

Enhancing the Effectiveness of Environmental Projects and Programs

Providing Evaluation Services to Governments, Foundations, and Nongovernmental Organizations to Improve Outcomes



Abt Associates (Abt) provides innovative and sophisticated evaluation services that support retrospective analyses, as well as strategic learning partnerships. We provide these services for a range of environmental, natural resource management, water resource, and public health programs within federal agencies, foundations, and nongovernmental organizations.

Introduction

All organizations need to optimize limited resources to accomplish their objectives effectively and efficiently, and evaluations are often used to assist in these efforts. Using program evaluation information, organizations can make important mid-course corrections and gain from lessons learned. Recent, “real-time” evaluation approaches allow organizations to make ongoing tactical or strategic adjustments.

How Abt Can Help

We are known for our rigorous, nuanced approach to evaluation that results in useful, practical recommendations for project or program intervention. With our in-depth, relevant technical experience, we are able to get up to speed quickly and use our professional networks to efficiently identify key players and issues. Abt staff have expertise in restoration ecology, conservation biology, oceanography, hydrological and geomorphological dynamics, natural resource management, ecosystem service valuation, climate change science and adaptation policy, environmental policy analyses, human health and economics. For more than 25 years, our evaluation team has helped a range of organizations evaluate programs, identify best practices and organizational innovations, and develop and analyze credible and rigorous performance metrics.

Abt’s Evaluation Expertise

Developing and Implementing Retrospective Evaluations

Rigorous program evaluation allows managers to assess a program’s strategy, implementation, and results, providing robust findings and recommendations.



Developing and Implementing Real-Time Monitoring and Evaluation Plans

Abt develops strategies, metrics and methods that provide decision-makers with timely, actionable information and analysis that targets your organization’s needs.

Developing Theories of Change and Logic Models

These analytical tools explicitly describe a process of planned social or policy intervention, including critical assumptions, short- and long-term objectives, explicit logical connections between activities and outcomes, and a step-by-step strategy of efficiently turning organizational resources into desired outcomes.

Relevant Work

David and Lucile Packard Foundation’s Agriculture Subprogram

Abt developed and implemented a detailed, real-time monitoring and evaluation plan to track the subprogram’s progress toward reducing carbon and nitrogen emissions from agriculture. Our plan included the development of relevant indicators, identification of practical and robust methodologies for assessing progress, and conducting periodic strategic assessments.

Marine Conservation Initiative

Abt conducted two mid-term evaluations of the Marine Conservation Initiative, a \$253 million initiative focusing on fundamental policy reforms to ocean and fisheries management. We utilized an ensemble methodology for our evaluations, integrating quantitative, qualitative, categorical, and narrative methods to provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance long-term program effectiveness.

Lenfest Ocean Program

Abt evaluated the Lenfest Ocean Program, whose mission is to ensure that marine research results are delivered to government leaders, fisheries management professionals, the scientific community, the media, and the public to better inform policy decisions. A key focus for this evaluation was helping the program understand whether and how the knowledge it created was utilized in the context of marine conservation management and policy.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)

Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Program

Abt is helping NFWF and the Department of the Interior (DOI) evaluate the impact of its investments in efforts to develop and implement best practices for enhancing coastal community and ecological resilience to sea level rise, storm surge, and wave erosion. Abt's evaluation will provide insights into the performance, impact, and cost-effectiveness of resilience activities across multiple spatial and temporal scales.

Pulling Together Initiative

This initiative has awarded more than 400 grants over the past 10 years to help reduce the threat of invasive weeds through the creation of local Cooperative Weed Management Area partnerships. In addition to program and project-level evaluations, Abt provided a strategic assessment of the initiative and proposed program implementation changes to enhance effectiveness.

Long Island Sound Futures Fund

Abt completed a comprehensive external evaluation on the comparative effectiveness of alternative, on-the-ground strategies and activities to protect and restore Long Island Sound. Efforts included water quality improvement, coastal habitat restoration and protection, and community engagement and education. We worked closely with the program's management team to conduct a combination of six research steps, and performed an integrated analysis to produce findings and recommendations. This evaluation resulted in a report and a set of recommendations to maximize the effectiveness of future grant-making.



Contact

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Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 60 countries.

