

Evaluation of the Georgia Basin Action Plan

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Acronyms used in the report

A&E	Audit and Evaluation Branch
CESF	Competitiveness and Environmental Sustainability Framework
DAEC	Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
DPR	Departmental Performance Report
EC	Environment Canada
EI	Ecosystem Initiative
ENGO	Environmental Non-governmental Organization
ES Board	Ecosystem Sustainability Board
ESC	Evaluation Steering Committee
FY	Fiscal Year
GBAP	Georgia Basin Action Plan
GBCO	Georgia Basin Coordination Office
GBEI	Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative
MIS	Management Information System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OPG	Outcome Project Grouping
OPP	Outcome Project Plan
PE	Priority Ecosystems
PEA	Priority Ecosystem Approach
PEI	Priority Ecosystem Initiative
PIT	Planning and Implementation Team
PTL	Project Team Lead
RBAF	Risk-based Audit Framework
RMAF	Results-based Management and Accountability Framework
RPP	Report on Plans and Priorities
SST	Sector Sustainability Tables
TB	Treasury Board
US EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency

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Prepared by the Evaluation Division, Audit and Evaluation Branch.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Environment Canada's (EC) Audit and Evaluation Branch completed the evaluation of the Georgia Basin Action Plan (GBAP) in April 2007. This project was selected for evaluation by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee (DAEC) of Environment Canada in November 2005. The DAEC directed that an approved evaluation framework be applied to the GBAP, one of the programs under Priority Ecosystems.

The Georgia Basin Action Plan, which evolved from the earlier Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, was implemented on April 1, 2003, to establish priorities and undertake initiatives that positively influence the state of the natural environment, economic growth and social capital within the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound region. The GBAP is the second five-year phase (2003-2008) of collaborative programming for the Georgia Basin.

There were four broad issue areas of focus for the evaluation, namely:

- **Program relevance** — the degree of alignment with the directions and priorities of Environment Canada, the clarity of the intent of the GBAP, as well as the continuing rationale for the program given prevailing areas of need and the potential for overlap with other initiatives.
- **Success** — perceived results of the GBAP, both intended and unintended, in areas supporting the mandate of the program.
- **Cost-effectiveness** — the potential for the GBAP to use resources more effectively in the pursuit of its mandate.
- **Design and delivery** — the clarity of activity, accountabilities, expected deliverables and intended results of the GBAP. In addition, process considerations pertaining to the allocation of resources, management of risk, monitoring and reporting, and the leveraging of partnerships were considered.

This evaluation of the GBAP is summative in nature. It rigorously applies the 30 evaluation questions from the evaluation framework and examines all four evaluation issues noted above.

To test and support the approved framework, the evaluation employed the following data collection methods:

- document reviews in order to assess whether the evolution of the GBAP, along with management issues and information on the program and its operations, has been clearly understood and accurately reported;
- telephone and in-person interviews using structured guides with internal Environment Canada staff and external stakeholders and partners;
- one facilitated focus group; and
- a survey of Project Team Leads.

Below is an overview of the findings in a summary format according to the four main issues — relevance, success, cost-effectiveness and design and delivery.

Relevance

1. The fundamental design elements which translate the principles of an ecosystem approach into a well-defined program structure are lacking (not adequately defined in documents both for Priority Ecosystems [PE] and for the Georgia Basin Action Plan [GBAP]).

2. There is evidence showing a role for government in this program area.
3. A valid role exists for the federal government, based on documents and interviews.
4. The public interest is served by the program; however, there is no apparent comprehensive and analytical examination of targeting reach, even though partnership constitutes one of the program principles. The unbundling process obfuscates the clarity and roles of a program such as the GBAP, an area-specific ecosystem initiative.
5. Theoretically there is a link associating this program with departmental outcomes from the OPP to the OPG, as well as Board outcomes and Board priorities.
6. Both documentation and staff interviews illustrate that there is a connection between this program and overall departmental strategic outcomes.
7. There is wide-ranging opinion on whether adjustments to the program are necessary to ensure better alignment with departmental priorities.
8. Due to a lack of relevant documentation, we cannot comment extensively on whether all OPPs within the scope of the OPG need to exist.
9. To answer the question of program duplication, EC staff universally does state that no duplication exists. This evaluation did not specifically engage other methodologies to consider program duplication.

Success

10. Given that documentation of outcomes and project deliverables was not readily available, comprehensive or complete, little to no objective evidence of outcomes exists. We find some success in achieving outcomes at a project level, anecdotally.
11. Neither rigorous nor systematic performance measurement data were supplied by the program; therefore, it is difficult to comment on attribution of program outcomes to outputs.
12. There is a potential implication for Canada's economic growth and competitiveness associated with the programs; however, this linkage is at the early stages and no definitive attribution/conclusions can be drawn. The GBAP's environmental results could not be readily demonstrated, making the further links to economic performance that much more tenuous.
13. Broad and wide-ranging unanticipated outcomes have been identified as occurring from the program based on interview comments.

Cost-effectiveness

14. Alternative delivery approaches were not specifically researched as part of the evaluation methodology and documentation on this does not exist.
15. Given that efficiency of a program is a calculation based on the amount of outputs generated by dollar of resources input, and we could not make such a calculation, the question of whether GBAP is efficient cannot be answered. This is problematic. It was found that there was no consistent or complete available listing of projects (and their outputs) for the GBAP. It was also found that the resources available were increasingly under-spent from FY2003–04 to FY2005–06. In the absence of performance reporting, success/effectiveness cannot be demonstrated. This brings cost-effectiveness/value for money into question.
16. Cost recovery is not an issue for this evaluation given that no specific clients receive custom benefits.
17. Given that no attribution between program activities/outputs and outcomes can be found, and in the absence of performance reporting, success/effectiveness cannot be demonstrated. Thus cost-effectiveness / value for money is brought into question, and the structure and ecosystem approach for PEs remain undocumented. All this leads one to conclude that there is no demonstrable evidence that Canadians are getting value for

money.

18. It is difficult to state whether the program is affordable.

Design and Delivery

19. Certainly given the requisite departmental OPP/OPG structure, there are documented deliverables and results for the program. However, basic information such as an inventory of projects and their outputs as well as PTLs is not readily available. Communication of such information to PTLs is also an issue.
20. Some important gaps in the logic of the program exist (e.g., development/application of Priority Ecosystem Approach). These gaps cloud plausible attribution of outcomes.
21. There is no apparent systematic decision-making approach to project selection and resource allocation.
22. There is documentation of a risk management strategy but the extent of actual management actions on this is questionable. Moreover, there is no formal vision to date, partners are elusive and the unbundling is weakening connectivity to projects.
23. There is no apparent documented analysis of financial capacity requirements. There is no apparent need for additional financial capacity (in 2005–2006, actual vs. budgeted left a 22 percent surplus of funds). No data exist on human resources capacity analysis, although there seems to be a significant level of staff turnover in the GBAP office.
24. Theoretically, there appears to be a linkage between the program and the Department's strategic positioning/former CESF pillars.
25. In terms of partnerships, which is one of the principles of the program, an extensive survey of GBAP partners was planned for some 50 partners of the program; however, the survey was cancelled as only 13 partners could be successfully located. The evaluation was initially planned to have 5 focus groups with a total of 50 participants, composed of co-deliverers familiar with the GBAP; however, only one focus group with 10 participants could be assembled. No industry partners were identified by EC. Given that it was difficult to locate partners, there is an apparent issue with regards to reach for the program. This is especially problematic given that the program is based on partnerships.
26. There is no apparent documentation of a complete program design upon which to base an assessment of the actual delivery and thus comment on the consistency of program design versus delivery.
27. In terms of EC management and staff being supportive of the program, there are wide ranging opinions among staff on this issue. Surprisingly, there were problems finding the actual PTLs for GBAP projects; only 19 were successfully surveyed.
28. There is a management structure defined and operating. However, there is no extensive systematic decision-making approach/structure to ensure active links of the GBAP to management that would provide responsive support to the program.
29. In terms of accountability, a management structure was evident whereby a Board lead exists (ES Board), the OPG lead exists, and the OPP lead exists. However, there is no apparent documentation of a program design upon which to base an assessment of the actual delivery. Opinion is wide ranging and only the PTLs perceive that for the most part, the roles and responsibilities of all groups involved in the delivery are clear and commonly understood.

The above series of findings leads to the following conclusions:

1. It is appropriate that the federal government be involved with these types of activities which preserve and protect the environment of Canada, as these activities both serve the public interest and respect the overall division of powers across governments.

2. However, the PE as well as the GBAP lack fundamental design elements which a program is expected to have, such as a vision and defined methodology for executing a Priority Ecosystem Approach (PEA), as well as criteria and systematic methods for the selection of activities. In addition, the elements of planning, implementing, monitoring, and reporting are not well carried out.
3. Partnerships constitute a principle for both the Priority Ecosystems and the Georgia Basin Action Plan; yet such extensive partnerships could not be located for the evaluation. The difficulty in securing this information indicates a problem for the program.
4. The financial basis of operations of the GBAP governance generates fundamental questions about how resources are used and linked to results. The activity costs some \$5.5 million annually. Some 78 percent of these costs are classed for salary and, operations and maintenance with no further cost details readily available. Funds have not been spent as allocated, with some 10 percent, 7 percent and 20 percent of such funds identified as surplus at year end for the last three years.
5. The GBAP lacks a rigorous and systematic performance measurement of its operations, making analysis and plausible attribution to outcomes difficult.

Two significant and global recommendations are made:

RECOMMENDATION #1: Formalization of the Ecosystem Approach

Given that the Department has committed to an ecosystem approach, the lead of the Priority Ecosystems (PE) OPG along with the leads of the other ecosystem OPPs including GBAP should:

- a) **Establish clarity on strategic planning and structural issues of the ecosystem approach. This should include clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities across OPGs, OPPs and unbundled OPPs, direction setting, methodology, outcomes, results structure and communications. The results should be reported to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval by January 2008.**
- b) **Undertake a management review of all ecosystem initiatives to ensure appropriate performance measurement, reporting and associated accountability. This should be reported to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval by December 2007**

The PE OPG and, specifically, the GBAP OPP need to seek greater precision on the vision as well as a tightened operational definition of what specific results are being sought by using an ecosystem approach, and put the vision and expected results into an operational program. This needs to be completed prior to consideration of the initiation of any new program development.

As well, the unbundling exercise has resulted in many projects no longer being reported as part of the GBAP OPP. The results of those now unconnected projects still do need to be monitored for results delivery. The need for the current structure and role of regional ecosystem initiatives as well as their functions with respect to the coordination of unbundled ecosystem initiatives' activities/results therefore needs to be closely re-examined. Given that the Department has a complete results-based management system, the unbundling exercise leaves only the governance issue under the PE OPG. The governance role with respect to the

individual ecosystem OPPs and the OPG needs to be examined for possible streamlining and efficiencies.

The OPG should examine these results for the GBAP initiative in light of the other five ecosystem initiatives under its direction. This will be important given the development of a National Ecosystem Framework in EC (ES Board Deck March 2007) and fundamental to the design of departmental RBM programs. There is active discussion of an interim two-year extension of the current ecosystem initiatives followed by a renewal process in 2009–2010. However, the conclusions and recommendations of this report need close scrutiny and reflection in the context of that approach.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

Over a year ago, the Environmental Sustainability (ES) Board called for a new EC ecosystem approach and a Priority Ecosystem Initiative Management Framework.

Under the leadership of the PE OPG, an Ecosystem Approach as a management model to environmental management was articulated in 2006 and presented to both ES Board (January 2007) and the Weather and Environmental Services (WES) Board (May 2007). The implementation of this approach is starting and will be done on a continuous basis using EC's management structure and planning process.

The PE OPG is also working, with participation from other OPGs, on a Priority Ecosystem Initiative Management Framework. The purpose of the framework is to:

- encourage the systematic, repeatable and defensible (1) selection of Priority Ecosystems and Priority Ecosystem Initiatives (PEIs) and (2) determination of EC's level and type of involvement (roles and responsibilities) from a range of possible levels; and
- present direction and basic guidelines for PEI planning, design, implementation, management and reporting in a nationally consistent manner, consistent with the Ecosystem Approach.

It is our intent that the framework, once developed, be applied to existing Ecosystem Initiatives, and to potential new ones, by March 2008. This should lead to a more common approach to selection, design and delivery of PEIs in the Department.

As they are progressively implemented, we are confident that these two initiatives should address most of the observed weaknesses related to recommendation 1(a): roles, responsibilities, direction setting, methodology, etc.

With regard to recommendation 1(b) a process has already been launched with the assistance of the Evaluation Division of the Audit and Evaluation Branch (A&E), and will be implemented to provide assurance to ES Board members that the issues noted in the evaluation with respect to the GBAP (presence of a management framework, appropriate information on performance, partners and projects) are being considered and addressed to the extent that they apply to other PEIs. This report will be provided to the ES Board by the end of October 2007.

Once available, the OPP leads will also be actively involved in the application of the PEI Management Framework to the existing PEIs (March 2008) and we strongly believe that this will have a very positive effect towards strengthening, overall, the governance and effectiveness of PEIs.

RECOMMENDATION #2: GBAP Implementation/Planning, Measuring and Reporting

The lead of the GBAP OPP, with support and coordination from the lead of the Priority Ecosystems OPG, should undertake actions to urgently deal with improvements to the planning, measuring, and reporting systems outlined below by December 2007 and report those to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval.

The entire spectrum of planning, measuring, and reporting of results of the GBAP OPP needs to be rigorously documented and managed during the remaining timeframe of the GBAP (April 2008) whereby close tracking of all projects, results, and deliverables becomes readily available and actively used in program decision-making. A comprehensive listing of results achieved at the conclusion of GBAP is required so as to allow for a post-mortem assessment of value for money invested.

Given that the population being targeted by a program is crucial to achieving successful outcomes and that this was problematic for the GBAP, the OPP should do an in-depth analysis of reach and report on whether its planned versus actual reach was well-aligned and achieved during program delivery. Such an examination of reach by GBAP may also benefit other ecosystem OPPs as well as the overall OPG.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

As a first step in response to the evaluation finding, the ES Board requested that all spending on the GBAP initiative except for select items or elements be suspended. This fall, the results of an analysis carried out by the OPG Leads and the Regional Director General, Pacific and Yukon Region on the planned path forward for the GBAP would be discussed with the Board.

The Georgia Basin Coordination Office (GBCO) has been tasked with establishing and implementing an action plan to urgently deal with improvements to the measuring and reporting of results and outcomes from the GBAP. A preliminary report will be tabled to the ES Board in December 2007, followed by a full report by April 2008. This same exercise will provide the material for a report that documents the outputs and outcomes of GBAP projects, and provides a final report on the 5-year program. This report is targeted for completion by April 2008 in order to provide meaningful summative reporting on the program's achievements.

The GBCO is also operationalizing the performance measurement framework developed in 2004, which provides measures related to outcomes identified in the GBAP logic model.

GBCO staff will undertake an analysis of reach, as they go forward, to document program activities, status, outputs and outcomes.

This analysis will be based on the Communication and Outreach Strategy for the GBAP that was developed through a concerted effort in 2004 and articulates the planned reach. This information will be collected and reported-on in the five-year wrap-up report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Environment Canada's (EC) Audit and Evaluation Branch (A&E) completed the evaluation of the Georgia Basin Action Plan (GBAP) in April 2007. This project was selected for evaluation by EC's Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee (DAEC) in November 2005. The DAEC directed that an approved evaluation framework be applied to the GBAP, one of the programs under Priority Ecosystems (PE).

There were significant delays in the completion of this project, principally due to an unsuccessful reporting by the contracted consultant applying the new framework; this resulted in the need for Evaluation Division staff to reprocess the data collected to produce the current report.

This document presents the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the Georgia Basin Action Plan and is organized in the following way:

- Section 1.1 provides background information on the program;
- Section 1.2 outlines the objectives of this evaluation;
- Section 1.3 outlines the scope;
- Section 1.4 presents the methods used to conduct the evaluation;
- Section 2.0 presents the evaluation's findings;
- Sections 3.0 and 4.0 lay out, respectively, the conclusions and recommendations; and
- Section 5.0 outlines the management responses to the recommendations.

1.1 Background

The Georgia Basin Action Plan (GBAP), an evolution of the earlier Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative, was implemented on April 1, 2003, to establish priorities and undertake initiatives that positively influence the state of the natural environment, economic growth and social capital within the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound region. The GBAP is the second five-year phase (2003-2008) of collaborative programming for the Georgia Basin and builds on previous and continuing initiatives such as the:

- o Fraser River Estuary Management Program (FREMP);
- o Burrard Inlet Environmental Action Program (BIEAP); and
- o Fraser River Action Plan (FRAP).

The GBAP encompasses the mid- to south-eastern portion of Vancouver Island, the lower mainland (including Vancouver and the Greater Vancouver Regional District), the lower Fraser Valley and the Sunshine Coast. Together, these areas represent the fastest growing urban area in British Columbia. The environmental pressures are clearly linked to the impact of population growth on space, land use, transportation, resources and development.

To protect, restore and conserve this unique ecosystem, the federal government launched the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative (GBEI) in 1998. The GBEI pursued a vision of "managing growth to achieve healthy, productive and sustainable ecosystems and communities" by pursuing four component action plans, each of which has an associated goal, also known as the "ultimate outcome." The four action plans were Achieving Clean Air, Achieving Clean Water, Conserving and Protecting Habitat and Species, and Sustainable Communities.

Due to the interconnection between the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound ecosystems, the *Joint Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound Ecosystems* was signed by Environment Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency in January 2000.

Priority ecosystems

As is the case with the GBEI, the GBAP is one of six geographically-based ecosystem initiatives in operation across the country. These Ecosystem Initiatives (EIs) target priority ecosystems to address and solve complex environmental issues in concert with stakeholders. The objective of Priority Ecosystems is to attain the highest level of environmental quality within a targeted ecosystem. This acts as a means to enhance the health and safety of Canadians, preserve and enhance our natural environment, and optimize economic growth by applying an integrated ecosystem management approach.

Current Priority Ecosystem Initiatives (PEIs) are:

- Atlantic Canada Ecosystems and Communities;
- Georgia Basin Ecosystem;
- Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem;
- Northern Ecosystem;
- St. Lawrence River Ecosystem; and
- Western Boreal Ecosystem.

In addition, a Priority Ecosystem Initiative Integration OPP was set up to address horizontal issues related to ecosystem management.

In leveraging collective capacity through partnerships, Priority Ecosystems were developed based on environmental, health and economic competitiveness factors, as well as an effort to respond to the unique problems of targeted areas and communities.

A number of core principles characterize Priority Ecosystems, including the following:

- Decisions based on sound science — including natural and social sciences combined with local and traditional knowledge;
- An ecosystem approach — recognizing the interrelationships among land, air, water, wildlife and human activities;
- Federal–provincial–territorial partnerships — governments working together to achieve the highest level of environmental quality for all Canadians;
- A citizen/community base — working with individuals, communities, Aboriginal peoples, industry and governments in the design and implementation of initiatives; and
- Pollution prevention — promoting a precautionary approach.

At the heart of integrated ecosystem management is the approach of breaking down “stovepipes” created by departmental and jurisdictional mandates along with national program definitions, and allowing federal activities to be aligned with a shared management agenda composed of commonly agreed-upon priorities, goals and objectives. Its intended results are increased cooperation and coordination of federal efforts, enhanced efficiency and effectiveness, and the development of unified positions and perspectives.

GBAP goals, objectives and strategies

The GBAP is committed to achieving the following goals¹:

- collaborative stewardship actions support the sustainability of the Georgia Basin;
- sustainable land, aquatic and resource use planning and management support the conservation, protection and restoration of the environment, enhance human and social well-being, and contribute to a strengthened economy;
- scientific and indigenous knowledge supports improved decision making by advancing the understanding of key ecosystem stresses; and
- targeted ecosystems are protected and restored.

To realize these goals, the following strategies are implemented:

- integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations;
- generate new knowledge and develop relevant tools for decision makers and influencers;
- target knowledge transfer to support and influence decisions at all levels;
- optimize outreach and stewardship actions;
- optimize government programs and collaboration to take direct action;
- strengthen partnerships and strategic alliances; and
- promote best practices.

To fully take advantage of the above strategies, the following GBAP actions have also been identified:

- support the development of and access to stewardship tools and integrated resource and land-use data and information for the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound;
- influence decisions and actions that support the sustainability of the Georgia Basin Ecosystem through the development of ecosystem health and community progress indicators;
- promote and support shared leadership roles in stewardship, sustainable best practices and eco-efficiency amongst governments, non-government organizations, First Nations, the private sector, communities and individuals;
- provide tools to implement ecosystem-, airshed- and watershed-based approaches in aquatic, land and resource use plans;
- advance our understanding of socio-economic and health impacts of poor air, water, or habitat quality;
- support the sustainable use of the ecosystem by aquatic and terrestrial resource-based industries;
- improve scientific understanding and share indigenous knowledge of ecosystem stresses resulting from human activity;
- improve understanding of climate change impacts and adaptation;
- further identify links between human health and environmental conditions;
- reduce loadings and emissions of toxics and contaminants in air and water;
- protect drinking water sources; and
- conserve, protect and restore important aquatic and terrestrial species and habitats.

¹ Goals, strategies and actions are taken from the *Georgia Basin Action Plan: Sustaining a Healthy Ecosystem and Healthy Communities 2003–2008. A Framework for Collaboration*.

A number of key result areas are shared by the GBAP formal partners (such as Parks Canada, the British Columbia Ministry of the Environment). As depicted in a logic model for the GBAP, these outcomes are as follows²:

Shared (partners) ultimate outcome

- Healthy, productive and sustainable ecosystems and communities in the Georgia Basin.

Shared long term results

- Collaborative stewardship actions support the sustainability of the Georgia Basin.
- Sustainable land, aquatic and resource use planning and management support the conservation, protection and restoration of the environment, enhance human and social wellbeing, and contribute to a strengthened economy.
- Scientific and indigenous knowledge supports improved decision making by advancing the understanding of key ecosystem stresses.
- Targeted ecosystems are protected and restored.

Shared interim results

- Information is accessible.
- Trends are measured.
- We work together.
- All plans use an ecosystem approach.
- Resource use is sustainable.
- We understand the consequences of our choices.
- The environment's impact on humans is better understood.
- Climate change impacts are better understood.
- We have safe water to drink.
- Pollutants in the air and water are reduced.
- Biodiversity is protected.

In addition to these shared results, Environment Canada has developed related short-term outcomes:

- Common interests and priorities are identified and documented.
- Communities of interest are engaged in sustainable decision-making.
- Integrated data and information exist and can be accessed for better decision-making.
- Indicators are created and provided to decision-makers.
- Growth strategies, management plans and official community plans incorporate sustainability principles.
- Decision tools are created and applied by communities of interest.
- Aboriginal communities are engaged in partnerships.
- Industry, landowners and local governments prevent the release of and reduce pollutants in air and water.
- Areas with ecological values are acquired or designated.
- Awareness among communities of interest around environmental issues and the socio-

² All of these results, including EC's role in the program, are represented in the GBAP Logic Model dated March 2004.

- o economic impacts of their decisions is enhanced.
- o Resource contributions are leveraged from other sources.
- o Collaborative partnerships build shared capacity to undertake projects.

Program approach and structure

The GBAP seeks to foster integrated and sustainable approaches to land use and development for the protection and conservation of habitat, species, water, air and the viability of economic opportunity and individual well-being within the Georgia Basin. Building upon previous agreements and partnerships, Environment Canada works directly with planners and decision makers within partnerships to foster more sustainable policies and processes in the Georgia Basin.

Many of the decisions and actions affecting the long-term success of the GBAP remain the purview of provincial and local governments. The GBAP allows EC to influence these decisions through shared science, technical information, networks, and program experience. Moreover, the GBAP's collaborative stewardship approach, supported by science and traditional knowledge, helps all partners to understand the consequences and impact of decisions. It also enables partners to take advantage of opportunities to ensure sustainable communities within the Georgia Basin.

The GBAP has a coordination and management structure that is intended to facilitate collaborative planning and stakeholder involvement within and across individual mandates by a number of departments and ministries, as well as partnering with other organizations on specific projects. The management structure is also planned to be flexible and to allow for developing partnerships.

As outlined in Figure 1, the governance structure of the GBAP is composed of the following bodies:

- 1) Steering Committee;
- 2) Coast Salish Advisory Forum;
- 3) Management Committee;
- 4) Planning and Implementation Teams;
- 5) Coordination Office.

Figure 1



1. Steering Committee: The signatory parties to the Statement of Cooperation co-govern by means of a Steering Committee, at the senior executive or equivalent level. As designed, the Steering Committee, chaired by EC, is intended to provide oversight and general direction to the programs and actions undertaken through the Georgia Basin Action Plan. The Committee is responsible for the overall implementation of the action plan, including annual reporting on results. It also sets key directions and priorities, approves objectives for the coming year, receives progress reports on work and achievements to date, serves as a forum to mediate disputes, and approves annual communications plans, GBAP reports and public announcements. Included in the Steering Committee governance process is an annual meeting with a public participation component to enable interested stakeholders and other levels of government to provide input to planning as well as receive information on progress to date.
2. Coast Salish - First Nations: The original structure included an Advisory Forum that allowed for annual meetings with First Nation leaders in the Georgia Basin. This has since been replaced by the inclusion of the Coast Salish as signatory partners.
3. Georgia Basin Coordination Office: Environment Canada staffs the Georgia Basin Coordination Office (GBCO) to support the Steering Committee and Management Committee, foster information exchange, coordinate strategic communications, and facilitate program integration amongst and between the Planning and Implementation Teams and with complementary Georgia Basin – Puget Sound transboundary initiatives.
4. Joint Management Committee: A Joint Management Committee has been formed composed of senior staff representatives from the signatory parties and other departments, agencies and ministries that participate in the delivery of the Action

- Plan. The role of the Joint Management Committee is to:
- foster cooperation and integration of actions;
 - promote the integration of environmental, social, and economic goals and outcomes through an ecosystem approach;
 - ensure implementation of the Action Plan's principles, strategies and goals;
 - identify opportunities for collaborative undertakings; and
 - seek commitments under their appropriate governmental processes for the implementation of identified actions.
5. Planning and Implementation Teams: In order to undertake the planning and implementation requirements for project work, issue-specific Planning and Implementation Teams (PITs) have been formed as required (shown within the dotted line in Figure 1). The role of PITs is to develop collaborative projects that support the achievement of the Action Plan's goals and outcomes. PIT membership includes representatives from partner agencies, the Coast Salish First Nation, the Georgia Basin Coordination Office and other organizations involved in the planning and delivery of Action Plan projects and initiatives. PITs are intended to remain flexible and represent a range of organizations and interests that contribute program expertise to the achievement of the Action Plan goals. Co-chaired by key partners, the following PITs are currently in place:
- Integrated Data Management;
 - Clean Air;
 - Habitat and Species;
 - Clean Water; and
 - Sustainable Communities.

In addition, a number of stakeholder mechanisms and processes exist. Georgia Basin stakeholders and Puget Sound partners are invited to participate in two processes under the Action Plan: an annual partners' workshop that engages the full range of GBAP delivery partners to provide guidance, advice and support in the development of annual work plans; and an annual stakeholder meeting that provides an opportunity for the GBAP Steering Committee to report on progress, profile best practices and receive stakeholder input.

Program funding and expenditures

In April 2003, the federal Environment Minister announced a five-year contribution of \$22.5 million, combined with an ongoing investment of \$8 to \$10 million from EC for clean air, clean water, habitat and species protection, and improved environmental decision making in the Georgia Basin. As of March 2004, an updated budget suggested the annual allocation for the GBAP was approximately \$4.7 million, with the Coordination Office within EC overseeing its delivery. However, there is a significant amount of EC staff time that is dedicated to the GBAP that is not reflected in this budget figure. The funds are dedicated to projects that advance EC priorities. It is in this regard that there is a general anticipation that partner agencies and institutions will contribute their own resources, either financial or in-kind, towards the projects that they lead. These collaborative projects are identified through inter-agency PITs. Table 1 below summarizes Environment Canada's budget allocations by goal (objective), and by year, based on 2004 estimated data.

Table 1: Five-year budget allocation by GBAP goal (objective)

OBJECTIVE:	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8
Goal 1:					
Information is accessible	1,003,205	1,043,205	987,205	966,605	926,805
Trends are measured	289,200	334,200	324,200	309,200	335,200
We work together	1,163,000	1,080,000	1,120,000	1,080,000	1,175,000
Goal 2:					
All plans use an ecosystem approach	283,175	390,175	490,175	488,175	487,085
Resource use is sustainable	83,000	83,000	83,000	83,000	83,000
We understand the consequences of our actions	119,200	125,300	125,300	112,800	112,800
Goal 3:					
The environment's impact on humans is better understood	704,725	1,048,975	1,054,975	982,975	648,885
Human impacts on the environment are better understood	0	0	0	0	0
Climate change impacts are better understood	80,000	100,000	140,000	140,000	130,000
Goal 4					
We have safe water to drink	437,365	602,325	903,325	891,325	800,325
Pollutants in air and water are reduced	0	0	0	0	0
Biodiversity is protected	375,000	375,000	375,000	375,000	375,000
Totals	4,537,870	5,182,180	5,603,180	5,429,080	5,074,100
Five-year total					\$25,826,410

Note: Budget reflects over-programming which will be cash-managed by in-year adjustments

A number of key requirements and obligations (legislation, agreements, and memoranda of understanding) provide the necessary direction for the GBAP policy and strategies, including the following:

- o Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999;
- o Fisheries Act;
- o Species at Risk Act;
- o Canadian Biodiversity Strategy;
- o Georgia Basin Action Plan Framework for Collaboration (2003–2008);
- o Georgia Basin-Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy Statement of Intent;
- o National and Global Programmes of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities; and
- o US Environmental Protection Agency-Environment Canada Joint Statement of Cooperation on the Georgia Basin Puget Sound Ecosystem.

Georgia Basin Action Plan within Ecosystem Initiatives

The Ecosystem Initiative Program of Environment Canada embodies this approach and enables the Government of Canada to focus on six priority areas in Canada of which the GBAP is one.

Environment Canada facilitates or leads integrated planning on a five-year cycle. This planning may involve the other federal departments working in the ecosystem, the provincial departments concerned, Aboriginal people, citizens and communities as well as non-governmental organizations. Partners are involved in intensive consultations held in connection with the implementation of Ecosystem Initiatives (EIs). The priorities identified through this process align with national priorities. The precautionary principle and risk management considerations are adopted in decision making.

Environment Canada currently has six EIs with a total annual budget of \$24.5 million for 2005–2006. In some regions, other A-based funds have been coded to the EIs to augment programming delivery. Thus, the reference level for the EIs in 2004–2005 was \$43.5 million. This budget has an important leverage effect because it secures the financial commitment of federal partners (and provincial partners for some initiatives) for an extended period.

The decision to unbundle and what it means for Ecosystem Initiatives

For each Priority Ecosystem Initiative (PEI), a five-year plan is established with partners, as an effort to respond to the unique environmental and sustainability issues of targeted ecosystems. The plans incorporate measurable environmental results, collaborative governance mechanisms, integrated science and monitoring, community involvement, the sharing of information and experiences and informed decision making. The PEI plans (placed-based) incorporate many issues (wildlife, water, air, toxics, community projects, indicators) connected with broader national EC programs.

An unbundling exercise carried out in June 2006 was to facilitate better integration with national program objectives and results (national coherence and effectiveness as a balance to strong regional integration). Governance activities were maintained in the 1C1 OPG (PEI planning, coordination and reporting activities, partnership management (governance structures and agreements), community engagement and capacity building and strategic integration between PEIs and in the Department). The results and associated resources related to all other areas, however, were redistributed to the most appropriate OPG in the Department for the duration of the PEI action plans.

The delivering OPG and OPP Leads from that point on are accountable for delivering targeted results and commitments in Priority Ecosystems Action Plans and reporting on them. The resources are managed by the delivering OPP for the duration of the EI plan (five years) but EI resources are to become available at the end of an Action Plan for reallocation to new plans and priorities. Also, delivering OPGs are to be involved in the planning and development of new PEI five-year plans when they take place (development of agreed-upon results with partners, establishment and strengthening of partnerships, etc). This participation as well as the implementation of a new PEI Management Framework should lead to a more common approach, to design and delivery of PEIs in the Department.

1.2 Objectives of the Evaluation

There were four broad issue areas of focus for the evaluation, namely:

- **Program relevance** — the degree of alignment with the directions and priorities of Environment Canada, the clarity of the intent of the GBAP, as well as the continuing rationale for the program given prevailing areas of need and the potential for overlap with other initiatives.
- **Success** — perceived results of the GBAP, both intended and unintended, in areas supporting the mandate of the program.
- **Cost-effectiveness** — the potential for the GBAP to use resources more effectively in the pursuit of its mandate.
- **Design and delivery** — the clarity of activity, accountabilities, expected deliverables and intended results of the GBAP. In addition, process considerations pertaining to the allocation of resources, management of risk, monitoring and reporting, and the leveraging of partnerships were considered.

1.3 Scope

This evaluation of the GBAP is summative in nature. It will rigorously apply the 30 evaluation questions from the evaluation framework and examine all four evaluation issues noted above.

The framework is built on a traditional logic model, built on the premise that one uses resources (Inputs) and does things (Activities) which result in products (Outputs) targeted at certain stakeholders (Reach) in order to achieve certain results, desired end-points or altered conditions (Outcomes). Subsequently, a suite of generic evaluation questions (along with associated indicators and data sources) was developed that could be applied to any program and examined in tandem with the completed logic model. The questions focus on the four main evaluation issues – relevance, success, cost-effectiveness and design and delivery. These generic questions (which include the seven expenditure review questions) would be coupled with a handful of supplementary evaluation questions pertaining to the specific program being evaluated. These supplementary questions would be determined in the context of carrying out a specific evaluation. The evaluation framework is shown in Annex 1.

1.4 Methodology

The Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee (DAEC) of Environment Canada approved an evaluation framework composed of questions along with associated indicators and data sources. They directed that it be applied to Priority Ecosystem, GBAP. To test and support the approved framework, the evaluation employed the following data collection methods:

- document reviews in order to assess whether the evolution of the GBAP, along with management issues, has been clearly understood and accurately reported as well as information on the program and its operations;
- telephone and in-person interviews using structured guides with internal EC staff and external stakeholders and partners;
- one facilitated focus group; and
- a survey of Project Team Leads.

However, a number of limitations presented themselves during the course of this evaluation. The following represent the more noteworthy ones:

1. An initial contract to conduct and report on the GBAP in the context of the new framework failed to achieve the requisite results and the data collected were

- reprocessed in-house by Evaluation Division staff to produce the current report.
2. The ability to address some evaluation questions was limited by the availability of information, an issue that became more apparent as the evaluation unfolded. For example, without any documents reporting on financial costs, comparable programs to benchmark with, expenditure trends, data on project results, etc., it was not possible to produce a reliable assessment of efficiency and cost effectiveness.
 3. It was found that certain evaluation framework questions were missed in the consultant's data collection instruments, leaving some of the evaluation questions with reduced available data for the subsequent analysis.
 4. As shown in Annex 2, the ability to draw upon large numbers of stakeholders to participate in this evaluation was constrained.

2.0 FINDINGS

Below are the findings of this evaluation presented by the four categories – relevance, success, cost effectiveness and design and delivery—and using the set of questions developed for the evaluation framework.

2.1 Relevance

This section will examine program relevance—the degree of alignment with the directions and priorities of EC and clarity of the intent of GBAP, as well as the continuing rationale for the program given prevailing areas of need and the potential for overlap with other initiatives.

Q1 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating ³
Overall, does the program (and its purpose) make sense in terms of the intent of the CESF [departmental strategic outcomes]?	Program mission/raison d'être supports the intent of the CESF [departmental strategic outcomes].	√

Findings

- The program documentation as well as staff opinions do indicate a clear connection between the GBAP with the Priority Ecosystems Outcome Project Grouping (OPG) and the Department's broad strategic directions.
- The principles outlined by the Department's ecosystem approach are so broad and propose a very non-exclusionary definition which results in a statement that is unconstrained both in space and unbounded by technique. The fundamental design elements of an ecosystem program remain illusive.

Q2 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Role of government—Is there a legitimate and necessary role for government in this program area or activity? ⁴	Demonstrable needs not being met by private sector, and need to preserve as public good. Existence of private market failure or need to protect a perceived public good.	√

Findings

- The program documentation indicates a role for government (primarily with regard to coordination activities, providing expertise for decision-making purposes, and resources) in protecting and restoring environmental health (seen as a public good); this does not preclude other partners/stakeholders from playing an important role.
- Staff opinion indicates the GBAP does serve a public interest, and is, for the most part, responsive to needs and changing needs by complementing other programs and

³ NOTE: Rating is a judgement on whether the findings indicate no major problem (√) or a small problem (○) or a major problem (⊗). Annex 3 presents a summary list of such ratings.

⁴ Expenditure review question.

partners' activities. (Some overlap may exist, but no real duplication of effort, except within EC. Some speculated this might be the reason for unbundling.)

Q3 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
<p>Federalism—Is the current role of the federal government appropriate, or is the program a candidate for realignment with the provinces/territories?⁵</p> <p>How does this activity or program balance the need for coordinated Canada-wide action with the need for flexibility to reflect the diverse needs and circumstances of provinces/territories and regions?</p>	<p>The program is situated at the appropriate level of government without need for realignment.</p>	<p>√</p>

Findings

- a) Role exists for the federal government, based on documents and interviews.
- b) The federal government does have a role to play given:
 - i. Exclusive jurisdictional powers (as outlined in the *Constitution Act, 1867*) over regulation of international and interprovincial trade and commerce; regulation of navigation and shipping; regulation of seacoast and inland fisheries; broad taxing and spending powers; criminal law; and peace, order and good government (residual-powers clause);
 - ii. Fiduciary obligations, whereby the federal government assumes a general obligation to protect First Nations and their lands and to generally look out for their best interests (Section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*);
 - iii. The transboundary nature of the environmental issues affecting Georgia Basin (including air quality and climate change), given that it is linked (watershed) with the Puget Sound area in Washington State (a Joint Statement of Cooperation Agreement between U.S. and Canada was signed in 2004 regarding the Georgia Basin and Puget Sound ecosystem), and given that the previous government focused its attention on the issue of climate change and the present government is focusing its attention on improving air quality;
 - iv. Provincial programs focus more on the protection of specific flora and fauna (i.e. burrowing owl, steelhead, white sturgeon) or smaller-scale ecosystems (i.e. South Okanagan Similkameen Conservation Program);
- c) There were significant cutbacks to provincial ministries whose mandates include the management and protection of key resources, such as the British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, at least until 2004–2005.
- d) The majority of EC staff interviewed (7 of 12) found it difficult to link GBAP's goals and objectives with the strategic directions and priorities for the Government of Canada, due in most part to the recent change in government; 3 identified air quality objectives as the prime link.

⁵ Expenditure review question.

- e) According to the visioning statement for the Priority Ecosystems OPG, ecosystem initiatives are designed to take into account the specific geographical environmental problems that are inherent therein; therefore, each ecosystem initiative is designed to address specific regional environmental issues. However, all ecosystem initiatives have four common principles—they are based on an ecosystem approach; science is used to inform decision making; partnerships are pursued to achieve their goals; and there is a focus on engaging citizens and communities.

Q4 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
What would be the consequences if the program did not exist? ⁶	The program does or does not serve a recognized and needed function.	○

Findings

- a) The program is very horizontal in its design: it includes other federal departments, several provincial agencies, and First Nations as partners. Within the Department many different parts of the organization are also involved in the delivery of its projects. Therefore, there is a broad connection to a wide-ranging suite of partners.
- b) The senior EC managers underline the collaborative nature of the program and the public interest being served.
- c) However, the continued cohesiveness of the GBAP program is brought into question through the unbundling process of the Priority Ecosystems OPG. Unbundling masks the specific role of an area-specific ecosystem initiative.

Q5 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Public interest—Does the program area or activity continue to serve the public interest? ⁷ Is the program defined in terms of targeted client groups?	The program is connected with societal/environmental needs.	√

Findings

- a) Public interest is likely to exist; however, no apparent comprehensive and analytical examinations of targeting reach by the GBAP.
- b) There was universal agreement amongst the 22 EC staff and managers that the initiative very much addresses the public interest.

⁶ Expenditure review question.

⁷ Expenditure review question.

Q6 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Does the program clearly contribute to delivering departmental outcomes (OPP, OPG) and Board priorities?	The program is aligned with departmental outcomes and Board priorities.	√

Findings

- a) Documentation indicates that there is a clear link between the program and the Priority Ecosystems OPG, Ecosystem Sustainability Board, and departmental outcomes and priorities.
- b) Out of the 12 EC staff responses, 9 had difficulty making a connection with Board priorities (either did not know them, or they were constantly changing); however, the majority were better able to make a connection with departmental outcomes. All Board members (3) felt there was a clear link with the Board priority (focusing on priority ecosystems) and with departmental outcomes. Out of 13 responses, the majority of EC staff felt that the design of GBAP was reflective of departmental priorities although, given changing priorities, some felt this might no longer be the case; all Board members felt the linkage was there as well. Of the 5 EC staff responses, 4 felt that the goals and objectives of GBAP were reflected in project level deliverables (although quality control and enforcement may be an issue).
- c) The OPG does not provide a clear link between the specific accountabilities of other OPPs/OPGs (for which near-term results they are accountable) regarding priority ecosystems and how these accountabilities contribute to achieving the end results of the Priority Ecosystems OPG.

Q7 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Are changes required to ensure alignment with current departmental priorities as well as the CESF (departmental strategic outcomes)? If yes, is the Program (OPP) and its structure able to accommodate for such changes (e.g. mechanisms).	Program rationale addresses required changes if needed.	○

Findings

- a) Not all of the 22 EC staff and managers interviewed were of uniform opinion as to need for changes to this program. Some pointed to the failings of a fixed five-year program that is not engaging its partners such as DFO and First Nations sufficiently as the partners (DFO) are withdrawing, weak, or providing insufficient funds. Some questioned the administrative and coordination elements of this program. Others noted the integrative science base of the GBAP and its general overall evolution over time. Some concerns were voiced as to the type and level of reporting requested by the program that staff would find acceptable and reflective of their participation as well as the onerous departmental results structure that does not allow for funds to be moved easily, or expedite approvals. Universally there was no concern voiced as to potential duplication of the GBAP to other programs.
- b) Some of the three senior EC managers questioned unbundling and the capacity to retain the integrative elements. Risks to unbundling are underlined. They stated that there would be a need to ensure that budget allocation is made in an integrative fashion and not just on a single medium approach (air, water, etc). There are implications and connections across OPGs that must be maintained to retain effectiveness; that connection is managed through management committee and through effective partnerships at Board and OPG

- level.
- c) The four signatory partners vary in their opinions. One states that GBAP is almost invisible for us; it is business as usual. Others state that the environmental aspect is covered by the GBAP but challenges with incorporating the social and economic dimensions remain. Nevertheless, in the opinion of some, progress has been made.

Q8 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Do all OPPs within the scope of the OPG need to exist?	There is sound/explicit rationale for all OPPs with regard to the OPG.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

- a) Despite a lengthy history and existence of the individual ecosystem initiative projects, to date, no documented rationale has been developed which clearly identifies the need for each and every GBAP project to exist and indicate their relationship with each other.
- b) There is recognition, however, that a national strategic vision should be developed. Some early discussion has pointed to elements of what that may contain but these have not yet been developed. A definition of an ecosystem approach coupled with a management framework for Priority Ecosystems was scheduled for the fall of 2006. More specifically, the plan for Ecosystem Management was forecast to be in place by April 2006; this has not occurred. The means to identify critical ecosystems was expected to be in place by October 2006 with the Ecosystem Sustainability Board presented these results in November 2006 and the method applied by March 2007.

Q29 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
What are the closely connected existing programs and how is duplication avoided and complementarity achieved (including non-federal government programs)?	Program mandate or outcomes do not duplicate other programs, or program mandates complement other programs.	√

Findings

- a) No comparison document looking at GBAP and similar programs was found to exist.
- b) In interviews with the three senior managers and departmental staff and managers (25 in all), 16 individuals specifically mentioned that to their knowledge there was no duplication of GBAP with any other programs. Only one staff member noted the potential of some level of internal duplication but for only 10 percent of the work.

2.1.1 Summary Points for Relevance

1. The fundamental design elements which translate the principles of an ecosystem approach into a well-defined program structure are lacking (not adequately defined in documents both for Priority Ecosystems [PE] and for the Georgia Basin Action Plan [GBAP]).
2. There is evidence showing a role for government in this program area.
3. A valid role exists for the federal government, based on documents and interviews.
4. The public interest is served by the program; however, there is no apparent comprehensive and analytical examination of targeting reach, even though partnership constitutes one of the program principles. The unbundling process obfuscates the clarity

- and roles of a program such as the GBAP, an area-specific ecosystem initiative.
5. Theoretically there is a link associating this program with departmental outcomes from the OPP to the OPG, as well as Board outcomes and Board priorities.
 6. Both documentation and staff interviews illustrate that there is a connection between this program and overall departmental strategic outcomes.
 7. There is wide-ranging opinion on whether adjustments to the program are necessary to ensure better alignment with departmental priorities.
 8. Due to a lack of relevant documentation, we cannot comment extensively on whether all OPPs within the scope of the OPG need to exist.
 9. To answer the question of program duplication, EC staff state universally that no duplication exists. This evaluation did not specifically engage other methodologies to consider program duplication.

2.2 Success

This section will examine success—perceived results of the GBAP, both intended and unintended, in areas supporting the mandate of the program.

Q9 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
What has happened as a result of the program? Have any outcomes been achieved as a result of the program? What have been its environmental impacts?	The program demonstrates results in keeping with intended outcomes and planned deliverables.	☒

Findings

- a) Given that documentation of outcomes and project deliverables was not readily available (i.e. no complete inventory of projects exists), comprehensive, or complete, little to no objective evidence of outcomes exists. We find some success in achieving outcomes at a project level, anecdotally.
- b) No rigorous performance measurement data were supplied by the program; therefore, it is difficult to comment on attribution of program outputs to outcomes.
- c) The GBAP has produced one report, the GBAP 2005 Update, which provides a brief overview of the deliverables of 16 projects (out of a total of 77); however, no link is provided between these projects and GBAP’s outcomes outlined in its 2004 Logic Model. The *Departmental Performance Report* (DPR) also provides an account of activities in 2005–2006 dealing with, above all, partnerships, awareness, science and knowledge exchange, etc., but with no link to outcomes identified in the 2004 Logic Model.

Outcomes

- d) Overall, almost all PTLs surveyed felt that the universe of immediate outcomes stated in the 2004 GBAP Logic Model was partially to fully achieved (Note: no answers were provided for “Enhanced awareness among communities of interest of environmental issues and the socio-economic impacts of their decisions). Regarding attribution to the GBAP program, the majority of PTLs surveyed felt that the universe of immediate outcomes stated in the 2004 GBAP Logic Model was partially to fully attributable.
- e) Also, almost all PTLs surveyed felt that they gained moderate to substantial benefit from the GBAP in areas such as leveraging resources; forming partnerships with various stakeholders/players; accessing information, research and/or science; shared public profile on specific issues; and ability to inform senior management and decision makers

on policy issues.

Leveraging resources:

- f) **EC staff:** Almost all felt that the GBAP was effective in leveraging resources (both cash and in-kind contributions). However, no details on such leveraging were available.
- g) **ENGO partner agencies:** three comments provide mixed reactions to leveraging.
- h) **Focus Group (partnerships able to leverage resources):** Comments mentioned issues surrounding transparency of funding criteria and process (3 of 7); overall, most comments critical of GBAP model and activities.

Establishment of partnerships with Aboriginal groups, community representatives, and other organizations including levels of government:

- i) **EC staff:** GBAP has been successful in developing and improving partnerships with various key players/stakeholders, including provincial and local government, environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs), other federal partners, and business and industry. There was a mixed review regarding the development and improvement of partnerships with First Nations (capacity was cited as an issue on both sides); success with First Nations seemed to be a case-by-case issue.
- j) **ENGO partner agencies:** Partnerships with various players have either been enhanced or are being established. Partnerships with First Nations groups are especially being pushed by EC (also ENGOs).
- k) **Focus group (partnerships in general):** More than half of comments stated that the GBAP was not instrumental in forming partnerships (partnerships established under GBEI; issues with transparency in funding model); about a third of comments mentioned that the GBAP has been instrumental in forming partnerships, albeit as a silent funding partner (issues surrounding outreach, especially to industry and other federal departments).

Improved access to, and integration of, information and data to support decision making:

- l) **EC staff:** Data, for the most part, are available, although inconsistent (case-by-case scenario—Science and Technology (S&T) data reports seem to be available to those who need them in a timely manner, and these reports are integrated into the decision-making process). Some mentioned that the GBAP website is not effective in providing the necessary information. Access to data itself does not seem to be a major issue (data do exist); the problem is that the information is not communicated properly to users; there is no information management policy; data are not being used effectively (integration into decision-making process).
- m) **ENGO partner agencies:** Data/information has been shared to a certain extent—no real indication from the responses as to whether or not the data are integrated and support decision making (one comment out of three stated that the Planning and Implementation Teams (PITs), especially the Information Management Sharing PIT, have not worked).
- n) **Focus group (question on use of science and information):** There seems to be a mixed reaction regarding the communication/dissemination (outreach) of information to users (one comment mentioned that a project was underway, yet no communication of the existence of that project or information from that project to users).

Engagement by communities of interest in the use of decision-making tools and joint planning:

- o) **EC staff:** Overall, communities of interest are engaged in the use of decision-making tools and joint planning, although not in a consistent or comprehensive fashion across the Basin. A few mentioned that data/tools are in early stage of development.
- p) **ENGO partner agencies:** one pertinent comment stated that some PITs have used tools effectively, but joint planning has been a problem, especially where EC has been the lead.

Effective incorporation of sustainability principles in strategies and plans:

- q) **EC staff:** Strategies and plans, for the most part, incorporate sustainability principles, although not in a consistent or comprehensive fashion (e.g., Smart Growth, farming practices, GVRD). A few mentioned that on paper, this is the case; however, not

- necessarily with implementation of the plans.
- r) **ENGO partner agencies:** Given that sustainability is a concept that is at the forefront of many levels of discussion, all responded in the affirmative, though two specifically mentioned that they already had such a concept in their plans and strategies.

Acquisition or designation of areas with ecological values:

- s) **EC staff:** Most EC staff mentioned that either there had been actual acquisition of areas with ecological values or awareness was raised regarding sensitive areas. Again, this seems to be on a case-by-case basis, as a few mentioned that this was not relevant in their projects.
- t) **ENGO partner agencies:** To some extent, though no attribution to the GBAP.
- u) **Focus group (question on changes in management of land use and protection of ecological values):** Many specific examples provided (no mention either way of attribution to GBAP)—GVRD; Best Management Practices Code, etc.

Initiatives by industry, government or landowners to prevent and reduce pollution:

- v) **EC staff:** Most EC staff mentioned that there have been initiatives to prevent and reduce pollution, but again, this seems to be on a case-by-case basis, with no consistent or comprehensive strategy for the GBAP.
- w) **ENGO partner agencies:** There seems to be some government initiatives to prevent and reduce pollution.
- x) **Focus Group (question on industry and landowner initiatives to prevent and reduce pollution):** Issues of attribution were seen as too large of an obstacle to answering this really well.

Ecosystem improvements:

- y) **EC staff:** Overall, more than half of EC staff mentioned that there seems to be some improvements; however, this seems to be on a case-by-case basis (air and water quality). Furthermore, measurement and attribution were mentioned as difficult processes, especially given the fact that a few mentioned that there were no benchmark indicators at the general level or follow up in place.
- z) **ENGO partner agencies:** Some areas of improvement, not in others; one comment (out of three) mentioned that their project is on a GBAP site, but entirely funded by another agency.

The natural environment:

- aa) **First Nations representatives:** For the most part, First Nations representatives felt that the natural environment was not improving (in some cases, actually worsening)—not holistic (water quality, but not better sewage treatment, restrictive environment around ports).
- bb) **Local government representatives:** Mostly positive feedback, though specific examples were provided (air quality, invasive species, urban planning in specific regions—no discussion at ecosystemic level).
- cc) **ENGO partner agencies:** All five mentioned that there has been some contribution from the GBAP (two mentioned that it was not significant).

The use of scientific traditional and/or local knowledge:

- dd) **First Nations representatives:** It was felt that scientific knowledge was the predominant source of data/information. Overall, reps felt that traditional knowledge (on a broader-based level) was not being used; one person mentioned that local knowledge seems to be used more as it is project specific.
- ee) **Local government representatives:** Scientific knowledge is used (scientific studies, new technology/tools, S&T reports). No mention of use of traditional ecological knowledge by any of the reps (one mentioned explicitly that they did not have a linkage with First Nations, specifically for land planning).
- ff) **ENGO partner agencies:** Seems to be project-specific; in some cases, scientific

knowledge is being used; in others, they focus on traditional knowledge. One partner felt that the GBAP did not contribute to an increase in the use of traditional knowledge, as this is seen as a province-wide phenomenon; another discussed GBAP's direct and significant contribution to this (through the creation of a First Nations council, conferences), as it pertains to air and water quality.

Communities, citizens, industry and others taking responsibility for their actions:

- gg) **First Nations representatives:** Almost all representatives felt that there was a positive change in the level of responsibility being taken by communities, citizens, and industry. Two representatives attributed this partly to GBAP activities.
- hh) **Local government representatives:** Industry seems to be taking on more responsibility for its actions (however, there are increased regulations, codes of practice, etc.). There are problems achieving significant behaviour changes in individuals (media efforts are not effective enough).
- ii) **ENGO partner agencies:** There has been an increase in various players taking responsibility for their actions, but it does not seem that the GBAP contributed to this.
- jj) **Focus group (question on taking responsibility):** There was a mixed reaction in terms of attribution of various players taking responsibility for the activities of GBAP. GBAP's strength seems to lie in the fact that it does not play a direct programmatic role (playing a support/enabling role), but provides partners with scientific information and funding. The GBAP's weakness seems to be that it does not have a clear mandate/strategic direction.

Communities, governments, and other organizations coming together as partners:

- kk) **First Nations representatives:** Although partnerships are a good mechanism through which to raise awareness of First Nations environmental concerns, there were mixed comments regarding the level of various players coming together as partners. Furthermore, one mentioned the GBAP specifically as a venue to discuss their concerns, whereas another stated that it was the First Nations group that created partnerships in a specific area (the GBAP provided funding as a partner).
- ll) **Local government representatives:** More than half felt that there have been changes (due in part to resourcing/leveraging); one individual mentioned provincial politics as a barrier to partnerships (e.g., under-staffing, under-funding in the British Columbia Ministry of the Environment).
- mm) **ENGO partner agencies:** GBAP has contributed to various players coming together and created partnerships (though one comment out of four mentioned that this was a province-wide phenomenon and not limited to the Georgia Basin).

External influences of results:

- nn) Population increases; the receptive community, the circumstances, the sense of urgency to motivate action, not just political will but also community will.

PTL Survey: challenges to success of projects:

- oo) **Capabilities or capacity of partners to participate:** 12 of 19 respondents stated that this was from "somewhat of a challenge" to a "major challenge".
- pp) **Level of stakeholder awareness and understanding:** 10 of 19 respondents stated that this was at least "somewhat of a challenge".
- qq) **Overall administration and management:** 14 of 19 respondents stated that this was from "somewhat of a challenge" to a "major challenge".
- rr) **Continuity of senior management commitment and engagement:** 10 of 19 respondents stated that this was from "somewhat of a challenge" to a "major challenge".

Q10 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
What are the implications for Canada's economic growth and competitiveness?	The program may have impacts on Canada's economic growth and competitiveness.	○

Findings

- a) Summary: There is a potential implication for Canada's economic growth and competitiveness; this linkage is at the early stages and no definitive attribution/conclusions can be drawn. The fact that GBAP's environmental results could not be readily demonstrated makes the further links to economic performance that much more tenuous.
- b) In general, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment states that ecosystems have contributed to substantial net gains in human well-being and economic development; communities depend on surrounding ecosystems for raw materials and essential services such as water supplies, food, timber and fuel. Economic systems also depend on the surrounding ecosystems for access to raw materials used in manufacturing, such as water, fuel and timber, among others (the Georgia Basin region supports such activities as agriculture, forestry, fishing, manufacturing, and recreation and tourism); therefore, the economic and public health costs associated with damage to natural ecosystem services can be significant.
- c) Specifically, in the GBAP region, there are significant potential economic implications surrounding the tourism industry. There may be significant losses due to a decrease in air quality (leading to poor visibility). These losses have been predicted to be as high as \$7.45 million and \$1.32 million (for extreme visibility events) for the Greater Vancouver region and Frasier Valley, respectively (the study from which these figures stem also provides figures as low as \$4.03 million and \$.5 million for the two regions for lesser events). Unfortunately, sufficient data regarding the frequency of these events are not available; though the impact of a decrease in air quality would lead to losses in revenue from tourism, the likelihood of these events occurring is at this time not available. Therefore, though there may be potential negative economic implications stemming from a decrease in air quality in the region, the extent, in terms of revenue loss, of these negative implications cannot be adequately determined.
- d) The GBAP action plan result does state that they will contribute to a strengthened economy; in that light, GBAP funding (Grants and Contributions) has promoted the development of economic growth; specifically, coastal management plans have been developed to diversify and expand the economies of many of B.C.'s coastal communities (focusing on such activities as shellfish aquaculture, log handling and storage, and public and commercial recreation). For example, the GBAP Strategic Outreach Project focuses on shellfish remediation initiatives which aim to re-open closed shellfish growing areas in order to harvest shellfish products for food, ceremonial and economic purposes.

Q11 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Have there been any unanticipated results, either positive or negative, that can be attributed to the program? If so, how were they addressed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintended outcomes are present that can be attributed to the program. • Actions to address unintended impacts are undertaken. 	○

Findings

- a) A wide range of unanticipated outcomes (nearly two dozen) were noted in interviews in the survey as well as in the one focus group. The majority of the unintended outcomes fell in the positive category; virtually none of the outcomes, either positive or negative, seemed to have been formally addressed by any of the program's management interventions.
- b) Fifteen of twenty-two EC staff and managers spoke of unanticipated outcomes. On the positive side, they noted networking with other federal and provincial ministries; increased use of the Ecological Gifts Program where land donations yield tax breaks to property owners; addressing wildlife concerns for farm and dairy operations; increased public support for clean air initiatives; increased scrutiny by the public of the 2010 Olympics from a sustainability viewpoint; addressing digging in Boundary Bay; making important connections with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, new partnerships that are transferable outside of the limits of the Georgia Basin; as well as aiding the development and patent for a water sampler. On the negative side, mention was made of the difficulties in building trust with the First Nations and some staff reluctance to work with First Nations after hearing their complaints; the degree and extent of unhappiness of partners (DFO, partners, province); loss of trust and stability of some partnerships, the bureaucratic nature of the process which is reliant on old administration/control and contribution agreements, a shifting EC structure and attendant funding, inability to maintain launched GBAP projects throughout their lifetime, lack of tools to transfer the science, and inability to measure ecosystem progress. One also noted pollution elsewhere was more severe, yet the GBAP offered little solutions for those areas such as Prince George.
- c) Three of five partner agencies noted items here; all were positive. The GBAP triggered discussions on environment both in the Coast Salish community as well as across the coalition of communities across the Basin. Some of the water lessons learned (water bucket and balance) have developed tools at BC grassroots that could be applied nationally. Projects that protect land (e.g., acquiring vulnerable Crown land and leasing it back to the BC Parks for requisite protection) were also mentioned.
- d) Only two of the seven First Nations interviewed offered positive outcome comments here. The GBAP seems to have unified their youth community on the subject of environment (which some contend was an intended outcome) as well as identified a pollution source for shellfish (namely, cattle).
- e) Five of eight local government representatives offered comments all as positive outcomes. Reference was made to the best management practices for an agricultural study that showed which information gaps still need to be addressed as well as provided better farming practices for specific environmental concerns. The adoption of new technologies (e.g. Google Earth) provided an important opportunity to integrate and view data spatially. As well, two water projects were noted as advancing developments significantly, namely, the water balance model and Silver Ridge's storm water monitoring project.
- f) The focus group noted improved facilitation and information-sharing among communities across the Basin, citing the Abbotsford auto recycling code now adopted across the province as a good example of a positive unintended outcome.
- g) The survey showed that only 4 of the 17 PTLs noted unintended outcomes and all were positive. These were: additional projects identified; development of DNA-based bacterial source identification method; new scientific information; shared decision support criteria for prioritization of conservation acquisitions; common reporting template for priority acquisitions and the rationale for their selection; new liaison with groups; strengthened partnerships; and increased capacity through partnerships.

2.2.1 Summary Points for Success

1. Given that documentation of outcomes and project deliverables was not readily available, comprehensive, or complete, little to no objective evidence of outcomes exists. We find some success in achieving outcomes at a project level, anecdotally.
2. Neither rigorous nor systematic performance measurement data were supplied by the

program; therefore, it is difficult to comment on attribution of program outcomes to outputs.

3. There is a potential implication for Canada’s economic growth and competitiveness associated with the programs; however, this linkage is at the early stages and no definitive attribution/conclusions can be drawn. The GBAP’s environmental results could not be readily demonstrated, making the further links to economic performance that much more tenuous.
4. Broad and wide-ranging unanticipated outcomes have been identified as occurring from the program based on interview comments.

2.3 Cost-Effectiveness

This section will examine cost-effectiveness—the potential for GBAP to be made more effective in the use of resources and the pursuit of its mandate.

Q12 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Are there better ways of achieving the results? Have alternative programs been examined that might achieve the objectives and intended impacts and effects?	Alternative delivery methods have been analyzed.	○

Findings

- a) The concept and general validity of an ecosystem approach exists in the literature, but there have been no specific reports connecting that notion to the situation on priority ecosystems at EC. No documentation of cost-comparative alternative approaches was found to have been conducted.
- b) There was a range of comments from the 22 EC staff and managers interviewed on how to improve program coordination but no insightful comments on fundamentally different approaches. Some of the improvements suggested include improvements in coordination and outreach within EC; more frequent internal information and reporting, improving capacity to deal with partners both inside and outside EC; stronger leadership from senior management, and a comprehensive website which documents all projects undertaken.
- c) When asked about how they would improve outcomes the next time, 6 of the 17 respondents to the survey of Project Team Leads said, “More active pursuit of new partnerships with communities, the voluntary sector, and/or the private sector”; 5 noted “More efficient use of available resources in the delivery of the project(s)”; 4 pointed to “A less complex approach to the governance or structure (design) of the project(s)”; and 2 wanted “Better leveraging (use) of existing partnerships with communities, the voluntary sector, and/or the private sector”.

Q13 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Efficiency—If the program or activity continues, how could its efficiency be improved? ⁸	Program or activity shows opportunity for efficiency increases.	☒

Findings

⁸ Expenditure review question.

- a) Salary and O&M account for almost 70 percent of total program expenditures per year; Grants and Contributions account for between a fifth to a quarter of total program expenditures.
- b) The 22 EC staff and managers who gave an opinion on the program's efficiency (10 did not) were divided. Five felt there was an opportunity to improve efficiency whereas 7 did not. Some of the comments on improvements revolve around initial allocation of funding and opportunity for regrouping later, being willing to allocate resources to projects proposed by the partners and not only EC proposals, providing more time to secure greater buy-in from partners, much uncertainty on how to react to the unbundling process and the revised role of the GBAP Coordination Office in this advocating for unbundled project funding, and criticism of the operation of the Management Information System.

Q14 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Should the program or activity include a cost recovery element? If yes, does it?	Delivery of customized goods/services for defined client groups. A cost recovery mechanism is present; if applicable.	n/a

Findings

- a) Cost recovery is not an issue for this evaluation.

Q15 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Value for money—Are Canadians getting value for their tax dollars? Is the program or activity cost-effective? ⁹	Program demonstrates value for money.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

- a) The financial data supplied and available shows only the planned allocations at the project level; no actuals were supplied. The overall GBAP budget has shown that the total amount of funding supplied has increasingly not been spent over the years (see budget tables below).
- b) No reports or indicators showing attribution between program activities/outputs and outcomes other than at logic model level were found.
- c) Salary and O&M account for almost 70 percent of total program expenditures per year and Grants and Contributions account for between a fifth to a quarter of total program expenditures. No data were available to indicate the types of activities to which O&M were applied.
- d) No rigorous performance measurement underway to show project or program progress.
- e) A management information system for tracking projects is not maintained or used for decision making.
- f) O&M dollars were consistently under-spent compared with planned in all three years: by 10 percent in 2003–2004, 7 percent in 2004–2005 and 20 percent in 2005–2006.
- g) The validation comment from the program manager states, "While the Salary and O&M indeed appear high, more extensive tracking and reporting of data at project levels would also help differentiate between clear overhead costs and the O&M used for contracts, MOUs and other direct project activities—giving a more realistic and less excessive-looking picture

⁹ Expenditure review question

of the balance of expenditures. While this information can be found, the point that these were not easily accessible is of greater importance and I do not recommend we go back to unearth the specifics at this stage.”

- h) The validation comment from the program manager confirms that, “There is no systematic performance measurement data.”
- i) OVERALL—leads one to suspect that Canadians are not optimally getting value for money.
- j) GBAP Budget.
 - o planned versus actual expenses for the fiscal years 2003–2004 to 2005–2006

2003–2004

	Salary	EBP	O & M	Capital	G & C	Total
Allocated	1,390,500	278,100	1,799,100	66,000	967,300	4,501,000
Actual	1,360,066	272,013	1,400,991	66,000	937,931	4,037,001
Difference	30,434	6,087	398,109	0	29,369	463,999
% Difference (Rounded)	2.2%	2.2%	22.1%	0%	3.0%	10.3%

2004–2005

	Salary	EBP	O & M	Capital	G & C	Total
Allocated	1,561,196	312,239	1,999,734	0	1,036,329	4,909,498
Actual	1,434,995	286,999	1,778,793	0	1,045,075	4,545,862
Difference	126,201	25,240	220,941	0	-8,746	363,636
% Difference (Rounded)	8.1%	8.1%	11.0%	0%	-0.8%	7.4%

2005-06

	Salary	EBP	O & M	Capital	G & C	Total
Allocated	1,667,977	333,595	2,406,982	160,000	810,125	5,378,679
Actual	1,434,233	286,847	1,640,435	103,025	818,226	4,282,766
Difference	233,744	46,749	766,547	56,975	-8,101	1,095,914
% Difference (Rounded)	14%	14%	31.8%	35.6%	-1.0%	20.4%

Q16 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Affordability—Is the resultant package of programs and activities affordable? If not, what programs and activities would be abandoned? ¹⁰	The program is financially affordable without the need to abandon components.	○

Findings

- a) Summary: It is difficult to state whether the program is affordable.
- b) Cannot conclude whether or not the program is affordable; actual expenditure is lower than resources allocated for all three fiscal years. Yet without any comparison with similar programs, it is difficult to state whether or not the program is indeed affordable or whether the underlying rationale used to determine the level of resources allocated to the program each year is erroneous (is the funding allocated to the program on target or overestimated—if overestimated, to what degree is it overestimated?).
- c) Of the 9 responses received, 5 felt that there was sufficient funding for the present GBAP activities. A few cited that given EC’s changing structure and the unbundling of priority ecosystems, it is difficult to know where funding is coming from (source of funding). Of the 19 responses received in the PTL Survey, 10 stated that there would be a need for some change to activities or focus (3 stated it could continue with no changes, while no one stated that it could not continue at current funding levels).

2.3.1 Summary Points for Cost-effectiveness

- 1. It is difficult to state whether the program is affordable.
- 2. Alternative delivery approaches were not specifically researched as part of the evaluation methodology and documentation on this does not exist.
- 3. Given that efficiency of a program is a calculation based on the amount of outputs generated by dollar of resources input, and we could not make such a calculation, the question of whether GBAP is efficient cannot be answered. This is problematic. It was found that there was no consistent nor complete available listing of projects (and their outputs) for the GBAP. It was also found that the resources available were increasingly under-spent from FY2003–04 to FY2005–06. In the absence of performance reporting, success/effectiveness cannot be demonstrated. This brings cost-effectiveness/value for money into question.
- 4. Cost recovery is not an issue for this evaluation given that no specific clients receive custom benefits.
- 5. Given that no attribution between program activities/outputs and outcomes can be found, and in the absence of performance reporting, success/effectiveness cannot be demonstrated. Thus cost-effectiveness/value for money is brought into question, and the structure and ecosystem approach for PEs remains undocumented. All this leads one to conclude that there is no demonstrable evidence that Canadians are getting value for money.

2.4 Design and Delivery

This section will examine design and delivery—the clarity of activity, accountabilities, expected deliverables and intended results of the GBAP. In addition, process considerations pertaining to the allocation of resources, management of risk, monitoring and reporting, and the leveraging of partnerships were considered.

¹⁰ Expenditure review question.

Q17 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Does the program identify clear deliverables and expected results?	Expected results and deliverables are clearly communicated and identified at program and project level.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

- a) Expected results and deliverables are clearly identified in the 2004 GBAP Logic Model, though not all near-term results in the Logic Model are identified in the GBAP OPP (the near-term results for which the two Outcome Project Sub-components are responsible).
- b) The majority of EC staff found the goals and objectives of the GBAP to be too broad and at too high a level to be useful operationally; all three signatory partners mentioned that the GBAP’s goals and objectives are not clearly communicated to partners and were therefore not clearly and commonly understood by all partners. Additionally, most EC staff and signatory partners felt that most project level deliverables and milestones reflected the GBAP’s goals and objectives.
- c) Of the 19 responses received in the PTL survey, 15 stated that the goals and objectives of the GBAP were at least “somewhat clear or partially understood” (two stated “not clear or understood”; only 1 stated “very clear and well understood”).
- d) Some of these near-term results have been unbundled; however, the OPG does not provide a clear link between the specific accountabilities of other OPPs/OPGs (for which near-term results they are accountable) regarding PEs and how these accountabilities contribute to achieving the end results of the PE OPG.
- e) Therefore, communication is an issue, certainly amongst the PTLs.

Q18 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with its mandate and plausibly linked to the outcomes in terms of clarity and attribution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities and outputs are linked with mandate and outcomes. • The attribution of outcomes to the program is plausible. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

- a) The GBAP logic model draws links between the activities and outcomes; however, the model fails to indicate the development and application of a formal ecosystem approach. Such a methodology is not developed nor guides the actions/projects under the GBAP.
- b) Of the 22 EC staff and managers interviewed, 12 provided comments on the linkage and even those comments were tangential to this issue.
- c) The interviews with five partner representatives showed the two extremes, with one commenting that the GBAP never effectively addressed their concerns and another stating “it’s a good return for money spent.” The fifth responded (positive middle ground) by saying that the program grant permitted development of their water balance model and water bucket websites.
- d) For one of the program’s client groups, industry, no contacts could be successfully identified for participation in interviews.
- e) Data from the survey of the PTLs provided 19 observations. Answering the question on the degree to which the goals and objectives of GBAP were reflected in the project-level deliverables and milestones, 18 respondents said that these were “somewhat”, “more” or “fully reflected” in their projects. Only one said it was weakly reflected and one said it was not reflected at all.

Q19 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Are decision-making processes in place to allow for the highest areas of importance to be reflected in the allocation of resources (priorities)?	Allocation of resources is based on highest importance and resourced according to priorities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

- a) There is no apparent systematic decision-making approach to the selection of projects and resource allocation; no documentation was available. Budget allocation is addressed in another question.
- b) This lack of project selection criteria was also specifically noted by one focus group participant.

Q20 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
How has risk been addressed? Has a risk management strategy been developed? Is it adequate?	Risk is adequately addressed and managed.	<input type="radio"/>

Findings

- a) The OPP for Priority Ecosystems identifies six areas of risk (four external and two internal):
 1. Human and natural environment “Urban sprawl, increasing transportation demands and developments in the energy sector all result in very high risks to water, species and habitat, air quality and human health in the region. The risks of flooding, avalanches and landslides are increased through poor land use decisions”.
 2. Economic/trade/socio-political environment presents an opportunity—namely, “to build GBAP into the CESF bilateral where appropriate”.
 3. The legal framework presents an obligation and an opportunity. The GBAP is to meet its obligations with regard to these transboundary commitments with the US Environmental Protection Agency; as well, the GBAP is working on strengthening its partnership with Coast Salish First Nations.
 4. Stakeholders – Formal signatory partners, as well as numerous local governments and non-government organizations, have made a commitment to participate in the GBAP projects and initiatives.
 5. The departmental workforce is obliged “to meet the reporting requirements and to support the larger collaborative goals of the GBAP”.
 6. Business activities and assets present an “opportunity to focus and enhance communications and engagement with key stakeholders”.
- b) The Outcome Project Summary for the GBAP notes six specific risks and their management responses
 1. Risk to the partnership and therefore to the commitment to GBAP outcomes is constant given other pressures facing partners. This risk is managed at the partnership level through the governance function by assisting partners in seeing the success of their contributions, be they funding or in kind. The opportunity to show on-the-ground successes shows the partners in a good light and assists in keeping them on board.
 2. Flexibility in our business approaches such as an ecosystem or watershed approach helps put the focus on place-based improvements and assists in

- 3. Economic / trade / socio-political environment risks are mitigated through clear communications within EC and with EC's partners, in particular the B.C. Ministry of Environment.
 - 4. Risks related to legal frameworks, such as the current GBAP-Environmental Protection Agency agreement, are mitigated through the ongoing work and coordination within the GBCO and other EC units.
 - 5. Risks related to changing First Nations standing, including recent court decisions, are mitigated through the ongoing development of relations with First Nations, notably through the full partnership status of Coast Salish in the GBAP. At the same time, risks to a balanced GBAP agenda and full Coast Salish participation require solid steering committee commitment and increased funding.
 - 6. The GBAP is dependant on partners and stakeholders for its success; GBAP resources have previously facilitated these relationships. Current resource allocations are sufficient to maintain EC's status amongst partners and stakeholders and they continue to facilitate these relationships, with the possible exception of Coast Salish participation.
- c) In interviews with the three senior managers, only one spoke of risk associated with the unbundling exercise. The GBAP becomes dependent upon a risk assessment from other outcome project groupings; this means other OPGs could eliminate a valid risk identified by GBAP. This, however, can be managed through effective partnerships at the Board and OPG level.
 - d) Interviews yielded specific comments from 20 program staff and managers; they spoke diversely of how risk was handled. One clearly said that there was no practice to identify and manage risks and it was but a paper exercise whereas another stated that risks and priorities are managed alongside the GBAP. Some other risks noted by others included: the risk of not doing ecosystem management properly, risks not being collectively managed across project teams; and the risks of not handling partnerships properly. Another staff member voiced the need to manage very specific local risks such as the Vancouver Winter Olympics in 2010 or specific agricultural risks. Finally, another remarked on the risk that the GBAP put more energy into process than results.
 - e) In summary, there is formal program documentation of risks and opportunities, all of which are positively described. However, staff voiced a diversity and divergence of opinion; staff questioned whether risk was handled successfully.

Q21 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Is there a clear and compelling analysis of capacity requirements? Are any proposals for increased capacity well justified?	Presence and appropriateness of justifications for funding and resourcing.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

- a) In the Outcome Project Summary, capacity issues are raised. It states, "We lack the appropriate capacity to present our science and information in a context that will resonate with decision makers." It also notes that "Capacity to support First Nations inclusiveness remains one of continuing to build the relationship and is very much a funding issue."
- b) The PTL survey revealed that of the 19 respondents, 12 felt that the degree of available resources (financial, people and material) more than partially met the needs of the project(s) as originally planned. Of the 7 who voiced a dissenting opinion, 5 said that this lack of capacity partially or greatly affected the achievement of the GBAP's goals and objectives.
- c) There is no apparent documented analysis of financial capacity requirements.
- d) There is no apparent need for additional financial capacity with much under-spending

(2005-2006: Actual vs. Budgeted is ~ -22%).

- e) No data exist on human resources capacity, although there seems to be a significant level of staff turnover in the GBCO.

Q22 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Is there a clear link between program design, outcomes and the CESF pillars?	Appropriate strategies are present in program design.	√

Findings

- a) Theoretically, there appears to be a linkage between the program and the CESF pillars; however, the concept of pillars is no longer being actively pursued in the Department and thus is no longer pertinent to our discussion.

Q23 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Partnership—What activities or programs should or could be transferred in whole or in part to the private/voluntary sector? ¹¹	Partnerships have been explicitly and comprehensively explored.	☒

Findings

- a) The ability to draw sufficient numbers of stakeholders was severely constrained. The program was not able to provide an accurate list with a sufficient number of accessible stakeholders and readily available contact information to allow the needed samples for all of the proposed methodologies to be developed. As an example, no industry partners initially forecast could be found; "... not one industry contact could be identified for an interview ". The plan to conduct a partners survey with local government, stakeholders, and others initially forecast was deemed unviable due to the small number that could be located; the forecast 50 partners (based on an estimate from the program) turned into just 13. The surveys were converted into interviews. The 5 focus groups of 50 participants initially forecast were collapsed to only one with 10 attendees due to lack of identified participants. This shows a serious discrepancy between initially perceived and actual reach of the program.
- b) Given that it was difficult to locate partners, there is an apparent issue with regards to reach for the program. This is especially problematic given that the program is based on partnerships.
- c) Even internally there was an over-prediction of EC involvement by the program; initially well over a hundred names were suggested as PTLs; however, just 35 names were finally confirmed, and of those, only 19 leads responded to the survey. There was no readily available inventory of PTLs.
- d) Of the 13 EC staff and managers that answered the pertinent question, the vast majority (10) were of the opinion that partnerships contributed to the program in a valued and meaningful way. Some mentioned that for them much was built on pre-existing partnerships; partners whose interest and commitment was principally tied to the funding aspect and the under capacity of partners to deliver on their commitments. Additionally, all the three senior managers felt partners contributed significantly from their vantage point.
- e) The comments of the four signatory partners were evenly divided. Two indicated there were advantages but two questioned the value of the partnerships. One stressed that

¹¹ Expenditure review question.

- changes are recommended due to a fundamental flaw of GBAP "...if we want partners to recognize added benefit, all need to be resourced for it [the project]."
- f) Ten of the 13 EC program staff and managers interviewed felt that more partners could be scoped in. Those who were not in favour were concerned about scope creep and the need to solidify the existing partners before expanding further and noted the need to provide funding to entice further environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS). The survey of Project Team Leads was nearly evenly divided on this question: 8 felt the greater opportunity for others to be involved, whereas 10 questioned the sufficiency of others to do more and undertake more outside of government.
 - g) Quoting from the consultant's interim report, "The ability to draw sufficient numbers of stakeholders was severely constrained. One of the key assumptions made, and reaffirmed during the orientation for this evaluation, was that of an accessible, accurate and sufficient number of stakeholders, and readily available contact information to develop the needed samples for all of the proposed methodologies. In practice though, numerous obstacles were encountered in attempting to develop cohorts of local government, non-government and industry respondents for interviews, survey samples and focus group participants. Furthermore, the management information system does not collect or report on any contact information for partners. Hence these cohorts must be developed by referral from PTLs, as they are the only owners of such information. Adding to this, responses to voicemails and emails were extremely slow. All combined, this resulted in a significant amount of time being spent in attempting to contact respondents and in seeking such referrals."
 - h) The initial forecasted contacts were estimates based on targets confirmed by program staff. Yet the program (GBCO or program leads) did not have required lists of such names. As well, there was no inventory of projects from which to readily draw partner contact information.
 - i) Throughout the process, a list of contacts and repeated attempts to secure contact were recorded by the consulting company.
 - j) After the launch of this evaluation, the number of anticipated versus actual contacts decreased dramatically. Two planned surveys of 50 had to be converted into interviews of just some 13 individuals.
 - k) A number of individuals contacted that were identified as potential contacts by the program responded that they were not sufficiently acquainted with the GBAP or unable/unwilling to provide input. Included in this list were the Federation of BC Naturalists and 6 EC employees from the Pacific and Yukon region.
 - l) Initially 10 telephone interviews were planned with industry; however, no contacts could be identified by the GBCO or PTLs.
 - m) One example of a letter of invitation sent to potential interviewees is provided in Annex 4.
 - n) The process by which contacts were to be sought was defined (Annex 4).

Q24 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
How consistent is the program with its own proposed approach (has the program been delivered as designed)?	The program is consistent with and follows its defined approach/methodology.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Findings

- a) Comments on program design can be based only on the documentation available such as the logic model. This model appears thorough, yet it, along with the main priority ecosystem program, demonstrates a weakness in use of the nebulous term of an "ecosystem approach". In addition, this term is not specifically defined in the GBAP logic model, yet it is referenced as a second-level immediate outcome: "all plans use an ecosystem approach". There are no clear links in GBAP between this second-level immediate outcome to a first-level outcome nor the requisite supporting outputs and activities.

- b) As evidenced in detail in an earlier question (#19), the program could not provide any documentation showing why the projects were selected; this is not to necessarily imply that these were inappropriate selections, but rather that the decision making process and criteria for these selections were not available.
- c) All available documentation notes only the planning element but not the actual delivery of the products. There is no evidence showing the essential connections between what was planned and what was actually delivered. There are comments in interviews throughout about the delivery of projects such as, for example, “water bucket and water balance”, but its connection to the project level is undocumented.
- d) The management structure of a steering committee, management committee, project implementation teams and coordination office all have documentation of their activity and operations as planned. As well, one session of the Coast Salish First Nations Advisory Forum has been held; though its operations have been described as being annual.
- e) Though EC managers and five partner agencies were interviewed and project implementation team leaders were surveyed, none of their commentary provided insights into whether the program was delivered as designed.

Q25 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Are Environment Canada management and staff, and partners, supportive of the goals and objectives of the GBAP?	Program staff and delivery partners are aligned, comfortable and supportive of program design and delivery.	√

Findings

- a) The 9 of 10 EC staff and managers who commented on this section gave a resounding yes to the alignment question. The one who did not was not entirely sure of the GBAP’s objectives. The three signatory partners who commented also said yes. Finally, the 19 PTLs who responded to this survey question all reported satisfaction at or above the “somewhat satisfied” category, with a dozen in the stronger “moderately satisfied” category.
- b) In summary, nearly all the interviews with EC staff and management, signatory partners and PTLs reported that program staff and delivery partners are aligned, comfortable and supportive of program design and delivery.

Q26 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Is there an established structure that provides for responsive management and logically supports the achievement of goals and objectives?	Program management structures support program delivery.	○

Findings

- a) The management structure of a steering committee, management committee, project implementation teams and coordination office all have documentation of their activities and operations as planned.
- b) There were 22 EC staff and management interviews that provided some insights into dimensions of management support for the program. In terms of resource allocation, there was a dichotomy between whether the one static budgetary allocation from the program across the projects was good from a stability standpoint and whether greater flexibility for changing priorities should have been built in. There was also divergence of opinion on whether the funding was or was not adequate in terms of amount. Two people noted the

- lack of specific targets which negated the possibility of effective monitoring.
- c) There was mixed reaction to whether coordination and support was adequate. The majority had little comment in this area but there were two extremes of opinion expressed. Some felt “we are trying to run before we crawl”, with more partners brought onboard before solidifying the base of operations. Some noted that the GBCO was overwhelmed and under capacity, the program lacked stable leadership, administration used too much funding, and there was a lack of a project inventory, whereas others commented that there was no issue with program coordination. One person remarked on the confusion concerning the MIS and the lack of a simplified two-page guide to its operation. In this evaluation’s discussions with the GBAP, the failing of this system has been fully recognized by the GBCO.

Q27 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Is there comprehensive monitoring and reporting on performance that allows management and staff to carry out their responsibilities and demonstrate results?	Performance measurement and reporting monitors and reports on program operations and outcomes.	☒

Findings

- a) A performance measurement framework was developed under contract but not put into operation.
- b) Interviews with 22 departmental staff and managers substantiated the lack of a systematic and rigorous performance measurement system. Some of their commentary said the MIS is a great idea but awkward to use; there are data accuracy and reporting issues; there is “no consistent reporting in results oriented format”; and there is no requirement to “plan for results”. They also noted that the project leads were reluctant to report to the MIS and did the bare minimum; one described the MIS as “a badly designed text data base”. Further comments were made that pointed to the lack of accountability between resource allocation and reporting on results and the fact that the measurement of results was “a celebrated success rather than the real state of the environment”. The GBAP overall was characterized by one respondent as operating with “...not much in the way of evaluation/assessment/request of what we have done with the money”. In those interviews only a couple of staff were satisfied with the MIS.
- c) In the survey of PTLs, 17 of 19 said there is sufficient useful information for managing and reporting on projects, and 15 said that the administrative requirements were minimal.
- d) There were no annual reports to link program impacts with adequate attribution; the one annual report that was produced in 2005 reported on only a small sample of projects (16 out of 77), with no statement on the status of the remaining projects that were funded by the GBAP.
- e) In summary, no rigorous performance measurement data were supplied by the program; therefore, it is also difficult to comment on attribution of program outputs to outcomes.

Q28 Evaluation questions	Statement of what should be observed	Rating
Who is accountable for the program? Are the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of all groups involved clear, defined, and commonly understood?	Roles, responsibilities and accountability are clearly defined in program management structure.	○

Findings

- a) A defined governance and management structure has been documented for GBAP; there is a steering committee, management committee, project implementation teams and

- coordination office, all of which have documentation of their roles and responsibilities.
- b) As well, EC and its partners for this project (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Parks Canada, British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, the British Columbia Ministry of Sustainable Management and First Nations and local government) all have their mandates and interests outlined under the GBAP framework for collaboration.
 - c) However clarity begins to dissipate due in part to the unbundling of the GBAP in 2005 as part of the priority ecosystem unbundling initiative. The one collective program has now been segmented across 10 OPGs and 22 OPPs.
 - d) Interviews with 22 EC staff and managers revealed widely differing opinions on the clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountability. The degree of clarity was sought at different departmental levels. Of those who had a definitive answer, three felt that it was well understood at a national level and six did not. At a regional level four said it was clear, three said it wasn't and three were mid-range. When asked as to whether this was clear for senior management, two said it was and four said it was not, while another said it was clear only internally. And, finally, with and amongst partners three respondents felt it was clear and four felt it was not clear.
 - e) Three of the four signatory partners commented on this aspect; two felt it was clear and one said definitely not.
 - f) The survey of 19 PTLs showed that 17 of the 19 found that roles were somewhat clear or partially clear or better. There were but two who questioned the clarity for them.
 - g) In summary, one can see the great dilution of clarity. The unbundling exercise certainly has made the participation and attendant roles and responsibilities more complex. Certainly, opinion is wide ranging and it is only the PTLs that perceive that for the most part, the roles and responsibilities of all groups involved in the delivery are clear and commonly understood by the parties involved.

2.4.1 Summary points for Design and Delivery

1. Certainly given the requisite departmental OPP/OPG structure, there are documented deliverables and results for the program. However, basic information such as an inventory of projects and their outputs as well as PTLs is not readily available. Communication of such information to PTLs is also an issue.
2. Some important gaps in the logic of the program exist (e.g., development/application of Priority Ecosystem Approach). These gaps cloud plausible attribution of outcomes.
3. There is no apparent systematic decision-making approach to project selection and resource allocation.
4. There is documentation of a risk management strategy but the extent of actual management actions on this is questionable. Moreover, there is no formal vision to date, partners are elusive and the unbundling is weakening connectivity to projects.
5. There is no apparent documented analysis of financial capacity requirements. There is no apparent need for additional financial capacity (in 2005–2006, actual vs. budgeted left a 22 percent surplus of funds). No data exist on human resources capacity analysis, although there seems to be a significant level of staff turnover in the GBAP office.
6. Theoretically, there appears to be a linkage between the program and the Department's strategic positioning/former CESF pillars.
7. In terms of partnerships, which is one of the principles of the program, an extensive survey of GBAP partners was planned for some 50 partners of the program; however, the survey was cancelled as only 13 partners could be successfully located. The evaluation was initially planned to have 5 focus groups with a total of 50 participants, composed of co-deliverers familiar with the GBAP; however, only one focus group with 10 participants could be assembled. No industry partners were identified by EC. Given that it was difficult to locate partners, there is an apparent issue with regards to reach for the program. This is especially problematic given that the program is based on partnerships.

8. There is no apparent documentation of a complete program design upon which to base an assessment of the actual delivery and thus comment on the consistency of program design versus delivery.
9. In terms of EC management and staff being supportive of the program, there are wide ranging opinions among staff on this issue. Surprisingly, there were problems finding the actual PTLs for GBAP projects; only 19 were successfully surveyed.
10. There is a management structure defined and operating. However, there is no extensive systematic decision-making approach/structure to ensure active links of the GBAP to management that would provide responsive support to the program.
11. In terms of accountability, a management structure was evident whereby a Board lead exists (ES Board), the OPG lead exists, and the OPP lead exists. However, there is no apparent documentation of a program design upon which to base an assessment of the actual delivery. Opinion is wide ranging and only the PTLs perceive that for the most part, the roles and responsibilities of all groups involved in the delivery are clear and commonly understood.

2.5 Other: DAEC question

This section deals with a question which was posed specifically by the Departmental Audit and Evaluation Committee when this evaluation was selected.

Q30 Evaluation questions
What lessons can be applied to the OPG (higher order question about approach)?

Findings

- a) The three senior managers responded in interviews concerning the commonalities and potential lessons learned that could be transferable from the GBAP. They stressed the uniqueness of each of the six geographically based departmental initiatives, citing the GBAP as being one of the best ones to integrate across the different environmental elements. Other commonalities mentioned include the “general feature of partnerships and collective needs being met through an integrated approach of partnerships” and the fact that “all work towards governance and shared objectives”. It was pointed out that the other initiatives “can benefit... in that they can learn from the strengths of the others”.
- b) There were two lessons-learned exercises done on the Department’s ecosystem initiatives: a deck on May 9, 2006, and a summary table on March 31, 2006. In both, the lessons and actions were summarized. No further documentation on the state of learning and actions based on such lessons has been found.
- c) In summary, one can only observe that the unification of lessons learned across ecosystem initiatives is challenging at best. The findings and observations that apply to the GBAP in this evaluation require close scrutiny for each of the other six initiatives as well as for the entire PE OPG. There is recognition of the commonality of lessons learned, but the extent of follow-up on that remains unknown.

2.6 Overview of Findings

Below is an overview of the findings in summary format according to the four main issues of relevance, success, cost-effectiveness and design and delivery.¹²

¹² For a summary of ratings by question, see Annex 3.

Relevance

1. The fundamental design elements which translate the principles of an ecosystem approach into a well-defined program structure are lacking (not adequately defined in documents both for Priority Ecosystems [PE] and for the Georgia Basin Action Plan [GBAP]).
2. There is evidence showing a role for government in this program area.
3. A valid role exists for the federal government, based on documents and interviews.
4. The public interest is served by the program; however, there is no apparent comprehensive and analytical examination of targeting reach, even though partnership constitutes one of the program principles. The unbundling process obfuscates the clarity and roles of a program such as the GBAP, an area-specific ecosystem initiative.
5. Theoretically there is a link associating this program with departmental outcomes from the OPP to the OPG, as well as Board outcomes and Board priorities.
6. Both documentation and staff interviews illustrate that there is a connection between this program and overall departmental strategic outcomes.
7. There is wide-ranging opinion on whether adjustments to the program are necessary to ensure better alignment with departmental priorities.
8. Due to a lack of relevant documentation, we cannot comment extensively on whether all OPPs within the scope of the OPG need to exist.
9. To answer the question of program duplication, EC staff universally does state that no duplication exists. This evaluation did not specifically engage other methodologies to consider program duplication.

Success

10. Given that documentation of outcomes and project deliverables was not readily available, comprehensive or complete, little to no objective evidence of outcomes exists. We find some success in achieving outcomes at a project level, anecdotally.
11. Neither rigorous nor systematic performance measurement data were supplied by the program; therefore, it is difficult to comment on attribution of program outcomes to outputs.
12. There is a potential implication for Canada's economic growth and competitiveness associated with the programs; however, this linkage is at the early stages and no definitive attribution/conclusions can be drawn. The GBAP's environmental results could not be readily demonstrated, making the further links to economic performance that much more tenuous.
13. Broad and wide-ranging unanticipated outcomes have been identified as occurring from the program based on interview comments.

Cost-effectiveness

14. Alternative delivery approaches were not specifically researched as part of the evaluation methodology and documentation on this does not exist.
15. Given that efficiency of a program is a calculation based on the amount of outputs generated by dollar of resources input, and we could not make such a calculation, the question of whether GBAP is efficient cannot be answered. This is problematic. It was found that there was no consistent or complete available listing of projects (and their outputs) for the GBAP. It was also found that the resources available were increasingly under-spent from FY2003–04 to FY2005–06. In the absence of performance reporting, success/effectiveness cannot be demonstrated. This brings cost-effectiveness/value for money into question.
16. Cost recovery is not an issue for this evaluation given that no specific clients receive

- custom benefits.
17. Given that no attribution between program activities/outputs and outcomes can be found, and in the absence of performance reporting, success/effectiveness cannot be demonstrated. Thus cost-effectiveness / value for money is brought into question, and the structure and ecosystem approach for PEs remain undocumented. All this leads one to conclude that there is no demonstrable evidence that Canadians are getting value for money.
 18. It is difficult to state whether the program is affordable.

Design and Delivery

19. Certainly given the requisite departmental OPP/OPG structure, there are documented deliverables and results for the program. However, basic information such as an inventory of projects and their outputs as well as PTLs is not readily available. Communication of such information to PTLs is also an issue.
20. Some important gaps in the logic of the program exist (e.g., development/application of Priority Ecosystem Approach). These gaps cloud plausible attribution of outcomes.
21. There is no apparent systematic decision-making approach to project selection and resource allocation.
22. There is documentation of a risk management strategy but the extent of actual management actions on this is questionable. Moreover, there is no formal vision to date, partners are elusive and the unbundling is weakening connectivity to projects.
23. There is no apparent documented analysis of financial capacity requirements. There is no apparent need for additional financial capacity (in 2005–2006, actual vs. budgeted left a 22 percent surplus of funds). No data exist on human resources capacity analysis, although there seems to be a significant level of staff turnover in the GBAP office.
24. Theoretically, there appears to be a linkage between the program and the Department's strategic positioning/former CESF pillars.
25. In terms of partnerships, which is one of the principles of the program, an extensive survey of GBAP partners was planned for some 50 partners of the program; however, the survey was cancelled as only 13 partners could be successfully located. The evaluation was initially planned to have 5 focus groups with a total of 50 participants, composed of co-deliverers familiar with the GBAP; however, only one focus group with 10 participants could be assembled. No industry partners were identified by EC. Given that it was difficult to locate partners, there is an apparent issue with regards to reach for the program. This is especially problematic given that the program is based on partnerships.
26. There is no apparent documentation of a complete program design upon which to base an assessment of the actual delivery and thus comment on the consistency of program design versus delivery.
27. In terms of EC management and staff being supportive of the program, there are wide ranging opinions among staff on this issue. Surprisingly, there were problems finding the actual PTLs for GBAP projects; only 19 were successfully surveyed.
28. There is a management structure defined and operating. However, there is no extensive systematic decision-making approach/structure to ensure active links of the GBAP to management that would provide responsive support to the program.
29. In terms of accountability, a management structure was evident whereby a Board lead exists (ES Board), the OPG lead exists, and the OPP lead exists. However, there is no apparent documentation of a program design upon which to base an assessment of the actual delivery. Opinion is wide ranging and only the PTLs perceive that for the most part, the roles and responsibilities of all groups involved in the delivery are clear and commonly understood.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS

The series of findings presented in section 2.0 leads one to conclude the following:

6. It is appropriate that the federal government be involved with these types of activities which preserve and protect the environment of Canada, as these activities both serve the public interest and respect the overall division of powers across governments.
7. However, the PE as well as the GBAP lack fundamental design elements which a program is expected to have, such as a vision and defined methodology for executing a Priority Ecosystem Approach (PEA), as well as criteria and systematic methods for the selection of activities. In addition, the elements of planning, implementing, monitoring, and reporting are not well carried out.
8. Partnerships constitute a principle for both the Priority Ecosystems and the Georgia Basin Action Plan; yet such extensive partnerships could not be located for the evaluation. The difficulty in securing this information indicates a problem for the program.
9. The financial basis of operations of the GBAP governance generates fundamental questions about how resources are used and linked to results. The activity costs some \$5.5 million annually. Some 78 percent of these costs are classed for salary and operations and maintenance with no further cost details readily available. Funds have not been spent as allocated, with some 10 percent, 7 percent and 20 percent of such funds identified as surplus at year end for the last three years.
10. The GBAP lacks a rigorous and systematic performance measurement of its operations, making analysis and plausible attribution to outcomes difficult.

Given that EC is a results-based focused organization and that GBAP has such elements ingrained in its structure, it might prove useful to discuss the conclusions of this evaluation based on this construct. The graphic depicting managing for results is outlined below in Figure 2.

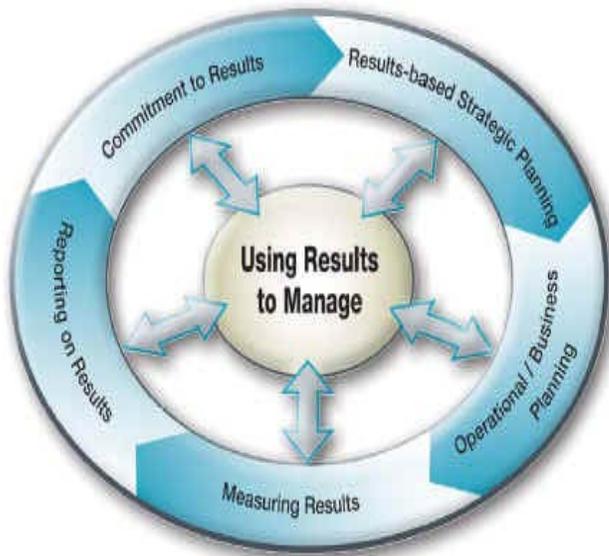


Figure 2 Figure 2: Managing for Results
 (Source: www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/account/transmod/tm02_e.asp#2)

In connecting these conclusions with the construct of results-based management, it appears that there have been some successful efforts to operate results at a Results-based Strategic Planning phase which is well linked to the high-level organizational objectives. Based on the evidence presented particularly in the relevance section, the need for the federal government, and specifically EC, is well supported in terms of jurisdiction and the public interest. However, the definition and actual operation of an ecosystem approach is so broad and non-exclusionary that the fundamental design elements of an ecosystem program remain illusive; its definition is unconstrained both in space and unbounded by technique. Continuing clockwise on the diagram, the next four phases prove troublesome.

The activities of operational/business planning—measuring results and reporting on them—all have significant deficiencies. It was not possible to trace a comprehensive trail from the initial project selection through to the delivery of its 77 projects. Active performance measurement is not implemented; in fact, even a basic inventory of projects, their leads, and expected and actual delivery of results is not available. Partners are the founding principles of ecosystem initiatives and the GBAP, yet many of the anticipated partners could not be found for surveys, interviews or focus groups. The program has never done an in-depth analysis of its reach, which is one of its critical building blocks.

In terms of the program expenditures, salary and O&M account for almost 78 percent of total program expenditures per year, with no further cost details readily available and Grants and Contributions account for between a fifth and a quarter of total program expenditures. Funds have not been spent as allocated, with some 10 percent and 22 percent of such funds identified as surplus at year end for the last two years. Given that no attribution between program activities/outputs and outcomes can be found, that no rigorous or systematic performance measurement is conducted and that the structure and ecosystem approach for PE remains undocumented, one must suspect that Canadians are not optimally getting value for money.

The last arc of the results circle is about reporting on results. This focuses on the reporting, in an integrated fashion, of results to Parliament. In that light, EC does have all the requisite vehicles for integrated reporting such as the Departmental Performance Report and the Report on Plans and Priorities. However, the GBAP as a program has serious deficiencies. The reporting on projects is anecdotal at best and the one annual report notes the highlights only of 15 selected projects and is silent on the remainder. The program's Management Information System is not regularly updated, and, according to some, not well designed. Clearly the reporting is devoid of completeness and comprehensiveness as well as regularity. Given this situation, the Department is not in a strong position to claim effective integrated reporting, at least for the Priority Ecosystems OPG.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusions, the following recommendations have been made:

RECOMMENDATION #1: Formalization of the Ecosystem Approach

Given that the Department has committed to an ecosystem approach, the lead of the Priority Ecosystems (PE) OPG along with the leads of the other ecosystem OPPs including GBAP should:

- a) Establish clarity on strategic planning and structural issues of the ecosystem approach. This should include clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities across OPGs, OPPs and unbundled OPPs, direction setting, methodology, outcomes, results structure and communications. The results should be reported to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval by January 2008.**
- b) Undertake a management review of all ecosystem initiatives to ensure appropriate performance measurement, reporting and associated accountability. This should be reported to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval by December 2007.**

The PE OPG and, specifically, the GBAP OPP need to seek greater precision on the vision as well as a tightened operational definition of what specific results are being sought by using an ecosystem approach, and put the vision and expected results into an operational program. This needs to be completed prior to consideration of the initiation of any new program development.

As well, the unbundling exercise has resulted in many projects no longer being reported as part of the GBAP OPP. The results of those now unconnected projects still do need to be monitored for results delivery. The need for the current structure and role of regional ecosystem initiatives as well as their functions with respect to the coordination of unbundled ecosystem initiatives' activities/results therefore needs to be closely re-examined. Given that the Department has a complete results-based management system, the unbundling exercise leaves only the governance issue under the PE OPG. The governance role with respect to the individual ecosystem OPPs and the OPG needs to be examined for possible streamlining and efficiencies.

The OPG should examine these results for the GBAP initiative in light of the other five ecosystem initiatives under its direction. This will be important given the development of a National Ecosystem Framework in EC (ES Board Deck March 2007) and fundamental to the design of departmental RBM programs. There is active discussion of an interim two-year extension of the current ecosystem initiatives followed by a renewal process in 2009–2010. However, the conclusions and recommendations of this report need close scrutiny and reflection in the context of that approach.

RECOMMENDATION #2: GBAP Implementation/Planning, Measuring and Reporting

The lead of the GBAP OPP, with support and coordination from the lead of the Priority Ecosystems OPG, should undertake actions to urgently deal with improvements to the

planning, measuring, and reporting systems outlined below by December 2007 and report those to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval.

The entire spectrum of planning, measuring, and reporting of results of the GBAP OPP needs to be rigorously documented and managed during the remaining timeframe of the GBAP (April 2008) whereby close tracking of all projects, results, and deliverables becomes readily available and actively used in program decision-making. A comprehensive listing of results achieved at the conclusion of GBAP is required so as to allow for a post-mortem assessment of value for money invested.

Given that the population being targeted by a program is crucial to achieving successful outcomes and that this was problematic for the GBAP, the OPP should do an in-depth analysis of reach and report on whether its planned versus actual reach was well-aligned and achieved during program delivery. Such an examination of reach by GBAP may also benefit other ecosystem OPPs as well as the overall OPG.

5.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

RECOMMENDATION #1: Formalization of the Ecosystem Approach

Given that the Department has committed to an ecosystem approach, the lead of the Priority Ecosystems (PE) OPG along with the leads of the other ecosystem OPPs including GBAP should:

- a) **Establish clarity on strategic planning and structural issues of the ecosystem approach. This should include clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities across OPGs, OPPs and unbundled OPPs, direction setting, methodology, outcomes, results structure and communications. The results should be reported to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval by January 2008.**
- b) **Undertake a management review of all ecosystem initiatives to ensure appropriate performance measurement, reporting and associated accountability. This should be reported to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval by December 2007.**

The PE OPG and, specifically, the GBAP OPP need to seek greater precision on the vision as well as a tightened operational definition of what specific results are being sought by using an ecosystem approach, and put the vision and expected results into an operational program. This needs to be completed prior to consideration of the initiation of any new program development.

As well, the unbundling exercise has resulted in many projects no longer being reported as part of the GBAP OPP. The results of those now unconnected projects still do need to be monitored for results delivery. The need for the current structure and role of regional ecosystem initiatives as well as their functions with respect to the coordination of unbundled ecosystem initiatives' activities/results therefore needs to be closely re-examined. Given that the Department has a complete results-based management system, the unbundling exercise leaves only the governance issue under the PE OPG. The governance role with respect to the individual ecosystem OPPs and the OPG needs to be examined for possible streamlining and efficiencies.

The OPG should examine these results for the GBAP initiative in light of the other five ecosystem initiatives under its direction. This will be important given the development of a National Ecosystem Framework in EC (ES Board Deck March 2007) and fundamental to the design of departmental RBM programs. There is active discussion of an interim two-year extension of the current ecosystem initiatives followed by a renewal process in 2009–2010. However, the conclusions and recommendations of this report need close scrutiny and reflection in the context of that approach.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

Over a year ago, the Environmental Sustainability (ES) Board called for a new EC ecosystem approach and a Priority Ecosystem Initiative Management Framework.

Under the leadership of the PE OPG, an Ecosystem Approach as a management model to environmental management was articulated in 2006 and presented to both ES Board (January 2007) and the Weather and Environmental Services (WES) Board (May 2007). The implementation of this approach is starting and will be done on a continuous basis using EC's management structure and planning process.

The PE OPG is also working, with participation from other OPGs, on a Priority Ecosystem Initiative Management Framework. The purpose of the framework is to:

- encourage the systematic, repeatable and defensible (1) selection of Priority Ecosystems and Priority Ecosystem Initiatives (PEIs) and (2) determination of EC's level and type of involvement (roles and responsibilities) from a range of possible levels; and
- present direction and basic guidelines for PEI planning, design, implementation, management and reporting in a nationally consistent manner, consistent with the Ecosystem Approach.

It is our intent that the framework, once developed, be applied to existing Ecosystem Initiatives, and to potential new ones, by March 2008. This should lead to a more common approach to selection, design and delivery of PEIs in the Department.

As they are progressively implemented, we are confident that these two initiatives should address most of the observed weaknesses related to recommendation 1(a): roles, responsibilities, direction setting, methodology, etc.

With regard to recommendation 1(b) a process has already been launched with the assistance of the Evaluation Division of the Audit and Evaluation Branch (A&E), and will be implemented to provide assurance to ES Board members that the issues noted in the evaluation with respect to the GBAP (presence of a management framework, appropriate information on performance, partners and projects) are being considered and addressed to the extent that they apply to other PEIs. This report will be provided to the ES Board by the end of October 2007.

Once available, the OPP leads will also be actively involved in the application of the PEI Management Framework to the existing PEIs (March 2008) and we strongly believe that this will have a very positive effect towards strengthening, overall, the governance and effectiveness of PEIs.

RECOMMENDATION #2: GBAP Implementation/Planning, Measuring and Reporting

The lead of the GBAP OPP, with support and coordination from the lead of the Priority Ecosystems OPG, should undertake actions to urgently deal with improvements to the planning, measuring, and reporting systems outlined below by December 2007 and report those to the Ecosystem Sustainability Board for approval.

The entire spectrum of planning, measuring, and reporting of results of the GBAP OPP needs to be rigorously documented and managed during the remaining timeframe of the GBAP (April 2008) whereby close tracking of all projects, results, and deliverables becomes readily available and actively used in program decision-making. A comprehensive listing of results

achieved at the conclusion of GBAP is required so as to allow for a post-mortem assessment of value for money invested.

Given that the population being targeted by a program is crucial to achieving successful outcomes and that this was problematic for the GBAP, the OPP should do an in-depth analysis of reach and report on whether its planned versus actual reach was well-aligned and achieved during program delivery. Such an examination of reach by GBAP may also benefit other ecosystem OPPs as well as the overall OPG.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE:

As a first step in response to the evaluation finding, the ES Board requested that all spending on the GBAP initiative except for select items or elements be suspended. This fall, the results of an analysis carried out by the OPG Leads and the Regional Director General, Pacific and Yukon Region on the planned path forward for the GBAP would be discussed with the Board.

The Georgia Basin Coordination Office (GBCO) has been tasked with establishing and implementing an action plan to urgently deal with improvements to the measuring and reporting of results and outcomes from the GBAP. A preliminary report will be tabled to the ES Board in December 2007, followed by a full report by April 2008. This same exercise will provide the material for a report that documents the outputs and outcomes of GBAP projects, and provides a final report on the 5-year program. This report is targeted for completion by April 2008 in order to provide meaningful summative reporting on the program's achievements.

The GBCO is also operationalizing the performance measurement framework developed in 2004, which provides measures related to outcomes identified in the GBAP logic model.

GBCO staff will undertake an analysis of reach, as they go forward, to document program activities, status, outputs and outcomes.

This analysis will be based on the Communication and Outreach Strategy for the GBAP that was developed through a concerted effort in 2004 and articulates the planned reach. This information will be collected and reported-on in the five-year wrap-up report.

Annex 1 Evaluation Framework

Issue	Question (7 Expenditure Review questions are bold)	Statement of what should be observed	Indicator What information	Source Where to find it
Relevance	1. Overall, does the program (and its outcomes) make sense in terms of the CESF?	Mission/raison d'être connects with final outcome (CESF)	Demonstration of the program connection with CESF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outcome Project Plans, Outcome Project Groups, Governance Board (OPP/OPG/Board) CESF documentation Program performance framework
	2. Role of government – Is there a legitimate and necessary role for government in this program area or activity?	Existence of private market failure or need to protect a perceived public good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of mandate to improve environmental quality which is deemed as a public good Facilitates inter- and intra-governmental relations (including federal/provincial/First Nations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental Performance Reports, Reports on Plans & Priorities (DPR, RPP) Program literature
	3. Federalism – Is the current role of the federal government appropriate, or is the program a candidate for realignment with the provinces/territories? How does this activity or program balance the need for coordinated Canada-wide action with the need for flexibility to reflect the diverse needs and circumstances of provinces/territories and regions?	The program is situated at the appropriate level of government without need for realignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration that program is linked to federal government priorities Federal government has constitutional jurisdiction Demonstration that program is linked to provincial/territorial government priorities Provincial government has constitutional jurisdiction Territorial government has jurisdiction Demonstration of consultation/consideration of provincial territorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution Act, 1867 Federal Speech from the Throne; Federal Budget Speech Provincial/territorial budget speech Provincial/territorial programs Consultations with provinces/territories Interviews

Issue	Question (7 Expenditure Review questions are bold)	Statement of what should be observed	Indicator What information	Source Where to find it
			organizations	
	4. What would be the consequences if the activity or program did not exist?	The program does or does not serve a recognized and needed function	Demonstration of the utility/rationale for program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPP/OPG/Board • RMAF; RBAF; Corporate Risk Profile • Interviews
	5. Public Interest – Does the program area or activity continue to serve the public interest? Is the program defined in terms of targeted client groups?	The program is connected with societal/ environmental needs	Reach is analyzed and targeted, and connected to societal/environmental requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPP/OPG/Board • Program literature • Interviews; surveys
	6. Does the planned work clearly contribute to delivering departmental outcomes (OPP, OPG & Board) and Board priorities?	The program is aligned with departmental outcomes and Board priorities	Demonstration of the direct outcome linkages with Board and departmental outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPP/OPG/Board, Board priorities • Program literature
	7. Are changes required to ensure alignment with current departmental priorities as well as the CESF? If yes, does the Program (OPP) and its activities address the need for such changes [e.g., mechanisms].	Refer to answers to questions 1 and 6. Program rationale addresses required changes if needed.	Demonstration of the need for change and response in program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPP/OPG/Board • Interviews
	8. Do all OPPs within the scope of the OPG need to exist?	There is sound/explicit rationale for all OPPs with regards to the OPG	Demonstration of the need for suite of OPPs within an OPG; explicit linkage of each OPP to its OPG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPP/OPG/Board interviews
	9. What are the closely connected existing programs and how is duplication avoided and	Program delivery does not duplicate other programs	Analysis of comparable programs as to duplication and complementarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on program design • Interviews

Issue	Question (7 Expenditure Review questions are bold)	Statement of what should be observed	Indicator What information	Source Where to find it
	complementarity achieved (including non-federal government programs)?			
Success	10. What has happened as a result of the program? Have any outcomes been achieved as a result of the program? What have been its environmental impacts?	The program shows results and outcomes	Documentation of outputs, documentation reports program impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program literature • Periodic reports on progress • Stakeholder/partner surveys
	11. What are the implications for Canada's economic growth and competitiveness?	The program may have impacts on Canada's economic growth and competitiveness	Economic reporting demonstrates links between this environmental program and economic growth and competitiveness specifically the value of natural capital and capital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic reports; quarterly statistics; Bank of Canada reports; DPR, OPP, OPG, Treasury Board (TB) submission
	12. Have there been any unintended results, either positive or negative, that can be attributed to the program? If so, how were they addressed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintended outcomes are present that can be attributed to the program • Actions to address unintended impacts are taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of impacts beyond that outlined in expected program design and delivery outcomes • Management determines actions to be taken given unanticipated results by maximizing the positive and mitigating the negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of partners/ stakeholders • Program management interviews • Review of program meeting minutes; correspondence
Cost-Effectiveness	13. Are there better ways of achieving the results? Have alternative programs been examined that might achieve the objectives and intended impacts and effects?	Alternative delivery methods have been analyzed	Demonstration of analysis of various delivery options/opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program design reports; case studies • Program management
	14. Efficiency – If the program or activity continues, how could its efficiency	Program or activity shows opportunity for efficiency increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration of analysis of cost over time in program delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost over time analysis • Costing details (e.g.

Issue	Question (7 Expenditure Review questions are bold)	Statement of what should be observed	Indicator What information	Source Where to find it
	be improved?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of analysis of cost profile of program 	salaries, operating costs, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program design literature; documentation
	15. Should the program or activity include a cost recovery element? If yes, does it?	Delivery of customized goods/services to the gains of niche audiences. A cost recovery mechanism is present; if applicable.	Demonstration of analysis of reach/outputs. Demonstration of financial analysis/reporting on cost recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program financial reports Documentation of cost recovery mechanisms, Program literature, program interviews
	16. Value for money – Are Canadians getting value for their tax dollars? Is the program or activity cost-effective?	The program shows value for money by demonstrating its cost-effectiveness	Demonstration of analysis of costs and impacts of program in its design and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost-effectiveness analysis/reporting Program financial reports, program literature
	17. Affordability – Is the resultant package of programs and activities affordable? If not, what programs or activities would be abandoned?	The program is financially affordable without the need to abandon components	Delivery options/opportunities documented; cost of program is benchmarked with comparable programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program design reports Case studies Interviews
Design & Delivery	18. Does the program identify clear deliverables and expected results?	Expected results and deliverables are clearly identified	Demonstration of the program's expected deliverables and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPP/OPG/Board Plans; reports; work plans; TB submissions
	19. Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with its mandate and plausibly linked to the outcomes in terms of clarity and attribution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities and outputs are linked with mandate and outcomes The attribution of outcomes to the program is plausible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation that describes program and links between mandate, activities, outputs and its outcomes Program design documents causality within the logic model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPG/OPP/Board Documentation of program design
	20. Are decision-making processes in place to allow for the	Allocation of resources is based on highest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection process for areas of importance are applied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation - meeting minutes; reports; plans;

Issue	Question (7 Expenditure Review questions are bold)	Statement of what should be observed	Indicator What information	Source Where to find it
	highest areas of importance to be reflected in the allocation of resources (priorities)?	importance and resourced according to priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria that are used to evaluate proposals, as to priorities and commensurately allocate resources are applied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate Risk Profile Interviews
	21. How has risk been addressed? Has a risk management strategy been developed? Is it adequate?	Risk is adequately addressed and managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks are identified with mitigating strategies Risk management strategy is present; and is robust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPP/OPG/Board Risk assessments; RBAF; Corporate Risk Profile
	22. Is there a clear and compelling analysis of capacity requirements? Are any proposals for increased capacity well justified?	Program capacity requirements are recognized; requests for program capacity increases are well-justified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstration of the program's capacity is commensurate with its design and delivery Demonstration of the analysis of need for increases in the program's capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPP/OPG/Board Documentation; TB Submission; RMAF
	23. Is there a clear link between program design and the CESF pillars (decision-making, information, science & technology, performance promotion and enforcement, and education and engagement)?	Appropriate strategies are present in program design	Demonstration of application of CESF Pillars to program design is clear and explicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPP/OPG/Board CESF Pillar Decks Program Management literature Minutes from management decision-making meetings
	24. Partnership – What activities or programs should or could be transferred in whole or in part to the private/voluntary sector? Have opportunities for partnerships with communities, voluntary sector and private sector been considered?	Partnerships have been explicitly and exhaustively explored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presence of documentation that stakeholders are involved; engaged; contribute resources where appropriate; jointly plan Partnerships have been analyzed and knowingly selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OPP/OPG/Board Survey stakeholders and partners; file review; reports on program design; interviews

Issue	Question (7 Expenditure Review questions are bold)	Statement of what should be observed	Indicator What information	Source Where to find it
	25. How consistent is the program or activity with its own proposed approach (has the program been delivered as designed)?	The program is consistent with and follows its defined approach/ methodology	Program design matches program delivery; any deviations are documented and well-justified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports on program design • Program management • TB submission
	26. Are Environment Canada management and staff, and partners, supportive of the goals and objectives for this program?	Program staff and delivery partners are aligned, comfortable and supportive of program design and delivery	Demonstration of staff/partner perspectives on design/delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with staff, partners
	27. Is there an established structure that provides for responsive management and logically supports the achievement of goals and objectives?	Program management structures align with program delivery	Management structure operates to support delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program literature • Minutes of program management meetings • Interviews
	28. Is there comprehensive monitoring and reporting on performance that allows management and staff to carry out their responsibilities and demonstrate results?	Performance measurement and reporting monitors program operations	Implemented and operating performance measurement information system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management information system • Interviews
	29. Who is accountable for the program? Are the roles and responsibilities of all groups involved clear? Is there an appropriate accountability framework (e.g. for multi-stakeholder agreements)?	Defined program management structure for program	Roles, responsibilities and accountability is clear and duly implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program literature • Minutes of program management meetings • Interviews

Annex 2

List of Contacts by Type

GROUP	METHOD APPLIED	NUMBER INITIALLY FORECAST	NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED	NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETIONS
OPSC/OPG/EC Board members	interview	4	4	3
EC staff and management	interview	15	28	22
Signatory partners	interview	5	4	4
Industry	interview	10	X ¹	0
First Nations	interview	15	17	7
Local government	survey	30		Changed to 8 interviews
Local government	interview	15	15	8
ENGO	interview			5
ENGO	survey	20		Changed to 5 interviews
Project partners and small business operators/associations	focus group	50	14	10
Project Team Leads	survey	35	27	19

SAMPLING PROBLEMS

Due to the lack of accessible, accurate and readily available contact information to develop the needed samples for all of the proposed methodologies, Elevate Consulting had difficulty in drawing sufficient numbers of stakeholders. As a result, some initially planned survey and focus group instruments could not be validly undertaken or were constrained in their size. In practice though, numerous obstacles were encountered in attempting to develop cohorts of local government, non-governmental, and industry respondents for interviews, survey samples and focus group participants. Furthermore, the Management Information System does not collect or report on any contact information for partners. Hence these cohorts must be developed by referral from PTLs, as they are the only owners of such information. Adding to this, responses to voicemails and emails were extremely slow. All combined, this resulted in a significant amount of time being spent in attempting to contact respondents and in seeking such referrals.

Much of the information provided in support of the evaluation was out of date or inaccurate. This was particularly evident with the Management Information System. In particular, a significantly lower number of “distinct” PTLs with completed or ongoing projects was encountered. Despite an initial identification of well over a hundred names listed as PTLs, there were actually fewer than 35. This discrepancy meant that the proposed sample frames for surveys, interviews and focus groups, as well as referrals to local government, First Nations, and non-governmental respondents, would not work as planned. Only 19 PTL survey

¹ No interviewees were identified by EC (GBCO) or by the PTLs.

completions were obtained from a targeted number of 30. Further, the low number of referrals from PTLs did not allow for some methodologies to be carried out. The surveys for local government and environmental non-governmental organizations, while successfully deployed, yielded only five and four completions, respectively—an insufficient number from which to draw any valid and reliable findings. The results of these two surveys have not, therefore, been included in this report. In addition, the low number of referrals also did not allow for the targeted number of interviews for local government representatives, non-governmental organizations, and industry to be completed. Indeed, not one industry contact could be identified for an interview. At the project's outset, there was a plan to hold 5 focus groups involving some 50 delivery partners however, the lack of participants narrowed the focus group to just one with 10 in attendance.

Annex 3

Summary List of Ratings by Questions

Below is a table showing the individual ratings based on judgement on whether the findings indicate no major problem (√) or a small problem (○) or a major problem (☒).

Out of the 28 questions raised in the evaluation framework, the GBAP had findings for 8 questions that were not a problem, 9 that constituted a small problem and 11 that were a big problem.

Question #	Not	Small	Big
		Problem	
1	√		
2	√		
3	√		
4		○	
5	√		
6	√		
7		○	
8			☒
9			☒
10		○	
11		○	
12		○	
13			☒
14	n/a	n/a	n/a
15			☒
16		○	
17			☒
18			☒
19			☒
20		○	
21			☒
22	√		
23			☒
24			☒
25	√		
26		○	
27			☒
28		○	
29	√		
TOTAL	8	9	11

Annex 4

Process by Which Contacts Were Made

Letter of invitation

GBAP Project Partners – formal and informal – Interviewees

Address

Dear _____:

Re: Evaluation of Georgia Basin Action Plan

We are writing to invite you to participate in an interview to assist in an evaluation of the Georgia Basin Action Plan (GBAP). Elevate Consulting has been contracted by Environment Canada to conduct this evaluation, and would greatly value your input from the perspective of a Project Partner with the GBAP.

As you know, the GBAP is a joint program of federal, provincial, local and aboriginal governments to strengthen the collective capacity to protect and restore the health of the Georgia Basin ecosystem while working cooperatively to provide economic opportunities and enhance human well-being. Environment Canada has committed to conducting a formative evaluation mid-way through the program (2005-2006) with the primary aim of assessing the degree to which the GBAP has become established and whether the program is operating as effectively and efficiently as possible within its evolving policy and budgetary context.

Elevate Consulting has been contracted by Environment Canada to conduct this evaluation, and would greatly value your input. Our evaluation will be based on data gathered from interviews, focus groups, surveys, case studies and a review of program documents.

We anticipate that our interview with you should take 45 to 60 minutes. We have attached the interview questions, so that you can review them in advance. Of course, your participation is voluntary and any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. All information will be reported in summary format only, without any connection to any individual comments.

Should you have further questions about this evaluation, please contact Mary Beth Berube, Manager of the GBAP, at 604-713-9528, or mary.beth.berube@ec.gc.ca. We will be contacting you very shortly to schedule a time that we can conduct the interview. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Bruce MacInnis

Elevate Consulting

Process to track contacts

Given Elevate's past experience and Mary Beth's willingness to assist in this matter, I would suggest that the following process be followed for those interviewees with contact information provided:

- One email from Elevate, followed up by a phone call to confirm that the email has been received.
- After two days, if no response, Elevate issue a follow-up email, with a cc to Mary

Beth.

- Mary Beth could then use that as a prompt to phone the individual in question and ask that the individual call Jess and either (a) schedule an interview, or (b) let her know why one cannot be scheduled. (I think it is important to separate those unfamiliar with the program from those who are simply unavailable, travelling, etc.)
- If there is no response to Jess within 2 business days, then Mary Beth would send the following email (cc'ing elevate) with the following:

I do not wish to unduly take up your time. I understand that you have recently declined to participate in the evaluation of the Georgia Basin Action Plan. Would you be so kind as to confirm whether:

- (a) you declined because you do not recognize GBAP or do not believe that your project is related to GBAP, or
- (b) you are simply not interested in the evaluation, but may have a connection to GBAP

Please *reply all* to this email and simply indicate (a) or (b) in the subject or body of the email. I sincerely appreciate your time in this matter.

Thank you, ...