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**FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
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Faculty of Education

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**Investigating the relationship between process use and use
of evaluation findings in a government context**

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Investigating the relationship between process use and use of evaluation findings in a
government context

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Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in fulfilment of the requirements of a
Masters of Arts in Education

Faculty of Education
University of Ottawa

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Your file *Votre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-51826-7
Our file *Notre référence*
ISBN: 978-0-494-51826-7

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Abstract

Despite support for the notion that evaluation utilization is facilitated by stakeholder engagement, evaluation practice in the Government of Canada may not be conducive to such engagement. This mixed-methods study explores the extent to which process use is manifest within government; the conditions, influences and factors that enhance process use; and the relationship between process use and findings use. The study supports the notion that process use and its consequences are important predictors of findings use in government. The level of stakeholder engagement present in this context appears to support the development of knowledge/skills, which may not be sufficient in enhancing findings use; changes in attitude/affect and in actions/behaviours may be of greater importance. This study highlights the importance of timely, higher-level engagement over frequent, surface-level engagement, as well as the importance of organizational learning capacity and conditions mediating evaluation use in setting the stage for process use to occur.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Glen K. Amo, who provided me with the opportunity to return to university at a time when I had all but given up hope on a post-secondary education. Thank you for standing by me through the ups and downs of both my undergraduate and graduate studies. Thank you for keeping the house clean, for feeding me, for making me coffee, and for being my best friend. Thank you for understanding why I needed to do this. May we continue to provide each other with the support and encouragement to pursue that which brings us joy and fulfilment, and may we continue to find humour and growth in whatever new challenges life reserves for us.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to the many individuals and organizations that have contributed to the successful completion of this thesis.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Professor J. Bradley Cousins for accepting to take me on as a part-time student, and for patiently supporting and guiding me throughout this process. Thank you for introducing me to the field of program evaluation, which has provided me with a fulfilling and challenging career over the past 8 years.

I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Professor Joel Westheimer, who first introduced me to the richness of qualitative research; and Professor Tim Aubry, who believed in my research abilities early on and helped me to build a strong foundation of knowledge and experience from which I continue to draw.

To the Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) research team, thank you for allowing me space to craft a research project within your work; and to the staff and management of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), thank you for making time for this project and for providing invaluable and rich insights.

To my family, friends, colleagues and fellow students, thank you for your unwavering encouragement and support. In particular, I am grateful to Emily Addison, Julie Beaulac and Isabelle Bourgeois, who have set a level of academic and personal standard that is truly inspiring. Special thanks also go to my parents, Gérard and Peggy Ouellette, who instilled in me the value and importance of education as a means of enriching one's path in life.

Finally, I would like to thank my employer, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), particularly France Landriault, Robert Lalande, Dr. Carmen

Charette and Dr. Chad Gaffield, for providing the support and encouragement required to complete such studies on a part-time basis. Special thanks go to my current Director, Wayne MacDonald, who refused to let me give up on this project and provided me with the space needed to craft a product of which I can be proud.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Within the Federal Government of Canada, *evaluation* is defined as the “systematic collection and analysis of information on the performance of a policy, program or initiative to make judgements about relevance, progress/success and cost-effectiveness and/or to inform future programming decisions about design and implementation” (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat [TBS], 2000a). In this context, as in other decision-making contexts, evaluation feeds into the knowledge- and experience-base from which information and strategic intelligence is drawn by those who make decisions and/or those who advise those decisions (Aucoin, 2005; Hofstetter & Alkin, 2003). In 2000, the Government of Canada adopted a new management framework entitled “Results for Canadians” (TBS, 2000b). This framework called for improved governance and service to the public through better management practices based on principles of modern comptrollership, including such concepts as “results-based management”, or managing programs, policies and initiatives with a focus on achieving expected results, and “evidence-based decision-making”, or decision-making based on evidence collected through performance measurement and evaluation (Independent review panel on modernization of comptrollership in the Government of Canada, 1997). Modern comptrollership gives program evaluation a key role to play in the Government’s management agenda, which was made explicit in a renewed Evaluation Policy in 2001 (TBS, 2001). In this context, program evaluation is expected to provide timely, strategically-focussed, objective and evidence-based information on the performance of government policies, programs and initiatives; information on which decision-makers can make sound, informed decisions, leading to the ultimate outcome of better management of the public purse (TBS, 2001).

Over the past 30 years, the Federal Government's evaluation function has been the major player on the Canadian program evaluation scene; it has been responsible for much of the history of program evaluation in Canada (Müller-Clemm & Barnes, 1997) and its practitioners – including internal evaluators and private firms hired to conduct evaluation work in government – represent a majority of the membership of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) (CES, 2003). Despite this, program evaluation in the Federal Government has a history of failing to meet high expectations of what it should and can accomplish (Müller-Clemm & Barnes, 1997; Segsworth, 1990; Segsworth, 2006) and, with the exception of fluctuations in resources, capabilities, and evaluation output, The Federal Government's evaluation function appears to have remained relatively unchanged since the first evaluation policy was issued in 1977 (Segsworth, 2006). An interim evaluation of the implementation of the 2001 evaluation policy completed in 2003 identified that many of the challenges and shortfalls of the past remained, while further emphasizing the Government's expectations of evaluation's key role in the current results-based management environment (CEE, 2003). One of the major challenges identified by this study, and by the Auditor General of Canada (1997, 2000), is that the *use* of evaluative information in program planning, management and reporting, and organizational decision-making is quite limited, and that this has been a problem for a number of years (Gauthier et al. 2004; Segsworth, 1990).

The Treasury Board of Canada is currently reviewing its evaluation policy in the context of the Government of Canada's new Federal Accountability Act (FedAA) which aims to strengthen accountability and increase transparency and oversight in government operations (Government of Canada, 2006). It is anticipated that the changes outlined in the new policy will also help address the many challenges experienced by the evaluation function over the

past number of years by re-focusing evaluation on value-for-money, expanding evaluation coverage, and increasing the quality, rigour, timeliness, neutrality and trustworthiness of evaluation studies; resulting in a better integration of evaluation within decision-making and resource allocation (TBS, 2007). Taken together, the changes to the evaluation policy are aimed at increasing *evaluation use or utilization* – or more precisely, the utilization of evaluation results or findings¹ within government as support for program and policy decision-making and as an accountability mechanism.

As a whole, the body of knowledge on evaluation utilization, its different manifestations and the factors that may affect it, continues to grow (Alkin & Taut, 2003; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986; Johnson, 1998; Leviton & Hugues, 1981; Patton, 1997; Shulha & Cousins, 1997). Although changes to TBS' Evaluation Policy are being guided by an extensive diagnostic process consisting of a wide range of research studies and academic think-pieces, as well as extensive consultations (TBS, 2007), what appears to have been overlooked in this process is the growing body of knowledge on the factors and characteristics that have been shown to foster evaluation utilization (for example, Alkin & Taut, 2003; Johnson, 1998; Patton, 1997; Shulha & Cousins, 1997). In addition, there is little acknowledgement of the understanding that is building amongst practitioners and theorists alike that the utilization of evaluation findings is *only one* of the consequences of evaluation, and that this consequence may be dependent on such other factors as an organization's learning capacity (for example, Preskill, 1994), its capacity to do and to use evaluation (for example, Stockdill, Baizerman & Compton, 2002), and the ways in which it undertakes or conducts evaluation (for example, Cousins, 2003; Cousins & Earl, 1992; Robinson, 1998). Of

¹ Note that I have chosen to use the term "evaluation findings" consistently throughout this text to encompass both results and findings.

particular interest to this discussion is the set of related impacts that are thought to result from individual, group, or organizational involvement in – or proximity to – the evaluation process, or what has been referred to as *process use* (Patton, 1997).

This study capitalizes on the upcoming wave of change to the evaluation function within the Federal Government of Canada by investigating the link between process use and use of evaluation findings in this context. Through a mixed-methods approach involving two streams of inquiry – a pan-Canadian survey of evaluation practitioners in government and an in-depth case study of a crown corporation of the Government of Canada (involving key informant interviews and the content analysis of relevant documents) – this study aims to document the extent to which process use is manifest within government, to understand the conditions, influences and factors that enhance process use, and to explore whether process use leads to greater degrees of use of findings in this context. In addition to adding to the body of research knowledge that is informing evaluation theory, evaluation training and education, evaluation practice, and evaluation policy, it is hoped that this study will help to further our understanding of process use as a concept, as a worthwhile consequence of evaluation, and as a means of deriving further benefits from the evaluation process, including accelerated and possibly increased use of evaluation findings.

1.2 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into 7 chapters: following the statement of the problem, Chapter 2 presents a review of past and current literature on the subject, framed by the study's conceptual framework, and ending with a statement of the study's research questions. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methods employed to address these questions, and Chapter 4 presents the study's results organized by stream of inquiry and by research question. An

integrated discussion of these results is presented in Chapter 5, and the study's strengths and limitations are presented in Chapter 6. Conclusion and implications for research and practice are presented in Chapter 7.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview and critique of the relevant knowledge base through the exploration of the conceptual framework that has guided the conduct of this study as well as the analysis of its results. Figure 1 provides a visual overview of this framework. The review begins at the tail end of the framework, exploring what is known about the consequences of evaluation with a particular focus on the consequences of interest to this study, that is, the use of evaluation findings and the consequences of being involved in – or in close proximity to – the evaluation process. The discussion then moves to the front end of the framework with an examination of the factors that have been shown to enable these consequences, with particular emphasis on factors related to the government context and to the approach to systematic inquiry used in conducting the evaluation. The central part of the framework is then explored with the purpose of clarifying the mechanisms that lead to the benefits that emerge from involvement in (or proximity to) the evaluation process. The evaluation process is seen not only as an opportunity but as a catalyst for meaning making, knowledge development and learning, which are presented as catalysts for utilization, particularly enhanced use of evaluation findings. The literature review section concludes with a critique of the current state of knowledge, and argues the merits of the questions explored through this study. It should be noted that, although this review served to develop the main elements of the framework, the use of category labels rather than detailed variables is consistent with my desire to remain open and receptive to new understanding emerging from the data collected, analyzed and interpreted in this study.

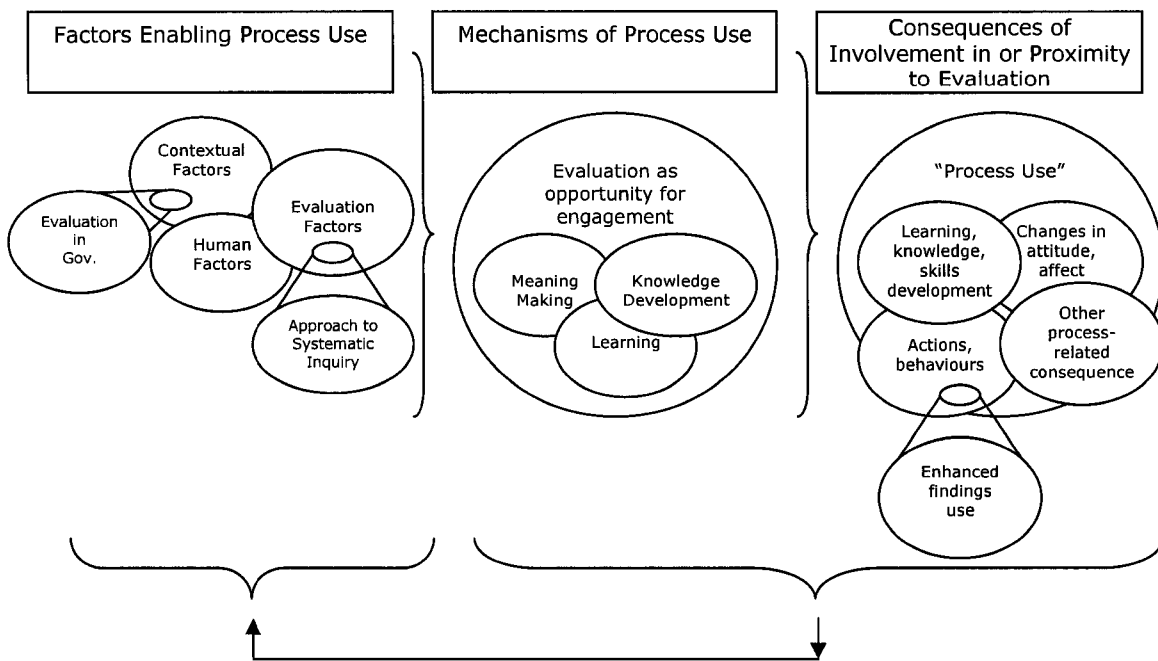


Figure 1. Process use conceptual framework.²

2.1 Consequences of Evaluation

The study of the consequences of evaluation is not new; however, for the better part of the last four decades, it has been focused on examining a particular consequence of evaluation, that of the use of evaluation findings (Alkin, 2003; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986; Leviton & Hugues, 1981; Shulha & Cousins, 1997). In the late 1980's and early 1990's, evaluation theorists and researchers broadened the lens of evaluation utilization research to include consideration of consequences that emerge from the act of processing evaluation information (Cousins & Leithwood, 1986), and from involvement in the evaluation process itself (Greene, 1988; Patton, 1997). More recently, consideration of an even broader range of possible consequences of evaluation has garnered interest. As evidence of this shift, the 2006 annual

² The framework represents the integration of prior work by Alkin and Taut (2003), Amo and Cousins (2006), Cousins (2003), Taut (2006), and Weaver and Cousins (2004).

conference of the American Evaluation Association (AEA) focused on the broader consequences of evaluation.

Evaluation can contribute to decision making. It can lead to program improvement. Evaluation can extend the knowledge base. More recent writings suggest a wide array of hoped-for consequences of evaluation, including empowerment, social justice, organizational learning, capacity building, social betterment, and even transformation. Evaluations can influence the way people think and act, individually and collectively. It can affect organizations in which evaluation has taken place and sometimes affect places far removed.

Evaluations may even have notable consequences for subsequent evaluation practice. (Mark, 2006, Letter of invitation from AEA's president, ¶ 1)

In order to frame the consequences of interest to this study, a snapshot of the evaluation utilization knowledge base will first be provided, followed by a more detailed description of the types of evaluation utilization that are discussed in the literature. Although the range of possible consequences of evaluation are acknowledged, the discussion here is focused on those consequences that are of direct relevance to this study, that is, those consequences that are thought to result from involvement in – or proximity to – the evaluation process.

2.1.1 Evaluation Utilization

The Encyclopedia of Evaluation (Mathison, 2005) states that “evaluation use, or *evaluation utilization* [italics added], occurs when evaluation information in the form of findings, or evaluation practice, has influence on the actions or thoughts of stakeholders” (p.143). This relatively recent definition highlights three important ideas that represent well

the evolution of thought in the area of evaluation utilization: 1) that evaluation utilization includes consideration of the use of evaluation findings; 2) that evaluation utilization includes consideration of uses that emerge from the practice (or process) of evaluation; and 3) that either one of these uses (or both) can have influence on the actions or thoughts of evaluation users.

Certainly the use (and non use) of evaluation findings has been of great interest to evaluation theorists and researchers, as well as evaluation users. In his introduction to the *International Handbook of Educational Evaluation*, Alkin (2003) reminds us of that much of the research on evaluation utilization stems from Cronbach's (1963, as cited in Alkin, 2003) notion that evaluation could have uses that go beyond making final judgements about the effectiveness of the object of evaluation and could be appropriately expected to provide information that would also be useful to making improvements to the evaluand. Alkin (2003) also reminds us that the study of evaluation utilization is intimately linked to the study of evaluation users with the recognition in the 1960s that evaluations could be of use to (and impact upon) a broad range of stakeholders.

Also key to the drive for more research in this area were concerns over the *non-use* of evaluation (Alkin, 2003), which, as Leviton and Hugues (1981) point out, were also raised with regards to other policy-relevant social science (Lynn, 1978, as cited in Leviton & Hugues, 1981). In fact, Leviton and Hugues (1981) draw from the literature of use of social science knowledge in general to help build an initial understanding of evaluation utilization.

Although research on evaluation utilization has evolved from examining use of evaluation findings to encompassing a wide-range of possible consequences of evaluation, the

use of evaluation findings continues to be seen by many as the ultimate purpose of evaluation.

Over forty years ago, this was argued by Weiss (1966) who stated that:

The basic rationale for evaluation is that it provides information for action. Its primary justification is that it contributes to the rationalization of decision making. Although it can serve such other functions as knowledge-building and theory-testing, unless it gains serious hearing when program decisions are made, it fails in its major purpose. (as cited in Alkin, Daillak & White, 1979, p. 14)

Indeed, this rationale remains central in a government evaluation context (Aucoin, 2005; TBS, 2001; Widmer & Neuenschwander, 2004), where both decision-makers and evaluators put a high premium on evaluations that provide clear support for decision making and action (Cousins, Goh, Aubry, Lahey, Montague & Elliot, 2006). At the same time, the study of the broader range of consequences and influences of both evaluation products and processes is emerging as an important area of inquiry in the quest to developing better understanding of the cost-benefit of engaging in evaluation activities in government as well as in other contexts.

Key to the development of our understanding of evaluation consequences have been a number of reviews and syntheses of the empirical knowledge base (for example, Beyer & Trice, 1982; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986; Leviton & Hugues, 1981; Shulha & Cousins, 1997) that have served as important launch pads for new thinking and research. For instance, in their 1986 review of 15 years worth of empirical research on evaluation utilization, Cousins and Leithwood took note of a conceptual broadening of evaluation utilization by stating that:

There are two conventional definitions of evaluation *use* or *utilization*, ...: (a) support for discrete decisions and (b) the education of decisionmakers. More recently, an even more basic conception of evaluation use has been described: that the mere psychological processing of evaluation results [or findings] constitutes use, without necessarily informing decisions, dictating actions, or changing thinking. (Cousins & Leithwood, 1986, p.332).

The idea that education or learning can be thought of as a consequence of evaluation is critical to this discussion, and will be further expanded upon in Section 2.3. What is important to state at this point is that the expansion of the evaluation utilization concept into such areas as learning has brought with it an expansion of thought around what evaluators could and should be accountable for (for example, the 1988 Weiss-Patton debate), and what other consequences might emerge from evaluation work (for example, Greene, 1988; Patton, 1997). More recently, theorists have begun to explore the broader concept of *evaluation influence* – which refers to intended and unintended changes that take place as a result of evaluation findings and processes within the time and place of the evaluation as well as beyond – as a means of examining and explaining the full range of evaluation consequences (for example, Henry & Mark, 2003a; Kirkhart, 2000; Mark & Henry, 2004). Although the conceptual lines that divide evaluation consequences, influences, impacts, and utilization are still blurry, it is clear that this area of study continues to inspire evaluation theorists, researchers and practitioners, with new voices joining in on the debate (for example, Christie, 2007; Taut, 2005; Taut, 2007).

2.1.2 *Types of Evaluation Utilization*

Although the concept of evaluation utilization continues to evolve, there is much conceptual and empirical work to support the existence of different types of evaluation utilization (Alkin & Taut, 2003; Henry & Mark, 2003a; Johnson, 1998; Patton, 1997; Weiss, Murphy-Graham & Birkeland, 2005). Drawing from their review of studies of the utilization of evaluations, of social science research generally and of organizational research specifically (including work in the 1970's by Weiss, Rich, Caplan, Patton, and so forth), Leviton and Hughes (1981) as well as Beyer and Trice (1982) extract three types of utilization that are based on the purpose to which evaluation is applied. These types – which are grounded in empirical research on knowledge utilization (Rich, 1977, as cited in Alkin & Taut, 2003) and which continue to resonate in the more recent evaluation utilization literature – include *instrumental use* which refers to the concrete application of evaluation findings to decision-making; *conceptual use* which refers to a change in the way one thinks about a program or an issue based on the evaluation (without necessitating that findings be put to use); and *symbolic or persuasive use* which refers to the use of evaluation evidence to support a decision that has already been made, or to “convince others to support a political position, or to defend such a position from attack” (Leviton & Hugues, 1981, p.528). This later use is further distinguished by Owen (1999, as cited in Alkin & Taut, 2003) who refers to two kinds of symbolic uses; the use of evaluation to enhance a program's reputation through its willingness to be subjected to an evaluation (referred to as *symbolic use*), and the use of evaluation to justify previously made decisions (referred to as *legitimative use*). Leviton and Hugues (1981) also note a relationship between conceptual use and instrumental use both in terms of one leading to the other, and of one melding or blurring into the other given the circumstances under which

decisions are made in practice. Other researchers also make note of the conceptual blurring and/or relationship between types of evaluation use, and very few studies have attempted to describe or test these relationships empirically (Johnson, 1998).

In an attempt to clarify some of the confusion in the evaluation utilization literature, Alkin and Taut (2003) classify types of evaluation utilization under two broad categories in order to differentiate between uses that result from the evaluation process itself, and those that results from the use of evaluation findings. They differentiate between *findings use* – how evaluation findings are used, applied, integrated; and *process use* – the way in which the process of going through an evaluation impacts on those involved in the process. They argue that both instrumental and conceptual use can be found under both categories, depending on whether it is the findings or the process that influence the use, but make a distinction between symbolic and legitimative use; arguing that legitimative use is based primarily on the findings, and that symbolic use is primarily concerned with the process (Alkin & Taut 2003).

Alkin and Taut's categorization represents one of the dimensions of the integrated theory of evaluation influence proposed by Kirkhart (2000), which purports that use can emerge from the findings of evaluation and from the evaluation process itself, can be intended or unintended, and can occur over a time frame that extends beyond the life-cycle of the evaluation.

Process Use

Of interest to this discussion is the development of a better understanding of the uses that result from the process of evaluation, and the relationships and interactions between such uses and the use of evaluation findings. Alkin, Taut and Kirkhart were not the first to propose the distinction between uses that result from the process of evaluation and those that result

from its findings. Although a more thorough discussion of the factors that influence evaluation utilization will follow, it is important to note at this point that research in this area fed into the uncovering of consequences that result from the evaluation *process* itself, rather than from the use of evaluation findings (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Cousins & Leithwood, 1993; King & Pechman, 1984; Greene, 1988). Patton (1997) was first to describe this consequence as *process use*, stating that:

Process use refers to and is indicated by individual changes in thinking and behavior, and program or organizational changes in procedures and culture, that occur among those involved in evaluation as a result of the learning that occurs during the evaluation process. Evidence of process use is represented by the following kind of statement after an evaluation: “The impact on our program came not just from the findings but also from going through the thinking process that the evaluation required.” (Patton, 1997, p.90).

Although a more thorough discussion of the mechanics of process use is presented in Section 2.3, it is worth stating here that the idea behind process use is consistent with constructivist-learning theory (Bandura, 1986) in that it describes the meaning-making process that groups of people go through when they are involved in an evaluation (Preskill, Zuckerman, & Matthews, 2003). As such, it can be seen as potentially resulting from collaborative, participatory, empowerment, utilization-focused and learning-oriented approaches to evaluation (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Fetterman, 1997, 2003; Preskill & Caracelli, 1997), and as conceptually linked to other consequences of evaluation such as organizational learning (for example, Preskill, 1994) and evaluation influence (for example, Kirkhart, 2000), as well other organizational processes such as evaluation capacity building (for example,

Stockdill, Baizerman & Compton, 2002), and the knowledge cycle organization's go through before taking action (sense making, knowledge creating, decision-making) (Choo, 2006). In fact, more recent writings on process use have begun to speak of it as a means of building an organization's capacity to do and to use evaluation (Cousins, Goh, Clark, & Lee, 2004; King, 2007) or as evaluation capacity *built* (Patton, 2007). As King (2007) states: "process use and ECB [evaluation capacity building] may well be a marriage made in heaven" (p.46). Process use is also noted as being of great importance to such approaches as empowerment evaluation (Fetterman, 2003), and as something that evaluators should consciously and intentionally strive for in undertaking evaluation studies (Preskill, Zuckerman & Matthews, 2003; Taut, 2007).

Although the idea that a consequences of an evaluation process could be thought of as a *type* of evaluation utilization might seem a bit awkward, the eloquence of Patton's description of process use and the fact that a number of theorists and researchers had been bumping into such a phenomenon in their own work (for example, Cousins & Earl, 1992; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986, 1993; Greene, 1988; King & Pechman, 1984) appears to have opened the door to process use being, as Cousins (2007a) puts it, "relatively well integrated into the parlance of evaluators and evaluation theorists" (p.2) over the course of the last decade. At the same time, the emergence in the literature of strong links between involvement of stakeholders in evaluation and evaluation utilization (for example, Cousins, 2003; Cousins and Earl, 1992; Greene, 1988; Robinson, 1998) can be seen as a catalyst for exploring what individual, group or organizational consequences might emerge from this involvement (Harnar & Preskill, 2007).

In their study of the operationalization of process use in empirical research on evaluation, Amo and Cousins (2007) reviewed eighteen studies examining process use either directly or indirectly. They identify from this review four broad categories of consequences of process use – categories that are reminiscent of the classic knowledge-attitude-behaviour model that is well known to those involved in education, prevention and social interventions – process use as evidenced by *learning*, by changes in *actions* or *behaviours*, by changes in *affect* or *attitude*, and by *other* consequences of participation in –or proximity to – evaluation that extended beyond these categories (social justice, creation of opportunities, networking, and so forth). Of critical importance to this discussion is the small pool of evidence that one of the action or behavioural consequences of process use is an increase likelihood of use of evaluation findings (Greene, 1988; Taut, 2007). As Taut (2007) points out:

Other participatory evaluation theorists would agree that without process use the likelihood for using evaluation findings is smaller. However, the empirical evidence for such claims is sparse, not least because the conceptualization of process use as a distinct outcome of evaluation is still fairly undeveloped (p.5).

While recent empirical research on process use draws heavily on Patton's (1997) conceptualization, Amo and Cousins (2007) note that a strong case for the concept's construct validity has not been made (this is counter-balanced by the relative paucity of empirical studies on the subject over the last decade). Their call for more and different research leading to a better conceptualization of process use, and to a stronger and more balanced knowledge base to move this area of inquiry forward is both met with support (for example, Harnar & Preskill, 2007; Taut, 2007) and caveat.

In his discussant chapter to the recent *New Directions for Evaluation* issue on process use, Patton (2007) states that he is “not worried about the lack of a general operational definition of process use [having] offered process use as a *sensitizing concept* in the tradition of qualitative inquiry, not as an operational concept in the tradition of quantitative research” (emphasis in original, p.100). Sensitizing concepts are beacons that help orient fieldwork, providing “a container for capturing, holding and examining ... manifestations to better understand patterns and implications [given time, space and circumstance]” (Patton, 2007, p.102). He argues that the abstract nature of process use makes it difficult to operationalize, but at the same time useful for advancing knowledge and theory. What he argues against, in his own words, is “the notion that arriving at some standard operational definition is the desired target, some kind of ‘achievement’ indicating maturity, consensus, shared understanding, and professional acceptance” (p.103). He concludes his discussion with the following thought that summarizes well the importance of process use to the evaluation profession:

I experience wisdom as a usefulness – a sensitizing concept, something to ponder, look for, and dialogue about. I confess that the possibility of at least one positive outcome of aging gives me some comfort, as does the possibility that all the hard work of facilitating an evaluation process may yield more enduring outcomes for participants than only findings (as important as they may be), for their relevance diminishes rapidly. Who knows? Perhaps helping them to learn to *think evaluatively* will nurture ego integrity, fend off despair (that nothing works), and lead to wisdom. Add wisdom to the list of process use outcomes (emphasis in original, p.111).

Having provided a broad overview of what is known of the consequences of evaluation, with particular emphasis on the consequences of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation, we now move to a discussion of the factors that are thought to influence these consequences.

2.2 Factors that Influence Evaluation Consequences

As mentioned above, much of the study of evaluation consequences has been focused on the utilization of evaluation findings – and to some extent processes – with more recent contributions taking a broader look at how evaluation's contribute to such things as individual, group and organizational learning (for example, Preskill & Torres, 2000), empowerment (Fetterman, 2001), social betterment (for example, Henry & Mark, 2003a), and so forth. As such, what we know about the factors that influence evaluation consequences more broadly is very much grounded in what we know about the factors that influence the utilization of evaluation findings and processes. This section of the literature review provides insight into this knowledge.

2.2.1 *Factors that Influence the Use of Evaluation Findings*

As previously mentioned, knowledge of evaluation utilization has greatly benefited from a number of careful reviews and syntheses that not only helped to develop a typology of use, but also helped to better understand how evaluation utilization can be enhanced. This understanding involves both the identification of factors or conditions that serve to engender use (for example, Cousins & Leithwood, 1986), and the description of processes or mechanisms through which this use occurs (for example, Cousins & Leithwood, 1993;

Cousins, 2003; Johnson, 1998; Mark & Henry, 2004). The later will be discussed in Section 2.3 of the literature review.

As a starting point, Leviton and Hugues' (1981) review of evaluation and social science research utilization provides us with a number of variables, characteristic of the evaluation process and its products, that have been argued to affect evaluation and/or social science research utilization. They cluster these variables into five categories: *relevance* of the evaluation to the needs of evaluation users, which includes timeliness of the evaluation; *communication* of needs for, and dissemination of, the evaluation; *information processing* by evaluation users; *credibility* of evaluation and evaluation producer; and *user involvement and advocacy* both in terms of the evaluation and the evaluand.

A few years later, Alkin (1985) concluded that three broad categories of factors that influence evaluation utilization could be extracted from the literature: *human factors* or characteristics of the people involved in the evaluation process; *evaluation factors* or characteristics of the evaluation itself (process and product); and *context factors* or characteristics of the situation or background in which the program being evaluated is found. Around that same time, Cousins and Leithwood (1986) completed a review of 65 studies from 1971 to 1985 dealing with evaluation utilization. They found that twelve factors influenced the use of evaluation findings, and that these factors could be grouped under two headings: *factors that are concerned with the implementation of evaluations*, which include evaluation quality, credibility, relevance, communication, findings, and timeliness; and *factors that are concerned with features of decision or policy setting*, which include information needs of users, decision characteristics, political climate, competing information, personal characteristics of users, user commitment and receptiveness to evaluation information. Cousins would later group factors

and conditions influencing evaluation use under two broad headings; *evaluation context*, which includes expertise, communication, instruction, time, resources, and role flexibility; and *decision/policy setting*, which includes administrative support, micro politics, culture, information needs, impetus, and skills (Cousins, 2003).

Evaluation in Government

Government is a particular decision/policy setting that influences the need for, and use of, evaluation. Although one of the primary roles of evaluation in a government setting are to feed into well-informed program and policy decision-making and demonstrate accountability and value-for-money (Desautels, 1997), Weiss (1977) reminds us that “the policymaking process is a political process, with the basic aim of reconciling interests in order to negotiate a consensus, not of implementing logic and truth” (p.533). Weiss et al. (2005) point to the example of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program, implemented in schools across the United States, as having been shown through numerous evaluations as being ineffective at keeping young people from using drugs. The program however is still widely implemented. Despite the growing body of empirical knowledge on evaluation use and knowledge use, Landry, Lamari and Amara (2003) point out that little is known about the use of knowledge (in this case, university research) in government agencies, and Kong (1998), who examined the particular case of use of performance measurement information in government, stresses that there is no comprehensive theory on the subject.

Although the particular use of evaluation and performance measurement information in government does not appear to have been studied extensively, one of the uses of such information – decision-making – has been examined more closely.

In summarizing the models of organizational decision-making from the literature on organizational behaviour and information use, Choo (2006) provides a framework that distinguishes between models according to two dimensions: goal uncertainty and procedural uncertainty. According to this framework, the *rational mode* of decision-making, characterized by low procedural and goal uncertainty, sees decisions as being directed by goals and guided by clear rules, routines, and performance. The *process mode* of decision-making, which is characterized by high procedural uncertainty coupled with low goal uncertainty also sees decisions as being directed by goals, but allows for multiple options and alternative solutions, rather than standard procedures. The *political mode* of decision-making, where low procedural uncertainty is coupled with high goal uncertainty, is characterized by clarity in the approach to achieve goals but conflict in the actual goals to be achieved. Finally, the *anarchy mode*, which occupies the bottom right quadrant of the model, sees uncertain and ambitious goals that have no clear way of being achieved. Although one could argue that decision-making in government could fall within any one of the four quadrants, the current regime of results-based management and evidence-based decision-making is an attempt to ensure a *rational mode* of decision-making across government. However, as Aucoin (2005) points out:

Decision-making in government is a process in which evidence, both from systematic research and practical experience, mixes with a complex interaction of ideas, interests, ideologies, institutions and individuals. ... At different times and under different regimes, the decision-making process will be structured and managed in ways that seek to give more or less weight to evidence. ... As a consequence, the importance attached to the use of evidence in decision-

making invariably waxes and wanes over time. The relative positioning of the program evaluation function, accordingly, has not been constant.” (Introduction section, ¶ 3-4)

Although the usefulness of evaluation in support of a rational mode of decision-making is being promoted by many governments around the world (for example, Dahler-Larsen, 2000; Segerholm, 2003; Wholey, 2001; Widmer & Neuenschwander, 2004), the very nature of the government context, as mentioned above, creates challenges for the integration of evaluation into government organizational culture. In order to better understand these challenges, a recent study by the United States General Accounting Office (GAO) (GAO, 2003) examined five agencies known to have developed capacity both to do and to use evaluation. They found four key elements that were more or less common to these agencies: the development of an evaluation culture or a commitment to self-examination; measures to assess and ensure data quality; strong analytical expertise within the organization; and collaborative partnerships within and outside the organization. In the Canadian Government context, a recent study of the effectiveness of evaluation focused on the attributes of evaluation units that are thought to improve the timing and focus of evaluation studies (which are argued to effect the use of evaluation findings) (CEE, 2004). Eight categories of effective practices were found, these related to: organizational structure; resourcing; planning; ability to influence decision-making; departmental performance measurement strategies; in-house expertise; quality control; and turning findings into action. Another recent study (CEE, 2005) examined fifteen evaluations completed with the Federal Government of Canada that had been identified, by Heads of evaluation, and having had an impact on decision-making. Seven common themes emerged from this analysis as key drivers contributing to the success of these evaluations: senior

management support of the process and evaluation findings; participatory relationship between evaluation and program staff; highly skilled and experienced evaluation staff; comprehensive data collection methodology including multiple lines of evidence; high level of independence/objectivity in the evaluation findings; focused and well-balanced recommendations; and stakeholder buy-in/involvement through participation in the evaluation governance mechanism.

It is interesting to note, amongst these recent studies, the emergence of common factors such as the importance of expertise, partnerships and collaboration, and organizational/senior level support. At the same time, these studies highlight a fundamental tension in the government context between the importance of neutral, objective and independent evaluation, and the benefits of stakeholder involvement and participation on the effectiveness of evaluation.

2.2.2 Factors that Influence the Benefits that Emerge from the Evaluation Process

Although the above discussion provides a broad overview of the factors that are thought to influence the use of evaluation findings, Johnson (1998) argues that there is very little research linking these factors empirically to specific types of use, including process use. In addition, Mark and Henry (2004) note that the evaluation literature has failed to detail the underlying mechanisms through which these factors allow for evaluation to achieve specific outcomes, such as those associated with process use. Although it is true that a comprehensive, empirically-validated theory explaining the full range of evaluation outcomes or influences does not exist, evaluation theorists and researchers have been shedding light on the various components of such an overarching theory (for example, Cousins et al., 2004; Cousins & Leithwood, 1993; Robinson, 1998).

Drawing from their previous conceptual work and from a careful review of 36 empirical studies of evaluation utilization, evaluation capacity building and organizational learning, Cousins and colleagues (2004) provide a framework that both gives a window into factors that may influence process use (such as the nature of the evaluation inquiry), and the benefits that can emerge from involvement in the evaluation process (such as development of evaluation and organizational learning capacity). At the same time, given that process use is considered along side other evaluation consequences, the factors that influence process use in particular (as well as the particular effects of process use) are less evident. However, there is a growing body of practical, theoretical and empirical knowledge supporting the link between the *approach to systematic inquiry* used in conducting the evaluation and evaluation utilization (Cousins, 2003; Cousins & Earl, 1992; Robinson, 1998), based on the premise that more collaborative forms of inquiry lead to increased evaluation utilization. This has given rise to increased interest in collaborative forms of inquiry and has helped to generate various types of collaborative evaluation models such as participatory evaluation, empowerment evaluation, stakeholder-based evaluation, and so forth (Weaver & Cousins, 2004). To help differentiate between these various types of collaborative systematic inquiry, Weaver and Cousins (2004) proposed five dimensions of form within which each type can be characterized: 1. control of technical decision-making; 2. diversity among stakeholders selected for participation; 3. power relations among participating stakeholders; 4. manageability of evaluation implementation; and 5. depth of stakeholder participation.

In his chapter titled “Utilization effects of participatory evaluation”, Cousins (2003) provides a review of scholarly and professional literature on the subject, in the hopes of shedding light on the relationship between collaborative inquiry (in this case, participatory

evaluation), and evaluation utilization. Cousins and Earl (1992) define participatory evaluation as “applied social research that involves a partnership between trained evaluation personnel *and* practice-based decision makers, organization members with program responsibility, or people with a vital interest in the program ...” (p. 399-400). Cousins (2003) goes on to state that “[participatory evaluation] is distinguishable from other forms of collaborative inquiry such as stakeholder-based evaluation and empowerment evaluation by virtue of the requirement that members of both the evaluation community *and* other stakeholder groups are *directly* involved in the production of evaluation knowledge” (p.245). He provides a conceptual framework linking participatory evaluation processes to utilization, which builds on the notion of *interactive processes* identified through previous work (Cousins & Leithwood, 1993) while being strongly grounded in the academic knowledge base on evaluation utilization.

Preskill et al.’s (2003) exploratory study of process use is one of the few to explicitly identify contextual factors (such as organizational characteristics), evaluation factors (such as facilitation of the evaluation process and frequency, methods, and quality of communications) and human factors (such as management support and characteristics of advisory group members) that are thought to influence process use. Their five categories of factors and the variables within each are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Factors that contribute to process use, adapted from Preskill et al. (2003)

Factors	Facilitation of evaluation processes	Management support	Characteristics of advisory group members	Frequency, methods, and quality of communications	Organizational characteristics
Variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amount of evaluator control during meetings ▪ Amount of dialogue and reflection ▪ Quality of dialogue and reflection ▪ Evaluator's or meeting facilitator's group process and facilitation skills ▪ Evaluator's background, experience, credibility, perceived position of authority ▪ Degree of trust among group members ▪ Climate of risk-taking in group meetings ▪ Willingness of group members to speak openly ▪ Extent to which time is given to reflect on learning from the evaluation process ▪ Extent to which members are provided time to get to know one another ▪ Meeting facilitator's level of power and authority ▪ How cultural differences are addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verbally support employee involvement in evaluation studies ▪ Provide incentives and rewards for participating in evaluation studies ▪ Expect employees to share their learning from the evaluation process with others ▪ Recognize and reward employees for implementing evaluation findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experiences with the program being evaluated ▪ Interest in the evaluation process ▪ Motivation to participate in the evaluation ▪ Role in the evaluation process and their understanding of their role as well as the group's role ▪ Position, rank, experience ▪ Previous experience with evaluation ▪ Previous training and education in evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequency and length of communications and interactions during the evaluation ▪ Amount of interaction after the evaluation's completion ▪ Methods of communication during the evaluation ▪ Methods of reporting evaluation findings ▪ Quality of oral and written communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Degree of organizational stability ▪ Support of previous evaluation work ▪ Location and ownership of the evaluation function ▪ External demands, constraints, threats ▪ Extent to which the organization's culture supports ongoing learning ▪ Extent to which the organization supports developing evaluation capacity

Although knowledge of the factors that influence process use is limited, the above discussion does provide insight into the factors that influence an organization's capacity to do and to use evaluation, as well as the factors that influence some of the consequences of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes. We now move to a discussion of the ways in which these factors exert their influence on such consequences.

2.3 Evaluation as a Catalyst for Learning – Learning as a Catalyst for Use

The key to understanding how involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes can lead to use of evaluation findings (as well as other consequences) lies at the intersection where conceptual frameworks/theories of evaluation utilization, knowledge utilization and individual/organizational learning meet. These will each be discussed in turn.

2.3.1 *Evaluation Utilization*

Leviton and Hugues (1981) propose two basic criteria that should be observed in order to consider that an evaluation has in fact been used (instrumentally, conceptually or persuasively) for a specific purpose at a specific point in time. First, that a certain amount of *information processing* (Weinberg, 1979, as cited in Leviton & Hugues, 1981) needs to occur; in other words, findings need to be discussed, related to the evaluand, and translated into implications by program stakeholders. Second, that “there must be evidence that in the absence of the research information, those engaged in policy or program activities would have thought or acted differently” (p.527). Evidence of this counterfactual could include “changes in certainty about a decision or belief ..., changes in attitudes on the relevant issue, increase in the forcefulness of an argument, and action directed at changing or preserving programs and policies, that take their form in part from evaluation evidence” (p.527).

In the same way as Leviton and Hugues argue for behavioural criteria as a means of determining whether or not use has occurred, Beyer and Trice (1982) see utilization as a complex, not necessarily rational or linear behavioural process and propose a conceptual framework of utilization (see Table 2) that links the behaviours of individuals that are associated with utilization processes, the corresponding organizational processes, and the behaviours that are characteristic of a two-phase utilization process. Observation of individual and organizational behaviours such as selecting between alternatives, engaging in information processing, and carrying out changes are considered evidence of the utilization process.

Table 2

Correspondence between components of behavior, organizational processes, and specific behaviors involved in utilization processes in users systems³, from Beyer and Trice (1982), p.595

Components of behavior ⁵	Organizational processes	Specific behaviors involved in utilization processes ⁴	
		Adoption phase	Implementation phase
Cognitions	Information processing	Sensing, search	Diffusion
Feelings	Affective bonding	Affective reactions	Receptivity, commitment
Choices	Strategy formulation and control	Selection	Evaluation, feedback
Actions	Action generation	Adoption	Use, institutionalization

In their conceptual framework of evaluation utilization, grounded in 15 years worth of empirical research, Cousins and Leithwood (1986) state that “the utilization construct reflects the minimum requirement, namely, that evaluation results [or findings] must be psychologically processed by the decisionmaker prior to conceptual growth or support for

³ User systems may be small groups, large subunits of organizations, whole organizations, or networks of organizations.

⁴ Adapted from Beyer and Trice (1978: 22-23, 57-59), as cited in Beyer and Trice (1982).

⁵ Based on Parsons (1951: 7-8), as cited in Beyer and Trice (1982).

discrete decisions” (p.348). The importance of such interaction with evaluation findings is also stressed by Johnson (1998) whose review of 18 models of evaluation utilization allowed for the generation of a complex meta-model which situates *cognitive use* at the intersection of evaluation participation and behavioural uses of evaluation (including instrumental, symbolic, legitimative, and action oriented process use). Johnson (1998) defines cognitive use as

...the cognitive processing construct [which] refers to the degrees to which people involved in or directly related to the program are aware of the evaluation, think about the information and form attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, skills and opinions about the program being evaluated. It also includes changes not related to the evaluation findings but result from participating in the evaluation (i.e. process use). People may cognitively develop an evaluation schema or mental model (i.e. they are able to think like an evaluator thinks). The schema may activate, for example, procedural and tacit knowledge. Cognitive use includes cognitive oriented process use, enlightenment and conceptual use, and individual learning. (p. 105)

2.3.2 *Knowledge Utilization*

The idea that utilization is at least in part dependent on users’ processing of the information is not unique to evaluation utilization theory, which, as previously mentioned, finds its roots in organization theory and knowledge use theory (Hofstetter & Alkin, 2003; Leviton & Hugues, 1981). Although Leviton and Hugues (1981) note that “writers on the subject of utilization have ... long recognized the relevance of other traditions in political science and organization behaviour” (p.526), Hofstetter and Alkin (2003) argue that the impact of the knowledge use literature on evaluation utilization theory and research has not

been sufficiently acknowledged. Indeed, the parallels between evaluation utilization and knowledge utilization are quite striking, especially, as was noted by Leviton and Hugues (1981), when it comes to the importance of user involvement in research and what we know about organizational change.

Although a thorough description of what is currently known about knowledge utilization is beyond the scope of this study, the following provides a brief overview in order to further shape our understanding of the mechanisms of process use.

In his recent book entitled *The Knowing Organization*, Choo (2006) provides a thorough synthesis of current knowledge on organizational behaviour, knowledge use, and information management, in order to develop a model of how organizations learn. In the words of Choo, this model, which is presented as a cube,

focuses on the information-use activities that support learning. The three major information activities we concentrated on are sense making, knowledge creation, and decision making. Within each activity, we looked at how information needs are experienced, how information is sought, and how information is used or not used. We observe that each of these processes is deeply influenced by cognitive, affective, and situational factors that play out at the individual, group, and organizational levels. (Choo, 2006, p.314)

As previously mentioned, Choo's synthesis of the literature on organizational behaviour and information use also revealed four modes of decision-making that can be distinguished by their level of goal uncertainty and procedural uncertainty. According to Choo (2006), these modes of decision-making can also be distinguished by the ways in which organization seek and use information. In this framework, the *anarchy mode* of decision-

making is characterized by low information seeking and low information use, and the *rationale mode* of decision-making – argued earlier as being the favoured mode in the government context – is characterized by moderate to low information seeking and use. The *political mode* of decision-making is characterized by slightly higher information seeking and use than the rational mode of decision making, while the *process mode* of decision-making – which couples clear goals with a higher level of uncertainty on how to reach them – is characterized by “repeated cycles of information processing [which converge] on a solution which is a specific answer to a specific problem” (Choo, 2006, p.246).

These repeated cycles of information processing allow for active engagement with information which provide the opportunity for *sense making* and *knowledge creation* by allowing for “interaction and conversation between [the organization’s] tacit and explicit knowledge” (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, as cited in Choo, 2006, p.196) and for building an organization’s *core capabilities* which consist of the organization’s tacit (skills), explicit (systems), and cultural (values and practices) knowledge and the degree to which these are integrated (Leonard, 1995, as cited in Choo, 2006, p.150). Such opportunities for direct engagement with information also serve to increase an organization’s ability to grow and survive, allowing it to move from single-loop learning (modifying actions to respond to changes in the environment without challenging norms, assumptions or strategies) to double-loop learning (modifying actions and norms/assumptions/strategies to respond to changes in the environment) which allows the organization to change the way it will think and act now and in the future (Argyris & Schön, 1978, as cited in Choo, 2006).

2.3.3 *The Learning Process*

Learning can be defined as “a lasting change in behaviours or beliefs that results from experience” (Halpern & Donaghey, 2003, p.1458). By virtue of its products and processes, evaluation can be seen as a learning instrument or system facilitating change in the behaviours and beliefs of individuals and organizations (Katz, Sutherland & Earl, 2005).

As previously mentioned, *process use* is understood to occur as a result of the meaning-making process that groups of people go through when they are involved in an evaluation (Preskill et al., 2005). This is consistent with the constructivist approach to learning, which purports that learning requires a change in the learner, and that change can be achieved through engaging in activities, discovering the consequences of these activities, and reflecting on the experience (Lamon, 2003). This is also consistent with the above discussion on the effects of active engagement with information for such purposes as problem solving or decision making (Choo, 2006). As such, evaluations, and in particular those evaluations that are guided by a collaborative, participatory process, can act as learning environments in which learning has the potential of occurring at the individual, group, team and organizational levels (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Cousins et al., 2004; Preskill, 1994; Preskill & Torres, 2000).

The relationship between learning and use of evaluation findings has been explored from a number of different angles. For instance, Forss, Cracknell and Samset (1994) argue the important role of evaluation in organizational learning, and the link between organizational learning and evaluation utilization. They note the importance of involvement in evaluation work in facilitating evaluation as a learning instrument, and distinguish between two learning processes – *learning by involvement* in the evaluation process and *learning by communication* of evaluation products or results. Preskill and Torres (Preskill, 1994; Preskill & Torres, 2000;

Torres, 1994) have significantly advanced knowledge of the link between evaluation, organizational learning, and evaluation utilization, by providing both theoretical and empirical work on the subject. More recently, Katz et al. (2005) describe the process of meaning making professionals go through when developing an “evaluation habit of mind” – or a propensity for the using data as evidence for decision-making – in the context of a professional development initiative.

Taut (2005) draws an explicit link between the learning that occurs as a result of being involved in an evaluation process and its impact on the use of evaluation findings.

...the kinds of uses that we can see resulting from the process of evaluation are similar to the ones following the reception of evaluation findings. ... it seems that if the evaluation process has created the interest and commitment of those involved and has thereby enabled learning in the sense of process use, then the likelihood for findings use increases. ... process use constitutes an enabling condition for findings use – therefore the great importance of this notion for the evaluation profession. (Taut, 2005, p. 131-132)

Although the above discussion provides strong support for the notion that evaluation utilization is facilitated by engagement with evaluative information (through, for instance, involvement in or proximity to evaluation processes), and that such engagement may lead to important individual and organizational consequences (including increased use of evaluation findings), changes to the Treasury Board of Canada (Secretariat)’s Evaluation Policy (which have yet to be finalized) appear to be moving the function away from the factors and conditions that would facilitate process use – resulting in an evaluation function aimed at generating information to support a rationale mode of decision-making and meet

accountability demands (single-loop learning), rather than a learning instrument aimed at fostering ongoing changes in attitudes, actions, behaviours (double-loop learning) including (but not limited to) the development of the elusive “evaluation habit of mind” that underpins the propensity of decision-makers to draw on evidence for the purposes of decision making and continuous improvement.

2.4 Summary and Research Questions

Although much is known about the broad concept of evaluation utilization, there is much room for the exploration of the even broader concept of evaluation consequences, and in particular, those consequences of being involved in the evaluation process. Evaluation, through its products and particularly its processes, creates a learning environment which may enable and/or enhance the use of evaluation findings. In the Federal Government of Canada, evaluation is now being marketed as a credible, objective tool for the generating of sound, trustworthy evidence for accountability purposes and for use in decision-making. This is an important function that will quite likely increase the profile of evaluation in the Federal Government. Will it however be sufficient in ensuring use of evaluation findings? Will the underlying tension between the accountability and learning functions of evaluation limit the use of evaluation findings by virtue of restricting (given the importance of neutrality and objectivity) the degree to which evaluation capacity and organizational learning can be developed in government organizations, through, for instance, involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes?

In order to shed light on the matter, we need to understand at deeper levels than is presently the case the relationship between the consequences of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes and use of evaluation findings in a government context. The impetus

for this thesis stems both from the potential practical significance of elucidating the benefits of involvement in evaluation processes in a government context (despite the potential risks of compromised neutrality or objectivity), and from the desire to contribute to reducing a gap in our understanding of the overall influence evaluations can have on individuals, groups and organizations.

Although the literature described above provides sufficient ground from which to build a conceptual framework of process use, the lack of empirical evidence on the links between factors thought to influence evaluation use and actual types of use (Johnson, 1998), the lack of a clear conceptualization of process use (Amo & Cousins, 2007), the high reliance this area of research has on narrative case studies (Amo & Cousins, 2007; Cousins et al., 2004) and the lack of an overarching theoretical framework of evaluation influence that clearly delineates the effects of involvement in evaluation and the mechanisms that underlie these effects (Mark & Henry, 2004) can be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity to ask different questions in different ways in order to arrive at a stronger understanding of process use.

Drawing from this line of reasoning, this study explores the following research questions:

- To what extent is process use of evaluation manifest within government?
- What conditions, influences and factors enhance process use of evaluation within government?
- Does enhanced process use lead to greater degrees of use of findings in government organizations?

We now turn to an examination of the methods that have guided this inquiry.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Epistemological Underpinnings

Questions are not inherently “important”, and methods are not automatically “appropriate.” Instead, it is we ourselves who make the choices about what is important and what is appropriate, and those choices inevitably involve aspects of our personal history, social background, and cultural assumptions. (Morgan, 2007, p. 71).

As a program evaluator in the Government of Canada for the past six years, I have had the opportunity to experience both useful evaluations and evaluations that were deemed to be of little use. What made these evaluations useful or of little use has not always been clear; issues of timing, planning, collaboration and methodological rigour appear to be of importance, but do not always explain variations in use. Unfortunately, as is similar in other areas of professional practice, there is very little literature emerging from the field as government evaluators do not often have the time or professional incentive to share their experiences, knowledge and theories in written form. I am therefore very committed to the cause of studying evaluation in government, and sharing this knowledge with my colleagues.

In terms of my personal epistemological penchants, my training in psychology has infused me with a post-positivistic, logical empiricist way of viewing the world which continues to influence my work and my readings of others’ work. In addition, I have been both witness and subject to “a reprivileging of quantification, standardization, outcomes, and even experimentation in some arenas by many western governments’ whole-sale adoption of new managerial practices and accountability-oriented policies during the past two decades”

(Power, 1999, as cited in Greene, 2007, p.33). This political position on appropriate and credible knowledge and methodologies has often posed significant challenges in my evaluation work, which involves the assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of programs that fund research in such areas as the intersection of research and creation in the fine arts, and the development of aboriginal knowledge and ways of knowing.

Through my graduate studies, I have been exposed to more interpretive paradigms such as constructivism as well as to alternative paradigms such as pragmatism (Patton, 2002; Morgan, 2007) and the “revisionist-traditionalist” orientation to empiricism espoused by Cousins which is characterized by “methodological eclecticism, pragmatism, and an appreciation of and tolerance for epistemological diversity” (Cousins, 2007b, p.21).

In sum, both my professional and academic experiences have contributed to developing what Greene (2007) refers to as my own personal *mental model*, or “complex, multifaceted lens through which a social inquirer perceives and makes sense of the social world [and which subsumes] philosophical paradigms, as well as substantive theories, disciplinary perspectives, and a whole host of personalized experiences, values, and ways of knowing” (p.13). As such, although I maintain an attachment to the post-positivist paradigm which is expressed through the development of the study’s conceptual framework (grounded in prior empirical knowledge) and through the quantitative aspects of this study, the qualitative aspects of this study (including the interpretation of findings from both streams of inquiry) are informed by my developing sensitivity to the importance of context in the process of meaning making (including my own) and to the variety of ways of knowing and of generating knowledge in the field of education.

As such, this mixed-methods, empirical study is guided by a conceptual framework that has been developed from the relevant body of knowledge, while being open and welcoming to the emergence of new knowledge and understanding on the concepts being examined.

3.2 Approach

This study is part of a larger investigation on evaluation capacity building by Cousins and associates which aims to understand the capacity of organizations to do and to use evaluations by examining the factors and conditions that support such capacity and allow for the integration of evaluative inquiry into the organizational culture (the conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 2). It also builds on a recent review of the operationalization of process use in empirical studies on evaluation by Amo and Cousins (2007) by providing further ground for the testing of ideas presented in this review.

This exploratory study provides an in-depth description of an aspect (the consequences of involvement in or proximity to the process of evaluation – or *process use*) of a phenomenon (evaluations conducted in government organizations), and through this examines the interactions between the following variables;

- 1) Factors and influencing or enabling forces (for example, contextual, human and evaluation factors) and process use
- 2) process use and utilization of evaluation findings

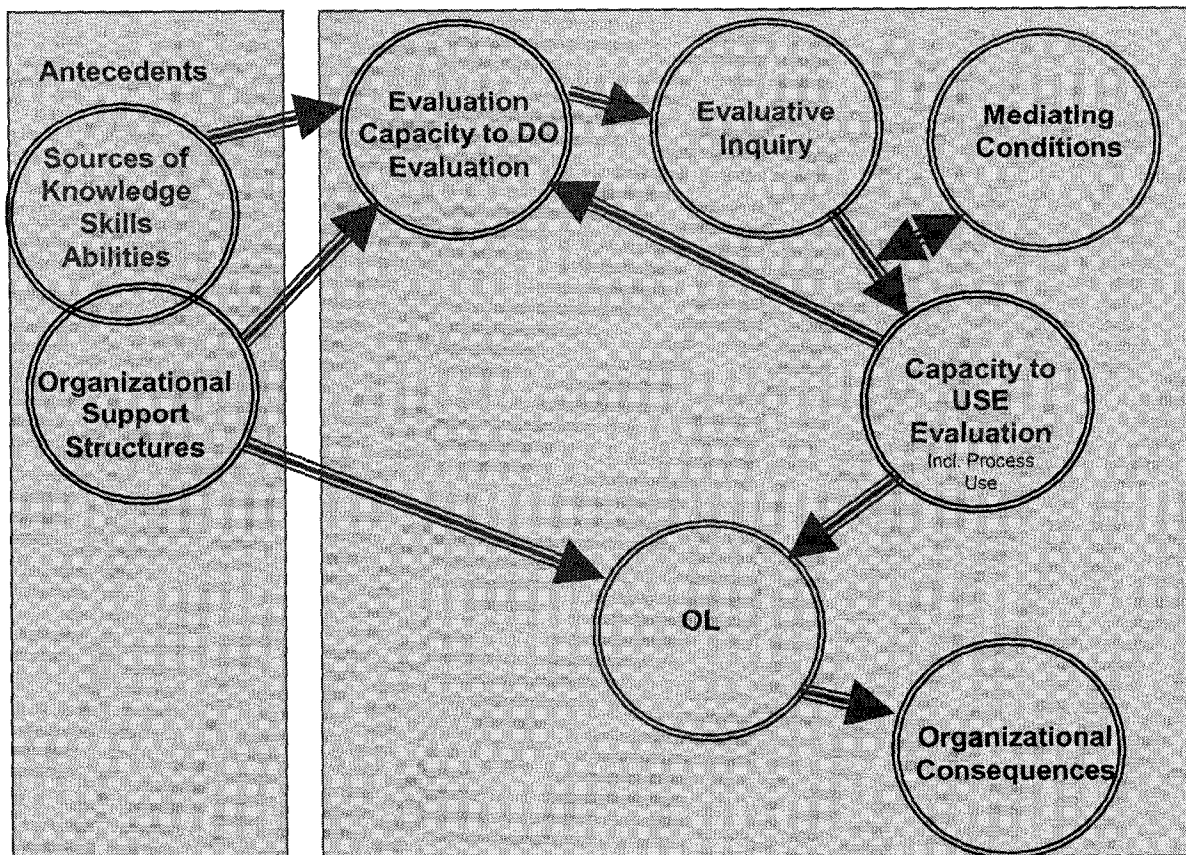


Figure 2. Conceptual framework – organizational capacity to do and use evaluation, from Cousins, Goh & Elliott, 2007, p.4.

It should be noted that, for the purposes of this study, a slightly nuanced definition of process use is put forward:

Process use refers to and is indicated by changes in knowledge or skills, attitude or affect, and/or actions or behaviours, that occur at the individual, group, or organizational level, as a result the meaning making, knowledge development and learning that occur from the opportunity to engage with evaluative information and thinking. This opportunity manifests itself through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes. (Adapted from Amo & Cousins, 2007, and Patton, 1997).

In order to achieve the goals set out by this study, a mixed-method, component design (Caracelli & Greene, 1997, as cited in Greene, 2007) made up of two parallel investigations is used, followed by an integration of both investigations. “Component designs bring different methods into common action ..., yet the methods remain distinctly identifiable throughout the study” (Greene, 2007, p.121). Methods are mixed at the level of data interpretation for the purposes of *complementarity*, which “seeks broader, deeper, and more comprehensive social understandings [as well as interpretations and inferences] by using methods that tap into different facets or dimensions of the *same complex phenomenon*” (emphasis in original, Greene, 2007, p.101).

The *first investigation* involves the quantitative analysis of questionnaire data gathered in the context of a larger pan-Canadian study on evaluation capacity building undertaken by Cousins and associates. The *second investigation* employs an explanatory, single-case study design (Yin, 2003). The case is a Canadian Federal Government crown corporation identified by experts in the field as having demonstrated high evaluation capacity – the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Although the investigations were in fact completed sequentially (the survey was completed before the case study), they were implemented independently and are given equal status in the study (Greene, 2007); in other words, they both serve equally to increase our understanding of process use, and of the relationship between process use and use of findings in government, by examining these issues from a macro (pan-government) and micro (organizational) standpoint. Both investigations are further detailed below.

3.2.1 Questionnaire Survey

The purpose of the questionnaire survey, which was administered under the auspices of the broader study on evaluation capacity building, was to gather information about factors related to evaluation practices within organizations in order to better understand how organizations build evaluation capacity⁶. The survey questionnaire (Appendix A), which was developed and pilot tested by Cousins and associates, asked respondents to rate their level of agreement and the estimated frequency of actions, activities or consequences according to a series of questions that fall under nine variables which includes scales developed through previous research as well as scales developed for the purpose of this study (nonetheless grounded in the literature): 1. *Capacity for organizational learning* (Goh & Richards, 1997; Goh, Quon & Cousins, 2007); 2. *Organizational support structures* (which has two sub-scales; one for formalization and the other for training support) (Goh & Richards, 1997); 3. *Capacity to do evaluation*; 4. *Evaluation capacity building activities*; 5. *Specific types of evaluation activities* (Cousins, Goh, & Lee, 2003); 6. *Stakeholder participation in evaluation*; 7. *Use of evaluation findings*; 8. *Use of evaluation process*; and 9. *Conditions mediating evaluation use*. Respondents were also asked to provide basic background information on their organization and on themselves. A mapping of these variables against the process use conceptual framework is provided in Figure 3.

In the context of the broader study, the survey was administered electronically to the following groups:

1. Members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (N= ~ 1,600 – 1,800 individuals)

⁶ Further details on the survey and its preliminary results in the context of the broader study on evaluation capacity building can be found in Cousins et al. (2007).

2. Member organizations of the United Way of Greater Toronto (N = ~ 150 organizations)
3. Member organizations of the United Way of Ottawa (N = ~ 70 organizations)
4. Head of Evaluation in the Federal Government (N = ~75)

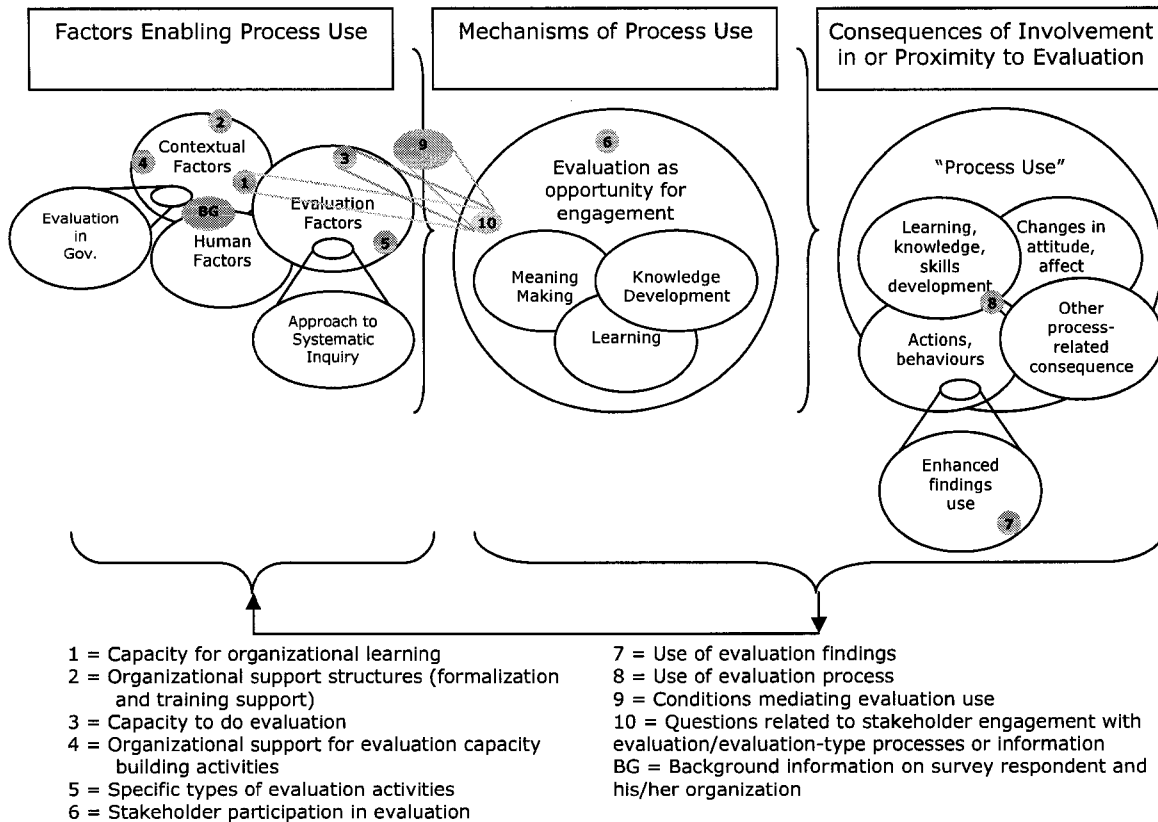


Figure 3. Mapping of survey variables against process use conceptual framework

Email invitations, including a link to the web-based survey, were sent to potential respondents based on email lists received from representatives of the above groups. Two reminder invitations were sent to non-respondents in each of the two weeks following the first email. A total of 340 usable responses were received. For the purposes of this study, only responses from group 1 (members of the Canadian Evaluation Society who self-identified as working for federal, provincial or municipal government) and group 4 (heads of evaluation in

the Federal Government) were extracted for analysis. Table 3 provides an overview of characteristics for this sub-sample of 183 respondents.

Table 3

Number and proportion of respondents by organizational affiliation, current position, gender, age category and level of education – government sub-sample (n=183)

	Organizational Affiliation				Total (%)
	Federal Government	Provincial Government	Municipal Government	Other Government	
Current Position					
Evaluation Specialist	53	28	4	5	90 (49.2)
Performance Measurement Specialist	2	6		1	9 (4.9)
Program Manager	2	3	2		7 (3.8)
Program Officer/Staff	7	2	1		10 (5.5)
Senior Manager	9	4		3	16 (8.7)
Executive Director	5	1	1		7 (3.8)
Auditor				1	1 (0.6)
Other	20	15	1	3	39 (21.3)
No response	3	1			4 (2.2)
Gender					
Male	36	22	5	4	67 (36.6)
Female					110 (60.1)
No response	60	38	3	9	6 (3.3)
Age Category					
Less than 30	8	4		1	13 (7.1)
30-39	18	19	1	4	42 (23.0)
40-49	32	17	4	4	57 (31.2)
50-59	30	18	3	3	54 (29.5)
60+	4	1	1		6 (3.3)
No response	9	1		1	11 (6.0)
Highest Diploma/Degree Attained					
High School	3				3 (1.6)
University - Undergraduate	19	10	1	1	31 (16.9)
University - Graduate	68	38	7	9	122 (66.7)
University - Doctoral	9	12	1	3	25 (13.7)
No response	2				2 (1.1)
Total (%)	101 (55.2)	60 (32.8)	9 (4.9)	13 (7.1)	183 (100)

The following analyses were conducted in the context of this study:

1. Descriptive analyses of variables of interest to this study (see Figure 3);
2. Reduction of data on background information (smaller number of categories with sufficient numbers in each for further analyses) and reduction of survey data into composite or scale variables with analysis of reliability or internal consistency of each (Cronbach's Alpha of at least .8);
3. Identification of plausible predictor variables for use in multiple regression analyses through the analysis of association or relationship (using zero-order bivariate Pearson correlations) between the scale variables and background variables of interest to this study and process use, as well as use of evaluation findings;
4. Assessment of the degree to which significant relationships, as identified in the above analysis, hold up when other predictor variables are accounted for or controlled for (using hierarchical multiple regression analysis).

The results of these analyses are presented in Section 4.1.

On the issue of assumptions

In order to assess the degree to which predictor variables met the assumptions for multiple regression, the normality of the distribution of variables used in the multiple regression analyses (discussed in Section 4.1) was assessed through visual inspection of histograms and Normal Q-Q plots, as well as examination of values associated with skewness and kurtosis. Visual inspection showed a few instances of possible negative skew. However, values for skewness and kurtosis (which would be zero if the distribution was normal) were all

smaller than or equivalent to ± 1 . Also, the mean and median were almost identical across all variables.

In order to bring more rigour to this assessment, the normality of distributions was tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic (with Lilliefors correction). Seven variables showed distributions that were significantly different from the normal distribution according to this very conservative test (organizational support structures; organizational support for ECB; capacity to do evaluation; use of evaluation process; and the three variables referring to types of process use, which are discussed in Section 4.1). Transformations were undertaken in order to see the degree to which multiple regression results would be different if variables showing non-normal distributions were transformed. All concerned variables showed moderate negative skewness – as such, a reflect and square root (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) transformation was used. Three variables were improved but still did not show a normal distribution, according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic, post transformation (organization support for ECB; capacity to do evaluation; process use as evidenced by changes in knowledge/skills). Other transformations suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell were tried, but results were similar. Regression analyses using transformed variables produced very similar results.

Given the results of visual inspection and examinations of skewness and kurtosis, the conservative nature of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic, and the fact that transformations did not correct the non-normality of all concerned variables or result in a significant increase or decrease in the overall variance accounted for by the regression models, I decided to use the non-transformed variables in all multiple regression analyses. However, in order to help inform future research on the subject, any nuances produced by the use of transformed

variables in the multiple regression analyses were included as footnotes to the multiple regression results tables (Tables 12 through 16).

In terms of possible violations of other assumptions of multiple regression, the assumption of linearity was examined using the scatter plots of standardized residuals (errors) as a function of standardized predicted values, which, in all cases presented as a random array of dots, evenly dispersed around 0 (Field, 2005). Examination of these scatter plots also provided a visual check of the assumption of homoscedasticity, although the sample is perhaps too small to be able to see any forms of heteroscedasticity. Bivariate scatter plots were also examined, and most approximate what Tabachnick and Fidell describe as “roughly the same width all over with some bulging toward the middle” (p.79), those variables however which were shown to have non-normal distributions do not quite behave in this way. However, as noted by Tabachnick and Fidell, “heteroscedasticity is not fatal to an analysis of ungrouped data ... the analysis is weakened, but not invalidated” (p.80).

3.2.2 Case Study

This study involves a sample of one organization – IDRC. As mentioned above, this case was identified by experts in the field (M. Q. Patton, personal communication, January 2007) as having demonstrated high evaluation capacity, thus increasing the probability of detecting relatively high levels of process use (*purposeful sampling – critical case*).

A total of nine (9) interviews were conducted (eight in person, one by telephone), eight of which were audio-tape recorded, with the participant’s permission. Participants included members of the Senior Management Committee (SMC) (2), as well as persons at the Director level (1), Manager/Program Manager level (2), the Senior Program Officer/Specialist level (2),

and the Evaluation Officer level (2). Four of the nine interviewees worked within the Evaluation Unit.

The sample of interviewees was formed with the assistance of IDRC evaluation staff members. Interviewees were invited to participate via email. Interviews, which averaged one hour in length, were completed by one or more members of the research team (Brad Cousins, Courtney Amo and Paul Shehardi) using the interview schedule in Appendix B. Although the interview schedule is highly structured, interviews followed a more semi-structure approach in order to account for variations in interviewee knowledge and to allow for a more open discussion of issues raised by the interviewees and of themes emerging from the interview.

Each team member was responsible for summarizing the content of their interviews and sharing these with the research team. In order to ensure the completeness of the interview summaries, the tapes were subsequently reviewed against the summaries. A number of relevant documents were also collected and reviewed in the context of the case study. These included reports such as strategic plans, evaluation guidelines, and research studies. A full list of documents reviewed is included in Appendix C.

An in-depth, descriptive analysis of all available data for the case was conducted. The steps followed in this analysis included:

- Organizing the data according to source and approach
- Synthesizing the data, highlighting patterns and themes
- Interpreting the data while identifying relationships and possible generalizations
- Presenting the data conceptually, visually and logically.

In the context of the larger study by Cousins and associates, this analysis contributed to the generation of a case profile report. This report will subsequently be validated through a

focus group process. While the Cousins et al. project is concerned with broader issues of the capacity to do and to use evaluation, this study's focus on process use and its effects on the use of evaluation findings was subsumed in the interview data collection and thus findings related to the issues of concern to this study are also included in the case profile report. These findings are presented in Section 4.2 of the thesis.

3.2.3 *Integration of Parallel Investigations*

As previously mentioned, the integration of the findings of the parallel investigations occurred during the interpretation stage of the study (Greene, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003, as cited in Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006), guided by the study's research questions. In order to give the reader a better sense of this integration, Table 4 links each research question to elements of each investigation, and provides a description of the results of the integration of findings from the two streams of inquiry. In addition, the integrated findings of the parallel investigations are discussed against the relevant literature. The results of this integration are presented in Chapter 5 of the manuscript.

Table 4

Study's research questions and how they are addressed through each investigation

Research Questions	How they are addressed		Integration
	Survey	Case Study	
To what extent is process use of evaluation manifest within government?	Descriptive analysis of scale variables related to stakeholder participation and engagement in evaluation or evaluation-type processes, and of scale variable related to use of evaluation process	Qualitative analysis of data from file/document review and interviews in order to document opportunities for engagement through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes, and draw out the consequences of this engagement/involvement	Description of the extent to which process use is manifest within government at the macro (survey) and micro (case study) level; discussion of parallels and contrasts; drawing of overall conclusions
What conditions, influences and factors enhance process use of evaluation within government?	Analysis of relationship between factors enabling process use (scale variables related to capacity for organizational learning; organizational support structures; capacity to do evaluation; evaluation capacity building activities; specific types of evaluation activities; stakeholder participation in evaluation; conditions mediating evaluation use; stakeholder engagement; background information) and scale variable related to use of evaluation process	Qualitative analysis of data from file/document review and interviews in order to highlight factors that appear to be at the heart of the involvement and engagement necessary for process use to occur	Description of factors that appear to enhance process use of evaluation within government at the macro and micro level; discussion of parallels and contrasts; drawing of overall conclusions
Does enhanced process use lead to greater degrees of use of findings in government organizations?	Analysis of relationship between factors enabling use of evaluation findings (all scale variables noted above, and scale variable related to use of evaluation process), and scale variable related to use of evaluation findings	Qualitative analysis of data from file/document review and interviews in order to draw out potential links between the mechanisms that underlie process use, and use of evaluation findings	Description of potential relationship between process use and use of evaluation findings within government at the macro and micro level; discussion of parallels and contrasts; drawing of overall conclusions

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Survey Results

4.1.1 *Data Description*

The purpose of the questionnaire survey, in the context of the broader study on evaluation capacity building (ECB), was to gather information about factors related to evaluation practices within organizations in order to better understand how evaluation capacity is built. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement and the estimated frequency of actions, activities or consequences according to a series of questions that fall under nine categories of variables:

1. Capacity for organizational learning;
2. Organizational support structures (which has two sub-scales; one for formalization and the other for training support);
3. Capacity to do evaluation;
4. Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities;
5. Specific types of evaluation activities;
6. Stakeholder participation in evaluation;
7. Use of evaluation findings;
8. Use of evaluation process; and
9. Conditions mediating evaluation use.

Respondents were also asked to provide basic background information on their organization and on themselves.

As discussed in the literature review, little is known about the specific factors that influence process use. Much of the literature to date has focused on evaluation utilization more broadly. The purpose of drawing so widely from the ECB survey is to explore the relationship between the variables measured in this survey and process use. In order to facilitate this exploration, a mapping of these nine categories of variables against the conceptual framework for process use was completed (see Figure 3 presented above). Given that this study is situated within a broader ECB study, not all elements of the process use conceptual framework are covered by the survey. A particular weakness in this regard is that the survey does not provide much information on the inner workings of process use aside from the level and frequency of stakeholder participation in evaluation. To help remedy this situation, individual survey items were examined in order to extract those that might conceptually relate to the type of engagement that occurs through involvement in evaluation or evaluation-type processes, or through processing of evaluation or evaluation-type information. Eight such questions were retained and are discussed later in this section. Overall, the elements of the process use conceptual framework that are covered by the ECB survey are considered sufficient in serving the exploratory purposes of this study⁷.

Description of the Sample

As previously noted, only responses from members of the Canadian Evaluation Society (N = ~1,600 – 1,800) who self-identified as working for federal, provincial or municipal government, and from Heads of Evaluation in the Federal Government (N=~75), were extracted for analysis. The characteristics of this sub-sample of 183 respondents were reported above in Table 3.

⁷ The strengths and limitations of the survey results are presented in Chapter 6.

Since data on the survey population do not exist, it is not possible to estimate the degree to which the sample of respondents is representative of the overall population of evaluators in government. However, a recent study on evaluation practice in Canada (EPC) completed by Gauthier, Borys, Kishchuk and Roy (2006) – which surveyed present and past members of the Canadian Evaluation Society, evaluators in the federal government, members of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development (CVSRD) and members of the Société québécoise d'évaluation de programme (SQEP) – arrived at a profile of evaluators in the municipal, regional, provincial and federal government sectors that provides a good basis for comparison⁸.

As can be seen in Table 5, the gender breakdown between the two samples is almost identical ($\chi^2=0.077$; $p=0.782$). Age was categorized differently in each study, which prevents us from making comparisons on this variable. In terms of education, the differences between the sample are more important – for instance, 80 percent of the ECB survey respondents hold graduate degrees, compared to over 50 percent in the EPC survey ($\chi^2=31.0$; $p=0.000$). For time spent working in the field of evaluation, although the proportion of respondents within each category varies significantly between samples ($\chi^2=29.0$; $p=0.000$), the proportions on each side of the five year mark are almost identical for both studies ($\chi^2=0.105$; $p=0.745$). When comparing the percentage of time spent on evaluation between samples, the difference between the two samples is significant ($\chi^2=29.7$; $p=0.000$), with over two thirds of ECB survey respondents spend more than 50 percent of their time on evaluation, as compared to

⁸ Only data from evaluators in the municipal, regional, provincial and federal government sectors were examined for the purpose of this comparison. A chi-square statistic was calculated to see whether significant differences exist between the ECB sample and EPC sample according to gender, highest diploma/degree attained, years in function/job, and percentage of time spent on evaluation. Since age was categorized differently in each of these studies, chi-square could not be calculated.

just over half of the EPC survey respondents. Overall, although these two samples are not significantly different in terms of gender and time working in evaluation, ECB survey respondents hold higher degrees and spend more of their time on evaluation than EPC survey respondents.

Table 5

Comparison of sample characteristics between government sub-sample of evaluation capacity building (ECB) study (Cousins et al., 2007) and government sub-sample of evaluation practice in Canada (EPC) study (Gauthier et al., 2006)

	ECB Study		EPC Study	
	# (%)		# (%)	
Gender				
Male	67 (37.9)	Male	208 (39.0)	
Female	110 (62.1)	Female	325 (61.0)	
	N	177	N	533
Age Category				
Less than 30	13 (7.6)	Less than 30	27 (5.5)	
30-39	42 (24.4)	30-54	377 (76.5)	
40-49	57 (33.1)			
50-59	54 (31.4)	55 and over	89 (18.1)	
60+	6 (3.5)			
	N	172	N	493
Highest Diploma/Degree Attained				
High School	3 (1.7)	College Diploma	33 (6.5)	
University - Undergraduate	31 (17.1)	Bachelor's Degree	159 (31.3)	
University - Graduate	122 (67.4)	Master's Degree	228 (44.9)	
University - Doctoral	25 (13.8)	PhD Degree	38 (7.5)	
		Post-doctoral Work	4 (0.2)	
		Other	43 (8.5)	
		None of the Above	3 (0.6)	
	N	181	N	508
Years in Function/Years in this job				
Less than 2	22 (12.4)	Less than 2	107 (25.3)	
2-4	63 (35.6)	2-4	90 (21.3)	
5-10	63 (35.6)	5-10	112 (26.5)	
11+	29 (16.4)	11+	114 (27.0)	
	N	177	N	423
Percentage of time spent on evaluation				
None	1 (0.6)	None	48 (8.9)	
1-49%	56 (32.0)	1-49%	203 (37.7)	
50%-99%	90 (51.4)	50%-99%	173 (32.2)	
100%	28 (16.0)	100%	114 (21.2)	
	N	175	N	538

Although this comparison gives us a better understanding of how the government sample of ECB survey respondents compares to that of another study done over a similar time period and targeting a similar population – which somewhat increases our confidence in the ability of the ECB survey to draw responses from the target population – it remains impossible to determine the degree to which either one of these profiles accurately reflects the reality of evaluators in government. As such, the results of analyses of these data are limited in their generalizability to the population of evaluators across all three levels of government in Canada.

Description of Data of Interest

Tables A through L⁹, contained within Appendix D, provide descriptive statistics on the items within the each of the variables of the ECB survey, while Table 6 below provides an overview of organizational characteristics such as the number of paid staff in the organization and the number of individuals within the organization with responsibility for program evaluation functions. Personal characteristics of respondents (such as job category, level of education, time working in evaluation, and so forth) are presented in Figures 12 through 18 and are discussed in turn below.

The purpose of the following description, which is organized according to the process use conceptual framework, is to introduce the reader to the data provided by the government sub-sample used in this study. At the same time, the reader is made aware of any data reduction and manipulation undertaken for the purpose of subsequent analyses.

⁹ A more detailed discussion of these tables in the context of the overall survey sample is provided in Cousins et al. (2007).

*Factors Enabling Process Use*Contextual Factors

The *size of organizations*, as measured by the estimated number of employees (full-time equivalents or FTEs), varies widely across the survey's government sub-sample. While Table 6 shows an overall average of close to 5,000 FTEs, estimates of FTEs range from 0 to close to 100,000. In order to make this information more useful to future analyses, the definition of organization size adopted by the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada (TBS)¹⁰ was used to classify organizations as either large (more than 500 FTEs) or small (fewer than 500 FTEs) (TBS, 2006).

Table 6

Descriptive statistics on number of overall employees (full-time equivalents) and number of employees (full-time equivalents) with responsibility for evaluation functions by organizational affiliation – government sub-sample (n=183)

	Organizational Affiliation				Overall
	Federal Government	Provincial Government	Municipal Government	Other Government	
Number of overall employees (full-time equivalents)					
N	87	48	8	12	155
Missing	14	12	1	1	28
Mean	5,946.45	4,614.21	4,043.75	261.39	4,995.55
Minimum	6.00	0.00	70.00	1.70	0.00
Maximum	99,999.00	60,000.00	20,000.00	1,500.00	99,999.00
Standard Deviation	1,5895.84	12,579.42	6,643.75	409.90	13,920.07
Number of employees with responsibility for evaluation functions (full-time equivalents)					
N	88	44	7	10	149
Missing	13	16	2	3	34
Mean	12.02	3.48	5.49	5.30	8.74
Minimum	0.40	1.00	0.00	2.00	0.00
Maximum	100.00	15.00	15.00	20.00	100.00
Standard Deviation	14.461	3.224	5.378	5.478	12.036

¹⁰ Two criteria are used by the TBS in its Policy on Internal Audit (TBS, 2006) for the purpose of designating departments or agencies as "small", they must have both fewer than 500 full-time equivalents and a reference-level of less than \$300 million per year. The ECB survey only collected data on the first criteria.

As can be seen in Figure 4, close to half of survey respondents are from large organization while just over a third hail from small organizations.

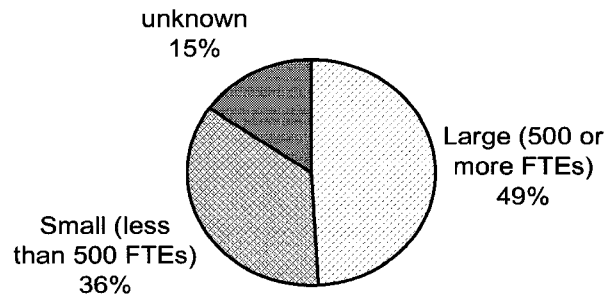


Figure 4. Proportion of respondents by organization size (N=183)

A wide range can also be seen in the number of *FTEs with responsibilities for evaluation* (see Table 6 above). Although the average number of evaluation FTEs is close to 9, estimates range from 0 to 100. Since there is no TBS classification for size of evaluation staff complement, the frequency of values associated with this field were examined in order to establish reasonably even groups that also made sense conceptually. Three groups were formed: small (3 or less FTEs), medium (4-10) and large (11+). As can be seen in Figure 5, relatively even proportions of respondents hail from small to medium evaluation teams, together representing about 2/3 of overall respondents.

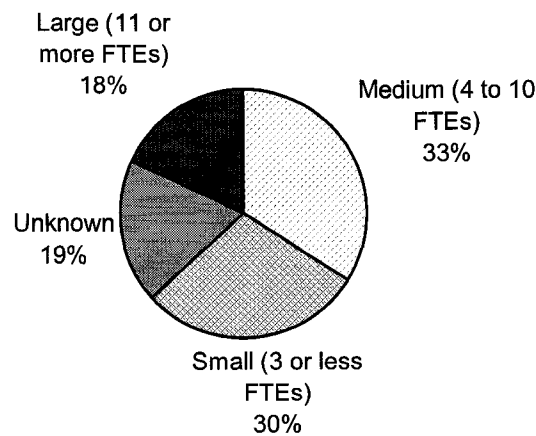


Figure 5. Proportion of respondents by size of evaluation team (N=183)

When questioned about their organization's *capacity for organizational learning*, respondents' answers concentrate around or slightly above the mid-point of the scale (Table A, Appendix D), with the exception of a few higher rated items such as "the organization's mission statement identifies values to which all staff must conform" and "we can often bring new ideas to the organization". These items contrast with the lowest rated items in the group which state that "managers frequently involve staff in important decisions" and "managers accept criticism without becoming defensive".

Respondents also provide scores around or slightly above the mid-point of the scale on questions related to *training support and formalization structures* (Tables B and C) within the organization. Although respondents provide stronger agreement on statements related to the relevance and usefulness of training, they do not agree as strongly with statements related to the development of leadership, coaching and team building, or to training being emphasized equally across the organization. Respondents describe the importance of formal channels and procedures, but also note possible overlap between the work of different units within their

organization. In addition, respondents note a moderate level of organizational support for *evaluation capacity building activities*, as shown in Table D.

Evaluation Factors

Characteristics of the government context stand out in answers to questions related to respondents' organizational *capacity to do evaluation*. As shown in Table E, respondents' scores are higher on questions related to reporting and to the technical aspects of conducting evaluation (formal reporting requirements, basic tools and resources, knowledge/skills to oversee work of external evaluations), and lower on questions that bridge the gap between doing and using evaluation (rewards for use of performance information, sufficient time to reflect on successes and failures).

Respondents' answers to questions relating to the *types of evaluation activities* undertaken by their organization are also indicative of a government environment (Table F). Respondents are most often involved in activities related to conducting (or managing) and reporting on evaluation and less frequently involved in conducting first-hand observation of program activities. It is interesting to note that respondents rarely use comparative group designs in conducting their evaluations, which speaks to the tensions between the need to generate evaluative information that is seen as legitimate and reliable in the eyes of government, and the real-life constraints of practicing evaluators.

Human Factors

As was previously seen in Table 3, close to half of survey respondents identify their *current position* as evaluation specialist, while the other half identify themselves as performance measurement specialists, program staff or management, or other levels of

management¹¹. Given the range of options and the small number of respondents in some of the groups, three broader categories were formed: evaluation, performance measurement and audit; program and policy; and management. This last category includes directors and executive directors of evaluation, who have to balance their role as evaluators with their responsibilities as part of an organization’s management team. As can be seen in Figure 6, close to 70 percent of respondents fall within the evaluation, performance measurement and audit category, while the remaining 30 percent is shared almost evenly between program/policy staff, and management.

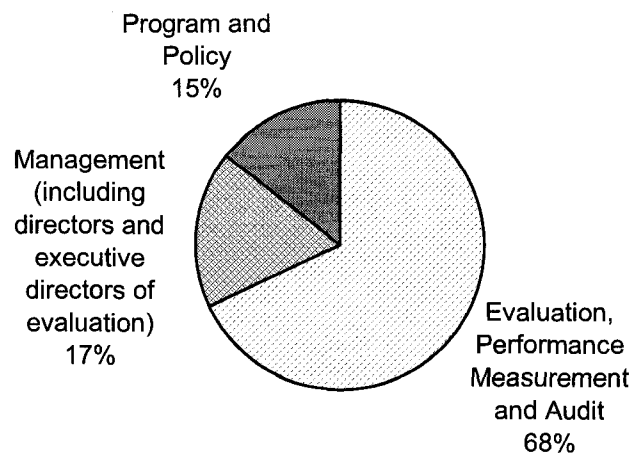


Figure 6. Proportion of respondents by position (N=179)

In terms of the *age of respondents*, Table 3 shows an almost even proportion of 30-39, 40-49 and 50-59 year olds, with the less than 30 and over 60 representing the minority. In order to facilitate analysis, age categories were further collapsed into three groups – under 40, 40-49, and over 50. As can be seen in Figure 7, this regrouping results in an almost even ratio.

¹¹ One respondent identified themselves as an auditor. Given that a significant proportion of respondents chose the “other” category, what they noted as their occupation was examined more closely, and re-coded as appropriate.

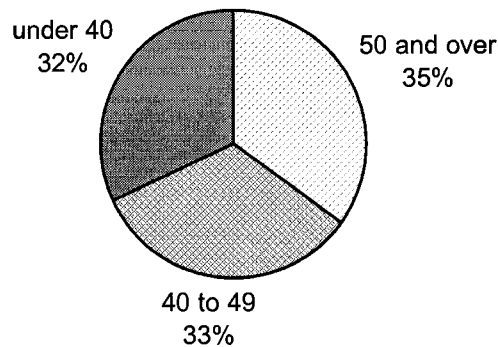


Figure 7. Proportion of respondents by age (N=172)

As was previously mentioned, over 80 percent of the ECB survey respondents indicate that their *education* is at the graduate or doctoral level, with the remaining having an undergraduate degree or lower. A new category of undergraduate, high school and college was created in order to encompass the small number of respondents with less than an undergraduate degree. The revised categories are presented in Figure 8.

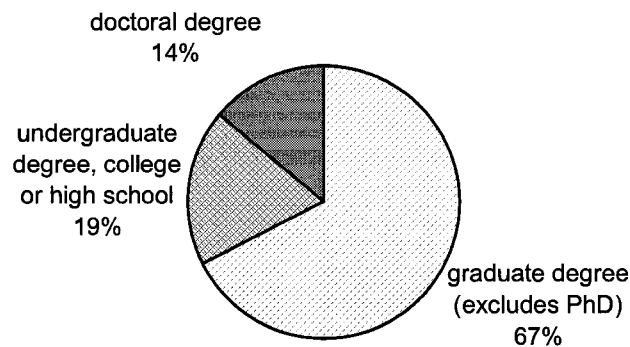


Figure 8. Proportion of respondents by highest diploma/degree attained (N=181)

As was also previously mentioned, over half of respondents indicate having spent more than 5 years in their job. While the average for this variable is 6.33 years, values range from 0 to 30 with a standard deviation of 5.60 years. For the purpose of comparison with the EPC study, these data were grouped into four categories – less than 2, 2-4, 5-10 and 11 or more years. These categories, which are reported in Table 6, are retained for further analysis as they produce sufficient sample sizes within each category and make sense conceptually.

In terms of time spent on evaluation, over two thirds of survey respondents report spending more than half their work time in this area. On average, respondents spend 59.4 percent of their time on evaluation, with values ranging from 0 to 100 and with a standard deviation of 30.9 percent. Again, for the purpose of comparison with the EPC study, these data were grouped into four categories – none, 1-49%, 50-99%, and 100%. These categories, which are reported in Table 6, do not however do justice to the more nuanced frequency distribution of this variable. As such, responses to this question were recoded into four categories: 0-30%, 31-60%, 61-90% and 91-100%. The resulting breakdown, which shows almost even number within each category, is presented in Figure 9.

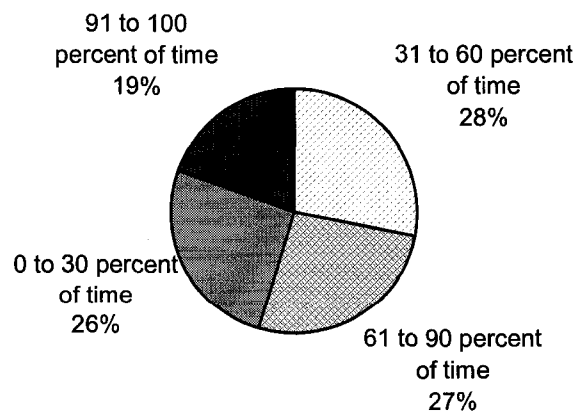


Figure 9. Proportion of respondents by percent of time spent on evaluation (N=175)

When asked to rate their *level of knowledge of evaluation theory and practice* on a scale ranging from “none” to “excellent”, respondents provide average scores that are almost identical for both theory and practice (4.6 and 4.7 respectively; see Figures 10 and 11).

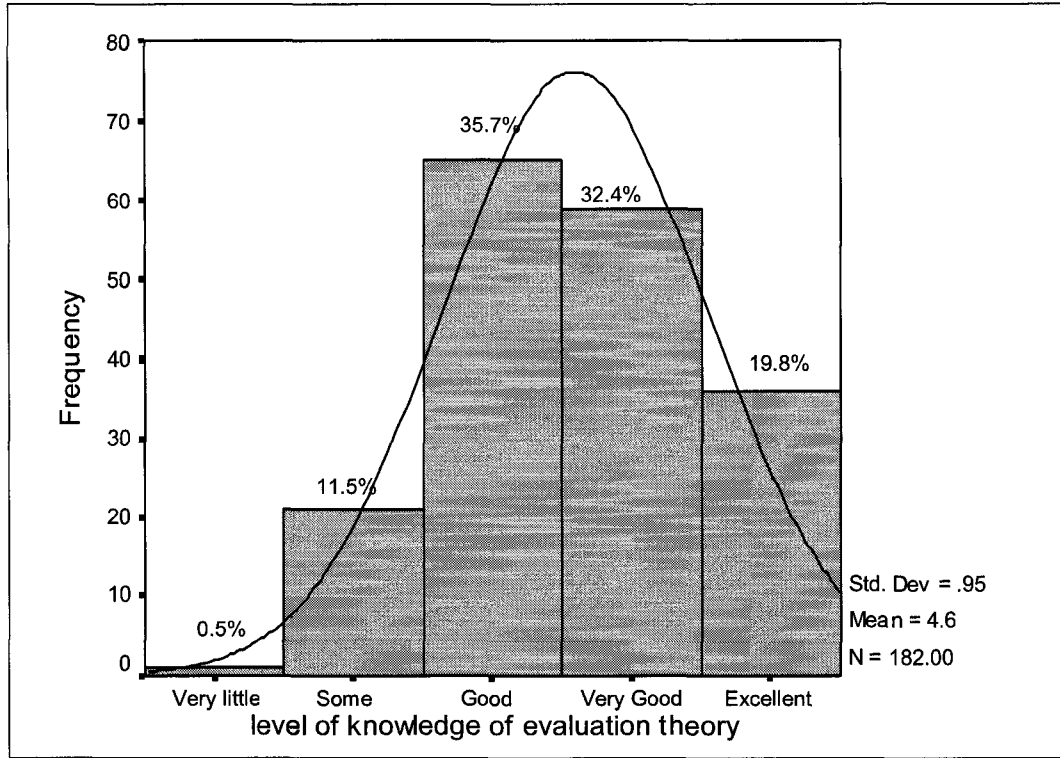


Figure 10. Level of knowledge of evaluation theory

In both cases, approximately 90 percent of respondents rate themselves as having good to excellent knowledge of evaluation theory and practice, with around 20 percent rating their level of knowledge as excellent, resulting in a negative skew to the distribution seen in the figures.

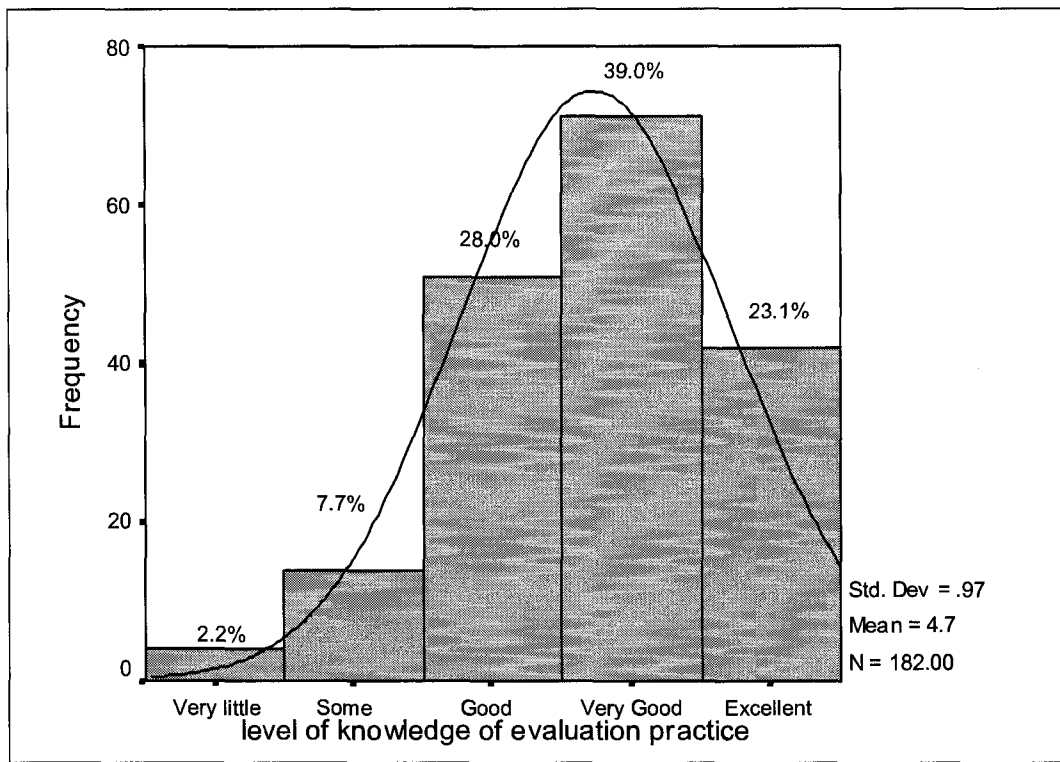


Figure 11. Level of knowledge of evaluation practice

Given the similar response pattern across these two categories of knowledge, a composite or scale variable of “evaluation knowledge” was created, representing the average of respondents’ ratings of their knowledge of evaluation practice and theory. The frequency of values associated with this scale variable was examined in order to establish reasonably even groups that made sense conceptually. These results are presented in Figure 12.

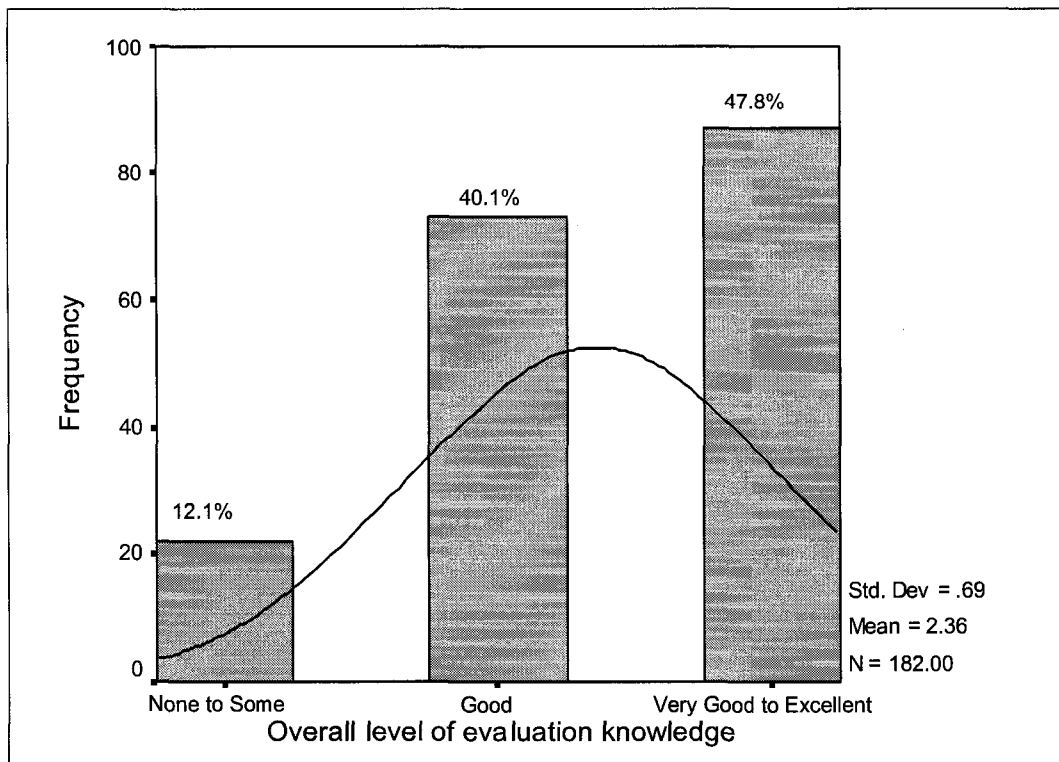


Figure 12. Overall level of evaluation knowledge

At the intersection of factors and mechanisms

The *conditions that mediate evaluation use* span across the three categories of factors presented in the process use conceptual framework, and, given their role as mediators, spill into the section of the conceptual framework that speaks to the mechanisms through which process use is thought to occur. Respondents' answers to questions related to these conditions, which are detailed in Table G, Appendix D, show the importance of evaluation accessibility, credibility, and objectivity, as well as user input and user involvement in evaluation. At the same time, respondents provide lower ratings on questions related to usefulness and timeliness of evaluations in support of decision-making, which are critical to use in a government context.

Mechanisms of Process Use

As previously mentioned, one of the weaknesses of this survey in the context of the present study is the lack of information collected on the mechanisms that are through to lead to process use. The premise – put forward in the process use conceptual framework – is that process use *works* because the evaluation process provides people with an opportunity to engage (with information, with each other, with their own knowledge, and so forth) through evaluation or evaluation-type processes. The ECB survey provides insight into this engagement through two means: 1) by asking about the level¹² and frequency of stakeholder participation in evaluation; and 2) by asking questions, throughout the survey, that speak of opportunities to engage through evaluation or evaluation-related processes.

In terms of level and frequency of stakeholder participation, Tables H and I (Appendix D) show that both program managers/directors and staff responsible for implementing programs are more highly and more frequently involved in evaluations than program sponsors/funders, intended beneficiaries or special interest groups. Given the mean scores around 5.3, the level and frequency of involvement of those closest to the program can be considered slightly better than moderate.

Table J assembles the questions, extracted from other sections of the ECB survey (1. capacity for organizational learning, 3. Capacity to do evaluation, and 9. Conditions mediating evaluation use), that provide insight into *stakeholder engagement through evaluation or evaluation-related processes*. These questions fit nicely together conceptually in that they all describe scenarios where stakeholders are provided with opportunities to engage with evaluative information, with their own knowledge and with the knowledge of others, and show

¹² It should be noted that the survey does not provide insight into what is meant by “level” of participation.

a strong level of internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .82. However, a weakness of this grouping is that it draws from questions that use two different 7-point scales; one measuring levels of agreement, the other measuring frequency. Responses to these questions echo those on stakeholder involvement, with mean scores around 5.2 for questions related to user input into evaluation and involvement of users throughout the evaluation process.

Consequences of involvement in or proximity to evaluation

The ECB survey contains two sections that deal with evaluation consequences; one related to the use of evaluation findings, and the other to the consequences of involvement in or proximity to evaluation, or process use.

As can be seen in Table K, *uses of evaluation findings* that are related to meeting internal and external accountability requirements and meeting the needs of program managers are identified by respondents as occurring most frequently (albeit with means around 5.5). Uses related to funding and fiscal allocation, although deemed critical in the context of government evaluation, are scored around the mid-point of the scale. The findings of evaluations are less frequently used for communication purposes and for decisions about staffing.

In terms of *process use*, Table L shows that consequences related to learning, knowledge and skills development (such as developing technical skills for doing evaluation) are deemed by respondents to occur more frequently as a result of involvement in evaluation activities and processes than changes in attitude or affect (such as appreciation of the value of evaluation) or changes in actions or behaviours (such as improved management practices). Indeed, questions related to expanded and expedited use of evaluation findings are rated at the mid-point of the scale.

Overview of variables brought forward for further analysis

More detailed analyses of the above data are guided by the study's three research questions:

- To what extent is process use of evaluation manifest within government?
- What conditions, influences and factors enhance process use of evaluation within government?
- Does enhanced process use lead to greater degrees of use of findings in government organizations?

The ECB survey data provide an opportunity to investigate possible answers to these questions, albeit in an exploratory fashion. In order to facilitate this exploration, the items within each category of variables were combined to produce composite or *scale variables*, reflecting the average score of each respondent across items within the set. Valid responses to ninety-percent of the items were required of each respondent in order to receive a composite score for the set. The reliability or internal consistency of each scale variable was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, with a value of .80 or higher being deemed as acceptable. As can be seen from Table 7, all but one scale variable (organizational support structures – formalization) show an acceptable level of internal consistency. Items for this variable were combined with those of organizational support structures – training in order to create a scale variable of overall organizational support structures with a higher reliability.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics and internal consistency of composite variables, Government sub-sample (N=183)

Composite Variable	# in conceptual framework (Figure 3)	N	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Alpha
capacity for organizational learning	1	165	4.16	1.76	6.50	1.082	.939
Organizational support structures - combined	2	160	4.73	2.27	6.57	0.896	.848
<i>organizational support structures-training</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>172</i>	<i>4.94</i>	<i>1.38</i>	<i>7.00</i>	<i>1.208</i>	<i>.928</i>
<i>organizational support structures-formalization</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>173</i>	<i>4.54</i>	<i>2.29</i>	<i>6.67</i>	<i>0.948</i>	<i>.614</i>
capacity to do evaluation	3	162	4.75	2.00	6.91	1.167	.891
Evaluation capacity building activities	4	178	4.62	1.00	7.00	1.717	N.A. ¹
specific types of evaluation activities	5	158	4.88	1.31	7.00	1.198	.912
stakeholder participation in evaluation - level of participation	6	157	4.43	1.00	7.00	1.364	.847
stakeholder participation in evaluation - frequency of participation	6	154	4.45	1.00	7.00	1.375	.837
use of evaluation findings	7	161	4.74	1.00	7.00	1.236	.904
use of evaluation process	8	157	4.65	1.00	7.00	1.232	.965
conditions mediating evaluation use	9	153	4.82	1.00	7.00	1.081	.955
Questions related to stakeholder engagement	10	158	4.49	2.13	6.63	0.978	.818

Notes: *Only one question in this set.¹*

Given the possibility that the background information on respondents and their organizations described above may be related to process use, these variables are also retained for further analysis. Table 8 provides a list of these variables.

Table 8

Descriptive statistics on variables related to background information on survey respondents and their organization, Government sub-sample (N=183)

Variable	N	Values (# / %)			
Organization size	155	Small (65 / 41.9%)	Large (90 / 58.1%)		
Size of evaluation team	149	Small (54 / 36.2%)	Medium (62 / 41.6%)	Large (33 / 22.1%)	
Position of respondent	179	Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Audit (122 / 68.2%)	Program and Policy (26 / 14.5%)	Management (31 / 17.3%)	
Age of respondent	172	Under 40 (55 / 32.0%)	40 to 49 (57 / 33.1%)	50 and over (60 / 34.9%)	
Level of education of respondent	181	Undergraduate degree, college or high school (34 / 18.8%)	Graduate degree (122 / 67.4%)	Doctoral degree (25 / 13.8%)	
Length of time in position	177	Less than 2 years (22 / 12.4%)	2-4 years (63 / 35.6%)	5-10 years (63 / 35.6%)	11 or more years (29 / 16.4%)
Percentage of time spent on evaluation	175	0 to 30% (45 / 25.7%)	31-60% (49 / 28.0%)	61-90% (47 / 26.9%)	91-100% (34 / 19.4%)
Overall level of knowledge of evaluation	182	None to some (22 / 12.1%)	Good (73 / 40.1%)	Very good to excellent (87 / 47.8%)	

We now move to the more detailed analyses that serve to provide exploratory answers each of the study's research questions.

4.1.2 Process Use in Government

As was previously presented, process use is considered to have occurred when evidence of changes in attitude or affect, changes in actions or behaviours, or changes in knowledge or skills is present – either at the individual, group or organizational level – as a result of involvement in or proximity to evaluation processes. The ECB survey contains items

that relate to the extent of stakeholder participation and engagement in evaluation and processes, and the consequences of such activities.

Stakeholder participation and engagement

As was discussed previously, respondents' answers to questions on the level and frequency of participation of different stakeholder groups in evaluation (Tables H and I, Appendix D), and on the engagement of such stakeholder in evaluation or evaluation-type processes (Table J) show that stakeholder participation/engagement is considered to be on average moderate.

In order to gain a different view of these results, the 7-point response scales were reduced to 3-points; combining the proportion of responses for the first two points, the middle three points, and the last two points of each scale. Figures 13 and 14 provide a graphic representation of the revised distributions for level and frequency of stakeholder participation.

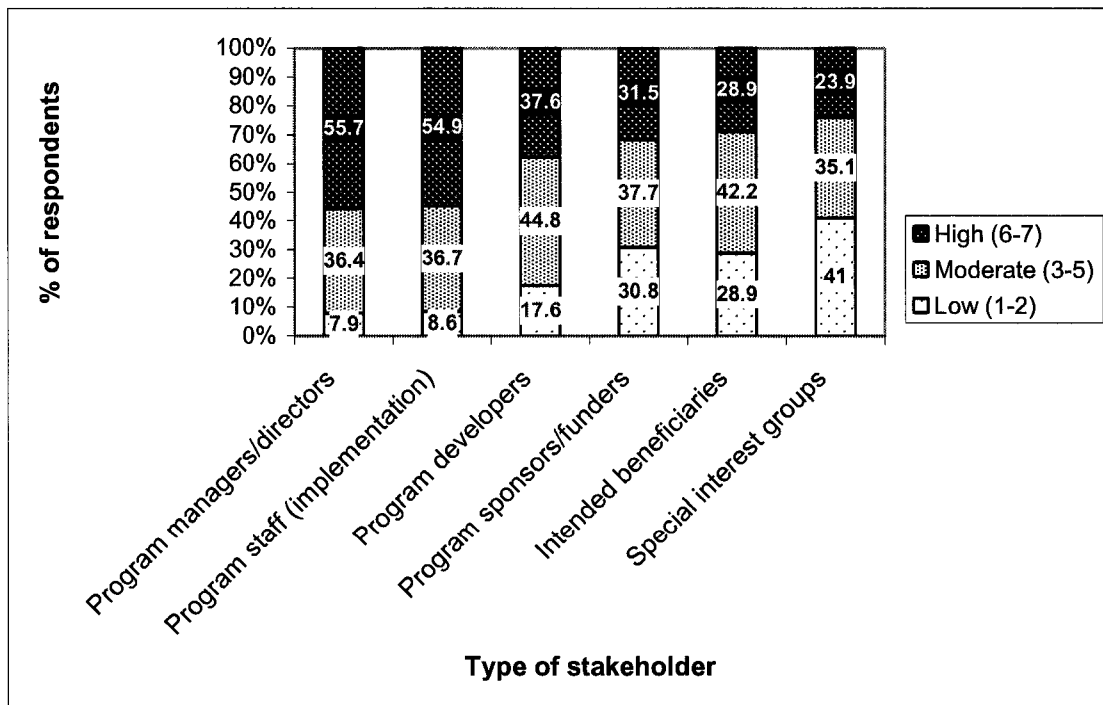


Figure 13. Level of participation of stakeholders in evaluation

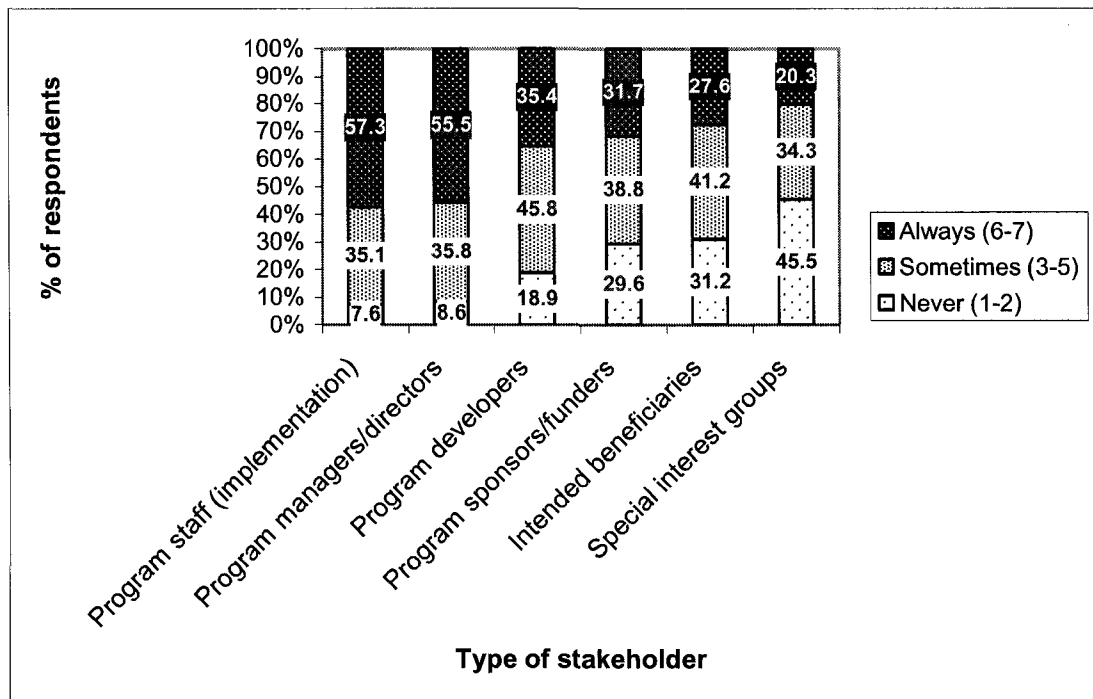


Figure 14. Frequency of participation of stakeholders in evaluation

It is interesting to note that proximity to the program at the time of evaluation appears to be a factor in explaining the degree (level and frequency) to which a stakeholder is involved in an evaluation. The degree of involvement goes down the further removed one is from the program’s current direct management and implementation. It is also interesting to note that the degree of participation of program sponsors/funders, and to a certain extent beneficiaries, shows an almost even split across categories of level and frequency, suggesting three equally important clusters of differing practices in this regard across government.

Figures 15 and 16 present the results for questions that speak to engagement of organizational staff in evaluation or evaluation-type processes, or with evaluation or evaluation-type information. The extent of involvement and input of evaluation users is similar to the involvement of program managers/directors and program staff described in Figures 13 and 14, which reinforces the notion that the needs of those closest to the program at

the time of evaluation are being acknowledged and served first and foremost. Although senior managers are also considered important users in the government context, the fact that they were not included as a category in Figures 13 and 14 prevents us from being able to assess the extent of their involvement in evaluation processes.

It is interesting to note that opportunities for engagement and reflection through other means (self-assessment, problem-solving, and so forth) do not appear to be as present in the government context as those opportunities offered through evaluation. In fact, the lower scores of the items presented in Figure 16 – which speak to more collaborative, participatory, learning-types of processes – make one wonder about the *nature* and *type* of involvement of users and other stakeholders in evaluation, which was not measured in this survey.

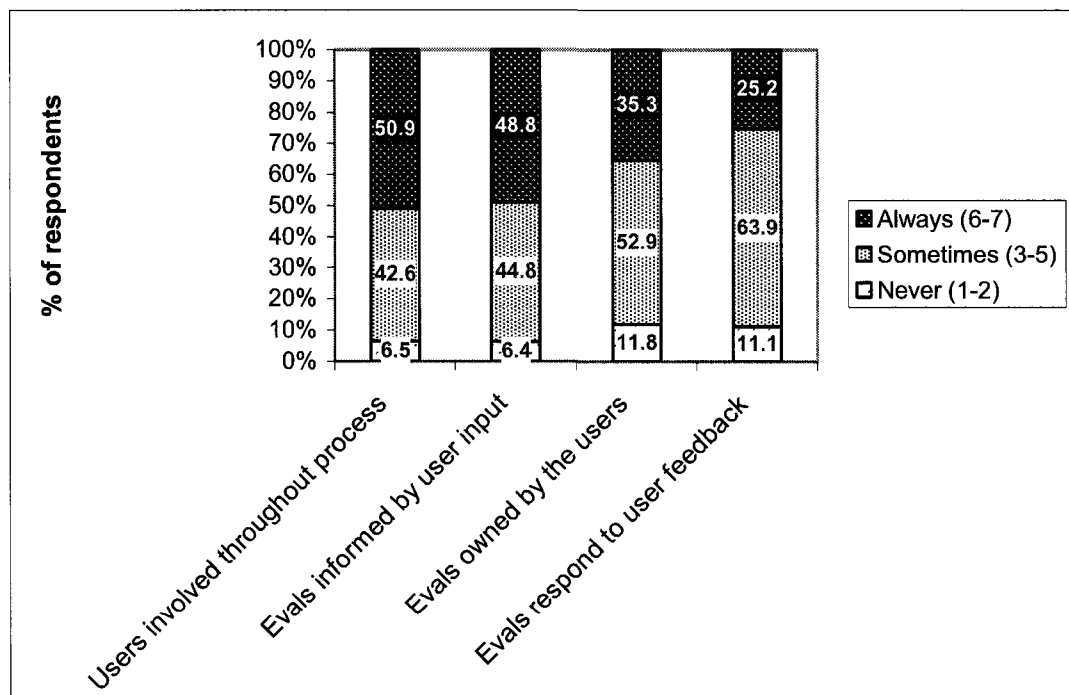


Figure 15. Questions that speak to stakeholder engagement (frequency)

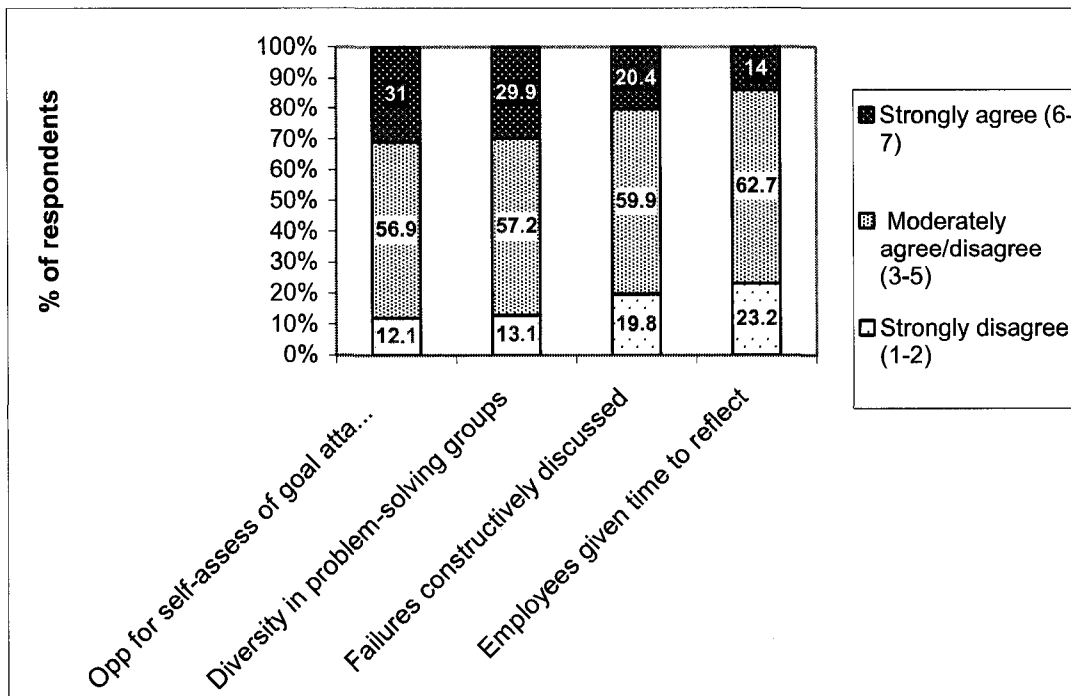


Figure 16. Questions that speak to stakeholder engagement (level of agreement)

Consequences of involvement and engagement

As part of the ECB survey, respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 (never) to 7 (always), the occurrence of 17 consequences of involvement in evaluation activities and processes. Since respondents were asked to answer these questions on behalf of members of their organization, no distinction can be made as to whether these consequences occurred at the individual, group or organizational level. The response distribution and descriptive statistics for each of these questions were discussed in brief in the previous section, and are presented under Table L, Appendix D.

As can be seen in this table, average scores at the individual item level range from 4.25 to 5.55, resulting in a score of 4.65 on the process use scale variable (Table 7).

In order to again gain a different view of these results, the 7-point response scales were reduced to 3-points. Figure 17 provides a graphic representation of the revised distributions.

As was previously mentioned, consequences occurring most frequently in government include an increased understanding of the program/policy/intervention being evaluated, as well as the development of evaluation knowledge and technical skills. Consequences occurring more rarely include the expanded or expedited use of evaluation findings, improvement of management practices, development of professional networks and increased commitment to the organization. Despite this, Figure 17 highlights that close to 4/5 respondents overall note that each of these consequences occurs at least sometimes in their organization.

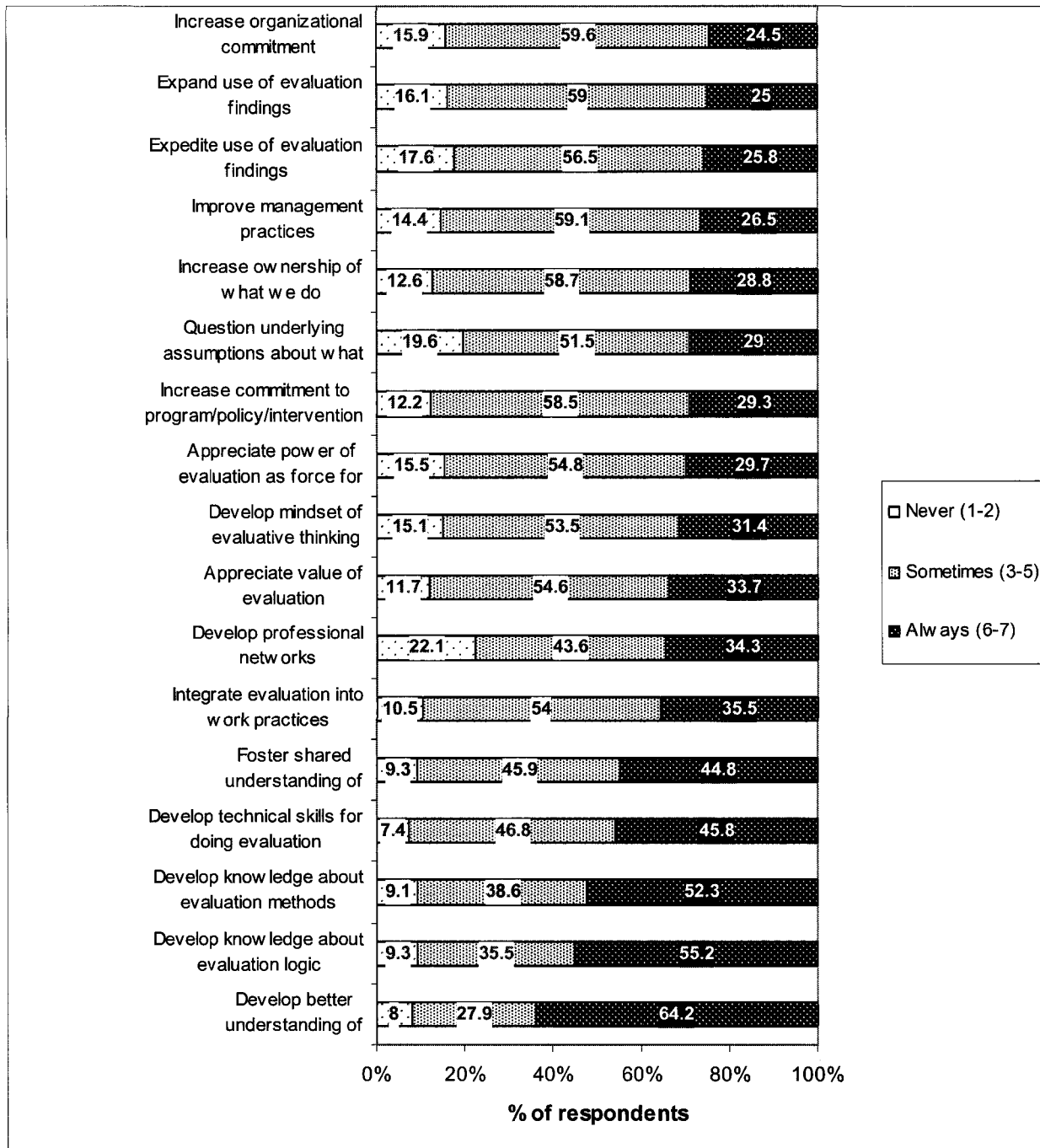


Figure 17. Frequency of occurrence of consequences of involvement in evaluation activities and processes

To gain a more nuanced understanding of the occurrence of process use in government, each of the 17 ECB survey questions addressing process use were grouped according to the

three¹³ categories of process use indicators identified in the conceptual framework (Figure 1), with an overall average produced for each category¹⁴. As can be seen in Table 9, this allowed for changes in knowledge and skills (or the learning aspect of process use) to emerge as most frequent (although still moderate), while changes in attitude/affect and changes in behaviour/action show a similar, lower frequency (closer to the mid-point of the scale).

Table 9

Descriptive statistics on indicators of process use, government sub-sample (N=183)

Indicator	N	Mean	Min	Max	S.D.	Alpha
Changes in knowledge and skills	177	5.24	1.00	7.00	1.35	.924
Changes in attitude or affect	177	4.48	1.00	7.00	1.37	.942
Changes in actions or behaviours	179	4.43	1.00	7.00	1.37	.894

A visual representation of the frequency distribution for each category of process use indicators is provided in Figures 18-20.

¹³ It should be noted that, although respondents were provided with an opportunity to indicate “other” process-related consequences, the responses of those who did could easily be re-coded into existing questions, and as such, no new consequences were identified.

¹⁴ Since these groups were created based on conceptual understanding of process use, their internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach’s Alpha. As can be seen in Table 9, they also show strong internal consistency, with alpha levels well above the 0.8 mark.

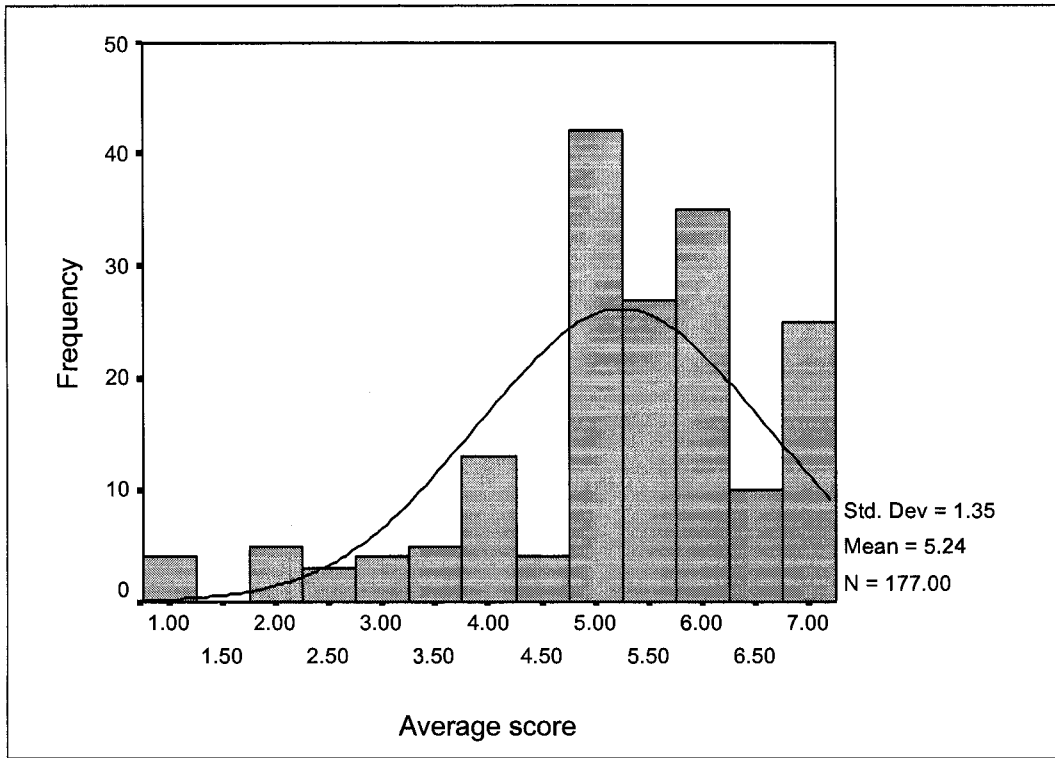


Figure 18. Process use as evidenced by changes in knowledge and skills

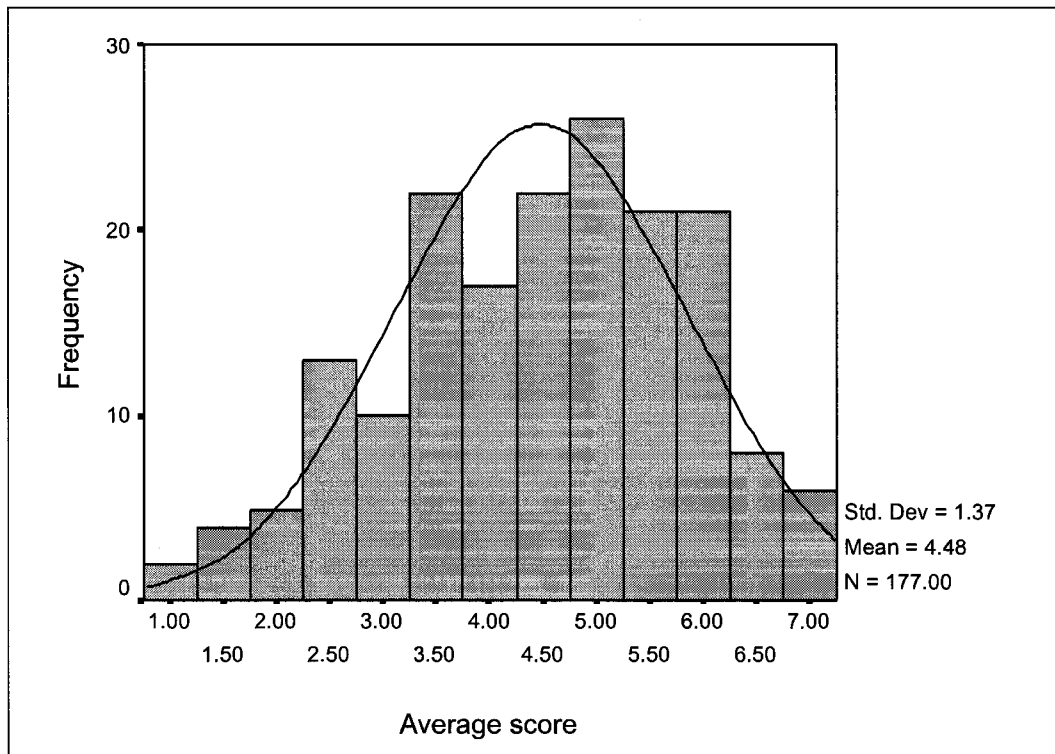


Figure 19. Process use as evidenced by changes in attitude or affect

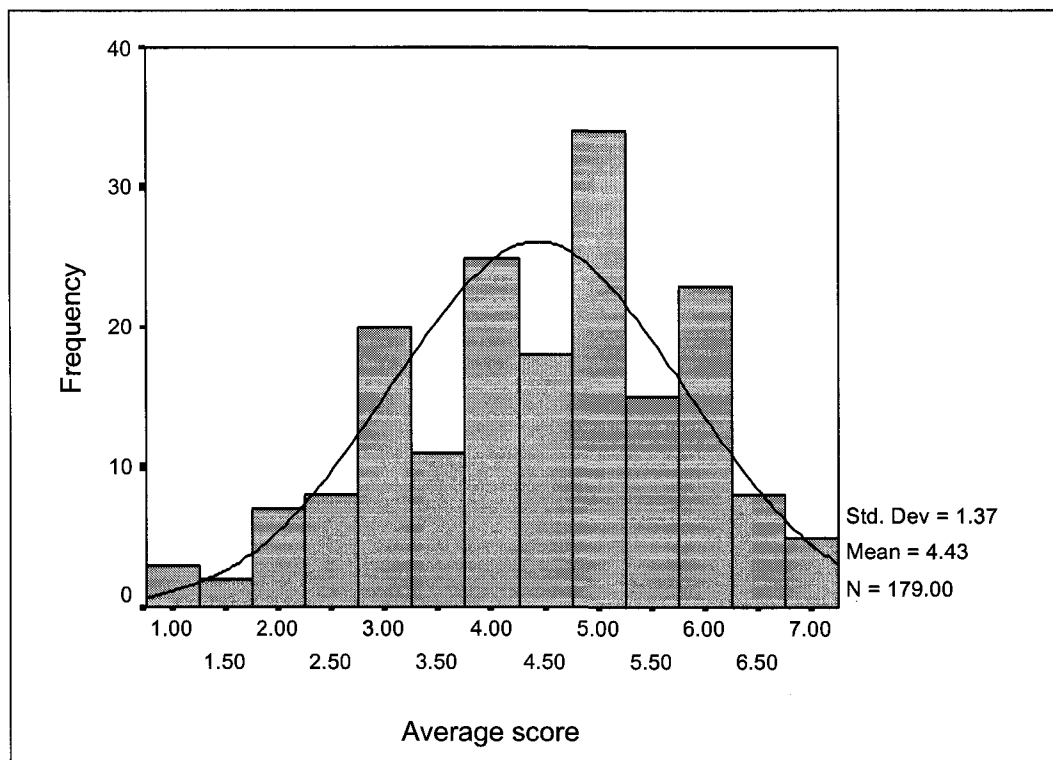


Figure 20. Process use as evidenced by changes in actions or behaviours

Summary

Although the results above are preliminary, they give insight into a government context that gives priority to involving those in closest proximity to the program in evaluation activities and processes. Although at least half of survey respondents note that all other stakeholder groups are sometimes to always involved, and at moderate to high levels, the level and frequency of involvement goes down the further one is removed from the management and implementation of the program at the time of evaluation.

According to close to 80 per cent of survey respondents, all of the identified consequences of involvement in evaluation activities and processes occur at least sometimes in their organization. Between 45 and 64 per cent of respondents report that changes in knowledge and skills – such as developing a better understanding of the program being

evaluated – are *always* a consequence of involvement in evaluation activities and processes, which is an important learning effect of evaluation. Although changes in attitude and affect – such as developing a mindset of evaluative thinking – and changes in actions and behaviours – such as improved management practices – are occurring less frequently, they are *always* a consequence of involvement in evaluation activities and processes for at least 24 per cent of respondents.

These differing levels of occurrence across types of consequences could be a function of the nature and type of involvement of stakeholders or users, which was not assessed in this survey, but can be glimpsed through the proxy of questions that speak to a lower involvement and engagement in evaluation-type processes such as self-assessment and reflection in this context. In other words, although learning outcomes might result from more surface levels of involvement, changes in attitudes/affect and actions/behaviours might require more in-depth and sustained involvement of stakeholders. Other factors may also be at play, which is what is being explored in the next set of analyses.

4.1.3 *Conditions, influences and factors that enhance process use*

The ECB survey was developed in such a way as to capture the conditions, influences and factors that are believed to have an influence on an organization's capacity to do and to use evaluation. In order to determine which (if any) of these factors were related to, and could account for variance in process use, a two-step analysis process was used.

First, in order to identify plausible predictor variables to be used in multiple regression analyses, the scale variables and background variables presented in Tables 7 and 8 were inter-correlated using zero-order bivariate Pearson correlations (pairwise deletion). As can be seen in Table 10, most contextual factors and all evaluation factors are significantly correlated with process use and use of evaluation findings, while only a few of the human factors show such a relationship. Variables describing the mechanisms of process use are all significantly correlated with process use and use of evaluation findings. Given these results, Table 11 provides the full list of predictor and criterion variables that were retained for subsequent analyses. A discussion on the issue of multicollinearity – or the condition where predictor variables are highly correlated – is provided in Section 6.1.

Table 10

Zero order inter-correlational matrix, criterion and predictor variables, government sub-sample (N= 183)

	Criterion variable	Criterion/Predictor variable	Predictor variables																	
			Contextual factors					Evaluation factors		Human factors							Mechanisms of process use			
			Size of organization	Size of evaluation team	Capacity for organizational learning	Organizational support structures – combined	Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities	Capacity to do evaluation	Specific types of evaluation activities	Age of respondent	Level of education of respondent	Current position - evaluation	Current position – program or policy staff	Current position - management	Time working in evaluation	Percentage of time spent on evaluation	Overall level of evaluation knowledge	Conditions mediating evaluation use	Level of stakeholder participation in eval.	Freq. of stakeholder participation in eval.
Use of evaluation findings	1.0																			
Use of evaluation process (predictor for use of evaluation findings)	.71**	1.0																		
Size of organization	.08	-.06	1.0																	
Size of evaluation team	.30**	.19*	.37**	1.0																
Capacity for organizational learning	.34**	.50**	-.08	.08	1.0															
Organizational support structures – combined	.35**	.41**	.03	.15	.51**	1.0														
Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities	.47**	.58**	.03	.26**	.48**	.48**	1.0													
Capacity to do evaluation	.57**	.64**	.02	.21*	.60**	.56**	.71**	1.0												
Specific types of evaluation activities	.65**	.59**	.28**	.43**	.36**	.37**	.52**	.64**	1.0											
Age of respondent	-.06	.04	.10	.01	.06	-.02	.07	.09	-.04	1.0										
Level of education of respondent	-.08	-.04	.07	-.04	-.01	-.11	.00	.11	.01	.10	1.0									

Zero order inter-correlational matrix, criterion and predictor variables, government sub-sample (N= 183) (cont.)

	Criterion variable	Criterion/Predictor variable	Predictor variables																				
			Contextual factors					Evaluation factors		Human factors						Mechanisms of process use							
			Use of evaluation findings	Use of evaluation process (predictor for use of evaluation findings)	Size of organization	Size of evaluation team	Capacity for organizational learning	Organizational support structures – combined	Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities	Capacity to do evaluation	Specific types of evaluation activities	Age of respondent	Level of education of respondent	Current position - evaluation	Current position – program or policy staff	Current position - management	Time working in evaluation	Percentage of time spent on evaluation	Overall level of evaluation knowledge	Conditions mediating evaluation use	Level of stakeholder participation in eval.	Freq. of stakeholder participation in eval.	Evaluation as opportunity for engagement
Current position - evaluation	.00	.09	-.07	.08	-.14	-.00	.03	-.01	.04	-.08	.06	1.0											
Current position – program or policy staff	.17*	.03	.07	-.06	.01	.05	-.08	-.03	-.03	-.04	-.10	-.60**	1.0										
Current position - management	-.15	-.14	.02	-.05	.17*	-.04	.04	.03	-.02	.14	.02	-.61**	-.19*	1.0									
Time working in evaluation	-.03	-.06	.06	.02	-.01	-.02	-.08	-.01	.01	.30**	.16*	.12	-.09	-.07	1.0								
Percentage of time spent on evaluation	.16	.27**	-.01	.21*	-.08	.13	.26**	.27**	.31**	.04	.09	.40**	-.21**	-.30**	.08	1.0							
Overall level of evaluation knowledge	.08	.11	.07	.27**	.08	.06	.17*	.14	.22**	.04	.20**	.15*	-.31**	.10	.23**	.28**	1.0						
Conditions mediating evaluation use	.61**	.75**	-.01	.18*	.47**	.40**	.48**	.63**	.61**	.05	.04	.10	-.09	-.05	.04	.33**	.14	1.0					
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.51**	.45**	.14	.20*	.28**	.10	.21**	.35**	.51**	.10	.03	.04	.04	-.09	.08	.02	.07	.47**	1.0				
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – frequency of participation	.42**	.33**	.20*	.14	.15	.03	.15	.26**	.45**	.10	.09	.06	-.02	-.05	.11	.08	.12	.48**	.87**	1.0			
Evaluation as opportunity for engagement	.55**	.71**	-.02	.15	.75**	.48**	.56**	.71**	.57**	.05	.08	-.04	.00	.04	.04	.13	.09	.82**	.58**	.51**	1.0		

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)
 **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Table 11

List of predictor and criterion variables retained for multiple regressions analyses

Type	Category	Variable	
Predictor	Contextual factors	Size of evaluation team	
		Capacity for organizational learning	
		Organizational support structures – combined	
		Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities	
	Evaluation factors	Capacity to do evaluation	
		Specific types of evaluation activities	
	Human factors	Current position – program or policy staff (only for use of evaluation findings)	
		Percentage of time spent on evaluation (only for use of evaluation process)	
	Mechanisms of process use	Conditions mediating evaluation use	
		Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	
		Stakeholder participation in evaluation – frequency of participation	
		Stakeholder engagement through evaluation or evaluation-type activities	
	Predictor and Criterion	Consequences of involvement in or proximity to evaluation	use of evaluation findings
			use of evaluation process (predictor for use of evaluation findings)

These correlations speak to the degree to which changes in the criterion variables are explained by each predictor variable on its own. For instance, the capacity to do evaluation, with a correlation coefficient of .64, explains, on its own, over 40 percent of the variation in process use (coefficient of determination, or r^2 , of .41). Conditions mediating evaluation use, and questions related to stakeholder engagement also show high correlation coefficients, and each explain over 50 percent of the variation in process use (r^2 of .57 and .51 respectively). Although this is interesting, it is not the full picture.

The *second* set of analyses look at the degree to which the above relationships hold up when other predictor variables are accounted for or controlled for. This is done through multiple regression.

Two multiple regression analyses were completed, both using hierarchical (blockwise) entry to construct regression models that draw on the process use conceptual framework (listwise deletion). The *first analysis* served to identify which predictors contribute substantially to the model's ability to predict process use. The *second analysis* included only significant predictors in order to assess the relative contribution of each to the model. In both analyses, the variables that describe the mechanisms of process use (level and frequency of stakeholder participation, and stakeholder engagement) were entered first into the model as a group. Given that involvement in, or proximity to, the evaluation process is a critical element of our process use conceptualization, it is anticipated that these variables will account for most of the variation in process use. At the same time, we are curious about whether the contextual, evaluation and human factors that are thought to affect the use of evaluation findings can also help explain variation in process use. These variables (size of evaluation team, capacity for organizational learning, organizational support structures, organizational support for

evaluation capacity building activities, capacity to do evaluation, specific types of evaluation activities, and percentage of time spent on evaluation) were entered second into the model as a group. Given that the conditions mediating evaluation use sit at the intersection of factors enabling process use and mechanisms of process use, this variable was entered last (forced entry).

First analysis

Three significant models emerged from this analysis, with the final model indicating that 74.2 per cent of the variance in process use was accounted for by the variables entered into the model ($F_{11,88}=20.098, p < .001, R \text{ square} = .742^{15}$). With an adjusted R square of .705, we can assume that if the model was derived from the population of evaluators in government rather than from a sample, it would account for approximately 3.7 percent less variance in process use.

When examining the steps of the hierarchy more closely, we can see that those variables that describe the mechanisms of process use account for 59.4 percent of the variance in process use, with contextual/evaluation/human factors explaining an additional 7.3 percent. Conditions mediating evaluation use, which was entered last, explained an additional 7.5 percent of the variance. Variables that show a significant association with process use, for all three steps of the hierarchy, are presented in Table 12.

¹⁵ The assumption of independence of errors was tested using the Durbin-Watson statistic. With a value of 2.181 (close to 2), we can have confidence that the assumption has been met.

Table 12

List of predictor variables that show a significant association with process use –multiple regression (hierarchical) – first analysis

	Beta Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	p
Step 1				
Constant (process use)	.344			
Predictor variables				
Evaluation as an opportunity for engagement	.895	.643	8.454	.000**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.279	.303	2.271	.026* ¹⁶
Step 2				
Constant (process use)	-.011			
Predictor variables ¹⁷				
Evaluation as an opportunity for engagement	.772	.597	4.529	.000**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.329	.357	2.722	.008**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – frequency of participation	-.278	-.291	-2.314	.023* ¹⁸
Time spent on evaluation	.240	.202	2.621	.011*
Step 3				
Constant (process use)	-.312			
Predictor variables ¹⁹				
Conditions mediating evaluation use	.716	.620	4.725	.000**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.381	.414	3.542	.001**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – frequency of participation	-.338	-.354	-3.155	.002**
Capacity for organizational learning	.270	.237	2.079	.041*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

¹⁶ Not significant in multiple regression analysis using transformed variables ($p = .069$)

¹⁷ Organizational support for evaluation capacity building ($p = .013$) shows up as an additional significant predictor variable in multiple regression analysis using transformed variables.

¹⁸ Not significant in multiple regression analysis using transformed variables ($p = .071$)

¹⁹ Organizational support for evaluation capacity building ($p = .013$) shows up as an additional significant predictor variable in multiple regression analysis using transformed variables.

It is interesting to note here that questions that relate to opportunities for engagement through evaluation or evaluation-type processes, although important contributors to the model early on, do not survive to the last stage; while capacity for organizational learning only appears at that last stage. While both level and frequency of stakeholder participation contribute significantly to the final model's explanatory strength, they contribute in opposite ways, suggesting that process use increases as the frequency of stakeholder participation *decreases*. The most important contributor to the final model is the scale variable of conditions mediating evaluation use, which contributes to a .716 unit increase in process use for every unit increase of this variable.

Second analysis

Only the significant predictors found in the final model from the first analysis were entered into the model explored in the second analysis. Three significant models again emerged, with the final model accounting for with 64.0 per cent of the variance in process use, or 10 per cent less than in the first analysis ($F_{4,121}=52.011, p <.001, R \text{ square} =.640^{20}$). At the same time, with an adjusted R square of .628, we can assume that if the model were derived from the population rather than from a sample, it would account for approximately 1.2 per cent less variance in process use, which is lower than the difference of 3.7 per cent identified in the first analysis.

When looking at the steps of the hierarchy, we can see that the level and frequency of stakeholder participation in evaluation together account for 23.2 per cent of the variance in process use. Capacity for organization learning explains an additional 15.5 per cent, and

²⁰ The assumption of independence of errors was tested using the Durbin-Watson statistic. With a value of 2.243 (close to 2), we can have confidence that the assumption has been met.

conditions mediating evaluation use explain an additional 25.2 per cent. All variables retained for the model show a significant association with process use, as presented in Table 13.

Table 13

List of predictor variables that show a significant association with process use – multiple regression (hierarchical) – second analysis

	Beta Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	p
Step 1				
Constant (process use)	2.838			
Predictor variables				
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.586	.644	3.998	.000**
Step 2				
Constant (process use)	1.127			
Predictor variables ²¹				
Capacity for organizational learning	.502	.423	5.473	.000**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.331	.364	2.372	.019*
Step 3				
Constant (process use)	-.055			
Predictor variables ²²				
Conditions mediating evaluation use	.748	.650	9.059	.000**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.316	.348	1.945	.004**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – frequency of participation	-.283	-.309	-2.609	.010**
Capacity for organizational learning	.225	.189	2.923	.004**
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)				
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)				

Although the effects of stakeholder participation in evaluation activities and processes still account for a significant portion of the variance in process use, it is interesting to note

²¹ Organizational support for evaluation capacity building (p = .000) shows up as an additional significant predictor variable in multiple regression analysis using transformed variables.

²² Organizational support for evaluation capacity building (p = .000) shows up as an additional significant predictor variable in multiple regression analysis using transformed variables.

here that the conditions mediating evaluation use account for the most variance, and that this value is much higher than in the first analysis (25.2 vs. 7.5). Frequency of participation still shows a negative relationship to process use, and all variables show a similar unit change to the first analysis.

Despite the fact that this model accounts for less of the variance in process use than the one presented in the first analysis, it has the advantage of more closely approximating the variance in process use that could be expected from the population, and the effects of multicollinearity are less pronounced²³.

Summary

Although the results above are preliminary, they provide us with a better understanding of the factors and conditions that influence whether a government organization will benefit from the consequences of involvement in evaluation processes. Clearly, although important to our conceptual understanding of process use, the participation of stakeholders in evaluation or evaluation-type processes is not sufficient in explaining variations in process use, and engagement in evaluation-type processes does not appear to be an important predictor in this case. In both analyses, the conditions mediating evaluation use emerge very strongly. However, given that the questions within this scale variable deal with factors that enable process use and elements that speak to the mechanisms underlying process use (such as involvement of users in the evaluation process), this finding does not help us to better understand the specific conditions, influences and factors that enhance process use. The only specific contextual factor that emerged as important in explaining variations in process use was capacity for organization learning, which, as mentioned in Section 4.1.1, is deemed by

²³ See Section 6.1 for a more detailed discussion of the issue of multicollinearity.

respondents' as being within the range of moderate (around or slightly above the mid-point of the scale).

We now move to an examination of the relative contributions of the predictors explored above (including process use) in enhancing the use of evaluation findings in a government context.

4.1.4 *Conditions, influences and factors that enhance use of evaluation findings*

In order to assess the contribution of process use to use of evaluation findings, the same two multiple regression analyses were completed, but using findings use as the criterion variable.

Both analyses used hierarchical (blockwise) entry to construct regression models based on our understanding of the factors that have been shown to enable the use of evaluation findings. As was the case in the previous set of analyses, the *first analysis* served to identify which predictors contribute substantially to the model's ability to predict use of evaluation findings. The *second analysis* included only significant predictors in order to assess the relative contribution of each to the model. In both analyses, the variables that have been shown to influence use of evaluation findings (specific types of evaluation activities, capacity to do evaluation, organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities, organizational support structures, capacity for organizational learning, size of evaluation team, current position – program or policy staff) were entered first into the model as a group. Given that we are trying to understand how involvement in – or proximity to – the evaluation process leads to use of evaluation findings, variables related to this involvement were then entered as a group (conditions mediating evaluation use, stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation, stakeholder participation in evaluation – frequency of participation, stakeholder

engagement through evaluation or evaluation-type processes). Process use was entered last (forced entry). In order to build on the findings presented below, a *third analysis* was completed which included only significant predictors from the first analysis, but broke out process use into the categories identified in the process use conceptual framework (learning, knowledge and skill development; actions and behaviours; and changes in attitude and affect). The purpose of this last analysis was to assess whether the different categories of process use contributed equally (or not) to explaining variation in findings use. The results of these three analyses are each presented in turn.

First analysis

Three significant models emerged from the first analysis described above, with the final model accounting for 70.0 percent of the variation in use of evaluation findings ($F_{12,85}=14.212, p < .001^{24}$). The adjusted R square of .651 tells us that the model would account for 4.9 percent less of the variation in use of evaluation findings if it were derived from population data.

The variables from the first group entered into the model – contextual, evaluation and human factors that have been shown to influence the use of evaluation findings – account for 52.9 per cent of the variance. The variables from the second group – which speak to involvement in, or proximity to, the evaluation process – account for an additional 15.3 per cent of the variance. Finally, process use, which was entered last in the model, accounts for an additional 1.8 per cent of the variance in use of evaluation findings.

Variables that show a significant association with use of evaluation findings, for each step of the hierarchy, are presented in Table 14.

²⁴ Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.705 (close to 2). Assumption of independence of errors has been met.

Table 14

List of predictor variables that show a significant association with use of evaluation findings – multiple regression (hierarchical) – first analysis

	Beta Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	p
Step 1				
Constant (use of evaluation findings)	.551			
Predictor variables				
Current position, program/policy staff	.811	.189	2.377	.020*
Specific types of evaluation activities	.517	.484	4.451	.000**
Step 2				
Constant (use of evaluation findings)	-.195			
Predictor variables				
Current position, program/policy staff	.615	.143	2.091	.040*
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.464	.487	3.761	.000**
Conditions mediating evaluation use	.414	.350	2.422	.018*
Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities	.156	.206	2.215	.030*
Step 3				
Constant (use of evaluation findings)	-.147			
Predictor variables				
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.364	.382	2.813	.006**
Process use	.278	.271	2.114	.038*

Although being a program or policy staff member, conditions mediating evaluation use, organization support for evaluation capacity building activities, and level of stakeholder participation are all important contributors to the second model, only the level of stakeholder participation in evaluation remains once process use is added into the final model. Each contributes about a .3 unit change in use of evaluation findings.

Second analysis

Again, only the significant predictors of the final model from the first analysis were entered into the model explored in the second analysis. Two significant models emerged, with the final model accounting for with 54.7 per cent of the variance in process use, approximately 15 per cent less than in the first analysis ($F_{2,133}=79.120, p <.001, R \text{ square} =.547^{25}$). With an adjusted R square of .540, if the model were derived from the population of evaluators in government, it would account for approximately 0.7 per cent less variance in process use, which is lower than the difference of 4.9 per cent identified in the first analysis.

When looking at the steps of the hierarchy, we can see that the level of stakeholder participation in evaluation accounts for 31.0 per cent of the variance in use of evaluation findings. Process use then explains an additional 23.7 per cent. Both variables retained for the model show a significant association with use of evaluation findings, as presented in Table 15.

Although the level of stakeholder participation in evaluation activities and processes explains the most variance, the importance of process use stands out more clearly in this analysis, and results in a larger unit change in use of evaluation findings than level of stakeholder participation.

Although this model accounts for less of the variance in use of evaluation findings than the one presented in the first analysis, it has the advantage of more closely approximating the variance in use of evaluation findings that could be expected from the population, and the effects of multicollinearity are less pronounced.

²⁵ The assumption of independence of errors is again met (Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.989 (close to 2)).

Table 15

List of predictor variables that show a significant association with use of evaluation findings – multiple regression (hierarchical) – second analysis

	Beta Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	p
Step 1				
Constant (use of evaluation findings)	2.524			
Predictor variables				
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.496	.557	7.704	.000**
Step 2				
Constant (use of evaluation findings)	1.113			
Predictor variables				
Process use	.536	.556	8.278	.000**
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.257	.289	4.304	.000**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Third analysis

In order to build on these findings, a final multiple regression analysis was completed in order to see whether each of the categories of process use (learning, knowledge and skill development; actions and behaviours; and changes in attitude and affect) contributed equally (or not) to explaining variation in findings use.

In this last analysis, only the significant predictors from the first analysis were entered, but with the process use scale variable broken into its three categories. The level of stakeholder participation was entered first, and the process use variables entered second, as a block. Two significant models emerged, with the final model accounting for 53.0 per cent of the variance in use of evaluation findings, which is slightly lower than the results for the

second analysis above ($F_{4,140}=38.303$, $p < .001$, R square = .530²⁶). When looking at the steps of the hierarchy, we can see that the level of stakeholder participation in evaluation accounts for 28.5 per cent of the variance in use of evaluation findings. Process use then explains an additional 24.5 per cent. All but one of the variables entered into the model (process use as evidenced by changes in knowledge and skills) show a significant association with use of evaluation findings, as presented in Table 16.

Table 16

List of predictor variables that show a significant association with use of evaluation findings – multiple regression (hierarchical) – third analysis

	Beta Coefficients	Standardized Beta Coefficients	t	p
Step 1				
Constant (use of evaluation findings)	2.650			
Predictor variables				
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.469	.533	7.437	.000**
Step 2				
Constant (use of evaluation findings)	1.393			
Predictor variables				
Process use as evidenced by changes in actions or behaviours	.264	.298	2.425	.017*
Process use as evidenced by changes in attitudes or affect	.240	.268	2.307	.023*
Stakeholder participation in evaluation – level of participation	.228	.260	3.860	.000**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

By breaking out process use into its categories, the relative importance of changes in actions/behaviours and attitudes/affect resulting from involvement in evaluation activities or processes is highlighted, while the importance of the level of stakeholder participation in

²⁶ Durbin-Watson statistic = 1.873 (close to 2). Assumption of independence of errors has been met.

evaluation is maintained. Together, these predictors account for close to 3/4 of a unit change in use of evaluation findings. Although this model accounts for less of the variance in use of evaluation findings than the ones presented in previous analyses it provides a clearer picture of the types of process use that are important to explaining variance in use of evaluation findings.

Summary

Again, although the results above are preliminary, they provide us with a better understanding of how the consequences of involvement in the evaluation process (particularly the behavioural consequences) are linked to the use of evaluation findings in a government context. What is particularly interesting is the fact that many factors known to influence the use of evaluation findings (such as those expressed in the scale variable on conditions mediating evaluation use) appear to fall to the wayside once process use is entered into the model. What is also striking in all three analyses is the low beta coefficients for use of evaluation findings (-.147, 1.113, and 1.393), which are the predicted values of the findings use scale variable if the other predictors in the model were 0. In other words, without good levels of stakeholder participation and good levels of consequences resulting from their involvement (particularly changes in actions or behaviours, and changes in attitudes or affect), we are left with rather low levels of use of findings. This is consistent with the maxim from the organizational change literature (Cousins, Goh & Clark, 2006) that belief (in this case, a strong enough belief in the findings of evaluation to put them to use) follows practice (in this case, changes in actions/behaviours or attitudes/affect that occur as a result of involvement in or proximity to evaluation). Although learning, knowledge and skills development are important, they may not be sufficient in fostering the use of evaluation findings in a government context. These findings provide the impetus for further exploration (which is done

at least in part in the case study portion of this thesis), and for building the case for stakeholder involvement in evaluation and evaluation-type processes in government.

4.2 Case Study Results

This case study involves a sample of one organization – the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) – which was identified by experts in the field as having demonstrated high levels of evaluation capacity, or capacity to *do* and to *use* evaluation (*purposeful sampling – critical case*). It should be mentioned upfront that, although this study is concerned with process use and use of evaluation findings in government, IDRC is not a typical government department or agency, and is not held to the same accountability, performance monitoring and evaluation policies and requirements as most government organizations. As a crown corporation²⁷ of the Federal Government of Canada, IDRC has the flexibility to tailor its approach to performance monitoring and evaluation to the specific context in which it operates. As such, the ways in which evaluation is undertaken in the organization (which are further described below) are more a function of organizational impetus and need rather than external requirements. As one interview puts it “*we don’t have to participate in the ritual*”. Although this can be seen as limiting the generalizability of the case to the broader spectrum of government organizations represented in the ECB survey sub-sample, it can also be seen as an opportunity to study evaluation in a government-type organization that is not constrained by central agency dictates, giving us a glimpse into what can be accomplished in a context where evaluation is primarily put to the service of learning and continuous improvement rather

²⁷ Crown corporations are corporations wholly owned by the Crown. Each corporation’s mandate, powers and objectives are laid out in their respective enabling legislation (Act). Although most Crown corporations are held to the control and accountability framework laid out in Part X of the Financial Administration Act (FAA), IDRC is not. Its control and accountability regime is outlined in the IDRC Act, which stipulates the requirement for annual audit of accounts and financial transactions, as well as the requirement for annual reporting to Parliament (through the Minister of Foreign Affairs) relating to the activities of the Centre for that fiscal year (Department of Justice Canada, 1985; TBS, 2002).

than external accountability. As such, this case has the potential to provide a number of practical implications for government evaluation policy and practice.

The raw data for this case study were collected through key informant interviews and the review of documents of importance to understanding the organizational context and its evaluation practices and products. The full list of documents reviewed is provided in Appendix C. The nine interviewees – which included members of the Senior Management Committee (SMC) (2), as well as persons at the Director level (1), Manager/Program Manager level (2), the Senior Program Officer/Specialist level (2), and the Evaluation Officer level (2) – were asked a series of questions on the organization’s capacity to do and use evaluation (see Appendix B). These questions are summarized into categories and mapped against the process use conceptual framework in Figure 21.

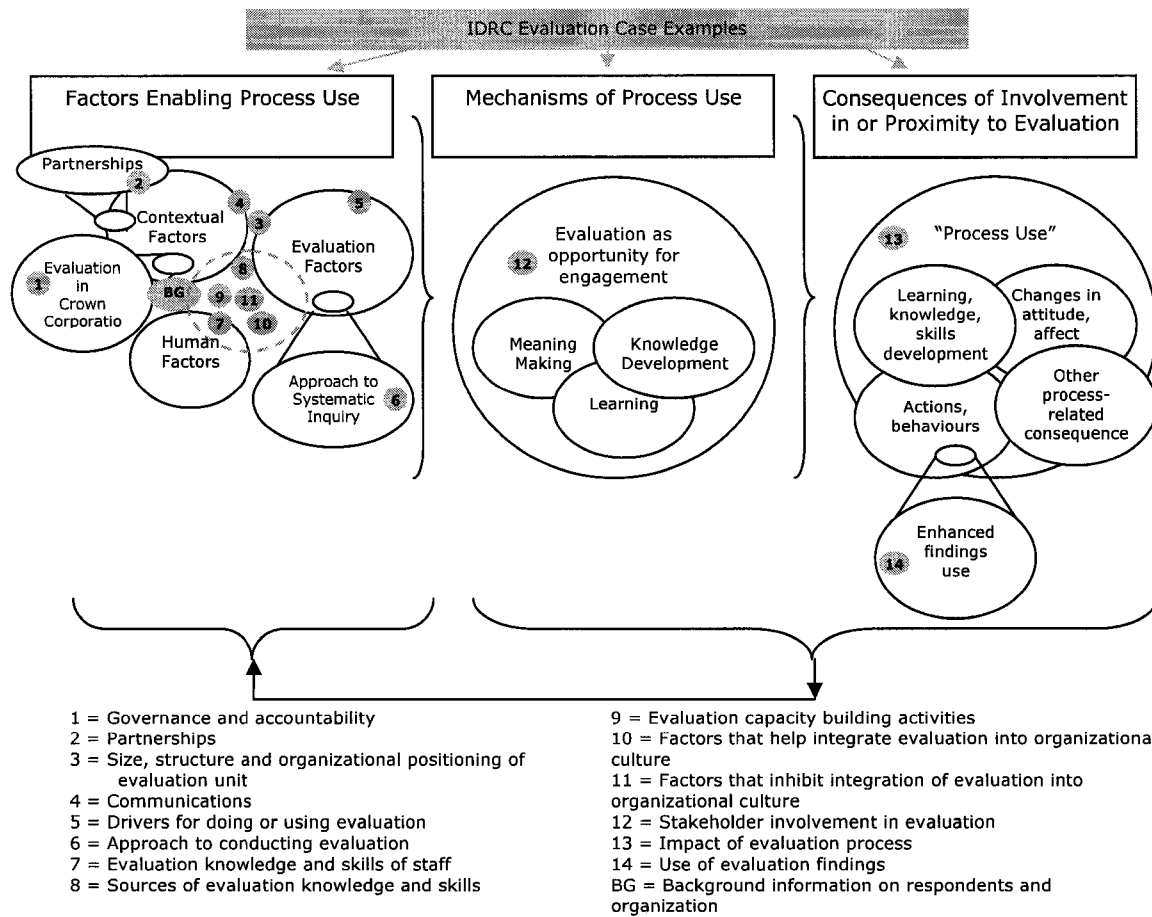


Figure 21. Mapping of interview questions against process use conceptual framework

As can be seen in this figure, a number of the categories of questions fall at the intersection of organizational, evaluation and human factors, although it could easily be argued that this is the case for most of the issues examined. As was the case in the ECB survey, very little explicit information was gathered on the mechanisms through which involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes result in the consequences associated with process use. As such, it is not possible at this stage to assess the relative potency and interactive/combined influence of factors that appear to be affecting process use. However, the data gathered helps to build a preliminary understanding of these interactions that can then be

pursued in future research. Although not all elements of the conceptual framework were covered in the interviews, information extracted from the documents reviewed helped to complete the picture and to contextualize interviewee responses. Overall, the data gathered is considered sufficient in fulfilling the exploratory aims of this study.

The case study is presented in three sections²⁸. First, some key details regarding IDRC are presented, in order to give the reader an understanding of the context in which this organization operates as well as an understanding of its mandate, functions and resources. Each research question is then explored, although re-ordered for ease of readability. First, Section 4.2.2 explores the conditions, influences and factors that appear to make IDRC an environment conducive to process use; second, Section 4.2.3 discusses the extent to which process use is manifest within this organization; and finally, Section 4.2.4 examines whether enhanced process use leads to greater degrees of use of evaluation findings²⁹.

4.2.1 Case Description

IDRC is an independent, Canadian Crown Corporation that was created by an Act of Parliament in 1970. Its mission of “Empowerment through Knowledge” is enacted through the support of applied research of direct benefit to developing countries and their citizens. By maintaining ongoing exchanges between itself and its partners in developing countries, IDRC is able to support projects that reflect pressing and current community needs. In addition, the

²⁸ It should be noted that much of the content of this results section is adapted from the first draft of the case profile report prepared in the context of the broader study on Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB). This report will be revised as a result of feedback gathered from interviewees and other stakeholders during a focus group session, to be held in the Fall of 2008. It is anticipated that the revised case profile will be published as part of an edited book which pulls together all the cases studied and provides an analysis across cases.

²⁹ The strengths and limitations of the case study are presented in Chapter 6.

Centre helps build research capacity in developing countries by providing experts advice and a significant set of resources (International Research Development Centre [IDRC], 2008a).

With a total budget of \$170.1 million (IDRC, 2007a), IDRC supports research under four broad themes (per cent of total budget for 2006/07 identified in parentheses):

- Social and Economic Policy (SEP) (38.4%)
- Environment and Natural Resource Management (ENRM) (22.0%)
- Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) (15.8%)
- Innovation, Policy and Science (IPS) (3.0%)

Each theme is fed by program initiatives (actual windows through which funding flows) which follow a 5-year lifecycle. IDRC also administers special projects, and provides training support and awards for academic study and hands-on training of young researchers from Canada and developing countries. In general, more than half of IDRC sponsored research activities are research projects funded through program initiatives, with workshops, conferences, dissemination activities, awards, and so forth accounting for the remainder.

IDRC's corporate activities accounted for 20.8 per cent of its budget in 2006/07, and supported the work of 446 FTEs located in Ottawa and in six regional offices around the world (Nairobi, Kenya; Dakar, Sénégal; Cairo, Egypt; New Delhi, India; Singapore, Singapore; Montevideo, Uruguay). These regional offices "provide a local perspective to the Centre's programming, nurture partnerships, and provide a first point of contact for researchers in developing countries. They also ensure closer monitoring of risks associated with the Centre's work and allow IDRC to respond to opportunities in a timely and coherent way" (IDRC, 2007a). When comparing the size of this organization to those surveyed in the context of the

broader study on ECB, it would fit within the 36 per cent that fall within the “small organization” category, as presented in Figure 4.

As a Crown Corporation, IDRC reports to the Parliament of Canada through the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Further details on the organization will be provided throughout the following sections.

4.2.2 Conditions, Influences and Factors that Enhance Process Use

In the context of the broader evaluation capacity building study, much attention was paid to those conditions, influences and factors (collectively referred to as factors) that are deemed to be related to an organization’s capacity to do and to use evaluation, and to the consequences of this capacity. The ECB Conceptual Framework (Figure 2) places process use within the category of *capacity to use evaluation*. As such, process use can be related to (and influenced by) these same factors. As was the case in the analysis of the ECB survey data, the purpose of drawing so broadly from data collected in the context of the ECB case study is to try to gain a better understanding of what *specific* factors appear to be responsible for creating an environment conducive to process use.

The discussion below covers the many factors explored as per the ECB conceptual framework which were mapped against the process use conceptual framework (Figure 21). The discussion ends by highlighting those factors that emerged from the analysis as being at the heart of the involvement and engagement necessary for process use to occur. These factors can be previewed in Table 21.

Contextual Factors

Governance and Accountability

IDRC is guided by an independent, 21-member, international Board of Governors (including up to 10 members from other countries – eight from developing and two from donor countries), which meets three times a year (IDRC, 2007b). The President of IDRC, an *ex officio* member of the Board, acts as the Centre's Chief Executive Officer. The President is supported by a Senior Management Committee made up of the organization's Vice-Presidents, program area Directors and regional Directors, Secretary and General Council, as well as the Directors of the Human Resources, Policy and Planning, Finance and Administration, and Communications and Government Relations. As was previously noted, IDRC is not subject to the same accountability regime as other government departments and agencies. The organization is however required to report annually on its activities and performance to the Parliament of Canada through the Minister of Foreign Affairs. As such, the Board of Governors and Senior Management are seen as primary users of evaluative information for the purposes of accountability. They also draw on evaluative information to support decision-making, organizational learning, and continuous improvement.

A clear indication of the commitment of senior management to evaluation and evaluation capacity can be found in the Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010 (IDRC, 2004a). Not only does this key document make reference to evaluation findings that have contributed its development, but it also makes explicit the organization's position with regards to the use and usefulness of evaluation:

IDRC recognizes that evaluation makes an essential contribution to learning and acquiring knowledge about effective approaches to research and development. The Centre will approach evaluation as a tool for both learning and accountability. IDRC will use – and help develop – the best

available monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure that it remains on track with respect to its plans and budgets. It will also maintain a critical perspective on the relevance of its plans, and propose changes to them as circumstances change. The Centre will direct efforts to strengthen the evaluation capacity of recipient institutions and individuals and of IDRC staff to enhance the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of research projects, programs, and processes, and internal governance and administrative procedures. (IDRC, 2004a, p. 4-2).

This commitment may be one of the factors that led the Centre to being “recognized by the Office of the Auditor General as a model of good corporate governance. The Centre's governance systems – its Board of Governors, its risk management practices, and its strong audit and evaluation functions – ensure that IDRC remains fully accountable to Canadians” (IDRC, 2007c, ¶ 1).

Partnerships

Partnerships have been an important part of IDRC since its inception (IDRC, 2006; 2008b), having “repaid themselves many times over in knowledge creation, new and productive coalitions, and greater credibility” (IDRC 2008b, ¶ 1). Since 1970, over 145 donors and international development agencies have entered into partnership with IDRC. In 2006/07, revenues from partnerships totalled \$20.5 million (12.1 per cent of total budget) (IDRC, 2007a). This amount was expected to increase to \$35.6 million in 2007/08 (19.4 per cent of expected budget for that year) (IDRC, 2007a).

Partnerships help to increase the availability of resources (financial and knowledge) in support of development research, while fostering the harmonization and coordination of

development assistance and development research programming. As will be further discussed later, partnerships also bring with them accountability requirements that can be discordant with the ways in which monitoring and evaluation is undertaken at IDRC.

Evaluation Unit

IDRC has had a formal evaluation function in place since 1991 (Love, 2005). The Evaluation Unit, which is housed within the President's Office, is made up of 6.5 professional staff (IDRC, 2008c) headed by a Director (6 in Ottawa, 0.5 in Delhi). The unit also includes an intern and a professional development award recipient. When compared to the size of evaluation units reported in the survey of ECB, the evaluation unit at IDRC is considered to be medium in size, and similar in this respect to a third of the units in the broader government context, as presented in Figure 5. The Unit contributes to the Centre's ability to manage risks and account for public funds by supporting the generation of evaluative evidence on the performance of the organization. At the same time, the Unit houses its own research function aimed at addressing knowledge gaps in the area of development research evaluation. Finally, mirroring the Centre's mission, the Unit supports Centre management to make use of evaluation in program planning and decision making by fostering and supporting, through various means, a culture of organizational learning, which, in the broader government context, appears to be at best moderate.

With a program budget of \$1.2 million and a budget of \$100,000 (IDRC, 2007d) allocated to evaluation capacity building within the Centre, the Evaluation Unit engages in four broad categories of activities:

- “Conducting and disseminating strategic evaluations;
- Carrying out capacity development in evaluation and evaluative thinking;

- Engaging in methodology development and tools for evaluation research and evaluation; and
- Developing and implementing organizational learning processes” (IDRC, 2005a, p. 10).

As will be later discussed, the evaluation function at IDRC is decentralized, with the Evaluation Unit providing central coordination and technical support to program staff and management, who are ultimately responsible for their own evaluations. This is quite different from the broader government context. Each member of the evaluation team is linked to a specific program unit in order to build the Evaluation Unit’s understanding of – and sensitivity to – program contexts, and to provide programs with a single point of contact within the evaluation unit.

Organizational support structures

IDRC has several formal mechanisms in place to promote improved effectiveness and accountability. These include formal planning and operational frameworks (for example, Corporate Strategy and Program Framework, Program Initiative Prospectuses, Evaluation Strategy, and so forth) as well as formal reporting mechanisms (for example, Annual Report; Annual Corporate Evaluation Report; External Reviews of Program Initiatives; Regional and Program Area Directors’ reports, and so forth) and ongoing data collection and reporting (for example, rolling Project Completion Reports, recipient reports, and so forth) (IDRC, 2005a, 2007e).

The Centre’s monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are overseen by the Evaluation Unit who is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the system and assessing the quality of evaluations against internationally-accepted standards of utility, feasibility, accuracy and

propriety. The results of these assessments are presented on an annual basis to the Board of Governors, and discussed during the organization's Annual Learning Forum – an annual event which brings together IDRC staff and management from all branches for a day of learning and reflecting.

The specific workplan of the Evaluation Unit is guided by the evaluation plans laid out in the prospectuses that govern each Program Initiative, as well as the priorities for strategic evaluations (major studies of issues that cut across the organization) which emerge from consultations with the Board of Governors, Senior Management, and external stakeholders.

Evaluation work at the Centre is supported by workgroups made up of primary intended users and other stakeholders who provide guidance, feedback and validation of evaluation plans, processes and products. The involvement of these stakeholders will be further discussed in Section 4.2.3.

Communication

The comments of interviewees give insight into an organization that values collaboration, consultation, and the professional and intellectual contributions of its staff members. IDRC values the creation of specific spaces for reflection and sharing (for example, the Annual Learning Forum), and is seen by interviewees as characterized by relatively informal communication amongst staff members, unhindered by hierarchy. At the same time, the diversity of the Centre's program portfolio and the challenging nature of the work can lead to the development of program-area silos – resulting in programs not necessarily being aware of what is being done in other areas. As will be further discussed, the evaluation approach adopted by IDRC has built-in processes that make evaluation a natural mechanism for breaking down these barriers. Through involvement in user groups or working groups,

managers and staff from different parts of the organization, as well as other stakeholders, are provided with a forum for discussion, exchange, reflection and engagement – the consequences of which extend beyond the evaluation. As one interviewee puts it “*one of the roles that evaluation has often [played] has been the cross fertilization of ideas from one program area to another...[evaluation has played this role] sometimes quite consciously*”.

Evaluation Factors

Drivers for doing or using evaluation

Almost a decade ago, IDRC senior management asked itself hard questions about evaluation:

we decided to look at about 60 evaluations in one go over a couple of days, and I think frankly we were shocked ... we were shocked at either how useless a lot of them were because in fact, things had been evaluated [where] there wasn't even a program anymore – doing ritualistic evaluation, really not helpful. Also pointed out that the quality standards had to increase. ... That immersion of senior management committee in what was actually being done and called evaluation really had an important impact....

This engagement of senior management with evaluation and the information that was being produced was identified as a pivotal point in the history of evaluation at IDRC. Currently, IDRC's Evaluation Strategy for 2005-2010 (IDRC, 2005a) outlines three roles for evaluation: 1) contributing to the organization's ability to account for its performance in managing public funds and demonstrate the results of its investments; 2) fulfilling the need for specialized evaluation tools and methods in the field of development research and evaluation;

and 3) supporting a learning culture across the organization. This last role was most echoed by interviewees, who drew a clear link between the organization's role in supporting research and knowledge creation (and the affinity of its staff for research), and its support for, and use of, evaluation.

We are a research-based organization, so it is full of people whose business is inquiry. We are curiosity driven, and we have lots of people who are trained in the art of inquiry. So being a research-based organization, you are already half way there.

At the same time, interviewees noted the existence of strong evaluation champions who strongly promote the value and use of evaluation as being an important driver for evaluation at IDRC. The value of involvement in evaluation processes is also promoted by evaluation champions, both within and outside the evaluation unit. When asked whether the culture of evaluation at IDRC was dependent on these champions, respondents felt that the culture was sufficiently institutionalized so as to no longer be dependent on any one individual.

Since IDRC is not held to the same central agency requirements for performance monitoring, reporting, and evaluation as other government departments and agencies, evaluation is driven less by requirements and more by its integration into the organization's learning culture. As such, IDRC's Evaluation and Results Reporting System (Table 17), was tailored to meet the organization's needs and thus allows for a balance between the drivers of accountability and risk management, and those of learning and continuous improvement. At the same time, interviewees noted that IDRC's continued ability to sustain this balance and develop/implement tailored monitoring and evaluation approaches (without central agency

intervention) is supported by its reputation for doing these things well, by the organization's desire to build its capacity for continuous improvement through inquiry and reflection, and its willingness to question whether the kinds of monitoring and evaluation activities undertaken at IDRC meet the organization's concerns for accountability.

Approach to conducting evaluation

Contrary to the broader government context where efforts appear to be centered around the more technical and reporting-oriented aspects of conducting evaluation, IDRC's approach spans the full spectrum of activities necessary for doing evaluation and for bridging the gap between doing and using evaluation. IDRC has adopted a Utilization-Focused Evaluation (U-FE) approach to its evaluation work which "prioritizes equally the use of rigorous methods in evaluation, and the use and adoption of evaluation findings" (IDRC, 2007e). The following guiding principles for evaluation are in line with the U-FE approach, and integrate both the mechanisms that underlie process use, and the consequences that characterize process use:

- Evaluations should enlist the participation of relevant users (in the broader government context, this is generally restricted to those closest to the program, and even in this case, participation can be considered slightly better than moderate);
- Evaluation processes should develop capacity in evaluative thinking and evaluation use;
- Evaluative thinking adds value from the outset of a project or program;
- Evaluation should meet standards for ethical research and evaluation;
- The decision to evaluate should be strategic not routine (which is counter to the broader government context, where evaluations of all programs must be completed on a cyclical basis); and
- Evaluation should be an asset for those being evaluated (IDRC, 2005a).

Table 17

IDRC's Evaluation and Results Reporting System (IDRC, 2007)

Org. Level	Reporting Mechanism	Content/Focus	Responsibilities	Primary Users and Uses	Timing
Corporate	Annual Corporate Evaluation Report (ACE)	Synthesis of findings from the year's evaluation reports	Evaluation Unit (EU): Prepare report Senior Management Committee (SMC): Review and respond	SMC: Review and formulate actions to be taken Board of Governors (BoG): Review and react to findings SMC: Use data in deliberations and decision-making	Annual
	Corporate Assessment Framework (CAF)	Assesses management of performance in 7 key performance areas	EU: Coordinate data collection and synthesis Policy and Planning Group (PPG): Archive and communicate with SMC		Annual
	Strategic Evaluations	Assess cross-cutting issues emerging from programming	EU: Conduct studies SMC, Programs and Partnerships Branch (PPB): Engage, reach, and use	PPB: Improve programming SMC: Demonstrate results	Periodic
	Annual Learning Forum (ALF)	Findings from rolling Project Completion Reports (rPCRs) and other evaluative documents	EU, PPG & PPB: Coordinate and organize	All Staff: Reflect and share on performance of IDRC to improve programming.	Annual
Program	Regional Director and Director of Program Area Reports	Outline progress and directions of program areas and regional representation	Director of Program Area (DPA), Regional Director (RD): Prepare reports	SMC, BoG: Use as inputs into programming directions and organizational management	Every year – alternates between RD and DPA reports
	External Reviews	Summative evaluations	PPB Management: Set Terms of Reference EU: Manage studies on behalf of PPB management	PPB Management: Input into decision making and resource allocation to programs Project Teams: integrate findings into next prospectus	Once at the end of the program cycle
	Program Monitoring and Evaluation	Variable: Formative evaluations	Program Team: Design and commission studies EU: Provide technical advice	Program Initiative (PI): Improve and adjust programming	Variable: throughout prospectus cycle
Project	Project Monitoring and Evaluations Rolling Project Completion Reports (rPCR)	Variable: Formative and Summative evaluations Learnings and results from project design, implementation phase, and completion of project	Program officer (PO), Project Leader (PL): Initiate and conduct or commission studies <u>On 3 projects per program per year:</u> Stage 1: Research officer (RO) interviews PO Stage 2: Team Leader (TL) interviews PO <u>On all projects over \$150,000</u> Stage 3: PO selects colleague or manager to interview or completes independently (Stage 1 and 2 are completed on selected projects; Stage 3 on all projects over CAD \$150,000)	PO, PL: Improve and adjust programming SMC: Accountability for public resources Programs: Improve and adjust programming EU, PPG: Corporate learning and communications	Variable: throughout the project cycle Throughout the project cycle
	Recipient Interim and Final Technical Reports	Research, findings, development results and process	PL: Prepares the report PO: Reviews and approves report.	PL, PO: Accountability, document learning, manage project	Throughout the project cycle

IDRC's Evaluation and Results Reporting System (Table 17) provides a broad overview of the types of evaluation activities that are undertaken by the Centre, who is responsible for leading these activities, and whose needs they serve. The system includes four types of evaluation activities: *Strategic Evaluations*, *External Reviews*, *Formative Evaluations of program initiatives*, and *Formative or Summative evaluations of projects*. Strategic Evaluations, which are major studies of issues that cut across the organization, are managed by the Evaluation Unit. External Reviews, which are the cyclical, summative evaluations of program initiatives planned for in their prospectuses (5-year cycle), are also managed by the Evaluation Unit with involvement of program staff and partners. Formative evaluations of programs and formative or summative evaluations of projects are managed by program managers/directors with support from the Evaluation Unit.

There is no standardized process for conducting evaluations at IDRC. However, there are some commonalities in the way the different types of evaluations are undertaken. Table 18 provides a description of the categories of activities noted by interviewees as finding their way into the majority of evaluations. The effects of the U-FE approach adopted by the Centre – which calls for processes that are context appropriate and for the involvement of primary intended users throughout the evaluation process – can readily be seen in this table.

Table 18

Categories of activities that reflect commonalities in the way evaluations are undertaken at IDRC

Category	Description
Scoping of the problem/questions	Identification of the specific issues/questions to be addressed by the evaluation, what the expected uses of the evaluation are (e.g., learning, program decision-making, etc.), and identification of a user group.
Develop user group/working group	Working group of users convened to provide oversight, support and advice to the evaluation. Also called advisory or steering group by some interviewees.
Development of Terms of Reference	Developed collaboratively, with input from program management and partners. The identification of evaluation issues/questions and anticipated uses of evaluation findings help to drive methodological choices.
Hiring of consultants	Done collaboratively, with program management and partners often involved in the selection. The vast majority of studies are contracted out to experts to who do not have a stake in the program being evaluated.
Field work	Most often undertaken by consultants. Evaluation and Program staff are sometimes involved in field work and/or preparing data for the evaluation.
Interpretation and validation	Findings presented to user/working group throughout the course of the evaluation for feedback and to help develop ownership and buy-in.
Dissemination of results	Results presented to the users and other audiences. Results disseminated in various forms (report, brochure, database, etc.) through various means (website, hard copies, etc.).
Quality assessment by Evaluation Unit	Evaluation Unit assesses the quality of all completed evaluations against internationally-accepted standards of utility, feasibility, accuracy and propriety. The results of these assessments are reported to the Board of Governors in the Annual Corporate Evaluation Report.

It should be noted that most of the evaluation work at IDRC is completed by external contractors, with the exception of smaller scale studies conducted by program and/or evaluation staff. As noted in Table 17, the Evaluation Unit reports annually to the Board on the profile of evaluators hired to complete IDRC evaluation studies, as well as on the quality of these studies. In 2006/07 (IDRC, 2007d), a total of 30 evaluators completed 18 reports for IDRC. Of these evaluators, 80 per cent were male and 16 per cent female; 60 per cent were from the South and 37 per cent from the North. The quality of studies completed, and the

Centre's focus on building the capacity of professional evaluators in the South will be further discussed.

Contrary to evaluations conducted in the broader government context, an important characteristic of evaluations at IDRC is that they are not expected to contain recommendations. As one interviewee puts it:

we want findings ... but we don't want recommendations. Because you as an outsider can't tell us our whole business, you only know the people you are looking at, you don't know all the other factors that are impinging on all of this. So we need you to tell us about that piece, not what you think we should do.

As such, the requirement that management responses be prepared for each individual evaluation – which is an indicator of evaluation utilization in so many other organizations – is not part of the IDRC evaluation process. Rather, management provides a response to the Annual Corporate Evaluation Report, which is annexed to the report and presented to the Board of Directors. As well, there is an expectation that programs will respond to evaluation findings and issues raised through evaluations as part of the renewal of program initiatives at the end of their five-year cycle. This lack of recommendations thus compels evaluation users to engage with the information contained within the report in order to make meaning of the findings and determine subsequent courses of action. However this interpretative task starts well before the final report is tabled given users involvement throughout the evaluation process.

In addition to the evaluation work outlined in Table 18, program managers/staff have the opportunity to reflect on the design, implementation, and results of projects through the

rolling Project Completion Report (rPCR) process (IDRC, 2005b). Given the importance of generating and sharing what has been learned from projects, IDRC recently revised this process in order to address the backlog of uncompleted reports and the resulting “knowledge drain” the Centre suffered when people left the organization. The report is completed by research officers through interviews conducted at 3 stages of a project: after its initial design, at mid-point, and at its end (Table 17 contains further information). The interviews build on each other and provide an opportunity for probing, reflection and sharing between research officers, team leaders/ managers, and directors. The interviews “deliver factual information and accountability for the management of public funds [and act as a] learning experience for both the interviewer and interviewee” (IDRC, 2005b, p.3). IDRC built into the process a number of incentives in order to ensure the conduct of interviews and completion of reports in a timely manner, as well as procedures to promote the use of the information. The Annual Learning Forum, which was mentioned earlier, is an example of a specific event originally conceived as a means to share the knowledge gained from rPCRs. The data from rPCRs are used in a number of reports (such as those of Regional and Program Area Directors) as well as in evaluations – “*we use them in a variety of ways within our [studies] ...a monitoring at the end of a project is not a bad dataset.*”

The Evaluation Unit is responsible for monitoring the rPCR system, and reports to Senior Management Committee twice a year on completion rates and outstanding reports. Since the launch of the revisions in 2005, the rate of completion has been continuously increasing. Interviewees who mentioned these reports were unanimous in stating the value-added of rPCRs and of the revised process in fostering organizational learning and generating

a rich data set on lessons learned and results, which would otherwise remain in the tacit knowledge-base of individuals.

Human Factors

Evaluation Knowledge and Skills of Staff

Overall, interviewees noted a varied level of evaluation knowledge and skills across the board. The Evaluation Unit – which, similar to evaluators in the broader government context, is made up of individuals who hold (or are working towards) graduate degrees – was deemed by respondents to be highly skilled and knowledgeable, with the understandable exception of new staff members (from within IDRC and outside) who require more support and training in building a deeper understanding of evaluation. The level of knowledge and skills of the IDRC evaluation unit appears to be similar to the self-reported level of knowledge and skills of evaluators in the broader government context, where approximately 90 per cent note having a good to excellent knowledge of evaluation theory and practice. Respondents noted the high level of ability of IDRC’s Evaluation Unit to *oversee* evaluation, and to ensure quality control over IDRC evaluation. Some respondents noted the high reliance on external consultants as being a barrier to sustaining the Unit’s capacity to *do* evaluation.

I think there are some issues around the extent to which the people in the Evaluation Unit can be involved in doing evaluations as opposed to commenting to others and developing tools and methods. I think probably now would be good to put a little more weight on getting our evaluation specialists involved directly in some of the evaluations.

Given that team leaders are accountable for operationalizing the evaluation plans included in the prospectuses for program initiatives (IDRC, 2004b), the evaluation knowledge

and skills of non evaluation unit staff is critical. Although deemed to be varied, many felt that the efforts of the Evaluation Unit in developing tools and methods, providing training and mentoring, and being an in-house resource had helped to create a higher level of evaluation knowledge and skills than could be seen in other organizations. In addition, some of IDRC's professional staff members come to the centre with previous evaluation experiences, and, given their strong research background, most have a natural tendency towards understanding evaluation. Some have taken additional training in evaluation, and some have even joined the Evaluation Unit – either on an interim or more permanent basis – allowing for hands-on experience and for the value of evaluation and involvement in evaluation processes to be propagated beyond the evaluation unit. IDRC management were also seen as having relatively high levels of evaluation knowledge and skills.

If you want to compare to other organizations, we are extremely sophisticated, simply by the nature of being a research-supporting organization. In terms of where we could be, I think we are probably sophisticated – not very – but sophisticated. As you know, the hardest leap is from good to great.

The Evaluation Unit's mandate of building capacity in evaluation and evaluative thinking applies both within the Centre and to IDRC partners in the field. As such, the Evaluation Unit and other Centre staff host monitoring and evaluation workshops with Centre projects in all regions (IDRC, 2007d). In addition, over the past 7 years, the Evaluation Unit has been working on cultivating regional nodes of evaluation expertise in order to build partners' capacity to do and use evaluation (IDRC, 2005a). These nodes, as well as the Evaluation Unit's support of international evaluation associations and individuals, help to

build regional capacity to conduct IDRC evaluations. In its Annual Corporate Evaluation Report for 2007, the evaluation unit notes, for the third year in a row, that the number of evaluators from the South hired to conduct IDRC evaluations is higher than the number of evaluators from the North (18 vs. 11) (IDRC, 2007d).

...another job of the evaluation unit is really to be of assistance to improving the capacity of evaluators in different parts of the world... We think it is extremely important ... that people from the regions have an opportunity to evaluate the work that is going on in their own region.... Our evaluation unit has a slightly different position than some others who are only concerned with their own organization – we are also concerned with the big world out there.

Respondents did not provide much information on the evaluation knowledge and skills of IDRC partners except to say that these were varied, depending in large part on research background and evaluation experiences. In terms of consultants, the Evaluation Unit strives to provide guidance to program staff in selecting skilled external experts to ensure quality evaluations. In the case of Strategic Evaluations managed by the Evaluation Unit, a lot of effort is put into bringing the best minds and strongest material to the table. As one respondent puts it: *“we dig smart minds and smart documents from inside and outside the organization to understand the topic”*.

As mentioned previously, the Unit assesses the quality of all evaluations conducted at IDRC on four dimensions – utility, feasibility, accuracy and propriety. This assessment is reported to the Board on an annual basis. The 2007 assessment “demonstrates some areas of improvements [over previous years], but suggests the need for an ongoing campaign to

improve evaluation quality” (IDRC, 2007d, p.14). The area of most concern was that of propriety, which looks at ethical issues and capacity, or the degree to which the principle that “evaluation should be an asset for those being evaluated” (IDRC, 2005a, p.8) is met. Scores were weak on this criterion – which relates to a consequence of being involved in evaluation – due to the fact that “reports seldom describe the ways in which they sought to add value to the project/program by *building the evaluative capacity of either the users of the evaluation or those being evaluated*” (IDRC, 2005a, p.15). The Evaluation Unit acknowledges that this is a high standard, and management, in their response to these findings, note the need to compare these scores to evaluation reports in other organizations. Interviewees noted that management and staff have a well developed sense of what accounts for a good (or bad) evaluation, and there is little tolerance for low quality evaluations.

A group that has permitted a really badly done evaluation is not going to go too far. There is a big stake in having evaluations properly done. In fact, I think that the consequences are more negative for permitting a badly done evaluation, than a well done evaluation that says that things didn't pan out – we work in a high risk business. But if you were awarding points, you get points for having good, honest evaluations done.

Factors at the Intersection of Context, People and Evaluation

Sources of Evaluation Knowledge and Skills

Interviewees noted that, as an organization, IDRC is committed to ongoing learning and training of staff, which appears to be rated around or slightly above moderate in the broader government context. This commitment is mirrored in the Evaluation Unit, which encourages its staff to pursue ongoing training and professional development. In addition, the

Evaluation Unit has an evaluation capacity building mandate which is operationalized in ways that are further detailed below. Through evaluation capacity building, the Unit aims to build an organizational culture of “evaluative thinking”, which is defined as “being clear and specific about what results are sought and what means are used to achieve them” (IDRC, 2005a, p.1). In order to fulfill its capacity building mandate as well as promote the dissemination and use of evaluation, the Unit has access to a targeted budget, which was of \$100,000 in 2007 (IDRC, 2007d). These dedicated resources help ensure that stakeholders can gain the knowledge and skills to extract the maximum benefit from involvement in evaluation and evaluation-type processes, and that evaluation users can have access to evaluative information that is presented in a way that facilitates engagement and use.

Sources of evaluation knowledge available to IDRC evaluation staff, program staff, management and partners include:

- Advice, guidance, and mentoring through direct contact with Evaluation Unit staff, who are partnered up with specific programs;
- Support in the form of resources, learning tools, guidelines, publications, books, archives of evaluation reports, etc; which are readily available through the internet and/or intranet;
- Formal training, workshops, and providing staff with opportunities to hear from high level evaluation theorists and practitioners through talks and involvement in advisory/working groups – for instance, the Evaluation Unit provides funding for staff and partners to attend the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET);

- Informal training through involvement in evaluation processes and “on the job” training. The 2007 Corporate Evaluation Reports notes a minimum of 44 new and ongoing evaluations planned for 2007-08; which provides significant opportunity for evaluation and non-evaluation staff to gain exposure and experience in evaluation.

Evaluation Capacity Building Activities

In addition to the sources of evaluation knowledge and skills mentioned above, IDRC also engages in a number of evaluation capacity building activities aimed at Evaluation Unit staff, program staff, management, partners, and evaluators who do work for the Centre.

The Evaluation Unit builds its evaluation capacity both through staffing (from within and outside the organization), as well as through the encouragement of staff to pursue ongoing training. While the senior staff and director of the Unit have been with the organization for a number of years, the Unit also has a number of newer staff members as well as an Intern and Professional Development Award Recipient, which contribute to stronger development evaluation capacity within and outside the organization.

Evaluation capacity of program staff and management is built through the resources mentioned above, but also through activities such as workshops on methodologies (for example, gender evaluation; Outcome Mapping; organizational assessment; targeted training based on need) and the Annual Learning Forum (ALF) – an annual event which brings together IDRC staff and management from all branches for a day of learning and reflecting. As one respondent puts it: *“it’s an opportunity to reflect on what is being learned from evaluations rather than to build capacity in carrying out evaluation – it helps to build capacity in evaluative thinking, in [understanding] what evaluations can do for us.”*

Factors that help Integrate Evaluation into the Organizational Culture

It is clear from the above discussion that evaluation is strongly embedded into the organizational culture at IDRC, or as one respondent puts it: *“part of the fabric of the organization”*. Interviewees noted a number of factors and forces that have helped to integrate evaluation into the organizational culture and have contributed to the impacts that evaluations

have had on the organization. As can be seen in Table 19, these occur at the level of the organization, of its systems and at the level of individuals operating within the system. In addition, the utilization-focused evaluation approach adopted by IDRC is seen as an important factor in explaining the organization's capacity to do and to use evaluation.

Table 19

Factors that help integrate evaluation into the organizational culture

Level	Factor
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandate of IDRC and its culture of inquiry Status of IDRC as a Crown Corporation and the flexibility and personalization that affords Culture of learning within IDRC Valuing of evaluation at the level of the Board of Governors and Senior Management Stability of environment and of IDRC budget Ability, at the level of the organization and individuals, to be clear about information needs and to know what is really useful for decision-making Profile of evaluation within and outside IDRC
Systems/mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built-in cycle of organizational and program renewal Mechanisms that exist to ensure the smooth running of the evaluation system Strong evaluation system and mechanisms that ensure things get done, and get done on time Mechanisms that allow for program people to move into the evaluation unit Incentives for staff to build monitoring and evaluation into their job descriptions
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong level of research capacity throughout the organization Leadership from managers who take evaluation seriously and promote it Evaluation Unit that is staffed, available, competent, current; and has professional credibility Strong, credible consultants, held in high esteem Little support throughout IDRC for lack of transparency People coming to IDRC with some evaluation experience or an evaluation background
Evaluation approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritization of evaluation for learning while maintaining accountability which supports the development of a culture of evaluative thinking Use of innovative ways of doing evaluation which are more relevant and appropriate to development research and to the work of IDRC Adoption of an evaluation approach that mirrors the organization's culture of consultation, collaboration, interaction and stakeholder participation, and that has built-in opportunities to stop and reflect

Factors that Inhibit the Integration of Evaluation into the Organizational Culture

Interviewees were also asked to reflect on the factors that may act as a barrier to maintaining or further developing the integration of evaluation into the culture of IDRC. As can be seen in Table 20, respondents noted a number of barriers that either exist, or could exist in the future, that would put at risk the organization's culture of evaluation and the impacts that it has experienced as a result of evaluation. Again, these can be seen to occur at the level of the organization, of its systems, and of individuals. Noted barriers are also related to the organization's evaluation approach and evaluation products. Indeed, one of the barriers most often mentioned by respondents has to do with balancing priorities and finding time to benefit fully from evaluation and evaluation processes:

"The one thing that we continuously bump us against in evaluation is that it takes a lot of time, energy, and work. It is not something that you can simply add on without taking away time from something else."

In addition, interviewees noted the existence of factors outside of the organization that could impact on its evaluation culture. One of the most critical issues here has to do with the increase in the number of important financial partnerships (potentially close to 20 per cent of the Centre's budget for 2007/08) that bring with them specific evaluation, monitoring and accountability requirements. Building the organization's capacity (both in terms of knowledge and human resources) to respond to these requirements while maintaining the organization's unique culture of balance between evaluation for learning and evaluation for accountability is seen as being an important challenge for the future.

Table 20

Factors that inhibit the integration of evaluation into the organizational culture

Level	Factor
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in the size of programming and resulting pressure on all to do more Tension between time/resources spent granting vs. learning/reflecting Communication barriers between staff and management hindering the circulation of ideas
Systems/mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to include evaluation in performance reviews
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People within the organization who don't see the value of evaluation or who have a reductionist view of what evaluation is for Too much stability in staff complement and lack of fresh perspectives Shortage of expertise, knowledge and skills in consulting community
Evaluation approach/products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of diversity of methods and effects of trends and fashions in evaluation Increase in need to use traditional approaches to evaluation to meet needs, demands and requirements of funding partners Risks associated with the loss or dissolution of a user group and lack of collaboration/interaction with stakeholders Low quality evaluation or poorly done evaluation Evaluations that are not timely, or that are poorly timed
Factors external to the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased emphasis on evaluation for accountability and value-for-money/audit approaches to evaluation within the Federal Government Increase in number of partnerships that involve specific evaluation, monitoring and accountability requirements that may be incongruent with IDRC's approach to evaluation Lots of demand for scarce evaluation resources in developing countries

Summary of Factors that Enhance Process Use

As can be gathered from the above discussion, there are many factors that contribute to creating the conditions that have allowed this organization to develop a high level of evaluation capacity. Given that opportunities for engagement and reflection as well as involvement in evaluation processes appear to be part of IDRC's organizational culture, the demarcation between those factors that enhance evaluation capacity (or support evaluation's integration into the organizational culture) and those that enhance process use is not clear cut. However, a certain level of differentiation can be achieved by highlighting those factors that

appear to be at the heart of the involvement and engagement necessary for process use to occur. Table 21 summarizes the results of this exercise, which identifies factors occurring at the level of the organization, its systems, its people, its evaluation approach and products, as well as factors external to the organization. The table also identifies some barriers to process use, although one could argue that a shift in any of the factors (for instance, the decision to no longer dedicate a budget to evaluation capacity building) would have an effect on process use. Although it is not possible at this stage to assess the relative potency of these factors, it is clear in the minds of those interviewed that one of the most important factors explaining the high level of evaluation capacity in this organization has to do with the organization's mandate and the resulting high-level of sophistication of its staff in research methods. The relative importance of this and other factors, as well as the interactive and/or combined influences of these factors is certainly worthy of further study.

We now turn to a discussion of the ways in which process use has manifested itself at IDRC.

Table 21

Factors that enhance process use

Level	Factor	Description
Organization		
	Organizational Status/ Purpose	IDRC is a Crown Corporation and not held to the same accountability regime as other government departments and agencies. This allows for more flexibility in terms of evaluation approaches and involvement of users/stakeholders in evaluation processes IDRC is a research-based organization that values rationality, evidence, and the generation of knowledge through research
	Organizational Values /Commitments	IDRC's Board of Governors/Senior Managers are committed to/value evaluation and evaluation capacity building and engage with evaluative information on a regular basis IDRC is committed to learning at the level of the organization and of individuals within the organization – involvement in evaluation processes is considered part of the learning culture of the organization IDRC values collaboration, consultation, and the contributions of its staff members, and thus supports the creation of spaces for reflection and sharing (e.g., Annual Learning Forum) IDRC values building capacity for continuous improvement through inquiry and reflection
	Role of Evaluation Unit within Organization	IDRC's Evaluation Unit has, as part of its roles, building organizational evaluation capacity and fostering a culture of organizational learning throughout the organization
	Organizational Stability	IDRC has a stable environment and budget – instability could create disincentives for involvement in evaluation processes as managers/staff redirect their attention to restoring stability
Systems/mechanisms		
	Explicit Expectation of Use	Planning, accountability and continuous improvement mechanisms are expected to draw on evaluative information and to engage with this information
	Decentralized Evaluation Function	The decentralization of the IDRC evaluation function makes evaluation the responsibility of users and requires their hands-on involvement
	Accessibility of Evaluation Positions	The ability of program staff to move into evaluation positions (temporarily or permanently) and to build monitoring and evaluation work into their job descriptions helps create professional incentives and helps propagate the value of evaluation and involvement in evaluation processes beyond the evaluation unit. Failure to include evaluation in performance reviews however can act as a barrier to continued involvement
	Dedicated Budget for Evaluation Capacity Building and Dissemination	The dedicated budget for capacity building and dissemination helps increase the level of evaluation knowledge and skills within the organization, maximizing the benefits of involvement in evaluation processes and engagement with evaluation information

Factors that enhance process use (cont.)

Level	Factor	Description
People		
	Level of Research Knowledge and Skills	The high level of research knowledge and skills throughout the organization facilitates involvement in evaluation processes and predisposes users to valuing evaluation information. Lack of understanding and valuing of evaluation can act as a barrier to involvement in evaluation processes and engagement with evaluation information
	Level of Evaluation Knowledge, Skills and Credibility	The high level of evaluation knowledge, skills and credibility of evaluation staff helps support and encourage involvement in evaluation and engagement with evaluation information
	Cost of Engagement/ Involvement in Evaluation	The high cost of involvement/engagement in terms of managers/staff time may act as a barrier given growth in the size of programming and pressure on all to do more – this creates a tension between time/resources spent granting vs. learning/reflecting
	Communication	Communication barriers between staff and management can hinder the benefits of involvement in evaluation processes
Evaluation approach/products		
	Purpose(s) of Evaluation	IDRC balances the learning and accountability functions of evaluation, and for many years has invested in the learning side, which has contributed to a culture of evaluative thinking across the organization
	Approach to Evaluation and Results Reporting	The Utilization-focused Evaluation (U-FE) approach demands involvement of users in user/working groups in all stages of the evaluation process, allowing them to engage with each other and with program and evaluation information. The importance of this (and its consequences) are built into IDRC's guiding principles for evaluation IDRC's Evaluation and Results Reporting System requires the involvement of management/staff in generating and using evaluative information, and provides opportunities for reflection, meaning making, knowledge sharing and development, and learning (e.g., participation in user groups, preparation of rolling Project Completion Reports) IDRC Evaluation do not contain recommendations, requiring users to engage with and make meaning of the evaluative information in order to best inform necessary or future actions
	Evaluation Quality and Timeliness	The consequences of involvement in evaluation and engagement with evaluation information are part of the criteria through which the quality of evaluations is judged High quality, well done and timely evaluations encourage involvement in evaluation processes and engagement with evaluation information
Factors external to the organization		
	Financial Partnerships	IDRC financial partners may have different accountability requirements/constraints which can be a barrier to process use (e.g., need to use traditional approach to evaluation to meet partner's requirements)
	Evaluation Approaches promoted by Federal Government	Increased emphasis on evaluation for accountability and value-for-money/audit approaches to evaluation within the federal government could have an effect on IDRC's approach to evaluation

4.2.3 *Process Use in Government*

For the purposes of this study, process use refers to and is indicated by changes in attitude or affect, actions or behaviours, knowledge or skills, that occur at the individual, group, or organizational level, as a result the meaning making, knowledge development and learning that occur from the opportunity to engage with evaluative information and thinking. This opportunity manifests itself through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes (adapted from Amo & Cousins, 2007, and Patton, 1997). In the previous section, a number of factors were identified as important to creating the conditions for such opportunities to manifest themselves, thus setting the stage for process use to occur.

As was the case in the examination of this question through ECB survey data, we begin by taking a more in-depth look at the opportunities for engagement through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes that exist at IDRC, and conclude with a discussion of the consequences of this engagement/involvement.

Stakeholder Involvement in Evaluation

Hands-on Involvement

As was previously noted, the evaluation function at IDRC is decentralized, with the Evaluation Unit providing oversight of the system as well as managing Strategic Evaluations and External Review, and programs being responsible for their own evaluations. In some cases, program staff are involved directly in the conduct of formative evaluations of programs and formative/summative evaluations of projects; from designing the evaluation, to collecting the data, to analyzing and reporting on results – a practice which is not encouraged in the broader government context owing to issues of neutrality and independence. In many cases,

evaluations actively engage senior managers, which demands careful planning and coordination of studies. When asked whether external stakeholders were also involved in this manner, interviewees provided some examples of more participatory evaluations, however, these stakeholders appear to be more regularly involved in providing data, feedback and validation rather than conducting the evaluation.

Involvement through User Groups

As was also noted above, evaluations at IDRC are supported by user or working groups made up of primary intended users and other stakeholders. Although respondents to the ECB survey highlight the importance of user input and user involvement in evaluation, the involvement of stakeholders in evaluation, even those closest to the program, is at best moderate in the broader government context. This is not the case at IDRC. Depending on the focus of an evaluation study, users of evaluation at IDRC can include any of the Centre's broad range of stakeholders: the Board of Governors; Senior Management Committee; Program area or Regional Directors; Directors of other units or divisions; program managers and staff; partners and partner organizations; and so forth. Through their participation in user groups, these individuals are involved in all phases of the conduct of an evaluation study: from developing terms of reference, to selecting consultants, to facilitating data collection, to reviewing evaluation reports. This helps build ownership of evaluation amongst members of the user group, and contributes to strengthening the organization's culture of evaluative thinking.

Involvement through Consultation

While evaluations are supported by user groups/working groups, other relevant stakeholders are involved throughout the course of the evaluation through consultations on the

design of the evaluation, through data collection or field work, through validation of findings and/or at the stage of dissemination. One interviewee noted that stakeholder groups the Centre doesn't work with directly are not often involved in evaluations given difficulties in findings reliable ways to gain their perspectives. The collaborative and consultative approaches used to develop IDRC programs are seen by many to also be reflected in the organization's approach to evaluation, with varying levels of stakeholder involvement across types of evaluation projects, but also across programs.

Some are highly participatory where they will go and run a series of workshops, some do a draft report and feed the report back to the partners and have a validation workshop, that type of thing. Then you'll have other programs in IDRC where it's classic – do the terms of reference, deploy the external consultant, use the external consultant's report. [It] depends on the program.

The discussion of the previous section, as well as the above discussion, give a sense of the many opportunities provided at all levels of IDRC for the kind of engagement – occurring at best at a moderate level in the broader government context – that allows for process use to occur. These have been summarized in Table 22. Although this table is organized by the organizational role of those engaged/involved, it could also have been organized by the purposes of this engagement/involvement, which, in the case of non-evaluation stakeholders, fall into four interrelated categories: 1) make meaning of/react to evaluation or evaluation-type information; 2) reflect, consult, collaborate, interact and share knowledge with others; 3) make use of evaluation or evaluation-type information (for accountability, decision-making, learning and/or continuous improvement); and 4) generate/recommend actions to be taken. The

purposes of engagement/involvement of evaluation staff and contractors, although different in nature, are consistent with the professional role these individuals are expected to play in the evaluation process, and contribute to more effective engagement/involvement of non-evaluation stakeholders.

Although this table is extensive, there are likely other, perhaps more subtle opportunities, which have not been captured through the data collected for this case study. Although the table speaks to the nature and purpose of engagement/involvement, it does not speak to the impact these activities might have on the organization. This is where we now move to in our discussion.

Impact of Evaluation Process

The ways in which evaluation is conducted within IDRC creates an environment where stakeholder exposure to, and involvement in, evaluation and evaluation-type processes is quite high, and occurs on a regular basis. The Evaluation Unit encourages “*evaluation processes so that people can have a learn by doing experience, with the idea that evaluation will serve them beyond just that one experience.*” Interviewees see the evaluation process as a capacity-building mechanism, and a forum for reflection and learning. This is supported by the findings of the multiple regression analyses presented earlier, which highlight the importance of level of stakeholder participation, conditions mediating evaluation use and capacity for organizational learning in explaining variations in process use (Table 13). At IDRC, the benefits that emerge from involvement in, or proximity to, evaluation processes are quite present, and respondents are well aware of them. Benefits highlighted by interviewees are presented in Table 23. As can be seen from this table, benefits are easily organized into the categories of process use identified in the process use conceptual framework, with the largest

number of benefits relating to learning, knowledge and skills development, which mirrors what is reported by evaluators in the broader government context. It is interesting to note here the small number of changes in actions and/or behaviours seen to occur as a result of involvement in –or proximity to – evaluation processes, which is also similar to the findings of the ECB survey, where respondents rate such effects as occurring less frequently. In fact, only one IDRC interviewee noted a relationship between the evaluation process and subsequent use of evaluation findings.

Table 22

Engagement through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation or evaluation-type processes

Role	Nature of engagement/involvement	Purpose of engagement/involvement
Board of Governors	Review evaluation findings (particularly strategic evaluations and external reviews)	Engage with, react to, and use information to report on performance and demonstrate results (accountability) Draw on information for decision-making, learning and continuous improvement
	Review Annual Corporate Evaluation Report	React to findings
Senior Management Committee	Review evaluation findings	Engage with, react to, and use information to report on performance and demonstrate results (accountability), and to develop plans and priorities, program prospectuses Draw on information for decision-making, learning and continuous improvement
	Review and respond to Annual Corporate Evaluation Report	Formulate actions to be taken
	Review data collected through Corporate Assessment Framework	Use data in deliberations and decision-making
	Participate in evaluation working/user groups	provide guidance, feedback and validation of evaluation plans, processes and products Engage with coworkers, partners and other stakeholders
	Review rPCRs/summary analyses of rPCRs	Use information to report on performance and demonstrate results (accountability) Draw on information for decision-making, learning and continuous improvement
	Participate in Annual Learning Forum	Engage with coworkers, reflect, share information and knowledge, build new knowledge; all in the service of continuous improvement
Program Management (regional directors and directors of program areas) and Staff	Review evaluation findings	Engage with, react to, and use information in the development of plans and priorities, program prospectuses, and reports (accountability) Draw on information for decision-making, learning and continuous improvement
	Participate in evaluation working groups/user groups	provide guidance, feedback and validation of evaluation plans, processes and products Engage with coworkers, partners and other stakeholders
	Design and commission program/project monitoring and formative evaluation studies	Fulfill responsibility for evaluation Generate information for use in decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability
	Collect interview data and complete rolling Project Completion Reports (rPCR)	Generate information for use in decision-making, learning, continuous improvement, and accountability
	Coordinate, organize and participate in Annual Learning Forum	Engage with coworkers, reflect, share information and knowledge, build new knowledge; all in the service of continuous improvement
	Review recipient interim and final reports	Accountability, document learning, manage project

Engagement through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation or evaluation-type processes (cont.)

Role	Nature of engagement/involvement	Purpose of engagement/involvement
Evaluation Unit	Manage strategic evaluations and external reviews; lead user groups for these evaluations	Ensure independence, quality control; facilitate dissemination Foster capacity development in evaluation and evaluation thinking
	Participate in evaluations of joint programming (lead by IDRC or partners)	Ensure quality control and understanding of IDRC/development research context Promote IDRC approach to evaluation outside the organization
	Engage in research and develop specialized evaluation tools and methods in the field of development research and evaluation	Ensure that such knowledge and tools are available best evaluate the work of the organization
	Provide central coordination and technical support on evaluations managed by programs, and monitor rPCR process and data	Ensure integrity of the system and quality of data and evaluations Support evaluation capacity, corporate learning and communications
	Coordinate, organize and participate in Annual Learning Forum	Support a learning culture across the organization Engage with coworkers, reflect, share information and knowledge, build new knowledge; all in the service of continuous improvement
	Assess the quality of completed evaluations	Fulfill monitoring and evaluation system oversight role; report findings to the Board of Governors
Contractors	Undertake evaluations	Produce high quality, credible evaluation products consistent with IDRC's standards and approach to evaluation
Funding recipients	Prepare recipient interim and final reports	Accountability, document learning, manage project
Partners	Participate in evaluation working groups/user groups	provide guidance, feedback and validation of evaluation plans, processes and products Engage with IDRC staff and management, other partners and other stakeholders
Other external stakeholders	Participate in evaluation working groups/user groups	provide guidance, feedback and validation of evaluation plans, processes and products Engage with IDRC staff and management, partners and other stakeholders

Table 23

Benefits of involvement in evaluation or evaluation-type processes

Type	Benefit
Learning, knowledge, and skills development	<p>Learning about the organization, about the program, its risks, about what works and doesn't work – increased cross-fertilization of lessons and experiences (this applies to IDRC staff, management and partners)</p> <p>Learning about the context in which partners operate</p> <p>Developing a common, more sophisticated language around certain issues (e.g., capacity building, policy influence, etc.)</p> <p>Developing and using a common language around monitoring and evaluation – this was particularly evident across interviewees</p> <p>Developing monitoring and evaluation skills</p>
Changes in attitude and/or affect	<p>Legitimizing and/or valuing of certain results (e.g., value of spending time building relationships)</p> <p>Greater understanding of different perspectives, and a forum for negotiating different perspectives</p> <p>Eroding of fear of evaluation and better understanding/valuing of evaluation as a tool for learning and accountability</p> <p>Shaping thinking and affect, and influencing the way staff and partners look at things</p>
Changes in actions and/or behaviours	<p>Increased ability to recognize accomplishments and devise ways to move forward</p> <p>Better ability to plan and manage– involvement in evaluation processes creates a stimulus for improving program design and increased decision-making</p>

As will be discussed in the next section, there is much overlap between the benefits outlined in Table 23, and the conceptual uses of evaluation noted by respondents. This may be evidence of a blurring of the line between those benefits that are a consequence of the evaluation process and those that result from use of evaluation findings, particularly given that respondents engage with evaluative information throughout the evaluation process and may not see these two sets of consequences as being separate from one another. Indeed, one could argue that the benefits outlined in Table 23 could as easily be as a result of the conceptual use of evaluation findings, with the exception of those that relate to the development of skills, the erosion of fear of evaluation, and the creation of a forum for discussion and negotiation.

In an organization which provides many opportunities for engagement through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation or evaluation-type processes (i.e., that it is “*part of the fabric of the organization*”), perhaps the distinction between the consequences of the process and the consequences of its products becomes trivial. In other words, in an organization with high evaluation capacity, the overall consequences of this capacity may trump the specific consequences associated with involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation or evaluation-type processes.

4.2.4 *Process Use and Use of Evaluation Findings*

Given the points raised above, the link between the consequences of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation or evaluation-type processes, and the use of evaluation findings appears to be implicit to the ways in which IDRC approaches evaluation. In order to see whether a more explicit link can be drawn, we begin with an overview of the different types of use of evaluation findings experienced by IDRC, followed by a discussion on how involvement in – or proximity to – the evaluation process might enhance these uses.

Use of Evaluation Findings

IDRC’s Evaluation and Results Reporting System (Table 17) highlights a number of uses for evaluation and evaluative information (for example, decision-making; improve programming; resource allocation decisions; planning; accountability; communication; learning; and so forth) by a number of users (for example, Board of Governors; Senior Management Committee; Programs; Projects; and so forth). As one interviewee puts it: “*the system that has been built up not only encourages use, but almost demands use, so it’s not a system that was developed to do evaluation just for evaluation’s sake*”. In the boarder government context, ECB survey respondents provide lower ratings on questions related to

usefulness and timeliness of evaluations in support of decision-making, which highlight challenges to utilization which IDRC appears to have been successful in overcoming.

As an organization, IDRC values evidence, and puts a lot of weight on the intellectual rigour and scrutiny of its highly educated workforce.

Evidence is really important. Evidence could be science or could be politics. It does not go down well to have what are seen as arbitrary decisions. ... If we understand the reasons for something, then we engage and align ourselves more readily with it. ... It needs to be seen as fair, and it needs to be seen as rational.

In discussing use of evaluation, interviewees emphasized the fact that IDRC has strived to find a balance between use of evaluation for learning and accountability purposes, with one respondent noting in particular the fact that evaluation is but one source of information managers have to balance in doing their work. However, as noted above, this information is highly valued.

Indeed, the approach to evaluation adopted by IDRC is seen to provide strong support for managers information needs, in that evaluations are encouraged to examine not only achievement of goals and objectives, but also the *why* and the *how* of a program's performance – “we are keen to learn about how the program itself becomes more than the sum of it's parts”.

Respondents noted other ways in which information from monitoring and evaluation activities was used in the organization that were not noted in Table 17. For instance, a few respondents gave the example of these activities being used to reflect, periodically and systematically, on program and strategic directions. In particular, the rolling Project

Completion Report (rPCR) process was seen as *“a very powerful way of imbedding reflection and diffusing knowledge within the program area ... it allows you to go in-depth into a project in a way that no other process does”*. In addition, the mid-term evaluations of program initiatives were seen as an opportunity to consider changes in direction – *“we don’t have to keep marching along”*. As IDRC works in a very high-risk business, the contribution of evaluation in helping make mid-course corrections and lessen *“inertia in decision-making”* was seen as critical.

Interviewees also noted the important relationship between use of evidence from monitoring and evaluation activities, and subsequent valuing of these processes and products. As one respondent put it: *“it isn’t just about closing the file – it’s active learning ... these are not dead documents, they really generate active learning.”*

Throughout the course of the interviews, respondents noted a number of examples of the different types of uses of evaluation findings. For instance, examples of *instrumental* uses included the Annual Learning Forums, which make direct use of evaluation findings and data from rPCRs, and the value of integrating evaluation findings from external reviews in drafting program initiative prospectuses. One respondent gave the example of an evaluation whose findings sparked the program to take a number of direct actions – *“shortly after that evaluation was submitted we commissioned a study on the use of gender in our project and a capacity building workshop in terms of improving the team’s capacity to engage with our partners on gender issues. That was a direct result of the evaluation ... similarly, we engaged in a reorganization of the website, and a change in our strategy in terms of where we focus on publishing information and how we approach evaluation”*.

Respondents also provided a number of examples of *conceptual* uses of evaluation findings, which, as previously mentioned, were similar to the process benefits identified in Table 23. These included the development and use of common language and changes in what people know and the way they think about programs and issues – *“this was a first step in terms of internally developing more sophisticated, nuanced understanding of issues so that it was easier to open the dialogue in a meaningful way with our partners”*. In addition, interviewees noted that findings from evaluations have made people question their assumptions, and legitimized certain values and positions. One respondent noted an example where evaluation findings had an indirect influence on the status of the organization studied within the broader research donor community.

Although respondents did not provide examples of political or persuasive uses of evaluation, one respondent did note that evaluations are sometimes used for symbolic purposes (for example, evaluations of joint programming), and another noted the tendency for some studies to focus on success case studies, and felt there is as much to learn from failures as there is from successes.

Interviewees also noted examples of non-use or lack of optimal use of evaluation. In one instance, *“reviewers didn’t have all the information about the changes that had already been contemplated, so in fact it was much harder for the review to play a key role because the evaluators couldn’t speak to some of the core issues.”* In another instance, an evaluation confirmed what the program already knew and its findings were therefore seen as not adding much value.

Process Use and Use of Evaluation Findings

In the process use conceptual framework, enhanced use of evaluation findings is seen as a change in actions or behaviours as a result of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation. When asked about the consequences of such involvement, respondents (with the exception of one) surprisingly did not speak of enhanced use of evaluation findings. However, given that the IDRC evaluation system is set up both to encourage process use and to encourage (even demand) use of evaluation findings, it would appear that an acknowledgment of this relationship is fundamental to the way in which evaluation is undertaken at IDRC and as such, may have been too obvious to mention. Perhaps it would have been more appropriate to ask, in this context, about the factors that lead to high levels of use of evaluation findings, and get respondents to reflect on the importance of involvement in – or proximity to – the evaluation process as a possible contributing factor. As was noted in the previous section, process use and level of involvement of stakeholders are the most important predictors of use of evaluation findings in the broader government context.

Despite this lack of explicit acknowledgement of the relationship between process use and use of evaluation findings on the part of IDRC respondents, Table 22 makes a strong case for the link between the mechanisms that underlie process use and use of evaluation findings.

As was previously noted, non evaluation stakeholders get involved in evaluation for four, interrelated reasons: 1) make meaning of/react to evaluation or evaluation-type information; 2) reflect, consult, collaborate, interact and share knowledge with others; 3) make use of evaluation or evaluation-type information (for accountability, decision-making, learning and/or continuous improvement); and 4) generate/recommend actions to be taken. The mechanisms of process use, as presented in the process use conceptual framework (Figure 1),

are therefore part of the rationale for involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation or evaluation-type processes. As such, it can be argued that IDRC’s U-FE approach is a process use approach, where opportunities to engage with evaluative information, make meaning of evaluation findings, develop knowledge from the findings, and contribute to organizational learning and continuous improvement are a *sine qua non* of use of evaluation findings – conceptual or instrumental. By going beyond the development of knowledge and skills, the U-FE evaluation approach ensures that the higher-level aspects of process use – which are most strongly associated with use of findings as per the results presented in Table 16 - are fostered at IDRC.

Summary

IDRC’s high level of capacity to do and to use evaluation can be attributed to a number of factors that relate to the organization, its systems, its staff and the approach it has adopted for evaluation. These factors have created the conditions for process use to occur strongly within this organization, and for use of evaluation findings to be part of regular business.

Although respondents did not draw an explicit link between the types of involvement in evaluation present at IDRC and use of evaluation findings, the approach to evaluation adopted by the organization takes this relationship for granted. One of the most interesting aspects of this case is the high level of evaluation sophistication expressed by interviewees. In one case, an interviewee asked about the impact of not having a high level of evaluation capacity, and when, in the life of an organization, does the type of engagement and reflection encouraged through evaluation become necessary and value-added. This speaks to the possible importance of building up evaluation capacity in a way that is meaningful and feasible, moving progressively towards changes in attitude/affect and actions/behaviours from a strong

grounding of knowledge and skills built, in part, through quality involvement in – and proximity to – evaluation.

This reflection provides a good segue into the more detailed integration and discussion of findings from both streams of inquiry explored in this study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Although much is known about the broad concept of evaluation utilization, there is much room for the exploration of the even broader concept of evaluation consequences, and in particular, those consequences of being involved in the evaluation process, or *process use*. Evaluation, through its products and particularly its process, can act as a learning intervention which may enable and/or enhance the use of evaluation findings by building the capacity of individuals and organizations to do and to use evaluation. In other words, involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes can be seen as an evaluation capacity building (ECB) exercise (Cousins et al., 2004; King, 2007), while the consequences of this ECB exercise – or process use – can be seen as evaluation capacity *built* (Patton, 2007).

In the Federal Government of Canada, evaluation is now being marketed as a credible, objective tool for the generating of sound, trustworthy evidence for use in decision-making and for accountability purposes. These are important functions that will quite likely increase the profile, quality and usefulness of evaluation in the federal government. At the same time, long standing concerns over the ability of evaluation to meet expectations of what it can and should accomplish remain, and the degree to which ECB efforts are being implemented in order to raise the overall level of capacity to do and to use evaluation across government is unclear.

Although there is strong support for the notion that evaluation utilization is facilitated by engagement with evaluative information and that such engagement may lead to important individual and organizational consequences, changes to the yet to be released Treasury Board

of Canada's Evaluation Policy appear to be moving the function away from the factors and conditions that would facilitate such engagement, resulting in a neutral, objective evaluation function aimed at generating information to support a rational mode of decision-making and meet accountability needs, rather than a learning instrument aimed at fostering continuous improvement through ongoing changes in attitudes, actions and behaviours. Concerns over the negative effects of stakeholder involvement in evaluation on the perception of neutrality and objectivity of evaluation products and processes appear to outweigh the potential benefits of such involvement, and this may be to the detriment of the evaluation function's ability to achieve its full potential (or even meet expectations) in this context.

In order to shed further light on these issues, this study aimed to investigate the link between process use and use of evaluation findings in a government context. Through a mixed-methods, component design integrating two streams of inquiry – a pan-Canadian survey of evaluation practitioners in government and an in-depth case study of a crown corporation of the Government of Canada, both conducted in the context of a broader study on ECB – this study sought to document, describe, and explain the relationship between the consequences of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation (process use) and the utilization of evaluation findings.

Three research questions were explored:

- To what extent is process use of evaluation manifest within government?
- What conditions, influences and factors enhance process use of evaluation within government?
- Does enhanced process use lead to greater degrees of use of findings in government organizations?

Methods are mixed here, at the level of data interpretation, for the purposes of complementarity. As such, the results of each stream of inquiry, which examined process use at the macro (survey) and micro (case study) levels, are discussed here for each of the above research questions in such a way as to compare and contrast the findings, and to draw out interpretations and broader inferences that are supported, as possible, by the literature.

5.2 Process Use in Government

Process use emerged as a concept thanks to empirical and theoretical work on the factors that influence evaluation utilization, which acknowledged the existence of consequences that resulted not from the use of evaluation findings, but rather from the evaluation *process* itself (Cousins & Earl, 1992; Cousins & Leithwood, 1993; King & Pechman, 1984; Greene, 1988). Patton (1997) was the first to call this type of consequence *process use*, and the way in which process use was conceptualized in this study borrows heavily from his initial definition:

Process use refers to and is indicated by changes in attitude or affect, actions or behaviours, knowledge or skills, that occur at the individual, group, or organizational level, as a result of the meaning making, knowledge development and learning that occur from the opportunity to engage with evaluative information and thinking. This opportunity manifests itself through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes. (Adapted from Amo & Cousins, 2007, and Patton, 1997).

The different elements of this definition were explored both at a government-wide level and at a governmental organization level, in order to describe the extent to which process use is manifest within government.

Given that the above definition, and the process use conceptual framework, implies the need for a certain amount of engagement with evaluation processes and products for process use to occur, the extent to which such engagement is present in government was explored first.

Although survey results show on average a moderate level of stakeholder participation/engagement in evaluation processes, this average does not apply evenly to all stakeholder groups. Survey respondents report that those closest to the management and implementation of the program at the time of evaluation participate more frequently and at a higher level in the evaluation than those who are further removed from the program. Around a third of respondents report a similar level and frequency of involvement for other stakeholder groups such as funders and intended beneficiaries, however a third also report that these groups have little to no involvement, which may suggest differing practices across government in this regard.

An important example of such differing practice can be found at IDRC, the organization that was the subject of the case study presented in this thesis. At IDRC, different stakeholder groups are involved in evaluation processes in ways that differ in terms of depth and frequency. Those closest to the management and implementation of the program are responsible for their own evaluations, and in some cases are involved directly in the conduct of studies. They may also be involved through user groups, which include other stakeholders from within and outside the organization. Stakeholders are also involved through consultations throughout the course of the evaluation. Although the involvement of those further removed from the program in some ways resembles the profile that emerged from the survey data (it varies across programs and evaluation studies), the involvement of those closest to the program appears to be a constant, and the purpose of their involvement intimately linked to the

organization's commitment to learning and continuous improvement. IDRC's Board of Governors, its senior managers, and its program managers and staff are involved in evaluation in order to make meaning, reflect, share knowledge, make use of evaluation findings, generate actions, and so forth. Although such involvement sits within an already charged workload, interviewees see the evaluation process as a capacity-building mechanism, and an important forum for reflection and learning.

While the consequences of stakeholder involvement in evaluation processes – or process use – appear to be on average moderate across government, close to 80 per cent of survey respondents note that each of the consequences identified occurs at least sometimes in their organization. According to the survey data, involvement in evaluation processes in government result more frequently in changes in knowledge/skills (such as the development of better understanding of the program/policy/intervention under study) than changes in attitude/affect (such as developing a mindset of evaluative thinking) or changes in behaviours/actions (such as expanded or expedited use of findings). The fact that respondents report differing levels of occurrence of these three types of process use could be a function of the *nature* and *type* of involvement of stakeholders or evaluation users in this context, which was not assessed in this survey. The low scores on questions that speak to involvement and engagement in evaluation-type processes (such as self-assessment and reflection) provide some indication that the type of engagement necessary for the affective and behavioural dimensions of process use to manifest might not be occurring on a regular basis. In other words, although the knowledge/skills development aspects of process use might result from more surface levels of involvement, changes in attitudes/affect and actions/behaviours might require more in-depth and sustained involvement of stakeholders, as is the case at IDRC.

Certainly the benefits that emerge from involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes are quite present in this organization. Similar to the broader government context, consequences related to knowledge/skills development emerge most strongly, followed closely by changes in attitude/affect. Although concrete examples of instrumental and conceptual use of evaluation findings were easily provided by interviewees, only a small number of such changes in actions/behaviours were seen to occur as a result of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes. Although this is perhaps a function of the way the questions were posed, it is also possible that the distinction between the consequences of the evaluation process and the consequences of its products has become blurred or even trivial in this organization. In fact, there is much overlap between the benefits that emerge from involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation and examples of conceptual use of evaluation findings provided by respondents. Certainly, the conceptual blurring of types of evaluation use is not a new phenomenon, and has been well noted in the literature (for instance, Johnson, 1998; Leviton & Hugues, 1981). Perhaps in the case of an organization with high evaluation capacity such blurring is more pronounced, with the overall consequences of this capacity overshadowing the specific consequences associated with process use. Taut (2007) arrives at a similar conclusion (albeit from a different perspective), noting that

In continuous, institutionalized self-evaluation processes it is not as helpful to differentiate the benefits professionals gain from evaluation processes on the one hand, and evaluation findings on the other, because they are the owners and actors and, thus, invariably ‘using the process’. In this case it seems more appropriate to think about high-quality, successful internalization and integration of evaluative thinking and practices. (p. 135)

Overall, although the consequences associated with process use are present in the broader government context explored in this study, those consequences associated with knowledge/skills development appear to be most prominent. This may be a function of the nature or type of stakeholder involvement in evaluation in this context, which was not explored in this study. Bourgeois (2008) however has noted that stakeholders in this context – given the overarching need to maintain neutrality and objectivity – are more likely to be involved in steering committees and advisory boards, and to be consulted for feedback, rather than being involved in the conduct of studies per se. In the specific organization studied, a variety of opportunities are provided to stakeholder on an ongoing basis for involvement in evaluation processes and engagement with evaluation information, not the least of which has to do with the decentralization of the evaluation function at IDRC. These opportunities are part and parcel of the utilization-focused evaluation (UF-E) approach adopted by the organization, which puts a premium on the use of evaluation findings by intended users, and on the development and sustainability of an organizational culture of learning, of which evaluation is an important component. The fact that this organization is seen by experts in the field as exhibiting high level of evaluation capacity is confirmed by the case study, and may be overshadowing, at least in the minds of interviewees, the specific contribution that involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation is making with regards to the many benefits that result from a high and deeply rooted organizational capacity to do and to use evaluation. Certainly, if we think of process use as a means of building an organization's evaluation capacity (Cousins et al., 2004; King, 2007), then the high levels of process use exhibited in the case studied are evidence of evaluation capacity *built* (Patton, 2007). At the same time, the

more moderate levels of process use across government may be further indication of overall moderate levels of both capacity to do and to use evaluation in this context.

5.3 Conditions, Influences and Factors that Enhance Process Use in Government

Although little is known about the conditions, influences and factors (collectively referred to as factors) that affect process use, much is known about the factors that influence the utilization of evaluation findings, both in terms of what helps to engender use (Alkin, 1985; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986; Leviton & Hugues, 1981) and the processes and mechanisms through which use occurs (Cousins & Leithwood, 1993; Cousins, 2003; Johnson, 1998; Mark & Henry, 2004). Much of this knowledge is grounded in theories of knowledge utilization, with the particularities of evaluation being taken into account. Although the factors that have been shown to affect the use of evaluation findings and processes have been grouped in different ways (Alkin, 1985; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986; Preskill et al., 2003), the conceptual framework for this study made use of the categories proposed by Alkin (1985) and refers to contextual, human and evaluation factors, while acknowledging areas of overlap both in terms of the factors explored in the survey and in the case study (see mappings provided in Figures 3 and 21). These factors were explored both at the government-wide (macro) level, and at the organizational (micro) level.

At the macro level, a two-step analysis process was used in order to determine which (if any) of the factors captured in the ECB survey were related to process use. First, variables were inter-correlated in order to identify plausible predictors of process use. Second, predictor variables were entered in a hierarchical (blockwise) manner into multiple regression models in order to see which relationships held up when all predictors were accounted for. The first multiple regression served to identify which predictors contributed substantially to the model's

ability to predict process use. The second included only significant predictors in order to reassess the relative contribution of each to the model.

Although the findings are preliminary, they highlight the importance of a few key factors in explaining variations in the occurrence of process use in a government context. Although the process use conceptual framework suggests that evaluation provides an opportunity for engagement (with evaluation processes and products, with one's own knowledge and the knowledge of others, and so forth) through involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation, such engagement does not appear to be sufficient in explaining variations in process use, and in fact, increases in the *frequency* of involvement of stakeholders in evaluation appears to have a negative impact on process use. This may be another indication of the importance of providing for certain *types* of involvement, rather than emphasizing frequent but surface or low level involvement.

The scale variable of conditions mediating evaluation use emerged as the strongest of all explanatory factors in the model. However, given that the questions within this scale variable deal with both factors that enable process use and elements that speak to the mechanisms underlying process use, this finding does not help us to better understand the specific factors that enhance process use in a government context. The only specific contextual factor that emerged as important in explaining variation in process use was capacity for organizational learning, which mirrors one of the organizational characteristics identified by Preskill et al. (2003) as contributing to process use.

At the micro level, the demarcation between the many factors that have contributed to creating a strong organizational capacity to do and to use evaluation at IDRC and the specific factors that have contributed to enhancing process use in the organization is not clear cut. At

the same time, a certain amount of differentiation was achieved by highlighting those factors that appear to be at the heart of the involvement and engagement which, according to the process use conceptual framework, are necessary for process use to occur. These factors, which are summarized in Table 21, occur at the level of the organization, its systems, its people, and its evaluation approach and products. There are also factors that are external to the organization. Since the categorization of these factors was emergent, it does not exactly match the process use conceptual framework, and some of the categories sit at the intersection of factors than enable process use to occur and the mechanisms that underlie process use. There are numerous parallels however with the factors and variables identified by Preskill et al. (2003) as contributing to process use – for instance, evaluator experience and credibility; staff experience and training in evaluation; degree of organizational stability; location and ownership of the evaluation function; organizational support for learning and developing evaluation capacity; and so forth – as well as factors identified by Taut (2007) – for instance, decentralization of power/authority; support for evaluation capacity building; management commitment and modelling; facilitation of communication; and so forth – which provides for a certain validation of the factors that emerged from this case. Although the study was not designed to assess the relative importance or potency of these factors, or how they interact or are inter-related, interviewees assigned most weight to the organization's mandate and the resulting high level of research sophistication of its staff in explaining IDRC's high level of evaluation capacity.

Although many factors were examined, only a few emerge as important in explaining whether the consequences of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation will manifest

themselves within an organization. Table 24 draws qualitative links between the factors that emerged from the case study and those that were examined in the context of the survey.

As can be seen from this table, there is good alignment between factors that show an association with process use at the macro and micro levels, with the exception of factors related to organizational status/purpose and factors external to the organization, which were not captured in the ECB survey. Although only a few of the ECB survey factors survived the multiple regression analysis, at least one of these factors is present for each category of factors that emerged from the case study. Many of the case study factors that link to ECB survey factors that did not in the end prove good predictors of process use in the broader government context may be more characteristic of the case than of the broader government, and as such provide preliminary indications of ways in which process use could be increased in this context. For instance, the accessibility of evaluation positions to non-evaluation staff within government organizations is limited by the knowledge and experience pre-requisites of these positions. Also, decentralized evaluation functions are not encouraged in the broader context, given the need to maintain neutrality and objectivity in evaluation processes and products (Bourgeois, 2008). Finally, the mandate and purpose of IDRC, which results in the majority of its staff members being highly skilled and knowledgeable in research methods, is not characteristic of government as a whole. There are only a few other government departments and agencies with a similar research and/or research support mandate (for instance, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research [CIHR], the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council [NSERC], the National Research Council [NRC], the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [SSHRC], Statistics Canada, and so forth), and these organizations are subject to the same accountability regime as other government departments

and agencies and therefore cannot tailor evaluation approaches to capitalize on the research strengths of their workforce.

Table 24

Link between factors enabling process use at the micro and macro levels

Micro-level (organizational case study)		Link to macro-level (government-wide survey) factors ³⁰
Level	Factor	
Organizational	Organizational status/purpose	N/A
	Organizational values/commitment	<i>Capacity for organization learning</i> Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities
	Role of evaluation unit within organization	Capacity to do evaluation Organizational support structures Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities
	Organizational stability	Organizational support structures
Systems/mechanisms	Explicit expectations of use	<i>Capacity for organization learning</i> Capacity to do evaluation <i>Conditions mediating evaluation use</i> Organizational support structures
	Decentralized evaluation function	Capacity to do evaluation Organizational support structures
	Accessibility of evaluation positions	Organizational support structures
	Dedicated budget for evaluation capacity building and dissemination	Capacity to do evaluation Organizational support structures Organizational support for evaluation capacity building activities
People	Level of research knowledge and skills	Capacity to do evaluation
	Level of evaluation knowledge, skills and credibility	Capacity to do evaluation <i>Conditions mediating evaluation use</i>
	Cost of engagement/ involvement in evaluation	<i>Capacity for organizational learning</i> Time spent on evaluation (background information)
	Communication	Organizational support structures <i>Conditions mediating evaluation use</i>
Evaluation approach/products	Purpose(s) of evaluation	<i>Capacity for organizational learning</i> Capacity to do evaluation Specific types of evaluation activities
	Approach to evaluation and results reporting	<i>Capacity for organizational learning</i> Capacity to do evaluation Specific types of evaluation activities <i>Stakeholder participation in evaluation</i> Questions related to stakeholder engagement with evaluation/evaluation-type processes or information <i>Conditions mediating evaluation use</i>
	Evaluation quality and timeliness	<i>Conditions mediating evaluation use</i>
Factors external to the organization	Financial partnerships	N/A
	Evaluation approaches promoted by the Federal Government	N/A

³⁰ Only factors that showed a significant association with process use (correlation) are presented in this table. Those factors that maintained a significant association with process use following the multiple regression analysis are *italicized*.

Overall, although involvement of stakeholders in evaluation is an important precursor to process use, it is not sufficient in explaining variations in the occurrence of consequences of such involvement. Whereas more in-depth involvement is associated positively with process use, more frequent involvement is not, pointing to the importance of timely, higher-level engagement over frequent, more surface-level engagement. The type of engagement seen at IDRC is diverse, occurs regularly, and is built into the work culture of the organization. In this context, evaluation is seen as critical to building and sustaining the organization's culture of learning, which emerged at the macro level as being the only contextual factor of importance in explaining variations in process use. The strongest explanatory factor to emerge from the ECB survey data was the scale variable of conditions mediating evaluation use, which includes questions that speak to both factors that enable process use and the underlying mechanisms of process use. Most of these conditions are characteristic of evaluation at IDRC, and many (for instance, an explicit expectation of use built into the evaluation system, evaluation staff that have high credibility, evaluations that are timely and of high quality, and so forth) emerged from the case study as being important to explaining the degree to which process use is present in this organization.

5.4 Process Use and Use of Evaluation Findings

The case for the link between process use and use of evaluation findings draws on theories of evaluation utilization, knowledge utilization, and individual/organizational learning. In this context, evaluation is seen as an opportunity for engagement, where involvement in the evaluation process creates a space where individuals can process evaluative information, draw on their own (and on the organization's) tacit and explicit knowledge to make meaning of such information and thus turn evaluative information into knowledge, and

ultimately experience double-loop learning which can result in the types of changes described in the process use conceptual framework (learning, knowledge and skills development; changes in attitude and/or affect; changes in actions and/or behaviours) (Choo, 2006; Cousins & Leithwood, 1986; Johnson, 1998; Leviton & Hugues, 1981; Preskill et al., 2005). This is not to say that use of evaluation findings does not occur in cases where stakeholders or evaluation users are not involved in the evaluation process, but rather that the likelihood of use increases when they do, as does the propensity of stakeholders to make use of evaluation information for decision-making in other contexts (Katz et al., 2005). As such, process use can be seen as enabling findings use (Taut, 2005), and as being a very effective means of building both capacity to do and to use evaluation (King, 2007).

In assessing the importance of process use as an enabling condition for findings use, the contextual, evaluation and human factors examined in the context of the previous research question were re-examined (with process use in the mix) and their relative importance assessed both at the macro (ECB survey) and micro (IDRC case study) level.

At the macro level, the two-step analysis process used to determine which (if any) of the factors captured in the ECB survey were related to process use was re-applied to determining which (if any) of these same factors (including process use) were related to use of evaluation findings. First, variables were inter-correlated in order to identify plausible predictors of use of evaluation findings. Second, predictor variables were entered in a hierarchical (blockwise) manner into multiple regression models in order to see which relationships held up when all predictors were accounted for. The first multiple regression served to identify which predictors contributed substantially to the model's ability to predict the use of evaluation findings. The second included only significant predictors in order to re-

assess the relative contribution of each to the model. A third analysis was completed in order to see whether each of the categories of process use (knowledge/skills development; changes in actions/behaviours; changes in attitude/ affect) contributed equally (or not) to explaining variations in findings use.

The first analysis resulted in only two significant predictors of use of evaluation findings (level of stakeholder participation in evaluation, and process use), and the second analysis showed the importance of these predictors; with level of stakeholder participation accounting for 31.0 per cent of the variance in use of evaluation findings and process use explaining an additional 23.7 per cent of the variance. The third analysis highlighted the importance of all but one of the categories of process use (knowledge/skills development) in explaining variation in use of evaluation findings. In other words, although knowledge and skills development are important, they may not be sufficient in fostering the use of evaluation findings in a government context.

Although the results are preliminary, they provide us with a better understanding of how the consequences of involvement in the evaluation process (particularly the behavioural consequences) are linked to the use of evaluation findings in a government context. Many of the factors identified in the literature as influencing the use of evaluation findings – or at least, those explored in this study – do not appear to be as important as the level of stakeholder participation in evaluation, and the consequences of this participation, in explaining variations in use of evaluation findings. In fact, the predicted value on the findings use scale when these variables are held constant (at 0) is quite low, which further emphasizes the importance of the level of stakeholder involvement and the level of consequences resulting from their involvement (particularly behavioural and affective changes) in increasing use of evaluation

findings in this context. This is consistent with the maxim from the organizational change literature (Cousins, Goh & Clark, 2006) that belief (in this case, a strong enough belief in the findings of evaluation to put them to use) follows practice (in this case, changes in actions/behaviours or attitudes/affect that occur as a result of involvement in or proximity to evaluation).

At the micro level, respondents were asked about the consequences of such practice at IDRC. As was previously mentioned, very few changes in actions or behaviours were identified by respondents, and only one spoke of enhanced use of evaluation findings. However, given that the IDRC evaluation system is set up both to encourage process use and to encourage (even demand) use of findings, it would appear that an acknowledgement of this relationship is fundamental to the way in which evaluation is undertaken at IDRC. Despite a lack of explicit acknowledgement of the link between process use and use of evaluation findings by respondents, the nature of engagement of stakeholders in evaluation or evaluation-type processes, as described in Table 22, is quite involved, and is characteristic of the type of engagement argued earlier as being at the heart of the link between process use and use of evaluation findings. In other words, the evaluation processes and systems at IDRC create the spaces and the opportunities for 1) making meaning of/reacting to evaluation or evaluation-type information; 2) reflection, consultation, collaboration, interaction and sharing of knowledge; 3) making use of evaluation or evaluation-type information (for accountability, decision-making, learning and/or continuous improvement); and 4) generating/recommending actions to be taken. Not only are the mechanisms of process use built into the rationale for involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation or evaluation-type processes; the

developmental, affective and behavioural consequences of such involvement are part of the *raison d'être* of evaluation at IDRC.

Overall, these findings support the notion that involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation, as well as the consequences of such involvement, are important predictors of use of evaluation findings in a government context. This is not to say that other factors previously identified in the literature are not influencing the use of evaluation findings, but rather that these two factors – which parallel the *information processing* and *user involvement* factors identified by Leviton and Hugues (1981), as well as the *interactive processes* concept identified by Cousins (1995) – emerge as significant in the context of this study. This is consistent with what is known about the importance of information processing to *sense making* and *knowledge creation* (Choo, 2006), about the importance of direct engagement with information in supporting double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978, as cited in Choo, 2006), and about the effects of collaborative forms of inquiry on evaluation utilization (Cousins, 2003; Cousins & Earl, 1992; Robinson, 1998). This has to some extent been noted by the Government of Canada, which acknowledges participatory relationships between evaluation and program staff as well as stakeholder buy-in/involvement through participation in the evaluation governance mechanism as key drivers of evaluation success in this context (CEE, 2005). What appears to be at stake here is the *type* and *nature* of participation. As Bourgeois (2008) notes, it appears to be “possible to attain an exemplary level of [evaluation] capacity, at least on some dimensions, without espousing fully participatory evaluation practices” (p. 187) in this context.

In the specific case of IDRC, the adoption of a utilization-focused evaluation (UF-E) approach appears to be an implicit acknowledgement of their understanding of the relationship

between involvement in evaluation processes and use of evaluation findings, even if respondents did not raise it explicitly. Although the ECB survey data do not speak to the types of involvement most likely to be of value to subsequent use of findings, the IDRC case highlights a variety of types and depths of involvement that quite likely account for both high levels of process use and use of evaluation findings in this context.

Before moving to a discussion of the broad conclusions of this study and of the implications of the study's findings on research and practice, it is important to remind the reader of the strengths and limitations of the study. These are provided in the next section.

Chapter 6: Strengths and Limitations

6.1 Strengths and Limitations of Survey

Although the survey findings present a number of strengths, there are also a number of limitations that need to be taken into consideration. Strengths and limitations are discussed together below.

First, the survey benefits from a sample sufficient to the types of analyses undertaken in this study. In order to determine this, a power analysis was completed for each of the multiple regression analyses included in this study. In all cases, observed power = 1 (0.01 level)³¹, giving us confidence in the size of the sample. At the same time, although the sample shows similarities to the sample generated through a similar study targeting a similar population, given that we do not have a sense of the characteristics of the population of evaluators targeted by this survey, we cannot assess the degree to which those who chose to respond to the survey are representative of all possible respondents, or different from those who did not respond. As such, the degree to which the findings from this study can be generalized to the population of evaluations across all levels of government in Canada is necessarily limited.

Second, it should be noted that, given sample size and possible issues with sample representation, a few variables used in the multiple regression analyses were shown through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic to not be distributed normally, although visual inspection and examination of skewness and kurtosis highlight the potential risk of relying on this

³¹ Post-hoc power analysis is conducted after a study has been completed and uses the obtained sample size and effect size to determine what the power was in the study assuming the effect size in the sample size is equal to the population effect size. Although there are no formal standards for power, most researchers who assess the power of their tests use 0.80 as a standard for adequacy. Through calculator available here: <http://www.danielsoper.com/statcalc/calc09.aspx>, observed power = 1 (at 0.01 level) for all multiple regressions completed.

conservative statistic. The issue of the degree to which these data met the assumptions of multiple regression, and the choices that were made in the context of the analysis, were discussed in detail in Section 3.2.1. In sum, transformations of affected variables did not result in all variables meeting the normality test of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic, and did not produce significant differences in results. Although non-transformed variables were retained, the nuances in results produced by the transformations were highlighted in the multiple regression results tables when applicable in order to help inform future research.

The survey data may also be subject to the challenge of method variance, which stems from the measurement of multiple constructs through one survey instrument and the risk that respondents will bias their responses to questions related to one construct due to their responses to questions related to another construct. This challenge is likely present within these data, given the high level of inter-correlation amongst scale variables, as seen in Table 10. A related issue is that of multicollinearity – a condition of high correlation between predictor variables – which increases the risk of Type II error³². In order to assess the possible effects of these inter-correlations on the multiple regression analyses, collinearity diagnostics were undertaken. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) note that “the statistical problems created by ... multicollinearity occur at much higher correlations (.90 and higher)” (p. 84). Examining the inter-correlational matrix in Table 10, none of the bivariate correlations are equal to or above .90. There are a few that are close – the correlation between conditions mediating evaluation use and evaluation as an opportunity for engagement (.82) can be explained by the fact that the later contains a few items from the former, as well as items borrowed from other composite (scale) variables. This was done to counter the weakness that no variables examined in an

³² Type II error in this context refers to the risk that a good predictor of process use or use of evaluation findings will be found non-significant and rejected from the model.

explicit way the mechanisms of process use. The correlation between level and frequency of stakeholder participation (.87) can be explained by the fact that the distributions of these variables are quite similar in this context, however, they are not the same, and their differences stand out in the multiple regression analyses.

In order to further assess the degree to which multicollinearity is an issue in this case, collinearity diagnostics were requested for all multiple regression analyses. At first glance, with the average of variance inflation factors (VIFs) values greater than 1 (Bowerman & O'Connell, 1990, as cited in Field, 2005), and some tolerance levels below .2 (Menard, 1995, as cited in Field, 2005), there is concern that multicollinearity may be biasing the regression. However, when tolerances of variables contributing significantly to the regression equation are examined, only one of the significant variables showed a tolerance below .2 (conditions mediating evaluation use in the first process use multiple regression – tolerance = .195). The tolerances in subsequent analyses are much higher.

When examining the criteria for multicollinearity suggested by Belsely et al. (1980) (cited in Tabachnick and Fidell, p.85), in most cases, condition indexes greater than 30 on a given dimension were not coupled with more than one variance proportion for an individual variable that was greater than .50. It did occur in the few cases described below.

In the first findings use multiple regression, current position (program/policy staff) showed important collinearity with findings use and organizational support structures – combined; and evaluation as opportunity for engagement showed important collinearity with capacity for organizational learning (with which it shares items). These variables however did not prove important predictors of use of evaluation findings, and were not retained for subsequent analyses (where condition indexes were below 30).

This was also the case in the first process use multiple regression, where conditions mediating evaluation use showed important collinearity with evaluation as an opportunity for engagement (with which it shares items), and capacity for organizational learning. Since conditions mediating evaluation use and capacity for organizational learning proved to be important predictors of process use, they were retained for further analysis. Condition indexes in the second analysis were all below 30.

Overall, multicollinearity appears to be of greater concern in the first, more exploratory multiple regression analyses, and its effects are less pronounced in subsequent analyses. Although excluding the troubled variables from the initial analyses would have likely reduce the problem, I have chosen to leave them in given that overall bivariate correlations are below .90 and given that these variables are important from a theoretical standpoint and their effects in terms of multicollinearity diminish as the multiple regression analyses become more conservative.

As a final point, the reader is reminded that this study was designed to serve an exploratory function, and its findings should be interpreted as such. Further research will be necessary to confirm the results of the multiple regression analyses presented in this thesis.

6.2 Strengths and Limitations of the Case Study

The case study also has a number of strengths and limitations that should be highlighted.

The case was chosen given that it had been identified by experts in the field as showing high levels of evaluation capacity, thus increasing the odds that high levels of process use would be found. Although this turned out to be true, the high levels of evaluation capacity made it more difficult to isolate the specific consequences of involvement in – or proximity to

– evaluation processes from the overall consequences of such a strong capacity to do and to use evaluation. Such a “halo” effect may not be present in organizations where the evaluation capacity is lower.

The case is somewhat limited in that little information was gathered on the underlying mechanisms that account for *why* involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation leads to the set of consequences that are known as process use. Such data may have helped to further support the relationship between process use and use of evaluation findings.

Although interviewees were quite sophisticated in their understanding of evaluation and of process use, they were being asked to think back to instances where the evaluation process had an impact, and it was clear from their responses that the line between process use and conceptual use of evaluation findings was blurred. Again, in an organization with such a high level of capacity to do and to use evaluation perhaps the distinction between the consequences of the process and the consequences of its products is somewhat trivial.

Interviewees were almost unanimous in their positive attitude regarding evaluation which, although understandable given the strengths of this organization’s evaluation function, might nonetheless imply a certain amount of social desirability affecting interviewees’ responses. This is most evident in responses to questions related to evaluation having little to not impact, where one respondent could not think of an example, and others often attributed the lack of impact to external forces.

Although interview findings show a high level of consistency with the content of the documents reviewed, broadening the sample of interviewees to include front-line staff, funding recipients and external partners may have helped to generate a more nuanced picture of the organization’s evaluation capacity and of process use. In addition, it would have been

quite interesting to observe process use in action while following a single evaluation project from beginning to end. This was however beyond the scope and timelines for this project.

As already mentioned, given IDRC's status as a Crown Corporation within the Government of Canada, it is not subject to the same accountability regime as other government departments and agencies. Although this can be seen as limiting the generalizability of the case, as the case study findings demonstrate, it provides us with a vision of what can be accomplished in such a context when evaluation is primarily put to the service of learning and continuous improvement rather than external accountability. The power of such an approach can be sensed through the high level of comfort with which respondents spoke about evaluation and the depth from which they drew their reflections. This richness is also reflected in IDRC's documents, which provide clear evidence of the positioning, value and power of evaluation within the organization. Taken together, these data provide a solid case from which much can be learned about how evaluation can thrive in a government organization.

Chapter 7: Conclusion and Implications for Research and Practice

7.1 Conclusion

Process use is a consequence of evaluation that has been part of the evaluation knowledge base for over a decade. It is a consequence that stems from the evaluation process itself, rather than from its products. To ignore process use in evaluating the cost-benefit of evaluation itself is to leave out not only an important part of the equation, but one that may have a multiplier effect on more often explored benefits associated with the use of evaluation findings. In a government context, the potential benefits of involvement in – or proximity to – evaluation processes are not trivial. Although the propensity to make use of evaluation findings for results-based management and decision-making is certainly driven by policy, interest, ideologies, and the like (Aucoin, 2005), it is also influenced by processes that help develop evaluative thinking or an evaluation habit of mind (Katz, Sutherland & Earl, 2005). If governments are interested in continuous improvement that not only acts as a response to change, but results in the kind of learning that changes attitudes, actions and behaviours (Choo, 2006), they might do well to negotiate a better balance between the constraints of neutrality/objectivity in the interest of accountability, and the possibilities that closer involvement in evaluation processes might offer.

Although a certain level of stakeholder involvement in evaluation processes is present in the broader government context, this involvement is resulting primarily in one type of process use – the development of knowledge and skills – which does not appear to be sufficient in enhancing the use of evaluation findings in this context. Changes in attitude/affect (such as the development of evaluative thinking) and changes in actions/behaviours (such as

the propensity to draw on evaluation information for decision-making), which are types of process use that are less present in the broader government context, appear to be most important in explaining variations in use of findings. IDRC provides for a variety of types and depths of involvement in evaluation that quite likely account for both high levels of process use and use of evaluation findings in this context. At the same time, given the constraints with regards to stakeholder involvement in the broader government context – owing to neutrality/objectivity concerns – it would be useful to further explore the specific types of involvement that are most useful in enhancing the use of evaluation findings in this context. This study points to the importance of timely, higher-level engagement over frequent, more surface-level engagement in supporting process use in a government context, although this is an incomplete picture. The importance of organizational learning capacity as well as conditions mediating evaluation use in setting the stage for process use to occur need to also be taken into account in understanding what is important in ensuring use of evaluation findings in a government context.

Although IDRC is a less than typical government organization, its strong evaluation capacity – and the consequences of this capacity – makes it an interesting case for what might be possible in the broader government context. Evaluation is seen as part of the organizational culture at IDRC, and the utilization of evaluation processes and products is built into the organization's systems and processes. These characteristics are not at odds with the accountability regime that the broader government context is subjected to, and there is much room for building evaluation capacity across government, even within the parameters and constraints of this regime. The findings of this study, albeit exploratory, provide ground for

arguing for such capacity building to occur but highlighting the benefits that are likely to emerge, not the least of which is the increased use of evaluation findings in government.

Although many of the results of this study were not surprising, a few unexpected findings are worthy of note. First, the fact that the frequency of stakeholder participation showed a negative relationship to process use and use of evaluation findings came as an important, albeit unexpected, insight. Also, the fact that the relationship between process use and use of evaluation findings was not explicitly noted by IDRC interviewees required the development of important conjectures that perhaps would not have emerged without this unexpected result. Finally, the strength of process use in explaining variations in use of evaluation findings – particularly process use as evidenced by changes in actions/behaviours and attitudes/affect – was hoped for but not anticipated. This is an important confirmation of what many evaluators intuitively or experientially know to be true, and as such, represents a significant contribution to the evaluation knowledge base.

7.2 Implications for Research and Practice

There has been a growing trend toward interest in the use of program evaluation in government for more than a decade (Rist, 1990). Despite this however, there is little empirically-generated research knowledge on the *raison-d'être*, practice, uses, impacts, and effects of program evaluation (Henry & Mark, 2003b; Weaver & Cousins, 2004), particularly in the area of government evaluations. Despite the preliminary nature of the findings presented in this thesis, they provide empirical evidence of the important role the consequences of involvement in evaluation can play in subsequent use of evaluation findings within government. This supports the arguments underlying the conceptual framework for this study, and speaks to the importance of ensuring quality (rather than frequent and low level)

involvement of stakeholders in government evaluations to the goal of increasing evaluation use.

In terms of the study's research contribution, the findings presented in this thesis add to the growing body of interdisciplinary knowledge on the factors that make evaluations useful, with a particular emphasis on the government context. They also help to further understanding of process use as a concept and as a worthwhile consequence of evaluation. It is hoped that these findings will inspire further research on process use, which in time will help inform evaluation theory, evaluation training and education, evaluation practice, and evaluation policy. Although it was not possible to explore these issues extensively within the scope of this study, it would be valuable in future research to explore issues such as the nature and type of stakeholder involvement most critical to enhancing use of evaluation findings; how the mechanisms that underlie process use actually exert their influence; how issues of values, norms, politics, power and trust influence stakeholder participation in evaluation and use of evaluation findings; and how the dimensions of time and intentionality influence both process use and use of evaluation findings (Kirkhart, 2000).

In terms of practical contribution, it is hoped that government program evaluators and evaluation policy makers will take note of this study's results and seek a better balance between the need for neutrality and objectivity and the potential benefits of involving stakeholders in more meaningful ways in the evaluation process. The IDRC case, although quite unique in government, is an excellent case for highlighting what can be accomplished when the approach to evaluation is tailored to the needs and characteristics of the organization, and has at its heart the creation of opportunities for engagement, reflection, knowledge development, and so forth. The problem of use of evaluation findings in government should be

re-conceptualized as a problem of knowledge utilization, as it was in the early writings on evaluation utilization, in order to best apply what is known about organizational learning, decision-making and continuous improvement to better managing governmental programs and organizations.

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Appendix A: Evaluation Capacity Building Survey Questionnaire

EVALUATION CAPACITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about factors related to evaluation practices in your organization. (Note: if you work predominantly as an external consultant providing evaluation services to organizations, this survey is NOT for you.) This is a research project of the University of Ottawa and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Information from this questionnaire will help us to better understand how to build organizational capacity for *doing* evaluation and *using* evaluation results in, for example, strategic decision making, program design, and improvement. In addition, the results will also provide insights on how to integrate evaluation into the organizational management functions. Please note that for the purposes of this survey, performance measurement and program monitoring are considered to be aspects of the evaluation function.

We thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this research project. Your responses will remain confidential and the results of the survey will be pooled for analysis (so that individual responses cannot be identified).

Sincerely,

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INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer all questions in the questionnaire even if some may seem similar. Make sure that you do not provide any personal or organizational identifying information on the survey. Occasionally concept definitions are elaborated using 'mouse-over' technology. You can access such information merely by moving the cursor slowly over the highlighted word.

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION – ORGANIZATION

Please tell us about your organization (i.e., your entire organization as opposed to the individual organizational unit to which you belong).

A1 How would you best describe the type of organization where you work? (√ ONE)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-profit organization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial Government | <input type="checkbox"/> College/University |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal Government | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Sector |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non Governmental Organization (NGO) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
(specify) |

To the best of your knowledge, provide estimates of the following:

- A2** The number of paid staff employed by your organization (full-time equivalents). _____
- A3** The number of individuals with responsibility for program evaluation functions (full-time equivalents) ? _____

B. CAPACITY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Indicate the extent to which you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with each of these statements about your organization:
(Circle ONE option)

		1 Strongly Disagree					7 Strongly Agree
B1	We can often bring new ideas into the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
B2	Failures are constructively discussed in our organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
B3	Current organizational practice encourages staff to solve problems together before discussing them with a manager.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
B4	People who are new to the organization are encouraged to question the way things are done.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
B5	Senior managers in this organization accept change and are not afraid of new ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
B6	Managers in this organization encourage staff to experiment in order to improve work processes.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7
B7	New work processes that may be useful to the organization as a whole are usually shared with all staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6 7

B8	Innovative ideas that are successful are rewarded by management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B9	Senior managers and staff in this organization share a common vision of what our work should accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B10	New ideas from staff are treated seriously by management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B11	Managers frequently involve staff in important decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B12	We can usually create informal groups to solve organizational problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B13	Managers can accept criticism without becoming overly defensive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B14	We have a system that allows us to learn successful practices from other organizations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B15	Managers often provide useful feedback that helps to identify potential problems and opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B16	We have opportunities for self-assessment with respect to goal attainment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B17	The organization's mission statement identifies values to which all staff must conform.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B18	Most problem-solving groups include staff from a variety of functional areas or divisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

C. ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT STRUCTURES

Indicate the extent to which you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with each of these statements about your organization:

(Circle ONE option)

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
C1	Staff in this organization are provided with work-related skills training.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C2	Information and decision-making must always go through proper channels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C3	The skills training that we receive can be applied to improve our work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C4	Staff in this organization are encouraged to continuously upgrade and increase their knowledge and education levels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C5	In my opinion, our organization has too many levels of hierarchy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C6	This organization supports the development of skills such as leadership, coaching, and teambuilding among staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C7	Most of our work must adhere to formal rules and procedures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C8	Learning that improves the work skills and knowledge of staff is encouraged.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C9	Staff training is emphasized equally at all levels.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C10	We require approval in writing for the introduction of new work activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C11	Training is done in teams where appropriate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C12	Standard operating procedures have been established for almost every	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	work situation.								
C13	Staff training is relevant to our work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
C14	Our work is usually closely monitored and inspected by management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
C15	There is very little overlap in work between different units in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

D. CAPACITY TO DO EVALUATION

(NOTE: MOVE THIS DEFINITION TO A DROP DOWN BOX over the word “EVALUATION”) ‘Evaluation’ is a process of systematic inquiry to provide information for decision and policy making about some object - a program, project, process, organizational unit, or product. Use of evaluation results might lead, for example, to making refinements to a program or to offering better alternative programs or options.

Indicate the extent to which you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with each of these statements about your organization:

(Circle ONE option)

		1			7			
		Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree			
D1	Our organization has long-term, dedicated fiscal support for our evaluation activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D2	We are able to easily access information about “best practices” within our field,	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D3	Our organization provides us with the basic tools/resources to support evaluation (e.g., computers, software, copying, administrative support).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D4	Employees are given sufficient time to reflect on organizational successes or failures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D5	We have a “champion” on staff who supports our evaluation efforts and advocates on our behalf when required.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D6	We have a planning and operational process to initiate, evaluate, and advance our evaluation activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D7	Overall, our organization possesses the technical competencies to conduct evaluations (e.g., instrument development, data collection and analysis).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D8	Our organization has the knowledge and skills to oversee evaluations performed by external evaluators.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D9	Our organization provides positive encouragement to conduct evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D10	We are rewarded for using performance information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D11	We have formal requirements to report on performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D12	Performance measurement is integral to our organizational accountability framework.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

E. EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

(NOTE: MOVE THIS DEFINITION TO A DROP DOWN BOX over the word “EVALUATION”) ‘Evaluation’ is a process of systematic inquiry to provide information for decision and policy making about some object - a program, project, process,

organizational unit, or product. Use of evaluation results might lead, for example, to making refinements to a program or to offering better alternative programs or options.

Indicate the extent to which you AGREE or DISAGREE to the following statement about your organization:
(Circle ONE Option)

		1			7			
		Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree			
E1	Our organization supports evaluation capacity building activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

To the best of your knowledge, indicate the types of EVALUATION CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES in which members of your organization have been engaged **over the past five years?** (✓ **ALL that apply**)

E2 External Evaluation-related Professional Development - Formal Education/Training Courses:

a) Canadian Evaluation Society (CES)

Workshops:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Essential Skills Series
<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate Course on Logic Models
<input type="checkbox"/> CES Seminars and Professional Development events
<input type="checkbox"/> CES National and/or Regional Conferences
<input type="checkbox"/> CES National Conference Workshops | <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate Course on Survey Methods
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: (<i>Specify below</i>)
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 2px 0;"/>
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 2px 0;"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> None
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know |
|--|--|

b) American Evaluation Association (AEA)

Workshops:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AEA Conference Workshops
<input type="checkbox"/> AEA Summer Institute
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Workshops/Professional Development: (<i>Specify below</i>)
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 2px 0;"/>
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 2px 0;"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> AEA National and/or Regional Conferences
<input type="checkbox"/> None
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know |
|---|---|

c) Other:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> University/College Courses on Evaluation (theory, practice, methods)
<input type="checkbox"/> University/College Courses on research methods
<input type="checkbox"/> Other University/College evaluation-related courses | <input type="checkbox"/> Other types of vendor-provided courses (e.g., Evaluator's Institute): (<i>Specify below</i>)
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 2px 0;"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> None
<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Know |
|--|---|

E3 Internal Evaluation-related Professional Development -Formal Education/Training Courses:

- Employer-sponsored evaluation-related workshops/training:
(Specify format, topic, length below)

- None
- Don't Know

E4 Informal Evaluation-related Learning on the Job:

- Mentoring
- Coaching – supervisor/"expert" evaluator
- Observation
- Other: (Specify below)
- Peer Learning
- Self-study
- Internship or Apprenticeship
- Job Assignment or Job Rotation

- None
- Don't Know

F. SPECIFIC TYPES OF EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

Indicate the extent to which your organization has engaged in the following evaluation activities **in the past two years**. (Note: These may be internal or externally contracted evaluation activities.) (Circle ONE option)

		1 Never							7 Always						
F1	Review program documentation (e.g., participant records, case notes).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F2	Conduct firsthand observation of program activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F3	Conduct formal program evaluations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F4	Establish performance targets (e.g., serve 200 people, 80% complete training).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F5	Monitor implementation (i.e., ensure that programs are delivered as intended).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F6	Monitor program outcomes (i.e., ensure program results are as intended).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F7	Assess the degree to which program goals/objectives are met.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F8	Engage in formal evaluation planning processes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F9	Use comparative group designs (e.g., randomized control trials, quasi experimental).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F10	Employ single-case mixed-method designs (i.e., qualitative and quantitative methods).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

F1 1	Use program theoretical designs (i.e., link program components to outcomes).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F1 2	Produce annual reports based on performance measures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F1 3	Produce reports about program activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F1 4	Produce reports for Boards of Directors and/or senior management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F1 5	Use a performance measurement system.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F1 6	Use program logic models.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F1 7	Use other evaluation or management systems (e.g., performance audits, results-based management, quality assurance activities): <i>(Specify below)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

G. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN EVALUATION

On each of the two scales below, indicate the extent to which members of the following stakeholder groups typically participate in evaluations *in* your organization or *for* your organization: (Circle ONE option for the frequency of participation, and ONE option for the level of participation)

NOTE: Stakeholders may participate either by being directly involved in *producing* the evaluation or in *providing input* that helps shape the design or conduct of the evaluation.

	Level of Participation							Frequency of Participation						
	1 Low	2	3	4	5	6	7 High	1 Never	2	3	4	5	6	7 Always
G1 Program developers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G2 Program managers or directors.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G3 Program sponsors or funders.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G4 Staff responsible for implementing the program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G5 Intended beneficiaries of the program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G6 Special interest groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G7 Other: <i>(Specify below)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

H. USE OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

Indicate the extent to which you have observed the following consequences of evaluation in your organization: (Circle ONE option)

Evaluation helps us to:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Never					Always	
H1 learn about program functioning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H2 make changes to existing programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H3 conduct strategic planning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H4 get new funding.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H5 justify program existence or continuation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H6 make decisions about staffing.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H7 report to the board (or equivalent).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H8 perform outreach and public relations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H9 make decisions about fiscal allocations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H10 meet external accountability requirements.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H11 Other: (<i>Specify below</i>)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I. USE OF EVALUATION PROCESS

Indicate the extent to which involvement in evaluation activities and processes have had the following consequences for members of your organization: (Circle ONE option)

Involvement in evaluation activities and processes has helped us to:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Never					Always	
I1 develop knowledge about evaluation logic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I2 develop knowledge about evaluation methods.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I3 develop technical skills for doing evaluation (e.g., instrument development, data collection and analysis).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I4 develop a better understanding of the program/policy/intervention being evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I5 foster a shared understanding of organizational functioning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I6 integrate evaluation into our work practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I7 improve management practices.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I8 expedite the use of evaluation findings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I9 expand the use of evaluation findings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I10 develop professional networks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I11 question underlying assumptions about what we do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I12 develop a mindset of evaluative thinking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I13	increase commitment to the program/policy/intervention being evaluated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I14	increase organizational commitment.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I15	increase ownership of what we do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I16	appreciate the value of evaluation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I17	appreciate the power of evaluation as a force for change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I18	Other: <i>(Specify below)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

J. CONDITIONS MEDIATING EVALUATION USE

A number of factors and conditions have been identified which may influence the use of evaluation findings. Indicate the extent to which you have observed these factors in your organization. (Circle ONE option)

Evaluations in our organization:

		1						7
		Never						Always
J1	are timely (linked to decision-cycle of senior decision makers).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J2	foster improvement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J3	respond to feedback from the users.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J4	are high quality.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J5	help users make tough decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J6	provide accurate results.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J7	reduce surprises for decision makers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J8	are perceived by users as unbiased.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J9	are informed by user input.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J10	are supported by quality assurance mechanisms (e.g. peer reviews).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J11	are based on objective data.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J12	can be compared against external standards or benchmarks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J13	are owned by the users of evaluation results.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J14	are produced by evaluators who are perceived as credible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J15	are perceived to be appropriately resourced.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J16	use a methodology that is understood by users.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J17	are consistent with pre-existing plans for evaluation within the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J18	are accessible to senior management.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J19	involve users throughout the evaluation process.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

K. COMMENTS

In this section, feel free to provide written comments about your organization’s evaluation practices, decision-making and problem-solving practices or any other issues of interest.

L. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tell us about yourself:

Note: This information will be used to describe our sample.

L1 Current Position (please √ the one which most applies to your current role):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation Specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Director |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Measurement Specialist | <input type="checkbox"/> Auditor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Officer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Officer/Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Manager | (Specify) |

L2 How long have you been working in this function?

_____ Number of years (round up).

L3 What percentage of your time do you spend on evaluation activities?

_____ Out of 100% (round up).

L4 How would you rate your level of knowledge about the field of evaluation, in terms of theory of evaluation and practice? (√ ONE of each)

Level of Knowledge about Evaluation Theory:

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Some
- Very Little
- None

Level of Knowledge about the Practice of

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Some
- Very Little
- None

L5 What is your gender?

- Male Female

L6 To which age category do you belong?

- less than 30 40-49 60 +
 30-39 50-59

L7 What is your highest diploma/degree attained?

- High School University - Graduate
 College University - Doctoral
 University - Undergraduate

Thank you for your input

Remember, you can obtain a summary of the results of this study by sending a request to bcousins@uottawa.ca with the subject line "ECB study summary request"

Note:

The University of Ottawa, Research Ethics Review Board, has approved this research. Any inquiries or questions dealing with ethical conduct of this research can be addressed to the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research at (613) 562-5841.

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

Evaluation Capacity Building Study

Interview Guide for Round 1 Interviews

Introduction

Introduce the purpose of the research, ensure that the participant has read and signed the letter of consent. Our preference is to tape-record. Ensure that is ok. Ask if he/she has any questions before getting started.

Organizational support structures

First, we would like to learn more about your organization - the “context” in which you conduct your evaluations. Could you please describe your organization in terms of the following:

General Context:

- The size of your organization and the evaluation function in particular.
- Your organization’s core business
- Communication in general and evaluation function in particular
- Commitment to professional development, resource availability; role flexibility

How would you describe your organization’s approach to decision making? (collaborative? Evidence-based? Democratic?, etc)

Capacity to DO evaluation and evaluation inquiry

How many people work on evaluation at your organization? Do you have an evaluation unit? How is it structured? How does it fit with the organizational structure (reporting, responsibilities, relation to core business)

Are evaluations usually done in-house or are they contracted out (subject to oversight)?

Please describe for me a “typical” evaluation process. Do you have a standard approach or methodology for conducting evaluations (or having them conducted)?

To what extent are stakeholders involved with evaluation? Which stakeholder groups are involved? *(Do the help do it? Involved only as sources of data? Which aspects are they most involved with—planning, instrument devel, data collection/analysis, reporting)*

Evaluation knowledge and skill development

How sophisticated would you say members of your organization are in terms of their knowledge skills and ability to DO or oversee evaluation?

What are the main sources of evaluation knowledge and skill in evaluation? (*on the job, workshops/training, education, etc.*)

Has your organization initiated any evaluation capacity building activities in the past while? Describe these.

Capacity to USE evaluation

In what ways is evaluation used in your organization by managers and decision makers? (*support for decisions? Learning about programs, organization, functions, etc.? Symbolic, persuasive and political uses?*)

To what extent and how do processes of doing evaluation have an impact on your organization (*process use? development of inquiry skills? development of evaluative thinking?*)

What sorts of factors or forces help to integrate evaluation into your organizational culture?

What sorts of barriers or forces inhibit the integration of evaluation into your organizational culture?

Case examples

Please select an evaluation that was completed recently that you would suggest had considerable identifiable impact on your organization (led to significant change, direct support for significant decisions). Describe the evaluation (*purpose, process*)

Describe the impact that the evaluation had? (*support for decisions, learning, symbolic/persuasive; process use*)

What main factors or forces lead to this impact?

Please select an evaluation that was completed recently that you would suggest had little or no impact on your organization. Describe the evaluation (*purpose, process*)

What main factors or forces lead to this evaluation having little or no impact in your organization?

Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. We will be summarizing all of your responses into a Case-Profile Report, which we will share with you at a later date. Then we will schedule a focus group, to discuss the report. It will be scheduled at your convenience.

Appendix C: List of documents reviewed for the case study

- International Development Research Centre (2004). *Corporate Strategy and Program Framework 2005-2010*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11250758901CSPF_2005_e.pdf)
- International Development Research Centre (2004). *Evaluation highlight 2: The corporate assessment framework*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12194967101The_Corporate_Assessment_Framework.pdf)
- International Development Research Centre (2005). *Evaluation Strategy: 2005-2010*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11446799141Strategy_2005-10.pdf)
- International Development Research Centre (2005). *Evaluation highlight 6: Deepening a culture of reflection - IDRC's rolling project completion report process*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12194970311Deepening_A_Culture_of_Reflection_IDRC's_Rolling_Project_Completion_Report_Process.pdf)
- International Development Research Centre (2006). *Partnering for progress*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11071836081PBD_brochure_e.pdf)
- International Development Research Centre (2007). *Annual report 2006-2007*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11879680421AnnualReport_0607_e4.pdf)
- International Development Research Centre (2007). *Governance and corporate structure*. (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-115181-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)
- International Development Research Centre (2007). *Accountability*. (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-114880-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)
- International Development Research Centre (2007). *Annual corporate evaluation report 2007*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12078348751ACE_report_2007_final_for_printing.pdf)
- International Development Research Centre (2007). *Evaluation Highlight 12: IDRC's Approach to Evaluation*. (<http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11793197571Highlight12.pdf>)
- International Development Research Centre (2008). *IDRC at a glance*. (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-114723-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)
- International Development Research Centre (2008). *Partnership and business development division (PBDD)*. (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-6430-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)
- International Development Research Centre (2008). *Our team*. (http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-103702-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)
- Love, A. J. (2005). *External review of the IDRC evaluation unit*. (http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/11368367921Evaluation_Report.pdf)

Appendix D: Descriptive Statistics on Evaluation Capacity Building (ECB) Survey Data

Table A

Descriptive statistics on capacity for organizational learning – government sub-sample (n=183)

<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SD (1)¹</i>	<i>Response Distribution (%)</i>							<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>95% C.I.</i>	
			<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>	<i>SA (7)</i>	<i>Lower</i>			<i>Upper</i>	
The organization's mission statement identifies values to which all staff must conform.	168	4.8	3.6	8.3	17.3	17.9	22.0	26.2	5.11	1.69	4.85	5.37	
We can often bring new ideas into the organization.	180	1.7	6.1	11.7	17.2	31.7	19.4	12.2	4.78	1.45	4.57	4.99	
We have opportunities for self-assessment with respect to goal attainment.	181	3.3	8.8	14.4	22.1	20.4	22.7	8.3	4.49	1.56	4.26	4.72	
Most problem-solving groups include staff from a variety of functional areas or divisions.	161	5.0	8.1	16.8	19.9	20.5	19.3	10.6	4.43	1.64	4.18	4.68	
New work processes that may be useful to the organization as a whole are usually shared with all staff.	180	0.6	10.6	22.8	21.7	24.4	13.3	6.7	4.26	1.42	4.05	4.47	
Innovative ideas that are successful are rewarded by management.	175	4.6	9.7	18.9	18.9	23.4	19.4	5.1	4.26	1.55	4.03	4.49	
Senior managers and staff in this organization share a common vision of what our work should accomplish.	178	5.6	12.9	14.0	16.9	25.3	19.7	5.6	4.25	1.63	4.01	4.49	
New ideas from staff are treated seriously by management.	178	3.4	6.7	20.8	23.0	30.9	10.1	5.1	4.22	1.38	4.02	4.42	
We can usually create informal groups to solve organizational problems.	173	4.6	15.0	16.8	13.3	24.9	19.7	5.8	4.21	1.65	3.96	4.46	
Current organizational practice encourages staff to solve problems together before discussing them with a manager.	173	4.6	13.3	15.6	20.8	24.3	15.0	6.4	4.17	1.58	3.93	4.41	
Managers in this organization encourage staff to experiment in order to improve work processes.	176	3.4	13.1	18.8	18.8	29.0	10.8	6.3	4.14	1.52	3.92	4.36	
Managers often provide useful feedback that helps to identify potential problems and opportunities.	179	2.2	14.5	23.5	15.6	22.9	19.0	2.2	4.08	1.49	3.86	4.30	
Senior managers in this organization accept change and are not afraid of new ideas.	175	2.9	17.7	20.6	17.1	21.7	15.4	4.6	4.02	1.56	3.79	4.25	
Failures are constructively discussed in our organization.	177	2.3	17.5	23.2	19.2	17.5	16.4	4.0	3.97	1.53	3.74	4.20	
We have a system that allows us to learn successful practices from other organizations.	175	3.4	18.9	21.7	20.0	22.9	12.0	1.1	3.81	1.44	3.60	4.02	
People who are new to the organization are encouraged to question the way things are done.	176	9.7	15.3	23.3	14.8	22.2	11.4	3.4	3.72	1.62	3.48	3.96	
Managers frequently involve staff in important decisions.	179	7.3	19.0	19.0	19.6	22.9	9.5	2.8	3.72	1.55	3.49	3.95	
Managers can accept criticism without becoming overly defensive.	170	5.9	20.0	20.6	18.2	22.9	10.6	1.8	3.71	1.51	3.48	3.94	

Notes: SD= strongly disagree (1); SA=strongly agree (7)¹

Table B

Descriptive statistics on organizational support structure, training – government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	Response Distribution (%)							95% C.I.			
		SD (1) ¹	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	SA (7)	Mean	SD	Lower	Upper
Staff training is relevant to our work.	179	1.1	2.8	9.5	10.1	25.7	31.3	19.6	5.28	1.39	5.08	5.48
The skills training that we receive can be applied to improve our work.	179	1.7	3.9	5.6	12.8	29.1	33.0	14.0	5.18	1.36	4.98	5.38
Learning that improves the work skills and knowledge of staff is encouraged.	181	1.7	2.2	7.7	17.7	21.0	36.5	13.3	5.17	1.35	4.97	5.37
Staff in this organization are provided with work-related skills training.	179	2.8	5.6	7.8	13.4	29.6	20.7	20.1	5.04	1.56	4.81	5.27
Staff in this organization are encouraged to continuously upgrade and increase their knowledge and education levels.	179	2.2	4.5	9.5	14.0	26.3	29.1	14.5	5.03	1.47	4.81	5.25
Training is done in teams where appropriate.	170	5.3	9.4	6.5	17.1	22.9	27.6	11.2	4.71	1.67	4.46	4.96
This organization supports the development of skills such as leadership, coaching, and teambuilding among staff.	179	0.6	6.1	14.5	24.0	22.3	24.0	8.4	4.67	1.39	4.47	4.87
Staff training is emphasized equally at all levels	165	4.2	15.2	12.7	15.2	18.8	23.0	10.9	4.42	1.75	4.15	4.69

Notes: SD= strongly disagree (1); SA= strongly agree (7)¹

Table C

Descriptive statistics on organizational support structure, formalization – government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	Response Distribution (%)							95% C.I.			
		SD (1) ¹	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	SA (7)	Mean	SD	Lower	Upper
Information and decision-making must always go through proper channels.	180	2.2	2.2	5.0	5.0	18.3	37.8	29.4	5.66	1.39	5.46	5.86
Most of our work must adhere to formal rules and procedures.	180	1.7	4.4	9.4	10.0	26.1	27.8	20.6	5.20	1.49	4.98	5.42
In my opinion, our organization has too many levels of hierarchy.	179	4.5	17.9	12.8	12.8	14.5	19.6	17.9	4.45	1.90	4.17	4.73
Our work is usually closely monitored and inspected by management.	180	3.3	11.1	17.2	15.6	23.9	20.6	8.3	4.41	1.61	4.18	4.64
We require approval in writing for the introduction of new work activities.	156	9.0	14.7	12.2	15.4	17.3	16.7	14.7	4.26	1.91	3.96	4.56
Standard operating procedures have been established for almost every work situation.	170	7.1	18.8	13.5	17.1	24.1	14.1	5.3	3.96	1.68	3.71	4.21
There is very little overlap in work between different units in the organization.	175	11.4	19.4	16.0	16.6	13.1	17.1	6.3	3.77	1.82	3.50	4.04

Notes: SD= strongly disagree (1); SA= strongly agree (7)¹

Table D

Descriptive statistics on capacity building activities– government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	SD (1) ¹	Response Distribution (%)						SA (7)	Mean	SD	95% C. I.	
			(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Lower				Upper	
Our organization supports evaluation capacity building activities.	178	2.8	13.5	11.2	15.2	20.2	22.5	14.6	4.62	1.72	4.37	4.87	

Notes: SD= strongly disagree (1); strongly agree (7)¹

Table E

Descriptive statistics on capacity to do evaluation – government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	SD (1) ¹	Response Distribution (%)						SA (7)	Mean	SD	95% C. I.	
			(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Lower				Upper	
We have formal requirements to report on performance.	174	3.4	4.6	6.9	8.6	13.2	21.8	41.4	5.55	1.71	5.30	5.80	
Our organization provides us with the basic tools/resources to support evaluation (e.g. computers, software, copying, administrative support).	181	2.8	3.3	7.2	8.3	16.6	32.6	29.3	5.48	1.55	5.25	5.71	
Our organization has the knowledge and skills to oversee evaluations performed by external evaluators	178	0.0	5.6	9.0	11.8	20.8	27.0	25.8	5.32	1.48	5.10	5.54	
Performance measurement is integral to our organizational accountability framework.	177	3.4	6.2	9.6	12.4	14.7	22.0	31.6	5.21	1.75	4.95	5.47	
Overall, our organization possesses the technical competencies to conduct evaluations (e.g. instrument development, data collection and analysis).	178	2.8	11.8	10.1	12.9	18.0	27.5	16.9	4.81	1.73	4.56	5.06	
Our organization provides positive encouragement to conduct evaluation.	179	3.9	6.1	13.4	16.8	18.4	26.3	15.1	4.79	1.65	4.55	5.03	
We have a planning and operational process to initiate, evaluate, and advance our evaluation activities.	179	2.8	13.4	10.1	14.0	18.4	23.5	17.9	4.74	1.76	4.48	5.00	
We have a "champion" on staff who supports our evaluation efforts and advocates on our behalf when required.	176	8.0	11.9	11.9	11.4	13.1	26.7	17.0	4.58	1.93	4.29	4.87	
Our organization has long-term, dedicated fiscal support for our evaluation activities.	175	9.7	12.0	10.9	14.9	13.7	18.3	20.6	4.48	1.99	4.18	4.78	
We are able to easily access information about "best practices" within our field.	178	4.5	10.7	14.6	15.2	24.7	21.3	9.0	4.45	1.64	4.21	4.69	
We are rewarded for using performance information.	159	8.2	17.0	17.6	17.6	13.2	17.0	9.4	3.99	1.81	3.71	4.27	
Employees are given sufficient time to reflect on organizational successes or failures.	172	8.1	15.1	22.1	20.3	20.3	12.8	1.2	3.73	1.52	3.50	3.96	

Notes: SD= strongly disagree (1); SA= strongly agree (7)¹

Table F

Descriptive statistics on specific types of evaluation activities—government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	Response Distribution (%)							Mean	SD	95% C. I.	
		Never ¹ (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Always (7)			Lower	Upper
Produce reports for Boards of Directors and/or senior management.	172	2.9	6.4	4.7	7.0	18.6	23.8	36.6	5.50	1.66	5.25	5.75
Conduct formal program evaluations.	178	3.9	3.9	5.6	7.3	19.7	24.7	34.8	5.48	1.64	5.24	5.72
Review program documentation (e.g., participant records, case notes).	172	4.7	6.4	7.0	6.4	20.3	21.5	33.7	5.31	1.78	5.04	5.58
Use program logic models.	176	4.0	9.1	5.7	8.5	17.0	21.0	34.7	5.27	1.82	5.00	5.54
Assess the degree to which program goals/objectives are met.	174	2.3	2.9	10.9	14.9	16.1	26.4	26.4	5.25	1.58	5.02	5.48
Produce reports about program activities.	176	6.8	5.1	5.1	6.8	23.3	25.0	27.8	5.21	1.78	4.95	5.47
Engage in formal evaluation planning processes.	177	3.4	6.2	10.7	8.5	17.5	26.6	27.1	5.19	1.72	4.94	5.44
Produce annual reports based on performance measures.	168	9.5	6.5	8.3	11.9	14.3	17.3	32.1	4.95	2.01	4.65	5.25
Monitor program outcomes (i.e., ensure program results are as intended).	177	4.5	6.8	11.9	7.9	26.0	22.0	20.9	4.94	1.72	4.69	5.19
Monitor implementation (i.e., ensure that programs are delivered as intended).	175	4.6	8.6	8.6	10.3	24.0	24.6	19.4	4.92	1.73	4.66	5.18
Use a performance measurement system.	175	6.9	9.7	6.3	10.3	24.6	16.0	26.3	4.89	1.88	4.61	5.17
Use other evaluation or management systems (e.g., performance audits, results-based management, quality assurance activities) (specify)	141	9.2	5.0	5.7	14.2	22.0	21.3	22.7	4.89	1.85	4.58	5.20
Employ single-case mixed-method designs (i.e., qualitative and quantitative methods) management.	167	8.4	9.6	6.6	8.4	22.2	25.7	19.2	4.80	1.89	4.51	5.09
Use program theoretical designs (i.e., link program components to outcomes).	169	8.9	7.1	7.7	13.0	21.9	20.7	20.7	4.77	1.87	4.49	5.05
Establish performance targets (e.g., serve 200 people, 80% complete training).	162	10.5	14.2	6.2	11.1	19.8	19.8	18.5	4.49	2.01	4.18	4.80
Conduct firsthand observation of program activities.	165	10.3	9.1	9.7	17.0	23.0	16.4	14.5	4.41	1.85	4.13	4.69
Use comparative group designs (e.g., randomized control trials, quasi experimental).	165	33.9	23.6	9.7	8.5	10.3	6.7	7.3	2.87	1.97	2.57	3.17

Notes: N= Never (1); A=Always (7)¹

Table G

Descriptive statistics on conditions mediating evaluation use – government sub-sample (n=183)

<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Response Distribution</i>							<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>95% C. I.</i>	
		<i>N (1)¹</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>	<i>A (7)</i>			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Evaluations in our organization are accessible to senior management.	175	0.6	1.1	4.0	2.9	13.7	29.7	48.0	6.09	1.19	5.91	6.27
Evaluations in our organization are produced by evaluators who are perceived as credible.	167	1.2	1.2	9.0	11.4	22.2	35.3	19.8	5.37	1.34	5.17	5.57
Evaluations in our organization are informed by user input.	172	1.7	4.7	5.8	13.4	25.6	28.5	20.3	5.23	1.46	5.01	5.45
Evaluations in our organization are based on objective data.	170	0.6	1.8	8.2	18.8	22.9	31.2	16.5	5.21	1.31	5.01	5.41
Evaluations in our organization involve users throughout the evaluation process.	169	0.6	5.9	11.8	8.9	21.9	29.6	21.3	5.20	1.52	4.97	5.43
Evaluations in our organization use a methodology that is understood by users.	171	1.2	4.7	7.6	15.2	24.6	35.1	11.7	5.09	1.37	4.88	5.30
Evaluations in our organization are consistent with pre-existing plans for evaluation within the organization.	168	1.8	5.4	8.3	13.7	22.6	35.1	13.1	5.08	1.46	4.86	5.30
Evaluations in our organization provide accurate results.	169	0.6	4.1	13.0	15.4	27.2	30.2	9.5	4.93	1.35	4.73	5.13
Evaluations in our organization are perceived by users as unbiased.	158	1.3	5.1	12.0	18.4	23.4	29.7	10.1	4.87	1.42	4.65	5.09
Evaluations in our organization reduce surprises for decision makers.	161	1.9	5.6	13.0	23.6	24.8	21.1	9.9	4.67	1.44	4.45	4.89
Evaluations in our organization are owned by the users of evaluation results.	153	3.3	8.5	17.6	13.1	22.2	20.3	15.0	4.63	1.68	4.36	4.90
Evaluations in our organization foster improvement.	173	1.2	6.9	15.6	22.0	27.7	20.8	5.8	4.54	1.38	4.34	4.75
Evaluations in our organization are perceived to be appropriately resourced.	161	4.3	10.6	14.3	14.9	21.7	23.6	10.6	4.52	1.68	4.26	4.78
Evaluation in our organization can be compared against external standards or benchmarks.	163	4.3	9.8	11.0	24.5	19.0	19.6	11.7	4.50	1.64	4.25	4.75
Evaluations in our organization are high quality.	172	1.7	7.0	9.9	19.2	22.7	27.9	11.6	4.48	1.49	4.62	5.06
Evaluations in our organization respond to feedback from the users.	163	3.7	7.4	11.7	25.8	26.4	17.8	7.4	4.47	1.48	4.24	4.70
Evaluations in our organization are supported by quality assurance mechanisms (e.g. peer reviews).	164	8.5	15.2	10.4	12.2	21.3	18.9	13.4	4.33	1.89	4.04	4.62
Evaluations in our organization help users make tough decisions.	163	4.3	10.4	17.2	24.5	22.7	17.8	3.1	4.17	1.48	3.94	4.40
Evaluations in our organization are timely (linked to decision-cycle of senior decision makers).	171	2.3	13.5	24.0	18.1	18.1	15.8	8.2	4.16	1.59	3.92	4.40

Notes: N= Never (1); A=Always (7)¹

Table H

Descriptive statistics on stakeholder participation in evaluation, level of participation– government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	Response Distribution (%)							95% C. I.			
		L (1) ²	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	H(7)	Mean	SD	Lower	Upper
Program managers or directors.	176	1.1	6.8	8.0	11.4	17.0	29.0	26.7	5.30	1.58	5.07	5.53
Staff responsible for implementing the program.	175	4.0	4.6	6.9	10.9	18.9	26.3	28.6	5.29	1.67	5.04	5.54
Program developers.	165	7.3	10.3	14.5	11.5	18.8	20.0	17.6	4.55	1.87	4.26	4.84
Program sponsors or funders.	146	16.4	14.4	8.9	11.0	17.8	20.5	11.0	4.05	2.04	3.79	4.31
Intended beneficiaries of the program.	173	16.8	12.1	10.4	13.9	17.9	17.3	11.6	4.02	2.01	3.72	4.32
Special interest groups.	151	20.5	20.5	11.3	13.9	9.9	17.9	6.0	3.50	1.98	3.18	3.82

Notes: L=Low (1); H=High (7)¹

Table I

Descriptive statistics on stakeholder participation in evaluation, frequency of participation– government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	Response Distribution (%)							95% C. I.			
		N(1) ¹	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	A (7)	Mean	SD	Lower	Upper
Staff responsible for implementing the program.	171	4.7	2.9	8.8	10.5	15.8	21.6	35.7	5.37	1.73	5.11	5.63
Program managers or directors.	173	1.7	6.9	7.5	9.8	18.5	22.0	33.5	5.36	1.66	5.11	5.61
Program developers.	164	6.1	12.8	12.8	10.4	22.6	17.1	18.3	4.55	1.86	4.27	4.83
Program sponsors or funders.	142	14.1	15.5	9.9	12.0	16.9	16.9	14.8	4.12	2.04	3.78	4.46
Intended beneficiaries of the program.	170	14.1	17.1	10.6	15.3	15.3	13.5	14.1	3.98	2.01	3.68	4.28
Special interest groups.	143	20.3	25.2	13.3	7.7	13.3	9.8	10.5	3.40	2.03	3.07	3.73

Notes: N= Never (1); A=Always (7)¹

Table J

Descriptive statistics on questions that speak to stakeholder engagement – government sub-sample (n=183)

<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Response Distribution (%)</i>							<i>95% C. I.</i>			
		<i>N(1)¹</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>	<i>A (7)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Evaluations in our organization are informed by user input	172	1.7	4.7	5.8	13.4	25.6	28.5	20.3	5.23	1.46	5.01	5.45
Evaluations in our organization involve users throughout the evaluation process	169	0.6	5.9	11.8	8.9	21.9	29.6	21.3	5.20	1.52	4.97	5.43
Evaluations in our organization are owned by the users of evaluation results	153	3.3	8.5	17.6	13.1	22.2	20.3	15.0	4.63	1.68	4.36	4.90
Evaluations in our organization respond to feedback from the users	163	3.7	7.4	11.7	25.8	26.4	17.8	7.4	4.47	1.48	4.24	4.70
		<i>SD(1)²</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>	<i>SA (7)</i>				
We have opportunities for self-assessment with respect to goal attainment	181	3.3	8.8	14.4	22.1	20.4	22.7	8.3	4.49	1.56	4.26	4.72
Most problem-solving groups include staff from a variety of functional areas or divisions	161	5.0	8.1	16.8	19.9	20.5	19.3	10.6	4.43	1.64	4.18	4.68
Failures are constructively discussed in our organization	177	2.3	17.5	23.2	19.2	17.5	16.4	4.0	3.97	1.53	3.74	4.20
Employees are given sufficient time to reflect on organizational successes and failures	172	8.1	15.1	22.1	20.3	20.3	12.8	1.2	3.73	1.52	3.50	3.96

Notes: N= Never (1); A=Always (7)¹

SD= strongly disagree (1); SA= strongly agree (7)²

Table K

Descriptive statistics on use of evaluation findings— government sub-sample (n=183)

<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Response Distribution (%)</i>							<i>95% C. I.</i>			
		<i>N (1)¹</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>	<i>(5)</i>	<i>(6)</i>	<i>A (7)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>
Evaluation helps us to meet external accountability requirements.	172	4.1	2.9	4.7	7.6	12.8	30.2	37.8	5.64	1.61	5.40	5.88
Evaluation helps us to learn about program functioning.	180	2.2	4.4	5.6	6.1	20.6	27.8	33.3	5.55	1.54	5.33	5.77
Evaluation helps us to report to the board (or equivalent).	174	4.6	4.6	4.0	6.3	19.0	32.8	28.7	5.44	1.64	5.20	5.68
Evaluation helps us to make changes to existing programs.	178	3.4	7.3	6.7	14.0	22.5	28.7	17.4	5.01	1.61	4.77	5.25
Evaluation helps us to justify program existence or continuation.	178	5.6	6.7	6.7	12.9	19.1	30.9	18.0	4.98	1.72	4.73	5.23
Evaluation helps us to conduct strategic planning.	175	5.7	9.1	9.7	20.6	18.3	21.7	14.9	4.61	1.74	4.35	4.87
Evaluation helps us to get new funding.	172	7.6	5.8	16.3	19.8	19.8	21.5	9.3	4.40	1.68	4.15	4.65
Evaluation helps us to make decisions about fiscal allocations.	169	8.9	7.7	16.6	20.1	18.9	17.8	10.1	4.26	1.74	4.00	4.52
Evaluation helps us to perform outreach and public relations.	168	9.5	16.7	13.1	19.6	14.9	15.5	10.7	4.03	1.85	3.75	4.31
Evaluation helps us to make decisions about staffing.	163	12.3	25.2	14.7	17.2	12.9	11.0	6.7	3.53	1.80	3.25	3.81

Notes: N= Never (1); A=Always (7)¹

Table L

Descriptive statistics on use of evaluation process— government sub-sample (n=183)

Item	N	N (1) ¹	Response Distribution (%)							Mean	SD	95% C. I.	
			(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	A (7)	Lower			Upper	
Develop a better understanding of the program/policy/intervention being evaluated.	176	1.7	6.3	3.4	5.7	18.8	35.8	28.4	5.55	1.50	5.33	5.77	
Develop knowledge about evaluation logic.	172	3.5	5.8	4.1	5.8	25.6	34.3	20.9	5.31	1.55	5.08	5.54	
Develop knowledge about evaluation methods.	176	2.8	6.3	5.1	6.8	26.7	31.8	20.5	5.26	1.54	5.03	5.49	
Develop technical skills for doing evaluation (e.g., instrument development, data collection, analysis).	177	3.4	4.0	7.3	14.1	25.4	27.7	18.1	5.10	1.53	4.87	5.33	
Foster a shared understanding of organizational functioning.	172	3.5	5.8	9.3	15.1	21.5	27.9	16.9	4.97	1.60	4.73	5.21	
Integrate evaluation into our work practices.	172	2.9	7.6	15.1	14.5	24.4	22.7	12.8	4.69	1.60	4.45	4.93	
Appreciate the value of evaluation	172	1.2	10.5	9.3	21.5	23.8	22.7	11.0	4.69	1.52	4.46	4.92	
Increase ownership of what we do.	167	2.4	10.2	13.8	15.6	29.3	20.4	8.4	4.54	1.53	4.31	4.77	
Increase commitment to the program/policy/intervention being evaluated.	164	4.9	7.3	12.2	20.1	26.2	22.0	7.3	4.51	1.55	4.27	4.75	
Develop a mindset of evaluative thinking.	172	5.2	9.9	14.5	16.3	22.7	22.1	9.3	4.45	1.67	4.20	4.70	
Appreciate the power of evaluation as a force for change.	168	1.8	13.7	17.3	17.3	20.2	19.0	10.7	4.40	1.63	4.15	4.65	
Question underlying assumptions about what we do.	169	3.6	16.0	9.5	13.6	28.4	24.3	4.7	4.39	1.61	4.15	4.63	
Expand the use of evaluation findings.	168	4.8	11.3	12.5	18.5	28.0	18.5	6.5	4.35	1.58	4.11	4.59	
Improve management practices.	166	4.2	10.2	14.5	24.1	20.5	21.7	4.8	4.31	1.54	4.08	4.54	
Develop professional networks.	172	8.1	14.0	10.5	15.7	17.4	26.2	8.1	4.31	1.81	4.04	4.58	
Expedite the use of evaluation findings.	170	4.7	12.9	14.1	20.0	22.4	17.6	8.2	4.28	1.64	4.03	4.53	
Increase organizational commitment.	163	4.9	11.0	16.0	22.1	21.5	17.8	6.7	4.25	1.59	4.01	4.49	

Notes: N= Never (1); A=Always (7)¹0