

Management Action Plan - An Evaluation of Transport Canada's Moving on Sustainable Transportation Program

CONTEXT

This action plan identifies the steps that program management will take to address the recommendations of the evaluation of Transport Canada's (TC) Moving on Sustainable Transportation (MOST) program. An evaluation of the MOST Program was previously completed for Phase 1 (1999 to 2001). Therefore, the focus of this evaluation is on Phase 2, which refers to the period 2002 up to June 2005 (when the evaluation began).

The MOST Program, originally named the Sustainable Transportation Fund (STF), was launched in 1999 as part of the department's first *Sustainable Development Strategy* (SDS) and is a key pillar to how the department works toward the attainment of its strategic objective to protect the physical environment. The program supports projects that produce education, awareness, and analytical tools needed to make sustainable transportation a viable option for Canadians.

The program is currently in its second phase with \$2.5 million in funding to be allocated over the 2002 – 2007 period. In the 2002 – 2005 period the MOST program has supported 46 projects, allocated \$2.3 million from Transport Canada, and leveraged over \$2.3 million in funding from other sources. The deadline for submissions to the final funding round was December 1, 2005. Current program authority ends in March 2007.

RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION (S)

Program staff have reviewed the evaluation and agree with the recommendations of the report. The Action Plan below outlines the steps that project management will take to address the recommendations.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

Recommendation(s)	Proposed Action	Forecast Completion Date	OPI
<p>a) <u><i>Demand for longer-term funding</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TC should examine the feasibility of modifying the MOST Program's terms and conditions to provide project funding beyond the current 	<p>Agree with this recommendation as it is often heard from MOST recipients. As part of program renewal, an option for making the maximum duration of projects three years instead of two years</p>	<p>Strategy for addressing this would be part of the program renewal process</p>	<p>David MacIsaac</p>

<p>two-year maximum.</p>	<p>will be researched and considered. There will be some sort of consultation process with a sample of past MOST recipients to obtain more detail on this issue.</p>	<p>that would start in March 2006 and be completed by a TB submission in summer 2006.</p>	
<p>b) <u>Performance Reporting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOST Program management should revise the five project categories outlined in the program's eligibility criteria (see Annex 1) so that they are mutually exclusive. This could facilitate the roll-up of performance data to describe program level results. • Given the challenges in ensuring reliability and validity of performance reporting, TC should reassess the program objective to "realize quantifiable environmental and sustainable development results on TC's sustainable development priorities." • The MOST Program should consider ways to simplify and streamline the reporting of performance data so that it is commensurate with the level of funding allocated, and the scope and complexity of the 	<p>Agreed, these should be simplified. These could be linked to the development of clear overall program targets that would be part of program renewal options. Development of targets would also address a recommendation of the audit on MOST conducted by the Commissioner on the Environment and Sustainable Development in 2003.</p> <p>Agree that this needs to be considered but would have to be careful to continue to signal the importance of results reporting. Ways to approach this might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ongoing training for non-profit groups and support in effective monitoring/reporting for projects, including resources for longer-term monitoring and modeling future results. b) changing this objective to reflect the longer-term results horizon that is more in keeping with the nature of MOST projects and with the sector in general. <p>Agree with this recommendation and it would be included in any program renewal considerations. As an initial step following approval of program renewal, program management would consult with past MOST program recipients to discuss approaches to simplify and streamline</p>	<p>Program renewal process would be initiated in March 2006 and revised categories developed before TB submission in summer 2006.</p> <p>Refinement of program objectives before TB submission in summer 2006.</p> <p>Research on this integrated into new RMAF that would be part of summer 2006 TB submission.</p>	<p>David MacIsaac</p>

<p>project. One recommendation would be to create a questionnaire or form that would identify the key indicators that need to be collected and reported on. This questionnaire could be distributed to funding recipients at the start of the project and returned at the conclusion of the project. The reliability and validity of data would be improved, performance data from different projects could be aggregated to describe program level performance, and the process for collecting and reporting on performance data would be simpler for stakeholders.</p>	<p>reporting and introduce the concept of a standard questionnaire or form. Once this form is refined, it would become part of the standard contribution agreement and the reporting process of the program. This is connected to addressing the previous two recommendations, as indicators would be linked to clearer categories, the establishment of targets, and the refinement of objectives.</p>	<p>Consultation and development of new questionnaire in fall 2006 and implementation following possible first funding round (Dec. 2006) in winter 2007.</p>	
<p>c) <u>Program Delivery</u></p> <p><i>Communication with Stakeholders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given that previous efforts to gather stakeholder feedback were not very successful, the MOST Program management should consider alternate ways to reach target groups. An adapted version of the questionnaires used as part of this evaluation (see Annex 6 and 7) could be administered to both unsuccessful applicants and funding recipients. 	<p>Agree with this recommendation. Will integrate this into the regular contribution agreement administration and reporting requirements for recipients, and would be part of the notification process for unsuccessful applicants.</p>	<p>Formal implementation of questionnaires following possible next Dec. 2006 funding round.</p>	<p>David MacIsaac</p>
<p>d) <u>Program Exposure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOST Program management should continue its current efforts in expanding program exposure. However, it should 	<p>Agree with this recommendation, but could not be implemented with current program operating resources. Approach to be proposed as part of program</p>	<p>Strategy to be outlined in program renewal options</p>	<p>David MacIsaac</p>

<p>also consider alternative ways to promote the program beyond the website. For example, management could explore opportunities to showcase the program at environmental or transportation events, particularly in underrepresented areas.</p>	<p>renewal.</p>	<p>leading to a TB submission in summer 2006. Implementation to start in fall 2006 to coincide with possible next funding round in Dec. 2006.</p>	
<p><u>e) Timeliness in Program Delivery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOST Program management should ensure that stated timelines are adhered to in the proposal evaluation process. In cases when delays may occur, management should openly communicate the reasons for the delay. • To improve the timeliness in disbursement of funds, the MOST Program management should consider adopting a process that involves disbursing funds in increments throughout a project's life by tying the release of funds to certain project milestones. • Where other TC groups affect the timeliness of program delivery areas, the MOST Program management should enter into discussions with these groups to re-examine the processes associated with these areas and assess options to improve processing time. 	<p>Agreed. Will be part of operations approach developed following program renewal.</p> <p>Agreed that this is an issue and that the recommended approach will be considered. Will investigate the approaches used in similar programs and will consider other (perhaps complementary) options that program staff have already identified such as a more standard financial reporting templates, training recipients, and increased staff capacity to undertake pre-audits.</p> <p>Agreed.</p>	<p>Implementation would start with first funding round, possibly Dec., 2006.</p> <p>Research as part of program renewal activities and implementation with first funding round.</p> <p>Discuss with relevant groups and refine processes to be implemented following a possible initial funding round in Dec. 2006.</p>	<p>David MacIsaac</p>

<p><u>f) Resources for Program Delivery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC should reassess the number of human resources devoted to the administration of the MOST program and determine if additional resources are required to improve program delivery and to support the implementation of the recommendations of this evaluation. 	<p>Agreed. Further research into how other, comparable, federal government programs are staffed will be undertaken. A new staffing profile would be proposed as part of program renewal. Current staff resources are not sufficient to administer all the due diligence requirements of the program in a timely fashion, compile inputs to departmental reports and other products, and compile the program's annual review. Additional work to respond to the recommendations of this evaluation such as improved communication and marketing will require additional resources.</p>	<p>Reassessment as part of program renewal process to begin in March 2006 and complete by summer 2006 for the TB submission.</p>	<p>David MacIsaac</p>
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