



Evaluation of Parks Canada's National Park Establishment and Expansion Sub-Program

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Office of Internal Audit and Evaluation

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Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by
the Chief Executive Officer of Parks Canada, 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Parks Establishment and Expansion sub-program involves the establishment, expansion, and in some cases, the completion of national parks (i.e., the acquisition of land). It accounts for an estimated 1% of Parks Canada's (the Agency) total annual expenditures. While it has a low materiality and corporate risk, it was identified as a commitment in the Agency's Evaluation Plans from 2009-10 to 2011-12. The evaluation also contributes to a horizontal evaluation of the Protected Area Strategy (PAS) in the Northwest Territories.

Evaluation Issues

Consistent with the requirements of the Treasury Board (TB) *Policy on Evaluation* and associated directives (2009), the evaluation addressed:

- **Relevance:** Is park establishment and expansion relevant to wider federal government outcomes? Is there a legitimate and necessary role for PCA in the establishment and expansion of national parks (reserves) (NP(R))? Is the program relevant to Canadians? Does the NP System Plan and its natural regions framework remain relevant for parks system planning?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent are the desired outputs being produced as planned? To what extent is the desired system knowledge being effectively accumulated, updated and used in program decision-making? To what extent are relationships building objectives effectively being attained? To what extent are corporate objectives and targets being achieved?
- **Efficiency and Economy:** Is the program managed efficiently (i.e., are the least amount of resources used to produce program outputs) and economically (i.e., are the least amount of resources used to influence program outcomes)?
- **Design and Delivery:** Are roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for national park establishment/expansion clear and appropriate?

Methodology

Data from multiple lines of evidence was collected for the evaluation. These included: document and file review (including analysis of a variety of secondary data from within the Agency); 23 interviews with Agency staff; 8 individual interviews with partners and stakeholders; case studies of six projects (4 establishments, 1 expansion, 1 completion); and comparison study of establishment practices in 6 jurisdictions (provincial and international).

Findings

Relevance: The establishment of national parks is consistent with the whole of government framework and a variety of international and national agreements and commitments. It is consistent with Parks Canada's legislative and policy mandate. There is broad public and stakeholder support for the activity. The program does not duplicate other federal programs.

The core of the Agency's approach to long term park system planning is to divide the country into 39 natural regions and establish a national park in each of these regions that is representative of the region's land and vegetation. A focus on representing natural regions is common in many but not all park systems we reviewed. How natural regions are defined and what types of parks or protected areas count toward representing a region also differs between park systems. We

found that the Agency's approach continued to be viewed as relevant and useful for purposes of park establishment. We also noted that the most recent published version of the NP System Plan (1997) contains a variety of information with respect to targets, processes and projects that, while relevant at the time, is now very dated.

Effectiveness: Park establishment involves a five step process from identification of several potential park areas within a natural region to the negotiation of a specific park agreement and establishing the park in legislation. The process is flexible with variations in the nature and scope of the activities undertaken, and outputs produced at each step. We found that relevant information for various steps in the process is collected, assessed, and used, with some types of information being more comprehensive than others (e.g., ecological compared to visitor information). There is clear evidence that information is shared and relationships are built to encourage local populations to participate in national park proposals.

The Agency Performance Management Framework and Corporate Plans contain several types of targets/objectives related to park establishment. Given limited resources and control over outcomes, the Agency does not specify a target date to complete the national park system. Instead targets are set to make progress in specific regions with the expectation that this will result in targeted increases in the number of regions represented by a given date. How many regions will be represented by a given date was reduced from 34 to 30 over the last 10 years and the time period to achieve the target was extended. Three new national parks were established in unrepresented regions between 2003 and 2005 (i.e., Ukkusiksalik NP, Gulf Islands NPR and Torngat Mountains NP). Despite this the Agency was unable to meet any of the targets it set for representation during this period. Currently, the Agency is targeting the establishment of national parks in two unrepresented regions by March 2015. We cautiously concluded that this target is likely to be met.

The Agency also commits to demonstrating progress in advancing the feasibility assessment process for specific park proposals, to establishing or expanding parks in already represented regions, to establish specific parks in legislation and to increase land acquisition in three existing parks. Results in each of these areas are variable with some notable successes (e.g., evidence of progress on feasibility studies in two unrepresented regions, expansion of the Nahanni NPR, the establishment of the Nááts'ihch'oh and Sable Island NPRs in represented regions; and increased land holding in specific national parks). There are also situations where the Agency has devoted time and effort to projects where key partners were not interested (e.g., expanding Waterton Lakes NP, exploring the establishment of a park near Wolf Lake in BC) or withdrew for the time being from the process (e.g., the South Okanagan - Lower Similkameen proposal in BC). The Agency has also had mixed success in meeting objectives for establishing national parks under the Canada National Parks Act.

Efficiency and Economy: Management is able to provide estimates of the overall costs of the five step park establishment and expansion activity, although the information is not readily available and direct costs of specific projects are likely underestimated given that not all relevant expenditures are coded to projects. It is clear that there is not a simple linear relationship between project expenditures and either the pace of park establishment and expansion or the outcomes which are largely outside of the Agency's control. Provincial park systems in Canada

face similar issues of variable costs, timeframes and lack of control over the establishment of protected areas.

Management conducted various analyses and made commitments to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the park establishment and expansion process during the 2007 to 2010 period. We found qualitative evidence that management uses temporary positions; the reassigning of resources when faced with project delays, and the creation of local project offices to support efficient project execution. Focusing on key information needs to support decision making and simultaneously undertaking the feasibility and negotiation steps of the process also contribute to overall efficiency. A national strategic guide to all establishment and expansion activities has not yet been developed.

Program Design: The evaluation found that there were some challenges pertaining to the clarity of roles and responsibilities, in part in regard to the transition from establishment to operation of the park. Furthermore, there is inconsistency in the way field unit staff are integrated in the national park proposal and the Agency could benefit from clearer guidance in this area.

Recommendations: Based on the evaluation findings we make two recommendations.

1. The VP Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation review the 1997 published version of the National Parks System Plan and develop an approach to ensure it remains relevant and useful given changes in process, projects and targets over time.

Management Response

Agree: By March 2015, the Protected Areas Establishment Branch will review and update the National Park System Plan to:

- (1) More accurately reflect current practices and criteria;
- (2) Identify where work has been completed and put into context the work in represented natural regions;
- (3) Describe potential future work and considerations that apply to work to complete the system;
- (4) More accurately reflect the Agency's current vision and current thinking in terms of working with Aboriginal peoples.

The Branch will work with other programs in the Agency to identify the means to better communicate the content of an updated National Park System Plan, as well as communicating the Government of Canada's establishment priorities, accomplishments, and opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the establishment process.

2. The VP Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation review, finalize, and communicate updated internal guidance to ensure that there is a consistent framework for national park establishment and expansion. Among other requirements, this guidance should address:
 - where and how risk management strategies should be incorporated into project plans;
 - mechanisms to ensure clear roles and responsibilities for specific projects (e.g., project charters);

- requirements for the financial management/coding of projects to improve financial monitoring;
- the timing, scope and goals of participation by other units of the Agency in establishment/expansion process;
- a requirement to conduct pre-feasibility and post-project analyses to identify the challenges and focus of feasibility assessments for the former, and lessons learned and best practices that could be applied to future establishment projects for the latter;
- requirements for the use of reporting mechanisms, such as those prepared in 2008 and 2010 (Business Cases and Actions Plans), provided the program determines these would provide additional value to management; and
- the practices to keep Aboriginal groups, stakeholders and other organizations informed on the status of establishment projects when they face prolonged period of inactivity.

Management Response

Agree: The Protected Area Establishment Branch will:

- (1) Finalize by December 2014 internal guidance that ensures staff are equipped with a consistent framework to guide their work on national park establishment; and
- (2) Produce a analysis on best practices and lessons learned.

Both will be informed by work to update the System Plan, the draft *Guide to an Integrated Approach on the Establishment Process (2008)*, and practical experience gained through the current and recently completed establishment projects.

New guidance will incorporate existing approaches to risk management in project plans and use of project charters addressing the timing, scope and goals of participation by other units of the Agency in the establishment process. The Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate will work within Agency processes to ensure that relevant information for financial management reporting is more easily accessible from the Parks Canada financial system.

The Branch will explore how to proactively communicate on the status of projects during periods of internal review and negotiations when there are limitations on what information can be shared during periods of inactivity due to internal review processes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Parks Canada's mandate is to:

“Protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations.”

The Agency is responsible for three major heritage systems:

- 44 National Parks (NP) of Canada
- 167 National Historic Sites (NHS) of Canada (administered by the Agency)
- 4 National Marine Conservation Areas (NMCA) of Canada

Parks Canada carries out its mandate through five programs and twenty sub-programs¹ (see Appendix A for Program Alignment Architecture - PAA). The focus of this evaluation is the National Parks Establishment and Expansion sub-program of the Heritage Places Establishment program from 2003 to 2013. The evaluation was included in the Agency's Evaluation Plans from 2009-10 to 2011-12, in keeping with the Agency's commitment under the *Treasury Board Evaluation Policy (2009)* to evaluate all direct program spending over a five-year period.

A framework to guide the evaluation was developed and approved in late 2010. In evaluation planning, national park establishment and expansion was rated as a low priority for evaluation work due to its low materiality (represented only 1% of Agency expenditures in 2011-12) and low corporate risk. The evaluation contributes to a horizontal evaluation of the Protected Area Strategy (PAS) in the Northwest Territories. The sub-program has not been subject to previous comprehensive evaluation work.

2. DESCRIPTION OF NATIONAL PARKS ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION

The core activities of the program include:

Establishment of a national park in an area that is in a healthy or natural state, or if stressed or modified, where there is potential to restore the area to a healthy, natural state,

Expansion of an existing park to increase its surface area to better represent a natural region and/or to enhance the health of the park's ecosystems, and

Completion of a park by acquiring land within existing official boundaries when the federal government does not yet own all the land.

¹ We use the terms program and sub-program throughout the evaluation rather than program activity and sub-active used at the start of the evaluation. The PAA was revised during the course of the evaluation to restructure and reduce the number of sub-programs from 20 to 19.

Park establishment and expansion typically follows a five step process, outlined below. This process is separate and distinct from the process of moving a park or an expansion of a park to fully operational status once it is established. It is important to keep the distinction in mind since a large percentage of the special purpose funding the Agency has received for “establishment” supports making a park operational (i.e., building infrastructure, creating programming, etc.). For purposes of the evaluation, the **term establishment** is limited to the initial five step process to create a national park.

2.1 Outcomes/Goals

The National Park Establishment and Expansion sub-program falls within the Agency’s broader program of Heritage Places Establishment. The expected results and performance expectations as per the Agency’s 2012-2013 Performance Management Framework (PMF) are shown below.

Table 1. Expected Results and Performance Expectations for NP Establishment and Expansion

	Expected Result	Targets
Program	Represent regions in the system of national parks	1) Increase the number of represented terrestrial natural regions from 28 in March 2007 to 29 of 39 by March 2013
Sub-Program	National Parks are created in unrepresented regions and some existing national parks are completed or expanded.	2) Make demonstrable progress towards establishing national parks in three unrepresented regions. 3) Expand one national park by March 2013 4) Increase the targeted land holdings in three unfinished national parks within available resources.

Since the 1970’s, the ultimate goal for Canada’s national parks system has been to represent each of Parks Canada’s 39 natural terrestrial regions with a national park. These regions are characterized by factors such as their geology, physiography, vegetation, wildlife and ecosystem diversity. The first target expresses the Agency commitment with respect to this goal.

The four specific targets in Table 1 existed in this form between April 2010 and March 2013. Prior to this the Agency had the same performance indicators (i.e., # of represented regions, progress in a specific number of regions, expanding a set number of existing parks) but set different target values. Starting in April 2013 the targets for representation and for number of proposals that will see progress were changed and the target to expand existing parks was dropped. Changes in the targets are reviewed below in the section on achievement of outcomes.

Past and current corporate plans have also included additional objectives such as targeting the inclusion of specific operating parks under the Canada National Parks Act and creating new national parks in already represented regions consistent with government direction. In some cases the specific timelines for achieving the objective are not clear. Commitments were also made in response to the 2008 Minister’s Roundtable² and in the 2009-2010 Corporate Plan to streamline and accelerate the park establishment process.

² Under the Parks Canada Agency Act (Section 8.1), the Minister shall at least once every two years convene a round table of persons interested in matters for which the Agency is responsible to advise the Minister on the performance by the Agency of its responsibilities and shall respond within 180 days to any written recommendations submitted during a round table.

2.2 Budget and Expenditures

Sources of funds for park establishment or expansion include A-base appropriations as well as special purpose funds.

A-Base Budgets: The five step establishment process is managed nationally through the Protected Areas Establishment Branch (PAEB). The A-base budgets for the branch for the 2010-11 and 2011-12 fiscal years were reported to be \$998K and \$1,114K respectively, including both salary and goods and services. These funds are to be used for both National Park (NP) and National Marine Conservation Area (NMCA) establishment projects. The vast majority of these funds are related to staff costs. The A-base of other business units in the Agency may also be used to support the sub-program but there is no easy method of identifying what these units routinely budget for the sub-program.

Special Purpose Funds: The major source of funds for recent national parks establishment and expansion activities is Budget 2003, from which the Agency received an estimated \$202M between April 2003 and March 2010. These funds were intended to support not only the establishment and expansion process (\$25M) but also capital investment and operating expenditures in newly established national parks (\$86M), and other projects, such as NMCA establishment (\$44M). Additional special purpose funds have since been allocated to support the establishment or expansion of specific national parks. This includes funding under Canada's Comprehensive Claims Program (\$233K annually from 2008-09 to 2013-14) and for the Advancing Conservation Interests in the Northwest Territories initiative (\$8M from 2008 to 2013), a portion of which was allocated to support the development and operation of the Sahyoue – Edacho National Historic Site and a feasibility assessment for the Thaidene Nene proposal. Budget 2010-2011 provided \$5.5 million over five years to establish the Mealy Mountains National Park in Labrador.

Actual Expenditures: Expenditures specific to the five step national park establishment process were not readily available. Management was able to provide data covering four years between 2008-09 and 2011-12 but it required several months to produce the information. Relevant expenditures are those incurred by the PAEB which manages the establishment process for both national parks and national marine protected areas. They include expenditures related to salary, G&S, grants and contributions, and advertising specific to the national parks as opposed to the marine areas aspects of their responsibilities. Some of PAEB expenditures are linked to particular park establishment or expansion projects and some are not linked to projects but represent expenditures in particular cost centers that may support more than one project.

Over the four years of data provided by management, expenditures totalled approximately \$16.3M, with average expenditures of just under \$4.1M per year. On average, about 79% of the expenditures were allocated directly to projects. Limitations of the data are discussed in section 4.3 on the efficiency and economy of the program.

2.3 Activities

The five-step process for park establishment is detailed in the Agency's *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies – National Parks Policy* (1994) and the 1997 National Parks System Plan. The steps are:

Step 1 – Identification of Representative Natural Areas

Establishment begins by identifying several areas within an unrepresented terrestrial region that meet the following two criteria: i) the areas must portray the geology, physiography, vegetation, wildlife, and ecosystem diversity characteristics of the natural region; and, ii) the areas' ecosystems must be in a healthy, natural state, or, if they are stressed or significantly modified, the area must have the potential for being restored to a natural state. Most of the work for this step was completed in the 1970's.

Step 2 – Selection of Potential National Parks

Potential sites for park establishment are to be selected from among the representative natural areas within a natural region based on criteria such as:

1. Quality of natural region representation;
2. Potential for supporting viable populations of native wildlife species;
3. Ecological integrity of the area's ecosystems;
4. Exceptional natural phenomena, and rare, threatened or endangered wildlife and vegetation;
5. Significant cultural heritage features or landscapes;
6. Opportunities for public understanding, education and enjoyment;
7. Competing land and resource uses, possible threats to the long-term sustainability of the area's ecosystems;
8. Complementarity with objectives of other existing or planned protected natural areas in the region;
9. Potential for establishing an adjacent national marine conservation area that is representative of its marine region;
10. Implications of Aboriginal rights, comprehensive land claims and treaties with Aboriginal peoples; and
11. International criteria for national parks.

The Agency can initiate the selection of candidate areas or may respond to interest expressed by third parties (i.e., local Aboriginal groups and/or environmental organizations). Before going on to step 3 (feasibility stage), consultations are to be held with provincial or territorial governments, other federal agencies, affected Aboriginal peoples, and other relevant parties. Most of the work for this step was also completed in the 1970's.

Step 3 – Assessment of National Park Feasibility

A feasibility assessment is a process that seeks to answer the question of whether a national park is desirable and feasible in a given area. Recently, these assessments have been launched through memorandums of understandings with provinces or Aboriginal organizations, such as the 2003 Memorandum of Understanding between Parks Canada and the Government of British Columbia.

The assessments are conducted in large part through consultations with relevant partners and stakeholders. Research is conducted so that the purpose and the environmental, social and economic implications of a new park or expansion proposal are clear to the various groups.

Building on available information, each proposal may be subject to several rounds of consultation on issues, such as park boundaries.

As per *National Parks Policy*, feasibility assessments should propose a boundary that:

1. Protects ecosystems and landscape features representative of the natural region;
2. Accommodates the habitat requirements of viable populations of wildlife species that are native to the natural region;
3. Includes an undisturbed core which is relatively unaffected by impacts originating from the surrounding landscape;
4. Does not fragment sensitive, highly diverse or productive natural communities;
5. Maintains drainage basin integrity;
6. Protects exceptional natural phenomena, and vulnerable, threatened or endangered wildlife and vegetation;
7. Offers opportunities for public understanding and enjoyment;
8. Results in minimum long-term disruption of the social and economic life particularly in the surrounding region; and
9. Does not encompass permanent communities.

For projects in the Northwest Territories (pre-devolution) and Nunavut, where the Government of Canada retains ownership of the land, an inventory of the non-renewable resource potential in the area is to be conducted. This study, led by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), is called the Mineral and Energy Resources Assessment (MERA) and ensures that the economic and strategic significance of mineral and energy resource potential is known prior to decision-making.

Proposed national park lands are sometimes withdrawn from other uses through appropriate federal or provincial legislation at some point during the feasibility assessment in order to provide interim protection pending final decisions.³

Step 4 – Negotiation of National Park Agreement(s)

Once a park proposal is deemed feasible, the Agency negotiates the terms and conditions under which the creation or expansion will occur. A federal-provincial agreement is usually negotiated for a province to transfer administration and control of the land to the federal government for a new national park.⁴ In northern Canada, the process differs depending on the specific jurisdiction involved. Where the territory has jurisdiction over its public land, a federal-territorial agreement is usually negotiated. This is currently the case with the Yukon Territory and, pending finalization of devolution, will soon be the case with the Northwest Territories. Crown lands in Nunavut are still the responsibility of the Government of Canada, so negotiations are principally with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), who has land management responsibilities in this area.

³ For example, lands for the proposed National Park Reserve (NPR) in the East Arm of Great Slave Lake / Thaidene Nene were withdrawn for park purposes under the *Territorial Lands Act*. In the case of the proposed NPR in the Mealy Mountains of Labrador, the provincial government provided interim protection by declaring the area mineral-exempt.

⁴ Exception included Mingan Archipelago NPR, where lands to establish the park were bought from a private landholder.

Where lands are subject to a comprehensive land claim by Aboriginal people, a new park can be established as part of a negotiated claim settlement or a national park reserve can be established pending the resolution of the claim.

New park agreements can cover many different topics, including: final park boundaries; land acquisition; details of land transfer; traditional resource harvesting; planning and management for the park and surrounding area; composition and role of a park management board; regional integration; and economic benefits.

In addition to these agreements, the Agency also undertakes to settle other private interests, such as those of long-term tenants or commercial interests (e.g., recreational fishing lodges) in the area. The Agency will negotiate Aboriginal agreements stemming from a land claim agreement or treaty rights (e.g., traditional rights to harvest) and socio-economic contracts with impacted Aboriginal groups (i.e., Impact Benefit Agreements).

A natural region is deemed to be represented in the system when step 4 is complete and the Agency has acquired the land and starts to develop and operate a park.

Step 5: Listing of Park in Legislation

National parks are formally established in legislation through an amendment to Schedule 1 or 2 of the *Canada National Parks Act*. This sets the boundaries of the new or expanded park so that these lands will have full protection under the Act (i.e., recognized uses, prohibitions of resource extraction).

In total, 40 of the 44 operational national parks or park reserves are now protected under the Act (i.e., 34 listed in Schedule 1 as national parks and six national park reserves⁵ listed in Schedule 2). Once outstanding Aboriginal land claims are resolved, and the required agreement negotiated with Aboriginal organizations, a national park reserve listed in Schedule 2 is moved to Schedule 1.

Appendix B identifies each national park and the date which these were enacted into legislation. A separate table is provided showing existing national parks and reserves by natural regions.

2.4 Human Resources, Roles, and Responsibilities

As noted, operational delivery of the five-step park establishment and expansion process is directed and controlled at National Office through the Director of Protected Areas Establishment Branch⁶. The Director reports to the Vice-President, Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate, who in turn reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Agency. In addition, the process involves various formal and informal arrangements made with the field units and the Vice-Presidents, Operations East and West/North.

⁵ Kluane NP and NPR, Nahanni NPR, Mingan Archipelago NPR, Pacific Rim NPR, Gwaii Haanas NPR, Gulf Islands NPR, and Sable Island NPR.

⁶ With the reorganization of 2012, lead responsibility for Step 5 went to the Policy, Legislation and Cabinet Affairs Group. The PAEB provides the input and advice on timing.

In principle, approvals at all stages of the process reside with the Agency CEO and Minister responsible for Parks Canada. In practice, the CEO is involved in briefings and consultations leading to an agreement (Step 3 to 5). Signing of a new park or establishment agreement and agreements with Aboriginal people, such as Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreements for new national parks in Nunavut, is done on behalf of the government by the Minister or the CEO, whose authority is derived from the *Parks Canada Agency Act*.

Parks Canada's establishment and expansion work is divided between units focusing on projects in northern and southern Canada. In most cases, a project manager located on the ground oversees a particular establishment and expansion project beginning at Step 3. The work of these local representative(s) is supported by staff with expertise in relevant field units and National Office (e.g., experts in Aboriginal affairs, negotiation, traditional uses of the land, geomatic and land surveying, tourism, socio-economic impacts, etc.).

We do not have a single, authoritative source for identifying the total number of FTEs working on national park establishment/expansion projects. Given the data available, it appears that the core, A-Base of the PAEB has remained relatively stable since 2010-11 at roughly 9 FTEs, while the B-Base (i.e., assignments) have been reduced from an estimated 18 FTEs in 2010-11 to 11 FTEs in October 2012.

2.5 Reach

The processes of park establishment and expansion depend on the involvement, cooperation and agreement of many partners, stakeholders, and interested parties. These include:

- **Other federal departments** such as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), Department of Justice (DOJ), and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan).
- **Aboriginal groups** are involved in the process in numerous ways given land claim, treaty or asserted rights, with efforts to create economic and social benefits for these groups.
- **Provincial and territorial governments** with whom the federal government must work, for example, to transfer lands for purposes of establishing or expanding a national park.
- **Independent academic and professional experts.** For example, Lakehead University has been engaged to help build the Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation's capacity to benefit from tourism and other economic opportunities that could follow park establishment in the area.
- **Non-government organizations (NGO)** including, for example, national organizations like the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF), and Nature Canada, as well as local groups.
- **Industry and commerce** including representatives of various industrial or commercial interests (e.g., farming, mining interests), as well as representatives of the tourism sector.
- **Citizens groups** in and around areas that have interests in allowed and prohibited uses, and economic and social impacts of the proposed project.
- **Municipalities** in and around areas proposed for new or expanded parks.
- **General public and private land owners** both within and outside proposed park boundaries.

The reach of most specific establishment or expansions projects is local to regional in scale (i.e., a particular provincial or territorial government, particular municipalities, non-governmental

organisations, Aboriginal communities, citizen groups, etc.), though some partners, stakeholders or interested parties may be national organizations. Ultimately, newly established or expanded national parks are expected to reach or serve visitors and Canadians.

2.6 National Park Establishment and Expansion Logic Model

The logic model showing the relationships between inputs (i.e., human resources and expenditures), activities, outputs and reach, and intermediate and long-term outcomes is shown in Table 2. The logic model provides a visual summary of the program description.

Table 2. Logic Model for National Park Establishment and Expansion

Strategic Outcome: Canadians have a strong sense of connection, through meaningful experiences, to their national parks, national historic places and national marine conservation areas and that these protected places are enjoyed in ways that leave them unimpaired for future generations.					
Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Reach	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcome
Parks Canada staff Budgets	Steps 1 and 2: Identify potential areas for new park or expansion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For proposed area(s), research: quality of natural region representation, ecological integrity, socio-economic features, competing land and resource uses, etc. Consult with other governments, communities and private interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Park System Plan List of candidate areas Research reports (environmental assessment, socio-economic studies) Records of meetings held, minutes of meetings, decisions taken 	Partners (land owners or managers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provinces and Territories Local communities Aboriginal communities Private individuals Service delivery partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCA Protected Area Establishment and Conservation Directorate Realty Services Field Units Department of Justice Surveyor General PWGSC AANDC NRCan Stakeholders/ interested parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other federal departments (EC, DFO, NRCan) Natural resources extraction industry/associations ENGO's International conservation community 	System Knowledge Improved Agency and public understanding of the potential areas for park growth or expansion, their regional context, benefits and issues, and of the surface area required to provide adequate protection for specific natural regions Relationship Building Productive collaborations with Agency partners, external partners and stakeholders System Progress Increased representation of Canada's natural regions. Greater protection of these natural regions through improved surface area coverage within the regions	System of national parks that is fully representative of Canada's natural terrestrial regions, and whose area is sufficient to protect and preserve the ecological integrity of these places for the benefit, education and enjoyment of Canadians
	Step 3: Assess feasibility of proposed new or expanded park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning (identify partners and stakeholders, assess cultural and natural resources, conduct geospatial mapping) Conducting feasibility assessment (i.e., socio-economic benefit assessment, risk analysis) Conducting MERA (for north) Developing concept for park/expansion Consultation with various groups, including the public and Aboriginals Negotiate interim land withdrawals (in some cases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility assessment report Partner and stakeholder list Natural and cultural asset evaluation Map of park boundary Socio-economic impact assessment Risk assessment / mitigation strategy MERA Vision and goal statement Basic Operational Scenario Order in Council for Interim Land Withdrawal (for north) 			
	Step 4: National park agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate/sign T&C for land transfer with province Negotiate/sign agreements with relevant Aboriginal organizations, if required Acquire third-party interests Acquire land from private owners (may occur after agreement is signed and depends on funds available for purchase) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal contractual agreement with provinces Park impact and benefit agreements with Aboriginal people Deeds of sale and titles to land 			
	Step 5: Make changes to legislation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit park/reserve for protection under CNPA Amend boundaries or status of NPR in CNPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendment to CNPA (Schedule I, II) Surveys and boundary description 			

3. EVALUATION DESIGN

3.1 Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The evaluation examined the relevance and performance (i.e., effectiveness, efficiency, and economy) of the national park establishment and expansion sub-program, consistent with the requirements of the TB *Policy on Evaluation* and related directives (2009). The scope includes park establishment, expansion and completion activities between 2003 and 2013. The process for moving a park from initial establishment to fully operational status is separate and distinct and, with the exception of some analysis of the transition between the two processes, is not included in the scope of the evaluation.

Agency evaluation staff conducted the evaluation with the majority of the work taking place between April 2011 and September 2012. Additional analysis and review of secondary data continued until December 2013. A consulting firm was engaged to assist with data collection and analysis for a related comparison study (see below).

3.2 Approach, Methodology and Limitations

The evaluation questions were originally set out in the *Framework for the Evaluation of the Establishment and Expansion of National Parks* (approved in November 2010). The evaluation addressed 10 specific questions and 16 associated expectations related to issues of relevance and performance, adapted from the original framework. The major questions are shown in Table 4. A more detailed matrix of evaluation questions, what we expected to observe, indicators and relevant data sources is found in Appendix C.

Table 3. Evaluation Issues and Questions

Relevance
1. Is park establishment and expansion relevant to wider federal government outcomes?
2. Is there a legitimate and necessary role for PCA in the establishment and expansion of national parks?
3. Is the program relevant to Canadians?
4. Does the NP System Plan and its natural regions framework remain relevant for parks system planning?
Performance
5. To what extent are the desired outputs being produced as planned?
6. To what extent is the desired system knowledge being effectively accumulated, updated and used in program decision-making?
7. To what extent are relationships building objectives effectively being attained?
8. To what extent are the corporate targets and objectives being achieved?
9. Is the program managed efficiently (i.e., is the least amount of resources used to produce program outputs) and economically (i.e., are the least amount of resources used to influence program outcomes)?
10. Are roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for national park establishment/expansion clear and appropriate?

3.2.1 Methods

The evaluation employed multiple methods of data collection.

Literature and File Review: A wide range of publicly available documents was reviewed for the evaluation; including legislation, policies, plans, reports and published literature (see Appendix D for details). Additionally, Agency files and databases (i.e., financial data) were reviewed.

Key Informant Interviews: Key informant interviews were conducted with 23 PCA staff and senior managers (i.e., 12 in the Protected Areas Establishment Branch, 7 in National Office, 4 within the offices of the VPs Operations and in selected field units). The majority of these interviews were conducted in person.

In addition, a limited number of interviews were conducted with partners and stakeholders (n=8), including representatives from other federal departments, provincial governments, NGOs, Aboriginal groups and industry groups. Interviewees were asked to provide their input regarding the relevance and effectiveness of establishment and expansion processes.

Comparison Study: A comparison study was contracted to explore national and provincial park establishment models employed in other jurisdictions, both within Canada and internationally. This analysis was based on a literature review and limited interviews with representatives of other jurisdictions (n=13) to clarify management practices and related challenges.

Case Studies: Case studies (n=6) were used to achieve an in-depth understanding of program service delivery. This included targeted literature and file review, and key informant interviews. Selected case studies included four establishment projects: Mealy Mountains (NL), South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen (BC), Nááts'ihch'oh (NWT), and Thaidene Nene (NWT). One expansion project (Nahanni NPR (NWT)) and one completion project (Bruce Peninsula NP (ON)) were also studied.

3.2.2 Strengths, Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Through the document and file review, interviews and case studies, we gained an extensive understanding of the national park establishment, expansion and completion processes. Our interviews with internal Parks Canada staff were extensive and can be considered representative of current opinion and perceptions within the Agency.

The partners and stakeholders who participated in interviews were largely identified by PCA staff. As such, they are a sample of convenience and do not necessarily provide a comprehensive or representative view of all groups involved in park establishment and expansion. In addition, the number of interviewees was limited due to the sensitive nature of consulting partners and stakeholders given the specific stage of some projects. We attempted to compensate for this limitation through a review of extensive public consultation documentation related to case studies.

The case studies themselves are a limited but a heterogeneous sample of all establishment projects focused on recent cases (i.e., since 2003) including examples both above and below 60° latitude (i.e., to reflect the two models of land ownership) and examples covering establishment, expansion and completion. While the PAEB has collected some relevant systematic information in the past to support OAG reviewing of the Agency's performance information⁷, we found that project files on the ground did not have a common structure for organizing information. This complicated efforts to assemble comparable information on each project and required more

⁷ The OAG no longer reviews information submitted in the annual performance report.

reliance on interviews to clarify the extent to which case findings were considered representative of the park establishment/expansion in general, or unique to a particular project.

Jurisdictional comparison also posed limitations. Given the fundamental differences between jurisdictions, finding processes with comparable goals and scope was difficult. Documentary evidence was also limited to what is publicly available and could be obtained in the course of the evaluation work.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1 Relevance

Question 1 Is park establishment and expansion relevant to wider federal government outcomes?	Indicators
<p>Expectation: The establishment/expansion of national parks is consistent with the federal government’s priorities and agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent to which establishment/expansion is consistent with GC goals, objectives, mandates, and priorities <p>National park establishment and expansion activities are consistent with three of the priorities in the federal government’s Whole of Government Framework (i.e., high-level outcome areas defined for the government as a whole). First, park establishment contributes directly to a <i>clean and healthy environment</i>, “to ensure that Canada's environment is restored and protected”. Secondly, it contributes to a <i>vibrant Canadian culture and heritage, as new and expanded national parks</i> “support Canadian culture and enhance knowledge of Canada’s history and heritage”. Finally, it contributes to a <i>strong economic growth</i> by creating an “environment conducive to economic growth [...] in all regions of Canada”.</p>

Park establishment also contributes to Canada’s international and national commitments. For example in:

- 1972: Canada committed to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage *whose* objectives are the protection, conservation and presentation of cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value.
- 1992: Canada signed the International Convention on Biological Diversity, requiring the country to, among other things, establish a system of protected areas and develop, where necessary, guidelines for the selection, establishment and management of protected areas to conserve biological diversity.
- 1992: Canada's federal, provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Environment, Parks and Wildlife agreed, among other things, to complete Canada’s networks of protected areas representative of Canada’s land-based natural regions by the year 2000.
- 1995: the Government of Canada released its Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, where it further committed to “make every effort to complete Canada's networks of protected areas representative of land-based natural regions, by the year 2000”.

The establishment and expansion of national parks in northern Canada is also part of the Government of Canada’s Northern Strategy. This strategy recognizes that the North is a fundamental part of our heritage and identity, and that, among other areas, protecting the North’s

environmental heritage is a priority. The Northern Strategy is linked through commitments to the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy (PAS), which was signed by the Government of the NWT and the Government of Canada in 1999. Canada’s Northern Strategy has recently committed \$15 M over three years to support the PAS. More recently, through its Arctic Foreign Policy Statement (2010), the government “continues to plan for additional protected areas in the North and has an ambitious program to expand the national park system, including the creation of three new national parks. The Government of Canada is moving forward in consultation with communities and industry to add nearly 70,000 square kilometres to Canada’s Northern protected areas network.” Finally, through its Sustainable Development Strategy (2010), the federal government has as one goal to “maintain productive and resilient ecosystems with the capacity to recover and adapt; and protect areas in ways that leave them unimpaired for present and future generations”. To that end, it “is taking action and investing in conservation and protection of ecosystems [...] by setting aside land for national parks.”

Various Speeches from the Throne and federal budgets have also affirmed the government’s commitment to establishing or expanding national parks as noted previously in section 2.2 on special purpose funding.

Question 2	Indicators
Is there a legitimate and necessary role for PCA in the establishment and expansion of national parks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which establishment/expansion is consistent with the Agency’s mandate and priorities. • Extent to which the Agency’s role in park establishment/expansion is necessary. • Extent to which the Agency has looked at alternative models for establishment/expansion.

Expectation: The establishment/ expansion of national parks are consistent with Agency mandate and priorities.

The *Parks Canada Agency Act* (1998) states that it is “in the national interest to protect the nationally significant examples of Canada’s natural and cultural heritage in the national parks” and “to include representative examples of Canada’s land and marine

natural regions in the systems of national parks and national marine conservation areas.” The *Canada National Parks Act* (2000) establishes how Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 of the Act may be amended for the purposes of establishing or enlarging a park or park reserve provided that the federal government has clear title and agreement from province where the land is situated. This aspect of the Agency’s mandate is in turn reflected in specific corporate priorities and performance targets as shown above in Table 1.

The evaluation found evidence of a necessary role for Parks Canada. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) – the world’s largest global environmental network – has adopted protected area management categories to classify protected areas according to their management objectives. Canada’s national parks fall under Category II – National Parks.⁸ In its 1994 *Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories*, the IUCN suggested that ownership and management of these areas should normally be by the highest competent

⁸ “Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.”

authority of the nation having jurisdiction over it; in Canada, this would be Parks Canada as the Agency designated by the federal government to manage these areas.

More recently, IUCN guidance (2008) has recognized that national parks may also be vested in another level of government, council of indigenous people, foundation or other legally established body. For example, Australia's national parks predate the Federation of Australia and are thus run by state governments. Different models also exist where Aboriginal groups play a central role in managing the national park, be it with a majority of members on the board of management (e.g., Kakadu National Park, Australia) or through transferring the management of operation, protection and enhancement activities to the local Aboriginal association (Quebec parks in the Nunavik region).

Parks Canada's ability to establish and expand national parks requires support from existing landholders, including provincial governments and impacted Aboriginal groups. This support does not exist in all areas. In addition, particularly in southern Canada, the area of undeveloped land available to complete the national park system is shrinking. The Agency has used a shared or cooperative management model in a few cases to support establishment of national marine conservation areas (e.g., the Saguenay-St-Lawrence Marine Park is being managed jointly by the Governments of Canada, through Parks Canada, and Quebec in association with local bodies). However, the *Canada National Parks Act* still requires that the federal government own the land making up a national park.

Other government and non-government organizations also manage networks of protected areas that contribute to the representativeness of Canada's land-based natural regions. However, it is unlikely that these could replace the role of national parks as each jurisdiction's specific goals and approach to conservation differs. For example, while Environment Canada also manages a system of federal protected areas (i.e., Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and National Wildlife Areas), only national parks require Crown ownership of both the surface and subsurface land title. Provincial and territorial protected areas serve a variety of objectives that can be more or less restrictive (i.e., may not permit recreation or may allow for resource extraction).

Question 3	Indicators
Is the program relevant to Canadians?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder support exists for national park establishment/expansion. • Canadians support conservation and the Agency's work in it.

Expectation: There is public support for the national park system. Parks Canada's 2012 National Survey of Canadians found that Canadians continue to assign the highest level of responsibility for the protection of natural areas to the federal government. Of those surveyed, 96% of Canadians indicated the federal government bears a lot (80%) or some (16%) responsibility for protecting the country's natural areas and wilderness. Furthermore, almost nine in ten Canadians supported the creation of new parks. Previous surveys (2009, 2005, and 2002) showed similar results.

The survey also found that Canadians most support the use of their tax dollars by the federal government to maintain existing national parks, and that the creation of new parks is seen as a lower priority. While 72% of respondents strongly supported the maintenance of existing parks, only 48% strongly supported the creation of new parks. The percentage of respondents

who supported or strongly supported establishment and maintenance of existing national parks was 86% and 95% respectively.

A similar pattern was evident in Parks Canada’s 2009 Stakeholder and Partner Engagement Survey, where 85% of Canadians think it is *critically important* to have a federal organization responsible for national parks. Again, a much greater percentage of respondents supported maintaining existing national parks as *critically important* compared to establishing new national parks.

Support for individual national park proposals are discussed in Question 7 on relationship building (section 4.2.2).

Question 4	Indicators
Does the NP System Plan and its natural regions framework remain relevant for parks system planning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The framework is seen to be relevant • It is periodically reviewed and updated as necessary

Expectation: There is support for the NP System Plan and its regions and a process in place to review the plan periodically.

Under the *Parks Canada Agency Act* (section 6.2), there is a requirement that the Agency produce long term plans for the systems of national parks, national historic sites and national marine conservation areas. The requirement for a NP System Plan predates the current

Act. The preamble to the Act indicates that the park system is based on protecting *representative examples of natural regions*.

The most current version of the plan dates from 1997 (i.e., the third edition). The plan divides Canada into 39 distinct "National Park Natural Regions" based on geology, physiography, vegetation, wildlife and ecosystem diversity (see Appendix E for map). The ultimate objective is to complete the national park system by representing each natural region. The plan provides a clear end state for the system of national parks.

The majority but not all of the park systems we reviewed in other jurisdictions⁹ also include the concept of representing natural regions or ecosystems in their system planning although our understanding is that PCA was among the first to use this approach.

Provincial governments each have their own

BC Ecoregion Classification

From larger units to smaller ones:

- Ecodomains: Area of broad climatic uniformity (4).
- Ecodivision: Area of broad climatic and physiographic uniformity (7).
- Ecoprovince: Area with consistent climatic processes, oceanography, relief and regional landforms (10).
- Ecoregion: Area with major physiographic and minor macroclimatic or oceanographic variation (47).
- Ecosections: Areas with minor physiographic and macroclimatic or oceanographic variations (139).

Source: **The British Columbia Ecoregion Classification**

⁹ The US National Park System Plan is not based on the concept of representing natural regions (<http://usparks.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.nps.gov>)

systems for classifying regions (e.g., see text box for the classification approach for British Columbia) that do not correspond to the Parks Canada approach. The Agency itself has different schemes for classifying regions (e.g., bioregions used for administrative purposes for structuring ecological monitoring programs which group parks differently than natural regions used for system planning).¹⁰

The Rouge National Urban Park

As a result of a commitment in the 2011 Speech from the Throne, Parks Canada is receiving \$140 over 10 years towards establishing, developing and operating the Rouge National Urban Park. The park is being established on the east side of the Greater Toronto Area. The new park differs from traditional national parks in several respects including having its own establishment legislation, which unlike traditional national parks does not make the maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity the first priority in all aspects of park management. The park is not considered relevant for purposes of representing a natural region. The establishment process itself was managed differently (i.e., it was not part of the work of the PAEB). The park responds in part to Government and Agency objectives to reach out and engage urban Canadians.

Although provincial governments have a focus on regional representation in their parks system, they also have distinctions between different types of parks and protected regions.¹¹ Representation of regions may be achieved through the establishment of many parks or different kinds of protected areas within a given region.¹²

In contrast, the Agency establishes a single type of national park although there is a recent exception with the establishment of the Rouge National Urban Park (see text box). A region is considered to be represented when at least one park is established within it although situations occur where multiple parks within a region may be created.

We found that Agency's core framework for park establishment (i.e., setting out 39 natural regions and seeking to represent each of these in the system) was widely endorsed by those interviewed for the evaluation. The majority of respondents indicated that the regions as defined did not require updating. The framework itself was viewed as a relevant, useful, easy to understand and communicate, and as providing a science based rationale for the selection of specific national parks for establishment, while supporting a systematic rather than ad-hoc approach to the activity. Some respondents in interviews offered suggestions for improving future versions of the plan by adding different types of content (e.g., effects of climate change on national parks or how parks contribute to improving habitat corridors and ecosystem connectivity).

The last two published System Plans date from 1990 and 1997. There is no set requirement or process for determining if and when the published plan should be updated. Both versions of the

¹⁰ For example, the parks representing the St Lawrence Lowlands natural region (i.e., St. Lawrence Islands, Georgian Bays Islands and La Mauricie) are not considered to be part of the same bioregion.

¹¹ Alberta for example has seven types of parks (see <http://www.albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/management-land-use/legislation-regulations.aspx> for classifications). BC has three classes of parks as well as other recreation or conservation areas, and ecological reserves (see http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/aboutBCParks/prk_desig.html for classifications)

¹² See for example <http://www.albertaparks.ca/albertaparksca/management-land-use/current-parks-system/boreal-forest.aspx> for how Alberta shows multiple kinds of protected areas as contributing to representation of a region.

plans are very similar in structure and content. The plans provide the most readily available public information describing the 39 natural regions (i.e., the land, vegetation and wildlife that characterize each region). This content forms the major portion of the documents and is unchanged in the two iterations of the plan. Another aspect of the plans which did not change is the description of the park establishment process (i.e., steps 1 through 5).

The plans also provide some time sensitive information related to context influencing system completion.¹³ It reports the number of regions represented in the system at the time (i.e., 21 in 1990 and 24 as of 1997), the status of projects to establish parks in specific unrepresented regions, references to expanding some already established parks and targets for completing the system (i.e., in 1997 it was suggested the system would be complete by 2000¹⁴). These aspects of the documents amount to a kind of performance reporting charting progress toward system completion. This function of the plan has largely been superseded by the annual Corporate Plans and Performance Reports, as well as the *State of Canada's Natural and Historic Places Reports*.¹⁵

The Agency's public website indicates that the 1997 System Plan does not reflect the current extent of system completion and that new parks have been created since the document was published. It refers readers to other parts of the website for a current version of the map of represented regions and provides links to four specific establishment proposals (i.e., Qausuittuq on Bathhurst Island in Nunavut, Bowen Island in BC, South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen also in BC, and Rouge in Ontario). These proposals do not cover all of the Agency's current establishment, expansion or completion projects, and some of the links simply serve to indicate that proposals are no longer being pursued (see section 4.2. for more on the status of projects). The inclusion of the Rouge National Urban Park proposal in the examples is potentially confusing since the park is not intended to contribute to system completion. There are no links to current corporate plans or reports that would provide readers with up to date information on the full range of current projects and initiatives.

OVERALL FINDING: RELEVANCE

The establishment of national parks is consistent with the Whole of Government Framework and a variety of international and national agreements and commitments. Internationally, establishment of parks at the federal or state/provincial level is a common instrument of government policy.

Park establishment is consistent with Parks Canada's legislative and policy mandate. There is broad public and stakeholder support for the activity although not as strong as the support for maintaining existing national parks. The program does not duplicate other federal programs.

The key feature guiding Parks Canada's establishment process, (i.e., classification of Canada into

¹³ For example, the 1990 version of the plan references the government's environmental action plan (The Green Plan) as a driver of establishment initiatives.

¹⁴ Plans to complete the system by 2000 followed from commitments noted previously in 1992 and 1995 (see page 13).

¹⁵ Under current legislation the Agency produces the State of Report every five years.

nature regions for representation in the system) is common in many parks systems although the nature of the regions and how representation is achieved differs between jurisdictions. The Agency’s establishment framework is widely endorsed as relevant and useful in park planning. The actual published System Plan (i.e., from 1997) contains the most easily accessible public information on the nature of each of the 39 natural regions and the park establishment processes. It also contains a variety of information on targets, approaches and projects that is now dated and not reflective of the current reality as set out in the Agency’s corporate plans. There are some links on the Agency’s website to more recent information but these do not cover the complete range of current activities and initiatives as set out in Corporate Plans, and do not distinguish how new types of parks (e.g., the Rouge National Urban Park) relate to key objectives of the System Plan.

4.2 Effectiveness

This section of the report is sub-divided into two parts, the first focusing on aspects of performance related to outputs and project planning, and the second related to the achievement of outcomes (knowledge, relationship building, and objectives in corporate plans).

4.2.1 Outputs and Project Planning

Question 5	Indicators
To what extent are the desired outputs being produced as planned?	Extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key outputs are planned and delivered consistent with commitments. • Rationale for changes to expected outputs (i.e., not produced or more or different outputs produced) is documented.

Expectation: Key outputs are planned and produced consistent with commitments. Key outputs are presented in the Logic Model (Table 2); these are numerous and exist at each step of the establishment and expansion process. Throughout the projects that we reviewed as part of the case studies (n=5), we saw evidence of these outputs being planned and delivered.

While the NP Policy sets out the five-step process for parks establishment, the policy also recognizes that this process is not rigid, noting that “each situation is unique and the steps leading up to the creation of a new national park reflect individual circumstances.”

A lot of the work for Step 1 (identification), and to a lesser degree, Step 2 (selection), was done in the 1970s and 1980s, when the System Plan was developed and researched. While some work occurred between 2003 and 2010, no identification /selection work is currently ongoing as the Agency’s focus is on completing work on active proposals. Some of the proposed parks have been on file since the System Plan was initiated, such as the Thaidene Nene and Mealy Mountains proposals. For these two parks, early land withdrawals have allowed for their area to be exempt from development, to maintain its natural and cultural values.

A Guide to an Integrated Approach to the Establishment Process was drafted in 2007 but this approach was never formally adopted. We found it to be a useful guide as it provides a comprehensive framework, with a focus on Step 3 where information gathering, analysis and

consultations are of greatest importance. The document recognizes that gathering and managing information needs to be purposeful and related to study objectives, and as comprehensive as possible at this stage when outcomes are not assured. Program staff emphasized that consultation is now a critical part of the feasibility assessment for all proposals.

At Step 3, all projects go through a planning stage where some key outputs are identified and target dates set. However, there is not a systematic process, template or methodology for this planning step. The outputs produced at this step also differ, depending on each proposal's specific issues and challenges. For example, a key output in the South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen was a proposed land management regime for grazing, whereas developing a draft framework for managing traditional land use was a key output for the Mealy Mountains proposal.

The feasibility assessment stage for each project does not necessarily result in a final report that concludes on the feasibility of the proposal based on the information collected. Of the projects reviewed, only the South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen produced this kind of report. In other cases, program staff indicated that formal recommendations, political decisions or announcements were the final output of Step 3.

Delays in Planned Outputs: All of the projects included in the case studies experienced significant delays for one or more specific outputs. Delays existed in the completion of a feasibility assessment, the launch of a communications strategy and website, final determination of boundaries, and final negotiation of Impact and Benefit Plan. Numerous reasons were given to explain delays against expected timelines:

- lack of resources by other partners and stakeholders to fulfill the consultation requirements;
- alignment with the political decisions at all levels (e.g., numerous delays in preparing for announcements);
- election cycles at different political levels (federal, provincial, Aboriginal, etc.) which require putting the proposal on the backburner, then briefing newcomers;
- delays by partner governments in releasing key information to move forward with the file (e.g., MERA), and
- challenges in engaging important groups, especially when there are broader land claim negotiation issues.

In contrast, we noted the experience of Sable Island NPR that proceeded through the feasibility assessment and negotiation of agreements in approximately two years. Factors contributing to the rapid completion of this proposal included:

- the geography of the area (i.e., a small area that is remote with only one Aboriginal group and no local landowners or communities to consult);
- the surface land was owned by the federal government and already designated as a protected area although not to the extent offered by national park status; and
- consensus existed on the proposal, including strong political support from both the federal and provincial governments.

While Parks Canada can work to influence the pace of the establishment process, many of the factors that support progress, or result in delays, are essentially outside of the program's control.

Project Planning and Tracking: In addition to its yearly reporting on progress in its Corporate Plan and Annual Report¹⁶, there have been two systematic reviews of status of various park proposals (i.e., Business Cases in 2008 and Action Plans in 2010). These provided senior management with more complete information on all of the park establishment and expansion projects including the park proposals' considerations, risk management, funding, expected outcomes, and next key steps. These provided a good check-in on the status of the proposals, and what the critical paths to success were. Besides these initiatives, overall we found limited documented evidence of more recent project planning and tracking. Some staff has brought to our attention that a new project management "standard" (project charters) would likely be developed for each active project, which could harmonize project planning. We encourage the PAEB to continue to implement this approach.

4.2.2 Outcomes

Question 6	Indicators
<p>To what extent is the desired system knowledge being effectively accumulated, updated and used in program decision-making?</p>	<p>Extent to which:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Relevant knowledge is being accumulated. 2) Agency officials are satisfied with the system knowledge available for decision-making (e.g., sufficiency, timeliness, relevance) 3) Agency officials use system knowledge in decision-making 4) Stakeholders and others understand intent and purposes of particular park establishment or expansion

Expectation: Relevant information is collected, assessed, and used.

The Agency's approach to developing system knowledge has slowly evolved from a focus on collecting large amounts of data and information to a more targeted focus on information that is essential to move the file forward. In the case studies, we found evidence that a wide variety of information was collected and assessed. This includes the following types:

- **Ecological Information:** Criteria related to ecology and natural resources form the central lens through which national parks are established. We found this to be the area where the most data was collected. Examples of this activity identified in the case studies included research on wildlife (i.e., bear, caribou), fire, land cover, watersheds, etc. We did not identify any issues with the quality of the information.

The study area in all but one proposal was reported as having a high degree ecological integrity, as the areas were in a fairly natural state with little land use. The only exception was South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen, which has seen dense land use and would require more work to restore it to a natural state, particularly given the small size of the land and the pressures from the surrounding areas.

- **Socio-economic Information:** In general, socio-economic data was described as being harder to obtain and analyse, and is subject to more debate. Some staff and stakeholders have indicated that there have been issues in the past with the quality of this data for some files.

¹⁶ These typically include the number of represented regions and brief information on the status and progress of each active proposal.

Agency management acknowledged difficulties with obtaining reliable data. A new approach is being undertaken with Thaidene Nene, where a cost-benefit assessment is being conducted which will integrate ecological, cultural, Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK), and renewable and non-renewable resource information to make informed decisions.

Another key source of information for projects north of 60° is the Mineral, Energy and Resource Assessments (MERA) conducted by NRCan, but funded by the Agency. These provide considerable information on the mineral wealth in a given area and are heavily relied on to make informed decisions about boundaries, but it was noted that they are costly (\$1M or more) when compared to the costs of other data gathering. While the process helps provide great information on the value of the land that could become a national park, it does not usually look at the area outside the proposed park where potential for resource development could be superior to resources in the study area.

- **Tourism/Visitor Information:** Specific details on how a park would be operationalized, what visitor facilities or services it would provide, and how these would impact on local communities were generally lacking. This kind of information was thought to be important by some of the stakeholder groups and field unit staff we interviewed, however, other program staff indicated that they have learned from past experiences that it is better to keep the feasibility assessment focussed on key concerns for establishment and leave issues such as tourism infrastructure to the management planning phase (post-establishment).
- **Cultural and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge:** The files reviewed also contained substantial information on cultural and Aboriginal traditional knowledge. Examples included archaeological surveys, elder's workshops, and cultural history studies. Reviews indicated that contribution agreements have been used to facilitate the involvement of Aboriginal groups in the data collection. Staff feel this can lead to larger positive outcomes than just the information gathered because it helps build relationships for the future.

Quantifying the extent to which the information is used is difficult. However it is clear from our case studies that in some instances the information collected had an impact on establishment proposals. We noted instances where the Agency has modified its approaches based on results of feasibility assessments, either by reducing park boundaries to respect local sensitivities, further developing policy tools (e.g., grazing framework, traditional use framework), or changing the entire approach to establishment. For example, the Nááts'ihch'oh NPR proposal was initially to be part of one Nahanni NPR expansion. However, to respect the *Sahtu Dene and Metis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement*, the Nááts'ihch'oh proposal was advanced as a distinct national park. The key was catching these pitfalls early enough not to derail or delay the process. To that end, some interviewees suggested doing more pre-assessment work to get a better understanding of the area and its people, and scope the feasibility assessment accordingly.

<p>Expectation: Information is shared with relevant stakeholders, Aboriginal groups, and community</p>	<p>Information sharing is an essential activity in all collaborative work. Of the five park proposals we reviewed, one (i.e., Thaidene Nene) has yet to undertake this step although it was planned for the future. In the other four cases, significant efforts were made to provide information to the public through tools</p>
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such as websites, newsletters, flyers, presentations, consultation reports, and public open houses. In some cases, the Agency has also measured the extent to which its communications were effective. For example, a survey measuring understanding with the Nááts'ihch'oh proposal showed good results.¹⁷

Most information about a park proposal is shared at the feasibility stage. Once the proposal enters the negotiation phase, sharing with the public is rare as efforts focus on the groups involved in negotiation with whom information is shared in confidence. The extent of information sharing also depends on the ownership of the information. For example, when information is obtained through contribution agreements with Aboriginal groups, it is considered to be more sensitive and is thus less likely to be shared.

The negative impact resulting from a lack of information sharing is clear. For example, in both the Mealy Mountains and the South Okanagan-Lower Similkameen, a long period of inactivity in communications led to speculation and negativity about whether the proposals would advance.

Question 7	Indicators
<p>To what extent are relationships building objectives effectively being attained?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency has evaluated public support for park establishment and expansion proposals • Agency participants in public consultations indicate that the community is appropriately and adequately represented in the consultation process • Feasibility assessment includes stakeholder identification and assessment • Partner and stakeholder list indicates coverage of major landholder, Aboriginal, commercial and other local interests • Consultation reports indicate the active participation of a range of local interest groups, including members of the public • Stakeholders indicate that they feel included and take part in the process • Stakeholders do not complain about impediments to participation

Relationships are essential to park establishment, and the Agency’s approach has changed significantly since the last the century. In the past, as one author put it, “Parks Branch chose land it thought appropriate for a park, the provinces expropriated the land, and the landowners settled.”¹⁸ Where such an approach was followed the Agency has been faced with long term challenges in maintaining effective relationships with communities. In light of this, the Agency has embraced “collaborative relationships – especially those with Aboriginal groups and regional residents (including communities and stakeholder groups) – that are key to the success of the project, and to the long term support and stewardship of a site”.

The *Canada National Parks Act* (s.12) stipulates that “the Minister shall, where applicable, provide opportunities for public participation at the national, regional and local levels, including participation by Aboriginal organizations, bodies established under land claims agreements and representatives of park communities, [...] in the establishment of parks.” This is reinforced in the Agency’s policies and corporate plans. Relationship building is also frequently cited by interviewees as the cornerstone of recent successes in park establishment work.

¹⁷ Following the consultation program: 85% agreed that they had a better understanding of Parks Canada’s Proposal, and 81% agreed they had understood why it’s important to create this NPR. [n=91, individuals who submitted comment forms]

¹⁸ MacEachern, Alan. 2001. *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935–1970*. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

The jurisdictional comparison study demonstrated the importance of consultation and collaboration with stakeholders. All provinces, territories and countries identify the involvement of interested parties early in the process as a key best practice including the value of:

- Working with a regional groups to obtain and share information, and gain a better understanding of their expectations to find a park proposal beneficial to all;
- Effectively managing expectations by being transparent about the costs, targets, and timeframes to encourage accountability and combat system inertia; and
- Facilitating connections, exchanges, and linkages among communities that are involved in protected area establishment.

Relationship building for Parks Canada must also consider the federal government's duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples. The introduction of section 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and more recent court decisions have heightened the legal significance of Aboriginal consultations. Consultation with Aboriginal peoples in Parks Canada has increasingly become a significant factor in the operational policies of the Agency, particularly where it relates to parks establishment.

Expectation: The local population support establishment or expansion initiatives.

Four of the five files that we reviewed had evaluated public support for the proposal through a variety of mechanisms, (e.g., open houses, comment cards and e-mails, and surveys conducted by the Agency or third parties). Evidence of

various kinds of consultations is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Types and Levels of Support of Park Establishment and Expansion¹⁹

Project	Evidence of Support
Thaidene Nene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No public consultation as some priority work is still ongoing with the Aboriginal groups in the area.
Nahanni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Survey (2008) found 99.6% support the park expansion (n=2134). • Evidence that 12 meetings were held with Aboriginal leaders and third party stakeholders. • Open houses
Nááts'ihch'oh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Survey (2010) found 96% support the creation of the NPR (n=1603). • Evidence of 9 meetings with Aboriginal leaders and communities and 13 meetings with third party stakeholders. • Open houses
South Okanagan–Lower Similkameen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Survey found 38.6% support establishment of (the proposed) national park; 19.4% oppose; 9.9% neither support nor oppose, 4.7% don't know; 27.1% need more information. (n=777) • An estimated 108 stakeholder groups were consulted • Open houses
Mealy Mountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of several public open houses (6 communities, 76 comments). • Establishment of a feasibility assessment steering committee to guide the study and to ensure that a comprehensive, community-based planning process was undertaken. It consisted of members of Aboriginal and local groups. Committee members played an

¹⁹ Public survey data comes from Nahanni Park Expansion: Analysis of Public Concern Report (2008); Proposed Nááts'ihch'oh NPR – Final Consultation Report (2010); Similkameen-South Okanagan Amenity Migrant Study, Special Report to Parks Canada: Empirical Analysis of Selected Survey Questions, Similkameen Valley Planning Society, (January, 2008).

Table 4. Types and Levels of Support of Park Establishment and Expansion¹⁹

Project	Evidence of Support
	active role in seeking participation and obtaining consensus. This unique arrangement yielded positive outcomes for agreeing on a park boundary and to launch negotiations.

Expectation: Important stakeholders are active participants.

For the four cases where public consultations were carried out, we found that communities close to the area of the park proposals were generally consulted twice; the

first time, around the notion of the park and broad study area, and a second time with more precise projected park boundaries.

Evidence indicates that there was sufficient consultation with many organizations of different scope to represent coverage of major landholders’ (Crown in the North), Aboriginal, commercial and local interests. Consultation reports were detailed and provided ample evidence of public discussions, including the scope of the specific meetings. In the case of Nááts’ihch’oh, the following was asked of participants of the consultation program (n=91): “I know how I can get involved and share my thoughts and views”, with 76.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Question 8	Indicators
To what extent are the corporate targets and objectives being achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of represented regions • Extent progress is demonstrated in targeted establishment or expansion projects • Expanding existing parks and establishing targeted new parks in represented regions • Establishing parks in legislation • Extent of land acquisition in targeted parks

Expectation: Targets and objectives in the PMF and the corporate plan are achieved or can reasonably be expected to be achieved

As noted in section 2.1 there are several types of targets in the Agency PMF and in Corporate Plans. Performance with respect to each type of target is reviewed below.

1) Representing Regions in the National Park System: Although the ultimate goal is to represent all 39 natural regions in the national parks system, the Agency does not have a target date for when this will be achieved given its limited degree of control over the process and limited resources.

In 2002, the government created the *Federal Action Plan (2002) to Establish National Parks and National Marine Conservation Areas* with a target to establish ten new national parks by March 2008. At the time there were 14 unrepresented regions. The plan set the stage for the Agency’s commitment to substantially complete the system by March 2008 (i.e., move from 25 unrepresented regions as of March 2003 to 34 of 39 by March 2008). The subsequent history of targets is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Historical Performance Targets for Number of Regions Represented in the Parks System

Corporate Plan(s)	Number of Regions Targeted for Representation	Target Date
2003-04 to 2006-07	34 of 39	March 2008
2007-08	30 of 39	March 2008
2008-09 and 2009-10	30 of 39	March 2010
2010-11 to 2012-13	29 of 39	March 2013
2013-14	30 of 39	March 2015

Source: PCA Corporate Plans; 2003-04 to 2013-14

By 2007, the Agency was indicating that it would not be able to meet the original target set out in the 2002 Action Plan given available resources, and scaled back its commitment to represent five new regions by March 2008. The target was further revised over time, either to reduce the number of areas to be represented and/or to expand the timeline to reach the number of targeted regions. Changes to the targets reflect changing status of various projects (e.g., changes in partner or stakeholder engagement) and/or availability of funds to develop and operate a new park once it is established.

Since 2003, the Agency has established new national parks in three unrepresented regions:

- Ukkusiksalik NP in Nunavut (2003), representing region 16: Central Tundra
- Gulf Islands NPR in BC (2003), representing region 2: Strait of Georgia Lowlands
- Torngat Mountains NP (2005), representing region 24: Northern Labrador Mountains

Establishment of these parks increased the number of represented regions from 25 to 28 where it remains to the present time. In consequence, the Agency did not meet any of the targets set between 2003 and March 2013 for the number of regions that would be represented in the system.

In April 2013 the target changed to focus on representing two new regions by March 2015. These are:

- East Coast Boreal (Region 21) with the proposed Mealy Mountains NPR in Labrador
- Western High Arctic (Region 38) with Qausuittuq NP proposal in Nunavut

Both projects are at the negotiations phase of the establishment process. The commitment to protect these areas by 2015 was included in the 2013 Speech from the Throne.²⁰ Given the level of government commitment to complete these processes and the status of negotiations at the time of the evaluation, we cautiously concluded that the Agency will likely achieve its current target.²¹

²⁰ The commitment was to “Complete, by 2015, its work to protect wilderness lands in Nááts’ihch’oh, Bathurst Island and the Mealy Mountains” so that it covers park establishment in unrepresented and already represented areas (i.e., the Nááts’ihch’oh proposal is in a represented area).

²¹ Our caution arises partly from the fact that the Agency has repeatedly expressed optimism about its ability to meet previous targeted levels of representation in the system (e.g., in the 2011-2012 DPR for example it was stated that the Agency was well positioned to meet its target of having 29 regions represented by March 2013) but has not been able to deliver on these expectations.

- 2) **Making Demonstrable Progress toward Establishing Parks in Unrepresented Areas:** In addition to targeting the establishment of new national parks as noted above, the Agency has committed at various points to making demonstrable progress in the establishment process in an additional four of the 11 unrepresented regions²², without setting a target for final park agreements in these regions. In recent Corporate Plans (i.e., starting in 2010-2012), the commitment is more specific and refers to completing the feasibility assessment phase of the process for a specific number of projects within the five year planning horizon of the plans.

The table below provides an overview of the status of projects in the four unrepresented regions as March 2013.

Table 6. Establishment Projects in Unrepresented Regions

Unrepresented Region Name	Region	Park Proposal	Province/Territory	Current Status
Interior Dry Plateau	3	South Okanagan - Lower Similkameen	BC	The Agency reported in March 2008 that the feasibility assessment (Step 3) was nearly finalized. However, subsequently the process stalled. In March 2012, the Agency indicated that in response to local community concerns, the Governments of BC and Canada had decided not to continue work on the feasibility assessment at this time. The project no longer appears in the Agency plans.
Northern Interior Plateaux Mountains	7	Wolf Lake proposal	BC/Yukon	After confirming a potential site for a national park (Step 2) in the Northern Interior Plateaux Mountains (Region 7, Wolf Lake proposal) the Agency was unsuccessful in persuading the Territorial Government and first nations to participate in a feasibility assessment. After March 2009 the project was no longer included in Agency plans. ²³
Manitoba Lowlands	14	Manitoba Lowlands	MB	Feasibility assessment is ongoing for the Manitoba Lowlands proposal and both a feasibility assessment and negotiations are ongoing for the Thaidene Nene proposal. We found evidence of tangible progress on a year to year basis in these two cases although the evidence is more compelling in the case of the Thaidene Nene proposal (i.e., including interim land withdrawal for the Thaidene Nene proposal).
Northwestern Boreal Uplands	17	Thaidene Nene East Arm of Great Slave Lake	NWT	

When the feasibility assessments will be completed for the Manitoba Lowlands and Thaidene Nene proposals is not clear. The Agency has committed to completing these in successive versions of its Corporate Plans each of which has a different five year planning horizon (e.g. the 2010-2011 plan implies the Thaidene Nene study will be completed no later than March 2016, but inclusion of the same commitment in the 2013-2014 plan implies it will be completed no later than March 2019).

²² There was no work to establish a national park in Regions 20, 22, 23 and 25, respectively the Laurentian Boreal Highlands, the Boreal Lake Plateau, Whale River and Ungava Tundra Plateau all of which are entirely or principally in Quebec where the provincial policy is not to transfer provincial lands; and region 28 in the Southampton Plain in Nunavut.

²³ Parts of the Nahanni and Nááts'ihch'oh NPRs extend into the Northern Interior Plateaux Mountains Region 7 but these are not considered representative of the region's ecosystem so they do not count toward representing the region in the national parks system.

- 3) **Expanding Existing Parks:** As of 2003, the Agency Corporate Plans identified possible expansions of three more existing national parks. Details on the proposals are summarized below.²⁴

Table 7. Expanding Existing Parks

Park/Region	Commitments	Status
Waterton Lakes NP - Region 5: Rocky Mountain	Corporate Plans from 2003-2004 through 2006-2007 expressed the Agency's interest in starting a feasibility assessment for a proposal to include the Flathead Valley in southeastern BC adjacent to the park.	The proposal represented an expression of interest on the part of the Agency. It did not proceed due to lack of provincial government support. The project disappeared from Agency plans after April 2007.
Nahanni NPR – Region 8: Mackenzie Mountains	A commitment to expand the Nahanni NPR to better represent the ecology of the region was part of the park's original management plan and the focus of a memorandum of understanding signed by the Agency and the Dehcho First Nations in 2003. Agency Plans from 2003-2004 through 2009-2010 continued to highlight intentions to expand the park.	The Nahanni expansion was completed in 2009 when Parliament passed legislation that resulted in a six-fold increase in the size of park reserve within the Dehcho region.
Tuktut Nogait NPR - Region 15: Thundra Hills	A target to expand the Tuktut Nogait NPR into Nunavut on the eastern boundary of the park was highlighted in Agency plans from 2003-2004 through 2011-2012.	The park was expanded in 2005 (see footnote 25) into the Sahtu Settlement Area. Attempts to subsequently expand the park east into Nunavut were unsuccessful and the target was dropped from 2012-2013 Plan. The status of the specific proposal was not reported in Agency performance reports.

- 4) **Establishing New Parks in Represented Regions:** Between the creation of the NP System Plan in the early 1970s and 2003, the Agency established three parks in already represented regions, all in the 1980s.²⁵ From 2003 to the present, Agency plans have highlighted work to establish three more parks in already represented regions. For the more recent cases (i.e., after 2003), the proposal to establish a new park in a represented region originated from outside the Agency. The proposals are summarized in below.

Table 8. Establishing New Parks in Represented Regions

Regions	Proposal	Status
2 -Strait of Georgia Lowlands	Bowen Island NPR	Consistent with the Agency commitment to reach out to urban populations, and in response to community requests, the Agency conducted a feasibility assessment between 2009 and 2011 on a proposal to establish a park in Bowen Island in BC (Region 2 Strait of Georgia Lowlands). The region was already represented by the Gulf Islands NPR. Ultimately, it was concluded that the proposed park was

²⁴ While not routine, changes to the boundaries of national parks, either to add or transfer small parcels of land, have happened on a number of occasions (e.g., adding 10.9 sq km to Thousands Islands National Park transferred from the Nature Conservancy of Canada in 2005; excising 10 sq km from Wood Buffalo NP for purposes of a first nation reserve in 2004). A more significant expansion took place in Tuktut Nogait NPR in 2005, when as a result of the signing of an Impact and Benefit Plan by the Government of Canada and the Deline Land Corporation, an additional 1,850 km² of land was added to the park in the Sahtu Settlement Area, thereby extending the park south to the original boundary first proposed in the 1990s, which spanned three land claim areas.

²⁵ Gwaii Haanas NPR (1987), Mingan Archipelago NPR (1984) and Bruce Peninsula NP (1987)

Table 8. Establishing New Parks in Represented Regions

Regions	Proposal	Status
		not feasible due to insufficient stakeholder support. The project was discontinued.
8 - Mackenzie Mountains	Nááts'ihch'oh NPR	The proposal to create the NPR grew out of the proposal to expand Nahanni NPR (see previous section). The Dehcho First Nations vision was to protect the entire South Nahanni watershed. The upper waters are subject to land claims by the Sahtu First Nations. The Nááts'ihch'oh NPR was proposed to accommodate the different Aboriginal groups' interests. Negotiations to establish the park reserve were concluded in 2012. The park is contiguous with the expanded the Nahanni NPR and largely represents the same region.
3 - Atlantic Coast Uplands	Sable Island NPR	This project grew out of federal and provincial government interest in extending the protection afforded by a national park to the island which was already subject to some federal protection. The park was established in legislation in 2013. The region was already represented by Kejimikujik NP. The Agency has indicated that the new park protects a unique ecosystem that adds to the overall representativeness of the region.

5) Establishing Parks in Legislation: In its 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 Corporate Plans, the Agency committed to protect the Ukkusiksalik and Gulf Islands NPs under the *Canada National Parks Act*, although no specific target date was identified. In 2006-2007, the Agency indicated an intent to protect the same two parks as well as the Pukaskwa, Bruce Peninsula and Wapusk NPs over the five year time frame of the plan (i.e., by March 2012). Subsequent plans continued to identify Ukkusiksalik and Gulf Islands as priorities for protection under the Act as well as Wapusk NP (i.e., the latter in the 2010-2011 Plan). After 2012, planning does not include references to protecting parks under the Act. The table below shows the progress in establishing parks under the Act since 2003.

Table 9. Inclusions of Parks under the Canada National Parks Act

Region	Park	Year of Agreement	Established in Legislation
34 - Western Newfoundland Highlands	Gros Morne NP	1970/73/78/83	2005
24 - Northern Labrador Mountains	Torngat Mountains NP	2005/2006	2005/2008
28 - Hudson-James Lowlands	Wapusk NP	1996	2010
2 - Strait of Georgia Lowlands	Gulf Islands NPR	2003/2004	2010
33 - Atlantic Coast Uplands	Sable Island NPR	2013	2013
16 - Central Tundra	Ukkusiksalik NP	2003	Not established under the Act
18 - Central Boreal Uplands	Pukaskwa NP	1971/78	
29 - St Lawrence Lowlands	Bruce Peninsula NP	1987	
8 - Mackenzie Mountains	Nááts'ihch'oh NPR	2012	

The Wapusk and Gulf Islands NPs were established in legislation in 2010, consistent with commitments in Corporate Plans. Other parks were also established in legislation although doing so was not specifically targeted in plans (i.e., Gros Morne and Torngat Mountains NPs and Sable Island NPR).

As a result, four existing national parks remain outside the Act. In the cases of Pukaskwa and Bruce Peninsula NPs the delays are reported to be related to the conclusion of final land transfers and resolving issues with Aboriginal groups. For Ukkusiksalik NP, the Agency is awaiting confirmation of an exchange of lands between the Government of Canada and Inuit that would increase the size of the park, as well as reaching a decision on whether to include Sila Lodge within the park.

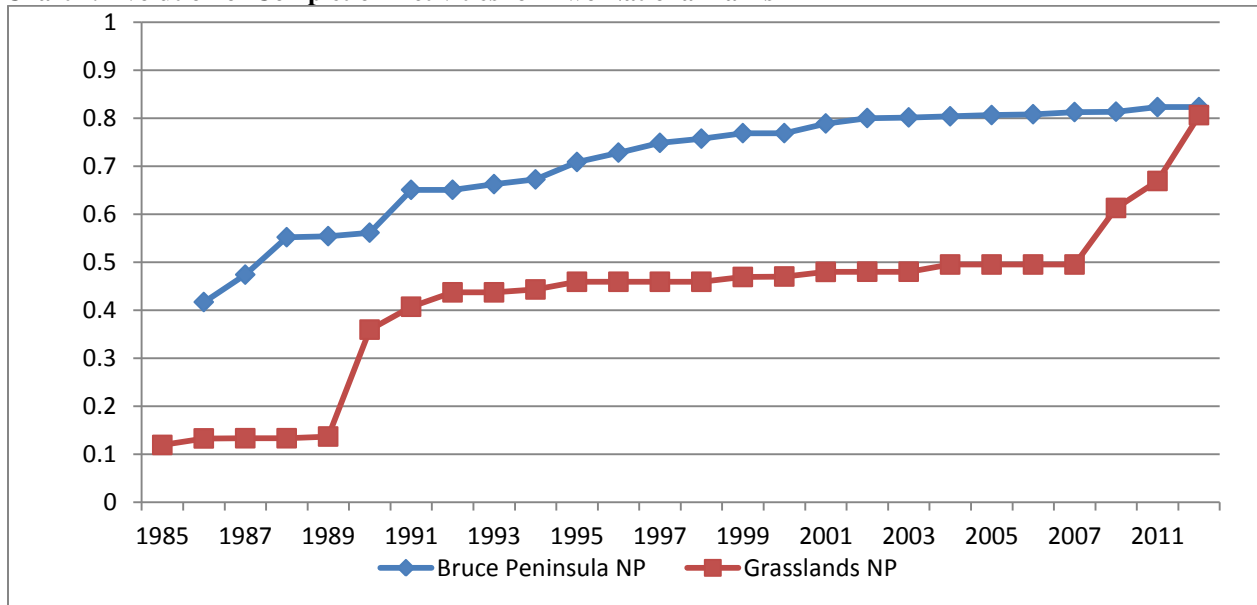
Although not specifically targeted in Corporate Plans, the Agency has also done work and concluded agreements resulting in established NPRs becoming national parks. For example, the Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve established in 2005 was changed to a national park in July 2008 when the *Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement* came into legal effect.

- 6) **Parks Completion:** The target for park completion is to “increase the targeted land holdings in three unfinished national parks within available resources”. Land is acquired on a willing seller/willing buyer principle. Because it does not control the process, the Agency has not set a target for when land acquisition will be completed.

The Agency is currently acquiring land in three national parks. In the case of Gulf Islands NPR, land is being acquired within a core area. However, the objective is not to acquire all land in the area so there is no way to quantify the extent of park completion.

In the other cases, Grasslands and Bruce Peninsula NPs²⁶, there are defined park boundaries that allow the extent of completion to be measured (i.e., the percentage of lands acquired). Chart 1 shows the extent of progress in acquiring lands in these parks over the last 25 to 30 years.

Chart 1. Evolution of Completion Activities for Two National Parks



Agency ownership of land within the park boundaries at the time of establishment varied from approximately 10% in the case of Grasslands NP to approximately 40% in the case of Bruce Peninsula NP. Both parks have now acquired approximately 80% of the land within their boundaries. Some of the remaining parcels of land to be acquired are large and acquisition of these could significantly accelerate completion of the parks. On the other hand, in the past the Agency has been unable to pursue available lands due to lack of resources. Failure to purchase land when it is available can potentially result in the desired

²⁶ In Bruce Peninsula NP, some lands are managed federally although they will only be transferred from the Province of Ontario once litigation and third party claims are addressed.

land being off the market for many years and can in principle increase risks of incompatible use which will require remediation in the future.

OVERALL FINDING: EFFECTIVENESS

The Agency has a general framework for the types of information required at various steps in the establishment process. The process involves five distinct steps. However, proceeding through the steps is not rigid and there are variations in nature and scope of the work leading up to the creation of a new national park. We found that relevant information for various steps in the process is collected, assessed, and used, with some types of information being more comprehensive than others (e.g., ecological compared to visitor information). There is clear evidence in the case studies that information is shared and relationships are built to encourage local populations to participate in national park proposals.

The Agency PMF and Corporate Plans contain several types of targets/objectives related to park establishment. Given limited resources and control over outcomes the Agency does not specify a target date to complete the national park system. Instead targets are set to make progress in specific regions with the expectation that this will result in targeted increases in the number of regions represented by a given date. The number of regions that will be represented by a given date was reduced from 34 to 30 over the last 10 years and the time period to achieve the target was extended. Three new national parks were established in unrepresented regions between 2003 and 2005 (i.e., Ukkusiksalik NP, Gulf Islands NPR and Torngat Mountains NP). Despite this, the Agency was unable to meet any of the targets it set for representation during this period. Currently, the Agency is targeting establishment of national parks in two of the unrepresented regions by March 2015. We cautiously concluded that this target is likely to be met.

The Agency also commits to demonstrating progress in moving the feasibility assessment process forward for specific park proposals, to establishing or expanding parks in already represented regions, to establish specific parks in legislation and to increase land acquisition in three existing parks. Results in each of these areas are variable with some notable successes (e.g., evidence of progress on feasibility studies in two unrepresented regions, expansion of the Nahanni NPR, the establishment of the Nááts'ihch'oh and Sable Island NPRs in represented regions; and increased land holding in specific national parks). There are also situations where the Agency has devoted time and effort to projects where key partners were not interested (e.g., expanding Waterton Lakes NP, exploring establishing a park near Wolf Lake in BC) or withdrew from the process (e.g., the South Okanagan - Lower Similkameen proposal in BC). The Agency has also had mixed success in meeting objectives for establishing national parks under the *Canada National Parks Act*.

4.3 Efficiency and Economy

A program is **efficient** to the extent a greater level of output is produced with the same level of input, or, a lower level of input is used to produce the same level of output. The level of input and output could increase or decrease in quantity, quality, or both. A program is **economical** to the extent the cost of resources used approximates the minimum amount needed to achieve expected outcomes.

In the case of the national park establishment and expansion sub-program, inputs consist of the overall budgets (expenditures) and staff. Outputs, as seen in table 2, include project proposals, research reports, consultation programs and reports, memorandums of understanding/agreements, etc. Outcomes include system knowledge, relationship building and system progress.

Question 9	Indicators
Is the program managed efficiently (i.e., is the least amount of resources used to produce program outputs) and economically (i.e., are the least amount of resources used to influence program outcomes)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of outputs and outcomes are monitored to identify efficiencies • Outputs are produced on time and on budget and in sufficient quantities to achieve results • Management demonstrates commitment to efficient operations

4.3.1 Description of Expenditures

Expectation: Parks are established/expanded at least cost to the Agency.

As noted in the introduction, expenditures on the five step establishment process were estimated based on records provided by the PAEB. The estimated expenditures were not readily available and took several months to produce. Reported expenditures are either linked directly to particular projects or recorded in various costs centers without direct links to projects. The four year expenditures profile is shown in the Table below.

Table 10. Estimated Expenditures on Five-Step National Park Establishment Process

Expenditures	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	Total
Not Allocated to Projects	1,005,274	860,413	741,071	859,961	3,466,719
Allocated Eleven Projects	3,191,833	3,057,432	3,366,642	3,194,953	12,810,860
Total	4,197,107	3,917,844	4,107,713	4,054,914	16,277,579

Over the period, the expenditures are allocated to salaries (35%), goods and services (43%)²⁷, contributions and grants (22%) and advertising (less than 1%).

The estimated total costs for the establishment activity and the costs of various projects are not precise. For example, total costs in the Director's office in the above estimate include some expenditure that supported NMCA establishment as opposed to national park establishment. While this leads to over estimating the total activity costs, the impact is likely small given that the total costs for the office were approximately \$700K for the period. Lack of information on other relevant costs (e.g., costs incurred by field units supporting feasibility studies or negotiations and preparing for the transition to an operational park), means that the total cost is underestimated, although we could not identify the extent of this error in estimation. Finally, individual project expenditures are underestimated given that some types of the expenditures (e.g., A-based salary costs, potentially some G&S in specific cost centers) are

²⁷ Includes cost of the MERA for the Thaidene Nene project

captured as unallocated costs rather than as project costs. Up to \$2M in projects specific costs for the period may be unallocated.

Expenditures by Projects: Recoded project costs for the four year period ranged from approximately \$260K for establishment of Sable Island incurred in 2011-12 to \$3.3M for the Thaidene Nene project. These costs do not represent the complete historic expenditures on individual projects which may in some cases extent back many years.

Progress through the steps in park establishment for the four projects in the case studies is shown below along with reported expenditures from 2008 to 2012.

Table 11. Timeline of Case Study Projects (2003-12)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Mealy Mountains Proposal	Step 3 - Feasibility Assessment						Between Step 3 and 4	Step 4 - Negotiation of Agreements		
South Okanagan Lower Similkameen Proposal	Step 3 - Feasibility Assessment									
Thaidene Nene Proposal	Step 3 - Feasibility Assessment		Overlap of both steps 3 (Feasibility) & 4 (Negotiation)							
Nahanni Completion Proposal			Step 3 - Feasibility Assessment	Overlap of both steps 3 (Feasibility) & 4 (Negotiation)		Step 5 - Passing of legislation/ Operationalization				
Nááts'ihch'oh Proposal						Overlap of both steps 3 (Feasibility) & 4 (Negotiation)		Step 4 - Negotiation of Agreements		
Reported project expenditures April 2008 to March 2012										
\$0.6M Mealy Mountains										
\$2.1M South Okanagan										
\$3.3M Thaidene Nene on Great Slave Lake										
\$1.0M Nahanni Expansion										
\$2.8M Nááts'ihch'oh NPR										

In general, there is no direct linear relationship between the recorded costs of these projects and either the pace of the project or the ultimate outcome which is dependent on the number and complexity of issues to be addressed and the number and diversity of stakeholders and partners that must be engaged. This is consistent with reports by representatives of parks systems in other jurisdictions who also noted that costs for their establishment projects vary significantly, as did the time required to complete the process (i.e., ranging from two to ten years).

The recent experience with the establishment the Sable Island NPR likely represents the optimal conditions for park establishment so it was accomplished relatively quickly (i.e., within two years) and has relative small associated costs. In other cases, the Agency can invest considerable resources (e.g., approximately \$2.1M on the South Okanagan - Lower Similkameen and \$644K on the Bowen Island proposals between April 2008 and March 2012) without achieving the intended result given lack of control over the process.

4.3.2 Management Actions to Support Efficient Operations:

From 2007 through 2010, management and the Agency conducted various analysis and made commitments to improve the establishment process.²⁸ Common commitments between the various sources include an emphasis on streamlining and accelerating the process wherever possible; focusing specifically on feasibility studies and negotiations; adopting a more integrated approach to understanding a study area's ecological, economic, social and cultural context; and strengthening relationships with partners and stakeholders as well as a new commitment to evaluating public support for proposals. Other specific commitments include increasing efforts to include traditional knowledge in decision-making, particularly to identify potential economic benefits for Aboriginal peoples; improving strategic risk assessments and developing mitigation strategies at the start of the feasibility assessment stage; and conducting holistic reviews of issues, drivers and road blocks at key points in process.

The documents also suggested a notional two year timeframe to complete each of the feasibility assessment and negotiation phases of establishment projects.²⁹ As is evident in the previous section, these timeframes are achieved in some projects but not others.

During the course of the evaluation, we observed a number of management actions designed to improve efficiency in various ways. These included:

Rationalizing inputs: PAEB has used temporary assignment positions rather than full time permanent staff where possible to reduce long term costs and tailor inputs to current demands. It has shifted resources between projects in response to external delays. It has also reportedly reduced travel costs through greater use of teleconferencing, limiting the size of delegations at meetings, or by combining meetings requiring travel with other activities related to projects. Management reported that travel costs decreased by 51% between 2009-10 and 2012-13.³⁰

Creation of Project Offices: Assigning project managers in communities close to where projects are taking place at the beginning of the feasibility assessment step (e.g., offices in Penticton supporting the South Okanagan - Lower Similkameen proposal and in Happy Valley-Goose Bay supporting the Mealy Mountains proposal) is intended to support efficient project execution.

Focusing and Streamlining Data Gathering: There is some evidence in the case studies of focusing research and data gathering on key issues and challenges at the feasibility step rather than amassing a large amount of information, some of which may not be relevant to the process as was the case in the past. There is also evidence of use of existing data and literature as well as consulting with experts in a given area, either in the Agency or in other organizations (i.e., Canadian Wildlife Service) to reduce costs associated with conducting primary research. This was especially prevalent in the review of the ecological information, where a lot of data and knowledgeable individuals are available.

²⁸ Relevant documents include a draft *Guide to an Integrated Approach to the Establishment Process* (2007); a *Business Case for Park Establishment Branch Core Capacity* (2008); and responses to the Minister's Roundtable (2008); and commitments in the 2009-2010 Report on Plans and Priorities.

²⁹ One document suggests that the feasibility study could take up to three years if extenuating circumstances are approved by senior management

³⁰ We did not verify the accuracy this data.

Assessing Public Support: As noted in the section on program outputs, the Agency made concrete efforts to assess public support at various points in the feasibility assessment phase.

Streamlining the Process: In certain projects, the Agency has undertaken the feasibility and negotiations steps simultaneously in order to reduce the work and achieve more rapid results.

Other relevant changes or innovations particularly regarding clarifying roles and responsibilities at different stages in the process are discussed in the section below on program design. While various changes have been made to the process, we noted that these have not yet resulted in an overall strategic guide to the establishment process, as was drafted in 2007 and envisioned in the PAEB's 2008 Business Case.

OVERALL FINDING: EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMY

Management is able to provide estimates of the overall costs of the five step park establishment and expansion activity, although the information is not readily available and direct costs of specific projects are likely underestimated given that not all relevant expenditures are coded to projects. It is clear that there is not a simple linear relationship between project expenditures and either the pace of park establishment and expansion or the outcomes which are largely outside of the Agency's control. Provincial park systems in Canada face similar issues of variable costs, timeframes and lack of control over the establishment of protected areas.

Management conducted various analysis and made commitments to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the park establishment and expansion process during the 2007 to 2010 period. We found qualitative evidence that management uses temporary positions; the reassigning of resources when faced with project delays, and the creation of local project offices to support efficient project execution. Focusing on key information needs to support decision making and simultaneously undertaking the feasibility and negotiation steps of the process also contribute to overall efficiency. A national strategic guide to all establishment and expansion activities has not yet been developed

4.4 Program Design

Question 10	Indicators
Are roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for national park establishment/expansion clear and appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informants report that roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clear and appropriate • Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clearly documented

Expectation: Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clear, appropriate, and implemented as intended.

Roles and responsibilities for national park establishment and expansion were introduced in section 2.4.

In 2008, an *Assessment of the Park Establishment Branch* was produced by a consultant, which resulted in 11 recommendations. It found some deficiencies in regard to unclear roles and

responsibilities, insufficient leadership to provide overall strategic direction, some accountability role/confusion, and some critical short and long term vacancies. The report also acknowledged the need to adjust processes and approaches to move park establishment files more quickly.

We found that some of these deficiencies are still present. Interviewees within the Agency indicated that this was an area where there was sometimes a lack of clarity, with involvement of several players that can lead to confusion. We also noted in the case studies that the roles and responsibilities were not always documented clearly, but rather have evolved based on project circumstances and needs. Some staff highlighted Mealy Mountains as a best practice where, at the negotiation stage, a briefing note approved by the CEO assigned clear roles to several team members. “Project charters” outlining roles and responsibilities for all levels of staff have also been piloted for some projects. While these have not yet been formally adopted, staff indicated that they did add clarity and could be expanded to other proposals as a best practice.

Roles and responsibilities for the northern Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment process were reported to be clear. The MERA Working Group is responsible for the technical research and the Senior MERA Committee Group (comprised of senior management from AANDC, NRCan, PCA and the territorial government) discusses the findings and makes final boundary recommendations to the Minister of AADNC, who has the ultimate responsibility for land management in the NWT and Nunavut. Some stakeholders and agency staff indicated that the Terms of Reference of the MERA, dating from 1995, would benefit from a review to reflect the full environmental, cultural and economic value of national parks and with new approaches to bring more collaboration, transparency and accountability.

Expectation: The transition from the establishment process to the process of making the park fully operational is appropriate.

Transferring responsibility for a national park from the Protected Areas Establishment Branch to the field unit to begin operationalization of the park is an essential step. However, there is no guidance to indicate when this should occur. Typically, this happens between Step 4

and 5, when all negotiations are completed, but before legislation is amended to include the park.

The extent to which there is staffing continuity (i.e., field unit staff contribute to the establishment/expansion process or establishment staff carry on with the operationalization of the park) was perceived by Agency staff to be the key factor for a successful transition. Ensuring continuity helps maintain the relationships built with partners and stakeholders during negotiations. Ongoing input from field unit staff can also help moderate commitments made at the negotiation stage, as these staff are best positioned to provide a ground-level perspective of what/how the park can be operationalized. Despite its perceived benefits, staff indicated that ensuring staff continuity has not always been common practice. We found limited cases where this approach was used.

OVERALL FINDING: PROGRAM DESIGN

An assessment of the PAEB in 2008 indicated, among other things, that there were some challenges with regards to roles and responsibilities, and a need to adjust processes and approaches to move forward with files, all elements that we heard from interviewees and saw in

the case studies. While some of the deficiencies in regard to roles and responsibilities are still present, there are also some examples of best practices being put in place.

Another area that could benefit from improvements is the Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment process where the 1995 terms of reference would benefit from a review to reflect the full environmental, cultural and economic value of national parks.

Finally, there is inconsistency in the way field unit staff are integrated in the national park proposal and the Agency could benefit from *clearer* guidance to ensure clear roles and responsibilities among PAEB staff and the field unit for successful park operationalization.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We concluded that the National Park Establishment and Expansion sub-program is relevant. It is consistent with the Whole of Government Framework and numerous international and national agreements and commitments and with the Agency's legislative and policy mandate. There is also broad public and stakeholder support for the activity.

Under legislation the Agency is required to produce a long term plan for the establishment of national parks. The core of the Agency's approach to long term planning is to divide the country into 39 natural regions and establish a park in each of these that is representative of the region's land and vegetation. A focus on representing natural regions is common in many, but not all, park systems we reviewed. The way in which natural regions are defined and what types of parks or protected areas count toward representing a region also differs between jurisdictions.

We found that the Agency's general framework is viewed as relevant and useful for purposes of park establishment. We also noted that the most recent published version of the NP System Plan (1997) contains a variety of information with respect to targets, processes and projects that while relevant at the time is now very dated. There are some links on the Agency's website to more recent information but these do not cover the complete range of current activities and initiatives as set out in Corporate Plans, and do not distinguish how new types of parks (e.g., the Rouge National Urban Park) relate to key objectives of the System Plan.

The Agency has a general framework for the types of information required at various steps in the establishment process. The process involves five distinct steps. However, proceeding through the steps is not rigid and there are variations in nature and scope of the work leading up to the creation of a new national park. We found that relevant information for various steps in the process is collected, assessed, and used, with some types of information are more comprehensive than others (e.g., ecological compared to visitor information). There is clear evidence in the case studies that information is shared and relationships are built to encourage local populations to participate in national park proposals.

Given limited resources and control over outcomes the Agency does not specify a target date to complete the national park system. Instead targets are set to make progress in specific regions with the expectation that this will result in targeted increases in the number of regions

represented by a given date. The number of regions that will be represented by a given date was reduced from 34 to 30 over the last 10 years and the time period to achieve the target was extended. Three new national parks were established in unrepresented regions between 2003 and 2005 (i.e., Ukkusiksalik NP, Gulf Islands NPR and Torngat Mountains NP). Despite this, the Agency was unable to meet any of the targets it set for representation during this period. Currently, the Agency is targeting establishment of national parks in two unrepresented regions by March 2015. We cautiously concluded that this target is likely to be met.

The Agency also commits to demonstrating progress in moving the feasibility assessment process forward for specific park proposals, to establishing or expanding parks in already represented regions, to establish specific parks in legislation and to increase land acquisition in three existing parks. Results in each of these areas are variable with some notable successes (e.g., evidence of progress on feasibility studies in two unrepresented regions, expansion of the Nahanni NPR, the establishment of the Nááts'ihch'oh and Sable Island NPRs in represented regions; and increased land holding in specific national parks). There are also situations where the Agency has devoted time and effort to projects where key partners were not interested (e.g., expanding Waterton Lakes NP, exploring establishment of a park near Wolf Lake in Yukon) or withdrew for the time being from the process (e.g., the South Okanagan - Lower Similkameen proposal in BC). The Agency has also had mixed success in meeting objectives for establishing national parks under the *Canada National Parks Act*.

Management is able to provide reasonably estimates of the overall costs of the five step park establishment and expansion activity although the information is not readily available and direct costs of specific projects are likely underestimated given that not all relevant expenditures are coded to projects. It is clear that there is not a simple linear relationship between project expenditures and either the pace of park establishment and expansion or the outcomes which are largely outside of the Agency's control. Provincial park systems in Canada face similar issues of variable costs, timeframes and lack of control over the establishment of protected areas.

Management conducted various analysis and made commitments to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of the park establishment and expansion process during the 2007 to 2010 period. We found qualitative evidence that management seeks to uses staff inputs efficiently through use of temporary positions; the reassigning of resources when faced with project delays, and the creation of local project offices to support efficient project execution. Focusing on key information needs to support decision making and simultaneously undertaking the feasibility and negotiation steps of the process also contribute to overall efficiency. A national strategic guide to all establishment and expansion activities has not yet been developed

Recommendations: Based on the evaluation findings we make two recommendations related to the continued relevance of the National Park System Plan and the comprehensiveness and consistency of its internal guidance for park establishment and expansion.

1. The VP Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation review the 1997 published version of the National Parks System Plan and develop an approach to ensure it remains relevant and useful given changes in process, projects and targets over time.

Management Response

Agree: By March 2015, the Protected Areas Establishment Branch will review and update the National Park System Plan to:

- (1) More accurately reflect current practices and criteria;
- (2) Identify where work has been completed and put into context the work in represented natural regions;
- (3) Describe potential future work and considerations that apply to work to complete the system;
- (4) More accurately reflect the Agency's current vision and current thinking in terms of working with Aboriginal peoples.

The Branch will work with other programs in the Agency to identify the means to better communicate the content of an updated National Park System Plan, as well as communicating the Government of Canada's establishment priorities, accomplishments, and opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the establishment process.

2. The VP Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation review, finalize, and communicate updated internal guidance to ensure that there is a consistent framework for national park establishment and expansion. Among other requirements, this guidance should address:
 - where and how risk management strategies should be incorporated into project plans;
 - mechanisms to ensure clear roles and responsibilities for specific projects (e.g., project charters);
 - requirements for the financial management/coding of projects to improve financial monitoring;
 - the timing, scope and goals of participation by other units of the Agency in establishment/expansion process;
 - a requirement to conduct pre-feasibility and post-project analyses to identify the challenges and focus of feasibility assessments for the former, and lessons learned and best practices that could be applied to future establishment projects for the latter;
 - requirements for the use of reporting mechanisms, such as those prepared in 2008 and 2010 (Business Cases and Actions Plans), provided the program determines these would provide additional value to management; and
 - the practices to keep Aboriginal groups, stakeholders and other organizations informed on the status of establishment projects when they face prolonged period of inactivity.

Management Response

Agree: The Protected Area Establishment Branch will:

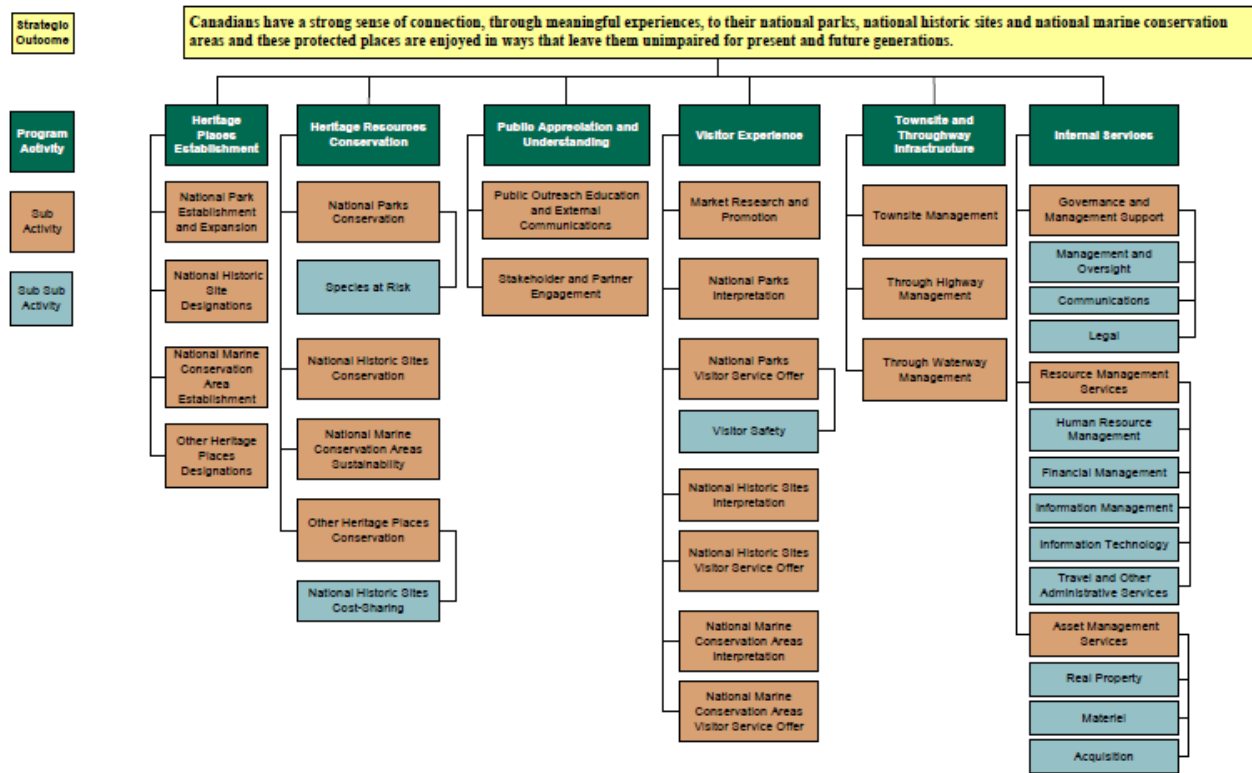
- (1) Finalize by December 2014 internal guidance that ensures staff are equipped with a consistent framework to guide their work on national park establishment; and
- (2) Produce a analysis on best practices and lessons learned.

Both will be informed by work to update the System Plan, the draft *Guide to an Integrated Approach on the Establishment Process (2008)*, and practical experience gained through the current and recently completed establishment projects.

New guidance will incorporate existing approaches to risk management in project plans and use of project charters addressing the timing, scope and goals of participation by other units of the Agency in the establishment process. The Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate will work within Agency processes to ensure that relevant information for financial management reporting is more easily accessible from the Parks Canada financial system.

The Branch will explore how to proactively communicate on the status of projects during periods of internal review and negotiations when there are limitations on what information can be shared during periods of inactivity due to internal review processes.

Appendix A. STRATEGIC OUTCOME AND PROGRAM ALIGNMENT ARCHITECTURE



Appendix B. LIST OF NATIONAL PARK (RESERVES) OF CANADA

National Park or NPR of Canada (by date of addition to system)	Year of Agreement*	Year Established in Legislation **	Area (km ²)***
1. Banff, Alta.		1885	6,641.00
2. Glacier, BC		1886	1,349.00
3. Yoho, BC		1886	1,313.10
4. Waterton Lakes, Alta.		1895	505.00
5. Jasper, Alta.		1907	10,878.00
6. Elk Island, Alta.		1913	194.00
7. Mount Revelstoke, BC		1914	262.50
8. Thousand Islands, Ont.	1904/2005	1914	23.50
9. Point Pelee, Ont.		1918	15.20
10. Kootenay, BC		1920	1,406.40
11. Wood Buffalo, Alta./NWT		1922	44,792.00
12. Prince Albert, Sask.		1927	3,874.60
13. Riding Mountain, Man.		1930	2,967.70
14. Georgian Bay Islands, Ont.		1930	25.60
15. Cape Breton Highlands, NS		1936	948.00
16. Prince Edward Island, PEI	1937/51/74/98	1937	27.00
17. Fundy, NB		1948	205.90
18. Terra Nova, Nfld. & Lab.	1957/78/83/98	1957	399.90
19. Kejimikujik, NS	1967	1974/ 1988	403.70
20. Kouchibouguac, NB	1969/71/75	1979	239.20
21. Pacific Rim, BC (NPR)	1970/73/77/87/92	2001	510.00
22. Forillon, Que.	1970	1974	217.00
23. La Mauricie, Que.	1970	1977	536.10
24. Pukaskwa, Ont.	1971/78		1,877.80
25. Kluane, Yukon (NP & NPR)	1972/93	1976/ 1995	22,061.00
26. Nahanni, NWT (NPR)	1972	1976/ 2009	30,000.00
27. Auyuittuq, Nunavut	1972/93/99	1976/ 2001	19,089.00
28. Gros Morne, Nfld. & Lab.	1970/73/78/83	2005	1,805.00
29. Grasslands, Sask.	1975/81/84/88/91/ 96	2001	906.40
30. Mingan Archipelago, Que. (NPR)		1984	150.70
31. Ivvavik, Yukon	1984	1984	9,750.00
32. Quttinirpaaq, Nunavut	1986/99	1988/ 2001	37,775.00
33. Bruce Peninsula, Ont.	1987		154.00
34. Gwaii Haanas (NPR) and Haida Heritage Site, BC	1987/88/90/93/94/ 96/97	1996	1,474.40
35. Aulavik, NWT	1992	2001	12,200.00
36. Vuntut, Yukon	1993	1995	4,345.00
37. Wapusk, Man.	1996	2010	11,475.00
38. Tuktot Nogait, NWT	1996/2005	1998	18,181.00
39. Sirmilik, Nunavut	1999	2001	22,200.00
40. Gulf Islands, BC (NPR)	2003/04	2010	35.90
41. Ukkusiksalik, Nunavut	2003		20,558.00
42. Torngat Mountains, Nfld.&Lab.	2005/2006	2005/ 2008	9,700.00
43. Sable Island, NS (NPR)	2011	2013	34.00
44. Nááts'ihch'oh, NWT (NPR)	2012		4,850.00
			306,356.60

Names: The names given are the **official and commonly used names**, as adopted by Parks Canada and listed by the Geographic Names Board of Canada (GNBC). If this name differs from the legal name in the *Canada National Parks Act (CNPA)*, the legal name is identified in a footnote. The full name is, for example, Banff National Park of Canada.

* **Year of Agreement** refers to the year a federal-provincial/territorial agreement and/or Aboriginal agreement(s) was signed to establish a national park or national park reserve (in the provinces, this usually includes provision for land transfer). **A natural region is considered represented in the NP system once a Park Agreement and land transfer enables a park to become operational.** If there are any amending agreements, they are also cited.

** **Year Established** refers to the year a national park or national park reserve is formally established and protected under the provisions of the *CNPA* (or its antecedents, for example, the *National Parks Act*), by Parliamentary or Order-In-Council (OIC) process.

*** **Park Area** refers to the size of a park, as provided in the legal description or administrative plan approved by the Surveyor General of Canada and included in the *CNPA* Schedule or Park Agreement, unless noted otherwise. Changes made to park area are noted in the footnotes.

A **National Park Reserve** is just like a national park except that it is subject to a claim, or claims, by Aboriginal people that the federal government has accepted for negotiation. The *Canada National Parks Act* applies. Local Aboriginal people may continue their traditional hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering and spiritual activities and may be involved in the management of the national park reserve. When the outstanding claims have been settled and agreements are reached that provide for the parks establishment, the park reserve can move to national park status (from Schedule II to I) under the *CNPA*.

Sources of Information: Park Establishment Branch of Protected Areas Establishment and Conservation Directorate; Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Branch and Real Property Services of Strategy and Plans Directorate; Field Unit or Park Superintendent, Park GIS Specialist

National Parks and National Park Reserves by Region.

Region	NP/NPR	Year
1. Pacific Coast Mountains	21. Pacific Rim, BC (NPR) 34. Gwaii Haanas (NPR)	1970/73/77/87/92 1987/88/90/93/94/96/97
2. Strait of Georgia Lowlands	40. Gulf Islands, BC (NPR)	2003/04
3. Interior Dry Plateau		
4. Columbia Mountains	2. Glacier, BC 7. Mount Revelstoke, BC	1886 1914
5. Rocky Mountains	1. Banff, Alta. 3. Yoho, BC 4. Waterton Lakes, Alta. 5. Jasper, Alta. 10. Kootenay, BC	1885 1886 1895 1907 1920
6. Northern Coast Mountains	25. Kluane, Yukon (NP & NPR)	1972/93
7. Northern Interior Plateau and Mountains		
8. Mackenzie Mountains	26. Nahanni, NWT (NPR) 44. Nááts'ihch'oh, NWT (NPR)	1972 2012
9. Northern Yukon	36. Vuntut, Yukon	1993
10. Mackenzie Delta	31. Ivvavik, Yukon	1984
11. Northern Boreal Plains	11. Wood Buffalo, Alta./NWT	1922
12. Southern Boreal Plains and Plateaux	6. Elk Island, Alta. 12. Prince Albert, Sask. 13. Riding Mountain, Man.	1913 1927 1930
13. Prairie Grasslands	29. Grasslands, Sask.	1975/81/84/88/91/96
14. Manitoba Lowlands		
15. Tundra Hills	38. Tuktu Nogait, NWT	1996/2005
16. Central Tundra	41. Ukkusiksalik, Nunavut	2003
17. Northwestern Boreal Uplands		
18. Central Boreal Uplands	24. Pukaskwa, Ont.	1971/78
19. Great Lakes St Lawrence Precambrian	8. Thousand Islands, Ont. 14. Georgian Bay Islands, Ont. 23. La Mauricie, Que.	1904/2005 1930 1970
20. Laurentian Boreal Highlands		
21. East Coast Boreal		
22. Boreal Lake Plateau		
23. Whale River		
24. Northern Labrador Mountains	42. Torngat Mountains, Nfld.&Lab.	2005/2006
25. Ungava Tundra Plateau		
26. Northern Davis	27. Auyuittuq, Nunavut	1972/93/99
27. Hudson-James Lowlands	37. Wapusk, Man.	1996
28. Southampton Plain		
29. St Lawrence Lowland	9. Point Pelee, Ont. 28. Gros Morne, Nfld. & Lab. 30. Mingan Archipelago, Que. (NPR) 33. Bruce Peninsula, Ont.	1918 1970/73/78/83 1984 1987
30. Notre Dame Megantic Mountains	22. Forillon, Que.	1970
31. Maritime Acadian Highlands	15. Cape Breton Highlands, NS 17. Fundy, NB	1936 1948
32. Maritime Plains	16. Prince Edward Island, PEI 20. Kouchibouguac, NB	1937/51/74/98 1969/71/75
33. Atlantic Coast Uplands	19. Kejimikujik, NS 43. Sable Island, NS (NPR)	1967 2011
34. Western Newfoundland Highlands	28. Gros Morne, Nfld. & Lab.	1970/73/78/83
35. Eastern Newfoundland Atlantic	18. Terra Nova, Nfld. & Lab.	1957/78/83/98
36. Western Arctic Lowlands	35. Aulavik, NWT	1992
37. Eastern Arctic Lowlands	39. Sirmilik, Nunavut	1999
38. Western Arctic Highlands		
39. Eastern Arctic Highlands	32. Quttinirpaaq, Nunavut	1986/99

Year refers to either the year of agreement or if this is absent the year established in legislation

Grey areas are regions where a national park or national park reserve is not yet established.

Appendix C. EVALUATION QUESTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, INDICATORS AND DATA SOURCES

Evaluation Questions	What Should be Observed	Indicators	Data source
Relevance: Is the establishment or expansion of parks consistent with Agency and governmental priorities and does it address the needs of Canadians?			
1. Is park establishment and expansion relevant to wider federal government outcomes? 2. Is there a legitimate and necessary role for PCA in the establishment and expansion of national parks? 3. Is the program relevant to Canadians?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment/expansion of national parks is consistent with the federal government’s priorities and agreements The establishment/expansion of national parks is consistent with Agency mandate and priorities There is public support for the national park system 	Extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment/expansion is consistent with GC and the Agency’s goals, objectives, mandates, and priorities. The Agency’s role in park establishment/expansion is necessary. The Agency has looked at alternative models for establishment/expansion. Stakeholder support exists for national park establishment/expansion. Canadians support conservation and the Agency’s work in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature and document review (e.g., international commitments, federal legislation, GC and PCA plans and priorities, stakeholder surveys, public opinion surveys) Interviews
4. Does the NP System Plan and its natural regions framework remain relevant for parks system planning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is support for the NP System Plan and its regions and a process in place to review the plan periodically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The framework is seen to be relevant It is periodically reviewed and updated as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews Comparison study (processes for review of goals/framework)
Performance: Are the intended outputs produced and are the results and targets achieved? Are results attributable to program activities? Was the program efficient and economic in the production of its desired results (i.e. outputs and outcomes)?			
5. To what extent are the desired outputs being produced as planned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key outputs are produced consistent with commitments 	Extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key outputs are planned and delivered consistent with commitments Rationale for changes to expected outputs (i.e., not produced or more or different outputs produced) is documented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review (corporate plans and performance reports; TB submission; internal planning documents; Round Table records) File review for timing of completion of key outputs Key informant interviews Case studies
6. To what extent is the desired system knowledge being effectively accumulated, updated and used in program decision-making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A process for identifying what information is required Relevant information (e.g. ecological, economic, social, and cultural information, including 	Extent to which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant knowledge is accumulated. Agency officials are satisfied with the system knowledge available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File review (proposals, feasibility studies, records of consultation, and decision records). Interviews with participants – both Agency and external parties

	<p>Aboriginal traditional knowledge and potential economic benefits for Aboriginal communities) is collected, assessed, and used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is shared with relevant stakeholders, Aboriginal groups, community members 	<p>for decision-making (e.g., sufficiency, timeliness, relevance)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency officials use system knowledge in decision-making Stakeholders and others understand intent and purposes of particular park establishment or expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies
<p>7. To what extent are relationship building objectives effectively being attained (i.e., effectiveness)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local population support establishment or expansion initiatives Important stakeholders are active participants. 	<p>Extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency evaluates public support for park establishment and expansion proposals Agency participants in public consultations indicate the community is appropriately and adequately represented in the consultation process Feasibility assessment includes stakeholder identification and assessment Partner/stakeholder list indicates coverage of major landholder, Aboriginal, commercial and other local interests Consultation reports indicate the active participation of a range of local interest groups, including members of the public Stakeholders indicate that they feel included and take part in the process Stakeholders do not complain about impediments to participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review (e.g. feasibility assessments, participant lists, local media reports, consultation records, and other public documentation) Interviews with participants and key informants Case studies
<p>8. To what extent are the corporate targets and objectives being achieved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targets and objectives in the PMF and the corporate plan are achieved or can reasonably be expected to be achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extent progress is demonstrated in targeted establishment or expansion projects Number of represented regions Expanding existing parks and establishing targeted new parks in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review of key outputs for Step 4: National Park Agreements Document review of key outputs, including timing of completion (see Q. 5) List of current projects indicating

		<p>represented regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing parks in legislation • Extent of land acquisition in targeted parks 	<p>extent of progress in unrepresented regions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External parties and Agency representatives for opinion on progress being made on projects • Ecological assessment of new or expanded parks included in feasibility study • Management plans and State of Park Reports (SOPR) for parks in the system subject to expansion/completion activities
<p>9. Is the program managed efficiently (i.e., is the least amount of resources used to produce program outputs) and economically (i.e., are the least amount of resources used to influence program outcomes)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks are established/expanded at least cost to the Agency • Progress is demonstrated on actions planned to streamline or accelerate the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of outputs and outcomes are monitored to identify efficiencies • Outputs are produced on time and on budget and in sufficient quantities to achieve results • Management demonstrates commitment to efficient operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File review • Comparison study • Key participant interviews • Case studies and comparison study
<p>10. Are roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities for national park establishment/expansion clear and appropriate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clear, appropriate, and implemented as intended • The transition from the establishment process to the process of making the park fully operational is appropriate. 	<p>Extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key informants report that roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clear and appropriate • Roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clearly documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Case studies • Interviews

Appendix D. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

Legislation

- Canada National Parks Act (2001)
- Parks Canada Agency Act (1998)

Government of Canada Policies and Guidelines

- Treasury Board. *Whole of Government Framework* (2012).
- Treasury Board. *Policy on Evaluation* (2009) and related directives.
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. *Canada's Northern Strategy* (2009).
- Environment Canada. *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy* (2010).
- Government of Canada. *Statement on Canada's Foreign Policy* (2010).
- Government of Canada, *Budget* (2004-2012).
- Government of Canada, *Speeches of the Throne* (2004-2012).
- Natural Resources Canada, *Terms of Reference – Mineral and Energy Resource Assessment of Proposed National Parks in Northern Canada* (1995).

Parks Canada Policies and Guidelines

- Parks Canada. *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies* (1994), National Parks Policy

Parks Canada Agency Corporate Documents

- Parks Canada. *Financial Coding Manual* (2008-09).
- Parks Canada. *Corporate Plans* (2003-04 to 2012-13).
- Parks Canada. *Departmental Performance Reports* (2003-04 to 2011-12).
- Parks Canada. *Stakeholder and Partner Engagement Survey* (2009).
- Parks Canada. *Program Activity Architecture* (2011-12).
- Parks Canada. *Performance Management Framework* (2011-12 and 2012-13)
- Parks Canada. *National Survey of Canadians* (2002, 2005, 2009 and 2012).
- Parks Canada. *National Park Management Plans* (various).
- Parks Canada. *State of the Park Reports* (various).
- Parks Canada. *National Park System Plan* (1997)

Parks Canada Agency Program Documents

- Parks Canada. *Monitoring and Reporting Ecological Integrity in Canada's National Parks, Volume I: Guiding Principles* (2005).
- Parks Canada. *Assessment of the Park Establishment Branch* (2008).
- Parks Canada. *Business Cases for Park Establishment/Expansion Projects* (2008)
- Parks Canada. *Action Plans for Park Establishment/Expansion Projects* (2010)
- Parks Canada. *Guide to an Integrated Approach to the Establishment Process - DRAFT* (2007)

Previous Evaluations, Audits and Management Reviews

- Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Chapter 31 - Canadian Heritage—Parks Canada: Preserving Canada's Natural Heritage (November 1996).

Other Documents

- United Nations World Heritage Convention (1972).
- United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1994).
- Northwest Territories Protected Area Strategy Advisory Committee, *A Balanced Approach to Establishing Protected Areas in the Northwest Territories* (1999)
- IUCN. *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories* (2008).
- IUCN, *Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories* (1994).
- British Columbia Ministry of Environment. *The British Columbia Ecoregion Classification* (2011).
- MacEachern, Alan. *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935–1970* (2001).

Appendix E. NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM PLAN

