



Summary of the evaluation of the Classification Program

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Summary of the evaluation of the Classification Program

From Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Internal Audit and Evaluation Bureau, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS)
December 2017

Program

The Classification Program (the program) provides the infrastructure for ranking jobs in the federal public service and comparing them with jobs internal to government and to jobs in the external labour market in order to determine fair and competitive compensation.

Evaluation scope and methodology

The evaluation assessed the program's relevance and performance (effectiveness and efficiency) in proportion to its risk and materiality, and focused on progress toward the achievement of immediate outcomes.

The lines of evidence were an analysis of administrative data, a document review, a jurisdictional review, interviews, and an online survey of heads of classification in the core public administration.

Limitation

The evaluation could not assess whether job evaluation standards are relevant and equitable since the program is in an early stage of the review of the occupational group structure (OGS).

Evaluation findings

Need for the program: Yes

There is an ongoing need for the program, and it is aligned with federal government and TBS priorities, roles and responsibilities. The program's relevance is likely to increase owing to various contextual factors, including the upcoming changes to pay equity legislation and policies.

Alignment with federal roles and government priorities: Yes

The Financial Administration Act provides the Treasury Board with the authority to allocate human resources and to classify positions in the federal public service.

Performance: Partial progress made

1. The program is making progress toward achieving its immediate outcomes, although there were delays in the OGS review owing to work that was neither anticipated nor funded and by a lack of capacity both internally and government-wide.
2. Given the magnitude of the work to be accomplished, the program's changing environment, and the complexity and sensitivity of the issues and the classification system, it is unclear whether there are sufficient resources to meet operational demands. This poses a risk to the program's ability to achieve its immediate and long-term outcomes.
3. The program is not operating as efficiently as it could because of ongoing staffing challenges, excessive reporting burden, and unfunded priorities that divert resources. There is a need for stronger governance and leadership that goes beyond oversight of the OGS review.

It is recommended that the program:

1. Complete a review (ideally by a third-party) of the assumptions and risks on which the program is based to determine the level of capacity and resources needed for:
 - a. its foundational role in the classification system and for its ongoing activities
 - b. the completion of the remaining work under the OGS review within a reasonable time frame, including its implementation
 - c. the more recently expanded core business activities, as well as upcoming commitments such as pay equity and any ensuing responses needed
2. strengthen its governance structure based on an assessment so that it has the rigour, vision, direction and support to achieve its expected outcomes.

3. review its funding model and reporting requirements to determine whether the current approach is appropriate, and to assess the balance between information needs and the resources invested in reporting.

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