Making Connections that Work

How to use peer assist workshops to facilitate knowledge transfer between teams

Environment Canada Environnement Canada

Canada

Making Connections That Work

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"I started thinking of knowledge as a tree.

Above the ground you find the explicit part of knowledge, while what is below the ground – the roots that keep the tree alive and make it robust – is the tacit part. If you uproot a tree and re-plant it in a new context, the chemistry of the soil has to be close to what it was, and you will also find new roots developing as you re-plant it. Unless you are a gardener, you are not aware of this because all you see is the explicit. It is the root structure, what it comes into contact with, and its new context that make something usefully moveable."

John Seeley Brown

Foreword

Given Environment Canada's current focus on teams and integration, I am pleased to present this new handbook: *Making Connections that Work*. As we all adapt to the department's organizational change, and re-invent our key role as members of project teams, this handbook will serve as a valuable resource. It promotes a knowledge-sharing technique, peer assist, which can help a new project team benefit from the experience and expertise located in other corners of the department.

Peer assist was pioneered and refined by leading private sector firms such as BP. However, the authors of this handbook recognized that the process could be adapted for use in the public sector context – and, specifically, within Environment Canada – to achieve the same benefits.

And they did just that. They adapted the peer assist process and tested it by running three workshops for EC teams late in 2004. The results – what worked well, what didn't – inform this handbook.

Making Connections that Work outlines why, when, and how to run a peer assist workshop. It explains how a peer assist workshop can shorten the learning curve for a team starting on a new project or program and help them direct their efforts to best effect.

I recommend this resource to you and hope that you will put it to good use making connections across the department that work for you and for Environment Canada.

Cassie J. Doyle
Associate Deputy Minister
January 20, 2005

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Acknowledgements

Throughout the process of piloting peer assist in Environment Canada, we've had the privilege to work with so many exceptional individuals. Without them this project, and hence this handbook, would still be nothing more than a good idea. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank them for their time and their intelligence.

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And the Innovation and Learning Fund, for making this project possible.

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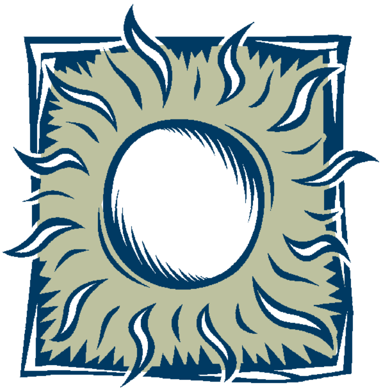

What is peer assist?

This handbook is based on three peer assist workshops run by the Science Policy Branch in late 2004 as part of an Innovation and Learning Fund project. Those peer assists brought together teams from across the department to focus on the science-policy interface, communicating science to northern communities, and managing the environmental risks of offshore oil and gas exploration. Reports from these case studies are available with the online version of the handbook.

Environment Canada (EC) staff can use this handbook to answer questions about why, when, and how to run a peer assist workshop. The handbook explains how a peer assist can shorten the start-up time for a new project or program and help the team direct their efforts to best effect.

The peer assist knowledge-sharing approach, hereafter called peer assist, was developed in the private sector, by British Petroleum (see References). Essentially, it is a process whereby a team with experience in a particular area transfers its learning from that experience to a team beginning a parallel type of project.

Peer assist involves knowledge sharing between two teams: a **project team** and a **resource team**. The project team is a group in the early stages of a project; team members are generally the ones who request and organize the peer assist. The resource team is a group of "wily veterans" with experience in a similar project area; this team may have worked together before or may be assembled for the purposes of the peer assist. The project may be a one-off endeavour or an ongoing set of operational, program, regulatory or policy responsibilities.

Definition: Peer assist is a face-to-face, horizontal (peer-to-peer rather than top-down) transfer of tacit (gained through experience and difficult to write down) knowledge from one project team to another. It allows valuable lessons and successes from past projects to inform subsequent projects.

Elements of a peer assist

1) Preparatory work designed to introduce teams to one another and to each others' projects
2) Peer assist knowledge sharing workshop – main elements include:
   a. Presentation by project team (team asking for the peer assist)
   b. Discussion and questions by resource team (team with experience to share)
   c. Analysis of issue to be discussed
   d. Option development and evaluation for project improvement
3) Follow-up by both teams to ensure continuation of knowledge exchange

Each of the elements above will be treated in more detail in the sections that follow.

Who should use this guide?

This guide is intended for Environment Canada employees. However, the peer assist process, as adapted for EC, could be used across government. The logistics section is specified for EC, but, again, much of the advice will apply outside the department.

The guide is addressed throughout to those teams that feel they might be able to benefit from another team's experience (project teams). We also welcome its use by anyone who is interested in knowledge-sharing techniques.

In addition, this handbook should prove useful to anyone organizing a workshop or meeting – whether peer assist or otherwise – as it covers logistics, contracting and departmental procedures necessary for workshop planning.

The Knowledge Management Centre can be found at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/ (Access is limited to EC.)

How to use this guide

If you think your team might be a project team, read on. The next few sections will help you determine whether or not a peer assist is right for you. If it is what you need, the remaining sections will guide you through the peer assist process step-by-step. As you read, keep in mind that this guide represents our learning in this area, but you are in the best position to know what will work for you – adjust, adapt and make peer assist a useful tool for you. Please let us know what works and does not work for you by emailing us at scpolicy@ec.gc.ca. Note that this handbook, including the Tools, is available online at the EC Knowledge Management Centre pages on the Infolane.

Tool 1 – page 52
Timeline for peer assist process

What might a peer assist workshop look like?

The following example will give you a better idea of who would be present at a peer assist, what they would do, and what kind of results to expect. It is adapted from Nancy Dixon's *Common Knowledge: How Companies Thrive by Sharing What They Know* (Harvard Business School Press, 2000). Although the organizations and initiatives in this example are real, the people, situations and partnerships are fictitious.

The Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), in cooperation with Sport Canada and Health Canada, is developing a comprehensive strategy to promote the *Canadian Policy Against Doping in Sport* to sports organizations, coaches and individual athletes. The CCES project team is led by Marie, a communications specialist, and consists of a sports therapist, an athlete services officer, a pharmacologist, and a doping control program officer. The project team is looking to develop a partnership with the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) association, as university athletes are one of the main target groups for this promotional strategy.

With a draft strategy mapped out and plans in place for initiatives that CCES and CIS could undertake together, Marie and her team are left with a few questions. What can CCES, a non-profit organization, bring to the table to entice CIS to partner with it? What kind of logistics would be necessary in terms of organizing joint publications? Should this partnership be part of a larger strategy of partnering with CIS? What can CCES reasonably expect from CIS in terms of financial and human resource commitments to this partnership? What kind of barriers in the two organizations' structures will present problems? And, most importantly, how can the project team manage this process so that they meet their deadline of the end of the fiscal year for producing a fully developed promotional strategy, including the initiatives involving CIS?

Through colleagues, Marie learns of a team at Sport Canada (part of the Department of Heritage) that has just finished a joint promotional strategy with Hockey Canada on spinal injury prevention. Marie calls Dave, one of the team members from Sport Canada, and asks if his team would be interested in acting as a resource team to help her team work through some of the obstacles it has encountered in partnering with an amateur sports association. Dave speaks to his colleagues, who agree that working with Marie's team would be a good way for them to actually think through what they learned in their work on spinal injury prevention. This would not only help Marie's team, but also capture some of that knowledge for their own future use.

On the meeting day, Marie defines what her team (the project team) would like to get out of the process. She lays out the objectives for the day and references the materials that Dave's team (the resource team) has received in advance. In the conference room where the two teams are meeting, the walls are covered with mock-ups of information products that the project team has been working on, as well as a CIS organizational chart and several examples of information products that CIS has produced in the past.

As Marie finishes her introduction, she introduces the pharmacologist on the project team. She discusses some health research products that the project team would like to integrate into its promotional strategy with CIS. After she speaks, members of the resource team ask her and each other questions about the doping project, the spinal injury project, and several other projects that they have previously been involved in as individuals. The pharmacologist then turns the floor over to the project team's athlete services officer, who is soon similarly engaged in discussion with the resource team over top-down versus bottom-up policy implementation and how to effectively engage a partner organization in both.

Following brief presentations by the rest of the project team, Marie tells the resource team that they have finished presenting information about their project. The resource team comes back to the original objectives and asks for more clarification on some points in light of what team members now know of the project. After more discussion, the resource team takes some time to discuss what they have heard and to develop a response. The resource team begins to discuss some options they could present to the project team, recording them on a flipchart as they go. The discussion is quite animated, with team members questioning each other's suggestions and offering novel ideas to stimulate discussion. Although the resource team members rely on their project knowledge from the spinal injury prevention project, they also draw on decades of combined experience in different project settings and contexts. This diversity and difference of perspective greatly adds to the breadth of ideas they come up with.

When the resource team is ready to present its response to the project team, the spokesperson thanks Marie's group and mentions the benefit of realizing that so much project knowledge is transferable to different situations. The project team listens carefully to the resource team's response, asking for clarification or elaboration when necessary. In the response, the resource team provides several options for how Marie and her team could approach the partnership with CIS, and presents several other ways they could achieve the project goals. Upon the conclusion of this response, Marie and the project team thank Dave's resource team for the innovative suggestions and options they have come up with in such a short time. Marie admits that she wasn't sure her team was ready for outside input, not having actually begun the process of partnering, but says she is now glad that they can take the resource team's suggestions into account before they are fully committed to a course of action or a particular type of partnership.

Following the workshop, several members of the resource team ask Marie to keep them informed of the project's progress and offer to discuss any aspect of the project with members of the project team. Marie thanks them and offers the same type of help on any future projects, where she or other team members might be able to share some knowledge.

Why do a peer assist?

Imagine if you could never ask for help. Your co-worker would not show you how he got the temperamental photocopier to work. Your wife would be the only one able to properly close your sticky car door. And the mystery of your neighbour's gardening genius would remain a mystery.

Luckily we help each other out every day, in little ways, by exchanging knowledge we have gained through experience. Why should the more complex lessons learned within EC be any different? Capturing existing knowledge, adapting it to new situations, and re-using it within the department makes sense.

"It would have taken us months to collect all this info via e-mails."

project team member

"Working with the resource team helped provide me with a framework for moving forward more consciously – I'm better aware of what questions to ask."

project team member

"The peer assist process gave me insight into the policy experience I had gained over the years. I didn't realize what I had acquired."

resource team member

It might seem difficult to justify committing valuable resources to holding a peer assist workshop in the early stages of a project. If, however, a peer assist workshop could help you save valuable time and resources later on, then it might be a good idea to invest in it up front.

As a project team, you stand to save time, money and frustration by holding a peer assist workshop. Your resource team, having been through a similar project before, will give you the benefit of its experience: what to look out for, people to talk to, people to avoid, what to do, and what not to do.

For the resource team, the benefits are less obvious but every bit as important. In a work environment with too many things to do and too little time in which to do them, the opportunity to reflect upon and synthesize your learning is a rare gift.

Additionally, peer assist allows the resource team to examine its learning and determine which parts are generally applicable (learning that the team can re-use in future projects) and which are project-specific. This is an effective way of learning from someone else's experience. Feedback from the project team after the workshop can extend that "distance" learning even further.

The truly unique aspect of a peer assist – and perhaps its biggest advantage over other types of meetings – is the dynamic that it encourages among participants. Given time and space to focus on an interesting problem, curious and committed people with whom to build dialogue, and a level of trust that allows innovative ideas to develop, we have found that members of both the project and resource teams invest themselves fully in the peer assist process. Try getting that from an hour-long teleconference or a string of impersonal e-mails!

Is peer assist for you?

You probably already have a good idea, from reading the previous section, of the possible benefits of the peer assist process. The question, then, is whether this process is the best way to share knowledge in your situation.

First of all, are you ready to ask for help? Remember that asking for a peer assist is evidence that you are smart enough to want to avoid reinventing the wheel.

Consider the timing, and decide if your project has advanced enough that you are sure it is, in fact, a wheel you are looking to create. Are you at a point where your project is defined well enough to allow you to explain it to someone else? Vague project definitions usually lead to vague peer assist outcomes.

Conversely, do you have enough leeway to make significant changes to your project plan, if necessary? A peer assist is useful only if it can actually make a difference to how you complete your project.

Secondly, can you identify areas or issues for which outside expertise would be particularly valuable? Business cases, initiatives or scenarios that encompass some of the larger issues inherent in your project can be a particularly useful way to structure a peer assist. Make sure that you can identify specific, concrete questions, issues or concerns for potential resource team members to think about.

Third, are there people you can access in the department, government, or another group who have knowledge that would be useful to you? Think outside your normal circle of contacts; people working on similar projects in a completely different area of EC can often lend a valuable perspective. Can you get all of these people in the same room at the same time? Don't be tempted to have people join by teleconference. In our experience, it's not a good idea as it has a negative effect on the dynamic of the workshop.

OPTIONS

What else can I do?

Other possible tools and techniques for knowledge sharing:

Peer review of your project plan
–
Phone consultation(s) – talk to people one-on-one
–
Contract with a consultant
–
Stakeholder consultation
–
Focus group
–
Courses, training
–
Reading, research
–
Teleconference
–
Join a "community of practice"

For more on communities of practice, see the EC Knowledge Management Centre on the Infolane, available at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

And lastly, does your team have the capacity, resources and support necessary to benefit from a peer assist? Is your team committed not only to the peer assist, but also to following up on the recommendations that come out of it? Are there enough people (at least four) involved in the project to warrant a workshop, but few enough to allow everyone to participate (no more than eight)?

Do you have some money and a few days’ time to devote to this process? Consider the time needed to find a resource team, organize the workshop, and do some preparatory work. Are you going to have to plead with your manager for every minute/dime you spend on this process? Peer assists that lack management support are difficult to get off the ground.

How do you pick the teams?

Peer assist involves knowledge sharing between a project team and a resource team. The project team, which usually requests and organizes the peer assist, is a group in the early stages of a project. The resource team is a group with experience in a similar project area. This team may have worked together before or may be assembled for the purposes of the peer assist. Finding the right people for each team and making sure the teams match are essential steps in the peer assist process.

What makes a project team?

The project team is the team that is seeking guidance from a more experienced team.

When deciding who should participate in the peer assist as a member of the project team, consider the following:

"But I don't work on 'projects'..."

You may not see yourself as working on a project – your work may be better defined as an "initiative" or a "program." This doesn't mean that your group can't form a project team. A project team is composed of people working together (across the hall or across the country) towards a common and well-defined objective.

The team's composition should reflect the diversity of roles and subject matter involved in the project.

It is important to include those individuals who will be responsible for implementing the work being discussed at the workshop.

There are advantages and disadvantages to having your managers participate.

Some peer assist enthusiasts do not recommend inviting your managers to the peer assist, because the presence of management can sometimes hinder participants from speaking freely. This is a valid observation. There may, however, be strategic value in inviting a manager who is responsible for the overall goals of the project. If you come out of the peer assist with dramatic new ideas for the project, it may help if your manager participated in their inception.

Think about whether management issues are an important factor in the project. Think about the personalities involved, and whether an open discussion may be limited by the presence of a manager.

The project team should not be too big or too small.

Six is a good size for a project team – but anywhere from four to eight could work. You need enough participants to represent the different roles in the project, but if there are too many people present some will naturally go into "passive mode." The group has to be small enough so that people can relax and get to know each other, and so that dialogue can be achieved.

Don’t worry about the odd sceptic.

Ideally, individuals invited to the peer assist will come to the workshop with an open mind, ready to participate. Some key players in your project may be less keen to participate in something they perceive as “touchy-feely.” Encourage them to come, and don’t worry: as long as there is a critical mass of willing participants, the less-willing participants may not adversely affect the success of the workshop. In fact, such participants may provide a challenge function in the group, which can lead to new insight.

Don’t worry about key players who can’t attend.

Inevitably, there will be people whose participation would be valuable, but who are unable to attend. Again, don’t worry. At the workshop, the focus should be on leveraging the expertise and experience that is present, and not on the could-have-beens, should-have-beens, or might-have-beens. The “right people” are the ones in the room and whatever happens at the workshop is the only thing that could have happened.

Do not teleconference.

It seems like a simple enough idea – just have the person who can’t join the peer assist in person dial-in on the phone. But having some people participate as disembodied voices in the middle of the table really changes the dynamics of the dialogue. The person on the phone is isolated from the myriad subtle visual and audio cues that are so valuable in dialogue. Often, participants can’t hear well enough. They begin to forego lighter remarks and humour, and the exchange becomes far more formal.

Teleconferencing requires that those who are speaking stay seated at the table; people can’t stand up to take notes on the flip-charts, for example. All of this can undermine the effort spent on developing trust and comfort within the group. More practically, the technology of speaker phones makes it difficult for the facilitator to cut in when required to make sure that the discussion is kept on track.

OPTIONS

Widening the circle

You may wish to involve the people who could not participate in the actual workshop by seeking their input to the pre-work, or sharing the workshop report with them and asking for feedback.

What makes a resource team?

The resource team has experience and expertise to share with the project team.

The resource team may already exist or be a composite.

The resource team may be composed of people within the department, from other government departments, or from outside government. The resource team may be an *existing* team – one that has worked together on a project in the past. Or it may be a *composite* team – composed of individuals that all have experience relevant to the needs of the project team, but that have not necessarily worked together before.

The team's composition should reflect the diversity of roles and subject matter involved.

If the resource team is an existing team, try to invite individuals who will represent the diversity in roles and subject matter inherent in the resource team's project. If the resource team is a composite team, try to achieve diversity in roles and subject matter appropriate to the project team's project.

Check numbers, and understand objectives.

As with the project team, the resource team should consist of individuals (ideally six) who are ready and willing to share their experience – understanding that the purpose of the peer assist is to adapt their experience to the context of the project team, and develop concrete options for the project team to consider.

Why go composite?

A composite resource team may offer opportunities for learning that an existing resource team may not. As the members of a composite resource team will not have worked in exactly the same context, they come to the peer assist with a range of experiences, rather than the more homogeneous experience of an existing resource team. This can engender comparisons and highlight contrasts among the experience of individual resource team members, and these comparisons may offer the project team richer insights into what might work best in their context.

Regarding the match between a wildlife project team and a water resource team: "it was probably helpful to the dialogue that the science areas were not the same but that they were at least complementary (both having an ecosystem focus)."

resource team member

What makes the right match?

When considering who to invite as the resource team, it may be helpful to think about how knowledge sharing works in a peer assist. The project team has a certain context, and a certain understanding of their project within that context (represented by the lower two boxes in Figure A). The resource team also has a context and an understanding about what has been successful in the past (the left two boxes of Figure A). There is a certain amount of overlap in the knowledge of the two teams (the lower left box).

This common knowledge – a shared language, understanding of constraints, or understanding of goals – is important, because it is the foundation on which to adapt good practices to a new context (upper right box).

When this overlap of knowledge is too small, you get a situation represented in Figure B. An insufficient common understanding leads to too many possibilities to consider, which makes it difficult to recommend actionable options for the project team.

Too much common understanding between the project and resource teams is not recommended, either (Figure C). Here you get a situation that restricts the potential for creative solutions, simply because everyone present is thinking "inside the same box."

The experiences of the project and resource teams should be sufficiently divergent, so that mental models will be challenged, and new ways of thinking will emerge. Finding individuals within or outside your department to form a resource team that will strike the right balance with the project team may be tricky. The next section gives some tips on this.

How do you find a resource team?

When looking for a resource team, your objective is to locate a team or set of people who could act in a resource capacity to your team, the project team.

This part may seem the most daunting. How do you find people who have worked on similar (but not too similar) projects in the department? First, call people you know, tell them what you are looking for, and ask if they know anyone who might have the expertise you are looking for. Then, charge ahead and call the people recommended by your contacts.

You can also surf the departmental Intranet or Internet for leads. Some organizations have knowledge directories, where individual employees set up profiles for themselves, indicating their expertise, experience, and areas of interest.

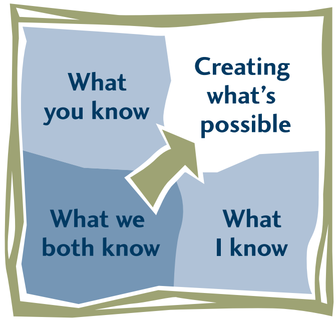

Figure A In the ideal match, the proportion of shared knowledge, expertise and understanding allows for the generation of new, actionable options for the Project team. (From Collison and Parcell.)

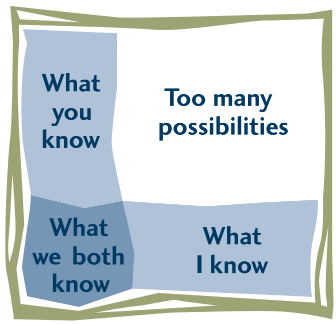

Figure B When the overlap in knowledge of the two teams is too limited, the range of options generated in discussion is too great.

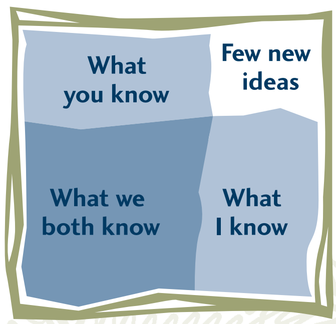

Figure C When the overlap is too great, the range of options generated is too limited.

"I'm looking for someone in the department who has experience working on projects that deal with X, and so-and-so gave me your name. Is this something you've worked on? Do you know anyone in the department who has undertaken something along these lines?"

Tool 2 – page 53
Sample invitation letter to resource team

Use your contacts within and outside the department to locate outside expertise, if it seems that your peer assist will benefit from an outside perspective. Remember, however, that there will be separate paperwork to do if you want to pay for an outsider's travel or for an honorarium.

Basically, the way to find your resource team boils down to: "ask around." You will find that you can learn a lot just by asking. Don't think that in asking for help you are admitting weakness. Most people will be flattered that you value their expertise, and will appreciate the opportunity to analyse their successes.

Once you have identified and spoken with the potential members of your resource team, send them a more formal letter of invitation.

The invitation letter

Timeline: 8 weeks

With the invitation letter, your objective is to formalize the relationship between the two teams. Ensure that both teams are clear on the issue(s) to be addressed at the peer assist, that they understand and commit to the peer assist process, and that they agree to dates, times and any cost implications.

In the invitation letter, you should clearly outline:

- your expectations for the peer assist,
- what you will provide to the resource team (including travel costs, hospitality),
- what you expect the resource team to do, both during the workshop and to prepare for it,
- where the peer assist will take place, and
- the timeline for the process.

In the letter, you should also commit to follow up after the workshop – as this can be a big part of the payback for the resource team (see page 47).

Do you need professional help?

A facilitator can be a critical contributor to a peer assist workshop. Using established facilitation tools and methods, a facilitator acts as a neutral body to manage the process without influencing the outcome. The facilitator does not need to be an expert in the topic of the workshop. In fact, an outsider perspective may help to challenge assumptions or flag gaps or inconsistencies that the two teams may not realize they have or that they don't share. Copying the facilitator on the pre-work (see page 22), or involving this person in its preparation, will serve to bring him or her up to speed on the basics of the topic being discussed.

Going it alone

You may choose to "go it alone" and self-facilitate your workshop. This puts a heavier load on the project team since, in addition to focusing on content, you will also have to manage the process of the workshop. The outside and neutral perspective that the facilitator brings is foregone.

It may be cheaper up front; however, if you're paying to bring people together who are setting aside other work in order to participate, you will want to make sure that that workshop time is as productive as possible. The facilitation cost is only a small portion of the overall workshop cost. Note also that facilitating a workshop requires a very different set of skills from chairing a meeting.

On the plus side, self-facilitation clearly signals your ownership of, and commitment to, the process.

Co-facilitation

The facilitation of a knowledge-transfer event such as a peer assist can be enhanced by having two facilitators. Having two outside perspectives can be especially valuable for highlighting assumptions. Co-facilitation is an effective way to train or mentor a budding facilitator in the department thereby building EC's capacity for future workshops.

Role of the facilitator in a peer assist

The facilitator works with you to tailor the peer assist process to your needs. The facilitator helps you clarify and communicate your goals and expectations, as a project team, for the workshop. Before the workshop, he or she works to ensure that those goals and expectations are addressed by tuning the workshop agenda, facilitating the team leads' meeting(s) (or teleconference), and, if needed, helping with the pre-work. During the workshop, the facilitator enables productive discussions, flags assumptions and misunderstandings that may prevent or distort knowledge transfer, ensures all participants have equal opportunity to contribute, brings the group to timely decisions and closure, and helps the teams document their learning. After the workshop, the facilitator can debrief the session and help you plan any follow-up.

Finding a facilitator

Finding a facilitator requires asking around. Talk to your colleagues to see if they can recommend people who successfully facilitated workshops or events they ran or attended. Use the Internet to look for associations of facilitators in your community.

In addition to paid consultants, many employees within the department are trained, or have experience, as facilitators. You may be able to "borrow" someone from another branch to run your workshop. You save on costs while the facilitator gains new insights into another part of the department. Note that you will have to ensure that the facilitator's manager is comfortable loaning two to three days of the employee's time to your branch. Similarly, people in other departments may be available for short facilitation stints. You should cover the costs for volunteer facilitators.

Make initial contact with each potential facilitator, determine availability for your preferred dates, and share this handbook. The handbook will help the facilitator understand what you are trying to achieve, assess his or her role in the process, and estimate the time and cost to provide those services. Ask the facilitator to send a CV and company brochure. Once you have both had time to review the other's background material, conduct a follow-up call or meeting that addresses the following points:

- **Type of workshop:** Make sure that the facilitator understands what you are trying to achieve – knowledge transfer between teams – and has suggestions and questions that help you think about the process.
- **Skills:** As peer assists seem to work better with smaller group sizes (10-15 people total), the facilitator needs to be capable in small group dynamics. Training or experience in team building, coaching, negotiation, mediation, or conflict resolution would suggest that the facilitator is practised with small group interventions.
- **Language:** If participants to the workshop speak both English and French, look for a bilingual facilitator so that all team members may communicate in their preferred official language.
- **Availability:** If you know your dates, and even if you don't, confirm the facilitator's windows of availability.
- **Willingness to travel:** It is important to flag if the workshop is not in the facilitator's home city. You will have to cover travel costs incurred by the facilitator.
- **Budget and estimated time commitment.**

The handbook is online at the Knowledge Management Centre website, http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Tool 3 – page 55
Sample invitation to non-EC staff to participate in the workshop

OPTIONS

Expert intervenor

In addition to a facilitator, you may wish to consider engaging an expert in the field in question. Such a person can provide an informed outside perspective, and relate and differentiate your project to common themes and patterns in similar projects elsewhere.

If you will be paying for this person's services, you can either use a service contract or an honorarium. The procedure for putting a service contract in place is provided below. For an honorarium, you must provide the person with a letter of invitation stating the services that are expected, the amount of the honorarium, the expenses that will be covered, and how these will be reimbursed. The amount promised must not exceed $5,000, travel and GST included. When the time comes for reimbursement, the expert intervenor must submit an invoice detailing the honorarium and expenses incurred (if applicable), with original receipts attached. After you receive this, you must in turn submit it to Finance, accompanied by a copy of the letter of invitation.

Make it clear

Even if you are working with a volunteer facilitator, be clear about what you are agreeing to – what expenses you will cover, how those will be reimbursed, what you expect the facilitator to do, and what time commitment is required.

Instructions for *journal vouchers* to reimburse expenses for EC employees outside your branch are included in the Logistics section.

An *invitation letter* – required to reimburse expenses of people outside the department who participate in the workshop – is included as Tool 3 in the Tools section.

Tool 4 – page 56

Sample "Statement of Work" and sole-source justification

Tool 5 – page 60

Sample letter for non-EC staff to obtain government rates at a hotel

Interview three or four candidate facilitators, if possible. Your choice, in the end, will depend on the facilitator's expertise and availability, your budget, and, of course, the rapport between you and the facilitator. Obtain and check references for your preferred candidate(s). Keep your interview notes as reference for materiel management should it question a subsequent sole-source contract. These notes may also prove useful in the future when you are looking for a facilitator – perhaps with a different suite of skills this time.

Contracting for facilitation or other outside expertise

If you choose to hire a consultant, whether a facilitator or an expert intervenor, you will need to set up a service contract.

A sample *Statement of Work* is included as Tool 4 in the Tools section. Use this as a starting point to prepare your contract with the facilitator. Typical rates for facilitators range from $600–$2,000 per day. Preparing for, running, and debriefing a 1.5-day peer assist workshop may require 2–4 days of a facilitator's time. The amount of preparatory time will depend on how organized and focused your team is. Use this handbook to do your own homework before calling the facilitator.

You will also need to budget for the consultant's travel and accommodations expenses in the contract. Consultants' travel expenses must comply with the rates quoted in the Treasury Board (TB)'s Travel Directive. These count toward the total contract price with respect to the $10,000 contracting threshold for sole-source contracts. The GST also counts toward the total contract price. Also note that as a government employee, you can't book travel for consultants (e.g. to get government rates on airfares). However, you may provide a letter that allows them to obtain the government rate at hotels while travelling on government business.

For sole-source contracts, you must provide a justification for not seeking competitive bids. This justification could document how the consultant's expertise and experience are particularly suited to the work in question, or how time constraints preclude seeking other bids. If you did interview several consultants, indicate that as part of the sole-source justification and explain how the chosen consultant met your needs more than competitors.

Once you have developed the Statement of Work, provide it to the consultant as the basis for a letter of offer to do this work for you. Submit the signed original of the consultant's letter of offer along with your Statement of Work, your sole-source justification, and a completed form 02-1884 "Requisition for a service contract" (available through the public folder system in the "Departmental forms" folder) to materiel management at least ten business days before the start date of the contract. Note, the lead time is longer in the lead-up to fiscal year end. Verify the cut-off dates for submitting contracts with your financial officer if you plan to let a contract in the last three months of the fiscal year.

Consult the Treasury Board's Travel Directive at http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/td-dv_e.asp

Save your form

The electronic system to complete form 02-1884 is challenging and does not support sharing the electronic file. You may find it faster to print the form and fill it out. Make sure to keep a printed copy for your files.

How do you prepare intellectually?

As your face-to-face time with the resource team will be limited, you don't want to waste that time telling team members things that they could easily read beforehand. By working through the following exercises, and asking the resource team to do the same, you will be able to hit the ground running at the workshop. A facilitator or someone else outside the project may be able to help you develop clear products for each of the exercises below.

Project team preparation

Project team project description and introductions

Timeline: 6 weeks prior to workshop

Logistics: Your team lead should compile the project description and biographical sketches and send them to the resource team lead.

Team members should each prepare a short biographical sketch that includes their roles and responsibilities in the project in question, as well as any other pertinent background information such as education, skills and expertise.

For the project description, get the concrete, factual, unambiguous stuff on paper so it can be shared before the meeting – location of the project, who is involved, timelines, resources, etc. The project's context, history and challenges will be presented during the actual workshop.

The project description should include a list of the full project team (not just those participating in the peer assist) along with their roles and responsibilities. This will give the resource team a fuller understanding of your project and may help team members identify areas of necessary expertise.

In addition to the project description, you may wish to develop background materials. The level of detail in this material will depend on the nature of your issue. For example, a highly technical question may require you to provide the resource team with a lot of pre-reading so that you don't spend the entire peer assist workshop explaining details to the team. Remember, however, to give the resource team enough time prior to the workshop to read the material you provide.

Project team presentation preparation

Timeline: You are the best judge of how long you will need – just make sure you're not scrambling at the last minute!

Logistics: You will give your presentation to the resource team at the beginning of the workshop.

Tool 6 – page 61

Instructions for project team's project description

Hindsight is 20/20

One of the project teams with which we worked opted not to develop background materials. Many of the team members' comments following the workshop centered on how much time had been wasted briefing the resource team on technical details that were essential to understanding the project, but could have been written down and sent out beforehand.

Tool 7 – page 62

Instructions for project team's preparation for presentation

In addition to briefly recapping the key points of the project (some people may not have had enough time to read the background material), include need-to-know information that was not committed to paper in the project description. You will need to point out the politics and context of your project (e.g., if the project originated elsewhere in the department) during this presentation. Think about involving your whole team in the presentation and try to keep it brief – half an hour should be long enough to get your most important points across.

Alternative formats for presentation may help to spark alternative ways of thinking about the project. Remember that you want a conversation with the resource team, and decks tend to stifle conversation. Consider just telling the resource team about your project – talking is a surprisingly effective form of communication. Or use some posters that show things that excite you about your project as a basis for your presentation. Avoid handouts as people will tend to read them instead of listening to you.

Resource team preparation

You will need to guide the resource team's preparatory work and assess how much it is reasonable to ask team members to do. The type of resource team that you have assembled (whether or not its members have worked together before) will also determine which of the activities described below are appropriate.

Tools 8a & 8b – pages 63 and 65
Instructions for resource team's synthesis exercise

Resource team synthesis of relevant project experience

Timeline: 6 weeks before the workshop
Logistics: No written output is necessary.

Ask the resource team members, if they are an existing team, to develop the synthesis of their relevant experience *together* (not one by one). This will likely prove to be a valuable exercise for team members as it gives them the chance to step back and really examine their shared experience.

Options for composite resource teams:

Synthesis of relevant knowledge around project team's project description

If the resource team consists of people who don't normally work together, they may prefer centering their preparatory discussions on the project team's needs rather than on their own individual experiences.

Individual synthesis and discussion

Each individual or sub-team can conduct a synthesis of their own project. The composite resource team can then come together (possibly by teleconference) to compare and contrast their experiences and distil the learning that is most transferable to the project team's issue.

The resource team should undertake the synthesis to ensure team members have a common understanding of what worked and didn't and why for their project(s) (so that they're not doing this at the peer assist!). This is an important part of the peer assist process and will likely prove highly beneficial to the resource team.

A face-to-face meeting is the best way for this kind of synthesis to occur. This meeting, possibly over lunch or with reflection-inducing treats (you may want to provide these as a thank you to the resource team), will give the resource team the chance to think about the project for an hour or two without interruptions.

"For me, the project synthesis was one of the most valuable parts of this process. It helped me think about my project in a new way and more fully understand what I had learned."

resource team member

Resource team project description and introductions

Timeline: 4-5 weeks before the workshop

Logistics: Ask the resource team lead to send you their project description and biographical sketches for distribution to your team.

You may want to ask the resource team for a project description similar to the one that you will have developed by this point. Such a description will likely help your team understand the scope of experience that the resource team will bring to the peer assist. You will definitely want to request that the resource team provide you with short biographical sketches.

Tools 9a & 9b – pages 67 and 68

Instructions for resource team's project description

OPTIONS

Resource team presentation

Your team may be interested in hearing a bit more about the resource team's project at the beginning of the workshop. If this is the case, let the team know a few weeks ahead of time so its members will be prepared to make a short and informal presentation.

Resource team review of project team materials

Timeline: 3 weeks before workshop

Logistics: Please ensure the resource team receives all material from you in plenty of time to read it prior to the workshop.

Reviewing the project team's materials will get the resource team thinking about the project and what they can contribute to making it work better. The resource team should review the materials both individually and as a group. Any questions that arise should be noted and passed on to the project team, as should requests for additional material.

You can also suggest that the resource team involve additional participants for this exercise. Even if the extra people can't go to the workshop, they can still provide valuable input that the team members attending the workshop can bring forward.

Joint preparation

Team leads' meeting/teleconference

Timeline: 2-3 weeks prior to workshop (or as needed during the planning process)

Team leads, or as many participants as appropriate, should discuss the goals and plans for the workshop. They should ensure that the goals of the peer assist are clear in light of the project description and the background materials exchanged; determine if additional information should be provided in advance of (or at) the workshop; and focus, shift, or expand the aim of the peer assist workshop based on the new knowledge (or more detailed knowledge) now at hand.

This teleconference (or meeting) is probably best held after both teams have had a chance to share their project descriptions. If, however, there seem to be gaps in your information, feel free to pick up the phone early and often. Ensure that all team members are briefed when you acquire new information.

How do you prepare logistically?

We recommend that you, the project team, manage and fund the logistics as you are asking the resource team members to give up their time to help advance your work.

Managing the logistics can be time consuming. There are rules, procedures and permissions to consider for travel, accommodations and hospitality. These require some lead time, so planning ahead is crucial.

Where to meet?

It is worth the trouble to get participants away from their home base. This helps ensure that the people present are truly present, and not slipping out to check their e-mail. It also encourages "out-of the-box" thinking; a different physical space can help create a different mental space, and thus serve the goals of a peer assist. (Remember, however, that the current TB Travel Directive states that people have to be more than 16 km away from their office to be considered on travel, and thus eligible to claim travel and accommodation expenses.) Moving both teams increases the likelihood that everyone will be able to participate in an evening event, such as a dinner.

The meeting room should be spacious and comfortable, and preferably have windows. We have found that holding the discussion around one big table works well, although smaller tables (arranged so that nobody has their back to anyone else) can also work. For a group of around 14, look for a room that is between 750 and 1000 square feet. Hotels are the obvious choice, but smaller inns, retreat centres, community centres, municipal libraries, and universities can offer excellent meeting rooms in pleasant and stimulating surroundings.

There are some amenities that you may like to have in your meeting space that will help you conduct the meeting, such as an Internet connection, a projection screen, and three or four flip charts. Remember to ask the facility about these, and for permission to post things on the walls. Also think about things that can disrupt a meeting: noise from traffic outside, proximity of a nursery school, playground, local farm animals or other wildlife (it happens!). Ask the facility what other groups might be nearby your meeting space on the day of your meeting. For example, a cheerleading convention might be very distracting. And a visiting dignitary could make your logistics very difficult.

How long to meet?

The length of a peer assist workshop can vary between one and two days. A 1.5-day workshop works well when travel can be accomplished in the morning of the first day and the evening of

Piggyback on another meeting

To reduce costs, consider if there are other workshops or meetings that will bring together some of the peer assist participants. Travel costs can be reduced by scheduling the two meetings back-to-back.

The current Treasury Board Travel Directive can be accessed at http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/td-dv_e.asp

Supply supplies

Designate someone to make sure that all the office supplies you will need during the workshop will be available on site. This may mean packing a box of supplies to bring with you.

Tool 10 – page 69

List of supplies and equipment

the second. This minimizes the time commitment, as travelling participants would not be required to stay over either the night proceeding or following the workshop. However, scheduling travel for the morning of the workshop can be risky – particularly in the winter – due to weather-induced delays.

When participants are coming from farther away – for example, from the east coast to the west – the issue of timing for the workshop becomes more complicated as jet lag and time zone differences need to be considered. Participants will also need to allocate additional days to travel.

Developing a budget

Your budget will vary depending on how far the participants are travelling. In our experience, workshops of 15 people have cost between $9,000 (when everyone travelled less than 300 km from their home base) and $15,000 (when half of the participants travelled over 4000 km). Here is a rough guide to the costs for a 1.5-day, 14-person workshop (in 2004):

Conference calls	During the planning stages	**$200**
Flights, other travel, incidentals	$800 per person (varies greatly with the distance travelled)	**$9,600**
Accommodation	$120 a night is reasonable. Remember to ask for the government rate.	**$1,680**
Hospitality (including gratuities and tax)	Follow the latest TB averages and maximums. The figure here is based on the current average allowed for one dinner, one breakfast, one lunch, and two refreshment breaks, for 14 people.	**$1,534**
Meeting room plus audiovisual rentals	This may cost more than you think it should. However, hotels often waive the meeting room cost if your participants are staying at the hotel.	**$900**
Service contract for facilitator	$1,000/day x 3 days	**$3,000**
Honorarium for expert intervenor	If you offer an honorarium to an expert intervenor, you will require a letter of invitation (see page 19 and Tool 3, page 55). Honoraria may not exceed $5,000, travel expenses and GST included.	**$600**
Total (before GST, except for hospitality, where GST is included in the TB rates)	The federal government is exempt from paying provincial sales tax: let your vendors know, supply the vendors with our PST exemption code, and make sure they don't add PST to your bill.	**$17,514**

"The dinner on the first night was a great way to get to know people better and discuss the issue in a more casual setting. It didn't hurt that the food was delicious, either!"

resource team member

> The current TB Hospitality Policy can be accessed at: http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/HOSP_e.asp

Hospitality – rules, options

There is tremendous value in eating together. At the beginning of the workshop, a meal together helps participants make connections in a social setting and builds a level of comfort and trust within the group. It thus sets the stage for effective discussions during the peer assist. During the course of the workshop, taking meals together clearly saves time, and allows dialogue to continue.

However, if you can't afford to feed your participants, you should make this very clear in the invitation and agenda. In your planning, you must take into account where people can get meals and snacks, and how much time this will take. It often takes twice as long as you think it should – at lunchtime people go off in all directions and invariably encounter delays (in being seated at a restaurant, waiting for and paying the bill, making their way back to the meeting room, etc.).

If you have a budget for hospitality, there are certain rules and procedures you have to abide by.

1) The Treasury Board publishes per-person averages and maximums for each meal offered as hospitality. Find the rates in the current TB Hospitality Policy. Do not exceed these rates.
2) Environment Canada has procedures on how to request approval for hospitality. At the time of writing, these procedures were in flux. Ask your local financial officer what the current rules are. Even better, find out who to talk to in corporate finance about hospitality. Do this at the earliest stage of your planning, as it can easily take weeks to obtain the required approvals, and you should get the approvals before you make arrangements for catering. Currently, any hospitality above $1,500 requires the approval of the Deputy Minister.

Accommodations

When planning accommodations, call the hotel to find out rates and to "block off" the number of rooms you will require. "Blocking off" rooms is a sort of pre-reservation based on the number of people you expect to reserve a room. Once the rooms are blocked off, let all participants know what they must do to reserve their rooms (name of hotel, name of event under which the rooms have been blocked off, quoted rates, and deadline for reservations). Participants then pay for their own rooms, and are reimbursed through their travel claim later.

Hotels will often offer special rates for government employees. Remember to ask the hotel for the government rate. If you are also inviting participants from outside government (consultants, members of NGOs, etc.), provide a letter requesting the government rate that they can present to the hotel.

Who pays

It makes sense for the project team to pay for the workshop and the travel expenses of all participants, since the project team will be getting the most direct benefit from the peer assist. All participants should submit travel claims to their home work unit. Resource team members should ask their administrative officers to use a Journal Voucher (JV) to recoup the costs from the project team's work unit.

For non-government participants, travel expenses are paid upon submission of an invoice from the participant outlining the expenses incurred, with original receipts attached. After you receive this from the participant, you must in turn submit it to Finance, accompanied by a copy of the letter inviting the participant to the peer assist, stating which costs will be covered and signed by the person in the project team's work unit who has spending authority.

Snacks in, meals out

When arranging for catering, ask the facility to set up the refreshment breaks inside your meeting room. This allows people to get up and refresh themselves with minimal disruption to the flow of the discussion. However, when it comes time for actual meals, like lunch or dinner, it is often better to serve them in a different space – for instance, in a lounge area outside the main meeting room. This gives the participants a refreshing change of surroundings. This also avoids having food smells linger in the room, which can be unpleasant.

Tool 5 – page 60

Sample letter for non-EC staff to obtain government rates at a hotel

Tool 3 – page 55

Sample invitation to non-EC staff to participate in the workshop

In large private sector organizations such as British Petroleum, where peer assist workshops have become part of the everyday work culture (every week a peer assist is held somewhere in BP), everyone's home work unit covers the costs of travel. The paper-work involved in charging costs to another work unit is considered too onerous to bother with, especially since the resource team members will likely be part of a project team at some point. This can be seen as a long-term reciprocal arrangement: it will all balance out in the end.

How do you run the workshop?

Peer assist is fundamentally a dialogue between two teams. The workshop, therefore, needs to create the conditions that support productive dialogue:

- equality among participants,
- empathetic listening, and
- a focus on airing and challenging assumptions.

Productive dialogue allows participants to raise questions, to have their differing perspectives heard, and to come to an understanding that benefits from the combined knowledge and expertise of all the participants.

Types of listening

Token listening: when you pretend to listen, but your eyes look right through or around the person (uninterested listening).

Cocktail party listening: when you are half listening to the person you're standing with and half listening and looking for more interesting conversations.

One-up listening: when you are only listening for a break in the other person's talk to interject your own "better" story.

Shoot-down listening: when you are listening for flaws in the speaker's discourse so that you can pounce as soon as the speaker is done.

Empathetic listening: when you actually take the time to hear what other people are saying, to paraphrase their points to confirm your understanding, and to imagine yourself in their shoes.

Trust is essential to effective dialogue and particularly to knowledge sharing. You will find yourself listening not only to the content of the advice, but also to the motivation, the depth of understanding, and the competence of the resource team member providing the advice. Conversely, resource team members will likely share their most hard-earned expertise and experience only if they have confidence that it will be respected and used appropriately.

What you are trying to achieve is akin to a spirited discussion around a kitchen table (rather than a formal discussion around a boardroom table). People should be relaxed and feel welcome to speak. There is a task at hand, however, and participants should have their metaphorical "sleeves" rolled up, ready to get the task done. Setting up your room with one large table can help achieve this. So can the availability of snacks.

OPTIONS

Expert intervenor to both teams

One way to lower the threshold at which trust is established between groups is through a broker – someone who is known and trusted by both teams. This person acts as an intervenor – warranting or certifying the knowledge and information being passed from one team to the other. The broker may also provide "interpretation" to overcome jargon and circumstances specific to only one team.

Such a go-between can be particularly valuable for enabling the transfer of knowledge on things that didn't work.

Overall roles for workshop

As project team members, your key role is to listen so as to understand and learn. Your team should establish someone from your group as the note-taker for each session. You should not rely on the facilitator to capture the learning from the workshop. The facilitator's job is process, not content. Take ownership of the workshop so that the advice is captured well enough to be used in your own context after the workshop.

The primary roles of the resource team are those of challenge function and option developers. It is important to stress to resource team members that they are responsible for options, not solutions. Solutions will come later once your team has had enough time to fully digest the options suggested by the resource team.

The facilitator is there to help guide inquiry – to keep it respectful but probing. Where there is contention, the facilitator needs to maintain the focus on the issue, not the individual.

Clearly, people will switch roles over the course of the workshop. However, understanding the overall role of each party can help to maintain the flow of the dialogue.

The agenda

An example of an annotated workshop agenda is provided below, followed by a discussion of each item. This can serve as a guide as you develop your workshop agenda with input from your own team, the resource team, and from the facilitator and expert intervenor (if you're using them). You may find you need a longer workshop to cover all the issues in common between the two teams. You may wish to add other activities such as a site visit. This section will guide you through those decisions. For each agenda item, the approximate duration is provided as well as suggested techniques and points to consider.

Note, however, that no matter how well-thought-out your agenda, you may find that you need to adjust or totally rework the flow of the meeting once the workshop is underway. Understanding your goals and objectives for the workshop, and considering a range of techniques in advance, will help provide the flexibility to "go with the flow" when you are actually "living" the event.

OPTIONS

Site visit

A visit to the project site can provide additional detail and context – making it "real" for the resource team. Similarly, a visit to the resource team's milieu can give your team a better understanding of the expertise and experience you're tapping into. The host team should organize the site visit, including logistics, and should confirm with the other team well in advance so that team members can make the additional time commitment.

Besides giving a more hands-on view of the project, a site visit helps the two teams get to know each other better. However, it requires extra time – and possibly money – to organize and run.

A The introduction is a critical element of the workshop. It establishes the tone and goals for the peer assist.

B People always take more time for a break than is allotted. Therefore, suggest 10 minutes, and expect it to take 20. However, breaks are not lost time. People often carry their conversations with them. You might ask if there are any observations, comments, or insights to be shared after each break.

C Option: When the resource team has questions for which they are seeking input or when the project team needs a more detailed understanding of the resource team's work in order to make use of its advice, a short presentation by the resource team may be warranted.

D If your hospitality budget doesn't stretch to dinner, you could suggest meeting as a group at a restaurant.

E A guest thinker can encourage out-of-the-box thinking and inspire the participants in their work. It could be a testimonial about the value of the resource team's project from someone outside of the resource team, thereby affirming the expertise and experience of the resource team. It could be a community member talking about the value of the project team's project – how it will benefit the community or what the challenge is.
Time: 60 minutes

This is something to make the workshop unique, memorable, and help to build the bond of shared experience between the participants. Invite the guest to stay for dinner for more informal discussion – if the timing works out.

Annotated workshop agenda template

Find this agenda online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

DAY ONE – AFTERNOON

12:00	**Lunch:** An inviting way to begin the workshop that allows people to get to know one another informally. It also accommodates delays in arrivals.
1:00	**Introduction:** Facilitator welcomes everyone to the workshop and outlines the agenda for the workshop. Participants jointly determine simple rules for working together and articulate their view of their roles and objectives for the workshop. A
1:45	**Presentation by the project team:** An opportunity for the project team to describe its project in detail – focusing on the context, challenges, and goals of the peer assist.
2:30	**Break** B
2:45	**Discussion:** Dialogue between the two teams focused on the presentation. Teams may raise questions, some of which may be "parked" for consideration the next day or in the future. C
	Refreshments, Dinner D and a **Guest speaker** E are all possible evening activities that allow the two teams to interact socially. F

DAY TWO – MORNING G

8:00	**Breakfast**
8:30	**Reflection:** Opportunity for thoughts about what was heard the night before. H
8:45	**Introduction to Day 2:** Overview of the day's agenda and logistics, and review of the rules of engagement developed the day before. Recap objectives and briefly visit the "parking lot".

9:00	**Questions from the resource team:** The resource team seeks additional information from the project team, highlights important points, and clarifies assumptions in what participants heard in the presentation. At this stage the resource team seeks to understand the project team's project fully.
10:00	**Break**
10:15	**Analysis:** The resource team discusses what its members heard from the project team, and the project team observes the discussion. The resource team's discussion identifies make-or-break issues for the project on which to focus further discussion and recommendations. The resource team may ask members of the project team for clarification where necessary.
11:00	**Consensus Building:** Allows the project team a chance to respond to the list of issues that the resource team has been developing, making sure both teams agree on the issues' relevance to the project team's project.
11:20	**Option Development and Evaluation:** Both teams discuss the issues identified during the Analysis session, thinking about how the issues can be practically addressed in the project team's context. This may take the form of developing concrete options about how to proceed, or it may be a more issue-centered discussion.

DAY TWO – AFTERNOON

12:00	**Lunch**
12:45	**Option Development and Evaluation:** (continued)
	Break: Provide drinks and light snacks in the afternoon but don't necessarily take a formal break.
3:30	**Closing:** Acknowledgement and appreciation of hard work that everyone has done and their participation in this workshop. Teams briefly discuss their learning and develop a plan for follow-up with each other. I

F Take care in scheduling activities in the evening. Make them optional unless you've moved everyone from their home turf and you've made it abundantly clear that the evening event is critical to the workshop (i.e. tell people they can't go off and meet their third cousin, twice removed).

G The template is laid out for a one-and-a-half day workshop. A key reason for structuring the workshop in this way is that it creates a natural break-point after the Presentation by the project team. The two teams can get to know each other and discuss the project informally over dinner and then sleep on what they have heard. The second day then starts with the stage fully set – consciously and perhaps sub-consciously – and with the participants more familiar – and perhaps more comfortable – with each other.

H Option: If you have engaged an expert intervenor, a synopsis or comments from that person on the activities to date can work well at this point. Discuss this in advance with the intervenor.

I If participants are travelling the evening of the second day, you need to be conscious of departure times when planning the afternoon session. Know when people need to leave and ensure that decisions that involve the whole group, or key members of the group, are made before these people need to leave.

The agenda, step-by-step

Introduction

Time: 45 minutes

The project team lead welcomes everyone and gives a brief introduction to the workshop. The lead should focus on what you hope to accomplish. The facilitator then outlines the agenda and addresses the important logistical issues of washrooms, phones, lunch and check-out time.

If the participants don't all know one another, then personal introductions are required. As an effective opening to the dialogue, consider asking each participant in turn to say something about his or her past experience that bears on the workshop topic. Also, as part of the personal introduction (or instead of it if everyone already knows one another), ask participants to state their objective for the peer assist. Capture these on flipcharts – so the group can come back to them over the course of the peer assist. Recognize, however, that objectives may shift as the meeting unfolds. Writing them down and referring back to them can make that shift explicit and, therefore, part of the learning of the workshop.

It is worthwhile taking the time to jointly determine simple rules for working together. You can help to build commitment to the dialogue process by inviting participants to call out a word or short phrase that embodies a key value required for effective peer assist – such as openness, frankness, and respect. You may wish to capture these values on a flipchart.

You also may want to ask participants to articulate their role in the workshop. Get each person to provide one word or phrase that encapsulates the role or perspective they bring to the workshop. Prime the pump by suggesting some uncommon – or even zany – roles such as sponge, framer, scout, browser, window shopper, translator, tourist, waiter, gas station attendant, agent provocateur.

Tuning in

Remind all participants that they should be present in the event: no cell phones, no Blackberries™. Acknowledge that people may need to stay connected to their day jobs. However, ask that they respect the workshop, and use the breaks and meal times to check in to home base.

OPTIONS

Appreciative inquiry

Pair participants (one from the resource team with one from the project team) and ask them to interview each other for five minutes at a time. Suggest interview questions such as: "What gives meaning to the work you do?" or "Why does your work matter?" Each person can then introduce their partner to the group. This helps to build closer connections between individual members of the two teams and usually raises memorable characteristics about each participant.

Presentation by the project team

Time: 45 minutes

Present your project. Be direct, frank, and succinct. Recap the basic factual items covered in the project description distributed in advance of the workshop, but focus on the context and challenges. This is your chance to articulate the more sensitive or political elements of the project that do not lend themselves to print. Be very clear about your ultimate objectives for the project, as well as your more immediate objectives for the workshop.

The facilitator creates space for the project team to make its presentation without questions or discussion of options starting prematurely. This establishes the discipline of respectful listening right from the start of the workshop. It also gives the resource team a view of the whole project as understood by the project team.

Discussion

Time: 1 hour, 45 minutes

After the project team makes its presentation, the facilitator opens discussion to the resource team. This dialogue should focus on clarification and first impressions. Invite the resource team to identify what its members heard and what they didn't hear that surprised them. You may wish to ask each resource team member in turn to provide a first assessment as to where they might be able to offer advice, which circumstances are similar, and which are vastly different. This will begin to sketch out the terrain for the later discussions.

The resource team members should also identify any additional information that they may need to formulate options – and get it (if possible).

Be prepared for the resource team members to redefine the scope of the peer assist. They may see things in a different perspective – and that's exactly why you asked them to participate.

OPTIONS

Parking lot

As the dialogue moves inevitably beyond clarification and first impressions, suggest that options, possible solutions, and questions of a more systematic nature be jotted down on Post-it™ notes and "parked" for further analysis the next day.

Post the "parking lot" over the refreshments table so that people are reminded of the ideas and issues raised over the course of the workshop. The facilitator should check to make sure that the points raised are being dealt with or have been superseded.

Reflection

Time: 15 minutes (or more as required)

At the start of the second day, give people an opportunity to voice any thoughts that came to them over the night or that morning. Depending on the workshop schedule, these thoughts may have been shared over the breakfast table with some colleagues. The facilitator opens the dialogue to the wider group.

Introduction to Day 2

Time: 15 minutes (or more as required)

Ensure that everyone is clear on the agenda for the day and timeframes. Check to see if anyone must leave before the scheduled end of the day, and plan to reach key decisions before then. Get logistics (phones, washrooms, lunch, end time) out of the way. Remind people of the rules of engagement they developed the day before.

Check on the workshop objectives as noted the day before and draw participants' attention to the issues and options "parked" at the refreshment station (or wherever you chose to locate the parking lot).

Just the facts

People who are particularly skilled at knowledge sharing often spend considerable time at the beginning of a conversation trying to establish what the other person knows. This helps them identify the hooks or links that will make their own experience resonate in the other person's context. Such people are also alert to differences – what might prevent knowledge transfer or require tailoring.

In the case of a peer assist, taking the time to learn the particulars of the project team's situation not only builds trust but also increases the likelihood that the options and advice that resource team members provide will be useful.

Feedback from the resource team: Questions, analysis, consensus, and options

The balance of the workshop focuses on the resource team members coming to a full understanding of the project team's project, analysing it through their own experience and knowledge, and working with the project team to develop options and advice. This sequence is outlined in a linear fashion in the agenda template. However, it will likely be iterative. In fact, for projects with clearly defined components (questions or steps or stages), you may wish to set up the agenda specifically to go through this sequence for each component. This compartmentalized approach may work, although it may also feel rushed, and participants may be frustrated if they cannot adequately address issues that cross the components.

Questions from the resource team

Time: 1 hour

Invite the resource team to ask questions that allow members to understand the project and its context fully. They should focus on the "what" of the project, seeking additional information, and highlighting and clarifying assumptions. They may wish to revisit the stated objectives for the peer assist in light of what they heard at the presentation the day before.

The facilitator should keep the resource team members on track in understanding the project (rather than focusing too quickly on solutions). The parking lot can be used for options and advice that come up too soon. The facilitator should flag assumptions – from both teams.

You should be frank and open in your responses to the resource team's questions – be receptive to other ways of thinking about the project.

The facilitator should encourage the resource team members to challenge each other – to make sure they participate as individuals with different perspectives, not as a single team with a groupthink response.

Analysis

Time: 45 minutes

After coming to a solid and shared understanding of the project and its context, the participants can now shift their dialogue to an analysis of the key issues and their root causes. You might ask the resource team to identify what it sees as the make or break issue(s) for this project.

Think before you leap

Often people rush into action, focusing immediately on finding solutions. However, swift action can short-circuit the process of probing the depths of other participants' thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and assumptions – the very elements that provide the foundation for informed decision-making.

OPTIONS

Fishbowl or forced listening

Give each team a chance to express itself fully while requiring the other team to hear it out in full. Recognize that it can be really difficult for those who are listening to hold back their comments, but tremendously valuable for those who are talking to have their full say.

Try to encourage dialogue within each team while members have the floor – not just sequential speeches by each team member.

Consensus building

Time: 20 minutes (or more as required)

Engage the resource team in a dialogue about why team members think the issues they have identified are key. Recognize that these may be the areas where the resource team can provide advice or feels advice is warranted. However, these areas may not be the key challenges for which your team had articulated a need for help. Make sure both teams agree on the relevance of the identified issues to the project team's situation before proceeding to option development. Revisit the "parking lot" to make sure there isn't anything there that still needs to be considered and discussed.

Just-in-time knowledge

In a peer assist, the process of exploring the project team's challenges elicits and uses knowledge that the resource team members may not have even recognized that they had. Knowledge, it turns out, is available only when you need it.

A participant to one of the pilot workshops remarked that she hadn't realized how much she knew about science-policy linkages until confronted with the challenge of designing an advisory body for a highly politicized, science-based issue. Suddenly she realized that she had a wealth of experience to draw on, very strong opinions, and lots of concrete advice to offer.

Option development and evaluation

Time: 2-3 hours

This is the real benefit of a peer assist – where the "rubber hits the road." Everything leading up to this session is designed to prime the pump so that you can now draw a cool, clear stream of advice, expertise and experience from the resource team's well of knowledge. Additionally, you may find that your own project team, given some priming by the resource team and the dialogue process of the peer assist, draws forth some equally refreshing perspectives from deep within its own knowledge stores.

In this session, the two teams develop and evaluate possible options for addressing the issues faced by the project team, and identified in the Question and Analysis sessions. The resource team needs to make positive, constructive suggestions framed clearly in the context of what the team heard from the project team, and informed by members' own experience. They need to "translate" their knowledge into the new context presented by the project team. Rather than saying, "here's what we did; you should do it this way," they need to ask themselves: "How can we translate what we did into something that is usable in the project team's situation?"

The facilitator keeps the dialogue focused on options – not solutions – and keeps participants from prematurely closing down possibilities. It is better to leave the development of solutions until after the peer assist since the advice and options that result from the peer assist may change the project fundamentally, the whole project team may not be present at the workshop, management may need to be consulted, and a day-and-a-half is not very long. You will need time to digest and consider the advice received and to tune it to your reality – not to mention needing time to sleep after having pulled off this peer assist!

Closing

Time: 30 minutes

Thank people for making the time to participate in the workshop and acknowledge the hard work that everyone has undertaken over the course of the peer assist. Highlight the new learning achieved by the two teams – including the new relationships established between them. Lay the foundation for continued connections by reiterating the commitment made in the invitation to follow up with the resource team.

Close by doing a "tour de cercle," giving everyone the opportunity to make a short closing remark. Remember to keep the closing short and sweet. This is the end of a long and productive day, and – rather like horses to the barn – people will be focused on getting home.

OPTIONS

Breaking out

Given the small number of participants in a typical peer assist, break-out groups may be difficult to orchestrate. However, where there are two to three key issues and clear specialization on both teams that align with those issues, break-out groups may be an effective and time-efficient mechanism for transferring knowledge in greater detail. You do lose the benefit of the broader group's diversity, however.

Burning the midnight oil

Do not plan to extend the session past 4:00 p.m. That extra time is typically not productive. However, if it looks like the conversation will continue past the scheduled close time, do the closing, acknowledge the departure of those who have to leave, and recommend a venue for those who wish to keep on talking.

How did it work in practice?

Now that you have had a chance to read all about running a peer assist workshop, you might be interested in how some of the suggested ideas would actually work. Here are some highlights of our experiences piloting peer assist in EC, which might help make the process a little more real for you. More detailed topic reports for each of the workshops are available at the Knowledge Management Centre page on the Infolane.

The Knowledge Management Centre can be found at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Science–Policy Linkages

This workshop brought together a team from the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and a team from the National Water Research Institute (NWRI) with representatives from the Water Policy and Coordination Directorate and the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund. Together they discussed mechanisms for creating and reinforcing science–policy linkages. The project team from CWS was working on various regulatory and policy aspects of the Species at Risk Act and hoped to benefit from the NWRI resource team's experience linking water science to policy.

One aspect of the workshop that was particularly beneficial to both teams was the presence of an expert intervenor, Dr. Sarah Michaels from the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. Dr. Michaels was able to help the workshop participants identify areas of similarity and areas of difference between their projects and relate their experience to that in other organizations. She provided a conceptual matrix that helped the teams organize their thinking about the difficult and somewhat abstract problem of science-policy linkages.

Another workshop success occurred when two members of the CWS team presented specific initiatives that they were working on at the time. This gave the resource team highly concrete challenges to address. As a consequence, the dialogue was at its most animated for the whole workshop. More to the point, the project team members left the workshop with tangible, practical suggestions about how to move their individual projects along.

Communicating Northern Science

The second workshop in the peer assist series saw a team from the Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) meet with experts from Inuit organizations, CWS, and Prairie and Northern region to tackle the issue of communicating complex atmospheric science to northern communities. The project team from MSC works in areas of highly complex science and had experienced difficulty translating that science into easily understood messages for the public, particularly in northern communities.

One of the strengths of this workshop was the small but strong composite resource team. Consisting of two members of Inuit organizations involved in science communication, a wildlife biologist who works in the North, and a regional EC communications officer based in Yellowknife, the team brought a breadth and depth of experience to the peer assist. In the true spirit of peer assist, the resource team was able to benefit from the experience almost as much as the project team. The communicators gained a better understanding of the scientists' needs and questions around communicating their work.

Equally important to the success of the workshop was the attitude of the project team. After experiencing a lot of frustration trying to develop communication products for its science, the MSC team – which included a manager – was wholeheartedly committed to getting all they could from the peer assist process. The members were honest about where they needed help and remained open to any and all suggestions throughout the process. Where the challenges raised were beyond the scope of the individual researcher, the manager committed to addressing them at her level.

Managing the Environmental Risks of Offshore Oil & Gas

In this, the third workshop of the series, a resource team from Atlantic Region shared their expertise in managing the environmental effects of offshore oil and gas activities with a project team from Pacific and Yukon Region. The PYR team was in the early stages of preparation for the offshore oil and gas moratorium debate in BC and was looking to benefit from the Atlantic team's extensive experience in this area.

The two teams met for a day and a half in Vancouver. The discussions that occurred covered a broad range of issues related to offshore oil and gas exploration and development, thus what was achieved was breadth rather than depth on any one issue. Also, as the PYR team was in the early stages of preparing to deal with this emerging issue, it was not in a position to present a concrete plan for its activities. This workshop functioned well as "reconnaissance" for the PYR team—an opportunity to gather information on critical issues and management options, and make important contacts with the key individuals working on this issue in the Atlantic region.

Why follow up?

It's not every day that we attend a workshop that is so informative and inspiring that we leave enthusiastically thinking about the ways in which we can apply what we've learned to our work, and how our work could benefit.

When this does occur, however, it is only too easy to forget the inspiration once we are back at the office and immersed again in the regular demands of the day-to-day.

Don't let this happen after your peer assist! Remember all the work you did in preparing for the workshop, and try to make a comparable investment in following up afterwards. Following up is a way to ensure that the benefits of your peer assist workshop are fully realized.

Maintaining Connections

Timeline: 2 weeks to 6 months following the peer assist workshop

After a peer assist, follow-up may naturally occur between participants who made individual connections during the workshop. Above and beyond this kind of follow-up, it is valuable (and can be strategic) to do some intentional follow-up:

- It is considerate to thank the resource team again once everyone has returned to their regular place of work. Remember to cc the resource team's managers.
- Following-up lets the resource team know that its advice was considered, how the advice was used, and to what effect. This adds to the learning that the resource team gained from participating in the peer assist.
- Following-up reinforces the connections made during the peer assist workshop, and allows the resource team to act in an ongoing mentoring or advisory role as the project team begins to implement the advice.

How to follow up

Follow-up can be planned as part of the closing of the peer assist. What the follow-up will consist of may be clear at that point, given the content of discussions. For instance, it may involve sharing the next draft of a proposal or workplan.

Follow-up activities can include:

- continued one-on-one communication between individuals with an interest in a particular area of the project,
- a teleconference in which the project team briefs the resource team on how the knowledge translation is going,
- an e-mail sent to all the resource team participants,
- an online discussion forum (like a listserv) where issues (or spin-off issues) can be raised or discussed further,
- a face-to-face meeting, where new or emerging issues related to the knowledge translation can be discussed, and
- a brown-bag lunch with no formal agenda (if all or most of the participants are based in the same city).

What's left to say?

The great thing about peer assist is that it allows you to borrow ideas and experience for your project right when you need them most. It also allows knowledge to be shared in a way that acknowledges that we need more than just information to complete complex projects; we need to know about the relationships between different pieces of information. A good resource team can help you use those bits of linked information to construct a new whole, different from what the team created the first time but based on tested knowledge.

Moving beyond peer assist, there is a well-developed literature of other facilitation techniques that might be an ideal fit for your needs. For a larger group, you might want to consider the "Open Space" technique, which relies on people who are passionate about their topic and willing to take responsibility for carrying the discussion where they want it to go. Or you could consider a rotating peer assist, where project teams get to refine their problem by telling it a few times and resource teams get to re-contextualize their knowledge to a variety of situations. Check out the References section and read up on some alternate techniques if they are of interest to you – the perfect facilitation method may be out there just waiting for you to find it!

Information on the Open Space technique is available at http://www.openspaceworld.org

We hope that this guide has been useful and that you will be able to apply peer assist to your work now or in the future. You might also want to prepare for a call asking you to lend your experience and expertise to a peer assist. Even if you don't have the time or money for a formal peer assist, there is still value in saying, "hey, I think I can help," or asking, "would you mind if I picked your brain about this?" Try it and prepare to be amazed at the response you get.

Finally, we would like to ask you for some help. If you decide to use peer assist, or even if you just skim this handbook, please let us know what was helpful and what wasn't, what worked and what didn't. You can e-mail us at scpolicy@ec.gc.ca to let us know your thoughts about this guide and the peer assist process in general. We appreciate you taking the time to help us learn from your experience!

Suzanne, Melanie and Shealagh
Science Policy Branch
February 7, 2005

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Tool 1: Timeline for peer assist process

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Weeks until workshop	Activities (location in handbook)
10	Identify members of your team and ensure their support for a peer assist (pages 11-13) Canvass your team and people you know for possible resource team ideas (pages 14-16) Create a budget (page 29) and detailed workplan for the process
9	Find a resource team (pages 15-16) Interview potential facilitators (pages 17-21)
8	Send an invitation letter to the resource team (Tool 2 - page 53) Identify possible dates for peer assist workshop Develop a statement of work (pages 20-21, Tool 4 - page 56) and provide it to the facilitator (and/or paid expert intervenor)
7	Complete paperwork for hospitality approvals (page 30) Book meeting space and catering (page 28), block off hotel rooms (page 31) Submit statement of work, letter of offer, sole-source justification (Tool 4 - page 56) and requisition for service contract to materiel management to contract a facilitator or paid expert intervenor (pages 20-21)
6	Prepare a project description and introductions; send to resource team (pages 22-24, Tool 6 - page 61) Ask the resource team to synthesize its relevant experience (Tools 8a & 8b - pages 63 and 65) Send an invitation letter to an unpaid expert intervenor or other unpaid outside participants (Tool 3 - page 55)
5	Ask the resource team to prepare a project description and introductions, to send to your team (pages 24-26, Tools 9a & 9b - pages 67 and 68)
4	Prepare a presentation on your project for the workshop (pages 23-24, Tool 7 - page 62) Book flights and ask the resource team to do the same (pages 31-32) Book hotel rooms (page 31) Confirm that outside attendees have made travel and hotel arrangements
3	Hold a meeting or teleconference with the resource team lead to clarify expectations and goals for the workshop (page 26) Prepare an agenda for the workshop and share with both teams (pages 35-43)
2	Confirm numbers with the caterers, check for special dietary needs of participants
1	Assemble the material on the Supplies List (Tool 10 - page 69)

Tool 2: Sample invitation letter to resource team

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Dear [____________]:

We are looking forward to working with you on the upcoming peer assist workshop on [*state topic of workshop here*]. This workshop is now scheduled for [*state dates of workshop*], at [*state location of workshop*]. We want to make sure that both teams get the most out of this experience. To aid in this, I have outlined below what you can expect from us as you prepare for the workshop. I have also outlined what commitments the resource team members should make to ensure the peer assist is as successful as possible.

We, the project team, will look after:

- Locating and engaging a facilitator
- Organizing a teleconference between team leaders to refine the issues to be addressed during the workshop [*if required*]
- Providing templates to structure your workshop preparations (pre-work)
- Workshop design
- Choosing a location for the workshop and accommodations, and coordinating ground transportation if required
- Providing team members with the information they need to book their travel and accommodation (to follow) [*or append this information here, if available at time of sending*]
- Reimbursing travel and accommodation expenses (through a journal voucher or JV)
  – We have planned for one night's accommodation, but if you cannot get a flight until the morning after the workshop, two nights' accommodation will be provided. Please inform us if you will require two nights' accommodation, as it will affect our budget.
  – The standard Treasury Board rates and rules apply.
- Providing meals during the workshop
- Preparing workshop notes, and circulating these to participants after the workshop
- Organizing follow-up activities, if requested

Resource team members must commit to:

- Participating in appropriate definition of workshop topic *[if required]*
- Completing the pre-work in time to share it with the project team prior to the workshop
- Arranging transportation to the workshop, as early as possible in order to minimize costs
- Booking accommodations as per our instructions (to follow)
- Setting aside a full two days for the workshop and related travel
- Participating in follow-up activities, if requested

Please feel free to contact me at any point in this process if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions for the workshop.

Thank you again for your involvement in this peer assist event. We look forward to the benefit of your experience, and your insights on how best to move our project forward.

[Signed,]

[Project team lead]

Tool 3: Sample invitation to non-EC staff to participate in the workshop (required for paying honoraria and for reimbursing expenses)

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

[*use departmental letterhead*]

Dear ___________:

This letter confirms that Environment Canada will cover your travel and accommodation costs to participate in the [*state title of workshop here*] workshop in [*state location here*] on [*state dates here*].

[*If you are offering an honorarium*]: We are offering an honorarium of [*amount*], in appreciation of your role in providing advice on [*relevant area of expertise*].

We will pay for your return travel from [*home location of individual*] to [*location of workshop*] and one night's single accommodation. All meals will be provided as part of the workshop. Treasury Board rules and rates will apply. [*If the individual is from outside the federal government, provide the relevant rules or rates. For instance, if the individual will be travelling by private vehicle, provide the current* TB *kilometric rates for private vehicles.*]

Original receipts will be required for your hotel room and travel expenses (airline or car rental invoice). Please submit your claim immediately after the trip is completed so that we can reimburse you promptly. Please also provide us with either your GST or SIN number for the use of our Accounting Office.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at [your phone number] should you have questions regarding any of the above.

Yours sincerely,

________[*sign here*]______
[*person with spending authority*]
Environment Canada

I accept the conditions.

[*recipient signs and returns*]
[*recipient's name*]

Tool 4: Sample "Statement of Work" and sole-source justification to hire a facilitator

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Facilitation for [your peer assist] workshop

1.0 Background

[*Your project*] is being undertaken by [*your branch*], Environment Canada. When completed, the project will [*your project outcomes*]. As a way to leverage the knowledge in this area that already exists within the department, [*your branch*] is inviting a peer group to a workshop where participants will share their experiences in this area and help develop a way forward for this project.

2.0 Contract scope and objectives

This contract covers the facilitation of this peer assist workshop and assistance with workshop planning and evaluation. The objectives of this contract are to maximize the benefit to be derived from the workshop through professional facilitation and to efficiently plan an effective knowledge transfer workshop.

Include the deliverables that pertain to your particular workshop. For example, you may choose not to have the facilitator provide a written summary of the workshop.

3.0 Work and deliverables

In order to assist, the consultant will be required to undertake the following work and provide the highlighted deliverables:

1) **Workshop planning**: The facilitator will assist with workshop planning and preparation as requested.
   Deliverable 1: Develop the workshop agenda and format in advance of the workshop.
   Cost: [$]
   To be delivered on or before: [*Date*]

2) **Workshop facilitation:** The contractor will facilitate the knowledge transfer workshop.
   Deliverable 2: Facilitate the workshop
   Cost: [$]
   To be delivered on or before: [*Date(s)*]

3) Follow-up: The facilitator will debrief the project authority and advise on follow-up activities from the workshop.

Deliverable 3: Follow-up to the workshop

Cost: [$]

To be delivered on or before: [*Date(s)*]

4) Written summary: The facilitator will provide a written summary of the workshop. [if required]

Deliverable 4: One electronic copy of the summary of the workshop in MS Word 2002 format

Cost: [$]

To be delivered on or before: [*Date(s)*]

4.0 Intellectual property

The terms and conditions of the contract only require the contractor to provide [*his or her*] expertise and advice in verbal form and as such, there will be no foreground intellectual property arising under the contract. [Use this clause when there are no written materials being prepared by the contractor (e.g. no written summary report of the workshop).]

or

The contractor will own the foreground intellectual property arising from work under this contract subject to providing an acceptable** license back to the Crown. [Use this clause when the Contractor will own the intellectual property. This is the government standard when there is intellectual property that arises from a contract. Check the "Contractor Owns" box on form 02-1884.]

or

The Crown will own the foreground intellectual property arising from work under this contract in accordance with exception 6.3 of the TB policy on intellectual property arising from Crown procurement contracts. [Use this clause in the exceptional circumstance where the Crown will own the intellectual property. Check the "Crown Owns" box when you fill out form 02-1884.]

**Acceptable means non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, world-wide, fully-paid and royalty-free license to exercise all intellectual property rights in the foreground information that vest in the contractor but may limit commercial exploitation by the Crown.

Include travel and living expenses if the workshop is out-of-town. Note these expenses are counted towards the $10,000 sole-source limit.

5.0 Travel

Expenses incurred for travel to and from the workshop will be charged to Environment Canada as part of this contract. The choice of accommodation may be at the discretion of the project authority in order to satisfy special arrangements Environment Canada may have with specific hotels. Travel/living expenses are estimated to total $ [*estimated costs for travel and living expenses*].

You may wish to allow invoices for separate deliverables.

6.0 Basis of payment

The contractor will be paid under the following schedule:

- 100% upon delivery of deliverables 1, 2 and 3

or

- 80% upon delivery of deliverables 1, 2 and 3, and 20% upon delivery of deliverable 4

7.0 Method of payment

An invoice will be submitted by the contractor upon completion of the work.

8.0 Project budget

The total cost of the project will not exceed [*estimate of contract*], plus GST.

9.0 Project schedule

The project will begin [*start date for this work*] and be completed by [*end date for this work*].

10.0 Departmental responsibilities

The department will supply any Environment Canada contextual information/documentation that is required for preparation.

11.0 Location of work and language of work

All of the work (100%) will be carried out off site.

or

Most of the work will be carried out from the contractor's quarters with the balance of the work occurring in a [*contracted/public*] meeting facility.

and

There is a requirement to conduct the meeting in [*English/French/both official languages*].

12.0 Project authority

[*Your name, your branch*], Environment Canada

Sole-source justification

[*Number of consultants interviewed*] consultants were interviewed for the provision of facilitation services for the peer assist session for [*your branch*]. Of the [*number of consultants interviewed, name of the consultant selected*] stood out substantially in the quality of the service that [*he or she*] provided and [*his or her*] ability to tailor [*his or her*] services to the needs of the Branch.

[*The name of the consultant selected*] is a skilled [*facilitator/consultant/executive coach/mediator*]. [*He or she*] draws on a broad personal background in [*short synopsis of the consultant's experience*]. [*He or she*] comes extremely highly recommended for [*his or her*] facilitation skills.

Due to [*his or her*] unique experience and the short time frame to develop this workshop, Environment Canada is proposing that this be a sole-source contract.

Tool 5: Sample letter for non-EC staff to obtain government rates at a hotel when travelling on government business

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

[*use departmental letterhead*]

[*address this letter to the hotel in question*]

To whom it may concern:

This is to confirm that [*name the individual*] is in [*name the city or location*] on official government business on [*state the dates of the workshop*]. [H*e/she*] will be attending the [*state name of workshop*] workshop.

Please extend government rates for hotel rooms to [M*r*/Ms N*ame*].

If you need further confirmation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

[*your name and contact details*]

Tool 6: Instructions for project team's project description

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Goal: Send a description of your project, along with any relevant reference materials, to the resource team prior to the workshop.

Rationale: Think of this as a chance to introduce your project to the resource team. It may also help you focus on which activities you would like to consider as your "project" for the purposes of the peer assist workshop.

Content: Include information about the scope of the project, what kinds of resources are dedicated to it, and some of the major activities your team is involved in as part of it. Context, history and challenges will be presented during the actual workshop (see Tool 7: Instructions for project team's preparation for presentation), so please focus on more concrete project elements for this description (e.g. timelines, deliverables, etc.). In addition, you may want to include brief biographies of each team member and their role in the project, as well as any other reference materials that you think would help the resource team better prepare to share its experience with you.

Logistics: Begin this exercise six weeks before the workshop. Forward the project description to the resource team members five weeks before the workshop.

Tool 7: Instructions for project team's preparation for presentation

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Goal: Develop a short presentation to tell the story of your project to the resource team on the first day of the workshop. Include any need-to-know information that you did not include in the project description.

Rationale: As part of the workshop, your team will be asked to give a short presentation to the resource team about your project, its history, context and challenges. You will also want to use the presentation to ensure that the resource team understands what you want to achieve from the peer assist.

Content: This presentation is meant to be informal and should not include a deck or handouts, but can take any other form you would like (creativity is encouraged). If you would like to have visual aids, either for your presentation or for later reference, please consider large posters to post on the meeting room walls or perhaps a collection of photos or diagrams. Material that you have already developed as part of your project might also be useful.

Logistics: As the workshop is meant to be an exchange of information between all members of both teams, we suggest that your whole team participate in the presentation. Plan for a presentation length of approximately 30 minutes.

Tool 8a: Instructions for resource team's synthesis exercise (for existing teams)

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Goal: To develop a common understanding, among resource team members, of what happened during the project (or the set of activities from which you will draw experiences for the purposes of this workshop), why it happened, and how that knowledge could be transferred to another team.

Rationale: The successful transfer of knowledge between two groups requires that the resource group have a good grasp of what they know, and how that knowledge came about. There has to be some synthesis before the transfer takes place. A process for synthesizing project knowledge requires flushing out all of the known and unanticipated aspects or conditions that contributed to both successes and failures.

Logistics: A face-to-face meeting is the best way for this kind of synthesis to occur. A meeting, possibly over lunch or with reflection-inducing treats, will give your team the chance to think about the project for an hour or two without interruptions. In this type of meeting, important conditions for success include an agreement between all team members that nothing will be taken personally, and that anything is “fair game” to talk about if it had an effect on the project.

How-to: The purpose of this exercise is to discuss as a team what worked and what didn’t, what factors contributed to successes and failures, how project activities and results were linked, and how you might translate this knowledge to people outside of your team. To this end, here are some questions that might help guide discussion about your project:

1) Looking back on it now, what was the single largest contributing factor to the success of your project?
2) What was the most interesting/enjoyable/rewarding part of the project to work on?
3) How did you overcome any obstacles that seemed, at the time, to be insurmountable?

4) What one project activity gave you the biggest reward for the smallest investment of resources (people, money, etc.)?
5) What project experience do you hope you will never encounter again in your professional life?
6) How would you rate your project's overall success on a scale of 1–10? How do you think someone else in Environment Canada might rate it, not knowing all the details?
7) What project constraint caused you the most headaches? A time-crunch? Inadequate access to expertise that could have helped your team? Insufficient funding? Ill-defined objectives? The sheer volume of work to be done?
8) Thinking about the environment/context in which your project was situated, which elements were beyond your control? Which elements could you control? What techniques did you employ to assert your control over the project's environment/context? What did you try to control, but could not? What might you have controlled, but did not try?
9) What would you do differently next time?
10) What do you think is transferable versus specific to the situation of that one project?

Or try this technique to get you started: make a list of successes – things that you were pleased with about the project. Then make a list of missed opportunities. Now place them in order of things you could control, and things you could not.

Results: This discussion is meant to help your team develop a common understanding of what happened during the course of your project so that you can use that learning both for the peer assist and in your own future work. You may find it helpful to have someone take notes during the discussion, but you may also prefer to have everyone focused on the discussion instead.

This discussion will likely inform the project description you share with the project team. As such, we suggest that you prepare the project description after the synthesis is done. This synthesis is focused on consolidating your learning as a team, rather than codifying your project knowledge for transfer to another group. The peer assist workshop will be geared to tailoring your learning to the project team's situation.

Tool 8b: *Instructions for resource team's synthesis exercise (for composite teams)*

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Goal: To develop a better understanding of what happened during your project (or the set of activities from which you will draw experiences for the purposes of this workshop), why it happened, and how that knowledge could be transferred to the project team.

Rationale: The successful transfer of knowledge between two groups requires that members of the resource group have a good grasp of what they know, and how that knowledge came about. There has to be some synthesis before the transfer takes place. A process for synthesizing project knowledge requires flushing out all of the known and unanticipated aspects or conditions that contributed to both successes and failures.

To this end, here are some questions that might help you think about your project:

1) Looking back on it now, what was the single largest contributing factor to the success of your project?
2) What was the most interesting/enjoyable/rewarding part of the project to work on?
3) How did you overcome any obstacles that seemed, at the time, to be insurmountable?
4) What one project activity gave you the biggest reward for the smallest investment of resources (people, money, etc.)?
5) What project experience do you hope you will never encounter again in your professional life?
6) How would you rate your project's overall success on a scale of 1-10? How do you think someone else in Environment Canada might rate it, not knowing all the details?
7) What project constraint caused you the most headaches? A time-crunch? Inadequate access to expertise that could have helped your team? Insufficient funding? Ill-defined objectives? The sheer volume of work to be done?
8) Thinking about the environment/context in which your project was situated, which elements were beyond your control? Which elements could you control? What techniques did you employ

to assert your control over the project's environment/context? What did you try to control, but could not? What might you have controlled, but did not try?
9) What would you do differently next time?
10) What do you think is transferable versus specific to the situation of that one project?

Or try this technique to get you started: make a list of successes – things that you were pleased with about the project. Then make a list of missed opportunities. Now place them in order of things you could control, and things you could not.

Results: This reflection is meant to help you develop a better understanding of what happened during the course of your project, so that you can use that learning both for the peer assist and in your own future work.

This synthesis will likely inform the project description you share with the project team. As such, we suggest that you prepare the project description after the synthesis is done. This synthesis is focused on consolidating your personal learning about the project, rather than codifying your project knowledge for transfer to another group. The peer assist workshop will be geared to tailoring your learning to the project team's situation.

Tool 9a: Instructions for resource team's project description (for existing teams)

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Goal: Introduce your team members and project experience to the project team after you have had a chance to synthesize the experience.

Rationale: Think of this as a chance to explain the scope of the project experience that you will bring to the peer assist. This will help the project team members understand where your team is coming from and allow them to better use your expertise.

Content: Include information such as the scope of the project, what kinds of resources were dedicated to it, and some of the major activities. Include a list of key team members, as well as their principal roles and responsibilities on the team and on other related projects.

Logistics: Five weeks before the workshop, the project team lead will forward a description of their project to you. Please reply with your team's project description.

Tool 9b: Instructions for resource team's project description (for composite teams)

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Goal: Introduce yourself and your project experience to the project team. Your project may be a set of activities that you do as part of your regular work rather than a distinct task.

Rationale: Think of this as a chance to explain the scope of the relevant project experience you will bring to the peer assist. This will help the project team members understand where you are coming from and allow them to better use your expertise.

Content: Include information such as the scope of your project, what kinds of resources were dedicated to it, and some of the major activities. Include your principal role and responsibilities within the project and in other related projects.

Logistics: Five weeks before the workshop, the project team lead will forward a description of their project to you. Please forward your project description in reply. Feel free to contact that person if you have any questions about their project, keeping in mind that it will be introduced more fully at the workshop.

Tool 10: List of supplies and equipment

Find this tool online at http://infolane.ec.gc.ca/kco-bcs/

Bringing the following equipment will ensure that workshop participants are able to focus on the peer assist rather than on searching for the materials they need. Your facilitator will also appreciate it if you supply anything that might be needed for various facilitation techniques.

- Scent-free, water-based, bevelled flipchart markers (even if the meeting facility says it has them, they will be terrible – bring your own)
- Flipcharts – 3 is a good number (usually available at the facility, but check ahead of time)
- Post-it™ notes (different colours and sizes)
- Masking tape for taping things to the wall (confirm with the meeting facility that this is permitted)
- Ball point pens, highlighters and pads of paper
- Name tags
- Thumbtacks and stapler
- Elastic bands and paper clips
- Scissors
- Your own reference books
- Digital camera (this allows you to take pictures of the group and of flipchart pages rather than having to lug them back to your office)
- Digital projector and laptop if needed (meeting facilities will charge you an arm and a leg to rent this equipment)
- Laser pointer if material is being projected (allows presenter to stay at the table)
- Extension cords
- Laptop for taking notes, if appropriate
- Meeting folders for participants including agenda, list of participants with contact information, project descriptions