Evaluation of the Conservation and Protection Program

The Conservation and Protection (C&P) program promotes and maintains compliance with legislation, regulations, policies and management measures to achieve the overall result that fisheries, oceans and other aquatic ecosystems are protected from unlawful exploitation and interference.

About the 🔍 Evaluation

The objective of the evaluation was to identify challenges and opportunities in the delivery and management of the C&P program and to provide senior management with evidence-based information for decision-making and program improvements.

Photo credit: DFO Facebook

Key findings

- The C&P program mandate is understood by employees, although core program objectives are less clearly defined. Fishery officers conduct many activities that might be important but may go beyond legislated responsibilities and the compliance and enforcement mandate.
- Program funding increased over the six-year period evaluated (2016-17 to 2021-22) — largely to support aerial surveillance and priority initiatives. Capital funding was stable or declined over time.
- Capital assets have depreciated beyond the departmental average and key assets are near or past the end of their useful life.
- While there is no agreement about the best reporting structure for the C&P program, there is strong support for consistent reporting structures in all regions.
- Work is needed to better integrate the National Fisheries Intelligence Service (NFIS) into the program and to support more effective use of its intelligence products.

Recommendations

As a result of the evaluation findings, four recommendations have been developed:

1 clarify the program mandate and objectives which will guide the activities needed to achieve the intended results. These changes will then need to be supported, implemented and communicated widely within the program and across the department

2 strengthen program accountabilities and facilitate consistent national program delivery, which includes a review of program governance, reporting structures and the communication between national headquarters and the regions

3 improve financial forecasting methods and tools, increase transparency and support the planning and allocation of funds for program delivery

4 prioritize the integration of the NFIS in the program and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all employees in the production and use of intelligence

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