Report to / Rapport au:

OTTAWA POLICE SERVICES BOARD
LA COMMISSION DE SERVICES POLICIERS D'OTTAWA

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SUBJECT: MERIT CVE EVALUATION 2017 - 2020

OBJET: TMPR CEV - ÉVALUATION 2017 - 2020

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ottawa Police Services Board authorize the award of a sole source contract of t**he Social Planning Council of Ottawa proposal for evaluation of the 3-year MERIT CVE evaluation project in the amount of $142,000, as laid out in this report, to be funded from Public Safety Canada.**

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

Que la Commission de services policiers d'Ottawa autorise l'octroi d'un contrat à fournisseur unique du Conseil de planification sociale d'Ottawa proposant l'évaluation du projet d'évaluation triennal TMPR CEV, se chiffrant à 142 000$, tel qu'indiqué au sein de ce rapport, et financé par Sécurité publique Canada.

BACKGROUND

Ottawa's risk-driven community safety and well-being initiative known as the Multiagency Early Risk Intervention Tables (MERIT) was implemented in the South East Ottawa Community Health Centre of Ottawa in June 2015.

This initiative is supported by the Ottawa Police Service, local agencies, and service partners, and aims to reduce crime, improve community resilience, and to offer early-

risk intervention targeted at individuals with 'acutely elevated risks'. This collaborative risk driven approach to community safety and well-being models provides a hub approach that brings together the most appropriate community agencies in a situation table model to provide a targeted, wraparound approach to vulnerable individuals, families and places that are experiencing heightened levels of risk.

Since its forming, MERIT has been successful in identifying people at risk of all ages and ensuring they can access the care and help they need that is available in our community.

In October 2017, MERIT was awarded a contribution agreement from Public Safety Canada in the amount of about $1 million to undertake a city-wide expansion, develop an organizational strategy, integrating a Prevention/Countering Violent Extremism angle into the hate/violent extremism nexus, supporting the OPS and partners to build a strategy aimed at increasing community resilience against violent extremism, establish front-line awareness to the early signs of violent radicalization, and provide strategic interventions to reduce risk, victimization, and criminality associated with violent extremism.

The project required a very specific evaluation framework that was nimble enough to evaluate the implementation of the recommendations from the 2016 pilot evaluation and those specific to the development and integration of P/CVE tools at the table, training for agencies, and P/CVE strategy development.

This report outlines the work to be done and the rationale for sole sourcing this work to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

DISCUSSION

Evaluation Purpose

The proposed evaluation is designed to support the smooth and stable functioning and evolution of the Table as a whole, as well as to support progress toward specified funder objectives on P/CVE.

- Supporting both the collective and individual accountabilities and reporting requirements of participating member agencies
- Clarifying the theory of change and logic model of MERIT with partners and stakeholders to ensure that there is a common understanding and shared objectives
- Supporting MERIT to achieve the targets and objectives agreed upon with the funder through developmental and formative evaluation
    - Including supporting the integration of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) knowledge, practices, and objectives through developmental evaluation

- Supporting MERIT to identify and to achieve the objectives of MERIT partner agencies and stakeholders through developmental and formative evaluation
- Identifying promising practices, challenges, and lessons learned that could inform practices and development of MERIT, of Situation Tables in general, of partner agencies and stakeholders, and of national security partners, including lessons learned about the integration of CVE into MERIT
- Identifying promising practices, challenges, and lessons learned that could inform the future evaluation framework and practices of MERIT, and of Situation Tables in general.
- Developing a mechanism for quantifying the return on investment for collaborating partners in supporting risk-based early intervention

Scope of the Evaluation

The final scope of the evaluation is in the process of being refined with funders, partners, and other stakeholders, but it will achieve the following:

1. Respond to the evaluation objectives, and to the project targets, objectives, and outcomes identified by the funders
2. Respond, as much as is feasible within the resources available for the evaluation, to the evaluation needs and objectives of MERIT partner agencies and stakeholders
3. Respond to the developmental and formative evaluation needs of the project, particularly with respect to the integration of CVE and to the engagement of additional partners and stakeholders

Evaluation Type

The evaluation will be a combination of developmental and formative approaches as MERIT launches throughout the city and integrates processes connected to P/CVE. The city-wide expansion of MERIT across Ottawa will involve many of the same practices and processes previously evaluated during the pilot phase and those used across the province, and as such a formative evaluation is planned that will ultimately improve the model. The additional focus on CVE, which represents a new and less understood component to the model, necessitates a developmental evaluation that will help track this innovation, identify issues as they emerge, and facilitate rapid readjustments as needed.

Proposed Evaluation Approach

Subject expertise and guidance rests with the Evaluation Steering Committee, the University of Ottawa Centre on Governance, and from insight generated by evaluators

and researchers working on evaluations of other situation tables. Context expert insight has been solicited from participating partner agencies, the communities being served, and other local stakeholders.

Evaluation Activities, Data Sources, and Data Collection Techniques

Following the practice of other Situation Table evaluators and the recommendation of Nilson (2015), the use of primary, secondary, and hybrid (simultaneously primary and secondary) data sources are planned. The following is planned:

PRIMARY DATA

- Observation of Situation Table Proceedings – twice per year
- Online stakeholder surveys of:
- Key Informant Interviews
- Annual MERIT forum to validate the results

SECONDARY DATA:

- Review of evaluation reports of similar initiatives in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada
- Explore data and metrics supporting local collaborative initiatives, including:
- Review of project background documentation and updates
- Process maps of how MERIT works
- Revision of theory of change, and of logic model

HYBRID DATA

- Timeline information, demographic information, agency involvement (originating, lead, assisting), presenting risk factors identified through the referral, status, conclusion, calls for service, etc., gathered through the Situation Tracking System.

Rationale

The Social Planning Council of Ottawa was specifically chosen to develop the framework because of their extremely positive track record with community agencies, and their ability to integrate a developmental lens that would support the evolution of the project over the three years to December of 2020.

The MERIT table partners have had extensive dealings with Social Planning Council of Ottawa, support the contract and MERIT's operational working group has approved this collaboratively-developed evaluation approach.

The Social Planning Council of Ottawa has developed a complete proposal for this comprehensive work. It is uniquely positioned to complete the work as its team members have a great deal of similar work experience, knowledge of the Ottawa area and the specific issues being worked on by MERIT, comprehensive knowledge of the work of MERIT and the agencies that form MERIT and has pulled together a team that matches the specific requirements of this evaluation work. Specifically, the team has practical evaluation skills and experience related to multi-disciplinary round tables and counter violence extremism projects. This experience is necessary for the timely development of an evaluation framework under the parameters established as part Public Safety Canada grant.

CONSULTATION

Stakeholder consultation is required for the evaluation framework as elements are being co-produced, and this work is ongoing although there is no impact on the community at large. The consultation is limited to the stakeholders on the MERIT Operational Working Group (struck in February 2018, with representatives from Community Agencies across Ottawa) and active table representatives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding for this project derives from a Public Safety Canada grant. The funds will flow from MERIT cost centre 121753. The cost of this evaluation over the next three years is in excess of $140,000.00, however, there is no expected impact on OPS resources as the budget line for the project is within the Ottawa MERIT CVE Contribution Agreement with Public Safety Canada, and connected to the deliverables of the project.

CONCLUSION

MERIT is an important and innovative program designed to assist people at risk in the community. It brings together social agencies and representatives from police, health and education to identify individuals who need help and connect them with the proper supports.

There have been many examples of individuals who have been assisted through MERIT and this evaluation will provide the MERIT table with important information on how it is meeting its mandate.