



EVALUATION OF THE CERTIFICATION AND MARKET ACCESS PROGRAM FOR SEALS

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was conducted between March and November 2019 to provide information for senior management decision-making. Evidence was gathered through a document review, 13 interviews, 2 case studies, a project file review (n=28) and a literature review. The evaluation objectives were to examine stakeholder needs, assess program effectiveness, identify factors impacting performance, and document lessons learned.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Certification and Market Access Program for Seals (CMAPS) was launched in 2015 to mitigate the impacts of the total seal products ban imposed by the European Union (EU). CMAPS was designed to assist Canadian Indigenous peoples access the EU market using the Indigenous exemption, and to assist the commercial seal products industry develop and renew other market access. Activities and resources aligned to three pillars that reflected program objectives.

Three Pillars target specific points on the seal products value chain



KEY FINDINGS



To varying degrees, the CMAPS has made progress on meeting its objectives. Perhaps the greatest accomplishment is that positive results were realized given the challenging context in which the program operates.

CMAPS is the only federal program solely focused on market access for seal products, and is seen as a demonstration of support at a critical point for the Canadian seal products industry. CMAPS is designed to address two broad sets of needs: 1) market access and 2) capacity building within Indigenous communities to access and leverage the Indigenous exemption. These require long term attention. CMAPS provides an opportunity for governments, industry, and communities to work in tandem to address challenges impacting market access.

Pillar 1

Under Pillar 1, capacity to enable the Indigenous exemption was established. Nunavut and the Northwest Territories became Recognized Bodies. However, tracking systems to support certification remain largely as they existed prior to CMAPS, and do not extend to processed products. Uncertainty over compliance with the EU regulation created challenges, and Recognized Bodies are still seeking clarification from the EU before investing in further systems development. In addition, information about the certification process has not been widely distributed, and stakeholders outside the process have limited understanding of requirements.

Pillar 2

Under Pillar 2, there was some improvement in capacity to support exports. Project funding resulted in a Circumpolar Crafters' Network whose goal is to support trade and product development among crafters. Market intelligence specific to opportunities for leveraging the Indigenous exemption was obtained through direct experience and meetings. Some product development and skill-building workshops were held, but were not widespread. The key challenge in this regard is the initial underestimation of what was needed to increase capacity to leverage the Indigenous exemption.

Pillar 3

Under Pillar 3, the objectives related to the broader seal products industry were well advanced. The contributions supported promotional events; participation in international trade shows; and market research. For the first time, there is a high level of consensus among industry players on a marketing strategy to securing market access, and a funding application to the Canadian Fish and Seafood Opportunities Fund received a high level of support from stakeholders. However, this does not replace the need for funding to support individual marketing activities.



FACTORS IMPACTING PERFORMANCE

FACILITATORS

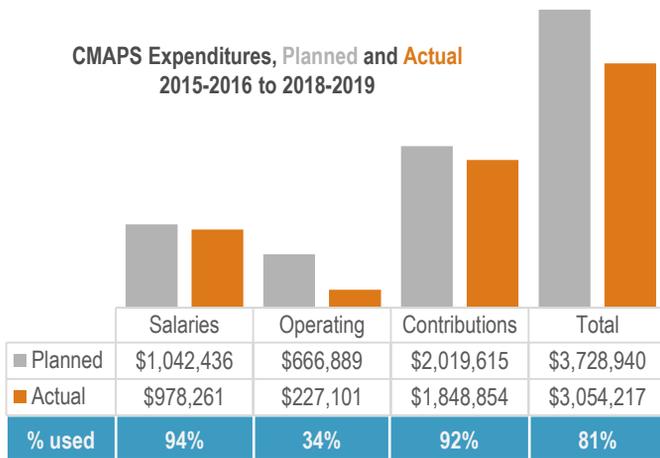
- Networking and sharing information among stakeholders
- CMAPS expertise and focus
- Eligible activities
- Local stakeholder involvement in project delivery
- Evident personal impact

CHALLENGES

- Timing of project decisions
- Management of contributions agreements
- Leveraging resources of other federal programs
- Lack of capacity in the program and among stakeholders

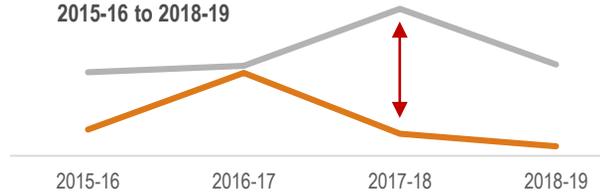
RESOURCES

CMAPS Expenditures, Planned and Actual
2015-2016 to 2018-2019



A marked drop in operating spending occurred in 2017-18 coinciding with a planned reduction in operating costs due to lower activity in supporting applications for Recognized Bodies. However, this is insufficient to explain the difference, and suggests that other planned activities did not occur. As operating costs were not tracked by pillar, it is challenging to isolate specific causes of the gap between planned and actual resources.

Annual Operating Costs, Planned and Actual
2015-16 to 2018-19



LESSONS LEARNED

Consider multi-year contribution agreements

To utilize resources more efficiently

To enable cohesiveness of results in capacity-building

To accommodate factors of geography, gender, and language

Consider simplifying the reporting requirements under contribution agreements

To reduce capacity required to administer projects

To better identify achievements of program objectives

To streamline the collection of performance data

Build capacity by engaging directly with stakeholders in local communities

Face to face interaction is the most effective method to communicate about the program

Shepherding proponents through government processes is necessary with CMAPS stakeholders

Develop a plan to build capacity that reflects updated needs assessment

Apply program management practices and resources consistently to the program

Improve training in managing contribution agreements

Provide a consistent approach to reporting requirements

Organize program files so that effective knowledge transfer can occur

Engage the knowledge and expertise of DFO regions and other government entities more fully

Facilitate access for stakeholders with low capacity and awareness of government programs

Address needs that are outside the scope of DFO with respect to the seal products industry

Increase stakeholders capacity and program effectiveness