



February 6, 2015

Standards Program Steering Committee
Imagine Canada
65 St Clair Avenue East, Suite 700
Toronto, Ontario M4T 2Y3

Re: Imagine Canada – Standards Program Evaluation

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Hivemind Solutions, we are pleased to submit our proposal in response your Request for Proposal entitled Evaluation of Imagine Canada Standards Program.

Our broad experience in program management, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder assessment, and mixed-method research speaks to our ability to evaluate competently, efficiently, and realistically.

This evaluation proposal includes:

- Program overview
- Evaluation Purpose & Objectives
- Evaluation Design
- Evaluation Methods
- Program logic model
- Evaluation matrix
- Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

On behalf of Hivemind Solutions, we would to like to thank you for the opportunity to demonstrate our evaluative abilities. We look forward establishing a productive working partnership.

Sincerely,

Hivemind Solutions

Evaluation of Imagine Canada Standards Program

February 6, 2016

Prepared for:
Imagine Canada

Prepared by:
Hivemind Solutions



Hivemind
Solutions

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1.0 Program Overview

Imagine Canada is a national non-profit sector serving charity based in Toronto. Their programs are aimed at supporting and enriching non-profit and charitable organizations and the sector as a whole. The three broad goals of the organization are to (1) strengthen the charitable and non-profit sector's collective voice; (2) create opportunities to connect and learn from each other; and (3) building the sector's capacity to succeed. Out of an estimated 170,000 non-profits and charities in Canada, 1,250 have membership with Imagine Canada.

One of Imagine Canada's key programs is the Standards Program. Piloted in 2011, it encourages charities and non-profits in Canada to be innovative, transparent and accountable, ethical, well governed, inclusive, and collaborative. The primary goal of the Standards Program is strengthening public confidence in the charitable and non-profit sector by accrediting organizations that demonstrate an ability to meet the standards outlined in the program. These standards focus best practices in board governance, financial management, fundraising, staff management, and volunteer management. As of June 2015, 266 organizations had registered for the accreditation program, and of those, 150 organizations have achieved accreditation. Accredited organizations are able to utilize Imagine Canada's Trustmark contingent on the submissions of an annual license fee and annual compliance report. Every five years, the accreditation needs to be renewed. Key external stakeholders of the program include the program sponsors (Great West Life, Canada Life, London Life, The Lawson Foundation, EY and KCI Ketchum Canada), the accredited organizations and organizations interested in joining.

2.0 Evaluation Purpose & Objectives

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the Standards Program and find ways of improving it. The first objective of the evaluation is to complete an impact assessment of the program to date to understand how the application process is viewed by participating organizations. Also, the evaluation aims to understand how the process might be improved. Finally, the evaluation seeks to understand what strategies Imagine Canada could employ to significantly increase participation.

3.0 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation of Imagine Canada's Standards program will be an completed as an independent and external evaluation of the program. This external evaluation will reduce bias within the evaluation process, eliminating specific stakeholder interests and agendas. The external evaluators will not have had any type of previous involvement or personal stake in the program. This allows for an unbiased approach to understanding the impact of the program, how the process is viewed by organizations and lastly how to make improvements and significantly increase participation within the program.

The evaluation plan presented by Hivemind solutions will be designed as quasi-experimental. The quasi-experimental design uses some elements of experimental design, but has data gaps such as the lack of a random sample, control group, baseline data, and/or end of project data. To fill these potential gaps, this quasi-experimental design is based upon the creation of comparison groups within our sample (described in Methodology). These comparison groups allow the evaluation to explore if the outcomes could possibly be attributed to the program itself or if they are affected by other contextual confounding factors.

4.0 Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives of this evaluation, online surveys, document review and key-informant interviews will be used. In order to assess the impact of the Accreditation Program, four organizational survey groupings have been identified.

1. Member organizations who have completed the accreditation process
2. Member organizations who are currently in the process of acquiring accreditation
3. Member organizations who began the process and did not finish
4. Both member and non-member organizations who have never engaged in the accreditation process

4.1 Online Surveys

An online survey process has been identified as the most efficient method of data collection due to the large sample size, variation in stakeholder involvement and limited timeline. Surveying inherently allows for collection of large and varied swaths of data with a limited timeline in a cost effective manner. Although a mostly quantitative survey approach limits the depth of information we are able to attain, a larger number of organizations will be represented. To provide more depth, one open-ended question will be included at the end of the survey in order to address how Imagine Canada can improve the Standards Program in order to increase participation.

All Imagine Canada members (accredited or not) will receive a request to participate via email, identifying the Executive Director or Board President of the organization as the party responsible for its completion. In addition, a random list of non-member organizations will be identified using information from the Canada Revenue Agency Charities Listing. In the survey, all organizations will be asked to identify which of the four groups they align with; however, the questions will be standardized for all participants. An important aspect of the survey will be its identification of the size of organizations as barriers to entry and reasons for participating may differ greatly based on size of the participating organization. Thus, identification of organizational size will allow for disaggregation of the data for comparative purposes. Before the survey is distributed to organizations, it will be piloted with ten people who were formally involved in non-profit work in order to improve usability.

By surveying non-participating organizations who do not hold memberships with Imagine Canada, the evaluation will be able to assess the program's reach beyond its current members, and knowledge of potential program benefits within the Canadian non-profit sector. The sample size for this group will be a minimum of 383 organizations, satisfying a 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval for the estimated 170,000 organizations within Canada.

4.2 Key-Informant Interviews

Short key-informant interviews will be done with eight of Imagine Canada's Board of Directors and all program staff. These interviews will explore 1) the extent to which the Standards Program is meeting the overall objectives of the organization; 2) the cost of administering the program; and, 3) how the program could be improved. Interviews are useful because they offer our evaluation depth of information that we cannot achieve through surveys or document reviews. The information collected from the respondents will be used to better understand the program and to create the surveys.

4.3 Document Review

The document review component of this evaluation will seek to accomplish two separate objectives. The first will be a comprehensive review of Imagine Canada's current messaging to member and non-member organizations in order to assess reach. Context will be provided to the evaluation through a critical review of Imagine Canada's current strategies with regard to: marketing strategy, application forms, mandate, annual reporting, funding reports, content of the standards handbook. In addition, membership records will be used to determine trends in membership over time.

In addition to internal document reviews, an analysis using materials available online of international best practices will be undertaken. For countries with a proportionally similar non-profit industry it will be necessary to identify organizations doing similar work, and how their practices have led to either success or failure within their own context. The findings of this research will be applied to the Canadian context as appropriate, and will have bearing in determining both positive and negative aspects of Imagine Canada's current messaging approach.

4.3 Data Analysis

The surveys will produce mostly quantitative data that will be analyzed using the statistical program SPSS. When appropriate the data will be disaggregated. For example, responses could be broken down by size or location of the organization, or by the four groups listed above. There will be one qualitative question on the survey, which will be inputted into the data analysis program NVivo to identify common themes among respondents. The qualitative data from the key-informant interview will be analyzed in NVivo as well.

5.0 Program Logic Model/Theory of Change

This Program Logic Model (PLM) shows a visual and narrative overview of the program as a whole. It is a 'picture' of the resources available within the program, the planned activities, and the changes and results that are to be seen through the program. The PLM covers four program components: Inputs, Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes.

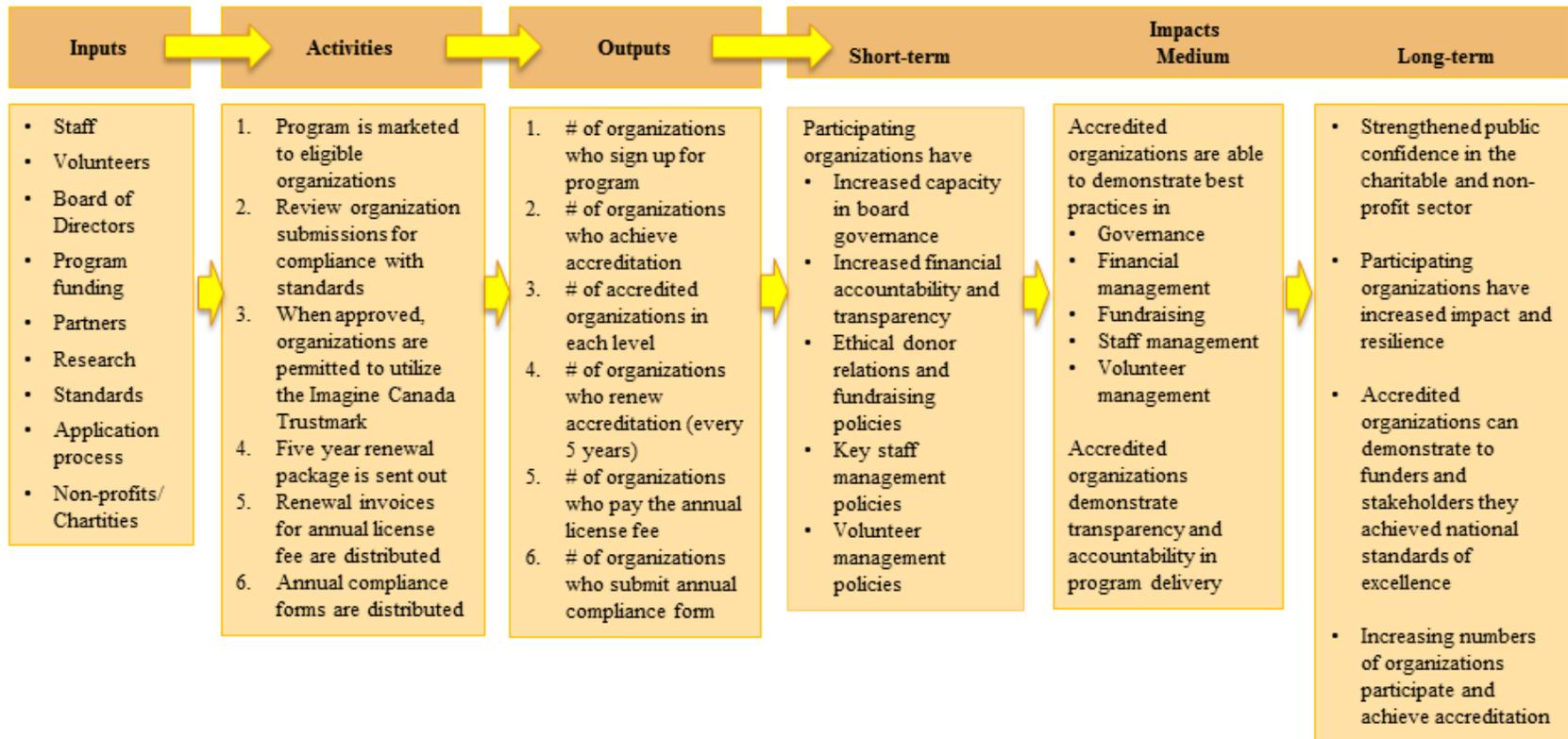
Inputs: are the resources that make program activities possible.

Activities: describe the day-to-day work of the staff, and time spent by participants

Outputs: indicators of the completed activities

Outcomes: results that indicate changes within the participants as a result of the program

Inputs must exist for activities to be run. Activities must be completed for outputs to be produced. Outputs must be produced for outcomes to be achieved.



Assumptions

- Sufficient volunteers to process increased number of applications
- Sufficient funding to support program staff and resource needs
- Organizations have the capacity to fulfill accreditation requirements

Risks

- Insufficient volunteer support to process applications in a timely manner
- Organizations have other priorities, and this may not be one
- Organizations have insufficient organizational capacity related to time or human resources

6.0 Evaluation Matrix

The program logic model gives a picture of the whole program; whereas, the evaluation matrix is a tool for systematically identifying evaluation questions, indicators of success, and possible data sources and data collection methods. For a comprehensive evaluation the following categories will be addressed: rationale, efficiency, effectiveness, reach and access, and impact. A brief definition of each category is given below.

Rationale addresses why the program was created. Is there sufficient evidence to prove its need?

Efficiency assesses whether the program is on time, on budget and related to the plan

Effectiveness assesses changes produced in the beneficiary group by the program

Reach and Access looks at whether the targeted beneficiaries are being served and participating in the program

Impact determines the long-term effects of the program that can be attributed to the intervention (OECD, 2010)

The evaluation matrix is presented on the following page for the Imagine Canada Standards Program. The matrix presents key evaluation questions and indicators to measure results and provide evidence that the Standards Program is achieving its goal its goals.

Rationale			
Evaluation Questions	Indicator	Source of Data	Method of Collection
Is there a need warranting the creation of the standard accreditation program?	# of organizations who see value in an accreditation program # of similar programs across the world	1. Organizations (accredited and non-accredited) 2. Program Documents	1. Surveys 2. IC to provide program

			documents 2. review of data from international examples
To what extent is the Standards Program consistent with the member organization priorities?	# of organizations who feel the accreditation is important for the goals of Imagine Canada (IC) to be achieved # of members of board of directors/program staff who feel the accreditation is important for the goals of Imagine Canada to be achieved	1. Organizations (accredited and non-accredited) 2 Board Members and Program Staff	1. Surveys 2. Key-informant Interviews
Efficiency			
Have adequate resources been allocated for timely processing of accreditation applications?	# of volunteer peer reviewers to process applications vs. # of applications # of staff dedicated to Standards Program vs. # of applications	1. Program Documents (Volunteer and staff records, number of applications)	1. IC to provide program documents
Is the cost of administering the accreditation process appropriate relative to application fee?	Cost of administering accreditation process vs. fees for application	1. Board Members/Program Staff 2. Program Documents (Fee structure, staffing responsibilities)	1. Key-informant Interviews 2. IC to provide documents
Is the accreditation done in a timely process?	average time it takes for the organization to complete the application length of time to process the application	1. Accredited Organizations 2. Program Documents	1. Surveys 2. IC to provide documents
Were applicants properly supported by Imagine Canada or other external organizations?	# of applicants who received support from IC # of applicants who received support from an external agency (e.g. other non-profit)	1. Organizations that have gone through application process (completed or not completed)	1. Surveys

Effectiveness			
How has the accreditation process improved the participating organization?	# of organizations that feel the process of being accredited has led to positive reform within the organization broken down by a) Board governance b) Financial accountability and transparency c) Fundraising d) Staff management e) Volunteer involvement	1. Accredited Organizations	1. Surveys
Has the accreditation improved the transparency of participating organizations?	% of organizations that feel their transparency has been improved	1. Accredited Organizations	1. Surveys
How many Imagine Canada member organizations are accredited?	# of organizations accredited broken down by year (last 5 years) # accredited organizations registered as a percentage of the total # of Imagine Canada members	1. Program Records (membership information, and list of accredited)	1. IC to provide program documents
How many accreditation applications have been withdrawn or not completed?	# of organizations that have withdrawn or not completed the applications	1. Program Records (Organizations registered to apply but did not complete within allotted time frame)	1. IC to provide program documents
Reach/Access			
Are organizations aware of the accreditation program?	Means in which they found out about the program # of non-participating organizations that are aware of Imagine Canada # of non-participating organizations that are not aware of the accreditation program	1. Organizations (accredited and non-accredited)	1. Surveys
Is the Standards Program adequately reaching the entire country?	# accredited organizations broken down by province # of accredited organizations broken down by major city	1. Program Documents (details of accredited organizations)	1. IC to provide program documents

Is the program reaching organizations of different sizes?	% of organizations in each of the three levels identified by Imagine Canada	1. Program Documents (list of accredited organizations and their corresponding level - 1, 2,3)	1. IC to provide program documents
Do organizations of all sizes feel they have the resources to become accredited?	% of organizations that feel the standards need for accreditation are achievable for different sized organizations	1. Organizations (accredited and non-accredited)	1. Surveys
Impact			
Has the accreditation increased confidence among donors and the public in participating organization?	# of organizations that feel the accreditation builds confidence among donors and the public # of organizations that feel they have had an increase in donor funds due to the accreditation	1. Accredited organizations	1. Surveys
Is there an increase in the number of accredited organizations?	# of organizations accredited since 2011 (broken down by year)	1. Program Documents (list of accredited organizations)	1. IC to provide program documents

7.0 Anticipated Challenges & Solutions

Challenges	Solutions
<p>Access to Organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are an estimated 170,000 charitable and non-profit organizations in Canada. A comprehensive list of all of these organizations does not exist. This limits the creation of the comparison group that is not involved with Imagine Canada in anyway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This evaluation will focus solely on registered Canadian charities. It is relatively easy to access this information through the Canadian Revenue's Agency charity listing page, and this will ensure that organizations across Canada are included in the sample.
<p>Organization Representation in Surveys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The surveys are designed to be completed by one individual at each organization. Therefore, it is not possible to gather the diverse opinions of all staff and volunteers who are involved in a single organization. The opinion of the survey participant will reflect the views of the larger organization for the purpose of this evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While every opinion is valid, this evaluation requires that the Executive Director or President of the organization is required to fill out the survey. This limits extreme bias within the survey data, as it is most likely that the Executive Director or President will have a balanced big picture understanding of the organization and its experience with Imagine Canada's Standards Program.
<p>Response Rate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is always a risk with surveys that the response rate will be low. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The evaluation will minimize the risk of low response rates by giving respondents an incentive. Respondents will have their organization entered into a draw that will allow for a waived membership fee to Imagine Canada for the next calendar year.
<p>Response Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The data collected from the surveys is mainly quantitative. This may limit the ability of respondents to answer according to their individual experiences with Imagine Canada's Standards program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This evaluation will provide one open-ended question. This question will be used to understand how the Standards program process may be improved. This question requires the most information based on the organizations unique experiences.

8.0 CES Evaluation Competencies

8.1 Respects all Stakeholders (1.3)

In order to competently and ethically complete evaluations, we have prioritized maintaining the integrity of existing stakeholder relationships, and are vigilantly mindful of our effect on the study population. Our evaluation has been designed with the nature of the non-profit sector and Imagine Canada's current relationships in mind, selecting non-intrusive lines of questioning and ensuring proper procedures with regard to: properly informing, engaging and respecting initial responses. In order to be a dynamic and effective evaluation team we strive to be inwardly critical. Prior to implementing large scale sampling of the member and non-member organization populations a pilot survey will first be implemented. If stakeholders deem that the decided methods are not appropriate to the context of this program and our evaluation goals, they will be re-evaluated and changed accordingly.

8.2 Assesses the Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness of Data (2.11-2.13)

Our evaluation design has carefully considered the appropriate approach to evaluation within Canada's non-profit sector. In this consideration we have determined which methodologies will produce data with high standards with respect to the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of our product. We must actively demonstrate that the product of our labour is reproducible and that our sample well represents the non-profit population. In addition, we have carefully selected lines of questioning which comprehensively answer evaluation questions regarding Imagine Canada's Standards Program in accreditation impact, the accreditation application process, and strategies to increase participation.

8.3 Shares Evaluation Expertise (3.9)

Although we have a great amount of faith in our team's experience, it is important to acknowledge our limitation as outsiders. We will incorporate participatory approaches to our survey design by working alongside Imagine Canada staff, developing a working partnership and leveraging insider expertise in order to empower and encourage ownership of the process. By sharing our evaluation expertise and maintaining active communication and explanation of results, Imagine Canada employees will fully understand the implications of the final product and develop capacity for future introspection.

8.4 Identifies and Monitors Required Resources (4.3-4.4)

A determination of the limitations of our evaluation will be provided. We strive to provide accurate, transparent, and realistic projections regarding the potential scope and general feasibility of the evaluation given the provided budget. Ongoing communication regarding our management of your resources is a priority, and a necessity in order for a positive working

relationship. Monthly reports on progress and budgets will be provided, and will also be available outside of regular delivery dates upon request.

8.5 Demonstrates Professional Credibility (5.10)

Keeping in mind our capacity as representatives of Imagine Canada in this evaluation process, it is important that we consistently demonstrate our legitimacy and credibility as evaluators to the organization we are working for. This will entail ready availability of full disclosures of our process, an accounting of our organizational background, and our relationship with Imagine Canada. This information will be stated as available upon initial contact with all participating organizations.

9.0 References

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