

Evaluation Study of the CEDO and CEDIP Programs

Final Report

Prepared for:

Western Economic Diversification Canada

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Executive Summary

This document presents the findings and conclusions of an evaluation study of the Community Economic Development Internship Program (CEDIP) and the Community Economic Development Opportunity (CEDO) program. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, design, success and monitoring of both programs.

The mandate of the CEDIP is to hire recent post-secondary graduates to assist the organization with economic development and diversification in their communities. CEDO is a funding vehicle for services and economic development projects conducted by CFDCs, WEI and FEDOs for WD. Its function is to provide a coordinated pan-Western approach to the utilization of the corporate budget to support community economic development activities.

Methodology

The evaluation findings were gathered through key informant interviews and a survey of Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN) partners (CFDCs, WEIs and FEDOs). Nineteen key informant interviews were conducted with WD representatives (14) and other stakeholders (5). The telephone survey involved interviews with 77 WCBSN members. To ensure that each region was adequately represented, the survey data was weighted according to region.

Findings

Relevance

- Overall, both CEDO and CEDIP are viewed as relevant to the needs of the interns, the communities, the WCBSN organizations and WD. There is a recognized need for community-level interventions (vs. business level support) coordinated by the WCBSN members. Both programs support these interventions by helping provide HR (CEDIP) and funds. There is, however, some debate whether CEDO should be provided on an ad hoc basis, or integrated in the overall contribution agreement of the WCBSN organizations.



Results

- The evaluation evidence shows that both programs are successful. For CEDIP, the findings show that interns acquire economic development-related skills and are highly likely to find employment or go to school after the internship. At the community level, CEDIP supports the WCBSN organizations' activities and contribute significantly to community planning activities. Many WCBSN members also report impacts on local business retention as a result of the work of the interns. As an indirect impact, CEDIP also helps retain qualified youth in rural communities.
- The delivery of CEDO varies significantly from region to region. The direct results of most projects include strategic plans and strategies for communities, although it is believed that most projects will have long-term impacts not yet measurable. A number of projects report impacts in terms of HR development in the area of economic development and expanding existing businesses. Most projects leveraged funds from other sources.

Design and Suggestions for Improvement

- At this point, both programs are regionally delivered. This approach was supported by most respondents. However, there were concerns expressed about the approach to project selection and monitoring. According to findings, the selection criteria need to be clarified, as well as the reporting requirements. Some respondents pleaded for a more consistent approach at the pan-western level.
- The application process is not considered timely (turnaround time between the applications and response is considered too long).
- The average amount of funding provided for CEDIP projects has been significantly reduced over the last two years. A number of respondents said that this has made it more difficult for the hosting organizations. In many cases, it has shortened the length of the internship.



Recommendations

Clarify Project Selection Criteria. To ensure that the programs meet their objectives and an equal access to funds on the part of the applicants, WD will need to clarify the selection criteria. In the longer term, WD may want to review all CED funding vehicles to maximize their strategic use.

Clarify Reporting Requirements and Format. WD should also clarify the reporting format for each of the programs to meet accountability requirements. The reporting format should reflect the indicators of the program RMAFs that cover these activities (Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks).

Conduct Follow-up Studies of CED Projects. WD should require WCBSN partners to follow-up on their projects two years after completion to demonstrate impacts. Additional resources may be needed to support such monitoring efforts. This would allow WD to learn best practices from projects that were most successful and demonstrate results for accountability requirements.

Maintain Regional Delivery Options. While the selection and reporting requirements should reflect WD objectives and therefore be standardized at a pan-Western level, the regions should continue to ensure project-selection and monitoring responsibilities. As well, some regions may prefer to integrate part of the program funds in the overall contribution agreements (of the WCBSN members). The capacity for the regions to opt for this delivery approach should be maintained. However, consistency in delivery will make it easier for WD to monitor results. The activities must also be consistent with the Program RMAF associated with the specific WCBSN partners (i.e., CF Program or Service Delivery Network Program, etc.).

Review Level of Funding of CEDIP. Considering that the average level of CEDIP funding was of \$ 10,000 in 2003 (down from \$30,000 in 2001), the issue of funding level remains a concern. WD may want to reconsider the level of funding provided in order to avoid the risk of spreading the program too thin across the WCBSN.



1.0 Introduction

This document presents the findings and conclusions of an evaluation study of the Community Economic Development Internship Program (CEDIP) and the Community Economic Development Opportunity (CEDO) program. The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, design, success and monitoring of both programs. The evidence was collected through key informant interviews and a survey of Western Canada Business Service Network (WCBSN) representatives.

1.1 Structure of Report

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 1 contains this introduction, background information and the evaluation questions;
- Section 2 presents the methodology;
- Section 3 presents the evaluation findings by issue;
- Section 4 outlines the key conclusions; and
- Section 5 presents the recommendations.

1.2 Background

WCBSN

The mandate of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is to promote the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada and to advance the interests of the west in national economic policy. These are in part achieved through WD's Western Canada Business Service Network, which has over 100 points of service including Community Futures Development Corporations, Women's Enterprise Initiative Organizations, Canada Business Service Centres, Francophone Economic Development Organizations and WD offices.



Community Economic Development Internship Program (CEDIP)

The mandate of the CEDIP Program is to hire recent post-secondary graduates to assist the organization with economic development and diversification in their communities. Overall, the CEDIP Program's objective is to offer meaningful career experience to a recent graduate and to support CFDC and WEI CED activities.

Furthermore, the program provides additional resources and support to the WCBSN organization. To be eligible, CEDIP interns must have graduated within the past three years from a post-secondary program. The intern must have been unemployed, underemployed, or working in an unrelated field of study. The contract stipulates that a workplan for the graduate had to be established for the intern. One aspect of this workplan is to address how the intern would support the CED activities the WCBSN organization wanted to undertake.

Community Economic Development Opportunity

CEDO is a funding vehicle for services and economic development projects conducted by WCBSN members for WD. Its function is to support community economic development activities, as identified and prioritized by the local communities serviced by the WCBSN member.

1.3 Key Findings of Previous Evaluation of CEDIP

In 1999, an evaluation was conducted of the CEDIP. The key findings of the evaluation were the following:

- The program was reaching the objectives at that point, according to findings. The program provided meaningful career experiences to youth. The funding allowed the WCBSN organizations to better meet community needs.
- Respondents stated that the services would not have been provided without the CEDIP funding.
- The length of the internships was a source of dissatisfaction. Managers said that a one-year term is not sufficient for the interns to be proficient in the job



responsibilities or to gain trust in the community. Restricted salary of the interns and short contracts posed challenges to the WCBSN organizations. Funding is considered insufficient.

1.4 Evaluation Issues

The evaluation addresses the following issues:

Relevance

- Is there a need for the CEDO? For CEDIP?

Delivery

- Are the CEDO projects properly selected?
- Are the CEDIP interns properly selected?
- Are the CEDO projects relevant for the communities?
- Are the CEDIP interns properly supported by WCBSN members?

Results and impacts

- Are CEDO and CEDIP projects reaching their objectives? Are they leading to improved research and economic planning? Are the results used?

Monitoring and Accountability

- Is the monitoring of CEDO and CEDIP effective?

Alternatives

- What could improve CEDIP? CEDO?



2.0 Methodology

This section outlines the methodology employed in the evaluation. The next section (3.0) presents the evaluation findings by issue. The evaluation used key informant interviews, a telephone survey and focus groups to collect information. These fieldwork activities were actually conducted concurrently for three other evaluation studies, that is, the evaluations of WCBSN, WEI and FEDOs.

2.1 Scope of the Study

The evaluation focuses on the relevance, success and delivery of the CEDO and CEDIP programs. The bulk of the evaluation evidence was gathered through a survey of a representative sample (n=75) of representatives of CFDCs, WEIs and FEDOs (see next subsection for details). The study focused on CEDO and CEDIP projects conducted over the last two years.

2.2 Evaluation Methodology

2.2.1 Key Informant Interviews

Representatives from WD and other stakeholders were interviewed for the evaluation. Stakeholders included community representatives and WCBSN members. Nineteen key informant interviews with WD (14) and other stakeholders (5) were conducted for this evaluation.

2.2.2 Telephone Survey of WCBSN Representatives

The WCBSN Network is composed of approximately 100 member organizations. To gather views on the WCBSN's effectiveness, GGI conducted a telephone survey among WCBSN representatives. In total, 77 WCBSN members were surveyed. The overall response rate was 75 percent. The margin of error of the survey results is 6 percent, 19 times out of 20. To ensure that each region was adequately represented, the survey data was weighted according to region.



3.0 Evaluation Findings

This section presents the overall findings of the evaluation. The section begins with the findings of the evaluation of the CEDIP program.

3.1 Community Economic Development Internship Program

As mentioned earlier, the objective of the CEDIP Program is to provide support to CFDCs and WEIs to hire recent post-secondary graduates to assist their organization in economic development and diversification in their communities. Overall, the CEDIP is intended to “offer meaningful career experience to a recent graduate”. This evaluation study assessed the relevance and success of the CEDIP. The study also gathered views on the effectiveness of program delivery as well as possible improvements in that area.

3.1.1 Relevance

Most respondents agreed that there was a need for CEDIP. Respondents generally agreed that CEDIP was relevant as there is a need for supporting economic development activities coordinated by the WCBSN members. One respondent noted that the CFDCs who use the program find it very important. As outlined below, the program has a number of impacts on the organizations, youth and the community.

Only two WD respondents questioned the relevance of the program. One respondent is of the opinion that both CEDIP and CEDO should be reviewed. According to the respondent, the CEDIP program would benefit interns if they were offered a job at the end of their term (they are not in most cases).



3.1.2 Results

Survey Results

Exhibit 3.1 Did your organization receive any funds for CEDIP projects within the last 2 years?

	Total	CFDC respondents only	Province			
			AB	BC	MB	SK
Total	96	95	29	35	17	16
Yes	58.7%	59.4%	60.0%	66.7%	45.5%	53.3%
No	37.7%	37.0%	28.0%	33.3%	54.5%	46.7%
Don't know	3.6%	3.6%	12.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%

Exhibit 3.1 above describes the number of CEDIP projects reported by the respondents and their regional distribution. As indicated, 59 percent said that they received funding for a CEDIP project. BC seems to make a higher usage of the program (67 percent of the respondents had a project), while Manitoba respondents report a lower usage (46 percent).

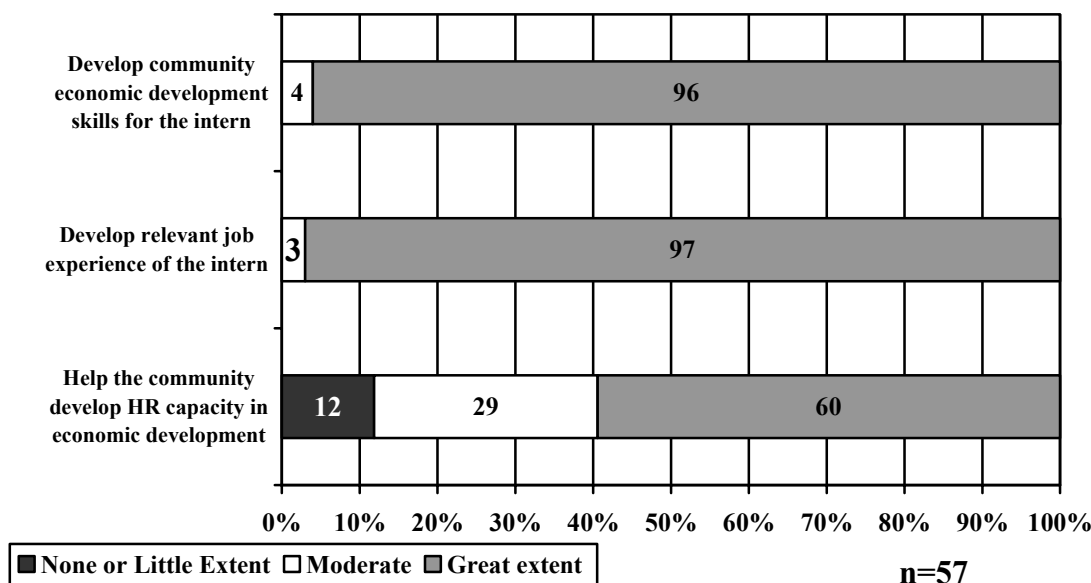
Exhibit 3.2: Occupations of Interns Following Internships

Exhibit 3.2 describes the impacts of the program on the interns. According to results,



46 percent of the interns were working at a new job (since the Internship), and 26 percent were attending school after their internship. Less than 10 percent were

Exhibit 3.3: Impact of CEDIP Projects



looking for work.

Exhibit 3.3 above provides additional impact information reported by WCBSN members. According to survey findings:

- Almost all respondents report that their projects helped the interns develop economic development skills and job experience to “a great extent”.
- Sixty percent said that their project helped the community develop HR capacity in economic development to a great extent. About one-third (29 percent) said that their projects helped develop that capacity to a moderate extent.

Exhibit 3.4: Impact Areas of CEDIP Projects

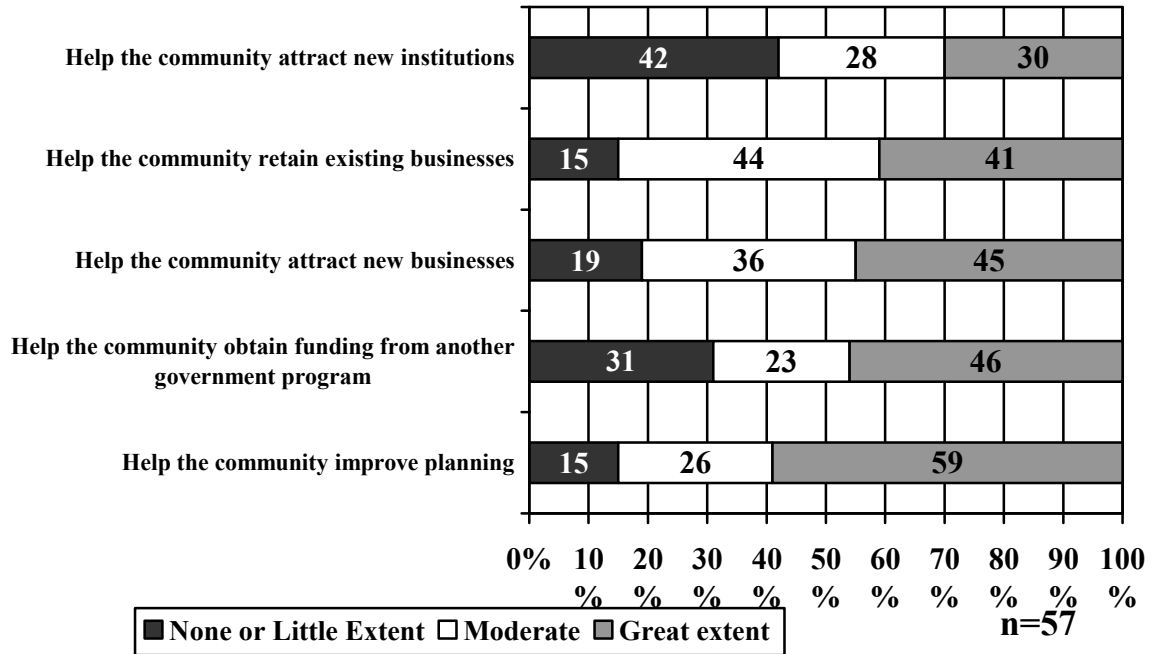


Exhibit 3.4 presents additional survey information on the impacts of CEDIP. Various impact areas were suggested to respondents and these were asked to mention to what extent their projects had an impact on these¹.

- As shown, the most significant impact areas are in community planning and business retainment. Eighty-five percent (85) of the survey respondents reported that their project had an impact on these from a “moderate” to “great extent”.
- Less respondents noted an impact in terms of attracting new institutions (e.g., research, educational or government institutions): 42 percent felt that their projects had no or little impact in that area.

¹ It should be noted that CEDIP projects are not necessarily expected to have impacts on all of these suggested impact areas. The purpose of the survey question was to assess the range of impact areas. It was NOT to assess the degree to which the projects had an impact on these areas as expected.



Key Informant Interviews

The interviews confirm that the program had a positive impact on both the interns and the communities. Respondents noted that CEDIP has a number of benefits, including the following:

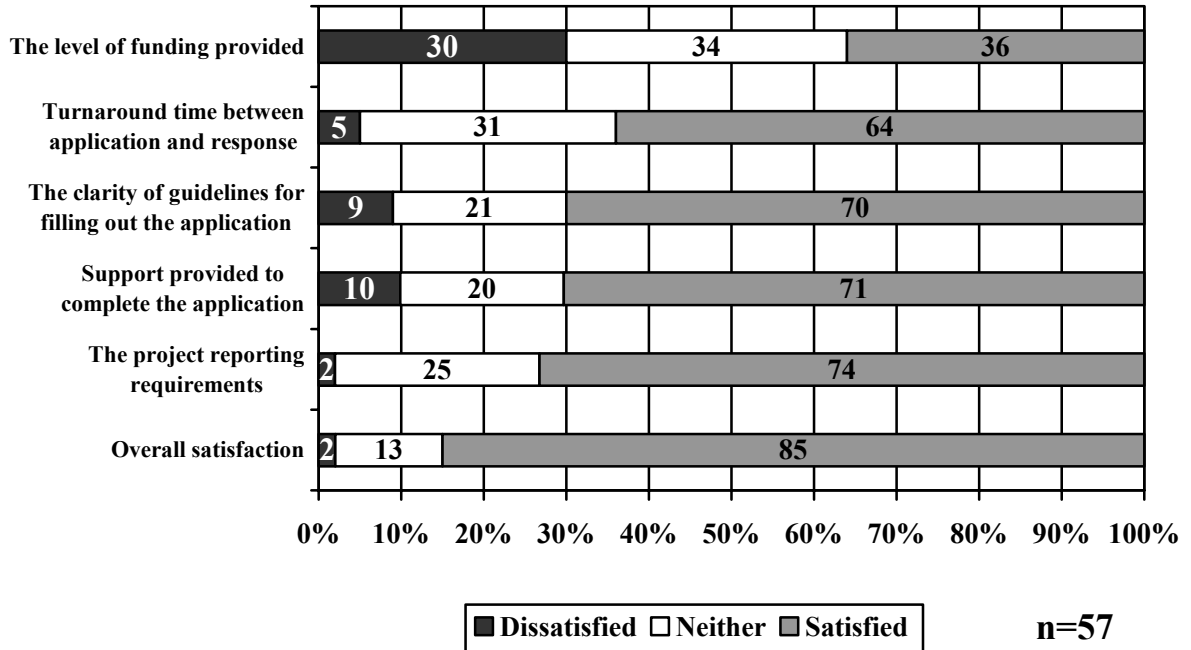
- From the Interns' perspective, respondents mentioned that the internships allow them to acquire experience in community economic development – as long as the work goes beyond filing papers. For example, one respondent mentioned that their CEDIP project involved intern work on tourism and community marketing issues. The CFDCs appreciate the work done by interns as they lack resources to do additional community economic development work. Support to interns is believed to be adequate.
- From the CFDC's perspective, it is a valuable program as they have limited resources to actually conduct CED activities.
- As for the communities, a number of respondents (4) mentioned that they benefit from the fact that the program helps the communities retain youth, at least for the time of the internship, which may eventually bridge to another job in the community. In some cases, the program helps attract youth back to their communities.

According to interview respondents, the program has a strong impact in BC, where CEDIP is used to a greater extent than average across the WD regions. A stakeholder noted that longer internships are more successful than shorter ones. He suggests that they should be a minimum of nine months, while another respondent suggested two years.

One respondent said that CEDIP is spreading money out too thin to actually have an impact. He also thought that the program shifted from its original intent, which was to provide a temporary job experience for interns in transition – not a temporary position leading to a full-time position.



Exhibit 3.5: Satisfaction With WD Delivery of CEDIP Projects



3.1.3 Delivery And Suggestions for Program Improvement

Survey Findings

The above exhibit presents the WCBSN respondents’ assessment of the WD delivery of the CEDIP program. According to the survey:

- The majority of WCBSN members surveyed (85 percent) are satisfied with the delivery of the program overall. About seven respondents in ten are also satisfied with the application guidelines, the support provided for application purposes, and the reporting requirements. Only 36 percent are satisfied with the level of funding.
- A lower percentage of respondents (64 percent) are satisfied with the turnaround time between application and response.



Key Informant Interviews

According to the key informant interviews, a number of changes would improve the results of the program. Two WD respondents thought that CEDIP projects should be more consistent and strategic. For example, they should all involve career-oriented work, not just clerical work. They could also be more strategic for the community.

As for the management of the program, it was also mentioned that the selection for both the interns and the host organizations should be based on pre-established criteria and be broadly disseminated. One respondent noted that the WCBSN organizations should maintain the responsibility of selecting the interns.

- Regarding funding, interviews confirm the survey findings. A WD respondent noted that the timeliness of the funding decisions could be improved. The delay for approvals leaves little time for planning. A CFDC respondent noted that delays in approvals actually reduce internship time. Three respondents noted that CEDIP would benefit from more funds. The level for each project should reflect an appropriate salary. WD officials confirmed that the average amount provided for each internship has diminished: in 2001-2002, average project funding was \$30,000. This amount was reduced to \$20,000 in 2002-2003, and to \$10,000 in 2003-2004. In many cases, the length of the internships has been reduced as a result of these reductions.

A respondent thought that a pre-determined amount should be given to all CFDCs, without any application process. Results would be reported in the quarterly reports. This would ensure more consistency in the level of funding provided (apparently, there are variations). Another respondent noted that in their region, the CEDIP funding will be rolled into the operational funding next year. Each organization will get about \$25,000 for either CEDO or CEDIP. Apparently, this will reduce the administrative burden on the WCBSN member in terms of application and reporting.



3.1.4 Evaluation of CEDIP: Summary of Key findings

Relevance

- Overall, most agree that there is a need for CEDIP, for the interns, the WCBSN members and the communities.

Results

- The program has a significant impact on the interns, the majority having found employment after their internship. Many opted to go back to school. There is a strong agreement that the interns develop economic development related skills during their internship. The program is also effective in helping communities retain youth.
- Most respondent report positive impacts on community planning, as well as helping communities attract new businesses.

Design and Suggestions for Program Improvement

- Many respondents raised the issue of the (insufficient) level of funding. The average level is currently \$10,000 (down from \$30,000), which only covers part of the internship costs.
- The program would benefit from a more clear and concise administrative process, including clear selection criteria, and a quicker turnaround time between application and response.



3.2 Community Economic Development Opportunity Program

As mentioned earlier, the CEDO program (Community Economic Development Opportunity) constitutes a funding vehicle for services and projects identified as priorities in the WCBSN members strategic plan, as it related to community economic development. The program supports projects conducted by CFDCs, WEI and FEDOs for WD. Currently, the program is managed at the regional level and each region has adopted a specific delivery approach. This evaluation study assessed the relevance, success and program delivery of the CEDO program. Views on possible improvements on delivery were also gathered.

3.2.1 Relevance

Key Informant Interviews

Respondents were asked to what degree there was a need for the CEDO program. Overall, respondents distinguished the need for support for community economic development initiatives and the need for the CEDO program specifically.

- In terms of community economic development initiatives in general, the majority of respondents confirmed the need for such efforts. One stakeholder said that there is a need for projects that bring various community stakeholders together to plan and assess community-level economic development issues, something business loans alone do not address. Unfortunately, such collective efforts require funds to support them (“people do not volunteer very long for these things”).
- The majority also confirmed the relevance of the WCBSN members’ role in CED activities. The WCBSN organizations are aware of local needs and have excellent Network linkages to play a leading role in community-level CED projects.

As for the need for the CEDO program in its current form, opinions were mixed among those who responded to the question (less than ten respondents). About half of respondents said that there is need. A national WD respondent explained that it is part of WDs mandate and that the WCBSN members need additional funding to conduct CED projects that go beyond business loans and services to entrepreneurs. They also



mentioned that additional funding was needed.

However, half of the other respondents were either hesitant or felt that the program was not needed, at least in its current form. These respondents felt that CED projects could be conducted within existing funding (WCBSN member operating budgets). A respondent said that it could be use only for exceptional projects, selected case by case. One region (Alberta) provides a pre-set amount to all CFDCs, in addition to some project funding.

3.2.2 Results

Key Informant Interview Findings

According to interview results, the BC region has put high priority on this program and has supported many CEDO projects in the region, especially in the area of rural development. CED activities are supported in that region by many funding vehicles, including SDNP, WDP, the CF program and CEDO. A WD respondent from that region said that hundreds of CEDO projects are supported every year. Examples of successful projects include the following:

- An Internet site that reviews film locations to attract film producers to areas throughout B.C.
- A project to support disabled entrepreneurs in the area of Website development.
- The Business Vitality Index Project, that measured the “business readiness” of communities and identified gaps and opportunities.
- The tourism/agriculture cluster development project in the Fraser Valley. This project facilitated the development of joint tourism/agriculture projects and achieved concrete, immediate results.

A project in Saskatchewan was also given as an example of a successful CEDO project. The project consisted of undertaking a feasibility study to convert condemned grain elevators. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool had announced the closure of 184 grain elevators throughout the province. The closures were to affect 15 communities within the service area of the CFDC. An assessment was conducted to determine the condition of the elevators and possible usage. Crop cleaning/storage and feed milling were identified as possible alternative usages and prime investment opportunities. As a result of the project, 11 elevators were eventually purchased, which resulted in



\$9,718,000 in new investment and an initial 43 new jobs. The communities involved also invested an additional \$88,000 for feasibility studies and business plans.

Other examples were noted in Alberta. In one area, funds were used to work with communities that were directly affected by mine closures. CEDO was used to devise diversification strategies. These were developed by getting together community stakeholders and representatives from the three levels of government to discuss options, alternatives and actions. As a result, various initiatives were developed in the areas of tourism, housing and food/agriculture. Other projects consisted of developing plans and assessing the feasibility of various projects, such as recreational facility development projects. In all cases, the respondent specified that such CEDO activities are complex and take time. Results are usually long-term.

Survey Findings

A number of findings were gathered through the survey of WCBSN members. The survey provides an overall view of program use, as well as indications on the impact/success of CEDO projects.

Exhibit 3.6: Did your organization receive WD funds for CEDO projects within the last 2 years?

	Total	WD Region			
		AB	BC	MB	SK
Total	96	29	35	17	16
Yes	87.9%	80.0%	95.2%	100.0%	73.3%
No	6.8%	8.0%	.0%	.0%	26.7%
Don't know	5.3%	12.0%	4.8%	.0%	.0%

Exhibit 3.6 provides an overall description of program use by region of the last two years preceding the survey. As indicated, results suggest that the program usage is highest in Manitoba and BC (although many respondents in Alberta were unsure whether their organizations received funds from CEDO or not). The number of members being higher in BC, the actual number is highest in that region.



Exhibit 3.7: What was the immediate objective of this CEDO project?

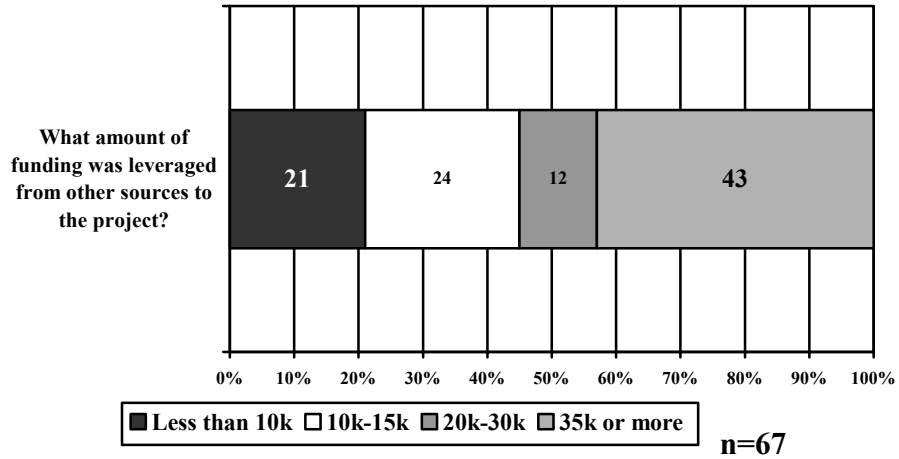
	Total	WD Region			
		AB	BC	MB	SK
Total	86	23	33	17	13
Conduct a study	11.3%	5.0%	10.0%	18.2%	16.7%
Develop a plan or strategy	35.4%	40.0%	45.0%	18.2%	25.0%
Develop physical infrastructure	8.8%	5.0%	10.0%	18.2%	.0%
Business training, counselling, or information	22.1%	25.0%	15.0%	36.4%	16.7%
Other (please specify)	19.7%	15.0%	20.0%	9.1%	41.7%
Don't Know	2.7%	10.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%

The findings shown in the exhibit above describe the projects funded under CEDO. As shown, about one-third of the projects consist of developing plans or strategies. Many other projects (22 percent) consisted of activities related to training, counseling or providing information. Among the other projects reported, the survey reported:

- A trade show;
- Work on a strategy for leadership development as well as a strategy for the tourism sector;
- Community profiling for content upload to a provincial website (sakbiz.ca);
- Development of software and internet mail to serve clients;
- Etc.

In terms of regional distribution, findings suggest that plans and strategies account for a higher percentage in BC and Alberta, while that Manitoba WCBSN members appear to coordinate more training, counseling or information related activities. In Saskatchewan, an exceptionally high number of projects did not fit in the survey categories and were classified as “other” types of projects.

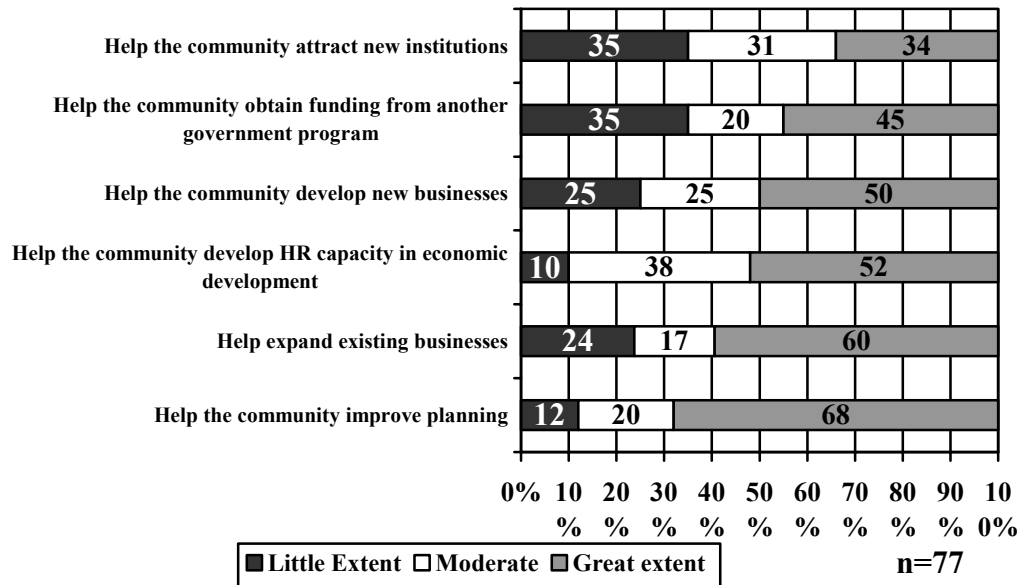
Exhibit 3.8: Leverage of CEDO projects



In Exhibit 3.8 above, survey findings related to the leverage effect of projects are presented. As shown, 43 percent of projects leveraged more than \$35,000 from other sources (each). Only 21 percent leveraged less than \$10,000.



Exhibit 3.9: Impact of CEDO Projects



The above exhibit provides results relating to the impacts of the CEDO projects.

According to results:

- The majority of projects help expand businesses (60 percent of projects) and/or improve community planning (68 percent) “to a great extent”.
- As well, 90 percent of respondents said that their projects helped the community develop HR community in economic development from a moderate to a great extent.
- Impacts on the attraction of new institutions and obtaining funding from other government sources was slightly lower (65 percent said that these were achieved from a moderate to a great extent).



3.2.3 Delivery And Suggestions for Program Improvement

Key Informant Interviews

As mentioned earlier, the delivery of this program is regionalized and has led to different delivery approaches – ranging from a “high project supporter” region, to a across-the-board distributed organizational funding approach. The success of the program depends on the regional manager and the support from the DG and the ADM. Another national respondent mentioned that the program needs to be part of a departmental strategy. Many respondents agreed that a more consistent approach would make it easier for WD to ensure due diligence and meet accountability requirements.

Mixed views were provided about the basic approach to funding, however. A number of respondents expressed a preference for project-based funding, while others expressed a preference for core-funding (part of overall contribution agreement). The argument for the latter was that it allowed better planning on the part of the WCBSN members. Other respondents expressed a preference for project-based funding. One national respondent said that CFDCs should come to WD with proposals in order to have the best ones selected: “Right now, CFs have a sense of entitlement – everyone gets a certain amount of money for the CED projects”. Specific projects allow an active involvement on the part of WD and the use of project criteria. This approach would also allow WD to make the program more reflective of WD’s overall strategy.

It was also mentioned that the reporting requirements for the program are minimal – only a narrative final report is provided. The quality of the reports is highly variable.

One stakeholder who has observed a number of projects said that the program would benefit from more involvement on the part of WD staff. Part of the objectives of CEDO projects is to get various stakeholders together – including federal government representatives. Attending some of the meetings has a significant impact.

A number of respondents suggested criteria for project selection. They included the following:

- Projects should aim at creating increased capacity (SME development, innovation, new capital);
- Projects should engage a range of partners;
- Projects should have the potential of follow-on;
- Projects should develop leadership;
- The project applications should demonstrate the need;
- The project should leverage other sources of funding;
- The projects should be innovative (at a local level);
- The projects should meet federal priorities (e.g., Aboriginals, etc.); and
- Projects tie into community needs/ strategic plan.

Other suggestions for delivery included the following:

- Projects should be strategic and sizeable to have an impact. Only best quality projects should be selected.
- The project selection process needs to be more timely.
- WD needs to ensure that program criteria are clear. For example, a CED project should involve a broad impact on the community. It should include social and economic goals.

The Case of BC

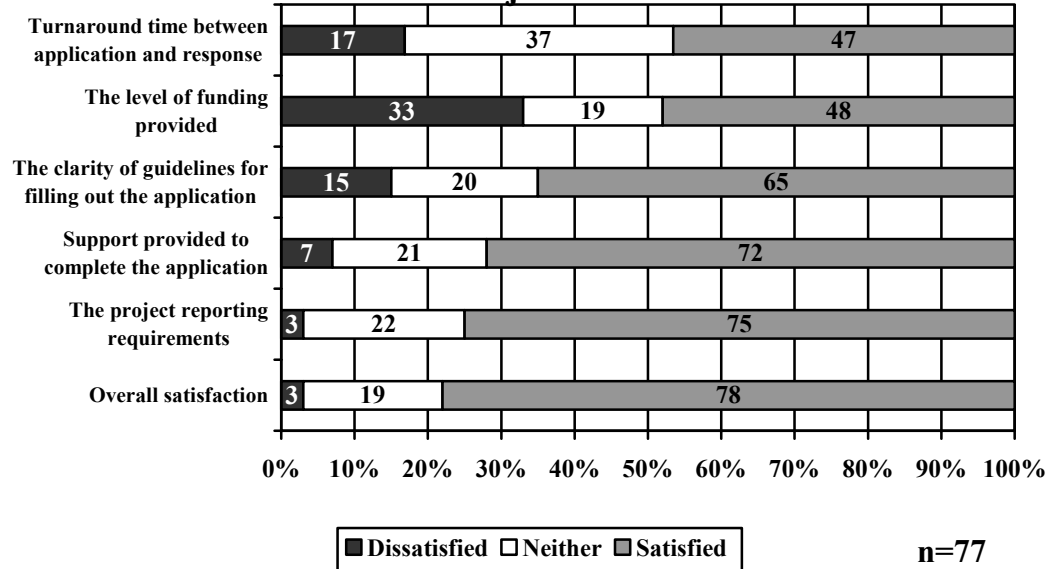
Overall, the region-tailored approach has led to regional differences. BC has strongly supported rural CED projects by allocating a portion of its regional G&C budget to this activity (through a variety of funding mechanisms, as mentioned earlier). They have a team of WD officers that works closely with WCBSN members and rural organizations to assist in concept development in response to regional needs and needs emerging from economic and environmental crises (e.g., forest fires, avian flu, softwood lumber conflict, salmon fishery).

A respondent noted that each project undergoes appropriate due diligence and effort is made to ensure that the project stems from a community plan, includes partners, and is supported by the community. In many cases, CFDCs present project ideas to WD and a decision is taken. There is no “entitlement” to project funding and WD does turn down proposals; For example, there were two recent large economic adjustment



initiatives (fisheries and softwood lumber) that were managed through a competitive application process. However, the process could be more competitive overall in one respondent’s view.

Exhibit 3.10: Satisfaction With Delivery of CEDO Projects



Survey Results

Exhibit 3.10 describes the survey results relating to the WCBSN members’ satisfaction with the delivery of the CEDO program. As indicated:

- WCBSN members are in majority satisfied with the delivery overall (78 percent satisfied). Reporting requirements are also satisfactory for most (75 percent satisfied).
- However, only 47 and 48 percent are satisfied with the turnaround time between the application and response, and the level of funding provided.



3.2.4 Evaluation of CEDO: Summary of Key findings

Relevance

- Overall, there is an agreement that the communities need special projects to gather stakeholders and develop economic diversification strategies and activities. These projects need support as volunteering is not sufficient. However, there is an ongoing debate whether WD support should take the form of CEDO, or be integrated in the overall contribution agreements with the WCBSN members.

Results

- According to survey findings, CEDO projects vary significantly from region to region. Many projects involve the development of plans and strategies for communities. Others involved the support of economic development activities. Most projects leveraged funds from other sources (about half leveraged \$30k or more).
- The most significant impact areas include helping improve community planning, developing HR in economic development, and expanding existing businesses. It was mentioned that most projects will have long-term impacts not yet measurable.

Design and Suggestions for Program Improvement

- A number of delivery issues were identified in the evaluation. Many respondents supported the idea of a regionally-managed program, but with clear, standardized criteria and reporting requirements. The program would benefit from more involvement of WD staff in some regions.
- The program would benefit from a more clear and concise administrative process, including clear selection criteria, and a quicker turnaround time between application and response.



4.0 Conclusions

The findings of the evaluation can be summarized in the following points:

Relevance

- Overall, both CEDO and CEDIP are viewed as relevant to the needs of the interns, the communities, the WCBSN organizations and WD. There is a recognized need for community-level interventions (vs. business level support) coordinated by the WCBSN. Both programs support these interventions by helping provide HR (CEDIP) and funds. There is, however, some debate whether CEDO should be provided on an ad hoc basis, or integrated in the overall contribution agreement of the WCBSN organizations.

Results

- The evaluation evidence shows that both programs are successful. For CEDIP, the findings show that interns acquire economic development-related skills and are highly likely to find employment or go to school after the internship. At the community level, CEDIP supports the WCBSN organizations' activities and contribute significantly to community planning activities. Many WCBSN members also report impacts on local business retention as a result of the work of the interns. As an indirect impact, CEDIP also helps retain qualified youth in rural communities.
- The delivery of CEDO varies significantly from region to region. The direct results of most projects include strategic plans and strategies for communities, although it is believed that most projects will have long-term impacts not yet measurable. A number of projects report impacts in terms of HR development in the area of economic development and expanding existing businesses. Most projects leveraged funds from other sources.

Design and Suggestions for Improvement

- At this point, both programs are regionally delivered. This approach was supported by most respondents. However, there were concerns expressed about the approach to project selection and monitoring. According to findings, the selection criteria need to be clarified, as well as the reporting requirements. Some



respondents saw the need for a more consistent approach at the pan-western level.

- The application process is not considered timely (turnaround time between the applications and response is considered too long).
- The average amount of funding provided for CEDIP projects has been significantly reduced over the last two years. A number of respondents said that this has had a significantly negative impact on the internships.



5.0 Recommendations

The findings overall indicate that both programs have positive impacts and should be continued. The following recommendations may be considered:

1. **Clarify Project Selection Criteria.** The evaluation findings indicate inconsistent practices in programming. There are many CED funding vehicles used by the regions (e.g., CEDIP, CEDO, SDNP, etc.) and there appears to be a lack of clarity of the purpose and scope of these vehicles/programs. In addition, the selection criteria were considered unclear by a number of respondents. To ensure that the programs meet their objectives and an equal access to funds on the part of the applicants, WD will need to clarify the selection criteria. For CEDO, the following criteria were suggested by respondents:
 - a. Projects should aim at creating increased capacity (e.g., SME development, innovation, new capital);
 - b. Projects should engage a range of partners;
 - c. Projects should have the potential of follow-on;
 - d. Projects should develop leadership;
 - e. The project applications should demonstrate the need;
 - f. The project should leverage other sources of funding;
 - g. The projects should be innovative (at a local level);
 - h. The projects should meet federal priorities (e.g., Aboriginals, etc.); and
 - i. Projects tie into community needs/ strategic plan.

In the longer term, WD may want to examine its role in CED, including examining methods of providing funding and types of projects/activities funded.

2. **Clarify Reporting Requirements and Format.** WD should also clarify the reporting format for each of the programs to meet accountability requirements. The reporting format should reflect the indicators of the program RMAFs that cover these activities (Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks).

- 3. Conduct Follow-up Studies of CED Projects.** One of the challenges for this evaluation was to assess the longer-term impacts of CEDO. WD should require WCBSN partners to follow-up on their projects two years after completion to demonstrate impacts. Additional resources may be needed to support such monitoring efforts. This would allow WD to learn best practices from projects that were most successful (e.g., consultation practices, incentives to business creation, etc.) and demonstrate results for accountability requirements.
- 4. Maintain Regional Delivery Options.** While the selection and reporting requirements should reflect WD objectives and therefore be standardized at a pan-Western level, the regions should continue to ensure project-selection and monitoring responsibilities. As well, some regions may prefer to integrate part of the program funds in the overall contribution agreements. The capacity for the regions to opt for this delivery approach should be maintained. However, it is the consultant's opinion that this approach should not be encouraged as it is highly likely to makes it more difficult for WD to monitor results. The activities must also be consistent with the Program RMAF associated with the specific WCBSN partners (i.e., CF Program or Service Delivery Network Program, etc.).
- 5. Review Level of Funding of CEDIP.** The previous evaluation had indicated that one-year internships are not long enough for the organizations and the interns to fully reach their objectives. Considering that the average level of CEDIP funding was of \$ 10,000 in 2003 (down from \$30,000 in 2001), the issue of funding level remains a concern. WD may want to reconsider the level of funding provided in order to avoid the risk of spreading the program too thin across the Network.

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