



Evaluation Summary

Diplomacy, Trade and International Assistance Coherence in the Asia-Pacific Branch 2015-16 to 2020-21



ABOUT THE EVALUATION

Global Affairs Canada's Evaluation Division conducted a thematic evaluation of the Asia-Pacific Branch (OGM) that examined coherence across business lines, including diplomacy, trade and international assistance, from 2015-16 to 2020-21. It is the third in a series of 4 geographical coherence evaluations. Its main objectives were to assess the extent to which OGM operated in a coherent manner and to examine the factors that either fostered or hindered the ability of streams to collaborate on shared mandates and outcomes.



KEY FINDINGS

The following factors were found to be the most important in determining the level of coherence in the Asia-Pacific Branch:

- **Leadership:** Coherence thinking among management was observed primarily through the strategic annual planning cycle. Unless specifically mandated, potential joint initiatives that senior management identified as being strategic tended to not result in tangible joint initiatives. While senior management attempted to demonstrate that coherence is a priority, a sizeable proportion of staff was not aware of this. In large part, the success of initiatives was found to be determined by the direction and guidance that senior management provided to staff.
- **Capacity and expertise:** Staff confidence in their skillsets for collaboration was high, but there may have been gaps in practical knowledge and competencies that hindered efforts for effective collaboration. OGM streams' limited knowledge of other OGM streams, the lack of incentives, and capacity issues across the department were found to be important hurdles to collaboration and coherence thinking. Currently, no funds are dedicated to supporting cross-stream initiatives. Availability of resources was found to be a significant facilitator of collaboration.
- **Organizational structure:** OGM's organizational structure was not a significant barrier to coherence. The reorganization that occurred within some bureaus was found to have had a positive impact on coherence. The 3 streams demonstrated sufficient flexibility to engage in cross-stream collaboration, although each stream was limited by its inherent features.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. OGM should identify tangible cross-stream initiatives and provide guidance to staff to ensure that collaboration across the streams materializes.
2. OGM should increase OGM streams' knowledge of other OGM streams.
3. OGM should establish incentives to further motivate staff to engage in joint initiatives.

