



Canadian Environmental
Assessment Agency

Agence canadienne
d'évaluation environnementale



Public Service Renewal

DECEMBER 1, 2016

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
Blueprint 2020 Progress Report

Canada

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Ron Hallman
President

It is our pleasure to provide the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency's (the Agency) Blueprint 2020 year three progress report.

Following the launch of the Blueprint 2020 (BP2020) initiative, the Agency has taken action to increase the sharing of innovative ideas, encourage employee engagement, and promote a more open, collaborative and inclusive culture. Over the past three years, there are a number of programs and events that have been put in place, which align with BP2020 principles.

In year one, a social media strategy was developed and implemented to further engage and enhance information sharing with Canadians. For the first-time ever, we established a Twitter presence for the Agency. This has proven to help reach Canadians, including Indigenous groups, and involve them in projects that are part of the federal environmental assessment (EA) process.



Brigitte Schryer
BP2020 Champion

In year two, our activities focused heavily around employee engagement. Our employees, through the Public Service Employees Survey (PSES), identified promotion and retention as areas requiring more attention from Management. One of the issues identified was access to second-language training as a barrier to advancement. In response, we developed a more coherent and integrated language training and maintenance program. Additionally an in-house peer coaching program was implemented in response to those employees who expressed a desire to hone skills during their daily work in support of career development and advancement.

As year three culminates, we are happy to report that the Agency has successfully implemented initiatives across several areas. In October, the Agency launched an innovative project management tracking and repository system called the Environmental Assessment Management System (EAMS). As a keystone project highlighted in our report, EAMS was developed to consolidate EA data and documents into a single repository. The Agency is now positioned to deliver better information on the EA process to colleagues and Canadians.

We are pleased to share with you our report outlining our BP2020 accomplishments. This report demonstrates that we have a sustainable organization with a flexible workforce that has proven capable of responding to complex challenges and implementing innovative changes. Our people remain our greatest asset and we are proud of #TeamCEAA's achievements creating a more open, collaborative and innovative public service.

“ Our people remain our greatest asset and we are proud of #TeamCEAA's achievements creating a more open, collaborative and innovative public service. ”

INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the initiatives undertaken by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) in the context of Blueprint 2020 and covers three specific areas as follows:

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES

RECRUITMENT AND ONBOARDING

OTHER ACTIONS TO RENEW THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The initiatives outlined within the report have been completed or are ongoing workplace initiatives for our Agency.

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES

Mental Health Strategy

The federal public service workplace mental health strategy is an important first step in the Government's efforts to build a healthy, respectful, diversified and supportive work environment that strengthens the public service.

In 2016, the Agency's Human Resources and Senior Management Committees endorsed the Agency Action Plan on Mental Health. The Plan includes current and future activities that the Agency is taking action to implement. For example, Mental Health First Aid training was provided to staff in both official languages in June and July. In early 2017, there will be two Joint Learning Program sessions on Mental Health offered in both official languages.

To support and implement the Agency Action Plan on Mental Health, an Agency Joint Committee on Mental Health was launched in November. The central role of the Joint Committee is to support the implementation of the Agency Action Plan on Mental Health. The committee, comprised of representatives from all sectors of the Agency (management, bargaining units, regions and employees) will work together to provide input and identify tools that best support Agency employees in having positive mental health in the workplace.

The Human Resources Division is working with Agency sectors to include a session on Mental Health and Resiliency in sector retreats. This initiative provides an opportunity to engage with employees and incorporate mental health considerations into existing Agency training. As an illustration, the syllabus for the Agency's training course called "Interest Based Negotiation" was expanded to include mental health considerations. This course assists employees that represent the Agency during in-person consultations or meetings and positions them to receive feedback from a wide-array of stakeholders and interest groups. In some cases, engagement activities concerning EAs of projects can become challenging to manage

and we are working to ensure employees are prepared and equipped to deal with these situations.

Wellness Blog

The Agency is committed to promoting a culture where employees take the time to reflect on their personal wellness and take action to develop healthier lifestyles and work habits.



The Agency has an active Workplace Wellness and Mental Health Champion, Kirstan Gagnon, who is leading initiatives to create and sustain a positive and healthy workplace.

In August, an Agency Wellness Blog was launched as a vehicle for sharing tips and best practices, as well as tools and resources. Blog posts focus on personal reflections about work-life blend, tips to reduce stress and positive leadership practices at work. While there is a core Blog Team, all employees are welcome and encouraged to contribute. A key goal of this initiative is to help reduce the stigma around mental health issues by having employees share their personal experiences.

The Agency has also developed a section dedicated to workplace wellness on its Intranet site. This section houses information on a wide range of wellness topics, including information about workshops and information sessions offered by the Canada School of Public Service on Mental Health.

In collaboration with a speaker from the Federal Speakers' Bureau on Mental Health, our Champion presented on the importance of mental health at the Agency's Senior Management Committee in November. The presentation focused on ways leaders can help create a culture that enshrines health, safety and well-being in all aspects of the workplace. Our managers want to lead by example. The Agency is working to ensure they are equipped with the right tools and resources to encourage positive mental health habits within their teams.



Wellness Walk



CEAA celebrates National Public Service Week

RECRUITMENT AND ONBOARDING

Recruitment

The nature of the Agency's work requires the recruitment of specialized employees that are in high-demand in the private sector. This, in combination with the fact that projects are driven by economic market conditions, can mean that workloads and required staffing levels are difficult to predict. This affects the Agency's ability to recruit and retain employees in various regions of the country. To promote greater stability, several strategies have been implemented.

challenges and, in some instances, a potential hiring opportunity through the "bridging" provisions of the Federal Student Work Experience Program.

In turn, these initiatives help with retention by ensuring workloads can be more evenly distributed among staff and that all employees are playing a role in their own development at various levels of the organization.



CEAA welcome and orientation for new employees

The Agency extensively recruits students and recent graduates for the development of operational policy and the conduct of environmental assessments (EA). The work is organized in a way that allows the students to gain experience with EAs while meeting concrete work objectives. The two work units responsible for these recruits invest in their early development by setting and adapting work objectives, organizing hands-on training and skills development opportunities, and through ongoing mentoring. These work units have become feeder groups for the Economics and Social Science and Physical Science groups across the Agency which allows these students to take on new

Onboarding

With the coming into force of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012), the Agency became the responsible authority for most federal EAs. As a result, the Agency has significantly invested efforts in training, knowledge sharing and skills development for new employees and recruits. The Agency is progressively implementing three key strategies to address the onboarding of new employees: adapting the federal EA training curriculum, refreshing the EA Practitioners Portal, and developing a general welcoming and orientation approach.

The federal EA training curriculum, offered to external clients by the Agency approximately three times a year, is also the primary vehicle for facilitating the early engagement of new Agency employees. This training builds understanding of CEAA 2012, which is the legislation that guides the Agency's work. This training includes an introduction to the legislation, processes and content of an EA under CEAA 2012. Employees also benefit from an updated introduction course, which deals with Agency policies and procedures for Indigenous engagement during EAs. The Agency is in the process of piloting an online training package.

"Knowledge transfer is at the heart of the Agency's collaborative approach to operational readiness and enables the best use of available talent."

Knowledge transfer is at the heart of the Agency's collaborative approach to operational readiness and enables the best use of available talent. One way of sharing information is through the Environmental Assessment Practitioners Portal. The portal makes key knowledge and information available to Agency employees in a convenient and easy to find way. The Portal includes research reports, tools, guidance documents and training material, and is updated on an ongoing basis. This resource keeps Agency employees up-to-date and also facilitates the onboarding of new project managers and analysts. Additional features are being considered to better inform new and current employees of ongoing operational policy work and recent additions.

In addition, the Agency is considering options for a more general orientation package in response to the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) 2014 results. This may include, for example, exploring shadowing opportunities and site visits, making mentors and electronic resources available to staff, and providing new employees with more structured, in-person orientation sessions.



OTHER ACTIONS TO RENEW THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Response to Public Service Employee Survey 2014

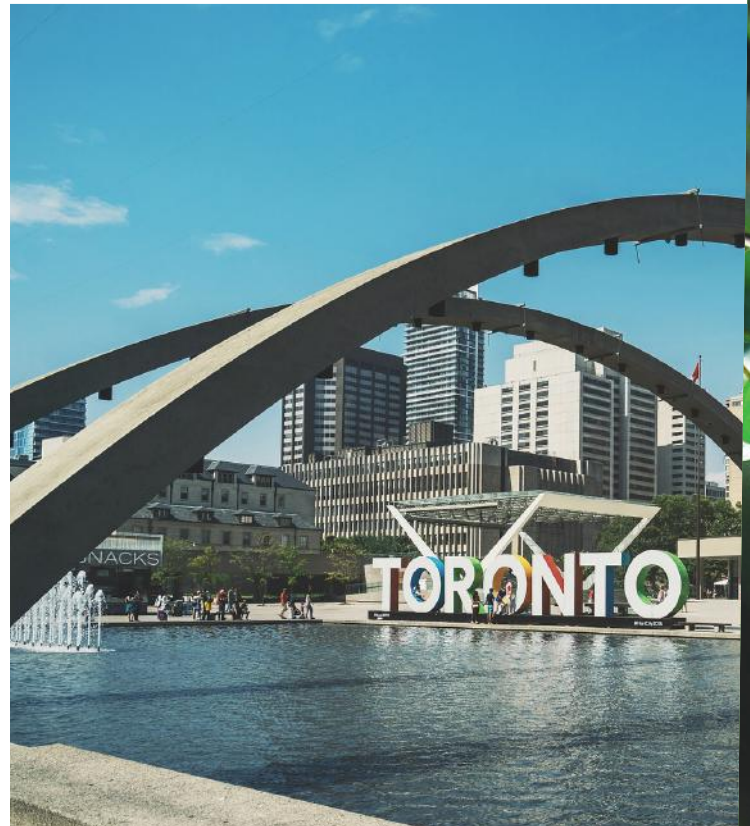
As a result of feedback collected from the PSES 2014, Agency managers and supervisors formed a cross-sector forum to share information and experiences and build an action plan for addressing the feedback received. Led by two co-chairs elected by its members, the forum allows new managers and supervisors to share and identify common issues and possible solutions (e.g. common training needs); as well as communicate items that may benefit from the attention of senior management (e.g. with the goal of nurturing a culture of innovation).

As part of the PSES 2014 action plan, the Agency identified themes and team leads were tasked with addressing issues within each theme. These included working on the following areas: Initiative and Efficiency; Information Flow; Workplace; and Career and Performance.

The Agency also made use of “Expose and Explain” sessions and working groups to identify issues and solutions to create efficiencies. This has led to more streamlined and modern processes and procedures across several teams. For example, the Agency implemented a new docket approval process, revamped its media approval process, developed an internal communications process and streamlined its media buy and invoicing process.

Regional Stakeholder Engagement

The Agency is headquartered in Ottawa with regional offices across Canada. Employees are encouraged to adopt practices that foster engagement, openness and collaboration within the public service and with external stakeholders in all locations across the country. This is exemplified in a yearly practice by the Ontario Regional Office in Toronto. Outside of their regular business activities, the Regional Office invites industry stakeholders and government colleagues to meet their team, ask questions and learn about their work. This promotes positive relationship-building between stakeholders and staff while raising awareness about the Agency’s mandate.



Ontario Regional Office hosted Industry open house

Employee Retention Activities

Coffee with the President

Established in April 2014, “Coffee with the President” is a unique outlet for Agency employees to engage with the President and discuss questions and concerns in a casual setting. It has proven to be a positive networking opportunity for employees at all levels of the organization. Held every two months, Coffee with the President allows employees across different sectors and regions to engage with one another and exchange their experiences and thoughts on topics relevant to the Agency and the broader public service.

This activity is aligned with the BP2020 plan to improve and develop networking activities, and encourage healthy people management and relationships between employees and executives. This event incorporates a group selfie that is posted to Twitter following each session. This helps make the tone of the event more personal and collegial, and encourages participants to develop interpersonal relationships with their colleagues and members of the Agency’s Senior Management Team.

The President and vice-presidents reach out to new employees upon the start of their responsibilities to welcome them to the Agency. The executive team, including the President, frequently checks in with employees by doing walk-arounds and planning visits to regional offices in conjunction with other Agency related travel.





"Working in the Innovation Hub with the IN•spire team was a positive and enjoyable experience, but becoming a Mobile Video maverick by learning how to use the Mobile Video Production Kits was the real icing on the cake," Carley Spencer, Communications Officer.

New technologies and Innovation

In March 2016, the Agency's Carley Spencer completed a three-day Micro Mission at Natural Resources Canada. This Micro Mission promoted a symbiotic relationship in that both the students (the participants) and the teachers (the IN•spire team) benefitted from this Micro Mission. Upon returning from her micro mission, Carley shared her experience with Agency staff members, who in turn got to learn best practices for shooting, editing, converting, and posting mobile videos to GCpedia. They also got to assemble the Mobile Video Production Kits (MVP) and disassemble them again. In return, the IN•spire team was able to complete a number of videos that they otherwise may not have had the time to finish and they got to spread the word on their mandate and the benefits of the MVP Kits.

This was a positive learning opportunity and encouraged Agency employees to be innovative and to explore the filmmaking process. Given government communications teams are encouraged to be more "digital by default", this learning experience allowed staff to bring their knowledge back to the organization so it could further develop its digital capacity.

As a result, MVP kits were procured by the Agency's Communications Division in November. These kits will be available to assist in the development of digital and shareable content for use in communications activities across multiple platforms. This will help document and share information about the Agency's business activities with Canadians.

The Agency Coaching Program

The Agency implemented an in-house coaching program to enhance employees' opportunities for career development and advancement in a small, structurally flat, organization.



CEAA President, Ron Hallman drops in for a chat with our in-house certified coach Bruce Morgan.

The Agency Coaching Program promotes confidence and healthy behavioural habits, which in turn, allows the employee to feel more comfortable and confident in their responsibilities at the Agency. The coaching program seeks to ask strategic questions to participants, in order to help them identify their challenges, and resolve them through self-reflection and action. The feedback received from this initiative has been extremely positive.

"The program allows employees to grow within the Agency without having to move into another position," said Bruce Morgan.

Since its inception, the Agency's coaching program has become an integral part of the Agency's approach to supporting and developing its people as they travel their professional journey.

To address feedback received on the need for more second language training opportunities, the Agency implemented a language maintenance and training program. This program consists of employees helping other

employees maintain and improve oral expression skills in their second language. By coaching one another, each employee benefits from the opportunity to broaden their views while interacting with someone of a different linguistic culture.

"Part of being an employer of choice means providing learning and development opportunities for our staff so that they can pursue a rich and challenging career. And the Agency's coaching program does just that!"
Ron Hallman, President.

The Next Generation Committee

The Next Generation Committee is an Agency-wide committee launched in 2015, championed by Anjala Puvananathan, Regional Director of the Ontario Region. The committee's raison d'être is to facilitate ideas that foster innovation and sustainability within the Agency, and engage in discussions to support career development. The young and enthusiastic members of the committee have developed "quick start ideas" for Agency-wide workshops on topics such as "Managing Careers" and "Managing Performance Discussions."

The Next Generation Committee, made up of employees from across the Agency, is active in bringing a sense of renewal to the Public Service through its focus on youth, innovation and results. The committee strives to continue fostering collaboration and hopes to remove generational and governance "silos" to create a more modern organization, which can be defined as a boundary-less organization that networks and collaborates more than ever before. Looking into the future, it will be important for the Agency to be well positioned for rapid innovation and possible change given the review of federal EA processes that is currently underway.



Next Generation Committee

In 2016, the Next Generation Committee launched "Innovation Talks", which is a series of workshops that showcase an array of topics. The first Innovation Talks took place in June during National Public Service Week. Employees were invited from across the Agency to share a five minute piece on an idea that has the potential to positively impact the work or culture of the organization. The topics presented included: limiting paper consumption; highlighting the Agency Coaching Program; encouraging employee engagement on Twitter; Indigenous consultation; the use of technology in EA; and Staffing 101 (onboarding new employees). Employees that attended provided positive feedback on the initiative and further Innovation Talks will be planned in the future.

Environmental Assessment Management System

The Agency's mandate is to provide high-quality EAs that contribute to informed decision-making, in support of sustainable development. An EA includes many legislative steps in the process, including opportunities for public and Indigenous engagement.



All of the activities around EAs require staff to track activities and milestones to ensure that adequate resources are in place to meet legislative requirements, including timelines. This includes the need to track and document the information received as a result of consultations with Canadians, including Indigenous groups, to ensure that feedback is integrated into EAs. The Agency also has tracking and reporting requirements, including the need to identify trends and conduct analysis for planning purposes that is in line with the objectives of BP2020 and continuous improvement.

To address these requirements, the Agency recently launched a new application to facilitate the management of EA project information and processes that uses the Shared Case Management System hosted by Public Services and Procurement Canada. This application enables the management of legislated timeframes and the planning of project activities, as well as an efficient means of capturing, retrieving and analyzing project information. Known as the Environmental Assessment Management System and Project Repository (EAMS), the application integrates key information in a central location, such as contact management lists, EA project information, Indigenous consultation information, participant funding tracking sheets, and communications and issues logs. Previously, this information was stored in disparate locations, repositories, documents and spreadsheets.

EAMS was officially launched in October 2016. This new approach to managing information is expected to increase the Agency's strategic knowledge of its business and better position it to deliver on its mandate.

Communications

The Agency developed a three-year communications plan, including a social media strategy, to guide communications activities and priorities in support of key business streams. The Plan focuses on ensuring the Agency is more "digital by default" while ensuring it has a cohesive and coordinated approach in the way it serves Canadians.

The Agency's social media presence on Twitter provides a vehicle to engage with Canadians, stimulate employee engagement, and encourage inter-departmental interaction through a widely-recognized and accessible platform. Agency activities and employee accomplishments are shared through both the President's Twitter account and the Agency's corporate accounts. The Agency plans to continue developing its social and digital presence to ensure information is shared broadly with Canadians. In 2016, the Communications Division has made important progress towards making digital content more engaging and social with an increased use of "shareables", including infographics and videos. Progress has also been made on ensuring that content is more accessible, including the increased use of plain language.



In December 2016, the Agency officially moves its website over to Canada.ca as part of the Treasury Board Secretariat's cross-government web renewal initiative. The Agency was one of the first organizations to onboard onto the new platform and viewed this as an opportunity to build a central website where Canadians can more easily find information about government services and programs.

The Agency provides the public with a single window access point to records related to EAs through an online public Registry. Over the past year, the Agency has made important progress towards providing greater online access to records through the online public Registry. For a number of EAs, increasing the records it posts has proven to support more open, transparent and meaningful participation. Moving forward, the Agency will continue its efforts to explore innovative approaches to further increase access to online information and records related to federal EAs which aligns with BP2020 principles.

Agency Research Program

The Agency also encourages innovation through its research program. An annual call for proposals allowed Agency senior management to select the most promising ideas and test them through research activities, such as knowledge synthesis, advisory processes, and case-study analysis. Six research concept proposals were received in 2016. Of these, five proposals were approved and research is being completed in 2016-17. As an example of one of these projects, the Agency has commissioned an inventory and analytical report of existing community-based environmental monitoring activities. This will provide useful information to inform the design and implementation of follow-up programs put in place for projects that receive environmental assessment approval to proceed.

The research program allows the Agency to capture learning and progress in the area of EA. The research is conducted through collaborative partnerships, which includes engaging employees and engaging knowledge-holders both internally and externally. This has resulted in the ability to provide solid guidance to EA practitioners on complex issues which aligns with BP2020 principles.



We need to **Live**

the vision in our everyday behaviours
and bring our best to work every day.

It's time to **Own**

the responsibility to make a difference
where we work, and ask how we can
improve our work and our environment.

Let's be open and **Share**

our accomplishments within and outside the Public
Service, be proud of what we do for Canadians and
show others our example.