Monitoring and Evaluation in the Government of Canada
An Overview of the Canadian Model

Presentation to the V Latin American Monitoring and Evaluation Conference
Bogota, Colombia: November 2009

Robert Lahey
REL Solutions Inc.
Outline

- Background on Canadian System
- Infrastructure Supporting Canadian M&E System
- Key Uses and Users of M&E Information
- Tools and Initiatives to support M&E and RBM
- Public Performance Reporting
- Organization of M&E in a Government Department
- Lessons Learned from 30 Years
- Contact Information
Background on the Canadian System of Government

- Large country (5 ½ time zones); relatively small population (32 million); decentralized government

- Sovereign parliamentary democracy
  * Federation of 10 provinces & 3 territories
  * A federal Parliament and 13 provincial/territorial legislatures w real power

- Federal government
  * Some 90 departments & agencies
  * Each has a Minister who reports to Parliament
  * Budgets approved annually
Global View on How M&E Supports Public Sector Management

Government’s Management Agenda: ‘Results for Canadians’

Objectives - Generate & use ‘results’ information for:
- Sound management
- Informing resource allocation decisions
- Good governance
- Accountability
- Learning, for continuous improvement
- Transparency
- Reporting to Parliament and Canadians

Key Tools:
- Ongoing performance monitoring (the ‘M’)
- Evaluation (the ‘E’)
- Audit
System Infrastructure Supporting Canadian Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) System

Relatively mature evaluation & performance measurement infrastructure

- Government-wide **Policies, Standards & Directives** outlining expectations & responsibilities for conduct of:
  - Evaluation...revised 3 times over 30 years – most recently 2009
  - Performance Measurement
  - Performance Planning and Reporting

- **Central agency guidance** and oversight on the standards & practice for M&E in departments: **Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)**
  - Centre of Excellence for Evaluation (CEE): ‘champion’, leadership, capacity building & oversight roles
  - variety of initiatives/drivers supporting ‘results’ measurement, reporting & **results based management (RBM)**
System Infrastructure Supporting Canadian M&E System (cont)

- **Dedicated resources**: All major departments & agencies have internal Evaluation units; have established corporate Performance Measurement Frameworks (MRRS)

- **Oversight**: Ongoing monitoring of departments by TBS of quality and resourcing of evaluation; performance measurement; reporting

- **Oversight**: Independent monitoring of policy implementation by the national audit office (Auditor General of Canada, OAG); broad exposure

- **Human resources**: Well established professional network & association of ‘Evaluators’ – professional development opportunities

- **Drivers**: Several tools and initiatives to support sustainability – many linked to central agency requirements or oversight. Ultimately though demand for M&E information derives from government’s desire to manage by & report on ‘results’
Canadian Government M&E System

Parliament of Canada
- Parliamentary Committees

Treasury Board
- Government’s management board (financial, management & HR)

Auditor General
- Oversight role
- Promotes accountability & best practices
- Independent audit of govt operations

Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)
- Centre of Excellence for Evaluation (CEE)
- Capacity building
- Oversight of M&E products
- Policies & standards (Evaluation, Audit, performance reporting, RMAFs, MRRS, MAF, RBM, etc.)
- M&E to inform funding decisions (EMS)

All Other Ministers—Federal Departments and Agencies
- Deputy Heads
  - Deputy accountable for Evaluation & Performance reporting
  - Head of Evaluation implements Evaluation Policy as per TBS standards & guidelines
  - Departmental Evaluation Committee determines priorities for evaluation study
- Evaluation studies inform program funding & strategic-level allocation
- Internal accountability & reporting
- External accountability & reporting to TBS & Parliament
### Many Uses and Users of M&E Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Client</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational – program specific</td>
<td>Program Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental</td>
<td>Deputy Ministers, Agency Heads, CEOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>Central Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative</td>
<td>House Committees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tools & Initiatives to support M&E & RBM
- Program-specific

- Use of Performance Measurement Frameworks (PMFs or RMAFs) – a blueprint for RBM
  * Provide basis for systematic monitoring of performance
  * Program managers accountable for ongoing monitoring

- **Evaluation Policy** recognizes different management needs for evaluative information
  * focus on value for money (relevance and performance)
  * carried out by Evaluation specialists (Departmental Evaluation units)
  * support to program & policy development

- Formal requirement to evaluate all programs seeking funding renewal - - **Federal Accountability Act** requires all transfer payment programs to be reviewed (relevance & effectiveness) over a 5-year period
Tools & Initiatives to support M&E & RBM
- Department-wide

- **Formal requirement** for performance monitoring & reporting on ‘results’ for all departments – central agency standards & oversight

- Introduction of **Management Resources and Results Structure (MRRS)**—corporate performance framework linking all programs to departmental outcomes – basis for performance monitoring & reporting

- Annual tabling in Parliament, as part of the Estimates process, departmental reports on ‘plans & priorities’ (**RPP**) & follow-up reports on ‘departmental performance’ (**DPR**)  

- Government-directed departmental **strategic expenditure reviews** to support decision-making re program allocation/reallocation & program elimination

- Each department assessed annually via the **Management Accountability Framework (MAF)** vs indicators, incl. quality of M&E information – an input to annual assessment of most senior officials
TBS Management and Accountability Framework (MAF)

Public Service Values
By their actions departmental leaders continually reinforce the importance of PS Values and Ethics in the delivery of results to Canadians (e.g.: democratic, professional, ethical and people values).

Policy and Programs
Departmental research and analytic capacity is developed and sustained to assure high quality policy options, program design and advice to Ministers.

People
The department has the people, work environment and focus on building capacity and leadership to assure its success and a confident future for the Public Service of Canada.

Citizen Focused Service
Services are citizen-centred, policies and programs are developed from the ‘outside in’, and partnerships are encouraged and effectively managed.

Risk Management
The executive team clearly defines the corporate context and practices for managing organizational and strategic risks proactively.

Stewardship
The departmental control regime (assets, money, people, services, etc.) is integrated and effective, and its underlying principles are clear to all staff.

Accountability
Accountabilities for results are clearly assigned and consistent with resources, and delegations are appropriate to capabilities.

Governance & Strategic Direction
The essential conditions – internal coherence, corporate discipline and alignment to outcomes -- are in place for providing effective strategic direction, support to the Minister and Parliament, and the delivery of results.

Learning, Innovation and Change Management
The department manages through continuous innovation and transformation, promotes organizational learning, values corporate knowledge, and learns from its performance.

Results and Performance
Relevant information on results (internal, service & program) is gathered and used to make departmental decisions, and public reporting is balanced, transparent, and easy to understand.
Tools & Initiatives to support M&E & RBM

- Horizontal cross-department

- Use of **Horizontal or Strategic RMAFs** to focus on government priorities or programs that collectively link to broader policy objectives

- Departmental **MRRS** improve the potential for high-level Evaluations that cross traditional jurisdictions (programs & departments) -- forward-looking

- Driven from the centre but generally co-managed by lead departments – time & effort in managing

- Few examples to date -- e.g. Climate Change; Agriculture Policy initiative

- Reporting on national performance re specific issues (e.g. youth) in **Canada’s Performance**, tabled in Parliament
Tools & Initiatives to support M&E & RBM
- Whole-of-government

- **Expenditure Management System (EMS)**—TBS directed; based on departmental MRRS; to provide government-wide advice on priority-setting and budget allocation

- Using Evaluation & performance information to help ensure that govt is ‘spending on the right priorities’

- High level, less refined information

- Ongoing development

- Note that evaluation information serves as only one input to government decision-making re allocation & reallocation
Public Performance Reporting – Promoting transparency & accountability

- Public disclosure of performance & effectiveness of govt programs to elected officials & general public
  - Annual tabling in Parliament of Departmental Performance Reports (DPR) & *Canada’s Performance*
  - Requirement to post Evaluation reports & DPRs on departmental web sites
  - Broad reporting on reports of the Auditor General – audits of govt operations & implementation of M&E across government
  - Responding to Parliamentary Committees (Public Accounts; Government Operations; Estimates)
  - Access to Information legislation
Organization and Implementation of M&E in a Government Department

- **Deputy Minister (DM)** in department faces variety of accountabilities requiring performance & results information.

- As a result, all medium & large departments have dedicated resources to conduct evaluation studies; and, must establish a corporate performance framework (MRRS).

- Senior level **Evaluation Committee** oversees evaluation use.

- **Internal Evaluation unit** reports to DM.

- **Head of the Evaluation** unit responsible for conduct of independent & objective evaluation studies.

- **Program managers** accountable for ongoing monitoring of performance of their programs.

- **Evaluators** assist development of performance monitoring systems.
Organization and Implementation of M&E in a Government Department (cont)

Departmental Deputy Head

---

Evaluation Committee
(DM & Executive Team)

Head of Evaluation

---

Departmental Evaluation Plan
(5-year risk-based plan)

Evaluation Unit

---

Evaluation Studies
- Manages & undertakes evaluation studies
- Apply TBS standards
- Advise on performance measurement

Program Managers

---

Management response & Action Plan
- Participates in evaluation studies

Performance Measurement Frameworks
- Facilitates performance measurement
Organization and Implementation of M&E in a Government Department (cont)

Some formal central agency (TBS) requirements for M&E in departments:

- Annual & multi-year Evaluation Plan, reflecting risks & priorities – 5-year cycle
- Senior level Evaluation Committee, chaired by DM
- Funding of Evaluation ‘appropriate’ to needs/size of department - much flexibility – decision of DM
- Approved MRRS serving as the basis for measuring & reporting on ‘results’ in annual performance report (DPR) to Parliament
- Evaluation reports & DPR posted on web
- TBS review of M&E products – Evaluation reports, DPR, MAF assessment
Final Thoughts
Lessons Learned from 30 Years

Drivers for M&E

- Building & using M&E capacity requires more than resources & technical skills—it requires a political will & sustained commitment - Central leadership and a plan are very important

- Think in terms of years, not months, to get a mature system

- ‘M&E information’ is **not an end in itself**; it needs to be linked to particular management and decision-making roles, particularly in the context of public sector reforms or govt agendas

- Clarify the **distinction between the ‘M’ and the ‘E’** & what each contributes to RBM and each requires re capacity building

- Need to build **capacity ‘to do’** evaluation (& gather performance information), plus the **capacity ‘to use’** M&E information

- The latter relies on the nature of the **incentives** in the system for managers to demand and use M&E information
Implementing the System

- Importance of mechanisms, communication vehicles & fora to link the demand for and supply of M&E information, to ensure that ‘what gets produced’ is ‘what is needed’, and delivered in a timely way.

- A formal Policy document is a useful basis for clarifying roles, responsibilities & accountabilities of key players - Deputy Heads, Evaluation specialists, program managers, central agency officials.

- The central agency ‘champion’ for the function (CEE) has played a key role in the M&E system - policy; guidance; capacity development; quality control.

- A number of requirements have been phased in by the central agency - ‘try, adapt, learn & adjust’ - long-term & iterative.

- Flexibility – not ‘one size fits all’.

- Oversight by the national audit office - very important to give broad & public exposure of how well the M&E system is being implemented & whether adjustments are needed.
Final Thoughts: Lessons Learned (cont)

Key Elements of Capacity Building

- **Building an adequate supply of human resource capacity** is critical and an ongoing issue.

- Both formal training & on-the-job experience important in developing ‘evaluators’. Two **key competencies for Evaluators**: cognitive capacity & communication skills.

- Program & senior managers important audiences for less technical training on M&E & RBM.

- **No quick fixes** in building an M&E system - investment in training & systems development is long-term.

- Identifying ‘champions’ and ‘good practices’ – learn from others; help avoid ‘fatigue’ associated with a change process.

- Data quality are critical for credibility. The national statistics office is a critical player re **data development**.

- **Performance reporting** at different levels – program; department; government – recognize different audiences & different needs.
Feedback from 16 Heads of Evaluation: “Evaluation is useful if...”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product-related issues</th>
<th>Capacity-related issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Relevant</td>
<td>- Technically competent Evaluators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quality</td>
<td>- Evaluators, incl. Head, possess good communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Focused on client’s needs</td>
<td>- Credible Evaluation unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Credible &amp; objective</td>
<td>- Appropriately resourced Evaluation unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reports formatted to audience needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Informs decision-making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Balanced &amp; fair representation (unbiased)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Includes recommendations for follow-up action</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Feedback from 16 Heads of Evaluation: “Evaluation is useful if…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process-related issues</th>
<th>Relationships across the organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td> • Timely</td>
<td> • Linked to strategic planning &amp; policy &amp; program development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> • Objective</td>
<td> • Input to resource allocation decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> • Participatory, involving clients</td>
<td> • Supports corporate reporting to external audiences (central agencies, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> • Builds knowledge, clarifies understanding</td>
<td> • Lessens risks &amp; surprises for senior managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td> • Challenge role</td>
<td> • Clear accountability &amp; governance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contact Information

- Robert Lahey, President
  REL Solutions Inc.
- E-mail: RELahey@rogers.com
- Telephone: +1 613 728-4272
- Address: 305 – 150 Caroline Avenue
  Ottawa, Ontario
  Canada  K1Y 4X8