

Evaluation of Alternative Service Delivery



About the Evaluation

The demand for programs and services delivered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has grown steadily in recent years, driven by growth in international trade, accelerated technological innovation, and foreign pests and diseases.

To continue to meet these demands, the CFIA uses external service providers to deliver many mandate-related activities and services on its behalf. These alternative service delivery (ASD) programs are intended to help the CFIA increase innovation in program design, gain access to specialized expertise, and increase cost-effectiveness and overall service delivery capacity. At the time of the evaluation, the CFIA oversaw and was accountable for 50 ASD programs.

The evaluation examined the CFIA's design and management of ASD programs, which impacts the CFIA's ability to effectively deliver the required services. Findings from this evaluation will support improved design and management of new and existing ASD programs at the CFIA.

Evaluation Approach

The evaluation examined the management of 19 of the 50 ASD programs across all three CFIA business lines.

Data for this evaluation were collected between 2019 and 2020. The evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach including:

- document and literature review
- interviews
- internal survey
- system mapping
- social network analysis
- case studies

Key Findings and Recommendations

The evaluation found that the design and management of CFIA ASD programs is not as effective as it could be. Despite these findings, the evaluation identified benefits to using ASD to deliver CFIA programs that could be further leveraged through improved support measures.

<p>FINDING 1 CFIA officials responsible for designing and managing ASD programs did not always have sufficient guidance and support to fulfil their responsibilities efficiently and effectively.</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 1 CFIA should update and expand the guidance and tools available to support officials responsible for designing and managing ASD programs.</p>
<p>FINDING 2 CFIA officials did not have easy access to the information needed for ASD program decision-making and oversight.</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 2 CFIA should clarify and document the decision-making processes, including decisions taken, related to ASD programs as per the Treasury Board Policy on Service and Digital and related policies, directives, standards and guidelines.</p>
	<p>RECOMMENDATION 3 CFIA should develop and maintain a complete and up-to-date electronic database of CFIA ASD programs that captures: the arrangements that enable each ASD program, which CFIA official is accountable, and which CFIA official(s) manage(s) the program day-to-day.</p>
<p>FINDING 3 CFIA ASD program officials did not have sufficient access to training and had limited opportunity to maintain skills and transfer knowledge.</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 4 CFIA should strengthen ASD program sustainability by implementing a plan to facilitate training, collaboration, succession planning, knowledge transfer, and retention of expertise.</p>
<p>FINDING 4 Current CFIA program policy instruments did not accurately describe ASD programs or the resulting implications for design, implementation and management.</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 5 CFIA should review and adjust its Horizontal Program Policy Suite to align with the Treasury Board <i>Policy on Service and Digital</i> (and related policies, directives, standards and guidelines) with respect to the design and management of ASD programs and communicate these changes to CFIA officials.</p>
<p>FINDING 5 CFIA ASD programs can be a beneficial way to deliver services, however the Agency did not have sufficient and centralized support for ASD implementation and oversight.</p>	<p>RECOMMENDATION 6 CFIA should establish a centralized team to promote and support a consistent Agency-wide approach to the implementation, oversight and continuous improvement of ASD programs.</p>

