

**Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
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**Evaluation Summary Report
CESO Aboriginal Services (CAS)**

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Introduction	i
Issues	i
Approach	ii
General Assessment	ii
Key Findings	ii
Recommendations	iii
Section 1 - Introduction	1
Purpose of the Report	1
Evaluation Issues	1
Methodology	2
Structure of the Report	2
Section 2 - Program Profile	3
DIAND's Relationship with CESO	3
Background	3
Responsibilities of CAS	4
Objectives and Priorities of DIAND	4
Section 3 - Evaluation Findings	5
Introduction	5
Relevance	5
Effectiveness	7
Cost-Effectiveness	10
Alternatives	11
Section 4 - Conclusions & Recommendations	13
Introduction	13
Relevance and Achievement of Aboriginal Peoples' and Departmental Objectives	13
Communications	15
Accountability	15
Coordination with other Aboriginal Economic Development Stakeholders	17
Appendices	
Appendix A	
Appendix B	
Annexes	
Terms of Reference	
Action Plan	

Executive Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarize the findings related to the evaluation of CESO's Aboriginal Services (CAS). The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and continued relevance of CAS, to determine its impacts and to help identify strategic issues and options for future changes.

The Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, whose mission is "to promote and extend the economic and social growth and well-being of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and of the people of developing nations and emerging market economies." It provides volunteer advisers (VAs) to support the development and management of Aboriginal businesses and communities in Canada through CAS and it supports business and social sectors of developing countries around the world through its International Services Program (ISP). Through a Flexible Transfer Payment arrangement with CESO's Aboriginal Services, DIAND provided \$1.547 M for the provision of professional, management development, advisory and consultative services to Canadian First Nations in 1997-1998. DIAND will shortly start discussions with CAS about the 1998-1999 funding agreement.

Issues

Issues to be addressed by the evaluation study are those outlined in the Terms of Reference:

Relevance: Are departmental and program objectives being achieved? Are they still relevant? Are they congruent with First Nations aspirations? Are there unmet needs? Are the target groups appropriate?

Effectiveness: How effective is the program? Are results clear and recorded? How satisfied are clients with the services? What are the impacts, both intended and unintended?

Cost effectiveness: Is the program working in a cost effective manner? Are there any unrealized sources of revenue?

Alternatives: Are there alternatives to continued DIAND funding of the CESO Aboriginal Services Program?

Approach

The methodology used reflects multiple lines of evidence, including interviews of clients, VAs, departmental and CESO officials, a review of documents, as well as stakeholder discussion groups, including a broad representation of First Nation clients, a Community Economic Development Officer and CAS VA's. The research was conducted in consultation with an Advisory Committee which included the executives of CESO and CAS, First Nations persons, as well as departmental program representatives. An Aboriginal firm provided assistance toward the Summary Report, in addition to performing much of the fieldwork, such as conducting project file reviews and interviews with client and volunteer advisers.

General Assessment

On the whole CAS provides valued volunteer services to Aboriginal people across the country. Volunteers have a broad range of expertise and clients generally report a high level of satisfaction with both the VAs and the program. There is good evidence that project objectives are generally met, that clients consider their projects a success and that those projects generate a number of benefits to communities, without adverse impacts.

While First Nation clients support CAS, the study has identified several means of strengthening service delivery in the short term, and recommends that future funding agreements require activities in line with the *Gathering Strength* Action Plan. The need for CAS services in the longer term will have to be reassessed as emerging Aboriginal organizations provide alternative services.

Key Findings

CAS's activities are in principle generally consistent with the department's objectives. There is a need, however, to revisit the CAS activities to ensure consistency with the *Gathering Strength* action plan. It is not clear that current linkages between DIAND and CAS ensure clear and ongoing communications as priorities develop and change.

CAS has made significant efforts to increase the relevance of the program and improve its service delivery; it has developed new alliances and agreements with Aboriginal organizations, client groups and sponsors. It has also increased Aboriginal representation at all levels. It has been more difficult to increase the number of Aboriginal VAs that can be accessed through the program. Clients have indicated that they would like to see more Aboriginal VAs on the CESO roster, which CESO is aware of.

Though DIAND and CAS respondents indicated that overall the creation of the new corporate identity for the Aboriginal Services Program has lent much credibility to CAS, some CAS board members and staff do not feel that there is sufficient Aboriginal control over the Aboriginal Services Program because the CAS board is a minority within the CESO board. In respect to reporting, CAS regularly provides DIAND with qualitative data on the project files

and activities per region. Additionally, CAS submits financial information on their operating results and consolidated balance sheet statements. Findings with regard to financial information were considered to be insufficiently detailed. Observations pertaining to reporting included the assessment that project file information is not necessarily of consistent quality across regions. Records are, in some cases, either missing or superficial and the evaluations in some cases seem to be misunderstood or neglected. CAS reports relate largely to its activities. More needs to be done to structure reporting.

While CAS has been successful in increasing the proportion of revenues it receives from sponsors and clients, this proportion varies across regions. In most cases, the ability of clients to pay is self declaratory and the negotiating process is inconsistent, suggesting that there could be some unrealized sources of revenues.

At this point, there are no Aboriginal alternative service providers to CAS which can offer a similarly broad range of low-cost services on a national level. Having noted this, this report identifies areas which offer DIAND, through CAS, an opportunity to improve the effectiveness and relevancy of the program. In the longer term, there will be a need to monitor the availability of Aboriginal alternative service providers as those alternatives are evolving.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, work with the CAS to continue efforts to increase Aboriginal representation and partnerships and to ensure that contribution agreements establish clear objectives and desired results consistent with departmental priorities on economic development and business related capacity building, in support of *Gathering Strength*.
2. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, be identified as the primary contact for liaison and communication with the Executives of CAS and CESO and provide for regular information exchange.
3. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, and CAS work together to develop guidelines for an accountability regime with respect to reporting, in order to improve and renew program planning, monitoring and evaluation of results.
4. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, and CAS work together to put in place a review of cost-effectiveness which will identify opportunities to achieve program savings and to ensure that contribution agreements provide for a separate statement of accounting of DIAND funded activities.

5. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, work with CAS to develop the appropriate linkages so that their program delivery mechanism is linked to DIAND's and to the overall federal programming and resources at the regional level and is well positioned to develop partnerships.

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to synthesize the results and findings and present conclusions and recommendations stemming from the evaluation of CAS. An evaluation of CAS was approved by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Branch (DAEB) in October 1996. The main purpose of this evaluation is to assess the effectiveness and continued relevance of CAS and to determine the impacts of the program and help identify strategic issues and options.

Budgets for Aboriginal programming were reduced from historic growth rates of 12% to 6% in 1995-1996 and 2% for 1997-1998 and 1998-1999. In this context, programs are reviewed for long term sustain ability. DIAND approved the 1996-1997 funding of CAS at \$1.547 million with the understanding that an evaluation be completed.

The evaluation was originally designed in three research Modules. Module I looks at program performance and continued relevance to clients, Module II focuses on the perspective of CESO and DIAND, and this Summary Report integrates the findings from both modules along with additional information provided by a discussion group made up of stakeholders.

Evaluation Issues

The evaluation issues as outlined in the Terms of Reference are as follows:

Relevance: Are departmental and program objectives being achieved? Are they still relevant? Are they congruent with First Nations aspirations? Are there unmet needs? Are the target groups appropriate?

Effectiveness: How effective is the program? Are results clear and recorded? How satisfied are clients with the services? What are the impacts, both intended and unintended?

Cost Effectiveness: Is the program working in a cost effective manner? Are there any unrealized sources of revenue?

Alternatives: Are there alternatives to continued DIAND funding of CAS?

Methodology

The methodology used for both Modules I and Module II reflects multiple lines of evidence. The methodology followed for Module I includes project file reviews and interviews with representatives of the First Nations client group, CAS volunteer advisors, as well as interviews with non-users (First Nations that have not used CAS in the past three years). The interviews for this Module took place over the months of June to August 1997. Clients and volunteer advisors interviewed were chosen directly from the project files reviewed, while names of non-users were provided by CAS. The interviews followed pre-tested interview guides that asked questions and prompted discussion on matters relevant to the key evaluation issues. A total of 83 case files were selected and provided to the evaluation team by CAS. From the 83 case files provided, 64 case files contained sufficient enough information to be reviewed. A total of 104 interviews were conducted over a two month period, resulting in 45 First Nation client interviews, 50 CAS volunteer advisor interviews and 9 First Nation non-user interviews. Out of the 64 case files reviewed, 45 were actually completed with both the First Nation client and CAS volunteer advisor interviews.

The methodology used for Module II involved the extensive review of DIAND files and CAS documents including program data and financial information. A literature review of alternative programs available to First Nations was also conducted followed by a total of 27 interviews with DIAND and CESO staff to determine the perception of the mission and to identify objectives, priorities, activities and achievements of CAS. Interviews were done between the months of April and June 1997. Opinions concerning value for money, or cost- effectiveness of the CAS Program, as well as alternatives to CAS and to the current funding agreements, were also collected.

Findings were reviewed by a group of stakeholders and additional research was undertaken to complete the study.

Structure of the Report

Section 2 of this Summary Report, the Program Profile, explains the historical relationship between DIAND and CESO and the nature of their funding agreement in more detail.

Section 3 presents a synopsis of the evaluation findings in relation to the evaluation issues, namely the relevance, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness of CAS and its alternatives. These results are further assessed as to whether or not they meet the needs of First Nation clients and the overall objectives of DIAND.

Section 4 provides a brief summary of the conclusions and recommendations from both Modules I and II as well as from the comments and opinions of the Stakeholder meeting who reviewed both modules.

Section 2 - Program Profile

DIAND's Relationship with CESO

Through various means and mechanisms, DIAND provides support and funding for the delivery of services to assist First Nation individuals, business enterprises, governments, organizations and associations who request professional assistance in management development, advisory and consultative services and other related services to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of their own enterprises, organizations and institutions. Through a Flexible Transfer Payment Arrangement with CESO, DIAND provided \$1,547 million to provide Canadian First Nations with professional, management development, advisory and consultative services in 1996-1997.

Historically, CESO has largely been dependent on DIAND funding to support its domestic programming (ie., through the Aboriginal Services Program). From 1987-1988 to 1992-1993, CESO funding levels remained constant -- frozen at \$1,655,000, and funded from Band Government as an element of the Indian/Inuit Management Development Program. Prior to this, the program received funds through the department's Economic Development Program. In 1993-1994, the DIAND/CESO agreement was renewed at \$1,520,000 (\$135,000 or 8% less than the previous year) and has remained near or at that level since.

Background

Founded in 1967, CESO is a non-profit, non-governmental volunteer-based organization. The organization's mission is "*to promote and extend the economic and social growth and well-being of the Aboriginal people of Canada and of the people of developing nations and emerging market economies.*" Domestically, CESO provides volunteers as advisors to support the development and management of Aboriginal businesses and communities in Canada through CESO Aboriginal Services (CAS), and supports business and social sectors of developing countries around the world through its International Services Program (ISP). In fiscal 1997-1998, under agreement with DIAND, CESO will spend \$1.547 million completing a target of 1,175 Aboriginal related cases and utilizing over 400 active volunteers.

CESO's original emphasis was on the support of economic development activities. In the early 90's, however, major market changes forced the organization to reconsider its direction and operations and to add to its services the provision of community administration advisory and training services. A Task Force was created in 1992 to examine the needs of the Aboriginal clientele and the ability of the organization to respond to those needs. In 1993, the Task Force submitted its report and recommended a complete restructuring of the organization and its corporate image to enable it to adapt to the changing environment.

It also highlighted CAS's need to develop a sustainable funding base over the long term which was to be independent from DIAND. CESO's Board of Directors fully endorsed the new directions and initiated the remodelling of CAS, including administration by an Aboriginal Board of Directors.

Responsibilities of CAS

Under the current Agreement with DIAND, CAS is responsible for the following:

1. to deliver the agreed upon services;
2. to ensure financial accountability; and
3. to provide, in this fiscal year, information required for the evaluation.

Objectives and Priorities of DIAND

Canadians recognize the need for substantial improvements in the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal peoples and northerners. The DIAND/CAS agreement is one such means for the department to lever the existing expertise of CAS volunteers to begin to make substantial improvements. In meeting the federal government's legal obligations to First Nations, DIAND's objectives and priorities are:

- a. to achieve negotiated self-government agreements;
- b. to improve conditions on reserves;
- c. to achieve and implement claims settlements; and
- d. to support and promote the political and sustainable development of the North.

These departmental objectives and priorities are further enhanced by the department's resolve to strengthening its accountability and changing its way of doing business (for example, introducing innovations in leadership and informatics, enhanced funding mechanisms and expanded use of Financial Transfer Agreements). These priorities, the department's strategies and approach for addressing these challenges, and the progress already made, are outlined in the department's *Framework for Action*, the *RCAP* (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples) statement on First Nation economic development needs (see Appendix "A"), as well as in the department's *Business Plan and Performance Report*. Given that the department has changed its priorities in support of First Nations' needs and the fact that CAS has undergone major changes, an evaluation was necessary to assess the performance of the revamped CAS in light of these changes in First Nation and DIAND priorities.

Section 3 - Evaluation Findings

Introduction

This section presents findings in relation to the following evaluation issues: *Relevance*, *Effectiveness*, *Cost Effectiveness*, and *Alternatives*

Relevance

Relevance of the program was assessed according to a number of factors, including: congruence with departmental objectives; implementation of the Task Force recommendations; identification of client needs; views of First Nations on relevance; and cultural appropriateness of services.

Departmental Objectives

CAS's activities, because of their focus on capacity building and economic development, are in principle generally consistent with the department's objectives as described in the Framework for Action, 1997. However, the contribution agreement between the department and CAS does not refer to specific objectives to be achieved through projects.

As the department works with First Nations to accelerate the pace of change and to promote self-government objectives, priorities for policies and services may be adjusted and updated, e.g. as expressed in the 1998 report, Gathering Strength. In light of this new action plan, there would appear to be a need for the department and CAS to work together to develop new common objectives and focus on certain project types and consistent accountability requirements. It is not clear, however, that current linkages between DIAND and CAS ensure clear and ongoing communications as priorities develop and change. Both DIAND and CAS have experienced organizational changes affecting liaison in the past year.

Increased Relevance since the Implementation of the Task Force Recommendations

Various changes were introduced when the 1992 Task Force recommendations were implemented which have led to an increase in relevance. CAS has developed new alliances and agreements with Aboriginal organizations, client groups and sponsors. New linkages appear to have helped to better identify the needs of First Nations. Most respondents felt the changes brought about by the creation of CAS, with a separate corporate identity, has lent much credibility to the organization.

Aboriginal representation was increased both at the staff level and at the Board level. Ten of the 24 persons employed by CAS are Aboriginal. The management team composed of 10 persons includes 7 First Nation members. The board of directors, formed of 8 persons, includes 6 First Nation members. It has been difficult however to recruit Aboriginal VA's, for lack of available candidates. Only 26 of the 4,356 VA's on the roster are Aboriginal persons.

Overall, CAS related services are described by most respondents as more relevant to First Nations' needs than were the former CNP's services, although some Aboriginal Board members and staff do not feel that Aboriginals have sufficient control over the Aboriginal Services Program.

Client Needs

Client needs are typically identified by two different means. First, when clients contact CAS directly, regional managers discuss with them the details of their project to identify their project needs and secondly, when CAS's staff and VA's visit communities to inform potential clients of CAS' services, or to initiate projects, the client will inform them of their current or future project needs.

Interviews with CESO and DIAND representatives indicated that, since the expansion of regional offices, a lot of effort is devoted to identifying client needs, and community visits are more frequent. Banking and training services are now provided. Services are now offered to all Aboriginal people although they are not necessarily utilized to the same degree across the country. Areas of unmet needs identified through client interviews are notably: network building, web site development, financing, by-law development, taxation advice, environmental advice and business planning in the North. CAS officials however indicated that they do have volunteers with those areas of expertise and business planning is available in the North.

Views of First Nations on Relevance

When asked directly whether or not they thought CAS was relevant to the needs of First Nations, 91% of the CAS's clients interviewed said that the program was relevant to the needs of First Nations. Four of the nine non-users interviewed also indicated that the program was relevant.

Clients were also asked if they considered CAS to be an Aboriginal organization controlled by Aboriginals. This question was answered negatively by 57% of the respondents, the remaining being evenly split between a yes response and a refusal to respond. The relatively small sample size did not allow for a full analysis of this perception across client types, although it seems that community organizations are less likely to consider CAS to be an Aboriginal organization (11 community organizations out of 15 who were asked this question said CAS was not an Aboriginal organization).

Cultural Appropriateness of Services

CAS has placed emphasis on cross-cultural awareness training for volunteers. Interviews with CAS representatives revealed that cross-cultural awareness activities vary widely from one region to the next. On the whole, there seem to be informal activities rather than systematic efforts. This was confirmed by the VA interviews: only 7 indicated that they had received some cross-cultural awareness training.

When asked if CAS was responding to the needs of First Nations in a manner that is culturally sensitive to their culture two thirds of the clients interviewed said yes. The remaining respondents were evenly split: either they did not know or they did not think the services were culturally appropriate.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness was assessed both through perceptions of participants on effectiveness and consideration of results through file reviews.

Client Satisfaction with CAS

Answers to various questions indicate a significant degree of client satisfaction. While 71% of the clients had used CAS before, 93% said they would use CAS services again, and 87% would be willing to recommend CAS to other First Nations.

When asked to rate CAS services, on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, three quarters of the clients chose either 4 or 5.

Client Satisfaction with VA

Half of the client respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with the VA skills, while 22% were reasonably satisfied. Approximately 87% of the clients thought that the VA skills properly matched the requirements of the project. Two thirds of the respondents were very satisfied by the advice given by the VA, while 22% were reasonably satisfied. Two thirds of the clients also indicated that they were very satisfied with the attitude of the VA, while a quarter were reasonably satisfied. With respect to the VA's accessibility, 58% of the clients were very satisfied and 35% were reasonably satisfied. When asked about the VA's ability to communicate, 51% of the clients were very satisfied, while 36% were reasonably satisfied.

VA Satisfaction with CAS

CAS volunteer advisor's were also asked to rate CAS overall on a similar scale and 70% of them rated CAS a 4 or a 5. Eighty four percent considered CAS a success and 86% claimed to have had a favourable experience with their project.

Notwithstanding that CAS volunteer advisors were satisfied with CAS overall, 66% felt that there was room for improvement. Better communication with volunteer advisors and First Nation clients, as well as a better screening process for properly identifying needs and thus accepting or rejecting projects, were examples mentioned most often.

Achievement of Project Objectives and Project Impacts

There are a number of additional indicators that project objectives are being met. Of the 45 completed case files, where both sets of interviews were completed, file information showed that 69% of the cases had all of their project objectives met (as identified in the terms of reference), whereas 27% had only some of their project objectives met. Four percent indicated that none of the project objectives were met.

Another indication of project objectives being met can be seen in the actual number of projects identified as successful. From the 45 case files reviewed, 84% of the projects were considered by the client to be successful while 16% of the projects were considered failures. How successful were they? On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being poor and 5 being excellent) 91% of First Nation clients rated the success of their projects, using CAS volunteer advisors, as being a 3 or higher, while 71% rated the success at 4 or 5.

Projects also were seen to generate numerous benefits to clients and communities. The most frequent benefits identified by clients were: jobs created, training provided, skills transferred and various community benefits received.

Project impacts were seemingly obtained without adverse unintended impacts. Examples of unintended impacts, identified by a quarter of First Nation clients and the same proportion of VA's, were positive outcomes, such as the fact that a VA helped to do some fund raising, networks were established, and unexpected recommendations were obtained.

Attribution of Results

The attribution of the results to the program is always a difficult assessment. Clients and VA's were asked if their project would have met its intended impacts if CAS had not been involved. An equal number of clients and VAs (44% for each) were uncertain. Thirty-eight percent of First Nation clients and 44% of CAS volunteer advisors said their project would not have met its intended impact without CAS's involvement. Eighteen percent of First Nation clients and 12% of CAS volunteer advisors were of the opposite view: they said the project would have met its intended impact anyway, even if CAS was not involved.

Recording of Results

There were concerns from the department that CAS was not providing enough information concerning on-reserve project impacts. New accountability requirements have been built into this year's funding agreement that should address this problem, although financial information provided by CAS to DIAND is not sufficiently detailed. Evaluation tools in support of those accountability requirements have also been developed. Getting clients to fill out the evaluation forms, however, has been a problem, although it is not clear whether or not this stems from the client having had a negative experience.

Out of 45 completed case files, 17 contained a minimal amount of information. The amount of information contained in the files varied by region. In 18% of the files for which complete project reviews were performed, there were noticeable discrepancies between what was recorded in the file and what was recorded in the interviews. Most discrepancies seemed to relate to the fact that the volunteers did not know the results of their involvement with the project since they did not stay in touch with CAS or the client after the project was completed.

Transfer of Skills and Capacity Building

The concept of transferring skills and building local capacity within Aboriginal communities is important to both DIAND and CAS. However, a clear definition of this concept and a strategy to achieve it is yet to be developed. (See Appendix "B" for suggested definitions of capacity building.)

Almost all CAS respondents spoke about the importance of transferring skills. Emphasis has also been placed on the concept of projects as partnerships, involving on-going support and mentoring. A few respondents indicated, however, that the concept of skills transfer is not supported by that of cost-recovery. While 38 percent of clients interviewed did not think that enough time was devoted to transfer of skills, longer assignments would cost more to clients. It should also be noted that only 5 of the 50 VA's interviewed indicated that they had received skills transfer training.

Approximately two thirds of the clients interviewed reported that they acquired new skills as a result of their project. This proportion varies across project types. The small number of projects in each category do not allow for a complete analysis of acquisition of skills by project type. However, business planning activities do not seem to be as good a means to transfer skills. Eight of the thirteen respondents in that category said they received some form of skill transfer, such as in the area of financial management, planning, analysis or accounting, while five either did not receive skills transfer or were uncertain.

The evolution of project types and client types does not allow for the identification of trends in skills transfer activities. Business planning activities represented 36% of the projects in 1996-1997, approximately the same proportion as four year ago.

Workshops, which are likely to be training activities, represented 5% of the projects in 1996-1997. On the other hand, community organizations, which are likely to be the type of clients mostly interested in capacity building types of activities, represented 42% of CAS's clients during the past 3 years, up from 38% in 1993-1994.

Barriers to Effectiveness

The implementation of the Task Force recommendations represented important changes, which all had to be implemented with a fixed contribution from the most important sponsor, DIAND. CAS is still adjusting to those changes. Other barriers to effectiveness identified by CAS and DIAND respondents are the short length of time that the VA is involved in the project, the diversity of First Nations needs and the geography of the country.

Some barriers to effectiveness identified by CAS's clients are the lack of Aboriginal VAs, the fact that VAs do not stay on-site long enough, a lack of follow-up, as well as, in some instance, that the VA's skills may not be up-to-date.

The most common barriers to effectiveness identified by VAs are related to unclear project terms of reference, improperly screened projects, changes in community leadership and lack of communication. Other problems encountered are community conflicts, unrealistic or unclear expectations, lack of understanding, reluctance to take advice and lack of follow-up.

Cost-Effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness was analysed from two perspectives. From CAS's perspective, the program's efforts to secure alternative sources of funding and devote more of its revenues to projects formed the basis of the cost-effectiveness assessment. From DIAND's perspective, value for money contributed to the program is the most important issue.

CAS's Perspective

Two elements seem to indicate an increase in cost effectiveness. Over the past four years, a larger proportion of CAS's budget is assigned to the regional offices where service delivery takes place. Clients and sponsors of projects contributed 25.5% of total revenues in 1996-1997, up from 11% in 1993-1994. The proportion of revenues coming from clients and sponsors varies across regions. It has been more difficult to get sponsors for capacity-building activities.

The case file reviews revealed that 62% of the clients paid some fee to CAS. That payment ranged from \$25 to \$3,000. In most cases, it appears that those clients who can afford to pay something are being asked to pay a portion or all of the expenses of the VA's. In most cases however, the ability to pay is self-declaratory. The negotiating process also seems inconsistent across regions.

There were some examples of projects where the client had the ability to pay, such as a medium size business or a First Nation institution, but they had not been required to contribute. This happened enough to suggest that there could be unrealized sources of revenues.

DIAND's perspective

Most DIAND and CAS representatives interviewed felt that CAS is providing a useful and valued service to First Nation communities, and that DIAND is getting value for its money spent on the program. The fact that VA's are providing their services for free ensures cost-effectiveness, as long as the Regional Manager is doing an effective job.

Alternatives

In this section a review of existing alternative service providers was conducted. DIAND respondents were also asked for their views on five theoretical funding alternatives.

Alternative Service Providers

In pursuing its objectives to promote economic development and capacity building, the department provides funding to various organizations for the delivery of relevant services to First Nations. A review of the services provided by those various organizations was necessary to identify any duplication or augmentation.

The most important alternative service providers funded by DIAND, in terms of DIAND's budget, are the Community Economic Development Organizations (CEDO) and the Tribal Councils. Aboriginal Business Canada, which is not funded by DIAND but also offers services to Aboriginals was also reviewed.

It appears that there is potential in those organizations to offer some of the activities provided by CAS. It is not clear that they could or would be willing to quickly replace CAS.

Funding Alternatives

Various funding alternatives were presented to DIAND respondents. Respondents were asked to comment on the following five alternatives to the current funding arrangement:

- Cut funding all together. This includes the option of giving the money directly to the bands or to economic development initiatives, such as those involving CEDOs, or focussing on the concept of capacity building and providing Tribal councils with the money.

- Continue some core funding to CAS but target some funds to other areas, such as training and banking, relating to economic development or capacity building.
- Target all funding to negotiated results relating to economic development or capacity building.
- Phase out core funding and replace it with matching funding equivalent to the fee-for-service revenue obtained by CAS from its clients.
- Retain core funding and augment CAS's activity as cost recovery grows.

Most respondents favoured retaining the core funding to CAS and augment activities as cost recovery grows. Other options where funding was cut or given directly to Tribal Councils were seen as jeopardizing CAS's future and services. Respondents did not think that there were realistically any alternatives available to all regions offering the same range of services, and indicated that those services were needed by First Nations.

If DIAND funding were removed, CAS would likely need to start charging clients above and beyond the project expenses to support its structure. When asked if they would be willing to pay \$300 a day for the VAs, plus the project expenses, 60% of the clients interviewed said no, 36% said yes, while 4% were uncertain. The large proportion of negative responses seems to indicate that cost recovery beyond project expenses could compromise CAS's ability to sustain itself.

It appears that the time has not yet come to cut CAS funding, since the services provided are needed by First Nations, who seem satisfied with those services. However there are areas of duplication and augmentation of other service providers. Since some clients seem to lack information about those services, it would appear helpful to develop a means of making all the information about the various services available in one place, such as a Web Site.

Section 4 - Conclusions & Recommendations

Introduction

On the whole, CAS provides valued volunteer advisory services to Aboriginal people across the country. Volunteers have a broad range of expertise and clients generally report a high level of satisfaction with both the VAs and the program. There is good evidence that project objectives are generally met, that clients consider their projects a success and that those projects generate a number of benefits to communities, without adverse impacts.

While CAS has made significant efforts to increase the relevance of the program and to improve its service delivery, there are still a number of evolutionary changes that it needs to address, especially as First Nations' needs and departmental objectives are changing. Alternative service providers have recently emerged and are developing. Resources are increasingly hard to come by. The department must also continuously rationalize and challenge its own expenditures in relation to both public and First Nations accountabilities. Therefore, the continuance of funding for CAS is not assured.

Assuming that funds are available for CAS in the coming fiscal year, the following recommendations are made to ensure achievement of First Nations' and departmental objectives to strengthen accountability and cost-effectiveness and to monitor the development and use of alternative service providers.

Relevance and Achievement of Aboriginal Peoples' and Departmental Objectives

The activities of CAS, because of their focus on capacity-building and economic development, are in principle generally consistent with the department's objectives as described in the *Framework for Action*, 1997. However, as the department works with First Nations to accelerate the pace of change and to promote self-government objectives, priorities for policies and services may be reviewed, adjusted and updated, e.g., as expressed in the 1998 report, *Gathering Strength* and the 1996 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* Report to which it responds.

Past contribution agreements did not refer to specific objectives to be achieved through projects, and requirements were based on fulfilling a predetermined number of assignments. While no new funding is available for CAS activities, there is potential for DIAND's funds to be better allocated through targeting specific departmental objectives, such as focussing on projects that offer advisory and mentoring roles with respect to building capacity in business and economic development.

In 1993, the Canadian Native Program (CNP) Task Force arrived at several recommendations, aimed at increasing the relevance of the program to Aboriginal people. Those recommendations were implemented overall successfully; new linkages and agreements were built with Aboriginal organizations, client groups and sponsors, and Aboriginal representation was increased both at the staff level and at the Board level. However, this evaluation identified the low acceptance of CAS as an Aboriginal organization as a weakness, even though the majority of clients interviewed consider CAS to be relevant to the needs of First Nations.

The VAs are mostly retired non-Aboriginals individuals, and are the face of CAS for its clients. In addition to low acceptance of CAS as an Aboriginal organization, there is some concern that the knowledge base of retirees may not always be relevant or suited to achievement of Aboriginal goals. Retired Aboriginal people with business experience are few in number and those whom would qualify to become volunteer advisors may not be aware of CAS. It is incumbent on CAS/CESO to undertake steps to identify potential candidates for their roster of VAs.

On the other hand, most DIAND and CAS respondents felt the changes brought by the creation of CAS, with a separate corporate identity, has lent much credibility to the organization. They also described CAS's services as more relevant to First Nations needs than were the former CNP's services. However, some Aboriginal Board members and staff do not feel that Aboriginals have sufficient control over the Aboriginal Services Program, since the CAS board is a minority within the CESO board.

As a number of people have pointed out over the course of the study, the CAS arrangement to provide low-cost advice by experienced retired executives is not a service with readily available substitutes, and CAS services are frequently used. If recommended changes are pursued, CAS may increase program relevance and effectiveness, as well as representation and support of the program amongst Aboriginal people.

Given that:

- there is a need to ensure that future assignments reflect clearly stated objectives in line with DIAND's priorities on economic development and capacity building;
- this study has found that it is critical to increase Aboriginal participation into CAS, including the number of Aboriginal volunteers;
- the department, as outlined in the *Gathering Strength* Action Plan, is committed to building new partnerships, it is recommended that

Recommendation

1. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, work with the CAS to continue efforts to increase Aboriginal representation and partnerships and to ensure that contribution agreements establish clear objectives and desired results consistent with departmental priorities on economic development and business related capacity building, in support of *Gathering Strength*.

Communications

Part of the difficulty in assuring that projects are relevant to Aboriginal people and DIAND needs appears to be related to a need for stronger communication links. Both DIAND and CAS have experienced organizational changes affecting liaison in the past two years. DIAND has recently created a new branch to deal with economic programs which will cover CAS support. Accordingly, it is recommended that:

Recommendation

2. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, be identified as the primary contact for liaison and communication with the Executives of CAS and CESO and provide for regular information exchange.

Accountability

Accountability has been reviewed from two perspectives. The first aspect is defined as reporting on program objectives and result. The second component encompasses reporting on financial information and ensuring cost-effectiveness. Both perspectives were explored and lead to recommendations aimed at strengthening accountability.

Reporting requirements on program objectives and results, as defined in the agreement between DIAND and CAS, specify that project statistics and a summary of the results identified in project evaluations have to be provided to DIAND quarterly. While this information has been provided, the project files that should support this reporting are not necessarily of consistent quality across regions. Records are in some cases either missing or superficial, and the evaluations seem in some cases to be misunderstood or neglected. In terms of management regime, there is in some instances a lack of clarity in project identification, needs assessment, matching of consultant to community, follow-up, on-going communications and much diversity among regions in how the service is offered and administered. In addition, although CAS supplies clients with evaluation forms on services rendered, few evaluations are completed by clients for the project files.

Part of the reporting style may be explained by past contribution agreements which did not refer to specific objectives to be achieved through projects and requirements were based on fulfilling a predetermined number of assignments. Furthermore, while the funding requirements do not identify that CAS maintain a reporting relationship with clients, as is done with DIAND, there is potential for CAS to report in greater detail to Aboriginal clients and organizations on their program results. As a tool to be used by CAS and clients it would be beneficial to ensure that clients consistently offer feedback to CAS on the services received.

Future agreements between DIAND and CAS should strengthen the reporting position of CAS by targeting specific departmental objectives, by prioritizing initiatives which respect capacity building in economic development, and by focussing on business development projects that utilize strengthened mentoring services offered by CAS. It is therefore recommended that:

Recommendation

3. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, and CAS work together to develop guidelines for an accountability regime with respect to reporting, in order to improve and renew program planning, monitoring and evaluation of results.

With respect to the second aspect of accountability, i.e. reporting on financial information and ensuring cost-effectiveness, reporting criteria within the agreement also necessitate financial performance information on budget classes and expenditures. Quarterly and annual reports by CAS are submitted expediently. While financial information is provided, the information to support the expenditures on projects by the program are not part of the reporting process. In addition, annual statements are provided in a consolidated statement, which is not sufficiently detailed to make specific information on DIAND funded activities readily available.

CAS is seen in this study to have increased cost-effectiveness over the past four years. A larger proportion of the overall budget is allocated to regional offices, where service delivery takes place. In 1996-1997, CAS received 25% of its revenues from sponsors and clients, up from 11% in 1993-1994. The proportion of revenues coming from clients and sponsors vary across regions. Clients are asked, when able, to cover some or all of the direct project expenses, although in most cases the client's ability to pay is self declaratory. It is not clear whether substantial additional funding from clients and sponsors could be readily found.

With regard to the management of funds, there have been occasional complaints to the department about financial inefficiencies which were not covered in the scope of this study. However, through this evaluation, no indication that would support those complaints was found.

All government funded organizations are being challenged to account for performance on a financial and cost-effectiveness basis and in that light it is recommended that:

Recommendation

4. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, and CAS work together to put in place a review of cost-effectiveness which will identify opportunities to achieve program savings and to ensure that contribution agreements provide for a separate statement of accounting of DIAND funded activities.

Coordination with other Aboriginal Economic Development Stakeholders

In keeping with the *Gathering Strength* Action Plan emphasis on partnerships, DIAND seeks opportunities to improve responses to Aboriginal people's needs and to enhance partnerships between service delivery organizations/governments and Aboriginal communities.

It is not clear that CESO regional offices are well linked to other program delivery mechanisms such as CEDO's, Aboriginal Business Canada, Council for Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO), Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), Tribal Councils and other service delivery organizations. Accordingly, it is likely that stronger relationships with other organizations playing key roles in Aboriginal economic development will add to the effectiveness of CAS. Acknowledging that DIAND is in a position to recognize the roles of Aboriginal economic development stakeholders such as other federal departments, Aboriginal Capital Corporations, Aboriginal organizations (CANDO, CCAB) and provincial governments, as well as roles internal to DIAND, it is recommended that:

Recommendation

5. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, work with CAS to develop the appropriate linkages so that their program delivery mechanism is linked to DIAND's and to the overall federal programming and resources at the regional level and is well positioned to develop partnerships.

The following is an excerpt from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' Report relating to economic development needs of Aboriginal people.

RCAP..... “Economic Development”

“Aboriginal people must have the tools to escape from the poverty that cripples them as individuals and as nations. Redistributing lands and resources will greatly improve their chances for jobs and a reasonable income. After that, the tools most urgently needed are capital for investment in business and industry and enhanced technical, management and professional skills to realize new opportunities.

Hand in hand with improved economic conditions must come improved living conditions. We propose a major initiative to bring housing, water supplies and sanitation facilities up to standards that will reduce threats to health and help restore self-respect and initiative.”

Accelerating development of human resources

- *“Activities of self-government, healing, community infrastructure development, and commercial enterprise will need many more trained people than are now available. Changes in the education system can generate better high school completion rates among Aboriginal students.”*
- *“We also propose a 10-year initiative to overcome education and training deficits by involving private companies, training institutions and governments in programs to encourage Aboriginal people to develop skills in a full range of technical, commercial and professional fields.”*

Institution building

- *“Most of the institutions governing Aboriginal life today originate outside Aboriginal communities. For the most part, they operate according to rules that fail to reflect Aboriginal values and preferences. In every sector of public life, there is a need to make way for Aboriginal institutions. Development of many of these institutions should proceed before self-governing nations emerge, but they should be designed to complement, not compete with, nation structures.”*

RCAP..... “Capacity Building”

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples defines, “capacity building” as a transitional strategy toward Aboriginal self-government. This transition includes rebuilding Aboriginal nations and reclaiming nationhood, setting up Aboriginal governments, negotiating new relationships and intergovernmental arrangements with the two other orders of government, exercising long-term Aboriginal governmental powers and supporting the building of these capacities (Section 4.2, Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples)¹.

In reference to self-government, capacity building includes the capacity to “*determine the form, key features and dimensions of their governments, to plan and design structures, institutions and procedures, to determine the scope of operations ...and to define the extent to which traditional forms of political organization will be incorporated or adapted in new or restored Aboriginal governments*” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Section 4)².

Capacity building involves developing the necessary human resources to achieve the goal of self-government. According to the findings of the Royal commission, “*Resources consist of the physical means of acting - not only financial, economic and natural resources for security and future growth, but information technology as well as human resources in the form of skilled and healthy people*”³ Section 2.3.35 of the Royal Commission Report recommends that an “*Aboriginal Transition Centre*” *be developed “to promote, coordinate and fund, as appropriate, in collaboration with associated institutions and organizations, the following types of initiatives: a) special training programs for Aboriginal negotiators to increase their negotiating skills and their knowledge of issues that will be addressed through negotiations; and b) training programs of short duration for Aboriginal government leaders to enhance Aboriginal capacities in negotiation and to increase the capacity of Aboriginal leaders to support and mandate negotiators and negotiation activities, as well as nation-level education, consultation and communication strategies”* (Recommendation 2.3.35 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples)⁴.

¹ Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Volume 1-5, and Summary of Recommendations, 1996.

² Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Final Report, Volume 2 - Restructuring the Relationship, Part 1, Section 4.2 Capacity Building: Aboriginal Strategies for Transition to Self-Government, 1996.

³ Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Final Report, Volume 2 - Restructuring the Relationship, Part 1, Section 3.22.1 - An Overview, 1996.

⁴ Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Final Report, Volume 2 - Restructuring the Relationship, Part 2, Appendix A, Summary of Recommendations in Volumes 1 and 2, Recommendation 2.3.35, 1996.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of The Canadian Executive Services Organization: CESO Aboriginal Services

Purpose: To assess the effectiveness of the recent change in approach and the future relevance of CESO Aboriginal Services.

Background: CESO is a non-profit, non-governmental organization whose mission is “to promote and extend the economic and social growth and well-being of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada and of the peoples of developing nations and emerging market economies.” It provides volunteers as consultants to support the development and management of Aboriginal businesses and communities in Canada through its Aboriginal Services (formerly the Canadian Native) Program, and of the business and social sectors of developing countries around the world through its International Services Program. Funding is provided by the federal government, by corporate and individual donations, by clients, and to a limited degree by provincial and territorial governments. In 1996-1997, DIAND allocated about \$1.5M to CESO with the understanding that an evaluation be completed in this fiscal year to help identify issues and strategic implications for the future of the Aboriginal Service Program.

Both DIAND and CESO have been experiencing dramatic changes in recent years. The department has accelerated its devolution to First Nations, and its priorities have been refocused to facilitate the transition to self-government. This is occurring in a period of major economic and structural change and more stringent performance accountability which could have significant implications for the department’s future relationship with CESO. CESO has also been changing its focus and structure, and is interested in an objective review of its continuing relevance, effectiveness and options. CESO restructured its Canadian Native Program to become an Aboriginal organization which would be more relevant to Aboriginal needs, and to this end, its Board of Directors is now primarily Aboriginal. There is limited performance information available on the Aboriginal Program, although CESO is working to have all projects evaluated on completion. About 1000 assignments were completed by the Aboriginal Services Program last year averaging 5-7 days in length.

Issues: Are departmental and program objectives being achieved? Are they still relevant? Are they congruent with First Nations aspirations? Are there unmet needs? Are the target groups appropriate?

How effective is the program? Are results clear and recorded? How satisfied are clients with the services? What are the impacts, both intended and unintended?

Is the program working in a cost effective manner? Are there any unrealized sources of revenue?

Are there alternatives to continue DIAND funding of the CESO Aboriginal Services Program?

Scope: The evaluation will review all activities of the CESO Aboriginal Services Program and will consider strategic and funding alternatives.

Approach: The evaluation will be conducted under the direction of DAEB in close consultation at all stages with an Advisory Committee composed of representatives of the department, the management of CESO, the Board of Directors and CESO clientele. The evaluation will be conducted primarily by consultants managed by DAEB, and reports and recommendations will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee before submission to the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee. The approach will follow multiple lines of evidence, such as a document review, interviews with stakeholders, identification of possible alternative models, and focus groups or a workshop which would include stakeholders to review implications and options.

Timeframe: Planning for the evaluation began in September 1996 and the study will be completed by March 31, 1997.

Cost: The evaluation will cost \$65K to which the program will contribute \$30K.

Approved by:

J. Stagg
Assistant Deputy Minister
Policy and Strategic Direction
October 23, 1996

ACTION PLAN

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VÉRIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

REQUEST FOR ACTION PLAN / DEMANDE DE PLAN D'ACTION

PROJECT / PROJET :96/25
DATE SENT / DATE D'ENVOI :
DATE DUE / ÉCHÉANCE :

PAGE : 1 OF / DE : 3

PROJECT TITLE / TITRE DU PROJET: Evaluation of CESO Aboriginal Services - Summary Report
REGION OR BRANCH / RÉGION OU DIRECTION GÉNÉRALE: Economic Policies and Programs Branch

(1) RECOMMENDATIONS / RECOMMANDATIONS	(2) REPORT / RAPPORT PAGE NO.	(3) ACTION PLAN / PLAN D'ACTION (If space provided is insufficient please continue on blank sheet. / Si vous manquez d'espace, veuillez continuer sur une page blanche.)	(4) RESPONSIBLE MANAGER / GESTIONNAIRE RESPONSABLE (TITLE / TITRE)	(5) PLANNED COMPLETION DATE / DATE PRÉVUE DE MISE EN OEUVRE
<p>1. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, work with the CAS to continue efforts to increase Aboriginal representation and partnerships and to ensure that contribution agreements establish clear objectives and desired results consistent with departmental priorities on economic development and business related capacity building, in support of <i>Gathering Strength</i>.</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>Economic Policies and Programs and CAS will identify and work toward developing potential partnerships which can benefit CAS and Aboriginal economic development. As an example, broadened partnerships for mentoring initiatives may be identified as a mode to strengthen Aboriginal economic development, an area which CAS can readily participate.</p> <p>Economic Policies and Programs and CAS will establish a new fiscal agreement which clearly identifies objectives and results. Economic Policy and Programs will use the Gathering Strength Implementation framework to guide and effect these changes.</p>	<p>Director General, Economic Policies and Programs aided by the Economic Policy Program Manager</p> <p>Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, aided by Economic Policy Program Director/ Manager</p>	<p>March 31, 1999</p> <p>September 30, 1998</p>
<p>2. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, be identified as the primary contact for liaison and communications with the executives of CAS and CESO and to provide for regular information exchange.</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, will be the ex-officio board member on behalf of DIAND. On a quarterly basis, the Director General will liaise on DIAND economic objectives, initiatives and results in order to keep CAS apprised of DIAND activity.</p>	<p>Director General, Economic Policies and Programs</p>	<p>September 30, 1998</p>

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VÉRIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

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3. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, and CAS work together to develop guidelines for an accountability regime with respect to reporting, in order to improve and renew program planning, monitoring and evaluation of results.	16	Economic Policies and Programs and CAS will work together, and build into its fiscal agreement, new guidelines for accountability which reflect new program objectives such as economic and sectoral business development objectives. In addition, Economic Policy and Programs and CAS will work together to ensure monitoring and evaluation of results play a more prominent role in CAS operations and that measurement tools reflect new program objectives and reporting needs. Objectives and results will be reviewed on a yearly basis.	Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, aided by Economic Policy Program Director/ Manager	September 30, 1998
4. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, and CAS work together to put in place a review of cost-effectiveness which will identify opportunities to achieve program savings and to ensure that contribution agreements provide for a separate statement of accounting of DIAND funded activities.	17	Economic Policies and Programs and CAS will review operational program expenses and identify areas and ways where savings can be achieved without adverse effect to service delivery. In addition, Economic Policies and Programs and CAS will ensure that DIAND funded activities are more clearly demonstrated in reporting documents. Objectives to be fulfilled will include an implementation plan.	Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, aided by Economic Policy Program Director/ Manager	March 31, 1999

AUDIT AND EVALUATION / VÉRIFICATION INTERNE ET ÉVALUATION

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5. The Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, work with CAS to develop the appropriate linkages so that their program delivery mechanism is linked to DIAND and to overall federal programming resources at the regional level and is well positioned to develop partnerships.	17	Economic Policies and Programs will work with CAS to better promote their services within DIAND and to other federal programs. Economic Policy and Programs will help CAS to be more identifiable with other federal programs and to identify those programs with which CAS has potential to become partners. Examples of partnership building may include relationships with proponents such as: Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, Canadian Aboriginal Business and Trade, and Aboriginal Business Service Centres.	Director General, Economic Policies and Programs, aided by Economic Policy Program Director/ Manager	March 31, 1999