

Goals

The goals of the International Program were mutually defined by participating ENGOs within RCEN-IP to include:

1) Improved management capacity of ENGOs

Many ENGOs expressed a desire for help with Results Based Management as well as budgeting and financial management. Often, nothing more than a second opinion is needed yet this is a role that is clearly outside of CIDA's ability to provide given that they are the final recipient of both reports and proposals.

Understanding current protocols and having an opportunity for peer review prior to submission is something that has clearly benefited both CIDA and ENGOs. The on-going discussions via listserves, our Results Based Management brochure and personal communications all provide forums to improve management capacity. With recently published guidelines and the implementation of program funding there is even more opportunity for ENGOs to co-operate in improving their management capacity.

2) Improved ENGO knowledge of current issues

Many ENGOs are battling with the same issues and yet unaware of potential avenues of co-operation. Some may not even be aware, due to geographic distance or isolation that they are working in the same partner countries or working on similar projects within the environmental sector. Yet, experience with reforestation in Costa Rica may have direct benefits for reforestation efforts in El Salvador which could benefit certification programs based in Mexico; experience working with the civil sector on transportation in Cuba may benefit a reforestation project working in the same country. Beyond all of the direct links are the overarching themes that every ENGO needs to be aware of; how will global climate change affect their work? How will the MAI affect their projects? How will trade and globalization hinder or help their projects? Clearly, it is impossible for any one group to tackle these broad issues and yet together we are able to address them in the most comprehensive way possible. ENGOs need a forum through which to improve their knowledge of current issues.

3) More effective communication between ENGOs

Not all ENGOs are currently using E-mail and not all e-mail users are familiar with listserves. Some ENGOs have web pages, while some do not. Some can afford to call others and check in on policy issues some simply cannot. Some have newsletters some do not. Clearly, when it comes to international programs a means of improving communication is needed. Currently this has been identified as a functioning listserve with web links in the future. However, sometimes what is needed is a simple regular phone call, to send someone a fax or an update or to let someone know that someone else is doing something similar and maybe they should talk. The well functioning hub of a

network is key to making smooth links and regular valuable communication is the essential oil of the hub.

4) Better liaison between ENGOs and other agencies, particularly CIDA

CIDA's ESDP program officers and staff have a substantial workload. This has been further complicated by staff turnovers and departmental changes. These are not easy conditions in which to explore new avenues for co-operation with ENGOs either within the division, agency or other federal institutions. Yet this is clearly needed as groups move from project to program funding or expand the horizons of their international work. Clearly environmental priorities will increase and the focus on environment among development circles is also increasing. There is a need for someone to broker discussions with groups like IDRC or DFAIT or even other branches within CIDA on behalf of ENGOs. Not all ENGOs have the direct access that the RCEN could provide and neither are there any other groups through which democratic inclusive discussions regarding policy could take place. There is clearly a liaison function for the RCEN that could be much larger and benefit the CIDA and other federal institutions to a much greater degree.

5) Improved CIDA knowledge of ENGO priorities and processes

Where does an agency such as CIDA go in order to understand national ENGO priorities and processes? To whom can they turn in times of consultation? While there are major players they could turn to they risk being exclusive or regionally biased. The RCEN is well placed to explore issues on a national, bilingual basis with regional and local consultation. We are the only organization in Canada that has a database and can actually name the players should a comprehensive consultation be needed.

The IP is one of the most effective ways for the Partnership Branch of the CIDA to further its goals of "capacity building for southern organizations and institutions" by increasing the capacity of north/south partnerships to effectively meet their goals and priorities. It directly impacts basic human needs in the developing world by improving the capacity and increasing the scope of ENGO work in G-77 countries. It directly affects women in development by providing gender examples and communication about gender issues among both Northern and Southern ENGOs. As a project that was conceived around improving ENGO infrastructure it directly meets CIDA's priority of infrastructure services and by practicing and refining democratic structures and sound management styles that can be adopted by member groups it also meets CIDA's priority of human rights, democracy and good governance. While private sector development may be inherent in individual ENGO activities it is not a part of the IP focus. The sixth priority area of CIDA is the environment which is clearly addressed as an IP focus both through our mission statement and the activities we engage in.

Actual record keeping and financial management of IP is carried out through the national office of the RCEN in Ottawa.