Industry Canada · Industrie Canada

Evaluation of the People Management Plan

Final Report

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Audit and Evaluation Branch

Submitted by:

EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Head Office: 99 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1100, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L7 — Tel: (613) 235-7215, Fax: (613) 235-8498
Toronto Branch: 145 King Street West, Suite 1000, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3X6 — Tel: (416) 214-1424
Edmonton Branch: 9925 109 Street NW, Suite 606, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J8 – Tel: (780) 408-5225 – Fax: (780) 408-5233
E-mail address: Pobox@ekos.com

Canada

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(a)   Background and Methodology

The People Management Plan 2000-2003 (PMP) at Industry Canada represents a human resource strategy and plan of action for all employees of Industry Canada in response to La Relève (1996). The end goal of the PMP is to help Industry Canada achieve its objective of becoming an Employer of Choice for people with the necessary competencies to allow the Department to achieve its lines of business. In the fall of 2001, Industry Canada sought to undertake an evaluation of the People Management Plan to assess the Plan's continued relevance, success and cost-effectiveness. This report presents the findings from this evaluation.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide feedback and analysis on the extent to which the Program has achieved its objectives and intended effects and to determine the perceived cost-effectiveness of this approach to the Department's involvement in activities to address workplace issues. The focus of the evaluation was on three principal issues including program relevance, success and cost effectiveness. To address these issues, the evaluation employed multiple lines of evidence, including: a review of program documents and files; 23 key informant interviews with PMC members (n=15) and Industry Canada managers (n=8); a telephone survey of 60 project sponsors and a telephone survey of 60 project participants.

(b)   Program Profile

Industry Canada's human resources strategy and Action Plan is based on an analysis of their employee demographics both corporately and by line of business, as well as on an assessment of challenges and a review of exemplary projects already underway to renew the work force throughout the Department. The People Management Plan is predicated on the four principles of renewal, retention, recruitment and representation, as well as an understanding of the Department's strength and areas of vulnerability. In response to the results of the 1999 Public Service Employee Survey, as well as department-wide consultation held at the beginning of 2000, the PMP priorities were reordered and revised to provide a more concrete expression of the goals and actions proposed to address priorities. The three resulting priorities of the 2000-2003 version of the People Management Plan included: improving the well-being of the workplace; investing in our people through learning and career development; and investing in our future organization by recruiting a skilled and representative workforce.

The People Management Committee (PMC) was established in the spring of 1997 to oversee the implementation of the PMP. As of 2000, the general mandate of PMC is to explore and champion good human resources management practices and to monitor and report progress to senior staff and to the members of the Departmental Management Board (DMB) on the implementation of the People Management Plan 2000-2003. The PMC is also responsible for measuring progress toward the achievement of the Plan's objectives and to take appropriate

actions to alter course for the Plan as appropriate, with the guidance and support of the Industry Canada Management Committee (ICMC).

An Evaluation Framework was established in 1998 as a basis for in-depth evaluation of the Department's efforts relative to the broad objectives of the Plan and organizational change. The framework recommends that the timing of the evaluation approach be linked to the three-year time frame employed for the People Management Plan, using a three-pronged evaluation approach that would include: a baseline assessment of Industry Canada's current status relative to human resource issues; an interim evaluation of progress and management of plan implementation; and a full evaluation of issues related to relevance, objectives achievement and medium- to long-term results expectations. The framework also recommended the establishment of a steering committee of managers to provide direction to the evaluation effort on a periodic basis, as well as guidelines to assess the Plan's attainment of the medium and long-term goals.

For the individual initiatives supporting the Plan, measuring progress involves assessing the results of these activities on an ongoing basis using the performance measurement templates that have been created. At the corporate level, senior management is expected to monitor the implementation of the Plan and ensure that an adequate organizational capacity exists to achieve desired results over the long term. At the project level, monitoring involves assessing the results of individual initiatives and ensuring that managers and staff have a clear understanding of how their daily activities contribute to department-wide goals and priorities.

(c) *Profile of Funded Projects*

The review of project files shows that overall, projects tend to be well distributed among all three PMP priority areas, with the largest number of projects contributing to improving the well-being of the workplace (62 per cent), followed by 51 per cent of projects that addressed learning and career development issues and 44 per cent that addressed issues related to recruitment and retention. The average level of proposed funding for projects implemented during the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 fiscal years was $87,792 and this figure was somewhat higher for the actual funding received (mean of $97,402). While not all PMP projects were designed with a participant group in mind, the number of participants was identified for only nine per cent (n=5) of the projects for which files were available.

(d) *Relevance*

The evaluation sought to assess the relevance of the PMP in a number of ways by gathering evidence concerning: the consistency of the Plan's priorities with those at the federal, departmental and sector/branch level; the continued need for the Plan; the relevance and viability of the Plan as a means to support workplace initiatives; and the degree to which the Plan can and has addressed key workplace issues. Overall, the evaluation evidence suggests that the PMP is a highly relevant mechanism for the Department. Findings from the evaluation for each of these relevance issues are as follows:

❑   *Consistency of the Plan's priorities:* most respondents to the evaluation feel that the Plan's priorities are consistent with federal, departmental and sector/branch priorities, noting that recruitment is a high priority for all sectors and branches and that the PMP has been successful at balancing the priority recruitment needs of both senior and less senior employees. Most survey respondents also note that it was unlikely that their sector or branch would have provided full financial support for their project had they not received funding through the PMP.

❑   *Continued need for the Plan:* a majority of survey and interview respondents also feel there is a continued need for the PMP to address the Plan's three key priorities, although certain factors may impinge upon the Plan's ability to achieve these objectives (e.g., objectives that are overly broad, the need to clarify/operationalize processes to help critically review proposed projects, the absence of a strategic approach to implement the Plan's priorities)

❑   *The relevance and viability of the Plan as a means to support workplace initiatives:* most interview respondents feel that the PMP continues to be a relevant and viable means of supporting Industry Canada's commitment to become an Employer of Choice (e.g., the Plan has: provided funds for relevant projects; brought branches and sectors together to identify/act on common issues; coordinated efforts to address human resource priorities; and provided employees a voice), although many recommend changes to enhance the PMP's relevance and viability (e.g., more resources to address work/life balance; more promotion of the Plan; and changes to encourage more staff participation).

❑   *The degree to which the Plan can and has addressed key workplace issues:* a majority of survey respondents feel there is at least a moderate need to address all of the workplace issues identified as future challenges for the Plan, and most participants would be at least somewhat likely to recommend PMP projects to other Industry Canada staff, and to indicate that the PMP project had met their expectations. Key informants identified workload and work/life balance, recruitment, and career development and training as the most pronounced needs of management and staff, and note that the PMP has supported many initiatives to address these issues.

PMC Input into the Development of the PMP

One measure of the Plan's relevance concerns the degree to which management and staff were consulted during the development of the PMP's priorities. The evidence suggests that roughly half of the PMC respondents had been consulted during the development of the 2000-2003 iteration of the People Management Plan and roughly the same proportion felt they were provided sufficient opportunity to contribute to the development of the 2000-2003 priorities. Nonetheless, there may have been room to involve more people in these discussions, provide more advance notice to Director Generals and heads of organizations, and coordinate activities of the HRB and the People Plan in Operations with those of the PMP.

Target Audiences

Overall, few gaps were perceived to exist in the audiences targeted by PMP projects. The file review found that approximately three-quarters of funded projects proposed to target a specific audience, and a similar distribution of target audiences was also observed for the sponsor survey. Further, a large majority of respondents to the sponsor survey and key informant interviews indicated that there were no employee groups that could have participated in their project but did not although there may be room to enhance the participation of some groups (e.g., smaller groups of employees in specific organizations, visible minority or disabled groups; the average employee, non-HRB employees, and administrative and support staff).

People Management Committee

The PMC is generally felt to be integral to the management and delivery of the Plan and is fulfilling their assigned roles, although there is may be room to improve its functioning. A majority of respondents to the sponsor survey indicated that the PMC has fulfilled its defined roles to at least a moderate extent, although there may be room to improve in terms of championing the best human resource practices and ensuring the management effort in the Department is integrated/well communicated. Furthermore, all PMC key informants agree that there continues to be a great need for PMC to manage and deliver the Plan (e.g., allows for timely response; equalizes the treatment of employees; promotes good human resource practices; avoids duplication; and representative of junior and senior staff). Specific suggestions to improve the PMC include: expanding its role/clarifying its purpose; more efforts to monitor projects progress; more effort to encourage reporting project results; improved participation at/in meetings; encouraging managers to make PMP a priority; more energy to recruit people to the PMC; reducing the size of the committee; streamlining the proposal review process; and better communication of the Plan and its benefits.

(e) Success

Performance Measurement

The evaluation findings suggest that there is a need to improve the measurement of project success relative the overall goals of the Plan. The review of project files found that one-quarter (24 per cent) of project proposals and nearly one-third (32 per cent) of final reports did not contain information concerning the measurement of objectives achievement. All project results (i.e., outputs and outcomes), however, were found to be at least somewhat consistent with the PMP priority addressed, although the performance measures most often concerned processes or outputs (53 per cent), followed by outcomes (18 per cent) and both outcomes and processes/outputs (five per cent).

There may also be room to improve the way in which the Plan's priorities are expressed in order to facilitate performance measurement activity, as mixed feedback was received with respect to the degree to which the priorities are: well-articulated and clear (objectives do not often change and are easy to relate to versus objectives are not well communicated, too broad, hard to relate to, and over-articulated); realistic (some objectives are

more realistic than others, are overly broad to be realistic); measurable (measurement tools are not in place, some objectives harder to measure than others); and results-based (Plan supports projects that yield positive results some objectives do not allow for measurable results, demonstrating results tends to be weak).

Monitoring Mechanisms

Among the monitoring mechanisms that currently exist, key informants identified the PMP Secretariat (monitors progress, financial obligations, status reports, funding levels, and provides lists of proposed projects), the project final reports and reporting templates, templates for financial reporting, project evaluations, and occasional audits and evaluations by the audit and evaluation branch. Most, however, feel these mechanisms are not adequate to capture information pertaining to PMP objectives achievement

Contribution to PMP Objectives

Collectively, funded-projects are perceived to have made considerable progress toward the Plan's objectives, as a large majority of sponsors and participants surveyed feel their project has contributed to the priority to at least a moderate extent to the PMP priorities it was designed to address. Evidence from key informants interviews also suggests that funded projects have contributed to each of the three PMP objectives to a moderate extent, with a higher perceived contribution to learning and career development (much support of training and development projects, these projects tend to be focused/have measurable results), and slightly more moderate ratings for improving the well-being of the workplace (no clear assessment criteria, more could be done) and recruitment of a skilled and representative workforce (few projects supported in this area). To enhance the Plan's ability to achieve its objectives, suggestions include: better communications and marketing; more cross-sector work; improved performance measurement; ongoing/open call for proposals; concrete priorities that are measurable and results-based; and more follow-through on successful projects.

Project-Specific Impacts

Overall, projects are perceived to be making a positive contribution toward addressing workplace issues, as a majority of respondents to the sponsor and participant surveys feel their project has or will have at least a moderate impact in all areas about which they were asked. Nonetheless, there may be room to improve the degree to which these impacts are demonstrated. The review of project files shows that projects have produced a variety of products (e.g., tools/resources for employees, training, workshops/events, and information/ communication products) and outcomes (e.g., enhanced employee communications/relations, enhanced skills/career development opportunities, improved recruitment capacity, enhanced image, improved quality of the workplace), however, this information was not available for large proportions of project files (43 per cent lacked information on products and 82 per cent lacked information about outcomes).

Dissemination and Communication

Once again, the evidence suggests that projects are well communicated, as the majority of project files identify a communications plan or strategy, although fewer specify the means to be used to communicate the project and project results. The most commonly reported communications vehicles include e-mail bulletins, websites or website postings, meetings/ briefings/presentations, and pamphlets/flyers/brochures. In terms of their effectiveness, survey respondents were most likely to have heard of the Plan or a PMP-funded project through word-of-mouth or e-mail bulletins, while 20 per cent of project participants had never heard of the PMP prior to the survey.

(e)   Cost-Effectiveness

Processes and Procedures

Respondents to the sponsor survey were generally satisfied with most processes and procedures about which they were asked, although there may be room to improve the amount of time allotted for the development and submission of proposals, the process of selecting projects for funding and the use of PMP committee working groups. Results of the key informant interviews also suggest the Plan's processes are functioning adequately, although responses were mixed and there may be room to improve most delivery mechanisms, including:

❑ *the planning process* (well thought out and encourages participation   need for a more strategic approach, more timeliness, better linkages to departmental priorities, earlier call for proposals);

❑ *the project selection process* (more disciplined approach/concrete criteria to critically review proposals);

❑ *project monitoring* (receive necessary information/positive feedback on projects, good monitoring of project progress   need to reduce the number of uncompleted projects, provide information about project results);

❑ *project reporting* (provide required information   need for more detailed/less basic information, uniform reporting, broader communication to employees, more time to report on projects);

❑ *PMP Committee Working Groups* (do good work sharing information/bringing people together   most unaware of working groups, most active only at allocation time)

Overlap and Duplication

The evaluation evidence suggests that while some overlap may exist between the PMP and other similar initiatives, this overlap is not generally perceived to be negative. The majority of survey respondents feel it is beneficial to provide similar services and supports through other Industry Canada initiatives (78 per cent) or PMP projects (64 per cent). Similarly, most key informant interview respondents are unaware of duplication or overlap among PMP projects or

between the PMP and other departmental initiatives, or feel that what little duplication that does exist is not a problem. Among the examples of the overlap that is perceived to exist, respondents most commonly reported overlap or duplication between the PMP and the Operations Sector People Strategy. Mechanisms to manage duplication and coordinate activities include the PMC and the PMP Secretariat.

Sustainability

The evaluation findings were mixed with respect to the sustainability of PMP projects and their impacts. On one hand, plans for the sustainability of the project or project impacts exist for only one-in-five project files reviewed and half of the PMC members interviewed question the sustainability of projects (i.e., depends on the project/its objectives, long-term results are not measured, and support for many unsustainable pilot projects). In contrast, a majority of sponsors and participants feel that projects are sustainable to a large (53 per cent) or moderate extent (32 per cent) and most managers feel that many PMP projects have had lasting impacts (e.g., developed management competencies, focused on training and development, received additional funding from Treasury Board, and led to the development of department-wide programs).

Partnership

The evidence suggests that few PMP projects are implemented in partnership. The review of project files found that only seven projects (13 per cent) reported that the project had been implemented in partnership, and these were most likely to be identified as other federal departments, or national not-for-profit organizations. On average, roughly two project partners were identified and the nature of the partnership support (reported for only three of seven projects) involved assistance with the implementation of the project.

Alternatives

Key informants generally perceive the PMP to be an effective and efficient way of achieving Industry Canada's overall goals and objectives in the area of human resources, because the Plan: provides a presence and visibility to demonstrate that the Department is interested in promoting and retaining employees; minimizes overlap and duplication; reduces inequities among different sectors; lends credibility to the Departments efforts (PMC not viewed as a management committee); sponsors worthwhile initiatives; implements the corporate human resources plan; and provides a democratized approach. Nonetheless, many feel the Plan can be improved to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency by: adopting a more strategic focus; supporting the PMC with sub-committees within each sector; employing a more meaningful project reporting system; enhancing the visibility and communication of the Plan; more consideration of the sustainability of successful project; supporting more projects that focus on the supervisor or manager community; and providing more resources to the Plan.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Key informants noted a number of strengths of the PMP. One primary strength of the Plan was felt to be the fact that the funding and approval process is centrally managed, which is thought to yield a number of advantages by: providing an additional source of funds to cash-strapped sectors; reducing funding inequities among organizations; ensuring a common understanding of departmental priorities; allowing for inter-sectoral communication, thus reducing duplication; and providing a forum between managers and employees. Other strengths include the Plan's: support important human resource initiatives, support of quality projects, broad focus, employee driven process, administrative processes (e.g., approval process, monitoring); and changing focus (i.e., the allocation process changes in response to changing needs).

Key informants also point out a number of aspects of the Plan they feel are not working well, the most common of which include: a lack of communication about the PMP (which may affect the quantity and quality of proposals submitted and coordination with other initiatives); the proposal review process (tools are not available to critically review proposals, need for a better costing model/earlier approval process to ensure funds do not go unspent, more timely approval, less academic/more accessible process, ongoing approval process); and the lack of focus for the Plan (which may affect the availability of firm criteria upon which to evaluate proposals, the PMP's strategic direction, and measurement of results). Other aspects of the Plan that some respondents believe are not working as well include: the use of funds to address issues within organizations' mandates; a lack of clear criteria to demonstrate project success; a lack of senior management direction at the sector level; a lack of follow-up on projects; and a perceived need for more focus on priorities other than learning and career development.

1. INTRODUCTION

The People Management Plan 2000-2003 (PMP) at Industry Canada represents the Department's response to La Relève (1996). The PMP represents a human resource strategy and plan of action for all employees of Industry Canada. The end goal of the PMP is to help Industry Canada achieve its objective of becoming an Employer of Choice for people with the necessary competencies to allow the Department to achieve its lines of business.

The Plan has three primary objectives for the 2000 to 2003 period:

❏ *Improving the well-being of the workplace* by providing challenging work in an environment characterized by openness, effective communications, trust, flexibility, fairness and respect;

❏ *Investing in our people: learning and career development,* whereby learning and career development are owned by the employee, facilitated by managers and supported by the Department; and

❏ *Investing in our future organization: recruiting a skilled and representative workforce,* by strengthening recruitment strategies and enhancing strategies in recruitment from outside the Public Services, thus strengthening public and client confidence in the Department.

The Plan is implemented by the People Management Committee (PMC). This committee receives proposals for projects throughout the Department, reviews them, and makes final decisions around which will receive funding. The Plan supports roughly 20 to 25 projects approved per year. For example, in 2000-2001, there were 22 projects which submitted final reports, and in 2001-2002, 38 projects have been undertaken.

In the fall of 2001, Industry Canada sought to undertake an evaluation of the People Management Plan to assess the Plan's continued relevance, success and cost-effectiveness. This report presents the findings from this evaluation.

1.1   Evaluation Objectives and Issues

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide feedback and analysis on the extent to which the Program has achieved its objectives and intended effects and to determine the perceived cost-effectiveness of this approach to the Department's involvement in activities to address workplace issues. The focus of the evaluation was on three principal issues including program relevance, success and cost effectiveness. Specifically, the evaluation sought to answer the following questions:

Relevance

1.   Is the People Management initiative still relevant? Are the Plan and Committee still needed? Do they respond to real needs? Is the initiative consistent with departmental and government priorities?

Success

2.   Are the overall objectives of the initiative well articulated? Are they clear? Realistic? Measurable? Results-based?
3.   To what extent are the individual projects in the People Management Plan contributing to the overall objectives? Are there other/better ways of achieving the objectives?
4.   What parties does the People Management initiative reach? Are these the right ones? Is their distribution appropriate? Are there others that could be targeted?
5.   What results are being achieved? Are these appropriate? Are there any unexpected or negative results being produced?

Cost-effectiveness

6.   Is there any overlap and/or duplication between the various PMP initiatives and other initiatives in the Department? If so, is the duplication or overlap acceptable? Is it being managed appropriately?
7.   Are the People Management initiative processes (planning, project selection, project monitoring, reporting, sub-committees, etc.) appropriate?

1.2 Evaluation Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation consisted of a review of program documents and files, 23 key informant interviews with PMC members (n=15) and Industry Canada managers (n=8), a telephone survey of 54 project sponsors and a telephone survey of 47 project participants.

The methodological approaches were designed to enable the evaluators to draw from multiple lines of evidence in an effort to provide comprehensive responses to each of the evaluation questions posed. The overall research design framework linking individual indicators to a host of data sources using individual methodological approaches is presented in the Matrix of Issues, Indicators and Data Sources provided in Appendix A (under separate cover). Each of the methodological components employed for the evaluation are described in turn, below.

1.3 Document and File Review

The purpose of the documentation review is to describe the People Management Plan (PMP), its context, and the history leading up to its introduction. In addition to providing an overview and constructing a descriptive profile of the Plan, the review addresses evaluation issues concerning the relevance and success of the initiative. This included a review of material obtained from program officials, including the Terms of Reference for the two iterations of the Plan, the PMP evaluation framework, an interim progress review and the terms of reference for the PMP committee working groups. Also included in the review was information obtained from a report to the Prime Minister from the Privy Council and the Secretary to Cabinet on the federal public service to provide some additional context for the development and implementation of the Plan. A list of sources used for the document review is presented in Appendix B (under separate cover).

The review of project files was designed primarily to contribute to an understanding of PMP participants and outcomes. The original design of the file review called for the review of proposals, progress reports and final reports for up to 75 funded projects implemented during the 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 fiscal years. Once fieldwork for the evaluation had begun, however, the client decided not to include files for projects implemented in the 1999-2000 fiscal year such that projects reviewed would uniformly reflect the 2000-2003 iteration of the Plan.

Thus, only 55 project files were included in the file review. In addition, many of the 2001-2002 projects included in the review (n=30) had not been completed at the time of the review, thus were missing a final report. As such, some of the resources originally dedicated for the file review were reallocated to accommodate the collection of additional information through the participant and sponsor telephone surveys (described below). The file review data collection template is presented in Appendix C (under separate cover).

The files reviewed as part of this phase of the evaluation included 25 project files from the 2000/2001 fiscal year and 30 files from the 2001/2002 fiscal year. As mentioned above, many of the 2001/2002 projects were ongoing at the time of the evaluation, thus not all files were complete (i.e., not all included a proposal, mid-term report and final report). The largest proportion of files reviewed included only a proposal (36 per cent), followed by files that included a proposal and mid-term report (20 per cent), a proposal, mid-term and final report (16 per cent), a proposal and final report (15 per cent), only a final report (seven per cent) and only a mid-term report (five per cent).

All of the projects for which only a proposal is available are 2001/2002 projects that have not yet been completed, accounting for 67 per cent of all 2001/2002 projects. The remaining 2001/2002 project files (33 per cent) contained both a proposal and mid-term report. It was not possible to confirm the project status of four 2000/2001 projects (accounting for 16 per cent of all 2000/2001 projects reviewed) as final reports were not available for these projects. The remaining 84 per cent of 2000/2001 projects had been completed at the time of the review.

1.4   Key Informant Interviews

A total of 23, one-hour long key informant interviews with members of the People Management Committee (PMC) and managers at Industry Canada were conducted. The lists of key informants to be interviewed were provided by the client and included members of the PMC, as well as managers who have specific knowledge of the Plan and/or work for branches or sectors where PMP projects have been initiated. The key informant interviews were used to gather information concerning all evaluation issues, including relevance of the People Management Plan,

outcomes of the projects undertaken through the plan (intended and unintended), strengths and weaknesses of the initiative, and perceived cost-effectiveness.

Respondents were contacted in advance of the interview to determine an appropriate time for them to respond, and the interview itself took place over the telephone. Two interview guides (i.e., one for PMC members and one for Industry Canada managers) were tailored to the individual respondent's area of expertise and experience with the initiative and included primarily open-ended questions. Respondents were given the choice of completing the interview in English or French. Draft interview guides for PMC and management respondents are presented in Appendix D and E, respectively (under separate cover) .

While the original evaluation design called for the completion of interviews with a total of 15 members of the People Management Committee and 10 Industry Canada managers, it was only possible to complete eight interviews with Industry Canada managers despite repeated efforts to contact all members of this stakeholder group who had not already participated.

1.5   Telephone Survey of Project Sponsors

The survey sample frame for project sponsors was developed from electronic lists of project sponsors received from Industry Canada. These lists were then converted into a format suitable for importation into EKOS' Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software. Following the removal of duplicate projects, the final sample contained information for 81 PMP-funded projects. Given the presence of multiple project sponsors in the sample fame (i.e., individuals who sponsored more than one PMP-funded project), a total of 41 project sponsors were available to be interviewed. In order to reduce the response burden for multiple project sponsors, calls were issued such that sponsors could be asked for information about all of the projects for which they were responsible during a single interview. Multiple project sponsors were also provided the opportunity to conduct the interviews for different projects at different times if they felt the single interview approach was too onerous.

EKOS designed the survey questionnaire in consultation with the client to address issues pertaining to the relevance, success and cost-effectiveness of the PMP. Specifically, key topics covered in the survey included an assessment of the degree to which project objectives were realized, whether the project would have proceeded without PMP funding, views on the process and suggestions for improvement.

The survey questionnaire was pretested on March 5th 2002 with 2 project sponsors to ensure that the ordering, length and clarity of the questionnaire were appropriate. The results of the pretest, showed that the average survey interview was 14 minutes, and also prompted some minor revision to the order and wording of some questions. Following this pretest, the survey was revised and translated into French. The revised version of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix F (under separate cover).

Fieldwork for the survey of project sponsors began on March 6 and was completed by March 25, 2002. Interviews were conducted in both French and English. The response rate for the survey is presented in Table 2.3. The response rate is the proportion of cases from the functional sample that responded to the survey or were "co-operative", either by completing the survey or by responding, yet being screened out of the survey because they were ineligible (i.e., individuals who indicated that no one in their household has a debit card). The refusal rate represents the proportion of cases from the functional sample that declined to participate in the survey. The functional sample factors out the attrition in the survey, leaving only the sample that resulted in completions or refusals, and those numbers attempted but not reached by the completion of fieldwork (e.g., retired phone numbers [called 10 or more times], respondents who were unavailable for the duration of the survey, and respondents who were unable to participate due to illness or some other factor, etc.). Attrition includes numbers that were not in service and duplicate numbers. The response rate for the survey was excellent at 77 per cent and the refusal rate was quite low at two per cent.

TABLE 2.1
Response Rate for the Survey of Project Sponsors

Call Classification	Total
Initial sample	81
(less) Unused sample	0
(less) Attrition	
Number not in service	0
Duplicate	0
Functional sample	81
Other	
No answer/busy	6
Unavailable for duration of survey	4
Retired (called 10 or more times)	7
Other/illness	0
Total "other" numbers	17
Non-response	
Refusal	2
Incomplete refusal	0
Total Non-response	2
Refusal rate	2%
Co-operative calls	
Completed	60
Ineligible	2
Total Co-operative Calls	62
Response rate	77%

1.6   Telephone Survey of Project Participants

In order to solicit feedback from stakeholders who are intended to benefit from the program, a telephone survey of project participants was conducted. The sample frame of project participants was drawn from electronic lists containing the names and telephone numbers of participants from six PMP projects. The availability of participant lists for only six PMP projects means that the results of the survey are not generalizeable to the population of PMP-project participants.

Following the removal of duplicates to ensure that participants appeared only once in the survey sample frame, a total of 205 participants of PMP projects were available to be contacted for interviews. The sample was stratified to ensure that a sufficient number of interviews was conducted with participants from each of the six PMP projects represented in the sample frame. Although analysis of survey responses was not be undertaken at the level of individual projects, it was nonetheless important to stratify the sample in this manner to ensure that the survey findings represented as broad a range of participant experience with and views of PMP projects as possible.

The participant survey instrument was designed in close consultation with the client to address broad issues pertaining to the relevance, success and cost-effectiveness of the Plan. Specifically, the survey collected information concerning the perceived need to address various workplace issues, continued relevance of PMP priorities, perceived impacts of the projects, and participant experience with other similar programs and projects.

The pretest of the participant survey questionnaire followed the same general process as was used for the pretest of the survey of project sponsors. Given the similarity of a number of questions in the sponsors and participant survey instruments, the results of the sponsor pretest were also used to guide changes to the participant survey instrument before this instrument was pretested. The participant survey questionnaire was pretested on March 7th 2002 with 2 project participants to ensure that the ordering, length and clarity of the questionnaire were appropriate. The results of the pretest, showed that the average survey interview was 14 minutes in length, and

also prompted some minor revision to the wording of some items. Following the pretest, the survey was revised and translated into French. The revised version of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix G (under separate cover).

The response rate for the survey is presented in Table 2.2. The response rate is the proportion of cases from the functional sample that responded to the survey or were "co-operative", either by completing the survey or by responding, yet being screened out of the survey because they were ineligible (i.e., individuals who indicated that no one in their household has a debit card). The refusal rate represents the proportion of cases from the functional sample that declined to participate in the survey. The functional sample factors out the attrition in the survey, leaving only the sample that resulted in completions or refusals, and those numbers attempted but not reached by the completion of fieldwork (e.g., retired phone numbers [called 10 or more times], respondents who were unavailable for the duration of the survey, and respondents who were unable to participate due to illness or some other factor, etc.). Attrition includes numbers that were not in service and duplicate numbers. The response rate for the survey was very high at 77 per cent and the refusal rate was quite low at three per cent.

TABLE 2.2
Response Rate for the Participant Survey

Call Classification	Total
Initial sample	205
(less) Unused sample	0
(less) Attrition	
Number not in service	25
Duplicate	0
Functional sample	180
Other	
No answer/busy	7
Unavailable for duration of survey	3
Retired (called 10 or more times)	24
Other/illness	2
Total "other" numbers	36
Non-response	
Refusal	4
Incomplete refusal	2
Total Non-response	6
Refusal rate	3%
Co-operative calls	
Completed	60
Ineligible	78
Total Co-operative Calls	138
Response rate	77%

1.7   Presentation of Findings

To enhance the clarity and usefulness of the evaluation findings, certain standard approaches were used when reporting findings from the various lines of evidence. In particular, results of the key informant interviews are presented throughout the report according to the proportion of key informants who expressed a certain view, with those views that were most often reported appearing first, followed by other views presented in descending order according to the proportion of respondents who expressed them.

It is also important to note that although the participant and sponsor surveys were designed and administered separately, a number of questions were common to both surveys. As such, these common questions were collapsed and are presented together throughout the report. Furthermore, while evidence was collected for a total of 60 PMP projects through the sponsor survey, only 32 individual sponsors were interviewed given that many of these sponsors were responsible for more than one project. As such, certain non-project specific issues addressed through the sponsor survey (e.g., consistency of PMP priorities with those of their sector/branch, rated satisfaction with PMP processes/procedures) were asked only once of these 32 sponsors.

1.8   Organization of the Report

The following chapters present the integrated findings from the various methodologies employed for the conduct of the evaluation. In Chapter 2 we begin by describing presenting a profile of the People Management Plan and of the projects supported through the Plan. This is followed in Chapter 3 by the presentation of evidence pertaining to the relevance of the PMP, and in Chapter 4 by a discussion of evaluation findings relating to the Plan's success. The final chapter of the report, Chapter 5, presents evidence concerning the program's cost-effectiveness.

2. PROGRAM PROFILE

In this section of the report, we profile the People Management Plan based on evidence gathered through the review of program documents, as well as a profile of projects supported through the Plan.

2.1 Profile of the People Management Plan

Industry Canada's People Management Plan represents the Department's response to the government-wide "La Relève" program. La Relève is a federal government-wide trend introduced in the mid 1990s that was initiated as a means of retaining current talent in the federal government, ensuring a focused strategy for attracting and recruiting young people into those areas demanded by business, providing opportunities for development, capturing the benefits of a diverse workforce, and preparing future leaders. Jocelyne Bouron, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet in 1997, outlined the need for and concept of La Relève in the Fourth Annual Report to The Prime Minister on The Public Service of Canada. In the report she emphasizes that La Relève addresses the human resource requirements of the whole Public Service. Specifically, all employees must have the skills and tools that are essential for their work; they need a supportive work environment; and they need to understand the valuable contribution they make to the quality of life of their fellow Canadians. She also notes that as departmental action plans are completed, other initiatives requiring corporate action will be identified and acted upon. As of June 1997, the corporate initiatives included:

❑ accelerated executive development;
❑ pre-qualification of potential assistant deputy ministers;
❑ appointment to level for assistant deputy ministers;
❑ compensation and retention;
❑ support for professional communities; and
❑ external recruitment.

As part of this government-wide initiative, Industry Canada has set a goal of becoming the "employer of choice" for people with the competencies to achieve its lines of business, and has developed the People Management Plan to assist the Department to achieve this objective. According to the 1997-2000 iteration of the Plan, Industry Canada's human resources strategy and Action Plan is based on an analysis of their employee demographics both corporately and by line of business, as well as on an assessment of challenges and a review of exemplary projects already underway to renew the work force throughout the Department. The Plan is predicated on the four principles of renewal, retention, recruitment and representation, as well as an understanding of the Department's strength and areas of vulnerability.

In addition to the PMP, Industry Canada has organized a number of formalized structures for ensuring employee participation and involvement in human resource issues that operate in parallel to the PMP, including:

❑ SITT's Employee's Council (operating since 1996);

❑ the Operations Sector's People Strategy, which employs a "bottom up approach" to develop its human resources issues (one line of evidence were focus groups);

❑ a joint employee-management council (established in 1999) to monitor progress in the implementation of the Industry Sector's Plan for People, and to identify champions and implementation of each of the key initiatives outlined in the Plan;

❑ having representatives from the Employee Advisor Committee participate on the CRC Management Committee; and

❑ a special human resources senior management committee to address human resource planning and other related issues.

According to the PMP's Evaluation Framework (1998), achievement of substantive results depends upon senior management's ability to maintain awareness and accountability towards PMP objectives and priorities; ensure coordination of efforts and lessons learned through appropriate reporting mechanisms; and to continually update and refresh the Plan as the Department evolves over the coming years.

Feedback received through the interview process conducted for the Evaluation Framework also indicated a variety of factors which might facilitate the progress (e.g., observable senior level commitment, employee involvement, establishment of time-lines and key milestone targets) as well as potential barriers (e.g., adequate time for training and participation on committees, limited number of career opportunities that can be created, delays due to work on Universal Classification System) to the successful implementation of PMP.

(a)   PMP Objectives and Priorities

In December 1997, Industry Canada conducted the Employer of Choice Employee Survey to establish a baseline for future performance measurement activities and identify key issues for further action. While the use of the survey results has varied across the Department, the findings were generally perceived as being useful in identifying important human resource issues and providing the impetus for specific actions being taken at the sector level. Based on the results of these early initiatives, four key PMP objectives emerged, and included:

- ❏ Revitalization or renewal of the existing work force through clear communication of business directions, training, development, career broadening, mobility, and succession planning;

- ❏ Retention of key staff by offering stimulating assignments and alternative work arrangements in order to maintain the necessary knowledge and expertise, along with a broad age distribution within the work force;

- ❏ Representation of women, Francophones, Aboriginals, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and client populations, recognizing that diversity makes sound business sense and can contribute significantly to understanding client needs and creatively responding to them;

- ❏ Focused recruitment to ensure that skills will be available to support ongoing and future operations with a highly capable, knowledge-based work force.

In response to the results of the 1999 Public Service Employee Survey, as well as department-wide consultation held at the beginning of 2000, the PMP priorities were reordered and revised to provide a more concrete expression of the goals and actions proposed to address priorities. The three resulting priorities comprised the foundation of the 2000-2003 version of the People Management Plan and as of September 11, 2000 included:

❑ Improving the well-being of the workplace by providing challenging work in an environment characterized by openness, effective communications, trust, flexibility, fairness and respect;

❑ Investing in our people: learning and career development, whereby learning and career development are owned by the employee, facilitated by managers and supported by the Department; and

❑ Investing in our future organization: recruiting a skilled and representative workforce, by strengthening recruitment strategies and enhancing strategies in recruitment from outside the Public Services, thus strengthening public and client confidence in the Department.

(b)   The People Management Committee

The People Management Committee (PMC) was established in the spring of 1997 to oversee the implementation of the PMP. To support different aspects of the Plan, the PMC also established a Finance Sub-committee in spring 1998 to develop criteria for the review of funding requests by the PMC, as well as a Communications Sub-Committee in the summer of 1998. By the fall of 1998, the PMC had recommended a number of new initiatives to senior management for funding approval.

In January 1998, the Audit and Evaluation Branch developed a comprehensive Evaluation Framework for the PMP, which was used to support an Interim Progress Review of the PMP that began in December of that same year. The Interim Progress Review (1999) identified a number of concerns about the overall management of the PMP and the role of the PMC. Suggestions were made to clarify the mandate of the PMC and the roles and responsibilities of its members, review the membership and use alternates, and improve the level of secretariat support to ensure improved communications, coordination of agenda and to avoid duplication of effort.

As of 2000, the general mandate of PMC is to explore and champion good human resources management practices and to monitor and report progress to senior staff and to the members of the Departmental Management Board (DMB) on the implementation of the People Management Plan 2000-2003. According to the People Management Plan (2000-2003), the role of the PMC is to:

❑ champion the best of human resources practices as it addresses priorities;

❑ maintain the focus on the intended values and results of the Plan;

❑ ensure that the overall people management effort in the department is integrated and well communicated; and

❑ serve as a sounding board for departmental and Public Service HR policy development.

The role of the PMC members is to:

❑ champion the PMP in their respective organizations;

❑ seek out and report PMP initiative results as well as advice from their home organizations to PMC;

❑ represent their organizations/communities in PMC discussions and decisions on procedures, programs/project criteria, priorities and funding allocations; and

❑ contribute knowledge and skills to research, management, communications and advice to PMP project and activities.

The PMC reports to and is accountable to the Industry Canada Management Committee (ICMC) for the implementation of the People Management Plan, while a number of "responsibility centres", especially at the sector and branch level, are responsible for implementing specific elements of the Plan. The PMC is also responsible for measuring progress toward the achievement of the Plan's objectives and to take appropriate actions to alter course for the Plan as appropriate, with the guidance and support of the ICMC.

By May 2000, the 40-member People Management Committee replaced its existing sub-committee structure with Working Groups that would advise the PMC on projects/initiatives aimed at meeting their group's mandate. The working groups, or teams, which are established on a "as needed" and voluntary basis, are responsible to research, study and make recommendations to the PMC on issues and topics related to the Plan's three key priorities. Working group membership is drawn from both PMC members and non-members, including membership drawn from sector or branch level human resource planning groups. The four Working Groups identified as of August 2000, are: Career Development, Mentoring, Well-being in the Workplace, and Recruitment.

(c) *Evaluation and Monitoring*

The PMP Evaluation Framework recommends that a two-step process be followed to serve evaluation and reporting needs for both internal and external purposes: 1) periodic evaluations of the overall program; and 2) ongoing monitoring of projects. The two stages of evaluation and ongoing monitoring of the Plan are described in the following sections.

(i) *Evaluation*

Monitoring progress toward the Plan's overall goals and objectives requires an overall assessment of the Department's efforts relative to the broad objectives of the Plan and organizational change. The Evaluation Framework was established as a basis for in-depth evaluation from this overall corporate perspective. The framework recommends that the timing of evaluation approach be linked to the three-year time frame employed for the People Management Plan, using a three-pronged evaluation approach that would include:

❑　A baseline assessment of Industry Canada's current status relative to human resource issues;

❑　An interim evaluation of progress and management of plan implementation; and

❑　A full evaluation of issues related to relevance, objectives achievement and medium- to long-term results expectations.

The framework also recommends the establishment of a steering committee of managers to provide direction to the evaluation effort on a periodic basis. This committee would ideally continue through the interim and full evaluation steps, making progress reports and results debriefings to the People Management Committee as appropriate.

The evaluation framework outlines three broad issue areas to be addressed in the evaluation of the Plan:

❑　***Relevance of the People Management Plan:*** Do Industry Canada's PMP activities continue to make sense in terms of the conditions, needs or problems to which they are intended to respond?;

❑ **Results:** How challenging are Industry Canada's established goals for the PMP, and to what extent have they been accomplished for the Department overall, and by line of business? What have been the impacts of the PMP?; and

❑ **Plan Management:** Has the PMP been effectively implemented?

The framework also provides guidelines to assess the Plan's attainment of the medium and long-term goals. To this end, the framework recommends that Industry Canada employ the same criteria as were used for the Industry Canada Employee Survey of 1997 to describe an organization as an "employer of choice". The rationale for the continued use of these criteria is that this allows an effective integration of survey results with the eventual corporate evaluation study. The categories against which to measure the achievement of medium and long-term results are:

❑ **Work Environment:** Has Industry Canada fostered a stimulating work environment which rewards cooperation, horizontal teamwork, entrepreneurship and results?

❑ **Purpose:** Has Industry Canada communicated a clear sense of purpose and instilled the perception that what the department does is important and meaningful?

❑ **Respect:** Does Industry Canada demonstrate respect for individuals and all their life commitments?

❑ **Continuous Improvement:** Does Industry Canada support and reward continuous improvement in all areas of the mandate and in service delivery?

❑ **Career Development:** Has Industry Canada implemented innovative career development practices?

(ii)   Monitoring

For the individual initiatives supporting the Plan, measuring progress involves assessing the results of these activities on an ongoing basis using the performance measurement templates that have been created. This monitoring of progress would be performed by responsible managers as part of normal accountability arrangements in the Department. The People Management Committee would also periodically review the progress being made on these initiatives as part of its function of overall coordination of the implementation of the Plan.

The Evaluation Framework envisioned the following process for the monitoring mechanisms of PMP. At the corporate level, performance measurement is about organizational commitment to strategic objectives and change. Senior management was expected to monitor the implementation of the Plan and ensure that an adequate organizational capacity exists to achieve desired results over the long term. The Department would then report on the achievements of the PMP to the Clerk of the Privy Council Office on an annual basis, as well as to Parliament through the Industry Canada Performance Report. It was also recommended that the Department periodically assess longer-term performance trends and report to Parliament on these every three years, as required.

According to the Evaluation Framework measuring progress at the project level involves assessing the results of individual initiatives and ensuring that managers and staff have a clear understanding of how their daily activities contribute to department-wide goals and priorities. Results of these early consultations suggest that most PMP initiatives monitor their progress on an ongoing basis. For example, Measurement Canada's Human Resources Strategy assessment tools include business plans, human resources plans, special studies, working groups, leadership teams, employee surveys, human resources information system for demographic data, training and development reports, upward feedback, audit and evaluation reports. Other initiatives are reported to use similar tools.

In 1999, Industry Canada identified areas of improvement and made recommendations in its interim report. In discussing performance monitoring and reporting, the findings revolve around the problem of integrating PMP initiatives in terms of impact and effects, especially when evaluating them in terms of the strategic objectives and priorities. In terms of priorities, the report states:

One of the major weaknesses of the PMP is that it fails to identify relative priorities amongst the 75 initiatives. In addition, information related to resource requirements was not provided in the Plan. This poses additional challenges with respect to monitoring performance. Given the lack of information related to resources provided in the current PMP, it is not possible to make the important linkage between results achieved and resources and resources expended.

As part of the report, Industry Canada recommended that the PMC establish a Performance Measurement Sub-committee, which would be supported through the provision of technical advice from the Audit and Evaluation Branch.

(d) Results

The Plan is organized such that department-wide and sector-specific initiatives are captured under each of the four PMP objectives. According to the PMP Evaluation Framework, by 1998 the majority of funded initiatives (57 of 75) targeted "renewal and retention", while the remaining initiatives focussed on representation (n=10), and recruitment (n=8). In the fall of 1998 the PMC approved another 14 projects, as well as funding to support corporate training. Some of the new projects were extensions of original PMP initiatives (eg., Men and Women Working in Partnership, University Recruitment and Development Program Review, Upward Feedback).

According to Industry Canada People Management Plan 2000-2003, the department achievements as of September 2000 by priority were:

❑   Priority 1: Improving Well-being in the Workplace

  ■   Challenging work on an exciting agenda

  ■   Encouragement of creativity, innovation and intellectual freedom in pursuing work

  ■   Pride in the importance of the department and its work

  ■   Improved information dissemination within work units

  ■   Experimentation with employee awareness programs, work-life balance, awards and recognition and other retention initiatives

❑   Priority 2: Investing in Our People: Learning and Career Development

  ■   Corporate funded training that was aligned with the department's five strategic objectives and corporate management responsibilities

  ■   Exploration of innovative approaches to career development and on-line training

  ■   Personal learning plans adopted in parts of the department

  ■   Capacity for customized training and learning interventions and development of programs

- ▪ Informal succession planning for Exs, including transition to the EX level

- ▪ Bridging programs for support staff

- ❑ Priority 3: Investing in Our Future Organization: Recruiting a Skilled and Representative Workforce

  - ▪ Recruitment efforts that meet short term needs

  - ▪ Best practice university recruitment and development program

  - ▪ Increased representation of women in EX ranks

  - ▪ Increased representation in overall proportion of employment equity groups

2.2   Profile of Funded Projects

At the time of the evaluation, 38 per cent of projects for which files were available had been completed, while more than half (55 per cent) were ongoing. It was not possible to unambiguously determine the project status for seven per cent of projects. However, it should be noted that these projects were all 2000/2001 projects for which a final report was not available.

Exhibit 2.1 presents the distribution of projects according to the PMP objective the project was designed to address. Overall, projects tended to be well distributed among all three PMP priority areas, with the largest number of projects contributing to improving the well-being of the workplace (62 per cent), followed by 51 per cent of projects that addressed learning and career development issues and 44 per cent that addressed issues related to recruitment and retention.

EXHIBIT 2.1
PMP Priority Area Targeted (2000-2002)*

Improving the well-being of the workplace — 62

Investing in our people: learning and career development — 51

Investing in our future organization: recruitment and representation — 44

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70

*Projects could address more than one PMP priority area, thus the proportions of projects
addressing each priority area may sum to more than 100 per cent.
n=55

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PMP Review of Project Files
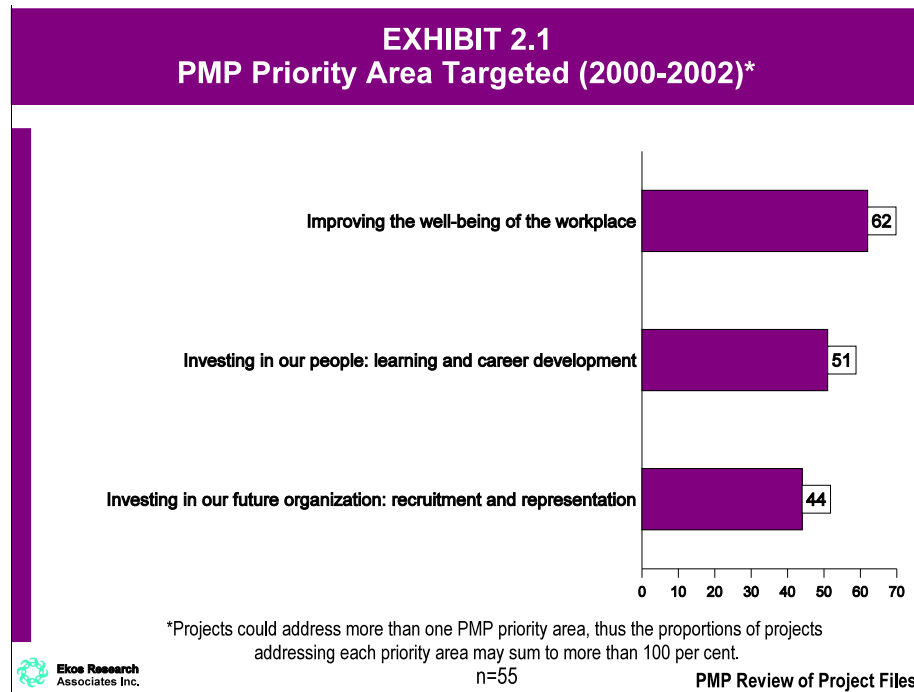
Exhibit 2.2 presents a comparison of proposed and actual funding for PMP projects. It is important to note that the proposed funding was available for 85 per cent of projects, while information on the actual funding received was available for fewer than half of the project files reviewed (44 per cent). The average level of proposed funding for projects implemented during the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 fiscal years was $87,792 and this figure was somewhat higher for the actual funding received (mean of $97,402).

EXHIBIT 2.2
Proposed versus Actual Funding for PMP project (2000-2002)

Proposed Funding

		Actual Funding*
19	Less than $20,000	7
17	$20,001 to $40,000	16
15	$40,001 to $60,000	7
12	$60,001 to $100,000	9
13	$100,001 to $200,000	11
8 $\overline{x}$=$85,792	More than $200,000	7 $\overline{x}$=$97,402
15	Not specified	44

n=55

n=35**

* Although 36 per cent of the total sample of project files did not contain a mid-term or final report it was possible to capture information concerning actual funding received for some of these projects from the People Management Plan Approved Projects and Allocated Funding, October 26, 2001.
** Excludes projects for which both a mid-term and final report were not available.

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PMP Review of Project Files

While not all PMP projects have a participant group, the number of participants was identified for only nine per cent (n=5) of the projects for which files were available. The average number of participants listed for these five projects is 1,203, with two projects identifying more than a thousand participants.

3. RELEVANCE

3.1 Consistency with Departmental and Government Priorities

During the participant and sponsor surveys, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they felt that the PMP's three priority areas continue to reflect the priorities of their sectors and branches (Exhibit 3.1). These results show that a majority of respondents from both surveys feel the PMP priorities reflect the needs of their sector (60 per cent) and branch (50 per cent) to a large extent (i.e., responded with a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale), while more than nine of every ten respondents feel they did so to at least a moderate extent (i.e., responded between a 3 and 7 on a 7-point scale) (94 and 93 per cent, respectively).

EXHIBIT 3.1
Relevance of PMP Priorities

"To what extent do you feel the PMP's three priority areas continue to reflect the priorities of..."*

your sector?

3	3	34	60

your branch?

4	2	43	50

0   20   40   60   80   100

■ DK/NR   ■ Small extent   □ Moderate extent   ■ Large extent

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n= 92

PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys
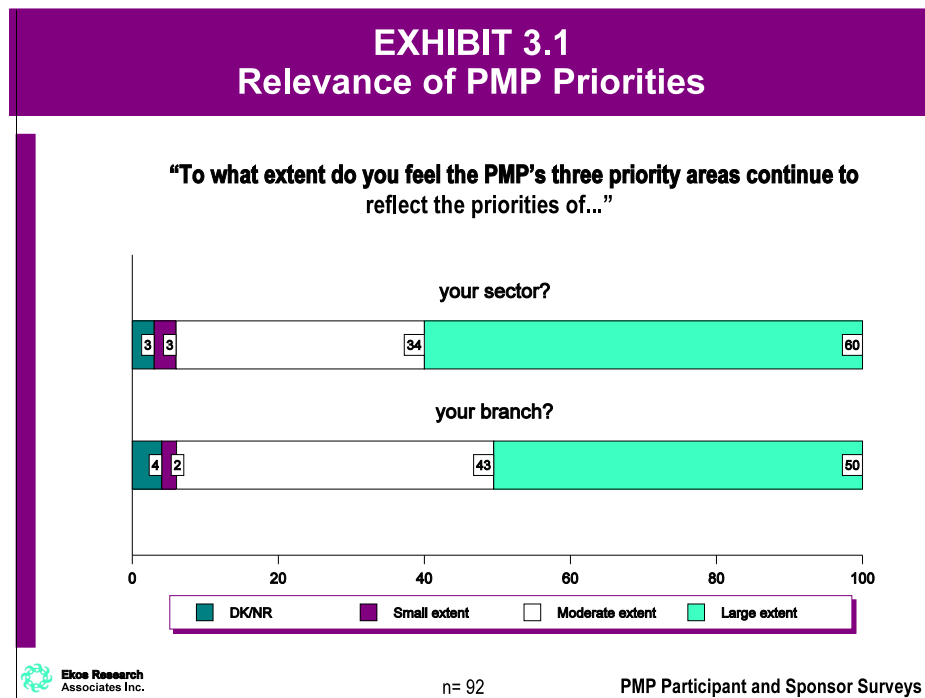
Consistent with the findings from the surveys, findings from the key informant interviews reveal that most PMC members and Industry Canada managers who were interviewed for the evaluation feel that the Plan's priorities are consistent with federal, departmental and sector/branch priorities, although some respondents were not able to answer. PMC respondents note that recruitment is a high priority for all sectors and branches and one respondent points out that the PMP has been successful at balancing the priority recruitment needs of both senior and less senior employees. Although it is felt that some sectors and branches do not use the PMP to guide their own priority setting activities because they tend to focus more on business lines, other branches and sectors put a greater emphasis on PMP priorities, such as recruitment and retention.

3.2   Continued Need for the Plan

Participants and sponsors were also asked to rate the extent to which they feel there is a continued need for the PMP to address the three key priorities of well-being in the workplace, learning and career development and recruitment and representation within Industry Canada. The vast majority of respondents to the surveys indicated that there was a continued need for the Plan to address these priorities to a large (82 per cent) or moderate extent (14 per cent responded with a 3, 4 or 5 on a 7-point scale) (Exhibit 3.2).

EXHIBIT 3.2
Continued Need for the Plan

"To what extent do you feel there is a continued need for the PMP to address these priorities within Industry Canada?"

DK/NR	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent

n= 92   PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys

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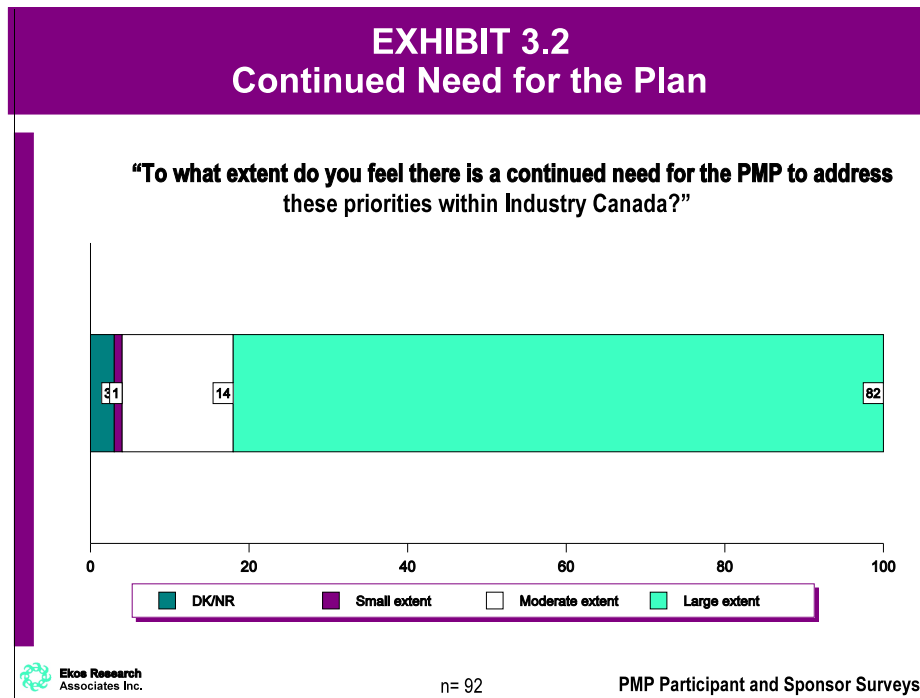
Respondents to the sponsor survey were further asked to rate the likelihood that their sector or branch would have provided full financial support for the project had they not received funding through the PMP (Exhibit 3.3). Nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) of project sponsors indicated that this was unlikely.

EXHIBIT 3.3
Perceived Likelihood of Sector/Branch Support

"What is the likelihood that your sector or branch would have provided full
financial support for the project had you not received funding through the PMP?"

Likely	18
Neither likely nor unlikely	12
Unlikely	65
DK/NR	5

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n=60

PMP Sponsor Survey
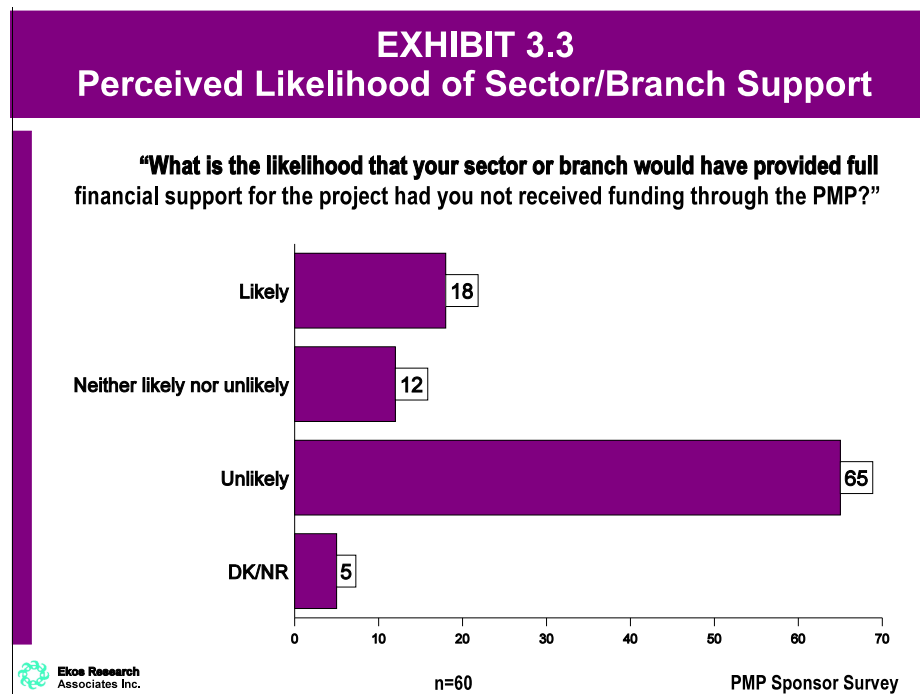
Key informants were also asked to comment on whether they feel there is a continued need for the PMP in order to support Industry Canada's achievement of the Plan's three key objectives, and a large majority of both managers and PMC members agree that PMP continues to be needed in this regard. Some PMC members note that the Plan supports these priorities by ensuring that proposals address at least one of these key issues before they are able to proceed in the competition. Some respondents also note, however, that certain factors may impinge upon the Plan's ability to achieve these objectives. For instance, several respondents from both groups feel that the objectives are so broad that all projects can easily fall into one or another category, a situation which is felt by some to lead to a "mishmash" of funded projects due to a lack of cohesiveness. There were also suggestions made to clarify and operationalize the rules, processes and procedures in the proposal stage to help determine the relative relevance and merits of each project, and to devise a strategic approach to implement the priorities. A small number of respondents also feel that certain objectives and activities should be covered by specific sectors

or branches, or supported through A-base funding, but that there are insufficient resources to support all required activities. Other issues that were reported include the perceived need to:

❑ revisit the priorities to gauge their relevance;

❑ redefine the priorities to make them more specific; and

❑ include or specifically address issues of succession planning within the priorities

Most PMC members and Industry Canada managers interviewed (approximately two-thirds of respondents from each group) also feel that the PMP continues to be a relevant and viable means of supporting Industry Canada's commitment to become an Employer of Choice for people with the necessary competencies. Support for this view stems primarily from the perception that the Plan has provided funds for relevant projects in training, recruitment, career development, and leadership development. Several respondents also note that the Plan has brought all branches and sectors together to identify issues and has enabled them to identify and act on common issues. In the view of one respondent, this use of a central plan to address human resource priorities ensures that issues are not being approached in a piecemeal fashion. Finally, one respondent feels the Plan is necessary to provide employees a voice that is separate from that of management and unions.

Despite strong support for the Plan's approach to addressing workplace issues, respondents nonetheless point to a number of areas for improvement to enhance the PMP's relevance and viability, including: more resources and efforts to address work load and work/life balance, as employees remain over-worked; replacing the goal of becoming the "employer of choice" with a more realistic standard of becoming "an excellent place to work"; more efforts to build on the awareness of the Plan that already exists, as well as to move forward on issues identified by the Plan; and a need to promote the Plan such that it is familiar to managers and employees, and that the results or outcomes of projects are well communicated to all staff. As well, a number of PMC members feel the relevance of the Plan would be enhanced through changes to the committee structure, to encourage more staff participation, and employ more of a "bottom-up" approach (which the Plan was designed to do).

3.3   Relevance to the Needs of Management and Staff

Participants and sponsors who participated in the surveys were asked to comment on the extent to which they felt there was a need to address various workplace issues, many of which had been identified as future challenges for the Plan. As shown in Exhibit 3.4 a and b, a majority of project sponsors and participants feel there is at least a moderate need (i.e., responded between a 3 and 7 on a 7-point scale) to address all of the workplace issues about which they were asked. Issues for which respondents were most likely to indicate a large need (i.e., a response of 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) include the need to introduce more formal succession planning at and below the EX level (74 per cent), address issues of workload, overtime, work-life balance, fairness and involvement (73 per cent), ensure take up by both managers and employees of a broad range of career development tools (68 per cent) and continue recruitment from Universities and development programs (67 per cent). Respondents were least likely to report a large need to improve the representation of visible minorities through recruitment (40 per cent), improve the work environment for people with disabilities and visible minorities (32 per cent) and enhance action to eliminate harassment and discrimination (27 per cent).

EXHIBIT 3.4
Perceived Need to Address Workplace Issues (a)

"To what extent is there a need to..."

Introduce more formal succession planning at and below the EX level?
1 3 22 74

Address issues of workload, overtime, work-life balance, fairness and involvement?
2 25 73

Ensure take up by both managers and employees of a broad range of career development tools?
32 68

Continue recruitment from Universities and Development Programs?
1 32 67

Improve information sharing throughout the Department?
1 3 34 62

Improve the marketing of the department as a workplace of choice?
3 2 34 61

DK/NR   Little need   Moderate need   Large need

n=92   PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys

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EXHIBIT 3.4
Perceived Need to Address Workplace Issues (b)

"To what extent is there a need to..."

Continue recruitment using bridging programs for CO-OP and FSWEP students?
11 | 38 | 60

Improve analysis and capacity to forecast recruitment needs for several years into the future?
2 | 3 | 35 | 60

Use recruitment to improve the distribution of people with disabilities, Aboriginal people and women across occupational groups?
2 | 5 | 49 | 43

Broaden the reach and availability of classroom and on-line learning opportunities?
4 | 5 | 48 | 42

Improve the representation of visible minorities through recruitment?
4 | 5 | 50 | 40

Improve the work environment for people with disabilities and visible minorities?
5 | 8 | 55 | 32

Enhance action to eliminate harassment and discrimination?
7 | 16 | 50 | 27

0 — 20 — 40 — 60 — 80 — 100

■ DK/NR   ■ Little need   □ Moderate need   ■ Large need

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n=92   PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys

❑ Sponsors were significantly more likely than participants to perceive a large need to improve the marketing of the department as a workplace of choice (81 per cent 50 per cent, respectively), improve the representation of visible minorities through recruitment (59 per cent 30 per cent, respectively), and use recruitment to improve the distribution of people with disabilities, Aboriginal people and women across occupational groups (59 per cent 35 per cent, respectively).

Project participants were also asked questions designed to assess the degree to which funded projects could address the needs of staff (Exhibit 3.5). These results show that almost half of the participants interviewed would be very likely to recommend the PMP project in which they had participated to other Industry Canada staff (48 per cent), and 42 per cent of participants reported that they would be moderately likely to do so. When asked if the project had met their expectations, one-third of participants (33 per cent) indicated that it had to a large extent, while half (50 per cent) indicated that it had done so to a moderate extent.

EXHIBIT 3.5
Participant Satisfaction with PMP Projects

"To what extent..."

would you recommend the project to other Industry Canada staff?

5 | 5 | 42 | 48

did the project to meet your expectations?"

3 | 13 | 50 | 33

0   20   40   60   80   100

DK/NR   Small extent   Moderate extent   Large extent

Ekos Research Associates Inc.

n=60

PMP Participant Survey
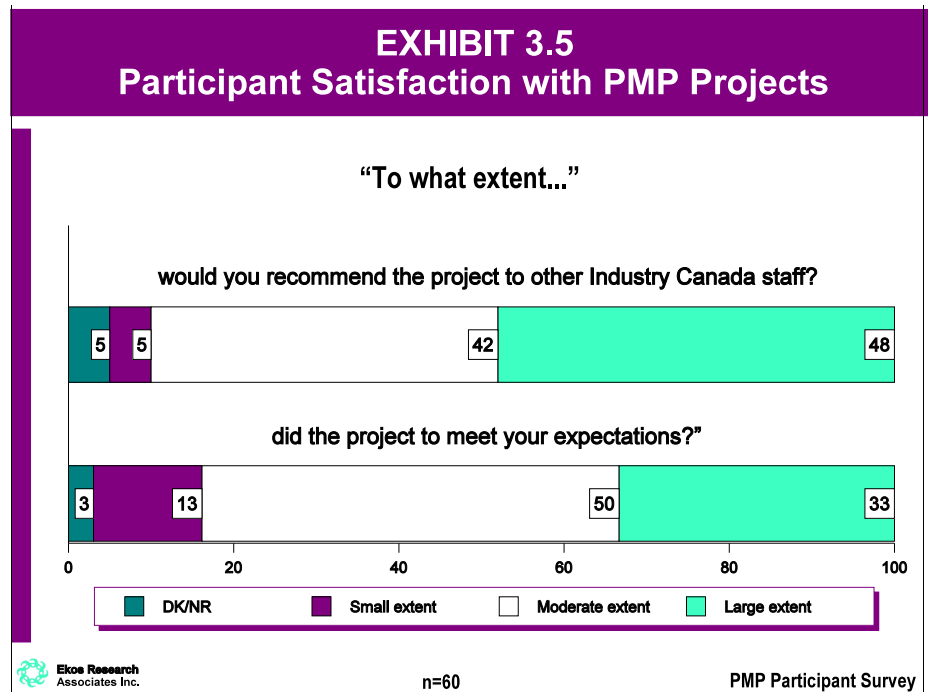
(a) *PMP Responsiveness to Key Workplace Issues*

During the key informant interviews, PMC members and Industry Canada managers were asked to identify what they feel are the most pronounced needs of management and staff in terms of workplace issues, as well as to identify how they feel the PMP has or could respond to these needs. In terms of the most pronounced needs of management and staff, a number of key themes emerged. To begin, one of the recurring issues raised by many key informants concerned workload and work/life balance, particularly as this issue relates to Industry Canada management. The perception exists among some respondents that support staff have been much more successful of achieving this balance, but that middle managers, who support, supervise and manage programs and budgets, may be more burdened.

Secondly, a number of respondents also mentioned the issue of recruitment, particularly among management and senior staff. Recruitment is of grave importance to many respondents given the Department's aging workforce, the difficulty in recruiting young talent and the need for succession planning (i.e., ensuring a smooth transition when large numbers of executives take

retirement in a few years by recruiting enough people within the Department with good corporate knowledge to be able to replace retirees). Respondents note that a number of factors may need to be overcome to adequately address this issue, including: providing appropriate challenges and training to new recruits; addressing the poor retention rate; competition from the private sector for new employees; potential marginalization of young people trained to be strategists in junior jobs; and the need for more information to be communicated on the expectations and work habits of "Gen Xers". In one respondent's view, the succession of older staff brings with it new opportunities, as change in management ranks may also allow for change in the organization's culture and a chance to increase the "people focus" in the Department.

While one respondent feels the PMP could respond to this issue by simplifying the procedures for recruitment and reclassification, another notes that they have made strides to respond to recruitment through certain projects and analysis, and by targeting two or three high priority areas within the Department. This respondent was quick to note, however, that the PMP must not replace or focus solely on the human resource function within any organization since human resources is only one component of the PMP and many other issues remain to be addressed by the Plan. Some managers also note that the PMP could help to address retention issues by examining why retention rates are low[1] and obtaining suggestions from new recruits to address these issues.

A third commonly identified issue concerns the need for career development and training. Specifically, respondents suggest there is a need to: increase overall awareness of evolving issues and to maintain/improve employee's skills; adapt to technological changes and the information age; and teach effective management, leadership and supervisory skills and have better-trained managers, since this group is responsible for motivating staff and are the ones that employees will trust and listen to the most. While it is not necessarily the PMP's role to address this, the PMP does nonetheless include a leadership development course, counselling services to executives, corporate learning events (e.g., courses dealing with stress, diversity training; problem employees; and public speaking). Further, without the PMP it is felt that the more particular types of training, such as workplace accommodation, sensitizing managers about issues relating to disabilities,

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[1] Although the perception exists among some respondents that retention rates are low, Industry Canada documentation suggests that problems with retention are, for the most part, fairly localized.

would not be addressed. Furthermore, respondents suggested that the PMP can initiate training, experimental modelling and different approaches to respond to these needs. One respondent also suggested that the Department invest in more morale-building activities that would help increase contact between the various levels of Industry Canada.

Other critical issues identified by several interview respondents include:

❏   the need for a meaningful performance appraisal process;

❏   office automation and the changing nature of clerical work; and

❏   the role people with disabilities play in the workplace.

A number of general suggestions were also received with respect to how the Plan can address the issues identified above, including: continuing to fund projects on a range of issues that are important; making specific recommendations for action and following through on them; following up more on projects to identify results and impact; continual monitoring employee needs; and improving awareness and knowledge of the PMP.

(b)   PMC Input into the Development of the PMP

When asked if they had been consulted during the development of the 2000-2003 iteration of the People Management Plan, approximately half of the PMC respondents said that they were. Some of those who were consulted by PMP on the drafts were disappointed that their suggestions were not incorporated. Others were merely pleased that they were consulted.

Again, approximately half of the respondents felt they were provided sufficient opportunity to contribute to the development of the 2000-2003 priorities. Those who were consulted commented that more people should have been drawn into the discussion. One PMC committee member reported, however, that Director Generals and heads of organizations do not receive much advance notice and must wait to react to the call letter. Another respondent suggests that it would be preferable to coordinate activities of the HRB and the People Plan in Operations with those of the PMP through some planning process, while some feel it would be better to have the call for proposals in October to allow for more time to prepare project proposals.

3.4   Target Audiences

Project files were reviewed to examine the degree to which projects identified and targeted specific audiences. Exhibit 3.3 presents a comparison of the audiences the projects proposed to target and the actual audiences who participated in the funded projects. The proposed target audiences for funded projects were most likely to be identified as the entire Department (25 per cent), followed by a specific sector (20 per cent) or a specific occupational group (18 per cent). Aboriginal people (five per cent), women (four per cent), people with disabilities (four per cent), new graduates (four per cent) and visible minorities (two per cent) were least likely to be identified. Roughly one quarter of funded projects (24 per cent) did not identify a proposed target audience. While the distribution of actual audiences participating in or targeted by these projects was somewhat similar to that for proposed audiences, any differences observed between these two distributions are likely attributable to the fact that this information was not available for over half of the projects for which a mid-term or final report was available.

EXHIBIT 3.6
Proposed versus Actual Audiences for
PMP Projects (2000- 2002)

Proposed Funding		Actual Funding*
25	Department -wide	11
20	Specific sector	11
18	Specific Occupational Group	17
5	Aboriginal	3
4	Women	0
4	People with disabilities	6
4	New graduates	3
2	Visible minorities	0
4	Other	0
24	Not specified	54

n=55   n=35*

*Excludes projects for which both a mid-term and final report were not available.

Ekos Research Associates Inc.   PMP Review of Project Files

Those projects that proposed to target a specific occupational group were most likely to target senior professionals (85 per cent), while the remaining projects targeted administrative or support staff (15 per cent) and a similar distribution is observed for the occupational groups that actually participated (75 per cent senior professionals and 25 per cent administrative and support staff). Projects that proposed to target a specific sector were most likely to target the Operations sector (88 per cent), while 13 per cent (one project) was targeted to employees in the Industry sector. Information on the actual sector targeted was available for only two projects, both of which targeted the Operations sector.

The file review also sought to gather information concerning the business line targeted by the projects, however, this information was available in only one of the 55 project files reviewed.

Consistent with the results of the file review, respondents to the sponsor survey were most likely to indicate that their project was designed to reach all Industry Canada employees (46 per cent) and Employees in one or two specific occupational groups (35 per cent). When asked whether they felt that there were any employee groups that could have participated in their project but did not, more than three-quarters (83 per cent) of sponsors surveyed indicated that they did not feel there were any.

Although most respondents to the key informant interviews do not feel there are any groups within Industry Canada that could, but have not benefited from or participated in PMP-funded activities, numerous PMC members and managers noted that they do believe that certain groups could benefit from the PMP but are not. Although managers were unable to identify specific groups that are under-represented, some argue that an effort should be made to ensure that all sectors and employment groups are benefiting from the Plan. The specific groups identified by PMC respondents include:

❑   Middle managers;
❑   The smaller groups: due to their size and reporting relationship of some smaller groups (e.g., those that report to the Deputy or Associate Deputy Minister) may not benefit as much as larger groups with more money and flexibility;

❑ Visible minority or disabled groups: while these groups are targeted by the Plan, there does not appear to be much innovation taking place to address their issues;

❑ The average employee: there is focus on equity groups and diversity, but this may not reach the average employee;

❑ Non-HRB employees: the PMP focuses largely on human resources, thus it is believed that the majority of approved projects come from HRB and other sectors/branches are not benefiting as much as they might[2]; and

❑ Administrative and support staff: this group may not be aware of the PMP, and therefore it would be of use to encourage their awareness, and help them to feel a part of more projects.

Finally, some respondents noted that most projects do not target employees but instead address process issues, thus many employees are not clear on how PMP funding benefits them.

3.5 Continued Need for the People Management Committee

Project sponsors were asked to rate the degree to which People Management Committee (PMC) has fulfilled a number of roles they have been assigned under the Plan (Exhibit 3.7)[3]. A majority of sponsors indicated that the PMC had fulfilled all of the roles about which they were asked to at least a moderate extent. Respondents were most likely to indicate that the PMC has, to a large extent (i.e. responded with a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale), maintained focus on the intended values and results of the Plan (66 per cent) and served as a sounding board for departmental and Public Service human resource policy development (54 per cent). Fewer than half of the sponsors who responded indicated that the PMC has, to a large extent, championed the best human resource practices as it addresses priorities (46 per cent) and ensured that the management effort in the department is integrated and well communicated (28 per cent).

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2.   Despite this perception, in most or all instances HRB proposals target a department-wide audience.

3.   It is important to note that large proportions of sponsors (i.e., between nine and 19 per cent) were not able to respond to these questions, thus valid percentages (i.e., excluding non-responses) are presented.

EXHIBIT 3.7
Performance of the PMC

"To what extent has the PMC..."*

Maintained focus on the intended values and results of the Plan? (n=29)

| 7 | 28 | | 66 |

Served as a sounding board for departmental and Public Service human resource policy development? (n=26)

| 4 | 42 | | 54 |

Championed the best of human resource practices as it addresses priorities? (n=28)

| 7 | 46 | | 46 |

Ensured that the management effort in the department is integrated and well communicated? (n=29)

| 14 | 59 | 28 |

0   20   40   60   80   100

☐ Small extent   ☐ Moderate extent   ☐ Large extent

*The distrbitutions of responses are based on valid percentages (i.e., excluding non-responses)

Ekos Research Associates Inc.

PMP Sponsor Survey

All PMC respondents agreed that there continues to be a great need for PMC to manage and deliver the Plan. The PMC is thought to allow Industry Canada to respond to the needs of staff in a timely way, contributes to equalizing the treatment of all employees through a democratic process, promotes good human resource practices and coordinates the development, implementation and evaluation of corporate human resource initiatives, ensures the Deputy's priorities are reflected in the PMP, and reviews projects to avoid duplication. The PMC is also thought to represent a good cross-section of views of both support and manager level staff, thereby broadening the participation of employees and coverage within the Department.

Respondents nonetheless point to areas in which the PMC can be improved. Some feel that the PMC needs to be more strategic and professional by expanding its role and clarifying its purpose, particularly regarding the process for screening proposals at the sector level. This process was described by some as too simplistic and as merely a rubber stamp of proposals without a critical analysis of their merits. Similarly, some respondents suggest that more needs to be done

to monitor funded projects, both in terms of monitoring their progress to ensure they do not lapse on their funding, and encouraging sponsors to report on the results of their findings and not merely its costs. This latter point is felt to be particularly relevant for pilot projects, since other sectors could potentially benefit from lessons learned and incorporate pilot practices into their initiatives.

Respondents also frequently mentioned a need to change the way in which the PMC functions. In particular, respondents note the need to ensure members' participation in the meetings, encourage managers to make PMP a priority and to devote more energy in recruiting people to the PMC. Some respondents also suggested making the committee smaller to improve its effectiveness, although this downsizing would likely decrease its representativeness. Given the heavy workloads of many PMC members, others noted that the project review process is too time-consuming. Finally, some respondents feel that employees need to be aware of what money is available, what kinds of projects are acceptable, and how they benefit from these projects as a means of encouraging more proposals.

4. SUCCESS

4.1 Performance Measurement

A key component of the PMP's success rests on its ability to measure progress toward the achievement of desired goals and outcomes. Exhibit 4.1 compares the distributions of measures that project sponsors proposed to use with measures actually collected in order to gauge the extent to which projects gathered information to assess the achievement of proposed objectives. Proposed measures of objectives achievement were most likely to involve anecdotal participant feedback (38 per cent), a questionnaire (29 per cent), the number of participants or events (29 per cent), and other administrative data (e.g., number of web site hits, recruitment statistics). Seven per cent of projects proposed to use other measures of objectives achievement while close to one-quarter of project files (24 per cent) did not contain information specifying how the achievement of project objectives would be measured. Relative to the proposed measures of objectives achievement, a higher proportion of project files reported information reflecting anecdotal feedback from participants (38 and 45 per cent, respectively) and the number of participants (29 and 41 per cent, respectively). It is also noteworthy that nearly one-third (32 per cent) of projects for which a final report was available did not report some measure of objectives achievement.

EXHIBIT 4.1
Measures of Objectives Achievement: Proposed and Implemented (2000-2002)

Proposed Measures*

Participant feedback	38
Questionnaire	29
Number of participants/events	29
Other administrative data (web site hits, recruitment statistics	9
Other	7
Not specified	24

n=55

Measures Collected

Participant feedback	45
Questionnaire	23
Number of participants/events	41
Other administrative data	5
Other	5
Not specified	32

n=35**

* Projects could employ more than one measure of objectives achievement, thus the proportions of projects using each measure may sum to more than 100 per cent.
** Excludes projects for which a final report was not available. PMP Review of Project Files

Ekos Research Associates Inc.

The nature of the performance measures collected or proposed was also reviewed. Performance measures were coded according to whether they captured information concerning processes or outputs (i.e., the project's products, such as workshops held, pamphlets produced, participants served), outcomes (i.e., the actual difference the project made in terms of achieving the objectives), or both outcomes and processes/outputs. Exhibit 4.2 shows that proposed or actual performance measures for the majority of projects concerned processes or outputs (53 per cent), followed by 18 per cent addressing outcomes and five per cent that involved both outcomes and processes/outputs. Roughly one-quarter of projects did not propose a performance measure and lacked a final report (13 per cent), provided insufficient information about the nature of the performance measures to allow them to be classified in this manner (five per cent), or did not identify a performance measure in either the proposal or final report (five per cent).

EXHIBIT 4.2
Nature of Performance Measures
Collected/Proposed (2000- 2002)

Category	Value
Process/outputs	53
Outcomes	18
Both proposed measure and final report unavailable	13
Both	5
Insufficient information	5
None identified	5

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n=55

PMP Review of Project Files
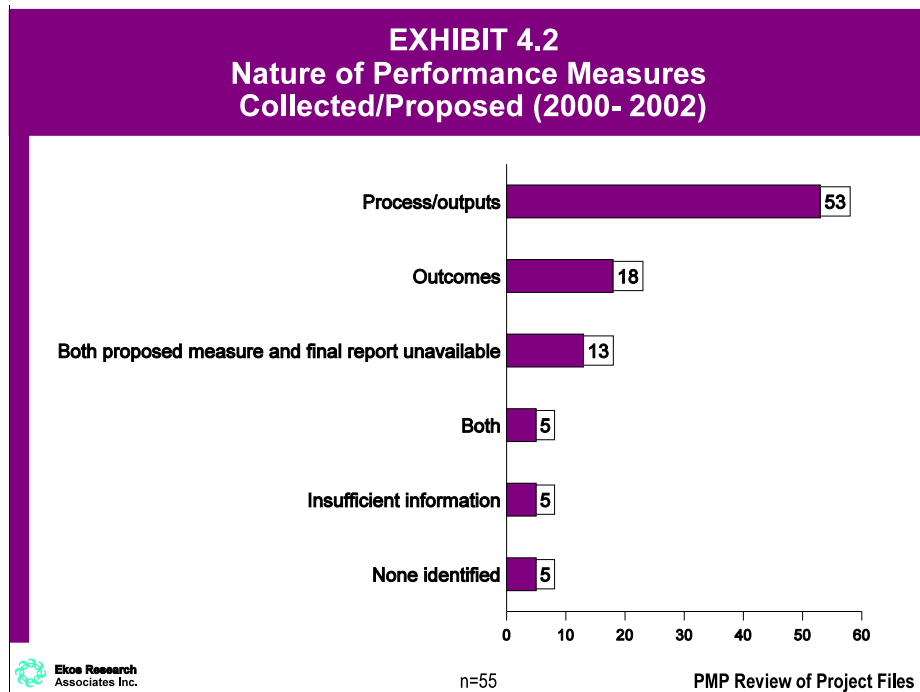
Finally, project results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) were rated according to the degree to which they were consistent with the PMP priorities the project was designed to address (Exhibit 4.3). While it was not possible to provide this rating for over one-third of completed projects (i.e., information on outputs and outcomes was not provided for 37 per cent of projects), the project results for the remaining 63 per cent of projects were at least somewhat consistent with the PMP priority addressed, with 34 per cent of project results rated as very consistent with the targeted PMP priority.

EXHIBIT 4.3
Rated Consistency of Project Results to PMP
Priorities (2000- 2002)

Very consistent — 34

Somewhat consistent — 29

Results not specified — 37

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40

n=35*
* Excludes projects for which both a mid-term and final report were not available.

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PMP Review of Project Files
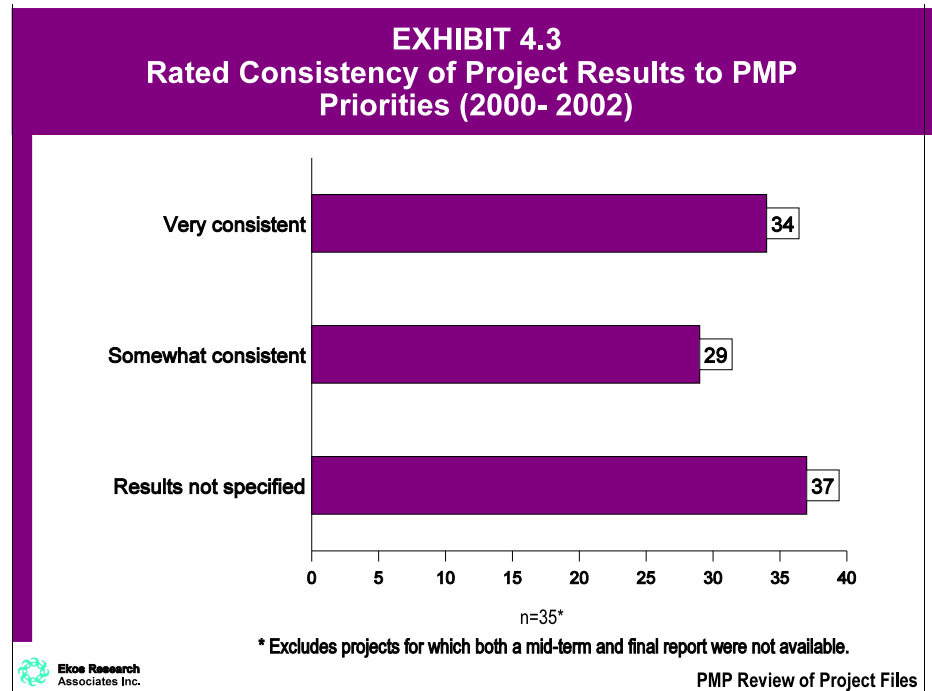
(a)   Comprehensibility of PMP Priorities

When asked to rate their overall understanding of the PMP's objectives, project sponsors were most likely to indicate that they understood the objectives to a large extent (68 per cent), while the remaining 32 per cent of sponsors indicated that they understood the priorities to a moderate extent.

PMC members were also asked to rate the Plan's overall objectives according to five different characteristics. A discussion of their ratings follows:

❑   ***Well-articulated and clear[4] :*** No clear consensus emerged concerning the degree to which respondents feel the Plan's objectives are well-articulated and clear, as respondents

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[4]   Key informants were originally asked to rate the articulation and clarity of the Plan's objectives separately. Feedback from the interviews, however, suggests that these two constructs are not sufficiently distinct to allow researchers to meaningfully distinguish ratings for these two items. As such, ratings for these two constructs were collapsed and presented as a single characteristic.

expressed divergent opinion and responses ranged from two to seven on a 7-point scale. Although a couple of respondent praised the fact that the objectives do not often change or that the goals are easy for people to relate to, others expressed concern related to their clarity and articulation, including: a lack of communication of objectives between different department levels; objectives that are too broad; the inability for employees to relate them to their own situations; a lack of clarity at the sector and branch levels about the objectives; and over-articulation of objectives (i.e., too detailed or specific, too many) such that the main points are lost.

❑ *Realistic:* Interviewees tended to rate the PMP objectives as moderately to very realistic. While some respondents feel the objectives are overly broad to be realistic, others note that some objectives are more realistic than others (e.g., recruitment is perceived to be a more realistic objective than improving the well-being of the workplace).

❑ *Measurable:* The majority of interviewees feel PMP objectives are measurable to a moderate extent. Some respondents expressed concern that nothing was being done about measurement within the Department (i.e., that the tools are not in place for measuring progress toward the attainment of objectives), while others argued that some objectives are harder to measure than others (e.g., it is considered more difficult to measure work-life balance issues or attitude-related objectives, such as workplace environments).

❑ *Results-based:* Respondents were divided in terms of the degree to which the Plan's objectives are results-based. A number of interviewees pointed out that some objectives by their very nature do not allow for measurable results (e.g., workplace well-being), while others suggest that the intention of the Plan is to support projects that yield positive results, although in one respondent's view demonstrating results tends to be weak.

(b)   Monitoring Mechanisms

Most PMC members are aware of monitoring mechanisms that currently exist for the PMP, although one-in-five indicated that they are not. Among the monitoring mechanisms that currently exist, respondents identified the PMP Secretariat (which monitors progress, financial obligations, status reports, funding levels and provides lists of proposed projects), the project final reports and reporting templates, templates for financial reporting, project evaluations, and occasional audits and evaluations by the audit and evaluation branch.

Most respondents, however, feel these mechanisms are not adequate to capture information pertaining to PMP objectives achievement. While one respondent notes that current mechanisms provide updates of how projects are progressing and any problem areas that need attention (particularly for reallocation), a number of others note there is a lack or complete absence of information concerning objectives achievement. Other weaknesses in project

monitoring, include: the lack of resources to support better monitoring; inequities between large and small projects in terms of resources to support monitoring; the lack of follow-up to ensure final reports are received; and the inherent difficulty in measuring higher order or longer-term objectives achievement.
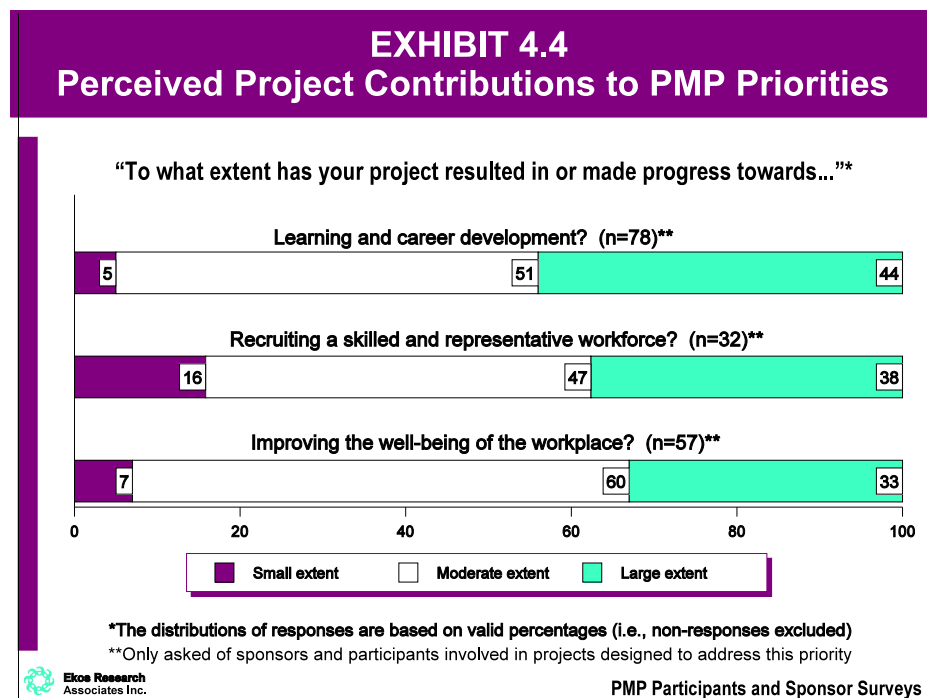
4.2 Project Impacts

(a) Contribution to PMP Objectives

As described earlier in section 2.2, projects tend to be well distributed among all three PMP priority areas, with the largest number of projects contributing to improving the well-being of the workplace (62 per cent), followed by 51 per cent of projects that addressed learning and career development issues and 44 per cent that addressed issues related to recruitment and retention. Survey findings also show that projects tend to be well distributed among the three PMP priority areas, although the rank ordering of priorities addressed was different[5], with project sponsors for 63 per cent of funded projects reporting that their project contributed to learning and career development, followed by recruiting a skilled and representative workforce (54 per cent) and improving the well-being of the workplace (50 per cent).

Both sponsors and participants were also asked to rate the degree to which their project resulted in or made progress toward the PMP objectives it was designed to address (Exhibit 4.4). Responses to this question show that sponsors and participants of projects designed to address learning and career development issues were most likely to indicate that their project has resulted in or made progress toward this PMP priority to a large extent (44 per cent), followed by projects designed to address issues related to recruiting a skilled and representative workforce (38 per cent) and projects designed to improve the well-being of the workplace (33 per cent). For each type of project designed to address one of the three priority areas, a majority of respondents feel their project has contributed to the priority to at least a moderate extent (i.e., responded between a 3

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5.   The different distributions of projects by priority area observed for the file review and survey of project sponsors is accounted for by the nature of the information (i.e., documented   perceived priorities), as well as the fact that these two methodologies examined projects funded over different time frames (i.e., files were reviewed for 2000 and 2002, while sponsors were asked about project funded between 1999 and 2002).

and 7 on a 7-point scale). It is interesting to note that a large proportion of survey respondents were unable to comment on the degree to which projects contributed to the PMP priority areas. Roughly one-in-ten were unable to comment on their project's contribution to well-being in the workplace (12 per cent) and learning and career development (10 per cent), and nearly one-third (29 per cent) were unable to comment on their project's contribution to recruitment and representation.

EXHIBIT 4.4
Perceived Project Contributions to PMP Priorities

"To what extent has your project resulted in or made progress towards..."*

Learning and career development? (n=78)**

| 5 | 51 | 44 |

Recruiting a skilled and representative workforce? (n=32)**

| 16 | 47 | 38 |

Improving the well-being of the workplace? (n=57)**

| 7 | 60 | 33 |

0   20   40   60   80   100

■ Small extent   □ Moderate extent   ■ Large extent

*The distributions of responses are based on valid percentages (i.e., non-responses excluded)
**Only asked of sponsors and participants involved in projects designed to address this priority

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PMP Participants and Sponsor Surveys

❑ Project sponsors were more likely than participants to indicate that their project has resulted in or made progress toward learning and career development to a large extent (65 27 per cent, respectively).

PMC members and managers were also asked to comment on the extent to which PMP-funded projects have contributed to each of the three PMP objectives. More than one-quarter of all respondents, however, could not assess the degree to which projects have contributed to the achievement of objectives, or noted difficulties in providing such an assessment, including variability of project contributions and difficulty in relating branch-specific projects to the broader

goals of the Plan. Nonetheless, most respondents were able to provide ratings for each objective, which are as follows:

❑ *Improving the well-being of the workplace:* interviewees were most likely to report that the projects contributed moderately to this goal. One respondent said that this goal in particular had not been well structured in terms of the Department's assessment criteria, thus any project proposal in this area is approved, while others feel much more could be done to achieve this objective.

❑ *Investing in people through learning and career development:* respondents tended to provide higher ratings in terms of project contributions to this objective, with ratings ranging from a moderate to large contribution (i.e., between 3 and 6). PMC members and managers alike report that the Plan often supports training and development projects and that projects designed to address this objective tend to be focussed and have measurable results.

❑ *Investing in the future of Industry Canada through recruitment of a skilled and representative workforce:* Roughly half of the respondents were unable to rate the degree to which projects have contributed to this objective, many because they could not recall any projects PMP has supported in this area. Those who did respond provided moderate ratings in terms of the projects' contributions to this priority.

When asked what changes could be made to the PMP to enhance the Plan's ability to achieve its objectives, respondents provided a variety of suggestions, including:

❑ *Communications and marketing:* some respondents feel there is a need to improve awareness and understanding of the PMP throughout the Department to ensure employees know what the Plan is and what it means to them, and also communicate project results to ensure the Department benefits from learning or outcomes associated with projects;

❑ *Cross-sector work:* a few respondents believe the PMP should place more emphasis on cross-sector issues and encourage cross-sectoral or larger projects to get "more bang for the buck" and to avoid repetition in proposals and projects;

❑ *Broader use of the Plan:* many managers note that the PMP is not used equally throughout the Department and that some sectors are making little or no use of the PMP while others use it a lot;

❑ *Performance measurement:* improve performance measurement on projects to have better information and data on the results and impacts of funded projects;

❑ *Making the Plan ongoing:* several respondents believe the Plan should be on-going, rather than being restricted to a once-a-year call for proposals;

❑ *More focus:* create a more narrow focus by developing concrete priorities that are measurable and results-based;

❑ *More follow-through:* creating an Office of Primary Interest (OPI) to institutionalize successful projects;

❑ *Addressing succession issues:* several of the managers interviewed feel that the PMP should do more to address issues related to succession planning; and

❑ *More risk-taking mechanisms:* to encourage 'out-of-the-box' thinking.

(b) Project-Specific Impacts

Project files were also reviewed to identify the specific objectives that each project proposed to address (Exhibit 4.5). For those files reviewed here, project objectives were most likely to involve enhancing the skills or career development of non-EX staff or staff department-wide (31 per cent), enhancing skills among or tools available to senior professionals (20 per cent), and improving the quality of the workplace in general (16 per cent). Less frequently observed project objectives included enhancing employee relations and communications (seven per cent), improving the quality of the workplace for senior professionals (five per cent), improved work life balance (four per cent), and enhancing the ability to retain staff (four per cent).

EXHIBIT 4.5
Proposed Project Objectives (2000-2002)

Objective	Value
Enhanced skills/career development for non-EX or department-wide	31
Enhanced skills/tools for senior professionals (e.g., EX)	20
Improved quality of the workplace (general)	16
Increased representation of and image building among EE/Aboriginal groups	13
Improved capacity to recruit new employees	11
Increased representation of French speaking employees	9
Enhanced employee relations and communications	7
Improved quality of the workplace for senior professionals (e.g., EX)	5
Improved work life balance	4
Enhanced ability to retain staff	4

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n=55

PMP Review of Project Files

In terms of project outputs produced or delivered, Exhibit 4.6 suggests that the largest proportion of projects developed a tool or resource for employees (18 per cent), followed by delivering training, a workshop or event (15 per cent), capturing information concerning the number of project participants or events (13 per cent), and developing an information or communication product (seven per cent). Fully 43 per cent of project files did not contain information about project outputs.

EXHIBIT 4.6
Nature of Project Outputs Produced (2000-2002)

Output	Value
Tool or resource	29
Training/workshop/event delivered	23
Number of participants/events	20
Information/communication product	11

n=35*

** Excludes projects for which both a mid-term and final report were not available.

PMP Review of Project Files

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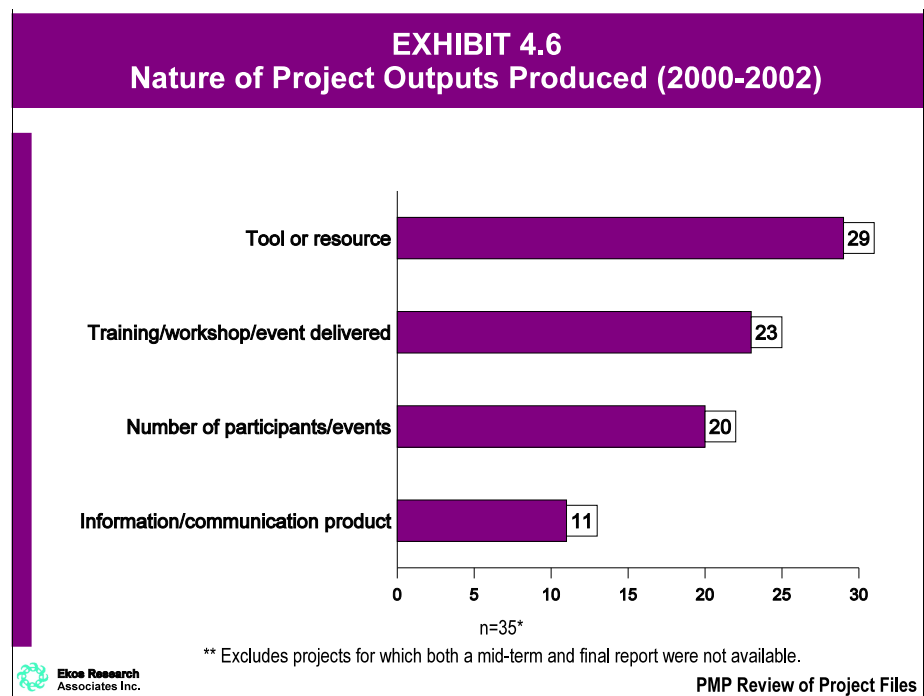
Information concerning outcomes achieved as a result of the project was available for fewer than one-in-five projects included in the file review (14 per cent) (Exhibit 4.7). Those outcomes that were identified included enhanced employee communications or relations (six per cent), enhanced skills or career development opportunities for non-EX groups or department-wide (six per cent), an improved capacity to recruit new employees (three per cent), an enhanced image among and representation of employment equity groups (three per cent), and improved quality of the workplace in general (three per cent)

EXHIBIT 4.7
Nature of Project Outcomes (2000-2002)

Enhanced employee communications or relations — 6

Enhanced skills/career development opportunities for non-EX groups or department-wide — 6

Improved capacity to recruit new employees — 3

Enhanced IC's image among/representation of employment equity groups — 3

Improved quality of the workplace in general — 3

Not specified — 86

0 20 40 60 80 100

n=35*
* Excludes projects for which both a mid-term and final report were not available.

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PMP Review of Project Files

Although project files contain relatively little information on project outcomes, respondents to the sponsor and participant surveys were asked to comment on the degree to they felt their project has or will lead to a number of different outcomes. As presented in Exhibit 4.2, respondents were most likely to indicate that their project has or will, to a large extent, lead to the development of new skills for participants (38 per cent), and further the career development of participants (37 per cent). Respondents were less likely to report that their project has or will encourage creativity, innovation and intellectual freedom (28 per cent), contribute to an increased understanding and awareness of the work carried out by other sectors and branches (27 per cent) and contribute to a sense of inclusiveness and well-being (23 per cent) to a large extent.
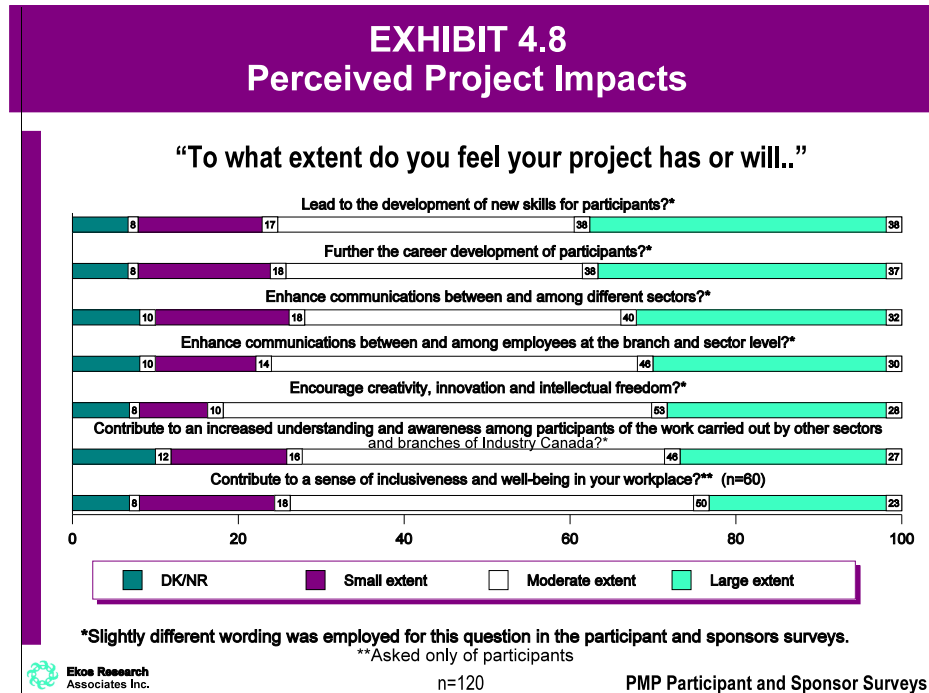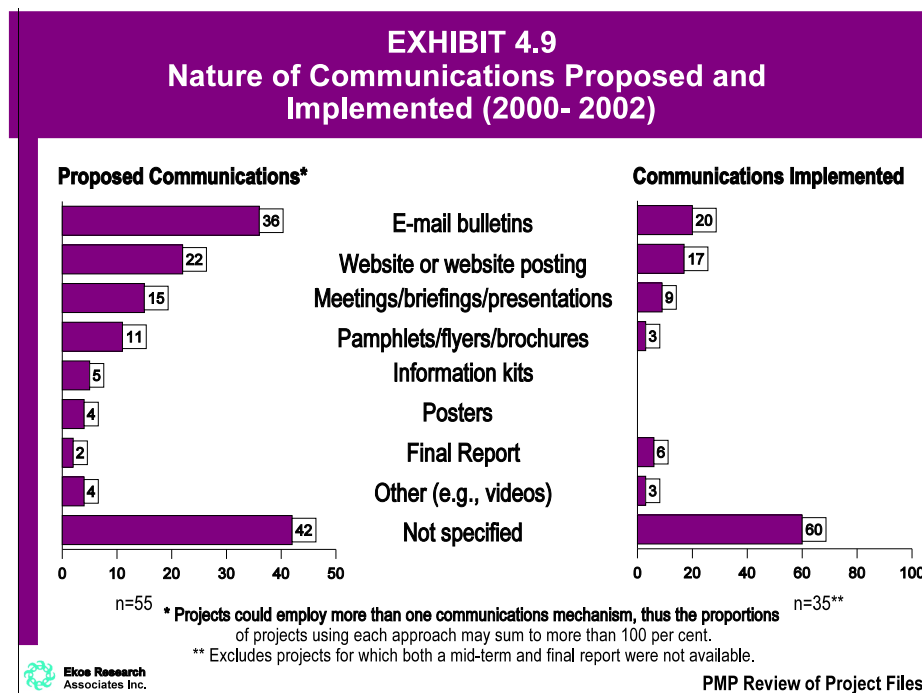
EXHIBIT 4.8
Perceived Project Impacts

"To what extent do you feel your project has or will.."

❑ Sponsors were significantly more likely than participants to indicate that their project has or will have a large impact (i.e., responded with a 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) on most areas about which they were asked. Sponsors were more likely than participants to indicate that their project will, to a large extent, lead to the development of new skills (60 per cent 17 per cent, respectively), further the career development of participants (58 per cent 15 per cent), enhance communication between and among employees at the branch and sector level (47 per cent 13 per cent, respectively), and enhance communications between and among sectors (42 22 per cent, respectively).

4.3   Dissemination and Communication

Findings of the review of project files suggest that the vast majority of PMP-funded projects (80 per cent) identify a communications plan or strategy, although 27 per cent of projects that listed a communications plan did not specify the means that would be used to communicate project findings or products. Exhibit 4.9 shows that e-mail bulletins are the most frequently proposed means of communicating project results (36 per cent), followed by websites or website postings (22 per cent), meetings, briefings or presentations (15 per cent), and pamphlets, flyers and brochures (11 per cent), information kits (five per cent), posters (four per cent), other methods

(four per cent), and final reports (two per cent) were less likely to be proposed. Relative to the proposed communications strategies, a higher proportion of project files that included a mid-term or final report did not report information concerning the means used to communicate project results (42   60 per cent, respectively).

EXHIBIT 4.9
Nature of Communications Proposed and
Implemented (2000- 2002)

Proposed Communications*   **Communications Implemented**

	Proposed	Implemented
E-mail bulletins	36	20
Website or website posting	22	17
Meetings/briefings/presentations	15	9
Pamphlets/flyers/brochures	11	3
Information kits	5	
Posters	4	
Final Report	2	6
Other (e.g., videos)	4	3
Not specified	42	60

n=55   n=35**

* Projects could employ more than one communications mechanism, thus the proportions of projects using each approach may sum to more than 100 per cent.
** Excludes projects for which both a mid-term and final report were not available.

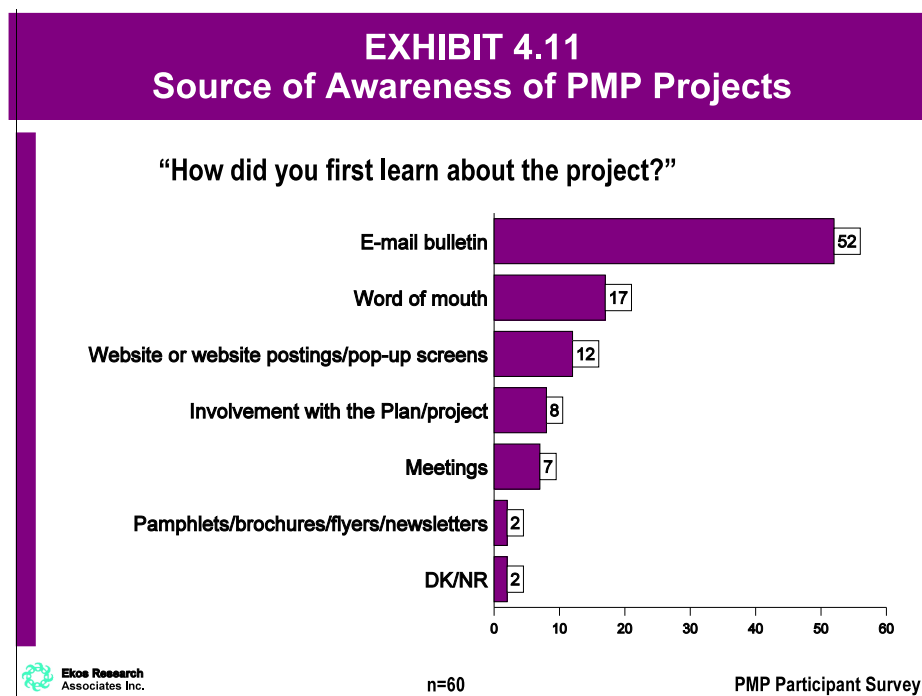Ekos Research Associates Inc.

PMP Review of Project Files

When asked to indicate how they first learned about the Plan, sponsors and participants were most likely to report that they had first learned of the PMP through word-of-mouth (35 per cent) or an e-mail bulletin (29 per cent) (Exhibit 4.10). Other sources of information about the Plan included a website or website posting (eight per cent), involvement with the Plan or one of the funded projects (seven per cent), work-related activity (e.g., meetings, councils) (three per cent), written materials (i.e., pamphlets, brochures, flyers or newsletters) (two per cent), and the IC Information intranet site (two per cent). Ten per cent of respondents had never heard of the PMP prior to the survey and sub-group analyses revealed that all of these respondents were project participants.

EXHIBIT 4.10
Source of Awareness of the Plan

"How did you first learn about the People Management Plan?"

Source	Value
Word of mouth	35
E-mail bulletin	29
Never heard of the PMP before today	10
Website or Website postings/pop-up screens	8
Involvement with the Plan/a project	7
Work-related activity (meetings, councils)	3
Pamphlets/brochures/flyers/newsletter	2
IC Info	2
DK/NR	4

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n=92

PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys

❏ Project sponsors were more likely than participants to have first heard of the Plan through word of mouth (50 *versus* 27 per cent, respectively) and involvement with the Plan or a funded project (19 *versus* zero per cent, respectively). Participants were more likely to report never having heard of the Plan prior to the survey (15 per cent *versus* zero per cent of project sponsors).

Participants were further asked how they had first learned of the PMP project in which they participated (Exhibit 4.11). More than half of these respondents indicated they had learned about the project through an e-mail bulletin (52 per cent), followed by word of mouth (17 per cent), a website or website posting/pop-up screen (12 per cent), personal involvement in the project or PMP (eight per cent), meetings (seven per cent) and pamphlets or brochures (two per cent).

EXHIBIT 4.11
Source of Awareness of PMP Projects

"How did you first learn about the project?"

Source	Value
E-mail bulletin	52
Word of mouth	17
Website or website postings/pop-up screens	12
Involvement with the Plan/project	8
Meetings	7
Pamphlets/brochures/flyers/newsletters	2
DK/NR	2

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n=60

PMP Participant Survey

4.4 Other Impacts

When asked if their projects had produced any unexpected or negative impacts, more than two-thirds (67 per cent) of sponsors surveyed indicated that they had not, while nearly one-in-ten (eight per cent) were unable to respond. Among the 25 per cent of project sponsors who did feel their project had resulted in unexpected or negative impacts, a number of different issues were raised, although few of these issues concerned project impacts. Among the issues raised (presented from the most to least frequently mentioned issue), sponsors noted that:
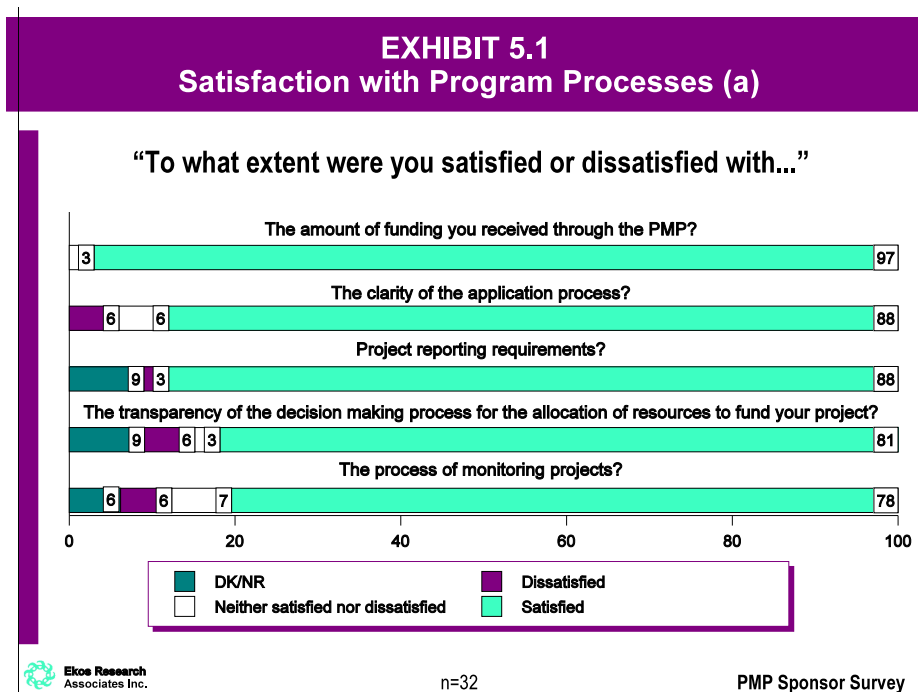
❑ the project involved more work and bureaucracy than they had expected;
❑ participation rates were lower than anticipated;
❑ the project was more successful than planned;
❑ there were insufficient funds to deal with project success;
❑ participation rates were higher than expected; and
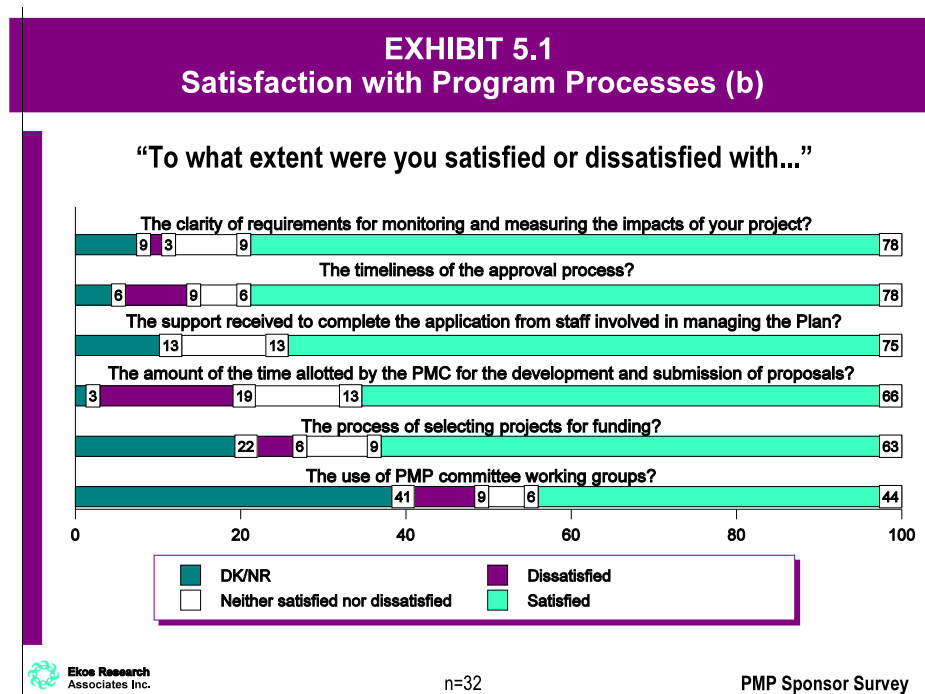❑ the project led to the discovery of other workplace needs.

None of the key informants interviewed for the evaluation were aware of any unexpected or negative impacts that have occurred as a result of the PMP and/or its funded projects. A few PMC respondents, however, noted that proposals were not always well thought-through so that they sometimes required additional funding, that the progress (i.e. whether or not they would continue) of some projects was sometimes miscommunicated, and that the criteria for the selection of proposals were not always strictly adhered to.

5. COST-EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 Processes and Procedures

When asked to rate their satisfaction with various program processes project sponsors were most likely to report being satisfied (i.e., responded with a 5, 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) with the amount of funding received through the PMP (97 per cent), the clarity of the application process (88 per cent), project reporting requirements (88 per cent), and the transparency of the decision making process for the allocation of resources to projects (81 per cent) (Exhibit 5.1 a and b). Sponsors were least likely to be satisfied with the amount of time allotted for the development and submission of proposals (66 per cent), the process of selecting projects for funding (63 per cent) and the use of PMP committee working groups (44 per cent). It should be noted that lower rates of satisfaction for the latter program processes are attributable in part to the large proportions of respondents who were unable to provide a rating (22 and 41 per cent, respectively).

EXHIBIT 5.1
Satisfaction with Program Processes (a)

"To what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with..."

The amount of funding you received through the PMP?
3 | 97

The clarity of the application process?
6 | 6 | 88

Project reporting requirements?
9 | 3 | 88

The transparency of the decision making process for the allocation of resources to fund your project?
9 | 6 | 3 | 81

The process of monitoring projects?
6 | 6 | 7 | 78

Legend:
- DK/NR
- Dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Satisfied

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n=32

PMP Sponsor Survey

EXHIBIT 5.1
Satisfaction with Program Processes (b)

"To what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with..."

The clarity of requirements for monitoring and measuring the impacts of your project?
9 | 3 | 9 | 78

The timeliness of the approval process?
6 | 9 | 6 | 78

The support received to complete the application from staff involved in managing the Plan?
13 | 13 | 75

The amount of the time allotted by the PMC for the development and submission of proposals?
3 | 19 | 13 | 66

The process of selecting projects for funding?
22 | 6 | 9 | 63

The use of PMP committee working groups?
41 | 9 | 6 | 44

Legend:
- DK/NR
- Dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Satisfied

Ekos Research Associates Inc. n=32 PMP Sponsor Survey

PMC members were also asked to rate the extent to which they feel each of a number of mechanisms for the delivery of the Plan is operating effectively. Their responses are as follows:

❑ *the planning process:* While roughly half of the respondents feel the planning process is working effectively (i.e., responded with a 5 or 6 on a 7-point scale), the remaining respondents provided more moderate ratings. For some, the strengths of the process include the fact that it is well thought out and that it encourages people to participate. Others, however, suggest the planning process could be improved if: it adopted a more strategic approach (i.e., not trying to be everything to everybody); if it was more timely; if there were better linkages to overall departmental priorities and to sector business plans; and if the RFPs were issued earlier in the year.

❑ *the project selection process:* Once again, ratings of the effectiveness of this mechanism were varied and ranged from not at all effective to very effective (i.e., between a 1 and a 6 on a 7-point scale). Respondents note that the project selection process requires a more disciplined approach and concrete criteria to allow for a critical review of projects.

❑ *project monitoring:* overall, the process of monitoring projects is felt to be moderately effective, with responses ranging from 2 to 6 on a 7-point scale. Respondents providing higher ratings for this process note that they receive reports about once a year, that they receive the information they require, that the PMC receives positive feedback on projects

and that the PMP secretariat does a good job of monitoring the progress of projects (e.g., what has been achieved, how much money spent). Others, however, note that the process needs to be strengthened to reduce the number of projects that are never completed (i.e., that return the PMP funding) and to provide information about project results rather than just financial data.

❑   *project reporting:* relative to other aspects of the Plan's delivery, a higher proportion of respondents rated the project reporting mechanism as moderately to very effective (i.e., a rating of 4 to 6 on a 7-point scale), suggesting that the reports provide the required information and are pretty good. Nonetheless, several respondents provided lower ratings (i.e., 2 or 3 on a 7-point scale). Among the areas to improve project reporting, these respondents feel that: the reporting could be more detailed; the information reported is too basic (i.e., nothing linking project results to the achievement of objectives); reporting of final results upon project completion is not uniformly applied across all projects; the reports should not only be communicated to the PMC but to all employees; and there is often insufficient time to adequately report on projects at fiscal year end.

❑   *PMP Committee Working Groups:* Fewer than half of the PMC respondents interviewed are aware that these working groups exist or have had any experience with them. One respondent feels the working groups are extremely effective and do a great deal of good work in terms of information sharing and bringing people together who have the time, interest and influence. Other respondents who are aware of the working groups, however, provide lower ratings of their effectiveness (i.e., between 2 and 4 on a 7-point scale) because some groups are stronger than others and most are not very active except at allocation time.
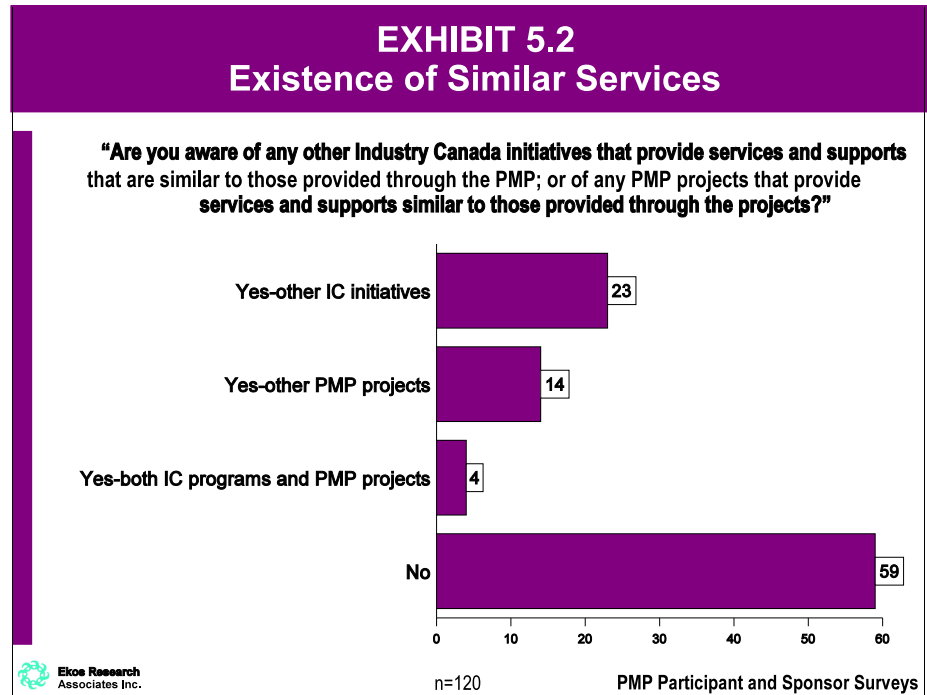
5.2   Overlap and Duplication

To assess whether the Plan duplicates or overlaps with other initiatives, respondents to the sponsor and participant surveys were asked if they were aware of: 1) other Industry Canada initiatives that provide services and supports that are similar to those provided through the PMP; or 2) other PMP projects that provide services and supports similar to those provided by the projects in which they were involved. Although more than half (59 per cent) of participants and sponsors indicated that they were not aware of any other similar projects or programs, 27 per cent indicated that they were aware of other similar Industry Canada initiatives, while 18 per cent reported being aware of other PMP projects similar to the one with which they were involved (Exhibit 5.2). The Industry Canada initiative that was most often reported to provide similar services was the Operations Sector People Strategy (reported by roughly one third of participants

and sponsors). Other Industry Canada initiatives that were perceived to be similar to the PMP include:
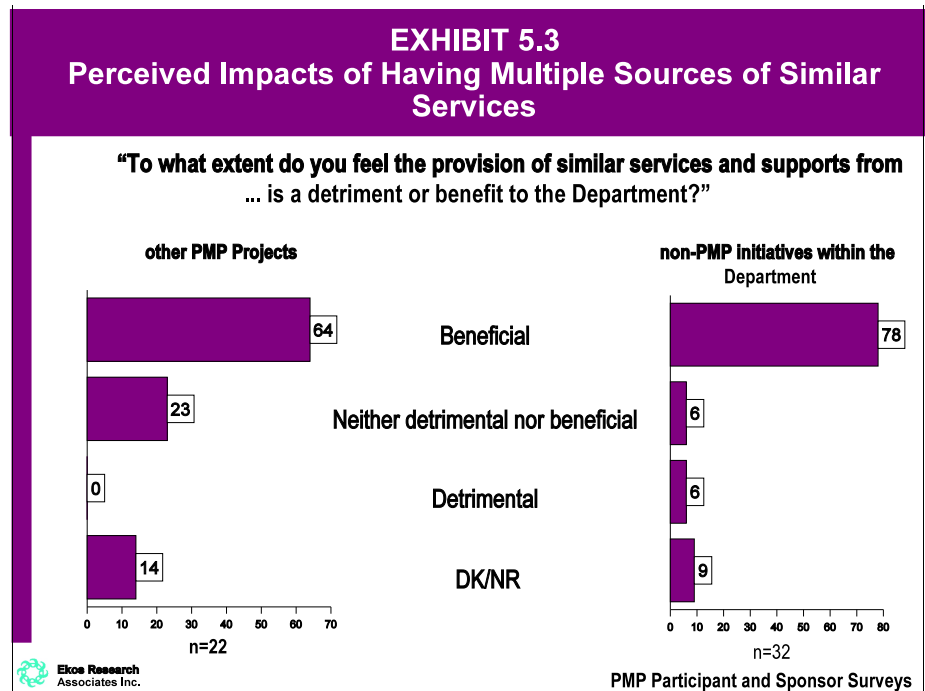
- ❑ Official languages committees;
- ❑ Coffee hour for economists;
- ❑ The Industry Canada Mentoring Program;
- ❑ The SITT Career Development Program;
- ❑ The Human Resources Councils;
- ❑ IHAP;
- ❑ The Human Resources Branch (HRB) web site;
- ❑ The Employee Assistance Program;
- ❑ The Career Assignment Program;
- ❑ Company Relationship Management;
- ❑ Sector-specific awards programs; and
- ❑ The Human Resources Professional Development Program.

Among the PMP projects that survey respondents indicated were similar to their own, respondents noted:

- ❑ The diversity management workshop for managers;
- ❑ The priorities strategy (it is unclear whether this respondent was referring to a PMP project to engage employees in departmental priorities or the priority report);
- ❑ Sector-specific human resources strategies (some of which are funded by PMP);
- ❑ Leadership development initiatives;
- ❑ Competency-based management;
- ❑ Centralized pool of funds for persons with disabilities;
- ❑ Employee counselling services;
- ❑ The career development panel;
- ❑ A company relationship management course;
- ❑ A website for Francophones; and
- ❑ The Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC) personal learning plans.

**EXHIBIT 5.2
Existence of Similar Services**

"Are you aware of any other Industry Canada initiatives that provide services and supports that are similar to those provided through the PMP; or of any PMP projects that provide **services and supports similar to those provided through the projects?"**

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n=120

PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys

Category	Value
Yes-other IC initiatives	23
Yes-other PMP projects	14
Yes-both IC programs and PMP projects	4
No	59

To assess the nature and effect of the provision of similar supports and services at the project and departmental levels, sponsors and participants who identified other similar PMP projects or Industry Canada initiatives were asked to indicate whether they felt the provision of similar services and supports was a benefit or a detriment to the Department. As shown in Exhibit 5.3, the majority of respondents feel it is beneficial to provide similar services and supports through other Industry Canada initiatives (78 per cent) or PMP projects (64 per cent). None of the respondents who identified other similar PMP projects feel the existence of these similar projects is detrimental, while only six per cent of respondents feel the provision of similar services and supports through non-PMP initiatives within the Department is detrimental.

EXHIBIT 5.3
Perceived Impacts of Having Multiple Sources of Similar Services

"To what extent do you feel the provision of similar services and supports from ... is a detriment or benefit to the Department?"

other PMP Projects

Beneficial	64
Neither detrimental nor beneficial	23
Detrimental	0
DK/NR	14

n=22

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non-PMP initiatives within the Department

Beneficial	78
Neither detrimental nor beneficial	6
Detrimental	6
DK/NR	9

n=32

PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys

Finally, participants were asked whether they had participated in the other similar PMP projects or Industry Canada initiatives that they had identified. A little more than half (57 per cent) of the participants who identified other similar Industry Canada initiatives had participated in these other initiatives. These respondents were equally likely to indicate that the PMP was better (38 per cent) or the same (31 per cent) as the other similar Industry Canada initiative in terms of addressing human resource issues. Roughly one-quarter (23 per cent) felt the PMP was worse. Only two participants who identified other similar PMP projects reported that they had participated in these other projects. These respondents reported that the PMP project that was the focus of the survey was better or the same as the other PMP project with which they had been involved in terms of addressing human resource issues.

Like many respondents to the surveys, most key informant interview respondents are unaware of duplication or overlap among PMP projects or between the PMP and other departmental initiatives, or feel that what little duplication that does exist is not a problem. For instance, one manager points out that two mentoring programs existed within the Department (one

in a region, one in a sector) prior to the PMP, but that their co-existence with the PMP has made the benefits of mentoring more widely available.

Among examples of the overlap that is perceived to exist, respondents reported overlap or duplication: between the PMP and the Operations Sector (which has its own separate strategy); between regions wanting to focus on recruitment issues; and between the PMP and union agreements and mechanisms. Several respondents also feel that some overlap exists among PMP projects, as similar projects have been undertaken by different sectors. These respondents feel the PMC should make an even greater effort to ensure that teams with similar projects or proposals collaborate and work together, and that there may be a need to incorporate cross membership between the PMP and the Operations Sector People Strategy.[6]

When asked if there were any mechanisms in place to manage duplication and overlap and coordinate activities, respondents reported:

- ❑ *The PMC:* which actively weeds out duplication in project proposals, encourages collaboration on similar initiatives and takes care not to support projects that can be accomplished through A-base funding; and

- ❑ *The PMP Secretariat:* which manages duplication and provides a control sheet of funded projects to allow the PMC to strategically assess overlap or whether something has been done before.

5.3   Sustainability

The review of project files showed that plans for the sustainability of the project or project impacts exist for roughly one-in five projects (20 per cent). In contrast to the evidence from the review of project files, the perception exists among sponsors and participants that projects are sustainable. When asked whether they felt that their project's impacts, outcomes or products would continue to be relevant and/or used by Industry Canada once the project was complete, a majority of participants and sponsors felt they would be to a large (53 per cent) or moderate extent (32 per cent) (Exhibit 5.4). Only three per cent of sponsors and participants felt

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6.   It should be noted that cross-membership between these two committees already exists.

that projects impacts, outcomes or products would continue to be relevant and/or used to only a small extent.

EXHIBIT 5.4
Perceived Sustainability of Projects

"To what extent do you feel the project's impacts, outcomes or products have or will continue to be relevant and/or used by Industry Canada once the project is completed?

Response	Value
To a large extent	53
To a moderate extent	32
To a small extent	3
DK/NR	12

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n=120   PMP Participant and Sponsor Surveys

❑   Project sponsors were significantly more likely than participants to indicate that their project's impacts, outcomes or products would continue to be relevant and/or used to a large extent (72 per cent   35 per cent respectively).

When PMC members interviewed as part of the evaluation were asked to comment on the degree to which PMP-funded projects or project impacts have or will continue beyond the life of the project, roughly half felt that the sustainability of the project and/or its impacts depends on the project and its objectives. For example, a number note that training-related projects had more potential to have sustainable impacts, while other projects, and particularly sector-specific projects, were seen by some as having too narrow a focus to be sustainable. It was also argued that long-term results from projects are simply not measured, as mechanisms do not exist to assess long-term impacts. Further, it was mentioned that the proliferation of unsustainable pilot projects was problematic, given that human resource branches have limited financial resources that they

can devote to continuing projects. In the view of one manager, the PMP is simply a collection of projects and not a process or program with a strategic focus, thus cannot have a lasting effect.

In contrast, most managers interviewed feel that PMP projects have had lasting impacts. Among the examples provided to support this view, managers pointed to PMP projects that have:

❑ developed management competencies, which enable employees to see what they need to achieve management positions and which have also led to a rewards and recognition program for Industry Canada managers;

❑ focussed on training and development and are thought to have a lasting impact for the individuals who participated in the training;

❑ received additional funding from Treasury Board and are being implemented throughout the federal government (e.g., the accessible procurement tool kit); and

❑ led to the development of a Department-wide mentoring program.

5.4   Partnership

When project files were reviewed to determine the extent to which partnerships had been formed, only seven projects (13 per cent) reported that the project had been implemented in partnership. Project partners were most likely to be identified as other federal departments (five per cent), or national not-for-profit organizations (two per cent). Six per cent of projects reported a partnership but did not identify the project partner. On average, just under two (mean=1.9) project partners were identified. The nature of the partnership support was reported for only three of these seven projects, all of which reported that the partners were involved in the implementation of the project.

5.5   Alternatives

Roughly half of the respondents to the key informant interviews feel the PMP is a very effective and efficient way of achieving Industry Canada's overall goals and objectives in the area of human resources, while the remaining respondents believe the Plan is at least moderately so but can be improved. Many of these respondents feel the Plan is a very important initiative within the Department in order to: provide a presence and visibility to demonstrate that the Department

is interested in promoting and retaining employees; minimise overlap and duplication through a centralized process; reduce inequities in the resources available to different sectors for human resource initiatives; lend credibility to the Departments efforts because the PMC is not viewed as a management committee; sponsor worthwhile initiatives that have broad relevance to the Department; implement the corporate human resources plan; and provide a democratized approach to encourage involvement of all staff and sectors, and reap the benefits of this broader perspective.

In the view of most key informants, however, the Plan can be improved to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, although one respondent points out that expectations of effectiveness and efficiency of the Plan should be tempered by the amount of funding available, which in their view is somewhat modest. Some of the suggestions to improve the Plan include:

❑   adopting a more strategic focus (i.e., clearer guidelines for funding);

❑   adopting a management sub-committee for the PMC to come up with concrete goals, or supporting the PMC with sub-committees within each sector, with one representative from each sector to sit on the PMC, objectives, rules and processes to enhance the efficiency of the proposal review process;

❑   employing a more meaningful project reporting system;

❑   enhancing the visibility and communication of the Plan;

❑   returning to the original governance structure which relied more on the use of sub-committees;

❑   more consideration of the subsequent implications of funded project in the overall human resource planning process (i.e., if the results are interesting, are resources available to devote to an expanded version of the pilot?);

❑   supporting more projects that focus on the supervisor or manager community to train them to do the work necessary to achieve the Plan's objectives; and

❑   providing more resources (i.e., dedicated staff) to the Plan to provide for a better review of proposals.

Only one PMC respondent could suggest an alternative initiative that might prove to be a more effective and efficient way of achieving Industry Canada's overall goals and objectives in the area of human resources. This respondent feels that Industry Canada's Human Resources Branch is the best way of addressing the Plan's priorities but that the PMP provides an additional way of achieving these overall goals that is necessary because it supports projects that would not

otherwise receive funding. The PMP and the HRB are, in this respondent's view, very complementary because the PMP approaches human resource issues from the bottom up as opposed to using the HRB's top down strategy.

5.6 Strengths and Weaknesses

(a)   Strengths

Respondents are most likely to feel the Plan's primary strength is the fact that the funding and approval process is centrally managed, with one-third reporting that this characteristic is working best. This centralised management is thought to yield a number of advantages by: providing an additional source of funds to support human resource initiatives by cash-strapped sectors; creating a funding balance between "have" and "have not" organizations within the department; ensuring a common understanding of departmental priorities regarding people management through the establishment and communication of common goals and objectives; allowing for inter-sectoral communication, which in turn leads to greater efficiency and reduced duplication; and providing a forum between managers and employees on objective setting and creative thinking about human resource issues.

Another commonly perceived strength concerns the simple fact that the Plan provides the funding to support important human resource initiatives. Several respondents point out that the Plan allows branches the opportunity to access resources to meet their priorities and provides opportunities to support incremental human resources activities that might not otherwise take place. One respondent cautions, however, that it is possible the funds may be used for some ongoing human resource activities or projects, which was not the original intention of the Plan. Other aspects of the Plan that PMC respondents noted have been working best include:

❑   ***The types of projects supported:*** a number of respondents feel that some projects are having real benefits for the employees they reach, that projects focussing on internal training are particularly strong, that many worthy projects are supported that enrich employees' lives, or that PMP funds offer an opportunity to implement pilot projects and try new approaches to solving issues;

❑ ***The broad focus:*** some respondents note that the PMP's broad focus is an advantage both in terms of the range of priorities (i.e., focussing on a number of areas to provide the opportunity for innovation; addressing all important "people issues" in the Department), as well as ensuring all Industry Canada staff are represented (i.e., the broad base of people on the PMC; funding and activities to support many groups) and that the priorities of the PMP are able to adapt well to the needs of particular sectors and branches.

❑ ***The employee driven process:*** a couple of respondents point out that the PMP provides a rare opportunity in the Department for projects to receive funding without management approval, that the projects are directly related to employees and their needs (for women, minority groups, worklife balance, training, etc.), and that the mere existence and introduction of the PMP has sent a clear message that people management and human resource issues are important to the Department.

❑ ***Administrative processes:*** while some criticized the lack of speed in approving proposals, others feel that the approval process works well and is timely, and that project projects are being well monitored.

❑ ***The Plan's changing focus:*** one respondent notes that the allocation process for the projects changes in response to changing needs (i.e., the Plan was reviewed because Industry Canada had outgrown aspects of it).

(b) Weaknesses

When asked to comment on those aspects of the Plan they feel are not working well, nearly half of all PMC members and managers consulted feel there is a lack of communication about the PMP. A primary concern among these respondents concerns the belief that the Plan lacks both the visibility and communication of information (e.g., what is the PMP, who is your representative on the PMC, where to go for more information, what has already been sponsored, what are the benefits of funded projects) to allow staff to support and take advantage of the Plan. This lack of communication about the Plan is perceived to directly affect the quantity and quality of proposals submitted for funding, and ultimately the impact of the Plan as sponsors and employees are less able to take advantage of projects results, lessons learned and best practices. Among the other communication issues raised, respondents feel: most communications (e.g., updates on projects) feed the PMC rather than anyone else in the Department, which leads to an overly cumbersome process for PMC members; the lack of understanding of PMP means the Plan's activities are not well-known and it is not part of the operations of many Departmental organizations; the dismantling of the communications sub-committee has hampered communications efforts; that there is not enough communication about what other areas of the

Department do; and that there is a lack of effort to consult or cooperate with potential stakeholders or relevant staff for whom funded projects will have a direct bearing (i.e., one manager became involved in the PMP only after learning of a project which had a direct bearing on their sector's area of responsibility).

Another issue raised by a number of PMC members is that they believe the committee should take a more critical stance in reviewing proposals. For many, this involves adopting a more strategic approach when reviewing proposals and developing the tools (e.g., clearly defined criteria for eligibility) that would allow the PMC to adopt a more critical stance. One respondent suggests that more discipline could be brought to the review process by conducting internal reviews of proposals within each sector so that they can be reviewed in light of the sector's priorities. In this way, only the best proposals (e.g., that are relevant to the needs of the largest number of employees) would be put forward and these proposals would be more defensible in the context of the Plan's overall goals and strategies.

A related issue that a number of respondents feel is important and which may impact on the PMC's ability to critically review proposals concerns the lack of focus for the Plan. Collectively, these respondents feel this lack of focus: means there are no firm criteria upon which to evaluate proposals because no proposals fall outside the scope of the Plan, thus every project is approved and there is little basis upon which to question a projects merit; does not provide any strategic direction (i.e., there are so many sub-priorities that in essence, there are no priorities at all); and makes it difficult to measure results against the Plan because there are few specific goals that can be isolated.

Several other issues associated with the review process were also raised and include: the need for a better costing model or an earlier approval process so that funds approved do not go unspent; the need for more staff representation in the review process (i.e., PMC is primarily management); a less academic approach to timelines and proposals so that more employees are able to access the Plan and contribute their ideas; the length of time required for funding to be approved (i.e., funds are often not released until late summer or sometimes early fall, which can make it difficult to ensure the money is spent by fiscal year end); the potential for duplication

when approving several projects that focus on the same specific objective; the potential for conflict-of-interest when PMC members must review proposals from their own sectors when not all committee members are present at the PMC meetings; and the need to review/solicit proposals throughout the year so that more proposals are submitted and a wider choice of projects is available.

Other aspects of the Plan that some respondents believe are not working as well include:

❑ ***Funding projects to address issues within organizations' mandates:*** A couple of respondents feel that some projects approved for PMP funding would be more appropriately supported through the organizations A-base funding and that some of the work should already be resourced in-house (e.g., support of official languages awareness campaign, although there are a number of employees whose jobs it is to promote official languages; projects to support a communications strategy for the Communications Branch);

❑ ***A lack of clear criteria to demonstrate project success:*** Some respondents note that there is no consistent framework or clear criteria to demonstrate project success and to evaluate whether projects are having the desired effect, and that projects sponsors need to be provided some direction or training on performance measurement. Several note that performance measures identified for PMP projects are often weak or vague and that little information is available on results of projects. In the view of one respondent, this issue is also related to the need to more clearly define the objectives of the Plan by adopting more concrete, narrow and measurable criteria (e.g., whether the project benefits a large or small number of employees);

❑ ***A lack of senior management direction:*** One respondent feels that employees require more access to senior management committees within certain sectors in order to provide direction from management (although it should be noted that this is not a criticism of the plan *per se*, but rather a perceived need to provide senior support/direction at the sector level); and

❑ ***A lack of follow-up:*** One respondent notes that projects initiated within sectors are rarely converted for department-wide coverage/benefits

❑ ***An imbalance in the number of projects focused on each priority:*** A few of the managers feel that much of the PMP projects funded appear to address learning and career development, and that additional effort or focus needs to be placed on the other two priorities, as significant issues remain to be addressed (e.g., recruitment, retention, succession, stress and work-life balance).

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In conclusion, we present a brief summary of the findings of the evaluation of the People Management Plan (PMP).

(a) Relevance

Overall, the evaluation evidence suggests that the PMP is a highly relevant mechanism for the Department. Findings indicate that the Plan's priorities are consistent with those of the federal government and Industry Canada sectors/branches, there is a continued need for the Plan, the Plan is considered to be a viable means of supporting Industry Canada's commitment to become an Employer of Choice, and the Plan has done much to address key workplace issues. In addition, it would appear that there are few gaps in the audiences and beneficiaries of funded projects. Nonetheless, the Plan's relevance may be further enhanced by adopting a more narrow focus, developing tools and guidelines for the critical review of proposed projects, more resources, and better promotion/communication of the Plan

(b) People Management Committee

The PMC is generally felt to be integral to the management and delivery of the Plan, although there may be room to improve/expand the role of the PMC by: clarifying its purpose, enhancing efforts to monitor progress and report on results; improving participation at/in meetings; encouraging managers to make PMP a priority; recruiting more people to the PMC; reducing the size of the committee; streamlining the proposal review process; and better communication of the Plan and its benefits.

(c) Performance Measurement and Monitoring

The evaluation findings suggest that there is a need to improve the measurement of project success relative the overall goals of the Plan. Large proportions of project files contain no

information concerning the measurement of objectives achievement and reported performance measures most often involve processes or outputs (as opposed to evidence about outcomes to demonstrate the projects contribution to objectives achievement). As well, most informants feel monitoring mechanisms (e.g., the PMP Secretariat, project final reports and evaluations) are not adequate to capture information pertaining to PMP objectives achievement

(d) Program Impacts

Collectively, funded-projects are perceived to have made considerable progress toward the Plan's objectives and to have had a number of other positive impacts in terms of addressing specific workplace issues. To enhance the Plan's ability to achieve its objectives, however, the evidence suggests a need for: better communications and marketing; more cross-sector work; improved performance measurement and concrete priorities that are measurable and results-based; an ongoing/open call for proposals; and more follow-through on successful projects.

(e) Dissemination and Communication

The evidence suggests that while most project files identify a communications plan, there is room to improve communications for both the Plan and its projects. Almost half of the project files reviewed failed to specify the means to be used to communicate information about the project and one-in-five project participants had never heard of the PMP prior to the survey. The most commonly reported communications vehicles employed include e-mail bulletins and websites or website postings, although sponsors and participants are most likely to have heard of the Plan or a project through word-of-mouth or e-mail bulletins.

(f) Processes and Procedures

Results of the evaluation suggest that stakeholders are generally satisfied with most processes and procedures about which they were asked. Nonetheless, there may be room to improve the overall delivery of the Plan by improving: monitoring and reporting mechanisms (e.g.,

reduce the number of uncompleted projects, information about project results); communication/promotion of the Plan and of project results; timelines for different aspects (e.g., time to respond to call for proposals, issuing the call for proposals earlier in the year); and project selection (i.e., more disciplined approach/concrete criteria to critically review proposals).

(g)   Overlap and Duplication

The evaluation evidence suggests that while some overlap may exist between the PMP and other similar initiatives, this overlap is not generally perceived to be negative. In fact, overlap between the Plan and other initiatives, or among PMP projects, is more likely to be perceived as beneficial. The Operations Sector People Strategy was most often identified as providing services similar to those of the PMP, and mechanisms to manage duplication and coordinate activities, such as the PMC and the PMP Secretariat, were generally considered to be adequate for this purpose.

(h)   Sustainability

The evaluation failed to yield strong evidence in support of the sustainability of projects, as this information was available for only one-in-five project files reviewed and some respondents questioned whether projects are generally sustainable (i.e., depends on the project's objectives, long-term results are not measured, and support unsustainable pilot projects). The perception does exist among a large number of stakeholders, however, that projects have had lasting impacts in terms of developing skills among employees and laying the groundwork for ongoing department-wide programs.

(i) *Partnership*

The study found that few PMP projects are implemented in partnership, with roughly one-in-ten project files reporting that the project had been implemented in partnership. Partners were most often identified as other federal departments or national not-for-profit organizations.

(j) *Alternatives*

The evaluation suggests that few or no viable alternatives to the Plan exist, and that the PMP is generally perceived to be an effective and efficient way of achieving Industry Canada's overall goals and objectives in the area of human resources by: providing presence, visibility and credibility to the Department's efforts; minimizes overlap and duplication; reduces inequities among sectors and provides a democratized approach; and sponsors worthwhile initiatives.

(k) *Strengths and Weaknesses*

The PMP's key strengths were identified as its centrally managed funding and approval process, support of important human resource initiatives, support of quality projects, broad focus, employee driven process, administrative processes (e.g., approval process, monitoring); and changing focus (i.e., the allocation process changes in response to changing needs).

Among those aspects of the Plan which are not working as well as they might, the evidence indicates a need to address issues related to: communication and dissemination; the proposal review process; strategic focus; monitoring and reporting; and follow-up and sustainability.