way to demonstrate that a program (as opposed to external factors such as what other organizations have done or the current political climate) directly caused an outcome. However, certain practical considerations can limit their use in an applied setting (HCU, 2001). For example, this design is costly and time-consuming to implement, and the very practice of random assignment may not be feasible, as is the case when measuring intact groups such as school classes (Singleton & Straits, 1999).

Another option is to adopt a quasi-experimental design. As shown in Figure 2, this type of design, like a true experiment, involves comparing experimental and control groups before *and* after a program (the pre-program/post-program design or the multiple time series pre-program/post-program design) or simply after a program (the post-test only design). This design still allows for the measurement of outcomes to prove the existence of a cause and effect relationship, but it has the advantage of being cheaper and easier to implement than the true experimental design. Thus, for cash-strapped and time-crunched organizations that require cause and effect information, a quasi-experiment can be an extremely valuable design option (see Pinho, 2001 for an example of its use in an environmental context). However, since the random selec

**Figure 2: Types of Quasi-Experimental Designs**

(1) The Pre-Program/Post-Program Design

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | O | X | O |
| Control Group | O | | O |

(2) The Multiple Time Series Pre-Program/Post-Program Design

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | O | X | O | | |
| Control Group | O | | O | X | O |

(3) Post-Test Only Design

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | X | O |
| Control Group | | O |

O = Observation or Measurement    X = Program

Sources: (1&2) HCU (2001), (3) Clarke & Dawson (1999)

*The Descriptive/Non-Experimental/Pre-Experimental Design*

To *describe* program process/implementation and outcomes in-depth, including participants' experiences with a program, the descriptive, non-experimental or pre-experimental design is used (HCU, 2001). Figure 3 depicts a couple of these design types. One type describes a group at one point in time (the post-program design) and the other kind describes a group before *and* after a program (the pre-program/post-program design).

**Figure 3: Types of Descriptive Designs**

(1) The Post-Program Design (or One-Shot Case Study)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Experimental Group | X | O |

(2) The Pre-Program/Post-Program Design (or Before and After Study)

Experimental Group    O    X    O OO

carrying out the program. As such, in a descriptive study, a cause and effect relationship should not be claimed (HCU, 2001).

### 2.4.10 Stage 10: Choose the Data Collection Methods

Once the evaluation design is selected, it is necessary to decide which data collection method (or methods) to use. There are many data collection strategies to choose from, such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, document review, observations, and standardized questionnaires. As depicted in Table 10, some of these strategies are qualitative, that is, they produce detailed descriptions from a small number of individuals about "how your project functions and what it may mean to the people involved" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998, p. 72). Other methods, as shown in Table 11, are quantitative in that they "use standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of [a large group of] people can fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned" (Patton, 1990, p. 14).

When choosing which methods to use, methodological familiarity and popularity should not be the deciding factors (Milstein et al., n.d.). Rather, data collection strategies must be matched to each indicator; in other words, they should provide information that will answer the evaluation questions (HCU, 2001). Additionally, if resources permit, more than one data collection method should be used during the same evaluation (this is called methodological triangulation or the mixed method approach), so that the strengths of one method can compensate for the biases and limitations of another (Clarke & Dawson, 1999). Other critical aspects to consider when deciding which strategies to adopt include the following:

- *The available resources (e.g. time, money, personnel and expertise)*: Some data collection methods, like in-depth interviews, are more expensive than other strategies, like reviewing existing documents (HCU, 2001; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1998).
- *The people you need to obtain information from:* Factors such as language, culture and level of education will have a bearing on which data collection strategies can be used (HCU, 2001). For instance, individuals with language difficulties should be personally interviewed rather than mailed standardized surveys.
- *The degree of validity (accuracy) and reliability (consistency) desired*: Observations and semi-structured interviews, for example, offer the greatest validity, whereas surveys and cognitive assessments tend to provide more reliable information, no matter who collects the data, or where it was collected (Reisman & Clegg, 1999).
- *When the information is required*: Some methods, like focus groups, can provide a great deal of information in a short period of time, while others, like mailed questionnaires, may take weeks to collect from respondents.

**Table 10: Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Data Collection Methods**

| METHODS | DESCRIPTION | STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|---|---|
| In-depth Interviews | • A small number of individuals are interviewed in person or on the phone<br>• Mainly open-ended questions are asked<br>• There are three types: the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach and the standardized open-ended interview | • Provides large amounts of detailed information about participants' perspectives, opinions, expectations and actions in a short period of time<br>• Implementation and analysis requires a minimum of specialized skills<br>• Unanticipated issues can be explored<br>• Immediate clarification is possible<br>• Provides a confidential environment | • Data collection is time-consuming<br>• Data is difficult to analyze<br>• Potential for interviewer bias<br>• Participants may be uncomfortable sharing what the interviewer wants to explore<br>• Interviewer must have excellent listening skills |
| Document Review | • The review of existing documents produced by the organization or target audience (e.g. letters, newspapers, minutes of meetings, brochures, diaries, logs, pictures, posters) | • Provides contextual information<br>• Data is easy to manipulate and categorize for analysis<br>• Unobtrusive and non-reactive method<br>• Good source of historical information<br>• Inexpensive to collect documents | • Documents may be inaccurate, incomplete or unavailable<br>• Data is restricted to what already exists<br>• What is recorded is influenced by social, political and ideological factors<br>• Data is open to multiple interpretations |
| Focus Groups | • A semi-structured discussion with 8-12 stakeholders<br>• Lead by a facilitator/moderator who follows an outline and manages group dynamics<br>• Proceedings are usually recorded on video or tape | • Provides a great deal of in-depth information in a short period of time<br>• Can be inexpensive to implement<br>• Unanticipated issues can be explored<br>• Immediate clarification is possible<br>• Atmosphere is more relaxed than in a one-to-one interview | • |

**Table 11: Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative Data Collection Methods**

| METHODS | DESCRIPTION | STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|---|---|---|---|
| Standardized Questionnaires, Surveys or Checklists | • Administered to a probability sample of the population by telephone, mail, email, fax or in person<br>• Mainly contain close-ended questions which require the respondent to select their answers from pre-determined response categories (e.g. yes, no, maybe)<br>• Includes tests and assessments designed to measure social and psychological variables (e.g. personality tests, knowledge tests and attitudinal assessments) | • Data analysis is simple | |

### 2.4.11 Stage 11: Collect the Data

Using the agreed-upon data collection method (or methods), information is collected from the "unit of analysis", those "people [e.g. program participants], objects [e.g. documents], or events" that can provide answers to the evaluation questions/indicators (USAID, 1997, Data Collection and Analysis Section, ¶5). More often than not, an evaluation involves gathering information from people, which then poses the challenge of identifying the sample size—that is, *who* and *how many* individuals will be interviewed, mailed surveys and so forth. When attempting to figure out *who* to gather information from, it helps to keep in mind the following question: "Which people can provide me with the information to answer my evaluation questions/indicators?" In order to determine the *number* of people to contact, the following should be considered:

- If an evaluation seeks to generalize from a sample to a population (as occurs with an experimental design), then a large number of people have to be selected using a random probability sampling technique such as simple random sampling (Patton, 2002). Table 12 depicts a standard sampling formula that can be used to determine the correct sample size for this purpose. For instance, if a program to be evaluated involved 100 people, 80 of these people need to be randomly selected to arrive at a confidence level of 95%.
- If random selection is not possible (as occurs with a quasi-experimental design) or an evaluation seeks to describe "something" in-depth (as occurs with a descriptive design), then a small number of "information-rich" people are chosen using a non-probability sampling technique known as purposeful sampling. There is no rule specifying how many people should be purposefully sampled; it can be as low as 1 (to seek greater depth) or as high as 30 (to seek greater breadth) (Patton, 2002).

**Table 12: Sample Sizes and Confidence Levels**

| **SAMPLING ERROR** | **± 3%** | **± 5%** | **± 10%** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population size | | | |
| 100 | 92 | 80 | 49 |
| 250 | 203 | 152 | 70 |
| 500 | 341 | 217 | 81 |
| 750 | 441 | 254 | 85 |
| 1000 | 516 | 278 | 88 |
| 2500 | 748 | 333 | 93 |
| 5000 | 880 | 357 | 94 |
| 10000 | 964 | 370 | 95 |
| 25000 | 1023 | 378 | 96 |
| 50000 | 1045 | 381 | 96 |
| 100000 | 1056 | 383 | 96 |
| 1000000 | 1066 | 384 | 96 |
| 100000000 | 1067 | 384 | 96 |

Source: Copied from Reisman & Clegg (1999) who copied it from Salant & Dillman (1994)

### 2.4.12 Stage 12: Analyze the Data

After the information is collected from the unit of analysis, the next step is to make sense of all of the raw evidence as it relates to the evaluation questions/indicators. Methods of data analysis differ according to whether the data is qualitative (i.e. words) or quantitative (i.e. numbers). The analysis of qualitative data involves coding or categorizing the information into patterns or themes. These themes may be theory-based, which means that they are quite well-developed at the start of an evaluation. Or, if the evaluation is more exploratory in nature, themes ntitiese themes

**Table 13: The Structure of a Formal Evaluation Report**

- Heading (and subheading if necessary)
- Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary/Abstract (preferably one page, no more than two)
    - The most important part for first-time readers and busy stakeholders
    - Summary of key findings and conclusions/recommendations
    - Limit each point to a short paragraph, including a relevant fact or example

2. Background and Purpose
    - 2.1 Background/Rationale (why the evaluation was carried out, what questions you are seeking answers to and why the findings are likely to be of interest)
    - 2.2 Literature Review (if done)
    - 2.3 Description of the Program/Service/Resource that was evaluated

3. Methodology and Procedures
    - 3.1 Development of Data Collection Instruments (e.g. surveys)
    - 3.2 Sampling Protocol (e.g. purposeful sampling, random sampling)
    - 3.3 Data Collection Procedures
    - 3.4 Data Analysis
    - 3.5 Limitations of the Evaluation

4. Results/Findings
    - Provide answers to your evaluation questions
    - Start with your most important information
    - Include unanticipated findings
    - Logically organize the findings with bullet points or numbers (e.g. 4.1, 4.2, etc.)
    - Use charts, tables, graphs and diagrams to illustrate your main points

5. Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion
    - Draw together the report's main themes and, most importantly, their implications.
    - Clearly structure recommendations/lessons learned using bullet points or numbers (e.g. 5.1, 5.2, etc).
    - Prioritize those recommendations/lessons learned which are most important and feasible to implement

Appendices

- Include any information needed by the audience to understand or substa the end of a program or soon after its completion, to summarize information collected during the program and provide recommendations, lessons learned and conclusions based on these findings. Both types of reports can vary in length and style, depending on the reporting needs of the stakeholders and the purpose for communicating the report. No matter what the format of the report, however, it should always be concise, unbiased, professionally presented and clearly written, preferably in the audience's language (Robson, 2000), as well as relatively devoid of academic terminology (Patton, 2002). As noted by one funder, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (1998, p. 97), "a concise, well-written report of ten pages is more likely to influence our programming than one hundred pages of raw data." Of course, the evaluation findings do not have to be presented in a written report, especially if the evaluation is conducted to improve a program (Patton, 2002). The results can be shared during ad-hoc personal discussions with stakeholders or by distributing executive summaries (of the written progress and/or final reports). Other creative forms of communication include memos, workshops, presentations, conferences, meetings, newsletters, brochures, press releases, media articles, posters, videotapes and web pages (Robson, 2000; HCU, 2001).

## 2.5 Summary

Certainly, there are many compelling reasons to evaluate. Not only can the findings lead to improved programs, but they can also ensure accountability to funders and other stakeholders, attract new sources of funding, improve an organization's credibility, and motivate staff, amongst other uses. Most importantly, once an organization is familiar with the evaluation process, it is not difficult to carry out an assessment. In fact, an evaluation can produce high-quality information even if it is conducted with limited time, money, personnel and expertise. The next chapter will consider the extent to which the evaluation concepts, tools and practices that were discussed in this chapter are applied by the Canadian non-profit sector in general, and by ENGOs in particular.

# CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION IN ENGOs

CCP & CPRN, 1998) and surveys (e.g. Kane, 2002; CCP, 2000) that attempt to capture the essence of this sector despite existing gaps in knowledge.

### 3.1.1 A Definition of Non-Profit Organizations

Non-profit organizations in Canada consist of registered charities, legally incorporated non-profit groups, and unincorporated non-profit organizations (CCP & CPRN, 1998). According to the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, there were approximately 75,000 registered charities as of February 1998 (CCP & CPRN, 1998) and 4,500 other legally incorporated non-profit organizations as of 1994 (CCP & CPRN, 1998 citing Day & Devlin, 1997). Furthermore, Quarter (1992) estimates that there are another 100,000 non-profit groups in this country that are not registered by the government, thus bringing the total number of non-profit organizations in Canada to approximately 180,000 (CCP & CPRN, 1998).

Several different types of non-profit organizations operate in Canada, for example, public and private foundations, hospitals, teaching institutions, religious organizations, environmental groups, food banks, international development agencies, libraries, museums, arts organizations, human and civil rights groups, and amateur athletic associations. Notwithstanding this diversity, however, they do have certain characteristics in common. As noted by PAGVS (1999, p. 119), a non-profit group "serves a public benefit, depends on volunteers at least for its governance, has limited direct control by governments, other than in relation to tax benefits, and [unlike market-driven enterprises and government agencies and departments] is not profit making, thus eligible for exemption from paying income taxes."[14]

Non-profit organizations are a significant component of Canadian society and a major source of employment for many Canadians. Based on data from registered charities, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy estimates that the non-profit sector received $90.5 billion in annual revenues in 1994 (Hall & Banting, 2000 citing Hall & Macpherson, 1997). The sector employs 1.3 million Canadians (approximately 9% of the Canadian labour force) and provides more than $40 billion annually in salaries and benefits (Sharpe, 1994). In fact, "the charitable sector accounts for more of Canada's employment, salaries and benefits than a number of other important sectors of the economy (e.g. finance, insurance, and real estate; and construction)" (Sharpe, 1994, p. 14).

[14] The definition of the non-profit sector is more complex than can be presented in this study. Exactly how to establish the boundaries of this sector has been regularly debated in the academic literature and policy circles (see, for example, *Sectoral Framework and Definition* in Appendix 1, CCP & CPRN, 1998).

### 3.1.2 The Funding of Non-Profit Organizations

*Revenue Sources*

Non-profit organizations receive funds from three main sources: government grants and contracts; earned income from investments, membership fees, the sale of goods and services, and other organizational activities; and cash and/or in-kind donations from individuals, foundations and/or corporations.  Not surprisingly, the proportion of income received from each funding source varies according to the type of non-

With respect to the first transformation, many authors assert that the reduction in government funding is compromising the very ‘health’ of non-profit organizations (particularly those that are heavily dependent on government support). For the most part, they point to the fact that this loss of government income has increased competition between non-profit groups for contributions from other revenue sources, namely private donors and corporations (PAGVS, 1999).[16] This increased competition, in turn, is affecting non-profit organizations for the worse, in various ways. First, fundraising costs are escalating (Hall & Banting, 2000 citing Hall & Reed, 1998), thus driving resources away from program delivery, strategic planning and other critical organizational activities. Second, as more and more groups find it necessary to attract corporate funding, they risk losing the credibility that they currently enjoy (Hall & Banting, 2000 citing Hall & Reed, 1998).[17] Third, non-profit organizations are more likely to accept donations with “priorities determined by the funder rather by than the organization or its constituency” (PAGVS, 1999, p. 5), thereby raising concerns about their ability to fulfil their own organizational mandates. Fourth, in order to attract funds, non-profit groups are ‘watering down’ their programs, so that “society loses important alternative voices and social agents committed to social change” (Juillet et al., 2001, p. 26 citing Reading, 1994 & Abrams, 1980). Lastly, non-profit organizations are, in general, working harder despite less money, resulting in “staff burnout, and an inability to keepatidng and o-all core operating costs, organizations are being forced to reduce their overhead expenses by eliminating administrative support, or increase their fundraising efforts (and hence, their fundraising costs) to obtain enough contracts to pay their overhead bills (Juillet et al., 2001). Second, some government contracts require non-profit groups to deliver programs according to government priorities, rather than their own organizational objectives. This has resulted in program changes related to the types of services provided and the kinds of target audiences served (Hall & Banting, 2000 citing Rekart, 1993). Lastly, since contracts have more "extensive" accountability requirements than the awarding of core funding, non-profit groups are spending more and more of their increasingly limited resources on evaluation activities, in particular, the measurement of performance (Juillet et al., 2001, p. 27 citing Knapp, Robertson & Thomason, 1990), thus leading "to the reorientation of an agency's mission towards activities that are easier to quantify [e.g. the number of services provided] and where success is more likely (Juillet et al., 2001, p. 27 citing James, 1989; Weisbrod, 1998; Ware, 1989).

### 3.1.3 Evaluation in Non-Profit Organizations

In recent years, non-profit organizations have been increasingly pressured by all types of funders to evaluate their programs. Governments, corporations and foundations are all demanding more formal accountability requirements for their non-profit grantees, to ensure that their donations are being used to benefit society (Juillet et al., 2001; PAGVS, 1999). Some of these funders expect more reporting on easily-measured items such as financial details and the products/outputs of services (Juillet et al., 2001), while others are more interested in basing their decision to award money on the assessment of outcomes, impacts or results.[18] Individual funders, as well, would like to receive more information about how non-profit groups are operating. According to the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's telephone survey of 3,863 Canadians (18 years of age or older), "more than two-thirds…said charities should be providing more information about their programs and services, how they use donations, their fundraising costs and the impact of their work on Canadians" (CCP, 2000, p. ix). Hall & Banting (2000, p. 20) echo this same sentiment, whil oi Tw ( in Non) Tj s.

### 3.2 Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations[20]

As is the case with the non-profit sector as a whole, there is very little research on ENGOs in Canada. As such, this section is based on information from only a handful of sources, including: (1) the executive summary of a feasibility study on funding gaps in the environmental community (Dale, 1997), (2) a Master's thesis on the evaluation of twelve environmental stewardship programs in British Columbia and Washington State (Pinho, 2001), and (

### 3.2.2 The Funding of ENGOs

*Revenue Sources*

Like other organizations in the non-profit sector, ENGOs depend on funds from government grants and contracts (e.g. Environment Canada); earned income from investments, membership fees, the sale of goods and services, and other organizational activities; and cash and/or in-kind donations from individuals, foundations (e.g. Vancouver Foundation), private businesses (e.g. Chevron Canada) and/or public institutions (e.g. University of British Columbia). Of course, the proportion of funding from each revenue source varies from group to group. Some ENGOs are heavily dependent on government and corporate funds, such as the Recycling Council of BC (RCBC, 2002). Other groups obtain most of their funding from individual donors and foundations. The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), for instance, currently derives 40% of its revenue from individual donors and another 40% from Canadian and American foundations. Only 3% of its funding comes from corporations and less than 1% is provided by governments (CPAWS, 2002).[22]

*New Trends in Green Funding*

The current funding situation for ENGOs is similar in many respects to that facing the entire non-profit sector at large. The effectiveness of the Canadian environmental community is being threatened by the following three changes to the green funding environment:

- A decline in the *level* of funding from governments and foundations;
- Changes in the *form* of funding; and
- A shift with regards to *who* is receiving funding.

Despite strong public concern [illegible] counterparts (Dale, 1997, p. 4). Core funding, in particular, has born the brunt of this assault. Government and foundation funders are just not as willing to provide funds to ENGOs to help them pay for critical operational expenses (e.g. salaries, professional development activities, equipment, office rent, telephone bills) as they once used to be.[24]

This reduction in funding levels is of great concern to small and medium-sized ENGOs and newly emerging groups. As funding levels decline, ENGOs are experiencing increased competition for a smaller piece of the funding pie; consequently, they are devoting more time and money to fundraising activities.[25] For many of the larger and older ENGOs, this does not pose a major hardship. Nurtured by core funding from governments during their early years of operation, these groups are able to handle an increase in their fundraising costs, without compromising or abandoning their other essential organizational activities (e.g. program delivery and evaluation). However, most small and medium-sized ENGOs, and newly emerging groups, did not benefit from this influx of core funding. As such, these types of organizations currently lack the resources to increase their fundraising activities and, at the same time, maintain the very nature of their organization. For instance, these ENGOs are spending as much as 70% to 90% of their time on fundraising efforts, at the expense of other critical organizational activities such as program delivery, communication functions, education, strategic planning (Dale, 1997) and evaluation.

In addition to a decline in funding levels, the form of funding has also changed in two main ways. First, all kinds of funders, but especially governments, are increasingly asking for the matching of funds. This means that funders will provide financial support as long as a certain percentage of their grantee's basis (which covers all operational expenses) to project/single issue funding on a contract basis (which covers only a small portion of operational expenses, if at all) (Dale, 1997). This trend is resulting in "the proliferation of short-term projects administered by weak institutions" (Shuman, 1999, p. 33). For instance, some ENGOs, like other types of non-profit organizations, are reducing their operational expenses by eliminating "core administrative support" (Juillet et al., 2001, p. 36). Others are spending more time fundraising and less time delivering programs and conducting other necessary organizational activities (e.g. evaluation), in order to secure more contracts (Juillet et al., 2001), since each new contract provides a little more money to cover their overall operational expenses.

ENGOs are not only being affected by changes in the level and form of funding. There has also been a shift with respect to who is receiving financial support. Increasingly, funds are being allocated to ENGOs working on more conservative issues. For example, ENGOs that focus on the 'safe' issue 8ac-40aand f increasingly expecting them to report on the implementation and effectiveness of their environmental programs (Juillet et al., 2001). In order to meet these accountability standards, as well as to inform

Notwithstanding these efforts to obtain feedback about their work, evaluation is still, overall, not widely practiced in the environmental community (Juillet et al., 2001). It appears that the main reason for this is a lack of funds to cover evaluation costs and a lack of in-house evaluation expertise (Juillet et al., 2001). This is why the most “comprehensive” evaluations are conducted by organizations with “stable sources of public funding” (i.e. quasi-governmental groups, like the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the International Development Research Centre) or, lacking this, those organizations that have established partnerships with other groups that can provide them with evaluation resources (Pinho, 2001). Other reasons cited in the literature that explain why evaluation is not more common include: the absence of clear program goals and objectives (which lay the foundation for evaluation), perhaps due to a lack of in-house expertise in program planning, and a perception within the organization that evaluation will not yield “useful” results (Pinho, 2001).

### 3.3 Summary

According to what little literature exists on evaluation practice in the non-profit environmental sector in Canada, many ENGOs, like most other non-profit groups in this country, are struggling with transformations in the green funding environment that jeopardize their capacity to evaluate their programs. Due to cutbacks in funding levels, for example, many ENGOs, especially resource-constrained small and medium-sized groups or newly emerging organizations that address controversial issues, are not evaluating as often or as expertly as they would like to, especially with respect to program outcomes, impacts or results. After the methodology for this project is presented in Chapter 4, this topic will be further explored in Chapter 5, when the findings from the interviews and document review conducted for this study will be presented.

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research framework, data collection techniques, data sources, data analysis procedures and methods of verification for this study. Most of the information contained in this chapter originates from the United States, where evaluation has been an established profession and field of study for the past thirty years.

### 4.1 Research Framework

This study is following the framework of evaluation research, a term that is, according to some evaluation theorists, distinguishable from ‘evaluation’ (Clark & Dawson, 1999) yet also overlapping. Evaluation involves investigating and judging the effectiveness of programs, projects, policies, practices, products, interventions, initiatives, activities, innovations or services (Patton, 2002; Clarke & Dawson, 1999). Evaluation research, on the other hand, “systematically and empirically” examines this effectiveness “through careful data collection and thoughtful analysis” (Patton, 2002, p. 10). Its focus is derived from questions that are formulated at the very start of the evaluation process, preferably as a result of discussions with individuals who intend to use the findings (Patton, 2002). The identification of these questions is, ideally, based on a consideration of the theory of a program. This is because evaluation research, unlike auditing or monitoring, is expected to identify and test program theory, those beliefs and assumptions underlying how a planned program is expected to bring about change (Clarke & Dawson, 1999). These beliefs and assumptions “can be expressed in terms of a phased sequence of causes and effects” (Weiss, 1997, Introduction, ¶3). For example, the theory underlying a wilderness survival program that aims to motivate students to act to resolve environmental problems may be as follows: an increase in knowledge of environmental issues and the development of outdoor skills will result in a more positive attitude about the environment and improved self-esteem, and this change in attitude and increased self-confidence will lead to more environmentally responsible behaviours (e.g. recycling). An evaluation research process would determine whether or not these changes or “little theories” occurred, by collecting information learning why and how a program succeeds or fails, or if resources are in short supply, as is the case in a small-scale evaluation, then this approach is unnecessary (Weiss, 1997).

Evaluation research not only judges effectiveness on a systematic basis or, sometimes, identifies and

The case study can focus on one case (single-case design) or several cases (multiple-case design) (Yin, 1994). Methodological triangulation (the use of multiple data collection strategies) and data triangulation (the use of multiple data sources) to gather qualitative and/or quantitative information are key characteristics of this approach (Gillham, 2000; Burns, 2000; Yin, 1994). This study is a single case study, as the unit of analysis or 'case' is one "complex and abstract" activity: program evaluation in non-profit ENGOs in the Lower Mainland. In particular, *recent* evaluation activities (i.e. those occurring at the time of the interview and/or those completed in the past three years) were studied. Like most single case studies, this study used multiple qualitative data collection strategies (literature review, interviews and document analysis) and multiple data sources (ENGOs, green funders and documentary materials).

### 4.2 The Role of the Researcher

As case study data is interpreted by the researcher, it is necessary to identify how my experiences and perspectives may bias data analysis. My perception of evaluation practice in the non-profit environmental sector was shaped by my contract work with an environmental organization in the Lower Mainland. From June to August 2000, I designed outcome evaluation strategies for this group's projects, publications, web site and advocacy initiatives. I believe this experience enhanced my knowledge and sensitivity about the challenges, decisions and issues surrounding the implementation and practice of evaluation in small organizations with limited time, money, personnel and evaluation expertise.

Due to this work experience, I brought certain assumptions to this study. For example, I commenced this research from the perspective that ENGOs are interested in and need to improve their evaluation efforts in order to meet the accountability standards of their funders and their internal information needs. I also presumed that green funders play a key role in enhancing or compromising evaluation practice in ENGOs, and that they would like to help their environmental grantees improve their evaluation efforts.

### 4.3 Research Methods

From January 2001 to August 2002, data was gatheo5infoeatiogugust uation -0 woulmt the accounta4 Tc -0.futc a with one method are compensated by the strengths inherent in other methods (Clarke & Dawson, 1999).

### 4.3.1 Literature Review

Throughout the research process, literature on evaluation, the non-profit sector in Canada, ENGOs, and qualitative research was collected and analyzed. The literature review shaped the research design and clarified the underlying assumptions of the research enterprise. It also established the need for this study by revealing gaps in previous research, and it clarified the purpose statement and research questions[27], which, in turn, influenced the choice of data collection methods. Finally, it guided the content and design of the interview questions, and it presented ideas for the interpretation, analysis and presentation of the survey findings (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

### 4.3.2 Interviews

The interview is one of the most important sources of information in case study research (Yin, 1994). The interview is appropriate to use when the researcher aims to investigate a sensitive topic with a small number of 'key' individuals using mainly open-ended questions (Gillham, 2000). It is also a preferred strategy "when extensive data is required on a small number of complex topics" (Burns, 2000, p. 583). The interview is a flexible method (Burns, 2000), as probes can be used to explore unanticipated issues, clarify answers and deepen responses to open-ended questions (Patton, 1990). Additionally, the researcher can immediately clarify questions that the participant does not understand (Singleton & Straits, 1999). Interviews also exhibit high response rates, probably due to the novelty of participating in an interview, the opportunity to talk about oneself, and the difficulty of refusing the interviewer's request (Singleton & Straits, 1999). Other factors contributing to high response rates may be an interest in the topic being explored, and remuneration, such as money or a copy of the completed study.

As with all data collection methods, interviews have some disadvantages. Compared to mail questionnaires, telephone interviews and focus groups, interviews are more expensive and time-consuming to conduct (Burns, 2000; Singleton & Straits, 1999; HCU, 2001). Varied responses to open-ended questions can be difficult to analyze, interpret and compare (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998). As well, response validity (accuracy) may be compromised by certain interview procedures such as a lengthy interview and improper wording and/or ordering of the questions, as well as an interviewer's

[27] The purpose statement and research questions were also clarified as a result of telephone and one-on-one discussions with two evaluation consultants and a green funder.

lack of training and poor listening skills.  Finally, the participant may jeopardize response validity through faulty memory, lack of knowledge, indifference, a reaction to the interviewer's personality or gender, or an inclination to respond to questions in a socially desirable way (Weiss, 1975).

To gather data for this study, the standardized interview approach was adopted.  In the standardized interview, information is collected using an interview schedule (or questionnaire) which "consists of instructions to the interviewer together with the questions to be asked, and, if they are used, response options" (Singleton & Straits, 1999, p. 254).  All participants are asked the same preand/or accidental or intentional destruction (Scott, 1990). As well, the information contained in the documents may be inaccurate, biased, incomplete and outdated (Patton, 1990; Scott, 1990).

### 4.4 Data Sources

This study is based on information retrieved from three data sources: ENGOs, green funders and documentary evidence.

#### 4.4.1 ENGOs and Green Funders

Case study researchers typically use a non-probability method of sampling known as purposeful or criterion-based sampling (Burns, 2000). Purposeful sampling involves the non-random selection of "information-rich cases" (Patton, 1990, p. 169) according to the presence of specific criteria defined by the researcher. In this study, ten ENGOs, and key informants within these organizations (Appendix I), were purposefully sampled according to the following criteria:

- The ENGOs were expected to be variable in size. In this analysis, attempts were made to include small, medium and large-sized organizations; however, most large-sized ENGOs declined to be interviewed, citing a lack of time or an unwillingness to discuss funding arrangements with someone external to their organization;
- The organizations, as a whole, were expected to represent a diversity of environmental topics, such as recycling, urban transportation, naturalization, and environmental education; and
- Within these ENGOs, key informants were required to be knowledgeable about evaluation and fundraising in their organization.

In addition, five green funders, and key informants within these organizations (Appendix II), were purposefully sampled according to the following criteria:

- The green funders, as a whole, were expected to be variable in type. In this study, attempts were made (with success) to include many different kinds of donors found in the Lower Mainland (i.e. a private business, co-operative, community foundation, corporate foundation, and federal government agency);
- In the past three years, they required one or more ENGOs selected for this study to submit interim and/or final evaluation reports to account for the expenditure of donated funds; and
- Within these organizations, the interview participants were expected to have reviewed evaluation reports by ENGOs as a requirement of their employment.

and documentary evidence was performed.  A content analysis “involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns [and themes] in the data” (Patton, 2002, p. 463).  For example, one pattern that was revealed from the qualitative findings was, “Most environmental groups are not satisfied with their evaluation capacity”, while the corresponding theme was “evaluation capacity”.  With respect to the quantitative evidence (i.e. numbers) arising from the fixed-choice, close-ended questions asked in the interviews, this information was displayed in tables (see Chapter 5).

## 4.6 Methods for Verification

### 4.6.1 Reliability

A reliable study produces consistent information if it is repeated following the exact same procedures described by the initial researcher (Yin, 1994).  In this study, reliability was improved by incorporating some close-ended questions into the interview schedule (Fink & Kosecoff, 1998) and carefully documenting the steps involved in conducting this work so that it can be replicated in the future (Burns, 2000).  Reliability was also enhanced through reporting the researcher’s bias (as noted in Section 4.2), using methodological triangulation (Section 4.3) and adopting data triangulation (Section 4.4) (Burns, 2000).

### 4.6.2 Internal Validity

An internally valid study generates accurate information; that is, the findings should match reality (Creswell, 1994 citing Merriam, 1988).  However, it should be recognized that attention to internal validity is not as important in a qualitative case study as it is in a quantitative study, as noted by Burns (2000, p. 476):

> …if the major assumption underlying qualitative research is that reality is ever-changing, subjective in interpretation and holistic, and not a single fixed entity, then it is not feasible to try and measure congruence between the data collected and some notion of reality.  In a case study what is being observed is a participant’s notion

ways to improve the accuracy of the evidence (which were not used in this study) include using a three-interview structure for eac

## CHAPTER 5: STUDY FINDINGS

After some general organizational information about the interview participants is presented, this chapter introduces the main findings from the interviews and document review, arranged according to the topic areas covered by the research questions guiding this study: the purposes of evaluation, evaluation activities in ENGOs, the effectiveness of ENGO evaluations, ENGO evaluations for green funders, and the evaluation capacity of ENGOs.

### 5.1 General Organizational Information

The date of establishment of ENGOs interviewed for this study ranges from 1974 to 1993. Three organizations were established in the 1970s, four in the 1980s, and three in the 1990s. From a list of issues derived from the *BC Environmental Directory* (1998), these groups were asked to identify the major topics that they currently focus on. All of the ENGOs felt that their organization addresses more than one environmental topic, and so they selected two or more options. Environmental education was the most frequently mentioned topic area, followed closely by urban issues. Table 14 lists all of the topics presented to the ENGOs and the number of times each topic was selected by the ten respondents.

**Table 14: The Environmental Issues Supported by the ENGO Interviewees**

| OPTIONS | NUMBER OF GROUPS |
|---|---|
| Environmental Education | 8 |
| Urban Issues | 7 |
| Wildlife | 5 |
| Parks & Wilderness | 4 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Make program improvements | 9 |
| Meet funders' evaluation requirements | 8 |

Determine long-

### 5.3 Evaluation Activities in ENGOs

#### 5.3.1 Types of Evaluations

All of the ENGOs interviewed for this study reported that informal and formal evaluations are both valuable sources of information about program implementation and/or outcome.[31] As depicted in Table 17, half of the groups indicated that they conduct an equal amount of both evaluation types. Three of the organizations perform more informal than formal assessments, while two groups conduct more formal than informal evaluations. All of the groups verbally expressed a strong interest in conducting more formal assessments.

**Table 17: The Frequency of Informal and Formal Evaluations**

| RESPONSE CATEGORIES | NUMBER OF ENGOs |
|---|---|
| Entirely informal | 0 |
| More informal than formal | 3 |
| Equally informal and formal | 5 |
| More formal than informal | 2 |
| Entirely formal | 0 |

In addition to the use of both informal and formal evaluations, all ENGOs surveyed for this study, as shown in Table 18, conduct a mixture of process/implementation evaluation (e.g. the measurement of inputs/resources and outputs such as the number of goods and services provided and the number of people served by the program) and outcome assessments (e.g. the identification of changes in individuals, the larger community/environment and the staff/organization carrying out the program). Some ENGOs (3 groups) spend an equal amount of time collecting process and outcome information. However, most organizations (7 groups) favor process evaluation.

**Table 18: The Frequency of Process and Outcome Evaluations**

| RESPONSE CATEGORIES | NUMBER OF ENGOs |
|---|---|
| Entirely process-oriented | 0 |
| More focused on process than outcome | 7 |
| Equally focused on process and outcome | 3 |
| More focused on outcome than process | 0 |
| Entirely outcome-oriented | 0 |

[31] The interviewer verified the participants' understanding of the difference between an informal and formal evaluation by asking them to provide examples of these two types of evaluation. According to the respondents, asking impromptu questions such as "How is the program going?" in a staff meeting, at a conference or out in the field constitutes an informal assessment. A formal evaluation is more systematic and pre-planned; for example, it involves using a database to generate statistical reports on a monthly basis, or delivering on-site questionnaires after every workshop, classroom presentation, or other regularly scheduled activity.

**Table 19: The Collectors of Information for ENGO Evaluations**

| COLLECTORS OF INFORMATION | NUMBER OF ENGOs |
|---|---|
| Staff | 10 |

**Table 20: The Data Collection Methods Used by ENGOs**

| DATA COLLECTION METHODS | NUMBER OF ENGOs |
|---|---|
| Questionnaire/Survey | 10 |
| Informal Conversations | 7 |

reservations about the credibility and accuracy of this type of information.[32] As such, these groups stated that they prefer to collect numbers and then use their qualitative findings to back them up, as explained by one respondent:

> I need the quantitative. I want the qualitative, but I want to be able to use it somehow. And if I'm writing a grant proposal, it's very easy for me to say '4500 kids came to our program last year' and throw a couple of quotes in to give them that feel of the program and that builds confidence than if I just had a bunch of feel and no numbers to back it up, so it's got to be a mix [of quantitative and qualitative data].

### 5.3.3 Users of Evaluation Information

Once the information is collected, who looks at it? Not surprisingly, staff members[33] are the most popular audience for the results, as shown in Table 22. Most of the time, staff members learn about the evaluation findings in office meetings or through ad hoc, one-on-one conversations in the workplace. To a lesser extent, they acquire evaluation information by reading written evaluation reports, financial statements, annual organizational reports, copies of completed surveys, and other documents that cite the evaluation findings one way or another.

After this information is distributed to staff members, what do they do with it? All of the organizations

**Table 22: The Users of Evaluation Information**

| USERS OF EVALUATION INFORMATION | NUMBER OF ENGOs |
|---|---|
| Staff | 10 |

**Table 23: ENGO Perceptions of the Credibility of ENGO Evaluation Content**

| RESPONSE CATEGORIES | NUMBER OF ENGOs |
| --- | --- |

According to the funders, the content of ENGO evaluations is considered to be credible for the following reasons:

- The group has “press”, that is, a tangible, well-publicized deliverable (e.g. the Great Bear

As with the issue of credibility, ENGOs provided many reasons to explain why they believe the content of their evaluations is useful, as follows:

- The evaluation contains a mixture of qualitative and quantitative information;
- The information collected is specifically numerical and narrative, instead of general like "overall, they really liked the program";
- The information collected answers the pre-planned evaluation questions;
- The evaluation includes negative feedback from the target audience;
- The evaluation is conducted by an internal evaluator;
- The evaluation has a set format over the years, so that change over time is readily apparent and trends can be easily identified;
- The evaluation contains questions that make a person truly reflect on his or her experience with the program; and
- The evaluation is conducted soon after a project ends so that the target audience's recall is fresh.

Alternatively, ENGOs admitted that a number of factors limit the usefulness of the content of their evaluations, such as: (1) the evaluation does not provide information about the outcome of the program; (2) the evaluation is incomplete (i.e. not everything about a program is assessed, due to resource constraints); (3) they are not always sure how to analyze or make sense of the information once it is collected; (4) the internal evaluator has not been formally trained in evaluation; (5) the evaluation is not pre-planned, but rather, ad hoc and sporadic; and (6) the evaluation findings do not feed into the bigger picture of how the program is supposed to operate.

Green funders were also asked to rate the usefulness of the content of ENGO evaluations according to the same ranking scale given to the ENGOs. As shown in Table 26, most of the funders (4 out of 5) chose the option of 'moderately useful', while one funder selected the category of 'extremely useful'. No funders chose the option of 'not useful'.

**Table 26: Funder Perceptions of the Usefulness of ENGO Evaluation Content**

| RESPONSE CATEGORIES | NUMBER OF FUNDERS |
|---|---|

- They can use the information to meet the accountability standards of their donors, board members and other stakeholders;
- The information informs their strategic planning and documentation process, as well as the way they grant funds;
- The information is shared with other parties (e.g. community agencies)[35];
- The evaluation reports are concise and clearly written; and
- The evaluation reports are honest about shortcomings and challenges, so that they learn 'something', as the following quote illustrates:

> An evaluation that…challenges its original assumptions and says, 'Here's what we've learned, here's what we haven't learned, here's where we could have improved, here's an area we didn't even think about but it came out of one of the findings and it's got us thinking', those are the evaluations that are really helpful for me because then it helps me assess the next group of projects that come in the door…a good evaluation teaches you something and a poor one doesn't.

## 5.5 ENGO Evaluations for Green Funders

### 5.5.1 The Evaluation Requirements of Green Funders

As noted in Chapter 3, ENGOs are increasingly being required to conduct evaluations for their funders. This begs the following question: "What exactly are green funders' evaluation requirements for ENGOs and how do they compare from funder to funder?" As depicted in Table 27, all of the funders expect some form of a written evaluation report, and, in most cases, a financial statement. The majority of funders (4 out of 5) allow ENGOs to determine the format of the evaluation report. This flexibility is much appreciated by environmental groups, who would be further administratively burdened if they had to adhere to different evaluation formats for each of their funders. To varying degrees, the funders expect the evaluation reports to identify program process (e.g. the number of goods and services delivered, or the number of people served by a workshop) and outcomes (e.g. changes in the behaviour or actions of people being served by the program). To help ENGOs gather this information, some funders (2 out of 5) provide written evaluation tips or resources to guide their grantees through their internal evaluation process. However, most funders (3 out of 5) do not provide ENGOs with additional funds to cover the cost of conducting evaluation, even though they require assessments from their environmental grantees.[36] In fact, many funders do not invite ENGOs

[35] In fact, some of the funders mentioned that they are considering the implementation of specific dissemination initiatives to distribute the evaluation findings to their entire organization, its members and/or the public at large. Potential initiatives mentioned included posting the "better" ENGO evaluations on their web site or creating a library where people can review the ENGOs' evaluation reports.

[36] These funders expect ENGOs to set aside, at their discretion, a certain percentage of the awarded project funds for evaluation-

**Table 27: The Evaluation Requirements of Green Funder Interviewees**

| FUNDERS | EVALUATION REQUIREMENT | WHO DETERMINES THE FORMAT OF THE EVALUATION REQUIREMENT? | ARE WRITTEN EVALUATION TIPS OR RESOURCES PROVIDED BY FUNDER? | DOES FUNDER PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO COVER EVALUATION COSTS? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Progress reports (for large projects only), final (i.e. end-of-project) report with financial statement | ENGOs determine the format of the report but are asked to consider a checklist of points they may like to address | Yes | Yes |
| B | Final report with financial statement | ENGOs determine the format of the report but are required to answer a small number of funder-defined questions | No | No |
| C | Quarterly reports and quarterly financial statements (for long projects only), final report with financial statement | Funder determines the format of the report (ENGOs are required to complete 'fill-in-the-blank' reports) | Yes | Yes |
| D | Progress report, final report with financial statement | ENGOs determine the format of the report but are required to address a small number of funder-defined questions | No | No |
| E | Progress reports and final report for large grants (no evaluation reports for small grants) | ENGOs determine the format of the report but are required to answer a small number of funder-defined questions | No | No |

to request evaluation funds in their grant proposal[37] because they consider their evaluation requirements to be simple, informal, and flexible (and so they should take very little time to complete) and/or it is simply not their policy to fund organizational capacity.

### 5.5.2 Impressions of the Evaluation Requirements of Green Funders

Given that ENGOs are required to meet their funders' evaluation requirements, whether or not they are provided with the funds to do so, the question remains, "Exactly how do ENGOs feel about these requirements?" As such, ENGOs interviewed for this study were asked to identify their likes and concerns about their funders' evaluation requirements. For comparative purposes, funders, too, were asked to speculate on ENGOs' likes and concerns about their requirements.

As depicted in Table 28, some ENGOs and funders share certain likes about the evaluation requirements. For example, they both appreciate that they force ENGOs to examine their work, that ENGOs can determine the format of the evaluation report, and the evaluation questions are, in most cases, simple, clear and specific. Additionally, some of the ENGOs and funders had common concerns. They mentioned that the funders' expectations are not always very clear and the evaluation requirements can be too complex and time-consuming when small amounts of money are awarded. Not surprisingly, however, most of those who were interviewed had different likes and concerns about the evaluation requirements, as also noted in Table 28. Most likely this is due to the fact that the ENGOs and funders targeted in this study have variable evaluation capacities and evaluation requirements, respectively.

Despite their concerns, the majority of ENGOs feel, on the whole, quite positive about their funders' evaluation requirements, as the following quotes illustrate:

> I feel pretty good about them…I think that they're very understanding of the need to set priorities within the context of the project.
>
> I'm glad that it [evaluation] is part of the requirements of the funders.
>
> For the most part, they're reasonable.

---

[37] As such, many ENGOs do not request evaluation funds or they do so inconsistently. Overall, six out of ten ENGOs interviewed for this study ask for evaluation money once in a while (usually 10% of the total project budget). Only one ENGO interviewed asks for evaluation funds all of the time.

As well, ENGOs believe that they are satisfying their funders' evaluation requirements. This opinion is based on the fact that they have not received any negative feedback from their donors about the quality of their reports, and they are still granted funds after they submit their evaluation findings.

Funders, too, feel “pretty good”, “good” and “all right” about their evaluation requirements for their environmental grantees. However, they believe that some measures could be taken to improve these ratings. For example, they could make their evaluation questions less ambiguous; accept ENGO annual reports and publications as a final evaluation report; provide more evaluation guidance (e.g. written ‘how-to’ evaluation publications or guidebooks with examples that specifically refer to environmental programs); ask for feedback from ENGOs about the evaluation requirements, and make changes accordingly; eliminate the requirement to submit quarterly progress reports; regularly review and assess their evaluation expectations to determine what is working and what is not working, and then make adjustments; and reduce the amount of written information required by ENGOs by collecting more data through site visits.

When funders were asked, “Is there anything that the entire green funding community can do to improve its evaluation requirements?”, most of their answers made reference to the issue of standardization. However, this is not considered to be a viable option at the present time, given the variety of funding organizations in operation, and their different mandates and accountability needs, as explained below:

> It [standardization] is not going to happen because our donors want X, their donors want Y, and we're really more about responding to the community and less about figuring out common mutual application forms…We haven't actually come together and said, ‘Let's develop evaluation standards for environmental groups in BC.’ We haven't done it, and I think you'll find that's going to be really hard especially with a raTc oard especially wms); a gnc0

### 5.6 The Evaluation Capacity of ENGOs

#### 5.6.1 Rating Evaluation Capacity

As noted in Chapter 1, the term ‘evaluation capacity’ refers to the ability of ENGOs to allocate resources (i.e. time, money, personnel and expertise) to evaluation activities. When ENGOs were asked to rate their evaluation capacity, most groups (4 out of 10) chose the ‘barely acceptable’ option, as noted in Table 29. A total of three organizations deviated from the rating scale provided, by describing their evaluation capacity as “between good and barely acceptable”. With respect to the rest of the organizations, one ENGO selected ‘good’, another chose ‘poor’ and the final group did not provide an answer. Some of these responses and related comments are noted below:

**Table 29: Rating of ENGO Evaluation Capacity by ENGOs**

**RESPONSE CATEGORIES**

Overall, ENGOs are disappointed with their evaluation capacity. This is because they are unable to implement more formal evaluations, carefully plan their assessments before their programs are implemented, and address their own evaluation questions (that is, during those times when the answers to their funders' evaluation questions will not satisfy all of their internal information needs). Due to a lack of evaluation training, they do not possess in

### 5.6.2 Strengthening Evaluation Capacity

According to both ENGOs and funders, there are a few things that can be done to strengthen the evaluation capacity of environmental groups. When ENGOs were asked the question, “Is there anything that your organization can do to increase its evaluation capacity?”, the majority of organizations mentioned the need to allocate more time to learning, and this means cultivating an organizational commitment to evaluation practice. As noted by one respondent, “Evaluation and accountability [is] freeing up time. It’s recognizing it’s an important part of the job.” In many cases, this requires a directive from the t

- Plan for their evaluation while they design their program;
- Be clear about their program objectives;
- Collect evaluation information while the program is being implemented so that the data is at their fingertips when they need to write an evaluation report;
- Assign staff specific evaluation tasks to complete;
- Ask their funders questions if they are confused about the evaluation expectations/requirements; and
- Share their evaluation techniques with other ENGOs in order to generate evaluation knowledge within the environmental community.

In addition to being asked if they could do anything to increase their evaluation capacity, ENGOs were also asked the question, “Is there anything that your funders can do to increase your evaluation capacity?”. The most popular response was the qj3e9ity, ENw ( ) hpything 6i9 -0.128 0 11.04 Tf-0i

- Provide more evaluation guidance (e.g. formal evaluation training or ‘how-to’ evaluation toolkits, guides and other written resources);
- Meet more often with groups to make their evaluation expectations, and the reasoning behind them, clearer;
- Increase funding for the administrative portion of the grant; in other words, provide additional

## CHAPTER 6: THEMES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses the findings from this study. First, a number of key themes are presented, followed by a series of recommendations for strengthening evaluation practice in ENGOs. Lastly, suggestions for future research, a few limitations of this study, and some final conclusions are offered.

### 6.1 Key Themes

During the course of this study, a number of inter-related themes were tested and verified that deserve to be highlighted. These themes—the evaluation process, green funders' evaluation expectations and ENGO evaluation capacity—are presented below.

#### 6.1.1 The Evaluation Process

*Most ENGO evaluations are funder-driven*

Most evaluations by ENGOs are prompted by the accountability demands of their funders, rather than by the information needs of the ENGOs themselves. That is, funders compel ENGOs to evaluate, using their evaluation questions (even though these questions do not always produce findings that will benefit the grantee). If the information that is acquired is deemed useful by ENGOs, then the findings accountability purposes, and (2) there is a clear understanding amongst ENGOs that the findings from systematic, pre-planned evaluations can significantly improve the effectiveness of their work.

*ENGOs want to conduct more outcome evaluations*

ENGOs are focusing most of their evaluation efforts on easily-measured program processes (i.e. inputs/resources and outputs such as the types of activities carried out, the number of goods and services provided, and the number of people served) rather than program outcomes (i.e. changes in individuals, the larger community/environment, and the staff/organization that delivered the program). ENGOs, however, want to know more about the outcomes of their work, especially since some donors are basing their funding decisions on the receipt of outcome assessments.

*ENGOs want to improve the quality of their internal evaluations*

ENGOs prefer to conduct internal evaluations to collect information for their funders, program staff and other stakeholders, but they do not feel 100% confident that their assessments are ‘good enough’. They wonder, for instance, if they are asking the right evaluation questions, gathering enough information, using the most appropriate data collection methods, and collecting information at the right time during the project’s lifecycle. Consequently, they would like to receive more training in evaluation and/or the services of an external evaluation consultant who can provide them with periodic guidance/input during their internal evaluation process.

### 6.1.2 Green Funders’ Evaluation Expectations

*Green funders expect ENGOs to evaluate their programs*

Like ENGOs, green funders are accountable to their board members, donors and other stakeholders. Understandably, then, they require their grantees to provide evaluations documenting the implementation and effectiveness of the programs they fund. Despite this requirement, however, many funders (especially those who define their evaluation requirements as ‘informal’ or ‘low maintenance’) do not provide additional funds to ENGOs to cover their evaluation costs. Even fewer funders provide ENGOs with funds to cover the cost of disseminating their evaluation findings to other stakeholders (e.g. the media, the environmental community at large and policy-makers) through, for example, long-distance telephone calls, publications, and presentations at conferences.

*Green funders want honest evaluations from ENGOs*

Many ENGOs are afraid that they will not be able to attract future funding if they are completely honest and open about minor and/or significant program difficulties. However, funders interviewed for this study indicated that they want to learn about project successes *and* weaknesses or areas of improvement so that they, too, can find out what exactly works and does not work. Funders, then, have to be clear about this preference in their grant application forms, grant acceptance letters and/or personal interactions with their grantees. In other words, they have to admit to ENGOs that they know that projects do not always happen as planned[38], and they have to assure ENGOs that being honest will not negatively affect their bottom line.

*Green funders want informative yet concise evaluations from ENGOs*

Green funders do not want to read lengthy evaluation reports, since their time is also in short supply. They prefer concise and jargon-free assessments that clearly summarize the program, including the objectives that were met (i.e. the successes), what did not work, what would be done differently, and what new things were learned. Photographs, in particular, are an appreciated supplement to an evaluation report.

*Green funders do not want to burden 'action-oriented' ENGOs with more paperwork*

As noted earlier, green funders need to know what ENGOs are doing with their money, since they, too, are accountable to certain stakeholders. Yet, at the same time, they do not want to burden groups with massive amounts of paperwork. One way that funders are getting around this is by requiring ENGOs to complete only a small number of evaluation questions (i.e. typically less than ten) in a format decided upon by their grantees. Another way is by reducing the number of interim/progress evaluation reports required for projects that are short in duration (i.e. six months or less).

### 6.1.3 ENGO Evaluation Capacity

*Most ENGOs are not happy with their evaluation capacity*

Overall, ENGOs are producing fairly credible and useful evaluations for their funders and program staff. They are, however, dissatisfied with their capacity to allocate resources to evaluation activities. For example, they are having difficulty conducting more formal/systematic evaluations, implementing outcome assessments, developing in-house evaluation expertise, and hiring external evaluation consultants to assist their internal evaluators.

*Most green funders feel good about ENGO evaluation capacity*

Since the evaluations that they receive from ENGOs are, overall, meeting their information needs, the majority of funders interviewed for this study feel pretty good about the evaluation capacity of their environmental grantees. However, they did note that there is an 'evaluation capacity discrepancy' within the environmental sector. Those ENGOs that are well-funded, whether they are large or small, newly emerging or well-established[39], typically possess the administrative capacity to plan and implement high-quality evaluations on a regular basis. This is because well-funded ENGOs can devote more time to evaluation, hire external evaluation consultants for assistance, if desired, and retain staff for longer periods of time, thus cultivating long-term evaluation expertise within their organization.

## 6.2 Recommendations for Strengthening Evaluation Practice in ENGOs

Throughout the course of this study, it became apparent that ENGOs and their funders can take certain steps to strengthen evaluation practice in the environmental sector. As noted below, some of these key recommendations refer to the evaluation process itself, while others focus on the issue of evaluation capacity.

### 6.2.1 Improving the Evaluation Process of ENGOs

ENGOs can take certain steps to improve their ability to carry out an evaluation. Two key suggestions are noted below:

- *Learn more about evaluation*: Gain familiarity with the evaluation process (as described in Chapter 2 of this study). Resource-constrained organizations, in particular, need to recognize that evaluation does not have to be complex or resource-intensive. As noted by one funder interviewed for this study, "…it [evaluation] isn't rocket science, but it can be if you want it to."

[39] Although, typically, well-funded ENGOs tend to be the larger and well-established/older groups.

- *Collect information during program implementation*: As often as possible, gather data while a program is underway, so that unintended negative effects are immediately identified and resolved soon after they occur, and information is readily available when it comes time to write interim and/or final evaluation reports for funders and other stakeholders.

Green funders, too, can take action to simplify the evaluation process for their environmental grantees. For example, they could:

- *Make their evaluation reporting requirements less onerous*: Allow ENGOs to determine the presentation format of the evaluation report. Also, design different evaluation reporting requirements according to the following factors: (1) the length of the project (e.g. short projects should not require the same amount of paperwork as long projects), and (2) an ENGO's annual budget (e.g. a group with a budget of less than $200,000/year should have "lesser reporting requirements than larger organizations whose annual budgets exceed this amount") (PAGVS, 1999, p. 31).

- *Create a learning culture*: An ENGO will not continuously allocate available resources to evaluation unless it is committed to learning.  Therefore, management must take steps to create a learning organization, one that is consistently committed to the process of reflection, dialogue and action planning.  Given adequate resources, this entails accomplishing the following tasks, amongst others (Preskill, 1994, p. 293):

  > …*assess and communicate…management's commitment* to organizational learning [e.g. by developing an organizational policy requiring evaluation for every program that is planned and implemented, so that assessment becomes as natural an activity as budgeting] and the benefits that individuals and the organization may experience as a result of this transformation…then *provide training* to employees in the areas of coaching, conflict management, group process facilitation, performance feedback, team building, negotiation, critical thinking and evaluation.

- *Request evaluation training*: Ask funders to provide organizational learning and evaluation training workshops, seminars and conferences.  Encourage environmental associations (e.g. the British Columbia Environmental Network), training organizations (e.g. Training Resources for the Environmental Community) and independent evaluation consultants to deliver organizational learning and evaluation seminars to ENGOs.

- *Establish partnerships*: Join forces with well-funded ENGOs or other types of organizations with evaluation resources (e.g. as was the case when the Comox Valley Citizen's for Action on Recycling and the Environment partnered with the University of BC's Institute of Health Promotion Research) (Pinho, 2001).

- *Investigate and participate in initiatives that aim to provide ENGOs with a long-term stable funding base that is not tied to single-issue project funding*: For example, a new initiative called the National Environmental Treasure (NET) is "designed to develop a long-term sustainable endowment fund for the environmental community" (Dale, 1997, p. 2).  The trust fund for this

- *Provide more evaluation guidance*: Distribute written evaluation resources, examples of completed evaluations (i.e. templates) and/or simple evaluation forms or ‘check-off’ lists to environmental grantees. Hire an independent evaluation consultant who can assist one or more environmental groups during evaluation planning and implementation.

- *Diversify their grantmaking practices*: Distribute funds to environmental associations (e.g. the British Columbia Environmental Network), training organizations (e.g. Training Resources for the Environmental Community) and independent evaluation consultants so that they can deliver organizational learning and evaluation training workshops to ENGOs.

### 6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Throughout the course of this research, it became apparent that there is a lack of research on: (1) the Canadian non-profit sector at large, especially the non-profit *environmental* sector and, in particular, ENGOs’ current evaluation efforts and funding circumstances, and (2) the role of evaluation in the Canadian funding community. In order to obtain a richer understanding of these two topics, the following studies would be extremely useful:

- A study of the non-profit sector in Canada, in particular “the strengths and weaknesses of the…sector, its contributions to Canadian life, the factors that constrain its role, the impact of current government strategies toward the sector, the attitudes of the public, and so on” (Hall & Banting, 2000, pp. 23-24).
- A study comparing the funding levels for ENGOs with other types of non-profit organizations (e.g. health, education, international development), given claims that the funding levels for ENGOs are not as generous as for other kinds of non-profit groups (Dale, 1997).
- A study of the breakdown of total revenue sources for the Canadian environmental sector.
- An overview of current evaluation approaches and needs in ENGOs in the rest of Canada, with special attention paid to the differences between well-funded and under-funded groups, large and small organizations, old and young ENGOs, and high-profile and low-profile groups.
- Case studies examining how current or previous environmental programs have been evaluated by ENGOs or evaluation consultants.
- A study investigating how the decline in core funding in favor of project funding has impacted the ‘health’ of the environmental sector in Canada.
- The extent to which ENGOs are focusing on organizational learning activities, since the use of evaluation is rooted in an organization’s culture of learning.
- A survey of US and Canadian funders to determine which Canadian ENGOs are being funded, the criteria for funding, regional disparities, etc. (Dale, 1997).
- A comparative study of evaluation in Canadian funding organizations, including such topics as their interest in evaluation, their evaluation knowledge/expertise, their evaluation requirements for grantees, and the role that grantee evaluations play in their work.

## 6.4 Study Limitations

There are four key limitations associated with this study. First of all, this project does not represent the opinions of the majority of large, well-funded and high-profile ENGOs in the Lower Mainland. Attempts were made to incorporate their perspectives but these groups declined to be interviewed, citing a lack of time or an unwillingness to discuss their evaluation and funding circumstances with someone who does not work for their organization. Second, this study does not include the viewpoints considered fairly high-quality (i.e. credible and useful), according to the ENGOs and funders interviewed for this study.  This research, however, also revealed some problems with respect to evaluation practice in ENGOs.  For one thing, most of their evaluations are driven by their funders' evaluation requirements as opposed to their internal information needs.  This means that their assessments do not always address those issues that are most applicable to making program

# APPENDIX I: LIST OF ENGOs INTERVIEWED

The following organizational/program profiles contain direct citations from the ENGOs' web sites,

**8. Recycling Council of BC (RCBC)**

| | |
|---|---|
| Participants: | Ms. Tina Neale, Director of Information Services (Primary) |
| | Ms. Natalie Zigarlick, Executive Director (Secondary) |
| Address: | 10-119 West Pender Street, Vancouver, BC V6B 1S5 |
| Phone: | (604) 683-6009 |
| Email: | rcbc@rcbc.bc.ca |
| Web: | www.rcbc.bc.ca |

RCBC is a multi-sectoral non-profit organization working towards waste avoidance. It supports waste management solutions by conducting research, facilitating the exchange of ideas and providing information services such as the BC Recycling Hotline.

**9.**

## APPENDIX II: LIST OF GREEN FUNDERS INTERVIEWED

The following organizational/program profiles contain direct citations from funders' web sites, annual reports, newsletters and/or brochures.

### 1. Environment Canada, EcoAction

| | |
|---|---|
| Participant: | Ms. Karen Lyons, Community Outreach Advisor |
| Address: | Pacific & Yukon Region, 700-1200 West 73rd Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6P 6H9 |
| Phone: | (604) 664-9093/1-800-667-7779 |
| Email: | ecoaction2000.pyr@ec.gc.ca |
| Web: | www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction |

Environment Canada is a federal government agency with a mandate to preserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment, including water, air and soil quality; conserve Canada's renewable resources, including migratory birds and other non-domestic flora and fauna; conserve and protect Canada's water resources; carry out meteorology; enforce the rules made by the Canada-United States International Joint Commission relating to boundary waters; and coordinate environment policies and programs for the federal government.

EcoAction (formerly called Action 21) is an Environment Canada funding program that helps non-profit, non-government groups implement projects that protect or enhance the environment in their community. Priority for funding is given to projects that will achieve results in the areas of clean air and climate change, clean water, and nature.

### 2. Mountain Equipment Co-op, Environment Fund

| | |
|---|---|
| Participant: | Ms. Christina De Haas, Environment Program Coordinator |
| Address: | 149 West 4th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 4A6 |
| Phone: | (604) 707-3343 |
| Email: | cdehaas@mec.ca |
| Web: | www.mec.ca |

Mountain Equipment Co-operative (MEC) is a member owned and directed retail consumer co-operative which provides products and services for wilderness-oriented recreational activities such as hiking and mountaineering. MEC's Environment Fund supports Canadian-based environmental and conservation groups engaged in activities, projects, research and education concerned with environmental conservation and wilderness protection.

### 3. TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

| | |
|---|---|
| Participants: | Ms. Jennifer Taylor, Coordinator, Western Canada<br>Ms. Amanda Perry, Manager, Western Canada |
| Address: | TD Tower, 700 West Georgia Street, 3rd Floor, Vancouver, BC V7Y 1A2 |
| Phone: | (604) 654-8832 |
| Email: | perry.amanda@td.com |
| Web: | www.fef.ca |

Headquartered in Toronto, the TD Bank offers a full range of financial products and services to approximately 13 million customers worldwide.  As of January 25, 2001, TD Bank was Canada's second largest bank in terms of market capitalization and had more than $284 billion in assets. Established in 1990, the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides funding for local community-based environmental initiatives that make a positive difference to the Canadian environment.

**4. Vancouver City Savings Credit Union, Envir**

## APPENDIX III: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## APPENDIX IV: ENGO CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT FORM

Simon Fraser University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection of all times of the interests, comfort and safety of all research participants. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures the researcher will be using in your interview. Your signature on this form will signify that (1) you have read a project description (2) you have received adequate opportunity to consider this form, and (3) you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be held in a secure location and will be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, it is possible that, as a result of legal action, the researcher may be required to divulge information obtained in the course of this research to a court or other legal body.

---

Having been asked by Michelle Rose from the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University to participate in this interview, I have read the project description and I understand the procedures to be used in this research. I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that my supervisor or employer may require me to obtain his or her permission prior to my participation in a study such as this.

I understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the interview with the researcher, Michelle Rose (ph: 604-736-4016 or email: mjrose@sfu.ca), or with Dr. Peter Williams, Director,

## APPENDIX V: GREEN FUNDER CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT FORM

Simon Fraser University and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection of all times of the interests, comfort and safety of all research participants. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures the researcher will be using in your interview. Your signature on this form will signify that (1) you have read a project description (2) you have received adequate opportunity to consider this form, and (3) you voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be held in a secure location and will be destroyed after the completion of the study. However, it is possible that, as a result of legal action, the researcher may be required to divulge information obtained in the course of this research to a court or other legal body.

---

Having been asked by Michelle Rose from the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University to participate in this interview, I have read the project description and I understand the procedures to be used in this research. I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I also understand that my supervisor or employer may require me to obtain his or her permission prior to my participation in a study such as this.

I understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the interview with the researcher, Michelle Rose (ph: 604-736-4016 or email: mjrose@sfu.ca), or with Dr. Peter Williams, Director,
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## APPENDIX VI: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ENGOs

**STRENGTHENING EVALUATION PRACTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LOWER MAINLAND**

by
Michelle Rose, Graduate Student
School of Resource & Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University
Phone: (604) 736-4016 Email: mjrose@sfu.ca

Name & Title: ____________________________________________

Organization: ____________________________________________

Date of Interview: ________________________

### INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this interview is to ascertain and understand the use (or non-use) of evaluation in your organization, including the effectiveness/quality of your evaluations, the common barriers that your organization confronts in using evaluation and the role of your funders with respect to your evaluation activities. The information from this interview will be used to generate recommendations to strengthen evaluation practice in environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia.

When you answer these questions, please consider your *recent* evaluations. Recent evaluations are those occurring at the time of this interview and/or those completed in the past three years.

### DEFINITIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ENGOs | Environmental non-governmental organizations |
| Evaluation | The collection, analysis, and reporting of information about your programs, projects, services, activities, innovations or interventions (I will use the phrase ‘programs, projects or services’ to refer to all of the above terms, but feel free to substitute whatever term makes the most sense to you). |
| Evaluation Capacity | The resources (i.e. time, money, personnel and expertise) required to conduct evaluation in order to satisfy the evaluation requirements of your funders and the information needs of your organization. |
| Evaluation Requirements | Information requested by your funders about the implementation and/or impact of your programs, projects, or services. |
| Funders | Government agencies/departments, foundations or businesses that fund your organization. |

## YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. What are the *major issues* your organization is working on? *(Please check all that apply)*

- o Transportation
- o Environmental Education
- o Urban Issues
- o Waste Reduction/Recycling
- o Tourism
- o Fisheries
- o Forestry
- o Water Quality
- o Parks & Wilderness
- o Wildlife
- o First Nations
- o Health/Toxins
- o Atmosphere/Ozone
- o Other *(Please specify):* ____________________________ ____________________________

2. What year was your organization incorporated as a non-profit society?

3. How many permanent full-time and part-time staff does your organization have?

3. What is the nature of your involvement in evaluation in your organization?

4. Have you personally received formal training in evaluation? If yes, please describe the type of training you received.

## RECENT EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

5. (a) What are the *primary* reasons why your organization conducts evaluations?
   (b) In your opinion, what do *you* think are the most important reasons for conducting evaluations?

6. (a) Evaluations by ENGOs can be informally or formally implemented. Informally implemented evaluations are *sporadic, ad hoc* and *short-lived*. Formally implemented evaluations are more *disciplined*, *systematic* and *on-going*. How would you describe the implementation of evaluation in your organization? *(Please check the appropriate description)*

   o Entirely informal   o More informal than formal   o Equally informal & formal   o More formal than informal   o Entirely formal

   (b) Please provide an example of when your organization informally and/or formally implemented an evaluation.

7. (a) Process evaluations measure *how* a program, project or service is implemented (e.g. Did the program operate as planned?). These evaluations often include information about the *number* of goods and services provided (e.g. How many tours did we provide?) or the *number* of people served (e.g. How many people participated in our program?). Outcome evaluations, on the other hand, measure the overall *impact* or *effect* of a program, project or service (e.g. Did our clients' knowledge increase? Did the program achieve its goals and objectives?). How would you describe evaluation in your organization? *(Please check the appropriate description)*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| o Entirely process-oriented | o More focused on process than outcome | o Equally focused on process & outcome | o More focused on outcome than process | o Entirely outcome oriented |

(b) Please explain your selection.
(c) How would you describe your funders' evaluation requirements for your organization's programs, projects or services? *(Please check the appropriate description)*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| o Entirely process-oriented | o More focused on process than outcome | o Equally focused on process & outcome | o More focused on outcome than process | o Entirely outcome oriented |

8. (a) What *methods* does your organization use to *collect* information about its programs, projects or services?
(b) What methods do *you* prefer to use to collect information? Please explain your answer.
(c) Methods used by ENGOs can be informal (e.g. asking questions after a workshop or tour) or formal (e.g. carefully designed surveys). How would you describe the data collection methods used by your organization? *(Please check the appropriate description)*

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| o Entirely informal | o More informal than formal | o Equally informal & formal | o More formal than informal | o Entirely formal |

(d) Please provide an example of an informal and/or formal method used by your organization.

9. (a) What kinds of information does your organization collect?

- o Quantitative data only (e.g. numerical information)
- o Qualitative data only (e.g. interviews, focus groups)
- o A mixture of quantitative and qualitative data
    - o Mainly quantitative data
    - o Mainly qualitative data
    - o An equal amount of quantitative and qualitative data

(b) What kinds of information do *you* prefer to collect? Please explain your answer.

10. (a) When does your organization collect information? *(Please check all that apply)*

- o Before a program, project or service is implemented
- o During the implementation of a program, project or service
- o After the completion of a program, project or service

(b) When do *you* prefer to collect information? Please explain your answer.

11.

(b) How much do you request in your grant proposals?
(c)

29. Evaluation capacity refers to the resources required to permit your organization to produce evaluation information that will, for example, guide strategic planning or satisfy the evaluation requirements of your funders. Please rate your organization's current evaluation capacity.

o Very good    o Good    o Barely acceptable    o Poor    o Very poor

30. Is there anything that your organization can do to increase its evaluation capacity?

31. Is there anything that your funders can do to increase your evaluation capacity?

## CONCLUSION

32. Overall, how do you feel about your organization’s evaluations?

33. Overall, how do you feel about your funders’ evaluation requirements?

34. Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding your organization’s evaluation or your funders’ evaluation requirements?

## APPENDIX VII: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GREEN FUNDERS

**STRENGTHENING EVALUATION PRACTICE IN ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE LOWER MAINLAND**

by
Michelle Rose, Graduate Student
School of Resource & Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University
Phone: (604) 736-4016 Email: mjrose@sfu.ca

Name & Title: ______________________________________________________

Organization: ______________________________________________________

Date of Interview: ______________________________

### INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this interview is to (1) gain an understanding of your organization's evaluation requirements for environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, (2) identify your opinion regarding the effectiveness/quality of evaluations by ENGOs, and (3) determine how evaluation practice in ENGOs can be strengthened.

When you answer these questions, please consider *recent* evaluation reports by ENGOs. Recent evaluation reports are those completed in the past three years.

### DEFINITIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| ENGOs | Environmental non-governmental organizations |
| Evaluation | The collection, analysis and reporting of information *by ENGOs* about their programs, projects, services, activities, innovations or interventions in order to meet your accountability standards. |
| Evaluation Capacity | The resources (i.e. time, money, personnel and expertise) required to permit ENGOs to conduct evaluation in order to satisfy your evaluation requirements and the internal information needs of ENGOs. |
| Evaluation Requirements | Information requested by your organization about the implementation and/or impact of an ENGO's programs, projects, services, activities, innovations or interventions. |

## YOU AND YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. For private businesses or co-operatives: *Please go to Question 2*

## EVALUATIONS BY ENGOs

9. (a) In your opinion, how *credible* (believable) are evaluations by ENGOs?

   o Extremely credible   o Moderately credible   o Not credible

   (b) Please explain your answer.
   (c) In general, what factors or characteristics make an evaluation by ENGOs credible to you?

10. (a) In your opinion, how *useful* are evaluations by ENGOs?

    o Extremely useful   o Moderately useful   o Not useful

    (b) Please explain your answer.
    (c) In general, what factors or characteristics make an evaluation by ENGOs useful to you?

11. What does your organization do with evaluations by ENGOs? In other words, what use does your organization make of the evaluation findings?

12. How do ENGOs cover the cost of conducting evaluations for your organization?

## THE EVALUATION CAPACITY OF ENGOs

13. Is there anything that ENGOs can do to increase their evaluation capacity?

14. Is there anything that your organization can do to increase ENGOs' evaluation capacity?

## CONCLUSION

15. Overall, how do you feel about your organization's evaluation requirements for ENGOs?

16. Overall, how do you feel about the evaluations you receive from ENGOs?

17. Overall, how do you feel about the evaluation capacity of ENGOs?

18. Is there anything else you would like to comment on regarding your evaluation requirements or evaluations by ENGOs?

**Thank you for your participation in this interview. Would it be possible to obtain documentation about your evaluation requirements for ENGOs (e.g. grant applications, evaluation guidebooks, interim and/or final report forms)?**

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