

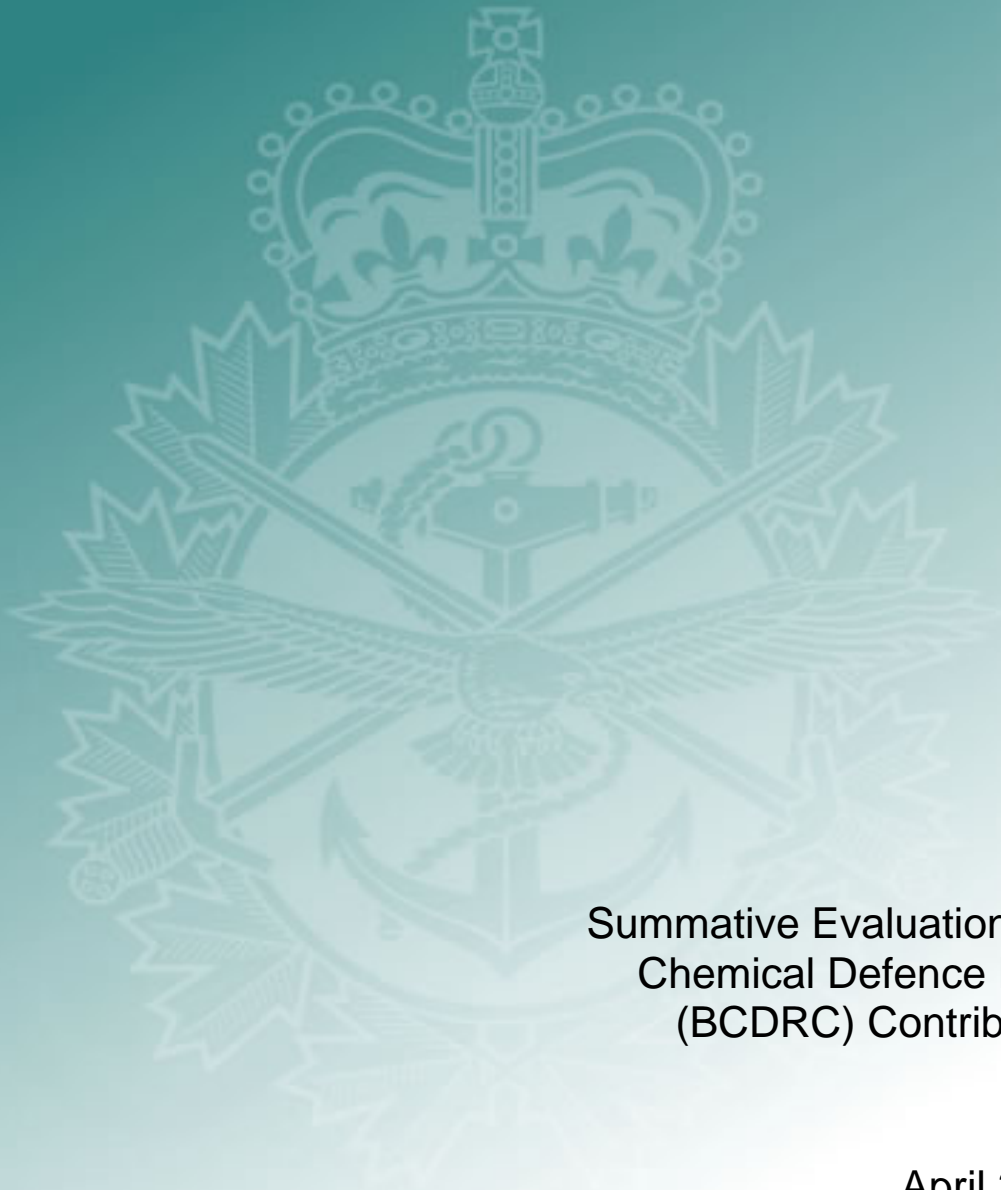


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Summative Evaluation of the Biological and
Chemical Defence Review Committee
(BCDRC) Contribution Agreement

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Canada 

Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	i
Results in Brief	ii
Introduction	1
Background	1
Objectives.....	1
Scope	1
Methodology	1
Description of Program	2
Findings	4
Relevance.....	4
Success	5
Cost Effectiveness	8
Recommendations	9
Annex A—Logic Model	A-1



Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADM(Pol)	Assistant Deputy Minister (Policy)
ADM(S&T)	Assistant Deputy Minister (Science and Technology)
ATI	Access to Information
BCD	Biological and Chemical Defence
BCDRC	Biological and Chemical Defence Review Committee
CF	Canadian Forces
DND	Department of National Defence
DSAB	Defence Science Advisory Board
FY	Fiscal Year
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters
RBAF	Risk-Based Audit Framework
RMAF	Results-based Management and Accountability Framework



Results in Brief

The Contribution Agreement between the Biological and Chemical Defence Review Committee (BCDRC) and the Department of National Defence (DND) expires on 31 March 2010. In accordance with Treasury Board's Policy on Transfer Payments, a summative evaluation is required to support the renewal of the terms and conditions of the program. The current contribution agreement covers fiscal years (FY) 2005/06 to 2009/10 inclusively, and provides annual funding of \$100,000 to the Committee for that period.

The scope of the review was limited to the period FY 2004/2005 to FY 2007/2008, so that data could be obtained for those completed years.

Key Findings

Relevance

The BCDRC continues to be relevant and important. Not only is the mandate of transparent reporting strongly supported by current government priorities, it also contributes to Canada's commitments to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. While there may be a perception that the risks of biological and chemical warfare are reducing, in actual fact the issues are becoming more complex and there remains a valid need to have this important capability.

Success

The BCDRC has been and continues to be a success. Since the Committee's inception ministerial inquiries related to biological and chemical defence (BCD) incidents have dropped considerably, although this is anecdotal from selected interviewees rather than being backed by firm data. There remain, nonetheless, ongoing ministerial inquiries related to legacy issues associated with chemical/biological exposures by veterans at various Canadian Forces (CF)/DND locations.

BCDRC is as independent as it is practicable, and has full authority to publish its annual report without influence or interference.

Cost effectiveness

Ninety-five percent of the annual BCDRC expenditure of \$100,000 is being spent on travel and per diem allowances and the remainder goes into report production. For this relatively modest expenditure, indications are that the Canadian public has confidence that DND/CF's BCD activity is legitimate and professionally conducted.

Overall Assessment

The BCDRC contribution is relevant and is supported by the Government's commitment to accessible transparent information on government programs. Although the original indicators assigned to the Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) of this program did not provide clear evidence of performance, when combined with a number of ancillary indicators, there is sufficient data to indicate this program is both performing well and is cost-effective in achieving the prescribed outcomes. This evaluation substantiates a continuation of the Contribution Agreement.



Introduction

Background

The current Contribution Agreement between the BCDRC and DND expires on 31 March 2010. In accordance with Treasury Board's Policy on Transfer Payments, an evaluation is required to support the renewal of the terms and conditions of the program. A summative evaluation of the contribution program with BCDRC was included in DND's Evaluation Work Plan for FYs 2008/09 – 2009/10.

Objectives

The evaluation objectives, based on the 2004 RMAF, were to assess:

- The **relevance** of the BCDRC in the following areas:
 - Does the scope and nature of biological/chemical defence-related activity in the DND/CF still require a transparency mechanism?
 - Is the Committee viewed as a useful mechanism by persons involved in biological/chemical defence activity?
 - Does the exchange of ideas/recommendations between experts assist the conduct of such activity as measured by interviews with key stakeholders?
- The extent to which the BCDRC was **successful** in achieving public confidence in Canada's BCD program and the extent to which the terms and conditions of the Contribution Agreement were met.
- The **cost effectiveness** of the contribution agreement between CF/DND and the BCDRC include:
 - Overall costs and benefits; and
 - Ratio of administration to operations costs.

Scope

The scope of the evaluation was focused primarily on four years: FY 2004/05 to FY 2007/08, although the period covered by the Contribution Agreement is 01 April 2005 to 31 March 2010.

Methodology

The following methods were used during the evaluation:

- Interviews with key stakeholders;
- Review of file documentation, such as departmental program management files, BCDRC annual reports, BCDRC expenditure data, the BCDRC website, and the Barton Report;¹
- Review of the 2005 Management Self-Assessment Evaluation Report;
- Review of the RMAF, the Risk-based Audit Framework (RBAF) and the Contribution Agreement between DND and BCDRC; and
- Analysis of other information obtained during the evaluation.

¹ Mr. William H. Barton Report, 1989.



As the BCDRC Contribution Agreement represents a relatively low dollar amount and low risk of failure, this evaluation was restricted primarily to an internal review process. An external survey of Canadian and foreign citizens to determine their confidence in the CF/DND's BCD activities was considered not cost-effective.

The RMAF, approved in 2004, was BCDRC's first document of this type and, while it provided some strategic guidance, certain parts of the Logic Model, the Ongoing Performance Measurement Strategy and the Evaluation Strategy were not fully aligned. This created a challenge in relating this evaluation to the 2004 RMAF; however, other measures and approaches were available to assess and evaluate the BCDRC. The Logic Model is attached at Annex A.

Description of Program

In 1988, the then-Minister of National Defence ordered an external review of DND/CF chemical and biological defence policies and programs in response to a number of public criticisms, some of which related to the lack of openness associated with these activities. The review was conducted by Mr. William H. Barton, formerly Canada's chief disarmament negotiator, and was released publicly in 1989. One of the key recommendations of the report was the establishment of an independent review committee to improve the transparency and openness of BCD activities within DND/CF.

The Minister accepted this recommendation and the BCDRC was subsequently formed in 1990 under the administration of the Defence Science Advisory Board (DSAB). Committee operations were supported by Vote 1 funds at that time. In 1997, the BCDRC was separated from the DSAB, and to strengthen the arm's-length relationship between the BCDRC and DND/CF a contribution agreement using Vote 10 funds to support the Committee's operations was established. The BCDRC is now wholly self-administering, although it reports administratively to the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff.

The BCDRC's mandate is to: review the CF/DND's BCD programs involving research, development, and training; assess whether these programs are defensive in nature; and determine whether they are conducted in a professional manner with minimal threat to the public or the environment. On an annual basis, the Committee selects two or three departmental and CF facilities for inspection and issues an independent, publicly accessible, report with their findings.

Under the current contribution agreement (FY 2005/06 to FY 2009/10), BCDRC receives \$100,000 per year (see Table 1). The Committee comprises a chair, two members and an executive officer. The chair and members have backgrounds in toxicology, chemistry or microbiology, and are paid a per diem of \$500. The executive officer receives a \$350 per diem.



Cost Element	Projected Expenditures by Fiscal Year				
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Per Diem – Chair	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
Per Diem – Members (2)	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
Per Diem – Executive Officer	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Administration Expenses	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Translation Costs	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Travel – Chair & Members	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000
Travel – Executive Officer	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
Totals	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000

Table 1. Contribution Agreement Projected Expenditures by FYs: 2005/06 – 2009/10.

Findings

Relevance

The BCDRC continues to be relevant to government priorities and supports international treaties.

Since the creation of the BCDRC, the policies of Canada towards BCD activities have remained consistent in that they are to be defensive in nature and serve only to better protect Canadians. Government priorities also include the open and transparent provision of information regarding activities. In addition to supporting these objectives, the BCDRC also provides an independent and transparent review that strengthens Canada's participation in the international Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction.

This Convention states that “each state party undertakes never in any circumstance to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain:

1. microbial or other biological agents or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, or types in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes; and
2. weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.”

The Convention also requires signatory states to demonstrate compliance. The BCDRC is one method that demonstrates Canada's compliance with the Convention and in doing so it supports the DND Program Activity Architecture Element “Contribute to Canada and the International Community.” More specifically it supports the two Sub-Activities Contributing to Canadian Government and Society and the International Community in accordance with Canadian Interests and Values.

Success

The BCDRC successfully provides open and transparent access to information related to Canada's BCD activities.

The Logic Model, (Annex A) developed as part of the 2004 RMAF, identified three immediate outcomes and one final outcome as shown in Table 2.

A number of the measures and indicators reflected in the RMAF, however, were not helpful in determining the success of BCDRC. It will be important in the next Logic Model to develop measures that are more related to the outcomes and that are more measurable.

Ancillary Measures of Success—Operational and Administrative

To augment the RMAF indicators, a number of ancillary measures were developed to indicate BCDRC's success in achieving its immediate and long-term outcomes.

Operational

- The operations of the Committee are at arm's length from those conducting the activities under review;
- Committee members are credible in their respective fields of expertise;
- The Committee has access to facilities/staff relevant to their mandate;
- Committee members are not in positions of conflict of interest;
- The Committee's report is not subject to DND/CF approval;
- The BCDRC report is openly accessible to the public; and
- Recommendations made by the BCDRC are tracked, kept open until resolved to the Committee's satisfaction and the departmental/CF response to the Committee is also made public.

Administrative

- Direct Costs – actual annual amount expended by BCDRC for travel, per diem, administration including funds required for audit and evaluation if required;
- Indirect Costs – estimated time required by program manager for Committee administration and cost of website management and maintenance costs; and
- Committee responsiveness – timely delivery of annual reports.

Based on the original RMAF and ancillary measures the evaluation assessed performance against each of the immediate outcomes. Through a roll-up of these outcomes an assessment of success in achievement of the targeted ultimate outcome was also possible.



Immediate Outcomes

- Public and international community informed of BCD program compliance and safety
 - This outcome is achieved through annual reports that address both compliance and safety. The reports are published on the Internet with easy access through different searches.
- Independent source of information on program available to the public
 - The annual reports are easily accessible to the public. Independence of the information is achieved through the BCDRC's being comprised of internationally recognized experts in the field who have no other connection to the CF/DND. They operate at arm's length from DND and their reports are issued as submitted for publication.
- Immediate feedback to involved stakeholders from Committee experts
 - In addition to publishing reports on the Internet, members of the BCDRC provided direct feedback to the primary stakeholders within DND. This was verified through interviews with those stakeholders.

In addition to the evaluation data review, the prime stakeholders of the BCDRC were asked to assess the BCDRC performance in relation to the immediate and ultimate outcomes. Their assessment included each outcome being measured on a scale from “Not at all Successful” to “Indispensable.” The results are shown in Table 2.

Outcome Assessed	Stakeholder	Rating
Immediate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and international community informed of BCD program compliance and safety; • Independent source of information on program available to public; and • Timely feedback to involved stakeholders. 	BCDRC Chair and members	Very Successful – especially when dealing with DND/CF
	ADM(S&T) staff	Very Successful
	NDHQ Secretariat staff	Very Successful
	ADM(Pol) staff	Successful to Very Successful
Ultimate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCD activity is legitimate and professionally conducted. 	BCDRC Chair and members	Very Successful
	ADM(S&T) staff	Very Successful
	NDHQ Secretariat staff	Very Successful
	ADM(Pol) staff	Indispensable

Table 2. BCDRC Success Measured through Stakeholder Assessment.

Ultimate Outcome

- Public Assured DND/CF BCD activity is legitimate and professionally conducted
 - Since undertaking a survey of the public to determine achievement of this outcome would be very expensive in relation to the program cost, the assessment was based on the number of program queries received. The evaluation placed particular emphasis on ministerial inquiries and Access to Information (ATI) requests as they tend to reflect levels of concern or dissatisfaction with easily available information on BCDRC. Since 1999, there have been only two ATI requests relevant to the CF/DND BCD activities and approximately 200 ministerial inquiries were received during the term of this Contribution Agreement. The reviewed inquiries relate primarily to legacy claims concerning chemical/biological exposure at various CF/DND locations. From these results, it can be reasonably concluded that the public has little to no concern with the legitimacy or professionalism of Canadian BCD activity since the inception of the BCDRC. As the original concerns that led to the Barton Report were based on a lack of transparency of BCD activities, it can be inferred that the continued publication of open reports is a contributor to the achievement of the ultimate program outcome.

When key stakeholders were asked to rate the extent to which they believed BCDRC was successful in meeting its immediate and ultimate outcomes, both outcomes were measured on a scale ranging from “Not at all Successful” to “Indispensable.” The results portrayed in Table 2 reflect positively on the program.

Comments obtained through interviews and questionnaires also served to indicate the degree of BCDRC’s success. The following quote is indicative of the comments received:

“The review activities which BCDRC provides to the DND/CF in BCD operations are indispensable. They provide a depth of assurance to the public which the DND/CF was previously unable to provide. Among other things, BCDRC has been able to demonstrate to the public, through an open and transparent approach, that the DND/CF is undertaking BCD research in a responsible and ethical manner. As well, they build confidence within the international community that Canada is compliant with its treaty obligations. The advice and expert opinions provided to DND/CF stakeholders regarding our activities have improved the quality of our BCD programming activities.”

During the evaluation, it was observed that the BCDRC annual reports often repeated comments on the implementation of recommendations from one year to the next. It would be helpful to the reader to know which comments are repeated, and which ones are new to the current annual report.

Cost Effectiveness

As shown in Table 3, BCDRC is very cost-effective in managing program funding and provides excellent value for the money expended.

Expenditure Element	Actual Expenditures by Fiscal Year			
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Per Diem – Chair	10,500	11,000	10,500	10,500
Per Diem – Members (2)	18,000	10,500	18,000	18,000
Per Diem – Executive Officer	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000
Administration Expenses	185	438	613	130
Translation Costs	0	2,300	3,604	749
Travel – Chair & Members	26,598	18,025	26,077	24,906
Travel – Executive Officer	11,624	10,011	6,937	10,399
Totals	101,907	87,274	100,731	99,684

Table 3. BCDRC Expenditures Summary – FY 2004/05 to FY 2007/08.

The BCDRC provided unaudited financial statements, along with all other requested financial records. A sample of the transactions underlying the BCDRC financial statements was examined and nothing indicated that the financial records were not in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the Contribution Agreement, Treasury Board Guidelines and Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The records indicate a well-managed program with a high percentage of spending on operations and relatively low expenditures on administration. In researching potential alternatives on delivering the outcomes, no other method could meet the same objectives at the same or lower cost.

Comments obtained through interviews and questionnaires reinforced this deduction:

“In terms of value for money, BCDRC brings together a very select group with known expertise to review CF/DND BCD research, development and training activities to ensure they are strictly defensive in nature. It is not possible for the CF/DND to provide either in perception or reality a truly independent assessment of these activities. The yearly funding agreement of \$100K is similar to an insurance policy—you pay a small premium for a truly rigorous, transparent and open assessment, which ensures both the Canadian public and international community has confidence in the Canada’s BCD activities.”

Recommendations

Success

A number of the measures and indicators reflected in the RMAF were not helpful in determining the success of BCDRC. It will be important in the next Logic Model to develop measures that are more related to the outcomes and that are more measurable.

During the evaluation, it was observed that the BCDRC annual reports often repeated comments on the implementation of recommendations from one year to the next. It would be helpful to the reader to know which comments are repeated, and which ones are new to the current annual report.

Note: The recommendations to improve management of the BCDRC program are not significant enough for directed action through a Management Action Plan.



Annex A—Logic Model

Biological and Chemical Defence Review Committee (BCDRC) Program

