

# National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health

## Process for Knowledge Translation – Working With Our Client Group

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National Collaborating Centre  
for Environmental Health

Centre de collaboration nationale  
en santé environnementale



BC Centre for Disease Control  
An Agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

# Outline

- Our mandate
- What is knowledge translation (KT)?
- Our approach
- How we involve our client group
- What we've learned
- Where we're going

# Mandate

- Synthesizing, translating & exchanging knowledge
- Identifying gaps in knowledge
- Building networks & capacity

# Focus

- Health risks associated with the physical environment
- Evidence-based interventions to reduce those risks



# Scope

- Initially defined as EH services/programs currently delivered by regional & local health agencies throughout Canada
- Client group – people who deliver those services/programs or set the policy framework for delivery

# What is KT?

- Translating research evidence into action
- What is “evidence”?
- What is “action”?

*The goal is to improve policy & practice and fill knowledge gaps.*

# Theories of KT

- Use of evidence is limited in policy & practice
- Factors other than research can influence the policy process, e.g. professional, organizational, structural
- Differences between worlds of researchers & policy-makers can hinder communication
  - ask different questions
  - have different time frames for results
  - use different languages
  - lack understanding about each other

# Strategies for KT

- Increase dissemination by researchers
- Increase acquisition skills of policy-makers
- Use “knowledge brokers” or facilitators
- Provide systematic reviews of evidence
- Develop collaborative relationships

# Approaches to KT

- Producer push
- User pull
- Exchange

*Some studies have evaluated the effectiveness of these strategies in Canada.*

# Our Approach

*Exchange model – active brokering*

- Defining the audience
- Listening to their needs
- Linking to what's already available
- Partnering with researchers
- Providing quality products
- Getting feedback

# 2005-06 Development Work

- To assess needs, gaps & opportunities for NCCEH
- To facilitate development of workplan for first 3 years of operation
- Based on national environmental scan
- Input from practitioners, policy-makers & researchers to identify priority needs

# Environmental Scan

- Semi-structured interviews
- Identified practitioners/policy-makers via CMOHs & ADMs
- Identified researchers in an informal way
- Included request for Advisory Board nominations
- Modified questions for web survey
- Piloted
- Visited 12 of 13 provinces/territories

# Environmental Scan (con't)

- 65 practitioners/policy-makers from 38 agencies, 22 researchers interviewed
- 30 people responded to web survey
- Discussions with organizations that included practitioners/policy-makers & provided training for PHIs

# Interviews

- Asked practitioners & policy-makers what they had, what they needed, their interest in KT, need for evidence for policy & practice, priorities
- Asked researchers about past & current research, its use in practice & policy, successes & failures, barriers & enablers, ideas for KT activities

# Literature & Website Search

- Searched peer-reviewed & grey literature for systematic reviews & meta-analyses in EH
- Based appraisal on Cochrane & Campbell Collaboration guidelines
- Conducted limited search for literature on process of KT
- Searched for websites providing resources relevant to EH KT

# Assessment

- Compared existing EH KT products, materials & activities with those identified as needs by practitioners/policy-makers
- Identified gaps & potential opportunities to fill them, including priority NCCEH products & activities

# What We Found

- Wide variation of policy setting & service/program delivery models across Canada
- Little or no surveillance of environmental exposures & risk factors
- Scant citable scientific evidence for many current services/programs
- Little evaluation of services/programs
- Shortage of people with advanced training in EH
- Relatively little KT activity in EH

# Opportunities To Bridge The Gaps

- Produce documents, e.g. reviews of evidence, evidence-based practices
- Monitor & exchange information about policy, practice & research
- Establish secondments & interchanges
- Develop courses & summer institutes
- Match practitioners/policy-makers & researchers
- Evaluate work of NCCEH

# Website

- Preferred means of communication
- Developed with focus group of practitioners & policy-makers
- Built in opportunities for feedback & networking



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HOME ABOUT US SITE MAP CONTACT US

Français

#### CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS!

[Click here.](#)



#### Feedback

Any comments on the  
NCCEH or our website in  
general?

Home  
About Us  
Environmental Health News  
▼ Needs, Gaps &  
Opportunities  
    Assessment Report  
    Bridging the Gaps  
    Needs Survey  
▼ Networking Opportunities  
    Training & Practicum  
    Directories  
Recent Research  
Review, Guidance &  
Summary Documents  
Legislation  
Related Organizations  
Photo Gallery  
Events  
Contact Us

#### SEARCH THIS SITE

» GO

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

National Collaborating  
Centres for Public Health  
(NCCPH) Annual Summer  
Institute in Knowledge  
Synthesis, Translation, and  
Exchange  
(11 days)

International Union for  
Circumpolar Health (IUCH)  
14th International Congress  
on Circumpolar Health

## HOME

**Welcome to the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health (NCCEH) website**—bringing together practitioners, policy-makers, and researchers for evidence-based practice and policy.

#### What's New

- [Presentations](#) on: Bisphenol-A, Power lines and health, Pesticide intervention, Cell phone technology, and Raw milk
- [Directory of training programs](#) - updated
- [Summer institute in knowledge synthesis, translation and exchange](#) - final program available
- [Presentations from our 2009 safe drinking water course](#)
- [Presentation on our major project on drinking water-related illnesses in Canada](#)
- [Directory of environmental health legislation in Canada](#) - updated
- [Recommendations for safe re-occupancy of marijuana grow operations](#)
- [Directory of practicum opportunities](#) - updated
- [Recent journal articles on selected environmental health topics](#)
- [When can point-of-use water filters be used for removal of protozoa?](#)

Please check out our [review, guidance, and summary documents](#) section, go to our needs, gaps, and opportunities [assessment report](#), and explore our [networking opportunities](#). Also be sure to visit our [training and practicum opportunities](#) page.

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH NEWS

Stay informed with the latest news in environmental health.

- Garbage a burning issue in Metro Vancouver
- Study warns of cataclysmic glacial melting
- Climate effects of refrigerants underrated
- Court OKs dumping gold mine waste in lake
- Ontario to clean up abandoned radar sites in northern Ontario
- Air has elevated cancer risk in 600 neighborhoods
- Clamping down on the 'rubber duck' chemical
- Weed killer kills human cells
- New Brunswick to restrict use of pesticides
- Radiation leaking at double the 'action level.'

**more**

# Networking

- Environmental scans
- Advisory Board
- KT documents
- Drinking water project
- Courses & workshops
- Directories of training programs, practicum opportunities, EH legislation

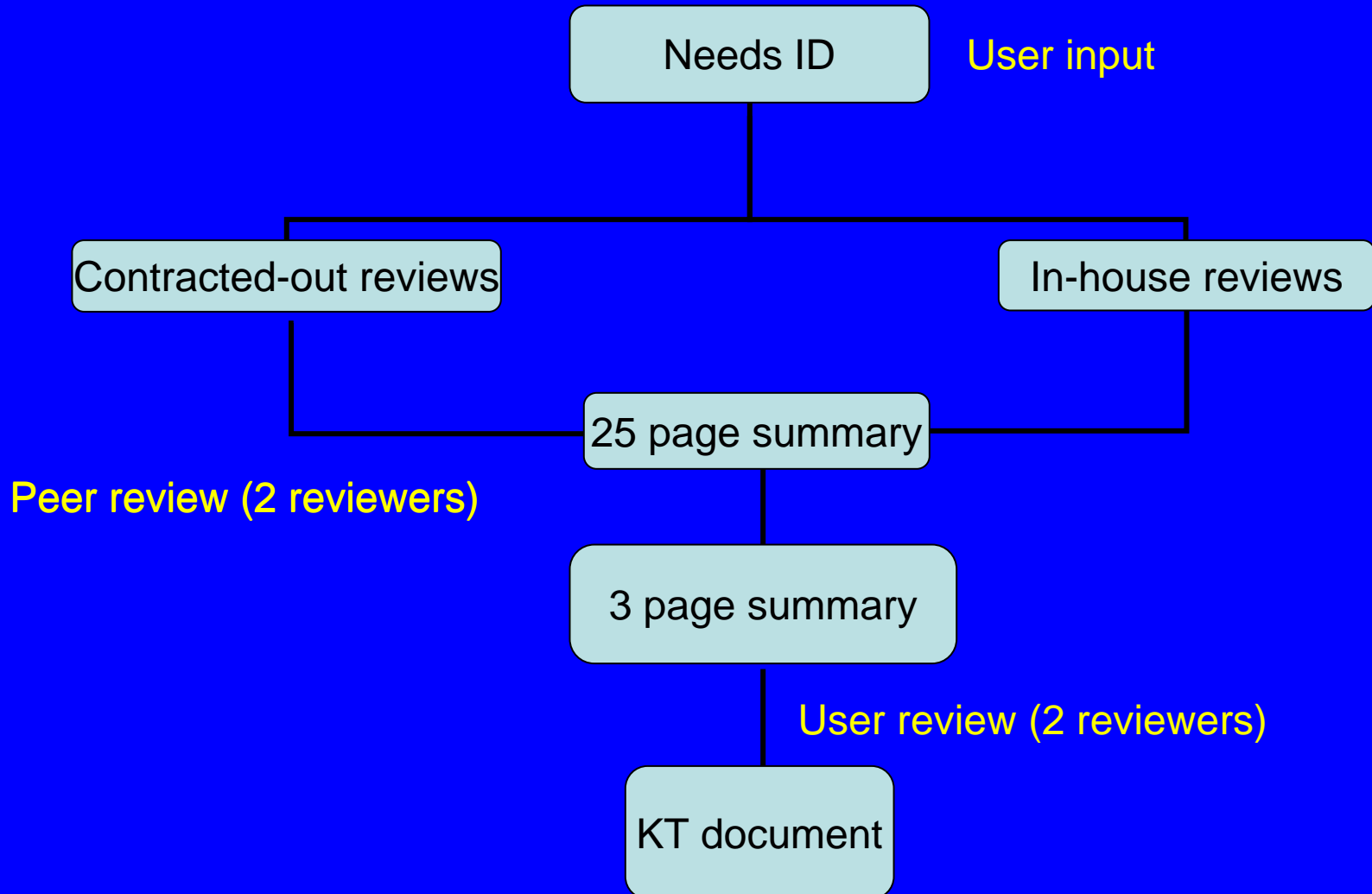
# Networking (con't)

- Recent research, EH news
- Secondments & practicums
- Working groups
- Summer institutes
- Meetings & conferences

# KT Documents

- Produced in-house
- Contracted out through call for proposals
- Preference for systematic reviews
- Work with client group to identify & refine document topics
- Science/peer review as 1st stage
- User/relevance review for final documents

# What We Tried To Do



# Lessons Learned

- Topics too broad
- Tried to cover too much
- Clients wanted short documents
- EH scientific literature may not be relevant
  - Good for identifying risk factors
  - Very little on interventions
- Practice knowledge may be more relevant

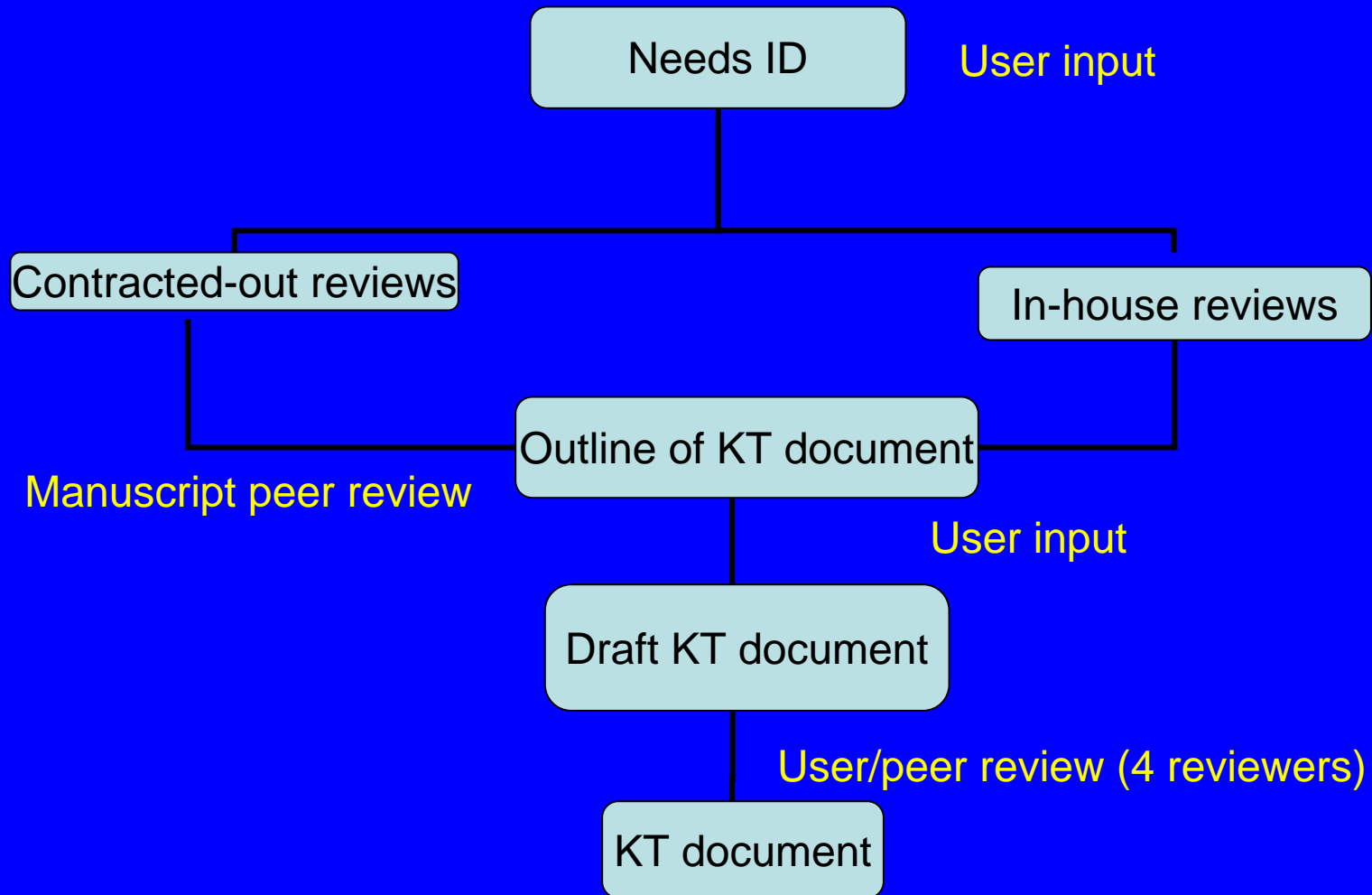
# Actions

- Define questions more precisely
- Define what is actionable or informational
- Break down topics into smaller chunks
- Define target audience for each KT document
- Rethink how we contract out reviews

# What We Are Doing/Planning

- Reviews (both contracted & in-house)
  - Define a more focused question to answer
  - Outline review early on
  - Eliminate the 25 page summary
- KT Documents
  - Draft outline
  - Gather input from users up front
  - Produce series of documents (e.g. radon, pesticides)
  - Changed format (mirror NCCID)
  - Have a 3-4 page summary, summary up front

# What We Are Doing/Planning (con't)



# Types of KT Documents

- Summaries of contracted reviews
- Evidence reviews
- Guidance documents

# How Are We Doing So Far?

*“Is this information useful in your work?”*

- Ad hoc feedback
- Course evaluations
- Independent evaluation
- Updated environmental scan

# Independent Evaluation

- External contractor
- Initial evaluation Dec 2007
- Updated Dec 2008
  - Interviewed 120 practitioners/policy-makers, 23 researchers, 9 NCCEH representatives
  - NCCEH blinded to interviewee list
  - Conducted 4 case studies on KT documents & website

# Results

- Strong and growing need for NCCEH
- NCCEH rates high in credibility – 4.6 of 5
- About 50% have heard of us
- Overrepresentation of some provinces
- More positive feedback on shorter KT documents

# Updated Environmental Scan

- Goals
  - Identify major gaps in EH in Canada
  - Feedback on how well we've done
  - Feedback on what we need to do over the next few years
  - Establish new contacts

# Approach

- Coordinated with independent evaluation
- Targeted MOHs, EH directors & policy-makers
- 38 phone interviews
- Some overlap with evaluation interviewees
- Mix of rural & urban health agencies
- Included those who knew about us, those who didn't
- 237 web surveys

# Key Questions

- Most important needs in EH in Canada
- Additional topics for documents
- Other information NCCEH could provide
- Three most important things we are doing
- Three most important things we should be doing

# Additional Questions

- Advisory Board nominations
- Go-to person/organization for evidence-based practice & policy
- Interest in collaborating on NCCEH projects

# Ranked Needs

- Scientific evidence base for services/programs
- Evaluation of effectiveness of services/programs
- Scientific evidence in usable form
- People with advanced training in EH
- Surveillance of environmental exposures & risk factors

# Most Important Things We Are Doing

- Providing evidence in usable form
- Being a central hub of information
- Connecting with health agencies & others

# Things We Should Be Doing

- Increase our visibility

# Lessons Learned

- Everything takes longer than planned
- Cannot anticipate all the questions
- No substitute for experience
- Build a flexible system to allow for learning
  - what works, what doesn't, why

# Lessons Learned (con't)

- Gather input from client group up front
- Make efficient use of client group & researcher time
- Shorter is better
- Use plain language
- People skills are important
- Building trust takes time

# Next Steps

- Continue with our approach and evaluate

# Thank you!

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