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Implementation Evaluation of the Reserve Land and Environment Management Program

June 18, 2009

Evaluation, Performance Measurement,
and Review Branch
Audit and Evaluation Sector

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List of Acronyms

CP: Certificate of Possession

FN: First Nation

FNLMA: First Nations Land Management Act

FNOGMMMA: First Nations Oil and Gas and Moneys Management Act

GIS: Geographic Information System

GPS: Global Positioning System

INAC: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

LMTP: Land management training program

NALMA: National Aboriginal Land Managers Association

RLAP: Regional Land Administration Program

RCAP: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

RLEMP: Reserve Land and Environment Management Program

RMAF: Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework

Executive Summary

This document presents an evaluation of the Reserve Land and Environment Management Program (RLEMP). The objective of the evaluation is to provide an implementation evaluation of the RLEMP Pilot project¹ which will assist INAC in strategic program planning and analysis related to land management in the future.

The RLEMP includes a professional land management training and certification program that prepares selected First Nations (FNs) for their new roles and responsibilities under a broader scope of land, resources and environmental management. It also provides contribution agreements to help support land management activities in selected communities, including some of the administrative work involved in land transactions.

The evaluation assessed Program rationale/relevance, design and delivery, results and success as well as alternatives to improve the cost-effectiveness. The evaluation covers the Program activities beginning in April 2005 and ending in March 2008. A document review, key informant interviews (n=40) and case studies of communities (n=7) were conducted to evaluate the program.

Conclusions

Rationale/relevance

Overall, there is strong evidence indicating a need for a Program such as RLEMP. Findings indicate that the RLEMP rationale is consistent with INAC's priorities related to land management, with Gathering Strength (1998) and the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). There is a shared vision between FNs and INAC on the need to support FNs in their efforts to better manage their lands with less INAC assistance. RLEMP is seen as a stepping stone preparing FNs for the next step in land management towards the First Nations Land Management Act (FNLMA). Many FN communities have economic development opportunities and environmental issues to address, and land management is a key enabler to these. There is a need for training for FN land managers as they take on new responsibilities in the area of land management. Although there are other training programs on land management offered by some colleges, there are no other similar national programs to RLEMP.

¹ A Pilot of RLEMP began in June 2005 with the initial participation of 16 First Nations and is the object of this evaluation.

Design and Delivery

Evaluation findings indicate that the Program has had some success in providing training opportunities for land managers, although training participants as well as many INAC and training institution representatives acknowledged that the Program needs to be more practical and aligned to the particular needs of each community. Participants have varied experiences with land management as well as diverse educational backgrounds. As such, some have had more difficulties than others coping with the course requirements. Some participants lack the necessary support from their band administration and have difficulties meeting the course time and effort requirements.

Many of the Program's challenges derive from gaps in planning and communication. Program parameters and training requirements are not well understood by land managers, band leaders or INAC regional staff. The roles and responsibilities between the various players (i.e., INAC HQ, INAC regions and FN communities) require clarification. Time spent at the beginning of each fiscal year securing funding is considerable, taking away from time that might be better spent on program planning.

Finally, the funding formula is not well understood nor seen by any respondent group as realistically addressing the needs that FNs have to complete the transition to FNLMA.

Success

The evaluation found that the results of the Program are uneven across communities. RLEMP training was found to be most useful for some participants (and their communities) in that it broadened their perspective of land-management to include consideration for environmental issues and long-term planning. In particular, RLEMP courses facilitated the development of skills in business case preparation and planning. Also notable was that the Program provided excellent networking opportunities for which the benefits have continued long after training. Many communities are finding they are able to conduct more work in-house and save money, as a result.

While there have been some measurable results of the RLEMP training, the full extent of intended impacts due to this training have yet to be realized. Most communities continue to be dependent upon INAC for assistance in completing the templates for land transactions. As well, the evaluation found that Program monitoring is lacking and requires significant improvements to allow for better reporting on Program performance.

Cost Effectiveness, Factors Influencing Success and Duplication

The evaluation found that, despite extensive costs to the federal government due to the centralized, high-end approach of the training, RLEMP remains a worthwhile investment. Alternative approaches to Program design and delivery are being explored and require further investigation. These include a mixed training delivery model to accommodate land managers who are new as a result of turnover in participating communities, as well as land managers

whose capacities are evolving with experience, and the next generation of training participants. Distance learning mechanisms and a more decentralized approach were identified as having the potential to cut costs, although training quality and networking opportunities could be compromised. Recognition of previous training credits could reduce costs. Accommodation costs could be reduced by using university residences in the spring/summer months.

Recommendations

Overall, the evaluation found that there is a real need for RLEMP and that the Pilot should progress to a fully expanded program. However, given the uneven impacts and the many design and delivery factors affecting the Program's effectiveness, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Improve Program Planning, Design and Communications. A number of issues need to be addressed in the planning and organization of the Program to allow for improved Program results. Specifically, the vision of RLEMP as an important intermediate step toward the FNLMA requires greater clarification and reinforcement with all stakeholders. A gap analysis between communities' land management training needs and RLEMP training is needed to support improvements to Program design. Adjustments to training design that are more responsive to the particular needs of communities (as established through the gap-analysis) will lead to improved Program delivery. Included in this redesign is the need for INAC to review RLEMP's funding formula to ensure that the Program is addressing needs appropriately among participating communities. Finally, the relative roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, including INAC HQ and regional staff, as well as community leaders and land managers, require clarification. Overall, Program communications need improvement to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of and understand the key elements of the Program and their involvement in a timely manner.

2. Up-date Training Model and Implement Program Monitoring. RLEMP's training model requires updating as per the revised Program design. The analysis of the training needs will lead to improvements in the content and delivery of training. The evaluation findings point to various delivery options and improvement areas that can be considered as potential alternatives. A more cost-effective model should be implemented, which could include a mixed training delivery model to accommodate the both the next generation of training participants, as well as land managers who are new as a result of turnover in participating communities. A Program performance monitoring and reporting system to monitor and report on results needs to be implemented and will require alignment with Program redesign.

3. Ensure Sustainable Funding for RLEMP. There is solid evidence to suggest that RLEMP's rationale and continued relevance is significant. It is recommended that funding for RLEMP be sustained. Specifically, multi-year funding would ensure Program stability and allow for long-term planning by both INAC officials and FNs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of and adjustments in RLEMP's funding formula is necessary as part of this redesign to ensure the Program is addressing needs equitably among participating communities. 	<p>HQ, the National Aboriginal Land Managers Association and the University of Saskatchewan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training needs for individual First Nations will fluctuate based on staff turnover and changes in land use activities on reserve. The option of offering training electives has been explored with participating First Nations. The development of these electives will be based on the availability of funding. 	<p>Director, FNLM</p>	<p>March 2010</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, including INAC HQ and regional staff, as well as community leaders and land managers, require clarification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The First Nations Land Management (FNLM) Directorate will continue working with participating First Nations to identify possible adjustments to the current funding formula. The KPMG Cost Benefit Analysis of land management activities will provide important information for assessing different funding options and the true costs of land management on reserve. 	<p>Director, FNLM</p>	<p>December 2009</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roles and 	<p>Director, FNLM</p>	<p>March 31, 2010</p>

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	monitoring and communication requirements.		
3. Based upon the significant evidence that supports RLEMP's rationale and continued relevance, it is recommended that funding for RLEMP be sustained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically, multi-year funding would ensure Program stability and allow for long-term planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FNLM Directorate will be seeking multi-year funding to implement RLEMP as a full program and thereby ensuring program stability to allow for long term planning. 	Director, FNLM	March 31, 2010

I approve the above Management Response and Action Plan

 Sara Filbee
 Assistant Deputy Minister

Date: _____

The Management Response and Action Plan for the Evaluation of the Reserve Land and Environment Management Program were approved by the Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Committee on June 2, 2009.

1. Introduction

The objective of the evaluation is to provide an implementation evaluation of the RLEMP Pilot project which will assist INAC in strategic program planning and analysis related to land management in the future.

1.1 Program Profile

INAC is the main department responsible for meeting the federal government's constitutional, political and legal responsibilities on reserves and in the North. In recent years, the department has undertaken to support First Nations (FNs) governance over land, resources and the environment through legislative and regulatory development, implementation of sectoral governance initiatives such as those pursuant to the First Nations Land Management Act (FNLMA) and the First Nations Oil and Gas and Moneys Management Act (FNOGMMA), and the development of professional and institutional governance capacities.

In 2002, INAC conducted a comprehensive review of the existing Indian Act-based land management programs, RLAP and 53/60. This study outlined the transaction-based and restrictive nature of the programs and concluded that these programs did not meet the needs of INAC or FNs. The transformation of the RLAP and 53/60 programs to RLEMP represents:

- A transition from a funding program focused on land administration to a FN capacity-building program focused on integrated land and environmental management; and,
- A shift from the traditional departmental "operational" role to an advisory and monitoring role.

The RLEMP was designed to focus on modern management practices, including a broader scope of land management responsibilities, a revised funding formula, and an improved training program. As well, the Program was designed to encourage FN communities to develop and sustain land use planning, environmental and compliance management expertise. The original RLEMP objectives were to:

- Strengthen FN governance and improved accountability;
- Provide an integrated training approach with capacity development mechanisms and institutional support and development;
- Increase involvement of FNs in the full scope of land management activities with regional offices assuming a more advisory and monitoring role;
- Provide opportunities for alignment with FNLMA, treaty processes and self-government;
- Provide financial sustainability and linkages between funding scope of activities and results; and,

- Integrate land use planning.

The RLEMP includes a professional land management training and certification program that prepares FNs for their new roles and responsibilities under a broader scope of land, resources and environmental management. The training program builds FN expertise through a two-pronged approach that includes both post-secondary and technical training components. The first, currently being delivered by the University of Saskatchewan, includes general courses on legal systems, natural resources management and environmental studies. The second portion, currently delivered by the National Aboriginal Land Managers Association (NALMA), includes specific training on the technical elements of managing land under the Indian Act.

The following are examples of the RLEMP post-secondary curriculum:

- **Introduction to Legal Concepts in Resource Management:** - An overview of historical and current land systems used in Canada and the development and impact of legislation on First Nations.
- **Environmental Studies I Economics and Law:** An introduction to basic biophysical and economic theory underlying natural resource management.
- **Legal Process and Instruments in Resource Management** - A study of real property law as it affects First Nation reserves including ways of holding property, property transfer, property rights, taxation and property responsibility and obligations.

Examples of RLEMP technical training components are as follows:

- **Fundamentals** - An introduction to the concepts of land use planning and sustainable development as well as mapping, legal surveys, property management and compliance strategies.
- **Collective and Individual Interests** – Provides students with comprehensive knowledge regarding the rights, interests and instruments connected with land tenure, Indian Land Registry: tools and systems, collective interests, individual interests and estates.
- **Leasing** - Provides students with the knowledge and skills required to initiate and implement a lease on reserve lands as required under the *Indian Act*.
- **Permits** – Provides students with the advanced skills and knowledge required to complete a permit on reserve lands as required under the *Indian Act*.

RLEMP Program funding is provided to FNs through funding arrangements which establish a certain relationship between the department and the FNs recipients by transferring varying degrees of authority to the FNs (annual or multi-annual). The program is delivered through the combined efforts of INAC headquarters, INAC regional offices, FNs, Tribal Councils, various First Nations and non-First Nation associations, organizations and specialists.

The logic model contained in the 2004 RMAF is found in Appendix A of this report.

Level of Funding, Roles and Responsibilities

The amount of RLEMP-related funding to be provided to each FN depends upon the “RLEMP Level” assessed. Three levels are expected in terms of FN involvement and capacity in lands and environment management:

- Level One (Entry) is the entry level where base funding is to be provided to support job training to develop a land manager within the FN.
- Level Two (Operational) includes increased funding and is tied to having a trained land manager fulfilling the lands and environment management function for the FN.
- Level Three (Delegated Management) includes increased funding, and is tied to having a trained land manager, and requires a “full blown” lands and environment management by the FN.

The level of funding is also based on the following components:

- Volume of land management transactions (registered in Indian Lands Registry System);
- Band population;
- Area of reserve;
- Quantity of individual land holdings;
- Land use, environmental and compliance activities; and,
- Base funding for operational and management costs.

Additional funding is provided for additional responsibilities, including the development of land use plans, Community Environmental Sustainability Plans (CESP) and compliance frameworks.

The assessment of each FN’s “RLEMP level” was to be based on pre-defined assessment criteria (still under development) and a three stage assessment process, as follows:

- Self assessment by each FN;
- Assessment by the relevant INAC region; and,
- Negotiation of an appropriate level based on the two assessments.

Key FNs responsibilities set out in the funding arrangements include:

- Employment of an appropriately qualified land manager as per the FN assessed level;
- Education/training of the FN land manager in accordance with the FN workplan (annex to the funding arrangement) to move to the next level of lands and environment management;
- Fiscally responsible management of RLEMP funding for the land and environment management purposes intended;
- Use of INAC HQ provided systems, tools, templates and other support for lands and environment management;
- Preparation and submission of reporting requirements detailed in each funding arrangement; and,
- The specific responsibilities related to each of the five lands and environment management areas.

INAC regions delivery responsibilities include:

- Assessment of the RLEMP Level for each FN;
- Allocation of RLEMP resources to FNs based on the RLEMP funding formula;
- Negotiation and approval of RLEMP portion of funding arrangements with FNs;
- Providing advice to FNs on development and implementation of a workplan (which will be attached to the funding arrangement) to move along the RLEMP Level continuum;
- Support and advice to FNs, on an as required basis, on issues and approaches related to lands and environment management;
- Review and approval of transactions for which FNs do not have the delegated authority;
- Co-ordination of reporting between FNs, the region and the Indian Lands Registry;
- Monitoring compliance with the RLEMP-related terms and conditions of the funding arrangements with FNs;
- Collection and review of RLEMP-related performance information reported by FNs; and,
- In conjunction with INAC Headquarters, analysis of the performance information submitted by FNs, identification of the implications of the information on the RLEMP Program, and as required, modifications of program policy and or delivery.

INAC headquarters (primarily Lands and Environment Directorate), is responsible for:

- Policy development;
- Development of procedures, tools, templates and systems in support of lands and environment management;
- Development of minimum program standards and national criteria;
- Acquisition and allocation of resources to regions;
- Development of reporting requirements; and,
- Management of program data and performance measurement.

Pilot

In June 2005, 16 FNs began to Pilot a portion of the RLEMP training delivered by the National Aboriginal Land Managers Association (NALMA). A total of 52 FNs are participating in RLEMP, currently. The training program has also been leveraged by FNs at the operational and developmental phase under the First Nation Lands Management Act (FNLMA). This has resulted in a total of 77 FNs completing training delivered by the University of Saskatchewan and/or NALMA. In 2007-2008, the G&Cs budget for RLEMP was \$11.5 million. Approximately \$2.4 million was for training and \$9.2 million was invested in FN communities for lands management.

2. Evaluation Methodology

This section presents the objectives of the evaluation and guiding evaluation issues. It also describes the methodological approach and its strengths and weaknesses.

2.1 Evaluation Objectives and Scope

The objective of the study was to provide an implementation evaluation of the RLEMP Pilot project to assist the First Nation Land Management Directorate in strategic program planning and analysis related to land management in the future. The Directorate is required to document existing and emerging challenges, as well as the initial successes and perceived benefits of various aspects of RLEMP.

The evaluation covers the program activities beginning in April 2005 and ending in March 2008. The following expenditures were made during this time frame: \$13.7M. The fieldwork was conducted between October 2008 and January 2009.

2.2 Evaluation Issues

The following issues guided the evaluation:

A. Rationale/Relevance

1. Does the RLEMP fill a need or gap in terms of successfully implementing First Nation Land management regimes?
2. Is the RLEMP consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities?
3. Does the RLEMP complement, duplicate or overlap other federal government land management initiatives?

B. Results and Success

4. Does the training sufficiently provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the roles and responsibilities of RLEMP? (i.e. able to complete appropriate templates, INAC standard documents, follow appropriate INAC processes from initial document development stage to execution and registration of document)

Have there been any impacts (both positive and negative) as a result of the Professional Land Management Certification training (University and Technical)?

5. What outcomes or impacts have resulted due to the RLEMP in the following areas:
 - a. Improved coordination and information sharing among FNs and their delivery partners?
 - b. Improved partnership with FNs and FN institutions?

- c. Increased access by FNs to more appropriate lands and environment management professional development?
- d. Increased and/or maintained FNs capacity in lands and environment management?
- e. Increased FNs involvement in reserve lands and environment management and/or reduced INAC involvement?
- f. Modernized reserve lands and environment administration and management?
- g. Other impacts?

6. What are the main factors that have affected the success of the initiative (both positively and negatively)? Are there any barriers or issues foreseen or encountered at this time that will/may (or has) impede(d) the progress or success of the RLEMP?

7. Have there been any unintended impacts (either positive or negative) as a result of RLEMP?

C. Cost - Effectiveness

8. Are there more cost-effective ways to deliver RLEMP and the RLEMP training that might achieve similar objectives and results? E.g. delivery approaches, management structures, HQ/regional interfaces, etc.

D. Design and Delivery

9. To what extent has the RLEMP Pilot project communication package contributed to the FNs having the understanding/knowledge of “What RLEMP is” in order to make an informed decision concerning participating in the Pilot? If not, what additional information is required?

10. Are the needs assessments and program planning strategies appropriate? (i.e. communication and marketing strategies)

11. To what extent has assistance been provided for the transition from the previous INAC land management programs (i.e. RLAP and 53/60 Delegated Authority programs) into RLEMP? By Whom? (Regions, Headquarters, Other FNs, FN organizations).

12. Are the roles and responsibilities within the overall program (RLEMP) structure clear and appropriate including:

- a. FN roles
- b. INAC Headquarters roles
- c. INAC Regions roles
- d. University of Saskatchewan roles
- e. National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association roles

13. To what extent does the RLEMP funding formula better reflect the activities and deliverables within land management (as compared with the previous Indian Act land management programs – RLAP and 53/60).

14. Are the expectations, commitment and time factors for the training clearly understood by both the student and their employer (First Nation) prior to entering the training? If not, why?

15. To what extent is the process for requesting participation in the Professional Land Management Certification program (University and technical training) working?

16. Are the management processes and procedures for monitoring and reporting on capacity assessments and other funded management activities appropriate?

E. Lessons Learned

17. What lessons can be learned from RLEMP?

2.3 Approach

The following methodologies and sources of information were used to gather the evaluation evidence.

Document Review

A document and literature review was conducted in the various phases of this evaluation. Initially, documents were reviewed to design the methodological approach of the evaluation. Additional documents and literature were reviewed to gather evaluation evidence, especially to assess the program rationale and program delivery. Sources reviewed included:

- RLEMP RMAF March 2004
- RLEMP RBAF March 2004
- 2002 RLAP and 53/60 Evaluation
- RLEMP Manual and toolkit
- RLEMP funding formula
- RLAP funding formula
- RLEMP Communication package
- RLEMP Tracking Database
- NALMA training package
- University of Saskatchewan Orientation presentation
- NALMA Orientation presentation
- Key correspondence with FN participants
- Testimonials
- Letters of complaint
- Budgets – Training Delivery
- Budget Analysis from University of Saskatchewan and NALMA
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996)

- Gathering Strength – Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan (1998)
- INAC Report on Plans and Priorities (2008-2009)

Key Informant Interviews

In-depth key informant interviews were conducted to obtain facts, explanations, examples and views on various issues and were a key source of evidence. The following interviews were conducted:

- INAC HQ staff (n=4)
- INAC regional staff (n=6)
- Land managers and other FN administrators (n=20)
- Instructors and Training institution representatives (n=10)

Most interviews were conducted over the phone, except for those with respondents located in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Some interviews were conducted in person during the conduct of case studies. In most cases, the respondents received the interview guide in advance.

Community Case Studies

Many other individuals were interviewed as part of case studies. Seven case studies were conducted to obtain more in-depth information of the impacts of the program, as well as contextual factors, barriers, best practices, etc.

The case studies were based on two-day site visits involving interviews and meetings with the land manager and other community representatives (with the exception of one case study that was conducted by phone by request of the FN). Regional staff were also interviewed as part of some case studies. All case studies are supported by documentation beyond the interviews, including Website information about the communities.

The case study selection was made in consultation with INAC-HQ and regional staff. The selection was not random: it was made to obtain a mix of successful and less successful cases to obtain a qualitative representation of the communities involved in the program.

2.4 Strengths and Limitations of Approach

A key strength of the study is that more than half of the 52 communities that participated in the RLEMP Pilot were represented in the data collection (i.e. 20 key informant interviews with FN land managers and seven case studies).

A limitation of the evaluation is the lack of quantitative information with regard to potential impacts. While the case studies provide evidence-based information to some level of detail, no quantitative information was collected in a systematic fashion, or inferred through assumptions.

A comparison exercise could have been attempted, but it would have been very difficult to build a sizeable comparable group of communities, considering (1) the heterogeneous population of communities participating in the Pilot, and (2) that the ones “most ready” were selected for the Pilot (versus a random selection).

As this is an implementation evaluation, a quantitative measurement of the impacts, with or without a comparison group, was not considered crucial for the purposes of this evaluation. The evaluation confirmed that it was also too early to measure the full extent of the impacts of RLEMP (the Pilot has only been active for three years, the first cohort of graduates having graduated two years ago). Immediate impacts of RLEMP, however, were measured and evidence to support the extent to which RLEMP is achieving results is outlined in the following section of this report.

3. Evaluation Findings - Rationale/Relevance

1. Does the RLEMP fill a need or gap in terms of successfully implementing First Nation Land management regimes?
2. Is the RLEMP consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities?
3. Does the RLEMP complement, duplicate or overlap other federal government land management initiatives?

3.1 Overview

The evaluation found that, overall, RLEMP continues to be relevant and that RLEMP's rationale is consistent with INAC's priorities related to land management. The Program's rationale is also consistent with *Gathering Strength* (1998) and the recommendations of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996). There is a shared vision between INAC and FNs on the need to support FNs in their efforts to better manage their lands with less INAC assistance. RLEMP is seen as a stepping stone in preparing FNs for the new land management regime, FNLMA. Many FN communities have economic development opportunities that involve land management and there are issues to address regarding the environment. As land management is viewed as a key enabler of economic development, there is solid evidence indicating the need for training for FN land managers as they take on new responsibilities in the area of land management.

No other programs duplicate the work of RLEMP. There are other land management training programs in selected post-secondary institutions, but they lack the depth of the RLEMP training. Informal training (i.e., mentoring) is provided by some INAC regional offices.

3.2 Findings

RLEMP is consistent with departmental and overall government priorities. Evidence includes the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) 1996 report, which recognized the inherent right of Aboriginal Nations to self-governance and of the responsibility of the Canadian Government in assisting them in this process. Following the RCAP report, the federal government published *Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* (1998), which proposed a number of measures to build FN capacities and facilitate a transition towards self-governance. As argued in the Royal Commission report, Aboriginal Nations need the right tools to build governance capacity, and the federal government has the obligation to help them in this process. In this endeavour, the federal government proposed multiple strategies of actions among which is the development and establishment of programs to enhance Aboriginal Nations authority over reserve land management. To achieve this, *Gathering Strength* proposed to implement initiatives to provide accredited professional development programs in land management, and to support an accelerated transfer of land management to Aboriginal Nations.

According to the federal government, economic development and reinforced governance capacity will be the outcome of those initiatives.

A decade later, *Gathering Strength's* core objective of attaining self-governance for Aboriginal Nations remains central to INAC's plans and priorities. In its *Report on Plans and Priorities* for 2008-2009, INAC reiterated its support to those FNs who are ready and willing to move towards self-governance. RLEMP is viewed as a stepping-stone towards FNLMA, and toward the broader goal of self-governance.

According to the 2007 management review of the training component of the RLEMP Pilot, the RLEMP training program objectives were relevant then, as they continue to be today. Results indicated that there were extensive training needs for land managers to ensure that they develop the required knowledge related to the Indian Act, as well as a range of skills and competencies related to community management, economic development, policy development, environment and natural resource expertise, land use planning, and technical skills including the utilization of General Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

Evidence collected in the current implementation evaluation clearly demonstrates that RLEMP remains relevant and that there continues to be a need for this Program. FNs have a general desire to move towards self-governance, including in the area of land management. RLEMP constitutes an important step in the land management continuum, moving from RLAP to RLEMP, and eventually to FNLMA. The evaluation found that RLEMP, while needing to address some key design and delivery issues, has the potential to build capacity amongst FNs and to facilitate their moving toward this new land management regime.

At a more practical level, the evaluation found that there is a need to better manage FN land by decentralizing the administrative process for land transactions (commercial leases in particular), which involves consultations, land surveys, utility reviews, environmental assessments and approvals. Evidence suggests that FNs are better capable of establishing their own priorities and making the process more efficient by completing some of the paper work. Training to develop skills and competencies in these business administration areas is essential, as well as in the area of addressing environmental issues.

The evaluation identified the following immediate land issues and economic development opportunities that need attention and that RLEMP can help FNs address:

- High volume of transactions in most communities (some have a significant backlog of transactions ranging from residential to commercial); transactions involve environmental assessments and communities are trying to build capacity to manage these land projects that raise environmental issues, including the land for waste materials.
- Land disputes require attention.
- Development of urban plans and commercial zoning: including community consultations, appraisals, land surveys and land transactions.

All of the above tasks are coordinated by land managers (or other managers), and there is a need to help communities develop and retain local land management services. Some communities are aiming for FNMLA status and evidence suggests that RLEMP will help communities achieve this goal more quickly, than if there was no such program.

Further evidence suggests that RLEMP training is relevant in that it is meeting a number of pressing land management needs, as follows:

- Although many participants have fairly detailed knowledge of the specific areas they deal with, they lack a broad understanding of wider issues that affect land management. The evaluation has found that RLEMP is addressing the need for land managers to understand the broader framework for land management.
- There is a real need by FNs to learn about legislation, regulations and policies associated with natural resources and land development issues specific to reserves. RLEMP is addressing this need to increase community awareness of potential environmental issues.
- FN land managers lack skills in specific areas such as finance (e.g., reading and producing financial statements) and applied science. RLEMP has the potential to further address this need.
- Land managers deal with many businesses. They require training to understand business planning and administration concepts. While FN managers know and understand their particular contexts, RLEMP is facilitating the development of FN business administration capacity.

Overall, the evaluation found that RLEMP is viewed as a building block that facilitates the transition from RLAP to RLEMP, while providing FNs with incentives to take on a broader scope of responsibilities. Evidence suggests that RLEMP does not duplicate or overlap with other federal government land management initiatives. While there are other land management courses offered in some community colleges, none are national in scope and none are comparable to RLEMP, covering only general principles of land and environment management. RLEMP is unique in that it covers the technical administrative aspects of land transactions.

There could be some overlap with INAC's economic development funding for community land use planning and some band funding could be used by communities for land management through their general budgets. Neither would likely achieve the potential impacts of RLEMP.

4. Evaluation Findings – Design and Delivery

9. To what extent has the RLEMP Pilot project communication package contributed to the First Nation having the understanding/knowledge of “What RLEMP is” in order to make an informed decision concerning participating in the Pilot? If not, what additional information is required?

10. Are the needs assessments and program planning strategies appropriate? (i.e. communication and marketing strategies)

11. To what extent has assistance been provided for the transition from the previous INAC land management programs (i.e. RLAP and 53/60 Delegated Authority programs) into RLEMP? By Whom? (Regions, Headquarters, Other First Nations, First Nation organizations).

12. Are the roles and responsibilities within the overall program (RLEMP) structure clear and appropriate including:

- a. First Nation roles
- b. INAC Headquarters roles
- c. INAC Regions roles
- d. University of Saskatchewan roles
- e. National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association roles

13. To what extent does the RLEMP funding formula better reflect the activities and deliverables within land management (as compared with the previous Indian Act land management programs – RLAP and 53/60).

14. Are the expectations, commitment and time factors for the training clearly understood by both the student and their employer (First Nation) prior to entering the training? If not, why?

15. To what extent is the process for requesting participation in the Professional Land Management Certification program (University and technical training) working?

16. Are the management processes and procedures for monitoring and reporting on capacity assessments and other funded management activities appropriate?

4.1 Overview

The management review (2007) of the training component of the RLEMP Pilot found that the delivery and content of the post-secondary and technical components of the RLEMP training were satisfactory. However, there were challenges and barriers associated with the design and delivery of the Pilot. Specifically, the 2007 management review identified the following challenges and barriers to RLEMP's success: (1) issues with time pressure and workload for participants, (2) a need for customization and tailoring of the program to reflect the diverse backgrounds of participants, (3) delays in funding and approval, (4) excess in demands, and (5) the staff and leadership turnover of communities.

The evaluation has found that the Program was generally successful in providing training opportunities for land managers, many of which were satisfied with the delivery and content of the training. However, most of the training participants, as well as many INAC and training institution representatives, indicated that more work is required to ensure that courses are more practical and adapted to the particular needs of training participants. Participants arrive at the courses with very different backgrounds, both in terms of land management experience and in terms of level of education. As a result, some have more difficulties coping with the course requirements than others. In addition, some participants lack the support from their band administration, which is necessary to meet the course time and effort requirements.

Many of the issues that both this evaluation and the management review identified are rooted in gaps in Program planning and communication. Specifically, Program managers spend considerable time at the beginning of each fiscal year accessing the necessary resources to operate the Program, which is time that might be better spent focusing on program planning. It has been suggested that a multi-year program funding arrangement might enable Program managers to address most of the delivery issues through better planning.

There is an overall lack of awareness by stakeholders (i.e., land managers, band leaders and INAC regional staff) of Program parameters and training requirements. The roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders require further clarification.

Finally, the funding formula is not well understood nor is it viewed (by any stakeholder group) as realistically addressing the needs that FNs have to complete the transition to FNLMA.

4.2 Findings

Roles and Responsibilities

The evaluation has found that there is lack of clarity surrounding the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved. While many key informants are generally clear on INAC

roles (HQ and Regional), others do not have this same level of understanding, in particular of the differing roles between INAC land managers and FN land managers.

There are concerns by some FN participants that regional INAC officials are not as available to help answer questions as they might be. Key informants indicated that workload and a lack of knowledge and understanding of RLEMP due to staff turnover are likely contributors to this perceived lack of availability. Evidence indicates that other factors contributing to this lack of clarity and understanding is the stage at which participants are at in the process and the degree to which there has been turnover in land management staffing in participating FN communities. All these factors combined are contributing to the communication gaps between INAC and FN communities.

There is also confusion around the differences between previous programs (e.g., 53/60) and RLEMP. In particular, the new tasks involved in RLEMP for which participants are responsible are creating some challenges. For example, the new requirements under RLEMP for lease transactions are not well understood.

The evaluation found that the roles and responsibilities of training institutions to deliver meaningful courses are well understood. Key informants applaud INAC efforts to work with training institutions to develop and improve upon the training competencies of graduates. Overall, there is solid evidence to suggest that much progress has been made in Program design and delivery throughout its evolution.

Communications

There is some evidence to suggest that last minute communications from INAC to FN communities regarding the status of their potential participation in RLEMP has created problems for some participants. In a few instances, communities learned that they were selected for the Pilot only a few days prior to training, making community consultations and a Band Council Resolution (BCR) effectively impossible. Communications at the community level are key to ensuring buy-in throughout the process (i.e., the political will to fully participate). Elders and new band councils could delay implementation of land management activities if the rationale for RLEMP is misunderstood and the implications for band participation are unclear. Key informants suggested that training materials and brochures be developed for councilors, community members (e.g., especially elders), to explain land management principles and requirements.

The evaluation found that eligibility requirements and the selection process were also unclear for many participants. There continues to be confusion among both FNs and INAC regional officials about how bands/communities are chosen to participate. As well, there are concerns about the unknown consequences of participation in RLEMP. Evidence suggests that the implications of carrying out fiduciary obligations under the Indian Act remain unclear to

participants/communities and, therefore, this raises concerns regarding the capacity of the community to fulfill RLEMP requirements. Confusion is exacerbated as funds continue to flow through RLAP, as well as RLEMP. It was suggested that a presentation to the community to explain why they were chosen and what is expected of them could help to alleviate some of these concerns.

The evaluation found that while training institutions are providing students with all the necessary information about RLEMP (e.g., through a handbook and introductory information session), there remains confusion among many participants and their communities about what is funded and what kind of a time commitment is required.

Planning

The evaluation assessed the extent to which the planning activities for RLEMP have been appropriate. Overall, it appears that a lack of stable funding for RLEMP has prevented INAC from conducting yearly planning in a timely fashion, and that this has had considerable impacts on the Program's activities. Program managers spend considerable time assembling the necessary resources for the Program at fiscal year-end, when they should be conducting planning activities.

Evidence indicates that Program managers are challenged by bureaucratic and funding cycle obstacles that have led to on again/off again projects and last minute offers to participate in training. It has been suggested that a multi-year program funding arrangement, through the Program's own terms and conditions, would enable managers to address most of the design and delivery and communications issues through better planning.

The evaluation found that most INAC regional officials' awareness of overall planning is limited. On the other hand, training institutions are quite involved in planning activities and are well-consulted by INAC-HQ, continuing to collaborate with key partners to review needs. Evidence indicates that training institutions are responsive to changing conditions and are making ongoing efforts to adapt their strategies, such as hiring subject expert teaching assistants.

Transition Assistance

Evidence is uneven regarding transitional funding. While some key informants were grateful for funding that helped make the transition into RLEMP status, others suggested that the funds were inadequate. While some FNs acknowledged that there had been help with transition through funding and support from regional officials, most indicated a lack of funds, guidance and advice. Requests by FNs for information from regions went unanswered in many cases. In particular, leases are proving to be a major concern and INAC's template, which was to be adapted by each community, has been found to be too broad. There seems to have been a lack of departmental resources for extensive support during the transition period. INAC regional officials acknowledge they lack capacity and are unable to provide the time needed to support training to FNs.

RLEMP Funding Formula

The funding formula for FN communities participating in RLEMP is based on transaction activities, and extra funding is awarded to FN communities that have an environment plan, a land use plan, or a reporting framework. The evaluation has found that the funding formula is not well understood. As well, evidence indicates that the funding formula is not addressing the needs of FNs who have demonstrated an interest in completing their transition to FNLMA. For example, the creation of a land use plan involves a steep learning curve and requires time and experience to master skills in such areas as by-laws, zoning, surveys and community agreement.

The funding formula favors lease over permit activities, while land holding transactions are not recognized at all. In this context, some communities are receiving less funding under RLEMP than they did under RLAP. Some communities do not have leases or commercial development. The formula does not recognize the length of time it may take to get a transaction finalized. For example, band surveys for agreement or environmental issues may significantly delay progress and the band must assume the costs.

The evaluation also found that often the funds are not sufficient for the services that FNs are asked to provide (e.g., hiring consultants, GIS and mapping, and managing environmental issues). The level of funding limits some communities from assuming new lands management responsibilities. There is much evidence to indicate that more transitional support for such things as community consultation, environmental planning, and extended general knowledge and guidance from INAC is needed to prepare FNs for their evolving roles in land management.

Training Delivery

The training component of RLEMP constitutes a major activity of the Program. The delivery of the training component was assessed as part of this evaluation (i.e., community/trainee selection process, the training workload, and the adequacy of training).

Eligibility of candidates for training continues to be of concern. The evaluation found that there is a wide diversity of readiness for training among participants. Evidence supports the need for a preliminary assessment of training readiness of each participant. This could include the completion of a capacity assessment form and/or an interview to clarify expectations (e.g., in terms of the content covered), as well as the work and time commitment required.

The evaluation found that the training selection and recruitment process was not clear to all stakeholders, with evidence that INAC regional officials should be more involved in the selection process to take advantage of their knowledge of and relationships with the communities and the individuals involved in land management.

The workload involved in the training continues to be an issue. The evaluation found that the younger, educated participants did not find the requirements onerous, while other established FN lands officials struggled with course content, in particular at the university level (i.e., the complexities of the subject matter were found to be too demanding for the time allowed, particularly when required to pass an examination). While there appears to have been some

improvement in awareness by participants who took more training after the Pilots (i.e., they were better prepared for the academic challenges), the concern around workloads and meeting family responsibilities continues to be an issue.

The diversity of readiness amongst students and the lack of band support for participating community members are having an impact on the success of training delivery. Lack of band support makes it more difficult for students to complete their assignments and to complete their training without major disruptions due to the immediacy of work-related issues. The evaluation found that there is a need to prepare participants to be students (e.g., training in communications, time management, and note taking).

Related to this, the evaluation found that professors/instructors could facilitate student-preparedness if they knew who their students were prior to the course commencing. (i.e., they could send a questionnaire to students to assess their knowledge and course expectations). If professors/instructors received a list of students names at least a month before the beginning of the term, this would allow them to evaluate incoming students and to grant appropriate transfer credits for those who have had training. Most instructors are attempting to tailor their teaching to the needs of the current cohort, but advance knowledge of students' preparedness would increase their capacity to be more responsive to students' needs.

Overall, the evaluation found that with each successive cohort, the recruitment process has improved (i.e., later cohorts are better-informed about RLEMP, Program details and expectations).

Relevance of Course Content

The evaluation found that RLEMP provides a good introduction to operational training. In addition, the National Aboriginal Land Manager Association's (NALMA) website is a useful tool in providing information directly to FN land managers. However, the evaluation found also that the training does not sufficiently educate trainees in matters of the Indian Land Registry system. Evidence suggests that more regional funding to support coaching activities, such as completing templates and drafting permits would be helpful in this regard. The technical courses could be more hands-on, as well.

Overall, there is evidence of enthusiasm and appreciation of the opportunity to participate. The evaluation found that the training provided through RLEMP is useful to some extent and that it helped in providing some useful skills such as establishing plans. However, more work is needed to make the courses more practical to produce fully functional FN lands officials. Evidence is such that many participants experienced difficulties in absorbing the university-level material, but, as well, there were difficulties in adapting what participants' had learned back in their own communities and meeting the system requirements on the ground. The courses were too specialized for some, in areas unrelated to their community's needs to be relevant (e.g., either focused on farming communities or lacking in oil and gas). There was also evidence to support the need for more training in environmental legislation and management, as well as the need to be able to comply with INAC land management manual, statutes and regulations.

Overall, the evaluation found that the training program addresses a broad range of topics but that it has been a challenge to provide students with the depth of knowledge and skills required to operate within RLEMP, and in such a short period of time (e.g., it has been suggested that a two week module on environmental assessment is not enough time to properly train a student).

Usage of Funding Supports in the Community

The evaluation found that there is a lack of understanding, generally, by key informants about how funding is used in the communities (e.g., course training, staffing a position, land use planning, for leases, natural resources and operational costs).

5. Evaluation Findings – Results and Success

4. Does the training sufficiently provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the roles and responsibilities of RLEMP? (i.e. able to complete appropriate templates, INAC standard documents, follow appropriate INAC processes from initial document development stage to execution and registration of document)

Have there been any impacts (both positive and negative) as a result of the Professional Land Management Certification training (University and Technical)?

5. What outcomes or impacts have resulted due to the RLEMP in the following areas:

a. Improved coordination and information sharing among FNs and their delivery partners? Improved partnership with FNs and FNs institutions?

b. Increased access by FNs to more appropriate lands and environment management professional development?

c. Increased and/or maintained FNs capacity in lands and environment management?

d. Increased FNs involvement in reserve lands and environment management and/or reduced INAC involvement?

e. modernized reserve lands and environment administration and management?

f. Other impacts?

6. What are the main factors that have affected the success of the initiative (both positively and negatively)? Are there any barriers or issues foreseen or encountered at this time that will/may (or have) impede(d) the progress or success of the RLEMP?

7. Have there been any unintended impacts (either positive or negative) as a result of RLEMP?

5.1 Overview

The evaluation found that the results of the Program are uneven across communities. RLEMP training was found to be most useful for some participants (and their communities) in that it broadened their perspective of land-management to include consideration for environmental issues and long-term planning. In particular, RLEMP courses facilitated the development of skills in business case preparation and planning. Also notable was that the Program provided excellent networking opportunities for which the benefits have continued long after training. Many communities are finding they are able to conduct more work in-house, and save money as a result.

While there have been some measurable results of the RLEMP training, the full extent of intended impacts due to this training have yet to be realized. Most communities continue to be dependent upon INAC for assistance in completing the templates for land transactions.

The evaluation found, also, that Program monitoring is lacking and requires significant improvements to allow for better reporting on Program performance.

5.2 Findings

The evaluation found that in many communities, the training and contribution funding allowed land managers to apply what they learned in various ways. However, the evaluation also found that the training was less useful for participants than they had anticipated. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the funding formula does not allow FNs to manage land transactions or land activities as expected. Although results from the management review of the training component of the Pilot (2007) demonstrated that RLEMP training leads to positive results likely to produce positive long-term impacts and that the success rate of trainees was satisfactory and comparable to other groups attending similar courses in university, participants are now questioning its usefulness.

There are various areas where RLEMP is expected to have impact, including FN involvement in lands management and other economic development and social impacts. They are as follows:

FN Involvement in Lands Management and its Modernization

FNs participating in the Pilot were expected to have greater involvement in land management as a result of RLEMP. The evaluation found that, in some cases, RLEMP has led to a greater FN role in land transactions. The training has allowed FNs to become increasingly involved in various land management activities and decision-making. Overall, FNs' increasing involvement in land management activities due to RLEMP training has allowed for the following:

- A broader view of land management, particularly with respect to environmental issues, and in some cases the creation of land development plans;

- Raising land management issues as a priority for communities; and,
- Helping to prepare communities for the next step (i.e., FNMLA) (e.g., development of land plans and codes).

Specifically, the evaluation found that RLEMP has had some degree of success in a number of different areas of FN land management and decision-making. For some communities, RLEMP training has raised an awareness of land use planning and the potential for development. Environmental issues are being considered in the planning process. Training has allowed some communities to conduct land management activities in a more timely, efficient, and competent manner. FN land managers in these communities are becoming better-equipped to provide sound land management advice and to make more informed decisions. Communities are becoming less dependent on INAC for assistance (i.e., NALMA templates are being adapted for use by communities). Some are making better use of computers and databases for the purposes of land management.

As well, there is evidence that INAC is still very much involved in the paperwork and, in some cases, land management overall. While FNs have taken on greater responsibility for leasing transactions, INAC regional officials are still responding to questions and providing advice on a daily basis. Training has had limited impacts in some communities. A major challenge for many FN land managers is to balance their multiple responsibilities within their band administration, including that of land management. The evaluation found that there are not sufficient resources from RLEMP for communities to build a development plan.

Economic Development and Social Impacts

The evaluation found that RLEMP training and the RLEMP contribution has had positive economic and social impacts in some communities. Some FNs have improved their land management skills, which have included greater consideration for environmental issues. This is leading to improved land use and quality of life. FNs' increased knowledge and capacity has been useful for addressing legal issues, for mapping and GIS activities and, planning work. More of this type of work is being conducted in house (i.e., capacity is increasing), which is reducing consulting fees and increasing cost savings. There is evidence that some communities are updating outdated plans and land use policies, as a result of RLEMP.

There is also some evidence that some FN communities are more sensitized to wildlife protection (i.e., increased awareness of endangered species), as a result of the training. As well, streams and wetlands now are being considered for protection. There is greater awareness of what tools exist for protection and how and where to look for information on these tools.

There are a number of examples of how participants are making good use of their newly acquired skills and knowledge, as follows:

- Assuming an administrative leadership role within the community and becoming a key player in community development, specifically in regards to mineral development;

- Land management unit using new knowledge on policies, procedures and regulations to guide practices related to mining issues, fostering shared management agreements for crown corporations and generating revenues;
- Making use of business planning skills to help band convert agricultural land from traditional agriculture usage to turf growing;
- Making use of new knowledge on financial issues to assess business plans for proponents who are considering renting land for new businesses;
- Better managing band's properties: assessing the value of land that band council was considering purchasing and demonstrating to council that the selling cost was too high;
- Making better use of commercial leases;
- Managing public works and housing development (i.e., making use of project management skills, planning skills and research skills for land management and other areas);
- Incorporating newly acquired awareness about environmental protection and legislation (i.e., 'protecting natural heritage'); and,
- Increased FN contact with NALMA to ask questions about environmental issues.

While the evaluation found evidence of positive impacts in some FN communities, most communities reported limited economic and social impacts as a result of RLEMP. Many key informants indicated that RLEMP has not solved the lack of resources in FN land management. The Program does not provide funding for surveys, which are critical for the resolution of estates and land disputes. Overwhelmingly, the evaluation found that tailoring the training to suit the regions and communities is essential. As well, recognition of credits for courses already taken and more time to complete the course have been raised as potential changes to the Program.

There is evidence that band council, local leadership and public support are key factors in achieving success in a Program such as RLEMP. Many key informants indicated that it was too early to tell whether RLEMP will increase the likelihood of FNs achieving self-governance status in the area of land management, or not.

Graduation day is reported as being an incredible experience. Observers can see at the ceremony how the participants feel a sense of pride and accomplishment: "they go back to their communities with their heads held a little higher".

Information Sharing and Networking

There is overwhelming evidence that RLEMP provided extensive opportunities to network and develop lasting linkages between participants. Following a few weeks in training, participants were reported to have opened up and discuss issues amongst themselves. Collaborative learning was encouraged by creating mixed knowledge-bases in group work to ensure that participants would be exposed to diverse perspectives on issues facing FN communities. As well, there was a lot of mentoring that occurred between advanced students and those who were struggling. The initial Pilot cohort was described a "close knit group" that interact and share advice.

Well after the course, many participants continued to call their colleagues for assistance with expertise and knowledge in specific areas of land and environmental management, and for advice on how to proceed to the next phase (FNLMA). This approach was reportedly easier for FNs than asking government officials directly for assistance.

Program Results Monitoring

The evaluation found that Program monitoring is lacking and requires significant improvements to allow for better reporting on Program performance. Currently, reporting requirements are very low and there is evidence that an improved system for performance monitoring is needed.

6. Evaluation Findings – Cost Effectiveness /Alternatives

8. Are there more cost-effective ways to deliver RLEMP and the RLEMP training that might achieve similar objectives and results? E.g. delivery approaches, management structures, HQ/regional interfaces, etc.

This section addresses the issue of cost-effectiveness, which can be defined as the ratio of program costs over program results. Evaluation evidence was gathered to assess various alternatives that might reduce this ratio, either by reducing Program costs without significantly reducing results, or by increasing results without significantly raising program costs.

No Program data were available to assess program cost-effectiveness or cost-efficiency (i.e., administrative costs over outputs, such as Gs&Cs), however, key informants shared various opinions about how to improve cost-effectiveness.

6.1. Overview

Based upon available evidence, the evaluation found that RLEMP is beneficial, despite high costs to the federal government due to the centralized, high-end approach (i.e., extensive travel and time costs). Distance learning mechanisms and a more decentralized approach that could potentially cut costs were suggested by many key informants. However, it was noted that this could affect training quality and reduce networking opportunities. Better timing could reduce accommodation costs by using university residences instead of hotels.

6.2 Findings

The following evidence regarding approaches that could improve the cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the Program was found:

- Adjusting some aspects of the funding formula (e.g., the per hectare formula favors some bands that own large surfaces of land and are receiving large sums that are not always justified);

- Renting hotel suites with kitchenettes that could reduce meal costs, or renting university residences or purchasing space for the delivery of training, instead of renting space at a high cost;
- Using decentralized delivery points, or by delivering some components online or through videoconferencing;
- Using a blended approach to maintain the networking advantages of in-person training;
- Incorporating a mixed training delivery model to accommodate the next generation of training participants, land managers who are new as a result of turnover and land managers whose capacities are evolving with experience; and,
- Developing Terms and Conditions for resources dedicated to RLEMP in order to reduce the amount of time spent by Program managers looking for funding each fiscal year.

Although a decentralized approach was suggested as a means to reducing costs, there was evidence to counter this potential alternative. It was noted by some key informants that online training or distance learning would likely reduce effectiveness (i.e., it is difficult for seasoned university students to succeed with distance education, let alone FN students with less formal education). The evaluation also found that isolation for participants in a decentralized Program could be a factor in reducing networking benefits. Further evidence suggests that NALMA already tried to deliver courses on the Internet but found that many bands did not have high speed access.

The evaluation found that in order to improve effectiveness and efficiency, the Program needs to collect performance information to be able to report on how FNs are benefitting from RLEMP funding and what are the results of the Program.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The evidence gathered for this evaluation leads to the following conclusions:

Rationale/relevance

Overall, there is strong evidence indicating a need for a program such as RLEMP, and that the program is consistent with government priorities. Findings indicate that the RLEMP rationale is consistent with INAC's priorities related to land management, with Gathering Strength (1998) and the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). There is a shared vision between FNs and INAC on the need to support FNs in their efforts to better manage their lands with less INAC assistance. RLEMP is a stepping stone in achieving this and prepares FNs for the next step in land management (FNLMA). Many FN communities have economic development opportunities and environmental issues to address, and land management is a key enabler to these. There is a need for training for FN land managers as they take on new responsibilities in the area of land management.

There are no other similar national programs.

Design and Delivery

In general, findings indicate that the program was successful in providing training opportunities for land managers, many of which were satisfied with the delivery and content of the training. However, most of the training participants, as well as many INAC and training institution representatives, acknowledged that more work is required to make the course more practical and adapted to FN needs. The participants arrive at the courses with very different backgrounds and some have more difficulties coping with the course requirements. Some participants also lack the necessary support from their band administration and have difficulties meeting the course time and effort requirements.

Many of these issues derive from gaps in communication. There is a lack of awareness about the parameters of the program and its training requirements among land managers, band leaders and even INAC regional staff. Roles and responsibilities between the various players involved, including INAC HQ, regions and the communities could be clarified further. All of the above issues are a product of deficiencies at the yearly planning stage of the Program, as the Program spends considerable time at the beginning of each fiscal year to find the necessary resources to operate the Program. This time might be better spent focusing on program planning.

Finally, the funding formula is not well understood or viewed as addressing the needs of FNs to make the transition to FNLMA.

Success

Results from the program are uneven across communities. For example, training was useful for some participants to manage land with a broader perspective on various aspects of land management, including environmental issues and long term planning and land issues. However, most communities are still dependent upon INAC for completing the templates for transactions.

Most communities report limited economic and social impacts as a result of RLEMP. Some report extensive impacts in terms of addressing local land management/environmental issues and developing plans. Many report saving substantial amounts by conducting more work in-house. Courses provided useful skills for various purposes, such as business case preparation and planning, as well as provided excellent networking opportunities.

The program monitoring requires significant improvements to be able to report on Program results.

Cost Effectiveness, Factors Influencing Success and Duplication

Many report that RLEMP is beneficial, despite extensive costs to the federal government due to the centralized, high-end approach (i.e., extensive travel and time costs). The evaluation found a number of alternatives, including the use of distance learning mechanisms and a more decentralized approach that could potentially cut costs, although this would likely affect training quality and reduce networking opportunities. Better timing of training delivery could reduce accommodation costs by making use of university residences. As well, the recognition of previous training credits could reduce costs.

7.2 Recommendations

Overall, the evaluation found that there is a real need for RLEMP and that the Pilot should progress to a fully expanded program. However, given the uneven impacts and the many design and delivery factors affecting the Program's effectiveness, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Improve Program Planning, Design and Communications. A number of issues need to be addressed in the planning and organization of the Program to allow for improved Program results. Specifically, the vision of RLEMP as an important intermediate step toward the FNLMA requires greater clarification and reinforcement with all stakeholders. A gap analysis between communities' land management training needs and RLEMP training is needed to support improvements to Program design. Adjustments to training design that are more responsive to the particular needs of communities (as established through the gap-analysis) will lead to improved Program delivery. Included in this redesign is the need for INAC to review RLEMP's funding formula to ensure that the Program is addressing needs equitably among participating communities. Finally, the relative roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, including INAC HQ and regional staff, as well as community leaders and land managers, require clarification. Overall, Program communications need improvement to ensure that all stakeholders

are aware of and understand the key elements of the Program and their involvement in a timely manner.

2. Up-date Training Model and Implement Program Monitoring. RLEMP's training model requires updating as per the revised Program design. The analysis of the training needs will lead to improvements in the content and delivery of training. The evaluation findings point to various delivery options and improvement areas that can be considered as potential alternatives. A more cost-effective model should be implemented, which could include a mixed training delivery model to accommodate the both the next generation of training participants, as well as land managers who are new as a result of turnover in participating communities. A Program performance monitoring and reporting system to monitor and report on results needs to be implemented and will require alignment with Program redesign.

3. Ensure Sustainable Funding for RLEMP. There is solid evidence to suggest that RLEMP's rationale and continued relevance is significant. It is recommended that funding for RLEMP be sustained. Specifically, multi-year funding would ensure Program stability and allow for long-term planning.

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Exhibit 3.0: Logic Model for the Reserve Lands and Environment Management Program (RLEMP)

