

# **Trends in Collaboration: Lessons Learned from Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) and Beyond**

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By the New Economy Development Group

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## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) is the largest component of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). For that reason there is a need to identify and disseminate lessons learned from the SIDPD projects to enable government and voluntary sector organizations and other key stakeholders to benefit from and use the lessons learned to date.

For this reason, an analysis of the reports from SIDPD projects was undertaken in early 2005, which identified common issues for consideration, good practices and emerging themes around collaboration.

This report on the analysis will be used as the basis for further dissemination of the key learnings. As part of the dissemination, a meeting was held in March 2005 with representatives from government, the voluntary sector and other stakeholders to discuss the findings and further clarify the key lessons learned and strategies for moving the combined learning forward.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND TO SIDPD**

The SIDPD is a 5-year \$28.5 million initiative -- the largest component of the \$94.6 budget for the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). The two major objectives of SIDPD were:

- a) To enhance policy development in federal departments by strengthening opportunities for input by voluntary sector organizations; and
- b) To strengthen the policy capacity of the voluntary sector to contribute to departmental policy development.

Two rounds of projects were approved and undertaken between 2001 and 2005, most of which have been completed and project reports provided. The projects ranged in budget size from \$30K-\$4.2M; number of partners/stakeholders, from one to 100s and time, from 6 months to four years. Some projects addressed issues within federal jurisdiction; several were within provincial or shared federal/provincial jurisdiction.

Project activities were also broad; some experienced the full range of policy development; others focused on issue identification and organizing stakeholders to address the issues.

### **2.1 Rationale for SIDPD**

SIDPD emerged from recognition on the part of the federal government and the voluntary sector of the need to strengthen their relationship. It was also based on the belief that improved policy development would be one of the most important outcomes of a strengthened relationship. The voluntary sector wanted to strengthen its capacity to influence policy development. The federal government saw an opportunity in SIDPD to involve the sector more effectively, thus leading to better policies and programs.

From the beginning policy development for SIDPD was interpreted broadly to include issue identification, partnership development, policy planning and formulation, program design, delivery, monitoring evaluation and lessons learned. The SIDPD projects themselves reflected a broad view of policy development. That broad definition was similarly incorporated into the Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue:

**Public Policy Development:** the complex and comprehensive process by which policy issues are identified; the public policy agenda is shaped; issues are researched, analyzed and assessed, policies are drafted and approved, and, once implemented, their impact is assessed. (*Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue*. p. 3.)

## 2.2 Evaluation and Analysis of SIDPD

A process evaluation of SIDPD was carried out in 2003-04, the results of which were publicly released in November, 2004. The evaluation documented the status of SIDPD projects, and identified the challenges and lessons learned from the overall process, also the extent to which the projects met the two objectives of SIDPD.

It is important to underscore that the current look at SIDPD is analysis—it is not an evaluation. With guidance from the Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF) and Social Development Canada (SDC) staff it was decided to focus on the partnerships – because all SIDPD projects had to be partnerships – and on the relationships at the heart of those projects.

In addition “horizontality,” because it was an essential aspect of SIDPD, also forms a backdrop to this analysis. “Horizontality” can be understood as the degree to which the voluntary sector and government departments are working in collaboration across their respective silos of responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

Twenty three projects<sup>2</sup> were chosen for examination. To be chosen, projects had to have final reports and evaluations on file and represent a range of issues and national and regional projects. In addition, based on the file review and previous knowledge from the SIDPD evaluation they had to have met or be on their way to meeting most of their objectives. Because the analysis focused on the relationships at the heart of the projects, it was the intention to conduct interviews with a range of federal government project officers, SIDPD voluntary sector project managers and project partners including provincial government representatives. In the end, there were more interviews completed with voluntary sector staff due to the high turnover of federal project officers.

The objective of the analysis then is to understand the role of partnerships and the nature of the relationships and the ways in which collaboration contributed to the projects. In addition, it is hoped that the publication of this analysis will further the development of collaborative working relationships within and between the federal government and voluntary sectors.

And finally, although this Report draws largely on an analysis of SIDPD, it is important to note that the findings are consistent with other horizontal/collaborative initiatives such as Vibrant Communities, the Urban Agreements in Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg,

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<sup>1</sup> See Next Section

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A

the Sustainable Communities Initiative in Nova Scotia<sup>3</sup> and other “joined up” or horizontal programs such as Homelessness, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, and related initiatives in Crime Prevention and Youth Justice.

### 3.0 A WORD ABOUT COLLABORATION AND HORIZONTAL MANAGEMENT

#### 3.1 Horizontal Management

The idea of ‘horizontal management’ is not altogether new. “From the time of the separation of governing structures into departments, ministries, and analogous organizations there have been complaints that one organization does not know what another is doing, and that their programs are contradictory, redundant or both... [the] Holy Grail of coordination [has been] one of the perennial quests for the practitioners of government”.<sup>4</sup>

What is new, however, is the scope of current efforts to re-fashion government. In the 1970s, for instance, attempts to promote service integration tended to focus on coordinating programs at their point of delivery. In comparison, current efforts at ‘modernizing government,’ ‘integrated governance,’ ‘joined-up government’ and ‘horizontal collaboration’ are much broader in their implications. Managing a horizontal initiative involves entering into an arrangement with partners where there is shared accountability and responsibility among partners; joint investment of resources (such as time, funding, and expertise); shared risks among partners; mutual benefits; and common results.<sup>5</sup> Such changes have significance for elected officials and civil servants, for central agencies, line departments and those playing a mediating role with government, most importantly the voluntary sector.

In essence, horizontal management is about “working collaboratively across organizational boundaries”. Its focus is “bringing diverse people together and lining up authorities in a complementary way to achieve a common purpose”.<sup>6</sup> The ability to build alliances, form partnerships and effectively manage *horizontal* initiatives is in many cases key to delivering high-quality, cost-effective services to Canadians.<sup>7</sup>

A study<sup>8</sup> of Federal Regional Councils in 2002 comments: “In probing the underlying factors that lead to positive results, there was almost unanimous agreement that the primary determinants of success were more cultural than institutional in nature” It goes on to observe: “Despite the degree of diversity, the challenges of horizontal

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<sup>3</sup> Nova Scotia Sustainable Communities Initiative: An External Review, Caledon Institute of Social Policy, May 2004

<sup>4</sup> Peters, B. Guy. (1998). *Managing Horizontal Government: The Politics of Coordination*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development

<sup>5</sup> Lahey, James (2001), *Moving from the Heroic to the Everyday; Lessons Learned from Leading Horizontal Projects*, Ottawa, Canadian Centre for Management Development Final Report on the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Horizontal Demonstration Project, 2003

<sup>6</sup> Lahey, 2002

<sup>7</sup> Treasury Board Secretariat, 2002, *Companion Guide: The Development of Results Based Management and Accountability Frameworks for Horizontal Initiatives*, Ottawa.

<sup>8</sup> *Delivering Federal Polices in the Regions: Partnership in Action*, September 2002

management remain the same – sharing leadership, team building, linking cultures, sharing responsibility and building trust emerge as the single most important cluster of success factors. People make it happen, or they break it.”

### 3.2 Collaboration

Regardless of the sector or the issue that is being addressed, complex, interconnected issues are cumulative effects whose sources and solutions lie beyond a single span of control. The realization is emerging that the answer to this dilemma does not lie in expanding command and control, but in learning how to come together as community, combining interests and integrating our efforts.

There is an emerging understanding of the nature of collaboration and the relationship to partnering and the need for horizontal governance. Understanding of why we need to coordinate, partner and collaborate is an evolving notion – but in essence it is about governance – the use of public policy levers and tools for society’s well being.

Improved collaboration between governments and communities has emerged as a focus of interest for a number of basic reasons.<sup>9</sup> Those reasons include the increasing presence of:

- complex interrelated problems;
- inadequate resources and the inability of one organization or entity to address the problem;
- the need to address the sources (s) of the problems over time;
- the creation of ways and means of bringing people together that are more than the sum of the individuals and organizations;
- social and bureaucratic fragmentation and divisive competition over limited resources; and
- disengaged citizens.

Collaboration then becomes a “Mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more likely to achieve together than alone”<sup>10</sup>

In *Collaboration: What Makes it Work*; The Wilder Foundation says that the factors that make or break collaboration include: ideology, leadership, power, history, competition and resources.

Their research identified a continuum of increasing intensity for building relationships and doing work. The continuum starts with cooperation which it describes as a series of short-term informal relationships with little definition or clarity – essentially separate groups working together in an ad hoc fashion. The next higher level of intensity is coordination which has more formal relationships and a clearer sense of mission and

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<sup>9</sup> Taylor-Powell, Ellen, Boyd Rossing and Jean Geran. (1998). *Evaluating Collaboration: Reaching the Potential*. Madison: University of Wisconsin.

<sup>10</sup> *Collaboration: What Makes It Work*; Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 2001

longer term interaction around a specific effort or program. At the highest level of intensity is collaboration, a more durable relationship in which separate organizations merge into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Finally, collaboration is seen as the most intense way of working together while still retaining the separate identities of the organizations involved.

It is important to remember that not all issues require collaboration – collaboration above all, as it is beginning to be understood, requires significant time and resources in order to make it work. Collaboration is required when issues are complex and interrelated and means doing things differently from the way things have been done in the past.

Coordination, cooperation and consultation are legitimate governance mechanisms that need to continue to be used in appropriate instances. Clearly, as we have seen governments here and around the world are struggling with better understanding how to reach out and engage their citizens in meaningful ways.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

The key SIDPD findings are presented followed by lessons learned from the projects themselves and what is emerging about the nature of collaboration.

### 4.1 Key SIDPD Findings

#### 4.1.1 Government and Sector Capacity

Virtually all the interviews conducted indicated that there has been **increased voluntary sector policy capacity** along with real changes in the way in which the voluntary sector partners are working together.

However, in the context of strengthening the voluntary sector's opportunities for input into departmental policy development, the reports are more mixed. While there are several interesting examples of improved opportunity to input into departmental policy development processes, limited innovation is reported to date across government.

The inability of many departments to capitalize on the projects appears to be related to multiple factors including the absence of active departmental champions and staff turnover.

We learned that a partnership does not mean 50/50. You need to identify mutual interests and be reasonable about the limitations of each partner and acknowledge that there will be differing perspectives and opinions. We also learned that each voluntary organization has a different operating style and ways of working and we had to make adjustments for that. It was really a capacity building process for all of us.

*Voluntary Sector Manager*

Our relationships have been sustained. We've created a broad partnership that includes the local Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Labour. We learned early on that we had to start developing relationships across the province. The province is also an important player. The federal government participation has weakened through changes in personnel and lack of clear direction from NHQ.

*Voluntary Sector Project Partner*

The federal department seemed interested and engaged at one level but did not seem committed to understanding the importance of the work. A stronger federal presence on the project might have strengthened it.

*Voluntary Sector Project Manager*

Interviewees indicated that there were capacity issues for representatives of both the government and the voluntary sector.

**4.1.2 Process vs. Policy: Engaging Stakeholders**

**The majority of the activities occurred around process - there was limited input into actual policy development.**

This is not a negative finding however, because in fact SIDPD has built a great deal of social capital. The majority of interviewees indicated that as result of their project, sustainable relationships had been built with partners and other key stakeholders, they had developed a greatly enhanced understanding of the subject matter being addressed and all involved had a much deeper appreciation of the public policy process.

The private sector is beginning to let go of some of their myths about the voluntary sector. They are becoming better informed and beginning to understand the importance of the voluntary sector to the health of Canadian communities and their requirement to support the sector.

In addition, SIDPD has significantly contributed to the development of a number of VS Networks –these represent a broad range of issues and stakeholders and could be used as a vehicle for public consultation, policy development.

The emphasis on process was also linked to the fact that policy development by definition has long historical time frames. The design of SIDPD did not take this into consideration and thus many projects did not get past organizing to identify and address policy issues due to their limited time frames. Despite the limited timeframes for SIDPD early indications are that **some projects are being sustained beyond SIDPD.**

Project managers reported receiving funding from provincial and territorial governments and foundations as well as the federal government for follow-up activities. Several

Our goals in terms of partnership building and collaboration were not realistic. We spent all our time getting the infrastructure in place – e.g. website, newsletter and resource library. Now we are ready to deal with the issue we formed around. The good news is that the territorial government has moved from year to year funding and has provided us with three year funding to build organizational sustainability.

*Executive, Director, VoluntarySector Organization*

project mangers indicated the funding had come as a result of the increased profile that the funding from SIDPD provided.

Many of the projects represent a very broad range of stakeholders—interestingly many included provincial and municipal officials and some even included the private sector. This broad range of stakeholders is innovative in many instances and again represents a promising new development.

### 4.1.3 A New Way of Working

In some significant instances the voluntary sector interviewees described the role that their **project officer had played as very helpful or facilitative**. They described a role for the federal government that was not one of leader or controller but rather that of facilitator or coach—helping the project partners understand the complexities of government and in many instances helping identify the right people to talk to—in particular where the issue was within the purview of another jurisdiction or department.

Much of the credit for the success of our project was due to our project officer. She was there for us the whole time and was an active participant in the project. She knew how to work within the bureaucracy and at the same time help us to make things happen. We had an open relationship with lots of trust on both sides. This was a very different experience than most of our dealings with federal departments.

“I learned early on that I had to participate. I needed to make personal visits to monitor progress but more importantly in order to be engaged and helpful. The learning curve was steep but in the end the relationship was collaborative and positive.”

*Government Project Officer*

Many interviewees reported that SIDPD provided them for the first time with both significant resources but more importantly the credibility with departments to undertake policy development—they were not seen any longer as “just advocacy organizations”. A limited number of projects also indicated that they are beginning to

experience some success with accessing senior management in government as a result of their SIDPD Project.

### 4.1.4 Getting the Word Out

Knowledge transfer and the dissemination of results is now a major issue for all government funding programs, foundations and granting councils. It was intended to be an integral part of SIDPD. Developing a dissemination plan is relatively easy compared to actually carrying it out. For example, project staff have often moved on when dissemination occurs.

We have to understand the power of the voluntary sector. We need to find ways as a sector to foster the exchange of information and learning about policy development and partnership building.

*Voluntary Sector Project Manager*

The interviews indicate that any one dissemination strategy is a weak approach— a dissemination strategy has to be broad—it is not enough to post a report on a website for example. Interviewees indicated that face to face workshops and other opportunities are still preferred—many are searching for practical ways to communicate the learning from these projects.

What SIDPD did was enable the creation of warmed up spaces for interaction and connection. Nothing in humankind has ever happened without this. We don't think of the space that we create as the basis of operations. It is a given. Telephone systems allow people to talk. Because we can talk we can do things. You have to value the spaces that we create as worthwhile.

*Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) Leader*

### 4.1.5 A Values Shift?

And lastly, it appears that this movement to more collaborative practices is in fact a values shift. In many ways it is a paradigm shift – from government control to

collaboration, from the lack of information sharing on how the business of government is done to increased transparency and from misunderstanding to a deeper appreciation of the challenges inherent in any public policy process.

## 4.2 Key Success Factors of the Projects

To begin, it is important to acknowledge that many of the elements discussed are consistent with good project management. However when taken together successful projects with high degrees of collaboration exhibit the same characteristics.

### 4.2.1 Receptivity and Timing

Although it seems like common sense after the fact, projects were most successful when there was receptivity to the ideas. Real

success occurred where the policy issues were already on the government's agenda, or there was other political support and most importantly, where there was already considerable experience/familiarity with the issue within the sponsoring voluntary organizations and the government.

Policy Development is driven by the government in power. The issues that get acted upon have political backing.  
*Government Project Officer*

It was noted that projects were less successful that were trying to raise emerging policy issues or where the organizations or government representatives did not have a lot of experience on the file. This was very apparent in the significant number of project representatives that indicated they had difficulty engaging senior management or decision makers.

The design of SIDPD did not allow for developmental projects. The design assumed that public policy issues could be formulated, organized around and addressed within a one-two year time frame. This has lead to greatly raised expectations and unnecessary frustration on the part of both voluntary sector and government representatives.

Some of our most successful activities were unplanned. However, as it turned out our multi-sectoral approach was exactly what the government was looking for and we had uptake from a number of departments that we had not anticipated. There was a confluence of ideas outside and inside government.

*Voluntary Sector Project Manager*

When we started—sometime ago—our issue (child care) was not exactly on anyone's agenda. However things have changed and we even had a meeting with the minister.

*Provincial Government Partner*

### 4.2.2. Leadership: Passion and Commitment

Not surprisingly, passionate, committed leadership was seen as essential to the success of the projects—leadership needed to be evident in both the voluntary and government sectors for the project to have a good chance of achieving its final objectives

We need communication on both sides and the right people doing it—we need government staff who are committed and want to be working on the project. Frequently government staff are given a job and they do not have the heart for it.

*Government Project Officer*

Voluntary organizations are under funded but the people who work there are committed and often subject to burnout. People work on these issues because they are passionate about them

*Project Manager*

### 4.2.3 Thoughtful and Deliberate Processes/Clear Governance Structures

Very importantly and interesting was the finding that successful projects were very intentional and deliberate in the way they went about implementation. Project managers talked about hours spent identifying issues, mapping strategies, identifying stakeholders, determining a process, confirming and clarifying objectives, identifying indicators of success and preparing for evaluation. Related to an intentional, deliberate process is a clear governance structure. Governance includes identifying roles and responsibilities for all the key players, identifying areas of authority and clear lines of accountability. Projects with good governance structures had signed Memorandum of Understanding or Partnership Agreements signed by all parties.

You need to be very clear with your partners what you are collaborating about. You need to negotiate on language and on a joint agenda with very clear boundaries for the respective organizations. And you need lots of personal contact between the key players—we spent hours on the phone negotiating next steps and what our respective roles were.

*Voluntary Sector Manager*

We had a process whereby we had monthly meetings with key players on the project. We saw this as a learning opportunity for everyone and we assumed that the government people wanted to share their ideas—that they were more than administrators. The meeting provided us with an open, safe, well animated space in which to learn.

*Voluntary Sector Project Manager*

Project managers also spoke about the need to understand that partners had different agendas but that what collaboration offered was a common agenda that would require continuous evolution and development. Interviewees also made it clear that there was always the potential for the various agendas to come into conflict but that the MOUs and governance structures provided means by which to deal with the conflict.

### 4.2.4 Effective Engagement Strategies

We had a very focused agenda—poverty reduction. We were able to reach out to government in very concrete terms.

*Voluntary Sector Manager*

Successful projects had well thought out engagement strategies that operated at multiple levels—that ensured that the strategy included key players including senior management, other key bureaucrats community organizations, ordinary citizens etc.

These engagement strategies were notable for their inclusiveness and sensitive approach to ensuring that the full range of issues and sub-issues were addressed and people associated with those issues engaged.

### 4.2.5 Capacity of Key Players

Project managers talked about the need for lots of personal contact amongst key players to sort out conflict and the project details. So engagement was seen as a multi-layered notion with the need for both personal and private spaces for dialogue. Collaboration is such that no-one has the skill sets required—much of it has to be learned experientially

There are big language differences between the voluntary sector and government. I had worked in government and understood both languages—I was “bilingual”—so I was able to go back and forth between the two.

*Voluntary Sector Project Manager*

However it was clear from the interviews that the projects that were very collaborative also had key players that were highly skilled and that this skill level impacted all aspects of the project, key players had good understanding of the business of government and of the voluntary sector and very importantly understood the need to and could speak the other's language. That skill set also included openness to ideas and the flexibility to back up and change a course of direction if that is what was required.

#### **4.2.6 Relationship (Trust) Building and Role Definition**

Interviewees spoke about high degrees of trust and respect for their partners but also the requirement to balance relationships; that when the relationship is out of balance there needs to be some process to get the

There was a high level of trust and confidence between the partners. Each partner had to develop a very clear sense of their area of responsibility and respect for each others skill sets. There were times when we had different perspectives and priorities and we had to openly caution one another about our concerns.

*Voluntary Sector Project Manager*

We had a policy person who we had come to know quite well and she was very helpful—then she left the position. We were never able to find another person to connect with. It was very frustrating as we had invested a lot of time in the relationship. Loosing the relationship with the departmental representative had a big impact on the project.

*Voluntary Sector Manager*

balance back. They also noted and understood that not all relationships are equal. Interviewees spoke about the time required to both define the parameters of the relationship and develop the relationship required to make the project work.

#### **4.2.7 Continuous Learning**

And lastly successful projects exhibit the ability to continuously learn throughout the life of the project, to build in review mechanisms and to be open to evaluation as a learning tool. In the end collaboration is about transformation—of agendas, skill sets, understanding of how the world works and ultimately public policy

We realized early on that the community groups did not understand the policy process and that we needed to work to help local partners understand the process. Some of our local partners took that on but it was not built into the project in a systematic fashion. We have now built local development in to the follow up project. Our topic was very broad and the project spun out a number of sub issues—we were trying to do too much. The follow up work will be more focused and have fewer sub committees.

*Voluntary Sector Project Manager*

## **5.0 CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATION**

There were several challenges reported by interviewees to moving collaboration forward as a way of working together.

### 5.1 Legitimacy

Firstly, although the majority of the voluntary sector representatives indicated that they felt that SIDPD provided them with increased legitimacy with the federal government, several also felt that the government still saw them as advocacy organizations and thus not providing “objective” policy development. There may be links between this issue and the voluntary sector’s expressed need for a review of charitable status regulations which could have an impact on the perception of organizations’ advocacy roles.

Our biggest problem still is that we are not seen as “legitimate”. [...] SIDPD for the first time began to change that.

*Voluntary Sector Vice President*

### 5.2 Support for Skills Development

If public policy is defined as a commitment to a course of action and a set of outcomes by those with the resources and power to carry it out, there is also realization that no organization or individual starts out with the skills and the knowledge necessary to function effectively in this collaborative milieu<sup>11</sup>. Much of the necessary skills and knowledge can only be attained through action learning or targeted workshops where people learn by working together on real issues with opportunities to reflect on their experiences.

### 5.3 Understanding Jurisdictions in Public Policy Development

Several of the projects dealt with issues that were either solely within provincial jurisdiction or part of a shared jurisdiction. Several interviewees spoke of the time and resources spent sorting jurisdictional issues out and of the need for federal government project officers to help identify jurisdiction from the beginning of a project

This issue is very much related to support for the federal government playing a facilitator role – which in fact it does not need to be front and center on all issues. This notion is very much in keeping with the work underway in some areas of the country with regard to Urban Agreements—where there are federal staff assigned to act as facilitators across multi faceted agreements with the federal, provincial and municipal levels.

### 5.4 Administrative Constraints

The last point is one that forms a backdrop to all evaluations and analysis of horizontal initiatives – that is bureaucratic and administrative constraints.

This issues is some ways the bane of the Western World. Recent research in Canada, in the UK and in the US identifies and leads to similar conclusions with regard to initiatives similar to SIDPD.

<sup>11</sup> Journeys in Governance: The Role of the Public Sector in Addressing Tough Community Problems, James P Ellsworth and Dr Lawrence Jones Walters, April, 2004 (unpublished)

These findings include:

- The tendency (by government programs) to take a provider-centred perspective rather than that of the service user.
- The lack of incentives or rewards for organizations or individuals who contribute to corporate/horizontal goals or those of another department or organizations.
- The absence of the skills and capacity to develop and deliver cross-cutting solutions.
- Budgets and organizational structures that are arranged around vertical, functional lines (e.g., education, health, defense) rather than horizontal, cross-cutting problems and issues (e.g., social exclusion, sustainable development).
- Systems of accountability (e.g., audit) and the way risk is handled often work at cross-purposes to innovative crosscutting work.
- The centre is not always effective at giving clear, strategic direction, and providing mechanisms for resolving conflict between departments.

Clearly these issues are ones that will be a challenge for sometime as the government and the voluntary sector collectively develop and hone the skills and understanding required to manage complex interrelated problems.

Our funding rules have become too hard and fast – we need to be more flexible. On the other hand, we need to help the voluntary sector understand that the government is subject to public scrutiny with respect to the way public funds are spent. It is difficult to be accountable and get the funding quickly to the voluntary sector organizations we work with.

*Government Manager*

## 6.0 FURTHERING COLLABORATION

From the interviews and file review, it is apparent that there has been a significant shift in the last few years to more collaborative approaches. In order to support the further development of collaborative policy development and the development of relationships based on collaboration, there are some steps that could be taken that would add substantially to the knowledge and expertise required to work collaboratively.

1. Development of an orientation/training session on collaboration that would be a requirement for any new initiatives similar to SIDPD. This orientation session would be given to government and voluntary sector managers and program/project staff as part of the development of any funding proposal where there is a significant horizontal governance aspect and thus requirement for collaboration. The training session could be developed on the basis of existing training materials (see [www.wilderpubs.org](http://www.wilderpubs.org) and [www.projectvoice.ca](http://www.projectvoice.ca)) and the lessons learned from this analysis. The training/orientation session could be developed and a group of leaders trained to give it across the country.
2. Development of a course on Collaborative Project Management.
3. Follow-Up Lessons Learned Workshops. The March 2005 Workshop brought together some fifty people representing about 25 SIDPD projects out of the 67 carried out to discuss lessons learned to date. A number of other SIDPD projects with potential for follow up activities could be identified and brought together in order to benefit from the lessons learned to date from SIDPD and similar initiatives.

4. The VSI/SIDPD Evaluation will be conducted within the next year. The evaluation could be used as a vehicle for action research in order to bring the learning forward during the evaluation in workshops and focus groups.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

This brief analysis of SIDPD has focused on the partnership aspect of SIDPD and on the relationships at the heart of those projects. What the analysis found was very much in keeping with the current research on horizontality and the resulting need for collaborative processes. It is still too early to tell what the final outcomes of many of the SIDPD projects will be, as by definition the policy process is long-term in nature and developmental. In other words projects and relationships are iterative and build on one another.

However there is much to celebrate about the accomplishments of the SIDPD projects and all those who gave much time and effort on issues they were committed and passionate about.

The SIDPD funding has allowed for the translation of discontent around issues into informed thinking that can be taken forward in the development of concrete policy formulations and dialogue with government.

*Former Manager, Government*