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Evaluation of the Detector Dog Service (DDS) Program: Detailed findings

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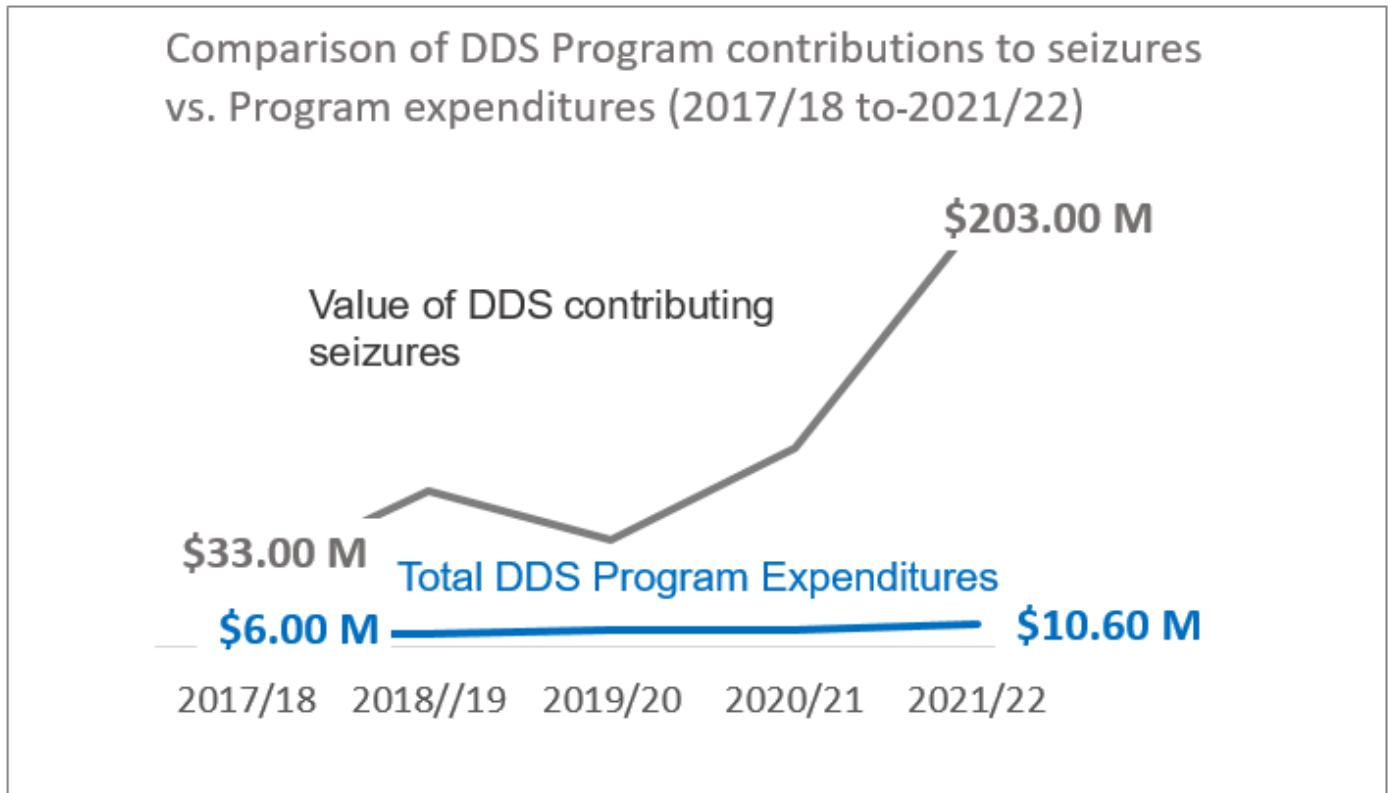
Theme 4: Program spending and value-for-money

Finding 7: The Program demonstrates good value-for-money for the Agency. Program contributions to seizures increased substantially over time, while overall Program expenditures increased at a lower rate.

The value of ICES seizures with DDS contribution increased by 515% from 2017 to 2018 to 2021 to 2022, while DDS Program expenditures only increased by approximately 77% within the same timeframe.

During the pandemic in 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023, some DDS teams normally assigned to traveller stream were redirected to the commercial stream, resulting in higher value seizures – a trend that might be worth exploring further.

Figure 1:



▼ Text description

Line graph showing a comparison of Detector Dog Service Program contributions and program expenditures from fiscal year 2017-2018 to fiscal year 2021-2022.

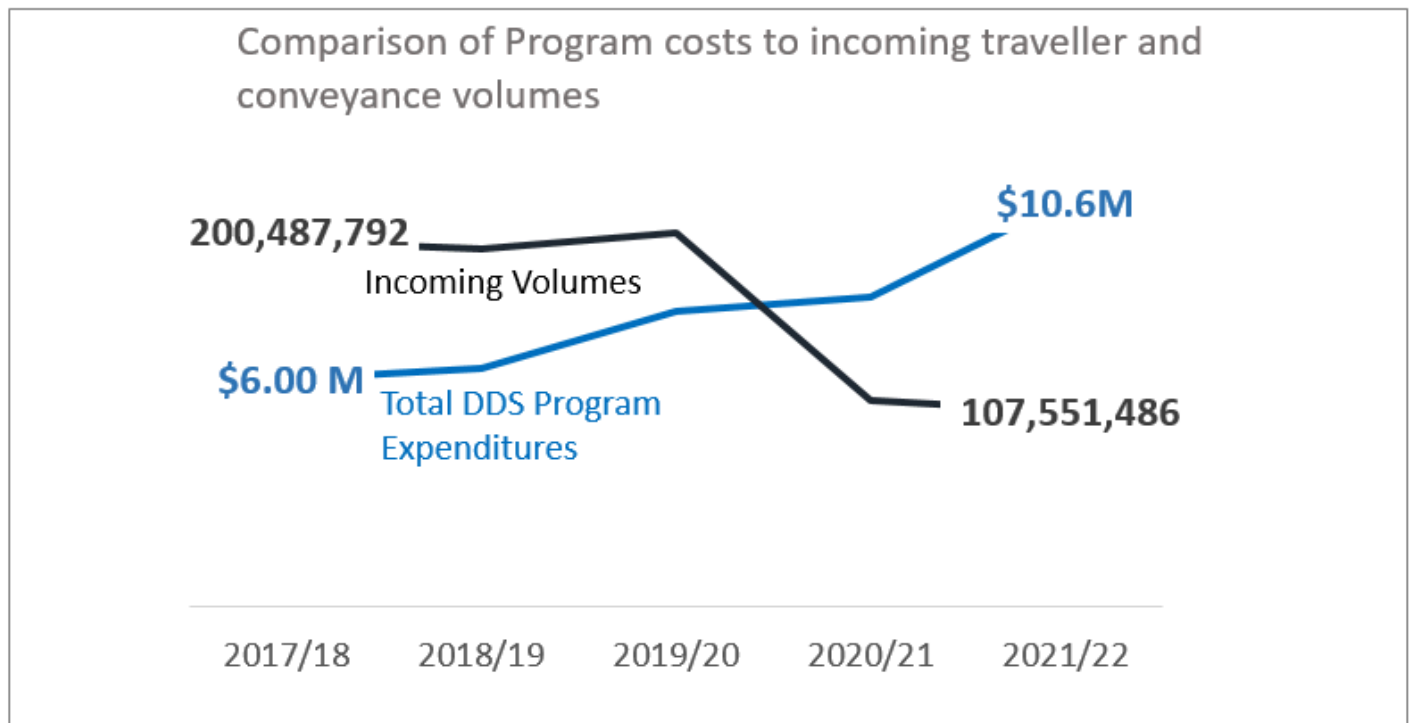
The top line in the graph represents the value of Detector Dog Service Program contributions to seizures. In fiscal year 2017-2018 the value was 33 million dollars. In 2018-2019 the value slightly increased. In 2019-2020 the value decreased below 33 million dollars. In 2020-2021 the value significantly increased, surpassing the 2018-2019 increase. In 2021-2022 the value substantially increased to 203 million dollars.

The bottom line of the graph represents total Detector Dog Service Program expenditures which start at 6 million dollars in 2017-2018 and gradually increase to 10.6 million dollars by 2021-2022.

Despite the fact that total traveller and commercial volumes decreased by 46% since 2017 to 2018 (likely as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic), Program expenditures increased within the same timeframe due to funds already committed [redacted].

Lower commercial and traveller volumes did not impact Program resource use, as the number of searches by DDS teams increased by 29%, and the number of enforcement actions increased by 654% between 2017 to 2018 and 2021 to 2022.

Figure 2:



▼ Text description

Line graph showing a comparison of Program costs and incoming traveller and conveyance volumes from fiscal year 2017-2018 to fiscal year 2021-2022.

The top line in the graph represents incoming traveller and conveyance volumes. In fiscal year 2017-2018 the incoming volume was 2000,487,792 travellers and conveyances. The volume decreased minutely in 2018-2019 and then gradually increased until 2019-2020. In 2019-2020 the incoming volumes made a steep decline. In 2020-2021 the volumes stabilized with a slight decrease through to 2021-2022 when the volumes were 107,551,486.

The bottom line of the graph represents total Detector Dog Service Program expenditures which have steadily increased from 6 million dollars in 2017-2018 to 10.6 million dollars in 2021-2022.

Theme 5: Process efficiencies

Finding 8: An approach adopted in two Regions, requiring the termination of a detector dog handler's assignment when a detector dog retires/passes, might be creating unnecessary inefficiencies/costs for the Program.

The one-dog approach:

- Adopted by the PAC and GTA Regions [redacted]
- The approach states that the assignment of DDH duties in the BSO work function will not be extended past the working life of the detector dog ²⁰

Active years for a detector dog:

- Expectation is that most detector dogs retire after 8 to 10 years of service; however, the evaluation's analysis shows that 66% of detector dogs served between 1 to 7 years, with an average of 6 active years (Annex E)

- Under this one-dog approach, new DDHs must be trained every 6 years (on average) in GTA and PAC

Potential inefficiencies/costs created by the one-dog approach: Investment in terms of money and time is higher for new versus experienced handlers – training a new handler costs at least 2.5 times more than training a new detector dog with an experienced handler.

Criteria	New DDH	Experienced DDH
Training (time)	Basic course: 10 weeks	Replacement course: 5 weeks
Training (money)	\$38,617 – including college costs (accommodation, supplies and training) and regional costs (travel and per diems)	\$19,308 – college costs (retraining)
Recruitment (time and costs)	Salary costs of recruitment staff (i.e. time required to run a competition, select candidates and send them to the college for two-day selection process).	Nothing required
Other costs (home kennel)	\$14,400 for a new kennel (or between \$2,000 and \$11,000 to move an existing kennel to a new DDH's home)	No cost
Total costs	Between \$40,617 and \$53,017 plus training and recruitment resources	\$19,308 plus training resources

Other unquantifiable impacts:

- loss of gained experience

- loss of relationships built with stakeholders (importers, other handlers, enforcement partners)
- impact on morale and motivation to perform (according to survey/interviews
 - 88% Of handlers perceived the lack of certainty in terms of a career path to be a main challenge for the program, largely due to this policy

“Very hard to find encouragement to better myself and the dog when, let’s face it, this is the only dog I am getting. This also translates over to when new handlers come in, no one wants to assist them because, why bother, we only get one dog.”

— DDH

Due to the newness of the approach, it was not possible to track its impact on the number of applicants for recent DDH competitions. However, limited preliminary data suggests the number of applicants may be declining. ²¹

When the collaborative agreement was initiated in the PAC Region in 2021, HQ was consulted and agreed with the Region’s implementation. At the time, the Program noted HQ is responsible for monitoring results and setting direction in response to the Program’s outcomes. HQ’s current stance is that the impacts of the one-dog approach, particularly with respect to inclusivity, should be reviewed.

Stakeholders in favour of the approach stated that it is a means through which the Region can reduce performance issues from DDHs, as their continuation in the role is not guaranteed. No evidence was found to confirm this perception. Additionally, underperforming DDHs can be performance-managed through existing channels, including individual performance assessments and ending an assignment early, if necessary.

Under FMM, HQ Program staff (the functional authority) has the responsibility to assess the current impact of the one-dog approach on the consistency and efficiency of service delivery across the Regions.

Theme 6: Resource utilization

Finding 9: While limited program resources are generally assigned where needed, [redacted]. ²²

Generally, there is good coverage in air mode and a good rationale for assigning DDS teams to other modes, including:

Team type	Coverage	Rationale for assigning DDS Teams
FPA	[redacted]	FPA products are higher risk when coming from overseas ([redacted]).
Currency	[redacted]	Although there are only 4 teams, they show good results in [redacted], including seizures of \$16.5M over 5 fiscal years.
D&F	[redacted]	High use of DDS teams in these modes; overall, high number of seizures (although limited firearm seizures in postal specifically).

[redacted]: DDS teams could be used as an efficient, non-intrusive tool to determine risks in [redacted].

[redacted]; evidence of risk.

[redacted]. For example:

- [redacted] – 3 DDS teams assigned: 1 FPA team in air and 2 D&F teams in land. Vast geographical area; increasing commercial volumes

- [redacted]. Large geographical area; high traveller and commercial volumes in land, air, marine, and rail

Other potential limited coverage:

- [redacted] (where there are 21 million commercial releases over the period of 5 fiscal years, [redacted]). ²³

[redacted]. ²⁴

DDS teams are called into marine when available and needed.

- [redacted].

In the marine mode commercial volumes are high. In 2019:

- Halifax Port reported 1,774,872 metric tonnes (MT) in imports
- Port of Vancouver reported 16,598,382 MT in foreign inbound volumes

Preliminary data shows that D&F teams add value when used in the marine mode:

- Over the past five years: 1,820 ICES seizures in marine - DDS teams contributed to 44 of these (2% of all seizures)
- Total value of all seizures was \$1B - the DDS teams contributed to \$673M (67% of total value)

Regional stakeholders expressed strong support to add DDS resources to the marine mode.

Example from the Pacific Region

Over the last nine months (April to December 2022), a D&F team has been assisting in the marine mode due to the pallet LSI being broken down.

Their contributions included:

- 524 searches (136 hours)

- 44 DDS indications
- 21 indications confirmed ²⁵
- 18 seizures (\$118.8M)
 - 3,527 kg of meth and fentanyl precursors
 - 1,807 kg of opium 593 kg of marijuana ²⁶
 - 18 kg of methamphetamine

In comparison, the same D&F teams had the following statistics in the postal mode during the same period:

- 160 searches (52 hours)
- 139 DDS indications
- 112 indications confirmed
- 101 seizures (\$805,607)

Note that though success rate (confirmed indications and seizures) is higher in postal, the monetary value is much lower.

This is not to discount the importance and value add of teams in postal, but to showcase how teams can contribute to enforcement in both modes.

Theme 7: Performance measurement and reporting

Finding 10: The program's current performance measures and reporting only partially assess achievement of results and the value add of the program to the Agency.

No formal performance measurement framework (PMF) exists, including a logic model and associated, relevant indicators and targets to measure and report on progress to achieving expected outcomes.

A logic model was developed by the evaluation team and approved by the program during the scoping phase (Annex F). The outcomes in the logic model align with the program's stated mandate and could be used as the basis to develop a formal PMF.

In the past three years, the program has made some improvements in measuring and tracking performance:

- Improvements to the Handler Activity Report (HAR) system that allow for granular and aggregated reporting
- The program reports to the Agency on five key performance indicators annually, which are aligned to some expected outcomes, but do not cover achievements of all expected results; and
- In the past two years, the program created the Program Integrity Analysis Report, but this provides limited performance information.

Opportunity exists to fully leverage the reporting capability of the Program, specifically in demonstrating its value for money.

Footnotes:

- 20 The PAC Region's Collaborative Agreement states that while each assignment is for the duration of the working life of the detector dog, the same handler may apply for a new assignment, with a new detector dog, once the first has concluded. Should the detector dog need to be replaced within the first 4 years of the team for any reason, the handler will be considered to receive a new detector dog.
- 21 Numbers of applicants may be declining due to other factors concerning the DDH role, such as: requirement to have a yard to construct a home kennel which is becoming a challenge with high property prices, and policy around long-term leave (losing the assignment if going on leave for 90 consecutive days or more).
- 22 To conduct the analysis, the evaluation looked at the current funded teams (October 2022) and used other contextualizing information such as travellers and commercial volumes, geographical information, interviews and document review to assess coverage .
- 23 GTA has [redacted] funded teams, all placed at Pearson's International Airport (PIA) and the Mail Centre. GTA DDS teams are available to other POEs and off site examination facilities within the region when requested. [redacted].
- 24 [redacted].

25 Interesting to note: In this example, the percentage of confirmed indications is much lower than the overall average for all modes (48%, compared to average above 90% for all modes). It could be that the detector dogs were indicating on traces of drugs possibly concealed in the area and subsequently moved, or that BSOs were unable to locate something that was actually there, as dismantling and examining marine conveyances can be complex.

26 [redacted]. Without the DDS teams, BSOs would have to dismantle and examine the pallets to find contraband.

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