

Evaluation Strategy 2005-2010

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	OVERVIEW	1
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Corporate Roles	2
1.3	Background to the Strategy.....	3
1.4	The external review and the proposed strategy.....	5
2.	THE CENTRE’S CORPORATE STRATEGY AND THE EVALUATION STRATEGY	6
3.	GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF IDRC’S EVALUATION UNIT.....	7
4.	EVALUATION STRATEGY 2005-2010: THE APPROACH.....	9
5.	INTENDED RESULTS	9
	Vision.....	9
	Mission	9
6.	STRATEGIES.....	10
6.1	Conducting and disseminating strategic evaluations	11
6.2	Carrying out capacity development in evaluation and evaluative thinking	11
6.3	Engaging in methodology development and tools for evaluation research and evaluation.....	13
6.4	Developing and implementing organizational learning processes.....	13
6.5	Partnerships.....	15
7.	RESOURCES.....	16
7.1	Human Resources	16
7.2	Financial Resources	17
7.3	Level of effort and priority setting.....	17
7.4	Work planning, Review and Reflection.....	18
	ANNEX I: ACRONYMS	1
	ANNEX II: OVERVIEW OF THE IDRC EVALUATION SYSTEM	3
	ANNEX III: IDRC PROGRAMMING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EU STAFF.....	5
	ANNEX IV: AN INDICATIVE LIST OF DELIVERABLES	9
	ANNEX V: PARTICIPANTS IN THE EVALUATION STRATEGY CONSULTATION	11

[A]n institution that takes risks must also learn about what works (or not) and why (or why not). IDRC recognizes that evaluation makes an essential contribution to learning and acquiring knowledge about effective approaches to research for development. The Centre will approach evaluation as a tool for both learning and accountability. IDRC will use – and help develop – the best available monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure that it remains on track with respect to its plans and budgets. It will also maintain a critical perspective on the relevance of its plans, and propose changes to them as circumstances change.¹

1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

IDRC's approach to evaluation mirrors the Centre's approach to development research programming. As such, in the evaluation of IDRC-supported research, we are concerned about rigour and validity in our approach to evaluation; we adopt an action-oriented approach to contribute to evidence-based decision making and practice; we focus on ownership of and participation in evaluation by our constituencies; and we prioritize capacity building in evaluation as central to the long term integration of evaluation into building a more effective development research community. We see evaluation as a central contribution of people effectively participating in knowledge processes.

To achieve these goals, over the past few years, the Evaluation Unit has focused on strengthening a culture of *evaluative thinking* in the Centre. This moves the view of evaluation from the study of projects and programs to evaluation as an analytical way of thinking that infuses and informs everything we do. As defined in the Centre's Corporate Assessment Framework (CAF), evaluative thinking is "being clear and specific about what results are being sought and what means are used to achieve them." It assures the systematic use of evidence to guide and/or report on progress and achievements so that information is used in decision making. This strategy, therefore, addresses not only what the Evaluation Unit will be doing, but also how it will work to build evaluation into the Centre's mode of operating at all levels. Annex IV summarizes the deliverables mentioned throughout the report.

¹ IDRC Corporate Strategy 2005-2010, p.18.

1.2 Corporate Roles

A distinctive feature of evaluation at IDRC is that evaluation has always played a dual role. It plays the traditional evaluation role in risk management for the Centre, and it plays a research and development role. A third role that has emerged over the past several years is a role in organizational learning and development. This role relates to the development of evaluative thinking as a core process within IDRC.

1. Management of Public Funds

In its role as part of agency protection for the Centre, the Evaluation Unit contributes to risk management through knowledge generation and sharing about Centre performance. There is an increasing demand for demonstrating accountability in the federal system in Canada. While the requirements may be different in an independent Crown Corporation, the Centre is not immune to these demands and expectations. Evaluation plays a role in accountability and in performance management, together with other parts of the Centre, notably Audit, Finance and Programs and Partnership Branch. The intent is to improve innovation and use around new discoveries and process improvements that will contribute to risk management and the appropriate management of public funds. The Centre's Operational Framework reflects key issues in this regard and indicates key areas of focus for the next 18 to 24 months.

2. Evaluation Research

In the field of development research and evaluation, the Evaluation Unit seeks to fill gaps in the tools and methods which exist to meet the evaluation needs of our partners, IDRC staff and Centre management. Traditional evaluation tools are incomplete in meeting the needs of the development research community. The development of new tools and methods has contributed to the Centre's reputation as well as to our ability to carry out effective evaluation. It has also significantly improved the ability of our partners to use evaluation as a device to inform their own work.

3. Organizational Learning and Development

As a tool for learning and management decision, evaluation is a shared responsibility in the Centre. This means that different actors are responsible for various elements of the evaluation system. In order to create the potential for reflection, the Unit is active in strengthening the data systems, creating learning processes, and supporting the development of a learning culture across the Centre.

The Evaluation Unit's primary concern is for the Centre to be able to articulate and demonstrate the results of its development research interventions. Each of the three roles outlined above plays a part in strengthening that capacity. In the

management of public funds and accountability, we will focus on the effectiveness of the Centre's use of resources. The Unit's responsibilities vis-à-vis the Operational Framework are integrated as appropriate across our strategies in Section 6 of this document. In evaluation research, there is an ongoing need for the development and refinement of tools and methods to assess results. Finally, in organizational learning and development, through demonstrating and learning from the results of past efforts, the Centre can improve both how it works and what it does in the future. Together these elements contribute to improved demonstration of results while at the same time offering guidance and insights for ongoing improvements.

1.3 Background to the Strategy

This document will outline how the Unit intends to respond to the current accountability-driven environment over the next five years. We must take into consideration that over a period of five years, some significant changes may well take place either in the socio-political environment in Canada, or in the countries in which the Centre is working. These changes can have a significant influence, not only on how we do our work, but how our priorities evolve. This strategy is developed with the assumption that changes will take place. Their scale and scope are unknown but we will revisit the strategy on a regular basis over the course of its implementation. We will review it with our partners in the field, with the Centre and periodically with outside experts and propose any needed adjustments to Centre management.

Our proposed strategy maintains significant continuity with our 2000-2005 Strategy, but it also evolves to take account of growth and change in the evaluation field and in the Centre. We have continued to use Outcome Mapping as the organizing principle for our strategy. Readers will note some evolution in our use of Outcome Mapping over the past five years, but essential elements remain unchanged, notably the focus on changes in behaviour and actions as the end state we are seeking. Continuity is largely maintained in the principles which guide our work, with one significant change: the focus on evaluative thinking is reflected in the principles which are now expressed above the level of formal evaluation to take into account the integration of evaluative thinking in how the Centre operates. We have maintained a strong use orientation: evaluation needs to be both useful and used in support of improving Centre-supported research. Working with IDRC partners in the South, IDRC staff and management remain important, as does work in strategic evaluation, capacity building, tools and methods as well as knowledge for organizational learning.

There is recognition in this strategy that the communication and dissemination of evaluation require more attention. While the Centre and the Unit have always placed considerable emphasis on carrying out evaluations which have a specific use identified, the successes we have seen over the past five years in the use of evaluation have been in cases where a range of communication and dissemination

tools have been employed. Continued expansion of effort in this direction should yield positive results. This implies that more resources have to be allocated to these efforts. In the past they have often been seen as “add-ons” which are inserted into a full schedule. In future we need to ensure time and money are allocated for these efforts more persistently. This is consistent with strengthening the use of evaluation and evaluative thinking.

We have identified three types of partnership in which the Unit will engage over the next five years. These build on work we have done over the past several years. As outlined in section 6 below, we will build partnerships in support of Centre priorities with like-minded agencies; we will partner to maintain our presence and leadership in the evaluation community; and we will partner with Centre programs on resource generating activities through the provision of evaluation supports and services to externally funded activities. Building partnerships and collaboration inside the Centre (*inter alia* policy and planning, communications) are central to these intentions. As highlighted above, our approach to information systems has evolved to a focus on organizational learning, where data systems and knowledge and exchange processes are combined to enhance the learning from evaluation taking place Centre-wide. The relationship with external partners has been redefined to one of strategic partnership. This is outlined in more detail in section 6.5, but essentially refers to those individuals or groups with which the Unit may need to work with to achieve its objectives, but with whom it is not necessarily seeking changes in actions or behaviours.

Finally, in terms of resources and relationships to programs, the Unit has modestly expanded core resources with the addition of a junior Evaluation Officer and a half-person year in a Regional Office. This latter appointment introduces a formal regional component to the Unit for the first time and this will significantly enhance our ability to support staff and partners in the field. In relating to Programs, the Unit has identified direct relationships with RDs, DPAs and PIs. In so doing, we have maintained a strength of the evaluation function at IDRC: that we transfer ideas from one program area to another. We have achieved this by maintaining involvement across program areas for each staff member of the Unit.

This strategy was developed through several mechanisms. Informal consultations of Unit staff with other parts of IDRC and with partners were a significant element. For the first time, we also requested an external review of Unit performance. The review was carried out by Dr Arnold Love who is a specialist in internal evaluation systems. The evaluation included both desk review and fieldwork. An important element of the development process was a one-day meeting with a group of experts who were selected to represent evaluation expertise, development and development research expertise, and experience in running evaluation units in agencies. Centre participation was key to this meeting through the involvement of the President, the Directors of Program Areas and the Policy and Planning Group. Annex V lists participants at this meeting. A number

of changes were incorporated into the strategy from these consultations as well as the external review of the Unit.

1.4 The external review and the proposed strategy

The external review conducted by Dr Arnold Love was an important input into the refinement of this strategy. It confirmed the effectiveness of the principles underpinning

the approach and strategies of the Unit. We have maintained and built on these features in this proposed strategy. Notable among these features are the use and user orientation of the Centre's approach to evaluation; the maintenance of an evaluation research program in support of building evaluation quality and evaluation capacity; the dual focus on learning and accountability and our responsiveness and promotion of a evaluation processes tailored to the special needs of the Centre's varied programs.

A number of observations and conclusions highlighted by the reviewer are reflected throughout this strategy but a few require specific comment here.

- His several observations and concerns regarding the high volume of demand on the Unit both from Centre staff and partners, and their concerns about the Unit's continued abilities to meet those demands are an ongoing issue for the Unit. These factors are reflected in the evolution of our capacity building strategies – building nodes of evaluation expertise in the regions and strengthening our work with Centre staff. The commitment of the Centre to evaluative thinking is reflected in the addition of a junior Evaluation Officer position as well as .5 FTE in a regional office. The Unit will continue to expand its repertoire of approaches to capacity building, identifying opportunities to support both staff and researchers that build on our development of nodes of evaluation expertise.
- In suggesting a deepening of the decentralization of the evaluation function, Dr Love has touched on an issue of importance. The degree of success in decentralization is reflected in the abilities of Centre programs to engage in evaluative thinking. This goal is behind the strategies and activities highlighted in the Capacity Building section below (6.2).
- In highlighting the importance of a research results orientation, Dr Love has addressed an important issue. As he notes, “managers need evidence of research results to defend IDRC”. We will deal with this in a number of different ways, some of them involving other parts of the Centre. The Unit is working increasingly closely with the Policy and Planning Group and the Communications Division to disseminate the relevant findings from strategic evaluations and project reports. A second area of work to support the presentation of results is improvements in the availability and integrity of data on research results within the Centre. For example, the changes in project reporting that have been highlighted over the past eighteen months (the “Rolling Project Completion Reporting” system) call

for some changes in how the Centre collects and stores information on the outputs, outcomes and results of projects. In addition to the Evaluation Unit, the design and implementation of these systems will involve Programs and Partnership Branch and Resources Branch. Success in this process is key to the success of the new project reporting system and to the use of the data for learning as well as accountability purposes.

- The reviewer's observation that the dissemination of Outcome Mapping and other tools was not strategically planned from the outset is correct. This resulted from the very rapid uptake of Outcome Mapping and immediate high demands that stretched the resources of the Unit. We managed these demands by developing a cadre of experienced outcome mapping experts and a rich set of electronic and print materials fully accessible on our website and a CD. This incremental approach has had both methodological and reputational benefits for the Centre. At this stage however, we are becoming more strategic in our dissemination plan for tools and methods.
- The reviewer notes a concern raised by Secretariats that they had not received as much support as they would have liked in their evaluation work. This resulted in part from the operational distinctions between Secretariats (which respond to multiple donors) and Program Initiatives (which may have some external funds but which respond directly to the Centre). The changes being implemented to bring the remaining Secretariats closer to the Centre's other programming will largely resolve this issue, however it is likely that some Secretariats may retain some operational distinctions. The level of evaluation support to Secretariats will be treated on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the relevant Secretariat and Program Area of the Centre.

2. The Centre's Corporate Strategy and the Evaluation Strategy

IDRC's Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010 is the Centre's strategic plan examining the environmental drivers underlying the Centre's work and the foundations for its work, its legislative mandate and purpose, its values and fundamental beliefs, its guiding principles, and its strategic objectives.² As such, it is the guiding document that governs what is contained in the evaluation strategy. The quote from this document that introduces our strategy highlights the central importance IDRC attaches to the role of evaluation.

The Evaluation Unit will continue supporting the Centre in its efforts to demonstrate the Centre's effectiveness in achieving its stated goals of:

- Mobilizing local research capacity of developing countries;
- Fostering and supporting the production, dissemination and application of research results that lead to changed practices, technologies, policies and

² IDRC Corporate Strategy 2005-2010, p.3.

laws that promote sustainable and equitable development and poverty reduction; and

- Reinforcing, funding and participating in partnerships between Canadian institutions and institutions in the developing world.³

Capacity building remains a central focus of the Centre's work with individuals and institutions in the South. The same holds true in evaluation. As noted in the Corporate Strategy, "the Centre will direct efforts to strengthen the evaluation capacity of recipient institutions and individuals and of IDRC staff to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency of research projects, programs and processes, and internal governance and administrative procedures".⁴

3. Guiding Principles of IDRC's Evaluation Unit

Evaluation is both science and art. The art of identifying critical issues to be evaluated, organizing them conceptually, and bringing the appropriate people to participate in the collection, interpretation, and utilization of the evaluation findings is as important as the systematic collection and analysis of reliable data.

The guiding principles articulated below are consistent with the principles outlined in our previous Evaluation Unit Strategy, 2000-2005. The key evolution reflects the importance the Centre attaches to broader processes of evaluative thinking, not only the value in formal evaluation processes and documents.

Overall, the Centre's evaluation efforts should balance learning with accountability. In practice, accountability tends to look for and report on results and the resources consumed to achieve those, while learning tends to look more closely at the "why" and "how" of success and failure. The purpose of an evaluation should be clear and the process transparent.

In light of this, the Evaluation Unit follows a Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE) approach to its work. This approach does not advocate any particular evaluation content, model, method, theory, or even use. Rather, it helps primary intended users select the most appropriate content, model, methods, theory, and uses for their particular situation. As no evaluation can be value-free, utilization-focused evaluation answers the question of whose values will frame the evaluation by working with clearly identified primary intended users who have responsibility to apply evaluation findings and implement recommendations. Evaluations, therefore, provide opportunities for project or program stakeholders to reconcile their various perspectives and/or visions of reality.⁵

³ *ibid*, p.16.

⁴ *ibid*, p.18.

⁵ Michael Quinn Patton. *Utilization-Focused Evaluation : The New Century Text*, London: Sage, 1997.

The following principles guide the work of the Evaluation Unit:

- **Evaluations should enlist the participation of relevant users.** To be useful, evaluations need to produce relevant, action-oriented findings and this is fostered by sustained involvement and ownership by the client and users throughout the process.
- **Evaluation processes should develop capacity in evaluative thinking and evaluation use.** Be it IDRC managers, program staff, or project partners, evaluation should increase participants' capacities and comfort with evaluation.
Exclusive reliance on external expertise can limit an organization's ability to be clear and specific about its goals and to learn and apply lessons. Specific strategies can be built into evaluations that are explicitly aimed at fostering these organizational characteristics.
- **Evaluative thinking adds value from the outset of a project or program.** Evaluative thinking can make a project or program more effective by helping clarify the results to be achieved, the strategies that will contribute to their achievement, and the milestones that will demonstrate progress. This is true from design through implementation.
- **Evaluation should meet standards for ethical research and evaluation quality.** In order to ensure the validity of the evaluation findings, accepted social science research methods and procedures should be followed. The quality of evaluations are assessed against four internationally accepted standards: utility, feasibility, accuracy, and propriety.
- **The decision to evaluate should be strategic not routine.** Evaluation is designed to lead to action and can contribute to decision-making and strategy formulation at all levels. To aim evaluations at providing useful findings, the Centre is selective in determining what issues, projects and programs are to be assessed at what time.
- **Evaluation should be an asset for those being evaluated.** Evaluation can impose a considerable time and resource burden on partner organizations and their participation should not be taken for granted. They should benefit from the process and should have control over the evaluation agenda when they are the intended users.

4. Evaluation Strategy 2005-2010: The Approach

The Evaluation Unit has defined its strategy using Outcome Mapping. Outcome Mapping is an approach to think systemically about how a program intends to advance its goals. It is based on the definition of vision and mission statements and outcome challenge statements against which progress can be measured. It includes an indication of “organizational practices” (how the Unit will actually operate) that the Unit will follow in meeting its goals, as well as an outline of the specific strategies that will guide the identification of activities. Outcome Mapping requires a focus on the individuals or organizations with which one interacts directly, and assesses contributions to changes in their behaviours, relationships, or activities that the Evaluation Unit has helped to bring about.

5. Intended Results

Vision	Mission
<i>Useful evaluation that promotes innovation and social change</i>	<i>In realization of this vision, and in support of the Centre’s mandate, the Evaluation Unit promotes methodology development and processes of evaluative thinking that balance the opportunity for learning with the needs of accountability. Following its guiding principles, the EU works with IDRC partners in the field, IDRC program staff and IDRC managers, to strengthen the use, influence and quality of evaluation by engaging in four areas:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>1. Strategic evaluations;</i><i>2. Capacity development;</i><i>3. Tools and methods development and use; and</i><i>4. Organizational learning processes.</i>

In Outcome Mapping, *Outcome Challenges* describe how the behaviours, relationships, activities or actions of an individual, group or institution will change if the Evaluation Unit is extremely successful. They are, therefore, defined for each *Boundary Partner*, or group with whom we seek to promote change.

Outcome Challenge: IDRC Partners

IDRC Partners promote and include utilization-focused evaluation in their projects, programs and organizations to influence research for development activities, innovation and social change. These IDRC partners actively engage in opportunities to strengthen their ability to think evaluatively and to improve their understanding and use of monitoring and

evaluation processes for their own needs. They engage in and support high quality evaluation and are recognized as regional experts and provide mentoring, training and technical advice to others.

Outcome Challenge: IDRC Program Staff

IDRC Program Staff promote and include high quality utilization-focused evaluation in support of their programs and projects while also participating in corporate-level evaluation processes. They engage in opportunities to build their own monitoring and evaluation capacities and to systematically build the capacity of those with whom they work to think and act evaluatively in their work. IDRC Program Staff work collaboratively with the EU and with their Southern partners to develop innovative evaluation processes that respond to the needs of diverse programs.

Outcome Challenge: IDRC Senior Management

IDRC Senior Managers actively demonstrate stewardship of a culture of evaluative thinking by maintaining a balance between learning and accountability within the Centre. They are active and persistent in their engagement in corporate evaluation processes by requesting evaluations, by reinforcing the development of high quality evaluation work and using the findings in their ongoing management of IDRC.

6. Strategies

To achieve its mandate and influence the behaviour of its partners described above, the Evaluation Unit will employ a variety of strategies over the coming five years. These strategies will be directed at IDRC partner organizations, IDRC staff and IDRC senior management as well as the environment within which these individuals or groups work. They will entail working both directly with the boundary partners noted above as well as with strategic partners to further our objectives.

The strategies of the Evaluation Unit fall into four broad categories:

1. Conducting and disseminating strategic evaluations;
2. Carrying out capacity development in evaluation and evaluative thinking;
3. Engaging in methodology development and tools for evaluation research and evaluation; and
4. Developing and implementing organizational learning processes.

6.1 Conducting and disseminating strategic evaluations

Strategic evaluations are undertaken to broaden the Centre's understanding of issues of importance to staff, management and partners. These strategic evaluations will contribute to the Centre's corporate knowledge about the scope, characteristics and effectiveness of its support and inform the design, support and monitoring of future projects. The Evaluation Unit expects to undertake up to three new strategic evaluations in this period, focusing on issues raised through consultation with IDRC Program Staff and Senior Management.

A second, critical aspect of strategic evaluation is communication and dissemination. Experience from the last CSPF indicates that strategic evaluations are highly valued within the Centre and provide essential contributions to program planning and reflection. They also represent one of IDRC's contributions to the broader development community about what works in development research and why. In the first year of this proposed strategy, no new strategic evaluations will be initiated. Rather, the Unit will focus its energy and resources on dissemination and communication of the studies currently underway on: 1) IDRC networks, 2) capacity building, and 3) to some extent, continued dissemination of the policy study. Strengthening our efforts in this regard will include working with the Communications Division on communication strategies and with Policy and Planning on policy implications from strategic evaluations.

6.2 Carrying out capacity development in evaluation and evaluative thinking

Capacity building in evaluation and evaluative thinking will continue to be a core focus of the Evaluation Unit. The strategy over the next five years has three key components:

6.2.1 Capacity building within the Centre

Over the past ten years, the Unit has focused on responding to project needs brought by staff to the Unit. The focus over the next five years will be on strengthening staff capacity to integrate evaluation into their core activities with projects. This implies more effort spent on a range of capacity building activities with staff, including some training events in methods (*inter alia* Outcome Mapping, Organizational Assessment, participatory evaluation), mentoring, problem solving, bringing provocative speakers to the Centre on evaluation issues, continuing to expand resources available through our website, providing additional guidelines on evaluation, secondments to the Unit, etc. Building capacity in the Centre also includes capacity building in evaluation-related skills such as facilitation and consensus training, research methods, and collaboration.

In addition to maintaining an expanding evaluation website (which is used by staff, IDRC partners and the general public), the Evaluation Unit will support the development of a community of practice amongst staff, encouraging the integration of evaluative thinking and practice at all points of the project cycle.

More broadly, the Evaluation Unit will also continue to provide feedback on the quality assessments of evaluation reports and to actively disseminate evaluation findings, both within the Centre and externally through the use of various dissemination processes such as the Annual Learning Forum and other innovative processes.

6.2.2 Building Southern nodes of evaluation expertise

Demand for field support and services from both IDRC partners and other organizations has been growing dramatically over the past several years. In order to respond to this demand, the Unit began three years ago to cultivate nodes of evaluation expertise in the regions. These nodes are supported by the Unit to strengthen regional capacities and knowledge in the evaluation field. These regional nodes may provide direct services and supports to IDRC-supported partners in the regions as well as to others. In line with the principles outlined in Section 3 above, the purpose is to reinforce the capacities of partners and partner organizations to use evaluation for their own learning and accountability needs. The overall intent of this approach is to support the professionalization of evaluation in the South. To date, work on nodes is ongoing in two regions (WARO and LACRO). The Unit will continue to work with these nodes and will seek to identify nodes in other regions. Over the next twelve to eighteen months, the focus of our search will be east and southern Africa, and South Asia. Expansion to other regions will take place later in this strategic planning period.

In addition, support will be provided to international evaluation associations for capacity building, dissemination and networking purposes. Partnerships with domestic agencies/departments related to Centre priorities will be cultivated.

6.2.3 Individual capacity building

A scholarship program is established which provides support to individuals from the countries in which the Centre works to pursue graduate level studies or to write on issues related to evaluation.

Support will be provided for participation by IDRC partners, and occasionally staff, in various evaluation fora and training events, such as the regional evaluation associations, other regional association meetings and training events, as well as programs such as the International Program in

Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) co-sponsored by the World Bank and Carleton University, a program to which we have already sponsored twenty-five IDRC partners and staff. Support may also include mentoring of individuals in developing countries interested in building careers in evaluation.

6.3 Engaging in methodology development and tools for evaluation research and evaluation

In support of the evaluation of research for development, the Evaluation Unit will continue to provide ongoing technical assistance on appropriate evaluation tools and methods for IDRC senior management, staff and partner organizations. This will include developing and testing innovative approaches to evaluation that respond to emerging project and program needs.

During this strategy, a particular focus will be placed on adaptation of approaches to new needs. In this regard we have identified two areas in which we will be active: i) expanding our work in organizational assessment to address the assessment of inter-organizational arrangements (e.g., networks, consortia); and ii) Outcome Mapping and governance, to explore the use of Outcome Mapping concepts for large scale systems change. The development of a new program area within the Centre, on Innovation, Science and Policy may also lead us into new tools and methods once there has been an opportunity to consult with the new team that will be implementing this program. Noting the external reviewer's comment on the limited use of some tools within the Centre (notably organizational assessment), adaptation and integration of tools and methods will be explored on a demand basis to meet specific Centre needs.

6.4 Developing and implementing organizational learning processes

Organizational learning includes processes for reflection as well as the management of an evaluation system in the Centre. Annex II summarizes the evaluation system in the Centre. As that annex illustrates, evaluation is a shared responsibility in the Centre with different actors responsible for various elements of the evaluation system. The Unit takes overall responsibility for ensuring the integrity of the system, for its modifications and adjustment to meet emerging needs and priorities. Organizational learning includes the dissemination of strategic evaluation findings, R-PCR findings at the Annual Learning Forum (ALF), an Annual Corporate Evaluations Report (ACE), Corporate Assessment Framework (CAF) reporting, as well as the production of various series of written briefs focusing on "Guidelines for Evaluation", "Evaluation Highlights" (summaries of issues such as attribution) and "Evaluation Findings" (summaries of evaluations with broad relevance).

Organizational learning also includes the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of evaluation information systems to ensure that evaluation data is as openly available as possible to all Centre staff who seek it. In this regard, the Unit will be actively involved in the development and implementation of information systems to support the Rolling Project Completion Reporting process. As well, the unit will continue to maintain an inventory of evaluation studies which is accessible and searchable on key topics (inter alia, content, program area, country).

As noted in the Operational Plan (Chapter 10), over the next 18-24 months, the Unit will engage with PPB management and the Grants Administration Division on the implementation of the Rolling-Project Completion Reporting process, including the development of appropriate management and data systems, as well as training for Centre staff. Over the next 6 months the Unit will lead the consultation on the design of the next Annual Learning Forum and will play a lead role in implementing decisions on directions for the ALF.

The Unit will maintain its responsibility for the management of External Reviews of Centre Programs. Over the next year the Unit will work with Programs to complete external reviews of four ICT4D programs (PAN Asia, PAN Americas, Acacia and the Institute for Connectivity in the Americas) and one SEP program (Governance, Equity and Health). No programs are scheduled to initiate an external review in the next 12-18 months. New reviews will be initiated as appropriate.

The Unit will complete the second year of implementation of the Corporate Assessment Framework. This will include working closely with the Policy and Planning Group and senior management on using the findings and subsequently assessing the merits of the CAF as a tool for Centre managers. The objective of the Corporate Assessment Framework (CAF) is to provide mechanisms by which SMC can, on a regular basis, and in a systematic way, generate and use empirically-based information to monitor and report on how well IDRC is progressing towards achieving its corporate mission. It is intended to enable SMC to monitor some of the diverse and dynamic conditions related to Centre programs and initiate actions to manage and enhance corporate performance assessed against the current CSPF.

The CAF is still early in its development and application as a tool designed to assist SMC in its management of the Centre's activities. To improve the utility of the CAF, an external review was undertaken in 2004. The review assessed the appropriateness and adequacy of its design and use in IDRC. Information provided through this external evaluation has allowed the EU to further strengthen those areas of the CAF that are performing well, and begin a process of consolidation and adjustment within the framework to better meet the needs of SMC.

In 2004-05, studies were undertaken within six of the seven CAF performance areas. In 2005-06, a different set of issues identified by SMC will be undertaken in six performance areas. These issues range from examining IDRC's efforts in technology adoption, adaptation and innovation, to its support for the devolution of activities and/or functions to existing or newly created entities in the South. While new CAF studies will be initiated each year, over time the CAF will become an increasingly important and deep repository of information to meet the Centre's management needs.

The EU will also provide support to Regional Directors (RDs) and Directors of Programming Areas (DPAs) by directly facilitating the uptake and use of Rolling Project Completion Reports (R-PCR) and evaluation findings in their annual reporting. Annex III outlines the distribution of responsibilities within the Unit for working with each Program Area, Regional Office and program (Initiative, Corporate Project, or Secretariat).

6.5 Partnerships

The work in the four main areas outlined above is enhanced by the partnerships we build to support the Centre's evaluation activities. The Unit will further enhance its partnership and communication activities. In our last strategy, the Unit identified other donors as a "boundary partner". Over the course of the strategy it became clear that our relationships with other donors and with experts in the evaluation field were more appropriately described as strategic partnerships that support our abilities to work with our three boundary partners. There are three key dimensions to partnership for the Unit:

6.5.1 Partnerships to support Centre strategies

Where evaluation is a component in building or strengthening a Centre partnership, the Unit will continue to play a corporate role in support of Centre efforts to work with priority partners. Over the next twelve to eighteen months this will include collaboration with the National Academies in the USA in design and oversight of the evaluation component of a project to build capacity in three National Academies of Science in Africa, as well as presentations on evaluation with partners such as the Wellcome Trust, SIDA, SDC and Unicef. Partnerships with evaluation associations will be sought. Collaboration within Canada with relevant agencies, notably CIDA and Treasury Board Secretariat will be pursued.

6.5.2 Partnerships to maintain our position in the field of evaluation

The Unit has made significant contributions to the field of evaluation notably through Outcome Mapping and Organizational Assessment, but also in its reputation for the development of a learning culture in the organization. The Unit will build on partnerships that help enhance the

profile of the Centre within the development evaluation community. Over the next twelve to eighteen months this will include partnerships with leaders and thinkers in evaluation, engaging with key evaluation networks to identify leaders and thinkers in the evaluation field with whom we could work on issues of importance to the Centre (i.e., how do we document results as a development research funding agency). These evaluation partnerships will be built through engagement with agencies funding and evaluating development research, such as the OECD DAC Evaluation Network, Foundations, among others.

6.5.3 Partnerships which bring resources to the Unit

Over the past five years, the Evaluation Unit has earned an average of twenty percent (20%) of the operational credits* earned by Centre programs. These funds were received for evaluation support to externally-funded projects, usually projects of Program Initiatives (PIs) or Corporate Projects. The Evaluation Unit will continue to provide technical assistance and other support, in partnership with Centre programs, to those large externally-funded projects which have a significant monitoring and evaluation component. Such activities provide important field opportunities for the Unit and bring resources to the Unit that can be used to provide additional evaluation support to the Centre.

7. Resources

7.1 Human Resources

At the start of its 2000-2005 Strategy, the Evaluation Unit maintained a core staff of three professional FTEs, one intern and one support staff. By the end of this strategy, through a variety of secondments, special contracts and arrangements, the Unit carried a professional staff of eight with the consequent workload that generated. After a significant contraction in size through retirements and end-of-contract departures in the period October 2004 – March 2005 (reducing by half its professional staff), the Evaluation Unit core team is expanding slightly to a complement of 4.5 professional staff and 1 support staff. Significantly, the Unit will have a half FTE based in a Regional Office for the first time. This will have some impacts on our operating style and will require attention by the team as we develop effective ways of working as an international team. The addition of a junior Evaluation Officer in the first year of this strategy will enhance our ability to deliver support to the Centre. This strategy is based on this complement of staffing quantity and quality.

* Operational credits are funded credited back to the Unit involved after the Centre's costs for administering an external grant have been taken into account. The percentage does not take into account operational credits outside programming units of the Centre.

7.2 Financial Resources

The Unit identifies three types of resources to support our work. Our core program budget (\$1.4 million for 2005-2006) allocated by the Centre provides resources for the core elements outlined in this Strategy, assuming resource levels remain at similar levels in relation to Centre program budgets. Through strategic partnerships that bring additional resources into the Unit, some modest additional activities may be undertaken; these resources are dependent on the development of large-scale activities by programs that involve the Evaluation Unit. The third type of resource is other Centre funds which may be sought for special activities requested by the Centre that were not anticipated in the Strategy or annual work planning processes. At the start of this strategy, these resources are in balance in terms of meeting the Unit's objectives.

7.3 Level of effort and priority setting

The level of effort within each of the areas of activity outlined above will be balanced against available resources. On average over the five years, it is anticipated that about 20% of the EU's efforts will be dedicated to each of our three boundary partners, 20% to the extension of tools and methods and partnerships, and the remaining 20% to dissemination, administration, and program management.

The following table indicates the prioritization of EU time based on partner and area of work. As evaluation work often cuts across different partners simultaneously, the shading is only meant to indicate relative priority for engagement of EU time.

Priority Foci

	Strategic Evaluations	Capacity Building	Tools & Methods	Organizational Learning
Senior Management				
Program Staff				
IDRC Partners				
PRIORITY KEY:				
Highest Priority				
Medium				
Lowest				

7.4 Work planning, Review and Reflection

The Unit will engage in ongoing **reflection** through regular review of the evaluation strategy as we develop annual work plans. Each year we will seek feedback from our three boundary partners as well as key experts and thinkers in the field of evaluation. This will permit us to make any necessary adjustments to support continuous improvements in the Centre's practice of evaluation. In line with Centre policy to review each program towards the end of its cycle, the Evaluation Unit will seek an external review in the fourth year of this strategic plan.

Annex I: Acronyms

Acacia	Communities and the Information Society in Africa
ACE	Annual Corporate Evaluation report
AEA	American Evaluation Association
ALF	Annual Learning Forum
BAIF	Bharatiya Agro-Industries Foundation (now called BAIF Development Research Foundation)
CAF	Corporate Assessment Framework
CES	Canadian Evaluation Society
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSPF	Corporate Strategy and Program Framework
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DPA	Director of Program Area
ENRM	Environment and Natural Resources Management
ESARO	Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa
EU	Evaluation Unit
GEM	Gender Evaluation Methodology
ICT4D Development	Information and Communication Technologies for
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IIFAC	International Institute on Facilitation and Consensus
IPDET Training	International Program for Development Evaluation
ISP	Innovation, Science and Policy
IUCN	World Conservation Union
LACRO Caribbean	IDRC Regional Office for Latin American and the
OA	Organizational Assessment
OECD DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Development Assistance Committee
OM	Outcome Mapping
PA	Program Area
PAN Americas	ICT4D Program in the Americas
PAN Asia	Pan Asia Networking
PI	Program Initiative

PLaW	Managing Natural Resources (Africa and the Middle East): People, Land and Water
PY	Person-Year
RBM	Results-Based Management
RD	Regional Director
R-PCR	Rolling-Project Completion Report
SANFEC	South Asian Network on Food, Ecology and Culture
SARO	Regional Office for South Asia
SDC	Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency
SEP	Social and Economic Policy
SID	Special Initiatives Division
SIDA Agency	Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency
SMC	Senior Management Committee
SMEPOL	Small and Medium Enterprise Policies Project (Egypt)
U-FE	Utilization-Focused Evaluation
UKES	United Kingdom Evaluation Society
UPE	Urban Poverty and Environment
WARO	IDRC Regional Office for West and Central Africa

Annex II: Overview of the IDRC Evaluation system

IDRC's Performance Measurement & Organizational Learning System

Org. Level	Reporting Mechanism	Content/ Focus	Responsibilities	Primary Users and Uses	Timing
Corporate	Annual Corporate Evaluation Report	Reporting on corporate performance	EU: Prepare report SMC: Receive, review and prepare reaction to report	SMC: Review and formulation of actions to be taken BoG: Review and react to findings	Annual
	Corporate Assessment Framework	Variable: Strategic topics relevant to IDRC's mission that are determined by SMC to assist in decision-making	SMC: Determine questions/ issues to investigate; EU: Coordinate individual studies; package data for SMC discussion PPG: Archive findings; package data for SMC discussion; keep records of SMC decisions based on CAF-generated data	SMC: Use data in deliberations and decision-making	Annual
	Strategic Evaluation	Variable: Investigations into cross-cutting issues emerging within IDRC Programming	EU: Conduct Studies	PPB & SMC: Learn about programming issues from studies EU: Develop tools to assist programs in addressing issues	Variable: dependent on size of study
	Annual Learning Forum (ALF)	Variable: using R-PCR findings	EU, PPG, PPB Management to design and implement	Organizational learning and improvement	Annual
Program	Director of Program Area (DPA) Reports	Variable: Outline progress and directions of program areas	DPAs: Prepare reports EU: Support use of evaluation and R-PCR findings in reports	SMC: Review developments BoG: Review and react to program area developments	Every other year – alternates with RD reports
	Regional Director (RD) Reports	Variable: Outline developments in IDRC regional programming	RD: Prepare reports EU: Support use of evaluation and R-PCR findings in reports	BoG: Review and react to regional developments and strategies	Every other year – alternates with DPA reports

Org. Level	Reporting Mechanism	Content/ Focus	Responsibilities	Primary Users and Uses	Timing
	External Reviews	Summative Evaluation of PIs, Secretariats, Corporate Projects	PPB Management: Set Terms of Reference EU: Assist in drafting ToRs; coordinate studies PIs: Work with reviewers	PPB Management: Use data as input to decisions about program structure and resource allocation to programs. Program Teams: Demonstrate results achieved by the program; identify areas to improve program in subsequent phases	Once per program cycle
	Program M&E	Variable: Formative evaluations addressing themes, processes, or component of program	Program Team: Design and Conduct Studies EU: Provide technical support	PIs: To assess progress and generate information to assist in adjusting program directions	Variable: dependent on program cycles and perceived needs
Project	Project Evaluations	Variable	PO: Design and implement evaluation EU: Provide technical support and conduct quality assessment	PO: Learn and make decisions regarding project activities Partner: Learn and make decisions regarding project activities Program: As part of team processes to determine programming directions	Variable: dependent on project cycles and perceived need
	Rolling-Project Completion Reports	Projects over CAD 150,000; 3 per PI to receive full R-PCR; balance Phase III only	RO & PO: conduct & file Phase I interviews TL & PO: conduct & file Phase II interviews DPA/RD & PO: conduct & file Phase III interview	IDRC: Basic accountability to Auditor General for public resources PO, PI, PPB Management: Project learning (project design, implementation, management, results)	At project approval, mid-term and within 90 days of project closure
	Project Monitoring: Trip reports	Variable	PO: Monitor projects through visits, email and telephone contact. Prepare trip reports	PO: Keep up-to-date on developments within project Program Team: Keep colleagues up to date on activities within program	Variable: dependent on determined need
	Recipient Reporting: Technical Reports; Financial Reports	Technical Report: summary of results obtained Financial Report: summary of expenditures	Recipient (project leader) Responsible for producing reports. PO/TL: Reviews and negotiates revisions	Recipient (Project Leader): Accountability for completion of research, achievement of objectives, and expenditures PO and Team: summary of results obtained within project GAD: financial and administrative milestones	Specified milestones within project

Annex III: IDRC Programming Responsibilities for EU Staff

Evaluation Unit Staff at 30 May 2005:

Fred Carden, Director

Fred joined IDRC's Evaluation Unit in 1993 and became the Director in March 2004. He has written in the areas of evaluation, international cooperation, and environmental management. He has taught and carried out research at York University, the Cooperative College of Tanzania, the Bandung Institute of Technology (Indonesia) and the University of Indonesia. He holds a PhD from the Université de Montréal and a Master's degree in environmental studies from York University. His current work includes assessing the influence of research on policy as well as the development of evaluation tools and methods in the areas of organizational assessment, corporate performance and outcome mapping. Recent co-publications include Outcome Mapping, Organizational Assessment, and Evaluating Capacity Development.

Sarah Earl, Senior Program Officer

Sarah has worked at IDRC since 1998. She has carried out research and worked in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. She holds a Master's degree in Russian politics and development from Carleton University and an MA in Russian history from the University of Toronto. Her research focus was the role of the intelligentsia in Russian democratization efforts. Sarah led the conceptual development of outcome mapping and has authored various publications on the methodology and its use by projects, programs, and organizations. She now supports knowledge activists to use outcome mapping to research the social dimensions of development assistance and improve their effectiveness. Her current work also includes designing and implementing organizational learning processes, researching international knowledge networks, and developing the evaluation capacity of research and non-government organizations. She has extensive experience in group facilitation, training, and has worked in various parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. She is a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Sharp New Start Foundation.

Amy Etherington, Professional Development Awardee

Amy has been working with the Evaluation Unit since 2003. She has volunteered with participatory development projects in rural agricultural communities in Northern India and plantations in Sri Lanka. Amy holds a BA in Sociology, and is working towards her Masters in Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University.

Katherine Hay, Senior Regional Program Officer

Katherine joins the Evaluation Unit in August 2005. She is based in IDRC's Regional Office in New Delhi, India. She has been working and carrying out

research in South Asia for over a decade and joined IDRC in May 2000. Prior to joining IDRC, she worked as a consultant with the International Institute for Sustainable Development, and with Canadian and South Asian nongovernmental development organizations. Her past research includes analysis of the impact of modernization on gender norms and household power structures in Ladakh, India. Katherine is experienced in social and gender analysis, participatory monitoring and evaluation, and project management; she is also a skilled trainer and facilitator. While at IDRC she coordinated a five year women's health and empowerment project (co-funded by the Canadian International Development Agency) that explored using women's micro-credit groups as platforms for broader social change in rural India. In her regional partnership role, Katherine facilitates strategic partnering and dialogue with international agencies, foundations, government, and the private sector to promote development research and improve donor coordination. Some of her current interests include: the strategic role of organizational partnerships, organizational development and capacity building for applied research institutions, and intersecting issues around gender, empowerment, and citizenship in development research and evaluation. Katherine holds a degree in Environment and Resource Studies from the University of Waterloo, and an M.A. in International Affairs from Carleton University, Ottawa.

Kevin Kelpin, Senior Program Specialist

Kevin joined the Evaluation Unit in May 2004 as a Senior Program Specialist. He has a social science background with a PhD in Anthropology from the University of British Columbia and a MA in Visual Anthropology from the University of Southern California. He has taught development studies at Wilfrid Laurier University and has worked and undertaken research on community based natural resource management projects in Nepal and India. His current work and research interests include the development of corporate performance assessment frameworks, the role of capacity building processes in development and the use of video and communication devices in monitoring and evaluation processes. He has also been involved in the production of documentary films on social and development issues in Nepal, Mexico and the United States.

Martine Lefebvre, Evaluation Unit Coordinator

Martine joined the Evaluation Unit in March 2005 as Coordinator. Previously, she worked in Programs and Partnership Branch with Pan Asia Networking as a Program Assistant. She has a wide range of work experience in administration in the education and private sectors.

Evaluation Officer

An entry-level post for an Evaluation Officer is under active recruitment. The post is to be filled by July 2005.

Evaluation Unit responsibilities

In an effort to clarify and manage responsibilities, key contact team members have been identified from the Evaluation Unit (EU) for the Directors of Program Areas, Regional Directors, Program Initiatives, Secretariats and Corporate Projects. This division allows EU staff to maintain a greater Centre-wide awareness of evaluation activities compared to a strict Program Area or Regional Office division. The Unit's Evaluation Officer, Professional Development Awardee and/or Intern will provide support where appropriate. This division of responsibilities will change as necessary.

The Evaluation Unit will make every effort to maintain a balance of support across the Centre's Program Areas and regions of operation.

<u>Kevin Kelpin</u>	<u>Sarah Earl</u>	<u>Katherine Hay[*]</u>	<u>Evaluation Officer⁺</u>
Jean Lebel (ENRM)	Rich Fuchs (ICT4D)	DPA (ISP)	Brent Herbert-Copley (SEP)
Federico Burone (LACRO)	Eglal Rached (MERO)	Roger Finan (SARO)	
Connie Freeman (ESARO)	Gilles Forget (WARO)	Stephen McGurk (ASRO)	
RPE Pan Asia UPE	Acacia/CA PCD GGP	Gender Unit	EcoHealth GEH
Pan Americas ROKS SID Honduras BioTech EMS EcoPlata	IMFNS ICA PBDD Bellanet EEPSEA PERC Telecentre.org	RITC	

^{*} 0.5 PY

⁺ This position will be filled in July 2005.

Annex IV: An indicative list of deliverables

The following is a tentative list of deliverables during the first 18-24 months of the proposed strategy.

Strategic Evaluations

Policy Study manuscript	Q2		
Policy article for peer reviewed journal			Q4
Networks Survey		Q3	
Networks: 3-5 studies			
Networks Workshop			Q4
Capacity Study: 5-8 studies	Q2		
Website updates	Q2	Q3	Q4

External Reviews

ICA	Q1		
PLaW	Q1		
PAN Asia			Q4
PAN Americas			Q4
Acacia			Q4
GEH			Q4

Capacity Building

IPDET Scholarships	Q1		
Outcome Mapping Training		Q3	Q4
Graduate Scholarships			Q4
ESARO Workshop			Q5
SARO node identification			Q4
ESARO node identification			
Q6			

Program Support

Evaluation designs are underway with 2-5 programs at any given time.

NB: Much of our work with program supports program outputs rather than direct deliverables by the Evaluation Unit. Ongoing collaboration is expected in some projects, in prospectus development and evaluation planning

Project Deliverables

Current projects include: BAIF Final Report, SANFEC, GEM, Pelican, IIFAC

NB: As with Program Support, many of our project are carried ou jointly with program and our work is in support of project deliverable.

Outcome Mapping

Community Web Site Q3

Organizational Assessment

Upgrade OA website	Q3
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Organizational Learning

CAF: Completion of 6 Yr. 1 Studies For SMC consideration	Q2	Q3	Q4
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CAF: 6 Yr. 2 studies for SMC consideration Q2 Q3 Q4

CAF: Report Q5

RPCR: Backlog reports	Q3	Q5
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RPCR: systems development	Q4	Q5
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Data integrity study	Q5
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ALF 2006	Q4	Q5
1	1	1
2	2	2
3	3	3
4	4	4
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100	100	100

Literature Review Q2

Results Based Management-Outcome Mapping

ACE 2006

Q6

Evaluation Guidelines (2-4)

Evaluation Highlights (2-4)

Evaluation Findings (4-6)

Annual work plan 04

Unit website overhaul Q4

Partnerships

Presentation: Wellcome Trust Q1

Presentation: SIDA, DfID, SDC 03

Presentation: UNDP 04

Conferences:

AEA-CES Q3

- 12 papers supported in 4 sessions sponsored by unit

Other Evaluation Conferences Q3

– 2-4 papers delivered

Collaboration:

National Academies	Q1	Q2	Q3
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SIDA Evaluation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
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Annex V: Participants in the Evaluation Strategy Consultation

A consultation on the proposed strategy was held April 22, 2005 at IDRC, to obtain input from experts from a range of related fields: evaluation, development research, internal evaluation, as well as Centre expertise. The full staff of the Evaluation Unit participated in the discussion.

External Participants:

1. Armstrong, Jim
President, The Governance Network
2. Borbey, Peggy
Director, Evaluation and Analysis, Canadian Institutes for Health Research
3. Cousins, Brad
Professor, University of Ottawa
4. Lithman, Eva
Director of Evaluation, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
5. Love, Arnold
Consultant & Evaluation Unit External Reviewer
6. Lusthaus, Charles
Partner, Universal Management Group
7. McPherson, Nancy
Head, Monitoring & Evaluation Unit, IUCN – World Conservation Union
8. Smillie, Ian
Consultant

IDRC Participants:

9. Fuchs, Rich, Director,
Information and Communication Technologies for Development
10. Herbert-Copley, Brent, Director, Social and Economic Policy
11. Lebel, Jean, Director, Environment and Natural Resources Management
12. Munro, Lauchlan, Director, Policy and Planning Group
13. O’Neil, Maureen, President
14. Smyth, Nancy, Senior Policy Analyst, Policy and Planning Group