



# Centre of Excellence for Evaluation Community Newsletter

Vol. 4 | Issue 3 | July 2005

## Message From the Senior Director

Before we head into a much-deserved holiday break, I wanted to take this opportunity to share a few projects and events of interest to the community.

It has been a busy six months for the group at the CEE. Starting in January, with the launch of revised guidance for RMAFs, we've held 14 information and training sessions for our colleagues at TBS as well as throughout all departments and agencies involving over 800 managers evaluators and analysts. Our website now contains all material that was covered for these sessions, as well as a guide that outlines a strategic approach to developing RMAFs.

(please see: [www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval))

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At the end of April, a Heads of Evaluation meeting was held at the Canada and the World Pavillion. Three deputy ministers and ADMs joined us for the day to discuss the positioning of evaluation and better ways of engaging DMs in evaluation. Highlights of this meeting are included in this newsletter.



And finally, our Senior Advisory Committee is finalizing three research papers that will further support the future direction for evaluation within the federal government. These research papers focus on the role of evaluation in decision making, furthering the professionalization of the evaluation function, and approaches to DM engagement. These reports will soon be available on our website.

Over the summer months, our group will remain busy on several projects that we hope to roll out to the community in the Fall. These projects cover issues such as RMAF implementation successes, the impact of evaluations on decision making, developing tools for value-for-money reporting, and developing frameworks for meta-evaluation research.

This will be the final newsletter before the Fall season. Please let us know what you think by contacting me at (613) 952-7447 or [Hunt.Terry@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:Hunt.Terry@tbs-sct.gc.ca).

Have a safe and relaxing summer holiday! ♦

*Terry Hunt,*

Senior Director,  
Centre of Excellence for Evaluation

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## Canadian Research on Evaluation Capacity Building

An interdisciplinary team of researchers at the University of Ottawa have received SSHRC funding for a 3-year study of evaluation capacity building in Canada. The team will work cooperatively with Treasury Board's Centre of Excellence for Evaluation and the Canadian Evaluation Society to explore not just the capacity to do evaluation, but the capacity to use it.

The research team is comprised of Brad Cousins (Faculty of Education), Swee Goh (School of Management) and Tim Aubry (School of Psychology) in collaboration with Bob Lahey (retired: former Director of CEE) and Steve Montague (Performance Management Network). Catherine Elliott (Faculty of

Education) will serve as graduate assistant on the project.

A range of research strategies are planned over the next 3 years, the first being a concept mapping study in the federal government sector designed to deepen understanding about the conditions under which evaluation is likely to be used. To follow will be questionnaire survey and case study initiatives in government and non-governmental evaluation contexts. Look for more information about the concept mapping study in the next issue of the Newsletter. For more information, contact Brad Cousins at [bcousins@uottawa.ca](mailto:bcousins@uottawa.ca) 613-562-5800 ext. 4036. ♦

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## TBS Evaluation Website Greatest Hits

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Evaluation website appears to have struck a power chord with the Federal Evaluation Community. The website's structure and content have been steadily improving over the past few years. As a result, the Evaluation website is experiencing significant positive growth in the areas of site usage and traffic.

The Evaluation site is one of the many TBS service websites, and is maintained and administered by the CEE and RBMD webmasters. It was established to provide information and resources to support the Federal Evaluation Community and the implementation of the TBS Policy on Evaluation.

Roughly a year ago, in Summer 2004, the task of refining and enhancing the site was undertaken by the CEE and RBMD webmasters. This was the second such website refinement exercise in two years. A new information architecture was developed to allow for a more intuitive user experience. Our online information and resources were catalogued, reviewed, refined and then reorganized in a more "logical" breakdown of sections and subject pages. The emphasis of this website upgrading was ease of access for the user to locate the desired information contained in the site. Quick access links from the home page were added in the shape of the What's New listings (a chronological list of the most recent additions to the site) and the Quick Links box,

which features links to the most frequently accessed documents, such as the Evaluation Policy.

	January 1 to June 23 2004	January 1 to June 23 2005	Difference
<b>Visits*</b>	61,084	106,885	+74.98%
<b>Average visits per day</b>	349	614	+75.93%
<b>Average length of visit (min.)</b>	17:40	15:38	-11.51%
<b>Median visit lengths</b>	3:42	5:45	+55.41
<b>International visits</b>	56.05%	70.93%	+26.55%
<b>Successful hits for entire site</b>	629,989	1,171,330	+85.93%
<b>Average hits per day</b>	3,599	6,731	+87.02%
* Visits - Number of visits to this page. A visit is a series of actions that begins when a visitor views the first page from the server, and ends when the visitor leaves the site or remains idle beyond the idle-time limit. The default idle-time limit is thirty minutes.			

In a comparative look at the first halves of the past two years the numbers demonstrate that traffic and website usage overall have increased significantly.

Along with the increases in overall traffic and site usage, there were some other interesting numbers. One such statistic is the increase in the number of international visitors to the website. This may be due, in part, to the outreach activities that the CEE has undertaken with exchanges between international governments on the subject of Evaluation. Another is the average length of the visits to the site. At first glance it may look like a negative statistic, however with increases in traffic, this number might also suggest that website users are finding what they are looking for in a shorter time frame.

If anything, the numbers do indicate overall growth for TBS' Evaluation website, and that previous efforts to improve the site have produced desirable results. As we approach the summer months, we are once again looking at the Evaluation site to further enhance the website's structure, content, and user satisfaction. For example, one of the common criticisms about the site is that unless a link is sent out, it is difficult to access if the user is reliant on search engines or the TBS website. While we have made efforts to promote the Evaluation's URL (web address) by including it on most of our materials, this summer's exercise will aim to find ways to improve ease of access to the site itself.

You, the Evaluation Community, are the primary client users of the Evaluation site, and as a result, the primary drivers of where our efforts to improve the site are

### Top Ten Evaluation Website Downloads

	Title	Downloads	URL
①	Program Evaluation Methods: Measurement and Attribution of Program Results	5,993	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/meth/pem-mep_e.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/meth/pem-mep_e.pdf</a>
②	Evaluation Guidebook for Small Agencies	3,287	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/dev/sma-pet/guidelines/guidebook_e.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/dev/sma-pet/guidelines/guidebook_e.pdf</a>
③	Guide d'évaluation des petits organismes	2,459	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/dev/sma-pet/guidelines/guidebook_f.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/dev/sma-pet/guidelines/guidebook_f.pdf</a>
④	Preparing and Using Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks	1,790	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/guide/guide_e.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/guide/guide_e.pdf</a>
⑤	Méthodes d'évaluation des programmes : Mesure et attribution des résultats des programmes	1,600	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/meth/pem-mep_f.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/meth/pem-mep_f.pdf</a>
⑥	Guide for the Development of Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks	1,324	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/RMAF_Guide_e.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/RMAF_Guide_e.pdf</a>
⑦	Models for Evaluation and Performance Measurement for Small Agencies, Summary Report	1,136	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/tools_outils/EN_ok_toHTML.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/tools_outils/EN_ok_toHTML.pdf</a>
⑧	Guide to Developing a Risk-Based Departmental Evaluation Plan	1,115	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/tools_outils/guide/image/rbdep-pmear_e.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/tools_outils/guide/image/rbdep-pmear_e.pdf</a>
⑨	Guide pour l'élaboration d'un plan ministériel d'évaluation axé sur le risque	955	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/tools_outils/guide/image/rbdep-pmear_f.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/tools_outils/guide/image/rbdep-pmear_f.pdf</a>
⑩	Guidance for Strategic Approach to Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks	907	<a href="http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/sarmaf-ascgrr/sarmaf_ascgrr_e.pdf">http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/sarmaf-ascgrr/sarmaf_ascgrr_e.pdf</a>

focused. To this end, we'd like once again to invite your comments and suggestions for improvement.

Please send your comments to Ross Henwood at [Henwood.Ross@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:Henwood.Ross@tbs-sct.gc.ca), or to 952-1546. With your help, and our continued efforts, we can ensure that the TBS Evaluation service site continues to be a number one hit with the Evaluation crowd. ✦

activities. There is also a discussion on how information collected by the CEE for monitoring purposes is used by the TBS/CEE to support central agency decision-making.

Copies of this document can be downloaded from the CES website at:

[www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/dev/health-santé/hefgc-sfegc\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/dev/health-santé/hefgc-sfegc_e.asp) ✦

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## The Health of the Evaluation Function in the Government of Canada

### Report for Fiscal Year 2004-05

Centre of Excellence for Evaluation - Treasury Board of  
Canada Secretariat 2005

Produced by the Centre of Excellence for Evaluation, this report examines the health of the evaluation function in the Government of Canada during fiscal year 2004-05.

Topics covered include:

- ▶ An Overview of the Federal Evaluation Function;
- ▶ Evaluation Infrastructure;
- ▶ Human and Financial Resources;
- ▶ Evaluation Coverage;
- ▶ Evaluation Quality;
- ▶ Management and Accountability Framework Review;
- ▶ Evaluation Community Needs Assessment;
- ▶ CEE 2004-05 Activities to Support the Evaluation Community.

This is an excellent resource for heads of evaluation and senior officials who are interested in supporting sound, evidence-based decision making by advancing the evaluation function. It serves as an excellent reference tool to compare how your organization is doing in relation to the federal evaluation function as a whole or to other departments and agencies. For example, there is information on how units are funded, what services they provide, essential infrastructure, in-house versus contracting resources, coverage and scope of evaluation

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## Results Reporting Capacity Check (RRCC)

### A New CEE Guide to Demonstrate Results Reporting of Low Risk Programs

The Centre of Excellence for Evaluation has developed a Results Reporting Capacity Check (RRCC) to assist departments and agencies in quickly and systematically assessing the capacity of low-risk programs and initiatives to manage, achieve and demonstrate results for Canadians. Conducted by the department's Evaluation Unit, the RRCC offers an independent and objective view of a program or initiative's strategic, operational and results capacity. The guide provides detailed instruction on how to conduct an RRCC including key questions, documents to review, and an assessment template to guide the capacity analysis.

Results of the RRCC provide a level of confidence to departmental executives and central agencies that a program or initiative has the capacity – as shown by its performance – to demonstrate and account for results. Positive RRCC results provide confidence to senior management that performance information is readily available and or an evaluation could be easily executed. Poor RRCC results will result in the need for a formal program evaluation. Departments and agencies will be happy to hear that positive results of an RRCC can be used to support a request for an exemption to conduct an evaluation for their "low-risk" grants and contribution programs pursuant to the Policy on Transfer Payments.

For more detailed information on the RRCC and how it can be used visit:

[www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval)

[www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/rrcc-dcrr/rrcc-dcrr\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/rrcc-dcrr/rrcc-dcrr_e.asp)

Contact Victoria Carlan, Senior Analyst, CEE at:  
tel.: (613) 941 7193  
email: [carlan.victoria@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:carlan.victoria@tbs-sct.gc.ca). ✦

## The April 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of Evaluation

### The Role of Evaluation in Evidence-based Executive Decision Making

The Centre of Excellence for Evaluation (CEE) sponsored a full-day meeting of the Heads of Evaluation on April 27<sup>th</sup> at the Canada and the World Pavilion. The theme of this meeting was ‘The Role of Evaluation in Evidence-based Executive Decision Making’.

The day’s agenda included presentations relating to the needs of Deputy Ministers, evaluation requirements for expenditure review, and the evolving role of internal audit and its complementary relationship with evaluation.

The agenda was designed to be interactive with presentations being followed by equal time for questions and commentary from participating Heads of Evaluation.

#### Highlights of the Day’s Events:

Keynote Address:

**Samy Watson,**

Deputy Minister for Environment Canada  
‘What do Deputy Ministers Need?’

Mr. Watson described evaluation as a central function in the demonstration of accountability within the current government environment of resource reallocation.

He carried with him a May 1981 TBS publication entitled, ‘Guide on the Program Evaluation Function’ which he referred to in discussion of the continued and



Sami Watson makes his keynote address to the Heads of Evaluation at the Meeting at the Canada and the World Pavilion on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2005.

present need to demonstrate cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

He indicated that deputies should be involved in results-based management accountability frameworks (RMAFs) and that the evaluation offices should not work in isolation but supply the expertise in helping address questions of what it is a department is trying to do. Evaluation should be seen as value added and not as a threat and should provide clear advice (eliminating the jargon).

**Munir Sheikh,**

Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet, PCO  
‘Expenditure Review and the Role of Evaluation’

Mr. Sheikh addressed the expenditure review process and the ranking of priority of government programs in regard to value for money. He further explained that such ranking could not be done without the use of evaluation.



Munir Sheikh speaks on the topic of Expenditure Review and the Role of Evaluation.

He expressed concern however that all program evaluations could not be done in a timely fashion with only a few programs being evaluated annually. He indicated that at such a rate it would take many years to evaluate the full offering of programs available and suggested that all programs need to be looked at in a preliminary way, within the course of a fiscal year, in determining value for money.

A revamped expenditure management system was seen to be a requirement in the review of good value for money along with preliminary evaluations of all programs with a focus on priorities and efficiencies in the delivery of core programs. ♦

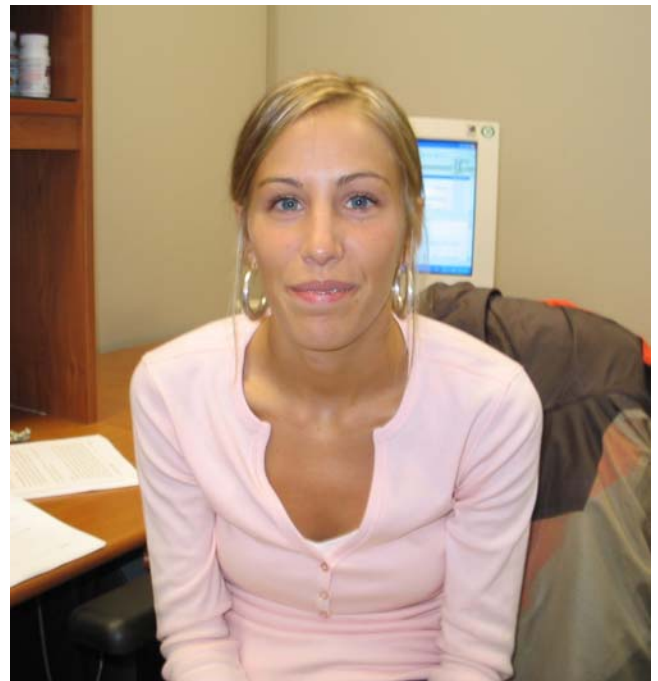
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## New Faces of the CEE

### The CEE Welcomes Annique Yovetich

A native of London Ontario, Annique has been living and studying as an Ottawaian for the last couple years, and has come to love it here in the Nation's Capital. One of

four children, she has accepted a student position and will join the CEE family for the summer, before returning to Carleton University for her fourth year of study. She is studying History, Political Science with a minor in French. Annique will be working with Josée Boisvert and Rebecca Leslie on the ERIC review exercise. ♦



CEE Summer Student, Annique Yovetich

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## Management for Results

In the *Twelfth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada* (ending March 31, 2005), Alex Himelfarb, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet, highlights a Public Service where program and expenditure review must 'become an integral part of how we work'.

([www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=Report](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=Report))

He further outlines the Expenditure Review process in a culture of transformation and resource reallocation where there will be continuous reassessment of *value for money* in resource allocation decision-making processes.

In addition, the first of four established Corporate Priorities for the Public Service of Canada (for 2005-06) is **Management for Results**, which ensures program effectiveness and value of money through the demonstration of measurable progress against performance indicators.

These statements remind us of the importance of making evaluation relevant in terms of the expenditure review process: ensuring that the 7 policy questions of the Expenditure Review Committee are addressed in evaluation processes, as well as demonstrating that a Department's programs are geared to generating results that matter to Canadian and are providing maximum value from the resources allocated to them. ♦