FINAL REPORT

Improving Internal Coordination of New Initiatives in HRDC

Project No.: 425/98

Project Team

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1. Background

During the departmental risk diagnostic sessions held in 1997/98, managers expressed concern to the Internal Audit Bureau (IAB) that the internal coordination of departmental initiatives was a challenge. IAB responded with a "best practices" review to provide a real value-added product for managers.

The review has resulted in the establishment of eight practical principles for the effective coordination of national and regional initiatives in HRDC. These principles are based on two case studies; the Resource Determination Model for Labor Program Delivery, and the Regionalization of Vocational Rehabilitation in the Income Security Program, which were selected in consultation with our national and regional audit coordinators. The principles are also based on a broad scope of interviews conducted with experienced HRDC project managers in all of the remaining branches and business lines, including regional perspectives.

The principles reflect and are specific to the environment, structure and organizational culture of the department since they are a reflection of the experiences of HRDC managers and project coordinators.

The following principles are suggested for the successful coordination of HRDC initiatives:

1. Develop a clear direction and strategy
2. Establish support and accountability for the project
3. Form a strong project team
4. Develop plan for information sharing and communication
5. Support and empower people
6. Conduct pilots and staged roll-outs
7. Customize the implementation plan
8. Benefit from learning

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2. Tools for Internal Coordination

The major findings in this report were used to develop two tools for managers and project leaders in HRDC. Both are a reflection of best practices and are specific to the department. The first tool is a one-page reference guide for managers and project leaders: "Internal Coordination in HRDC: General Principles for Project Leaders". It provides quick tips for the most important principles to the successful implementation of a new initiative. The second tool is a two-page risk checklist to be used by managers/project leaders to ensure that key steps are not forgotten in the development and implementation of a new initiative: "Risk Checklist for Internal Coordination in HRDC". It breaks down each of the key principles and focuses on the high risk areas.

3. Recommendations

1. The principles for internal coordination defined in the report should be used by HRDC managers and project leaders as a reference tool. They will serve as a reminder for steps sometimes overlooked in project management.
2. The principles should be tailored by the project leader to reflect the individual needs and requirements of the project. A project leader should consider the size and scope of the project as well as the people involved in order to best apply these principles.

APPENDIX A

Internal Coordination in HRDC:
General Principles for Project Leaders

These general principles have been established based on best practices within HRDC. They are specific to the unique environment, structure and organizational culture within the department. The principles should be used as a guide for project leaders, but adapted to the individual needs and requirements of an initiative.

1. **Develop a Clear Direction and a Strategy**
   - Gain clear direction from the guiding body
   - Design a detailed plan of action with the project team
   - Ensure the vision and strategy are coordinated with existing HRDC mandates

2. **Establish Support and Accountability for the Project**
   - Establish support and commitment from an influential guiding body: Steering Committee, Senior Management Team, or an Executive Champion

3. **Form a Strong Project Team**
   - Break project into manageable units
   - Include diverse ideas and perspectives in project design development
   - Build team spirit

4. **Develop a Plan for Information Sharing and Communications**
   - Create wide-spread awareness of the vision and strategy
   - Make the process highly inclusive and participatory
   - Break down barriers to internal communication

5. **Support and Empower People**
   - Focus on developing a dynamic work environment
   - Provide people with tools and guidance
   - Understand participants' motivations and provide them with incentives

6. Implement Project through Pilots and Staged Roll Outs
- Allow testing of different approaches and fine-tune the design
- Evaluate pilots on an ongoing basis and apply lessons learned

7. Customize Implementation Plan
- Consider how the project will impact branches/regions and design the implementation plan to meet their individual needs
- Conduct a follow-up to the implementation plan

8. Benefit from Learning
- Conduct a final evaluation of the project
- Document and communicate lessons learned and best practice

APPENDIX B

<u>Risk Checklist for Internal Co-ordination in HRDC</u>

This Checklist represents lessons learned from the successful coordination of internal initiatives in HRDC. It should not be considered a complete list of steps to project management, however, it does identify the key risk factors. The checklist should serve as a guide to project leaders, but should be adapted to meet the needs and requirements of each individual initiative.

RISK FACTORS   YES   N/A

1. Develop a Clear Direction and a Strategy

a) Have you developed a clear vision of the final outcome?
☐   ☐

b) Does the vision create a felt need for change in the organization?
☐   ☐

c) Have you formulated an action plan with detailed work steps?
☐   ☐

d) Has the project been broken down into manageable units?
☐   ☐

e) Have you developed a project charter or terms of reference?
☐   ☐

f) Have you established a clear time-line for the completion of specific tasks?   ☐   ☐

g) Do you have an evaluation framework or performance indicators?
☐   ☐

h) Have you conducted a risk assessment for the project?
☐   ☐

i) Does the direction and strategy tie into the HRDC Vision/business plan?
☐   ☐

j) Has the project been coordinated with other internal HRDC initiatives?
☐   ☐

k) Does the strategy support innovation and creativity?
☐   ☐

l) Does the strategy incorporate lessons learned from previous HRDC initiatives?   ☐   ☐

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2. Establish Support and Accountability for the Project

a) Does the project have support from senior management?
   ☐   ☐

b) Have you established an influential/powerful guiding body?
   ☐   ☐

c) Have you selected members who know the business? who are seen as credible by their peers? who have authority to make decisions?
   ☐   ☐

d) Have you selected members who represent all affected branches, regions, and business lines?
   ☐   ☐

e) Have you outlined a clear role for the guiding body?
   ☐   ☐

f) Have you engaged the regions early in the process?
   ☐   ☐

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3. Form a Strong Project Team

a) Have you selected team members who represent all affected branches, regions, and business lines?
   ☐   ☐

b) Have you selected team members with influence? appropriate skills?
   ☐   ☐

c) Has the team been given a clear mandate by the guiding body?
   ☐   ☐

d) Are the roles and responsibilities of each team member clear?
   ☐   ☐

e) Is there one single project leader accountable for the initiative?
   ☐   ☐

f) Have sub-working groups been established to manage specific tasks?
   ☐   ☐

b) Have you established lines of communication among team members which ensure the process is inclusive and participatory?
   ☐   ☐

c) Have you established a conflict management mechanism to resolve disputes?   ☐   ☐

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4. Develop a Plan for Information Sharing and Communication

a) Have you identified the most effective means of communication within the department? ☐   ☐

b) Have you developed communication documents/tools which can be adapted to individual branches/regions/business lines? ☐   ☐

c) Is the language clear, concise and easy to understand? ☐   ☐

d) Are communications travelling in all directions, and across branches, business lines and regions? ☐   ☐

e) Have you engaged stakeholders in a consultative process? ☐   ☐

f) Have you kept a record of key decisions and actions in order to keep people updated on your progress? ☐   ☐

5. Support and Empower People

a) Have you provided team members with ongoing support and encouragement? ☐   ☐

b) Have you provided team members with independence and decision-making power? ☐   ☐

c) Have you given consideration to innovative and creative ideas? ☐   ☐

d) Have you provided team members with tools and appropriate guidance? ☐   ☐

e) Do you understand the motivations of those involved in the project? ☐   ☐

f) Have you provided team members with incentives to meet project objectives? ☐   ☐

6. Implement Project Through Pilots and Staged Roll Outs

a) Have you tested different approaches to implementing the project?
    ☐   ☐
b) Have you made appropriate modifications to the implementation process?
    ☐   ☐
c) Have you conducted evaluations of the pilots and applied lessons learned?   ☐   ☐

7. Customize the Implementation Plan

a) Have you considered how the project will impact the affected branches, regions, business lines and stakeholders?   ☐   ☐
b) Have you tailored the design of the implementation plan to meet the needs of branches/regions/business lines?   ☐   ☐
c) Have you developed tools which are adaptable to branches/regions/ business lines?   ☐   ☐
d) Have you conducted a follow-up? Are all tasks completed?
    ☐   ☐

8. Benefit from Learning

a) Have you conducted a mid-term and a final evaluation of the project?
    ☐   ☐
b) Have you documented and communicated lessons learned and best practices?   ☐   ☐